



The mediating role of stress on the relationship between organizational culture and dysfunctional attitudes: A field study

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Abstract. The main objective was to determine the correlation level of organizational culture of workers' dysfunctional attitude and to research organizational stress's mediating role in prediction. The sample consists of total 638 personnel in primary schools in Kayseri (562 males and 76 females with an average age of 31-40). Demographic Information Form, dysfunctional attitude scale short form, organizational stress and culture scales were used. Mediating role was researched by structural equation modelling. School organizational culture statistically significantly predict worker's dysfunctional attitudes and organizational stress. Organizational stress statistically significantly predicts school worker's functional attitude. It is found that organizational stress has a partial mediating role in school organizational culture and school workers' dysfunctional attitudes. It is thought that school organizational culture become prone to worker's dysfunctional attitude through organizational stress. In addition to effect of school organizational culture, it is observed that changes occurring for organizational stress sources are important in terms of causing dysfunctional attitudes. It is thought that, in this regard, existing study provides beneficial information by dealing with school organizational culture, organizational stress and workers' dysfunctional attitudes together, contributing to related literature and helping experts of this topic.

Keywords: Organizational culture, dysfunctional attitudes, organizational stress, structural equation modelling, stress

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INTRODUCTION

Attitudes are cognitively, emotionally and behaviorally an important aspect of human life (Keskin, 2003; İnceoğlu, 2010). Attitudes determines the predispositions or directions of people towards a situation or anything (Tavsancil, 2002; Cabi, 2016). Dysfunctional attitudes are the attitudes that cause people to feel emotions in varying degrees and affect their behaviors negatively (Beck et al., 1979).

There have been a number of definitions about attitude. Attitudes are thoughts, beliefs and behavioral tendencies of individuals towards animate or inanimate things (an objective, situation or other people). Besides, attitudes are not a product of individuals' own life experiences. Mass media and other environmental media can affect the production of attitudes in some cases (Özmen et al., 2012).

Beck refers to behavioral patterns in the mind which are preserved as cognition. These patterns create the world of humans and also shape their behaviors. Depressions fed by the behaviors of humans are unique to our lives (Köknel, 1989).

Attitudes, cognitive factors based on facts, and emotional factor behavior factors are composed of a total of three factors. Cognitive, emotional and behavioral factors of attitude are not distinct from each other. On the contrary, they are intertwined concepts and have internal consistency.

Thoughts (cognitions) of a person about an issue or a case influence his/her emotions and the emotions affect the behaviors (Baysal, 1981).

Beck argues that the cognitions the individuals have created since their childhood would affect their whole life and guide their emotions, thoughts and behaviors. He says that the subjective cognitions of the individuals affect their behaviors and affections (Köknel, 1989). When the national literature is examined, there are a number of studies. There are books about distortion, cognitive distortions, negative beliefs or communication (Bilgin, 2001).

Beck, treated individuals with depression with a cognitive-behavioral therapy approach and revealed the concept of "Dysfunctional Attitudes" to explain the cognitive processes of these individuals (Duy, 2003). In these cognitive behavioral therapies, he talks about three basic structures, core beliefs, intermediate beliefs (assumptions) and automatic thoughts. According to him, automatic thoughts occur because of cognitive distortions that occur during the person's processing of information and data related to this experience. These automatic thoughts shape the emotions and reactions of the individual. Freeman et al. (2004) found that automatic thoughts which are distorted and non-functional play an important role in the development of psychopathology. Beck (2001) reported that each person has automatic thoughts, not just psychopathologies. Intermediate beliefs consist of rules and assumptions about the world, the self and the others and are often expressed in conditional statements. Core beliefs as the deepest mental building blocks. These beliefs are rigid, overgeneralized and resistant. People develop these beliefs towards themselves, others and the world. Individuals develop and maintain their core beliefs positively, but when psychological problems occur, core beliefs become negative. When psychological problems arise, positive core beliefs are observed especially in "inadequacy" and "unlovability" dimensions. While people with core beliefs of inadequacy have beliefs such as being helpless about themselves, being weak and uncontrollable, being trapped, being weak and vulnerable, and being in need, people with core beliefs of unlovability have beliefs such as being unloved and disliked about themselves, not being attractive, being undesirable, not being cared about, and being a bad person. When psychological problems occur, both of these fundamental negative beliefs are generally active. The basic beliefs of the person affect the perception of the situation in any case and case-specific automatic thoughts emerge. These thoughts cause negative emotions and behaviors that are not necessary in that condition. Dysfunctional attitudes should be evaluated with depression. According to Beck, the depression of individuals results from their distorted, dysfunctional, thoughts which affect their mental health and behavior, and their affection is impaired due to these thoughts and depression is triggered. Freeman (2004) presented a cognitive triad that triggers depression. According to him, cognitive errors cause the individual to neglect himself/herself, the future and the outside world. Cognitive triad occurs in three steps as a pattern that triggers depression. Individuals first assume that the problems develop on the basis of these deficiencies by ignoring the situational explanations and by defining themselves as inadequate. Because of these distortions, they see themselves as worthless and unwilling. Secondly, they tend to negatively evaluate their experiences related to the outside world. One sees the outside world as a place that creates constant obstacles, causes continuous negative experiences and does not allow him or her to realize goals and creates obstacles. Thirdly, the person is in the negative expectation of his or her future, thinking that, in the future, he or she will continue to experience the difficulties as now and will be prevented.

Beck revealed that people process the information in a nonfunctional way and make cognitive distortions, especially in depression. Savasir and Batur (2003) reported that people in depression make cognitive errors commonly and they continuously consider themselves negatively due to these errors. Cognitive errors occur when people make deduction as they wish without enough evidence, only focus on negative sides, evaluate situation as being related to themselves while they are not involved, think that they are responsible for the negative outcomes, make generalizations from one detail, evaluate their lives on extremes, trivialize their successes or exaggerate their failures, think that others have a negative approach without evidence, and make negative predictions about the future and perceive these as realities.

The interest in the concept of organizational culture, which entered the literature after Pettigrew's work "On Studying Organizational Culture", has increased and it has become one of the popular topics (Demir, 2007). Organizational culture, in a sense, is a historical and nominal product that affects behaviors and interpretations (Yalcin & Bayram, 2014; Ying et al., 2014). In his work, Pettigrew (1979) organizational culture consists of symbols, languages, ideologies, beliefs, rituals, and myths. Hill and Lynn (2009) define organizational culture as "norms, beliefs and behavior standards that provide employees with meaning, objective, and motivation and thus an organization's capacity to fulfill its legal responsibilities". In the commonly accepted definition in literature, Schein (1992) describes organizational culture as a model of shared basic assumptions, which is learned during the solutions for problems of external adaptation and internal integration and which guides new members through perception, thinking and feeling for these problems. Organizational culture consists of assumptions which differentiates the organization from the similar, offers the organization stability, is symbolic and veiled, directs the members of the organization, and reflects the top management's thoughts and evaluations (Demir, 2007). Organizational culture contributes to productivity by specifying the standards of work methods, strengthens the team spirit by contributing to unity and solidarity among the personnel, helps soften the conflicts inside the organizations, and create a promotional identity (Eren, 2004).

Before being used in the field of health psychology, the word stress, which is used in physics and engineering, comes from the Latin root *estrictia* (Ertekin, 1993). According to Hans Selye, a Canadian physiologist, who for the first time explained the concept of stress, stress is a change in the human body that occurs in the internal and external environment (Ozdevecioglu et al., 2003). According to stress theory named "General Adaptation Syndrome" of Selye that explains reaction mechanism of human organism, stress the vague reaction of the organism against oppression and demands. Human organism will certainly show a biochemical reaction against both positive and negative external factors and the reaction is always the same, no matter what the factor is (Guney, 1997). Stress is the situation which the individual perceives as a threat, cannot control and therefore which has a negative effect on the mental and psychological health of the human being (Tutar, 2004). Difficulty in living conditions, increase in uncertainty due to change and changes in interactions between people cause stress to increase. Moreover, the deterioration of the balance of life due to external factors such as urbanization, technological developments and natural phenomena make it difficult for the human to adapt to the external environment and as a result, people experience more intense stress (Ward, 2000, Bilgen et al., 2018).

Many academic studies have been carried out in the field of organizational culture and management and Educational Sciences in our country regarding stress. Dysfunctional attitudes are more recent in academic studies. Effective management in buildings operating in one of the most critical stages of child education, such as primary schools, becomes increasingly important. Effective management should be nurtured by deep awareness and strategic decisions related to this awareness. From this perspective, it is aimed to contribute to the literature by investigating the role of stress mediation in the relationship between organizational culture and dysfunctional attitudes.

METHODS

Participant

The participant is formed by school personnel who work at various state schools in Kayseri and who voluntarily participate in the research. 76 (11.90%) women and 562 (88.1%) men, which makes 638 at total, participated in the research. Ages of the participants vary from 18 to 63 and average age group is 31-40 years old (42.5%); 303 (47.5%) of them have work experience of 0-10 years, 175 (27.4%) have 11-20 years, 154 (24.1%) 21-30 years and 6 (0.9%) have more than 30 years.

Measures

The scale and forms that were determined below were used in the study.

Demographic Information Form

It is a form developed by the researchers to obtain demographic information such as age, gender and work experience of participants.

Dysfunctional Attitudes Scale Short Form (DAS-17)

The original form was developed by Weissman and Beck (1978) in order to determine the frequency of occurrence of dysfunctional attitudes related to depression. The short form was developed as 17-item by Graaf, Roelofs and Huibers (2009). Translation of the short form into Turkish was made by Hisli Sahin and Durak Batigun (2016). The scale consists of two sub-factors, namely perfectionism (PE) and dependency (DE). Participants are requested to answer the items in the subscales related to their dysfunctional attitudes in 5-point Likert scale as “totally disagree (1); disagree (2); neither disagree nor agree (3); agree (4) and totally agree (5)”. The Cronbach alpha value of this scale is .881.

Organizational Stress Scale (OSS)

17-item short scale which was developed by Theorell et al., (1988) and adapted for Turkish by Yildirim, Tasmektepligil and Uzum (2011) is used in order to measure organizational stress levels. The scale consists of 4 sub-factors, which namely are workload, control, skill use and social support. Participants are requested to answer the items in the subscales related to organizational stress level in 5-point Likert scale as “never (1); rarely (2); sometimes (3); often (4) and always (5)”. The Cronbach alpha value of this scale is .839.

Organizational Culture Scale (OCS)

Denison organizational culture scale used in the research was developed by Denison and Mishra (1995) and adapted for Turkish by Yahyagil (2004). The scale has 27 items and consists of 4 sub-factors, namely vision (VI), adaptability (AD), consistency (CO) and involvement (IN). Participants are requested to answer the items in the subscales related to organizational culture in 5-point Likert scale as “totally disagree (1); disagree (2); neither disagree nor agree (3); agree (4) and totally agree (5)”. The Cronbach alpha value of this scale is .854.

Process

Necessary data for the research was gathered by face-to-face survey method because of its great advantages in terms of high response rate and opportunity to ask many questions (Gulmez and Kitapci, 2008). Questionnaires were conducted where health professionals operated under the supervision of researchers. Consent forms were conveyed to voluntary participants before the application and questionnaires were applied after they gave consent. After validity and reliability studies, no form was left out of the evaluation since all of the questionnaires were successfully responded.

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Data Analysis

The statistical studies of the role of mediation in the field of psychology have been continuously advanced from the early stages to the present. Debates around causality and mediation patterns (Maccorquodale & Meehl, 1948; Baron & Kenny, 1986; MacKinnon, et al., 2000; etc.) did not include bootstrap-based tests. With the testing of the significance of indirect effects in mediating

role by MacKinnon et al. (2002) and Shrout and Bolger (2002) and with the intensified studies on bootstrap-based analyses, structural equation modeling (SEM) which is an analysis method that takes measurement errors into consideration (Byrne, 2006) came up and has quickly become widespread. In SEM, operations are done assuming that there are linear relationships among latent variables themselves and among observed and latent variables (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007).

For the analysis of the data, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 25.0 and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) 25.0 package programs were used. As a result of the analyses, the models developed were examined by investigating the goodness of fit indices of χ^2/df , RMSEA, HOELTER, PCLOSE, NFI, NFI, RFI, IFI, TLI and CFI.

RESULTS

The results of the research are as follows shortly.

Table 1: Basic statistics and correlation among variables

Variables	C. alpha	N	Ave.	S. Er.	1	2	3
1-Dysfunctional attitudes (DAS)	.88	638	3.21	.23	1		
2-Organizational culture (OCS)	.85	638	3.31	.29	.42**	1	
3-Organizational stress (OSS)	.84	638	3.66	.28	.32**	.29**	1

Table 1 indicates that total reliability of scales is higher than .70 and their averages are higher than 3, that there is a bidirectional and positive relationship between dysfunctional attitudes and organizational culture at .42** level and between dysfunctional attitudes and organizational stress at .32** level, and that there is a bidirectional and positive relationship between organizational culture and organizational stress at .29** level. Thus, it can be said that while one variable increases, the other also increases. The purpose of the correlation analysis is to determine the power and the direction of the linear relationship between the variables.

Table 2: Confirmatory factor analysis results

Indices	Perfect Fit	Acceptable Fit	DAS-17	OSS	OCS	Model1	Model 2
CFI	,970≤CFI≤1,000	,950≤CFI≤,970	,998	,997	,999	,997	,999
HOELTER	≥200	75≤HOELTER≤200	978	962	1,067	,987	1,064
IFI	,950≤IFI≤ 1,000	,900≤IFI≤,950	,996	,997	,999	,998	,999
NFI	,950≤NFI≤1,000	,900≤ NFI≤,950	,998	,989	,975	,989	,989
PCLOSE		≥0,05	,912	,925	,988	,901	,981
RFI	,900<RFI≤1,000	,850<RFI≤,900	,979	,985	,991	,968	,971
RMSEA	,000≤RMSEA≤,050	,050≤RMSEA≤,080	,018	,027	,037	,022	,011
TLI	,95≤TLI≤1,000	,900≤TLI≤,950	,997	,983	,998	,992	,998
χ^2/df	,000 ≤ χ^2/df ≤ 2,000	2 ≤ χ^2/df ≤ 3	2,231	1,198	2,372	1,297	1,071

Sources: (Hooper and Mullen 2008; Wang and Wang, 2012)

Table 2 shows the CFA results of the variables in the model. A single statistical significance test is not sufficient to accurately describe a model obtained from CFA data, and should be evaluated according to several criteria. The goodness of fit indexes of all three variables are within acceptable limits. Thus, it is understood that the structures related to the variables are consistent and appropriate with the empirical data used in the analysis.

In the first model developed by the researchers, dysfunctional attitudes were taken as the dependent variable and organizational culture and its subscales as independent variables. Thus, the first effect that Baron and Kenny (1986) mention was researched.

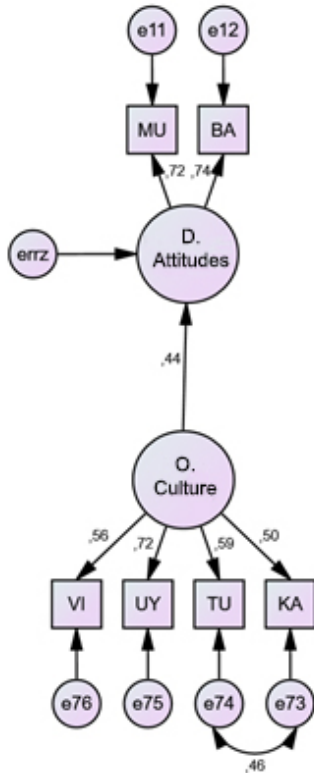


FIGURE 1: Test results of model 1

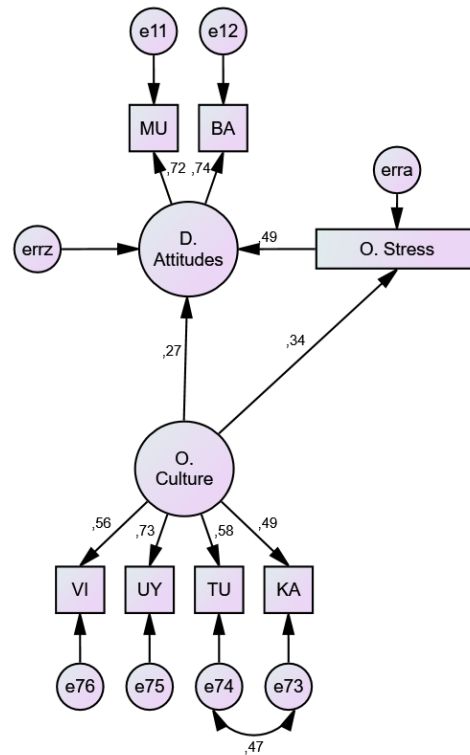


FIGURE 2: Test results of model 2

In the second model, dysfunctional attitudes were taken as dependent variables, organizational culture as independent variable and organizational stress as mediating variable.

In Table 2, values of Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Relative Fit Index (RFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) are examined. NFI is positively correlated with the sample amount. NFI, RFI, IFI, TLI, and CFI take a value between 0.00-1.00. If the model takes a RMSEA value, between 0.05 and 0.08, it is accepted to have an acceptable fit (Simsek, 2007; Hair et al., 2010).

The table 2 shows that the models developed in the research have perfect fits and thus, required conditions to determine the mediation role by means of SEM are met.

Table 3: Regression coefficients of relationships among variables

Model	Observation variable	Direction of effect	Latent variable	Standardized predicted value	Standard error	Critical value	p
Model 1	DAS	←	OCS	,439	,075	5,563	,000
Model 2	DAS	←	OSS	,481	,050	9,625	,000
Model 2	DAS	←	OCS	,266	,060	4,430	,000
Model 2	OSS	←	OCS	334	,057	5,816	,000

If the effect of independent variable on dependent variables disappears or the effect of independent variable weakens, the variable in the model is accepted to be mediating variable (Baron and Kenny, 1986).

According to the results of bootstrap analysis, it was determined that the indirect effect of organizational culture on dysfunctional attitudes was significant by mediating role of organizational stress ($\beta=.164$, %95 BCA CI [0.008, 0.336]).

Table 4: Results of direct and indirect effect analysis for model 2 mediating role

Effect	OCS	
Direct effect	,266	
Standardized direct effect	,274	
Indirect effect	,161	DAS
Standardized indirect effect	,166	

Table 2, 3 and 4 demonstrate it is possible to state that there is the partial mediating role of organizational stress in the effect of organizational culture on dysfunctional attitudes.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

Analyses that were made in direction of research's basic objectives have shown that organizational culture and organizational stress positively predict dysfunctional attitudes and that direct effect value of organizational culture decreases along with organizational stress.

In the literature, Copper and Williams (2002) researched the experience of negative feelings due to organizational stress such as job dissatisfaction, decreasing job undertaking and worry, and anxiety, low motivation and depression due to work-related factors; Nel et al. (2004) decreasing quality due to the organizational outcomes of stress, job performance, discontinuity and rise in endorsement; Bellinggrath et al. (2009) chronic job stress due to organizational stress and its relationship with allostatic load in women; Boehlko (2009) stress which results from giving responsibilities to new inspectors, awarding and punishment methods, no opportunity to be involved in decisions, political and administrative oppressions, being unable to be self-governing, and increasing economic worries; Uzun and Yigit (2011) the outcomes of low salaries and long working hours; Gokgoz and Altug (2014) moderate organizational stress that teachers face and its effects on performance; Balyer and Gunduz (2014) stress level arising from the missions of educational inspectors; Yamuc and Turker (2015) organizational stress sources; Ayaz and Bati (2017) the relationship between organizational stress and organizational trust; Develi, Gugercin and Iplik (2017) organizational stress sources and conscious awareness; and Colak (2017) organizational stress and organizational creativity. When individuals believe that they show little effort to change a stressful situation, they prefer to cope with stress in an emotion-oriented way. When they are convinced that their desires or sources towards the stressful situation might change, they cope with it in a problem-oriented way (Vollink et al., 2013).

Akbaba Turkoglu (2013) researched the level where depressed individuals have more dysfunctional attitudes than healthy individuals; Forand and DeRubeis (2014) the relationship of functional attitudes with depression; Pardini et al. (2014) dysfunctional attitudes and general psychological health; Otto et al. (2007) dysfunctional attitudes and life satisfaction; Gokdag (2014) the relationship between dysfunctional attitudes and automatic thoughts; Luty et al. (1999) the relationships among dysfunctional attitudes, temperament and characteristics and predictive power of temperament and characteristics for dysfunctional attitudes in case of depressed individuals; Conway et al. (2015) dysfunctional attitudes and stressors (cognitive, genetic and clinical effects); Kerqeli et al. (2013) the influence of dysfunctional attitudes on depression; Akhtar and Uzma (2014) the role of depressogenic dysfunctional attitudes and social support disorders of patients with somatoform; Ku (2017) negative life events, dysfunctional attitudes, cognitive triad and depression symptoms; Haeffel et al. (2005) negative cognitive styles, dysfunctional attitudes and depression; and Akhtar et al. (2017) personal characteristics and dysfunctional attitudes in patients with somatic symptom disorder. While the number of studies on dysfunctional attitudes has increased in recent years, there has not been yet a satisfying number of research on the topic in our country. It is a clear indication of the progress of studies in our country that one of the fundamental scales has been procured for the field of the psychology in such a recent time as 2016.

Employees within the organization convey the organizational culture through stories, traditions, symbols, and organizational jargon in the process of socialization (Guclu, 2003). The set of shared values in organizational culture affects internal dynamics and successes of organizations (Kocel, 2018) and these permit to qualify the organizational culture as weak or strong (Robbins, 2000). From this point of view, organizational culture also involves a process of organizational learning (Dauber, Fink & Yolles, 2012). It suggests how the matter whether values and norms of the organization meet personal demands or society's demands has come up, how these are reflected (Sigri and Tigli, 2006), and the integration level of individuals with groups (Hoftstede and Bond, 1988).

Consequently, organizational stress plays a mediating role in the effect of organizational culture in schools on dysfunctional attitudes. These findings reveal that organizational stress can contribute to decreasing this effect. Therefore, general proposition put in the research was verified by the test done and showed that the fact that school personnel possess organizational stress has an effect on their level of exhibiting dysfunctional attitudes. The mediating role in this effect is of organizational stress and as its effect increases, stress level of the personnel decreases.

Determining factors with mediating roles such as stress in determination of how dysfunctional attitudes emerged and how they reflect on schools' organizational cultures and working styles is important in terms of specifying the behaviors of school personnel among themselves and the reflections of these behaviors on students and parents. Both organizational processes and expressions of educational applications are significant for the health and quality of application processes.

The facts that the participant of the study is composed of the employees of schools, that measurement tools are based on self-reports, and that the analysis is done according to these data can be evaluated among the limitations of the research. face-to-face surveys for sampling is considered a limitation as it is not homogenous whereas it is thought to be enriching as it provides a hard-to-reach sampling due to the intensive course load in schools. In addition, organizational stress could not be investigated in detail; only the mediating role of it was researched. In the literature, there are serious deficiencies in the examination of dysfunctional attitudes in schools with different variables.

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