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## The Mediator Role of Organizational Justice in the Relationship between Teachers' Prejudices in their School Relations and Organizational Commitment: A Structural Equation Model

TUGBA HOSGORUR, YAHYA ALTINKURT and DUYGU KAN

### Abstract

This study aims to test the theoretical model developed for the mediator role of organizational justice in the relationship between teachers' prejudices in their school relations and organizational commitment levels. The research is designed using the survey model. The population comprised of teachers working at primary, secondary, and high schools in the Milas district of Mugla, Turkey, during the 2015-2016 academic year. The research sample comprised of 326 teachers selected through the disproportionate cluster sampling technique. The data for the research was collected through the Prejudices in School Relations Scale, Organizational Justice Scale, and the Organizational Commitment Scale. Pearson correlation coefficients were employed in terms of correlations between the variables observed during the research. The resulting model was tested using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Research results show that teachers have a medium-level commitment, while their organizational justice perception is slightly over the medium level. Teachers are most prejudicial against managers and students, followed by parents, and least prejudicial against their colleagues. Teachers' prejudices against their colleagues are relatively low, while their prejudices against managers, students, and parents are close to the medium level. In this research, it was determined that teachers' organizational justice perception plays a mediator role between the variables of teachers' prejudices in their school relations and their organizational commitment. The intermediation of organizational justice perception displays a suppression effect in the inversely proportional relationship between teachers' prejudices and commitment.

**Keywords:** organizational justice, organizational commitment, prejudice.



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## Introduction

Having skilled employees who do their jobs well in an organization is not enough for efficiency per se. Organizations also need to retain the employees in the organization for long periods of time in order to make efficient use of their efforts (Colquitt, LePine, & Wesson, 2015). This ensures that organizational commitment deserves consideration by the management. Organizational commitment holds an important position in management literature since it plays a vital role in an organization attaining its targets, the presence of an innovative culture within the organization, and the sustaining of a balanced structure in the organization (Sharma & Sinha, 2015). Organizational commitment sets the outline of relations between the employees and the organization. It is a psychological factor that has direct influence on employee decisions on whether to remain a member of the organization or leave the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). A significant number of research studies emphasize that employees with a high level of organizational commitment have the lowest possibility of leaving the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). However, organizational commitment does not solely relate to whether employees will remain in the organization; rather it relates to employees' considering themselves a part of the organization, i.e. a sense of belonging. Studies on organizational commitment in the literature suggest that organizational commitment is a key variable in understanding the behaviors which employees display within the organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Research by Steers (1977) on the antecedents of organizational commitment showed that personal characteristics, job characteristics and work experiences influenced commitment. In this context, it is concluded that the prejudices that employees develop against some elements of the organization as a result of their organizational experience might influence their organizational commitment, while their organizational justice perception might also have an influence on their organizational commitment. Therefore, this current research study is structured in a way to statistically test the relationship that theoretically exists in terms of the stated variables.

Over time, studies on organizational commitment have evolved from a unidimensional to a multidimensional structure (Sharma & Sinha, 2015). A multidimensional perspective has saved organizations from depending solely on a single image of employee commitment. Employees may not feel that committed to a specific element of the organization, while being relatively more committed to another element. A multidimensional perspective makes it possible to research the impact of various characteristics that organizations have such as a dynamic environment, quality of the work done and cultural structure on the commitment levels of employees and the elements they attach to. This has resulted in a rapid adoption of the multidimensional perspective in the literature (Cohen, 2003). On the other hand, studies on the subject have also employed different types of classification.

Kanter (1968) classified organizational commitment in three dimensions, namely continuance commitment, coherence commitment, and control commitment. *Continuance commitment* explains the situation in which past investments in or sacrifices for the organization by employees raise the cost of their leaving the organization or make it impossible for that to happen. *Coherence commitment* is a type of attachment that stems from the individual's social relations within the organization and causes the individual to want to remain a member of the organization. *Control commitment*, on the other hand, represents the attachment of individuals to organizational norms that will shape their

behaviors in the desired manner by ensuring the compatibility of individuals' perceptions on the organization with organizational values (Kanter, 1968).

Salancik (1977) and Mowday et al. (1982) considered two types of organizational commitment: attitudinal and behavioral. *Attitudinal commitment* defines the perception of employees on the compatibility of their own targets and values with those of the organization in which they work, while *behavioral commitment* explains the process in which a past behavior by an organization's employee commits them to the organization (Mowday et al., 1982). Meyer and Allen (1991) combined common elements of previous studies to establish a three-dimensional framework on organizational commitment. Accordingly, there are three sources feeding the organizational commitment which are affective, continuance, and normative commitments.

*Affective commitment* is generally relevant to the climate or culture of the organization. It relates to the mood when employees successfully complete their tasks or the satisfaction from their relations with others in the organization (Colquitt et al., 2015). Affectively, committed employees feel emotionally more involved in and associated with the organization. Such individuals feel they are responsible for the success of the organization. Thus, they usually display a high level of performance and develop a positive attitude towards the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

*Continuance commitment* relates to what the individual would lose if they left the organization. Therefore, any situation which raises the employee's cost of leaving the organization has the potential to lead to continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The effort, energy or time the employees use as they do their jobs, the salary received, their promotions, or job alternatives on offer in other organizations are all factors impacting on continuance commitment. If what they get in return for their work meets their expectations, individuals will improve their contribution to the organization (Colquitt et al., 2015). However, individuals with low continuance commitment levels may still remain within the organization, but this will have a negative impact on their perceptions of the organization as well as their performance.

*In normative commitment*, the individual feels indebted to his manager, colleagues or the organization as a whole and feels he must stay there (Colquitt et al., 2015). He thinks it is his moral responsibility to continue working for the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Employees feel as such under the influence of both their learning from their experiences prior to entry into the organization and their experiences from socialization processes following entry into the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The emphasis by the individual's social environment, and specifically their family, that loyalty to the organization is a must, the structure of the culture of the society he lives in that attaches more importance to the society than individuals or the individual's internalization of the messages the organization conveys to individuals that it puts more stress on having loyal employees in the socialization process within the organization all lead to normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). It is considered that employees' potential prejudices against relations within their organizations may be one of the variables that could impact on employees' perception on the organization and thus their organizational commitment levels.

Prejudice is defined as a positive or negative thought previously acquired and formed on the basis of the existing conditions, situations and images about a person, opinion or fact (Cevizci, 1996). Kagitcibasi (2006) suggests that the main reason for prejudice is that human

beings perceive world as “us and them”. When this concept is considered from an organizational point of view, prejudices occur in the form of a series of negative attitudes and behaviors without a cause by employees against a specific group (Sandel, 2014; Stangor, 2016). Organizational prejudices have both emotional and intellectual elements since they may be formed before employees get to know each other sufficiently, for instance, in the form of judging themselves as members of a certain group (Cuceloglu, 2015).

Prejudices have been attracting attention not only in science, but also philosophy. Immanuel Kant, an 18th century philosopher, defined prejudice as all kinds of convictions we arrive at without definitively confirming their validity and proving their accuracy. Kant suggested that customs, traditions, habits, upbringing and even personal desires may push our consciousness aside and emerge as the source of prejudices. Francis Bacon, a predecessor of Kant, attempted to explain the source of prejudice through the concept of “idols of the mind”. Bacon held that human beings could arrive at accurate judgments to the extent that they cleared such idols from their minds. In a similar vein, René Descartes suggested that our judgment would be more precise and less ambiguous if we could be rid of our existing prejudices before restructuring information (Sandel, 2014).

Studies into the sources of prejudice offer various approaches adopting psychological and socio-psychological perspectives. One of the most widely acknowledged approaches to this end suggests that most prejudices are actually learned during childhood from family and other environments interacted with (Cuceloglu, 2015). Social identity theory, another approach, is based on an individual’s wish to have a positive attitude towards their perceived social identities. Accordingly, it is assumed that individuals tend to breakdown society into various groups, identify themselves with a certain group and compare their own group with other groups. While making such comparisons, they want to perceive their own group as superior to other groups and this constitutes the source of intergroup dichotomies, social competition and, indirectly, prejudices (Lemyre & Smith, 1985; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In this context, prejudice is not only a consequence of the presence of internal and external groups covering the distinction of us and others, but also strengthens the presence of such groups (Marshall, 1999).

Allport (1979) suggests it is difficult to strike a balance between individual or collective perspectives. He also holds that prejudices are a problem arising from personality formation and development and that no individual will reflect the attitude of the group he belongs to on any subject so long as he does not have a habit or personal requirement pushing him to do so. However, he does not ignore the fact that one of the most significant situations constituting the source of prejudices is the requirements and habits reflecting the influence of internal group members on the individual’s personal development. This perspective does not reject that the main influence on the individual is collective and means accepting that prejudices are eventually unique to each individual (Allport, 1979). Another approach assumes that individuals’ prejudices make them feel better if they have a negative self-perception and they do not have a better tool to cope with the unhappiness from such negative self-perception and such prejudices are indirectly maintained (Fein & Spencer, 1997).

Based on all of these, it is possible to infer that even a simple prejudicial statement reflects a rich perspective of the individual in relation to the type of order the world has, of the connection / relationship he has with the persons he perceives as others and what they actually mean to him (Reicher, 2012). When the situation is evaluated in the organizational

environment, it is considered that the opinions of employees on organizational justice is one of the variables impacting on the level of prejudices they have against different persons or groups in their organizations.

The concept of organizational justice first emerged when the processes of the legal system was applied to organizations (Greenberg & Tyler, 1987). This concept is relevant to employees' justice perceptions within the organization (Moorman, 1991). A broader definition of organizational justice includes all mutual socioeconomic exchanges within the organization such as task, pay, reward, punishment and promotion, as well as employees' relationships with senior managers, colleagues and the organization itself as a social system (Ozkalp & Kirel, 2004). There are various classifications of organizational justice in the literature. Organizational justice was initially regarded as only distributive justice, with the procedural justice dimension added later. However, the tendency to consider organizational justice as a whole is also very common (Altinkurt, 2010).

*Distributive justice* is employees' perception on whether or not the acquisitions they obtained are distributed fairly (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). Adopted during the times of Aristoteles but receiving highlight following Adams' Equity Theory on an organizational basis, distributive justice rather involves a fair distribution of organizational resources (Yilmaz, 2010). Employees evaluate distributive justice by questioning whether decision outcomes such as wages, rewards, promotions and tasks assigned are delivered by using appropriate norms (Colquitt et al., 2015).

*Procedural justice*, on the other hand, covers the processes whereby the distribution of outcomes is decided and the justice perceptions towards the tools used in these processes. How individuals are behaved in the organization matters to them and the procedural justice perceptions of individuals shape their relations with their managers. Organ (1988) suggests that the criteria in place for decision-making in organizational practices are relevant to procedural justice. Procedural justice has two aspects, namely structural and social aspects. In the structural aspect, the individual directly focuses on practices in the decision-making process, while he evaluates the interactional dimension in the social aspect by focusing on how these processes are communicated to him (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). In some studies, interactional justice is considered as a dimension that is distinct from procedural justice (Bies & Shapiro, 1987; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). Interactional justice is defined as the perceived justice of interpersonal behaviors during the application of processes (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001).

Many studies on organizational justice in the literature show the relationship between justice perceptions of employees and their commitment. Conducting antecedent studies on organizational justice, Greenberg (1996) defines organizational justice as a concept explaining employee perceptions on how fairly they are treated within the organization and how this perception impacts on organizational outcomes such as commitment and satisfaction. Chughtai and Zafar (2006) indicate in their study that the distributive and procedural justice perceptions of employees have a significant impact on their organizational commitment. Researchers state that any perceived inequality regarding acquisitions or any injustice pertaining to decision-making processes may lower the commitment levels of employees (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006). Akgunduz and Guzel (2014), Ay and Koc (2014), Babaoglan and Erturk (2013), Bakhshi, Kumar, and Rani (2009), Lowe and Vodanovich (1995), and Martin and Bennett (1996) also arrived at similar conclusions in their respective studies. Another variable that could possibly impact on employee commitment in an organizational

environment is the prejudices individuals develop against the persons or groups they interact with. Erdogan (2012) found that the prejudices of teachers against different groups are strong predictors of an environment of trust at schools. In this context, it is inevitable that this element, which has an impact on trust for the organization, impacts on the commitment of employees. It is also foreseen that the prejudices which employees have might also impact on their organizational justice perceptions. When individuals who have a positive attitude towards justice in their organization feel themselves more committed to their organizations, they are more likely to perceive the groups they interact with in their organizations as internal group members. This may eliminate the potential negative impacts of prejudices they can develop against the groups they interact with.

This current study aims to test the theoretical model developed in relation to the role of organizational justice as a mediator in the relationship between teachers' prejudices in their school relations and organizational commitment levels. Within the framework of this overall aim, the research seeks to answer the following questions:

- What is the level of teachers' prejudices in their school relations, organizational justice perceptions and organizational commitments?
- Do the organizational justice perceptions of teachers play a role as a mediator in the relationship between their prejudices in school relations and organizational commitments?

## Methodology

This study has been designed as a survey model. The population of the research is comprised of 1,325 teachers working at primary, secondary, and high schools in the Milas district of Mugla in Turkey during the 2015-2016 academic year. In the determination of the sample, disproportionate cluster sampling technique is employed. The size of the sample is calculated as 297 for a confidence interval of 95%. Considering that scales might not come back completed or deemed unusable for whatever reason, it was decided to seek the opinions of 400 teachers. Out of the data collection tools received back, a total of 326 were usable and utilized for analyses.

As to the demographics of the participants, 53.7% of the teachers are female (n=175) and 46.3% are male (n=151). 35.3% were primary school teachers (n=115), 25.8% were secondary school teachers (n=84), and 38.9% were high school teachers (n=127). 68.1% of the teachers worked at district centers (n=222), while 31.9% worked in villages (n=104). 84.4% of the teachers were permanent staff (n=275), and 15.6% were paid teachers (n=51). 32.8% of the teachers had nine or less years' experience (n=107), while 34.0% had 10-19 years of experience (n=111), and 33.1% had 20 years or more experience (n=108).

The Organizational Commitment Scale, Prejudice in School Relations Scale, and the Organizational Justice Scale were employed to collect the survey data. The Organizational Commitment Scale was developed by Ustuner (2009). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were performed for the construct validity of the scale. The scale is a unidimensional Likert-type scale comprised of 17 items. This single factor explains 48.23% of the total variance. The factor load values of the items on the scale varies between .44 and .86. The goodness of fit values obtained via CFA are as follows:  $\chi^2/sd=2.86$ , GFI=.89, AGFI=.85, CFI=.95, NNFI=.95, RMSEA=.078, RMR= .055, and SRMR=.035. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is calculated as .96 and the test-retest reliability

coefficient is calculated as .88 (Ustuner, 2009). In this survey, the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was re-calculated as .96. The scale responses vary between 1-Totally disagree and 5-Completely agree. A higher score on the scale means a higher level of organizational commitment is held by the teachers.

Organizational Justice Scale was developed by Hoy and Tarter (2004) and adapted to Turkish by Tasdan and Yilmaz (2008). The construct validity of the scale is tested via EFA. The scale is a unidimensional Likert-type scale comprised of 10 items. This single factor explains 53% of the total variance. The factor load values of the items on the scale varies between .39 and .87. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is .88 (Yilmaz, 2010). In this survey, the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is calculated as .94. The scale responses vary between 1-Totally disagree and 5-Completely agree. A high score from the scale indicates a positive perception on organizational justice.

The Prejudice in School Relations Scale was developed by Erdogan (2012). The scale has 29 items. The construct validity of the scale is tested via EFA. The scale is comprised of four factors, namely "Prejudices Against Managers", "Prejudices Against Teachers", "Prejudices Against Students" and "Prejudices Against Parents". These four factors explain 53.59% of the total variance. The factor load values of the items on the scale varies between .42 and .83. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.91. In this survey, the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is calculated as .90. The scale responses vary between 1-Totally disagree and 5-Completely agree. A high score from the scale means an increased prejudice of teachers in the relevant dimension.

Before analysis of the survey data, the data collection tools were reviewed. In this process, incompletely or carelessly completed responses were identified and then excluded. This was followed by an extreme value analysis as well as the analysis of normality of distribution and multicollinearity problem. z scores ( $z < 3$ ) and Mahalanobis distances were calculated in the determination of extreme values. The normality of distribution was tested by skewness and kurtosis coefficients and these coefficients were found to be within the range of +1 and -1 (For all variables, skewness coefficients were between -.30 and +.59, while kurtosis coefficients were between -.26 and +.06). Variance increase factor (VIF) analysis and non-standardized regression coefficients (B) were employed in the determination of whether or not there is multicollinearity among the variables in the survey. The fact that VIF value is more than 10 (Myers, 1990) or B value is more than 2 point to a multicollinearity problem (Cokluk, 2010). In the research, the maximum VIF value was 1.64 and maximum B was .64. Therefore, there was no multicollinearity problem.

Pearson correlation coefficients are employed in terms of correlations between the variables observed during the research. The resulting model was then tested using the Structural Equation Model (SEM). In the analyses for role as a mediator, the causal steps method by Baron and Kenny (1986) were employed. This method is usually employed in models where there is one single mediator. In this research, measurement model and structural model, maximum likelihood estimation technique and covariance matrix were employed. Research data were analyzed with LISREL 8.70 and SPSS 22 software. To test the goodness of fit for the established model,  $\chi^2/sd$  ratio and GFI, AGFI, NFI, NNFI, CFI, IFI, RMSEA, and SRMR indices were employed. In the event that the  $\chi^2/sd$  ratio is equal to or less than 2.5, the model is considered to represent a perfect fit (Kline, 2011). In terms of CFI and TLI fit indices, values at .90 and above are considered to represent a good fit (Sumer, 2000; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). A model with values at .08 and below is thought to represent a



good fit on both RMSEA fit index (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1993; Sumer, 2000) and SRMR fit index (Brown, 2006; Hu & Bentler, 1999). The research also considered the critical sample size value in addition to these fit indices.

The organizational justice and organizational commitment scales used as the data collection tools are both single factor scales. Therefore, it was decided to perform parceling for these scales on the structural equation modeling. The use of parceling in structural equation modeling is recommended since they are more reliable compared to single factor constructs and represent a more continuous and normal distribution (Bandalos & Finney, 2001; Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002). Parceling is used to ensure flexibility in data modeling, meet the likelihood assumptions, reduce the number of parameters in the model and improve model fit (Bandalos & Finney, 2001; Hagtvvet & Nasser, 2004; Little, Rhemtulla, Gibson, & Schoemann, 2013; Matsunaga, 2008). Parceling is described as the use of an item with at least two relations included in the measurement tool as the main unit in structural equation modeling. To this end, in consideration of the number of items in the scales employed and the correlations between items, organizational commitment scale is divided into four parcels and organizational justice scale is divided into three parcels in this research and analyses were conducted within this framework.

## Results

Under the aim of the research, the arithmetic mean and standard deviation values for the observed variables as well as the correlations between them were studied. Findings are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Arithmetic mean and standard deviation values of observed variables and correlation coefficients

Variables	$\bar{x}$	S	C2	C3	C4	J1	J2	J3	PAM	PAT	PAS	PAP
Commitment 1 (C1)	2.95	.87	.85**	.83**	.77**	.60**	.62**	.57**	-.27**	-.24**	-.05	-.11*
Commitment 2 (C2)	3.18	.82		.85**	.78**	.69**	.68**	.63**	-.28**	-.24**	-.02	-.12*
Commitment 3 (C3)	3.03	.78			.83**	.71**	.68**	.65**	-.32**	-.27**	-.04	-.13*
Commitment 4 (C4)	3.17	.81				.68**	.66**	.63**	-.24**	-.25**	-.09	-.11*
Justice 1 (J1)	3.45	.74					.85**	.81**	-.44**	-.30**	-.05	-.17**
Justice 2 (J2)	3.57	.76						.76**	-.44**	-.36**	-.09	-.18**
Justice 3 (J3)	3.63	.72							-.37**	-.26**	-.09	-.15**
Prejudice against managers (PAM)	2.58	.74								.52**	.28**	.38**
Prejudice against teachers (PAT)	2.29	.94									.38**	.36**
Prejudice against students (PAS)	2.56	.68										.55**
Prejudice against parents (PAP)	2.45	.66										-

\*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$

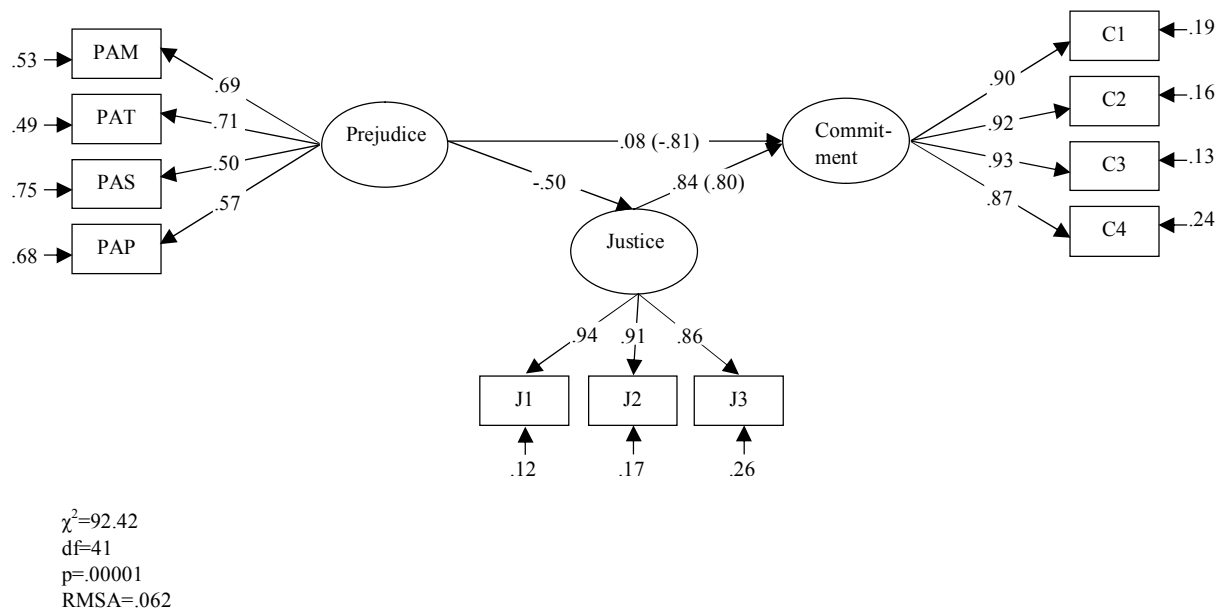
As Table 1 indicates, teachers attending the survey have a medium level of organizational commitment and an organizational justice perception that is slightly above the medium level. Teachers have the most prejudices against managers (AA=2.57, S=.74) and students (AA=2.56, S=.88), followed by parents (AA=2.44, S=.88), and are least prejudiced against their colleagues (AA=2.29, S=.94). Teachers' prejudices against their colleagues are

relatively low while their prejudices against managers, teachers and parents are close to medium level.

Positive and relatively high level of significant correlations varying between .57 and .71 existed between the organizational commitment level and organizational justice perceptions of teachers who were the internal (dependent) variable of the research. A negative and close to medium level significant correlation varying between .24 and .32 existed between the teachers' organizational commitment level and prejudices against managers; a negative and close to medium level significant correlation varying between .24 and .27 existed between the teachers' organizational commitment level and prejudices against their colleagues; and a negative and low level significant correlation varying between .11 and .13 existed between the teachers' organizational commitment level and prejudices against parents. There was no correlation between the organizational commitment level of teachers and their prejudices against students. A negative and medium level significant correlation varying between .37 and .44 existed between the teachers' organizational justice perception, the role of which as a mediator was studied, and prejudices against managers; a negative and medium level significant correlation varying between .26 and .36 existed between the teachers' organizational justice perception and prejudices against their colleagues; and a negative and low level significant correlation varying between .15 and .18 existed between the teachers' organizational justice perception and prejudices against parents. There was no significant correlation between the organizational justice perception of teachers and their prejudices against students.

Another aim of the study was to identify whether or not the organizational justice perceptions of teachers played a role as mediator in the relationship between their prejudices in school relations and organizational commitments. However, before proceeding with the testing of the structural equation model in terms of mediation, a measurement model in which the variables to be included in this structural model were modeled together was established and analyzed. As a result of the analysis, the  $\chi^2$  value calculated for the measurement model was 92.42 and the degree of freedom was 41 ( $\chi^2/sd=2.25$ ,  $p<.00$ ). Other goodness of fit values for the measurement model (GFI=.95; AGFI=.92; CFI=.99; IFI=.99; NFI=.98; NNFI=.98; SRMR=.04; RMSEA= .062) also indicated that the model was a good one. Results for the t-test model indicated that all factor loads for the variables were statistically significant. Since the model proved to be good from the results of the analysis, no modifications were made among the items. Furthermore, the critical sample size value of the model was calculated to be 228. Therefore, 326 persons that represented the sampling size of the study met the minimum limit for a fit model.

After the measurement model was tested, the main aim of the study, i.e. the mediation test was conducted. Causal steps method was initially used for mediation test (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In this framework, three distinct models were established. In the first model, the direct correlation between the prejudices of teachers in their school relations and their organizational commitments was tested, while the second model tested the direct correlation between the prejudices of teachers in their school relations and their organizational justice perceptions. On the other hand, the third model tested the direct correlation between the organizational justice perception and organizational commitment. The role of organizational justice as a mediator was then evaluated. These models are presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Role of organizational justice as a mediator

The coefficients provided in parentheses in Figure 1 are values of direct impact before the mediation test. In the first model, it was found that the direct correlations between the prejudices of teachers in school relations and their organizational commitment ( $\beta=-.81$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) were statistically significant. In the second model, it was found that the direct correlations between the prejudices of teachers in school relations and organizational justice ( $\beta=-.50$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) were statistically significant. Thirdly, it was seen that the direct correlations between the organizational justice perception and organizational commitment ( $\beta=.80$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) were statistically significant. Considered as the mediator, organizational justice was found to impact on the dependent variable before becoming an independent variable. Such analyses proved that it was appropriate to perform a mediation test in the model. Therefore, the role of organizational justice as a mediator in relationships between the prejudices in school relations and organizational commitment was tested last.

In Figure 1, it can be seen that there is a high level, inverse and statistically significant correlation between the prejudices of teachers in school relations and their organizational commitments ( $\beta=-.81$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and that, once organizational justice – the mediator – is added to the model, the standardized path coefficient of this path remains too low and the path is not statistically significant ( $\beta=.08$ ,  $p>0.01$ ). Therefore, the role of teachers' organizational justice perception as a complete mediator between teachers' prejudices in school relations and the organizational commitment variables was established.

Lastly, in order to provide an additional proof for the complete mediator role of organizational justice established via the causal steps method, the direct, indirect and total effect values among the observed variables were studied. Effect values indicate the level of relations and mediation between variables (MacKinnon, 2008). Direct effect is the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable. Indirect effect is the collective effect of independent variable and mediator on the dependent variable. Total effect, on the other hand, is the total of direct and indirect effects. The multiplication of the path coefficient between prejudice and justice ( $\beta=-.50$ ) by the path coefficient between justice and commitment ( $\beta=.84$ ) provides the indirect effect size ( $IS_{indirect}=-.42$ ). The addition of the direct effect size between prejudice and commitment ( $\beta=.08$ ) and indirect effect size

provides the total effect size. Thus, the total impact size was calculated to be .34. This value confirms that, as reflected by the causal steps method, organizational justice plays a mediation role between the prejudices of teachers in school relations and the organizational commitment variables. However, the suppression effect of justice at this point is striking. The suppression effect emerges in cases where direct and indirect effect sizes are inversely marked (Mackinnon, Krull, & Lockwood, 2000).

## **Conclusion and Discussion**

This study aims to establish the role of organizational justice perception as a mediator in the relationship between teachers' prejudices in their school relations and organizational commitment levels. Before this model was tested, descriptive analyses on variables were conducted. The results from teachers on organizational commitment, prejudices in school relations, and organizational justice perceptions are listed as follows and the analysis results from the established model are then presented.

Survey results showed that teachers' commitments were at a medium level. This conforms to research results in the literature (Devos, Tuytens, & Hulpia, 2014; Garipagaoglu, 2013; Sesen & Basim, 2012; Uslu & Beycioglu, 2013). Organizational commitment is at the intersection of organizational obligations and individual experiences. Since social systems are supported by human beings, staying united requires the organization to perform the work it is obliged to carry out by involving the employees in the system via positive behaviors such as loyalty, dedication and esteem towards the organization (Kanter, 1968). Sothan, Baoku, and Xiang (2016) concluded that creativity and information sharing behaviors of employees are related to organizational commitment while Colak, Altinkurt, and Yilmaz (2014) concluded that the leadership behaviors displayed by employees are correlated with organizational commitment. In addition to such effects of organizational commitment on employees, Gul (2015) concluded that organizational commitment is directly correlated with organizational development. To this end, it only seems possible for the organization to function effectively and efficiently by ensuring that employees have a healthy relationship with the organization. The fact that teachers have a medium level of commitment to their schools in this study means the reflections of commitment in schools are not sufficiently utilized.

Teachers are most prejudicial towards managers and students, followed by parents, and least prejudicial to their colleagues. Teachers' prejudices against their colleagues are relatively low while their prejudices against managers, teachers and parents are close to medium level. In a similar vein, Erdogan (2012) concluded that teachers are least prejudicial against their colleagues. This is followed by the prejudices they develop against managers, parents, and students respectively. While the prejudices teachers develop against managers remain relatively low, their prejudices against parents and students are found to be close to medium level, and similar to the results of this current research. Lindsley (1998) suggests that individuals have a tendency to think the groups they feel they belong to are heterogeneous, whereas the members of other groups are relatively homogeneous. To this end, overgeneralizations by individuals towards the groups they are prejudicial against are accompanied by a rejection of considering individual differences and stereotyping, thus hindering rational thinking. In a similar vein, since they can expose the individual or group to an undeserved disadvantage, it is possible to say that prejudices do not involve any justice, but cover intolerance and disrupt one's reputation (Marshall, 1999). Based on this, it is

challenging to think that the prejudices teachers develop against students might bring about unfair practices in terms of classroom management. Furthermore, the prejudices teachers develop against managers might emerge as a negative attitude directed at the school since the manager is a function representing the organization. Erdogan (2012) states that the prejudices teachers develop against managers are one of the strongest predictors of the environment of trust in schools.

Teachers' organizational justice perceptions are slightly higher than medium level. It is also stated in the literature that teachers have similar opinions on organizational justice (Altinkurt & Yilmaz, 2010; Babaoglan & Erturk, 2013; Oztug & Bastas, 2012). Skarlicki and Folger (1997) concluded that the negative perceptions of employees on both distributive and procedural justice caused retaliation behavior while Ozdevecioglu (2003) concluded that they lead to aggressive behavior. In addition, they concluded that organizational commitment and organizational justice (Akgunduz & Guzel, 2014; Ay & Koc, 2014; Babaoglan & Erturk, 2013; Bakhshi et al., 2009; Chughtai & Zafar, 2006; Lowe & Vodanovich, 1995; Martin & Bennett, 1996) and organizational trust (Ozgan, 2011; Ugurlu & Ustuner, 2011) are positively correlated. In this context, it is evident that negative perceptions on justice may not only have a negative influence on the interaction between individuals at school, but also damage the trust and commitment of teachers towards their organizations. Possible results of such negative perceptions on justice have a critical unbearable value for schools. Therefore, the organizational justice perception levels of teachers were found to be insufficient in this study.

The final aim of the study was to establish the mediator role of organizational justice perception in the relationship between teachers' prejudices in their school relations and organizational commitment levels. As a result of the testing of the model established in this current study, it was found that the organizational justice perception plays a role as a complete mediator between prejudices in school relations and organizational commitment variables. Furthermore, it is established that organizational justice perception has a suppression effect in the inverse relationship between prejudices and commitment. This is a striking and key finding. This means that teachers' prejudices against the organization has a negative effect on their commitment to the organization. Similarly, their organizational justice perceptions and prejudices in school relations are inversely correlated.

However, perceptions of teachers that school managers behave fairly reduce their prejudices in school behaviors and even eliminate the negative effect of their prejudices on their organizational commitments. This emphasizes the wide scope of effect that organizational justice enjoys. Ugurlu and Ustuner (2011) concluded that managers' ethical leadership behaviors had a positive effect on perceptions regarding organizational justice and led to organizational commitment. Akgunduz and Guzel (2014) found that the success of managers' practices specifically on procedural justice contributed to improving employees' organizational trust and organizational commitment. These results show that the positive perceptions teachers have in relation to organizational justice make them feel confident in their schools (Hosgorur & Yorulmaz, 2016) and thus enable a stronger sense of belonging. Therefore, teachers will be able to consider themselves as well as all stakeholders related to the school as members of the same team. Furthermore, this will prevent teachers' perceiving stakeholders as 'others' and developing prejudices against them.

Based on all of these results, it is concluded that the fairness of the outcomes of decisions made in school management, coupled with the involvement of the people

concerned in decision-making processes and the observation of principles such as openness, accountability and equity (Altinkurt & Yilmaz, 2010), will be influential in improving teachers' perceptions of justice. It can also be stated that, during the process of notifying the people concerned on the decisions made, it will introduce a positive contribution to the social dimension of teachers' justice perception to keep communication channels open, ensure an uninterrupted flow of information between management and employees, and adopt professional ethical norms as the framework in all kinds of communication. It is considered that teachers' prejudices in school relations may also be correlated with organizational climate in addition to their organizational commitments and justice perceptions. Further research may be designed in order to investigate the effect of this situation on teachers' performances.

## Notes

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