



The 7th International Strategic Management Conference

Perceived procedural rationality and political behaviours in strategic decision making process and organizational commitment triangle

Münevver Çetin^a, Dilek Pekince^b

^a University of Marmara, Department of Educational Sciences, İstanbul, 34722, Turkey

^b University of Marmara, Department of Educational Sciences, İstanbul, 34722, Turkey

Abstract

Effectiveness of a strategic decision is characterized with the strategic decision making process behind it. To follow a rational process; looking for and analyzing relevant information extensively; giving adequate importance to analytic techniques and focusing on crucial information rather than irrelevant ones should be realized. To protect the process from political behaviours; decision makers should primarily be concerned with organizational goals and open with each other about their interests and preferences; make negotiation among group members and should not effect the decision with their own power and influence. Today's universities are not only expected to research and teach; but also make their own strategic plans for future. With these expectations, considering the fact that strategic decision making process determine not only the final decisions; but also effect the people for whom decisions are; a relation between perceived procedural rationality, political behaviours and organizational commitment were hypothesized. The study was conducted with 150 academicians and data were analyzed with regression analyze.

© 2011 Published by Elsevier Ltd. Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of 7th International Strategic Management Conference

Keywords: Strategic decision making process, Rationality, Political behaviour, Organizational commitment

1. Introduction

Strategic decision making process that involves matching the institution's capabilities with its threats and opportunities within the context of an institutional mission (Hunt et al, 1997: 32), as the brain and the nervous system of organizations, is also the cornerstone and catalyst of strategic planning. Beyond choosing the most appropriate one from alternatives; it requires the awareness of the nature of decision conditions, choosing and implementing the best alternative. It functions as a part of synthesis (Mintzberg, 1994: 107). At this point, efficiency of a strategic decision is determined with to what extent it serves to organizational ends and depends on the complete information between different alternatives. These attributions refer to the rationality of the decision and to what extent it includes political behaviours of decision makers.

Strategic decision making process determine not only the final decisions; but also effect the people for whom decisions are. In this study, organizational commitment is taken as part of strategic decision making process' possible effect. Three of the components of organizational commitment are conceptualized as efficiency, continuance and normative attachment of the employee to the organization. Determining the perceived procedural rationality and political behaviours in strategic decision making process by academicians and these perceptions' relation to their organizational commitment is the aim of this study. To this end, Affective Commitment Scale (ACS), Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS) and Normative Commitment Scale (NCS) developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) were used to measure organizational commitment; Strategic Decision Making Process Scale developed by Dean and Sharfman (1996) were used to measure perceived procedural rationality and political behaviours in strategic decision making process.

2. Strategic Decision Making Process

Content research and process research are the main and complementary branches of researches into strategic decision making process. While the subjects like portfolio management, diversification, acquisitions and mergers; alignment of firm strategies with environmental characteristics take place in content research; process research deals with the process through which a strategic decision is made and implemented and the factors that effect the process (Elbanna and Child, 2007: 561). To clarify the link between strategic decision making process and effectiveness, two assumptions are suggested (Dean and Sharfman, 1996: 369). While the first assumption explains the causal relationship between decision processes and strategic choices; the second assumption is that choices relate to outcomes.

Strategic decision making process for which two assumptions are also plausible, consists of rationality, centralization, formalization/standardization, political/problem solving dimensions (Papadakis et al, 1998: 116). Hitt and Tyler (1991: 329) describe rational strategic decision making as "series of analytical process whereby a set of objective criteria are used to evaluate strategic alternatives". This dimension emphasizes the critical function of having complete, related and critical information and usage of analytic techniques. At the political behaviour dimension, Sussman et al (2002: 315) assess these behaviours as the ones that serve to personal interests. The ones, that are not part of person's formal role in the organization; but effects the distribution of advantages or disadvantages. Political actors are thought to be enacting for self-serving and self-aggrandizement purposes in an unethical manner.

The political perspective on strategic decision making assumes that decisions emerge from a process in which decision makers have different goals, forming alliances to achieve their goals in which the preferences of the most powerful prevail (Elbanna and Child, 2007: 434). From an organizational

perspective, organizational politics include both reactive (intends to protect self-interest) and proactive (promotes self-interest) behaviours. Organizational politics are accepted to be visible via blaming or attacking others, use of information, image building/impression management, support building for ideas, praising others, power coalitions, strong allies; associating with the influential and creating obligations-reciprocity (Allen et al, 1979: 77-79).

The fundamental question in the field of strategic management focuses on how firms achieve and sustain competitive advantage (Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997: 509) and literature suggests little findings on strategic management in education sector that has a non-profit structure different than firms. Ereş (2004: 21) states that application of strategic planning in education is different than the other fields due to their management styles. One of the limited researches on strategic planning in education sector; is on resolving the debate between learning school and formal planning types of planning in their strategy formation behaviours (Brews and Hunt, 1999). While there is a narrow space on strategic management in educational institutions in the literature; in practice, universities and schools of Turkey are asked for making their own strategic plans by the governments.

In an official document published by Council of Higher Education of Turkey (YÖK, 2007), there exist two explanations to clarify why strategic planning in universities is necessary. It is written that with a flexible guidance, it will be possible to realize general goals, determine basic politics, and evaluate opportunities with a creative approach and secondly; with a consentaneous plan; there will be less tension between internal and external factors and so more productive developments will be possible. In the light of these necessities, it has been a legal obligation for universities to make their strategic plans since 2005 (YÖK, 2005).

3. Organizational Commitment

There is a relationship between the perceptions and behaviours of individuals. Individuals are influenced by their qualities, by the features of the people and the events which are perceived and by the atmosphere which the processes are realized. One of the variables of the organizational behaviour is commitment that is one of the attitudes of personnel and is related to work (Özgan, 2011: 241-242). Becker and Billings (1993: 188) suggest that commitment profiles should be considered as part of the explanation of commitment-related phenomena such as satisfaction, intent to quit, prosocial organizational behaviour and absenteeism, turnover, tardiness. They classify organizational commitment into four categories: First, the locally committed (employees who are attached to their supervisor and work group). Second, the globally committed (who are attached to top management and the organization). Third, the committed (who are attached to both local and global foci), and fourth, the uncommitted (who are attached to neither local nor global foci). Angle and Perry (1986) consider commitment with dual commitment that includes commitment to the organization and commitment to the union.

Organizational commitment as one of the strongest predictors of organizational behaviours is assessed by Allen and Meyer (1990:3) with a three-headed approach. They state that employee remain in an organization due to three reasons: desires, needs and necessities. According to Williams and Anderson (1991: 604), there is a closed relationship between organizational citizenship and organizational commitment; because both types reflect personal sacrifice made for the sake of organization, do not depend primarily on reinforcements or punishments and indicate a personal preoccupation with the organization.

One of the key factors that effect organizational commitment is human resources management practices. Herrbach (2009: 908) state that training opportunities, assignment to new roles and provision of

flexible working conditions are associated with organizational commitment and more specifically, these practices are strongly associated with the willingness to remain in the organization. Wright and Kehoe (2007: 15-16) also notes that empowerment enhancing practices are expected to have a positive impact on organizational commitment, and probably impact the affect, motivation, and continuance outcomes. They state that organizations that allow employee input into decisions, share information, and treat employees with respect; strengthens shared perceptions of congruence between employee and organizational values, integrates employees into the life of the firm, and increases employees' identification with the firm and thus enhances commitment.

Other factors effect organizational commitment are that participation in decision making, growth opportunities and fairness of rewards/recognition. Allen, Shore and Grieffeth (2003: 114) state that organizational human resources practices seen as supportive by employees increase perceived organizational support and lead to affective attachment to the organization because of employee perceptions that the organization supports and cares about them. This perceived support is considered by Whitener (2001: 530) in the context of social exchange theory that engenders feelings of obligation, gratitude and trust (Brock and Kim, 2002: 15). He states that employees' commitment to the organization derives from their perceptions of the employers' commitment to and support of them. In the light of this view, employees interpret human resource practices and the trustworthiness of management as indicative of the personified organization's commitment to them and they reciprocate their perceptions accordingly in their own commitment to the organization. Ussahawanitchakit, (2008: 9) points that building a climate of openness and experimentation in accepting new ideas and points of view in both internal and external aspects have a positive relationship with organizational commitment.

The ideas related with openness and support are seen in procedural justice. Procedural justice theory focuses on how decision making procedures affect those who have a stake in; but limited control over, the outcome of the decision (Johnson et al, 2002: 1145). Ceylan and Kaynak (2010: 33) define procedural justice as a concept that provides employees to believe that organizational and managerial decisions are legitimate. They state that sense of powerlessness and isolation are consequences of impossibility to control decision making process and convenient grounds for organizational commitment to disappear. Because, an employee whose concerns, views, needs and opinions are not considered in decision making processes; feels itself isolated and as one that is low-status and so, low committed to organization. Özgan (2011: 244) also shows a significant and positive relationship at the medium level between the perception of organizational justice and organizational commitment with his study.

Segars and Grover (1998: 144) consider cooperating as one of the necessities of strategic planning to be successful. Armstrong (1982: 2) also underlines a systematic procedure be used to gain commitment of those who will be affected by the plan in each of the steps of formal strategic planning process. If decisions are just taken to have control by top managers, staff will feel less responsible to implement decisions and this will lead strategic decision process to failure.

There is little empirical findings that show strategic decision making process' effect on employee' organizational commitment. While Dooley and Fryxell (1999) suggest that perceptions of trustworthiness (loyalty and competence) play different roles in enabling dissent to enhance decision quality and build decision commitment in strategic decision making process; the research conducted by Johnson et al (2002: 1156) to determine how international joint venture management (IJV) teams' and parent involvement in strategic decision making influences the IJV management teams' commitment to the IJV and to the parent firms, show that procedural justice in strategic decision-making can have a powerful effect in aligning the organizational commitment.

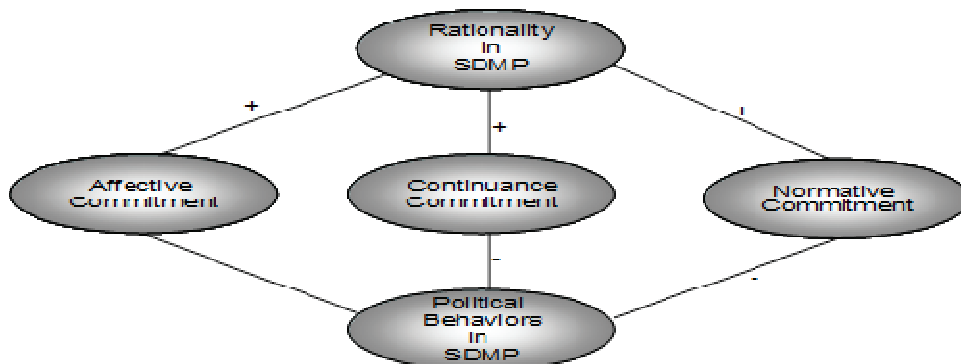


Fig 1. Research design

Hypothesis 1: Perceived procedural rationality in strategic decision making process will be positively related to academic staff' organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 1a: Perceived procedural rationality in strategic decision making process will be positively related to academic staff' affective commitment

Hypothesis 1b: Perceived procedural rationality in strategic decision making process will be positively related to academic staff' continuance commitment

Hypothesis 1c: Perceived procedural rationality in strategic decision making process will be positively related to academic staff' normative commitment

Hypothesis 2: Perceived political behaviour in strategic decision making process will be negatively related to academic staff' organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 2a: Perceived political behaviour in strategic decision making process will be negatively related to academic staff' affective commitment

Hypothesis 2b: Perceived political behaviour in strategic decision making process will be negatively related to academic staff' continuance commitment

Hypothesis 2c: Perceived political behaviour in strategic decision making process will be negatively related to academic staff' normative commitment

4. Method

This study aims to determine academic staff' perceptions about the procedural rationality and political behaviours in strategic decision making process and these perceptions' relation with their organizational commitment to the university. Data including perceived procedural rationality and political behaviours in strategic decision making process were gathered with the Likert-style scale developed by Dean and Sharfman (1996). In this scale, there exist five items in procedural rationality factor and four items in political behaviour factor. For the procedural rationality ($\alpha=.80$) and for political behaviour ($\alpha=.66$) and for factor values; correlation between factors $p < 0.05$; eigen value 1.0. After adapting the scale in

Turkish; validity of the translation was checked with 42 academicians that are working in English Language Teaching Departments of different state faculties. Table-1 shows t-test results of two groups:

Table 1. T-Test Results that Show the Statistical Validity of Scale's Translation into Turkish

Item No	Groups	<i>N</i>	X_{ort}	<i>SS</i>	Sh_x	<i>T</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>P</i>
r1	English	42,000	3,476	0,890	0,137	1,461	72,189	0,148
	Turkish	42,000	3,119	1,310	0,202			
r2	English	42,000	3,214	1,001	0,154	0,290	82,000	0,772
	Turkish	42,000	3,143	1,241	0,191			
r3	English	42,000	3,048	0,936	0,144	-0,560	82,000	0,577
	Turkish	42,000	3,167	1,010	0,156			
r4	English	42,000	2,905	0,983	0,152	0,747	82,000	0,457
	Turkish	42,000	2,738	1,061	0,164			
r5	English	42,000	3,143	0,843	0,130	-0,864	82,000	0,390
	Turkish	42,000	3,310	0,924	0,143			
p1	English	42,000	2,976	0,975	0,150	-0,537	82,000	0,593
	Turkish	42,000	3,095	1,055	0,163			
p2	English	42,000	3,071	1,022	0,158	0,099	82,000	0,921
	Turkish	42,000	3,048	1,168	0,180			
p3	English	42,000	3,524	0,994	0,153	-0,967	82,000	0,336
	Turkish	42,000	3,738	1,037	0,160			
p4	English	42,000	3,000	1,169	0,180	0,179	82,000	0,858
	Turkish	42,000	2,952	1,268	0,196			

To measure, academic staff' organizational commitment to the university, Affective Commitment Scale (ACS), Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS) and Normative Commitment Scale (NCS) developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) were used that are all Likert-styles. Each of the factors of Organizational Commitment Scale is consisted of eight items. For affective commitment ($\alpha=.87$), continuance commitment ($\alpha=.75$) and normative commitment ($\alpha=.79$). For this study; translation of Çetin (2004) was used. Data were collected form 150 academicians that were randomly selected, working in state universities. Each of the academic personal was asked to answer the items in two scales. To analyze the obtained data, regression analyze was used.

5. Findings

Table 2. Perceived procedural rationality and political behaviours in strategic decision making process

	<i>N</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SEM</i>	<i>Range</i>
Procedural rationality	150	1,200	4,200	3,1667	,05179	,63433	3,000
Political Behaviour	150	1,000	4,250	3,0533	,04626	,56654	3,250

Table-2 shows that, perceptions about procedural rationality and political behaviours have similar and also average ratings considering their means (3.31667 and 3.0533)

Table 3. Organizational commitment’s three dimensions

	<i>N</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SEM</i>	<i>Range</i>
Affective commitment (AOC)	150	2,125	4,000	3,0767	,02939	,35996	1,875
Continuance commitment (COC)	150	1,571	4,571	2,9381	,03587	,43928	3,000
Normative commitment(NOC)	150	1,500	3,625	2,7292	,03562	,43625	2,125

Between organizational commitment dimensions; affective commitment has a bigger degree than the other two dimensions; but three of the ratings show that academicians’ commitment to the universities is at an average level

Table 4. Regression analyze results of procedural rationality and affective commitment

<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Dependent</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R2</i>	<i>Rche</i>	<i>Fche</i>	<i>p</i>
Procedural rationality	Affective commitment	,166a	,027	,027	4,172	,043

Table-4 shows that perceived procedural rationality in strategic decision making process is positively related to academicians’ affective commitment (p= .043) as it is suggested in Hypothesis 1a.

Table 5. Regression analyze results of procedural rationality and continuance commitment

<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Dependent</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R2</i>	<i>Rche</i>	<i>Fche</i>	<i>p</i>
Procedural rationality	Continuance commitment	,030a	,001	,001	,135	,714

Table 5 shows that there is no significant relationship between perceived procedural rationality and continuance commitment of academicians.

Table 6. Regression analyze results of procedural rationality and normative commitment

<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Dependent</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R2</i>	<i>Rche</i>	<i>Fche</i>	<i>p</i>
Procedural rationality	Normative commitment	,078a	,006	,006	,894	,346

Table 6 shows that there is no significant relationship between perceived procedural rationality and normative commitment of academicians.

Table 7. Regression analyze results of political behaviours and affective commitment

<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Dependent</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R2</i>	<i>Rche</i>	<i>Fche</i>	<i>p</i>
Political behaviour	Affective commitment	,136a	,019	,019	2,795	,097

Table 7 shows that there is no significant relationship between perceived political behaviours and affective commitment of academicians.

Table 8. Regression analyze results of political behaviours and continuance commitment

<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Dependent</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R2</i>	<i>Rche</i>	<i>Fche</i>	<i>p</i>
Political behaviour	Continuance commitment	,035a	,001	,001	,177	,675

Table 8 shows that there is no significant relationship between perceived political behaviours and continuance commitment of academicians.

Table 9. Regression analyze results of political behaviours and normative commitment

<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Dependent</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R2</i>	<i>Rche</i>	<i>Fche</i>	<i>p</i>
Political behaviour	Normative commitment	,036a	,001	,001	,194	,660

Table 9 shows that there is no significant relationship between perceived political behaviours and normative commitment of academicians.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

This study is an attempt to find a link between perceived procedural rationality and political behaviours in strategic decision making process and employee' organizational commitment in universities. So it is expected to contribute to strategic management literature with the new sights it brought related with academicians, their perceptions about strategic decision making processes and organizational commitment.

Johnson et al (2002: 1145) state that procedural justice theory focuses on how decision making procedures affect those who have a stake in; but limited control over the outcome of the decision. They also note that procedural justice in strategic decision making can have a powerful effect in aligning the organizational commitment. Similar to this finding, Ceylan and Kaynak (2010: 33) point that there is a strong relationship between procedural injustice and work alienation dimensions. An employee who feels powerless; thinks that it has not an effect in determining how the resources are distributed and controlling decision making process and this feeling results with a low degree commitment to the organization. Study's first hypothesis is supported with these findings that; perceived procedural rationality is positively related with affective commitment. But other hypotheses that were predicting a relationship between perceived procedural rationality and continuance and normative dimensions of commitment; and

between perceived political behaviours and affective, continuance and normative commitment were not supported by research findings.

References

- [1] Hunt, C.M., Oosting, K.W., Stevens, R., Loudon, D., Migliore, R.H. (1997). *Strategic Planning for Private Higher Education*. London: Haworth Press.
- [2] Mintzberg, H. (1994). The fall and the rise of strategic planning. *Harvard Business Review*, p.107-114.
- [3] Allen, N.J., Meyer, J.P. (1990). The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 63, p.1-18.
- [4] Dean J.W., Sharfman, M.P. (1996). Does decision process matter? A study of strategic decision- making effectiveness. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 39(2), p. 368-396.
- [5] Elbanna, S., Child, J. (2007). The Influence of decision, environmental and firm characteristics on the rationality of strategic decision-making. *Journal of Management Studies*, 44(4), p. 561-591.
- [6] Papadakis, V.M., Lioukos, S., Chambers, D. (1998). Strategic Decision Making Process: The role of Management and context. *Strategic Management Journal*, 19(2), p. 115-147.
- [7] Hitt, M.A., Tyler, B.B. (1991) Strategic decision models: Integrating different perspectives. *Strategic Management Journal*, 12, p. 327-351.
- [8] Sussman, L., Adams, A.J., Kuzmits, F.E., Raho, L.E. (2002). Organizational politics: Tactics, Channels and hierchical roles. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 40, p. 313-329
- [9] Elbanna, S., Child, J. (2007). Influences on strategic decision effectiveness: development and test of an integrative model. *Strategic Management Journal*, 28, p. 431-453.
- [10] Allen, R.W., Madison, D.L., Porter, L.W., Renwick, P.A., Mayes, B.T. (1979) Organizational politics: Tactics and characteristics of its actors. *California Management Review*, 22(1), p. 77-83.
- [11] Teece, D.J., Pisano, G., Shuen, A. (1997). Dynamic capabilities and strategic management. *Strategic Management Journal*, 18(7), p. 509-533.
- [12] Ereş, F. (2004). Eğitim yönetiminde stratejik planlama.[Strategic planning in educational management] *Gazi Üniversitesi Endüstriyel Sanatlar Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 15, p. 21-29.
- [13] Brews, P.J., Hunt, M.R. (1999). Learning to plan and planning to learn: resolving the planning school/learning school debate. *Strategic Management Journal*, 20, p. 889-913.
- [14] YÖK (2007). Türkiye'nin yükseköğretim stratejisi. [Turkey's higher education strategy]. Ankara: Meteksan
- [15] YÖK (2005). Yükseköğretim Kurumlarında Akademik Değerlendirme ve Kalite Geliştirme Yönetmeliği. [Official Guidance on Academic Assesment and Quality development in Higher Education] http://www.yodek.org.tr/download/yonetmelik_dl.pdf
- [16] Özgan, H. (2011). The relationships between organizational justice, confidence, Commitment, and evaluating the manager and the perceptions of conflict management at the context of organizational behavior. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 11(1), p. 241-247
- [17] Becker, T.E., Billings, R.S. (1993). Profiles of commitment: An empirical test. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 14, p. 177-190.
- [18] Angle, H.L., Perry, J.L. (1986). Dual commitment and labor-management relationship climates. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 29(1), p. 31-50.
- [19] Williams, L.J., Anderson, S.E. (1991). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment as predictors of organizational citizenship and in-role behaviors. *Journal of Management*, 17(3), p. 601-617.
- [20] Herrbach, O., Mignonac, K., Vandenberghe, C., Negrini, A. (2009). Perceived HRM practices, organizational commitment and voluntary early retirement among late-career managers. *Human Resource Management*, 48(6), p. 895-915.
- [21] Wright, P.M., Kehoe, R.R. (2007). Human resources practices and organizational commitment: A deeper examination. *CAHRS Working Paper Series*. 472, p. 1-22.
- [22] Allen, D.G., Shore, L.M. Griffeth, R.M. (2009). The role of perceived organizational support and supportive human resources practices in the turnover process. *Journal of Management*, 29(1), p.99-118.
- [23] Whitener, E.M. (2001). Do "high commitment" human resource practices affect employee commitment? : A cross-level analysis using hierarchical linear modeling. *Journal of Management*, 27, p. 514-535.
- [24] Bock, G.W., Kim, Y.G. (2002). Breaking the mythes of rewards: An exploratory study of attitudes about knowledge sharing. *Information Resources Management Journal*, 12(4), p. 14-21.
- [25] Ussahawanitchakit, P. (2008). Organizational learning capability, organizational commitment, and organizational effectiveness: an empirical study of Thai accounting firms. *International Journal of Business Strategy*, 8(3), p. 1-12.

- [26] Johnson, J.P., Korsgaard, M.A., Sapienza, H.J. (2002). Perceived fairness, decision control, and commitment in international joint venture management teams. *Strategic Management Journal*, 23, p. 1141-1160.
- [27]. Ceylan, A., Kaynak, R. (2010). Work alienation as a mediator of the relationship between organizational injustice and organizational commitment: implications for healthcare professionals. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 5(8), p. 27-38.
- [28] Segars, A.H., Grover, V. (1998). Strategic information systems planning success: An investigation of the construct and its measurement. *MIS Quarterly*, 22(2), p. 139-163
- [29] Armstrong, J. S. (1982). The value of formal planning for strategic decisions: Review of Empirical Research, *Strategic Management Journal*, 3, p. 197-211
- [30] Dooley, R.S., Fryxell, G.E. (1999). Attaining decision quality and commitment from dissent: The moderating effects of loyalty and competence in strategic decision-making teams. *Academy of Management Journal*, 42 (4), p. 389-402.
- [31] Gemlik, N., Ayanoğlu-Şişman, F., Sıgri, U. (2010). The relationship between burnout and organizational commitment among health sector staff in Turkey. *Journal of Global Strategic Management*, 4(2), p.137-150.
- [32] Pienaar, C., Bester, C. (2009). Addressing career obstacles within a changing higher education work environment: perspectives of academics. *Psychological Society of South Africa*, 39(3), p. 376-385.
- [33] Çetin, M. (2004). *Örgüt kültürü ve örgütsel bağlılık* [Organizational culture and organizational climate]. Ankara: Nobel.