An Investigation of the Relationship between Workaholism and Organizational Commitment of Primary School Teachers

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**ARTICLE DETAILS**

**ABSTRACT**

**Purpose:** The individuals’ workaholic tendencies are assumed to be reflected in their attitudes and behaviours in the workplace. Thus, the present study aimed to reveal the relationship between the workaholic tendencies of primary school teachers and their organizational commitment.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** A correlational survey model, among the quantitative research methodologies, was adopted in the study. The research sample consisted of 301 primary school teachers working in public primary schools in a metropolitan municipality city center in southeast Turkey. The research data were collected through the Organizational Commitment Scale and the Workaholism Battery.

**Findings:** Affective commitment scores of the participating teachers are partially high while the normative commitment and continuance commitment scores are neutral. Regarding workaholism tendencies, teachers have a high level of perception for enjoyment and work involvement through their drive perceptions are moderately high. Male teachers and those between 20-25 have higher workaholic tendencies of 38.9% grand total. The sub-dimensions of enjoyment and drive significantly predict affective and normative commitment while the work involvement sub-dimension of workaholism predicts continuance commitment.

**Implications/Originality/Value:** The effects of workaholism should be considered for future practices and research aimed at teacher commitment to be carried out in educational settings.

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**Introduction**

Teachers have versatile contributions to the educational system (Fidecioğlu & Fidan, 2010). The goal
achievement of educational institutions depends on the professional qualifications of teachers, their responsiveness, vision, attitudes towards their organization, and work. Accordingly, classroom management skills, professional skills, learning-teaching characteristics, skills to discover student needs, and other knowledge and skills are crucial (Sands & Goodwin, 2005). Primary school teachers have to devote more time as they have relatively deeper student and parent interaction compared to subject matter teachers working in subsequent levels of education. However, a busy schedule at school may damage the attitudes and behaviours of primary school teachers towards their profession, and they may be professionally deformed. Workaholism emerges as one of such occupational deformities (Klimova & Barabaschikova, 2015).

The term workaholism was first explained by Oates in 1971 as a state of addiction (McMillan, O’driscoll, Marsh & Brady, 2001; Harpaz & Snir, 2003, Loscalzo & Giannini, 2017). According to Oates, the state of workaholism refers to emotions and is characterized as a need that cannot be met as a result of continuous long-term work, state of exaggeration (McMillan et al., 2001: 69). Spence & Robbins (1992) defined workaholism as the inability to leave work by detaching from social activities outside of work, being overly dependent on work-related attitudes, and not being able to get work-related thoughts from one’s mind (Seybold & Salamone, 1994). Scott, Moore & Miceli (1997) pointed out that individuals with workaholic tendencies 1) spend most of their time in the work environment and neglect their daily activities 2) find work-related occupations outside of work 3) overthink about work and work more than necessary.

Most of the studies have negatively embraced workaholism though it has confounding connotations. The phenomenon of workaholism can be defined as an exaggerated dependence on work that can harm the employee as well as the organization (Harpaz & Snir, 2003; Vardi & Weitz, 2004). The exaggerated and passionate attitudes of the employees in the organization and the teachers at schools are welcomed as they are regarded to be positive in the short term. Although the initial excitement and passion of individuals contribute to the organization, various problems may arise in the long run such as moving away from organizational goals, decreased organizational productivity, burnout, and mental health deterioration (Balducci, Cecchin, Fraccaroli & Schaufeli, 2012; McMillan, O’Driscoll & Brady, 2004; Robinson & Post, 1997; Spence & Robbins, 1992; Yılmaz, Altünkurt & Kesim, 2014). Contrarily, there are also studies indicating that workaholism may have positive reflections. It is believed that workaholic individuals achieve much more in their jobs as they overcommit (Killinger, 1991; Oates, 1971; Schaef & Fassel, 1988; Machlowitz, 1980; Korn, Pratt, & Lambrou, 1987; Sprankle & Ebel, 1987; Snir & Harpaz, 2004; Bayraktaroğlu et al., 2009).

The concept of commitment distinguishes as a fundamental variable for all kinds of organizations. The salient problems in organizations are closely related to the dissatisfaction of individuals with the job opportunities and their workplaces (Gül, 2002). Organizational commitment deserves scholarly attention due to its contributions to the organization and employee behaviours (Bayraktaroğlu & Dosaliyeva, 2016). The first academic studies on the concept of organizational commitment were conducted by Whyte in 1956 (Gül, 2002). Whyte paid attention to the factors that affect organizational commitment, its effects on the organization, and the assumptions about what the potential results and outputs could be (Atay, 2006). Organizational commitment has been appreciated as a behaviour style, a set of behaviours towards the organizational goals, a driving force or attitude that encourages individuals (Onay Özka y et al., 2006, Meyer & Allen, 1997, Dunham & Grube, 1994; Lois & Nyhan, 1994; Morris & Sherman, 1981, Mowday et al., 1979). Accordingly, the concept of organizational commitment is defined as an attitude in which individuals associate their identities with the organization, a behaviour developed for the benefits and consequences of their attitudes towards the organization, a process in which the organizational goals and objectives coincide with the individual ones, a situation based on the results of moral and conscientious pressure to stick to the organizational goals (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky (2002) developed a model in which they revealed the three basic components of organizational commitment and their determinants:
The studies on organizational commitment implied that individuals should not only eliminate negative attitudes and behaviours towards the organizations they are members of but should also strive for the continuation and effectiveness of their organizations. The individuals may perform their duties properly in the organization, be reliable, and obey the rules, but all these do not indicate that they are committed employees (Dominyak, 2006; cited in Bayraktaroğlu & Dosaliyeva, 2016). However, loyal individuals with higher organizational commitment lead to a higher level of organizational efficiency. This provides a reliable environment with a lower level of employee turnover (Vance, 2006). Apart from a great many independent studies on the attitudes and behaviours of employees, workaholism tendencies and their level of organizational commitment (Scott, et al. 1997; Gholipur et al., 2008; Bayraktaroğlu, Kutanis, & Dosaliyeva, 2009; Shimazu et al., 2012; Kesen, 2015; Bayraktaroğlu & Dosaliyeva, 2016; Yalçınsoy & Aksoy, 2019; Kılınç & Yener, 2019), there are few studies (Okur Özdemir & Arık, 2018) examining the relationships between teachers’ workaholism tendencies and organizational commitment.

While organizational commitment is associated with a great many organizational outputs (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993), the phenomenon of workaholism consists of long working hours, excessive interest and commitment to work (Taşlıyan, Hırlık, & Güler, 2017). These two, known to have strong correlations, are shown to be the three outcome variables of work engagement together with job satisfaction (Stoeber, Davis & Townley, 2013). It is claimed that workaholics’ positive attitudes towards work could contribute to the process of achieving organizational goals (Schaufeli, Tarri & Rhenen, 2008). Thus, statistically revealing the relationship between teachers’ workaholic tendencies and organizational commitment is lucrative for the relevant literature. In this regard, the present study aimed at testing the relationship between primary school teachers’ workaholic tendencies and their organizational commitment. In line with the main purpose of the study, answers to the following questions were sought:

- What are the organizational commitment and workaholic levels of primary school teachers?
- What is the distribution of the respondents by the categories of workaholism?
- Does workaholism significantly predict organizational commitment?
Research Methodology
A quantitative research methodology was adopted in this study. The research was designed with the correlational survey model, which aims to determine the existence and/or degree of covariance between two or more variables (Karasar, 2015). In such studies, a sample representing the universe is studied and the current situation is attempted to be portrayed in detail (Karakaya, 2009).

The population consisted of teachers working in public primary schools in the metropolitan municipality city center in southeast Turkey during the 2020-2021 academic year. The research sample included 301 primary school teachers using the simple random sampling technique. While determining the number of respondents, the criteria of .95 representation potential and .05 margin of error were taken into account based on Yazıcıoğlu and Erdoğan’s (2004:40) universe-sample estimation. Research data were collected through Organizational Commitment Scale and Workaholism Battery.

Organizational Commitment Scale was developed by Meyer, Allen & Smith (1993) and adapted into Turkish by Dağlı, Elçiçek & Han (2018). It consists of 18 divergent 7-point Likert-type items. The scale has three factors consisting of six items each: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. The internal consistency coefficients were estimated to be α=0.80, α=0.73, and α=0.80 respectively.

Workaholism Battery was developed by Spence & Robins (1992) and adapted into Turkish by Yılmaz, Altunkurt & Kesim (2014). It has 23 different 5-point Likert-type items and includes three sub-dimensions of enjoyment, drive, and work involvement. Cronbach’s Alpha internal consistency coefficients of the factors were between .76 and .85. The Workaholism Battery also enables determining the categories of respondents based on the attitudes towards work. While Spence & Robbins (1992) identified six categories, Buelens & Poelmans (2004) added two more clusters. This study adopted the typology of Buelens & Poelmans (2004). For this purpose in mind, two distinct clusters for each sub-dimension implying low/high level of respondent scores were created using k Means Cluster Analysis. Then, 2x3=8 workaholism categories were created for three dimensions and two levels of scores. The first three of these categories are workaholics (enthusiastic addicts, work addicts, work enthusiasts) while the rest five are non-workaholics.

SPSS 23™ software package was used to analyse the research data. Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive power of workaholism components on teacher commitment. Before the analysis, outliers, linearity, normality, multicollinearity, covariance assumptions were controlled. It was checked whether the binary correlations between the variables were less than .90, the VIF values were less than .10, and the tolerance values were greater than .10. All these indicate that there is no multicollinearity (Büyüköztürk, 2014). In addition, it was controlled whether the values of the independent variable and the variances in the subsets of the values of the dependent variable were equal to each other (covariance). The z scores of each scale item in the data set were estimated, and the extreme scores that were less than -3 and greater than +3 were cleared as they may potentially harm normal distribution (Çokluk, Şekercioğlu & Büyüköztürk, 2014). Afterward, skewness and kurtosis were tested whether they were between -1.5 and +1.5. The results indicate that the data is normally distributed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). During data analysis, descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were computed, the frequencies and percentages of the workaholism categories were determined, and the relationship between the workaholism and commitment was analysed through multiple linear regression. For reliability, internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach’s Alpha) were estimated.

Findings
This section includes the research results based on data analysis. The below table submitted descriptive statistics for the variables.
The Organizational Commitment Scale includes a 7-Likert type scoring, but the Workaholism Battery is in 5-Likert type. Accordingly, the affective commitment (\(\bar{X} = 4.93\)) perceptions of the participating teachers are partially high while the perceptions of normative commitment (\(\bar{X} = 4.35\)) and continuance commitment (\(\bar{X} = 3.75\)) are neutral. Besides, the teachers have a high level of perception for enjoyment (\(\bar{X} = 3.78\)) and work involvement (\(\bar{X} = 3.61\)) though their drive (\(\bar{X} = 3.31\)) perceptions are moderately high. Descriptive statistics regarding the workaholism categories of primary school teachers were given in Table 2.

According to Table 2, 38.9% of primary school teachers have workaholic tendencies. 23.6% of the workaholic teachers are work addicts, 10.3% are work enthusiasts and 5% are enthusiastic addicts. The rate of teachers without workaholic tendencies corresponds to 61.1%. Among those, 20.6% are reluctant hard workers, 15.6% are unengaged workers, 14.6% are relaxed workers, 7.6% are disenchanted workers, and 2.7% are alienated professionals. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis regarding the prediction of the affective commitment of primary school teachers by the sub-dimensions of workaholism were presented in Table 3.

Teachers’ affective commitment is significantly predicted by the enjoyment (\(\beta = 0.396\), \(t = 7.265\), \(p < 0.05\)) and drive (\(\beta = 0.189\), \(t = 3.421\), \(p < 0.05\)) sub-dimensions of workaholism. However, work involvement (\(\beta = -0.064\), \(t = -1.208\), \(p > 0.05\)) sub-dimension is not a significant predictor of teachers’ affective commitment. A one-unit increase in the enjoyment sub-dimension has a .396 effect on teachers’ affective commitment, and that of drive sub-dimension has a .189 impact. Accordingly, 22% of primary school teachers’ affective commitment is explained by enjoyment and drive (adjusted \(R^2 = 0.223\); \(p < 0.05\)). This means that the increase in enjoyment and drive sub-dimensions develop teachers’ affective commitment. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis regarding the prediction of the normative commitment of primary school teachers by the sub-dimensions of workaholism were submitted in Table 4.
Teachers’ normative commitment is significantly predicted by the enjoyment (β=.392***, t=7.157, p<.05) and drive (β=.158***, t=2.854, p<.05) sub-dimensions of workaholism. Again, work involvement (β=-.023, t=.423, p>.05) sub-dimension is not a significant predictor of teachers’ normative commitment. A one-unit increase in the enjoyment sub-dimension has a .392 effect on teachers’ affective commitment, and that of drive sub-dimension has a .158 impact. Accordingly, 22% of primary school teachers’ normative commitment is explained by enjoyment and drive (adjusted $R^2=.219$; p<.05). It implies that the increase in enjoyment and drive sub-dimensions develop teachers’ normative commitment. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis regarding the prediction of the continuance commitment of primary school teachers by the sub-dimensions of workaholism were given in Table 5.

<p>| Table 4. Multiple linear regression analysis for predicting normative commitment |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---|---|---|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-dimensions</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td>.948</td>
<td>.344</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
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<td>.090</td>
<td>.392</td>
<td>7.157</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.135</td>
<td>.158</td>
<td>2.854</td>
<td>.005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work involvement</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.423</td>
<td>.673</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^{2}=.476$, adjusted $R^{2}=.219$

$F (3, 297) = 28.986$, P=.000

Teachers’ continuance commitment is significantly predicted by work involvement (β=.280***, t=4.786, p<.05) sub-dimension of workaholism. The enjoyment (β=-.020, t=-3.42, p>.05) and drive (β=-.069, t=-1.129, p>.05) sub-dimensions are not significant predictors of teachers’ continuance commitment. A one-unit increase in the work involvement sub-dimension has a .280 effect on teachers’ continuance commitment. Accordingly, 6% of primary school teachers’ continuance commitment is explained by work involvement (adjusted $R^{2}=.062$; p<.05). It yields that the increase in work involvement sub-dimension partly develops teachers’ continuance commitment.

<p>| Table 5. Multiple linear regression analysis for predicting continuance commitment |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---|---|---|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-dimensions</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
<th>β</th>
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<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td>Enjoyment</td>
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<td>.733</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drive</td>
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<td>.106</td>
<td>-.069</td>
<td>-1.129</td>
<td>.260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work involvement</td>
<td>.392</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>.280</td>
<td>4.786</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^{2}=.268$, adjusted $R^{2}=.062$

$F (3, 297) = 7.663$, P=.000

Conclusions, Discussion & Recommendations

A high level of organizational commitment in educational settings is desirable in ensuring organizational effectiveness and efficiency. On the other hand, the phenomenon of workaholism may lead to positive or negative outcomes for organizations. Controversially, workaholic behaviour is both defined as a pathological condition and an element of pride in organizations. However, it is necessary to examine various variables in organizations to solve these kinds of dilemmas of employees in organizations (Okur Özdemir & Arık, 2018). Therefore, this study aimed to determine the relationship between the workaholism tendencies of primary school teachers and their organizational commitment. The research results put forward that teachers’ perceptions of affective commitment are partially high while their normative commitment and continuance commitment perceptions are neutral. Ersözüli (2012) also concluded that teachers’ organizational commitment is low.

The research results imply that teachers’ enjoyment and work involvement perceptions are high while their drive perceptions are moderately high. Almost half of the participating teachers (38.9%) had workaholic tendencies. While it is similar to the findings of Yılmaz et al. (2014), it contradicts those of Yavuz Tabak, Şahin & Tabak (2018), reporting a greater degree of workaholism. Accordingly, Altun-Dilek & Yılmaz (2016) informed that more than half of the teachers have workaholic tendencies. Özdemir (2013) also
published a high level of workaholism for primary school teachers.

The research results revealed that less than half of the teachers for both genders are workaholics. Though we did not test the effect of gender on workaholism tendencies, the previous research concluded that the workaholism tendency does not differ by gender (Burke, 2000; Snir & Harpaz, 2004; Naktiyok & Karabey, 2005; Bardakçı, 2007; Akin & Oğuz, 2010; Bardakçı & Baloğlu, 2012). However, Akyüz (2012) reported that men have much more workaholic tendencies than women and enjoy work. Similarly, Burke, Matthiesen & Pallesen (2006) established that men have higher workaholism scores than women only in the sub-dimension of work involvement. Though we did not examine, the relevant literature implied that teachers’ organizational commitment does not change by gender either (Başyigit, 2009; Dirikan, 2009; Karataş & Güleș, 2010; Kiliçoğlu, 2010; Tulunay, 2010; Uslu & Beycioğlu, 2013).

The workaholism categories of the participating teachers by age indicate that 48.7% of the teachers between 20-25, 34.7% of them between 26-30, and 39.6% of them aged 31 and over have workaholic tendencies. We also did not report whether the workaholism tendencies differ by age. There are a limited number of studies on the effect of age on workaholism tendency. To illustrate, Bardakçı & Baloğlu’s (2012) research on school administrators revealed that workaholism tendency differs by age. The relevant literature yields that there is a positive relationship between workaholism tendencies and organizational commitment (Aziz, 2002; Burke & Koksal, 2002; Burke, 2004; Gholipour et al., 2008; Bayraktaroğlu, Kutanis & Dosalieva, 2009; Aziz et al., 2013; Tiftik & Zincirkiran, 2014; Kesen, 2015; Rakhshanimehr & Jenaabadi, 2015; Bayraktaroğlu & Dosalieva 2016; Okur Özdemir & Arık, 2018; Kilinc & Yener, 2019). Temel (2006) noted that workaholic workers exhibit excessive dependence on their work and their institutions. Similarly, Naktiyok & Karabey (2005) pointed out that workaholism mostly emerges due to the excessive commitment to institutions. On the contrary, workaholism and job satisfaction are found to be poor in explaining organizational commitment according to the study of Yalçınsoy & Aksoy (2019).

The present study determined that the enjoyment and drive sub-dimensions of workaholism significantly predict teachers’ affective and normative commitment. It is partly in parallel with the findings of Tiftik & Zincirkiran (2014). Moreover, it coincides with the findings by Rezaee (2000) that there is a significant and positive relationship between enjoyment and organizational commitment. 22% of primary school teachers’ affective commitment and normative commitment are explained by enjoyment and drive (as cited in Rakhshanimehr & Jenaabadi, 2015). Therefore, the increase in the enjoyment and drive sub-dimensions of workaholism develops teachers’ affective and normative commitment. Our finding is also in line with the study of Bayraktaroğlu & Dosalieva (2016) that the increase in the enjoyment and motivation sub-dimensions of workaholism improves affective commitment.

The research data pointed out that less than half of the participating teachers have workaholic tendencies. It is widely accepted in the literature that workaholic teachers would also have high organizational commitment. Teachers with high organizational commitment would exert more effort than others to achieve the organizational goals (Kök, 2006). The relevant literature indicated that teachers’ organizational commitment encourages them to have positive attitudes and behaviours in the workplace (Saks, 2006), and they incline to abandon the negative ones (Richman, 2006). The organization consisting of people with a high level of organizational commitment ensures that its members would remain loyal to their organizations (Kuean et al, 2010). It could be inferred that organizational commitment is crucial for preventing teacher circulation in educational settings. Teachers with high organizational commitment would perform beyond their official roles and responsibilities (Bogler & Somech, 2004) and would necessarily adhere to the organizational goals and values (Mowday et al., 1982).

The present study has several implications for the researchers and practitioners. Firstly, studies on determining the conditions that encourage teachers’ commitment to their profession and their organizations
should be carried out to provide them with better career opportunities. Future studies may also be repeated by using different instruments available. Additionally, the present study is limited to primary school teachers. It can be suggested to collect research data from subject matter teachers working at different levels. Similar studies can be conducted by collecting data from school administrators. This study adopted a quantitative research methodology. It is important to enrich the relevant literature with qualitative and mixed methods studies. All these would deepen our understanding. Finally, the effects of workaholism should be considered for future practices aiming at teacher commitment at schools.

References


