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Organizational Attractiveness Dimensions and Workplace Authenticity Relationship

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Abstract

Organizational attractiveness is an important subject of employer branding and has five main factors that listed social, market, application, brand and economic value. These are mainly common factors about that which criteria can be more effective on employees. Authenticity at work can be generally defined that being your true self and acting like that. Authenticity is also an important issue for people's physiological needs at work. Therefore, workplace authenticity and organizational attractiveness dimensions could be related with each other and may authenticity could be a new factor of attractiveness. Because, workplace authenticity affects work engagement and satisfaction in a positive way. In Turkey, there has been no study in this area to provide any empirical evidence about that authenticity is one of the effective factors of organizational attractiveness. This research has focused on to investigate authenticity with its importance level of employees' perspective. The relevant studies and literature review on organizational attractiveness and workplace authenticity are critically reviewed and analyzed. 235 professionals participated in an online survey from top three big cities which are Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir in Turkey. From the age of 22 to 55, in many different sectors and hierarchical level of professionals were participated in this survey. The results showed that authenticity could be an effective dimension of organizational attractiveness as perceived by professionals. Therefore, authenticity may be a beneficial factor and can be used in employer branding strategies.

Keywords: Employer Branding, Organizational Attractiveness, Turkish Business Environment, Workplace Authenticity

1. Introduction

The meaning of authenticity can be related with acting with real self in the literature. Authenticity can be a significant indicator for the fully-functioning people (Rogers, 1965). In another definition, authenticity can be a psychological need, which is a people's necessity to fulfill themselves before self-actualized process (Maslow, 2013). According to Erickson's words (1994): "It is an individual's own perception that leads to the experience of

authenticity, rather than others' perception of that individual". Recently, a more comprehensive conceptualization of authenticity term has emerged.

Brand equity is one of the differential effect of products and services with the brand name on customer side. It's a measure of each brand's ability for catching up consumer preference and loyalty (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011). Employer branding is like a synonymous of brand equity subject with the one significant difference: internal customers. Internal customers could be defined by employees of organization. Employer branding has been identified as the total efforts of the company to create a desirable place to work for their internal customers and future talents (Llyod, 2002). To occur a desirable place, companies must attract their potential employees in the business environment. Therefore, organizational attractiveness term comes to the agenda. Organizational attractiveness can be explained as the main degree of people's perception about organization and related with employer branding strategies. In another words, it's an individual's general desire of work in a specific organization (Williams, 2013).

There are several reasons to study these two subjects' relationship. Firstly, there is no research about workplace authenticity and its consequences of organizational attractiveness measurement in Turkish business environment. In addition, there are very few studies about this field in the literature. Secondly, interest in authenticity and organizational attractiveness relationship have been existed for years but recently had significant studies demonstrated their connection. In addition, the concept of workplace authenticity had more attention rather than organizational attractiveness factors from the business media (Rosh & Offermann, 2013). The purpose of this research is to make a broader contribution of the relation between organizational attractiveness dimensions and workplace authenticity from perspective of the professionals.

As a result, most of the empirical studies have been done for investigate the relationship between authenticity and organizational culture, also business professionals' perspective of authenticity at work. Many arguments show that workplace authenticity as a significant dimension to consider new business opportunity. There are a few scales and study outputs in this area however workplace authenticity and organizational attractiveness relation was not searched enough in the literature. As already mentioned above, there are no research about this relationship in our country. Therefore, the following hypothesis could be searched:

- H1. Workplace authenticity can be effect on organizational attractiveness in a positive way.
- H2. Workplace authenticity can be measured as a new organizational attractiveness dimension.

For analyzing this hypothesis, an online questionnaire was conducted with a sample of 235 employees living in top three big cities of Turkey. The research examines organizational attractiveness dimensions with different attributes and studied on workplace authenticity.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Organizational Attractiveness

Organizational attractiveness is one of the most important section of employer branding strategies. This section has been argued in many different areas such as management, human resources, marketing, psychology and communication. For explaining the organizational attractiveness, firstly employer branding term must be understood. Employer branding term can be identified as a long-term company strategy for managing the recognition level of employees and creating awareness of potential ones in terms of a specific organization (Sullivan, 2004). It makes an organization to a better and desirable workplace for all employees. Organization culture and identity are affected by employer branding strategies and these also creates either employer brand value in general or organizational attractiveness in specific. An employer brand value shapes the image of organization that in turn affects organizational attractiveness (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Organizational attractiveness can be explained as "the degree to which a respondent would personally seek a company as an employer and would recommend the company as an employer" (Villamil, 2007). In another study, organizational attractiveness term is defined as intangible and invisible benefits of organization for future

employees (Berthon et al., 2005). Organizational attractiveness also refers to the strategy of employers that indicate their company strengths in order to attract talents. It can be an impressive factor for career choices and job decisions of individuals (Gomes & Neves, 2011). In addition, organizational attractiveness impresses decision of future talents to gather more information about this organization (Cable & Turban, 2001).

An organizational attractiveness depends on professionals' beliefs and thoughts about brand image and employer branding strategies. The more positive beliefs of people's idea of the organization, the more likely they can be affected by these organizations and want to apply for job vacancies in there (Reis et al., 2017). To specify the attractiveness factors and their relative influence on employees are so important to create appropriate employer branding strategies (Berthon et al., 2005; Edwards & Edwards, 2013; Pingle & Sharma, 2013). Successful employer branding strategies helps that to increase reputation and exposure of an organization. Thanks to it, organizational attractiveness can heighten for potential talents (Sullivan, 2004). To occur a sustainable business, organizations have to employ right talents with the high potential. In the 21st century business world, a great number of companies have been present so talented professionals have been looking for the best employers. The best way to hire the most talented people in their own company is to increase the organizational attractiveness.

2.2 Workplace Authenticity

Authenticity is a psychological term and relates being one real self in general. It is defined "as a matter of being true to one's 'inner self' and acting in accordance with existential values rather than instrumental concerns" (Gay & Morgan, 2013). It is also the unimpeded operation of real self in daily work (Goldman & Kernis, 2002). According to Ryan and Deci (2001), authenticity is one of the personality traits that contain meaningful feelings to become true self, self-esteem and self-endorsement. These are comprehensive conceptualization of authenticity and this conceptualization creates a turning point of authenticity term in the workplace studies.

Workplace authenticity can be identified as acting in accordance with one person's own beliefs, rights and values at work that requires a self-awareness. Recently, this term has become more powerful element in the management and human resources area. Authenticity is a significant dimension for the business people to develop their career path (Craddock, 2004). Researches show that professionals look meaningful things in their jobs, they could not be satisfied with financial rewards (Judge & Robert D. Bretz, 1992). For doing this, people have to add something about their instincts and true self to work. Authenticity has also been related with professionals' performance of work and occurring productive teams (Reis et al., 2016). Because, workplace authenticity affects work engagement and satisfaction positively (Metin et al., 2016). To reflect real self while at work makes people feel more comfortable and adopt that workplace more.

Workplace authenticity researches have been focused more on from employees' perspective like relation between authenticity and organizational culture (Reis et al., 2016), work engagement and job satisfaction (Metin et al., 2016), employees' well-being (Ménard & Brunet, 2011). From the different perspective, some studies have been done about leadership that make authentic decisions of leaders and act in an authentic moral manner (May et al., 2003; Leroy et al., 2015). In addition, authenticity measure scales have been currently available in different studies.

An important authenticity measure can be captured by the theory-based concept of authenticity (Wood et al., 2008). This measure is occurred in three dimensions. The first dimension is explained with one person's conscious awareness and actual experiences harmony (self-alienation), second dimension is explained with conscious awareness and actual behavior relation (authentic living), and the last aspect of authenticity is about acceptance of the influences from other people (acceptance of external influence).

However, few of instruments focus on authenticity despite its very clear relevance to the work condition such as work relations, leadership and well-being (Bosch & Taris, 2014). Firstly, Wood et al. (2008) had created an authentic living scale model for analyzing people's authenticity in regular. Based on this study, a new authenticity scale model is created by Reis et al. (2017) for measuring workplace authenticity dimension.

This study has taken the view of authenticity perspective as the driving force behind the development of employer branding strategies in the workplace (Wood et al., 2008). Thanks to it, the relationship between authenticity and

organizational attractiveness was clearly established. So, it can be addressed that authenticity would be a significant factor of future workplace.

3. Method

3.1 Research Goal

This study aims to identify that workplace authenticity and organizational attractiveness factors can be related with each other and authenticity can be measured as a new element of attractiveness dimensions. To find out organizational attractiveness factors, a sample of Turkish professionals who have different age, gender, and hierarchical level was measured.

The analysis contains the following steps: authenticity importance level was examined according to responses with different age, gender and hierarchical level. Also, it was compared with the other organizational attractiveness factors.

3.2 Sample and Data Collection Process

Research was implemented with a sample of Turkish professionals. The questionnaire contained Employer Attractiveness Scale (Alniacik & Alniacik, 2012) and Authentic Living Scale (Wood et al., 2008) mix. It was occurred and used by Reis et. al (2017) in another study about measuring employer attractiveness factors. Demographic questions (age, gender, company name and hierarchical level) was also added the questionnaire. The questionnaire was translated into Turkish by the author for doing survey in local language and reaching more respondents, after that translated back into original language. The respondents evaluated importance level of all criteria to apply a new job opportunity with using the five-point Likert scale with a single-question: "How important are the following factors to you in the process of evaluating a new business opportunity?"

This study has obtained data from 235 professionals with diverse profiles and different career stages at top three big cities of Turkey. The sample included 126 men (53.6 percent) and 109 women (46.4 percent). Individuals' ages ranging from 22 to 55 and the majority of respondents' age was between 22 and 35. Another demographic ranking about hierarchical levels, professionals worked as specialists (51.9 percent), after that, executives (19.1 percent), entry levels (13.6 percent), managers (9.4 percent), directors (3 percent) and top management professionals (3 percent).

3.3 Instrument Development

The employer attractiveness scale (Berthon et al., 2005) was used to measure each factors importance about components of organizational attractiveness. This scale was implemented because it has already been used in many international researches thanks to its good reliability (Alniacik & Alniacik, 2012; Reis et al., 2017). The original version contains twenty-five items and five dimensions that are interest value, social value, economic value and application value. Principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted to specify these factors according to our sample and some analyses for the questionnaire was done in SPSS. This was the first part of the analysis. Reliability of the scale was assessed by internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient that value 0.901 is highly acceptable (Cortina, 1993). Research data was appropriate for factor analysis according to descriptive statistics that KMO value (0.871) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < 0.001$). Because of the showing weak loadings, seven items were excluded in this test. Although factor loadings could be equal or higher than 0.700, loadings from 0.500 to 0.700 were still acceptable (Hulland, 1999; Hair et al., 2011).

According to analysis, five factors were suggested for the organizational attractiveness with the 69.54% extraction sums of squared loadings. Details were shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Organizational Attractiveness Scale

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Factor loadings</i>
<i>Market value</i>	
“Innovative employer – novel work practices/forward-thinking”	0.717
“The organization produces innovative products and services”	0.720
“The organization both values and uses your creativity”	0.673
“The organization produces high-quality products and services”	0.655
“Working in an exciting environment”	0.753
“Opportunity to teach others what you have learned”	0.629
<i>Brand value</i>	
“Feeling good about yourself as a result of working for a particular organization”	0.856
“Feeling more self-confident as a result of working for a particular organization”	0.841
“Acceptance and belonging”	0.622
“Gaining career-enhancing experience”	0.621
<i>Economic value</i>	
“An attractive overall compensation package”	0.713
“An above-average basic salary”	0.742
“Good promotion opportunities within the organization”	0.591
<i>Social value</i>	
“Supportive and encouraging colleagues”	0.694
“Having a good relationship with your colleagues”	0.679
“Having a good relationship with your superiors”	0.625
<i>Application value</i>	
“Humanitarian organization – gives back to society”	0.742
“Happy work environment”	0.647

In this study, organizational attractiveness scale contains eighteen items and five factors. Social value: good working environment and relationship styles of employees. Market value: supplying high-quality products and services to customer, with innovative employer, using employee’s creativity in an exciting working environment. Brand value: feeling professional’s more confident and good about themselves because of workplace, gaining career-enhancing experience in customer-oriented organization. Economic value: working employees with good promotion opportunities, above-average salary and compensation packages. Application value: happy work environment in humanitarian organization. These dimensions showed some differences from the original employer attractiveness scale structure (Berthon et al., 2005) because of the Turkish business environment culture.

The four original items of Authentic Living scale (Wood et al., 2008) was used to measure workplace authenticity because of their easiness and reliability (White & Tracey, 2011). These items were modified from the daily-life routine to workplace dynamics by Reis et al. (2017). Organizational attractiveness factors and developing authenticity items were mixed, and the questionnaire contains both scales.

In the first part, only Employer Attractiveness Scale items were analyzed for specified attractiveness factor. After that, authenticity items were added and the new PCA was done for the specified all dimensions. Scale reliability that Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient was 0.919 and KMO value was 0.883 with the significance level ($p < 0.001$).

According to analysis, the new organizational attractiveness dimension was specified with the 71.06% extraction sums of squared loadings in Table 2.

Table 2. Organizational Attractiveness Scale with Authenticity

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Factor loadings</i>
<i>Market value (MAV)</i>	
“Innovative employer – novel work practices/forward-thinking”	0.720
“The organization produces innovative products and services”	0.711
“The organization both values and uses your creativity”	0.656
“The organization produces high-quality products and services”	0.637
“Working in an exciting environment”	0.717
“Opportunity to teach others what you have learned”	0.629
<i>Brand value (BRV)</i>	
“Feeling good about yourself as a result of working for a particular organization”	0.852
“Feeling more self-confident as a result of working for a particular organization”	0.840
“Acceptance and belonging”	0.615
“Gaining career-enhancing experience”	0.599
<i>Economic value (ECV)</i>	
“An attractive overall compensation package”	0.706
“An above-average basic salary”	0.699
“Good promotion opportunities within the organization”	0.586
<i>Social value (SOV)</i>	
“Supportive and encouraging colleagues”	0.706
“Having a good relationship with your colleagues”	0.623
“Having a good relationship with your superiors”	0.631
<i>Application value (APV)</i>	
“Humanitarian organization – gives back to society”	0.532
“Happy work environment”	0.505
<i>Authenticity value (AV)</i>	
“To be able to behave in my job in accordance with my values and beliefs”	0.699
“To always feel free to stand by what I really believe in”	0.773
“To be able to be yourself rather than having to please others”	0.651
“To be able to be true to myself in most situations within the firm”	0.757

4. Results

According to Kolmogorov-Smirnov test result, distribution of the data was not normal. Therefore, for analyzing factor relations Spearman correlation method and Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were used in SPSS. Authenticity and organizational attractiveness factors correlations are shown in Table 3. Wilcoxon test outcomes (Z) also the effect sizes (re) for each dimension and descriptive statistics which are mean and standard deviation (SD) were shown in Table 4. To sum up, any differences between authenticity and other organizational attractiveness dimensions were assessed in statistically.

Table 3. Authenticity and Organizational Attractiveness Factors Correlations

	<i>AV</i>	<i>SOV</i>	<i>MAV</i>	<i>APV</i>	<i>BRV</i>	<i>ECV</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>HL</i>
<i>AV</i>	-								
<i>SOV</i>	0.440 **	-							
<i>MAV</i>	0.494 **	0.570 **	-						
<i>APV</i>	0.489 **	0.445 **	0.500 **	-					
<i>BRV</i>	0.361 **	0.435 **	0.541 **	0.388**	-				
<i>ECV</i>	0.331 **	0.237 **	0.338 **	0.239**	0.363 **	-			
<i>A</i>	0.031	-	0.014	0.039	0.063	0.041	-		
<i>G</i>	-	0.067	0.145	0.048	-	0.152	0.035	-	-
<i>HL</i>	0.172 *	-	-	0.207**	*	-	0.115	-	-
	-	0.004	-	-0.021	-	-	0.193	-	-
	0.022	-	0.023	-	0.051	0.071	**	0.374**	-

Notes. AV: Authenticity value, SOV: Social value, MAV: Market value, APV: Application value, BRV: Brand value, ECV: Economic value, G: Gender, HL: hierarchical level. Correlation is significant at * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

Table 4. Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test Output

	<i>A</i>	<i>AV</i>	<i>SOV</i>	<i>MAV</i>	<i>APV</i>	<i>BRV</i>	<i>ECV</i>
<i>Mean</i>	29.59	4.51	4.45	4.37	4.53	4.22	4.18
<i>SD</i>	5.18	0.65	0.63	0.67	0.67	0.77	0.83
<i>Z</i>	-	-	-1.35 ^c	-3.38 ^c	-0.60 ^b	-5.38 ^c	-6.06 ^c
<i>r_e</i>	-	-	-0.08	-0.35	-0.04	-0.22	-0.39

Notes. SD: Standard deviation, Z: Wilcoxon test output, r_e: effect size. Z^b: positive ranks, Z^c: negative ranks.

4.1 Authenticity and Organizational Attractiveness Dimensions Relation

The Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to analyze data because the data was not normally distributed (Woolson, 2007). The results showed that there were any statistically significant differences between authenticity and other dimensions of organizational attractiveness.

Market value (Z: -3.38*; r_e: -0.35), brand value (Z: -5.38*; r_e: -0.22) and economic value (Z: -6.06*, r_e: 0.39) mean differences were significant ($p < 0.01$).

For analyzing effect sizes, the following criterion was considered: value of 0.1 represents a small effect, value of 0.3 is considered a medium effect, and value of 0.5 is seemed large (Fritz et al., 2012). So, authenticity had medium effect scores for market value, brand value and economic value. Social value (Z: 1.35, p: 0.17, r_e: 0.08) and application value (Z: -0.60, p: 0.54, r_e: -0.39) were considered not significant.

4.2 Authenticity: New Organizational Attractiveness Dimension

According to the respondents' demographic variable, authenticity was examined as a new dimension of attractiveness scale. There were collected information from different age, gender and hierarchical level participants in this survey. According to gender, women professionals gave more importance to authenticity variable when making use of an opportunity. Authenticity score mean for 109 Turkish female employees that is 4.63 (SD: 0.52); while 126 male professionals that is 4.41 (SD: 0.73). Mann-Whitney test was used in this study to analyze independent samples which were non-parametric (Siegel & Castellan, 1988). So, there was significant difference between two mean scores (U: 5 566, $p < 0.05$, re: -0.17); and the effect size was small.

While a comparison based on hierarchical levels has been made, The Mann-Whitney test was considered. Important score differences were identified in between top managers and directors (U: 6 000, $p < 0.05$, re: -0.16), top managers and executives (U: 80 500, $p < 0.01$, re: -0.14) also directors and managers (U: 37 000, $p < 0.01$, re: -0.13). Effect sizes slightly decreased from top management to middle management, and the other levels considered not significant. Therefore, this result showed that top management professionals gave more importance to the authenticity more than middle management and entry level employees.

Lastly, the third demographic variable was age. As shown in the Table 3, authenticity and age relation considered not significant (p : -0.058). Therefore, no any statistical tests could not analyze this relation.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study emphasizes that authenticity can be a measure as a new factor of organizational attractiveness attribute. The results represent that respondents gave more importance to authenticity rather than market value, economic value, brand value and social value. According to Reis et al. (2017), possibility of being one true self in any circumstances and making some decisions with one's own values at work weighed more valuable when making use of a new job opportunity. Other organizational attractiveness factors rather than authenticity could less attract new talents. Mean score of authenticity was higher than most of the attractiveness factors but mean score of application value was also higher than authenticity. The significance level of authenticity mean score was always higher than market value, brand value and economic value. According to respondents, this study approved that authenticity variable had more value than the following: 1) supplying high-quality products and services to customer, with innovative employer, using employee's creativity in an exciting working environment; 2) feeling professional's more confident and good about themselves because of workplace, gaining career-enhancing experience in customer-oriented organization, 3) promotion opportunities, above-average salary and compensation packages. Although authenticity is a new dimension of attractiveness, social value and authenticity relation can be found statistically not significant.

Results also showed that female professionals gave more importance on authenticity rather than males. It can be related with the gender roles. According to Konrad et al. (2000) study, men and women learn their gender roles at an early age stage to interiorize gender concepts that fit with the society's norms. Another study indicates that women more value authenticity rather than men at workplace. Because female professionals generally want to listen their inner voice and working in a good environment with high-value of enjoyment, personal growth opportunities, also good colleagues and superiors (Peterson, 2004). In terms of cultural differences about gender roles, the study of Alniacik & Alniacik (2012) can be a guideline for the local environment. They found that women professionals pay more attention to authenticity factor rather than men, too. In addition, they have observed important differences between men and women in four attractiveness dimensions.

According to hierarchical level, top management professionals value authenticity more than middle management and entry level professionals. This result is in keeping with any other studies. Professionals who have more power and high rank in hierarchical level act like their own values and convictions (Reis et al., 2017). Leaders take up authenticity factor as one of the necessities for a great workplace environment and achieving success (Kerfoot, 2006).

In this study, authenticity and age relation considered not significant. Therefore, age cannot be an effective demographic characteristic in this relationship. Results also showed that many different age groups either generation Y and Z or generation X gave importance in authenticity.

Being yourself at work gain importance day by day in a manner of social aspects. It is not about act like whatever you want but about showing real yourself. According to this study, authenticity can be measured as a relevant dimension of the organizational attractiveness. The results show that all the factors including authenticity have high importance on attractiveness such as market, economic, social, application and brand value. Therefore, authenticity may be beneficial and can be used for the attracting new talents for the companies. Companies can create their employer branding strategies according to organizational attractiveness dimensions and any other differential effects. For a long time, strategies were contained employer attractiveness factors. This study states that a new dimension can be added to related factors, so firms become more competitive in attracting their future talents. If the authenticity would be positioned as a psychological benefit in the company's employer branding strategy, the interest of professionals will increase significantly to its company.

5.1 The Limitations of the Research

This study does not examine the organizational attractiveness dimensions in time. How can authenticity and other attractiveness dimensions affect potential employees in their job searching duration? Do these attributes change over time and help people to find jobs? In future studies, researchers can study authenticity dimension effect in time.

Results show that authenticity may be one of the important organizational attractiveness dimensions. Demographic segmentation was limited with the age, gender and hierarchical level. Also, sample size was occurred by only professionals; neither students nor unemployed people can count. In order to conduct a more comprehensive study on this subject, it would be searched on a wider population.

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