

The Effects of Organizational Stress Sources on Quality of Work and Work Peace According to Provincial Managers of the Ministry of National Education



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İL MİLLÎ EĞİTİM MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ

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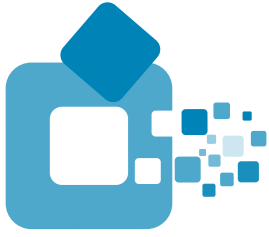
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## The Effects of Organizational Stress Sources on Quality of Work and Work Peace According to Provincial Managers of the Ministry of National Education



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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the effects of organizational stress sources on the quality of work life and work peace, according to the provincial administrators of the Ministry of National Education. The study utilizes a qualitative case study model, aiming to examine the perspectives of provincial organization managers working in Antalya during the 2022-2023 academic year with an in-depth and holistic approach. The research study group included ten provincial organization managers working in Antalya. Data were gathered using an interview form. Five semi-structured questions on the interview form were devised based on expert opinion. The data were analyzed by descriptive and content analysis. According to the research results, the participants mentioned many factors, such as individual differences in terms of lifestyles and cultural backgrounds, political pressure, or anything related to the work environment can cause organizational stress. For this reason, if it is desired to ensure work peace and increase the quality of work life, the factors that may cause organizational stress should be eliminated first. This should be the primary task of top managers or leaders and the element that needs attention.

**Keywords:** administrators, organizational stress, quality of work life, work peace.

## 1. Introduction

Organizations may serve as sources of stress related to the work they carry out. Sometimes the technology, the environment, the experiences or conflicts of its members, groupings within the organization, the climate created by the organization and some other factors contribute to the rise the stress in an organization. In addition to the sources of stress due to common causes in organizations, there are also stressful situations specific to that organization or arising from that job (Ertekin 1993; 7). Stress sources arising from the job requirements directly affect the concept of role, professional development, relationships at work, organizational structure, and climate structure.

Today, employees and managers work in a business environment where changes and uncertainties are experienced in an intensely competitive environment. In an organization, many different sources of stress can affect employees. Almost any job is a potential source of stress. Since every job has some requirements and demands according to its structure and scope, fulfilling these requirements and behaving to comply with them can stress people (Artan 1986; 469). Stressors arise from job requirements, time pressure, information overload and poor working conditions. For example, some jobs expose employees to time pressure and the rush to do the job. It is also a reality that job training pressure will create a source of tension for employees to a great extent. Time pressure is often felt more intensely in managerial activities. The obligation to direct the line of work also creates tension among managers (Özkalp & Kirel 2001). Time pressure is a significant source of stress, especially for senior managers and employees tasked with completing specific projects. Individuals who have to organize their lives with a calendar and clock feel this pressure too much, and their quality of work life decreases over time (Artan 1986).

On the other hand, individuals may sometimes face an information load they cannot handle in their working life. Organizations occasionally cause a load of information to inform their managers and employees about new technological developments, new business policies, and internal reports. Sometimes, managers may also be under an information overload because they feel obliged to have information on issues outside their field (Yozgat 1983). Employees may also experience tension due to the need to follow new professional developments, think multi-dimensionally, and know complementary facts and events. In addition, unstable working conditions in a workplace express the negative aspects of the physical environment, which will adversely affect the employees and reduce their performance.

Another reason for the discomfort is caused by noise intensity. It is claimed that those who work in noisy environments experience much conflict at home and work and experience other emotions, such as anger and aggression (Sabuncuoğlu & Tüz 1995). This directly or indirectly affects the quality of work life or work peace in various ways and causes employees to face various challenges (Artan 1986). Similarly, workplaces with heat, light and ventilation systems and clean and tidy changing areas increase the adverse effects of working conditions (Eren 1998). Studies have shown that temperature and humidity affect individuals' morale, working capacity, and physical and emotional states (Özkalp & Kirel 2001; Pehlivan 2002).

While determining the rights and obligations of an individual within the social group, their role is also determined. If this role requires more than the performance of the employee, or if the role is not defined precisely and there is uncertainty, it is inevitable for the individual to be stressed (Özdayı 1990). Role conflict is defined as the pressure of two or more events that co-occur during the positioning of an employee in the workplace (Şimşek et al. 2003). In other words, it is a situation in which two or more role pressures conflict. Role conflict is observed when conforming to one pressure makes it challenging to comply with another (Artan 1986). Studies revealed that role conflict causes internal conflicts within the organization, increases interpersonal tensions, decreases job satisfaction, and decreases the person's self-confidence and the organization (Özkalp & Kirel, 2001). In addition, individuals experience role conflict when they have insufficient knowledge about their roles—not knowing the expected performance, uncertainty about how to reach these expectations, and not knowing beforehand how the work-related behavior will lead to the emergence of role conflict (Şimşek et al., 2003). According to Özkalp and Kirel (2001), in the simplest terms, role conflict is the inability of the individual to know what to do in the case of uncertainty that leads to job dissatisfaction, job tension, loss of self-confidence, and a feeling of not being valid.

An individual working in an organization is in relationships with other people. In determining these relations, the status of individuals in the organization and their personalities also play an essential role. The presence of many people in the workplace is a critical condition that creates stress for people who form the basis of relationships at work (Özdayı 1990). For example, an insufficient level of relations with managers; changes people with high efficiency and productivity into unrecognizable personalities, makes them insensitive and unwilling to work, and renders them useless when they might

be helpful to the organization. Such events can decrease the motivation of the employee to work, put him under intense stress and cause conflict with other employees as well as internal conflict (Koçel 1995). According to the personality structures of the auxiliaries, their expectations from the managers will also be different. For example, auxiliaries who strictly obey and respect authority will suspect the manager, believing their behavior should be one way or the other, leaving them free to lead. These doubts will weaken people's relationships and cause anxiety. The accumulation of this restlessness causes stress (Artan 1986). Mutual communication between employees at all levels of an organization will enable individuals to work peacefully in their environment. It can be said that the probability of experiencing job dissatisfaction and stress will decrease in an organization where positive communication is ensured between auxiliaries, managers and colleagues.

The cultural structure of the institution is full of long-term and severe stressors for the employees. The employee may experience significant difficulties adapting to the values and norms required by the cultural structure, which is a significant cause of stress (Pehlivan 2002). The lack of clarity in the goals and procedures of the organization, conflicts between departments, pressure, strict management, unemotional working relations, and inability to participate in decisions are stressors arising from the organizational structure and climate (Özkalp & Kirel 2001). Unplanned work and not knowing how to reach goals negatively affect the employees' morale in the organization. The uncertainty of authority and responsibilities within the organization and the emergence of doubts about who is responsible for whom will lead to unrest among the employees. Thus, since the distribution of authority is not done well, the communication channels between the lower and upper levels will be blocked, and the distribution of orders and worker management will become problematic.

For this reason, it should be determined who will take orders from whom and who will be connected to whom to avoid creating a stressful environment for employees (Eren 1998). According to Artan (1986), whether a person could participate in business-related decisions is essential. Personal characteristics also play a significant role. Some people do not tend to participate in decisions on any matter because they are passive or indifferent. In addition to participating in decisions, bureaucratic problems negatively affect people (Özdayi 1990). Based on all the facts summarized above, the present study aimed to examine the effects of organizational stress sources on the quality of work life and work peace, according to the provincial administrators of the Ministry of National Education. Thus,

the present study sought to find answers to the following research question,

- What are the perceptions of the managers about the sources of organizational stress and the effects of organizational stress on the quality of work and work peace?

## 2. Material and Method

This research employs a qualitative case study approach with the goal of examining the perspectives of provincial organization managers working in Antalya during the 2022-2023 academic year. The qualitative case study is a research method that investigates a phenomenon within its real-world context with an in-depth and holistic approach to gain a deep understanding by collecting and analyzing data from multiple sources.

### 2.1. Study group

The research study group comprised ten provincial organization managers working in Antalya in the 2022-2023 academic year. They all participated in the study on voluntary bases, and their identities were anonymized by assigning alphanumeric codes for each. The participants were all senior managers with at least five years of professional experience.

### 2.2. Data Collection and Data Analysis

The present study's data is gathered with the help of the interview form developed by the researcher. Five semi-structured questions in the interview form were created in line with expert opinion. The interviews were held in person in the institutions of the managers. The researcher used a set of predetermined questions but also asked follow-up questions to clarify or expand on the participant's answers. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for content analysis. Finally, the data were analyzed descriptively through inductive content analysis. Thus, the researcher begins the analysis by reading the data and identifying themes or patterns without predetermined codes or categories.

## 3. Findings

Managers' perceptions of the effects of organizational stress on the quality of work life and work peace are summarized in Table 1.

Table.1: Managers' Perceptions of organizational stress												
Themes	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	f	%
1.individual differences	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓					5	50
2. political or administrative pressure			✓					✓			2	20

Table.1: Managers' Perceptions of organizational stress												
Themes	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	f	%
3. adapting to the working team				✓	✓				✓		3	30
4. working environment		✓					✓		✓		3	30
5. pressure		✓			✓		✓		✓		4	40

As illustrated in Table 1, the analysis of the interview data revealed that managers' perceptions concerning the sources of organizational stress and the effects of organizational stress on the quality of work and work peace gathered around five main themes, namely, individual differences, political and administrative pressure, adapting to the working team, working environment and pressure.

It is found that most of the participants believe the primary source of organizational stress, which affects the quality of work life and work peace, is the employees' individual differences. Some of the participants' perceptions concerning the belief that the source of organizational stress is the individual differences of the employees are as follows;

*Stress that occurs due to pressures caused by individual differences and other reasons can be organizational stress (M6).*

*Lack of peace at work is organizational stress. Many different life views, habits, lifestyles, clothing differences and even personal physical appearance differences cause organizational stress. Different family structures, regions, habits, eating and drinking behaviors, perspectives on life, differences in the way of addressing students... although these differences constitute a whole, in cases where they cannot achieve harmony, they cause separation and, therefore, stress (M5).*

It is found that the employees' pressure is the second most mentioned source of organizational stress that cause violations in the quality of work life and work peace. It is further found that the pressure might be originated from political or administrative issues. The participants expressed their thoughts as follows.

*The psychological pressure of a group on others. Reactive behavior when expressing our thoughts. There may be groupings or conflicts in the working environment. These can cause organizational stress (M10).*

*Sometimes we witness political pressure from local politicians, or in some cases, the administrators force employees to do various things in the institution. In such circumstances, there is natural organizational stress (M3)*

*I define it as the stress originating from the external environment, created, or dictated to the employee by the people in higher positions. Anything cannot work in this situation (M9).*

*Organizational stress comes to my mind first as the stress caused by the relations within the institution, but the weight of the workload, bureaucratic work, and institutional hierarchy can also cause organizational stress. We can even say that it is the primary source of organizational stress. This is inevitable, especially in provincial and top administrations (M7).*

Another source of organizational stress is found as the difficulty adapting to working as a team. The participants believe that the employees who could not adapt to new teams felt stress, and it caused disruptions in the quality of work life and work peace. Some of the opinions of the participants are exemplified below.

*Organizational stress is the reaction that puts the individual under pressure regarding working conditions and productivity by differentiating all components of the individual's work environment, both collectively and individually. The individual must always be in teamwork in his working life. Even in the sectors that work alone, the individual depends on another. This dependency must also be in a structure that exhibits continuity on issues such as understanding and harmony so that individuals do not negatively affect each other. We can see the effects of organizational stress in all work areas with incompatibility (M4).*

The analysis of the data revealed that the employee's working environment also causes stress, and it negatively impacts the quality of work life and work peace. Some of the participants' perceptions concerning the role of the environment are as follows.

*It does not seem possible for the individual not to experience organizational stress in an environment where he has problems communicating even with his closest environment and living in common areas. Factors such as age, gender, professional experience, length of service in the institution, cultural level, even eating habits in the family and environment, and the feeling of tolerance and empathy create organizational stress. Therefore, organizational stress is everything that an individual is exposed to in the working environment (M1).*



*The individual's communication with the environment, work conditions, age, length of service, professional experience, empathy status, speech, and behavior patterns, etc. are some sources of organizational stress. Every situation experienced in the business environment brings organizational stress. The teaching profession is also carried out within a specific organization in the workplace. It is known that stress can be experienced within organizations due to different reasons (M2).*

*Anything can cause organizational stress. It can be anything from a single person to an official post, a senior person to a group. Provincial administrators should always be ready for these. I think they should know the methods and techniques of coping with such sources of stress. It requires a high level of psychological resilience. You should not reflect your stress on the work and increase the stress of the organization. Otherwise, there can be no talk of business peace. It would be a war environment, not a business environment. Especially the quality of work life is not possible in this case. Because people are always unhappy in those environments, they do not even say good morning to each other (M8).*

*Where there is stress, first of all, there is no peace. This, in turn, affects the quality of work life and work peace directly. It's that clear. In fact, I would like to point out that personal stress can be managed somehow, but organizational stress cannot be solved even if you want it. Everyone should be willing to live in peace, not just you, using peaceful methods. But some people really feed off of tension. Permanent managers, in particular, imagine themselves in a constant crisis. In such an environment, talking about the quality of work life is very difficult (M3).*

## 4. Conclusion and Discussions

Since the first use of the term, quality of work life, more than 30 years ago, several definitions and theoretical constructs have followed to alleviate its many problems. The issue has inspired researchers recently, and some new definitions for Quality of Life (Martel & Dupuis 2006) are proposed, considering there is no consensus on the solutions developed to date.

Some scholars argue that the quality of work life is in danger of losing the values that work brings to the workplace. Many misleading definitions of the concept are refuted to avoid this danger, a precise definition is established, and ways of using it are outlined. It was concluded that for

Quality of Work Life efforts to be successful, three central components must be well managed: the "development of projects at different levels, changes in management systems and structure, and changes in senior management behavior" (Nadler & Lawler 1983).

On the other hand, the relationship between organizations and peace has become a growing universal phenomenon that has been researched in various fields and contextual settings. Many articles provide a theoretical set-up for this diverse material, illustrate the latest research, and highlight the most pressing knowledge gaps that need to be filled. Based on findings from businesses, international organizations, and the academic community, some research pairs these findings with five claims about how business impacts peace. These arguments supply an outline for categorizing and testing leading employee peace arguments. It also supports the preliminary arguments that organizations cannot expect to be rewarded as peacebuilders simply for undertaking peacebuilding activities and that economic opening will only bring peace to the extent that a local regime allows. That genuinely bold employee peace choices are seldom made in unstable contexts. This outline can promote consistent scientific findings and more efficient organization deals in the complicated and challenging peacebuilding field (Miklian 2016).

Similarly, Miklian and Schouten (2019) examined various commercial efforts to achieve peace through six rigorous qualitative cases regarding the role of business in peacebuilding and conflict reduction. They found that the local context is crucial to establishing work peace. They also asserted that business-peace projects must first understand whom they empower, which unwittingly exacerbates conflict. In a discussion on how to move the business and peacebuilding agenda forward with science and politics, Miklian and Schouten (2019) suggested that the effects of business peace projects are to be truly beneficial for a political economy, and they must be evaluated at the societal level, not the project level (Miklian & Schouten 2019).

As stated by the managers participating in the present study, many factors can cause organizational stress. Other outstanding sources of organizational stress are reported as a lack of clarity in the goals and methods of the organization, conflicts between departments, pressure, strict management, unfriendly working relations, inability to participate in decisions, and stressors arising from the organizational structure and climate. This finding of the present study aligns with the findings of other studies (e.g. Özkalp & Kirel 2001) in the literature.

The latent analysis of the data also revealed that unplanned work of the organization and not knowing how to reach goals negatively affect the employees' morale. This directly affects the quality of work life and work peace. The uncertainty of authority and responsibilities within the organization and the emergence of doubts about who is responsible for whom will lead to unrest among the employees. It can be claimed that achieving organizational peace in such environments is impossible. Thus, since the circulation of authority is not done well, the communication channels between the lower and upper levels might be blocked, and the circulation of demands and worker management might become problematic. Thus, it should be determined who will take orders from whom and who will be connected to whom to avoid creating a stressful environment for employees (Eren 1998). Similarly, Artan (1986) claimed that whether a person can participate in business-related decisions is essential.

The present study's findings also showed that personal characteristics play a significant role in creating a stressful environment, affecting the quality of work life and work peace. In some cases, people might not tend to participate in decisions on any matter because they are passive or indifferent. Furthermore, to participate in decisions, bureaucratic problems might also affect people negatively (Özdayı 1990) regarding the quality of work life and work peace.

The participants of the present study also expressed similar comments. For this reason, if it is desired to ensure work peace and increase the quality of work life, the factors that may cause organizational stress should be eliminated. This should be the primary task of top managers or leaders and the element that needs attention.

While the present study conveys valuable insights into the effects of organizational stress sources, it is critical to recognize its limitations to gain an in-depth understanding of the findings. The interviews rely on human interaction, which incorporates subjectivity into the process. The interviewee's emotions, biases, or personal opinions may influence the responses, altering the validity and reliability of the data collected. For gathering data via interviews, the number of participants is limited. Hence, the results may not be completely representative of the general population. Due to the small sample size and potential self-selection biases of participants, the findings of the study may not be generalizable. Moreover, interviewees may be hesitant to address personal or sensitive topics, jeopardizing the quality and depth of the information acquired. Despite these limitations, interviews offer crucial insights into participants' opinions, feelings, and emotions, providing a comprehensive understanding of complicated situations that other research methods may not be able to capture.

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