

Ethical Values and Job Satisfaction Predicting School Counselors' Organizational Identity

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Abstract: This study investigates how ethical values and job satisfaction predict Turkish school counselors' perceptions of organizational identity within the framework of the 2020 Guidance and Psychological Counseling Services Regulation (GPCSR). Data were collected from 204 school counselors using the Inclination to Ethical Values Scale, the Teacher Organizational Identity Perception Scale, and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. Regression analysis showed that ethical values and job satisfaction significantly predicted organizational identity ($R^2=.28$, $p<.01$). The findings emphasize that professional identity, reinforced by the new GPCSR, represents an important regulatory advancement. Ethical adherence and job satisfaction are crucial for enhancing organizational identity among school counselors. Strengthening professional identity requires aligning institutional policies with ethical standards and implementing training programs targeting job satisfaction and identity development. This research contributes to the literature by underscoring the role of the 2020 GPCSR in shaping the professional structure of school counseling in Turkey.

Keywords: School Counselor, Organizational Identity, Ethical Values, Job Satisfaction

Okul Psikolojik Danışmanlarının Örgütsel Kimliğinin Yordayıcısı Olarak Etik Değerler ve İş Doyumu

Öz: Bu çalışma, etik değerler ve iş doyumunun Türk okul psikolojik danışmanlarının örgütsel kimlik algılarını nasıl yordadığını, 2020 Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışma Hizmetleri Yönetmeliği (RPDHY) çerçevesinde incelemektedir. Araştırmada, Etik Değerlere Yatkınlık Ölçeği, Öğretmen Örgütsel Kimlik Algısı Ölçeği ve Minnesota İş Doyumu Anketi kullanılarak 204 okul psikolojik danışmanından veri toplanmıştır. Regresyon analizine göre, etik değerler ve iş doyumunu örgütsel kimliği anlamlı bir şekilde yordamaktadır ($R^2=.28$, $p<.01$). Bulgular, yeni RPDHY ile güçlendirilen mesleki kimliğin önemli bir yasal ilerleme olduğunu göstermektedir. Etik ilkelere bağlılık ve iş doyumunu, örgütsel kimliği geliştirmede kritik bir rol oynamaktadır. Çalışma, kurumsal politikaların etik standartlarla uyumlu hâle getirilmesi ve iş doyumunu ile kimlik gelişimini hedefleyen eğitim programlarının uygulanması gerektiğini önermektedir. Bu araştırma, Türkiye’de okul psikolojik danışmanlığının profesyonel yapısını şekillendirmede 2020 RPDHY’nin belirleyici rolünü vurgulayarak literatüre katkı sunmaktadır.

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Changing societal conditions impact education, necessitating continuous educational reform (Altan, 2020; Brinkman, 2019). These changes emphasize the demand for well-educated and competent professionals (Boyacı, 2019; Yıldız-Akyol & Boyacı, 2020). Educational institutions play a crucial role in addressing the evolving needs of modern societies (Myers & Twenge, 2018). A fundamental component of contemporary education is counseling services, which aim to support students in self-discovery and personal development (Aydın & Odacı, 2020; Boyacı, 2019). Educational activities promote holistic development in professional, academic, emotional, and social domains (Hunsmann, 2024). Guidance and Psychological Counseling (GPC) services facilitate individuals' adaptation to life circumstances and support the realization of their potential (Capuzzi & Gross, 2017; Heydari et al., 2022). Consequently, school counselors hold a distinctive and essential role within educational systems (Crothers et al., 2020; Neyland-Brown et al., 2019).

In Turkey, GPC services are primarily provided by school counselors within educational institutions (Özyürek, 2019; Yıldız-Akyol & Boyacı, 2020). However, these services are often misconstrued as teaching, with teachers sometimes performing counseling functions (Tuzgöl-Dost & Keklik, 2012; Özyürek, 2019). Although counselor education is delivered within faculties of education, the counseling profession significantly differs from traditional teaching roles due to the distinct professional identity of psychological counselors (Boyacı, 2020). School counseling is a specialized profession that supports individuals' cognitive, emotional, and social development in accordance with ethical principles (İkiz et al., 2017; Siviş-Çetinkaya, 2019). Clinical supervision, as a vital component of counseling, significantly influences school counselors' professional identity and effectiveness (Gillen et al., 2024). Given the profound impact of GPC services on clients' lives, it is imperative to uphold ethical principles, guidelines, and professional standards (Johnston & Tarvydas, 2019; Siviş-Çetinkaya, 2019).

Despite a history spanning nearly 70 years, the GPC profession in Turkey continues to struggle for recognition (Boyacı, 2020; Özyürek, 2019; Tuzgöl-Dost & Keklik, 2012). Key challenges include deficiencies in professional identity, legal frameworks, and the misperception of GPC roles among school administrators and teachers (Arslan et al., 2019; Boyacı, 2020; Tuzgöl-Dost & Keklik, 2012). Moreover, the lack of clear standards for accreditation, certification, and qualification negatively influences ethical compliance in the field (Arslan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2018). This study explores psychological counselors' perceptions of organizational identity concerning ethical values and job satisfaction, while also analyzing the implications of the 2020 GPCSR.

In Turkey, school-based GPC services are regulated by the "Ministry of National Education, Guidance and Psychological Counseling Services Regulation" (GPCSR) (MEB, 2020a) and the "*Ministry of National Education, Guidance and Psychological Counseling Ethical Directive*" (GPCED) (MEB, 2020b), both enacted on August 14, 2020. The 2020 GPCSR formally replaced the previous designation of "guidance teacher" with "school counselor/psychological counselor." Additionally, the GPCED mandates adherence to key ethical principles—competence, honesty, confidentiality, sensitivity, scientific integrity, and professional responsibility (MEB, 2020b). These regulatory advancements represent significant reforms for the GPC profession.

The primary objective of the school counseling profession is to ensure that counselors adhere to ethical principles (Bond, 2015; King-White et al., 2019). An effective counselor should possess self-awareness, psychological well-being, cultural sensitivity, objectivity, reliability, and strong interpersonal skills (Hongryun et al., 2017). Ethical principles serve as guiding frameworks in structuring counseling practices (İkiz et al., 2017).

Given that individuals spend a significant portion of their lives at work, their professional environments influence job satisfaction and well-being (Güneş, 2020; Mullen et al., 2017). Work environments that foster satisfaction enhance employees' motivation, productivity, and sense of accomplishment (Li et al., 2025). However, psychological counselors frequently encounter role ambiguity and conflicts, which negatively impact their job satisfaction (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011). Accordingly, job satisfaction was included as a key variable in this investigation of organizational identity perceptions.

Research Questions & Hypotheses

This study aims to examine the relationships among ethical values (justice, love, and cooperation), job satisfaction, and organizational identity perceptions. The main research question is: *"Do ethical values and job satisfaction significantly predict school counselors' perceptions of organizational identity?"* To address this, the following hypotheses were tested:

- H1: Ethical values (justice, love, and cooperation), job satisfaction, and organizational identity perceptions are positively and significantly correlated.
- H2: Ethical values (justice, love, and cooperation) and job satisfaction positively and significantly predict school counselors' organizational identity perception.

Testing these hypotheses will offer insights into whether the professional identity of psychological counselors, emphasized in the 2020 GPCSR, and the ethical principles outlined in the GPCED effectively contribute to enhancing school counselors' organizational identity perceptions in Turkey.

Review of Related Literature

Research on ethics in psychological counseling in Turkey remains relatively limited. Existing studies have primarily focused on topics such as the employment of non-GPC graduates in schools, confidentiality, interpersonal relationships, multiculturalism, online psychological counseling, and professional competence (Arslan et al., 2019; Arslan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2018; Camadan, 2018; İkiz et al., 2017; Kolay-Akfert, 2012).

Kolay-Akfert (2012) examined ethical dilemmas faced by psychological counselors, the strategies they employ to resolve these dilemmas, and the challenges they encounter. The study identified three key ethical dilemmas: confidentiality, dual relationships, and professional competence. Similarly, Arslan et al. (2019) explored current and emerging ethical challenges in psychological counseling, emphasizing that out-of-field assignments, issues of professional identity, multicultural counseling, competence, and confidentiality are among the most critical concerns. Their findings also suggest that in the future, school counselors may face further identity issues, unregulated out-of-field assignments, multicultural challenges, and ethical code ambiguities.

The professional identity of psychological counselors in schools has been a longstanding issue (Kuzgun, 2016; Tuzgöl-Dost & Keklik, 2012). Psychological counselors are often misidentified as teachers by school administrators and other educators, which undermines their professional recognition and effectiveness (Boyacı, 2020). Özyürek (2019) provided a comprehensive assessment of Turkey's GPC field, identifying eleven major problem areas related to identity, legislation, regulations, and employment conditions. According to this study, the ambiguities in laws and regulations, poor working practices, and employment policies significantly affect counselors' professional standing (Özyürek, 2019). Similarly, Tuzgöl-Dost and Keklik (2012) investigated the challenges faced by school counselors, identifying key concerns such as uncertainty in job titles, lack of accreditation, insufficient counselor training, gaps in professional qualifications, and biased attitudes from teachers and administrators toward GPC services.

As in other countries, job satisfaction among psychological counselors in Turkey has received substantial scholarly attention (Aydin & Odaci, 2020; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Jodoin & Ayers, 2017; Kağan, 2010). Güneş (2020) examined factors affecting job satisfaction and found no significant differences based on gender, professional experience, education level, or institutional setting. However, the study revealed that higher perceived socioeconomic status positively correlates with increased job satisfaction among psychological counselors. Various studies have investigated how self-efficacy, trait anxiety, cognitive flexibility, role conflict, ambiguity, ethics, and communication difficulties affect job satisfaction (Aydin & Odaci, 2020; Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Jodoin & Ayers, 2017). Other research has focused on stress-related variables, such as burnout (Mullen et al., 2017) and institutional work environments (Kağan, 2010).

In summary, the variables examined in this study, namely organizational identity, ethical values, and job satisfaction, are closely interrelated. This research aims to contribute to the literature by analyzing how

ethical values and job satisfaction influence school counselors' perceptions of organizational identity within a structured theoretical framework.

Method

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationships between school counselors' perceived organizational identity, inclination toward ethical values, and job satisfaction. A correlational study allows researchers to evaluate the relationship patterns between two or more variables (Creswell, 2012; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Such studies aim to explain the connections between variables and infer potential cause-and-effect relationships (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Since this study follows a survey-based approach, this design was chosen to reach a larger sample and to understand the relationships between the investigated variables better.

Participants

Data were collected from 204 school counselors working in various schools across different cities in Turkey during the 2020–2021 academic year. The study utilized the convenience sampling method, a type of non-probability sampling in which the accessibility and willingness of participants determine their inclusion (Creswell, 2012). This method was selected due to its practical advantages in terms of time and cost efficiency. A total of 208 school counselors participated in the study, of whom 135 were female (64.9%) and 73 were male (35.1%). The participants' ages ranged from 22 to 61 years ($M = 37.24$). The school counselors were working across different educational levels, from preschool to high school. Additionally, 164 counselors held a bachelor's degree, while 44 had a master's degree.

Instruments

Inclination to Ethical Values Scale (IEVS)

The Inclination to Ethical Values Scale (IEVS), developed by Kaya (2015), was used to assess participants' tendency to adopt ethical values. The scale measures the extent to which individuals are inclined toward ethical values. The validity and reliability analyses of the IEVS were conducted with 196 participants, and data analysis was performed using SPSS 21.0.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) identified a 16-item scale with three factors: love, justice, and cooperation, explaining 61.93% of the total variance. The 5-point Likert-type scale yields scores ranging from 16 to 80. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the entire scale was $\alpha = .90$ (Kaya, 2015). In this study, the internal consistency coefficients were $\alpha = .84$ for the total score and $\alpha = .78$, $\alpha = .80$, and $\alpha = .84$ for the love, justice, and cooperation subscales, respectively.

Organizational Identity Perception Scale (OIPS)

The Organizational Identity Perception Scale (OIPS) was developed by Tabak and Boyacı (2019) to measure teachers' perceptions of organizational identity. The Likert-type scale consists of 17 items categorized into three dimensions: *Support* (8 items), *Belonging* (4 items), and *Communication* (5 items). The factor load values of the scale items range from .56 to .89, and the three dimensions account for 72.1% of the total variance related to organizational identity perception.

The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were: Total scale: $\alpha = .94$; Support subscale: $\alpha = .94$; Belonging subscale: $\alpha = .80$; Communication subscale: $\alpha = .80$. In this study, the internal consistency coefficients were $\alpha = .93$ for the total scale and $\alpha = .92$, $\alpha = .75$, and $\alpha = .91$ for the support, belonging, and communication subscales, respectively.

Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)

The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), developed by Weiss et al. (1967), is a widely used instrument for measuring job satisfaction across various professional settings. The MSQ was adapted to Turkish by Baycan (1985) and employed in this study to comprehensively assess participants' job satisfaction

levels. The 5-point Likert-type scale consists of 20 items, with scores ranging from 20 to 100. Higher scores indicate higher job satisfaction. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients reported in different studies include cited in Özkan, 2017: Akdoğan (2002): $\alpha = .86$; Ural and Kılıç (2005): $\alpha = .87$; Gündüz (2008): $\alpha = .93$; İrigüler (2015): $\alpha = .91$. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the MSQ was calculated as $\alpha = .88$.

Personal Information Form (PIF)

The researcher developed a Personal Information Form (PIF) to collect demographic and professional background information about participants. The form included questions about age, gender, years of experience, and educational background.

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Social Sciences Ethics Committee of Istanbul Medeniyet University. The research commenced after securing legal and ethical permissions. Data were collected via online forms (Google Forms). Participants were recruited via email, and voluntary participants were given approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The data collection process lasted one month in total.

Data Analysis Procedures

Once the data collection process was completed, the dataset was checked for missing and erroneous entries. Univariate outliers were examined using histograms and box plots, while z-scores were computed via IBM SPSS. Multivariate outliers were identified through Mahalanobis distance coefficients. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test confirmed that the data were normally distributed ($p = .275 > .05$), satisfying normality assumptions (George & Mallery, 2024).

Descriptive statistics were computed for all study variables. The relationships between the variables were examined using Pearson product-moment correlation analysis. A regression model was developed to assess whether organizational identity perception (dependent variable) was significantly predicted by ethical values (love, justice, cooperation) and job satisfaction (independent variables). All statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS, with p-values set at $p < .01$ and $p < .05$ for significance.

Findings

Descriptive Statistics and Verification of Hypothesis 1

To test the first hypothesis (H1) of the study, "*There are positive and significant relationships between ethical values (justice, love, and cooperation), job satisfaction, and organizational identity perception.*" Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between the study variables, as well as to verify the correlation structure of the regression models used in this research. The results of the correlation analysis and descriptive statistics for the study variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Pearson Correlation Values Between the Variables and Descriptive Statistics*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
(1) Organizational Identity Perception	---	.43**	.37**	.31**	.34**	.42**
(2) Inclination to ethical values		---	.85**	.79**	.70**	.33**
(3) Love			---	.51**	.43**	.32**
(4) Justice				---	.33**	.12
(5) Cooperation					---	.34**
(6) Job Satisfaction						---
$\bar{x}$	66.41	73.49	37.47	22.79	13.01	78.3
Ss.	11.90	5.26	2.46	2.30	1.89	6.3
Kurtosis	.09	.89	.76	.64	-.76	.44
Skewness	-.59	-.94	-.39	-.96	-.11	-.86

** $p < .001$

In this study, the inclination toward ethical values was conceptualized under three components: love, justice, and cooperation. As shown in Table 1, moderate and significant positive correlations were observed between school counselors' perceived organizational identity scores and ethical values. The correlation analysis revealed that organizational identity perceptions were positively and moderately correlated with: *Love* ($r = .37, p < .01$); *Justice* ($r = .31, p < .01$) *Cooperation* ($r = .34, p < .01$). Additionally, there was a moderate and significant positive correlation between school counselors' organizational identity perception scores and their job satisfaction scores ($r = .42, p < .01$).

Inferential statistics

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to analyze the second hypothesis of the study (H2): "*Ethical values (justice, love, and cooperation) and job satisfaction positively and significantly predict organizational identity perception*". The results of the multiple linear regression analyses are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Prediction of Organizational Identity Perception by Love, Justice, Cooperation, and Job Satisfaction

Predicted variable	Predictive variable	B	β	t	p	R	R ²	ΔR^2	F
Organizational Identity Perception	Constant	-4.12		-.37*	.000	.529	.280	.266	19.75**
	Love	.68	.14	1.88*	.033				
	Justice	.81	.15	2.23*	.019				
	Cooperation	.72	.11	1.68*	.021				
	Job Satisfaction	2.13	.32	4.96**	.000				

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

As shown in Table 2, the variables of love, justice, cooperation, and job satisfaction positively and significantly predicted the school counselor's perceived organizational identity ($R = .529, R^2 = .28, p < .01$). Accordingly, the variables of love, justice, cooperation, and job satisfaction together explained 28% of the total variance in organizational identity. The standardized regression coefficients (β) and t values indicated that the relative importance levels of the predictive effects of the independent variables on organizational identity were love ($\beta = .68, t = 1.88$), justice ($\beta = .81, t = 2.23$), cooperation ($\beta = .11, t = 1.68$) and job satisfaction ($\beta = 2.13, t = 4.96$).

The evaluation of the regression models, established in line with the research hypotheses, revealed that organizational identity was significantly predicted by love, justice, cooperation, and job satisfaction. When all these results are evaluated together, it is possible that school counselors with high job satisfaction and a tendency toward ethical values (love, justice, and cooperation) also have a high level of perceived organizational identity.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that ethical values (justice, love, and cooperation) and job satisfaction among school counselors are positively and significantly correlated with their perceptions of organizational identity. Furthermore, justice, love, cooperation, and job satisfaction were found to be significant predictors of school counselors' organizational identity perceptions. These results suggest that as school counselors' adherence to ethical values and job satisfaction increase, their perceptions of organizational identity also improve.

Consistent with previous research, one of the key factors affecting job satisfaction among psychological counselors is professional identity-related issues, including working conditions and role conflict (Cervoni & DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Kağan, 2010; Kim & Lambie, 2018). In this study, psychological counselors' perceptions of organizational identity were tested within a theoretical model incorporating ethical values and job satisfaction. The results confirm that job satisfaction is closely linked to organizational identity perceptions. Similarly, Gillen et al. (2024) emphasized that clinical supervision plays a crucial role in strengthening both professional satisfaction and organizational identity among school counselors.

The literature indicates that professional identity and role-related challenges are among the most prevalent problems faced by psychological counselors in schools (Arslan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2018;

Özyürek, 2019; Tuzgöl-Dost & Keklik, 2012). Although delayed, the identity issue of psychological counselors (formerly referred to as "guidance teachers") was formally addressed with the enactment of the 2020 GPCSR (MEB, 2020a). This regulation represents a significant reform for the GPC profession, bringing much-needed clarity to the role and professional standing of psychological counselors.

Despite its 70-year history in Turkey (Boyacı, 2020), the psychological counseling profession has long struggled with role ambiguity and the need for external validation. These identity-related issues negatively impact the job satisfaction and professional productivity of psychological counselors (Aydin & Odaci, 2020; Boyacı, 2020; Camadan, 2018). The findings of this study are consistent with the existing literature and further support its conclusions.

Moreover, the results highlight that ethical values significantly predict organizational identity perceptions. Ethical standards in the field of psychological counseling are often influenced by challenges related to identity, accreditation, certification, and training (Arslan et al., 2019; Camadan, 2018; Kolay-Akfert, 2012). Counselors must operate within a scientific, objective, and structured framework, emphasizing the importance of professional competencies and field-specific expertise (Bond, 2015; Crothers et al., 2020; Sivis-Çetinkaya, 2019).

One of the most significant legal advancements in the GPC field in 2020 was the introduction of the Ethical Directive (GPCED), which formally established ethical standards for psychological counselors in Turkey (MEB, 2020b). According to Arslan and Sommers-Flanagan (2018), to enhance the ethical practices of GPC professionals, Turkey's code of ethics must be continuously updated. In this regard, the 2020 GPCED represents a crucial regulatory step in ensuring that ethical codes remain relevant and enforceable.

Limitations

This study was conducted with a sample of 208 school counselors working in various regions across Turkey. Therefore, the generalizability of the results is limited. Additionally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, data collection was conducted via online forms, making it impossible to collect data through face-to-face interactions. Furthermore, while this study employed quantitative data collection methods, qualitative approaches such as interviews and observations were not utilized. Thus, the research is subject to certain methodological limitations, including sample size and self-reported data, further highlighting the need for additional research on organizational identity perceptions in psychological counseling. Although multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the predictive roles of ethical values and job satisfaction on organizational identity, it is acknowledged that these predictors may conceptually influence each other. This methodological limitation suggests that a hierarchical regression model might better capture the incremental explanatory power of each construct. Future studies are encouraged to explore this relationship using a stepwise analytical framework to provide more nuanced insights.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study indicate that school counselors with high ethical values and job satisfaction also tend to have strong perceptions of organizational identity. Given this, future research should explore the ethical competencies of GPC students in universities and practicing psychological counselors in schools. While this study examined the relationships among organizational identity perceptions, ethical values, and job satisfaction, future research could investigate additional variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of organizational identity perceptions. Additionally, experimental studies could be conducted to validate the findings of this research.

Future studies should also focus on improving ethical values among school counselors through psychoeducation programs, group counseling, and focus group interventions. Evaluating the effectiveness of such interventions through experimental research designs would further enrich the literature and address existing gaps in ethical awareness and professional identity development.

This study also underscores the importance of ethical values in shaping psychological counselors' organizational identity perceptions. Given this, policymakers must develop and regularly update ethical

regulations while ensuring effective implementation and monitoring. Furthermore, incorporating ethics-focused courses into undergraduate programs and enhancing ethics education in universities would significantly improve ethical standards among future psychological counselors. Finally, while this study focused on school-based psychological counselors, future research should explore the perspectives of undergraduate psychology students regarding ethical standards in the field.

Conclusion

The results of this study reveal that justice, love, cooperation, and job satisfaction are positively and significantly correlated with school counselors' organizational identity perceptions. Moreover, organizational identity perceptions were significantly predicted by justice, love, cooperation, and job satisfaction. Professional identity and role conflict remain among the most pressing issues faced by psychological counselors in Turkey (Özyürek, 2019; Tuzgöl-Dost & Keklik, 2012). Therefore, the 2020 New GPCSR represents a critical regulatory step in formally recognizing the professional identity of psychological counselors. These regulatory improvements strengthen organizational identity perceptions, enhance job satisfaction, and reinforce ethical standards in the GPC profession.

Declarations

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