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## **A Pilot Study on Validity of Turkish Version of Organizational Politics Scale**

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### **Abstract**

The present study aimed to pilot test the reliability and construct validity of the Turkish version of the Perception of Organizational Politics Scale (short version), developed by Kacmar and Carlson (1997). Study sample included 199 executive and non-executives employees working in different industries in Bursa. Statistical analysis results supported the scale's one dimensional and three dimensional 13-item structure and the corrected model was shown to be more reliable and valid.

**Keywords:** Perception of Organizational Politics, Organizational Politics Scale, reliability analysis, confirmatory factor analysis

### **1. Introduction**

The phenomenon of politics is a reality that exists in the daily activities of organizations (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992; Kacmar and Carlson, 1997). Despite the fact that early studies on organizational theory relied on the assumption that rational principles dominated in organizational operations and individual behavior (Altıntaş – Çınar, 2007), constantly changing environmental conditions and competitive environment, limited operational resources and technological changes provide a setting for irrational behavior in the organizations. In fact, certain research stated that organizational operations and behavior of the individuals would not be always rational and irrational behavior could be observed from time to time in the literature (Gandz and Murray, 1980; Madison et al., 1980; Pfeffer 1981; Mintzberg, 1983; Welsh and Slusher, 1986, Eisenhardt and Burgeois, 1988; Drory and Romm, 1988; Parker et al., 1995). Thus, it could be argued that irrational properties politicize the organizations and political behavior of the individuals render the organizations irrational.

Ideas about organizational politics became a part of the literature since 1960's. Although several empirical, theoretical and conceptual studies have been conducted on the subject, organizational politics is yet to be conceptualized. On the other hand, definitions of the concept focused primarily on the phenomenon of effect (Mayes and Allen, 1977; Farrel and Petersen 1982). Since organizational resources are limited, self-

interest of individuals in their activities and their efforts and activities to affect other individuals-employees based on their own interest form the basis of the organizational politics concept. Especially the behavior that are not approved by the organization and conducted with the aim to influence the decision making process are considered within this context (Burns, 1961; Farrel and Peterson, 1982; Gandz and Murray, 1980; Mayes and Allen, 1977; Schein, 1977; Drory and Romm, 1990). In this framework, Pfeffer and Salancik (1974: 138) stated that decisions on the distribution of limited resources between the organizational sub-units are among the most important decisions in almost all organizations and these decisions are part of a political process. It could be argued that individuals attempt to influence especially topics such as the decision making process about determination of operational budget, selection and evaluation criteria, distribution of awards and tasks and career planning. According to Farrel and Petersen (1982: 405), organizational politics is the process of the attempts to influence the distribution of advantages and disadvantages in an organization. On the other hand, Grey and Ariss (1985: 707) defined organizational politics as the deliberate acts of influence that individuals or groups perform to protect or improve their interests when a conflict situation is present. These effects are not rational according to Miles (1980: 154) and affect the decision making process since the actors focus on their own interests. Furthermore, this process of influence occurs by the use of power tactics (Drory and Romm; 1990). Thus, political behavior differentiates from formal internal behavior and are associated with the non-formal aspect of the organization (Farrell and Peterson, 1982; Narayanan and Fahey, 1982; Mintzberg and Waters (1985); Mayes and Allen (1977: 675) separated the organizational politics into the categories of those approved by the organizations and not approved by the organization and defined political behavior as the methods of arriving at consequences not approved by the organization or arriving at consequences approved by the organization using means that are not approved by the organization. In fact, Pfeffer (1981), called political behavior as hidden motive. According to Pfeffer, the actor believes that the real motive is unacceptable and wrong and hides the real motive and exhibits an acceptable motive. Therefore, political behavior includes the hidden intent that is behind the observable behavior of the actors. Thus, the objective of the present study is to introduce the concept of organizational politics and propose a tool of measurement to assess organizational politics perception in Turkey. For this purpose, reliability and validity of the Turkish translation of "Organizational Politics Perception Scale," developed by Kacmar and Carlson (1997) were investigated. As a result of this assessment, it was considered that if the scale is to be found adequate, it would contribute to establishment of language and methodology unity and facilitate the comparison of study findings obtained from different industries and demographical samples.

## **2. The Perception of Organizational Politics**

When the content of organizational politics is observed, a process where individual perceives the situations or events based on her or his own perspective could be noticed (Ferris et al., 1989; Ferris and Kacmar, 1992; Gandz and Murray, 1980; Kacmar and Carlson, 1997). Perception of politics could be defined as subjective interpretation of organizational application that promotes political behavior and the working frame defined by superiors and colleagues (Harrell-Cook et al., 1999: 1095). According to Andrews and Kacmar (2001), perception of politics is generally in the eye of the beholder and the perception could change from one individual to another. While a

behavior could be conceived as political by someone, for someone else, the same behavior could not be at all political. Even, the same behavior could be perceived as political when performed by others, but it was reported that when the same behavior is performed by the individual, it is unlikely that the behavior would be perceived as political by the same individual (Kacmar and Ferris, 1991). In fact, Gandz and Murray (1989) argued that it would not be possible to have an objective perspective on organizational politics since the perception of politics is based on subjective evaluations that are shaped due to the mood of the individual. Thus, the fact that the perception of politics is more significant than the actual existence of politics is due to the fact that individuals shape their responses based on the way they perceive the reality, not based on the objective reality (Cropanzano et al., 1997: 161). Perception of politics depends on how individuals interpret the organizational climate and how political they perceive the work environment and thus, the organizational politics phenomenon is based on the thoughts of individuals about politics rather than the actual existence of politics (Vigoda and Cohen, 2002: 311-312). Ferris et al. (1995) stated that organizational environment has a profound effect on whether individual behavior would be perceived as political. Individuals who perceive the organizational environment as highly political attempt to behave politically as a control mechanism and try to render their environment bearable (Bodla and Danish, 2009: 47). Since organizational culture would be shaped under the influence of political activities in organizations with dense political activities, it could be argued that this would in turn increase the tendency of employees to act politically (Buenger et al., 2007:294). In fact, political perception of the organization by the individual could also result in internal policies independent of the existence of politics in the very organization. At this point, individuals' perception of politics is more important than the actual existence of politics (Bodla and Danish, 2009: 46). It could be observed that there were only limited studies in the literature on measurement of organizational politics perception until the nineties. Especially with the years 1990 and 2000, interest in organizational politics has been more conceptual, in an increasing number of empirical research, what people think about political tactics, understanding the organizational tactics to influence policy rather than through individual perception, it is important (Vigoda-Gadot and Talmud, 2010: 2832). Kacmar and Ferris (1992) claimed that this was due to the lack of an effective measurement tool for the perceptions of policies in an organization. It could be observed that initial studies on the measurement of the perception of politics were conducted by Gandz and Murray (1980) and Madison et al. (1980). Later on, Perception of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS) was developed by Kacmar and Ferris (1991). Widely applied scale includes 31 statements. The authors conducted their studies in two consecutive stages and arrived at a scale structure where the statements were grouped under five dimensions of “*go along to get ahead*”, “*self-serving behavior*”, “*co-workers*”, “*cliques*” and “*pay and promotion*”. The scale developed by Kacmar and Ferris was later tested by themselves and many other researchers. In fact, in a study Kacmar and Carlson (1997) conducted on three different samples to improve advanced structural validity of the scale, they stated that three-dimensional and 13 item measurement models were valid. The scale was finalized with a structure where the statements were categorized under three dimensions of “*general political behavior*”, “*go along to get ahead*” and “*pay and promotion*”.

### 3. Methodology

The main goal of the study is to test the construct validity of 13 items Organizational Politics Scale developed by Kacmar and Carlson (1997) as first and second-order models. The study focuses on determining whether the scale works in the contextual of cross section sampling data.

#### 3.1. Scale and Method

In the present study, perception of organizational politics scale, short version, developed by Kacmar and Carlson (1997) was translated into Turkish and used. Current scale includes 13 items on *general political behavior (6 items)*, *go along get ahead (5 items)*, and *pay and promotion (2 items)*. The scale is a 5-item Likert-type scale (1 = I strongly disagree, 2 = I disagree, 3 = I Neutral, 4 = I agree, and 5 = I strongly agree). The items of the organizational politic scale used in the study are below.

**Table 1: The Items of Organizational Politics Scale**

1. When it comes to pay raises and promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant.
2. Agreeing with powerful others is the best alternative in this organization.
4. Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political.
5. I have seen changes made here that only serve the purposes of a few individuals, not the whole work unit or department.
6. Sometimes it is easier to remain quiet than to fight the system.
7. Favoritism, rather than merit, determines who gets good raises and promotions around here.
8. Telling others what they want to hear is sometimes better than telling the truth.
9. It is safer to think what you are told than to make up your own mind.
10. Inconsistent with organizational policies, promotions in this organization generally do not go to top performers.
11. None of the raises I have received are consistent with the policies on how raises should be determined.
12. This organization is not known for its fair pay and promotion policies.
13. Rewards such as pay raises and promotions do not go to those who work hard.
14. The stated pay and promotion policies have nothing to do with how pay raises and promotions are determined.

The scale is widely accepted and used in organizational politics the literature. The original scale consists three dimensions with 13 items. However, it is measured by only one dimension of construct (Lau et al., 2017; Grave et al., 2015; Yılmaz et al., 2014) or by fewer items (Saleem, 2015; Nasurdin et al., 2014; Alkan and Turgut, 2015; Yılmaz, 2014). In this study, the scale was considered three factor with 13 items. In this context, three-dimension (first-order correlated or second-order) and one dimension (all 13 items loaded as one construct) measurement models were compared to clarify the construct validity by exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, composite reliability and

average variance extracted (AVE) values. IBM-SPSS 23.0 and AMOS 23.0 statistical software were preferred for analyses.

### 3.2. Sample

The research was carried out by means of convenient sampling in the Bursa region. 210 employees who are working in businesses operating in different sectors and who are not managers and managers are employed and valid 199 question form was included in the analyzes. Seventy eight percent of the participants worked in manufacturing and 22% worked in service industries. Industrial distribution of the participants showed that 22% were in banking, 30% were in automotive, 28% were in textile, 15% were in food and 5% were in construction industries. Sixty seven percent of the participants were male and 33% were female. Fifty five percent of the participants were between the ages of 18-35, 32% were between 36-45 and 11% were between 46-55. Work experience of the participants was 1-3 years for 22%, 4-8 years for 38%, 9-13 years for 12%, and 14 years or more for 18%. Thirteen percent of the participants were junior managers, 26% were administrative staff, 42% were middle level managers, and 19% were top executives.

### 3.3. Analysis

#### 3.3.1. Data Purification

In the analysis section, items-based correlations were determined to check multicollinearity problem as shown in Table 2. There is no correlation value which exceed 0.90 limit. It was not observed. Secondly, the missing values examined were by EM method and then normal distribution values (skewness-kurtosis) were organized. Next the overall cronbach alpha value of the scale was found as 0.859

**Table 2: Correlations Between the Study Variables (N=199)**

	s1	s2	s3	s4	s5	s6	s7	s8	s9	s10	s11	s12	s13	M
s1	1	,17*	,33**	,35**	,26**	,34**	0,13	-,15*	,42**	,29**	,26**	,37**	,49**	2,77
s2		1	,17*	,39**	,30**	,43**	0,08	,25**	,25**	,24**	,24**	,30**	,30**	3,24
s3			1	,33**	,27**	,38**	0,01	,14*	,31**	,47**	,20**	,25**	,32**	3,14
s4				1	,38**	,60**	0,11	0,1	,41**	,30**	,33**	,30**	,32**	2,94
s5					1	,42**	,28**	,16*	,33**	,24**	,19**	,17*	,25**	3,11
s6						1	0,11	0,05	,55**	,396**	,39**	,37**	,41**	3,02
s7							1	0	,32**	0	0,02	,21**	,19**	2,9
s8								1	-0,09	,32**	0,07	-,15*	-0,11	2,38
s9									1	,346**	,32**	,63**	,48**	2,98
s10										1	,33**	,30**	,297**	2,92
s11											1	,33**	,18**	2,82
s12												1	,52**	3
s13													1	3,13

\*p<0.05 \*\*p<0.01

### 3.3.2. Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis

An exploratory factor analysis was performed primarily on the data obtained from the study in order to determine the construct validity of the scale. In the exploratory factor analysis, some principles were accepted; principal component, varimax rotation, cross-loadings, factor loadings  $>.30$  and scree-plot. In the confirmatory factor analysis, goodness of fit indexes and CR and AVE values were taken into account. RMSEA is expected to be  $<.05$ , CFI  $>.90$ , GFI  $>.90$ , chi-square / df  $<3.0$  (Bentler, 1990; Schermelleh, Engel et al., 2003).

#### 3.3.2.1. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis: One Dimension

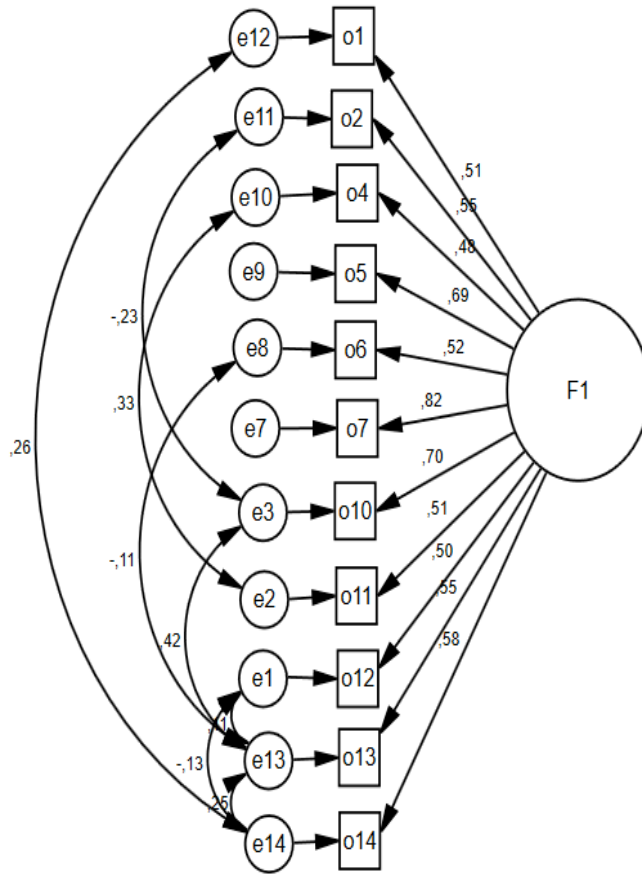
Scale items were subjected to exploratory factor analysis as one dimension. Initially the 13 items in the organizational politics scale were analyzed as a single dimension. Total variance of the single dimensional scale was found as 36% as a result of the conduct.ed explanatory factor analysis. Internal consistency of the scale was  $\alpha = .836$  (KMO=.832).

**Table 3: One Dimensional Factor Analysis**

	<i>Factor Loadings</i>
1. When it comes to pay raises and promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant.	,620
2. Agreeing with powerful others is the best alternative in this organization.	,552
4. Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political.	,571
5. I have seen changes made here that only serve the purposes of a few individuals, not the whole work unit or department.	,688
6. Sometimes it is easier to remain quiet than to fight the system.	,553
7. Favoritism, rather than merit, determines who gets good raises and promotions around here.	,781
8. Telling others what they want to hear is sometimes better than telling the truth.	,292
9. It is safer to think what you are told than to make up your own mind.	,089
10. Inconsistent with organizational policies, promotions in this organization generally do not go to top performers.	,760
11. None of the raises I have received are consistent with the policies on how raises should be determined.	,602
12. This organization is not known for its fair pay and promotion policies.	,538
13. Rewards such as pay raises and promotions do not go to those who work hard.	,681
14. The stated pay and promotion policies have nothing to do with how pay raises and promotions are determined.	,681

Validity values for the model compliance of the single dimensional scale conducted with confirmatory factor analysis had quite high values after the variable number 8<sup>th</sup> item and 9<sup>th</sup> item which had an insignificant effect based on corrected

validity values, was excluded and covariance of the error terms were taken into account (GFI = .963 CFI = .992 RMSEA = .027 prob = .250 chi-square/df = 1, 14 (See Figure 1).



ki-kare=41,298 df=36 GFI=,963 CFI=,992 prob=,250 RMSEA=,027

**Figure 1: One-dimensional Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

### 3.3.2.2. Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis: Three-Dimension

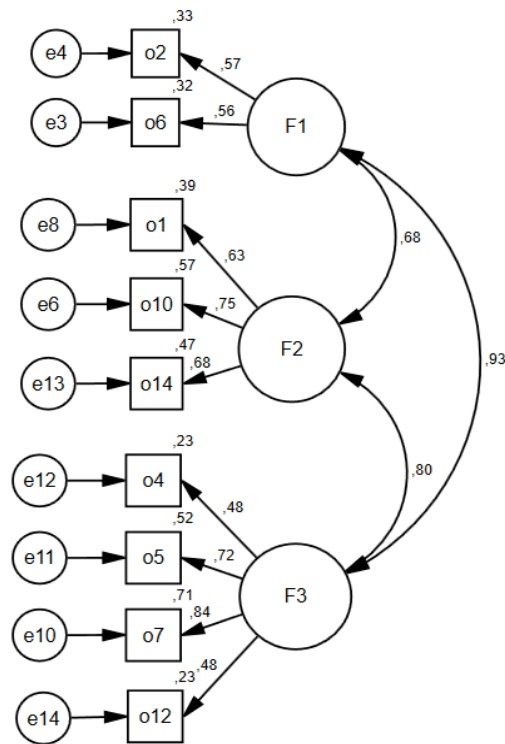
Total variance of the three-factor organizational politics scale was found as 54, 9% as a result of the conducted exploratory factor analysis(KMO=832). The first factor explained 35, 8% of the variance and had an internal consistency value of  $\alpha = .800$  and it included five items (items no. 1,9,10,13,14). The second factor explained 12, 20% of the variance and had an internal consistency value of  $\alpha = .756$  and it included five items (items no. 4,5,7,11,12 ). The third factor explained 8, 96% of the variance and had an internal consistency value of  $\alpha = .574$  and it included three items (items no. 2,6,8).

**Table 4: Three Dimensional Factor Analysis**

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
1. When it comes to pay raises and promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant.	.648		
9. It is safer to think what you are told than to make up your own mind.	-.577		
13. Rewards such as pay raises and promotions do not go to those who work hard.	.718		
14. The stated pay and promotion policies have nothing to do with how pay raises and promotions are determined.	.751		
10. Inconsistent with organizational policies, promotions in this organization generally do not go to top performers.	.682		
4. Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political.		.640	
5. I have seen changes made here that only serve the purposes of a few individuals, not the whole work unit or department.		.454	
7. Favoritism, rather than merit, determines who gets good raises and promotions around here.		.512	
12. This organization is not known for its fair pay and promotion policies.		.765	
11. None of the raises I have received are consistent with the policies on how raises should be determined.		.514	
2. Agreeing with powerful others is the best alternative in this organization.			.525
6. Sometimes it is easier to remain quiet than to fight the system.			.726
8. Telling others what they want to hear is sometimes better than telling the truth.			.694
Explained Variance %	35.8	12.20	8.96
Cron.Alpha	.800	.756	.574

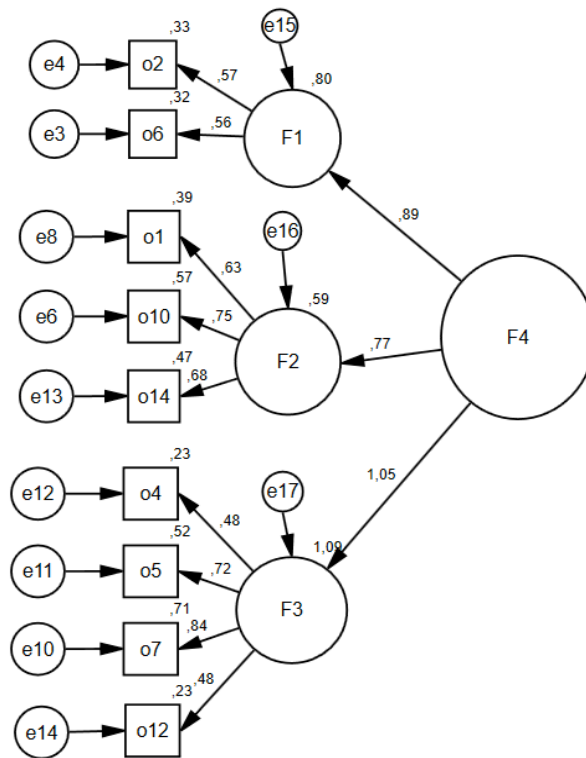
Three-dimensional confirmatory factor analysis was conducted as first-order correlated model and revised model with modification (dropped two items, 8 and 9). The result can be shown in Figure 2. All values are in acceptable limits (GFI = .968 CFI = .988 RMSEA = .03 prob = .193 chi-square/df = 1.23). It was also conducted a second-order model based on this revised first-order correlated model. The measurement model of second-order is in Figure 3. Second-order model was preferred as all values were same with first-order model.





ki-kare=29,753 df=24 prob=,193 GFI=,968 CFI=,988 RMSEA=,035

**Figure 2. First-order CFA Correlated**



ki-kare=29,753 df=24 prob=,193 GFI=,968 CFI=,988 RMSEA=,035

**Figure 3. Second-order CFA**

**Tablo: 5 Comparison of The Models**

	Chi-square /df	CFI	GFI	RMSEA	prob	CR	AVE
<b>Model 1: Single-factor</b>	1,14	.992	.963	.02	.250	.67	.34
<b>Model 2: Three-factor (revised)</b>	1.23	.988	.968	.03	.193	.73	.41
<b>Model 3: Second-order</b>	1.23	.988	.968	.03	.193	.92	.82

As a result, second-order model was selected to validity according to limit of composite reliability, AVE (Hair et al., 1998; Bagozza of and Yi, 1988 and the other indices values. Spesifically, second-order model can be used for conceptualization and simplification of scale.

#### 4. Results

The study was carried out to test the validity of the organizational politic scale designed by Kacmar and Carlson(1997) in terms of one and multi-dimensionality. First, exploratory factor analysis was applied to the original scale items and has reached a three-factor solution. Then confirmatory factor analysis performed single and three-dimensional (first and second order) the validity were examined. EFA was for group the items, CFA was used to reach to a theoretically-meaningful structure (Byrne, 2005: 17). In this context the contribution of this study is to establish generalized measurement model. Analysis has indicated that second-order model was more valid for the scale as the conceptualization. The basic reason to considering of accept the second-order model is to be reflect meta-evaluation(Chen et al., 2006: 193), simplify parsimonious (Chu, 2008: 322; Hagger and Chatzisarantis, 2005: 527; Rindskopf and Rose, 1988: 66) and generalization (Bagozzi et al. 2001: 33) of the concept. Second-order model is exogenous and unobserved, first-order is endogenous (Narayan et al., 2008: 472).In other words, organizational politic concept has three latent factors and represent sub-factors whole. It means that these three factor form the organizational politics together.

It is seen that some article has used the first-order with three-factor model to measure the organizational politics scale of Kacmar and Carlson (1997) and found similar construct in Turkish sampling (Evrin, 2015: 73). The fact that different samplings need to be used to test the stability of a factor structure (Thomson, 1989) is very important for future research in Turkish version of the scale. In this context, testing the scale with different sampling in Turkey will support to reach a valuable measurement for this scale. It will also contribute to Turkish literature of organizational politics field. There are some limitation in research. Finally, it could be argued that to be able to use Perception of Organizational Politics Scale Turkish Version as a standard tool, it should be improved. Therefore, a measurement tools suitable for the cultural context of our country could contribute to future studies. However, the most appropriate stance on the issue is to develop unique scales that are suitable for our culture. Otherwise, as long as we do not develop appropriate scales, improvement of adapted scales could fell short for the purpose.

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