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The Effect of Employees' Perceptions of their own Values and their Managers' Values on their Work Alienation: The Mediating Role of Organizational Climate

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Abstract

Work alienation is one of the behavior patterns in which the relationship between the employee and the organization is negative. When the literature is examined in terms of individual values, it is observed that high congruence of the individual values of managers with those of employees in the organization is expected to affect the positive behavioral outputs in the positive direction and negative behavioral outputs in the negative direction. According to the hypothesis of this study, there is a relationship between manager-employee value congruence and work alienation. In this study, the mediating effect of organizational climate was also investigated in the relationship of manager-employee value congruence and work alienation. According to the results obtained, there is a relationship between manager-employee value congruence and alienation to work, and in this relationship, organizational climate is a partially mediating variable.

Introduction

Work alienation is defined as a reflection of the emotions experienced by the individual as a result of his or her work position in the organization and his/her unrealized anticipation regarding the workplace environment (Demirez & Tosunoglu, 2017, p. 70). While positive outcomes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment are reduced in alienated employees, negative factors such as intention to leave the job, absenteeism, and health problems seem to increase. The feeling of work alienation also affects employee performance negatively (Chiaburu, Thundiyil & Wang, 2014). For this reason, work alienation is one of the important problems for businesses.

Values are defined as a guide in deciding our behavior pattern (Tziner & Elizur, 1987, p.378). According to England, individual value systems influence the situations managers face and how

they understand, solve problems and make decisions. They affect the way managers view other individuals and groups, and are therefore influential on interpersonal relationships (1967).

Organizational climate is an important concept that reveals how the workplace environment is. For this reason, it has an important influence on employees. The organizational climate allows the organization to differ from other organizations. It is the whole of the individual, organizational and environmental characteristics that are perceived by the individuals in the organization and that are influential on their behaviors (Arslan, 2004).

This research was conducted in order to determine the effect of employees' own values and their managers' perceptions regarding their own values (manager-employee value congruence) on work alienation. The mediating role of organizational climate in this relationship was also examined in the study. The study is important in terms of revealing the factors that cause employees to move away from work and analyzing the effects of organizational climate on behaviors.

The study was conducted with the employees of the oil and LPG companies in the energy sector in Istanbul, Turkey.

In the second part of the study, the theoretical framework regarding the concepts of values, organizational climate, and work alienation is given. In the third part, findings of research method, sample, and the research are included. In the last part of the study, conclusion and discussion are given in the light of the findings.

Theoretical Framework

This section contains the theoretical framework of individual values, organizational climate and work alienation which are the variables of the research.

Individual Values

The concept of "values" has been used in various forms in order to specify interests, pleasures, likes, preferences, tasks, moral obligations, wishes, desires, aims, and needs, unwanted and attractive things, and a variety of other selective orientations (Rokeach, 1979, p. 28). In his work on values, Charles Morris described values as "the science of preferred behavior" (Kluckhohn, 1951, p. 390). Similarly, Hofstede defined value as the tendency to prefer some instances comparing to others (Hofstede, 1981). According to some authors, values are normative norms that guide judgments and choices among alternative forms of behavior (Tziner & Elizur, 1987, p. 378). Rokeach defined values as "a personal or socially preferred lifestyle in response to beliefs or antagonistic behavior based on a particular behavior" (Korukonda, 1991, p. 46). Based on this definition, the concept of value reflects three fundamental characteristics; to be aware of what is desired, to be influential by the associated feelings, and to have a behavior component that causes an action when it becomes active (Zhao, He & Lovrich, 1999). As a result of their literature search, Schwartz and Bilsky pointed out that there are five common features of value definitions (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). According to these features;

1. Concepts and beliefs are values.
2. Values are about the desired results and behaviors.
3. They go beyond special cases.
4. They guide the choice or evaluation of behaviors and events.
5. Lastly, values align according to their importance.

Values are shaped by personal beliefs, and they develop with work, internal observation, and consultation with others (George, 2009). Values are thoughts and beliefs that influence and direct our choices and behaviors. Values have an important influence on how we decide and what kind of decisions we make, both consciously or unconsciously, whether these decisions are right or wrong, good or bad (Gini, 1997, Latkovikj, Popovska & Popovski, 2016). A personal value becomes a social value when shared by all or the majority of the community (Kim, Boush, Marquardt & Kahle, 2006).

When some studies in the field are examined, it is seen that value has been conceptualized in different forms. Most of the academicians working on this subject have focused on two types of the concept of value. The first type is the value of an individual place given to an object or output. This includes the value that has been gained as a result of the instrumental relationship established with other objects or outputs. Calculations must be made in order to load such a value on an output or object (Meglino & Raylin, 1998). The other type is objective values. Objective values refer to the highest mode of life that has been idealized (Henri & Debats, 1996).

Values are the basis for understanding people. Individuals make sense of people's behaviors by means of value perceptions. Values determine what individuals shape in a right way and what they shape in a wrong way. They guide people when they need to make a selection. Values, in summary, affect attitudes and behaviors (Robbins & Judge, 2013).

In 1992 and 1994, Schwartz conducted a research covering 40 countries. In this research, he examined how societies respond to three problems in order to determine values (Steers & Runde - Sanchez, 2002). These problems are defined as follows:

- Relationships between individuals and groups
- Responsible social behaviors
- The role of humanity in the natural and social world.

Values are divided into classes in order to examine differences in value priorities and associate specific priorities to other variables (Schwartz, 1992). 10 value types emerged on the basis of three universal needs - biological, socialization and survival. These values are called universalism, goodness, security, tradition, harmony, power, success, hedonism, self-direction, and a life full of excitement (Schwartz, 1996).

Organizational Climate

Climate is defined as the average state of weather patterns in which a meteorological parameter and processes in a particular region are identified and characterized by long periods of time and

characterize the seasons (Turkish Language Association [TDK], 2018). The climate within the organization is conceptualized as the interaction between individual factors (personality, needs, values, etc.) and organizational factors (structure, supervisory practices, goals, etc.) (Friedlander & Greenberg, 1969, p. 3). According to Litwin and Stringer (1974), the concept of climate shows the characteristics of an environment that is directly or indirectly perceived by the surrounding individuals. According to Waters, Roach, and Batlis (1974) on the other hand, the climate is a set of characteristics specific to a particular organization that is affected by the organization's members and the way it reaches an agreement with the environment. The most recognized definition of the concept of organizational climate was made by Taguiri and Litwin in 1968. According to this definition, climate is the relatively permanent quality of the total environment that is (a) experienced by its members, (b) that affects the behavior of its members, and (c) that can be explained by the values constituting certain characteristics of the organization (1968, p. 25). Organizational climate specifies the perceived characteristics of the work environment by employees and serves as a major force in influencing the work behavior of these employees (Hodgetts, 1991).

Organizational climate is defined as the widespread perception of employees about the organization. This is why it is different for every organization. However, it is possible to classify climates of organizations with certain similar characteristics.

Litwin and Stringer (1968) classified the organization climate under 3 headings.

- Authoritarian structured climate
- Democratic-friendly climate
- Achieving business climate

Authoritarian Structured Climate: It is the type of climate in which the continuity of official construction is emphasized. The areas of activity are defined in a clear and strict manner, and the roles of the members of the organization are determined. While the management encourages the title-based authority, it punishes deviation from the rules. Communication is only through official channels. In this type of climate, employees are more likely to react to the official structure and to show an aggressive attitude towards authority symbols. At the same time, job satisfaction is expected to be low.

Democratic-Friendly Climate: It is the type of climate in which there is an informal structure. It is desirable to have a friendly working environment, teamwork, group cohesion and mutual support. There is no punishment. In this type of climate; it is expected to focus on interpersonal relationships rather than focus on task performance and high job satisfaction.

Achieving Business Climate: It is the type of climate in which there is a structure where success sees a value. Innovative and creative efforts are supported. Internal organizational competition is valued and regarding the competition, feedback is fast. Success is rewarded. Informal communication is preferred. In this type of climate, success-oriented employees are expected to be more eager. Job satisfaction, embracing the organization and feelings of commitment will be high (Litwin & Stringer, 1968).

Work Alienation

The term "alienation" comes from the Latin word "alienatio". The word "Alienatio" is derived from the Latin verb "alienare" which means to move away or to send away. The meaning of "alienation" from the Latin root was defined as "causing separation" (Kanungo, 1982).

Marx defines alienation as an individual's view of himself or herself as a passive person separated from the object (Fromm, 2004, p. 37). In a broader sense, the meta-society evolves rapidly within the capitalist system, so that exchange value builds a growing sovereignty over the value of use, and as a result, the human being alienates to his/her product, labor, society and his/her own existence, moves away and loses his/her power to control these (Şimşek, Çelik, Akgemci and Fettahlioglu, 2006, pp. 572).

As a concept, "alienation" can be expressed as actions and experiences that lead to one's lack of feeling as a whole and division of one's consciousness (Bonjean & Grimes, 1970). Seeman indicated five types of alienation. These are powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, normlessness, and self-estrangement. Powerlessness is about people feeling unsuccessful in controlling their own destiny. Meaninglessness is the inability to make a definitive decision on what to do due to the fact that the individual cannot understand the situation because he/she is not provided with clear information in the decision-making process. Isolation means that the individual is abstracted from the society. If the individual is unable to communicate with other people in the society, he/she unable to establish relationships with other people and he/she has acknowledged these then isolation (social isolation) has occurred. The individual now feels himself/herself alone outside the community. Normlessness is defined as the way in which an individual determines his/her behaviors to achieve a certain purpose by resorting to socially unacceptable ways. Self-estrangement is defined as an inability of the individual to enjoy life, a difficulty in socializing, and as a result, alienating to his/her own self (Seeman, 1959).

Alienation to work is the feeling that the elements that have a significant impact on one's activities and work are out of his/her control (Pearlin, 1962). Hirschfeld and Feild stated that work alienation is showing no interest in working (2000, p.790). Work alienation is the indifference of employees to the goals of the organization, rules, and principles of the work, work environment, colleagues, and various organizational events. In short, it can be expressed as the indifference to the act of working (Ayaydin, 2012).

The Relationships among Individual Values, Work Alienation, and Organizational Climate

An examination of the literature reveals the fact that there are no studies exhibiting the relationship between individual values and work alienation. The studies regarding individual values and manager-employee value congruence generally focus on the relationship between values and organizational commitment and values and job satisfaction. According to Finegan, if the employee is working in a workplace that is compatible with his/her values then he/she will be more committed to the organization, and if he/she is working in a workplace that is incompatible with his/her values then he/she will be less committed and less productive (2000). In other words, the existence of value congruence affects positive behaviors in an affirmative way while it prevents negative behaviors. The study by Findikli exhibits the fact that the harmony of manager-employee business values affects job satisfaction positively (2012). Parallel to this

work, it has been presented that the value congruence of employees with their organizations and managers is positively related to organizational commitment and job satisfaction, and negatively related to the intention to leave the job and job turnover rate (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998). The study by Seybolt and Gruenfeld suggest that work alienation and job satisfaction are similar and parallel terms, and the subjects that are positively related to job satisfaction are negatively related to work alienation (1976, 193).

As a result of their work within the scope of the literature about the relationship between values and organizational climate, Wallace, Hunt, and Richards reported that there is a mutual relationship between business values and organizational climate (1999). It has been determined that individual values and manager-employee value congruence have a positive effect especially on ethical climate (Grojean, Resick, Dickson and Smith, 2004). In parallel with the literature, Vijayakumar concluded in his work that business values and management style are related to organizational climate (2007). The type of values employees perceive is related to the type of climate. A positive organizational climate is observed in organizations where value perceptions such as coherence and universality are higher. Climate is perceived to be more negative in organizations where power value comes to the forefront (Chernyak - Hai & Tziner, 2016).

Examining the relationship between organizational climate and work alienation through the structure, Kakabadse found that central and formal structures were positively related to work alienation (1986). There is a meaningful relationship between organizational climate and work alienation, and this relationship varies according to the type of climate. Positive organizational climate reduces work alienation (Demirez and Tosunoglu, 2017).

The Research

This section contains the research model, hypotheses, sample, scales used in the research and findings of the research results.

Research Model and Hypotheses

The main purpose of this research is to determine whether employees' perceptions of their own values and their perceptions of their managers' values (manager-employee value congruence) affect the work alienation emotions of employees and whether there is a mediating role of organizational climate in this relationship.

In order to understand these relationships, two models have been created, namely the basic model and the mediator model.

Figure 1. The Basic Model

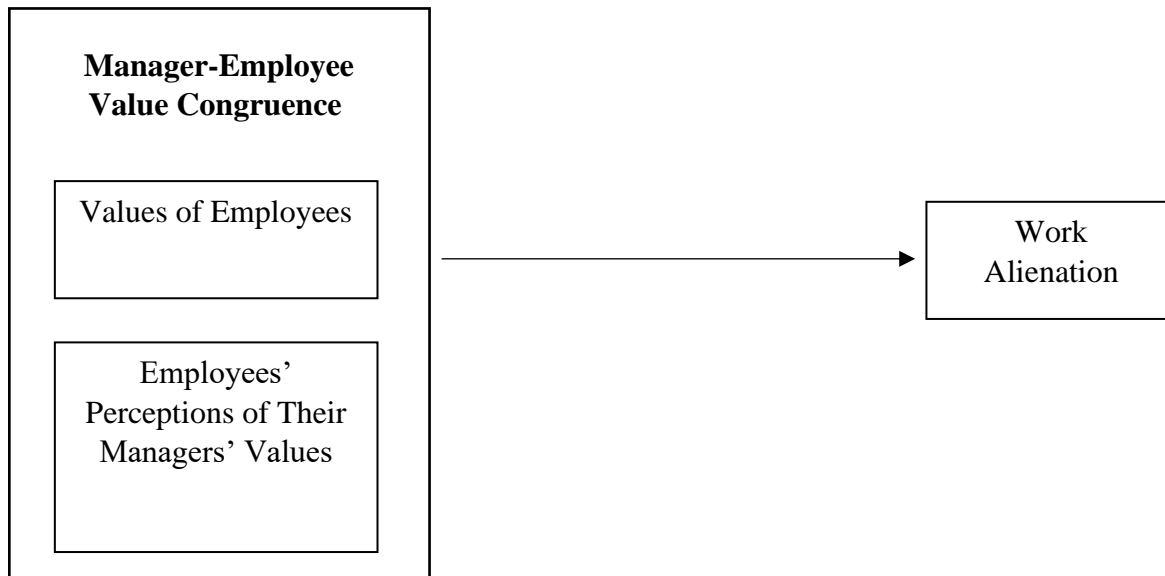
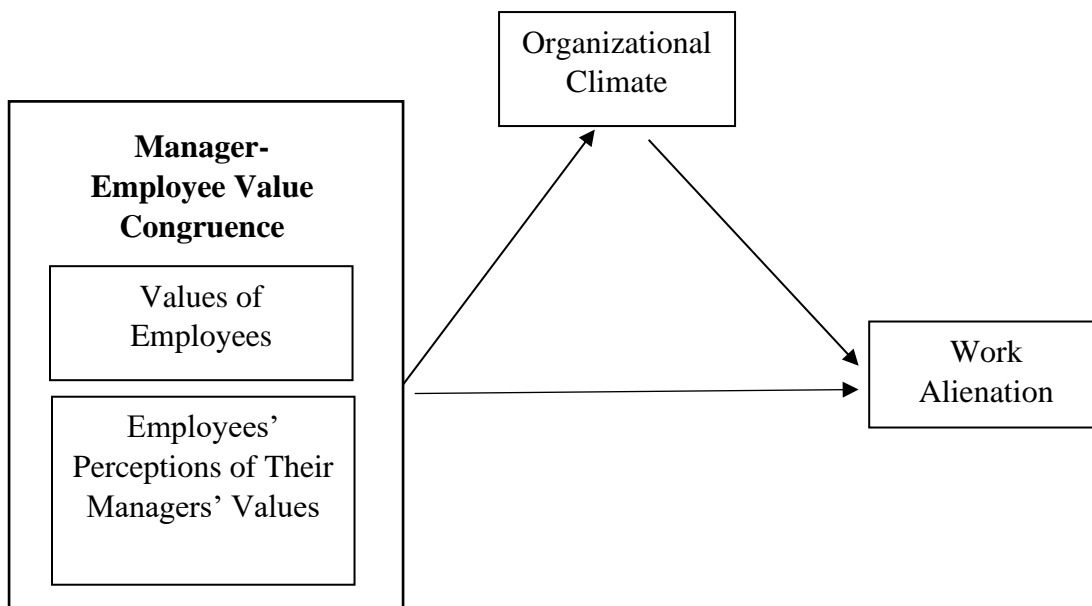


Figure 2. The Mediator Model



The study consists of two basic hypotheses. For the analysis of the mediating effect, two sub-hypotheses were formed under hypothesis two.

H1: The relationship between employees' own values and their perceptions of their managers' values (manager-employee value congruence) has an effect on work alienation emotions.

H2: Organizational climate has a mediating role in the effect of the relationship between employees' own values and their perceptions of their managers' values (manager-employee value congruence) on work alienation emotions.

H2a: There is a relationship between organizational climate and the relationship between employees' own values and their perceptions of their managers' values (manager-employee value congruence).

H2b: There is a relationship between organizational climate and employees' work alienation feelings.

Method

The basic model and the mediator model were tested in the study. Linear regression analysis was used to measure the effect of manager-employee value congruence on work alienation which is included in the basic model.

In order to explain the mediating role of organizational climate between manager-employee value congruence and work alienation, the causal step approach was used which was first mentioned by Judd and Kenny (1981) and used widely by referring to the study of Baron and Kenny (1986) (Burmaoglu, Polat and Meydan, 2013). According to this approach, the following conditions must be present in order for the mediation effect to be mentioned (Judd & Kenny, 1981; Baron & Kenny, 1986).

- There should be a statistically significant relationship between the independent variable (manager-employee value congruence) and the dependent variable (work alienation).
- There should be a statistically significant relationship between the independent variable (manager-employee value congruence) and the mediating variable (organizational climate).
- A statistically significant relationship should be observed when analyzing the mediating variable (organizational climate) together with the independent variable (manager-employee value congruence) and the dependent variable (work alienation) within the model.

In the regression analysis where the mediating variable (organizational climate) is included in the model, the regression coefficient of the independent variable (manager-employee value adjustment) on the dependent variable (work alienation) must be lower than the unmediated regression coefficient.

Sample

The employees working in the head offices of the oil and LPG companies in the energy sector in Istanbul, Turkey constitute the population of the research. Since the population is wide and scattered, the research was carried out on the sample. The main factor to be considered when determining the number of persons in the sample is the fact that the quantity and quality of the sample reflect the characteristics of the population.

The data were collected in person and online by random sampling method. Regarding the sample size; Comrey and Lee point out that 50 is quite weak, 100 is weak, 200 is middle, 300 is good, 500 is very good and 1000 and above is excellent (1992). According to Tavşancil, the sample size

should be at least 5 times the number of variables (2014). For this reason, a total of 315 samples are required. After data collection, missing data were excluded and the obtained 304 samples were thought to be enough.

62% of the respondents are male. 47% of the participants are between 30 and 40 years of age. 31% is observed to be in the age range of 40-50 years. Those who are under 30 years constitute 13% of the sample whereas the remaining 9% are over 50 years old. The majority of the sample (49%) has a bachelor's degree. 28% is observed to have a master's degree. 51% of the participants are managers. The rest are experts, administrative and technical staff. While the average tenure in the current workplace is 7 years, the average total working time is 16 years.

Scales

Schwartz's 40-item Portrait Values Scale was used to measure the employee values and their perceptions of manager values (manager-employee value congruence). The Likert-type scale, which was translated into Turkish and used in studies in Turkey, was utilized in the study (Findikli, 2012, pp. 303-305). The reliability of the scale was Cronbach's alpha = 0.795.

The widely accepted scale for work alienation was developed by Hirschfeld and Feild in 2000 and consists of 10 items (p.1902). The Likert-type scale, which was translated into Turkish and used in articles and dissertation studies in Turkey, was utilized in the study type (Ayaydin, 2012, p. 121; Tuzun, 2014, p. 191). The reliability of the scale was Cronbach's alpha = 0.911.

The questionnaire, which was used to measure organizational climate in the research, was developed as 20 items by Yahyagil (2006, p. 101). In the study, 13 items of the scale were included as Likert-type and were used as a scale. The reliability of the scale was Cronbach's alpha = 0.905.

Findings

Correlation and regression analyses were used to test the hypotheses in this study. The basic model and the mediator model were tested with the SPSS 23 program.

Factor analysis was performed with priority to determine manager-employee value congruence. The value dimensions and averages resulting from the factor analysis are exhibited in Table 1. The value dimensions that employees perceived for their managers were found as self-enhancement, self-transcendence, hedonism, openness to change and conservation. The value dimensions of employees themselves were emerged as self-enhancement, self-transcendence and hedonism.

Table 1. The Results and Means of Individual Values Factor Analysis

VALUE DIMENSIONS	VALUE TYPE	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
SELF-ENHANCEMENT	Employee Value	3.61	0.81
	Perceived Manager Value	4.12	0.76
SELF-TRANSCENDENCE	Employee Value	4.40	0.43
	Perceived Manager Value	3.49	0.91
HEDONISM	Employee Value	3.97	0.73
	Perceived Manager Value	3.65	0.93
OPENNESS TO CHANGE			
	Perceived Manager Value	3.38	0.97
CONSERVATION	Employee Value	-	-
	Perceived Manager Value	4.18	0.85

The examination of the means of the perceived values of the values of employees and the values of employees' managers reveals the fact that the average values are close to each other in the dimensions common to the two groups. It has been determined that employees have a higher average in the dimensions of self-transcendence and hedonism than their perceptions of their managers' values.

In the measurement of manager-employee value congruence, the same questionnaire was given to the employees twice. At first, they were asked to determine their own values, and then they were asked to state their perceptions of their managers' values within the same scale. It is possible to indicate that as the difference between the points given by the employees to every item while determining their own values and the points given to their perceptions of their managers' values decreases, the congruence of the values of employees and managers increases. The manager-employee value congruence is found by adding the absolute values of the common value expressions that emerge as a result of the values of employees and employees' perceptions of their managers' values. Absolute values of the differences are taken because the fact that the difference between the values of employees and employees' perceptions of their managers' values has a negative or a positive value does not make any difference on the result of value congruence. The 40-item value scores can have a range from 1 to 160. It is emphasized differences having high values indicates a low degree of congruence and low values of differences indicates a high degree of congruence (Findikli, 2014).

As a result of this information, it is seen that the manager-employee value congruence average (4.4) obtained in the research has a low score and there is harmony between the two groups in terms of values.

The relationship between manager-employee value congruence and organizational climate and work alienation was tested by the correlation analysis method. The Pearson coefficients of the relationship between manager-employee value congruence and organizational climate and work alienation are given in Table 2. There is a positive (16), statistically significant ($p < .01$) and weak

($r < .50$) relationship between manager-employee value congruence and work alienation. It is possible to observe a weak ($r < .50$), statistically significant ($p < .01$) and positive (.24) relationship between manager-employee value congruence and organizational climate. A positive (.24), statistically significant ($p < .01$) and weak ($r < .50$) relationship was determined between organizational climate and work alienation.

Table 2. Pearson Coefficients among the Value Variables that have emerged in the Research

VARIABLES	1	2	3
1. Manager-Employee Value Congruence	1		
2. Work Alienation	.16**	1	
3. Organizational Climate	.24**	.24**	1

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

Linear regression analysis was conducted in order to examine the effect of manager-employee congruence on work alienation. In the regression analysis, manager-employee congruence is the independent variable and work alienation is the dependent variable. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Regression Analysis Results of the Effect of Employee Value Congruence on Work Alienation

Variable	F	β	t	p
Manager-Employee Congruence	8.285	0.163	2.878	0.004
R ²				0.03
Adjusted R ²				0.023

Dependent variable: Work Alienation

The effect of manager-employee value congruence was found to be positive and significant on work alienation ($\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$). The total variance explained is 2.3%.

H1: The relationship between employees' own values and their perceptions of their managers' values (manager-employee value congruence) has an effect on work alienation emotions.

According to the findings obtained at this stage, **there is a negative and significant effect of the relationship between employees' own values and their perceptions of their managers' values (manager-employee value congruence) on work alienation emotions. Hypothesis 1 has been accepted.**

The results of a three-stage regression analysis conducted to explain the mediating role between the manager-employee congruence of organizational climate and work alienation are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The Mediating Role of Organizational Climate in the Relationship of Manager-Employee Congruence and Work Alienation

	Work Alienation		Organizational Climate	
Analysis 1	B	t		
Manager-Employee Value Congruence	0.16**	2.878		
<i>R</i> ²	0.03			
<i>Adjusted R</i> ²	0.023			
<i>F Value</i>	8.285**			
Analysis 2			β	t
Manager-Employee Value Congruence			-0.24***	-4.273
<i>R</i> ²			0.06	
<i>Adjusted R</i> ²			0.054	
<i>F Value</i>			18.262***	
Analysis 3	B	t		
Manager-Employee Value Congruence	0.11*	1.983		
Organizational Climate	-0.21***	-3.634		
<i>R</i> ²	0.07			
<i>Adjusted R</i> ²	0.06			
<i>F Value</i>	10.913***			

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < 0.001$

As a result of the first analysis, a positive ($\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$) and significant effect of manager-employee value congruence was found on work alienation.

According to the results of the second analysis, a negative ($\beta = -0.24$, $p < 0.001$) and significant effect of manager-employee value congruence was found on organizational climate. This result reveals that organizational climate can play a mediating role between manager-employee value congruence and work alienation.

In the final analysis, organizational climate is included in the model as a mediating variable. As a result of the analysis, organizational climate was observed to ($\beta = -0.21$, $p < 0.001$) have a negative and significant effect on job satisfaction. The coefficient β of the effect of manager-employee value congruence was determined to decrease from 0.16 ($p < 0.01$) to 0.11 ($p < 0.05$).

H2: Organizational climate has a mediating role in the effect of the relationship between employees' own values and their perceptions of their managers' values (manager-employee value congruence) on work alienation feelings.

As a result of the three-stage regression analyses made, organizational climate has a partial mediating role in the effect of the relationship between employees' own values and their

perceptions of their managers' values (manager-employee value congruence) on work alienation feelings. Hypothesis 2, Hypothesis 2a and 2b are accepted.

Conclusion and Suggestions

According to the results obtained in this study, manager-employee value congruence was found to be high. It is possible to conclude that employees' thoughts about their managers' values and their own values are similar and therefore they are compatible.

In the literature, there is no study that examines the relationship between values and work alienation. Studies that examine the relationship of work alienation with organizational commitment and job satisfaction were found. According to the results of these studies, positive behaviors increase and negative behaviors decrease as the manager-employee value congruence increases (as the numerical point difference decreases statistically). For this reason, the relationship between manager-employee value congruence and work alienation is expected to be negative. In this study first of all, it is found that there is congruence between employees and managers in terms of values. This means employees think that their own values and their manager's values are similar. This similarity was measured based on employee perception. As a result of this study, a negative and significant relationship was found between manager-employee value congruence and feelings of work alienation. The relationship is weak and it is not enough to explain feelings of work alienation.

In this relationship, the mediating effect of organizational climate was tested and it was found that it is related to both manager-employee value congruence and work alienation. The result is in parallel with the literature. As a result of the mediator analysis, it was found that organizational climate has a role of partial mediation in the relationship between manager-employee value congruence and work alienation.

In this study, employees' perceptions of their managers were analyzed in the value congruence perspective. The study has the feature to pioneer the works regarding the relationship between employees' perceptions of their managers' values and work alienation. Also value congruence still needs more working with the related organizational subjects.

As a result, work alienation is a state that causes employees to feel mentally distant and to feel bad. To prevent this from happening, it will be useful for businesses to increase the value congruence between managers and employees. The high level of value congruence between the manager and the employee will ensure that the organization climate is positive. Similarly, if the climate is positive, it will provide that the feeling of work alienation decreases and/or does not occur.

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