

Is Organizational Democracy Related to Organizational Trust?: The Case of Health Institution in Türkiye

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Abstract

The study aims to determine the existence of a relationship between organizational democracy and organizational trust and to investigate the potential impact of organizational democracy on organizational trust levels. The study adopted a quantitative method and a survey technique to collect data. The population and sample of the study consisted of health personnel working in a public hospital. The research data were collected through “Organizational Democracy Scale” and “Short Form of Organizational Trust Inventory”. Analytical techniques such as descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were employed to analyse the gathered data. Findings from the study reveal that participants' perceptions of both organizational democracy and organizational trust are situated at a moderate level. Moreover, a robust positive correlation between the perception of organizational democracy and the level of organizational trust was observed. Additionally, the perception of organizational democracy was found to exert a significant positive impact on the level of organizational trust. As a result, it is predicted that as a result of creating a democratic working environment in health institutions, the organizational trust of employees will be ensured.

Keywords: Organizational Democracy, Organizational Trust, Health Institutions, Grid-Group Theory, Türkiye.

1. INTRODUCTION

Democracy is defined as a type of government in which people govern themselves, and the employee factor is important for the organizational evaluation of democracy. In order to talk about organizational democracy, employees need to express their opinions about decisions, participate in decisions, have equal rights with other employees, and believe that the organization is fair and that the organization is accountable. Democratic character develops in democratic organizations. When differences between management and employees are ignored, employees tend to be active, and interaction increases (Perry, 2014).

One of the concepts assumed to be related to organizational democracy in the literature is organizational trust. Trust is an important concept among individuals, social relations, and organizations. Bromiley & Cummings (1996) define trust as the belief that commitments will be fulfilled, promises will be kept, and despite high interests, no behaviour will be done to harm

another person. It is thought that organizations with a high level of trust will increase the achievement of goals, high levels of performance, productivity, organizational success, and motivation, while low levels of trust lead to the opposite results. The participation of all employees in the organization is considered necessary to ensure organizational trust. For this, the biggest task falls to the management and the practices of the management (Asunakutlu, 2002; Eren & Akyüz, 2014).

The health sector is labour-intensive, where the human factor is significant, risk and uncertainty are intense, and mistakes are difficult to compensate for. In organizations where democratic practices are established, employees are encouraged to fulfil their duties with more self-confidence and to realize common goals. Hence, the levels of organizational trust and employees' perceptions of organizational democracy hold significant importance. This study aims to ascertain the perceptions of organizational democracy and levels of organizational trust among employees within healthcare institutions. Additionally, it seeks to identify the relationship between organizational democracy and organizational trust, and unveil the impact of organizational democracy perception on the level of organizational trust.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, we will assess the current literature on the relationship between organizational democracy and organizational trust within the framework of grid-group theory. According to the grid-group theory proposed by Mary Douglas, two contexts determine the classification of a social environment. These are grid and group social contexts. The network social context refers to the rules imposed on individuals from outside and the degree to which the individual is controlled. In contrast, the group social context refers to the degree to which the individual participates in society. Douglas argued that rating these two social contexts as high and low would result in 4 different combinations (high group-high network; low group-low network; high group-low network; low group-high network) and four different types of culture (hierarchical, individualistic, collectivist, and bureaucratic) (Douglas, 1982; Douglas, 1983).

2.1 Organizational Democracy

In order to comprehend organizational democracy, it is essential to initially elucidate the concept of democracy. The concept of democracy, which has its origins in Ancient Greece in the 5th and 4th centuries BC, is derived from the words “demos” people and “kratos” authority. Demos referred to the people living in a city, as well as the common people of the lower strata and the clergy, but did not include women, captives, and slaves, who constituted a large part of the total population. Kratos, on the other hand, carries meanings such as power, authority, and authority (Beetham, 2012; Dinçkol, 2017; Jent, 1967; Kaltsounis, 1990). From this point of view, the word democracy can be defined as “people's power” or “power belonging to the people” (Aktaş, 2015).

In the late 20th century, technological developments and sociocultural changes with the widespread use of the Internet also affected the science of management. It led to the introduction of democratic practices in organizations and the emergence of the concept of “organizational democracy” (Çankaya, 2018). The concept, which is called “organizational democracy” (Butcher & Clarke, 2002; Whiddon & Martin, 1989) and “workplace democracy” (Grady, 1990; Foley & Polanyi, 2006; Lansbury, 2009) in foreign literature, is called “organizational democracy” in Turkish literature (Erkan Coşan & Altın Gülova, 2014; Geçkil & Tikici, 2015; Tutar & Sadykova, 2014).

Organizational democracy is a form of management in which the organization is managed not only by managers and shareholders but also by all employees who have a stake in its performance (Carr & Mezillo, 2015; Witteloostuijn & Jong, 2008). Organizational democracy, which is also used

synonymously with industrial democracy, includes different concepts such as employee participation, participatory management, self-management, and employee empowerment (Han & Garg, 2018; Weber et al., 2009). The common point of the research on organizational democracy is the encouragement of employee participation in decisions, providing a fair working environment, and making employees feel valued (Lansbury, 2009). Furthermore, job satisfaction is regarded as crucial concerning employee performance, productivity, and efficiency (Tutar & Sadykova, 2014).

With organizational democracy, the delegation of more power and responsibility to lower-level employees in organizational decisions will create self-organizing small units. Psychological ownership in organizational activities is expected to be high due to individual participation, knowledge, and leadership (Butcher & Clarke, 2002). In democratic organizations, the democratic character develops and if the differences between decision-makers and employees are ignored, employees are more active and interaction between employees occurs at a higher level (Perry, 2014).

Participation, transparency, criticism, justice, equality, and accountability are the sub-dimensions of organizational democracy (Geçkil & Koçyiğit, 2017). Participation is also referred to as “employee participation” and “participatory management” and is sometimes used instead of organizational democracy (Kesen, 2015). Employee participation is vital in organizational democracy (Witteloostuijn & Jong, 2008). Transparency refers to the ability of everyone involved in the decision-making process and those affected by the decision to learn and use all relevant financial and non-financial information about a decision taken in the organization, which are trade secrets and not shared with the public (Geçkil & Koçyiğit, 2017; Forcadell, 2005; Pamukçu, 2011). The criticism dimension refers to the ability of employees at all levels to evaluate the policies, procedures, and activities of the organization in terms of being right, wrong, positive, or negative and to express their opinions easily as a result of this evaluation (Geçkil, 2013). In terms of organizational justice, interactions on the results of organizational activities are important in determining employees' perceptions of justice (İşcan & Sayın, 2010). Equality, which is a dimension of organizational democracy, is the fact that employees working in organizations have the same rights, and fairness is observed, regardless of differences such as language, religion, race, and gender (Bakan et al., 2017; Kılıç, 2011). Accountability is defined as “the obligation to account for actions and take responsibility” (Eryılmaz & Biricikoğlu, 2011).

2.2 Organizational Trust

Trust, which has an important role in ensuring social order, helps people live together, create good relationships and make these relationships permanent, and meet on common ground by exchanging ideas for a life together (Boztepe, 2013; Demirel, 2008). Since it is an abstract concept, trust is shaped by inference from the events and situations experienced, observation of various attitudes and behaviours, social relations and desires (Asunakutlu, 2002).

Trust is a multidisciplinary concept that undergoes examination across various fields and is approached from diverse perspectives. According to the views of personality theorists, trust is based on the depths of personality. According to the views of sociologists and economists, trust is conceptualized as trust within the organization, between organizations, and the trust of the employee in the organization. According to the views of social psychologists, trust is defined as several factors including interactions between the parties to trust, expectations from the other party, realization of expectations, possible risks, and development or prevention of trust by focusing on the source of trust (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996).

In the literature, there is a consensus that trust, which comes to the forefront in terms of the continuity of relationships for individuals and organizations, is an important element for

organizational success. However, since it is a multifaceted process, it is accepted that it requires a devoted effort to establish and maintain trust between individuals and organizations and that it takes place in the long term (Demircan & Ceylan, 2003; Yazıcıoğlu, 2009).

Organizational trust includes the idea that all managers and employees in the organization will behave fairly toward each other and will not interfere with their rights and interests (Demirkaya & Kandemir, 2014). In other words, it is expressed as “the expectation that the actions of the other party will be beneficial rather than harmful” (Asunakutlu, 2001). Since it is thought that the environment of trust in organizations is created by the management, the attitudes and behaviours of managers should not be ignored in the formation or destruction of organizational trust (Kalemci Tüzün, 2007).

Schoorman et al. (2007) define trust as the “willingness to take risks”. The level of trust refers to the amount of risk a person is willing to take. The sustainability of organizational activities such as determining organizational goals, teamwork, leadership, performance measurement, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction depends on the level of trust that employees (Eroğlu, 2014; Huff & Kelley, 2003). In an environment where the level of organizational trust is high, employees can express their ideas freely, there is less resistance to change, employees adopt their responsibilities, their productivity, their commitment to the organization is at a higher level and there is an environment of consensus in the organization (Yılmaz & Altınkurt, 2012).

Upon reviewing the literature on organizational trust, it becomes apparent that organizational trust encompasses several dimensions, namely trust in the manager, trust among employees, and trust in the organization (Börü et al., 2007). Management behaviours play an important role in the formation of trust between managers and employees (Whitener et al., 1998). In cases where employees do not trust their managers, they will not have positive expectations towards their managers and will make less effort (Brower et al., 2009). This situation leads to the emergence of conflicts in the organization, disruption of work, and or deadlock (Yeh, 2009).

Trust among employees refers to the trust in horizontal relationships between employees and employee groups within the organization (Polat, 2009). Trust in co-workers will increase cooperation, commitment, and effective communication among employees, thus increasing motivation by satisfying employees socially and emotionally (Ferres et al., 2004). Finally, the idea that employees are valuable for the organization they are in leads to the idea that they will be rewarded within the organization and that they will gain the behaviours that the organization wants from them. This will lead to trust in the organization (Wayne et al., 1997).

2.3 The Relationship between Organizational Democracy and Organizational Trust

The formation of trust makes participation in social life and social affairs easy, risk-free, and attractive and supports the formation of organizations in which order, permanence, and functionality are at the forefront (Zmerli & Newton, 2008). Trust is one of the important elements for the continuity and effective functioning of democratic systems (Mishler & Rose, 2005). The continuity of democracy depends on establishing relationships based on trust. People’s trust in the state and its institutions encourages them to participate in decisions. Participation is seen as one of the basic elements of democracy and this encourages the development of democracy (Uzar Kurtaran, 2019).

In addition, democratic practices contribute to the establishment of trust. The trust that employees in an organization have in themselves leads to an increase in their desire to take responsibility, their ability to do business, and ultimately their performance with the development of their sense of belonging (Kuşçu Karatepe, 2019). The level of trust has an impact

on the perception of democracy in organizations and the stability of democracy. Democracy is seen as more advantageous than other systems in terms of trust. In democratic societies where certain standards are established, individuals have certain rights. It supports individuals' trust in other organizations and individuals by developing protection mechanisms against situations that may cause breaches of trust such as discrimination, disrespect, and neglect (Rainer & Siedler, 2009).

Where the level of trust between organizations and individuals is high, efforts towards democracy are of great importance (Mishler & Rose, 2005). Trust and democracy are not mutually reinforcing concepts. While a high level of trust can create a long-term, successful democratic system, the opposite situation paves the way for an inadequate, dysfunctional democratic system (Ekmekçi, 2010). The level of trust is decisive for the functioning, continuity, and interaction of individuals and organizations. A high level of trust positively affects the willingness of employees in issues such as teamwork, cooperation, commitment, and task distribution (Çankaya, 2010).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Purpose and Research Questions

With a specific focus on health institutions, this study delves into the relationship between organizational democracy and organizational trust. The following questions were formed in line with the aims of the study:

- Is there a significant relationship between organizational democracy and organizational trust behaviors?
- Does organizational democracy have a significant effect on organizational trust?

3.2 Data Collection Tools

The survey method was employed as the data collection tool in the study, with a preference for the quantitative analysis method. "Organizational Democracy Scale" developed by Geçkil & Tikici (2015) consists of 28 statements; participation-criticism, transparency, justice, equality, and accountability dimensions. The 21st and 23rd items in the scale were removed from the study as a result of confirmatory factor analysis. The reliability coefficient for the organizational democracy scale was found to be 0.95; the dimensions of participation-criticism 0.88, transparency 0.88, justice 0.80, equality 0.83, and accountability 0.74. For the measurement of organizational trust, the "Short Form of Organizational Trust Inventory" developed by Bromiley & Cummings (1996) and translated into Turkish by Kalemci Tüzün (2006) consists of cognitive and emotional trust dimensions with 12 statements. In Kalemci Tüzün's (2006) study, which is the Turkish adaptation of the organizational trust scale, the reliability coefficient of the dimensions of the organizational trust scale was found as 0.85 for cognitive trust and 0.72 for emotional trust.

3.3 Study Sample and Population

The study population consists of 400 health personnel working in a public hospital. It was aimed to reach the employees of the health institution with the convenience sampling method. Accordingly, participants are 214 health personnel working in the health institution during the research and who accepted to participate in the research voluntarily.

3.4 Ethics Statement

Ethical approval was obtained from Sakarya University Ethics Committee for the research with a letter dated 08.11.2019 and numbered E.14137. In line with ethical approval, healthcare professionals who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study were informed and their verbal

consent was obtained. The research data were obtained based on the participant's responses to the questions in the questionnaire form.

3.5 Statistical Methods

IBM SPSS Statistics 24.0 and AMOS 24.0 data analysis programs were used to analyze the data obtained from the study. In order to determine the tests to be used in the analysis of the data, the suitability of the data for normal distribution and the homogeneity of variances between groups were tested. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was performed to determine the conformity of the data to a normal distribution. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were used to analyze the data.

In order to assess the validity of the data, a confirmatory factor analysis was employed. The 4th item of the organizational trust scale was not included in the analysis because it was included in both dimensions. Items 21 and 23 of the organizational democracy scale were excluded from the analysis because the regression coefficient was below 0.50 as a result of confirmatory factor analysis.

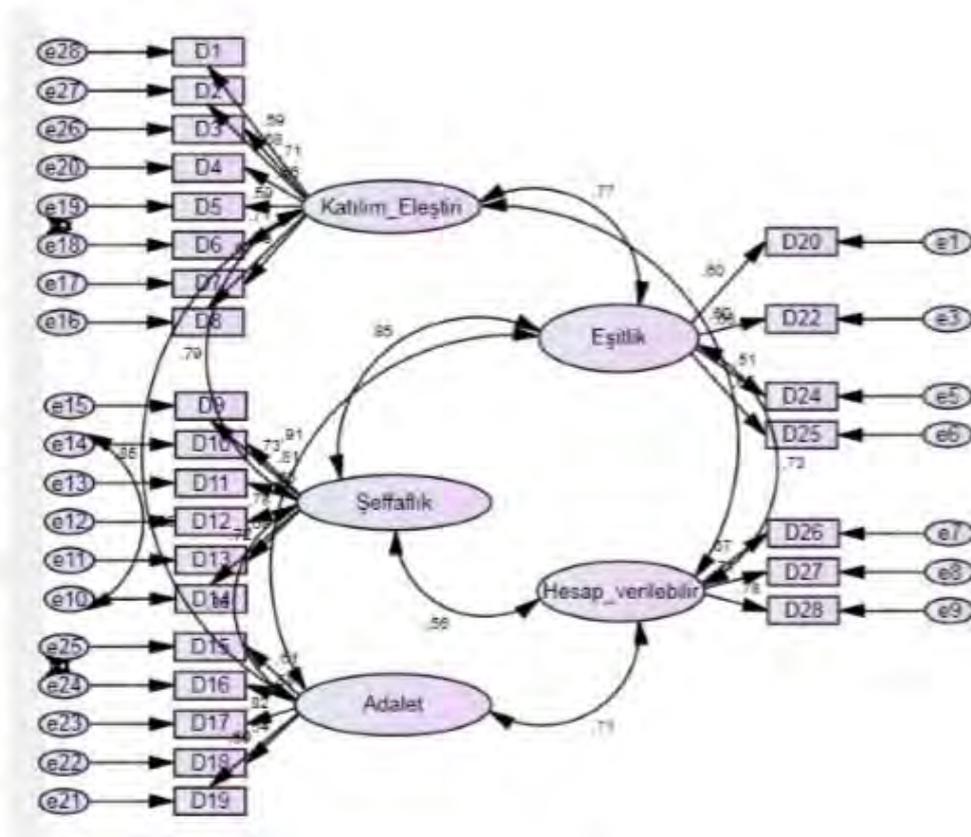


Figure 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Organizational Democracy Scale

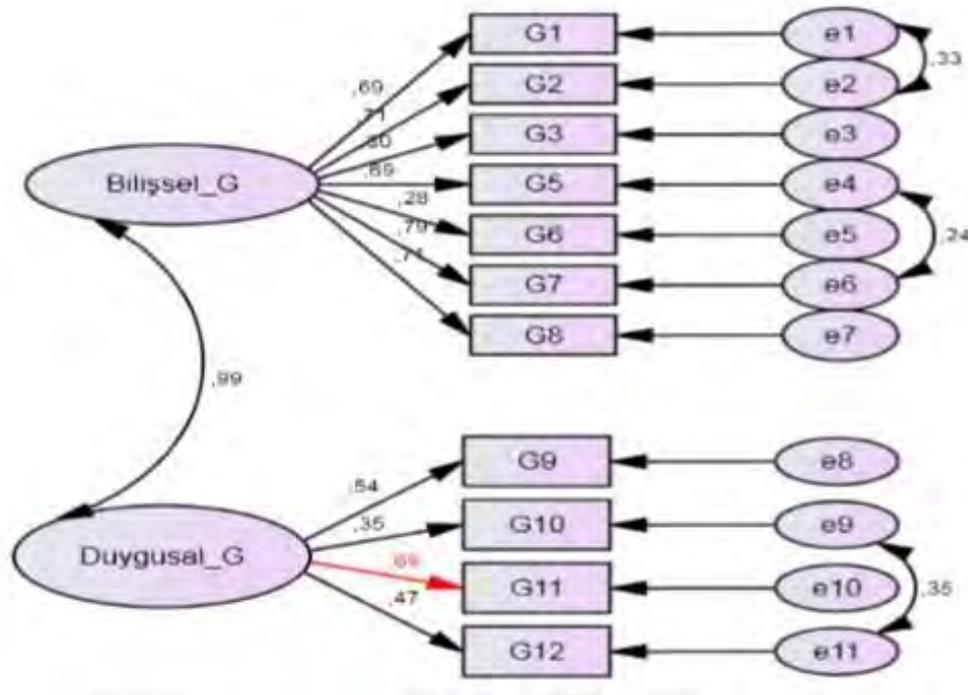


Figure 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Organizational Trust Scale

The reliability of the data was evaluated with the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. The Cronbach Alpha value of the organizational democracy scale is 0.938 and the Cronbach Alpha values of its dimensions vary between 0.869 and 0.691. The Cronbach Alpha value of the organizational trust scale is 0.871, 0.852 for the cognitive trust dimension, and 0.629 for the emotional trust dimension. According to these results, it is possible to say that the scales are highly reliable.

The overall mean of the organizational democracy scale is 2.90 ± 0.69 . The averages of its dimensions are as follows: participation criticism 2.75 ± 0.79 , transparency 3.27 ± 0.79 , justice 2.62 ± 0.80 , equality 3.20 ± 0.69 and accountability 2.85 ± 0.91 . Accordingly, it can be said that the participants' perceptions of organizational democracy are at a medium level except for the justice sub-dimension, and a low level in the justice sub-dimension. The overall mean of the organizational trust scale is 3.14 ± 0.73 ; the averages for the dimensions are 3.11 ± 0.79 for cognitive trust and 3.21 ± 0.76 for emotional trust. Accordingly, it can be said that participants' organizational trust levels are at a medium level.

Table 1. Reliability Analysis and Descriptive Statistics

Scales	α	n	\bar{x}	σ
Participation-Criticism	.869	8	2.75	.79
Transparency	.867	6	3.27	.79
Justice	.774	5	2.62	.80
Equality	.691	4	3.20	.69
Accountability	.762	3	2.85	.91
Organizational democracy	.938	26	2.90	.69
Cognitive trust	.852	7	3.11	.79
Emotional trust	.623	4	3.21	.76
Organizational trust	.871	11	3.14	.73

4. RESULTS

Of the participants, 124 (57.9%) were female, while 90 (42.1%) were male. When the marital status of the participants is analyzed, 123 (57.5%) are married and 91 (42.5%) are single. Upon analyzing the age distribution, it is seen that 40 (18.7%) are between the ages of 20-24, 63 (29.4%) are between the ages of 25-29, 30 (14.0%) are between the ages of 30-34 and 81 (37.9%) are between the ages of 35 \geq . Regarding the educational level of the participants, 40 (18.7%) had secondary/high school education, 61 (28.5%) had associate's degree and 113 (52.8%) had bachelor's degree. Of the participants, 139 (65.0%) were health personnel, 43 (20.1%) were administrative personnel and 32 (15.0%) were technical personnel. When we look at the working time of the participants in the institution, it is seen that 100 (46.7%) of the participants have worked for ≤ 6 years, 47 (22.0%) for 7-12 years, and 67 (31.3%) for 13 \geq years.

Table 2. Participants' Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Variable		n	%
Sex	Female	124	57.9
	Male	90	42.1
Marital status	Married	123	57.5
	Single	91	42.5
Age	20-24	40	18.7
	25-29	63	29.4
	30-34	30	14.0
	35 \geq	81	37.9
Education status	High school	40	18.7
	Associate degree	61	28.5
	Undergraduate	113	52.8
Position	Health personnel	139	65.0
	Administrative staff	43	20.0
Working duration	Technical staff	32	15.0
	≤ 6 years	100	46.7
	7-12 years	47	22.0
	13 \geq years	67	31.3

There is a high positive correlation between organizational democracy perception and organizational trust level ($r=0.709$; $p<0.01$). There is a high positive relationship between organizational democracy and cognitive trust sub-dimension ($r=0.706$; $p<0.01$), and a moderate positive relationship between emotional trust sub-dimension ($r=0.572$; $p<0.01$). There is a positive high-level relationship between organizational trust and participation-criticism sub-dimension ($r=0.620$; $p<0.01$); there is a positive medium-level relationship between transparency ($r=0.476$; $p<0.01$), justice ($r=0.585$; $p<0.01$), equality ($r=0.512$; $r<0.01$) and accountability ($r=0.424$; $p<0.01$) sub-dimensions.

Table 3. Relationship between Organizational Democracy and Organizational Trust

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Organizational democracy (1)	1								
Participation-Criticism (2)	.893**	1							
Transparency (3)	.705**	.503**	1						
Justice (4)	.866**	.700**	.579**	1					
Equality (5)	.708**	.521**	.915**	.562**	1				
Accountability (6)	.689**	.569**	.428**	.542**	.486**	1			
Organizational trust (7)	.709**	.620**	.476**	.585**	.512**	.424**	1		
Cognitive trust (8)	.706**	.628**	.448**	.588**	.484**	.421**	.962**	1	
Emotional trust (9)	.572**	.481**	.432**	.462**	.460**	.345**	.869**	.701**	1

Organizational democracy exerts a statistically significant impact on organizational trust ($p < 0.05$). The model created to predict this effect is significant and positive. The relationship coefficient of the model showing the effect of organizational democracy on organizational trust is 0.709 and the variance explained is 50.2% of the total variance. In other words, a change in the level of organizational trust significantly affects the perception of organizational democracy.

Table 4. The Effect of Organizational Democracy on Organizational Trust

Independent Variable	Unstandardized Values		Std. Values	t	p	R	R ²	F	p
	β	S.E.	Beta						
(Constant)	.773	.149		5.173	.000				
Organizational Democracy	.676	.046	.709	14.618	.000	.709	.502	213.700	.000

5. ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION

Although there are studies examining the relationship between organizational democracy and organizational trust in the literature, there are a limited number of studies in the sample of health institutions and health workers. In this study, the mean of the organizational democracy scale was calculated as 2.90 ± 0.69 and the mean of the organizational trust scale as 3.14 ± 0.73 . Accordingly, although the participants' perceptions of organizational democracy and organizational trust levels are at a medium level, their organizational trust levels are relatively higher. The scales employed in the study exhibit high levels of validity and reliability. A strong positive correlation exists between organizational democracy and organizational trust. Specifically, a high level of positive correlation is observed between organizational democracy and the cognitive trust sub-dimension of organizational trust, while a moderate level of positive correlation is noted between organizational democracy and the emotional trust sub-dimensions. Perception of organizational democracy significantly affects the level of organizational trust. Organizational democracy explains 50.2% of the change in organizational trust level.

As a result, we can say that employees' organizational trust levels will increase as a result of including organizational democracy practices in health institutions. Encouraging employees to participate in organizational decisions and activities and express their thoughts will contribute to organizational trust. Thus, it is thought that employees will be empowered to come up with new ideas and solve problems. Employees' belief that the work in the organization is managed transparently will prevent uncertainty and confusion in unforeseen situations. The idea that employees have equal rights within the organization will encourage them to work in harmony to achieve organizational goals. In addition, there will be a positive change in the employee's belief

that the organization can take responsibility for its actions, which will increase the belief in the maintenance and continuity of order in the organization. It should be taken into consideration that the words, attitudes, and behaviours of managers in health institutions are cognitively and emotionally evaluated by employees and affect organizational trust. For this reason, it should be kept in mind that openness, transparency, effective communication and consistency are important in managerial processes. On the other hand, employees should be encouraged to express themselves freely within the organization and their ideas, suggestions, and problems should be listened to without prejudice.

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