Power Distance as a Moderator of the Relationship between Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Impression Management[1]

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Abstract

This research discovers predictive effect of employees' organizational citizenship behaviors on impression management strategies as well as moderation effect of power distance on this interaction. To that end data was collected from 178 schoolteachers, who work at three different public elementary schools in Turkey, through questionnaire and analyzed with multifarious statistical methods. The results from hierarchical multiple regression analysis indicated that individuals engaged in organizational citizenship behaviors in order to form expected impressions of themselves in others' minds and perception of power distance has moderating effect on this process.

Keywords: Organizational Citizenship Behaviors, Impression Management, Power Distance, Moderation Effect and Behavior.

JEL Code Classification: D23, M12

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1. Introduction

In today's business environment, employees may tend to use some methods in order to impress their managers by using volitional behaviors. Managers may be affected by their employees' behaviors while they take decisions and evaluate performance. In the quest of determination of predictors of performance, researchers realized that employees' specific behaviors have significant relationships with performance, which were coined later as organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) (Organ, 1977: 47; Bateman & Organ, 1983: 588). These strong predictors may have certain relations with methods, which were used by employees to create positive perceptions in their managers' minds about themselves (Bolino, 1999: 83). However power distance, which originated from structures and cultural characteristics of organizations, may have a deterministic role on behaviors of employees (Asgari, Silong, Ahmad & Samah, 2008: 96).

In this context, the aim of this article is to examine the extent of organizational citizenship behaviors that were used as a means of impression management and to find out the effects of perception of power distance on this process. Initially theoretical background about OCBs, impression management and perception of power distance was explicated and possible relations between them were underscored. Following that method of analysis and findings were discussed. Our research was conducted with voluntary participation of 178 schoolteachers, who work in a public school. Data was gathered by questionnaires. After analyzing the data, we found that perception of power distance has significant contributions on the effects of both OCBs that immediately benefit specific individuals and OCBs that benefit the organization on some impression management methods.

2. Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

The notion of OCBs appeared in the field of organizational behavior spontaneously. Namely, researchers, who were in quest of the hypothesis, which was "satisfaction causes performance", realized that some discretionary actions of employees improve organizational effectiveness. Organ (1977: 47) proposed that the logic behind the "satisfaction causes performance" hypothesis was Adam's (1965) Theory of Equity. According to that point of view most people expect mutual balance, equity and justice in their daily interpersonal transactions and social relations. In this respect, employees would feel resentment when they experience an unfair treatment and tend to show antisocial behaviors toward organization (Khalifa and Truong, 2010: 138). On the other hand employees would show prosocial and discretionary behavior in case of being granted by management in excess of what is expected, in order to reciprocate the benefactor. Bateman and Organ (1983: 588) took this reasoning forward by emphasizing that performance does not originate from satisfaction consistently and directly in a causal relationship. The presence of some certain conceptions of behaviors due to satisfaction of employees, which were described by Katz and Kahn (1966),

facilitates operation of organization's social machinery. They coined these behaviors as "Citizenship Behaviors", some of which were helping other colleagues in their job-related problems, accepting difficult and burdensome duties without hesitation, trying to ease interpersonal conflicts in order to contribute creation of effective working climate and protecting fixture and sources of organization. The structure of OCBs was determined by Smith, Organ and Near (1983: 653-663) within a study, of which results produced two factors. While one group of items factored around the behavior of helping a specific person, the other group factored around some organization specific behaviors, such as; punctuality, attendance, not vesting time and observing the rules. The first item was named as "*Altruism*" and the latter as "*Compliance*". In this way at least two dimensions of OCB were distinguished empirically. In light of these progresses Organ (1988: 4) defined OCB as discretionary actions of employees, which are not part of their job requirements but contributing factors of organizational effectiveness (Organ and Moorman, 1993: 6). OCBs' structure comprised five dimensions, which were *Altruism, Conscientiousness, Courtesy, Sportsmanship,* and *Civic Virtue* (Moorman, Niehoff, and Organ, 1993: 214)*.* Altruism was defined as the helping behavior of employees toward their coworkers in times of need, such as orienting newcomers and lessening the workload of peers. Conscientiousness was defined as employees' job specific behaviors, which were beyond required limits; such as coming work early and leaving late, attending at work beyond norms, keeping workplace clean, spending less time on idle conversations. Courtesy was defined as preventive actions of employees against problem sources, in helping manner, with showing respect for each other's rights, avoiding creating problems for co-workers and being courteous in mutual interactions. Sportsmanship was defined as employees' demonstration of willingness toward being committed to organization, always focusing on the positive side of situation. Civic virtue was defined as employees' behaviors toward providing support for development of the organization and their voluntary participation to activities regarding organizational well-being (Organ, 1997: 64-65). However Brief and Motowidlo (1986: 711) defined these kinds of behaviors as prosocial behaviors and Williams and Anderson (1991: 602) examined OCBs in two categories, one of which comprised behaviors that benefit the organization and the other comprised behaviors that immediately benefit specific individuals. The former was in correspondence with *altruism* and the latter was in correspondence with Smith et al.'s (1983) *compliance* dimension. Allen, Barnard, Rush and Russell (2000: 98) in their study emphasized the issue of beneficiaries of OCBs. That is, OCBs consist of a good many of behaviors, some of which are performed toward supervisors. However some of OCBs are performed toward subordinates or other co-workers. Van Dyne and Graham (1994: 777), by setting off from civic citizenship conception, redefined the construct of OCBs in five dimensions, which were *loyalty*, *obedience*, *social participation*, *advocacy participation* and *functional participation*. Another redefinition of OCB was done by Organ (1997: 91) by comparing the discretionary characteristic of OCBs with

contextual performance. As a result of his theoretical analysis, he defined OCBs as employees' contributions to the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context of organizations that supports their task performance. In their comprehensive analysis on OCBs literature and empirical researches, Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Peine and Bachrach (2000: 514-558) tried to attract attention on close theoretically constructs of OCBs, such as extra-role behavior, prosocial organizational behavior, organizational spontaneity and contextual performance. In addition they exhibited all studied dimensions of OCBs by several prior researchers. At the same time they showed relations of OCBs with its antecedents and consequences. Study revealed important managerial consequences of OCBs, such as performance evaluation and contributions to organizational effectiveness. In this research OCBs were handled within two dimensions (Williams & Anderson, 1991), one of which is OCBs toward organization and the other one is OCBs toward individuals.

3. Impression Management

Impression management, also called self-presentation, corresponds to the control of individuals on the process by which others form impressions and general idea about them. (Larry & Kowalski, 1990: 34). On the other hand impression management can be treated as a kind of motive, which is aimed to control appearance of employees to others (Morrison & Bies, 1991: 523). Impression management can also be defined as upward influence behaviors of employees, which were engaged in so as to direct managers' evaluations and perceptions in favor of themselves. As people interact with each other, they make up specific perceptions, evaluations and treatments toward others around them. When individuals are asked to make judgments about others, they often recollect their predetermined categorization, which is divided into likeable or dislikeable. This points at evaluation process, which later on generates impressions toward others (Wayne & Ferris, 1990: 488). Impression management strategies can be applied downward by supervisors and upward by subordinates (Kumar & Beyerlein, 1991: 619). Leaders may engage in impression management behaviors in order to generate support of subordinates for their actions and decisions (Gardner & Martinko, 1988: 321). In addition, supervisors may need to justify their decisions thorough impression management, when they are responsible for a failure (Caldwell & O'reilly III, 1982: 134). On the other hand subordinates engage in impression management strategies in order to ensure their supervisors' liking for themselves and gain favorable performance appraisals (Wayne & Ferris, 1990: 495). Therefore it may be thought that success of organizations and employees mutually may be affiliated with application of impression management strategies properly (Gardner III, 1999: 34). Individuals generate impression management strategies due to specific stimuli, which comprise characteristics and behavior of individuals and audience with environmental cues. Individuals elicit impression management strategies as a consequence of interpretation of these stimuli

throughout cognitive, motivational and affective processes (Gardner & Martinko, 1988: 322). In parallel with Jones and Pittman's (1982) taxonomy, well accepted classification of impression management strategies consist of five dimensions, such as self-promotion, ingratiation, exemplification, intimidation and supplication. Self-promotion refers to individuals' attempts, by which they advertise themselves, express their successes and qualifications, such as knowledge, skills and abilities in order to be perceived distinguished by others. Ingratiation refers to individuals' behaviors by which they butter up, do favors and harmonize others in order to be perceived favorable and likeable by others. Exemplification refers to employees' extra role behaviors, which are beyond and above call of duty in order to gain devotion and be perceived as an example or role model by others. Intimidation refers to individuals' behaviors, whereby they try to make feel others about their means and capabilities to punish by a threatening manner. Supplication refers to individuals' behaviors, by which they try to be perceived by others as straitened for help due to their inadequacies (Bolino & Turnley, 1999: 190). In this research these taxonomy of impression management strategies were used as well.

4. OCBs and Impression Management

Although it was thought that employees show OCBs discretionally, research revealed that in the construct of contextual performance, managers were influenced by employees' OCBs, while appraising their performance and taking decisions about distribution of rewards (Kiker & Motowidlo, 1999: 603). Employees who engage in OCBs ease their manager's job. In response, due to their OCBs employees may gain liking of their managers (Allen & Rush, 1998: 248). Eastman (1994: 1380) asserted that their managers sometimes could perceive employees' OCBs as ingratiation. However employees, who engaged in OCBs consistently and sincerely were rewarded by their managers and comprehended as good citizens. Additionally, Morrison (1994: 1561) proposed that the boundary between in-role and extra-role behaviors was fuzzy in terms of OCBs' construct definition. She elaborated this boundary by redefining OCBs in the way of employees' perspective and found out that employees perceived many OCBs as in-role behaviors, which meant that employees engaged in OCBs in order to satisfy occupational requirements instead of acting in order to reciprocate benefits. Tepper, Lockhart and Hobler (2001: 790) also defended the belief that employees engage in OCBs as part of their job requirements, in order to impress their managers about their managerial decisions intentionally. Furthermore, in their empirical study Zellars, Tepper and Duffy (2002: 1073) found that some employees perceived OCBs as necessities in connection to their job requirements, instead of discretionary behaviors and continued to engage in OCBs, in spite of their superiors' abusive supervision.

In light of these studies it seems logical to mention about a link between OCBs and employees' impression management tactics. Correspondingly, Bolino (1999: 83) pointed out the relation between impression management strategies and OCBs of

employees. He asserted that individuals are motivated to engage in OCBs for impression management reasons. That is they perform OCBs in order to create expected images in their managers' minds and hence gain desired benefits. In another study, which examined the relationship between OCBs and impression management in terms of supervisor evaluations of employee favorability, Bolino, Varela, Bande and Turnley (2006: 284) found that supervisor focused impression management strategies have considerable effect on perceptions of managers about their employees' OCBs in the point of good soldiers' indication. Min, Park O., Park W., Park H. and Yun (2007: 132) also stressed that employees engage in OCBs so as to enhance their self-image, depending on results of their empirical research. In another study Nguyen, Seers and Hartman (2008: 161) found significant relationships between some impression management strategies and some OCBs. Results of their empirical study showed that ingratiation strategy correlated with conscientiousness, in addition self-promotion strategy correlated with altruism, which base the supposition that employees may engage in OCBs in order to impress their managers intentionally. Based on the above explanations we hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: Individuals engage in OCBs in order to form impressions, which they desire.

5. Power Distance

Power distance was coined by Mulder (1977) in the field of social psychology as a new view. According to Mulder (1977: 90) power refers to potential with which others' behaviors can be directed or determined and power distance refers to degree of inequality in terms of possession of power between less powerful and more powerful individuals, who belong to same societal system. On the other hand Hofstede (1980) handled power distance as a social existence. That is, societies differentiate depending on their cultural dimensions, one of which is power distance. According to Hofstede (1991: 97) power distance is the extent of expectation and acceptance of unequal distribution of power, by less powerful members of an organization. In organizations, where power distance is low, supervisors need subordinates' support and guidance to some extent. Namely, they are prone to appeal subordinates' opinions about the matter, while taking decisions. Correspondingly, subordinates feel disturbed due to close supervision instead they prefer participative actions. They can express their opinions cavalierly, whether agree or disagree with their superiors. In addition mutual cooperative actions and interdependence are inevitable characteristics of inter organizational relations. Equality and expression of discomfort originated from inequality is one of underscored characteristics of low power distance cultures. On the other hand members of organizations, which have high power distance culture, accept inequalities between superiors and subordinates as normal. Supervisors pay little attention to subordinates' opinions or perceptions, however they may expect to be seen generous and kind by subordinates, in comparison to low power distance

cultures. Subordinates behave and do their jobs according to supervisors' instructions. They can find little or no space for individual contributions (Mead, 1998: 36-37; Hofstede, 2001: 83; Ford & Kiran, 2008: 136).

6. Power Distance as a Moderator

As described above explanations, power distance pays important role in shaping individuals' relationships within an organization. Therefore perception and acceptance of power distance by individuals constitutes and relieves hierarchical structure of an organization. In their research Begley, Lee and Li (2002: 704) found that power distance moderated the relationship between employees' justice perception and other employee outcomes. They found that power distance has deterministic effect on variables. The study of Lam, Schaubroeck and Aryee (2002: 14) points the moderating role of power distance on relationship between employees' justice perception, job satisfaction, performance and absenteeism. Dash, Bruning and Guin (2006: 321) paid attention to moderating effect of power distance on nature of business relations in cross-country and country level analysis. According to findings in high power distanced societies banks have greater opportunity to exploit weaker corporate clients. In Farh, Hackett and Liang (2007: 721) study power distance's negative moderating effect was found between relationship of perceived organizational support and work outcomes, such as organizational commitment, job performance, conscientiousness, altruism and voice. Liu and Lao (2013: 1754) found that between the relationship of transformational leadership and employees' speaking up, power distance was a strong, negative moderator, which meant that in high power distanced organizations subordinates run into difficulty when they attempted to speak up. Randel and Wu (2011: 262) stressed that power distance is one of determiners of the relation between collective and relational identities of employees. Such that, high collective employees had strong relational identities in the context of low power distance. In parallel with the above discussion we hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 2: Power distance has moderating effect on the relationship between OCBs and impression management.

7. Method

7.1. Sample

In this research we needed a sampling frame that matches organizational requirements, easily be contacted with and on which our hypothesis can be tested. Following field explorations we realized that the schoolteachers meet these requirements. That's why schoolteachers are determined as our research population. To this end, the data was gathered from voluntary participation of 178 schoolteachers, who were selected according to simple random sampling method and work at a public elementary school in Turkey, which constitutes sampling frame of this research. The data was gathered through questionnaires. 129 of

participants (72.5%) were male and 49 of them (27.5%) were female. Ages of participants vary from 22 years to 63 years, with an average of 41.42 years (*SD*=7.77). Participants' period of tenure varies from 1 year to 34 years with an average of 10.87 years (*SD*=7.67). Demographic data was only used to explain characteristics of participants of this study.

7.2. Data Collection Instruments

7.3. Measure of OCBs

OCBs of schoolteachers were measured with the scale, which was developed by Basım and Şeşen (2006). Six point Likert-type scale measures OCBs within two dimensions, one of which is *OCBs toward organization* (11 items) and the other one is *OCBs toward individuals* (8 items). Ascending points show usage of OCBs. Validity of scale was tested with confirmatory factor analysis, ($\Delta\chi^2$=107.78, *p*<0.01, *SD*=50, $\Delta\chi^2$/*SD*=2.16, *RMSEA*=0.08, *CFI*=0.93, *IFI*=0.93) which verified that scale comprises two dimensions. The reliability of the scale was assessed using Cronbach's coefficient alpha of α=0.89, which showed that scale was reliable.

7.4. Measure of Impression Management

Impression management strategies of schoolteachers were measured with the scale, which was developed by Bolino and Turnley (1999) and later on adapted to Turkish context by Cantekin (2003). Five point Likert-type scale measures impression management strategies within four dimensions, which are *ingratiation, supplication, exemplification* and *self-promotion*. Ascending points indicate usage of this impression management strategy. Validity of scale was tested with confirmatory factor analysis, ($\Delta\chi^2$=404.12, *p*<0.01, *SD*=158, $\Delta\chi^2$/SD=2.56, *RMSEA*=0.10, *CFI*=0.92, *IFI*=0.92) which verified that scale comprises four dimensions. The reliability of the scale was assessed using Cronbach's coefficient alpha of α=0.96, which showed that scale was reliable.

7.5. Measure of Power Distance

Power of distance perception was measured with the scale, which was developed by Chelariu, Brashear, Osmonbekov and Zait (2008). Five Point Likert-type scales comprise five items. Ascending points indicate the extent to which power distance was perceived. Validity of scale was tested with confirmatory factor analysis, ($\Delta\chi^2$=6.82, *p*<0.03, *SD*=2, $\Delta\chi^2$/*SD*=3.41, *RMSEA*=0.08, *CFI*=0.95, *IFI*=0.95) which verified that scale comprises one dimension. The reliability of the scale was assessed using Cronbach's coefficient alpha of α=0.78, which showed that scale was reliable.

8. Discussion and Results

Results show that, teachers' OCBs toward organization (*M*=3.99, *SD*=0.53) and OCBs toward individuals (*M*=4.16, *SD*=0.53) are above average, which means that

they engage in both OCBs. On the other hand teachers' engagement in impression management strategies are below average (Table 1), which means that teachers are not likely to engage in much impression management strategies. Additionally teachers' perception of power distance is below average (*M*= 2.30, *SD*=0.79). Namely they perceive more of a low power distanced context.

Correlations between dimensions of variables show that (Table 1) there is a negative, weak and significant relationship between perception of power distance and OCBs toward individuals and positive, moderate and significant relationship between perception of power distance and impression management strategies. In addition OCBs toward individuals are in negative, weak and significant relationship with three strategies of impression management, which are supplication, exemplification and self-promotion. At the same time strong, positive and significant relationships are seen between both OCBs and between strategies of impression management.

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations and Correlation Coefficients

Variables	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Power Distance	2.30	.79	(.78)						
2. OCBs Toward Individual	4.16	.53	-.189[*]	(.81)					
3. OCBs Toward Organization	3.99	.53	-.027	.712[**]	(.83)				
4. Ingratiation	2.32	.85	.426[**]	-.098	.067	(.86)			
5. Supplication	1.59	.93	.559[**]	-.287[**]	-.057	.765[**]	(.94)		
6. Exemplification	1.66	.95	.567[**]	-.262[**]	-.033	.818[**]	.926[**]	(.89)	
7. Self-promotion	1.81	.84	.446[**]	-.175[*]	.024	.737[**]	.858[**]	.845[**]	(.89)

**p<.01; *p<.05; The values in parenthesis show internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha).

Hypotheses were tested via hierarchical multiple regression analysis (Aiken & West, 1991), by which causal relations between variables are revealed. At the first step age and tenure were included into analysis as control variables, later on in the second step effects of predicting variables, which were OCBs and power distance, were analyzed. Following that, in the subsequent steps, two way and three way interactions were included into analysis. Predictive effects of OCBs and perception of power distance over impression management strategies can be seen in Table 2.

As can be seen in Table 2, while demographic variables were under control, OCBs toward individuals have significant and negative effect on supplication (β =-.273, *p*<.01) and exemplification (β=-.260, *p*<01), OCBs toward organization have significant and positive effect on exemplification (β=.178, *p*<.05) at the same time perception of power distance positively and significantly affected all impression management strategies, which are ingratiation (β=.420, *p*<.01), supplication (β=.530, *p*<.01), exemplification (β=.539, *p*<.01), self-promotion (β=.442, p<.01).

When two way interactions are examined, deterministic effect of perception of power distance on OCBs toward individuals' negative and significant effect on both supplication (β=-.222, *p*<.01) and exemplification (β=-.167, *p*<.05) and OCBs toward

organization' significant and positive effect on supplication (β=.234, *p*<.01), exemplification (β=.237, *p*<.01) and self-promotion (β=.218, *p*<.01) is apparent. Findings of this research partially support both hypotheses. That is, individuals engage in not all OCBs in order to form specific impressions, which do not comprise all strategies. At the same time, perception of power distance has a determining effect on this process.

Table 2: Results of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis: Effects of Predicting Variables on Impression Management Strategies

Steps	Ingratiation			Supplication			Exemplification			Self-promotion		
	B	Beta	ΔR²	B	Beta	ΔR²	B	Beta	ΔR²	B	Beta	ΔR²
1 Constant	-.481			-.910			-.785			-.721		
Age	.012	.106	.013	.022	.182	.038*	.020	.162	.025	.015	.138	.051**
Tenure	.001	.013		.002	.017		-.001	-.006		.011	.107	
2 PD	.446	.420**		.616	.530**		.633	.539**		.458	.442**	
OI	-.184	-.116	.202**	-.474	-.273**	.361**	-.455	-.260**	.364**	-.278	-.180	.236**
OO	.276	.156		.291	.167		.312	.178*		.284	.183	
3 PD x OI	-.228	.103		-.539	-.222**		-.409	-.167*		-.375	-.173	
PD x OO	.311	.148	.022	.539	.234**	.040**	.551	.237**	.036*	.448	.218**	.032*
OO x OI	.224	.084		-.051	-.017		.021	.007		.000	.000	
4 PD x OO x OI	-246	-068	.003	-261	-.065	.003	-.217	-.054	.002	.004	.001	.000

**p<.01, *p<.05, PD: Power Distance, OO: OCBs Toward Organization, OI: OCBs Toward Individual

According to results, perception of power distance effects teachers' tendency to engage in impression management behaviors. Individuals' likeliness to use mentions instead of direct contacts as power distance ascends may be the reason of this effect (Merkin, 2006). Another reason may be the Individuals' considerations about direct contributions' futility, therefore inclination to engage in OCBs (Asgari et al., 2008). In addition supervisors, who are in a higher statue and who grasp power, attract attention of subordinates. That's why subordinates may struggle to impress their supervisors to secure their positions (Doğan & Kılıç, 2009). Another finding of this research is negative effect of OCBs toward individuals on supplication and exemplification strategies. This finding shows that when individuals help each other and make out close relations, necessity to engage in supplication and exemplification strategies is eliminated. Because, individuals are helped without engaging in supplication and motivated without exemplifications. In addition, another finding reveals that individuals' engagement in OCBs toward organization has effect on exemplification strategy, which verifies that individuals may use exemplification strategy so as to have favorable performance appraisal or other promotions (Bolino et al., 2006). Results of dual interactions reveal that power distance has moderation effect on OCBs predictive influence on impression management strategies, which means that perception of power distance is one of shaping factors of individuals' behaviors toward others and organization as

hypothesized. The higher the power distance, the more individuals would tend to engage in OCBs toward organization so as to impress their supervisors and benefit more.

9. Conclusion

In this article we have analyzed predictive effect of OCBs toward individuals and toward organizations on impression management strategies as well as moderating role of perception of power distance between these interactions. In order to do that with participation of schoolteachers our hypotheses were tested. We have revealed significant effects of each kind of OCBs on impression management strategies of employees. In addition, influence of power distance perception on impression management strategies was showed up. Although or study have limitations in terms of sample size and context, our findings shed light on an unknown spot in field of organizational behavior. As distinct from other studies in this research we analyzed a new model of relationships between variables of organizational citizenship behaviors, perception of power distance and impression management strategies, which is not researched before. By this means we have discovered deterministic influence of perception of power distance on the relationship between OCBs and impression management strategies. In this way we filled a gap in field of organizational behavior and give inspiration to researchers for new explorations. The value of this study arises from its unique model, which explains moderation effect of perception of power distance on relationship between OCBs and impression management strategies. In future studies our hypotheses may be tested in different contexts other than schoolteachers and both in collectivist and individualist societies. Results taken from collectivist and individualistic societies may be compared in respect of moderation role of power distance perception.

Additionally, supervisors and managers may pay attention to our findings in order to improve efficiency of their employees and overall organization. Results of this research can be applied and paid attention in managerial decision-making processes. Such that, supervisors may consider effects of power distance perception on employee's behaviors with comparison to their organizational culture. In this way supervisors may comprehend and evaluate the real reasons of mentions and other extra role behaviors of their subordinates, which may ensure effective use of time, energy and other limited sources of organization. Moreover by this means, supervisors may differentiate good soldiers and self-seekers of their organizations. This approach may also improve satisfaction of employees. That's why low turnover rates, improved commitment and long tenure of employees may be assured.

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