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The Mediating Role of Implicit Leadership in The Effect of Locus of Control and Organizational Culture on Employees' Organizational Commitment¹

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Kontrol Odağı ve Örgüt Kültürünün Çalışanların Örgütsel Bağlılığına Etkisinde Örtük Liderliğin Aracı Rolü	The Mediating Role of Implicit Leadership in The Effect of Locus of Control and Organizational Culture on Employees' Organizational Commitment
Öz <p>Bu çalışma; kontrol odağı ve örgüt kültürünün örgütsel bağlılık üzerindeki etkilerini, örtük liderliğin [çalışanların zihinlerindeki lider prototipi (örtük liderlik teorileri), mevcut yöneticilerinin liderlik özelliklerine ilişkin çalışan algıları (algılanan liderlik) ve uyum değişkeni (örtük liderlik teorileri ile algılanan liderlik arasındaki uyum)] aracılık rolü ile birlikte incelemektedir. Balıkesir ilinde eğitim ve sağlık sektöründe görev yapmakta olan 558 çalışandan elde edilen verilere göre, iç kontrol odağı ile tüm örgüt kültürü boyutları (esnek, rekabetçi ve hiyerarşik) örgütsel bağlılığı pozitif yönde etkilemekte ve algılanan liderlik ile uyum değişkeni söz konusu bu etkilere aracılık etmektedir. Ayrıca araştırma sonuçları, örtük liderlik teorilerinin oluşumunda iç kontrol odağı ile esnek örgüt kültürünün pozitif, dış kontrol odağının ise negatif yönde etkisinin olduğunu göstermektedir.</p>	Abstract <p>This study investigates the effects of locus of control (LOC) and organizational culture on organizational commitment together with the mediating role of implicit leadership [i.e., leader prototype in the minds of the employees—ILTs, perceived leadership—ILTs recognition, and congruence (between ILTs and ILTs recognition) variable]. According to the data collected from 558 employees in the education and health care sectors within Balıkesir province of Türkiye, internal LOC and all dimensions of organizational culture (i.e., flexible, market, and hierarchy) exhibit a positive influence on organizational commitment with the mediation role of ILTs recognition and congruence variable. Findings also indicate that internal LOC and flexible culture positively affect ILTs, while external LOC negatively.</p>
Anahtar Kelimeler: Örgütsel Bağlılık, Örtük Liderlik, Kontrol Odağı, Örgüt Kültürü	Keywords: Organizational Commitment, Implicit Leadership, Locus of Control, Organizational Culture
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1. Introduction

Rotter's Social Learning Theory serves as the foundation for the formulation of the idea of locus of control (LOC). As a personality dimension, LOC refers to people's general expectations regarding whether all positive or negative events that affect them are under the control of their own actions or personality traits or by external forces like chance, luck, or fate (Rotter, 1990). Individuals who hold the view that their experiences and events are influenced by their own actions and that they possess agency over them are said to have an internal LOC. Conversely, individuals who believe that chance, luck, fate, or other external forces play a significant role in the occurrence of events are said to have an external LOC (Rotter, 1966). One may argue that possessing an internal LOC is associated with positive personality characteristics, while an external LOC is linked to negative traits. Furthermore, those with an internal LOC tend to exhibit greater success in their professional endeavors.

Organizational culture refers to the sum of beliefs, values, traditions, and organizational practices shared by members of an organization. These are relatively unchanging and long-lasting and are passed on to subsequent generations of members (Buchanan & Huczynski, 1997). Organizational culture is challenging to replicate because it encompasses unspoken values and shared assumptions among its members, as well as unique elements tied to the organization's history. The inclusion of this particular trait confers a competitive advantage, a crucial factor for the prosperity and longevity of organizations (Barney, 1986). Schein (1984, 1990) examines the concept of organizational culture across three distinct levels: visible artifacts, values, and basic assumptions. The literature on organizational culture types exhibits variation, with one particularly significant contribution by Cameron and Quinn. In their four-box "Competing Values Framework" model, the culture forms are called hierarchy, market, clan, and adhocracy culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2006): Hierarchy culture is dominated by high levels of structuralization, authority, and standardized rules. In market culture, the main values of organizations are competitiveness and productivity. Friendly relations, teamwork, a sense of unity, employee participation, and integration with the organization are common features of clan culture. In an adhocracy culture, organizational structure is low, and individual creativity and innovation are expected.

The concept of "Implicit Leadership Theories" places emphasis on the followers rather than the leader within the leadership process (Tabak et al., 2010; Tabak et al., 2013). In a broader sense, implicit leadership theories (ILTs) represent the beliefs held by individuals regarding the characteristics and actions that a leader should possess (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004). When we examine the theoretical foundations of ILTs, we see the theory of leadership categorization, which was formulated by Lord et al. (1984). In general, leadership categorization theory is based on comparing the concrete qualities and behaviors of the potential leader with the ideal or typical leader prototype that followers have previously created in their minds (Junker & van Dick, 2014). When the prototype of the leader in the minds of the employees and the concretely observed qualities and behaviors of the potential leader are compatible, the potential leader will be accepted as a leader by the followers. Offermann et al.'s (1994) and Epitropaki and Martin's (2004) studies made a great contribution to the field. When examining other studies in the field, it can be observed that demographic variables (Paris, 2004; Epitropaki & Martin, 2004), cultural differences (Epitropaki et al., 2013; Shen, 2019), and personal characteristics (Keller, 1999; Lim et al., 2010) are the focal factors affecting the formation of ILTs. And transformational leadership,

leader-member exchange (LMX), well-being, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance are the factors affected by ILTS (Epitropaki et al., 2013). In some studies (Topakas, 2011; Junker et al., 2011) based on intrapersonal congruence, it was determined that the congruence between the leader prototype in the minds of the employees (ILTs) and employees' perceptions of the potential leader's characteristics and behaviors (ILTs recognition) affected some other organizational results.

Organizational commitment is the desire of the employee to maintain membership and the desire to exert effort to achieve the goals of the organization (Mowday et al., 1979). Among the many definitions and classifications, the most widely accepted one is the three-component model of Meyer and Allen (1991). In "affective commitment" an emotional orientation towards the organization and identification with the organization come to the fore. "Continuance commitment" is based on awareness of the costs that will be encountered as a result of leaving the organization. The sense of obligation to the organization and loyalty are the common features of "normative commitment". The fact that employees with high commitment to their organizations exhibit higher performance (Meyer et al., 2002) and have a low desire to leave the job (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) that will contribute to the organization reveals the importance of organizational commitment for organizations. The comprehensive examination of individual factors such as personality and organizational factors such as organizational culture and leadership together is crucial in gaining a thorough understanding of the idea of organizational commitment. In other words, studies that deal with the factors affecting organizational commitment from a holistic perspective will provide an opportunity to better understand how the organizational commitment of employees with different personality traits can be increased in different organizational cultures and leadership practices.

So, the primary objective of this study is to investigate the potential mediating function of implicit leadership in the effect of a personal factor such as LOC on the one hand and a contextual factor such as organizational culture on the other on organizational commitment. The importance of this study for organizations and managers is that it will contribute to the increase of employees' organizational commitment, which is one of the main goals of organizations, by making suggestions in light of the results to be obtained.

Furthermore, in reviewing the pertinent literature, it has been observed that no study has been identified that simultaneously evaluates the variables of ILTs, ILTs recognition, and congruence, along with certain antecedents and consequences, while also investigating their potential mediating role. It is considered that this study adds value to the implicit leadership literature in this respect as well.

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

2.1. Locus of Control, Implicit Leadership, and Organizational Commitment Relationship

The findings about the effect of locus of control (LOC) on organizational commitment (Luthans et al., 1987; Meydan & Basım, 2015) indicate that those with internal LOC have higher organizational commitment.

In relation to the correlation between LOC and implicit leadership theories (ILTs), Runyon (1973) states that those with internal LOC prefer to operate under a participatory management style, while those with external LOC prefer to operate under a directive management style (Spector, 1982). Lim et al. (2010), stating that people with external LOC

would need the guidance and support of their leaders more and would be more influenced by their charismatic leaders, found a significant correlation between LOC and ILTs dimensions.

Several studies (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005; Topakas, 2011; Junker et al., 2011) have investigated the impact of ILTs on organizational commitment. These studies have found that congruence between employees' ILTs and ILTs recognition affects organizational commitment. This effect is positive in terms of the prototypical dimension, while it is negative in terms of the antiprototypical dimension.

In this context, the following hypotheses have been formed, in which organizational commitment is evaluated as dependent, LOC as independent, and implicit leadership as a mediating variable:

Hypothesis 1: The leader prototype in the minds of the employees (ILTs) has a mediating role in the effect of the employees' LOC on their organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 2: Employees' perceptions of their current managers' leadership characteristics and behaviors (ILTs recognition) have a mediating role in the effect of employees' LOC on their organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 3: The congruence between ILTs and ILTs recognition has a mediating role in the effect of employees' LOC on their organizational commitment.

2.2. Organizational Culture, Implicit leadership, and Organizational Commitment Relationship

Research about the effect of organizational culture on organizational commitment indicates that clan organizational culture, which is based on respect and relations, has a positive relationship with affective commitment, while hierarchy organizational culture, which is based on low cost and effectiveness, has a negative relationship (Richard et al., 2009). Clan and adhocracy cultures, which emphasize flexibility and individualism, affect organizational commitment positively, while hierarchy and market cultures, emphasizing stability and control, affect it negatively (Erdem, 2007). Alternatively, it has been found that the culture of adhocracy and clan has an effect on affective and normative commitment, and market culture has an effect on continuance commitment, while hierarchy culture has no effect on organizational commitment (Acar, 2013).

Regarding how organizational culture affects ILTs, Shen (2019) found some results that partly supported the idea that in a clan culture, where the workplace is friendly, morals are important, and the leader is seen as a guide and helper, employees will prefer the positive (prototypical) ILTs dimension, which is made up of the sensitivity, dedication, intelligence, and dynamism sub-dimensions. On the other hand, in a market culture, where aggression and results-orientedness dominate and the leader is oppressive and competitive, employees will prefer the negative (antiprototypical) ILTs dimension, which is made up of the tyranny and masculinity sub-dimensions.

As explained in the section above, the congruence between employees' ILTs and ILTs recognition affects organizational commitment (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005; Topakas, 2011; Junker et al., 2011).

In this context, the following hypotheses have been formed, in which organizational commitment is evaluated as dependent, organizational culture as independent, and implicit leadership as a mediating variable:

Hypothesis 4: The leader prototype in the minds of the employees (ILTs) has a mediating role in the effect of organizational culture on employees' organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 5: Employees' perceptions of their current managers' leadership characteristics and behaviors (ILTs recognition) have a mediating role in the effect of organizational culture on employees' organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 6: The congruence between ILTs and ILTs recognition has a mediating role in the effect of organizational culture on employees' organizational commitment.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The universe of this study consists of employees working in the education and health care sectors in a province of Türkiye. According to the latest statistical data published by the relevant ministries, there are 15.686 teachers (Ministry of Education, 2022) and 10.316 health care sector employees (Ministry of Health, 2022) in this city. The sample for the research is 558 employees working in these two sectors. While all of the participants in the education sector are teachers, the participants in the health care sector are doctors, nurses, laboratory assistants, emergency medical technicians, medical secretaries, and other administrative and auxiliary staff. Convenience sampling has been used for the sampling method, and the data of this cross-sectional study have been gathered between the dates of April 1, 2022, and May 31, 2022, by using a self-reported survey, including a Likert-scale questionnaire.

According to the frequency analyses, 296 participants work in the education sector (%53), and 262 participants work in the health care sector (%47). Most of the participants are women (362 women, %65), married (411 people, %73), at the undergraduate education level (381 people, %68), at 1 to 15 years of service (400 people, %71), and between 31 and 50 years old (368 people, %66).

3.2. Measurement Tools

There are six sections in the questionnaire: demographic variables, locus of control (LOC), organizational culture, implicit leadership theories (ILTs), perceived leadership (ILTs recognition), and organizational commitment items.

3.2.1. Locus of Control Scale

In this study, the Turkish translation of Spector's (1988) Work Locus of Control Scale by Kaya (2016) has been preferred. The scale is a 6-point Likert-style measurement tool that includes 16 items in total, 8 items in the internal LOC and 8 items in the external LOC. The scores for the statements describing the internal LOC are reverse-coded during the analysis, and as a result, scores obtained from the scale indicate the external LOC.

As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) carried out in the study, it has been determined that the data belonging to the sample do not fit the constructed factor structure. In the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), it has been seen that the statements about the internal control focus are grouped under one factor and the statements about the external control focus under another factor. Confirmatory factor analysis has been conducted, treating internal LOC (without reversing the expressions) and external LOC as two separate

dimensions. Ultimately, three items (11, 14, and 15) with low factor loadings have been removed, resulting in a 2-dimensional primary factor structure comprising 13 items. In its 13-item and 2-dimensional form, we have concluded that the data of the sampling fit the primary level factor structure ($\chi^2=166,426$; $p=0,00$; $\chi^2/sd=2,774\leq 3$; CFI=0,946; NFI=0,918>0,90; GFI=0,957>0,90; RMSEA=0,056<0,08; RMR=0,082). Additionally, the reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the internal LOC dimension, the external LOC dimension, and the total scale have been found to be at valid levels: 0.700, 0.843, and 0.772, respectively.

3.2.2. Organizational Culture Scale

To measure organizational culture in this study, the Turkish translation of Cameron and Quinn's (1999) Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) by Akdeniz (2018) has been preferred. There are 24 expressions in the scale that evaluates organizational culture in six dimensions, and there are four different expressions for four different culture types. The use of the relative scoring method in the OCAI allows for more differentiation compared to Likert-type scales. However, the interdependence of each response in the relative scoring method limits the use of some statistical analyses, such as standard correlational analyses. For this reason, a Likert-type form of the scale was developed by some authors (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). In this study, to facilitate participant responses, the 5-point Likert form of the scale has been preferred.

As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) carried out in the study, it has been determined that the data belonging to the sample do not fit the constructed factor structure. In the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), market and hierarchy dimensions have been separated into two distinct factors, as in the original scale. However, clan and adhocracy dimensions have been combined and grouped under one factor, which we will refer to as 'flexible organizational culture.' This new factor has also included all leadership expressions, representing four different dimensions. As a result of the EFA, we have removed 3 expressions (21, 22, and 24) that loaded on more than one factor with similar factor loadings. This has led to a 3-factor structure, explaining 64.830% of the total variance with the remaining 21 expressions. We have then conducted a confirmatory factor analysis on this 21-expression, 3-dimensional structure. The analysis has shown that the data from the sample fit the primary-level factor structure well ($\chi^2=736,212$; $p=0,00$; $\chi^2/sd=4,136\leq 5$; CFI=0,933; NFI=0,914>0,90; GFI=0,882>0,85; RMSEA=0,075<0,08; RMR=0,058<0,08). In addition, the reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) have been found to be at valid levels: 0.957 for the flexible dimension, 0.735 for the market dimension, 0.763 for the hierarchy dimension, and 0.951 for the total scale.

Contingency leadership theories have been used during the investigation of literature compliance and the renaming of the new factor that emerged with a different structure. These leadership theories argue that there is no uniform leadership characteristic that is valid in all situations and for all followers, and that each unique event may require a different leadership behavior. Including all of the leadership expressions that represent four different dimensions together with the other expressions of clan and adhocracy dimensions that form the organic (flexibility and freedom to action) processes in the vertical axis of the Cameron and Quinn model, this new organizational culture dimension has been named "flexible organizational culture" in this current study. There are other research results indicating that the factor structure of the OCAI may differ according to the sample and context of the

research and that clan and adhocracy dimensions can be integrated under a single dimension (Ferreira & Hill, 2008; Köse & Korkmaz, 2020), as in this study.

3.2.3. Implicit Leadership Theories (ILTs) Scale

The implicit leadership scale used in this study was developed by Tabak et al. (2010, 2013) with the understanding of the ideal leader in line with Turkish culture. The scale is secondary-level multi-character structured with five factors (i.e., personal morality, versatility, sensitivity, power, and impressiveness), including 27 items and explaining 61.8% of the total variance. The evaluation of the scale is in 10-point Likert format.

As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) carried out in the study, it has been determined that the data belonging to the sample do not fit the constructed factor structure. In exploratory factor analysis (EFA), it has been seen that the dimensions of versatility and impressiveness are combined under a single factor, and as a result, a four-factor structure is valid. Confirmatory factor analysis consisting of four factors has been carried out again, and it has been seen that two questions (27th and 25th questions) with a low factor load should be canceled. Since the number of questions in the power dimension would decrease to one with the cancellation of these two questions, it has been concluded that the 26th question would be canceled and a 3-dimensional structure (i.e., personal morality, versatility, and sensitivity) would be formed. During the secondary level confirmatory factor analysis of the 3-dimensional structure, the 18th question under the versatility dimension has been removed due to its low factor loading, resulting in a 3-dimensional secondary level factor structure comprising 23 items. In its 23-item and 3-dimensional form, it has been determined that the data of the sampling fit the secondary level factor structure ($\chi^2=886,881$; $p=0,00$; $\chi^2/sd=4,208\leq 5$; CFI=0,926; NFI=0,906>0,90; GFI=0,884≥0,85; RMSEA=0,076≤0,08; RMR=0,053≤0,08). Additionally, the reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the personal morality dimension, the versatility dimension, the sensitivity dimension, and the total scale have been found to be at valid levels: 0.927, 0.910, 0.846, and 0.931, respectively.

3.2.4. Perceived Leadership (ILTs Recognition) Scale

Employees' perceptions of their current managers' (i.e., potential leaders) leadership characteristics and behaviors (ILTs recognition) have also been measured using the scale described above. In order to determine the ILTs of the employees, it has been asked how much the expressions in the scale express the leader prototype in their minds. On the other hand, in order to determine employees' ILTs recognition, it has been asked how well the expressions on the scale fit their current first-level manager.

Since the absolute difference method would be used for the "congruence variable" to be created using the statistical method in the next step, the questions that have been excluded during the factor analyses of the ILTs scale have been excluded from the evaluation for this scale as well. According to the confirmatory factor analysis for the structure consisting of 23 expressions and 3 dimensions, it has been determined that the data of the sampling fit the secondary level factor structure ($\chi^2=902,517$; $p=0,00$; $\chi^2/sd=4,468\leq 5$; CFI=0,967>0,95; NFI=0,958>0,95; GFI=0,877≥0,85; RMSEA=0,079≤0,08). Additionally, the reliability coefficients (Cronbach alpha) have been found to be at valid levels: 0.982 for the personal morality dimension, 0.977 for the versatility dimension, 0.961 for the sensitivity dimension, and 0.989 for the total scale.

In addition, in order to obtain the data on the “congruence variable” in the research model, the scale scores for ILTs recognition have been subtracted from the scale scores for ILTs scale using the absolute difference method statistically. The absolute difference method is generally used in studies based on congruence in the social sciences (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005).

3.2.5. Organizational Commitment Scale

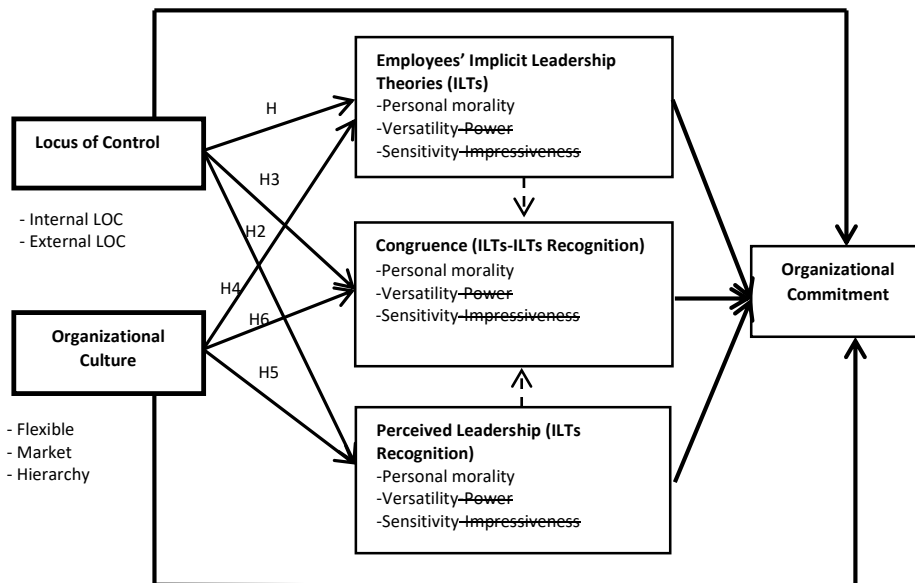
The Turkish adaptation of Jaworski and Kohli's (1993) organizational commitment scale by Şeşen (2010) has been used in this study. The scale, which was developed to measure people's commitment to the organization in general, includes a total of six items. The statement “I have little or no commitment to my job” is reverse coded. The evaluation of the scale is in 5-point Likert format.

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) showed that the sample data fit the built factor structure ($\chi^2=13,074$; $p=0,023$; $\chi^2/sd=2,615\leq 3$; $CFI=0,994>0,95$; $NFI=0,991>0,95$; $GFI=0,992\geq 0,90$; $RMSEA=0,054\leq 0,08$; $RMR=0,022\leq 0,05$). In addition, the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) has been found to be at a valid level: 0.849.

3.3. Updated Research Model As The Result of Factor Analyses

According to the results of the factor analyses, LOC, which is taken as a single dimension in the assumed research model, should be taken as two dimensions: internal and external LOC. Likewise, organizational culture, which is taken as four dimensions in the assumed research model, should be taken as three dimensions: flexible, market, and hierarchy. The updated research model is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Research Model Updated As Result of Factor Analyses



4. Results

In this study, we have used Hayes' SPSS PROCESS Macro, version 4.0 (model 4), to conduct mediation tests. For the calculations, 95% confidence intervals (CI) with 5000 bootstrap resamples have been used. Table 1 shows the mediation analyses for the mediating role of implicit leadership in the effect of locus of control (LOC) on employees' organizational commitment.

Table 1. Mediation Analyses Results About Locus of Control As The Independent Variable

Path	Predictor	Outcome	b	SE	p	% 95 Bootstrap Confidence Intervals (BootCI) for Indirect Effect	
						Lower	Upper
Model 1.1							
(a)	INT-LOC	ILTs	0.1868	0.0367	<0.001		
(b)	ILTs	Org. Commit.	0.1019	0.0540	0.0595		
(c)	Total Effect of INT-LOC		0.3204	0.0468	<0.001		
(c')	Direct Effect of INT-LOC		0.3013	0.0477	<0.001		
(ab)	Indirect Effect of INT-LOC		0.0190	0.0109		-0.0009	0.0416
Model 1.2							
(a)	EXT-LOC	ILTs	-0.0513	0.0255	<0.05		
(b)	ILTs	Org. Commit.	0.1718	0.0548	<0.01		
(c)	Total Effect of EXT-LOC		-0.0241	0.0332	0.4682		
(c')	Direct Effect of EXT-LOC		-0.0153	0.0330	0.6442		
(ab)	Indirect Effect of EXT-LOC		-0.0088	0.0053		-0.0209	-0.0005
Model 2.1							
(a)	INT-LOC	ILTs Recog.	0.5235	0.1287	<0.001		
(b)	ILTs Recog.	Org. Commit.	0.1603	0.0138	<0.001		
(c)	Total Effect of INT-LOC		0.3204	0.0468	<0.001		
(c')	Direct Effect of INT-LOC		0.2364	0.0426	<0.001		
(ab)	Indirect Effect of INT-LOC		0.0839	0.0235		0.0402	0.1322
Model 2.2							
(a)	EXT-LOC	ILTs Recog.	-0.0224	0.0890	0.8015		
(b)	ILTs Recog.	Org. Commit.	0.1733	0.0140	<0.001		
(c)	Total Effect of EXT-LOC		-0.0241	0.0332	0.4682		
(c')	Direct Effect of EXT-LOC		-0.0202	0.0294	0.4922		
(ab)	Indirect Effect of EXT-LOC		-0.0039	0.0155		-0.0335	0.0272
Model 3.1							
(a)	INT-LOC	Congruence	-0.3798	0.1240	<0.01		
(b)	Congruence	Org. Commit.	-0.1645	0.0144	<0.001		
(c)	Total Effect of INT-LOC		0.3204	0.0468	<0.001		
(c')	Direct Effect of INT-LOC		0.2579	0.0425	<0.001		
(ab)	Indirect Effect of INT-LOC		0.0625	0.0225		0.0204	0.1088
Model 3.2							
(a)	EXT-LOC	Congruence	0.0344	0.0852	0.6865		
(b)	Congruence	Org. Commit.	-0.1756	0.0147	<0.001		
(c)	Total Effect of EXT-LOC		-0.0241	0.0332	0.4682		
(c')	Direct Effect of EXT-LOC		-0.0180	0.0296	0.5430		
(ab)	Indirect Effect of EXT-LOC		-0.0060	0.0146		-0.0344	0.0233

For hypothesis 1, there have been two mediation analyses. According to Model 1.1 mediation analysis, internal LOC's indirect effect on organizational commitment is not significant (path-ab or indirect effect; $b=0.0190$, $\text{BootSE}=0.0109$, 95% $\text{BootCI}= - 0.0009$ to 0.0416 , including zero). Thus, ILTs are not identified as mediators in the relationship between internal LOC and organizational commitment. According to Model 1.2 mediation analysis, external LOC's indirect effect on organizational commitment is significant (path-ab or indirect effect; $b= - 0.0088$, $\text{BootSE}=0.0053$, 95% $\text{BootCI}= - 0.0209$ to $- 0.0005$, not including zero). The completely standardized indirect effect is $- 0.0113$, and it can be said that this value is close to a low value. Thus, ILTs are identified as mediators in the relation between external LOC and organizational commitment, despite the fact that the path from external LOC to organizational commitment (total effect) is not statistically significant (path-c, or total effect; $b= - 0.0241$, $\text{SE}=0.0332$, $p=0.4682$).

For hypothesis 2, there have been two mediation analyses. According to Model 2.1 mediation analysis, internal LOC's indirect effect on organizational commitment is significant (path-ab or indirect effect; $b=0.0839$, $\text{BootSE}=0.0235$, 95% $\text{BootCI}=0.0402$ to 0.1322 , not including zero). The completely standardized indirect effect is 0.0731 and it can be said that this value is close to a middle value. Thus, ILTs recognition is identified as a mediator in the relationship between internal LOC and organizational commitment. According to Model 2.2 mediation analysis, external LOC's indirect effect on organizational commitment is not significant (path-ab or indirect effect; $b= - 0.0039$, $\text{BootSE}=0.0155$, 95% $\text{BootCI}= - 0.0335$ to 0.0272 , including zero). Thus, ILTs recognition is not identified as a mediator in the relationship between external LOC and organizational commitment.

For hypothesis 3, there have been two mediation analyses. According to Model 3.1 mediation analysis, internal LOC's indirect effect on organizational commitment is significant (path-ab or indirect effect; $b=0.0625$, $\text{BootSE}=0.0225$, 95% $\text{BootCI}=0.0204$ to 0.1088 , not including zero). The completely standardized indirect effect is 0.0544 , and it can be said that this value is close to a middle value. Thus, the congruence variable is identified as a mediator in the relationship between internal LOC and organizational commitment. According to Model 3.2 mediation analysis, external LOC's indirect effect on organizational commitment is not significant (path-ab or indirect effect; $b= - 0.0060$, $\text{BootSE}=0.0146$, 95% $\text{BootCI}= - 0.0344$ to 0.0233 , including zero). Thus, the congruence variable is not identified as a mediator in the relationship between external LOC and organizational commitment.

Here, the following explanations should be made regarding the congruence variable: It has been created by taking the absolute difference statistically, that is, by subtracting the ILTs recognition scale scores from the ILTs scale scores. Low scores in this variable indicate that the manager or potential leader's leadership behavior is closer to the employees' preferred leadership characteristics. That is, low scores indicate an expected fit. Therefore, the negative relationship of this variable with other variables should be understood in a positive way.

Table 2 shows the mediation analyses for the mediating role of implicit leadership in the effect of organizational culture (i.e., flexible, market, and hierarchy) on employees' organizational commitment.

Table 2. Mediation Analyses Results About Organizational Culture As The Independent Variable

Path	Predictor	Outcome	b	SE	p	% 95 Bootstrap Confidence Intervals (BootCI) for Indirect Effect	
						Lower	Upper
Model 4.1							
(a)	Flexible OC	ILTs	0.0711	0.0306	<0.05		
(b)	ILTs	Org. Commit.	0.0990	0.0443	<0.05		
(c)	Total Effect of Flexible OC		0.5591	0.0321	<0.001		
(c')	Direct Effect of Flexible OC		0.5521	0.0321	<0.001		
(ab)	Indirect Effect of Flexible OC		0.0070	0.0043		0.0005	0.0172
Model 4.2							
(a)	Market OC	ILTs	0.0144	0.0320	0.6525		
(b)	ILTs	Org. Commit.	0.1647	0.0506	<0.01		
(c)	Total Effect of Market OC		0.3680	0.0385	<0.001		
(c')	Direct Effect of Market OC		0.3656	0.0382	<0.001		
(ab)	Indirect Effect of Market OC		0.0024	0.0049		-0.0068	0.0132
Model 4.3							
(a)	Hierarchy OC	ILTs	0.0419	0.0311	0.1788		
(b)	ILTs	Org. Commit.	0.1458	0.0505	<0.01		
(c)	Total Effect of Hierarchy OC		0.3689	0.0373	<0.001		
(c')	Direct Effect of Hierarchy OC		0.3628	0.0371	<0.001		
(ab)	Indirect Effect of Hierarchy OC		0.0061	0.0048		-0.0015	0.0173
Model 5.1							
(a)	Flexible OC	ILTs Recog.	14752	0.0867	<0.001		
(b)	ILTs Recog.	Org. Commit.	0.0664	0.0154	<0.001		
(c)	Total Effect of Flexible OC		0.5591	0.0321	<0.001		
(c')	Direct Effect of Flexible OC		0.4612	0.0389	<0.001		
(ab)	Indirect Effect of Flexible OC		0.0979	0.0304		0.0398	0.1586
Model 5.2							
(a)	Market OC	ILTs Recog.	0.7455	0.1068	<0.001		
(b)	ILTs Recog.	Org. Commit.	0.1453	0.0140	<0.001		
(c)	Total Effect of Market OC		0.3680	0.0385	<0.001		
(c')	Direct Effect of Market OC		0.2597	0.0368	<0.001		
(ab)	Indirect Effect of Market OC		0.1083	0.0199		0.0708	0.1495
Model 5.3							
(a)	Hierarchy OC	ILTs Recog.	0.9181	0.1012	<0.001		
(b)	ILTs Recog.	Org. Commit.	0.1396	0.0145	<0.001		
(c)	Total Effect of Hierarchy OC		0.3689	0.0373	<0.001		
(c')	Direct Effect of Hierarchy OC		0.2407	0.0370	<0.001		
(ab)	Indirect Effect of Hierarchy OC		0.1282	0.0232		0.0863	0.1774
Model 6.1							
(a)	Flexible OC	Congruence	-13938	0.0836	<0.001		
(b)	Congruence	Org. Commit.	-0.0630	0.0161	<0.001		
(c)	Total Effect of Flexible OC		0.5591	0.0321	<0.001		
(c')	Direct Effect of Flexible OC		0.4712	0.0388	<0.001		
(ab)	Indirect Effect of Flexible OC		0.0879	0.0302		0.0322	0.1494
Model 6.2							
(a)	Market OC	Congruence	-0.7031	0.1024	<0.001		
(b)	Congruence	Org. Commit.	-0.1462	0.0147	<0.001		
(c)	Total Effect of Market OC		0.3680	0.0385	<0.001		
(c')	Direct Effect of Market OC		0.2652	0.0370	<0.001		
(ab)	Indirect Effect of Market OC		0.1028	0.0196		0.0670	0.1428
Model 6.3							
(a)	Hierarchy OC	Congruence	-0.8589	0.0972	<0.001		
(b)	Congruence	Org. Commit.	-0.1401	0.0152	<0.001		
(c)	Total Effect of Hierarchy OC		0.3689	0.0373	<0.001		
(c')	Direct Effect of Hierarchy OC		0.2484	0.0371	<0.001		
(ab)	Indirect Effect of Hierarchy OC		0.1205	0.0227		0.0790	0.1683

For hypothesis 4, there have been three mediation analyses. According to Model 4.1 mediation analysis, flexible organizational culture's indirect effect on organizational commitment is significant (path-ab or indirect effect; $b=0.0070$, $\text{BootSE}=0.0043$, 95% $\text{BootCI}=0.0005$ to 0.0172 , not including zero). The completely standardized indirect effect is 0.0075 , and it can be said that this value is close to a low value. Thus, ILTs are identified as mediators in the relationship between flexible organizational culture and organizational commitment. According to Model 4.2 mediation analysis, market organizational culture's indirect effect on organizational commitment is not significant (path-ab or indirect effect; $b=0.0024$, $\text{BootSE}=0.0049$, 95% $\text{BootCI}= - 0.0068$ to 0.0132 , including zero). Thus, ILTs are not identified as mediators in the relationship between market organizational culture and organizational commitment. According to Model 4.3 mediation analysis, hierarchy organizational culture's indirect effect on organizational commitment is not significant (path-ab or indirect effect; $b=0.0061$, $\text{BootSE}=0.0048$, 95% $\text{BootCI}= - 0.0015$ to 0.0173 , including zero). Thus, ILTs are not identified as mediators in the relationship between hierarchy organizational culture and organizational commitment.

For hypothesis 5, there have been three mediation analyses. According to Model 5.1 mediation analysis, flexible organizational culture's indirect effect on organizational commitment is significant (path-ab or indirect effect; $b=0.0979$, $\text{BootSE}=0.0304$, 95% $\text{BootCI}=0.0398$ to 0.1586 , not including zero). The completely standardized indirect effect is 0.1041 , and it can be said that this value is close to a middle value. Thus, ILTs recognition is identified as a mediator in the relationship between flexible organizational culture and organizational commitment. According to Model 5.2 mediation analysis, market organizational culture's indirect effect on organizational commitment is significant (path-ab or indirect effect; $b=0.1083$, $\text{BootSE}=0.0199$, 95% $\text{BootCI}=0.0708$ to 0.1495 , not including zero). The completely standardized indirect effect is 0.1106 , and it can be said that this value is close to the middle value. Thus, ILTs recognition is identified as a mediator in the relationship between market organizational culture and organizational commitment. According to Model 5.3 mediation analysis, hierarchy organizational culture's indirect effect on organizational commitment is significant (path-ab or indirect effect; $b=0.1282$, $\text{BootSE}=0.0232$, 95% $\text{BootCI}=0.0863$ to 0.1774 , not including zero). The completely standardized indirect effect is 0.1344 , and it can be said that this value is close to a middle value. Thus, ILTs recognition is identified as a mediator in the relationship between hierarchy organizational culture and organizational commitment.

For hypothesis 6, there have been three mediation analyses. According to Model 6.1 mediation analysis, flexible organizational culture's indirect effect on organizational commitment is significant (path-ab or indirect effect; $b=0.0879$, $\text{BootSE}=0.0302$, 95% $\text{BootCI}=0.0322$ to 0.1494 , not including zero). The completely standardized indirect effect is 0.0935 , and it can be said that this value is close to a middle value. Thus, the congruence variable is identified as a mediator in the relationship between flexible organizational culture and organizational commitment. According to Model 6.2 mediation analysis, market organizational culture's indirect effect on organizational commitment is significant (path-ab or indirect effect; $b=0.1028$, $\text{BootSE}=0.0196$, 95% $\text{BootCI}=0.0670$ to 0.1428 , not including zero). The completely standardized indirect effect is 0.1050 , and it can be said that this value is close to the middle value. Thus, the congruence variable is identified as a mediator in the relationship between market organizational culture and organizational commitment.

According to Model 6.3 mediation analysis, hierarchy organizational culture's indirect effect on organizational commitment is significant (path-ab or indirect effect; $b=0.1205$, $BootSE=0.0227$, 95% $BootCI=0.0790$ to 0.1683 , not including zero). The completely standardized indirect effect is 0.1263 , and it can be said that this value is close to a middle value. Thus, the congruence variable is identified as a mediator in the relationship between hierarchy organizational culture and organizational commitment.

To summarize all these mediation analyses, hypothesis 1 (for the external LOC), 2 (for the internal LOC), 3 (for the internal LOC), and 4 (for the flexible organizational culture) have been partially confirmed, while hypothesis 5 and 6 have been completely confirmed.

5. Discussion

This study examines the effects of locus of control (LOC) as a personal factor on one side and organizational culture as a contextual factor on the other side on organizational commitment. Additionally, the study explores the mediating role of implicit leadership, which encompasses the leader prototype in employees' minds (implicit leadership theories—ILTs), employees' perceptions of their current managers' leadership traits and behaviors (perceived leadership—ILTs recognition), and the congruence variable (i.e., the alignment between ILTs and ILTs recognition). The findings of the study have theoretical and practical implications, which we elaborate below.

5.1. Theoretical implications

The finding of this study, showing that while external LOC has no effect on organizational commitment, internal LOC does, is supported by other research results (Luthans et al., 1987; Meydan & Basm, 2015), demonstrating that those with internal locus of control (LOC) have higher organizational commitment.

Regarding the result stating that all types of organizational culture (i.e., flexible, market, and hierarchy) affect organizational commitment positively, it should be stated that there are contents in this conclusion that are compatible with other research results and that are not. For the flexible culture's positive effect on organizational commitment, it can be said that it is consistent with other research results indicating that clan culture positively affects organizational commitment (Erdem, 2007), clan culture is in a positive relationship with affective commitment (Richard et al., 2009), and clan and adhocracy culture positively affect affective and normative commitment (Acar, 2013). In addition, according to current research, the most positive effect on organizational commitment among organizational culture types is flexible culture. For the market culture's positive effect on organizational commitment, it can be said that it is not consistent with another research result carried out in Türkiye (Erdem, 2007) stating that market culture affects organizational commitment negatively. Considering that Erdem's (2007) study covers only healthcare professionals and the sample in the present study includes healthcare professionals as well as teachers, it can be thought that an individual and the between-schools competitive environment in terms of performance that may occur as a result of job autonomy and individual responsibility in the teaching profession can be positively welcomed by teachers and can play a role in increasing their organizational commitment. And again, for the hierarchy culture's positive effect on organizational commitment, there are some inconsistent research results carried out in Türkiye (Acar, 2013) showing that hierarchy culture is not related to organizational commitment. The study carried out by Acar (2013) covers 448 private sector employees in 39 different logistics enterprises.

Considering that the sample in the present study is predominantly teachers working in the public sector, in terms of public employees, it can be thought that official rules, procedures, and bureaucracy, which constitute the characteristic of hierarchy culture, can be perceived as positive features that provide working order rather than being restrictive and can play a role in increasing their organizational commitment.

The conclusion showing that ILTs recognition and congruence variables have a mediation effect on the relationship between internal LOC-organizational commitment and on the relationships between all-of-the organizational culture dimensions-organizational commitment is supported by other research results (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005; Topakas, 2011; Junker et al., 2011) that demonstrate congruence between employees' ILTs and ILTs recognition positively effects organizational commitment.

Another finding of this research is about the effects on ILTs. In the study, the implicit leadership scale developed by Tabak et al. (2013) has been used to measure ILTs. As a result of the factor analyses performed for the scale, which is originally five-dimensional, a new structure consisting of three dimensions (personal morality, versatility, and sensitivity) has been reached. The results of the analyses show that internal LOC and flexible organizational culture affect this new structure of ILTs positively and external LOC negatively. In addition, ILTs have a mediating role between external LOC-organizational commitment and flexible organizational culture-organizational commitment. These results about the ILTs are discussed in detail below.

An important conclusion is about the factor structure of ILTs scale, which was developed by Tabak et al. (2010, 2013). For the sample of this research, the power dimension consisting of "experienced", "informed", and "authoritarian" statements has not appeared as a desired leadership feature in the leader. Considering that this study has been carried out in the education and health care sectors, the reason why the power dimension does not find meaning may be that knowledge and expertise come to the fore rather than power in sectors such as education and health care. We believe that it is very important and necessary to reconsider whether "power dimension" is a desired leadership characteristic in Turkish culture. In future comparative studies, which will be conducted by including different business sectors such as family businesses or military institutions, the power dimension may gain more importance. We believe this kind of comparative research will add value to studies in the field of implicit leadership in Türkiye.

The literature supports the findings indicating opposing effects of internal and external LOC on ILTs. The statements of Runyon (1973) that those with an internal LOC prefer to operate under a participatory management style and those with an external LOC prefer to operate under a directive management style (Spector, 1982) support this result. Likewise, it is possible to say that the significant correlation relationship found by Lim et al. (2010) between LOC and ILTs dimensions supports the result obtained.

The finding that only flexible culture influences ILTs among the organizational culture dimensions is consistent with earlier research by Shen (2019). In his research, Shen (2019) found that clan culture type and market culture type, which have contradictory structural features, also affect employees' ILTs in the opposite direction. According to current research results, it is possible to say that the flexible culture, which is dominated by organic processes such as flexibility and initiative together with situational leadership, is more compatible with this new ILTs structure than other types of organizational culture.

As a result of the research, it has been determined that ILTs have a mediating role between external LOC-organizational commitment and flexible organizational culture-organizational commitment. The fact that the tests for the mediation effect in this study have been carried out with regression analyses based on the Bootstrap method in accordance with the Contemporary Approach, has created a significant difference compared to the mediation tests based on the Traditional Approach. If the Traditional Approach had been taken as the basis for the study, since the external LOC as an independent variable had no effect on organizational commitment as a dependent variable, the hypothesis in question should have been rejected before proceeding with the next steps. However, since our research is based on the Contemporary Approach, the indirect effect (a.b) is significant even though the total effect is not, so the hypothesis has been confirmed and ILTs have been accepted to have a mediating role between external LOC and organizational commitment.

5.2. Practical implications

In addition to the theoretical implications, this study has important practical implications for organizations and their managers. First, the results reveal that internal LOC is linked to organizational commitment. There are also previous research results (Wu et al., 2015; Angelova, 2016) showing that internal LOC is not a fixed personality trait but can change over time based on job characteristics (i.e., job autonomy) and business experiences (i.e., allocation of duties and managerial positions). So the following suggestions can be made to organizations and their managers to help employees develop more internal LOC and, in turn, their organizational commitment : a) Giving priority to candidates with a high internal locus of control in personnel selection; b) Giving tasks and responsibilities that will enable employees to realize their own potential within the scope of in-service training and development of employees; c) Increasing the creativity and self-confidence of employees by supporting corporate entrepreneurship; d) Providing employees with job autonomy by giving them the authority to make decisions in their jobs; e) Increasing employees' sense of responsibility and self-confidence by ensuring their participation in internal organizational decisions; f) Increasing the work motivation of employees by acting fairly and equitably in rewards, punishments, and promotions.

Second, another important finding of this study is that all dimensions of organizational culture—flexible, market, and hierarchy—have a positive impact on organizational commitment. But organizations and their managers should take into account the study finding that a flexible organizational culture is the dimension that has the most positive impact.

Third, the results also reveal that congruence variable (i.e., the alignment between ILTs and ILTs recognition) has a mediation effect on the relationship between internal LOC-organizational commitment and on the relationships between all-of-the organizational culture dimensions-organizational commitment. In other words, when an employee perceives that the leader possesses the expected qualities, namely the alignment between ideal leader characteristics and the demonstrated leadership traits of the manager, it can elicit various positive emotions, particularly trust, within the employee. Consequently, this may have a positive impact on the employee's level of commitment to the organization. On the other hand, when an employee meets with a manager whose traits do not align with ideal leader traits, it might elicit adverse emotional responses, such as disappointment. Consequently, this can have a detrimental impact on the employee's level of commitment to the organization.

Given the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the business landscape during this research, particularly in the healthcare sector, and the inclusion of healthcare workers in the sample of this study, the following recommendations can be offered to organizations and managers in healthcare and similar sectors that face significant challenges during extraordinary crisis periods such as pandemics. These recommendations aim to enhance employee satisfaction with managerial leadership and subsequently improve organizational commitment. Firstly, it is advisable to provide transparent communication to employees regarding the exceptional circumstances and their impact on the organization. This will enable employees to gain a comprehensive understanding of the temporary changes expected in management and leadership practices.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

One of the limitations of the research is that the findings cannot be generalized in terms of geographically different fields and other business sectors since this study has been conducted in only one province of Türkiye and on employees in just two sectors: education and health care. Future studies in geographically different areas and in different sectors may increase the generalizability of the findings. In addition, since the study is a cross-sectional study, another limitation of the study is that the data obtained represent only a certain time period, and therefore the results can be interpreted in a limited way. The research has been carried out in April and May of 2022, and the general feature of the date in question is the current COVID-19 pandemic. As of the research date, the lethal effects of the pandemic have decreased all over the world, but the effects it has created continue in business life, especially in the health care sector. Considering that the sample of this research also includes health care sector workers, it would be beneficial to re-examine the study subject and assess the development of the examined subject over time, within the scope of a longitudinal study, at a time when the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on business life have completely disappeared.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study clarify two main conclusions. The first conclusion is about the antecedents of organizational commitment. It has been confirmed that internal locus of control (LOC) and all-of-the organizational culture dimensions have a positive effect on organizational commitment, while ILTs recognition and congruence variable mediate these effects. The second conclusion is about the antecedents of ILTs. Results demonstrate that internal LOC positively, external LOC negatively, and within the organizational culture dimensions, only flexible culture positively affects the ILTs, while ILTs have a mediation effect between external LOC and organizational commitment and between flexible organizational culture and organizational commitment.

In addition, it's also thought to be the first time that three variables (ILTs, ILTs recognition, and congruence) that make up implicit leadership in the context of categorization theory have been looked at together as mediating variables in a study about organizational commitment. In this sense, this research is thought to add value to the studies of implicit leadership and organizational commitment literature. It is advisable to augment the quantity of research endeavors that examine these three factors of the implicit leadership concept within the context of other organizational variables.

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Extended Summary

The Mediating Role of Implicit Leadership in The Effect of Locus of Control and Organizational Culture on Employees' Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is the desire of the employee to maintain membership and the desire to exert effort to achieve the goals of the organization (Mowday et al., 1979). The fact that employees with high commitment to their organizations exhibit higher performance (Meyer et al., 2002) and have a low desire to leave the job (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) reveals the importance of organizational commitment for organizations. The comprehensive examination of individual factors such as personality and organizational factors such as organizational culture and leadership together is crucial in gaining a thorough understanding of the idea of organizational commitment. In other words, studies that deal with the factors affecting organizational commitment from a holistic perspective will provide an opportunity to better understand how the organizational commitment of employees with different personality traits can be increased in different organizational cultures and leadership practices.

So, the primary objective of this study is to investigate the potential mediating function of implicit leadership [i.e., leader prototype in the minds of the employees—ILTs, perceived leadership—ILTs recognition, and congruence (between ILTs and ILTs recognition) variable] in the effect of a personal factor such as locus of control (LOC) on the one hand and a contextual factor such as organizational culture on the other on organizational commitment. The research sample comprises 558 employees from the education and health sectors in Balıkesir province. The data for this cross-sectional study, in which the convenience sampling method is used, has been obtained using a Likert-type survey in April and May 2022.

In this study, to measure LOC, the Turkish translation of Spector's (1988) Work Locus of Control Scale by Kaya (2016) has been preferred. To measure organizational culture, the Turkish translation of Cameron and Quinn's (1999) Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) by Akdeniz (2018) has been used. Tabak et al.'s (2010, 2013) scale has been utilized to assess leadership. To determine ILTs of the employees, participants have been asked to what extent the items on the scale represent the leader prototype in their minds. To determine their ILTs recognition, they have been asked to what extent the same items correspond to their first-level manager. Additionally, the congruence variable has been obtained by calculating the absolute difference between the ILTs and ILTs recognition (i.e., in this study, the congruence variable shows the difference between the leadership prototype/model and perceived leadership). To measure organizational commitment, the Turkish adaptation of the scale developed by Jaworski and Kohli (1993) by Şeşen (2010) has been used.

We have used Hayes' SPSS PROCESS Macro, version 4.0 (model 4), to conduct mediation tests. For the calculations, 95% confidence intervals (CI) with 5000 bootstrap resamples have been used.

The findings of this study clarify two main conclusions. The first conclusion is about the antecedents of organizational commitment. It has been confirmed that internal LOC and all-of-the organizational culture dimensions have a positive effect on organizational commitment, while ILTs recognition and congruence variable mediate these effects. The second conclusion is about the antecedents of ILTs. Results demonstrate that internal LOC positively, external LOC negatively, and within the organizational culture dimensions, only flexible culture positively affects the ILTs.

This study also has important practical implications for organizations and their managers. First, the results reveal that internal LOC is linked to organizational commitment. There are also previous research results (Wu et al., 2015; Angelova, 2016) showing that internal LOC is not a fixed personality trait but can change over time based on job characteristics (i.e., job autonomy) and business experiences (i.e., allocation of duties and managerial positions). So the following suggestions can be made to organizations and their managers to help employees develop more internal LOC and, in turn, their organizational commitment: a) Giving priority to candidates with a high internal locus of control in personnel selection; b) Giving tasks and responsibilities that will enable employees to realize their own potential within the scope of in-service training and development of employees; c) Increasing the creativity and self-confidence of employees by supporting corporate entrepreneurship; d) Providing employees with job autonomy by giving them the authority to make decisions in their jobs; e) Increasing employees' sense of responsibility and self-confidence by ensuring their participation in internal organizational decisions; f) Increasing the work motivation of employees by acting fairly and equitably in rewards, punishments, and promotions.

Second, another important finding of this study is that all dimensions of organizational culture—flexible, market, and hierarchy—have a positive impact on organizational commitment. But organizations and their managers should take into account the study finding that a flexible organizational culture is the dimension that has the most positive impact.

Third, the findings of this research indicate that organizational commitment increases as employees' perceptions of their leaders more closely align with the leader prototype/model in their minds. Given the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the business landscape during this research, particularly in the healthcare sector, and the inclusion of healthcare workers in the sample of this study, the following recommendation can be offered to organizations and managers in healthcare and similar sectors that face significant challenges during extraordinary crisis periods such as pandemics. This recommendation aims to enhance employee satisfaction with managerial leadership and subsequently improve organizational commitment. It is advisable to provide transparent communication to employees regarding the exceptional circumstances and their impact on the organization. This will enable employees to gain a comprehensive understanding of the temporary changes expected in management and leadership practices.

Another important conclusion of this study is that the dimension of power is not a favored leadership attribute for leaders. The reason why the power dimension does not find meaning for this research's sample may be that knowledge and expertise come to the fore rather than power in sectors such as education and healthcare. Considering that power may hold greater significance in organizational contexts such as family businesses or military institutions, conducting comparative studies across different sectors and exploring whether the "power" dimension retains its status as a desired leadership trait in Turkish culture would enhance the value of implicit leadership research in Türkiye.

In addition, it's also thought to be the first time that three variables (ILTs, ILTs recognition, and congruence) that make up implicit leadership in the context of categorization theory have been looked at together as mediating variables in a study about organizational commitment. In this sense, this research is thought to add value to the studies of implicit leadership and organizational commitment literature. It is advisable to augment the quantity of research endeavors that examine these three factors of the implicit leadership concept within the context of other organizational variables.