Evaluation of institutional isomorphism of guidance research centers with social network analysis approach

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to determine the level of institutional isomorphism of Guidance Research Centers (GRS), which are public education organizations. The concept of institutional isomorphism means that organizations that are similar according to the type, level and characteristics of environmental conditions can survive. In the study, coercive and normative dimensions of institutional isomorphism were analyzed by textual analysis and the mimetic isomorphism dimension was analyzed by the social network analysis method. The study was carried out in the 2019-2020 academic year. Thirty-eight top managers from six different geographical regions across Turkey participated. The participants of the study were selected by snowball sampling and the data generator method. The data of the study were collected by documentation and semi-structured interview techniques. The qualitative data of the study on coercive and normative isomorphism were analyzed by descriptive and content analysis; Social network analysis data on mimetic isomorphism were analyzed with UCINET 6.647 software, network structural features and inter-actor relations. According to the findings obtained in the research, GRCs, which are affiliated to the same top-institution, assigned to the same legal infrastructure, working in the same occupational field, as expected theoretically, are highly coercive and normative isomorphic organizations. However, according to the social network analysis data obtained in the mimetic dimension and the network analysis diagrams created by 79 actors. It is essential to consider the factors of institutional isomorphism in determining what improvements are to be made to develop the capacities of GRCs and disseminate new practices and successful studies.

Keywords: ; Institutional isomorphism; educational organizations, social network analysis, guidance centers

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1. Introduction

1.1. Introduce the problem

Ensuring the effective and productive work of organizations established to realize shared goals is an important research topic of organizational research. While each organizational theory analyzes the structure, functioning and environment of the organization from different perspectives, the primary purpose is to understand how organizations can survive and how they can work efficiently and effectively, and to develop strategies for what measures can be taken for this. Like all organizations, educational organizations also aim to provide effectiveness and efficiency. Contrary to popular belief, educational organizations established to meet educational needs are not just schools. In Turkey, just like Public Education Centers (PEC), Science and Art Centers (SAC), Guidance Research Centers (GRC) are public organizations established to meet and support the educational needs of their target audiences other than those encountered by schools, specific to their field of expertise.

In Turkey, the GRCs established in provinces and big districts under the Ministry of National Education (MNE) have a different function than schools, although they are both educational organizations. Guidance and Research Centers (GRC) are institutions that carry out their activities to plan, provide, coordinate, monitor and evaluate the guidance and psychological counselling and special education services in provinces and districts (MNE, Guidance Research Center Directive, 31.08.2020). According to the statistics of the Ministry of National Education (2020), approximately 1490 psychological counsellor/guidance teachers and special education teachers work in 236 GRCs in 81 provinces in Turkey (https://orgm.meb.gov.tr/alt_sayfalar/kurum.asp).

In Turkey, the Ministry of National Education carries out various studies to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of GRCs. First of all, within the scope of the *2023 Education Vision Document*, various training programs were organized for GRC personnel to increase their professional knowledge, skills and awareness, to be aware of the new approach, to gain new perspectives, and to access scientific and up-to-date information. *With the Project of Strengthening the Capacity of Guidance Research Centers in terms of Providing Inclusive Education Services,* it was aimed to strengthen the digital infrastructure of the entire GRC, to increase the competencies of the experts and teachers working there, and to manage data based on software with the support of software. At the same time, in the project, where 20 thousand brochures in Turkish, Arabic and English were distributed to inform families about the services provided at GRCs and the referral processes, public service announcements were prepared to increase the recognition and awareness of the centers (www.meb.gov.tr). These types of projects are very large-budget studies.

When the literature in Turkey is examined, it cannot be said that improving the efficiency and capacity of GRCs attracts the attention of scientific researchers. Although there are many studies on the development of guidance and psychological counselling services in the surveys, no research has been found to improve the organizational efficiency of these institutions directly (Camadan, 2021; Öz, 2012; Özak, Vural and Avcıoğlu, 2008; Tulunay Ateş and Anaç, 2020). While research on educational organizations generally focuses on studies examining schools and school staff, the structure, functioning and efficiency of such organizations, such as PEC, SAC, GRC, which facilitate students to benefit from education and training processes more effectively, have not attracted much attention in scientific research. However, in various studies on the functioning of schools and institutions, there is a limited number of studies that have reached findings specific to the functioning of these institutions. For example, in the findings of Uğurlu's (2016) research on the cooperation and levels of educational organizations, these institutions based on expertise such as the GRC, PEC, SAC, which are called *affiliated organizations* because they are different educational organizations from schools. It interacted with the school and other institutions at a higher level was more connected and cooperated. Therefore, it has been suggested that developing these institutions and eliminating the shortage of experts in terms of their capacity to influence other institutions (for example, dissemination of innovations) in the plans to be made for improving the cooperation network with other institutions and spreading it to the entire network (education system).

Current education systems strive to increase the quality of these services so that every student can benefit from psychological counselling and guidance services effectively. It is expected that this research will contribute to the data-based strategic decisions that can be taken to develop and increase the efficiency of educational organizations based on expertise. In addition, it brings an organizational perspective to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of GRCs.

1.2. Literature review

1.2.1. The context of guidance research centers in Turkey

Along with all kinds of necessary studies for the effective and efficient execution of guidance and psychological counselling services in educational institutions, identification of individuals with special education needs and guidance and psychological counselling services for these individuals are carried out by guidance and research centers in provinces and districts (GRC Guide, 2017). According to the Guidance and Research Center Directive published by the Ministry of National Education on 31.08.2020, Guidance and Research Centers carry out their activities to plan, provide, coordinate and evaluate the guidance and psychological counselling services and special education services in provinces and districts are institutions.

Guidance and research centers; It consists of two departments, namely the section of guidance and psychological counselling services and special education services. *Guidance and psychological counselling services department*; fulfils its duties in the fields of school guidance and psychological counselling, psychosocial support, individual and group psychological counselling and guidance, and research and development. These can be briefly listed: At the beginning of the academic year, the department prepares the annual work plan through the e-Guidance system. It shares the yearly work plan at the central committee meeting and has it approved by the manager. It applies the annual work plan throughout the academic year and updates it when necessary. It processes the works carried out into the e-Guidance system. Evaluates the studies carried out at the end of the academic year. *The special education services department* performs its duties in educational evaluation and diagnosis, identifying gifted individuals, monitoring and research and development. The responsibilities of the special education services department can be summarized as follows: At the beginning of the academic year, it prepares the annual work plan of the department. It shares the yearly work plan at the central committee meeting and has it approved by the manager. It applies the yearly work plan throughout the academic year and updates it when necessary. Evaluates the work done at the end of the academic year (GRC Guide, 2017; Ministry of National Education of Guidance Research Center Directive, 2020). Guidance and research centers play an active role in improving the self-development of all individuals, in making the guidance and psychological counselling services more qualified in education, and in the advancement of disabled students in all areas of development in the education system (Kekeç and Töre, 2020; Tulunay Ateş and Anaç, 2020).

Guidance research centers are public institutions. The establishment of these institutions, their working styles, the services to be provided by these institutions and the recruitment processes of the personnel working in these institutions are all regulated by specific laws, regulations and directives. For this reason, the procedures to be followed by these institutions are strictly defined by the Turkey Ministry of National Education. When the tasks specified according to the service areas of the guidance and research centers are examined, it is seen that they provide many different types of services.

1.2.2. New institutional theory and isomorphism

An institutional theory emphasizes that organizations are open systems that are strongly influenced by their environment. According to institutional theory, the survival of organizations does not only depend on their effectiveness and efficiency. Institutionalism; is a theory that states that organizations are constructed by and tend to resemble phenomena in their institutional environment and that formal organizations adapt to their institutional environments through technical and transformational interdependencies (Meyer and Rowan, 1977, 346). The new institutionalists, who brought a unique perspective to institutionalism that emerged in the 1970s, introduced the

concept of *institutional isomorphism* to the literature, and based on this concept, they revealed that organizations began to resemble each other more and more with the effect of both mimetic, coercive and normative pressures (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, 150-154).

Isomorphism, which is a fundamental concept within the population ecology approach; According to the type and characteristics of the environmental conditions, only organisms that comply with these conditions and are uniformly shaped according to the requirements in question can continue to live. Isomorphism is a concept derived from mathematics and population biology. The first study to adapt the concept to organizations belongs to Meyer and Rowan. DiMaggio and Powell examined the concept in detail in the theory of institutional isomorphism in the organizational fields they revealed (Scott 2001). Meyer and Rowan (1977, 352) mention that the success of organizations does not only depend on the effective control and coordination of production activities, and they state that for organizations to increase their chances of survival, gain legitimacy and access resources, they should generally become isomorphic in line with the myths of their institutional environment. DiMaggio and Powell (1983, 149), on the other hand, are essential in terms of clarifying the concepts of organizational space and isomorphism. In this study, the authors define the concept of institutional isomorphism as a restrictive process that causes a unit to resemble other teams in the same environmental conditions, based on the question of what makes organizations similar to each other. Accordingly, institutional isomorphism is determined through three mechanisms: coercive, normative and mimetic:

Coercive institutional isomorphism emerges from the formal and informal pressures exerted by the other organizations to which the organizations are affiliated and the society's cultural expectations in which the institutions operate (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, 150). *Normative institutional isomorphism* stems mainly from professionalization. Two aspects of professionalization are essential sources of isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, 152). The first of these is education and the law. The same occupations are subject to the same education and the same rules. This situation causes isomorphism. The second is professional and commercial organizations. These are essential tools that play a role in establishing and disseminating normative rules regarding organizational and professional behavior.

In summary, normative institutional isomorphism emerges due to rules, laws and standards in a professional profession. Not every tendency for institutional isomorphism is due to coercive reasons. *Mimetic institutional isomorphism* occurs because organizations tend to model other organizations when organizational technologies are not adequately understood, when goals are unclear, or the environment creates symbolic uncertainty (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, 151). Organizations imitate other organizations that are perceived as successful by decision-makers in their population.

1.3. Objective

The main purpose of this study is to determine the institutional isomorphism of the Guidance Research Centers (GRC), which are public education organizations. In line with this primary purpose, answers to the following questions were sought in the study: *(1)*What is the situation of GRCs in terms of coercive isomorphism? In this context: *(a)* what are their hierarchical relations with their top institution? *(b)* are they similar in mission and vision to other GRCs? *(c)* are there clear procedures for organizational modes of operation?

(2) What is the situation of GRCs in terms of normative isomorphism? In this context, *(a)* which professional organizations are GRCs associated with? *(b)* what laws and regulations does it operate under?

(3) What is the situation of GRCs in terms of mimetic isomorphism? In this context, top managers of GRCs participating in the research which GRCs do they take as examples and follow closely? In other words, which GRCs are taken as more samples?

2. Method

2.1. Research design

This research was conducted with a mixed research approach consisting of qualitative and social network analysis approaches. Mixed studies are the type of research that involves collecting data, analyzing and integrating findings using more than one research approach or method in a single study (Bernard and Ryan, 2010). Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research (Bernard and Ryan, 2010). Social network analysis is an interdisciplinary research approach that has unique calculation methods in terms of revealing relationships between actors. It allows the structure formed by the relationships between the actors and inter-actors and these relationships in a digitalized manner or graphics (Carrington, Scott and Wasserman, 2005; Scott, 2000). According to Freeman (2004, 2), these aspects are a part of all modern social network analysis examples. Social network analysis justifies the insights on the structural connections which tie social actors to each other. This empirical data is collected systematically, and it is controlled. This data is presented through graphics. Mathematical models are relied on in the making of these calculations.

2.2. Research sample and participants

The research participants consisted of 38 administrators working as institution directors in various Guidance Research Centers (GRC) throughout Turkey in the 2019-

2020 academic year. The snowball sampling method was used to determine the participants of the study. Snowball sampling is used in the data collection process in social network analysis research, revealing the network pattern and creating actor lists (Carrington, Scott and Wasserman, 2005; Scott, 2000). Snowball sampling, one of the primary sampling methods, is particularly effective in identifying individuals and situations that can be a rich source of information (Bernard and Ryan, 2010).

The number of participants from whom direct data was collected in the study was 38. The demographic characteristics of the participants in the study are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information on study participants (GRC's managers)

Gender			Tenure profession			Tenure management			
			(year)			(year)			
	F	%		F	%		F	%	
Female	6	15.79	1-5	1	2.63	0-1	4	10.52	
Male	32	84.21	6-10	3	7.89	2-5	16	42.10	
-	-	-	11-15	6	15.78	6-10	16	42.10	
-	-	-	16-20	16	42.10	11+	2	5.26	
-	-	-	21+	12	31.57	-	-	-	
Total	38	100.00		38	100.00		38	100.00	.

Social network research can examine the types of networks at different levels. Therefore, selecting and defining network boundaries is an important decision in collecting social network data (Eren, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021; Eren and Kıral, 2018). To determine the *mimetic institutional isomorphism network* in the research, the administrators were asked which guidance research centers they took as examples and benefited from their studies. The number of actors has increased as the participants added the guidance research centers that did not participate in this research to the network, as well as the guidance research centers that participated in the study. The name generator technique, which is used together with snowball sampling in social network analysis research, enables the participants to add the actors of the relationship type asked to the network. In the study, two kinds of network patterns were formed: *the participant network* of guidance research centers (n=38), where the participants from whom direct data were collected, and the other guidance research centers (n=41) that these participants stated as examples. Therefore, *the whole network* of the research, representing the entire guidance research center, was found to have 79 actors.

Turkey is divided into seven geographical regions and 81 provinces. According to the MEB directive, there must be at least one GRC in each province and territory. In Table 2,

the characteristics of the actors consisting of guidance research centers in different provinces and geographical regions participating in the research are given.

Table 2. Distribution of actors forming the mimetic isomorphism networks by geographical regions

Geographical regions	Whole network			Participant network		
	N=79			N=38		
	F	%	Actors	F	%	Actors
Marmara	33	41.77	GRC_3,4,5,7,10,14,17, 18,23,25,29,30,32,33,37,41, 44,45,46,47,48,49,51,52.53, 54,55,56,57,60,61,62,66	11	28.94	GRC_3,4,5,7,10,14,17, 18,23,25,29
Karadeniz	15	18.98	GRC_2,8,9,11,15,22,24,42,50 63,67,68,76,78,79	7	18.42	GRC_2,8,9,11,15,22,24
İç Anadolu	11	13.92	GRC_21,27,34,35,36,39,58,59, 70,77	5	13.15	GRC_21,27,34,35,36
Doğu Anad.	8	10.12	GRC_12,13,19,31,38,43,74,75	5	13.15	GRC_12,13,19,31,38
Ege	4	5.06	GRC_1,26,64,65	2	5.26	GRC_1,26
Günayd. And	4	5.16	GRC_6, 16,20,28	4	10.52	GRC_6, 16,20,28
Akadeniz	4	5.06	GRC,69,71,72,73	4	10.52	GRC,69,71,72,73
Total	79	100.00		38	100.00	.

In the research, the same sample was studied in both qualitative and social network analysis dimensions. As can be seen, 79 guidance and research centers from seven geographical regions entered the sample. At the same time, participation was made from the Marmara region, the most populated region in terms of population density.

2.3. Research instruments

The data specific to the study's qualitative research and social network analysis were collected by textual analysis technique and semi-structured interview technique. Textual technique for answering research questions about coercive and normative institutional isomorphism in research; Data were collected by semi-structured interview technique to reveal the mimetic institutional isomorphism network pattern. To answer the questions about *coercive institutional isomorphism,* guides on organizational functioning, legal infrastructure (laws, directives and circulars), vision and mission statements and strategic plans for 2019-2023 were examined from the websites of the GRCs where the participants are assigned. In answering the questions about *normative institutional isomorphism,* their relations with professional organizations (Turkish Psychological Counseling Association, connections with other collaborating professional organizations)

were examined. The textual data were coded and separated into themes and evaluated with descriptive and content analysis.

An interview form was first created to collect data from participants in various regions and provinces of Turkey via e-mail and phone calls to answer questions about *mimetic institutional isomorphism*. There are two questions in the form prepared to collect data specific to participant demographic information (gender, tenure, managerial experience) and social network analysis. To reveal the relationship scanned in social network research, the researcher needs to decide on the format of the question, the answer format, and what additional information they would like to describe the social network structure. Moolenaar (2012, Tables 1 and 2) provided a perspective on what kinds of questions are asked for which types of relationships in educational research also mentioned the benefit of being short in the questionnaires that included these questions. To the participants, *1- Are there any other guidance research centers that you find success in your professional work and follow their work?* They were asked to indicate their names if any. *2- They were asked whether they met with other guidance research centers and shared ideas and good practices, their communication method (face-to-face, e-mail, telephone) and facilitating manager characteristics.* The collected data were coded and analyzed in a way specific to social network analysis (density, degree, etc.), and a mimetic isomorphism network map was created.

3. Results

3.1. Coercive institutional isomorphism

Coercive institutional isomorphism is the isomorphism that occurs due to organizations adopting certain practices in line with the wishes of the segments they are dependent on. It also appears to result from organizations complying with the expectations of other organizations on which they are hanging in terms of resources. At the same time, hierarchical relations by a higher institution create compelling institutional isomorphism. In the research, guidelines on organizational functioning, legal infrastructure (laws, directives and circulars), vision and mission statements, and strategic plans for the year 2019-2023 were examined from the websites of the guidance research centers where the participants are assigned and the Turkish Ministry of National Education in answering the questions about coercive institutional isomorphism. As a result of textual analysis, the following findings were reached:

When GRCs in Turkey are evaluated in terms of hierarchical relations with higher institutions, it should be noted that they are public institutions at the provincial and district level, hierarchically affiliated to the Ministry of National Education. The procedures in the functioning of these institutions are carried out as in other public institutions—employees in the institution work as public servants. The establishment,

functioning, duties, duties of the employees in the institution, relations with other public institutions are regulated by laws, regulations, directives and circulars. Legal basis of guidance services on the website of the Ministry of National Education, all laws related to education, as well as *Child Protection Law* (25876 R.G, 2005), *Guidance and Psychological Counseling Services Regulation* (2020), *Psychosocial Protection, Prevention and Crisis Intervention Services Directive* (2019), *Guidance and Psychological Counseling Services Ethical Directive* (2020), *Guidance and Research Center Directive* (2020) and many regulatory circulars. In particular, in the GRC directive, how and where the GRC will be installed, what equipment, its duties, and under which conditions the titled personnel will work there are strictly defined.

The websites of 38 GRCs, where the research participants were assigned, and a total of 79 GRCs, including 41 actors who later joined the network, were examined. All of the websites reviewed include *Strategic Plans for 2019-2023*, and these plans include the introduction of the institution, statistics on the current situation, stakeholder analysis, SWOT analysis, mission, vision and core values, goals, targets and actions, institutional capacity and planned capacity-building studies and evaluation reports. This ensures uniformity in all GRCs, in other words, isomorphism. In addition, the procedures of these institutions are explained in the *GRC (RAM) Guide* (2018). Therefore, it has been found that these institutions have clear procedures in the way of organizational functioning. While the main objectives of the Turkish national education system are emphasized in the mission statements of the GRCs, it is seen that the fundamental human values are emphasized more in the vision statements. Examples of mission and vision statements are given below. For example: *In line with the main objectives of the Turkish National Education, to bring happy, successful and mentally healthy individuals to the society, to be an institution that guides in every need* (GRC_12, mission). *Every human being is valuable, and this value stems from their existence as human beings* (GRC_15, vision).

3.2. Normative institutional isomorphism

Normative institutional isomorphism stems mainly from professionalization. According to Di Maggio and Powell (1983, 152), two aspects of professionalization are essential sources of isomorphism. The first is education and laws, and the second is the effect of professional organizations and commercial organizations. Laws are both a coercive and normative instrument of institutional isomorphism. Regulations regarding the professional staff's education processes and the profession's requirements, and the standards set by the professional organizations determine the occupational standards and create normative isomorphism.

According to the research findings, the GRC's and the psychological counsellors working in these institutions have very strictly defined professional principles and standards in the professional sense. For example, in the MNE Guidance and

Psychological Counseling Services Regulation (2020, 3/ö), guidance research centers are defined as *"the institution that plans and provides guidance and psychological counselling services and special education services and ensures that the services are carried out in a coordinated manner".* Therefore, their fields of duty include both guidance and psychological counselling and special education. However, the responsibilities of guidance teachers/psychological counsellors as professional staff working in the institution are defined in the same regulation (2020,21). In addition, in the *RAM (GRC) Directive* (2018, 12), it is stated that cooperation can be made with other personnel (child development and educators, language and speech therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, clinical psychologists and social workers) to be assigned in the institution and with other institutions if needed.

Another powerful tool of normative institutional isomorphism is the influence of professional associations. Professional organizations do not only defend the development of the profession and the interests of their colleagues. Such organizations, as interest groups and non-governmental organizations, have a strong influence on both the curriculum's content in the profession's education process and the shaping of the behavior of the professional staff. In particular, the ethical principles of a field such as psychological counselling are built on confidentiality and trust. For this reason, the Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association (https://pdr.org.tr/) carries out very active studies in the field of guidance and psychological counselling in Turkey. The ethical principles that not only the staff working in CRCs but also the psychological counsellors working in schools and other institutions must comply with were created by this institution (https://samsunpdr.org/pdr/etik-kurallar/). To summarize, the ethical principles that the personnel working in GRCs must comply with have been determined by the professional organization and the Ministry of National Education. According to these findings, it can be said that the normative institutional isomorphism of GRCs is relatively high.

3.3. Mimetic institutional isomorphism

Mimetic institutional isomorphism arises spontaneously. This isomorphism, which is different from coercive and normative isomorphism, is an organization's response to uncertainties in the external environment. Organizations can imitate the strategies and tactics used by other organizations to cope with the delays in their external environment, increase their legitimacy, and gain power. (Di Maggio and Powell, 1983, 151). According to the research findings, the mimetic institutional isomorphism network consisting of guidance research centers that 38 GRC's managers participated in stated that they followed and took as an example in the 2019-2020 academic year consisted of 79 actors (Node=79) and 68 connections (Ties=68). On the other hand, isolated actors (Isolated=8)

represent actors with no mimetic institutional isomorphism; in other words that they do not take any institution as an example (Figure 1).
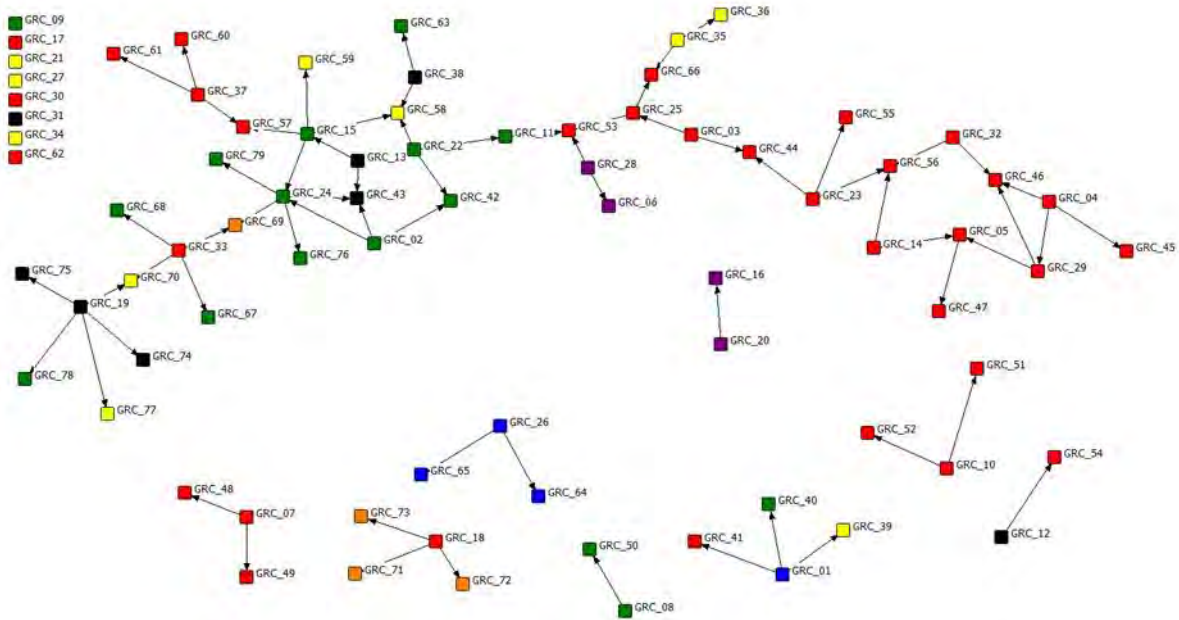

Figure 1. Mimetic institutional isomorphism network map by geographic regions.

Description: The checkboxes represent the actors, the lines the relationship of mimetic institutional isomorphism. Disconnected actors were isolated. Red: Marmara region, green: Karadeniz region, yellow: İç Anadolu region, black: Doğu Anadolu region, blue: Ege region, orange: Akadeniz region and purple: Güneydoğu Anadolu region.

According to the research findings, it was found that while most of the GRC managers took the practices in other CRCs as an example, some of them (GRC_9, 17, 21, 27, 30, 31, 34, 62) did not take any other institution (isolated actors) as an example. GRCs located in different geographical regions follow each other and take samples. This situation is also seen in the mimetic institutional isomorphism network map colored according to the different areas in Figure 1. However, as expected, it was found that the GRCs in the same region and the provinces and districts closer to each other in terms of distance followed each other more. The fact that the actors, especially in the Marmara region (red), interact more with each other and take each other as an example, as most of the GRCs here are located in the districts of Istanbul, and because they come together more and share innovations at the provincial level meetings, joint studies at the regional level due to its execution. A direct quote on this is given below:

We meet with GRC managers in our province at provincial level meetings. We work together on some joint projects and assignments made by the Provincial Directorate of National Education. I know their managers, and I have cordial relations. We learn from each other as we share some of our apps. (GRC_ 04).

In the research, the structural features of the mimetic institutional isomorphic network and the data on the actors in the network were also analyzed with techniques specific to social network analysis (Table 3). According to the findings obtained regarding the structural features of the mimetic institutional isomorphism network, its component was 12 (Component size=12). The component represents whether the network forms a whole and whether the actors in the network interact with each other. Therefore, the network structure is fragmented.

Table 3. Mimetic institutional isomorphism network's structural measures

Variables	Nodes	Ties	Isolated	Component Size	Density	Std	Average Degree	Clustering Coefficient
	79	68	8	12	0.011	0.104	0.861	0.024

The density measure measures how many connections are made between actors compared to the possible connections made. It gives the ratio of the established connection according to the number of connections that can be established and takes a value between 0-1. A density of *"0"* indicates no interaction, a *"1"* indicates close relationships (Carrington, Scott and Wasserman, 2005; Marsden, 2005). According to the findings obtained in the study, the density of the mimetic institutional isomorphism network was 11% (*D*=0.011, *Sd*=0.104, Avg. Degree=0.861). Thus, it has been found that 11% of the maximum relationship that can be established in the network is realized, and this rate is meagre. This may be an indication that there may be some disconnections within the network. Different analyzes are used to determine this.

The clustering coefficient is defined as a measure of the direct links of various actors in the network with their neighbors (Carrington, Scott and Wasserman, 2005; Marsden, 2005). Thanks to the clustering coefficient, it reveals the close and distant relationships of the actors (Scott, 2000). This ratio probability that two neighboring actors are connected can take values between *(0-1).* A high clustering coefficient means more internal links and fewer external links. The fact that the internal connections of the network are strong and close, but the external connections are few interpreted as a certain degree of closure to new information in terms of the mimetic institutional isomorphism network. In the study, the clustering coefficient of the mimetic institutional isomorphism network was found to be 0.024 (*Clustering Coefficient*= 0.024). The low

density and clustering coefficients also confirm the fragmented structures in the diagrams.

In the research, which RAMs were taken as samples were analyzed with social network analysis centrality measures. Link strength in social networks is an analytical approach that reveals the individual characteristics of the actors in the network and the positions of these actors in the network. It enables identifying the actors with high impact capacity in the network (Carrington, Scott and Wasserman, 2005). In the study, the centrality measures, which reveal their positions in mimetic institutional isomorphism networks consisting of other institutions that CRC administrators take as an example, were analyzed by degree centrality, closeness centrality, betweenness centrality and eigenvector centrality (Scott, 2000), and the findings regarding the prominent actors are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Mimetic institutional isomorphism network centrality measures

ID	Degree	ID	Closeness.	ID	Betweenness	ID	Eigenvector
GRC_24	6.000	GRC_09	1560.000	GRC_53	566.000	GRC_24	1.000
GRC_19	5.000	GRC_17	1560.000	GRC_22	553.500	GRC_15	0.761
GRC_15	5.000	GRC_30	1560.000	GRC_21	540.000	GRC_43	0.677
GRC_33	4.000	GRC_31	1560.000	GRC_25	535.000	GRC_02	0.632
GRC_04	3.000	GRC_58	1560.000	GRC_24	456.000	GRC_69	0.385
GRC_01	3.000	GRC_62	1560.000	GRC_15	432.000	GRC_58	0.365
GRC_03	2.000	GRC_12	1541.000	GRC_44	396.000	GRC_76	0.323
GRC_20	1.000	GRC_18	1503.000	GRC_23	379.000	GRC_79	0.323
GRC_09	0.000	GRC_13	913.000	GRC_57	132.000	GRC_22	0.237

According to the research findings, the most central actor of the mimetic institutional isomorphism network was determined as GRC_24 (*deg*=6). In addition to GRC_24, the guidance research centers with the highest degree of mimetic institutional isomorphism network, in other words, being in the most central position in the network and taking the others as examples, are actors with the codes GRC_19 (*deg*=5) and GRC_15 *(deg*=5), respectively. Closeness centrality is how an actor in the network is directly or indirectly close or distant from other actors. It reflects the actor's ability to access information within the network and how quickly he can connect to other actors in the network (Scott, 2000). According to the research findings, GRC_19 (*Clo*= 1560.000) was found to be the actor with the highest ability to access information in the mimetic institutional isomorphism network. Actors with high closeness centrality can reach all other actors in the network at the highest level, using their connections and friends. Therefore, opportunities to access information are also more (Marsden, 2005). Betweenness centrality is based on the theoretical basis that the actors positioned in the structural gaps formed by the absence of relations between the actors and act as a bridge can

benefit more, depending on the structural gap theory put forward in the social capital theory (Burt, 1992). GRC_53 *(Betw.*=566,000) was the highest actor, which functions as a bridge in the mimetic institutional isomorphism network and whose connection plays a critical role in establishing a connection between the actors. Actors with codes GRC_22, *(Betw.*=553,500), GRC_21 (*Betw.*= 329,216), GRC_25 (*Betw.*=535.00) act as bridges in the same network. In the study, the actor with the highest eigenvalue of the mimetic institutional isomorphic network was GRC_24 (*Eigenvector*=1,000). Other actors with the highest eigenvector values were GRC_15 (*Eigenvector*=0.761), GRC_43 (*Eigenvector*= 0.677), GRC_02 (*Eigenvector*=0.632) and GRC_69 (*Eigenvector*=0.385). This measurement assumes that not all connections are of equal value. The quality of connections is as important as the number of connections for a person to be in a central location. In other words, it is more important for an actor to have few high-quality links than to have many medium-quality links (Marsden, 2005). Thus, in the research, all the actors that play an active role in the network due to their position in the mimetic institutional isomorphism network were put forward based on the data.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

In this study, which aims to determine the level of institutional isomorphism of Guidance Research Centers (GRC), which are public education organizations, institutional isomorphism is examined in the dimensions of coercive, normative and mimetic institutional isomorphism. The basic thesis of institutional theory is that the social and cultural environment homogenizes organizations in shaping organizational arrangements. In other words, organizations tend to resemble each other more and more to gain legitimacy and power in their environment. Therefore, social, cultural, environmental factors, values, norms and expectations force organizations to resemble each other (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Friedland and Alford, 1991; Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Thus, the basic thesis of institutional theory is that the social and cultural environment homogenizes organizations in shaping organizational arrangements. In other words, organizations tend to resemble each other more and more to gain legitimacy and power in their environment. Therefore, social, cultural, environmental factors, values, norms and expectations force organizations to resemble each other (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Friedland and Alford, 1991; Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

Institutional theory is concerned with the similarities of organizations, not their differences. In this context, *coercive institutional isomorphism* emerges due to the formal and informal pressures exerted by the other organizations to which the organizations are affiliated and the cultural expectations of the society in which the institutions operate. Research findings show that since the Guidance Research Centers are primarily public institutions, they are regulated by the fundamental laws of the Republic of Turkey, the legal infrastructure of the Ministry of National Education, as well as rules specific to

their field (such as Child Protection Law, Special Education Law) and various regulations and circulars. It is hierarchically responsible to the Ministry of National Education, its top institution, and the Governorship and Provincial Directorate of National Education at the provincial level. There are short, medium and long-term goals to be achieved in the 2019-2023 strategic plans, which are researched through the official websites of the research participants. In the vision and mission statements, both the educational goals of the country and the fundamental values of the profession such as respect for human beings, trust and self-realization are emphasized. While their missions are within limits specified in their job descriptions, their vision statements are determined in a way that integrates them with their professional and core values to achieve this. As a result, it is seen that GRCs have a very tightly defined task area in terms of coercive institutional isomorphism. Some institutionalists have stated that over time, organizations become isomorphic with each other, increasingly identify with each other, and become passive against the factors and forces in their environment. They were considered here as institutions include other organizations (state, hierarchical supreme institution for this research) and law, regulation, tradition, social and professional norms, culture, and ethics (Hawley, 1968). Therefore, in the study, while the duties expected from GRCs in their job descriptions are *"planning, providing, coordinated execution of guidance and psychological counseling services and special education services in provinces and districts, monitoring and evaluating the services provided"* (MNE, Guidance Research Center Directive, 2020). They are expected to comply with a large number of legal regulations and administrative procedures in their fulfilment. As a result, research findings revealed that GRCs are highly coercive institutional isomorphic organizations.

Normative institutional isomorphism stems mainly from professionalization (educational processes, laws, professional and commercial organizations). Research findings show two types of personnel assigned to GRCs: guidance counselor/psychological counselor and special education teacher. In the examinations made with the textual technique, it is stated in the regulations that social workers and therapists in various fields can be assigned to these institutions when necessary. The active actors in the training processes of psychological counselors are the Council of Higher Education (CHE) and universities. These institutions create the content of the training programs for the acquisition of the profession. The content to be implemented by the Guidance and Psychological Counseling Departments of the universities is created by the education faculties and approved by CHE. The active actors in the training processes of psychological counselors are the CHE and universities. These institutions form the content of the training programs for the acquisition of the profession. The content to be implemented by the Guidance and Psychological Counseling Departments of the

universities is created by the education faculties and approved by CHE. In other words, occupational standards were developed and defined by these institutions.

Zapp, Marques and Powell (2021) stated that the increasing globalization and homogenization of higher education institutions are due to the international higher education regime, accountability practices, permeability of open borders, education markets and global science understanding. Universities are exposed to these environmental pressures like all other institutions, and an essentially isomorphic change occurs. This situation makes universities, like other organizations, more rational, standardized and strategic actors. The research of Cardona, Pardo, and Dasi (2020) on the isomorphism of universities also supports this finding. This standardization is not only in the training process but also in the application process of the profession. The active actor in terms of professional organizations of psychological counselors is the Turkish Psychological Counseling Association. This institution, a non-governmental organization and professional organization, shapes the profession to a large extent by offering suggestions for developing the content of pre-vocational education for psychological counselors, organizing various pieces of training for psychological counselors working in the profession, and establishing the ethical rules of the job. As a result, with the research findings, it has been revealed that GRC employees have professional standards. Therefore, their fields of duty (guidance and psychological counseling, special education) are normative institutional isomorphic organizations at a high level.

Mimetic institutional isomorphism occurs due to the tendency of organizations to model other organizations when organizational technologies are not adequately understood when goals are unclear, or when the environment creates symbolic uncertainty (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, 150-152). Therefore, organizations imitate other organizations that are perceived as successful by decision-makers in their population. The social network analysis method has brought a new perspective to organizational research and has been widely used in organizational analysis (Goldsmith and Eggers, 2004; Granovetter, 1985; Kilduff and Tsai, 2007; Knoke and Kublinski, 1982; Krachardt, 1992). According to the research findings obtained by the social network analysis method, the behavior of GRCs to follow and take samples from other colleague institutions was examined. Accordingly, 38 participating RAM managers created a mimetic institutional isomorphism network with 79 actors and 68 links. In the study, the density of the imitative isomorphic network was found to be 11%. In other words, GRCs followed and sampled other GRCs at a rate of 11% of the maximum level they could take as an example. In addition to the low density, the low clustering coefficient and eight isolated actors show that the GRC managers take other GRCs as examples at a low level. Comparisons made according to geographical regions show that although actors in the same regions have more relations, they share their experiences with other regions

through telephone, internet, meetings in joint meetings and are aware of each other through various channels.

GRC_24 was the most centralized actor of the network, the most exemplary and the most exemplary actor of the network and the highest eigenvector value of connections. The reasons for this were stated to be personal relationships, being successful and being willing to share their experiences. As a result, research findings revealed that GRCs are low-level mimetic institutional isomorphic organizations. Suddaby (2010) stated that institutionalists misinterpreted isomorphism over time, inferring that organizations became isomorphic with each other over time, became utterly identical, and acted passively towards factors and forces in their environment. Thereupon, DiMaggio and Powell (1988) introduced the concept of *corporate entrepreneurship* and a new classification to eliminate this misinterpretation. The authors emphasized that environmental forces do not enslave organizations, and what they call corporate entrepreneurship is a process in which organizations often change their institutional environment through creative methods. Institutional entrepreneurs are actors who create new organizational forms or transform existing ones. These actors can be individuals, groups, organizations, or organizations (DiMaggio, 1988; Garud, Hardy and Maguire, (2007). It is understood that some of the RAMs with extremely high normative and coercive isomorphism can still make a difference in their field of duty. Therefore, it is possible to call the RAMs, which are taken as an example by other RAMs, as corporate entrepreneurs. There are also different views on the actors to be considered as corporate entrepreneurs. Battilana (2006) stated that to be called a corporate entrepreneur, it is necessary to initiate and implement changes that will make a difference. Suddaby (2010), on the other hand, stated that any change agent, no matter how weak, is seen as institutionalization, and any change agent is accepted as a corporate entrepreneur.

The 2023 Education Vision document published by the Ministry of National Education in Turkey in 2019 emphasizes that GRCs should be structured according to changing needs. According to Kuzgun (1995), these centers, which were opened with the efforts of special educators, are similar to *Child Guidance Clinics,* which was established independently of schools with the movement to protect school health in the United States. Türküm (2012, 278) likened the guidance and psychological counseling services in a province to the circulatory system of a living thing and said that the guidance and research center directorate is the heart of that creature. Guidance and Research Centers are institutions that work for special education problems, guidance and psychological counseling within the field of education for the citizens in their area of responsibility. However, research on guidance research centers is very limited (Nazlı, Kiye, Yoncalık, Önal, Can et al. 2021; Yılmaz & Uçar, 2021). Research in the field has generally focused on subjects that may fall within the field of special education. In a study specific to the operation of GRCs, it has been stated that many problems negatively affect the operation

of GRCs and that significant improvements are needed for the procedure to be carried out smoothly. More research is needed on the development and managerial function of these institutions.

5. Limitations

The limitation of the qualitative dimension of the research is the problem of updating the institutional websites that can be accessed during the data collection process with the documentation technique. The fact that the websites of some institutions are not up-to-date is a significant limitation. The limitation for the social network analysis dimension is the inability to ensure the participation of all Guidance Research Centers across Turkey. In addition, some of the administrators reached were hesitant to participate in the research. Especially in recent years, this problem has been experienced in many types of research in collecting data from public institutions. In a social network analysis study in which all guidance research centers in Turkey participate, a more extensive and more interactive network can be revealed in the analysis of the whole network and the relations of all actors within the network. In future research, it will be helpful to conduct research on the complete network and investigate the change of this network covering the 2019-2020 academic year longitudinally. A longitudinal study will also provide the opportunity to compare the difference in the mimetic institutional isomorphism network.

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