

Intercultural Communication and Crisis Management:**Ikea Case Study****Deniz AKÇAY**

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Abstract

Globalization has now more effectively interconnected cross relations amid international companies, communities, and organizations than in the past. Walls among the blocks of such structures have now become more transparent and permeable. This situation has accelerated and strengthened the interaction process among relevant structures. Just as the case when any changes witnessed in any given community can now more quickly and effectively reach other groups via news, social reactions, etc., global companies can equally experience the problems and crises emerging in their international agencies and franchisees in their central structures and systems.

Within that context, problems on intercultural communication and crisis communication have gained further importance. In the present study, Coombs's situational crisis communication model has been built onto intercultural communication ground. News published in various national and international publications between 2011 and 2015 has been collected to apply discourse analysis. Furthermore, in this study, in-depth interviews have been conducted between June 15 and June 16, 2016, with Koop-İş (Turkish union of trade, cooperative, education, and bureau workers) chairman advisor Deniz Akdoğan and collective labor agreement chairman Aytuğ Balaman.

Based on this conceptual background and within the context of labor unionization, the relationship of IKEA, one of the world's most valuable brands, with Turkey-based Mapa Furniture/IKEA Turkey and Koop-İş Union has been treated in this study in terms of its reflections on the media. This study deals with the crisis of the famous Swedish brand IKEA and attempts to evaluate how intercultural differences cause crisis in international businesses. Consequently, it is seen that IKEA's decentralized structure of management led this crisis to the international sphere rather than intercultural differences.

Keywords: Crisis Management, Management, Intercultural Communication, Intercultural Marketing, Crisis

Kültürlerarası İletişim ve Kriz Yönetimi:

Ikea Örneği

Özet

Küreselleşme dünyadaki şirketler, toplumlar ve organizasyonlar arasındaki ilişkileri geçmişe göre birbirine daha çok bağlamış, bu yapılar arasındaki duvarlar daha saydam, daha geçirgen olmuştur. Bu durum, ilgili yapılar arasındaki etkileşim sürecini hızlandırmakta ve güçlendirmektedir. Her hangi bir toplumda yaşanan gelişmelerin haber, sosyal tepki vb. açıdan diğer toplumlara daha hızlı ve etkileyici şekilde ulaşması gibi küresel marka olan şirketlerin; başka ülkelerdeki temsilcilerinin, franchiselerinin de yaşadığı sorun ve krizleri kendi merkezi yapılarında ve sistemlerinde hissetmesi mümkündür.

Bu bağlamda kültürlerarası iletişim ve kriz iletişimi konuları da önem kazanmaktadır. Çalışmada Kültürlerarası İletişim temeli üzerine Coombs'un Durumsal Kriz İletişim Modeli yerleştirilmiştir. 2011–2015 arasında çeşitli ulusal ve uluslararası yayınlarda yer alan haberler toplanmış ve söylem analizi yöntemi uygulanmıştır. Bununla birlikte çalışmada Koop-İş (Türkiye Kooperatif, Ticaret, Eğitim ve Büro işçileri) sendikası başkan danışmanı Deniz Akdoğan ve Toplu iş sözleşmesi müdürü Ayтуğ Balaban ile 15–16 Haziran 2016 tarihleri arasında derinlemesine mülakat yapılmıştır.

Çalışmada, bu kavramsal zemin üzerinde dünyanın en önemli markalarından olan IKEA; çalışanların sendikalaşması bağlamında, Türkiye ağırlıklı olarak Mapa Mobilya/IKEA Türkiye ve Koop İş Sendikası arasındaki ilişki ve onun basına yansımaları açısından ele alınmaktadır. Çalışmada uluslararası bir İsveç markası olan IKEA Krizi ele alınmış ve ortaya çıkan tablo içinde Kültürlerarası farklılıklar uluslararası işletmelerde krize nasıl yol açmaktadır? sorsuna cevap aranmıştır. Sonuç olarak Uluslararası boyuta taşınmış olan bu krizin kültürlerarası farklılıktan ziyade, ağırlıklı olarak IKEA'nı merkezi olmayan yönetim yapısından kaynaklandığı görülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kriz Yönetimi, Kriz, Kültürlerarası İletişim, Yönetim, Uluslararası Pazarlama

Introduction

Uncertainty and change in the environment constantly expose organizations to unexpected dangers and opportunities. It is seen that increase in social awareness, developments in communication technologies, globalization, and the interaction between corporations and various social and political structures have increased the chance of crisis for organizations.

In this framework and in this new crisis environment, corporations have to organize themselves in a rational way in order to survive, and they are obliged to apply certain communication models in order to guide them.

Unless unpredictable events are rationally handled, they push institutions to unplanned transformation or crisis.

This study addresses IKEA's crisis and seeks to answer the question of how intercultural differences lead to crisis in international business.

In the conceptual background, crisis and reputation concepts are explained, and the importance of taking intercultural differences into consideration in institutions' communication studies is presented. Furthermore, the section explains how crisis managers can use Coombs's situational crisis communication model in the crisis process when evaluating the options of an institution and provides effective strategies and guiding principles during a crisis, including how institutional reputation can be least affected by it.

The second part of the study focuses on IKEA's crisis. It presents the general structure of IKEA and the problems IKEA experienced with its Turkey representative, MAPA Furniture, in the process of unionization with Koop-İş and in the process of internationalization. The research method part of the study bases IKEA's crisis on

Coombs's situational crisis communication model and employs discourse analysis to news collected between 2011 and 2015. The study also draws its data from the in-depth interviews conducted with Koop-İş union leader advisor Deniz Akdoğan and manager of labor contract Aytuğ Balaman on June 15 and 16, 2016.

Conceptual Background

In a postmodern environment where social borders are permeable by means of Internet and communication technologies, individuals can now easily access any type of information, news, and innovation with no time and place limits next to communicating with individuals and groups with the same mind-set. Thus, communication has undoubtedly become one of the most salient factors of everyday life. Communication can be direct/indirect among individuals and communities or can be conducted through private or official channels. Also, the perception and interpretation method of an individual and the different coding formats of both the individual and the community of the individual, combined with different sociocultural factors, play an effective role during communication. Hall underlines that during the message creation process, the process's exclusive material tools and unique network of social relations demand the unification and organization of media tools and practices (Hall, 2006:165-166) Hall also notes that such unification and organization is not only limited within the discursive domain; it also takes place during the process of spreading the message to different viewers. Hall states that once this process is finalized, it should be transposed into social practices and restructured to make it more effective, or in other words, the message should be reanalyzed as coding and encoding. Otherwise, there would be no consumption in the absence of meaning since meaning is jointed with practices, and under no circumstances could it create any effect (Durham & Kellner, 2003, pp. 169–170).

National and international companies and organizations are no longer static existences within communities, but in modern age, they are mandated to utilize goal-oriented communication messages and tools and even structure such means if need be. These structures could thus maximize their efficiency and proficiency level via setting a transnational and global communication network. Another equally salient factor in boosting their efficiency is that once international corporations are well informed primarily about the cultural values of the nations with whom they maintain commercial, cultural, and political relations, this would help them greatly in executing their business interactions more aptly. Neuliep (2013, p. 347) underscores that there is no management theory that excludes culture. So executives must socialize within a culture and belief set that guides their opinions, emotions, and behaviors in terms of communication and management to make it easier to adapt to a certain culture. According to Brighton (2013, p. 34), "communication events have to adapt to cultural factors from internal differences within a given language and culture community, usually embracing a nation, and from external differences when two foreigners communicate." Najafbagy (2008, p. 146) reports that specific factors such as the following should be promulgated to succeed in intercultural communication:

- *To increase our awareness and understanding of our own rights
- *To increase our awareness and understanding of our own culture
- *To become more cognizant of our attitudes and feelings toward people of another country or community and vice versa
- *To better understand the social, political, and economic environments of other cultures and their impact on personal behavior
- *To gain better awareness and appreciation of the similarities and differences between different cultures
- *To be flexible and realistic to an extent that could contribute to resolving conflicts

It is clear that international companies in particular would be able to more effectively manage potential crisis situations once they harness management styles tailored to prioritize cultural differences amid different communities. When crisis communication is not carried out properly, the reputation of institutions can be severely damaged.

Gotsi and Wilson (2001, p. 69, as cited by Terblanche, 2014, p. 656) kurumsal itibarı dış paydaşların kurumla ilgili zaman içerisindeki değerlendirmeleri olarak tanımlamakta ve bu değerlendirmenin dış paydaşların kurumla doğrudan edindiği deneyimlerine, kurumun kendisinin eylemleriyle ilgili bilgi vermesine bağlı olduğunu ifade etmektedirler. Protecting the institutional reputation of a business in crisis is directly related with the good management of crisis.

Hays (1985, p. 36, as cited by Kernisky, 1997, p. 84) delineates crisis as the insurmountable conflict between a company's expectations and the events emerging around the company. Loosemore (1998, p. 24), on the other hand, comments that crisis would be the final outcome of major social corruptions, forcing the company to face positive or negative outputs.

Coombs (2007) notes that crisis management could be exemplified under three main stages: precrisis, crisis intervention, and postcrisis (as cited by Mazzei & Ravazzani, 2015, p. 3). Precrisis examines if a company's practices are geared toward early detection of the factors responsible for the crisis and sheds light to the potential measures. Such early preventive activities, also known as *proactive* strategies, enable to establish a solid communication within the company and allow the company to be well-prepared for any potential threats or opportunities. Coombs claims that postcrisis communication can be used in order to repair the reputation and/or prevent reputational damage. Coombs's situational crisis communication model is useful for crisis managers to determine their options and what strategies can be more effective during the crisis response process so that reputation will be less damaged and protected. Using the communication framework helps clarify and solve the problem (Coombs, 2007, p. 163).

Besides Coombs's theory, to resolute the conflict in crisis which this article relies on, considering intercultural communication is another important factor.

Accordingly, intercultural communication activities are immeasurably effective in assisting companies in rendering early interventions in any potential crisis. Trompenarss, for instance, underlines that family metaphor is attached great importance in the national and international trade relations of countries such as Turkey, Venezuela, Hong Kong, Malaysia, India, Singapore, and Spain (Neuplen, 2013, p. 350). On the other hand, as detected in the next part of the present research, the case study IKEA had, in due course, experienced union crises in countries such as Turkey, America, and Canada, and the underlying causes behind such crises had been the decentralized structure of IKEA Global, IKEA's corporate values and Swedish values, and the conflicts experienced with international IKEA agencies that have a different mentality than Sweden and with discrepant national legal practices. It is now construed that union crises in IKEA, particularly the crisis within the scope of Koop-İş and IKEA Turkey, stemmed from the prevailing differences and gaps between the two nations.

Ikea Crisis

Founded in 1943 in Sweden, IKEA has a total of 235 stores throughout 43 countries, mostly located within Europe. Humanitarian features in IKEA products, such as creativity and design, take the front stage, and its products are popular by virtue of their economic, ergonomic, and mobile qualities. Its products explicitly resonate national Swedish culture. Salzer reports that from a myriad of aspects, IKEA is an extreme company since only a handful of companies managed to nourish its corporate culture with unique symbols not only within its own company but also publicly and deliberately outside the company. Salzer also notes that while devising its self-

identity, IKEA resorts to national Swedish identity too. Within the framework of all these points, Salzer defines IKEA as a culturally aware company independent and open toward the public (1994, p. 38). On the other hand, it is viewed that before entering any global market, IKEA takes on board expectations and the needs and tastes of a community. To illustrate, IKEA stores create alternative shortcuts in the United States because of the demands of American public who always seek comfort (Helvacioğlu & Özutku, 2002, p. 207).

IKEA's Turkey franchise, Maya Group, is a family company. The early seeds of which were planted in 1948, and it gained official recognition in 1948. By conserving its family company values, the group completed corporate structuring phase in 1999 under the body of Maya Holding. Subsequent to the 2000s, retail and service sectors became affiliated business branches (<http://www.maya.com.tr/cms/tarihce/3>).

According to year 2004 data, 16% of the Swedish population consists of immigrants, which indeed is a contributing factor in boosting the multicultural perspective of Sweden toward risk and risk management (Falkheimer & Heide, 2006, pp. 180–181). Barker and Gower (2010, pp. 296–297) argue that corporations must conduct activities for its internal and external followers in a competitive and expanding market that bears gender, age, race, religion, ethnicity, and cultural factors while also maintaining communication activities. For IKEA Center then, with regard to Koop-İş and Turkey and countries in which there are IKEA agencies, communication activities and emerging crises can be positioned as "external followers," and this situation may introduce with itself interculturality in communication. In an expanding competitive environment, in order for an international company like IKEA to succeed in communication, crisis communication particularly, an approach blending its national structure and culture with the local management style and culture in the country IKEA operates should exist.

In line with the attachment of a community, many organizations in which actors such as employees, customers, and suppliers are connected resemble each other in their flexible websites reaching beyond geographical and political borders (Castells, 2000a, as cited by Oliveira, 2013, p. 254). Since individuals and organizations generate and share social, historical, and cultural values while communicating, they inevitably get influenced by different identities in their public relations and communication operations. The analyzed case of Koop-İş and the process developed between IKEA Turkey, Global Union, IKEA Sweden (center), and communication activities are categorized as, within the framework of intercultural communication studies, assigning of the authority to local management by the central management as a reflection of creating a goal-oriented message, using communication channels, and internalizing communication by moving beyond geographical and political borders. Harvard University professor Philip Rosenzweig posits that the success of intercultural communication relies on the effective communication skills of managers (Neuliep, 2003, p. 312).

Research

IKEA's stance toward unification in both Turkey and other states has fueled an exponentially rising wave of crises on the international platform. The crises received much attention in national and international press. In addition, it was also surveyed that a number of IKEA employees in international areas are union members, having signed collective labor agreements. According to the article "IKEA's Turkey Criteria" dated September 7, 2012, on the *Radikal* newspaper, IKEA signed a collective labor agreement with the Norwegian HK Union, the Handels Union in Sweden, and the Teamsters Union in Canada for IKEA employees, and IKEA employees in Germany who had all signed collective labor agreements were from Verdi Union (<http://www.radikal.com.tr/ekonomi/ikeada-turkiye-kriterleri-1099496/>).

Many stakeholders can be influenced by news revealing a crisis. Therefore, considering news in media is crucial for crisis managers (Coombs, 2007, p. 173). That is one of the most important factors in order to form this case in article.

In order to understand the whole crisis from beginning to end, news tracking and discourse analysis method is used. News is what Coombs mostly underlined in his theory.

During the crisis between 2011 and 2015, *sixteen* news articles published from national and international Internet resources were analyzed via discourse analysis based on Coombs's situational crisis communication theory, and the focal point was whether intercultural difference created any effect in the beginning and end of the crisis. It was then concluded that rather than from intercultural difference, the crisis stemmed from IKEA's decentralized management structure.

As mentioned before, Coombs's situational crisis communication theory is useful for crisis managers to determine their options and what strategies can be more effective during the crisis response process so that reputation will be less damaged and will be protected. Using the communication framework helps clarify and solve the problem.

Within the scope of this study, an in-depth interview was held between June 15 and June 16, 2016, with Koop-İş union chairman advisor Deniz Akdoğan and collective labor agreement chairman Aytuğ Balaman. Using discourse analysis, corporate affairs and positioning as well as shifts observed in such affairs and positioning were examined within the crisis process.

Table 1: Situational Crisis Communication Theory of Coombs (2007)

Category	Strategy	Subdimension
<i>Initial Strategies</i>		
Adjust Information	1. Corrective action 2. Express concern for victim	1. What is being done to project from future crises 2. Expected by stakeholders, but not admission of guilt
<i>Primary Strategies</i>		
Deny	3. Attack the accuser 4. Denial 5. Scapegoat	3. Confronting the person or group claiming something is wrong with the organization 4. Asserting that there is no crisis 5. Blaming person or group outside the organization for the crisis
Diminish	6. Excuse 7. Justification	6. Minimizing responsibility by denying intent to do harm and or claiming inability to control the events that triggered the crisis 7. Minimizing the perceived damage caused by the crisis
Rebuilt	8. Compensation 9. Apology	8. Offering money or other gifts to victims 9. Indicating the organization takes full responsibility and asks for forgiveness
<i>Secondary Strategies</i>		
Bolstering	10. Reminder 11. Ingratiation 12. Victimage	10. Telling stakeholders about past and current good works of the organization 11. Praising stakeholders and or reminding them of past and current good works by the organization 12. Reminding stakeholders that the organization is a victim too
Source: Coombs, 2007		

Discourse Analysis Using Coombs's Situational Crisis Communication Model: Analyzing Unionization Process in IKEA

At the center of this study is IKEA Turkey, represented by Mapa Furniture, and Koop-İş Union, which seeks unionization (the fight between both parties and the emergent crisis situation). IKEA opened its first store in Turkey in 2005, and Koop-İş received its first membership applications from IKEA employees in 2007 and started the earliest activities for corporate organization in June 2011. It sought to address tough working conditions in IKEA Turkey, unfavorable terms of agreement, health and safety concerns, several employee complaints, as well as claims that smoking and asking to borrow money from a coworker twice/more were reported as dismissal grounds. Another common argument was it violated labor law, and pursuant legislations were devised to oppress laborers. There was also a complaint that a smoking fine equating to 91 TL in Turkish law was dismissal ground without compensation in IKEA (<http://direnemek.org/2014/12/05/deniz-akdogan-ile-ikea-calisanlarinin-sendika-mucadelesini-konustuk/>).

A similar crisis to IKEA Turkey was recently experienced in the United States. Problems that IKEA experienced within the scope of employees/unionization were not solely restricted within Turkey borders. In the United States, IKEA is primarily managed by American directors. In the article "Ikea's U.S. Factory Churns Out Unhappy Workers" by the *LA Times*, dated April 10, 2011, it was reported that unlike Sweden, IKEA employees in the United States receive significantly lower wages and work in tough and long working hours. US workers' attempt for unionization were dissuaded by IKEA. As reported in the news, IKEA had signed a contract with Jackson Lewis law firm, famed with its resistance against opening the gates to any labor union, and had organized mandatory meetings that dissuaded/scared the employees from union memberships. The case did not

receive much reaction in the United States but was reported in the front pages of Swedish media since a large number of Swedish employees were already union members. An interview was conducted with the director of the organized union force in Swedish factories. The director shared his perplexion upon discovering the incident since IKEA was a solid brand established on Swedish business ethics. The company's attitude in the United States might trigger a tremendous problem. In its line of news, an IKEA Sweden spokesperson described this event as "disappointing." The spokesperson pointed out that he would not discuss the complaints of a small number of employees and labeled the antiunion meeting as "rumors" and said that IKEA Sweden could, under no circumstances, approve this condition to linger any longer (<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/apr/10/business/la-fi-ikea-union-20110410>).

Nationwide organization attempts started in 2011. In March 2012, Turkey organized international meetings in Istanbul with the agency of IKEA Turkey employees, Koop-İş, as well as twenty-four union representatives from 19 countries and UNI IKEA, the global union labor organization with a considerable number of IKEA workers (<http://www.koopis.org.tr/haberler253/ikeanin-onunde-kitlesel-basin-aciklamasi.php>). It was resolved that international IKEA employees would transfer their individual experiences and develop robust relations under the sole roofs of international bodies set toward a common path that prioritized the rights of IKEA employees. During this meeting, having enlightened good and bad practices of IKEA, it was agreed to forge a joint action plan and that sticking together would render a strong effect on IKEA's central management and the media and that meetings to be conducted with IKEA Center would be in the form of a "social dialogue" on the same page ([http://www2.filcams.cgil.it/info.nsf/1ff2f0b3995796d1c12579c100611b19/\\$file/IKEA-Alliance-ReportConclusions-EN.pdf?OpenElement](http://www2.filcams.cgil.it/info.nsf/1ff2f0b3995796d1c12579c100611b19/$file/IKEA-Alliance-ReportConclusions-EN.pdf?OpenElement)).

During these meetings, trade sector unions worldwide established UNI IKEA Global Union Alliance. In cooperation with the company management, it founded a platform in which global and local relations would bolster employees' welfare and in which IKEA's business success could be founded (<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/unions-reach-out-to-local-ikea-workers.aspx?pageID=238&nID=15330&NewsCatID=347>).

From this point onward, since Koop-İş gained the support of an international force as a partner, it seemed that as a union, it had more power to attract laborers inclined to choose the union, and it had greater influence on IKEA Turkey's management in terms of labor rights. Indeed, it was reported that the UNI Global Union headquartered in Switzerland to represent over 20 million employees in over 150 countries actively maintained its operations in countries such as Canada, the United States, Greece, Malaysia, and Italy, and employees in the headquarters of IKEA in Sweden also rendered their support to this joint attempt (http://www.uniglobalunion.org/search/apachesolr_search/IKEA).

Once IKEA's Turkey agency Mapa refused to communicate with Koop-İş and openly provoked antiunion campaigns, Global Union Alliance (UNI Global Union) put into an action plan to support IKEA Turkey employees. According to the news posted in Koop-İş's official website, within the scope of this plan, cooperation protocols were signed with trade sector unions in Turkey, measures were taken to prevent interunion rivalry, and it was resolved to organize Koop-İş Union in IKEA at the end of meeting (<http://www.koopis.org.tr/haberler57/ikea-orgutlenmemiz-uluslararası-gundemde.php>).

With the support of the union, the alliance organized national and international media campaigns and global action days (<http://www.koopis.org.tr/haberler400/ikea-kuresel-eylem-gunu-tum-dunyada-gerceklestirildi.php>). Subsequent to granting the union with the authority to sign collective labor agreements on behalf of workers because of the jurisdiction plea raised by the employer, UNI IKEA's chairman called IKEA

Turkey to respect the decisions of local authorities in Turkey and urgently initiate collective agreement meetings (<http://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/turkish-union-koop-wins-union-recognition-ikea>).

At this point, in February 2015, with the recognition of the IKEA Union Alliance by granting the authority to Koop-İş Union through the channel of the Turkish Ministry of Labor and Social Security, the union organization of IKEA Turkey employees secured itself a legal basis. Trusting on its legal foundation, the union enterprise could then cooperate with an international platform to expand its impact area.

Upon the membership of Koop-İş with UNI Global Union, the relationship between the union and IKEA Turkey's management gained impetus. In the words of Koop-İş CEO Alemdar, aimed constructive "social dialogue" could not yet be secured at the moment. In the article "Ikea Employees Prepared for Protest" on *Posta* newspaper dated August 4, 2012, Alemdar stated that the IKEA Turkey management accredited their union in May 2012, which led them to cancel the envisaged mass press declaration to be shared on May 6, 2012, in tandem with UNI Global and UNI IKEA Global Union Alliance. As a consequence, to stop the pressure of the IKEA Turkey management, they would take actions per effective laws with the support of Türk-İş, affiliated unions, UNI Global, and UNI IKEA Global Union Alliance (<http://www.posta.com.tr/ekonomi/isdunyasi/HaberDetay/IKEA-calisanlari-eylem-hazirliginda.htm?ArticleID=133569>).

It was reported that this protest would receive the participation of UNI IKEA Global Union Alliance and a large number of IKEA employees worldwide and that union activities were then becoming a source of panic for IKEA Turkey (<http://www.emekdunyasi.net/ed/isci-sendika /19306-ikea-calisanlarindan-eylem-hazirligi>).

The projected protest was reported on September 5, 2012, in *Milliyet* newspaper, with the headline "Protest in Ikea on Saturday." In this news, union declarations and the views of IKEA Turkey's management' were correspondingly shared. On behalf of Koop-İş, Alemdar underlined that they would keep fighting until IKEA workers were granted with the right of collective labor agreement. Alemdar continued such, is it true that the employers force the workers, even the ones not union members, to resign, and by calling the union members employed in IKEA stores in other cities to its head office, they are forced and threatened to submit their resignation in Istanbul notaries? (www.milliyet.com.tr/ikea-da-cumartesi-eylem-var/ekonomidetay/05.09.2012/1591724/default.htm).

From this point onward, IKEA Turkey's denial of being antiunion is the equivalent of the *denial/refutation* category in Coombs's situational crisis communication model. In the *Milliyet* newspaper dated September 5, 2012, the declaration below was shared against the claims of "preventing the attempts for unionization":

As IKEA Turkey Management we firmly believe that union organization is a constitutional right and we are all obliged to pay equal respect to all rights granted. While on one hand we pay respect to freely exercising organization right within the framework of legal rights, we would on the other hand like to share our objection to illegal practicing of this right, which could trigger sabotage actions towards the peaceful and safe work atmosphere we maintain in our workplace (www.milliyet.com.tr/ikea-da-cumartesi-eylem-var/ekonomidetay/05.09.2012/1591724/default.htm).

The protest and mass press declaration shared in this protest were broadcast on *Channel D Prime News* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2dRcHvHeZA>) presented by İrfan Değirmenci, as well as on *Günaydın* (Good Morning) programs (<http://tvarsivi.com/player.php?y=11&z=2012-09-10+08%3A14%3A01&res=2012-09-10+08%3A14%3A31>). The protest was also tracked by the *Wall Street Journal*, and a video of the protest was shared on the Internet. *Wall Street Journal* published the news on September 12, 2012, with the headline "IKEA threatens to sue Turkish unions" (<http://www.wsj.com/video/ikea-threatens-to-sue-turkish-unions/271C502A-5FA9-49B3-88E5-EF3861E98A34.html#!3DF3E724-6F73-47AF-9CCF-BE96395AC8F2>).

This started to defame the reputation and identity of IKEA not only in Turkey but also globally (<http://www.wsj.com/video/ikea-threatens-to-sue-turkish-unions/271C502A-5FA9-49B3-88E5-EF3861E98A34.html#!3DF3E724-6F73-47AF-9CCF-BE96395AC8F2>). It was probable that this situation would more actively push IKEA Global into a crisis situation. Interceding with this, news of the protest was also echoed in Swedish agenda. In the article "Ikea Slammed over Anti-union Bullying in Turkey" by Swedish newspaper *The Local*, dated September 7, 2012, Swedish unions confirmed the terms of IKEA employees in Turkey and agreed that union members or those who wanted to be members were bullied and that employees were disturbed in their private homes and threatened to disavow Koop-İş. Hence, Swedish unions supported the September 8 protest. In the continuation of this news, Swedish unions criticized IKEA Turkey's antiunion actions and requested IKEA Center to sign an international labor rights agreement that supported union membership for all employees. Against all these claims, only one spokesperson from IKEA Sweden remained hesitant to share a direct comment on the situation in Turkey and reminded that IKEA was "open" for a global labor agreement, and that as a company, they attached value to employees whose job motivation and loyalty mattered significantly. The spokesperson shared the company's desire to let all employees freely decide to be or not to be a union member, and that in a large number of places, IKEA already maintained "good" business relations (<http://www.thelocal.se/20120907/43086>). This comment of the spokesperson falls into the same category as the statement of *denying the existence of a crisis* in Coombs's model.

On its statements, IKEA Sweden avoided directly addressing the union and underlined that IKEA employees were endowed with motivation and freedom to be or not be a union member and that the company was open to any global coactivity. IKEA Center, with this open-ended and indirectly addressed statement, demonstrated a lofty, agreeable approach advocating common sense at the expense of ignoring the actual party to negotiate. Such attitude recalls that their strategy in this process was "wait and see." Their position appeared to be temperate. This attitude of IKEA Sweden is classified under Coombs's "diminishing" category and can be associated with the subdimension of *minimizing responsibility by denying intent to do harm or claiming inability to control the events that triggered the crisis*. Likewise, IKEA Turkey labeled union's claims as vilifications and manipulations. They stated that based on the previous laws enacted by the union, they could, as a corporation, counterattack.

A general perspective to the news on union protests, the central directorate in IKEA Sweden demonstrated a more generalized, encompassing, global attitude that was open to dialogue with union protests as opposed to the attitude of IKEA Turkey. IKEA Turkey, on the other hand, created an impression that they perceive the very same process as a "legal threat" per constitutional and national laws. Such attitude jointed with the statement that "freedom" conversely shadowed the sincerity of the message and its attachment with corporate philosophy. The images and messages of IKEA Turkey were accusive, aggressive, harsh, and violent within the context of "threat." With such attitude and stance, it is most likely that the company, though not intentionally, reinforced its image as oppressive and "threatening." Such attitude of IKEA Turkey falls into the same category with *denial/refutation* defined in Coombs's model as *blaming a person or group outside the organization for the crisis*.

In the article "Ikea's U.S. Factory Churns Unhappy Workers" dated April 10, 2011, LA Times reported that the company was essentially managed by American CEOs, and since a contract was signed with a law firm famed with its antiunion fight, it is possible to interpret with the existence of both information on the same news that IKEA Center remained in a neutral position against the ongoing events and law case (<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/apr/10/business/la-fi-ikea-union-20110410>). Indeed, the management team in the United States did not originate from Sweden but are dominated by US citizens. It appears that the source/focal point of the problem shifted toward the US managers of IKEA rather than IKEA Center. This shift

pushed IKEA Center to a relatively distant place from the source of problem, and IKEA Center was dissociated as a secondary contact party in addition to the local administration. In the current picture, the problem seems to be taking place between IKEA USA and its local employees. From this stance, IKEA Center, just as the case in Turkey, looks like an independent third party speaking in a lofty tone and advocating common sense. IKEA Center's attitude toward the events in the United States replicates its attitude toward events in Turkey in which a discourse with common sense was utilized, yet with its mildly conciliatory tone to settle the parties involved in the event, it partially echoes IKEA Turkey's attitude to some extent. The fact that the spokesperson mentioned about hearing some "rumors" about a number of antiunion meetings in the company leaves an impression that they are at the stage of perceiving and analyzing the progressing case. Such discourse of the spokesperson, including identifying the news as "rumor," is identical with the *diminishing category* in the crisis communication model of Coombs defined as *minimizing the perceived image caused by the crisis*. In other words, they create the image of a group believing that events were marginalized; hence, they started to position themselves in a different place. The fact that the spokesperson named this event as unacceptable from the viewpoint of the Swedish group management seems that in the problem solving process, IKEA would put limits to its position.

Negative news was posted in esteemed, highly circulated US publications such as the *LA Times*, *Huffington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal*. It can be observed that the company was stuck between its national (Sweden) public view and foreign public view (the issues raised in the publications of developed capitalist countries and neighbor states). It is probable that such concerns could bring IKEA Center one step closer to conciliations. In *Wall Street Journal*, dated September 12, 2012, besides the video of which link was shared above, union claims were repeated in printed news columns, and IKEA Turkey was said to perceive the claims with a "legal threat for suing." In the news, IKEA Center's identical problems in the United States and France were mentioned, and it was reported that IKEA was occasionally hasty to react to public pressures about its business practices, and IKEA's Turkey agency, Mapa Furniture, was mentioned. The news seemed to be at equal distance and neutral to both parties' views. In this news, Uni Global Union's director said that IKEA in Turkey was represented by Mapa Furniture, and as a local Turkish company, Mapa was not legally obliged to abide by IKEA's global standards. Uni Global, however, demands IKEA to demonstrate its respect for laborers regardless of the agencies managing its stores. In the IKEA line of news, IKEA Turkey's arguments were given. It was reported that IKEA Turkey found Koop-İş claims groundless and that the acts were typical of Koop-İş's motivation to defame IKEA's brand reputation. IKEA Turkey stated that in the violation of law and groundless claims, they would exercise their legal rights. The statement of IKEA's global operations spokesperson in the news was that IKEA paid respect to workers' rights and could form a sincere web of dialogue with a set of global union alliances organizing labor rights, but IKEA would not offer any opportunities of union membership (<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB1000087239639044426404577645533857364156>)

In the *Hürriyet* newspaper dated December 17, 2012, a "surprising" development was released; IKEA Sweden and the Swedish government provided moral and material support to Koop-İş for unionization (<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ikea-turkiyede-sendika-kavgasi-22176341>). According to the report, IKEA Center communicated its position through a written notice to Koop-İş and Mapa Furniture. The same news also mentioned that Koop-İş's pressure toward employees was defined as "unrealistic" and "unreasonable" by IKEA Turkey CEO Atalay. Atalay stated that like IKEA Global, IKEA Turkey viewed union organization as a universal human right which was one of the basic rights of employees, but still, as a company policy, they were "neutral" toward unions. Just as no employee could be dismissed from union membership via exercising pressure or threat, none could be forced to be a union member either.

Atalay remarked that Koop-İş Union attempted to be organized with the support of company management and commented that the “union should never ever think that we would ask our employees to be a member of any union” (<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ikea-turkiyede-sendika -kavgasi-22176341>).

In the union line of this news, one critical development is that Koop-İş was now supported by IKEA Global and the Swedish government. This statement matters as it shows that in its fight against unions, IKEA Turkey seemed to be abandoned and isolated. IKEA Global’s statement of having sent a written notice concurrently to the employees and union is significant because a written document functions as an evidence to use in the fullness of time. In Global Union’s own website and Koop-İş’s website, there are news and reports pointing to identical problems (<http://www.koopis.org.tr/sayfa-44/ikea.php>). On the other hand, IKEA Turkey’s CEO is sharing the truth when reminding that in other countries, IKEA has employees with no union membership. At this point, what is most evident is that for the very first time, IKEA Center underlines its “neutral” position toward unions and the freedom of laborers to select any union that they feel closer since that is a universal human right. Atalay, while mentioning to have commenced as a company participatory and supporting practices for employees, the wording “we started” reveals that at least partially, some of the practices have just recently been put into practice. Accordingly, the company executed a reactive internal policy toward union protests, and as defined in Coombs’s crisis communication model, the company strives to *rebuild*, or in other words, the organization takes full responsibility and asks for forgiveness.

In the article “How Did IKEA Respond to Union’s Claims?” on the Patronlardunyasi.com website, dated January 10, 2013, it is seen that IKEA Turkey mainly focused on the financial success or the projects they gained as a representative of IKEA Global. In the same news, there are also questions about union rights and answers provided by the CEO on the same issue. Moreover, a new process supporting IKEA Turkey’s arguments but hidden from the press till then emerged. In the words of CEO Atalay, the union cooperating with Koop-İş and Business Alliance filed a claim about IKEA Turkey to the Ministry of Labor, but the ministry inspection committee filed a legal report saying the absence of a union pressure in the workplace. Atalay highlighted that within the context of report, Ministry of Labor inspectors could not detect any union pressure in the workplace. Atalay added that within the context of the Ministry of Labor’s inspections, investigations were conducted in five different stores, and till that day, a sum of 4,600 employees had been payrolled, and the current number of employees was around 2,000. As a result of investigations, he said to be “honored” that as officially reported, inspectors could not detect any union pressure in workplaces. CEO Atalay also added that the ministry “launched an official investigation against such biased news.” As a comment on the news that workers who were laid off because of union membership were reemployed pursuant to the Üsküdar Labor Court verdict, Atalay said, “All information you have is utterly unrealistic” (<http://m.patronlardunyasi.com/haber/IKEA-sendikanin-iddialarina-nasil-cevap-verdi/138604>). In this news, it is seen that IKEA Turkey manifests the *attack the accuser* strategy that is the primary strategy of the denial/refutation category in Coombs’s crisis communication model.

In the Patronlardunyasi.com news above, the focus was IKEA Turkey as a lucrative IKEA agency having won noteworthy financial success in Turkey with its high performance, whereas in the *Hürriyet* newspaper dated December 17, 2012, the news highlighted that IKEA Turkey’s discourses emphasized being “neutral,” the “freedom to choose any union,” the “normality of being a union member,” and that during the September 2012 protest, IKEA Sweden shared a “neutral,” lofty tone advocating common sense. IKEA Turkey synthesized its discourse with IKEA Sweden in terms of primary approach and foundational concepts; however, accompanying discourse/attitude and reactions were exclusive to their policy. Indeed, as stated in Coombs’s crisis communication model, IKEA Turkey’s attitude is reflective of attacking the accuser’s subdimension, *confronting the person or group claiming something is wrong with the organization*, as manifested by giving evidence to the

Ministry of Labor reports. In the statements provided along with the Ministry of Labor's report, they worded a similar tone with the pre-September 2012 protest, but with a discourse and attitude which even became more aggressive, accusive, and harsh.

At this point, identical to the September 9, 2012, Wall Street Journal news "Ikea Threats to Sue Turkish Unions" that labeled protests as a "legal threat," the same attitude was reiterated by synthesizing with IKEA Center's key concept and discourses. IKEA Turkey stated that inspections were commenced about the union. In its discourse, IKEA Turkey confirmed its workplace conditions with the words "free environment" and "freedom to choose any union" while negating the union. When the statements "now in our workplace, four or five unions can operate in relevant fields" and "if our employees choose a specific union, it is only normal that if it wins legal majority here, it can commence collective agreement negotiations" are co-analyzed, it surfaces that once any given union accumulates power, only then can it win the right for signing collective agreement. This IKEA attitude helps the company to regulate labor relations via its internal practices.

In the process ensuing Ministry of Labor reports, Global Union and Koop-İş (Turkish cooperative, trade, education, and bureau workers union) presented an independent report to IKEA Center in May 2013. Shared to the national and international press, this report was prepared by John Logan, chairperson of the Labor and Employment Studies program at San Francisco State University. Per his report, IKEA followed good and lawful practices in countries such as Norway, Denmark, Austria, and Sweden, where employees were protected by laws, but in countries with no sufficient or well-managed legal protection for employees, the company followed negative and discrepant practices (http://inthesetimes.com/article/15172/ikeas_race_to_the_bottom). In this report, it was highlighted that by abusing inadequate laws, IKEA routinely violated workers' right to establish union, organized "must be attended" meetings, and laid off union activists or forced them to resign. In the report, it was also pointed that with regard to union rights, IKEA Turkey "almost surely violated Turkish labor law and constitution" as well as IKEA's corporate code of ethics which respected employees right of "establishing any organizations they chose." On the other hand, it was also reported that violation of Turkish law and "IKEA values," combined with antiunion reactions, were against joint agreements such as the United Nations Global Compact, International Labor Organization, and Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development Guidelines for Multiple Enterprises known as the basic international human rights standards on the freedom of organizing. It was also manifested that such violations of workers' basic rights triggered loaded suspicions toward IKEA's international voluntary commitment to global standards (<http://www.koopis.org.tr/uploads/yuklemeler/1-birlesik.pdf>). The same report was posted on the Internet (http://inthesetimes.com/article/15172/ikeas_race_to_the_bottom) and *Evrensel* newspaper (<http://www.evrensel.net/haber/53986/abdli-profesor-ikea-raporu-hazirladi>).

Eventually, in January 2014, as the antiunion news in several IKEA countries gained impetus as in the case in Turkey, with uprisings in union movements and the forging of a specific agenda, IKEA Center posted a critical explanatory comment. In a January 10, 2014, news on Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* "IKEA Attempted to Stop Union Employees," it was shared that IKEA, for the first time, recognized their wrongdoing in Turkey (<http://www.dn.se/ekonomi/ikea-anklagas-for-att-motarbete-fackligt-arbete/>). At this point, IKEA's acceptance of its misdeeds is in the same category with apology and compensation in the *Rebuilt* category of Coombs's model. In the news, IKEA Group media director Josefin Thorell shared the views of Alke Boessiher of UNI Global Union and Swedish Trade Workers director Lars-Anders Häggström. Initially, in this news, IKEA's workplace environment in Sweden and Northern Europe was presented as a model environment, but in the rest of the world, the furniture giant opposed unionization. At the moment, Canadian employees had been unpaid for

more than seven months. Boessiher stated that once IKEA employees in Richmond, Canada, refused to sign the new agreement, IKEA laid off the personnel, which then triggered the global meetings with the company. Furthermore, the news stated that in terms of the strike rights of workers, IKEA took Canadian labor courts as reference and tried diligently to satisfy the demands of the union. IKEA Group media director Josefin Thorell stated that despite having offered a myriad of suggestions to the union, they were rejected. Boessiher commented that with regard to America-based and Canada-based employees' rights, IKEA failed to apply its own terms and conditions. Countries such as Canada in which local managements abound compared with other countries provided greater means to avoid responsibility.

Thorell noted that IKEA had a decentralized structure and established its practices on the basis of laws and regulations in the country they operated. Since unions operated differently in different countries, they were resolved to cowork with local unions. He pointed that each IKEA employee was free to have union rights, but bribery, threat, and revenge were some of the methods employed in IKEA to dissuade workers from union membership. Thorell added that it was important to learn a lesson from what emerged in Turkey, and certain measures needed to be implemented to prevent recurrence of the same event in other countries. Boessiger agreed that like IKEA, prior to the outbreak of any other scandals like in Turkey, it would be much wiser to take preventive measures. It was also reported in the news that Swedish Trade Workers director Lars-Anders Häggström also agreed that it would be quite a fair approach to treat all IKEA workers with equal respect. Prof. Dr. John Logan's report issued immediately after the Turkish Ministry of Labor in share with Koop-İş was also circulated in Sweden. In the same post, IKEA news from different dates were also given place (<http://www.dn.se/stories/stories-ekonomi/ikea/>).

An article entitled "IKEA Attempted to Stop Union Employees," which explained the approach of Sweden and IKEA Center, considered the event as union problems that IKEA directly experienced in several countries including Turkey. This is the first time IKEA Center shares a "confession" not about Turkey but Sweden. The confessor is IKEA Group media director Josefin Thorell. Thorell's confession falls into the same strategy titled *apology/compensation* in the *Rebuilt category* within Coombs's situational crisis communication model. Thorell, in the news related to dismissals and salary cuts in countries such as America and Canada as well as the negative attitudes of IKEA toward unionization, confessed IKEA's misdeeds in Turkey. In 2014, a new agenda was introduced to the already-negative relationship between Koop-İş and IKEA Turkey. In an August 28, 2014, news posted in the T24 website entitled "In IKEA Asking to Borrow Money from a Coworker Is Dismissal Ground without Compensation," Koop-İş claimed that using tobacco or asking to borrow money from a friend more than once were even used as dismissal grounds (<http://t24.com.tr/haber/ikeada-arkadasindan-borc-isteyen-tazminatsiz-kovuluyor,269060>). In the news, Koop-İş stated that the contract, having violated labor law and affiliated legislations, aimed to bully the workers, and the smoking fine, which equated to 91 Turkish lira fines in Turkish law, was used in IKEA as dismissal ground without compensation, which was evidently contradictory to any legislative regulation as much as it is against the natural course of life. IKEA's response to these claims was such: "28.8.2014 dated IKEA-Turkey claims serviced on the news website as 'As per the contract signed between IKEA employees and company management, employees would be dismissed without compensation in the event of smoking or asking to borrow money from a friend' are far from reflecting the truth."

IKEA Center's confession of the case falls into the *Rebuilt category*, while IKEA Turkey, as seen, fails to demonstrate the same approach.

In IKEA, similar antiunion pressures have continued till today as witnessed in the United States. The article of San Francisco State University professor John Logan on the double standards of IKEA on workers' rights was shared on November 8, 2015, in the Truthout site. Besides, as of 2013, IKEA employees in the United States

likewise started a union organization (<http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/33694-ikea-s-double-standard-on-workers-rights>). In the article, despite the existence of the United Nations Global Compact signed in 2004 by IKEA in which corporate social responsibility practices and internal ethic codes with the slogan "Good Business with Common Sense" were highlighted and exemplified with the statements "IKEA Group supports all its colleagues' freedom of right to establish, join, and/or not join any given association; leave the freedom of choice at their disposal," in US stores such as College Park, Maryland; Seattle, Washington; and others where union organizations were in progress, there was evidenced pressure toward employees, and signing a contract with a law firm reputed with its antiunion success was a contradictory practice against the allegedly neutral position of IKEA toward unionization (<http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/33694-ikea-s-double-standard-on-workers-rights>).

In the article "IKEA Workers Have Asked for a Union and the Company Hasn't Responded" published in Gawker.com on December 11, 2015, it was shared that union attempts gathered the support of Democrat Party nominees Bernie Sanders and Martin O'Malley, but it was not welcomed by IKEA USA as seen in the counter-response toward unionization attempts by hiring a reputed law firm (<http://gawker.com/ikea-workers-have-asked-for-a-union-and-the-company-has-1742141754>). It is obvious that although IKEA completed the unionization process in Turkey, the process was still unfinished in the United States.

After all these developments, with the support of UNI Global and Swedish participants for a period of three consecutive years at the onset of 2015, Koop-İş won union recognition in IKEA Turkey (<http://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/turkish-union-koop-wins-union-recognition-ikea>).

Interviews with Deniz Akdoğan and Aytuğ Balaman

An interview was conducted with Koop-İş union chairman advisor Deniz Akdoğan and Aytuğ Balaman on June 15–16, 2016.

Akdoğan remarked that they got in touch with Uni Global, and in the next stages, Uni Global provided some training to union members and activists to bolster the organization capacity of Koop-İş union. Akdoğan also added that in the process of organizing Koop-İş union to inform the workers about union membership, laborers were reached via various communication channels such as social media; printed, visual, and interactive materials; billboards and advertisements; as well as press posts which allowed them to receive a considerable number of members from every single store.

Koop-İş chairman advisor Akdoğan said that before Prof. Dr. John Logan's report, Swedish and IKEA Center authorities did not believe events in Turkey. But after Logan's report touched upon the problems prevalent in other countries, IKEA started to see that not good practices were not followed in all countries. Akdoğan added that after this event, IKEA Center conducted an independent research with PwC and detected the existence of serious violations on health conditions at the workplace. Based on these findings, Akdoğan said that the company resolved to revise its human resources policy and rendered training to managers. In the aftermath of this process, other parties chose an alternative discourse and said that "union is a right," "anyone can be member of any union," "you are equally free to be or not to be a union member," and "Koop-İş union is not the only union, there are many other unions."

In the second meeting conducted with Koop-İş's collective labor agreement director on June 15, 2016, in Ankara, Balaban declared that Koop-İş won the authority for signing the collective agreement by making over 40% of IKEA employees union members on February 14, 2015, and was recognized by the Ministry of Labor as an authorized union. In the interview conducted with Koop-İş union on June 16, 2016, Akdoğan declared that as a result of the meetings conducted between IKEA Turkey franchise Mapa Furniture and Koop-İş on June 15,

2015, the parties signed a collective labor agreement effective for three consecutive years (till December 31, 2017).

Shortly, Koop-İş found a strong union as an international shareholder for its unionization aim. As an effect of the organizations it held together, IKEA revised its business policies in human resources, its approach to Koop-İş, its position, and its discourse. In the end, Koop-İş succeeded in signing a collective agreement with Mapa Furniture.

Changes in Mapa Furniture's attitudes toward Koop-İş in the unionization process can also be seen clearer in the article with consideration to IKEA Global's changing attitudes over time.

Conclusion

The relations, tensions, and changes witnessed between IKEA Turkey representative MAPA Furniture and Koop-İş particularly during 2011–2015 because of unionization attempts expanded over Turkey borders and echoed their effects in the hometown of IKEA Global, Sweden. In parallel with this process, attitudes of IKEA store management teams and franchises in the United States, Canada, and several other countries toward unionization activities, fueled with rising demands to correct and improve working conditions, were also highlighted in printed and visual media, different broadcast channels, and corporate websites. Global increase and spread of negative views on workplace conditions is evidently a risk of reputation for IKEA.

Najafbagy (2008, p. 146) states that the following factors should be taken into consideration to succeed in intercultural communication:

- *To increase our awareness and understanding of our own rights
- *To increase our awareness and understanding of our own culture
- *To become more cognizant of our attitudes and feelings toward people of another country or community and vice versa
- *To better understand the social, political, and economic environments of other cultures and their impact on personal behavior
- *To gain better awareness and appreciation of the similarities and differences between different cultures
- *To be flexible and realistic to an extent that could contribute to resolving conflicts

In Turkey, on the other hand, as Koop-İş entered into a business alliance with globally effective and widespread Global Union (GU), it could find itself a shareholder that maintained an international power on this issue. In the Istanbul-based meeting between Koop-İş and GU, UNI IKEA Global Union Alliance was established to protect the rights of all IKEA employees worldwide. Hence, as stated also by Hall, with the support of this shareholder, Koop-İş started to forge its own message (problem case) and reach different viewers (relevant parts of domestic public & global public) and started to build its own cluster of relations. The reputation risk mentioned above could then find itself a global contact/party which could amplify its effect.

During the unionization process, it became harder for IKEA to see "the problem" since in countries where IKEA Center, Mapa Furniture, and IKEA confronted clashing opinions, as reported by Neuliep, the managers lived through a cultural and belief system that guided their actions. Indeed, inherent Swedish identity and ideal values of Swedishness that Swedish unions and the government and IKEA Center management lived within and accommodated itself securely and the misconception that IKEA was the true representative of Swedish identity largely prevented the center to analyze the problems in other countries. Another probability is that IKEA's rapid growth and spread over the globe after the 2000s could also be the reason of weakened relations with the branches and less effective control mechanisms. The truth is as a result of this toilsome unionization process,

Prof. Dr. Logan's study and PwC research assigned by IKEA, global news on the negative practices toward employees, and many other concrete findings, IKEA also felt the urgency to revise its own structuring. When this revision process is evaluated within Najafbagy's conflict resolution principles, it was noted that IKEA's management style in other countries affects its own main system, particularly the employees' problems. Thus, it is identified that IKEA notes the difference between its own and other countries' culture and acts accordingly. These increased IKEA's awareness about community structures in other countries and helped IKEA become more flexible and realistic about solving central problems. The pressure of (Swedish) public opinion on IKEA and the support IKEA Center gave to Mapa Furniture in Turkey lead IKEA Center to use a more constructive language and approach. In addition, Mapa Furniture's use of similar language and approach with IKEA shows that the principles proposed by Najafbagy are realized to a large extent.

In light of that, the structural problem mainly stemmed from IKEA's decentralized structure and franchises' tendency to act per the political-legal structuring in the countries they operate (United States, Canada, etc.) and take regional measures within the scope of companies. It is vitally urgent that in this particular problem and identical ones, the company owns and/or devises a strategy that fits its global structure.

When related news are examined, it is seen that the problem perception, reaction, and reaction process of IKEA Center and IKEA Turkey/Mapa Furniture are dissimilar in terms of format and progress. During the process, Koop-İş established closeness and common share with GU, the Swedish government, Swedish unions, and the general public, while IKEA Turkey became isolated. From this framework, starting from the very beginning of the process, IKEA Center, which emphasized its "neutral," "unbiased" position toward the unionization right of employees' "freedom to choose any union" in a lofty, commonsense, and dialogue-friendly tone, employed a discourse that tried to construe the crisis but not amplify its reaction. IKEA Center made a confession about the events and rendered apologies which fit with the attitude in Coombs's rebuilt category, while IKEA Turkey demonstrated an attitude that was labeled even in international news as "threatening," which meant it acted, according to Coombs, by attacking the accuser, a primary strategy in the denial/refutation category. Thus, by jointing IKEA Center's commonsense-advocating discourses to its statements, it started to employ a hybrid language. It might be presumed that in addition to management approach, the fact that Mapa Furniture had been the party that directly and actively got engaged in an agreement bargaining process with Koop-İş could have been one cause of this harsh tone in its discourse.

With the signing of a collective labor agreement in 2015 between Koop-İş and IKEA Turkey, it was monitored that for three years the agreement was in force, Koop-İş was the winning part of the process. As the Koop-İş and IKEA Turkey unionization process is investigated, just as IKEA's experience of crisis is evaluated under the scope of the research question, it is seen that in IKEA Center/IKEA Global Business, homeland culture, values, and public interactions of institutions could play a determinant role in the attitude they held, and the change in the position, effectiveness, and pervasiveness of joint shareholders in due time could have been effective in crisis communication and discourses. As an organizational approach, analyzing their structure, networks, and deficiencies as well as adapting their strategies according to these factors assist companies in determining strategies for current or potential crisis.

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