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Relationship Between Organizational Cynicism And Ethical Leadership Behaviour: A Study At Higher Education

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Abstract

In this study, it is aimed to evaluate the relationship between ethical Leadership behaviour of faculty administrators of higher education and academics' organizational cynicism behaviour. The population of the study is 400 academic staffs that work in three universities in Thrace region in 2011-2012 education years. Data were collected with organizational cynicism and ethical leadership scales. The data is reported with using multiple regression and path analysis. Three main results were found. First one is that academics perceptions for faculty administrators are in middle level. Second is that academics organizational cynicism attitudes are in high level. In the study, faculty administrators' ethical leadership behaviour has a negative and consistent effect on academics' organizational cynicism behaviour. It is found that perceived ethical leadership behaviour is an important predictor of organizational cynicism.

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1. Introduction

Organizational cynicism is a new notion in the organizational behaviour and organizational psychology literature, and it takes attention of organization theorists. Origins of the cynicism which emerged in ancient Greece as a thought and life style (Dean, 1998) is a school of thought and life style (Arslan, 2012). The old cynical are known as cruel critics but nowadays, the meaning is pessimistic and disbelief (Mantere and Martinsou, 2001). Cynicism had a similar meaning with scepticism, suspiciousness, disbelief, lack of confidence, nowadays its meaning predominates with 'critical, queasy, captious' (Erdost and et all. 2007). Cynicism, especially, is an attitude of describing events depending on disappointment and pessimistic ideas about unspoken ideas; or it is a tendency of showing interest to others for a tool or managing the works to seek or increase his/her personal advantage (Mautner, 1997). Cynicism evokes emotional elements and negative emotions such as belittle, anger, shame and trouble (Abraham, 2000). Cynicism, in organizational concept, identified as suspicious that are shared with a lot of people (Dean and Et. All. 1998).

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Organizational cynicism researches started to improve at the ends of 1980 and the beginning of 1990 (James, 2005). We can separate the organizational cynicism studies in two main groups; in the first group there are studies that try to define the concept and improve a scale (Dean and ET. All. 1998; Abraham, 2000). In the second group, there are studies that try to explore the antecedents and results in different contexts and situational variables (Boomer, Rich and Rubin, 2005; Bernerth, Armenakis, Field and Walker, 2007).

In this study Brandes' Organizational Cynicism definition is grounded on. Cynicism is also described as 'person's negative attitudes consist of cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions to his/her organization (Dean, Brandes, Dharwadkar, 1998). In that definition organizational cynicism is one's negative attitudes to his/her organization; it has three dimensions. These dimensions are; having a belief of lacking of integrity in the organization; having negative emotions to the organization; and coincide with these beliefs and emotions, having an attitude to the organization that exhibit ignominiously or critical behaviours. Some reasons of cynicism are, stressing out and work load, not coming up to personal or organizational expectations, inadequate social support, inadequate promotion in terms of competition, goal conflict, increasing organizational sophistication, inefficiency in decision making, miscommunication and dismissal (Andersson, 1996; Reichers and et. All. 1997). In cognitive dimension of organizational cynicism, people's behaviours are changeable and unreliable, and also people can say lie and trick (Brandes, 1997; Brabdes and Das, 2006; Kalağan, 2009). Affective dimension of organizational cynicism consists of strong emotional reactions such as, trouble, shame, anger and disrespect (Abraham, 2000). In affective dimension people who have cynical attitudes are seen as people not only have negative beliefs but also bear negative emotions to the organization (Dean et. all. 1998). In behavioural dimension, employees who have cynical behaviours are tendency to pessimistic forecasting about events in the organization. They can behave in negative and humiliating (Dean and et. All. 1998). It could be tendency to abusive, sardonic, critical behaviours to the organization (Dean, Brandes and Dharwadkar, 1998). At the end of these, decreasing in performance, organizational citizenship behaviours, motivation, commitment and increasing in interpersonal conflict, complaint, absenteeism and employee turnover are inevitable (Andersson, 1996; Andersson and Bateman, 1997; Reichers and et.all. 1997; Wanous and et.all. 2000). Studies aimed to identify the reasons of organizational cynicism are; psychological contract (Abraham, 2000; Andersson, 1996; Özgener and et. all. 2008; Özler and et. all. 2010), organizational injustice (Özgener and et. all., 2008; Özler and et.all. 2010), adopting organizational policies which serve one's own interests instead of trueness and honesty (Davis and Gardner, 2004), behave respectfully and earnestly but having emotions of falling on stony ground (Fleming and Spicer, 2003; O'Brien and et.all, 2004), lack of intimate participation to the decision making process and not having real support of the management (Fleming, 2005; O'Brien and et. all, 2004; Wanous and et. all, 2000), decreasing in quality of leader and employee interaction (Bommer and et. All, 2005; Davis and Gardner, 2004). When analysed the studies about organizational cynicism that are done nowadays; the researches deal with organizational changes (Reichers and et. all.,1997;Abraham, 2000; Bommer and et. all., 2005;Bernert and et. all, 2007; Wu and et. all., 2007; Brown and Gregan, 2008), some of them tested the relationship between leadership and organizational cynicism (Ferres and Connel, 2004; Bommer and et. all, 2005; Kouzes and Posner, 2005; Wu and et. all , 2007; Rubin and et. all, 2009). Except these researches the relationship between organizational cynicism and organizational justice is studied (Benert and et. all., 2007; Wu and et. all., 2007) Abraham (2000) researched the effect of organizational cynicism on work satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship. Anderson and Bateman (1997) found out a negative way relationship between organizational cynicism and organizational citizenship.

Ethical Leadership

According to Bennis, although leadership is a scope that has been studied for nearly one hundred years, there isn't much knowledge about it (Karip, 1998). Some of the leadership definitions focus on the leader's characteristics, some focuses on leader's behaviours, and some focuses on the output and results (Ivancevich and Matteson, 2002). Leadership is defined as one promotes others to behave in desired way by using force (Donnelly and et.all, 1998). The most important characteristic of a leader is honesty and ethical values (Sweet, 2000). Ethical is moral principles and values codes that manage the behaviours of a group or person. Ethical values are that standardizing what is true or wrong in behaviours and decisions (Daft, 2000). Ethical leadership is a leadership theory that manages a relation, which depends on ethical values and principles (Erdoğan, 2002). Çelik describes ethical leadership as influencing employees with ethical power (Çelik, 2000). Ethical leader is a in a person a

position of that create a proper organization culture with forming effectiveness on different people in the organization (Zhu, 2008). Ethical leadership is that a leader has ethical values and expresses his/her behaviours with integrating these values (Cuilla, 1998). Ethical leadership identified as concreting the organization mission, aims and values in ethical conception (Freeman and Stewart, 2006). The aim of the ethical leadership is to present and clarify the ethical dimensions which are in all managerial decisions, and create the ethical principles which lead the decision making process in the organizations (Jose and Thibodeaux, 1999).

According to Yılmaz, a manager should exhibit ethical behaviours in individual behaviours, decision-making, communicative process and while creating school climate (Yılmaz, 2005). Behavioural ethical expresses administrator's fair and honest behaviours, seeing every one equal in the organization and equal treatments. The administrators exhibit such behavioural ethical behaviours; love trueness, goodness, freedom, tolerance, courage, mercy and altruism (Kidder, 1995; Beckner, 2005). Ethical in decision making is analysed in the extend that leaders' making right decisions, knowing right from wrong in terms of ethical and behaving ethical in decisions he/she made (Turhan, 2007). In decision making process an ethical leader should literally understand problem, identify alternative solutions, guess the results for the alternative solutions and choose the best solution for the problem (Rebore, 2001). Communicative ethical is about creating a good communication between administrator and employees and providing job satisfaction. Trust is expected to increase for the leader who is frank to the employees and communicate well and values to employees (Yılmaz, 2006).

2. Aim Of The Study

In turkey, there aren't any researches that investigate relationship between organizational cynicism and ethical leadership; there are a few researches in foreign literature. Researchers studied organizational cynicism especially as one variable, or with variables of job satisfaction, organizational trust or organizational commitment. This study will contribute to the literature because, here, it is tried to examine the relationship between organizational cynicism and ethical leadership. In this study, mainly, it is tried to find out an answer to the question of 'what is the effect of ethical leadership on academics', working in higher education, organizational cynicism attitudes?'

The aim of this study is to identify the faculty administrators' ethical leadership levels and to find out the relationship between ethical leadership and academics organizational cynicism attitudes. For this reason, it is tried to find out these questions;

- 1- In what level do the faculty administrators exhibit ethical leadership behaviours?
- 2- In what level do the academics exhibit organizational cynicism behaviours?
- 3- Is the ethical leadership the significant predictor of organizational cynicism?

3. Method

3.1 Model of the study

This study is in relational screening model. Relational screening model is a model that investigates changing of two or more variables together or the level of it (Karasar, 1999).

3.2 Study group

The population of the study is 400 academic staffs who work in three universities in Thrace region in 2011-2012 education years. While deciding sample method, purposeful sampling, of maximum variation sampling method, is used. The aim here is to create a sample relatively and try to reflect varieties of individuals who can be the side of studying problem, in maximum level. (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005). In this regard, population selected from faculties, academies and conservatories and academics that have different title. 400 surveys were administered and 360 were evaluated. When demographic variables of sample viewed; 63.7 % is male, 36.3 % is female; 20 % is research assistant, 17 % is lecturer, 35 % is assistant professor, 19 % associate professor, %8 is professor. Tenure of sample is; 31.2 % is between 1 and 5 years; 26.8 % is between 6 and 10 years;

23.7 % is between 11 and 15 years; and 28.2% is more than 16 years. 86% of academics haven't any administrative duty; 4.2 % is head of a department, 8.3 % is head of the department of a science, and 1.5 % is associate dean.

3.3 Data collection tools

In the study data was collected through two different survey administered simultaneously. In order to identify faculty administrators' ethical leadership behaviors, 44 items Ethical Leadership scale (ELS) was used, developed by Yılmaz (2005), and to identify cynicism behaviors, 13 items Organizational Cynicism Survey was used that was developed by Brande (1997).

3.3.1 Organizational cynicism survey

In order to identify academics' cynicism attitudes, "Organizational Cynicism Survey" was used, developed by Brande and et.all (1997). Organizational Cynicism scale consists of 13 items; 5 items for cognitive cynicism, 4 items for affective cynicism and 4 items for behavioural cynicism. Survey items were in a 5 point Likert Scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. Total variance of 3 dimensions is 49,698 %. First dimension is cognitive cynicism and its variance is 24,341 %, second dimension is affective cynicism and its variance is 17,761 %, and the variance of dimension behavioural cynicism is 7,587 %. To determine the reliability of scale Cronbach's Alpha consistency coefficients calculated for both overall scale and each dimensions separately, and Cronbach Alpha is defined as a criterion of the reliability of the scale. Total reliability efficiency of the scale is .89. Three dimensions' reliability coefficient is; .79 for cognitive cynicism, .81 for affective cynicism, and .76 for behavioural cynicism. In three dimensions of the scale, item test correlations of 13 items changes between 0.532 and 0.803.

3.3.2 Ethical Leadership scale

In order to evaluate faculty administrators' ethical leadership behaviours according to academics' beliefs, Ethical Leadership Scale was used developed by Yılmaz (2005). In the scale there are 15 items for communicative ethical behaviours, 11 items for climatic ethical behaviours, 9 items for ethical behaviours in decision-making. Ethical leadership scale is in a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. Total variance calculated for 4 dimension 55,127 5. the variance of first dimension is 13.276 %, of second dimension is 15,675 %, of third dimension is 16,387 % and of the fourth dimension is 9,789 %. Cronbach Alpha consistency coefficients were used for reliability of the scale. Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients calculated both overall scale and all dimensions separately, and Cronbach Alpha is determined as a criterion of the reliability. Total reliability coefficient is .93, and .87 for communicative ethical, .80 for climatic ethical, .75 for behavioural ethical and .91 for ethical in decision-making. In all dimension of the scale, item test correlations of 44 items changes between 0,612 and 0,783.

3.3.3 Data Collection and analysis

400 surveys, which consist of 'organizational Cynicism Scale' and 'Ethical leadership Scale', conducted to sample determined before. At the end, 360 surveys evaluated. Analysis of the data was made with using SPSS and LISREL statistic computer software package. On the variables, arithmetic mean (\bar{x}), standard deviation (s), Frequency (f), Percentage (%) and Pearson Moment correlation analysis were made in SPSS program. Testing of the model where the effects of variables on each other and the effect of ethical leadership on organizational cynicism evaluate was made in LISREL Alpha program with using path analysis technique, and the results were reported. The results of the study were tested at $p < .05$ level.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for organizational ethical leadership scale and organizational cynicism scale ($n=360$)

Scales	Sub scales	Number of items	X	S
Organizational Cynicism	Cognitive cynicism	5	3.71	1.64
	Affective cynicism	4	3.45	1.52
	Behavioral cynicism	4	3.34	1.47
Ethical Leadership	Behavioral ethical	9	3.21	1.36
	Ethical in decision making	9	3.12	1.25
	Climatic ethical	11	3.16	1.04
	Communicative ethical	15	2.93	0.98

In Table 1, according to the responds of academics, it is shown that they exhibit organizational cynicism behaviours sub dimensions respectively, cognitive cynicism ($\bar{x} = 3,71$), affective cynicism ($\bar{x} = 3,45$) and behavioural cynicism ($\bar{x} = 3,34$). It is found that academics exhibit 2cognitive cynisim2 the most and behavioural cynicism the

least. When the responds of academics to the organizational cynicism scale analysed it is seen that the highest mean for the item of “I believe that things that is done and told are different” ($x=3,65$), the lowest mean calculated for the item of “ In my organization, employees are expected to the something but different behaviours are rewarded” ($x=2,98$). In affective cynicism dimension, the highest mean calculated for the item of “when I think of my organization I feel anxiety” ($x=2,03$). In the behavioural cynicism dimension, the highest mean calculated for the of “I complaint about what is going on in my organization to my friends who aren’t in my organization” ($x=2,98$). The lowest mean in this dimension calculated for the “When someone talks about my organization or employees in my organization I and my colleagues look meaningfully” ($x=2,06$).

According to the responds of academics, they stated that faculty administrators exhibit “behavioural ethical” the most and they exhibit ethical in decision making least. Faculty administrators’ exhibition behaviours of sub dimensions of ethic leadership is respectively; behavioural ethical ($x=3,21$), climatic ethical ($x=3,16$) ethical in decision making ($x=3,12$) and communicative ethical ($x=2,93$). In ethical leadership Scale, the highest mean of behavioural ethical dimension for the item of “our administrator acts courageously in events” ($x=2,96$), the lowest mean of this dimension calculated for the item of “our administrator tells the truth in all conditions” ($x=2,01$). In sub dimension ethical in decision making the highest mean calculated for the item of “ In economic field, our administrator isn’t engaged in activities which provides personal gain” ($x=3,01$), the lowest mean calculated for the item of “ our administrator effectively implement decisions which is made together” ($x=2,03$). In climatic ethical dimension, the highest mean calculated for the item of “our administrator is in a struggle for increasing occupational efficiency” ($x=2,54$). The lowest mean calculated for the item of “our administrator creates a free environment for discussing” ($x=2,18$). In communicative ethical dimension the highest mean calculated for the item of “Our administrator appreciates the employee for their services” ($x=2,06$), the lowest mean calculated for the item of “Our administrator join the discussions in comprehensively and positively” ($x=2,01$).

Path analysis was used in order to identify in what way and level faculty and academies administrators’ ethical leadership behaviour effects academics’ organizational cynicism behaviour. Most used goodness of fit indexes, X3, RMSEA, CFI, GFI, AGFI and AIC were probed. X2 goodness of fit index should use with another indicators because it is sensitive to the size of the sample. In terms of goodness of fit index, such criterions use, X2/sd should be lower than 5, GFI should be higher than .90, CFI should be higher than .95 and RMSEA should be lower than .06 (Byrne, 1998; Jöreskoy and sörbom, 1993). And also, if goodness of fit indexes GFI; CFI and AGFI is higher than .90 and RMSEA and SRMR values lower than .05, it indicates that the model has a good fitness with data. At the end of the analysis goodness of fit indexes for the model calculated as [$\chi^2=123,12$, $SD=5,6$, $P<0,001$], (χ^2/SD)= 2,86, RMSEA=0,54, GFI=0,95 and AGFI=0,87. Latent variables of organizational cynicism are cognitive, affective and behavioural cynicism. Behavioural ethical, ethical in decision making, climatic ethical and communicative ethical are latent variables of ethical leadership. In the model ethical leadership is the predictor variable. In figure 1, goodness of fit indexes of the model is reported.

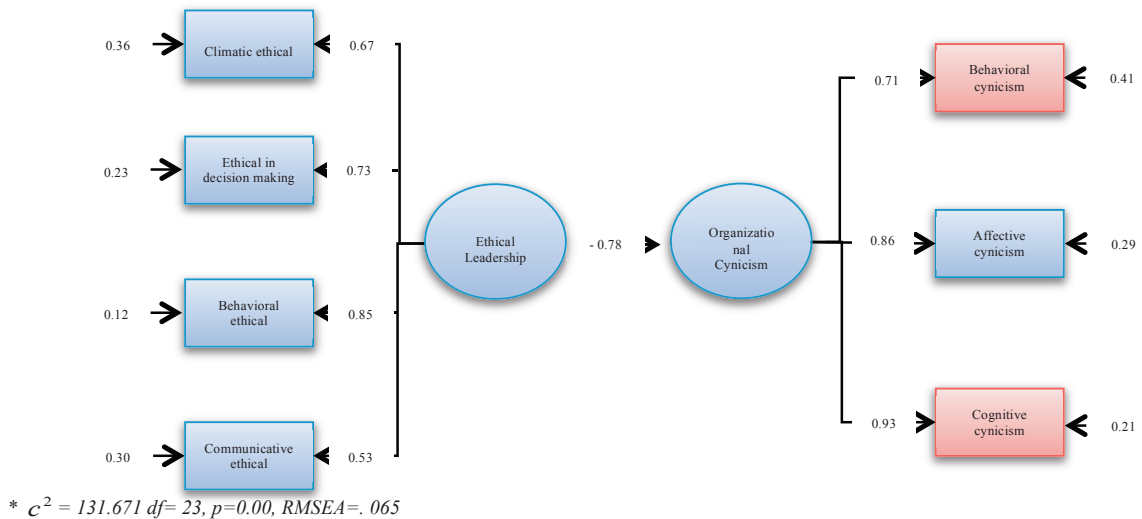


Figure1. Standard path coefficients

Factor loads of model are shown in figure 1. Factor loads taking place in the model; indicate how much an item represents its latent variable (Şimşek, 2007). When standard path coefficients analysed, it is found that the best indicator of ethical leadership is behavioural ethical (.85), second one is ethical in decision making (.73), third one is climatic ethical (.67) and the last one is communicative ethical (.53). It is found out that the best indicator of organizational cynicism is cognitive cynicism (.93), second one is affective cynicism (.42) and the last one is behavioural cynicism (.71). As it is seen in Figure1, there is a relationship between academics' ethical leadership perceptions and organizational cynicism attitudes ($\beta = -0.78$). Based on this finding it could be stated that there is a high and significant relationship between academics' ethical leadership perceptions and organizational cynicism attitudes. In conclusion, it could be stated that when administrators' ethical leadership behaviours increase, academics organizational cynicism attitudes decrease.

4. Discussions And Conclusion

In this study, the relationship between ethical Leadership behaviour of faculty administrators of higher education and academics' organizational cynicism behaviour, and also its level and way investigated. First of all, academics' organizational cynicism attitudes were identified; it is found out that academics show the cognitive cynicism behaviour in the highest level, and behavioural cynicism in the lowest level. In analysing responds of academics for the cynicism scale, it is found out that the highest mean calculated for the item of "I believe that things that is done and told are different in my organization" ($x=3.65$). This finding is consistent with Nartüng's (2006) study, organizational values of academics. In that study academics indicated that the values indicated on the paper aren't practiced. And also Kalağan's (2009) master degree thesis research investigating the relationship between research assistants' organizational support and organizational cynicism attitudes is consistent with the data of this study. In Kalağan's (2009) study, the highest mean for organizational cynicism for the item of " things that is done and told are different in my organization" ($x=3.41$). in this study ,in dimension affective cynicism the highest mean calculated for the item of "when I think of my organization I feel anxiety" ($x=3.01$). Kalağan (2009) found the highest mean for this dimension for the item of "I critic politics and implementations with others". In the analysis of this study, the highest mean calculated for the item of behavioural cynicism "I complaint about what is going on in my organization to my friends who aren't in my organization" ($x=2.98$). In this study, according to the respond of academics, faculty administrators exhibit ethical leadership in middle level. It is found out that faculty administrators exhibit behavioural ethical ($x=3.21$) the most, and ethical in decision making the least.

Communicative ethical ($x=2.93$) and climatic ethical ($x= 3.16$) are shown in middle level. In the study of Gültekin (2008) and Helvacı (2010), they indicate that school administrator exhibit behavioural ethical in a good level. This result supports the result of this study.

In the studies of Yücel and Altınkurt (2009), Gültekin, (2008) and Helvacı, (2010), They indicated that school administrators don't exhibit climatic ethical behaviours in enough level. This result also supports the results of this study. In this study, relationship between academics ethical leadership perceptions and organizational cynicism attitudes calculated as ($\beta= - 0.78$). Based on this finding, it could be stated that relationship between academics ethical leadership perceptions and organizational cynicism attitudes is high and significant. In conclusion, it could be said that 78 % academics' cynicism attitudes are depend on administrators' ethical leadership behaviours. It could also be stated that, when organizational ethical leadership behaviours of administrators increase, academics organizational cynicism behaviours decrease. Andersson and Bateman (1997), in their studies, stated that when employees do not trust their administrators and have a feeling of being prevented because of made decisions, their cynicism attitudes increase. In another study when administrators do not behave ethical in decision-making, it is effective in developing cynicism attitudes. (Andersson, 1996; Reichers and et.all, 1997). It is stated in a study that broken promises triggers employees' cynicism attitudes. (Byrne ve Hochwarter, 2008). It is found out in a study that Employees being destitute of administrators' help and leaders' hypocrisy is an important reason of improving negative attitudes between employees (Johnson and O' Leary, Kelly, 2003). And also in a study it is found out that quality in communicative between leader and employee triggers employees' cynicism attitudes (Bommer et.all 2005; Cole et. All, 2006; Davis and Gardner, 2004). All these studies mentioned below support the findings of this study. In conclusion, in this study it is concluded that administrators' ethical leadership behaviours are effective in employees' organizational cynicism attitudes, and if administrators' ethical leadership behaviour is in a positive way, employees' cynicism behaviours will decrease meaningfully. Based on the findings of this study investigates the relationship between organizational cynicism attitudes and ethical leadership; it could be stated that employees high ethical leadership perceptions causes decreasing in organizational cynicism.

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