

Perceptions of Organizational Cynicism in Academics who teach in the Field of Sports in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to examine the perceptions of organizational cynicism among academics who teach in the field of sports. Population of the research is composed of academics who teach in the sports field as part of the academic staff. The number of academics in the field of sports education in Turkey is around 5,000. In order to ensure a 95% confidence level in the study, at least 384 people were needed. In this context, 408 academics were approached, and the study was conducted. In the research, a questionnaire form was used as a data collection tool. The questionnaire consists of two parts. In the first part, there are 5 questions to determine the demographic and employment characteristics of the individuals, and in the second part, there are 13 questions in the form of a 5-point Likert scale to determine the perception of organizational cynicism. Data analysis was conducted in SPSS 16 package program. The decision whether the indifference tests will be parametric or nonparametric was determined by Kolmogorov - Smirnov Test. As the "p" values are not at the level of 5% significance within the scope of the test results, it was decided that the sub-dimensions fit the normal distribution conditions. Thus, it was decided to use the parametric tests of t test, ANOVA test and Pearson correlation test.

Keywords: Academics, Higher education, Organizational cynicism, Sport sciences, Sport management, Turkey.

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Contents

1. Introduction	444
2. Method	444
3. Findings	445
4. Conclusion	446
References	446

Contribution of this paper to the literature

This study contributes to the existing literature by examining the perceptions of organizational cynicism among academics who teach in the field of sports.

1. Introduction

Academics who teach in the field of sports play important roles both in the development of sports education and in the development of athletes. It is critical for the academics to undertake duties related to the organization and to express their opinions about the organization. In this research, academics' perceptions of organizational cynicism will be examined.

In the literature, in most of the psychological approaches, the concept of cynicism is accepted as a permanent personality trait. In one of studies that examines cynicism in the scope of personality, it is stated that cynical individuals see the behaviors of others as erroneous, selfish, careless, and unreliable. At the same time, it is asserted that it is possible for cynical individuals to be angry and vicious towards other individuals, and they can be authoritarian in this respect (Brandes., 1997). According to Abraham, cynicism is an innate personality trait that is based on non-strong relationships where relationships are defined on humiliation, while it usually reflects negativity on human relationships (Abraham, 2000). By approaching cynicism as an individual tendency, Stanley et al. have expressed that this concept is mostly the feeling of distrust reflected on the decisions and attitudes of the individuals (Stanley, Meyer, & Topolnytsky, 2005).

It is seen that cynicism in institutions has started to be studied more in the 1990s. The book "The Cynical Americans" published by Kanter and Mirvis (1989) was influential in increased importance given to the issue. Also, in the same year, an article titled "Fighting Cynicism in the Workplace" was published by Kanter and Mirvis (1989). The researchers claimed that approximately 43% of the workforce in America was cynical (Kanter & Mirvis, 1989). After these studies, the effects and results of cynicism in organizations have been evaluated with different variables. The complete conceptualization of organizational cynicism was constituted with the studies of Brandes. (1997) and Dean, Brandes, and Dharwadkar (1998).

Concept of the organizational cynicism has been defined differently in the literature. In one of the studies, organizational cynicism was defined as negative and distrustful manners and behaviors towards major institutions and organizations. In addition, it was stated that these negative manners and behaviors were caused by different social factors and the media (Bateman, Sakano, & Fujita, 1992).

According to Wanous et al. organizational cynicism refers to a pessimist and hopeless attitude towards change processes that was not well managed before, and institutional changes planned in the coming periods (Wanous, Reichers, & Austin, 1994). Andersson (1996) defines organizational cynicism as an attitude that reflects itself under three categories. These categories are a pragmatist approach by the management, the assumption that organizational operation operates on certain benefits, and the improbability of a change in the present conditions.

Reichers et al. stated that the organizational cynicism hinders change in the institution. In addition, they asserted that those who carried out the process of change in this concept were lazy and incompetent and the possibility of success was mentioned pessimistically (Reichers, Wanous, & Austin, 1997). According to Dean et al. organizational cynicism is the negative attitude which consists of three elements toward the employed institution. These three elements can be listed as thoughts regarding the lack of honesty and righteousness of the institution; negative feelings towards the institution; and the depreciatory and critical tendencies consisted of feelings and beliefs about the institution (Dean et al., 1998).

In a different study, organizational cynicism was referred as having a negative view against the initiatives of change in the name of attempts to succeed. It was also stated in this study that organizational cynicism consists of two elements. The first one is a negative point of view towards change attempts, while the second is the accusations made against successful change and motivation efforts (Wanous et al., 1994). In another definition, organizational cynicism is expressed as an attitude which emerges with a strong emotional response that leads to a derogatory and critical attitude as well as to a belief that the institution is not truthful (Abraham, 2000).

2. Method

In this study, data was collected through the scale within the scope of descriptive survey model. The model of the research is given Figure 1.

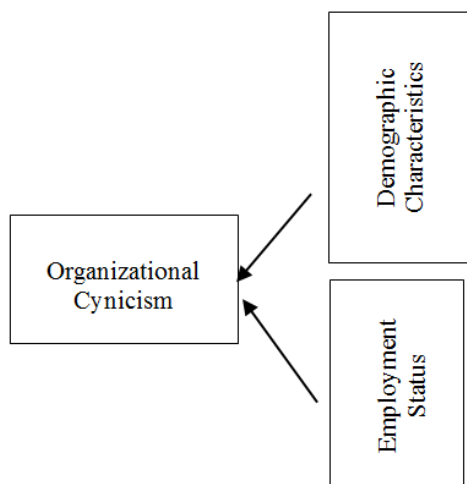


Figure-1. Research model.

Population of the research is composed of academics who teach in the sports fields as part of the academic staff. The research group consists of 408 academics who work in the field of sports sciences.

As a data collection tool, a questionnaire form was used in the research. The questionnaire form consists of two parts. In the first part, there are 5 questions to determine the demographic characteristics and employment status of the individuals, and in the second part, there are 13 questions in the form of a 5-point Likert scale to determine the perception of organizational cynicism. In the Organizational Cynicism Scale developed by Brandes, Dharwadkar, and Dean (1999) there are three dimensions called cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Kalağan (2009) and exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis was performed on the scale. Cognitive sub-dimension consists of 5 questions, affective sub-dimension consists of 4 questions and behavioral sub-dimension consists of 4 questions. Cronbach Alpha values of sub-dimensions were determined as 0,785 for affective dimension, 0,768 for behavioral dimension and 0.786 for cognitive dimension.

3. Findings

Table-1. Test of normality of dependent variables in the research.

n=408		Organizational cynicism scale sub-dimensions		
		Cognitive	Affective	Behavioral
Normal Parameters	Mean	17.08	9.66	11,09
	Std. Deviation	3.84	3.37	3,22
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		0,675	1,214	1.161
p		0,752	0.102	0.135

In Table 1, the normality assumption regarding the organizational cynicism perceptions was tested. As a result of the analysis, it was accepted that the sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism scales provided the normality assumption ($p>0,05$). As normality assumption was ensured, it was decided to use parametric tests of t test and ANOVA test.

Data analysis was performed in SPSS 16 package program. The decision whether the indifference tests will be parametric or nonparametric tests was determined by Kolmogorov - Smirnov Test. It was decided that the sub-dimensions fit the normal distribution conditions since “p” values were not at the 5% significance level within the scope of the test results. It was decided to use the parametric tests of t test and ANOVA test.

Table-2. Demographic and employment characteristics of the participant academics.

n=408	Variable	Frequency	%
Gender	Female	32	7.8
	Male	376	92.2
Age	20-29	40	9.8
	30-39	88	21.6
	40-49	176	43.1
	50 and older	104	25.5
Marital Status	Single	80	19.6
	Married	328	80.4
Employment Period	1-5 years	112	27.5
	6-10 years	88	21.6
	11-15 years	32	7.8
	16-20 years	24	5.9
	21 and more years	152	37.3
Title	Research Assistant	72	17.6
	Lecturer	56	13.7
	Assistant Professor	112	27.5
	Associate Professor	128	31.4
	Professor	40	9.8

In Table 2, demographic and employment characteristics of the academics participating in the research are examined. Among the participant academics, 92.2% are male, 43.1% are between 40-49 years old, 80.4% are married, 37.3% have been serving for 21 years and over, and 31.4% are associate professors.

Table-3. Satisfaction status of the academics regarding the working conditions.

Variable	Frequency	%
Very satisfied	48	11.8
Satisfied	240	58.8
Indecisive	88	21.6
Not satisfied	32	7.8

As shown in Table 3, when satisfaction status regarding the working conditions of the academics is examined, 58.8% of them are satisfied and 11.8% of them are very satisfied.

When the organizational cynicism perception according to demographic and employment characteristics is examined in Table 4, it is determined that the affective perception differs in accordance with the employment period while cognitive and affective perceptions differ in accordance with the satisfaction status ($p<0,05$). Tukey test, which is one of the Post Hoc tests conducted in order to determine from which variable the difference originated, was performed. According to the test results, it has been determined that as the years of service increases, the perception of cynicism increases. As the years of service increases, the perception of affective cynicism in the organization increases. It is possible that the enthusiasm of the newly arrived academics for the job may

cause their emotional cynicism to decrease. The research also found that academics, who were more satisfied with the work environment, had lower cognitive and affective cynicism perceptions.

Table-4. Perception of organizational cynicism regarding demographic and employment characteristics.

n=408	Variable	Mean± Std. Deviation		
		Cognitive	Affective	Behavioral
Gender	Female	18.00±4.24	7.75±0.50	9.75±2.36
	Male	17.00±3.85	9.85±3.47	11.21±3.28
	t	0.495	1.199	0.868
	p	0.623	0.236	0.389
Age	20-29	14.60±3.04	8.00±2.82	12.80±2.86
	30-39	17.63±3.52	8.45±2.33	10.36±3.07
	40-49	16.90±4.71	10.22±3.71	10.81±3.38
	50 and older	17.91±2.19	10.46±3.52	11.53±3.25
	F	0.971	1.345	0.779
	p	0.415	0.271	0.512
Marital Status	Singler	15.40±3.43	10.40±4.69	11.80±3.73
	Married	17.50±3.86	9.51±3.02	10.92±3.11
	t	1.566	0.742	0.764
	p	0.124	0.462	0.448
Employment Period	1-5 years	15.57±4.25	7.78±2.35	10.64±3.38
	6-10 years	15.90±3.93	8.90±3.91	9.90±2.66
	11-15 years	20.25±0.50	10.00±1.63	11.50±3.31
	16-20 years	17.33±4.04	11.00±2.64	8.66±1.52
	21 and more years	18.22±3.35	11.26±3.44	12.42±3.27
	F	2.028	2.745	1.789
	p	0.107	0.040	0.147
Title	Research Assistant	16.22±3.59	8.88±2.66	11.77±3.89
	Lecturer	16.66±5.13	9.33±6.11	12.33±2.08
	Assistant Professor	16.92±3.02	8.78±3.21	11.50±2.90
	Associate Professor	18.81±4.06	10.56±3.65	9.68±3.30
	Professor	15.20±4.54	9.20±1.64	11.60±3.20
	F	1.256	0.908	0.944
	p	0.300	0.484	0.462
Satisfaction Status	Very satisfied	12.66±2.94	5.83±2.04	10.00±2.75
	Satisfied	17.27±3.91	10.20±3.54	11.06±3.35
	Indecisive	17.63±2.76	9.90±1.92	11.72±3.19
	Not satisfied	20.75±0.50	11.00±3.82	11.25±3.77
	F	4.882	3.507	0.361
	p	0.005	0.022	0.782

4. Conclusion

In this study, academics' perceptions of organizational cynicism were examined, and it was attempted to determine whether these perceptions differed according to demographic and employment characteristics.

When the organizational cynicism perception was examined according to demographic and study characteristics, it was determined that the affective perception differs in accordance with the years of service and cognitive and affective perception differ in accordance with the satisfaction status.

Yavuz and Bedük (2016) found that organizational cynicism perceptions did not differ according to the income levels of individuals. In his study, Ergen (2015) found that employees aged between 20-30 experiences behavioral cynicisms more heavily than the employees aged between 31-40.

Açıkgöz (2016) found that the organizational cynicism perceptions of single individuals are higher than that of married individuals.

According to the test results, it was determined that as the years of service increases, perception of cynicism increases. In his research, Ergen (2015) found that organizational cynicism perceptions did not differ according to the employment period. The belief of the newly employed trainers that innovation and change related to the institution can easily be realized and the idea of them being idealistic can be very intense. It can be thought that these existing thoughts may turn into exhibition of negative attitudes and an increase in the organizational cynicism perception when they become familiar with the institution-specific policies, operations, and applications. And for the trainers with professional experience, it can be interpreted as a decrease in cynicism perceptions since they know the employed institution better and see themselves as part of the organization.

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