



# Organizational Cynicism, School Culture, and Academic Achievement: The Study of Structural Equation Modeling

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explain constructed theoretical models that organizational cynicism perceptions of primary school teachers affect school culture and academic achievement, by using structural equation modeling. With the assumption that there is a cause-effect relationship between three main variables, the study was constructed with a causal research design. The population of the study comprised 2447 primary school teachers working at 118 primary schools within the boundaries of the Eskişehir metropolitan area in the 2011-12 academic year. In order to determine the research sample, primary schools were stratified according to their locations in upper, middle, and lower socio-economic areas, five schools were selected for each stratum, and 291 primary school teachers working at a total of 15 schools were included in the study. The data for the study was gathered through the Organizational Cynicism Scale and School Culture Survey, adapted into the Turkish language, in addition to a utilization of schools' placement test scores in the 2010-11 academic year. The Organizational Cynicism Scale consists of (i) emotional, (ii) cognitive, and (iii) behavioral dimensions; the School Culture Survey includes (i) instructional communication, (ii) collaborative leadership, (iii) trust, (iv) unity of purpose, (v) teacher collaboration, and (vi) professional development dimensions. For testing theoretically constructed structural equation models, path analysis was used in order to investigate appropriate models, and to adjust measurement error in both latent and observed variables. The study results indicated that organizational cynicism affects school culture and academic achievement negatively while school culture has a positive effect on academic achievement.

## Key Words

Academic Achievement, Cynicism, Organizational Cynicism, School Culture, Structural Equation Model.

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Cynicism, mentioned frequently and discussed in different disciplines in recent times, emerged in ancient Greek civilization as “a school of thought and way of life.” The origin of the concept is thought to have been derived from the Greek word “kyon,” meaning “dog” or a school in Cynosarges located near Athens at that time. Although the first cynic character in history is seen as Antisthenes, who was Socrates’ student, Diogenes of Sinop overshadowed him with his honesty and enlightening ideas that marked the period. Other cynics believed in people rather than institutions; they despised and insulted eminent foundations like religion and the government, finding them unnecessary. Cynics during that period also wanted the elimination of traditions in order to reach freedom and self-sufficiency for a better life. Furthermore, they refused conventional notions of happiness like money, power, and fame, and sought happiness in the pursuit of virtue. The emphasis on this doctrine turned into a contemptuous and unwilling negative attitude, which emerged as a general suspicion of the honesty of people and public statements at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This modern definition of cynicism is in contrast to its definition in ancient philosophy which emphasizes “virtue and moral freedom in liberation from desire” (Brandes, Dharwadkar, & Dean, 1999; Dean, Brandes, & Dharwadkar, 1998; Mazella, 2007; Russell, 1972).

Cynicism, which has its roots in ancient Greek civilization, is seen today as a personality disorder, and from a psycho-analytic point of view, it is a state in which one possesses a negative ethic with (i) the person’s goodness, (ii) internal unrest, and (iii) linguistic actions (Eiguer, 1999) or one’s disbelief in his own world in true friendship, love, or concern for others (Bonime, 1966). From a *socio-analytical point of view*, cynicism is sharing of a belief that a particular institution or system lacks the capacity for approaching others with love and faith (Sievers, 2007). The relevant literature about cynicism provides various definitions and conceptualizations; the concept of cynicism is addressed under six basic frameworks by different scholars in terms of (i) personality cynicism (Cook & Medley, 1954), (ii) social and institutional cynicism (Kanter & Mirvis, 1989), (iii) professional cynicism (O’Connell, Holzman, & Armandi, 1986), (iv) employee cynicism (Andersson, 1996), (v) organizational change cynicism (Wanous, Reichers, & Austin, 1994), and (vi) organizational cynicism (Dean et al., 1998). The conceptualization of cynicism has been different in the context of

different studies conducted by researchers, but the common focal point of them all is the fact that cynicism is a negative (i) belief, (ii) emotion, and (iii) behavior (Brandes et al., 1999; Dean et al., 1998). In fact, cynicism is often incorrectly referred to as “skepticism” and “distrust” in the literature. Even though some authors (Kanter & Mirvis, 1989; Reichers, Wanous, & Austin, 1997) have tried to distinguish these concepts from each other structurally, a consensus has not yet been reached in the literature. However, cynicism is clearly separate from other behaviors and feelings. Cynicism completely depends on an individual’s own experiences, and it contains intensely emotional aspects such as frustration, disappointment, shame, and disgust (Brandes et al., 1999; Dean et al., 1998). For example, cynics are not very optimistic about organizational change due to thinking of repeated failures (Stanley, Meyer, & Topolnysky, 2005).

### Organizational Cynicism

While cynicism is an innate personality trait reflecting generally negative emotions and perceptions like frustration about human behavior, organizational cynicism refers to negative attitudes toward one’s employing organization that are composed of cognitive (belief), affective (affect), and behavioral (behavior) dimensions which are (i) one’s belief that the organization lacks integrity, (ii) a negative affect toward the organization, and (iii) tendencies towards disparaging and exhibiting critical behaviors toward the organization that are consistent with these beliefs and affects (Abraham, 2000; Andersson, 1996; Dean et al., 1998, p. 345). More specifically, for the cognitive dimension, cynics believe that organizations exhibit a lack of principles constituting organizational integrity like fairness, honesty, and sincerity. For the affective aspect, they have tendencies to exhibit emotional reactions such as fear, anger, hate, disgust, contempt, and shame towards the organization. For the behavioral dimension, cynics may tend to show negative behaviors by pretending, condescending, and making pessimistic predictions about the future course of action in the organization, while being cynical and arrogant; that is, far from having traits like sincerity, openness, and honesty (Brandes, et al., 1999; Dean et al., 1998).

Organizational cynicism that is expressed as harmful behavior has some triggers like organizational, individual, and social variables. Organizational change efforts (Ferres & Connel, 2004), management support and psychological resistance

(Cole, Bruch, & Vogel, 2006), excessive stress, dissatisfaction with organizational expectations, low social support, lack of incentives for improving employee motivation, conflict in organizations, increasing organizational complexity, difficulty in decision making, lack of communication, psychological contract violations (Johnson & Q'Leary-Kelly, 2003; Jordan, Schraeder, Field, & Armenakis, 2007; Reichers et al., 1997), sudden and brutal dismissal of employees, unequal distribution of power in the organization, skepticism, anxiety, social exclusion and obsessive personality disorders of the people in the organization, organizational injustice, traditional work values, long working hours, mobbing, downsizing and restructuring of the organization, distorted images of the organization, differences in employment incomes, low organizational performance, job insecurity, and poor leadership skills (Andersson & Bateman, 1997; Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989; Bernerth, Armenakis, Field, & Walker, 2007; Bommer, Rich, & Rubin, 2005; Cartwright & Holmes, 2006; Eaton, 2000; İnce & Turan, 2011; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Roskies & Louis-Guerin, 1990; Özgener, Ögüt, & Kaplan, 2008; Salancik & Meindl, 1984; Tyler, Rasinski, & McGraw, 2006; Wilhelm, 1993) are all reported as leading factors for organizational cynicism in the literature.

Cynicism brings about negative consequences as regards employees and the organization. The literature reveals that cynicism decreases employee commitment, employee motivation, and esprit de corps in organizations (Bedeian, 2007; Johnson & Q'Leary-Kelly, 2003; Reichers et al., 1997; Wanous, Reichers, & Austin, 2000; Watt & Piotrowski, 2008), job satisfaction (Abraham, 2000; Bedeian, 2007; Johnson & Q'Leary-Kelly, 2003; Reichers et al., 1997), extra work charge and job performance (Andersson & Bateman, 1997; Dean et al., 1998; Johnson & Q'Leary-Kelly, 2003), organizational citizenship (Andersson & Bateman, 1997; Dean et al., 1998; Reichers et al., 1997), trust of management, inter-organizational communication (Stanley et al., 2005), and altruistic behaviors in the organization (Jordan et al., 2007). On the other hand, organizational cynicism increases employee absences, employee complaints, bad rhetoric, workplace tension, turnover intentions, sarcastic and arrogant attitudes of the employees harming corporate identity (Bedeian, 2007; Dean et al., 1998; Evans, Goodman, & Davis, 2011; Johnson & Q'Leary-Kelly, 2003; Wanous et al., 2000; Wilkerson, Evans, & Davis, 2008), behaviors threatening organizational norms and welfare of the

organization (Robinson & Bennett, 1997), unethical behaviors (Andersson & Bateman, 1997; Nair & Kamalanabhan, 2010), organizational alienation (Abraham, 2000), emotional burnout (Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003; Johnson & Q'Leary-Kelly, 2003), and resistance to organizational change (Ferres & Connel, 2004; Reichers et al., 1997; Stanley et al., 2005; Wanous et al., 2000). Therefore, it is possible that organizational cynicism may bring destructive and negative consequences for teachers in educational organizations. Furthermore, it is likely to harm *school culture*: the structure and functioning of the school, as well as the school's beliefs, norms and values, traditions and artifacts. Hence, the theoretical framework of the present study emphasizes school culture.

### School Culture

Organizational culture, which forms the basis of the concept of school culture, has become popular in scientific management literature focusing on organizational performance, productivity, managerial effectiveness, and organizational behaviors, and is described using different approaches (Alvesson, 1993; Hofstede, 1998). First, Pettigrew (1979) defined organizational culture as "the system of collectively accepted meaning operating for a group at any time" (p. 574). Peters and Waterman (1982) also describe organizational culture as *a shared set of values*, while Smircich (1983) defines the concept as "shared meaning, perception, beliefs, and values among members of an organization" (p. 345). Schein (1985) provides a more specific definition by emphasizing elements of culture: "a pattern of shared beliefs, assumptions, and value systems among a group of people" (p. 17). According to Schein (1985), these elements that form organizational culture are (i) artifacts, (ii) values and norms, and (iii) underlying assumptions (p. 25). More specifically, artifacts are expressions such as artistic products, myths, symbols, histories of the organization, program and policies of the organization, as well as behavior patterns and their physical implications (communication mechanisms, coordination, decision making). Values reflect the philosophy, ideology, moral and ethical codes, goals, ideals, and standards of the organization, including basic essentials that provide judgments about what is right or wrong. Norms are unwritten social rules and standards expected from organization members in various situations (Hatch, 1997). Trust, cooperation, openness, close friendship, and group conflict are

examples of values, whereas collegial support and solving discipline problems are examples of norms (Hoy & Miskel, 1991). Underlying assumptions are defined as perceptions and evaluations of organization members and their interpersonal relations (Schneider, 1988). In fact, underlying assumptions express organization members' beliefs about what the truth is and influence how members perceive of, think, and feel about the organization (Hatch, 1997). Thus, organizational culture refers to the effort to understand the meaning, experienced emotions, atmosphere, character, and image of the organization (Hoy & Miskel, 1991).

Similar to organizational culture, *school culture* is a concept developed in educational administration to explore the meaning, character, and atmosphere of educational organizations (Gruenert, 2005). Therefore, there is no universal definition of school culture, but in general, there are views on what better school culture involves. For example, Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1994) define it as observable behavior patterns, norms, values, philosophy, unwritten policies, and procedures. In other words, school culture is a system of behaviors, actions, and observable arrangements developed continuously among its members (Vaill, 1989 as cited in Evans, 1996). Likewise, Deal and Peterson (1990) define school culture as a pattern of values, beliefs, and traditions generated through history of the school. Generally, school culture refers to a set of shared values that guide the actions of teachers, students, and administrators (Heckman, 1993). Stolp and Smith (1995) also define school culture as a set of meanings that includes norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and myths transmitted historically, even though it may be perceived differently by school members. Although different definitions have been formulated by various researchers, school culture can be better understood by its components; namely, observable arrangements, architecture and routines, historical roots, mission, vision and values of the school, stories and tales, and rituals and ceremonies (Deal & Peterson, 1999). Hence, school culture is a set of norms, values, beliefs, rituals, ceremonies, symbols, and stories that provides the personality of the school.

Culture is a significant concept for organizations as it influences them in terms of balance, loyalty, unity, and ability. Findings in the literature show that school culture affects school outcomes (Cheng, 1993; Edmonds, 1979; Fyans & Maehr, 1990). Specifically, a positive school culture influences the motivation of students and teachers, academic

achievement of the students, job satisfaction, commitment and cooperation of the teachers, employee dedication and motivation, and structuralization of the school community (Canizo, 2002; Deal & Peterson, 1990, 2000; Giles, 1998; Harris, 2002; Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Masland, 1985; Lima, 2006). Indeed, studies show that one of the important factors affecting student achievement is school culture (Deal & Peterson, 1999; Smith, 2006). Six basic features of school culture in schools with high achievement are (i) a shared vision, (ii) traditions, (iii) collaboration, (iv) shared decision-making, (v) innovation, and (vi) communication (Goldring, 2002). Similarly, Gruenert (2000) states that *collaborative school culture* is an effective school culture typology of the culture typologies that influence student achievement most, since working with cooperation and a sense of confidence, purpose, and team spirit is the basis of creativity and productivity in organizations (Pawlas, 1997).

The literature also demonstrates that schools with higher performance possess a school culture that gives importance to concrete indicators such as rituals, traditions, symbols, heroes, stories, and ceremonies (Beare, Caldwell, & Millikan 1989; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Deal & Peterson, 1999), and discrete indicators like beliefs, convictions, values, norms, philosophy, mission, vision, goals, assumptions, and moral values (Alkire, 1995; Beare et al., 1989; Deal & Peterson, 1999; Schein, 1999). Therefore, it is clear that school culture is associated with students' academic achievement (Aidla & Vadi, 2007; Cheng, 1993; Dumay, 2009; Gaziel, 1997; Heck & Marcoulides, 1996). More specifically, higher performance in schools is attributed to effective and strong school cultures, while schools with lower performance are believed to possess negative school culture (Van Der Westhuizen, Mosoge, Swanepoel, & Coetsee, 2005).

As is clear from the theoretical framework, it is expected that organizational cynicism may have negative effects on schools, both on school culture and academic achievement, like it does on other organizations. Taking into account the relationship between school culture and academic achievement explored in many other studies, the purpose of the present study is to explain constructed theoretical models that examine how organizational cynicism perceptions of primary school teachers affect school culture and academic achievement, by using structural equation modeling.

## Method

### Research Design

This study explains constructed theoretical models for how organizational cynicism perceptions of primary school teachers affect school culture and academic achievement, by using structural equation modeling. Two different models were developed based on organizational cynicism. In order to determine the effect of organizational cynicism on school culture in the first constructed model, and the effect of organizational cynicism and school culture on academic achievement, a *causal research design* was utilized. *Causal research designs emphasize existing cause-and-effect relationships between variables* (Karadağ, 2009). In this study, with the assumption that there is a cause-and-effect relationship between organizational cynicism, school culture, and academic achievement variables, organizational cynicism perceptions of teachers were taken as an independent variable and school culture was taken as a dependent variable in the first model; organizational cynicism and school culture were taken as independent variables while academic achievement was taken as a dependent variable in the second constructed model. Besides considering previously-conducted studies about the relationship these three variables have with each other (Cheng, 1993; Kythreotis, Pashiardis, & Kyriakides, 2010; Macneil, Prater, & Busch, 2009; Stolp & Smith, 1995), three preconditions were attained in order to establish a cause-effect relationship between them: (i) temporal precedence, (ii) constant conjunction, and (iii) absence of alternative explanations (Neuman, 2007).

### Population and Sample

The population of the study comprised 2447 primary school teachers working at 118 primary schools within the boundaries of the Eskişehir metropolitan area in the 2011-12 academic year. To determine the research sample, primary schools were stratified with regard to their locations in upper, middle, and lower socio-economic areas (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006), five schools were selected for each stratum, and 291 primary school teachers working at a total of 15 schools were included in the study.

### Data Collection Tools

The data of the study was gathered through a utilization of two scales: the Organizational

Cynicism Scale, which reveals teachers' perceptions about organizational cynicism, and the School Culture Survey, which elicits school culture perceptions. Academic achievement scores corresponded to placement test scores of the schools in the 2010-11 academic year.

**Organizational Cynicism Scale:** In order to determine teachers' organizational cynicism perceptions, the Organizational Cynicism Scale developed by Brandes et al. (1999) was used. The scale is a five-point Likert scale comprising three subscales ((i) affective, (ii) cognitive, (iii) behavioral) with 13 items. After the adaptation of the scale into the Turkish language, confirmatory factor analysis was utilized through a maximum likelihood technique in order to examine its construct validity. Chi-square value ( $\chi^2$ ) and the statistical significance level [ $\chi^2=149.06$ ,  $df=41$ ] were determined, all with fit indices, through confirmatory factor analysis. Considering the degrees of freedom, the low chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value showed that scale items corresponded to the gathered data [ $\chi^2/df=3.6$ ]. Moreover, goodness of fit indices [RMSEA=.09, AGFI=.86, GFI=.91] indicated that the proposed model was acceptable. More specifically, GFI and AGFI values varied between 0 and 1. Although there is no consensus on what relative values for these indices constitute a good fit, values greater than .85 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1984; Cole, 1987; Marsh, Balla, & McDonald, 1988) and .90 (Hoyle & Panter, 2005; Kline, 2005; Schumacker & Lomax, 1996) are recognized as a good fit. RMSEA values obtained in the study varied between 0 and 1, indicating a good fitting. The RMSEA value expresses root mean square error of approximation, and when it is closer to 0, it indicates a perfect fit, contrary to GFI and AGFI values. In fact, RMSEA values less than .05 are considered to indicate a perfect fit, values between .05 and .10 show an acceptable fit, and values greater than .10 indicate a poor fit (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). In addition, a ratio of chi-square to the degrees of freedom ( $\chi^2/df$ ) value that is between 2 and 5 provides a good fit, while values less than 2 show a perfect fit, as this ratio approaches 0 (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2001). As a result of seven modification indices suggested by confirmatory factor analysis, the two greatest chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) modification indices were used to determine the best fitting in the model. According to the performed modification adjustments and factor analysis results, the Organizational Cynicism Scale was made to consist of 11 items arranged with three factors: (i) affective,

(ii) cognitive, and (iii) behavioral. Higher scores on these factors indicated teachers' negative affective, cognitive, and behavioral attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors towards their schools.

**School Culture Survey:** For ascertaining teachers' school culture perceptions, the School Culture Survey developed by Gruenert (2000) was used. The scale is a five-point Likert scale comprised of six subscales ((i) *collaborative leadership*, (ii) teacher collaboration, (iii) *professional development*, (iv) collegial support, (v) unity of purpose, and (vi) learning partnership) with 35 items. After the adaptation of the scale into the Turkish language, confirmatory factor analysis was utilized through a maximum likelihood technique in order to examine its construct validity. Chi-square value ( $\chi^2$ ) and statistical significance level [ $\chi^2=928.46$ ,  $df=227$ ] were inspected with all fit indices through confirmatory factor analysis. Considering the degrees of freedom, the low chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value showed that scale items corresponded to the gathered data [ $\chi^2/df=4.0$ ] (Hair et al., 2010; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2001). Also, goodness of fit indices [RMSEA=.10, AGFI=.78, GFI=.74] indicated that the proposed model was acceptable (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2001; MacCallum et al., 1996). As a result of performed modification adjustments suggested by confirmatory factor analysis and factor analysis, the School Culture Survey Scale included 35 items arranged with six factors: (i) instructional communication, (ii) collaborative leadership, (iii) trust, (iv) unity of purpose, (v) teacher collaboration, and (vi) professional development. Specifically, instructional communication included items related to communication behaviors of teachers used for instructional purpose, while the collaborative leadership dimension comprised items on teachers' interactions with school leaders and the behaviors facilitating collaboration between teachers. The trust subscale involved teachers' trust toward their colleagues and trust of school leaders toward the teachers, whereas the unity of purpose dimension included items about the mission statement of the school and its reflection on education. Teacher collaboration comprised items about behaviors fostering collaborative culture, and the last dimension, professional development, involved items related to teachers' feelings about developing new ideas and school improvement. In addition, Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients of the Organizational Cynicism and School Culture Survey were also computed and identified as appropriate.

## Procedure

The aim of this study was to test developed independent theoretical models investigating the relationship between primary school teachers' perceptions about organizational cynicism, school culture, and academic achievement. Since these models were formulated using theoretical concepts and structures that cannot be measured directly (organizational cynicism and school culture), their variables can be explained by structural equation modeling with the use of some indicators. In order to develop appropriate models, test them, and unify measurement errors in both observed and latent variables, path analysis was utilized. The methodology of the study consisted of the following stages:

(i) Construction of the theoretical model: Two different theoretical models were used in the study. In the first model, a structural equation model suggesting the relationship between organizational cynicism and school culture was constructed. This model involved three main components, namely, two measurement components and a structure component. Of the two measurement components, the first one, organizational cynicism (the exogenous variable of the study), was measured through three observed variables (affective, cognitive, and behavioral). The second measurement component, school culture (the endogenous variable of the study), was measured by six observed variables (instructional communication, collaborative leadership, trust, unity of purpose, teacher collaboration, and professional development). The structural model component theoretically shows the relations between latent variables, such as the relationship between organizational cynicism and school culture. In the model, it was assumed that organizational cynicism perceptions of teachers (exogenous variable) have effects on school culture (endogenous variable). The second model of the study proposed a structural equation model indicating the relationships between organizational cynicism, school culture, and academic achievement. This theoretical model consisted of a structural component that formulated the effect of organizational cynicism and school culture variables (latent variables) on academic achievement (observed variable). Hence, the main purpose of the constructed models was to validate whether such formulations can be acceptable.

(ii) Testing of the constructed model: At this stage, it is clear that models describing the relationships between organizational cynicism, school culture,

and academic achievement variables were constructed with statistical acceptability. For the acceptable models, goodness of fit indices were calculated as follows: GFI [Goodness-of-fit index], AGFI [Adjusted goodness-of-fit index], RMSEA [Root mean square error of approximation], Chi-square [ $\chi^2$ ], degrees of freedom [ $df$ ], the ratio between chi-square and degrees of freedom [ $\chi^2/df$ ], and  $t$  value. Standard values of these indices were considered in the study (Anderson & Gerbing, 1984; Cole, 1987; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2001; Kline, 2005; Marsh et al., 1988; Schumacker & Lomax, 1996). As a result of acceptable goodness of fit indices, the relationships between variables and structures in the constructed models were accepted as statistically associated with the concerned structures.

### Results

The study proposed two theoretical models that emphasize the effect of organizational cynicism on school culture, and the effects of organizational cynicism and school culture on academic achievement. Before testing the formulated models, correlation analysis and path analysis were performed respectively to examine the relationships between variables and to determine the associations between variables through computing goodness of fit indices.

#### Correlation Analysis Results of the Theoretical Model

Mean values, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients of the variables are as follows: the highest mean value of teachers' cynicism corresponds to the behavioral aspect [ $\bar{X}=2.32$ ,  $SD=.95$ ], while the lowest value is observed in the affective dimension [ $\bar{X}=1.78$ ,  $SD=.92$ ]. For the school culture variable, the highest mean value belongs to the mission factor [ $\bar{X}=3.79$ ,  $SD=.69$ ], whereas the lowest value belongs to the trust dimension [ $\bar{X}=3.55$ ,  $SD=.73$ ]. In order to determine the relationship between organizational cynicism and school culture scores, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted, and the results revealed that there are significant negative relationships between organizational cynicism and school culture factors (between  $-.23$  and  $-.46$ ). Likewise, there is a significant negative relationship between academic achievement and the behavioral aspect of organizational cynicism ( $r=-.12$ ).

#### Results of the Goodness of Fit Indices

Goodness of fit indices for the constructed model with simultaneous contribution of latent and observed variables were determined through GFI, AGFI, RMSEA,  $\chi^2$  and  $\chi^2/df$  values. GFI, which measures the relative amount of covariance and the total variance explained by the model, was computed as .92 in the first model (organizational cynicism) and .91 in the second model (organizational cynicism, school culture, and academic achievement). Similarly, the AGFI value was calculated as .95 for the first model and .94 for the second model. These goodness of fit values indicate that the models were appropriate for the gathered data (Hoyle & Panter, 2005; Kline, 2005; Schumacker & Lomax, 1996). Moreover, RMSEA, which corresponds to the lack of fit of a model to the population data, was calculated as .06 for the first model and .07 for the second constructed model. Hence, the computed RMSEA values represent the appropriateness of the model for the obtained data (MacCallum et al., 1996). Arrows representing explained and unexplained variances for each latent variable were also included in the structural model. In the study,  $\chi^2/df$  values were computed as 2.3 for the first model and 2.5 for the second model, which indicate a good fit between observed and replicated covariance matrices (Hair et al., 2010; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2001).

Path analysis results indicating the relationship between organizational cynicism, school culture, and academic achievement in the constructed models were also considered. Organizational cynicism, the first component and independent variable of the first structural equation model, consisted of three observed variables: affective, cognitive, and behavioral cynicism. Of these observed variables, the cognitive cynicism factor was the highest predictor of organizational cynicism ( $\lambda_{21}=.96$ ). School culture, the second component and the dependent variable of the constructed model, involved six observed variables, namely, instructional communication, collaborative leadership, trust, unity of purpose, teacher collaboration, and professional development. Of these observed variables, teacher collaboration was the highest predictor of school culture ( $\lambda_{51}=.94$ ). In the third component of the developed model scrutinizing the effect of organizational cynicism on school culture, organizational cynicism explained  $-.46$  variance of school culture. In the second constructed structural equation model with organizational cynicism, school culture,

and academic achievement, organizational cynicism accounted for -.16 variance of academic achievement and -.13 for school culture.

### Discussion

The path analysis results of the study with appropriate goodness of fit indices revealed that an interaction model of organizational cynicism, school culture, and academic achievement can be constructed. The study results fit with the related literature examining the relationship between school culture and academic achievement (Demirtaş, 2010a, 2010b; Gruenert, 2005; Kelly et al., 1998; Kythreotis et al., 2010; MacNeil et al., 2009; Salfi & Saeed, 2007; Stolp & Smith, 1995; Yahaya, Yahaya, Ramli, Hashim, & Zakariya, 2010). Even though there is limited research investigating the association between organizational cynicism, school culture, and academic achievement, a theoretical model can be constructed with the assumption that factors related to organizational cynicism such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, motivation, and school climate have influence on school culture (Cheng, 1993; Stolp & Smith, 1995).

In the first developed model, it was demonstrated that of all organizational cynicism dimensions, teachers' cognitive cynicism perceptions were the highest predictor for organizational cynicism, the first measurement component and independent variable of the model. This reflected teachers' beliefs about the discrepancies between what the school says and does, inconsistencies between practices and deeds, and teachers' doubts about implementations in the school. The second measurement component and dependent variable of the model was highly predicted by teacher collaboration compared to other culture dimensions, instructional communication, collaborative leadership, trust, unity of purpose, and professional development.

The second structural equation model of the study was constructed in two steps: (i) the effect of organizational cynicism on school culture, and (ii) the effects of organizational cynicism and school culture on academic achievement as latent variables. The findings showed that as teachers' organizational cynicism perceptions increased, their school culture perceptions decreased (46%); as teachers' organizational cynicism perceptions increased, academic achievement decreased (16%); and as teachers' school culture perceptions increased, academic achievement increased (13%).

The first model of the study indicated that teachers' organizational cynicism perceptions have effects on their school culture perceptions. That is, teachers' negative beliefs, behaviors, and emotions about their schools influence their perceptions about teacher collaboration, instructional communication, collaborative leadership, trust, unity of purpose, and professional development. Researchers claim that cynicism within an organization may lead to undermining relations, distrust, depriving of interrelations, poor communication, and discourteous and unfair behaviors (Andersson, 1996; Dean et al., 1998; Kanter & Mirvis, 1989). Furthermore, scholars argue that organizational cynicism affects factors such as organizational commitment (Bedeian, 2007; Wanous et al., 2000), organizational citizenship (Andersson & Bateman, 1997; Evans et al., 2011; Jordan et al., 2007; Yetim & Ceylan, 2011), job satisfaction (Bedeian, 2007; Evans et al., 2011), organizational justice (Bernierth et al., 2007), and organizational climate (Brown & Cregan, 2008), which are closely related to organizational culture. Therefore, it is concluded that the above-mentioned studies have similarities with the present study, since organizational cynicism has negative influence on trust, instructional communication, and collaborative leadership, which form school culture. Given these results, it is also asserted that teachers may think their leaders lack leadership skills, and they may not care about developing their professionalism or acting within the goals of their schools. This situation may also negatively affect main components of school culture like school norms, beliefs, values, and traditions.

Another result of the study was in regards to the effect of school culture on academic achievement. School culture that connects school members and constitutes shared values has influence on and shapes the feelings and thoughts of administrators, teachers, and students (Deal & Peterson, 1999), and carries significance for academic achievement (Gruenert, 2005). Parallel to these findings and this study, other conducted studies have concluded that strong school culture gives birth to student achievement (Demirtaş, 2010a, 2010b; Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006; Kythreotis et al., 2010; Macneil et al., 2009; Maslowski, 2001; Salfi & Saeed, 2007; Schoen & Teddie, 2008; Stolp & Smith, 1995; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1997; Yahaya et al., 2010). Therefore, it is clear that administrators' leadership skills, positive communication, collaboration and trust between teachers, acting within the aims of the school, and improving professional development

have reflections on academic achievement of students as important components of school culture. Besides, school culture's impact on academic achievement (16%) which is thought to be affected by many individual and organizational factors shows the importance of school culture on academic achievement.

The last result of the study was the negative influence of teachers' organizational cynicism perceptions on academic achievement. This result clearly indicates that teachers' negative beliefs, feelings, and behaviors toward the school affect academic achievement. This may be related to performance of teachers, since cynicism which is negatively associated with employee performance (Andersson & Bateman, 1997; Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003; Kalağan & Aksu, 2010; Kutanis & Çetinel, 2010) may lead to teachers having low performances. In this context, teacher effectiveness and performance are important factors for students that affects the student himself, his parents, and physical and organizational features of academic achievement (Day, Sammons, & Gu, 2008; Goe, Bell, & Little, 2008; Ngoma, 2011). On the other hand, the findings of the study can be explained using expectancy theory, which is closely related to organizational cynicism. According to expectancy theory, one of the motivation theories, employees perform their work in line with their expectations and think that they will obtain rewards as a result of their efforts in the organization. Hence, their efforts and expectations influence their performances directly (Robbins, 2000). Moreover, the effect of cynicism on achievement may be accounted for by the Pygmalion effect, which is one of the theories of

social psychology, also referred to as the Rosenthal effect (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). Specifically, disbelief in achievement, which is known as self-fulfilling prophecy, and a failure expectation of teachers due to prior failures may lead to unsuccessfulness in schools. As a parallel to this theory, teachers' organizational cynicism is mostly explained by the belief aspect (cognitive cynicism) in the present study. Therefore, it is evident that teachers' thoughts about discrepancies in their schools, their doubtful approaches to planned implementations, disbelief in the policies and goals of the schools, and negative feelings toward their schools may have reflections on academic achievement.

To summarize, organizational cynicism encompassing teachers' negative and subversive feelings, beliefs, and behaviors about their schools affect school culture and academic achievement negatively. On the other hand, school culture is determined to be a factor that increases academic achievement. School administrations can overcome the negative influence of organizational cynicism in their schools by eliminating distrust within the school, conducting implementations consistent with the school purpose, enabling teachers' participation in decision-making processes, and creating a school culture that emphasizes accountability and high moral standards. In fact, the image of schools can be changed through planning social activities inside and outside the school, and improving the working conditions of teachers. The creation of achievement-oriented learning environment and culture can also increase student achievement.

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