

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Examining the organizational cynicism among teachers at schools: A mixed methods study

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The purpose of this study is to examine the organizational cynicism among teachers at schools. In this study, which was conducted by a mixed method, “the Organizational Cynicism Scale for Teachers” was used in the quantitative dimension, while a semi-structured interviewing technique was used in the qualitative dimension. The quantitative part of this research population consists of 348 teachers who worked in public schools on the Anatolian side of Istanbul in 2014 to 2015 academic year. In the qualitative part of this research, 30 teachers were interviewed concerning factors that affect teachers in terms of interaction, process and assignment of duties in the organizational sense. In the analysis of quantitative data, descriptive statistical techniques were used, while qualitative data was worked out by content analysis. According to the results obtained in the quantitative dimension of the research, it was seen that the organizational cynicism level of teachers was at low and medium level. It was determined that this result was also supported by the findings obtained by means of qualitative analysis.

**Key words:** Cynicism, organizational cynicism, teacher, school.

## INTRODUCTION

Cynicism is a philosophical movement which emerged in Ancient Greek Era. The history of cynicism concept dates back to the 4th century B.C. Cynicism, which has started to take its place in the literature of administration since 1980s, is regarded as a negative attitude that has cognitive, affective and behavioral components. Cynicism, which has started to be the subject of some studies in the field of educational administration and supervision lately, can lead to a change in the organization and a resistance towards administrative control.

Founded by Antisthenes, known also as an epicurean and his antipathy for vanity, each member of the cynicism movement is called a “cynic”. They believe that happiness

can be achieved by developing apathy for earthly ambitions and goods. In this sense, they bring forward the thesis that people cannot own earthly goods for a long time. The most famous cynic is Diogenes who lived in a barrel (Dean et al., 1998).

A cynic believes that as long as the interests are not a matter of question, it is out of question for others to exhibit selfless behaviors. A real cynic accepts the freedom to attack popular beliefs for his/her personal interests, belittles social norms and brings individualism forward. S/he has difficulties in accepting the principles of the government and society, and acts reluctantly to play a part in a structure that adopts them (Horton, 2004).

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Therefore, cynics need to rely on a life style which is completely purified of elements like fame, power and wealth; and to protect themselves from the devastating effects of social contracts, laws and traditions by refusing them (Andersson, 1996).

The data obtained regarding Greek cynics rests on myths and legends which were put forth and handed on from generation to generation rather than documents. This situation is a result of their ideological attitudes so much so that not only they reject everything that is earthly, but also they do not care about what is written (Cutler, 2000). On the other hand "eudaimonia", which could be defined as the highest good that a person can attain, is regarded as the common purpose of cynics. Eudaimonia can be explained as endless happiness. To achieve this, a cynic needs to live in harmony with nature, avoid feelings like arrogance and peevishness and prefer a freedom away from lust (Sayre, 1945).

In Oxford English Dictionary, cynicism is defined as an inclination to question whether something will happen or whether it is worthwhile; pessimism (Oxford Dictionary, 2014). In Turkish Language Association Dictionary, cynicism is defined as the Antishenes's doctrine which argues that one can attain virtue and happiness on his/her own by getting rid of all needs without being attached to any values (Turkish Language Association, 2014). The concept of cynicism has gained different meanings apart from its original use in Ancient Greece. The Cynic School, since its foundation in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., has criticized materialist elements such as well-being, power and wealth harshly and was not slow to heap ridicule on these elements.

Ancient Greek cynics are the defenders of high virtue on ethics and morals basis. Conversely, cynics in the modern world have turned into determinant individuals who show that they will do anything to protect themselves from the possible dangers posed from the rest of the society, instead of relying on what is moral and ethical. Contemporary cynicism is treated as a form of conception that could possibly bring the applications of organizations and leaders to a standstill (Godfarb, 1991; Wu et al., 2007).

### **Organizational cynicism**

Dean et al. (1998) who presented different approaches to treat cynicism based on other researchers' studies, brought the concept of cynicism under five headings:

1. Personality-oriented cynicism
2. Society or Institution-oriented cynicism
3. Occupation-oriented cynicism
4. Employee-oriented cynicism
5. Organizational change-oriented cynicism.

Table 1 shows the sub-headings of the taxonomy put

forth by Dean et al. (1998) in treating cynicism.

### ***Personality-oriented cynicism***

In personality-oriented cynicism, the dominant point of view is human nature. Primary studies have revealed that cynics are selfish, do not care about others, question the purpose of others in a skeptical way, and are protectionist, insecure individuals. In its most general sense, this approach suggests that cynic individuals are unlikely to free themselves of these characteristics since cynicism is the result of one's personality structure (Dean et al., 1998).

### ***Society/Institution-oriented cynicism***

Social/institutional-oriented cynicism focuses on cynicism in a situational sense. According to the results of a study carried out by Kanter and Mirvis (1989), with the start of industrial era, the fluctuations in the social domain has been facing us as a situation created by problems such as unmet expectations of employees. According to social/institutional approach, frustrations experienced in different levels of relations in the social domain play a triggering role in the rise of cynicism (Andersson, 1996; Andersson and Bateman, 1997).

### ***Occupation-oriented cynicism***

Occupation-oriented cynicism is a cynicism type which comes out as a result of organizational effect, type of the service given and laws. Dean et al. (1998) states that occupational cynicism is more intense in:

1. Ordinary jobs, in other words uncomplicated jobs,
2. Repetition-based jobs,
3. Jobs restricting intervention in terms of the work process,
4. Shift working jobs.

In occupation-oriented cynicism, elements such as the quality of the work, its complexity and the participation level in decision making processes related to the job are determinative (James, 2005). A weak organizational climate, anxiety for dismissal, high level of job insecurity, unfair assignments and failings in ethical standards are also triggering factors that cause occupation oriented cynicism (Khan, 2007).

### ***Employee-oriented cynicism***

Employee-oriented cynicism is a cynicism type which

**Table 1.** Points of view towards conceptualizing cynicism.

Variable	Personality-oriented	Society or institution-oriented	Occupational cynicism-oriented	Employee cynicism-oriented	Organizational change-oriented
Focus in conceptualizing	Negative perceptions and hostile attitudes towards others.	Unmet expectations of society, institutions or other authorities.	Occupational responsibilities	Administration in organizations and other ranks.	Organizational change efforts
Definitions	Tendency to describe others as hostile, unethical and ugly, low level of trust in others.	Cynicism (1) feeds on society, institutions, authorities, unrealistic and high expectations for the future (2), experiences that result in frustration and (3) the feeling of betrayal.	Underestimating and despising what others do, losing respect and pride felt for the job.	The feelings of anger, despair and frustration caused by the job, and tendency to mistrust and underestimate the administration and other constituents of the job.	An inappropriate, pessimistic point of view that causes laziness regarding changing efforts which is based on the belief that positive results can come out in the organizational sense.

Source: Dean et al. (1998); Organizational cynicism. The academy of management review 23(2):341-352.

characterized by frustration, hopelessness, and disillusionment, as well as contempt toward and distrust of business organizations, executives and other objects in the workplace (Andersson, 1996; Andersson and Bateman, 1997).

**Organizational change-oriented cynicism**

Organizational change-oriented cynicism rests on a negative point of view asserting that the efforts for change are futile (Vance et al., 1995). The most important argument in organizational change-oriented cynicism is that individual efforts for the solution of the problems in the organizational context are not sufficient, and there are factors beyond the control of the individual which become effective on the problem (Reichers et al., 1997).

High expectations and frustrations are the main factors causing organizational cynicism in the organization. Slighting employees and considering

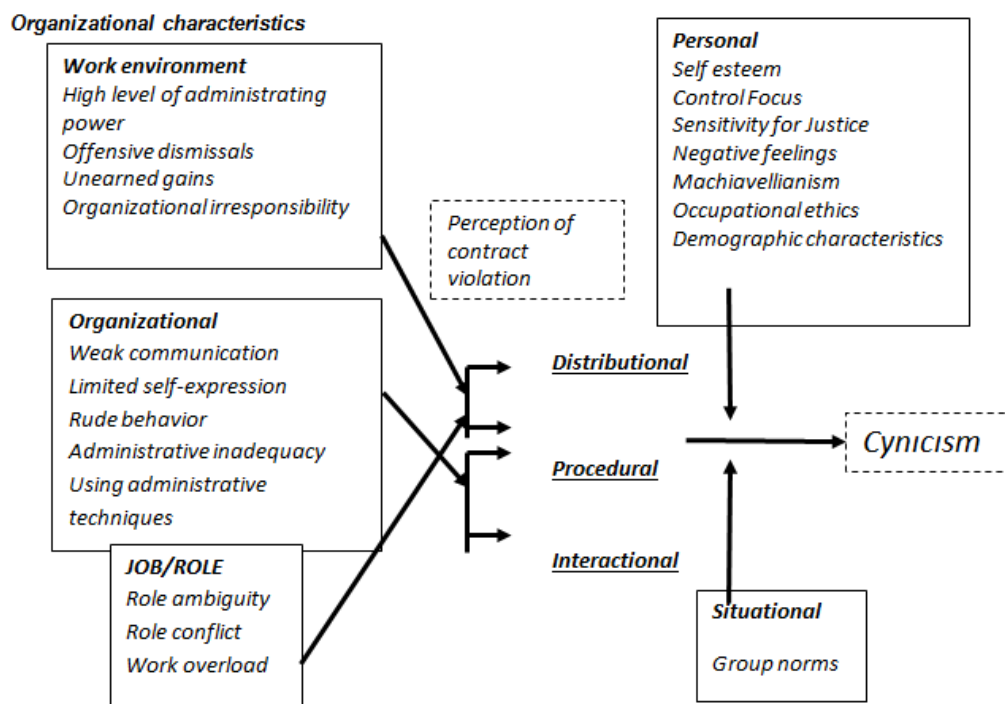
their work as worthless paves the way for cynicism to arise (Kanter and Mirvis, 1989; Andersson, 1996; Andersson and Batemann, 1997). Organizational cynicism has cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions (Dean et al., 1998). It rests on the idea that others are unfair (Twenge et al., 2004; James, 2005; Bommer et al., 2005; Bernerth et al., 2007; Tayfur et al., 2013). These organization members are skeptical because of their hurt and disappointed feelings, and these doubts turn into cynicism in time. These people find themselves embittered and eventually turn into threatening elements for organizations (Bommer et al., 2005; Lee and Ashforth, 1996). Andersson (1996) states that cynicism reduces the faith in change and destroys hope for the future.

In this sense, Senge (2010) by specifying that organizational cynicism is a resistance point in the organization, emphasizes that the cynic in the organization is actually an idealist who is

disappointed and his/her experiences transform him/her into a cynic resisting to change.

While personal characteristics come to fore in some cases, it is also seen that external factors are also influential in the rise of cynicism such as the effect of social domain, organizational structure, changing efforts and management structure apart from the personality structure (Kanter and Mirvis, 1989; Andersson, 1996; Reichers et al., 1997; Andersson and Batemann, 1997). Andersson (1996) gives the causes and results of cynicism in Figure 1.

Besides causes stemming from the work environment such as unearned gains, offensive dismissals and excessive power owned by administrators; factors like organizational communication problems, rude behaviors, administrative inadequacies, role conflicts and work overload also give rise to cynicism. These problems are named as the violation of the contract, which damage intra-organizational



**Figure 1.** Causes of cynicism (Source: Andersson, 1996. Employee cynicism: an examination using a contract violation framework. Human Relation. 49(11):1395-1418).

procedures and the interaction among organization members (Andersson, 1996).

Violation of the contract does not always lead to cynicism in every case. As can be seen from Figure 1, if violation of a contract is to bring out cynicism, personal and situational characteristics need to be inclined to create cynicism. Alongside with personal characteristics such as self-esteem, being controlled, sensitivity to equality demand and being negative; situational elements like group norms are also effective on how a person will react to contract violation and at what level s/he will bring forth cynicism.

Educational organizations living in a dynamic system are influenced by the attitudes, belief systems, preferences, interests, life styles, cultures values and personal traits of their members (administrators, teachers, students, parents). In this context, as a result of negative factors, a negative attitude born of the negative reflections, beliefs and images appears. This negative attitude raises both the individual's personality traits to the fore cynicism caused by working conditions (Kalagan and Guzeller, 2010).

Thus a teacher or a manager who exhibit cynic attitudes may imagine that school development efforts are ignored by other stakeholders, and may tend to be reluctant to contribute to development of school

effectiveness. And also these stakeholders who tend to exhibit cynic behaviors get out of expressing their opinions, keep them and choose to share their feelings about how s/he feels while working at school with others out of school context (Korkut and Aslan, 2016).

Having an efficient education environment can be possible by minimizing factors that form the basis for cynic tendencies stated by Andersson (1996) like injustice, communication problems and rude behaviors. A school where these factors are minimized can become an organizational environment in which each member have faith in organizational integrity, where mutual positive feelings are dominant and genuine relations that rest on constructive criticism are developed (Nair and Kamalanabhan, 2010a).

The purpose of this study is to examine the organizational cynicism among teachers at schools. In accordance with this purpose, teachers' opinions regarding factors which affect them in terms of organizational interaction, process and assignment of duties were received.

**METHODOLOGY**

In this study, a mixed research model was applied where qualitative and quantitative research methods were used together. The mixed

model requires the use of both methods respectively (Johnson and Christensen, 2008). The aim of using mixed method in this study is improving validity of research, contributing to development of perspectives and strengthening links between theoretical and practical areas. Because of these reasons of collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, proposals of research are going to be more realistic. Since this model makes it possible to use scales consisting of structured questions and open-ended questions together, it gives the opportunity to obtain versatile data. In addition to this, the mixed model strengthens the research more than the use of other models separately since it provides a basis for the interpretation of data analysis both on a statistical and thematic level (Creswell, 2009). In this study, sequential exploratory research design was used in mixed methods type. The sequential exploratory research design involves a first phase of qualitative data collection and analysis, followed by a second phase of quantitative data collection and analysis that builds on the results of the first qualitative phase (Creswell, 2009).

### Study group

In determining the qualitative study group, a purposeful sampling method was employed to collect qualitative data. As the study group, 30 teachers from different majors were reached with the purposeful sampling method to enable determining situations that are considered to hold rich information. Participant views are given by using codes to ensure privacy for participant credentials. Demographic information of participant teachers is given in Table 2. In the quantitative dimension, the population of the research consists of teachers who worked in public schools of Ministry of Education on the Anatolian side of İstanbul, in 2014 to 2015 academic year. The research sample was formed by 348 teachers, determined by simple random sampling, who worked in public schools on the Anatolian side of İstanbul in 2014 to 2015 academic year.

### Data collection tool

In collecting qualitative data, the phenomenology was applied, which focuses on the essence of experiences gained through life, and thus gives the opportunity to analyze the core meanings lying under the complexity of these experiences in a clear way (Merriam, 2002). In the research, structured open-ended interviewing nine questions were used, which were prepared after the literature review and piloted upon expert opinions. The purpose of collecting data by using open-ended interviewing questions is to understand the essence of participants' views in a broader perspective without relying on the restrictive effect of pre-prepared survey type questions, and to transform these into data (Patton, 2002). In collecting quantitative data, "Organizational Cynicism Scale for Teachers" was used, which was developed by Sağır and Oğuz (2012). This scale consists of four sub-dimensions:

1. Alienation from the institution being worked (items 1 to 7)
2. Factors lowering performance (items 8 to 16)
3. A negative attitude towards the school (items 17 to 21), and
4. Participation of the employees in implementing decisions (items 22 to 25).

Cronbach Alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient was calculated as 0.86 for the first factor; 0.88 for the second factor, 0.85 for the third factor and 0.68 for the last factor. In the research, participants were asked to give their opinions on the questions given for the Likert-type scale. According to this, a five-point Likert

scale was used; (5) strongly agree, (4) agree, (3) neutral, (2) disagree and (1) strongly disagree. Scale results spread over 5.00 to 1.00=4.00 point range. This range was divided into five, and dimensions setting the cut-points of the scale were determined. The scale, together with the four factors it includes, accounts for 0.59 of the total variance. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the total scale was found to be 0.89.

### Data analysis

In the analysis of qualitative data, a content analysis was carried out on an inductive basis. The inductive basis enables thematizing and categorizing the codes, which emerge from the relations of data to one another (Patton, 2002). For this purpose, codes were formed by doing a content analysis on interviews, which were handled individually, and these codes were thematized. After that, the findings were put in the tables by presenting data relations in an organizational way. In the analysis of quantitative data, "IBM SPSS 21 for Mac" program was used and descriptive statistical methods were employed.

## FINDINGS

### Quantitative analysis findings

Quantitative analysis findings were gathered by the analysis of data collected by means of scales from teachers who work in public schools and participated in the research for the solution of the problem. The result of descriptive statistical analysis, done to determine the average point for participant teachers' organizational cynicism level, is given in Table 3.

When the average point for the cynicism level of participant teachers was analyzed, it was determined that it is at a low level in the sub-dimension of alienation from the institution being worked ( $2.50 \pm 0.42$ ); at a medium level in the sub-dimension of factors lowering performance ( $2.90 \pm 0.50$ ); at a low level in the sub-dimension of a negative attitude towards the school ( $1.94 \pm 0.48$ ); and at a low level in the sub-dimension of participation of the teachers in the implementation of decisions ( $2.29 \pm 0.53$ ). In addition, a low-level agreement can be seen in the sub-dimension of overall point for participants' organizational cynicism ( $2.41 \pm 0.34$ ).

### Qualitative analysis findings

Views received from teachers were gathered and analyzed as part of educational organizations on the basis of:

1. Interactions that came out
2. Duties assumed
3. Organizational structure and processes.

### Teachers' views on intra-organizational interaction

Under this title, teachers' views were asked regarding the

**Table 2.** Demographic information of qualitative study group.

Participant	Age	Gender	Major	Seniority	Participant	Age	Gender	Major	Seniority
P1	28	Female	P.E.	6	P16	36	Female	Eng.	11
P2	27	Male	Eng.	4	P17	51	Male	Social S.	28
P3	22	Female	Science	1	P18	35	Male	Turkish L.	11
P4	33	Female	Social S.	8	P19	29	Female	Science	8
P5	30	Male	Turkish L.	6	P20	32	Female	Kindergarten T.	6
P6	33	Female	Social S.	7	P21	35	Male	Social S.	10
P7	35	Female	Science	12	P22	35	Female	Kindergarten T.	10
P8	34	Female	Turkish L.	9	P23	36	Female	Classroom T.	12
P9	31	Female	Science	7	P24	30	Male	I.T.	8
P10	34	Female	Maths	2	P25	25	Female	I.T.	6
P11	29	Female	Maths	7	P26	40	Male	Visual Arts	16
P12	31	Female	Classroom T.	9	P27	24	Female	Science	2
P13	26	Female	Turkish L.	3	P28	32	Female	Kindergarten T.	8
P14	37	Male	Science	12	P29	36	Male	Visual Arts	11
P15	43	Female	Visual Arts	6	P30	27	Female	Maths	2

**Table 3.** Organizational cynicism level of teachers working at schools.

Variable	n	$\bar{X}$	S	Min.	Max.
(Affective and behavioral) Alienation from the institution	348	2.50	0.42	1	5
Factors lowering performance	348	2.90	0.50	1	5
Negative attitude towards school	348	1.94	0.48	1	5
Participation of teachers in the implementation of decisions	348	2.29	0.53	1	5
Overall point for organizational cynicism	348	2.41	0.34	1	4.64

relations, and communication and interactions they formed with others. In the light of the data gathered from the interviews, findings obtained from the content analysis are given in Table 4. When teachers' views were analyzed based on the findings obtained from the interactions brought forth by their communication with others (administrator, colleague); it can be said that teachers, who have horizontal relations with their colleagues, perceive colleague attitude more positively:

"I think the communication between me and my colleagues is quite positive at the school where I am currently working. I can say that my colleagues' attitudes are sincere, respectful and understanding (P13)".

On the other hand, the views of the participants show that the perception of administrative attitude compared to colleagues is more negative:

"I know that administrators don't want me here." (P12)

#### Teachers' views on duties and roles assumed

Under this title, teachers were asked to give their

opinions regarding personal responsibilities they assume for the present status of the school as well as the level of fulfillment of duties and responsibilities by administrators. Findings obtained as a result of the content analyses is given in Table 5.

When the data regarding roles and responsibilities assumed by participants as individuals and the role of administrators with whom teachers are in a vertical relationship was analyzed; it was seen that participants have a negative point of view especially for the fulfillment of duties and responsibilities by administrators. Majority of teachers (25/30) describe administrators with negative adjectives like strict in documents, oppressive, discriminating etc.

"Administrators, whether employed by an exam or appointed, are quite happy with their chairs granted to them. They do not care about anything but their position. They want teachers to solve every kind of problem themselves and reflect no trouble to them (P11)".

While some of the teachers (13/30) who were asked to give their opinions about the fulfillment of responsibilities

**Table 4.** The analysis of teachers' views regarding intra-organizational interaction.

Theme	Code	Participant	F
Colleague attitude	Positive	Moderate, good, humanistic, sincere, respectful, sharing P1, P2, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P13, P14, P15, P16, P18, P21, P22, P24, P26, P28, P29, P30	19
	Negative	Indifferent, instable, sexist, ideological, selfish, subjective, rude P3, P6, P10, P11, P12, P17, P19, P20, P23, P25, P27	11
Perception of administrative attitude	Positive	Fair, witty, professional, cheerful, constructive, open-minded, successful, patient, idealist P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9, P14, P16, P19, P20, P23, P25, P26, P28, P29, P30	18
	Negative	Has no idea, aggressive, opponent, incompatible, angry, meek, marginal, unwanted, strict, distant, exhausted, hopeless, ordinary, self-seeking P2, P8, P10, P11, P12, P13, P15, P17, P18, P21, P22, P24, P27	12

**Table 5.** The analysis of teachers' views regarding the duties and roles assumed.

Theme	Code	Participant	F
Perception of administrator role	Positive	Adequate, responsible P1, P4, P9, P23, P25	5
	Negative	Strict in documents, unfair, careless, inadequate, close to criticism, oppressive, threatening, impatient, exclusionary, chair-lover, irresponsible, prejudiced, authoritative, discriminatory P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20, P21, P22, P24, P26, P27, P28, P29, P30	25
Perception of personal role regarding the present situation	Positive	Active, compromising, entrepreneurial, problem solver, advisor, responsible P3, P5, P7, P9, P10, P11, P13, P14, P15, P18, P21, P23, P24, P25, P27, P29, P30	17
	Negative	Isolated, neutral, insistent, indecisive, abrasive, reckless, unproductive P1, P2, P4, P6, P8, P12, P16, P17, P19, P20, P22, P26, P28	13

they assume within the school described themselves with negative adjectives like neutral, reckless etc., some (17/30) described themselves with positive adjectives like active, compromising etc.

“...I did my M.A. in educational administration and supervision. I also fulfilled my teaching responsibilities. I am a trade union member, so I try to take place in such processes on an opinion basis. I express my views in committee meetings. I also ask the union for help when a colleague of mine needs legal support (P7)”.

**Teachers' views on processes and organizational structure**

Under this title, teachers were asked to give their

opinions about the present structural status of the school organization of which they are a member; about their own future, the future of the schools they are working in and the future of the education system of which they have become a part. The findings obtained as a result of the content analyses are given in Table 6. When participant views regarding the perception of the organization they work in were analyzed, it was seen that only one participant expressed positive opinions, while others stated negative views regarding the present situation of the school they work in:

“I am satisfied with the present condition of my school. We are trying to increase students' academic achievement. Administrators ask our opinions on every subject. I feel lucky to be working in such a peaceful school environment... (P30)”.

**Table 6.** The analysis of teacher views in terms of organizational structure and process.

Theme	Code		Participant	F
Perception of the present situation of the organization (school)	Positive	Adequate	P30	1
	Negative	Administrational inadequacy, inadequacy of colleagues, equipment inadequacy, parents' insensitivity, lack of infrastructure, inadequate curriculum, political uncertainties, economical problems, lack of empathy	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20, P21, P22, P23, P24, P25, P26, P27, P28, P29, P30	29
Perception of the condition of the organization (school) in the future	Positive	Optimistic, can develop, can improve	P4, P5, P9, P11, P13, P15, P18, P21, P22, P23, P24, P25, P27	13
	Negative	Neutral, cynic, pessimistic, expectation of politicization, stable, uncertainty	P1, P2, P3, P6, P7, P8, P10, P12, P14, P16, P17, P19, P20, P26, P28, P29, P30	17
Perception of Personal Future	Positive	Optimistic, advance in the career, career development	P2, P3, P4, P5, P9, P10, P11, P13, P15, P21, P23, P24, P25, P26, P27, P30	15
	Negative	Neutral, pessimistic, stable, uncertainty	P1, P6, P7, P8, P12, P14, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20, P22, P28, P29	15
Perception of the future of education system	Positive	Can improve, development, progress	P3, P5, P9	3
	Negative	Neutral, cynic, pessimistic, expectation of politicization, stable, uncertainty, chaotic	P1, P2, P4, P6, P7, P8, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20, P21, P22, P23, P24, P25, P26, P27, P28, P29, P30	27

"To start with, our classes are too crowded and the number of teachers is not sufficient. Counselling service falls short of guiding students. We also encounter security problems and we don't feel safe. Our school lacks basic needs: A library, a laboratory, a studio, and computers are not enough. These are essential needs as air, water and food for our school where a full-day education is given, and should be met in a short time." (P16)

When views of the participants, who expressed their opinions about the present condition of their schools, were analyzed; it was seen that there are teachers who have optimistic points of view (13/30) although the majority (17/30) used pessimistic expressions regarding the future of their schools:

"The present condition as well as the future of the school seems dark to me. With this understanding of education, I think all schools are in a similar darkness. I'd like to go on teaching my students 1-4<sup>th</sup> grade and go to another school because nothing changes; at least I will be in a different place." (P10)

"A better education could be provided by creating a safe

education environment and supplying the missing equipment." (P25)

Half of the teachers, who were asked to give their opinions about their personal future expectations, expressed pessimistic views, while the other half mentioned that they are optimistic on their expectations.

"By every passing year, I want to improve myself, learn new things and share my experiences with people. I think I have the energy to do all these." (P25)

"Unfortunately, I don't think I will be in a better position in the future in an education environment where merit is not considered. I also don't believe that I can change things in a better way (P29)".

It was determined that majority of the teachers (27/30), who were asked for their opinions regarding the future of education system, have pessimistic expectations of future:

"The education system of our country is terrible. It is an aimless system which operates by trial and error. Therefore, the quality of our education system is low (P19)".



"...The education system is tried to be formed by trial and error. Unfortunately, this trial and error work is a constantly ongoing process. It never ends. System changes, which are not suitable for the structure, values, socio-cultural characteristics of the society and country, and physical condition and feasibility of the school are presented with 'a fait accompli' without preparing a sufficient substructure. Before we get used to something new or when we are used to it, new changes are being made. Teachers are in a situation that we call 'learned helplessness'... (P21)".

## DISCUSSION

In this study, which is done to analyze organizational cynicism level of teachers working at schools in the organizational sense, views of the participants were analyzed in two dimensions:

1. In the quantitative dimension, the views were analyzed under four factors;

- (a) Alienation from the institution being worked
- (b) Factors lowering performance
- (c) A negative attitude towards the school
- (d) Participation of the employees in implementing decisions.

2. In the qualitative dimension, the views were analyzed in terms of the

- (a) Interactions that came out of the relations formed with others
- (b) Duties assumed and
- (c) Organizational structure and processes.

As a result of the analysis of findings, which were obtained from the descriptive analyses done in the quantitative dimension, on the basis of factors, it was determined that the organizational cynicism levels of teachers are low. When the results that are obtained from the sub-dimensions; alienation from the institution being worked ( $2.50 \pm 0.42$ ); factors lowering performance ( $2.90 \pm 0.50$ ); a negative attitude towards the school ( $1.94 \pm 0.48$ ); participation of the employees in implementing decisions ( $2.29 \pm 0.53$ ) were analyzed with participant views on interactions that came out of the relations formed with others in the organizational sense in the qualitative dimension, it can be said that the results are consistent.

It was seen that majority of the participants (19/30) stated words like "moderate, good, humanistic, compatible, sincere, respectful and sharing", which denotes that they find their colleagues' attitude positive towards themselves. However, when the participants were asked

about the perception of administrators for them, it was seen that there were positive expressions, but the negative ones like "aggressive, opponent, incompatible, angry, meek, marginal, unwanted, strict, distant, exhausted, hopeless, ordinary and self-seeking" were uttered much more. For this situation, it can be said that there is a difference in terms of perception between colleagues with whom a horizontal relation is established and the administrators with whom they have a superior-subordinate relationship. Participants pointed out that situations created by superiors like "no appreciation for success" can cause cynic behaviors, which were also put forth in Oki (2013) research. When considered with Andersson's findings (1996) that relations with administrators are triggering, factors which provide a basis for cynicism on an interactional level can lead to cynicism within the organization.

It was seen that participants, who were asked for their views regarding the fulfillment level of works and responsibilities by administrators and the level of their effect on the present condition of the school, have a negative perception of the administrator role. It is also striking that they used words like "strict in documents, unfair, careless, inadequate, close to criticism, oppressive, threatening, impatient, exclusionary, chair-lover, irresponsible, prejudiced, authoritative and discriminatory". When this finding is handled with Cartwright and Holmes (2006) comment; "when administrators do not establish relations with employees that rests on empathy, an organizational environment which can cause cynicism is formed", it can be said that a negative perception of administrators has a high chance to create cynicism. Moreover, when frequently used words which indicate the perception of administrators such as "unfair, authoritative, discriminatory and exclusionary", are considered with Huseman et al. (1987) justice sensitivity and its relation to cynicism, it can be said that relations with administrators who exhibit unfair behaviors has a potential to create cynicism (Reichers et al., 1997).

Participants, who were asked for their opinions regarding personal duties and responsibilities, used positive words like "active, compromising, entrepreneurial, problem solver, advisor and responsible" as well as negative ones like "isolated, neutral, insistent, indecisive, abrasive, reckless and unproductive". It is put forth in Watson, Clark and Tellegen (1988) research that cynicism shows itself in situations of dissatisfaction, trouble and fear. Also, as stated in Andersson research findings (1996), these situations strengthen the probability for cynicism to become more apparent in the organization.

The conclusions drawn from participants' views regarding organizational structure as well as their opinions for the present and future condition are as follows:

1. They stated negative views for the present condition of

their schools. In the analysis of these views, factors like “administrational inadequacy, inadequacy of colleagues, equipment inadequacy, parents’ insensitivity, lack of infrastructure, inadequate curriculum, political uncertainties, economical problems and lack of empathy come to the forefront.

2. Participants whose perception for the future condition of the organization was analyzed mostly used negative expressions. In the analysis of these views, words like “pessimistic, cynic, expectation of politicization, stable and uncertainty” stand out.

3. When asked about their personal expectations for the future, they exhibited a more positive approach and highlighted elements like “optimism, advance in the career and career development”.

4. The positive approach towards the personal future left its place to negative expectations when it came to views for the future of the education system.

Here, factors like “neutral, cynic, pessimistic, expectation of politicization, stable, uncertainty and chaotic” come to the forefront. The results of the qualitative research are consistent with the results obtained in the sub-dimension of quantitative analysis, participation of teachers in the implementation of decisions, which could be treated in relation to the organizational structure. These findings are parallel to the results of the research done by Yetim and Ceylan (2011).

Although more positive points of view were in the forefront regarding personal future, participants also had pessimistic expectations about the organizational change and future of the education system; this situation could be evaluated in the cynicism type where situational factors are the cause when the cynicism classification put forth by Dean, Brandes and Dharwadkar (1998) taken into consideration. This type of cynicism is possibly occupational-oriented, and this situation can be overcome by managing administrative processes in an efficient way.

The fact that participants had a positive attitude in their views for personal expectations shows that they have no problem regarding self-respect, and that they do not let negative situations to affect their future expectations. Self-respect is a concept that is about the answers given to the questions of what other people’s opinions are for the self, what weaknesses or strengths the person has as an individual, and how his/her relation is to other people (Gilroy, 2004). Individuals who don’t have positive opinions about themselves have low self-respect levels. Generally, these individuals show strong reactions to possible violations and adopt a defensive approach (Andersson, 1996). It could be said that these individuals have a tendency to develop a cynic attitude.

The literature review shows that cynicism can be manageable within the organization considering the administration style which is an important factor in the

rise of cynicism (Kanter and Mirvis, 1989; Reichers et al., 1997; Dean et al., 1998; Nafei and Kaifi, 2013). However, when the findings of this study was analyzed, it can be said that the school environment holds the conditions to lead to cynicism, and this situation is not well-managed by the school administrators. Many factors can be specified to take place among factors that cause cynicism; to illustrate, teachers do not have an appropriate setting to involve in decision-making processes actively, teacher contribution is ignored in education policy-making processes, there is a gap between organizational aims and individual expectations, administrators are not chosen by a merit-based and transparent approach etc. Of all these factors, lack of organizational support establishes a ground for cynicism, which was also supported by teacher views in the qualitative dimension. This finding is in parallel to the results of Kasalak and Aksu (2014) research in which the relation of perception of organizational support to organizational cynicism was analyzed.

Each phase of education needs to be considered as an ethical effort, so each individual shaping the education process must have ethical values (Nair and Kamalanabhan, 2010b). Professional ethics can generally be defined as seeing the job as an internalized value or a cultural norm which forms the basis for considering the effort for doing a good job valuable (Linz and Chu, 2013). It can be said that individuals who have a low level of professional ethics compared to those who have a high level, have a bigger chance to develop cynic tendencies when it comes to organizational violations.

For instance, it was brought forward in Kanter and Mirvis (1989) study that employees who have a low faith in professional ethics believe that share of rewards are not fair. Individuals who have professional ethics can show their intention of working for the common good to their colleagues by the relations they form with them (Horton, 2004). Yet, if the communication in the organization is not based on an ethical basis, it can give rise to cynic tendencies (Dean et al., 1998; Nair and Kamalanabhan, 2010).

## CONCLUSION

In other words, it can be said that organizational cynicism feeds on unethical conduct and communication problems. An ethical communication can be explained as the exhibition of sincerity regarding communication which is based on mutual ethical values (Bakker, 2007). Ethical communication is affected by many factors like the decision-making process which defines the relations within the organization, administration style, colleague relations, superior-subordinate relations and informal group dynamics.

Cynicism is closely related to the type and size of the

effect of the factors on relations. Unethical attitudes of administrators towards teachers can cause negative feelings such as frustration and anger. Such negative feelings are likely to create cynicism by causing lack of confidence in others in the organization, poor performance, job dissatisfaction, reduction in the level of organizational commitment, and an increase in intention to quit (Dean et al., 1998; Abraham, 2000; Bernerth et al., 2007; Watt and Piotrowski, 2008; Byrne and Hochwarter, 2008; Chiaburu et al., 2013). Based on these findings in the research, the following suggestions can be developed:

1. Forming an organizational culture that is based on ethical values and that promotes justice in the school can prevent cynic tendencies. Teachers whose expectations are met, views are received and who involves in decision-making processes will have a low level of organizational cynicism.
2. Studies that can develop collaboration, support and faith among teachers can be done in the school organization.
3. Periodical in-service trainings can be given to teachers so that they can become aware of the negative conditions (that is having internal locus of control) which could also stem from them rather than ignoring their own share in the problems and highlighting external reasons.
4. It should be aimed to raise teacher candidates as individuals who are self-aware, accept themselves as they are, know what their weaknesses and strengths are and have a high level of self-respect.
5. Workshops on ethics can be organized to make teachers become individuals who are more focused on gains of professional development instead of financial ones.
6. The population of this study was restricted with teachers. Certain generalizations can be made by involving school administrators in the population of the study. In addition to these, a research which enables a comparison between public and private school teachers can be designed.

## Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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