

Investigation of Teacher Perception Levels of Organizational Cynicism and Organizational Loneliness

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This research was conducted to determine the organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness perception levels of teachers in the distance education process. In the research, it was tried to determine whether the opinions of the teachers differed significantly according to gender, branch, marital status and professional seniority. In this context, the relational survey model was preferred as the research model. The population of the research consists of 3735 teachers working in Edirne province in the 2020-2021 academic year. The sample of the study consists of 324 teachers selected by easily accessible sampling method. Organizational Cynicism Scale and Loneliness at Work Scale were used to collect data. Descriptive statistics were made on the collected data. As a result of the research, it was determined that teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism in the distance education process differed significantly according to gender, branch and professional seniority variables, but did not differ significantly according to the marital status variable. It was determined that teachers' organizational loneliness perceptions differed significantly according to gender, marital status and branch variables, but did not differ significantly according to professional seniority variable. It has been determined that there is a positive and moderate relationship between teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness. Organizational cynicism was found to be a significant predictor of organizational loneliness. As a result of the research, the importance of supporting teachers' organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness perceptions with qualitative studies was emphasized especially in terms of better understanding in the distance education process.

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Keywords: Teacher, organizational cynicism, organizational loneliness.

INTRODUCTION

People who cannot lead their lives alone tend to form organizations together with other individuals with different qualifications in order to achieve their goals. Organizations are structures which are established with the aim of achieving common goals and by the coming together of at least two people. All activities in organizations depend on individuals. Although the concept of cynicism is considered important in many different disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, psychology and politics, its importance continues to increase in terms of management sciences (Yıldız, 2013). Historically, in the cynical philosophy which emerged in Ancient Greece in 500 BC, individuals do not accept social rules but rather adopt natural rules. This philosophy is accepted as the origin of the concept of cynicism (Mantere & Martinsuo, 2001).

The idea of seeing people as individuals who only think of their own interests and always put these interests above all else has emerged as cynicism (Andersson & Bateman, 1997). Cynicism is the situation of people who see negativities, have a pessimistic perspective on these features, and use this perspective as a tool, without caring about other people (Tokgöz & Yılmaz, 2008). A cynical person is one who belittles another, looks for his faults and does not believe in his sincerity (De Bakker, 2006). The concept of cynicism is a notion which expresses the combination of pessimism, doubt, distrust and disbelief. Cynical individuals criticize everything and constantly seek fault (Yıldız, 2013). Organizational behavior such as cynicism is based on the determination of all behaviors which affect the performance of individuals and organizations positively or negatively (Greiling, 2007). Cynicism, which arises from situations experienced by individuals, can also occur frequently in organizations (Dean et al., 1998). Being angry, insecure and pessimistic towards employees, managers or other elements within an organization are examples of cynical behavior (Andersson, 1996).

Cynical behavior in organizations can cause distrust towards the organization, negative attitudes, reduced commitment, alienation from work, low performance, decreased motivation and organizational loneliness (Wanous et al., 2000). When these behavioral situations affect the employees of an organization, a resistance arises against the management and other employees (Kannan-Narasimhan & Lawrence, 2012).

According to the relevant literature, organizational cynicism can be caused by individual and organizational factors. Individual factors are demographic characteristics such as gender, age, educational status, marital status and income level arising from the characteristics of the individual, and psychosocial characteristics such as personality and temperament (Deveci, 2018). Organizational factors which cause cynicism in institutions

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are organizational injustice, lack of communication and violation of the psychological contract (Pelit & Pelit, 2014).

Organizational cynicism is three-dimensional for those working in organizations. The first dimension is the cognitive cynicism dimension, which refers to the opinions of the employees about the dishonesty of the organization. The second dimension is the dimension of affective cynicism, which includes negative feelings towards other employees and the organization. The third dimension is the behavioral dimension which emerges as a result of the cognitive and affective dimensions (Dean et al., 1998).

Although individuals who are cynical in organizations prioritize their own interests, they can negatively affect other employees and render the organization dysfunctional (Kart, 2015:75). When employees in organizations are exposed to organizational cynicism over an extended period, they might suffer undesirable situations and heavy losses as a result of these situations. Moreover, the dominance of the organization and the sustainability of the organization can be negatively affected (Nous, 2007).

In order to reduce cynicism in organizations, the participation of employees in the decisions which concern them should be ensured, employees should be informed about the work to be done, communication should be prioritized, mistakes should be minimized and time should be used effectively (Reichers et al., 1997).

Loneliness occurs when an individual feels unhappy and suffers as a result of not being able to adapt to his or her environment (Geçtan, 1999). Individuals who experience loneliness move away from their environment and experience uneasiness due to the problems which they encounter (Wright, 2005). When people who experience loneliness have difficulties in establishing social relationships, they might also have difficulty in accepting this situation (De Jong & Gierveld, 1987).

Loneliness manifests as emotional and social loneliness. Emotional loneliness refers to the inability to establish closeness and trust, and the occurrence of emotional problems in relationships. Social loneliness is the feeling of not belonging to a group and not being able to establish social relations (Weiss, 1973). Although people are social beings with an innate sense of belonging, loneliness arises when these needs are not met (Sagan & Miller, 2019). Loneliness is a subject which has been studied psychologically, but studies on organizational loneliness are lacking (Lam & Lau, 2012).

Organizational loneliness, unlike the feeling of individual loneliness, occurs when individuals have difficulty in establishing relationships in business life and cannot communicate (Kayaalp & Özdemir, 2019). Organizational loneliness can arise in negative situations when the business expectations of an individual do not match those of other employees (Kaplan, 2011). Organizational loneliness, similar to social loneliness, can occur in the form of an individual's inability to socialize in business life and not be included in any groups. In addition, it can be seen as emotional deprivation which occurs in the form of an individual's inability to express himself/herself and experiences stress in relationships (Doğan et al., 2009). These negativities in organizations will increase stress and cause a decrease in performance. An employee whose performance decreases can feel unsuccessful because s/he is not efficient. This sense of failure can also cause organizational loneliness (Karaduman, 2013).

In the literature, organizational loneliness is generally associated with variables such as gender, age, marital status, education level, seniority, salary, geographical location of the workplace, superior/subordinate relationships, low family support, the number of employees in the workplace and the level of competition among organizations (Akgül, 2020). Understanding the reflections of organizational loneliness on the organization is critical for several reasons. For example, low or no social interactions of employees in an organization can lead to various negative possibilities such as low social support perceptions, a loss of the sense of belonging, and the lack of identification (Akduman, 2020).

Research on organizational loneliness mostly focuses on organizational structure. In educational organizations, teachers might experience organizational loneliness when they do not receive the support which they expect from their managers and colleagues. This, in turn, can lead to negative consequences and affect the quality of education (Silard & Wright, 2022).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' perception levels related to organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness. This was examined through the following research questions:

1. What is the level of teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness?
2. Do teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness differ significantly according to gender, marital status, school level and years of teaching experience?

3. Is there a relationship between teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness?

4. Are teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism a significant predictor of organizational loneliness?

Teachers are the cornerstone of educational organizations and play key roles in the realization of the purpose of educational organizations in this respect. This situation raises expectations on teachers. It is thought that teachers' behavior in respect of this expectation will greatly affect their attitude towards the organization. In addition to teachers' perspectives on the organization, the effect of the distance education process, which has been introduced more frequently in recent years and particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, on educational organizations has revealed the necessity of examining teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness.

METHOD

This section is organized under the following headings: the research model, the research participants, the data collection tools, data analysis and research ethics.

The Research Model

In this study, the relational survey model, which is one of the general survey model types from quantitative research designs, was employed. Relational screening models are used to determine the existence and degree of variation between two or more variables and to obtain clues about causality (Büyüköztürk et al., 2008; Karasar, 2010). In this study, the relationship between organizational cynicism perceived by teachers and their organizational loneliness levels was determined by the relational survey model.

Research Participants

The population of the research consisted of 3735 teachers working in Edirne province in the 2020-2021 academic year. The sample was selected using the easily accessible sampling method, which is one of the non-random sampling methods. In this form of sampling, data are collected from an overarching population in the fastest and most economical way (Malhotra, 2004; Zikmund, 2007). In this context, the sample of participants in the research consisted of 324 teachers. Demographic information about the participating teachers is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Groups</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender	Female	170	52.47
	Male	154	47.53
Marital status	Single	128	39.51
	Married	196	60.49
School level	Pre-school	77	23.77
	Primary school	85	26.23
	Secondary school	162	50.00
Years of teaching experience	0-5 years	98	30.25
	6-10 years	85	26.23
	11-19 years	70	21.60
	20 years +	71	21.91
Total		324	100

As Table 1 shows, 170 (52.47%) of the teachers were female and 154 (47.53%) were male; 128 (39.51%) of them were single and 196 (60.49%) were married. Of the teachers' school level, 77 (23.77%) were pre-school teachers, 85 (26.23%) were primary school teachers and 162 (50%) were secondary school teachers. In terms of their years of teaching, 98 (30.25%) had taught for 0-5 years, 85 (26.23%) for 6-10 years, 70 (21.60%) for 11-19 years, and 71 (21.91%) had 20 years or more years of teaching experience.

Data Collection Tools

The Organizational Cynicism Scale was employed: this scale was developed by Brandes et al. (1999) and a Turkish adaptation of the scale was made and its validity and reliability were established by Kalağan (2009). In that adaptation, the Organizational Cynicism Scale was determined as a total of thirteen items and three sub-dimensions. The internal consistency coefficients of the developed scale were calculated as Cognitive Dimension at .91, Affective Dimension at .94, Behavioral Dimension at .86 and General Scale at .93. The

internal consistency coefficient values determined in this current study were Cognitive Dimension at .90, Affective Dimension at .90, Behavioral Dimension at .83 and General Scale at .90.

Also used was the Loneliness at Work Scale developed by Wright et al. (2006) with a Turkish validity and reliability study conducted by Doğan et al. (2009). The Loneliness at Work Scale consists of sixteen items and two sub-dimensions. Dogan et al. (2009) calculated the internal consistency coefficients of the scale as .87 for the Emotional Deprivation Dimension, .83 for the Social Companionship Dimension and .91 for the overall scale. The internal consistency coefficients determined in this current study were .88 for the Emotional Deprivation Dimension, .87 for the Social Companionship Dimension and .93 for the overall scale.

Analysis of the Data

Before the analysis, the data set was examined to determine whether it met the normality assumption parameters. In order for data to be normally distributed, the skewness and kurtosis values should both be ± 2 (Cameron, 2004). Since the skewness and kurtosis values for this data set were between +1.63 and -1.79, normality was assumed.

Descriptive statistical calculations were carried out first. In order to determine the organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness perception levels of the teachers, arithmetical averages were examined. When interpreting arithmetical averages, a range of 1.00-1.79 is quite low, 1.80-2.59 is low, 2.60-3.39 is medium, 3.40-4.19 is high and 4.20-5.00 is quite high (Özdamar, 2002).

An independent groups t-test was used to analyse significant differences between the variables of gender and marital status and the participants' perception levels of organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether there was a significant difference according to the school level and years of teaching experience. A Scheffe test, which is a more sensitive measure than other similar tests, was used to determine the differences between groups. Finally, Pearson's correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationship between the teachers' perception levels of organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness and then a regression test was conducted to reveal the extent to which organizational cynicism perceptions predicted organizational loneliness perceptions.

Ethical Procedures

Prior to the collection of the research data, the approval of the Inonu University's Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research Ethics Committee was sought and obtained; the approval was dated 05/07/2021 and numbered E.61621. The research project commenced after receiving the decision that the research was ethically appropriate.

RESULTS

The findings showed the relationship between teachers' perception levels of organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness in relation to the variables of gender, marital status, school level and years of teaching.

Results Regarding the Teachers' Perception Levels of Organizational Cynicism and Organizational Loneliness

First, the teachers' perception levels of organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness were examined by considering each dimension separately. The results are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Results Regarding Perception Levels of Organizational Cynicism and Organizational Loneliness

Scale and Dimensions	n	\bar{x}	ss
Organizational Cynicism	324	3.54	.31
Cognitive Dimension	324	3.62	.42
Affective Dimension	324	3.42	.42
Behavioral Dimension	324	3.29	.55
Organizational Loneliness	324	3.47	.30
Emotional Deprivation	324	3.33	.30
Social Companionship	324	3.75	.37

Table 2 shows that the average organizational cynicism perception was at a high level at 3.54. The average organizational loneliness perception was also found to be at a high level of 3.47.

Results of Teachers' Perceptions of Organizational Cynicism and Organizational Loneliness According to the Four Variables

An independent groups t-test was conducted to determine whether the teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness differed significantly according to the variables of gender and marital status, and the results can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. T-Test Results of Teachers' Perceptions of Organizational Cynicism and Organizational Loneliness by Gender and Marital Status

Scale	Variable		n	\bar{x}	ss	t	df	p
Organizational Cynicism	Gender	Female	170	3.70	.74	.66	322	.00*
		Male	154	3.38	.65			
	Marital status	Single	128	3.74	.85	1.87	322	.58
		Married	196	3.34	.81			
Organizational Loneliness	Gender	Female	170	3.81	.52	.64	322	.01*
		Male	154	3.13	.74			
	Marital status	Single	128	3.77	.59	1.47	322	.00*
		Married	196	3.17	.69			

*p< .05

As can be seen in Table 3, the teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism differed statistically according to gender (p<.05) but they did not differ according to marital status (p>.05). Female teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism were at a higher level than those of male teachers.

Table 3 also shows that the teachers' perceptions of organizational loneliness differed significantly according to gender and marital status (p<.05). It was found that female teachers and single teachers had higher organizational loneliness perceptions than male teachers and married teachers respectively.

An ANOVA was employed to evaluate whether the teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism differed significantly according to the variables of school level and years of teaching experience, and the results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. ANOVA Results of the Teachers' Perceptions of Organizational Cynicism by School Level and Years of Teaching

Variable	Groups	n	\bar{x}	ss	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean of Squares	F	p	Diff.
School level	Pre-school (1)	77	3.88	.80	Inter G.	2.25	3	1.11	1.92	.01*	1-3
	Primary school (2)	85	3.40	.78	In G.	273.64	320	.25			
	Secondary school (3)	162	3.38	.80	Total	226.02					
Years of teaching	0-5 years (1)	98	3.25	.84	Inter G.	3.97	3	1.59	2.74	.02*	1-4
	6-10 years (2)	85	3.33	.59	In G.	189.96	320	.24			
	11-19 years (3)	70	3.45	.75	Total	242.47					
	20 years +(4)	71	3.80	.72							

*p< .05

Table 4 shows that the teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism differed significantly according to the variables of school level and years of teaching (p<.05). According to the school level variable, there was a statistically significant difference between secondary-school teachers and primary and pre-school teachers in favor of secondary-school teachers. According to the variable of years of teaching experience, there was a statistically significant difference between teachers with 20 years and more experience and teachers with 0-5 years experience in favor of the more experienced teachers. The difference between the groups was determined by the Scheffe test.

An ANOVA test was also conducted to test whether the teachers' perceptions of organizational loneliness differed significantly according to the variables of school level and years of teaching experience. The results obtained are given in Table 5.

Table 5. ANOVA Results of Teachers' Perceptions of Organizational Loneliness by School Level and Years of Teaching

Variable	Groups	N	\bar{x}	ss	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean of Squares	F	p	Diff.
School level	Pre-school (1)	77	3.33	.58	Inter G.	.47	3	.27			
	Primary school (2)	85	3.14	.57	In G.	139.33	320	.27	.58	.02*	2-3
	Secondary school (3)	162	3.74	.49	Total	140.78					
Years of Teaching	0-5 years (1)	98	3.40	.85	Inter G.	.94	3	.32			
	6-10 years (2)	85	3.48	.75	In G.	128.74	320	.40	.85	.46	-
	11-19 years (3)	70	3.49	.71	Total	140.70					
	20 years +(4)	71	3.51	.74							

*p< .05

Table 5 shows that the teachers’ perceptions of organizational loneliness differed significantly according to the school level (p<.05) and this difference was in favor of the secondary school teachers between them and the primary school teachers. The difference between the groups was determined by the Scheffe test. It was also determined that perceptions of organizational loneliness did not differ significantly according to the variable of years of teaching experience (p>.05).

The results of the Pearson’s Correlation analysis which was conducted to determine the direction and level of the relationship between teachers’ organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness perceptions are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Results Regarding the Relationship Between the Teachers’ Perceptions of Organizational Cynicism and Organizational Loneliness

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Cognitive Dimension	1						
2. Affective Dimension	.745*	1					
3. Behavioral Dimension	.588*	.582*	1				
4. Organizational Cynicism	.578*	.611*	.639*	1			
5. Emotional Deprivation	.842*	.955*	.821*	.456*	1		
6. Social Companionship	.557*	.336*	.333*	.622*	.528*	1	
7. Organizational Loneliness	.463*	.343*	.345*	.429*	.327*	.751*	1

*p< .05

Table 6 shows that a positive and moderate relationship was found between the teachers’ perceptions of organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness (r=.429; p<.05). When the dimensions of the scales are examined individually, it can be seen that similar results were obtained.

In addition, a regression test was conducted to determine the predictors of teachers’ perceptions of organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness and the results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Regression Test Results Regarding the Predicting Power of Teachers’ Perceptions of Organizational Cynicism on Perceptions of Organizational Loneliness

Independent variable	Dependent variable	B	S E.	R	t	p	R ²
Organizational Cynicism	Organizational Loneliness	.420	.152	.395	7.65	.02*	.156

*p< .05

As can be seen in Table 7, organizational cynicism was found to be a significant predictor of organizational loneliness (R=.395; R²=.156; p<.05). The result shows that the teachers’ perceptions of organizational cynicism explain 16% of their organizational loneliness perceptions.

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

The data for this study were collected during a period when teachers continued to provide both distance education and face-to-face education. The findings showed that the organizational cynicism perception levels of the teachers who participated in the research were high.

The literature review showed that there has been a great deal of variance across studies related to teachers’

perception levels of organizational cynicism. Some studies have shown cynicism perception levels to be low (Abaslı, 2018; Ayık, 2015; Demirtaş et al., 2016; Doğan & Uğurlu, 2014; Ergen & İnce, 2017; Helvacı & Çetin, 2012; Kahveci & Demirtaş, 2015; Sezgin, Nartgün & Kartal, 2013; Terzi & Derin, 2016; Yıldız, 2013), whereas others have found them to be moderate (Kalağan & Güzeller, 2010; Özgan et al., 2012; Sezgin, Nartgün & Kalay, 2014).

In the present study, it was found that the organizational cynicism perceptions of male and female teachers were different in that female teachers were more cynical than male teachers. In the literature, there are studies in which female teachers are more cynical at the affective level (Terzi & Derin, 2016) and otherwise have a similar perception of cynicism to male teachers (Doğan & Uğurlu, 2014; Ergen & İnce, 2017; Helvacı & Çetin, 2012; Kalağan & Güzeller, 2010; Sezgin, Nartgün & Kalay, 2014; Sezgin Nartgün & Kartal, 2013). According to the marital status of the teachers participating in the research, no significant difference was found in the perception levels of organizational cynicism. In some studies, in the literature, findings similar to this result have been reported (Ergen & İnce, 2017; Kalağan & Güzeller, 2010). Different results were found by Kahveci and Demirtaş (2015) who determined that the cynicism perception levels of teachers differed according to their marital status. The current study also found that teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism differed according to the level of the school in which they taught, and it can be said that the secondary-level teachers were more cynical than the primary and pre-school teachers. There are studies in the literature, however, which reported that teachers' perceptions of cynicism did not differ according to their school level (Ergen & İnce, 2017; Helvacı & Çetin, 2012).

The current study found that the organizational cynicism perception levels of the participating teachers differed according to their years of teaching. This result is compatible with similar research results reported in the literature (James, 2005; Kahveci & Demirtaş, 2015; Kalağan & Güzeller, 2010; Terzi & Derin, 2016). Accordingly, it can be said that the teachers in the current study with more experience of teaching were more cynical. On the other hand, some studies have reported that teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism did not differ according to the length of their teaching experience (Doğan & Uğurlu, 2014; Ergen & İnce, 2017; Sezgin Nartgün & Kartal, 2013). It was observed that the participating teachers had a high level of organizational loneliness perception. In the literature, there are studies in which teachers' perceptions of organizational loneliness were found to be both high (Özkan, 2019; Özkuk, 2017; Doğan et al., 2021) and low (Oğuz & Kalkan, 2014; Örenç, 2021; Sezen 2014; Sezgin, Nartgün & Demirer, 2012; Tabak & Argon, 2018). It was observed that the organizational loneliness levels of the participating teachers also differed according to their gender, and that the female teachers experienced more organizational loneliness. This result coincides with those of previous studies in which the organizational loneliness perception levels of male and female teachers were determined at different levels (Demirtaş & Haşit, 2016; Sezgin, Nartgün & Demirer, 2012). The findings also showed that single teachers participating in the research had higher organizational loneliness perceptions than married teachers. The perceptions of organizational loneliness differed between secondary school teachers and primary school teachers and secondary school teachers felt more alone at work than primary school teachers. However, some studies in the literature have shown that teachers' perceptions of organizational loneliness did not differ by school level (Demirtaş & Haşit, 2016; Oğuz & Kalkan, 2014). The present study also concluded that the organizational loneliness perception level of the participating teachers did not differ according to their years of teaching experience. This result is similar to those reported by Sezgin, Nartgün and Demirer (2012) and Yılmaz and Altınok (2009).

In this study, the relationship between teachers' organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness was examined. A moderate positive relationship was identified between the organizational cynicism perceptions of the teachers participating in the study and their perceptions of organizational loneliness. Organizational cynicism perception emerged as a significant predictor of organizational loneliness perception. In the literature, there are studies with similar results (Angın, 2019; Bakioğlu & Kiraz, 2019; Hoşgör & Cin, 2020; Kayaalp & Özdemir, 2020; Neto, 2006; Yoldaş & Salihoğlu, 2015). In the light of the results reported above, it is recommended that a qualitative research methodology could be designed to explore this issue, or that the research could be repeated with different sample groups in order to better understand the factors which cause teachers to experience organizational cynicism and organizational loneliness.

Declarations

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflicts of interest were disclosed by the author(s) with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

Ethics Approval

Prior to the collection of research data, ethics committee approval was obtained with the decision of Inonu University's Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research Ethics Committee dated 05/07/2021 and numbered E.61621. After the decision that the research was ethically appropriate, the research process was started.

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Research and Publication Ethics Statement

This study was approved by the research team's university ethics committee (Inonu University's Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research Ethics Committee) on 05/07/2021 with the number E.61621. Hereby, we as the authors consciously assure that for the manuscript " Investigation of Teacher Perception Levels of Organizational Cynicism and Organizational Loneliness" the following is fulfilled:

- This material is the authors' own original work, which has not been previously published elsewhere.
- The paper reflects the authors' own research and analysis in a truthful and complete manner.
- The results are appropriately placed in the context of prior and existing research.
- All sources used are properly disclosed.

Contribution Rates of Authors to the Article

The authors provide equal contribution to this work.

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