

# The Effect of Nurses' Perceptions of Organizational Support on Organizational Cynicism\*

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## Abstract

**Background:** Nurses who do not perceive enough organizational support may bear negative emotions against their administrators and institutions. Job performance and the quality of patient care can be affected substantially by nurses who have negative emotions and are not being supported. **Objectives:** This descriptive and correlational research was carried out to determine the effect of nurses' perceptions of organizational support on organizational cynicism. **Methods:** The study data were collected between January and March 2014 from 220 nurses who work at a university hospital. The data were collected using the Demographic Form, the Perceived Organizational Support Scale and the Organizational Cynicism Scale. Permissions from the owners of the scales, ethical board approval and permission from the institution were obtained before collecting data. The data were analyzed with a computer using frequency and percentage distributions, descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation analysis and simple linear regression analysis. **Results:** The organizational support perceptions of the nurses (Mean = 76.10 ± 15.94) and organizational cynicism levels (Mean=38.14 ± 9.26) were moderate. According to the simple linear regression, there is a negative, medium level and meaningful relation between perceived organizational support and organizational cynicism (R=.418, R2 = .175, p < 0.05). Perceived organizational support explains 18% of organizational cynicism. **Conclusion:** This study found that perceived organizational support reduced organizational cynicism and that organizational support negatively affect organizational cynicism. **Key Words:** Nursing, Nursing Personnel, Nursing Administration Research.

## Öz

### Hemşirelerin Örgütsel Destek Algısının Örgütsel Sinizm Üzerine Etkisi

**Giriş:** Yeterince örgütsel destek görmeyen hemşireler, yöneticilerine ve kurumlarına karşı olumsuz duygular taşıyabilir. İş performansı ve hasta bakımının kalitesi, olumsuz duyguları olan ve desteklenmeyen hemşireler tarafından önemli ölçüde etkilenebilir. **Amaç:** Bu tanımlayıcı ve korelasyonel araştırma, hemşirelerin örgütsel destek algılarının örgütsel sinizm üzerine etkisini belirlemek amacıyla yapılmıştır. **Yöntem:** Araştırma verileri Ocak ve Mart 2014 tarihleri arasında bir üniversite hastanesinde çalışan 220 hemşireden toplanmıştır. Veriler, Tanıtıcı Özellikler Formu, Algılanan Örgütsel Destek Ölçeği ve Örgütsel Sinizm Ölçeği kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Verilerin toplanmasından önce, ölçek sahiplerinden izinler, etik kurul onayı ve kurum izni alındı. Veriler, frekans ve yüzde dağılımları, tanımlayıcı istatistikler, Pearson korelasyon analizi ve basit doğrusal regresyon analizi kullanılarak değerlendirilmiştir. **Bulgular:** Araştırma verilerinin değerlendirilmesi sonucunda hemşirelerin örgütsel destek algıları ( $\bar{X} = 76.10 \pm 15.94$ ) ve örgütsel sinizm düzeyleri ( $\bar{X} = 38.14 \pm 9.26$ ) orta düzeyde saptanmıştır. Basit doğrusal regresyon analizi sonucuna göre, algılanan örgütsel destek ile örgütsel sinizm arasında negatif, orta düzeyde ve anlamlı bir ilişki (R = .418, R2 = .175, p < 0.05) olduğu ve algılanan örgütsel desteğin örgütsel sinizmin %18'ini açıkladığı belirlenmiştir. **Sonuç:** Bu çalışmada algılanan örgütsel desteğin örgütsel sinizmi olumsuz etkilediği ve algılanan örgütsel desteğin örgütsel sinizmi azalttığı ortaya çıkmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Hemşirelik, Hemşirelik Personeli, Hemşirelik Yönetimi Araştırması.

**Geliş tarihi:** 09.04.2018

**Kabul tarihi:** 01.02.2019

Organizations, especially in our century, are seeking new ways to retain qualified manpower to protect their competitive superiority. One of these approaches is making their workers feel important and valuable, while increasing their work effectiveness by backing them on all subjects, especially their jobs. This approach is also intended to reduce workers' negative feelings, thoughts and behaviors against institutions. One of the most important factors that retains employees and improves productivity is organizational support (1,2). Organizational support means that employees feel secure and know that the organization is supporting them (3).

Supportive organizations are the organizations that respect the employees' expectations and happiness. They provide productive work environments, consider creative ideas, suggestions and criticisms and put them in practice by allowing participation in decision making. They also have democratic management styles and create trustworthy work environment by behaving fairly and impartially (1,4).

They provide job security, enhance working conditions, maintain clear intra-organizational communication, reward success, create learning environment that support the development of their employees (5). Reducing disagreements and sources of stress, caring about complaints and dealing with problems face to face are other features of the supportive organizations. While finding solutions, making arrangements for employees and developing human resources policy, the managements of supportive organizations consider whether they support their employees or not (1).

Perception of organizational support is affected by age (3,6), gender, level of education (7), working hours, organizational justice, manager support, implementation of human resources (8) and the characters of the employees (1). Especially, appreciation, praising, creating opportunities for the development of employees, listening to employees, allowing them to take part in decision making, caring about their opinions and suggestions increase employees's perception of organizational support (4,8). Having a reward system, enhancing working conditions, creating promotion opportunities, paying

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fair salaries, providing job security, giving opportunities for education and development and providing social opportunities are the practices that increase perceptions of organizational support (8).

The confidence of employees who perceive organizational support increases (9) and develops their sense of responsibility, gets the to make more efforts (4,5) and practice good organizational citizenship (4). It helps the employees to be more creative, free and enterprising about their job (10,11) and perform better (4) so that their success can increase. It also reduces their stress and burn-out levels (7), lateness or not coming to the work and helps to achieve quality service (5,8,12,13). Perceived organizational support leads to job satisfaction, which is reflected employees' private lives and increases their life satisfaction (8), and when their organizational commitment increases the idea of quitting their jobs becomes less attractive (2,12).

It also affects employees' attitudes, behavior and performance positively, which plays a key role in the effectiveness and productivity of both employees and organizations (5,9). One attitude and behavior that is affected by organizational support is organizational cynicism (14). Organizational cynicism is defined as "negative and insecure attitudes towards the institution and managers" (15). Organizational cynicism, leads to lack confidence (16), to feel sameness, derision, anger, furiousness, disappointment (17), despair, doubt, uneasiness, alienation and humiliation in employees. They criticize their managers and think that they are not fair and honest. All these ideas and beliefs form cynicism's cognitive dimension, which leads to critical and derogatory behavior against institutions in the behavioral dimension (15,17). All these negative perceptions, attitudes and behaviors are debilitating for employees and prevent organizational development (18).

Employees with cynical attitudes cause negative results such as emotional problems, depression, insomnia, anger, resentment, furiousness, rage, tension, nervousness, doubt, job dissatisfaction, burnout, disobedience, reduced motivation and performance, breaks from or quitting jobs, unproductiveness and reduced loyalty (6,12,14,18-20).

It is thought that nurses who do not have enough organizational support can feed negative feelings towards their managers and institutions and this situation will affect the performance and patient care quality of nurses negatively. However, in the literature review, it was not come across to any study revealing the effect of nurses' perceived organizational support on organizational cynicism. Therefore, the need to reveal the current situation was felt and this study was carried out. This study is an original study because it is one of the first studies on nurses in this topic. It is thought that this study will contribute to both the nursing and social sciences literature on the subject and will be a guide for future research. At the same time, the results of the study will raise awareness about of the importance of organizational support in reducing organizational cynicism for nurse managers.

## Methods

### Aim and Design

This descriptive and correlational research was carried out to examine the effect of nurses' perceived organizational support on organizational cynicism.

### Research Questions

- What are the nurses' levels of perceived organizational support?
- What are the nurses' levels of organizational cynicism?
- Does perceived organizational support have an effect on organizational cynicism?

### Population and Sample

The nurses working in a university hospital in January-March 2014 formed the population. This hospital is one of the largest hospitals in Turkey with 1,000 nurses and 2,000 beds. All nurses who accepted to participate in the study without using the sampling method were included in the study. 300 nurses agreed to take part in the research were included in the scope of the study. However, 220 nurses filled the data collection tool. Of them, 49.1% were between the ages of 26-35, 96.4% were female, 58.6% were married and 82.3% have bachelor degrees. Of them, 85.5% worked as service nurses, 44.5% have worked for internal units, and 28.6% had job experience between 1-5 years. Of them, 36.4% had institutional experience between 1-5 years, 76.4% worked sometimes at day and sometimes at night, and 92.3% worked 40-50 hours weekly.

### Tools

The Demographic Form, the Organizational Support Scale and the Organizational Cynicism Scale were used in data collection.

**Demographic Form:** This form, prepared by the researchers, has ten questions about the nurses' personal and professional characteristics (age, gender, marital status, position, working unit etc.)

**Perceived Organizational Support Scale (POSS):** This scale was developed by Çobanoğlu and Derinbay (2016) (3). It has 29 items and three subdimensions. The educational support subdimension has nine items, the administrative support subdimension has nine items, and the justice subdimension has eleven items. The educational support is the support for work-related or vocational training and development of the employees. The administrative support is behaviors such as guiding, motivating, advocating, asking for ideas in work-related subjects. The justice subdimension includes the managers to act fairly towards its employees in workrelated issues. While the total and subdimension Cronbach alpha internal consistency indices of scale were found to be between 0.83-0.85 by Çobanoğlu and Derinbay (2016) (3), they were between 0.87-0.92 in this study. The five-point Likert scale scores statements as: (5) strongly agree, (4) agree, (3) undecided, (2) disagree and (1) strongly disagree. The scale is assessed by subdimension arithmetic averages. The higher the score, the more organizational support is indicated.

**Organizational Cynicism Scale (OCS):** This scale was developed by Brandes, Dharwadkar, and Dean (1999) (21) and translated into Turkish by Kasalak and Aksu (2014) (6). The scale has 13 items and three subdimensions. The cognitive subdimension has five items, the affective subdimension has four, and the behavioral subdimension has four. In the cognitive

dimension, there are expressions that include criticism, beliefs and opinions about practices and actions of institution or managers of the individual. The affective subdimension includes the employees' negative emotions related to the institution. The behavioral subdimension includes the behaviors they display in the institution with negative feelings of the individuals

While the total and subdimension Cronbach alpha internal consistency indices of scale were found to be between 0.86-0.94 by Kasalak and Aksu (2014) (6), they were between 0.79-0.94 in this study. The five-point Likert scale scores statements as: (5) strongly agree, (4) agree, (3) undecided, (2) disagree, (1) strongly disagree. The scale is assessed by subdimension arithmetic averages. The higher the score, the more organizational cynicism is indicated.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The researchers gave information about the research to all the accessible nurses and interviewed them. Data collection forms were given to 300 nurses who agreed to participate; however, only 240 out of the 300 forms were returned. Then data collection instruments were checked carefully, and 20 forms were excluded from the research for missing data. Therefore, data were assessed based on 220 forms. The return rate of the data collection forms was 73 %.

After transfer to computer, the data were assessed by a statistician with statistical packet programme. Frequencies and percentage distribution was used to evaluate the data about the descriptive characteristics of nurses. Mean and standard deviation values were used to determine perceived organizational support and organizational cynicism levels. Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between the perceived organizational support and organizational cynicism levels of nurses. In order to determine the effect of perceived organizational support on organizational cynicism, simple linear regression analysis was performed.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Permission to use the measurement scales was obtained from researchers who developed them. Before starting the research, approval was received from the university's ethics committee (Decision Number:10.06.2013). In addition, written permission was received from the institution where data were collected. The nurses were also informed, and their verbal consent was obtained during the data collection procedure.

### **Results**

The distribution of the nurses' perceived organizational support and their perceptions on organizational cynicism are shown in Table 1. In work-related issues, 38.2% of nurses think that they are only supported by the head nurse, 24.2% think that they are supported only by supervisor nurse, and 18.5% think that they are supported by both the head nurse and the supervisor nurse. Of them, 38.2% think that they are not supported by the administration in work-related issues.

Regarding organizational cynicism, 25.7% of the nurses have negative thoughts and feelings against executive nurses, 24.3% of the nurses have negative thoughts and feelings against other executives, and 50% of the nurses have negative thoughts and feelings against all executives and managers. On the other hand, 38.2% of the nurses do not have negative thoughts and feelings against management (Table 1).

**Table 1. Distribution of Nurses' Perceived Organizational Support and Perceptions on Organizational Cynicism (n=220)**

Nurses' perceived organizational support and opinions on organizational cynicism		n	%
Do you think that you are supported by managers on work related issues?	-Yes, I am supported.	136	61.8
	*I am supported only by the head nurse.	52	38.2
	*I am supported only by the supervisor nurse.	33	24.2
	*I am supported by both the head doctor and head nurse.	26	19.1
	* I am supported by both the head nurse and supervisor nurse.	25	18.5
	-No, I am not supported.	84	38.2
Do you have negative thoughts and feelings against the managers in your work place?	-Yes, I have negative thoughts and feelings against the managers.	136	61.8
	* I have negative thoughts and feelings against the executive nurses.	35	25.7
	* I have negative thoughts and feelings against the other executives.	33	24.3
	* I have negative thoughts and feelings against all executives and managers.	68	50.0
	- No, I do not have negative thoughts and feelings against the managers.	84	38.2

\* n and % values are calculated based on the nurses who responded affirmatively

**Table 2. Distribution of Nurses' Mean Scores on The POSS and OCS Subdimension**

Scales	Subdimension	n	Min	Max.	Mean	SD
Perceived Organizational Support Scale	-Educational Support	220	13	38	27.72	3.36
	-Administrative Support	220	9	43	21.95	6.61
	- Justice	220	11	55	26.42	8.32
	Total	220	41	131	76.10	15.94
Organizational Cynicism Scale	-Cognitive Cynicism	220	5	25	14.92	4.07
	-Affective Cynicism	220	4	20	11.00	3.90
	-Behavioral Cynicism	220	4	20	12.23	2.99
	Total	220	13	63	38.14	9.26

The distribution of the mean scores on the POSS and OCS subdimension (Table 2) show that the highest mean score on the POSS scale was for educational support (Mean = 27.72 ± 3.36), and the lowest mean score was for administrative support (Mean = 21.95 ± 6.61). On the OCS scale, the highest mean score was for cognitive cynicism (Mean = 14.92 ± 4.07), and the lowest mean score was for affective cynicism (Mean = 11.00 ± 3.90).

Correlation analysis was done to determine whether organizational support has an effect on organizational cynicism (Table 3), whether there is a meaningful relation between educational support and the subdimension of organizational cynicism. It was determined a negative, meaningful, but weak relations between the subdimension of administrative support and cognitive cynicism (r = -.389, p = .000) and affective cynicism (r = -.363, p = .000) and behavioral cynicism (r = -.317, p = .000).

**Table 3. Correlations Between the Subscales of The POSS and OCS**

		Educational Support	Administrative Support	Justice	Perceived Organizational Support Total	Cognitive Cynicism	Affective Cynicism	Behavioural Cynicism	Organizational Cynicism Total
1- Educational Support	<i>r</i>	1							
2- Administrative Support	<i>r</i>	.345	1						
	<i>p</i>	.000*							
3- Justice	<i>r</i>	.365	.854	1					
	<i>p</i>	.000*	.000*						
4-Perceived Organizational Support Total	<i>r</i>	.545	.934	.953	1				
	<i>p</i>	.000*	.000*	.000*					
5-Cognitive Cynicism	<i>r</i>	-.130	-.389	-.400	-.398	1			
	<i>p</i>	.055**	.000*	.000*	.000*				
6-Affective Cynicism	<i>r</i>	-.127	-.363	-.348	-.359	.587	1		
	<i>p</i>	.060**	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*			
7-Behavioural Cynicism	<i>r</i>	-.079	-.317	-.262	-.285	.478	.631	1	
	<i>p</i>	.242**	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*		
8-Organizational Cynicism Total	<i>r</i>	-.136	-.426	-.407	-.418	.842	.883	.799	1
	<i>p</i>	.044**	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	

\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p > .05$

It found a negative, meaningful, but weak relation between the subdimension of justice and cognitive cynicism ( $r = -.400$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and affective cynicism ( $r = -.348$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and behavioral cynicism ( $r = -.262$ ,  $p = .000$ ) (Table 3).

The relation between total perceived organizational support and organizational cynicism indicated a negative, meaningful, but weak relation between total perceived organizational support and cognitive cynicism ( $r = -.398$ ,  $p = .000$ ), affective cynicism ( $r = -.359$ ,  $p = .000$ ), behavioral cynicism ( $r = -.285$ ,  $p = .000$ ) (Table 3).

These findings show that there is a relation between perceived administrative support and justice and organizational cynicism. The more justice and organizational support is provided, the less organizational cynicism arises.

According to the simple linear regression for the effect of perceived organizational support on organizational cynicism, there is a negative, medium level and meaningful relation between perceived organizational support and organizational cynicism ( $R = .418$ ,  $R^2 = .175$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 4. The Results of Simple Linear Regression for The Effect of Perceived Organizational Support on Organizational Cynicism**

	Variation	B	Standard Error	Beta	t	p
Organizational Cynicism	Perceived	56.618	2.778		20.382	.000
	Organizational support	-.243	.036	-.418	-6.795	.000
	$R = .418$	$R^2 = .175$				
	$F_{(1,218)} = 46.174$	$p = .000$				

According to results of the standardized regression coefficient and t test, perceived organizational support has little effect on the attitude of cynicis. It explains 18% of organizational cynicism (Table 4).

### Discussion

The nurses' mean scores on the organizational support scale are closer to the median, and this is in line with these results (Table 2). This indicates that nurses' perceived organizational support is not at the desired level. Since this study's participants were young and lacked both professional and institutional experience, they did not experience sufficient organizational support. Another study showed that health care workers have a medium level of perceived organizational support. Health care workers with 11-30 years of professional experience have higher levels of perceived organizational support than workers with 1-10 years of professional experience. Similarly, 40 years and older health workers were found to have higher perceived organizational support (22). These findings in the literature support this research's findings.

The nurses' responses about organizational cynicism showed that approximately more than half of the nurses have negative thoughts and feelings against the managers of the institutions where they work (Table 1). Their average scores on the subscales of organizational cynicism scale are closer to median, which also supports these findings (Table 2). It is undesirable for a majority of nurses to be in negative feelings and thoughts against the administration. However, nurses have thoughts of cognitive cynicism (Table 2), and it is pleasing that these thoughts can be positively modified before they become feelings and behaviors. Most of the nurses are young, new to the institution and did not find what they expected from work life. For this reason they have cognitive cynicism against managers, but this cynicism is not reflected in their behaviors.

Other studies conducted with health professionals related to organizational cynicism have found different results. Some studies have shown that health professionals who work in hospitals have lower levels of organizational cynicism and tend to exhibit behavioral cynicism (23,24). Other studies have shown that health professionals have higher levels of organizational cynicism, and have lower levels of cognitive cynicism (12,25). Similar to the existing research findings, it was found that nurses have moderate levels of organizational cynicism (20,24,26). Health professionals have higher levels of cognitive cynicism than other types of cynicism (27), and as levels of education increases, levels of organizational cynicism also increase (26).

There is negative and highly significant relationship between nurses' organizational cynicism and organizational support, especially their perceptions of administrative support and justice. As organizational support increases, organizational cynicism decreases (Table 3). It was found that organizational support explains 18% of organizational cynicism (Table 4). Relevant studies from other fields have similar findings. These studies found strong and meaningful negative relationships between perceived organizational support and organizational cynicism (6,12,28). Considering the important effects of organizational support on organizational cynicism, these findings indicate that administrators need to provide more organizational support before nurses' cognitive cynicism turns into behavioral cynicism. The facts that the majority of the nurses in this study were young, in their first years in the profession and thought that they do not receive enough support from executive nurses revealed their need for organizational support. In addition, this indicates the importance of more organizational support to decrease organizational cynicism.

### Conclusion and Suggestions for Implementation

The results of this study of the effects of organizational support on organizational cynicism show that nurses do not have enough organizational support and have cognitive cynicism attitude towards their institution. They also show that organizational support has an effect on organizational cynicism and that as perceived organizational support rises, organizational cynicism falls. According to these results, it can be suggested, particularly to executive nurses, that providing more organizational support to the nurses and identifying thoughts that result in cynicism and increasing organizational support to making attempts to reducing cynicism. It can be suggested to study this topic in different institutions with different samples.

### Limitations and Strengths

This study's results are limited to perceptions of nurses who work at one university hospital and agreed to participate in it. The nurses were reluctant to fill out the data collection tools as they working at a large university hospital and had participated in research studies too many times. The nurses also did not want to participate in this study because of its research topic. This was a difficulty for this study. However, as one of the first studies investigating the effect of nurses' perceived organizational support on organizational cynicism, this was also a strength of this study.

### Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflicts of interest. The authors alone are responsible for the content and writing of the article.

### Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the nurses who participated and the administrators who give permission for data collection.

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