

The Effects of Organizational Cynicism on Turnover Intention and An Application

Güner ÇÖL

orcid.org/0000-0002-9222-4399

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, İstanbul Üniversitesi - Cerrahpaşa, SBMYO
Asst. Prof. Dr., İstanbul Univ. - Cerrahpaşa, Soc. Sci. Voc. School
gunercol@iuc.edu.tr

Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine the effect of organizational cynicism attitudes of administrative staff, working at a public university in Istanbul, on their turnover intention. The randomly determined sample of the study consists of 217 administrative employees. Partial least squares path analysis (PLS-SEM) was used in the analysis of the data collected by the survey technique. SmartPLS-4 statistical program was used to analyze the data. According to the findings of the research; it is seen that affective and behavioral dimensions of organizational cynicism have positive and significant effect on turnover intention, but cognitive sub-dimension has no effect. The R² value of the model shows that the turnover intention is explained by approximately 52%.

Keywords: Organizational cynicism attitudes, turnover intention, administrative staff

Introduction

Organizational cynicism is the negative attitudes developed by the employee towards his/her organization, and these attitudes lead him/her to have negative feelings and to develop a critical approach towards the organization, and to behave in this direction (Dean et al. 1998; Davis and Gardner, 2004). When the literature is examined, it is seen that organizational cynicism is handled in three dimensions as cognitive, affective and behavioral (Dean et al. 1998). The cognitive dimension expresses the belief that the organization is far from the principles of justice, honesty and sincerity. The affective dimension is the various negative feelings of employees towards their organizations. The behavioral dimension is defined as the negative behaviors of employees towards their organizations by reflecting what they feel cognitively and emotionally on their behaviors (Demirci and Tekiner 2019).

It is clear that organizational cynicism, which consists of three negative attitudes, can cause different negative consequences for organizations. One of these negative consequences is the turnover intention. Intention to leave is a “destructive and active” action that employees show when they are not satisfied with their work conditions. Employee turnover is generally undesirable for organizations. Because, in organizations where turnovers are common, many negative aspects may arise such as; the possibility of losing the talented workforce negatively affects sustainable competitive advantage, the training to be given to the newly hired employees, the recruitment costs, the sadness of those who continue to work due to losing their colleagues, and the anxiety arising from the uncertainty of

the relations with the newcomers (Büyükbeşe, 2012).

There are many studies on the effects of organizational cynicism on turnover intention (Peter and Chima 2018; Demirci and Tekiner 2019; Polat and Meydan, 2010; Güzel and Ayazlar, 2014: 137; Yalçın, 2017; Beheiri, Ahmed, and Aboul-Ela, 2018; Kunduracı, 2019; Canbek and Kanbur, 2019). In most of these studies, organizational cynicism was considered as a single variable without going down to its sub-dimensions. However, the number of studies examining which dimension fuels organizational cynicism most, by associating sub-dimensions one by one with turnover intention, is quite limited. Among these, the study conducted by Canbek and Kanbur (2019) states that affective and behavioral dimensions have a positive and significant effect on turnover intention, but the cognitive dimension does not have any effect. However, Soybalı and Pelit (2021) argue that cognitive and affective dimensions positively and significantly affect turnover intention, but behavioral dimension does not have any effect. For this reason, there is a need for more research to be conducted in different sectors that deals with the effects of organizational cynicism's each sub-dimension on one by one. Thus, it will be revealed which dimension causes turnover intention the most. Because losing a qualified employee means losing the knowledge and experience gained over the years. For this reason, in this study, it is aimed to determine the dimension that increases turnover intention the most by associating the sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism with turnover intention separately.

Organizational Cynicism

According to Andersson (1996), *cynicism* is an attitude that occurs with disappointment and negative feelings towards organizations, ideologies, groups and individuals, or distrust towards all of these. Cynicism is the suspicion of other people's motives, honesty and goodwill and generalizing this to other subjects or situations (Tan and Tan, 2007). Organizational cynicism is the negative attitude of the person towards the organization he works for. This attitude consists of beliefs, emotions and behavioral tendencies. An individual with organizational cynicism thinks that the organization lacks honesty, integrity and justice and believes that the decisions taken are far from sincerity. These beliefs are accompanied by negative emotions such as anger and contempt. Behavioral tendencies related to organizational cynicism include humiliating and critical statements about the organization (Davis and Gardner, 2004). According to another definition, organizational cynicism is an attitude arising from a critical evaluation of the values and activities of the organization (Bedeian, 2007). Abraham (2000) defined organizational cynicism as a belief that the organization lacks honesty. He stated that this belief, when combined with a strong negative feeling, can lead to critical and negative behaviors towards the organization (Abraham, 2000). Dean et al. (1998) defined organizational cynicism as "the individual's negative attitude towards the organization he works for" and suggested that it has three dimensions: cognitive, affective and behavioral (Dean et al., 1998):

Cognitive Dimension: In the cognitive dimension, cynical employees think that the organization has no principles and all

relationships and interactions in the organization are shaped for the interests of individuals. Thus, employees will be able to compromise values such as honesty, respect, sincerity and trust, and even display immoral and unscrupulous behaviors in line with their interests (Dean et al., 1998; Begenirbaş and Turgut, 2014; Kazançoğlu and Ercan, 2019).

Affective Dimension: In short, it is negative feelings towards the organization. Attitudes consist of both beliefs and feelings. Cynicism is not objective judgments about the organization, but strong emotional reactions to the organization. The affective dimension of organizational cynicism consists of many emotions. The individual may be angry or hate the organization he works for. When he thinks about the organization, he may feel sad, disgusted and even ashamed (Dean et al., 1998).

Behavioral Dimension: It is the tendency of the employees to act critically and humiliatingly towards the organization, consistent with their beliefs and feelings about the organization they work for (Özgener et al., 2008). In other words, it includes the behaviors of employees' making complaints, mocking and criticizing their organizations (Kalağan and Güzeller 2010). In organizations, cynical behavior can be shown only by actions without the use of words. The meaningful glances of the employees and their mocking and contemptuous laughter are examples of cynical behaviors (Karacaoğlu and İnce, 2012).

Turnover Intention

According to Tett and Meyer (1993), turnover intention is an individual's desire to leave the organization that he/she works for.

Krueger and Rouse (1998) define turnover intention as the decision to look for other job alternatives in other organizations (Peter and Chima 2018). According to another definition, it is expressed as employees' thinking of leaving their jobs due to their dissatisfaction with the current job conditions (Özcan et al., 2012). It is possible to talk about many organizational and individual factors that are stated to be effective in the employees' decision to leave the job. Beliefs, perceptions, feelings and thoughts that employees acquire about organizational culture and values, relations with colleagues, career development opportunities, roles within the organization, demands and expectations, justice, reward system and remuneration can be effective in their decision to leave the job (Yalçın, 2017). The precursor of leaving the job is the turnover intention.

Since turnover intention is of vital importance for organizations, many studies have been conducted on this subject. (Güzel and Ayazlar 2014; Kunderacı 2019; Soybalı and Pelit 2021; Yalçın 2017; Özcan et al. 2012). Because leaving the organization where individuals work does not only mean physical separation. Because leaving the organization of an individual does not mean only physical separation; The individual who leaves the organization also takes the knowledge and experience he/she has gained with him/her. The cost to the organization of the new employees to reach the same level of knowledge and experience is quite high. For this reason, employees who have the intention to leave the job should be prevented from making the decision to leave the organization as quickly as possible. It may be possible today that the intention does not turn into a behavior, but it should be known that the intention is likely to turn into a

behavior. (Erbil, 2013).

The Relationship Between Variables

One of the factors that is claimed to increase employees' intention to leave is organizational cynicism. The results of studies dealing with the effects of organizational cynicism on turnover intention show that organizational cynicism may be effective in employees' decision to quit their job (Beheiri, Ahmed and Aboul Ela, 2018; Peter and Chima 2018; Canbek and Kanbur 2019; Demirci and Tekiner 2019). It has been determined that organizational cynicism is significantly and positively related to turnover intention in studies where its sub-dimensions are ignored and treated as a single variable (Beheiri et al. 2018; Peter and Chima 2018; Demirci and Tekiner 2019). Canbek and Kanbur (2019) revealed that organizational cynicism and its sub-dimensions, affective and behavioral, have a positive and significant effect on turnover intention, but the cognitive sub-dimension has no effect. In the study conducted by Soybalı and Pelit (2021) on hotel employees, it was determined that organizational cynicism and its sub-dimensions, cognitive and affective dimensions, positively and significantly affect the turnover intention, but the behavioral dimension does not have a significant effect. In addition to these, there are studies showing that all three sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism have positive and significant effects on turnover intention (Kunduracı, 2019; Güngör, 2019; Çubuk, 2021).

As it is seen, the results of studies on the effects of organizational cynicism's sub-dimensions on turnover intention differ in the literature. In some studies, it was stated that cognitive cynicism and in others behavioral cynicism did not have any effect on turnover

intention. Therefore, more studies on the subject are needed. From this point of view, the model and hypotheses of the research were designed as follows.

H₁: Cognitive cynicism positively affects turnover intention.

H₂: Behavioral cynicism positively affects turnover intention.

H₃: Affective cynicism positively affects turnover intention.

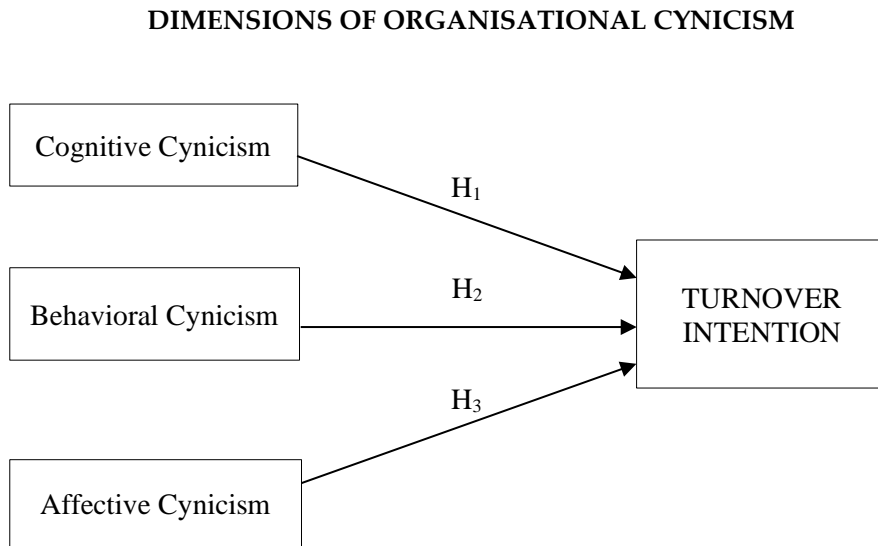


Figure 1: The Research Model

Methodology

The original scale of Brandes et al. (1999), which was adapted in Turkish by Kalağan (2009), was used to measure the dimensions of organizational cynicism. There are a total of 13 expressions in the scale, 5 of which are in the cognitive dimension, and 4 in each of the behavioral and affective dimensions. The 5-item turnover intention scale, which originally belongs to Reychav and Weisberg, was adapted

in Turkish by Büyükbeşe (2012).

In the research, we used the survey method with closed-ended questions as the data collection method. In addition to questions about demographic information, the survey includes a total of 18 questions measuring the variables of the research. The application of the study was made on the administrative staff of a public university in Istanbul. The questionnaire was sent electronically to all the staff of the university, but since the number of academic staff responses was very low, they were not included in the analysis. The questionnaire, which was randomly answered by 217 administrative personnel, was included in the analysis. Among these, 127 are men and 90 are women, 165 are married and 52 are single, 15 are under the age of 30, 144 are between 30-50 and 58 are over the age of 50. Participants answered the questions using a 5-point Likert Scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree).

Statistical Analysis and Findings

First of all, the reliability and validity tests of the scales used in the study were conducted. For this purpose, convergent validity, discriminant validity and internal consistency were evaluated. For internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) coefficients were examined. In the determination of convergent validity, average variance (AVE=Average Variance Extracted) values explained by factor loadings were used. Cronbach Alpha and combined reliability values are expected to be above 0.70, and the AVE value is expected to be above 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2006; Hair et al., 2014; Yıldız, 2019). The internal consistency and convergent validity analysis results of the variables of

the research are given in Table-1.

Table-1: Validity and Reliability Results of the Scales

Variables		Expressions	Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alfa	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
ORGANIZATIONAL CYNICISM	Cognitive Cynicism	COG1	0,876	0,916	0,937	0,749
		COG2	0,780			
		COG3	0,883			
		COG4	0,892			
		COG5	0,892			
	Behavioral Cynicism	BEH1	0,856	0,801	0,863	0,614
		BEH2	0,808			
		BEH3	0,683			
		BEH4	0,778			
	Affective Cynicism	AFF1	0,974	0,976	0,982	0,932
		AFF2	0,974			
		AFF3	0,970			
		AFF4	0,945			
TURNOVER INTENTION	T.INT1	0,916	0,953	0,964	0,841	
	T.INT2	0,956				
	T.INT3	0,942				
	T.INT4	0,863				
	T.INT5	0,906				

In order to evaluate the internal consistency, we looked at the Cronbach Alpha and CR coefficients of the variables. Cronbach Alpha coefficients are ranged between 0.801 and 0.976, and CR coefficients between 0.863 and 0.982. This shows that internal consistency is maintained.

While determining the items to be included in the factor structure, benchmark values for "factor loads" are determined by considering the sample size. Benchmark values of 0.50 and higher are

suggested. For example, it is recommended that the factor load threshold value be at least 0.55 for 100 participants (Catalano, 2018; Şencan and Fidan, 2020). The factor loads of the variables in this research are between 0.683 and 0.974; and the AVE values are between 0.614 and 0.932. Therefore, we can say that convergent validity is also provided.

Table-2: Discriminant Validity Results (AVE Criteria)

	Cognitive Cynicism	Behavioral Cynicism	Affective Cynicism	Turnover Intention
Cognitive Cynicism	(0,865)			
Behavioral Cynicism	0,620	(0,783)		
Affective Cynicism	0,736	0,710	(0,966)	
Turnover Intention	0,597	0,589	0,702	(0,917)

To evaluate the discriminant validity, *AVE criteria* which has been proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and *HTMT criteria* which has been proposed by Henseler et al. (2015) were used. Fornell and Larcker (1981) indicated that, the square roots of AVE must be greater than the correlations among the variables of the study. It is seen in Table-2 that values in parentheses (which are the square roots of AVE) are greater than the correlations of other variables.

Table-3: Discriminant Validity Results (HTMT Criteria)

	Cognitive Cynicism	Behavioral Cynicism	Affective Cynicism	Turnover Intention
Cognitive Cynicism				
Behavioral Cynicism	0,666			
Affective Cynicism	0,776	0,753		
Turnover Intention	0,636	0,624	0,726	

Henseler et al. (2015) pointed out that, HTMT value has to be below 0.90 (and below 0.85 for concepts that are far from each other in terms of content). It is seen that all of the HTMT values in Table-3 are below the limit value. Bottomed on the information in Table-2 and Table-3, it can be stated that discriminant validity was achieved. The correlation findings of variables are shown in Table-4.

Table-4: Correlation Analysis Results

	Cognitive Cynicism	Behavioral Cynicism	Affective Cynicism	Turnover Intention
Cognitive Cynicism	1			
Behavioral Cynicism	0,620*	1		
Affective Cynicism	0,736**	0,710**	1	
Turnover Intention	0,597*	0,589*	0,702**	1

** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, $N = 217$

From the correlation findings obtained, it is understood that there are positive and moderately significant relationships between cognitive cynicism and behavioral cynicism; turnover intention and

cognitive cynicism; turnover intention and behavioral cynicism. On the other hand, the relationships between cognitive cynicism and affective cynicism, affective cynicism and behavioral cynicism, turnover intention and affective cynicism are again positive but more significant.

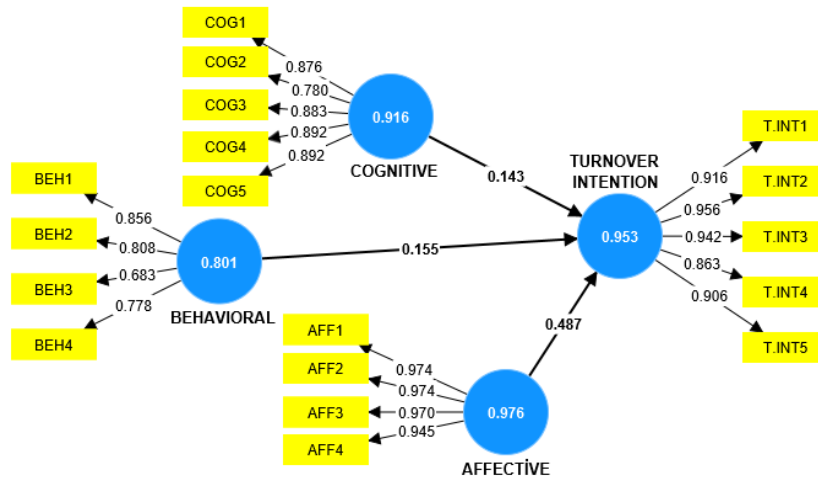


Figure 2: The Structural Equation Model

Partial least squares path analysis (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the research model. The data were analyzed using the SmartPLS-4. We used PLS algorithm to calculate linearity, path coefficients, R^2 and effect size (f^2) of the research model. To evaluate the significance of the PLS path coefficients, we calculated the t-values. Findings are seen in Table 5.

Table-5: Coefficients of the Research Model

Variables		Standardized β	t value	p	R ²	f ²	VIF
Cognitive Cynicism	Turnover Intention	0,143	1,882	0,060	0,518	0,019	2,276
Behavioral Cynicism		0,155	2,620	0,009		0,024	2,103
Affective Cynicism		0,487	6,183	0,000		0,174	2,824

According to Hair et al. (2014), Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values among the variables should be below the limit value of 5. Since all three of the VIF values in Table 5 are below 5, we can say that a linearity problem does not exist among the variables.

As a result of the analysis, affective cynicism ($\beta=0.487$; $p<0.01$) and behavioral cynicism ($\beta=0.155$; $p<0.01$) affect turnover intention in the same direction and at a high level. However, it was determined that cognitive cynicism did not have a significant effect on turnover intention. In the light of these findings, the 2nd and 3rd hypotheses of the research were supported, but the 1st hypothesis was rejected. On the other hand, based on the R² value of the model, we can say that the turnover intention is explained by approximately 52%.

According to Cohen (1988), an effect size coefficient (f²) value of 0.02 is considered as "low", 0.15 is considered as "medium" and 0.35 is considered as "high". Sarstedt et. al. (2017) stated that it is not

possible to talk about any effect when the coefficient is below 0.02 (Yıldız, 2019). Based on the coefficients in the table, it can be said that behavioral cynicism has a low effect size (0.024) and affective cynicism has a medium effect size (0.174) on turnover intention. Since the f^2 value of cognitive cynicism is less than 0.02, it has no effect on turnover intention.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Education is one of the most important needs of people in our age. Universities are the last educational institutions that shape and direct the talents of the individual before starting the business life. Like every institution, universities also should take measures to prevent their qualified employees from leaving the job. One of the factors that cause people leaving their job is organizational cynicism. In this study, it is aimed to determine the effects of the perceptions of organizational cynicism of the administrative staff of a public university in Istanbul, on their turnover intention. For this purpose, the effects of cognitive, behavioral and affective cynicism, which are the sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism, on turnover intention were investigated.

According to the results of the correlation analysis, there was a positive significant relationship between the cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions of organizational cynicism and the turnover intention. The findings show that with the increase in the organizational cynicism level, the turnover intention will increase as well. On the other hand, it is seen that the affective dimension is the most related organizational cynicism dimension to turnover intention whereas the least related one is the behavioral dimension. Based on this result, it can be said that employees who have the intention to quit

their job are cautious about transforming their strong feelings about cynicism into behavior and reflecting them to the organization.

In addition, as a result of the analyzes made, it was determined that affective ($\beta=0.487$; $p<0.01$) and behavioral ($\beta=0.155$; $p<0.01$) dimensions, which are the sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism, significantly and positively affect turnover intention. It was determined that the cognitive dimension did not have a significant ($p>0.05$) effect on the turnover intention. These results are in line with the results of the Canbek and Kanbur (2019) study.

The results of the analysis show that the dimension with the strongest effect on the turnover intention is the affective dimension. Accordingly, university employees experience cynicism mostly in their emotions, that is, in their inner world. The fact that the behavioral dimension has a weaker effect indicates that they are able to reflect only a part of the cynicism they experience on their behavior. This situation suggests that they have reservations about expressing the cynicism they experience and reflecting it on their behaviors.

The cognitive dimension, which represents the belief that the organization lacks fairness, honesty and integrity, did not have any effect on turnover intention. This result suggests that it is due to their emotional reaction, thinking that there is nothing they can do to change the injustices experienced. In other words, there is a possibility that the effects of the cognitive dimension are loaded on the affective dimension.

Every employee of an organization may decide or intend to leave the job for various reasons. One of the reasons for this is

undoubtedly the “organizational cynicism”. Therefore, managers of the organization have to take measures to prevent the formation and development of organizational cynicism among the employees. It is seen in this study that, the most important precaution to be taken is to prevent negative emotional reactions. For this, the university management needs to develop ways and methods in which employees can express their requests, suggestions and complaints without hesitation. In our age, no matter what kind of an organization people work in, instead of being an ordinary personnel, they want to participate in the management of the organization, they want to actively involve in taking all kinds of decisions that concern them, they want to express their thoughts freely and therefore to be effective in the results (Dinçer and Fidan 2011). The presence of an administrative personnel in the management bodies, representing the administrative staff, will ensure that the correct information about how and for what reason the managerial decisions are taken, reaches everyone in the organization. In this way, the negative emotional reaction caused by incomplete and misinformation can be reduced, even if it is not completely eliminated. In addition, the institution should not compromise on the principles of justice, honesty and transparency in the decisions it takes and in all the works it does, and it should be at an equal distance from every employee. Otherwise, organizational cynicism will increase and therefore the intention to leave the job will turn into a decision to leave the job. It should not be forgotten that every qualified employee who leaves the job takes the knowledge and experience that he has acquired over the years with him.

The most important limitation of this study is that

academicians were not included in the analysis because the number of academic staff who filled out the questionnaire was very few. It would be beneficial for future studies to include academicians and to compare academic staff and administrative staff.

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