The mediating role of locus of control in the effect of organizational support on organizational cynicism

Accepted 18th July 2023

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to examine the mediating role of locus of control on the effect of organizational support on organizational cynicism in school organizations. A research model was created and hypotheses were developed to examine the role of locus of control as a mediator in the effect of organizational support on organizational cynicism. Data were obtained from 385 participants using the simple random sampling method among school employees. The data were then analyzed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modeling in SPSS and AMOS. The findings revealed a negative correlation between organizational support and organizational cynicism, and showed that locus of control played a partial mediator role in this relationship. The results of this study have useful implications in terms of the steps that can be taken to mitigate the negative impacts on employees' organizational behaviors.

Key words: Organizational cynicism, organizational support, locus of control.

INTRODUCTION

The most basic element of an organization is people, who work together in a coordinated manner to achieve a common purpose (Daft, 2012). When employees are offered a favorable work atmosphere that fosters a positive attitude towards their institution, they become more motivated in their duties (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Organizational support, based on Blau's (1964) social exchange theory and involving psychological contracts (Shore and Shore, 1995), is particularly crucial for employees who find it challenging to meet the demands arising from both inside and outside the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1990). According to the social exchange theory, there are mutual responsibilities between employees and the organization that are not explicitly defined and complement formal contracts, which have several negative implications if breached (Coyle-Shapiro and Conway, 2005).

Organizational support refers to the perception that members of an organization have regarding how much the organization values and cares for their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). This concept indicates that the organization values its employees, takes their well-being into account (Eisenberger et al., 2002), and cares about them as much as they care about the organization (Allen et al., 2008), and their well-being (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Additionally, employees are aware of how their contributions to the organization are recognized (Natunann, Bies and Martin, 1995), how their performance is rewarded, and how their emotional and social needs are met, and their perceptions are reflected in their emotions and opinions (Dawley et al., 2010). Kraimer and Wayne (2004) identified three types of support that contribute to the formation of perceived organizational support: adjustment support, financial support, and career support. Employees with a sense of organizational support expect fair compensation practices, acceptable forgiveness of mistakes, missions that are meaningful, and care for their well-being when they are sick within the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Moreover, promotions, rewards, career opportunities, participation in decision-making, and the feeling of being valued and respected by the institution...
motivate employees to work more effectively (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002).

When employees perceive that their organization provides them with support, it can lead to positive outcomes, such as a belief that their well-being is valued in the workplace (Allen et al., 2003). This can improve the relationship between the organization and its employees (Eisenberger et al., 1986), reduce the impact of stressors on employees (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002), and enhance the sense of identification that employees feel with the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). In turn, this can strengthen the social exchange relationship between the organization and its employees (Byrne and Hochwarter, 2008) and increase employee performance in achieving the organization's goals (Lynch et al., 1999).

While employee expectations of organizational performance have increased, failing to provide an environment that meets their social needs can result in organizational cynicism (Cartwright and Holmes, 2006). Organizational cynicism is already present in almost all organizations (James, 2005) and is characterized by a multidimensional distrust of the organization's integrity (Bedeian, 2007; Johnson and O'Leary-Kelly, 2003). Organizational cynicism has far-reaching consequences, affecting individuals, groups, and the organization as a whole, as it shapes their perceptions, attitudes, judgments, evaluations, expectations, and actions toward each other and the organization (Vice, 2011). According to Dean et al. (1998), organizational cynicism manifests as an attitude that reflects a belief in the institution's lack of honesty, resulting in employee disfavor toward the organization and condescending and critical behavior toward it.

Individuals are exposed to positive or negative reinforcers throughout their lives, which influence their behavior and perceptions of rewards (Pierce and Cheney, 2004). Each person interprets these reinforcers differently based on their unique perspective and responds accordingly (Somoye and Eyupoglu, 2020). These experiences shape individuals' expectations (Dönmez and Başal, 1985). The locus of control, which is the belief about who controls the outcomes of their actions, is linked to the individual's attribution of the rewards or punishments they receive (Şahin et al., 2008). The locus of control is formed by the generalization of the individual's expectation that a particular action will result in a specific reinforcer (Dağ, 2002). In essence, the locus of control represents the individual's belief about whether they or external factors are responsible for positive or negative outcomes in their lives (Leone and Burns, 2000). Negative attitudes toward the school can develop among employees when their needs and expectations are not met (Brandes, 1997; Wilkerson et al., 2008; Levent and Keser, 2016). Failing to meet the expectations of school employees can result in disappointment, which may contribute to organizational cynicism (Andersson and Bateman, 1997; Kanter and Mirvis, 1989; Levent and Keser, 2016).

Conceptual relationships and hypotheses

The existing literature suggests that there is a lack of research on the relationship between organizational support, organizational cynicism, and locus of control, particularly in terms of the level and direction of the relationship between these variables and latent variables. Previous studies have mainly focused on specific organizations in various sectors other than school organizations, and were often conducted on a limited number of employees. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the mediating role of the locus of control in the relationship between organizational support and organizational cynicism in school organizations, including all personnel who directly impact education and training. To achieve this aim, several hypotheses have been formulated and tested.

The norms of reciprocity suggest that meeting employees' socio-emotional needs leads to better performance and a decreased likelihood of negative attitudes towards the organization (Kerseand Karabey, 2019). Affective events theory suggests that employee experiences and emotions influence their behavior (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996), while Vroom's Expectancy Theory suggests that unmet expectations and negative perceptions of the organization lead to negative emotional feelings and behaviors (Robbins and Judge, 2013). Social exchange theory suggests that employees may display adverse behaviors towards the organization due to unmet expectations and negative beliefs about the organization, leading to organizational cynicism (James, 2005; Johnson and O'Leary-Kelly, 2003). As such, it is hypothesized that there is a negative relationship between organizational support and organizational cynicism. Hence, this hypothesis has been developed:

**H1:** There is a negative relationship between organizational support and organizational cynicism.

Organizational cynicism is a multidimensional construct that encompasses cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions (Dean et al., 1998). The cognitive dimension of organizational cynicism involves the various beliefs, knowledge, and experiences employees have about people, things, and psychological situations (Johnson and O'Leary-Kelly, 2003). In this dimension, employees display a negative attitude towards their job, colleagues, or the organization itself (Naus, 2007). The affective dimension of organizational cynicism involves the emotional responses of employees towards the organization (Dean et al., 1998). This dimension reflects the employees' negative feelings and emotions, such as anger, disappointment, and frustration, towards the organization (Abraham, 2000). The behavioral dimension of organizational cynicism involves the employees' negative behaviors towards the organization, such as absenteeism, reduced work effort,
and turnover intentions (Dean et al., 1998).

Turner and Valentine (2001) explain that the behavioral dimension of organizational cynicism includes employees' actions, such as hostile criticism, sarcastic humor, degrading behavior, and complaints about the organization. According to Johnson and O'Leary-Kelly (2003), the most noticeable behavioral tendencies of cynical employees are their open criticisms of the organization's deficiencies in values such as transparency, sincerity, justice, and honesty. These criticisms can arise from a belief that certain organizational policies and practices do not serve any purpose other than the organization's interests, as noted by Dean et al. (1998).

According to Andersson (1996), employees often evaluate company events based on their negative thoughts and feelings, which can lead to negative attitudes towards people and organizations that humiliate them at work, as noted by Dean et al. (1998). Levent and Keser (2016) suggest that a change in any of the three dimensions of organizational cynicism can cause individuals to change their overall attitude toward organizational cynicism. This means that if there is an imbalance between the attitudes or components that make up an individual's attitude, their attitude may change, as explained by Griffin et al. (2017). The hypothesis has been developed that cognitive cynicism, which arises from the organizational support perceived by school personnel, can affect and change affective and behavioral cynicism. However, in some cases, for various reasons, this expectation may be reversed, leading to inconsistency in the change of organizational cynicism's sub-dimensions. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

\( H_2: \) The change in organizational cynicism's sub-dimensions becomes inconsistent with the indirect effect of organizational support.

According to Eaton (2000), when employees perceive the organization as responsible for negative events, they tend to blame the organization and attribute negative causality to it, leading to the occurrence of organizational cynicism. Additionally, personal characteristics of employees, such as locus of control, can increase their tendency to respond negatively, as suggested by Andersson's (1996) conceptual models for organizational cynicism. The locus of control is a personality trait that reflects an individual's belief in the causal relationship between their actions and their consequences, and their belief in whether they have control or influence over these outcomes (Kara et al., 2016). Some individuals believe that their actions and outcomes are within their control, while others believe that external factors determine them (Şahin et al., 2008). Therefore, due to the low level of perception of organizational support among school employees, their behavior is shaped by their causal attributions regarding their control or influence over the school management's cynical attitudes. As a result, the following hypotheses have been developed:

\( H_3: \) There is a positive relationship between organizational support and locus of control.

\( H_{3a}: \) The level of relationship between the indirect effect of organizational support and locus of control varies.

\( H_4: \) There is a positive relationship between organizational cynicism and locus of control.

\( H_{4a}: \) The level of relationship between the indirect effect of organizational cynicism and the sub-dimensions of locus of control varies.

\( H_5: \) Locus of control has an intermediary role in the effect of organizational support on organizational cynicism.

**METHODS**

**Research model**

In this study, the relational scanning type, one of the quantitative research methods, was applied to investigate the mediating role of locus of control in organizational support on organizational cynicism. Relational scanning research involves collecting information about the attitudes, experiences, and characteristics of one or more groups of people through question and answering (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015). This research's relational design is a model determined by the researchers, and the proposed model is tested with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis through latent variables. The model developed and tested within the scope of this research is given in Figure 1.

In Figure 1, organizational support is analyzed as the leading variable of organizational cynicism, and the control point is used as an intermediary variable between organizational support and organizational cynicism. Organizational support (exogenous variable) and locus of control (mediator variable) path coefficient “a” organizational cynicism (endogenous variable) path coefficient “b” with the locus of control (intermediary variable), organizational support to organizational cynicism (exogenous variable to endogenous variable) directly path the coefficient of the organizational support to organizational cynicism (exogenous variable to endogenous variable) was determined as “c’. “axb” indicates the indirect effect of organizational support on organizational cynicism.

**Population and sample**

The participants for the questionnaire were selected using the simple random sampling method, with the stratified sampling method employed to determine the sample. A total of 385 participants were included in the study. In Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which typically requires a large sample size, it is recommended to have a
sample size (N) to parameter (q) ratio (N/q) of 20/1 for each latent variable. As the organizational cynicism construct in this study included 14 parameters of latent variables, a minimum of 280 (N=20x14) statistical estimates were required to organize the cynicism parameter (Kline, 2011). Therefore, the research's sample size of 385 is sufficient for statistical analysis in SEM. Table 1 presents the distribution of participants based on their demographic characteristics.

**Table 1:** Distribution of participants by demographic characteristics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seniority</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Selection Status</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>15-19 years</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingly</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>20-24 years</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwillingly</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>25 years or more</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>25 years or more</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Branch</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>Pre-School Teacher</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's Degree (without Thesis)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>Classroom Teacher</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's (with Thesis)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>Branch Teacher</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>73.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>School Type</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Secondary School</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Director</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Measures**

The scales were developed by blending existing scales from the literature and were evaluated for scope and face validity by expert opinions. A pilot study was conducted to refine the scales, and the data obtained was analyzed using the Bartlett-Sphericity test and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) coefficient methods. The normal distribution of data was examined, and factor analysis was used to determine...
organizational cynicism, and control points. Maximum Likelihood calculation method was employed to generate the covariance matrix, given the normal distribution of the data. The goodness-of-fit values obtained from the analysis were deemed acceptable based on literature standards, which suggested that the model was compatible with the data ($X^2[550, N=385]=1004.728; \chi^2/df=1.827; CFI=0.904; RMSEA=0.046; SRMR=0.060$). Table 2 provides the correlation relationships and weights between the latent variables in the measurement model.

Table 2: Measurement model correlation relations and weights.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational cynicism</td>
<td>&lt;-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational cynicism</td>
<td>&lt;-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational support</td>
<td>&lt;-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p<0.001.

Table 3: Standardized regression weights regarding the indirect effect of organizational cynicism on the sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism in the path analysis model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Direct effects</th>
<th>Indirect effects</th>
<th>Total effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive cynicism</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>-0.840</td>
<td>-0.840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective cynicism</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>-0.682</td>
<td>-0.682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral cynicism</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>-0.588</td>
<td>-0.588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational cynicism</td>
<td>-0.893</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>-0.893</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p<0.001.

Data analysis

Validity analysis and reliability analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) were performed applying the SPSS 24 and AMOS 24 programs of the data obtained in this study, which aims to analyze the mediating role of the locus of control in the relationship between organizational support in school organizations. Structural equation modeling can be described as a combination of factor analysis and regression analysis. The researchers also checked the data's suitability to the covariance matrix created according to the theoretical model using Hox and Bechger’s (1998, method).

FINDINGS

The study began by testing a measurement model that comprised latent variables such as organizational support, organizational cynicism, and control points. Maximum Likelihood calculation method was employed to generate the covariance matrix, given the normal distribution of the data. The goodness-of-fit values obtained from the analysis construct validity. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess the goodness of fit of the model, and various criteria were used to determine the acceptable fit of the model. The scales were developed with a 5-Likert type rating and assessed on different dimensions. The reliability of the scales was assessed using Cronbach’s Alpha. The study concludes that the developed scales have good reliability and validity to measure organizational cynicism, organizational support, and locus of control.

To test the hypothesis that there is a negative relationship between organizational support and organizational cynicism, a model was created and estimated using the Maximum Likelihood (ML) method. The path analysis revealed that the model had acceptable goodness-of-fit values ($X^2[246, N=385]=518.269; \chi^2/df=2.107; CFI=0.932; RMSEA=0.054; SRMR=0.048$), indicating that it was compatible and acceptable to the data. The results showed that there was a significant negative correlation between organizational support and organizational cynicism ($\beta=-0.893, p<0.001$). Specifically, a one-unit increase in organizational support led to a decrease of 0.893 units in organizational cynicism, while a decrease of one unit in organizational support resulted in an increase of 0.893 units in organizational cynicism. Moreover, organizational support accounted for 80% of the variation (variance) in organizational cynicism, implying that organizational support is a precursor of organizational cynicism. Based on these findings, Hypothesis 1 was
Table 4: Standardized regression weights regarding the indirect effects of organizational cynicism on the sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Direct effects</th>
<th>Indirect effects</th>
<th>Total effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External locus of control</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>-0.382</td>
<td>-0.382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal locus of control</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.443</td>
<td>0.443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of control</td>
<td>0.596</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.596</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p<0.001.

Table 5: Standardized regression coefficients related to the indirect effect on the sub-dimensions of the locus of control in the organizational cynicism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Direct effects</th>
<th>Indirect effects</th>
<th>Total effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External locus of control</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.685</td>
<td>0.685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal locus of control</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>-0.354</td>
<td>-0.355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of control</td>
<td>-0.716</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>-0.716</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p<0.001.

accepted.

Table 3 shows the standardized regression weights (β) in the confirmation model regarding the indirect effect of organizational support on the subdimension of organizational cynicism. Table 3 shows that there is a significant negative correlation between organizational support and the subdimension of organizational cynicism. The standardized regression weights (β) show that the indirect effect of organizational support on cognitive cynicism is (β=0.840, p<0.001), on behavioral cynicism is (β=0.588, p<0.001), and on affective cynicism is (β=0.682, p<0.001). These results suggest that the sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism change in an inconsistent manner with the effect of organizational support. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was accepted based on these findings.

The model that aimed to test the hypotheses "There is a positive relationship between organizational support and locus of control, and the level of relationship between the indirect effect of organizational support and the sub-dimensions of the locus of control" was estimated by the Maximum Likelihood (ML) method. The goodness-of-fit values obtained from the path analysis were within the acceptable thresholds, which indicates that the model is compatible and acceptable with the data (X²[204, N=385]=391.587; X²/df=1.920; CFI=0.931; RMSEA=0.049; SRMR=0.053). The results showed that there is a positive relationship between organizational support and locus of control (β=0.599, p<0.001). Moreover, organizational support explained 36% of the variance in the locus of control. Based on these findings, Hypothesis 3 was accepted.

Table 4 presents the standardized regression weights (β) of the model, which demonstrate the indirect impact of organizational support on the sub-dimensions of the locus of control over the locus of control.

Table 4 shows that the relationship between organizational support and the internal locus of control over the locus of control is significantly positive (β=0.443, p<0.001), while the relationship with external locus of control over the locus of control is significantly negative (β=-0.382, p<0.001). These findings suggest that the impact of organizational support on the sub-dimensions of locus of control differs. Therefore, Hypothesis 3a is supported, indicating that the presence of organizational support leads to an increase in internal locus of control tendencies and a decrease in external locus of control tendencies among school employees.

The Maximum Likelihood (ML) method was employed to estimate the model created to test the hypotheses regarding the positive relationship between organizational self and locus of control, and the level of relationship between the indirect effect of organizational cynicism and the sub-dimensions of the locus of control. The goodness-of-fit values obtained through path analysis are within the acceptable range, indicating that the model is compatible and acceptable with the data (X²[246, N=385]=435.365; X²/df=1.770; CFI=0.913; RMSEA=0.045; SRMR=0.054). The results demonstrate a significant negative correlation between organizational cynicism and locus of control (β=-0.716, p<0.001), and organizational support accounts for 51% of the change (variance) in the locus of control. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is supported. The standardized regression weights (β) in the model, which confirm the indirect effect of organizational cynicism on the sub-dimensions of the locus of control over the locus of control, are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 shows that organizational cynicism has a
significant negative relationship with the internal locus of control over the locus of control (β=-.354, p<.001), while the relationship with external locus of control over the locus of control is significantly positive (β=0.685, p<0.001). These findings suggest that the impact of organizational cynicism on the sub-dimensions of locus of control differs. Therefore, Hypothesis 4a is supported, indicating that the cynical perception of school employees towards their school increases as their external locus of control tendencies increase.

According to some assumptions should be given for any variable to mediate between exogenous (independent) and endogenous (dependent) variables. These assumptions can be listed as follows: 1) There should be a significant regression relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables. 2) In a model created using exogenous variables, endogenous variables, and mediator variables, the exogenous variables should significantly affect the mediator variable. 3) In a model created using exogenous variables, endogenous variables, and mediator variables, the mediator variable should significantly affect the endogenous variable. In the mediation analysis in which exogenous, endogenous, and mediator variables are included together when the exogenous variable’s effect on the endogenous variable is insignificant, a full mediation situation arises. If the decrease in the effect’s coefficient is still significant, the partial mediation effect is mentioned. Even so, according to the modern mediation approach, even if the relationships between other variables are meaningless, the indirect effect of the “a x b” path, that is, the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable, is regarded as an indicator of the mediation effect.

Baron and Kenny (1986), proposed several assumptions that should be met for a variable to mediate between exogenous (independent) and endogenous (dependent) variables. These assumptions include: 1) a significant regression relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables; 2) significant effects of exogenous variables on the mediator variable in a model created using exogenous, endogenous, and mediator variables; and 3) significant effects of the mediator variable on the endogenous variable in the same model. If the effect of the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable becomes insignificant when the mediator variable is included, full mediation occurs. However, if the coefficient of the effect still decreases significantly, partial mediation occurs. According to the modern mediation approach, even if the relationships between other variables are not significant, the indirect effect of the "a x b" path, i.e., the effect of the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable through the mediator variable, can still be used as an indicator of the mediation effect (Hayes, 2009; Hayes, 2018; Zhao et al., 2010).

After testing the second and third hypotheses, it was found that the direct effect of organizational support on organizational cynicism decreased when the control variable’s locus of control was added to the model. The standardized regression coefficient for organizational support on organizational cynicism decreased from -0.890 to -0.504 (β=-0.504, p<0.001) after adding the locus of control as a control variable in the model. This suggests that the locus of control variable partially mediates the relationship between organizational support and organizational cynicism. These findings lend support to the second and third hypotheses of the mediation analysis.

A latent variable model was constructed to investigate the hypothesis that "the locus of control mediates the relationship between organizational support and organizational cynicism." To test this hypothesis, a relational model was created to depict the mediating role of locus of control in the effect of organizational support on organizational cynicism. The Maximum Likelihood (ML) method was used to conduct path analysis on this model. The goodness-of-fit values obtained from the path analysis were within literally acceptable thresholds, indicating that the model was compatible and acceptable to the data (X²[485, N=385]=900.146; X²/df=1.876; CFI=0.906; RMSEA=0.047; SRMR=0.059). The Sobel test confirmed that the indirect effect of organizational support on organizational cynicism through the locus of control was significant (β=0.148, p<0.001). Table 6 shows the regression weights (R.K.) and standardized regression weights (S.R.K) for the constructed path model.

The standardized regression weights for the effect of organizational support on organizational cynicism were (β=0.893, p<0.001). According to the model, the standardized regression weight (β=0.744, p<0.001) between organizational support and organizational cynicism was reduced to -0.744 by adding the trajectory of the control instrumental variable to the model. According

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locus of control</th>
<th>Organizational support</th>
<th>-0.132</th>
<th>0.449</th>
<th>0.035</th>
<th>3.809</th>
<th>***</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>Significant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational cynicism</td>
<td>Locus of control</td>
<td>-10.085</td>
<td>-0.331</td>
<td>0.278</td>
<td>-3.904</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational cynicism</td>
<td>Organizational support</td>
<td>-0.715</td>
<td>-0.744</td>
<td>0.090</td>
<td>-7.951</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>c'</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The representation of p<0.001. Three asterisks (*** ) indicates that p values are much less than 0.001.
to Baron and Kenny (1986) mediation theory, this reduction in the effect of organizational support on organizational cynicism suggests the presence of other mediating variables in the relationship. Therefore, the locus of control is considered a "partial mediator variable" in the relationship between organizational support and organizational cynicism. In line with modern mediation theory, a re-path analysis was conducted using the bootstrap method to test whether the locus of control variable mediates the relationship between organizational support and organizational cynicism. The Bootstrap analysis was run with 5000 resamples. In assessing mediating effects using Bootstrap techniques, the 95% confidence interval (CI) values should not include zero to support the study hypothesis. According to Hayes (2018), the Bootstrap method is considered more reliable than Baron and Kenny’s method and the Sobel test.

The Bootstrap analysis results showed that the indirect effect of organizational support on organizational cynicism through the locus of control was significant ($\beta = -0.148$, 95% CI[-0.341,-0.050]). This is because the lower and upper confidence interval values obtained by the percentage method did not include 0 (zero), indicating that the mediating effect is statistically significant. Additionally, the locus of control explained 88% of the variance in organizational cynicism. Therefore, the results suggest that the locus of control plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between organizational support and organizational cynicism. Based on these findings, Hypothesis 5 was accepted.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The study found that organizational support and organizational cynicism have a significant negative relationship. Organizational support was found to be negatively and significantly related to the sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism, and there was a positive significant relationship between organizational support and locus of control, particularly internal locus of control. Conversely, there was a negative significant relationship between organizational support and external locus of control. On the other hand, organizational cynicism had a negative significant relationship with locus of control, particularly internal locus of control, and a positive significant relationship with external locus of control. Therefore, locus of control was identified as the mediating variable in the relationship between organizational support and organizational cynicism.

School employees who perceive low levels of organizational support may experience negative emotions such as disappointment, unhappiness, and helplessness, which can ultimately lead to cynical attitudes. The Affective Event Theory (AET) explains that perceptions of organizational support can trigger various responses in individuals (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996), and this theory forms the basis of organizational cynicism. Empirical results obtained in this study support the relationship between perceptions of organizational support and organizational cynicism. Previous literature also supports the negative relationship between organizational support and organizational cynicism, as demonstrated by studies conducted by Brandes et al. (2006), Kasalak and Aksu (2014), and Kerse and Karabey (2019). In fact, Kerse and Karabey (2019) found that employees with a low perception of organizational support tend to exhibit more negative attitudes and behaviors towards their organization as compared to those with a high perception of organizational support. This highlights the importance of ensuring that employees feel supported in order to prevent the development of cynical attitudes.

Research suggests that employees tend to have more positive beliefs about their organization when they identify more strongly with it (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Since organizational support is typically provided to employees by their administrators, the behavior and practices of administrators are closely associated with the organization itself (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Brandes (1997) previously found a negative correlation between organizational support and organizational cynicism, and this current study supports that finding. Specifically, the study found that there is a negative relationship between school personnel’s perception of organizational support and organizational cynicism. Furthermore, school personnel with a low perception of organizational support are more likely to exhibit cynical attitudes towards their organization compared to those with a high perception of organizational support. These findings suggest that providing adequate organizational support to employees, particularly through the behavior and practices of administrators, can help prevent the development of cynical attitudes.

Insufficient promotion opportunities in school organizations may lead to school personnel being unable to fully utilize their capabilities and remaining in lower-level positions than they desire. This can lead to a desire for career progression and advancement, which can positively affect their perception of organizational support (Robbins and Judge, 2013). Additionally, school management may sometimes create obstacles that impede the professional and academic work of school personnel, which can result in a pessimistic attitude towards their personal future expectations (Levent and Keser, 2016). Career problems related to promotion in organizations can also lead to organizational cynicism (Eaton, 2000), while unrealistically high expectations that go unmet can result in cynicism as well (Kanter and Mirvis, 1989).

James (2005) found that the mediating role between perceived organizational support and organizational cynicism is played by the internal locus of control. The current study similarly found that the locus of control acts as a “mediating variable” in the relationship between
organizational support and organizational cynicism. Furthermore, the study revealed that there is a relationship between organizational support and internal locus of control, as well as between organizational cynicism and internal locus of control.

Kraimer and Wayne (2004) define organizational support as the organization’s recognition and reward of an employee’s performance and contribution. Expectancy theory suggests that employees compare their performance and rewards to those of others, and if they perceive a lack of fairness or equity, they may develop cynical attitudes (Kerse and Karabey, 2017). This can lead to the belief that the organization is unjust and lacks equality, which is a factor in the development of cynicism among school employees (Dean et al., 1998). The study found a correlation between organizational support and external locus of control, as well as between organizational cynicism and external locus of control. This suggests that school personnel who perceive low levels of reward support from their organization (external locus of control) and perceive injustices in the distribution of rewards (external locus of control) may develop cynical attitudes.

Employees who have more job autonomy have that internal motivation and self-confidence (Hackman and Oldham, 1976), more creativity (Oldham and Cummings, 1996), less mental strain (Karasek, 1979), more satisfaction with various aspects of the work context (Oldham and Hackman, 1981), and less emotional dissonance (Abraham, 2000), compared with those who have little job autonomy. This situation contributes to the perception of organizational support (Moorman et al., 1998). The current study reveals a correlation between organizational support and internal locus of control and between organizational cynicism and external locus of control. It can be said that school employees may exhibit cynical attitudes while performing their duties because their autonomy (internal locus of control) is restricted to management and directives.

If school employees perceive low levels of organizational support in their workplace, it may lead them to harbor negative thoughts about the school they are employed in (Naus, 2007). Kasalak and Bilgin Aksu (2014) found that the perceived level of organizational support among participants was a crucial factor in predicting organizational cynicism. Based on the results of this study, it appears that changes in the sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism are no longer aligned with organizational support. This could be due to initial variations in school employees' perceptions of organizational support, their personality traits, and the sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism, causing discrepancies in the changes in the sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism.

In this study, it was revealed a significant and negative correlation between organizational support and the sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism. This finding indicated that, as a result of organizational support, school employees’ cognitive cynicism levels were higher than their affective and behavioral dimensions. Therefore, it can be argued that changes in the sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism are inconsistent with the impact of organizational support. This finding is consistent with the research of Kasalak and Bilgin Aksu (2014), but it contradicts the findings of Brandes (1997) and Johnson and O’Leary-Kelly (2003).

Upon examination of the organizational cynicism literature, cognitive cynicism appears to be an attitude based on several fundamental assumptions, such as individuals or organizations lacking principles, being inconsistent, and prone to deception and dishonesty. The organization's benefit is also prioritized in all actions within the organization, and that employees can be ignored (Brandes, 1997). School employees can also exhibit various affective reactions towards their school, such as unethical behavior, fear, paranoia, and pessimism during work processes within the school (Pelletier and Bligh, 2008). The present study determined that the perceived level of organizational support among school employees significantly affects their cynicism levels, which consist of reactions to the school such as stress, anxiety, and anger. The perception of organizational support was found to be a determining factor in behavioral cynical attitudes, such as criticizing school employees, making fun of their symbols and values, and complaining.

The present study revealed that locus of control acts as a "mediator variable" in the relationship between organizational support and organizational cynicism. Additionally, a low level of correlation was found between organizational support and external locus of control, whereas a high level of correlation was found between organizational support and internal locus of control. Conversely, the relationship between organizational cynicism and external locus of control was high, while the relationship between internal locus of control and organizational cynicism was low. In this study, school employees exhibit low levels of organizational cynicism when they perceive high levels of organizational support from the school or administration and have a dominant internal locus of control. Conversely, school personnel with an external locus of control who perceive low levels of organizational support from the school or administration and attribute this to the school’s interpretation and administration tend to exhibit high levels of organizational cynicism. According to Yildirim (2022), the likelihood of decreasing the level of organizational support is not objective but subjective, as school employees develop cynical attitudes by perceiving and interpreting a reduction in organizational support resulting from their actions. Also, the development of cynical attitudes in response to a decrease in organizational support can be influenced by previous experiences of similar situations. For example, a school employee who has reacted and corrected a decrease
in support of their previous workplace may believe that they can also correct the support level of their current school by criticizing the administration. According to Burger (2008) such expectations can shape a person’s personality by influencing their stable behavior patterns, leading to consistency in their behavior.

In school organizations, it is important to create a positive and supportive school culture where school employees feel valued and appreciated. School leaders can achieve this by encouraging open communication, providing opportunities for professional development, and recognizing the efforts and contributions of their employees. In addition, school leaders should strive to establish fair and transparent policies and procedures that promote trust and reduce the perception of unfair treatment among school employees. Finally, it is important to note that organizational cynicism is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, and there are no easy solutions for addressing it. However, by promoting a supportive school culture, providing opportunities for professional development, and establishing fair policies and procedures, school leaders can help to reduce the levels of cynicism among their employees and create a more positive and productive work environment.

In this study, organizational cynicism was determined solely by the perceptions of school personnel. Other factors that contribute to organizational cynicism, mediating variables, regulators, and the impact of cynicism on individuals are all topics that can be studied. Since this study is designed with a positivist paradigm approach, the relationship among organizational support, organizational cynicism, and locus of control can be studied by conducting different studies from the positivist paradigm.

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