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THE EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DESTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL CYNICISM: THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT BREACH

Yıkıcı Liderlik İle Örgütsel Sinizm Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi: Psikolojik Sözleşme İhlalinin Aracı Rolü

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ÖZET

In this study, the predispositions of organizational cynicism in the workplace was examined in terms of individual psychosocial variables. As a consequent of the literature research and theoretical background investigations, it can be argued that there may be perceptions of destructive leadership in the workplace as a psychosocial variable among the variables that can explicate organizational cynicism. In addition, it is assumed that the relationship between destructive leadership and organizational cynicism may change according to certain situational factors and it can be assumed that psychological contract breach may have a mediator role. The research was conducted on the participants working in organizations from manufacturing, fast-moving consumer products, telecommunication, energy, finance, and education sectors in Istanbul. Exploratory factor analyses were carried out on the gathered data (N=260) and multiple regression analyses were conducted in order to test the hypotheses. Results showed that there is a significant association between destructive leadership and organizational cynicism. Moreover, it was observed that psychological contract breach has a mediating role on the relationship between destructive leadership and organizational cynicism. The findings were evaluated with the conceptual and practical implications. This paper is based on a PhD thesis, titled "The Relations of Perceived Destructive Leadership and Self-Consturals with Employees' Personal Psychological Disharmony and Organizational Cynicism: The Roles of Psychological Need Thwarting, Psychological Contract Breach and Task Significance".

Keywords: Organizational Cynicism, Destructive Leadership, Psychological Contract Breach

ABSTRACT

Bu çalışmada, çalışanların örgütsel sinizm düzeyleri ve örgütsel sinizmin öncülleri bireysel psikosozal değişkenler bağlamında incelenmiştir. Literatür araştırması ve teorik arka plan incelemeleri ardından, örgütsel sinizmi açıklayabilecek değişkenler arasında bir psikosozal değişken olarak çalışanların deneyimlediği yıkıcı liderliğin olduğu görülmüştür. Bununla birlikte, örgütsel sinizm ile yıkıcı liderlik arasındaki ilişkide birtakım durumsal faktörler aracılığıyla gerçekleşebileceği öne sürülerek psikolojik sözleşme ihlalinin bir aracı rolü olabileceği varsayılmıştır. Araştırma, İstanbul ilinde üretim, hızlı tüketim malları, telekomünikasyon, enerji, finans, eğitim gibi sektörlerde çalışmakta olan bireyler üzerinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Elde edilen verilere (N=260) keşfedici faktör analizi uygulanmış ve hipotezleri test etmek amacıyla çoklu regresyon analizi yapılmıştır. Bulgulara göre çalışanların algıladığı yıkıcı liderlik ile örgütsel sinizm arasında anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra, bireylerin psikolojik sözleşme ihlalinin yıkıcı liderlik ile örgütsel sinizm arasındaki ilişkide aracı rolü olduğu görülmüştür. Elde edilen sonuçlar, kuramsal ve uygulamaya yönelik değerlendirmelerle birlikte tartışılmıştır. Bu makale "Algılanan Yıkıcı Liderlik ve Benlik Kurgularının Psikolojik Uyumsuzluk ve Örgütsel Sinizm ile İlişkisi: Psikolojik İhtiyaç Engellenmesi, Psikolojik Sözleşme İhlali ve İşin Anlamlılığının Rollerini" adlı doktora tezinden türetilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Örgütsel Sinizm, Yıkıcı Liderlik, Psikolojik Sözleşme İhlali

1. INTRODUCTION

Both organizations and individuals are constantly seeking ways to maximize their outcomes to reach their needs and goals. With the contribution of today's economy, it is vital for interacting parties to make robust choices between competition and cooperation. Even though, it might be useful to expect that other parties may behave in a self-serving manner, doubting others' about their intentions constantly might be costly both at a relational and an individual level.

In this respect, organizational cynicism includes a dissatisfaction towards organizations as a consequence of the belief that organizations tend to engage in behaviors that involve little ethical concern, such as fairness, integrity and cooperation (Özler and Atalay, 2011). As the studies demonstrated that organizational cynicism is highly prevalent, the concept gained major influence in organizational research in the last two decades (Chiaburu et.al., 2013).

Although it might be suggested that organizational cynicism may emerge simply as a result of low work ethic or inability to understand organizational dynamics, it can also be argued that it is an end product of suboptimal organizational interactions (Cole, Bruch and Vogel, 2006). In addition, organizations suffer from organizational cynicism, just as employees do, and it is related with wide variety of work outcomes, such as suboptimal performance, absenteeism, and turnover (Andersson, 1996; Dean, Brandes, and Dharwadkar, 1998). Thus, approaching the concept from an wider perspective is necessary. To dive deeper into the concept, one of the main research question of the present study will be:

Question 1: Do the employees in organizations engage in organizational cynicism?

As a multivariate concept, it is crucial to understand the underlying dynamics of organizational cynicism. Studies have shown that organizational cynicism is a construct that have strong relationship with leadership practices. More specifically, constructive leadership patterns are correlated with lower levels of organizational cynicism in subordinates (Wu, Neubert and Yi, 2007). On the other hand, employees who experience loss of faith in their leaders, low quality of interaction with them, and ineffective leadership are more likely to engage on organizational cynicism (Davis and Gardner, 2004; Dobbs, 2014). Therefore, another main research question of the study will be:

Question 2: Are leadership practices of the leaders and organizational cynicism levels of subordinates associated?

For one thing, it is vital to understand the underlying psychological mechanism about the relationship between leadership and organizational cynicism. As a violation of unwritten rules between organization and employee on behalf of organization, psychological contract breach shed light on the association between these constructs. For this reason, final research question of the present study will be:

Question 3: Does psychological contract breach play a role on the relationship between leadership and organizational cynicism of employees?

To sum up, this research investigates the managerial variables that are related to organizational cynicism, as well as the psychosocial factors that connect these concepts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Concept of Organizational Cynicism

As a philosophical term, cynicism dates back to Antique Greece, 4th century (B.C.). Philosophers known as Stoics explicated virtue as avoiding pleasures and problems, and adopting determination, bravery and integrity, although they argued that these individuals were rare to the utmost (Brandes, Dharwadkar, and Dean, 1999).

In organizational behavior, organizational cynicism stands for a condescending attitude towards one's organization due to the lack of concern between different parties (Chiaburu et.al., 2013). The fundamental framework that covers organizational cynicism consists of three sub-categories; cognitive, affective and behavioral (Neves, 2012). At the cognitive level, employees may believe that organizations do not behave fairly due to a lack of integrity, which can render them hopeless about their circumstances (Davis and Gardner, 2004). In relation to that, employees may feel frustration, resentment and anxiety towards their

organization at the affective level. Correspondingly, employees may engage in derogatory behavior towards their organizations in line with their opinions and emotions (Andersson, 1996).

Conceptually, organizational cynicism can be explained through Adams' (1965) equity theory. According to Adams (1965), employees look for alternative ways to maximize their profit and they are immensely sensitive to perceived inequity. If employees sense that organizations do not meet mutual goals, they may seek ways to resolve the issue, or decrease their effort as a reaction (Kanter and Mirvis, 1991). In addition, Rotter (1967)'s trust theory provides a theoretical framework to explicate the organizational cynicism. Rotter (1967) argues that behavioral preferences in interpersonal relationships are shaped by the level of trust between individuals. Thus, if leaders in the organizations and subordinates have lower levels of trust to each other, organizational cynicism is likely to emerge (James, 2005).

2.2. The Concept of Destructive Leadership

In organizational behavior, researchers have focused primarily on constructive side of leadership. In many classic leadership approaches, like trait approaches, Ohio State studies, and managerial grid (Judge, Heller, and Mount, 2002), which were followed by postmodern approaches like transformational leadership (Bass, 1997), ethical leadership (Brown and Trevino, 2006), servant leadership (Rieser, 1995), scholars emphasized positive qualities of leadership, with the intention to figure out "What makes a good leader?". However, occurrence of suboptimal leadership practices is also a major concern for organizations, and spotting destructive properties of leadership is also valuable for the relevant literature (Einarsen, Aasland, and Skogstad, 2007).

Poor leadership leads to several negative results on employees and organizations. However, studies demonstrate that suboptimal leadership is not simply a result of organizational inefficiency and social stress, but there are certain leadership orientations that have unfavorable effect on employees (Shaw, Erickson and Harvey, 2011). In this respect, scholars coined the term of destructive leadership to cover leadership practices that adversely influence subordinates' behaviors (Larsson, Brandebo, and Nilsson, 2012).

Destructive leadership is the repeated and systematic leadership behavior that has unfavorable effect on the organization through inefficient use of human capital by decreased motivation, well-being or job satisfaction (Brandebo, Nilsson, and Larsson, 2016). Particularly, it emerges as a deliberate, maladaptive behavioral pattern of leaders that discourage subordinates to pursue organizational goals. To put it another way, what distinguishes destructive leadership from suboptimal leader outcomes is the fact that destructive leaders deliberately use ineffective methods that would recklessly hinder the pursuit of organizational goals (Einarsen et.al., 2007). From this point of view, destructive leadership is about managerial behaviors that are perceived as inhibitive.

In addition to volitional use of hostile behaviors, destructive leadership includes the use of those behaviors continuously and for a relatively longer time (Larsson et.al., 2012). At times, employees from all levels might be required to adapt to conflicting situations with managers, which may have negative effects on subordinates' behalf. However, destructive leadership includes repetitive use of maladaptive leadership behaviors, excluding occasional, unintentional misuse of power (Einarsen et.al., 2007).

Moreover, destructive leadership encapsulates both passive and active behavioral patterns. In another saying, not only deliberate and blatantly hostile behaviors, but passive forms of ineffective leadership is included in the concept of destructive leadership. Thus, the concept includes maladaptive leadership than may lead to several individual-level unfavorable consequences (Kellerman, 2004).

In this respect, Shaw and colleagues (2011) had come up with a destructive leadership framework consisting of six sub-categories. First, authoritarian leadership includes micro-managing and overcontrolling behavior patterns. Second, inadequate leadership includes insufficient skills on concepts like lack of negotiation abilities, not having skills to meet the demands of the job, inability to improve and motivate employees. Third, unethical behaviors involves inconvenient leadership uses such as lying, cheating, and other unethical behaviors. Fourth, inability to deal with new technology and other changes covers incompetency in adapting to new work-related methods, as well as changes. Fifth, callousness toward subordinates encapsulates being negligent and using poor communication skills. Sixth, nepotism includes favoring some employees over others.

2.3. The Concept of Psychological Contract Breach

Employees and organizations cooperate with the aim to reach personally meaningful outcomes. Expecting reciprocation from the other party, both employees and organizations form a bond which involves both consideration of economic and emotional outcomes (Kirel, 2000). Thus, it might be shallow to argue that what maintains the reciprocal relationship between employees and organizations are signed contracts that provides formality to the mutual responsibilities between them. However, economic and sociocultural conditions had enormous impact on how both employees and organizations perceive their effect on other party (Dunn and Schweitzer, 2005). From this perspective, violation of psychological contract plays a critical role on the relationship between employees and their organizations.

Psychological contract breach can be defined as the set of beliefs that there is a mutual obligation between interacting parties regarding the interests of each (Conway and Briner, 2005). Even though it might be unwritten and informal, individuals expect other parties to respect their interests in the pursuit of others' goals. As the organizational level of psychological contract breach gained prominence, two fundamental properties of the concept emerged that shed light on the gap between the perceived inequality between organizational practices and employees' expectations. Rousseau (2004) argued that psychological contract is based on the obligations regarding the employment relationship. Since psychological contract breach, as is psychological contract, is subjective in nature, the gap between actual situation and expectation can be major. Second, psychological contract breach is associated with expectations rather than genuine obligations on organizations' behalf. Thus, expectations that are shaped by former experiences and personal observation may aggravate the perceived intentional violence on perceptual commitments.

Psychological contract breach has several adverse impacts on employees' side. Preemptively, psychological contract breach is associated with affective reactions, which can be categorized under two main responses. On one side, psychological contract breach may trigger frustration and anger. Research has found that breach has strong associations with feelings of violation in employees (Zhao et.al., 2007). On the other side, breach is related to mistrust on organizations. Perceived violation of commitments lead employees to be distrustful towards their organizations and feel distress as a consequence (Young and Daniel, 2003).

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESES

3.1. The Relationship Between Destructive Leadership and Organizational Cynicism

Researchers have attempted to shed light on the factors that are associated with organizational cynicism and found individual, interactional and organizational factors that may worsen it. Organizations are based on social interactions between multiple parties seeking ways to maximize their outcomes. Thus, employees expect the employment relationship to meet their psychological needs (Eaton, 2000). In his expectancy theory, Vroom (1964) argues that these expectations are shaped by three factors; expectancy, instrumentality and valence. More specifically, if an employee is guaranteed that her contributions to the organization will be returned favorably, she has skills and tools to meet expected performance, and the reward carries personal meaning, she will be eager to show higher performance (Lunenburg, 2011). On the contrary, if the the reward is not guaranteed, then an employee would be suspicious about organizations' goals, feel discouraged and fail to actualize her potential. As leaders are the parties that mediate the relationship with organizations, employees who believe that managers are unlikely to reciprocate for their higher performance would lead to increase organizational cynicism. Relevant research shows that behavioral integrity of leaders is linked to diminished organizational cynicism in employees (Kannan-Narashiman, and Lawrence, 2012).

In addition, Blau's (1964) Social Exchange Theory provides a framework on the association between leadership and organizational cynicism. Blau (1964) argues that social exchanges are based on the tendency to increase personally meaningful rewards through deliberate and goal-directed behavior with the expectation of reciprocation, and lack of opportunity to reach these rewards would result in decreased motivation to show superior performance. For this reason, interactions with leaders that do not provide development opportunities, continuous feedback, personal concern and opportunity to exercise autonomy would result in the organizational cynicism (Mete, 2013).

From this perspective, organizational cynicism is a construct that have strong linkage with leadership. Specifically, distrust towards leaders, poor interaction with them, perceptions of little ethical concern, and

incompetent leadership may result in organizational cynicism of employees (Davis and Gardner, 2004). Research provided evidence on the relationship between organizational cynicism and leadership. To be more precise, organizational cynicism has been found to be positively correlated with toxic leadership (Dobbs, 2014), and Machiavellian leadership (Gkorezis, Bellou, and Skemperis, N., 2015), while it has inverse associations with transformational leadership (Wu et.al., 2017), perceived supervisor support (Cole et.al., 2006), and empowering leadership (Lorinkova and Perry, 2017). From this point forth, organizational cynicism may be related with destructive leadership. Thus, below hypothesis has been generated in the light of the research:

H₁: There is a positive relationship between destructive leadership and organizational cynicism.

3.2. The Mediating Role of Psychological Contract Breach

Relevant literature demonstrated that lack of trust towards management, feelings of disappointment as a consequence of continuous self-serving behavior on behalf of organizations, detached and avoidant behavioral tendencies by employees are associated with organizational cynicism (O'Leary, 2003; Tokgöz and Yılmaz, 2008). Numerous studies explicated several factors that may inflame organizationally cynic tendencies at individual, managerial and organizational levels. At the managerial level, organizational cynicism have been found to be associated with authoritarian leadership (Jiang et.al., 2017), servant leadership (Peng, Jien and Lin, 2016) and perceived supervisor support (Cole et.al., 2006). On the other side of the coin, it is critical to understand the psychological mechanism on the relationship between leadership and organizational cynicism. In this respect, psychological contract breach is a concept that may explain organizational cynicism by providing an underlying psychological rationale. Breach of unwritten rules between organization and employee by organization, is likely to lead to perceptions of injustice, and indirectly, organizational cynicism (Griep and Vantilborgh, 2018; Bashir and Nasir, 2013).

From this viewpoint, the role of psychological contract breach on the relationship between destructive leadership and organizational cynicism can be explained by Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), and Justice Theory (Greenberg, 1990). Since, organizations are based on the formal and informal interactions between multiple parties, just and safe environment for all parties has immense importance when it comes to the pursuit of individual and organizational goals. In this regard, psychological contract breach can be defined as volitional breach of employee rights, and it linked to the perceptions of unfairness (Dunn and Schweitzer, 2005). According to Blau (1964), the behaviors of each party, including organization, managers, employees and so on, can be considered as a point on an ongoing interactional continuum, and certain action may be explained as a reaction to a behavioral pattern that the person has been objected to (Çetinkaya and Özkara, 2015). Thus, an employee who believes that her leader, who may represent her organization, does not meet the unwritten employment rules might tend to engage in organizational cynicism (Chiaburu et.al., 2003). Apart from that, the relationship between these variables may be explicated by Greenberg's (1990) Justice Theory. Greenberg (1990) argues that individuals moderate their behaviors according to the behaviors that they had been subjected to. Thus, when they believe that they are treated unfairly, individuals are likely to compensate the situation through unfavorable ways for the other party. Consequently, individuals who perceive unjust behaviors from their leaders likely to have negative attitudes towards both leaders and organizations, and demonstrate organizational cynicism.

In this respect, below hypothesis has been proposed in the light of relevant literature:

H₂ Psychological contract breach mediates the relationship between destructive leadership and organizational cynicism.

4. METHOD

4.1. Sample and Data Collection

The data in the study was gathered from a sample of 260 participants from several private sectors in Turkey. Regarding the importance of employee behaviors, it is critical to comprehend the rationale for their workplace behaviors. From this perspective, the study aims to provide organizations by studying reasons for employee attitudes and behaviors. Thus, the sample was limited to private sector employees from various sectors located in İstanbul. The participants were individual contributors, first-level and middle-level managers. Employees in senior management roles were not included in the sample, as participants were asked to evaluate their current managers.

Online and paper-based surveys were utilized in the study as the data collection method. 173 surveys were obtained through online surveys, and remaining 87 responses were gathered by paper-based surveys. 46% of the participants were female, while 54% were male. Regarding the age, 7% was below 25 years of age, 47% was between 25 and 30, 28% was between 30 and 35, 14% was between 35 and 45, and remaining 4% was above 45 years of age. In terms of education level, 55% of the participants had Bachelor's degree, 42% had Master's degree, and 3% had Philosophy degree. With regard to the total work experience of the employees, 10% had less than 2 years, 27% had between 2 and 5 years, 46% had between 10 and 15 years, 10% had between 10 and 15 years of experience, and 7% had 15 years of work experience or more. Concerning the work experience in the current organization, 25% had less than 1 year, 43% had between 1 and 3 years, 22% had between 3 and 5 years, 6% had between 5 and 10 years, and 3% had more than 10 years of experience in their current organizations.

4.2. Survey Instruments

In the present study, three different scales were used to measure the variables. All the scales were responded by employees on a 6-point rating scale, ranging from "1=totally disagree" and "6=totally agree".

The level of destructive leadership perception on employees was measured by Shaw and colleagues' (2011) study. In the original study, destructive leadership was measured by Destructive Leadership Questionnaire (DLQ), which had a total of 28 items. Adaptation of the scale to Turkish language was conducted by Uymaz (2013), and Cronbach alpha value of the scale was found to be 0.96. Destructive Leadership Questionnaire (DLQ) had six subscales, namely authoritarian leadership, inadequate leadership skills, unethical behaviors, inability to deal with technology and other changes, callousness towards subordinates, and nepotism. The example items for authoritarian leadership was "My boss is tyrant", inadequate leadership skills was "My boss has no idea what it takes to motivate subordinates", unethical behaviors was "My boss often acts in an unethical manner", inability to deal with technology and other changes was "My boss avoids having to use new technology", callousness towards subordinates was "I rarely know what my boss expects of me", and nepotism was "My boss tends to show excessive favoritism". None of the items had less than 0.50 factor loadings, therefore no items were excluded.

Psychological contract breach level of employees was measured by Robinson and Rousseau's (1994) Psychological Contract Breach Scale (PCBS). Psychological contract breach was measured with 9 items, which was unidimensional. Adaptation to Turkish language was conducted by Çetinkaya and Özkara (2015), and Cronbach alpha value was 0.78. Exemplary items of the scale were "I feel betrayed by my organization" and "I feel a great deal of anger toward my organization". All the items in this scale had factor loadings of 0.50 or above, thus none of the items were excluded.

Finally, organizational cynicism level of employees was measured by Brandes and colleagues's (1995) Organizational Cynicism Scale. The scale consists of 13 questions, in total. Turkish language adaptation was conducted by Karacaoğlu and İnce (2012), which revealed 0.91 Cronbach alpha value. There are three subscales of Organizational Cynicism Scale, namely, affective cynicism, cognitive cynicism, and behavioral cynicism. The exemplary items of affective cynicism is "When I think about my company, I experience aggravation", cognitive cynicism is "My company's policies, goals and practices seem to have little in common", and behavioral cynicism is "I complain with my friends outside the company about how I work is being carried out in the company."

5. THE STUDY FINDINGS

5.1. Descriptive, Factor, and Reliability Analyses

The statistical analyses of the present study was carried out using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Firstly, factor analyses and Cronbach alpha values of the scales were conducted in order to test the relationships among variables. Results have shown that, Cronbach alpha value of the scales had high internal reliability coefficient and KMO coefficients were on a significance level. Mean and standard deviations values of the variables are shown in Table 1, and factor loadings of the scale were presented in Table 2.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations

	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Destructive Leadership	2,76	1,41
Psychological Contract Breach	2,76	1,23
Organizational Cynicism	2,82	1,15

Table 2. Factor Loadings and Cronbach Alpha Values of Scale

	% Variance Explained	Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha	KMO
Destructive Leadership	78,34	0,94	0,95	0,97
Psychological Contract Breach	82,04	0,95	0,94	0,90
Organizational Cynicism	81,20	0,92	0,95	0,92

5.2. Findings of the Test of Hypotheses

The correlations analyses were conducted by Pearson correlation test in order to identify the relationship between independent, dependent, and mediator variables of the study. As correlation analysis showed that (N=260; p=0,000) there are moderate positive correlation (r=0,627) between destructive leadership and organizational cynicism (p=0,000), moderate positive correlation (r=0,621) between destructive leadership and psychological contract breach (p=0,000), and moderate positive correlation between (r=0,690) psychological contract breach and organizational cynicism (p=0,000), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation Results of the Variables

	M	SS	1	2	3
1. Destructive Leadership	2,76	1,41	1	0,621**	0,627**
2. Psych.Contract Breach	2,76	1,23	0,621**	1	0,690**
3. Organizational Cynicism	2,82	1,15	0,627**	0,690**	1

N=260; **p<0,000

The correlation analysis showed that there was a significant correlation between destructive leadership and organizational cynicism. Thus, the first hypothesis (H₁) was supported. In addition, there was a significant correlation between psychological contract breach and organizational cynicism. Then, regression analysis, in line with Baron and Kenny (1986)'s method, was applied in order to test the second hypothesis of the study. In the first step, a regression analysis was conducted between independent variable and mediating variable. In the second step, a regression analysis was performed between independent variable and dependent variable. In third step, the effect of independent variable and dependent variable by including the mediating variable. In this respect, the mediating role of psychological contract breach on the relationship between destructive leadership and organizational cynicism was examined. Results demonstrated that both first and second steps possess significant results ($\beta = 0.621$, $p < .001$, $F = 162,094$; $\beta = 0.627$, $p < 0.001$, $F = 167,499$) which aligns with Baron and Kenny (1986)'s first two steps. After the addition of mediating variable into the regression analysis, the impact of the independent variable on dependent variable remained as insignificant, and the mediator variable had significant results ($\beta = 0.324$, $p < 0.001$, $F = 151.141$). Thus, it can be concluded that psychological contract breach had a partial mediator role on the relationship between destructive leadership and organizational cynicism. In this respect, second hypothesis (H₂) of the study was partially supported.

Table 4. The Mediating Role of Psychological Contract Breach between Destructive Leadership and Organizational Cynicism

Dependent Variable: Organizational Cynicism					
Independent Variables	B	β	R ²	Adj. R ²	F
Step 1 Destructive Leadership	0.667**	0.621**	0.386**	0.383**	162.094
Step 2 Destructive Leadership	0.633**	0.627**	0.394**	0.391**	167.499
Step 3 Destructive Leadership Psychological Contract Breach	0.327** 0.459**	0.324** 0.489**	0.540**	0.537**	151.141

*p<0.05; **p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Step 1: Dependent Variable: Psychological Contract Breach; Independent Variable: Destructive Leadership

Step 2: Dependent Variable: Organizational Cynicism; Independent Variable: Destructive Leadership

Step 3: Dependent Variable: Organizational Cynicism; Independent Variable: Destructive Leadership and Psychological Contract Breach



6. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The present study concentrates on the relationship between destructive leadership and organizational cynicism, as well as the role of psychological contract breach on this association. It is doubtless that numerous organizational variables play a role on the relationships between employees, leaders, and organizations. Thus, to approach organizational variables from a wider and integrative perspective while understanding humans at organizations and solving their problems is critical. In this respect, the sample was chosen from employees with various sectors to increase generalizability of the results.

The first finding regarding the hypotheses of the study was that destructive leadership and organizational cynicism were related. Luckily, the mean scores of destructive leadership ($M=2,76$) and organizational cynicism ($M=2,82$) were relatively low. On the other hand higher scores on either construct was associated with higher scores on the other, and vice versa ($r=0,627$, $p=0,000$). Therefore, first hypothesis (H_1) was supported. This finding is congruent with other studies aiming to explicate the relationship between organizational cynicism and toxic leadership (Dobbs, 2014), authoritarian leadership (Jiang et.al., 2017), and Machiavellian leadership (Gkorezis et.al., 2015). Although suboptimal leadership practices were measured with different scales, our finding is consistent with relevant research.

In addition, psychological contract breach was found to have a mediator role on the relationship between destructive leadership and organizational cynicism. Statistical analysis revealed that psychological contract breach had a partial mediator role on these constructs ($\beta=0,489$, $p=0,000$, $F=151,141$). Thus, second hypothesis (H_2) of the study was supported. Moreover, the mean score for psychological contract breach was 2,76, which was a relatively lower average. This results demonstrate that psychological contract breach provides a modest psychological mechanism on how perceptions of destructive leadership leads to higher levels of organizational cynicism of employees. In this respect, our finding provides consistent results with the studies linking suboptimal leadership patterns and psychological contract breach (Jiang et.al., 2017; Dobbs, 2014), as well as studies that associate psychological contract breach and organizational cynicism (Griep and Vantilborgh, 2018; Bashir and Nasir, 2013).

The present study provided managerial and organizational implications. As the results demonstrated that destructive leadership is associated with organizational cynicism, it is critical for managers to avoid authoritarian behaviors, incompetence, unjust treatments, and creating an environment that provide little autonomy and development opportunities. In addition, managers are not the sole contributor of organizational cynicism. The results also showed that failing to keep promises and violating psychological contract may result in organizationally cynic perceptions, affect, and behaviors. In this respect, it is safe to assume that organizational cynicism may be eluded or decreased as managers and organizations remain cautious.

This study has certain limitations. For one thing, employees' organizational levels were discarded which might play a role on the relationship between constructs, even though participants may vary in terms of the responsibility in their organizations. Apart from that, the present study investigated psychosocial tendencies of individuals overlooking individual characteristics. In this respect, participants' personality traits may have an influence on their tendency to perceive injustice and unethical behaviors quickly. From this perspective, future studies may put personality characteristics into account while examining differences in organizational cynicism and psychological contract breach. In addition, participants may be vulnerable to social desirability bias as the items in the scales may lead individuals to keep their opinions to themselves, even though researchers promised on the privacy of the results in the instructions of the questionnaire set. Last, but not least, both organizational culture and national culture was overlooked in the study which may have immense effect on how individuals may perceive unfair practices on organizations' and managers' behalf. For this reason, future studies may combine qualitative and quantitative methods while examining organizational cynicism and psychological contract breach.

On the other hand, the findings in the present study provides valuable insight about the organizationally cynic tendencies, as well as perceptions of destructive leadership and psychological contract breach, and the associations between these constructs.

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