

A Research on the Relationship between Personnel Empowerment and Organizational Cynicism

Emre İşçi¹, Fatma Ayanoğlu Şişman^{2,*}, Gülfer Bektaş³

1Marmara University, Health Science Faculty, Istanbul, 34470, Turkey
2Marmara University, Management and Organization Department, Istanbul, 34470, Turkey
3Acıbadem University, Health Science Faculty, Istanbul, 34470, Turkey

Abstract In recent years some philosophical concepts are being used to understand and explain the relationship between the employees and the organizations. Cynicism, as being one of these concepts, reflects the employees' negative perceptions and attitudes against the organizations they are working for. Some studies on this specific issue reveal the fact that organizational disappointment decreases in the presence of some organizational dynamics. In this research, personnel empowerment by means of which all the authority and responsibility of work is granted to the person who is performing it as well as the opportunity to use initiative when needed and its impact on organizational disappointment is evaluated. For this purpose a sample including 140 employees working in hospitals has been developed to achieve results in relation to the aim of the research. The results of the research prove the fact that personnel empowerment decreases the level of organizational disappointment ($r=-0,40$; $p<0,05$). In the regression analysis conducted, it has been found out that personnel empowerment explains 16% of organizational disappointment and thus other organizational dynamics and variables are needed to explain cynicism.

Keywords Empowerment, Management, Cynicism, Organization

1. Introduction

The concept of empowerment has been studied and examined in terms of efficiency and performance increase in businesses. Recent studies demonstrate the fact that personnel empowerment has positive impact on employees and studies have begun to be carried out more frequently. Empowerment not only helps build employee self-esteem but also develop positive feelings and attitudes towards the businesses. Consequently, the possibility of individual turnovers decreases while the employees' commitment to the employing organizations and their work performance increase. Cynicism is the negative attitude developed by the individual against the employing organization. One of the most important purposes of a management is to ensure the full competence and efficiency of its employees. It is an obvious fact that the cynic individuals will have lower efficiency and performance levels. Considering the situation one needs to ask how one can remove cynicism. In this respect, the aim of the researcher is to find out whether there is a relationship between organizational cynicism and personnel empowerment or not and if there is such a relationship to define the level personnel empowerment

affects organizational cynicism and whether it decreases or increases cynicism. In this article first of all the concepts of empowerment and cynicism will be evaluated and the research period, the findings obtained throughout the research and solution suggestions will be given in detail.

2. Empowerment

Today's intensely competitive working conditions require new managerial approaches as traditional management mentality proves to be inadequate. One of these approaches is empowerment. Empowerment is about the personnel's authority and decision making responsibility they have on the work they are performing in an organization where the concept of personnel is developed on the very basis of power. Therefore it would be helpful to evaluate the concept of power briefly.

According to Weber power is the ability of a person to make his or her will accepted in a social relationship even against the resistance of others[1]. From another perspective power is the ability to have something done even against the resistance of others.[2] In this respect empowerment is a concept through the implementation of which a person gains power on issues considering the work he or she is obliged to perform.

In organizations empowerment means granting authority and power to the employees to ensure that they are capable of doing the things that they have not been able to do so far in

* Corresponding author:

fatmasisman@yahoo.com (Fatma Ayanoğlu Şişman)

Published online at <http://journal.sapub.org/mm>

Copyright © 2013 Scientific & Academic Publishing. All Rights Reserved

relation to their work.[3] Similarly, conditions in which employees are motivated, believed in their qualifications and encouraged to use their own initiatives indicate the existence of empowerment.[4]

Empowerment is in fact a period through which seniors share their power with juniors or subordinates and seniors transfer their authority of power and control to juniors who have relatively less power and control in the organization. It would not be wrong to state that this period enhances the employees' commitment to the organization as well as their motivation and has a positive impact on organizational elements in the long run[5].

Empowerment is most of the time considered to have the same meaning with the concept of "authorization" and is even used interchangeably with the concept of authorization. However, empowerment means assigning the employee with authority, power and responsibility in relation to the work he or she is supposed to perform and unlike authorization in the act of empowerment such authority, power and responsibility is not withdrawn, it is of permanent nature[6].

3. Cynicism

There are two views about the origin of the concept of cynicism[7].

According to the first view cynicism derives from the Greek word "kyon" which means dog. Cynical individuals prefer a natural life, do not conform to social rules, do not care for their clothing and wander around slatternly and despise what others call civilization. Therefore, the metaphor of "kyon" (dog) has become the symbol of cynics who display unconventional and unusual behavior.

According to the second view it has been suggested that the concept derived from the word "Kynosarges" (gymnasium) where Cynics school was located in.

Organizational cynicism represents an attitude which can be associated with a number of things and which can make generalizations between different targets and a learned belief which develops through experience. In this respect, the concept of organizational cynicism is defined by James as "a type of cynicism associated with attitudes against the employing organization which the individual perceives with negative beliefs, feelings and reacts accordingly; organizational cynicism is the response to the past personal and social experiences which are likely to change as a result of environmental factors." [8]

Different definitions for cynicism:[9]

Author(s)	Year	Definition
Kanter and Mirvis	1989	Cynics are narrow-minded, disappointed people who could not find what they have expected. They believe in the fact that people with whom they are in relationship are egocentric and that they only work for their own benefits.
Batemon	1992	Cynicism reflects negative and distrustful attitude towards authority

		and institutions.
Sukano and Fujitu Andersson	1996	Employee cynicism is an attitude characterized by the feelings of disappointment, hopelessness and being restricted such as despise and distrustfulness towards work organizations, managers and/or other things existing in the workplace.
Vance, Brooks and Telsuk	1996	The belief that there would be a change for the better in the organization but as the situation would continue to grow away from what is considered to be ideal because of reasons out of the control of the cynical person such change is not like to take place.
Recihers, Wanous and Austin	2000	Cynicism about change is associated with loss of faith in the leaders of change and is a response to the previously unsuccessful efforts of change.
Abraham	2000	It is a deep-rooted distrustfulness against others which is based on the generalization that the world is full of people who do not have the ability to feel pleased with social interactions, who are selfish, indifferent and dishonest.
Bakker	2001	Cynicism can be defined as attitudes which "are not right ethically" and actions which are adjusted either directly or indirectly to a means to perform a duty in (challenging) reality.
Stanley, Meyer and Topolnytsky	2005	Cynicism about change is disbelief against a specific organizational program of change and against realities which managements announce or imply.
Naus, Iterson and Roe	2007	The manner through which the members of an organization defend themselves against problematical events and conditions in the working environment.

While defining the concept of organizational cynicism, Mirvis and Kanter pointed out the fact that organizations can be cynical as well. They described cynical organizations as "organizations which apply deceptive and exploitive implementations, develop unilateral relations with their employees, behave in a quick-tempered manner, support administrators who follow a hypocritical policy against their employees and materialize values selfishly." [10]

Types of Cynicism

a) Dispositional Cynicism

Dispositional cynicism is the pathopsychological variable of organizational cynicism. This type of cynicism is also figured in "Cook-Medley Hostility Scale". This invariable idiosyncrasy is defined as cynicism against any kind of human behavior (Dalken, 2004: 17). In dispositional cynicism the person behaves hostile towards others and question people's attitude towards himself even if they have good intentions.

b) Employee Cynicism

Employee cynicism is mainly targeted against big capital owners, senior management and other persons or departments in the work place. The feeling of inequality separates the cynical employee from other employees. This feeling of inequality occurs when the formal employment contract between the employer and the employee is violated as in the violation of psychological contracts between the employer and the employee, which implicitly promise equality, justice and objectivity[11].

c) Work Cynicism

Work (Occupational) Cynicism is usually associated with service sector personnel who are believed to experience clash of roles and uncertainty about their roles[12].

d) Social Cynicism

Social or Institutional cynicism is about the distrustful attitude of citizens against their states or institutions. Social/Institutional cynicism occurs as a result of the violation of the psychological contract between the individual and the society[13].

e) Organizational Change Cynicism

Cynicism about organizational change is defined as “pessimistic views about the efforts of organizations to change and reach the targeted success”[14].

f) Organizational Cynicism

Organizational cynicism is usually associated with the employees’ excessively negative attitudes towards the employing organizations. In organizational cynicism the employee despises the management, accuses it of selfishness, insults and despises his or her colleagues (Dean and others, 1988: 345).

4. Methodology

This research is designed to figure out the impact of personnel empowerment, which is considered to be one of the modern techniques applied in organizations and believed to have a positive effect on the employees’ attitudes towards the employing organization, their work, colleagues and the customers, on organizational cynicism, a philosophical and sociological concept which, in the recent years, has played a significant role in identifying and explaining the relationship between the individual and the organization. The research is planned to cover the health sector and with this purpose the personnel employed in the private hospitals in Istanbul made up the universe of the research. The method of sampling is used in gathering data from the universe because of time and financial restrictions. The hospitals are not homogenous with regard to the number of beds and personnel and the fields they provide service for and for this reason 4 hospitals from different layers are used to develop a sample for the research (See Table 1). Lists and activity data in relation to the hospitals in Istanbul are obtained from “Statistical Yearbook of Inpatient Treatment Institutions” and “Istanbul health Handbook”. Hospitals in Istanbul are divided into layers according to the data obtained from the abovementioned

sources and hospitals that would constitute the sample for the research are chosen randomly from among this list. Hospitals which accepted to participate in the research are included in the sampling.

Table 1. Distribution of the Participants According to the Layers

Layer	n	%
A	44	31,4
B	33	23,6
C	63	45,0
Total	140	100,0

The period of data collection covers the dates between December 2011 and January 2012 and the employees who accepted to participate in the research (n=140) are included in the sampling. Although face to face dialogues were implemented during the process of data collection, the surveys were distributed to the hospital personnel in envelopes and the personnel was asked to put the surveys into a box after they completed them in order to ensure that the data provided would not be influenced depending on distrust.

5. Findings

At the beginning of the research it has been assumed that equal number of participants from the hospitals would participate in the research nevertheless with the belief that trying to even out the number of participants would eventually lead to negative outcomes such as biased results it has been decided and ensured that all the participants would be included in the research.

In the research size of the sample is not measured and data is collected in accordance with the normal distribution in terms of validity and reliability and by taking the fact that the sample would be at least 5 times bigger than the number of articles available in the scale into consideration.

As for the data collection tools, the ones that have been applied in Turkish culture are preferred and with this purpose the personnel empowerment scale which has been adjusted to Turkish culture and whose validity and reliability has been verified by Bolat, Bolat and Seymen who prepared a new scale by preparing 16 questions similar to the ones in the scales developed by Ahearne (2000), Arnold et al (2000) and Gordon (2002).[15] The 9- question scale developed by Vance, Brooks and Tesluk (1997) and obtained from the study of Kalağan and Güzeller[16] is used as the scale for organizational cynicism.

Data obtained throughout the research has been transmitted to electronic environment and analyzed by using the SPSS 11.5 statistical program package. Conformity of the data to the normal distribution values is examined both by drawing histograms and by applying the One-Sample Kolmogorow-Smirnow test and eventually it has been decided that the values are in conformity with the normal distribution. In this respect, parametric tests of significance are used in the research. In the analysis and assessment of the

data frequency tables, extensivity criteria, the Pearson's Correlation test and linear regression tests are applied. As the level of statistical significance 0,05 is used.

In order to define the reliability of the data collection tools the Cronbach alpha values are calculated and the coefficient of 0,94 is obtained for the personnel empowerment scale and the coefficient of 0,73 is obtained for the organizational cynicism scale. The fact that these coefficients are bigger than 0,70 proves the internal consistency of the data

collection tools used in the research. Besides, no article effecting the total correlation between the articles in any of the scales has been observed.

In order to determine the validity of the scales Exploratory Factor Analysis has been performed. At the end of the analysis article 5 in the personnel empowerment scale and article 9 in the organizational cynicism scale are removed from the scale as they did not provide adequate article load value (0,10) between the components.

Table 2. Results of the Factor Analysis for Personnel Empowerment (Varimax rotation is used)

Articles	1 (Variant explanation=27,178)	2 (Variant explanation=23,773)	3 (Variant explanation=21,721)	Factor Cronbach alpha
E12	,862			0,91
E10	,826			
E11	,791			
E9	,774			
E13	,696			
E8	,609			
E7		,845		0,88
E6		,777		
E14		,763		
E15		,658		
E16		,595		
E1			,816	0,88
E2			,786	
E3			,780	
E4			,682	
Percentage of total variant explanation= 72,672				
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy test= ,868				
Bartlett's Test	Chi-square		1712,346	
	s.d		105	
	p		,000	

Articles 1, 2, 3, 4 are classified as significance and importance (making the work meaningful and important); 6, 7, 14, 15, 16 as support (improvement, education and resource); 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 as free will and providing freedom (granting initiative, participation in the decision making process).

Table 3. Results of the factor analysis for organizational cynicism (Varimax rotation is used)

Articles	1 (Variant explanation=23,638)	2 (Variant explanation=22,295)	3 (Variant explanation=21,906)	Factor Cronbach alpha
CI7	,853			0,70
CI1	,848			
CI6		,832		0,64
CI5		,814		
CI4			,773	0,60
CI8			,623	
CI3			,617	
CI2			,584	
Percentage of total variant explanation = 67,839				
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy test = ,592				
Bartlett's Test	Ki-square		266,342	
	s.d		28	
	p		,000	

Although the scale for organizational cynicism has presented a 3-factor structure it is taken into consideration as a single-factor structure in the available literature.

Table 4. Socio-demographic and occupational features of the participants

Features	Categories	n	%
Gender	Male	39	27,9
	Female	93	66,4
	Not indicated	8	5,7
Education	High School	54	38,6
	College	19	13,6
	Bachelor's	21	15,0
	M.A	15	10,7
	Ph.D.	17	12,1
	Not indicated	14	10,0
Administrative Function	None	44	31,4
	None	65	46,4
	Not indicated	31	22,1
Trust in the Supervisor	Yes	108	77,1
	No	15	10,7
	Not indicated	17	12,2
Total		140	100,0

66,4% of the participants are women, 38,6% are high school graduates and 46,4% do not have an administrative function and 77,1% trust their supervisors.

Table 5. Central and extensity criteria for organizational cynicism and personnel empowerment and the participants' ages and the period they have been working for the institution

	Age	Length of the period the participant is working for the institution (Year)	Length of the period the participant is performing the job (Year)	Organizational cynicism	Personnel empowerment	
Mean	33,25	3,02	9,22	2,63	4,08	
Median	32,00	2,00	6,00	2,63	4,13	
Std. Deviation	9,84	4,23	8,25	,81	1,01	
Minimum	19,00	,10	,00	1,13	1,50	
Maximum	60,00	30,00	35,00	4,38	5,63	
Percentiles	25	26,00	1,00	3,00	2,13	3,50
	75	38,00	3,00	13,00	3,28	4,88

The average age of the participants is 33,25 + (9,84), the average organizational cynicism is 2,63+/(0,81) and the average personnel empowerment is 4,08 +/(1,01). Median for the period of time spent in the institution is 2,00 and median for the period the participants are performing their job is 6,00.

Table 6. Correlation between organizational cynicism and personnel empowerment (Pearson's Correlation test is applied)

		EMPOWERMENT	SIGNIFICANCE	SUPPORT	FREE WILL
CYNICISM	r	-,400(**)	-,420(**)	-,376(**)	-,280(**)
	p	,000	,000	,000	,001
	n	138	138	138	138
EMPOWERMENT	r		,841(**)	,857(**)	,893(**)
	p		,000	,000	,000
	n		139	139	139
SIGNIFICANCE	r			,653(**)	,614(**)
	p			,000	,000
	n			139	140
SUPPORT	r				,612(**)
	p				,000
	n				139

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

When the correlation between the participants' organizational cynicism and personnel empowerment is evaluated it has been observed that the general score for empowerment is correlated in a negative direction and at a medium level with significance and support and in a negative direction and at a weak level with free will ($p < 0,05$).

Table 7. Regression analysis for organizational cynicism and personnel empowerment

Independent Variable	Constant	B	β	t	R ²	Adj. R ²	F	P
Personnel Empowerment	3,935	-,320	-,400	-5,094	,160	,154	25,949	,000

* Dependent variable "organizational cynicism", $p < 0,05$

$Y = 3,935 - 0,320x$ in other words organizational cynicism = $3,935 - 0,320$ personnel empowerment

When the regression analysis between organizational cynicism and personnel empowerment is evaluated it has been observed that empowerment explains 0,16 of cynicism. It is obvious in the model that personnel empowerment affects cynicism with the coefficient of -0,32 and according to this finding the regression equation is:

$Y = 3,935 - 0,320x$ in other words organizational cynicism = $3,935 - 0,320$ personnel empowerment

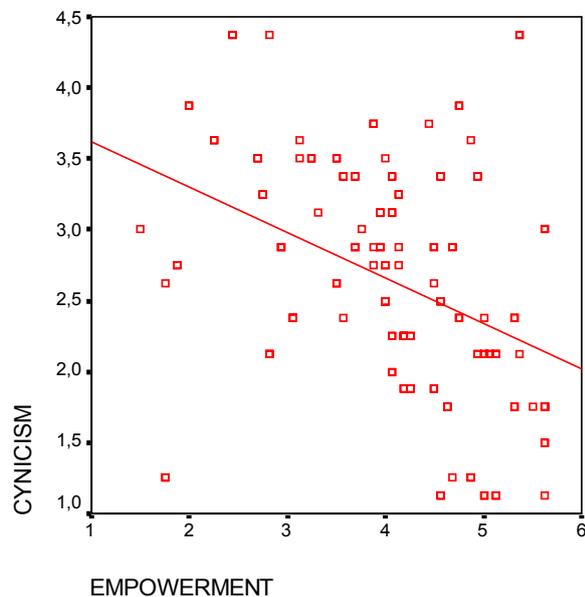


Figure 1. Personnel empowerment and organizational cynicism scatter gram and regression line

6. Conclusions

Personnel empowerment means in brief, granting power and authority to employees. Empowerment also motivates and energizes the employees.

Organizational cynicism can be considered as the negative attitude of the employee against the employing institution. The main three elements of organizational cynicism can be summarized as belief in the fact that the organization lacks honesty, negative feelings towards the organization and expressions stating the dishonesty and insincerity of the organization. Among the reasons for the occurrence of

organizational cynicism disposition, violation of the psychological contract and deficiencies in the leadership behavior can be given.

In this research the relationship between organizational cynicism which is in fact a negative factor in the institutions and personnel empowerment is evaluated.

66,4% of the participants are women, 38,6% are high school graduates and 46,4% do not have an administrative function and 77,1% trust their supervisors.

When the correlation between the participants' organizational cynicism and personnel empowerment is evaluated it has been observed that the general score for empowerment is correlated in a negative direction and at a medium level with significance and support and in a negative direction and at a weak level with free will. When the regression analysis between organizational cynicism and personnel empowerment is evaluated it has been observed that empowerment explains 0,16 of cynicism.

At the end of the research it has been determined that there is a relationship between personnel empowerment and organizational cynicism. Personnel empowerment which is believed to enhance employee motivation and have a positive impact on the employees should also be evaluated from this perspective. The issue of personnel empowerment should seriously be taken into consideration in businesses.

REFERENCES

- [1] Fred Luthans, *Organizational Behaviour*, McGraw Hill, New York, 1992.
- [2] David Krackhardt, *Assesing The Political Landscape: Cognition, and Power Organizations*, Administrative Science Qarterly, New York, p.343
- [3] Michael Donovan, *The Empowerment Plan*, Journal for Quality and Participation, p.12
- [4] Ken Blanchard, John Carlos, Alan Randolph, *Empowerment Takes More Than a Minute*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Fransisco. P.56
- [5] J.A. Conger ve R.N.Kanungo, "The Empowerment Process: Integrating Theory and Practice," *Academy of Management Review*, Volume No:13, Edition No:3, (1988), p.472; Gretchen M. Spreitzer, "Psychological Empowerment in the

- Workplace: Dimensions, Measurement.
- [6] Tamer Kocel, İşletme Yöneticiliği, Arıkan Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005, p.414-416
- [7] M. Gökberk, Felsefe Tarihi, Remzi Kitapevi, İstanbul, 2000.; 48, Haçerlioğlu, O., Düşünce Tarihi. Remzi Kitapevi, İstanbul, 1999, p.76
- [8] James, M.S.L., Antecedents And Consequences Of Cynicism In Organizations: An Examination Of The Potential Positive And Negative Effects On School Systems (Dissertation of Doctor of Philosophy), The Florida State University, Florida, 2005, p.7
- [9] Ersin Şirin, İlköğretim Okullarındaki Öğretmenlerin Okul Kültürü Algıları İle Örgütsel Sinizm Tutumları Arasındaki İlişki (İstanbul İli Esenyurt İlçesi Örneği), Yeditepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Eğitim Yönetimi ve Denetimi Anabilim Dalı, İstanbul-2011, p.28; quoted by Dean vd. (1998), Stanley vd. (2005); Akt.Tokgöz ve Yılmaz (2008).
- [10] P.H. Mirvis, and Kanter, D.L., "Beyond Demography: A Psychographic Profile of The Workforce", Human Resource Management, 30 (1), (1991), p.61
- [11] M.L. Andersson. (November, 1996). Employee cynicism: An examination using a contract violation framework. *Human Relations*, Vol. 49, No. 11; 1403, p.1403
- [12] W.J. Dean, P. Brandes and R. Dharwadkar. (1998), Organizational Cynicism. *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 23, No. 2., p.343
- [13] D. Kanter and P. Mirvis (1991). Cynicism: The New America Malaise. *Business and Society Review*. Spring, p. 59
- [14] M. Brown and Christina Cregan, Organizational Change and Cynicism: The Role of Employee Involvement, Human Resource Management, Winter-2008, Vol:47, No.4, p.668-669
- [15] Oya İnci Bolat, Tamer Bolat ve Oya Aytemiz Seymen, Güçlendirici Lider Davranışları ve Örgütsel Vatandaşlık Davranışı Arasındaki İlişkinin Sosyal Mübadele Kuramından Hareketle İncelenmesi, Balıkesir Üniv. Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, Vol:12, No:21, 2009, p.215-239
- [16] Gamze Kalağan, Cem Oktay Güzeller, Öğretmenlerin Örgütsel Sinizm Düzeylerinin İncelenmesi, Pamukkale Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, Sayı:27, 2010, p.83-97.