SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS, GRATITUDE AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AS PREDICTORS OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CYNICISM

Research article

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Abstract

This study aimed to test the predictive power of teachers' social connectedness and gratitude levels and their demographic characteristics to predict their organizational cynicism perception. The study was designed in a relational survey model. 304 teachers were reached sampled from the population through the snowball sampling method. Data were collected using the Organizational Cynicism Scale, Social Connectedness Scale and, Gratitude Scale. Correlation analysis and hierarchical regression were performed during the analysis. According to correlation analysis results, there were moderate and negative associations between organizational cynicism and social connectedness and gratitude, low and negative association between organizational cynicism and gender, and low and positive associations between organizational cynicism and level of education, and professional seniority. There was no significant association between organizational cynicism and marital status. From this study, it was found that the independent variable, which had the highest predictive value for organizational cynicism, was social connectedness followed by gratitude, and the variable group with the lowest predictive value was found to be demographic variables.

Keywords: teacher, organizational cynicism, social connectedness, gratitude

1. Introduction

Teachers' attitudes towards the school they are working to show what the school means to them and can guide them about what they can do for the school. Negative attitudes and feelings of teachers towards the school mean that they can decrease their contributions to schools in which they work. Negative attitudes teachers develop for the school are defined as organizational cynicism in general (Korkut & Aslan, 2016). With the increase in organizational cynicism, teachers tend to develop negative feelings not only for all works and procedures about the school but also for the stakeholders of the school. This is because some of the feelings and behaviors that occur as a result of the increase in the perception of organizational cynicism are lack of discipline in schools, indifference in performing duties, insincere and inconsistent school climate, exhibiting unethical behaviors related to interests and regarding individual interests before social relationships (Köybaşı, Uğurlu, & Öncel, 2017). When the effects of these feelings and behaviors are considered, organizancal cynicism is a feeling that should not exist in schools. Contrary to organizational cynicism, positive attitudes developed by teachers to schools affect school climate positively, ensure stakeholders of the school trust each other, and cause effective schools to emerge (Hoy & Miskel, 2010). For this reason, determining the factors that cause teachers to develop the feeling of organizational cynicism

can guide administrators in recognizing this feeling, preventing teachers from feeling organizational cynicism and managing this negative feeling. Therefore, it was thought that bringing into the open variables related to teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism is significant for school organizations.

1.1. Literature Review on Organizational Cynicism

Cynicism means disliking or not trusting others (Brandes et al., 2008). Organizational cynicism is also defined as the negative attitudes of the individual towards an organization (Andersson & Bateman, 1997; Dean, Brandes, & Dharwadkar, 1998), or as negative behavior developed especially towards the organization as a result of perceived harm from an individual or an event (Reichers, Wanous, & Austin, 1997). When the definitions in literature are examined, it can be said that organizational cynicism means attitudes towards the organization characterized by negative beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to these, it is a response to the social experiences of the individual within the organization together with environmental effects (Andersson, 1996; Andersson & Bateman, 1997; Dean et al., 1998; Reichers et al., 1997) which is/are seen as an obstacle to the development of the organization.

Organizational cynicism becomes measurable with cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions (Dean et al., 1998). *Cognitive cynicism* expresses the lack of sincerity, honesty, and justice in the organization (Durrah, Chaudhary, & Gharib, 2019). Cognitive cynicism gives the impression that employees are not appreciated and considered significant, thus, they do not show the required effort for their organization (Rehan, Iqbal, Fatima, & Nawabl, 2017). It is known that cognitive cynicism perception is negatively associated with organizational commitment (Bernerth, Armenakis, Field, & Walker, 2007) and decreases the performance in the organization (Abraham, 2000). *Affective cynicism* includes emotional and psychological responses such as violence, tension, anxiety, and discomfort, and it is characterized by feelings of disrespect and frustration with the organization (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). In addition to causing the development of different feelings such as anger and hatred towards the organization, affective cynicism causes a vanity that accompanies the belief in having superior knowledge (Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998). *Behavioural cynicism* refers to critical expressions and negative attitudes frequently used in the organization and consists of cynical humor including criticism, negative behaviors, negative interpretation of the attitudes in the organization, and cynical predictions about future acts of the organization (Rehan et al., 2017). Employees who have such a cynicism feeling show less effort and bad work performance (Lynch, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 1999). In the present study, organizational cynicism was addressed and evaluated from an integrative perspective, not based on dimensions.

The main actor of all stages of the input-output process in educational organizations is the human being. For this reason, they have a dynamic structure and affected by the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of their stakeholders. Thus, organizational cynicism, which is considered to develop negative feelings towards the school and is an undesirable situation in the school, is expected to affect the functioning of schools (Demirtaş. Özdemir, & Küçük, 2016). A high level of cynicism causes teachers to drop out of school, decrease their performance, develop negative attitudes towards the school, and avoid participating in decisions (Akın, 2015). Thinking of being underestimated, giving up making suggestions about the school, thinking that one's efforts are not appreciated, believing that everyone is not treated fairly, and despairing about the future of the school can be stated as teacher feelings and behaviors that can be seen as a result of high organizational cynicism (Kalağan & Güzeller, 2010). Organizational cynicism, which tends to occur when the organization is not trusted, is associated with frustration, hopelessness, and anger (Ajzen, 2001; Andersson, 1996;

Andersson & Bateman, 1997) and has a negative effect on the thoughts of integrity and honesty about the organization one works in (Dean et al., 1998).

When the literature is reviewed, it can be seen that organizational cynicism for schools has been examined increasingly especially in recent years. There are studies that examine the association between teachers' feelings of organizational cynicism and a large number of organizational factors such as administrative support and organization policy (James, 2005; Soomro, Yawer, & Rashid, 2019), transformational leadership (Miller, 2018; Wu, Neubert, & Yi, 2007), democratic leadership (Terzi & Derin, 2016), problem-oriented leadership (Özdem & Sezer, 2019), organizational commitment (Mousa, 2017; Yıldız, 2013; Yüksel & Şahin, 2017), organizational silence (Demirtaş et al., 2016; Sezgin-Nartgün & Kartal, 2013), bureaucratic structure (Demirtaş et al., 2016), organizational justice (Wu et al., 2007), job satisfaction (Özdem & Sezer, 2019; Yim & Moses, 2016) and organizational trust (Akın, 2015). In addition, there are also studies investigating the association between organizational cynicism and organizational commitment (Altınöz, Çöp, & Sığındı, 2011; Özgan, Külekçi, & Özkan, 2012; Yavuz, & Bedük, 2016). For this reason, it can also be said that organizational cynicism is associated with the social connectedness of employees.

1.2. What is Social Connectedness?

Social connectedness is defined as the sense of intimacy that is considered significant for the sense of belonging and is based on the experiences of interpersonal relationships (Lee & Robbins, 2000). Social connectedness has two basic elements, the *relational element* based on the connection with others and the *autonomy element* that expresses how the individual feels in a relationship (Barber & Schluterman, 2008). Social connectedness considered as the last stage of an individual's belonging development is a feeling which has been developed since the beginning of adulthood and continues to develop during university life (Lee & Robbins, 1995; 2000). It can be said that individuals define themselves in association with their social environment. An individual's perception of feeling like a part of his/her social and emotional relations can be accepted as social connectedness (Lee & Robbins, 1998).

Since individuals with strong social connectedness perceive themselves as a part of the social world, they feel safer when they are with other people and because they trust them (Williams & Galliher, 2006) they have lower social anxiety (Lee & Robbins, 2000). Besides, some studies show that social connectedness is associated with life satisfaction (Kara, Gürbüz, Küçük-Kılıç, & Öncü, 2018) and psychological well-being (Hendrickson, Rosen & Aune, 2011). It is also known that high social connectedness develops participating in social environments, managing feelings and needs, and high self-respect (Lee & Robbins, 1995). The individual who does not perceive himself/herself as different from others and otherized can participate in social environments more and satisfy his/her emotional and social needs at a higher level (Duru, 2008). In the light of these assessments, it is possible to say that social connectedness can help to reduce negative feelings towards the organization one works in. In the context of school, there are many factors involved in the development of social connectedness. School practices, practices in the classroom, relationships with the school community, and interpersonal relationships can have positive or negative effects on social connectedness experiences (Bower, van Kraayenoord, & Carroll, 2015). Besides, social connectedness in school is also associated with different positive academic results such as student participation, academic achievement, and expectations of achievement (Woolley, Kol, & Bowen, 2009; Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004). For this reason, highlighting the elements that support the development of social connectedness in schools can enable teachers to develop positive feelings about the school. Thus, it can be possible to create a more positive and more effective school environment.

1.2. What about Gratitude?

Gratitude is one of the concepts about organizational cynicism and social connectedness because gratitude strengthens the individual's relationships with other people (McCullough, Kimeldorf, & Cohen, 2008) and prepares the ground for the individual to show close and helpful behaviors (Bartlett, Condon, & Cruz, 2012). Gratitude emerges as a behavior that goes beyond the individual's self. Thus, gratitude is a feeling which is developed not for the individual himself/herself, but others. It can be said that many events in human life cause gratitude to emerge and that this feeling varies from culture to culture. However, gratitude generally stems from the perception of having gains with others' behaviors without deserving these gains (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002). Lyubomirsky (2008) defined gratitude as realizing the positive sides of events and analyzing deeply, wondering, appreciating, thanking, being aware of what one has, and expressing these to the other side.

It is a known fact that grateful individuals have lower feelings of depression, anxiety, loneliness, and jealousy exhibit less neurotic behavior, and have positive effects on social relationships (Kardaş & Yalçın, 2018). Research results showing that feelings of gratitude are positive in individuals' self-evaluation, reduce depressive symptoms (Lin, 2015; McCullough et al., 2002), and increase positive emotions, optimism (Emmons & McCullough 2003), life satisfaction (Oğuz-Duran & Tan, 2013), and pro-social behaviors (Tsang, 2006), and contributes to relationship satisfaction (Algoe, 2012) showed that individuals with high levels of gratitude tend to develop positive feelings about themselves, their surroundings, and the events that occur. This means that gratitude affects increasing the state of well-being. In addition to these, the relationship of gratitude with normative commitment increases the level of attendance to work (Balay, 2000; Obeng & Ugboro, 2003). Gratitude causes an increase in positive behaviors and organizational performance (Grant, 2012). This is because the feeling of gratitude which causes pro-social behaviors defined as behaviors shown for the benefit of others without any expectations of a reward (Froh, Bono, & Emmons, 2010) to be shown more supports sharing, helping, cooperation, and social relationships (Altıntaş & Bıçakçı, 2017).

Behaviors shown as a result of gratitude can cause individuals to develop their relationships and strengthen their social bonds (Emmons & Shelton, 2002). That is, gratitude can help strengthen supportive social relationships and secure these relationships (Chan, 2013). While gratitude increases motivation to develop social behaviors in the school environment, it causes stronger relationships and participation in schools (Freitas, Pieta, & Tudge, 2011; Froh et al., 2010; Weber & Ruch, 2012). This means that both the need for working in the same environment and on the basis of mutual benefits are the foundation of the social connectedness of employees (Field, 2006).

1.3. Research Problem

Social relationships teachers develop have the potential to affect their feelings towards the school, and one of these feelings is organizational cynicism. Therefore, examining the social bonds which occur as a result of the mutual relationships of teachers with organizational cynicism can help us to understand the feelings teachers develop. In addition to these, it can be expected for the feeling of gratitude, which can be defined as a feeling an individual can have for someone else in his/her social environment, to affect teachers' feelings about the schools they work in. This is because gratitude stems from the perception that an outcome is achieved with the behaviors of other individuals (McCullough et al., 2002) and expresses the tendency to be aware of and appreciate positive things (Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010).

On the other hand, it is also possible to see studies that examine the association of organizational cynicism with personal characteristics such as age, gender, and educational level

(Akın, 2015; Kılıç, 2011; Wu et al., 2007). It was stated that demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, education level, professional seniority (Erdoğan & İraz, 2019), and personality traits (Karadağ, Kılıçoğlu, & Yılmaz, 2014) were effective in the emergence of organizational cynicism. When related studies are examined, it is thought that in addition to individual attitudes and perceptions, organizational cynicism may also be related to demographic variables.

The present study aims to test the predictive power of teachers' social connectedness, gratitude levels, and demographic variables (gender, marital status, education level, and professional seniority) to predict their organizational cynicism perception. The answers to the following questions were sought to reach the aforementioned aim:

1. Is there a significant association between organizational cynicism and teachers' demographic characteristics (gender, marital status, education level, and professional seniority), gratitude, and social connectedness levels?

2. Do teachers' demographic characteristics (gender, marital status, education level, and professional seniority), gratitude, and social connectedness levels predict their organizational cynicism perceptions?

2. Method

2.1. Research Model

The present study was designed in a relational survey model within the scope of quantitative research. The relational survey model is a research model that aims to determine the covariance between two or more variables (Karasar, 2010). Perceptions that remain hidden within the organizational structure can be determined with the help of scales and surveys developed to reveal this perception. For this reason, it was evaluated that the predictive relationships between teachers' organizational cynicism levels and their demographic characteristics, gratitude, and social connectedness levels can be revealed through the relational survey model.

2.2. Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of 3985 teachers working in state schools of a city center in the east of Turkey during the 2019-2020 academic year. In the snowball sampling method, a few events of the type the researcher wishes to study at the beginning may lead the researcher to more events, and gradually more events than expected are reached. The snowball sampling consists of events or subjects that are added while the research is continuing (Punch, 1998). In the snowball sampling method, the process usually starts with the random selection of a subject in the defined population, and other subjects in the sample are reached through this subject. Since the face-to-face interview is a risk due to Covid 19 pandemic, the teachers who were reached from this population with the snowball sampling method were included in the study. First of all, the teachers reached on the phone were told that the survey forms would be sent to them through e-mail or social media, and they were asked to transfer the surveys sent to their colleagues. 304 teachers were reached from the population with this method, and it was found that this number was acceptable at 90% confidence and 4.53% error level. Teachers' demographic characteristics that participate in the sample are given in Table 1.

Table 1. *Teachers' demographic characteristics*

Demographic variables	N	%
Gender	304	
1. Female	156	51.32
2. Male	148	48.68
Marital status	304	
1. Married	225	74.01
2. Single	79	25.99
Education level	304	
1. Undergraduate	236	77.63
2. Graduate	68	22.37

	Min.	Max.	$\overline{X}$	sd
Age	21	63	38.56	8.38
Seniority	1	40	14.14	8.68

When Table 1 is examined, 51.32% (n = 156) of the participants are female, 48.68% (n = 148) are male, 74.01% (n = 225) are married, 25.99% (n = 79) are single, 77.63% (n = 236) have undergraduate degree and 22.37% (n = 68) have graduate degree. Besides, the average age of the teachers is 38.56, while their average professional seniority is 14.14 years.

2.3. Data Collection Instruments

Personal information form was used to find out the teachers' demographic characteristics who participated in the study. Other data of the study were collected with the *Organizational Cynicism Scale*, *Social Connectedness Scale,* and *Gratitude Scale.* Information about the scales is given below.

Organizational Cynicism Scale: The scale originally developed by Vance, Brooks, and Tesluk (1997) was adapted to Turkish by Güzeller and Kalağan (2008). The scale consists of a single dimension and a total of nine Likert-type items. Six of these items are positively worded, while three are negatively worded. Negatively worded items were reversely coded during coding, and a high total scale score means high organizational cynicism perception. Güzeller and Kalağan (2008) calculated the internal consistency coefficient as .83, and the test-retest reliability coefficient as .81. In the present study, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found as .62.

Social Connectedness Scale: The original scale which consists of a single dimension and a total of eight Likert-type items was developed by Lee and Robbins (1995). The internal consistency coefficient of the original scale was calculated as .91 and, the test-retest reliability coefficient was calculated as .96. All of the items in the scale are negatively worded and during coding, the items are reversely coded, and high scores taken from the scale mean high social connectedness. The internal consistency coefficient of the Turkish version of the scale adapted by Duru (2007) was found as .90. In the present study, this value was found as .89.

Gratitude Scale: The scale developed by McCullough et al. (2008) consists of a single dimension and six Likert-type items. Item 3 and item 6 are reversely coded. As a result of the

adaptation of the scale into Turkish by Yüksel and Oğuz-Duran (2012), a measurement explaining 53.27% of the total variance was obtained, and item 6 was omitted from the Turkish form of the scale. While coding the scale items, item 3 was reversely coded and a high total score taken from the scale shows a high gratitude level. Yüksel and Oğuz-Duran (2012) calculated the internal consistency coefficient of the scale as .77, and the test-retest reliability coefficient as .96. Confirmatory factor analysis results of the scale (GFI = .97; CFI = .94; AGFI: 90; SRMR = .04 and RMSEA = .10) confirm the scale structure. In the present study, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found as .72.

2.4. Data Collection

The scales were turned into electronic forms via Google drive forms, and the prepared form was sent to teachers through e-mail and social media. It was decided that the sample size was sufficient when the number of surveys completed reached 310 and the submission of forms was stopped. When the collected forms were checked, it was found that six forms were filled in randomly, and 304 survey forms were evaluated.

2.5. Data Analysis

SPSS 22.0 statistical program was used in the analysis of research data. First of all, lost and extreme values of the data were controlled. Next, mean, standard deviation, and skewness and kurtosis values were examined within the context of descriptive statistics. Table 2 shows the skewness and kurtosis values of descriptive statistics.

Table 2. *Results for descriptive statistics analysis*

Descriptive	N	$\bar{X}$	sd	Skewness	ses	Kurtosis	sek
Organizational cynicism	304	2.6	.64	.03	.14	-.25	.28
Gratitude	304	3.17	.75	-.04	.14	-.03	.28
Social connectedness	304	3.67	.97	-.33	.14	-.59	.28

ses: Std. error skewness; sek: Std. error kurtosis

In Table 2, skewness and kurtosis values range between .03 and -.59. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) stated that in the case of the aforementioned values ranging between ±1, the relative variation coefficient, which expresses the ratio of the standard deviation and the mean as a percentage, is about 25% is considered as evidence for the existence of a normal distribution. Skewness and kurtosis values and the relative variation coefficient obtained from the present study show that these conditions were met. For this reason, the research data met the normality assumption.

Correlation analysis was used to test the association between the teachers' demographic characteristics and organizational cynicism, social connectedness, and gratitude perceptions. Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) was calculated in this context. A correlation coefficient close to +1 shows a positive high association, while a correlation coefficient close to -1 shows a negative high association, and the absolute value of this coefficient being between .70 and 1.00 is accepted as a high association, while the value's being between .70 and .30 is accepted as a moderate association and lower than .30 is accepted as a low association (Büyüköztürk, 2012).

Besides, some assumptions should be tested in studies before regression analysis. One of these assumptions is to determine whether there is a linear collinearity problem between variables, and the other is to determine whether there is autocorrelation in the model after model estimation. The fact that the simple correlation value between the variables being higher

than .80 shows that there is a possibility of linear collinearity problems (Garson, 2012). Tolerance value being higher than .10 and VIF value being lower than 10 mean that there isn't a multicollinearity problem between the variables (Can, 2013). When the relationship between the variables was examined, the correlation coefficients were lower than .80 (see Table 4), and Tolerance and VIF values were within the desired ranges (see Table 3). The related values are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. *Results of multicollinearity and autocorrelation values*

Collinearity statistics	VIF	Tolerance	Autocorrelation	p
Organizational cynicism	1.20	.84		
Social connectedness	1.28	.78		
Gratitude	1.23	.81		
Gender	1.08	.93	.02	.62
Marital status	1.10	.91		
Education level	1.08	.93		
Seniority	1.16	.87		

Table 3 shows that there is no multicollinearity and autocorrelation problem between the variables, and thus that regression analysis can be applied to variables. The calculated autocorrelation coefficient being .02 means that there is no association between error terms (Fox & Weisberg, 2018). After error assumptions related to regression analysis were checked, regression analysis was carried out. The analyses were carried out with hierarchical regression, which is a type of multiple regression. The hierarchical regression is a type of analysis that allows independent variables to be analyzed individually or in groups in the desired order. In the evaluation as a result of the literature review conducted about the variables, demographic characteristics, gratitude, and social connectedness in the model respectively to find out their states of predicting organizational cynicism and thus the variables' levels of predicting organizational cynicism were tested.

3. Results

The findings obtained as a result of data analysis are presented in this section. Table 4 shows the findings regarding the correlation analysis.

Table 4. *Results of correlation analysis*

Variables		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Organizational cynicism	r	—						
2. Social connectedness	r	-.54***	—					
3. Gratitude	r	-.31***	.42***	—				
4. Gender	r	-.12*	.05	-.08	—			
5. Marital status	r	-.09	-.09	.03	-.13*	—		
6. Education level	r	.16**	-.19***	-.09	.11	-.01	—	
7. Seniority	r	.19**	.12*	-.03	.19**	-.28***	-.15*	—

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

When Table 4 is examined, a moderate and negative association was found between organizational cynicism and social connectedness (r = -.54; p < .001) and gratitude (r = -.31; p < .001). Hence, as teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism increase, their perception of social connectedness and gratitude decreases, or conversely, as their perceptions of organizational cynicism decrease, their perceptions of social connectedness and gratitude increase. A low and negative association was found between organizational cynicism and gender (r = -.12; p < .05). This relation means that teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism differ according to their gender, albeit at a low level, and a low and positive association was found between organizational cynicism and education level (r = .16; p < .01) and professional seniority (r = .19; p < .01), while no significant association was found between organizational cynicism and marital status (r = -.09; p >. 05). In other words, it was concluded that as the education levels and professional seniority of teachers increased, their perceptions of organizational cynicism also increased, but their marital status did not cause a change in teachers' perceptions of organizational cynicism.

The demographic variables included in the hierarchical regression model and statistical data regarding social connectedness and gratitude levels of predicting organizational cynicism are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. *Results of the hierarchical regression model for predicting organizational cynicism*

		B	Std. Error	β	t	p	Part r	Partial r
Step 1	(Constant)	2.63	.21		12.66	.00		
	Gender	-.13	.07	-.10	-1.81	.07	-.10	-.10
	Marital status	.05	.09	.04	.61	.54	.03	.04
	Educational level	.24	.09	.15	2.70	.01	.15	.15
	Seniority	-.01	.00	-.14	-2.32	.02	-.13	-.13
Step 2	(Constant)	3.47	.24		14.26	.000		
	Gender	-.16	.07	-.12	-2.27	.02	-.12	-.13
	Marital status	.06	.08	.04	.71	.47	.04	.04
	Educational level	.19	.08	.13	2.32	.02	.12	.13
	Seniority	-.01	.00	-.15	-2.57	.01	-.14	-.15
	Gratitude	-.24	.04	-.31	-5.89	.00	-.31	-.32
Step 3	(Constant)	4.23	.24		17.90	.00		
	Gender	-.12	.06	-.09	-1.83	.07	-.09	-.11
	Marital status	.01	.07	.00	.07	.95	.00	.00
	Educational level	.09	.08	.06	1.17	.24	.06	.07
	Seniority	-.01	.00	-.11	-2.21	.03	-.11	-.13
	Gratitude	-.09	.04	-.14	-2.37	.02	-.11	-.14
	Social connectedness	-.30	.04	-.46	-8.48	.00	-.40	-.44

When Table 5 is reviewed, it was found in the first step that the demographic variables included in the model significantly predicted organizational cynicism together. However, when

the significance of the regression coefficients of each variable was examined, it was found that educational level (β = .15; p < .05) and professional seniority (β = -.14; p < .05) significantly predicted organizational cynicism, while the predictive power of gender and marital status variables were not found to be significant.

It was found that the model variables obtained with the inclusion of the variable of gratitude in the second step of the analysis significantly predicted organizational cynicism together. However, when the regression coefficients of each variable were examined, it was found that gender (β = -.12; p < .05), educational level (β = .13; p < .05), professional seniority (β = -.15; p < .05), and gratitude (β = -.31; p < .05) significantly predicted organizational cynicism, while the predictive power of the marital status variable was not found to be significant.

Finally, when the social connectedness variable was added in the last step, it was found that all of the model variables significantly predicted organizational cynicism together. However, when the significance levels of the regression coefficients of each variable were examined, it was found that professional seniority (β = -.11; p < .05), gratitude (β = -.14; p < .05), and social connectedness (β = -.45; p < .05) predicted organizational cynicism negatively and significantly, while the predictive power of the variables of gender, marital status, and educational level was not found to be significant in this model.

Table 6 shows the fit values of the hierarchical regression models related to the prediction of organizational cynicism by demographic variables, gratitude, and social connectedness.

Table 6. *Fit values of the hierarchical regression model*

	Model Fit Measures				Overall Model Test		
	R	R²	ΔR²	F	df1	df2	p
Step 1	.26a	.07	.07	5.35	4	299	< .001
Step 2	.41b	.16	.10	34.66	1	298	< .001
Step 3	.57c	.33	.16	71.92	1	297	< .001

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Education level, Marital status, Seniority
b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Education level, Marital status, Seniority, Gratitude
c. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Education level, Marital status, Seniority, Gratitude, Social connectedness

Table 6 shows that each of the three different models tested in three steps with hierarchical regression was significant as a whole. In the first step, demographic variables (gender, marital status, education level, and professional seniority) were included in the analysis, while gratitude was included in the second step, and social connectedness was included in the third step. Four demographic variables explained about 7% of organizational cynicism (ΔR^2 = .07; p < .001), while gratitude explained about 10% (ΔR^2 = .10; p < .001), and social connectedness explained about 16% (ΔR^2 = .16; p < .001) significantly. It is possible to say that all independent variables predict 33% of organizational cynicism and that a significant part of organizational cynicism results from the independent variables used in this study. Finally, it was found that the independent variable which had the highest predictive value for organizational cynicism was social connectedness, followed by gratitude, and the variable group with the lowest predictive value was found as demographic variables.

4. Discussion

This study aimed to reveal the effect of the levels of social connectedness and gratitude along with demographic variables in predicting teachers' organizational cynicism levels. In the analyses conducted for this aim, the first result reached was that there was a negative and low association between organizational cynicism and gender, and there was a positive and low

association between organizational cynicism and both educational level and professional seniority. On the other hand, there was no significant association between marital status and organizational cynicism. It was concluded in the regression analysis that demographic variables were significant predictors of organizational cynicism and that a low percentage of organizational cynicism resulted from the demographic variables of teachers. James (2005) stated that demographic variables were associated with organizational cynicism, while organizational environment and intra-organizational relations should not be ignored in the organizational context.

In literature, there are study results which show that there is a moderate association between demographic variables and organizational cynicism (Efilti, Gönen, & Ünal-Öztürk, 2008), organizational cynicism varies in terms of demographic variables (Çınar, Karcıoğlu, & Aslan, 2014), female teachers have higher cynicism perceptions than male teachers and professional seniority has a significant effect on organizational cynicism (Terzi & Derin, 2016). However, there are also studies conducted in the literature that have concluded that demographic variables other than the variable of the family do not influence organizational cynicism (Delken, 2004) and organizational cynicism levels of teachers do not vary in terms of gender and professional seniority (Akın, 2015; Kalağan & Güzeller, 2010; Sezgin-Nartgün & Kartal, 2013). It can be said that there is no consensus between the aforementioned studies. On the other hand, female and male teachers can make sense of the events that occur around them and interpret them in different ways. Besides, the state of having graduate education and higher professional seniority can cause teachers to interpret events that occur in school more positively.

The second result found in the study was that teachers' gratitude levels were moderately and negatively associated with organizational cynicism. Gratitude is an emotion that is the subject of a few studies in organizations. Jacobsen (2013) stated that communication was important for avoiding negative organizational outputs and creating a positive environment in the organization by increasing the sense of gratitude. The result that individuals' levels of optimism and showing social behaviors increase as a result of gratitude (McCullough et al., 2002) showed that organizational cynicism could be related to the feelings of gratitude. In addition to this, Hasan, Mortimer, Lings, and Neale (2017) concluded that gratitude was effective in predicting organizational cynicism. The results of the aforementioned study support the result of the present study that gratitude predicts organizational cynicism. It can be said that the feelings of gratitude enable teachers who are in schools to see the positive sides of events. Teachers' being aware of the values they have and the feeling of appreciation they develop may prevent them from developing negative feelings. For this reason, increasing teachers' feelings of gratitude may decrease the level of organizational cynicism in schools.

Another result of the study was that teachers' levels of social connectedness were moderately and negatively associated with organizational cynicism. Cynicism stems from expectations based on social sharing within the organization (James, 2005). Both poor communication within the organization and insufficient social support are associated with organizational communication (Reichers et al., 1997), and these are concepts associated with low social connectedness (Williams & Galliher, 2006). Teachers' negative beliefs are associated with collaboration, instructional communication, and unity of purpose (Karadağ et al., 2014). The results obtained from the study show that organizational cynicism is closely associated with social connectedness. In this context, it is possible to say that the present study results on predicting the level of organizational cynicism of social connectedness are supported by the literature. Besides, organizational cynicism harms interpersonal relationships, deprives individuals of these relationships, causes poor communication (Andersson, 1996; Dean et al., 1998), and decreases organizational communication (Stanley, Meyer, & Topolnytsky, 2005).

Increasing teachers' social connectedness in schools as a result of developing social relationships in which interaction is high can decrease organizational cynicism. In this sense, it is possible to say that administrators have important duties in schools. Strengthen the communication and social ties between teachers by creating positive and supportive school environments by school administrators can increase teachers' positive feelings towards the school.

James (2005) stated that the organizational environment has direct effects on cynical behaviors and these behaviors significantly affect organizational outcomes. Due to its association with especially performance (Byrne & Hochwarter, 2008; Chiaburu, Peng, Oh, Banks, & Lomeli, 2013) and the fact that it affects both school culture and academic achievement negatively (Karadağ et al., 2014), organizational cynicism is an important issue for schools. In addition to this, low performance can cause organizational cynicism (Andersson & Bateman, 1997), and that teachers' organizational cynicism levels can be decreased with an increase in their performance. On the other hand, besides cynic feelings, humiliating and critical behaviors can occur in organizations (Dean et al., 1998).

Eliminating organizational cynicism in schools may be the best way to get rid of its aforementioned negativities. However, although it seems possible in theory, it may not be possible to eliminate cynic feelings in human-centered organizations such as educational institutions when considered in organizational practice. For this reason, in addition to looking for ways to minimize organizational cynicism perception, school administrators should also find solutions about how they can make use of the presence of cynicism. Vance et al. (1997) stated that individuals show more cynic behaviors when they think that their organization may improve but believe that this possibility is low. In this sense, school administrators should be sensitive about the concept of organizational cynicism and cynical behaviors. Administrators should be able to realize teachers' distancing behaviors such as making fun of the school, making non-constructive criticism, and examine the reasons for these behaviors.

5. Conclusion

Organizational cynicism is a strong emotional state which is common in organizational life and which affects the organization at many different points. Therefore, analyzing organizational cynicism in the context of organizational variables will help us in understanding organizational life. For this reason, the present study examined the levels of teachers' demographic characteristics, gratitude feelings, and social connectedness in predicting organizational cynicism. As a result of the study, while teachers' demographic characteristics had a low power to predict their organizational cynicism perception, both social connectedness and gratitude were important in explaining organizational cynicism in schools. It is a known fact that low organizational cynicism causes to increase in job satisfaction, interpersonal relationships, motivation, and organizational commitment, and it has an indirect effect on the emergence of organizational citizenship behaviors (Andersson, 1996; Abraham, 2000). Organizational cynicism also has effects on organizational performance (Abraham, 2000; Akın, 2015). Besides, teachers with low cynic feelings have a higher potential to get effective and successful school outcomes and to contribute to the school. For this reason, knowing about the factors that cause organizational cynicism will be a guide to school administrators in minimizing and guiding the related behaviors. In this sense, the results obtained should be examined carefully by school administrators.

6. Limitations and Recommendations

The fact that the present study was carried out in only one city in Turkey can be evaluated as a limitation in terms of the generalizability of the study. Besides, due to Covid 19 pandemic,

it was not possible to make face-to-face interviews with the teachers. This situation prevented reaching more teachers. Another limitation of the study was that the data were collected by e-mail and social media through digital forms. It can be recommended to get the opinion of more teachers and support the study data with qualitative data collection processes both for the generalization and explanation of the study findings.

It was found that teachers' organizational cynicism perceptions can be decreased by increasing their social connectedness. For this reason, school administrators can organize social activities to increase teachers' social commitment among teachers and administrators inside and outside the school.

School administrators can be informed about the behaviors of teachers which are derived from organizational cynicism through in-service training. Thus, the administrator who encounters such behaviors can realize the factors that cause the feeling of cynicism early. School administrators can enable teachers' awareness of the positive sides of feelings by increasing their feelings of gratitude. Thus, teachers can be prevented from developing negative feelings towards schools. No studies have been found in the literature on social connectedness and gratitude's predicting organizational cynicism. However, the strong effects of social commitment and gratitude on predicting organizational cynicism can enable researchers to focus more on the relationship between spoken variables and organizational cynicism. Different results are found in the literature on the demographic variables that affect teachers' organizational cynicism. However, this subject can be examined in detail through qualitative research methodology/studies.

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