Research

# The Mediating Role of the Locus of Control in the Impact of Organizational Trust on Organizational Cynicism [1]

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**Abstract:**

*This study aims to examine the mediating role of the locus of control in the effect of organizational trust on organizational cynicism in school organizations with latent variables, including all personnel who directly impact education and training in schools. In this study, the relational scanning model, which is one of the quantitative research methods, was used. The research started with a detailed literature review, and the information on the definitions and theories of the concepts of organizational cynicism, organizational trust, and locus of control were achieved; and a research model was created by developing hypotheses in line with this information. The data of the study were obtained from 385 participants who were selected by simple random sampling method among school personnel working in public schools. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analyses of the obtained data were performed using SPSS and AMOS statistical package programs. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that there is a negative relationship between organizational trust and organizational cynicism, and locus of control has a mediator role in the relationship between organizational trust and organizational cynicism.*

**Keywords:** Organizational trust; organizational cynicism; locus of control; mediation role

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# INTRODUCTION

Effective organizations and teams are characterized by high mutual trust among their members. In these organizations, members believe in each other's talent, character and integrity. But trust is fragile, takes a long time to build, and can be easily destroyed (Robbins & Coulter, 2002). The main idea in the concept of trust is to make inferences about the characteristics of the trusted person such as honesty, accuracy, reliability, and ability, and that these inferences have consequences that determine their work behavior and attitudes (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). In schools which the quality of the relationships between individuals can affect the functioning of the organization relatively more is accepted, creating a climate based on an atmosphere of trust facilitates education to reach its goals (Akin, 2015).

Organizational trust concept; expresses the trust between the employees working together or affiliated with each other, the trust between the superiors and their subordinates, and the trust in the organization as a whole (Guinot, Chiva & Mallén, 2013). When the literature is examined, it appears that organizational trust have benefits or institutions on issues such as follows; organizational commitment for institutions (Fairholm, 1994; Fink, 1992; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; Pillai, Schriesheim & Williams, 1999; Diffie-Couch, 1984; Sonnenburg, 1994; Gilbert & Tang, 1998), productivity (Sonnenburg, 1994), morale (Sonnenburg, 1994; Fairholm, 1994; Diffie-Couch, 1984), organizational citizenship behavior (Pillai, Schriesheim & Williams, 1999; Kanovsky & Pugh, 1994; Nyhan & Marlowe, 1997; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 1990; Deluga, 1995; Brockner, Siegel, Daly, Tyler & Martin, 1997) and job satisfaction (Cook & Wall, 1980; Blake & Mouton, 1982; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Organizational insecurity causes employees to develop negative attitudes towards each other and their organization (Eisinger, 2000).

There are many variables that negatively affect organizational trust within the organization (Lewicki, McAllister & Bies, 1998). One of the variables is thought to negatively affect organizational trust is organizational cynicism (Akin, 2015; Nicholson, Leiter & Laschinger, 2014). Organizational cynicism, which includes negative and destructive emotions, beliefs and behaviors of teachers about the school they work in, negatively affects the school culture and the behaviors of the employees (Karadag, Kilicoglu & Yilmaz, 2014). When the literature is examined, it is revealed that cynicism reduces trust in management, communication within organizations (Stanley, Meyer & Topolnytsk, 2005), and altruistic behavior in organizations (Jordan, Schraeder, Feild & Armenakis, 2007). Andersson (1996) suggested that some personality traits of employees may increase their tendency to display negative behavior. The locus of control, one of these personality traits, explains the individual's beliefs about the level of control of situations and events (James, 2005).

Historically, cynicism is discussed in two different periods, Ancient cynicism and modern cynicism (Laursen, 2009). Ancient Greek cynicism was a school of thought, and lifestyle based on Socrates' thoughts, influenced by the ancient Chinese belief of cynicism (Luck, 1997). Modern cynics, on the other hand, have tried to isolate themselves from the values that society believes in (Vice, 2011). Cynicism today; a new disease of the twentieth century (Cutler, 2000), self-defense (Kanter & Mirvis, 1989), loss of faith in top management (Wanous, Reichers & Austin, 2000); is defined as a new paradigm specifying the pattern of relationships between employer and employee (Feldman, 2000).

Organizational cynicism is a multidimensional concept that emerges as a situational structure, arising from an environmental context, that can occur at any time for a specific goal (Dean, Brandes & Dharwadkar, 1998). Organizational cynicism is learned depending on the negative experiences within the organization (Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003) and negative thoughts can be generalized to cover all organizational elements (Wanous, Reichers & Austin, 2000). The concept of organizational cynicism is defined by James (2005) as *"negative beliefs, emotions; and the attitude of the employee towards the organization he/she works with in relation to the behaviors associated with these negative beliefs and feelings; a reaction to the history of social and personal experiences open to change by environmental factors"*.

Organizational cynicism considered as an attitude; and it is discussed in three dimensions as follows; the cognitive dimension that includes disbelief towards human behavior and the kindness and sincerity that these behaviors include (Brandes, 1997); the affective dimension consisting of negative emotions such as feeling anger towards the organization, feeling anxious and bored, and belittling the organization (Greenberg & Baron, 2003); and, the behavioral dimension (Dean, Brandes & Dharwadkar, 1998), which includes behaviors aimed at humiliating the organization, such as harsh criticism and pessimistic predictions.

Developments and changes such as adapting to rapidly changing and developing environmental conditions, competitiveness of organizations, teamwork, organizational structures based on cooperation have made trust an important concept for organizations (Tan & Lim, 2009). Employees when there is no trust in the organization; do not take the risk of taking the first action, and abstaining behavior is displayed towards increasing cooperation and efficiency (Sabel, 1993). Therefore, organizational trust plays an important role in the achievement of the goals of organizations, efficiency and success of the organization.

Trust is a psychological condition that includes positive expectations for employees' intentions and behaviors (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1998). Trust among employees and groups within the organization is a crucial factor in ensuring long-term stability and peace of mind in the organization (Cook & Wall, 1980). Organizational trust is the belief and trust of employees in the integrity, fairness, honesty, rightfulness, friendship of each other in relationships and interactions in the organization (Louis, 2007).

Organizational trust is the belief of employees in achieving the goals of the organization and that organizational action will be beneficial for employees (Gilbert & Tang, 1998). According to Mishra (1996), organizational trust is defined as the desire of employees to be aware of the basic goals, norms and values of the organization.

Locus of control is a psychological concept that expresses an individual's beliefs about how much control they have over events (Grimes, Millea & Woodruff, 2004). Rotter (1966) explained the concept of locus of control in the social learning theory, which argues that the probability of occurrence of a behavior, that is, the potential of behavior, should take place in two variables such as expectation and reinforcement value. The concept of locus of control is a structure that consists of two dimensions, internal and external locus of control.

People who develop a strong belief that the events that occur in their lives and the achievement of the rewards that are valued depend more on chance, luck, and factors other than themselves are mostly externally controlled (Daft, 2000). In other words, people who believe that chance, fate and factors other than themselves have an important effect on events and incidents that happen to them are called people with a high external locus of control (Carlson, Heth, Miller, Donahoe & Martin, 2009). People with a high focus of internal control tend to see the consequences of the events they encounter in their lives directly as a result of their own efforts and behavior (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2019).

Trust, which ranks third in Maslow's pyramid of needs, is an important concept that determines the quality of social relationships (Welch, Rivera, Conway, Yonkoski, Lupton & Giancola, 2005). With the theoretical view of Emile Durkheim, trust is accepted as the basic building block of social interactions, formations and thus organizations (Seligman, 1997). Employees in organizations with high trust feel more comfortable and do not hesitate to share their ideas (Shaw, 1997). Ensuring a trust atmosphere in schools facilitates school effectiveness, communication in the school, and collaboration of administrators, teachers, students and other stakeholders (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). The feeling of mistrust in the organization, on the other hand, causes negative feelings and behaviors among individuals such as alienation to work, not going to work frequently, decreased commitment to the organization, and poor performance (Brandes, 1997).

In their research, Stanley, Meyer, and Topolnytsky (2005) found that cynicism and trust in organizations are two variables that are highly correlated with each other. According to Abraham (2000), cynical employees who have negative feelings towards the organization think that the organization is far from integrity, honesty and sincerity. These employees think that the organization managers are more interested in protecting their own interests; thus, they do not trust the organization. According to Mirvis and Kanter (1989), cynics do not trust the management, they do not find the payment system fair, they think that not everyone has an equal chance to progress, they do not believe that the management will listen to them and value their work.

Many factors can be mentioned that may affect the relationship between organizational trust and organizational cynicism (Akin, 2009). One of these factors is the locus of control. School personnel differ from each other according to the way they perceive the reasons for the events that happened to them (Forte, 2005). School staff with predominant internal locus of control tend to see their successes and failures as a result of their own behavior by emphasizing the presence of skill-based aspects in their work (Klein & Wasserstein-Warnet, 1999). Individuals with dominant external locus of control tendencies, on the other hand, believe that their actions depend on factors outside of their control (Connolly, 1980; Landy & Contre, 2004; Martin, Thomas, Charles, Epitropaki & McNamara, 2005). It can be said that employees with dominant external locus of control tendencies are individuals with more negative attitudes (Arsenault, Dolan & Ameringen, 1991).

## Purpose of the research

When the literature is examined; there are not enough studies that deal with the relationship among organizational trust, organizational cynicism and locus of control and examine the level and direction of the relationship between these variables with implicit variables. It has been observed that a small number of studies have been carried out in organizations in various sectors other than school organizations. Besides, it has been noted that the studies conveyed are generally carried out to cover some of the personnel working in the organization. This study aims to examine the mediating role of the locus of control in the effect of organizational trust on organizational cynicism in school organizations with latent variables, including all personnel who directly impact education and training in schools. For this purpose, various hypotheses were created and answers were sought for these hypotheses.

### Hypotheses of the study

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

H2: The change in the sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism becomes inconsistent with the indirect effect of organizational trust.

H3: There is a positive relationship between organizational trust and locus of control.

H4: The level of relationship between the indirect effect of organizational trust and the sub-dimensions of locus of control differs.

H5: There is a positive relationship between organizational cynicism and locus of control.

H6: The level of relationship between the indirect effect of organizational cynicism and the sub-dimensions of the locus of control differs.

H7: The locus of control has a mediating role in the effect of organizational trust on organizational cynicism.

## METHOD

### Research Model

In this study, the relational scanning model, which is one of the quantitative research methods, was used to examine the mediating role of locus of control in the effect of organizational trust on organizational cynicism. Screening models involve gathering information on attitudes, experiences, and characteristics among one or more groups of people through questions and answers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). The relational design of this research is a model determined by the researchers and the proposed model is tested with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis through latent variables (Stein, Morris & Nock, 2010). The model developed and tested within the scope of this research is given in Figure 1.
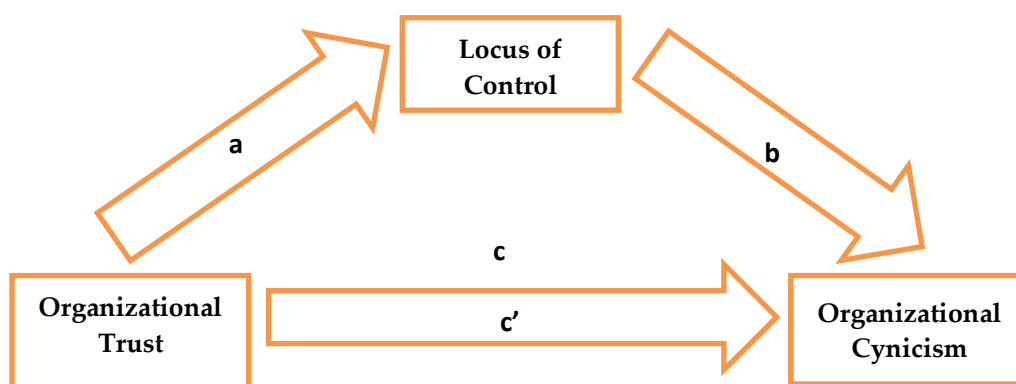


*Figure 1.* Research Model

According to the research model in Figure 1, organizational trust is the leading variable of organizational cynicism, and the locus of control is analyzed as a mediator variable between organizational trust and organizational cynicism. Organizational trust and locus of control path coefficient was determined as "a", organizational cynicism path coefficient with locus of control as "b", organizational trust to organizational cynicism direct effect path coefficient "c", organizational trust to organizational cynicism total impact path coefficient "c' ". "a x b" indicates the indirect effect of organizational trust on organizational cynicism.

### Participants

The study population consists of 2800 people of which 207 administrators (66 school principals and 141 deputy principals), 2603 teachers, and 70 officials working in 4 official kindergartens, 20 primary schools, 19 secondary schools, and 17 high school level schools in Beylikduzu district of Istanbul province during the 2018-2019 academic year. The

participants of the study were determined using the simple random sampling method. In the simple random sampling method, each person's probability of being selected as sampling is equal; every person in the population is not affected by other people and is independent (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). A total of 1000 questionnaire forms were distributed to the sample representing the population. The participating school staff responded to 583 of the forms given. One hundred sixty-four questionnaires were excluded from the study due to incomplete answers, unfinished ones, ticking more than one answer option, and inconsistent answering of all items by giving the same answer. In the 419 questionnaires evaluated, box plot was examined to determine the extreme values. As a result of this examination, 34 of the questionnaires had extreme values, and these questionnaires were removed from the study; and analyzes were done with the remaining 385 questionnaires. According to this result, the sample size of the research was determined as 385. In SEM, which is a technique that requires a large sample size, there should be an ideal sample size (N) and parameter (q) ratio (N/q) 20/1 for each latent variable. Among the implicit variables used in this study, organizational cynicism implicit variable contains the most parameters (q=14). Thus, organizational cynicism parameters require a total of q=14 statistical estimates; an ideal minimum sample size should be 20x14, i.e., N=280 (Kline, 2011). According to this result, 385 sample size of the research is sufficient for using statistical analysis in SEM.

Information on the participants' demographic characteristics (school personnel) in the research sample is given in Table 1.

Table 1

*Distribution of Participants by Demographic Characteristics*

| Gender | N | % | Seniority | N | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 234 | 60.8 | 0-4 years | 27 | 7.0 |
| Male | 151 | 39.2 | 5-9 years | 68 | 17.7 |
| Total | 385 | 100.0 | 10-14 years | 72 | 18.7 |
| **Job Selection Status** | **N** | **%** | 15-19 years | 104 | 27.0 |
| Willingly | 339 | 88.1 | 20-24 years | 68 | 17.7 |
| Unwillingly | 46 | 11.9 | 25 years or more | 46 | 11.9 |
| Total | 385 | 100.0 | Total | 385 | 100.0 |
| **Education** | **N** | **%** | **Branch** | **N** | **%** |
| Bachelor's Degree | 319 | 82,9 | Pre-School Teacher | 15 | 3,9 |
| Master's (without Thesis) | 36 | 9.4 | Classroom Teacher | 82 | 21,3 |
| Master's (with Thesis) | 27 | 7.0 | Branch Teacher | 283 | 73.5 |
| PhD Degree | 3 | 8 | Civil Servant | 5 | 1.3 |
| Total | 385 | 100.0 | **School Type** | **N** | **%** |
| **Position** | **N** | **%** | Primary school | 104 | 27.0 |
| Teacher | 350 | 90.9 | Middle school | 135 | 35.1 |
| The principal | 9 | 2.3 | High School | 146 | 37.9 |
| Deputy Director | 26 | 6.8 | Total | 385 | 100.0 |
| Total | 385 | 100.0 | | | |

As shown in Table 1, 60.8% of the school personnel constituting the research sample are women, and 39.2% are men. 37.9% of the school personnel in the research sample work in high schools, 35.1% in secondary schools, and 27% in primary schools. When the school personnel's professional seniority in the sample is examined, 7% has seniority of 0-4 years, 17.7% 5-9 years, 18.7% 10-14 years, 27% 15-19 years, 17.7% 20-24 years, and 11.9% has seniority of 25 years or more. 82.9% of the sample's school personnel have undergraduate education, 9.4% master's degree without thesis, 7% master's degree with thesis, and 0.8% doctorate education. Of the school personnel in the sample, 90.9% are teachers, 2.3% are principals, 6.8% are vice-principals, and 1.3% are civil servants.

### Data Collection Tools

In examining the mediating role of locus of control in the relationship between organizational trust and organizational cynicism in school organizations, new scales have been developed within the scope of this study by blending the scales used in the literature by researchers. Within the framework of organizational cynicism, organizational trust, and locus of control theories, definitions, and explanations, which were reached through a detailed literature review, the scale items were determined by choosing the expressions that would best describe the content of organizational cynicism, organizational trust, and locus of control in school organizations, and enable them to differentiate from similar concepts. The sub-factors of the scales were determined by exploratory factor analysis. The validity analysis of the scales were examined by item and factor analysis. Item analyzes were carried out using two methods: item analysis based on the difference between the lower and upper group averages and item analysis based on correlation.

Whether the data has a normal distribution was determined by examining the Skewness-Kurtosis values of the data. After the data was determined to have a normal distribution, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) criterion and Bartlett test results showing the suitability of the data for factor analysis were examined. Secondly, factor analysis was used to determine to construct validity. Factor analyzes were conducted using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). For scales, CFA was applied as a primary and secondary level. Structure validity in CFA has been examined with the model fit.

The scale used to determine the school personnel's organizational cynicism attitudes was developed in three dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioral cynicism consisting of 14 statements; and was rated as 5-Likert (1-Strongly Disagree, 5-Strongly Agree) type. The KMO analysis result of the Organizational Cynicism Scale was determined as .889, and the Barlett test as significant (p=,000). As a result of the factor analysis, the data were compatible with the scale's three-factor structure. The goodness of fit values of the primary and second-level Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) performed to determine the construct validity of the Organizational Cynicism Scale were determined as $X^2$(62, N=385)=136,664; $X^2$/df=2,204; CFI=,950; RMSEA=,056; SRMR=,045. According to the goodness of fit values, the CFA values of the Organizational Cynicism Scale are within

acceptable limits. According to the second-level CFA results, it was confirmed that the items in the Organizational Cynicism Scale, which is theoretically put forward, represent all three dimensions. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was determined as .864 with the reliability analysis.

The scale used to determine the organizational trust perceptions of the school personnel was shaped in a single dimension consisting of 11 items and was rated as 5-Likert (1-Strongly Disagree, 5-Strongly Agree) type. The KMO analysis result of the Organizational Trust Scale was determined as .962, and the Barlett test as significant (p=,000). As a result of the factor analysis, it was determined that the data were compatible with the scale's one-dimensional structure. The goodness of fit values of the primary-level Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) performed to determine the construct validity of the Organizational Trust Scale were determined as $X^2$(35, N=385=72,070; $X^2$/df=2,059; CFI=,986; RMSEA=,054; SRMR=,024. According to the goodness of fit values, the CFA values of the Organizational Trust Scale are within acceptable limits. According to the primary-level CFA results, it was confirmed that the items in the Organizational Trust Scale, which is theoretically put forward, represent the one dimensions. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was determined as .942 with the reliability analysis.

The scale, which is applied to determine the types and levels of locus of control that the school staff has been shaped in two dimensions: internal and external locus of control consisting of 11 items and rated as 5-Likert (1-Strongly Disagree, 5-Strongly Agree) type. KMO analysis result of Locus of Control Scale was determined as .776 and Barlett test as significant (p=,000). As a result of the factor analysis, it was determined that the data were compatible with the scale's two-dimensional structure. The goodness of fit values of the primary and second-level Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) performed to determine the construct validity of the Locus of Control Scale were determined as $X^2$(43, N=385)=72,860; $X^2$/df=1,694; CFI=,942; RMSEA=,043; SRMR=,048. According to the goodness of fit values, the CFA values of the Locus of Control Scale are within acceptable limits. According to the second-level CFA results, it was confirmed that the items in the Locus of Control Scale, which was theoretically suggested, represent both dimensions. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was determined as .675 with the reliability analysis.

### Data Analysis

Validity analysis and reliability analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) were performed using the SPSS 24 and AMOS 24 programs of the data obtained in this study. Confirmatory factor analysis is a factor analysis used to test the compatibility of the factors determined by explanatory factor analysis to the factor structures determined by the hypothesis (Bandalos & Finney, 2010). Structural equation modeling can be explained as a combination of factor analysis and regression analysis, and it uses the estimated covariance matrix created according to the

theoretical model to test the compatibility of the observed data to the covariance matrix (Hox & Bechger, 1995).

### *Ethical considerations*

During the research process, first of all, necessary permissions were obtained from the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education. In this study, all rules stated to be followed within the scope of "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed. None of the actions stated under the title "Actions Against Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", which is the second part of the directive, were not taken.

## RESULTS

In the study, firstly, the measurement model consisting of the implicit variables of organizational trust, organizational cynicism and locus of control was tested. Due to the normal distribution of the data, the covariance matrix was created by using the maximum likelihood calculation method. The goodness of fit values obtained as a result of the analysis are within acceptable threshold values in the literature, indicating that the model is compatible and acceptable with the data ($X^2$[552, N=385]=1060,453; $X^2$/df=1,921; CFI=,908; RMSEA=,050; SRMR=,065). Correlation relations and weights between implicit variables in the measurement model are given in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Measurement Model Correlation Relations and Weights*

|  |  |  | Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Organizational cynicism | <--> | Organizational trust | -,851 |
| Organizational cynicism | <--> | Locus of control | -.688 |
| Organizational trust | <--> | Locus of control | .439 |

p<.001

As seen in Table 2, it has been determined that organizational trust has a negative and significant relationship with organizational cynicism (r=-,851, p<,001) and positive and significant relationship with locus of control (r=,439, p<,001); and, that organizational cynicism has a significant and negative relationship with the locus of control (r=-,688, p<,001). After the measurement model was verified, the research hypotheses were tested using the structural model with implicit variables.

The model created to test the hypotheses "*There is a negative relationship between organizational trust and organizational cynicism, and the change between the indirect effect of organizational trust and the sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism is inconsistent*" was estimated with Maximum Likelihood (ML) method since the data is normally distributed. The goodness of fit values obtained as a result of the path analysis are within acceptable threshold values in the literature, indicating that the model is compatible and acceptable

with the data (X²[248, N=385]=550,284; X²/df=2,219; CFI=,936; RMSEA=,058; SRMR=,051). The standardized regression weights (β) of this model created are shown in Figure 2.
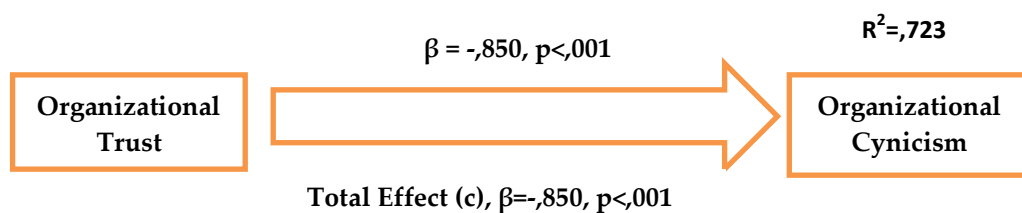


**Figure 2.** *The Path Analysis Model of the Relationship between Organizational Trust and Organizational Cynicism*

As seen in Figure 2, there is a significant negative (β=-,850, p<,001) relationship between organizational trust and organizational cynicism. According to this, a one-unit increase in organizational trust causes an .850 -unit decrease in organizational cynicism, or a one-unit decrease in organizational trust causes an .850 -unit increase in organizational cynicism. In addition, organizational trust explains 72% of the variance in organizational cynicism. Hypothesis 1 was accepted according to this result.

Regarding the indirect effect of organizational trust on the sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism through organizational cynicism, the standardized regression weights (β) in the model which verified in Figure 2 are given in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Standardized Regression Weights Regarding the Indirect Effects of Organizational Cynicism on its Sub-Dimensions in the Path Analysis Model with Organizational Trust and Organizational Cynicism*

| | Organizational trust | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Direct effects | Indirect effects | Total effects |
| Cognitive cynicism | .000 | -.809 | -.809 |
| Affective cynicism | .000 | -.643 | -.643 |
| Behavioral cynicism | .000 | -.557 | -.557 |
| Organizational cynicism | -.850 | .000 | -.850 |

p<.001

As seen in Table 3, it is seen that organizational trust has a significant negative relationship with the sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism through organizational cynicism. Indirect effect of organizational trust on cognitive cynicism is (β=-,809, p<.001)-.809, indirect effect on behavioral cynicism is (β=-,557, p<,001)-,557, and indirect effect on affective cynicism (β=-,643, p<,001) -,643. It can be said that the change in organizational cynicism sub-dimensions is becoming inconsistent with the effect of organizational trust. Based on these results, Hypothesis 2 was accepted.

The model created to test the hypotheses "*There is a positive relationship between organizational trust and locus of control, and the level of relationship between the indirect effect of*

*organizational trust and the sub-dimensions of locus of control differs*" was estimated with Maximum Likelihood (ML) method since the data is normally distributed. The goodness of fit values obtained as a result of the path analysis are within acceptable threshold values in the literature, indicating that the model is compatible and acceptable with the data ($X^2$[186, N=385]=313,894; $X^2$/df=1,688; CFI=,961; RMSEA=,043; SRMR=,053). The standardized regression weights ($\beta$) of this model created regarding the factors are shown in Figure 3.

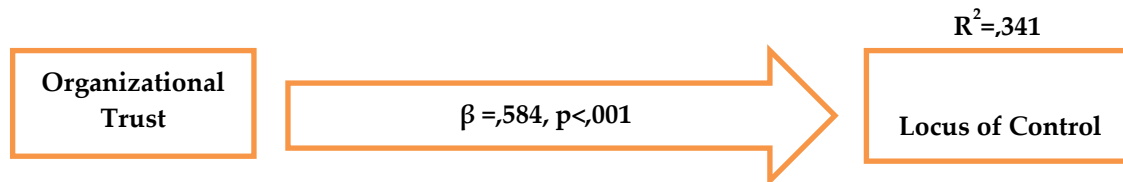| Organizational Trust | $\beta$ =,584, p<,001 → | Locus of Control $R^2$=,341 |
|---|---|---|

**Figure 3.** *Path Analysis Model of the Relationship between Organizational Trust and Locus of Control*

As seen in Figure 3, there is a positive significant ($\beta$=,584, p<,001) relationship between organizational trust and locus of control. In addition, organizational trust explains 34% of the variance in the locus of control. Hypothesis 3 was accepted according to this result.

Regarding the indirect effect of organizational trust on the sub-dimensions of the locus of control through the locus of control, the standardized regression weights ($\beta$) in the model which verified in Figure 3 are given in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Standardized Regression Weights Regarding the Indirect Effects of Locus of Control on its Sub-Dimensions in the Path Analysis Model with Organizational Trust and Locus of Control*

| | Organizational trust | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Direct effects | Indirect effects | Total effects |
| External locus of control | .000 | -,356 | -,356 |
| Internal locus of control | .000 | .436 | .436 |
| Locus of control | .584 | .000 | .584 |

p<.001

As seen in Table 4, it is observed that organizational trust has a positive significant relationship with internal locus of control, one of the sub-dimensions of locus of control, over locus of control ($\beta$=,436, p<,001); and, that on the other hand, it has a negative significant relationship ($\beta$=-,356, p<,001) with the external locus of control. It can be said that the level of relationship between the effect of organizational trust and the sub-dimensions of locus of control is differentiating. Based on these results, Hypothesis 4 was accepted. It can be said that internal locus of control tendencies of school personnel increase in the presence of organizational trust, and external locus of control tendencies in

the absence of organizational trust.

The model created to test the hypotheses "*There is a positive relationship between organizational cynicism and locus of control, and the level of relationship between the indirect effect of organizational cynicism and the sub-dimensions of locus of control differs*" was estimated with Maximum Likelihood (ML) method since the data is normally distributed. The goodness of fit values obtained as a result of the path analysis are within acceptable threshold values in the literature, indicating that the model is compatible and acceptable with the data ($X^2$[246, N=385]=435,365; $X^2$/df=1,770; CFI=,913; RMSEA=,045; SRMR=,054). The standardized regression weights of this model created with the ways related to the factors are shown in Figure 4.

$R^2$=,510

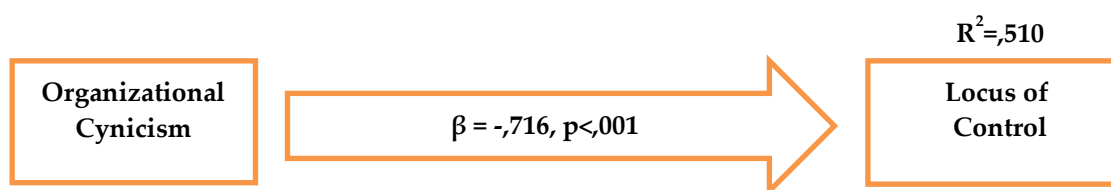| Organizational Cynicism | $\beta$ = -,716, p<,001 | Locus of Control |

*Figure 4. Path Analysis Model of the Relationship between Organizational Cynicism and Locus of Control*

As seen in Figure 4, there is a significant negative ($\beta$=-,716, p<,001) relationship between organizational cynicism and locus of control. In addition, organizational cynicism explains 51% of the variance in the locus of control. Based on this result, Hypothesis 5 was accepted.

Regarding the indirect effect of organizational cynicism on the sub-dimensions of the locus of control over the locus of control, the standardized regression weights ($\beta$) in the model verified in Figure 4 are given in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Standardized Regression Weights Regarding the Indirect Effects of Locus of Control on its Sub-Dimensions in the Path Analysis Model with Organizational Cynicism and Locus of Control*

|  | Organizational cynicism | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Direct effects | Indirect effects | Total effects |
| External locus of control | .000 | .685 | .685 |
| Internal locus of control | .000 | -,354 | -.355 |
| Locus of control | -,716 | .000 | -,716 |

p<.001

As seen in Table 5, organizational cynicism has a negative significant relationship with the internal locus of control, one of the sub-dimensions of the locus of control, through the locus of control ($\beta$=-,354, p<,001); and there is a positive significant relationship ($\beta$=,685, p<,001) with the external locus of control. In other words, it can be said that the level of relationship between the effect of organizational cynicism and the

sub-dimensions of locus of control is differentiating. Based on these results, Hypothesis 6 was accepted. It can be said that the cynic perception of school personnel towards their schools increases as the tendency of the external locus of control increases.

In the model created for the hypothesis that "*the locus of control has a mediating role in the effect of organizational trust on organizational cynicism*" the relationship was analyzed with latent (implicit) variables. The relationship model of the intermediary locus of control was created in the effect of organizational trust on organizational cynicism to test this situation. Path analysis was made to the model created with the Maximum Likelihood (ML) method. The goodness of fit values obtained as a result of the analysis are within acceptable threshold values in the literature, indicating that the model is compatible and acceptable with the data ($X^2$[552, N=385]=1060,453; $X^2$/df=1,921; CFI=,908; RMSEA=,050; SRMR=,065). The non-standardized regression weights (R.W) and standardized regression weights (S.R.W) related to the paths of this model created are shown in Table 6. Also, with the Sobel test, it was determined that the mediating role of locus of control in the effect of organizational trust on organizational cynicism was significant (β=-,148, p=,005<0,05).
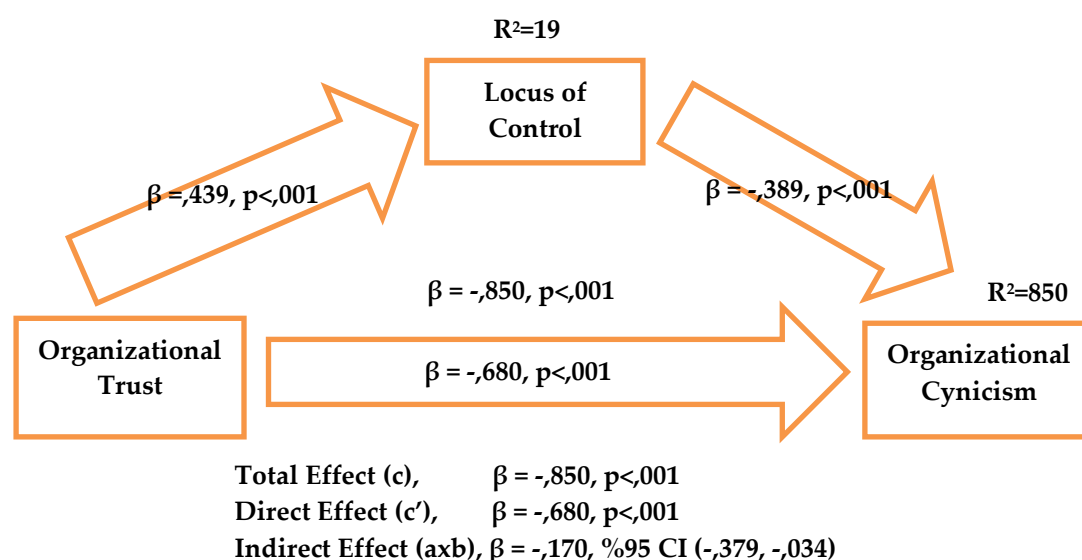
**Table 6**

*Significance Levels and Results of Organizational Trust, Organizational Cynicism and Intermediary Locus of Control Variable Relations*

| | | | R. W Estimate | S.R. W Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Label | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Locus of Control | ← | Organizational Trust | ,107 | ,439 | ,028 | 3,897 | *** | a | Significant |
| Organizational Cynicism | ← | Locus of Control | -1,286 | -,389 | ,317 | -4.050 | *** | b | Significant |
| Organizational Cynicism | ← | Organizational Trust | -,549 | -,680 | ,067 | -8.170 | *** | c' | Significant |

The representation of p<.001, three asteriks (***) indicates that p values are much less than .001.

In Figure 2, the standardized regression coefficient of the effect of organizational trust on organizational cynicism is (β=-.850, p<0.001) -.850. However, in the model in Figure 5, created by adding the mediating locus of control variable to the model in Figure 2, the standardized regression weight between organizational trust and organizational cynicism decreased to (β=-.650, p<0.001) -650. Since the effect of organizational trust on organizational cynicism is reduced and significant (β=-.680, p<,001), it can be said that locus of control has a partial mediating role in the relationship between these two variables. According to the mediation theory of Baron and Kenny (1986), in the mediation analysis in which exogenous, endogenous and mediator variables are included together, the effect of the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable, when it is insignificant, is full mediation; if the decrease in the weight of the said effect is still significant, then the partial mediation effect is mentioned.

According to the modern mediation theory, in order to test the mediating role of locus of control in the effect of organizational trust on organizational cynicism, a path analysis was performed again with bootstrap technique. Analysis results are presented in Figure 5. It is suggested that the Bootstrap technique gives more reliable results than Baron and Kenny's traditional method and Sobel test (Hayes, 2018). In Bootstrap analysis, 5000 resampling option was preferred. According to Preacher and Hayes (2004), in the mediation effect analysis performed with the bootstrap technique, the 95% confidence intervals (CI) values obtained as a result of the analysis should not include the zero value in order to support the research hypothesis (Preacher & Hayes, 2004).

$R^2$=19

**Locus of Control**

β =,439, p<,001

β = -,389, p<,001

β = -,850, p<,001

$R^2$=850

**Organizational Trust**

β = -,680, p<,001

**Organizational Cynicism**

Total Effect (c),　　β = -,850, p<,001
Direct Effect (c'),　　β = -,680, p<,001
Indirect Effect (axb), β = -,170, %95 CI (-,379, -,034)

CI: Confidence Interval

*Figure 5. Path Analysis Model of Organizational Trust, Organizational Cynicism and Intermediary Locus of Control Variable Relations*

As seen in Figure 5, according to Bootstrap analysis results, the indirect effect of organizational trust on organizational cynicism through the locus of control was found to be significant (β=-,148, %95 GA[-341, -,050]). Because the Bootstrap lower and upper confidence interval values obtained by the percentage method do not include 0 (zero) value. In addition, organizational trust explains 85% of the variance in organizational cynicism with the locus of control. These results show that the locus of control variable has a mediating effect on the relationship between organizational trust and organizational cynicism. Based on these results, Hypothesis 7 was accepted.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study concluded that there is a significant negative relationship between organizational trust and organizational cynicism. In other words, a decrease in the level of

trust within the organization increases organizational cynicism. According to this result, it can be said that organizational trust is one of the pioneers of organizational cynicism. Organization employees feel positive emotions when organizational trust is established. Individuals in the organization are not cynical individuals because they move away from negative emotions. According to Nicholson, Leiter, and Laschinger (2014), while the number of cynical individuals increases in organizations with mistrust; there is no cynicism in organizations where an atmosphere of trust prevails.

There are many personal and organizational factors that underlie the existence of cynical employees among school staff (James, 2005). It is stated that the feeling of "trust" has a special place and importance among these factors (Nicholson, Leiter & Laschinger, 2014). Organizational trust is defined as an employee's perception of the support provided by the organization, his/her belief that the leader will be truthful and will keep his/her word (Mishra & Morrissey, 1990). The decrease in school staff's trust in top management can cause employees to develop cynical attitudes about change (Wanous, Reichers & Austin, 2000). These school personnel think that the administrators of the organization are more interested in protecting their own interests (Akin, 2015). According to Abraham (2000), the basic idea in organizational cynicism is the sacrifice of honesty, justice and goodwill feelings in order to gain personal benefit.

Teachers' trust in principals in a school affects how teachers adapt to innovation, how they participate in professional development and adopt teacher leadership (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Organizational cynicism includes the tendency of school staff to behave critically and degrading, accompanied by negative attitudes towards management (Dean, Brandes & Dharwadkar, 1998). In a study conducted by Andersson and Bateman (1997), it was found that in organizations where there is a difference between managers' wages and employees' wages that create a perception of injustice, and where job security is not strong, employees' trust in the organization is lower and their perception of cynicism is higher.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are studies that reveal a positive relationship between communication and trust within the organization (Ridder, 2006; Ruppel & Harrington, 2000; Stevenson & Gilly, 1991). The effective functioning of the communication system enables the school staff to express their feelings and thoughts comfortably and contributes to the school staff to make more efforts towards common goals (Mishra & Morrisey, 1990). Owen, Hodgson, and Gazzard (2011) stated that managers should always allow open communication and establish equal relations with everyone in order to create a reliable image. Thomas, Zolin and Hartman (2009) point out that if school personnel do not trust their administrators or do not communicate openly, employees will be skeptical and exhibit cynical attitudes in supporting organizational goals.

School administrators' providing autonomy and psychological support to school staff, participation of school staff in making decisions and applying policies that value them are important in creating a sense of trust in the school (Reychav & Sharkie, 2010). In school organizations, the awards given to the employees for their contributions to the school should be distributed according to the principle of equality, and school employees should not think that their contribution is worthless or that they are not rewarded for their contributions (Hoy & Tarter, 2004). In their study, Isci, Sisman and Bektas (2013) found that organizational cynicism decreases when the employee in the organization is given more authority and the right to take initiative related to his/her job.

Paying attention to the wishes and needs of the school staff and having opportunities for personal and professional development also contribute to trust formation (Reychav & Sharkie, 2010). There is a positive relationship between the professional and personal development opportunities offered by the organization to employees and organizational commitment (Bartlett, 2001). According to the research results of Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998), the level of trust increases in a school environment where the professional development of school personnel is supported. In this context, it can be said that failure to meet the expectations of school staff regarding career advancement and professional development affects their perceptions of organizational cynicism.

Expectation theory centers on self-interest (Robbins & Judge, 2013). According to the research results of Levent and Keser (2016), it is stated that school employees have expectations such as "optimism, career advancement, professional development" from the school. However, unfortunately, sufficient attention is not paid to in-service training and professional development in schools. With this aspect, it can be said that there is a relationship between the selfishness found in organizational cynicism and the expectations that pursue personal interests (Mirvis & Kanter, 1989; Brandes, 1997).

Trust is the belief in the honesty and integrity of the trusted individual (Vidotto, Massidda, Noventa & Vicentini, 2012). Employees trust managers if they keep their promises and behave with integrity and honestly in their communication with employees (Simons, Friedman, Liu & McLean Parks, 2007). Subordinates feel more secure within the organization when they trust their managers (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995). The inconsistency between the promises of the administrators and their practices causes both a decrease in the trust between the administrators and the school staff and the disappointment of the school staff (Andersson, 1996). Organizational cynicism can emerge if school personnel believe that integrity, honesty, and sincerity are sacrificed for the personal interests of administrators or for the benefit of the organization (Abraham, 2000).

In schools with low trust, school staff develop self-defensive behaviors (Paul, 1982). Naus (2007) expresses organizational cynicism as a defense mechanism developed by the employee against bad working conditions. Organizational cynicism is an internal "free

space" or "self-defense" space created by school staff at different hierarchical levels to protect themselves (Karafakis & Kokkinidis, 2011). In this context, organizational cynicism can also have positive outcomes within the organization (Davis & Gardner, 2004). School staff with cynical attitudes within the school can play a positive role in questioning the correctness and validity of organizational strategies and decisions. Cynical school staff even though they display negative attitudes based on the lack of organizational integrity, they can be considered as "the voice of conscience within the organization." Cynical individuals can be decisive in preventing administrative decisions that ignore the rights of school personnel and only protect the interests of the school (Brandes, Castro, James, Martinez, Matherly, Ferris & Hochwarter, 2008).

When looking at the current studies examining the relationship between organizational trust and organizational cynicism, it is observed that as organizational cynicism levels increase, the level of organizational trust decreases (Turner & Valentine, 2001; Chrobot-Mason, 2003; Bommer, Rich & Rubin, 2005). The findings of this study showed that there is a negative relationship between organizational trust perceptions of school personnel and organizational cynicism in all dimensions. According to Sagir and Oguz (2012), school administrators should take into account that school staff who do not believe in the work done in the school, who are pessimistic about their own performance, who make negative statements against their school and who refrain from cooperating with the administration may be experiencing cynicism.

One of the findings obtained in this study is that the change in the sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism is becoming inconsistent with the effect of organizational trust. This finding is in line with the findings of the study conducted by Guler (2014). It can be said that factors such as the existence of a belief (cognitive) expectation situation in the concept of trust, the concept of insecurity includes negative feelings (Brandes, 1997), and the personality traits of the school staff caused this inconsistency.

Due to the insecure behaviors of the school and the administration, cognitive dissonance may occur in the minds of the staff who experience cynicism in their schools. It is unlikely that a staff member with cynical attitudes in his/her school will act beyond the formal requirements of a school that s/he believes lacks integrity. Similarly, it is possible for staff with cynical attitudes to behave in a consistent manner with their feelings and beliefs (Brandes, 1997). According to cognitive dissonance theory, people have a tendency for their cognitions to be consistent with each other. If there is an inconsistency or a contradiction, the individual somehow wants to make them consistent and eliminate the contradiction (Kruglanski, 1989). According to the balance theory, school staff want to balance the three components of organizational cynicism. If there is a change in one of the three components of organizational cynicism, school personnel are expected to change the other components as well (Levent & Keser, 2016). According to the cognitive dissonance and balance theory, there should be consistent changes in affective and behavioral cynicism of the school staff with the effect of changing cognitive cynicism.

According to the findings of this study, it was found that the locus of control is the "mediating variable" in the relationship between organizational trust and organizational cynicism. Also in this research, while there is a negative relationship between organizational trust and external locus of control, a positive correlation with internal locus of control have been found; a high level of positive correlation between organizational cynicism and external locus of control, and a moderate level of negatively correlation with internal locus of control have been found. Accordingly, it is observed that the organizational cynicism levels of the school personnel with an internal locus of control who have the perception that the organizational trust level of the school or school management is high is low; it can be said that the organizational cynicism levels of the school personnel with an external locus of control who have the perception that the organizational trust level of the school and the administration is low is high. It can be said that the level of organizational cynicism of school personnel with an external locus of control, who interprets the school and the administration as is using the trust the personnel has in them for their own interests, is high.

Based on the findings obtained in this study, in order to decrease cynical attitudes by increasing the organizational trust levels of school personnel, it is recommended that school administrators, in matters such as performance evaluation, rewarding, appreciation, should prioritize professional ethical principles rather than relationships, act fairly and in accordance with the law; and, they should include school staff in the decision-making process and perform all their work in a transparent manner. In addition, since the locus of control is effective in the relationship between organizational trust and organizational cynicism, it can be said that school staff should be equipped with functional skills to show internal control-oriented behavior rather than external control-oriented behaviors.

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