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The relationship between school administrators' leadership styles and organisational cynicism from teachers' perspectives

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This study reported on here aimed to determine the relationship between leadership styles (democratic, autocratic and transformational) and organisational cynicism in addition to examining whether leadership styles predict organisational cynicism. The data were collected from 426 teachers (183 male and 243 female teachers) from primary and secondary schools in the central districts of Mersin. The sample was formed by availability sampling, which is one of the improbable sampling techniques. Data were collected using the Leadership Style Scale (Taş, Çelik & Tomul, 2007) and the Organizational Cynicism Scale (Kalağan, 2009). Descriptive statistics, *t*-test, correlation and multiple regression analysis results show that views of teachers on autocratic and democratic leadership differ significantly by gender and also that male and female teachers experience behavioural cynicism to different extents. The findings of the study also reveal that all leadership styles were associated with all sub-dimensions of organisational cynicism. Furthermore, the leadership styles were found to be significant predictors of all 3 types of organisational cynicism. As a result, leadership styles of school administrators are associated to a considerable extent with organisational cynicism experienced by teachers. Thus, it would be recommended that school administrators attend training or seminars on leadership behaviour and also be evaluated by their subordinates.

Keywords: autocratic leadership; democratic leadership; organisational cynicism; transformational leadership

Introduction

The increasing speed of economic and technological developments in the world can engender great changes in social life. This change also affects the educational organisations that are intertwined with the society. As schools are the places where educational practices are performed, they are of critical importance for a healthy society. Schools prepare the individual for society and arrange the relationship with their environment. Therefore, schools play an important role in achieving both the school's and national goals such as adapting individuals to new technology and contributing to the development of upcoming technology.

Keeping in mind that the human factor is the foremost issue to be taken into account during the change process (İnandı & Gılıç, 2016) teachers, as the basic stakeholders of educational organisations, are remarkably effective in attaining organisational goals. When teachers have positive attitudes towards their school, it is highly probable to reach the organisational goals; whereas, if they have developed negative attitudes, one of which is organisational cynicism towards their school, it is quite unlikely to accomplish the goals.

It has been observed that due to the increasing negativities at the schools (Kaysi & Gürol, 2016) and a lack of support by their superiors (Hedrick, 2005; İnandı, 2019), teachers' enthusiasm for teaching wanes and they no longer want to practice the profession. In this study we sought to determine whether the leadership styles of school administrators can significantly contribute to the negative situations that teachers experience. This study would thus contribute to the literature and practice on the investigation of the relationship between leadership styles and organisational cynicism, since leadership styles are considered to be one of antecedents of organisational cynicism. This study is of importance in that it presents insight in whether leadership styles are the predictors of organisational cynicism and gives clues with regard to taking steps against organisational cynicism that teachers experience. In this context, the purpose of the study was to reveal the association between leadership styles and organisational cynicism experienced by teachers in addition to determining whether leadership styles were significant predictors of the organisational cynicism.

Literature Review

Gkorezis, Petridou and Xanthiakos (2014) argue that a leader with positive humour has an impact on organisational cynicism by means of the leader-member exchange (LMX) which may enhance the employees' positive feelings towards the organisation. When the leader acts according to the developmental approach, interaction between the leader and subordinates is expected to be increased. The high LMX is supposed to result in a low level of organisational cynicism. A strong relationship between the school administrator and teachers is expected to help teachers develop positive attitudes towards their school.

The leadership style adopted by administrators is one of the major antecedents of organisational cynicism. It is noted that leadership style has a great influence on removing negative behaviours arising from cynicism (Thomas & Gupta, 2018). There have been a number of studies, both in Turkey and worldwide, on unveiling the relationship between leadership styles and organisational cynicism. Organisational cynicism has been found to

be positively associated with autocratic leadership (Jiang, Chen, Sun & Li, 2019), laissez-faire leadership (Demirçelik & Korkmaz, 2017) and Machiavellian leadership (Gkorezis, Petridou & Krouklidou, 2015) but negatively associated with democratic leadership (Terzi & Derin, 2016), transformational leadership (Demirçelik & Korkmaz, 2017; Gövez, 2013; Rubin, Dierdorff, Bommer & Baldwin, 2009) and transactional leadership (Gövez, 2013).

From the literature review it seems that leadership styles are individually and separately associated with organisational cynicism, which brings about the need to examine the relationship of the commonly observed leadership styles (autocratic, democratic and transformational) with organisational cynicism. These three leadership styles are to be regarded together in determining whether they are significant antecedents of organisational cynicism. In view of the abovementioned relationship, it seems essential to draw a conceptual framework by further discussing the leadership styles and organisational cynicism.

Theoretical Framework

Leadership styles

Various definitions of leadership have been offered, but not all of them have been accepted by all researchers. Identifying the leadership styles would help us determine administrators' behavioural inclinations. The way that leaders work appears on a spectrum ranging from developmental to controlling approaches (Williams, 1999). The developmental approach includes participation in relations, expanding freedom areas, supporting change, encouragement, behaving flexibly and adaptively, and creating space for individual choices. The developmental approach includes such factors as common benefits, cooperation, debate, evaluation of change and discussion, which are regarded to be significant. As leaders tend to adopt controlling behaviours, they begin to give instruction and take control of subordinates, endeavour to maintain the present situation, create a disciplinarian and structured environment in the workplace, and attach particular importance to doing things accurately.

A number of leadership styles have been proposed in studies on administration (Khan, Nawaz & Khan, 2016; Seethalekshmi, 2014), all of which can be grouped under the developmental and controlling approach but cannot be examined together in this study. Therefore, democratic, autocratic and transformational leadership, which are at the two ends of the continuum, were chosen to be investigated. Democratic and transformational leadership can lead to positive attitudes of employees such as increased job satisfaction, organisational commitment and citizenship while autocratic leadership may cause negative

organisational behaviours such as organisational cynicism, burnout, alienation, loneliness and exposure to mobbing (Hoel, Glasø, Hetland, Cooper & Einarsen, 2010; Kul, 2010; Peker, İnandı & Gılıç, 2018). In line with the aforementioned continuum, Ferguson (2011) argues that autocratic leaders exhibit controlling behaviour, whereas, developmental communication and group dynamics are taken into account under democratic leadership. Autocratic leaders see themselves as the only decision-makers without considering the opinions and feelings of their followers. On the other hand, the democratic leader and his/her followers act together as a group because the leader regards the views of his/her followers in the administration of the organisation as being important (Şenses, 2018). Democratic leaders create an environment to share experiences, ideas and feelings and dignify the thoughts of subordinates, which makes the organisation more powerful (Brookfield, 2010). Autocratic leaders have intentions of preserving the rigidity of organisational hierarchy and attach priority to the work itself, not the human relations.

Transformational leaders, different from autocratic leadership but beyond democratic leadership (Shanker & Sayeed, 2012), strive to be a model for their subordinates and develop a desire for change by influencing them with self-confidence, vision and charisma. Transformational leadership is placed on the developmental side of the continuum and is closer to democratic leadership. That is why it is asserted that transformational leadership is more appropriate for an organisation to survive by exploring the innovation, initiating change and meeting the needs in a competitive environment (Mokhber, Ismail & Vakilbashi, 2011). As leaders' charisma is effective to manage crises, especially during a change process, it is important for the leader to adopt a transformational leadership style in change management (Boga & Ensari, 2009). Transformational leaders encourage employees to think critically and creatively, influence them positively and increase their motivational level in addition to setting an example for employees (Rehman, Shareef, Mahmood & Ishaque, 2012).

The three leadership styles discussed above are considered to have a relationship with organisational cynicism. Democratic leadership allows employees to contribute to decisions and increases job satisfaction while autocratic leadership decreases job satisfaction (Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashmi & Shaikh, 2012). Accordingly, democratic leadership is negatively related to organisational leadership (Ince, 2018) and is perceived by teachers to be a significant predictor of organisational cynicism (Terzi & Derin, 2016). Jiang et al. (2019) determined that autocratic leadership was positively related to organisational cynicism, which results in work

alienation. As for the transformational leadership which leads to increased effort, effectiveness and job satisfaction in an organisation, it was found to have a negative relationship with organisational cynicism (Demirçelik & Korkmaz, 2017).

As a result, in this study, we assumed, in agreement with the argument of Abdul Rashid, Sambasivan and Rahman (2004) that leadership style has an effect on the attitudes of employees. The leadership style of school administrators is an important factor with regard to teachers' attitudes towards their school – particularly on organisational cynicism level. For this reason, organisational cynicism needs to be discussed in detail.

Organisational cynicism

Cynicism dates back to ancient Greece where it was accepted as a school of thought and a way of life (Durrah, Chaudhary & Gharib, 2019; Mignonac, Herrbach, Archimi & Manville, 2018; Thomas & Gupta, 2018). Hornby (2001:290) defines cynicism, in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, as the belief that people only do things to help themselves rather than for good or sincere reasons. Accordingly, cynic people do not believe that something good will happen or that something is important. Cynic people have a negative view of life by the standards of the average person.

Though the meaning of cynicism has changed over time, society still regards cynics as people detached from the evils of society, and in a work context, this detachment shows up as an attitude, most often expressed in terms of frustration, hopelessness, or distrust toward organisations and managers (Thomas & Gupta, 2018). Despite its long history dating back to ancient Greece, cynicism has been one of the attributions of modern society, and employee cynicism has been a growing interest among management researchers since the 1990s (Mignonac et al., 2018). Since then, there have been numerous definitions as to organisational cynicism (Bedeian, 2007; Dean, Brandes & Dharwadkar, 1998; Wilkerson, 2002). All of them emphasise the negative attitude developed by employees towards their organisation due to various antecedents and resulting in unfavourable outcomes for the organisation.

The most clarifying description of organisational cynicism was proposed by Dean et al. (1998:345) as:

a negative attitude toward one's employing organization, comprising three dimensions: (1) a belief that the organization lacks integrity; (2) negative affect toward the organization; and (3) tendencies to disparaging and critical behaviours toward the organization that are consistent with these beliefs and affect.

As seen in this description of organisational cynicism, it is a complex, multi-faceted construct

(Stanley, Meyer & Topolnytsky, 2005) corresponding to three dimensions: beliefs (cognitive), affect and behaviour. To be clear, the belief aspect indicates that developing self-interests of the leadership is preferred to the fairness, sincerity and honesty, which causes the hidden motives and deception to become apparent, while the affective aspect of organisational cynicism depicts the arousal of strong negative emotions such as contempt, anger, distress and shame (Abraham, 2000). The employee may express these cynical beliefs and negative emotions, overtly or covertly, through severe criticism of the organisation or nonverbal behaviour such as "knowing looks, rolling eyes and smirks" (Dean et al., 1998:346).

On the other hand, if the interests of organisations and employees can be aligned, the long-term effectiveness and well-being of both can be secured, and thus, employees may be expected to develop favourable attitudes towards the organisation while, if not so, stormy weather may lie ahead, both in terms of organisational success and employee attitudes and well-being (Naus, Van Iterson & Roe, 2007:685). Reconciliation between the interests of employees and organisations is to be achieved so that employees could avoid developing negative attitudes towards their organisation. When employees feel that organisational leadership acts in its own interest, it is likely that employees begin to find their organisation less trustworthy. Therefore, administrators should exhibit such behaviours to help employees develop organisational citizenship, organisational commitment and job satisfaction, which would enable them to feel trust in their organisation and spend their energy and talents to achieve the goals of the organisation. If the employees work in such an environment, they are less likely to experience organisational cynicism.

If the administrators exhibit autocratic and mobbing behaviour, they can become unable to create a secure and fair environment. This can lead their subordinates to experience organisational cynicism as well as many other antecedents such as the misalignment between the interest of the organisation and employee, and thus low trust in the organisation, psychological stress due to overload and inequitable social exchange from the organisation, personality traits such as neuroticism, extroversion and conscientiousness (Morgan & De Bruin, 2010). Moreover, it can also lead to a breach in contract between employee and employer (Thomas & Gupta, 2018), a lack of organisational support and negative workplace experiences (Chiaburu, Peng, Oh, Banks & Lomeli, 2013), and role conflict (Naus et al., 2007). Other than these antecedents, exhaustion, a key aspect of burnout, is considered to result in cynicism which, together with depersonalisation, is accepted as mental

distance, being developed as an adaptive mechanism against exhaustion and excessive job demands (Jackson & Rothmann, 2005). Lastly, in a study conducted by Mignonac et al. (2018), it is emphasised that external prestige (view of family, friends, media, etc. about the organisation) and organisational support is considerably significant in promoting organisational cynicism. When the external prestige and organisational support is low, employees tend to exhibit negative attitudes toward the organisation. However, it is noteworthy that if the organisation has a positive identity and high status (pride) and an employee receives organisational support, which in turn helps engender a feeling of respect, he develops and maintains a positive social identity within the organisation (Tyler & Blader, 2003). An individual with a strong group engagement is expected to endeavour for organisational success.

As for the consequences of organisational cynicism, it can be said to bring negative outcomes for both the organisation and employees. Organisational cynicism has been found to be negatively associated with organisational commitment, organisational citizenship, participation in team-based activities, job satisfaction and job performance (Abraham, 2000; Chiaburu et al., 2013; Dean et al., 1998; Nafei, 2013), motivation to work and trust in the organisation (Thomas & Gupta, 2018), school culture and academic achievement (Karadağ, Kılıçoğlu & Yılmaz, 2014), and to promote alienation (Abraham, 2000; Jiang et al., 2019), organisational silence (Mignonac et al., 2018), turnover intention (Schmitz, Froese & Bader, 2018), resistance to change (Stanley et al., 2005), badmouthing and emotional burnout (Thomas & Gupta, 2018).

Schools are considered to be one of the organisations where organisational cynicism is increasingly experienced by teachers (Demirçelik & Korkmaz, 2017). As schools function to shape the future of a society, they constantly need to adapt to the changes and developments that occur rapidly. During this process, school stakeholders, especially the school administrators and teachers, are to play an interactive role. If school administrators are open to communicate and able to establish a sincere and interactive environment in the school, the teachers are expected to develop positive attitudes towards their school. Otherwise, it is probable that teachers will have negative feelings and attitudes towards their school and administrators, which may inevitably lead to failure of the school in keeping up with the developments.

In light of the abovementioned information, the problem statement of the study was: "Do the leadership styles of school administrators predict the organisational cynicism experienced by teachers?" In line with this problem, the following

sub-questions were set:

- 1) In what way do the opinions of teachers on leadership styles of school administrators significantly differ by gender?
- 2) In what way do the opinions of teachers on organisational cynicism significantly differ by gender?
- 3) In what way do the opinions of teachers on leadership styles of school administrators significantly relate to their level of organisational cynicism?
- 4) To what extent do the leadership styles of school administrators significantly predict teachers' level of organisational cynicism?

Method

We assumed that leadership behaviour of school administrators were associated with organisational cynicism experienced by teachers. Although descriptive in determining the leadership styles and level of organisational cynicism, this study was also relational as it examined the relationship between leadership styles and organisational cynicism. The relationships revealed through the survey provided results that could be useful in predicting situations in which one variable of a cause-effect relationship cannot be established but, at the same time, various clues about another variable are available and known (Karasar, 2007). Therefore, it was considered that the relational survey model was appropriate to employ in this study because it was aimed at revealing the relationship between leadership styles and organisational cynicism.

Population and Sample of the Study

The population was 5,207 teachers in 165 public primary and middle schools in Mersin, Turkey (Mersin Provincial Directorate of National Education, 2018). About 500 randomly-chosen teachers received the survey on hard copy, of which 451 teachers responded within 2 weeks. Of the 451 responses, 25 were excluded from the analysis as they were incomplete or invalid. The sample of the study consisted of 426 teachers (183 male and 243 female), which was formed by improbable sampling. Availability sampling, which is one of the improbable sampling techniques, was employed in the study (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2009). When probability sampling techniques cannot be employed, improbable sampling techniques are chosen to make predictions for the population. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), who proposed a guideline for determining the sample size from a population with a definite size in number, this study had a sample size at 95% confidence level. This was high enough to represent the population. Detailed information about the sample is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Distribution of teachers by gender, seniority and teaching period at the current school

		<i>N</i>	%
Gender	Male	183	43
	Female	243	57
	Total	426	100
Seniority	0–5 years	72	16.9
	6–10 years	84	19.7
	11–15 years	87	20.4
	16–20 years	75	17.6
	21 years plus	108	25.4
	Total	426	100
Teaching period at current school	0–5 years	274	64.3
	6–10 years	104	24.4
	11–15 years	30	7
	16–20 years	10	2.3
	21 years plus	8	2
	Total	426	100

According to Table 1, the sample of the study was composed of 183 male (43%) and 243 female (57%) teachers. Seventy-two (16.9%) of them had 0–5 years of experience while 84 (19.7%) had 6–10 years, 87 (20.4%) 11–15 years, 75 (17.6%) 16–20 years and 108 (25.4%) had more than 20 years of experience. As for their teaching period at their current school, 274 (64.3%) have been working at their current school for 0–5 years, 104 (24.4%) for 6–10 years, 30 (7%) for 11–15 years, 10 (2.3%) for 16–20 years and eight (2%) for more than 20 years.

Data Collection

Data collection was managed in three parts: items for personal information about the participants formed the first part; the Leadership Style Scale (Taş et al., 2007) in the second part; and the Organization Cynicism Scale (Kalağan, 2009) in the third part.

Leadership Style Scale

Developed by Taş et al. (2007), the Leadership Style Scale (LSS) consists of 59 items and five dimensions: Autocratic leadership (10 items), democratic leadership (13 items), laissez-faire leadership (11 items), transformational leadership (15 items) and transactional leadership (10 items). For content validity, the opinions of management professors were sought. For reliability, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of the scale was found to be .87–.70 for autocratic, .87 for democratic, .61 for laissez-faire, .91 for transformational and .55 for transactional leadership. Along with the information about reliability and validity, this scale covered all of the three leadership styles examined in the study, therefore, it was preferred for data

collection.

Based on the purpose of this study, only autocratic, democratic and transformational leadership dimensions were employed, excluding other dimensions. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for the three dimensions was calculated as .89–.85 for autocratic, .94 for democratic and .96 for transformational leadership.

Organizational Cynicism Scale

This scale was originally developed by Brandes, Dharwadkar and Dean (1999) and adapted to Turkish by Kalağan (2009). It is a five-point Likert-type scale consisting of 13 items and three sub-dimensions: cognitive (five items), affective (four items) and behavioural cynicism (four items). Brandes et al. (1999) calculated the internal consistency coefficient as .86, .80 and .78 respectively, while Kalağan (2009), after translation-retranslation for adaptation, calculated it as .93 for the entire scale and .91, .94 and .86 for the sub-dimensions respectively. In this study, internal consistency coefficient for the scale was .93 while it was .90 for cognitive, .97 for affective and .79 for behavioural cynicism, which shows the reliability of the scale.

Analysis of Data

Upon deciding to use parametric or non-parametric tests, it was checked whether there was a normal distribution in the dependent variable. For this purpose, the sample size, normality tests and the skewness values of the data were all examined together. It was found that in a sample size $n > 30$, the dependent variable (organisational cynicism) had a normal distribution, and a *t*-test was performed as the other factors were in the range of -3 and +3 in the skewness values (Büyükoztürk, 2005; Klein, Bliese, Kozlowski, Dansereau, Gavin, Griffin, Hofmann, James, Yammarino & Bligh, 2000). Therefore, a *t*-test was applied to determine whether the leadership styles of the principals and organisational cynicism levels of the teachers significantly differed by gender. Following that, correlation analysis was employed to reveal the relationship between the leadership styles and organisational cynicism. Finally, multiple regression analysis was performed to ascertain whether the leadership styles were significant predictors of the organisational cynicism.

Findings

Findings for the Gender Variable

The findings regarding the gender variable are shown below in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2 *T*-test results for teachers' opinions on leadership styles of school administrators by gender

Leadership style	Gender of teachers	<i>N</i>	\bar{X}	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Autocratic	Male	183	2.67	.82	-2.880	.004**
	Female	243	2.90	.85		
Democratic	Male	183	3.44	.92	2.356	.019*
	Female	243	3.25	.79		
Transformational	Male	183	3.41	.95	1.951	.052
	Female	243	3.23	.87		

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

As shown in Table 2, a significant difference existed with regard to gender in autocratic leadership ($t = -2.880$; $p < .01$) (in favour of female teachers) ($X = 2.90$) and democratic leadership ($t = 2.356$; $p < .05$) (in favour of male teachers ($X = 3.44$)). That is, female teachers regarded their

principals to be more autocratic while male teachers described their principals as more democratic. With regard to transformational leadership, there was no significant difference by gender.

Table 3 *T*-test results for the organisational cynicism level of teachers by gender

Organisational cynicism	Gender of teachers	<i>N</i>	\bar{X}	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Cognitive	Male	183	2.67	.94	.230	.818
	Female	243	2.65	.99		
Affective	Male	183	2.24	1.16	-1.234	.218
	Female	243	2.38	1.22		
Behavioural	Male	183	2.59	.83	-2.569	.011*
	Female	243	2.81	.88		

Note. * $p < 0.05$.

Table 3 shows that teachers' organisational cynicism significantly differs regarding behavioural dimension ($t = -2.569$; $p < .05$) in favour of female teachers ($X = 2.81$), while there was no significant difference in cognitive and affective dimensions by gender ($p > .05$). Female teachers stated that they

experienced behavioural cynicism against their school and leadership more than male teachers.

Findings for the Relationship between Leadership Styles and Organisational Cynicism

The results of the correlation analysis regarding the relationship between leadership styles and organisational cynicism are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Correlation analysis for the relationship between leadership styles and organisational cynicism

	1	2	3	4	5	6	\bar{X}	<i>SD</i>
Cognitive	1						2.65	.97
Affective	.560*	1					2.32	1.19
Behavioural	.531*	.645*	1				2.72	.87
Autocratic	.591*	.564*	.529*	1			2.80	.84
Democratic	-.549*	-.430*	-.380*	-.620*	1		3.33	.86
Transformational	-.567*	-.420*	-.393*	-.599*	.904	1	3.31	.91

Note. * $p < 0.05$.

From Table 4 it is clear that all dimensions of organisational cynicism had a significant relationship with all dimensions of leadership styles. That is, cognitive cynicism had a positive significant relationship with autocratic leadership ($r = .591$, $p < .01$) but it was negatively related to democratic ($r = -.549$, $p < .01$) and transformational leadership ($r = -.567$, $p < .01$). Likewise, affective cynicism had a positive significant relationship with autocratic leadership ($r = .564$, $p < .01$) but it was also negatively related to democratic ($r = -.430$, $p < .01$) and transformational leadership ($r = -$

.420, $p < .01$). Behavioural cynicism also had a positive significant relationship with autocratic leadership ($r = .529$, $p < .01$) but it was negatively related to democratic ($r = -.380$, $p < .01$) and transformational leadership ($r = -.393$, $p < .01$).

Leadership Styles as Predictors of Organisational Cynicism

Results of the multiple regression analysis, which was performed to reveal whether leadership styles predicted organisational cynicism, are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Multiple regression analysis of the leadership styles predicting organisational cynicism

Organisational cynicism Variable	Cognitive				Affective				Behavioural			
	B	SE	β	t	B	SE	β	t	B	SE	β	t
Constant	2.608	.303	-	8.621	1.042	.401	-	2.596	1.700	.299	-	5.684
Autocratic	.446	.055	.387	8.153	.680	.073	.479	9.381	.479	.054	.466	8.865
Democratic	-.037	.101	-.033	-.371	-.090	.133	-.064	-.673	.064	.099	.063	.644
Transformational	-.325	.093	-.305	-3.501	-.099	.123	-.075	-.805	-.162	.092	-.171	-1.770
	$R = .648$ $R^2 = .420$ $F(3) = 102.026$				$R = .574$ $R^2 = .330$ $F(3) = 69.346$				$R = .538$ $R^2 = .290$ $F(3) = 57.462$			
	$p < .01$				$p < .01$				$p < .01$			

As can be seen in Table 5, dimensions of leadership styles (autocratic, democratic and transformational) significantly predict the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions of organisational cynicism ($p < .01$).

Cognitive cynicism

A significant relationship between all leadership style dimensions and cognitive cynicism was found ($R = .648$; $R^2 = .420$; $p < .01$). Leadership styles account for the 42% of variance in cognitive cynicism. The standardised regression coefficient (β) revealed a relative order of importance of the predictor variables for cognitive cynicism as autocratic, democratic and transformational.

Affective cynicism

A significant relationship between all leadership style dimensions and affective cynicism was also found ($R = .574$; $R^2 = .330$; $p < .01$). Leadership styles account for the 33% of variance in affective cynicism. The standardised regression coefficient (β) revealed a relative order of importance of the predictor variables for cognitive cynicism as autocratic, democratic and transformational.

Behavioural cynicism

Similar to the previous dimensions of organisational cynicism, there was a moderately significant relationship between all leadership style dimensions and behavioural cynicism ($R = .538$; $R^2 = .290$; $p < .01$). Leadership styles account for the 29% of variance in behavioural cynicism. The standardised regression coefficient (β) revealed a relative order of importance of the predictor variables for behavioural cynicism as in other dimensions of organisational cynicism: autocratic, democratic and transformational.

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this study was to determine whether, from teachers' perspectives, a relationship existed between the leadership styles exhibited by school administrators and organisational cynicism experienced by the teachers; and to revealing the relationship between leadership styles and organisational cynicism. Firstly, it was examined whether leadership styles and organisational

cynicism differed significantly by gender. It was found that there was a significant difference regarding autocratic and democratic leadership styles by gender. Female teachers considered their principals to be more autocratic, while male teachers found their principals to be more democratic. The reason why school administrators preferred autocratic behaviour towards female teachers was most likely due to the perceptions for gender roles in Turkey (Inandi, 2009). Although teaching is a profession attributed to women, the school environment is a male-dominated area legitimating the gender discrimination (Unal, 2003). Therefore, women are expected, in their workplace as well as in society, to firstly fulfil their parental and domestic responsibilities rather than pursuing a career (Inandi, Tunc & Kılavuz, 2018; Thompson, 2003), which Simpson (1997) defined as role trap. For all these reasons, Celikten (2005) argues that women internalise these traditional roles and tend to ignore their work-related roles.

As suggested by Gilbert, Raffo and Sutarso (2013), gender stereotypes are prevalent in workplace settings; principals regard female teachers as mothers or wives rather than teachers. Although Lavy (2013) revealed that there was no evidence of gender differences in teachers' knowledge of programmes, efforts and teaching methods even in a competitive environment, there was a biased treatment of female teachers, most possibly due to motherhood myths which function as a justification for gender discrimination against women in the workplace (Verniers & Vala, 2018). According to motherhood myths, it is believed that women have the specific ability for domestic and parental work. This traditional distribution of gender roles is maintained in the workplace and it is viewed that mothers pursuing a career threatens the family. From the findings of this study it can be concluded that school administrators, of whom the majority are male, tend to act in line with motherhood myths and discriminate between male and female teachers offering an authoritarian atmosphere for female teachers, allowing male teachers a realm of freedom.

Reflections on the difference of leadership styles between male and female teachers are also clear in their level of organisational cynicism. Female teachers were found to experience behavioural cynicism more than male teachers. As

in social life, individuals have the right to demand for equality in organisational contexts. Accordingly, female teachers would like to contribute to decisions as male teachers, and to be treated equally (Giliç, 2015). However, a lack of equality may lead them to develop negative attitudes towards the school and exhibit verbal or non-verbal negative behaviour within or outside the school. Although no discrimination by gender is allowed in the Turkish law system, women are still regarded as lagging behind men because of glass-ceiling barriers and gender-related stereotyped perceptions constructed in the society (Inandı, 2009). Women are thus likely to explicitly criticise the school administration and what is done at school or choose to say nothing but have “knowing looks, rolling eyes and smirks” in the workplace (Dean et al., 1998:346).

Similar to the findings of our study, Bezuidenhout and Cilliers (2010) revealed in their research conducted in South Africa that female academics suffered increased levels of cynicism as a sub-dimension of burnout. Female educators were more likely to experience cynicism in their workplace. Unlike what we found about gender differences in organisational cynicism, in his research about gender differences regarding job satisfaction, burnout and organisational cynicism of early childhood teachers, Sak (2018) revealed that male teachers experienced more cynicism at school than female teachers. This contradiction was supposed to have resulted from the quantitative distribution of male and female teachers in early child education. The number of male teachers in early child schools falls far behind female teachers, which may cause male teachers to feel isolated and thus develop negative attitudes towards their schools.

All sub-dimensions of organisational cynicism were found to have a positive significant relationship with autocratic leadership; however, they were negatively and significantly associated with democratic and transformational leadership. As the school administrators adopt an autocratic manner towards the teachers, it is most likely that teachers nurture negative attitudes towards the school cognitively, affectively and behaviourally. With reference to Kars and İnandı's (2018) finding that autocratic leadership was negatively related to organisational trust, the teachers' trust in their principals began to wane, resulting in questioning of the organisation. With its key dimensions such as integrity, consistency and openness, trust refers to a positive expectation that other people will not act in opportunistic ways in their words, behaviour or decisions (Appelbaum, Bartolomucci, Beaumier, Boulanger, Corrigan, Doré, Girard & Serroni, 2004). When teachers feel that their principals act in line with their own interests rather than in favour of the organisation and do not share much with the

teachers, they lose their confidence in school administration. Once developed, such negative cognition inevitably results in negative emotions and verbal or non-verbal criticism of the school. Jiang, Chen, Sun and Yang (2017) similarly unveiled the positive relationship between autocratic leadership and organisational cynicism explaining that employees under autocratic leadership tended to perceive higher organisational cynicism and thus showed deviant workplace behaviours.

On the other hand, all sub-dimensions of organisational cynicism had a negative association with democratic and transformational leadership. The more the school administrators exhibited democratic behaviour and transformational leadership, the less teachers tended to experience organisational cynicism cognitively, affectively and behaviourally. Contrary to autocratic leadership, there was a strong social exchange between the leader and employees under democratic leadership. As being the person responsible for integrating subordinates into the organisation (Lord & Brown, 2001), the leader of an organisation is to have a high leader-member exchange, which in turn mitigates the organisational cynicism level (Gkorezis et al., 2014). This can be achieved through democratic leadership. In addition, transformational leadership also establishes a strong link between the leader and followers since the leader acts as a model for them. It is evident that transformational leaders create willingness in followers, enhance their performance and improve their organisational citizenship behaviour (Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang & Chen, 2005). To conclude, in organisations where there is high leader-member exchange and employees willingly work with a high performance and strong organisational citizenship, it is quite unlikely that organisational cynicism will occur.

All leadership styles discussed in this study were found to be significant predictors of all sub-dimensions of organisational cynicism. Autocratic, democratic and transformational leadership styles together accounted for 42% of the total variation in cognitive cynicism, 33% in affective cynicism and 29% in behavioural cynicism. Leadership styles in this study considerably predicted the organisational cynicism experienced by teachers. Jiang et al. (2017) reveal that autocratic leadership leads to organisational cynicism and, as a result, employees exhibit deviant behaviour at the workplace. To reduce organisational cynicism, Terzi and Derin (2016), who also found that democratic leadership was a significant predictor of organisational cynicism, suggest that school administrators show democratic leadership behaviour which will help to increase organisational performance and success. However, in case of cynicism about organisational change, transformational leadership outweighs the

other leadership styles. Leaders who believe in the probability of positive change are more likely to engage in transformational leadership resulting in higher performance and positive influence on employees' attitudes (Rubin et al., 2009). Similarly, Bommer, Rich and Rubin (2005) reveal that transformational leadership behaviour minimise cynicism about organisational change. To conclude, autocratic, democratic and transformational leadership styles adopted by school administrators influence the organisational cynicism level of teachers to varying extents.

As a result, female teachers found their principals to be more autocratic than did male teachers, and also experienced higher organisational cynicism than their male colleagues. In addition, autocratic leadership was positively associated with organisational cynicism while democratic and transformational leadership was negatively related to organisational cynicism. It is worth noting that leadership styles together significantly predict organisational cynicism.

Principals should exhibit a fair approach to both male and female teachers. To achieve this, they should undergo some training about leadership. Local and central education boards may arrange such training or seminars. Furthermore, principals could also be evaluated by the teachers through the use of objective criteria.

Authors' Contributions

Yusuf İnandı collected the data for the study and conducted all statistical analyses. Fahrettin Gılıç wrote the introduction and literature review. Both authors contributed to the method and discussion section of the article. Both authors also reviewed the final manuscript.

Notes

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