

AN IN-DEPTH EXAMINATION OF THE ROLES OF NEPOTISM AND CYNICISM IN JOB SATISFACTION IN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

Nepotism and organizational cynicism, two critical dynamics in contemporary business environments, significantly influence various aspects of professional life for employers, managers, and employees alike. Extensive research highlights that in institutions shaped by distinct organizational cultures, the presence of nepotistic practices and cynical attitudes can have profound implications on key variables such as employee performance, productivity, organizational commitment, and overall workplace morale. Among these implications, the concept of job satisfaction emerges as a central concern, as it directly affects both individual well-being and institutional effectiveness. Given this context, it becomes essential to examine how nepotism and cynicism impact employees' job satisfaction within organizational structures. A nuanced understanding of these relationships not only contributes to the theoretical literature but also offers practical insights for improving workplace conditions. Identifying the extent of these effects and proposing strategies to mitigate negative outcomes while enhancing job satisfaction is considered a valuable contribution to organizational development. This article, therefore, seeks to explore these interconnections and provide actionable conclusions that may inform managerial practices and human resource policies in various organizational settings.

Keywords: Nepotism, Cynicism, Job satisfaction, Organizational cynicism, Organizational behavior.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic business environment, nepotism and organizational cynicism have emerged as pervasive challenges that affect various dimensions of workplace behavior and organizational functioning. Especially within organizations characterized by distinct cultural norms and internal value systems, these two phenomena can significantly influence employee experiences, attitudes, and performance outcomes. Nepotism—commonly defined as favoritism shown to relatives or close acquaintances in recruitment, promotion, or resource allocation—continues to be one of the most frequently cited complaints among employees. Despite their efforts to enhance their qualifications and accumulate experience through professional development, employees often find their advancement obstructed by nepotistic practices, leading to demotivation, frustration, and diminished workplace efficiency.

Similarly, organizational cynicism—characterized by negative beliefs, emotions, and behaviors directed toward one's organization—has been shown to erode trust, reduce organizational commitment, and undermine psychological well-being. Particularly in environments where unethical managerial behavior is observed, cynicism tends to intensify, damaging both employee engagement and overall morale. When considered together, both nepotism and cynicism present significant barriers to sustaining a healthy organizational culture. Among the many consequences of these behaviors, job satisfaction stands out as a central construct, closely tied to employee retention, productivity, and organizational loyalty. Recent studies emphasize that job satisfaction not only influences individuals' emotional well-being but also plays a critical role in organizational success (Capone et al., 2022). Therefore, understanding how perceptions of nepotism and cynicism influence job satisfaction in the workplace has become a research priority.

This study seeks to investigate the extent to which employees' perceptions of nepotism and organizational cynicism affect their levels of job satisfaction in Turkish organizations. In doing so, it also considers whether evolving workplace dynamics and changing employee expectations have led to shifts in how these variables are experienced or perceived over time. The study raises two key research questions:

To what extent do employees' perceptions of nepotism and organizational cynicism influence their job satisfaction in organizations with a defined organizational culture?

What emerging patterns or new trends can be identified in the relationship between job satisfaction and its antecedents?

By addressing these questions, this study aims to contribute to both academic literature and managerial practice. Understanding how such detrimental organizational behaviors influence job satisfaction can help institutions design more effective human resource strategies, mitigate negative outcomes, and build a more transparent, inclusive, and performance-oriented workplace culture.

2.0 THE CONCEPT OF NEPOTISM

In the literature, nepotism is accepted as a sub-concept of the concept of favoritism, which means helping someone to succeed by helping them. In this sense, it is defined as a kind of relatives favoritism (Dirlik & Alptekin, 2022). In a more general sense, it is the recruitment, promotion or employment of people with better opportunities compared to other employees, without taking into account their education, knowledge, experience and skills. Family members support other family members (Altıntaş & İpçioğlu, 2022). The concept of nepotism derives from the Italian word "nipote" meaning nephew. However, in the literature, it is stated that it comes from the Latin word "nepos", whose English equivalent is "nephew" or "grandson" (Vveinhardt & Sroka, 2020). In other words, in nepotism, the person uses his/her position, authority or status to employ only his/her family members and relatives both in the enterprise he/she is involved in and in other enterprises, regardless of the issues such as education and expertise required by the job (Şeker, 2023).

In nepotism, which is a form of favoritism due to closeness arising from family connections, the career development of people who are related to relatives should be based on the

performance and skills they can show, but it is realized by prioritizing the bond of closeness. In general, nepotistic approaches in any business are described as a sensitive situation that leads to negative behaviors. Familial relationships is often taken into consideration in recruitment or promotion processes for a particular position. This tends to lead to preferences that are unfair. For this reason, some countries have strict anti-nepotism policies to prevent people with family connections from working in the same businesses. However, it is also possible that there is pressure to relax these anti-nepotism policies (Padgett & Morris, 2005; Kawo, 2023).

It is stated that nepotism, which is seen as both unethical and unfair and unlawful behavior, is more common in organizational cultures with strong family ties. Accordingly, a distinction can be made between old and new nepotism. It is stated that the old nepotism is realized more coercively from the upper level to the lower level, while the new nepotism is realized voluntarily from the lower level to the upper level (Ciulla, 2005). In nepotism, which is frequently seen in public institutions, the person is employed regardless of whether he/she is suitable for the job or not, and sometimes new positions are created for the person even if there is no suitable position for the person (Gökyer & Demir, 2024).

One of the most similar concepts to nepotism is cronyism, also known as friends favoritism. In cronyism, where close friendship and friendship arising from social relations come to the fore, kinship or family ties are not taken into account (Yurtsever, 2023). Another example of concepts similar to nepotism is the concept of patronage, which means political favoritism. It refers to the appointment and/or promotion of people who support the political power because they have the same ideology as the political power by the politicians in power (Çiftçi & Gürkan, 2021). Patronage is based on the relationship between the person who performs the transaction, called the boss, and the interlocutor, called the customer. In this relationship, the boss protects his/her influence by helping the person who will later become his/her customer. In other words, in the patronage system, there is a network of social relations between the client, who needs someone close to him/her who can protect him/her, and the patron, who has political connections that can provide this protection (Weingrod, 1968). A final example is sexual favoritism. It means discrimination between employees in organizations in terms of appointment, promotion or assignment in violation of the principle of equality between genders. Thus, for the sake of a certain interest, the opposite sex or both sexes are favored (Abubakar et al., 2017). Sexual favoritism also means that managers protect and protect any employee with whom they have a sexual and/or affectionate relationship by treating them differently from other employees. In this type of favoritism, there is usually a consensual sexual, emotional and romantic relationship between employees and senior managers (Cesur & Erol, 2020).

2.1 The Positive and Negative Aspects of Nepotism

Although nepotism is often criticized, it can also be seen as a virtuous behavior, so it can be experienced frequently. Therefore, although it is known as a negative concept, some benefits can be mentioned. The most important of these is that critical information and practices are protected as it is seen as unlikely that family members, especially in managerial positions, will transfer to another business (Kul & Çevik, 2023). Similarly, the presence of family members in key positions may increase cohesion in the long term. Family members who have an intrinsic understanding of the organization's historical background and culture can lead to increased

success (Çetin, 2023). Similarly, providing a family environment within the company and strengthening the sense of loyalty can be shown as one of the positive aspects of relatives taking stronger responsibilities by making sacrifices in jobs other than their own duties. Thus, the presence of employees with similar values in a close working environment leads to a positive effect in terms of organizational efficiency (Hayajenh et al., 1994). On the other hand, studies have shown that nepotism shortens the learning period and serves stability by providing high loyalty and performance and lower turnover rate for the favored person. In addition, it is stated that this accelerates decision-making processes and provides a productive environment for the organization by preventing problems related to lost time (Vinton, 1998). Finally, nepotism is also considered to have a beneficial financial impact. In times of crisis, which can often be encountered, it is possible for managers and employees consisting of family members who have known the organization closely since the beginning to use their experience in order not to lose control. In a way, it can be said that they can contribute to the growth of the organization with more profitable initiatives and seek ways to get out of the crisis with minimal damage (Canal, 2022).

On the other hand, despite its positive sides, nepotism has numerous disadvantages. In general, it is argued that the progress of nepotistic behaviors endangers organizations. First of all, nepotism, which is accepted as an important obstacle to institutionalization, causes human resources policies not to be developed, the perception of justice to be damaged and the performance of other employees to decrease. Irresponsible behavior, social alienation, apathy and reluctance to work can be counted as different examples due to the belief that favored people will not be punished (Çetinel, 2024). Apart from this, it is stated that it leads to the deterioration of the existing morale, harmony and good relations between employees, causing insecurity and dissatisfaction, leading to less commitment to the work done (Pearce, 2015). In nepotism, which is seen as a negative concept in both public and private organizations, there is a perception of discrimination against those outside the favored person or group and it is stated that corruption will be seen. Therefore, morale, motivation, commitment, satisfaction and trust will decrease (Sroka & Vveinhardt, 2018). Similarly, it is predicted that nepotism may trigger conflict among non-family members and intra-organizational conflicts. Due to the perception of nepotism in non-family employees, there will be a sense of inequality of opportunity in career development and limited development opportunities. This may damage organizational commitment and cause turnover (Çetin, 2023). Finally, it is mentioned that nepotism can accelerate moral corruption in the work environment, and that people who are hired and/or promoted through nepotism can disrupt or slow down their work. Therefore, it is emphasized that relations with other employees may also deteriorate (Alhas, 2024).

2.2 Measures Against Nepotism

Family companies are among the most common examples of nepotism in organizational culture. The economic power and contribution of family businesses both in terms of our country and the world in general cannot be denied. According to studies in the literature, half of all companies globally and approximately 90 percent of those in the United States are family-owned businesses. It is also emphasized that these companies contribute up to 90 percent of Turkey's national income (Suer, 2023). Again, according to the reports prepared by the European Union (EU), it can be said that between 65 percent and 80 percent of the world economy is covered by family businesses. Similarly, in Turkey, it is stated that 85 percent of

employment and at least 75 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) are provided by family businesses (Gülbay, 2019). The most striking danger that such entities, whose economic volumes have reached a certain size, face in today's conditions is the problem of their continued existence. Because in these companies, where nepotism behaviors are frequently seen, ensuring sustainable success confronts each other in an inverse proportion. For this reason, some suggestions are made in the studies on the issues that need to be done regarding nepotism.

First of all, it is stated that a family council should be established in family businesses with a large number of family members. As a community that can strengthen communication and ties between family members, people should be able to voice their demands and express themselves freely. In this way, it is important to actively operate these councils in order to easily solve problems related to management (Matias & Franco, 2021).

Another measure that can be taken against nepotism is to create a family constitution. Such an initiative is seen as a major step towards institutionalization. It is stated that the constitution in question should include basic rules that prevent conflicts within companies, regulate the relations of family members with companies and foresee future planning. At the same time, general issues such as the company's mission, vision and objectives, as well as the education, lifestyle and shareholding of family members can be regulated. Similarly, it is also important to objectively regulate the inheritance sharing, employment and promotion processes of family members (Garcia & Requejo, 2023).

Furthermore, it is argued that the biggest measures against nepotism should be taken by managers. Firstly, activities against nepotism should be carried out in recruitment, career development and wage policies in line with objective management principles. Conscious, ethical and universal management principles that pave the way for institutionalization should be adopted. In order to transform into a more professionalized organization that goes beyond the perception that only family interests are taken care of and to develop more effective human resources practices, employees should be regularly trained and a safer and fairer work environment should be provided (Çetinel, 2024).

In the literature, succession or succession comes to mind as the most well-known practice when it comes to family businesses. The concept of succession can be defined as the transfer of the management of the company from one family member to another family member or to a non-family expert. In the process of this practice, the current manager is expected to withdraw himself over time and bring the person who will take over the management to the forefront. Although it is an extremely important transfer for the organization, it is not a preferred practice in family businesses unless it is mandatory (Gözen & Kıran, 2022). The main point to be emphasized here is to ensure the sustainable success of organizations by preventing nepotism. For this purpose, critical measures such as establishing transparent policies at all levels, adopting objective performance measurement criteria, ensuring open communication channels, and establishing independent evaluation and audit mechanisms can be listed. In addition, by increasing the number of employees, it will be possible to increase productivity by creating a competitive business environment by allowing employees with different experiences to work together (Şeker et al., 2024).

Finally, taking into account the social benefit, measures that can be taken in the public and private sectors can be mentioned in order to protect against the harmful consequences that may arise due to the negative effects of nepotism. First of all, in order to put an end to this practice, which is considered to have become a kind of addiction, it is necessary to prepare a multi-faceted struggle. In this context, it would be useful to determine and announce the necessary qualification and merit criteria for the posts and positions in institutions that have reached a certain volume, especially in the public sector, and to introduce an independent audit process. Then, it can be said that interviews and exams to be held in recruitment, which is one of the most common processes where nepotism is encountered, should be reorganized. Reliable, objective and fair exams would put an end to corruption in this area. Considering that the interviews to be held with those who are successful in the exams are subjected to a subjective evaluation process, it is suggested that these practices should be abolished or limited as much as possible (Özçelik, 2021).

3.0 CYNICISM AND THE CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CYNICISM

The conceptual history of cynicism can be traced back to Ancient Greek philosophical movements. Although it was used as truth-telling in Ancient Greece, it has now turned into a negative meaning. Cynicism can also be characterized as distrust in bilateral relations, which often arises due to the bad acceptance of the other party (Andersson & Bateman, 1997). Cynicism, which is accepted to have a close meaning to concepts such as doubt, skepticism, pessimism, disbelief and distrust in the literature, is a situation that makes it difficult or impossible to solve even the smallest problems in organizations. People who have these feelings and thoughts are called cynics (Turhan & Erol, 2020). Cynical people tend to see people other than themselves as manipulative and without virtue. They may move away from moral rules and honesty for their own personal welfare and comfort (James, 2005). In other words, cynicism, which emerges in the form of being dissatisfied and distrustful towards other people, also means exhibiting bad and unstable behaviors towards institutions and organizations (Bateman et al., 1992).

The negative feelings and thoughts that the person has towards the organization he/she is a part of appear as organizational cynicism. It is thought that there is no honesty in an environment where there is a belief that the organization they are affiliated with lacks integrity (Dean et al., 1998; Naus et al., 2007). Organizational cynicism, which we can evaluate in the context of the negative feelings, thoughts and behaviors of cynical people who live a life focused only on their own personal interests, against the organization they work for, is considered on a broader scale. Employees with these attitudes and behaviors will naturally approach their work and the colleagues they work with in a similar way. It is argued that this situation stems from the idea that the organization they work for acts against them (Çelik & Altındağ, 2021). On the other hand, it is stated that employees feel that they have been wronged by experiencing disappointment because their expectations are not met in the organization they have just joined. In this case, they gradually move away from the organization and lose their sense of trust. Thus, there is an increase in the level of organizational cynicism (Kaya & Demirdağ, 2024). Organizational cynicism, which is based on the belief that selfishness and dishonesty are at the center of the organization, can be defined as disappointment and hopelessness in general and disrespect and distrust towards a particular person, institution, ideology or group in particular (Kanter & Mirvis, 1991; Andersson, 1996).

3.1 Types and Dimensions of Organizational Cynicism

Studies on organizational cynicism indicate that it can manifest in different types. Personality (general) cynicism is one of them. Personality cynicism, which means that employees have a negative perspective towards the life they live and all people, includes insecure and bad attitudes exhibited in social relations, working environment and in general in their whole life (Andersson & Bateman, 1997). In addition, it refers to the person's underestimation of others, disrespectful behavior and poor relationships. It includes a deep sense of insecurity and the belief that the environment is full of dissatisfied and selfish people. Although it does not involve aggression, it is stated that it leads to hopelessness, anger and deception (Abraham, 2000).

Another type of organizational cynicism is employee cynicism. It refers to the fact that employees lose the importance of the rules, whether written or unwritten, against the organization they are part of, and that they have a dismissive attitude towards the organization and managers with the idea that the wrong decisions made by the managers will be continuous (Andersson, 1996). One of the main characteristics of employee cynicism is disappointment and distrust towards the organization. Employees have such negative feelings when they lose faith in the goals and policies set. Thus, commitment and motivation to the organization are damaged and performance decreases (James, 2005). However, employee cynicism can also be considered as a result of the experiences of the person in different organizations in business life. In order to improve this, it is important that ethical value judgments are adopted in the organization in question. Because it is suggested that people can get rid of cynical thoughts such as anger, harm, and ignoring towards the organization they work for in this way (Çotul & Altındağ, 2018).

Social cynicism, another type of cynicism, is defined as the negative behaviors that a person feels towards the organization and the society in which he/she lives. In this way, the person has harmful thoughts towards the organization and tries to influence other people in the organization in this direction (Kanter & Mirvis, 1991). Social cynicism is largely related to institutional welfare and emerges as a result of unmet social expectations. Therefore, it is seen that people in countries with weak education, development level and economic power engage in such behaviors (Atalay, 2024).

In general, there are three different dimensions of organizational cynicism, which is defined as the negative feelings and behaviors that people exhibit towards the organization they work for.

The first one is the cognitive (belief) dimension. In the cognitive dimension of organizational cynicism, it is seen that people's beliefs about the organization and other employees are at the forefront. Accordingly, the person believes that the organization and other employees have negative qualities such as being unreliable, thinking only of oneself, hypocritical, lying, lazy and deceitful (Brandes, 1997). In short, it reflects a belief that the organization is dishonest. For this reason, negative thoughts emerge that organizational practices are arbitrary, official documents are not serious enough, and behaviors are not stable and reliable (Develi & Özer, 2024).

Secondly, the affective (emotional) dimension can emerge on the basis of different interrelated emotions such as anger, disgust, embarrassment, fear, contempt, surprise, etc. The affective dimension is especially important for the service sector. Employees in this sector are more likely to show these emotions (Dean et al., 1998). Due to the variability of the decisions taken within the organization, the inconsistency of the promises made to the employees and the inability to meet the concentrated demands, significant negativities may arise in terms of honesty, trust and respect for the organization (Elitok et al., 2023). In the last dimension of organizational cynicism, behaviors that emerge due to the negative beliefs and feelings of employees towards the organization are important. It is seen that employees who have negative feelings towards the organization, who believe that the organization is unfair and dishonest, adopt a pessimistic, critical and cynical attitude. It can even be seen that such behaviors go further than mockery and critical approach and turn into vandalistic attitudes and behaviors that are provocative, damaging honor and dignity, sabotaging and blackmailing (Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998). In other words, it can be expressed as employees constantly conveying negative information about the organization to the people around them, complaining and criticizing (Dean vd., 1998).

3.2 Factors Causing Organizational Cynicism

In the studies on the concept of organizational cynicism, it is seen that two basic distinctions can be made about the causal factors: personal and organizational. Personal factors consist of demographic characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, education, length of service and income level. Organizational factors include organizational justice, hierarchy, organizational policies and psychological contract violation. In the studies, it is stated that organizational factors are dominant in the development of organizational cynicism rather than personal factors (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006; Delken, 2004). For example, as the age of employees increases, their level of satisfaction with their profession increases and their expectations within the organization decrease. Again, although the expectations of employees differ in terms of gender, it is stated that women are more meticulous and men focus on being more successful (Koçyiğit, 2023). Studies in the literature have found that married employees have lower levels of cynicism than single or divorced employees (Erkara, 2019). In terms of education level, it is reported that individuals with low education level are more common than individuals with higher education level (Erdost et al., 2007). However, in some studies, it is stated that the level of cynicism increases as the level of education increases (Fero, 2005). In some studies, no significant relationship was found (James, 2005). It is stated that there is a positive and significant relationship in terms of income level. Since employees with high income spend more, their income loss is higher and their cynicism levels are higher because they are disappointed. Similarly, it is stated that cynical perspectives of employees are higher as their length of service progresses (Tinaztepe & İrge, 2021).

Hierarchy is the most important organizational factor. It has been found that those at the top of the hierarchy in an organization experience less cynicism than those at the lower levels. The reason for this is that as the level of responsibility increases, the level of satisfaction increases at the same rate and cynicism decreases (Delken, 2004). Organizational politics are related to behaviors that are observed within the organization, affect decision-making processes and are undesirable within the organization. Organizational cynicism can be seen when these policies are only for the benefit of the organization (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992). Organizational justice

refers to the level of employees' perception of whether organizational practices, decisions and processes are fair or not. When unfair practices are made in processes such as salary and promotion, employees' trust decreases and they start to show cynical attitudes (Chiaburu et al., 2013). Finally, one of the most important factors that cause cynicism is the violation of the psychological contract. When the expectations of the employees in the organization are not met and it is understood that they will never be met, a breach of the psychological contract occurs. Therefore, it is accepted that fulfilling psychological responsibilities and showing that employees are valued will have a preventive effect on cynicism (Pugh et al., 2003).

3.3 The Consequences of Organizational Cynicism

Organizational cynicism brings along many negative situations in working life. In the studies conducted in the literature on the negative consequences of organizational cynicism, it is predicted that it may cause damages in terms of behavioral, physical and psychological health. Psychological consequences such as depression, excessive anger and irritability, anxiety disorder may occur in people who experience cynicism. It is also possible to see vandalistic and sabotaging behaviors towards the organization (Kanter & Mirvis, 1991; Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998). It is emphasized that due to the long-lasting negative effects of cynical employees, the whole organization will suffer in many aspects, especially productivity. In such cases, there is a significant decrease in critically important variables such as sustainability, organizational performance, alienation, organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Abraham, 2000). At the same time, it is stated that it increases the conflict environment among employees and that they become hopeless due to disappointment as a result of their expectations not being met. For this reason, employees will gradually begin to end their voluntary behaviors that will benefit the organization. They will only fulfill their duties at the minimum level required by their normal jobs and will avoid performing more (Demir, 2021). On the other hand, it is stated that organizational cynicism also causes some negative behavioral consequences for employees. In particular, it is stated that it leads to behaviors that negatively affect the health of employees, such as turning to the use of alcohol and tobacco products and experiencing unusual weight gain (Brandes, 1997).

4.0 THE CONCEPT OF JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction, which became a popular concept in the 1930s, has more than one definition. For example, job satisfaction is simply the feelings of employees about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs. It can be expressed as the extent to which people like or dislike their jobs (Spector, 1997). On the other hand, job satisfaction is defined as the feelings and behaviors that employees have about their jobs. It is also based on their perceptions about their jobs or workplaces, such as the policies implemented by the organization they are affiliated with, the management model, working conditions and rights of employees (Moestain et al., 2020). In general, the concept of job satisfaction is considered as a behavioural variable. In past studies, it has been considered in terms of meeting the needs of employees such as wages. However, currently, a behavioural and cognitive perspective such as sticking to a satisfied job or avoiding an unsatisfactory job has become more dominant (Spector, 1985). It is seen that the concept of job satisfaction has increased its importance due to the increasing competitive environment with the development of technology and the active participation of the young generation in business life. Job satisfaction, which is characterized as the emotional state that a person has

depending on his/her personal evaluation of his/her job, is also explained as the satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction of employees (Winkelhaus et al., 2022). Since the issues that are important for employees in business life vary from person to person, it can be said that the concept of job satisfaction is also affected by different factors. For this reason, it is characterized as a multidimensional concept since its meaning can change for each employee. Accordingly, job satisfaction depends on social, personal, organizational and cultural factors (Mullins, 2010). Finally, it is stated that the concept of job satisfaction is the mood that emerges as a result of work experience. The mood in question is a phenomenon that develops within the framework of employees' previous work experiences, expectations and the options in front of them (Ekşi, 2024).

4.1 Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction

The feelings, thoughts, perspectives and expectations of employees in the work environment are different from each other. It is argued that employees' individual or organizational feelings of satisfaction should be evaluated separately in connection with whether or not or to what extent these issues are met (Bui, 2019).

Individual factors can be shown as one of the remarkable factors that reveal job satisfaction for individuals in business life. It can be said that it emerges as a result of taking into account the characteristic features and experiences gained by the person since birth. For this reason, these factors, which vary from person to person, are listed as age, gender and marital status, education level and personality (Urhan, 2014). Age is one of the most important factors affecting the concept of job satisfaction. Accordingly, it has been determined that older employees in business life are more satisfied than younger employees. Therefore, it has been observed that job satisfaction increases with age (Ladikli & Arslan, 2023). Although the findings obtained in terms of the relationship between the gender factor and job satisfaction vary depending on many factors, it is generally observed that the job satisfaction rate of women is higher than that of male employees (Erdoğan, 2021). When the marital status factor is examined with job satisfaction, it is understood that married employees are generally more satisfied than single employees. The reason for this is that the prosperity of married employees in their home life is reflected in the work environment, whereas single employees have higher expectations about work and can change jobs more easily (Uhlir & Rehor, 2020). In business life, a person's level of education is considered as an important factor in terms of being able to adequately meet their expectations from their job. It is suggested that there is a significant relationship between the level of education of employees and their satisfaction with their work, and as the level of education increases in general, the rate of job satisfaction increases (Fabra & Camison, 2009). In business life, employees' personalities are another important factor associated with job satisfaction. In the relationship between personality types and job satisfaction, it is stated that employees have different expectations and approach the events they encounter in the organization differently because they have different personalities. For example, it has been concluded that only responsible and harmonious employees have a balanced personality type and contribute positively to job satisfaction (Sudak & Zehir, 2013).

There are a number of organizational factors that affect the concept of job satisfaction, which varies from person to person in business life. In this sense, factors such as establishing positive relations with employees within the organization, creating an objective and fair wage policy,

improving the working environment, and developing promotion processes can be counted (Sencer & Acar, 2020). First of all, wages are one of the most fundamental factors affecting employees' job satisfaction. Because it is seen as the strongest source of motivation that increases the efficiency and performance of the work done in the organization. In addition to adequate salaries and bonuses, it is stated that job satisfaction increases with special incentive tools such as paid leave, vacation, etc. (Tanjeen, 2013). Another important factor in terms of job satisfaction is job security. Job security means employees' evaluation of their current job conditions and their positive and negative perceptions of the future (Ahmad & Jameel, 2018). On the other hand, to the extent that the promotion opportunities offered to employees within the organization are seen as realistically achievable, it is stated that the feelings of performance and satisfaction increase at the same rate (Rinny et al., 2020). In addition, another important factor is the quality of the job. It is possible for employees to like and adopt the job as a result of seeing their work as interesting and enjoyable. For this, features such as being open to innovations, providing solutions to problems and providing a work environment favorable to interests and talents can be counted (Abdullah et al., 2023). Finally, it is important to provide a working environment where employees feel comfortable both physiologically and psychologically. It is suggested that mutual interaction can be increased through production and designs that create conditions that will make employees happier with their work (Sittisom, 2020).

4.2 Methods of Increase Job Satisfaction

For organizations, increasing the job satisfaction levels of employees is a remarkable need in terms of eliminating or preventing many negative consequences such as job loss, employee turnover, absenteeism, etc. In this way, both individually and organizationally, a high level of benefit can be achieved in increasing performance and productivity in the work environment. A number of practices are suggested in the literature to increase job satisfaction

Job design is the most important of these. It can be said that in order to increase the satisfaction level and productivity of employees, managers can reorganize the structure of the work performed in a way that is compatible with the employees by taking advantage of the possibilities of technology (Ayık, 2022). Job enrichment, which is based on the idea of making the changes needed to meet the expectations of employees, is generally related to the process of planning and decision-making. It stands out as a means of preventing boredom and monotony and motivating talented employees, especially in workflows where the same type of processes are constantly fulfilled (Eroğlu, 2020). The job simplification model, which is another method used to increase the productivity of employees, is to organize the flow process of the work done and to develop techniques for this. With this technique, employees are clearly informed of their job descriptions and specialized assignments are made accordingly. In this way, it becomes easier to motivate employees and the negative effects of boring work are reduced (Marangoz & Biber, 2007). Job expansion, which is used to reduce the repetition of the same job and the resulting mental fatigue, is a technique in which employees perform more than one job of different types within a certain planning. Although it has the effect of increasing the satisfaction level of individuals, there is also the possibility of a decrease in the quality of production (Pehlivan, 2019).

4.3 Consequences of Job Dissatisfaction

It is a fact that people working in business life spend most of their time in the work environment. If people see their work as a kind of drudgery or consider it outside of their normal life, it is difficult for them to integrate with their work and organization. On the contrary, it is argued that the integration of people with their organization and their work depends on their ability to establish a connection between their work and their real life and to see that their work is actually a part of their life. In this way, it is thought that employees can devote themselves to their work at a higher level (Maitour, 2021). Employees' dissatisfaction at work has many negative physical, economic, social and social consequences. In the studies conducted in the literature, one of the main negative consequences of job dissatisfaction is absenteeism, which generally means that the employee is not physically present in the work environment. Behaviors such as being chronically or irregularly late for work and/or leaving work early even though there is no important reason are frequently observed in employees with low job satisfaction (Çakır & Öztürk, 2023). On the other hand, it is argued that there is a strong negative relationship between job satisfaction and the stress perceived by employees. In this way, it is seen that while the stress level decreases, other stress-related problems are also eliminated. Therefore, organizations should improve mental comfort in order to get the highest performance from employees (Singh et al., 2019). Similarly, alienation from work is the psychological state that an employee experiences when his/her interest in his/her job decreases or when his/her job and career goals do not coincide. In other words, job alienation can be defined as the employee's unwillingness and indifference towards the goals and principles of the organization, colleagues and other situations in the work environment (Naktiyok & Yıldırım, 2018). Finally, turnover intention is considered to be an important determinant of employees' job satisfaction. It is stated that there is a strong negative relationship between turnover and job satisfaction, which is defined as the probability of leaving the organization in the near future and the prediction of leaving behavior (Yaman et al., 2023).

5.0 A STUDY ON THE ROLES OF NEPOTISM AND CYNICISM ON JOB SATISFACTION IN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

5.1 Purpose and Scope of the Study

It is a fact that achieving the goals envisaged in organizations with a organizational culture and achieving success as a result is directly related to the job satisfaction of employees. Obtaining concrete data on the effects of nepotism and cynicism perceptions on employees' job satisfaction may be useful for employers and managers. The main purpose of this study is to examine how cynicism and nepotism, which are generally known as negative concepts in the organizational behavior literature, affect employees' job satisfaction.

In this framework, this research seeks to answer the question of whether nepotism and cynicism shadows have a positive or negative effect on job satisfaction in organizations with organizational culture. In the survey study conducted within the scope of the research, no sector and position discrimination was observed. It was preferred that the participants in the research were from the personnel group employed in corporate organizations.

Finally, the following hypotheses were developed by taking into account the studies conducted in the literature:

H1: Nepotism perception has a significant effect on employees' job satisfaction.

H2: Organizational cynicism perception has a significant effect on employees' job satisfaction.

H3: Nepotism and organizational cynicism perceptions together have a significant effect on employees' job satisfaction.

5.2 Research Methodology and Scales Used

The survey used in the study was primarily conducted among the employees of corporate companies throughout Turkey without any geographical limitation. At the same time, the concepts of nepotism and organizational cynicism are independent variables and the concept of job satisfaction is determined as the dependent variable. It is seen that many different studies have been conducted in the literature on these dependent and independent variables. In terms of this study, three scales that are considered to have high validity and can lead to the most accurate results were utilized. These scales are nepotism, which is the first independent variable, organizational cynicism, which is the other independent variable, and job satisfaction, which is the dependent variable. The scale used to measure nepotism was taken from Kaba (2018) and was created by Abdalla et al. (1998) and Ford and McLaughlin (1985). The Turkish adaptation of the scale was conducted by Asunakutlu and Avcı (2010). The organizational cynicism scale was taken from Anaş (2016) and developed by Luczywek (2007). Finally, the job satisfaction scale was taken from Urhan (2014) and developed by Davis et al. (1970). The Turkish adaptation of the scale was made by Gökçora (1985).

Accordingly, the aforementioned scales were combined to form a 54-question survey. The first part of the survey consists of six questions related to the demographic characteristics of the participants. The nepotism part consists of 14 questions, organizational cynicism part consists of 20 questions and job satisfaction part consists of 20 questions. The survey form was organized online through Google Forms application and delivered to the participants. The answers were collected using a five-point Likert scale. The answers were organized as (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly Agree. In total, 337 responses were received online.

5.3 Demographic Characteristics

While analyzing the results obtained from the results related to the demographic characteristics of the participants who participated in the survey that constitutes the source of the research and who represent the research population, factors such as gender, marital status, age, title and status, educational status and the length of time they have been working in the organization were discussed. Demographic characteristics provide important data to better interpret the results of the study. The findings regarding the evaluation of the social and demographic data of the 337 participants included in the research are shown in the table below and explained in the explanations.

Table 1. Demographic Information of Participants

Demographic Characteristics		Number	Percentage
Gender	Female	174	51,6

	Male	163	48,4
Marital Status	Married	226	67,1
	Single	111	32,9
Age	70 Years and above	4	1,19
	60-69 Years old	9	2,67
	50-59 Years old	54	16,02
	40-49 Years old	90	26,71
	30-39 Years old	113	33,53
	20-29 Years old	65	19,29
	18-20 Years old	2	0,59
Title and Status	Business Owner or Partner	50	14,8
	Senior Executive	32	9,5
	Mid-Level Executive	115	34,1
	Lower Level Executive	122	36,2
Education Level	High School	30	8,9
	Associate Degree	37	11
	License	154	45,7
	Postgraduate	117	34,5
Work Experience	0-5 Years	131	38,9
	6-10 Years	74	22
	11-15 Years	39	11,6
	15-20 Years	48	14,2
	21 Years and above	45	13,4

The table above shows that 51.6 percent (174) of the respondents were female and 48.4 percent (163) were male. Therefore, it is seen that the majority of the respondents are women. Likewise, 67.1 percent (226) of the participants were married and 32.9 percent (111) were single. Therefore, it is understood that the number of married participants is more than twice as high as the number of single participants. On the other hand, when the findings on the age of the participants are analyzed, it is seen that they are at least under 20 years old and 60 years old and above. In addition, in terms of age statistics, it can be seen that the highest number and proportion of respondents are between the ages of 30-39. In terms of the statistics on the title and status of the respondents, it can be said that they are at least senior managers and at most junior managers. Apart from this, it can be said that the statistics of low-level and middle-level managers participating in the survey have a percentage of more than 70 percent compared to all participants. When the information on the educational status of the participants is examined, it is understood that the participants are mostly undergraduate graduates and the least high school graduates. In this context, the proportion of bachelor's and graduate degree holders exceeds 80 percent. Thus, when associate degree graduates are taken into account, it is clear that more than 90 percent of all respondents are university graduates. Finally, according to the statistics on the working experience of the respondents, it is seen that the respondents have the highest number of 5 years or less of working experience and the lowest number of 11-15 years of working experience.

5.4 Reliability Analysis

The primary goal of researchers in a scientific research is to reach objective and accurate results. The reliability of the findings also reveals the value of that research. Therefore, it is very important that scientific research yields reliable results (Arslan, 2022). In the literature, it is not considered sufficient to have detailed data in order to reach a valid analysis as a result of the research. Because it is stated that the reliability of the analysis in question is possible with the compatibility of text and analysis values (Toker, 2022).

Reliability analysis is used to assess the consistency and reliability of a measurement tool. Cronbach's Alpha is one of the most widely used statistics measuring the internal consistency of a scale. When Cronbach's Alpha values are 0.70 and above, the scale is considered to be acceptably reliable. Values of 0.80 and above are considered good, and values of 0.90 and above are considered excellent.

Table 2. Reliability Analyses of Variables

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Questions
Overall Reliability	,852	54
Nepotism Reliability	,966	14
Cynicism Reliability	,967	20
Job Satisfaction Reliability	,965	20

Looking at the table above, the Cronbach's Alpha value for Overall Reliability is 0.852. This value shows that the scales used in general are highly reliable and that the scales measure consistently. The Cronbach's Alpha value for Nepotism Reliability is 0.966. This is an extremely high level of reliability and indicates that the questions related to nepotism are consistent and reliable. Cynicism The Cronbach's Alpha value for reliability was 0.967. This indicates that the questions related to cynicism are highly reliable and the scale has high internal consistency. Cronbach's Alpha value for Job Satisfaction Reliability was calculated as 0.965. This value confirms the reliability of the questions related to job satisfaction and the consistency of the scale.

5.5 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a general characterization of multivariate statistical techniques in which the analysis is applied to determine the relationship between variables according to the answers obtained from the scale questions used by the researcher. Thus, it is possible to reveal the psychological structures underlying the variables related to the same factor used in the research (Karaman, 2023).

Factor analysis is a statistical technique used to explore the underlying structures of data and to understand the relationships between variables. Factor analysis uses some important reference values, in particular the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of

Sphericity. The KMO value measures the adequacy of the sample and usually values of 0.70 and above indicate that the data set is suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity tests whether the data are suitable for factor analysis and a significant result ($p < 0.05$) indicates that the data are suitable for factor analysis

Table 3. Factor Loadings of Variables: KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Variables	KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	Sig
Nepotism	0,960	4897,431	91	0,000
Cynicism	0,968	6399,624	190	0,000
Job Satisfaction	0,960	5927,584	190	0,000

The KMO value for the nepotism scale was found to be 0.960 and the result of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p < 0.000$). These values indicate that the data for the nepotism scale is suitable for factor analysis. The KMO value for the cynicism scale was calculated as 0.968 and the result of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was also significant ($p < 0.000$). This shows that the cynicism scale is highly suitable for factor analysis. For the job satisfaction scale, the KMO value was 0.960 and the result of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p < 0.000$), which indicates that the job satisfaction scale is suitable for factor analysis

5.6 Correlation Analysis

In the literature, it is stated that correlation analysis is applied to determine whether there is any relationship between two or more variables (Karadavut, 2021). Correlation coefficients have examples of structures developed according to different possibilities and data types. It is stated that the correlation coefficient frequently preferred in research is the Pearson correlation coefficient. What is important in Pearson correlation coefficient is that the variables are normally distributed (Kılıç, 2022).

Table 4. Correlation Table

		Nepotism	Cynicism	Job Satisfaction
Nepotism	Pearson Correlation	1	0,797**	-0,660**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0,000	0,000
	N	334	334	334
Cynicism	Pearson Correlation	0,797**	1	-0,752**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000		0,000
	N	334	334	334

Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	-0,660**	-0,752**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	0,000	
	N	334	334	334

The Pearson correlation coefficient measures the linear relationship between two variables and takes a value between -1 and 1. These values provide information about the direction and strength of the relationship. A positive correlation coefficient indicates that two variables increase or decrease together, while a negative correlation coefficient indicates that one variable increases while the other decreases. Correlation between Nepotism and Cynicism: Pearson correlation coefficient was found to be 0.797. This value indicates that there is a very strong positive relationship between the two variables. That is, an increase in nepotism is associated with an increase in the level of cynicism. This result suggests that nepotism in organizations contributes to the spread of cynicism among employees. Correlation between Nepotism and Job Satisfaction: Pearson correlation coefficient was found to be -0.660. This value represents a moderately strong negative relationship. That is, an increase in nepotism leads to a decrease in job satisfaction. This indicates that nepotism has a negative effect on employees' job satisfaction. Correlation between Cynicism and Job Satisfaction: Pearson correlation coefficient was found as -0.752. This indicates a very strong negative relationship. An increase in cynicism is associated with a significant decrease in job satisfaction. It can be concluded that cynicism has a negative impact on job satisfaction. In conclusion, this table shows that nepotism and cynicism have negative effects on job satisfaction and these effects are strong.

5.7 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis method is also applied in the studies due to the inability to obtain a cause-and-effect relationship between the variables used in the correlation coefficient analysis. Regression analysis is a statistical method used to determine the relationship between the variables of the study. In this direction, the reasons for the effects between variables are tried to be determined (Yavuzer, 2023). In the literature, it is mentioned that regression analysis is used to evaluate contradictory situations. The existing relationship is tried to be explained by creating a certain equation between variables (Özer, 2022).

Table 5. Regression Coefficients

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t.	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Fixed)	5,332	0,102		52,506	0,000
	Nepotism	-0,144	0,051	-0,166	-2,802	0,005
	Cynicism	-0,588	0,056	-0,620	-10,447	0,000
a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction						
Model Summary						

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of Estimate		
1	0,759 _a	0,576	0,573	0,67333		
Predictors: (Constant), Cynicism, Nepotism						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df.	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
1	Regression	203,840	2	101,920	224,801	0,000 ^b
	Remaining	150,068	331	0,453		
	Total	353,908	333			
a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Cynicism, Nepotism						

Model Summary: The R^2 value is 0.576, meaning that the model explains 57.6 percent of the total variance. This is a very high explanatory power. ANOVA: As a result of the ANOVA analysis, which tests whether the regression model is significant, the F-value is 224.801 and the p-value is 0.000. This result indicates that the model is significant. Coefficients: The constant coefficient (Constant) is 5.332 and the p-value is 0.000, which indicates that the constant is significant. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for nepotism is -0.144 and the p-value is 0.005. This indicates that nepotism has a significant and negative effect on job satisfaction. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for cynicism is -0.588 and the p-value is 0.000. This indicates that cynicism has a significant and negative effect on job satisfaction. The results of the regression model show that the effects of nepotism and cynicism on job satisfaction are significant and negative. In order to understand the overall explanatory power of the model and the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable, the following points can also be taken into consideration. When the standardized coefficients (Beta) are examined, it is understood that the effect of cynicism (Beta = -0.620) on job satisfaction is greater than the effect of nepotism (Beta = -0.166). This shows that cynicism has a more dominant negative effect on job satisfaction. The negative effects of both variables emphasize that increasing nepotism and cynicism in organizations have negative consequences on employees' job satisfaction. The standard error value of the model was found as 0.67333. This value indicates that the prediction error of the model is low and therefore the predictions of the model are reliable. The results of the regression analysis support that the model accurately reflects the effects of the independent variables on job satisfaction and the model is valid. This once again confirms that nepotism has a significant impact on job satisfaction. These results show that nepotism and cynicism have serious negative effects on job satisfaction in organizations.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This study investigates the impact of perceived nepotism and organizational cynicism on employees' job satisfaction within institutions characterized by a distinct organizational culture. The first hypothesis, H1: The perception of nepotism has a significant effect on employees' job satisfaction, was supported by the analysis. Results revealed a direct and negative relationship, indicating that higher perceptions of nepotism correspond to lower levels of job satisfaction. Similarly, the second hypothesis, H2: The perception of organizational cynicism has a significant effect on employees' job satisfaction, was also supported. The

findings demonstrated that organizational cynicism exerts a strong, direct, and negative influence on job satisfaction. Moreover, the third hypothesis, H3: Perceptions of nepotism and organizational cynicism together have a significant effect on employees' job satisfaction, was validated, showing that both variables jointly contribute to a decline in job satisfaction. However, comparative analyses indicated that organizational cynicism has a more dominant and detrimental effect than nepotism alone.

Through comprehensive correlation and regression analyses, the study confirms that both nepotism and cynicism significantly undermine job satisfaction. The pronounced influence of cynicism suggests that negative attitudes and distrust within the organizational environment may be more damaging than favoritism-based practices. These findings hold critical implications for organizational leaders and human resource professionals. When left unaddressed, such negative dynamics not only erode employee satisfaction but also compromise broader organizational performance and morale.

Accordingly, the study underscores the necessity for managerial strategies aimed at mitigating nepotism and cynicism. Implementing a merit-based, transparent, and equitable management system can enhance perceptions of fairness and legitimacy, thereby boosting employee satisfaction. Furthermore, fostering a culture in which employees feel valued and respected can substantially diminish cynical attitudes and promote psychological engagement.

In conclusion, this research emphasizes that reducing nepotistic and cynical behaviors in organizational settings can significantly enhance job satisfaction and, in turn, support higher organizational efficiency and productivity. It is imperative that both practitioners and scholars take heed of these insights. Managers must adopt proactive policies to combat such detrimental practices, while academics should continue to explore these variables to inform evidence-based interventions. From an industry-wide perspective, the study suggests that sustainable organizational success depends on fostering a culture of fairness and accountability. Nepotism and cynicism not only threaten individual well-being but also weaken collective commitment and long-term performance. Therefore, organizations across all sectors are encouraged to revise their human resources strategies, placing greater emphasis on meritocracy in recruitment, promotion, and reward systems. Establishing a clear stance of zero tolerance toward nepotistic behavior will contribute significantly to cultivating a healthier, more productive workplace environment.

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