

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Relationship between workplace bullying and organizational cynicism in Turkish public universities

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**The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of organizational cynicism on workplace bullying and to identify the types of workplace bullying faculty members at the universities face based on their status. In this study, quantitative research design was used and data was gathered from 320 volunteer faculty members who are working in different universities. Faculty members have negative attitudes toward their organizations and they believe that there is lack of integrity in their universities. Workplace bullying is initially work-related and then person-related. There is a negative and strong relationship between the organizational cynicism and workplace bullying. The workplace bullying types that the faculty members face are slander, compulsion to leave the university, not being granted tenure at universities, favoritism, alienation, having problems in administrative permissions to attend different congresses and prevention of the use of sources.**

**Key words:** Organizational cynicism, workplace bullying, faculty members, public universities, Turkey.

## INTRODUCTION

### Organizational cynicism

Organizational cynicism is a negative attitude which is described as one's feeling that the employing organization lacks integrity and honesty (Dean et al., 1998). James (2005) states that one's negative attitude towards an employing organization, characterized by negative beliefs, feelings and behaviours, is a personal response to the organization. Brandes (1997) identifies two dimensions in organizational cynicism: (1) an increase in negative attitudes due to individual mistakes, and (2) a feeling that the organization will not develop. While Abraham (2000) maintains that organizational cynicism occurs when leaders in organizations are deprived of such principles as integrity, honesty, fairness, sincerity by looking after their own interests, Andersson (1996) attributes it to employees' high expectations from their organizations and the failure of organizations to meet these expectations.

It is revealed that organizational cynicism develops as implicit or explicit strong criticism, and negative beliefs

and feelings towards an organization. In the definition of organizational cynicism, Mirvis and Kanter (1991: 61) add that organizations can also be negative. According to these researchers, cynic organizations are the ones engaged in deceptive and coercive practices, maintaining one-way communication with the employees, acting irritably, adopting a two-faced policy, supporting the managers and reifying the egotistical values.

According to Albrecht (2002), bureaucratic structure in public organizations leads to cynicism. According to Mirvis and Kanter (1991), 48% of the employees, and according to Reichers et al. (1997) 53% of the employees in the US experience organizational cynicism. It is seen that organizational cynicisms has gradually become a widespread phenomenon.

### Workplace bullying

Leymann (1990) maintains that direct or indirect unethical communication and hostile behaviour toward one

individual by one person or a group of people indicate bullying and physical terror in working life. Namie (2003) defines workplace bullying as "status-blind" and sees it as interpersonal hostility. Bullying is nearly invisible and sustained, and it appears in the form of social assault or unbalanced power. Bullying is the realization of social offense as an invisible, long-lasting and unstable style of power. Workplace bullying affects the emotional and physical well-being of employees negatively (Vartia, 2001; Quine, 2001; Lewis, 2004).

It is possible to gain power from various sources through informal social relationships with colleagues and superiors and tasks in the organization. Several studies (Craig, 1998; Neuman and Baron, 1998; Vartia, 2001, Einarsen and Skogstad, 1996) show that workplace bullying has negative effects on the individual, organization, society, city, family and peer groups.

In literature, workplace bullying is associated with the type of leadership, lack of control at work, major role conflict, social climate (Einarsen et al., 1994) or organizational cynicism (Lutgen-Sandvik and Sypher, 2009; Akgeyik et al., 2007, Mayhew et al., 2004).

### **The relationship between organizational cynicism and workplace bullying**

Cole et al. (2006) note that while positive experiences in the organization (excitement, satisfaction, better understanding of the work, having positive feeling etc.) decrease organizational cynicism, negative experiences (tension, anxiety, lack of confidence, pressure and dissatisfaction etc.) increase its occurrence (Evans and Bartolome, 1984). According to Johnson and O'Leary-Kelly (2003), organizational cynicism partially mediates the effects of psychological contract breach on work-related attitudes.

Lobnikar and Pagon (2004) found that there is a significant positive relationship between violent and aggressive attitudes at work and cynicism. According to research, there is a positive relationship between intimidating behaviour resulting from gossip, criticism and slander about the aggrieved and cynicism.

Andersson and Bateman (1997) discovered a negative relationship between poor organizational performance and cynicism. According to the findings of the study, negative attitude toward work leads to negative attitude toward the organization and its leaders.

Bullying is rather common in educational institutions. Several studies (Kalağan, 2009; Tüzel, 2009; Yaman, 2007; Tanoğlu, 2006; Lobnikor and Pagon, 2004) reveal that intimidation is employed at universities which are regarded as settings for learning. In this respect, the purpose of this study is to discover the types of workplace bullying faculty members face in Turkish universities and to examine the impact of organizational

cynicism on workplace bullying.

## **METHODS**

### **Sample**

The sample of the present study is composed of faculty members from 28 universities (Anadolu University, Gazi University, Ataturk University, Izzet Baysal University, Marmara University, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Hacettepe University, Uludag University, Trakya University, Pamukkale University, Cumhuriyet University, Akdeniz University, Middle East Technique University, Selcuk University, Inonu University, Canakkale 18 Mart University, Trakya University, Dokuz Eylul University, Istanbul University, Cukurova University, Adiyaman University, Yıldız Technique University, Balıkesir University, Kahramanmaraş Sutçu Imam University, Erciyes University, Karaelmas University, Dicle University and Fırat University) that are randomly selected among 102 public universities in Turkey. In accordance with the Higher Education Law numbered 2547, all the public universities have the same establishment principles and similar organizational structure.

To better reach the faculty members and to save money and time, the questionnaires were sent to the e-mail addresses of each faculty member. Faculty members filled the questionnaires prepared in digital format by entering the system. In total, 320 faculty members volunteered to take part in the study.

Based on the demographic features (gender and age) and other characteristics (title, being subjected to workplace bullying or not, the overall length of service, seniority at the university where one works, administrative duties) of the participants, frequency and percentage distributions were reported. Table 1 shows personal information concerning the participants.

As seen in Table 1, 98 of the participants are female while 222 of them are male. The majority of the faculty members participating in the study are between the ages 31 to 35 and 41 and above. When evaluated with respect to their titles, it is seen that 55 professors, 49 associate professors, 100 assistant professors, 21 research assistants with a PhD degree, 79 research assistants, 12 instructors and 3 specialists participated in the study. While 88 faculty members report bullying at work, 232 of them do not.

Faculty members have varying overall length of service. 73 of faculty members have been teaching for 21 years or more, breaking down to 70 who have worked for six to 10 years, 60 who have worked for 11 to 15 years, 59 who have been teaching for one to 5 years and 58 who have been working for 16 to 20 years. As for the degree of seniority at the institutions where they work, 92 of faculty members have been teaching at their institution for 1 to 5 years, breaking down to 81 who have been working at their institution for 1 to 6 years, 52 who have been teaching for 11 to 15 years, 47 working at their institution for 16 to 20 years and 48 teaching for 21 years or more.

### **Research instruments**

In this research, "Organizational Cynicism in Universities Questionnaire" was employed to gather information on organizational cynicism, and "Negative Act Questionnaire" was used for workplace bullying. The pre-test for the data collection tools was done on a group consisting of 96 faculty members who have the same features as the actual group.

### **The design of the organizational cynicism questionnaire**

The organizational cynicism questionnaire was developed by the

**Table 1.** Personal information regarding the faculty members participating in the study.

Variable		N	Percentage		N	Percentage	
Gender	Female	98	31		1–5 years	59	18
	Male	222	69		6–10 years	70	22
Age	25 and below	10	3	Seniority	11–15 years	60	19
	26- 30	54	17		16- 20 years	58	18
	31- 35	66	20		21 years and above	73	23
	36- 40	65	20		1–5 years	92	29
	41 and above	125	40		6–10 years	81	25
Title	Professor	55	17	Tenure in the university	11–15 years	52	16
	Associate professor	49	15		16- 20 years	47	15
	Assistant professor	100	31		21 years and above	48	15
	Research assistant (PhD)	21	7				
	Research assistant	79	25	Administrative duties	Dean	3	1
	Teaching assistant	12	4		Vice Dean	9	3
	Expert	4	1		Head of department	30	10
			Head of division		33	10	
Subjected to workplace bullying or not	Yes	88	28		None	231	72
	No	232	72		Other	14	4

researcher by reviewing the literature and referring to the scales developed previously by Brandes (1997) and Dean et al. (1998). The questionnaire is composed of three sections (belief in lack of integrity at university, negative attitude toward university and positive attitude toward university) and 19 items; it consists of a five-point Likert-type questionnaire. Reliability of the questionnaire is 0.92 and reliability coefficients for the three sub-sections are 0.86, 0.81 and 0.77, respectively. These values are the indicator of high internal consistency (Hair et al., 1998).

To test the construct validity of the questionnaire, factor analysis was used. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett Sphericity Test analyses were used to see whether the data collected were suitable for factor analysis. According to the results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett Sphericity Tests which test the efficiency of sample size, KMO value is 0.93 while Bartlett Sphericity Test result is 2163.558 and  $P=0.000$  ( $P<0.001$ ). The result of factor analysis shows that the percent of total variance is 59% and size variances are 24, 19 and 16%, respectively.

### The design of the workplace bullying questionnaire

The 22-item negative acts questionnaire (NAQ), which was developed by Einarsen et al. (2009), was adapted to Turkish by Cemaloğlu (2007)<sup>1</sup>. NAQ has three underlying factors: physical

intimidation bullying, person-related bullying and work-related bullying. In the NAQ, the participants were asked to mention how many times they were subjected to bullying. The order of frequency for this study is "never, sometimes, every month, every week and every day".

In the research, reliability of the questionnaire is 0.90 and reliability coefficients for the three sub-sections are 0.87, 0.81 and 0.80, respectively. These values are the indicator of high internal consistency (Hair et al., 1998). To test the construct validity of the workplace bullying questionnaire, factor analysis was used.

According to the results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett Sphericity Tests, which test the efficiency of sample size, KMO value is 0.897 while Bartlett Sphericity Test result is 2204.176 and  $P=0.000$  ( $P<0.001$ ). The result of factor analysis shows that the percent of total variance is 60% and size variances are 25, 18 and 17%, respectively.

The open-ended statement, "Have you ever been subjected to bullying? If yes, how?" which also appears in the original scale, has been added to the Turkish adapted version.

### Data analysis

SPSS 13.0 and LISREL 8.54 statistical software packages were used for data analysis. Frequency and percentage distributions for demographic features (gender, age, title, the overall length of service, seniority at the institution where one works, administrative duties), and mean and standard deviation values for data collection tools were calculated. Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between the data collection tools.

<sup>1</sup> To be able to use the "Negative Act Questionnaire", the researcher got permission from Einarsen, Hoel and Notelaers (2009) and Cemaloğlu (2007), who adapted the scale to Turkish. I want to express my gratitude to them for giving me their consent to use the questionnaire.

**Table 2.** Personal information about the faculty members subjected to workplace bullying.

Variable		N	Percentage		N	Percentage	
Gender	Female	28	32	1–5 years	15	17	
	Male	60	68	6–10 years	22	25	
Age	26- 30	14	16	Seniority	11–15 years	21	24
	31- 35	21	24		16- 20 years	14	16
	36- 40	20	23		21 years and above	16	18
	41 and above	33	37		1–5 years	25	28
Title	Professor	18	20	Tenure in the university	6–10 years	28	32
	Associate Professor	11	13		11–15 years	14	16
	Assistant Professor	28	32		16- 20 years	11	12
	Research Assistant (PhD)	7	8		21 years and above	10	12
	Research Assistant	20	23	Administrative duties	Dean	2	2
	Other (teaching assistant, expert)	4	4		Vice Dean	3	3
					Head of department	5	6
					Head of division	9	10
			None	65	74		
			Missing value	4	5		

The relationship between organizational cynicism and workplace bullying was tested with structural equation model. The responses to the open-ended question were subjected to content analysis.

**FINDINGS**

**Findings from the descriptive analysis of the Faculty members subjected to workplace bullying exposure**

In the study, 88 out of 320 faculty members have reported that they were subjected to workplace bullying. Personal information about the faculty members subjected to workplace bullying is given in Table 2.

As seen in Table 2, 32% of the faculty members subjected to bullying are female, while 68% of them are male. It is found that faculty members between the ages of 31 to 35 and who are 41 and above are more often subjected to workplace bullying. Based on the tenure in the organization, it can be said that faculty members with 6 to 10 years tenure and 11 to 15 years tenure are subjected to bullying at work. As displayed in Table 2, the faculty members who have administrative duties are subjected to workplace bullying more compared to the ones who do not.

**The types of workplace bullying the faculty members face with respect to their titles**

Data on the views of the faculty members about the types

of workplace bullying they face with respect to their titles is given in Table 3.

As seen in Table 3, the types of workplace bullying which generally all faculty members in the study face are compulsion to leave university and slander. The views of the faculty members regarding the compulsion to leave their workplace are as follows:

*“Due to the unfair accusations of my inferior and wrong policies of my senior, my efficiency has decreased and as a result, I have lost time. I have received threats to leave my work place and the city (P11).*

*I was not given tenure and the conditions for appointment to certain positions were being changed continuously in favor of certain individuals (AP10).*

*I was asked to leave the university I was working at (AsP19).*

*I have been receiving harsh criticism from the head of the department. Instead of talking about the scientific matters, s/he is forcing me to gossip. I can escape from this for a while only by locking myself in my room, but whenever we see each other, I definitely hear an offensive remark. I have been going through this for 10 or 11 years now (ARDr6).*

*I am fed up with such sentences as “I gave you this job and I will not let you go on working at this job”. I always face an insulting attitude (AR14).”*

It was found that another type of bullying that the faculty

**Table 3.** The views of the faculty members about the types of workplace bullying they face with respect to their titles.

The types of workplace bullying	P (n=18)	AP (n=11)	AsP (n=28)	ARDr (n=7)	AR (n=20)	O(TA and E) (n= 4)
Compulsion to leave university	√	√	√	√	√	√
Slander	√	√	√	√	√	√
Indirect threats	√	√	√	√	√	
Complaint	√	√	√		√	√
Favoritism	√	√	√		√	√
Not being granted tenure and not being given any teaching load	√	√	√	√		
Not being appointed students	√		√			
Exclusion	√		√	√		√
Disallowance of attending domestic and foreign meetings and congresses	√				√	√
Self-defense compulsion	√		√	√	√	
Taking remarks personally or distorting them	√		√	√	√	
Disregarding merit rating principles		√	√		√	
Constantly changing conditions for promotion		√	√			
Giving an impossible and arduous task	√	√	√		√	
Administrative oppression	√	√	√	√	√	
Verbal and physical assault			√		√	
Being forced to give non-field courses			√	√		
Excessive workload	√		√	√	√	
Interference in private lives					√	
Gossip	√	√	√		√	
Negative criticism	√	√	√		√	√

P = Professor, AP: Associate professor, AsP: Assistant professor, ARDr: Research assistant Dr., AR: Research assistant, TA: Teaching assistant, E: expert.

members are subjected to is slander. The views of the faculty members with various titles on the topic can be summarized as follows:

*“10 years ago I was subjected to 5-year long slander, criticism, giving an impossible and arduous task, not being informed about issues, contempt, spreading rumour about me, warning about my obligation to see doctor on the grounds that my mental state is deteriorating, insults such as “Go away! We do not want you here!” in the presence of others by the head of the department and his/her spouse (AP2).*

*I was subjected to such acts as exclusion, slander and prevention of promotion (AsP2).*

*[...] The people in my department are poles apart...They avoid giving you any information; however, in department meetings, they emphasize that they get on so well with us to drive a wedge between the people in the same group. Thus, this time the group you belong to starts to get suspicious of you. (AR5).”*

Moreover, it was discovered that the faculty members are subjected to bullying in the form of indirect threats, complaint, favoritism and negative criticism. The other types of bullying are exclusion, taking remarks personally

or distorting them, administrative oppression, verbal and physical assault and gossip. It is understood that mainly professors, assistant professors and research assistants are subjected to this type of bullying. Some of the participants state what they experience as follows:

*“[...] I was isolated for ten years in such a way that I could not enjoy my rights. I was subjected to social violence. My department was changed while I was being appointed to professorship. Another faculty member was appointed as the head of the department instead of me. I cannot express how sad I felt in those days. Eventually, I developed high blood pressure (P8).”*

*“[...] I am ignored in my department. Nobody greets me or returns my greeting. I see that there is considerable pressure on research assistants not to talk to me...If I disagree with the directors in my department, they get offended, which leads to more exclusion (AsP20).”*

*“[...] At last, I ran out of patience, and so we had an argument. After the birth of my child, I had difficulty getting maternity leave. Every single day, they tried to delay my breastfeeding leave. When I got back to work after the birth of my child, I had an increased workload...I was under control all the time (AR18).”*

**Table 4.** Descriptive statistics for organizational cynicism and workplace bullying scale dimensions.

Dimensions	$\bar{X}$	$\sigma$
Negative attitude toward the organization	2.5951	.84866
Positive attitude toward the organization	2.6784	.89855
Belief in lack of integrity in the organization	3.5439	.90559
Physical intimidation bullying	1.4062	.55923
Person- related bullying	1.7252	.86464
Work – related bullying	2.0895	.89963

**Table 5.** The results of the correlation analysis for the relationship between organizational cynicism and workplace bullying variables.

Correlation	Negative attitude toward the organization	Positive attitude toward the organization	Belief in lack of integrity in the organization	Physical intimidation bullying	Person-related bullying	Work – related bullying
Negative attitude toward the organization	1					
Positive attitude toward the organization	0.673**	1				
Belief in lack of integrity in the organization	0.694**	0.641**	1			
Physical intimidation bullying	-0.470**	-0.338**	-0.423**	1		
Person- related bullying	-0.336**	-0.275**	-0.272**	0.486**	1	
Work – related bullying	-0.586**	-0.453**	-0.518**	0.644**	0.469**	1

p\*\*<0.01.

According to the findings of the study, the faculty members who are subjected to bullying more than assistant professors (n=28) are research assistants (n=20) and professors (n=18). Research assistantship is a degree which is seen as a primary step in the academic world. It is also a degree where there is a lot of inexperience. It is seen that the participants with this degree are especially subjected to verbal/active direct bullying, which also includes intervention in their private lives.

#### Descriptive statistics for organizational cynicism and workplace bullying

Descriptive statistics for the data collection instruments used in the study is given in Table 4. As seen in Table 4, faculty members believe that their organization lacks integrity. This is followed by positive attitude and negative attitude. On the other hand, the faculty members mainly experience work-related bullying. This is followed by person-related bullying and bullying with physical threat.

#### The relationship between organizational cynicism and workplace bullying

Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test if

there is a significant relationship between organizational cynicism and workplace bullying variables. The results are given in Table 5. As seen in Table 5, there is a significant relationship (0.01) between the independent variable (organizational cynicism) and the dependent variable (workplace bullying).

The strongest relationship is between negative attitude toward the organization and the belief in lack of integrity in the organization, which is a medium and positive relationship ( $r = 0.694$ ). While there is a medium positive relationship ( $r = 0.673$ ) between the positive and negative attitude toward the organization, the relationship is low and negative with person-related bullying ( $r = -0.275$ ). There is a medium positive relationship ( $r = 0.641$ ) between the belief in lack of integrity in the organization and the positive attitude toward the organization while the relationship between person-related bullying and the positive attitude toward the organization is low and negative ( $r = -0.272$ ). Moreover, work-related bullying has a negative and medium relationship with negative attitude toward the organization, positive attitude toward the organization and the belief in lack of integrity in the organization, respectively ( $r = -0.586$ ,  $r = -0.453$ ,  $r = -0.518$ ).

As seen in Table 5, there is also a medium positive relationship between bullying with physical threats and person-related bullying ( $r = 0.644$ ,  $r = 0.469$ ). According to our findings, the strongest relationship is between the

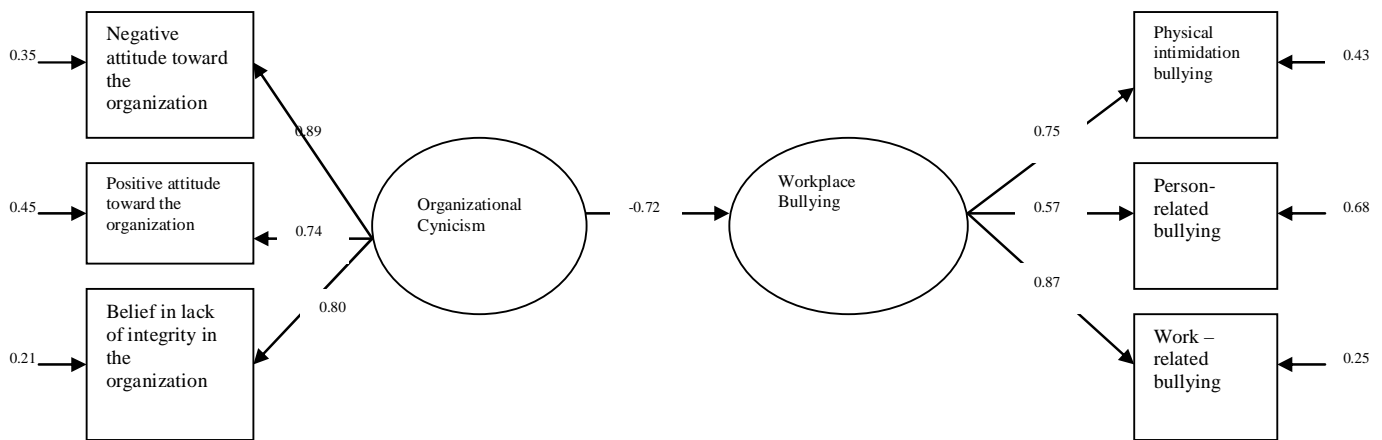


Figure 1. The path diagram displaying the relationship between organizational cynicism and workplace bullying.

belief in lack of integrity in the organization and negative attitude toward the organization, while the weakest relationship is between person-related bullying and positive attitude toward the organization.

**The impact of organizational cynicism on workplace bullying**

The impact of organizational cynicism on workplace bullying has been investigated through structural equation modeling (Figure 1) and presented in a path diagram LISREL VIII (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 2001).

Adjustment statistics has been reviewed before the evaluation of the structural model to ensure the acceptability of it. Chi square, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), goodness of fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) and standardized RMR (SRMR) have been used for the assessment of model fit (Hair et al., 1998). Adjustment statistics reveal a good adjustment of data ( $\chi^2 = 12.09$ , RMSEA = 0.040, GFI = 0.99, SRMR = 0.026, AGFI = 0.97) (Hair et al., 1998).

As seen in Figure 1, the factor affecting organizational cynicism most is the negative attitude toward the organization with factor loading of 0.89, while the factor having the least effect on organizational cynicism is the positive attitude toward the organization with factor loading of 0.74. The factor affecting workplace bullying most is the work-related bullying with factor loading of 0.87, while the factor having the least effect on workplace bullying is the person-related bullying with factor loading of 0.57. These findings suggest that there is a high negative relationship between organizational cynicism and workplace bullying ( $\beta = -0.72$ ). In other words, as organizational cynicism increases, workplace bullying

decreases, and as organizational cynicism decreases, workplace bullying increases.

**DISCUSSION**

The findings of the study suggest that faculty members have a negative attitude toward their organization and believe that there is lack of integrity in their institutions. Accordingly, they occasionally experience work-related bullying. According to the findings of the study, there is a significant negative relationship between organizational cynicism and workplace bullying. This finding is contradictory to the findings of the studies which have been carried out in the West (Lobnikar and Pagon, 2004; Andersson and Bateman, 1997) and which found a positive relationship between workplace bullying and organizational cynicism. This finding which does not correspond with the findings in literature can in a sense be explained by the “Stockholm Syndrome” phenomenon in Turkish culture because the characteristics of Stockholm Syndrome, which may be defined as a phenomenon in which hostages exhibit positive bonding towards their captors and gradually admire them (Auerbach et al., 1994) are seen in Turkish culture, specifically in administration culture.

In Turkey, the characteristics of administration culture can be listed as over-centralized structure, extreme hierarchy, many interim positions, high level of dependency of inferiors, a huge gap between generations in the organization, low competition, risk avoidance, lack of self-confidence among the staff, manipulative dependency on the organization, controlled superiority in the delegation of authority, and great emphasis on status and symbols (Şişman, 2007). These features lead inferiors to show fake loyalty and commitment to their superiors embodying all the power, monitoring people

excessively and closely, putting pressure on and even exerting tyranny over people. This fake loyalty and commitment gradually turns into a habit and even admiration. It can be stated that the characteristics of Stockholm syndrome are, to a certain extent, observed in Turkish universities.

In Turkish culture, particularly these characteristics of administration culture may have an impact similar to Stockholm syndrome on Turkish people and on faculty members. It is stated in literature that in Turkish culture, as in Stockholm syndrome, administrators command obedience; their practices are not questioned; and they are even appreciated even though they commit misconduct in office (Onat, 2012; Sunat, 2012; Övür, 2011).

Although public universities in Turkey are autonomous, they are governed like other public institutions. The previously mentioned characteristics of administration culture maintain their dominance at universities. In his research on tendencies in Turkish organizational culture, Halis (2001) found that organizational culture shows flexible and situational features, but normative, hierarchical, traditional and authoritarian practices have a negative influence on success, cooperation and confidence.

Berberoğlu et al. (1998) found that this faculty has some traditional values and that culture is, to a large extent, shaped by faculty members who constitute a subculture. As it is seen, these findings indicate that the organizational culture, especially the administration culture, in Turkish public universities lead to a different relationship between organizational cynicism and workplace bullying than in the West.

The results also put forward that universities do not offer organizational support and that 27% of the faculty members are subjected to bullying. Correspondingly, in his study on informal punishments faced by faculty members, Yaman (2007) discovers that culture of fear is dominant in Turkish universities. According to Yaman (2007), power forms the basis of the culture of fear, and faculty members are continuously suppressed and threatened. Yaman (2007) maintains that this culture of pressure and suppression is formed starting from research assistantship which is considered to be the bottom step in the academic world. In this way, research assistants are made to experience "learned helplessness" in the face of problems, and they are prevented from claiming their rights when they face trouble.

Another finding in the study is that the faculty members in the age group 41 and over run the risk of being subjected to bullying more. Faculty members having administrative duties are subjected to bullying less than the ones who do not have any administrative duties. The present study shows that bullying is faced hierarchically at the beginning of academic world (research assistants), in the middle of academic world (assistant professor) and the top positions in the academic world (professors).

Björkqvist et al. (1994) discovered a relationship between the position held and workplace bullying in the study they carried out with 726 university employees working at Abo Akademi University and employees who are subjected to bullying in 19 workplaces. According to the findings of the researchers, as individuals get a higher position at work, they experience more bullying compared to the ones with low status positions. Also, individuals with administrative and service duties are subjected to bullying more than the ones who teach and do research.

Yet, in the present study, it was found that faculty members with administrative duties experienced less bullying. The reason for this may be the fact that in Turkish universities power held increases as individuals move up the administrative ranks, that all the power is embodied in higher positions, and that there is little accountability.

As a result of the analysis of the types of workplace bullying that faculty members are subjected to at work, it was discovered that faculty members initially face slander and compulsion to leave university. This finding coincides with the findings of Tüzel (2009) and Blase and Blase (2003). The second most common types of bullying are being threatened, complaints, favoritism and being negatively criticized. The other types of bullying are exclusion, taking remarks personally and distorting them, administrative oppression, verbal and physical assault and gossip.

Professors, assistant professors and research assistants are more frequently subjected to workplace bullying. Tanoğlu (2006) found that research assistants occupy the first place in facing bullying (72%), and this is followed by instructors (28%). Similarly, Tüzel (2009) discovered that research assistants are subjected to systematic workplace bullying (32.2%), and that professors (55.2%) and assistant professors (22.4%) perform bullying behaviour.

According to Tüzel (2009), professors who hold the highest position among teaching staff use the power stemming from their status negatively. However, as seen in the present study, professors and assistant professors are subjected to bullying as well. In that case, as faculty members experience bullying, they perform bullying behaviour on those who hierarchically have a lower status in return. It seems that the present study's findings regarding organizational cynicism, organizational bullying and the relationship between these two concepts are sometimes contradictory to the findings of other related studies. Thus, an integrated research design is required.

Although the findings of the study are limited, they are generalisable to Turkish higher education system and particularly to public universities. A flexible approach is needed in interpretations. The present study should be replicated using a quantitative design as well as a qualitative design with various groups and at different



levels to obtain definite findings.

Despite this limitation, it is hoped that the findings in the study will help gain better insight into the issues of organizational cynicism and workplace bullying encountered in Turkish universities and help resolve these issues.

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