

## **The Relationship Between Psychological Contract Breach and Organizational Cynicism**

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### **Abstract**

Psychological contract is composed of employees' beliefs about what they owe to the organization and what does the organization owe to them in return. However, the psychological contract which is supposed to be between employee and employer and exists in employee's mind as mutual obligations; is sometimes broken and damaged. When the employer does not fulfill or delayed in fulfilling some obligations, these obligations being either obviously promised or implied, the employee thinks that psychological contract is breached. Organizational cynicism is seen at the employee who perceives a psychological contract breach as a reaction behavior. Organizational cynicism is defined as the negative attitude of an employee towards the organizations (s)he is employed by; which is composed of believing that the organization lacks integration, negative feelings towards the organization, and consistently, humiliating and hypercritical behavior tendency. Organizational cynicism has three dimensions called cognitive, affective and behavioral. In this context, the objective of the research is to reveal the effects of psychological contract breach which is gaining importance for organizations; on organizational cynicism and its dimensions. The data collection method of the research is determined as a survey, and the universe is restricted as research assistants working in a state university. According to the descriptive analysis results, the level of psychological contract breach and organizational cynicism levels of research assistants are low. According to analysis results, psychological contract breach effects both organizational cynicism and its dimensions. Consequently, organizational cynicism increases while psychological contract breach increases.

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**Keywords:** Psychological Contract, Psychological Contract Breach, Organizational Cynicism

## **Introduction**

Business world whose parties comprised of employees, employers and organization has recently changed. Employers used to commit providing support to their employees in areas such as safety at work, training and promotion and etc. They were expecting loyalty, trust and commitment towards their organizations in the exchange of this. Thus, employer-employee relationships were inter-balanced. However, changes introduced by globalization have also influenced the balance between employer-employee relationships. Changing business relationships have brought about longer shift time for employees, more extensive job definitions, expectancy from them to be more flexible and be tolerant for continuous change and uncertainty. In the exchange of employers' growing expectations, on the contrary, no notable change has been observed with employers' responsibility towards employee apart from sustaining their employment. These changes occurred in employees' employment relationships have resulted in differences in terms of interpretation of changing balance in their minds. It was observed that individuals have developed various attitudes towards their organization for self-defense. Perception of psychological contract breach and organizational cynicism could be considered as employees' answer against this unfair situation based on the self-defense reaction (Naus et al., 2007: 684-685).

In contemporary organization structures, psychological contract, described as the reflection of social contract concept in sociology science to organizations, maintains the relationship between employer and employee, ensures fulfillment of expectations of employees and organization, and guides managers (Isci, 2010: 2). Psychological contract concept has been utilized extensively to comprehend structure of dynamic business relationships and to explain behaviors and attitudes at work (Bal and Vink, 2011: 2795). Psychological contract breach refers the conscious of failing in fulfillment of obligations mandated by psychological contract existing between the individuals and their employer organization (Johnson and M. O'leary-Kelly, 2003: 629). On the other hand, organizational cynicism is considered as an attitude that arises as a reaction among employees against these negative conditions. Organizational cynicism represents employees' disbelief towards organizational decisions, mistrust towards their intentions, and the belief that managers do not reflect their real characteristics (James, 2005: 25). There are studies which investigate the relationship between the two concepts in the domestic and global literature (Andersson, 1996; Abraham, 2000, Delken, 2004; James, 2005; Percin et.al., 2012; Arslan, 2012; Aslan and Boylu, 2014). According to findings reported by aforesaid studies, psychological contract breach is related with organizational cynicism

in general; and psychological contract breach is antecedent of organizational cynicism.

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **Psychological Contract**

Psychological contract concept has recently gained interest in terms of examination of employees' expectations from the relationships between employee and their employer and their organization in the organizational behavior literature (McDonald and Makin, 2000: 84). Contracts are fundamental and elemental structures of organizations. Contracts keep individuals and their organization together and regulate their relationships and allow them to act collaboratively in accomplishing organizational targets (Robinson et al., 1994: 137). Regardless of how comprehensive business contracts are, they could not introduce resolution to all dimensions of business relationship. Psychological contracts reduce individual uncertainties regarding the agreed conditions of business relationship. If employees think that he or she agreed with their employer, they feel safe. This allows management of employee behavior without the need for any administrative supervision. Employees' belief that they would have gaining in the near or far future ensures that they supervise their own behaviors continuously. Thus, psychological contracts lets employees feel that they could make their own destiny in the organization as one of the parties in the contract (Shore and Tetrick, 1994: 93-94). Psychological contract concept, unlike the written formal business contract executed during job entry, is comprised of a series of expectation set that occur between employees and their organization, and which is not set forth in written form.

Psychological contract is one of the concepts which contribute in description of the relationship between organization and employee; and allows investigating employee-employer relationship, the fundamental aspect of organizational life, from new and distinct point of view (Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000: 905). It is not possible to set all characteristics of employment relationship in the recruitment contract signed by employees. Psychological contract completes this gap between employees and their organization. Another feature of this concept is that it shapes employee behavior. Employees determine their behavior by comparing their obligations towards their organization with their organization's obligations towards themselves (Cihangiroglu and Sahin, 2010: 12).

Psychological contract business is set of mental expectations created by individuals about obligations of employees and organization as well as perception and interpretation of written, verbal, attitudinal and behavioral messages within the scope of relationships (Karcioğlu and Turker, 2010:121). Psychological contract concept is founded on the assumption that

there are two parties in business relationships as employee and management and that both parties have common obligations towards each other. However, these obligations mean more than the written contract executed between both sides (Herriot et al., 1997: 151). In this context, psychological contract concept is unilateral contract considered as individually and which covers obligations of both organization and individual (Walker and Hutton, 2006: 434). The origin of the expectations between employee-employer, and not exhibited in written form but implied allusively are individual beliefs and behaviors of organization. Expectations of individuals within the scope of psychological contract are shaped by organization primarily. In other words, organizations give promises and give incentives to employees so that employees exert their efforts more intensively and to motivate them. Thus, these promises or incentives could either be in an explicit way or in allusive way as it is observed mostly (Bal et al., 2013: 108). Since psychological contracts are subject to individual perceptions, it is not necessary that it should be acknowledged or shared by other members of the individual's group (Morrison and Robinson, 1997: 228).

Dunahee and Wangler (1974) claimed that formation of psychological contracts commences during job interviews. In this process, not only certain conditions such as wage for the designated job description are discussed, but also details and extent of assigned obligations are discussed. Furthermore, psychological contract is formed by employee's perception on the basis of body language displayed by employers, employee's observation with the quality of the organization as well as the certain conditions explained to employees during job interviews (Shore and Tetrick, 1994: 95-96).

Psychological contracts are highly personal. They vary according to individuals, organizations and time period. Two individuals who apply to the same organization at the same time for the same job title would have different psychological contracts (Petersitzke, 2009: 2).

When definitions of psychological contract concept are taken into consideration, it could be seen that some studies emphasize that this concept is comprised of perceptions of managers and employees (Argris, Schein etc.), and some others described as employees' perception of obligations between parties (Rousseau etc.). In the present study, on the basis of the description suggested by Rousseau, psychological contract was considered as employees' perception of reciprocal obligations between themselves and their employer organization because organizations do not have psychological contracts with their employees. Organizations have employment strategies through which they manage the reciprocal relationship with employees and gain an influence on this relationship (Petersitzke, 2009: 143).

## **Psychological Contract Breach**

Psychological contract, which lies on the foundation of the employee-employer relationship, is comprised of obligations believed to be two-sided by employees. However, employees think usually that employers do not fulfill their obligations appropriately. As a result of the study of Robinson and Rousseau (1994) conducted on managers, it was found that 55% of managers fail to fulfill one or more obligations relevant with their relationship with employees in the first two years of employment of workers. This status, whether there is a rationale or not, suggests that employees' feeling such as thrust, job satisfaction, intention to continue working for the organization, and continue to exert same or higher performance at work decrease. Because of aforesaid potential negative impacts, it is substantially important for organizations to determine the conditions which cause breach of psychological contract among employees (Robinson and Morrison, 2000: 525).

In the light of the developments such as reorganization, downsizing or growth experienced by organizations recently, psychological contracts have become a phenomenon that needs attention in employment relationships. The pressure caused by the continuous and fast-paced evolution faced by organizations resulted in a change in employee relationships as well. Sims (1994) stated that long-term job safety provided on the condition of working hard and resulting employee commitment are no longer available. Therefore, organizations need to realize reciprocal obligations between employees and themselves in this new condition faced. Moreover, these changes increase possibility of distraction or breach of existing psychological contract, an abstract set of expectations, between employee and employer (Robinson, 1996: 574).

Psychological contract viewed by Rousseau (1989) as reciprocal obligations set between employee and employer is sometimes disrupted or damaged at certain occasions. Employer's failure or omission in promises and obligations within the scope of the psychological contract gives harm to psychological contract (Buyukyilmaz and Cakmak, 2014: 584). When it is considered that at least one of the obligations that arise as a result of promises made explicitly or implied allusively by employee is not fulfilled, or even fulfillment of these obligations is delayed, employees perceive that psychological contract is breached (Kiefer and Briner, 2006:204). When an imbalance felt by employees between what they sacrifice for their work and promises made to them by employer arise, employees think that this contract imagined in their mind is breached (Aslan and Boylu, 2014: 36).

Differences noticed by employees with their expectations from their organization and the benefits supplied by the organization to them are viewed as breach of psychological contract. However, breach status differs

subject to the benefits fundamental reason of the breach. For instance, employees attach more importance to benefits which could have more direct impact on their lives; and finally, the breach that arise is perceived more laud and clear. Moreover, since benefits are concrete and tangible things which allow that they could be discussed and assessed rationally, negative respective actions of organization could easily be recognized by employees. Therefore, unconformity perceived by employees with the awarding practices of their organization increases their perception of breach further with respect to other circumstances (Turnley and Feldman, 1999: 369).

Psychological contract breach is an abstract concept made up of perceptions of employees owing to its subjective nature. However, there could be an evident breach at some occasions. For instance, if the person authorized for recruitment process declares to employees that they will be promoted at the end of the third year even though this was not included in the job contract, and if this promotion is not given to them at the end of the period, then, there is an explicit status of breach. Employee broke the word given at the beginning. In some occasions, information provided during recruitment process could be ambiguous. Using ambiguous expressions such as “Employees could gain promotions in the first three years without any hindrance” could be understood as a promise to be promoted in their first three years during recruitment process. If this promised promotion does not take place, employee would then feel the breach. However, the breach felt at this point is result of the controversy between employee and employer. Controversy emerges when there are different understanding between employee and employer concerning a promise made in terms of whether there is an obligation, or content of a promise made. In both cases, the difference between what is understood by employees on the basis of what was told to them and what was realized would result in perception of contract breach (Robinson and Morrison, 2000: 526-528).

One of the most important differences between obligation and expectation concepts, which arise in employees’ minds and which could not be differentiated clearly, is the potential consequences that may arise when they are not fulfilled. Guest (1998) reported that reactions of employees against the unsatisfied expectations would be reflected on organizational consequences more severely and detrimental. Indeed, Robinson (1996) reported the similar supporting result which indicates that contract breach causes unsatisfied expectations. However, unsatisfied expectations will not bring consequences of contract breach about on its own (Shapiro and Kessler, 2000: 905-906).

## **Organizational Cynicism**

Cynicism concept has been point of interest since the foundation of the cynic school in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century during the Ancient Greek period. Cynicism emerged in Ancient Greek as a philosophy and a life style; and relevant studies predicated this concept to the Greek philosophers such as Antisthenes and Diogenes members of a philosophy sect called cynics (Brandes, 1997: 7). Cynics were of the opinion that ‘virtue’ which states that human being is the sole ‘good’. The single way of acquiring this virtue is to avoid defects by mostly addressing others’ defects which could be obtained through self-control mechanism. On the basis of this opinion, contemporary cynics are known as “nitpicking persons” (Barnes, 2010: 10).

Today, cynicism is an acknowledged concept. Cynicism does not only influence the society, it is also seen extensively with members of organizations considered as product of society; and it emerges as a paradigm within the framework of organization (Dean et al., 1998: 341). Cynicism has recently come to prominence as an attitude towards a certain targets such as organizations while it has traditionally been for a person or it has social focus (Neves, 2012: 966).

Whereas “cynic” person is described as the one who observes only their personal interests and who considers everyone as self-seeker, the ideology explaining this concept is referred as cynicism. The fundamental belief with cynicism is that honesty, justice and sincerity principles are sacrificed to the personal interests. Although cynicism has similar meaning with words of “skepticism”, “incredulity”, “distrust”, “disbelief”, “pessimism”, and “negation”, in its contemporary version, individuals’ “nitpicker, picky, assailer” meanings prevail (Erdost et al., 2007:514, Polat and Meydan, 2010: 151).

Cynicism concept applied to organizations by academicians and practitioners after the end of 1980s. Awareness towards organizational cynicism concept raised as result of the book in which a national study of Kanter and Mirvis (1989) conducted on American employees was published. This was followed by the study of Bateman et al. (1992) in which organizational cynicism was described as negative and insecure attitudes against authority and organization. Organizational cynicism concept is described as negative attitude developed by an employee towards organization. It is reported that there are three dimensions of humiliating and critical behavior towards organization in conformity with the belief and affections that organization lacks honesty, negative affection towards organization (Dean et al., 1998:345). Negative attitudes could be against all of the employer organization as well as only against a department of it (Naus, 2007: 25). When employees believe that their organization lacks honesty, accordingly organizational cynicism emerges among employees.

The perception that basic expectations relevant with moral, justice and honesty are breached lies under the foundation of the perception of employees that organization lacks honesty. Organizational cynicism is conceptualized as a quality for future; and it is claimed that it represent “learned idea” (Johnson and M. O’leary-Kelly, 2003:629).

Structures of organizational cynicism and general cynicism concepts are different. While general cynicism is described as determined and innate personal characteristic which reflects mostly negative perceptions of individuals, organizational cynicism is described as negative attitude which covers affective, cognitive and behavioral dimensions that emerge in a person against his/her employer organization. While general cynicism is comprised of reasons originated from innate personality of a person, the cynical attitude among employees, referred as organizational cynicism was result of structural and organizational factors (Abraham, 2000: 270).

Organizational cynicism refers an attitude which could be associated with many object and which allow generalization from one target to another and a learned belief developed as a result of an experience. In this line, organizational cynicism concept is related with attitudes towards employer organization formed by behaviors relevant with negative beliefs, affections, feelings and behaviors of individuals; and as an answer to history of social and personal experiences open to evolution by environmental factors (James, 2005: 7). Organizational cynicism concept means that there is belief that organizations could progress on the condition that this is an insignificant possibility. When this concept is examined, it could be seen that two dimensions of organizational cynicism are emphasized. Whereas the first dimension implies that adverse attitudes would increase because of personal mistakes, the second dimension includes the belief that organization could progress (Brandes, 1997:18).

Organizational cynicism concept includes beliefs and affections relevant with the inclination to exhibit “negative affection”, “humiliating” and “critical” behaviors against organization. Organizational cynicism is described as negative beliefs, negative affections and severe either deliberate or latent criticisms drawn against organization. Organizational cynicism is a negative attitude with three dimensions comprised of belief that organization lacks integrity, negative affection against organization, and inclination of humiliating and critical behavior against organization, which is in conformity with aforesaid belief and affection. These dimensions are given as follows (Dean et al., 1998: 345-346);

1- Cognitive Dimension: This is the belief that organization and its employees lack honesty. Organizational cynics are of the opinion that organization practices betray principles such as justice, honesty and sincerity. They could believe in that such principles could be sacrificed for



personal interests and this is an ongoing norm within the organization. Furthermore, cynics do not tend to regular logic of organizational decisions made because they believe that there is a latent cause undisclosed lying underneath of all actions.

2- Affective Dimension: This dimension is comprised affections of individuals with cynic attitude towards their organization. Cynicism is not only a judgment containing discontent against organization, but also it includes strong affective reactions. It involves affective reactions such as disrespect, rage, nuisance, and shame. Cynic individuals might feel humiliation and fury against organization; or they might feel pain, disgust or shame when they think of organization. Cynic individuals, in spite of their negative affections, might have tacit pleasure from these negative affections ironically. Finally, organizational cynicism also involves a series of negative affection as well as the beliefs of employees with their organization.

3- Behavioral Dimension: This group employees exhibiting cynic behavior in employer organization tend to make pessimistic predictions about incidents that occur within the organization. For instance, they might foresee that the organization sacrifice quality of products as soon as manufacturing costs rise. They might exert humiliating behaviors against others frequently. The most evident behavior of cynic individuals is their severe criticism against organization. Sometimes employees display behaviors of complaint, teasing and criticism about their organization. Additionally, non-verbal behavior types might be displayed to express cynic attitudes. These non-verbal behaviors might include “I-know” kind of implicative gazes, eye-rolling, grinning and sneering.

## **Research**

### **Purpose and Scope of the Research**

When descriptions of psychological contract breach and organizational cynicism concepts are considered, it could be observed that essence of two concepts are based on social exchange in employment relationships. In other words, both concepts display a nature as a reaction against their unsatisfied expectations in the context of employment relationships. However, there are points in which both concepts differ. Psychological contracts involve promises which are thought to be made by employees especially for them. When employees believe that the promises made to them were not fulfilled by their employers, psychological contract breach occurs. There is a belief under the foundation of psychological contract breach, which implies that these promises made were not fulfilled. On the other organizational cynicism is based on wide variety of unfulfilled expectations rather than promises unsatisfied. Moreover, cynicism may not be result of personal experiences of employees. It could be influenced by

experiences of others regarding the organization (Johnson and M. O'leary-Kelly, 2003: 630). Great disappointment that emerges as a result of unsatisfied promises, unfulfilled expectations felt among employees lies underneath cynicism. When employees believes that the promises made to them were not fulfilled, psychological contract breach takes place and accordingly the negative affections that would arise would trigger them to adopt cynic attitude towards the organization (Ucok and Torun, 2014: 236). In other words, employees who think that the promises made to them adopt adverse attitude towards their organization which pave the way for organizational cynicism. According to the studies so far, a significant positive correlation was determined between the two concepts. The purpose of the present study is to determine the relationship between research assistants' perceptions towards their institutions regarding psychological contract breach and the organizational cynicism. In this context, the main and sub-hypotheses of the research were given below:

H: Psychological contract breach has positive impact on organizational cynicism.

- H<sub>1a</sub>: Psychological contract breach has positive impact on cognitive cynicism.
- H<sub>1b</sub>: Psychological contract breach has positive impact on affective cynicism.
- H<sub>1c</sub>: Psychological contract breach has positive impact on behavioral cynicism.

### **Research Methodology**

The universe of the study was comprised of research assistants at the Pamukkale University. In this scope, 450 survey forms were distributed to all research assistants. Some of research assistants were not able to be reached due to their reluctance for participation into the study, holiday, busyness or health issues. Totally 350 research assistants (RAs) were distributed survey form and 97 forms completed and collected back for analysis. Finally, 93 surveys were included in analysis because 3 of the collected forms were not found reliable. When it is considered that return rates of applied researches differs in the range of 20% to 40% of the main body (Ogut, 2003), obtained 26.5% of the return rate of survey forms was considered as acceptable for further analysis.

As data collection tool in the study, the scale with 5 expressions, commonly found in the literature, developed by Robinson and Morrison (2000) to measure psychological contract breach perception and the scale, comprised of 17 expressions and with 3 dimensions, developed by Brandes et al. (1999) to measure organizational cynicism were employed.

## Findings

Results of the reliability analysis conducted to determine internal consistency of the scale were exhibited in Table 1. Whereas reliability of the psychological contract breach scale with 5 expressions was found as 91.2%, reliability of the organizational cynicism scale with 13 expressions was determined as 86.2%. Reliability levels of dimensions were determined for cognitive cynicism, affective cynicism and behavioral cynicism as 91.2%, 93.2% and 81.1%. Based on these results, it was observed that internal consistency of scales was ensured.

Dimensions	No. of Expressions	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )
1. Psychological Contract Breach	5	.912
Organizational Cynicism	18	.862
2a. Cognitive Cynicism	5	.912
2b. Affective Cynicism	5	.932
2c. Behavioral Cynicism	4	.811

**Table 1:** Results of the Reliability Analysis

Table 2 exhibits demographical information of participant 93 RAs. In terms of gender distribution of the participants, percentages of male and female participants were 55.9% and 44.1%. In terms of participants' age distribution, percentages of age groups of 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, and 35 and older were 14%, 52.7%, 25.8%, and 7.5%, respectively. It was notable that majority of participants were in the age group of 25-29. While 44.1% of participants were married, 55.9% were single. According to their service period duration, percentages of RAs from groups of 0-2 years, 25 months -4 years, and 4 years and longer were 38.7%, 30.1%, and 31.2%, respectively. In terms of their work place, their percentages were determined as Engineering Faculty, Faculty of Business and Administration (FBA), Faculty of Education, Faculty of Natural Sciences Literature (FNSL) and other faculties were 25.8%, 23.7%, 22.6%, 23.7% and 4.2%. In terms of employment status distribution percentages of RAs, 33/a status, Faculty Member Training Program (FMTP), 50/d status, and 35<sup>th</sup> clause status were 34.4%, 34.4%, 22.6%, and 8.6%, respectively.

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Percentage

Gender Distribution	Male	52	55.9
	Female	41	44.1
Age Distribution	20-24	13	14
	25-29	49	52.7
	30-34	24	25.8
	35 and older	7	7.5
Marital Status	Single	52	55.9
	Married	41	44.1
Service Period Distribution	0-2 Yrs.	36	38.7
	25 Mns.- 4 Yrs.	28	30.1
	49 Mns.-6 Yrs.	9	9.7
	6 and Longer	20	21.5
Faculty	FBA	22	23.7
	Education	21	22.6
	Engineering	24	25.8
	FNSL	22	23.7
	Other	4	4.3
Employment Status	33/a	32	34.4
	50/d	21	22.6
	FMTTP	32	34.4
	35 <sup>th</sup> Article	8	8.6

**Table 2:** Demographical Information of Participants

Table 3 exhibits descriptive analysis results obtained from the answers given by participant RAs to the expressions in surveys prepared for measuring psychological contract breach perceptions and organizational cynicism levels. According to the mean and standard deviation values in the table, mean perceived psychological contract breach score and mean organizational cynicism score were estimated at 2.52 and 2.44, respectively. In terms of organizational cynicism dimensions, mean behavioral cynicism dimension was estimated at 2.68 and it was found that it was higher with respect to other dimensions. According to the results, it is possible state that RAs' psychological contract breach perceptions and their cynic attitudes towards their organization were at low level.

	( $\bar{x}$ )	S.d.	Level*
1.Psychological Contract Breach	2.52	.920	Low
2.Organizational Cynicism	2.44	.983	Low
2a.Cognitive Cynicism	2.59	.854	Low
2b.Affective Cynicism	1.99	.884	Low
2c.Behavioral Cynicism	2.68	.801	Medium

\* $\bar{x}$ =1-2.59; Low  $\bar{x}$ =2.60-3.39; Medium  $\bar{x}$ =3.40-5; High

*Table 3: Average and Standard Deviation Values of Collected Data*

The results of the correlation analysis which indicate the relationship between variables and their constituent dimensions were exhibited in Table 4. It was found that all relationships between psychological contract breach perception and organizational cynicism variable and organizational cynicism dimensions were statistically significant. Medium level correlation was observed between dependent variable of the study, organizational cynism and dimensions of organizational cynicism and independent variable, psychological contract breach. The most significant relationship 0.455 ( $p < 0.01$ ) was found between psychological contract breach perception and cognitive cynicism. This relationship was found to be medium level and positive. The least significant relationship (0.317) was found between psychological contract breach perception and behavioral cynicism ( $p < 0.01$ ), which was at medium level and positive.

	1	2	2a	2b	2c
1.Psychological Contract Breach	1				
2.Organizational Cynicism	,405**	1			
2a.Cognitive Cynicism	,455**	,867**	1		
2b.Affective Cynicism	,427**	,865**	,644**	1	
2c.Behavioral Cynicism	,317**	,775**	,448**	,563**	1

\*\*Correlation value at 0.01 significance level

**Table 4:** Correlation Values Among Variables

In order to test research hypotheses, a linear regression analysis was conducted. Table 5 exhibits the results of the analysis. According to analysis results, psychological contract breach levels of RAs have positive ( $\beta = 0.483$ ) and significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) effect on organizational cynicism level. In other words, one unit increase in RAs' perception levels of psychological contract breach towards their organizations will increase their cynic attitude towards their organization by 0.483 units. According to the estimated variance value, it could be understood that psychological contract breach perception could explain 22.5% of the organizational cynicism attitude. Finally, hypothesis of the study is accepted and the research model is supported. According to the regression results of the sub-hypothesis, it was found that psychological contract breach was positively and significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) effective on sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism. According to  $\beta$  coefficients, the most significant relationship was found between psychological contract breach and cognitive cynicism ( $\beta = 0.473$ ). Thus, sub-hypotheses of the study were supported.

Dependent Variables	Independent Variable	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t	p	Explained Variance $R^2$
Organizational Cynicism	Psychological Contract Breach	.483	14.300	.000	.225
Cognitive Cynicism		.473	14.300	.000	.199
Affective Cynicism		.411	14.300	.000	.173
Behavioral Cynicism		.313	14.300	.000	.091

**Table 5:** Regression Analysis Results

Results of the variance analysis conducted to determine whether contract breach perception levels of research assistants with respect to their employment status, in which one way Anova test was applied, were exhibited in Table 6 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Accordingly, psychological contract breach levels display significant difference with respect to organizational cynicism levels. According to average values, psychological contract breach perception ( $\bar{x} = 2,85$ ) of RA with 33/a employment status and their organizational cynicism level ( $\bar{x} = 2,71$ ) were higher in comparison with the RAs with other employment statuses.

	Employment Status	Average	Standard Deviation	Sig(p)
Psychological Contract Breach	33 <sup>rd</sup> Article	2.85	.8163	.000
	50/d	2.04	.7427	
	ÖYP	2.53	.7528	
Organizational Cynicism	35 <sup>th</sup> Article	2.40	.8830	.000
	33 <sup>rd</sup> Article	2.71	.7980	
	50/d	2.25	.5875	
	ÖYP	2.26	.5897	
	35 <sup>th</sup> Article	2.50	.7972	

**Table 6:** Variance Analysis Results According to Employment Status

## Conclusion

Psychological contract breach refers that employees get the idea that their employer organization has not fulfilled one or more obligations towards them although employees have made contributions to their organization. On the other hand, organizational cynicism is described as beliefs of employees that their organization lacks honesty and their negative considerations about their organization and their tendency to exhibit humiliating and critical behaviors against their organization in conformity with aforesaid belief and thoughts. In the present study, the relationship between these two concepts was tried to be revealed. In the light of hypotheses set forth in this context, the effect of perception of psychological contract breach on organizational

cynicism and on its dimensions of cognitive, affective and behavioral cynicism were investigated. According to the obtained findings, RAs' psychological contract breach levels and organizational cynicism levels were estimated at  $\bar{x}=2.52$  and  $\bar{x}=2.44$ , respectively. Thus, both values are in proximity of median value. However, it is possible to state that they are found at low level. When dimensions of the organizational cynicism are considered, behavioral cynicism level was found at medium level ( $\bar{x}=2.68$ ).

RAs work at different types of employment statuses at universities. Their expectations from organizations or what is promised to them legally differ according to these employment statuses. The employment status with highest job security is the one referred as 33/a article. On the other hand, the least secure employment status is the one referred as 50/d article because they will be discharged from the university unless their position is assigned by the Higher Education Council at the end of their doctorate education. In terms of psychological contract breach and organizational cynicism levels, RAs exhibit significant difference with respect to their employment statuses. On the basis of findings, psychological contract breach levels and organizational cynicism levels of the RAs employed subject to 33/a status providing the highest job security were higher with respect to others. Our findings supported the research hypotheses. In other words, psychological contract breach perception is significantly and positively effective on organizational cynicism. As one of the substantial obstacles before organizational performance, cynic behaviors could be prevented not only by written contracts made with employees, but also by remaining loyal to promises and commitments made at all levels and the must be fulfilled on timely manner. Moreover, in order to prevent misunderstandings among employees, organizations, managers and organizational practices are required to be explicit as much as possible.

Both concepts may not be a positive characteristic for organizations. However, they are influent on individuals and on their professional lives. Managers and employers are required to assess natures and dynamics of psychological contract breach and organizational cynicism, their influence on employees' behaviors and attitudes accurately.

In the present study, only a public university was investigated for research purposes. By including other universities into the scope of the study, it is possible make generalizations across the country. Furthermore, private universities could be analyzed as well so that RAs from both types of organizations could be compared. Another limitation of the study is that the study universe was confined with RAs in a public university. Further studies could expand the universe as faculty members and even administrative personnel could be included to reach more comprehensive conclusion about the university. The study is comprised of analysis of qualitative and

quantitative data. Hence, it could be supported by qualitative studies to investigate concepts more profoundly.

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