

FACTORS DETERMINING ORGANISATIONAL CYNICISM: THEORETICAL INSIGHTS

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Abstract. Organisational cynicism has been a topic of discussion and debate among employees and top management. The article analyses the factors that determine the organisational cynicism of employees and seeks to reveal ways to reduce it. Reducing organisational cynicism leads to effective employee management, optimal management of the organisation's results and performance efficiency, therefore, in today's organisations, which are characterized by the fact that they employ employees of different generations who have different attitudes towards the work environment created in the organisation, which determines the emergence of organisational cynicism, the analysis of the factors that determine it becomes relevant. The article consists of two parts: first, the concept of organisational cynicism is revealed, and the second part of the article analyses the factors that determine organisational cynicism. Organisational cynicism in the article is understood as a negative attitude of employees towards the organisation in which they work, manifested in a sceptical and critical assessment of the organisation's behaviour, values, motives and actions, which is often associated with distrust of managers, contempt, suffering, anger and shame. An organisation seeking to reduce organisational cynicism must create conditions that ensure the harmony of employees' personal values and organisational culture, as well as the harmony of employees' needs and motivation system, while striving for a leadership style oriented towards leadership, rather than strict management.

Keywords: cynicism, organisational cynicism, factors for organisational cynicism

INTRODUCTION

Organisational cynicism has been a topic of discussion and debate among employees and top management. In the modern labour market, organisational cynicism is becoming an increasingly serious problem, causing a negative impact not only on the psychological health of employees but also on workplace productivity and organisational success (Ucar & Ipek, 2019). Organisational cynicism can have a detrimental effect not only on organisational performance but also on employee well-being. This can manifest itself through fatigue, stress (Besse, Poremski, Lliberte & Latimer, 2018), lost motivation (Kang, 2020), etc. Organisational cynicism can arise due to complex employee-organisation relationships. However, an equally important reason for the manifestation of organisational cynicism is the demographic indicators of employees: previous work experience (Aslam, Ilyas & Imran, 2016), age, gender, education (Christian, 2023; Polatcan & Titrek, 2014), marital status, length of service, income, profession (Terzi & Derin, 2016). Therefore, organisational leaders need to understand the causes of organisational cynicism and ways to reduce or even avoid it.

In managing an organisation with employees of different generations, the attitude of employees towards the organisation itself, other members of the organisation, and commitment to the organisation are important, as this helps to achieve management effectiveness (Peng, Li, Wang, & Lin, 2020) and helps to avoid the expression of organisational cynicism (Kalkan, Aksal, Gazi, Atasoy, & Dagli, 2020). The authors' research results show that the expression of organisational cynicism is determined by organisational culture (Durrach, Chaudhary, & Gharib, 2019; Kangas et al., 2018; Ucar & Ipek, 2019; Uriesi, 2019;), management, and leadership (Farahnak, Ehrhart, Torres, & Aarons, 2020; Islam, Furuoka, & Idris, 2020; Oreg & Berson, 2019; Rahman & Hadi, 2019), which are factors that determine the efficiency and competitiveness of the organisation's activities. When innovations are developed or ideas are generated in an organisation with employees of different generations, the generation of creativity and innovation becomes a conceptual tool for reducing the expression of organisational cynicism (Aljawarneh and Atan, 2018; Christian, 2023; Kismo, 2023; Sameer, 2018). Therefore, the factors determining the expression of organisational cynicism must be constantly assessed and controlled to ensure optimal management of employees.

This paper aims to provide theoretical insights into the factors determining organisational cynicism.

The aim implied the following structure of the article: first, the concept of organisational cynicism is revealed, and in the second part of the article the factors determining organisational cynicism are analysed.

The article was prepared using the method of scientific literature analysis.

CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE CONCEPT OF ORGANISATIONAL CYNICISM

To better understand the concept of organisational cynicism, the article will first review the concept of cynicism.

First, it is important to mention that cynicism can manifest in various areas: personal, professional and social life. When analysing the scientific literature (Durrach et al., 2019; Nemr and Liu, 2021) it became clear that cynicism is an individual's detachment from societal norms, ethics, principles and customs, which is expressed in suspicion, distrust, anger, contempt, disappointment, emotional detachment and the belief that people are dishonest and selfish. Christian

(2023) defines cynicism as an attitude in which a person critically evaluates the world and its phenomena, often manifested in distrust and criticism. Cynicism, according to Caylak and Altuntas (2017), is understood as a specific reaction to a specific environment, for example, an organisation, or a negative attitude towards it, which arises from the belief that the organisation does not pay enough attention to employees. The approaches proposed by these authors allow us to state that when talking about individual cynicism, it can describe this individual's distrust and critical and negative attitude towards events, situations, people and phenomena occurring in his personal, professional and social environment, their negative assessment, manifested in negative emotions.

Regarding a more specific form of cynicism, i.e. organisational cynicism, it can be assumed that organisational cynicism is a negative attitude, the formation of which is promoted by employees' dissatisfaction with the organisation in which they work. This assumption is confirmed by the works of the authors which were analysed in the scientific literature (Ayik, 2022; Kokalan, 2019; Lutz et al., 2020; McCrindle, 2021; Yang et al., 2020; van Twist and Newcombe, 2021, etc.). For example, according to Ayik (2022), organisational cynicism is defined as a negative attitude of employees towards the manager, the organisation and the functioning of the organisation; as well as a condition in which many employees do not trust the organisation in which they work and, as a result, become isolated from the community, which causes professional stress and leads to a bad microclimate or a mismatch between personal and organisational values. According to McCrindle (2021), organisational cynicism is a reaction or negative emotions that are caused by employees' experiences in an organisation. According to Lutz et al. (2020), it is an employee's negative attitude toward the organisation, that usually arises when they believe that fair decision-making is not ensured in the organisation. Kokalan (2019) notes that a negative attitude arising from distrust in the organisation or its activities can manifest itself through suspicion, emotional detachment and disappointment, as well as through resentment or criticism of the organisation's decisions, activities or culture. A slightly different definition is provided by Tuna et al. (2018), who state that organisational cynicism is an attitude that includes a sense of insecurity, unfair beliefs, and cognitive, emotional and behavioural situations in the organisation. Cinar et al. (2014), defining the concept of organisational cynicism, note that it is a negative reaction of employees to the organisational culture and that it is the belief of employees that managers pursue personal interests without adhering to the principles of honesty and sincerity.

In summary, it can be stated that organisational cynicism is an employee's negative attitude towards his or her organisation, manifested in a sceptical and critical assessment of the organisation's behaviour, values, motives and actions, which reflects the employee's belief that the organisation lacks moral integrity. Organisational cynicism describes an employee's negative attitude not only towards the organisation in which he or she works but towards his or her colleagues as well. The definitions of organisational cynicism found in the scientific literature allow us to state that the expression of an employee's organisational cynicism is revealed in his or her distrust of managers, contempt, suffering, anger and shame, dissatisfaction and disappointment, failure to meet expectations, disrespectful behaviour, strong criticism of the organisation, sarcasm, and denial of various processes taking place in the organisation.

Having described the concept of organisational cynicism, the article further analyses its determining factors.

ANALYSIS OF FACTORS THAT DETERMINE ORGANISATIONAL CYNICISM

Analysing the scientific literature, it became clear that various researchers who analyse the factors determining the emergence of organisational cynicism analyse them in different contexts, which leads to the fact that they emphasize different aspects of these factors. In this article, we have chosen to present three factors that determine the expression of organisational cynicism that are most often analysed in the works of scientists. These are the following: with employee values incompatible organisational culture, an inappropriate management style, and a motivation system that does not meet employee needs.

1. The fit between employee values and organisational culture.

Organisational culture can be generally defined as the values that dominate an organisation, on which the organisation relies in its activities, and which are reflected in the physical environment and the deeper, less noticeable layers of the organisation, as well as manifested through stories, memories, legends, and myths. Organisational values, principles, and norms of behaviour strongly influence the nature and success of people's work. In the scientific literature, one can find various statements about how with employees' values incompatible organisational culture can lead to employee disappointment and dissatisfaction with the organisation, i.e. organisational cynicism. Here, according to Besse et al., (2018), it can be stated that the expression of organisational cynicism can be caused by organisational culture due to an imbalance between the values and principles of the organisation and the values and principles of the employee, conflicts arise due to pressure to perform work or unclear work requirements, and according to Uriesi (2019) and Wisse & Sleenbos (2016), this leads to an inappropriate communication style, which also causes employee dissatisfaction with the organisation. According to Smollan and Morrison (2019), a suitable organisational culture makes it easier for organisational members to overcome problems, such as organisational cynicism and helps to form a unique system of values and beliefs that exists within the organisation and has a positive or negative influence on the behaviour of its members.

It is also worth noting that the impact of organisational culture on the emergence or non-emergence of organisational cynicism can be revealed by studying the functions organisational culture performs. Ince (2018) distinguished the following functions of organisational culture:

- contributes to the organisation's most important goals,

- determines what the organisation and its different members can expect from each other,
- determines which methods of controlling the behaviour of organisational members, considering their age, are acceptable and which are not,
- shapes and defines the behaviour of organisational members among themselves,
- establishes norms of behaviour for members of different ages and positions
- determines the methods of punishing and rewarding organisational members.

Looking at the functions listed above, it becomes clear that the fit between the values of the organisation and employees, to effectively and smoothly perform these functions, becomes particularly important so as not to cause employee dissatisfaction, disappointment, conflicts, negative attitudes towards the organisation itself, in other words, so as not to cause organisational cynicism among employees.

In summary, it can be stated that organisational culture is an environment consciously or artificially created by management, which, due to the values that dominate in that environment, is often unique and stands out from other similar organisations. When talking about organisational culture as a factor of organisational cynicism, it is important to mention that a culture that reduces organisational cynicism must unite the efforts of the organisation's employees to achieve common goals, based on dominant values and principles. To do this, the fit between the values declared by the employees and the organisation must be ensured. Each employee of the organisation must be constantly encouraged to communicate openly, be part of the organisation, receive clear and timely information on various issues, and actively participate in the organisation's activities. An employee who knows the organisation's values and principles and supports them realises that he is part of the organisation, therefore helps the organisation achieve better results, feels responsible and recognized as a full member of the organisation, can communicate smoothly with other employees, which means that at the same time his negative attitude towards the organisation, in other words, organisational cynicism, decreases.

2. Management style as a factor of organisational cynicism.

An analysis of the scientific literature (Bakari, Hunjra, Jaros, & Khos, 2018; Farahnak et al., 2020; Gunduz, 2017; Ince, 2018; Oreg & Berson, 2019; Rahman & Hadi, 2019; Smollan & Morrison, 2019, etc.) suggests that the expression of organisational cynicism is also determined by management style. When analysing the works of scientists to answer the question of how management style can contribute to the emergence of organisational cynicism, it became clear that employees are less likely to distrust their organisation and be cynical towards it when their manager demonstrates leadership qualities and applies appropriate leadership instead of management styles. For example, Ince (2018) states that leaders rely on cooperation to mobilize people of different ages to achieve common goals; they are future-oriented and strive to change it because they are focused on the continuous culture of organisational improvement and progress; in addition, leaders rely on their charisma, influence, and ability to inspire everyone regardless of their age. According to Bakari, Hunjra, Jaros, and Khoso (2018), leaders view people as valuable resources that can be included in the organisation's activities and contribute to its success; they usually use a horizontal communication system, where information is shared at all levels of the organisation; they are interested in focusing people of different generations on the vision so that employees can be motivated to work towards overall organisational success.

Looking at the work of these researchers, it becomes obvious that employees of managers who apply this leadership style will be less likely to be dissatisfied with their organisation, will not criticize it, will not experience negative emotions, will not behave disrespectfully and will not be disappointed with either their organisation or their colleagues, in other words, organisational cynicism will be less common in such an organisation. Conversely, if the manager views employees as means to achieve the organisation's goals, if he or she communicates only vertically, if only the implementation of their plan, monitoring achievements and identifying problems is important and relevant to him, and if he or she focuses on the current situation and tries to manage it, and relies on his position and authority to control and manage employees, then he is likely to face more frequent organisational cynicism since employees will be angry, dissatisfied and disappointed with the organisation, they will criticize it and will be convinced that the manager makes decisions unfairly. As Farahnak et al. (2020) assume, a strong leader, seeking to maintain common values that unite employees of different generations, inspires and encourages them by his example to smoothly solve emerging problems, communicate constantly, and avoid reaching a stage where organisational cynicism becomes uncontrollable.

3. The fit between employee needs and the motivation system

Increasing employee motivation and creating a motivating reward or motivation system are constantly recurring themes in both scientific works and practitioner reports. The topic of the correlation between the motivation system and organisational cynicism is also inevitable. There is no point in creating a universal motivation system that is suitable for most employees since the needs, values, and life situations of each employee are different. This means that creating a universal motivation system would not satisfy the needs of all employees, which would lead to employee dissatisfaction, disappointment, criticism, anger, and other aspects of employee reaction to the organisation related to the expression of organisational cynicism. Such a system, according to Helvacı and Kilicoglu (2018), can only be created for a short period and to achieve short-term organisational goals. Therefore, when achieving long-term strategic goals, such motivation would be ineffective, and organisational cynicism would quickly arise.

What is needed to create a fit between employee needs and the motivation system? What motivation system would ensure a high level of employee motivation and not cause organisational cynicism? Hewett et al. (2019) note that to ensure successful employee motivation in an organisation, it is necessary to constantly improve and develop the psychological and social environment. Lee (2020) claims that employees will actively pursue organisational goals only when they, regardless of their generation, are unanimously convinced that their personal needs and interests are met, and

a favourable social environment is ensured. When analysing the scientific literature (Akar and Celik, 2019; Hewett et al., 2019; Lee, 2020; Nerstad, Wong, and Richardsen, 2019; Walsh and Magley, 2018; Zigarmi, Galloway, and Roberts, 2016) it was revealed that the following factors are important to create a favourable psychological and social environment:

- relationships based on mutual trust and understanding must be created between managers and employees in the organisation,
- the social environment must be based on the realization of material, security, social, and respect needs,
- employees need to be given more freedom, responsibility, and opportunities to combine personal life and work,
- a complex of both material and non-material motivational measures must be used,
- conditions must be created to satisfy physiological, communication, and self-realization needs, to combine personal life and work,
- methods of involving employees in decision-making and transferring responsibility must be created.

It should be noted that the needs and life situation of employees are not stable, it is dynamic. Therefore, in order to achieve the fit between the needs of employees and the motivation system, the motivation system must also constantly change.

In summary, it can be stated that organisational cynicism, manifested in employees' negative attitude towards the organisation and emotional detachment and the belief that managers pursue personal interests, without adhering to the principles of honesty and sincerity, occurs when the fit between the personal values of employees and the values of the organisation is not ensured, the applied management style is not focused on leadership and when the fit between the needs of employees and the motivation system is not ensured.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Organisational cynicism is defined in the scientific literature as a negative attitude of employees towards their colleagues, professions and the organisation in which they work, manifested in a sceptical and critical assessment of the organisation's behaviour, values, motives and actions, which reflects the belief that the organisation lacks moral integrity, and which is often associated with distrust of leaders, contempt, suffering, anger and shame. Analysis of the scientific literature allowed us to distinguish such features indicating the expression of organisational cynicism as employee frustration, constant fatigue, pessimism, constant dissatisfaction, disrespectful behaviour, lack of commitment to the organisation, and distrust of the organisation.

2. The analysis of scientific literature has allowed us to highlight three factors that determine organisational cynicism: related to organisational culture, leadership style and motivation system. Therefore, an organisation that seeks to reduce organisational cynicism must create conditions that ensure the fit between employees' personal values and organisational culture, as well as the fit between employees' needs and motivation system, and strive for a leadership style oriented towards leadership, rather than strict management. If these conditions are not created, employees will likely be dissatisfied, disappointed, and angry, they will not trust the organisation, they will be convinced that decisions are made unfairly, they will criticize the organisation, their behaviour will change negatively, and tension, stress, conflicts will arise. Ultimately, this will affect the results of the entire company.

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