



The relationship between job satisfaction, perceived organizational support and organizational cynicism of ÖYP research assistants

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1. Introduction

ÖYP is one of Turkish Higher Education Institution (YÖK)'s programs that aims to raise academic staff to Turkish universities, in great request especially for a few last years. People are nominated to this program with their GMAT (in Turkish ALES; 50%), GPA (35%) and foreign language point (15%) and then they start to work as research assistants- during their Master or PhD study- at the same university where they study. After they finish their PhD, they return to their permanent universities to start to teach as many years as they used to complete their own education. If they fail, resign from their duty during the education or don't return to main universities to teach; they have to pay all the salaries they got in the past with 50% interest, which is a very compelling obligation while at the same time it is a job guarantee.

Heading off these conditions, this study aims to describe ÖYP research assistants' job satisfaction, perceived organizational support and organizational cynicism. To measure these notions, "Perceived Organizational Support Scale", "Minnesota Job Satisfaction Scale-Short Version" and "Organizational Cynicism Scale" were applied to 33 ÖYP research assistants online and 2 focus groups were conducted with 3 participants for each group. Content Analysis has been applied to data, gathered from focus groups. This study has a comparatively small sample but this is a preliminary study, which will be used as the basis of further studies on ÖYP research assistants.

There are three notions that will be used to describe the working atmosphere of ÖYP research assistants. These are job satisfaction, perceived organizational support and organizational cynicism. Job satisfaction is defined by Locke (1976; as cited in Callaway, 2007, p. 13) as a pleasurable or positive emotional state that results from the appraisal of one's job or job experience. Robbins (2009) states basic job satisfaction elements as working for himself, promotion opportunities, salary, control and colleagues.

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Perceived organizational support is defined by using organizational support theory as the basis, which suggests that “in order to meet socioemotional needs and to assess the organization’s readiness to reward increased efforts, employees form general beliefs concerning how much the organization values their contributions and cares about their “well-being” (Eisenberger et al. 1986; Shore & Shore 1995; in Rhoades, Eisenberger & Armeli 2001, 825; as cited in Seppänen, 2012, p. 8).

The concept of organizational cynicism is defined by Dean et al. (1998) as: a negative attitude toward one’s employing organization: i) a belief that the organization lacks integrity; ii) negative affect toward one’s employing organization; iii) tendencies to disparaging and critical behaviors toward the organization that are consistent with these beliefs and affect (p. 345; as cited in Kasalak & Aksu, 2014, p. 126).

2. Method

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative research methods are used, so it can be said that this is a mixed method descriptive research. The aim of this study is to describe the relationship between variables, to show correlations between variables and to collect answers and situation samples from participants at first-hand.

Target groups of the study is ÖYP research assistants at Turkish universities. The data were collected using Perceived Organizational Support Scale, developed by Kalağan and Aksu (2009), Organizational Cynicism Scale, developed by Brandes et al. (1999) and translated by Kalağan (2009) and Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (short form), developed by (Weiss et al., 1967) and translated to Turkish by Deniz and Güliz Gökçora (1985). 33 ÖYP research assistant participated but one participant was taken out during analysis because of the unclarity of information.

At the second step, two focus groups were conducted with three participant and one moderator for each group. The transcript of data was done and then content analysis was applied to data to find out main themes.

3. Findings

Mean of participants’ age is 25.88 and working time mean is 2.14 years. Age and working time are not an interpretative elements on job satisfaction, perceived organizational support and organizational cynicism because there couldn’t be determined any correlation between them.

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On five-point Likert-type scales, job satisfaction (M=3.54) and perceived organizational support (M=3.15) averages are relatively high and when it is compared to them, organizational cynicism (M=2.97) average is less than job satisfaction and perceived organizational support.

There is significant and strong negative correlation between perceived organizational support and organizational cynicism ($\rho=-.558$, $p<0.01$). The correlation between job satisfaction and organizational cynicism ($\rho= -.361$, $p<0.05$) is also significant and negative as it is predicted. The correlation that was determined between job satisfaction and perceived organizational support is significantly high and positive ($\rho= .716$, $p<0.01$).

Table 1: means of variables from top to bottom: age, working year, “Are you happy about being involved in ÖYP program?”, job satisfaction mean, organizational cynicism mean, perceived organizational support mean.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Yaşınız	32	24	31	25,88	1,947
Kıdem Yılı	29	1	6	2,14	1,156
ÖYP'ye dahil olmaktan memnun musunuz? 1(Kesinlikle Memnun Değilim)/den 5 (Kesinlikle Memnunum)'e derecelendirdiniz ve yorumlarınız varsa ekleyiniz.	31	1	5	3,74	,965
Mortalama	32	2,20	4,90	3,5391	,63927
ÖSortalama	32	1,62	4,85	2,9736	,90271
ÖDortalama	32	1,63	4,79	3,1513	,76209
Valid N (listwise)	29				

Table 2: Correlations of variables with order of job satisfaction, organizational cynicism and perceived organizational support.

Correlations					
Spearman's rho	Mortalama	Correlation Coefficient	Mortalama	Ösortalama	ÖDortalama
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.042	.000
	N	32	32	32	
Ösortalama	Correlation Coefficient	-.361*	1,000	-.558**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.042	.	.001	
	N	32	32	32	
ÖDortalama	Correlation Coefficient	.716**	-.558**	1,000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.	
	N	32	32	32	
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

There three dimensions of organizational cynicism which are cognitive (M=3.01), affective (M=2.52) and behavioral (M=3.38) and there four dimensions of perceived organizational support which are distribution of tasks (M=2.81), academic consultancy (M=3.41), opportunity to develop (M=3.31) and interaction (M=3.51).

Table 3: Dimensions of organizational cynicism and perceived organizational support in the order mentioned in the upper paragraph.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
BilişselORT	32	1,60	4,60	3,0063	,85078
DuyuşsalORT	32	1,00	5,00	2,5234	1,33404
DavranuşsalORT	32	1,50	5,00	3,3828	,94610
Görev DağılımıORT	32	1,00	5,00	2,8125	,87554
Akademik DanışmanlıkORT	32	2,17	4,83	3,4062	,72702
Gelişme FırsatıORT	32	2,00	5,00	3,3125	,82496
EtkileşimORT	32	1,17	5,83	3,5104	1,16162
Valid N (listwise)	32				

When focus group data analyzed, two main themes came out; “communication” and academic consultant”. Participants mentioned about communication problems between;

- YÖK and universities
- University units and research assistants
- Among department staff.

Colleagues also have an important part on job satisfaction according to participants and when we look at the statistics on job satisfaction.

4. Discussion

It is found that perceived organization support is at the highest level in terms of interaction; however at the lowest level in terms of distribution of tasks. These statistical data were supported by content analysis of focus group because participants mentioned about treated like secretaries instead of research assistants and also they need more communication in the university units and in their department.

Organizational cynicism is stronger at behavioral dimension rather than affective or cognitive dimensions. According to Brandes (1997) and Johnson & O'Leary-Kell (2003) (as cited in Kasalak and Aksu, 2014) the lowest dimension of organizational cynicism is generally behavioral dimension however in this study it is vice versa. But it can be explained with the experience of ÖYP research assistants on distribution of tasks. If they feel they are treated like secretary or a job status that will be perceived lower status than they have, this behavioral dimension perception can be logical.

A very general view of this study shows that ÖYP research assistants have job satisfaction and perceived organizational support. On the other hand; even though the mean of organizational cynicism is relatively higher, it is not higher than job satisfaction and perceived organizational support. Heading off this point, a conclusion about the ÖYP research assistants' situation on these notions can be done as they are happy with their professions but there are some problems that should be considered and worked on such as communication and distribution of tasks on university level and on YÖK level both. Because in focus groups, ÖYP research assistants declared that even though they like their jobs and happy with the involvement in ÖYP program, there are some difficulties and obstacles in the process like communication, being unable to settle down or using their scholars because of universities' lack of allowance or loan.

As a conclusion, ÖYP research assistants are happy to do this job and happy to have academic support from their colleagues and academic consultants but they want redevelopment of ÖYP process.

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