Article History
Received: 08.09.2021
Received in revised form: 24.03.2022
Accepted: 30.03.2022
Article Type: Research Article

International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research (IJCER)

www.ijcer.net

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To cite this article:

Keser, S., Akpolat, T. & Demirbilek, M. (2022). Polemic and Cynicism: A Study in Educational Organizations. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, *9*(2), 313-328. https://doi.org/10.33200/ijcer.993047

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International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research
Volume 9, Number 2, June 2022, Page 313-328 ISSN: 2148-3868

Polemic and Cynicism: A Study in Educational Organizations

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Abstract
In this research, the case study method was used to uncover the relationships and commonalities between polemics and cynicism in the context of educational organizations. The research study group consists of five teachers who were selected through criterion sampling. These teachers worked for public schools and they were experienced in various case studies. The data was obtained through semi-structured interview questions, subjected to descriptive analysis, coded, and brought together under various categories and themes. The results obtained show that polemicist attitudes that come to life in the leader or administrator in educational organizations cause the development of cynical tendencies in the eyes of teachers and other personnel. Considering the findings obtained in line with the opinions of the teachers who are the subject of the cases, the polemicist attitude was determined to consist of conservative, otherizing, subject, and toxic sub-themes and the cynical attitude to consist of passive, being seen as the other and criticizing sub-themes. At the same time, observations revealed that polemicist and cynical tendencies are common in the codes of seeing oneself/the other one as capable, mutual distrust, and resistant.

Keywords: Hierarchical attitude, Conflict, Resistance, Favoritism, Ideology, Personalizing

Introduction

Polemic, which appears as an eccentric type of discussion in everyday language, is defined as the often-harsh arguments that organizations or individuals engage in over various actions or views (Lemaitre & Noriega, 2015). The word polemic, which came into English from the French word "polémique" in the 17th century, means a hostile attack on one's ideas. An examination of the etymological origin of the word reveals that it was derived from the Greek word "polemikós" (πολεμικός), meaning "warrior or hostile". The word polemos which is the root of this word means "war" (Merriam-Webster, 2020).

A review of the historical processes of development shows that the existence of polemics can be observed on three different lines (Foucault, 1998): (1) In religious polemics, the other who is accused of not following religious norms is declared guilty on the basis of subjective and difficult-to-argue personal claims of weakness.The polemicist, who represents dogma like a judge, accuses the other of being harmful and threatening based on a moral deficiency (Şarfi, 2011). (2) In the legal polemic, the person deemed guilty is the person who was determined to be sentenced in the beginning. As in the case of other polemical reasons, also in the case of legal polemics, in which an equal relation is rejected, the judgement is announced from the beginning in the direction of condemnation.Evidence collection operations and processes exist because they serve this purpose. Truth is a preconceived, unalterable prejudgment accepted by the polemicist. Conviction is inevitable. (3) In political polemic (Corbett, 2020), which is one of today's most visible polemic areas, a polemicist who supports an ideology, a party, or a structure positions the other as the enemy. On the opposite side, the other one is regarded as a threatening element that must be fought and surrendered.

As organizations aiming to contribute to social progress, academia is a state of institutionalization consisting of individuals who are experts in their fields. At this point, the way for academics to reveal their academic practices is possible with academic freedom, which includes speaking up (Keser, 2020). In other words, academic freedom constitutes the substance of the academician's professional existence. At this point, the academician may not always be able to find the field he needs while practising their profession. They may encounter obstacles in administrative and educational processes (Bozdağ, 2009). One of these obstacles is the organizational processes that generate polemic.

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Polemic, which can have a bad reputation, especially in academia, is seen as a type of discussion that can be called hostile, which interrupts cooperation efforts and is applied to stop possible professional losses (Crewe, 2004). This discussion type is fed by verbal aggression and narcissism that hinder knowledge production and career development processes.

A polemic individual rejects a horizontal form of relationship between himself and the other; the purpose of polemic is not to reach consensus or to take advantage of the other's views. In any case, defeating the other is a premise, consensus or resolution is not intended (Siega & Sponholz, 2014). Therefore, polemic creates a negative communication environment.

Foucault (2014), who explains polemic through its differences with debate, states that there is a horizontal relationship in debate and the purpose of debate is to eliminate possible misconceptions and obtain more information by focusing on the problematics and grounding on an in-depth analysis process with questions and answers. The debate is an analytical process and involves reasoning within a logical framework, not dominating or defeating (Smelko & Smelko, 2013). As a situational state, the debate itself appears as a contextual interaction, as the phrase is, with both parties and without personal reference. The debate itself is the only fact that determines the rights and responsibilities of both parties regarding the interaction that is established at that moment and dwelling on contradictions, reasoning, and information inquiries remain within the limits determined by this fact. As an obstacle to the effort to reach the truth, a polemic against debate develops on a hierarchical plane between the polemicist and the other, while the polemicist sees himself in a privileged position as the sole holder of the right to question (Foucault, 2014). In the debate, the individual is aware of their responsibility towards the other while expressing their thoughts. When evaluated in this context, there is a horizontal relationship in the debate (Luckett, 2006). The space of discussion is a battleground; as a "holy" warlord, he is there to correct the other person in polemic. There is no consensus-seeking with the other person while he sees the other person as a potential criminal on a hostile basis, and the person, who poses a threat with his existence, is an enemy. The essence of dealing with the other is the desire to exclude him. The polemicist, moving by the motivation to bring his deserving cause to victory, aims to impose his truth, not his quest for truth (Foucault, 2014). The relationship he establishes with the other is not dialogue, which is essential, but a monologue.

The polemicist acts in a situation that creates a paradox in itself. The other is "known" to the polemicist. He has the "knowledge" of the other. The dangerousness, hostility, and threats of him are fixed and real. The polemicist is interacting with what he knows. The other party is not a stranger. Derrida (2020) mentions the paradox of being a stranger and being known while revealing the reason for Socrates' persistent desire to be considered a stranger in court. Judges and Athenian citizens represent polemicists who positioned themselves hierarchically with Socrates. It is possible to mention that Socrates wishes to alienate himself. In Tolan's (1996) words, alienation is when the individual pushes himself out of the culture, social area, and daily life of society. Socrates insists on being considered a stranger; a stranger is the one whose discourses are unfamiliar, there will be a neutral process deemed appropriate for the stranger in the inquiry, and being a stranger is something situational that creates the possibility of conducting an inquiry, questioning and analyzing in order to eliminate possible errors (Derrida, 2020). On the other hand, the Judges are polemicists who prefer not to know Socrates. Socrates is the "known, recognized" person who has been judged from the beginning, poses a threat, and needs to be overthrown.

Classical cynicism is a philosophical movement that existed from the beginning of the 4thcentury BC until the end of the Roman period. Like every philosophical movement, cynicism arose out of people's dissatisfaction with their world. The wars experienced at that time and the great turmoil that arose caused the social institutions to become dysfunctional and led people to think for their salvation (Türkeri, 2019). Although there are many members of the aforementioned philosophical movement, one of the most well-known is the Diogenes of Sinop (Navia, 1996). Diogenes' observation and the assumption being that philosophers did not and could not follow the advice they gave to live a good life. Diogenes considers all these a curtain for political privilege and comfortable conditions (Chaloupka, 1999). Therefore, cynicism advises that all the products of civilization (government, private property, marriage, religion, caste system, luxury, and all artificial pleasures related to the senses, etc.) are worthless and one should reject all these for personal salvation and simple life. While Diogenes lived within the framework of the values he believed in, his thoughts as a colorful provocateur has found an area of use beyond what he probably imagined (Chaloupka, 1999). Although the real Diogeneses were ambiguous in the late ancient age and the Middle Ages, methods such as cynic teaching methods, satire, irony, and word games reveal the existence of cynics in many areas (Laursen, 2009). It is said that one of the assumptions about the transfer of cynicism from the ancient teachings to the contemporary meaning is that while the early cynics lived a life compatible with the aforementioned philosophy, their successors reduced the classical teaching of cynicism to not caring about their duties, such as borrowing money and not returning it (Türkeri, 2019).Unlike the Ancient Greek cynics, today's cynics are individuals who, in a sense, have ended their search, not for understanding life.

Contrary to classical cynicism, modern cynicism is often described as immoral, selfish, manipulative, and hypocritical (Larursen, 2009). Sloterdijk et al. (1984) state that false forms of consciousness such as lies, mistakes, and ideology reveal modern cynicism. Cynical individuals believe that what they do is not "good" but still do

what they do and feel themselves both as victims and altruists. Therefore, modern cynics imitate the ongoing and collectivist ideals but do not live by considering them in the modern era (Chaloupka, 1999).

However, the perception of classical cynicism and that of contemporary cynicism differ. For example, while the basic indicator in classical cynicism is to tell the truth, contemporary cynicism is fueled by negative emotions. This situation can also be observed in organizational contexts (Dean et al., 1998; Hodgins, 2014; Kart, 2015).Increasing cynicism among employees makes it necessary to understand this concept in an organizational context. Karfakis and Kokkinidis (2011) state that organizational cynicism is a reflection of the organizational resistance of the employees towards the changing organizations with the post-industrial transformation. According to the authors, the labor-capital contradiction, which was evident in the Fordist period, changed form and became ambiguous in the post-Fordist period. Therefore, cynicism becomes an indicator of the existence of silent resistance of employees. Some of the ways employees resist are irony and humor. (Sloterdijk et al., 1984), the modern cynic is more interested in not approving the order and not trusting it using humor and pastiche rather than building a new order (Mikkonen et al., 2011). Jones et al. (2005) explain this by indicating that they both laugh at the world in a certain way, but it is only the cynic (classic cynic) whose laughter is loud and transformative. In other words, the classical cynic does not take the burden of the world.

In the literature, it is possible to observe efforts to conceptualize organizational cynicism through some contexts. Studies reveal that there are attempts to explain organizational cynicism by focusing on personality, society, profession, employee, and organizational change (Abraham, 2000; Dean et al., 1998). Personality cynicism refers to an innate negative thought about human behavior (Kahn, 2014, p. 31). In his discussion of cynicism and postmodernism, Bewes (1997) noteshat the cynical personality is a postmodern character alienated from both society and its subjectivity, while the postmodern character feels disbelief, disappointment, and distrust in relation to a metanarrative, big promises, or big projects. Social cynicism results from the violation of the psychological contract between society and the individual (Dean et al., 1998). Occupational cynicism emerges as a result of the difficulty experienced by the employee in complying with the affective norms required by profession (Abraham, 2000). Employee cynicism is defined as a non-constructive organizational behavior that jeopardizes the efficiency of the organization, as well as a contemporary form of individualism as a result of post-industrial structuring (Kosmola & Richards, 2009). Organizational change cynicism is defined as a negative attitude towards the organisation's future success resulting from the belief that change leaders are inadequate in response to unsuccessful change attempts in the past (Abraham, 2000).

Organizational cynicism generally emerges as "a relatively common mentality characterized by hopelessness, frustration, and disappointment associated with contempt, disgust, and suspicion among employees" (Dhar, 2009). Dean et al. (1998) defined organizational cynicism as negative attitudes of employees towards the organization in which they are employed, consisting of cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. The cognitive dimension consists of employees' negative beliefs about the basic values that constitute the integrity of an organization, such as the soundness of moral principles, fair behavior, and honesty in their organizations. The affective dimension refers to the affective experience of the beliefs that employees acquire through cognition. On the other hand, the behavioural dimension refers to the negative and contemptuous behaviors of employees, especially using humor to show their critical attitude towards the organization (Dean et al., 1998).

In organizations where the hierarchical structure is dominant, the rewards and power provided increase as one moves to the higher levels (İnandı & Tunç, 2012). According to Sing et al. (2018), this increase in power causes managers to blame, exclude, and ignore the organisation's decision-making processes by increasing their aggressive tendencies over the right to speak. This situation causes the school administrators, who dominate the discourse as a result of power pollution in educational organizations, to show arrogance. This arrogant behavior causes all kinds of success to cost the school administrator who exhibits polemical attitudes, and failures to the employees of the organization (Babatunde & Olalekan, 2020). Therefore, the manager, who is positioned as a subject in the organization, tries to dominate the employees of the organization by using the legal power given (Dean, 1998). This situation creates a basis for cynical tendencies such as poor communication, avoidance of self-expression, rude behavior, role conflicts, and indifference to work among teachers (Levent & Keser, 2016). Therefore, the polemicist attitude of the administrator leads to the emergence of a cynical culture in school organizations.

Although there are studies in the field of cynicism in educational organizations (Akpolat & Oğuz, 2021; Altınkurt et al., 2014; James, 2005; Levent & Keser, 2016), observations reveal that there are no studies on cynicism at the level of discourse. For this reason, the need has arisen to examine what discourse, including polemics, means in the context of cynicism.This study aims to examine the relationship between polemic and cynicism in educational organizations. Educational organizations, where stakeholders such as teachers, administrators, students, and parents are interconnected with complex networks of relations, are places where polemical attitudes and cynical tendencies can be observed. This study also aims to examine the relations between polemic attitudes and cynical tendencies in the context of organizational processes through the relationships that teachers establish with others (managers, colleagues, parents) based on this reality.

Method

Research Pattern and Model

Polemic is a phenomenon that is experienced in-depth on individual events. Therefore, it was deemed necessary to conduct detailed studies on the case studies experienced by individuals to trace the polemic. For this reason, the relationship between this situation and cynicism is discussed through the case study. The case study method, which is one of the qualitative research patterns, was used in the research. Case studies aim to reveal and discover facts and patterns in the eyes of the individual and the group, analyze the variables, structures, schemas, and the relationships between them at the level of individuals and cases based on events and facts (Flyvbjerg, 2011). At the individual level, case study is a qualitative research pattern that allows a detailed examination of actions, special needs, living conditions, past experiences, group-level departments, informal and formal groups. At the institutional level, it provides a detailed examination of problems, processes, and institutional structure (Sagadin, 1991).

Multiple case study, which is one of the types of case study method, was used in the research. In multiple case studies, each case is handled one by one, and these events are compared within the framework of literature and facts through the relationships and common points between them (Mesec, 1998 as cited in Starman, 2013).

Study Group

In the research, the criterion sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used to determine the study group. The criterion sampling method is a widely used technique in selecting and determining effective events and situations within limited resources (Patton, 2002). In this method, individuals and situations that have special information about the experienced facts and meet the criteria suitable for the purpose of the research are selected (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). At the same time, rich in content cases are the subject of the research, and the research is enriched through a standardized questionnaire (Patton, 2002).

Since the experiences of teachers who have cynicism as a result of polemic are considered as a criterion, this study examines examples that can be reached adequately under the specified criterion. According to Gustafsson (2017), the research context should be taken into account in the selection of single or multiple case studies.

In this direction, in the research, case studies that (1) included the facts cynicism and polemic, (2) experienced in state-owned educational organizations (schools), and (3) generally based on teacher-administrative relations and conflicts were accepted as criteria, and five case studies that experienced and included these phenomena, which took place in public schools located on the Asian side of the city of Istanbul, Turkey, were determined as criteria. Within this framework, the demographic variables of the teachers who experienced the case studies that met the criteria and with whom the interviews were conducted, as well as a summary of the cases, are presented in Table 1 below;

Table 1. Demographic Variables and Case Summaries of Teachers who Experienced the Case Studies that Met the Criteria and with whom the Interviews were Conducted

Case Code	Gender	Branch	Years of Seniority	Case Summary
V1	Female	Preschool Teacher	10	The teacher’s search for rights is due to the unearned gain of the school principal and the pressure on the teacher by various stakeholders, especially the school principal, at different levels and positions, and the resulting cynicism and polemic-based situations.
V2	Female	Guidance Teacher	9	A teacher who was appointed due to her life safety starts to claim her rights in the face of the nepotistic attitudes she sees in her new school, the teacher’s personal situation is abused and suppressed in the face of her claim of her rights, and the teacher is exposed to polemical situations and becomes cynical with the involvement of officials at different levels.
V3	Female	Preschool Teacher	16	With the appointment of a new principal at the school where the teacher works, conflict situations arise based on personal animosities, the teacher's demand for her rights in the face of these situations, the polemical and oppressive attitudes of the officials who confront her at the upper levels in demanding her rights, and the teacher's tendency toward cynicism in the face of these attitudes.
V4	Female	Classroom Teacher		As a result of the principal constantly looking for deficiencies in the teachers, exerting pressure, using intimidation methods, displaying ideological attitudes,

				and fomenting personal animosities, the teacher and her friends have turned to cynicism and have asked to be transferred to other schools after the teacher and her friends have had various polemics with the administration.
V5	Female	English Teacher	15	A personal attitude has been developed towards the teacher by the administration and staff from the first day in the school where she is appointed, later on, the teacher's claim for her rights against unfair practices in the school, as a result, she is dragged into loneliness, and the teacher's tendency to cynicism with the ill-founded investigations and similar situations involving the upper levels.

Data Collection Tools

In the research, an interview form consisting of semi-structured questions containing the concepts that form the basis of polemic and cynicism was used as a data collection tool. Semi-structured interviews allow access to in-depth and contextual data on the facts and relationships that form the research framework and analysis of unpredictable situations by addressing open-ended questions to the interviewee (Adams, 2015). As part of the research, semi-structured questions were asked to the participating teachers to reveal the details of the facts that constitute the subject of the research in the relevant cases by interviewing the teachers who experienced the relevant cases. To ensure the validity and reliability of the interview form, which consists of semi-structured questions, which is the data collection tool of the research, interview questions were sent to three faculty members who are experts in their fields, and the questions were revised based on expert feedback. However, to test the effectiveness of the questions in implementation, a pilot interview was conducted with one participant and the final form of the questions was determined.Some of the questions posed to the participating teachers are as follows;

Questions	When you evaluate the behavior and attitudes of the people you are dealing with in the relevant case, what can you say about the following situations?
	• Acting in line with the ideological perspective of the oppressors in the case you describe, • The pressure elements in the case you are describing act and resist in line with dogma and settled thought, • Disbelief and distrust that change will take place in the change processes at school, • The pressure practitioners in the case you describe are quite self-confident, • In the case you have described, the oppressors feel distrust of the other party and see the other party as an enemy, • In the case you describe, the oppressors position themselves at the top (powerful) in the hierarchical plane, • In the case you describe, the oppressed person thinks that the other person is superior (able), • The oppressors in the case you describe are constantly attributing responsibility and guilt to people, personalizing the issues discussed, and responding to events and situations in line with their emotional attitudes and feelings, • In the case you describe, the oppressors don't think healthily and logically, displaying a judgmental, critical attitude towards others and adopting an exclusionary attitude, • In the case you describe, the oppressors convey their ideas and thoughts directly in their polemic environment, while the oppressed use indirect expressions.

Table 2. Semi-Structured Questions Asked to the Sampled Teachers

Data Collection and Analysis

In the research, interviews with participating teachers, who experienced the relevant cases, were conducted online due to pandemic conditions. Interviews were recorded using the Zoom program and each interview lasted an average of forty-five minutes. The data obtained were transcribed using a word processing program and then subjected to content analysis using the Maxquda program for qualitative data analysis.Content analysis is used to identify concepts, words, and themes in qualitative data. At the same time, the meanings and relations that exist in the content analysis are analyzed within the framework of certain themes and concepts (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Elo et.al., 2014). The data obtained during the analysis of the data were coded in line with the polemic and cynicism literature and conceptual framework and brought together under various categories and themes.

Validity and Reliability

Internal and external validity and reliability dimensions were taken into account to ensure the validity and reliability of the research.

Internal validity is concerned with whether researchers' interpretations of events and phenomena reflect reality (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). To ensure internal validity, the interview form was prepared following the purpose of the research based on the relevant literature (Merriam, 2018). The most important factor in ensuring external validity is the generalizability of the research results. In this context, detailed information is given about the process and analysis of the relevant research results. These results can be tested in other research processes and environments (Tuncel, 2008).

For internal reliability, the researchers coded the data set independently, and the coding was compared to ensure consistency. Once the transcripts of the data obtained from the interviews were prepared, they were sent to the interviewees and their confirmation was obtained. To increase credibility, the views of the participants were included in the study. To ensure external reliability, the experiences of the participants who were the source of data were reported as they were (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005).

Findings

All codes related to cynicism and polemic cases obtained by content analysis of the cases are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Codes Generated After Case Analysis

Codes	**f**	**Observed case(s)**
Avoiding conflict, withdrawal	8	V2, V4, V5
Intimidation	17	V2, V3, V4, V5
Verbal abuse	3	V2, V5
Feeling of exclusion	6	V2, V3, V5
Dogmatic established thought	2	V1, V3
Fear, anxiety	9	V1, V2, V3, V5
Self-confidence	1	V1
Irrationality	1	V1
Ignoring, dropping the subject	3	V1, V3
Judgmental attitude	11	V1, V2, V3, V4, V5
Emotional attitude	1	V1
Resistance	4	V1, V2
Hierarchical attitude	9	V1, V2, V3, V4, V5
Distrust	1	V1
Referring to the situation	1	V1

Regarding as an enemy, nurturing enmity	5	V1, V2, V3, V5
Personalizing	8	V1, V2, V3, V4, V5
Conflict-based relationship	6	V1, V2, V3, V4, V5
Exclusion	5	V1, V2, V3, V5
Ideological attitude	7	V1, V4
Seeing as powerful	8	V1, V2, V3, V4, V5
Favoritism	8	V1, V2, V3

Table 3 reveals that intimidation is the most repeated code among the codes related to cynicism and polemic cases (f= 17). This is followed by the judgmental attitude (f= 11) and the hierarchical attitude (f= 9). The least repeated code is self-confidence, irrationality, emotional attitude, distrust, and referring to the situation (f=1). The codes obtained were first evaluated in the context of the cynic and polemicist and gathered under the main themes. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the codes to the main themes.

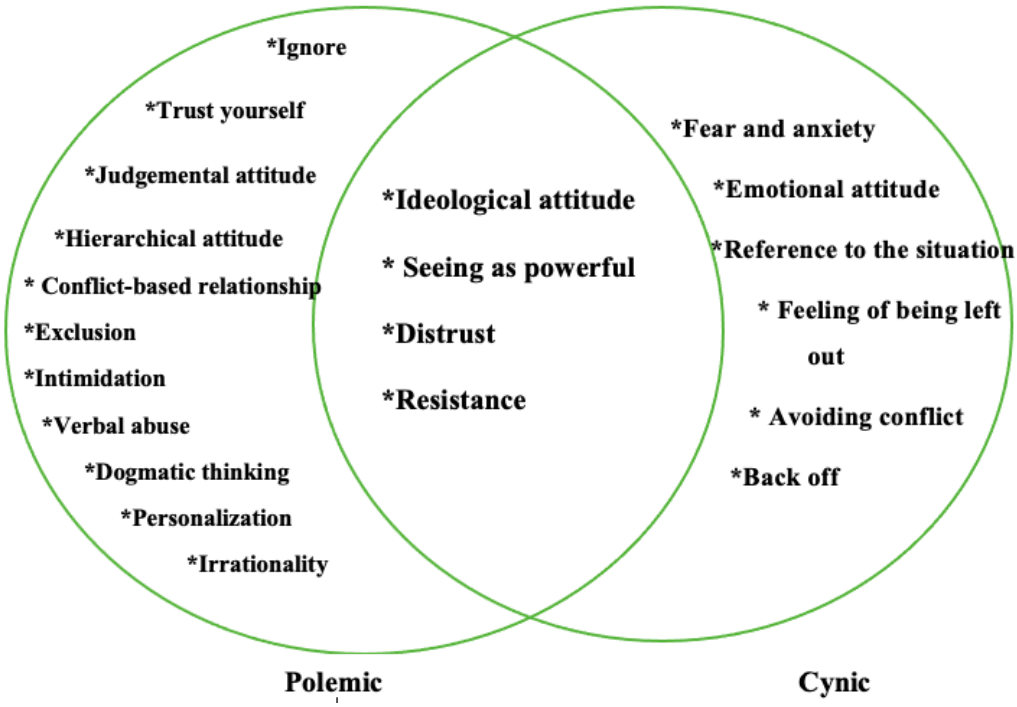

Figure 1. Distribution of Codes by Main Themes

Figure 1 shows the distribution of codes under the main themes of polemicist and cynic. While the codes above the diagonal line are related to the polemicist individual, the codes below are related to the cynic individual. The codes above the diagonal line indicate both polemicist and cynic characteristics.

Among the codes distributed under the main themes, the interrelated ones were grouped under sub-themes to examine the polemicist and the cynic in depth. The sub-themes and categories related to the polemicist main theme are shown in Figure 2.

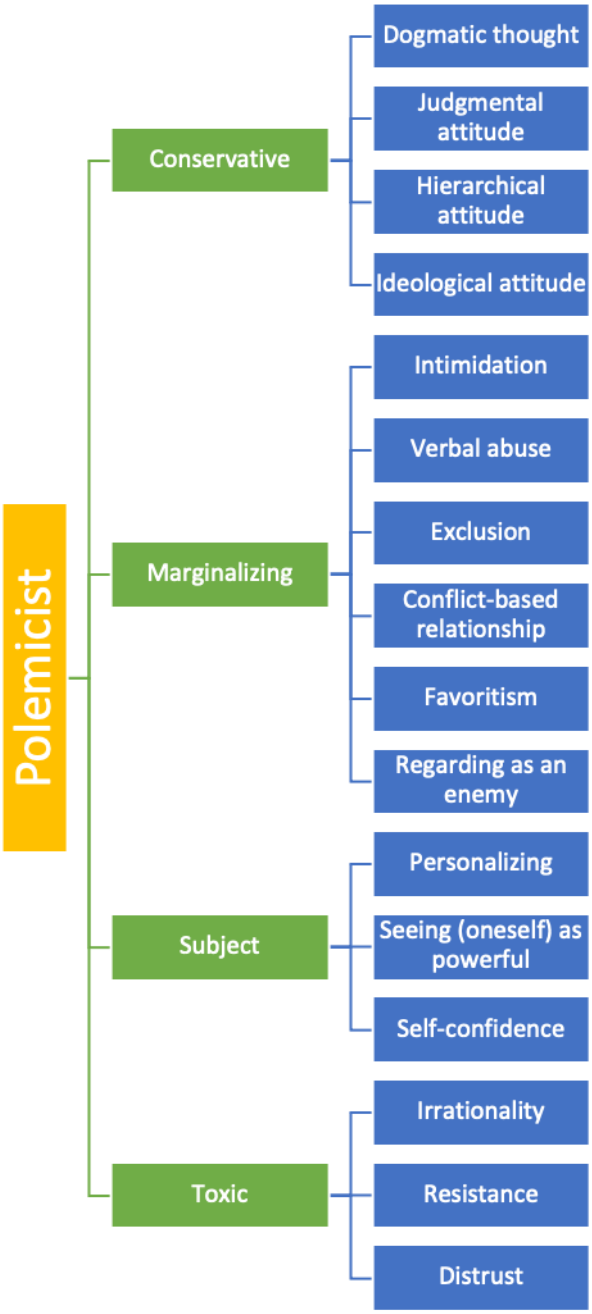

Figure 2. Polemicist Sub-Theme and Code Distribution

Figure 2 exhibits that the codes collected under the main theme of polemicist are collected in 4 sub-themes. These are named conservative, othering, subject, and toxic, considering the meanings expressed by the relevant codes. The explanations for each sub-theme are below.

Polemicist as the Conservative One

The polemicist sees himself as hierarchically superior, andand has a judgmental attitude within the framework of his dogmatic established thoughts in case of discussion or conflict in a relationship based on inequality. Some teachers' views of the polemicist as a conservative are as follows:… while taking my statement, the male inspector said "ma'am, you may have heard something about our bias, but there is no such thing". But there really was. They were biased because when I finished my statement, they told me, 'It's not your duty to save the world, ma'am.' (V1)

> …the first thing he said to the assistant principals on the first day of his arrival… We had administrators who had four years of service. He said 'quit as soon as possible, I will set up my own team'. After they quit, he increased his pressure on us even more. (V4)
>
> I said, '… please review my file; I have been subjected to mobbing for a long time and I want my file to be examined impartially'. He tried to convince me by saying 'let's talk; let's meet'. He continued 'The

> Prince Islands in Istanbul is a small region. Here is a boutique institution. We are working as a family. You know ma'am; we have to tolerate each other'. This is all he said (V3).

The Polemicist as the Marginalizing One

The polemicist is by nature there to win arguments or conflict situations. Therefore, he sees the parties of the discussion or conflict as enemies and engages in conflict-based relationships with behaviors such as intimidation, verbal abuse, and exclusion to overthrow the person he has marginalized. The existence of marginalization means the glorification of one's close friends or relatives, the polemicist also reveals this inequality by favoring his close friends or relatives. The views of the teachers on the polemicist as the marginalizing one are as follows:

> … In the same year, they appointed another teacher who had been working for five years as Deputy Principal, but the reason for his election was that he was acquainted with the district branch manager. (V1)
>
> …. For example, when I wanted to talk, he would say 'come another time, I have work now' when I went to his room. When I go some other day, he also says 'let's talk another time'. In other words, he was applying a sanction on the servant through the deputy director. Then when I went to his room and wanted to say 'this is wrong', he ignored me. Actually, I describe him as a professional torturer. (V3)
>
> …he entered my room by kicking things. He walked up to my fellow advisory teacher, who was working at the same school, using threatening language: 'I will make life unbearable for you; you'll see!'. He also punched the table (V3)
>
> ... I greet them, they do not respond. One or two paid teachers…Especially the others do, but they try not to talk much; frankly, they try not to be contacted. I feel like an unwelcome person, anathematized, and excluded from society. I mean, I was so unhappy that my feet went back, believe me, even when I'm talking about it, I feel so bad. (V5)
>
> …but then when they found out, terrible pressure of the national districteducation authority started on the school teachers, that is, on my friends and me. There were constant inspections on the school; inspectors came over almost every day, they were like 'are you doing your job properly or not?' and we passed the inspections about ten times. (V1)

The Polemicist as the Subject

In case of argument or conflict, the polemicist perceives the problem in terms of his personality, not the current situation, and sees the right to do whatever he wants to achieve his goals and is confident in himself. The views of the teachers on the views on the polemicist as a subject are as follows:

> …it was as if I was a lazy teacher, he was managing my classroom and setting the rules. This was his approach. As these examples increased, I went to his room one day and he did this to me, for instance, he forbade drinking tea at school. His reason for that was 'you are a kindergarten teacher, you have no break time, you cannot drink'. (V3)
>
> … Yes, in general, he would personalize every small thing and hold a grudge after that, frankly, he would not forget it when it was a small thing, he would definitely attack me with some issue and his attitude was very provoking, seriously provoking the other party. (V4)
>
> … the mistress always said, 'I am in the catbird seat; nothing will happen to me', you know, they tried to make sure that nothing much happened while we were going through the process. (V1)

Polemicists as the Toxic One

The polemicist distrusts the other party he marginalizes and resists being the winner with illogical explanations. Their views on the polemicist as the toxic one are as follows:

> The district governor gathered us in front of him and there was no principal in the principal's room. He came to ask, and he lined us up like jugs. Everybody was listening to him. His eyes were twitching (V1).
>
> … he never gave up. I was also being intimidated, and he was following me, taking a statement down for me as I was a minute late, or wanting to use the investigation against me. (V2)

Sub-themes and categories related to the main theme of cynic are shown in Figure 3.

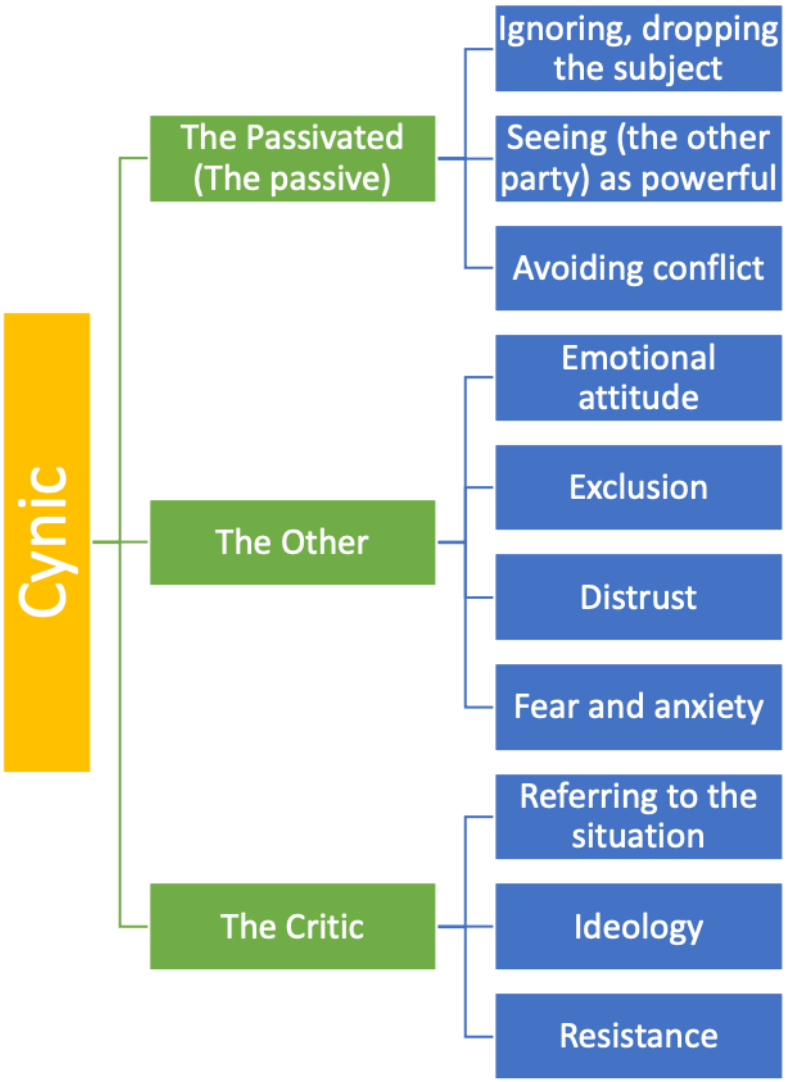

Figure 3. *Cynic Sub-Theme and Code Distribution*

Figure 3 reveals that the codes collected under the main theme of cynic are gathered in three sub-themes. Considering the upper meanings revealed by interrelated codes, sub-themes are named as the passivated (the passive), the other, and the critic. Each sub-theme is presented below.

The Cynic as the Passive One

The suppressed cynic sees the other as capable and engages in ignoring behavior to avoid conflict. The teachers' views on the cynic as passivated (the passive) are as follows:

> … when you enter the teachers' room, you see that everyone has their cell phones and they are buried in their cell phones, there is no conversation, there is no chat, and there is no asking after people. There is silence. I mean there is this mood: let me not see anything, let me not get involved in anything, let me just go to my class, let me not make a sound during breaks, and let me not wander around. There is such a mood of teachers. (V5)
>
> … they were passive. The manager said, 'you will do this, you will do that' but they kept silent. I mean, for example, in the board meetings, he decided on his own. He wouldn't even let us express our ideas. He was making decisions on his own and dogmatizing. He wouldn't even let us express our ideas. The other friends had quailed and kept silent. They were saying 'ok' all the time. (V4)
>
> … Since he had experienced that for 5-6 years, he knew people and told me that they could do something physical at work, they could mob. We've been through too much, including what my friend said, even though they knew me. I mean it was incredible. (V1)

Cynic as the Other One

The cynic feels distrust of the person and the organization and shows emotional attitudes with a sense of exclusion. All of this leads the cynic to perceive himself as the Other. Teachers' views of the cynic as the Other are as follows.:

> …you know, I came with a life safety appointment, which everyone already knows, but they don't ask me; this is a situation I already feel from people's looks. I mean, you feel like a freak, everyone is looking

> at you, there is something that is talked about among themselves, but there is something that is not talked about with you. (V2)
>
> …that is, whoever is close to me will be taken into account to open an investigation against him. If the teachers were brave, maybe this man wouldn't have found this courage, but the teachers are in the 'let sleeping dogs lie' mood. (V5)
>
> …I have experienced a traumatic event, I am very weak, I am full of fear anyway, I am not happy and peaceful in my personal life, I do not even feel safe, and the fact that these are known in the workplace and receiving small threats about this institution has increased my anxiety . (V2)
>
> … I don't feel well, frankly, I don't want to go back there again, I don't want to work, I don't want to be exposed even for a moment, I don't want to hear his voice, I don't want to see his face. (V5)

Cynic as the Critic

The cynic is a critic when he is not satisfied with the current situation. As a result, he has no place but to resist, as he is suppressed. But even while expressing that he is resisting, part of him tends to run away. Like the critics, the teachers' views on cynicism are as follows:

> … There is nothing. He also said that among the cleaning products, he took the smelly garbage bags and the beautiful ones to put in his bag and take it home or give to others. Indeed, this is still in my tone of voice; how can he steal from children? Is a teacher there to teach numbers to 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds? (V1)
>
> Apart from that, of course, there was constant pressure due to disagreements, but on the contrary, while we were in favor of student-centered education, we faced practices that did not benefit students at all (V4)

Discussion

This research examines the effects of polemic manager perceptions experienced by teachers on organizational cynicism attitudes, based on case studies. Exploring the polemical attitude framework is important in revealing new perspectives to better understand how organizational cynicism develops. As a result of the study, the polemicist attitude was examined under 4 headings according to the teachers' opinions who were the subject of the cases. The polemicist attitude can be characterized by the existence of the states of conservatism, marginalizing, seeing oneself as a subject, and creating toxic effects. As a conservative, the polemicist perceives himself/herself as hierarchically superior and exists within the stereotyped belief system with their accepted judgments. Therefore, it is possible to indicate that the polemicist has a dogmatic mindset. Individuals with a dogmatic mindset cannot accept that their beliefs are challenged. Knowledge is necessary for them as long as it confirms their beliefs. Therefore, they show low tolerance for opinions against their uncertainty and beliefs (Gürses, 2002). It is known that school administrators use their legal power to ensure the execution of educational activities (Hassenboehler, 2004). In hierarchically structured organizations, legal power represents the authority and the authority limits the area of the members of the organization by holding the authority (Alamur, 2005).

As a marginalist, the polemicist may tend to exclude the people he is dealing with from the organizational processes in situations that are contrary to his belief and thought systems. In this direction, the behavior of the marginalizing individual tends towards behaviors and attitudes such as verbal abuse and intimidation against the individual and situation he or she opposes. At the same time, conflict-based relationships are intensely present in all of these situations. Thus et al. (2021) state that unethical leadership practices cause organizational cynicism and that the resulting organizational cynicism attitude may cause negative consequences for the entire organization. One of the main axes that form the framework of ethical practices is stated as consistency by Haynes and Kunt (2002). Ethics in the context of consistency emphasizes treating or approaching all people equally (without giving priority to any situation or individual) in making judgments in any situation. In a polemical stance, the preference that occurred in this study can be interpreted as the undermining or absence of one of the main arguments in the ethical context when viewed on the axis of consistency. In other words, inconsistency in the ethical context and favoritism in the polemicist context produce similar situations in terms of the effects they create. For this reason, inconsistency can reveal organizational cynicism as a favored attitude on a polemicist foundation. Polat and Kazak (2014) state that the favoritism and behaviors of school administrators negatively affect teachers' perceptions of organizational justice. On the other hand, Karademir (2016) stated that the favoritism and behaviors of school administrators increase teachers' organizational cynicism. All these results support the research finding.

As a subject, the polemicist can exhibit self-centered attitudes and behaviors in organizational processes and practices. He builds his sensitivity on himself, thus transforming acting in an egocentric context, as opposed to altruism, into a personal norm. In any case, what really matters is himself. Egocentrism as one of the reasons for the separation between individuals in social interaction spheres can be defined as the tendency of the individual to see himself in the center in the relations with others in all circumstances and conditions. Considered on this basis, the individual who is the subject positions himself and others on a hierarchical vertical line, rather than acting on a horizontal level in his relationships with others. Individuals with an egocentric orientation see their

experiences as essential and construct and define others in the context of these experiences (Epley & Caruso, 2004). Morgan (1997) also discussed this situation as individuals imposing their will on others within the framework of domination. Individuals with a polemicist attitude tend to put the distribution of roles within the organization before the organizational goals and the organization's reason for existence. The status he has loses its instrumentality in realising organizational goals and turns into an identity feature of the individual with this status. This situation causes the individual with the status at the top in the hierarchical structure to see himself as powerful and take this tendency to see himself as powerful as a reference point in his practices and behaviors in relation to others. In the words of Morgan (1997), the person who is powerful and sees himself as the power acts with an illusion that causes him to resort to ways and means that he would not use in his interactions with others and to engage in behaviors that he would not engage in. In summary, the individual who has positioned himself as the owner of power tends to see having power as a personal trait and as a feature that is only in his monopoly.

The toxic polemicist tends to exhibit behaviors that will harm the positive climate in the organization with their attitudes. The behaviors they exhibit and the harmful attitudes they display can cause the negative course of the emotional orientation of the others they interact with. Thus, researchers stated that the toxic leadership behaviors of the school administrator in educational organizations negatively affect the school climate (Tepe & Yılmaz, 2020). Toxic-oriented polemicist individuals, who take their personal position as a reference point at the base of their actions, act aggressively towards others. This will negatively affect the loyalty, motivation, health, and happiness of the employees of the organization (Goldman, 2011). The arguments that are fed by the marginalizing consequences of these aggressive attitudes are the irrationality of the powerful polemicist individual. In their study, Sing et al. (2019) found that toxic leaders acted critically and aggressively towards their subordinates, blamed them, tried to defeat their subordinates as individuals whom they regarded as if they were on a battlefield, and at the same time exhibited guiding attitudes by exposing them to their personal interests. Thus, they create a toxic environment and harm their subordinates long-term (Pelltier, 2010). Kırbaç (2013) states that toxicity spreads from the moment it starts in educational organizations and negatively affects the culture of the organization.

The followers of a leader who has personal goals and reveals his personality at all levels believe that the organization cannot achieve its goals in the presence of a leader with this attitude (Sabir et al., 2020). At this point, the person who has taken on a role as a manager tends to view the responsibility they are taking on as an extension of their identity. Narcissism, which emerges as the main orientation of egocentrism in the private and public spheres, paves the way for the emergence of cynicism by focusing on one's own experience and development and positioning others according to this focus. This situation, which leads to an egocentric expression, has the potential to produce organizational cynicism through marginalizing others on a polemicist basis on which one sees himself as a subject (Zagórska, 2019). Saber et al. (2020) emphasized that the attitudes of establishing oneself as a subject, which can also be considered as an element of the polemicist attitude that manifests itself on an egocentric basis, are in a positive relationship with the emergence of organizational cynicism. In this context, according to the findings obtained in this study, it is seen that the cynical individual exhibits a passive, marginalizing, and criticizing character.

In the emergence of avoidance-oriented behaviors, the preferences of individuals to be passive or active are decisive. One of the main determinants of the dilemma of being active or passive is managerial attitudes (Johnson & Klee, 2007). As a passive cynical individual, he sees the power in front of him as capable and avoids the conflict processes in which this person is involved. Seeing oneself as powerful can produce cynicism by directing individuals to be passive through an autocratic management style. The individual who tends to cynicism may tend to withdraw himself by pacifying when he sees that the control is in another individual, in other words, his situation depends on someone else who is in power (Meyerson, 1990). At this point, cynical individuals may face erosion of self-confidence. These individuals, who are faced with losing their motivation to compete, can position themselves below the powerful with the effect of external stimuli (Akman, 2013).

Like the other, the cynical individual loses his confidence in the organization by exhibiting emotional attitudes such as anger and anxiety regarding the feeling of exclusion he faces in any conflict situation. The cynical individual, who is the other against the powerful, can act with a tendency to see otherness as a shield. So much so that otherness has the potential to become a preferred situation rather than a situation to which the cynical individual is exposed (Kart, 2015). The Other, who creates a sphere of influence that encompasses all life practices, can be seen as a factor that relieves the tensions caused by the attitude of standing against the powerful and thus taking risks in the individual, with the armor of invisibility woven by him. Abaslı (2018) states that teachers' excluded feelings will cause organizational cynicism.

The cynical individual as a critic develops a resistance to protect and maintain his position by being exposed to the ideological attitudes of the person he accepts as power. This resistance does not aim to be visible to the powerful but to ensure that the critic is no more visible. At this point, it is possible to indicate that the cynical individual has a critical attitude towards the existing situation but cannot express this attitude directly. Rehan et al. (2017) state that cynical individuals reveal their critical attitudes with silent sarcasm. This silent and cynical criticism may manifest itself as a political practice with little risk in the face of the unethical attitudes of the

powerful (Kennedy, 1999). Organizational cynicism attitudes of teachers cause organizational silence by pushing them not to express their concerns and ideas about organizational problems intentionally (Nartgün & Kartal, 2013).

Conclusion

Consequently, the relationship between individuals exhibiting polemicist and cynical attitudes is more evident in the presence of a hierarchical relationship. The polemicist, constructing himself on the basis of power and not recognizing the right to speak to someone other than himself, positions the other according to himself. For the polemicist who, as the owner of all space, imposes his existence on others, others are only and exclusively others. What they position as others are not those outside the space, but those who have always been there and must continue to exist.. Others are not outsiders or strangers. But they don't own the house either. The owner of the house is the polemicist, who sees himself as a ruler, who speaks, who judges, who gives the verdict and announces it. The other, who is stuck in the space, is the one who is excluded while inside the space. He sees the polemicist as the capable one and therefore he is the one who validates his power by reproducing it in a sense. In a place where he does not feel like the owner, he tries to suppress or postpone his fears and anxieties, preferring invisibility instead of being visible with his presence. The cynic, who becomes sensitive at the point of resistance, ceases to be cynical when he expresses resistance and becomes visible. Resistance is the most sensitive line of the cynic. The choice between resistance or non-resistance brings along the confrontation with the polemicist or freedom from the polemicist's judgment. The cynical, not coming from outside, not alien, being inside, staying within the space (the space of the organization), hopes to ensure his existence by avoiding conflict. Socrates wishes to be a stranger before the Athenian judges. A stranger is an outsider. And it is he who is free not to be subject to the judgment of Athenian judges and citizens. In a sense, he is not in a position to choose to resist or not. The polemicist, the arbiter, the judge, is the one who passes judgment on Socrates because he has the right to position him as the subject of the inner space. For this reason, the powerful, who is the polemicist and the cynical, who is subject to judgment, are in the same space, know each other, act according to each other, and look after each other; at some point, they are the guarantee of each other's existence. While Socrates wishes to be tried as a stranger, he wishes to invalidate the judgment in Derrida's (2020) words. Socrates has no chance of not appearing before the polemicist. For this reason, he has no choice but to wish to be accepted as a "stranger". The cynic is, in a sense, the one who is inside and cannot be a stranger. The only way for the cynic to get rid of their anxieties, fears, and the torment of the powerful is to give up their right to resist and choose to be invisible.

Suggestions

- The number of studies examining the relationship between cynicism and polemics is limited in the literature, and this relationship can be examined qualitatively or quantitatively in different types of organizations.
- According to the research results, cynicism tendencies arise due to the hierarchical nature of the relations and communication of administrators with teachers in educational organizations. In this context, a democratic and sustainable environment and communication process that supports horizontal relations and fosters participation should be supported by school administrators.

Limitations

- The fact that all participants in the study were women creates a limitation based on the gender variable.
- This research is limited to case studies that are considered as criteria.

Author (s) Contribution Rate

All authors contributed equally.

Conflicts of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval (only for necessary papers)

For this research, ethical permission (08.06.2021-16591) was obtained from Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University.

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