

The mediating role of organizational cynicism in the effect of distributional justice on intention to leave the job

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the effect of distributive justice on intention to leave the job and to determine the mediating role of organizational cynicism in this relationship. To this end, the perceptions of distributive justice, organizational cynicism, and intention to leave the job were measured among administrative and healthcare employees of private hospitals. The main population of the study consists of employees of private hospitals operating in Gaziantep. The sample of the research consists of healthcare and administrative staff of private hospitals in the Şahinbey and Şehitkamil districts of Gaziantep. The analysis results indicated that distributive justice had a negative and significant effect on intention to leave, distributive justice had a negative and significant effect on organizational cynicism, and organizational cynicism had a positive and significant effect on intention to leave. When adding the mediating role of organizational cynicism to the model when measuring the effect of distributive justice on intention to leave, this effect was reduced according to the simple linear regression results.

JEL classifications: D63, J28, J53

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1. Introduction

In a global competitive environment, organizations must improve themselves in many areas in order to survive, gain a competitive advantage, and achieve sustainable competitiveness. Human resources are one of the most important elements in the process of organizations achieving their goals. If employees feel valued within the organization, if their expectations from their employer are met, if the distribution of gains such as work, wages, rewards, penalties, and promotions is fair, and if the evaluation of work results is conducted fairly, they will trust the organization, will not have negative feelings or behaviors towards it, their loyalty to the organization will increase, and ultimately, they will not want to leave the organization. In this context, the concepts of distributive justice, organizational cynicism and intention to leave the job the job are examined.

This study investigates the effect of employees' perceptions of distributive justice within the organization on their intention to leave the job and the mediating role of organizational cynicism in this effect. First, the concepts of distributive justice, organizational cynicism, and intention to leave the job are explained, and previous studies in this context are cited. Subsequently, the research method, including the purpose of the study, the population and sample, the data collection tool, the hypotheses, and the analysis tables related to the research, are described. Finally, the findings and recommendations obtained from the research are presented.

2. Conceptual framework

2.1. *Distribution justice*

Among the public, the term justice is used to express the words honesty or truthfulness (Colquitt et al., 2001; Wiseman & Stillwell, 2022). Organizational justice, on the other hand, refers to personal evaluations of the moral and ethical attitudes and behaviors of managers who administer and manage an organization (Moç, 2018; Unterhitzenberger & Lawrence, 2025). There is a close relationship between the dimensions of organizational justice, the fundamental dimensions being procedural justice, distributive justice, and interactional justice. These concepts were first expressed by Greenberg (1987) as concepts that point to employees' perceptions of justice in organizations (Uysal, 2018).

Researchers refer to the first component of justice as distributive justice, as this concept concerns the fair distribution of outcomes that are obtained or not obtained. Distributive justice relates to the fact that not all employees are treated equally; the distribution of outputs is differentiated within the organization. Employees are concerned with whether they are getting "their fair share" (Cropanzano et al., 2007). Price and Mueller (1986) define distributive justice as "the degree to which rewards and punishments are related to performance inputs". This definition of distributive justice is based on Adams' equity theory, (Adams, 1965) which suggests that employees will consider a situation fair when their effort/outcome ratio is equal to that of another employee. Therefore, distributive justice refers not to the amount of rewards and punishments given by the organization, but to the equality of rewards distributed among employees (Mitchell et al., 2012; Ha & Moon, 2023).

The basic structure of distributive justice consists of participants, the thing(s) to be distributed, and the distribution criterion(s) (Keren-Paz, 2016). In distributive justice, it is important that all gains obtained, such as tasks, goods, services, opportunities, roles, status, wages, rewards, punishments, and promotions, are distributed fairly and correctly among employees (Sani & Yavuz, 2018). Employees want to be treated fairly, as well as other employees, in the distribution of the results obtained. They consider that justice has not been served if the distribution ratio is different. On the other hand, the three fundamental rules of distributive justice (Lambert et al., 2019) are:

- Equity rule: employees should receive a share of the gains in proportion to their contribution, i.e., their labor.
- The equality rule: this means treating all employees equally, without any discrimination (based on gender, race, etc.), so that they all receive a share of the gains.
- The need rule: rewards or gains are distributed by taking into account the needs of the employees

Most recent studies on distributive justice (though usually only indirectly) propose a different concept of the individual, one that assumes that self-understanding requires separation from others and that motivation is based narrowly on personal interests (Narasaputra et al., 2023; Ha & Moon, 2023; Lahlou-Kassi & Eddakir, 2025). Fundamentally, distributive justice means distributing equal results for equal effort and performance. Employees should receive rewards and penalties without any discrimination. If an employee has demonstrated superior performance, effort, and diligence compared to others, they should be rewarded commensurate with this extra performance; otherwise, they will be penalized for their extra performance. As a result, managers and decision-makers will be perceived as unfair by employees, which will negatively affect employee performance, productivity, work quality, and organizational integrity (Cohen, 1987; Moç, 2018; Ha & Moon, 2023; Lahlou-Kassi & Eddakir, 2025).

2.2. Cynicism and organizational cynicism

Cynicism, as ancient Greek philosophy, was defined as a philosophical thought and way of life during the historical period up to 500 BC (Türkmen & Aykaç, 2017). Etymologically, cynicism comes from the word cynic. "Cynic" means "dog" in Greek. People called cynics protested by criticizing all kinds of ideas, behaviors, or feelings in ancient Greek civilization (İşçi & Ari, 2018).

People who only look after and priorities their personal interests and define those outside themselves as opportunistic are called 'cynical', and the idea that explains this is expressed as 'cynicism'. The fundamental belief associated with cynicism is that principles such as justice, sincerity, and honesty are sacrificed for personal gain (İnce & Karacaoğlu, 2012).

The theoretical foundations of organizational cynicism are formed by expectancy theory, attribution theory, social exchange theory, emotional events theory, and social motivation theory (Kalağan & Güzeller, 2010) and have emerged over time as the new paradigm of employer-employee relations. In the simplest terms, organizational cynicism arises when employees do not trust their organizations and feel that the business cannot be trusted. Most definitions of organizational cynicism are associated with emotions such as disappointment and anger (Durrah et al., 2019). In other words, organizational cynicism involves an individual displaying negative beliefs, feelings, and behaviors towards the organization they work for (Sungur et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2023).

Although there are many definitions related to organizational cynicism in the literature, the most common definition is that of Dean et al. (1998), who define it as "an individual's negative attitude towards an organization". In this context, the individual's "cognitive, emotional, and behavioral" attitude towards the organization they work for is examined in three sub-dimensions. These dimensions (Türkmen & Aykaç, 2017; Giampaolo et al., 2025) are:

- A belief that the organization lacks integrity, cognitive dimension.
- Negative feelings towards the organization, emotional dimension.
- A tendency to exhibit aggressive/derogatory and critical behavior consistent with these beliefs and feelings towards the organization, the behavioral dimension.

The cognitive dimension of organizational cynicism is referred to as a belief-based thinking approach (Shaharruddin & Ahmad, 2013). In this context, employees believe that the organization does not adhere to fundamental principles such as honesty, sincerity, and fairness

within the cognitive dimension of organizational cynicism (Dean et al., 1998). In this context, the belief that there are unprincipled practices in the organization plays a role in this cognitive approach (İşçi & Ari, 2018). In the cognitive dimension, there is a belief that there is a lack of honesty. Employees believe they will have problems with their trust in the organization. According to cynics, values such as sincerity, virtue, and honesty are sacrificed in the pursuit of personal interest. Employees who exhibit cynical behavior in their organizations believe that institutional practices do not adhere to organizational principles and that official statements prepared by institutions are not taken seriously by employees. Therefore, employees may sacrifice value judgements such as sincerity, honesty, and truth in favor of their interests (Eraslan et al., 2018). Cognitive cynicism is the belief that the organization does not treat its employees fairly, morally, honestly, or sincerely (Dean et al., 1998). Consequently, employees believe that their managers are unreliable and inconsistent (Sungur et al., 2019). Cynicism has effects that reduce the effectiveness and efficiency of organizations and cause significant material and moral losses. In this context, it is possible to mention a wide range of organizational cynicism outcomes, including job dissatisfaction, decreased organizational commitment, sabotage, theft, fraud, increased organizational downsizing, increased turnover rates, increased labor turnover, increased layoff rates, alienation from work, and decreased organizational performance (Gün, 2016; Giampaolo et al., 2025)

Another dimension of organizational cynicism is the emotional dimension. Cynicism is not an indifferent judgement about the organization; it can involve strong emotional reactions. In conceptualizing this emotional component of cynical attitudes, we primarily draw on Izard's (1977) work, which defines nine basic emotions, each described in both mild and strong forms: interest-excitement, pleasure-joy, surprise-astonishment, distress-pain, anger-rage, disgust-repugnance, contempt, fear, and shame (Dean et al., 1998). For example, cynical individuals may feel disgusted and angry towards their organizations or experience feelings of pain, disgust, and even shame when they think about the organization. Therefore, cynicism is associated with all kinds of negative emotions (Eraslan et al., 2018; Giampaolo et al., 2025).

The final dimension of organizational cynicism is behavioral and involves negative, often derogatory behaviors. These behaviors explicitly express a lack of sincerity and honesty on the part of the organization. Employees who exhibit cynical behavior may make gloomy, pessimistic predictions about the future within the organization, while also displaying negative and often demeaning behavior towards their colleagues (Dean et al., 1998). Employees' cynical behavior also includes a disgusting and comical attitude, such as disparaging their organization. Furthermore, employees who mock their organizations and senior management tend to be less likely to make voluntary efforts for their work (Rehan et al., 2017). Within organizations, cynical behaviors can also be discerned through actual behaviors. Meaningful glances, smirks, derisive smiles, and eye rolls that imply that employees know something about each other can be examples of cynical behavior (Brandes & Das, 2006; Giampaolo et al., 2025).

2.3. Intention to leave the job

Studies examining the theories underlying research on intention to leave the job have found that the expectation theory, human capital theory, equity theory, resource-based approach, Herzberg's two-factor theory, embeddedness theory, social exchange theory, and organizational equilibrium theory. These theories attempt to reveal how intention to leave the job arises and what factors influence it (Dirik, 2019).

The intention to leave the job is defined as the final stage in the decision-making process for an employee planning to leave their employer. According to Tett and Meyer (1993), the intention to leave the job is defined as a conscious psychological willingness to leave an organization (Bothma & Roodt, 2013; Baquero et al., 2025), while according to Mobley et al. (1979), the intention to leave the job is defined as the employee's perception and evaluation of

job alternatives (Duque, 2015; Jasiński & Derbis, 2022). On the other hand, intention to leave the job is expressed as one of the employees' withdrawal behaviors, while it is also defined as "the employee actively leaving the job and seeking alternative employment" (Scott et al., 1999). According to Rusbelt et al. (1988), intention to leave the job is expressed as employees experiencing dissatisfaction due to work-related conditions and, as a result, planning to actively leave the organization by engaging in destructive activities (Erbil, 2013; Neves et al., 2022).

The intention to leave the job is the final stage of employees' plans to quit their jobs. Employees take the decision to leave their job after a long period of time, and this decision-making process involves planning to leave the job, searching for new and alternative jobs, evaluating different roles and positions, and deciding whether to continue with the organization or leave (Addae & Parboteeah, 2006; Neves et al., 2022).

Employees' intention to leave the job does not always result in them actually leaving. Even though employees have the intention to leave the job, they may not be able to realize this intention, leave the organization, or terminate their employment due to reasons such as concerns about not finding a better job, the reaction they may receive from their environment, or resistance to change. Resignations resulting from the intention to leave the job will incur certain costs for the organization. Therefore, the employee's wishes and expectations should be reasonably met, their motivation should be taken seriously, and the continuity of qualified employees within the organization should be ensured (Jaramillo, 2006; Baquero et al., 2025).

Organizations that are aware that their most important capital is their employees and workforce attach importance to issues such as employee loyalty and continuity, invest in this area, and reduce their intention to leave the job and, consequently, their actual departure by ensuring that employees want to remain in the organization of their own accord (Koçoğlu, 2012; Jasiński & Derbis, 2022).

2.4. Literature review

Some of the results of previous studies on the concepts discussed in this study are as follows:

Parè and Tremblay (2007) and Edrees et al. (2023) found a negative relationship between the perception of procedural justice, one of the dimensions of organizational justice, and the intention to leave the job. Özer and Günlük (2010) investigated the effect of organizational justice on accountants' job satisfaction and turnover intention. According to the research results, they found that distributive justice, one of the dimensions of organizational justice, had no effect on turnover intention.

Çağ (2011) conducted a study to determine the effect of perceived organizational justice on organizational cynicism and intention to leave the job. According to the research results, it was determined that there was a low-level, positive and significant relationship between employees' perceived sense of justice and organizational cynicism, and that there was a medium-level, positive and significant relationship between organizational cynicism and employees' intention to leave the job.

Yalçınkaya (2013) and Narosaputra et al. (2023) conducted a study on the effect of distributive justice on organizational cynicism. According to the research results, it was found that distributive justice has a negative and significant relationship with all sub-dimensions of organizational cynicism, including cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. Güzel and Ayazlar (2014) investigated the effect of organizational justice on organizational cynicism and intention to leave the job. The research findings indicate that although the perception of organizational justice is related to intention to leave the job, it is explained solely by procedural justice among the dimensions of justice, and that the perception of justice negatively affects intention to leave the job.

Akova and Kılıç (2015) and Baquero et al. (2025) investigated the relationship between public employees' levels of organizational cynicism and their intention to leave their jobs, concluding that the relationship between organizational cynicism and intention to leave the job is significant and positive, and that organizational cynicism influences the intention to leave the job. Bulut and Hovardaoğlu (2018) and Obeng and Atan (2024) found a positive relationship between organizational cynicism and intention to leave the job in their study. Aydın (2018) and Li et al (2022) investigated the effects of perceived organizational support and organizational cynicism on intention to leave the job and found a positive and significant relationship between organizational cynicism and intention to leave the job.

3. Research method

3.1. Research objective, population and sample, data collection tool

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the effect of employees' perceptions of distributive justice on their intention to leave the job and the mediating role of employees' perceptions of organizational cynicism in this effect. Employees' perceptions of distributive justice also affect their performance, the quality of their work, their productivity, and their decisions regarding whether to continue in their current jobs. In this context, the perceptions of private hospital employees regarding distributive justice, their levels of organizational cynicism, and their perceptions of intention to leave their jobs were investigated.

A quantitative research method was used in the study, and data were collected through a questionnaire. The data obtained in the study were tested using frequency, correlation, and regression analyses in the SPSS software. The main population of the study consists of employees of private hospitals operating in Gaziantep. The sample of the study consists of administrative and healthcare employees of private hospitals operating in the Şehitkamil and Şahinbey districts of Gaziantep province. The average number of employees in the region is 3,000, and questionnaires were sent to 450 individuals who agreed to complete the survey, but 393 individuals responded.

The questionnaire used in the study consists of four sections. The first section contains six questions to measure the demographic characteristics of the participants. The second section contains 13 statements to measure perceptions of organizational cynicism, five statements to measure employees' perceptions of distributive justice, and five statements to measure their intention to leave their jobs.

The questionnaire forms used in the study begin with a cover letter addressed to the respondents. The first section of the questionnaire contains questions aimed at determining the socio-demographic characteristics of the employees, such as gender, marital status, job position, educational status, age, and length of service.

Statements pertaining to the distributive justice dimension of Niehoff and Moorman's (1993) organizational justice scale, which consists of three sub-dimensions (distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice) and 20 statements, were used in the study. Examples of statements include: "There is very little common ground between my organization's policies, objectives and practices," and "In my organization, employees are expected to do one thing, but another behavior is rewarded." (Niehoff & Moorman, 1993)

The organizational cynicism scale consists of 13 statements. The scale was developed by Dean et al. (1998), and its validity and reliability have been tested. The scale was adapted into Turkish by Kalağan (2009). Examples of statements include: "I get angry when I think about the organization I work for," "When the organization I work for and its employees are mentioned, I exchange meaningful glances with the people I work with," and "I criticize the practices and policies of the organization I work for with others."

The intention to leave the job scale was developed by Wayne et al. (1997) and adapted into Turkish by Küçükusta (2007). Examples of statements include: "I am seriously considering leaving my job," and "I am actively looking for work outside the organization."

A 5-point Likert scale was used for the statements in the questionnaire, and participants were asked to select one of the options ranging from "Strongly disagree (1)" to "Strongly agree (5)".

3.2. Research hypotheses

In line with the purpose of the study, the following hypotheses were proposed to investigate the effect of distributive justice on the intention to leave the job and the mediating role of organizational cynicism on this effect.

- H1: Distributive justice affects the intention to leave the job.
- H2: Distributive justice affects organizational cynicism.
- H3: Organizational cynicism affects the intention to leave the job.
- H4: Organizational cynicism plays a mediating role in the effect of distributive justice on intention to leave the job.

3.3. Findings

The demographic findings obtained from the 393 hospital employees who participated in the study are presented in Table 1. Table 1 shows that female employees outnumber male employees (60.1%) and that the majority of participants are single employees (50.9%). According to the age variable, the highest proportion of employees is in the 24-29 age group (30.0%), while the lowest proportion is among employees over 54 years of age (1.3%). According to the education status variable, it was determined that the majority of employees were high school graduates (31.8%). In addition, 68.2% of the employees participating in the study were in healthcare positions. Looking at the seniority variable, it can be seen that individuals with 1-4 years of service (38.7%) were in the majority.

Cronbach's alpha values were examined to measure the reliability of the scales. As shown in Table 2, Cronbach's alpha values were found to be 0.858 for the distributive justice scale, 0.793 for the organizational cynicism scale, and 0.892 for the intention to leave the job scale. According to the literature, scales with alpha values between 0.61 and 0.80 are considered to have acceptable reliability, while scales with values between 0.81 and 1 are considered to have high reliability. Looking at the average of the participants' responses to the statements regarding distributive justice, it was 2.44 (close to disagree on a 5-point Likert scale), meaning that distributive justice was not perceived as very positive in their workplace. Nevertheless, the average organizational cynicism score was 2.71 (close to undecided); while the intention to leave the job has an average of 2.61 (between disagree and undecided). It can be said that participants' perceptions of organizational cynicism and intention to leave the job are low.

The construct validity of the scales used in the study was determined through exploratory factor analysis. According to the exploratory factor analysis, the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy) value, which indicates the adequacy of the sample, i.e., the suitability of the data for factor analysis, was greater than 0.60, and the sphericity degree (Bartlett's test of sphericity), which indicates that meaningful factors will emerge from the obtained data, was 0.000 (Kerse & Karabey, 2017).

As can be seen in Table 3, the distribution justice scale was found to be unidimensional, as in the original scale, with a total explained variance value of 56.11% and factor loadings of the propositions ranging from 0.583 to 0.864.

Table 1. Demographic findings regarding participants

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	236	60.1
	Male	157	39.9
Marital status	Married	193	49.1
	Single	200	50.9
Position	Healthcare worker	268	68.2
	Administrative staff	125	31.8
Educational status	Secondary school	125	31.8
	Associate degree	122	31.0
	Bachelor's degree	89	22.6
	Master's degree	28	7.1
	Doctorate	29	7.4
Age	18-23	94	23.9
	24-29	118	30.0
	30-35	87	22.1
	36-41	62	15.8
	42-47	25	6.4
	48-53	2	0.5
	54 and above	5	1.3
Seniority	Less than 1 year	78	19.8
	1-3 years	152	38.7
	4-6 years	120	30.5
	7-9 years	38	9.7
	10 years and over	5	1.3

Table 2. Reliability findings related to the scales

	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items	Mean	Standard deviation
Distribution fairness	0.858	5	2.448	0.879
Organizational cynicism	0.793	13	2.718	0.943
Intention to leave the job	0.892	4	2.613	1.099

Table 3. Exploratory factor analysis of the distributive justice scale

Factors	Factor loadings
DA2	0.864
DA3	0.815
DA1	0.767
DA4	0.684
DA5	0.583
Eigenvalues	2.806
Explained variance (by factor, %)	56.11
Total explained variance	56.11
KMO = 0.759	Bartlett's sphericity test; P = 0.000

As seen in Table 4, the data about the exploratory factor analysis of the organizational cynicism scale are presented. One of the 13 statements in the original scale (question 11) was excluded from the scale due to its low factor loading value. Items 12 and 13 were also excluded because they were grouped under a single dimension with only two statements. Consequently, it was determined that there were two dimensions, the total explained variance was 71.616%, and the factor loadings of the items ranged from 0.441 to 0.899.

Table 4. Exploratory factor analysis of the organizational cynicism scale

Factors	Factor loadings	
	1	2
OS7	0.899	
ÖS2	0.896	
ÖS3	0.881	
ÖS8	0.786	
ÖS5	0.441	
ÖS6		0.762
ÖS1		0.732
ÖS4		0.725
ÖS9		0.704
ÖS10	0.476	0.683
Eigenvalues	6.362	1.306
Explained variance (by factor, %)	53.016	10.887
Total explained variance		71.616
KMO = 0.891	Bartlett's sphericity test; P = 0.000	

As shown in Table 5, the data from the exploratory factor analysis of the intention to leave the job scale are presented. One of the five statements in the original scale (statement 5) was removed from the scale because it had a low factor loading value. It was determined that the scale had a single dimension and total explained variance of, and that the factor loadings of the statements ranged from 0.820 to 0.941.

Table 5. Exploratory factor analysis of the job separation intention scale

Factors	Factor loadings
IA2	0.941
IA1	0.872
IA3	0.847
IA4	0.820
Eigenvalues	3.036
Explained variance (by factor, %)	75.899
Total explained variance	75.899
KMO = 0.776	Bartlett's sphericity test; P = 0.000

Pearson correlation analysis was applied to determine whether there was a relationship between distributive justice, intention to leave the job, and perceptions of organizational cynicism, and if so, the direction of that relationship. Although there are no strict limitations, a correlation coefficient below 0.50 indicates a weak relationship; between 0.50 and 0.70 indicates a moderate relationship; and above 0.70 indicates a strong relationship (Durmuş et al., 2013).

As can be seen in Table 6, weak, positive and negative statistically significant relationships were found between the variables. A negative relationship was found between distributive justice and intention to leave the job, a positive relationship between organizational cynicism and intention to leave the job, and a negative relationship between distributive justice and organizational cynicism.

Table 6. Correlation analysis

		Distribution justice	Intention to leave the job	Organizational cynicism
Distribution fairness	Pearson correlation	1	-0.419**	-0.366**
	Sig. (two-tailed)		0.000	0.000
	N	393	393	393
Intention to leave the job	Pearson correlation	-0.419**	1	0.451**
	Sig. (two-tailed)	0.000		0.000
	N	393	393	393
Organizational cynicism	Pearson correlation	-0.366**	0.451**	1
	Sig. (two-tailed)	0.000	0.000	
	N	393	393	393

In line with the research objective, various regression analyses were applied within the framework of the four-stage approach proposed by Baron and Kenney to test the basic mediation model. Table 7 presents the step-by-step results of these regression analyses.

In the first three steps of the study, simple linear regression analysis was used to determine the effect of employees' perceptions of distributive justice on their Intention to leave the job, the effect of perceptions of distributive justice on organizational cynicism, and the effect of organizational cynicism on the Intention to leave the job. In the fourth step, the effect of distributive justice and the mediating variable of organizational cynicism on turnover intention was tested using multiple regression analysis.

Table 7. Regression analysis results

Step	Predicted variable (Dependent variable)	Predictor variable (Independent variable)	Regression coefficient	R	R ²	P	F	Accept - Red
1	Intention to leave the job work	Distribution justice	-0.419	0.419	0.175	0.000**	83.196	H1 Accepted
2	Organizational cynicism	Distribution justice	-0.366	0.366	0.134	0.000**	60.309	H2 Accept
3	Intention to leave the job	Organizational cynicism	0.451	0.451	0.203	0.000**	99.598	H3 Accept
4	Intention to leave the job	Organizational cynicism	0.343	0.527	0.278	0.000**	74.923	H4 Accept
		Distribution justice	-0.293					

When examining the findings obtained from the analysis in step 1, it was concluded that the simple regression analysis applied was appropriate ($F=83.196$, $p; 0.001$, $r= -0.419$). When this regression model was evaluated, it was determined that for every 1-unit increase in the perception of distributive justice, there would be a -0.419-unit increase in the intention to leave the job. Accordingly, it was concluded that distributive justice is effective in reducing the intention to leave the job.

Based on the findings obtained in step 2, it was concluded that the simple regression analysis applied was appropriate ($F=60.309$, $p; 0.001$, $r= -0.366$). When evaluating this regression model, it was determined that for every 1-unit increase in the perception of distributive justice, there would be a -0.366-unit increase in organizational cynicism. Accordingly, it was concluded that distributive justice is effective in reducing the perception of organizational cynicism.

Based on the findings obtained in step 3, it was concluded that the simple regression analysis applied was appropriate ($F=99.598$, $p:0.001$, $r=0.451$). When this regression model was evaluated, it was determined that for every 1-unit increase in organizational cynicism, there would be a 0.451-unit increase in the intention to leave the job. Accordingly, it was concluded that the perception of organizational cynicism is effective in its increase.

In step 4, the effects of perceived distributive justice (independent variable) and organizational cynicism (mediating variable) on the intention to leave the job were investigated

using multiple regression analyses. According to the findings, it was concluded that the analysis applied was appropriate ($F=74.923$, $p; 0.001$, $r=0.527$). When the mediating variable was added to the model, the effect of distributive justice on the intention to leave the job decreased from $\beta = -0.419$ ($p < 0.001$) to $\beta = -0.293$ ($p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that organizational cynicism plays a partial mediating role in the effect of distributive justice on turnover intention.

According to the analysis results, it is observed that distributive justice reduces organizational cynicism, and organizational cynicism increases the intention to leave the job. The findings of the regression analysis conducted in four stages were evaluated according to the mediation effect criteria of Baron and Kenny's method, and it was found that they met the criteria and had a partial mediation role. All these data show that hypotheses H1, H2, H3, and H4 are sufficiently supported by evidence (Table 7). These data are also consistent with the correlation analysis (Table 6).

4. Discussion and conclusion

To ensure that human resources, the most valuable asset of organizations, are productive for the organization, it is necessary to minimize negative perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors that may lead to negative outcomes. For employees to provide quality and productive services, they need to be motivated and have a happy and peaceful working environment. This situation is influenced by many factors, such as the organizational climate and employees' perceptions of justice.

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of perceived distributive justice on employees' intention to leave the job and the mediating role of organizational cynicism on this effect. To this end, data were collected and analyzed through a survey conducted among healthcare and administrative staff at private hospitals in the Şahinbey and Şehitkamil districts of Gaziantep.

Three hypotheses were developed regarding the direct effect between the variables relevant to the study objective, and one hypothesis was developed regarding the mediating effect. Simple linear regression and multiple regression analyses were used to test the hypotheses. First, a correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationship between the variables. According to the correlation analysis, negative and significant relationships were found between distributive justice and organizational cynicism, between distributive justice and intention to leave the job, and a positive relationship was found between organizational cynicism and intention to leave the job. Accordingly, employees who believe that all gains distributed within the organization are distributed fairly among employees exhibit less cynical behavior and are less likely to consider leaving their jobs.

After identifying the relationships between the variables through correlation analysis, regression analysis was performed to test the hypotheses. There are different approaches to regression analysis with a mediator variable. In this study, the causal step approach, also known as the Baron and Kenny method, and the criteria associated with the approach were taken into account. Simple linear regression analyses were performed in four steps of the regression analysis: the first step measured the effect of distributive justice on turnover intention, the second step measured the effect of distributive justice on organizational cynicism, and the third step measured the effect of organizational cynicism on turnover intention. In the fourth step, multiple regression analysis was applied to determine the effect of distributive justice and organizational cynicism on the intention to leave the job. According to the analysis results, it was determined that distributive justice has a negative and significant effect on the intention to leave the job, distributive justice has a negative and significant effect on organizational cynicism, and organizational cynicism has a positive and significant effect on the intention to leave the job, and hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 were accepted. When measuring the effect of distributive justice on turnover intention, the addition of organizational cynicism as a mediator

to the model reduced this effect compared to the simple linear regression result. According to the Baron and Kenny approach, this indicates a partial mediating effect. Accordingly, hypothesis H4 was also accepted. The findings obtained as a result of the research are consistent with the results of previous studies (Yalçinkaya, 2013; Akova & Kılıç, 2015; Kunduracı, 2019; Narosaputra et al., 2023; Baquero et al., 2025).

Employees who exhibit cynical attitudes and behaviors within the organization negatively affect organizational outcomes and employee productivity. Employees' tension and irritation when thinking about the organization they work for, their perception of inconsistency within the organization, and their lack of trust in the organization cause them to feel uncomfortable within the organization. Therefore, the reasons for this type of cynical behavior, which increases employees' intention to leave the job the organization, should be investigated, and these reasons should be identified and eliminated.

According to the findings obtained from the analyses, increasing employees' positive perceptions of the organization, ensuring that all benefits (such as promotions, wages, social assistance, etc.) are distributed fairly, and ensuring that no discrimination is made among employees will ensure their loyalty to the organization and prevent them from wanting to leave their jobs. Similarly, employees with positive perceptions will not exhibit cynical behavior and will not harbor negative thoughts about the organization. In this regard, the necessary management measures should be taken to ensure fairness within the organization.

The research was conducted only in private hospitals operating in the Şahinbey and Şehitkamil districts of Gaziantep province. It is estimated that more diverse findings would be obtained if the scope of the research were expanded to include all private hospitals in Gaziantep province and applied to public hospitals as well, allowing for a comparison of the results between public and private hospitals. It is assumed that the findings obtained will contribute to the literature when compared with studies conducted in different sectors. Furthermore, similar studies could be conducted on different samples to generalize the results. It is thought that using qualitative methods alongside quantitative methods in future research would be beneficial in explaining the results in greater detail.

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