Effects of Conflict Culture and Gossip on Employee Wellbeing and Counterproductive Work Behavior: Organizational Cynicism as a Mediator

Çatışma Kültürü ve Dedikodunun Çalışan Öznel İyi Oluşu ve Üretim Karşıtı Davranışlar ile İlişkisi: Örgütsel Sinizmin Aracı Rolü

Ayşe Nur SÖNMEZ*

Habibe Tuğba EROL KORKMAZ†

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Öz

Örgütsel sinizm hem çalışanlar hem de kurumlar için birçok olumsuz sonuca sahiptir. Ayrıca, çatışma kültürleri nispeten yeni bir konudur. Bu nedenle örgütsel sinizm, iyi oluş ve üretim karşıtı iş davranışları gibi diğer değişkenlerle olan ilişkisinin açıklığa kavuşturulması önemlidir. Bu araştırmada amaç, çatışma kültürleri ve örgütsel dedikodunun çalışan iyi oluşu ve üretim karşıtı iş davranışları ile ilişkisinde örgütsel sinizm aracı rolünü test etmektir. Anket verileri 32 farklı meslekte çalışan 225 (130 kadın, 94 erkek, 1 diğer olarak) katılımcıdan toplanmıştır. Katılımcılara demografik bilgi formu, Çatışma Kültürü Ölçeği, Örgütsel Dedikodu Ölçeği, Olumlu ve Olumsuz Duygu Ölçeği, Yaşam Doyumu Ölçeği, Üretim Karşıtı İş Davranışları Ölçeği ve Örgütsel Sinizm Ölçeği uygulanmıştır. Analizler LISREL üzerinden yapısal eşitlik modellemesi (YEM) ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bulgular, kaçıngan çatışma kültürü ile çalışanların iyi oluşları ve üretim karşıtı iş davranışları arasındaki ilişkinin örgütsel sinizm tarafından tam aracılık edildiğini göstermiştir. Ek olarak, örgütsel dedikodu - çalışan iyi oluşu ve örgütsel dedikodu - üretim karşıtı iş davranışı ilişkilerine de örgütsel sinizm aracılık etmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Çatışma kültürleri, örgütsel dedikodu, iyi oluş, üretim karşıtı iş davranışları, örgütsel sinizm*

Abstract

Organizational cynicism has many negative consequences for both employees and institutions. Also, conflict cultures are relatively a new topic. Therefore, clarifying its relationship with other variables like organizational cynicism, well-being and counterproductive work behaviors is essential. In this research, the aim is to test the mediating role of organizational cynicism in the relationship of organizational conflict cultures and organizational gossip with employee well-being and counterproductive work behaviors. Questionnaire data were collected from 225 (130 female, 94 male, and 1 as "other") participants who work in 32 different occupations. The participants received demographic information form, Conflict Culture Scale, Organizational Gossip Scale, Positive and Negative Affect Scale, Life Satisfaction Scale, Counterproductive Work Behaviors Scale, and Organizational Cynicism Scale. Analyzes were carried out with structural equation modeling (SEM) via LISREL. The findings showed that the relationship between avoidant conflict culture and employee well-being and counterproductive work behaviors was totally mediated by organizational cynicism. Additionally, the relationships between organizational gossip and employee well-being, as well as organizational gossip and counterproductive work behaviors, were mediated by organizational cynicism.

Keywords: *Conflict cultures, organizational gossip, well-being, counterproductive work behavior, organizational cynicism*

*Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Psikoloji Anabilim Dalı Doktora Öğrencisi, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt Üniversitesi Esenboğa Külliyesi C Blok Kat:2 Esenboğa/Ankara - Türkiye, aysnrokszr@outlook.com
†Prof. Dr., Mersin Üniversitesi, İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Fakültesi, Psikoloji Bölümü, htugbaerol@yahoo.com
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Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relations of conflict cultures and organizational gossip with individual and organizational outcomes. As an individual outcome employee subjective well-being was examined, and as an organizational outcome counterproductive work behavior was examined. Moreover, organizational cynicism was tested as a mediator of these relationships. Organizational conflict and gossip are inevitable in workplace contexts. Their effects have been separately studied in many studies. However, conflict as a culture has not been studied much. This is the first study to test the effects of conflict culture and organizational gossip simultaneously. Each of the constructs included in the tested model are briefly described below. Variables of the study are grouped under subtitles corresponding to independent variables, dependent variables, and the mediator variable.

1.1.Conflict Cultures and Organizational Gossip

Conflict has been rationalized as a social occurrence across various cultures and eras and has been studied in many scientific fields such as sociology, communication, social psychology, and organizational psychology (DeDreu & Gelfand, 2008). Rahim (2002; s. 207) defined the concept of organizational conflict as a process that interact each other which results in discordance and controversy inside or between social units such as organizations. From an organizational perspective, conflict and work life are closely related (DeDreu & Gelfand, 2008). Conflict, frequently experienced in organizations, can also adversely affect organizational effectiveness (Gelfand et al., 2012). Therefore, the way an organization manages conflict is an important issue (Gelfand et al., 2008).

Shared criteria that outline how conflict should be handled in organizational contexts are referred to as conflict cultures (Gelfand et al., 2008). Regardless of the individual members' conflict management styles in organizations, conflict cultures influence the attitudes and behaviors of the employees and they reduce diversity in that sense (Gelfand et al., 2012). Conflict cultures are based on two dimensions: (1) agreeable-disagreeable conflict management and (2) active-passive conflict management (Gelfand et al., 2008; s. 141). Agreeable norms represent behavior that advances corporate and group goals and involves acting in cooperation with others. On the contrary, the priority for disagreeable behaviors is one's own interest toward others. Active norms include open participation, assertiveness, and little situational constraints, while passive norms include open participation and excessive situational constraints while lacking assertiveness. As a result of this two-dimensional distinction, the researchers identified four conflict cultures: dominating conflict cultures (active and disagreeable), collaborative conflict cultures (active and agreeable), avoidant conflict cultures (passive and agreeable), and passive-aggressive conflict cultures (passive and disagreeable).

Gossip occurs as part of informal communication (DeGouda et al., 2005). Therefore, gossip has become an inevitable phenomenon in organizations that enable sociability, and it has started to be studied by academics (Tian et al., 2018). According to Kurland and Pelled (2000; s. 429) organizational gossip is an unofficial and judgmental discussion about a member of the organization who isn't present within a group. Gossip within the organization can cause serious harm, such as quitting the job or loss of motivation (DeGouda et al., 2005). Employees use negative gossip for bullying, ignore people who are the subject, and exclude and belittle people's work through gossip (Pheko, 2018). Especially negative gossip has devastating effects on organizations. As a result, it is essential to comprehend the structure of organizational gossip in depth concerning reducing the harms of negative gossip.

1.2.Employee Wellbeing and Counterproductive Work Behavior

Well-being is a multifaceted construct. For example, Diener (2009) described subjective well-being as people's primarily positive cognitive and emotional experiences with their lives. This

definition focuses more on the things that provide life satisfaction to people and states that the important thing is to feel positive emotions frequently, and not experience any unpleasant emotions. In short, having more positive emotions, and a positive general evaluation of one's life are essential criteria for subjective well-being (Diener, 2009). While Keyes (1998; s. 121) evaluated well-being as the absence of negative emotions and situations, Danna and Griffin (1999) described it as the satisfaction of one's ordinary life, work-related issues, and general health. According to Ryan and Deci (2001), well-being refers to an ideal psychological efficacy and experience. Employee well-being is an essential issue for organizations and has led to many studies on employee well-being (Grant et al., 2007). Although there is no single definition of organizational well-being, Danna and Griffin (1999; s.364) stated that employee well-being should include both general work experiences such as job satisfaction, and more external dimensions such as salary satisfaction. Furthermore, negative individual and organizational well-being have harmful consequences for individuals and organizations by negatively affecting one's health, causing intention to quit, and increasing accident tendency (Bao et al., 2012).

Gruys and Sackett (2003; s. 30) characterize counterproductive work behaviors (CWB) as voluntary behaviors against organization’s lawful concerns, and these behaviors include such as theft, aggression, sabotage, and abuse of resources. Therefore, for the behavior to be characterized as counterproductive, the behavior should have the intention of harming the company and its personnel (Fox et al., 2001), and the behavior is done for a purpose, not by accident (Spector & Fox, 2005). As antecedents of CWB, the researchers focused more on personality traits and environmental factors that may cause stress (Penney & Spector, 2005). Accordingly, CWB positively correlated with anxious personality (Fox et al., 2001), hostile personality, and negative affect (Penney & Spector, 2005). Also, CWB are negatively correlated positive self-concept (Marcus & Schuler, 2004).

1.3.Organizational Cynicism as a Mediator

Dean et al. (1998) define organizational cynicism (OC) as a negative attitude toward the organization and it has three components. Firstly, employees who have higher level of cynicism believe that their organization lacks honesty. Secondly, they have a negative affect and lastly, they have a tendency to criticize and behave in an unfavourable manner toward the organization. At the heart of OC is the idea that the organization lacks integrity; therefore, variables such as the unfair behavior of superiors, insincerity in the organization, and experiences that damage credibility and unpleasant organizational policies cause OC (Naus et al., 2007; s. 689, 690). Although cynicism is a concept that can be directed to both the organization and to the employees, contextual factors rather than personality traits are essential in the formation of cynicism (Chiaburu et al., 2013). According to the literature, cynicism can has significantly detrimental effects on organizations. For example, there is a negative correlation between OC and citizenship behavior (Andersson & Bateman, 1997), organizational commitment, perceived organizational support, organizational justice (Chiaburu et al., 2013), and job satisfaction (Wanous et al., 1994). Also, there is a positive relationship between OC and psychological contract breach (Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003), perceived organizational politics (Chiaburu et al., 2013), negligent behaviors at work, and exit thoughts (Naus et al., 2007).

We expect that organizational cynicism will mediate the effects of conflict culture and organizational gossip on employee well-being and counterproductive work behaviors. Detailed hypothesis explanations are presented below:

Since conflicts are managed more healthily in collaborative conflict cultures, employees will not experience psychological and physical problems arising from conflict. Therefore, it will affect well-being positively. In contrast, the well-being of the employees who work in an avoidant conflict culture will be negatively affected because of avoiding conflict, suppressing

their emotions, and problems remain deeply unresolved. Also, because conflict is encouraged in dominating conflict cultures and the most important thing for everyone is their own interests, the well-being of employees can be negatively affected. Because of these reasons, hypotheses regarding conflict cultures and well-being are listed below:

H1a: Collaborative conflict culture positively predicts employee well-being.

H1b: Dominating conflict culture negatively predicts employee well-being.

H1c: Avoidant conflict culture negatively predicts employee well-being.

In collaborative conflict cultures, employees can solve their problems in a calm and harmonious environment, so they have no reason to be involved in counterproductive work behaviors. However, employees in dominating conflict cultures lack these features. Therefore, being in constant conflict and not liking this situation can lead to CWB. Additionally, in avoidant conflict cultures, employees may show CWB such as slowing down work or poor performance because they cannot solve their problems and feel restricted. Hence, hypotheses regarding conflict cultures and CWB are listed below:

H2a: The collaborative conflict culture of the organization negatively predicts counterproductive work behaviors.

H2b: The dominating conflict culture of the organization positively predicts counterproductive work behaviors.

H2c: The avoidant conflict culture of the organization positively predicts counterproductive work behaviors.

Negative gossip can make employees feel excluded and bullied. Therefore, a hostile atmosphere prevails in organizations where there is gossip. In this case, the well-being of employees may decrease. Because of these reasons, the below hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Organizational gossip predicts employee well-being negatively.

By using gossip, some employees may harm other people and the organization, such as spreading false rumors about someone else. In addition, gossip can also be used as a sabotage tool, especially against people with good careers. Therefore, gossip can lead to CWB.

H4: Organizational gossip predicts counterproductive work behaviors positively.

In a collaborative conflict culture, employees will feel more comfortable, they will think that their opinions are valued, and as a result, they will not develop cynicism. As a result, their well-being level will increase, and their CWB level will decrease. For this reason, collaborative conflict cultures will increase well-being and decrease CWB by reducing cynicism.

H5a: Organizational cynicism mediates the relationship between collaborative conflict culture, employee well-being, and counterproductive work behaviors.

Being in fierce conflict situations regularly may be difficult for some employees. Hence, employees who work for organizations that support this may develop negative feelings, thoughts, and attitudes. In return, this cynical attitude may cause low well-being and more CWB behaviors.

H5b: Organizational cynicism is mediating in the relationship between dominating conflict culture, employee well-being, and counterproductive work behaviors.

Since harmony and order within the organization are important in an avoidant conflict culture, employees become passive in conflict situations, do not express their thoughts openly, and submissive behavior is common. Therefore, employees drown in emotions such as repressed tension. As a result, all these repressed emotions will manifest themselves as cynicism towards the organization and the employee will move away from the organization. Therefore, in

avoidant conflict cultures, employees will develop cynicism and in turn, their well-being will be affected negatively and CWB will arise.

H5c: Organizational cynicism mediates the relationship between avoidant conflict culture, employee well-being, and counterproductive work behaviors.

The cycle of misinformation resulting from gossip may cause the employee to feel negative feelings towards the organization and, as a result, to alienate himself from the organization, reduce his interaction with the organization, and have an emotionally negative attitude. As a result of all these, the employee may develop organizational cynicism. By increasing cynicism, it may decrease well-being and increase CWB.

H5d: Organizational cynicism is mediating in the relationship between organizational gossip, employee well-being, and counterproductive work behaviours.

1. Purpose and Importance of the Research

Since conflict cultures are a relatively new concept, their relationship with variables such as well-being, CWB, and cynicism has a limited place in the literature. Therefore, this research aimed to contribute to the elaboration of knowledge on conflict cultures as antecedents of organizational cynicism. In addition, another goal is to test a model that includes organizational conflict culture, gossip, and organizational cynicism as predictors of employee well-being and counterproductive work behaviors. It is aimed to test a comprehensive model that will provide additional information about the construct of organizational cynicism.

2. Method

The study aims to test whether OC is a mediator variable in the link between conflict cultures and organizational gossip regarding employee well-being and CWB. The independent variables are organizational conflict cultures and organizational gossip. Dependent variables are employee well-being and CWB. Moreover, OC plays a mediating variable role. Figure:1 shows the research model.

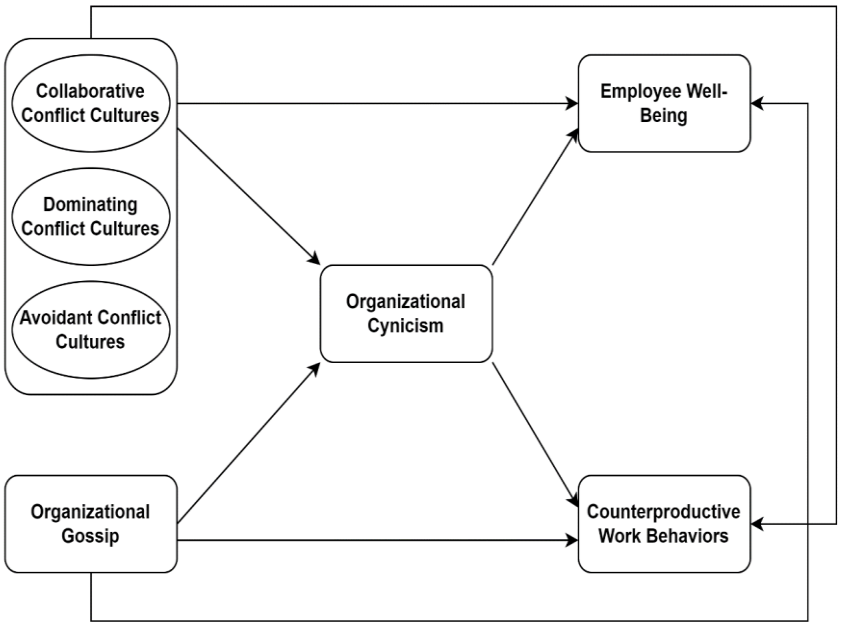

Figure 1. Research Model

2.1. Participants

262 participants in all took part in the study. The data from 37 people included outlier values, thus they were excluded from the data set. Final participants consisted of 225 individuals between the ages of 20 and 57 (Mean = 30.62, SD = 8.28). One hundred and thirty (57.8%) of the participants stated their gender as female, 94 (41.8%) as male, and 1 (0.4%) as other. Regarding the participants' education levels, the highest frequency is the undergraduate level. 161 people (71.6%) have undergraduate degrees, 52 people (23.1%) have master's degrees, 10 people (4.4%) have doctorate degrees, and 2 people (0.9%) have high school degrees. In addition, the average tenure of the participants was 35.36 months, and the standard deviation was 37.06.

2.2.Measures

Demographic information form, Conflict Cultures Scale, Organizational Gossip Scale, Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS), and Satisfaction with Life Scale, Counterproductive Work Behaviors Scale, and Organizational Cynicism Scale were used as data collection tools in the research. Brief information on each scale is presented below.

The researchers created a demographic information form, asking for information on gender, age, education level, marital status, occupation, and tenure.

Conflict Cultures Scale. The Conflict Cultures Scale created by Gelfand et al. (2012) was used in this study. It was adapted from the Dutch Test for Conflict Handling (DUTCH; De Dreu et al., 2001) According to this adaptation, the scale includes three dimensions: dominating (5 items), collaborative (4 items), and avoidant (4 items) conflict cultures. They didn't involve passive-aggressive dimension in the scale because of psychometric properties. Hence, we stick to the original scale as Gelfand et al. (2002) used. Erol Korkmaz (2022) adapted the scale into Turkish. In conclusion, there are 13 items in full scale. Items are scored on a 5-point Likert system (5: Strongly agree, 4: Agree, 3: Partially, 2: Disagree, 1: Strongly disagree). The scale includes items like "Branch members examine issues until we find a solution that satisfies everyone (collaborative), Branch members push their own points of view (dominating), Branch members avoid openly discussing conflicts (avoidant)". In the original scale, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was .79 for the dominating conflict culture dimension, .87 for the collaborative conflict culture dimension, and .66 for the avoidant conflict culture dimension. The Cronbach Alpha coefficients for sub-dimensions in the current research were .94 for collaborative conflict culture, .93 for dominating conflict culture, and .77 for avoidant conflict culture.

Organizational Gossip Scale. The Organizational Gossip Scale developed by Han and Dağlı (2018) was used in the study. In total there are 24 items and the scale is graded on a 5-point Likert (5: Totally agree, 4: Agree, 3: Partially, 2: Disagree, 1: Completely disagree). Scale items include three dimensions: having information, developing relationships, and organizational harm. In the original scale, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the awareness dimension was .92, the developing relationships dimension was .94, and the organizational harm dimension was .94, while the reliability coefficient of the whole scale was .83. Examples of the items are "I learn many things about my colleagues at my workplace through gossips (having information), I try to relax by gossiping with my colleagues at my workplace (developing relations), I lose my confidence in my colleagues who gossips at my workplace (organizational harm)".

While administering the scale, the phrase "at my workplace" was used for the item. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients of the scale and its dimensions are .96 for the having information dimension, .91 for the relationship development dimension, and .91 for the organizational harm dimension. The reliability coefficient of the whole scale is .89.

Employee Subjective Well-Being. The Positive and Negative Affect Scale and The Satisfaction with Life Scale were used to measure employee subjective well-being.

Positive and Negative Affect Scale. PANAS, developed by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988) was used to measure employee well-being. The scale includes ten positive and ten negative emotions. The grading was between 1 (too little or no) and 5 (too much). The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was .83 for the negative affect dimension and .86 for the positive affect dimension. The scale asked participants to make ratings for "how they feel at work." Some of the positive items on the scale are “interested, excited, and enthusiastic”, and negative items are “distressed, guilty, and ashamed”. Items are The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients of the scale dimensions were .92 and .88 for the positive and negative affect dimensions respectively.

Satisfaction with Life Scale. The Satisfaction with Life Scale, originally created by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985), and adapted to the Turkish by Dağlı and Baysal (2016) was used in the study. The scale consists of 5 items assessed on a 5-point Likert-type scale (5: Totally agree, 4: Agree, 3: Partially, 2: Disagree, 1: Totally disagree). The scale includes items like “I am happy with my life.”. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale was .88, and the test-retest reliability was .97. For the current study, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient is .89.

Counterproductive Work Behaviors Scale. The Counterproductive Work Behaviors Scale, developed by Spector et al. (2006), was used in this study. The scale includes 33 items and five sub-dimensions: abuse, production deviance, sabotage, theft, and withdrawal. Öcel (2010) adapted the scale into Turkish and she found four dimensions: abuse, sabotage, theft, and withdrawal. The reliability coefficient for the overall scale is .87. The scale scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = never, 2 = very rarely, 3 = once or twice a month, 4 = once or twice a week, 5 = every day). High scores on the scale indicate that counterproductive work behaviors are exhibited more frequently. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale is .97, the test-retest reliability is .92, and the split-half reliability coefficient is .95. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient in the current study was .95 for the abuse dimension, .85 for the theft dimension, .84 for the withdrawal dimension, .93 for the sabotage dimension, and .96 for the overall scale.

Organizational Cynicism Scale. In the study, the Organizational Cynicism Scale, created by Brandes, Dharwadkar, and Dean (1999), and adapted by Karacaoğlu ve İnce (2012) was used to measure organizational cynicism. The scale includes 13 items and three dimensions: emotional (4 items), cognitive (5 items), and behavioral (4 items). The rating is based on a 5-point Likert-type scale (5: Strongly agree, 4: Agree, 3: Neither agree nor disagree, 2: Disagree, 1: Strongly disagree). Some of the items are like “I get angry when I think about my workplace (emotional), The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was .94 for the emotional dimension, .87 for the cognitive dimension, .82 for the behavioral dimension, and .91 for the full scale. In the current study, the reliability analyses revealed internal consistency values of .96 for the emotional dimension, .94 for the cognitive dimension, .87 for the behavioral dimension, and .96 for the overall scale.

3. Procedure

Before data collection, ethical approval was taken to conduct the study. Following approval by the ethics committee, data were collected via the Internet using the snowball technique. In the questionnaire form, the participants were made aware that the details they provided would be kept private and that the study was completely voluntary. Filling the questionnaire took approximately 15-20 minutes. After data collection, we performed data cleaning and data analysis process. During the analysis, we used SPSS 26 program for descriptive statistics and reliability analyses, and LISREL 8.51 program was used for testing the mediation model.

Results

To investigate the bivariate correlations between the study's variables, we employed a Pearson correlation analysis. Table:1 shows the variables' means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients.

Table 1. Correlations of Variables

Variables	X̄	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Collaborative Conflict Cultures	3.21	1.20	-								
2. Dominating Conflict Cultures	3.23	1.24	-.67**	-							
3. Avoidant Conflict Cultures	3.05	0.93	-.64**	.62**	-						
4. Organizational Gossip	2.83	0.71	-.36**	.36**	.31**	-					
5.Organizational Cynicism	35.09	14.92	-.57**	.58**	.56**	.46**	-				
6. Positive Affect	32.88	9.03	.32**	-.23**	-.23**	-.15**	-.32**	-			
7. Negative Affect	23.13	7.98	-.22**	.27**	.28**	.38**	.50**	-.38**	-		
8. Life Satisfaction	3.07	1.00	.29**	-.21**	-.33**	-.12	-.42**	.43**	-.37**	-	
9. CWB	40.07	13.36	-.16*	.21**	.12	.24**	.43**	-.26**	.24**	-.02	-

N = 225, **p* <.05, ***p* < .01

Structural equation modelling analyses were carried out in two steps. In step one, the measurement model was tested, followed by the structural equation model in step two. To test the measurement model, three random observed variables were created for each latent variable and we tested whether the measurement model was compatible with the data. The goodness of fit values for the measurement model test is shown in Table: 2.

Table 1. The Goodness of Fit Values of the Measurement Model

The Goodness of Fit Values	Model Value
X^2/df	2.15
GFI	0.87
AGFI	0.82
RMSEA	0.07

N= 225

According to the suggestions produced by the LISREL 8.51 program, modifications were made by letting the errors between the indicators of the same latent variable correlate. The analysis was repeated, which resulted in the improvement of the goodness of fit indices. Following repeated analysis, the model became significantly better according to the result of the chi-square difference test (53.99; 2 p<.05). The values for the measurement model's final goodness of fit indices are shown in Table:3.

Table 2. Revised Goodness of Fit Values of the Measurement Model

The Goodness of Fit Values	Model Value
X^2/df	1.85
GFI	0.88
AGFI	0.84
RMSEA	0.06

N= 225

Once the measurement model was proven to be acceptable, the structural model was tested by adding the regression paths between the latent variables. The goodness of fit values of the structural model are portrayed in Table 4. As seen in the table, the model's goodness-of-fit values are at a reasonable level.

Table 4. The Goodness of Fit Values of the Structural Model

The Goodness of Fit Values	Model Value
X^2/df	1.79
GFI	0.88
AGFI	0.84
RMSEA	0.06

N=225

The standardized regression weights for the model are presented in Figure 2. Non-significant regression paths are presented as dashed lines in the figure. Results showed that the avoidant conflict culture and organizational gossip significantly predicted OC, and in turn, OC significantly predicted employee wellbeing and CWB. The exogenous variables did not have any direct effects on well-being or CWB, therefore it was concluded that OC fully mediated the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. According to the results, only H5c and H5d were supported, and the other hypotheses were not supported.

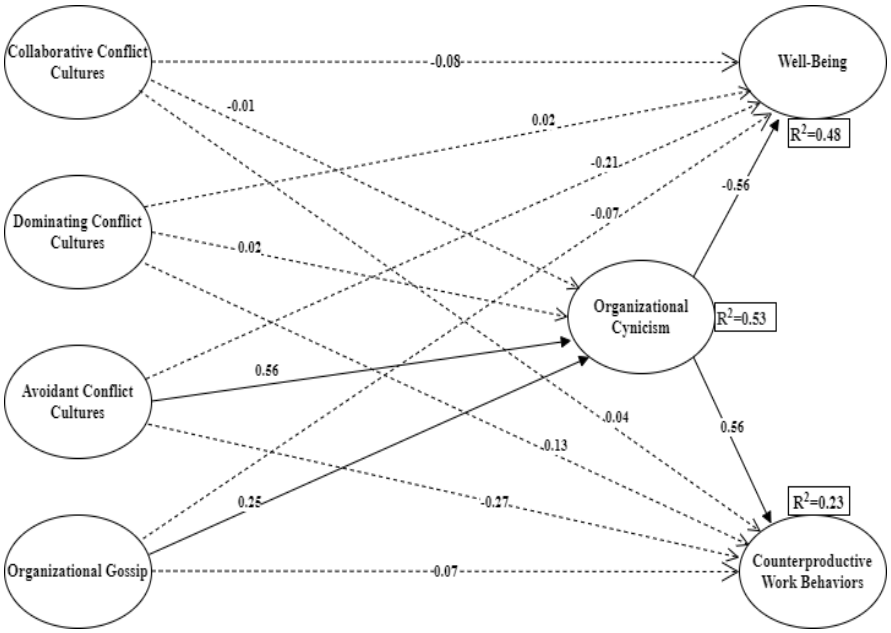

Figure 2. Standardized Regression Values for the Structural Model

Discussion

In light of the results, OC fully mediated the effect of avoidant conflict culture and organizational gossip on employee well-being and CWB. Avoidant conflict culture positively predicted OC. When we look at the literature, the underlying reasons for OC are the working environments that do not allow the employees to voice their complaints, the inability of the person to defend her/his rights in the organization, the inability to express feelings and thoughts, the perception that the organization lacks integrity, the unfair behavior of the superiors, insincerity in the organization, experiences that damage the credibility, and negative perception of organizational policy by employees (Naus et al., 2007). Therefore, an avoidant conflict culture (Gelfand et al., 2008; s. 145), which emphasizes harmony, order and enforces submissiveness in the face of conflict, will be an excellent environment for employees to develop cynicism, as opposed to a culture that encourages open expression of thoughts. Unfortunately, there is no research on the connection between conflict cultures and OC in the literature. Therefore, based on this research, the statistically significant association between an avoidant conflict culture and OC contributes to our understanding of the implications of conflict cultures.

In previous studies, conflict was found to negatively affect well-being, having adverse effects such as headaches, acceleration of heartbeat, and burnout symptoms in employees (DeDreu et al., 2004; s. 10). The same effects have been also observed for avoidant conflict culture since the employees constantly suppress their emotions, and the problem is not resolved in case of any conflict, resulting in tension (Gelfand et al., 2008). Similarly, OC and emotional burnout are positively correlated (Naseer et al., 2021). Yasin and Khaled (2015) found a negative relationship between OC and employee well-being. Hence, the new study's findings agree with those of past research in this field.

Researches conducted on OC and CWB show that employees with high cynicism steal, speak badly about people, show aggression, and show antisocial behaviors towards the organization (Murad et al., 2021). Therefore, cynical feelings and thoughts in employees in an avoidant conflict culture are put into action as counterproductive work behaviors.

Another finding obtained as a result of this study is that organizational gossip decreases employee well-being due to increased OC, and in addition, it increases CWB. Previous studies showed that employees feel negative feelings toward the organization as a result of organizational gossip, move away from the organization, and develop cynicism as a result (Kuo et al., 2020). In addition, it has been stated in previous studies that OC reduces employee well-being (Yasin & Khaled, 2015) and increases CWB (Naseer et al., 2021). Considering all these studies, the finding of cynicism mediating the effect of organizational gossip on employee well-being and CWB is parallel with earlier research.

When we examine the correlation table, the majority of the variables have statistically significant correlations with each other. Although the correlations are significant, according to regression analysis, collaborative and dominating conflict cultures did not predict OC, well-being, or CWB. There may be some reasons for the lack of significant regression results between dominating and collaborative conflict culture and well-being and CWB. For example, according to Pondy (1967), although conflicts affect well-being, for some employees, the circumstance is the exact reverse, and it might contribute favorably to a person's character development. Not every employee is adversely affected by conflict; on the contrary, some employees can enjoy this conflicted environment. Therefore, it may be possible that the well-being of employees in these conflict cultures is not affected. Likewise, because they are not disturbed by this conflicted environment, it is also possible that they do not engage in counterproductive work behavior toward the organization.

There may be several reasons why organizational gossip does not significantly predict employee well-being and CWB. Firstly, gossip can have positive effects on employees, including the release of suppressed emotions, seeking information, providing stimulation in monotonous work environments, and safeguarding group values and norms (Grosser et al., 2012). Therefore, in this case, because the employees benefit from gossip, the effect that will harm their well-being disappears, and they do not have any reason to act against the organization. Considering all these results, avoidant conflict culture and organizational gossip are stronger predictors in the structural equation.

None of the direct predictive paths between the exogenous variables (sub-dimensions of conflict culture and organizational gossip) and dependent variables (employee subjective well-being, and CWB), put forward within the scope of the hypotheses, were found to be significant in the model testing. Another explanation for this finding might be that organizational cynicism is a strong, fully mediating variable. Although there are significant correlations between the variables in the expected direction, when these variables are considered together within the framework of a model, the possible direct effects have become nonsignificant. Therefore, organizational cynicism is a potent mediator and predictor variable.

However, the present study has certain limitations. To begin with, counterproductive work behavior data is not normally distributed. The scale includes examples of negative behaviors that people perform at work. According to the concept of self-serving bias, people reject negative feedback and ignore their flaws and failures to protect their self-esteem (Forsyth, 2008). Therefore, the participants may have filled out the questionnaire by distorting their negative behaviors. Alternatively, they may not have been able to trust and answer the items accurately, despite the given information in the consent form that the answers would not be shared with anyone. In addition, since organizational gossip is measured by self-report, it may be possible for the participants to have inhibited their answers. Another limitation is that since we collected data by the snowball technique, the participants were from different organizations and occupations. In terms of the generalizability of the results, this situation can be considered a limitation. In the future, the study findings need to replicate with other groups of participants. For example, data can be collected from different organizations and analyzed by using multilevel analysis techniques. We collected this data during the pandemic, so it is a limitation to use the snowball technique in terms of measuring organizational culture. Moreover, conducting a longitudinal study to explore the causal relationships between conflict cultures and employee well-being would be useful. Implementation of intervention programs for changing conflict cultures could benefit organizations and employee well-being.

Recommendations

Although theoretical knowledge is fundamental, it is equally important to put this knowledge into practice. According to Rahim and Bonoma (1979), reducing or eliminating conflict in organizations is not always possible. Therefore, in this case, the important thing is managing the existing conflict. In practice, it is crucial for both the organization and employee well-being to understand the impact of conflict and conflict on the health and well-being of employees and to predict when and how they will do this when it is desired to benefit from conflict (DeDreu et al., 2004). Therefore, especially in terms of well-being, when psychosomatic symptom complaints increase, the organization and employees need to work on the cause of this situation. According to Gelfand et al. (2008), leadership styles are critical in motivating and directing employees and are also considered a factor that determines the conflict culture of the organization. Therefore, if charismatic leaders develop in avoidant conflict cultures, as in dominating or collaborative conflict cultures, employees will be less likely to develop cynicism. Organizational structure, incentives, and people's traits as the determinants of conflict cultures are noteworthy in terms of changing conflict cultures (Gelfand et al., 2008). As a result,

changing these characteristics to change the avoidant conflict culture will be beneficial for the organizations and the employees.

From the point of view of organizational gossip, in-house information about the harmful effects of gossip to reduce gossip, punishment of employees who spread gossip, implementation of the open-door policy by managers, instilling concepts such as justice, transparency, open communication, and trust within the organization will reduce employees' being in a position to generate speculation (De Gouveia et al., 2005). Furthermore, in some cases, the source of gossip is usually a single person (Grosser et al., 2012). If the source of gossip is clear, the confrontation of superiors with that person in private can reduce gossip. As an alternative approach, considering the social function of gossip, organizing group activities to include behaviors that serve the group might be helpful. In this way, gossip can be adaptive rather than destructive (Kniffin & Wilson, 2010). In light of the study's results and the information presented above, changing avoidant conflict culture and reducing organizational gossip would be helpful in preventing the employees from developing cynicism, and as a result, their well-being will be positively affected. At the same time, when all these conditions are met, the possibility of employees turning to counterproductive work behaviors will decrease. Therefore, these precautions are essential for both the employees and the organization.

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