

Impact of Employee Cynicism on Employee Performance: The Moderating Role of Supervisor Support

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Abstract

Employee cynicism is a growing concern in workplace dynamics, particularly in healthcare organizations where teamwork is essential. This study examines the negative impact of employee cynicism on employee performance in public sector hospitals. Additionally, it explores the moderating role of supervisor support in mitigating these adverse effects. A quantitative approach was employed, using a structured questionnaire distributed among 250 nurses working in public sector hospitals in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS, applying regression and moderation analysis. Findings indicate that employee cynicism significantly reduces employee performance. However, supervisor support acts as a buffer, weakening this negative relationship. The study provides insights for healthcare administrators, emphasizing the need to foster supportive leadership to counteract workplace cynicism and enhance employee productivity.

Keywords: Employee Cynicism, Employee Performance, Supervisor Support, Workplace Attitudes, Healthcare Sector.

Introduction

In recent years, organizations across various industries have increasingly recognized the profound impact that negative workplace attitudes have on employee productivity, morale, and overall organizational performance. Among these attitudes, employee cynicism has emerged as a particularly detrimental factor. [1] Cynicism, characterized by distrust, frustration, and skepticism toward organizational leadership or policies, creates an environment where employees disengage from their work, resist change, and exhibit reduced job satisfaction. [2] These behaviors not only hinder individual performance but also undermine team cohesion and the organization's ability to achieve its goals. [3]

The consequences of workplace cynicism are far-reaching. Research has shown that cynicism can lead to diminished job satisfaction, lower organizational commitment, and higher turnover intentions among employees. [4] It fosters a toxic work culture where collaboration and innovation are stifled. Employees experiencing cynicism often feel disconnected from their roles and responsibilities, which results in lackluster performance and reduced quality of work. This issue is especially pronounced in sectors where teamwork and trust are critical to success, such as healthcare. [5]

Healthcare settings, particularly public hospitals, are uniquely vulnerable to workplace cynicism due to the high levels of job stress, heavy workloads, and rigid hierarchical structures that characterize the industry. [6] Nurses, who form the backbone of patient care delivery, are

especially susceptible to the negative effects of cynicism. When nurses experience distrust or frustration toward their organizations, it not only impacts their well-being but also compromises the quality of care provided to patients. This can lead to adverse outcomes for both healthcare providers and recipients. [7]

The role of supervisor support in mitigating workplace cynicism has gained significant attention in recent years. [8] Supportive supervisors play a pivotal role in fostering a positive work environment by building trust, promoting job satisfaction, and enhancing employee commitment. When employees perceive their supervisors as empathetic and supportive, they are more likely to feel valued and motivated. [9] This support can act as a buffer against the adverse effects of cynicism, encouraging employees to remain engaged and perform at their best.

Given the critical implications of workplace cynicism for organizational effectiveness and employee well-being, this study aims to explore the intricate relationship between employee cynicism and performance. [10] Specifically, it examines how supervisor support moderates this relationship within healthcare settings. By analyzing this dynamic, the research seeks to contribute valuable insights to the field of organizational behavior while offering practical recommendations for healthcare management. [11]

The findings of this study hold particular relevance for healthcare administrators striving to enhance service quality in an era marked by increasing demands on healthcare systems. Understanding how supervisor support can alleviate the negative effects of cynicism will enable organizations to implement targeted interventions that promote a healthier work environment. [12] Furthermore, this research underscores the importance of addressing workplace attitudes as a strategic priority for achieving long-term organizational success. [13]

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design using a cross-sectional survey approach to examine the impact of employee cynicism on employee performance and the moderating role of supervisor support.

Population and Sampling

The study was conducted among nurses working in public sector hospitals in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. The target population consisted of nurses from three major teaching hospitals:

1. Holy Family Hospital
2. Benazir Bhutto Hospital
3. District Headquarters Hospital

A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used to select participants. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 250 valid responses were received, yielding a response rate of 83.3%.

Data Collection and Measures

The study utilized the following pre-validated scales to measure the key variables:

Employee Cynicism: Measured using a 10-item scale adapted from Cole, Bruch, and Vogel (2006).

Employee Performance: Assessed using an 8-item scale from Tessema and Soeters (2006).

Supervisor Support: Evaluated using a 6-item scale from Eisenberger et al. (1986).

All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using SPSS 21.0. The analysis included: Results

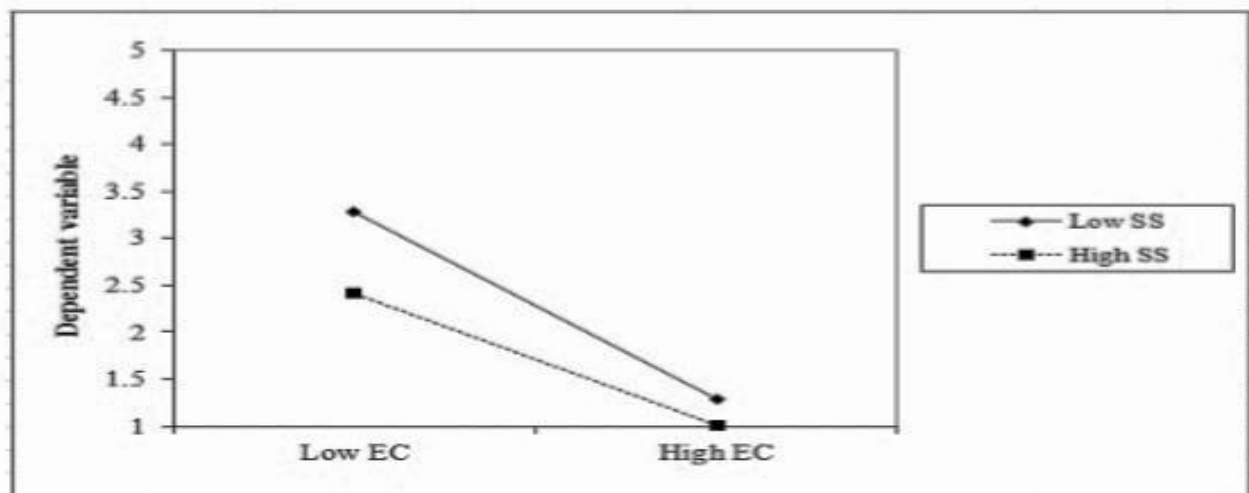
Employee cynicism negatively affects employee performance ($\beta = -0.572$, $p < 0.001$).

Supervisor support significantly moderates the relationship ($\beta = 0.400$, $p < 0.001$), reducing the negative impact of cynicism on performance.

Results

Predictors	Employee Performance		
	B	R ²	ΔR^2
Step 1			
Control Variables		.114	
Step 2			
Employee Cynicism	-.852***		
Supervisor Support	.286***	.551***	.437***
Step 3			
EC*SS	.143**	.571**	.021**

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$,



The moderation regression analysis confirms that employee cynicism negatively affects employee performance, while supervisor support positively influences performance. The introduction of the interaction term (Employee Cynicism * Supervisor Support) significantly improves the model (change in R^2 is significant), indicating that supervisor support moderates the negative relationship between cynicism and performance. Specifically, when supervisor support is high, the negative impact of cynicism on performance is weakened, supporting the hypothesis.

The findings confirm that employee cynicism negatively impacts employee performance in public sector hospitals. Cynical employees exhibit reduced motivation, lower engagement, and decreased job satisfaction, leading to poorer performance.

However, supervisor support acts as a protective factor, buffering the negative effects of cynicism. Supportive supervisors provide clear guidance, encouragement, and recognition, which improves job satisfaction and motivation.

Discussion

Key Findings

The findings confirm that employee cynicism negatively impacts employee performance in public sector hospitals. Cynical employees exhibit reduced motivation, lower engagement, and decreased job satisfaction, leading to poorer performance.

However, supervisor support acts as a protective factor, buffering the negative effects of cynicism. Supportive supervisors provide clear guidance, encouragement, and recognition, which improves job satisfaction and motivation.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the literature on workplace behavior by validating social exchange theory, which posits that employees reciprocate positive treatment with increased effort and commitment.

Practical Implications

For hospital administrators, fostering a supportive leadership culture can reduce cynicism and enhance performance. Training programs should focus on developing supervisors' abilities to support and engage employees.

Conclusion

Employee cynicism negatively impacts employee performance, as cynical employees often develop negative beliefs about their organization, leading to disengagement, dissatisfaction, and lower productivity. Supervisor support plays a crucial role in reducing cynicism by fostering a sense of fairness, transparency, and appreciation.

Findings suggest that when employees perceive strong supervisor support (e.g., fairness in performance appraisals, encouragement, and recognition), their level of cynicism decreases, leading to improved performance. The key takeaway is that effective supervisor support acts as a moderator, weakening the negative relationship between cynicism and employee performance. When supervisor support is high, the harmful effects of cynicism are minimised. Higher supervisor support reduces the negative influence of cynicism, leading to more balanced and productive workplace behavior as it plays a key role in mitigating the negative effects. When supervisors provide structured guidance and constructive feedback, the cynical employees are less likely to engage in destructive workplace behaviors. Supervisor support is a critical factor in improving workplace behavior by reducing both employee cynicism, leading to better employee performance. Organizations should, therefore, focus on transparent leadership, fair recognition, and continuous feedback to ensure that negative attitudes like cynicism are addressed effectively. A well-structured supervisor support system empowers employees, fostering loyalty, motivation, and responsibility toward ethical workplace behavior. Overall, leadership and management play a decisive role in shaping employee attitudes, preventing negative behaviors, and ensuring organizational success.

Limitations and Future Research

The study used self-reported data, which may introduce bias.

Future research could employ longitudinal designs to track changes in cynicism and performance over time.

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