Investigating the link between Organizational Cynicism and Job Engagement in the Indian Pharma Sector

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the intricate the association between organizational cynicism and job engagement within the dynamic landscape of the Indian pharmaceutical industry, recognizing the importance of employee engagement in organizational success. The study explores the negative link between cynicism and job engagement, emphasizing the need for businesses to address and mitigate cynicism to enhance overall employee well-being and productivity. The time period of the study was June-November 2023 where data from 472 managers in the pharmaceutical industry was collected and analyzed using structural equation modeling, revealing a substantial negative correlation between organizational cynicism and job engagement. The findings underscore the importance of cultivating a positive work culture to counteract cynicism and promote employee engagement in the evolving landscape of organizational management. This is a contribution to the existing literature by offering insights specific to the Indian pharmaceutical context, thereby facilitating informed strategies for organizational development and employee well-being.

Keywords: Job Engagement, Organizational Cynicism, SEM, Pharmaceutical sector, India JEL Classification Code: M12, J5, C83

Introduction

In today's organizational management environment, creating a happy work environ-ment has emerged as a critical under taking to improve overall productivity, job fulfillment, and worker well-being. The quest of employee engagement and the ongoing battle of eliminating corporate cynicism are fundamen-tally intertwined. Cynicism poses challenges that businesses must recognize and overcome if they are to build work environments where people feel inspired to contribute and have a sense of purpose. Employees' emotional and psycho-logical connections to their work and organiza-tion are the foundation of the idea of job engagement, which is acknowledged as a critical factor in organizational performance (Kahn, 1990; Bakker and Albrecht, 2018). In addition to making a substantial contribution to their jobs, engaged workers also act as brand ambassadors for the company, fostering creativity and a healthy work environment. However, corporate skepticism frequently stands in the way of reaching and sustaining high levels of employee engagement. The development of a healthy work environment is severely hampered by organizational cynicism, which is defined as mistrust and cynicism toward leadership, policies, and practices (Dean et al.,

1998; Andersson and Bateman, 1997). It adds a degree of uncertainty that might weaken job engagement's foundations, resulting in disengagement and a drop in the performance of the firm as a whole. The significance of engaged workers in promoting creativity, productivity, and sustained success is being acknowledged by businesses more and more (Saks, 2006). Consequently, it is critical to comprehend and tackle the effects of organizational cynicism.

The contemporary work environment is transforming at a rapid and significant rate. There has been a discernible surge in mergers and acquisitions over the past 20 years. These restructurings almost always result in job losses, uncertainty, and elevated stress among employees; these effects are not always offset by organisational benefits like higher productivity and monetary gains (Cartwright and Holmes, 2006). Simultaneously, organizational change is indeed propelled by the adoption of information technology, the swift growth of service sector employment, the practice of outsourcing, and a more adaptable utilization of labor (Kompier, 2005). As a consequence of these shifts in both the workplace and broader society, there is a growing sentiment that employees are becoming more dissatisfied and disappointed with their organizations. Rather, people look for opportunities to express themselves more completely and find personal fulfilment (Bunting, 2004). Some elderly workers may decide to leave the workforce, while others may decide to work less, focus their energy in other directions, or reevaluate their career options and job needs. Research conducted in the 1990s (Mirvis and Kanter, 1991; Reichers et al, 1997) has indicated the existence of cynicism in the workplace. In the 21st century, employees seem to be growing more cynical, particularly in work settings where there is a lot of distrust, fraud, and exploitative conduct (Twenge et al., 2004). Cynicism within the organization is one of the factors that makes people less engaged at work. The main objective of this research is to examine the impact of organisational cynicism on employee engagement.

Theoretical Background of Study

According to the social exchange theory (SET) (Blau, 1964), people engage in relationships that involve the exchange of both financial and socioemotional resources. Individuals are more secure when there is a balanced exchange of resources, which occurs throughout time in cycles of reciprocity (Wayne et al., 1997). As a result, the Social exchange theory has increasingly become the theoretical basis for the studies of employee-employer relations throughout the years (Bambacas and Kulik, 2013). According to studies on employment relationships (Shore et al., 2009; Bal et al., 2012), scholars have paid careful consideration to the relationship that exists between an employer and employee in an organisation. As a result, fulfilling exchange interactions between coworkers lead to the development of exchange norms and expectations over time (Miles, 2012). For this reason, the Social exchange theory is regarded as a well-known conceptual paradigm for understanding behaviours connected to the workplace (Cropanzano et al., 2003). According to Moen et al. (2011), employees' impressions of fair dealing at the workplace and a degree of loyalty to them can lower their desire to switch their company, which contributes support to this.

Organizational Cynicism

The word "cynicism" originated in fourth-century Greece, among a group of theorists who openly criticised the authority of both religious and governmental institutions. These intellectuals identified as Antisthenes' followers. Many dubbed these Antisthenes followers "dog disciples," or Cynics, because they believed that they were purposefully against popular beliefs or

viewpoints. However, cynicism had an upsurge in the third century as a school of thought that welcomed criticising customs, traditions, prevailing knowledge, and social norms. An observation reveals that a significant number of employees resign from their positions due to a loss of trust in their employers. Furthermore, when their financial circumstances improve, individuals tend to switch jobs. Cynicism, in this context, implies that individuals prioritize their own interests without consideration for others. Typically, those characterized by cynicism are viewed as insincere and dishonest, with their attitudes and behaviors posing potential harm to others. Cynicism stands out as a prominent concept within the realm of organizational behavior in contemporary times. While it shares synonyms such as "skepticism," "incredulity," "insecurity," "disbelief," "pessimism," and "negation," in the present context, a cynic is defined as someone who identifies faults, appreciates things with difficulty, and engages in criticism (Erdost et al., 2007).

Numerous unfavourable consequences have been connected to organisational cynicism, including stress, organisational retaliation, and a decrease in employee commitment and intention to leave (Margelytė-Pleskienė and Vveinhardt 2018). According to Lockwood (2018), cynicism is contagious and, once it affects an organisation, it harms the organization's success and reputation. The three primary dimensions of organisational cynicism are affective, behavioural, and cognitive (Dean et al., 1998). Anxiety and stress are indicators of affective cynicism, which is an internalised cynical attitude towards the organisation (Abraham, 2000). An attitude of cynicism about the company could result in behavioural cynicism. Lastly, a lack of loyalty, credibility, and confidence in the organisation is an indication of cognitive cynicism (Durrah et al. 2019; James, 2005).

Job Engagement

Job engagement, according to Kahn (1990), is "the harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (p. 694). Kahn (1990) defines engagement as a multifaceted motivational construct that entails the investment of a person's entire and full self in the execution of a job (Rich et al., 2010), Kahn (1990) focused his research on "job engagement" and the degree of employees' participation in performing work duties, however he used the term "personal engagement" and considered it to be a role-specific concept.

Job Engagement, along with its antecedents and results, has gained attention over the past few decades by different scholars, mostly from the domain of management. According to research, high levels of employee engagement promote job fulfilment, flexibility, and innovation in workers (Eldor and Harpaz, 2016; Saks, 2006), which increases the profits, and customer satisfaction while reducing attrition and absenteeism (Harter et al., 2002). It was initially suggested that job engagement happens when they apply their personal selves to the performance of their job responsibilities (Andrew and Sofian, 2012; Kahn, 1990). Employee engagement is considered a predominant source of competitive advantage, enabling organizations to navigate challenges such as improving workplace performance and productivity in the face of widespread economic decline. Engaged employees contribute to the development of a competitive edge and foster a better understanding within the organization (Iqbal et al., 2017).

Engaged workers use themselves, their minds, and their emotions to communicate who they really are. On the other hand, a lot of people in today's world don't have the privilege of selecting their dream profession and have to accept employment as a necessity. If workers aren't

allowed to choose their jobs, they might be less motivated and accountable for their work. According to Maslach et al. (2001), disengaged workers disassociate themselves from their jobs and repress their emotional, cognitive, and physical commitment in their work. If this condition persists and no significant steps are taken to address the issue of work-life balance, it may result in a high intention of employee turnover and job-hopping (Kumara and Fasana, 2018). Employees that are happy and inspired perform better (Reijseger et al., 2017; Shuck and Reio, 2014), whereas those who lack these resources or energy lowers their performance and are less inclined to act in a manner that is beneficial to others Demerouti et al., 2005 ; Prentice and Thaicon, 2019.

In addition to being essential for improving an organization's employees' well-being, engagement monitoring and promotion can also aid in the achievement of organizational objectives (Brauchli et al., 2013; Tims et al., 2013). All of these findings needs to be examined in the context of the new normal that Covid-19 has created, presenting an opportunity for businesses and employees to adjust to entirely novel methods of operation and significant modifications to the approaches for encouraging and improving engagement (Wang et al., 2021; Ployhart et al., 2021). Due to an increase in workload, many employees find it difficult to maintain a healthy work-life balance. This is having an adverse effect on their psychological health (Prasad et al., 2020), which supports the distress, despair, and anxiety that tend to erode employee engagement (Pirzadeh and Lingard, 2021).

Review of Literature

Relationship between Organizational cynicism and Job Engagement

Durrah et al., (2019) conducted a research that explored the connection between cynicism and pride in organizational setting. The study aimed to quantify both organizational cynicism and organizational pride among workers within industrial organizations. The results revealed a substantial and detrimental link between the level of organizational cynicism and emotional pride. The impact of organizational cynicism on employee productivity was examined by Arslan and Roudaki (2019), who additionally inquired the potential moderating effect of employee engagement in this relationship. According to the study, there is a substantial inverse relationship between organizational cynicism and worker performance, suggesting that organizational cynicism negatively affects worker performance. This implies that a higher level of employee engagement can alleviate the detrimental effects of cynicism on performance. Employees may be cynical about the organization when they believe the transformation process is not functioning as it should. The employee could in this situation direct his or her cynical response at the company or the management (James and Shaw, 2016). The interplay between organizational cynicism and job engagement highlights the importance of addressing negative attitudes within the workplace. Companies should concentrate on establishing a pleasant work environment, encouraging open communication, and providing opportunities for employees to develop their careers.

Chao et al., (2011) conducted a study focusing on the interplay between organizational cynicism, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. Their results unveiled a clear negative association between cynicism and engagement. Employees with a cynical outlook exhibited reduced levels of engagement and job satisfaction when contrasted with those who held more positive views, indicating that cynicism was detrimental to both engagement and job satisfaction. As the level of cynicism increases, an individual's active engagement with the organization decreases

(Yasin et a., 2015). Demonstrations of cynicism towards organizations may manifest through suspicion, distrust, disparagement of the organization, and a psychological inclination to distance oneself from the work environment. Prajogo et al. (2020) investigated the connections between cynicism, engagement, emotional exhaustion, and in-role performance. Organizational cynicism, reflecting a lack of trust in organizational change, leads to employee critique. The study posits that such skepticism depletes emotional resources, resulting in increased emotional exhaustion. Consequently, emotionally drained employees exhibit lower levels of creative work involvement and in-role performance. Interestingly, the research suggests that employees with high organizational cynicism also demonstrate greater engagement in creative work. Yoldash and Isac (2022) also conducted a study on employees of NGOs in Afghanistan. They found that organizational cynicism has a negative impact on the satisfaction level of the employees. Van Ruysseveldt et al. (2023) revealed that change in the workload of employees can contribute to the change in organizational cynicism and turnover intentions.

Purpose of Study

Numerous studies have investigated the influence of organizational cynicism on employee engagement, particularly among Health Care Professionals. Some research has also explored the relationship between workplace cynicism and various factors contributing to employee turnover. However, the examination of the impact of cynical behavior on employee engagement is not extensively covered in the existing literature. The researcher has focused on employees in pharmaceutical companies, aiming to understand the reasons behind employee cynicism in the organization and how it influences employee engagement levels within the organizational context. As previously stated, the intention of this study is to examine the relationship between job engagement and organisational cynicism. Based on existing research, the following hypothesis was developed:

H1: "There is negative association between the dimensions of organizational cynicism and job engagement."

Research Methodology

We have gathered information from managers in the pharmaceutical industry. We used a multistage probability sampling method to choose the study's sample. The entire population from which the sample is taken is the study's universe. The actual group selected from the population for the purpose of the study formed the sample. Universe was also indicated by the geographical limitations by which we bound the area of our study. Keeping in view, the money and time constraints, it is not pragmatically feasible to study the entire universe, so we chose select subjects to make the study. Therefore, in first stage we have restricted the sample to the manager working in the pharmaceutical industries in the north India. For stage two the choice of the universe was restricted to the north India because of some plausible reasons. (1) The time and cost were the prime amongst the deciding factors. (2) Baddi, Barotiwala, Nalagarh area (BBNA) of Himachal Pradesh, were selected consciously as these are the tax free states and most of the pharma industries hubbed here. From the population of 900 managers, 472 managers were taken as a sample for the study by means of non probability purposive sampling.

Data Collection

We selected the sample by using purposive probability sampling and used google forms to circulate questionnaires to the sample. Out of 472 respondents. Out of the entire pool of 472

participants, 240 were identified as male, while 232 were female. 85 percent of the participants, or a substantial proportion, were between the ages of 25 and 39, with only 5 percent of participants have age group of more than 55 years. In the realm of empirical research, the reliability of findings is greatly influenced by the size of the sample. Researchers commonly view sample sizes ranging from 200 to 300 as satisfactory for carrying out "structural equation modeling (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007; Kline, 1994)."

Tools of Data Collection

Organizational Cynicism Tool: The scale of organizational cynicism utilized in this investigation was created by Brandes et al. in 1999. It has three subdimensions—behavioral, cognitive, and affective—and eighteen items. The coefficients of internal consistency reliability for emotional cynicism were 0.881, for cognitive cynicism they were 0.835, and for behavioral cynicism they were 0.879. As a result, for the reliability assessments of the pertinent scales, Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 was deemed appropriate (Kline, 1994).

Job Engagement Tool: The Job Engagement Scale was adapted from the existing scales by Rich et al. (2010) and Saks (2006) consists of 23 items. The scale's overall reliability coefficient for internal consistency was 0.913. Respondents were asked to mark their agreement on the statements according to their importance of being a parameter for evaluating their cynicism level on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 stands for "Strongly disagree" and 5 stands for "Strongly agree". Firstly, we tested the validity of the scales employed in the study using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). We examined the one-factor work engagement scale and the three-factor organizational cynicism scale (affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects) in order to achieve this goal.

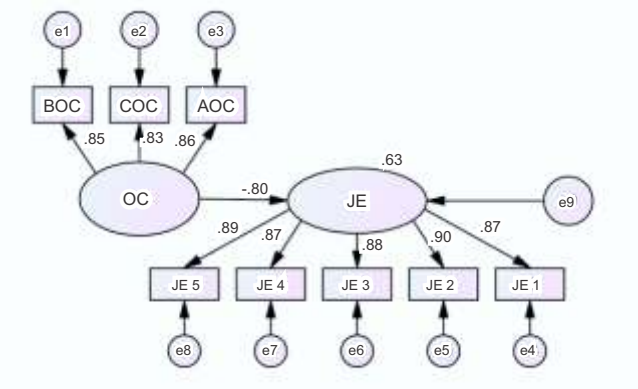
The goodness of fit (GFI), incremental fit index (IFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) values in confirmatory factor analysis are recommended to all be greater than 0.85 and less than 0.08, respectively (Meydan and Şeşen, 2015). Furthermore, all components had alpha scores greater than 0.80 and composite reliability (CR) scores greater than 0.70. According to Hair et al. (2019), it was thus confirmed that the measurements showed good reliability scores.

Data Analysis

The statistical analysis utilized the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 25.0), wherein the Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to examine the directional relationships among the variables. To assess the study's hypotheses, structural equation modeling (SEM) with AMOS was conducted.

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 1 depict the mean scores for Organizational cynicism (OC), Job Engagement (JE) among managers. The mean values indicate that the managers exhibit a higher level of Emotional Job engagement (Mean = 3.74) and lower level of organizational cynicism (Mean = 2.96).

It is also evident from the table 1 that Organizational Cynicism (OC) and job engagement (JE) had significant negative



correlation i.e. -0.692. All the dimensions of organizational cynicism have negative and significant correlation. Affective organizational cynicism (AOC) was negatively correlated with Job engagement (JE) (r = -.657**) There is negative and significant correlation with cognitive organizational cynicism (COC) and JE (r = -.618**). Behavioral organizational cynicism (BOC) is also negatively correlated with job engagement (r = -.596**). The overall correlation analysis revealed that OC is negatively correlated with job engagement. This means that if we have higher level of OC in the organization then we will have lower level of job engagement.

Structural Model of Organizational Cynicism and Job Engagement

In order to test the hypothesis of the research that Organizational cynicism has negative impact on job engagement of the employees. The structural model of OC and JE was shown in the diagram below which is reveling that OC has negative significant impact on Job engagement. The estimated shows the value of standardized regression coefficient (β = -.796) at p value .000. To evaluate the strength of the proposed model the squared multiple correlation was also calculated and the value for the same i.e. (r2 = .63) which indicates that 63% variance occurred due the change in the levels of organizational cynicism on job engagement of the employees in pharmaceutical companies.

"The model was also analyzed for its fitness by using various means like comparative fit index (CFI), goodness of fit index (GFI), Root mean square of approximation (RMSEA). The values for the same are CFI = 0.963, GFI = 0.931, and RMSEA = .079. So therefore all the values are acceptable as per their benchmarks given by (Hair et. el., 2010).

The results of the present study are also in line with results of the previous studies like Kökalan, (2019), Arslan and Roudaki (2019)."

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine how employee job engagement is affected by organizational cynicism. The results clearly showed that there is a negative significant relationship between the OC and JE as well as all the dimensions of OC were also be negatively associated with job engagement of the employees. Our study very clearly revealed that the increased level of cynicism will decrease the level of job engagement among the employees.

Correlations

	Mean	SD	Organizational cynicism	Job engagement	Affective cynicism	Cognitive cynicism	Behavioral cynicism
Organizational cynicism	2.96	0.17	1				
Job engagement	3.74	0.19	-.692**	1			
Affective cynicism	2.8	0.24	.905**	-.657**	1		
Cognitive cynicism	2.87	0.27	.891**	-.618**	.695**	1	
Behavioral cynicism	2.85	0.15	.910**	-.596**	.743**	.722**	1

When an employee experiences frustration in their job, it hinders their ability to effectively engage in their work, resulting in decreased productivity and poor performance. This situation gives rise to the concept of cynicism. Previous research has primarily concentrated on exploring the repercussions of organizational cynicism on employee performance, engagement, and job satisfaction (Flade, 2003). The quality of relationships with colleagues emerges as a crucial factor influencing employees' commitment levels within a workplace. If employees do not align with the organization's goals, cynicism may arise, causing a shift in their attitudes and behaviors towards the organization. High cynicism individuals exhibit strong feelings of distrust and unfairness beliefs, believing others to be dishonest and motivated by ill intentions (Bommer et al., 2005; Xu et al., 2018). People with high cynicism evaluate and react more strongly than people with lower levels of cynicism because they have fewer personal resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Expanding upon this idea, a theory suggests that uncivil coworker actions could push workers who have a high degree of cynicism into a more severe loss spiral, deteriorating the negative impact of incivility on job satisfaction (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989).

Effectively managing frustrated employees becomes the responsibility of supervisors (Bellavia and Frone, 2005). Andersson and Bateman (1997) concluded that despite the lack of research specifically examining the link between the cynicism dimensions and job satisfaction, a large body of prior work has consistently found a negative relationship between the two (Abraham, 2000; Tükeltürk et al., 2009). Consequently, our research outcomes align with and reinforce findings from existing studies. Moreover, the study by Arslan and Roudaki (2019) indicate that a significant proportion of respondents' express dissatisfaction with their respective organizations. Furthermore, they perceive that the organization is breaching its commitments in various ways and failing to uphold its promises. This breach of the employment contract contributes to Employee Organizational Commitment (OC) and adversely affects their overall productivity. A noteworthy observation is that a majority of respondents highly prioritize their professional development, yet the results suggest that employers are not adequately addressing this aspect.

Implications of the Study

The research study distinctly highlights that employees exhibit a strong emotional connection with the organization they work for and derive happiness from achieving their goals within the organization. Regarding employee engagement, trust with superiors is a prevalent factor, with only a small number of employees expressing feelings of jealousy when their co-workers are promoted. Fair treatment of employees emerges as a crucial element for both employee engagement and satisfaction in the workplace. If superiors fail to treat employees fairly, it adversely impacts morale, leading to decreased engagement levels. According to the conservation of resources theory, social support and constructive resources may be effective to mitigate the adverse effects of organisational cynicism on employee outcomes. That is, employees with greater personal or professional resources (tougher, more resilient, effective control, etc.) are less likely to encounter negative attitudes or substandard performance as a result of organisational cynicism.

The findings suggest a deficiency in how superiors handle work-related issues within the organization. Employee cynicism arises when employees experience irritation and frustration in their perception of the organization. It is the responsibility of superiors to play a pivotal role in employee development, acting as a channel for

communication, overseeing performance, providing guidance as needed, and offering support. Organizations need to proactively address the detrimental impact of organizational cynicism on job engagement. When employees experience frustration in their work, it hampers their ability to engage effectively, resulting in low productivity and poor performance. This frustration often gives rise to the concept of cynicism. Previous research has concentrated on understanding the repercussions of organizational cynicism on various aspects such as employee performance, engagement, and job satisfaction. Our research indicates that cultivating spiritual environments within organizations is a highly effective approach to achieving this goal. To implement this strategy, organizations should consider establishing dedicated divisions or initiatives focused on fostering spirituality as an integral component of the organizational culture. While these efforts may not completely eradicate organizational cynicism but it may shape the values of the organization to have a significant increase in the engagement level of employees.

Limitations of the Study

Although our research on " Investigating the link between Organizational Cynicism and Job Engagement in the Indian Pharma Sector" provides insightful information, it is important to recognize some limitations. The study's exclusive emphasis on the Indian pharmaceutical industry may restrict the findings' generalizability and limit their relevance to other industrial environments or cultural situations. Furthermore, the degree to which our findings represent the whole workforce in the industry may be impacted by the very small sample size that we used in our study. More longitudinal research is required since the study's cross-sectional design makes it unable to follow changes over time or establish causal linkages. The study's dependence on quantitative data can obscure subtle qualitative details, and its lack of a qualitative component might restrict how deeply we can go with our knowledge.

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