Examining the role of employee engagement in the relationship between organisational cynicism and employee performance

Muhammad Arslan
Faculty of Agribusiness and Commerce, Lincoln University, Christchurch, New Zealand, and
Jamal Roudaki
Department of Financial and Business Systems, Faculty of Agribusiness and Commerce, Lincoln University, Christchurch, New Zealand

Abstract
Purpose – Organisational cynicism (OC) is a growing trend in contemporary organisations. However, its impact on employee performance (EP) remains understudied. The purpose of this paper is to address this gap by investigating its effect on EP. The study also investigates the moderating effect of employee engagement (EE) on the relationship between OC and EP.

Design/methodology/approach – Primary data are collected through questionnaire from employees (N = 200) of various health organisations in Pakistan by employing a convenient sampling technique. Hierarchical multiple regression is employed by using SPSS.

Findings – The findings of correlation and regression analyses reveal that OC has significant negative relationship with EP. Hence, the patient care is compromised in sampled organisations due to poorer performance of employees. Moreover, findings also reveal that EE has a moderating effect on relationship between OC and EP. Therefore, hospital management needs to increase EE to reduce the cynicism and improve performance. In addition, organisations and managers need to consider their role and actions creating the conditions that lead to cynicism among employees and should take trustworthy steps to increase employee retention and engagement and, ultimately, their performance. Moreover, the findings of the study indicate that the majority of respondents are not happy with their organisations. They also feel that the organisation is not fulfilling its promises and betraying them in several ways. This breach of contract becomes the reason for OC among employees and badly affects their performance. Most of respondents give importance to their career development and the findings reveal that organisations are not focussing on career development of their employees.

Research limitations/implications – The study has some limitations and implications. The organisational culture can mitigate the negative effect of OC and enhance performance by promoting EE. It is recommended that employee cynicism can be reduced by providing a supportive environment, EE and fairness. Nevertheless, the findings of this study still help supervisors to inhibit this harmful effect by reducing the level of psychological contract violation and organisational politics that will reduce the level of cynicism among employees and improve their performance.

Practical implications – It is found that OC has a major impact on the behaviour and attitude of employees, supervisors and representatives on the one hand and, ultimately, the organisation, on the other hand. These effects have specific susceptibilities due to the vicinity of the employees. It is recommended that employee cynicism can be reduced by providing a supportive environment.

Social implications – The study also helps psychologists to understand employees’ attitudes and improve personnel selection to ensure they recruit the right people. Leaders need to communicate honestly, effectively and frequently to address cynicism in order to ensure ample staffing and resource levels that result in good patient care and positive work attitudes at hospitals.

Originality/value – According to the researchers’ best knowledge, only few studies tried to investigate the relationship between organisational cynicism and EP by employing the moderating effect of EE. Therefore, it will be a good contribution in existing literature to understand consequences of cynicsisms.

Keywords Employee performance, Hierarchical multiple regression, Employee engagement, Health organizations, Organizational cynicism

Paper type Research paper
1. Introduction
In the contemporary era, human resources have a pivotal role in today’s organisations wanting to gain a competitive edge in the international and indigenous employment market. Thus, workforce is considered as a strategic asset in any organisation for the formulation and implementation of strategies. Nevertheless, employee retention has become a major concern for many organisations (Hausknecht et al., 2009) around the globe, specifically in the health care sector in which there is a shortage of qualified personnel (Hayes et al., 2006) in many countries (Mantler et al., 2015) including Pakistan (Abdullah et al., 2014). Employee retention is perceived as cost effective and a sign of organisational health (Duffield et al., 2011); however, some employees exhibit withdrawal behaviours such as lateness, increased absenteeism, day dreaming (Mousa, 2017a), ebbed sustenance for organisational initiatives and abridged work effort that can be very costly (Sagie et al., 2002). These passive withdrawal behaviours may have an underlying commonality in employee cynicism. Studies in early 1990s have already pointed out the presence of organisational cynicism (OC) at the workplace (Kanter and Mirvis, 1989; Reichers et al., 1997) and employees seem to be progressively cynical in the new era, especially in corporate environments endemic with scandals, distrust and opportunistic behaviours (Twenge et al., 2004).

Employee cynicism has been perceived to have several negative consequences that include counterproductive behaviours (Luksyte et al., 2011), intentions to comply with unethical requests, reduced organisational commitment (Stanley et al., 2005; Mousa, 2017b), badmouthing, poorer performance (Kim et al., 2009), lack of job satisfaction (Wilkerson et al., 2008; Bernerth et al., 2007; Kuo et al., 2015; Mantler et al., 2015; Sinha et al., 2014; Armer, 2017) and increased levels of intention to quit (Dean et al., 1998). Various scholars have studied different dimensions of cynicism; however, the interest of researchers had revolved around employees’ attitudes, which were in the best interest of organisations (Aslam et al., 2015; Simha et al., 2014; Yildiz and Saylikay, 2014; Mantler et al., 2015). According to Dean et al. (1998), OC is a negative attitude of an employee towards the organisation. Other researchers have defined OC as an attitude of unfriendliness with oneself for the organisation due to the fact that the organisation will always try to fool its employees, display a lack of honesty (Nair and Kamalanabhan, 2010) and take decisions on personal experiences and knowledge (Koumaditis and Themistocleous, 2015).

In the current dynamic workplace environment, individuals are becoming progressively frustrated and alienated with work (Bunting, 2011) and instead are looking for the opportunity for greater self-expression and fulfilment. Therefore, researchers highlighted the importance of employee engagement (EE) which provides intrinsic motivation and helps in aligning the interests of employees with their organisation (Chalofsky, 2003) and ultimately reduces OC. Similarly, Holbeche (2004) documented that many employees progressively want to work for ethical organisations that actively live out their values and where managers “walk the talk” on policies and practices. Consequently, studies revealed that employees rate purpose, autonomy, engagement, learning and close working relationships as more vital than money (Chalofsky, 2003; Mitroff and Denton, 1999). Researchers also found that those employees have a higher propensity to engage with their jobs who have a positive perception about their organisation and managers (Rai et al., 2017). In addition, researchers found that a rise in organisational demands decreases work engagement, while autonomy and support increase it (Taipale et al., 2011). Cartwright and Holmes (2006) also found that employee cynicism and mistrust increase if organisations expect more from their workforce and provide less in return. Hence, it can be documented that EE is linked to cynicism and performance.
In conclusion to above discussion, it can be documented that OC needs to be addressed to increase performance, retention of employees and sustainability of organisation. Though, cynicism has become the subject of various disciplines in social sciences; for example, management, religion, philosophy, political science, sociology and psychology (Ivancevich and Matteson, 2002; Helm et al., 2015; Rose et al., 2017; Nicholson et al., 2014) and researchers have investigated various dimensions of OC and, in the organisational context; different models have been developed for studying OC (Rose et al., 2017; Mantler et al., 2015; Yildiz and Şaylikay, 2014; Cartwright and Holmes, 2006; Stanley et al., 2005; Cole et al., 2006) in developed countries; however, few studies have been conducted to investigate the impact of OC on EE and performance in developing countries (Leung et al., 2010; Hussami, 2008; Mousa, 2017a, b) especially in Pakistan (Bashir, 2011; Aamir and Sohail, 2006; Aslam et al., 2015; Hussami, 2008). The current study fills this gap in the existing literature by investigating the effect of OC on employees’ performance and also examines the moderating effect of EE on the relationship between OC and employee performance (EP) among employees of teaching hospitals of Pakistan.

The rest of the paper is organised into the literature, hypotheses development and then methodology, in Sections 2 and 3, respectively. The results are included in the fourth section and a conclusion and recommendations section concludes the paper.

2. Literature and hypothesis development

This section first defines cynicism in the organisational context and then presents the extant literature and hypotheses development. Second, a nexus between OC and performance is presented while EE is presented in the last section.

2.1 Cynicism

The contention about the founder of cynicism has always been limited to two ancient philosophers; namely, Antisthenes and Diogenes of Sinope. Scholars argue that Antisthenes was the founder of cynicism (Dean et al., 1998; Holzman, 1980) and Diogenes was one of his disciples (MacCunn, 1904). Andersson (1996) argues that Diogenes founded the cynical philosophy not his teacher, Antisthenes. Moreover, there are authors who argue that Diogenes was the founder of cynicism and had no links with Antisthenes whatsoever (Sayer, 1945). OC is closely related to other constructs that include work alienation, job satisfaction, trust, EP, burnout and psychological contract violation (Dean et al., 1998; Johnson and O’Leary-Kelly, 2003; Storm and Rothmann, 2003; Yildiz and Şaylikay, 2014; Simha et al., 2014; Nicholson et al., 2014; Delken, 2004; Mousa, 2017a, b). Job satisfaction, as an attitudinal variable, is confined to a particular setting where the employee performs tasks and is revealed only in the responses that arise immediately from these task settings. It has a number of components; in particular, remuneration, supervision, employment conditions, job security and prospects for promotion (Rodrigues and Carlos, 2010). An employee may display job dissatisfaction when there is disconnection between expectations of the employees and reality. Leung et al. (2010) found a negative association between social cynicism and job satisfaction in China. Similarly, a cross-national comparison study in the USA and Britain documented that police officers who were dissatisfied with their work were more likely to show signs of cynicism than those who were satisfied (Shanafelt et al., 2015). Researchers also argued that the occurrence of cynicism also depended upon the nature of the job (Hussami, 2008) and organisational culture (Kaya et al., 2014).

2.2 OC and performance

It is worthwhile to discuss the concept of performance before highlighting the relationship between OC and performance. The concept of performance is complex and plurality
of the concept derives from its use in many different contexts (Daniel, 1976; Noble and Ward, 1976). Concepts like performance are not only pluralistic in their meanings and diverse in their usage, but they also exhibit mobility. Cronin (1982) defined performance measures as “being the process of systematically assessing effectiveness against a predetermined norm, standard or expressed goal”. In a similar vein, researchers documented that individual work performance (IWP) is relevant and often used outcome measure of studies in the occupational settings (Koopmans et al., 2014). Therefore, it is also applicable to the present study. The IWP consists of three broad dimensions, i.e. task performance (Koopmans et al., 2011), contextual performance (Rotundo and Sackett, 2002) and counterproductive work behaviour (Viswesvaran and Ones, 2000). Task performance has received most attention in recent literature (Hassan et al., 2016; Lang et al., 2018; Khong et al., 2017) and is defined as “the proficiency with which individuals perform the core substantive or technical tasks central to his or her job” (Campbell et al., 1993). Borman and Motowidlo (1993) defined contextual performance as “behaviours that support the organizational, social and psychological environment in which the technical core must function”, while Rotundo and Sackett (2002) defined counterproductive work behaviour as “behaviour that harms the well-being of the organization”.

From a theoretical perspective, OC has a negative influence on job performance. However, researchers argue that cynical employees can be a positive force for change by challenging ineffectice policies and routines and, consequently, influencing work effectiveness in a positive way (Brandes and Das, 2006), while some studies found that society developed negative attitudes towards those firms and their management (Bernerth et al., 2007; Delken, 2004; Wilkerson, 2002). Therefore, need arises to investigate this relationship to address the cynicism. Similarly, when a company fails to produce a profit, the employees and public tends to put the blame on the executives of that company. Consequently, a poor decision of company can cause cynicism towards both the management and the company (Yildiz and Şaylıkay, 2014). Researchers also argued that if a company pays its executives very high salary in poor trading conditions, the level of cynicism towards management and the organisation seems to be stronger than when it is performing well (Aslam et al., 2015). Similarly, employees feel ashamed to be associated with those public institutions who failed to deliver promised services and nurture cynicism towards the institution and its management. Several researchers have conducted studies to examine the relationship between OC, job burnout (Simha et al., 2014), alienation (Yildiz and Şaylıkay, 2014) and outcomes (Nafei, 2014). Abraham (2000) found a positive association of OC with job dissatisfaction and alienation and a negative association with organisational commitment and organisational behaviour. Pelit and Pelit (2014) found a strong and positive correlation between mobbing and OC among hotel employees in Turkey. Similarly, Aslan and Yılmaz (2013) found a high level of cognitive cynicism among male teachers in Turkey as compared to female teachers. Mantler et al. (2015) conducted a study among hospital staff nurses and documented that cynicism is an attitudinal state that changes over time. In addition, Aslam et al. (2015) conducted a study to investigate the impact of OC and privatisation and found the interactive effect of behavioural resistance in the relation among dispositional resistance, employee’s intent to quit and organisational contextual factors. The empirical literature provides the evidence that factors such as retrenchment of employees and high salary packages for executives cause dissatisfaction and, consequently, disenchantment towards the organisation itself and leads toward high level of cynicism (Aslam et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2009; Kuo et al., 2015). Hence, the first hypothesis of the study includes the relationship between an employee’s performance and OC, as follows:

\[ H1. \] OC has a negative relationship with EP.
2.3 EE and OC

In academia, EE has received much consideration over the last decade. However, the concept remains new with comparatively little academic research being conducted about it in recent years. An emergent body of knowledge supports the relationship between EE and organisational outcomes (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli et al., 2006; Salanova et al., 2005; Suliman and Al Harethi, 2013; Truss et al., 2013; Menguc et al., 2017), and also provides support for a positive relationship between internal service climate and psychological empowerment (Suliman and Al Harethi, 2013). Researchers also considered engagement as an important work-related factor both in academic and clinical fields. Catlette and Hadden (2001) argued that EE referred to a psychological and positive work-related state of mind that led employees to enthusiastically involve themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally in their work roles. Chalofsky (2003) argued that EE provides intrinsic motivation that aids in allying the interests of employees with their organisation and reduces cynicism. The researchers also documented that engaged employees worked hard and that consequently that led them to achieve beyond the requirements and expectations of their work role (Lockwood, 2007; Graban, 2016; Anitha, 2014) and managers want to improve their employees’ engagement to enhance their overall performance (Wright and Cropanzano, 2000; Anitha, 2014). Studies also showed that engagement can improve the well-being of employees and reduce staff turnover (Memon et al., 2014; Shuck et al., 2014).

Aamir and Sohail (2006) conducted a study among full time university teachers of Pakistan to examine the effect of job dissatisfaction and organisational justice on organisational commitment. They found a significant relationship of job satisfaction and organisational justice with organisational commitment. However, they did not find any relationship between different personal characteristics like age, education, marital status and tenure of service with organisational commitment. Nafei (2013) found difference in employee attitudes towards OC and organisational change. Yildiz and Şayilikay (2014) argued a positive connection between work alienation, anomy and cynicism among employees of Turkish banks. The employee's perception that the organisation failed to deliver on its promises directly results in emotional exhaustion such that the perceived breach not only results in negative behaviour but also in emotional and physical burnout. Therefore, the second hypothesis is developed as:

\[ H2. \text{ EE has a moderating effect on the relationship between OC and EP.} \]

This study implements statistical data analysis and a questionnaire as the means of data collection. The variables of the study are developed on the foundation of cynical attitudes and EP. Achor (2012) conducted a sweeping meta-analysis of 225 academic studies and found that employees with positive attitudes perform better than the employees with negative attitude. In addition, positive attitude among employees generates creativity and engagement and they perform at their full capacity to achieve their goals and promotion while this creativity and engagement diminishes in the presence of negative attitude. EE is significantly interwoven with important business outcomes. Highly committed employees tended to perform better when compared to less committed employees. A fiasco in trust may cause increased cynicism concomitant with the apparent disengagement of an individual from an organisation. Researchers also suggest that cynicism may create positive outcomes both for employees and their employing organisations (Kosmala and Richards, 2009). Consequently, it is argued that if employees trust their managers and receive support from their supervisors, they will respond to work in a positive manner (Price and Reichert, 2017; Taipale et al., 2011) through increased commitment and motivation that can lead to higher performance (Baptiste, 2007). Furthermore, those dis-engaged employees continue to perform at work not because they enjoy their work but because they have to “get on with it”. Although the literature suggested that employee cynicism can be reduced and controlled by
EE, only few studies have established an empirical link (Abraham, 2000; Bakker et al., 2014; Iqbal et al., 2017; Cartwright and Holmes, 2006). Since cynicism is a negative attitude that comprises affective, cognitive and behavioural components (Shuck et al., 2014; Bakker et al., 2014), it might be possible that it might concur with engagement. Developing a scale to measure EP is a dilemma in public health organisations that are involved in providing various professional services to the public. This study did not find any defined criteria for measuring EP among sampled organisations. It is also comprehensible the exertion of defining a criterion for measuring EP of the health services provided at different levels of organisations. Moreover, the criteria need to be discussed with employees before its administration to increase the reliability.

3. Measurements

3.1 Organisational cynicism
An OC scale is adapted from Brandes et al. (1999) for this study. Brandes et al. (1999) developed this scale using the theoretical definition proposed by Dean et al. (1998). The scale consists of 13 items on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree with three subscales called affective, cognitive and behavioural. Negative emotions such as anger, disgust and distress reflected the affective items. Cognitive evaluations that employees have about sincerity and integrity of their employing organisation reflected the belief items. Behavioural items reflect disparaging and critical behaviours concomitant with OC. The reliability (Cronbach’s $\alpha$) of total items is 0.898.

3.2 Employee engagement
In this study, EE has been taken as a moderating variable between OC and EP. A questionnaire is used for the measurement of EE. The scale of Schaufeli et al. (2006) is used to measure EE on a five-point Likert scale. The scale is divided into three sub-scales called vigour, dedication and absorption. The study adapts two items from the vigour scale, two from the dedication scale and three items from the absorption scale within a five-point Likert scale ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The reliability (Cronbach’s $\alpha$) of these seven items is 0.705.

3.3 Employee performance
The adapted scale is used to measure EP. The individual task performance scale developed by Koopmans et al. (2014) is used to measure EP. The scale consists of five items on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The reliability (Cronbach’s $\alpha$) of EP is 0.646. The study also employs gender and age as control variables that is consistent with prior studies (Chiaburu et al., 2013; Avanzi et al., 2015).

4. Methodology

4.1 Sample and procedure
The purpose of the study is to measure OC among employees working at teaching hospitals in Pakistan, in particular, to investigate the relationship between OC and employee’s performance at teaching hospitals in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The unit of analysis is individual employees working at surveyed hospitals.

The population of the study is employees of different teaching hospitals who work in Islamabad and Rawalpindi hospitals. The non-probability or non-random sampling technique is used to gather the data from respondents, in which data are collected from population members who are conveniently available to participate in the study (Dörnyei, 2007), also called opportunistic sampling (Barton, 2001). Although convenient sampling is perceived as a limitation in this study, it can still provide rich data and very
effective in situations where it is difficult to get a list of all the employees working in an organisation (Battaglia, 2011). Graham et al. (2006) and Paskiewicz (2001) also employed convenient sampling in their healthcare studies. Besides the above reasons, another justification for choosing convenient sampling technique is its cost effectiveness and the short span of time. Therefore, this also empowers the researcher to achieve the sample size in a comparatively quick and inexpensive way as compared to probability sampling or other techniques. The questionnaire has directly handed out to 280 individual employees and ensured them about confidentiality and anonymity of their response[1]. However, only 230 usable questionnaires have collected, and 30 questionnaires were found incomplete at later stage; therefore, 200 completed questionnaires were used for extracting the results. The overall response rate was 82.14 per cent. The questionnaires were delivered in English because it is widely used as the official language in Pakistan[2].

4.2 Data and analysis
In order to pursue the objectives of the study, primary data are collected from the respondents through the adapted questionnaire and SPSS 20 is used to conduct the data analysis. Each questionnaire is entered into excel and later coded into SPSS. A reliability test is conducted to test the validity of the questions. In addition, while descriptive statistics and correlation analysis are performed to investigate the associations between the variables, hierarchical multiple regression analyses are also conducted to investigate the relationship between the dependent and explanatory variables. Finally, a moderation analysis is performed to investigate the moderating effect of EE.

5. Results and discussion
The thrust of the study is to investigate the relationship between OC and EP on the one hand and engagement on the other hand. The descriptive results are presented first followed by the correlation, regression and moderation analyses. A discussion of the results concludes this section.

Table I presents the results of the biographical information of the respondents. The frequency percentage of male respondents is 32.5, compared to females with 67.5. From the tabular perspective regarding gender division, it is evident that the majority of respondents were females. This suggests the notion that females were mostly suffering by OC.

The results reveal that 34 per cent of the respondents have bachelor’s qualification, while the second major qualification is Masters, with a frequency of 30.5 per cent. The PhD/MS/MPhil/EQUI qualifications are low (25 per cent) as compared to the bachelors and masters. Finally, the respondents represent that less than 11 per cent of the total respondents are in the “Under Bachelors’ category”. It seems that hospitals prefer to hire the bachelor-qualified candidates. The critical analysis of the results reveals that 70.5 per cent of the respondents were contract employees and this dropped sharply to permanent and temporary employees, at 14.5 and 14 per cent, respectively. The table shows higher numbers of respondents as entry-level employees in the organisations, at 46.5 per cent, and this is followed by the supervisory level at nearly 34 per cent, while team leader has a low percentage compared to the entry and supervisory level respondents.

5.1 Descriptive statistics
The results of the descriptive statistics are presented in Table II.

Table II presents the intensities of the variables. There were a total of 200 respondents. The results reveal that the mean value for OC is 3.0235, with a minimum value of 1.77 and a
maximum value of 4.46 while standard deviation is 0.77290, whereas the mean value for EE is 3.3671, with a minimum value of 1.29 and a maximum value of 5.00 with a standard deviation of 0.64757. The last entry in the table, 3.6020, represents the mean value of EP with its corresponding minimum and maximum values. The standard deviation of EP is 0.58559. The data are normally distributed as a normal distribution exists if the value of standard deviation lies between 0 and 1. The association between variables is also examined by employing a Pearson correlation.
5.2 Correlation analysis

The result of the correlation analysis between OC, EE and EP is presented in Table III while controlling the effect of gender and age.

Table III shows the significant negative relationship ($r = -0.269$) between OC and EE by exception at the 0.000 level of significance. The correlation analysis also reveals that when EE to the particular organisation increases, the level of OC decreases as a consequence. These findings are supported by Mitroff and Denton (1999). In addition, Chalofsky (2003) also documented that EE is linked to OC and helps in reducing the cynicism among employees. A significant negative relationship ($r = -0.622$) is also found between EP and OC at the 0.000 level of significance. These results are consistent with prior studies of Kim (2009) who documented that cynicism reduces the job performance. There is no evidence of auto-correlation among variables of the study as $r < 0.80$. According to Gujarati (2003), if the value of the partial correlation is less than 0.80, then there is no autocorrelation among the variables of the study.

5.3 Regression analysis

The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between OC and EP by taking EE as moderating variable. The following section presents the results of the hierarchical regression analysis between OC and EP while taking gender and age as control variables. This section also presents the results of the moderation analysis of EE.

Hierarchal regression analysis represents the effect of one variable on another variable. In the present study, OC is taken as the independent variable while EP is taken as the dependent variable while the effect of gender and age are controlled. In Table IV shows the values of $R$ and $R^2$ for models 1 and 2. The model 1 only incorporates the gender and age while model 2 incorporates OC by controlling the effect of gender and age.

The value of $R$ represents a simple correlation and is 64.4 by taking control variables (gender and age), indicating a high degree of correlation, in model 1. While this value increased to 80.1 when incorporated the OC in model 2. The value of $R^2$ explains the total variation of the dependent variable due to the independent variable(s). In this case, it is 41.4 in the presence of the control variables (gender and age) in model 1, while $R^2$ increased to 64.1 when incorporated the independent variable (OC) in model 2, which is high. It can be argued that a 64.1 per cent change in EP is due to OC and control variables (gender and age) while the remaining change (35.9 per cent) is due to other factors. OC incorporates 22.7 per cent in EP alone. The value of standard error of the estimate is 0.35356 in model 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control variables</th>
<th>OC</th>
<th>EE</th>
<th>EP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender and Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance (two-tailed)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>-0.269**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Significance (two-tailed)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>196</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td>-0.622**</td>
<td>0.586**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Significance (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table III: Correlations analysis

Note: **Significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)
Moreover, finding any additional extraneous variables in the model is represented by an adjusted $R^2$, which is 63.5 per cent for study as represented in model 2. The degree of freedom is 2 and 3 in models 1 and 2, respectively. The value of F statistics is more than 15 in both models (1 and 2). If the value of the $F$-statistic is more than 15, the model is best fitted. The value of $p$ also shows a significant relationship between variables at 0.1 per cent level of significance both in models 1 and 2.

Table IV also presents the value of the $\beta$ in model 2. As the value of the beta coefficient for OC is $-0.375$; it can be argued that a 0.375 unit decrease in EP is predicted for every unit increase in OC, while holding the other variables constant. It means if OC increases among employees, their performance decreases. In model 2, the values of the $t$-statistics ($-11.125$) and $p$ (0.000) also provide evidence of a significant negative association between OC and EP. Consequently, statistical analysis reveals that the study’s first hypothesis that considered a negative relationship between OC and EP is accepted. This negative association of cynicism with performance also appeared to be nearly across other studies (Chiaburu et al., 2013).

Nevertheless, the results suggest that cynicism impaired the output. To expand the results discussion, the next section will include the moderating effect of EE on the relationship between OC and EP.

### 5.4 Moderation analysis

The results of the moderation analysis are presented in this section in Table V. Following the earlier data analysis, EE is taken as the moderating variable in the data analysis.

A hierarchical multiple regression model is employed to measure the moderating effect of EE on relationship between OC and EP. A total of four models are performed. In model 1, only gender and age are entered to control their effect on EP. In model 2, the OC is entered to see its effect. In model 3, the EE are entered into the model while controlling other variables. Finally, the moderating effect of employee engagement is analysed in model 4. The results reveal that $R^2$ has significantly from model 1 to model 4. The value of $R^2$ was 41.6 per cent in model 1 while it reaches to 76 per cent in model 4. Hence, there is a 34.6 per cent change in in $R^2$. In model 3, the value of EE ($B = 0.357$, $SE = 0.038$, $\beta = 0.395$, $t = 9.307$, $P = 0.000$) and OC ($B = -0.302$, $SE = 0.029$, $\beta = -0.398$, $t = -10.338$ and $P = 0.000$) reveals that OC is significantly associated with EE. While the model 4 represents that EE has a moderating effect on relationship between OC and EP. These findings are consistent with prior studies (Cartwright and Holmes, 2006).

Our hypothesis that EE has a moderating effect on the relationship between OC and EP can be accepted on the basis of these robust results.
Table V. Moderation analysis between OC, EP and EE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.52</td>
<td>t</td>
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<td>0.055</td>
<td>0.41</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>−0.336</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>−0.32**</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>OC</td>
<td>−0.375**</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>−0.495</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>−11.125</td>
<td></td>
<td>−0.302**</td>
<td>0.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>0.357**</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>0.385</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.307</td>
<td></td>
<td>−0.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OC × EE</td>
<td>0.644</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>0.867</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.751</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.414</td>
<td>0.0641</td>
<td>0.716</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.754</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj. R²</td>
<td>0.408</td>
<td>0.0635</td>
<td>0.716</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.754</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE of the estimate</td>
<td>0.45046</td>
<td>0.3536</td>
<td>0.867</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.751</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>69.651</td>
<td>116.628</td>
<td>147.339</td>
<td></td>
<td>122.937</td>
<td></td>
<td>122.937</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>(2, 197)</td>
<td>(3, 196)</td>
<td>(4, 195)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(5, 194)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(5, 194)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Dependent variable: EP. **Significant at the 0.01 and 0.001 levels (two-tailed), respectively
5.5 Discussion

The study fills the gap in the existing literature by investigating the effect of OC on employees’ performance and also examines the moderating effect of EE on the relationship between OC and EP among employees of teaching hospitals of Pakistan. The theoretical treatment of OC is very helpful in discussing and analysing employee attitudes. The study not only finds significant negative relationship between OC and EP, but also finds the moderating effect of EE. Consequently, the study supports the evidence, presented in the literature, regarding a negative relationship between OC and EP (Brandes and Das, 2006; Kim et al., 2009). Due to disappointment and frustration with the organisation, cynical employees, consequently, perceive the absence of a connection between reward and performance or lower instrumentality (Wilkerson, 2002; Bernerth et al., 2007; Wilkerson et al., 2008). Consequently, as in previous studies, this perceived instrumentality led to a reduction in effort and performance (Ozler et al., 2011; Yildiz and Şaylikay, 2014; Simha et al., 2014), organisational commitment (Stanley et al., 2005; Mousa, 2017b) and job satisfaction (Wilkerson et al., 2008; Bernerth et al., 2007; Kuo et al., 2015; Mantler et al., 2015; Simha et al., 2014; Armer, 2017). However, an organisation’s structure and relationship can play a pivotal role in reducing this behaviour and motivating the employees (Koumaditis and Themistocleous, 2015). Positive and supportive organisational structure and relationship can increase organisational effectiveness and may contribute to an organisation’s financial well-being. On the other hand, perceived negative organisational structure and relationship would increase OC leading to negative consequences such as diminished employee commitment (Stanley et al., 2005), employee motivation (Taipale et al., 2011; Price and Reichert, 2017), and esprit de corps in organisations (Watt and Piotrowski, 2008).

The result also revealed that EE has a moderating effect on the relationship between OC and EP. These findings are supported by existing studies of Cartwright and Holmes (2006), who documented that employers can reduce cynicism among their employees by increasing EE. Similarly, Abugre (2017) found that employees’ satisfaction can be increased through effective interpersonal interactions and engagement that will help in reducing OC at workplace. It was also evident from previous studies that EE matters within an organisation, on the one hand, and that disengaged employees, on the other hand, increased costs for an organisation due to high absenteeism (Mousa, 2017a), lower productivity and high turnover of staff (Saari and Judge, 2004; Truss et al., 2013).

Hence, it is pivotal to engage the employees to retain them and reduce the costs. It has also been documented that a high level of EE can reduce the devastating effect of OC on EP. In addition, researchers also documented that EE provides intrinsic motivation that helps in aligning the interests of employees with their organisation (Chalofsky, 2003) and reduces OC.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

The present study examines the triangle relationship between OC, EE and EP of hospital employees of Pakistan. It is evident that OC has a spill over effect and prevails in most of modern organisations. The findings of correlation and regression analyses reveal that OC has significant negative relationship with EP. Hence, the patient care is compromised in sampled organisations. Moreover, findings also reveal that EE has a moderating effect on relationship between OC and EP. Therefore, hospital management needs to increase EE to reduce the cynicism and improve performance. In addition, organisations and managers need to consider their role and actions creating the conditions that lead to cynicism among employees and should take trustworthy steps to increase employee retention and engagement (Cartwright and Holmes, 2006) and ultimately their performance. Moreover, the findings of the study indicate that the majority of respondents are not happy with their organisations. In addition, the study finds that sampled respondents were not happy
with their organisations due to their deception and contract violation, consequently, it was affecting their performance. Delken (2004) also found a positive relationship between psychological contract violation and OC. The findings reveal that employees give priority to their career development while organisations are not taking any measures for their career development.

In this twenty-first century, employees cannot wait for 10-15 years to get promoted. Consequently, this affects EP and increase OC. Similarly, in Pakistan, the EP is greatly affected due to inequality of rewards and benefits. The findings reveal that most of the employees believe and focus on the shortcuts to affluence rather than competence and performance and become more dedicated in the presence of political culture within an organisation. Consequently, the merit, rules and policies are certainly compromised in such organisations (De Vreese, 2005). It also fosters immoral practices such as gifts, bribery to make line managers happy which is already a common practice in Pakistan. Managers need to take justice as a norm and engage it in recruiting, selecting, training, maintaining and promoting their employees. Consequently, this will reduce cynicism (Cartwright and Holmes, 2006). In addition, massive corruption exist in organisations specifically in public organisations (Transparency International, 2016). Consequently, the efficiency of such organisations cannot be enhanced, and mostly lower rank employees become frustrated due to organisational injustices, organisational politics and inequality in rewards. Since organisations have failed to take care of their employees in terms of financial and psychological aspects, their deviance from this can be viewed as retribution by the employees, commonly explained through the frustration-aggression theory.

6.1 Implications of study
According to the researchers’ best knowledge, only few studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between OC and EP by employing the moderating effect of EE. The findings from this study have practical implications for supervisors and managers when considering the level of cynicism in their organisations. It is found that OC has a major impact on the behaviour and attitude of employees, supervisors and representatives on the one hand and, ultimately, the organisation, on the other hand. These effects have specific susceptibilities due to the vicinity of the employees. It is recommended that employee cynicism can be reduced by providing a supportive environment (Price and Reichert, 2017; Taipale et al., 2011), EE (Cartwright and Holmes, 2006) and fairness. However, the study findings help the supervisors to impede the harmful effect of employee cynicism through controlling organisational politics and reducing psychological contract violation that will ultimately improve their performance. In addition, the study provides the guidelines for psychologists to understand employee attitudes in a better way and ensure the recruitment of right people by improving the personnel selection process (Cartwright and Holmes, 2006). In a similar vein, it is found that organisational culture can alleviate the negative effect of OC and improve performance by endorsing EE (Bellavia, 2005). Hence, managers should provide supportive environment within their organisations. Additionally, specific organisational interventions like leadership training, openness, honesty and early communication can increase the predictability and controllability of future events and consequently, help in controlling OC. Recently, in Pakistan, young doctors, paramedical staff and nurses have conducted a number of strikes that not only affected the well-being of patients but many people died due to these strikes and unavailability of doctors. In many occasions, the Government of Pakistan has made promises to doctors, paramedical staffs and nurses but still failed to fulfil those. Therefore, the level of cynicism has increased manifolds among hospital employees of Pakistan. The job insecurity and lack of adequate compensation are also emphatic factors towards low productivity and negative attitude toward organisation.
6.1.1 Implications for hospital management. The higher level of organisation cynicism in hospital staff is linked to increase absenteeism, poorer performance (Kim et al., 2009) and more counterproductive behaviour such as coming late and purposefully doing wrong work (Krishnan and Singh, 2010). Leaders and managers need to identify such behaviours and take remedial actions to reduce the level of cynicism among employees. In addition, leaders need to communicate honestly, effectively and frequently to address cynicism in order to ensure ample staffing and resource levels that result in good patient care and positive work attitudes at hospitals.

6.2 Limitations and future research recommendations
Like other studies, this study also has some limitations and provides directions for future research. Due to a large population, it was not possible to collect data from whole population and other sectors. Future researcher can extend this study to larger sample and also to other sectors. In addition, this study does compare data from public and private hospitals, hence, it provides scope for future researchers to conduct comparative study. The study employed convenient sampling technique to unavailability of list of employees, consequently, generalisability and representativeness can be questioned. This study considered the dimensions of OC, EE and EP as whole, there is scope to examine the effect of individual dimensions. The existing literature can be extended by including variable like job satisfaction, organisational change, burnout and counterproductive work behaviour. This study is quantitative in nature and only employs regression and moderation analysis. Future research can employ structural equation modelling (SEM) and mixed methodology (i.e. qualitative and quantitative) to conceptualise cynicism attitude.

Notes
1. The names of respondents and their organisations were not recorded to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.
2. All participants were comfortable with English version of questionnaire. Moreover, English is used as the official language in Pakistan since its creation in 1947. See Mahboob (2009), available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistani_English.

References


**Corresponding author**
Muhammad Arslan can be contacted at: Muhammad.arslan@lincolnuni.ac.nz

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