Organizational cynicism and employee performance

Moderating role of employee engagement

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Abstract

Purpose – Organizational cynicism is a growing trend in contemporary organizations. However, its impact on employee performance remains understudied. The purpose of this study is to address this gap by investigating the effect of three dimensions of organizational cynicism (cognitive, affective and behavioral cynicism) on employee performance. The study also investigates the moderating effect of employee engagement on the relationship between three types of organizational cynicism and employee performance.

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

Findings – The findings reveal that all three types of organizational cynicism (i.e. cognitive cynicism, affective cynicism and behavioral cynicism) have a significant negative relationship with employee performance, while employee engagement moderates this relationship. Moreover, the findings indicate that the majority of respondents are not happy with their organizations. They have the feeling that their organizations are not fulfilling their promises, in fact, are betraying them in different ways. This breach of contract becomes the reason for organizational cynicism among employees and negatively affects their performance at work.

Research limitations/implications – The study has a large population size and it is quite difficult to address the whole population and collect data from a large sample because of time and limited budget.

Practical/implications – The organizational culture can mitigate the negative effect of organizational cynicism and enhance performance by promoting employee engagement. The study helps psychologists to understand employees’ attitudes and improve personnel selection to ensure they recruit the right people. Openness, honesty and early communication can increase predictability and controllability of future events.

Social implications – The job insecurity and lack of adequate compensation are assertive factors towards low productivity and negative attitude toward organization.

Originality/value – According to the researchers’ best knowledge, only few studies tried to investigate the relationship between organizational cynicism and employee performance by using the moderating effect of employee engagement. Therefore, it will be a good contribution in existing literature to understand consequences of cynicisms.

Keywords Employee performance, Employee engagement, Affective cynicism, Behavioral cynicism, Cognitive cynicism, Hierarchical multiple regression

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

In the contemporary era, human resources have a pivotal role in today’s organizations wanting to gain a competitive edge in the international and indigenous employment market. The workforce is considered as a strategic asset in any organization for the formulation and implementation of strategies. In recent decades, it can be seen that the complexity of work life, differences between social and individual expectations, environmental conditions and
problematic time management issues have created anxiety and tension for employees in any organization. For decades, the investigation of employees’ attitudes has been an interesting area of research for organizations and researchers. The reason for this in-depth interest is obvious, because these interests have a profound effect on organizational performance and employees’ behavior. It is evident from the existing literature that job satisfaction and organizational commitment have been studied extensively and researchers have enthusiastically explained and operationalized the idea and its precursors in different cultural and organizational settings (Abraham, 2000; Davis and Gardner, 2004; Medina and Rufin, 2015; Nafei, 2013a; Rodrigues and Carlos M, 2010). 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 organizations (Aslam et al., 2015; Mantler, Godin et al., 2015; Simha et al., 2014; Yıldız and Şaylakay, 2014).

Literature provide evidence of increased attention among researchers and organizational managers about employees’ attitudes, which can have disastrous effects on the overall organization (Kuo et al., 2015; Sahoo et al., 2015). Organizational cynicism is a comparatively new addition to these attitudes. According to Dean et al. (1998), organizational cynicism is a negative attitude of an employee towards the organization. They also defined it as an attitude of weakness with the key characteristic being negativity. Other researchers have defined organizational cynicism as an attitude of unfriendliness with oneself for the organization because the organization will always try to fool its employees, display a lack of honesty (Nair and Kamalanabhan, 2010) and takes decisions on personal experiences and knowledge (Koumaditis and Themistocleous, 2015). Ozler et al. (2011) defined it as a negative feeling by individuals that includes dissatisfaction, disturbance and hopelessness about an organization and its staff. They also explained it as the outcome of an employees’ belief that the organization lacked honesty. In other words, the expectations of the employees for justice, morality and honesty are violated.

Organizational cynicism shows the level of obstruction within an organization. Researchers argued that these beliefs tended to create negative consequences among the employees, like emotional exhaustion (Johnson, and O’Leary-Kelly, 2003). It is argued that negative consequences also include counterproductive behaviors, intentions to comply with unethical requests, reduced commitment to change, badmouthing and a lack of job satisfaction (Armmer, 2017; Bernerth et al., 2007; Kuo et al., 2015; Mantler et al., 2015; Simha et al., 2014; Wilkerson et al., 2008), while few studies have been conducted to investigate the impact on employee engagement and performance. The current study fills the gap in the existing literature by investigating the effect of cognitive cynicism, affective cynicism and behavioral cynicism on employees’ performance and also examines the moderating effect of employee engagement by taking sample from teaching hospitals of Pakistan.

The rest of the paper is organized into the literature and hypothesis development, and then methodology, in the second and third sections, respectively. The results are included in the fourth section and a conclusion and remarks section concludes the paper.

2. Literature and hypothesis development
The literature about organizational and employee performance from the perspective of cynicism perspective is limited and has focused on the development and application of the definition of cynicism in the organizational context. Therefore, this section of the paper first defines cynicism in the organizational context and then presents the extant literature and hypothesis development and then continues to present organizational cynicism and performance in the second section and employee engagement in the last section.
2.1 Organizational Cynicism
Cynicism has become the subject of various disciplines in social sciences, for example, management, religion, philosophy, political science, sociology, and psychology (Helm, Moulard, and Richins, 2015; Ivancevich and Matteson, 2002; Nicholson et al., 2014; Rose, Duschinsky, and Macnaughton, 2017). However, 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 and 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). According to Abraham (2000), organizational cynicism occurs when employees lack confidence in an organization and feel that the organization cannot be relied upon. It has also been found that this negative attitude has adverse effects on the organization itself as well as the performance, satisfaction, and commitment of its employees. Researchers have investigated various dimensions of organizational cynicism and in the organizational context; different models have been developed for studying organizational cynicism (Mantler et al., 2015; Rose et al., 2017; Yildiz and Şaylıkay, 2014).

2.2 Dimensions of Organizational Cynicism
Organizational cynicism has three dimensions, that is, cognitive cynicism, affective cynicism, and behavioral cynicism. These dimensions are: having lack of beliefs, negative emotions, and critical behavior about organizations. In the cognitive dimension of organizational cynicism, people’s behaviors are unpredictable and erratic, and also, people can say lie and trick (Brandes, Dharwadkar, and Dean, 1999), while affective dimension of organizational cynicism comprises strong emotional reactions such as anger, shame, and trouble (Abraham, 2000), and people not only have negative beliefs but also negative emotions towards organizations (Dean et al., 1998). In the behavioral dimension of organizational cynicism, employees who have cynical behaviors are inclination to distrustful conjecturing about events in the organization and can act negatively. (Dean et al., 1998).

Organizational cynicism is closely related to other constructs that include work alienation, job satisfaction, trust, employee performance, burnout, and psychological contract violation (Dean et al., 1998; Johnson and O’Leary-Kelly, 2003; Nicholson et al., 2014; Simha et al., 2014; Storm and Rothmann, 2003; Yildiz and Şaylıkay, 2014). 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 M, 2010). An employee may display job dissatisfaction when there is disconnection between expectations of the employees and reality. The employee who is facing job dissatisfaction may end up being persistently absent from work or leaving the organization. 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 organizational culture (Kaya et al., 2014).

2.3 Organizational Cynicism and Performance
From a theoretical perspective, organizational cynicism has a negative influence on job performance. However, researchers argue that cynical employees can be a positive force for
change by challenging ineffective 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). 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, 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 levels in poor trading conditions, the level of cynicism towards management and the organization seems to be stronger than when it is performing well (Aslam et al., 2015). Correspondingly, when a public institution is seen to be failing to deliver services that it ought to, employees generally feel ashamed of being associated with the institution and cultivate cynicism towards the institution and its management. In the literature, several studies have been conducted to investigate the relationship between organizational cynicism, job burnout and job-related outcomes (Nafei, 2014; Nicholson et al., 2014; Simha et al., 2014; Yildiz and Şaylıkay, 2014). Some researchers did not find any association between level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment to enhance performance (Rodrigues and Carlos M, 2010). However, Abraham (2000) found a positive association between organizational cynicism and job dissatisfaction and alienation and with a negative association with organizational commitment and organizational behavior. Pelit and Pelit (2014) found strong and positive correlation between mobbing and organizational cynicism among hotel employees in Turkey. In addition, Aslam et al. (2015) conducted a study to investigate the impact of organizational cynicism and privatization and found interactive effect of behavioral resistance in the relation among dispositional resistance, employee’s intent to quit and organizational contextual factors. The empirical literature also reveals that factors, such as high salary packages for executives, retrenchment of employees and failure of the organization to achieve set objectives, generate dissatisfaction and, subsequently, disillusionment towards the organization itself and this creates a high level of cynicism (Aslam et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2009; Kuo et al., 2015). The following hypothesis of the study includes the relationship between an employee’s performance and three types of organizational cynicism, as follows:

H1. Cognitive Cynicism has negative relationship with employee performance.

H2. Affective Cynicism has negative relationship with employee performance.


2.4 Employee engagement and organizational cynicism

In academia, employee engagement has received much consideration over the past decade. An emergent body of knowledge supports the relationship between employee engagement and organizational outcomes (Menguc et al., 2017; Salanova et al., 2005; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli et al., 2006; Suliman and Al Harethi, 2013; Truss et al., 2013) and also provides support for 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 employee engagement 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. 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 (Anitha, 2014; Graban, 2016; Lockwood, 2007) and managers want to improve their employees’ engagement to enhance their overall performance (Anitha, 2014; Wright and Cropanzano, 2000). Studies also showed that engagement can improve the well-being of employees and reduce staff turnover (Memon et al., 2014; Shuck, Twyford, Reio, and Shuck, 2014). Aamir and Sohail (2006) conducted a study to examine the impact of different aspects of job satisfaction and organizational justice. They also examined the effect of organizational commitment on turnover intentions and job performance by gathering data from 125 full-time university teachers in Pakistan. The results revealed a significant relationship between the facets of job satisfaction and organizational justice with organizational commitment. In addition, they found no relationship between different personal characteristics like marital status, education level, age and tenure of service with organizational commitment. Nafei (2013b) found difference in employee attitudes towards organizational cynicism and organizational change. Yıldız and Şaylakay (2014) argued positive connection between work alienation, anomie and cynicism among employees of Turkish banks. The employee’s perception that the organization failed to deliver on its promises directly results in emotional exhaustion such that the perceived breach not only results in negative behavior but also in emotional and physical burnout. Therefore, the second hypothesis is developed as:

\[ H_4. \] Employee engagement has moderating effect on the relationship between all three types of organizational cynicism (i.e. Cognitive, affective and behavioral cynicism) and employee performance.

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 employee performance. Achor (2012) conducted a sweeping meta-analysis of 225 academic studies and documented that when employees worked with a positive attitude, the creativity, engagement and performance of the employees improved. The researcher also documented that happy employees performed at higher levels and their results will be more persuasive towards achieving promotion. In contrast, if an employee was working with a negative mindset, then his/her performance, creativity and engagement diminished. Employee engagement 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 organization. Researchers also suggest that cynicism may create positive outcomes both for employees and their employing organizations (Kosmala and Richards, 2009). Consequently, it is argued that if employees trust their managers and receive support from their supervisors, then they will respond to work in a positive manner 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 employee engagement here are few studies that have established an empirical link (Abraham, 2000; Bakker et al., 2014; Iqbal et al., 2017). As cynicism is a negative attitude that comprises affective, cognitive and behavioral components (Bakker et al., 2014; Shuck et al., 2014), it might be possible that it might concur with engagement. Developing a scale to measure employee performance is a dilemma in public health organizations that are involved in providing various Professional services to the public. In this study, it is found that the sampled organizations do not have any defined criteria to measure employee performance. It
is also understandable the difficulty of setting criteria for measuring performance of the health services provided at different levels of organizations. In addition, the validity of the criteria can be questionable if these criteria are not discussed with employees before administration.

3. Measurements
An organizational cynicism 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 cognitive (five items), affective (four items) and behavioral cynicism (four items). The reason of choosing this scale is reliability and validity calculated by Brandes et al. (1999) to measure organizational cynicism[1]. Another reason is widely acceptance and use of this scale by other researchers (Mete, 2013; Polatcan and Titrek, 2014). The cognitive dimension of organizational cynicism measures that employees have about sincerity and integrity of their employing organization reflected the belief items. The affective dimension of organizational cynicism consists of negative emotions such as anger, disgust and distress. Behavioral items reflect disparaging and critical behaviors concomitant with organizational cynicism. The reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) of total items is 0.898.

3.1 Employee engagement
In this study, employee engagement has been taken as a moderating variable between organizational cynicism and employee performance. A questionnaire is used for the measurement of employee engagement. The scale of Schaufeli et al. (2006) is used to measure employee engagement on a five-point Likert scale[2]. The scale is divided into three subscales called vigor, dedication and absorption. The study adapts two items from the vigor 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.

3.2 Employee performance
The adapted scale is used to measure employee performance. The individual task performance scale developed by Linda et al. (2014) is used to measure employee performance. 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 employee performance is 0.646. The study also uses age and employment tenure as control variables that is consistent with prior studies (Avanzi et al., 2015; Chiaburu et al., 2013).

4. Methodology
4.1 Samples and procedure
The purpose of the study is to measure organizational cynicism among employees working at teaching hospitals in Pakistan, in particular, to investigate the relationship between three dimensions of organizational cynicism 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 organization. Graham et al. (2006) and Paskiewicz (2001) also used 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 distributed to 280 individual employees and 230 usable questionnaires have collected in a four months process. Moreover, 30 questionnaires were incomplete; therefore, 200 completed questionnaires were used for extracting the results. The response rate was 82.14 per cent.

4.2 Data and analysis
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, a regression analysis is also conducted to investigate the relationship between the dependent and explanatory variables. Finally, a moderation analysis is performed to investigate the moderating effect of employee engagement.

5. Results and discussion
The thrust of the study is to examine the nexus between dimensions of organizational cynicism and employee performance 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.

The biographical information of respondents is presented in Table I. 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. Most of respondents (34 per cent) have at-least bachelor’s qualification followed by master’s degree holders (30.5 per cent), while only few respondents (25 per cent) have PhD/MS/MPhil/EQUI qualifications. Only few respondents have under bachelor’s qualification. It can be documented that hospitals prefer to recruit the bachelor-qualified candidates. 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 organizations, 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
In Table II, the results reveals that the mean value for cognitive cynicism is 3.0920, with a minimum value of 1.40 and a maximum value of 5.0, while standard deviation is 1.01721. While the mean value for affective cynicism is 2.8225, with a minimum value of 1.25 and a maximum value of 4.5 while standard deviation is 0.82005. Whereas the mean value of behavioral cynicism is 3.1388, with a minimum value of 1.25 and a maximum value of 5.0,
standard deviation is 0.71448. The employee engagement has mean of 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 employee performance with its corresponding minimum and maximum values. The standard deviation of employee performance is 0.58559.

### Table I.
Biographical information of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>32.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>67.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29 years</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-39 years</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>46.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>40-49 years</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualification</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Bachelors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment Tenure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than one Year</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 and above years</td>
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<td>4.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sector</td>
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<td>Public</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private</td>
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<td>76.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semi-government</td>
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<td>Employment status</td>
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<td>Permanent</td>
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<td>Contractual</td>
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<td>Temporary</td>
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<td>Position in organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entry level</td>
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<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team leader</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19.5</td>
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### Table II.
Descriptive statistics

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.0920</td>
<td>1.01721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>2.8225</td>
<td>0.82005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.1388</td>
<td>0.71448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
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<td>5.00</td>
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<td>0.64757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>3.6020</td>
<td>0.58559</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** CC = Cognitive Cynicism; AC = Affective Cynicism; BC = Behavioral Cynicism; EE = Employee engagement; EP = Employee performance
The association between variables is also examined by employing a Pearson correlation.

5.2 Correlation analysis

Table III presents the result of the correlation analysis between CC, AC, BC, EE and EP by controlling the effect of age and employment tenure.

The results of correlation analysis reveals that significant negative relationship of employee engagement and employee performance with all three dimensions of organisational cynicism. Employee engagement has significant negative relationships with cognitive cynicism \((r = -0.23)\), affective cynicism \((r = -0.40)\) and behavioral cynicism \((r = -0.33)\) at 0.001 level of significance. The analysis reveals that all three dimensions of organizational cynicism decreases with increase in employee engagement. Similarly, employee performance also has significant negative relationships with cognitive cynicism \((r = -0.56)\), affective cynicism \((r = -0.55)\) and behavioral cynicism \((r = -0.39)\) at 0.001 level of significance while positive correlation with employee engagement \((r = -0.65)\). It can be documented that employee performance decreases in presence of these three dimensions of cynicism. However, employee performance can be increased by increasing employee engagement and vice versa. There is no evidence of auto-correlation among variables of the study as \(r < 0.80\). According to Gujrat (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 objective of present study is to investigate the relationship between three dimensions of organizational cynicism and employee performance. The study also determines the moderating effect of employee engagement on this relationship. The following section presents the results of the regression analysis between cognitive, affective, behavioral cynicism and employee performance (EP) while taking age and employment tenure as control variables. The results of the moderation analysis are also presented in this section.

In total, two regression analyses were conducted, first by only incorporating control variables presented in Model 1, while second by incorporating independent variables of study that is presented in Model 2. In the present study, three dimensions of organizational cynicism (i.e. cognitive, affective and behavioral) are taken as independent variable, while employee performance (EP) is taken as the dependent variable, while the effect of age and employment tenure are controlled. Table IV shows the values of R and \(R^2\). In Model 1, the value of R represents a simple correlation and is 53.0 by taking control variables, indicating a high degree of correlation. This value increased to 73.0 in Model 2 when incorporated the three dimensions of organizational cynicism. The value of \(R^2\) explains the total variation of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control variables</th>
<th>CC</th>
<th>AC</th>
<th>BC</th>
<th>EE</th>
<th>EP</th>
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<tr>
<td>Age and Employment Tenure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>0.78*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
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<td>0.58*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>-0.23*</td>
<td>-0.40*</td>
<td>-0.33*</td>
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<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>-0.56*</td>
<td>-0.55*</td>
<td>-0.39*</td>
<td>0.65*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table III.
Correlations analysis

Note: *Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (two-tailed)
the dependent variable because of the independent variable(s). In this case, it is 28 in presence of control variables in Model 1, while $R^2$ increased to 53 when incorporated the three independent variables in Model 2, which is high. It can be argued that a 53 per cent change in employee performance (EP) is because of cognitive, affective, behavioral dimensions of organizational cynicism in presence of control variables, while the remaining change (47 per cent) is because of other factors. Moreover, finding any additional extraneous variables in the model is represented by an adjusted $R^2$, which is 52 per cent for study in Model 2. If value of the $F$ statistic is more than 15, then the model is best fitted. The value of $p$ and stats also shows a significant relationship between variables and provide evidence that employee performance has negative association with cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions of organizational cynicism. Consequently, $H1$, $H2$ and $H3$ are accepted. These findings are consistent with prior studies (Chiaburu et al., 2013). To expand the results discussion, the next section will include the moderating effect of employee engagement on the relationship between three dimensions of organizational cynicism and employee performance.

5.4 Moderation analysis
This section presents the results of moderation analysis and determines the moderating effect of employee engagement. The results are presented in Table V by conducting hierarchial multiple regression analysis. Model 3 presents the effect of employee engagement as independent variable, while Model 4 presents the moderation effect of EE with all three dimensions of organizational cynicism.

In Table V, results reveal that $R^2$ changes from 71.4 to 73.8 in Models 3 and 4, respectively. It means employee engagement has moderating effective on relationship between CC, AC, BC and EP. Our hypothesis $H4$ that employee engagement has a moderating effect on the relationship between three dimensions of organizational cynicism and employee performance can is accepted.

5.5 Discussion
The study considers organizational cynicism more comprehensively not only by focusing on employee performance but also by determining the moderating effect of employee
engagement. The theoretical treatment of organizational cynicism is very helpful in discussing and analyzing employee attitudes. The findings of this study reveal that there is a significant negative relationship between all three dimensions organizational cynicism and employee performance, while employee engagement moderates this relationship. The study also supports the evidence presented in the literature regarding a negative relationship between organizational cynicism and employee performance (Brandes and Das, 2006). Because of disappointment and frustration with an organization, cynical employees, consequently, perceive the absence of a connection between reward and performance or lower instrumentality (Bernerth et al., 2007; Wilkerson, 2002; Wilkerson et al., 2008). Consequently, as in previous studies, this perceived instrumentality led to a reduction in effort and performance (Ozler et al., 2011; Simha et al., 2014; Yıldız and Şaylıkay, 2014) and organization’s structure also play pivotal role in reducing this behavior and motivating the employees (Koumaditis and Themistocleous, 2015). It was found that if employees’ perceived that the organization is not fulfilling their expectations, then it has a negative effect on their performance (Kim et al., 2009; Mantler et al., 2015). It was also evident from previous studies that employee engagement matters within an organization, on the one hand, and that disengaged employees, on the other hand, increased costs for an organization because of high absenteeism, lower productivity and high turnover of staff (Saari and Judge, 2004; Truss et al., 2013).

The findings of study are very helpful in mitigating the negative effect of organizational cynicism among organizations, especially specifically in 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). The findings are also very useful for developing economies because of similar socio-economic factors and contextual setting. This result revealed that employee engagement has a moderating effect on the relationship between organizational cynicism and employee performance. In similar vein, Cartwright and Holmes (2006) documented

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
<th>Beta</th>
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<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.008***</td>
<td>0.039</td>
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<td>0.366</td>
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<td>0.028</td>
<td>0.372</td>
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<td>1.487</td>
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<td>BC</td>
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<td>0.042</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>1.016</td>
<td>-0.305**</td>
<td>0.222</td>
<td>-0.372</td>
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<td>0.109***</td>
<td>0.184</td>
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<tr>
<td>CC × EE</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>0.097</td>
<td>1.528</td>
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<tr>
<td>AC × EE</td>
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<td>(9, 190)</td>
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Notes: Dependent variable: EP; *Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (two-tailed); **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed); ***Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed)
that employers can reduce cynicism among their employees by increasing employee engagement. It has also been documented that a high level of employee engagement can reduce the devastating effect of organizational cynicism on employee performance.

6. Recommendations and conclusion
This study investigates the triangle relationship between organizational cynicism (i.e. CC, AC and BC), hospital employees’ performance and engagement. It is concluded that organizational cynicism is a problem that prevail in most of contemporary organizations both in developed and developing countries and has the power to spillover to other parties. The findings of the study reveal a significant negative relationship between organizational cynicism and employee performance, while employee engagement has a moderating effect on this relationship.

The findings of the study indicate that the majority of respondents are not happy with their organizations. They also feel that the organization is not fulfilling its promises and is betraying them in several ways. This breach of contract becomes the reason for organizational cynicism among employees and badly affects their performance. Most of respondents give importance to their career development and the findings reveal that organizations are not focusing on career development of their employees. This is the twenty-first century and no one can expect to have an employee wait for 10 to 15 years to be promoted to the next grade. This affects the performance of employees and, as a result, organizational cynicism increased. In Pakistan, the inequality of rewards is affecting the performance of employees. The study also reveals that most employees focus and believe on short cuts to opulence rather than performance and competences. If organizations have political culture, then they feel more dedicated. In such organizations, the rules, policies and meritocracy are definitely compromised. It can also promote immoral practices to make the line manager happy in the form of gifts, bribery, etc., that is common in Pakistan. Moreover, there is massive corruption in organizations, mostly in public organizations (Transparency International, 2016). The efficiency of such organizations cannot be improved and most employees in the lower ranks of organizations are frustrated because of organizational injustices, politics in organizations and inequality in rewards. As organizations 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. According to the researchers’ best knowledge, only few studies tried to investigate the relationship between organizational cynicism and employee performance by using the moderating effect of employee engagement. The findings from this study have practical implications for supervisors and managers when considering the level of cynicism in their organizations. It is found that organizational cynicism has a major impact on the behavior and attitude of employees, supervisors and representatives on the one hand and, ultimately, the organization, 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), employee engagement 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 organizational politics. The study also helps psychologists to understand employees’ attitudes and improve personnel selection to ensure they recruit the right people. The organizational culture can mitigate the negative effect of organizational cynicism and enhance performance by promoting employee engagement. Moreover, specific organizational interventions like leadership training are more likely to be helpful in reducing it. Openness, honesty and early communication can increase predictability and
controllability of future events. Recently, young doctors, paramedical staff and nurses have conducted a number of strikes that affected the well-being of patients and many people died because of these strikes. In many occasions, Government of Pakistan has made promises to doctors, paramedical staffs and nurses but still failed to fulfill those. Consequently, the level of cynicism has increased among hospital employees. The job insecurity and lack of adequate compensation are also assertive factors towards low productivity and negative attitude toward organization.

6.1 Limitations and future research recommendations
The study has some limitations and areas for future research. The study has a large population size and so it is quite difficult to address the whole population and collect data from a representative sample in short time and budget. Future researchers can extend this study to different sectors and also to the whole population. There is also scope to conduct a comparative study between public and private hospitals. Future researchers can consider variables like job satisfaction, burnout, organizational change and counterproductive work behavior and extend the existing literature. The present study uses hierarchal multiple regression and moderation analysis only because of quantitative in nature. Future researchers can also use different methods like structural equation modeling and factor analysis to analyze different aspects and can also consider exploring the socio-economic factors. There is also scope for using mixed methodology (i.e. qualitative and quantitative) to explore cynical attitude in detail.

Notes
1. Brandes et al. (1999) calculated that items in cognitive dimensions had factor loads between 0.63 and 0.81; in affective dimensions, they were between 0.75 and 0.80; in behavioral dimension, they were between 0.54 and 0.80.
2. The scale has been widely used by researchers in earlier studies both in developed and developing markets to measure employee engagement. Moreover, reliability test was conducted to increase validity.
3. Because of time and cost constraints, analyses are conducted on useable collected questionnaires in specified period.

References


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