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The Impact of Employee Cynicism on Deviant Workplace Behavior: The Mediating Role of Self-Esteem and the Moderating Role of Employee Resilience in Higher Education Institutions of Pakistan

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Abstract

This study looks into the relationship between employee cynicism and deviant workplace behaviour, with a focus on self-esteem as a mediator and employee resilience as a moderator in Pakistani Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Data was gathered from employees at various HEIs in Pakistan, and structural equation modelling was used to examine the relationships between the variables. The findings show a significant positive relationship between employee cynicism and deviant workplace behaviour. Furthermore, self-esteem was partially mediate this relationship, implying that low self-esteem is associated with higher levels of deviant behaviour. Furthermore, employee resilience was found to moderate the relationship between employee cynicism and deviant workplace behaviour, implying that higher levels of resilience may reduce the negative effects of cynicism on workplace behaviour. These findings shed light on the complex dynamics that exist within HEIs and offer valuable insights for fostering a positive work environment and improving organisational effectiveness.

Keywords: Employee cynicism's, Self-esteem, Employee resilience and Deviant workplace behaviors

Introduction

Committed and devoted workers are expected to increase productivity and performance in today's cutthroat business environment (Howladar, Rahman, & Uddin, 2018). The majority of workers depart from their usual work habits. At workplace employee's deviant behaviour is defined as an individual's voluntary conduct that violates organisational standards Anis & Emil, (2022), endangering the welfare of its members and the entire organisation (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Employees with these behaviours go beyond the organization's acceptable norms. The principles, behaviours, and hypotheses that are accepted within the organisation are known as the norms (Abdullah & Marican, 2017). Because organisational deviance has a detrimental effect on employee negative behaviours and business productivity, researchers, academics, and professionals are concentrating on this issue (Jiang, Chen, Sun, & Yang, 2017; Zheng et al., 2017).

According to Robinson and Bennett's (1995) estimation, the DWB caused an annual loss of approximately \$6 billion to \$200 billion. Although certain studies have suggested that negative attitudes significantly contribute to the exacerbation of employees' deviant behaviors in the

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workplace. Previous research studies demonstrated that cynicism is gaining popularity among theorists and has been promoted as a new concept in organisational behaviour topics. Cynicism is common in many organisations in the western context and many Asian countries (Ali et al., 2020). Research has identified a variety of factors that contribute to deviant workplace behaviour, including organisational cynicism (Jiang et al., 2017). Qin et al. (2019), critically examine the cynicism and abusiveness of supervisors in the workplace.

Notably, cynicism is a phenomenon that has drawn the attention of researchers recently as a pervasive issue in the workplace that affects a set of performance variables like workplace deviance (Hamzah, 2023). One of the most important problems facing today's organisations is workplace deviance. Furthermore, organisational cynicism is characterized by a belief in the organization's lack of integrity, negative affective experiences, and a proclivity to engage in negative and disparaging behaviour towards the organisation (Peng, Ma, Zhang, & Jex, 2021). Furthermore, social exchange theory by Cropanzano and Mitchell, (2005) explained that cynic employees showed a poor exchange relationship between employees and the employer. Most of the workers engaged in workplace deviance due to a poor exchange relationship. One of the prior study supported that cynicism is related to those who are highly dissatisfied with their work-environment (Sak 2018). The goal of this study was to make multiple contributions to the body of current literature. First off, this study closes a knowledge gap about the connection—particularly in academic settings—between employee cynicism and deviant work behaviour. When employees are cynical, they react to the organisation by engaging in more negative behaviours, such as workplace behaviours (Shahzad and Mahmood, 2012).

Many studies have identified employee workplace deviance behaviour and organisational citizenship behaviour as prominent workplace behaviours with undeniable significance (Amin et al., 2021). Notably, researchers proposed numerous organisational and individual factors that positively influence organisational cynicism and workplace deviance behaviour (Safdar, Shafiq, Abbas, & Arif, 2022). To fill-out theoretical contribution in this research we examine the positive impact of employees' cynicism on their deviance behaviors especially at higher education institutions (HEIs) across Azad Kashmir and twin cities of Pakistan. Therefore, cynicism has frequently been defined as a negative attitude, behaviour, or personality trait that affects employee performance in a vicious cycle of goal-oriented thinking (Toheed, Tori, & Ramay, 2019). Employees frequently feel stressed and insecure at work when confronted with a change; thus, resistance to this change is a common reaction that results in a loss of self-esteem.

One of the study examined that employees' cynicism decrease their level of confidence and self-esteem (Twale, 2017). It badly affects employees' feelings and increase level tension and anger during working hours. Low self-esteem is mostly predicted by high cynicism that plays a role in fostering feelings of frustration; events within the organization result of such outcomes are diminishing the degree of one's affiliation and pride in the organization (Durrach, Chaudhary, & Gharib, 2019). Previous research found that cynicism was negatively related to employees' self-esteem, performance, deviance, and intention to leave (Chih Kuo, Chang, Kuo, & Cheng, 2020). This means that if an employee's self-esteem in the workplace is low, it will cause problems at work, which will harm the company (Suzabar et al., 2020). Organisational cynicism is linked to low self-esteem and negative behaviour because it causes people to develop a series of negative feelings about organisations. In addition to a negative shift in attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours, the individual's self-esteem and awareness decrease (Kuzu, 2023). Similarly, workers who are cynical and dissatisfied with their jobs are more likely to experience depression

and low self-esteem. Specifically, academics who lack confidence in themselves mediate the relationship between organisational cynicism and employee deviance behaviour, which has received little attention in previous research.

Moreover, we considered self-esteem as a mediating factor between employees cynicism and their deviant workplace behavior, this is the second object of this research. Consequently, it is supported that individuals' self-esteem impacts their work, leading to either improved or worsened outcomes (Mendez, 2020). This underscores the influence of self-esteem on interpersonal relationships. Therefore, it becomes imperative to explore the profiles of academicians with low self-esteem to identify potential levels of deviant behavior symptoms at risk, as well as the levels of self-esteem that may serve as protective factors for individuals. The need to look into the connection between low self-esteem and employee cynicism and deviant behaviour is one of the limitations of earlier research. Accordingly, personality effects are far more complex and even bright personality traits that are typically seen as desirable may have unfavourable effects (Smith et al., 2018; Xin et al., 2017). By considering various issues and gap in literature in this research study, authors focused to consider employees' resilience as an external factor that will mitigate the positive relationship between low self-esteem and high deviant behaviors, which was supported by prior studies (Shrauger, 1975).

Accordingly Tonkin et al. (2018), employees' resilience is defined as an individual's ability to adapt, cope, and endure adverse circumstances. But there has been limited research examining the impact of employee resilience on negative workplace outcomes (Britt et al., 2016). Similarly, AlHawari et al. (2020) investigated how resilience affects stressors in the hospitality industry. With the support of conservation of resource theory by Hobfoll (2011) that explained employees and supervisor relationship. Employees with high resilient personality try to manage their employees. Building upon this, the current research article aims to address the third objective: examining employee resilience as a moderator of the relationship between low esteemed employees and workplace deviant behavior.

Literature Review

Cynicism and Employees Deviance Behavior

According to Veinhardt and Pleskienė (2018), organisational cynicism has been linked to a number of unfavourable outcomes, including unfavourable workplace outcomes and behaviours. According to Lockwood (2018), cynicism is contagious and, once it permeates an organisation, it harms the organization's success and reputation. (Dulnik, 2018). Studies explained various dimensions of cynicism, Dean et al (1998, showed cognitive, affective, and behavioural cynicism. When workers believe they are not being treated fairly, cynicism sets in (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). It is when employees develop negative beliefs about the company and its management, they often react in ways that are not beneficial to the organisation (Michalak and Ashkanasy, 2013).

Parties in a social exchange relationship are expected to follow specific exchange rules as part of the reciprocation process outlined by social exchange theory (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Exchange relationship is balanced, people are content (Wayne et al., 1997) and want to return the negative actions (Lorinkova and Perry, 2017). Workers with high levels of cynicism have poor social exchanges with their managers. These workers consider their current employer to be poor exchange partners and feel that they are exploitative and self-centered. Consequently, employees with a pessimistic outlook often take part in unhelpful or destructive reactive actions as a means of exacting revenge on the company (Naseer et al., 2021; Tong et al., 2020).

Likewise, it is possible that an employee's attitude towards their workplace, organisational cynicism, will lead to actions that are critical for the organisation. The key element that contributes to these harmful behaviour is cynicism. Mostly employees' dissatisfaction with the organisation is known as organisational cynicism (Sak 2018). Cynicism is also linked to employee depression brought on by the conviction that the company lacks integrity, which, when combined with other extremely unpleasant emotions, results in critical, decisive behaviour (Grama and Todericiu 2016). People who are involved in cynicism encounter a lot of problems not for organization but for themselves, the outcome of employees level cynicism will discontent, rage, and depression, along with autocratic leadership and ineffective conduct and destructive behaviors (Durrah et al., 2019). On the basis of above discussion, we proposed hypothesis as;

Hypothesis 1: *Employee cynicism is positively related to their deviant workplace behaviors.*

Self-esteem As a Mediator

Self-esteem is an individual's subjective evaluation of their own worth (Trzesniewski et al., 2013: 60). At workplace employees who experience negative response are more likely to be sensitive to situations or viewpoints that align with their values. Studies showed that affective cynicism is related to counterproductive workplace behaviors. As per Durrah, Chaudhary, and Gharib (2019), an individual's low self-esteem influences the emergence of feelings of frustration. When events within the organization are perceived pessimistically, it reduces the level of their affiliation and pride in the organization. Low self-esteem is considered a psychological risk factor as it can render individuals more susceptible to health issues (Uslu, 2021). Employee mistrust and suspicion of the organisation is known as organisational cynicism, and it typically shows up as anger, dissatisfaction, and low self-esteem directed towards the organisation (Nan & Selamat, 2022).

According to Hobfoll (1989), a company's ability to retain skilled personnel over time depends on employee satisfaction. According to research studies, supervisors must treat staff members fairly in order to prevent them from losing skilled personnel. Employees who experience abuse develop low self-esteem and shy away from dealing with managers and even coworkers (Agarwal & Avey, 2020).

Moreover, Tajfel's Social Identity Theory (1978), explained that individuals reinforce their identity through their association with specific groups, thus enhancing their self-esteem. When employees perceive disdain from their supervisors or other authority figures, their self-worth diminishes, and they are more likely to engage in negative behaviors (Mousa, 2018).

Hypothesis 2: *Employees' low self-esteem mediates in the relationship between cynicism and deviant workplace behavior*

Employee Resilience as a Moderator

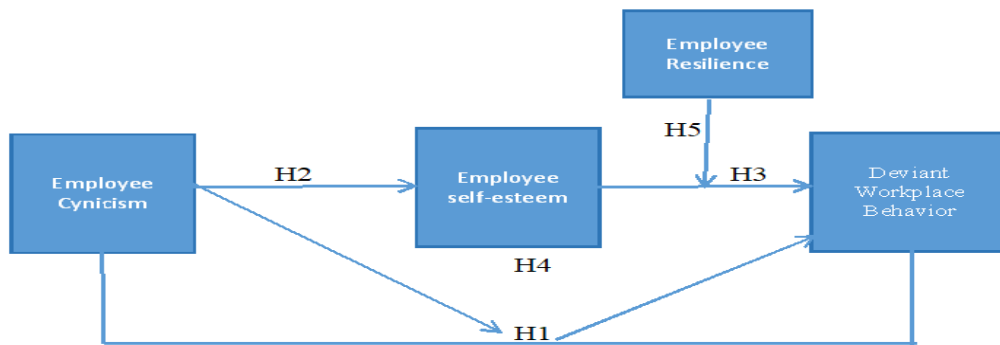
Employees who are capable to reduce negative workplace outcomes must have strong personality traits like they are much resilient. Resilient individuals are much capable to handle stress at workplace (Campbell-Sills et al., 2006) and capable to handle difficult circumstance (Hjemdal et al., 2006; Rutter, 1987). Employees who possess greater resilience are more positioned to benefit from resource gains, which lessens the adverse effects (such as psychological distress). Many times at workplace, employees acts in a certain way because they believe it to be linked to obtaining essential resources (Hobfoll, 2001). These acts improves people's knowledge, skills, attachment style, and self-esteem (Santoro, G., Messeni-Petruzzelli, A., & Del Giudice, M., 2021), all of which help them to reach their occupational goals (Liang,

F., & Cao, L. 2021).

Likewise, Britt et al. (2016) hypothesised that workers who possess resilience may not always exhibit resilience for every outcome at work. The moderating role of employee resilience has thus only been rarely studied in the general management and hospitality literature (Al-Hawari et al., 2020; Kimura et al., 2018). In this research, scholars try to fill out the theoretical gap by considering employee resilient as a moderator in the relationship with low-self-esteem employees and their deviant behaviors in HEIs across Azad Kashmir and Islamabad/Rawalpindi. By considering employee's resilience current research study try to fill the existing gap in the management science literature. Hence, hypothesised as;

H4: *Employee resilience moderate between low employee self-esteem and deviant workplace behaviour, high resilient employees' weaken the positive relationship between low self-esteem and deviant behaviors of employees.*

Conceptual Model



Methodology

The current study adheres to positivist research philosophy that considered scientific methods to generalize theory while conducting value-free research and taking into account academics' opinions and feelings as a source of data for hypothesis testing. Likewise, purposive sampling is a data collection approach where individuals, locations, and activities are deliberately chosen to offer valuable insights not attainable through other sampling methods (Maxwell, 1996).

For that reason in this study, authors adopted purposive sampling including both administrative and non-administrative staff members employed by higher education institutions (HEIs). We contacted the heads of the human resources departments of HEIs (public and private), in Rawalpindi and Islamabad as well as Azad Kashmir, to obtain official permission to gather data. Eventually, the subjects gave their permission to take part in the research.

Moreover, to initiate the data collection process for this study, the principal author elaborated on its objectives to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and provided assurances regarding the confidentiality, anonymity, and exclusive academic research use of the information. Proposed sample comprised of almost ten universities from twin cities of Pakistan and six from the State of Azad Kashmir. The academic establishments consented, and their human resource departments divulged the names of both administrative and non-administrative employees with their explicit permission. We then approached the participants, explaining the study's objectives while ensuring that they would remain anonymous.

As in this study research carefully designed to avoid common method bias, for that most frequent method in management science is time-lagged which was used by numerous past studies (Khan et al., 2020; Pesamaa et al., 2021; Podsakoff et al., 2012). These research studies had been conducted in eastern and western context so, in this research we also followed. Data had been divided into three different times symbolized as time 1 (T1), time 2 (T2), and time 3 (T3). At T1, employee demographics, such as gender, age, education, and experience, from administrative and non-administrative staff members at various Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The participants who filled out the T1 survey also contributed data regarding moderating and mediating factors during T2, specifically resilience and employee self-esteem. Subsequently, at T3, we sought feedback from both administrative and non-administrative personnel regarding deviant workplace behavior. After a gap of four weeks, we reached out to 410 participants who had filled out the T1 questionnaires, obtaining 358 responses for T2.

Following the removal of incomplete surveys, the final sample size stood at 336. Subsequently, we conducted a comparative analysis of the responses gathered at T1, T2, and T3, utilizing unique identifiers created by the respondents themselves (comprising birth year and grandfather's name). We found approximately 70% response rate, surpassing the average rate reported in similar studies. Indeed it remained consistent with response rates observed in previous research endeavors conducted in Pakistan (Bhatti et al., 2020). Thus, detail of demographic variables that has been used are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics.

Demographic Variables	Frequency (f)	Cumulative Percentage (cp)
Age	146	43.1
20-30 31-40	176	41.2
40 Above	15	100
Gender		
Male	244	72.61
Female	92	100
Education		
FA/ F.SC	69	17.90
BA/B.SC	75	40.02
Ms/M.Phil	192	100
Experience		
5 years	40	11.90
10 years	170	50.10
Above 10 years	126	100

Tools and Measures

Based on the criterion that these measures are commonly used, all valid and reliable instruments and measures were chosen from previous studies. The degree of agreement with the statements was evaluated for each measure using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represented strong disagreement and 5 represented strong agreement.

Employee's Cynicism

Cook-Medley (1954) measured employee cynicism, one of the measurement tools. High internal consistency has been demonstrated by the Cook-Medley scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .90$). We took into account this scale in this study by taking into account a prior study by Arslan, M., & Roudaki, J. (2019). The scale's reliability in this investigation was greater than .08.

Self-Esteem of Employees

The 10-item "Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale," created by Rosenberg in 1965, was used to measure the self-esteem of the workforce. Some examples of items are as follows: "I have a

positive outlook on myself," The scale's alpha reliability was 0.72. Studies in management science were the ones that used this scale the most, and a recent study by Jackson, S., & Jackson, L. T. (2019) revealed alpha reliability of 0.81.

Employee Resilience

The study assesses employee resilience using the 9-item scale developed by Naesswall, Kuntz, Hodliffe, and Malinen (2015). "I effectively interact with others to face unforeseen obstacles at work", "I successfully manage a high workload for lengthy periods of time", as well as "I resolve crises properly at work", just to name a few. Mao et al., (2022) used this scale recently and reported an alpha reliability of 0.949.

Deviant Workplace Behaviour

Bennett and Robinson (2000) developed a 19-item scale for deviant workplace behaviour, with an alpha reliability of 0.78.

Demographic Variables Controlled

In this research study, the authors accounted for demographic variables to mitigate their influence on the actual research or conceptual model, encompassing factors such as age, gender, work experience, and job tenure. Folkman et al. and Novacek (1987) highlighted that women with high resilience traits and employees with extensive work experience demonstrated negative behaviors toward their organization. Furthermore, we conducted an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to ascertain whether demographic factors like age, gender, education, and experience significantly affected the dependent variable. Notably, significant ANOVA results were obtained for gender ($F = 37.29, p < .001$), education ($F = 26.11, p < .001$), and team ($F = 53.22, p < .001$). Subsequently, we adjusted for these variables in further analyses.

Data Analysis Approach

Furthermore, we will employ structural equation modeling to perform confirmatory factor analysis, evaluate model fit, assess convergent and discriminant validity, and test regression hypotheses. To examine moderation hypotheses, we will utilize the Process macro. All data analysis will be carried out using SPSS version 28, Amos version 23.

Factor Analysis

In management science literature to validate the research variables not only reliability analysis is enough, for more statistical significance current research conducted confirmatory factor analysis known as CFA that is comprised of four factor model.

The variables of interest in the study included employee cynicism, employee self-esteem, employee resilience, and deviant workplace behavior. Various fit indices with threshold values were utilized as benchmarks in this analysis, as commonly employed by previous researchers (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005). These indices comprise chi-square, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI). A normed chi-square value below 3 signifies a favorable fit (Carmines et al., 1981), while an RMSEA below 0.05 indicates a satisfactory model fit (Kline, 2005). Moreover, CFI, Incremental Fit Index (IFI), and TLI values exceeding 0.90 indicate a good model fit.

By adhering to the established threshold values validated by theory, the current theoretical model yielded distinct results (chi-square/df = 1.82, CFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.91, IFI = 0.92, and RMSEA = 0.04) compared to the three-, two-, and single-factor models. The results of the

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) highlighted that the four-factor model was most suitable for the data. All items were observed to load onto their respective latent factors, with factor loading's ranging from 0.61 to 0.79. These findings are summarized in Table 2.

Furthermore, in social science literature the most frequent issue faced by scholars are common method bias, in this study we conducted Harman's single-factor method, which requires a value of less than 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2003). This method is widely accepted and appropriate for dealing with common method variance issues (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). Result found 36% of the variance, which is less than the threshold value, indicating the absence of common method bias.

Convergent and Discriminant Validation of Structural Model

To check the validity of interested research variables, this study had conducted convergent and discriminant validation with the average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR). Like reliability analysis both CR and AVE have some threshold values, i.e. 0.70 and 0.50 recommended by (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). It means that current variables of interest should lie between these values to be the part of measurement model. The statistical output has been presented in table 2.

Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

Model	Standardized Factor Loading	CR	AVE	Fit-Statistics	Four Factor Model
Employee Cynicism		.88	.67		
EC1	.88				
EC2	.67				
EC3	.60				
EC4	.70				
EC4	.99				
EC5	.61				
EC6	.83				
EC7	.67				
EC8	.72				
Employee Self-esteem		.90	.80		
ESE1	.71				
ESE2	.68				
ESE3	.60				
ESE4	.88				
ESE5	.82				
ESE6	.76				
ESE7	.79				
ESE8	.65				
ESE9	.68				
ESE10	.75				
Employee Resilience		.76	.56		
ER1	.82				
ER2	.85				
ER3	.90				
ER4	.94				
ER5	.77				
ER6	.72				
ER7	.68				
ER8	.70				
ER9	.79				
Deviant Workplace behavior		.86	.57		
DWB1	.66				
DWB2	.81				
DWB3	.76				
DWB4	.70				
DWB5	.82				
DWB6	.88				
DWB7	.87				
DWB8	.88				
DWB9	.84				
DWB10	.79				
DWB11	.69				
DWB12	.71				
DWB13	.72				
DWB14	.79				
DWB15	.90				
DWB16	.89				
DWB17	.75				
DWB18	.65				

Chi-square/df = 1.64,
NFI = .90
CFI = .97,
SRMR = .06,
RMSEA = .05

Note: CR = Composite Reliability, AVE = Average variance extracted, N = 205.

NFI = Normed Fit Index, CFI = Comparative Fit Index, SRMR = (Standardized) Root Mean Square Residual, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

Correlation Analysis

The given below Table 3 showed different parameters of central tendency including averages like means, data standard deviation. Current research found that how much consistent each variable of the study is so considered reliability analysis. Indeed for more statistical significance conducted the analysis that identified the association among variables known as correlation analysis. Current result employed that employee cynicism had a negative and significant correlation with self-esteem ($r = -0.32$, $p < 0.01$), resilience ($r = -0.35$, $p < 0.05$), and deviant workplace behaviour ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$). Employee self-esteem showed a positive correlation with resilience ($r = 0.44$, $p < 0.05$) and a negative correlation with deviant workplace behaviour ($r = -0.32$, $p < 0.01$). Employee resilience showed a negative correlation with deviant workplace behaviour ($r = -0.09^{**}$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 3: Correlation, Descriptive and Reliability Statistics.

Sr.No	Variables	Time Lag	Means	S. D	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	1	2	3	4
1	Employee Cynicism	T1	4.73	0.77	.88	1			
2	Employee Self-esteem	T2	3.65	0.74	.92	-.32**	1		
3	Employee Resilience	T2	3.73	0.64	.90	-.35*	.44*	1	
4	Deviant Workplace Behavior	T3	4.04	0.60	.91	.52**	-.32*	-.09**	1

N = 336. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$.

Testing Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 proposed a positive correlation between employee cynicism and deviant behaviors in the workplace. As illustrated in Figure 2, employees' cynical behavior fosters negativity within the organization, thereby positively influencing deviant behaviors ($\beta = 0.177^{***}$, $t = 2.868$, $p = 0.004$). Thus, H1 was affirmed.

Hypothesis 2 suggested a negative association between employee cynicism and self-esteem. The findings reveal that cynical employees exhibit lower levels of self-esteem ($\beta = 0.186^{***}$, $t = 2.706$, $p = 0.007$). Consequently, H2 was supported.

Furthermore, the third hypothesis concerns the direct impact of emotional exhaustion on counterproductive work behavior. The results of H3 indicate that emotional exhaustion significantly and positively affects counterproductive work behavior ($\beta = 0.229^{***}$, $t = 4.126$, $p = 0.001$). Therefore, H3 was also confirmed.

Mediating Effect of Employee Self-Esteem

This study hypothesized the indirect effect of self-esteem (H4) on the relationship between employee cynicism and deviant work behavior, with the findings presented in Table 4. The

results demonstrate that self-esteem exerted a negative and significant indirect influence on the relationship between cynicism and deviant work behavior (-0.043^{***} , $t=2.279$, $p=0.023$).

Moreover, to assess the partial and full mediation effects, we employed Hair Jr et al. (2017)'s approach utilizing the Variance Accounted For (VAF). According to this methodology, if the VAF value falls within the range of 0.2 to 0.8, it indicates partial mediation, whereas a VAF value exceeding 0.8 suggests full mediation. As depicted in Table 6, the VAF value (20%) signifies partial mediation, thereby supporting Hypothesis 4.

Table 4: Direct and Mediation Analysis.

Sr#	Variables	β	t value	P. Value	Accept/Reject
H1	ES → DWB	0.1777	2.868	0.004	Accepted
H2	EC → SE	-0.186	2.706	0.007	Accepted
H3	SE → DWB	-0.229	4.126	0.001	Accepted
H4	EC → SE → DWB	-0.043*	2.279	0.023	Accepted

$p<0.05$; $**p<0.01$; $***p<0.001$.

Moderating Effect of Employee Resilience

This study examined Hypothesis 5, showed the employee's resilience as a moderator that weakens the positive relation between low-self-esteem employees and their deviance workplace behaviors. The results presented in Table 5 indicate that resilience significantly influences the self-esteem of employees (0.081 , $t = 1.469$, $p = 0.003$). Moreover, the interaction between employees' resilience and their self-esteem on deviant workplace behavior also exhibits a negative but significant impact (-0.096 , $t = 1.741$, $p = 0.040$). Therefore, H5 is confirmed.

Table 5: Moderating Effect of Employee Resilience.

	Interaction Term	β	t	P value	Accept/Reject
H5	ER * SE and DWB	-0.081	1.469	0.003	Accepted

$p<0.05$; $**p<0.01$; $***p<0.001$.

Moderation Graph

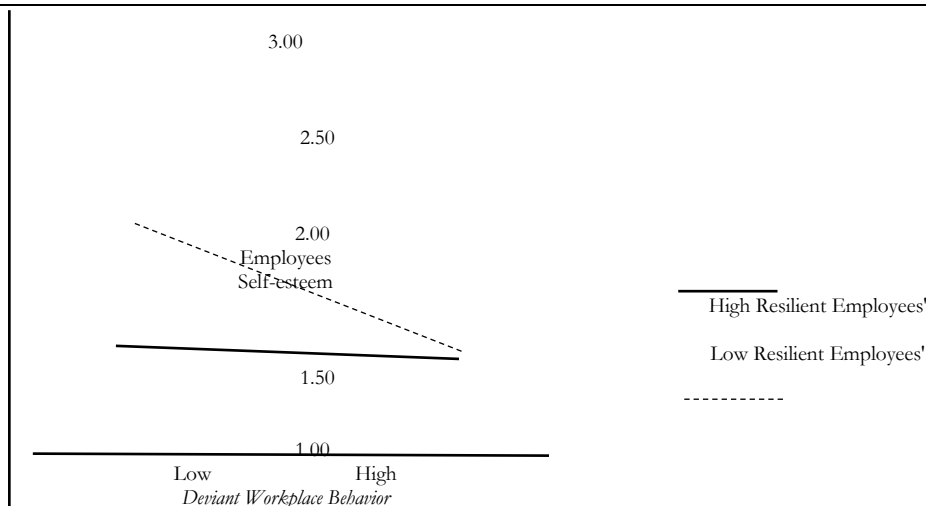


Figure 2: Employees' Resilience as a moderator between Low self-esteem and Deviant workplace behavior.

Structural Model

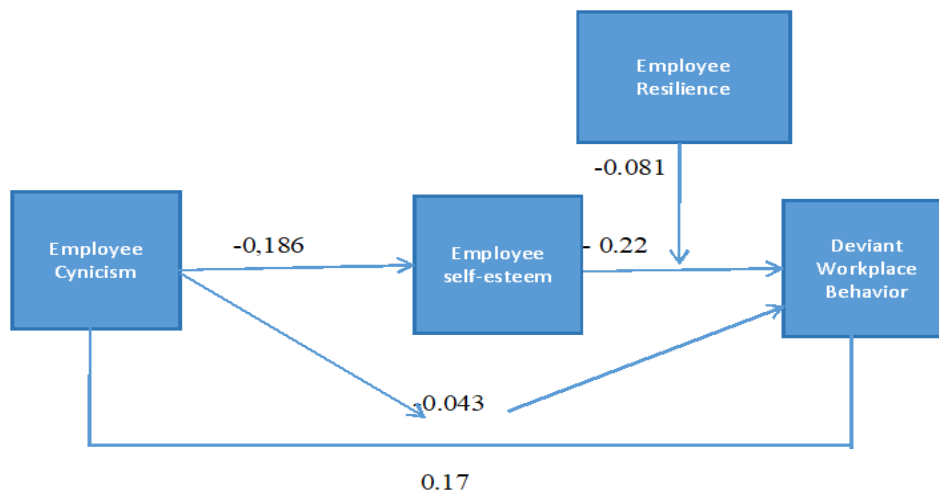


Figure 2. Structural Model

Discussion and Implications

After gathering data from relevant audience, we performed statistical analysis on proposed hypothesis. As we showed that hypothesis 1, demonstrated that employee cynicism positively influences deviant work behavior. After statistical analysis we found that current result aligned with prior researchers who have indicated the coexistence of a positive effect with numerous negative behaviors including employees deviance (Ali et al., 2020). One of the past research in management science literature showed that employees' cynical attitudes impact their behaviors (Vveinhardt & Pleskienė, 2018). At workplace employees with cynic attitudes showed to

perform destructive behaviors that is consistent with current findings (Lockwood, 2018). Most of the employees with cynicism positively related with deviant behavior (Dulnik, 2018).

Recently found that cynicism induces pressure, anxiety, and fear in victims, creating a vicious cycle of tiresome destructive behavior. Current results showed in Pakistani Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), employees' cynicism, coupled with destructive behavior towards subordinates, leads to deviant work behavior. Moreover, hypothesis 2, proposed low-self-esteem mediates in the relationship between employees cynicism and deviance behaviors and much supported by past studies. Theoretical literature found that individuals with low-confidence on their own abilities linked with high cynicism (Trzesniewski et al., 2013). It is also consistent workplace deviance behaviors which is indirectly linked by low-self-esteem (Durrach, Chaudhary & Gharib, 2019). Regarding hypothesis 3, our findings illustrated that self-esteem negatively influences counterproductive work behavior which is supported by Nan & Selamat, (2022), who suggested that individuals who experience cynicism from their supervisors are more likely to engage in counterproductive work behavior, which is ultimately detrimental to the organization.

Concerning hypothesis 4, i.e self-esteem partially mediates the relationship between cynicism and counterproductive work behavior. The indirect effect of low self-esteem has been empirically examined in the past literature. Our results are consistent with prior research Agarwal & Avey, (2020) which explained that individuals with low self-esteem experience stress, anxiety, and negative feelings when subjected to unethical and authoritarian behavior from their supervisors, ultimately leading to counterproductive work behavior. Furthermore, in this research study we proposed another potential variable related to employees personality that strengthen this research study and filled out the theoretical gap. Employees resilience act as a moderator in the relationship between low self-esteem and high deviant behaviors. Current result supported by prior researchers findings (Santoro, G., Messeni-Petruzzelli, A., & Del Giudice, M., 2021; Liang, F., & Cao, L. 2021).

Implications of the Study

This study has significant implications for academic institutions and their administrative and non-administrative staff in terms of deviant workplace behaviours. We contribute to the existing literature by investigating employee cynicism, destructive behaviours, low self-esteem, and how resilience can address these issues. Furthermore, because people's attitudes at work influence their behaviour in both positive and negative ways, our research contributes to the body of knowledge about conservation of resources theory and categorization theory, both of which are related to people's workplace behaviours and identities.

Furthermore, this study has practical implications for Pakistan's higher education institutions (HEIs). For starters, departments pay insufficient attention to employee cynicism, despite its prevalence throughout Azad Kashmir and Pakistan. There could be a variety of reasons why these acts are not being reported adequately. Because of the numerous negative consequences of deviant behaviour in the workplace, organisations should take steps to reduce their prevalence. One strategy would be for academia, including universities, to proactively address and manage these harmful behaviours. The current study discovered that employees with low self-esteem have a positive correlation with cynical behaviour and exhibit higher levels of deviant workplace behaviour.

Second, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) must reassess their selection criteria and recruit suitable candidates for supervisory roles to address DWB issues. Third, the study found that people with low self-esteem are more likely to behave strangely around their coworkers. Thus, psychological and emotional factors should be considered during the candidate selection process in order to reduce unfavourable and ineffective workplace behaviours. Employees with high resilience in their personality demonstrate the ability to maintain willpower and self-esteem, reducing deviant behaviour in the workplace at HEIs

Study's Limitation and Future Direction

There are few limitations to this study that provide opportunities for further investigation. First off, our study used a time lag design rather than a longitudinal one because of time and resource limitations. In order to produce more broadly applicable findings, we advise future researchers to conduct longitudinal studies that include both organisational and employee levels of cynicism within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) throughout Pakistan's various regions.

Second, our study's scope was limited to academia, specifically public and private higher education institutions in Azad Kashmir, Rawalpindi, and Islamabad, with a small sample size. As a result, we encourage future researchers to conduct empirical studies that investigate the most recent antecedents contributing to such destructive behaviours in a variety of sectors, including police, airlines, and hospitals.

Third, our findings indicate that the moderating effect of employee resilience had significant impact on the relationship between low self-esteem and deviant workplace behaviours. Future research should include more variables, such as personality traits, and look into areas other than academia. The inclusion of various public and private organisations, such as banks, educational institutions, and software companies, may increase the significance and applicability of the findings while using organisational cynicism as a predictor of employees deviant workplace behaviors.

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