

The Relationship of Organisational Cynicism, Emotional Exhaustion, Creative Work Involvement and In-Role Performance

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This paper examines the relationship between organisational cynicism, creative work involvement, emotional exhaustion, and in-role performance. Organisational cynicism happens when an employee has no trust in his/her organisation's change process. As a result, he/she tends to criticize his/her organisation. This research argues that being critics will drain someone's emotional resources and will result in high emotional exhaustion. This emotionally exhausted employee will have low creative work involvement and low in-role performance. This research also argues that employees with high organisational cynicism will have higher creative work involvement. The last hypothesis examined is that creative work involvement will have a positive influence on employee in-role performance. 200 employees with a tenure of more than one year from various organisations participated in this research. Hypothesis testing was conducted with the two-step method of structural equation modelling. This research has several findings: organisational cynicism has positively influenced emotional exhaustion, organisational cynicism positively influences creative work involvement, emotional exhaustion has negatively influenced creative work involvement, emotional exhaustion also negatively influenced in-role performance, and creative work involvement positively influenced in-role performance.

Key words: *Organisational cynicism, emotional exhaustion, creative work involvement, in-role performance*

Introduction

Organisational cynicism is a common organisational phenomenon that has rarely been researched in current years. Even if organisational cynicism is a common phenomenon, many believe that this cynicism has a detrimental effect on employee attitudes and outcomes (Brown & Cregan, 2008; Nafei, 2013; Neves, 2012; Özler & Atalay, 2011; Thundiyl, Chiaburu, Oh, Banks, & Peng, 2015; James M. Wilkerson & Evans, 2008). Those researches found the influence of organisational cynicism on employee attitudes such as commitment, absenteeism, and OCB and also employee outcomes such as employee performance. While most research tested the direct effect of emotional exhaustion on organisational cynicism, this research argues that organisational cynicism has a positive effect on emotional exhaustion based on spillover theory which states that anything that is too much in a certain condition will influence another thing (Neves, 2012). This research also examines the complex relationship of organisational cynicism, emotional exhaustion, creative work involvement and in-role performance.

Literature Review

Organisational Cynicism

Organisational cynicism is an employee's manifestation of their distrust of their organisation. This may be due to the employee's disappointing experiences and may stem from many causes such as negative performance appraisal, unsatisfactory working conditions, unclear management policy, etc. (James M. Wilkerson & Evans, 2008). Dean, Brandes, and Dharwadkar (1998) described three aspects of organisational cynicism. First, the employee believes that the organisation does not work as it should. This may be a result of differing idealism between an employee towards his/her supervisor. When an employee thinks that the organisation leaders do not work well so the organisation does not run as it should, the employee will be cynical to the organisation. Second, as a result of this cynicism the employee will have an adverse affect on their organisation. This negative effect or feeling toward an organisation will come as an employee holds a negative belief toward the organisation. Third, employees behave in a manner according to their beliefs. In this case, the employee will actively criticise the organisation and behave in such a negative way such as blaming the organisation and also they may be active in badmouthing behaviour (Wanous, Reichers, & Austin, 2016; James M. Wilkerson, Evans, & Davis, 2008).

Organisational cynicism may also a result of the organisational change process (Thundiyl et al., 2015). When an employee thinks that the change process does not work as it should be, he/she can be cynical to the organisation. In this case, the employee may target his/her cynical reaction towards the organisation or the management (James & Shaw, 2016). Cynicism has been related with some negative elements such as alienation, lack of hope,

interpersonal conflicts, apathy, resignation, absenteeism, lack of trust in others, suspicion, exhaustion, disillusionment or low performances, and commitment (Bernierth, Armenakis, Feild, & Walker, 2016; Grama & Todericiu, 2016).

Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is the condition of being drained emotionally. Highly emotionally exhausted employees will feel that he/she is emotionally tired. Emotional exhaustion also refers to “feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted of one's emotional resources” (Maslach, 2017). Some researchers found some antecedents of emotional exhaustion such as Oppenauer and Van De Voorde (2016) who stated that high involvement in the work system might result in high emotional exhaustion and Kyei-Poku (2019) who stated that supervisor unfairness also influences emotional exhaustion. Another researcher found support for emotional exhaustion as a moderator for the influence of independent to dependent variables (Dust, Resick, Margolis, Mawritz, & Greenbaum, 2018; Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2017; Kim, Choi, & Vandenberghe, 2017). Another researcher found that this emotional condition is so serious that it will result in several aspects, such as turnover intention (Kyei-Poku, 2019) and interpersonal deviance (Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2017). A meta-analysis by Edmondson, Matthews, and Ambrose (2019) stated that emotional exhaustion influences turnover intention, organisational commitment, job satisfaction, and job performance. This research paper will explore the influence of emotional exhaustion on creative work involvement and in-role performance.

Creative Work Involvement

Carmeli and Schaubroeck (2007) define creative work involvement as the engagement of the employee in his/her effort and time in creative processes at work. An employee with high creative work involvement is an employee who is willing to use his/her time and put in more effort to work well. He/she will try to do his/her best in order to work better by being creative at work. Some researchers found creative work involvement in performance (Bang & Reio, 2017; Carmeli & Schaubroeck, 2007; Volmer, Spurk, & Niessen, 2012). Since most jobs need the employee to be creative, enthusiastic, and energised, creative work involvement is a significant determinant of employee performance (Bouckenoghe & Menguç, 2018).

In-Role Performance

In-role performance is employee performance measured by an employee's ability and achievement in doing his/her work based on his/her job description. Williams and Anderson (1991) differentiate in-role performance as job description based performance with the second performance measure (extra-role performance /organisational citizenship behaviour).

Most research uses in-role performance as an employees' performance measure. This measure might include working 8 hours/day, doing what is described in the job description, and achieving performance targets. The other research using extra-role behaviour as a performance measure used this variable to define this performance as organisational citizenship behaviour. This measure might include: sportsmanship, civic virtue, and helping behaviour (Williams & Anderson, 1991).

The Influence of Organisational Cynicism on Emotional Exhaustion

An employee with high organisational cynicism tends to criticise everything in the organisation. This might be a result of being a perfectionist, so people will always criticise everything that is not suitable for his/her idealism. This also might be a result of someone's dislike of his/her manager/organisation. Being critics will not make someone have peace of mind. When people tend to criticise everything, his/her emotional resources might be drained. So, when there is a higher level of organisational cynicism, emotional exhaustion will increase. Therefore, we define the first hypothesis as follows:

H1: Organisational cynicism has a positive influence on emotional exhaustion

The Influence of Organisational Cynicism on Creative Work Involvement

Cynical people tend to have different views from other people. Sometimes, cynical people have a different perspective on how to solve a problem. When cynical employees know something that is not right according to him/her, he/she will tend to react, criticise, and sometimes even bring new ideas about how to solve the problems. This will result in the higher the level of employee cynicism; the more creative the employee will be. Therefore, we define the second hypothesis as follows:

H2: Organisational cynicism has a positive influence on creative work involvement

The Influence of Emotional Exhaustion on Creative Work Involvement

Being highly emotionally exhausted will make someone can not focus on his/her work. People with high emotional exhaustion are at a high level of stress. In this situation, people will tend to focus only on themselves, ignoring their external environment. So, highly emotionally exhausted people will not get involved with their work, even more, it will be hard for them to be creative with their work, so when emotional exhaustion increases, creative work involvement will subsequently decrease. Therefore, we define the third hypothesis as follows:

H3: Emotional exhaustion has a negative influence on creative work involvement

The Influence of Emotional Exhaustion on In-Role Performance

In order to enable a person to work well, many dispositional and situational variables influence this variable. External factors may include an excellent working facility, proper working tools, effective leadership, etc. The dispositional or internal factor will include the employee's psychological condition. Emotional exhaustion is one of the dispositional factors that may influence how an employee works. People with high emotional exhaustion are placed in unsatisfactory conditions to work since they feel emotionally tired and exhausted. These conditions will ensure that an employee cannot work well, so when emotional exhaustion increases, performance will decrease. Therefore, we define the fourth hypothesis as follows:

H4: Emotional exhaustion has a negative influence on in-role performance

The Influence of Creative Work Involvement on In-Role Performance

Creative work involvement happens when an employee will use more of his/her effort and time to be creative at work (Carmeli & Schaubroeck, 2007). When an employee is willing to use his/her time to be creative in his/her work, he/she will always try to find new ways to do his/her work, investing time and effort to the job. Therefore he/she will be able to make a better result of the job outcome (Adil & Awais, 2016). This will create an argument that the more involved an employee is to be creative in their work, he/she will be able to perform better. So, the higher the creative work involvement, the higher the performance will be. Therefore, we define the fifth hypothesis as follows:

H5: Creative work involvement has a positive influence on in-role performance

Methodology

Research Participant

Research participants are selected using a purposive sampling method. Criteria for selecting research participants are full-time employees with more than a 1-year work tenure. Using full-time employees means that they have more attachment to the organisation than part-time and contract-based employees. Determining that the respondents have a 1 or more year tenure is based on the consideration that employees that have worked for one year or more have already understood his/her work well and have been accustomed to the organisation. Table 1 below shows the participants' demography.

Table 1: Participants' Demography

Description	Classification	Number of respondents
Gender	Male	120
	Female	80
Age (years)	< 30	36
	31 - 40	34
	41 - 50	62
	= > 51	68
Marriage status	Married	173
	Not married	27

Measurement

Organisational cynicism is an employee's cynical reaction to his/her organisation. 8 items developed by Reichers, Wanous, and Austin (1997) were used to measure this variable. A sample item for this measure is "people respond to problems do not have the skills needed to do their jobs". Emotional exhaustion is an employee being emotionally overextended and depleting their emotional resources (Maslach, 2017). 5 items developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) were used to measure this variable. A sample item for this measure is "I am often frustrated at my job". Creative work involvement refers to the employee's engagement in effort and time to be creative at work (Carmeli & Schaubroeck, 2007). 9 items developed by Tierney, Farmer, and Graen (1999) were used to measure this variable. A sample item for this measurement is "I often find new opportunities to improve the process and product at work". In-role performance is an employees' achievement in his/her own job. 5 items developed by Williams and Anderson (1991) were used to measure this variable. A sample item for this measure is "I often completes my main obligations". All variables were measured using 5 scale likert scale.

Exploratory factor analysis was used to test the validity of instruments. This research use eigenvalue greater than 1 to determine how many factors to extract using varimax rotation to get the optimal result. Table 2 below shows the factor analysis result. Since all the factor loadings are more than 0,5, we can conclude that all items used to measure the variables in this research are valid. The factor analysis result also shows that all variables have convergent and are considered discriminantly valid since items of each variable are grouped in different columns.

Table 2: Factor Analysis Result

	1	2	3	4
IRP1				.726
IRP2				.755
IRP3				.650
IRP4				.698
IRP5		.513		.604
CWI1		.616		
CWI2		.727		
CWI3		.771		
CWI4		.845		
CWI5		.770		
CWI6		.738		
CWI7		.775		
CWI8		.755		
CWI9		.726		
CYN1	.734			
CYN2	.887			
CYN3	.859			
CYN4	.894			
CYN5	.877			
CYN6	.887			
CYN7	.853			
CYN8	.860			
EXH1			.724	
EXH2			.749	
EXH3			.809	
EXH4			.852	
EXH5			.806	

Hypothesis Testing

The two-step method of structural equation modelling involving calculating lambda and epsilon values was used to test the hypotheses. The two-step method of structural equation modelling minimises the number of parameters to be estimated in order to reach a better model fit.

Results and Findings

Model Fit Assessment

Two-steps of structural equation modelling (SEM) was used involving the calculation of lambdas and epsilons to reach a better model fit to test the hypothesis. This method enables a reduction of a number of estimated parameters so that it will increase the goodness of fit. Using SEM requires model fit examination. When the fit values are fulfilled, that is a sign that the data has supported the model, then hypotheses examination can be conducted. The fit values are shown in the table below. From the table of fit values calculation, all the fit values in the modified model are fulfilled. So, it is concluded that the data has supported the model, and thus, we can conduct the hypotheses testing.

Table 3: Model Fit Evaluation

Goodness-of fit Indexes	Criteria	MODEL FIT	
		Calculated result	Model valuation
Chi-Square	Small, not significant	6.19 P=0.013	Good fit
CMIN/DF	1-2 over fit, 2-5 liberal limit	6.19	Good fit
GFI	> 0.9	0.98	Good fit
AGFI	> 0.8	0.85	Good fit
TLI	> 0.9	0.8	Sufficient fit
CFI	> 0.9	0.96	Good fit
RMSEA	< 0.1	0.162	Sufficient fit

Figure 1 below illustrates the modified research model based on a two-step approach of structural equation modelling.

Figure 1. Model for Paper

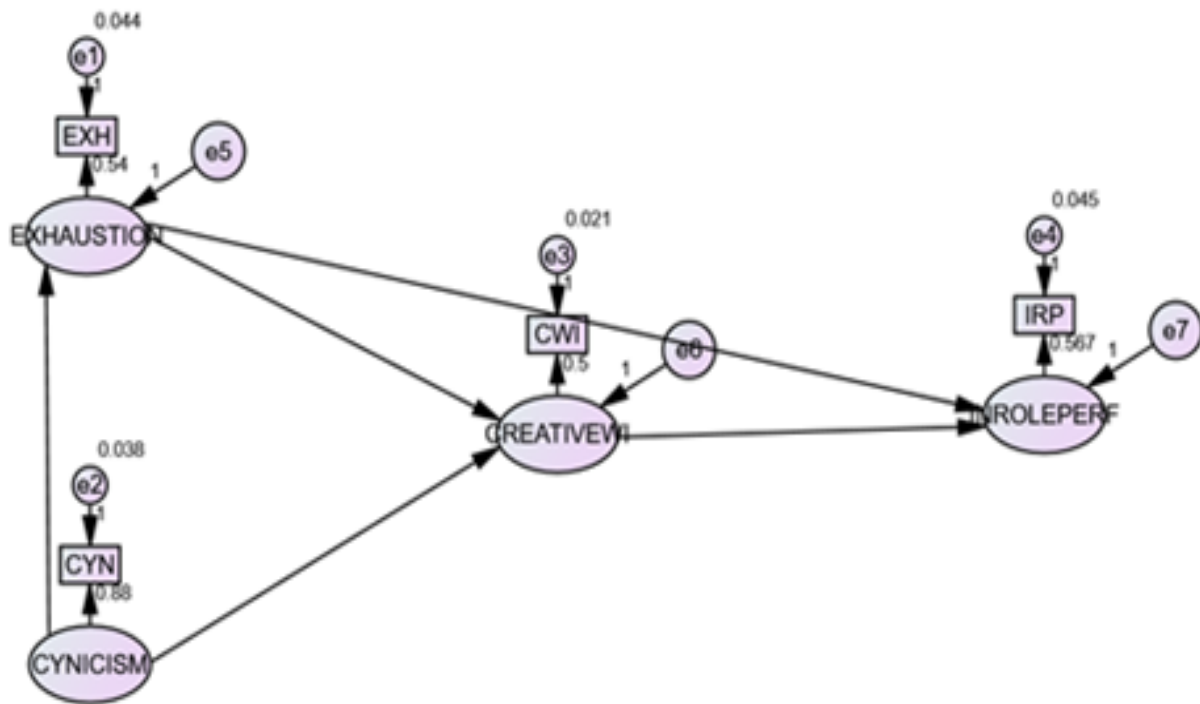


Table 4: Hypothesis Testing Result

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
H1: Organisational Cynicism has a positive influence on emotional exhaustion	0.283	0.076	3.738	0.0001	Hypothesis supported
H2: Organsational Cynicism has a positive influence on creative work involvement	0.192	0.077	2.500	0.012	Hypothesis supported
H3: Emotional exhaustion has a negative influence on creative work involvement	-0.280	0.080	-3.496	0.0001	Hypothesis supported
H4: Emotional exhaustion has a negative influence on in-role performance	-0.106	0.060	-1.771	0.077	Hypothesis supported
H5: Creative work involvement has a positive influence on in-role performance	0.745	0.059	12.276	0.001	Hypothesis supported

The Influence of Organisational Cynicism on Emotional Exhaustion

Hypothesis 1 stating that Organisational Cynicism has a positive influence on emotional exhaustion is supported ($\beta = 0.283$, $P < 0,01$). This finding supports the argument that being cynical to the organisation will have a detrimental effect on the employee. People with high cynicism tend to hold the view that everything is not right according to them, causing him/her to show cynical behaviour all the time. Being cynical will drain someone's emotional resources for not being able to be grateful for anything. So, cynical employees tend to be tired emotionally, and the higher the level of cynicism, the employee will experience a higher level of being emotionally exhausted.

The Influence of Organisational Cynicism on Creative Work Involvement

Hypothesis 2 stating that Organisational Cynicism has a positive influence on creative work involvement is supported ($\beta = 0.192$, $P < 0,05$). Cynical people tend to have their own idealism. When they see anything that is below their idealism, they tend to show their cynical behaviour while suggesting a better way to be applied to the organisation. This finding supports the argument that when cynical people are dissatisfied with their organisation, they might find another way to make the organisation better. Therefore, the higher the organisational cynicism, the higher the level of creative work involvement.

The Influence of Emotional Exhaustion on Creative Work Involvement

Hypothesis 3 stating that emotional exhaustion has a negative influence on creative work involvement is supported ($\beta = -0.280$, $P < 0,01$). Emotional exhaustion happens when someone feels that he/she has lost his/her emotional resources. This is a sign of employee burn out. When an employee has a high level of emotional exhaustion, the employee will lose his/her passion for working well, resulting in a decrease in employee's creative work involvement. This may occur when the employee is tired emotionally; he/she will not be able to be creative since he/she can not work with full concentration.

The Influence of Emotional Exhaustion on In-Role Performance

Hypothesis 4 stating that emotional exhaustion has a negative influence on in-role performance is supported ($\beta = -0.106$, $P < 0,1$). This hypothesis is supported even though it has a low level of significance. Highly emotional, exhausted employees will not be able to work well. Emotionally exhausted people, usually have at a high level of stress, resulting in their incapability to work well. Therefore, when there is a high level of emotional exhaustion, the performance will decrease.

The Influence of Creative Work Involvement on In-Role Performance

Hypothesis 5 stating that creative work involvement has a positive influence on in-role performance is supported ($\beta = 0.745$, $P < 0,0001$). People with creative work involvement will focus his/her time and effort to be creative in his/her work. Being creative will enable an employee to create a new and better way to finish his/her work. This will enable someone to work better, reaching a higher performance target.

Conclusions, Limitations, and Suggestion for Further Research

Conclusions

This research examined the relationship between organisational cynicism, emotional exhaustion, creative work involvement, and in-role performance. Hypothesis testing with structural equation modelling results in several findings: organisational cynicism has positive influence on emotional exhaustion, organisational cynicism has positive influence on creative work involvement, emotional exhaustion has negative influence on creative work involvement, emotional exhaustion has a negative influence on in-role performance, and creative work involvement has a positive influence on in-role performance.

Limitations

The main limitation of this research is using a single source for all data resulting in the possibility of common method variance. Employee's in-role performance also uses a self-appraisal that might result in an upward bias in scoring performance.

Suggestion for Further Research

Future research should use different informants for measuring performance, such as using a leader to fill the employee's performance data. This will reduce the potential problem for common method variance. The reduction of common method variance can also be reduced by using a single source for data with a time lag, such as the participants filling out certain information, then after 1 or 2 weeks, ask the same participant to fill the performance information again.

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