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[The Impact of Organizational Cynicism on Knowledge Sabotage: The Mediating Role of Job Induced Tension and Moderating Role of Psychological Hardiness]

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ABSTRACT

This purpose of this research study is to examine the impact of organizational cynicism (OC) on job induced tension and knowledge sabotage (KS). Job induced tension (JIT) investigates the mediating effect in the relationships between Organizational cynicism (OC) and knowledge sabotage (KS). Furthermore, psychological hardiness (PH) was proposed to moderate the relationship between Organizational cynicism (OC) and negative employee outcomes i.e., knowledge sabotage (KS) indirectly via job induced tension (JIT). The study data was collected from 375 employees via adopted questionnaires from employees working in health sector (i.e., MTI HMC, MTI KTH, MTI LRH) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. A random sampling technique was used to collect data. The effects of direct, mediated, moderated, and mediated moderated variables were analyzed using Model 14 of the Hayes PROCESS macro. The findings indicate that Organizational cynicism (OC) contributes to increased occurrences of job induced tension (JIT) and knowledge sabotage (KS). The proposed relationship between Organizational cynicism (OC) and negative outcomes (i.e., job induced tension (JIT) and knowledge sabotage (KS)) were positive and significant. Moreover, job induced tension (JIT) significantly mediates the relationship between Organizational cynicism (OC) and negative outcome (i.e., knowledge sabotage (KS)). The study's findings suggest that psychological hardiness (PH) serve as a buffering factor, mitigating the impact of job induced tension (JIT) on knowledge sabotage. Furthermore, psychological hardiness (PH) significantly moderates the indirect effect of Organizational cynicism (OC) and negative outcomes via job induced tension (JIT). Based on social cognitive theory (SCT) which was used to examine the study model, this research study significance lies in uncovering how Organizational cynicism (OC) relates to negative employee outcomes such as job induced tension (JIT) and knowledge sabotage (KS). It also emphasizes the crucial role of Psychological hardiness in understanding and mitigating these consequences, offering valuable insights to further explore these dimensions in a more detailed investigation and explanation at workplace

Keywords: Organizational cynicism, job induced tension, knowledge sabotage, psychological hardiness, social cognitive theory, medical teaching institutes, hayatabad medical complex, khyber teaching hospital and lady reading hospital

Introduction

Knowledge is a key strategic and valuable resource (Kim et al., 2017). It is a guiding force for the organizations to achieve growth, success and sustainable competitive advantage compared to its competitors (Shahzad et al., 2020). Knowledge sabotage refers to the application of incorrect knowledge or the failure to utilize the necessary knowledge which results in severe detrimental consequences for the victim, organization, and other stakeholders (Serenko, 2019, 2020). Knowledge saboteurs act intentionally and rationally with a clear, destructive goal in mind (Serenko, Alexander, 2023). Job-induced tension refers to the psychological and physiological stress encountered by employees due to work-related factors, such as excessive workload, role ambiguity, lack of control, interpersonal conflicts and its adverse outcomes, including reduced job satisfaction,

burnout, and health problems (Kahn et al., 1964). Job induced tension is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope (World Health Organization, 2023). Disappointment or organizational cynicism occurs when employee's expectation in respect of justice, sincerity and honesty are not met and an attitude of having negative feelings towards the organization (Soomro, UN Saraih, TS Tunku Ahmad, 2022). It may develop as a result of psychological contract breach (Anderson, 1996). Organizational cynicism involves feeling of arrogance depression, work related burnout, carelessness and professional unhappiness (Naus et al. (2007). Cynical employees are less likely to freely share their knowledge because they lack faith in their organization (Tinaztepe, 2012). As asserted by Davis and Gardner (2004), cynical attitudes are more developed in those employees who have weak intimacy with their leaders and organization. From Personal, Social and Organizational context, employees having more cynical behavior, feel more perceived cost of knowledge sharing and therefore reluctant to knowledge sharing (Chiaburu et al., 2013; Salavati et al., 2014)

Hardiness is linked to integrity and ethical behavior, discouraging actions that could harm the organization (Maddi, 2002). Psychological hardiness contributes to maintaining a high level of ability to cope with unexpected and challenging situations (Bartone et al., 2022). Hardy employees feel a strong sense of purpose and responsibility, reducing the likelihood of engaging in destructive behaviors (Hystad et al., 2011). Employees with high hardiness cope better with job pressures (Eschleman et al., 2010). Bartone and colleagues (2013), states that individuals with high hardiness levels will perceive a stressful situation as interesting and worthwhile, a chance to exercise control, and an opportunity for growth. Hardy employees foster positive workplace relationships, improves knowledge sharing (Maddi, 2013).

Literature review and hypotheses development

Organizational Cynicism

Niederhoffer (1967), was probably the first researchers who studied and measured cynicism in an organizational work setting. When we compare ancient cynics and cynics in the organizations, hopelessness is common in both (Andersson, 1996). Employees high in cynicism are typically pessimistic, quick to fault the organization, blaming others for poor work and highly critical of organizational processes (Enciso et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2021). Employees, due to the lack of confidence in organizations develop cynic attitudes and behaviors which create hurdles and challenges in business operations and the organizational change process (Clegg & De Matos, 2016).

Job Induced Tension

Job tension is defined as stress arising from work-related experiences (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, & Snoek, 1964). According to Gardner and Cummings (1988), job stress occurs whenever job- related stimuli causes a job holder's experienced activation level to deviate substantially from one's characteristic level of activity. It has been linked empirically with a number of negative outcomes including dissatisfaction, depression, somatic disorders, and turnover intent (Frone, 1990; 0' Driscoll & Beehr, 1994). Jex (2017), posits that job related stress arises when work demands threaten the well-being of employees.

Knowledge Sabotage

Knowledge Saboteurs generally act against their organizations or employees by subverting organizational processes or harming others at work and at the same time, pursuing their personal, ego-driven goals (Crino, 1994). This involves the perpetration of sabotage attempts aimed at hampering the activities of colleagues and companies (Serenko, 2020). Moreover, the negative practice of sabotage falls within the wider paradigm of workplace deviance, which, in a more general manner, encompasses voluntary behaviors in conflict with the organizational norms and is intended to harm the well-being of an organization (Bennett et al., 2018).

Psychological Hardiness

It can be broadly described as the way individuals view themselves and their surroundings (Bartone et al., 2013). The term hardiness was first used by Kobasa (1979), to describe executives who were found to remain healthy despite a high degree of work stress. It is defined as the ability to understand the external conditions accurately and to make a desirable decision (Khaledian, Hasanvand & Hassanpour, 2013). Maddi (1999), expanded his work by exploring hardiness as a buffer against stress-related illnesses. Psychological hardiness has three dimensions: commitment, control and challenge (Qaddumi, 2011)

Linking organizational cynicism with job induced tension and knowledge sabotage

Organizational cynicism is considered close to the concepts of negativity, disbelief, skepticism and pessimism (Akdemir et al., 2016). Organizational Cynicism not only develops from personal experiences but also awareness of other's experiences (Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003). Outcomes of organizational cynicism includes deviant workplace behavior as well as negative emotions such as job dissatisfaction (Fisher 2000). Organizational cynicism which is defined as a negative attitude toward one's organization characterized by distrust, frustration, and pessimism (Dean et al., 1998). The most common are the feelings of dislike, anger, pain and hatred (Dean et at., 1998). Stress and tension may develop among individuals who have a high level of loyalty toward an organization (Zhao, H.; Peng, Z.; Sheard, 2013). James (2005), defined frustration as a common function of cynicism and job dissatisfaction. He further argued that cynicism has different components such as hopelessness, frustration, contempt and mistrust (James, 2005). Persistent negative perceptions and distrust toward the organization contribute to emotional exhaustion, a key component of job-induced tension (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Organizational cynicism represents a negative attitude (Dean et al., 1998) while knowledge sabotage represents counterproductive behavior (Serenko, 2020). The SCT suggests that behavior is influenced by personal, environmental, and cognitive factors (Bandura, 1986). Cynical employees tend to be frustrated, disillusioned, distrust and often harbor feelings of inequality (Abraham, 2000). Knowledge sabotage exists when as organizations do not own the employees as intellectual asset, so therefore cannot coerce workers to transfer knowledge (Kelloway & Barling, 2000). The knowledge sabotage persists when employees are not encouraged and rewarded for doing for knowledge transfer (Bock, Zmud, Kim, &Lee, 2005).

H_1: There is a positive relationship between organizational cynicism and Knowledge Sabotage.

H_2: There is a positive relationship between organizational cynicism and job induced tension.

Mediating role of Job Induced Tension

While direct studies specifically examining this relationship might be very limited, we can draw upon related literature and theoretical frameworks to propose a plausible one. Several organizational factors contributes to cynicism development, employees doubts regarding the organization's integrity, transparency, and fairness (Dean, Brandes, & Dharwadkar, 1998), negative emotions in the workplace are the main determinant such as aggravation, anxiety, and frustration (Perrewé & Zellars, 1999; Durrah, et al., 2019). The most common Causes of cynicism are the feelings of dislike, anger, pain, hatred (Dean et at., 1998). Stress that develops due to an uneven distribution of work, excessive workload, intensive working, disagreements and lack of knowledge also has severe consequences for employees and organizations effecting organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Erdil et al., 2005). The term "stress" was coined by Hans Selye in 1973. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), stress is defined as a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his resources and endangering his well-being.

Employees' job tension contributes to various insecurities (Mohsin, M. *et al,* 2022). In order to defend against additional resource loss, employee might face continuous stress and suffer more resource harm, resulting in various destructive work related organizational outcomes. The drastic effects includes emotional exhaustion and burnout (Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003). Job induced tension decreased organizational loyalty, increased dissatisfaction, diminished enthusiasm, lack of trust towards the leaders (Reichers et al., 1997). Cynical attitudes toward the organization contribute to increased job-induced tension, which, in turn, heightens the likelihood of reduced performance (Byrne & Hochwarter, 2005). We hypothesize that organizational cynicism could indirectly influence knowledge sabotage through its impact on job-induced tension. Employees who harbor cynical attitudes may experience heightened levels of job-induced tension and knowledge sabotage.

H_3: Job induced tension positively significantly mediates the relationship between organizational cynicism and knowledge sabotage.

Linking Job Induced Tension with Knowledge Sabotage

Job induced tension is the negative mental states which induce undesirable job outcomes, for instance, counterproductive work behavior (Ferris et al., 2008; Zhao et al., 2013). Irum et al (2020), elaborates the tendency to respond negatively if mistreated. When employee encounter stress, they are expected to show deteriorated performance on job duties that require patience, precision, and the ability to concentrate (Motowidlo et al., 1986). Employee experiencing high level of stress and pressure in their work environment may resort to maladaptive coping mechanisms to alleviate their discomfort. (Serenko, A. and Abubakar, A.M. (2022).Knowledge sabotage occurs when employee intentionally provides incorrect knowledge or conceals knowledge while being fully aware that the knowledge in question is needed and extremely important to the other party (Serenko, Alexander 2023). Many previous investigations tried to understand their antecedents to propose proactive prevention measures (Serenko, Alexander 2023).

Serenko, A. and Abubakar, A.M. (2022) asserted that knowledge offenders usually experience negative moods, feelings and emotions resulting from their misbehavior, such as shame, guilt, rumination, inability to relax and anxiety (Zhong and Robinson, 2021). Knowledge sabotage behavior is a way to regain a sense of control, exert power, or alleviate their stress (Serenko, A. and Abubakar, A.M, 2022). According to Serenko, Alexander (2020), saboteurs believe that their action was a necessary, provoked response to a targets' inappropriate behavior, whereas targets hold saboteurs solely responsible. Similarly Serenko, Alexander (2023), also asserted that Victims of counterproductive workplace behavior experience negative emotions, anxiety, stress and humiliation. Hence, we proposed the following hypotheses:

H_4: There is positive relationship between job induced tension and knowledge sabotage.

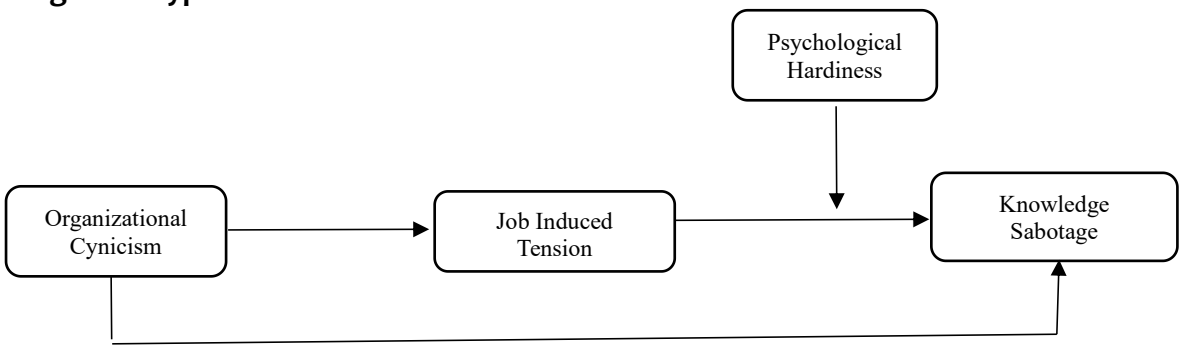
Moderating role of Psychological Hardiness

According to Van Servellen, M Topf, B Leake (1994), hardiness has been linked with less stress as hardy individual influence experience and cope with stressful life circumstances. Psychological hardiness operates as a significant moderator or buffer of stress (Bartone, Paul T., et al., 2022). It consists of the three interconnected dimensions of commitment, control, and challenge (Ramanaiah, Sharpe, & Byravan, 1999). Among the dimensions, commitment entails a generalized sense of purpose and engagement in life (Kobasa, 1979). Control is a belief in personal control and influence over life events and experiences and Challenge is categorized by expectancy and the capacity to see change as a probable for growing and progress (Khoshaba & Maddi, 1999). These three interrelated psychological hardiness components are believed to influence the individual's perception, evaluation, and coping in stressful situations (Cole, Feild, & Harris, 2004).

Job-induced tension refers to the stress and pressure experienced by employees due to various job-related factors (Kahn et al., 1964). Whereas, Knowledge sabotage involves intentionally withholding or manipulating information, expertise, or resources that are crucial for the organization's success (Serenko, A., & Bontis, N., 2016). Similarly, MS Cole, HS Feild, SG Harris (2004) asserted that psychological hardiness construct has emerged as a buffer in the relationship between stressors and illness and has shown to enhance performance, conduct, and morale (Maddi, 1999). It also tend to perceive stress as making their lives more interesting (KN Nanavaty, V Verma, A Patki 2017, Rubbab, Um E., et al, 2022). Psychological hardiness instigates positive attitudes and behaviors among the individuals (Kash et. al., 2000; Kobasa, 1982). Psychological hardiness has a greater sense of emotional control under stressful situation (Maddi, 2006). It provides flexibility by turning negative conditions into opportunities to grow and gain wisdom (Maddi, 2006). Moreover, it enhances resilience in response to the ongoing demands and pressures of everyday life (Maddi, 2005). Hence, we proposed the following hypothesis:

H_5: Psychological hardiness positively significantly moderates the relationship between job induced tension and knowledge sabotage.

Figure 1: Hypothesize Research Model



Methods

Data collection and sample demographics

This research adopts a positivist philosophy. It emphasizes the use of quantifiable and verifiable data to evaluate hypotheses and formulate theories. Statistical techniques like regression and correlation were used to generalize findings across the community. A quantitative research design was applied to explore relationships among variables using standardized methods. Data was collected via structured questionnaires from staff of MTI HMC, MTI KTH, and MTI LRH in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including both doctors and non-doctors. The study is explanatory in nature, aiming to clarify causal links between organizational cynicisms, job induced tension and their negative outcomes. Field research was conducted through structured and closed-ended questionnaires at the respondents' workplaces in their respective MTIs, which allows for authentic data collection thereby enhancing objectivity and comparability across participants and settings. Employees of the selected medical teaching institutes (MTIs) including MTI HMC, MTI KTH and MTI LRH served as the unit of analysis. A cross-sectional approach was adopted, collecting data at one point and time to efficiently capture a wide range of information. Due to constraints, a representative sample of 375 employees were selected using Simple Random Sampling. The Human Resource departments of the respective MTIs facilitated the distribution of surveys, considering ethical standards, ensuring confidentiality, and voluntary participation.

Table 1: Measurement of Scales

S.NO	Variables	Items	Source
1	Organizational Cynicism	14	Brande's et al. (1999)
2	Job Induced Tension	6	House and Rizzo's (1972).
3	Psychological Hardiness	6	Bartone et al. (1989) and Maddi et al. (1999)
4	Knowledge Sabotage	4	Serenko & Choo (2020)

Results and Analysis

Demographic Statistic

A total of 375 surveyed respondents reveals a slightly higher representation of males (54.9%) than females (45.1%), with complete gender data. Among the age groups, the largest age group was 31–40 years (45.9%), followed by 41–50 years (22.7%), while the smallest group was aged 61–70 (2.9%). An equal number of participants (33.3%) were selected showing equal representation. The job nature shows 62.4% were doctors and

37.6% were non-doctors. In terms of experience, the most represented experience category was 6–10 years (38.4%), and the least was 31–35 years (2.9%). Qualification wise, 40.8% held an MCPS, followed by 31.5% with a Master's degree; the smallest group had FCPS (0.5%). Income wise, 45.3% earned above Rs. 151,000, while only 4.8% earned Rs. 0–50,000, indicating a higher-income majority in the sample.

Table 02: Frequency Distribution

Measure	Item	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	206	54.9	54.9	54.9
	Female	169	45.1	45.1	100.0
	Total	375	100.0	100.0	
Age group	20-30	60	16	16	16
	31-40	172	45.9	45.9	61.9
	41-50	85	22.7	22.7	84.5
	51-60	47	12.5	12.5	97.1
	61-70	11	2.9	2.9	100
	Total	375	100	100	
Organization	MTI KTH	125	33.3	33.3	33.3
	MTIHMC	125	33.3	33.3	66.7
	MTI LRH	125	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	375	100.0	100.0	
Job Nature	Doctor	234	62.4	62.4	62.4
	Non-Doctor	141	37.6	37.6	100.0
	Total	375	100.0	100.0	
Years of experience	0-5 Years	97	25.9	25.9	25.9
	6-10	144	38.4	38.4	64.3
	11-15	63	16.8	16.8	81.1
	16-20	16	4.3	4.3	85.3
	21-25	25	6.7	6.7	92.0

	26-30	19	5.1	5.1	97.1
	31-35	11	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	375	100.0	100.0	
Qualification	SSC	36	9.6	9.6	9.6
	HSSC	14	3.7	3.7	13.3
	Bachelor	52	13.9	13.9	27.2
	Master	118	31.5	31.5	58.7
	MCPS	153	40.8	40.8	99.5
	FCPS	2	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	375	100.0	100.0	
Monthly Income	0-50000	18	4.8	4.8	4.8
	51000-100000	92	24.5	24.5	29.3
	101000-150000	95	25.3	25.3	54.7
	151000 Above	170	45.3	45.3	100.0
	Total	375	100.0	100.0	

Notes: SSC (Secondary School Certificate); HSSC (Higher Secondary School Certificate); MCPS (Member of college of physician and surgeon); FCPS (Fellow of the college of physician and surgeon)

Results and Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Table 03 shows that OC ranges from 14 to 70, with a mean of 42.21 and a standard deviation of 16.201. JIT ranges from 7 to 30, with a mean of 27.01 and a lower standard deviation of 4.343, suggesting that most participants experience high levels of JIT with relatively little variation. KS ranges from 4 to 28, with a mean of 15.10 and a standard deviation of 4.843, indicating moderate levels of KS. Lastly, PH, scores range from 6 to 42, with a mean of 24.70 and a standard deviation of 10.440, reflecting moderate levels of psychological resilience among participants, with notable variability in their responses.

Table 03: Descriptive Statistics

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
OC	14	70	42.21	16.201
JIT	7	30	27.01	4.343

KS	4	28	15.10	4.843
PS	6	42	24.70	10.440

Reliability Analysis

The bar chart presents that OC (0.796) exhibits strong reliability, which indicates a high level of internal consistency among their items. Similarly, JIT (0.749) also meets the acceptable threshold, showing moderate reliability. PH (0.839) suggesting a very strong internal consistency as it has the highest reliability. KS (0.781) also shows good reliability, confirming the consistency of the scale items. Since the Cronbach's Alpha values of all the variables are above 0.7 and they meet the acceptable reliability standard, which shows the appropriateness of using these scales for further statistical analysis.

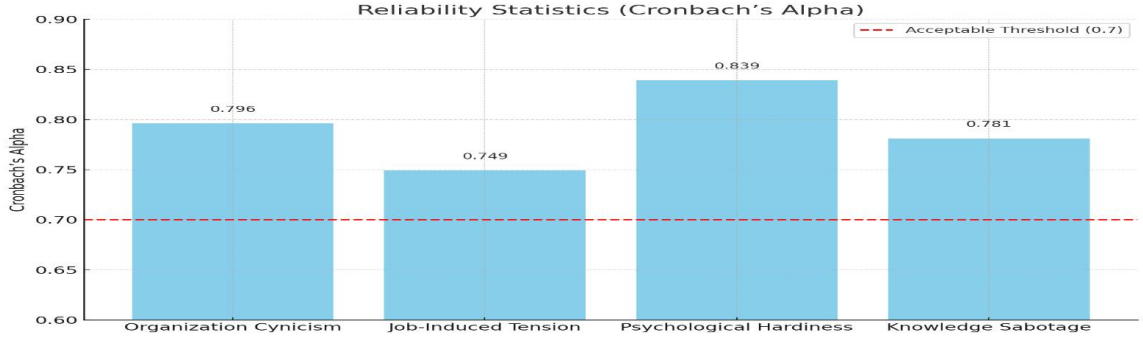


Figure 2: Reliability Statistics (Cronbach's Alpha) for Study Variables

Correlation Analysis

The correlation matrix shows several significant relationships among the study variables. OC is positively correlated with JIT ($r = 0.503$, $p < 0.01$) similarly, there is a significant positive relationship between OC and KS ($r = 0.427$, $p < 0.01$). PH has a significant negative correlation with KS ($r = -0.310$, $p < 0.01$), implying that individuals with higher psychological resilience are less likely to engage in KS. The correlation analysis supports our study's hypotheses.

Table 04: Correlation Matrix of Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5
1. OC	-0.011	1			
2. JIT	0.571**	0.503**	1		
3. KS	0.490**	0.427**	0.573**	1	
4. PH	0.054	0.076	0.084	-0.310**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Regression Analysis

R-value (0.761) shows a strong positive correlation between the independent variable and KS. Similarly, R^2 (0.579) has strong relationship which Shows that 57.9% of the variance in KS is explained by OC, JIT, and PH which shows a substantial proportion of variance in the dependent variable. Adjusted R^2 (0.575) shows for the number of predictors in the model which is slightly lower than R^2 but still confirms a good model fit. Standard Error of the Estimate having a value of (3.159) represents the average deviation

of the actual values from the predicted values while a lower standard error represents a better model fit. R^2 Change (0.579) and F Change (127.283, $p < 0.001$) reflects that as a whole the model is highly significant.

Table 05: Model Summary of Regression Analysis

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of Estimate	R^2 Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	0.761	0.579	0.575	3.159	0.579	127.283	4	370	0.000

ANOVA Table Interpretation

Regression Sum of Squares (5079.990) represents that the variance in KS is explained by the predictors (OC, JIT, PH). Residual Sum of Squares (3691.764) demonstrates the unexplained variance in KS and the total Sum of Squares (8771.754) reflects the total variance in the dependent variable. Mean Square is the sum of squares divided by the degrees of freedom (df). F-Statistic (127.283, $p < 0.001$) represents that the overall regression model is highly significant, which means that the independent variables collectively have a strong effect on KS. The p-value is (0.000) and since $p < 0.05$, therefore we reject the null hypothesis, which confirms that at least one of the predictors significantly influences KS. The ANOVA results reveal that the regression model is statistically significant ($F(4,370) = 127.283$, $p < 0.001$), which means that the predictors collectively contributes to the KS.

Table 06: ANOVA Results for Regression Model

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
Regression	5079.990	4	1269.998	127.283	0.000
Residual	3691.764	370	9.978	—	—
Total	8771.754	374	—	—	—

Regression Coefficients Interpretation

The table shows OC (B = 0.109, $p < 0.001$) demonstrates that a one-unit increase in OC increases KS by 0.109 units. The effect of their relationship is moderate (β = 0.366) and statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). JIT (B = 0.209, $p < 0.001$) which reflects that a one-unit increase in JIT increases KS by 0.209 units. The effect is moderate (β = 0.188) and also statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). PH (B = -0.174, $p < 0.001$) denotes that a one unit increase in PH decreases KS by 0.174 units. The negative coefficient (β = -0.375) shows that individuals with higher PH are less engaged in KS which suggests a protective role of PH. In the collinearity diagnostics, tolerance values where (all > 0.1) and VIF values (all < 10) reflects that multicollinearity is not a concern in this model. The highest VIF (2.418 for JIT) is still within the acceptable range, which confirms that the predictors are independent. Furthermore, all the independent variables significantly predict KS ($p < 0.001$).wherein, the OC (β = 0.366) is the strongest predictors while PH (β = -0.375) negatively signifies KS, suggesting it reduces its impact. All the hypotheses are supported.

Table 07: Regression Coefficients for Predicting Knowledge Sabotage

Predictor Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval	Tolerance	VIF
Constant	4.098	1.112	—	3.685	0.000	(1.911, 6.284)	—	—
Organizational Cynicism	0.109	0.013	0.366	8.489	0.000	(0.084, 0.135)	0.613	1.632
Job-Induced Tension	0.209	0.058	0.188	3.577	0.000	(0.094, 0.324)	0.414	2.418
Psychological Hardiness	-0.174	0.016	-0.375	-11.077	0.000	(-0.205, -0.143)	0.991	1.009

Regression Results for Direct Effects

The results reveal significant positive relationships between the predictor (OC) variable and the outcomes (JIT and KS). OC (B = 0.1349, p < 0.001) is positively associated with JIT. Additionally, OC (B = 0.0539, p < 0.001) also significantly contribute to KS. JIT (B = 0.3292, p < 0.001) shows a strong positive relationship with KS.

Table 08: Regression Results for Direct Effects

Predictor	Outcome	B	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
OC	JIT	0.1349	0.0120	11.2470	.000	0.1113	0.1585
OC	KS	0.0539	0.0126	4.2737	.000	0.0291	0.0787
JIT	KS	0.3292	0.0823	3.9984	.000	0.1673	0.4911

Regression Results (OC) for JIT

Table 09 presents that the constant term (B = 21.3122, p < 0.001) represents the baseline level of JIT when OC is at zero. This indicates that even in the absence of OC, there is still a significant level of JIT present, approximately 21.31. The high t-value (39.3058) and the small p-value (p < 0.001) indicate that this constant term is highly statistically significant. The effect of OC on JIT is 0.1349 (p < 0.001), indicating a positive and significant relationship. This means that for every one-unit increase in OC, JIT increases by 0.1349. The t-value (11.2470) is very high, confirming that the relationship is highly significant. The confidence interval (LLCI = 0.1113, ULCI = 0.1585) does not contain zero, confirming the significance of this effect.

Table 09: Regression Results for JIT

Predictor	Outcome	B	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	JIT	21.3122	0.5422	39.3058	.000	20.2461	22.3784
OC	JIT	0.1349	0.0120	11.2470	.000	0.1113	0.1585

Regression Results for KS

Table 10 presents the regression results for KS indicating that the constant term (B = 7.7330, p = 0.0004) indicates the baseline level of KS when all predictors are at zero. This suggests that even in the absence of OC, JIT, and PH, KS is still present at a significant level (approximately 7.73). The high t-value (3.5432) and the small p-value (p = 0.0004)

confirm that this baseline effect is statistically significant. The effect of OC on KS is 0.0539 (p = 0.000), indicating a positive relationship. The t-value (4.2737) and the confidence interval (LLCI = 0.0291, ULCI = 0.0787) confirm the statistical significance of this relationship. The effect of JIT on KS is 0.3459 (p = 0.000), indicating a strong positive relationship. The t-value (4.1937) and the confidence interval (LLCI = 0.1837, ULCI = 0.5082) indicate a robust and statistically significant effect. The effect of PH on KS is 0.0199 (p = 0.0000), suggesting that higher PH is associated with a lower likelihood of engaging in KS. The t-value (6.6144) and the confidence interval (LLCI = 0.0140, ULCI = 0.0258) confirm the significance of this relationship, indicating that employees with higher PH are less likely to engage in KS behaviors. The interaction effect between JIT and PH (JIT × PH) is -0.0006 (p = 0.0000), indicating a moderating role of PH. Specifically, higher levels of PH reduce the strength of the positive relationship between JIT and KS. The negative coefficient (t-value = -5.3410) and the confidence interval (LLCI = -0.0008, ULCI = -0.0004) indicate a significant moderation effect.

Table 10: Regression Results for KS

Predictor	Outcome	B	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	KS	7.7330	2.1825	3.5432	.0004	3.4414	12.0247
OC	KS	0.0539	0.0126	4.2737	.000	0.0291	0.0787
JIT	KS	0.3459	0.0825	4.1937	.000	0.1837	0.5082
PH	KS	0.0199	0.0030	6.6144	.0000	0.0140	0.0258
JIT × PH (Interaction Term)	KS	-0.0006	0.0001	-5.3410	.0000	-0.0008	-0.0004

Mediation Analysis (Bootstrapped Indirect Effects)

The indirect effect of OC (OC → JIT → KS) is 0.0835 (BootSE = 0.0095, BootLLCI = 0.0650, BootULCI = 0.1025). This suggests that OC significantly influences KS through JIT, with a significant mediation effect, indicated by the confidence interval (BootLLCI = 0.0650, BootULCI = 0.1025) not containing zero.

Table 11: Mediation Analysis (Bootstrapped Indirect Effects)

Predictor	Indirect Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
OC → JIT → KS	0.0835	0.0095	0.0650	0.1025

Mediation Analysis (Organizational Cynicism)

At low levels of PH (PH = 20), the indirect effect of OC on KS through JIT is 0.1638 (BootSE = 0.0195), with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.1266 to 0.2036. This indicates a significant and strong mediated effect. At medium levels of PH (PH = 30), the indirect effect is 0.1208 (BootSE = 0.0129), with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.0967 to 0.1469. This effect is still significant but weaker than at the low level of PH, indicating that employees with medium PH experience a reduced impact of OC on KS through JIT. At high levels of PH (PH = 40), the indirect effect is 0.0835 (BootSE = 0.0095), with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.0650 to 0.1025. This is the weakest indirect effect, suggesting that employees with high PH experience the least mediation of OC on KS through JIT.

Table 12: Mediation Analysis (Bootstrapped Indirect Effects)

PH Level	Indirect Effect (OC → JIT → KS)	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Low (20)	0.1638	0.0195	0.1266	0.2036
Medium (30)	0.1208	0.0129	0.0967	0.1469
High (40)	0.0835	0.0095	0.0650	0.1025

Conditional Effects of Job-Induced Tension at Different Levels of Psychological Hardiness

At low levels of PH, the effect of JIT on KS is 1.2140 (SE = 0.1087, t = 11.1677, p < 0.001) which indicates a strong positive relationship. The confidence interval (LLCI = 1.0002, ULCI = 1.4278) does not contain zero, confirming the statistical significance of this effect. At medium levels of PH, the effect of JIT on KS is 0.8955 (SE = 0.0620, t = 14.4475, p < 0.001). While still positive and significant, this effect is weaker than at low levels of PH. The confidence interval (LLCI = 0.7736, ULCI = 1.0173) confirms the significance of this effect. At high levels of PH, the effect of JIT on KS is 0.6188 (SE = 0.0518, t = 11.9359, p < 0.001). This is the smallest effect of JIT on KS, indicating that employees with high PH are the least likely to engage in KS behaviors. The confidence interval (LLCI = 0.5168, ULCI = 0.7207) also does not contain zero, confirming the statistical significance of this effect.

Table 13: Conditional Effects of Job-Induced Tension at Different Levels of Psychological Hardiness

PH (Moderator Level)	Effect (JIT → KS)	SE	T	p	LLCI	ULCI
(Low)	1.2140	0.1087	11.1677	.0000	1.0002	1.4278
(Medium)	0.8955	0.0620	14.4475	.0000	0.7736	1.0173
(High PH)	0.6188	0.0518	11.9359	.0000	0.5168	0.7207

Moderation Analysis (Interaction Effects)

The direct effect of JIT on KS (B = 0.3292, p < 0.001) confirms that JIT is positively associated with KS. As JIT increases, employees are more likely to engage in KS behaviors. The coefficient is significant, and the confidence interval (BootLLCI = 0.1673, BootULCI = 0.4911) does not contain zero, indicating a robust relationship. The direct effect of PH on KS is also significant (B = 0.0199, p < 0.001), indicating that higher PH is associated with a lower likelihood of KS. The coefficient suggests that individuals with higher levels of PH are less likely to engage in KS, possibly due to their greater resilience and coping abilities in stressful work environments. The confidence interval (BootLLCI = 0.0140, BootULCI = 0.0258) confirms the significance of this effect. The interaction effect between JIT and PH is negative (B = -0.0006, p < 0.001), indicating that PH moderates the relationship between JIT and KS. Specifically, higher levels of PH reduce the strength of the positive relationship between JIT and KS. This suggests that employees with greater PH are less likely to engage in KS, even when experiencing high levels of JIT. The negative coefficient is significant, and the confidence interval (BootLLCI = -0.0008, BootULCI = -0.0004) does not contain zero, confirming the moderation effect.

Table 14: Moderation Analysis (Interaction Effects)

Predictor	Outcome	B	SE	T	p	LLCI	ULCI
JIT	KS	0.3292	0.0823	3.9984	.000	0.1673	0.4911

PH	KS	0.0199	0.0030	6.6144	.000	0.0140	0.0258
JIT × PH	KS	-0.0006	0.0001	-5.3410	.000	-0.0008	-0.0004

Conditional Effects of Job-Induced Tension at Different Levels of Psychological Hardiness

At low levels of PH (PH = 20), the effect of JIT on KS is 1.1491 (SE = 0.1114, t = 10.3109, p < 0.001). This indicates a strong positive relationship between JIT and KS. Employees with low PH show the highest effect of JIT on KS, suggesting that JIT significantly leads to KS in less resilient employees. The confidence interval (LLCI = 0.9299, ULCI = 1.3682) does not contain zero, confirming that this effect is statistically significant. At medium levels of PH (PH = 30), the effect of JIT on KS is 0.8482 (SE = 0.0649, t = 13.0708, p < 0.001). This effect is still positive and significant, though weaker than at low levels of PH. The confidence interval (LLCI = 0.7206, ULCI = 0.9759) confirms the significance of this effect. At high levels of PH (PH = 40), the effect of JIT on KS is 0.5869 (SE = 0.0535, t = 10.9796, p < 0.001) further supporting the idea that individuals with higher PH are better able to cope with stress and thus less likely to engage in KS. The confidence interval (LLCI = 0.4818, ULCI = 0.6920) again does not contain zero, confirming the statistical significance of this effect.

Table 15: Conditional Effects of Job-Induced Tension at Different Levels of Psychological Hardiness

PH (Moderator Level)	Effect (JIT → KS)	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
20(Low)	1.1491	0.1114	10.3109	.0000	0.9299	1.3682
30(Medium)	0.8482	0.0649	13.0708	.0000	0.7206	0.9759
40 (High)	0.5869	0.0535	10.9796	.0000	0.4818	0.6920

Discussion

The study's findings supported the model. The results confirm that negative organizational environment, marked by organizational cynicism contributes to increased job-induced tension, which in turn leads to knowledge sabotage based upon the Social cognitive theory (SCT). The findings also support existing literature that organizational cynicism is critical stressors in the workplace that influence employee behavior. Similarly, result shows significant relationship between Job induced tension and Knowledge sabotage. The mediating role of job-induced tension between organizational cynicism and knowledge sabotage is significant, confirming that job-induced tension mediates the relationship between the organizational cynicism and the occurrence of knowledge sabotage. The moderating role of psychological hardiness between job-induced tension and knowledge sabotage has significant negative effect which buffers the relationship between job-induced tension and knowledge sabotage. Additionally, Organizations can help mitigate the negative effects of organizational cynicism and reduce knowledge sabotage by fostering resilience among employees because as psychological hardiness increases, the effect of job-induced tension on knowledge sabotage decreases.

Table 18: Hypothesis/ statements status

H#	Statements/ Hypothesis	Status (Significant/ Insignificant)
H_1	There is a positive relationship between organizational cynicism and Knowledge Sabotage.	Significant
H_2	There is a positive relationship between organizational cynicism and job induced tension.	Significant
H_3	Job induced tension positively and significantly mediates the relationship between organizational cynicism and knowledge sabotage.	Significant
H_4	There is positive relationship between job induced tension and knowledge sabotage.	Significant
H_5	Psychological hardiness positively and significantly moderates the relationship between job induced tension and knowledge sabotage.	Significant

Theoretical Implications

The effects of organizational cynicism on knowledge sabotage has been mainly ignored by the previous research studies. Our research extends the social cognitive theory, by presenting a more comprehensive framework for analyzing the association between organizational cynicism and knowledge sabotage. Our findings results in a positive relationship between organizational cynicisms, job induced tension and knowledge sabotage which conceptualizes job induced tension as a response to organizational cynicism among health sector workers which ultimately leads to knowledge sabotage even within highly skilled occupations as cynicism correlate with burnout, increasing job-induced tension. The results shows that job induced tension significantly impact knowledge sabotage. The findings support the hypothesis that psychological hardiness reduces the positive relationship between job induced tension and knowledge sabotage which emphasizes the importance of psychological hardiness to promote positive work outcomes. This presents an exciting opportunity for future conceptual and empirical research to explore and understand the nuances of psychological hardiness and its impact on employee experiences and outcomes.

Practical Implications

According to our research findings, negative workplace environment such as organizational cynicism leads to negative employee attitudes and behavior, which can undermine organizational performance. Organizations can discourage knowledge sabotage by implementing training and learning programs that can help them to view their jobs as stepping stones. Moreover, employees who exhibit psychological hardiness are better equipped to handle workplace stress without resorting to destructive behaviors, such as job induced tension and knowledge sabotage. The finding emphasizes the importance of addressing organizational cynicism as a key factors in stress-induced behaviors like knowledge sabotage. Organizations can mitigate the negative effects of organizational cynicism on employee outcomes by addressing job tension related issues by implementing strategies and approaches that efficiently reduce job induced tension

thereby encouraging employees to be proactive in raising concerns and provides a realistic work preview. Employees can avoid negative outcomes by focusing on the solutions to improve knowledge sharing behavior. Those who excel in psychological hardiness may find them particularly useful in easing negative attitude and feelings about counter productive workplace behavior. However, our research findings further suggests that placing these workers in an environment with others who share their characteristics can better gauge their sentiments and help organizations better manage their skills and expertise.

Conclusion and Future Direction

We examined a mediated moderated model that provide key findings which indicates a positive relationship between organizational cynicisms, job induced tension and knowledge sabotage. Cynical employee leads to job induced tension, which in turn results in knowledge sabotage which negatively affect organizational environment, productivity and outcomes. We examined that job induced tension which mediates the proposed hypotheses. Based upon the social cognitive theory, when an employee induces tension due to the job, they are more likely to engage in knowledge sabotage which results in negative workplace behavior. Furthermore, we investigated and examined the moderating role of psychological hardiness which moderates or weaken the direct link between job induced tension and knowledge sabotage, and indirectly effecting organizational cynicism and knowledge sabotage. Unlike other research studies, this research study has also several limitations which needs to be overcome by the future researchers. First, future research should incorporate alternative method other than self-reported questionnaire i.e., experimental design, observational studies to ensure accuracy and reliability. Second, various other cultures, organizations, sectors may be opted for better generalizability of our research model. Third, Incorporation of broader and larger sample size could have different results. Fourth, the current research being a cross-sectional, future researcher should conduct time lag or longitudinal. Fifth, qualitative research study instead of quantitative can have more in-depth view of the phenomena. Sixth, several other mediating and moderating variable such as role conflict, burnout, and various leadership styles such as ethical leadership etc can be significant effect.

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