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The Effect of Coworker Trust, Transformational Leadership and Job Stress on Organizational Cynicism During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: This study aimed to examine the effect of coworker trust, job stress and transformational leadership on organizational cynicism where employee silence is a moderating factor between the effects of job stress and organizational cynicism. This study involved 185 respondents who were all employees of PT. Santiniluwansa Lestari & Joint Venture Company. This research applied a quantitative approach. Then, it used primary data obtained from the results of filling out the questionnaire. The data was then analyzed using the Partial Least Square analysis technique using the SmartPLS program. Based on the results of the analysis in this study, it was found that: (1) coworker trust has a negative effect on organizational cynicism, (2) transformational leadership has a negative effect on organizational cynicism, (3) job stress has a positive effect on organizational cynicism and (4) employee silence strengthens the effect of job stress on organizational cynicism. Thus, it is concluded that good coworker trust and transformational leadership can suppress the occurrence of organizational cynicism, while high job stress can increase the occurrence of organizational cynicism. The results of the analysis also show that the more silent employees are, the higher the effect of job stress on the occurrence of cynicism in the organization.

Keywords: coworker trust, transformational leadership, job stress, Partial Least Square.

I. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of Covid-19 at the end of 2019 caused a stir that caused everyone's concern because, unexpectedly, the virus quickly spread throughout the world. Fear of transmitting Covid-19 can trigger psychiatric symptoms such as depression, confusion, stress and anxiety among individuals, even those who have never previously experienced mental illness (Shigemura et al, 2020). In addition, the lack of knowledge about Covid-19 and the widespread confusion about information about the disease can increase anxiety and fear among individuals (Tang et al, 2018).

The impact of Covid-19 on the world of work is the emergence of the WFH (work from home) system, which is an appeal from the WHO (World Health Organization). The company, where the research was conducted, implemented a WFH (work from home) system. However, the negative impact of WFH, among others, can increase job stress. For instance, causes of increased job stress include problematic internet connections or lack of work concentration because working at home is not as conducive as working in the office (work from office).

Organizational cynicism is a negative attitude towards the organization in hiring someone. Organizational cynicism, consists of three dimensions: (1) the belief that the organization lacks integrity, (2) a negative influence on the organization, and (3) a tendency to disparage and critical behavior against the organization that is consistent with beliefs and influence (Dean et al, 1998). In addition, Chiaburu et al (2013) found in a meta-analysis that organizational cynicism has a greater effect on attitudes and behavior than positive constructive organizational beliefs. Organizational cynicism can have significant implications for an organization, so managers must understand what needs to be done first to minimize negative impacts (Dean et al., 1998).

In addition, this study focuses on the fact that organizational cynicism can be a serious problem in an organization which was previously characterized by relatively less intense competition. Today, however, public organizations are increasingly being forced to reform inefficient practices by restructuring and changing human resource policies (Blau, 1964; Schraeder et al, 2005). As a result, many public organizations have adopted practices such as performance-based compensation and dismissal of underperforming employees that are typical of nonprofit organizations (Schraeder et al, 2005). As employees of a public organization, we recognize that this transition deviates from the general policy of nonprofit organizations. Organizational cynicism can become a serious problem for public organizations in this process because it can damage the interests of non-profit organizations and cause disappointment and frustration for the organization.

In this study, the factors that cause organizational cynicism in public organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic are specifically analyzed. Previous research focused on task and work environment antecedents experienced by employees and suggested managers to practically manage the factors that lead to organizational cynicism.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development **Organizational Cynicism**

The irony of organizational cynicism is often a picture of employees who experience injustice in organizational practices and policies (Stanley et al, 2005). The irony of organizational cynicism can have a significant negative impact on an organization especially on performance. In addition, the survival of an organization requires awareness, prevention and control of this organizational cynicism.

Employee evaluation in the public sector focuses on coworker trust, transformational leadership and job stress as factors that affect organizational cynicism. This study also assessed how job stress can reduce the impact of organizational cynicism through employee silence (Dyne et al, 2003; Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Employee silence is a work pressure on organizational cynicism, because traditional and conservative organizations such as public organizations are more likely to hesitate to make such statements than other organizations (Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

Coworker Trust and Organizational Cynicism

Work is an important indicator of the quality of social relations in a work unit. Coworker trust has been defined as a person's desire to be vulnerable to the behavior of coworkers who have no control over their actions (Tan & Lim, 2009). Coworker trusts expect behavior to be reciprocal and allow peers to provide mutual support or benefits (Blau, 1964). This reduces the possibility of opportunistic behavior where colleagues trust each other and can effectively contribute to organizational outcomes (Colquitt, LePine, Zapata, & Wild, 2011)

Coworker trust can also reduce the cynicism of an organization. Organizational events can have a negative impact on employees. However, handling the situation may require a different way based on social relationships with coworkers. Through coworker trust, employees can understand this as a challenge to overcome with colleagues (Simha & Elloy & Huang, 2014). Coworker trust can act as an antidote to reduce fatigue at work (Tan & Lim, 2009). It can help employees to accept organizational changes in a more positive direction. In the future, employees who trust their co-workers will trust the integrity and goodwill of the organization more than employees who do not. When public organizations implement market-oriented reforms, employees may initially experience negative effects due to work discomfort and pressure to perform. However, reliable employees tend to view it as necessary and inevitable for the survival of the organization. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Coworker trust has a negative correlation with organizational cynicism.

Transformational Leadership and Organizational Cynicism

The leadership style of a leader has a significant impact on employee attitudes and performance (Bass, 1998; Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson 2003). Transformational leadership creates a vision that inspires and motivates employees to work towards a new vision (Bass, 1998). These leaders empower employees to overcome difficulties and challenges by developing their abilities, skills and knowledge. To achieve organizational goals, employees are influenced by creative leaders who actively communicate and share information to form cooperative teams (Richardson & Vandenberg, 2005)

Creative transformational leaders can reduce organizational cynicism. Individual attention and intellectual stimulation of employees can reduce the potential for organizational cynicism by encouraging them to believe in growth that is aligned with the organization (Bakker et al, 2004). When the application of transformational leadership improves, the level of employee motivation and job satisfaction will also increase (Casmun et al, 2020; Ratina et al, 2020). Transformational leadership with a knowledge codification strategy has a significant and positive correlation (Gunawan et al, 2020)

Attention from the leader can increase trust not only for the leader but for the entire organization (Stanley et al, 2005). In this situation, employees are less likely to interpret organizational difficulties as unfair.

The impact of transformational leadership on organizational cynicism is very strong when an organization is in transition. Under the leadership of innovation leaders in public organizations moving to market-driven systems, employees can see organizational change as an opportunity rather than a threat and identify themselves as change agents rather than victims of change. This leads to lower levels of organizational cynicism. Thus, we put forward the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Transformational leadership has a negative correlation with organizational cynicism.

Job Stress and Organizational Cynicism

Work-related discomforts may be experienced by employees at work such as unwanted physical contact, psychological stress and/or negative emotional arousal (Cavanaugh et al, 2000). Three commonly used theoretical models related to job stress are job characteristics (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), effort and reward imbalances (Siegrist, 1996) and job demand resources (Bakker et al, 2004).

Based on the business characteristics model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), employees experience job stress due to lack of diversity in work such as in work technology, identity and interests, autonomy and acceptance of inappropriate responses (Taylor & Bain, 1999). Employees, working in such unfavorable conditions, cannot change meaningful decisions about their obligations and are not rewarded fairly by the organization. As a result, in the long run, these employees are isolated and cynical about the organization (Taylor & Bain, 1999).

The effort-reward imbalance model (Siegrist, 1996) shows that employees feel negative at work when the effort required to complete the job is greater than the rewards (salary, promotion opportunities and job security). This shows that employees will experience stress. Such feelings can lead to organizational cynicism because employees tend to think that the organization exploits them for nothing.

Job demands according to the resource model (Bakker et al, 2004) and job demands are factors that deplete employees physically and/or psychologically, such as the environment, unprofitable work and pressure to achieve goals (Bakker et al, 2004). Employment data sources are aspects of work that help employees achieve business goals, reduce job demands and achieve personal growth, learning and development. Employees experience high levels of job stress when job demands are high but without the support of adequate work resources (Bakker et al, 2004; Hakonen et al, 2008; Taris & Schaufeli, 2015). Therefore, this situation can create a sense of cynicism towards the organization. Therefore, we put forward the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Job stress has a positive correlation with organizational cynicism.

Effect of Employee Silence

Morrison & Milliken, (2000) found that organizational silence is a collective phenomenon caused by organizational context factors. Employees are not respected by the organization in expressing opinions in accordance with their interests. Employees in organizations experience social pressure to conform to the norm of silence (Prouska & Psychogios, 2018). This is generally stronger in organizations characterized by narrow hierarchies and management's fear of negative comments, such as public organizations with more conservative organizational cultures than private organizations (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). In addition, public organizations are often more complex and ambiguous in their goals than private organizations. This is partly due to the lack of sales and revenue rules as well as competitive requirements such as efficiency and equity (Chun & Rainey, 2005). As a result, managers can be overly sensitive to employee feedback because there are few other objective performance indicators.

Workplace stress can have a more serious impact on organizational cynicism for employees who are silent than those who speak their mind. When employees are silent for a long period of time they tend to not care and feel isolated in the organization (Bagheri & Zarei & Aeen, 2012). They tend to interpret the characteristics of work and stressful working conditions as unfair to their own advantage and are very cynical about the organization. On the other hand, employees who express their opinion against the norm of silence actively can jeopardize their interests to improve the organization (Dyne et al, 2003). Actions that are the result of organizational commitment can also contribute to increasing employee participation in the organization (Staw, 1981). As a result, employees who express opinions in organizations tend to be less cynical about the organization than employees who are stressed and silent. Employee voice behavior can also increase employee self-efficacy by taking action for constructive organizational change. Schwarzer & Hallum (2008) found that highly productive employees experience less stress at work. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: The positive effect of job stress on organizational cynicism will be greater for employees who are silent than for those who express their opinions.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a quantitative study. The population of this research is the employees of PT. Santiniluwansa Lestari & Joint Venture Company throughout Indonesia. By using the saturated sample method, all members of the population, totaling 185 employees, were used as research samples. This study uses primary data obtained from the results of filling out the questionnaire. The research data were then analyzed using the SEM PLS (Partial Least Square) analysis technique with the help of the SmartPLS program.

ANALYSIS RESULTS AND CHANGES

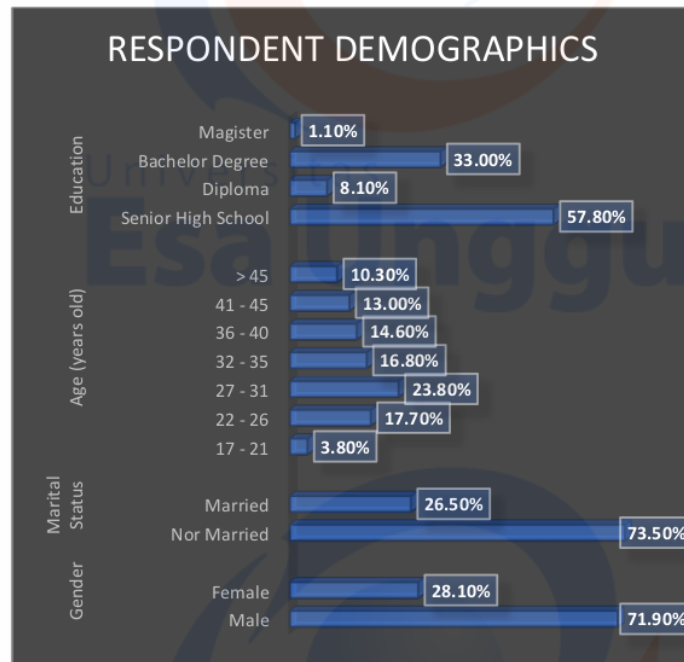


Figure 1. Respondent Demographics

Based on Figure 1, from the gender of the respondents, the results of the analysis show that of the 185 respondents studied in this study, most of them are male (71.9%), while the remaining 28.1% of respondents are female. Furthermore, from marital status, the results of the analysis show that of the 185 respondents studied in this study, 73.5% of respondents were married while the remaining 26.5% of respondents were not married. Furthermore, in terms of age, respondents in this study were dominated by respondents aged 27-31 years. Meanwhile, in terms of education, the results of the analysis show that most of the respondents in this study have educational background of Senior High School (57.8%).

PLS Analysis Results

Hypothesis testing in this study was carried out using the Partial Least Square (PLS) analysis technique with the help of the SmartPLS program. Based on the operational definition of research variables, Coworker Trust is an exogenous latent construct with 6 measurement indicators, Transformational Leadership is an exogenous latent construct with 11 measurement indicators, Job Stress is an exogenous latent construct with 6 measurement indicators, Organizational cynicism is an endogenous latent construct with 5 measurement indicators. Meanwhile, employee silence is a latent construct that acts as a moderator of the relationship between job stress and organizational cynicism with 5 measurement indicators.

The stages in this PLS analysis include the outer model testing phase and the inner model testing phase. The outer model testing phase is used to test the validity and reliability of all indicators in measuring their constructs, while the inner model testing is used to test research hypotheses. The measurement model testing phase includes testing Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity and Composite Reliability. The results of the PLS analysis can be used to test the research hypothesis if all indicators in the PLS model have met the requirements of convergent validity, discriminant validity and composite reliability.

Convergent validity test is done by looking at the loading factor value of each indicator to the construct. The indicator is declared to meet the criteria for convergent validity if the loading factor value is above 0.7. In addition to looking at the loading factor value of each indicator, convergent validity must also be assessed from the AVE value of each construct. All constructs in the PLS model are declared to have met convergent validity if the AVE value of each construct is > 0.5 . Discriminant validity is carried out to ensure that each concept of each latent variable is different from other variables. The model has good discriminant validity if the AVE square value of each exogenous construct (the value on the diagonal) exceeds the correlation

between the construct and other constructs (the value below the diagonal). Construct reliability can be assessed from Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for each construct. The recommended value of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha is more than 0.7, but in development research, because the limit of loading factor used is low (0.5), the low value of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha is still acceptable as long as the validity requirements are convergent and discriminant validity has been met.

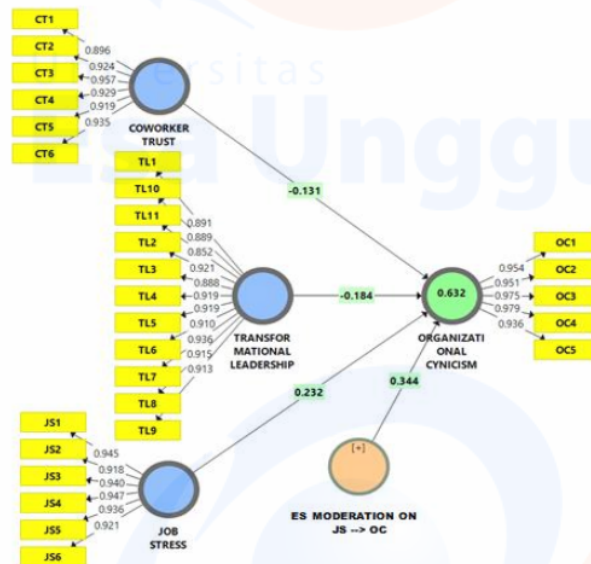


Figure 2. Estimation Results from the PLS Model

Based on the estimation results of the PLS model in Figure 2 above, all indicators in each construct have a loading factor value above 0.7, the AVE value of all constructs in the form of dimensions and variables has exceeded 0.5 which indicates that all indicators in each construct has met the required convergent validity criteria. Furthermore, based on the results of the discriminant validity test in Table 2, testing using the Fornell Larcker method shows that all indicators have a square root value of AVE > from the correlation of the construct with other constructs. In the discriminant validity test by looking at the HTMT constructs, all constructs having HTMT < 0.90 indicate that all indicators and constructs in the PLS model have met the required discriminant validity criteria.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Indicator	Loading Factor	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
CT1	0.896	0.859	0.968	0.973
CT2	0.924			
CT3	0.957			
CT4	0.929			
CT5	0.919			
CT6	0.935			
ES1	0.935	0.855	0.958	0.967
ES2	0.898			
ES3	0.960			
ES4	0.941			
ES5	0.886			
JS * ES	1.169	1.000	1.000	1.000
JS1	0.945	0.874	0.971	0.976
JS2	0.918			
JS3	0.940			
JS4	0.947			
JS5	0.936			

Indicator	Loading Factor	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
JS6	0.921			
OC1	0.954	0.919	0.978	0.983
OC2	0.951			
OC3	0.975			
OC4	0.979			
OC5	0.936			
TL1	0.891	0.819	0.978	0.980
TL10	0.889			
TL11	0.852			
TL2	0.921			
TL3	0.888			
TL4	0.919			
TL5	0.919			
TL6	0.910			
TL7	0.936			
TL8	0.915			
TL9	0.913			

After going through the outer model testing phase and all the indicators and constructs proved to be valid and reliable, the test continued to the inner model testing phase. The inner model test includes an assessment of the goodness of fit structural model, an assessment of the path coefficient, a test of the significance of the partial effect of exogenous variables on endogenous variables and the calculation of the coefficient of determination.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity Test Results

Discriminant Validity Testing using Fornell Larcker Test Method						
	CT	ES	JS	MOD	OC	TL
CT	0.927					
ES	-0.012	0.924				
JS	-0.688	-0.173	0.935			
MOD	-0.006	0.398	-0.071	1.000		
OC	-0.412	-0.505	0.541	0.135	0.959	
TL	0.686	0.023	-0.763	0.017	-0.458	0.905
Discriminant Validity Testing using HTMT Method						
	CT	ES	JS	MOD	OC	TL
CT						
ES	0.100					
JS	0.712	0.169				
MOD_JS	0.021	0.408	0.079			
OC	0.399	0.510	0.545	0.138		
TL	0.707	0.109	0.782	0.060	0.464	

Goodness of fit test of PLS model is performed by looking at the values of R Square, Q Square and SRMR model. In this test, the value of R square model shows the predictive power of the model from the power of exogenous variables in predicting endogenous variables. The value of R square is categorized into 3 categories, namely strong, moderate and weak. According to (Chin, 1998) the R square value of 0.67 indicates that the PLS model is strong, 0.33 indicates the PLS model is in the moderate category) and 0.19 indicates that the PLS model is in the weak category. Furthermore, in testing the value of the Q Square model, the Q square value is categorized into 3 categories, namely small, moderate and large, the Q square value of 0.02 is declared small, the Q square value of 0.15 is moderate and the Q square value is 0.35. declared large. Furthermore, in the test that looks at the SRMR value, the model is declared fit if $SRMR < 0.10$ and the model is declared perfect fit if $SRMR < 0.080$.

Table 3. Test Results of Goodness of Fit Model

Parameter	Criteria	Results
R Square	0.67 Strong; 0.33 Moderate; 0.19 Weak (Chin, 1998)	0.632
Q Square	0.02 Small; 0.15 Moderate; 0.35 Large (Chin, 1998)	0.573
SRMR	<0.10 fit; < 0.08 perfect fit (Hair, 2017)	0.069

Based on the results of the goodness of fit test in the table above, the R Square model value in the moderate category is $0.632 > 0.33$; the value of Q Square in the large category is $0.573 > 0.35$ and the SRMR model in the perfect fit category is $0.069 < 0.08$.

After the inner model meets the goodness of fit criteria from the R square, Q Square and SRMR model values, the test is continued on the inner model testing. In this test, the significance of the path coefficient is tested by looking at the statistical T value and p value of each path coefficient. With a level of 5%, the path coefficient is declared significant if the T statistic > 1.65 and p value < 0.05 because the hypothesis in this study is a one-tailed hypothesis so that the T statistic is compared with the T table of 1.65. The results of the coefficient significance test, this path is then used to test the research hypothesis.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Results of Effect

No	Hypotheses	Analysis Results	Hypothesis Testing Results
1	Coworker trust has a negative correlation with organizational cynicism	Path Coeff = -0.131; T Stat = 1.997; P value = 0.023	accepted
2	Transformational leadership has a negative correlation with organizational cynicism	Path Coeff = -0.184; T Stat = 2.064; p value = 0.020	accepted
3	Job stress has a significant effect on Organizational Cynicism	Path Coeff = 0.232; T Stat = 2.500; p value = 0.006	accepted
4	The positive effect of job stress on organizational cynicism will be greater for employees who are silent	Path Coeff = 0.344; T Stat = 4.246; p value = 0.000	accepted

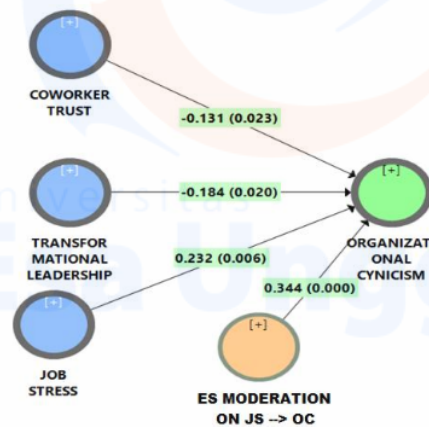


Figure 3. The estimation results of the PLS (bootstrapping) model

Based on the results of the analysis in Table 4 above, the following results were obtained:

- **Hypothesis 1.** The results of the analysis in Table 5 show that the path coefficient value of the influence of coworker trust on cynical organizations is negative at -0.131 with a p value of 0.023 and a T statistic of 1.997. Due to the p value < 0.05 and T stat > 1.65 , hypothesis 1 is accepted and it is concluded that coworker trust has a negative and significant effect on organizational cynicism. The higher the coworker trust, the less cynicism occurs in the organization.

- **Hypothesis 2.** The results of the analysis in Table 4 show that the value of the path coefficient of transformational leadership on organizational cynicism is -0.184 with a T statistic of 2.500 and a p value of 0.020, so hypothesis 2 is accepted and it is concluded that good transformational leadership is proven to suppress cynicism in organizations.
- **Hypothesis 3.** The results of the analysis in Table 4 show that the path coefficient value of the effect of job stress on organizational cynicism is 0.232 with a T statistic of 2.500 and a p value of 0.006. The results of the analysis show that hypothesis 3 is accepted and it is concluded that high job stress can significantly increase the occurrence of organizational cynicism.
- **Hypothesis 4.** The results of the analysis in Table 4 show that the path coefficient of the moderating effect of employee silence on the effect of job stress on cynical organizations is positive at 0.344 with a T statistic of 4.246 and a p value of 0.000. It means that hypothesis 4 is accepted and it is concluded that employee silence can strengthen the effect of job stress on organizational cynicism. It also shows that the effect of job stress on organizational cynicism will be more visible in employees who are silent.

III. DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that coworker trust has a negative effect on organizational cynicism. The higher the coworker trust, the lower the cynicism in the organization. According to (Tan & Lim, 2009) coworker trust is a mutual trust that is formed between members of the organization so that it affects the behavior of one worker with another. Employees who trust each other will help each other so that career competition will be lower and organizational cynicism will decrease. This is in contrast to poor employee relations and very low trust between employees, which will lead to more conflict and career competition so that organizational cynicism will be higher (Blau, 1964). In the article Colquitt, LePine, Zapata, & Wild (2011) explained that coworker trust will reduce job competition which in turn will have an impact on contributing to good performance for the organization because members of the organization work together to achieve common goals. (Simha, Elloy, and Huang, 2014) also stated that coworker trust can assist employees in solving problems at work, this also supports the formation of a good work environment so as to reduce the occurrence of organizational cynicism.

In addition to coworker trust, the results of this study also show that transformational leadership has a negative effect on organizational cynicism. In (Bass, 1998; Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson 2003) it is stated that superior leadership is a factor that has a significant effect on performance. Transformational leadership also affects employee attitudes in accepting changes in the organization. Good superior leadership can form good relationships between employees so that they can work cooperatively. This cooperative cooperation will reduce organizational cynicism that may be formed within the organization. This is because a good leader will provide education to employees to be able to work together to achieve common goals. Thus, organizational cynicism will decrease along with the strengthening of good relations between employees through good leadership direction. The results of this study are also supported by the statement (Bakker et al, 2004) which states that transformational leadership can reduce organizational cynicism. Stanley et al (2005) stated that leadership attention will increase employee confidence in the leadership and organization. This will further suppress the occurrence of cynicism in the organization because of the high trust between employees and other employees, leaders and the organization itself.

The results of this analysis indicate that job stress can increase organizational cynicism. Job stress tends to make a person reluctant to make physical contact and cause negative emotions at work (Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau 2000). In Taylor & Bain (1999), job stress is influenced by the absence of job feedback so that work results are not evaluated properly. Besides, job stress can also be caused by not appreciating work results. If organizational members do not respect each other, organizational cynicism will increase which has an impact on the emergence of conflict and decreased work motivation.

The results of this study indicate that employee silence can strengthen the effect of job stress on organizational cynicism. (Morrison & Milliken, 2000) states that organizational silence is formed due to pressure on employees to follow company norms and rules. This silence was also caused because the organization never listened to complaints and input from members of the organization. Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero (2003) state that organizational silence is caused by not listening to organizational opinions or complaints which can lead to perceptions of work injustice. Thus, employees assume that the job stress they experience is the result of injustice in the division of tasks which will trigger high job cynicism. In employees who are silent, they have mostly tried to raise work problems but were ignored by the organization. In the absence of attention, employees choose to remain silent so that the pressures experienced on employees who are silent are actually higher. Thus, job stress experienced by employees is very likely to trigger very high organizational cynicism compared to organizations with high job stress but employee opinions and complaints can still be considered and resolved together.

IV. CONCLUSION

The conclusions obtained from the results of the study are as follows:

1. Coworker trust has a negative effect on organizational cynicism. The higher the coworker trust, the lower the organizational cynicism.
2. Transformational leadership has a negative effect on organizational cynicism. High transformational leadership can suppress the occurrence of organizational cynicism.
3. Job stress has a positive effect on organizational cynicism. High job stress on employees can trigger high organizational cynicism
4. Silent employees can increase the effect of job stress in triggering organizational cynicism. The more employees who are silent, the higher the effect of job stress on the emergence of organizational cynicism.

V. SUGGESTION

The results of this study can contribute to the company that organizational cynicism in the company can be suppressed by increasing trust between employees and improving the quality of transformational leadership. In addition, organizational cynicism can also be suppressed by reducing job stress that occurs in employees. In addition to these three factors, the company must also try to be a good listener, listen to every employee's complaint and provide the best solution because employees who are silent will have a high level of job stress and greater organizational cynicism which can trigger a decrease in work motivation, work conflict and hinder work motivation. achievement of company goals.

In addition to the contribution to the company, this study also provides direction for further research to modify the model in this study by adding variables that have not been studied. Several previous studies have shown that the work environment and organizational commitment can also trigger organizational cynicism so that further research can include these variables in the research model.

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