



The Price of silence, isolation, and cynicism: The impact on occupational frustration

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ABSTRACT

In today's competitive business landscape, organisational dynamics like *silence*, *isolation*, and *cynicism* deeply influence employee well-being. Understanding these is vital in the private sector for a productive and harmonious workplace. This study examined the impact of organisational silence (OS), organisational isolation (OI), and organisational cynicism (OC) on occupational frustration (OF) among private sector employees in Oman. A survey was conducted, and the collected data were analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM) with SmartPLS software. The final sample size included 390 participants. The results indicated that OI and OC were significant predictors of, while OS did not show a significant impact. The findings suggest that decreasing OI and OC in the workplace can contribute to a decrease in OF among employees. The study provides recommendations for organizations to improve their policies and work practices to alleviate occupational frustration among their employees. This research highlights the importance of addressing organisational factors to enhance employee well-being and job satisfaction in the workplace.

1. Introduction

Businesses face numerous external and internal threats and challenges. Many businesses struggle to maintain their competitiveness in the face of rapidly evolving technology due to the speed and manner in which the business environment undergoes changes [1]. Therefore, depending on the nature of the situation, organizations may meet some of the workers' desires and needs. However, they will not always be able to meet their needs and requests, causing individuals to feel frustration and despair [2]. Employees are the main driver of organizations. Without them, an organisation cannot continue its work. It is important to know the value and importance of staff in the institution. However, many employees in various sectors feel frustrated at work due to the lack of motivation to work, which

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motivates them to perform [3]. These problems in the work environment may generate some negative and undesirable behaviours in the workers and their work, making them feel frustrated and unwilling to complete work-related tasks on time [4].

OF is an important topic in the literature on organisational behaviour, especially as organizations tend to expand and grow in size. As a result, the work environment has become more complex, and workers' desires, needs and aspirations have increased more than in any previous period. Therefore, depending on the nature of the situation, organizations may meet some of the workers' desires and needs. However, they will not always be able to meet their needs and requests, causing individuals to feel frustration and despair [2]. Because of such organisational factors in the work environment, it is important to know the reasons behind their formation and spread among the employees because of their great impact on the workers and the many losses for the organisation [3].

This study will shed light on some of the organisational factors associated with the work environment, such as organisational silence (OS), organisational isolation (OI) and organisational cynicism (OC), and their influence on OF private sector firms in Oman because of their great importance, especially in the recent period. This is because some describe OF as a disease that exhausts and tires workers. If this feeling is repeated more than once and in more than one situation, with time, workers are unable to go through and face challenges and adapt to the atmosphere at work [5].

In this context, there are various theories that relate silence, isolation, cynicism, and occupational frustration. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model is one of these theories and contends that job demands and job resources are significant predictors of occupational outcomes, such as job satisfaction and worker well-being [6]. According to the JD-R model, high job demands and limited job resources can lead to burnout, which is characterized by depersonalization, decreased personal success, and emotional weariness. Burnout can cause cynicism and detachment from work, which can lead to people becoming less engaged and communicative in the workplace. This might lead to feelings of isolation and an unwillingness to communicate with people, exacerbating occupational frustration [7]. The link between the JD-R model and occupational frustration has been supported by research. De Lange et al. found that job expectations and job resources were connected with burnout, which was related to occupational frustration [8]. Similarly, Leiter and Maslach found that burnout correlated with negative attitudes toward work, such as cynicism and reduced communication [9].

We can say that the JD-R model offers an effective framework for understanding the relationship between silence, isolation, cynicism, and occupational frustration. Organizations can help to prevent or mitigate these negative outcomes by identifying the variables that contribute to frustration and promoting job resources. Beyond the JD-R model, other theories that propose a link between silence, isolation, cynicism, and occupational frustration include the Conservation of Resources Theory (COR), and the Social Exchange Theory (SE). According to these theories, employees who believe they are not receiving adequate support or resources from their employer or colleagues may become disengaged and less willing to communicate or cooperate with others, leading to feelings of isolation and dissatisfaction. This can lead to cynicism and detachment from work, which can increase occupational frustration [10].

In this framework, organisational factors and OF behaviour are critical subjects for organizations to achieve their goals. Therefore, the primary goal of this study is to examine how organisational factors, namely OS, OI and OC, affect occupational frustration among employees. This study focuses on Oman's private service sector, as it is the most important sector for bolstering the Omani economy and employs many individuals. Moreover, this sector plays a crucial role in enhancing economic, social, tourism, and development aspects by creating job opportunities, delivering goods and services in support of economic growth to keep pace with the vision of Oman 2040. The importance of this sector also emerges as a result of its great contribution to creating abundant job opportunities for Omanis and expatriates. Employment rates in this sector stood at about 78 % of the total workforce in Oman during the past ten years. The number of workers in the private sector rose from 176.3 thousand in 1980 to 1.626 million by the end of 2019 [11].

Our study contributes to the existing literature by addressing Durrah and Chaudhary's call [12] that there is ample scope to consider the factors that influence organisational staff behaviours. Consequently, it is vital to unearth the facts that support these effects. Generally, research in this area is still limited, and more extensive exploration is needed to determine the effect of these variables. This study attempts to delve into this previously unexplored area, offering an in-depth insight into organisational factors and their impact on career frustration, particularly from the standpoint of Omani private-sector employees. The purpose of our study is to determine the effects of three organisational factors on occupational frustration (OF) among Oman's private sector employees, specifically organisational silence (OS), organisational isolation (OI), and organisational cynicism (OC). The three organizational factors (OS, OC, OI) with functional frustration were selected in one model due to the lack of studies on the availability of a comprehensive model for all these variables together. Therefore, there is an urgent need to fill this research gap. In addition to that these variables are of great importance to all types of organizations and their different effects on employees. Indeed, a number of theoretical frameworks, such as the job demands-resources theory and the social exchange theory, among others, can assist in the explanation of occupational frustration. The researchers concentrated on silence, isolation, and cynicism precisely because these factors have been identified as significant sources of frustration for individuals in the workplace. Recognized as prominent sources of workplace frustration, these factors deserve attention given their potential significant impact on employee dissatisfaction.

2. Theoretical Foundations and Hypotheses development

2.1. Organisational silence (OS)

Silence, in a corporate context, often serves as a communication mechanism that employees use to withhold concerns or complaints about peers, superiors, or the organization [13]. Organizational Silence (OS) has been previously viewed as a sign of loyalty, where employees choose to remain silent instead of speaking up about issues [14]. However, recent research has shown that employee silence has negative effects on employee performance and hinder its desired outcomes [15]. Pinder and Harlos defined OS as a loss of voice

that spans a range of emotions, perceptions, intentions, and cognition [14,16].

The effects of OS can be captured in terms of its impact on both the organization and individuals [17]. For the organization, OS can lead to inferior decision-making, loss of valuable information, obstructed analysis of ideas, and an increased risk of crises, all of which impede the development and improvement of the organization. For individuals, OS can precipitate social isolation, diminished cooperation, and poor work performance, which reduces chances of obtaining promotions or opportunities to work in other positions. Furthermore, OS can decrease employee commitment [18] and increase an employee's intention to leave [19], as well as block organizational change and progress, undermine learning environments, and hinder organizational communication [20,21].

The causes of OS can be divided into two categories: organizational and administrative reasons, and individual reasons. Organizational and administrative reasons include a lack of support from senior management, continued negative feedback from supervisors, and a negative internal climate of the organization [16,17]. Individual reasons include a lack of confidence, which leads to decreased communication and silence [22], fear of facing negative reactions [23], lack of experienced employees, leading to a sentiment that they don't possess the prerogative to voice opinions [24], and isolation or a lack of necessary network of contacts with other employees, both physically and psychologically [25].

2.2. Organisational isolation (OI)

Organizational Isolation (OI) pertains to feelings of aversion, boredom, discontent, and emotional and psychological detachment in the workplace [26]. Kobasa et al. defined isolation at work as discouraging behavior towards work, indicating a low level of association with a job, and conceptualized it as a general concept [27]. Researchers have also associated isolation at work with lower levels of positive psychological stimulation related to work activities and the environment, as well as a disconnect from the work atmosphere [28,29].

Elements precipitating OI include centralization and the emergence of formality, lack of independent tasks, and differences at the individual level [30]. Additionally placing a competent individual in misfit role, workplace politics, office politics, interpersonal clashes, leadership styles, cultural transitions, inequitable evaluations of employees, and alien technology are other factors inducing isolation [31].

The consequences of OI are apparent when employees are unable to fulfill their social wants and needs, resulting in a gap between business goals and their individual goals, values, and interests [32]. OI is evident in reduced engagement, a weak organizational affiliation, scanty application of skills, prevalent workplace antagonism and disputes, restricted involvement, wavering commitment to organizational aspirations, evasion of duties, suboptimal autonomy levels, and a diminished zeal in augmenting company revenues and gains [33].

2.3. Organisational cynicism (OC)

Organizational Cynicism (OC) has surfaced as a contemporary framework for employer-worker relationships [34], and many workers in institutions have been found to be cynical [35,36]. OC reflects negative feelings and emotions, such as despair and vexation, adversely affecting the work ambiance [37]. Li et al. define OC as indicating doubt or uncertainty about the organization's management, negative opinions about the management's response to contradictions, and bringing harsh criticism and contempt for the organization sarcastically [38].

Both direct and peripheral factors play a part in the inception and manifestation of cynicism in entities, including inappropriate organizational procedures, low performance, a sense of injustice, low commitment, violations of psychological contract, and vast differences in salaries between higher management stakeholders and low-level workers [39–41]. In addition to organizational factors, individual factors such as sex, age, marital status, experience, and qualification can also influence OC [42].

James categorizes OC into five distinct structures [43]: Personal cynicism, which is a character trait or characteristic of a person; Societal cynicism, which is related to negative feelings toward society; Change cynicism, which suggests the lack of confidence of specific employees toward any change in the institution [44] and the nature of the profession [34]; Work cynicism, which is a component of burnout and exhaustion [45], indifference to work, and a willingness to negatively evaluate performance [46,47], and work-related stress [48]. Staff cynicism refers to negative attitudes and behaviors of individuals [49] and mockery of employees, which negatively affects organizational processes and productivity [50]. For example, an employee may choose to lounge around instead of doing their job effectively [51]. This example is the first step of staff cynicism, which is the extreme stage of withdrawal from work [52].

OC has many consequences that can negatively affect both individuals and organizations. These include strong feelings of disinterest and indifference among employees, initiation of resignation by some individuals due to a lack of desire to serve the organization, feelings of isolation and loneliness within the work environment, negative feelings such as frustration and despair among employees, loss of a sense of trust towards others and the organization, feelings of suspicion of others' actions in general and the senior management and its members in particular, low levels of individual and organizational performance, instability of interpersonal relationships among members of the organization, a desire for stability and sudden changes, and a high work absence rate [53–56].

2.4. Occupational frustration (OF)

Organizations strive to reduce the severity of at work and its negative effects on individuals by facilitating continued interaction among employees in the organizations and the interactions of employees with organizations and their parts [57]. Organizations may

also invest in efforts to comprehensively use their human resources (HR) by forming an administrative philosophy that positively impacts employees and their jobs, thereby increasing capabilities and improving job performance. These efforts are reflected in individuals' attitudes and the work environment displaying characteristics such as loyalty, teamwork, cohesion, and satisfaction [58].

OF can be defined as a negative response to an obstacle to achieving desired goals, leading to defensive behavior in employees [59]. The reasons behind OF were explained by Davis [58] to include individual capabilities of employees, organizational management, work style, needs, motivations, the internal and external environment, participation, and cooperation. Ntsiful et al. postulated that providing support for job resources can eliminate OF and identified three dimensions of job resources [2].

- Organizational level - providing job opportunities and supporting job security for employees, salaries, and fairness in promotions.
- Social relations - including the quality of relationships between individuals within the work environment, such as support and encouragement of the work team, support for supervisors and heads, and the development of relationships with senior management.
- Task level - symbolizing the variation in work skills, the degree of importance of tasks, the type and nature of tasks, clarity of roles at work, autonomy, and the degree of contribution to decision-making.

Organizational efforts to reduce OF can lead to increased job satisfaction, motivation, and performance in employees [2]. Additionally, studies have corroborated that employees' job satisfaction is positively related to their productivity, performance, and job tenure [60].

In conclusion, reducing OF in the workplace is crucial to ensuring employee satisfaction, motivation, and productivity. By providing job resources, organizations can positively impact their employees and their jobs, thereby creating a more positive work environment.

2.5. Organisational factors and occupational frustration (OF)

Previous studies have investigated the impact of organizational factors (OS, OI, and OC) on occupational frustration (OF), but only a few studies have examined these relationships comprehensively. The relationships between the organizational factors have been evaluated in different contexts.

2.5.1. Organizational silence (OS) and occupational frustration (OF)

Several factors have been associated with silence behavior. Amiri et al. found a significant and inverse relationship between OS and commitment [61], while Yeloglu et al. indicated that OS and organizational learning are positively correlated [62]. It has been demonstrated that OS reduces workplace isolation [60], and Erdogdu found a significant relationship between OS and OC in the educational context [61]. According to a study by Morrison and Milliken, individuals who felt their workplace lacked psychological safety were more inclined to silence, which was linked to lower job satisfaction and more probable intentions to leave [63]. Based on a study conducted by Detert and Burris, employees who kept silent about workplace issues were more likely to experience negative emotions such as frustration, anger and irritation, which were linked to lower job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions [64].

These studies suggest that organisational silence in the workplace can be detrimental to job satisfaction and employee well-being, and can contribute to feelings of occupational frustration. Based on the review mentioned above, the following hypothesis was formulated.

H1. Organizational silence has a significant impact on occupational frustration.

2.5.2. Organizational isolation (OI) and occupational frustration (OF)

Organizational isolation and occupational frustration are both challenging workplace experiences that individuals may confront. Several researches have been conducted to investigate the association between these two variables.

According to Hakanen et al. perceived organizational support is negatively connected to organizational isolation and occupational frustration. A study discovered that organizational isolation was positively connected to emotional weariness, and that this association was partially mediated by occupational frustration [65]. Abbas et al. revealed that a hostile work environment and negative leader-follower relationship might exacerbate OI [33], while Valikhani and Soltani found that the three dimensions of functional isolation on organizational citizenship affect organizational citizenship behavior [66]. Based on the review mentioned above, the following hypothesis was formulated.

H2. Organizational isolation has a significant impact on occupational frustration.

2.5. 3. Organizational cynicism (OC) and occupational frustration (OF)

Occupational frustration was found to partially mediate the association between organizational cynicism and proactive behaviors like problem-solving and innovation [67].

Durrah indicated the significant impact of OC on work isolation in Oman's healthcare sector [68], while a positive relationship between OC and isolation was reported in the Pakistani manufacturing industry [69]. In addition, Knoll and Van Dick found that silent employees developed a negative attitude towards their organizations, resulting in lower well-being and higher stress levels [70], while Ehtiyar and Yanarda found that employees who withheld their thoughts, opinions, and criticism to themselves resulted in negative consequences for organizations and themselves, leading to lower motivation and job satisfaction [71]. Furthermore, high levels of OC

are associated with negative outcomes, such as job stress and ineffective actions, leading to negative attitudes of frustration, despair, disappointment, and a sense of distrust in the workplace [72]. Durrah and Chaudhary found a significant impact of cynicism and isolation behaviors on employees' intention to leave work [12], while a study by Durrah et al. showed that emotional cynicism, one dimension of OC, affects attitudinal pride [73]. However, cognitive cynicism and behavioral cynicism do not affect attitudinal pride. Studies have also focused on cynicism behavior, such as Han et al. who aimed to identify the impact of intellectual capital on the turnover of nurses in mediating the relationship between cynicism and commitment by identifying the causal relationship between variables that affect nurses' social capital factors. The results of their study indicated that the rate of OC was high in government hospitals, and social capital directly reduced cynicism and increased commitment to a company [74]. Aydın Küçük confirmed that co-worker support significantly moderates the relationship between cynicism towards organizations and job satisfaction [75]. Based on the review mentioned above, the following hypothesis was formulated.

H3. Organizational cynicism has a significant impact on occupational frustration.

2.6. Private sector in Oman

The private sector is a major contributor to economic development in any country, providing employment and essential goods and services in various fields [76]. In the developing world, it is responsible for about 90 % of employment. In Oman, the "Oman 2040" vision has envisioned new roles for the private sector, making it the primary driver of development and an active partner in implementing programs and plans.

This study focuses on private services sector companies in the Dhofar Governorate, which is of economic importance due to its strategic location, the magnitude of large private sector investments in various fields, and the diversity of service institutions in this sector. The Dhofar Governorate is located in the southern region of Oman and is known for its historical and cultural significance. The private sector in the Dhofar Governorate comprises an area of application for this study because it is a significant contributor to Oman's economy and provides important services in various fields. The private services sector companies in the Dhofar Governorate play a vital role in bolstering the economy and providing employment opportunities for the local population.

3. Methodology and analysis

3.1. Sample and procedures

This study employed a quantitative approach to investigate the expected impact of organisational factors, represented by OS, OI, and OC, on OF in the private services sector in Oman. The study utilized both primary and secondary information and data sources. The secondary sources included books, periodicals, and previous research and studies. Primary data were collected using a questionnaire tool crafted based on the literature and previous studies that examined these variables in different contexts.

The target population for this study comprised private sector companies in the Dhofar Governorate. We randomly selected companies from sectors such as banking, health, industry, communications, and insurance. These businesses, which employ the biggest percentage of workers in the Sultanate of Oman's private services industry, serve as a good representation of that sector. These industries have a major impact on the Omani economy. We used simple random sampling based on the table developed by Krejcie and Morgan to obtain a fit sample size of 400 individuals [77]. Of these, 390 completed questionnaires were retrieved, resulting in a

Table 1
Demographic characteristics.

Variables	Categories	Number	Percent
Gender	Male	184	47.2
	Female	206	52.8
Age	Less than 30	72	18.5
	30 to less than 45	294	75.4
	45 and more	24	6.1
Education	Secondary and less	46	11.8
	Diploma	250	64.1
	Bachelor	72	18.5
	Postgraduate	22	5.6
Job	Manger	52	13.3
	Head of Department	56	14.4
	Employee	282	72.3
Experience	Less than 5 Yeas	92	23.6
	5 to less than 10 Years	100	25.6
	10 Years and More	198	50.8
Sector	Banking	90	23.1
	Industry	100	25.6
	Health	86	22.1
	Communications	48	12.3
	Insurance	66	16.9
Total		390	100

response rate of 97.5 %.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections, and ethical approval for this study was secured from the Research and Ethics Committee at the University of Buraimi, with the assigned approval number CoB 05. Before administering the questionnaire, informed consent was obtained from all study participants, ensuring that they were fully aware of the study's purpose and procedures. Participants were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. Moreover, they were assured of the confidentiality of their responses, with data being anonymized and used solely for research purposes. The informed consent process involved providing participants with a detailed explanation of the study's objectives, the nature of their involvement, and the expected duration of their participation.

The demographic data collected, including gender, age, education, job, experience, and industry, allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the study's findings. The sample consisted of 47.2 % males and 52.8 % females, and three-quarters of the respondents were between 30 and 45 years old. The majority of participants (64.1 %) held a bachelor's degree, and most were employees (72.3 %). Half of the sample had work experience of over ten years, and half hailed from the banking and industry sectors, as shown in [Table 1](#).

Furthermore, ethical considerations included ensuring that participants were not exposed to any harm or discomfort during the study. Steps were taken to minimize any potential stress or anxiety related to the survey questions, and participants were encouraged to respond honestly while assuring them that their responses would not affect their current or future employment.

The second section of the questionnaire included two parts, with the first part focusing on the three organisational factors namely, organisational silence (OS), organisational isolation (OI), and organisational cynicism (OC), and the second part related to occupational frustration (OF). The questionnaire was designed to capture respondents' views and experiences with these variables and to explore their impact on occupational frustration in the private services sector in Oman.

3.2. Measures

The organizational silence scale was adapted from the study of Adamska and Jurek and consisted of four items [78]. This scale measures the degree to which employees remain silent and avoid speaking up about issues that could affect the organization. The organizational isolation scale, which consists of four items, was adapted from the study of Punia and Berwal and measures the extent to which employees feel disconnected from their colleagues and the organization [79]. The organizational cynicism scale, consisting of five items, was adapted from the study of Dean et al. [80] and measures employees' negative attitudes towards the organization, management, and their work.

In addition, the current study employed a six-item occupational frustration scale, which was adopted from the study of Keenan and Newton [81]. This scale measures the degree of frustration experienced by employees in their work environment. The items in the scale were developed to assess various aspects of frustration, such as disappointment with work outcomes, dissatisfaction with working conditions, and a feeling of being stuck in one's job.

All items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The items were translated into Arabic and pretested on a sample of 30 employees to ensure their appropriateness and clarity. The final version of the scale was used to collect data in the current study.

3.3. Descriptive statistics

The results of descriptive statistics were summarized and presented in [Table 2](#). The mean and standard deviation of the organisational factors were reported. The results showed that the means of the organisational factors were low, with OI having the lowest mean ($\bar{x} = 1.723$ & $\sigma = 0.625$), followed by OS ($\bar{x} = 1.808$ & $\sigma = 0.612$) and OC ($\bar{x} = 2.238$ & $\sigma = 0.766$). The mean of occupational frustration was also reported to be low ($\bar{x} = 2.517$ & $\sigma = 0.776$).

The normality condition of the data was also checked using the skewness and kurtosis tests. The results indicated that all the values were within the acceptable range of ± 3 , indicating normality of the data [82]. Moreover, the VIF values were examined to detect the presence of multicollinearity among the independent variables. The results showed that all the VIF values were below five, which is the recommended threshold for accepting the absence of multicollinearity among the variables [83].

3.4. Common method bias (CMB)

To mitigate the risk of CMB, procedural precautions were taken before and during data collection and statistical techniques were employed after data collection [84]. The survey instructions offered introductory and contextual information, and respondents were given a brief overview of the study's objectives. They were also assured that their responses would be anonymous and confidential and

Table 2
Descriptive statistics.

Latent Construct	Mean	St.D.	Skewness	Kurtosis	VIF
Organizational Silence (OS)	1.808	0.612	0.892	1.723	1.540
Organizational Isolation (OI)	1.723	0.625	1.427	2.192	1.809
Organizational Cynicism (OC)	2.238	0.766	0.540	-0.116	1.311
Occupational Frustration (OF)	2.517	0.776	0.276	-0.225	-

used solely for academic research purposes [85].

To assess the potential for CMB, we conducted a single-factor Harman test using SPSS [86]. All items from the questionnaire were loaded onto a single factor using exploratory factor analysis (EFA), as shown in Table 3 [87]. The overall variance explained by the single factor was 39.584 %, which is below the 50 % cut-off recommended by Podsakoff et al. to identify potential bias [88].

Based on the results of the Harman test, we found no evidence of CMB in our study data. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that CMB is a potential limitation of any study that uses self-reported measures, and we took several steps to mitigate this risk in our research design.

3.5. Measurement model assessment

The measurement model’s reliability and convergent validity were assessed using Cronbach’s alpha (α), composite reliability (CR), and rho_A for reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) and indicators’ outer loadings for convergent validity [89] as shown in Table 4 [83]. The Cronbach’s alpha values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.6, and all CR values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating good reliability [90]. Rho_A values were also greater than 0.7, signifying good internal consistency [91, 92]. Furthermore, all AVE values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.5, and all indicators’ outer loadings exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.60, except for OF6, which was dropped. These results demonstrate that the measurement model had satisfactory reliability and convergent validity [93,94].

3.6. Discriminant validity

The discriminant validity of the constructs was assessed using two methods. The first method used the Fornell and Larcker criterion [95]. As depicted in Table 5, the diagonal values representing the square root of AVE (highlighted in bold) for each construct was higher than its correlation coefficient with other constructs, indicating that the constructs have discriminant validity.

The second method used the heterotrait–monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) [96]. As presented in Table 6, the validity of the measurement model was acceptable, as the values of HTMT were below the recommended threshold of 0.85 [97]. Therefore, both methods confirm the discriminant validity of the constructs in the study.

3.7. Structural equation modelling (SEM)

In our study, we examined a model consisting of four variables as shown in Fig. 2 (see Fig. 1). Three of these variables are exogenous constructs, namely OS, OI, and OC, while one variable is an endogenous construct, namely OF. To analyse the data, we used SPSS v. 26 for descriptive statistics and CMB analysis. For testing the hypothesized structural equation model (SEM), we employed partial least squares (PLS) analysis using SmartPLS v. 4. We also evaluated the model fit and assessed its acceptance.

PLS-SEM is an analytical technique for detecting or building predictive models. When it comes to analyzing causal models between latent variables, this method often outshines the general linear structural relation model, aligning more aptly with exploratory research [98]. The PLS-SEM method is very appealing to many researchers as it enables them to estimate complex models with many constructs, indicator variables and structural paths without imposing distributional assumptions on the data [99].

In the Structural Equation Modelling section, we examined the impact of the independent variables (OS, OI and OC) on the dependent variable (OF) using SEM with the bootstrapping technique in SmartPLS. The results, presented in Table 7, revealed that both OI and OC had a significant and positive influence on OF ($\beta = 0.129$, $T = 2.006$, $P = 0.045$ and $\beta = 0.737$, $T = 19.131$, $P = 0.000$), respectively, while OS did not significantly influence OF ($\beta = -0.011$, $T = 0.214$, $P = 0.831$). Therefore, H2 and H3 were accepted, and H1 was rejected.

We also assessed the R² values, and the average R² value of the model was approximately strong as it can interpret 64.5% of, indicating that organisational factors strongly explain the variance in OF. The effect sizes (f^2) were also evaluated, and the values ranged from very weak to moderate.

Furthermore, we evaluated the predictive model fit using the blindfolding technique provided in SmartPLS. The Q² value for organisational factors in the study model was 0.309, indicating that the current research model has sufficient predictive power. Finally, the quality indicators in Table 7 showed that the model fit was good, with the data situated within a set of generally accepted criteria for model fit.

Table 3
Common method bias (CMB).

Items	Total	Variance	Cumulative	Total	Variance	Cumulative
1	8.709	39.584	39.584	8.709	39.584	39.584
2	3.663	16.652	56.237			
3	1.583	7.195	63.431			
.	.	.	.			
.	.	.	.			
22	.216	.982	100.000			

Table 4
Measurement model assessment.

Latent construct	Item	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	rho_A	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Organizational Silence (OS)	OS ₁	0.703	0.775	0.774	0.856	0.599
	OS ₂	0.766				
	OS ₃	0.800				
	OS ₄	0.820				
Organizational Isolation (OI)	OI ₁	0.833	0.775	0.805	0.854	0.598
	OI ₂	0.835				
	OI ₃	0.792				
	OI ₄	0.611				
Organizational Cynicism (OC)	OC ₁	0.611	0.778	0.789	0.850	0.534
	OC ₂	0.687				
	OC ₃	0.832				
	OC ₄	0.779				
	OC ₅	0.723				
Occupational Frustration (OF)	OF ₁	0.684	0.747	0.769	0.832	0.510
	OF ₂	0.634				
	OF ₃	0.674				
	OF ₄	0.671				
	OF ₅	0.852				

OF₆ was dropped due to low loading on its underlying construct.

Table 5
Fornell–Larcker criterion.

Construct	OS	OI	OC	OF
OS	0.744			
OI	0.591	0.773		
OC	0.319	0.485	0.730	
OF	0.300	0.480	0.696	0.707

Table 6
HTMT ratio.

Construct	OS	OI	OC	OF
OS				
OI	0.807			
OC	0.410	0.594		
OF	0.419	0.608	0.824	

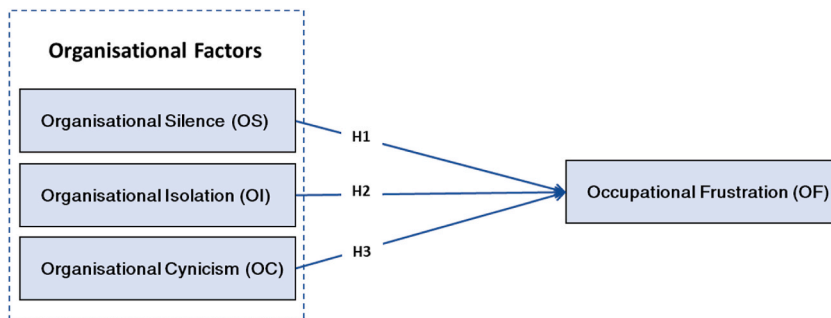


Fig. 1. Proposed model.

4. Discussion

Despite evidence showing that negative workplace behaviors and certain organizational factors can impact employees, research examining the effect of these factors on organizational frustration remains limited [100]. Therefore, this study aimed to address this gap by examining the impact of three organizational factors - OS, OI, and OC - on OF in the private sector in Oman. Building on previous research, the study's model hypothesized that these factors would have an impact on employees' behaviors towards OF. The unique focus on the private sector in Oman makes this research important for HR professionals and top management seeking to

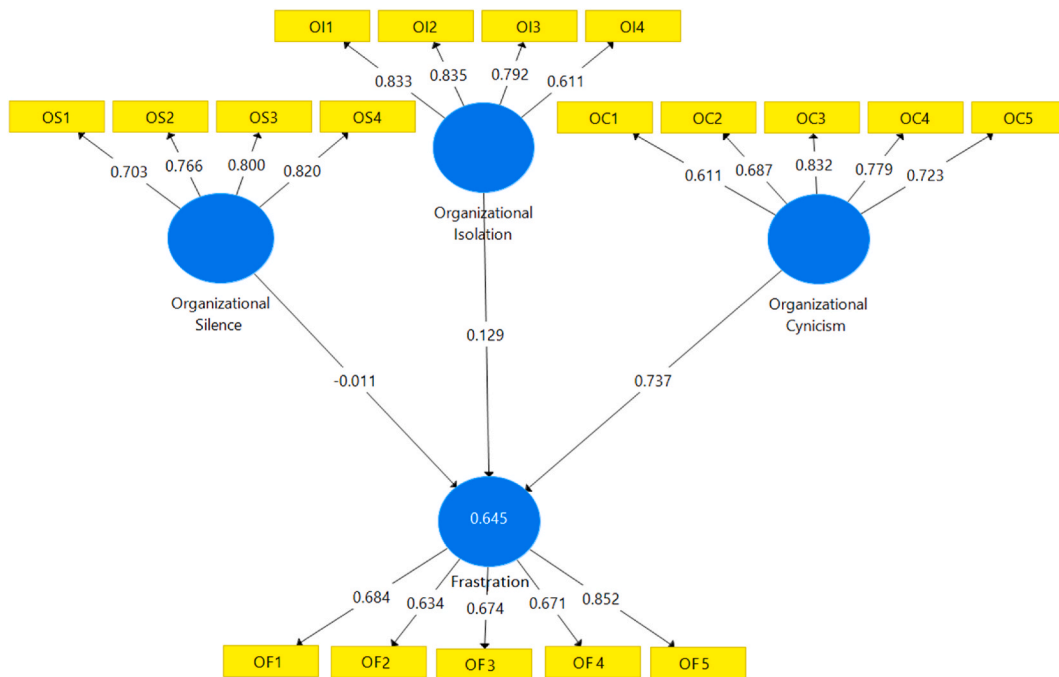


Fig. 2. Tested model.

Table 7
Assessment of structural model (direct and indirect effect).

Hypotheses	β Path	T-Stat.	P-Value	Result	f^2	R^2	Q^2
H ₁ : OS - > OF	-0.011	0.214	0.831	Rejected	0.000 ⁺	0.645	0.309
H ₂ : OA - > OF	0.129	2.006	0.045	Accepted *	0.026 ⁺⁺		
H ₃ : OC - > OF	0.737	19.131	0.000	Accepted ***	0.164 ⁺⁺⁺		
Model Fit	GoF = 0.601		RIMSA = 0.078	SRMR = 0.072		NFI = 0.954	

understand and address OF. The PLS-SEM approach was used to test the conceptual framework, and the data collected from 390 respondents showed that the proposed model successfully predicted and explained individual behaviors in the workplace, supporting the study’s theoretical model. The findings of this study can provide insights and guidance to organizations in the private sector in Oman to address organizational factors that lead to OF and improve employee well-being and productivity.

Regarding the interpretation of demographic characteristics in this study, it was discovered that there were more female employees of men, which is a logical result given that the nature and system of work in service jobs is more suitable for females. Additionally, it was discovered that the majority of the employees were between the ages of 30 and 45. This age group exhibits the highest levels of activity and productivity, which indicates that these workers have appropriate experience in their field of work. The study also showed that the majority of respondents have a university qualification, which means that these employees are appropriately qualified to fill these positions in the service sector. Finally, the respondents were distributed among five service sectors, and the largest share was for the industrial sector, then the banking sector, as these two sectors are the largest in this field.

The study results reveal that OS does not significantly influence workers’ OF in the private sector institutions of Oman, leading to the rejection of H1 in this study’s context. This outcome may be due to the fact that workers in this sector who experience OS are not discouraged from speaking up and addressing their concerns and the pressures they face at work. Rather, they adapt to the situation, thereby avoiding animosity, rage, absenteeism [57], intention to leave work [19], or reduction in commitment [18]. Consequently, they may not experience feelings of hopelessness or frustration in their work, which is reflected in the lack of significant effect of OS on OF.

Also, these results may be due to possible causes.

- Institutions in the private sector might provide more prospects for career advancement relative to their counterparts in other industries. Such opportunities might infuse employees with a sense of direction and professional purpose, curtailing their frustration quotient [2].
- The operational culture of private entities could be more anchored towards outcomes and performance benchmarks, bestowing employees with a feeling of accomplishment and validation, thereby deflating their job-related frustration [101].

- Compared to their peers in other sectors, professionals in the private space might harbor greater job security, toning down their frustration levels [102].

The study findings reveal that OI has a significant impact on employees' OF in Omani private sector organizations, supporting H2. A potential explanation for this could be the lack of attention to psychological and emotional factors, low levels of interpersonal relationships, and an increase in routine tasks in the workplace [26]. Employees may feel isolated and disconnected from the work environment, leading to weak social connections among colleagues and alienation from others in the organization [32]. This result is consistent with previous literature that suggests OI may lead to formality and centralization in the internal work environment [30]. Therefore, symptoms of isolation can appear among employees, increasing their work-related concerns and frustration.

Furthermore, the results suggest that OC is positively related to OF among Omani private sector workers (H3), indicating high levels of OC in the workplace, exemplified through dishonesty, lack of trust [73], negative opinions and harsh criticisms against the management of the organization and disdain in a cynical manner [80]. One possible explanation is that employees' expectations and the promises they expect have not been met, leading to frustration and despair with the employer [103]. It could also be because employees' realization of the injustice they face and live in the workplace has resulted in their desperation for any future improvements by the companies [68], as well as inappropriate organizational procedures [41], low performance [39], and breaches of the psychological contract [40,104].

5. Theoretical and managerial implications

This study makes profound theoretical and intellectual contributions that may interest academics and researchers in the field of organizational behavior and human resources. By examining the impact of organizational factors such as OS, OI, and OC on OF behavior, this study enhances our understanding of these variables. Moreover, as one of the few studies conducted in the Arab region, specifically in Oman, this research helps bridge the knowledge gap in this area.

The paper offers a comprehensive model of organizational factors that influence OF, contributing to the existing literature that focuses on employee behavior determinants. Specifically, it highlights how some organizational factors can influence OF from the perspective of private sector employees in Dhofar Governorate, Oman.

The research also has significant managerial implications, highlighting actionable insights for decision-makers, policymakers, and organizational managers on the organizational factors contributing to employee frustration. The findings of the study demonstrate that OI and OC significantly affect employees' frustration levels. Therefore, managers need to develop and implement appropriate policies and corrective measures to limit unacceptable workplace behaviors and practices.

One crucial approach is to enhance communication channels between senior management and employees, reducing silence and encouraging participation and expression of opinions. In addressing OI, management should provide the necessary support to motivate and encourage employees to feel connected to their organization and their work's value and meaning. Enhancing camaraderie through training in teamwork and conflict resolution can prove invaluable in dissolving isolation barriers and bolstering relational confidence among employees.

Organizational managers must also develop and implement clear policies to safeguard employee rights and provide opportunities for employees to achieve their goals to eliminate OC. Directing employees to appropriate solutions and providing specialized teams for professional guidance and counseling can prepare them for challenges or problems they may encounter.

In summary, the theoretical and managerial implications of this study are significant, advancing our understanding of and providing practical recommendations for managers to improve employee behavior and increase job satisfaction.

6. Limitations and future research directions

Despite providing valuable insights for organizations, this research has certain limitations that must be acknowledged. Firstly, the study was limited to the private sector in Oman, which limits the generalisability of the findings. Expanding the horizon to encompass public sector organizations can grant a panoramic view of the influence of organizational factors on OF across diverse sectors. Additionally, comparing the results between the private and public sectors can provide valuable insights into sector-specific differences. Secondly, the cross-sectional nature of the study's design limits the ability to establish causal relationships between variables. A longitudinal study design could provide more robust evidence for causality. Furthermore, the use of self-reported measures may introduce common method bias, which can be addressed in future studies by utilising multi-source or multi-method approaches.

Thirdly, the study's scope limited to three organisational factors (OS, OI, and OC), opens doors for enriched exploration in future endeavors. Delving into facets like organizational injustice, ethical leadership, and work-life balance. Researchers can also investigate how these factors interact with each other to better understand how to mitigate OF in the workplace. Furthermore, probing into variables such as job demands, job resources, job satisfaction, and turnover intention.

Future research could also explore the moderating effect of individual differences, such as personality traits, gender, age, and cultural background, on the relationship between organisational factors and OF. Finally, research could investigate the effectiveness of different interventions and strategies to reduce OF, such as leadership training, employee empowerment, and mental health support programs. This could inform the development of evidence-based interventions that can be implemented in the workplace to mitigate OF and improve employee well-being and performance.

Ethical approval

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Research and Ethics Committee at the University of Buraimi, with the assigned approval number CoB 05.

Consent

All participants provided written informed consent before participation in this study.

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Data availability statement

Data is available through the following link:<https://osf.io/jau4s/>

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Omar Durrah: Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing – original draft. **Wafa Rashid Alalyani:** Resources, Validation. **Kamaal Allil:** Conceptualization, Writing – review & editing. **Ayman Al Shehab:** Methodology. **Shooq Al Rawas:** Data curation. **Ali Hubais:** Visualization. **Souzan Hannawi:** Supervision.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships which may be considered as potential competing interests:

Wafa Rashid Alalyani reports financial support was provided by University of Buraimi. Wafa Rashid Alalyani reports a relationship with University of Buraimi that includes: employment. Wafa Rashid Alalyani has patent pending to no. Conflict of Interest The corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e22278>.

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Organizational Silence

1. I avoid direct contact with the manager.
2. I feel that others are avoiding me at work.
3. I find it very difficult to socialize with others at work.
4. I remain neutral when discussing with my colleagues at work.

Organizational Isolation

1. I do not tend to form friendships within my current work environment.
2. I feel the weakness of social relations and ties within the work environment.
3. I suffer a lot from loneliness even when I am among colleagues at work.
4. I'm uncomfortable and disorganized at work.

Organizational Cynicism

1. When I think about my organization, I feel a sense of anxiety.
2. When I think about my organization, I experience aggravation.
3. When I think about my organization, I experience tension.
4. When I think about my organization, I get angry.

5. When I think about my organization, I don't like working in it.

Occupational Frustration

1. There are times when my efforts to just do my job as efficiently as possible are blocked by other people.
2. There are a lot of petty and arbitrary rules at work.
3. I rarely run into obstacles trying to get things done at work.
4. There are occasions when my job would be easier if people were more cooperative.
5. Often the system at work prevents you from doing things in a more efficient way.
6. Now and again I feel thwarted in my efforts to do a good job.

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