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FROM PSYCHOPATHY TO EXPEDIENCY: UNRAVELLING THE MEDIATING ROLES OF ORGANISATIONAL CYNICISM AND MORAL DISENGAGEMENT IN LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS

Aneu YULIANEU
STIE Latifah Mubarokiyah, Tasikmalaya, Indonesia

Faizal WIHUDA
Jenderal Soedirman University, Purwokerto, Indonesia

Arief Adhy KURNIAWAN
AMIKOM University, Purwokerto, Indonesia

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The research conducted is grounded on the principles of social exchange (SET), social cognitive theory (SCT), and conservation of resources theories (COR). These theories enabled us to comprehend the indirect correlation between leader psychopathy and employee expediency. To validate our research, we surveyed three waves, collecting information from 282 hotel employees in Indonesia. The PLS-SEM technique was used to test the hypotheses. The results demonstrated evidence that leader psychopathy had a positive direct and indirect effect on employee expediency through organisational cynicism and moral disengagement. We make novel theoretical, empirical, and practical contributions by explaining why leader psychopathy affects employee expediency. This study is one of the first to integrate leader psychopathy, organisational cynicism, moral disengagement, and employee expediency into a single theoretical model.

Keywords: psychopathy, leader, cynicism, disengagement, expediency, hotel, employee



Aneu Yulianeu, Pondok Pesantren Suryalaya, Dusun Godebag, Desa Tanjungkerta, Jl. Nanggaleng - Cirahtayu No.12, Tanjungkerta, Kec. Pagerageung, Kabupaten Tasikmalaya, Jawa Barat, Indonesia, Postal Code 46158. E-mail: anjusu09@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Leader deviant behaviour is a major issue worldwide, impacting organisations and societies in various ways. This behaviour can include unethical decision-making, abuse of power, corruption, harassment, and other forms of misconduct. In cultural assessments, Indonesia scores high on power distance, meaning people tend to accept hierarchical authority. In such environments, leaders have more control, which can sometimes foster or enable deviant behaviours if there is a lack of checks and balances. According to the clinical definition of the term, psychopathy is described as the combination of deviant behaviour and interpersonal detachment (Patrick et al., 2009). Psychopathy presents significant risks when exhibited in leadership roles, as it undermines the ethical and collaborative foundation essential for effective leadership. Leaders with psychopathic tendencies often exploit their positions for personal gain, disregarding employee well-being and organisational goals, leading to toxic work environments and long-term damage to trust and morale. Leader psychopathy is a striking example of deviant behaviour with significant ramifications. Palmen et al. (2021) assert that power, prestige, and money are primary attractions for psychopaths. Given the hospitality industry's potential to provide these elements, pursuing a career in this field appears logical. The hospitality sector's dynamic and customer-centric nature offers professionals opportunities to wield influence, attain prestige, and potentially amass wealth.

Furthermore, the reason for selecting employees from the hospitality industry to study the impact of leader psychopathy on employee expediency is the high interaction levels inherent in this sector. In the hospitality industry, employees constantly engage with leaders, colleagues, and customers, creating an environment where leadership styles have a pronounced and observable effect. This frequent and varied interaction amplifies the influence of a leader's behaviour, making it an ideal context to study the specific impacts of leader psychopathy on employee expediency. Psychopaths, being drawn to environments where they can exploit power dynamics and gain personal advantages, might find the hospitality industry appealing. The combination of managerial roles, customer interactions, and financial dealings within this sector aligns with the factors that attract psychopathic individuals (Zhuang et al., 2022). This perspective sheds light on the possible alignment between the characteristics of the hospitality industry and the preferences of individuals with psychopathic traits, raising questions about the implications for organisational dynamics and employee deviant behaviour within this specific professional domain.

Multiple authors have proposed that leaders' traits, behaviour, and attitudes, or the extent to which followers perceive their leaders to engage in persistent hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviours, are a primary cause of employee deviant behaviour (Sharma, 2018). Leader psychopathy, as a type of leadership destructive behaviour (Boddy, 2021), is considered very damaging to the overall health of a company and the well-being of its employees. Leaders who exhibit psychopathic traits often show a charming facade, concealing their underlying disregard for others. Employees under the influence of leader psychopathy frequently experience heightened stress, diminished job satisfaction, and increased turnover intentions (Blickle et al., 2018). These toxic leadership behaviours tend to create a hostile work environment marked by manipulation, bullying, and a lack of empathy. The negative outcomes ripple through the organisational culture, fostering distrust and hindering collaboration. Recent theories and studies show how a leader acts and the different factors that make up a follower's personality, such as their centre of control and willingness to take the initiative, affect how they treat their employees. Research conducted by Erkutlu and Chafra (2019) has provided evidence to support the hypothesis that psychopathy is linked to organisational deviance (Mathieu et al., 2014), affecting psychological exhaustion and job satisfaction (Volmer et al., 2016) as well as increasing work-family conflict and psychological distress of subordinates (Mathieu et al., 2014). Employee expediency, as an example of employee deviant behaviour, denotes the adoption of unethical practices by employees to achieve immediate goals or desired outcomes (Greenbaum et al., 2018). This term underscores the willingness of individuals to prioritise short-term gains over ethical considerations within the workplace. This complex and concerning behaviour has prompted researchers to delve into various theoretical frameworks to comprehend its underlying dynamics. In its most basic form, it is characterised by individuals engaging in questionable behaviours or taking shortcuts to accomplish their professional goals, frequently at the price of the ideals or ethical standards of the business (Zhu et al., 2023). Employees may manipulate data, take shortcuts regarding quality standards, or disobey established processes to save time or accomplish personal goals. These are just some of the ways that this phenomenon may present itself. Since employee expediency is a self-serving activity, individuals who engage in such actions likely put their interests ahead of the organisation's overall betterment. Many possible dangers to the workplace are brought to light by the problems that surround employee expediency. These dangers include compromising in-

tegrity, the erosion of trust, and damage to the firm's culture (Saleem & Naseer, 2022). In a logical sense, these deviant behaviours are a significant problem for firms, and as a result, academics have focused their attention on the factors that lead to employee expediency.

Additionally, a recent meta-analysis revealed a positive correlation between workplace psychopathy and counterproductive work behaviour as well as job performance (Roth & Klehe, 2021). The positive relationship between psychopathy and job performance from prior research was observed at the individual level, meaning the individual's psychopathic traits were related to their job behaviour and performance. However, this study examines the relationship between managerial psychopathy and employee expediency, focusing on the interpersonal effects of psychopathic behaviour in leadership on subordinates. Hence, this study examines how leader psychopathy generates important follower consequences like organisational cynicism, moral disengagement, and employee expediency.

Furthermore, we assume a leader's psychopathy will encourage employee expediency by lowering employee morale and involvement. Organisations grappling with leader psychopathy must recognise the urgency of addressing these issues. Hence, understanding and mitigating the impact of leader psychopathy is crucial for fostering employee well-being and ensuring the organisation's long-term success. However, nothing is understood about the underlying process that drives the link between leader psychopathy and employee expediency. Hence, we analyse the possible beneficial effects of leaders' psychopathy on employee expediency. We also look at the relationship between moral disengagement and organisational cynicism and the mediating roles these two factors play.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Leaders' psychopathy and employee expediency

The concept of corporate psychopaths was extensively developed by Boddy (2005); this research examined how individuals with psychopathic traits infiltrate managerial roles, manipulating corporate structures to achieve power and influence, often at the expense of employees' well-being and organisational performance. Babiak et al. (2007) further expanded the understanding of this phenomenon when they coined the term "corporate psychopaths". Further research conducted by Boddy (2017) indicates that people with psychopathic characteristics frequently attain executive and senior roles in business. Such leaders tend to display unethical behaviour and prob-

lematic management practices. Through the lens of social exchange theory, individuals participate in social interactions with the anticipation of gaining advantages and reducing disadvantages (Ermer & Kiehl, 2010). Within a professional environment, a leader who displays psychopathic features may employ manipulative tactics to attain personal benefits, exploiting others for their advantage (Babiak et al., 2007). In reaction to leader psychopathy, the followers or subordinates may adopt expedient conduct to deal with the situation. They may prioritise immediate profits and expedient measures to manage the difficult circumstances caused by the leader's psychopathy. This behaviour can be interpreted as a practical reaction to the leader's absence of empathy and self-centred concentration. In addition, leaders who demonstrate psychopathic qualities may exhibit deceptive behaviour, high levels of self-confidence, a lack of empathy, remorselessness, superficial charm, and a tendency to place their interests above those of the organisation or their team. This behaviour frequently entails a lack of regard for ethical norms, a readiness to take advantage of others, and a concentration on attaining personal objectives without considering the welfare of employees or the overall company culture.

Additionally, the principle of COR might be utilised to comprehend this correlation. Leader psychopathy can exhaust the emotional and psychological reserves of employees through deceptive and exploitative methods. Employees may engage in expedient conduct to safeguard their well-being and adapt to a demanding work environment, aiming to conserve their resources and shield themselves from the detrimental consequences of leader psychopathy. To summarise, there is a connection between leader psychopathy and expedient behaviour, which the principles of social exchange theory and the conservation of resources theory may explain. The manipulative acts of the leader's psychopathy may compel followers to adopt expedient habits as a pragmatic reaction to the challenging work environment caused by their leadership. Scholars have explored the impact of psychopathy as a personality factor on organisational and personnel results in the multi-context business (Blickle & Schütte, 2017; De Clercq et al., 2019; Jones, 2014). There is substantial evidence from previous research that leader psychopathy has a significant impact on employees, such as psychological distress, work-family conflict, emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and burnout (Mathieu et al., 2014; Sutton et al., 2020; Oyewunmi et al., 2018). Hence, we predict that the causes of expediency as a deviant behaviour establish a strong foundation for forecasting the adverse correlation between employee expediency and socially disruptive behaviour (leader psychopathy). Consequently, fol-

lowers of leader psychopathy are frequently subjected to social and psychological pressures that promote expediency. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: A positive correlation exists between leader psychopathy and employee expediency.

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF ORGANISATIONAL CYNICISM

Organisational cynicism has recently garnered increasing attention due to corporate scandals and unethical behaviour by its leaders, which has exacerbated employees' skepticism towards the organisation. Organisational cynicism can contribute to employee depression due to a belief in a lack of honesty, leading to strong negative sentiments and critical decision-making (Grama & Todericiu, 2016). Snowden and Gray (2011) noted that when managers behave in an impulsive and risky manner towards them, workers frequently lose faith in their leaders and disobey work-related instructions. Küçük (2022) also found that those with a cynical attitude tend to be suspicious of management and mistrust their superiors. In conclusion, when managers display psychopathic or abusive behaviours with their staff, it makes people less hopeful about their futures in the company and more skeptical of the management and leads to increased deviant behaviour. The relationship between leader psychopathy, organisational cynicism, and employee expediency can be explored by applying the COR theory, which highlights the mediating role of organisational cynicism. According to the theory, individuals are motivated to obtain, maintain, and safeguard resources (Abubakar et al., 2018). Stress arises when there is a perceived risk to these resources. Organisational cynicism arises as a reaction to the perceived reduction or endangerment of personal and managerial resources. Within the framework of leader psychopathy, these individuals may exhibit actions that exhaust or jeopardise the assets of subordinates, including trust, social cohesion, and a conducive work atmosphere.

Consequently, employees may develop skepticism to protect themselves against the perceived threat to resources; cynicism functions as a mechanism for employees to manage the stress and uncertainty resulting from leader psychopathy. Organisational cynicism is an intermediary factor influencing the connection between leader psychopathy and employee expediency. Employees who feel skeptical because they believe their resources are at risk could engage in expedient actions to protect themselves or safeguard their interests when they perceive a shortage of resources. Essentially, the COR theory elucidates how organisational cynicism functions as an intermediary by mirroring the strain and depletion of resources resulting from leader psychopathy, ultimately impacting em-

ployees to partake in expedient actions. Therefore, we suggest the subsequent hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Organisational cynicism mediates a positive relationship between a leader's psychopathy and employee expediency.

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF MORAL DISENGAGEMENT

Moral disengagement, a concept initially proposed by Bandura (1990), centres on the notion that individuals can mentally detach themselves from their moral self-regulation and self-criticism purposefully. Bandura's social cognitive theory posits that moral disengagement arises from cognitive mechanisms enabling individuals to rationalise or justify morally dubious activities without activating the usual self-imposed consequences of ethical violations (Newman et al., 2020). Furthermore, individuals deactivate moral self-regulation by strategically reframing situations, providing themselves with cognitive room to rationalise and justify specific behaviours that would otherwise be deemed inconsistent with established moral standards. This process involves a cognitive shift wherein individuals manipulate their perception of a given situation, allowing them to reinterpret actions that diminish moral culpability. Individuals can create a mental space that accommodates behaviours that might conflict with their ethical principles by engaging in such reframing. This ability to reframe situations serves as a mechanism for moral disengagement, enabling individuals to navigate moral complexities and engage in actions that might otherwise evoke self-sanctions and guilt. Prior studies have demonstrated that moral disengagement plays a vital role as a psychological mechanism by which ethically questionable leadership influences the immoral conduct of subordinates (e.g., Akhtar et al., 2023; Fuller, 2022). This relationship implies that leaders who display poor ethical behaviour can influence the moral decision-making of their subordinates by creating an atmosphere that enables moral disengagement. In such situations, people may experience psychological facilitation in detaching themselves from their moral convictions, resulting in a higher probability of participating in actions that depart from ethical norms. The connection between morally questionable leadership, the disconnection from moral standards, and the resulting unethical actions highlights the complex relationship between leadership behaviour and the ethical behaviour of individuals inside an organisation.

Leader psychopathy specifically cultivates a demanding work atmosphere, causing subordinates to justify their harmful actions to these leaders' overwhelming pressure. Leader psychopathy in a stressful environment might lead employees to engage in expedient conduct. This behaviour is driven by the

need to find quick and efficient solutions to cope with the increased stress and demanding conditions. Psychopathy and expedient employee behaviour show how leadership practices shape employees' reactions in the organisational context, suggesting that expedient actions may be a coping mechanism for the demanding work environment.

Hypothesis 3: Moral disengagement mediates a positive relationship between a leader's psychopathy and employee expediency.

METHOD

Sample and procedure

The hypotheses were tested by employing data from a survey of hotel personnel in eight four and five-star hotels in Indonesia. This study followed the ethical guidelines and received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of STIE Latifah Mubarakiyah, ensuring compliance with ethical standards for research involving human participants. Confidentiality was guaranteed, and participation was entirely optional. At Time 1, 450 employees were asked to fill out a questionnaire that assessed the leader's psychopathy and the control variables. Leader psychopathy was operationalised as the immediate supervisor of the employees participating in the survey. We specified that the psychopathy subscale from the Dirty Dozen measure was adapted to assess leader personality traits as perceived by employees. This approach ensures that the employees consider the psychopathic traits of a leader with regular and direct interactions, providing more accurate and relevant responses.

A total of 356 employees have provided us with their feedback. After ten days, at Time 2, we distributed a second questionnaire that dealt with moral disengagement and organisational cynicism to those individuals who had previously completed the Time-1 survey. A total of 336 questionnaires were returned. At the end of the ten days, at Time 3, we invited the 336 individuals who had previously filled out questionnaires at Time 1 and Time 2 to evaluate their expedient conduct. A total of three hundred questionnaires were returned. A total of 282 employees were included in the usable sample, leading to a response rate of 78.06%. This result was achieved by removing any data deemed erroneous or fraudulent (for example, all responses were identical).

We conducted an attrition analysis to determine whether participants who dropped out differed from those who remained in the study. This research study categorises participants into two groups: those who dropped out of the study (dropouts) and those who completed it (completers). We check

for major differences between groups. Important discrepancies may imply that the dropout group is not randomly distributed, which might induce bias. Our research found no differences between groups, so there is no indication of bias.

We accounted for the demographic variables significantly linked to employee expediency, such as age (in years), gender (male and female), education (high school as low educational attainment and bachelor degree as high educational attainment), tenure with the organisation, and tenure with the current supervisor (in years) (Greenbaum et al., 2018).

The final sample consisted of 282 employees with an average age of 38.2 years ($SD = 9.78$). Among the 282 responses, 126 were female and 43 were male. The average tenure with the organisation was 6.02 years ($SD = 2.49$), while the average tenure with their current supervisor was 5.95 years ($SD = 2.63$). The distribution of participants by managerial positions is as follows: Frontline staff (e.g., receptionists, waiters): 252 participants (89%), Managers (e.g., restaurant managers, housekeeping supervisors): 30 participants (11%).

Instrumentation

By employing the back translation method proposed by Brislin (1980), we could translate all of the items in this study into Indonesian. This technique was done because all items were initially generated in English. The scale contains 5 Likert scale items ranging from strongly disagree to agree strongly. Leader psychopathy. We measured Leader psychopathy developed by Jonason and Webster (2010) on a 4-item scale. Sample items include "My immediate supervisor tends to lack remorse and tends to be unconcerned with the morality of my actions". The Cronbach's alpha of the scale in the current study is 0.906. We measured leader psychopathy using a 4-item scale developed by Jonason and Webster (2010), originally part of the Dirty Dozen measure designed to assess individual personality traits. This scale was selected for its brevity and its specific focus on personality traits relevant to leadership contexts.

Organisational cynicism. We measured Organisational cynicism, developed by Dean et al. (1998), on a 3-item scale. Examples of statements were "Company policies, goals, and practices are often inconsistent". The Cronbach alpha for current organisational cynicism is 0.892.

Moral disengagement. Moral disengagement was measured by Moore et al.'s (2012) propensity to disengage on an 8-item scale morally. Sample items include "People can't be blamed for doing things technically wrong when all their friends are doing it too". This study reported that the Cronbach alpha of the scale was 0.947.

Employee expediency. We assessed employee expediency with Greenbaum et al.'s (2018) 4-item scale. Sample items in-

clude "I only enforce company rules when they benefit my welfare". The 4-item scale achieved an internal consistency of 0.914.

Table 1 presents means, standard deviations and correlations between gender, age, education, tenure with the organisation (TWO), tenure with the supervisor (TWS), leader psychopathy (LP), organisational cynicism (OC), moral disengagement (MD), and employee expediency (EE), among 282 respondents.

➔ TABLE 1
Means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Gen	Age	Edu	TO	TS	LP	OC	MD	EE
Gender	1.446	0.498	-								
Age	38.205	9.787	0.062	-							
Education	1.776	0.650	-0.090	0.130	-						
Tenure with organisation	6.028	2.496	0.010	-0.008	0.078	-					
Tenure with supervision	5.950	2.633	-0.029	-0.012	-0.025	-0.123	-				
Leader psychopathy	14.329	3.157	-0.019	0.069	-0.030	0.031	0.073	-			
Organisational cynicism	10.883	2.740	-0.001	-0.006	-0.023	-0.03	0.073	0.630**	-		
Moral disengagement	28.911	6.306	0.004	0.055	0.047	-0.017	0.015	0.534**	0.589	-	
Employee expediency	14.354	3.724	-0.055	-0.001	0.003	0.060	0.024	0.713**	0.638*	0.639**	-

Note. N = 282; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$. TO = tenure with organisation; TS = tenure with supervision; LP = leader psychopathy; OC = organisational cynicism; MD = moral disengagement; EE = employee expediency; TWO = tenure with organisation; TWS = tenure with supervisor.

The mean of educational attainment is 1.776 ($SD = 0.650$) on a scale where higher numbers indicate higher levels of education. Regarding organisational attitudes and behaviours, the mean score for organisational cynicism is 10.883 ($SD = 2.740$), suggesting a moderate level of cynicism among employees. Moral disengagement, reflecting the extent to which employees rationalise unethical behaviour, has a mean score of 28.911 ($SD = 6.306$), pointing to a range of moral reasoning processes in the workforce. In addition, employee expediency, which may reflect pragmatic or self-serving behaviours, has a mean of 14.354 ($SD = 3.724$).

Leader psychopathy showed strong positive correlations with organisational cynicism and moral disengagement, suggesting that perceptions of psychopathic leadership are associated with higher levels of cynicism and disengagement among employees. Additionally, employee expediency was strongly and positively correlated with leader psychopathy, organisational cynicism, and moral disengagement, highlighting a potential link between these constructs in workplace behaviours.

Measurement model assessment

We utilised SmartPLS 3.0, a partial least square approach to structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), to assess the study's hypotheses. Various statistical methods were used to determine the validity and reliability of the study's outer model, following the recommendations of Hair et al. (2013). The constructs' reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were assessed. Outer loadings, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), square roots of the AVE values, Fornell-Larcker criterion, and heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratios are all part of the measurement model evaluation results reported in Tables 2, 3, and 4. According to statistical results, all of the latent constructs in our model had CR values of more than 0.70 (Hair et al., 2013).

Similarly, tests were conducted using Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each study variable to evaluate the construct reliability. Every construct had a value larger than 0.70, which is the recommended acceptance level according to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). As these findings show, we can see that our instrument is internally consistent. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the measurement model is compatible with structural analysis.

We analysed convergent validity using the average variance extracted (AVE), which measures the amount of variance captured by a construct relative to the variance due to measurement error. The results indicate that the AVE values for all constructs exceeded the recommended cutoff point of 0.50, suggesting that the items within each construct explained more

than half of the variance. The guidelines of Hair et al. (2019) were followed to establish the discriminant validity of the scale using two key criteria. The assessment utilised the 'Fornell-Larcker criterion method' and the 'HTMT' ratio. Table 3 shows that the constructs' average shared variance is smaller than the square root of the average variance extracted.

Table 4 illustrates that HTMT levels must remain below 0.85 (Hanseler et al., 2015). The analysis confirmed the scale's predicted reliability by finding noticeably lower HTMT values when compared to the defined benchmark. This result proves its ability to distinguish between constructs and correlate with the external assessment. Hence, the convergent and discriminant validity of the scale was confirmed (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

TABLE 2
Results of measurement model assessment

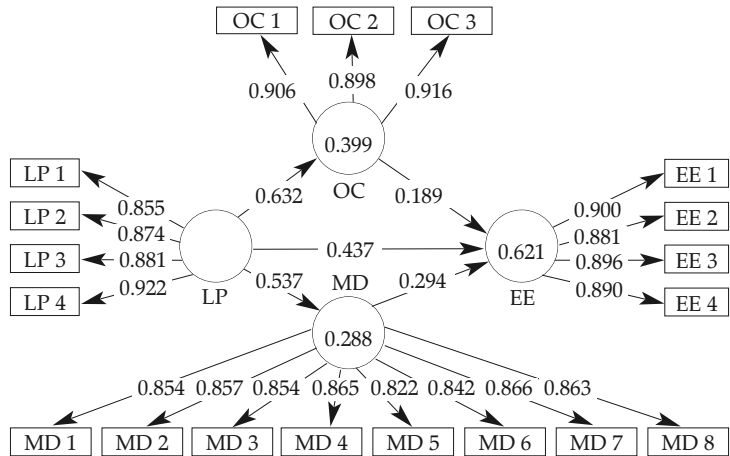
Items	Outer loading	VIF	Composite reliability	Average variance extract	α
<i>Leader psychopathy</i>			0.934	0.780	0.906
LP 1	0.855	2.272			
LP 2	0.874	2.497			
LP 3	0.881	3.219			
LP 4	0.922	4.092			
<i>Organisational cynicism</i>			0.933	0.822	0.892
OC 1	0.906	2.602			
OC 2	0.898	2.544			
OC 3	0.916	2.768			
<i>Moral disengagement</i>			0.955	0.728	0.947
MD 1	0.854	3.001			
MD 2	0.857	3.026			
MD 3	0.854	3.060			
MD 4	0.865	3.306			
MD 5	0.822	2.439			
MD 6	0.842	2.792			
MD 7	0.866	3.082			
MD 8	0.863	3.100			
<i>Employee expediency</i>			0.940	0.796	0.914
DL 1	0.900	3.012			
DL 2	0.881	2.639			
DL 3	0.896	2.949			
DL 4	0.890	2.787			

Structural model assessment

After completing the psychometric requirements for our measurement model, we evaluated our structural model. The path coefficients' significance and magnitude were used to evaluate the structural model. A 5.000-resample bootstrapping method was used. Figure 1 presents the results of the structural model assessment. The findings of the tests conducted on the hypo-

theses are shown in Table 4. Our statistical result discovered that leader psychopathy directly and significantly impacted employee expediency ($\beta = 0.437, t = 7.585$) at a significance level of $p < 0.001$, supporting Hypothesis 1.

➔ FIGURE 1
The mediating effect of organisational cynicism and moral disengagement on the relationship between leader psychopathy and employee expediency



Notes: LP = leader psychopathy; OC = organisational cynicism; MD = moral disengagement; EE = employee expediency.

Furthermore, the primary objective of this research was to investigate the effects of organisational cynicism and moral disengagement as mediators in the connection between leader psychopathy and employee expediency.

➔ TABLE 3
Results of
Fornell-Larcker criterion

Variable	1	2	3	4
1 Employee expediency	0.892			
2 Leader psychopathy	0.714	0.883		
3 Moral disengagement	0.640	0.537	0.853	
4 Organisational cynicism	0.639	0.632	0.591	0.906

Note: Values in bold are the square root of AVE

➔ TABLE 4
HTMT criterion

Variable	1	2	3	4
1 Employee expediency				
2 Leader psychopathy	0.783			
3 Moral disengagement	0.687	0.576		
4 Organisational cynicism	0.707	0.700	0.640	

We followed Hayes (2013) and MacKinnon et al. (2004) criteria to test for mediation effects using SmartPLS 3.0. The results of the direct impacts of leader psychopathy on the two mediating variables (organisational cynicism; $\gamma = 0.632, p < 0.001$ and moral disengagement; $\gamma = 0.537, p < 0.001$) were all sig-

nificant. Also, the path between organisational cynicism and employee expediency ($\beta = 0.189, p = 0.002$) and moral disengagement and employee expediency ($\beta = 0.294, p < 0.001$) was also significant. Therefore, the second requirement for testing mediation was confirmed. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, we used a bias-corrected bootstrapping technique with a 95% confidence interval to evaluate the indirect effect of leader psychopathy on employee expediency through the two mediating variables. Table 5 shows that the bootstrap results suggest that organisational cynicism ($\beta = 0.119, t = 3.083, p = 0.002$) and moral disengagement ($\beta = 0.158; t = 4.760, p < 0.001$) have positive and substantial mediation effects. Therefore, both Hypotheses 2 and 3 were confirmed.

TABLE 5
Results of structural
model evaluation

Hypotheses	Relationship	Path coefficient	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
H1	LP → EE	0.437	7.585	0.000	Supported
H2	LP → OC → EE	0.119	3.083	0.002	Supported
H3	PEOU → MD → EE	0.158	4.760	0.000	Supported
Stoner Geisser Q²					
Employee expediency	0.489				
Organisational cynicism	0.324				
Moral disengagement	0.206				
SRMR	0.082				

Note: SRMR = standardised root mean square.

Prediction-oriented PLS-SEM evaluates fit factors such as R^2 and Q^2 before assessing hypotheses. Falk and Miller (1992) advised R^2 values above 0.10. Organisational cynicism and moral disengagement explained 61.7% of employee expediency ($R^2 = 0.617$). Chin et al. (2008) classified endogenous latent variables as substantial, moderate, or weak based on R^2 values of 0.67, 0.33, or 0.19 to assess model validity. Employee expediency ($R^2 = 0.617$) can be characterised as moderate. The blind-folding process in smart PLS 3.0 was used to obtain the value of Q^2 . A Q^2 value greater than zero demonstrates the prediction accuracy of the structural model, according to Hair et al. (2013). Our study's results provide good evidence of predictive relevance as the Q^2 values for employee expediency, organisational cynicism, and moral disengagement were 0.489, 0.324, and 0.206, respectively. According to Lachowicz et al. (2018), one way to evaluate the relative size of the indirect impact and the overall effect is by using effect size (f Square), mediation ν , or ν statistics (ν). Ogbeibu et al. (2020) suggest a statistical interpretation that classifies ν mediating effects as low at 0.02, moderate at 0.075, and high at 0.175.

According to the calculations in Table 5, the involvement of organisational cynicism (*M*) and moral disengagement (*M*) in facilitating the indirect impact of LP (*X1*) on EE (*Y*) at the structural level is categorised as low (0.014) and moderate influence (0.024).

TABLE 6
Upsilon mediation
effect size (v) or
Upsilon statistics (v)

Statistical path	Upsilon statistics (v)	Information
LP (<i>X1</i>) → OC (<i>M</i>) → EE (<i>Y</i>)	$[0.632]^2 \times [0.189]^2 = 0.014$	Low influence
LP (<i>X1</i>) → MD (<i>M</i>) → EE (<i>Y</i>)	$[0.537]^2 \times [0.294]^2 = 0.024$	Moderate influence

DISCUSSION

The present study investigated and evaluated the relationship between the leader's psychopathy and hotel employee expediency. A thorough comprehension of the model's linkages is achieved through integrating theories. According to social exchange theory (SET), leader psychopathy is a reciprocal dynamic which, when implemented by employees, can result in expediency and cynicism. Furthermore, social cognitive theory posits that witnessing unethical leader behaviour can lead employees to become morally disengaged. Lastly, COR posits that when faced with the stress that leader psychopathy causes, employees may resort to cynicism and expediency as coping methods to save their psychological resources.

Considering the results, we discover that leader psychopathy was positively related to employee expediency (Hypotheses 1), which is consistent with previous studies (e.g., Erkutlu & Chafra, 2019). Studies conducted in the past have validated the notion that the negative component of supervisory roles affects individual performance. This sustained exposure to leader psychopathy can cultivate a detrimental environment where negative roles are reinforced, fostering an atmosphere of perceived threat among individuals. The cumulative impact of this ongoing influence may contribute to the manifestation of unwanted behaviours within the organisational context. The threatening nature associated with leader psychopathy can create a sense of instability, eroding trust and undermining the positive dynamics essential for a healthy work environment. As such, the long-term consequences of leader psychopathy may extend beyond mere observation, potentially influencing the organisational culture and shaping behaviours that deviate from desired norms. It was argued by Haider and Yean (2023) that employees who are subjected to destructive treatment are more likely to engage in deviant behaviour. Our findings are consistent with their arguments.

Regarding Hypothesis 2, we discovered that the association between leader psychopathy and employee expediency

is mediated by organisational cynicism. To our knowledge, no previous study has tested the mediating role of organisational cynicism in the relationship between leader psychopathy and employee expediency. Our study is the first to explore this important connection, contributing novel insights to the literature. Therefore, our study makes a noteworthy contribution by investigating how organisational cynicism influences the connection between leader psychopathy and employee expediency. In environments led by leader psychopathy, the absence of clear performance standards creates a breeding ground for high subjective performance levels (Landay et al., 2019) and potentially detrimental decision-making (Blickle et al., 2018). Sensing the precarious nature of their resources, employees may experience a dual challenge – not only contending with potential negative impacts on their performance but also grappling with cynicism arising from the perceived risk to their resources.

The third hypothesis asserted that moral disengagement mediates the relationship between leader psychopathy and employee expediency. The identification of moral disengagement as a mediator in the relationship between leader psychopathy and employee expediency stems from several compelling reasons. Leader psychopathy is characterised by a lack of moral and ethical considerations, creating an environment where individuals may detach themselves from typical moral constraints. This detachment, known as moral disengagement, is a psychological mechanism that allows individuals to rationalise and justify unethical behaviour. In the context of this study, leader psychopathy influences employees to disengage, facilitating the acceptance of expedient actions morally. Employees perceiving a leader's disregard for ethical standards are likelier to adopt similar attitudes. The mediation effect of moral disengagement underscores how leader psychopathy contributes to an erosion of moral frameworks, directly influencing employees to engage in expedient behaviours. This finding deepens our understanding of the intricate pathways through which leader psychopathy shapes employee conduct, emphasising the significance of moral disengagement as a critical link in this relationship.

Theoretical implication

This study has enhanced a threefold contribution related to leadership and employee expediency literature. First, the finding that leader psychopathy is related to general deviant behaviour in the workplace supports the findings of many other studies (Mathieu et al., 2014; Bulkan, 2017; Erkutlu & Chafra, 2019), providing more evidence for the connection between leader psychopathy and deviant behaviour in professional

settings. Second, by verifying the positive impact of leader psychopathy on employee expediency, our study adds to the growing body of research on the elements that lead to expediency. Third, leveraging the social conservation of resources theory, our research has crafted and scrutinised a mediation model to elucidate the intricate dynamics surrounding the influence of leader psychopathy on employee expediency. This theoretical framework posits that individuals are driven to conserve and protect their resources, encompassing time, energy, and cognitive capacities. Leader psychopathy, characterised by manipulative tendencies and a lack of empathy, is theorised to deplete these crucial resources within the organisational context. Consequently, employees may resort to expedient behaviours as adaptive responses to cope with the challenging work environment created by leader psychopathy. Our study investigates the nuanced aspects of this relationship, exploring the underlying mechanisms and identifying the specific conditions under which leader psychopathy exerts its strongest impact on employee expediency.

According to the hypotheses that we have developed, there was a positive correlation between leader psychopathy and employee expediency. Besides, our findings show that moral disengagement mediates the effect of leader psychopathy on employee expediency. This finding aligns with predictions when taken in context with the abundant research showing that moral disengagement is a key component in the chain reaction linking bad leadership to unethical actions. Leader psychopathy can influence employees' moral reasoning and ethical decision-making processes within the organisational context, leading them towards expedient actions. Identifying moral disengagement as a mediating factor offers valuable insights into the psychological mechanisms involved. According to the conservation of resources (COR) theory, individuals are inherently driven to acquire, preserve, and protect valuable resources. When examining the impact of leader psychopathy within this framework, a cascade of cognitive justification mechanisms, such as the displacement of responsibility, emerges. These cognitive processes contribute to organisational cynicism, where individuals develop a skeptical outlook towards the organisation and its intentions. The association between leader psychopathy and organisational cynicism sets the stage for an increased likelihood of employee expediency. As organisational cynicism intensifies, employees may resort to expedient behaviours as a coping mechanism, responding to a perceived lack of support and fairness. This intricate chain of events underscores the nuanced interplay between leadership behaviour, cognitive processes, and the broader organisational climate in shaping employee responses and ethical choices.

Managerial implications

These findings hold significant implications for management. To mitigate deviant behaviours within organisations, firms must invest additional effort and time into minimising the prevalence of leader psychopathy. Because leader psychopathy is identified as a personality disorder capable of instigating employees' organisational cynicism (OC), moral disengagement (MD), and ultimately enforcing employee expediency, addressing and curbing this leadership approach becomes crucial for fostering a healthier workplace environment. Management strategies should cultivate leadership that prioritises transparency, ethical considerations, and a supportive organisational culture. By actively discouraging the possibility of psychopathy behaviour among management, organisations can foster a positive work atmosphere, reducing the likelihood of an organisational uncondusive environment among employees. This condition, in turn, promotes a more constructive and engaged workforce, ultimately contributing to enhanced organisational performance and employee satisfaction. Employers should prefer candidates for managerial positions who demonstrate a lack of negative character traits and low selfishness. If the organisation wants to foster effective and ethical leadership, it must favour applicants with these traits. Organisations can cultivate a more favourable work environment by intentionally choosing leaders who prioritise teamwork over individual gain and display admirable character attributes. Those in leadership positions with less egotism are more inclined to put the group's and company's success first. A more engaged workforce, productivity, and solid groundwork for future success are all possible outcomes. Incorporating these factors into the promotion and selection process can improve the calibre of leadership and the general dynamics of the organisation. As the data reveals that organisational cynicism and moral disengagement mediate the relationship between leader psychopathy and employee expediency, organisations should consider implementing behaviour-reduction training programmes for employees exhibiting negative behaviours. These programmes could encompass interventions to address organisational cynicism and promote moral engagement. Organisations can design training initiatives that target the reduction of cynicism and the enhancement of ethical decision-making skills among employees. These programmes may include workshops, awareness campaigns, and leadership development initiatives that foster a positive organisational culture and ethical conduct. By investing in such training programmes, companies can proactively address the underlying factors contributing

to employee expediency associated with leader psychopathy. These initiatives contribute to a more ethical and positive work environment and empower employees to resist negative influences and make ethically sound decisions in challenging situations.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This study possesses certain limitations that provide avenues for future research. Primarily, due to time constraints and limited resources, our study adopted a cross-sectional rather than a longitudinal design. A cross-sectional approach captures a snapshot of data at a specific time, which may restrict our ability to establish causation or track changes over an extended period. Future researchers may benefit from employing longitudinal methodologies, allowing for the exploration of how variables evolve and interact over an extended timeframe. This approach could enhance the robustness of findings and provide a more nuanced perspective on the causal relationships suggested in our cross-sectional study. However, employing time-lagged designs would reduce the potential for selection bias. Another significant limitation of this study is the high dropout rate, which reduced the sample size from 450 to 356 participants. While this attrition may have introduced bias, our analysis of group differences did not reveal significant discrepancies, suggesting that the dropout group was not systematically different from the remaining participants. Despite these constraints, our study lays a foundation for subsequent research endeavours to delve deeper into the complexities of the examined phenomena. Future studies could be enhanced by including a moderator variable. Several potential variables that could reduce the negative impact of leader psychopathy on employee expediency are hardiness and resilience.

CONCLUSION

The results of this investigation demonstrate that leader psychopathy possesses the potential to stimulate employee expediency. This is facilitated by the emergence of moral disengagement and organisational cynicism, which subsequently incentivise expedient behaviours among employees. By implementing the social cognitive viewpoint, conservation of resources, and social exchange theory, our research findings contribute to expanding knowledge about employee expediency and leader psychopathy. Consequently, the findings of this research offer several significant recommendations that businesses may use to lessen the presence of leader psychopathy and employee expediency.

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Od psihopatije do koristoljublja: razotkrivanje posredničkih uloga organizacijskoga cinizma i moralne neangažiranosti u dinamici vodstva

Aneu YULIANEU

STIE Latifah Mubarokiyah, Tasikmalaya, Indonezija

Faizal WIHUDA

Sveučilište Jenderalal Soedirman, Purwokerto, Indonezija

Arief Adhy KURNIAWAN

Sveučilište AMIKOM, Purwokerto, Indonezija

Provedeno istraživanje temelji se na principima socijalne razmjene (SET), socijalne kognitivne teorije (SCT) i teorije očuvanja resursa (COR). Te su nam teorije omogućile da shvatimo neizravnu povezanost između psihopatije vođe i koristoljublja zaposlenika. Kako bismo potvrdili to istraživanje, proveli smo anketiranje u tri navrata,

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FROM PSYCHOPATHY...

prikupljajući podatke od 282 hotelska zaposlenika u Indoneziji. Za testiranje hipoteza upotrijebljena je tehnika PLS-SEM. Rezultati su pokazali da je psihopatija vođe imala pozitivan izravan i neizravan učinak na koristoljublje zaposlenika kroz organizacijski cinizam i moralnu neangažiranost. Dajemo nove teorijske, empirijske i praktične doprinose objašnjavajući zašto psihopatija vođa utječe na koristoljublje zaposlenika. Ova je studija jedna od prvih koja je integrirala psihopatiju vođe, organizacijski cinizam, moralnu neangažiranost i koristoljublje zaposlenika u jedinstven teorijski model.

Ključne riječi: psihopatija, vođa, cinizam, neangažiranost, koristoljublje, hotel, zaposlenik



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