RESEARCH PAPER

Impact of Psychological Hardiness and Perceived Organizational Support on Organizational Pride through the Mediating Role of Thriving at Work

¹Nyela Ashraf*, ²Amina Tariq and ³Kanwal Shahzadi

1. Lecturer, Department of Business Administration, University of Poonch, Rawalakot, AJK, Pakistan
2. Lecturer, Department of Management Sciences, Air University, Kharian, Punjab, Pakistan
3. Lecturer, Department of Management Sciences, COMSATS University, Islamabad, Pakistan

| ***Corresponding Author:** | nyelaashraf@upr.edu.pk |

ABSTRACT

This study looks at the positive effect of psychological hardiness on organizational pride, with a particular emphasis on the mediating function of thriving at work along with the moderating function of perceived organizational support. Past research show that psychological hardiness benefits individuals and organizations. Based on resilience and organizational support theories, we argue that people with high psychological hardiness thrive at work, which enhances organizational pride. Perceived organizational support can boost the benefits of psychological hardiness on thriving at work. We used a quantitative research strategy, surveying 331 individuals from diverse service sector industries. This study employed structural equation modeling to examine the associations among variables under study. The findings indicate that there is a significant mediating effect of thriving at work on the relationship between psychological hardiness and organizational pride. Moreover, we found that when POS is high the positive relationship between psychological hardiness and thriving at work becomes strengthen. Results of the study necessitate to cultivate an environment of support within the organizations along with efforts to establish training programs for enhancing psychological hardiness of employees. These efforts would generate feelings of thriving at work ultimately leading to organizational pride.

| **KEYWORDS** | Organizational Pride, Thriving at Work, Perceived Organizational Support, Psychological Hardiness |

Introduction

Psychological hardiness, a construct reflecting individuals' resilience and ability to endure stressful conditions (Bartone et al., 2023), has emerged as a pivotal factor influencing employees' attitudes and behaviors within the workplace. This is because the evolving landscape of organizational behavior research continues to unravel the intricate dynamics between employee resilience, workplace satisfaction, and overall organizational commitment (Lee, 2018). An attempt is being made by this study for bringing into light that how psychological hardiness fosters organizational pride. Particularly, we examined the mediating role of thriving at work between psychological hardiness and organizational pride along with the moderating role of perceived organizational support between the relationship of psychological hardiness and thriving at work.

It is highlighted by research community that individuals with high levels of hardiness perceive stressful situations as opportunities for growth and learning and not as threats. This influences their engagement and satisfaction at work positively (Maddi, 2002). The reason behind this is that psychological hardiness -characterized by the three

Cs: commitment, control, and challenge- equips employees with the resilience to navigate the complexities and adversities of the workplace (Kobasa, 1979).

It is being postulated by the current study that thriving at work, plays a critical mediating role between psychological hardiness and organizational pride. Thriving at work is a psychological state wherein individuals experience a sense of vitality and learning at work (Lyndon et al., 2018). Previous research has demonstrated that POS is a dual-component experience that propels individuals toward higher performance and innovation (Spreitzer et al., 2005). It is being hypothesized by the current study that employees with high psychological hardiness are more likely to thrive at work, contributing to enhanced feelings of organizational pride which is being defined as a positive emotional state deriving from one's affiliation with the organization (Katzenbach, 1998).

Perceived organizational support (POS) is employees' positive perception of their organization's appreciation and support for their contributions and well-being (Claudia, 2018). This study has examined POS as a moderating variable in the relationship between psychological hardiness and thriving at work. An emotional bond between the employee and the organization is being developed by POS (Eisenberger et al.,1986) which enhances the employee's belief in their efficacy and value to the organization. Building upon the aforementioned arguments, current study proposed that POS in conjunction with psychological hardiness results in more pronounced effect on thriving at work as compared to the stand alone impact of psychological hardiness on thriving at work.

This study attempted to offer valuable insights into how organizations can cultivate environments that not only support employee resilience and thriving but also bolster organizational pride and commitment. Specifically, the aim was to contribute to the literature by elucidating the complex interplay between psychological hardiness, thriving at work, perceived organizational support, and organizational pride. This has been done by building on the theoretical foundations laid by previous scholars.

Literature Review

Kobasa (1979) introduced the idea of psychological hardiness for the first time. This concept is generally viewed to enhance an individual's capacity to manage stress and excel in demanding circumstances. It refers to an individual's mindset characterized by a profound sense of commitment (both personal and professional aspects of life), a sense of control, and the conviction that challenges serve as opportunities for growth rather than threats so one should always ready to face them (Stein & Bartone, 2020). A heightened sense of dedication towards their respective positions is being felt by individuals who possess elevated levels of psychological hardiness, resulting in a perception of their efforts as significant (Vagni et al., 2020). This evidence is substantial in relating psychological hardiness with organizational pride as research has found that task significance is substantially related with organizational pride (Groza & Groza, 2022). Additionally, empirical evidence indicates that employees who demonstrate commitment-one of the component of psychological hardiness- are more inclined to cultivate a robust organizational identity (Mael and Ashforth, 1992), which serves as a prelude to the experience of organizational pride. Moreover, resilient individuals frequently experience a sense of autonomy and influence over their tasks and results, resulting in increased levels of involvement and contentment (Rybakovaitā et al., 2022). Logically, employees who are more contented and involved are more prone to develop pride in their organizations. According to Salanova et al. (2005), the perception of control

which is the third component of psychological hardiness has the potential to foster a favorable organizational climate, wherein employees have a feeling of worth and pride in their accomplishments and the firm to which they are affiliated. Thus, it can be inferred that having more feelings of control over outcomes enhances feelings of pride in the organization. One the otherhand, if employees do not have control they may feel powerless and powerlessness creates a self-defeating "loss-loss" culture (Reppert, 1988) where no one can develop feelings of pride for their organization. Research has also indicated that individuals who possess elevated levels of psychological resilience demonstrate enhanced levels of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and performance (Maddi, 2002). These outcomes are closely linked to the development of organizational pride, as satisfied and committed workers are prone to feel proud of their association with the organization. Based upon the above arguments, it is hypothesized that;

H1: Psychological hardiness is positively related to organizational pride

Thriving at the workplace is characterized by a sense of vitality, which involves feeling alive and enthusiastic, as well as continuous learning, which involves the ongoing improvement of skills (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Engagement has a crucial role in determining vitality, as persons who are dedicated are more likely to have increased energy and enthusiasm towards their jobs (Fleck & Inceoglu, 2010), which in turn enhances their sense of thriving. Psychological hardiness's commitment component guarantees that individuals are highly involved in their work, cultivating a sense of purpose and importance (Martela & Steger, 2016). This develops the rationale to relate psychological hardiness with thriving at work. Moreover, individuals who hold an intense feeling of control, which is a fundamental component of psychological hardiness, have the belief that they can exert influence over outcomes by means of their actions. When people start thinking this way they not only become motivated to face obstacles, but also develop a mindset of continuous learning which is one of the two components of thriving at work. Hardy individuals actively seek feedback and opportunities for skill development, which leads to a better sense of learning and growth which enhances their overall sense of thriving at work. Additionally, according to Raijene et al. (2021), adopting a perspective that perceives obstacles as opportunities rather than threats enables resilient individuals to confront arduous circumstances with a mindset oriented towards personal and professional advancement. Hardy individuals have a power of accepting challenges instead of avoiding them and viewing them in negative context (Stein & Bartone, 2020). Consequently, it facilitates the hardy individuals to adjust to ever-changing work environment and overcoming challenges. This is crucial because it helps hardy people to achieve success and thrive at work. The act of confronting and surmounting obstacles has the potential to foster inventiveness, problem-solving abilities, and resilience (Carmeli et al., 2021) thus, so augmenting the overall experience of thriving in the workplace. Additionally, feelings of thriving incubate in an environment where individuals perceive increased performance, engagement and reduced burnout by demonstrating a significant level of, vitality, and efficiency in professional tasks. Studies have shown that there is a favorable correlation between psychological hardiness and job performance, engagement, and reduced burnout rates (Maddi, 2002; Bartone, 2006). Thus, hardy people have more feelings of thriving at work. Moreover, hardy individuals possess superior abilities to manage stress and overcome challenges, which are unavoidable in any professional environment. Through proficient stress management, these persons uphold their overall well-being and remain

concentrated on prospects for personal development, which is crucial for thriving (Bartone, 2006). Thus, based on the above discussion this study postulates that;

H2: Psychological hardiness is related to thriving at work in a positive fashion

Organizational pride is a feeling of honor and esteem towards an organization, influenced by individual and group accomplishments, moral principles, and standing (Tyler & Blader, 2013). According to Kleine et al. (2019), employees who are in a state of flourishing are more inclined to demonstrate elevated levels of engagement and a heightened sense of affiliation with their firm. The heightened level of involvement and identification facilitates a more profound affiliation with the principles and achievements of the organization, resulting in heightened sentiments of organizational pride (Ashforth et al., 2008). According to Abid et al. (2021), employees who are thriving view themselves as capable and efficient contributors to their firm. If organizations acknowledge such employees then workers would develop feelings of enhanced self-esteem (Luthans et al., 2015). Thus, the acknowledgment of the employee contributions to the achievements of the business results in augmenting sentiments of pride inside their professional environment. A favorable organizational climate and culture that places importance on innovation, resilience, and ongoing enhancement is being developed by a thriving workforce. Employee pride in the organization in such environments is augmented because such type of environment not only promotes the success of individuals but also enhances the organization's reputation and attractiveness as an employer (Schneider et al., 2013). Numerous positive results have been found to be connected with thriving at work, as evidenced by research conducted by Porath et al. (2012). These benefits include increased levels of job satisfaction, lower intentions to leave one's employment, and improved performance. These results are crucial in fostering a favorable organizational image and achieving success, both of which are fundamental factors in cultivating organizational pride. Building upon the above discussion we hypothesized that:

H3: Thriving at work and organizational pride are positively related to each other

Thriving at workplace, which includes both vitality and learning (Spreitzer et al., 2005), plays a crucial role in facilitating the translation of psychological hardiness into positive organizational results. Individuals that possess hardiness and the ability to effectively manage stress (Buheji, 2023; Stein & Bartone, 2020) are more inclined to exhibit a sense of energy and actively seek out learning prospects within their professional environment, so exemplifying the fundamental concept of thriving. On the other hand, organizational pride means the emotional connection and admiration that individuals hold for their their organization. This sentiment is shaped by factors such as acknowledgment of accomplishments, adherence to ethical principles, and the organization's reputation (Tyler & Blader, 2013). Employees who are thriving, experiencing vitality, and consistently growing are more inclined to actively contribute to and value their organization's achievements and principles, so cultivating a sense of pride. The relationship between psychological hardiness and organizational pride, which is influenced by thriving in the workplace, could be enlightened by the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory proposed by Hobfoll in 1989. COR theory posits that individuals endeavor to acquire, preserve, and safeguard their valued resources. Psychological hardiness can be conceptualized as an individual's personal attribute that facilitates their capacity to effectively manage the stress and adversities, resulting in an augmentation of resources such as vitality and possibilities for learning, which are indicative of thriving. When individuals thrive, they are more inclined to make positive

contributions to their organization, acknowledging and aligning with its accomplishments and principles, resulting in a sense of pride within the organization. Thus, the study postulates that;

H4: Thriving at work acts as a mediator between the relationship of psychological hardiness and organizational pride

Perceived organizational support (POS) refers to the perceptions held by employees regarding the organization's acknowledgement of their contributions and its commitment to their welfare (Eisenberger et al.1986). The psychological resources offered by psychological hardiness can be enhanced by POS. When individuals see a significant degree of support from their institution, they are more inclined to experience a sense of security in utilizing their hardiness attributes, including commitment, control, and challenge, as they hold the belief that the business provides them with backing. This form of support serves as a protective mechanism that motivates employees to actively participate in their tasks, embrace uncertainty, and actively pursue avenues for personal and professional growth, thus cultivating a state of thriving. The favorable impact of psychological hardiness on thriving at work can be enhanced by a high level of POS. Hardy individuals who view their organization as supportive are likely to enjoy a combined and mutually beneficial increase in their energy and ability to learn, as both their internal resilience and external support come together to enhance their vitality. This implies that POS has the potential to enhance the transition from being hardy to thriving. POS can also act as a buffer in situations where psychological hardiness alone is not enough to guarantee success. In circumstances characterized by high levels of stress or difficulty, the perceived level of support provided by the business can help alleviate the possible adverse effects on an employee's well-being and ability to acquire knowledge, so enabling hardy individuals to continue to flourish. According to Neves and Eisenberger (2014), organizations that are viewed as supportive have a higher likelihood of establishing an environment that promotes openness, risk-taking, and innovation. This milieu, in turn, promotes the manifestation and advantages of psychological hardiness, so facilitating the thriving of individuals. The validation and reinforcement of positive attitudes and behaviors related with hardiness can be enhanced by the perceived support from the organization, hence increasing their impact on thriving. Therefore, the study hypothesizes that;

H5: POS moderates the association between psychological hardiness and thriving at work, strengthening this link when perceived organizational support is high.

Material and Methods

Sample and Procedure

The targeted population under study consisted of employed individuals in the service industry, with a special focus on the education sector in Azad Kashmir and Rawalpindi, Pakistan. The data were obtained from employees in a non-contrived setting with minimal researcher intervention, since respondents were assured that their information would be treated with confidentiality in the event of any reluctance to provide it for the study. The data were gathered during two distinct time periods using self-administered surveys within a cross-sectional time frame in order to mitigate potential common method biases. The sampled employees were given a total of 450 questionnaires. A total of 311 questionnaires were established by removing incomplete replies and matching employee responses at two distinct time points, T1 and T2. Hence,

the ultimate sample size comprised of 331 participants, with a response rate of 69%. Out of the total responses, 195 (58.9%) were male, while 136 (41.1%) were female. Out of the total respondents, 201 (60.7%) were unmarried, while 130 (39.3%) were married.

Measures

The acquisition of all measures was conducted by a self-report questionnaire, as self-reporting is deemed more suitable for the variables examined in this study. The measurement of all items was conducted using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 to 5. Hardiness has been assessed by six items 2 per facet the earlier work of Bartone (1991) and Maddi (1999). α of the scale was found to be 0.97. To measure thriving at work a 10-item scale developed by Porath et al. (2012) was employed. Cronbach's α was found .95. The organizational pride was assessed by 7 items developed according to scale of (Gouthier & Rhein, 2011). Cronbach's alpha for the scale was 0.96. The eight item scale of Eisenberger et al (1986) was employed for estimation of Perceived organizational support. Cronbach's α was found to be 0.94.

Results and Discussions

Confirmatory factor analysis

Validity (Discriminant and convergent) of the study constructs were evaluated (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Alternative models were contrasted with the four-factor model. The results revealed that the four-factor model comprising psychological hardiness, POS, thriving at work, and organizational pride provided the most accurate representation of the data ($\chi 2/df$ = 1.13, CFI =.98, TLI =.94, RMSEA =.04, SRMR =.04). This model outperformed alternative models, such as a three-factor model that combined organizational pride and thriving at work($\chi 2/df$ = 7.1, SRMR = .15, RMSEA = .17, CFI = .47, TLI = .56); a 2-factor model in which organizational pride, thriving at work, and perceived organizational support were combined ($\chi 2/df$ = 9.1, SRMR = .19, RMSEA = .16, CFI = .53; TLI = .51); and a 1-factor model compromising all study variables were combined into one factor ($\chi 2/df$ = 13.1, SRMR = .19, RMSEA = .18, CFI = .33, TLI = .32), specifying that variables of the study were adequately distinct. Furthermore, convergent validity was demonstrated by the fact that all factor loadings of the variables in the four-factor model were substantial.

Structural Path Analysis

Direct Path

In order to test the hypotheses, SEM is used. Regression coefficient values (standardized regression coefficients) and their respective standards are displayed in Table 1 below. The results for these parameters determine whether the hypotheses are accepted or not.

Table 1
Direct Effects

Structural Path	β	S.E
Psychological Hardiness → Organizational Pride	0.324***	0.049
Psychological Hardiness → Thriving at Work	0.260***	0.043
Thriving at Work → Organizational Pride	0.297***	0.039

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

The table 1 highlights that psychological hardiness is positively associated with organizational pride (β = 0.324, p < 0.001). Hence, hypothesis 1 i.e. psychological hardiness is positively associated to organizational pride is accepted. Additionally, the results of the study as shown in table 1 also depict that psychological hardiness is significantly related to thriving at work in a positive fashion (β = 0.260, p < 0.001). Thus, hypothesis H2 is accepted. Moreover, tests of Hypothesis 3 indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between thriving at work and organizational pride (β = 0.297, p < 0.001). Hence, hypothesis 3 i.e. thriving at work is positively related to organizational pride is accepted.

Mediation Effect

Table 2 displays the results of the mediation hypothesis stated in H4 which proposed that thriving at work acts as a mediator between the relationship of psychological hardiness and perceived organizational support.

Table 2
Mediation Effect of thriving at work

	B	S.E	LLCI	ULCI	Result
Direct Effect	0.108	0.04	0.23	0.35	Accepted
Indirect Effect	0.276	0.01	0.29	0.36	
Total Effect	0.384	0.05	0.34	0.45	

Table 2 above present the result of mediation hypothesis including direct, indirect and total effects. The direct effect was significant (β = 0.108, SE= 0.04, CI= LL 0.23; UL 0.35). The indirect effect of psychological hardiness on organizational pride was also significant (β = 0.276, SE= 0.01, CI= LL 0.29; UL 0.36). Finally, the overall impact, encompassing both direct and indirect effects, was also considerable (β = 0.384, SE= 0.05, CI= LL 0.34; UL 0.45). Furthermore, the confidence intervals do not contain zero. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is accepted.

Moderation Effect

Hypothesis 5 emphasized the moderating role of perceived organizational support positing that Perceived organizational support moderates the relationship between psychological hardiness and thriving at work, strengthening this link when perceived organizational support is high.

Table 3
Moderating Effect of Perceived Organizational Support

Structural Path	β	P-value
Psychological Hardiness $\rightarrow$ Thriving	0.231	0.001
Perceived Organizational Support $\rightarrow$ Thriving	0.314	0.001
Interaction (Hardiness x Org.Support)$\rightarrow$ Thriving	0.564	0.000

In the table 3 above, the substantial value of interaction term (β = 0.564, p < 0.001) indicates significant moderating effect of perceived organizational support when compared to the stand alone effect of psychological hardiness on thriving which is less (β = 0.231, p < 0.01) than the combined effect of psychological hardiness and perceived organizational support. It indicates that when perceived organizational support is high the positive association of psychological hardiness and thriving at work is strengthened. Thus, hypothesis H5 is accepted by the findings of the study.

Conclusion

The study validates that psychological hardiness significantly and positively influences thriving at work and organizational pride. Thriving at work is also found to be positively associated with organizational pride along with its significant mediating role between psychological hardiness and organizational pride. In summary, this study emphasizes the interdependent connection among psychological hardiness, thriving at work, and organizational pride, wherein the moderating impact of perceived organizational support is of utmost importance. In support of a holistic approach to employee well-being, these results highlight the significance of fostering an empowering and supportive workplace. By nurturing psychological hardiness and thriving within their workforce, organizations have the ability to nurture a sense of loyalty and pride, which ultimately contributes to the overall performance and sustainability of the organization.

Study implications

Our study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on psychological hardiness by incorporating the notion of thriving at work as a crucial mechanism by which psychological hardiness impacts organizational pride. Furthermore, the organizational support theory is enhanced by the moderating effect of perceived organizational support on the relationship between psychological hardiness and thriving at work. This underscores the importance of conducive work environments that promote employee well-being and performance.

This study provides practitioners with the indication that interventions targeting the improvement of psychological hardiness among employees may yield positive outcomes in terms of fostering thriving and, as a result, organizational pride. Potentially beneficial are training programs that emphasize the development of hardiness, stress management, and adaptability. Furthermore, our research emphasizes the significance of perceived organizational support in strengthening the favorable consequences of psychological hardiness on thriving. Establishing a culture of trust and mutual respect through the creation of supportive environments that recognize and attend to employee needs ought to be the objective of organizations.

Organizational policymakers can utilize these insights to formulate and execute policies that promote the welfare and growth of their personnel. Policies that promote ongoing education, employee autonomy, and purposeful labor can foster an environment conducive to optimal performance. Incorporating acknowledgement and incentives for hardiness and flexibility can serve to fortify the significance of psychological hardiness within the organizational culture.

Limitations and Recommendations

This study, while providing valuable insights into the dynamics between psychological hardiness, thriving at work, organizational pride, and perceived organizational support, is subject to several limitations. First, the depending on self-reported data may present common method bias, possibly inflating the relationships among the constructs. Using measures that are objective in nature or which are from multiple sources future research could benefited by validating the findings. For example, future studies could incorporate objective measures of performance, absenteeism, or turnover to complement self-reported measures of psychological hardiness, thriving,

and organizational pride. This would help mitigate common method bias and provide a more nuanced understanding of how these constructs influence tangible organizational outcomes.

Second, the sample was drawn from a diverse set of industries, which enhances generalizability but also introduces heterogeneity that may obscure industry-specific effects. The impact of industry-specific factors on the relationships explored in this study remains an open question. Exploring these relationships within specific industries could uncover the role of industry-specific factors in shaping the dynamics of psychological hardiness, thriving, and organizational pride. Such research could offer tailored recommendations for industry-specific interventions.

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