

Organizational Dehumanization and Job Anxiety: Moderating Role of Passion: A Conservation of Resource Theory Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Purpose- For employees, organizations have always been significant social entities, therefore, using the theoretical lens of conservation of resource theory, this study investigates the impact of organizational dehumanization on job anxiety. Moreover, passion is used as a moderating variable between organizational dehumanization and job anxiety to explain how the presence of passion changes the effect of organizational dehumanization on job anxiety.

Study Design/methodology/approach- The study used a two-wave time-lagged approach through convenience sampling technique for collection of data. For that purpose, two hundred and fifteen employees working in various service sector organizations in Pakistan from different sectors participate in survey process. Moreover, PROCESS macro by Hayes was used to analyze the proposed hypotheses.

Findings- Results show that there is a positive significant link between organizational dehumanization and job anxiety. Moreover, higher levels of passion in individuals weaken the level of job anxiety in the presence of higher organizational dehumanization.

Research Practical Implications- Since employers serve as role models for their employees, it is imperative that they provide a clear and strict example of ethics and respect for others. There should be rules in these workplaces prohibiting dehumanization and other forms of workplace abuse. Further, this study highlights the importance of passion for individuals to minimize job anxiety especially in the environment of dehumanization.

Originality/value- There is limited research on the factors that can preserve and restore the well-being of employees who have been mistreated at work. These findings offer insight into how employees' passion can boost productivity even in toxic and stressful work environments.

Keywords: Organizational Dehumanization, Passion, Job anxiety, Conservation of resource theory

JEL Classification Codes: O15, D23

1 | INTRODUCTION

Research has emphasized the significance of employees in any work environment and validated their existence to accomplish organizational objectives (Brown et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2024; Mulyadi et al., 2023).

Hence, in the last few decades, employees' relationships with their organizations have become a major focus for organizational behavior researchers ([Caesens et al., 2017](#); [Chughtai et al., 2023](#); [Lagios et al., 2023](#)). Most studies examined the positive relationship of employees with their organization ([Chughtai et al., 2023](#)). Nonetheless, few studies stated that the workplace may cause destruction and hindrance ([Caesens et al., 2019](#); [Dhanani & LaPalme, 2019](#); [Ng, 2024](#)) and have begun to investigate the negative aspects of the employer-employee relationship ([Caesens et al., 2019](#); [Hackney & Perrewé, 2018](#)).

Earlier studies looked at both the positive and negative aspects of the relationship in question, including perceived organizational cruelty ([Shore & Coyle-Shapiro, 2012](#)), organizational obstruction ([Mackey et al., 2018](#)), and perceived organizational support ([Suifan et al., 2018](#)). The majority of research looked at how well employees got along with their employers ([Ma et al., 2023](#)). However, a handful research studies ([Caesens et al., 2019](#); [Dhanani & LaPalme, 2019](#); [Ng, 2024](#)) have begun to look into the negative sides of the employer-employee relationship and have stated that the workplace may bring destruction and obstruction.

The unfavorable relationships that employees have with others in their workplace, such as those involving organizational obstruction, abusive supervision, organizational unfairness, and aggressions started by coworkers have been the subject of previous research ([Eisenberger et al., 2004](#); [Lee, 2022](#); [Schat & Kelloway, 2000](#); [Tepper et al., 2006](#)). Because of the negative effects that organizational abuse has on both individuals and organizations, scholars are now more interested in examining these links i.e. abusive supervision and turnover intentions ([Lyu et al., 2019](#)), workplace incivility ([Chughtai & Shah, 2020](#); [Chughtai et al., 2020](#)) and employee deviance ([Jin et al., 2020](#)) organizational injustice and negative megaphoning ([Lee, 2022](#)) workplace tele pressure and emotional exhaustion ([Alatailat et al., 2019](#)) workplace ostracism and interpersonal deviance ([Hua et al., 2023](#)), and more.

Recently, scholars started paying attention to the concept of organizational dehumanization ([Ariño-Mateo et al., 2024](#); [Caesens et al., 2017](#); [Stinglhamber et al., 2021](#); [Stinglhamber et al., 2023](#)) as a novel construct. It can be defined as “the experience of an employee who feels objectified by his or her organization, denied personal subjectivity, and made to feel like a tool or instrument for the organization's ends” and it takes place in organizations when employees are treated like robots ([Bell & Khoury, 2011, p. 170](#)). It might be the result of an act meant to treat a person like a tool or an animal, which gradually impairs the intellectual ability of the human ([Haslam, 2006](#)). When workers in an organization are treated like machines, dehumanization occurs ([Bell & Khoury, 2011](#)). Dehumanization may give rise to grave ethical difficulties since actions and treatments that harm other people and cause them anguish and suffering represent a moral conundrum ([Christoff, 2014](#)). The perception that someone is being treated unfairly, unethically, or inequitably is the root cause of dehumanization ([Bell & Khoury, 2011](#)).

The intensity of the dehumanization can vary from very mild to harsh form but even the mild form of dehumanization can adversely affect the outcomes ([Christoff, 2014](#)). Furthermore, compared to animalistic organizational dehumanization, academics contend that mechanistic dehumanization is more widespread ([Caesens et al., 2017](#); [Christoff, 2014](#)). Past literature on organizational dehumanization has focused on the negative attitudes and behaviors as consequences of this workplace mistreatment i.e. turnover intention, emotional exhaustion, avoidance behavior, low work integrity, and deviant behavior ([Bell & Khoury, 2016](#);

[Caesens et al., 2019](#); [Caesens et al., 2017](#); [Demoulin et al., 2021](#)). Numerous studies also focused on the negative outcomes of organizational dehumanization ([Lagios et al., 2021](#); [Muhammad & Sarwar, 2021](#); [Sainz et al., 2023](#); [Srivastava & Dhir, 2024](#); [Stinglhamber et al., 2023](#)) but there is a need to research on how workplace dehumanization may have an impact on the perception of employees and their outcomes.

Thus, the current study identifies the outcome of organizational dehumanization. Earlier studies have indicated that dehumanization can result in a wide range of detrimental effects, particularly hostile and violent conduct like bullying ([Obermann, 2011](#)) and social rejection ([Martinez et al., 2011](#)). Additionally, it is believed that organizational dehumanization is a significant predisposing factor to unfavorable workplace outcomes such as low job satisfaction ([Caesens et al., 2017](#); [Nguyen et al., 2021](#)); intentions to leave ([Bell & Khoury, 2016](#); [Caesens et al., 2019](#); [Lagios et al., 2021](#); [Nguyen et al., 2021](#)); deviant behavior like knowledge hiding and time theft ([Muhammad & Sarwar, 2021](#)); and low work dignity ([Sainz et al., 2023](#)). A recent study by [Stinglhamber et al. \(2021\)](#), found a connection between voice behavior, diminished affective commitment, and emotional exhaustion concerning organizational dehumanization. Due to this increasing interest of scholars in finding out more consequences of organizational dehumanization, this study intends to investigate job anxiety as a distinct outcome of organizational dehumanization. Accordingly, the researchers of this study argue that organization dehumanization as a stressor can produce negative effects like job anxiety.

Work-related passion is an important concept that studied in a stressor context ([Benitez et al., 2023](#); [Jung et al., 2023](#); [Khan et al., 2023](#); [Liao et al., 2023](#); [Thoudam et al., 2023](#)). While there has been significant advancement in over a decade in the study of work-related passion, many questions remain unanswered ([Pollack et al., 2020](#)). Therefore, this study investigates the conditioning effect of passion on the relationship between organizational dehumanization and job anxiety that may reduce the damaging effect of organizational stressors. Individuals who are dedicated to their work-related passion are driven to succeed through persistent determination and fortitude ([Jordan et al., 2018](#)). Thus, this research proposes that passion works as a personal resource that may reduce the more threatening or actual resource loss which lessens the positive relation between organizational dehumanization and job anxiety.

The present study answers to the call by explaining the impact of organizational dehumanization on job anxiety, as call for future research by Brison et al. ([2022](#)) asserted that there is a need to explore the consequences of organizational dehumanization ([Lagios et al., 2021](#); [Nguyen & Stinglhamber, 2021](#); [Sainz et al., 2023](#); [Stinglhamber et al., 2022](#)). Additionally, study by Stinglhamber and colleagues ([2023](#)) highlighted that the negative effect of organizational dehumanization on organizational deviance is weakened by high compliance, it's critical to ascertain individual variability in this context ([Rubbab et al., 2022](#); [Stinglhamber et al., 2023](#)). A different study by Sarwar et al. ([2021](#)), asserted the need to contemplate the resources that may buffer the deteriorating effect of organizational dehumanization. Furthermore, several recent scholars stated that there is a need to reconnoiter the factors that help employees to mitigate the relationship between job stressors and anxiety ([An et al., 2023](#); [Yin et al., 2023](#); [Zhang et al., 2022](#)). In light of these findings, the current study examines the moderating role of work-related passion between the relationship of organizational dehumanization on job anxiety. This study also contributes to existing knowledge by using the conservation of resource theory ([Hobfoll, 1989](#); [Hobfoll et al., 2018](#)) by explaining the relationship between organizational dehumanization and job anxiety in the presence of work-related passion as a moderator. This manuscript

consists of different sections such as an introduction, literature review, research methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion.

1.1 | Problem Statement

Dehumanization has been widely studied in social psychology but recently researchers started exploring this concept from an organizational perspective. So, it is essential to have more understanding of organizational dehumanization from the work-related viewpoint. In the past organizational dehumanization has been linked to various attitudinal and behavioral outcomes but there is insufficient research on the emotional aspect of this idea. Thus, it is crucial to study the distinct outcomes of organizational dehumanization. Hence, this study answers the recent calls by examining organizational dehumanization and its impact on job anxiety. In addition, according to existing literature, there is a dire need to search that factors which can be helpful for individuals to minimize the positive association between organizational dehumanization and job anxiety.

1.2 | Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. Does organizational dehumanization relate to job anxiety?
2. Does work-related passion moderate the relationship between organizational dehumanization and job anxiety?

1.3 | Research Objectives

This study is based on the following objectives:

1. To examine the relationship of organizational dehumanization with job anxiety
2. To analyze the moderating impact of work-related passion in the relationship between organizational dehumanization and job anxiety

1.4 | Significance of the Study

1.4.1 Theoretical significance

The current study makes several contributions to existing literature. First, it addressed the phenomenon of organizational dehumanization which recently got scholars' attention in the aspect of the organization as previous research on dehumanization studies this concept in social psychology research ([Haslam, 2006](#)). Organizational dehumanization is the perception of employees of how their organization uses them as tools ([Bell & Khoury, 2011, 2011](#)). Research on the employer-employee relationship has emerged as an important concern for organizational behavior researchers ([Shore & Coyle-Shapiro, 2012](#)). Thus, this study contributed to organizational behavior literature by focusing on organizational dehumanization and its outcome i.e. job anxiety. Second, this study also utilized work-related passion as a moderating variable between organizational dehumanization and job anxiety relationship. Passion for one's job is a significant factor that needs to be investigated in the context of stress ([Benitez et al., 2023](#); [Jung et al., 2023](#); [Khan et al., 2023](#); [Liao et al., 2023](#); [Thoudam et al., 2023](#)). In over a decade, the study of work-related passion has advanced significantly, yet many concerns remain ([Pollack et al., 2020](#)). Third, the current study utilized the COR ([Hobfoll, 1989](#); [Hobfoll et al., 2018](#)) theory as an overarching theory to explain the proposed model. COR theory explains that when employees are mistreated at work, strive to protect, and limit the loss of

resources and how it affects employees' attitudes, behaviors, and well-being COR ([Hobfoll, 1989](#); [Hobfoll et al., 2018](#)). Fourth, the current study took service sector employees as a prospective population as this sector can enlighten very well how being dehumanized individuals at the workplace can affect the outcomes.

1.4.2 Practical significance

The growing body of literature on organizational dehumanization provides several avenues for practitioners ([Nguyen et al., 2021](#)). This study suggested that organizational dehumanization may have detrimental impacts on employees' outcomes. Organizations should be careful while treating their employees and put such strategies that help in reducing dehumanization practices and negative outcomes. Employees see that their workplace is not giving them the expected importance and treating them inhumanely which activates the feeling of anxiety. Thus, by giving value to employees and treating them as human, an organization can reduce the negative reaction of employees in the form of reduced well-being and counterproductive behaviors by giving them the perception that they are valuable members of the organization. So, organizations and managers should take such initiatives to keep employees motivated so that feelings of anxiety can be reduced. To minimize this feeling of anxiety some type of coping training be provided to employees that help may them in managing their emotions. Further, this study highlighted the importance of passionate employees as passion can help individuals to reduce negative outcomes. So, practitioners should try to hire passionate employees and if possible, train their employees to augment their passion. Further, managers can also introduce such a feedback system through which they can evaluate employees' performance by providing them constructive feedback to enhance fortitude and stability.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 | Theoretical Foundation

By reviewing the past literature, the current study aimed to explain the impact of organizational dehumanization on job anxiety with the moderating effect of work-related passion. The current study used the conservation of resource (COR) theory ([Hobfoll, 1989](#); [Hobfoll et al., 2018](#)) as an overarching theory to explain the impact of organizational dehumanization on job anxiety through moderating factor i.e. work-related passion. COR theory was initially presented by Hobfoll ([1989](#)). This theory elucidates the behavioral changes during stressful events. Resources are described as objects, individual characteristics, situations, or energies that individual values or that serve as a method to obtain these Hobfoll ([1989](#)). There may be some environmental conditions that may cause threatening or loss of these resources. When people face a stressful situation, they try to build up more resources to avoid future losses. When people have resource accumulation, they experience positive things such as good well-being ([Cohen & Wills, 1985](#)). Further, COR theory argues that if a loss occurs an individual can compensate for that loss by employing other resources ([Pearlin et al., 1981](#)).

An updated version of COR theory ([Hobfoll et al., 2018](#)) argues that resources are threatened because of stressors and stress occurs when an individual is threatened with loss of resources, faces some loss, or fails to gain the resources. According to COR theory ([Hobfoll, 1989](#)), stressful conditions at the workplace cause the depletion of the resource pool which further prompts individuals to preserve their remaining resources. Thus, this study postulates that employees who feel dehumanized by their organization face stress, and this

stress causes a decline of resources in line with COR theory. Further COR theory states that the decline of resources creates the urge to defend residual resources. By using COR theory, current research is considering organizational dehumanization as a threat to resources which induces negative outcomes i.e. job anxiety. But in line with COR theory, current research used passion as a personal resource which may work in stressful situations, as people try to build up more resources to avoid future losses.

Additionally, employees' passion for their work plays a more direct motivating effect ([De Clercq & Pereira, 2020](#)), determined workers are drawn to challenging environments because they can acquire resources in the form of passion by feeling personal triumph ([Vallerand et al., 2003](#)). Another study by Wu et al. ([2023](#)) considered work passion as intrinsic motivation that impacts employees' work-related emotions. Passionate workers typically experience a boost in energy when they accomplish difficult jobs ([Baum & Locke, 2004](#)). So, by using COR theory, this study used passion for work as a resource which helps in diminishing the negative effect of dehumanization and job anxiety. This study presents that passion can work as a moderator that may decrease the negative effect of organizational dehumanization on job anxiety.

A study by Halbesleben ([2014](#)) stated that the researchers utilize COR theory while studying coping mechanisms. As there are limited resources available in a stressful situation, employees work hard to preserve and protect their resources and individuals use some personal resources i.e. some personality traits to cope with threats ([Hobfoll, 1989](#)). According to this theory, individuals adopt such behavior by which they can protect additional resources for future events ([Ng & Feldman, 2012](#)). So, by utilizing COR theory ([Hobfoll, 1989](#)), this study assumes that work-related passion can be a possible moderator that may affect an individual's perceived organizational dehumanization and job anxiety.

2.2 | Organizational Dehumanization and Job Anxiety

The concept of dehumanization at work initially surfaced in sociological and philosophical studies during the advent of the industrial and capitalist modern age. Haslam ([2006](#)) gave a comprehensive overview of the dehumanization literature in social psychology. When someone is treated less humanly and more like an animal or machine, with less ability to possess human characteristics like intellect, will, and sentiment, this is known as dehumanization ([Haslam, 2006](#)). When a person treats someone else as less human, they treat them like a tool, rejecting or suppressing their subjectivity, agency, and autonomy. In the workplace, dehumanizing behaviors are regularly observed and accepted as a legitimate tactic for accomplishing individual and organizational goals ([Christoff, 2014](#)). Organizational dehumanization is defined as the experience of an employee who feels demeaned by his or her organization, denying him as a subject, and left feeling like a tool or instrument for the company's benefits ([Bell & Khoury, 2011](#)). It's a psychological state in which people believe that others aren't entirely human or are less human than them ([Haslam, 2006](#); [Haslam & Loughnan, 2014](#)).

In the recent years, a lot of research has been done on dehumanization from the perspective of sociology, but recently this phenomenon has gained importance in the workplace context ([Christoff, 2014](#)). Employees at their workplaces face different kinds of mistreatment including the perception of being treated like machines, objects, tools, etc. ([Bell & Khoury, 2011](#); [Christoff, 2014](#)). Employees make this perception because of various factors such as the type and quality of work assigned ([Baldissarri et al., 2019](#); [Taskin et al., 2019](#); [Valtorta et al., 2019, 2019](#)). Scholars, while studying the employer-employee relationship have recently

focused on the phenomenon of organizational dehumanization ([Bell & Khoury, 2016](#); [Caesens et al., 2019](#); [Caesens et al., 2017](#); [El-Sayed Aly et al., 2023](#); [Gip et al., 2023](#); [Lagios et al., 2023](#); [Stinglhamber et al., 2021](#); [Stinglhamber et al., 2023](#)). A negative workplace gives stress to employees, increases pressure on them and threats to resources aggravates anxiety ([Muschalla et al., 2010](#)). At the workplace, stressors are the reason for job anxiety i.e. performance evaluation. Thus, job-related anxiety is the result of strain that is experienced by employees in performing their work activities, worries about organizational activities, and fear of approaching deadlines ([Parker & DeCotiis, 1983](#)). Numerous research on job anxiety has been done from clinical perspective, while there is a need to research job anxiety in the non-clinical context ([Muschalla et al., 2010](#)).

Anxiety has been extensively researched from two angles: general anxiety research ([Eysenck, 2013](#)) and anxiety connected to one's job. According to Demir ([2018](#)), anxiety is a persistent psychological state that is characterized by fear or a sense that something negative may happen. Job anxiety is a type of state anxiety ([Muschalla et al., 2013](#)). Most people experience anxiety at the workplace. Consequently, given the significance of job anxiety, a great deal of research has been conducted on its effects ([Doby & Caplan, 1995](#); [Griffith & Hebl, 2002](#); [Hunter & Thatcher, 2007](#); [Mannor et al., 2016](#); [Poursadeghiyan et al., 2016](#)). Job anxiety refers to an obnoxious emotional situation that includes concerns, fear, anguish, and agitation in reaction to physical or psychological threats ([Nauman et al., 2019](#)). According to past research, job anxiety occurs due to loss of resources i.e. Job stress, job insecurity, work-family conflict, job instability, etc. ([An et al., 2023](#); [Blomqvist et al., 2023](#); [Yuan et al., 2023](#)). The employees feel job anxiety due to worrying about the functioning of their workplace ([Andruszkiewicz et al., 2023](#)). In past research job anxiety has been studied as the outcome of the perceived threat of terrorism ([De Clercq et al., 2017](#)). Given the significance of the workplace for employees, research on the relationship between job anxiety and harmful workplace experiences such as organizational dehumanization is essential. So, this study presents that in the struggle to defend resources and avoid further loss, employees feel job anxiety. Thus, we hypothesize as follows:

H1: *Organizational dehumanization is positively associated with job anxiety.*

2.3 | Moderation Impact of Passion

In 2004, Baum and Locke defined passion as feelings of adoration, devotion, and desire. They described it as one's love of, or intense affective state towards work ([Baum & Locke, 2004](#)). Further work-related passion was defined by Forest et al. ([2011](#)) as a strong predisposition toward work that one takes pleasure in and decides to devote a substantial amount of time and effort to ([Forest et al., 2011](#)). The fundamental idea of general passion as having a strong work-related enthusiasm gives employees the persistence and motivation to accomplish their goals and maintain a great work-life balance. There is limited research on whether individuals are different in responding to unjust events, as fewer studies explained that how a person's passion for their work plays the role of a personal resource ([Dam et al., 2019](#); [De Clercq & Pereira, 2023](#); [Khan et al., 2023](#)), which may affect the association between work-related stressors and unfavorable outcomes ([Benitez et al., 2023](#); [Lavigne et al., 2014](#)). Most studies that explored injustice have focused on situational factors ([Mikula, 1986](#)). A recent study explained that passion helps employees induce their positive emotions and reduces negative emotions ([Wu et al., 2023](#)). Work-related passion also increases

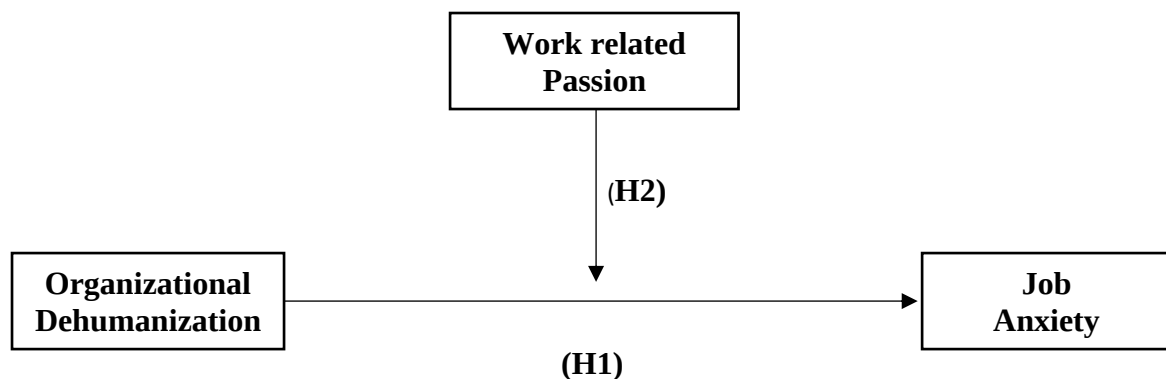
the positive work intention ([Peyton & Zigarmi, 2024](#)). Another study by Islam et al. ([2024](#)) examined passion as a moderator in the relationship between ethical leadership and work engagement. Moreover, passion as a moderator decreases negative behavior like knowledge hiding and cyberloafing ([Khan et al., 2023](#)). It has also been observed that passion plays the role of personal resources that help in decreasing the relationship between burnout and job satisfaction ([Benitez et al., 2023](#)).

Work-related passion can serve as a valuable personal resource as a means to cope with difficult situations ([De Clercq et al., 2023](#); [Vallerand et al., 2022](#)) that helps employees manage organizational stressors and reduce their psychological discomfort at work ([Benitez et al., 2023](#)). Passionate workers may find work-related challenges intriguing and produce a positive feeling that aligns with work-related passion ([De Clercq & Pereira, 2023](#)). According to a study by Lavigne et al. ([2014](#)) perceptions of stressors may be altered by individuals' enthusiasm for their work, as passionate employees are filled with positive energy ([Gulyani & Bhatnagar, 2017](#)) which can reduce negative feelings and enhance the sense of a pleasant, controlled work environment in the case of passionate employees. So, this study presents that individuals who perceive organizational dehumanization but also high on passion, feel less job anxiety. The study hypothesizes as follows:

H2: *Passion will moderate the relationship between organizational dehumanization and job anxiety such that the positive relationship will be weaker in the case of high passion.*

Figure 1

Research Model



3 | METHODOLOGY & DESIGN

The present study used empirical quantitative research technique using survey method to test the hypothesized relationships, as Marshal ([1996](#)) said the purpose of quantitative research is to test hypotheses and make generalizability. The current study is a causal nature that explains the impact of organizational dehumanization on job anxiety. Further, this study used a deductive scientific research approach to assess the hypotheses deduced from a theory ([Saunders et al., 2009](#)). This study employed the survey method to collect the participants' responses as it is the most suitable method to collect data from a large population.

Owing to many restrictions, including those related to time, resources, and study design, it was not feasible to study the full population ([Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020](#); [Taherdoost, 2016](#)). Therefore, convenience sampling technique has been employed to collect the data. Hence the data was collected from people who were easily accessible and willing to provide the data. In survey research, convenience sampling is usually preferred as it helps to save the time and cost of data collection ([Rahman, 2023](#)). A study that uses convenience sampling can result in high internal validity, in case the data is properly analyzed, and the findings are reliable ([Andrade, 2021](#)).

Moreover, this study used a time-lagged design as data was collected two times with a minimum gap of two weeks because the cross-sectional design has some limitations regarding generalizability according to researchers, i.e., Cole and Maxwell ([2003](#)). A survey was conducted by distributing questionnaires among service sector (banking, telecom, health, and education) employees of Pakistan. To evaluate the perception of employees regarding organizational dehumanization, job anxiety and work-related passion, it was necessary to get the data about study variables from service sector employees. As in the service sector, there is more interaction between employees and their supervisors so there may be more chance of dehumanization, thus this sector seemed more relevant for data collection. The service sector was a preference for the current study by keeping the idea that it may enhance the generalizability of the result. The researchers made assurance regarding the confidentiality of the respondents' data. It was a temporarily segregated data collection as data was collected at different periods. At time 1, respondents filled in the questionnaire containing items of the organizational dehumanization scale. At time 2, data for moderator (work-related passion) and outcome (job anxiety) was collected.

This study used the rule of 10 to draw a more appropriate sample. According to the rule of 10, For every item in the instrument being used, there should be a minimum of ten cases ([Arrindell & Van der Ende, 1985](#); [Garson, 2008](#)). Thus, the study gathered data from 200 ($20 \times 10 = 200$) employees by adhering to the rule of 10. Initially, the questionnaires were distributed among 300 service sector (banking, telecom, health, and education) employees in Pakistan. Data from 215 respondents were finally obtained due to dropout resulting from time-lagged design. In the first-time lag, i.e., T1 300 questionnaires were distributed from which 264 were received back. After that at Time 2, 252 questionnaires were distributed to the same respondents who responded at T1. At Time 2, 237 questionnaires were received back. The final sample size turned out to be 215 after discarding incomplete responses. Hence the final response rate is 71.7%.

3.1 | Measures

Previously validated instruments were used to measure the study variables so, these were well-examined, reliable, and have good validity. Moreover, the English language is an official language used as a medium of communication in educational institutions and in professional organizations, also past studies published in top-tier journals used the English language for data collection ([Chughtai & Khan, 2023](#); [Naseer et al., 2016](#); [Nauman et al., 2018](#)). All the measures used a Likert-type scale, ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree.

3.1.1 Organizational Dehumanization. Organizational dehumanization was measured by using an eleven items scale ([Caesens et al., 2017](#)). Sample items are “My organization makes me feel that one worker is easily as good as any other” and “My organization considers me as a tool to use for its ends”.

3.1.2 Work-related Passion. To measure passion this study used the short version of the grit scale (Grit-S) ([Duckworth & Quinn, 2009](#)). As this scale contains two dimensions including persistence and passion so we used four items of passion from this scale. Sample items are “I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one” and “I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.”

3.1.3 Job Anxiety. To measure this construct, the current study used the 5 items scale ([Parker & DeCotiis, 1983](#)). Sample items are “At work, my feelings are down, anxiety, and hopeless” and “Most of the time I feel poor appetite or overeating.”

4 | RESULTS and ANALYSIS

After completing the survey, the collected data was entered into SPSS software for analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted in AMOS to confirm the discriminant validity of all the variables ([Anderson & Gerbing, 1988](#)) to determine the best-fit of model.

Table 1

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Measurement Models)

Models	χ^2	Df	χ^2/Df	CFI	NFI	GFI	TLI	RMR	RMSEA
JA-P (2 Factor Model)	139.17	55	2.531	.95	.91	.94	.92	.191	.095
JA-P (1 Factor Model)	189.39	53	3.573	.91	.88	.92	.87	.241	.136
OD-JA-P (3 Factor Model)	2706.2	1455	1.720	.86	.79	.78	.91	.193	.050
OD-JA-P (1 Factor Model)	4369.1	1704	2.463	.78	.69	.64	.72	.347	.063

Note: OD; organizational dehumanization, JA; job anxiety, P; passion, CFI; comparative fit index, NFI; normed fit index, GFI; goodness of fit index, TLI; Tucker-Lewis's index, RMR; root mean square residual, RMSEA; root mean square error of approximation, N=215

In addition to CFA, composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and maximum shared variance (MSV) were also calculated to establish discriminant and convergent validity. Both convergent and discriminant validity measure the appropriateness of constructs ([Campbell & Fiske, 1959](#)). The cut-off value for composite reliability is 0.70 ([Hair et al., 2019](#)) and for the study variable, CR was greater than 0.70, thus establishing the reliability and internal consistency of the variables. According to the recent research by Kline ([2023](#)) the acceptable value for convergent validity should be greater than 0.50. The AVE for all the variables was in the acceptable range of 0.50 thus confirming the convergent validity. In the end, MSV was calculated and found to be less than the AVE values of study variables, thus confirming the discriminant validity of the study.

Table 2*Convergent and discriminant validity of scales*

Variables	CR	AVE	MSV
Organizational Dehumanization	.81	.52	.41
Passion	.75	.56	.36
Job Anxiety	.84	.51	.32

Note: CR; composite reliability, AVE; average variance extracted; MSV; maximum shared variance, N = 215

Before performing statistical analysis, data health was checked. First, to check the missing data, frequencies were run, and missing values were treated accordingly by using the mean approach in which the construct's mean value was used to treat the missing values. After treating the missing values, the normality of the data was checked. This study checked the normality of data by calculating the values of skewness and kurtosis for all variables. All the values were under the acceptable range of +2 and -2 ([Garson, 2012](#); [George & Mallery, 2019](#); [Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014](#)). The Q-Q plot also revealed that the data is normally distributed hence there is no need for data treatment. Before conducting the correlation, this study identified the control variables by using one-way ANOVA. No dependent variable was found to be significant in ANOVA, thus we continued further analysis. First, descriptive analysis was done to evaluate means, standard deviations, Pearson's correlation, and alpha reliabilities of study variables. Pearson's correlation shows that there is a significant positive correlation of organizational dehumanization with job anxiety ($r=.15$, $p < .01$). Passion has a negative correlation with organizational dehumanization ($r= -.24$, n.s) and with job anxiety ($r= -.24$, n.s).

Table 3*Descriptive Statistics, Normality, Reliability and Correlations*

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. Org. Dehumanization	0.01	0.26	4.64	.91	(.82)		
2. Job Anxiety	-0.48	-0.01	4.35	1.18	.15*	(.85)	
3. Passion	-0.91	1.05	4.52	1.71	-.01	-.24	(.88)

N=215; Cronbach's alpha reliability is given in parentheses. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

This study utilized PROCESS-macro as suggested by Hayes ([2018](#)) with 5000 bootstrapping sample size, to test the proposed relationships with direct, and moderation paths. To check the moderation effect of passion on organizational dehumanization and job anxiety, the study used model 1. Results showed a positive relationship between organizational dehumanization with job anxiety. Regression analysis results in Table 2 supported this hypothesis as the B value was .08 ($p < .02$, LL/UL-Cis = .025/.344). Hence H1 was proved.

Table 4*Direct Effects*

Effects	B	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI	P
OD → JA	.08	.05	1.92	.025	.344	.024

Note: OD; organizational dehumanization, JA; job anxiety, P; passion, LL; lower limit, UL; upper limit, CI; confidence interval, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, $N = 215$

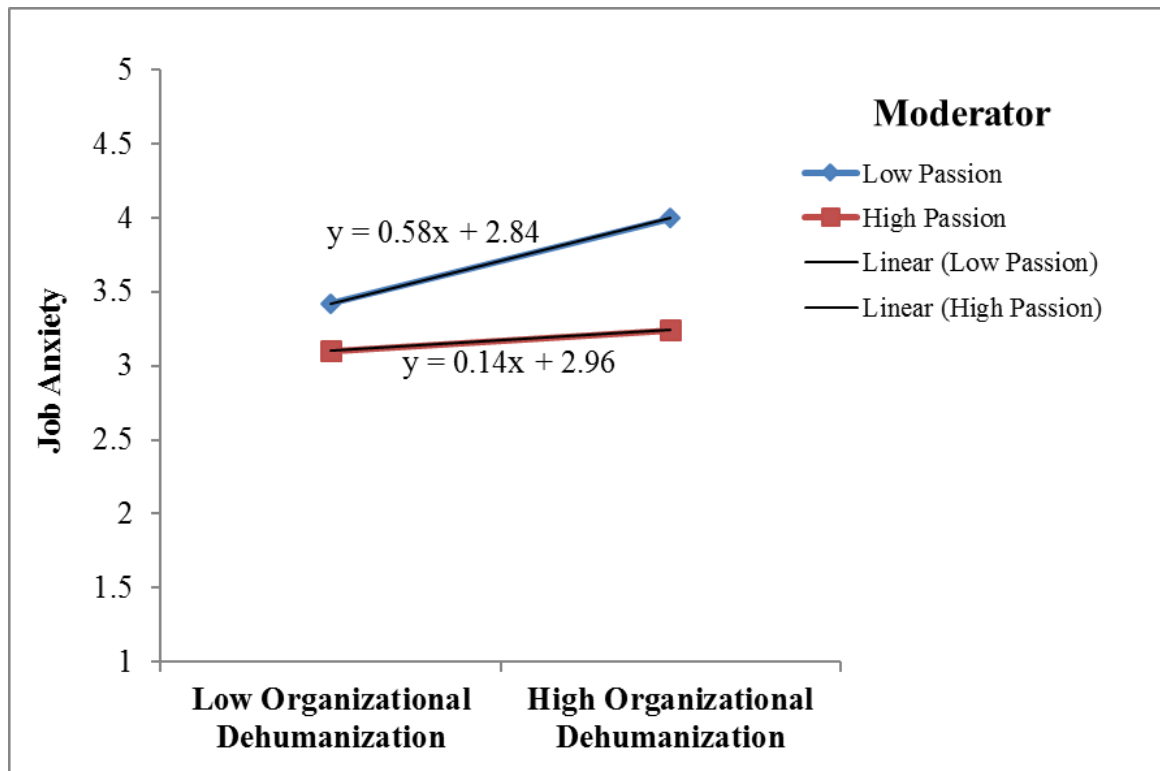
The second hypothesis of the study was about moderation. In the first step, independent and moderator variables were mean-centered ([Aiken et al., 1991](#)). Where passion positively and significantly impacted the job anxiety ($B = -.27^{**}$, $p < .01$, LL/UL-CI = $-.173/-.346$), and the interaction of passion and organizational dehumanization also significantly and negatively impacted the job anxiety B ($-.11^{*}$, $p < .05$, LL/UL-CI = $-.225/-.195$), thus, these results support H2 of this study. The results supported that passion moderated the relationship between organizational dehumanization and job anxiety such that the positive relationship was weaker when the level of passion of individuals was higher.

Table 4*Moderation Analysis*

	B	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.44***	.06	72.19	4.330	4.603
OD	.18***	.05	4.05	.129	.267
P	-.27**	.06	-4.62	-.173	-.346
OD x P	-.11*	.03	-3.23	-.225	-.195
R²	.20***				
ΔR^2 due to interaction	.02**				

Note: OD; organizational dehumanization, JA; job anxiety, P; passion, LL; lower limit, UL; upper limit, CI; confidence interval, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, $N = 215$

The interaction graph of moderation of this study was formulated using ± 1 standard deviation, which further explains that there was higher dehumanization in the organization at workplace, but when individual was at higher level of their passion, it reduces their job anxiety.

Figure 2*Interaction Graph*

6 | DISCUSSION

This study, by using theoretical lens of COR theory, focused to examine the impact of organizational dehumanization on job anxiety using work-related passion as a buffering variable. The first hypothesis was about the direct relationship between organizational dehumanization on job anxiety. The results of the study also supported this hypothesis that job anxiety is an outcome of organizational dehumanization. This study's results also aligns with past research that organizational dehumanization results in negative outcomes ([Brisson et al., 2022](#); [El-Sayed Aly et al., 2023](#); [Gip et al., 2023](#); [Lagios et al., 2023](#); [Stinglhamber et al., 2021](#); [Stinglhamber et al., 2023](#)) and job anxiety is one of those effects. Organizational behavior scholars have placed a great deal of emphasis on the relationship between employees and their workplace ([Caesens et al., 2017](#)). The negative effects of organizational abuse on individuals as well as organizations have piqued the interest of researchers in learning more about the relationships between abusive supervision and turnover intentions ([Lyu et al., 2019](#)), workplace incivility and employee deviance ([Jin et al., 2020](#)), and other related topics.

The second hypothesis was about work-related passion as a moderating variable between organizational dehumanization and job anxiety. The results of this study also supported this hypothesis which is consistent with previous findings ([Benitez et al., 2023](#); [De Clercq & Pereira, 2023](#); [De Clercq et al., 2023](#); [Vallerand et al., 2022](#)). A study by De Clercq and Pereira ([2023](#)) asserted that passionate employees recover from difficult situations as work-related passion helps them in mitigating negative impacts. Further, passion functions as a personal resource that aids in coping with the detrimental impact of burnout on job satisfaction ([Benitez et al., 2023](#)). A recent study by Abou Zeid et al. ([2024](#)) argued that when employees believe their

relationship with the organization is abusive and disruptive, it results in adverse organizational outcomes. In line with the current study results, another study by Rubbab et al. (2022), explained that employees often go under psychological and physical strain as a response to organizational misconduct because of perceived dehumanization. Further passion for work is a significant factor that affects employees' work life. It creates a work environment that is helpful to employees' psychological health and buffers against burnout (Zito et al., 2022).

5.1 | Theoretical Implication

This study adds an intriguing viewpoint to the literature on organizational behavioral psychology by extending the employee-organization relationship paradigm. First, it focused on organizational dehumanization by presenting job anxiety as its outcome, which lately attracted scholarly attention in the field of organizational behavior. Second, this study added value to organizational mistreatment literature by explaining how passion as a moderator lessens the positive relationship between organizational dehumanization and job anxiety. Third, this research extends the assumptions of COR by supporting the whole model which presented that employees who are mistreated at their workplace try to minimize resource loss and how spiral resource loss affects the employees' attitude and behavior by further explaining how positive resources i.e. i.e. passion work during stressful events.

5.2 | Practical Implications

Organizations should introduce some explicit policies that address treating people with respect and dignity and giving them honor in the workplace. These workplaces should present regulations that outlaw any kind of mistreatment in the workplace, i.e. dehumanization. To promote awareness and understanding seminars and workshops should be organized that address implicit prejudices. Organizations should welcome the concept of whistleblowing for their employees to discreetly report incidents like dehumanization by keeping the anonymity of their employees. Organizations should also introduce HR policies and recruitment procedures during the recruitment of employees by assessing their personality traits. Management of the organizations also conduct some important personality tests to hire a more ethically inclined workforce. Employers should also be clear and strict in depicting ethics and showing respect to others as they are considered role models for their employees. Moreover, organizations can introduce skill enhancement programs for their employees to better manage their workload. Employees' workload should be manageable and continuous training should be provided to manage stress and anxiety. In summary, organizations and employees may work together to establish and promote a respectful, understanding, and supportive environment.

5.3 | Limitations and Future Directions

The study has certain limitations that need to be addressed and can open new avenues for future research, especially on dehumanization. Further, to get individual perceptions, and evaluate its results self-reported measures were adopted. Based on the research variable, we believe that the most effective way to evaluate mistreatment with employees and its outcomes is using a self-reported questionnaire. As a result, it could be helpful for future studies to validate current study findings using different metrics (such as peer reporting). Future research can use other moderators (i.e., leadership humility, and psychosocial safety climate) that may explain in which circumstances the destructive effects of dehumanization can be minimized.

For example, it would be useful to find out how employees' political skills, and proactive career behavior work in this situation. Further research can also work on finding different types of violations such as moral violation and how dehumanized employees perceive their workplace as morally violating the norms. Thus, future research may consider some mechanisms while explaining dehumanization and outcomes. This study presented a model in which organizational dehumanization is used as a predictor of negative emotional state i.e. job anxiety by leaving a void in the literature on finding predictors of organizational dehumanization. Thus, it would be interesting to examine the reasons behind the occurrence of organizational dehumanization. The present study presented one outcome which is job anxiety. In the future, the results of this study may also be extended to other outcomes such as venting, interpersonal harm toward coworkers, etc.

5 | CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study suggests that dehumanizing employees may further affect their attitudes and behaviors such as job anxiety. By using the conservation of resource theory, this study presented a model containing organizational dehumanization and job anxiety. Moreover, this study also presented a moderating effect to explain the model as it elucidated the passion. This study suggests that organizations should avoid all kinds of mistreatment at any cost to prevent employees' negative attitudes and behaviors.

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