UOS Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities (UOSJSSH)
ISSN (P) 2224-2341, ISSN (E) 2310-0249
Volume: 8, (2) 2024, Pages (44-51)
Journal Homepage: https://uosjssh.su.edu.pk/

My Way or the High Way: A Mixed Study of Job Insecurity and Employee Recalcitrant Behavior in Determining Sustainability in Public and Private Universities of Lahore, Pakistan

Ayesha Ali, PhD
University of the Punjab, Higher Education Commission
22ayesha11@gmail.com

Abstract:

The research inquires the relation of job insecurity induced by employer with recalcitrant behavior of employees in public or private universities of Lahore, Pakistan. The article investigates whether the job insecurity induced by employer is related to the satisfaction or recalcitrant behavior in employees of an organization. The constructs are studied through mixed methodology in a cross-sectional comparative setting by administering 250 online questionnaires and 30 interviews of the faculty. The results indicate that job insecurity and the related perceptions lead to recalcitrant behavior in the university faculty. This has significant insights for the employee retention, turnover and performance in the universities as well as organizational productivity and sustainability.

Keywords: Job insecurity, Employee misbehavior, Recalcitrance, Non-compliance, Defiance.

Introduction

The paper discusses the job insecurity and uncertainty which are often responsible for causing recalcitrant attitude among the employees of any public or private organization. When the self-interests of employees are damaged due to the management led insecurity in job, discontent is developed which affects their performance and organizational sustainability also. The recalcitrant attitude of the employees could assume the form of defiance, non-compliance and mutinous behavior towards the management. The independent and dependent variables are studied in higher education sector in Lahore, Pakistan.

Job insecurity (Independent variable):

This variable relates to the legal ways through which employer causes unrest in the employee in order to make them unstable in their job tenure. For example, it might be mentioned in the contract terms that the employer reserves right to lay employees off at any time, however; when the time arrives, and the employees make formation against the decision. Theoretically, the defiance needs to be rather covert otherwise it would be unlawful in itself due to the terms of the job.

Employee recalcitrant behavior (Dependent variable):

This variable is the probable result of the above-mentioned proceedings. The issue is examined that how far the disobedient attitude of the employees exists and not whether it proves to be successful. The employees demonstrate their dissatisfaction by staging protests or strikes and filing legal suits against the management. These measures by the employees aim to destabilize the management.

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Theoretical background

The social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) highlights the employees' reaction to the management's negative measures in an organization. The employees perceive them as a violation of the employer-employee psychological contract. The consequence is employee misbehavior including defiance, withdrawal, deviance or absenteeism etc. (Law & Zhou, 2014) amounting to anti organizational citizenship behaviors (Eckerd et. al., 2013).

Literature Review

Job insecurity is considered to influence the employees' performance and their commitment to the organization negatively due to the fear of income loss and instability. According to Dekker (2005), job insecurity results in discomfort for the employees ultimately leading to employee defiance within the organization. The employees experience stress while performing their daily duties since their mind would constantly be occupied by the possibility of employment loss. Dekker's analysis labels the job insecurity as worst-case scenario in terms of employee and organizational loss. This is because when employees enter the workplace, they feel alienated at the workplace and even the kindest gestures by employers seem hostile. The point is supported by Staufenbiel (2010) who states that job insecurity means that the employee is no longer loyal to the firm, and thus, their performance is greatly affected. It is stated that job insecurity directly deters motivation – the one vital factor needed for the firm to succeed. The demoralization in employees automatically increases lackluster in their routine tasks and they view all organizational measures as suspicious. Also, job insecurity causes employee absenteeism, turnover and psychological distress. However, Burchell (2005) states positive aspects ofjob insecurity in certain cases – especially for the indolent and shirking employee. In such cases, job insecurity acts as a good tactic to motivate the lazy employee towards better performance. So, a little job insecurity is needed to remind the employees that they can be replaced unless they perform up to the standards of the firm. This, though, enhances the work rate of employees and may further cause dissatisfaction among them.

In challenging circumstances, the employees express dissatisfaction despite the obstacles put forth by the management and attempt to regain the curbed powers which affects their performance (Staniland, 2007). Murphy & Coye (2013) termed the con-complying attitude as the upward defiance. The purpose of disobedience is to highlight the resistance that exists between the management and the employees. The deliberate attitude of the employees outside the organizational structure is in conflict to the organizational citizenship behavior (O'Brien & Allen, 2008).This recalcitrant attitude of the employees is self-recommended for the organization as it is the outcome of the strife between management and employees.

Murphy & Coye (2013) explain it as mutinous behavior in any organization and term it a well-planned struggle which is an outcome of the discriminatory policy adopted by the management. The defiance of the employees often gains momentum despite the strong reaction from the management. It may happen that such disobedience may result in challenging the power of the management in the organization. The term mutiny is also used to describe the rebellious attitude of the employees. The concept is related to disobedience which is being inquiredin this study under the term 'recalcitrance' in the organizations.

Research Model

IV = Job insecurity, DV = Employee recalcitrant behavior



Figure no. 1 Job Insecurity and Employee Recalcitrant Behavior

Methodology and sampling

The cross-sectional research design was used with mixed methods in this research. The questionnaires were administered by making an online link in order to pursue this inquiry. The questionnaire had two segments; one was about demographics requiring education, number of teaching hours, income and extra-curricular activities. The second segment consisted of questions regarding job insecurity and employee recalcitrance requiring response of a 5-point Likert scale. The online links were circulated among 10 general public and private universities in Lahore, Pakistan out of a total of 12 general public and private universities. From each university, five departments were randomly chosen to gather data from250 lecturers. For qualitative research, 30 interviews of faculty members were conducted. The unit of analysis of this research was the faculty members of the academic organizations.

Research Questions

Quantitative RQ# 1: How does the job insecurity induced by the employer lead to employee recalcitrant behavior?

Qualitative RQ# 2: How and why does job insecurity by employer influence employee's behavior?

Hypotheses

Ho: There is no relation between job insecurity and employee recalcitrant behavior.

H 1: Job insecurity leads to employee recalcitrant behavior.

Results and Discussion

The following Table 1 presents the response rate of the questionnaire administered on the faculty of the public and private universities;

Table 1 Response Rate

Table 1: Responses Rate		
Activities	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Distributed questions	*384*	*100%*
Returned questions	*365*	*95 %*
Usable questions	*355*	*92 %*

The responses rate provides insights into the effectiveness of the survey distribution process and the level of engagement from the respondents. The high percentage of returned questions (95%) suggests a strong response rate, indicating good participation from the respondents. The

percentage of usable questions (92%) indicates that the majority of the returned questions were suitable for analysis, reflecting the quality of the data collected.

Table 2 below shows the demographic variables pertaining to the faculty;

Table 2 Demographic Profile

Table 3: Demographic Profile			
Demographic	***Categories***	*N*	*%*
Gender	*Male*	*146*	*41.1*
	Female	*209*	*58.9*
Age	*21-25 years*	*152*	*42.8*
	26-30 years	*133*	*37.5*
	31-35 years	*52*	*14.6*
	Above 35 years	*18*	*5.1*
Employment Status	*Lecturer*	*172*	*48.5*
	Assistant Professor	*126*	*35.5*
	Associate Professor	*35*	*9.9*
	Professor	*22*	*6.2*
Sector	*Private*	*265*	*74.6*
	Public	*90*	*25.4*

The gender distribution of the respondents shows that there were more female respondents (58.9%) than male respondents (41.1%). The majority of respondents fall within the age range of 21-30 years, with the highest percentage (42.8%) belonging to the 21-25 years category. The employment status breakdown shows that the majority of respondents are Lecturers (48.5%), followed by Assistant Professors (35.5%). The majority of respondents work in the private sector (74.6%), while a smaller proportion work in the public sector (25.4%).

Table 3 below shows the reliability measures pertaining to the faculty;

Table 3 Internal Consistency Measures

Table 3: Factors LoadingFactors Loading, Composite Reliability (rho a), Cronbach's Alpha and (AVE)						
Constructs	***Items***	***Factors Loading***	***Items Deleted***	***Cronbach's Alpha***	***Composite Reliability***	***Average Variance Extracted***
Job Insecurity	*JI1*	*0.803*	*0*	*0.843*	*0.843*	*0.641*
	JI2	*0.804*				
	JI3	*0.796*				
	JI4	*0.795*				
	JI5	*0.779*				
	JI6	*0.729*				
Employee Recalcitrant Behavior	*ERB1*	*0.797*	*0*	*0.917*	*0.919*	*0.616*
	ERB2	*0.796*				
	ERB3	*0.834*				
	ERB4	*0.708*				

Job Insecurity

The factors loading values indicate the strength of the relationship between each item and the Job Insecurity construct. All items have high factor loading values, suggesting a strong association with the construct. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability both have high values (0.843), indicating high internal consistency reliability for the Job Insecurity construct. The AVE value of 0.641 indicates that the Job Insecurity construct explains 64.1% of the variance shared among its items.

Employee Recalcitrant Behavior

The factors loading values indicate the strength of the relationship between each item and the Employee Recalcitrant Behavior construct. All items have relatively high factor loading values, suggesting a strong association with the construct. Both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability have high values (0.917 and 0.919, respectively), indicating high internal consistency reliability for the Employee Recalcitrant Behavior construct. The AVE value of 0.616 indicates that the Employee Recalcitrant Behavior construct explains 61.6% of the variance shared among its items.

Both constructs, Job Insecurity and Employee Recalcitrant Behavior, demonstrate high levels of reliability and validity, as evidenced by their high Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and AVE values. The high factor loading values for all items within each construct suggest strong associations between the items and their respective constructs, further supporting the validity of the measurement model. These findings enhance the credibility of the study's results and contribute to the robustness of the research findings related to job insecurity and employee recalcitrant behavior. Table 4 below presents the discriminant validity of the constructs;

Table 4 Discriminant Validity

Constructs	**Job Insecurity**	**Employee Recalcitrant Behavior**
Job Insecurity	*0.777*	
Employee Recalcitrant Behavior	*0.514*	*0.747*

The correlation coefficient of 0.777 between Job Insecurity and itself indicates a strong positive correlation, which is expected since it's comparing the same construct.
The correlation coefficient of 0.514 between Employee Recalcitrant Behavior and Job Insecurity indicates a moderate positive correlation between these two constructs.
Table 5 below presents the relation of the constructs;

Table 5 Causal Relation: Structural Equation Model

Relationship	*b (SE)*	**C.I**	**P Values**	**Result**
Job Insecurity ->Employee Recalcitrant Behavior	0.405(0.06)	0.302, 0.523	**0.000**	**Supported**

The above mentioned table shows (SE): The value of 0.405 represents the un-standardized regression coefficient, indicating the strength and direction of the relationship between Job Insecurity and Employee Recalcitrant Behavior. It suggests that for every one-unit increase in Job Insecurity, there is a 0.405-unit increase in Employee Recalcitrant Behavior.

C.I (Confidence Interval): The confidence interval (0.302 to 0.523) provides a range of values within which the true population parameter (the effect size) is likely to fall. Since the interval does not include zero, it indicates that the effect is statistically significant.

P Values: The p-value of 0.000 indicates that the relationship between Job Insecurity and Employee Recalcitrant Behavior is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, providing strong evidence against the null hypothesis. The result indicates that the hypothesized causal relationship from Job Insecurity to Employee Recalcitrant Behavior is supported by the data.
The results of the structural equation model provide evidence that Job Insecurity has a significant positive effect on Employee Recalcitrant Behavior. This suggests that higher levels of Job Insecurity are associated with increased levels of Employee Recalcitrant Behavior.

The statistical significance of the relationship underscores the importance of addressing job insecurity concerns in organizations to mitigate potential negative consequences on employee behavior and organizational outcomes. This proves the **H1** that the job insecurity leads to employee recalcitrant behavior.

Discussion

Relationship between Job Insecurity and Employee Recalcitrant Behavior

The significant positive relationship found between Job Insecurity and Employee Recalcitrant Behavior underscores the potential impact of job insecurity on employee attitudes and behaviors. This finding aligns with existing literature suggesting that perceptions of job insecurity can lead to negative employee outcomes, such as resistance or defiance towards organizational objectives thus affecting organizational sustainability and productivity.

The structural equation model provides evidence supporting the hypothesis that job insecurity influences employee recalcitrant behavior. This suggests that perceptions of job insecurity may contribute to employees exhibiting behaviors characterized by resistance, non-compliance, or opposition to authority within the workplace.

The quantitative findings are supplemented by qualitative results. The respondents supported that job insecurity leads to *dissatisfaction among the employees in an organization as they feel the organization doesn't own them*. Some interviewees also stressed that *employees feel insecure since they think management can kick them out at their will and whims, no matter how hard they would work.* Further, the respondents mentioned that *employees need to be secure when it comes to job since the organization benefits from their services so it should do everything to make the employee secure.* These opinions indicate that the employer employee relations get affected by the job terms and conditions it provides to its workforce.

Managerial Implications

Organizations need to prioritize efforts to address job insecurity concerns among employees. Implementing transparent communication practices, providing opportunities for employee feedback and involvement in decision-making processes, and offering career development and advancement opportunities can help alleviate feelings of job insecurity.
Managers should adopt strategies to manage and mitigate employee recalcitrant behavior effectively. This may involve fostering a supportive work environment, providing clear expectations and guidelines, offering constructive feedback and coaching, and addressing underlying issues contributing to resistance. Organizations should take a proactive approach to prevent and manage job insecurity and its potential consequences on employee behavior.

By addressing underlying causes of job insecurity, such as organizational restructuring, economic uncertainty, or lack of career advancement opportunities, organizations can promote a positive work environment and enhance employee engagement and commitment.

Theoretical Implications

1. Contributions to Job Insecurity Literature:

The findings contribute to the growing body of literature on job insecurity by providing empirical evidence of its relationship with employee recalcitrant behavior. This enhances theoretical understanding of the mechanisms through which job insecurity affects employee attitudes and behaviors within the workplace.

2. Role of Perceptions and Attitudes:

The study highlights the importance of considering employees' perceptions and attitudes, such as job insecurity, in understanding workplace behavior. Theoretical frameworks exploring the impact of organizational factors on employee attitudes and behaviors can benefit from incorporating job insecurity as a significant determinant.

3. Practical Application of Structural Equation Modeling:

The use of structural equation modeling in examining the relationship between job insecurity and employee recalcitrant behavior demonstrates the practical application of advanced statistical techniques in organizational research. This underscores the importance of employing rigorous methodological approaches to investigate complex phenomena within organizational settings.

Conclusion

The findings suggest that addressing job insecurity is crucial for promoting positive employee attitudes and behaviors within the workplace. By implementing strategies to alleviate job insecurity and effectively manage recalcitrant behavior, organizations can foster a supportive work environment, enhance employee well-being, and improve organizational performance. Furthermore, the study contributes to theoretical understanding by highlighting the role of job insecurity in shaping employee behavior and the practical application of structural equation modeling in organizational research.

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Job insecurity affects the employee behavior and obedience as much as the non-existence of the participatory decision making. Job insecurity may elicit a reaction that can be aggressive and forthright which has implications for organizational sustainability and productivity. While the violation of a legal contract may lead to downright protest, job insecurity will most likely result in de-motivation. When employees are dissatisfied, they would perform their duties in a sterile and mechanical way, not considering the vitality of performance. On the contrary, for some individuals, job insecurity can actually elicit a more obedient reaction. Employees will start believing that if they do not do their jobs right, they will end up getting fired from their job. The paranoia gives them an added sense of panicked energy to help them do their jobs right. There are still some employers out there who believe that some level of job insecurity is healthy.

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