

## **Job Insecurity and Job Performance: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction**

**Muhammad Tufail**

*Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan*

**Fahad Sultan**

*Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan*

**Syed Haider Khalil**

*Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan*

**Shahnaz Sahibzada**

*Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan*

### **Abstract**

*Considering the recommendation to study the stress and job outcomes relationship in non-western country, the present study aims to investigate the relationship between job insecurity and job performance as well as the mediating role of job satisfaction between the two constructs. By applying purposive sampling technique, data was collected from 363 officer ranked employees of different private sector organizations. Time-lagged multiple sources data collection technique was applied. The results confirmed the negative relation of job insecurity with job satisfaction and job performance. In addition, this study also proved that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between job insecurity and employee job performance. This study also demonstrates that selected organisations are exposed to international competition; their products and services compete across region.*

Keywords: Job Insecurity, Job Satisfaction, Job Performance

### **Introduction**

Currently, due to global economics characterised by restructuring, mergers and downsizing, the labour markets have been intensively reformed (Ward-Warmedinger & Macchiarelli, 2014). Such circumstances have affected employees by feeling insecurity of their (e.g. Callea, Urbini, & Bucknor, 2012). Since 1970's the technological advancement, economic recessions, wide-ranging global competition and industrial restructuring have immensely changed the features and value of job (Howard, 1995). Globalizations, coupled with advent of advance technology, have raised the tough competition among organizations at both national and international level. Consequently, to survive in highly global environment, organizations often practice joint ventures, privatizations, downsizing, merger and acquisition as a mean to achieve competitive edge among the competitors (Farber, 2008) and to cut cost and escalate profit (Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, 2006; Mishel, Bernstein & Allegretto, 2005). Hence, currently organizations have more focus on core competencies and outsourcing of vital functions (Burke & Cooper, 2000). Hence, the idea of long term employment has been decomposed which was considered as standard

of employment (Millward & Brewerton, 2000). In this regard, Wikman (2010) also supported the view that currently majority of organizations practice temporary employment and project based job. Similarly, research studies have been conducted on consequences of job insecurity (see Cheng & Chan, 2008; Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, 2002) but few in relation with job performance (De Witte et al., 2010). The current study focuses on employee performance due to the vital interest of managers, due to the current dynamic and uncertain environment and global competition in which the organizations are solely dependent on the productivity (e.g. Piccoli, De Witte & Reisel, 2017). Research studies have confirmed stressors are pertinent antecedents of employee behaviour and job insecurity is one of them (Wang, Lu, & Siu, 2015; Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2000).

According to Jelavic and Ogilvie (2010), with respect to workplace behaviour culture has been divided in western and eastern culture. It has been recommended to carry out the relationship between stress and job outcomes in eastern cultures (Gilboa, Shirom, Fried, & Cooper 2008; Clarke, 2012; Lee, Huh, Kim, Kim, & Seo, 2015). Moreover, little attention has been given to mediating role between job insecurity and employee well-being (Rioli, Savicki, & Richards, 2012; Vander Elst, Van den Broeck, De Witte, & De Cuyper, 2012). In order to follow the recommendation, the aim of the current study is to add evidences from an eastern developing country. Mainly, to test that whether the job insecurity and work attitude and behavior in nonwestern developing country provide similar homologous results as suggested by studies conducted in western countries. Thus, the current study extends the literature regarding Job insecurity and job outcomes by exploring the mediating role of job satisfaction in a link of job insecurity and employee job performance.

## **Literature Review**

### **Job Insecurity**

Employment provides bases for sources of material, personal satisfaction and security. Current state of society poses high level of unemployment (Vujicic, Jovicic, Lalic, Gagic, & Cvejanov, 2015). In this regard, the degree of uncertainty about continuation of individual's when perceived, is called job insecurity (De Witte, 1999; Hui & Lee, 2000). There are controversies regarding the definition of job insecurity definition. Probst (2002) defines job insecurity as the professed stability of continuation of one's job as one knows it, while De Witte (2005) considers it as stressors, consist of cognitive likelihood of losing job and related affective experience. Though, primarily job insecurity was considered as "motivator" in job place, latter on this concept changed from motivator to stressors in 1980s (Greenlugh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Sverke, Hellergren & Naswall, 2006). Hence, job insecurity is poorly defined construct and is in under developing stage in organizational stressors literature, having neither a single definition on which scholars agreed nor a widely accepted measure (Klandermans & van Vuuren, 1999).

Global and multidimensional construct are the two basic constructs majorly explained in literature. The concern for continuation of one's job in future is described as global construct, however, in time of crisis such as reorganization or merger, political changes etc job insecurity is considered as a stage proceeding unemployment (Dooley 2003). While multidimensional construct explains the context of job insecurity as more multifaceted phenomenon, having no fear regarding losing job but some aspects like promotions, positive performance appraisals and job stability (Ojedokun 2008; Jacobson 1991).

Similarly, a tremendous differentiation between quantitative and qualitative aspects of job insecurity was suggested by Hellgren, Sverke and Isaksson (1999). Fear of losing job is described quantitative while losing some aspects of job for example, career opportunities, demotion are described as qualitative job insecurity (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). Though, these aspects are based on these two aspects employees' subjective occurrence, depends on employee know-how and insight of situation. Similarly, studies (e.g. Klandermans & Van Vuuren, 1999; Probst, 2003) elaborated that subjective job insecurity is the expected stressful circumstances in form of losing job in near future, while the "objective" job insecurity is prompted by circumstances in form of dismissals, restructuring, downsizing which leads to higher subjective experience of job insecurity (Klandermans & Van Vuuren, 1999; Probst, 2003),

### **Job Insecurity and Job Performance**

The uncertainty regarding continuation of job by employee is considered as Job insecurity (De Witte, Vander Elst, & De Cuyper, 2015). Appraisal of actual work environment causes such perception. Subsequently, different employees interpret the same subjective situation differently. In this regard, many evidences are available which demonstrates the negative relation between job insecurity and employees' health and attitudes (De Witte, Pienaar, & De Cuyper, 2016). Yet, lesser evidences demonstrate the behavioural aspect. Studies have shown mixed results between job insecurity and employee performance. For example, studies have investigated the negative relation between the two constructs (Cheng & Chan, 2008; Gilboa, Shirom, Fried, & Cooper, 2008). Similarly, meta-analysis conducted by Sverke, Hellrgen and Naswal, (2002) found the insignificant result. Other evidences demonstrate that job insecurity is unrelated to performance (e.g., Loi, Ngo, Zhang, & Lau, 2011; Staufenbiel & König, 2010).

Job insecurity bears detrimental consequences including decreased or lesser job performance (Gilboa, Shirom, Fried, & Cooper, 2008; Cheng & Chan, 2008). Due to job insecurity the reduced job performance can be explained in two ways: (i) cognitive explanation and (ii) affect-based explanation (Schreurs, Hetty, Günter and Germeys (2012). The cognitive explanation is based on breach of psychological contract by employer. According to Millward and Brewerton (2000), job insecurity is a vital component in psychological contract, hence, when perceived as violation of psychological contract, creates imbalance (De Cuyper et.al 2008; DeCuyper & De Witte, 2006). Such imbalance results in decrease in employee productivity (Jensen, Opland, & Ryan, 2010).

While affect based explanation elaborates the continuation of job or losing some aspects of the job in future (Sverke et al., 2002). Experiencing such fear employees feel lack of control, alienation and powerlessness in these situations (Sverke et al., 2002; De Witte, 1999). Having low level of controlling, the individuals appraise the situation as stressful and negative emotions are arise developed, result in more strain (Spector, 2002). In such tense situation (e.g. job insecurity) employees limit job resources, likely have lesser interest in work output which leads to reduced job performance (Bakker, Emmerik & Reit, 2008). Therefore, the following hypothesis has been derived:

**Hypothesis I:** *Job Insecurity is significantly related to job performance.*

## **Job Insecurity and Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is defined as emotional state stimulated by employee job experience (Locke 1976). The relation between job insecurity and employee job satisfaction is quite clear as different sources of satisfaction like self-efficacy, social contacts and economic stability are offered by employment (De Witte 1999). According to the JD-R model, job demands contain job characteristics that are considered unfair by employees (Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2003). Job insecurity is one of such Job demand, deems fit in the JD-R's robust progression (Van den Broeck, Lens, De Witte, & Van Coillie, 2013), being intensively studied in relation to well-being. Previous studies have concluded that individual well-being is decreased by job insecurity (De Witte, 1999), mainly job satisfaction (e.g., De Witte et al., 2010).

The degree of job satisfaction of permanent employees is found to be higher than temporary or contractual job holders (Grunberg, Moore & Greenberg 1998; Ashford, Lee & Bobko, 1989; Lim 1996). For example, research studies have confirmed the inverse relation between job insecurity and reduced job satisfaction (De Cuyper, Notelaers, & De Witte, 2009; De Witte & Näswall, 2003; Reisel, Probst, Chia, Maloles, & König, 2010). In this regard, meta-analysis conducted by Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, (2002) established the negative relation between the two constructs. Longitudinal study carried out by Hellgren, Sverke and Isaksson (1999) also found the inverse relation. In meta-analysis conducted by Podsakoff, LePine and LePine, (2007) confirmed that job insecurity (hindrance stressors) is negatively linked with employee job satisfaction. More recently, Tufail, Shahzad, Gul and Khan (2017) confirmed the negative relation between hindrance stressors (job insecurity) and employee job satisfaction. Thus, the following hypothesis is derived:

**Hypothesis 2:** *Job Insecurity is significantly related to Job satisfaction.*

## **The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction**

Studies have confirmed that job satisfaction is the predictor of employee behavior and has been used as mediator with employee attitude and behavior (e.g. Chiu & Chen, 2005; Varela & García, 2006; Vandenabeele, 2009; Politis, 2006; Malik, & Waheed, 2010; Yousef, 2002). These studies explored the employee behaviour is being affected by the mediating effect of job satisfaction. Job insecurity is a cognitive function and is appraised by individual (Brief & Weiss, 2002). Preliminary, employees will appraise attitude towards their jobs positively and as consequences the job behavior (Job Performance) will be affected. Positive attitude leads to positive feelings and productive work behavior. Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, (2002) suggested that job attitude is short term while behavioral responses and job insecurity are long term. The long-term effects of job insecurity and job performance will be affected positively via short term consequences. If the short-term consequences remain persistent, the effects will be feasible for long. So, it can be argued that the job insecurity will be experienced first, and would lead to act as mediator regarding long term effects. Work stressors i.e. job insecurity is indirectly, strain negatively impacts job satisfaction, and job satisfaction positively impacts job performance (Podsakoff, Lepine & Lepine, 2007). According to this idea job insecurity is having indirect relationship with job performance and job satisfaction. Thus, it can be argued that job insecurity will evoke negative feelings and emotions towards job attitude, thus, will affect the job outcomes. Hence, it is proposed that;

**Hypothesis 3:** *Job insecurity and employee job performance relation will be mediated via job satisfaction.*

## Methodology

### Sampling

The target population was the banking sector due to downsizing. According to SBP (2017), there are 13 Islamic Banks having accreditation license from the state bank of Pakistan and the total number of Islamic banks' branches are 1220, out of which 85 branches are established at Khyber Pakhtonkhwa. Islamic banks were selected for the data collection as there are rumors that three Islamic banks, Bank Alfalah, Meezan Bank and Faysal banks are going to be sold out. Perception regarding study variables was recorded through self-administered questionnaires. Data was collected from officer ranked employees. For confirmation of secrecy of the obtained information, a cover letter was attached with each questionnaire. According to Spector, (2006) common method variance has been exaggerated extensively, though it is not a serious issue. However, to handle with such problem data was collected with time lagged method. In first phase of data collection data regarding job insecurity and job satisfaction was collected. While in second phase (i.e. 35 days) data regarding job performance was collected. Each questionnaire was given a code and same was marked for employer. Regarding job performance of employees, data was obtained from immediate Boss.

Out of 370 distributed questionnaires, 205 were returned (response rate of 55%) and was used for further analysis. The low response rate was due to the busy schedule of the bankers. According to demographic information 77% were male, 64% were married, 11% were under 25 years old, 47% were between 26-35 years, 23% were between the ages of 36 and 45, and 19% were older than 45.

### Measures

The current study measured the study variables using a five point's likert scale. All the measures were adopted from previous studies, where the scores were ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The researcher measured the Job Insecurity with 8 items scales developed by Ashford, Lee and Bobko, (1989). Job satisfaction was assessed with 20 items, developed by Weiss, Dawis and England, (1967) and lastly the employee job performance was measured with 7 items developed by Williams & Anderson (1991).

## Results

Table 1 shows the mean, standard deviation, correlation coefficient and alpha reliabilities of the study variables.

*Table 1. Descriptive, Correlation and reliabilities*

	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1 JIS	2.13	0.92	(0.93)		
2 JS	3.42	0.83	0.65**	(0.88)	
3 JP	2.92	1.32	-0.19**	-0.47**	(0.95)

N = 205; Cronbach's alpha presented in parenthesis.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

**Model fit**

Structural equation model was run to test the direct effect. The results of model fit indices indicate that all values are in acceptable range ( $\chi^2 = 91.87$ ,  $df = 42$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.21$ ,  $RMSEA = .08$ ,  $GFI = .94$ ,  $AGFI = .91$ ,  $IFI = .94$ ,  $CFI = .95$ ) are above the acceptable standards indicating that model fits the data well. To check the multicollinearity among the constructs the Tolerance test (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001) and variance inflation factor (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998) were calculated. The tolerance test value (i.e. 0.96) was found above the threshold value (i.e. 0.10), similarly, the VIF value (i.e. 1.95) was below 5 (Chatterjee & Price, 1991). Based on the beta coefficients, the inverse relation between job insecurity and job performance was confirmed ( $\beta = .21$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Similarly, the negative relation between job insecurity and job satisfaction was also confirmed ( $\beta = .46$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Lastly, it was found that the relation between job satisfaction and job performance is direct ( $\beta = .37$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

**Regression Analyses**

Bootstrapping technique suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2004) was applied to check the mediation effect, as to test the mediating impact bootstrapping techniques is superior to Barron and Kenny (1986) procedure and Sobel test. Using 1000 bootstrapped samples, with bias correction method we obtained 95% confidence interval (CI). Mediation is confirmed when the indirect effect does not include zero for 95% Confidence Interval. Table 2 shows the mediation results. The standardized total effect of job insecurity and job satisfaction was 0.47, where the direct effect was 0.21 and indirect effect was found 0.26. Also bootstrapping 95% CI for indirect effect does not contain zero and normal theory test was also significant ( $p < 0.00$ ). Therefore, the partial mediation is confirmed, i.e. job insecurity and employee job performance is mediated via job satisfaction.

Table 2. Mediating effects of Job Satisfaction between Job Insecurity and JP

Path	Total effect	Direct effect <sup>a</sup>	Indirect effect <sup>b</sup>	95% CI <sup>c</sup>	
				Lower level	Upper level
JIS → JS → JP	0.47	0.21	0.26	0.21	0.37

JIS (Job Insecurity), JS (Job Satisfaction), JP (Job Performance)

a JIS → JP

b (JIS → JS) × (JS → JP)

c Determined by bootstrapping with bias correction

**Discussion and Conclusion**

The outcome of this study confirmed that whenever employees perceive job insecurity as a reaction, they stress out and their level of job satisfaction is reduced. Work setting provides bases for degree of employees’ satisfaction. Fear of losing overall or some aspects of losing one’s job will affect the level of job satisfaction (Sverke, Hellrger & Näswall, 2002). It is a general phenomenon that the negative feelings and emotions will result in negative outcomes. Job

insecurity is labeled as hindrance stressors (Cavanaugh, et al., 2000) evoke the negative emotions and threaten the employees from personal growth. Job insecurity evokes harmful consequences and is associated with negative reinforcing events such as absenteeism, turnover and low level of job satisfaction. Previously, literature in western and developed culture has explored the inverse relation between job insecurity and employee job satisfaction (Grunberg Moore & Greenberg 1998; Podsakoff, LePine & LePine, 2007; Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996).

Furthermore, the current study confirmed the homologues result regarding job insecurity and employee job satisfaction. Job insecurity is considered a chronic cause of workplace deviance (Lawrence & Robinson, 2007). Insecure employees tend to blame the organization for their sufferings. If such stress cannot be released by suffering employees, they may then take revenge upon the organization, underpinned by the concept of a negative form of reciprocity (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). Productivity of the employees is at stake with the feeling of losing job. Job insecurity, when perceived as breach of psychological employment arises the imbalance between employer-employee exchange relationships (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011) and results in lower performance (Jensen, Opland, & Ryan, 2010). Employees perceive job insecurity as a violation of the psychological contract with their employers (Sverke, Hellergen & Naswall, 2002); the trade-off between security from employer and loyalty from employees. The perception of qualitative or quantitative job security evoke the negative feelings and individuals lose control over the situation (Spector, 2002), that results in low performance (Bakker, Van Emmerik, & Van Riet, 2008).

The vital contribution of the current study is to check the mediating role of job satisfaction in a link of job insecurity and job performance. Job satisfaction is negatively linked with job insecurity while directly associated with employee job performance. In the same direction Webster Beehr and Christiansen (2010) confirmed the mediating effect of job satisfaction between organizational stressors and job outcomes. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), linking job insecurity with job outcomes, primary appraisal is one of the vital elements. The current study supported the job insecurity relation with job performance directly and through job satisfaction. Our explanation in this regard is the direct link between stress and appraisal. Earlier the main emphasis of stress was on coping and considered coping as deliberate response to stress that contain effort (Lazarus, 1966). For coping to be intentional, however, an individual must evaluate the situation as stressful (Beehr & Franz, 1986). No coping will be observed in case of any stress and the behavior will be normal. However, the mediation result of the current study explores that job insecurity is harmful and would reduce work performance even if is mediated via job satisfaction.

### **Managerial Implications**

Apart from this, manager must be cautious about the critical effects of job insecurity on job outcomes. More supportive working environment should be provided to employees to reduce such harmful effects. Instead of demotion job rotation will be more feasible for maintaining the employees' behavior up to the desirable level. Qualitative job insecurity is more harmful in terms of commitment. Employees suffered from qualitative insecurity remain in organizations having more grudges and grievances, may have more adverse behavior. At time of recession the managers should adopt such policies to sustain the morale of the employees and avoid downsizing. In case of applying qualitative insecurity, the employees must be set back to previous position upon

achieving the targeted goals. Such environment should be created to lesser the perception of job insecurity to keep employees motivated and productive.

### **Limitation and Future Directions**

Despite of vital contribution to the literature, the current study was faced by some limitation. First the sample of the study contained the employees of those banks which are under rumor to be sold out. So, the perception of job security was already there, further the respondents might have filled the questionnaires having threats of losing job in near future. Second the sample comprised the Private sector banks. In Public sector organizations the perception of job insecurity is almost zero. The current study investigated one behavioral variable, in future other behavioral variables like counter product work behavior and work engagement may also be studied. Another potential mediating variable can be innovative work behavior. Employees having innovative work behavior may not consider the fear of losing job. Paternalistic leadership style plays vital role in enhancing employee productivity, and can be considered as mediating variable. Paternalistic leadership style might lesser the feeling of job insecurity and enhances the work performance.

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