

THE EFFECT OF ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE ON COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIORS: INVESTIGATING THE MEDIATING ROLE OF AFFECTIVE JOB INSECURITY AND MODERATING ROLE OF JOB INSECURITY CLIMATE

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Abstract

This paper investigates the mediation effect of affective job insecurity between organizational justice and counterproductive work behavior in the presence of job insecurity climate as a moderator. Time-lagged data were collected from employees of various private sector organizations. Two hundred fifty questionnaires were distributed, and 202 complete sets of employees were received with the response rate of 81%. Research findings reveal that organizational justice diminishes counterproductive work behavior when the employees feel insecurity at work. Affective job insecurity mediates the relationship between organizational justice and counterproductive work behavior; moreover, there is a positive buffering effect of job insecurity climate such that the relationship is mitigated between affective job insecurity and counterproductive work behavior when job insecurity climate is high. Time lag data is used the duration is three weeks between the valuations of organizational justice and counterproductive behavior. This period is lengthy enough to reduce recall bias in the two employee surveys but short adequate to prevent the chances of significant outside events that might occur during that study. Organizational decision-makers should recognize that the feeling of job insecurity triggers employee performance because of psychological stress. The organizations can try to minimize this fear of job insecurity by offering them a permanent nature job. In the short-term, the organizations can promote the job insecurity climate. The moderated mediation effect of job insecurity climate adds significant value and contribution to the literature.

Keywords: Organizational Justice; Affective Job Insecurity; Counterproductive Work Behavior; Job Insecurity Climate

INTRODUCTION

To maintain cut-throat competition, economic slump, technological advancements, and restructuring of companies in the global market. To remain in the competition, joint venture, merger, downsizing, and acquisition options can be preferred by the companies (Hirsch & Soucey, 2006). Due to these reasons, job insecurity becomes a significant threat to the employee's well-being around the world (de Jong et al., 2016). Job insecurity is the perilous variable to study as it has a significant impact on the organizational and individual level, i.e., counterproductive work behavior and job satisfaction (Probst, 2003). The most prominent yarn for employees is job insecurity (Areni & Chirumbolo, 2005). In literature, job insecurity term is still debatable (Carr & Chung, 2014; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). The component which depends on belief is called cognitive JI, and another one belongs to emotion, which is called affective JI (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989). So job insecurity has both components. To date, job insecurity mostly described as a cognitive process. Conceptually affective JI best describes job insecurity (Huang, Lee, Ashford, Chen, & Ren, 2010; Reisel & Banai, 2016). So it is a valuable contribution to the literature to explore further this dimension, which brings novelty in the study (Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018). Affective job insecurity is the thread we perceived in the organization but respond it emotionally, like fear, anxiety, and worry, etc. (Huang et al., 2010). Most of the researchers think that job related adverse outcomes are not only related to JI, but it's AJI variable, which is the most closely associated with employee counterproductive work behavior (Probst, 2003). When organizations are unable to protect the rights of employees, especially when jobs are insured, then employees feel the emotional reaction, and as the result of this shows counterproductive work behavior as the retaliation from the organization (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). The collective thoughts about job insecurity among the employees in the organization called Job insecurity climate (Sora, Caballer, Peiró, & De Witte, 2009). Some other variable also moderates the relationship between AJI and their outcomes and high JI climate worse the relationship between AJI and counterproductive work behavior (Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018). Those employees who were contractual are affected by the environment of job insecurity as compared to those employees who were permanent. COR theory stated that humans always try to capture resources. There are three significant reasons in which physiological stress initiates, first when all available resources are gone, second when a threat is attached with a resource to be lost and

third when after investment no resource gain. According to this theory, there are different types of resources, some of them related to individual personality, objects, and conditions, i.e., housing-related to object resource, optimism related to personality resource, and seniority related to condition resource (Hobfoll, 1989). JI treated as a loss of employment and valuable resource (Hellgren, Sverke, & Isaksson, 1999). This study also examines the mediating role of AJI with counterproductive work behavior. For academics and practitioners, this study explores some insightful contributions towards literature due to cultural reason. We conduct this study in Pakistan that is the non-west and underdeveloped country.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In 1990 the term “organizational justice” was first introduced by Greenberg (Hamlett, 2014; Zhang, 2006). Greenberg defined this term as employee perception of fairness in an organization. Research further demonstrated that organizational justice has a significant influence on work-related outcomes (Greenberg, 1987). In light of literature, three streams of organizational justice are available. The perceived insight of fairness in organizational issues referred to as distributive justice (Colquitt, 2001; Greenberg, 1987). Employees compared their contribution regarding input and rewards, which they received as output and then developed the perception of organizational equality and inequality (Saleem & Gopinath, 2015). Employees feel guilty if they think their reward is less than effort made, and hence, the employee feels disparity (Adams, 1963). Allocations of resources are another part of distributive justice (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). There must be equal resources for each employee, and this does not depend on favoritism (Deutsch, 1975). Job insecurity can be defined as the employee's fear of losing their job at any time and thus cause stress in the workplace (Hellgren & Sverke, 2003). The performance of the individual and organization is negatively suffered due to uncertainty in the job (Areni & Chirumbolo, 2005). In literature, there are two critical components of job insecurity. The first one is based on a cognitive part that relies on employee beliefs. The result of affective job insecurity brings uncertainty and unpredictability, but reducing uncertainty and unpredictability reduces affective job insecurity. If organizational justice increases, then this may help to minimize affective job insecurity and vice versa (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Huang et al., 2010). These types of practices help to decrease affective job insecurity (De Witte, 2005). Thus

H1: Organizational justice is negatively related to affective job insecurity.

Researchers have shown that unhealthy treatment with workers not only makes the employee unsatisfied but also makes them angry, and as a result of this, they act differently (Dalal, 2005). For example, slow down their work, do corruption and theft (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001). This behavior psychological create a negative impact on workplace performance and also decrease the loyalty level (Brimecombe, Magnusen, & Bunds, 2014). On the other hand, if the behavior with the employee is right, then the employee feels better and feel proud to be part of the organization (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). The research demonstrated that organizational justice creates a significant impact on employee behavior (Al-A'wasa, 2015). When an employee feels that he is a victim of unfairness, then he starts fighting with others as a reaction (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001). Using power unkindly develops a negative attitude in groups and also extends conflicts among employees (Brimecombe et al., 2014). Thus;

H2: Organizational justice is negatively related to CWB.

Employees have shown counterproductive behavior when affective job insecurity is high in the organization (Lim, 1997). The leading cause of CWB is job insecurity (Lawrence & Robinson, 2007). The organizations have not fulfilled the promise of permanent employment, which caused increased affective job insecurity, then employees showed different counterproductive behaviors (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Spector & Fox, 2002). Thus;

H3: Affective job insecurity is positively related to CWB.

We support the mediating part of affective job insecurity towards CWB and job performance with the help of affective event theory (Brimecombe et al., 2014). According to the affective event theory, any work event in the organization (justice) will provoke an emotional reaction or affective reaction which contributes towards the outcome variables of the organization (Mignonac & Herrbach, 2004; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). On the bases of this theory, we might consider that the mediating effect between affective job insecurity and organizational justice, counterproductive behavior (Huang et al., 2010). Thus, we develop the following hypothesis;

H4: The indirect effect of Affective job insecurity exists between organizational justice and CWB.

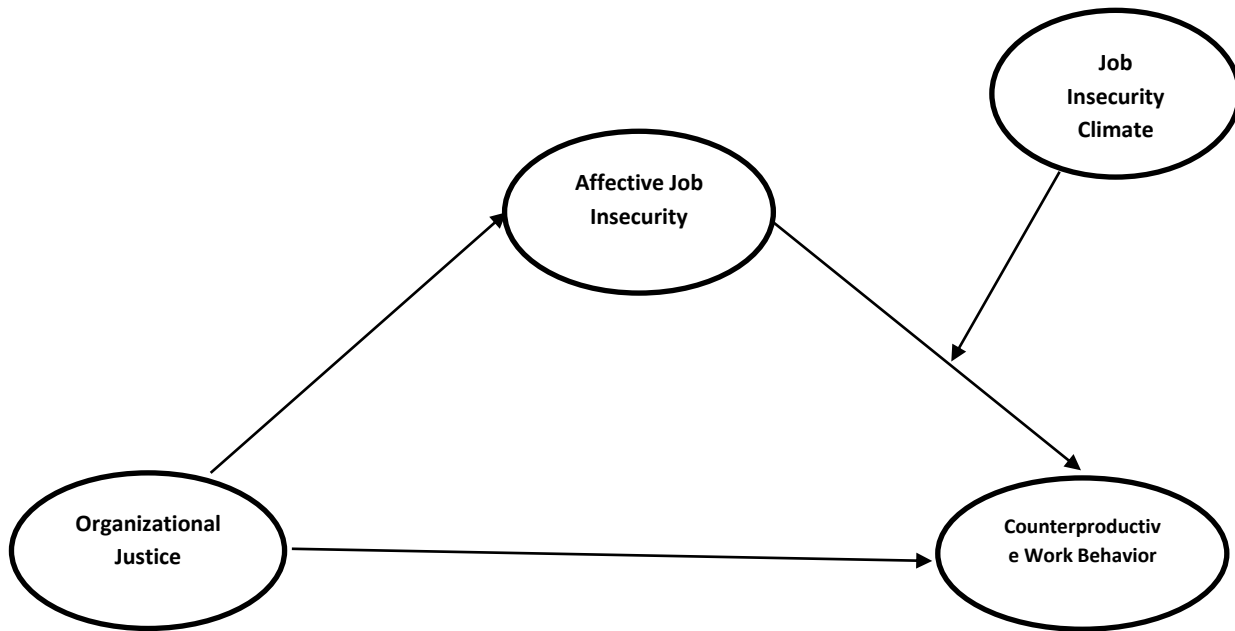
The employees showed anti organizational work behavior in case of an insecure job climate (Wallace et al., 2016). Different types of practices reflected by employees such as theft, poor attendance, miss-use of organization resources (Gruys & Sackett, 2003). In the presence of an insecure job, the employees show counterproductive behavior when a high job insecurity climate exists (Greco, O'boyle, & Walter, 2015).

H5: Affective job insecurity is negatively related to CWB, which is moderated by job insecurity climate as the relationship is stronger when job insecurity climate is high.

The individual opinions which were shared among employees about job insecurity makes organization uncertain climate (LeBreton & Senter, 2008). Few types of researches have shown that the environment is base on individual perceptions, so the best way to ask the questions to the employees about climate at the workplace (Wallace et al., 2016). In the case of poor organizational communication among employees and different rumors about regulatory changes invoked the insecure climate of the organization (Saleem & Gopinath, 2015). When the topic of discussion is organization change, then many of the employees thought negative feelings (Sora et al., 2009). So, change caused the emergence of insecurity climate in the workplace (Bordia, Jones, Gallois, Callan, & DiFonzo, 2006). Taking a job insecurity climate as a moderator, we further explore the relationship between counterproductive work behavior and affective job insecurity (Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018). The moderation mediation relationship suggests that at a high job insecurity climate, the influence of affective job insecurity explains the negative correlation between organizational justice and CWB (Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018). Thus;

H6: Indirect relation between organizational justice and counterproductive behavior through affective job insecurity is moderated by job insecurity climate, as the indirect relation is stronger when job insecurity climate is high.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Collection

We collect the sample from various organizations based in Pakistan, including three educational institutes and eight private sector organizations. With the help of personal contacts, these organizations were facilitated and accessed. For data collection, three paper and pencil based survey was conducted. Initially using a time lag of three weeks, two questionnaires were distributed among employees; and one questionnaire was distributed among the employee supervisors at the same time with the first survey. Three weeks' gap is enough to reduce the recall-based bias among employees. The questionnaire is based on the English language because this language is the official language in all organizations. The privacy of each response is on high priority, and we make sure that no data would ever be public. Two hundred fifty questionnaires were distributed, and 202 complete sets of employees were received with the response rate of 81%. Among the respondents, 67% of males and 33% were females. Employees belong to different education levels, 33% of employees hold a bachelor's degree, 24% of employees hold a master's degree, 31% of employees hold an MPhil degree, and 12% of employees hold a Ph.D. degree.

Measures

Items used for five constructs are from previous studies with five-point Likert scales.

Organizational Justice

To measure organizational justice, we used a previous valid twenty items scale developed by Colquitt (2001) (five-point Likert scales) ranging from 1 (“Very little extent”) to 5 (“Very great extent”). (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.847).

Affective job insecurity

To measure affective job insecurity, we used a previous valid seven items scale developed by Huang and Lee (2010) with five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (“Strongly disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly agree”) (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.78).

Job insecurity climate

We used a previous valid four items scale developed by Lastad, De Witte, and Hans (2016) with five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (“Strongly disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly agree”). (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.81).

Counterproductive behavior

To measure counterproductive behavior, we used a previous valid ten items scale developed by Spector, Bauer, and Fox (2010) with five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (“Never”) to 5 (“Very often”). (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.885).

Results

Table 1 shows that organizational justice is negatively correlated with affective job insecurity ($r = -0.31, p < 0.01$), Job insecurity climate ($r = -0.35, p < 0.01$), counterproductive behavior ($r = -0.21, p < 0.01$). There is a positive significant correlation between counterproductive behavior and affective job insecurity ($r = 0.54, p < 0.01$).

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations and Reliabilities

Variables	Mean	S.D	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Age	1.71	0.76	1					
2. Gender	1.33	0.47	0.01	1				
3. Organizational Justice	3.16	0.49	0.02	0.01	(0.85)			
4. Affective Job Insecurity	3.2	0.62	0.11	0.01	- 0.31**	(0.78)		
5. Job insecurity climate	3.14	0.78	0.03	0.01	- 0.35**	0.62**	(0.81)	
6.CWB	2.83	0.78	0.01	-0.6	-0.21**	0.54**	0.66**	(0.88)

n = 202

**p<0.01

Hypothesis 1 stated that with a high degree of organizational justice, then the effect of affective job insecurity decreases. We found support to this hypothesis because the p-value is significant as (b = -.302, p < 0.01). The counterproductive work decreases in the presence of organizational justice; hence, our hypothesis 2 is also supported because the p-value is significant as (b = -.212, p < 0.01). The impact of CWB is less when the thread of job insecurity is less in the organization; hence, hypothesis 3 is supported because the p-value is significant as (b = .545, p < 0.01).

Table 2

Tests of mediation effects using bootstrapping procedures

Effects	Coefficient	95% confidence interval(CI)
OJ→ AJI→CWB		
Direct Effect	0.42	[-0.06, 0.14]
Indirect Effect	0.09	[0.04, 0.18]

n= 202

The mediation effect of affective job insecurity can be checked by using a bootstrapping method Model 4 (Hayes, 2017). In table 2, the values [0.04, 0.18] did not include zero; thus, the presence of mediation takes place, which supports our hypothesis 4.

Moderation Graph

We run Model 1 to check the moderation effect of insecurity climate; the value of the interaction term is significant as (b = - 0.30, p < 0.05), which supports our hypothesis 5. Furthermore, at a low level of the relationship between job insecurity and CWB was significant (b = -0.89, p<0.01) but insignificant at a high level (b = 0.60, ns), which gives further support to our hypothesis.

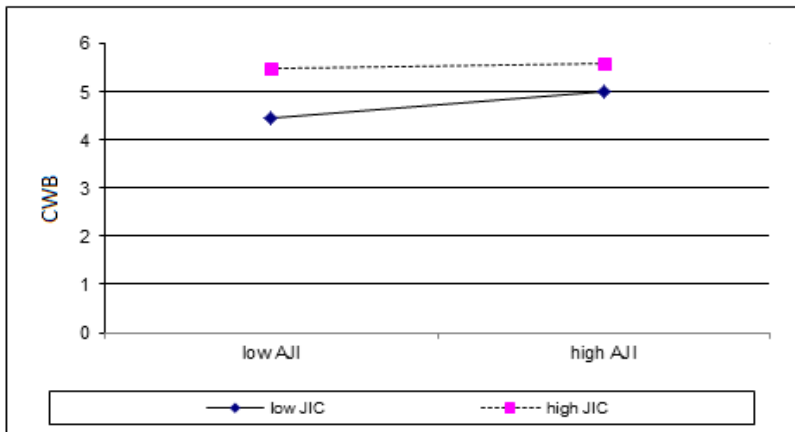


Fig. 1 Moderating Effect of Job Insecurity Climate on the relationship between Affective Job Insecurity and Counterproductive Work Behavior

Table 3

Tests of moderated mediation using bootstrapping procedures
CWB (Dependent Variable)

Independent	Mediator	Level of moderator	Conditional Indirect effect	95% confidence interval (CI)
Organizational Justice	Affective Job Insecurity	Low JIC	0.23	[0.13,0.34]
		High JIC	0.03	[-0.10, 0.15]

We run Model 14 to test hypothesis 6 using the bootstrapping technique. With 5000 random samples and replacement from the full sample, we found that confidence interval of the indirect effect of organizational justice on counterproductive work behavior through affective job insecurity did not include 0 when job insecurity climate was low ([0.13, 0.34]) but include 0 when it was high ([-0.10, 0.15]). Moreover, the index of moderated mediation (Hayes, 2015) equaled -0.13, and its confidence interval did not include 0 ([-0.23,-0.05]). Overall, these results suggested that job insecurity climate functioned as a buffer against the indirect effect of organizational justice on counterproductive work behavior in support of hypothesis 6.

DISCUSSION

In this study, we investigated the impact of organizational justice on outcome variables through affective job insecurity. The extent to which employees see fairness in the organization refers to organizational justice. There is a close relationship between affective job insecurity and organizational justice, which is also supported by our hypothesis. The result of affective job

insecurity gives us the uncertainty in the job (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). If there is an increase in organizational justice, which provides stability in the job. When the organization does the injustice, then employees become angry and show different unethical behaviors. One way to explain this behavior is that the employee slows down their work (Spector & Fox, 2002). Organizational justice influences the action of the employee. The fear of losing a job creates stress psychologically, and the employee feels so much pressure while doing the job hence, this affects the performance of the employee. COR theory also supports this, which says that in case of scarce resources, the people always feel fear about it, and their performance suffers due to the limitation of these resources (Hobfoll, 1989). We also found empirical support for the hypothesized buffering role of job insecurity climate in the relationship between affective job insecurity and counterproductive work behavior and performance. According to the COR theory, the reaction of humans depends upon the limitation of available resources (Hobfoll, 1989). When the funds are scarce, then people act differently as compared to when sufficient resources are available. If the job of the employee is secure, then the employee comfortably performs their duty.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This research offers several vital guidelines for organizations that hope to maintain the job performance of the employee by considering the job insecurity environment in mind. Organizational decision-makers should recognize that the feeling of job insecurity triggers employee performance because of psychological stress. The organizations can try to minimize this fear of job insecurity by offering them a permanent nature job. In the short-term, the organizations can promote the job insecurity climate. Due to this, the performance of the employee increases, but this will affect the overall performance of the organization in the long run. Another reason to avoid job insecurity as a motivator is that the uncertainty creates the stress in employees, and due to this psychological stress, the employee performance decreases and employee also shows counterproductive behaviors. As the employees are critical assets for any organization. Employees showed their concern about fairness in the outcome, treatment, and procedures. All these things should affect the behavior and attitude of employees. So, it is pronounced that the organization develops a healthy environment, which gives a boost to the employees to perform well and put an extraordinary effort into work.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has a few inadequacies whose reflection would offer openings for future research. First, as the time lag data is used the duration is three weeks between the valuations of organizational justice and counterproductive behavior. This period is lengthy enough to reduce recall bias in the two employee surveys but short adequate to prevent the chances of significant outside events that might occur during that study. The possibility of reverse causality also decreases due to the longitudinal design; namely, some employees might grow more worried about their jobs and organizational functions because of their performance. To ensure the causality, future studies may not depend upon the single sample design. Future research may include field and laboratory experiments that include control groups and treatments. Second, Affective rumination is another crucial variable for future consideration. Additional, future research should also examine other potential buffers of the job insecurity and work outcome variables such as perceptions of control and past experiences of employees. Third, we have presented country unbiased theoretical opinions as the national factors may affect the results of our conceptual framework, so in the future, we further investigate the impact of different blame attributes of job insecurity across cultures.

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