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The Impact of Job Insecurity on Burnout Among Females Employees: The Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Support

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Abstract: *The purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between job insecurity and burnout among female employees and whether Perceived Organizational Support (POS) plays a moderating role between job insecurity and burnout. It was hypothesized that there will be positive correlation between job insecurity and burnout and POS will play a moderating role between job insecurity and burnout. The research approach used in this study was quantitative research and purposive sampling technique was used. There were 300 female participants resided in Karachi, Pakistan. Job insecurity, burnout, and POS was assessed through three scales. Job Insecurity was measured through Job Insecurity Scale, POS was calculated by its respective scale, and burnout was measured through burnout scale. The data was analyzed through SPSS version 26. Data analysis involved statistical examination, the relationship between variables was through regression analysis, and Hayes' Process Model to employ moderation analysis. The results showed a positive correlation between job insecurity and burnout among female employees and no moderating role of POS among job insecurity and burnout. Limitations and implications were highlighted in the research as well.*

Introduction

The world is talking about gender equality specifically the rights of women but when we investigate the conditions of Pakistan, the scenario is very different. Pakistan is ranked last out of 148 countries in Global Gender Gap Index 2025. Though there is an increase in the literacy rate of females, but they are still struggling in economic sector and political representation (Hussain & Hussain, 2025). The rises in literacy rate among females have paved the path for them to get the chance to work within the organizational settings. Unfortunately, they have started facing gender inequality in the workplace as well. Even if the women in Pakistan have the similar job position as the men, still they will face gender discrimination in terms of limited opportunities for career development, unequal salaries, and harsh working environment (Hanek & Garcia, 2022a). This gender disparity not only gives them the sense of job insecurity but a rise in their stress levels. In general, they face gender-based occupational segregation and limited chances for growth (Parker & Funk, 2017). Though there are organizations

which created policies to support women and make workplace bearable for them, but this varies from one organization to another. It is assumed such support have helped the women to feel secure and contributed in lessening their emotional weariness.

Literature Review

Job Insecurity has been considered as a crucial workplace stressor over the past years. It specifically impacts female employees with reference to the limited opportunities for their career growth, inflexible working hours, and unnecessary workload. It is defined as a perceived risk of losing one's job and the related fear of losing economic stability, career advancement, and workplace recognition (Shoss, 2017). According to contemporary research, employees who feel their jobs are insecure face higher levels of psychological stress, less organizational commitment, and lower job satisfaction (Adekiya, 2023)

Moreover, women's perceptions of job insecurity are made worse by gender inequality. Women are more likely to experience job insecurity when working in precarious situations like temporary contracts, pay reductions, and informal work (Menéndez-Espina et al., 2020). They are pushed often further in certain types of job roles just because they are females and they don't have the same opportunities to mode up in their careers as their male counterparts (Hanek & Garcia, 2022b).

One of the major outcomes of job insecurity is employee burnout. It is defined as a psychological syndrome characterized by depersonalization, low professional efficacy, and emotional exhaustion (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Those employees who face constant workplace stress without practicing coping exercises are more likely to experience burnout. It is concluded, female employees experience emotional weariness and burnout much more than the male employees because of increased social and organizational demands (Kumar & Mellsop, 2012)

Furthermore, females who opt for low-skilled and unstable jobs have higher chance of experiencing somatic complaints, insomnia, and symptoms of anxiety (Vargas-Jiménez et al., 2020). This suggests job insecurity and burnout have direct link Job insecurity and employee burnout. (Chong et al., 2024) Those employees who perceived their jobs as insecure end up going through burnout. Most likely, they will endure ongoing stress which results in cynicism and emotional exhaustion.

However, perceived organizational support (POS) may act as a moderator between job insecurity and employee burnout. POS refers to the degree to which workers believe that their workplace values their contributions and is concerned about their employee's welfare (Eisenberger et al., 1986). It has been demonstrated that POS protects against the negative effects of workplace stressors, such as burnout and job insecurity. This further supports the notion that a rise in POS will further rise in employees' faithfulness, organizational loyalty, and job contentment. POS decreases the negative physiological and psychological effects of workplace stressors when the organization offers the material and emotional support to the employees (George et al., 1993). Whereas one of the researches showed POS and employee burnout to be negatively correlated which underscores the protective function of organizational support in high-demand settings (CROPANZANO et al., 1997)

Theoretical Framework

Conversion of Resource theory is one of the theories pointing to the fact that individuals make efforts to achieve, maintain, and protect resources such as job security, financial stability, and emotional well-being. As if they lose any of such resources, they are going to cause them stress and burnout (Hobfoll, 1989). Job insecurity threatens the economic and psychological resources of employees which makes them vulnerable to experiencing burnout. If we talk about this theory in the context of female employees, job insecurity can be harmful as the society of Pakistan is dealing with harsh gender inequality (Faheem et al., 2022). Another applicable theoretical framework is Organizational Support

Theory (OST) given by (Eisenberger et al., 1986) which concluded that the perception of organizational support among employees is based upon how much their organization values their contributions and well-being. According to this theory, when employees experience high organizational support, they tend to feel less stressed, more secure and involved in work. This theory can further be helpful in the context of female workers who recognize their organization as considerate and flexible with them. This will lead to lessening their feelings of burnout and make them realize that their job is secure. In addition to this, Social Role Theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012.) further describes gender- related occupational expectations and behaviours related to the workplace. According to this theory, women mostly considered less suitable for managerial positions and experience greater scrutiny in occupational settings. The organization prefers males to be given such roles regardless of qualifications, resilience, experience, and how much hardworking female employees are. This gender disparity leads to higher job insecurity and burnout among female employees.

Significance of the study

Pakistan is one of those countries who faced recurring crisis such as high inflation, currency depreciation, and constant deficit of balance of payments. Job insecurity among employees becomes common due to such adverse economic conditions in the country. It further amplifies job insecurity due to gender inequality persisting within the country. Most importantly, cultural norms further undermine the access of growth opportunities for females' employees. This affects their mental health as well as their physical health. The current research highlights the critical workplace issues in Pakistan where the job insecurity among female employees is a growing concern. Also, the gender disparity within the country ignites the perception of job insecurity among females. This increases the risk of burnout. This further contributes to the local knowledge as the western society has worked a lot about job insecurity and burnout among female employees and doesn't highlight the Pakistan's socio-cultural aspect. Additionally, this research showed how less POS is provided for the female employees which contributes to their emotional weariness and burnout. This research is going to give insight into the HR of the organizations to create policies by showing them how POS can provide support for a specific group and protect them from physical and psychological distress. This further highlight to notice the gender-sensitive treatments within the organizations. It encourages the fair treatment, deserving roles, and flexible working hours for female employees. This study will focus on those females who are working in any organization whether public or private sector. This will help to find the relationship among job insecurity and employee burnout and whether POS plays the moderating role between them.

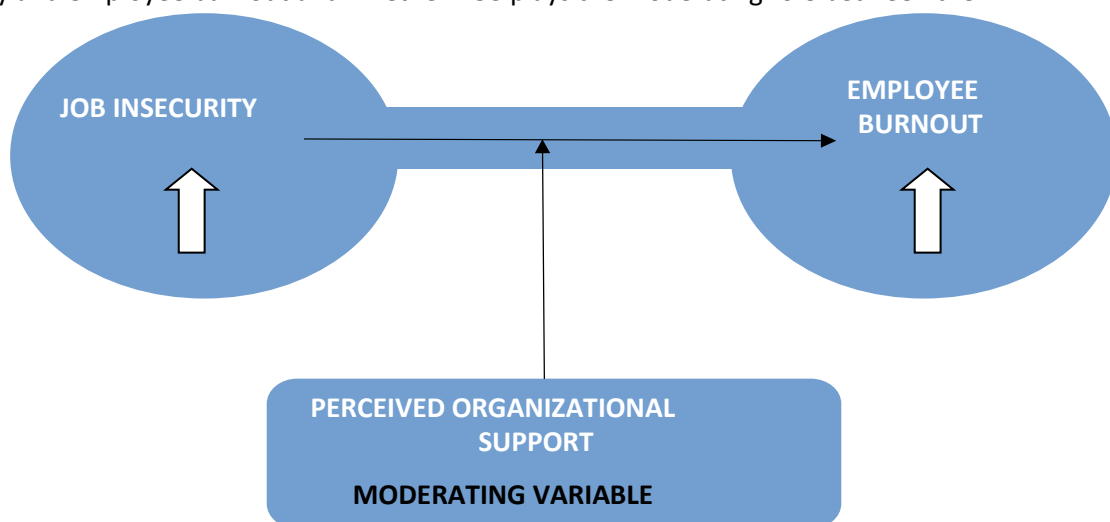


Figure 1: Theoretical framework for the study

Research Objectives

1. To explore the relationship between job insecurity and employee burnout among female employees.
2. To determine the moderating role of perceived organizational support in relationship between job insecurity and employee burnout

Research Questions

1. Is there a relationship between job insecurity and employee burnout among female employees?
2. Does perceived organizational support acts as a moderator in relationship between job insecurity and employee burnout?

Research Hypothesis

1. Job insecurity will have detrimental impact on employee burnout among female employees.
2. POS is expected to moderate the relationship between job insecurity and employee burnout

Methodology

Research Design

The research methodology used in this study was quantitative research and used purposive sampling experimental design. The research approached females' employees working in any organization of Karachi whether public or private sector. Three scales were administered; Perceived Organizational Support Scale, Job Insecurity Scale, and Burnout Measure Scale.

Sampling Size & Sampling Procedure

This study carried out in Karachi, Pakistan. The research population was recruited through purposive, convenience sampling technique. This included female employees working in any organization who range between 25-45 years. The reason of choosing this age bracket was females, usually, get free from their graduation and post-graduation by this age.

Inclusion Criteria

- Employees age ranging from 25-45 years
- Females
- Must be currently employed
- Minimum 1 year of experience in their current job role
- Employees from different sectors in Pakistan

Exclusion Criteria

- Employees who are below and above age 25-45 years
- Male employees
- People who have less than 1 year of job experience
- Self employed
- Part time employees
- Employees on maternity and extended leaves
- Employees on temporary or contractual period

Measures

Demographic form

The demographic form included relevant information like their name, age, education, employment status, current job role, years of experience, working hours and

Job Insecurity Scale

Job insecurity scale (English version) was established by (De Witte, 2000). It was a four-item questionnaire which is used to measure the level of job insecurity in female employees. The responses will be recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”. High scores will show high level of job insecurity. The Job Insecurity Scale has a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.87.

Perceived Organizational Support Scale

Perceived organizational support scale was developed by (Eisenberger, 2001). It was an eight-item scale that is used to measure the perceived organizational support by employees. The responses will be recorded on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree”, 2 = “moderately disagree”, 3 = “slightly disagree”, 4 = “neutral”, 5 = “slightly agree”, 6 = “moderately agree”, 7 = “strongly agree.” High scores will indicate high level of organizational support given to the employees. The Perceived Organizational Support scale has a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.93.

Burnout Scale

Burnout measure scale was created by (Shirom & Melamed, 2006). It is a 14 items Likert scale that is used to assess the burnout of employees. The responses will be recorded on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1= “never or almost never”, 2= “very infrequently”, 3 = “quite infrequently”, 4 = “Sometimes”, 5 = “quite frequently”, 6 = “very frequently”, 7 = “always or almost always”. High scores will indicate excessive burnout in employees. The Burnout measure has a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.97.

Procedure

The first step of the research was to take permission from the authors of the scales. The second step was to take consent from various organizations to conduct the research with their female employees. The participants were recruited through purposive sampling technique. All participants were selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Data was gathered through a structured, paper-based questionnaire that included both closed-ended and Likert-scale items. Three scales were used; POS scale, Job insecurity scale, and burnout scale. Selected participants were approached in-person and surveys were completed by them. They were informed about the study’s objectives, procedures, and all ethical considerations. The participants were informed their voluntary participation in the study and they can cease from participation if they feel like. Informed consent form was signed by them before proceeding to demographic form. Each participant was informed that the questionnaire would not take more than 20 minutes. As soon as the data was collected, IBM SPSS Statistics was used to structured, assessed, and analyzed to obtain the results.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Table 1: Frequencies and percentages of demographic variables of females (N=300)

Variables	f	%	M	SD
Gender	-	-	1.00	.000
Females	300	100		
Current job role	-	-	2.36	.860
Entry-level	39	13.0		
Mid-level	145	48.3		
Senior-level	91	30.3		
Executive	19	6.3		
management				
Others	6	2.0		

Type of organizations	-	-	2.19	.696
Gov. sector	17	5.7		
Private sector	233	77.7		
Non-profit organization	32	10.7		
Freelance	11	3.7		
Others	7	2.3		
Duration in current job	-	-	3.41	.630
1 to 3 years	200	66.7		
3 to 5 years	77	25.7		
More than 5 years.	23	7.7		
Employment status	-	-	2.01	.231
Full time	299	99.7		
Freelance	1	.3		
The believe of employees about job insecurity	-	-	1.16	.664
No	46	15.3		
Yes	161	53.7		
Neutral	71	31.0		
The believe of employees about organizational support	-	-	1.14	.770
No	117	23.7		
Yes	112	39.0		
Neutral	49	37.3		
Employees total working hours per week	-	-	2.29	.732
Less than 20 hours	114	16.3		
20 to 40 hours	137	38.0		
More than 40 hours		45.7		
Feelings of employees related to work stress	-	-	2.22	.796
Rarely	48	16.0		
Sometimes	159	53.0		
Often	72	24.0		
Always	21	7.0		

Note: =frequency, %=percentage, M=mean, SD=standard deviation

Table 1 demonstrates the frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation of the demographic variables used in the research. This included no. of females, current job role, type of organizations, and duration in current job, employment status, and feelings of employees related to work stress, their belief about job insecurity, POS, and their total working hours per week.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Product Correlations of job insecurity with burnout and its subscales

Variables	JI	BO
Job insecurity	-	.510**
Burnout	.510**	-

Note:JI=job insecurity, BO=burnout

Table 2 shows that job insecurity has a significant positive, moderate correlation with burnout, and significant positive.

Table 3: Simple linear regression analysis showing job insecurity as a predictor of burnout

	Burnout						
	R	R ²	ΔR^2	β	t	p	95% CI
							LL UL
Job Insecurity	.510 ^a	.260	.260	.510	10.23	.00	1.97 2.91

Note. β =Standardized beta, R²=R-squared, ΔR^2 =Adjusted R-squared CI=Confidence Interval, LL=Lower limit, UL= Upper limit

Table 3 provides that a unit change in the predictor variable of Job Insecurity will result in a significant change in the criterion variable of Burnout with a predictive change of 26.

Table 4: Moderation analysis of job insecurity and burnout

Model	β	p	ΔR^2	F
Constant	44.581	.0002		
JI	1.620	.154		
POS	-.443	.179		
JI*POS	.019	.564	.0008	.3335

Note: β =Standardized beta, R²=R-squared, F=Frequency, p>0.05

Table 4 shows that there is no significant moderation impact of perceived organizational support between job insecurity and burnout.

Discussion

The present study focused on the relationship between job insecurity and burnout among female employees and the moderating role of Perceived Organizational Support (POS). The primary hypothesis claimed that job insecurity negatively influence employee burnout among female employees. According to the results, Job insecurity has a significant positive, moderate correlation with burnout. As the employees become insecure about the job so the burnout among them will increases. Hence, proved the first hypothesis. This aligns with the one of the contemporary researches which claimed suppressing emotions leads to diminished cognitive performance and physiological stress responses which enhances burnout levels from emotional exhaustion (Brotheridge & Grandy, 2002) . A further research by (Martínez-Iñigo et al., 2007), concluded the job insecurity among employees lead to emotional burnout among them.

Moreover, the second hypothesis was rejected. It indicated that there was no moderating role of POS between job insecurity and burnout. This aligns with the studies conducted in the past. The perceived supervisor support was not moderating between job insecurity and burnout within labor force (Cao et al., 2024). However, there are few studies which demonstrated that POS do moderates the relationship between job insecurity and burnout among employees (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2006). (Hngoi et al., 2023) this study clearly quoted POS reduces the strain effect on those employees who perceive their job as insecure and so it lowers the burnout among them. This finding is noteworthy in the context of Pakistan as the organizations has made policies to make measures to support women such as flexible working schedule, maternity leaves, and provide medical facilities. However, how many organizations are truly following such measures is still uncertain. Hence, such measures of support are insufficient in making female employees as less job insecure or mitigate burnout among them.

Recommendations and Limitations of the Research

One of the implications of this research is to alleviate the psychological stress brought on by job insecurity and tackle gender inequity, businesses should actively create inclusive and supportive workplace policies. The emotional suffering that women workers may experience may be lessened by fair chances for career advancement, open communication throughout organizational changes, and long-term contracts. Furthermore, despite the fact POS has no significant impact to alter the relationship among job insecurity and burnout, it is still a crucial factor in employee well-being. This implies that support activities should be more sincere, comprehensive, and integrated into the organization's culture rather than superficial programs.

The limitation of the study is the biasness and limitation of the representativeness of the result due to its sampling technique. Secondly, the current research is exclusively focused on female employees whose age ranges from 25-45 years and excluded employees above and beyond this age range and also focused only on females which limits the room for gender comparison.

Conclusion

It was observed in this research that the job insecurity and burnout among female employees have a positive correlation whereas, there was no moderating role of POS among job insecurity and burnout. These findings contribute in the existing literature by ensuring the community work towards drafting policies for female employees, and make sure such policies are being implemented withing the organization. One of the most important implications suggested is to alleviate the psychological stress brought on by job insecurity and tackle gender inequity, businesses should actively create inclusive and supportive workplace policies.

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