

## EXPLORING THE WORK ENGAGEMENT AS MEDIATOR IN FINDING IMPACT OF JOB INSECURITY ON JOB PERFORMANCE

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**Abstract:** *The performance is the most significant phenomenon that can influence the entire working format of the organizations in productive or adverse manners based on the effectiveness of performance management system. Similarly, job insecurity is the phenomenon wherein the individuals are worried about their professional affiliations with undesired possibility of losing their jobs. Likewise, work engagement denotes the degree of individual's engagement in assigned responsibilities. This study examined the role of work engagement as mediator in connecting the job insecurity and job performance. The data was collected (employees from NGOs) through questionnaire adapted from existing studies with the aim to measure the research issues and their interrelationships. The data was analyzed by using different statistical procedures like correlation, regression and mediation to find answers of research hypotheses about the relationships among research variables as developed from theoretical framework to reach the conclusion comprehensively. The results show positive association, significant impact and partial mediation. Some recommendations are offered to policy-makers and future researchers as extracted from the results of the study.*

**Keywords:** *Job Insecurity, Work Engagement, Job Performance & NGOs*

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## **Introduction**

The public and private sector partnerships pave the way towards the developmental process in the context of both the developed and developing countries. Both these sectors have been considered as the active players towards the process of development. However, this role is also actively performed by third sector named the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Gibbs, et al., 1999). These organizations are responsible for introducing and implementing the developmental project at both the regional and national level. The NGOs are private entities who are responsible to track their activities by promoting the individuals' interests to environmental protection, accept community change, and provide social services like emergency support, rehabilitation, education social mobilization and the poverty reduction (Susan & Oliver, 2005). Still, this role can be attained effectively when these organizations have active performance management system (Helm, et al., 2007). The effective performance management system helps in boosting the employee engagement and productivity leading to higher performances in organizations.

The performances are active parameters for gauging organizational credibility

and success (Feng, et al., 2008). Thus, employees' performance has been considered as significant tool in measuring the success of organizations and non-governmental organizations (Rosen, et al., 2010). However, there exist factors that discourage the employees to show their utmost performance in which job insecurity is more critical. The job insecurity has been considered as dilemma for both the employees and organizations as insecure employees are likely to show the lower engagement, lesser commitment and lower performance which ultimately hamper organizational activities (Witte, et al., 2015). The job insecurity is the leading issue that mainly originates from the downsizing, restructuring and merger acquisition of the organizations overwhelmed at creating different nature of anxieties among employees concerning their jobs (Piccoli, et al., 2017). These anxieties thus lead to lower level of performance and higher level of job burnout that ultimately hits the standing and success of concerned organization. However, there are some other factors wherein work engagement (Park & Karen, 2019) that can play facilitating role in increasing or decreasing the connection between job insecurity and job performance.

The work engagement has been widely considered as the significant contributors towards performance as the engaged employees are likely to involve actively in assigned tasks, stay longer, produce better outcomes and have turnover intentions at the minimum level (Judge & Mueller, 2012). Thus, refining employees' engagement has been measured as the key to enhancing the performance and developing productivity in organizations (Hu, et al., 2017). Moreover, economic recessions, technological advancement, organizational restructuring and global competition have changed immensely the value and structures of jobs which overwhelmed at different issues (job insecurities & turnover intentions) that are expected to affect the employees and organizations (Salmela & Upadyaya, 2018). The job insecurities have been widely experienced in context of the non- governmental organizations as these organizations are always hiring the workforces on impermanent basis due to their nature of work and functions (Kim, Han & Park, 2019). Thus, employees working in these organizations are always worried about their jobs and always seeking for the lucrative opportunities whenever offered to them.

### **Problem Statement**

The problems addressed in this research are related with exploring the role of job insecurity towards job performance. The

literature revealed that feelings of job insecurity at workplace may results in positive or negative attitudes towards work, depending on how employees interpret their situation and goals (Thomas & Konig, 2010). Similarly, different studies identified different variables as mediators in relationships between job insecurity, and job performance like work engagement (Thomas & Konig, 2010; Wang, et al., 2014; Park & Karen, 2019). In this regard, this study aimed to examine work engagement as mediator in relationships between job insecurity and job performance. This study aims to examine relationships among these variables in context of the non-governmental organizations. The study aims to investigate these leading issues in particular context due to their critical and effective role in process of development at the regional as well as national level especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

### **Research Objectives**

- To examine the relationship (association) among predictor (job insecurity), criterion (job performance) and mediator (work engagement).
- To examine the role of work engagement as mediator in relationship between job insecurity and job performance).

## **Literature Review**

The job insecurity has been recognized as the psychological stressor that not only influences the individuals' performances but also affects their emotional strength leading to job burnout overwhelmed at high intentions for turnovers (Burchell, et al., 2002). The job insecurity results from the peril towards individuals' continuity at existing jobs which signifies individual's worries about losing current jobs (Bosman, et al., 2005). The literature shows that job insecurity has negative influence upon individuals' job performance however, the job insecurity is likely to be abridge by showing the high work engagement and high performance which ultimately provide an opportunity to individuals to continue their existing jobs (Cheng & Chan, 2008). Thus, job insecurity can be controlled through high level of the work engagement and greater level of the performances. The job performance has the adversative relationships as increase in one may lead to decrease in another (Tilakdharee, et al., 2010). The job insecurity is expected to have positive association with job burnout and job performance therefore; increase in one may ultimately increase in another (Witte, et al., 2015). The existing research studies provide enough evidences about the relationships among the research variables under the

considerations (Richter & Katharina, 2019). Thus, this section offers an insight about the research variables (job insecurity, job performance, and work engagement) along with their interrelationships in particular context.

## **Job Insecurity**

The job insecurity is the fundamental right of all individuals' working in different nature of organizations withers public, private or non-governmental organizations. It is also the basic obligations of all the organizations to provide recognition to their employees for the efforts along with the securities towards their jobs (Bosman, et al., 2005). When employees feel uncertainty about their jobs then they will not be able to show their utmost engagement and performance (Feng, et al., 2008). Those employees who are at higher risk of job insecurities are expected have greater emotional exhaustion and higher intentions to turnover (Jiang & Probst, 2014). The employees' apprehension about uncertain situation towards their current jobs acts as source of discouragement that led employees to engage lesser and inspire them to look for better employment opportunities (Richter & Katharina, 2019). These will not only organizational smooth functioning but influence organizational credibility in undesirable manners. When the employees feel unsecure at workplaces then it will not only affect

their behavior towards the assigned tasks but also affect their efforts and potentials leading to performances.

### **Job Performance**

The job performance is the most effective phenomenon that is responsible for the success and failure of every organization including non-governmental organizations. In this regard, the non-governmental organization uses the provisional services of employees as a tool to attain greater performances from workforces (Feather & Rauter, 2004). The organizations use the performance as a tool to evaluate efforts of their employees in achieving assigned tasks (Feng, et al., 2008). Therefore, performance is considered as effective criterion in evaluating organizational productivity and success (Lorente, et al., 2014). The performance of employees is influenced by various dynamic factors like the job insecurity, job burnout, occupational stress and injustices at the workplaces (Kim, Han & Park, 2019). However, there are certain factor which boosts employees' performance like strong culture, justice, work engagement, emotional intelligence, employees' commitment and the psychological empowerment. The performance is mainly affected when concerned employees feel unsecure and thus show limited efforts towards the

attainment of their work assignments and tasks.

### **Work Engagement**

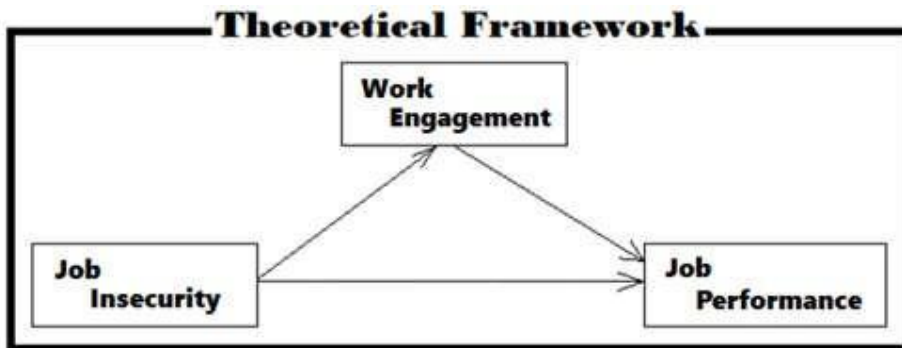
The engagement at workplace is measured as dynamic factor towards smooth functioning of institutional tasks leading to higher level of performance and productivity. The engaged employees are considered as an efficient asset of the organizations which is the outcomes of organizational motivation (Feather & Rauter, 2004). In this connection, work engagement denotes the positive, persistent and effective inspirational situation that is characterized by dedication (strong involvement), vigor (highly energetic) and captivation (highly focused) (Xanthopoulou, et al., 2008). Thus, engaged employees find their job/work energizing, meaningful, interesting and thus experiences positive affects leading to enthusiasm, pleasure and happiness at workplaces (Ouweneel, et al., 2012). Therefore, the work engagement is the outcome of positive experiences of the employees at workplaces however, it is evident to be affected by the job burnout and job insecurity when experiences by employees in organization in contemporary competitive situations (Kim, et al., 2019). The employees may secure their existing jobs through high level of involvement and engagement in their assigned tasks thereby showing the high level of the performances.

## **Relationships among Research Variables**

The individual during their professional tenure is always worried about the continuation of their job with honor and self-respect. However, this confidence comes at stake when job insecurity arrives due to one or another reason in the viable environment (Burchell, et al., 2002). The job insecurity is the outcome various undesirable circumstances that the employees feel during the period of restructuring and downsizing where employees feel uncertain about their jobs (Bosman, et al., 2005). The insecurities are the appraisal of the work environment that the employees' experiences at the workplaces which influences employees' attitude, health and working potential (Cheng & Chan, 2008). The job insecurity effects employee behavior harmfully which results in lower commitment and decreased performance level due to their negative connection (Reisel et al., 2010). The literature provides enough evidence about positive relationship between the job insecurity, job engagement and performance.

The job performance is highly influenced by job insecurity as emotional lethargy and the psychological exhaustion at higher level led to lower commitment and lower performance. The performance is also influenced undesirably by the turnover intentions but influenced positively by the work engagement (Ouweneel, et al., 2012). Thus, engaged employees are expected to have greater performance level and lower burnout and turnover intentions however, this engagement level is expected to be influenced by higher level of uncertainty about the existing jobs (Alessandri, et al., 2015). The fair treatment at workplaces is also considered as the source of inspiration where employees feel respected and honored (Park & Karen, 2019). The literature revealed that the fair decisions become more dominant when confronted by uncertainty which provide fair justifications for the decisions of organization towards their employees and fair decisions inspires concerned employees to show greater performances.

**Figure 1 Theoretical Framework**



**H1(a):** To find the association between job insecurity and job performance.

**H1(b):** To examine the association between job insecurity and work engagement.

**H2:** To examine the association between work engagement and job performance.

**H3:** To examine the role of work engagement as mediator in relationship between job insecurity and job performance.

### **Research Methods**

This section offers the complete guidelines regarding the methods and procedure, tools and techniques for conducting the research. For this purpose, a comprehensive research design is offered comprises different essential mechanisms that are prerequisite to conduct the study and to reach the conclusion more systematically.

### **Research Philosophy**

The philosophical approach is dynamic for providing the logic, method and foundation to conduct the research. In

this regard, different philosophical approaches are available based on the nature of research studies (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). In this connection, this study aims to find out the existing realities (job insecurity, job performance and work engagement) in the native environment by collecting primary data from respondents with aim to analyze data by using some statistical tools to extract new findings and to provide new information to existing database (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). So, based on these assumptions, the positivism is the most befitting research philosophy for this research.

### **Research Design**

The main function of research design is to confirm that the obtained evidences enable the researcher to address effectively the problem under consideration as definitely as possible (Adèr, et al., 2008). It further aims at finding information for testing and validation the theory behind theoretical framework to accurately describe the phenomenon and existence of the possible relationships among these

phenomena (Creswell, 2014). For this purpose, for describing phenomenon, descriptive statistics will be used and exploring the possible relationships, the inferential statistics will be used. Therefore, research design of this study comprises descriptive and inferential approached to explore the phenomena in a native environment.

### Research Approach

The research approach denotes the methods through which the researcher accesses the main population of the study. In this regard, different research approached is available however, in social sciences, survey has been recommended as the best approach to access population of the study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2011). The survey approach is used to access the sample of the study as it is impossible to access the entire population, thus the researchers rely on the sample of the population (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The researchers from social sciences provide sufficient evidence and explanations about characteristics, contents, and processes of survey approaches. However, the most comprehensive approach towards

survey is the deductive approach which is connected to positivist approach.

### Population & Sample

The population has been considered as the entire group of population in which the scholars are interested so as to analyze and generalize the results (Levin, 1984). The population is the group of entire elements where the researchers try to draw the conclusions about their opinion towards certain phenomenon (Hair, et al., 2007). The population of interest in this research is the employees working in the non-governmental organizations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The population of total national NGOs functional in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is 1800 employees wherein a sample of 350 employees was selected through statistical formula (Yamani, 1967). Total 350 questionnaires were distributed and 318 were recollected. The researcher used the random sampling technique in current study to access and collects the data from the sample.

**Table 1 Sample-Size Determination**

E	N	Sample Size
0.05	1800	349.51
Formula used $n = N/1 + Ne^2$	$n = 1800/ (1+1800 (0.0025))$ $n = 349.51$	Sample = 350 Collected= 318

Where: N = Population size, n = Required Sample-Size,

e = Level of Error

### Data Collection & Analysis Methods

The data collection is an important part of the research process as without the

data collection, no research study is possible to conduct (Goode & Hatt, 1952). In this regard, two type of data is



mostly used in social sciences likewise, secondary data and primary data. Thus, secondary data was collected from online sources while primary data was collected through questionnaire from existing research studies. Thus, the secondary data was analyzed through argumentations while primary data was analyzed by using diverse tools of statistics like correlation, regression, and mediation. It is an accredited fact that without analyzing the data, the researcher will not be able to present the outcomes (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

### **Questionnaire Design and Measurement**

The questionnaire design is also the most important phase of the research studies where the researchers are required to select the best tool to collect

the primary data from the respondent of the study (Hair, Money, Samuel & Page, 2007). The measurement of variables is also an important part of the research study where the research is required to propose a suitable scale for measuring the research variables (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). Therefore, the questionnaires were adapted from the existing research studies likewise, job insecurity scale was adapted from (Vander, Witte & Nele, 2014), the scale of (Organ & Paine, 1999) was adapted for job performance and the work engagement scale was adapted from (Rich, 2006). These scales have been widely used in different contexts which has further validated through reliability statistics.

**Table 2 Reliability Statistics**

S.No	Research Variables	Items	Cronbach Alpha
1	Job Insecurity	10	.829
2	Work Engagement	10	.740
3	Job Performance	10	.879
4	Instrument	30	.899

### **Data Analysis & Discussions**

The results obtained from statistical procedures have been presented in this section about the relationships among the research variables. The assumptions

were created about the possible relationships about the research variables which were analyzed to obtain the desired information.

**Table 3 Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Job Insecurity	318	2.00	6.60	2.9475	.74865
Work Engagement	318	3.27	6.91	5.9334	.61196
Job Performance	318	3.10	5.10	4.3384	.49090
Valid N (listwise)	318				

The description of research variables in an important part of research process which helps in describing research variables over different dimensions which further helps in describing the relationships among research variables. The descriptive statistics offers the information about the total sample-size, the responses rate of respondents about

the research statements used in measuring variables (minimum and maximum), their mean and standard deviation. These information have been obtained by using SPSS by applying the descriptive statistics for describing the research variables.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The Correlation among Research Variables

**Table 4 Correlation Analysis**

		Job Insecurity	Work Engagement
Job Insecurity	Pearson Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N		
Work Engagement	Pearson Correlation	-.357**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	318	
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	-.411	.536**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	318	318

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation procedure offered significant information in deciding the association among the research variables (job insecurity, work engagement & job performance). The results of H<sub>1b</sub>: through correlation shows job insecurity is significantly and negatively associated with the work engagement (r = -.357 and p = .000), H<sub>1a</sub>: job insecurity is negatively and significantly associated with job performance (r = -.411 & p = .000) while work engagement is positively and significantly correlated with job performance. The correlation provides

significant data about relationships among variables in non-governmental context and thus H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> are accepted. Different studies in different contexts provide different results which are similar to some extent with the results of current study (Bosman, et al., 2005; Feng et al., 2008; Huang, et al., 2013; Alessandri, et al., 2015; Hu, et al., 2017; Kim, Han & Park, 2019). Therefore, results are significantly compared to make clear current study position in existing database of the knowledge.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** The Mediation Process (Work Engagement as Mediator)

**Table 5 Regression (Model Summary) (Path-a)**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.475 <sup>a</sup>	.226	.223	.53932

**Table 6 Regression (ANOVA) (Path-a)**

Model		Sum Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	26.799	1	26.799	92.135	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	91.914	316	.291		
	Total	118.713	317			

**Table 7 Regression (Coefficients) (Path-a)**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		$\beta$	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.078	.123		57.530	.000
	Job Insecurity	-.388	.040	-.475	-9.599	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Job Insecurity

b. Dependent Variable: Work Engagement

**Table 8 Regression (Model Summary) (path b, c &  $\hat{c}$ )**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	RSEE	Change Statistics				
					R <sup>2</sup>	F	df1	df2	Sig. F
					Change	Change			Change
1	.435 <sup>a</sup>	.411	.412	.49137	.001	.392	1	316	.000
2	.533 <sup>b</sup>	.588	.583	.44380	.005	72.37	1	315	.000

**Table 9 Regression (ANOVA) (path b, c &  $\hat{c}$ )**

Model		Sum Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.295	1	.295	.392	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	76.297	316	.241		
	Total	76.392	317			
2	Regression	14.349	2	7.174	36.425	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	62.043	315	.197		
	Total	76.392	317			

**Table 10 Regression (Coefficients) (path b, c &  $\hat{c}$ )**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		$\beta$	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.270	.112		8.096	.000
	Job Insecurity	.323	.337	.335	.626	.000
2	(Constant)	1.483	.343		4.324	.000
	Job Insecurity	.176	.038	.268	4.652	.000
	Work Engagement	.394	.046	.491	8.507	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Job Insecurity, Work Engagement

b. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

The hypothesis about mediating role of work engagement was examined through regression by using the steps recommended by Baren & Kenny (1986). The first step (path-a) of the mediation (tables 5, 6 & 7) shows 27% change in the work engagement due to job insecurity thereby showing the significant impact ( $\beta = -.388$  &  $p = .000$ ). The remaining three steps provide significant information in deciding mediation (tables 8, 9 & 10). It provides two models of regression conclude mediation procedure likewise in first mediation shows the direct effect by showing 41% change in the job performance due to the job insecurity with significant impact ( $\beta = .323$  &  $p = .000$ ). The second model shows 59% variance in job performance due to job insecurity and work engagement with significant effect ( $\beta = .394$  &  $p = .000$ ). As the Beta has been reduced in direct relationship from (.323) to (.176) while p-values remained significant therefore, work engagement partially mediated the relationship between job insecurity and the job performance. The results were validated through existing research studies which are similar to some extent based upon the nature and context of the study (Thomas & Konig, 2010; Huang, et al., 2013; Wang, et al., 2014; Wang, et al., 2015; Woocheol, 2017; Kim, et al., 2019). Thus, results have been validated through the existing studies.

## **Conclusion**

The job insecurity and job performance have been widely researched in different contexts with diverse outcomes. Keeping in view the existing trends, this study also explored the relationships between the above-mentioned variables in the non- governmental context with additional parameter of examining the mediating role of work engagement. The results of the study confirmed again the significant but negative association between job insecurity and job performance as the performance is get effected when the employees feel unsecure at the workplace. The negative and significant relationship is also evident job insecurity and work engagement as the employees who feels insecurity are little engaged in their assigned tasks. However, positive and significant relationship is evident between work engagement and job performance as the engaged employees are more concerned about their assigned responsibilities. Similarly, the work engagement significantly mediated the relationship between the job insecurity and job performance through partial mediation. The main theme behind is when employees feel insecurity in their professional affiliation then they have to lose their job potential which can be recovered through involvement and participation to make their position strong in the organizational setup.

Therefore, the present study chased the research hypotheses significantly by reaching the conclusion systematically in order to extract some recommendations.

### **Recommendations**

The job insecurity is a dilemma for the organizations as it not only affects working format of the organizations but also affect the employees from different emotional parameters. Therefore, organizations are required to offer secured positions to their workforces to attain the desired positions in the competitive environment.

The work engagement is important for the organizations as it inspires the workforces to show their active involvement and participation in the organizational activities. Thus, organizations need to develop the strategies to make the employees engaged in their assigned tasks and responsibilities to attain better outcomes.

The job performance is vital phenomenon as it is directly related with the survival and development of the concerned organizations. Therefore, the organizations are required to take suitable measures to improve performance of employees to ensure the strong strategic position in contemporary competitive scenario.

The future researchers are thus required to add some moderators by conducting

their studies in different organizations (other than non-governmental organizations) to highlight the commonalities and differences that exists in public and private sector to offer better insight about the research variables under considerations.

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