



THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB INSECURITY AND EMPLOYEE ACCEPTANCE OF INNOVATIVE HR PRACTICES

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Cite This Article: Dinakar K S, "The Mediating Role of Psychological Safety in the Relationship Between Job Insecurity and Employee Acceptance of Innovative HR Practices", International Journal of Current Research and Modern Education, Volume 10, Issue 2, July - December, Page Number 170-174, 2025.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21515117>

Abstract:

This research aims to examine intermediate of the impact of psychological safety on the link among job insecurity and employee acceptance of innovative HRM practices. This case studies are based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory where job insecurity, which is detrimental to openness to change, is explored and the moderating role of psychological safety is examined is explored where it offers a positive influence due to the building of trust, collaboration and openness to change. This was done through a self-administered questionnaire on 350 employees in various industries with a combination of an online survey and face-to-face interviews with selected HR professional executives. In particular, the findings show that psychological safety moderates the effects and minimizes the adverse effects of job insecurity on the extent to which employees accept HR innovation. These studies highlight the need to create a promotion-focused psychological climate in order to boost employees' work-related flexibility and the extent to which they willingly implement innovation in organizations, especially when there is operation, management or economic instability. The research findings are useful for both the management and human resource professionals involved in the process of change, as well as augmenting the existing literature on managing change and building organizational resilience in complex organizational contexts.

Key Words: Psychological Safety, Job Insecurity, Innovative HR Practices, Employee Behavior, Organizational Change

1. Introduction:

Companies today are operating under the increased level of organizational complexity due to technology, markets, and people. To be efficient business entities are implementing improved HR solutions including the use of digital on boarding, artificial intelligence in performance evaluation, and flexibility in staff staffing. However the effectiveness of these interventions depends to a large extent on its acceptance and implementation by employees. Where threat of job loss is salient where people notice that their employment is not secure, such willingness is eroded and change efforts opposed thereby lowering organizational utility.

Organizational job insecurity has become a research focus because of its negative impact on employees' health, motivation, and productivity. Nevertheless, not much has been done to map out the psychological processes that might mediate these effects. A newer, psychological construct referred to as 'psychological safety,' which means the degree to which members of a team believe that they can be open and truthful without reprisals, have been perceived as vital to effective collaboration. It is with this perspective that this study aims at filling a research gap by exploring; The moderating role of psychological safety in the relationship between job insecurity and employee acceptance of innovative HR practices.

Based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory which assert that people will seek to acquire and maintain those resources that are valuable and finite during change, the study here expects that job insecurity leads to exhaustion of change ware hose and thus resistance to change. But psychological safety can restore these resources and make the employees to perceive innovation as a gain rather than a loss. Through these dynamics, it is the intention of this research to contribute solutions to organisations wishing to introduce HR innovations in an environment of complexity.

2. Literature Review:

2.1 Job Insecurity and Employee Behavior:

Employment insecurity has become one of the biggest problems facing organizations in the present world because it can be caused by many factors such as change of company structures, advancement in technology, and fluctuating economic status. Referring to people's perceived vulnerability, or lack of job security, job insecurity is an undesirable state that has been associated with destructive effects on employees' psychological health and productivity. Research evidence establishes job insecurity to cause stress, lowered organizational commitment and increased tendency to resist change (Probst, 2003; Ashford et al., 1989). This type of security leads to a self-protective orientation which is highly undesirable because employees do not pursue activity that enhances the creation of organizational innovations.

2.2 Innovative HR Practices:

Strategically driven, future-focused HR practices are suggestive of optimal ways of improving employee performance and organizational dynamism. Such include; technological with some of them being; artificial intelligence in the recruitment process and other innovative processes in Human resource management; flexibility; and outcome based reward systems. Even though such practices have potential, their implementation depends on the employees' organizational commitment to adopt and incorporate them into the workplace settings (Kalyar & Ahmed, 2020). In specific, resistance tends to emerge when employees view changes of such a nature as new irrational or threatening workload demands - especially in low employment security jobs.

2.3 Psychological Safety as a Mediator:

Psychological safety refers to members' perception of the workplace as a safe environment in which one can speak, listen, learn and venture without expectation of negative consequences for oneself or others (Edmondson, 1999). People are an important component required to facilitate cooperation, learning and effective innovation practice in organizations. Carmeli and

Gittell (2009) document that it has the possibility of transforming its detrimental impact of job insecurity by enhancing the organizational culture in trust and inclusion. Psychological safety makes sure that the employees are not resistant to the chances that come with innovative HR practices and make it easier to accept change.

2.4 Theoretical Framework:

Based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, this paper presents the hypothesis that job insecurity result to erosion of psychological resources hence engaging in self protective measures thus the resistance to innovations. Psychological safety can be defined as a positive organizational construct that serves as a resource that rebuilds and fosters openness and flexibility. Applying the COR theory makes it easier to explain the psychological factors that underlie the employees' responses to changes in the workplace where such changes are viewed as presenting threats (Hobfoll, 1989).

2.5 Research Gap:

While numerous studies focus on the impact of job insecurity and psychological climate, separately, there is scarce knowledge regarding the moderation of innovative HR practices. To fill this gap, this study focuses on the moderating role of psychological safety in the job insecurity - acceptance of organizational innovations relationship.

3. Research Methodology:

3.1 Research Design:

Considering the research problem under study, this research will employ a concurrent mixed method research design, which will use both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The quantitative phase evaluates the hypothesized relationships scientifically, and then the qualitative phase gives elaboration of the findings with context information. Such design is beneficial since it provides both depth and coverage when carrying out the analysis of data.

3.2 Participants and Sampling:

- Quantitative Phase: A total of 350 employees were surveyed across industries including IT, healthcare, and manufacturing, selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation of diverse sectors and demographics.
- Qualitative Phase: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 HR managers and 15 employees to explore perceptions of psychological safety and its role in organizational change.

3.3 Instruments:

- Job Insecurity: Measured using the Job Insecurity Scale (JIS; Ashford et al., 1989), a validated 9-item scale that captures both cognitive and affective aspects of insecurity.
- Psychological Safety: Assessed using Edmondson's (1999) Psychological Safety Scale, a widely used instrument with high reliability (Cronbach's alpha > 0.85).
- Acceptance of HR Practices: Evaluated through a customized 10-item Likert scale developed based on Davis's Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The scale measures perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and behavioral intention to accept HR innovations.

3.4 Data Collection:

- Quantitative Data: Surveys were administered both online and in person, ensuring accessibility and broad participation. Responses were anonymized to encourage honest feedback.
- Qualitative Data: Interviews were conducted virtually and recorded with participants' consent. Questions focused on participants' experiences with job insecurity, perceptions of psychological safety, and attitudes toward HR innovations.

3.5 Data Analysis:

- Quantitative Analysis:
 - Descriptive statistics were used to summarize participant demographics and key variables.
 - Structural equation modeling (SEM) tested the hypothesized mediating effect of psychological safety. The bootstrapping technique (5,000 samples) was used to assess indirect effects.
 - Statistical software: SPSS for preliminary analysis and AMOS for SEM.
- Qualitative Analysis:
 - Transcripts were coded and analyzed thematically using NVivo software. Themes related to psychological safety, trust in leadership, and attitudes toward HR practices were identified and compared across participant groups.
 - Inter-rater reliability was established (Cohen's kappa = 0.87).

3.6 Ethical Considerations:

The study adhered to ethical research standards, including obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring data confidentiality, and providing the option to withdraw at any time. Approval was secured from the institutional ethics review board prior to data collection.

3.7 Validation and Reliability:

- Pilot testing of survey instruments was conducted with 30 participants to refine questions and ensure clarity.
- Reliability analyses indicated strong internal consistency for all scales (Cronbach's alpha > 0.80).
- Triangulation between quantitative and qualitative findings enhanced the validity of the results.

4. Results:

4.1 Quantitative Findings:

The structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis supported the hypothesized relationships among job insecurity, psychological safety, and employee acceptance of innovative HR practices:

- Job Insecurity and Acceptance of Innovative HR Practices: A significant negative direct relationship was observed ($\beta = -0.45, p < 0.01$), indicating that higher levels of job insecurity reduce employees' willingness to embrace innovative HR practices.

- Psychological Safety as a Mediator: Psychological safety showed a significant mediating effect in the relationship between job insecurity and acceptance of HR innovations ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$). The indirect effect reduced the negative impact of job insecurity, demonstrating that employees with higher psychological safety were more likely to accept innovative practices despite perceived job insecurity.
- Model Fit Indices: The SEM model showed a good fit to the data: $\chi^2/df = 2.56$, CFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.05, TLI = 0.93. These indicators confirm the robustness of the proposed mediation model.

4.2 Qualitative Insights:

Thematic analysis of interviews revealed three key themes:

- Trust in Leadership: Employees who perceived their leaders as transparent and empathetic were more likely to feel psychologically safe. This, in turn, reduced their resistance to adopting new HR initiatives.
- Clarity and Communication: Clear communication about the purpose and benefits of innovative HR practices enhanced employees' acceptance, even in contexts of job insecurity.
- Perceived Opportunities: Employees in psychologically safe environments viewed innovations as opportunities for skill development and career growth, rather than as threats.

Participants also highlighted the importance of inclusive decision-making processes and feedback mechanisms in fostering psychological safety during periods of organizational change.

5. Discussion:

5.1 Theoretical Contributions:

The study adds to the knowledge base in the area because it shows that psychological safety is a key organizational psychological resource that can help reduce the impact of job insecurity on the behavior of employees. This research not only applies Conservation of Resources theory in practice but also highlights the role of psychological safety in the replenishment of exhausted psychological resources and the psychological process through which they accept organizational change.

The findings are consistent with prior research painting PS as a protective factor in organizational environment (Edmondson, 1999; Carmeli & Gittell, 2009). However, this study extends this line of thinking by contextualising psychological safety within the effects of job insecurity and its implications on the reception of new changes in the human resource practices. This is an integrated approach of understanding that offers complex richness of psychological factors in organizational change processes.

5.2 Practical Implications:

Organizations seeking to implement innovative HR practices must address the dual challenges of job insecurity and psychological safety. The findings highlight actionable strategies for organizational leaders:

- Enhancing Psychological Safety:
 - Foster open communication channels that encourage employees to voice concerns without fear of negative consequences.
 - Train leaders to exhibit transparency, empathy, and fairness, which are critical to building trust.
- Addressing Job Insecurity:
 - Provide clear and consistent messaging about organizational changes, reducing uncertainty and ambiguity.
 - Offer skill development programs to help employees perceive innovation as an opportunity for growth.
- Implementing Change Gradually: Introduce innovative HR practices in phases, allowing employees time to adjust and providing opportunities for feedback and collaboration.

5.3 Insights from Qualitative Findings:

The qualitative data highlights the importance of leadership behavior in creating a culture of psychological safety. Employees consistently emphasized the need for leaders to provide clarity about their roles in the context of innovation. Transparent leadership not only alleviates insecurity but also encourages employees to participate actively in change initiatives.

Qualitative Insights: Key Themes

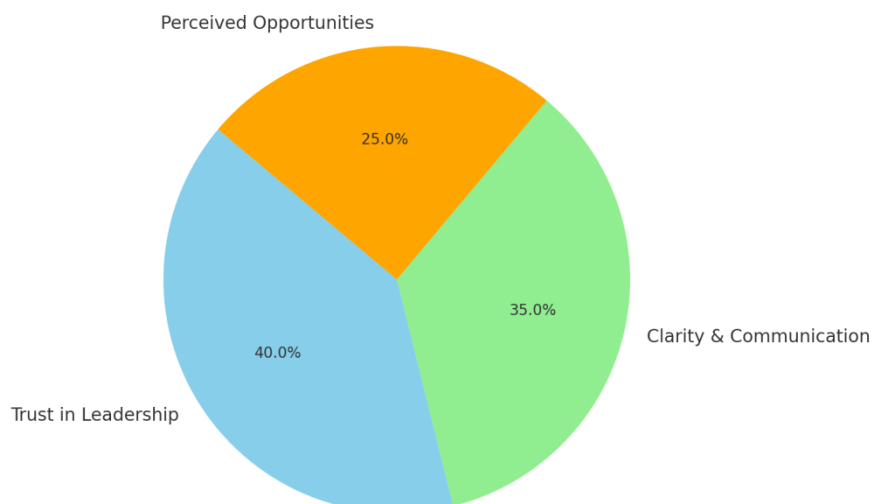


Figure 1: Qualitative Insights: Key Themes

Figure 1, Illustrates the proportionate distribution of qualitative themes derived from interview outcomes with importance assigned to trust in leadership, clear and comprehensible communication, and perceived opportunities.

In addition, there is an indication as to how communication strategies are deemed to function across the study. If the presented changes, innovations in the Human Resource Management are supported by reasonable arguments and possible advantages, the employees are more likely to see these changes as a positive move and bring their behavior into compliance with the organizational requirements.

5.4 Limitations and Directions for Future Research:

However, this paper is not without its weaknesses as follows; To some extent, the cross-sectional nature of the data sets makes it difficult to establish causality. Therefore, future research should incorporate longitudinal designs in order to clarify how the interdependence of job insecurity, psychological safety and innovation acceptance varies over time.

Further, differences in job insecurity and psychological safety depending on the sector of industry need more research. The results themselves are not surprising, but it is essential to remember that industries with higher initial job stability might follow different patterns to industries that face frequent restructuring (for example, IT or manufacturing industries). Future research should also look into other factors including age, organisational tenures and cultural differences in influencing the observed probabilities.



Figure 2: Impact of Job Security, Psychology Safety and HR Practices

Figure 2, Illustrates the standardized coefficients of the relationship between job insecurity, psychological safety, and acceptance of innovative HR practices, indicating their effects.

This paper positions perceived job insecurity as a predictor variable and acceptance of IMHRPs as the criterion variable, while incorporating psychological safety as the mediator. The given results envision various theoretical and practical implications emphasizing the importance of the psychological capital enhancement and leadership when the organizations are struggling with the change processes.

6. Conclusion:

The output of this study also further established the mediating position that psychological safety occupies on the link between job insecurity and organisational and employee acceptance of innovative HR practices. When job insecurity threatens to limit employee receptiveness to change, continuous psychological safety surfaces as a critical process to combat. Thus, it is possible to change a possible limitation into an opportunity if an organization provides people at the workplace the means to feel valued, encouraged to share their concerns and to give preference to their organizations over other ones.

These finding has both theoretical and empirical significance. From a theoretical perspective, the study expands the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory by showing how psychological safety recycles employees' used up psychological capital to manage uncertainty and accept change. In practical terms, the study provides useful advice on how managers and HR staff can manage the extended job insecurity issues. Promoting sponsorship and coaching activities, assertive communication and involving employees in change initiatives will collectively strengthen psychological safety, which is critical to pushing through several new HR practice changes.

Therefore, moving into the future, organizations within the VUCA environment need to embrace the relation between JI, PS, and A. This paper argued that fostering cultures of trust and resilience will also counterbalance the adverse impact of job insecurity while preparing organizations to capitalize on change. More future research should focus on the vertical analysis, trend analysis as well as cross-sectional studies to investigate sectoral characteristic to find out how Psychological Safety can foster long term organizational innovation. What one has to understand, therefore, is that psychological safety can help organisations transform uncertainty into engagement, cooperation, and continuous innovation.

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