My Way or the High Way: A Mixed Study of Role of Leader in Job Insecurity and Employee Recalcitrant Behavior in Determining Sustainability in Public and Private Universities of Lahore, Pakistan

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Article Information	Abstract
	The article scrutinizes the co-relation of job insecurity induced by employer with recalcitrant behavior of employees in presence of a leader as a mediating variable in public or private universities of Lahore, Pakistan. Job insecurity is increasingly recognized as a significant organizational challenge, influencing various aspects of employee behavior and well-being. This article explores the relationship between job insecurity, employee recalcitrant behavior, and the mediating role of leaders in mitigating or exacerbating these effects. The inquiry seeks to comprehend whether the job insecurity caused by the employer is related to the satisfaction or recalcitrant behavior in employees of an organization due to the presence of a powerful employee leader. The constructs are studied through mixed methodology in a cross-sectional comparative setting by administering 355 online questionnaires and 30 interviews of the faculty. The results indicate that job insecurity induced by employer with leader playing the mediating role and the related perceptions lead to recalcitrant behavior in the university faculty. This has significant insights for the employee protest, resistance and unrest in the universities as well as organizational stability, persona, sustainability and productivity. The article also offers theoretical, practical and policy implications which can enhance the employee and organizational welfare, productivity and sustainability.

Authors' Note: *This research was conducted to find the association between the job insecurity and the employee recalcitrant behavior with leader as a mediating variable in universities to contribute to the field of governance and management. This mixed study offers interesting comparative results by examining the phenomenon in the public and private spheres.*

Introduction

The investigation aims to analyze a significant feature relating to the uncertainty in job that leads to recalcitrant attitude in the workforce of any public or private organization. When the management-led job insecurity curbs the self-interests of the employees, dissatisfaction is

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developed that often ruins their performance. It may happen, in such a context, that the presence of a union or employee's leader assembles the employees under one banner and direct the reaction towards the management. The employee's response could assume the appearance of defiance, mutinous behavior, recalcitrance, and non-compliance towards the management thus has serious repercussions for the organizational sustainability.

There are three variables; job insecurity is the independent variable involving the legal ways through which the management spreads unrest among the employees to make them shaky during their job term. For instance, the contract may confer on the employers the right to lay employees off at their discretion, however; the employees may react sternly when such a decision is expected or implemented. Theoretically, the disobedience ought to be concealed or else it would be illegitimate in itself according to the terms of the contract. The role of a powerful leader can be a mediating variable. The leader can play a vital part through the use of tactics, flair or authority. The employee leader has the knack of representing his colleagues as well as safeguarding their rights and interests. This variable is expected to enhance the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Employee recalcitrant behavior is the dependent variable and the probable outcome of the above-mentioned variables. The main interest of the paper is to examine the existence and not the success of the mutinous behavior. The employees' recalcitrance is demonstrated through dissatisfaction, protests, strikes and legal actions against the management. These measures by the employees aim to destabilize the management. Despite extensive research on the impact of job insecurity on employee behavior, problem remain in understanding how job insecurity specifically influences recalcitrant behaviors among employees. Recalcitrant behaviors, characterized by resistance, non-compliance, and disengagement, pose significant challenges to organizational effectiveness and employee well-being. This study aims to investigate the nuanced relationship between perceived job insecurity and various forms of recalcitrant behaviors in the workplace, exploring potential moderators and mediators that may influence this relationship. By addressing these gaps, the research seeks to provide actionable insights for organizational leaders and human resource practitioners to mitigate the detrimental effects of job insecurity on employee behavior and foster a more supportive and productive work environment.

This study aims; to examine the relationship between job insecurity and employee recalcitrant behaviors, to assess the mediating role of leadership in the relationship between job insecurity and recalcitrant behaviors, to explore the mediating mechanisms through which leaders influence the relationship between job insecurity and recalcitrant behaviors, to investigate the impact of job insecurity on various types of recalcitrant behaviors (e.g., absenteeism, sabotage) among employees, and to propose practical recommendations for organizational leaders to mitigate the negative effects of job insecurity on employee behaviors and improve sustainability

Theoretical Framework

The psychological contract theory states that there are promises between the employee and the employer at the very onset of employment relation. The psychological contract involves various commitments regarding financial compensations, career opportunities, job security and work life balance. As the employment relation progresses, a constant parallel is drawn between the promises and their real fulfillment. If the employees perceive actual fulfillment of the contract, they respond positively, however, when they perceive violation of the psychological contract, they retaliate with negative behavior such as anger, disobedience and misbehavior (Topa, 2022). Further, Social Exchange Theory explains that employees reciprocate perceived organizational support

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and leadership behavior by demonstrating less recalcitrant behaviors when supported during periods of job insecurity (Blau, 2007). Also, Job Demands-Resources Model states that the lack of job demand reduces resources available to employees, potentially leading to recalcitrant behaviors unless compensated by leadership resources (Tummers & Bakker, 2021; Droogenbroeck; 2016). The employee recalcitrant behavior due to job insecurity is triggered by the role of leader who can either exacerbate or mitigate employee reactions (Amghar, 2022).

Literature Review

Job Insecurity:

Job insecurity is a pervasive concern in contemporary workplaces, significantly impacting employees' attitudes and behaviors. Defined as the perceived threat of involuntary job loss, job insecurity has been linked to various negative outcomes, including reduced job satisfaction, diminished organizational commitment, and increased stress levels among employees (De Cuyper et al., 2016). One particularly concerning consequence of job insecurity is its association with employee recalcitrant behavior, which encompasses behaviors such as absenteeism, tardiness, decreased productivity, and even sabotage (Pindek et al., 2016).

Job insecurity is multifaceted, encompassing both objective and subjective dimensions. While objective measures such as layoff rates and organizational restructuring provide tangible indicators, subjective perceptions of job insecurity often have a more significant impact on employee behavior. These subjective perceptions are influenced by factors such as economic conditions, organizational communication, and individual predispositions (Cheng & Chan, 2008). The insecurity in the job affects the motivation and satisfaction in employees leading to the expression of disobedience within the organization. Dekker (2005) states regarding job insecurity that it engenders displeasure and unrest in the employees. They remain perturbed while performing their daily tasks since their constant preoccupation surrounds the possibility of being jobless. Dekker's considered job uncertainty as the source of producing the most terrible results for organizations among all the possible mishaps that could happen to employees. It happens because the workforce feels estranged in the organization when it does not offer a secure job and often the employer appears to be a hostile entity. The view is held up by Staufenbiel (2010) who finds job insecurity to be the cause of lack of employee's loyalty towards the firm. The uncertain status of the job becomes the reason for declining employee performance.

Employee Recalcitrant Behavior:

Recalcitrant behavior encompasses a range of negative workplace behaviors, including reduced job performance, absenteeism, turnover intentions, and counterproductive work behaviors. These behaviors are often seen as coping mechanisms or retaliatory responses to perceived threats or stressors in the work environment, such as job insecurity. Research indicates a strong connection between job insecurity and recalcitrant behavior. Employees experiencing heightened levels of job insecurity often exhibit behaviors aimed at safeguarding their perceived interests or retaliating against perceived threats from the organization (Sverke et al., 2002; Probst, 2005). These behaviors can also manifest as passive resistance, such as reduced effort or withdrawal, or active forms like absenteeism and workplace deviance (Damawan et.al., 2020).

Job insecurity also leads to the deterioration of employees' motivation – a vital need to ensure the organization's success. The insecure environment bears suspicion in the employees regarding all the company's operations as they may find it contrary to their interest and thus, they start losing focus in their performance of their duties. Also, the job insecurity causes the employee to plan for resigning from the job. Burchell (2005) add a positive aspect to the job insecurity as it can keep an indolent employee on toes. In this context, job insecurity proves to be a valid strategy to improve efficiency of the employees. However, it enhances the fear among the employees and causes dissatisfaction among them.

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The role of leadership in mitigating or exacerbating the effects of job insecurity and subsequent recalcitrant behaviors is crucial. Effective leadership practices, characterized by supportive communication, transparency, and fairness, can buffer the negative impact of job insecurity. Conversely, poor leadership characterized by autocratic decision-making, lack of communication, and perceived unfairness can amplify feelings of insecurity among employees, leading to increased recalcitrant behaviors (De Witte et al., 2016).

Leadership Styles and Their Influence:

Studies have shown that transformational and participative leadership styles are particularly effective in mitigating the adverse effects of job insecurity. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate employees by fostering a sense of trust, vision, and support, which can reduce uncertainty and enhance job satisfaction even in uncertain times. Participative leaders involve employees in decision-making processes, providing them with a sense of control and empowerment that counteracts feelings of insecurity (De Witte et al., 2016).

Conversely, laissez-faire and authoritarian leadership styles have been linked to increased job insecurity and subsequent recalcitrant behaviors. Laissez-faire leaders provide little guidance or support, exacerbating employees' feelings of uncertainty and disengagement. Authoritarian leaders impose strict control and limit employees' autonomy, which can create a climate of fear and undermine trust, thereby fostering recalcitrant behaviors as employees react defensively to perceived threats (De Witte et al., 2016).

In addition to it, Murphy & Coye (2013) explain that the employees' leaders can play a crucial role to direct, coordinate and organize employees' efforts. The leader through the exercise of referent power instills a mutinous reaction towards the organization's management. The employees commence noncompliance against the employer especially when their stakes are at risk. The study by Quaglieri (1988) talks about the individuals who act upon the appeals made by the workforce and assume the leadership roles to safeguard their fellows' interests from the management's infringement. Berland & Jessop (1993) highlight the union leader's contribution to arrest the authoritarian power of the employers.

Moreover, the employees display discontent in the face of the hindrances put forward by the employers to reclaim their due rights; the encroachment of which affects their productivity (Staniland, 2007). In this regard, Murphy & Coye (2013) explained this con-complying mind-set as the upward defiance against the management. The rationale of recalcitrance is to focus upon the conflict between the management and the employees. The behavior is deliberate and outside the structure of rules and is taken as contrary to organizational citizenship behavior (O'Brien & Allen, 2008). This recalcitrant attitude is common in the organizations and is the consequence of the discord between management and employees.

The mutinous behavior is a well-thought-out struggle due to the selfish policy of the management as illustrated by Murphy & Coye (2013). The employees' defiance accumulates momentum even in the face of stern reaction from the management when the efforts are synchronized by a powerful employees' leader. The disobedience empowers workforce to challenge the authority of the executives in the organization. The word mutiny is employed to define the rebellious stance of the employees. The notion is linked to disobedience and is inquired in this article as 'recalcitrance' in the organizations.

Current Research Trends:

Recent studies continue to explore nuanced aspects of job insecurity, recalcitrant behavior, and leadership. For example, research examines the moderating role of organizational justice in the relationship between job insecurity and employee behaviors,

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highlighting the importance of fair treatment in mitigating negative outcomes. Similarly, studies investigate the role of communication strategies in buffering the impact of job insecurity, suggesting that open and transparent communication from leaders can reduce uncertainty and enhance employee resilience (Shoss et. al., 2023). Therefore, being less studied, the role of leader in determining employees' recalcitrant behavior due to job insecurity is gauged in the current study.

Research Model

Independent Variable = Job insecurity, Mediating Variable = Powerful Employees' leader, Dependent Variable = Employee recalcitrant behavior
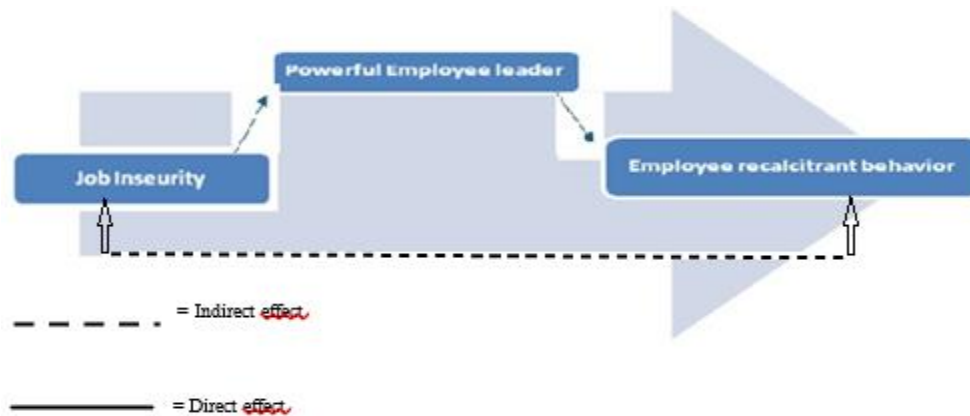

Figure no. 1 Role of Leader in Job Insecurity and Employee Recalcitrant Behavior

Mixed Methodology and sampling:

The research investigation used cross sectional research design with mixed methodology. This approach was employed as it could comprehensively investigate the complex interplay between job insecurity, employee's leader, and employee recalcitrant behavior. Mixed methods research is particularly apt in this context as it allows for the integration of qualitative and quantitative data to provide a more holistic understanding of the phenomena under study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Quantitative Phase:

The quantitative phase of this research aimed to establish the prevalence, correlations and causal relations of the variables within the chosen diverse sample of organizations. A structured questionnaire was administered to a sample of 355 employees across various public and private universities in Lahore, Pakistan. The quantitative survey had two segments; the first section gathered information on 04 demographic questions like the gender, age, employment status and sector. The second part related to the questions about job insecurity, leader's role and the employee recalcitrance. The online questionnaires were administered to follow this inquiry. Responses received to the total emails sent were 355 who were faculty members of five general public and private universities each making a total of ten universities. These universities represented the higher education institutions of Lahore, Pakistan. The five departments were randomly chosen for data collection from each university. . The questionnaire included validated scales and items to measure the variables. Participants rated their perceptions of job insecurity using 06 items adapted from scales developed by De Witte (2005). Employees' leader's role was assessed using 04 items from Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 1995), focusing on leadership behaviors. DV was measured through 04 items adapted from studies on organizational deviance

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and counterproductive work behaviors (Li et. al., 2022; Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Quantitative data analysis involved descriptive statistics, reliability and validity measures and SEM using Smart-PLS to examine the direct and mediated relationships between variables.

Qualitative Phase:

The qualitative phase complemented the quantitative findings by exploring the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors that influenced the relationships identified in the quantitative phase. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of employees identified through the quantitative phase, selected purposefully to ensure diversity in job roles, perceived levels of job insecurity, leader and recalcitrant behavior. Therefore, 5 lecturers from each of the departments were selected making a total of 30 interviews. The unit of analysis of this research was employees of the organizations. Questions focused on perceptions of job insecurity where participants were asked to describe situations or factors that contribute to feelings of job insecurity and how these perceptions influence their behaviors at work. Then, participants discussed their experiences with different leadership styles and how these styles affect their motivation, commitment, and propensity for recalcitrant behaviors. The participants reflected on instances where they or others engaged in behaviors perceived as recalcitrant and the reasons behind such actions including role of employees' leader. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques to identify recurring themes and patterns related to job insecurity, leadership, and recalcitrant behaviors. Integration of qualitative and quantitative findings was achieved through triangulation, wherein converging results from both methods provided a richer and more nuanced understanding of the research questions.

Research Questions:

Quantitative RQ#1: How does perceived job insecurity influence the incidence and intensity of employee recalcitrant behaviors in organizational settings?
Quantitative RQ#2: Does the job insecurity, induced by the employer, lead to employee recalcitrant behavior in presence of a powerful leader?
Quantitative RQ#3: To what extent do different leadership styles (e.g., transformational, transactional, laissez-faire) mediate the relationship between job insecurity and employee recalcitrant behavior?
Qualitative RQ#4: How and why does an employees' leader influence employee's behavior when job insecurity is induced by an employer?

Hypotheses:

Ho: Higher levels of perceived job insecurity will not positively correlate with increased incidences of employee recalcitrant behaviors, such as absenteeism, reduced effort, and sabotage.
H 1: Higher levels of perceived job insecurity will positively correlate with increased incidences of employee recalcitrant behaviors, such as absenteeism, reduced effort, and sabotage.
Ho: The presence of a leader has no effect upon the relationship between job insecurity and employee recalcitrant behavior.
H 2: In presence of a powerful (employees/ union) leader, job insecurity will lead to employee recalcitrant behavior.

Results And Discussion:

The findings of this study contribute to the understanding of the complex dynamics between job insecurity, employee recalcitrant behavior, and the role of leaders within

organizations. SPSS was used to conduct the descriptive analysis, reliability, validity and factor analysis. The following Table 1 presents the response rate of the questionnaire administered on the faculty of the public and private universities;

Table 1 Response Rate

Table 1: Responses Rate		
Activities	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Distributed questions	*384*	*100%*
Returned questions	*365*	*95 %*
Usable questions	*355*	*92 %*

The above given table displays that 384 questionnaires were circulated. Out of the total administered questionnaires, 365 were returned. This indicated a non-response from respondents, with a total response rate of 95% at the end. Among the received responses, 355 were usable as the questionnaires were either incomplete or not filled properly.

Table 2 below shows the demographic variables pertaining to the faculty including age, gender, sector and employment status, which are meaningful for the comprehension of employee behavior;

Table 2 Demographic Profile

Table 3: Demographic Profile			
Demographic	*Categories*	*N*	*%*
Gender	*Male*	*146*	*41.1*
	Female	*209*	*58.9*
Age	*21-25 years*	*152*	*42.8*
	26-30 years	*133*	*37.5*
	31-35 years	*52*	*14.6*
	Above 35 years	*18*	*5.1*
Employment Status	*Lecturer*	*172*	*48.5*
	Assistant	*126*	*35.5*
	Professor	*35*	*9.9*
	Associate Professor	*22*	*6.2*
	Professor		
Sector	*Private*	*265*	*74.6*
	Public	*90*	*25.4*

Table 3 below shows the reliability measures pertaining to the faculty;
Table 3 Internal Consistency Measures

Table 3: Factors Loading Factors Loading, Composite Reliability (rho a), Cronbach's Alpha and (AVE)						
Constructs	*Items*	*Factors Loading*	*Items Deleted*	*Cronbach's Alpha*	*Composite Reliability*	*Average Variance Extracted*
Job Insecurity	*JI1*	*0.803*	*0*	*0.843*	*0.843*	*0.641*
	JI2	*0.804*				
	JI3	*0.796*				
	JI4	*0.795*				

	JI5	0.779				
	JI6	0.729				
Employee Recalcitrant Behavior	ERB1	0.797	0	0.917	0.919	0.616
	ERB2	0.796				
	ERB3	0.834				
	ERB4	0.708				
Role of Leader	ROL1	0.797				
	ROL2	0.799				
	ROL3	0.786				
	ROL4	0.767				

Job Insecurity:

This construct of Job Insecurity has six items with factors loading indicating the strong relationship between construct and its items. There are high factor loadings for each item, ranging from 0.803 0.729 suggesting that the items are good indicators of job insecurity. The items were not deleted during analysis. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the questionnaire is 0.843, reflecting high internal consistency. The Composite Reliability (rho_a) is also 0.843, suggesting good reliability. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is 0.641 which is sufficiently above the threshold of 0.5 explaining acceptable convergent validity.

Employee Recalcitrant Behavior:

This construct has four items. Similar to job insecurity, the items possess relatively high factor loadings between 0.797 to 0.708. No items were deleted due to the absence of low factor loading. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is 0.917 which means there is high internal consistency. The Composite Reliability (rho a) is 0.919, indicating acceptable reliability. The AVE is 0.616 which is above the threshold of 0.5 reflecting an acceptable convergent validity.

Role of Leader:

This construct includes four questionnaire items with strong factor loadings, ranging from 0.797 to 0.767. No items required deletion for further statistical analysis. Table 4 below presents the discriminant validity of the constructs;

Table 4 Discriminant Validity

Constructs	**Job Insecurity**	**Employee Behavior**	**Recalcitrant**
Job Insecurity	0.777		
Employee Recalcitrant Behavior	0.664	0.645	
Role of Leader	0.514	0.748	

Job Insecurity and Employee Recalcitrant Behavior

The discriminant validity for the job insecurity questionnaire is 0.664, indicating the correlation coefficient between the variables of job insecurity and Employee Recalcitrant Behavior. The value is less than 0.9 which establish discriminant validity between these two constructs.

Job Insecurity and Role of Leader:

The value of discriminant validity is 0.514, suggesting the correlation coefficient between the job insecurity and the Role of Leader. The value is found to be less than 0.9 so there is significant discriminant validity between the items of these two variables.

Employee Recalcitrant Behavior and Role of Leader:

A meaningful correlation coefficient exists between the Employee Recalcitrant Behavior and the variable of Role of Leader as the value of discriminant validity is 0.748. Also, this value is below than 0.9, so, it suggests an acceptable discriminant validity between these two constructs.

Concisely, the above given Table demonstrates a strong discriminant validity between the items of the variables. This indicates that all constructs gauge a unique aspect of the variable being investigated, without significant redundancy or overlap.

Table 5 below presents the relation of the constructs;

Table 5 Causal Relation: Structural Equation Model

Relationship	*b (SE)*	C.I	P Values	Result
Job Insecurity -> Employee Recalcitrant Behavior	0.405(0.06)	0.302, 0.523	**0.000**	**Supported**

Table 5 demonstrates the findings for structural equation model, particularly suggesting the causal relationship between "Job Insecurity" and "Employee Recalcitrant Behavior".

This table explains the association being statistically studied between "Job Insecurity" to "Employee Recalcitrant Behavior". This has implications that the job insecurity has a significant impact on employee recalcitrant behavior.

b gives the estimated unstandardized coefficient value for causal relation with standard error (SE). In given table, the value of *b* is 0.405 with standard error value of 0.06.

Confidence Interval (C.I) at 5% indicates that there is 95% confidence that the value of coefficient will be within the specified range. The value of confidence interval ranges from 0.302 to 0.523.

p-value indicates the significance value associated with the coefficient estimate. Here, the p-value is 0.000 (p-value < 0.05) indicating statistical significance of the results.

The results signify that there a significant causal relationship exists between job insecurity making and employee recalcitrant behavior. The structural equation model analysis shows that higher level of job insecurity is associated with higher level of employee recalcitrant behavior. The hypothesis **H1** is proved that job insecurity leads to employee recalcitrant behaviors.

Table 6 below presents the indirect relation of the constructs;

Table 6 Indirect Relation

Relationship	*b (SE)*	C.I	P Values	Result
Job Insecurity -> Role of Leader -> Employee Recalcitrant Behavior	0.496(0.10)	0.369, 0.597	**0.000**	**Supported**

Table 6 displays the findings of indirect relationship between "job insecurity" and "Employee Recalcitrant Behavior" which is mediated by the variable entitled "Role of Leader."

The first column states the causal relationship of variables being studied. In this table, the job insecurity is examined as how it indirectly affects the dependent variable of "Employee

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Recalcitrant Behavior" through the mediation of "Role of Leader". The table shows that the effect of job insecurity on dependent variable is significantly mediated through the leader.

In this table, the coefficient is 0.496, along with the standard error of 0.10. The confidence interval ranges between 0.369 and 0.597 signifying 95% chance exists that the values will lie within this confidence interval. The p-value is 0.000, meaning that the result is significant.

The results show that there is a significant indirect relationship between job insecurity and employee recalcitrant behavior which is mediated by the perceived role of the leader. This also implies that the impact of job insecurity on employee behavior is influenced by the mediating variable.

The hypothesis **H2** is proved that job insecurity leads to employee recalcitrant behavior due to the leader's role.

Discussion

The discussion is structured around key themes emerging from the literature and the study's findings. The study investigates the influence of job insecurity in employers over mutinous or employee recalcitrant behavior, with leader's role as mediating variable. The study pertains to public and private universities through the representative sample from Lahore, Pakistan. This study has implications for organizational dynamics in educational context with particular focus on management, employee behavior and leadership. The findings highlight that the role of leaders in forming employee behavior is significant within the organizations.

The results satisfy the research objectives that i) the job insecurity is related to employees' recalcitrant behaviors, ii) employee's leader lay an important role, iii) mediation mechanisms are communication and cultural expressions, iv) expression of various types of recalcitrant behaviors, and v) proposing recommendations for employee and organizational welfare and sustainability.

Consistent with previous research, the quantitative study confirms a significant causal relationship between job insecurity and employee recalcitrant behaviors. The results satisfy the research questions that i) the job insecurity increases employees' recalcitrant behaviors which proves **H1**. Also, themes extracted from qualitative findings indicated that the employees experiencing heightened job insecurity are more likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) such as absenteeism, reduced effort, and even sabotage. This finding underscores the disruptive impact of perceived job instability on employee attitudes and behaviors, potentially compromising organizational performance and morale.

The study explains that the leader's behavior can mediate the relationship of job insecurity and employee recalcitrant behavior. This means that the employee leaders play an important role in minimizing or maximizing the effects of organizational behaviors on employees' response. The quantitative results satisfy the research questions that employee's leader lay an important role, leader mediates the relationship (which proves **H2)**, and significant themes are explored to understand the mediated relationship. The qualitative results also signify that many issues can be resolved through the positive role of leader between employees and management which can positively impact organizational sustainability. Organizations can benefit from leader's role which can tone down the frustrations and retaliation in employees and enhance the organizational commitment and stability by reducing conflicts and politics.

The study also highlights the critical role of leaders in influencing employee responses to job insecurity. Themes, generated through qualitative findings, such as transformational leadership behaviors, symbolized by intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, idealized influence, and individualized consideration, emerged as particularly effective in buffering the negative effects of job insecurity. Leaders who fostered a supportive climate, communicated openly about organizational changes, and provided emotional reassurance were associated with lower levels of recalcitrant behavior among employees.

Conversely, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles were less effective or even exacerbative in the context of job insecurity. Transactional leaders who focused predominantly on contingent rewards and punishments without addressing underlying concerns about job stability may inadvertently amplify employees' anxieties. Similarly, laissez-faire leaders who were perceived as disengaged or indifferent to employees' needs may fail to provide the necessary guidance and support during periods of uncertainty, thereby exacerbating recalcitrant behaviors.

Job insecurity in the presence of a union leader becomes a whole different experience. The role of the employee leader includes bringing the employees together and inspiring them to claim their rights for protection, security, and professional development. Employee disobedience increases as they understand they can achieve their objectives by acting together under one flag. They expect that they can attain job permanency and growth through legitimate role of leader who makes them heard before the management or other legal forums. In worse conditions, the employees even pursue cases to secure their employment through legal means. This phenomenon is more common in the public sector where there are mostly regular employments.

The qualitative interviews from the faculty members also confirmed that the *"job insecurity leads to frustration, lack of motivation and negative word of mouth. There are more chances that the employees would not listen to management's instructions when they have an opportunity. In cases, there is compulsion to obey they will perform half-heartedly, shirk responsibility, and exhibit poor performance."* They also highlighted that the organizations make use of leader in mediating the relation between employees and management. A participant stated that "*a leader can convey the insecurity of job to the decision makers and convince them to provide the same for better performance. They can also convey the repercussions of not providing the job security as it brings bad name and increase organizational disputes."*

The reaction of the employees is strong in the presence of employee leader who either pacifies or triggers reaction. If the employee knows that the employees have a union leader to stand for their cause, they would subdue or exact hard work from the subordinates. Where an employee would face the issue of job insecurity, the employee's leader would address the issue by highlighting and safeguarding their rights before the management. Even when the employers ignore the security of job for the employees, the presence of a leader may help things settle smoothly for them by staging resistance and organizing legal options against the management.

Thus, the leader renders a primary role in the professional representation of fellow colleagues as well as influencing the organizational behavioral patterns. The leader not only secures benefits for the workforce but also fights the case for them in case no solution arises in terms of employer employee relationship. So, organization sustainability is influenced by cooperation, commitment, politics or resistance of the workforce. Thus, this has serious implications for organizational life and behaviors.

Theoretical Implications:

By integrating theories of job insecurity and recalcitrant behavior, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of employee responses to organizational stressors. Job insecurity is shown not only to influence traditional outcomes such as turnover intentions and job satisfaction but also to precipitate recalcitrant behaviors aimed at self-protection or retaliation.

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This integration underscores the importance of considering a broader range of employee behaviors in response to perceived threats, thereby enriching theoretical models of Psychological Contract Theory and Social Exchange Theory that seek to explain organizational behavior in contexts of uncertainty. The study expands the psychological contract theory as propounded by Topa (2022) by explaining the role of leader in the employee perceived job insecurity and the management's behavior and response towards it. The psychological contract in the minds of employees is either safeguarded or broken by the leader's take on the subject. The article study is also useful from the managerial perspective and organizational behavior.

Implications for Organizational Policy, Practices and Sustainability:

The theoretical insights gleaned from this study have several strategic implications for organizational leaders and policymakers. Recognizing the detrimental impact of job insecurity on employee behavior underscores the need for proactive measures to enhance job security perceptions, improve communication, and foster supportive leadership climates. By investing in leadership development programs that cultivate transformational leadership qualities, organizations can empower leaders to reduce the negative results of job insecurity and enhance organizational resilience for improved sustainability.

Workplace Culture and Employee Engagement: Job insecurity can create a toxic work environment characterized by fear, mistrust, and reduced employee engagement. Employees who perceive their jobs as insecure may disengage from their work, leading to lower productivity, decreased job satisfaction, and increased turnover. This erosion of workplace culture can undermine organizational sustainability by weakening the organization's ability to retain talent and maintain a cohesive workforce.

Counterproductive Work Behaviors: Recalcitrant behaviors such as absenteeism, reduced effort, and sabotage directly impact organizational performance and efficiency. These behaviors can disrupt operations, strain team dynamics, and diminish overall productivity. Persistent recalcitrant behaviors can contribute to a negative cycle where organizational goals and sustainability are undermined, further exacerbating job insecurity and employee disengagement.

Leadership Impact on Climate and Trust: The role of leaders in mitigating the effects of job insecurity is crucial for maintaining organizational sustainability. Transformational leaders who foster a supportive climate characterized by open communication, transparency, and empathy can mitigate the negative impact of job insecurity. Such leadership practices build trust among employees, enhance organizational resilience, and contribute to a positive workplace culture that promotes sustainability.

Organizational Adaptability and Resilience: Organizations facing periods of economic uncertainty or technological disruption require adaptive and resilient employees. Job insecurity can challenge this adaptability by fostering a risk-averse culture where employees prioritize self-preservation over innovation and organizational growth. Effective leadership that addresses job insecurity can help cultivate a resilient workforce capable of navigating change and seizing opportunities for sustainable growth.

Long-Term Organizational Health: Sustainable organizations prioritize the well-being and development of their employees. Addressing job insecurity and mitigating recalcitrant behaviors contribute to long-term organizational health by fostering a positive cycle of trust, engagement, and performance. Employees who feel secure in their roles are more likely to invest in their work, contribute innovative ideas, and support the organization's strategic objectives.

Practical Implications:

From a practical standpoint, these findings suggest several strategies for organizational leaders to mitigate the detrimental effects of job insecurity:

Promoting Transformational Leadership: Organizations should strategically invest in promoting leadership development programs for cultivation of transformational leadership traits and qualities among the managers and employees. By fostering trust, inspiring commitment, and demonstrating empathy, transformational leaders can help alleviate employees' concerns about job insecurity and foster a more resilient workforce.

Enhancing Communication and Transparency: Transparent communication about organizational changes, strategic objectives, and performance expectations is crucial in reducing uncertainty among employees. Leaders should prioritize regular updates and opportunities for dialogue to address concerns and build trust.

Building a Supportive Organizational Culture: Providing a supportive work environment to make the employees feel respected, valued and empowered can enhance resilience in the face of job insecurity. Leaders should encourage teamwork, recognize employee contributions, and provide avenues for professional growth and development.

Monitoring and Addressing Recalcitrant Behavior: While preventive measures are essential, organizations should also implement strategies to detect and address recalcitrant behaviors effectively. This may include establishing clear policies, conducting regular performance evaluations, and offering constructive feedback to encourage positive workplace behaviors.

Limitations:

Despite the contributions of this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional nature of the research limits causal inference regarding the relationships observed. Future longitudinal studies could provide insights into the temporal dynamics of job insecurity and its impact on employee behaviors over time. Second, the study primarily focused on quantitative measures of job insecurity and recalcitrant behavior, and potential qualitative insights from employees' perspectives. Incorporating other qualitative methods could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying mechanisms and subjective experiences of job insecurity.

Future Directions:

In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of leadership in mitigating the adverse effects of job insecurity on employee recalcitrant behavior. By promoting research on transformational leadership qualities and supportive organizational climate, leaders can help cultivate a resilient workforce capable of navigating uncertainties and maintaining organizational effectiveness.

Conclusion:

The results and data support that the role of a strong employee leader influences employee behavior and response. Job insecurity engenders the feeling of vulnerability among the employees who often retaliate out of frustration. With their leader's help, the employees feel safe, expressive, and protected. Thus, the leader can convince them to respond in a cooperative way or disobey management's orders in an attempt to convince them for provision of job security. The presence of a leader can settle the conflicting issues or may trigger the legal battle. In some situations, leaders indulge in meaningful dialogues and represent the employee's case before the management. The study, thus, presents insights into the organizational politics, conflicts, and culture to better understand the behavior and patterns of leader, employees, and management in public and private universities. The results can be practically and theoretically valuable for organizational behavior, sustainability and leadership.

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