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**Professor MURUGESAN SELVAM, M.Com, MBA, Ph.D, D.Litt**  
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## **IMPACT OF JOB INSECURITY ON GENERAL STRAIN ISSUES OF EMPLOYEES THROUGH MODERATED MEDIATION ANALYSIS**

**Naveed Saif\***

*University of Lakki Marwat, Pakistan*  
dr.naveed.saif@hotmail.com

*and*

**Shadiullah Khan**

*Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan.*

### ***Abstract***

*The current study proposes to understand the dynamic relationship between employees' job insecurity and mental and health related issues, through the mediating role of perceived control. The relationship is based upon theoretical underpinning of Appraisal Theory. Results indicated that Perceived Control mediated the relationship between JIS and MHC while trust in management, did not buffer the strength of relationship between JIS and MHC. Similarly, Boundary less career orientation (BCO) also did not exercise moderating mediating effect. Future researcher may investigate the same model, with other strain related issues like burnout, emotional exhaustion and psychological distress, innovative work behavior and self rated performance, to understand the dynamic relationship between JIS and outcomes through moderated mediation analysis.*

**Keywords:** *Job Insecurity, PCB, Mental Health Issues, Physical Health Issues.*

**JEL Code :** *M10; D91; J08;*

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**\* Corresponding Author**

## 1. Introduction

Job Insecurity (JIS) has become one of the most important topics of research, among the scholars, academicians and behavioral scientists, across developing and developed countries in the globe. The concept of job insecurity has become a buzz word in the world of behavioral research. There are a number of JIS definitions, expressed by prominent researchers but still it is in an evolving stage. Many definitions of job insecurity (JIS) have been given since the last decade. **Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984)** investigated job insecurity in the following words: “powerless to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation” (p. 438). On the other hand, **Jacobson (1987)** explained JI as follows: “a discrepancy between the level of security a person experiences and the level she or he might prefer” (p.1431). Another definition of JI by **Davy, et al., 1997** is “One’s expectations about continuity in a job situation” (p.323). According to **Rosenblatt and Ruvio, (1996)**, “an overall concern about the future existence of the job” (p.587). **Heany, Isreal and House, (1994)** coined the term JIS in the following words, “an employee’s perception of a potential threat to continuity in his or her current job. In other words, the same objective situation can occur among workers, having various feelings of uncertainty (**Klandermans and Van Vuuren, 1999; Sverke et al, 2002**). Other researchers (**De witte, 2005; Sverke and Hellgren, 2002**) expressed their views that job insecurity is an involuntary phenomenon. It does not deal with workers who had selected risky job positions, such as work for temporary purpose. According to **Sverke et al, 2002**, insecurity of the future job position depends on job insecurity. The feeling of job insecurity includes the perceived opportunity to lose current job position (Cognitive dimension) and anxiety related to the threat itself

(Affective dimension) (**Borg and Elizur, 1992**). **Huang, et al., (2012)** described that on the basis of theoretical level, cognitive and affective dimensions can be differentiated from each other. Insecurity of the future job position expresses threat and miseries, associated with job loss. Significance of job for workers and powerlessness of an individual employee, to cope with the threat, will result in job insecurity consequences. However, these are not regarded as an element of job insecurity construct (**Mauno et al, 2001; Vander Elst, et al., 2011**). JIS is observed as one of major stressors among employees of developed and developing countries. JI could cause various consequences, that affect employees’ association with their job. More specifically, it reduces employees’ commitment (**Saif and Ullah, 2017; Vander Elst et al, 2014; Vander Elst et al., 2011**), satisfaction level (**Saif and Ullah, 2018**), mental health (**Vander Elst, et al., 2016**), physical health (**Charkabi, 2017**), enhances turnover (**Charkhabi., 2017**), emotional exhaustion (**Saif and Ullah., 2017**), burnout (**Jiang and Probst, 2016**).

## 2. Review of Literature

**Vander Elst et al (2016)** differentiated the outcomes of JIS, on the basis of strain related to job and coping reactions. Job strain variables consist of lower level of vigor as well as need for recovery along with mental and physical health related issues while coping reactions were expressed by less motivated and satisfied employees as well as lower level of self-rated performance. The same model was validated by **Saif and Ullah, 2017**, in Pakistan work context, while **Charkabi (2017)** validated it across three countries, from different continents, (Asia, Europe and America). **Vander Elst et al (2016)** model consists of Psychological

contract breach (PCB) and Perceived Control as mediating variables between JIS and Job strain issues (Mental and Physical health Issues). The mediating path is further moderated and mediated by boundary less career orientation, recommended by **Charkabi, 2017**. Trust in management buffering role, on the relationship between JIS and outcomes, is based upon the model of **Jiang, and Probst, 2019; Saifand Khan, 2017**. Both mediator perceived control and PCB mediated relationship between JIS and mental and physical health complaints, yielded results. **Saif, et al., (2018)** validated the role of trust in management as buffer between JIS and outcome variable. Similarly, BCO role of moderating and mediating between JIS and employees' commitment, turnover intention, and psychological work distress and work satisfaction, was also confirmed, among a sample in the Pakistan work context. Another study, conducted by **Rohde, et al., (2016)**, indicated that lack of financial resources, variation in income level and job insecurity, could lead to psychological illness, among the workers in an Australian work context. Similar results were quoted by **Dekker and Schaufeli, (1995)** that JIS enhanced burnout and led to psychological illness among employees. **Ferrie, et al., (2002)** indicated that JIS enhanced psychiatric morbidity, and other psychological issues, among British workers. **Nica, et al., (2016)** indicated that JIS enhanced employability concern, and well-being issues, that ultimately triggered the problem of mental health related issues.

### 3. Statement of the Problem

Job insecurity became one of the most important topics of research, among social scientists and behavioral researchers. In the Pakistan work context, the dynamic relationship between job insecurity and its consequences, is

yet to be explored. Most importantly, the mediating role of two important attributes and moderating and mediating effect of BCO are still a buzz word in the field of behavioral research. Hence the current research is an attempt to solve the problem of job insecurity and outcomes, through the moderating and mediating effect, in the work set up of insurance sector employees.

### 4. Need of the Study

This study will be helpful for the HR managers of insurance sector, to design their strategies, to reduce the feelings of employees' job insecurity, through providing basic health related benefits.

### 5. Objectives of the Study

The Objective of the study was to find out the relationship between job insecurity and employees, mental health and general health complaints, to investigate the multi meditational role of PCB and perceived control between job insecurity and outcome variables and to find out the moderating and mediating effect of BCO and moderating role of trust in management between JIS and employees' general as well as mental health complaints.

### 6 Hypotheses of the Study

**H-1:** PCB and perceived control mediate the relationship between JIS and health (Physical and Mental) related issues.

**H-2:** Boundary less Career Orientation could act as mediation between JIS and health (Physical and Mental) related issues.

**H-3:** Trust in management could act as moderator between JIS and health (Physical and Mental) related issues.

### 7. Methodology of the Study

The purpose of the current research study was to investigate the meditational effect of two

important mediators, namely, Perceived Control and PCB between job insecurity and health related issues. At the same time, the moderating effect of trust in management and moderating mediating role of BCO has also been examined in the current research study.

### 7.1. Sample Selection

For this purpose, data were collected from four different insurance sector of Pakistan work context. Data were collected from employees working in southern zone of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa. 200 participants were selected for the current study.

### 7.2. Sources of the Data

The current research study was exploratory as well as causal in nature because in the first stage, the association between JIS and dependent variable was examined, followed by hypothetical relationship through advanced statistical procedures. Data were collected through adopted constructs, from previous studies, to measure variables.

### 7.3. Period of the Study

Data were collected from participants, with their consent. While filling questionnaire, their personal information's anonymity was also assured. The data were collected between 2018-2019, for the current research study.

### 7.4. Tools Used in the Study

In the first stage, CFA was performed, to validate the model followed by SPSS package to correlate the relationship between variables. In the final stage, Hayes macros were applied to validate moderation, multiple mediation and moderated mediation analysis.

## 8. Data Analysis

The confirmatory factor analysis procedure was applied and the requisite information is

displayed in **Table-1**. Findings indicated that RMSEA and other values were in the prescribed range, as recommended by **Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007**; and **Hair et al., 2006**. The values, depicted in parenthesis, are Average Variance Extracted and all the values of correlation were less than AVE values. Hence the seven factor model was good fit for further analysis. The highest correlation was recorded between JIS and Psychological contract Breach ( $0.32^{**}$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), followed by MHC and Psychological contract Breach ( $0.28^{**}$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). The lowest correlation was recorded between trust in management and BCO. **Table-2** indicates that perceived control could explain 38% of variation ( $R^2 = 0.3876$ ;  $F = 118.523$ ) in employees' MHC, through JIS feelings in HEI's sector. Results also indicated that JIS was significantly associated with employees' perceived control ( $\beta = -0.1267$ ,  $P = 0.05$ ), through path (a), and employees' MHC from their job ( $\beta = 0.5507$ ;  $P = 0.000$ ) via path (c). The relationship between PC and PHC was significant but very weak ( $\beta = 0.841$ ;  $p = 0.0135 < .05$ ). The direct effect of employees' NFR, through JIS and PC, was also significant ( $\beta = 0.5613$ ;  $P = 0.000$ ). It further confirmed upper and lower level of CI ( $\{LLCI = 0.4875$ ;  $ULCI = 0.6351\}$ ), as zero did not cross both ULCI and LLCI index value. As path (b) was insignificant, it is proved that employees' PC partially mediated the relationship between JIS and employees' MHC. In the second part of **Table-3**, trust in management was investigated as moderating variable, between JIS and worker NFR. Results indicated that TRS could explain 18% variation ( $R^2 = 0.1808$ ;  $F = 23.321$ ) between predictor and employees' NFR, at 95% confidence interval ( $MSE = 0.8661$ ;  $P = 0.000$ ). The coefficient value of interaction effect ( $TRS * PHC$ ) indicated that 1% increase in JIS caused one percent decrease in employees'

PHC and their trust on management ( $\beta = -0.0152$ ;  $SE = -0.0412$ ;  $T = -0.9897$ ). As zero was between upper and lower level CI ( $\{LLCI = -0.1608$ ;  $ULCI = 0.0573\}$ ), it is proved that trust in management did not moderate the relationship between JIS and employees' PHC. Finally, the moderated mediation effect of BCO was investigated through **Preacher and Hayes, 2013** model number 15, via SPSS macros. Results from **Table-3** indicated that interaction effect of  $BCO*PCB$  could explain 18% ( $R^2 = 0.1839$ ) of variation in predictor and employees' PHC and the overall model was significant ( $F = 13.0778$ ;  $SE = -0.0554$ ;  $P < 0.005$ ). Similarly, the coefficient level of  $BCO*PCB$  indicated that 1% increase in job insecurity could lead to 5% decrease in PHC, which ultimately affected employees' perceived control ( $\beta = 0.0518$ ;  $T = -0.9341$ ;  $P = 0.3510 > 0.005$ ). In order to further validate the model, indirect effect of BCO was set at one standard deviation (SD), below and above the mean score. The indirect effect of BCO through PCB was insignificant ( $-0.0511$ ), at upper level of confidence interval ( $\{LLCI = -0.1290$ ;  $ULCI = 0.0336\}$ ). The lower level of confidence also was insignificant as CI level crossed zero ( $\{LLCI = -0.0677$ ;  $ULCI = 0.0649\}$ ). Hence **H-2: Boundary less Career Orientation act as Moderated Mediation between JIS and Health (Physical and Mental) related Issues**, was rejected. **Table-3** displays that perceived control could explain 17% of variation ( $R^2 = 0.1729$ ;  $F = 31.7646$ ) in employees' PHC, through JIS feelings in HEI's sector. Results also reveal that JIS was significantly associated with employees' perceived control ( $B = -0.1276$ ,  $P = 0.05$ ), through path (a), and employees' PHC from their job ( $B = 0.3575$ ;  $P = 0.000$ ) via path (c).

The relationship between PC and PHC was insignificant ( $B = 0.0061$ ;  $p = 0.8837 > 0.05$ ). The

direct effect of employees' NFR, through JIS and PC was significant ( $B = 0.3765$ ;  $P = 0.000$ ). Upper and lower level of CI were confirmed ( $\{LLCI = 0.2809$ ;  $ULCI = 0.4721\}$ ), as zero did not cross both ULCI and LLCI index value. As path (b) was insignificant, it is proved that employees' PC partially mediated the relationship between JIS and employees' PHC, but could not qualify the basic assumptions of **Barron and Kenny, 1986**. This leads to the rejection of **"H-1: PCB and Perceived control mediate the relationship between JIS and Health (Physical and Mental) related issues"**. In the second part of **Table-3**, trust in management was investigated as moderating variable, between JIS and worker NFR. Results depict that TRS could explain 18% of variation ( $R^2 = 0.1839$ ;  $F = 23.321$ ) between predictor and employees' NFR, at 95% confidence interval ( $MSE = 0.8661$ ;  $P = 0.000$ ). The coefficient value of interaction effect ( $TRS*PHC$ ) indicated that 1% increase in JIS caused (1%) decrease in employees' PHC and their trust on management ( $B = -0.0152$ ;  $SE = -0.0412$ ;  $T = -0.9897$ ), as zero was between upper & lower level CI ( $\{LLCI = -0.1608$ ;  $ULCI = 0.0658\}$ ). Hence **"H-3: Trust in Management act as Moderator between JIS and Health (Physical and Mental) related Issues"**, was rejected.

## 9. Findings of the Study

The results of the study found that trust in management did not moderate the relationship between JIS and employees' PHC. BCO did not act as a moderating effect, through mediational role of PCB between JIS and employees' PHC, at higher level of PCB in HEI's context. It is evident that although employees' PC partially mediated the relationship between JIS and employees' PHC, it could not qualify the basic assumptions of **Barron and Kenny**

(1986). It is identified that trust in management did not moderate the relationship between JIS and employees' PHC. BCO did not act as a moderating effect, through the meditational role of PCB, between JIS and employees' PHC, at higher level of PCB in HEI's context.

## 10. Suggestions

The current findings confirmed the Appraisal theory that individuals design future appraisal, based upon analyzing the available resources or opportunities. The findings also suggest that job insecurity is considered as a serious threat by employees, to continue their career and during such phase, the psychological bond between employer and employees becomes weak and causes higher absenteeism, turnover intention, psychological distress, emotional exhaustion and lower commitment as well as innovative work behavior and job satisfaction. In such a case, the trust of manager can act as a bridge to cope with employee BCO attitude.

## 11. Conclusion

From the discussion of the above result, it can be concluded that job insecurity did play an important role in shaping the attitude of employees' behavior. It is also evident that because of job insecurity, serious health related issues like mental as well as health complaints became the outcomes, which not only seriously affected organization culture but it also questioned the efficiency of top management. It is concluded that Perceived Control could mediate the relationship between JIS and MHC while trust in management did not buffer the strength of relationship between JIS and MHC. Similarly, BCO also did not cause moderating mediating effect. While in the studies of Vander Elst et al. (2016), both PCB and PC mediated the relationship between JIS, MHC & PH, the study of Saif and Ullah (2018) confirmed the

role of trust as a buffering variable and BCO as a moderating mediation between JIS and psychological distress, employees' work satisfaction and commitment. Similar results are evident in the case of JIS and physical health complaints, through PC and PCB mediating role, moderating effect of TRS and moderating mediating effect of BCO.

## 12. Limitation of the Study

However, the current study suffered from several limitations because data were collected through self administrated questionnaire and response was obtained at once. Future researcher may get detailed information through interview as well as observation. Future researcher may investigate the same model with other strain related issues i.e.(burnout, turnover, intention, emotional exhaustion and psychological distress, innovative work behavior and self rated performance), to understand the dynamic relationship between JIS and outcomes through moderated mediation analysis.

## 13. Scope for Further Research.

The scope of the current study can be enhanced, by applying the current moderated mediated model of JIS and outcomes, by applying it in various sectors (services, SME's, private banking, early grade schooling, higher education institutions and private hospital). Further data may be collected from more number of respondents, through various districts of KPK as well as from male and female participants, to understand the concepts in more detail.

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**Table-1: CFA Results and Correlation Analysis**

CMIN/Df	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	CFA
2.11	0.941	0.910	0.951	0.971	0.921	0.042	Results
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
1. JIS	<b>(0.61)</b>	0.26**	0.21*	0.32*	-0.19	-0.44**	0.15**
2. MHC	0.42	<b>(0.66)</b>	0.11*	0.28**	0.17*	0.09	0.27**
3. PHC	0.32	0.21	<b>(0.71)</b>	0.31**	0.19*	0.08	0.21**
4. PCB	0.29	0.44	0.48	<b>(0.76)</b>	0.11	0.08*	0.16*
5. PC	0.33	0.39	0.51	0.55	<b>(0.63)</b>	0.11	0.09
6. TRS	0.62	0.23	0.54	0.56	0.66	<b>(0.70)</b>	0.06
7. BCO	0.34	0.45	0.65	0.25	0.44	0.51	<b>(0.73)</b>
<p>*p&lt;.05, **p&lt;.01, ***p&lt;.001  <b>JIS</b>= Job Insecurity, <b>BCO</b>= Boundary less career Orientation, <b>PCB</b>= Psychological Contract Breach, <b>PC</b>= Perceived Control, <b>TRS</b>= Trust in Leaders; <b>MHC</b>= Mental Health Complaints; <b>PHC</b>= Physical Health Complaints. Value in the parenthesis is Average Variance extracted.</p>							

**Source:** Primary Data computed using SPSS

**Table-2: Model Results of Moderation, Mediation and Moderated Mediation for Mental Health Complaints**

Meditational effect of perceived control via model 4						
R	R²	SE	F	Df1	DF2	P
0.6226	0.3876	0.6337	118.253	2	318	0.0000
Path			Coefficient (B)		Sig value	
JIS TO PC (a1)			-0.1267		0.0559	
PC TO MHC (b1)			0.0841		0.0135	
JIS TO MHC (c)			0.5507		0.000	
JIS TO PC TO EE (C)			0.5613		0.000	
Direct and Indirect Path Analysis						
	Effect	95%LLC1		95%ULC1		
Total	0.5507	0.4744		0.6269		
Direct	0.5613	0.4875		0.6351		
Indirect	-0.0107	-0.302		-0.0003		
Sobel test (Normal Theory) for Mediation						
Effect	SE	Z Score		P Value (significance)		
-.0107	0.0074	-1.4470		0.1479		
Moderation effect of trust on leader via Model 1						
R	R²	MSE	F	Df1	Df2	Sig
0.6254	0.3862	0.6372	66.478	3	317	0.0000
Interaction	Coefficient	SE	T	P	95%LLC1	95%ULC1
TRS*MHC	-0.0348	0.0354	-0.9842	0.3257	-0.1045	0.0348
Moderation Mediation analysis via (15)						
R	R²	MSE	F	Df1	Df2	Sig
0.6265	0.3925	0.6346	42.1827	5	315	0.000
Interaction	Coefficient	SE	T	P	95%LLC1	95%ULC1
BCO*PCB	0.0094	0.0516	0.1822	0.8555	-0.0922	0.1100
Bootstrapping Analysis						
Conditional Indirect effect (s) of X on Y at values of the BCO						
	Level	BCO	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLC1	Boot ULC1
PCB	Low	-1.0466	-0.0436	0.0299	-0.1035	0.0114
PCB	Mean	0.0000	-0.0392	0.0228	-0.0862	-0.0040
PCB	High	1.1733	-0.4343	0.0372	-0.1099	0.0365
Index of moderated mediation						
	Index	Se (Boot)	Boot LLC1		Boot ULC1	
	0.0042	0.0222	-0.0377		0.0505	
JIS= Job Insecurity, BCO= Boundary less career Orientation, PCB= Psychological Contract Breach, EE= Emotional Exhaustion, TRS= Trust in Leaders						
Df= Degree of Freedom, SE= Stander Error,						
LLC1= Lower level Confidence Interval, ULC1= Upper Level Confidence Interval,						
Bootstrap Sample Size						

**Source:** Primary Data computed using SPSS

**Table-3: Model Results of Moderation, Mediation and Moderated Mediation for Mental**

Meditational effect of perceived control via model 4						
R	R <sup>2</sup>	SE	F	Df1	DF2	P
0.4158	0.1729	0.8695	31.7646	2	318	0.0000
Path			Coefficient (B)		Sig value	
JIS TO PC (a1)			-0.1267		0.0559	
PC TO PHC(b1)			0.0061		0.8837	
JIS TO PHC (c)			0.3757		0.0000	
JIS TO PC TO PHC (C)			0.3765		0.000	
Direct and Indirect Path Analysis						
			Effect		95%LLC1	95%ULC1
Total			0.3757		0.2825	0.4690
Direct			0.3765		0.2809	0.4721
Indirect			-0.0008		-0.0149	0.0100
Sobel test (Normal Theory) for Mediation						
Effect		SE	Z Score		P Value (significance)	
-0.0008		0.0059	-1.1295		0.8970	
Moderation effect of trust on leader via Model 1						
R	R <sup>2</sup>	MSE	F	Df1	Df2	Sig
0.4252	0.1808	0.8639	23.321	3	317	0.0000
Interaction	coefficient	SE	T	P	95%LLC1	95%ULC1
TRS*PHC	-0.0152	0.0412	-0.3693	0.7121	-0.0963	0.0658
Moderation Mediation analysis via (15)						
R	R <sup>2</sup>	MSE	F	Df1	Df2	Sig
.4288	0.1839	0.8661	13.0778	5	315	0.000
Interaction	coefficient	SE	T	P	95%LLC1	95%ULC1
BCO*PCB	-0.0528	-0.0554	-0.9341	0.3510	-0.1608	0.0573
Bootstrapping Analysis						
Conditional Indirect effect (s) of X on Y at values of the BCO						
	Level	BCO	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLC1	Boot ULC1
PCB	Low	-1.0466	0.0001	0.334	-0.0677	0.649
PCB	Mean	0.0000	-0.0240	0.0252	-0.0730	-0.0269
PCB	High	1.1733	-0.0511	0.0410	-0.1290	0.0366
		Index of moderated mediation				
	Index	Se (Boot)		Boot LLC1		Boot ULC1
	-0.0231	0.0246		-0.0708		-0.0266
JIS= Job Insecurity, BCO= Boundary less career Orientation, PCB= Psychological Contract Breach, EE= Emotional Exhaustion, TRS= Trust in Leaders						
Df= Degree of Freedom, SE= Stander Error,						
LLC1= Lower level Confidence Interval, ULC1= Upper Level Confidence Interval,						
Bootstrap Sample Size=10000						

**Source:** Primary Data computed using SPSS