

Work Without Permanence: Impact of Job Insecurity on Outsourced Employees

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Abstract: In today's labour market, outsourcing is becoming more and more common, which has resulted in a greater percentage of workers having unstable employment. Although this approach gives businesses flexibility, it frequently causes outsourced workers to feel unstable, which may negatively influence their overall work experience. This article examines how job insecurity affects workers who are outsourced, concentrating on three important aspects: employee well-being, work engagement, and job satisfaction. The analysis emphasizes how perceived work uncertainty can lower commitment, lower motivation, and have a detrimental impact on psychological and emotional well-being. It does this by drawing on current research and pertinent empirical results. The results highlight how crucial it is to manage employment conditions in outsourced agreements and imply that enhancing job security, especially in flexible work models, can have a major positive impact on a workforce that is more resilient, engaged, and pleased.

Keywords: Outsourced, Job insecurity, Well-being, Work engagement, Job Performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

For the last few years, the labour marketplace has experienced tremendous transformation due to globalisation and international competition. Therefore, in order to cut expenses and boost productivity, organisations have turned to a variety of strategies, such as outsourcing, privatisation, mergers, restructuring, and downsizing (Hellgren and Sverke, 2003). As a result of these changes, new flexible employment arrangements have arisen, which may make employees feel more insecure about their actual positions (Sverke and Goslinga, 2003). The term "perceived powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened work condition" refers to job insecurity (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt, 1984). One of the most distressing burdens a person may experience is the idea that they have work but are unsure if it is secure (Hartley et al. 1991; Ironson 1992).

Hoy and Miskel (1991) claim that work security is an essential element of an employee job satisfaction and is related to the need for a calm, orderly, and stable society free from chaos and anxiety. According to Mansour and Hassan (2019), work stability is the belief that one will remain in one's position and continue to work there. Employees' emotional state is influenced by their feelings about their jobs; the more positive these feelings are, the more satisfied they are with their jobs (Armstrong 2020).

The impact of job insecurity on the work engagement, job satisfaction and health of outsourced personnel of government departments will be examined in this study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

De Cuyper, Nele et al., (2006) evaluated how job insecurity affected permanent employees' self-rated performance, organisational commitment, both life and work fulfilment in comparison to temporary workers. According to psychological contract theory, more social psychological contracting is engaged in by permanent staff members than by temporary ones,

and work instability is due to violation of the relational psychological contract. Therefore, it is anticipated that employment uncertainty will have an adverse impact on permanent workers but not temporary employees. In a similar vein, the researchers discovered that the psychological effects of job instability do not always have to be universal. Despite being more job insecure than permanent employees, temporary employees did not experience the similar level of stress in relation to organisational commitment and work satisfaction as permanent employees. According to psychological contract theory, the lack of negative job insecurity effects can be generalised from temporary labour to all employees with primarily transactional psychological agreements.

De Cuyper, Nele et al., (2009) assessed the association between employability and job insecurity and affective organisational commitment and job satisfaction in temporary agency employees, fixed-term contract workers, and permanent employees. According to the authors hypothesis, employability and job satisfaction are positively correlated, but affective organisational commitment and employability are negatively correlated, while job insecurity has a negative association with both of these factors, with the strongest correlation found in permanent employees and the weakest in temporary agency workers. The findings indicate a negative association between job instability and the outcomes of both temporary agency workers and permanent employees. In the case of outsourced employees with fixed terms, this link was not substantial. For temporary agency workers and fixed-term contract workers, employability had a negative association with the results; for permanent employees, this relationship was not significant.

Virtanen, M et al., (2015) researched if shifts in work, health and behaviours associated to health, and sick leave occur after a shift in employment status from temporary to permanent work. At baseline, fixed-term employees expressed less contentment with their jobs, employment security, and workload than permanent workers. They also claimed to be more capable workers. At baseline, the rate of medically certified sick leave was lower for all fixed-term employees. Changes in the outcome measures were not linked to continuous fixed-term employment. Following the transition from temporary to permanent employment, there was a rise in medically certified sick leave, job stability, and long-term job satisfaction.

Karatepe, Osman M. et al. (2020) evaluated how work engagement mediated the association between non-attendance and non-green behaviours and job insecurity. In addition to increasing absenteeism, non-green behaviours, and intention to be late for work (ILFW), JIS also undermines work engagement and threatens future job loss. Engagement in the workplace reduces non-green behaviours and non-attendance purposes. Furthermore, the effect of JIS on absenteeism, ILFW, ILWE, and non-green behaviours is partially mediated by work engagement. Shin, Yuhung et al. (2020) worked to identify the limitations that reduce the negative effects of job instability on engagement and performance. It was anticipated that because job instability undermines work engagement, it would have a negative impact on job performance. It is suggested that when workers offer and receive assistance motivated by prosocial motive, this relationship deteriorates. The association between job performance and job insecurity was substantially mediated by work engagement. Additionally, the study discovered a strong three-way interaction between prosocial motivation, helping others, and job insecurity on work engagement. This meant that when employees prosocial motivation and help-giving were both high, the negative association between job insecurity and work engagement was at its weakest. High levels of prosocial and help-giving motivation also showed the least amount of the indirect impact of job instability on job performance through work engagement. Additionally, no evidence was found to support the three-way relationship between prosocial motivation, job instability, and obtaining assistance on work engagement or the indirect impact of work engagement on job performance.

Mahmoud, Ali B. et al., (2020) developed an analytical model that connected job insecurity to organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) through two mediators: job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation. They assessed the path model's invariance among the three cohorts of generations – generations X, Y, and Z. According to the findings, job insecurity had a negative correlation with intrinsic motivation, which in turn had a good correlation with job satisfaction. Job satisfaction had a beneficial impact on OCBs. Job insecurity's indirect impacts on OCBs were mitigated by both intrinsic motivation and job happiness. Because work uncertainty has a significant detrimental impact on intrinsic motivation and, consequently, on their jobs, Generation X reacted to it more strongly than subsequent generations. In contrary to generation Y, generation Z workers followed their parents from generation X in participating in more OCBs when they were happy in their positions. Therefore, it is generally not surprising that the OCBs of Generation X employees are predicted to decline more severely than those of Generation Y due to the higher levels of employment insecurity during epidemic times (e.g., COVID – 19).

Through a literature survey Reyes, Jeffrey E. (2021) explored the circumstances of employees categorised as contractual, temporary, and non-standard in government agencies and institutions. According to the reviewed articles, employees in this group are frequently paid less than regular employees and do not receive the same incentives and benefits. Furthermore, several factors influencing regular or contract employees job satisfaction were found to influence their decision to stay employed by a government organisation.

Omar Maqableh et al., (2023) investigated how job satisfaction mediated employees' intentions to leave their jobs and their job security. According to the study, job security and employee turnover intention are successfully mediated by job satisfaction. Additionally, the findings demonstrated that job security had a favourable impact on attaining employee job satisfaction and a significant negative influence on turnover intention. Reddy N T. et al., (2019) studied low-professional employees' levels of job satisfaction. According to the study's findings, workers are satisfied, but organisations should upgrade some facilities to boost employee satisfaction and raise performance and productivity levels.

Theoretical Review and Hypothesis Development

Job insecurity and Job satisfaction

According to Bernardi et al. (2008), job insecurity is the term used to define subjective views about working circumstances, particularly the possibility of losing job stability and the longevity of one's employment relationship with the company. Job uncertainty can have negative effects on an individual since it is a reflection of the imagined fear of losing one's job. For many people, work plays a crucial role in their lives since it provides for their social and economic necessities. (Jahoda 1982) Jobs offer people daily structure, social contacts, financial support, and opportunities for personal growth. (Locke, 1976) An employee's level of satisfaction with their work is determined by their job satisfaction. People who experience work uncertainty are likely to be unhappy with their occupations because job insecurity stems from the individual's assessment of the employment security as being less than ideal. Job happiness and job instability are strongly correlated negatively, according to several research (Ashford et al., 1989; Lim, 1996; Ramona, 2003; Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996). Hoppock (1935) described job satisfaction as an integration of elements stemming from the enjoyment of one's work that leads one to declare, "I am satisfied with my job." Similar to this, Locke (1976) highlighted that an employee's internal sense of job satisfaction is a result of numerous workplace practices. Finally, Herzberg (1959) defined the processes and components of the workplace, such as tasks and accomplishments, that help the employee acquire this sensation. There are two primary and important aspects that contribute to job happiness. The first has a direct connection to the workplace, whereas the second is linked to the workers. Stress at work is decreased and job satisfaction is raised in an atmosphere where coworkers appreciate and support one another (Badrianto & Ekhsan, 2020). According to Alkahtani et al. (2021), companies can get job satisfaction by giving their staff members empowerment and assistance. Numerous HRM policies, including training, rewards, teamwork, and job security for employees, also have an impact on job satisfaction (Demircioglu & Berman, 2019).

H_{1a}: Job insecurity has a significant positive effect on job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction and wellbeing

Well-being is intimately related to both productivity and health. Research indicates that employees who are in good physical, mental, and emotional health are more likely to be productive at work than those who are not (Harvard Business Review 2013). Happy and healthy workers have a better quality of life, a reduced chance of becoming sick or hurt, are more productive at work and are more likely to give back to their communities (Hamar B et al. 2015). Worker well-being has been acknowledged as a nationally significant health concern by the National Academy of Medicine and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The nature of work is changing, and some of these changes could significantly impact the well-being of employees. There is growing evidence that workplace wellness and health-promotion programs are effective (Olsen et al. 2015, Palumbo MV et al. 2012), and new practices that are being adopted to promote employee well-being (such as non-standard employment arrangements) can also foster team member engagement and improved performance (Ray TK et al. 2017, Murashov et al. 2016). However, today's focus on robotics, artificial intelligence, and technology may pose new health and well-being issues for employees (Murashov et al. 2016). For instance, because of the expanding gig economy a labour market where freelance or short-term contracts are more common than part-time or salaried employment-workers are less likely to benefit from many aspects of employment and are more likely to face job insecurity

than they were in the past. This can result in higher levels of stress and detrimental health outcomes (Ray TK et al. 2017, Howard 2017).

H_{1b}: Job satisfaction has a significant positive effect on employee well-being.

Job satisfaction and Job performance

A special focus must be given to job satisfaction in order for employees to perform better. An emotional attitude that is enjoyable and an affection for one's work is what is meant by job satisfaction. Employees' positive outlook on work and all aspects of the workplace demonstrates this. Workplace, outside work, and a mix of both indoor and outdoor labour are all sources of job satisfaction (Hasibuan, 2001, p. 202). A person's feelings toward his work are reflected in his level of job satisfaction (Handoko, 2001, p. 193). Since every person is distinct. His degree of happiness increases with the number of components of his employment that align with his personal preferences (Anoraga, 1998). The psychological component of job satisfaction affects how employees behave while performing their duties. Because job happiness affects work and the quality of their work, it is crucial for employees. When workers are happy and content with their jobs, they will undoubtedly do their obligations to the best of their abilities in order to increase their level of satisfaction, which will improve their performance at work (Shah, 2015; Irwan et al., 2020). On the other hand, an employee who is unhappy or dissatisfied will be distracted at work, which will negatively affect his output (Annisa, 2013).

H_{1c}: Job satisfaction has a significant positive effect on job performance.

Job satisfaction and Work engagement

Employees enter an interactive phase that is full of challenges, inspirations, and pride when they are fully engaged in their work. The primary factor influencing these workers' job satisfaction is the interaction style of their work engagement. According to Lu, Lu, Gursoy, and Neale (2016) Job happiness is the result of the individual components that make up work engagement. According to Karanika-Murray, Duncan, Pontes, and Griffiths (2015), workers who exhibit enthusiasm and dedication to their work and are highly and favourably involved in it are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs. On the other hand, Britt, Castro, and Adler (2005) discovered that workers who are highly engaged with their jobs and organisations are adversely impacted by unfavourable experiences they have at work and, as a result, are impacted by stressors associated to their jobs. Caldwell and O'Reilly (1990) contended that organisational pressure and uncertainty drive workers to demonstrate their involvement and dedication to their jobs; these commitments stem from externally imposed pressures rather than internal ones, which ultimately lowers job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is reduced when personal preferences and outside needs are not aligned. The conclusion drawn by Griffiths and Karanika-Murray (2012) was that workers who are absorbed may have an addiction to their jobs. Similarly, a study by Burke and MacDermid (1999) revealed a negative correlation between workaholism and job satisfaction.

H_{1d}: Job satisfaction has a significant positive effect on work engagement.

Job insecurity and Work engagement

Few workers have the luxury of negotiating for or moving to better employment, despite the fact that job insecurity is common in the corporate world. Therefore, maintaining job-insecure individuals' engagement and performance in their current firm is a difficult but crucial issue (Wang et al., 2014). Since employee engagement at work is a major factor in determining organisational effectiveness (Hewitt Associates, 2004; Kompas & Sridevi, 2010), it is crucial to investigate whether and when workers stay committed to their jobs in spite of job insecurity threats, both conceptually and practically (Wang et al., 2014). According to Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, and Taris (2008), p. 187, work engagement is defined as "a positive, fulfilling affective-motivational state of work-related well-being that is characterised by Vigor, dedication, and absorption.

H_{1e}: Job insecurity has a significant positive indirect effect on work engagement through job satisfaction.

Job insecurity and wellbeing

Job uncertainty lowers an individual's level of wellbeing. A study conducted in the UK with 600 workers found that those who felt insecure about their jobs had lower psychological well-being (Burchell 1994). Utilizing the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ), a self-administered screening tool intended to identify non-psychiatric disorders (Goldberg 1972)

along with associated metrics, Roskies and her colleagues discovered a correlation between job insecurity and psychological distress, anxiety, and depression (Roskies & Louis-Guerin 1990). Orpen (1993) found a correlation between employment uncertainty and depression and anxiety in his South African study. An international study comparing Israel and the Netherlands found that insecure workers experienced more negative emotional experiences and were more depressed (Van Vuuren, Klandermans, Jacobson, & Hartley, 1991, pp. 80–81). Other studies extend the list with a higher degree of physical, mental, and emotional tiredness, or “burnout”, indicating that extended exposure to job insecurity may cause a worker’s resources to decline (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995; Landsbergis, 1988). The belief that one’s existing position may be lost is implied by job insecurity. That this view lowers well-being is scarcely surprising. Work is essential to social recognition and engagement in our society. This is central to the model of “latent deprivation” developed by Jahoda (1982). She lays out the needs that are met by employment in this model, including earning money, making friends outside of one’s family, managing one’s time, and having the opportunity to grow both socially and personally. These requirements are frustrated by the fear of unemployment, which also results in the loss of significant resources (financial, social, and societal). Therefore, it seems to be an unappealing future potential.

H_{1f}: Job insecurity has a significant positive indirect effect on employee well-being through job satisfaction.

3. METHOD

The current study takes a quantitative approach to analyze the effects of job insecurity on outsourced employees in various industries. The design suits because it allows systematic measurement of the psychological and behavioural consequences of job insecurity such as work stress, commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. The research is conceptualized to test perceived job insecurity level relationships with their effects on employee outcomes through a systematic questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. The population of the study includes outsourced employees from Government organisation. Purposive sampling was used to target individuals who work in occupations that lack the job permanence associated with formal employment. Targeting outsourced workers is motivated by the fact that they are at risk of loss of employment, uncertainty in employment contracts, and lack of long-term employment rights, and are therefore well suited to study the effects of perceived job insecurity (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; De Cuyper et al., 2008).

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using the help of SmartPLS version 4 because it is able to accommodate complex models involving multiple constructs and deals with small-to-medium-sized sample sizes perfectly (Hair et al., 2019). Data collection was carried out in two different stages. The initial stage was utilized to test the measurement model in terms of validity (Average Variance Extracted and Discriminant Validity) and reliability (Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability). The structural model was analyzed to find out significant relationships among job insecurity and impact variables during the second stage. The demographic variables, i.e., age, gender, type of outsourcing, and experience, were controlled. Robustness was assured for the statistics using 5000 bootstrap samples and 95% confidence intervals, which were utilized to check hypotheses and association strength. Normality tests, multicollinearity tests, and model fit were performed excluding hypothesis testing and association strength since they ensured reliability and accuracy of findings (Hair et al., 2020).

Measurement Model

The measurement model is highly valid and reliable for all constructs. Cronbach's Alpha (CA) is between 0.701 and 0.829, which reflects acceptable to good internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), whereas Composite Reliability (CR) values are greater than 0.70, which provides construct reliability (Hair et al., 2019). Convergent validity is established since Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are greater than the 0.50 cut-off point (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and the indicator loadings range between 0.681 and 0.927. The findings confirm that Job Insecurity (CA = 0.701, CR = 0.708, AVE = 0.769), Job Performance (CA = 0.707, CR = 0.710, AVE = 0.773), Work Engagement (CA = 0.829, CR = 0.830, AVE = 0.854), and Employee Well-Being (CA = 0.708, CR = 0.709, AVE = 0.621) are being measured reliably. The findings confirm the model suitability for further structural equation modelling and analysis

Table 1: Construct Reliability, Validity

Job Insecurity CA=0.701; CR=0.708; AVE=0.769	OL
JS_1:	0.893
JS2_2:	0.86
Job Performance CA=0.707; CR=0.71; AVE=0.773	
JP_1:	0.889
JP_2:	0.87
Work Engagement: CA=0.829; CR=0.83; AVE=0.854	
WE_1:	0.921
WE_2	0.927
Employee Well Being: CA=0.708; CR=0.709; AVE=0.621	
EWB_1:	0.882
EWB_2:	0.681

CA: Cronbach’s alpha; **CR:** Composite Reliability; **AVE:** Average Variance Extracted; **OL:** Outer Loadings (standardized)

Discriminant validity examines the extent to which expected unrelated constructs actually vary from each other. By the Fornell–Larcker criterion, discriminant validity is established when the square root of each construct's Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (diagonal values) is larger than its correlations with other constructs (off-diagonal values) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As indicated in Table 2, the square roots of the AVEs are: Employee Well-Being (0.788), Job Insecurity (0.877), Job Performance (0.879), and Work Engagement (0.924). These diagonal values are larger than the respective inter-construct correlation coefficients. For example, the correlation between Work Engagement and Employee Well-Being is 0.673, which is less than both constructs' square root AVEs (0.924 and 0.788, respectively). Likewise, all the other constructs satisfy this requirement. Thus, by the Fornell–Larcker criterion, discriminant validity is established, and each construct in the measurement model is empirically different from the others.

Table 2: Discriminant validity using Fornell–Larcker criterion

	1	2	3	4
EMPLOYEE WELL BEING	0.788			
JOB INSECURITY	0.305	0.877		
JOB PERFORMANCE	0.42	0.244	0.879	
WORK ENGAGEMENT	0.673	0.285	0.379	0.924

Structural Model

The structural model is part of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), and it is interested in testing hypothesized relationships between latent constructs. Unlike the measurement model, which is interested in testing whether observed variables and constructs fit, the structural model tests the direction, strength, and significance of causal paths, making it possible to directly, indirectly, and through mediating effects test. This is particularly helpful in complex research scenarios where variables interact with one another.

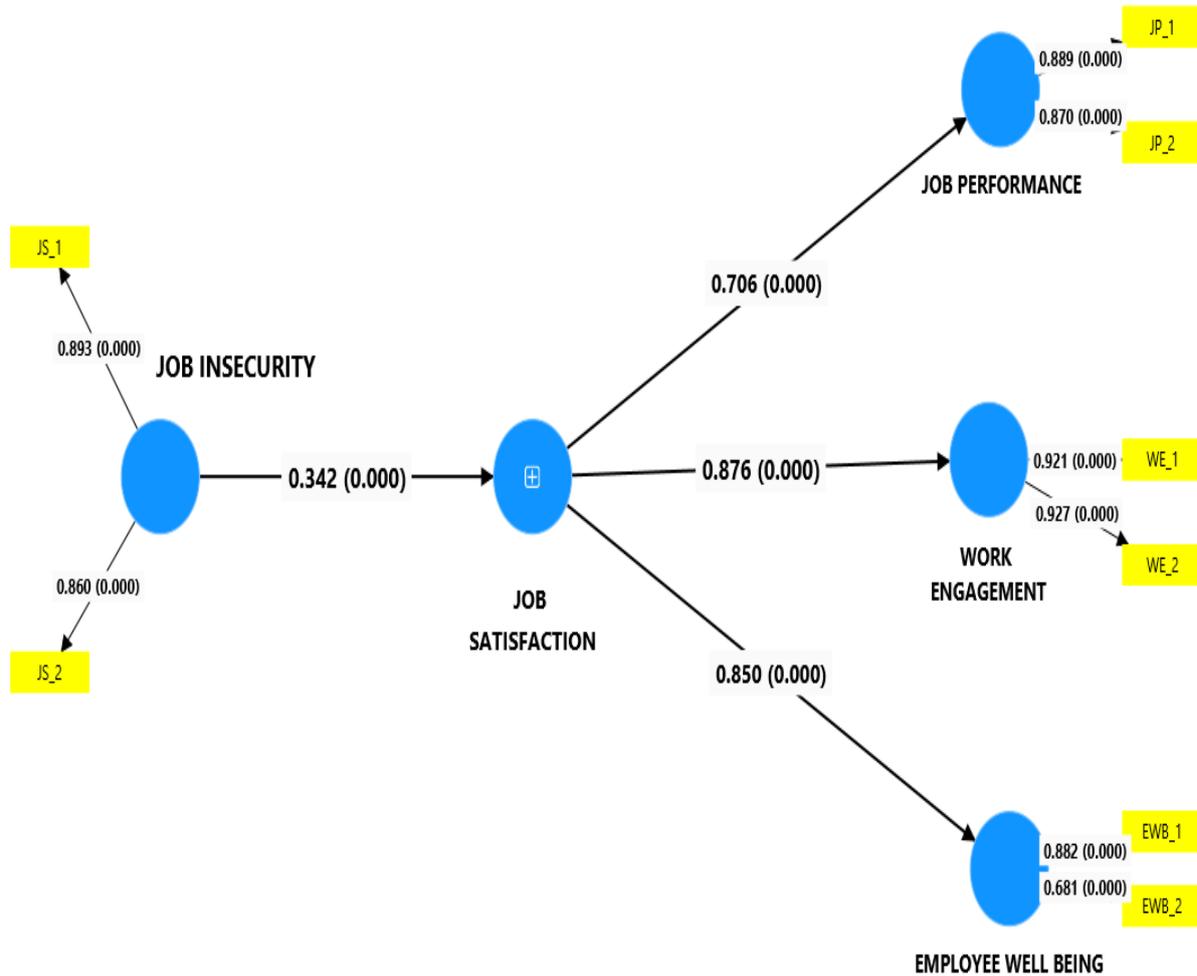


Figure 1: Structural Model

Table 3: Structural Estimate

Direct Effect				
	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics	P values
JOB INSECURITY -> JOB SATISFACTION	0.342	0.047	7.216	0.000
JOB SATISFACTION -> EMPLOYEE WELL BEING	0.850	0.013	66.254	0.000
JOB SATISFACTION -> JOB PERFORMANCE	0.706	0.033	21.170	0.000
JOB SATISFACTION -> WORK ENGAGEMENT	0.876	0.010	86.891	0.000
Indirect Effect				
	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics	P values
JOB INSECURITY -> JOB SATISFACTION -> WORK ENGAGEMENT	0.299	0.042	7.184	0.000
JOB INSECURITY -> JOB SATISFACTION -> EMPLOYEE WELL BEING	0.290	0.041	7.068	0.000
JOB INSECURITY -> JOB SATISFACTION -> JOB PERFORMANCE	0.241	0.036	6.769	0.000

The structural model revealed statistically significant relations between job insecurity, job satisfaction, and significant employee outcomes. That is, job insecurity positively influenced job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.342$, $t = 7.216$, $p < .001$), so that perceived insecurity is related to differences in levels of satisfaction. Furthermore, job satisfaction significantly affected employee well-being ($\beta = 0.850$, $t = 66.254$, $p < .001$), job performance ($\beta = 0.706$, $t = 21.170$, $p < .001$), and work engagement ($\beta = 0.876$, $t = 86.891$, $p < .001$). Moreover, all indirect effects of job insecurity through job satisfaction were significant: on work engagement ($\beta = 0.299$, $t = 7.184$, $p < .001$), employee well-being ($\beta = 0.290$, $t = 7.068$, $p < .001$), and job performance ($\beta = 0.241$, $t = 6.769$, $p < .001$). These results verify that job satisfaction has a mediating effect, supporting previous hypotheses of organizational behavior.

Acceptance of all the hypotheses fits within the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, positing job demands such as insecurity affecting job outcomes through personal and job resources such as satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Positive effects of job satisfaction on performance and well-being fit with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which postulates satisfaction as a performance and motivation driver (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). The indirect effects fit Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), postulating that if the employees are dissatisfied as a result of job insecurity, their performance and involvement are affected through lower job satisfaction. The findings are therefore supported theoretically and prove the structure of the hypothesized model.

4. DISCUSSION

The study revealed that job insecurity has a notably negative impact on job satisfaction, work engagement, and overall wellbeing of outsourced employees working in government departments in India. Employees experiencing higher levels of job insecurity reported feeling undervalued, uncertain about their future, and dissatisfied with their roles. This insecurity led to decreased levels of work engagement, with many employees showing signs of emotional detachment, reduced enthusiasm, and lower commitment to their tasks. Furthermore, the psychological effects of job insecurity were evident, as employees reported heightened stress, anxiety, and a decline in their overall mental and emotional wellbeing. These findings highlight the pressing need for government departments to adopt policies and practices that offer greater stability and support to outsourced employees, as job insecurity not only affects individual workers but also hampers overall organizational efficiency and morale.

Government departments should consider implementing more stable contractual frameworks, offering clearer communication regarding job continuity, and providing benefits that enhance a sense of security among outsourced staff. Enhancing job security can lead to higher employee morale, improved performance, and reduced turnover, ultimately contributing to more efficient public service delivery. Additionally, fostering a supportive work environment for outsourced workers aligns with ethical employment practices and strengthens the reputation of public institutions as equitable and responsible employers.

Limitations and Future Research

This study on impact of job insecurity of outsourced employees has certain limitations. Firstly, the findings may be limited in scope due to the focus on specific region or sectors within the public domain, potentially restricting generalizability across other public or private sectors. Additionally, data collection methods – such as surveys or interviews – might bias, as outsourced employees may be hesitant to share fully transparent feedback about their working conditions. Future research should expand upon these findings by exploring HR outsourcing impacts across a wider range of sectors and geographic regions to improve generalizability. Longitudinal studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how outsourcing affects employees over time, particularly regarding job satisfaction, well-being, and work engagement.

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