



## Personnel Review

The direct and interactive effects of job insecurity and job embeddedness on unethical pro-organizational behaviour: an empirical examination

Sumit Kumar Ghosh,

### Article information:

To cite this document:

Sumit Kumar Ghosh, "The direct and interactive effects of job insecurity and job embeddedness on unethical pro-organizational behaviour: an empirical examination", Personnel Review, <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-05-2015-0126>

Permanent link to this document:

<https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-05-2015-0126>

Downloaded on: 23 July 2017, At: 20:58 (PT)

References: this document contains references to 0 other documents.

To copy this document: [permissions@emeraldinsight.com](mailto:permissions@emeraldinsight.com)

The fulltext of this document has been downloaded 3 times since 2017\*

Access to this document was granted through an Emerald subscription provided by emerald-srm:235247 []

### For Authors

If you would like to write for this, or any other Emerald publication, then please use our Emerald for Authors service information about how to choose which publication to write for and submission guidelines are available for all. Please visit [www.emeraldinsight.com/authors](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/authors) for more information.

### About Emerald [www.emeraldinsight.com](http://www.emeraldinsight.com)

Emerald is a global publisher linking research and practice to the benefit of society. The company manages a portfolio of more than 290 journals and over 2,350 books and book series volumes, as well as providing an extensive range of online products and additional customer resources and services.

Emerald is both COUNTER 4 and TRANSFER compliant. The organization is a partner of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and also works with Portico and the LOCKSS initiative for digital archive preservation.

\*Related content and download information correct at time of download.

## The direct and interactive effects of job insecurity and job embeddedness on unethical pro-organizational behaviour: an empirical examination

### Abstract

**Purpose** – This study empirically examines both the direct effects and the interactive effects of job insecurity and job embeddedness on unethical pro-organizational behaviour.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Data was collected, using established scales, from employees of different Indian organizations. In all, 346 responses were collected. The data was analysed using a stepwise multiple regression technique.

**Findings** – The results of the analysis reveal that both job insecurity and job embeddedness are positively linked to unethical pro-organizational behaviour. Further, the relationship between job insecurity and unethical pro-organizational behaviour is moderated by job embeddedness.

**Research limitations/implications** – The study's results indicate that managers should be aware that employees who run the risk of losing their jobs might be inclined to perform pro-organizational behaviour that could be unethical. Intrinsically, such acts could be detrimental to the organization's long-term health and therefore managers should be vigilant and timely in discouraging this behaviour.

**Originality/value** – Unethical pro-organizational behaviour as a means used by employees to combat job insecurity has not previously been addressed by researchers. Thus, this study contributes to the literature through its empirical examination of the role of job insecurity and job embeddedness as factors influencing unethical pro-organizational behaviour.

**Keywords** Job insecurity, Job embeddedness, Unethical pro-organizational behaviour, India

**Paper**

**type**

**Research**

**paper**

## Introduction

Over the years, employee perception of job security has declined (Weaver, 2015), partly because of the de-regularization of employment conditions (Kuroki, 2012). In India, for example, following the initiation of economic liberalization, organizations have resorted to means such as voluntary separations and employer friendly job contracts to keep employee populations in check (D'Souza, 2010). On the other hand, media\* have been reporting impending lay-offs in the country's information technology, start-up and consumer durables companies, in order to cut costs. In such conditions, it is likely that perceptions of job insecurity among employees will be high. Moreover, it is also to be expected that employees will seek means with which to combat such threats to their jobs.

In the recent times the issue of job insecurity is gaining enormous importance as organisations are increasingly linking consistent employment to performance (Greenhalgh and Rosenbatt, 2010 p. 16). Moreover, there is an increase in hiring of temporary workers by the organisations leading to higher perception of job insecurity (Callea, A. et al., 2016 p. 415). Studies reveal that job security is highly sought after by the employees in the recent times and continuous research is required to combat the ill effects of job insecurity (Hai-jiang, Chang-qin, and Oi-ling, 2015). Though the consequences and antecedents of job insecurity is extensively studied more research is need from the perspectives of human resources practitioner to identify specific actions which employees may adopt to deal with job insecurity (Boswell, Olson-Buchanan, and Harris, 2014). Yi and Wang (2015) posit that job insecurity can combine with a high achievement orientation to ensure minimal levels of withdrawal from work. Thus, employees who have a higher sense of job embeddedness may draw upon their achievement orientation in the context of job insecurity, so that they can avoid slipping down from the core of the organisation to becoming a contingent employee (Hirsch and De Soucey, 2006). They may want to signal to their employer that they can contribute effectively to the organisation, especially in a climate where job insecurity may be on the rise (Burchell, 2002). Consequently, they may not find any moral barriers in engaging in unethical behaviors which may be useful for the organisation, which may be one of the outcomes that human resource managers may need to manage (Debus, Probst, Konig and Kleinmann, 2012). Since the evaluation of fairness during the experience of job insecurity impacts how an employee behaves (Schumacher, Schreurs, Van Emmerik and De Witte, 2015), it may be possible that employees who attribute their job insecurity to factors beyond the organization's control and thus may want to exert themselves at any cost to benefit the organization, including by ignoring ethical concerns.

Employees indulging in pro-organizational behaviour in order to contend with job insecurity has been extensively addressed in the literature, as has their engaging in counterproductive behaviour as a consequence of job insecurity (Keim *et al.*, 2014). However, affected employees could also choose to engage in behaviour that may be pro-organizational but might not bear the scrutiny of global ethical standards. For instance, a salesperson could exaggerate the features of a product they were selling to a customer in order to achieve their sales target as well as help their organization to earn additional revenue. Or, an accountant might fudge the numbers in order to reduce tax payments for their organization (Umphress *et al.*, 2010, p. 771). By performing an unethical but organizationally beneficial action such as this, the employee may be seen as efficient by their superiors (Umphress *et al.*, 2010, p. 771). In light of recent increases in the occurrence of such activities, the concept of "unethical pro-organizational behaviour" has attracted the attention of researchers (Umphress and Bingham, 2011, p. 621). The present study

\*[www.businessinsider.com/layoffs](http://www.businessinsider.com/layoffs)

explores the relationship between job insecurity and unethical pro-organization behaviour in terms of its implications for practicing managers at a time when the fear of job loss is increasing congruently with the tendency for employees to engage in behaviour such as this that offers short-term benefits to the organization. Studying this relationship has a few implications for the researchers too. Employees engage in unethical pro-organizational behaviour for personal gains and such behaviours are not conducive for the goodwill of the organizations (Umphress *et al.*, 2010). Studies have shown that job insecurity negatively impacts employee loyalty to the organizations (King, 2000). Hence it is necessary to investigate the possibility of job insecurity being an antecedent of unethical pro-organization behaviour as by indulging in such behaviour the employees may be able to safe guard their jobs.

Job insecurity is an established area of interest among researchers (for a review, see Keim *et al.*, 2014), while many organizations worldwide have long been confronting the practical ramifications of the issue too (De Witte, 2005). The extant literature considers various forms of organizational change and market uncertainties as strong antecedents and employee well-being and job attitudes as consequences of job insecurity (Keim *et al.*, 2014; Severe and Hellene, 2002). Researchers have found that employees handle job insecurity by working hard, seeking help from others (Armstrong-Stassen, 2006) and practising impression management (Huang *et al.*, 2013). However, there are no prior studies that investigate employees responding to job insecurity by engaging in behaviours that are unethical but pro-organizational.

Job embeddedness has been primarily considered as an antecedent of turnover intention (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001), with some studies identifying job embeddedness as a much more robust construct than job satisfaction to predict turnover intention (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001). Conversely, beyond turnover intention, which is negatively linked to job embeddedness (Kaifeng *et al.*, 2012), organization citizenship behaviour (Lee *et al.*, 2004; Sekiguchi *et al.*, 2008) and performance

(Halbasleben, 2008) have been positively linked to job embeddedness. While there are a large number of studies that have examined the positive consequences of embeddedness (Ng and Feldman, 2010, pp. 698–9), very few have explored its negative effects. For instance, Ng and Feldman (2012, p. 1245) found that job embeddedness results in work–family conflict, and also concluded (Ng and Feldman, 2010, p. 710) that highly embedded employees lose interest in developing new social ties and invest less time in honing their skills, as they feel that they have no need to explore opportunities elsewhere. Given the paucity of studies that examine the possible negative consequences of job embeddedness (Ng and Feldman, 2014, p. 369), the present study proposes to explore the issue by linking it to unethical pro-organizational behaviour.

The contributions of this study are twofold. First, it extends the literature pertaining to employee actions to mitigate job insecurity. To date, studies have mostly focused on employee initiatives toward handling job insecurity, such as hard work, refraining from counterproductive behaviour (Probst *et al.*, 2007) and impression management (De Cuyper *et al.*, 2014). This study contends that, in order to retain employment or employment features, employees may get involved in unethical pro-organizational behaviour that may, in turn, help them to be perceived as useful to the organization. Second, this study considers the role of potential antecedents to unethical pro-organizational behaviour – namely, job embeddedness and job insecurity – and examines the interactive effects of them on unethical pro-organizational behaviour.

## Theoretical foundation and hypotheses development

### *Job insecurity*

Researchers have proposed multiple definitions of *job insecurity*, but most agree that it can be conceived of as “subjective, involuntary, and futuristic” (Vander Elst, 2014, p. 365). Researchers have considered the cognitive aspect (loss of job) and the affective aspect (emotions associated with job loss) of job insecurity as two separate dimensions, as well as as a combined global measure (O’Neill and Sevastos, 2013, p. 339). Some scholars have studied the cognitive aspects, others the affective aspects, and some have studied both aspects of job insecurity (for a review, see Keim *et al.*, 2014). The literature also differentiates job insecurity from job loss, noting that the former has more to do with uncertainty whereas the actual loss of a job is a reality (Severe *et al.*, 2002, p. 243).

In a competitive scenario, the phenomenon of job insecurity is likely to persist (Ashford *et al.*, 1989, p. 804), and previous researchers have studied it in the context of changes in the work environment pertaining to markets, regulations and reforms (Ashford *et al.*, 1989; Kinnunen *et al.*, 2014). The various dimensions of job insecurity studied to date include “loss of present job, loss of job features (income, status, autonomy), and powerlessness (lack of protection, authoritarian environment)” (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt, 1984, p. 442). Researchers have found positive links between job insecurity and *organizational change, role ambiguity and external locus of control* as antecedents, and negative relationships between job insecurity and *commitment, trust and job satisfaction* as consequences (Ashford *et al.*, 1989, pp.816-17). Recent research has concluded that job insecurity can be reduced through a higher internal locus of control, lower role ambiguity, improved communication and less change, in addition to organizational support and employability of the individual (for a review, see Keim *et al.*, 2014).

Different people perceive job insecurity in different ways, which suggests that personality traits might play an important role as an antecedent of job insecurity (De Witte, 2005, p. 2). For

instance, an organizational downsizing activity might be seen as a threat, with some employees fearful of

losing their jobs, yet others may not perceive this activity in the same way (De Witte, 2005, p. 1). Job insecurity has been shown to have negative effects on a person's life (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt, 2010, p. 12), and can adversely affect physical as well as psychological health (Cheng and Chan, 2008, p. 283). However, it has also been observed to be a "challenge stressor" that can motivate people to positively contribute more to an organization (Staufenbiel and König, 2010, p. 104). Specifically, researchers have argued that job insecurity can induce an employee to put in increased effort toward achieving higher productivity and also lower their propensity to engage in counterproductive behaviour (Probst *et al.*, 2007). Notably, the likelihood that an employee will put in additional effort to benefit an organization because of job insecurity is greater in countries where safety nets are weak (Gilboa *et al.*, 2008, p. 251). Furthermore, as Severe *et al.* (2002, p. 251) reasoned, in situations in which performance is a more important parameter in decision making pertaining to lay-offs than length of service, job insecurity may induce better performance. Armstrong-Stassen (2006) found that employees who work hard to handle job insecurity fare better as compared to employees who do not put in sufficient efforts.

As the literature suggests, employees will strive to protect their jobs through engaging in various alternative actions. In the next section, such responses to job insecurity are explained from the conservation of resources and social exchange theoretical perspectives.

### ***Employee response to job insecurity***

If an employee values their job and there is a threat to it, they are likely to engage in "proactive coping" (Hobfoll, 2001, p. 351), or, in other words, engage in behaviours that can mitigate job insecurity. Drawing from conservation of resources theory, Jiang and Probst (2014) found that organizations could lessen the uncertainty associated with job insecurity by regularly communicating with their employees on issues related to future changes in the organization. They further contended that this would help to lower the undesirable outcomes of job insecurity. Also, consistent with conservation of resources theory, Cheng *et al.* (2014) reported that employees use personal coping strategies to handle job insecurity. They posited that "engaged coping strategies" – that is, proactively and realistically dealing with a situation rather than running away from it – help in mitigating the negative outcomes of job insecurity (Cheng *et al.*, 2014, p. 81).

Most pro-organizational behaviours, particularly organizational citizenship behaviours, have been studied within the framework of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Konovsky and Pugh, 1994). In a recent study, Lam *et al.* (2015) suggested that job insecurity and organizational citizenship behaviour have a curvilinear relationship, theorizing that high job insecurity induces employees to engage in organizational citizenship behaviour in order to avoid lay-offs (Lam *et al.*, 2015, p. 501). Proponents of unethical pro-organizational behaviour claim that its construct is also embedded in social exchange theory (Umphress and Bingham, 2011, p. 625). In other words, employees may engage in pro-organizational behaviours, even if unethical in nature, provided they stand to gain from them.

Employees also use impression management strategies to reduce job insecurity (De Cuyper *et al.*, 2014; Huang *et al.*, 2013). Huang *et al.* (2013) recognized that impression management behaviours that could be ascribed as being beneficial to the organization might be more effective in handling job insecurity than those attributed to self-glorification. Thus, employees may exhibit pro-organizational behaviour in order to be perceived positively by the organization as well as to reduce their job insecurity. It has also been acknowledged that, in circumstances in which performance is assigned greater importance, employees may even engage in unsafe behaviour in

order to perform such actions (Hofmann and Stetzer, 1996). Furthermore, Schweitzer and colleagues (2004) found that the pressure to meet performance goals also induces a propensity to indulge in unethical behaviour. In a recent study, Kouchaki and Desai (2015) found that, when an individual's high anxiety level leads to high threat perception, they are likely to engage in unethical behaviour. Thus, some of the conceivable actions that employees might take to respond to job insecurity incorporate pro-organizational behaviours, even when such behaviours may fall outside of ethical norms. In the literature, such behaviours have been conceptualized as "unethical pro-organizational behaviours", and, in this paper, are discussed below.

### ***Unethical pro-organization behaviour as an employee response to job insecurity***

Over the past two decades, concepts such as unethical behaviour (violation of societal norms), counterproductive behaviour (violation of organizational norms) and illegal behaviour (violation of laws) have been studied extensively, both separately and as overlapping concepts (Kish-Gephart, 2010, p. 2). Most researchers in this area have considered illegal and immoral behaviour as unethical behaviour and concluded that an individual performs them primarily to further his or her own self-interest (Thau *et al.*, 2015, p. 98). However, Robinson and Bennett (1995, p. 556) reasoned that behaviours that might be considered unethical from a broader perspective may not necessarily be unacceptable to the relevant organization. Sometimes, such behaviour may be performed to benefit others. For instance, a person might allow another person to illegally copy software that they have legally purchased if they stand to benefit in return (Glass and Wood, 1996, p. 1192). Further, it is found that people are likely to engage in dishonest behaviour to benefit others when they are in a better position compared to the relevant others (Gino and Pierce, 2009). It has also been suggested that an individual may lie to benefit others if their impetus is *utilitarian* and matches with the ethical predisposition of the others who stand to gain from the action (Wilermuth, 2013, p. 288). At times, such unethical actions can be to the benefit of the organization or group to which that individual belongs (Thau *et al.*, 2015; Umphress *et al.*, 2010).

*Unethical pro-organizational behaviour* comprises "unethical acts that are conducted, in part, to benefit the organization" (Umphress *et al.*, 2010, p. 770). Yet, such acts may in turn benefit the individual too (Umphress *et al.*, 2010, p. 770). Unethical pro-organizational behaviour has also been categorized as "actions that intend to promote the effective functioning of the organization or its members and violate core societal values, mores, laws, or standards of proper conduct" (Umphress and Bingham, 2011, p. 622). Interestingly, it has been shown that ethical leadership has a curvilinear relationship with unethical pro-organizational behaviour (high and low ethical leadership does not influence unethical pro-organizational behaviour) and this relationship is moderated by identification with a supervisor (Miao *et al.*, 2013). Moreover, transformational leadership was found to be positively related to unethical pro-organizational behaviour, with the relationship being mediated by organizational identification (Effelsberg *et al.*, 2014). Effelsberg *et al.* (2014) also found that employees who have higher organizational identification are more likely to become involved in unethical pro-organizational behaviour.

Robinson and O'Leary-Kelly (1998, p. 661) reported that individuals who do not align with their group members' inclination to engage in antisocial behaviour report lower job satisfaction. Correspondingly, Thau *et al.* (2015, p. 100) found that group members who face "exclusion risk" engage in pro-group unethical behaviour to mitigate this risk by proving themselves worthy of the group. This relationship is stronger when the "need for inclusion" is high, and, extending this



to an organizational level, employees who run the risk of losing their jobs might have a higher propensity to engage in activities that may be unethical but of some use to the organization. This idea is consistent with earlier suggestions and conservation of resources theory that, when faced with job insecurity, employees will perform organizationally beneficial behaviours even when such behaviours are unethical. Unethical pro-organizational behaviour, as viewed through the lens of social exchange theory (Umphress and Bingham, 2011, p. 625), may help employees to gain acceptance by the organization and thereby lessen the chances of losing their job as well as abate the negative feelings associated with that prospect.

There appear to be no prior empirical studies in the context of work organizations that have investigated this relationship between job insecurity and unethical pro-organizational behaviour. There is evidence to support the idea that people engage in pro-group unethical behaviour to maintain their group membership (Thau *et al.*, 2015), though, and so it is important to address this particular research gap. Drawing on conservation resources theory, social exchange theory and the viewpoints discussed above, on the basis of the findings of Thau *et al.* (2015) and also to respond to the call for research identifying the possible antecedents of unethical pro-organization behaviour (Miao *et al.*, 2013; Umphress *et al.*, 2010), the following is proposed:

*Hypothesis 1.* Job insecurity will be positively related to unethical pro-organizational behaviour.

### ***Job embeddedness and unethical pro-organizational behaviour***

*Job embeddedness*, considered as both an affective and a cognitive attachment to an organization, deals with the “fit” with the organization, the “links” within and outside the organization and the “sacrifices” associated with the breaking of the links (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001, p. 1104). Thus, it is seen as a set of “combined forces”, both *work* related and *non-work* related, that tie an employee to his or her job (Crossley *et al.*, 2007, p. 1031; Yao *et al.*, 2004, p. 159). While job embeddedness can be perceived through multi-foci lenses such as community embeddedness, family embeddedness and so on (Kiazad *et al.*, 2015), the global scale developed by Crossley *et al.* (2007) is all encompassing and takes into account all of the *on-the-job* and *off-the-job* dimensions of the concept (Crossley *et al.*, 2007).

Job embeddedness is also viewed as an important construct with which to predict employee turnover (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001, p. 1104). The literature suggests that employees who have difficulties in sacrificing the contacts they have developed within and outside of the organization, and for whom the cost of withdrawing from the organization is high, are likely to have strong job embeddedness (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001), and may not leave the organization even if they experience negative shocks (Oyler, 2014, p. 154). Instead, such employees, argue Burton *et al.* (2010), are likely to display pro-organizational behaviour. Moreover, a strong connection with the organization induces a sense of identification with it (Riketta, 2005, p. 361). Further, Umphress *et al.* (2010) found that organizational identification influences unethical pro-organizational behaviour – provided that organizations reward such behaviours – and so it is conceivable that employees who feel they are embedded in an organization could get involved in unethical pro-organizational behaviour, with this involvement potentially helping them to maintain their organizational membership. To empirically verify this relationship, in order to identify the possible antecedents of unethical pro organizational behaviour and explore the negative effects of job embeddedness, the following is proposed:

*Hypothesis 2.* Job embeddedness will be positively related to unethical pro-organizational behaviour.

A direct effect model specifying Hypotheses 1 and 2 is depicted in Figure 1.

<Insert Figure 1 near here>

Note that, while Hypotheses 1 and 2 specify direct effects of job insecurity and job embeddedness on unethical pro-organizational behaviour, this study contends, too, that job embeddedness may moderate the relationship between job insecurity and unethical pro-organizational behaviour, as outlined below.

First, though the literature suggests that job insecurity induces lower job embeddedness (Murphy *et al.*, 2013), it is argued here that these phenomena may in fact be independent of each other. This line of reasoning stems from the viewpoint that job embeddedness is not just the outcome of on-the-job factors, but also of various off-the-job factors such as community and neighbours (Crossley *et al.*, 2007; Mitchell *et al.*, 2001).

Second, job embeddedness is considered a resource from the perspective of conservation of resources theory (Halbasleben, 2008; Harris *et al.*, 2011), and an employee would stand to lose this resource if they have to leave their organization, as job embeddedness is organization specific (Halbasleben, 2008, p. 244). Thus, it may be argued that, in order to protect resources such as links and fit with the organization (Harris *et al.*, 2011, p. 273), a person might engage in behaviours that may help them to keep their job and thereby safeguard the associated resources. High job embeddedness also implies high loss for an employee if they were to have to leave the organization for which they perform that role. In other words, high job embeddedness may accentuate an employee's reaction to job insecurity. Given that the consequences of job insecurity are contingent on the employee's dependence on the job (Richter *et al.*, 2014), and also taking into consideration the findings of Thau *et al.* (2015, p. 100), who proposed that a high "need for inclusion" strengthens the relationship between the "risk of exclusion" and "pro-group unethical behaviour", as well as addressing the gap in empirical evidence available in the current literature to substantiate this finding, it is hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis 3.* The relationship between job insecurity and unethical pro-organizational behaviour will be moderated by job embeddedness. The greater the job embeddedness, the stronger the relationship between job insecurity and unethical pro-organizational behaviour will be.

Figure 2 depicts an interactive model of job insecurity and job embeddedness on unethical pro-organizational behaviour.

<Insert Figure 2 near here>

## **Methods**

### ***Sample***

The data were collected as a part of a wider study using a questionnaire that was completed by employees working in different organizations in India. A link to the online questionnaire was mailed to a large number of alumni of a leading business school in India and to executives of

various organizations who have undergone short duration programmes at the Said Business School. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Ultimately, 346 usable responses were received from executives of various types of organizations in different sectors, such as information technology, manufacturing, health care, insurance, banking etc. Seventy-seven per cent of the respondents were male, and 76 per cent were less than 40 years of age. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents had 12 or more years of experience.

## **Measures**

### *Job embeddedness*

A seven-item, five-point (1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”) scale developed by Crossley *et al.* (2007, p. 1035) was used in the present study to measure job embeddedness. In line with Crossley and colleague’s (2007) work, participants were given the following instruction: “After considering both work-related (such as relationships, fit with job, and benefits) and non-work-related (such as neighbours, hobbies, and community perks) factors, please rate your agreement with the statements.” Sample items include “I am too caught up in this organization to leave” and “I simply could not leave this organization that I work for”. In the present study, Cronbach’s alpha (reliability coefficient) was .88.

### *Job insecurity*

In line with the definition of job insecurity as the “subjectively perceived and undesired possibility to lose the present job in the future, as well as fear or worries related to this job loss” (Vander *et al.*, 2014, p. 365), the scale developed by De Witte and featured in Vander *et al.* (2014, p. 369) was used. The five-point (1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”) scale had four items. Sample items include “Chances are, I will soon lose my job” and “I think I might lose my job in the near future”. In the present study, Cronbach’s alpha was .80.

### *Unethical pro-organizational behaviour*

Unethical pro-organizational behaviour was measured using a six-item, five-point (1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”) scale developed by Umphress *et al.* (2010, p. 771). Sample items include “If it would help my organization, I would misrepresent the truth to make my organization look good” and “If needed, I would conceal information from the public that could be damaging to my organization”. In the present study, Cronbach’s alpha was .76.

## **Results**

Means, standard deviations, correlations and reliability values (shown in parentheses) are reported in Table I. As can be seen, the correlation between job insecurity and unethical pro-organizational behaviour was found to be positive and significant (0.23,  $p < .001$ ). Also, while the correlation between job embeddedness and unethical pro-organizational behaviour was positive (0.11,  $p < .05$ ) and significant, the correlation between job embeddedness and job insecurity was negative and non-significant. The control variable age was positively and significantly correlated with unethical pro-organizational behaviour (0.13,  $p < .05$ ) and job embeddedness (0.26,  $p < .001$ ), whereas experience was positively and significantly correlated with job embeddedness (0.22,  $p < .001$ ), but not with unethical pro-organizational behaviour.

<Insert Table I near here>

To test the direct effects model (Hypotheses 1 and 2), hierarchical regression analysis was carried out, and the results are presented in Tables II and III. In step one, the control variables of gender, age and experience were entered. These were controlled to eliminate the influence of such variables on the dependent variable (Miao *et al.*, 2013). The control variables explained the 2 per cent variance ( $R^2 = .02, p < .05$ ). In step two, the independent variables (job insecurity and job embeddedness) were entered. The results indicated a positive relation between job insecurity and unethical pro-organizational behaviour ( $B = .24, p < .001$ ), thus supporting Hypothesis 1. Further, the relationship between job embeddedness and unethical pro-organizational behaviour was also found to be positive ( $B = .11, p < .05$ ), supporting Hypothesis 2. The model explained the 9 per cent variance ( $R^2 = .09, p < .001$ ). Also, the incremental  $R^2$  due to job insecurity and job embeddedness was significant (change in  $R^2 = .06, p < .001$ ). The results provide support to the direct effects model depicted in Figure 1.

<Insert Table II near here>

To test the interactive effects model, in step three, the interaction term (job insecurity  $\times$  job embeddedness) was entered, and the results (Table III) reveal the presence of moderation as the change in the  $R^2$  ( $.02, p < .01$ ) was significant (Hair *et al.*, 2003), thus supporting Hypothesis 3.

<Insert Table III near here>

Taking the analysis further, low and high job embeddedness scores were plotted (Figure 3). As hypothesized, the slope representing low job embeddedness scores depicts a weak positive relationship between job insecurity and unethical pro-organizational behaviour, whereas the slope representing high job embeddedness scores suggests a comparatively stronger positive relationship between job insecurity and unethical pro-organizational behaviour. The results support the interactive effects model (Figure 2).

<Insert Figure 3 near here>

## Discussion

As set out in conservation of resources theory, people will endeavour to protect their resources (Hobfoll, 2001). Thus, when an employee finds that their job is under threat, they are motivated to engage in coping behaviours that are pro-organizational (Cheng *et al.*, 2014). Moreover, while job insecurity has been shown to have a strong impact on an individual's health (Cheng and Chan, 2008) and can be destructive (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt, 2010), it can also act as an advantageous challenge stressor (Staufenbiel and König, 2010) and stops people from indulging in counterproductive behaviour (Probst *et al.*, 2007).

The extant literature suggests that employees may use impression management to deal with job insecurity, and that, by doing so, they can create a positive impression about themselves in the minds of their supervisor – and, in return, save their job (De Cuyper *et al.*, 2014). Consistent with this, the present study hypothesized that, to cope with job insecurity, an employee may engage in behaviours from which the organization might benefit in return for being positively perceived, even if such behaviours are unethical in nature. Studies suggest that such behaviours can come to be promoted in an organization, as it is not always amoral culture (Umphress and Bingham, 2011) but also ethical leadership (Miao *et al.*, 2013) and transformational leadership

(Effelsberg *et al.*, 2014) that positively influence behaviour that might be unethical in nature but is nonetheless pro-organization. As hypothesized, a positive and significant relationship was found between job insecurity and unethical pro-organizational behaviour.

This study does not answer the question of whether people engage in such behaviour out of fear or to create a positive impression in the relevant organization, but it does support the view that employees may get involved in unethical pro-organizational behaviour to protect valued resources – in this case, their jobs. This finding offers significant theoretical contributions to the literature: employee inclination to engage in unethical pro-organizational behaviour to safeguard jobs has not been explored before, but this study provides empirical evidence to this effect. While it may be argued that there are prior studies (Staufenbiel and König, 2010, p. 104) that have determined that employees do engage in behaviours that are pro-organizational when their jobs are insecure, the present study expands these findings by emphasizing that such pro-organizational activities could be unethical. Unethical pro-organizational behaviour might be beneficial to organizations in the short run, but could be detrimental to their functioning in the long run (Thau *et al.*, 2015, p. 107). Regarding the study's practical implications, managers should be aware that employees might respond to a threat to their jobs by engaging in unethical pro-organizational behaviour. Hence, they should be vigilant with respect to employees who perceive their jobs to be insecure, as job insecurity may influence these employees to engage in behaviour that might benefit the organization but falls short of accepted standards of ethics (Thau *et al.*, 2015, p. 107). The inferences of these findings for managers are that they should themselves display high standards of ethical behaviour and make it amply clear through their behaviour and actions (particularly the distribution of reward) that unethical behaviour is unacceptable and will lead to undesirable consequences (Umphress *et al.*, 2010, p. 778). Correspondingly, managers should also frequently interact with employees who have high job insecurity (Keim *et al.*, 2014, p. 283), so that they can prevent such employees from engaging in unethical behaviour.

From the perspective of conservation of resources theory, job embeddedness provides resources to employees such as an emotional and cognitive attachment with the organization (Halbasleben, 2008). In circumstances in which employees do not wish to lose these resources and believe that, in order to protect them, they might have to engage in behaviour that may be unethical but has organizational support, they will likely not hesitate in doing so. Additionally, a strong fit with the organization may induce a strong sense of organizational identity (Riketta, 2005), and, in order to retain this identity, employees may be inclined to engage in behaviour that benefits their organization, even if it is unethical in nature from a global ethical standard (Umphress *et al.*, 2010). The present study provides support for this argument, as job embeddedness was found to be positively related to unethical pro-organizational behaviour.

Job embeddedness, which is often regarded as a measure of an employee's willingness to serve their organization by engaging in pro-organizational behaviours such as organizational citizenship behaviour (Sekiguchi *et al.*, 2008), performance (Halbasleben, 2008) and so on, also has a darker side. Results from this study's analysis indicate that highly embedded employees may engage in behaviours that could be considered unethical when viewed from a broader perspective, a finding that, in turn, extends the debate pertaining to the role of job embeddedness in employee behaviour. More specifically, this study reveals that employees with high embeddedness may indulge in unethical pro-organizational behaviour: while job embeddedness is a positive phenomenon as it reduces employees' intention to leave the organization (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001), it may also strengthen the inclination of employees to display unethical pro-

organizational behaviour. Hence, organizations must continually develop policies and practices, such as training in ethical practices,

through which to instil ethical values in their employees (Miao *et al.*, 2013, p. 650), so that those who are looking for a longer association with the organization refrain from engaging in unethical behaviour, even if it benefits the organization in the short term.

In line with Thau and colleague's (2015) study, it was hypothesized that, if an employee's need for retaining and protecting their job is high (in this case, if job embeddedness is high), and if there is threat to their job, the propensity for that employee to engage in unethical behaviour will also be high. The literature on job embeddedness emphasizes that sacrificing the organizational fits and links developed by them within and outside the organization becomes extremely difficult for a highly-embedded employee (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001, p. 1104). The present study hypothesized and found that job embeddedness moderated the relationship between job insecurity and unethical pro-organizational behaviour. In other words, an employee who needs their job and has a fear of losing it may indulge in unethical pro-organizational behaviour. Thus, using an earlier example, a salesperson with a sales target might not hesitate to exaggerate the features of a product to unsuspecting customers in order to sell that product, especially if their job is contingent on their achievement of a sales target and their life within and outside of the organization is tied up with it. This study furthers the research exploring possible antecedents of unethical pro-organizational behaviour by indicating that job insecurity and job embeddedness could be possible precursors to it.

As the study was carried out in the Indian context, there are a few cultural dimensions that should also be considered. India, being high on power distance (Hofstede, 2001), may find that the inclination of employees headquartered in the country to be a part of unethical practices of their organization without raising their concerns may also be high (Jain, 2015). Furthermore, as India is rated high on collectivism (Hofstede, 2001) too, employees' tendency to become embedded in organizations may also be high (Ramesh and Gelfand, 2010). Therefore, the managerial implications drawn from this study may be more apt for India than for other countries. However, their global application cannot be ruled out, as there is much evidence to support the impression that this phenomenon is widespread.

The study's findings provide the basis for a greater debate concerning human resource management practices in general. The recent example of a large organization is a case in point: within their endeavour to market their products as being more environmentally friendly, the company used "fraudulent means with which to cheat the testing mechanism" – and the company has since claimed that this was the work of a few employees. Similarly, there have been quite a few cases reported in which accounts were fudged to project a brighter image of the affected firms to their unsuspecting shareholders. Such incidences\* are widespread across various sectors, which raises several questions. Do employees engage in such activities because of a pressure to perform? Are human resources practices inadequate to deal with such tendencies of people?

### **Implications for managers**

The findings of this study suggest that HR practitioners should be aware that perception of job insecurity may encourage an employee to depict any type of behavior even if such behaviors are detrimental to his/her self, in order to be seen as beneficial to the organisation (Boswell, Olson-Buchanan, and Harris, 2014). In fact the findings contends that such behavior could be unethical in nature. With the increase in incidences of unethical behavior by the employees, HR managers should be particularly concerned about the employees who have high job insecurity as such employees may quickly adopt unethical behaviors which could help them in making their

\*To maintain the anonymity of the organizations sources are not revealed.

jobs secure (Boswell, Olson-Buchanan, and Harris, 2014). Hence, besides, regular interactions with the employees, emphases should be laid on providing adequate support system to such employees who are under pressure to perform and encourage them to express themselves in appropriate forum when faced with situations where they are compelled to engage in activities that are not ethical in nature (Hsiung 2012). Managers should from time to time review the 'psychological contract' they have entered with the employees because of impending danger of such contracts getting breached due to higher job insecurity (Callea, A. et al., 2016 p. 415). Practicing good LMX (Probst, Jiang and, Graso, 2016), along with high organizational justice (Hai-jiang, Chang-qin,, and Oi-ling, 2015 ) is also known to mitigate the negative impact of job insecurity. Hence it is recommended that organizations from time to time should carry out interventions to sensitize the practicing managers about the issues pertaining to job insecurity and the importance of healthy relationship between managers and employees besides promoting fairness in the organizations.

### **Limitations and directions for future research**

Firstly, similar to other research (Miao *et al.*, 2013, p. 651) on the topic of unethical pro-organizational behaviour, this study may have been affected by the issue of social desirability. Endeavouring to address this, the researcher took suitable care to ensure confidentiality, with the study's participants instructed to send their responses directly to the researcher without revealing

\*To maintain the anonymity of the organizations sources are not revealed.

© Emerald Publishing Limited

This is a pre-print of a paper and is subject to change before publication. This pre-print is made available with the understanding that it will not be reproduced or stored in a retrieval system without the permission of Emerald Publishing Limited.



their identities. In future studies concerning unethical pro-organizational behaviour, though, the social desirability aspect should be controlled, in order to elicit more authentic responses. Secondly, as the data were collected from a single source, concerns of common method bias may exist, and hence the results should be interpreted accordingly. However, it should also be noted that the correlation between both the predictor variables was not significant. Moreover, the predictor variables had differential impact on the dependent variable (Folger and Konovsky, 1989, p. 125). The scales used for the study were well established in the literature, and, as there were no overlaps among the items, the issue of common method bias was, to a large extent, accounted for in this study (Conway and Lance, 2010). Thirdly, due to the cross-sectional nature of the study, causal relationships among the variables may be difficult to establish. Future studies should consider longitudinal data in order to obtain greater insights. Fourthly, in this study, a global version of the job embeddedness scale was used. Though the scale is highly recommended (Harris *et al.*, 2011), in future studies, the longer version of the scale developed by Mitchell *et al.* (2001), which captures the different components separately, along with the longer version of the job insecurity scale (O'Neill and Sevastos, 2013), which distinctly captures different components of job insecurity, might beneficially be used. This would facilitate a better understanding of the links between various components of both of the constructs. Finally, in future studies, a comparison across different sectors, type of employment, education levels and so on might be attempted in order to obtain further insights.

As advocated in the discussion section above, this study's results call for a greater debate and investigation to verify whether employees' inclination to engage in fraudulent activities for the sake of their firm is a consequence of the "perform or perish" stance taken by many organizations.

## Conclusion

This study empirically examined the inclination of employees to become involved in unethical but pro-organizational behaviour in order to deal with the threat of job insecurity. Previous researchers have not actively pursued this line of research, and so the conclusion of this study that there exists a positive relationship between job insecurity and unethical pro-organizational behaviour contributes to the literature. Moreover, the finding that job embeddedness is positively linked to unethical pro-organizational behaviour adds to existing research by identifying job embeddedness as an antecedent of unethical pro-organizational behaviour. Finally, a further significant finding of the study is that job embeddedness strengthens the relationship between job insecurity and unethical pro-organizational behaviour.

## References

- Armstrong-Stassen, M. (2006), "Determinants of how managers cope with organizational downsizing", *Applied Psychology*, Vol. 55 No. 1, pp. 1–26.
- Ashford, S.J., Lee, C. and Bobko, P. (1989), "Content, cause, and consequences of job insecurity: A theory-based measure and substantive test", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 32 No. 4, pp. 803–29.
- Blau, P. (1964), *Exchange and Power in Social Life*, Wiley, New York, NY.

- Boswell, W.R., Olson-Buchanan, J.B. And Harris, T.B. (2014). I cannot afford to have a life: Employee adaptation to feeling of job insecurity. *Personnel Psychology*, 67(4), 887-915.
- Burchell, B. (2002). The prevalence and redistribution of job insecurity and work intensification. In B. Burchell, D. Ladipo and F. Wilkinson (eds) *Job Insecurity and Work Intensification*, pp. 61-76. London: Routledge.
- Burton, J.P., Holtom, B.C., Sablinski, C.J., Mitchell, T.R. and Lee, T.W. (2010), "The buffering effects of job embeddedness on negative shocks", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 76 No. 1, pp. 42-51.
- Callea, A., Urbini, F., Ingusci, E. and Chirumbolo, A. (2016). The relationship between job type and job satisfaction in a mediated moderation model: The role of job insecurity and psychological contract violation. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 37(2), 399-420

- Cheng, G.H.L. and Chan, D.K.S. (2008), "Who suffers more from job insecurity? A meta-analytic review," *Applied Psychology*, Vol. 57 No. 2, pp. 272–303.
- Cheng, T., Mauno, S. and Lee, C. (2014), "The buffering effect of coping strategies in the relationship between job insecurity and employee well-being", *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, Vol. 35 No. 1, pp. 71–94.
- Conway, J.M. and Lance, C.E. (2010), "What reviewers should expect from authors regarding common method bias in organizational research," *Journal of Business and Psychology*, Vol. 25, pp. 325–34.
- Crossley, C.D., Bennett, R.J., Jex, S.M. and Burnfield, J.L. (2007), "Development of a global measure of job embeddedness and integration into a traditional model of voluntary turnover", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 92 No. 4, pp. 1031–42.
- D'Souza, E. (2010), "The employment effects of labour legislation in India: A critical essay", *Industrial Relations Journal*, Vol. 41 No. 2, pp. 122–35.
- Debus, M. E., Probst, T. M., Konig, C. J. and Kleinmann, M. (2012). Catch me if I fall! Enacted uncertainty avoidance and the social safety net as country-level moderators in the job insecurity-job attitudes link. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97(3), 690-698.
- De Cuyper, N., Schreurs, B., Vander Elst, T., Baillien, E. and De Witte, H. (2014), "Exemplification and perceived job insecurity: Associations with self-rated performance and emotional exhaustion", *Journal of Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 1–10.
- De Witte, H. (2005), "Job insecurity: Review of the international literature on definitions, prevalence, antecedents and consequences", *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, Vol. 31 No. 4, pp. 1–6.
- Effelsberg, D., Solga, M. and Gurt, J. (2014), "Transformational leadership and follower's unethical behaviour for the benefit of the company: A two-study investigation", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 120 No. 1, pp. 81–93.
- Folger, R. and Konovsky, M.A., (1989), "Effects of procedural and distributive justice on reactions to pay raise decisions", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 115–30.
- Gilboa, S., Shirom, A., Fried, Y. and Cooper, C. (2008), "A meta-analysis of work demand stressors and job performance: Examining main and moderating effects", *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 61 No. 2, pp. 227–71.
- Gino, F. and Pierce, L. (2009), "Dishonesty in the name of equity", *Psychological Science*, Vol. 20 No. 9, pp. 1153–60.
- Glass, R.S. and Wood, W.A. (1996), "Situational determinants of software piracy: An equity theory perspective", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 15 No. 11, pp. 1189–98.
- Greenhalgh, L. and Rosenblatt, Z. (1984), "Job insecurity: Toward conceptual clarity", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 9 No. 3, pp. 438–48.
- Greenhalgh, L. and Rosenblatt, Z. (2010), "Evolution of research on job insecurity", *International Studies of Management and Organization*, Vol. 40 No. 1, pp. 6–19.

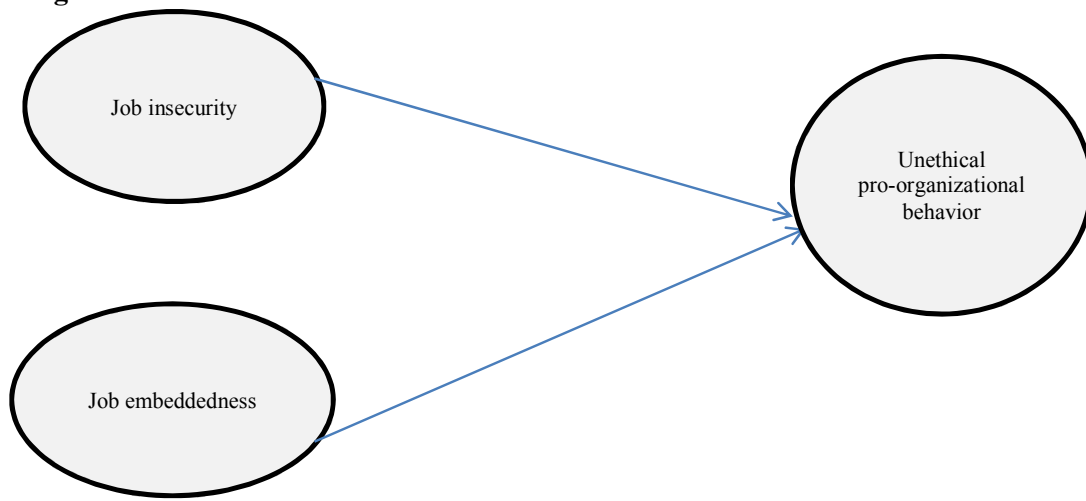
- Hai-jiang, W., Chang-qin, L., and Oi-ling, S. (2015). Job insecurity and job performance: The moderating role of organizational justice and mediating role of work engagement. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(4), 1249-1258.
- Hair, J.F, Jr., Anderson, R.E., Tatham, R.L. and Black, W.C. (2003), *Multivariate Data Analysis*, Pearson, India.
- Halbesleben, J.R. and Wheeler, A.R. (2008), “The relative roles of engagement and embeddedness in predicting job performance and intention to leave”, *Work & Stress*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 242–56.
- Harris, K.J., Wheeler, A.R. and Kacmar, K.M. (2011), “The mediating role of organizational job embeddedness in the LMX–outcomes relationships”, *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 271–81.
- Hirsch, P. M. and De Soucey, M. (2006). Organizational restructuring and its consequences: Rhetorical and structural. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 32, 171-189.
- Hobfoll, S.E. (2001), “The influence of culture, community, and the nested-self in the stress process: advancing conservation of resources theory”, *Applied Psychology*, Vol. 50 No. 3, pp. 337–421.
- Hofmann, D.A. and Stetzer, A. (1996), “A cross-level investigation of factors influencing unsafe behaviours and accidents”, *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 49 No. 2, pp. 307–39.
- Hofstede, G. (2001), *Culture’s Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations across Nations*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Hsiung, Hsin-Hua. (2012), “Authentic Leadership and Employee Voice Behavior: A Multi-Level Psychological Process”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 107 No. 3, pp. 349–61.
- Huang, G.H., Zhao, H.H., Niu, X.Y., Ashford, S.J. and Lee, C. (2013), “Reducing job insecurity and increasing performance ratings: Does impression management matter?”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 98 No. 5, pp. 852–62.
- Jain, A.K. (2015), “An interpersonal perspective to study silence in Indian organizations”, *Personnel Review*, Vol. 44 No. 6, pp. 1010–36.
- Jiang, L. and Probst, T. (2014), “Organizational communication: A buffer in times of job insecurity?”, *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, Vol. 35 No. 3, pp. 557–79.
- Keim, A.C., Landis, R.S., Pierce, C.A. and Earnest, D.R. (2014), “Why do employees worry about their job? A meta-analytical review of predictors of job insecurity”, *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 269–90.
- Kaifeng, J., Lepak, D.P., Jia, J. and Baer, J.C., (2012), “Does human resource management influence organizational outcomes? A meta-analytic investigation of mediating mechanisms”, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 55 No. 6, pp. 1264–94.
- Kiazad, K., Holtom, B.C., Hom, P.W. and Newman, A. (2015, March 16), “Job embeddedness: A multi foci theoretical extension”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Advanced online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0038919>.
- King, J. E. (2000), “White-collar reactions to job insecurity and the role of the psychological contract: Implications for human resource management”, *Human Resource Management*, Vol.39 No.1, pp. 79–92.
- Kinnunen, U., Mäkikangas, A., Mauno, S., De Cuyper, N. and De Witte, H. (2014), “Development of perceived job insecurity across two years: Associations with

- antecedents and employee outcomes”, *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 243–58.
- Kish-Gephart, J.J., Harrison, D.A. and Treviño, L.K. (2010), “Bad apples, bad cases, and bad barrels: Meta-analytic evidence about sources of unethical decisions at work”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 95 No. 1, pp. 1–31.
- Konovsky, M.A. and Pugh, S.D. (1994), “Citizenship behaviour and social exchange”, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 37 No. 2, pp. 656–69.
- Kouchaki, M. and Desai, S.D. (2015), “Anxious, threatened, and also unethical: How anxiety makes individuals feel threatened and commit unethical acts”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 100 No. 2, pp. 360–75.
- Kuroki, M. (2012), “The deregulation of temporary employment and workers’ perceptions of job insecurity”, *Industrial & Labor Relations Review*, Vol. 65 No. 3, pp. 560–77.
- Lam, C.F., Liang, J., Ashford, S.J. and Lee, C. (2015), “Job insecurity and organizational citizenship behaviour: Exploring curvilinear and moderated relationships”, *Journal of applied Psychology*, Vol. 100 No. 2, pp. 499–510.
- Lee, T.W., Mitchell, T.R., Sablinski, C.J., Burton, J.P. and Holtom, B.C. (2004), “The effects of job embeddedness on organizational citizenship, job performance, volitional absences, and voluntary turnover”, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 47 No. 5, pp. 711–22.
- Miao, Q., Newman, A., Yu, J. and Xu, L. (2013), “The relationship between ethical leadership and unethical pro-organizational behaviour: Linear or curvilinear effects?”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 116 No. 3, pp. 641–53.
- Mitchell, T.R., Holtom, B.C., Lee, T.W., Sablinski, C.J. and Erez, M. (2001), “Why people stay: Using job embeddedness to predict voluntary turnover”, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 44 No. 6, pp. 1102–21.
- Murphy, W.M., Burton, J.P., Henagan, S.C. and Briscoe, J.P. (2013), “Employee reactions to job Insecurity in a declining economy: A longitudinal study of the mediating role of job embeddedness”, *Group & Organization Management*, Vol. 38 No. 4, pp. 512–37.
- Ng, T.W.H. and Feldman, D.C. (2010), “The effects of organizational embeddedness on development of social and human capital”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 95 No. 4, pp. 696–712.
- Ng, T.W.H. and Feldman, D.C. (2012), “The effects of organizational and community embeddedness on work-to-family and family-to-work conflict”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 97 No. 6, pp. 1233–51.
- Ng, T.W.H. and Feldman, D.C. (2014), “Embeddedness and well-being in the United States and Singapore: The mediating effects of work-to-family and family-to-work conflict”, *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 360–75.
- O’Neill, P. and Sevastos, P. (2013), “The development and validation of a new multidimensional Job Insecurity Measure (JIM): An inductive methodology”, *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 338–49.
- Oyler, J.D. (2014), “Exploring the content and factorial validity of job embeddedness through the lens of a multigroup sample”, *Journal of Career Assessment*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 153–75.
- Probst, T.M., Jiang, L., Graso, M., (2016). Moderating the health and safety outcomes of job insecurity. *Journal of Safety Research*, 56, pp 47-56.

- Probst, T.M., Stewart, S.M., Gruys, M.L. and Tierney, B.W. (2007), “Productivity, counter productivity and creativity: The ups and downs of job insecurity”, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 80 No. 3, pp. 479–97.
- Ramesh, A. and Gelfand, M.J. (2010), “Will they stay or will they go? The role of job embeddedness in predicting turnover in individualistic and collectivistic cultures”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 95 No. 5, pp. 807–23.
- Richter, A., Naswall, K., Bernhard-Oettel, C. and Severe, M. (2014), “Job insecurity and well-being: The moderating role of job dependence”, *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 23 No. 6, pp. 816–29.
- Ricketta, M. (2005), “Organizational identification: A meta-analysis”, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 66 No. 2, pp. 358–84.
- Robinson, S.L. and Bennett, R.J. (1995), “A typology of deviant workplace behaviours: Multidimensional scaling study”, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 38 No. 2, pp. 555–72.
- Robinson, S.L. and O’Leary-Kelly, A.M. (1998), “Monkey see, monkey do: The influence of work groups on the antisocial behaviour of employees”, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 41 No. 6, pp. 658–72.
- Schumacher, D., Schreurs, B., Van Emmerik, H. and De Witte, H. (2015). Explaining the relation between job insecurity and employee outcomes during organizational change: A multiple group comparison. *Human Resource Management*, DOI: 10.1002/hrm.21687.
- Schweitzer, M.E., Ordóñez, L. and Douma, B. (2004), “Goal setting as a motivator of unethical behaviour”, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 47 No. 3, pp. 422–32.
- Sekiguchi, T., Burton, J.P. and Sablinski, C.J. (2008), “The role of job embeddedness on employee performance: The interactive effects with leader-member exchange and organization-based self-esteem”, *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 61 No. 4, pp. 761–92.
- Staufenbiel, T. and König, C.J. (2010), “A model for the effects of job insecurity on performance, turnover intention, and absenteeism”, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 83 No. 1, pp. 101–17.
- Severe, M. and Hellene, J. (2002), “The nature of job insecurity: Understanding employment uncertainty on the brink of a new millennium”, *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, Vol. 51 No. 1, pp. 23–42.
- Severe, M., Hellene, J. and Näswall, K. (2002), “No security: A meta-analysis and review of job insecurity and its consequences”, *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 242–64.
- Thau, S., Derfler-Rozin, R., Pitesa, M., Mitchell, M.S. and Pillutla, M.M. (2015), “Unethical for the sake of the group: Risk of social exclusion and pro-group unethical behaviour”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 100 No. 1, pp. 98–113.
- Umphress, E.E. and Bingham, J.B. (2011), “When employees do bad things for good reasons: Examining unethical pro-organizational behaviours”, *Organization Science*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 621–40.
- Umphress, E.E., Bingham, J.B. and Mitchell, M.S. (2010), “Unethical behaviour in the name of the company: The moderating effect of organizational identification and positive reciprocity beliefs on unethical pro-organizational behaviour”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 95 No. 4, pp. 769–80.

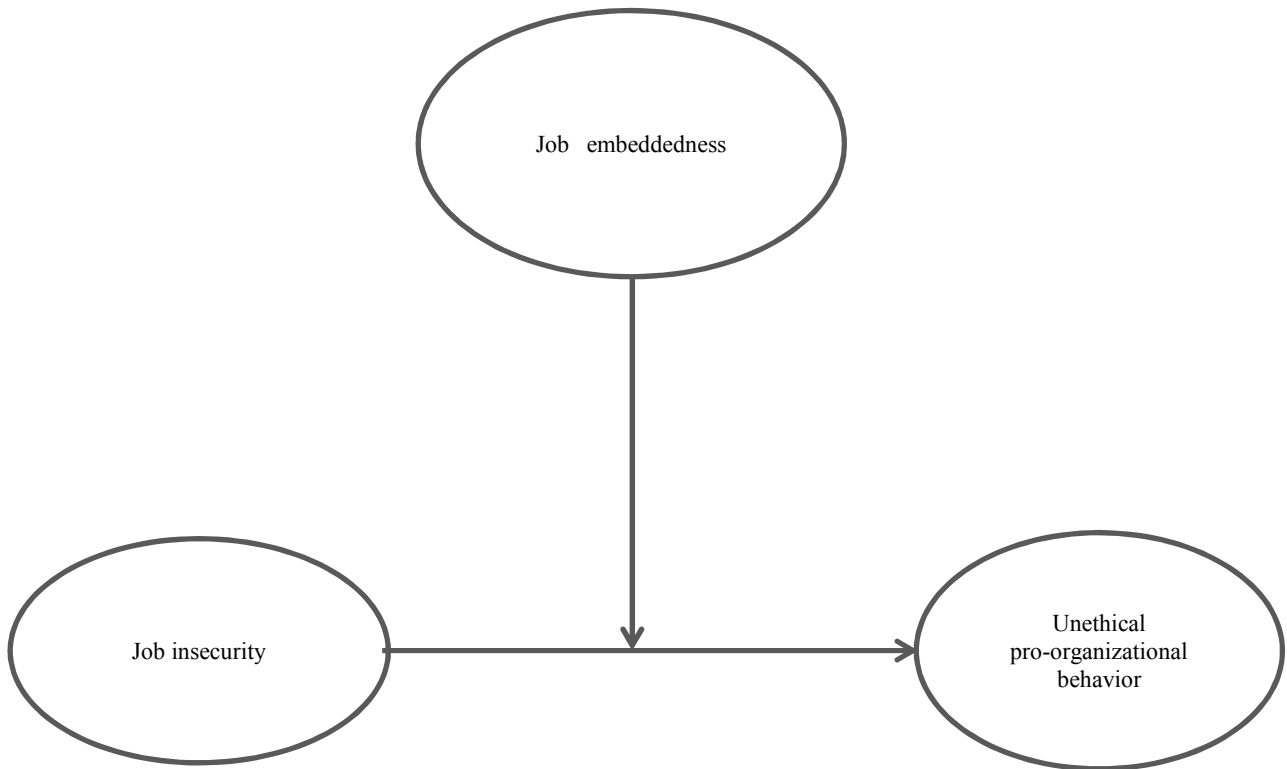
- Vander Elst, T., De Witte, H. and De Cuyper, N. (2014), “The job insecurity scale: A psychometric evaluation across five European countries”, *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 364–80.
- Weaver, C.N. (2015), “Worker expectations about losing and replacing their jobs: 35 years of change”, *Monthly Labor Review*, Jan., pp. 1–9.
- Wiltermuth, S.S., Bennett, V.M. and Pierce, L. (2013), “Doing as they would do: How the perceived ethical preferences of third-party beneficiaries impact ethical decision-making”, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 122 No. 2, pp. 280–90.
- Yao, X., Lee, T.W., Mitchell, T.R., Burton, J.P. and Sablinski, C.J. (2004), “Job embeddedness: Current research and future directions”, in Griffeth, R. and Hom, P. (Eds.), *Understanding Employee Retention and Turnover*, Information Age, Greenwich, CT, pp. 153–87.
- Yi, X. and Wang, S. (2015). Revisiting the curvilinear relation between job insecurity and work withdrawal: The moderating role of achievement orientation and risk aversion. *Human Resource Management*, 54(3), 499-515.

**Figure 1.** Direct effects model



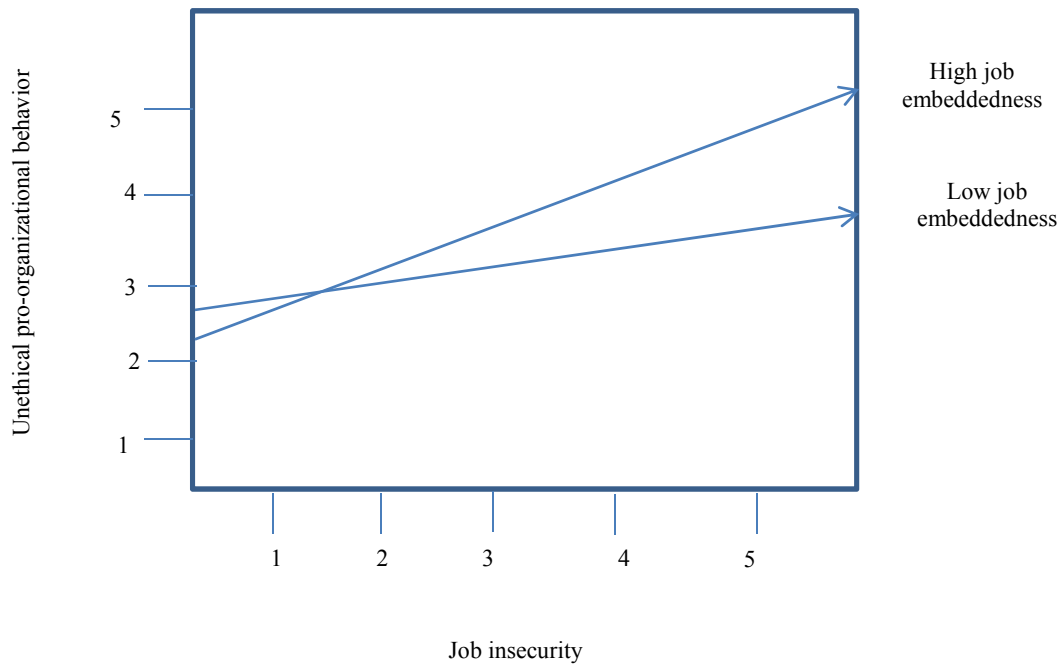


**Figure 2.** Interactive effects model



Downloaded by Western University At 20:58 23 July 2017 (PT)

**Figure 3.** Interactive effects of job insecurity and job embeddedness on unethical pro-organizational behavior



**Table I.**  
Descriptive statistics<sup>a</sup>

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Gender <sup>b</sup>	1.23	0.42						
2 Age (group) <sup>c</sup>	1.94	0.91	-.16 <sup>**</sup>					
3 Experience (group) <sup>d</sup>	4.02	2.23	-.15 <sup>**</sup>	.82 <sup>***</sup>				
4 Unethical pro-organizational behaviour	2.47	0.90	-.03	.13 <sup>*</sup>	.05	(.76)		
5 Job insecurity	2.01	0.91	-.02	.08	.07	.23 <sup>***</sup>	(.80)	
6 Job embeddedness	3.26	0.99	.01	.26 <sup>***</sup>	.22 <sup>***</sup>	.11 <sup>*</sup>	-.09	(.88)

<sup>a</sup>  $N = 346$ .

<sup>b</sup> Gender was coded as "1" for male and "2" for female.

<sup>c</sup> Age was coded as "1" for 20–30 years, "2" for 31–40 years, ... and "5" for 61 years and above.

<sup>d</sup> Experience was coded as "1" for 1–3 years, "2" for 4–6 years, ... and 8 for 20 years and above.

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

**Table II.**  
Regression analysis results for control and independent variables<sup>a</sup>

Variable	Step 1 Beta (standardized)	Step 2 Beta (standardized)
Gender	-.01	-.02
Age	.29 <sup>**</sup>	.24 <sup>*</sup>
Experience	-.19 <sup>*</sup>	-.19 <sup>*</sup>
Job insecurity		.24 <sup>***</sup>
Job embeddedness		.11 <sup>*</sup>
$R^2$	.02 <sup>*</sup>	.09 <sup>***</sup>
Change in $R^2$		.06 <sup>***</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Dependent variable = unethical pro-organizational behaviour.

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

**Table III.**  
Regression analysis results for interactive effect<sup>a</sup>

Variable	Step 3 Beta (standardized)
Job insecurity $\times$ Job embeddedness	.53 <sup>**</sup>
$R^2$ (total)	.11 <sup>***</sup>
Change in $R^2$	.02 <sup>**</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Dependent variable = unethical pro-organizational behaviour.

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$