# Outcomes of job insecurity among hotel employees during COVID-19

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#### Abstract

**Purpose** – This paper investigates the consequences of job insecurity among hotel employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Data were obtained from the employees of two five-star chain hotels in Turkey. The study hypotheses were tested via structural equation modeling.

**Findings** – The research findings demonstrate that job insecurity exacerbates job tension. Job tension erodes employees' trust in organization and aggravates their propensity to leave work early and be late for work. As hypothesized, job tension mediates the effect of job insecurity on organizational trust and the abovementioned outcomes.

**Originality/value** – This study adds to the hospitality literature by assessing the interrelationships of job insecurity, job tension, organizational trust and nonattendance intentions.

**Keywords** Hotel employees, Job insecurity, Job tension, Nonattendance, Trust in organization, COVID-19 **Paper type** Research paper

#### Introduction

According to the International Labor Organization's (2022) latest research, the pandemic will continue to substantially influence global labor markets. Until at least 2023, global unemployment is expected to stay above pre-COVID-19 levels. The expected number in 2022 is 207 million, up from 186 million in 2019 (International Labor Organization, 2022). Therefore, job insecurity is still a critical issue that deserves future research attention in the literature (e.g. Abbas, Malik, & Sarwat, 2021; Chen, Zou, & Chen, 2022). Stiffening competition, ever-changing technologies, the rise of outsourcing and unpredictable economic conditions worldwide are among the signs of job insecurity highlighting workers' fears over job continuity (De Witte, 1999; Jiang & Probst, 2019). However, job insecurity is more prevalent in the hospitality and tourism industry because of COVID-19, which has wreaked havoc on the service sector (Baum & Hai, 2020; Khawaja, Sarfraz, Rashid, & Rashid, 2022; Yost, Kizildag, & Ridderstaat, 2021).

Employees in different units may variously interpret certain stressors like job insecurity. What is critical, however, is that job insecurity is a substantial source of stress for individuals and has a negative association with their workplace attitudes (e.g. counterproductive work

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International Hospitality Review Vol. 38 No. 1, 2024 pp. 101-118 Emerald Publishing Limited 2516-8142 DOI 10.1108/IHR-11-2021-0070 behavior) and psychological health (Jung, Jung, & Yoon, 2021; Tian, Zhang, & Zou, 2014). lob insecurity also aggravates employees' job tension, defined as "a general nervousness or anxiety associated with the job affecting one's emotional and physical well-being" (Netemeyer, Brashear-Alejandro, & Boles, 2004, p. 50). In an unpredictable and unreliable work environment, employees are beset by job insecurity and, therefore, lose their feelings of organizational trust (Richter & Näswall, 2019), thus highlighting "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another" (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998, p. 395). Employees display nonattendance intentions due to their unfavorable perceptions of job security (Etehadi & Karatepe, 2019). Propensity to leave work early (PLE) and propensity to be late for work (PLW) are among the components of nonattendance intentions. PLW highlights "an individual's specific affective and cognitive responses to being late for work" (Foust, Elicker, & Levy, 2006, p. 122). In tandem with this definition of PLW (Foust et al., 2006), PLE is defined as workers' particular cognitive and affective responses to intentions to leave work early. These nonattendance intentions or behaviors can result in financial loss and disruption of effective service delivery (Boyar, Maertz, & Pearson, 2005).

Our paper proposes and tests a model of job insecurity outcomes among hotel employees during COVID-19. In particular, we assess (1) the link between job insecurity and job tension, (2) the impacts of job insecurity and job tension on trust in organization, PLE and PLW and (3) job tension as a mediator relating job insecurity to the above outcomes.

Our paper contributes to the job insecurity literature. First, employees are at high risk of unemployment or underemployment (Agarwal, 2021; Verma & Gustafsson, 2020). A recent report by the UNWTO (2020) shows that at least 100 million direct tourism jobs are at risk because of COVID-19, in addition to sectors associated with tourism such as the hospitality industry, which employs 144 million workers worldwide. This explicitly shows that the hospitality and tourism industry was severely hit by the pandemic (Ho, Lam, & Law, 2022). According to Hu, Yan, Casey, and Wu's (2021) research, employees ranked job insecurity as the primary concern since the outbreak of COVID-19. This makes an assessment of the outcomes of job insecurity among hotel employees during COVID-19 imperative. From the industry's viewpoint, hotel employees, especially those in frontline service positions, are among the most critical actors in establishing good connections between companies and customers (Ampofo, Owusu, Coffie, & Asiedu-Appiah, 2021). Therefore, hospitality and tourism businesses need strategies to retain high-performing employees since they contribute to the business performance recovery once the COVID-19 pandemic is controlled (Hao, Xiao, & Chon, 2020).

The risk or uncertainty of what might happen with the current job in the future is vulnerable to employees' trust in organization. That is, employees are likely to lose their trust in organization because of job insecurity (Richter & Näswall, 2019). The relevant literature delineates studies about the outcomes of job insecurity among hospitality employees during COVID-19 (Aguiar-Quintana, Nguyen, Araujo-Cabrera, & Sanabria-Díaz, 2021; Chen & Eyoun, 2021). A review of past and recent meta-analytic studies, as well as the latest research, reveals that one of the least investigated correlates of job insecurity is *trust in organization* (Cheng & Chan, 2008; Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018; Richter & Näswall, 2019). Therefore, we aim to understand whether hotel employees suffering from job insecurity display lose trust in their companies.

Second, Jung et al. (2021, p. 2) state, "Since it seems impossible for employees to perform their work without anxiety over their employment conditions during the current pandemic, it may be fruitful to determine the effects of job insecurity based on the responses and behaviors of employees and to identify how they can be alleviated. Despite its importance, such research has been scarce". Our paper concurs with the work of Jung et al. (2021) and examines the impact of job insecurity on PLE and PLW. More importantly, the relevant meta-analytic and review studies have reported no evidence concerning the association between

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job insecurity and these nonattendance intention outcomes (De Witte, Pienaar, & De Cuyper, 2016; Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018). Our search in the literature indicates that only Karatepe, Rezapouraghdam, and Hassannia's (2020) study has examined these linkages so far. Some empirical studies have linked job insecurity to employees' turnover intentions (e.g. Chen et al., 2022). However, we consider the voids concerning the effect of job insecurity on nonattendance intentions and aim to find out whether hotel workers' feelings of job loss in the future heighten their PLE and PLW.

Third, job insecurity engenders undesirable outcomes. However, there is still scarce evidence on the *mechanism* relating job insecurity to work-related consequences (Karatepe *et al.*, 2020; Richter & Näswall, 2019). With this realization, our paper tests job tension as a mediator of the link between job insecurity and the least investigated consequences, such as trust in organization, PLE and PLW. This is because work-related strain is one of the immediate reactions of employees to hindrance stressors and links stressors to outcomes (e.g. Kang & Jang, 2019).

## Theoretical framework and development of hypotheses

Background

In a global market environment buckling under the effects of COVID-19, employees have high degrees of uncertainty about their jobs (e.g. Giousmpasoglou, Marinakou, & Zopiatis, 2021; Han, Koo, Ariza-Montes, Lee, & Kim, 2021; Jiang & Wen, 2020). This is not surprising given global revenue losses in the hospitality, tourism and aviation industries and that many employees have lost their jobs due to defensive strategies taken against COVID-19 (Khan, Khalid, Abbas, & Khalid, 2022; Jones & Comfort, 2020; Lai & Wong, 2020; McCartney, Chi In, & Pinto, 2022; Verma & Gustafsson, 2020).

We classified the job insecurity-related studies into two groups: those conducted during the pandemic and those conducted before the pandemic. For instance, Koo, Curtis, and Ryan (2021) illustrated that employee engagement mediated the link between job insecurity and quitting intentions in the hotel industry. Likewise, Jung *et al.* (2021) noted that job engagement was a mediator between job insecurity and turnover intentions among hotel workers. Aguiar-Quintana *et al.* (2021) found that job insecurity eroded hotel workers' task performance while aggravating anxiety and depression. A study of foodservice workers documented that fear of COVID-19 exacerbated job insecurity and that this positive relationship was reduced by mindfulness (Chen & Eyoun, 2021).

In addition, the relevant literature reports the results of studies on job insecurity before the current pandemic, the data of which were derived from hospitality samples. For instance, Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara, Ting-Ding, and Guerra-Báez (2017) reported that job insecurity mitigated organizational citizenship behavior and heightened deviant behavior among employees working with outsourced employees. Darvishmotevali, Arasli, and Kilic's (2017) research illustrated that anxiety was a mediator between job insecurity and job performance. Moreover, Etehadi and Karatepe (2019) found that job insecurity influenced various outcomes, such as absence from work and innovative behavior, among hotel workers via selfefficacy. A recent study of hotel employees indicated that job insecurity was a partial mediator between authentic leadership and surface acting (Wang & Xie, 2020). A study of casino employees indicated that job satisfaction partly mediated the impact of job security on perceived health, while internal service climate moderated the influence of job security on perceived health (Wong, Ma, Chan, Huang, & Zhao, 2019). Safavi and Karatepe (2019) found that hotel employees beset by job insecurity had lower levels of job embeddedness and, therefore, displayed higher turnover intentions and lower service recovery performance. Cheung, Wu, and Chi's (2019) research illustrated that anxiety was a mediator between job insecurity and job dissatisfaction among casino employees. Another study also revealed that job insecurity exacerbated hotel workers' turnover intentions and eroded their job satisfaction (Mensah, Azila-Gbettor, & Appietu, 2020).

In another empirical study, Karatepe et al. (2020) found that employee engagement mediated the impact of job insecurity on absenteeism, non-green behaviors, PLW and PLE. A study of hospitality managers indicated that high levels of job insecurity increased the negative effect of grit on turnover intentions and career change intentions (McGinley & Mattila, 2020). Ma, Liu, Lassleben, and Ma's (2019) work disclosed that job insecurity was positively associated with deviant behaviors among Chinese state-owned air transportation employees. In addition, Costa and Neves (2017) demonstrated that psychological contract breach was a mediator between job insecurity and organizational deviance.

An evaluation of the writings before and during the COVID-19 pandemic implicitly shows that job insecurity has been associated with counterproductive work behavior, turnover intentions, task performance, subjective well-being and work engagement. The COVID-19-related studies have tested the impact of job insecurity on various outcomes. However, only one study has investigated PLE and PLW as consequences of job insecurity, while there is no empirical piece that has explored the link between job insecurity and trust in organization. More importantly, there is no evidence confirming the consequences of job insecurity among hotel workers and job tension as a mediator of the link between job insecurity and trust in organization, PLE and PLW. Therefore, we propose the conceptual model (see Figure 1) to fill the aforementioned gaps. It is hypothesized that job insecurity influences trust in organization, PLE and PLW directly and indirectly through job tension. Our study utilized organizational tenure and gender as control variables to see whether they confounded the relationships (e.g. Etehadi & Karatepe, 2019; Jiang & Probst, 2019).

### Hypotheses

Our paper posits ten hypothesized relationships. Job demands-resources theory contributes to our job insecurity → job tension hypothesis (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017),

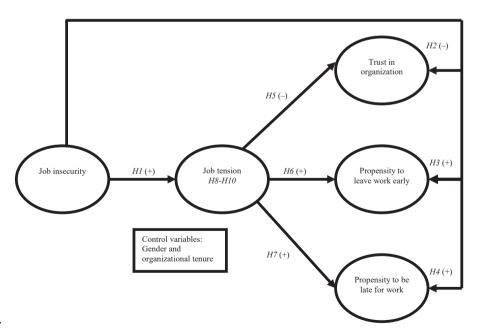


Figure 1. Conceptual model

while psychological contract theory is used to develop the hypothesis for the job insecurity  $\rightarrow$  trust in organization association (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). Conservation of resources theory is the theoretical framework for our hypotheses regarding the relationships between job insecurity  $\rightarrow$  PLE and PLW and between job tension  $\rightarrow$  trust in organization, PLE and PLW (Hobfoll, 2001). Affective events theory is utilized to develop the hypothesis concerning the job insecurity  $\rightarrow$  job tension  $\rightarrow$  trust in organization relationship (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Finally, we develop the hypotheses regarding the job insecurity  $\rightarrow$  job tension  $\rightarrow$  PLE and PLW associations under the umbrella of job demands-resources theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

#### Job insecurity and job tension

Job demands-resources theory highlights two psychological processes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The first is the health impairment process. According to this process, job demands predict work-related strain that drains employees' mental and physical resources, leading to negative work and nonwork outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The second is the motivational process, which suggests that job resources have the motivational potential and enhance employees' work engagement. Employees exhibit desirable work outcomes in turn (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

The health impairment process guides our hypothesis regarding the association between job insecurity (job demand) and job tension (work-related strain) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017). Specifically, job demands are predictors of work-related strain, while job resources are predictors of work (dis)engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Accordingly, we propose that employees beset by elevated levels of uncertainty about their job in the organization due to destabilized employment arrangements and the COVID-19 pandemic experience higher job tension. Scholars have explored the association between employees' feelings of job loss and work-related strain. Broadly speaking, Näswall, Sverke, and Hellgren's (2005) research illustrated that job insecurity triggered nurses' job tension. The meta-analytic work by Jiang and Lavaysse (2018) reported a positive correlation between job insecurity and strain  $(\rho = 0.24)$ . Therefore, we propose:

H1. Job insecurity positively relates to job tension.

#### *Job insecurity and trust in organization*

Job insecurity is an indication of future job loss. As psychological contract theory proposes, job insecurity signals the breach of a psychological contract and, by extension, a loss of organizational trust (cf. Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). When management does not keep its promises or fulfill its obligations, reneging occurs (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Once employees feel threatened by job insecurity, they lose their trust in organization due to the breach of a psychological contract (Richter & Näswall, 2019). Unprecedented incidents such as the COVID-19 pandemic are also signs of potential job loss and erode employees' feelings of trust in organization. This also deteriorates the relational character of a psychological contract based on long-term emotional exchange (cf. Ma et al., 2019). Though job insecurity seems to be an important aspect of relational psychological contract (Ma et al., 2019), it is also a critical aspect of the transactional psychological contract for full-time employees because of salary cuts or late salary payments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In light of this, we contend that employees lose their trust in organization over promises broken by the company.

Meta-analytic studies have shown a negative correlation between job insecurity and trust. However, these studies have not explicitly reported the type of trust (e.g. trust in coworkers, trust in supervisors, trust in management) used in their analysis (Cheng & Chan, 2008; Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, 2002). In this paper, we focus on employees' trust in organization. Few

empirical pieces have explored the link between job insecurity and trust in organization. Specifically, in a study carried out in different settings, Richter and Näswall (2019) reported that job insecurity mitigated employees' trust in organization. Another study documented that workers' feelings of job loss weakened their organizational trust (Kim, 2019). A previous study revealed that job insecurity diminished employees' trust in organization (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989). As highlighted earlier, there is a need for research about whether hotel employees lose their trust in organization when they feel insecure about the future of their job during the outbreak of COVID-19. Therefore, we propose:

H2. Job insecurity negatively relates to trust in organization.

#### Job insecurity and proclivity to display nonattendance intentions

As advanced by conservation of resources theory, resources such as personal characteristics and energies enable employees to combat stressors (Hobfoll, 2001). Employees take advantage of work-related resources (e.g. supervisor support) to handle stressors. However, when employees are beset by heavy workloads and stressors and/or are devoid of adequate work-related resources, they display negative attitudes and behaviors (Karatepe *et al.*, 2020). This is also highlighted by Shaffer, Harrison, Gilley, and Luk (2001, p. 100), who state that "excessive demands and/or insufficient resources within a particular role domain or between domains can result in negative affective and dysfunctional behaviors".

Organizational members who perceive uncertainty about their future job situation in the company have PLE and PLW. Our search in the relevant literature pinpoints only one empirical study that has developed the link between job insecurity and nonattendance intentions in light of conservation of resources theory, reporting that job insecurity heightens both PLE and PLW (Karatepe *et al.*, 2020). Accordingly, we surmise that the potential of involuntary job loss as a stressor leads to nonattendance intentions. That is, organizational members feel threatened about the potential loss of their jobs in the course of COVID-19 (Jung *et al.*, 2021). Under these conditions, employees exhibit negative attitudes in the form of nonattendance intentions. Therefore, we propose:

H3. Job insecurity positively relates to PLE.

H4. Job insecurity positively relates to PLW.

#### *Job tension and trust in organization*

As propounded by conservation of resources theory, negative employee outcomes occur because of resource loss and strain (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). Accordingly, we argue that when employees perceive a loss of valued resources while coping with problems stemming from job tension, they lose their trust in organization. Such loss is the inevitable result of insufficient work-related resources that could enable employees to handle their job tension. Loss of trust in organization would give rise to the deterioration of the relationship between employees and the company (cf. Richter & Näswall, 2019). Gauging the impact of job tension on trust in organization is imperative because hotel employees have been shown to suffer from strain due to a lack of resources at work (e.g. burnout, tension) (cf. Hsieh & Karatepe, 2019). Management does not seem to provide various resources to its employees because of various defensive strategies taken against the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite empirical evidence proving that employees' trust reduces their work-related strain (Bobbio, Bellan, & Manganelli, 2012; Lambert, Hogan, Barton-Bellessa, & Jiang, 2012), we still do not know whether heightened job tension erodes hotel employees' trust in organization. Therefore, we propose:

H5. Job tension negatively relates to trust in organization.

Job tension and proclivity to display nonattendance intentions

Conservation of resources theory contends that employees experience strain when they lose their valued resources and/or possess insufficient resources while handling stressors at work (Hobfoll, 2001). Employees display negative work-related outcomes because of strain and a loss of valued resources (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). In light of this theoretical reasoning, it can be argued that employees with heightened job tension exhibit higher PLE and PLW. We also argue that employees may display these negative outcomes when they receive insufficient support at work to cope with job tension during the COVID-19 pandemic. A synthesis of previous research shows evidence which pertains to the impact of job tension on outcomes (Netemeyer et al., 2004). However, it seems that only one empirical study has investigated the impact of job tension on the abovementioned nonattendance intentions among hotel employees so far (Hsieh & Karatepe, 2019). Therefore, we propose:

H6. Job tension positively relates to PLE.

H7. Job tension positively relates to PLW.

Job tension as a mediator between job insecurity and trust in organization

The links between job insecurity  $\rightarrow$  job tension and between job tension  $\rightarrow$  trust in organization implicitly suggest a mediation effect. Though the preponderance of the empirical studies has treated organizational trust as a mediator, there are also empirical studies that have assessed this construct as an outcome variable (Guzzo, Wang, Madera, & Abbott, 2021). In this paper, we aim to understand whether employees suffering from job insecurity and job tension have also lost trust in organization during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As propounded by affective events theory, workplace conditions are the proximal causes of emotional reactions and distal causes of outcomes (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). As cogently discussed by Rai and Agarwal (2017), repeated negative events exacerbate negative emotions, influencing employees' outcomes in turn. Based on this theoretical underpinning, we surmise that job insecurity is a repeated negative event, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which aggravates employees' negative emotions (e.g. nervousness, anxiety) and reduces their feelings of organizational trust. Therefore, we propose:

H8. Job tension mediates the impact of job insecurity on trust in organization.

Job tension as a mediator between job insecurity and proclivity to display nonattendance intentions

Job demands-resources theory suggests that employees with high levels of job demands or stress (e.g. work overload) experience heightened strain (e.g. exhaustion) due to depletion of emotional and physical resources and, therefore, display to undesirable outcomes (e.g. absenteeism) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Based on the health impairment component of this theory, it can be argued that job insecurity (job demand or stressor) drains employees' emotional and physical resources and results in aggravated feelings of job tension (work-related strain) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Consequently, these workers exhibit higher PLE and PLW (outcomes). In empirical terms, Hsieh and Karatepe (2019) reported that ostracism aggravated work-related strain, thus increasing hotel employees' nonattendance intentions. Darvishmotevali *et al.*'s (2017) research also provided evidence about the stressor (job insecurity) → strain (anxiety)→ outcome (job performance) relationship. Therefore, we propose:

H9. Job tension mediates the impact of job insecurity on PLE.

H10. Job tension mediates the influence of job insecurity on PLW.

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#### Method

Sample and data collection

We assessed the above relationships with data collected from hotel employees in Antalya, a popular tourism destination in Turkey. As elsewhere worldwide (Baum & Hai, 2020), job insecurity remains a vital issue in the Turkish hospitality industry. We selected the hotel industry because a dramatic decrease in international tourism receipts has influenced the hotel industry deleteriously during the pandemic (He, Mao, Morrison, & Coca-Stefaniak, 2020; Jafari, Ozduran, & Saydam, 2021). Despite the difficulties associated with the drop-off and pick-up technique due to governmental restrictions during the pandemic, we used a webbased survey to obtain data from employees in various departments such as security, sales, accounting and housekeeping in June 2020.

Data collection was carried out with strong support from management and in cooperation with human resource managers. The survey link was emailed to human resource managers, who directly shared the link with employees in the WhatsApp groups. These managers also emailed the survey link to employees. In short, 160 employees were requested to partake in our study through emails and were sent invitations via WhatsApp groups. Owing to these hotel managers' strong support, 151 surveys were obtained (a response rate of 94.4%).

To curtail the risk of common method variance, the participants were assured of anonymity, confidentiality and voluntary participation (Etehadi & Karatepe, 2019). We also checked the normality of the data via the Shapiro–Wilk test. There was no evidence of the non-normality of the data since p-values were greater than 0.05. Most of the sample was male (n = 98, 65%). Most participants were in the 28-37 age range (n = 101, 67%), while 32 (21%) were in the 18-27 age range. The sample consisted of 69 participants (46%) with two-year college degrees, while 65 (43%) had four-year college degrees. Sixty percent of the participants had tenures between one and five years, while eight percent had tenures less than one year. Twenty-five percent of the sample had tenures between six and ten years, and the rest had tenures longer than ten years.

#### Measures

We utilized the back-translation approach to ensure that the English-language measures were translated into Turkish accurately. We conducted a pilot study, which requested five hotel workers to check the readability and understandability of the items. These participants reported no difficulty regarding the above issues.

Job insecurity was operationalized through four items from Delery and Doty (1996). These items were positively worded. Example items are "Employees in this job can expect to stay in the organization for as long as they wish" and "It is very difficult to dismiss an employee in this organization". The above scale has proven useful in other papers (e.g. Karatepe *et al.*, 2020). Its scoring categories ranged from "5 (strongly agree)" to "1 (strongly disagree)".

Seven items were used to operationalize job tension via House and Rizzo (1972). Example items are "My job tends to directly affect my health" and "I work under a great deal of tension". The job tension scale has been tapped in several studies in the relevant literature (e.g. Hsieh & Karatepe, 2019). These items were scored on a seven-point scale ("7 = strongly agree" to "1 = strongly disagree").

Trust in organization was measured with seven items adopted from Robinson and Rousseau (1994). Sample items are "I believe my employer has high integrity" and "I can expect my employer to treat me in a consistent and predictable fashion". Recent studies have utilized this scale to assess workers' perceptions of trust in organization (e.g. Ababneh, 2020). These items were rated on a five-point scale ("5 = strongly agree" to "1 = strongly disagree").

PLW was measured through three items from Foust *et al.* (2006). PLE was also measured via three items adapted from Foust *et al.* (2006). For example, "Tardiness to work should be acceptable as long as the work gets finished" was changed to "Leaving work early should be

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acceptable as long as the work gets finished". These items have also been tapped in recent empirical pieces (Hsieh & Karatepe, 2019; Karatepe *et al.*, 2020). The items for nonattendance intentions were rated on the "7 = strongly agree" to "1 = strongly disagree" scale.

Our paper controlled for organizational tenure and gender to see whether they acted as confounding variables. Our study also utilized place of birth as a marker variable because of the use of self-report data to control common method variance (Kim, Kim, Han, Jackson, & Ployhart, 2017).

#### Strategy of analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling via LISREL 8.30 were performed to gauge the measurement and structural models (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996). A covariance matrix was utilized as the input. Confirmatory factor analysis was employed to present evidence of validity and reliability (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Structural equation modeling was used to test the hypotheses. The Sobel test was employed to verify the mediating impacts.

The " $\chi^2/df$ , comparative fit index (CFI), parsimony-normed fit index (PNFI), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)" were utilized in this paper. The values for RMSEA and SRMR lower than 0.08 indicate a good fit (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008), while the values for CFI greater than 0.90 denote a good fit (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985). Values between 2 and 5 for the  $\chi^2/df$  are acceptable. The relevant literature does not present a specific threshold for PNFI. However, a value for PNFI greater than 0.50 is acceptable (Hooper *et al.*, 2008). The partial correlation analysis using place of birth as a marker variable was performed to check common method variance.

#### Results

Measurement model and common method variance

On the basis of confirmatory factor analysis results, the measurement model fit to the data well (" $\chi^2 = 401.51 \ df = 215, \chi^2/df = 1.87$ ; CFI = 0.93; PNFI = 0.74; RMSEA = 0.076; SRMR = 0.066") after deleting one item from trust in organization, which was < 0.40 (e.g. Hooper *et al.*, 2008; Marsh & Hocevar, 1985). All of the loadings (excluding one item with a loading of 0.66) were above 0.70. The average variances extracted by variables were > 0.50. The average variances extracted for job insecurity, job tension, trust in organization, PLE and PLW were 0.63, 0.68, 0.71, 0.76 and 0.79, respectively. These findings collectively verified convergent validity (e.g. Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Discriminant validity was verified because none of the square roots of the average variances extracted was less than the correlation between each pair of variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In addition, the composite reliability (coefficient alpha) results for job insecurity, job tension, trust in organization, PLE and PLW were 0.87 (0.86), 0.94 (0.94), 0.94 (0.93), 0.91 (0.90) and 0.92 (0.89), respectively. All measures were reliable since each composite reliability score was above 0.60 and each coefficient alpha was above 0.70 (e.g. Etehadi & Karatepe, 2019).

In addition, two statistical analyses were performed to check the risk of common method variance. First, the results of the unrotated exploratory factor analysis demonstrated that the first factor explained 45.02% of the total variance. This is below the cut-off value of 50–60% (Fuller, Simmering, Atinc, Atinc, & Babin, 2016). Second, Table 1 delineates summary statistics and measure intercorrelations. The findings implicitly demonstrated that none of the study constructs significantly correlated with place of birth as a marker variable. The significance of these correlations did not change after controlling for place of birth (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Accordingly, common method variance was not a risk.

IHR 38,1	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
50,1	1. Gender	_							
	2. Organizational tenure	-0.050	_						
	3. The place of birth	-0.017	-0.044	_					
	4. Job insecurity	$-0.266^{**}$	-0.068	-0.096	-				
	5. Job tension	$-0.220^{**}$	-0.041	-0.155	0.509**	-			
110	6. Trust in organization	$0.197^*$	0.088	0.003	$-0.644^{**}$	$-0.517^{**}$	-		
	7. Propensity to leave work early	-0.128	-0.063	-0.069	0.312	0.500	$-0.310^{**}$		
	8. Propensity to be late for work	-0.097	-0.146	0.029	$0.339^{**}$	$0.486^{**}$	$-0.276^{**}$	0.696**	_
Table 1. Summary statistics	Mean	0.35	2.23	0.89	3.01	4.15	3.57	4.35	3.96
	Standard deviation	0.48	0.64	0.31	0.88	1.43	0.81	1.49	1.50
and correlations of observed variables	<b>Note(s):</b> ${}^*p < 0.05, {}^*p < 0.01$ . Two-tailed test. Gender was coded as $0 = \text{male}$ and $1 = \text{female}$ . Organizational tenure was measured in four categories. The place of birth was coded as $0 = \text{capital}$ city and $1 = \text{other}$ cities								

Test of the hypothesized structural model

Using the  $\chi^2$  difference test, a comparison between the hypothesized structural model ( $\chi^2 = 444.94$ , df = 253) and completely mediated model ( $\chi^2 = 490.63$ , df = 256) and non-mediated model ( $\chi^2 = 472.88$ , df = 254) was made. The hypothesized structural model fit better to the data than the completely mediated ( $\Delta \chi^2 = 45.69$ , df = 3, p < 0.05) and non-mediated models ( $\Delta \chi^2 = 27.94$ , df = 1, p < 0.05). The hypothesized structural model fit the data reasonably: " $\chi^2 = 444.94$  df = 253,  $\chi^2/df = 1.76$ ; CFI = 0.92; PNFI = 0.72; RMSEA = 0.071; SRMR = 0.063" (e.g. Hooper et al., 2008; Marsh & Hocevar, 1985).

H1 assumed that job insecurity positively affected on job tension. As expected, job insecurity depicted a positive link with job tension ( $\beta_{21} = 0.48$ , t = 4.91, p < 0.01) (Figure 2). Thus, H1 was confirmed. H2 assumed that job tension exerted a negative impact on trust in organization. The finding that job tension negatively influenced trust in organization

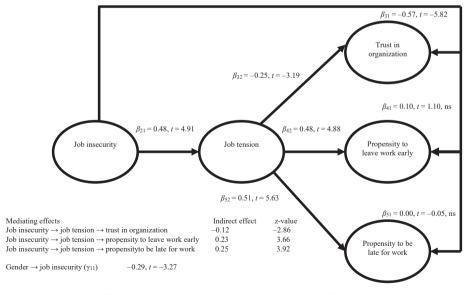


Figure 2. Hypothesized path results

**Note(s):** ns: not significant. The rest of the path estimates were significant (t > 2.58, p < 0.01)

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supported H2 ( $\beta_{31} = -0.57$ , t = -5.82, p < 0.01). The path estimate regarding the influence of job insecurity on PLE was inconsistent with what was given in H3 ( $\beta_{41} = 0.10$ , t = 1.10, p > 0.05). Thus, H3 was not confirmed. This was also true for the association between job insecurity and PLW. That is, the path estimate concerning the impact of job insecurity on PLW was not significant ( $\beta_{51} = 0.00$ , t = -0.05, p > 0.05). The above result did not support H4.

H5 assumed that job tension depicted a negative association with trust in organization. The results revealed that this relationship was significant and negative ( $\beta_{32} = -0.25$ , t = -3.19, p < 0.01). Accordingly, H5 was supported. H6 assumed that job tension had a negative effect on PLE, while H7 assumed that job tension was negatively linked to PLW. The path estimates concerning the effects of job tension on PLE ( $\beta_{42} = 0.48$ , t = 4.88, p < 0.01) and PLW ( $\beta_{52} = 0.51$ , t = 5.63, p < 0.01) were significant and positive. Thus, H6 and H7 were supported.

The Sobel test results concerning the mediating effects are provided in Figure 2. More specifically, job tension fully mediated the effect of job insecurity on PLE (H9, z-value = 3.66, p < 0.01) and PLW (H10, z-value = 3.92, p < 0.01), while job tension partially mediated the link between job insecurity and organizational trust (H8, z-value = -2.86, p < 0.01). Gender had a negative relationship with job insecurity ( $\gamma_{11} = -0.29$ , t = -3.27, p < 0.01). This finding illustrated that female employees experienced low levels of job security. The proportions of explained variance for job insecurity, job tension, trust in organization, PLE and PLW were 8%, 27%, 53%, 30% and 28%, respectively. We obtained the same pattern of the findings regardless of whether the control variables were included or not.

#### Discussion and conclusions

**Conclusions** 

We investigated the potential consequences of job insecurity among hotel workers during COVID-19. The findings concerning the impact of employees' feelings of job loss on job tension (H1) not only are concordant with the health impairment process of job demands-resources theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) but also dovetail with other studies (Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018). Anxieties over losing one's job during COVID-19 exacerbate employees' job tension. That is, employees with unfavorable perceptions of job security are beset by elevated levels of job tension. Our finding concerning the association between job insecurity and organizational trust (H2) corroborates the evidence reported by Richter and Näswall (2019). In other words, employees' worries over losing their jobs also mitigate their trust in organization. Concordant to psychological contract theory (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994), a breach of psychological contract (e.g. salary cuts) dampens employees' favorable perceptions of organizational trust, particularly during the current pandemic.

Employees' job tension also worsens their trust in organization (H5), leading to the deterioration of the relationship between employees and the company (Richter & Näswall, 2019). As conservation of resources theory contends, employees have negative work-related outcomes (Hobfoll, 2001; Lee & Ashforth, 1996). Employees with limited access to work-related resources and/or who lose their valued resources while trying to handle their job tension lose their trust in organization. Consistent with conservation of resources theory, employees display PLE (H6) and PLW (H7) when they perceive that they cannot cope with job tension due to the loss of certain resources and/or limited work-related resources. The results concerning the effect of job tension on the above nonattendance intention variables are supported by Hsieh and Karatepe's (2019) work.

Our research findings further suggest that job tension partially mediates the association between job insecurity and organizational trust (H8), while it fully mediates the influence of job insecurity on PLE (H9) and PLW (H10). In congruence with affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), employees who perceive that job insecurity seems to be a prevalent practice during the outbreak of COVID-19 exhibit nervousness or anxiety and, therefore, have

unfavorable perceptions of trust in organization. In addition, employees display heightened PLE and PLW due to their worries over losing their job in the near future, thus leading to job tension. This finding is also in agreement with the health impairment process of job demands-resources theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Lastly, the results do not support the positive links between job insecurity and the previously mentioned nonattendance intention variables (PLE, H3 and PLW, H4). This may be because employees do not find job insecurity a valid reason to display nonattendance intentions. Instead, they may do their best at work to avoid losing their job in the organization. However, employees' ongoing fear of job loss engenders job tension, which triggers nonattendance intentions.

#### Theoretical implications

The findings of our paper shed new light on and provide significant insights into the consequences of job insecurity. This is one of the first studies offering empirical findings and discussions in this area in the extant service literature. First, our paper addresses the necessity, as postulated by several scholars (Aguiar-Quintana et al., 2021; Chen & Eyoun, 2021; Jung et al., 2021), of examining job insecurity among hotel employees during the pandemic. This need is also apparent since millions of people have lost their jobs in the hospitality and tourism industry (UNWTO, 2020). As propounded by psychological contract theory, job insecurity is a sign of failure to fulfill promises or obligations, thus eroding employees' trust in organization (Richter & Näswall, 2019). However, evidence about the relationship between employees' feelings of job loss and organizational trust is scarce (e.g. Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018). This is especially true during the unprecedented difficulties arising from the current pandemic. Our study responds to this by gauging the link between hotel workers' feelings of the threat of job loss and organizational trust.

Second, the current literature presents studies that have related job insecurity to traditional consequences like job satisfaction (e.g. Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018). As conservation of resources theory contends (Hobfoll, 2001), high levels of stressful conditions and/or insufficient resources result in dysfunctional outcomes. However, the job insecurity literature lacks evidence of the link between job insecurity and critical nonattendance intentions outcomes like PLE and PLW (Karatepe *et al.*, 2020). Thus, our paper answers calls made for research on the outcomes of job insecurity during the pandemic.

Third, work-related strain such as job tension is one of the immediate reactions among employees (e.g. Kang & Jang, 2019). Therefore, our study uses job tension as the underlying mechanism that relates job insecurity to trust in organization, PLE and PLW. This is relevant and significant because evidence about the process by which job insecurity is associated with various consequences in the hospitality literature is lacking.

#### Management implications

According to the findings of our paper, job tension fully mediates the effect of job insecurity on PLE and PLW, while it partially mediates the effect of job insecurity on trust in organization. In light of these findings, our study offers five practical implications enabling managers to take action during and after COVID-19. First, job insecurity aggravates job tension and erodes trust in organization. These results signify the need for the retention of talented employees during a crisis. This is important because worries about job insecurity preclude the retention of talented employees (cf. Safavi & Karatepe, 2019). In addition, employees would contribute to the organizational performance recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic in the competitive hospitality market (Hao *et al.*, 2020). To achieve this, management should not prefer temporary or permanent salary cuts for such employees.

Second, our findings suggest that job insecurity heightens job tension, resulting in the erosion of organizational trust. Therefore, management must care about employees' well-being.

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Hospitality businesses can arrange online workshops to help employees cope with their nervousness or anxiety and build resilience during the pandemic. In these workshops, employees should feel that management still values them as strategic partners of the company, tries to retain them and helps them develop resilience despite temporary or permanent salary cuts. By doing so, management would not witness the loss of employees' trust in organization. In addition, management should go on arranging such workshops once COVID-19 subsides. This is crucial because hospitality employees who are frequently beset by stressors and suffer from anxiety only stand to benefit from such resilience-building sessions.

Third, job insecurity heightens job tension, resulting in higher nonattendance intentions during COVID-19. By recognizing this, managers of hospitality businesses should make sure that employees are fully aware of protective behaviors. This is vital because employees experience enough strain at work and should not have to deal with a lack of protective behaviors (i.e. wearing masks and gloves at all times, frequent sanitization and use of thermal body measurement systems) against the infectious COVID-19 disease. Otherwise, their tendency to display nonattendance would increase. Elevated levels of nonattendance would give rise to additional costs for hospitality businesses.

Fourth, job insecurity or job tension gives rise to undesirable outcomes such as the erosion of trust in organization and elevated levels of nonattendance intentions. Therefore, hotels can arrange weekly online health priority meetings in which employees' family members can participate with them. In such meetings, hotels should demonstrate that the company always pays strict attention to the rules and regulations associated with the pandemic. This will signal that hotels are clean and safe workplaces where employees adhere to protective health behaviors at elevated levels. Under these circumstances, employees are likely to receive more support from their family members. Lastly, there is a need for an environment where employees can voice their ideas to help the organization make better decisions. Such employees could also be encouraged to participate in decision-making (Jung et al., 2021). This practice will fuel employees' trust in organization while sending signals to them regarding job security.

#### Limitations and avenues for future research

Our paper is not without limitations. Specifically, we measured quantitative job insecurity and its potential outcomes. In future research, investigating the outcomes of both quantitative and qualitative job insecurity among hotel employees would add to the extant literature. We assessed PLE and PLW as the two nonattendance intentions. Inclusion of social loafing, turnover and counterproductive work behaviors as behavioral outcomes in future research models would enhance managerial responses to job insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic. In future studies, using objective data such as company records to measure employees' tardiness and leaving work early would be more useful.

Our study controlled for common method variance through a marker variable. However, in future studies, obtaining time-lagged data and/or using supervisor ratings would be more effective. Moreover, future studies could use a mixed-methods approach to investigate job tension as a mediator of the link between job insecurity, trust in organization and propensity to exhibit nonattendance, while gathering hotel employees' insights into the potentially detrimental impacts of job insecurity during the outbreak of COVID-19. The findings based on such studies would advance the understanding of job insecurity.

In this study, we used cross-sectional data. This practice precludes us from making causal inferences. In future research, collecting longitudinal data would be a potential solution to the issue of causality. Replication pieces with larger sample sizes would add to the current knowledge base about job insecurity and its possible consequences. In closing, gathering cross-national data and testing the link depicted in the model via such data would enhance our current knowledge of job insecurity.

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