

QUALITATIVE JOB INSECURITY AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: THE ROLE OF INTRINSIC MOTIVATION, LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Among millennial employees in India's IT sector, this study investigates whether intrinsic motivation serves as a mediating pathway between qualitative job insecurity and discretionary extra-role performance. It further examines how these work place dynamics can inform leadership practices and contribute to enhanced organizational effectiveness.

Design/methodology/approach: Data were collected from 403 employees working in IT organizations operating in India using a structured questionnaire and convenience sampling technique. The study adopted a quantitative survey research design, and structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed to examine the proposed relationships.

Findings: The results indicate a significant positive relationship between qualitative job insecurity and extra-role performance, with intrinsic motivation partially mediating this relationship. These findings suggest that employees may respond to threats to valued job features by strengthening their intrinsic motivation and engaging in discretionary work behaviours that contribute to organizational goals and efficiency.

Originality/value: The study enriches the literature on qualitative job insecurity by empirically examining intrinsic motivation as an intervening mechanism linking qualitative job insecurity with extra-role performance among millennial employees in India's IT sector. The findings also generate practical implications for

organizational leadership, underscoring the significance of supportive and motivational workplace conditions in fostering employee engagement, discretionary work behaviors, and overall organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: *Qualitative job insecurity¹; Intrinsic motivation²; Extra-role performance³; Leadership⁴; Organizational efficiency⁵; Millennial employees⁶; Indian IT sector⁷.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary organizations, a job is not merely a means of employment but encompasses various valuable features such as career growth, recognition, autonomy, security, and development opportunities that make employment attractive (Jena and Nayak, 2024; Pattnaik and Sahoo, 2021; Lambert and Pasha-Zaidi, 2019). Consequently, qualitative job insecurity (QLJIS), which refers to the perceived threat of losing valued aspects of a job, may have a proximal influence on employees' work-related attitudes and performance (Chirumbolo, 2020). Although job insecurity is generally viewed as a negative workplace experience, QLJIS may also function as a challenge stressor that stimulates employees to remain active and demonstrate their value within the organization (Muñoz Medina et al., 2023).

Extra-role performance (EP) represents discretionary and pro-social behaviour through which employees contribute beyond their formally prescribed job responsibilities (MacKenzie et al., 1998). Such behaviour can strengthen teamwork, service quality, organizational responsiveness, and overall organizational efficiency (Pattnaik and Sahoo, 2023). This is particularly relevant in the information technology (IT) sector, where employee attitudes and behaviours can influence service delivery, client relationships, organizational reputation, and operational outcomes.

The present study focuses on millennial employees, who have been characterized as development-oriented and attentive to valuable job attributes (Pasko et al., 2021; Jena and Nayak, 2023; Pant and Venkateswaran, 2019). Intrinsic motivation (IM) is examined as a mediating mechanism because it represents an important personal resource that encourages employees to utilize their capabilities and remain engaged during challenging circumstances (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Wang et al., 2019). Understanding this mechanism can provide insights for leadership practices aimed at sustaining employee performance and organizational efficiency.

2. FORMULATION OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

2.1 Qualitative job insecurity and extra-role performance

The relationship between qualitative job insecurity (QLJIS) and extra-role performance (EP) can be explained by the job preservation motivation perspective (Shoss, 2017). When employees perceive threats to valued job features, they may increase their efforts to demonstrate their usefulness and organizational value. Such efforts may include strengthening performance, increase visibility, and engage in behaviours beyond formal job responsibilities.

Employees may view discretionary efforts as a means of demonstrating competence, gaining recognition, and reinforcing their organizational standing (Huang et al., 2013; Shoss et al., 2022; Pattnaik and Sahoo, 2020). Extra-

role performance may therefore serve as a behavioural response through which employees seek recognition and protect valued employment conditions (Jawahar and Ferris, 2011; Astarlioglu *et al.*, 2011; Feather and Rauter, 2004). Accordingly, higher qualitative job insecurity may encourage employees to engage in extra-role behaviours to reinforce their organizational value.

H1: Qualitative job insecurity is positively associated with extra-role performance.

2.2 Qualitative job insecurity and intrinsic motivation

From a stress and coping perspective (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984), employees may respond differently to job-related stressors based on how they appraise the situation and their ability to cope. When threats to valued job features are perceived as manageable challenges, employees may increase their involvement and internally driven effort. Thus, qualitative job insecurity may encourage employees to demonstrate their capabilities and sustain work engagement.

Research suggests that employees may adopt constructive coping responses to job insecurity and challenging work conditions (Selenko *et al.*, 2013; Cheng *et al.*, 2014). Accordingly, when threats to valued job features are perceived as manageable, employees may strengthen their intrinsic motivation to remain engaged and respond constructively.

H2: Qualitative job insecurity positively influences intrinsic motivation.

2.3 Intrinsic motivation (IM) and extra-role performance (ERP)

Intrinsic motivation refers to employees' engagement in work because it is interesting, enjoyable, or stimulating (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Gagné *et al.*, 2015). Such motivation may encourage greater effort, involvement, and discretionary behaviours, including helping colleagues, sharing knowledge, and suggesting improvements. Since extra-role performance involves voluntary contributions beyond formal job responsibilities, intrinsically motivated employees may be more willing to invest additional effort without relying solely on external rewards. Accordingly, intrinsic motivation is expected to be positively associated with extra-role performance.

H3: Intrinsic motivation is positively associated with extra-role performance.

2.4. Interplay Among Qualitative Job Insecurity, Intrinsic Motivation, and Extra-Role Performance

The foregoing discussion indicates that intrinsic motivation may function as an underlying mechanism through which employees cope with perceived threats to valued aspects of their employment. When employees interpret qualitative job insecurity as a challenge that can be managed, they may experience stronger internal motivation to sustain their involvement in work and demonstrate their competence. This heightened motivation may subsequently stimulate discretionary behaviours that go beyond the prescribed responsibilities of their formal roles. Thus, intrinsic motivation may serve as an intervening pathway linking qualitative job insecurity with extra-role performance. In light of these theoretical arguments, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H4: Intrinsic motivation mediates the association between qualitative job insecurity and extra-role performance.

3. METHODS

3.1 Sample and procedure

A quantitative, non-experimental, time-lagged research design was employed to investigate the proposed associations among qualitative job insecurity, intrinsic motivation, and extra-role performance. The study focused on millennial employees employed in five major information technology (IT) organizations operating in India: TCS, Infosys, Wipro, LTIMindtree, and Accenture. In accordance with the classification adopted by Pasko *et al.* (2021), millennial employees were identified as individuals born between 1980 and 2000.

Data were gathered through a structured, self-administered questionnaire administered to eligible employees. Following the data-screening process, 403 responses were considered complete and suitable for subsequent analysis. The resulting sample size provided sufficient observations for examining the proposed conceptual model using structural equation modelling (SEM). The data analysis was performed using a two-step SEM approach. In the first stage, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to evaluate the adequacy of the measurement model. This assessment included examination of standardized factor loadings, construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. In the second stage, the structural model was assessed to determine the relationships specified in the proposed hypotheses. In addition, bootstrapping techniques were applied to assess the significance of the direct and indirect effects, particularly the mediating effect of intrinsic motivation.

3.2 Measures

All study constructs were assessed using established measurement instruments adopted from previously validated scales. A five-point Likert-type response format was used for all items, and respondents indicated the extent to which they agreed with each statement. The complete list of measurement items is presented in Table 2.

Qualitative Job Insecurity (QLJIS): Qualitative job insecurity was assessed using a four-item instrument developed by Hellgren *et al.* (1999). Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale. A representative item from the scale is: *"My future career opportunities in the organization are favorable."*

Intrinsic Motivation (IM): Intrinsic motivation was measured using the three-item scale developed by Gagné *et al.* (2015). Participants rated each statement using a five-point Likert response scale. An illustrative item is: *"...what I do in my work is exciting."*

Extra-Role Performance (EP): Extra-role performance was evaluated using six items adapted from the scale developed by Kehoe and Wright (2013). Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale. A representative statement is: *"I willingly share my expertise with my co-workers."*

Common method bias (CMB): To minimize the potential for common method bias (CMB), the study employed a 10-day time lag between the measurement of study variables, as recommended by Podsakoff *et al.* (2003).

Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality and informed that the study was conducted for academic purposes, with no right or wrong answers. Harman's single-factor test was also conducted, and the single factor accounted for 36% of the total variance, below the commonly used 50% threshold. Thus, the results provide no strong indication of a dominant common method bias problem in the data.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Respondent Profile

A total of 800 survey instruments were circulated among employees working in IT organizations across India. From these, 413 completed responses were received, yielding an overall response rate of 51.6%. Following a systematic screening process to assess the completeness and usability of the responses, 403 responses were considered suitable for the final analysis. Consequently, the usable response rate accounted for 50.4% of the total survey instruments distributed.

The demographic characteristics of the respondents were examined with respect to gender, organizational tenure, educational attainment, and hierarchical position. The gender composition of the sample comprised 68.9% male and 31.1% female respondents. In terms of educational qualifications, the majority of participants (59.8%) possessed a bachelor's degree. This was followed by respondents holding a master's degree (36.1%), while 4.1% reported having a doctoral qualification.

The respondents also differed in their length of service within their respective organizations. Approximately 24.3% had 0–3 years of organizational tenure, whereas 37.6% reported 3–7 years of experience. A further 25.7% had been with their organizations for 7–10 years, and 12.4% had more than 10 years of organizational tenure. With respect to hierarchical position, 28.4% of the respondents occupied junior-level positions, 44.4% were classified within the middle-management category, and the remaining 27.2% held senior-level positions. Overall, the demographic distribution indicates representation across different educational levels, organizational tenure categories, hierarchical positions, and gender groups within the study sample.

4.2 Measurement and Structural Model Assessment

The measurement model was assessed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to evaluate the reliability and validity of the constructs. The hypothesized relationships among qualitative job insecurity (QLJIS), intrinsic motivation (IM), and extra-role performance (EP) were subsequently examined using structural equation modelling (SEM). Statistical significance was assessed at the 5% significance level, with a corresponding 95% confidence level.

Table 1 reports the descriptive statistics and interrelationships among the study variables, including the mean values, standard deviations, construct correlations, and square roots of the average variance extracted (AVE). The principal diagonal of the correlation matrix displays the square root of AVE for each latent construct. These values were examined to establish discriminant validity in accordance with the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Discriminant validity is considered to be established when the square root of a construct's AVE exceeds its corresponding correlation coefficients with all other constructs included in the model. The correlation coefficients indicate the

direction and strength of the associations among QLJIS, IM, and EP. However, correlation coefficients are reported primarily to describe the relationships among the constructs and to provide preliminary evidence for the hypothesized associations; the hypothesized effects and mediation relationship are formally evaluated through the SEM analysis presented subsequently.

For empirical assessment of the proposed research framework, the measurement properties of the constructs were evaluated through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), followed by structural equation modelling (SEM) to assess the hypothesized associations. Statistical inferences were drawn at a 5% significance threshold, corresponding to a 95% confidence interval. Descriptive statistics, including the arithmetic mean and standard deviation, together with the inter-construct correlation coefficients and the square roots of average variance extracted (AVE), are reported in Table 1. The diagonal elements representing the square roots of AVE were subsequently considered for evaluating discriminant validity in accordance with the Fornell–Larcker criterion.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics, Inter-Construct Correlations, and Discriminant Validity

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	QLJIS	IM	EP
QLJIS	403	3.434	0.63734	0.732#		
IM	403	2.998	0.68731	0.324**	0.879#	
EP	403	2.867	0.54670	0.473*	0.124*	0.723#

Notes: Square root of AVE; *p-value<0.05; **p-value<0.01; QLJIS=Qualitative job insecurity;

IM= Intrinsic motivation; EP= Extra-role performance

5. MEASUREMENT MODEL ASSESSMENT

The measurement properties of the three study constructs qualitative job insecurity (QLJIS), intrinsic motivation (IM), and extra-role performance (EP) were evaluated through a pooled measurement model. The assessment focused on establishing the reliability and validity of the measurement scales before proceeding to the structural model analysis.

The adequacy of the measurement model was first examined through the standardized factor loadings of the observed indicators. Most of the items demonstrated factor loadings exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, while the remaining indicators recorded loadings above the minimum acceptable level of 0.50 (Comrey and Lee, 1992). These results indicate that the observed items provide adequate representation of their respective latent constructs.

The overall model fit was subsequently evaluated using several established goodness-of-fit measures. The obtained indices demonstrated an acceptable level of model fit, with the chi-square to degrees-of-freedom ratio (χ^2/df) recorded at 1.74, which is below the recommended value of 3. The normed fit index (NFI) was 0.911, while both the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) and comparative fit index (CFI) were 0.949. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was 0.039. These values satisfy the commonly recommended criteria for an acceptable measurement model (Hair et al., 2010).

The reliability and validity of the constructs were then assessed using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). As reported in Table 2, the factor loadings, reliability coefficients, AVE, and CR values were examined for all three constructs. The Cronbach's alpha and CR coefficients for QLJIS, IM, and EP exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency reliability (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Nunnally, 1994).

Convergent validity was established by considering the standardized factor loadings in conjunction with AVE and CR values. The results indicate that the indicators adequately converge on their respective constructs. Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which determines whether each construct is empirically distinct from the other constructs included in the model (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Taken together, the measurement assessment provides evidence that the scales used to measure QLJIS, IM, and EP demonstrate adequate reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity for subsequent structural analysis.

Table 2: Results for convergent validity and construct reliability (CR)

Factors and items	Standardized factor loadings	Cronbach's α	AVE	CR	MSV	ASV
Qualitative job insecurity		0.824	0.536	0.822	0.223	0.144
QLJIS1: Favorable career opportunities are available to me within the organization.	0.708					
QLJIS2: I expect stimulating work opportunities from my organization in the near future.	0.694					
QLJIS3: I expect my organization to value my competence in the future.	0.772					
QLJIS4: I expect favorable salary growth in this organization.	0.752					
Intrinsic Motivation: Why would you invest effort in your current job?		0.910	0.773	0.911	0.104	0.052
IM1: Because I enjoy my work.	0.870					
IM2: Because my work is exciting.	0.878					
IM3: Because I find my work interesting.	0.889					
Extra-role performance (EP)		0.866	0.524	0.868	0.223	0.080
EP1: I suggest ways to improve my department's effectiveness.	0.774					
EP2: I honestly express my views on serious issues, even when others disagree.	0.741					
EP3: I consult co-workers before taking actions that may affect them.	0.713					
EP4: I encourage colleagues to adopt new and effective work methods.	0.731					
EP5: I assist co-workers who have heavy workloads.	0.665					
EP6: I willingly share my expertise with colleagues.	0.716					

Note: (R) = Reverse coded

6. TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

The proposed associations among qualitative job insecurity (QLJIS), intrinsic motivation (IM), and extra-role performance (EP) were evaluated using structural model assessment. The statistical significance and robustness of the estimated relationships were examined through 5,000 bootstrap replications with a bias-corrected 95% confidence interval. The structural model exhibited satisfactory fit, as indicated by $\chi^2/df = 1.74$, NFI = 0.911, TLI = 0.949, CFI = 0.949, and RMSEA = 0.039.

The estimated structural paths provided empirical support for the proposed hypotheses. QLJIS showed a positive and statistically significant relationship with IM ($\beta = 0.325$, $p < 0.01$), thereby providing support for H2. Likewise, IM was positively related to EP ($\beta = 0.311$, $p < 0.05$), corroborating H3. The direct relationship between QLJIS and EP was also positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.156$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H1.

The proposed intermediary role of IM was further assessed by examining the indirect pathway linking QLJIS with EP through IM. The estimated indirect coefficient was positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.101$, $p < 0.01$), providing support for H4. The simultaneous significance of the direct and indirect pathways suggests that IM functions as a partial mediator in the association between QLJIS and EP. The estimated structural paths and the respective hypothesis outcomes are reported in Table 3.

Table 3: Path analysis

Structural Path	Effect(direct)	Effect(indirect)	Remarks
QLJIS EP	0.156**		H1 Supported
QLJIS IM	0.325**		H2 Supported
IM EP	0.311*		H3 Supported
QLJIS IM EP		0.101**	H4 Supported

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$;

QLJIS=Qualitative job insecurity; IM=Intrinsic motivation; EP= Extra-role performance

7. DISCUSSION

The findings provide a broader perspective on the behavioural implications of qualitative job insecurity (QLJIS). Although job insecurity is often associated with unfavourable employee outcomes, the present results suggest that, in some circumstances, QLJIS may be perceived as a challenge that encourages greater work involvement and extra-role performance (EP). Thus, workplace uncertainty may generate constructive behavioural responses rather than uniformly negative consequences.

The positive association between QLJIS and EP differs from previous studies reporting unfavourable relationships between job insecurity and employee performance (Callea et al., 2019; Chirumbolo et al., 2020). This difference may partly reflect the characteristics of the present sample. Millennials have been described as emphasizing personal and professional development, confidence in their capabilities, and adaptability to demanding work conditions (Kodagoda and Deheragoda, 2021). Accordingly, uncertainty regarding valued employment attributes may motivate some employees to increase their effort and demonstrate their competence. EP, involving discretionary and pro-social behaviours beyond formal job duties, may serve as an adaptive response through which employees demonstrate their contribution and reinforce their organizational value (Stynen et al., 2015).

This interpretation is consistent with the stress and coping framework and job preservation motivation perspective and responds to calls for greater attention to the behavioural consequences of QLJIS (Fischmann et al., 2018; De Witte et al., 2012; Chirumbolo et al., 2020; Nikolova et al., 2023; Piccoli et al., 2017; Shoss, 2017; Shoss et al., 2022). Similarly, Dahiya (2022) suggests that challenging workplace conditions may encourage greater work involvement.

The partial mediating role of intrinsic motivation (IM) further indicates that the QLJIS–EP relationship may operate partly through employees' internal motivational processes. When faced with uncertainty concerning valued employment attributes, intrinsic motivation may sustain involvement, encourage the use of personal capabilities, and promote voluntary contributions beyond formal role requirements. However, partial rather than full mediation indicates that IM does not fully explain this relationship, suggesting that other psychological, interpersonal, or organizational mechanisms may also influence constructive responses to QLJIS. Future research should therefore examine additional mechanisms to provide a more comprehensive explanation.

8. IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

The study extends the literature on qualitative job insecurity (QLJIS) by showing that its effects may include constructive employee responses. Integrating the stress and coping framework with the job preservation motivation perspective, the findings identify intrinsic motivation as a mechanism linking QLJIS with extra-role performance.

The findings also highlight implications for leadership and organizational efficiency. Supportive leadership practices involving communication, recognition, autonomy, and development opportunities may sustain intrinsic motivation and constructive discretionary behaviour. However, job insecurity should not be deliberately used as a motivational strategy, as the findings establish association rather than causation.

For IT organizations, strengthening intrinsic motivation and addressing employees' concerns regarding valued job features may support teamwork, service quality, knowledge sharing, responsiveness, and organizational effectiveness.

9. STUDY LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Time-lagged design: Limits causal inference. Future studies could use longitudinal designs to examine changes over time.

Self-reported data: May involve response bias and common method bias. Future research could incorporate supervisor, peer, and objective performance measures.

Methodological limitations: Multiple data sources and additional procedural/statistical techniques could further reduce common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Limited generalizability: The focus on millennial employees in the Indian IT sector limits applicability to other generations, industries, and countries. Comparative studies could address this limitation.

Leadership not empirically tested: Future research could examine leadership styles as moderators or mediators alongside organizational support, psychological resources, and resilience.

Organizational efficiency: The study does not directly measure organizational-level outcomes. Future research could examine productivity, service quality, innovation, and organizational effectiveness.

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