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Antecedents of Workplace Deviance: Role of Job Insecurity, Work Stress, and Ethical Work Climate

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This study examines why and how job insecurity affects employees' deviant behaviour at work. To develop our hypotheses, we build on the conservation of resources theory. Our hypotheses suggested that job insecurity would be positively related to work stress and workplace deviance. Moreover, an ethical work climate was hypothesised to moderate the relationship between work stress and workplace deviance. Using data from 174 employees working in Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) located in Pakistan, the findings indicated that job insecurity has consequences for work stress and two facets of workplace deviance. Further, we found that an ethical work climate prevents employees from both interpersonal and organisational deviant behaviour.

Keywords: job insecurity, work stress, interpersonal deviance, organisational deviance, ethical work climate.

Przyczyny zachowań dewiacyjnych w miejscu pracy – rola niepewności zatrudnienia, stresu i etycznego klimatu w pracy

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W opracowaniu zbadano w jaki sposób niepewność zatrudnienia wpływa na zachowania dewiacyjne pracowników. W celu sformułowania hipotez autorzy oparli się na teorii zachowania zasobów. Zasugerowali w nich, że niepewność zatrudnienia wykazuje dodatnią zależność ze stresem i zachowaniami dewiacyjnymi w miejscu pracy. Ponadto postawiono hipotezę, że etyczny klimat pracy działa jako moderator zależności między stresem a zachowaniami dewiacyjnymi. Z danych przekazanych przez 174 pracowników zatrudnionych w korporacjach wielonarodowych w Pakistanie wynika, że niepewność zatrudnienia ma wpływ na stres i dwa aspekty zachowań dewiacyjnych w miejscu pracy. Autorzy ustalili również, że etyczny klimat pracy zapobiega zarówno interpersonalnym, jak i organizacyjnym zachowaniom dewiacyjnym pracowników.

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Słowa kluczowe: niepewność pracy, stres w pracy, interpersonalne, organizacyjne zachowania dewiacyjne, etyczny klimat pracy.

JEL: E24, J24, J63, O15

1. Introduction

The increase in globalisation, economic changes, and trends toward downsizing and restructuring have given rise to significant levels of workplace deviance (Lawrence & Robinson, 2007). Prior research suggests that the majority of employees (between 60% and 80%) have engaged in some type of deviant behaviour (Bennett & Marasi, 2015; Guay et al., 2016; Zhu, Lyu, & Ye, 2019). Workplace deviance, broadly defined as "voluntary behaviour that violates significant organisational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organisation, its members, or both" (Robinson & Bennett, 1995, p. 556), is considered as one of severe and costly problems faced by the organisations today (Guay et al., 2016). Organisations are facing productivity and performance issues, and have lost billions of dollars due to deviant behaviours such as internal theft, fraud incidents, bullying, and workplace aggression (Bennett, Marasi, & Locklear, 2018).

With workplace deviance at such a high level and costing organisations so much, it is of vital importance that we understand its underlying causes (Mackey, McAllister, Ellen III, & Carson, 2019). Therefore, in this article, we examine job insecurity and work stress as plausible antecedents of workplace deviance. Job insecurity is about people who are working at the moment and fear they might lose their job or a valued aspect of it (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2007). According to Shoss (2017), employees are facing a high level of work stress because of insecurity related to their employment. It is a plague that is perhaps even more hated than unemployment.

A growing number of research studies on employee job insecurity indicate that the threat of losing one's job creates stress, which, in turn, leads to negative individual and organisational outcomes (e.g., Gallie, Felstead, Green, & Inanc, 2017; Shoss, 2017; Sora, Höge, Caballer, & Peiró, 2018). Although job insecurity leads to negative work-related outcomes (Shoss, 2017), little is known about the effects of job insecurity on employees' deviant behaviour. Based on the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), we argue that employees feel stress when there is a threat of resource loss (i.e., by perceiving job insecurity), which, in turn, promotes behaviours to recover from a resource loss (i.e., through deviant behaviour). In brief, we argue that job insecurity can lead to work stress, which together can encourage individuals to be engaged in deviant workplace behaviour in the form of interpersonal and organisational deviance.

In addition, we also examine the effects of an ethical work climate on employees' deviant behaviour. According to Kuenzi, Mayer and Greenbaum

(2019), an ethical work climate influences employees' deviant workplace behaviour. However, the findings regarding the effects of an ethical work climate on employees' deviant behaviour are inconsistent (Appelbaum, Deguire, & Lay, 2005; Hsieh & Wang, 2016). Therefore, we intend to investigate the plausible effects of an ethical work climate on workplace deviance.

This article may offer several potential contributions. First, the present research contributes to the conservation of resources theory by providing further insight into the relationship between job insecurity, work stress and workplace deviance. Based on the review of the literature, the research to date has yet to test the relationship between all three variables in a single study, thus precluding the development of more comprehensive understanding of how job insecurity promotes deviant behaviour at work. Moreover, we contribute to the research on job insecurity by addressing the knowledge gap regarding the role that job insecurity plays in promoting deviant workplace behaviours.

Finally, our study may help to highlight the importance of an ethical work climate in controlling employees' deviant behaviour at work. More precisely, we provide insight into the role of an ethical work climate on workplace deviance. Prior studies have found inconsistent results regarding the effects of an ethical work climate on workplace deviance. Therefore, the research has identified the need to better understand whether an ethical work climate affects employees' deviant behaviour at work (Hsieh & Wang, 2016).

2. Literature Review and Formulation of Hypotheses

2.1. Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory

Hobfoll's (1988) COR theory is a stress theory that describes why people maintain their current resources and pursue new ones. Further, it suggests that people make efforts to obtain, maintain, and protect their resources to overcome threats and avoid stress in troubling times. The COR theory maintains that people face stress when they feel threat to their existing resources predicting work-related outcomes. The COR theory is based on assumptions that are already validated (for example, Hobfoll, 2011), while it provides an understanding of the position of employee stress. The COR theory gives attention to 'stress' and explains both loss and gain cycles. It underlines that both cycles are essential for people who experience stress and stand against it in troubling times. The COR theory mentions that stress conceived is experienced in three steps; first, when there is a threat of a loss of resources, second, an actual net loss of resources, and third, a lack of gained resources next to the spending of resources.

Similarly, the COR theory is based on two assumptions. First, on the assumption of resource loss, which argues that for some individuals, a loss of

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a resource is more harmful and dangerous than the attainment of a resource. Second, individuals put their efforts in different resources in order to either prevent a resource loss, to recover from a loss or to gain an additional resource (Holmgreen, Tirone, Gerhart, & Hobfoll, 2017). Accordingly, people having more resources are less exposed to the possibility of being a victim of a resource loss, and they focus on resources and have the ability to engineer a resource gain. On the other hand, when comparing, those with fewer resources are more exposed to the chance of being a victim to a resource loss and less capable of a resource gain (Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014).

Consequently, little research has investigated how a loss of resources contributes to deviant behaviour of employees working in declining economic conditions. Hobfoll, Tirone, Holmgreen and Gerhart (2016) found that resources are beneficial and can enhance performance, while a lack or depletion of resources can cause stress. Thus, drawing on the COR theory, we suggest that employees feeling stress due to the threat of a resource loss (i.e., job insecurity) will be involved in deviant behaviour to overcome the threat of a resource loss or to gain additional resources.

2.2. Job Insecurity and Work Stress

The concept of job insecurity has been defined as "perceived powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation" (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2007). With job insecurity, people fear that they might lose their job or a valued aspect of the job. The classification of job insecurity is fear or probability and perception that they might lose it. If employees feel insecure at the workplace, they start feeling distressed and they do not trust the management and the organisation anymore. Organisational scholars have found that employees who feel the fear of a job loss in the workplace tend to have low organisational commitment, job performance, job satisfaction, and higher work stress (Kundi, Ikramullah, Iqbal, & Ul-Hassan, 2018; Kausto, Elo, Lipponen, & Elovainio, 2005; Ma, Liu, Lassleben, & Ma, 2019; Richter & Näswall, 2019).Job insecurity can be classified into cognitive and affective elements (Anderson & Pontusson, 2007; De Witte, 2005). The cognitive component of job insecurity refers to the individual's estimated probability of a job loss soon. The practical job insecurity element describes the fear of a job loss. Another classification is between subjective experience and the objective state. Subjective experience is derived by asking individuals to mention their probability of a job loss in the future and fear associated with it regardless of actual job security. On the other hand, objective job insecurity can be measured based on the unfortunate or declining economic situation of the country or the firm that may likewise influence the employee's perceptions, such as economic forecasts, downsizing or job market conditions expected to decline in the future predictions (De Witte, 2005).

Anderson and Pontusson (2007) found that employees working in non-employee oriented organisations are more likely to experience job insecurity in their daily work lives. The perception of vulnerability, on the other hand, is a feeling of precariousness and a sense of uncontrollability, a feeling that employment will come to an end one day, which, in turn, causes anxiety among a large number of employees and builds up into a real health and wellbeing crisis. Employees are dealing with short-term stress or chronic fear that can derive from fear of losing a job that can be worse for the employees both physically and psychologically (Xia, Wang, Song, Zhang, & Qian, 2019). This can cause short-term problems and long-term problems including coronary disease, stroke, even cancer. Studies indicate that job insecurity can reduce the years of the employee's life (Blom, Richter, Hallsten, & Svedberg, 2018; Silla, Gracia, & Peiró, 2005).

Based on the COR theory, individuals perceiving a threat of a resource loss (i.e. having fear of losing one's job) feel stress (Hobfoll, 2011). Besides, researchers in their studies have found that job insecurity leads to work stress, burnout and other health-related problems (e.g., Bosman, Rothmann, & Buitendach, 2005; Callea, Lo Presti, Mauno, & Urbini, 2019; Scicchitano, Biagetti, Chirumbolo, & Leonida, 2019). Therefore, we argue that employees who feel the threat of losing their jobs (i.e., job insecurity) will experience higher stress at work. Thus, we hypothesise following.

H1: There is a positive relationship between job insecurity and work stress.

2.3. Antecedents of Deviant Behaviour

Workplace deviance is defined as conscious (or deliberate) desire to cause harm to an organisation. It can be seen as "voluntary behaviour that violates institutionalised norms and in doing so, damages the well-being of the organisation" (Bennett et al., 2018). Deviant behaviour may emerge from a situation where workers perceive that their employer has unfairly dealt with them or that the employer's conduct is not based on principles in some specified manner. Employees then turn to actions that amount to behaving in an unacceptable way (misbehaving) in return as a method to take vengeance for the perceived wrongdoing. So, it is regarded as a form of unfavourable exchange that is harmful to employees as well as the employer. "A negative reciprocity orientation is the tendency for an individual to return negative treatment for negative treatment" (Akers, 2017; Schabram, Robinson, & Cruz, 2018).

Workplace deviance may be expressed in various ways, and it leads to an organisation's decline in productivity. For instance, Bennett and Robinson (2003) classified deviant behaviour into interpersonal and organisational deviance. While interpersonal deviant behaviour is directed at other individuals so as to get benefit from the situation (e.g., blaming and making employees ashamed), organisational deviance focuses on the organisation (e.g., arriving late at the office, working unproductively). Both forms of

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deviant behaviour have different consequences; however, both as a whole negatively influence an organisation. In addition to this, in the stress framework of workplace deviance, it is seen as an outcome variable (Bennett et al., 2018).

Research has indicated that the employees who perceive job insecurity tend to have more stress at work, which eventually encourages them to be involved in different deviant behaviour at the workplace such as misbehaving towards colleagues, disobeying supervisors or stealing something from organisations (Reisel, Probst, Chia, Maloles, & König, 2010). Furthermore, individuals who perceive a threat to their jobs have less satisfaction in their jobs, which makes them get involved in deviant behaviour. In the workplace, "frustration, injustices, and threats to self are primary antecedents to employee deviance" (Bennett & Robinson, 2003).

Despite the above factors, workplace deviance does occur in a particular set of conditions, and the behaviour is not uniform across the globe. However, there are various strategies indicated in the prior studies and designed to keep away workplace deviance. The first one is strengthening the employee's commitment by assuring employees that their jobs are secure. It further enhances employees' positive work behaviours and they stay positive. Moreover, they do not show deviance in their behaviour, which is a positive sign for the organisation's productivity. Supporting employees in every sort of their work will boost their self-esteem, and they will tend to remain committed to their organisations and less deviant at work (Appelbaum, Iaconi, & Matousek, 2007; Darrat, Amyx, & Bennett, 2017). Altogether, we hypothesise the following:

H2: Employees having work stress would be engaged in a) interpersonal deviance and b) organisational deviance.

H3: Employees perceiving a threat to their jobs would be involved in a) interpersonal deviance and b) organisational deviance.

H4: Work stress will mediate the relationship between job insecurity and a) interpersonal deviance and b) organisational deviance.

2.4. Role of Ethical Working Environment

An ethical work climate refers to the working environment that promotes ethical behaviour (Schminke, Arnaud, & Kuenzi, 2007). It further deals with moral values and principles that govern an individual's or organisation's behaviour. An ethical working environment is based on hard work, honesty, care, and rules and regulations. Organisations that lack an ethical working environment face different types of problems at both individual and organisational levels such as employees' deviant behaviour, low productivity, low employee performance and dissatisfaction among employees (Bennett et al., 2018; Farouk & Jabeen, 2018; Robinson, 1996). In contrast, a positive ethical work climate helps organisations in maintaining a productive

and happier workforce (Ahmed, Khan, & Memon, 2014; Thau, Crossley, Bennett, & Sczesny, 2007). In order to maintain ethical work behaviour in the organisation, leaders have to develop a code of behaviour aligned with the organisation's goals and set up rewards and punishments for unethical behaviour.

The organisation's leaders build a culture on ethical values, where people feel that the only thing to do is ethical conduct in all situations. Leaders need to model first of all expectations, and they must never compromise the values of the organisation like honesty, hard work and integrity, which are some of the essentials that leaders need to be role models in order to make sure that they are creating an ethical climate. Further, organisations need to establish an ethical climate by identifying the ethical purpose for their existence that makes employees' lives better. They need to maximise the incentives as a motivating tool and job security to get employees to work for the organisation. Organisations must have an ethical purpose for their employees, who will work hard if they have their purpose in it. As per the previous research, the lack of an ethical climate encourages employees in deviant behaviour (Bennett & Robinson, 2003). Similarly, another study reported a poor ethical climate as a predictor of workplace deviance (Andreoli & Lefkowitz, 2009). Thus, we hypothesise:

H5: An ethical working environment will negatively moderate the relationship between work stress and a) interpersonal deviance b) organisational deviance.

H6: An ethical working environment will moderate the indirect relationship of job insecurity with a) interpersonal deviance and b) organisational deviance through work stress.

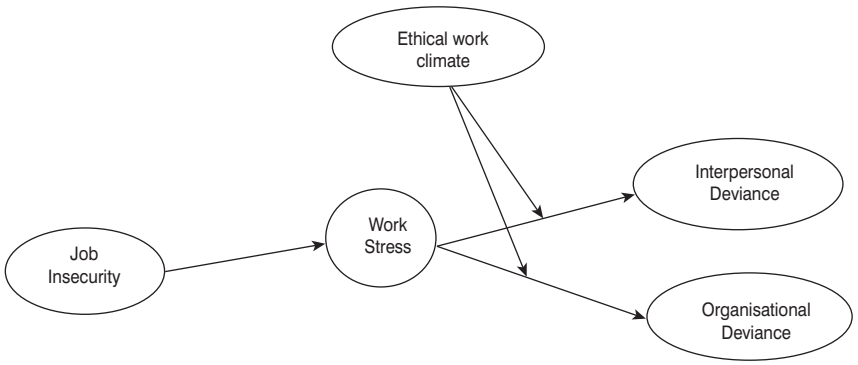

Fig. 1. Theoretical model. Source: Own study.

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3. Methods

3.1. Participants and Procedure

We distributed a survey form to 350 organisational members working in MNCs in Pakistan. The self-report survey form contained a piece of information which stated the study goals and assured confidentiality and a self-report questionnaire that comprised demographic information and the study variables. We received a total of 174 completed survey forms, yielding a response rate of 49.7%.

The sample comprised 58.6% of males, with respondents averaging 32.6 years of age and representing a well-educated sample (bachelor's degree = 18.3%, master's degree = 63.7%, and other professional qualifications = 18%). Average job experience was 5.8 years. The participants belonged to different occupations and business sectors, including telecommunications (33.3%), retail and sales (18.9%), finance and banking (16.7), hotels and services (16.7), and manufacturing (14.4).

3.2. Measures

All the variables excluding age, gender, qualification and work experience were assessed using 7-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Job Insecurity. Job insecurity was assessed using the 4-item scale developed by De Witte (2000; Cronbach's alpha = .93.). An example item is "I feel insecure about the future of my job".

Job stress. Job stress was assessed using the 4-item scale developed by Netemeyer, Maxham and Pullig (2005). A sample item is "I feel nervous because of my job" (Cronbach's alpha = .91).

Workplace Deviance. We used Bennet and Robinson's (2000) 21-item scale to measure two dimensions of workplace deviance. We measured *interpersonal deviance* with 6 items. An example item is "I make fun of my colleagues" (Cronbach's alpha = .88). *Organisational deviance* included 12 items, such as "I left my work to someone else to complete" and "I put little effort into assigned work" (Cronbach's alpha = .88).

Ethical work climate. Ethical work climate was measured using the 7-item scale developed by Schwepker, Ferrell and Ingram (1997). A sample item is "In my organisation, unethical behaviour is not tolerated" (Cronbach's alpha = .91).

Control Variables. Consistent with previous research on workplace deviance (e.g., Guay et al., 2016), we controlled for the effects of demographic variables in our analysis (i.e., age, gender, job experience, and qualification).

3.3. Data Analyses

To test the hypothesised relationships among the study variables, we conducted hierarchical regression analyses to examine the influence of job insecurity (i.e., on work stress) and work stress (i.e., on interpersonal and organisational deviance). Further, to test the indirect effects of job insecurity on interpersonal and organisational deviance, we used PROCESS macro (Model 4) by Hayes (2012). In addition, to test the moderated-mediation hypotheses, we used PROCESS macro (model 14).

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 highlights the descriptive analysis, including means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients, and correlations among the main variables of the study.

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1-Job Insecurity	2.66	0.62	(.93)				
2-Work Stress	2.68	0.63	.36**	(.91)			
3-Ethical work climate	3.09	1.55	–.18*	–.22**	(.91)		
4-Interpersonal Deviance	2.18	0.50	.39**	.33**	–.26**	(.88)	
5-Organisational Deviance	2.12	0.62	.31**	.28**	–.31*	.41**	(.84)
N = 174, *p<.01 **p<.001, Results with control variables.							

Tab. 1. Means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients and correlations. Source: Own study.

4.2. Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses 1 through 3 suggested that job insecurity positively relates to work stress, interpersonal and organisational deviance, work stress positively relates to interpersonal and organisational deviance. As expected (see Table 2), job insecurity positively predicted employee work stress (β = .378, p < .001), supporting Hypothesis 1. Work stress was positively related to interpersonal deviance (β = .358, p < .01) and organisational deviance (β = .404, p < .001), which provides full support to Hypothesis 2. Job insecurity positively predicted interpersonal deviance (β = .417, p < .001) and organisational deviance (β = .290, p < .001), providing full support to Hypothesis 3.

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	Work Stress		Interpersonal Deviance		Organisational Deviance	
	M1		M2		M3	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
Control Variables						
Age	.107	.385	–.102	.141	–.172	.114
Gender	.008	.480	.042	.105	.06	.032
Experience	–.01	.03	.028	.194	.033	.154
Qualification	.044	.253	–.022	.183	–.031	.169
Independent Variables						
Job Insecurity	.378**	.139	.417**	.129	.290*	.140
Work Stress			.358*	.167	.404**	.115
Ethical Climate			–.188*	.082	–.199*	.078
Ethical Climate × Work Stress			–.128*	.045	–.185*	.083
R^2	.234		.456		.451	
F	3.28*		4.81**		4.02**	
N = 174, *p<.05 **p<.01, M1 = Model 1, M2 = Model 2, M3 = Model 3						

Tab. 2. Results of regression analysis. Source: Own study.

Hypothesis 4 suggested that work stress positively mediates the relationship between job insecurity and workplace deviance. As expected (see Table 3), the indirect effect of job insecurity on interpersonal deviance (β = .182, 95% CI (.022, .342)) and organisational deviance (β = .201, 95% CI (.041, .361)) through work stress was significant. Taken together, these two findings provide support for Hypothesis 4.

Result of mediation (PROCESS Model 4)				
Job Insecurity			Interpersonal Deviance	
	β	SE	LLCI	ULCI
	.182	.08	.022	.342
Job Insecurity			Organisational Deviance	
	β	SE	LLCI	ULCI
	.201	.08	.041	.361
Result of mediated-moderation (PROCESS Model 14)				

Tab. 3. Result of mediation, and mediated moderation analysis. Source: Own study.

Hypothesis 5 suggested that an ethical work climate moderates the relationship between work stress and workplace deviance. The interaction term of work stress × ethical work climate on interpersonal deviance (β = –.128, p < .05) and organisational deviance (β = –.185, p < .05) was significantly negative. The interaction plots are presented in Figure 2, which depicts that the more ethical the work climate, the less deviant behaviour of employees.

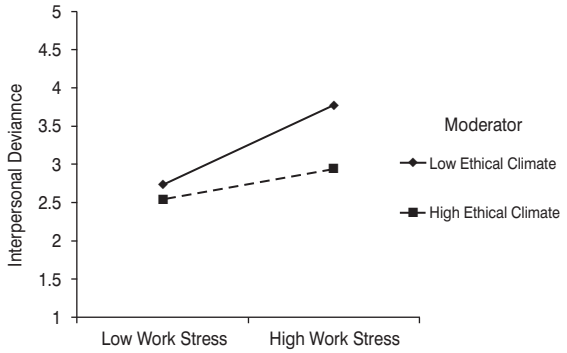

Fig. 2. The moderating effect of ethical work climate on job insecurity-interpersonal deviance relationship.

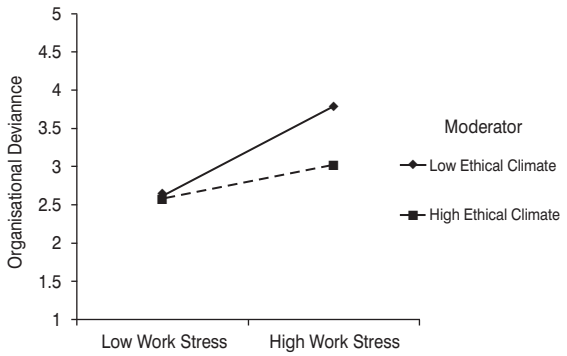

Fig. 3. The moderating effect of ethical work climate on job insecurity-organisational deviance relationship.

Finally, Hypothesis 6 suggested that the indirect effects of job insecurity on interpersonal deviance and organisational deviance are effected by the moderating role of an ethical work climate. As expected, the indirect effect of job insecurity on interpersonal deviance at different levels of an ethical work climate was not significant (Index = .128, se = .092, CI = –.594; .324) whereas the indirect effect of job insecurity on organisational deviance at

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different levels of an ethical work climate was significant (Index = –.13, se = .06, CI = –.22; –.06), providing partial support to Hypothesis 6.

		Interpersonal Deviance		
Conditional indirect effect via Work Stress	β	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Ethical work climate (−1 SD)	–.194	.181	–.596	.138
Ethical work climate (+1 SD)	.288	.194	–.136	.691
Index of moderated mediation	Index	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Ethical work climate	.128	.092	–.594	.324
		Organisational Deviance		
Conditional indirect effect via Work Stress	β	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Ethical work climate (−1 SD)	.23	.11	.09	.39
Ethical work climate (+1 SD)	.09	.04	.02	.14
Index of moderated mediation	Index	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Ethical work climate	–.13	.06	–.22	–.06

Note: Unstandardised coefficients and average bootstrap estimates are stated; bootstrapping procedure [5000 iterations, bias-corrected, 95% CI]; Sample size = 174

5. Discussion

5.1. Contribution to Theory and Research

Drawing on the Conservation of Resources Theory (COR), the present study hypothesised that job insecurity has an effect on employee work stress and deviant behaviour. In addition, we hypothesised that an ethical work climate prevents employees from deviant behaviour despite job insecurity and work stress. We expected that job insecurity predicts increased work stress and deviant behaviour. Furthermore, an ethical work climate was expected to buffer the positive relationship of work stress and workplace deviance (i.e., interpersonal and organisational deviance).

Overall, the results of our study provided a greater understanding of the consequences of job insecurity by demonstrating how employees' perception regarding job insecurity affects their work stress and deviant behaviour. More specifically, the results demonstrate that employees feel work stress when they feel job insecurity (threat of a resource loss), and are involved in deviant behaviour to recover from a loss or to gain an additional resource. This is in line with the results of previous studies indicating job insecurity as a positive predictor (Blom et al., 2018; Richter & Näswall, 2019) and workplace deviance as a positive outcome (Reisel et al., 2010; Swimberghe, Jones, & Darrant, 2014) of employee work stress.

Furthermore, our study also examined the moderating influence of an ethical work climate on the work stress and workplace deviance relationship. Interestingly, the results regarding the effect of an ethical work climate × work stress on both interpersonal and organisational deviance were significant. Similarly to Hsieh and Wang (2016), we found that the more ethical the work climate, the less deviant behaviour of employees at work. More specifically, the results of mediated-moderation revealed that an ethical work climate buffered the indirect effect of job insecurity on organisational deviance. However, the effect of an ethical work climate on the job insecurity and interpersonal deviance relationship was insignificant. These results are consistent with the work of Peterson (2002), who found that an ethical work climate was strongly associated with organisational deviance as compared to interpersonal deviance.

Our study provides a few notable contributions to the existing literature. First, we examined the effect of job insecurity and its relation with workplace behaviour. As expected, job insecurity was strongly related to employee work stress and deviant behaviour. Therefore, these findings contribute to the job insecurity literature in that they provide support for the notion that job insecurity has an adverse impact on employee wellbeing, i.e. stress, and can lead to undesirable workplace behaviour, i.e. interpersonal and organisational deviance (Shoss, 2017).

Second, this study contributes to the literature on the ethical work culture in that the findings provide support for the effect of an ethical work climate on employees' deviant workplace behaviour (Kuenzi et al., 2019). More importantly, this study contributes to the ethical work culture literature in that we examine the moderating role of an ethical work climate in both interpersonal and organisational deviance. In doing so, this study answers calls for research examining how an ethical work climate affects the dimensions of workplace deviance (Hsieh & Wang, 2016).

Finally, this study is one of the first studies to examine job insecurity, work stress and deviant workplace behaviour under the assumptions of Hobfoll's (2011) COR theory. Our study supports the COR theory in that the results indicate that employees feel stress when there is a threat of a resource loss (i.e., by perceiving job insecurity), which, in turn, leads to efforts to recover from a resource loss (i.e., through deviant behaviour).

5.2. Practical Implications

Besides theoretical contributions, our study offers three critical practical implications for encouraging an ethical working environment and controlling employees' deviant behaviour in the workplace. First, as we found that job insecurity promotes employee work stress and deviant workplace behaviour, we would suggest that organisations should diminish the uncertainty regarding employees' job threats which will lessen their work stress and deviant behaviour. By doing so, organisations can control the detrimental

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effects of job insecurity on employees' health and work behaviour (Callea et al., 2019; Ma et al., 2019).

Second, the study depicted that employees experiencing stress at work are involved in both interpersonal and organisational deviance. As a result, it is suggested that employees' stress tolerance should be taken into account in the selection and recruitment of employees. Further emphasis on stress management should be actively taken into consideration (Flaxman & Bond, 2010). Managers should ensure a harmonious and comfortable working environment. In addition, managers should not only focus on whether employees meet the targets but should care about their employees emotionally and psychologically.

Finally, previous research shows that an ethical work environment mitigates undesirable workplace behaviour (Decoster, Stouten, & Tripp, 2019). In our study, we found that an ethical work climate mitigates employees' deviant behaviour at work. Therefore, organisations should ensure an ethical working environment so that employees are not engaged in wrongdoings and undesirable workplace behaviour such as interpersonal or organisational deviance.

5.3. Limitations

This study has some limitations which can be addressed by the researchers in their future studies. First, we used a cross-sectional design, which may cause common method biases in our results. Further, this design did not determine the causal relationship among variables. Therefore, future researchers should conduct longitudinal studies to address this problem. Second, the current study targeted employees working in MNCs located in Pakistan. Hence, the results cannot be generalised to other cultural backgrounds. Future studies should consider replicating the current study in other cultural domains, or they may go for a comparative analysis of two or more cultures.

Third, although the role of gender was not a focus in our study, the results of correlation analysis indicated that gender is positively associated with both interpersonal and organisational deviance, which highlights that men are more inclined towards deviant behaviour as compared to women. Therefore, future studies should examine the role of gender for meaningful insights.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine how job insecurity relates to employee work stress and two facets of workplace deviance, i.e., interpersonal and organisational deviance. Besides, we examined the moderating effects of an ethical work climate on workplace deviance. Grounded in the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 2011), we found that job

insecurity was associated with higher employee work stress and deviant workplace behaviour. Finally, we found that an ethical work climate lowers employees' deviant behaviour at work.

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