

Job Insecurity and Affective Commitment Dilemma in Private Higher Educational Institutions in Bangladesh: How Organizational Support Matters During COVID-19

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Abstract: *Despite a handful of research examining the linkage between job insecurity and affective commitment, the study focuses on the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in the educational sector of Bangladesh, especially in the private HEIs (higher educational institutions), which is scant. Job insecurity, a pervasive organizational stressor, is a significant component in workplace counterproductive behavior, which results in a myriad of negative organizational outcomes, including low affective commitment, decreased performance, and so on. Thereby, the study intends to examine the impact of job insecurity on the affective commitment of the faculty members at private HEIs of Bangladesh during COVID-19. Drawing on the organizational identification theory, this study also seeks to evaluate the moderating role of organizational support in the job security and affective commitment linkage where the notion of social exchange theory and betrayal framework are also considered. A cross-sectional study is conducted, with data collected conveniently from 204 participants, where the PLS-SEM approach is used to examine the hypothesized relationships. The results reveal a significant negative association between job insecurity and affective commitment, with a significant intervening role of organizational support. More precisely, when respondents perceive a high level of organizational support, they maintain their affective commitment despite the feelings of insecurity. These findings not only shed light on the human resource policies of Bangladeshi HEIs, but also contribute to the existing social exchange and organizational identification theories, as well as the betrayal perspective.*

Keywords: *Affective Commitment, Betrayal Framework, COVID-19, Job Insecurity, Organizational Support, Organizational identification theory, Social exchange theory*

1. Introduction

Building an employee base, which is a source of sustainable competitive advantage (HOA et al., 2020), committed to the organization is the most crucial factor that organizations must consider, as affective commitment results in multiple positive outcomes, including increased work performance and decreased turnover (Nguyen & Ngo, 2020). Additionally,

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organizations rely heavily on a committed workforce to stay competitive in an era of turbulence and unpredictability (Scrima et al., 2014). However, with intensified global competition, repeated warnings of economic recession, advancement of technologies, industrial reengineering, and transitions in government policy, organizations now have to engage in continuous innovation, restructuring through mergers and acquisitions, and, increasingly downsizing their workforces, to maintain the competitiveness and viability in the marketplace. These changes make employees tremendously anxious and uncertain about their jobs (Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018).

Job insecurity, a significant workplace stressor, jeopardizes not only the employee's economic well-being but also the employee's mental well-being (Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018). Myriad factors contribute to this job insecurity, ranging from employer-specific characteristics to a country's macroeconomic conditions (Nauman et al., 2020). Irrespective of the forces, job insecurity has a detrimental effect on organizations, as previous research has discovered a significant negative relationship between job insecurity and organizational performance (Schumacher et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2015), as well as job insecurity and affective commitment (Cheng & Chan, 2008; König et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2015).

The covid-19 epidemic, declared a pandemic by WHO, has caused an unprecedented crisis, including job insecurity, to all industries worldwide, where the service sector is mostly affected (Chang et al., 2020). Unlike the rest of the world, Bangladesh has also faced the deadly devouring of this COVID-19 pandemic, with almost 13% of the population losing their jobs (BIDS, 2020). The higher education sector, particularly private universities, endured an employment shock earlier than other sectors, with a steep decline in student enrollment. The usual classroom activities in educational institutions in Bangladesh are halted from 18 March 2020, though distance learning has already supplanted conventional classroom learning. Apart from the ongoing debates over the effectiveness of virtual learning, the majority of students and faculty members have encountered virtual teaching for the first time, resulting in burnout for many faculty members (Schmidt-Crawford et al., 2021). Moreover, to save costs, the authorities of private HEIs restructure departments, reduce compensation scales, withhold increments and promotions, and curtail incentives and bonuses, all of which result in considerable financial difficulties for faculty members and ultimately instigate uncertainty regarding their jobs.

In the grim scenario of a pandemic, organizational support referring to employee conviction that their contribution is valued is the only way to motivate employees; the absence of this results in counterproductive behavior (Tian et al., 2014), which has a detrimental effect on firms' overall business performance (Dunlop & Lee, 2004). Therefore, the study investigates job insecurity, affective commitment, and organizational support in the context of private

HEIs of Bangladesh during the COVID-19 outbreak. This research addresses the following questions:

RQ 1: What is the effect of job insecurity on affective organizational commitment among the faculty members of private HEIs of Bangladesh?

RQ2: What is moderating effect of perceived organizational support on the relationship between job insecurity on affective organizational commitment?

The current investigation is going to add some unique contributions to the body of existing knowledge. Firstly, the study validates the proposition of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and depicts how it functions within the higher education sector during the COVID-19 pandemics. Secondly, the study provides substantial evidence for the betrayal perspective (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998), as empirical evidence demonstrates that job insecurity considerably reduces employee affective commitment. Thirdly, the study shed light on organizational identification theory (Mael & Ashforth, 1992) and extended the notion of theory by demonstrating that even under extreme pressure from organizational stressors, if employees continue to perceive their organization as supportive, their affective commitment remains high. Finally, the study offers some sustainable, practical ramifications that could be a valuable contributor to the human resource policies of private HEIs.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Individual Discussion of the Study Variables

2.1.1 Job Insecurity

Job insecurity can be defined as an employee's perception of uncertainty over the continuation of his or her current position (De Witte, 2016). This perception, which is primarily subjective, is formed by assessing the job's characteristics and the actual work environment. Job insecurity, therefore, ranges from losing a specific feature to losing the entire job. Shoss (2017) identified many factors that lead to job insecurity, including diverse economic forces such as an industry downturn or recession, organizational restructuring, interpersonal factors, and rational or irrational factors such as working on a temporary contract or anxieties unrelated facts than dispositional susceptibility. The consequence of insecurity at work is detrimental as it is regarded as one of the most common stressors in organizations (Lee et al., 2018). Besides, Reisel et al., (2010) provided that heightened job insecurity results in series of adverse outcomes such as increased job stress, unpleasant emotions, low job satisfaction, low organizational citizenship behavior, and high deviant behaviors.

2.1.2 Affective Organizational Commitment

Affective commitment emerges from the willingness to be a part of the organization, is one of the three components of organizational commitment outlined by Allen & Meyer (1990). Allen and Meyer (1990) defined affective commitment as a sense of commitment that is built on emotional relationship, identification, and involvement with the organization. Among the three types of commitment, affective commitment is considered most valuable because prior studies found that affective commitment has a higher positive impact on OCB than other types of commitment (e.g., Farzaneh et al., 2014; Purba et al., 2015).

2.1.2 Organizational Support

The idea of perceived organizational support in this study is adopted from Eisenberger et al., (1986), where they outlined organizational support as the degree to which individuals believe that their organization values employees' contributions and is invested in their well-being. Generally, when employees feel appreciated, valued, and recognized by the organization, perceived organizational support is manifested (Allen et al., 2003; Kurtessis et al., 2017).

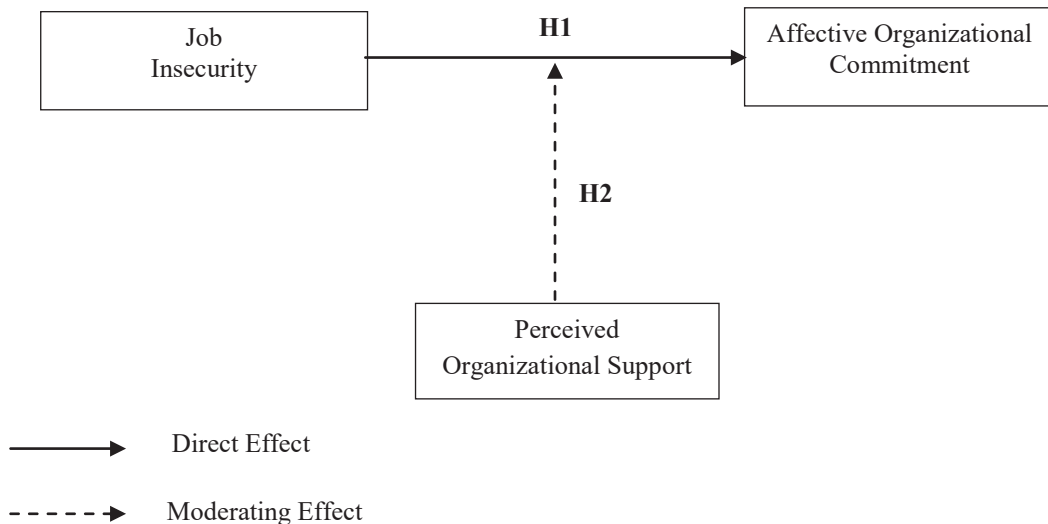


Figure 1: Conceptual framework based on the literature

2.2 Underpinning Theories

Blau's (1964) social exchange theory, Elangovan and Shapiro's (1998) framework of betrayal viewpoints, and organizational identification theory (Mael & Ashforth, 1992) is employed to discuss the hypothesized relationships of the study's framework. The relationship between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment is explored via the notion of social

exchange theory. Relationship parties, according to this theory, build mutual exchanges and seek reciprocation. Therefore, when an organization fails to meet employee expectations, such as job security, employees perceive the organization's reciprocity as failing, lowering their level of affective commitment to the organization (Arshad & Sparrow, 2010; Lee & Jeong, 2017). Previous studies support this view, as job uncertainty caused by an expectation mismatch influences employee commitment. De Witte and Näswall (2003) argued that job instability poses a challenge to the interests and values of employees and hence reduces their commitment to the organization. Downsizing, a considerable indication of job insecurity result of COVID 19 pandemic, arising from misaligned expectations between employer and employees. Allen et al., (2001) noticed that a decline in job security during a downsizing process reduces affective organizational commitment. Marques et al., (2014) also found a negative link between job instability and affective commitment during a downsizing process.

Besides, according to the betrayal perspective (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998), when trust is breached, a strong sense of support may exacerbate the negative impacts on workers' attitudes and behaviors, such as low affective commitment. Based on the paradigm of betrayal perspective (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998; Morrison & Robinson, 1997), an organization's inability to prevent situations of job insecurity during COVID 19 pandemic may be viewed as a betrayal. In general, employees expect their employers to provide emotional support and security, which results in mutual respect, trust, and obligations (Lynch et al., 1999). However, the failure of the employer to provide the emotional support and security is seen as a betrayal to which workers will react by changing their work attitudes and behaviors (Coyle-Shapiro, 2002). Thereby, the support from the organization also plays a crucial in cultivating employee's affective commitment.

Organizational identification theory, on the other hand, suggests that when an employee identifies with the organization, she or he would perceive the organization as a part of themselves. Organizational support, as a source of organizational identification, promotes the identification of the organization among its employees. Consequently, these identified employees, in turn, assist the organization in various ways (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Wu et al., 2016). However, employees who are worried about their employment status in the organization may experience fear and apprehension, which will prevent them from developing favorable attitudes toward the organization (Tian et al., 2014). Therefore, employees feeling insecure about their current employment status has a detrimental effect on their affective commitment. Based on this explanation, this study attempts to determine affective commitment status when employees simultaneously perceive both organizational support and job insecurity.

2.3 Development of Hypothesis

Job Insecurity & Affective Organizational Commitment

Negative emotions such as anxiety, irritation, depression, and so on, which arise from job insecurity, may decrease the level of employee's affective attachment with the organization (Ashford et al., 1989) and can make employees comprehend that organization is unreliable in terms of meeting its commitment to employees (Cheng & Chan, 2008). Meyer and Allen (1997), who coined the term affective commitment, outlined that employees' emotional attachment stems from their positive appraisal about the work environment while negative appraisal weakens their emotional attachment and ultimately results in low affective commitment. Prior empirical research has also established this relationship, suggesting that job insecurity has a detrimental effect on an employee's affective commitment (De Cuyper et al., 2009; Huang et al., 2010; König et al., 2011; Masia & Pienaar, 2011).

The social exchange theory, betrayal perspectives, and organizational identification theory discussed earlier also delivered a common theme: job insecurity manifests the organizational failure to maintain the transactional relationship between employee and employer where employee reacts negatively in turn by lowering their affective commitment (Blau, 1964; Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). The reason is well explained in the current study of Lam & Mayer (2014), where they concluded that when job insecurity levels are moderate to high, employees are more prone to keep their interest above the organization's favor. Based on the explanations, this study proposed that:

H1: Job insecurity has significant negative association with employee's affective commitment

Moderating Role of Organizational Support

Tian et al., (2014) emphasized the relevance of organizational support by identifying it as a contributor to improving work-related attitudes and behaviors, even during downsizing. In addition, the organization identification theory explains that when employees perceive the organization's role as supportive, they are committed to aiding the organization in return (Wu et al., 2016). Besides, Suazo and Stone-Romero (2011) observed a strong positive linkage between organizational support and employee's citizenship behavior. Therefore, it can be assumed that organizational support has an association with affective commitment.

In terms of the interaction effect, the role of organizational support should be assessed when the job insecurity is also present in the context, as it is already hypothesized that job insecurity negatively influenced affective commitment. Based on the proposition of organizational identification theory, organizational support, a source of organizational identification, positively influence the employees' affective responses (Mael & Ashforth,

1992). However, the same theory also proposed that employees are reluctant to respond positively when they found any negative characteristics in the organization (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Nevertheless, individuals who report high levels of perceived organizational support should be expected to receive assistance during a poor work experience, such as increased job insecurity. Therefore, employee's responses should be explored when both job insecurity and organizational support are existing.

H2: Perceived organizational support significantly moderates the linkage between job insecurity and affective organizational Commitment.

3. Methods

3.1 Research Design

As followers of positivism, the researchers used deductive reasoning to investigate the hypothesized relationship. The deductive approach following the philosophy of positivism sounds justified when researchers would like to test a theory (Saunders et al., 2009). The investigation is, therefore, quantitative. A cross-sectional survey was employed to obtain data from respondents between February and June 2021.

3.2 Sampling & Data Collection Procedure

The study's sample included faculty members currently employed in Bangladesh's private universities. Since there is no available list of all faculty members to use a probability sampling technique, this study utilizes a non-probability sampling strategy, specifically convenience sampling. Due to pandemic and ease of data collection, the whole survey was conducted online. Initially, 350 questionnaires were distributed through email. However, respondents returned 231 responses. Among the 231 responses, 27 questionnaires were removed due to incompleteness and outlier problems during data screening. Thus, the final response rate of the study is 58%, and the sample size is 204, where 60% are male and 40% are female. Regarding marital status, 63% of respondents are married, while the remainder is single. The majority of respondents (47 percent) are between the ages of 31 and 40, followed by 21-30 (35%), 41-50 (11%), and above 50 (7%). Furthermore, lecturer (53 percent) is the most common type of respondents, followed by the senior lecturer (21 percent), assistant professor (16 percent), associate professor (6 percent), and professor (4 percent) (Table 1).

The sample size of 204 is adequate for subsequent analysis in this study as Hair Jr et al. (2013) guidelines were followed to determine the minimum sample size. According to Hair Jr et al., (2013), the sufficient sample size to run a model is 75 with a statistical power of 0.80, R-square of 0.25, at the 1% significance level where the maximum number of arrows pointing at a construct is two. Additionally, G*power software is utilized to validate the sample size with the setting of $f^2 = 0.15$ (medium), $\alpha = 0.01$, 80% power, and number of

predictors = 2 demonstrating 82 sample size is adequate for this study. Both Hair Jr et al., (2013) guidelines and G*power software output proves the sample size adequacy for this study.

Table 1: Respondents Demographic Information

		No of Participants	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	123	60%
	Female	81	40%
Marital Status	Single	76	37%
	Married	128	63%
Age	21-30	72	35%
	31-40	96	47%
	41-50	23	11%
	Above 50	13	7%
Designation	Lecturer	107	53%
	Senior Lecturer	43	21%
	Assistant Professor	32	16%
	Associate Professor	13	6%
	Professor	9	4%

Source: Demographic profile of respondents

3.3 Measures

The questionnaire was divided into four distinct sections, the first of which included demographic questions such as gender, age, and designation. The remaining sections include measures that assess job insecurity, organizational commitment, and perceived organizational support. A well-established and valid scale is used to measure all the relevant constructs. Job insecurity was measured with a five items scale adapted from the work of SVERKE et al., (2004). In the case of measuring perceived organizational support, the Eisenberger et al., (1986) scale is adapted, whereas the Meyer et al., (1993) scale is used to measure affective organizational commitment. All the items were measured in a 5-point Likert scale where five meant strongly agree, and one meant strongly disagree (Table 2).

Table 2: Measures of the Study

Construct	Details	Example Item
Job Insecurity	Adopted from SVERKE et al. (2004) 5 items scale	I fear I will lose my job.
Affective Organizational Commitment	Adapted from Meyer et al. (1993) 4 items scale	I am proud to tell others I work at my organization.
Perceived organizational Support	Adapted from Eisenberger et al., (1986) 7 items scale	My organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part

3.4 Data Normality

Based on the recommendation of (Hair Jr et al., 2017), the researchers investigated the multivariate skewness and kurtosis accessible at web power online software. The data collected for this study was not multivariate normal, as measured by Mardia's multivariate skewness ($\beta=18.953$, $p<0.01$) and kurtosis ($\beta=62.718$, $p<0.01$). Therefore, the researchers moved to the PLS-SEM technique instead of CB-SEM and used Smart PLS software. Besides, Partial least squares is a well-known approach in business management nowadays (Garces-Ayerbe et al., 2012) which facilitates analysis of complex relationship with minimal samples.

3.5 Bias Issues

There is a possibility of a common bias method problem as the study demanded respondents to fill up the questionnaire on their own (Fuller et al., 2016). To resolve the CMB issues, the researchers conduct Harman's single factor test. Harman's single factor test assumes that when the variance is larger than 50%, indicating that the tests are suffering from common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The outcome of Harman's single factor test in this study is 31.05% of the total variance, which is lesser than 50%. Thus, it can be concluded that the study is free from common method bias.

4. Results

4.1 Measurement Model Evaluation

Fundamentally, measurement models are concerned with the reliability and validity of the study's constructs. Construct reliability is assessed through Cronbach Alpha and composite reliability. In both circumstances, any score above 0.7 indicates sufficient construct reliability (Hair Jr et al., 2017). The Cronbach Alpha values for all three constructs in this study ranged

from 0.821 to 0.905, while the composite reliabilities ranged from 0.897 to 0.913 (Table 3). Thus, the constructs in this study are completely reliable.

On the other hand, convergent and discriminant validity need to be evaluated to ensure that the constructs are valid. Convergent validity pertains to a construct's items being identical, but discriminant validity implies that all constructs are distinct. In the case of convergent validity, the average variance extracted should be more than 0.5 (Hair Jr et al., 2017). According to Table 3, the AVE in this study ranged between 0.578 and 0.646, larger than 0.5, indicating that all constructs exhibit convergent validity.

Table 3: Alpha value, CR & AVE

Constructs	Indicator	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Job Insecurity	JI 1	0.825	0.905	0.897	0.646
	JI 2	0.837			
	JI 3	0.833			
	JI 4	0.800			
	JI 5	0.782			
Affective Organizational Commitment	AOC 1	0.813	0.895	0.913	0.578
	AOC 2	0.788			
	AOC 3	0.816			
	AOC 4	0.805			
Perceived Organizational Support	POS 1	0.700	0.821	0.899	0.651
	POS 2	0.764			
	POS 3	0.721			
	POS 4	0.791			
	POS 5	0.842			
	POS 6	0.767			
	POS 7	0.718			
	POS 8	0.732			

Note: JI = Job Insecurity; AOC= Affective Organizational Commitment; POS = Perceived Organizational Support

Likewise, discriminant validity can be assessed using the Fornell and Larcker criterion and HTMT ratio. Fornell and Larcker (1981) indicated that when the square roots of AVEs are greater than the coefficients of inter-correlation, this provides sufficient evidence that the constructs are distinct. In Table 4, the square root of each construct's AVE value is greater than the number immediately below it, demonstrating discriminant validity. Besides, any

HTMT value is lesser than 0.85 providing sufficient proof of discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). Table 5 illustrates all the HTMT values <0.85; thereby, the constructs have discriminant validity.

Table 4: Fornell & Larcker Criterion for Discriminant Validity

Construct	Job Insecurity	Organizational Commitment	Perceived Organizational Support
Job Insecurity	0.846		
Organizational Commitment	0.552	0.768	
Perceived Organizational Support	0.356	0.467	0.741

Table 5: HTMT Ratio for Discriminant Validity

Constructs	Job Insecurity	Organizational Commitment	Perceived Organizational Support
Job Insecurity			
Organizational Commitment	0.547		
Perceived Organizational Support	0.446	0.529	

4.2 Structural Model Evaluation

The structural model is evaluated using various fit indices such as R^2 , F^2 , multicollinearity, Q^2 , and SRMR value. R^2 refers to the overall predictability power of the model. Cohen (1977) suggested that an R^2 value greater than 0.30 indicates a high degree of predictability. The current study's R^2 value is $0.485 > 0.30$, stating the model has significant predictability power. The R^2 value of 0.485 indicating that job insecurity explains the 48.5% of affective organizational commitment in this study.

Likewise, Cohen (1988) also mentioned the threshold value for effect size. According to him, f^2 value equals to, or greater than 0.35 indicates a strong effect size. Thereby from table 6 it is evident that, job insecurity has a strong, substantial effect on organizational commitment.

Table 6: Quality of the model and fit indices

Constructs	R Square	F Square	Tolerance	Inner VIF	Q Square
Organizational Commitment	0.485				0.187
Job Insecurity		0.617	0.528	1	
Perceived Organizational Support		0.098	0.528	1	
SRMR Value	Model Value = 0.078				

Contrarily, multicollinearity issues have been checked through tolerance value, and the inner VIF. Hair Jr et al (2017) alluded that when tolerance is greater than 0.2, and VIF is lower than 5.0, then there is no multicollinearity issue exist. In this study, the inner VIF is $1.0 < 5.0$, and the tolerances are $0.528 > 0.2$, demonstrating that this study is free from multicollinearity problems. Apart from R^2 , F^2 , and multicollinearity, cross validated redundancies (Q^2) and the standardized root means residual (SRMR) are frequently examined under structural model evaluation. Hair Jr et al. (2017) recommended that Q^2 value larger than zero and SRMR value less than 0.08 indicates model's predictive relevance and model fit, respectively. Table 6 reported Q^2 equals 0.187, and the SRMR value equals 0.078, concluding the model has sufficient predictive relevance and fit.

4.3 Evaluation of Model Hypothesis

The PROCESS macro in SPSS has been applied to investigate the model hypotheses (both direct and moderating effect). Hayes' (2013) Process is used with 5000 bootstrap samples and 95 percent confidence intervals (CIs). Results exposed in Table 7 discovered that the only direct hypothesis (H_1 : $\beta = -0.6495$; $p = 0.000$) is supported. Thus, the present study found a significant negative relationship between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that perceived organizational support would act as a moderator in the link between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment. Job insecurity has a noticeable effect on affective organizational commitment when organizational support is high and has a negligible effect on affective organizational commitment when organizational support is low. Table 7 reflects the moderating effect of organizational support in job insecurity-affective organizational commitment relationship. Based on the results from Table 7, the job insecurity and affective organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.3009$; $p = 0.000$) have a significant effect on organizational commitment. Additionally, Baron and Kenny (1986) said that if the product term of the predictor and moderator (interaction term) is significant, the moderation hypothesis is verified. In this study, the interaction term (Job Involvement* Supportive Culture), evident from Table 7 and 8, generates the significant result ($\beta = .1725^*$, $P < 0.05$, $t = 2.284 > 1.96$, both LLCI and ULCI is Positive). Hence, H_2 is verified, showing

that organizational support improves the favorable association between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment significantly.

Table 7: Results of Hypothesis

Relationship	β Coff.	S. E	T value	P value	(LLCI, ULCI)	Decision
H1: JI -> AOC	-0.6495	0.056	-7.648	0	(-.6965, -.4933)	Supported
H2: JI*AOC - > AOC	0.1725	0.037	2.284	0.0025	(.1100, .1943)	Supported

Note: JI = Job Insecurity; AOC= Affective Organizational Commitment; POS = Perceived Organizational Support

Table 8: Interaction Effect on Outcome Variable (Affective organizational Commitment)

Interaction Effect	R ² Change	F	df1	df2	P	Decision
JI*SC	0.017	7.0053	1	167	0.0025	Supported

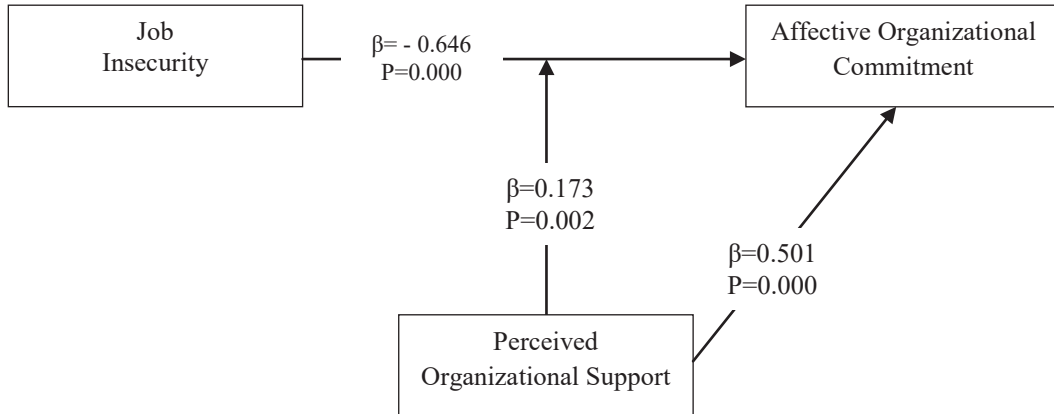


Figure 2: Structural model with hypothesized relationship

5. Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to determine the effect of job insecurity on affective commitment. The study’s results indicate that job uncertainty has a considerable detrimental effect on affective commitment (P =0.000 < 0.05, t = -7.684, and there is no zero between upper and lower limits). The coefficients value of β =-0.6495 indicates that an increase in work insecurity by one standard deviation reduces employees’ affective commitment by 65 percent. Regardless of the different contexts, this empirical investigation’s findings are

similar to those of earlier studies (e.g., Huang et al., 2010; König et al., 2011; Masia & Pienaar, 2011). The fact is that when the faculty members perceived their institutions have failed to live up to their expectations regarding job security, their level of emotional attachment to the institution decreases.

Additionally, this study examined the moderating effect of organizational support to investigate whether organizational support strengthens or lessens the relationship between job insecurity and affective commitment. The result shows that organizational support boost respondent's affective commitment ($P=0.000 < 0.05$, $t = -5.532$, and $LLCI = .3107$ and $ULCI = .1761$; there is no zero between upper limit and lower limit). The coefficients value $\beta=0.5009$ reflects that one standard deviation changes in organizational support improve 50% affective commitment of the respondents. This finding is consistent with the study of Wu et al. (2016).

Because both job insecurity and organizational support have been shown to have a significant effect on affective commitment, the focus is further extended on how job insecurity and organizational support interact to influence affective commitment. The result of this empirical investigation provides compelling evidence that organizational support significantly moderates the relationship between job insecurity and affective commitment ($P= 0.0025$, $t= 2.284$, $LLCI=0.1100$, and $ULCI =0.1943$). Figure 3 depicts that when organizational support is high, the respondent's affective commitment is higher than when the organizational support is lower. Besides, the affective commitment falls steeper in low organizational support than the high organizational support. When it comes to job security, respondents' affective commitment is twofold greater when they perceive the high organization support.

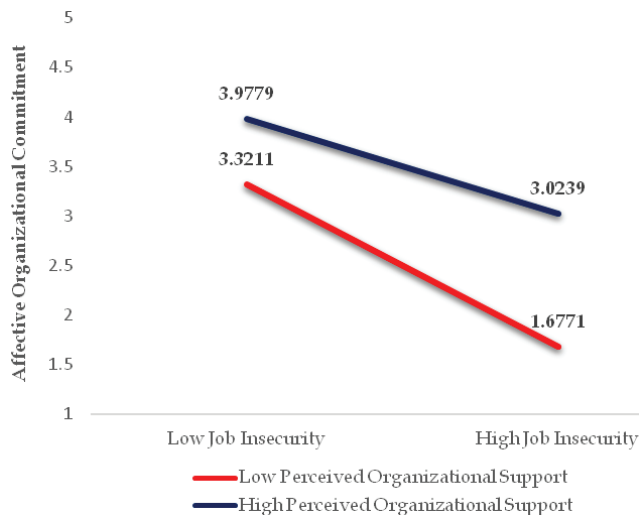


Figure 3: Interaction effect of organizational support and job insecurity on affective commitment

6. Conclusion

This study aims to explore the effect of job insecurity on affective organizational commitment among the faculty members of private HEIs of Bangladesh during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using a SEM analysis technique on cross-sectional data of 204 samples, this study reveals a negative relationship between job insecurity and affective commitment in the private HEIs of Bangladesh. Moreover, the study is further investigated whether organizational support influences the job insecurity-affective commitment linkage or not. Remarkably, the results confirm that perceived organizational support weakens the relationship between employee's job insecurity and affective commitment. In particular, a high level of perceived organizational support lessened the negative relationship between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment; however, this negative relationship becomes more intensified in the presence of low levels of perceived organizational support.

6.1 Implications

The current investigation has some significant practical implications. Employees may encounter feelings of uncertainty for job insecurity, which leads to a dread of getting laid-off and impairs their commitment. Indeed, diminishing commitment may result in a deterioration of service quality in the broader context. Hence, the impact of job insecurity is a critical aspect that must be tackled carefully at workplaces, as it affects employees, who are the source of competitive advantages (HOA et al., 2020).

Given that this empirical finding of this study indicates that organizational support has a substantial moderating role in the link between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment, the authorities of private HEIs should extend their wholehearted support throughout this pandemic. The HEIs should approach human resources more humanely and view the talent pool as an asset rather than a cost center. Besides, they should foster an enabling work environment that not only facilitates the development of affective organizational commitment but also mitigates adverse effects in the employee-organization relationship. Additionally, communication and clarification of organizational expectations must be encouraged. Essentially, for HEIs, as an effective intervention strategy, this study suggests considering downsizing or employee retrenchment as the last resort. Furthermore, the organization should consider employees' fear of being laid off as part of the perceived insecurity and consider employees' expectations more demonstratively, i.e., by trying to be more realistic, avoiding false beliefs, and giving emotional support to their workforce.

Likewise, the practical ramifications of the study also offer some amazing insights into the existing research. Though the study connected two traditionally distinct fields of inquiry, the context is somewhat different. Therefore, the most critical contribution is to validate the established relationship in this context. More precisely, the investigation verifies the outcome

of Blau's (1964) social exchange theory in the setting of the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides, the study shows how the betrayal perspective works by illustrating that failure to give job security appears to be a betrayal in the employer-employee relationship, resulting in the employee's withdrawal from organizational commitment.

Furthermore, the study adds a new dimension to the organizational identification theory (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Previously, the organizational identification theory notion suggested that employees would exert their effort only if they perceived the organization to be supportive and vice versa. Align with this notion; the likely outcome should be that employees suffering job insecurity become less emotionally committed to the organization. Nonetheless, the study discovers that even when employees feel insecure, they remain affectively engaged when they perceive additional support from the organization. Thus, the study provides new insight to the existing body of knowledge that even in the face of unforeseen pressures, if an organization's attitude toward its workforce is supportive, this is sufficient to create an employee's affective commitment.

6.2 Limitations & Scope of Future Study

This study sheds light on the negative association between job insecurity and employee's affective commitment, a relationship that is further moderated by perceived organizational support. However, the causal association established in this study cannot be extended conclusively due to the study's cross-sectional nature. Therefore, a longitudinal research design within the same research framework may be a promising future research direction.

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