

THE IMPACT OF VULNERABLE NARCISSISM AND ORGANIZATIONAL HYPOCRISY ON JOB INSECURITY-MEDIATING ROLE OF PERSECUTORY IDEATION.

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ABSTRACT

The majority of narcissistic research has concentrated on grandiose narcissism, ignoring vulnerable narcissism and its function in predicting conduct in the workplace. The purpose of this study was to look at the mediating function of persecutory ideation on the influence of vulnerable narcissism and organizational hypocrisy on job insecurity among employees of Nasarawa State University, Keffi. A cross-sectional survey of 291 employees was conducted, with 59.21% of participants aged 25-34 years old, and 51.2% males and 47.8% females. The results revealed that narcissism positively predicts job insecurity ($\beta = 0.07$, $p < 0.05$) and persecutory ideation ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.05$), while organizational hypocrisy also predicts job insecurity ($\beta = 0.13$, $p < 0.05$) and persecutory ideation ($\beta = 0.60$, $p < 0.05$). The analysis showed that narcissism and persecutory ideation have a significant joint influence on job insecurity ($R = 0.48$, $R^2 = 0.23$, $F(2,290) = 43.59$, $p < 0.05$), with a partial mediating role for persecutory ideation in the relationship between narcissism and job insecurity ($Z = 4.92$, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, persecutory ideation was found to significantly mediate the relationship between organizational hypocrisy and job insecurity ($Z = -5.204$, $p < 0.05$). By promoting transparency and ethical behavior, organization can mitigate organizational hypocrisy and reduce the likelihood of triggering persecutory beliefs among employees.

Keywords: Job insecurity, organizational hypocrisy, persecutory ideation, narcissism

INTRODUCTION

Concerns about job security have arisen as a result of manufacturing industries pondering to incorporate AI technology. Some jobs may be replaced by automation, but new ones will also arise. But for workers without the requisite training or education, the shift can be difficult, causing tension and anxiety. One in six workers in the European Union and one in ten in the United States worry about job loss within six months, as reported by the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2019). This anxiety affects 1.2 billion people globally, with underpaid, and unprotected employment common in South East Asia, Africa, and the Pacific regions (ILO, 2019). University employees experience job uncertainty, risks from tight budgets and technology developments, such as on-line learning platforms, which could lead to employment losses, reduce the efficacy of instruction, and worsen physical and mental health conditions. (Dayal, 2023).

According to Kinnunen et al. (2014), this increased insecurity is characterized by a sense of helplessness and anxiety brought on by the worry that one may lose one's job is called job insecurity. Other definitions of job insecurity include the possibility of being fired (Probst, 2003), a mismatch between expected and actual job security (Jacobson & Hartley, 1991), or anxious thoughts about losing one's job and having less opportunities for employment (Sverke et al., 2002). It can show up as mental anguish or a loss of control

over one's work (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Witte, 1999). In the context of this work, job insecurity refers to an ongoing state of worry and uncertainty that negatively impact employees. Unlike the definite occurrence of losing one's job, employees suffer from this ongoing sense of unease and uncertainty (Sverke et al., 2002). Strangely, leaving a job might really be a relief because it puts a stop to the continual concern over losing a job (Jacobson, 1991).

Nevertheless, the detrimental effects that job insecurity has on workers are not mitigated by this brief reprieve. Wilson et al. (2020) discovered that it worsens symptoms of depression. Choi et al. (2020) found a connection between financial stress and job insecurity through financial well-being. According to research by Shin et al. (2019), work uncertainty creates obstacles that lead to stress, which in turn results in anxiety, a loss of attention, and poorer performance. According to research by Lawrence et al. (2021), Olugbenga et al. (2020), and Eze et al. (2020), job instability has a negative influence on employee behaviour by predicting workplace deviant behaviours.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Given the connection between insecurity and maladaptive behaviour patterns, it is interesting to consider how personality factors could affect this dynamic. Narcissism, which is characterized by excessive self-preoccupation and a focus on one's own demands, is examined in this study (APA, 2021). Krizan and Herlache (2018) state that neediness, resentment, and shyness are characteristics of vulnerable narcissism, whereas grandiose narcissism is defined by confidence, exhibitionism, and manipulative behaviour. Vulnerable narcissists may experience low confidence and self-esteem (Khawaja et al., 2023), which can result in poor performance, lost opportunities, and unstable employment. Individuals with high narcissistic traits are more prone to act counter-productively, see other people's actions as abusive, and react aggressively (Krizan & Herlache, 2018). External validation is crucial to the fragile feeling of self-esteem that vulnerable narcissists cling to (Zeiger-Hill et al., 2008), leaving them feeling insecure when expectations are not met. Studies indicate a connection between narcissism and job instability despite the paucity of study on the subject. The fear of not being recognized at work makes vulnerable narcissists, who depend on outside validation to sustain their self-esteem, especially susceptible to job instability (Zeiger-Hill et al., 2008). In addition, they could act in a self-serving manner by taking credit for the labor of others or stealing it, which breeds mistrust and animosity. Inauthenticity and the fear of being discovered as a fraud are common issues for narcissists (Kaufman et al., 2020), which can cause emotions of unease and anxiety.

Knowing these underlying weaknesses might help shed light on the ways that narcissistic people's undesirable behaviours may be made worse by job uncertainty. Because they regard themselves as vulnerable, People with narcissistic tendencies are more likely to encounter rudeness at work. and to participate in it themselves (Meier & Semmer, 2013). Liu et al. (2020), for example, discovered that narcissists are more likely to become angry when they encounter rudeness, which can result in paranoid feelings (Kennedy et al., 1992). Due to their increased anxiety and suspicion of other people's motives, this may result in job insecurity. People who have vulnerable narcissism may experience emotional anguish, emotional turbulence, and trouble getting over unpleasant experiences (Zhang et al., 2017). Increased emotional reactivity and dysregulation may result from this weakened emotional awareness (Ponzoni et al., 2021). Furthermore, their heightened sensitivity to criticism and perceived threats can result in distrust, suspicion, and paranoia, which can cause anxiety and compromise job security.

However, another variable in this study is organizational hypocrisy, which is an important and deserving element in organizational research. The difference between an organization's stated values and its actual behaviours is known as organizational hypocrisy (OH) (Brunsson, 1986). This discrepancy can occur between encouraged and applied values, beliefs, and norms. OH can include leaders' freely chosen actions that go against the expectations and values of the company (Zeb et al., 2023) and involve contradictory talking, choosing, and behaving. Neglecting to tackle organizational hypocrisy may have a negative impact on staff morale and motivation. According to research, mistrust is positively connected with

perceived hypocrisy (Kılıçoğlu et al., 2019). Employees who experience hypocrisy doubt their leaders' commitment to values, leading to cynicism (Kannan-Narasimhan & Lawrence, 2012). This can lead to job insecurity, as employees question their roles' stability and worry about job loss or downsizing. Furthermore, Employees who experience hypocrisy may seek new opportunities (Goswami, 2022), which can exacerbate job insecurity and turnover.

Job insecurity and organizational hypocrisy may be related; however, the underlying cognitive processes are not entirely clear. According to this study, the association might be mediated by persecutory ideation. The cognitive model developed by Freeman et al. (2016) states that unpleasant emotions such as fear can cause a person to look outside of himself for reasons. Inconsistencies inside an organization can foster a toxic work environment and exacerbate feelings of injustice and dishonesty. According to Beard et al. (2009), this worry may subsequently result in skewed judgments of what happens. Negative perceptions may be reinforced by employees who mistakenly perceive neutral activities as hostile, such as a restructuring plan as a deliberate attack. As a result, workers may experience a reduction in job security as they grow more nervous and watchful of possible damage or abuse. According to research, persecutory ideation plays a mediating role in social exclusion and isolation by provoking others' deliberate punitive reactions (Al-Atwi et al., 2021). According to victim precipitation theory, this can lead to activities like peer monitoring, which can worsen feelings of insecurity by causing social retreat and rejection. Grandiose narcissism has been researched, but vulnerable narcissism has not, claim Wirtz and Rigotti [2020].

Through an examination of the mediating role of paranoid ideation, this study seeks to understand its involvement in job insecurity.

The following hypothesis were put forth in light of the literature review:

1. Narcissism will be a major predictor of persecutory ideation, organizational hypocrisy and job insecurity
2. Organizational hypocrisy will significantly predict persecutory ideation, and job insecurity
3. Persecutory ideation and narcissism will both significantly and jointly predict job insecurity.
4. Persecutory ideation and organizational insecurity will both simultaneously and significantly predict job insecurity.
5. The association between narcissism and job insecurity will be considerably mediated by prosecutorial ideation.
6. The association between job insecurity and organizational hypocrisy will be considerably mediated by prosecutorial ideation

METHODOLOGY

Information was gathered for the study using a cross-sectional survey design. from a large number of respondents at Nasarawa State University Keffi. The population consisted of both male and female workers, with an estimated staff strength of 1185. A sample size of 291 was calculated using the Raosoft sample size calculator. Questionnaires were distributed randomly to both academic and non-academic staff with guaranteed confidentiality and ethical consideration. Two trained assistants administered the instrument, and participants gave informed consent before completing the survey. Stratified sampling was used to ensure a fair representation of participants from both groups.. The majority of participants (59.21%) were between 25-34 years old, while 25.1% were aged 35-44 years old. There were slightly more males (51.2%) than females (47.8%). Most participants were single (57.4%) and junior staff (55.3%), while fewer were senior staff (44.7%).

The questionnaire used for data collection consisted of socio-demographic questions and four standardised scales:. The PIQ, developed by McKay, et al (2007), measures persecutory ideation with a 5-point Likert scale. The PIQ has excellent convergent validity, great reliability, and criterion validity,. Internal consistency was recorded at 0.88 in Nigeria (Oghenekwe et al., 2017).

The HyperSensitive Narcissism Scale (Hendin & Cheek, 1997) is a 10-item Likert-style self-report test designed to evaluate narcissistic tendencies. There are five questions on it, and higher scores suggest more hypersensitive and narcissistic tendencies. The HSNS exhibits a negative connection with self-esteem and a positive correlation with covert narcissism. It also has a reasonable internal consistency (0.72-0.75) and concurrent validity. Cronbach's alpha for the Nigerian study was 0.68, according to Ishola et al. (2018). The scale had an internal consistency of 0.748 overall, according to Akawu and Uzoigwe's (2024) validation of it in Nigeria. The subscales measuring egocentrism and oversensitivity to judgment have Cronbach alpha values of 0.66 and 0.74, respectively.

Perceived corporate hypocrisy was measured using the Perceived Corporate Hypocrisy Scale (Goswami et al., 2018). Nine questions on a 5-point Likert scale (1–5) were utilized, and the average score was determined by adding together all of the answers and dividing by 9. The scale included a single-factor structure and strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.93). Its correlations with attitudes about the company were negatively connected, whereas those with employees' plans to leave were positively correlated ($r = 0.56$). Pilot research yielded a 0.86 Cronbach's alpha.

Job insecurity was measured using the Job Insecurity Scale (JIS). The four items were scored using a 5-point Likert scale, and they were first created by De Witte (2000). A Cronbach Alpha of .80 was obtained by Ugwu and Asogwa (2017) in Nigeria, whereas the scale developers stated an alpha coefficient of .85. The Cronbach's alpha for pilot research involving 84 Federal Polytechnic Lafia employees was 0.66.

RESULT

Table 1: Table of Linear Regression demonstrating the predictive role of narcissism on the mediating variable and dependent variable

NARCISSISM	VARIABLE	B	T	R	R ²	Df	F	P
	JOB INSECURITY	.07	6.82	.372	.14	290	46.54	.00
	PERSECUTORY IDEATION	.26	7.46	.402	.16	290	52.63	.00

Regression analysis was used to evaluate the first hypothesis, and the results are shown in table 1. The simple regression analysis's findings show that narcissism positively predicts job insecurity [$\beta = .07, p < .05$]. It also, positively persecutory ideation [$\beta = .26, p < .05$] with the inference that narcissism increases job insecurity and persecutory ideation. It was shown that narcissism significantly explained 16% of the variance in persecutory ideation ($R^2 = .16$) and 14% of the variance in job insecurity ($R^2 = .14$). These findings thus support hypothesis 1, which claims that narcissism is a strong predictor of both job insecurity and persecutory ideation.

Hypothesis 2

Table 2: Analysis of Linear Regression displaying the impact of organisal hypocrisy in Predicting Dependent and Mediating Variables

Organizational Hypocrisy	VARIABLE	B	T	R	R ²	Df	F	P
	JOB INSECURITY	.13	6.02	.33	.11	290	36.24	.00
	PERSECUTORY IDEATION	.60	8.69	.46	.20	290	75.56	.01

Regression analysis was utilized to examine the second hypothesis. Table 2 displayed the findings. Organizational hypocrisy positively predicts job insecurity, according to the results of the simple regression analysis [$\beta = .13, p < .05$]. Additionally, it shows a positive correlation with persecutory

ideation [$\beta = .60, p < .05$], suggesting that job insecurity and persecutory ideation are exacerbated by organizational hypocrisy. It is observed that a significant 14% variance in work insecurity ($R^2 = .11$) and a 20% variance in persecutory ideation ($R^2 = .20$) were explained by organizational hypocrisy. These findings thus support hypothesis 2, which holds that organizational dishonesty will strongly predict both job insecurity and persecutory ideation.

Hypothesis 3

Table 3 Analysis of Multiple Regression Showing narcissism and persecutory ideation will jointly and significantly predict job insecurity

VARIABLE	β	t	R	R^2	Df	F	P
NARCISSISM	.24	4.2					
PERSECUTORY IDEATION	.33	5.9	.48	.23	290	43.59	.00

As shown in table 4, narcissism and persecutory ideation exerted a significant joint influence on job insecurity [$R = .48, R^2 = .23, F(2, 290) = 43.59, p < 0.05$]. Based on this finding, hypothesis 3 was verified. It is observed that the two factors account for 23% of the variance in the degree of job insecurity.

Hypothesis 4

Table 4 Analysis of Multiple Regression Demonstrating a combined prediction of organizational hypocrisy and persecutory ideation over job insecurity Multiple Regression Analysis Showing Joint prediction of and persecutory on job insecurity

VARIABLE	β	t	R	R^2	Df	F	P
ORGANIZATIONAL HYPOCRISY	.351	5.956	.46	.21	290	38.02	.00
PERSECUTORY IDEATION	.174	2.959					

As shown in table 4, narcissism and persecutory ideation exerted a significant joint influence on job insecurity [$R = .46, R^2 = .21, F(2, 290) = 38.02, p < 0.05$]. It has been observed that the two variables account for 21% of the variation in the degree of job insecurity. In light of this outcome, hypothesis 4 was verified.

Hypothesis five; Persecutory Ideation will significantly mediate the influence of narcissism on insecurity

Mediation Estimates using Sobel Test

Effect	Label	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Interval		Z	p	% Mediation
				Lower	Upper			
Indirect	a × b	0.027	0.005	0.016	0.038	4.92	< .05	40.7
Direct	c	0.040	0.010	0.019	0.061	3.85	< .05	59.3
Total	c + a × b	0.068	0.010	0.048	0.088	6.63	< .05	100.0

In addition, the indirect effect of narcissism on job insecurity through persecutory ideation was significant ($\beta = .027, p < .05, CI [.016, .038]$). This research demonstrates that the association between narcissism and job insecurity is partially mediated by persecutory ideation. ($Z = 4.92, p < .05$) The proportion of the total effect that is mediated was 40.7 indicating that 40.7% of the total effect of narcissism on job insecurity is mediated by persecutory ideation. Parallel to the direct and indirect effects, the path coefficient for the total effect between narcissism and job insecurity was also significant ($\beta = .068, p < .05, CI [.048, .088]$).

Hypothesis six; Persecutory Ideation will significantly mediate the influence of organisational hypocrisy insecurity on job

Mediation Estimates Using Sobel Test

Effect	Label	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Interval		Z	p	% Mediation
				Lower	Upper			
Indirect	a × b	0.06	0.01	0.04	0.09	5.20	< .05	51.4
Direct	c	0.06	0.02	0.019	0.11	2.80	< .05	48.6
Total	c + a × b	0.13	0.02	0.087	0.17	6.05	< .05	100.0

The outcome demonstrated the substantial impact of organizational hypocrisy on job insecurity. ($b = .13$, $p < .05$). Secondly, this research demonstrates that the association between narcissism and job insecurity is partially mediated by persecutory ideation. ($b = .06$, $p < .05$). Additionally, there is a considerable indirect impact of organizational dishonesty on job insecurity through persecutory ideation ($b = .06$, p). The relationship between job insecurity and organizational hypocrisy is considerably mediated by persecutory ideation, according to the results ($Z = -5.204$, $p < .05$). The percentage of the overall effect mediated was 51.4 indicating that 51.4% of the total effect of organizational hypocrisy on job insecurity is mediated by persecutory ideation. Therefore, mediation result indicates that persecutory ideation is partially mediating the association between organisational hypocrisy and job insecurity.

DISCUSSION

With persecutory ideation acting as a mediating factor, this study looked at the association between job insecurity and vulnerable narcissism/organizational hypocrisy. Narcissism was revealed to be a predictor of employment instability in our study. In particular, people who exhibited high degrees of narcissism were more likely to be unemployed. This supports research by (Wirtz, & Rigotti, 2020). indicated that narcissistic people might be more likely to burn out and experience emotional tiredness at work. People may feel overburdened, pressured, and apprehensive about their employment prospects as a result, which can ultimately result in feelings of job insecurity.

According to our research, employees may feel more insecure about their jobs when they believe that their company is hypocritical. This is in line with the findings of Kılıçoğlu and Yılmaz Kılıçoğlu (2019), who demonstrated that Teachers who perceive more organisational hypocrisy tend to rate lower on organizational commitment, motivation, organizational citizenship, and job satisfaction. The results showed that narcissism strongly predicted persecutory ideation based on the predictor's variables. Because of their exaggerated sense of self-worth, narcissists are extremely sensitive to constructive criticism and regard it as a calculated attack on their perceived superiority." The result aligns with the findings of Hepper et al. (2022), who found that defensive techniques used by vulnerable narcissists to protect themselves were linked to paranoia about being singled out or excluded.

We also found that high levels organizational hypocrisy predicted higher levels of persecutory ideation, which is a key mediator in the study. this is in line with studies that showed that Organisational hypocrisy can create a sense of uncertainty and mistrust among employees, leading to feelings of insecurity and anxiety. This study is in line with previous research (Kılıçoğlu, et al, 2019), demonstrating that hypocrisy in educational organizations leads to trust issues, impaired communication, increased rumours, decreased teacher motivation, job satisfaction, commitment, and performance

Our study's significance lies in its integration of persecutory ideation as a mediator, which was confirmed through our mediation hypotheses. Specifically, we found that persecutory ideation partially mediated the relationship between narcissism and job insecurity. This means that high narcissism predicts increased persecutory ideation, which in turn influences job insecurity. Meaning, narcissist may not feel insecure towards their job if they do not feel persecuted. Similarly, the partial mediation of persecutory ideation suggests that organizational hypocrisy can have a direct impact on job insecurity, but that this relationship is also influenced by the extent to which employees perceive threats or conspiracies against them., persecutory ideation can serve as a cognitive mechanism that amplifies the negative effects of organisational hypocrisy on job insecurity. The amplification of negative effects of organisational hypocrisy/ narcissism on job insecurity through persecutory ideation is consistent with the cognitive appraisal theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The theory proposes that an individual's perception of a threat or stressor is influenced by their cognitive appraisal of the situation, including their attributions, expectancies, and self-efficacy.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

This study investigated the function of persecutory ideation as a mediator in the connection between job insecurity and narcissism/organizational hypocrisy. According to our research, persecutory ideation increases with high degrees of narcissism and organizational dishonesty, and this in turn affects job insecurity. This study emphasizes how critical it is to understand the psychological underpinnings of narcissistic behaviour and feelings so that businesses can create focused plans to lessen the detrimental consequences on job insecurity. Organizations can lower the levels of persecutory ideation in narcissists by offering assistance and resources that make them feel more valued and safer. This can be achieved by understanding how narcissists process information and perceive threats. The results of the study also highlight the significance of taking into account the individual variations within employee groups and encouraging critical thinking, emotional control, and effective communication techniques in order to assist staff members in better controlling their feelings and views. To sum up, this study's results offer a sophisticated comprehension of the connection between job insecurity and organizational dishonesty. The significance of taking into account the psychological processes that underlie employee experiences and the possible advantages of addressing these processes in organizational interventions are highlighted by the mediating role of prosecutorial ideation. By investigating the generalizability of these results across many cultural contexts and businesses, future study can expand upon these findings.

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