

A Multilevel Analysis of Job Demands and Intention to Resign Through Perceived Service Recovery Performance

Khansa Zaman¹, Umer Iftikhar², Muhammad Saeed Rana³

Abstract

The present study investigates the influence of job demands on intention to resign of front line employees (FLEs) of courier industry. Moreover, it also focuses on neglected area of perceived service recovery performance which is the fundamental aspect of success in services industry. The current study incorporates perceived service recovery performance as mediator between job demands and intention to resign under the light of social exchange theory. Past literature of services is deplete with studies on banking industry, food industry, and transport and tourism industry, however, the courier industry is neglected regarding front line employees. Thus, this study responds to call for research by drawing a random sampling of 700 front line employees and their direct supervisors of courier industry. The results reflected that higher job demands results in intention to resign and reduce service recovery performance. Researchers have also discussed the limitation and direction for future research.

Keywords: Job demands, role conflict, role over load, role ambiguity, intention to resign, perceived service recovery performance, courier industry, front line employees.

1. Introduction

The human involvement in service planning process is a serious challenge as services are primarily managed by people. The front line service providers of organizations are central to set corporate reputation and its image (Jung & Seaock, 2017). Researchers argue that performance of front line service providers is vital in determining the recovery of service in an effective way. Likewise, it is argued that performance of FLEs is critical to determine service value by customers (Boshoff & Allen, 2000; Liat, Mansori, Chuan, & Imrie, 2017; Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 2003).

Performance of Service recovery (SR) is considered a strategic issue in service

1 Assistant Professor, SZABIST, Islamabad Campus

2 Assistant Professor at National Defence University Islamabad

3 MBA, MS Project Management at National Defence University, Islamabad. Email: saeed_mba@hotmail.com

ARTICLE HISTORY

30 May, 2018 Submission Received

2 Nov, 2018 First Review

1 Mar, 2019 Second Review

28 Apr, 2019 Third Review

10 May, 2019 Accepted

marketing literature (Ashill, Carruthers, & Krisjanous, 2005). Researchers argue that poor service recovery performance (SRP) yield undesirable outcomes for organizations, so key organizational factors related to SRP must be studied (Rod, Ashill & Carruthers, 2008). SR acts as another chance for organizations to retrieve their annoyed customers. In addition to this, researcher states that SRP should be given more importance than failure-free service particularly in high competitive services industries (Hazee, Van-Vaerenbergh, & Armirotto, 2017; Lin, 2010).

A recent study conducted on JD-R model investigated the elements of job demands (mental and emotional), in addition to these constructs, researchers argue that there are still some questions regarding processes and strategies that need to be hypothesized in future research (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Hence, the present study responds to call for research by analysing job demands to predict job outcomes of employees through mediating mechanism of service recovery performance with underlying theory of planned behaviour and social exchange theory. The existing literature is deplete with studies on banking sector, tourism, and telecom sector, however, the present study will contribute in the services literature by bridging the gap between job demands and job outcomes of FLEs employed in neglected industry such as courier industry. The objectives of the present study are: to examine the influence of elements of job demands such as role conflict, role overload, and role ambiguity on perceived service recovery performance; and to investigate the effect of perceived service recovery performance on employees' intention to resign by using two data sources (direct supervisors and employees).

The article is distributed in various sections. First section explains the objectives and rationale of the research. Second section discusses underpinning theory and theoretical foundations of research model employed to propose and test hypotheses. Third section explains comprehensive research design encompasses research methods and strategies. Lastly, analysis is presented with theoretical and practical implications.

2. Literature Review

Social exchange theory remained one of the most significant theories in disciplines of socio-psychology and sociological (Alexander, 1990; Cook, 2000). Theory of social exchange is proposed by Homans (1961) which is based on assumptions that human behavior is exchange activity of rewards and costs that are either tangible or intangible. It also assumes that behaviors of human are rationale and they estimate costs and rewards of their actions which may vary from other human beings. It also focuses on exchange of benefits which means giving others something economical or non-economical that is more valuable to them (Homans, 1961), and this exchange is an open secret of human behavior which is known and desired by everyone in

social life (Coleman, 1990). SET talks about the exchange of benefits, giving other something more valuable i.e. rewards or appreciation in exchange of performance (Homans, 1961). Social exchange suggests that service providers are benefited from internal (job fulfilment) and external awards (financial awards) through satisfying customers, and prosocial behavior occurs when the service provider is in pleasant mood (Boshoff & Allen, 2000).

Various researchers have identified outcome variables from SET (see e.g. Boshoff & Allen, 2000; Yavas, Karatepe, Avci, & Tekinkus, 2003, Ashill et al., 2005, Rod & Ashill, 2009). Boshoff and Allen (2000) proposed following outcome variables which are derived from SET in exchange of rewards and support: 1. extrinsic job satisfaction, 2. Intention to resign. The proposed theoretical framework is based on social exchange theory which stipulates the fact the social exchanges usually takes place through interaction between individuals while in sales process social behaviour skill is vital, taking this assumption the study has empirically tested by regressing the predictors on outcome variables.

2.1. Intention to resign (IR)

Mobley (1977) introduced the construct of intention to resign and defined as cognitive process which involves thinking, planning, and desiring to quit a job due to internal and external factors of organizations. IR is as an 'individual's inner estimated probability that he/she is permanently leaving the organisation at some point in the near future. Many previous studies have reported that intention to leave is the actual turnover of employees because once they have made their mind to leave then they cannot work effectively for the organization (see e.g. Shore & Martin, 1989; Tett & Meyer, 1993).

According to Bluedorn (1982), intention to resign is easier to predict than the actual turnover because in the former case organizations may try to retain their key employees by offering rewards and promotions. Turnover intention is a persistent phenomenon in services sector which produces serious problems for the organizations in terms of reduction in competitiveness and loss of skilled and qualified employees (Miller & Wheeler, 1992). Intention to resign results in greater loss and cost to the firm as: it disturbs the informal group relationships, decrease productivity, increase non serious attitude, and make employees less committed to the firm (Reese, 1992). This type of turnover is considered very harmful for the firm because it has an un-favorable impact on firm's performance for which a firm might not prepared (Boshoff & Allen, 2000). Therefore, studying antecedents of intention to resign helps organizations to formulate employee friendly strategies to enhance longer tenure to accomplish service excellence (Schneider & Bowen, 1991). However, the researchers of the current

study uses the concept of intention to resign based on the work of Mobley (1977) and propose to test desiring to quit job instead of actual behaviour.

2.2. Job demands

In Job Demands, following concepts are analysed by the researcher in this study.

2.2.1. Role conflict (RC)

Wolfe and Snoek (1962) are the pioneers in defining the concept of role conflict, they described role conflict as instantaneous happening of two or more sets of roles in a way that fulfilment of one role make difficult or impossible the accomplishment of other role. Likewise, Jex (1998) focuses on employees' stress which is resulted from role conflict, according to his argument role conflict decreases motivation level of employees at workplace which affects the efficiency of employees and job performance. The employees in courier industry are often exposed to recovery role in addition to their prime job of sales, where some time both roles can conflict with each other as recovery demands purely different kind of behaviours than the sales. Similarly, researchers assert that role conflict is about demands which are imposed on employees, these demands can be single or multiple roles which do not match with each other but employees have to perform them, hence such type of tasks results into negative work performance or reduce service recovery of employees (Cooper, Dewe, & O'Driscoll, 2001).

Due to incompatibility of expectations communicated to front line employees by multiple supervisors, the FLEs are incapable to meet all expectations and it results in adverse interaction with customers (Boshoff & Allen, 2000). Moreover, incompatible expectations put greater stress on employees fostering to compromise service recovery. To comprehend this phenomenon, Karatepe (2006) examined a study on front line employees of Turkish banks and indicated that role conflict is an important antecedent of SRP because instantaneous tasking results in partial fulfilment of tasks due to pressure of task completion.

Researchers conducted a study to analyse the influence of antecedents on front-line staff's perceptions of service recovery performance and identified role conflict as one of the predictor of recovery performance (Boshoff & Allen, 2000). Likewise, Yavas et al. (2003) conducted an empirical study on FLEs to explore the antecedents and consequences of service recovery performance in Turkish banks. The findings of their study revealed that the level of recovery performance is decreased with the increase in conflicting role demands. Moreover, Ashill et al. (2008) also confirmed the same findings in their study and argue that employees cannot perform well if they face multiple demands from multiple supervisors. Based on previous findings,

it is hypothesized that:

H₁: Role conflict positively influence intention to resign of front line employees.

H₂: Role conflict negatively influence perceives service recovery performance of front line employees.

2.2.2. Role ambiguity (RA)

Lack of information regarding job tasks and inadequate information to accomplish their responsibilities lessens the likelihood of employees to respond against job demands (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Researchers have stated a significant relationship of RA with intention to resign and argued that inadequate information put more stress on employees which instigate them to quit (Singh, 2000).

However, Yavas et al. (2003) conducted a study on job stressors and performance of employees regarding service recovery and found that role ambiguity or unclear task instructions reduces the performance of employees. Similarly, in a cross-sectional study, it is argued that role ambiguity decreases salesperson performance and satisfaction (Netemeyer, Brashear-Alejandro, & Boles, 2004). Researchers suggest that role ambiguity reduce employees' performance of dealing with aggrieved and annoyed customers and further delays actions regarding customer complaints due to inadequate information regarding job tasks which is being provided by their direct supervisors (Brown & Peterson, 1994; Rod et al., 2008).

Direct supervisors often do not provide complete information to the front line employees which happens due to ambiguous terms of references or job duties. Another reason of inadequate information to front line employees is poorly defined job tasks and responsibilities by their line managers which later on unfolds in lack of performance. Therefore, adequate information regarding job tasks results in better dealing with customer complaints (Rod et al., 2008). When front line employees know about their job descriptions, and demands, they will perform well in managing aggrieved customers (Rod et al., 2008). It has been seen that in courier industry the managers are usually changing territory of sales personnel which mostly creates ambiguity in the mind of sales people to which territory they concentrate. Researchers of the present study proposes that ambiguous roles create stress and anxiety among front line employees which negatively influence their service performance due to which their intention to quit job increase. Based on this, it is hypothesized that:

H₃: Role ambiguity positively influence intention to resign of front line employees.

H₄: Role ambiguity negatively influence perceives service recovery performance of front line employees.

2.2.3 Role overload (RO)

Various researchers have characterized Role over load inappropriately burdensome of role requirements (Schick, Gordon, & Haka, 1990). Tubre and Collins (2000) conducted a study to explore the impact of role overload on service recovery performance of frontline employees, the results of the study yielded that role overload results in anxiety as incapability of employees to meet huge demands put them into frustration which decreases the propensity to perform better (Tubre & Collins, 2000).

Peterson, Smith, Akande, Ayestaran (1995) indicated that role overload is strongly associated with workplace stress and employees' performance as overburdening resultant reduce effectiveness of employees' performance. Likewise, Rod et al. (2008) conducted a study to find out the relationship between job demand stressors and service recovery performance in state owned enterprises of New Zealand. The analysis showed a negative association between RO and SRP of employees which thereby means that managers should take steps to reduce the workload of employees for an excellent frontline service recovery performance.

Barnett and Baruch (1985) claimed that role overload result into psychological distress and intention to resign because multiple roles with less time put greater pressures on employees' mind which influence their work performance as well. Researchers claimed that role overload put greater pressure on employees which decreases the productivity at workplace (Boshoff & Allen, 2000; Yavas et al., 2003). The results of the past studies indicate that overburdened front line employees carry higher tendency to quit jobs and are poor performers therefore the number of aggrieved customers' increases in the services industry. Thus, it is hypothesized on the basis of past researches that:

H₅: Role overload positively influences intention to resign of front line employees.

H₆: Role overload negatively influences perceives service recovery performance of front line employees.

2.3. Perceived service recovery performance (PSRP)

Effective service recovery performance is considered as an important predicator of intention to resign in services industry (Yavas et al., 2003). Similar findings were found in little more recent studies by Yavas et al. (2003) and Ashill et al. (2005) in which they claim that when employees perform service recovery effectively; this state put them into a greater level of satisfaction which thereby means that performance causes satisfaction. Many previous studies have been tested the models service recovery with a mediating role of service recovery and hypothesized the factors of turnover

intentions, and argue that effective service recovery performance is an important predictor of employees' intention to leave or stay (Richer, Blanchard, & Vallerand, 2002; Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000).

Several researchers have predicted that intention to resign is one of the most critical and accurate predictor of actual turnover (see e.g. Kash, Naufal, Cortes, & Johnson, 2010; Takase, Yamashita, & Oba, 2007; Waters & Roach, 2006). The argument of researchers is supported by the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and Social Exchange Theory which argues that intentions and plans of individual are the best predictors of actual behavior. Due to this argument, many researchers have hypothesized that service recovery performance mediate the relationship of RC, RA, and RO with intention to resign (Boshoff & Allen, 2000; Ashill et al., 2005). Several empirical studies have hypothesized the relationship of performance with employees' intention to resign (Clegg, 1983; Bishop, Scott, & Burroughs, 2000).

The studies have tried to get answer regarding the issue that what determines the intention of employees to quit and most of them have linked it with performance of employees (Firth, Mellor, Moore, & Loquet, 2004). Based on previous literature and facts highlighted by the study above, it is assumed that there is a negative relationship of perceived service recovery performance between job demands and intention to resign which thereby means that effective service recovery would be decreased due to higher job demands which will enhance employees intention to quit jobs. It is therefore hypothesized that:

H₇: PSRP negatively influences intention to resign of front line employees.

H₈: PSRP negatively mediates the relationship between Role conflict and intention to resign.

H₉: PSRP negatively mediates the relationship between Role ambiguity and intention to resign.

H₁₀: PSRP negatively mediates the relationship between Role overload and intention to resign.

3. Methodology

The sample of the present study was drawn from courier industry of Pakistan. The research has employed survey technique for the collection of data. The survey based technique has been used mainly due to nature of study which is based on data of courier industry and without employing survey based technique data was difficult to collect. The courier industry got less attention from practitioners and researchers

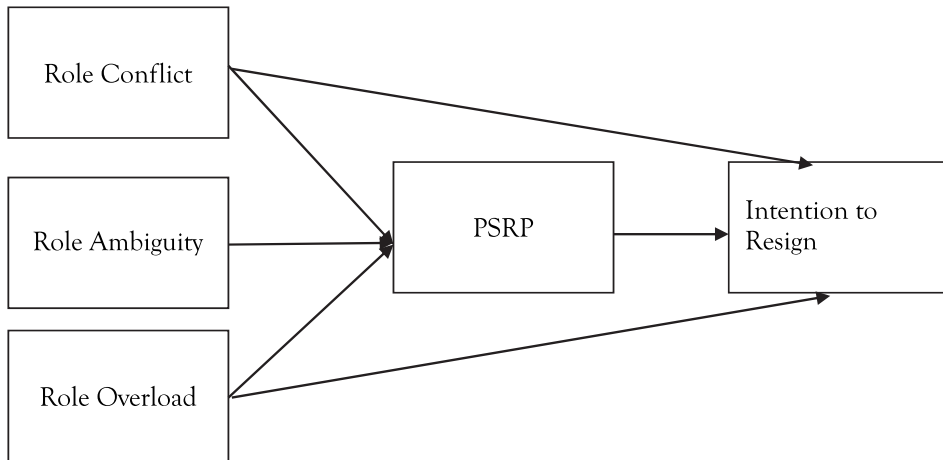


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

despite of knowing industry's contribution toward GDP of the country. Prior to this, most of the past studies were conducted on banking, hospital, tourism and hotel industries (see e.g. Yavas et al., 2003; Karapete, 2006, Ashill et al., 2005). The methodology of the study has employed the concepts of theory of social exchange and behaviour. Researchers contacted CEOs of the companies by formally writing the letter to seek permission for data collection. We assured the anonymity of the data and data collection would be smoothly executed without interrupting the organizational activities. We employed random sampling with sample size of 700, however 480 responses were received with response rate of 68% (420 FLEs and 60 direct supervisors) the majority of the data was taken from sales staff while fewer of the data obtain through direct superiors to manage the sample bias. After deleting outliers and half-filled questionnaires, 450 usable questioners were left for analysis.

The data was collected in one time lag to avoid common method bias. Here, direct supervisor data (minority part) was included because these supervisors have been promoted after working as field staff so they also have experiences related to role overload, role ambiguity and role conflict. The researchers aimed to study mediating role of PSRP therefore minimum two time lags were used as proposed by researchers (Cole & Maxwell, 2003). In first wavelength, data of job demands was collected from FLEs, however, data of PSRP was collected from direct supervisors as well to avoid social desirability and acquiescence bias because they evaluate employees' performance of providing better and effective service recovery. The data of employees' intention to resign was also collected from second wave length.

The independent and dependant variables of study were measured by using multiple items. All items were measured by using five point likert scale ranging from 1 =

strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Job demand stressor was operationalized with three job demand role stressors by following Singh, Goolsby & Rhoads (1994). PSRP was measured by using five items from the work of Boshoff and Allen (2000). However, Intention to resign was measured using three items from the work of Becker (1992).

The study questionnaire has covered the profile of every responder in terms of the organization, department, age and gender. The aforementioned demographic variables were controlled for further analysis. The OCS has the highest response rate with 30.7% followed by GPO and TCS respectively. Moreover, FedEx and DHL have the lowest response rate of 5.3% and 4% respectively. The department of front desk employees has given the highest responses (51.3%) while the lowest responses are from complain handling department (19.8%). Most of the respondents (49.1%) were in the age bracket of 25-31 and only 4% people were above 38. The highest percentage of (76.4%) shows that most of the front line employees were male.

Pilot testing was done to find out the reliability and validity of the instrument as the theoretical model was integrated from different studies. In pilot study, 100 questionnaires were distributed and 68 questionnaire were received. Researcher has used SPSS to check reliability and normality of distribution and AMOS for multi-variate analysis.

4. Results

We have employed MPlus 7.2 for data analysis of multilevel data which also overcomes limitation of the traditional multilevel analysis. The missing values were treated by using imputation technique. The researcher has tested normality analysis and treated data for outliers as well. All skew values ranged from 1.00 to 1.75 however, two heavily skewed z values were dropped from main data for the purpose of analysis. Before data analysis, the variables were computed to transform the average responses. To test reliability and validity of the data, the composite reliability and AVE were incorporated. In the test of CV, the values of squared multiple correlations (SMC) should be equal to .5 or greater than that with the factor loadings greater than or equal to .7 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1993). The value of SMC .476 to .893 with the coefficients of path range from .690 to .954 which is adequate for CV. All observed variables enjoyed an adequate level of convergent validity. In order to second Discriminant validity, the values of AVE should be greater than its shared variances (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The values of AVE are compared with shared variances which show that all values of AVE are greater than shared variances.

The multilevel CFA was modelled to predict individual and group level analysis. The model predicted a good-fit model indices (GFI = .935, CFI & TLI > .90, RM-

Table 1: AVE and Correlation

	Vari-ables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	CR	AVE
1	Age	37.16	7.91	~									
2	Gen-der	.61	.36	.01	~								
3	Educa-tion	1.76	.79	.02	.03	~							
4	RC	3.41	.56	.02	.01	.02	(.44)					.851	.670
5	RA	3.65	.65	.03	.01	.03	.334	(.45)				.749	.671
6	RO	3.51	.59	.02	.04	.05	.431	.381	(.459)			.762	.678
7	*PSRP	3.31	.42	.01	.03	.06	-.322	-.356	-.371	(.46)		.731	.679
8	IR	3.12	.40	.05	.03	.02	.441	.379	.366	-.219	(.45)	.731	.677

AVE – Average Variance Extracted. CR: Composite reliability

Note: Square root of AVE is shown in parentheses and correlations are reported.

*.A negative correlation coefficient depicts that an increase in one variable is associated with a decrease in other variable. A negative correlation demonstrates a connection between two variables in the same way a positive correlation coefficient does, and the relative strengths are the same

Table 2: Measurement Model

Model	X ²	df	X ² /df	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
Hypothesized five factor model:	376.61	217	1.73	.935	.966	.040
Three factor model:	354.41	209	1.69	.945	.921	.043
Role overload, role conflict, role ambiguity combined						
Two-factor model:	322.65	168	1.92	.967	.971	.034
Role overload, role conflict, role ambiguity and PSRP and intention to resign combined						
One-factor model:	307.79	154	1.99	.971	.981	.015
All factors combined						

SEA<0.06). The values of X²/df were less than 2 for all actors.

The path results and bootstrapping indirect effects indicated that RC has a significant positive relationship with intention to resign ($\beta = .308$, $p < .05$) reflecting that increase in the role conflict would increase employees' intention to quit job. However, perceived service recovery performance ($\beta = -.215$, $p < .05$) has a negative

relationship with intention to resign which thereby means that effective service recovery performance would reduce employees' intention to quit job. Role ambiguity has a significant positive relationship with intention to resign ($\beta = .255$, $p = .063$) and perceived service recovery performance ($\beta = -.196$, $p < .05$), the negative beta explain that for every 1-unit increase in the predictor variable, the outcome variable will decrease by the beta coefficient value.. Role overload has a significant association with intention to resign ($\beta = .920$, $p < .05$) and perceived service recovery performance ($\beta = -.378$, $p < .05$), the negative beta explain that for every 1-unit increase in the predictor variable, the outcome variable will decrease by the beta coefficient value. Likewise, Perceived service recovery performance has a significant relationship with intention to resign ($\beta = .131$, $p = .000$). The bootstrapping results confirmed mediation effects with confidence interval (CI) of 95%, (β , $-.102$ ($-.05$, $-.16$), $p < .05$) of perceived service recovery performance with role conflict and intention to resign. Role ambiguity also indicated mediation ($\beta = -.149$, ($-.06$, $-.197$), $p < .05$), the negative beta explain that for every 1-unit increase in the predictor variable, the outcome variable will decrease by the beta coefficient value.. of perceived service recovery performance with role ambiguity and intention to resign. Lastly, role overload also showed an indirect effect ($\beta = -.183$, ($-.041$, $-.183$), $p < .05$) of perceived service recovery performance with intention to resign, the negative beta explain that for every 1-unit increase in the predictor variable, the outcome variable will decrease by the beta coefficient value.. . The negative results of bootstrapping shows that higher job demands reduce service recovery performance and increases the employees' intention to leave job.

5. Discussion

Thus results of path analysis and indirect bootstrapping confirmed that job demands stressors decreases the service recovery performance of employees which results in increasing employees' intention to resign. Results of the previous studies have also confirmed a negative influence of job demands stressors on performance of employees as employees' innovative behaviour is reduced if they have more stress at the workplace. Moreover, if employees perceive that their performance is not up to the mark, their intentions to switch the jobs increases (Yavas et al., 2003).

The results reflected that RC, RA, and RO has a significant relationship with intention to resign and perceived service recovery performance. Moreover, job demand stressors negatively influences perceived service recovery performance of employees in courier industry. It thereby means that job demands are considered an important organizational factor to enhance intention to resign. Service organizations entailing to work overload, role ambiguity, and role conflict would accumulate more employees with intention to leave the organizations and low performance to recover the services

at workplace. The results of the study are consistent with the past literature indicating that job demands provoke employees to switch their jobs which thereby means that higher job demands decreases the service recovery performance of employees due to which their intention to leave the present job increase (Hazée et al., 2017; Lin, 2010). Moreover, these findings are consistent with the work of Boshoff and Allen (2000) and Singh (2000) who have declared a significant relationship between role ambiguity and job outcomes.

6. Conclusion

The present study explores organizational factors of job demands that determine the service recovery of employees in one of the neglected industry. This study includes the key factors of job demands which responded to call for research in different studies due to their importance. The results of the study indicated that job demands have more influence on perceived service recovery performance of employees, intention to resign of employees. The results showed that in courier industry, job demands is a challenge for employees, organizations therefore make efforts to enhance creativity of employees which minimizes their intention to quit the organization and make them satisfied. The mediating role perceived service recovery performance is partially supported. The results reveal that service recovery is not possible in presence of job demands. This is also a contribution in the body of knowledge as lack of empirical studies are available which testes the mediating role of perceived service recovery performance in relation with intention to resign and job demands.

7. Practical implications, limitations and future directions of research

The present study theoretically adds in the services marketing literature by confirming the assumptions of social exchange theory which states that employees work to seek reward and their performance is reduced in the absence of reward. Moreover, human beings are rationale therefore higher job demands are not accepted by human minds which without motivation are futile. The current study also enhances generalizability of SET by extending its application in the courier industry. The study presents useful insights for one of the rapidly growing courier industry by taking into account the concept driven from Social Exchange Theory.

The study also yields significant managerial implications for courier industry as it is one of the most neglected industry for academicians and practitioners. Courier industry is responsible to deliver the parcels timely and safely. Moreover, in case of service delays and any damages, they are responsible to recover the services. Negligence at the part of FLEs may cause emotional, psychological and financial setbacks to the customers. Therefore, knowledge of job stressors and its outcomes is important for

decision makers. The study unfolds that marketing and operations managers in service industry should put more emphasis on wisely and carefully assigning the tasks to the FLEs as ambiguity in the tasks or overburdening may reduce their performances. Service based organizations should devise mechanisms helping them knowing the resource allocation and resource levelling to avoid job stress to retain employees.

The present study is not without limitations. The limitations of the study include the generalizability of the findings, sampling, and survey technique. The researcher has collected the data from one service industry of Pakistan which includes six different organizations of courier industry which are direct competitors of each other which may limit generalizability of the study. The findings of the study may yield different findings when it is done in any other services industry of Pakistan i.e. health, insurance, telecom, hotel, and tourism etc. generally the study might also give different results when it is done in other countries.

Future research can be done to explore some other organizational factors of management, human resource, and marketing with respect to service recovery performance of employees. The same model can also be studied in the context of any other services based organization i.e. tourism, health care etc. Different sampling techniques i.e. probability sampling can be used to collect data; this might also give different results in other developed and developing countries. Moreover multiple data sources can be used to collect data this will also increase the generalizability of the results. This means that data for present study is only collected from front line employees who might give some biasness due to perceptual measures, the data from customers and employees should be collected to study service recovery performance of employees.

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