




Enhancing Employee Job Satisfaction Responding to COVID-19: The Role of Organizational Adaptive Practices and Psychological Resilience

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Purpose: The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically affected all aspects of people's lives and work, negatively impacting personal well-being and job satisfaction. Based on the conservation of resources theory, this study examines the relationship of organizational adaptive practices (OAP) responding to COVID-19 and psychological resilience (PR) with employee job satisfaction (JS) while incorporating the mediating role of emotional exhaustion (EE).

Methods: We surveyed 340 employees from China through an online questionnaire, which was used under convenience sampling and finally recovered a valid sample size of 314. We used SPSS and AMOS to analyze the correlation and hypothesis testing of the collected data through structural equation modelling (SEM) and bootstrapping.

Results: Both OAP and PR facilitate JS and inhibit employee EE. EE negatively predicted employee JS. EE mediated both the relationship between OAP and subordinate JS and the relationship between PR and subordinate JS.

Conclusion: The study provides a new perspective on increasing JS during the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby expanding the scope of the antecedents of employee JS in crisis situations. It also reveals the mediating role of EE and deepens the research on the mechanism by which OAP and PR affect individuals, providing practical guidance for organizations to improve employee satisfaction in sudden public crisis situations.

Keywords: COVID-19, organizational adaptive practices, psychological resilience, job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion

Introduction

The turmoil and uncertainty of global businesses and economies are increasing with the prevalence of COVID-19.¹ This sudden crisis is causing unfathomable economic, social, and individual losses and disruptions, creating a particularly challenging environment for human resource management.² The increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases and deaths, lockdown management, and the economic crisis may be harmful to individual well-being, mental health, and job satisfaction (JS).^{1,3} Numerous studies have confirmed that JS not only contributes to employee job performance and reduces turnover,⁴ but is also significant for organizations to maintain talent advantages and form core competencies,⁵ while job dissatisfaction is detrimental to organizational performance. For this reason, we emphasize the urgent need to understand what actions organizations are facing during the COVID-19 pandemic and what employees themselves should take to enhance individual JS.

Many studies on JS in COVID-19 have been conducted from these perspectives, such as occupational stress, work environment, and work resources.⁶⁻⁹ Among them, highly perceived organizational support (POS) is a vital work resource from outside the individual, which has an essential protective role in maintaining the individual's mental health, and scholars have proposed the positive impact of POS on individual JS in the context of epidemic normalization.¹⁰⁻¹² Unlike these studies, organizational adaptive practices (OAP) responding to COVID-19 was first derived, which is more focused on specific support behaviors implemented by the organization in response to COVID-19

than on POS, which can further influence employee attitudes and organizational behaviors.¹³ This means that the practice of organizational support in specific contexts has more research value. However, JS is a psychological concept that refers to an individual's overall cognition and psychological feelings about job content, work environment, and the job itself.¹⁴ These discussions around social and organizational contextual considerations may not fully reveal the psychological impact of JS in COVID-19. Indeed, even when faced with the same job-threatening event, individuals' responses to the event may lead to differential JS.^{15,16} Psychological resilience (PR) is an inherent psychological trait of individuals associated with positive work outcomes for employees. There was also evidence during the outbreak that individuals with higher levels of PR were better able to cope with the adverse effects of the epidemic.¹⁷ Accordingly, exploring how OAP and PR can increase employee JS within the COVID-19 period is very meaningful.

The conservation of resources (COR) theory is one of the essential theories for understanding employees' work attitudes and behavior driving mechanisms.¹⁸ Early research focused on relatively single resources, mainly focusing on individual internal psychological energy resources and less involving support from society.¹⁹ This paper provides an in-depth discussion of the impact and underlying mechanism of OAP and PR on JS based on the COR theory, which suggests that when employees are coping with high job demands or feeling depleted in high-stress situations, they can utilize the individual or social resources at their disposal to counteract the negative emotions associated with stress, prevent further loss of other resources, and alleviate stress.²⁰ Individual characteristics and supportive organizational resources such as PR and OAP can support individual values, thereby slowing emotional exhaustion (EE) and contributing to job satisfaction by compensating for and detracting from resources.²¹ OAP can provide individuals with timely resource replenishment, thus reducing the loss of emotional resources and improving JS. Furthermore, PR can help individuals overcome the negative impact of resource depletion and bring in more psychological resources, which can also mitigate EE and increase JS. Moreover, it has also been shown that negative emotions are more directed, and the destructive effects of negative emotions are more prominent compared to the benefits of positive emotions,²² which indirectly implies the necessity and urgency of exploring the relationship between OAP, PR, and JS from the perspective of emotional resource exhaustion.

There are several contributions as follows. First, it deepens the study of the mechanism of OAP and PR affecting individuals in the context of an epidemic crisis, enriches the understanding of its existing literature, and broadens the content and application of the COR theory. Second, based on the COR theory, we explore the impact and effect of OAP and PR on the production of EE, which enriches the study of the factors affecting EE. Next, the impact of OAP and PR on employee JS are explored in the COVID-19 pandemic, thus expanding the research on the antecedents of employee JS in crisis situations. Finally, this study provides timely theoretical support and practical guidance for organizational decision-makers on improving subordinate satisfaction during a global crisis.

Theory and Hypotheses

OAP Responding to COVID-19 and JS

OAP responding to COVID-19 is a new concept derived from organizational climates such as POS, safety climate, and family support within the COVID-19 period. It refers to organizations' specific support behaviors that can effectively help employees cope with the harm caused by COVID-19, including providing pandemic preparedness materials, allowing flexible work schedules, allowing paid time off, and allowing telecommuting.¹³

Our query of the literature on OAP and JS (eg, Lin et al, 2021¹³) suggests that OAP responding to COVID-19 may positively predict employee JS. First, providing more security regarding work environment and living needs through more pandemic preparedness materials,²³ and resource security is an essential material basis for enhancing employee JS. Secondly, by adopting more flexible work practices, including flexible work schedules, telecommuting, and paid time off, organizations can help employees better balance work and life, do their jobs more effectively and enhance JS during an epidemic.^{2,9,24} We can also explain the relationship between OAP and JS based on organizational support theory.

Organizational support theory proposes that individuals who feel POS often develop good work attitudes and behaviors to repay the organization more easily.²⁵ During the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations placed a greater emphasis on providing more specific supportive behaviors to ensure a safe work environment for employees,¹³ at a time when employees generated

more positive JS in response to organizational support.^{26,27} Taking these studies together, although there is no conclusive evidence that OAP affects employee JS, OAP may have an essential impact on JS. We further propose:

Hypothesis 1: OAP responding to COVID-19 is positively related to JS.

PR and JS

PR is the ability or dynamic process by which individuals quickly adapt to stressful situations such as life adversity, threats, and trauma and rapidly recover their psychological and physiological functions.^{28,29} The COR theory holds that individuals always have the disposition to work hard to acquire and maintain resources they deem valuable,³⁰ and individuals who have more initial resources are less vulnerable to resource loss and are better able to obtain new resources, which results in more individual needs being met and increased levels of satisfaction.³¹ PR can be treated as a significant positive psychological resource to assist employees in coping with sudden social crises and persistent daily crises³² and has been shown to promote positive individual attitudes and behaviors.^{33,34} Individuals with high PR tend to have high self-motivation and confidence, are calmer and more efficient in overcoming obstacles when encountering setbacks, insist on achieving their targets, and are more easily to be recognized and appreciated by their leaders and the organizations, thus contributing to an increase in JS.³⁵ A growing number of studies have introduced PR into employee JS research and confirmed its significant impact on JS.^{16,36} Thus, we propose:

Hypothesis 2: PR is positively related to JS.

OAP Responding to COVID-19 and EE

EE is a psychological symptom that occurs when individuals cope with high stress levels in the workplace and over-expend their mental and emotional resources.³⁷ It has been suggested that high POS reduces workplace stress by meeting individuals' demand for emotional support.³⁸ When individuals perceive social support, they are usually more likely to experience less pressure and anxiety,²⁶ reducing EE.³⁹ As a specific practice of organizational support within the COVID-19 period, adaptability is emphasized as a novel personal resource that can help individuals adapt and meet the changing demands they face at work to cope with the changing, novel, and uncertain circumstances.^{13,40,41} The organization helps employees cope with the COVID-19 crisis by implementing more adaptive practices, which implies transmitting more positive signals to staff and providing more resources for them to better cope with the work shocks and make career adjustment plans when the epidemic is prevalent,¹³ and this input of resources is a necessary condition for alleviating individuals' EE.⁴² Therefore, we propose:

Hypothesis 3: OAP responding to COVID-19 is negatively related to EE.

PR and EE

As an essential psychological resource for individuals coping with crisis, PR is an important protective factor against adversity, difficult times and stressors and is critical to individuals' mental health,⁴³ inhibiting the possibility of negative mental states. Individuals with high PR are able to more quickly understand the potentially devastating effects of overwhelming (even positive) events and in turn have more time, energy and resources to rebound, restore and balance to a stable emotion.¹⁶ Whereas people with lower levels of PR show lower emotional stability in the face of difficulties,⁴⁴ have less environmental adaptability and less openness to new experiences.⁴⁵ This lack of control over work and the feeling of uncertainty easily leads to EE.⁴⁶ In the COVID-19 crisis, employees may worry about losing resources such as job security and benefits due to the uncertainty caused by the crisis, resulting in EE.⁴⁷ According to the COR theory, individuals with sufficient resources are often better able to cope with threats,⁴⁸ and PR provides individuals with the resources they need to cope with difficult periods of COVID-19, thereby helping to suppress the formation of EE. Current research has confirmed the negative correlation of PR on EE during the COVID-19 epidemic.^{49,50} Therefore, we propose:

Hypothesis 4: PR is negatively related to EE.

EE and JS

EE, a core dimension of job burnout, describes an individual's state of depletion of psychological and material resources.^{51,52} Some scholars have noted that EE is also an important indicator of JS,^{53,54} leading to a series of negative consequences.⁵⁵ High EE reduces employees' ability to cope with and meet emotional demands at work⁵⁶ and is detrimental to the development and maintenance of quality communication within the organization,⁵⁷ and in most cases, these employees develop negative behaviors toward their organizations.⁵³ As the COR theory implies, members of organizations who have difficulty coping with their job roles owing to a lack of or inadequate resources tend to exhibit negative attitudes toward duty and show dissatisfaction with their job.⁵⁸ We thus propose:

Hypothesis 5: EE is negatively related to JS.

Mediating Effect of EE

The adverse impact of the epidemic has raised new issues and challenges for human resource management in many companies, and organizational support and PR can be a helpful addition to resources to alleviate stress and EE. Organizations can compensate for the loss of resources due to EE by providing employees with substantial resources to help them increase their coping resources and skills and promote their confidence and optimism that they can overcome future challenges,^{42,59} enabling them to work with a more positive and optimistic attitude.³⁸ Additionally, organizational support in crisis situations can effectively alleviate job burnout and turnover intention caused by stress.⁶⁰ Furthermore, the higher employees' own positive psychological resources are, the more they are able to resist the depletion of emotional resources by stress.⁶¹ When resources are reduced or threatened, individuals become stressed and exhausted, which can lead to EE if resources consumed by individuals are not replenished in time.³⁵ As a typical symptom of psychological burnout, EE further leads to the lack of emotional and psychological resources in individuals, reducing employee JS.^{35,54,62} Similarly, scholars have put forward that PR at work affects JS by regulating individuals' inner emotions when faced with stress.⁶³

From the perspective of work resources, people have the motivation to preserve, maintain and obtain the resources they own³⁰ and tend to avoid resource loss. The COR theory states that EE is a more immediate psychological response of individuals in stressful situations,⁶⁴ and individual characteristics (PR) and organizational support, among others, can provide support for personal values to avoid further depletion of one's emotional resources, thus compensating for the lack of JS triggered by EE. On this basis, we propose:

Hypothesis 6: EE mediates the relationship between OAP and JS.

Hypothesis 7: EE mediates the relationship between PR and employee JS.

Methods

Design

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we conducted a cross-sectional survey using online questionnaires and operated a convenience sampling method during this survey process. In addition, to ensure the sample's representativeness, we selected enterprises from different regions in China.

Participants and Procedure

This study mainly used snowball sampling to recruit participants from different industries, enterprises and departments from several regions in China, including Anhui, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, and Henan, covering industries such as machinery manufacturing, hospitality, and healthcare. Questionnaires and links to questionnaires were created through WJX.cn (an online questionnaire survey platform widely used in China). The data collection process began in December 2022 and ended in January 2023, during a period of high prevalence of the epidemic. To obtain more samples, those who had

already taken the survey were asked to post this questionnaire in multiple chat groups on social media such as WeChat. In addition, to minimize the negative effect of common methodological biases on this research, we declared the process and purpose of the research and ensured voluntary participation and confidentiality of the responses before we began.

We finally recovered 340 questionnaires. After deleting invalid questionnaires with incomplete information or with randomly filled responses and those that did not meet the requirements of this study, a total of 314 valid questionnaires were obtained. The number of valid samples exceeds ten times the questionnaire items,⁶⁵ and the actual effective recovery rate of 92.4% is higher than 70%,⁶⁶ so the data collected this time can be applied to the research. Among the employees in this questionnaire survey, 57.6% were females, and 42.4% were males. Most respondents were 30–39 years old (28.7%). The frequency distributions revealed that most study participants (76.4%) held a bachelor's or higher degree. Most participants have worked in the current organization for 1–5 years (30.3%).

Measures

The main variables in this study were measured using well-established scales commonly used for research in China and elsewhere and published in top journals. To ensure the validity of the content of the scale, we simply deleted the items of some variables. According to Brislin (1980),⁶⁷ the non-Chinese scales were processed strictly with the translation-back-translation procedure. We used a five-point Likert scale to measure these variables, where 1 represents “strongly disagree”, and 5 represents “strongly agree” (The main questions of the survey can be found in the [Supplementary Material](#)).

Oap

We measured OAP with four items used by Lin et al.¹³ They determined four items to measure according to the preliminary interview research and confirmed the validity and reliability of the scale through a questionnaire survey. These items are more suitable for the COVID-19 situation, such as “During the COVID-19 pandemic, my organization implemented a flexible work schedule, allowing me to arrange my working hours freely”. In this research, the Cronbach's alpha of the OAP scale was 0.840.

Pr

The measurement of this variable is a one-dimensional PR self-assessment scale simplified by Campbell Sills et al (CD-RISC-10)⁶⁸ from the 25-item PR Scale compiled by Connor and Davidson. It has good reliability, validity and universality in the Chinese context.⁶⁹ There are a total of 10 items, including a typical item is “I am able to adapt to changes at work and in my life”. The Cronbach's alpha of the scale was 0.964.

Ee

We measured EE with three items used by Watkins et al,⁷⁰ such as “I feel emotionally drained from my work”. In this study, Cronbach's alpha of the EE scale was 0.949.

Js

Liu et al⁷¹ used three items to measure JS. However, Wong et al⁷² found that scales containing both forward and reverse items can have problems among respondents in East Asia. Therefore, based on the needs of Chinese situational research, we delete the reverse item “In general, I do not like my work”, resulting in a reliability that meets the standard. The Cronbach's alpha of the JS scale was 0.979.

Control Variables

Basic demographic variables have an impact on JS.⁷³ To avoid extraneous variables affecting the relationship between the variables studied, several basic demographic variables were selected as control variables, including individual gender, age, education, and years of tenure.

Analysis

This study mainly used SPSS26.0 and AMOS24.0 to analyze the collected data statistically. Firstly, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using AMOS software to test the discriminant validity, convergent validity, and common method

bias test among these variables in this study. Next, we used SPSS26.0 for basic descriptive statistical testing and correlation analysis. Then, the structural equation path model of this study is constructed using AMOS software. Finally, the parameter Bootstrapping method was used to validate these assumptions further.

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

First, we use Amos to conduct confirmatory factor analysis to test the discriminant validity of the four latent variables involved in this paper: OAP, PR, EE, and JS.⁷⁴ As seen in Table 1, compared with the one-factor model, two-factor model, and three-factor model, the four-factor model has the best fit: $\chi^2/df = 2.19 < 3$, RMSEA = 0.06 < 0.08, CFI = 0.97 > 0.9,⁷⁵ TLI = 0.97 > 0.9,⁷⁶ SRMR = 0.04 < 0.08, all indicators are in a reasonable place indicating good discriminant validity among these four variables in this study.

We measured its convergent validity by standardized factor loading coefficients, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) values. The measurement results are shown in Table 2, and the standardized factor loading coefficients of these four indicators are greater than 0.5 and significant at the 0.01 level. Hence, the factor loading coefficients meet the criterion. We used the bootstrap method with a sample size set to 1000 for the significance test. The analysis results indicate that the CR index range was 0.832-0.980, which was higher than the threshold value of 0.7, and the AVE index range was 0.561-0.961, above the threshold value of 0.5,⁷⁷ suggesting that these indexes had good convergence validity.

For the questionnaire data, because the independent variables PR and OAP, mediating variable EE, and outcome variable JS were all self-reported by the participants, there may be common source bias. Possible common source bias was tested using the unmeasured latent method factor proposed by Podsakoff et al.⁷⁸ After controlling for the influence of the common source bias factor, the five-factor model fitted well ($\chi^2/df = 2.09$, RMSEA = 0.06, CFI = 0.98, TLI = 0.97, SRMR = 0.03), but the variation ranges for key fit indexes such as RMSEA, CFI, TLI, and SRMR were not 0.02 greater than those for the four-factor model, which indicated that the controlled model did not significantly improve and therefore that common method bias was not serious in this paper.⁷⁹

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The means, standard deviations (SDs), and correlation coefficients of the variables in this paper are shown in Table 3. The OAP responding to COVID-19 significantly negatively correlated with employee EE ($r = -0.26$, $p < 0.01$) and significantly positively predicted employee JS ($r = 0.39$, $p < 0.01$). PR was significantly negatively correlated with employee EE ($r = -0.39$, $p < 0.01$) and significantly positively predicted employee JS ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, EE could significantly negatively predict employee JS ($r = -0.37$, $p < 0.01$). It can be seen that the above correlation results are consistent with the theoretical assumptions proposed above and provide preliminary support for further analysis.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Results

The SEM was constructed and tested using the AMOS24.0 software. Among the results obtained by calculation, the partial mediation model fitted the best ($\chi^2/df = 2.39$, RMSEA = 0.07, CFI = 0.97, TLI = 0.96, SRMR = 0.04). We

Table 1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
4-factor model: OAP; PR; EE; JS	309.25	141	2.19	0.97	0.97	0.06	0.04
3-factor model: OAP + PR; EE; JS	886.90	149	6.00	0.88	0.86	0.13	0.09
2-factor model: OAP + PR + EE; JS	1749.16	151	11.58	0.73	0.70	0.18	0.13
1-factor model: OAP + PR + EE + JS	2371.62	152	15.60	0.63	0.58	0.22	0.13

Note: "+" Means Two factors were combined.

Abbreviations: OAP, organization adaptive practices; PR, psychological resilience; EE, emotional exhaustion; JS, job satisfaction.

Table 2 Measurement Results

Constructs	Estimates Factor Loading	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Construct Reliability (CR)	Cronbach's α
OAP1	0.852	0.561	0.832	0.840
OAP2	0.813			
OAP3	0.766			
OAP4	0.518			
PR1	0.829	0.721	0.963	0.964
PR2	0.829			
PR3	0.818			
PR4	0.795			
PR5	0.804			
PR6	0.915			
PR7	0.912			
PR8	0.870			
PR9	0.857			
PR10	0.851			
EE1	0.899	0.865	0.951	0.949
EE2	0.960			
EE3	0.930			
JS2	0.989	0.961	0.980	0.979
JS3	0.971			

Note: Fit statistics (N = 314).

Abbreviations: OAP, organization adaptive practices; PR, psychological resilience; EE, emotional exhaustion; JS, job satisfaction.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations (N = 314)

Measure	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender	1.58	0.50							
2. Age	2.80	1.14	-0.23**						
3. Tenure	3.12	1.24	-0.20**	0.88**					
4. Education	2.93	0.80	0.02	-0.12*	-0.17**				
5. OAP	3.54	0.95	-0.14*	0.14*	0.10	-0.14*			
6. PR	3.70	0.71	-0.02	0.10	0.09	-0.13*	0.36**		
7. EE	2.78	1.08	0.04	-0.22**	-0.16**	0.13*	-0.26**	-0.39**	
8. JS	3.49	0.92	-0.05	0.13*	0.16**	-0.15**	0.39**	0.65**	-0.37**

Note: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01.

Abbreviations: OAP, organization adaptive practices; PR, psychological resilience; EE, emotional exhaustion; JS, job satisfaction.

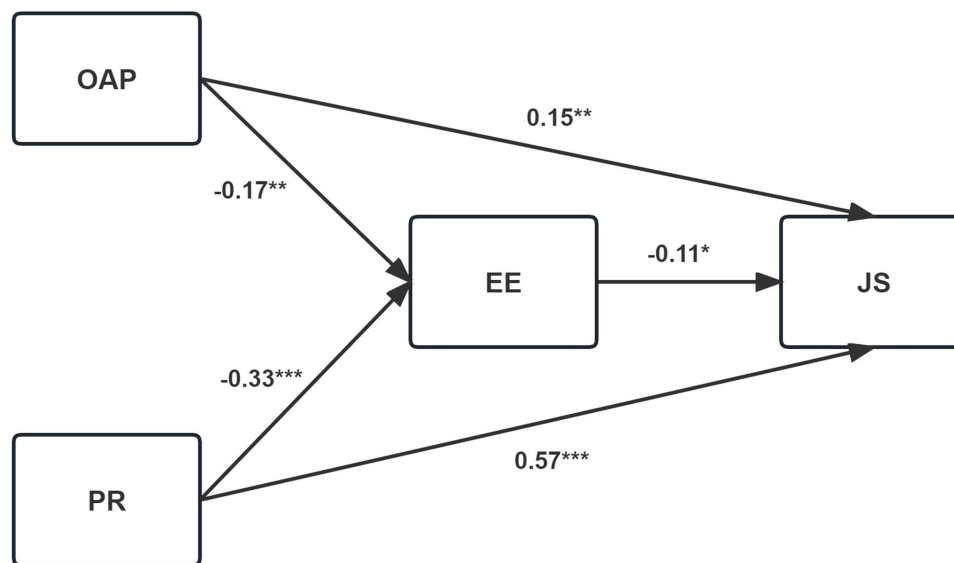


Figure 1 Pathway analysis results.

Notes: N=314. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Abbreviations: OAP, organization adaptive practices; PR, psychological resilience; EE, emotional exhaustion; JS, job satisfaction.

reported the path coefficients between these latent variables in [Figure 1](#). OAP had a positive impact on employee JS ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$) and a negative effect on EE ($\beta = -0.17$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, H1 and H3 were verified. In addition, PR can positively predict employee JS ($\beta = 0.57$, $p < 0.001$) and negatively predict employee EE ($\beta = -0.33$, $p < 0.001$), thus verifying H2 and H4. EE negatively affected employee JS ($\beta = -0.11$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, H5 was verified.

In order to further test the mediating role of EE in the indirect effects of pandemic OAP and PR on employee JS, independently, the parametric bootstrapping method described by MacKinnon et al⁸⁰ was used. The results showed the following [Table 4](#), which indicated that OAP responding to COVID-19 significantly affected employee JS through EE (with an indirect effect of 0.063, SE = 0.025, 95% CI = [0.022, 0.119]) and that PR also significantly affected employee

Table 4 Mediation Analysis Results (BS=5000)

a. Standardized direct path coefficients of the hypothesized model				
Direct Paths	Estimate	SE	p	
H1: OAP→JS	0.15	0.049	0.004	
H2: PR→JS	0.57	0.066	0.000	
H3: OAP→EE	-0.17	0.067	0.006	
H4: PR→EE	-0.33	0.082	0.000	
H5: EE→JS	-0.11	0.044	0.018	
b. Standardized indirect path coefficients of the hypothesized model				
Mediation paths	Indirect effect	Boot Standard error	Boot 95% CI	
			Lower limit	Upper limit
OAP→EE→JS	0.063	0.025	0.022	0.119
PR→EE→JS	0.066	0.032	0.015	0.138

Abbreviations: OAP, organization adaptive practices; PR, psychological resilience; EE, emotional exhaustion; JS, job satisfaction.

JS through EE (with an indirect effect of 0.066, SE = 0.032, 95% CI = [0.015, 0.138]). Because the Boot 95% CI does not include 0, the mediating effect or the path coefficient is significant. Finally, EE partially mediates the relationship of OAP responding to COVID-19 and PR with JS. Therefore, Hypotheses 6 and 7 are supported.

Discussion

According to the COR theory, both organizational resources (OAP) and individual resources (PR) can contribute to the development of individuals to their full potential. We conducted empirical research using SPSS and AMOS software, and the results showed that OAP and PR each have a positive impact on JS and a negative impact on EE. EE negatively predicted employee JS, and EE mediates the relationship between OAP and JS, as well as the relationship between PR and JS.

Theoretical Contributions

First, the research on the antecedents of JS in the context of major crises is expanded. Although the significant impact of work resources on JS in the COVID-19 epidemic has been suggested,⁹ there needs to be more research from the perspective of OAP. This paper has verified how OAP and PR affect employee JS from a multi-source perspective, thereby deepening and enriching the research on JS.

Secondly, based on the COR theory and with emotional resources as the core, this study presents a more comprehensive and complete demonstration of the compensatory and reduction processes of both OAP and PR in response to resource loss. Existing research has focused on the impact of individual characteristics and their job characteristics on the EE of employees,⁸¹ while the effect on organizational-level activities has yet to be addressed.⁴² In addition, many existing studies have selected various typical stressors, such as task setbacks, job insecurity, abusive management and other negative variables as their antecedent elements to be explored,^{82–84} and there needs to be more research on how positive variables affect EE. Based on the COR theory, this paper explores the effect of OAP responding to COVID-19 and PR on the production of EE, which enriches the research on the factors affecting EE.

Finally, this research broadens the content and application of the COR theory by explaining how OAP and PR influence employee attitudes in responding to COVID-19 by reducing EE. Previous research based on the COR theory mainly focused on the individual level, with relatively limited research results focusing on the organizational level.⁴² Based on resource preservation theory, this paper reveals that both organizational and individual resources that OAP and PR can exhibit resource depletion effects by reducing EE, thus compensating for the lack of JS caused by EE.

Practical Implications

First, given the positive impact of OAP on individual aspects of work in the context of COVID-19, organizations should actively provide more OAP to reduce further resource depletion in major crisis situations. Specific support behaviors such as providing protective equipment such as masks and disinfectants for organization members, allowing employees to work at home and have a flexible working schedule, and providing paid time off can all help to keep employees on track during the pandemic. In addition, corporate management should establish and maintain good relationships with employees, proactively assist them, understand their needs, and train them effectively and continuously to advance their professional skills.

Second, this study points out the importance of individual PR in influencing JS during coping with the COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals with high PR are more likely to obtain JS. Organizations can train employees to cope with stress to help them deal with difficulties and setbacks. During the COVID-19 period, individuals are prone to various negative emotions and cannot extricate themselves. Training employees to think independently and gradually move toward rationality through reflection can reduce the bad influences of the pandemic, further enhance their ability to cope with the pandemic and increase their resilience in difficult situations.

Third, the conclusion of this paper showed that EE can lead to a decrease in employee JS. Therefore, organizations also need to pay more attention to and de-escalate employees' emotions. Managers should carefully observe the psychological and emotional changes in employees and take necessary measures to respond when employees show signs of EE so as to prevent further expansion of emotions that could affect JS. Open communication channels should be established to help employees relieve stress and anxiety and mitigate the excessive loss of individual physical and

psychological resources. In addition, when hiring, companies can select and recruit employees with high PR and emotional management abilities to better cope with the negative impact of crises.

Limitations and Future Research

Although this research has made certain contributions in theory and practice, it also has several limitations. First, this study explored the pathway by which OAP and PR influence employee JS but did not consider the sociocultural context of the organization and individuals, thus lacking contextual applicability to some extent. Therefore, variables relating to sociocultural contexts (eg, power distance) could be incorporated appropriately in future research. In addition, due to practical constraints, our sample was selected from Chinese employees only, which may also limit the universality of our findings. Therefore, we suggest that more studies explore the impact of OAP and PR in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic using samples from different countries. Finally, employee JS is only one way of examining employees' work attitudes, and future studies could further seek more outcomes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as employee well-being as well as performance and behavior at work.

To sum up, we confirmed through empirical research that OAP and PR can provide important psychological resource support for employees' JS under sudden crisis situations, thus contributing to the research in the field of positive psychology.

Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread globally, causing life-threatening health risks, job insecurity, and income uncertainty for employees, many of whom have been forced into home isolation. In this context, it is vital to understand how organizations and individuals can help themselves cope with this adverse situation and improve JS. The following conclusions were drawn from the empirical study: first, OAP and PR positively affect employees' JS, respectively; second, OAP and PR negatively affect employees' EE, respectively. And EE also negatively affects employees' JS. Finally, according to the COR theory, EE mediates the relationship between OAP and JS, and also mediates the relationship between PR and JS. The findings of this paper provide theoretical implications for the relevant literature, as well as a basis for organizational managers to develop better management policies for subordinates to enhance JS during sudden public crises.

Ethics Statement

The study was conducted with the informed consent of the subjects and has been approved by the Internal Review Board of School of business administration, Anhui University of Finance and Economics. In addition, we require all participants to provide a informed consent form on their behalf. Last but not least, our research is in line with the Helsinki Declaration.

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