

Full Length Article

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Influence of Negative Career Shock on Employee Workplace Behavior through Emotional Exhaustion and Moderated by Hostile Climate

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ABSTRACT

Purpose - Even though much research has linked effective career management to career development strategies, there is always room for improvement in this area. While career shock has been the subject of increased research as of late, little is known about how negative career shocks relate to boredom in the workplace. Using the framework of the Conservation of Resource Theory (COR), this study aims to examine the effect of a negative career shock on workplace boredom via the mediating function of emotional exhaustion and the moderating role of a hostile climate.

Design/Methodology/Approach-In Pakistan service industry play important role in the development, so the data of 245 service industry workers were taken from different levels of management in Pakistan's twin towns of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. A questionnaire with 22 items using a 7-point Likert scale was used to get responses. We utilized SPSS version 24 to analyse the results.

Findings- The findings demonstrated a positive correlation between negative career shock and boredom on the job. Both emotional exhaustion and a hostile work environment lessen the correlation between emotional exhaustion and boredom on the job.

Implications: This research adds to the growing body of knowledge on the topic of unexpected career setbacks. It also offers useful and relevant conclusions and recommendations for the future of the field of study. Employees can protect themselves from a shock in their careers by building up their skills and connections through internal opportunities for advancement through training and development.

Originality/Value- The study contributes to the career-development literature by providing a causal link between career shock and boredom through empirical analysis.

Keywords: Career shock, emotional exhaustion, Workplace boredom, hostile climate, COR

1. INTRODUCTION

A shock is an unanticipated shift in an existing organizational structure that perplexes or interrupts a person's harmonious state, or any adjustment in the status quo in terms of how people see their jobs (Conroy et al., 2022). Numerous changes in a person's

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Article info

Received May 23, 2022
Accepted Sept 19, 2022
Published Sept 30, 2022

career are irregular (Boyatzis, 2006). Scholars have studied significant events that affect careers, but these studies are dispersed and poorly connected with career progression literature (Akkermans et al., 2018). To analyse the impact of such events on individual careers, many frameworks have been used in the past. A new definition and area of inquiry for career shocks were recently developed by combining the literature on random events with the research on shocks. A career shock, according to previous definitions, is a distinct and significant occurrence that is produced, at least in part, by events beyond the focus individual's control and that causes consideration about future career changes (Akkermans et al., 2018; Kraimer et al., 2019).

Unpredictable events cause transitions in one's career path (Kim, 2022; De Vos, 2019). These events may be anticipated and sometimes not while major events affect on person's career significantly (Akkermans et al., 2018). Unlike many researchers theorize such events under different names like serendipity (Betsworth & Hansen, 1996), happenstance (Miller, 1983), chance events (Hirschi, 2010), and most recently career shocks (Seibert et al., 2013). In current research our main concern on shocks with regard to one's career. We characterize a career shock as any event which deliberately triggers the behaviour of individuals in the form of seeking a new job, exploring more opportunities, and enhancing skills or intention to quit (Ahmad, 2022).

A career shock can be either a beneficial or a terrible experience, depending on the circumstances. Career shocks were classified into two categories by (Akkermans et al., 2018) positive and negative. According to the literature, an individual's favourable or unfavorable reaction to career management is largely determined by the strategic choices they make in the face of career shocks (Seibert et al., 2016). Positive career shock influences an individual's career positively (Seibert et al., 2013), such as receiving awards, promotions, and an increase in scale or position in the current organization. (Blokker et al., 2019) revealed that positive career shock was linked to young employees with perceived employability while (Rummel et al., 2019) showed that young graduates' entrepreneurialism was affected by career shocks. Ali & Mehreen, (2022) also investigated that shock leads to proactive behavior.

While on the other hand, negative career shock influences an individual's career

negatively (Seibert et al., 2013), such as the supervisor leaving the organization, experiencing a decrease in the labour force, moral outrage at one's work environment, feeling stress, lack of opportunities and motivation at work, etc. so that in negative career shock leads to image violation due to lack of goal achievements (Beach & Mitchell, 1987). This may be the case when unforeseen circumstances prevent favorable conditions for professional progress, causing employees to leave their jobs, be absent from their workplace, or quit entirely (Hussain & Deery, 2018). Employees, contrary to that, may experience negative career shocks from within the organization, such as unexpectedly decreased remuneration, no bonus or projected promotion, or a lack of prospects for professional advancement (Ayodele et al., 2020). This study focusing on negative career shock which influence negatively on employee's career outcomes.

The benefits of modern careers have received a lot of attention, but the drawbacks, such as stress and burnout, have been generally overlooked. There has to be more research done on the difficulties, disappointments, and setbacks encountered by those who choose an alternative career route (Baruch & Sullivan, 2022). Sullivan & Al Ariss, (2021) in their recent article analysing multiple viewpoints on job changes: There is a surprisingly little study in the literature on the topic of "career shock," as is shown by this review and the agenda for future study. Shocks negatively influence employees' careers so, it should be examined with other negative outcomes suggested by Akkermans et al., (2020). The environment also plays an important role in employee performance, (Akkermans et al., 2021) suggested that a hostile climate should also be examined as a moderator. (Peeters et al., 2022) also proposed that career shocks should also be tested in other countries to minimize the generalizability.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. Conservation of Resource Theory

As a theoretical basis for synthesis, the conservation of resources (COR) hypothesis has been proposed (Hobfoll, 1998; Hobfoll & Freedy, 2018). The career landscape has become more unpredictable and unclear over time. To anchor our theoretical arguments about the effect of negative career shock on employee performance with the help of COR

theory. The premise of this theory is that people would go to great lengths to keep and defend what they consider valuable (Hobfoll, 1998, p. 55). With the help of the conservation of resource theory, stress develops when a person's essential resources are endangered or lost (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll & Freedy, 2018; Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993).

COR theory predicts that negative career shocks would divert people's focus away from gaining new resources and toward preserving what they already have (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007). These negative shocks not only take away people's time and energy from exploring their surroundings for extra resources, but they also cause stress and narrow people's perceptual fields. As a result, people's concern over their jobs becomes more intense and leads to career anxiety and stress (Ito & Brotheridge, 2003; Pouyaud et al., 2012) so they become less focused on seeking new career opportunities (Zacher, 2014).

When it comes to resources, Hobfoll (1989, 1998) emphasizes the supremacy of the loss assumption, which holds that losses are more consequential than gains. When people are confronted with stressful or demanding situations, they may experience a loss of resources known as primary resource loss. According to COR theory, employees that are burned out are tired and disinterested. As a result, burnout reflects a condition in which people are depleted of resources. Employees that are burned out at the workplace are less effective in retaining or collecting job resources, and they are also less able to cope effectively with workplace demands. As per this concept, emotional exhaustion is still most inclined to produce when there is a real or perceived threat of resource loss, when one's resources are insufficient to satisfy work expectations, or when the expected rewards on an investment are not realized (Hobfoll, 1988). Long-term strain or emotional exhaustion happens when people believe they no longer have the emotional control to deal with the challenges they are facing (Hobfoll, 1989; Lee & Ashforth, 1996). As a result, COR theory may be a valuable lens through which to study the effects of career shocks on career outcomes. (Figure1)

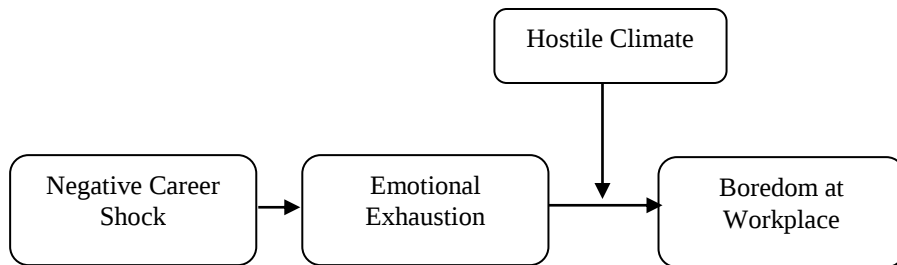


Figure 1: Research Model

2.2. Negative Career Shock and Employee's outcome relationship

Career shocks have become a subject of growing interest in career management in recent decades (Akkermans et al., 2018; Blokker et al., 2019). Individuals are being pushed to manage their careers on their own because of the rise of career shocks in the current period. Currently, a career shock has been defined as a destabilizing and unexpected event that is at least partially induced by outside factors and that prompts career planning (Akkermans et al., 2018, p. 4). As a result, a key feature of career shocks is that their existence and implications are not entirely under the control of the focal individual, implying that career shocks are more than just about individuality.

Career shocks were classified into two categories by (Akkermans et al., 2018) positive and negative. Positive career shock influences individuals' careers positively (Seibert et al., 2013), such as receiving awards, promotions, and increasing in scale, or positions in their current organization. (Blokker et al., 2019) revealed that positive career shock was linked to young employees with perceived employability while (Rummel et al., 2019) showed that young graduates' entrepreneurialism was affected by career shocks.

While on the other hand, negative career shock influences an individual's career negatively (Seibert et al., 2013), such as a supervisor leaves the organization, experiencing a decrease in the labour force, moral outrage at one's work environment, feeling stress, lack of opportunities and motivation at work, etc. so that in negative career shock leads to image violation due to lack of goal achievements (Beach & Mitchell, 1987). This could be because unexpected events obstruct opportunities for career

advancement, causing employees to leave their jobs, be absent from their workplace, or quit entirely (Hussain & Deery, 2018). Employees, on the other hand, may experience negative shocks from within the organization, such as unexpectedly decreased remuneration, no bonus or projected promotion, or a lack of prospects for professional advancement (Ayodele et al., 2020). This study focuses on negative career shocks which influence negatively employees' career outcomes.

The repetitiveness, monotony, tediousness, and stress of one's current employment are common factors considered in surveys designed to assess job boredom (Bruursema et al., 2011). According to COR, when people lose their resources in the form of boredom, it makes it hard for them to self-regulate towards the organization's environment.

H₁: *Negative career shock positively influences an employee's boredom at the workplace.*

2.3. Emotional Exhaustion mediates the Relationship between Negative career Shock and Boredom at the Workplace.

Most research on careers in the past few years has focused on how career paths are becoming increasingly complicated, dynamic, flexible, and unpredictable (Kossek et al., 2021). F) Vuori et al., 2012). Negative shocks can come in the form of lesser income, no bonus or promotion, or a lack of prospects for advancement (Ayodele et al., 2020). Depending on how strongly they feel attached to the company, employees who suffer such shocks may re-evaluate the importance they place on their employees and their career possibilities (Hussain & Deery, 2018).

Major organizational shocks (such as restructuring) can make people feel uneasy (Hofer et al., 2020), which in turn can cause them to have negative attitudes toward HR interventions and ultimately decrease their commitment to the company and increase their turnover rate (intentions). Because of this, negative shocks bring to light the direct connection that exists between the organization and the future career perspectives of employees (Harney et al., 2018; Mathisen et al., 2017; Quinlan, 2007).

In addition to physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion can be recognized by the aforementioned symptoms: a decline in energy, difficulty sleeping, illogical anger, apathy, family difficulties, fear, a pessimistic outlook, and an increase in alcohol consumption, among others (Cafasso, 2019). It's no secret that mentally exhausted

workers don't last long in any company (Rasli et al., 2014). Employees may be unable to conserve their limited resources when dealing with a stressful situation, such as a misunderstanding of their roles or responsibilities at work, and instead be forced to draw upon them to gain clarity about what is expected of them. This can lead to fatigue (emotional and otherwise) and burnout (Zhou et al., 2016). Consequently, workers who don't have enough resources are more likely to be negatively affected by adverse events (Van den Broeck et al., 2013). Specific demands, such as unfavorable organization-related career shocks, can be viewed as a resource threat (Shoss, 2017) based on the principles of COR theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

H₂: *Emotional Exhaustion mediates the positive relationship between Negative career shock and boredom at the workplace.*

2.4. Hostile Climate moderates the relationship between Emotional Exhaustion and Boredom in the workplace.

One significant predictor of employee actions is the "organizational environment," (Reichers & Schneider, 1990) which is a reflection of employees' general impressions of the company's management style (Carr et al., 2003; Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009). When workers in an organization sense jealousy, mistrust, and hostility toward one another, they are experiencing a hostile climate (Mawritz et al., 2012).

When employees consistently treat one another with hostility, it creates a hostile work environment (Mawritz et al., 2012). The norms managers and workers adhere to in terms of their interactions with one another in the workplace can be attributed to the organization's environment (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009; Schneider, 1975). Therefore, hostile cultures can foster aggressive conduct in the workplace, which can have a negative effect on the long-term viability and success of the business (Tepper et al., 2006).

For instance, the U.S. Postal Service Commission (Safe & Workplace, 2000) investigated many high-profile episodes of workplace hostility and found that negative attitudes and habitual harsh and disrespectful contacts at work contributed to the hostile behaviors of postal employees. This same survey also revealed that individual differences in personality traits were a factor in determining which workers displayed aggressive

actions and which did not. There have been many studies demonstrating that when people are inspired to succeed, they do so both individually and collectively (Alexandru, 2019; Hee & Kamaludin, 2016; Meadows et al., 2016) that employees are regarded as an organization's most valuable asset and are essential to attaining its objectives (Burlea-Schiopoiu & Ferhati, 2021). Nonetheless, without inspiration, workers will slack off, create friction within the company, and even work against its best interests (Alexandru, 2019). So, when employees did not receive any motivation from the organization they become emotionally exhausted.

H₃: *Hostile climate moderates the relationship between Emotional Exhaustion and Boredom in the workplace.*

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Population, Sampling, and Data Collection

In this study, the researcher uses a quantitative approach to examine how the independent variable influences the Dependent variable via the Mediator and moderator variables. This research, which begins with theory and ends with the process of testing hypotheses and collecting observations from participants, used a deductive approach and an explanatory nature to determine the causes and nature of effects among the variables and analyze the situation of a particular problem. Due to time constraints and the need for simplicity, a convenience sample method and a closed-ended questionnaire were utilized to gather information from the study's primary source population of government workers in Punjab, Pakistan (through a self-administered mechanism). The final response rate for this study was 54.44%, with 450 questionnaires sent out to employees working in public sector organizations in two time lags (firstly data was collected for negative career shock and emotional exhaustion while in the second lag, data was collected for hostile climate and employees boredom at the workplace), separated by a 15-day interval.

3.2. Research Tool

This study's data-gathering tools were adapted from those employed in previous academic investigations. A 4-item scale of Negative career shock was taken (Seibert et al., 2016). This scale's coefficient alpha was 0.87. Respondents' levels of emotional

exhaustion at work were evaluated using a four-item scale created by (Schaufeli, 1996), with scores ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was reported at 0.88. The DUBS, designed by (Reijseger et al., 2013) was used to evaluate levels of boredom in the workplace. This monotony gauge is used in the workplace to evaluate employee discontent. There are six indicators used to assess workplace boredom. This indicator was found to have a 0.93 alpha reliability. An 8-item scale was taken of hostile climate by (Buss & Perry, 1992) Aggression Questionnaire with a Cronbach alpha value of 0.93.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed out of which 245 were complete and valid for further processing. Most of the respondents were male 152 (62%) and the female ratio was 93 (38%). 22.4% of respondents belonged from the age range of fewer than 25 years, 51.8% of participants hold the age range of 26-35 years, 18.4% of the participants belong from the age range of 36-45 years while 46% or above age range were 18%. Education-wise 9.4% of respondents hold “intermediate”, 53.5% holds “graduation”, and 37.1% hold “master” and “MS/M. Phil” education. 117 (47.8%) respondents of this having “1-5year experience”, 62 (25.3%) had “6-10 years”, 34 (13.9%) had “11-15 years”, 32 (13.1%) had “16-20years” working experience. 37 (15.1%) employees at the entry level, 135 (55.1%) at the middle level and 73 (29.8%) were senior-level employees.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and discriminant validity (n=245)							
	Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1	NCS	5.52	1.076	(.79)	.486**	.348**	.535**
2	EE	5.00	1.216		(.77)	.222**	.484**
3	HC	5.23	1.071			(.75)	.278**
4	BAW	5.50	1.236				(.83)

NCS (Negative career shock), EE (Emotional exhaustion), HC (hostile climate), BAW (boredom at the workplace)

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics, and correlation data; bold values show discriminant validity and the numbers indicate that all variables are perfectly associated. NCS is favourably linked with EE ($r = 0.48^{**}$, $p 0.01$), positively associated with HC ($r =$

0.34**, $p < 0.01$), and positively associated with BAW ($r = 0.53$ **, $p < 0.01$). The association between HC and BAW is positive ($r = 0.22$ **, $p < 0.01$). EE correlates positively with HC ($r = 0.48$ *, $p < .05$) and BAW ($r = 0.27$ **, $p < 0.01$). These associations are significant; consequently, H_2 is supported.

Table 2: Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and convergent validity (n=245)						
Construct	Items	Loadings		AVE	CR	α
		Minimum	Maximum			
Negative Career Shock	4	.71	.84	.63	.87	.87
Emotional Exhaustion	5	.62	.87	.60	.89	.88
Hostile Climate	8	.71	.85	.56	.97	.93
Boredom at Workplace	6	.76	.88	.69	.93	.93
<i>CR=Composite Reliability, α=Cronbach's Alpha, AVE=Average Variance Extracted values</i>						

Table 2 indicates the loadings whose values are within the range of .7 and .8, AVE values are above the range of 0.5, and CR and alpha values of the variables, which are acceptable range.

Table 3. Test of Mediation				
Mediation effect of EE on the relationship between NCS and BAW				
Model	B	S. E	Lower Limit CI	Upper Limit CI
Effect of mediation between the link of (NCS) on (BAW)				
Total	0.615	0.062	.492	.737
Direct	0.45	0.068	.318	.585
Indirect	.163	.539	.074	.284
the standardized indirect impact of NCS on BAW				
EE	.142	0.043	.066	.236

Table 3 shows the corresponding values from the mediation analysis, demonstrating that mediation was discovered and providing support for H_2 . The indirect effect of EE is significant at the level of ($B = 0.14$, $SE = 0.04$, $LL = 0.06$, $UL = 0.23$).

Table 4. Test of Moderation			
Moderation analysis of Hostile Climate			
Variable	Boredom at Workplace		
	B -value	Standard error	t-value
Intercept	3.48***	.40	8.71
EE	.26**	.06	4.37
HC	.10***	.06	1.66
EE $\times$ HC	-.14***	.04	-3.12
R ²	.38		
ΔR^2	.02		
F	11.97***		
N = 245; $p < .05$; * $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.001$ ***			

Table 4 displays the moderation results, which demonstrate that EE significantly related to BAW ($B=.26$, $p .01$), HC significantly related to BAW ($B=0.10$, $p 0.001$), and HC moderated the negative relationship of EE and BAW ($B=-.14$, $p 0.001$), thus supporting H3. Individuals with higher levels of HC also had weaker relationships between EE and BAW, and higher BAW.

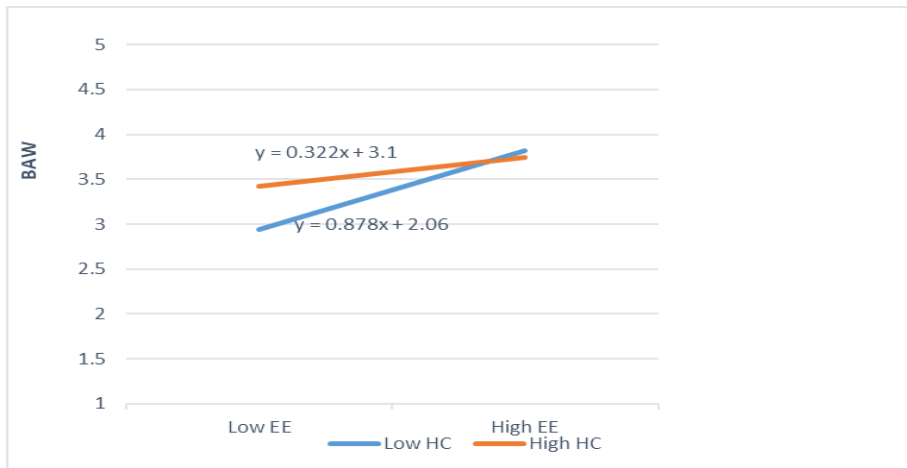


Figure 2. Interaction plot

Figure 2 indicates hostile climate dampens the positive relationship between emotional exhaustion and boredom in the workplace.

Table 2. Moderation Mediation Bootstrap Result

Mediator (Emotional Exhaustion)	Index	Standard Error	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI
Moderator (Hostile Climate)	-.076	0.038	-.158	-.008

N = 245, 95% 'Confidence Interval'

The results of moderated mediation are displayed in Table 5, where (Index = -0.07, Boot Standard Error = 0.03, Lower Limit CI = -0.15, Upper Limit CI = -0.01) indicates that HC weakens the link between NCS and BAW via EE.

5. DISCUSSION

With the help of the Conservation of resource theory, this study examines the relationship between negative career shock and employee boredom at the workplace, mediated by emotional exhaustion and moderated by a hostile climate. The findings of the research show that negative career shock is positively related to boredom in the

workplace, which supports hypothesis 1. While in previous research by (Ballantyne & Retell, 2020) also supports the relationship between shock and burnout in a teaching career.

The relevance and statistical power of applying this method for evaluating mediation models are demonstrated by the study's findings and the confirmation of most of the main mediation effects. Emotional exhaustion mediates the positive relationship between negative career shock and boredom in support of hypothesis 2. Which is consistent with the previous research on how and when negative organization shock is associated with career optimism: a conditional indirect mediation model by (Hofer et al., 2020).

Hostile climate weakens the positive relationship between emotional exhaustion and boredom at the workplace in support of hypothesis 3. In past research, career shock was also tested in a volatile environment by (Petrović et al., 2021).

5.1. Implication

To begin, the findings of this research help to close a gap in the existing literature on professional development by focusing on the effects of a previously unrecognized factor: negative career shock. (Akkermans et al., 2018) argues that further research is required to empirically examine the mechanisms behind the multiple complexities of negative career shock and their relationships with career outcomes. Since negative career shock due to emotional weariness has been largely disregarded in the prior literature on career management, our study experimentally analyses this phenomenon.

Furthermore, the current research deepens the connection between negative career shock and ennui, hence extending the COR theory. We argue that people plan and manage their careers by devoting resources to improve their chances of job success and decreasing these resources in response to setbacks.

When all is said and done, this research adds to and answers (Akkermans et al., 2018) call for more investigation in the future. Through a comprehensive literature analysis on career development perspectives, including career shock and associated problems, they proposed crucial linkages between career management strategies and outcomes.

To protect themselves from unexpected setbacks, workers should seek out training and development opportunities provided by their employer. To lessen the impact of

negative career shocks, firms should provide employees with many possibilities for professional growth. To proactively advance their careers, Human resources should prioritize workers by enacting measures like providing more opportunities for professional growth.

5.2. Limitations and Future Research Direction

Both strengths and weaknesses exist in this study. The study's strength is that the common method bias was mitigated by collecting data in two waves. The reliability of the results is bolstered by the time gaps between data gathering. The data were collected from the service industry which limits the generalizability. In the future, target other sectors also to improve the result. Another limitation is we only targeted public sector employees, In the future target another private sector also. In this research, the model is theorized by COR theory while in the future other motivation and human resource management strategies could be used. In the current study, we take negative career shock as an independent variable while in the future we can take positive career shock also. In our research, we focused only on the negative outcome but in the future can take positive outcomes also like proactive behavior. Future research should examine other mediators and moderators to gain a further understanding of negative career shock.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper contends that current careers research has ignored the impact of career shocks on career advancement. This study explored how negative career shock effect employees' boredom at the workplace under the mechanism of emotional exhaustion and buffering role of hostile climate with the help of the conservation of resource theory. Considering these findings, the setting in which careers are evolving can play an important effect on how individuals see their future career development. According to COR theory individuals lose, resources in the form of a negative shock, exhaustion, and a hostile climate but on the other hand in the future employees also motivate and gain resources through training and retention policies by the organization. This article also helps an organization retain competent employees.

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