

Job Embeddedness: Cross-cultural Comparison Between China and Pakistan During COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

As the COVID-19 pandemic spreads across the globe, cross-cultural studies are at the forefront of individuals' minds. Following this line, we conducted a cross-cultural examination between Chinese and Pakistani management employees' attitude toward job embeddedness. Survey data were collected using the English and Chinese versions of seven items exhibiting attitudes towards the employees' job embeddedness scale in the COVID-19 pandemic setting. As, the two groups are diverse on geographic, cultural, religious and economic scopes; it was not surprising to see that in this COVID-19 pandemic, these future managers differed on a number of opinions regarding job embeddedness. On the other hand, some similarities were also noted. The current research proposes a novel approach to probe cross-cultural comparison on job embeddedness in COVID-19 background. Considering the previous research on job embeddedness, there is scant attention given to Pakistan and China. This research will not only help to enhance understanding of job embeddedness knowledge but also help to boost the continued development of worldwide business opportunities in the COVID-19 pandemic. The implications of curated findings and future directions are also discussed.

Key Words

COVID-19 pandemic, job embeddedness, cross-cultural comparison, human resource management, China, Pakistan

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching effects on employers and as well as employees. For example, employee turnover intention is very high in this pandemic situation due to a variety of reasons, such as heavy workload, inflexible work hours, irregular holidays, and low pay. On the other hand, employers are also worried about this unprecedented employee job turnover intention rate. In this vein, scholars need to understand the ways to keep the best employees and minimize excessive turnover rates (Yadav et al., 2020). Turnover rates during this pandemic situation and other similar scenarios of global disruption that may occur in the future. Recruiting, screening, and employing exceptional individuals takes significant time and money for businesses. According to recent research, businesses spend up to 200% of a former employee's yearly salary on recruiting, selecting, and training replacements. Understanding how a business minimizes turnover intention and focuses on staff retention is critical. Modern

organizations that want to gain a competitive edge must rely on committed and skilled employees to do it (Ghosh & Gurnathan, 2014; Rafiq & Chin, 2019). According to Rafiq et al. (2022), firms that are not growing will be unable to retain employees who are growing. As a result, maintaining high calibre employees has become a difficult issue for today's businesses. Given the importance of employees' retention, employers must devote significant resources toward practices that may help improve employees' retention.

Job embeddedness, a novel notion drawn from management literature, has been used to analyse talent retention. Job embeddedness research aims to ascertain the whole range of reasons why an employee remains in his or her current position. Job embeddedness has been found to have a negative link with turnover intention during the past two decades (Zhang et al., 2012). Academics have backed the job embeddedness concept and connected it to a few individuals as well as group predictions in Western companies (Huang et al., 2021; Peltokorpi et al., 2022). Although

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value differences are a major notion in embeddedness research in Eastern countries, surprisingly, a little research has shed light on the cross-cultural differences in work embeddedness drivers in this pandemic situation.

In this pandemic issue, employee retention is not only a single country's or industry's problem, but a global phenomenon that needs to be addressed. The purpose of this study is to investigate the media personnel's attitudes regarding job embeddedness in this pandemic situation. In this study, we compare and contrast different job embeddedness dimensions between China and Pakistan. This task is not only intriguing because it compares two countries, but also because it examines China and Pakistan, which are traditionally considered collectivist cultures, in comparison to the United States (which is predominantly individualistic). Moreover, this study contends that, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, job embeddedness response helps in employees retention in Asian collectivist cultures. However, significant cultural differences may exist at the micro-level. Additionally, this study compares cross-cultural job embeddedness using (Hofstede, 2001) cultural ratings, which offered value for practitioners and managers working in global contexts.

Literature Review

Job Embeddedness

Scholars have established that during the COVID-19 pandemic situation many businesses are adopting different strategies to cover their loss. Among them layoffs is one of the main strategies (Kanupriya, 2021; Loang, 2022). Singh et al. (2021) found that many jobs disappeared from the market suddenly as a result of the pandemic crisis, which has created unrest and uncertainty among the employees of the organizations. So, organizational life in the severe conditions of COVID-19 pandemic has never been more challenging. Mitchell et al. (2001) introduced job embeddedness for the difficult situations, which ultimately helped employees to remain on the job in the challenging condition. Similarly Elshaer and Azazz (2021) indicated that increasing the amount of embeddedness may help employees use their strengths to avoid layoffs and improve retention as well as help firms deal with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The term 'job embeddedness' refers to the degree to which a person is entangled or entrenched in, linked to, attached to, or bound to their present position (Mitchell et al., 2001). Furthermore, Lee et al. (2004) re-define the job embeddedness construct with two fundamental dimensions on-and-off the job embeddedness with three sub-dimensions (i.e., link, fit, and sacrifice) each, respectively. So, overall job embeddedness is measured with the aggregate of these six sub-dimensions. To the overall job embeddedness notion, each sub-dimension provides a distinct knowledge and predictive power. Fit refers to how well an

employee fits into the company or community to which he or she belongs. The term 'links' refers to the official or informal interactions that exist between employees and their employers, as well as other people. The psychological and monetary expenses that would be incurred if a staff left are referred to as 'sacrifice'. If individuals feel they have strong links at their job/community, they fit well in their job/community, and they have less desire to leave the job/community in the future. Having a strong sense of 'job embeddedness' in one's job mean that an employee is less likely to leave their position because he or she is more attached to it since he or she perceives a strong connection between the company and the community. Given the importance to COVID-19 situation, businesses that have adopted the embeddedness model have been able to successfully retain employees by concentrating on the positive organizational and community relationships that keep employees embedded. The more tightly knit the web, the more embedded the employees.

In general, job embeddedness is the collection of numerous elements that connect employees to their job/work (retention). Similarly, Burrows et al. (2022) claimed that while employee retention and turnover intention are connected, indication suggests that there are significant differences between why an employee stays with an organization (retention) and why the alike individual quits the work (turnover). Gong et al. (2011), Western and Eastern nations have radically distinct cultural systems and customs. Therefore, job embeddedness is a new concept—examining and expanding it in a variety of contexts might help us gain a better comprehension of individual attitudes and attributes. The formation of individual descriptions and influencing aspects might be different in contradiction of different settings. Similarly, Rafiq et al. (2022) also suggest that perceiving the understanding of job embeddedness is a noticeable development in the cross-cultural investigation during pandemic situation.

Job Embeddedness Between China and Pakistan

As a developing economy, China has recently experienced substantial economic uncertainty and challenges. The declining situation has brought about unprecedented uncertainty for organizations and their employees. This unprecedented uncertainty led organizations to extraordinary difficult situation. In this situation many organizations have been forced to downsize and thousands of employees have lost their jobs. This refers to the perceived inability to predict how the organization's external environment will change and its consequences (Milliken, 1987). In this situation organizations needs to think about the alternative solutions and facilitate the transformation of organizations aligned with the new development, thereby ensuring their survival under the best conditions. Their survival depends on the adoption of management strategies that will allow

them to not only overcome their business losses but also focus on how they can retain their best employees. Because COVID-19-related uncertainties are threatening, workforces appear less capable of contributing diligent efforts when organizations need them to survive (Kluger, 2020). For their survival or retention, Chinese organizations need to focus on job embeddedness. For decades, much of research of employees' wellbeing stem from the Western culture (Bakker, 2015; Rafiq et al., 2019). Furthermore, Li and Angerer (2014), reported that employees' stress is basically intricately linked to their cultural values, beliefs and norms. So, it is reasonable to assume that Chinese employees' job embeddedness would manifest differently as compared to other cultures. Recently, Cheng et al. (2017) suggested that 'China represents an ideal nature of laboratory for in which to study wellbeing' (p. 132).

By the year 2020, the Muslim population had reached 1.80 billion, with approximately half of them residing in the developing and emerging regions of Asia. In these kinds of settings, it is vitally important to address workforce issues by integrating organizational behaviour and culture. From this angle, in order to capture Pakistanis' cultural mind-set more precisely, we adopt the culture-as-context framework to examine the job embeddedness. Corona phobia, which is defined as a 'disproportionate state of anxiety or persistent or uncontrollable fear that interferes with daily life and causes disruptions to behaviour and psychological wellbeing due to the coronavirus pandemic', has been recognized as a factor that influences employees' intent to leave their jobs all over the globe due to the pandemic. In response to COVID-19, Rafiq and Chin (2019) argued that employees' psychological resources play a crucial role in maintaining their health during this stressful situation. Previous research has demonstrated that job embeddedness consists of psychological resources that keep employees on the job despite negative working conditions.

However, there is a paucity of research demonstrating the employees' jobs embeddedness in populous developing markets from the perspective of organizational behaviour and culture. To fill the above-mentioned gap, this study attempts to offer a different perspective by focusing on two countries that embody the contextual features of a typical developing economy and also uses a prominent collectivist cultural aspect that reflects local people's values and belief. This research conducted a cross-cultural examination of job embeddedness in a fast-growing country, China, the world second largest economy with 1.402 billion inhabitants and comparatively less developed country, Pakistan, the World's sixth largest country with 220.9 million inhabitants during the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Hofstede's Theory and Job Embeddedness

Groysberg et al. (2018) defined culture as the similarity of values, customs, and institutions that distinguishes human communities. There are several definitions of

culture available (Ojalehto & Medin, 2015). According to Hofstede (2001), culture is the communal programming of the mind that differentiates one group from another. Culture refers to a group's overall 'design for a living' and the pattern of existence that exists within that community (Becker et al., 2012). Hofstede introduced four fundamental dimensions of national/international culture to help individuals working in a cross-cultural setting (Hofstede, 2011). These four fundamental dimensions are—(a) Individualism vs collectivism; (b) Uncertainty avoidance; (c), Masculinity vs femininity; and (d) Power distance. Furthermore, Hofstede (2001) exposed that national culture is defined in five fundamental dimensions rather than four. Subsequently, short-term vs. long-term orientation is Hofstede's fifth dimension. As a result, Hofstede's five cultural dimensions have remained an important addition to cross-cultural literature (Halkos & Skouloudis, 2017).

Organizations that function in many nations have discovered that the environment for human resource management can vary significantly in critical areas (Schwartz, 2013). However, contingent on the settings, the degree of standardizations or localizations may be fruitful, and the importance of hypothetical backdrops suppose that country variation, particularly in national cultures, are very essential for international organizations to act under a localization policy.

There are more than two hundred countries in this world. Therefore, it is significant to focus on the cross-cultural aspects including solidarity or segregation. For this reason, cross-culture is seen as the main aspect in inspecting a vast portion of an individual's behaviours. Huang et al. (2021) found that different cultural backgrounds still have differences in employees' perceptions. Asian nations may be better adapted to some cultural dimensions, such as collectivism, than Western countries (Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010). However, the features of an 'Asian' or 'Eastern' management strategy encompass significant distinctions in the behavioural orientation of managers from different Asian nations (Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010). To the unfamiliar Western eye, most Asian nations can be identical in their management-related styles; yet, the deeper values and visible features are also substantially diverse from countries within Asian culture, needing further cross-cultural investigation (Huang et al., 2021; Rafiq et al., 2022). Furthermore, we argue that national culture has an impact on organizations' and individuals' job embeddedness growth processes, which should be investigated further under cross-cultural settings.

Individualist vs collectivist—individuals are expected to be part of close-knit communities or in-groups that protect their members' interests in exchange for their commitment. Individualistic societies, then again, are essentially worried about one's own self and close family. Individualistic culture is associated with higher scores, whereas collectivist culture is associated with lower scores. According to Hofstede (2001) research, China received a

20 on the collectivism vs individuality dimension, whereas Pakistan received a 14. Both nations are predisposed toward collective cultures, as seen by their scores.

Uncertainty avoidance—assesses the extent to which laws and orders are required/desired to deal with irregularity in general and, more specifically, in the future. Higher uncertainty avoidance scores indicate significant levels of uncertainty avoidance in culture, whereas lower values indicate lesser levels of uncertainty avoidance in values. According to Hofstede (2001) study, China received a 30 on the uncertainty avoidance dimensions while Pakistan received a 70. In comparison to China, Pakistan has a strong uncertainty avoidance culture.

Femininity vs masculinity—this dimension defines how much a culture emphasizes nurture or achievement. Masculinity is seen as a characteristic that focuses on money, ambition and gender roles that are different. Femininity is a distinct feature that emphasizes nurturing and loving behaviours, environmental awareness, sexual equality, and highly fluid gender roles. A high score on this dimension suggests a positive attitude toward masculine culture in the community or society, whereas a low score shows a positive attitude towards feminine culture in the community or society. According to Hofstede (2001) research, China received a score of 66 on the masculinity vs femininity dimension, whereas Pakistan received a score of 50.

Power distance—the degree to which less powerful members of organizations and institutions (including families) accept and tolerate unequal power distribution. Individuals in societies with a significant power gap are more likely to agree that power imbalance is useful and acceptable. Individuals in such societies are more likely to agree that powerful people in positions of authority deserve special treatment. Low power distance societies, on the other hand, are more prone to assume that all members are equal. According to Hofstede (2001) research, China received 80 score on the power distance dimension and Pakistan received 55.

Long-term orientation vs short-term orientation—when we are dealing with the present and future, a culture will either attempt to innovate or look to the back/past for solutions. A culture with a strong long-term orientation places a great value on traditions and conventions and considers change to be negative. Change is far more accepted in short-term societies, as it is seen as inevitable. Long-term-oriented societies will plan for the future, whereas short-term-oriented cultures are more likely to emphasize instant satisfaction. Cultures whose scores are highly focused on adopting a more pragmatic approach, and encouraging to invest for the long-term orientation, while cultures whose scores are low focused on short-term orientation focused on the respect of traditions but desire to achieve results short-term basis. According to Hofstede (2001) study, China received a score of 118 on the long-term orientation scale, whereas Pakistan received a score of N/A. The Hofstede dimension score for short-term vs long-term orientation is not available for Pakistan. Due to

Table 1. Cultural Dimensions by China and Pakistan

No	Dimenstions	China	Pakistan
1	Uncertainty avoidance	30	70
2	Collectivism/individualism	20	14
3	Power distance	80	55
4	Masculinity/femininity	66	50
5	Short-term vs orientation vs long-term orientation	118	n/a

Source: G. H. Hofstede (2001)

the Pakistan score unavailability, we only included the first four dimensions of Hofstede's in our analysis. The results of Hofstede's cultural dimensions for both countries are reported in Table 1.

Research Question

From the preceding discussion, there is reason to expect that Chinese employees will have a greater overall degree of job embeddedness. As indicated by Triandis and Suh (2002), assuming the employer or employee is seen as an in-group, a more elevated level of collectivism ought to determine the significance of employer loyalty. Similarly, Lee et al. (2004) and Mitchell et al. (2001) discovered that organizational commitment and job embeddedness are greatly interconnected. We hypothesize that collectivist Chinese individuals will have a higher level of job embeddedness than Pakistani employees if the employers or employees are seen as an in-group. It may be very significant to investigate the effect of cross-cultural understanding while investigating the perception of job embeddedness differences. The comparison of employees from China and Pakistan was used to present the cultural backdrop for this study. This comparison is especially important since there is a need to better understand how far the practices of USA may be generalized to other nations.

Research conducted with an emphasis on management in specific cross-cultural contexts also provides supporting evidence for variance in perception of job embeddedness across samples (Huang et al., 2021; Treuren & Fein, 2021), between the United States and India (Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010), between Caucasians and Hispanics (Oyler, 2014), among European countries—Finland, Spain, Italy, and Denmark (Tanova & Holtom, 2008). These scholarships suggest that job embeddedness influences retention differently in different circumstances. As a result, probably, the impression of job embeddedness differs significantly between China and Pakistan.

Method

Participants

The job embeddedness scale is utilized to investigate any differences between Chinese and Pakistani media professionals

during COVID-19 from September 2021 to January 2022. We selected to emphasize media personnel in this article because they are unique from other jobs (Wu et al., 2017), and are going to continuously evolve (Rafiq, 2019).

Data were collected by self-reported surveys from employees in China and Pakistan who had been in the country for at least six months. An invitation letter was issued to workers via the internal organizational email system, explicitly stating the goal of the research, with the formal approval of the HR director of the concerned organization. Participants took part in the survey voluntarily, and there were no incentives offered to them to do so. Furthermore, we also assured the anonymity of respondents' responses.

In Pakistan, where English is an official language, the surveys were administered in English (Walumbwa et al., 2005). We translated the questionnaire into Chinese to collect data in China. Additionally, back translation processes were employed to ensure the accuracy and equivalence of scale in the Chinese and English versions (Brislin, 1986).

In all, we gathered data from 270 Chinese employees and 242 Pakistani employees ($N = 512$). This sample consisted of 60.5% men; 14.8% had a high school diploma, 31.4% had a bachelor's degree, 43.0% had a master's degree, 10.4% had a MPhil degree, and fewer than 1% had a PhD. 41.4% of respondents had an experience of range 1–5 years. Moreover, 12.5% were under the age of 25, while 42.8% were 26–35 years old. Finally, 68.9% of the respondents were married. Respondents' demographic details are given in Table 2.

Measures

Job embeddedness was assessed with the seven-item questionnaire introduced by (Crossley et al., 2007). For example, employees/respondents were asked to rate how strongly they agreed with these statements: 'I feel tied to this organization' and 'I'm too caught up in this organization to leave'. The reliability of this measure was $\alpha = 0.86$ (Pakistan) and 0.89 (China). For more detail, please see the appendix.

Results

The results for Hofstede's five cultural dimensions for China and Pakistan are shown in Table 1. Table 3 reveals the mean value comparison between China and Pakistan groups and the t-test shows that both groups are significantly different. This analysis is carried out item by item.

Table 3. T-tests for the Job Embeddedness China and Pakistan

Group Mean (SD)			
Questions #	Pakistan	China	t-value
I	3.94 (1.14)	4.13 (1.03)	2.01*
II	4.01 (1.10)	3.47 (0.98)	−4.39**
III	3.90 (1.05)	4.16 (0.94)	2.98**
IV	3.85 (1.10)	4.15 (0.88)	3.48**
V	3.91 (1.09)	3.68 (1.06)	−2.41*
VI	3.88 (1.06)	3.91 (1.03)	0.29
VII	3.90 (1.06)	4.21 (0.90)	3.49**

Source:

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

[AQ2]

Table 2. Respondents Demographic

Respondent Variable	Category	China		Pakistan		Total	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	106	39.3	96	39.7	202	39.5
	Male	164	60.7	146	60.3	310	60.5
Marital status	Un-married	64	23.7	79	32.7	143	27.9
	Married	194	71.9	159	65.7	353	69.0
	Widowed	12	4.4	4	1.6	16	3.1
Age	25 & below	37	13.7	27	11.2	64	12.5
	26–35 years old	111	41.1	108	44.6	219	42.8
	36–45 years old	59	21.9	52	21.5	111	21.7
	46–55 years old	41	15.2	40	16.5	81	15.8
	56 & above	22	8.1	15	6.2	37	7.2
Experience	< 1 year	37	13.7	22	9.1	59	11.5
	1–3 years	106	39.3	106	43.8	212	41.4
	4–6 years	37	13.7	42	17.4	79	15.4
	7–10 years	31	11.5	27	11.2	58	11.3
	11–13 years	44	16.3	33	13.6	77	15.0
	> 14 years	15	5.6	12	5.0	27	5.3
Education	High School	38	14.1	38	15.7	76	14.8
	Bachelor	86	31.9	75	31.0	161	31.4
	Master	118	43.7	102	42.1	220	43.0
	MPhil	27	10.0	26	10.7	53	10.4
	PhD	1	0.4	1	0.4	2	0.4

Source:

Out of seven, six comparisons yielded statistically significant findings (different). In comparison to Pakistani respondents, Chinese respondents are more likely to agree with the statement ‘I feel linked to this organization’. Additionally, results shown in Table 3 reveal that out of seven, six items’ comparisons were statistically significant. In comparison to Pakistani workers, Chinese employees are more likely to agree with the question ‘I feel attached to this organization’. In the next question, both countries agree that leaving my current employer would be tough (4.01 mean score—Pakistani; 3.47 mean score—Chinese). The distinction is highly significant. Regarding the idea that it is tough to quit the organization, Pakistani respondents agree, while Chinese respondents’ response is closer to ‘not sure’.

The Chinese and Pakistani respondents both agreed with the statements ‘I feel tied to this organization’, and ‘I’m too caught up in this organization to leave’. The results of the t-tests are statistically significant once more, albeit the distinction may not be all that expressive.

Whenever examined concerning the assertion ‘I just couldn’t leave the association that I work for’, Pakistani respondents would in general concur, while Chinese respondents would in general fall into the ‘not certain’ class (3.68). When asked if they agreed or disagreed with the question ‘I just could not quit the organization that I work for’, Pakistani group inclined to agree, whereas Chinese respondents tended to disagree (3.68).

Both groups are closer to ‘agree’ on the statement of ‘It would be easy for me to leave this organization’. However, the change is neither considerable nor very noteworthy in this case. It is worth mentioning, when asked about their reaction to the concept ‘I am tightly connected to this organization’ (V7), the Chinese group had a more favourable view toward highly agreed (4.21). The Pakistani respondents, oppositely, tended to lean toward the ‘not sure’ end of the spectrum (3.90).

Discussion

In this study, we looked at how media workers in China and Pakistan responded to dilemmas related to their jobs’ embeddedness. According to the findings of this study, individuals in China and Pakistan exhibit different views regarding job embeddedness on six out of the seven job embeddedness questions.

More significantly, the findings of this scholarship contribute to our knowledge of job embeddedness in a variety of ways. To begin with, employment embeddedness has not been examined outside of the Western world until today (Pillay et al., 2014; Van Dyk et al., 2013). Our study contributes to this rapidly expanding field by analysing the impact of cross-cultural variations on attitudes regarding employees’ job embeddedness in Chinese and Pakistani workers. Second, the previous scholarship has tended to treat job embeddedness as a multi-dimensional issue. This

study used a different approach by looking at the impact of general job embeddedness as a whole.

The data above clearly suggest that the two samples place a high value on job embeddedness. When we compared statistically significant values in both countries, there are extremely few dramatic differences. Pakistanis, for example, place a high value on the notion ‘...It would be difficult for me to leave this organization’ (item 2). On the other hand, the Chinese, do not score as high as Pakistan on this scale. In the same vein, Pakistani participants reported a high score for the statement ‘...I just could not quit the company that I work for’ (item 5), whereas Chinese respondents provide a less rating. Both notions centre around the theme of ‘how difficult it is for employees to quit their existing position’, and Pakistani participants score higher in terms of job embeddedness on these.

Why this aforementioned scenario is true for Pakistani because the economic condition of Pakistan is poor, and people may be unable to take action to quit their existing employment. According to Sutton (2017), individuals choose to stay with the organization even when earnings are typically constant in poor economic countries. In this scenario many workers experienced by pay freezes, longer working hours, and the cessation of all growth efforts, they were thankful to have a job. Tas et al. (2021) online COVID-19 survey which reveals those businesses all over Pakistan have been affected by the pandemic, which has led to closures, shorter work hours, and a slowdown in business activities. But in this worse situation, people still cannot quit their jobs because the economy is so bad that they cannot afford the basic necessities of life.

It does not imply that they are deeply embedded, inspired, and happy in their existing situation or that they intend to continue in their jobs; rather, they are constrained in their positions due to a lack of alternative opportunities/options available in the job market. Likewise, Greene et al. (2018) contended could be explained based on the current and anticipated economic conditions.

Additionally, Pakistan also scores relatively higher on uncertainty avoidance on Hofstede’s dimensions as did in (item 2 & 5). Those countries that score high on uncertainty avoidance place greater emphasis on stability and certainty and favour a variety of mechanisms that increase a sense of security (Hofstede, 2001). From this, we assume why Pakistani people have rated high scores on both items 2 and 5. In similar vein, Fernandez-Perez et al. (2021) found that stock market declines were larger in countries with higher scores for uncertainty avoidance than in countries with lower scores for uncertainty avoidance over the same time period during the COVID-19 situation. The same line of reasoning was applied when considering embeddedness as a point of view.

In comparison to Pakistan, our data revealed that Chinese workers have a more positive attitude toward job embeddedness (items 1, 3, 4 and 7). On the statement ‘I feel devoted to this organization’, Chinese group received

a high score. It exposed how Chinese employees are devoted to their job. They are not interested to leave their organization. According to Peltokorpi et al. (2022), in Chinese firms, significant intrafirm socialization tends to become deeply embedded in workers' views. Furthermore, they asserted that the implicit job arrangement in Chinese firms encourages employees to invest energy and time in forming and maintaining social relationships, as well as demonstrating their efforts, devotion, and commitment to routine organizational connections. These ties and relationships are directly connected to job embeddedness, which refers to the job sacrifice feature that pushes people to remain in their present organization. When we take a gaze at the flip side of job embeddedness as shown in the question 'I'm too caught up in this organization to leave' the Chinese suggest a higher level of job embeddedness compared with the Pakistan. It is consistent with the Chinese's previously stated judgment that they are more devoted and loyal. To carry out this loyalty related legacy, the Chinese government and policymakers implemented employment security-related policies, such as finding creative ways to assist employees who may be experiencing financial difficulties (Keong & Dastane, 2019; Rafiq & Weiwei, 2017). This type of initiatives keeps them embedded at work during COVID-19.

Subsequently, the statement is addressed to the fit aspect of job embeddedness 'I feel tied to this organization'. In the same vein, Peltokorpi et al. (2022) establish that Chinese workers are better qualified for the job and are more likely to be emotionally and professionally invested in their organization. These Peltokorpi findings are also consistent with our results. Lastly, the statement refers to link, stating that '...I am inextricably linked to this organization'. This most likely suggests a formal and informal relationship between the individuals, institutions, and other organizations. According to Froese and Peltokorpi (2013), early career stage employees are deeply interested in the network cohorts. These types of links maintained via continuous interactions, serve as crucial sources of information regarding customs and beliefs, as well as open support and assistance. On this matter, the present findings are consistent with the study demonstrating socializing strategies to increase job embeddedness (Reitz, 2014). The results show that Chinese individuals have more work-related and non-work-related relationships at work. Peltokorpi et al. (2022), revealed that links or contrast, reflect the individual's close social connections. Furthermore, these findings also show consistent differences between China and Pakistan for items 1, 3, 4 and 7 from Hofstede's dimensions. For example, China is rated higher on the collectivism dimension than Pakistan, yet the results also consistently indicate that China respondents placed higher on those items. Consequently, Hom et al. (2009) stated that Chinese employees' have a strong collectivist culture. Additionally, an 'individual's collectivist orientation reflects how highly the values being loyal to a social group,

and motivates the individual to work hard for group goals, and sacrifice personal benefits for the group interests' (Hom et al., 2009, p. 204). In similar manner Xiao (2021) found that collectivist Asian countries controlled the pandemic situation more effectively due to their highly responsible behaviour towards civic responsibility (e.g., they are more concerned about others' health than their own), which is supported by collectivist values.

Furthermore, we found support for our findings in Hofstede's hypothesis of cultural consequences across nations. Hofstede's theoretical underpinning is considered best for the understanding of cross-cultural studies. It was also anticipated that Hofstede's studies would help to clarify the similarities and differences highlighted between the two countries. This study also offers suggestions for the managers/supervisors in both national and international organizations. The use of job embeddedness organizationally may not only reduce the possibility of media professionals quitting in both nations, but it may also save the organization a significant expense associated with turnover intention (Dechawatanapaisal, 2018). The work embeddedness idea highlights a variety of ways in which managers may encourage employees, such as employee development programs, flexible scheduling, sports teams, sabbaticals, and mentorship systems (Mitchell et al., 2001). This scholarship focuses on and develops retention/stay mechanisms that are communal across cultures, as well as stay policies that are sensitive to variations between two cultures.

Practical Implications

First, as we have already mentioned, the cost of employee turnover is extremely high for the organizations. Therefore, companies need to exercise caution whenever they are hiring new staff. For instance, managers have a responsibility to place an emphasis on the cultural beliefs and shared values held by employees, as this can help an organization achieve success. To be more specific, the cultural compatibility is the most important aspect as compared to anything else when it comes to retaining great employees, especially when the company is facing significant changes in the setting.

Limitations

It is critical to recognize the study's limitations at this point. A key difficulty with the sample is that it is confined to business media professionals, which may preclude the study's generalizability to wider population. A future study might broaden the sample to include corporate personnel from a variety of organizations. This would allow for a comparison of existing and prospective company managers in each country's view on job embeddedness.

Even though there are a great number of benefits associated with job embeddedness, it is essential to be aware of any potential drawbacks. Because employee retention is the objective of job embeddedness, some workers may

develop the feeling that they are obligated to remain in their positions no matter what, even if they would benefit more from changing jobs. In a similar vein, there are situations that may arise in which an employee is no longer an ideal candidate for the position that they have held for some time because they are no longer a good fit for the position. They might also experience a sense of obligation to maintain their current position.

Conclusion

The burgeoning mass of scientific knowledge has accelerated at an exponential rate over the past decade, rapidly expanding global opportunities as well as exacerbating global threats. In a world where, now, information and technological exchange disseminates without barriers—it becomes ever more pertinent to understand and manage the ‘actors’ belonging to diverse cultural backgrounds. There is a foundational need to disentangle, standardize and integrate an international understanding of fundamental work attitudes such as job embeddedness. This study examined and compared Chinese and Pakistani media employees on their attitudes towards their job embeddedness during the COVID-19 situation. Though different values of job embeddedness are exhibited by the two studied groups, we find, that the job embeddedness model is a reliable predictor of employee retention. As a sustainable workforce can only be maintained if talented employees are hired and retained, it becomes even more essential to delineate universal practices that can aid to embed these individuals from varying cultures. With expanding socio-industrial relations between Pakistan and China, the job embeddedness model encompassing both community and organizations can prove to be a robust model for future investigations.

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Appendix A

Reflect the following statements about business attitudes in questions 1–7. Indicate your position regarding each by writing a number in the blank before each statement.

1 (strongly disagree) 2 (disagree) 3 (not sure) 4 (agree) 5 (strongly agree)

1. I feel attached to this organization.
2. It would be difficult for me to leave this organization.
3. I'm too caught up in this organization to leave.
4. I feel tied to this organization.
5. I simply could not leave the organization that I work for.
6. It would be easy for me to leave this organization.
7. I am tightly connected to this organization.

Source: Crossley et al. (2007)

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