



# Job insecurity and job performance as the key research issues of the modern labour market

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## Abstract

This paper focuses on analyzing the contemporary labor market, particularly examining the concept of “insecurity” related to employment and job retention. Despite the increasing research on job insecurity and its impact on employee performance, findings remain mixed and inconclusive. The objectives are to explore job insecurity conceptualizations and theoretical perspectives explaining its relationship with job performance. The main questions include whether a meaningful relationship exists between job insecurity and job performance as identified in literature, and the expected impact of job insecurity on performance. A systematic literature review methodology was used, involving a review and analysis of literature on job insecurity and its relation to various dimensions of employee performance. Two databases, Web of Science and Scopus, were utilized, including papers published before June 2023. This review contributes to the systematization of current empirical evidence in this research area, which is crucial for understanding the consequences of job insecurity on performance. This understanding is vital for organizations and policy-makers, considering the different conceptualizations of job insecurity and their impact on employee performance.

## Keywords

- job insecurity
- job performance
- labour market
- systematic literature review

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## Introduction

Increasing globalisation and transformations of the modern labour market have changed the traditional employment model, introducing “insecurity” associated with taking up and maintaining work (Franken et al., 2009). Job insecurity, understood as “perceived threat of job loss and the worries related to that threat” (De Witte, 2005, p. 1) is an unavoidable and widespread phenomenon in today’s professional world (Choonara, 2020; Debus et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2013; Jiang et al., 2020; Probst et al., 2017; Richter et al., 2020; Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). In theoretical terms, job insecurity is most often defined as “the perception that the future of one’s job is unstable or at risk, regardless of any actual objective level of job security” (Probst, et al., 2014, p. 32). According to Sverke et al. (2002), job insecurity is “a subjectively experienced anticipation of the fundamental and unwanted event related to job loss”. In the literature, job insecurity is also referred to as a “discrepancy between the level of confidence experienced by an individual and the level of confidence that he or she would like to feel” (Hartley et al., 1991), “expectations of continuity in work” (Davy et al., 1997, p. 323), a “concern about the continuing existence of jobs” (Awosusi & Fasanmi, 2014, p. 404), and finally a “perceived threat to the continuity and stability of employment as it is currently experienced” (Shoss, 2017, p. 1914). What all of these definitions have in common is that job insecurity is approached as a subjective phenomenon based on an individual perception of a given situation. Job insecurity based on individual perceptions is shaped by various factors, including the situation on the labour market, organisational and professional factors, as well as personal circumstances such as availability of resources, education or age (Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018; Kiersztyn, 2020; Salas-Nicás et al., 2020; Symeonaki et al., 2019). There are several approaches that assume an objective understanding of job security, interpreted as an “independently determined probability that employees will have the same job in the foreseeable future” (Sverke et al., 2002, p. 243).

From a psychological point of view, it is important to consider an individual interpretation of the environment in order to be able to understand the reactions and individual differences that will contribute to a more diverse and more exhaustive description of the situation of employees in the workplace. Paying attention to the interaction of individual and organisational contexts is essential for comprehending the causes of job insecurity, where perceptions of employees are seen as a link between the objective professional situation and the negative consequences that job insecurity tends to be associated with.

Job insecurity is a complex phenomenon that can affect the individual not only at work, but also outside of it; the same goes for the organisation in which

the individual works. Chirkowska-Smolak (2015) indicates that lack of job security refers to the negative reactions of employees to change in their work and reflects anxiety that accompanies serious and undesirable organisational transformations that threaten the sustainability of employment. Therefore, the employee has to decide between two possible alternatives: keep the job or lose it. This prompts certain insecurity about the future, which refers not only to professional life but also to aspects related to family life, social relations or health (Awosusi & Fasanmi, 2014).

Job insecurity, understood as a subjective perception that our job position is unstable or threatened, and the anxiety and fear that often accompany such an opinion, is a psychosocial threat that may cause significant problems for the organisation as well as disturb the health and well-being of its employees. A meta-analysis of the consequences of job insecurity (Cheng & Chan, 2008; Hsieh & Kao, 2022; Pap et al., 2020; Richter & Näswall, 2019; Sverke et al., 2002) showed that it is significantly negatively correlated with job satisfaction, professional involvement, organisation dedication, trust, as well as the physical and mental health condition, yet positively correlated with a desire to leave work. Research also found that job insecurity is a powerful stress factor in many contemporary employees (Jordan et al., 2002).

Given the prevalence of job insecurity around the world and its negative consequences, it seems necessary to identify potential moderators that could balance out perceptions and reactions to it. Rosen et al. (2010) consider it reasonable to conduct further research on contextual factors moderating job insecurity, not only due to their crucial importance for the development of theoretical literature but also because of the practical implications for an organisation in the context of managing the crisis of job insecurity.

The paper is conceptual, while the considerations contained in it are cognitive. The aim of the paper is to recognise and bring forth the current achievements of research studies related to job insecurity and job performance in order to identify the main research areas related to this topic in social sciences. Given the mixed results related to the impact of job insecurity on job performance, it is relevant to explore what potential mechanisms affect this relationship.

A systematic review of the literature was used to identify the existing research directions and trends. This systematic literature review based on empirical studies on the relationship between job insecurity and performance aimed to identify what is known about the conceptualisations of job insecurity and its relationship with specific performance indicators, as well as what factors play a role in this relationship. The identification of the subject of the study, i.e. the set of publications to be analysed, was carried out using the Web of Science and Scopus databases. Analysis of the articles making up the sample made it possible to identify key areas of research into job insecurity, which included the essence of the

concept and its impact on job performance. The analytical approach was used to identify and assess the existing theoretical approaches, as well as to identify key knowledge gaps and limitations of previous studies, constituting jointly the basis for putting forward operationalisation and measurement assumptions for future explanatory research.

The paper is organised as follows: in the theoretical framework section the authors provide definitions of the constructs used in the paper regarding job insecurity. Next, in the method section the authors discuss the literature under analysis, including the search strategy and inclusion and exclusion criteria of the systematic literature review. Afterwards, in the results section the authors present the evidence about the relationship between job insecurity and various aspects that determine employee performance. Finally, the paper provides a conclusion based on the objectives of the study.

## 1. Method

The study used a systematic literature review. The authors focused on exploring the conceptualisations of job insecurity and its relationship with job performance indicators. Therefore, we did not conduct a meta-analysis, but perform a qualitative systematic review of the available literature on the relationship between job insecurity and employer performance to create this overview. Opting for a systematic review has not only allowed for a formalised objective synthesis and assessment of research to date, but more importantly, it has enabled the identification of both researched and as yet unexplored areas. This, in turn, provided a framework for further research whose future findings could be generalised in the world literature. A systematic review (compared to traditional, which is often subjective and incomplete) is also advantageous as it poses research questions prior to commencing proper analysis, meaning it pre-emptively compiles a full list of relevant works along with the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of particular literature items (Wyrwa & Kaźmierczyk, 2020).

Our systematic review is based on a method that addresses the research question while also detailing the search criteria and providing an adequate structure for the synthesis of the results.

The systematic literature review procedure comprised the following stages: defining research goals and selecting primary literature (stage one), selecting publications and developing a publication database (stage two), as well as analysing the content and verifying the relevance of the obtained results to further research (stage three).

The selection of search criteria began with those related to the research model and the adopted cognitive context. The inclusion criteria were: (1) studies carried out on samples of workers, (2) qualitative and quantitative empirical studies, (3) studies that evaluated the relationship between job insecurity and performance behaviours and (4) studies published in scientific journals found on Web of Science and Scopus, which are considered the most comprehensive databases of peer-reviewed journals in social sciences. We followed previous literature reviews by restricting the search to peer-reviewed scientific journal articles written in English and we did not specify the year of publication, as the interest was in retrieving as many published articles as possible.

Taking into account not only the assumptions but also the practice of conducting a systematic literature review in research activities, we made decisions regarding the separation and application of the inclusion criteria for adding a publication to the database. It was assumed that the search criteria should be included in the title and abstract of the analysed papers. The titles and abstracts were identified through keyword-based searches of databases. We tested the research databases using a set of phrases that combined the following keywords: “job insecurity”, “job performance”, “employee performance” and “research”.

The database search yielded 498 publications, which were then subjected to a further “cleaning” process. After removing theoretical papers, duplicates, and those to which full access was limited (i.e. paywalled), the total sample was reduced to nearly 250 items. In the last stage of our research, we conducted a qualitative analysis of the publications. We applied thematic analysis to identify, analyse and interpret information from the included studies regarding the conceptualisation of job insecurity and its relationship with performance indicators. This stage included a detailed content analysis of entire texts in our publications database.

## **2. Theoretical framework of job insecurity**

The first attempt at putting job insecurity into a theoretical model was done by Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984). They determined job insecurity to be “perceived powerlessness in maintaining the desired continuity in the threatened employment situation” (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). The “desired continuity” included in the definition meant not only the maintenance of a job itself but also all its features such as the amount of remuneration, career development opportunities and the level of autonomy. On the basis of this definition, the phenomenon of job insecurity comprises two main elements: a threat and powerlessness

to counteract it. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt understood it as a product of multiplication: if at least one of the elements does not exist, the individual will not experience job insecurity.

Experiencing job insecurity causes specific, negative reactions in employees. These include reduction of effort put into work, increased willingness to leave and resistance to change. Employee reactions further affect the organisational efficiency through an increased level of departures, decreased performance and overall deterioration of adaptability. These correlations between job insecurity and its consequences are moderated by variables such as: social support, work dependence and individual differences (Chojnacki, 2015b).

The conceptualisation of job insecurity developed by Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (2010) distinguished four key elements. The first is desired continuity – if an employee does not want to keep their current job, they will simply go to another organisation or get promoted to a more attractive position – in that case there is no job insecurity. Thus, the first element of the concept of job insecurity is perceived as a threat to various work features, such as opportunities for promotion and the freedom to set one's own schedule. The more job features an individual considers to be at risk, the greater the job insecurity they experience. The second element is a subjective threat – if an employee perceives their job as threatened, it does not matter if it is a factual situation or an inaccurate interpretation of signals transmitted from the environment. Even an unjustified subjective threat may be a source of job insecurity. This assumption is supported by empirical data, which show that this phenomenon is sometimes independent of objective conditions, i.e. some employees in a jeopardised organisation felt secure about their future, while some employed in a company with a stable market situation were worried about their jobs (Roskies & Louis-Guerin, 1990). The third element concerns job features at risk. According to Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (2010), it is not only the fear of losing one's job as such, but also the deterioration of the employment situation by losing some of the desirable properties of the current job, e.g. if an employee fears undesired relocation, leaving friends, being burdened with unwanted duties or having their rights limited. Such employees may experience a significant degree of job insecurity – strong enough to trigger negative reactions. The last element of the model is perceived to be powerlessness (helplessness). An employee may experience a subjective threat, but if they are convinced of their capability to overcome it, it will not result in negative consequences. Otherwise, they will experience job insecurity.

The above four elements were combined to create a multi-dimensional job insecurity construct, which is an alternative to the previously used one-dimensional concept. However, the inconsistent structure of the job insecurity construct proposed by Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt was criticised in several subsequent studies. Some researchers have stated, among other things, that powerlessness should be

treated as the cause or effect of job insecurity, rather than a separate dimension of the structure (Probst, 2003; Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996; Vander Elst et al., 2011).

In any case, the model developed by Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt currently constitutes an important impetus for further research on job insecurity (Chojnacki, 2015a). Despite the passage of over thirty years, this approach is still frequently referenced in literature (Boswell et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2015). Based on the theoretical and multifaceted job insecurity model of Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984), Ashford et al. (1989) developed and justified a precise measure for the phenomenon in question. This multifaceted scale of job insecurity includes the following elements: job functions (significance of job features x probability of losing a given job function), total work (significance of job loss x probability of losing a given element of total work) and powerlessness (perceived powerlessness to confront the threat). Ashford and his colleagues empirically supported the multifaceted nature of job insecurity, demonstrating that their theoretical measure has superior predictive validity compared to previous measures assessing the global perception of job insecurity.

According to the classical models of job insecurity (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984), it was assumed that job insecurity is a potentially serious stress factor at work, which causes tension and anxiety. Employees who suffer from increased stress caused by the risk of losing their jobs are exposed to worse results the most (Gilboa et al., 2008).

The second theory, cited by job insecurity researchers, is the transactional theory of stress developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). One of the first references to the transactional theory of stress in the context of job insecurity can be found in Jacobson's publication, in which the author states that job insecurity resembles the process of cognitive appraisal as described by Lazarus and Folkman. He also combined Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt's model and Lazarus and Folkman's theory, indicating that the extent to which changes in the work environment lead to an individual experiencing job insecurity depends on: (1) cognitive evaluation of the threat posed by changes, (2) individually perceived availability of resources to counteract the threat, and (3) perceived consequences for the individual if the threat materialises.

In recent years, numerous examples of job insecurity in the context of the transactional stress theory analysis have emerged. Debus et al. (2012) referred to the theory of Lazarus and Folkman, indicating that the cognitive assessment of the stress factor (stressor) is of paramount importance in its relationship with the negative effects, and this assessment is influenced by various factors, including those from culture and society that they think are correlated with the individual process of experiencing stress.

Vander Elst et al. (2011) conducted a study aimed at defining the role of perceived control in the relationship between job insecurity and its negative effects.

The concept of perceived control has been defined as “the employees’ situational appraisal of his or her ability to control the job insecure situation” (Vander Elst et al., 2011, p. e216). The results found that perceived control is a mediator of the relationship between job insecurity and its consequences. Having analysed them on the basis of Lazarus and Folkman’s theories, the authors pointed out that the recognition of job insecurity is a stage of a primary assessment, which results in a secondary assessment, i.e. in such cases there will be an impression of lack of control resulting in negative consequences. The authors, however, emphasised that perceived control is only a partial mediator of this relationship and recommended further investigation of the mechanism of job insecurity.

Debus et al. (2014) analysed variables that influence the experience of job insecurity. In their opinion, there were two tendencies in the literature that resembled the age-old discussion of nature versus nurture. The former focuses on variables that characterise the individual, such as values or attitudes, while the latter includes environmental factors such as employment conditions or the financial situation of the enterprise. The authors transferred these considerations to the transactional theory of stress, as proposed by Lazarus and Folkman, claiming that the perception of stressors depends on both these groups of factors as well as the interaction occurring between them. For the purposes of the study, the location of the sense of control and negative affectivity were regarded as individual variables, while the company’s performance and the type of contract connecting the individual to the organisation were considered environmental variables. The results of the study showed that all of the factors significantly explained job insecurity, whereas the variables related to the individual reduced the prediction error of the dependent variable twice as much. In addition, the effect of the interaction between the sense of control and the type of employment contract turned out to be significant: people on temporary contracts experienced a significantly higher level of job insecurity than people on fixed contracts.

The third theory, presented in the context of research on job insecurity, is the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory by Hobfoll. Its basic assumption is that “people strive to retain, protect, and build resources and that what is threatening to them is the potential or actual loss of these valued resources” (Hobfoll, 1989, p. 513). In this approach, Hobfoll seeks general principles that guide the deliberate behaviour of people. He defines them as the willingness of an individual to maintain, protect and multiply their own resources, which are understood as items, personal properties or circumstances valued by the individual. According to the author, people are constantly searching for resources that are not yet available to maintain, those he or she already has, and to protect the resources which are jeopardised for some reason. Thus, the source of stress is the disturbance of the balance in the exchange of resources between the individual and the environment.



The literature contains a number of examples of the application of Hobfoll's theory as a theoretical explanation of the mechanism of job insecurity. Richter et al. (2014) conducted a study to determine whether work dependence, understood as a need for work due to the resources it provides to an individual, is a moderator of the relationship between job insecurity and personal well-being. The relationship between job insecurity and its consequences was justified based on the transactional theory of stress developed by Lazarus, while the "postulated moderator" is based on Hobfoll's COR theory. According to this theory, the wellbeing of an individual depends on the maintenance and acquisition of resources, which are largely provided by work. Job insecurity is a threat to work and, therefore, also a threat to resources such as financial security, significant activities, a sense of belonging or status. Consequently, the more an individual relies on their work to access these resources, the more negative the consequences of job insecurity will be for them. The results of the study demonstrated that work dependence is an important moderator of the relationship between job insecurity and wellbeing, regarded as job satisfaction, but not as subjectively assessed mental health.

De Cuyper et al. (2014) examined if the strategies taken by employees, namely managing one's own image to create a beneficial presentation in terms of diligence and loyalty, will be positively correlated with the (self-reported) results of the work performed and with emotional exhaustion in instances of insecure employment. The authors justified the postulated relationship based on Hobfoll's COR, pointing out that in circumstances of job insecurity, employees feel threatened by the potential loss of resources, which results in them engaging in activities to prevent that scenario from taking place. The results found that this exemplification is positively related to emotional exhaustion only in conditions of high job insecurity because there is no relationship with low insecurity.

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and Hobfoll's (1989) theory of conservation of resources both provide a theoretical basis for explaining how experiencing stress can lead to exhaustion resulting from an individual assessment of available resources. These theories are consistent with the subjective definition of job insecurity and provide a framework for examining the mechanisms that can underlie the relationship between job insecurity and its consequences. Both theories complement each other. Lazarus and Folkman's transactional theory of stress focuses more on the individual experience of stress and pressure, and is important for understanding individual differences. On the other hand, Hobfoll's COR theory goes beyond this range of activities and takes into account various resources that can affect the management of stress factors. In addition, this theory puts forward a hypothesis that, under certain circumstances, in an unambiguous situation with not much room for differences in interpretation, the external environment should be treated as an additional

component in the stress-exhaustion relationship (Hobfoll, 2001). Hobfoll, in his theory, further points out that in stressful situations, such as high job insecurity, people will try to reduce the loss of professional resources, e.g. by developing a new, separate relationship with work, which in turn may lead to lower performance levels (Hobfoll, 1989).

Hellgren et al. (1999) distinguished the quantitative and qualitative dimension of job insecurity. They referred to the threat of job loss as “quantitative job insecurity”, and to the threat of losing specific job features as “qualitative job insecurity”. Therefore, quantitative job insecurity indicates perceived threats to the job position as a whole, whereas qualitative job insecurity implies perceived threats to job features, in particular, “threats to quality deterioration in job relations”. This approach combines key elements of existing explanations, e.g. the concept of threat, the emphasis on perception that job insecurity may occur when work and its conditions are at risk. However, it does not include such elements as expectations regarding the security and the involuntary nature of threats. Job insecurity is therefore a multidimensional construct that concerns not only the sense of risk of losing employment but also the fear that even if the job is maintained, its conditions will deteriorate. Thus, these are fears related not so much to the loss of employment but to the loss of a job as employees have known them so far (Chirkowska-Smolak & Czumak, 2021). Selected definitions of job insecurity are included in Table 1.

**Table 1. Selected definitions of job insecurity**

Definition	Authors
“Perceived powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation”.	Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt (1984)
“Concern about the future permanence of the job, or sometimes a concern about a significant deterioration in conditions of employment”.	Van Vuuren & Klandermans (1990)
“A discrepancy between the level of security a person experiences and the level she or he might prefer”.	Jacobson & Hartley (1991)
“An employee’s perception of a potential threat to continuity in his or her current job”.	Heaney, Israel & House (1994)
“An overall concern about the continued existence of the job in the future”.	De Witte (1999)

Table 1 continued

Definition	Authors
“Quantitative job insecurity refers to concerns about the future existence of the present job. Qualitative job insecurity pertains to perceived threats of impaired quality in the employment relationship, such as deterioration of working conditions, lack of career opportunities, and decreasing salary development”.	Hellgren et al. (1999)
“Subjective probability of exogenous job destruction”.	Manski & Straub (2000)
“A fundamental and involuntary change concerning the continuity and security within the employing organisation”.	Sverke & Hellgren (2002)
“Job security [is] the perceived stability and continuance of one’s job as one knows it”.	Probst (2003)
“Employees’ perceptions about potential involuntary job loss”.	De Cuyper, Bernhard-Oettel, Berntson, De Witte & Alarco (2008)
“A concern about the future of one’s job”.	Klandermans, Hesselink & Van Vuuren (2010)
“An employee’s perception of the likelihood of losing their job involuntarily in, say, the next six or twelve months”.	Burchell (2011)
“A psychological state in which workers vary in their expectations of future job continuity within an organization”.	Loi et al. (2011)
“Worker’s perception or concern about potential involuntary job loss”.	De Cuyper, Mäkikangas, Kinnunen, Mauno & De Witte (2012)
“Employees’ feeling that their job is at risk or that they are likely to face job loss”.	Schreurs et al. (2012)
“The overall apprehension of the continuing of one’s job”.	Keim, Landis, Pierce & Earnest (2014)
“The subjectively perceived and undesired possibility to lose the present job in the future, as well as the fear or worries related to this possibility of job loss”.	Vander Elst, De Witte & De Cuyper (2014)
“Individual’s evaluation of how likely it is that one will lose one’s job in near future”.	Ellonen & Nätti (2015)
“The perceived threat of losing the current job in the near future”.	Vander Elst, De Cuyper, Baillien, Niesen & De Witte (2016)

Source: (Shoss, 2017, p. 1915).

### **3. The relationship between job insecurity and job performance**

Over the last few years, there has been an increase in the number of studies on the relationship between job insecurity and job performance (Adekiya, 2023; Ma et al., 2023; Nikolova et al., 2023; Shoss & Vancouver, 2023; Qian et al., 2022; Chirumbolo et al., 2020; Debus et al., 2020; Koen et al., 2020; Sverke et al., 2010). The relationship between job insecurity and job performance is ambiguous (Muñoz Medina et al., 2023; De Cuyper et al., 2020; Mao & Hsieh, 2013; Probst et al., 2020; Selenko et al., 2013; Sverke et al., 2019; Van Vuuren et al., 2020). A meta-analysis of stress factors and performance indicated a slight negative effect of job insecurity on job performance (Cheng & Chan, 2008; Gilboa et al., 2008), while other studies did not detect such a correlation whatsoever (Sverke et al., 2002). There are also research results showing that job insecurity may have a negligible positive impact on job performance (Probst, 2002; Probst et al., 2007; Sverke et al., 2002). Yet another study showed that there is a curvilinear relation between job insecurity and increased involvement in work (Ashford et al., 1989; Loi et al., 2011; Staufenbiel & König, 2010), in the sense that the increased effort put into work is the greatest with moderate levels of job insecurity (Brockner et al., 1992). Such inconsistent conclusions are usually interpreted in two ways: (1) by seeking methodological explanations or (2) by recognising moderating variables undiscovered so far (Probst et al., 2007; Sverke et al., 2002). Researchers have also suggested that ambiguous research findings may stem from a non-linear relationship between job insecurity and job performance (Selenko et al., 2013). In particular, Selenko et al. (2013) argue that job insecurity generates stress which reduces enthusiasm and motivation to work among employees. Due to psychophysical stress, employees are not able to invest sufficient energy in their work, which negatively affects their work efficiency. Therefore, along with an increase in the level of job insecurity, a decline in job performance can be expected. On the other hand, they believe that people experiencing an extremely high level of job insecurity may be more resistant and determined in the face of such anxiety, as evidenced by the decision to remain in the organisation despite the high level of uncertainty in maintaining current employment. From this perspective, changes in job performance are perceived as a result of efforts undertaken to deal with stress related to job insecurity. In turn, people who have survived restructuring and other threats become more involved in their work compared to those who need not worry about their jobs. With that being said, empirical evidence for the relationship between job insecurity and job performance is contradictory and fails to explicitly support any of these views (Gilboa et al., 2008; Probst, 2002; Sverke et al., 2002).

Other research results also indicated that the relationship between job insecurity and job performance is more complex. Staufenbiel and König (2010) developed a model in which job insecurity has two effects. On the one hand, it has an indirect negative impact on performance through organisational attitudes (job satisfaction and organisational commitment). At the same time, it has a direct positive impact on job performance, but that impact is nonetheless smaller. In other words, the direct impact of job insecurity that improves job performance is offset by the indirect impact that reduces it, which leads to the deterioration of work efficiency. It is important to note that a significant relationship has also been observed between job insecurity and performance reported by superiors rather than respondents themselves, which helps overcome the concerns about the apparent bias resulting from the use of the same source of information (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

The results of the previous analyses have shown that high levels of insecurity are associated with an increased intent to leave the workplace (Cheng & Chan, 2008). People who decide to stay in the organisation despite high job insecurity may therefore be more adaptive and persistent in the face of this stress factor. This hypothesis is confirmed by a study involving Finnish university employees, in which Selenko et al. (2013) stated that the relationship between job insecurity and job performance (as a self-reported ability to deal with tasks) takes the shape of the letter U. This means that self-reported job performance decreased with a moderate degree of job insecurity, but it increased again with a high level of job insecurity.

It was found that the weak and negative relationship between job insecurity and job performance may be due to the fact that a rational employee who experiences job insecurity is able to cope with it by increasing the effort put into work and maintaining job performance at a level high enough so as to be perceived valuable to the organisation (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Sverke et al., 2002).

In another study, Brockner et al. (1992) also noted a non-linear relationship between job security and job efficiency among those who have survived dismissals in the company. The effect they discovered, however, took a reverse U-shaped form. They showed that effort put into work was the highest for medium levels of job insecurity, and smaller with low and high levels. The authors justified the choice of such a dependent variable by pointing out that job performance depends on ability and effort, but the level of ability does not change as a consequence of reorganisation.

Despite the differences, studies conducted by Borg and Braun (after: Selenko et al., 2013) and Brockner et al. (1986) seem to indicate that there is empirical evidence to suggest that the relationship between job insecurity and job performance is curvilinear. If this relationship is indeed U-shaped, this may explain why some studies speak of negative correlations, while others cite neutral or even positive links between the two constructs. In studies that found a positive relationship be-

tween job insecurity and job performance, respondents generally indicated a moderate level of job insecurity, roughly the middle of the point-based scale (Probst et al., 2007), while in studies indicating a negative relationship (Schreurs et al., 2012), the average level of job insecurity was often below the centre of the scale.

## 4. Conclusions

This paper focuses on the relationship between job insecurity and job performance. Over the past decade, job insecurity has attracted increased research attention. Interestingly, less research has been reported on the relationship between job insecurity and job performance. One reason for this might be that the findings on the relationship between job insecurity and job performance have been rather inconsistent and therefore difficult to explain. Still, more studies on contextual job insecurity moderators are recommended, not only due to their crucial importance for the theoretical literature but also owing to practical implications for organisations in the context of managing a job insecurity crisis.

In empirical analysis, the impact of job insecurity on job performance is usually considered within one of two related perspectives. On the one hand, job insecurity is considered to lead to psychosomatic tensions that have a detrimental effect on the psychophysical condition of the employee as well as on work-related behaviours. Due to psychophysical stress, employees are unable to invest enough energy in their work, which negatively affects their performance. On the other hand, changes in work efficiency are perceived as a result of efforts made to deal with stress related to job insecurity. Consequently, employees at risk become more engaged in work than those who do not need to worry about their position in the organisation. Although some studies suggest a negative relationship between these two factors, others do not show any such relationship, or even indicate a positive one. Researchers have found that these contradictory conclusions are probably due to methodological artifacts, including inconsistencies in the considerations of performance. Furthermore, considering the fact that consequences of job insecurity in relation to professional attitudes and job satisfaction tend to occur relatively fast, over time they may have adverse effects on other values such as work efficiency or a sense of belonging to the organisation. Researchers also argue that inconsistent results for performance may be due to a non-linear relationship between job insecurity and job performance, in particular, that job insecurity prompts stress and reduces enthusiasm and motivation to work among employees. Thus, along with an increase in the level of job insecurity, a decline in work productivity can be expected. The same researchers, however, argue that

people subject to extremely high levels of job insecurity may be more resistant and determined in the face of such uncertainty, as evidenced by their decision to remain in the organisation despite not knowing if they will be able to keep the job. As mentioned earlier, a meta-analysis showed that high levels of insecurity are associated with an increased intent to leave the workplace. Employees who decide to stay in an organisation despite experiencing a high level of job insecurity may therefore be more adaptive and persistent in the face of this stressor. This hypothesis is supported by one study which found that the relationship between job insecurity and job performance (analysed as self-reported ability to cope with tasks) takes the form of the letter “U”. Put simply, self-reported job performance decreased when accompanied by a moderate degree of job insecurity, but it increased again when accompanied by a high level of job insecurity.

In identifying the problem of insecurity and referring it to the subject of this study, it should be noted that significant quality-related changes have taken place in terms of work. Global trends in this respect are similar, although their scale and pace differ for different societies. However, what they seem to share is the loss of social security and the increased sense of insecurity in individuals on all continents.

Finally, it must be noted that this study has some limitations, which suggests avenues for further research. In reviewing the articles, the study used only two databases (Web of Science and Scopus) and only considered papers published before June 2023. Thus, the scope of the work is restricted to evidence from publications indexed by these platforms. Other studies may include more databases and a longer timeframe. Furthermore, only publications written in English were examined; thus, results of papers written in other languages are beyond the scope of this work. Finally, the systematic literature review carried out in this work was directed to papers published in scientific journals and, due to this, the results obtained do not reflect the state of the field from the perspective of conference publications. The authors intend to address the above-mentioned limitations in future research.

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