Job insecurity's influence on the work-related outcomes of over-commitment and perceived performance

Tshepo William Kalanko, Masters in Industrial Psychology

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Supervisor: Dr. J. Pienaar
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- The references as well as the style as prescribed by the *Publication Manual (6th edition)* of the American Psychological Association (APA) were followed in this mini-dissertation. This practice is in line with the policy of the Programme in Industrial Psychology of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus to use APA style in all scientific documents.

- The mini-dissertation is submitted in the form of a research article. The editorial style specified by the *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology* (which agrees largely with the APA style) is used, but the APA guidelines were followed in constructing tables.

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DECLARATION

I, Tshepo William Kalanko, hereby declare that "Job insecurity's influence on the work-related outcomes of over-commitment and perceived performance" is my own original work and that the opinions and views expressed in this work are those of the authors and relevant literature references shown in the references.

Further I declare the content of this research will not be handed in for any other qualification at any other tertiary institution.

TSHEPO WILLIAM KALANKO   **NOVEMBER 2010**

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SUMMARY

Title: Job insecurity's influence on the work-related outcomes of over-commitment and perceived performance

Key words: Job insecurity, social support, responsibility, reorganising, turnover, commitment and performance

The primary objective of this research was to investigate the relationship between job insecurity and the work-related outcomes of over-commitment and perceived performance of trainers and trainees ($n = 700$) at a South African gold mine's training academy. A cross-sectional survey design was utilised to attain the outcomes of the research. The Qualitative and Quantitative Job insecurity scales of Hellgren, Sverke and Isaksson (1999), the Social support scales of Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison and Pinneau (1975), the Over-commitment scale of Näswall, Baraldi, Richter, Hellgren and Sverke (2006) and a scale measuring Perceived performance (Hall & Hall, 1976) were administered.

The results indicated significant relationships between job insecurity, over-commitment and perceived performance. The regression analysis confirmed that job insecurity (qualitative and quantitative), social support and their interaction predict over-commitment. Perceptions of performance were only predicted by social support. This study offers assistance to organisations that are going through adjustments and are striving for a healthy work organisation.

In closing, recommendations for future research were made.

OPSOMMING

Titel: Werksonsekerheid se invloed op die werkverwante uitkoms van oor-verbintenis en waargenome prestasie

Sleutelwoorde: werksonsekerheid, sosiale ondersteuning, verant-woordelikheid, reorganisering, omset, verbintenis en prestasie

OPSOMMING

Die primêre doelwit van die navorsing was om die verhouding tussen werksonsekerheid en die werksverwante uitkoms van oor-verbintenis en waargenome prestasie van opleiers en leerders ($n = 700$) by 'n Suid-Afrikaanse goudmyn se opleidingsakademie te ondersoek. 'n Deursnee opname is gebruik om die uitkomste van die navorsing te bereik. Die Kwalitatiewe en Kwantitatiewe Werksonsekerheidskaal van Hellgren, Sverke en Isaksson (1999), die Sosiale ondersteuningskaal van Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison en Pinneau (1975), die Oor-verbintenisskaal van Näswall, Baraldi, Richter, Hellgren en Sverke (2006) en 'n skaal wat Waargenome prestasie meet (Hall & Hall, 1976), is geadministreer.

Die resultate dui op 'n besonder betekenisvolle verhouding tussen werksonsekerheid, oor-verbintenis en waargenome prestasie. Die regressie-analise bevestig dat werksonsekerheid (kwalitatief en kwantitatief), sosiale ondersteuning en hul interaksieterme oor-verbintenis voorspel. Waargenome prestasie is slegs deur sosiale ondersteuning voorspel. Die studie bied ondersteuning aan organisasies wat aanpassings beleef en wat na 'n gesonde werkorganisasie streef.

Ter afsluiting word voorstelle vir toekomstige navorsing gemaak.

CHAPTER 1

1.   INTRODUCTION

This mini-dissertation focuses on the investigation of the influence of job insecurity on the work-related outcomes of over-commitment and perceived performance. Chapter 1 states the objectives of the study, and the main paradigms from which the research is conducted are also discussed. Information on the research method, participants, measuring battery and statistical analysis is provided. Chapter 2 will consist of the research article, and Chapter 3 will provide conclusions based on the findings and make recommendations as well as acknowledge limitations.

1.1   PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1.1   Overview of the problem

According to Sidney and Schaufeli (1995), there is so much transformation going on, employees do not know what is going to happen to their jobs. Employees are of the opinion that organisations treat them like mushrooms: keep them in the dark and feed them nothing but manure. This statement is from an interview with a railway signalman a few years ago and is perceived as an incident and emotion that is still experienced by many due to job uncertainty, restructuring, downsizing, organisational change and/or cutbacks. It is consequently a threat or fear that is experienced by many people worldwide, including those employees in mining industries. According to Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans and Van Vuuren (1991), job insecurity represents the inconsistency between the levels of security that one experiences and one's level of preference for security. It is, furthermore, linked with deliberate but unannounced redundancy.

Job insecurity can be perceived as an intermediary between unemployment and secure employment. Even though it is not necessarily followed by job loss, it is considered a problem as it leads to unemployment and termination of employment (Jacobson, 1991; Hartley et al., 1991). According to De Witte (1999), job insecurity is a huge problem faced by many, and it generally refers to people within an organisation who fear becoming

unemployed or losing their jobs. According to Van Vuuren (1990), job insecurity is furthermore a concern an employee has regarding the sustained existence of his/her job whereby he/she identifies components such as uncertainty about the future, subjective experience or perception and doubts concerning the continuation of the job.

The nature of work has also changed dramatically as a result of technological and global changes, economic recessions, restructuring and global competition (Burke & Nelson, 1998; Cascio, 1998; Cameron, Freeman & Mishra, 1991). These changes brought about the fundamental need to reduce labour costs or increase productivity to improve competitiveness (Howard, 1995). Most organisations opt for restructuring, lay-offs and mergers to cut costs, thereby increasing their global competitiveness which results in change, increased levels of work stress, job strain and job insecurity (Cartwright & Cooper, 1997; Terry & Callan, 1997).

According to Hartley et al. (1991), changes such as an increase in mergers and acquisitions, worldwide competition and economic uncertainty are associated with workforce reduction, creating a feeling of insecurity regarding the existence and the future of jobs. Job insecurity is not a new problem but has been existence for quite some time due to events such as intensified global competition, technological changes and restructuring that cause a dramatic change in the nature of work and normal functioning of an employee.

Recently, the South African Competition Tribunal approved a South African gold mine's bid to a hostile takeover of another South African gold mining company (http://www.miningmx.com, n.d.). According to Arnolds and Boshoff (2004), mergers and takeovers often result in lay-offs and have an unfavourable influence on the commitment of the employees as a result of these downsizings and retrenchments (Clark & Koonee, 1995; Robbins, 1998).

The current Rand/Dollar exchange rate and the volatile price of gold lead mining houses to pay attention particularly to production and cost cuts, which could, in turn, lead to work-related stress for employees within mining organisations. This could affect the employee's life outside and inside the working environment greatly. It fosters a lack of accountability and poor performance and increases the employee's level of job insecurity (Baker & Green, 1991; Cooper & Cartwright, 1994).

Several findings suggest that perceptions of job insecurity might have unfavourable consequences for the attitudes of employees in the workplace (Ashford, Lee & Bobko, 1989; Rosenblatt, Talmud & Ruvio, 1999), including an employee's perception of poor performance within the workplace (Hellgren & Sverke, 2003; Mohren, Swaen, Van Amelsvoort, Borm & Galama, 2003), job dissatisfaction (Davy, Kinicki & Scheck, 1997) and an increase in psychological distress (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995; Probst, 2000). Organisations worldwide are being exposed to the effects of the world economy, international competition and advances in technology, which pressurise organisations to improve their performance so that they become increasingly productive and competitive. This occurs as a result of organisations' profitability, gaining of competitive improvement and determination of cost savings such as salaries and wages, economies of scale or access to raw materials (Marais & Schepers, 1996).

As stated above, job insecurity is a dilemma worldwide and, moreover, within the mining industry. The South African mining industry made alterations to its policies and decision-making processes which contributed to employees feeling job insecure. According to O'Donnell (2009), job insecurity is still a setback in mining industries, including South African mines, due to the fact that this industry viewed the global economic slowdown on mining production as a short-term situation. Meanwhile, mining sectors had to struggle to find innovative solutions to handle downsizing, retrenching and reorganising which lead to job insecurity among mining employees.

For over a century, South Africa was one of the world's largest gold producers, until South Africa was accosted by China in which its gold production for the year 2007 was estimated at 276 metric tons and at 270 tons by the China Gold Association. According to the Chamber of Mines of SA, South Africa, on the other hand, produced only 254 tons of the metal in 2007. Mines, especially gold mines, were the corner stones of the South African economy as gold exports were the predominant source of foreign exchange earnings. Ever since the altered balance came about in 2007, though, mining and quarrying contributed much less than they did in previous years. As a result, restructuring and change occurred, which gave rise to job insecurity due to the fact that some mining sectors with around 460,000 employees had to make adjustments so that mining industries could continue to function and make a profit at

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the same time. This they achieved by means of retrenching and downsizing (South Africa, 2007).

As stated by the CEO of AngloGold Ashanti, Neville Nicolau, the company retrenched 10,000 people during the course of 2009 (O'Donnell, 2009). With the present situation in the South African gold mining industry, it is more likely that employees will face job insecurity, one way or the other. The threat of losing important job features such as being demoted rather than promoted, a lack of career prospects or being forced to cope with a drop in salary may be a continuous worry to employees at all levels (Näswall, 2004). The mining industry is faced with speedy changes internally and externally, and this is associated with increased levels of work stress. This, in turn, relates to both personal and job strain, which eventually results in job insecurity (Cartwright & Cooper, 1996; Terry & Callan, 1997).

1.1.2   Literature review

According to Barling and Kelloway (1996), job insecurity is considered a stressor, and protracted exposure to this phenomenon can give rise to various negative results. These range from individuals feeling less or more responsible for their work outcomes and their perceived performance (Näswall, 2004). This insecurity affects not only the individual but also the work environment. Job insecurity has been defined as "overall concern about the future existence of the job" (Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996, p. 587), "powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation" (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984, p. 438) and an individual's "expectations of continuity in a job situation" (Davy, Kinicki & Scheck, 1997, p. 323). In addition, as explained by Dekker and Schaufeli (1995) as well as Heaney et al. (1994), job insecurity is referred to as a discrepancy between the preferred and experienced levels of job security. There are two types of job insecurities such as quantitative job insecurity which is described as perceived threats of losing one's job itself, and qualitative job insecurity which refers to the threats to or uncertainty about losing important job features and values, such as promotions, remuneration increases and future career development (De Witte, 2005a).

Carayon, Smith and Haims (2001) state that job insecurity arises in the process of interaction between a person and the work environment where the individual's physical, psychological

and physiological homeostasis is threatened. This means that people who undergo this process experience increased pressure at work to a degree where it harms their job performance. This process in most cases causes employees to experience stress and dissatisfaction at work, with repetitive strain as well as problems within the workplace and a fear in losing their jobs thus it is referred to as Quantitative job insecurity (Korunka, Zauchner & Weiss, 1997).

Finally, Hackman and Oldham (1980) state that job insecurity produces a work environment that does not enable fulfilment of employees' personal and organisational needs, which then results in employees feeling less responsible for their work outcomes and perceiving themselves as not performing effectively or fully. This can however relate to qualitative job insecurity which refers to the threats to or uncertainty about losing important job features such as promotions, remuneration increase or future career development.

Workers within a specific organisation, with a perception of low job security, are more likely to experience a decrease in perceptions of performance (O'Quin, 1998) and a decrease in organisational commitment (Preuss & Lautsch, 2003). In this situation, higher levels of turnover are experienced (Ashford et al., 1989), as well as a decrease in compliance with rules, regulations and safety motivations which results in higher levels of occupational accidents or injuries (Probst & Brubaker, 2001). According to Jacobson (1991), employees with high levels of job insecurity feel as though they are in the dark and don't know what to expect.

Qualitative Job insecurity for instance, can unfavourably affect an individual's attitude, perception of performance and career advancement opportunities (Ramsower, 1985; Duxbury *et al.,* 1987; Huws *et al.,* 1990). Employees who are not as insecure as far as their jobs are concerned, on the other hand, experience an improvement in wellbeing and productivity in the organisation, and they encounter higher employee satisfaction (Lawler, 1982).

Many job-insecure individuals tend to work harder than other individuals as a sign of commitment and in expectation of being rewarded for high performance (Anderson, 2000). Over-committed employees tend to determine at all times how committed other individual are in the organisation, and this is stimulated by high levels of insecurity. As stated by

VanVegchel et al. (2005), employees with high levels of over-commitment try to handle job insecurity by displaying a pattern of thoughts, behaviours and emotions characterised by an extreme striving both at work and outside the work environment. These types of employees are prone to exaggerate the difficulty or strains experienced at work and have difficulty withdrawing from work and relaxing even away from the work environment. Employees with this intrinsic effort tendency are more prone to report a higher level of job insecurity and are at an increased risk of unfavourable health outcomes and behaviours such as fatigue, sudden/random bursts of anger, loss of or an increase in appetite and becoming increasingly lethargic. Unexplained backaches, rashes, itchiness, headaches and tension pain are commonly reported (Tsutsumi, Kayaba, Theorell & Siegrist, 2001). Over-committed employees find it difficult to switch off after work and have been found to have a heightened risk for being depressed and insecure (Aust, Peter, & Siegrist, 1997).

1.1.3 The moderating role of work-based social support

According to Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) as well as Cobb (1976), there are certain factors, such as work-based social support, that serve as moderators in the relationship between job insecurity and its negative consequences. Work-based social support thus refers to information that guides a person in believing that he or she is thought of or cared for, respected, appreciated and valued and that he/she belongs to a network of communication and mutual obligation. Consequently, work-based social support refers to connection: to needs recognised and acknowledged. It concerns interdependence, accepting assistance when it is needed and providing help when in a position to do so. It is about feeling connected to those we, as employees, work with, so that as we go about our daily business, or face a crisis, we feel there are people who care about us, who value us and who will be there when we need help and feel unaccompanied (Weber, 1998). Job insecurity, as stated by Sverke and Hellgren (2002), is more demanding of people who lack work-based social support and have increased working levels. Given what is known about job insecurity and work-based social support, the first question to arise would be whether colleagues or supervisors do, in fact, offer support when job insecurity is experienced.

Work-based social support is very important, according to Hatton, Rivers, Mason, Mason, Kiernan and Emersonet, (1999b), and is seen as a valuable resource because the quality of

supportive staff reflects the quality of the service, responsibility and perception of an employee's performance. Therefore, support received is frequently essential to social networks, commitment within the organisation and an employee's performance (Sharrard, 1992). Actual or perceived support from co-workers is a social resource and can assist greatly with managing demands in the workplace (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Support from supervisors and work colleagues may also assist the individual to re-examine the work situations so that it becomes more manageable and less threatening. This includes instances such as job insecurities within the workplace. This means that work-based support experienced by an employee may result in him/her being less job insecure and perceive him/her as performing. Thus work-based social support plays a moderating role. According to Dyer and Quine (1998), work-based social support from co-workers and supervisors and the perception of one's own performance have a direct bearing on reduced stress within the workplace, which might, in turn, affect performance and accountability and could even spill over to home life. In fact, according to Ito, Kurita and Shiiya (1999) as well as Ford and Honnor (2000), support within the workplace has been recognised as being very significant because work-based social support encourages co-workers to talk to each other *and* to supervisors, especially since supervisors are considerable sources of support within the workplace. Consequently, work-based social support results in a sense of unity while simultaneously contributing towards an enhanced sense of job security and responsibility. In addition as a moderator as it encourages colleagues to experience support from one another as they share common feelings and experiences. While work-based social support from supervisor also creates a moderating effect as this type of support focuses on supervisor supporting employees decreasing the levels of job insecurity and overcommitment and making them feel protected.

Rose, Ahuja and Jones, (2006) recognised that the nature of support that co-workers and supervisors offer is associated with reduced staff stress and insecurities within the work context. Work-based social support is found to have a moderating influence on the relation between job stressors and miscellaneous kinds of strain. Specifically, work-based social support is considered a main moderating resource in dealing with the stress caused by job insecurity (Ashford et al., 1989; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). According to Barling and Kelloway (1996), work-based social support within the workplace contributes extensively to protect individuals at insecure workplaces against reduced wellbeing and over-commitment

(Borg & Elizur, 1992). Likewise, Lim (1996) found that both work-based social support (support from colleagues and supervisors) and non-work-based social support (support from family and friends) contribute to reducing job insecurities, over-commitment and non-compliant behaviour among employees. Nevertheless, Büssing (1999) states that support from friends has a stronger moderating effect on indicators of wellbeing, perceived performance and health than support from supervisors and colleagues which seems to only have a moderating effect on job insecurities. Be that as it may, support is a powerful moderator in the relations between job insecurity and the variables in terms of outcome, be it perceived performance and/or over-commitment.

Job insecurity has become a somewhat enduring situation for an increasing number of employees and has been revealed to have a negative effect on an individual's psychological health, job attitudes and work behaviour. It is imperative to identify certain aspects that may diminish or eliminate the strains associated with job insecurity. In this study, one particular potential moderator of the relationship between job insecurity and its consequences has been examined, namely work-based support (Jacobson 1987, 1991; Orpen, 1994). Work-based social support interacts with job insecurity in predicting its outcomes, and it is suggested that work-based social support plays a critical role in the relationship between job insecurity and its consequences (Cobb 1976).

In conclusion, this research will make a value-adding contribution to the subject of Industrial Psychology as a science and within organisations by focusing on the following research questions, which has been formulated on the basis of the above-mentioned description of the research problem:

- How are job insecurity, work-based social support, organisational over-commitment and perceived performance conceptualised in the literature?
- What is the relationship between job insecurity, work-based social support, organisational over-commitment and perceived performance conceptualised in the organisation of interest?
- Can job insecurity and work-based social support be used to predict outcomes such as organisational over-commitment and perceived performance?

- Does work-based social support play a moderating role between job insecurity on the one hand and organisational outcomes such as organisational over-commitment and perceived performance on the other?

- What recommendations can be made in terms of managing job insecurity and work-based social support in order to avoid over-commitment and to ensure positive perceptions of performance?

2.   RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives can be divided into a general objective and specific objectives.

2.1 General objective

With reference to the above formulated research problem, the general objective of this study is to explore whether there is a relationship between job insecurity, work-based social support, organisational over-commitment and perceived performance.

2.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the research are as follows:

- To conceptualise job insecurity, work-based social support, organisational over-commitment and perceived performance from the literature;

- To determine the relationship between job insecurity, work-based social support, organisational over-commitment and perceived performance;

- To use job insecurity and work-based social support to predict outcomes such as organisational over-commitment and perceived performance;

- To determine whether work-based social support plays a moderating role between job insecurity on the one hand and organisational outcomes such as organisational over-commitment and perceived performance on the other; and

- To make recommendations in terms of managing job insecurity and work-based social support in order to avoid over-commitment and ensure positive perceptions of performance.

3. PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

According to Mouton and Marais (1992), the objective of the paradigm perspective is to characterise the research within the structure of the relevant research context. Thus, the paradigm perspective in this research is discussed in terms of the intellectual climate, discipline, meta-theoretical assumptions and market of intellectual resources. An intellectual climate and the market of intellectual resources which directs the research will be incorporated from the perspective of a certain paradigm.

3.1 The intellectual climate

According to Mouton and Marais (1996), intellectual climate refers to the variety or collection of beliefs, assumptions or meta-theoretical values which are held by those traditions within a discipline at any given stage. It refers to the multiplicity of non-epistemological value systems that are underwritten in any given period within a discipline.

The proposed investigation falls within the subject boundaries of Industrial Psychology and includes several sub-disciplines such as performance appraisal, organisational development, training and development, assessment centres and leadership. Industrial Psychology refers to the scientific and methodological study of people within their working environment. The above mentioned implies evaluation, scientific observation, optimal utilisation and, to a lesser degree, abnormal behaviour in interaction with the environment – whether physical, psychological, social or organisational (Munchinsky, Kriek & Schreuder, 2002).

3.2 Meta-theoretical assumptions

Two paradigms are relevant to this research. To begin with, the literature review will be confined to the boundaries of stress theory, the wellness paradigm and positive psychology. The empirical study will be completed within the positivistic paradigm.

3.2.1 Literature review

Job insecurity is considered by many as a stressor or perceived stress; therefore, according to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), it is adequate to rely on stress theory to analyse its occurrence. Stress theory refers to an interaction between an individual and his/her environment as a transaction, taking into consideration the ongoing relationship between the person and his/her environment. Typically, stress theory places emphasis on the meaning that an experience has for an individual.

This study is supported by the positive psychology paradigm which is defined as the scientific study of ordinary, subjective human strengths, positives, virtues, experiences, functioning and performance (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Sheldon & King, 2001). The aim of the positive psychology paradigm provides direction for the present study because the research has been conducted in order to bring about improvement and development in the organisation concerned in this study. According to Wissing (2000), the inclusion of the wellness paradigm focuses not only on the understanding and enhancement of psychological wellbeing and strengths but also on a holistic approach to wellness as well to increase the likelihood of healthier personal development and to decrease the probability of psychological and physical illness (Palombi, 1992).

3.2.2 Empirical study

Positivists attempt to use data obtained through direct observations so that 'positive facts' are researched. Therefore, this means that assumptions of the positivistic framework are that knowledge can only be acquired by means of the study of observable phenomena (Ardebili, 2001). In this study, the variables of interest are measured in a quantitative fashion, and analysed statistically.

3.3 The market of intellectual resources

The market of intellectual resources, according to Mouton and Marais (1992), refers to the collection of beliefs (the theoretical beliefs and the methodological beliefs), where these beliefs have a direct bearing upon the epistemological status of scientific statements. In addition, the theoretical and methodological beliefs will be contrasted with regards to the nature and structure of research phenomena as opposed to the research process.

3.3.1 Theoretical beliefs

According to Mouton and Marais (1992), theoretical beliefs can be described as those beliefs that can result in verifiable judgments concerning social phenomena. These are all judgments concerning the 'why' and 'what' of human phenomena and encompass all models, theories and conceptual definitions contained within the study.

A. Conceptual definitions

According to Hellgren, Sverke and Isaksson (1999), *job insecurity* refers to the extent to which people experience concern, worry and uncertainty regarding the future existence of their employment, and it is a discrepancy between preferred and experienced security in an employment situation. In concurrence, Lee et al. (2003) define job insecurity as "…an employee's perception of potential threat to continuity in one's current employment, which will lead to psychological stress due to uncertainty about the future" (p. 24). According to Van Vuuren (1990), job insecurity is described as a concern felt by an employee for the sustained existence of his/her job whereby he/she identifies components such as uncertainty about the future, subjective experience or perception and doubts concerning the continuation of the job.

Social support, according to Caplan et al. (1975), refers to support from co-workers, supervisors, family or friends. It is seen as a valuable resource in the organisation because staff with supportive relationships reflect effective, quality service rendering and a positive working environment (Sharrard, 1992).

Over-commitment is seen as a set of attitudes, behaviours and emotions based on the cognitive and motivational elements of behaviour that reflects an excessive ambition in combination with the need for approval and esteem. This set of attitudes is derived from competitiveness, disproportionate irritability and an inability to withdraw from work (Hanson, Schaufeli, Vrijkotte, Plomp & Godaert, 2000; Siegrist, 1998).

According to Hall and Hall (1976), employees' *perceived performance* is referred to as an individual's self-rated performance.

B. Models and theories

According to Kerlinger and Lee (2000), theory is referred to as a set of definitions, propositions and interconnected constructs of perceptions that presents a methodical analysis of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, the intention being to clarify and predict the phenomena. Within this study, stress theory is relevant because it refers to an interaction as a transaction, taking into account the ongoing relationship between the person and the environment.

A model, on the other hand, aims to show a simplified explanation of relationships between the main components of a process or procedure rather than merely attempting to categorise phenomena. In addition, it tries to create order amongst the relationships (Mouton & Marais, 1992). The one that underpins this study is the conceptual model of threshold (Allegro & Veerman, 1998) which attempts to incorporate the core aspects such as job insecurity, over-commitment and perceived performance. Figure 1 provides a graphic representation of the conceptual model of threshold (Allegro & Veerman, 1998):
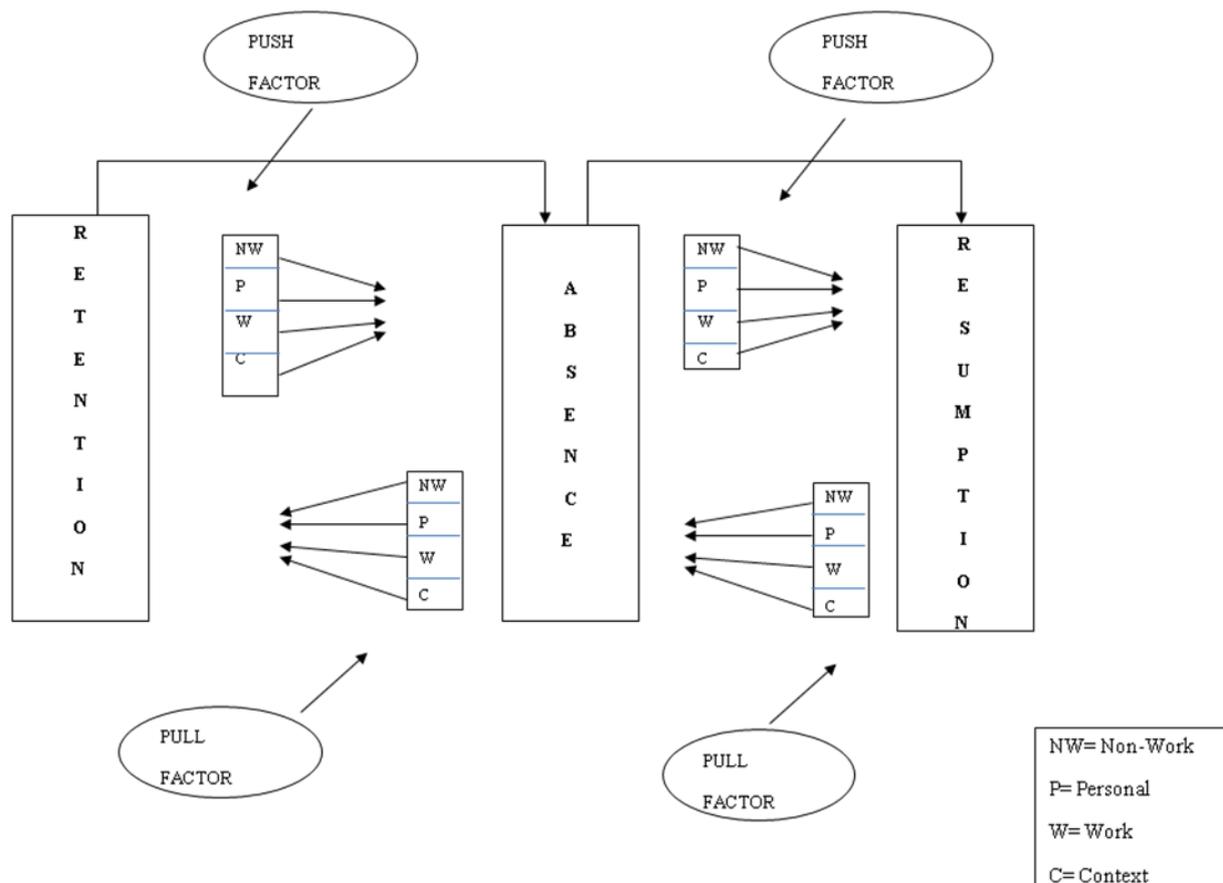
Figure 1: The conceptual model of threshold (Allegro & Veerman, 1998)

This model endeavours to explain that stress arises from work (such as job insecurity, fears about retention, downsizing, work demands) or from other life domains (i.e. life outside work) and focuses on determining the level of responsibility of employees in the workplace. Furthermore, this model is concerned with studying constructs such as an employee's effectiveness and to illustrate how the employee perceives his/her performance in stressful situations, also as far as ensuring retention is concerned. Furthermore, the model illustrates that due to demanding and stressful situations, people may decide to stay home (become less responsible) and not to go to work for a particular reason, usually because they feel that they are unable to work or are incapable of dealing with the stressful demands of work (Allegro & Veerman, 1998).

The model represents a range of variables that need to be taken into consideration. These can be classed as factors relating to people's work situation (e.g. type of organisation, job characteristics, work-based social support, etc.), the non-work domain (e.g. family situation

and social network), personal characteristics (personality, health situation, life style, socio-economic class, etc.) and context variables (e.g. financial situation, geographic location, etc.). In sum, the model is presented as a 'push and pull' model, demonstrating that some factors will 'push' people away from work (implying that they will be less responsible and, therefore, regard themselves as underperforming) while other factors will 'pull' people into work (resulting in them being responsible and, therefore, perceiving themselves to be performing).

For instance, poor employment characteristics (retention, job stress, etc.) will generally contribute to people perceiving themselves as less performing and being less committed; consequently 'pushing' people away from work. On the other hand, secure and satisfying work and feeling valued will, generally, help people to stay in their work. In other words, these characteristics will 'pull' people to work where they will regard themselves as performing and becoming more accountable but not being overcommitted (Allegro & Veerman, 1998).

3.3.2 Methodological beliefs

According to Mouton and Marais (1992), methodological beliefs refer to beliefs that make judgments concerning the nature and structure of scientific research and science. In addition, these beliefs include assumptions, presuppositions and methodological preferences on what constitutes high-quality research and are aligned to beliefs that form part of the intellectual climate due to frequent postulative aspects (Mouton & Marais, 1996). For the purpose of this research, the basis for a positivistic approach is to bring about improvement and development in the organisation concerned in this study, thus understanding and enhancing the psychological wellbeing and strengths of the individual. Therefore, methodological beliefs can be reflected in this study by means of support that will enhance the wellbeing and strength of the individuals and help them to be less overcommitted and less job insecure (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Sheldon & King, 2001).

4. Research Method

The research method intended for the purpose of this mini-dissertation consists of an empirical study and literature review. The results obtained will be presented in the form of a research article. This section focuses on the empirical study that consists of the research design, participants, measuring battery and statistical analysis of the data.

4.1 Literature review

The literature study will focus on determining the relationship between job insecurity, work-based social support, over-commitment and perceived performance.

4.2 Research Design

As stated, "a research design is a plan of how the researcher decides to execute the formulated research problem" (Mouton & Marais, 1996, p. 193). Consequently, the intention of the research design is to facilitate the researcher to predict what the suitable research decisions should be in order to maximise the validity of the ultimate results (Mouton, 1998).

According to Mouton and Marais (1996), explorative research can be illustrated as the exploration of a reasonably recent and unknown research area where the focus is intended to achieve new insight into the experience, in other words to provide information on the central concepts and constructs, to determine priorities for future research, to develop new hypotheses about an existing phenomenon and, most of all, to conduct an initial investigation before a more structured study of the phenomenon. On the other hand, descriptive research according to Mouton (1998) refers to factual knowledge or descriptive knowledge, data, facts, empirical generalisations, narratives and stories which provide straightforward descriptions of phenomena in the world. The nature of the proposed study is both explorative and descriptive.

According to Mouton and Marais, (1996), the cross-sectional design will be the most appropriate to this study as this design is used to examine components of a given phenomenon at a specific point in time. In addition to this design, the relationships between variables will be measured at a specific point in time without any planned intervention.

Therefore, the research will be conducted in a short period of time such as one day or a few weeks which makes the design more relevant (Du Plooy, 2001).

4.3 Participants

The study population will consist of 171 trainers and 230 trainees of which 93 where male and 340 female *(n = 700)* in a business unit of a mining organisation whereby questionnaires will be completed by all participants.

4.4 Data collection method

Data will be collected in such a way that questionnaires will be handed out to both the trainers and trainees. The selected employees will be requested to complete the questionnaire by following the instructions included in the booklet. The questionnaires will consist of pre-determined questions that will determine and enable the researchers to gather the correct information from all the completed questionnaires completed by the trainers and trainees.

The questions that were asked in the questionnaires were formulated in such a manner that it enabled the employees to freely contribute and complete the questionnaire. The formulation of these pre-determined questions was determined by means of a pilot study that had been conducted beforehand with other participants at other organisations or units. Once the questionnaires have been completed, the trainers and trainees will be notified to seal their questionnaires in the envelopes provided for this purpose for the sake of confidentiality and to ensure that their identities are protected. The data of all the completed questionnaires will be documented by the statistics department and then recorded accurately and checked by independent researchers.

4.5 Physical setting

Completion of the questionnaire took place where it best suited the trainers and trainees so that after completion, the questionnaires could be collected and kept in one place. Therefore, it was important for the researcher to make sure that the setting was private, comfortable and trouble free for the participants.

4.6 Measuring battery

The battery that was used consists of a compilation of several measures developed by several authors which also measures all the constructs applicable to the study. Consequently, the significant constructs that will be taken from the questionnaire are: job insecurity, work-based social support, organisational over-commitment and perceived performance.

Quantitative job insecurity. This scale consists of three items developed by Hellgren, Sverke and Isaksson (1999) and measures a concern and uncertainty regarding the future existence of employment. The response alternatives range from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree), and a high score on this scale represents a strong sense of quantitative job insecurity. For example, one item reads as follows: "I think my future prospects and opportunities within the organization are good". Several authors report a Chronbach alpha coefficient in excess of 0,70 for this scale (Ashford et al., 1989; Hellgren et al., 1999; De Witte, 2000).

The *qualitative job insecurity* scale consists of four items developed by Hellgren, Sverke and Isaksson (1999) and measures a concern about losing valued features of the job. A high score indicates a high level of qualitative job insecurity, and the response alternatives ranged from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree). A sample item reads as follows: "I enjoy being at my job". According to Ashford et al. (1989), Hellgren et al. (1999) and De Witte (2000), alpha coefficients larger than 0,83 for the total scale are reported.

Work-based Social support will be measured by a six-item scale measuring two factors (co-worker and supervisor support) based on Caplan et al. (1975). . The response alternatives range from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree), and a high score on either scale reflects a sense that support is available. Therefore, items focus on the extent to which people surrounding the employee provide support, are good listeners and provide help. A sample item reads as follows: "I usually receive help from my colleague(s) when something needs to be done quickly." According to Brough and Frame (2004), the instrument proved reliable with an alpha-coefficient of between 0,84 and 0,90.

Over-commitment is the short version of the scale developed by Näswall, Baraldi, Richter, Hellgren and Sverke (2006) and measures over-commitment to the organisation. The

response alternatives range from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree), and a high score reflects strong commitment to the organization. An example of a question relating to over-commitment would be "Work rarely lets me go; it is still on my mind when I go to bed." Siegrist (2002) indicates that the instrument proved reliable with an alpha-coefficient of 0,81.

Perceived performance is measured by a five-item scale which was developed by Hall and Hall (1976). The response alternatives range from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree), and a high score reflects the perception that one's own performance is good. According to Abramis (1994), the instrument proved reliable with an alpha-coefficient of 0.74.

4.7 Statistical analysis

The SPSS 16.0 for Windows program will be used to do the statistical analysis of the data. The following procedures will be used:

- The reliability of the constructs will be examined with Cronbach alpha coefficients (Clark & Watson, 1995).
- Descriptive statistics will be used to analyse the data (e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis).
- The relationships between variables will be determined through product moment correlation coefficients.
- The moderating effect of work-based social support will be tested by means of regression analysis and with interaction terms. Interaction terms are created by setting the means of variables to zero and creating a product term for the independent variable(s) and the moderator (see Aiken & West, 1991).

4.8 Ethical aspects

According to Struwig and Stead (2001), ethics can be described as a system of morals, rules and behaviours. Research ethics present researchers with a code of moral procedure and guidelines on ways and manners to conduct research in a morally satisfactory and acceptable manner. In an ethical climate, the following facets will at all times be required:

- The researcher must at all times be truthful, fair and respectful towards others and must not attempt to mislead or misinform participants;

- The researcher must always uphold and sustain the standards of his/her profession and be competent and qualified to contribute in a research study; and

- The researcher must at all times have respect for the rights and dignity of others. This includes confidentiality, independence and autonomy of the research participants and respect for the participant's privacy.

- The researcher will also have to be sensitive to any cultural or individual differences among people, with relation to factors such as gender, religion, race, ethnicity, age, language and socio-economic status. In addition, it is important for the researcher not to intentionally discriminate against people on the basis of such factors; and

- The wellbeing of others will be of most important concern to the researcher. As a result of the researcher's interaction with the participant, the researcher will avoid any harm to his/her research participant.

5. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the problem statement and various objectives of the research and explained the research method and measuring instruments. It also clarified the paradigmatic stance and approach of the proposed research. The next chapter deals with the reporting of the empirical results and will be in article format.

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CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Job insecurity's influence on the work-related outcomes of over-commitment and perceived performance

T.W. Kalanko

ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this research was to investigate the relationship between job insecurity and the work-related outcomes of over-commitment and perceived performance of trainers and trainees ($n = 700$) at a South African gold mine's training academy. A cross-sectional survey design was utilised to attain the outcomes of the research. The qualitative and quantitative job insecurity scales of Hellgren, Sverke and Isaksson (1999), the work-based social support scales of Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison and Pinneau (1975), the over-commitment scale of Näswall, Baraldi, Richter, Hellgren and Sverke (2006) and a scale measuring perceived performance (Hall & Hall, 1976) were administered. The results indicated particularly significant relationships between job insecurity, over-commitment and perceived performance. The regression analysis confirmed that job insecurity (qualitative and quantitative), work-based social support and their interaction terms predict over-commitment. This study offers assistance to organisations that are going through adjustments and are striving for a healthy work organisation.

OPSOMMING

Die primêre doelwit van die navorsing was om die verhouding tussen werksonsekerheid en die werksverwante uitkoms van oor-verbintenis en waargenome prestasie van opleiers en leerders ($n = 700$) by 'n Suid-Afrikaanse goudmyn se opleidingsakademie te ondersoek. 'n Deursnee opname is gebruik om die uitkomste van die navorsing te bereik. Die kwalitatiewe en kwantitatiewe werksonsekerheidskaal van Hellgren, Sverke en Isaksson (1999), die sosiale ondersteuningskaal van Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison en Pinneau (1975), die oor-verbintenisskaal van Näswall, Baraldi, Richter, Hellgren en Sverke (2006) en 'n skaal wat waargenome prestasie meet (Hall & Hall, 1976), is geadministreer. Die resultate dui op 'n besonder betekenisvolle verhouding tussen

werksonsekerheid, oor-verbintenis en waargenome prestasie. Die regressie-analise bevestig dat werksonsekerheid (kwalitatief en kwantitatief), sosiale ondersteuning en hul interaksieterme oor-verbintenis voorspel. Die studie bied ondersteuning aan organisasies wat aanpassings beleef en wat na 'n gesonde werkorganisasie streef.

Introduction

Studies of the South African mining environment and its influence on employee wellbeing and organisational productivity have an extensive history. Mining in South Africa has been around since 1887. Ever since, South Africa has become and still is a world leader in this industry. It is the world's largest producer of gold and platinum and one of the leading producers of base metals and coal. Despite the fact that it is well over a century old, South Africa's mining industry still has a long way to go before it will be fully tapped since this treasure trove has mineral deposits only a few countries in the former Soviet Union can match. While holding the world's largest reserves of gold, platinum-group metals and manganese ore, South Africa's mining industry has significant potential for the discovery of other world-class deposits in areas yet to be explored. Nevertheless, gold has been the basis of South Africa's relative prosperity for quite some time (DMOZ Open Directory Project, 1887-2010).

At least half a million South Africans, including suppliers and dependants, rely on the mining industry. However, the unknown factor in this industry is the future of labour costs. The mines employ several hundred thousand miners underground, most of which are members of the black National Union of Mineworkers, which is lobbying extensively for both better wages and better working conditions for its members (SAPA, 2002; Crush, Jeeves & Yudelman, 1991; Moodie, 1994). The South African gold mines years ago found it technically very difficult and financially very expensive to operate, even despite the low wages paid to the miners. The future of the gold industry in South Africa thus depends on increased productivity and employee performance. Currently, a decrease in gold prices and a strong domestic currency putting pressure on productivity give rise to employees feeling job insecure (DMOZ Open Directory Project, 1887-2010).

As stated above, due to the recent economic recession, restructuring, volatility of the Rand, technological changes and intensified global competition, a number of employees has become job insecure (Howard, 1995). Tremendous pressure is placed on organisations to improve their performance and to become even more competitive whilst simultaneously taking heed of organisational profitability and possible ways to save on costs, a first source of the latter

being salaries and wages. This, in turn, impacts job security and performance (Marais & Schepers, 1996), with the resultant uncertainty giving rise to fear amongst employees that they might lose their jobs and become unemployed (De Witte, 1999). Consequently, concern amongst employees regarding the security, future and existence of their work is ever present (Van Vuuren, 1990; Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996).

Job insecurity

The stress to produce constantly as well to pay attention to one's own performance and the company's productivity together with a number of negative stressors serve as elements that result in employees feeling job insecure. In addition, budget cuts, deteriorating markets, the introduction of new technology and pending reorganisation may also evoke feelings of job insecurity amongst employees. Job insecurity is a stressful experience because it gives rise to both unexpected events, such as feeling that one's job might be in danger, and unexpected actions, such as employees questioning why they are feeling job insecure and why they are subjected to this phenomenon (Reisel & Banai, 2002; Homburg, Workman & Jensen, 2002). Divergent circumstances may lead to the occurrence of job insecurity, some of which are employees receiving signals or hearing rumours that their jobs are at risk. Yet, they may not know for certain whether jobs will be reduced or when, if at all. This type of situations gives rise to multiple and divergent interpretations of the situation (Hewstone & Jaspars, 1984; Hewstone, 1988; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Sverke *et al*., 2002). Viewed globally, job insecurity relates to people within the context of their work who fear that they might lose their jobs and become unemployed (De Witte, 1999).

In the case of job insecurity, it is very likely that employees will cite their management as one of the reasons for or causes of their feelings of job insecurity. This is due to the fact that people's behaviours are attributed to group membership (Hewstone, 1988). Consequently, these attributions are formed, transformed and strengthened in social interaction, and people from the same group or society tend to resort to similar attributions (Hewstone & Jaspars, 1984; Hewstone, 1988). In addition, Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans and Van Vuuren (1991) state that the fact that management decides which employees are to be retained and which are to be laid off clearly puts it in a situation of power; therefore, management is seen as causal to job insecurity. Causes of job security such as management policies, a lack of participation

by workers in decision making, poor communication in the organisation, a poor social atmosphere and a lack of support from colleagues and supervisors, conflicting job expectations, too much responsibility and dangerous conditions affect both the quality of the experience and the actions of a person. As a result, a number of employees will feel job insecure and resort to searching for alternative employment or even revert to industrial action (Burchell, 1999; Hartley *et al*., 1991; Greenhalgh, 1983).

Armstrong-Stassen (2002) and Petterson, Hertting, Hagberg and Theorell (2005) stated that job insecurity results in employees having less trust in and loyalty for organisations, thus encouraging them to become overcommitted within the organisation and to their positions. Over-commitment is characterised by excessive work-related commitment and a high need for approval (Siegrist, Starke, Chandola, Godin, Marmot & Niedhammer, 2004). It fosters an inability to withdraw from work obligations and is related to vital exhaustion (Preckel, Von Kanel, Kudielka & Fischer, 2005). Poor sleeping habits, fatigue and signs of sustained physiological activation are found to be related to over-commitment. Consequently, over-commitment has also been associated with a number of factors that may be related to one seeing oneself as less effective or under-performing (Eller, Netterstrøm & Hansen, 2006; Kudielka, Von Känel, Gander & Fischer, 2004; Steptoe, Siegrist, Kirschbaum & Marmot, 2004). Individuals who are job insecure tend to work harder than other individuals as a sign of commitment and in hopes of positive outcomes as a result of high performance (Anderson, 2000). At the same time, over-committed employees tend to speculate at all times about just how dedicated other individuals in the organisation are, and this is stimulated by high levels of insecurity. As a result, VanVegchel, De Jonge, Bosma and Schaufeli (2004) state that employees with high levels of over-commitment try to handle job insecurity by demonstrating a pattern of thoughts, behaviours and emotions characterised by an extreme striving at work and outside the work environment. Being overcommitted to work refers to an individual who finds it difficult to stop thinking about work even after having signed off and may have an even greater impact on processes that are vital to sustained productivity and health (Siegrist, 1996; Sapolsky, 2004; Hellgren, Sverke & Näswall, 2008).

Consequently, over-commitment is referred to as the extent to which work issues are on the respondent's mind outside of work. It includes the perception of work spreading into other areas of life, not in terms of actual time spent on work tasks but time thinking about work

(Näswall, 2006). Increased work demands and negative factors like job insecurity and lack of support are associated with over-commitment and require flexibility. Worrying and continuous concern about uncertainty and unpredictability, restructuring, economic instability and other negative factors have been suggested as core elements of stress factors that cause the development of over-commitment (Dugas, Freeston & Ladouceur, 1997; Sapolsky, 2004; Siegrist *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, employees need to have an increased degree of autonomy in their work so that they can react fast to work-related outcomes, such as over-commitment which may affect an individual's wellbeing (Allvin, Wiklund, Härenstam & Aronsson, 1999).

If an individual's wellbeing is affected negatively, it will have an impact on his/her productivity and ability to function in the workplace (Elinson, Houck, Marcus & Pincus, 2004) as well as his/her overall performance (Adler, McLaughlin, Rogers, Chang, Lapitsky & Lerner, 2006). Work is associated with stressful situations which can cause strain or illness. As a result, studies found that over-commitment is related to job insecurity (Godin, Kittel, Coppieters & Siegrist, 2005; Mackie, Holahan & Gottlieb, 2001; Pikhart, Bobak, Pajak, Malyutina, Kubinova, Topor *et al.*, 2004; Tsutsumi, Kayaba, Theorell & Siegrist, 2001; Näswall, Sverke & Hellgren, 2005). Over-commitment to work may, therefore, be particularly troubling and may act both as a stressor in itself and worsen the effect of other job stressors. Over-commitment may also be related more directly to work conditions such as unclear work goals, economic situations, poorly specified work tasks and lack of feedback when work is completed as well as other factors within the environment which increase levels of worrying due to uncertainty and unpredictability (Nolen-Hoeksema & Davis, 1999; Siegrist, 1996; Sapolsky, 2004; Hellgren, Sverke & Näswall, 2008).

According to Hall and Hall (1976), once an employee feels job insecure, it leads to a tendency to experience over-commitment. According to Hanson, Schaufeli, Vrijkotte, Plomp and Godaert (2000); Preuss and Lautsch (2003) and Siegrist (1998), over-commitment refers to a set of attitudes, behaviours and emotions based on the cognitive and motivational elements of behaviour that reflect excessive ambition, in combination with the need for approval and esteem, and is derived from competitiveness, irritability and inability to withdraw from work. This as a result increases the risk of unfavourable outcomes in terms of wellbeing and behaviours such as fatigue, random bursts of anger, sudden backaches, itchiness, headaches and reported tension pain (Tsutsumi *et al.*, 2001). Furthermore, job

insecurity fosters an inability to switch off after work, and this leads to an elevated risk for depression (Aust, Peter & Siegrist, 1997).

Perceived performance has been found as the component that moderates a strong positive relationship in terms of the actual performance of an employee (Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Dollinger & Golden, 1992). Thus, this means that if an employee perceives him/herself as performing, the employee is likely to show a positive actual performance, which may increase productivity and organisational performance. Therefore, if an employee perceives him/herself as performing poorly, his/her concomitant actual performance may not be on par. As stated by O'Quin (1998), employees with high levels of job insecurity tend to perceive themselves as not performing.

Heskett, Sasser and Schlesinger (1997) refer to the feelings that employees have towards their jobs, colleagues and organisation where the latter encourage a chain leading to the organisation's growth and profitability as *perceived performance*. Therefore, if employees experience job insecurity, they are more likely to have negative feelings towards their jobs and the way they see their own performance. Furthermore, job insecurity has a negative impact on one's perception of performance and intensifies the possibility of employees becoming over-committed (Blatter & Bongers, 2002; Cheng, Kawachi, Coakley, Schwartz & Colditz, 2000; De Jonge, Bosma, Peter & Siegrist, 2000).

Work-based social support, on the other hand, promotes positive perceptions of one's performance and reduces stress within the workplace which might, in turn, affect performance and might spill over to the home life. Work-based social support also fosters communication among employees on how to cope with demanding work and other work-related issues better and, as a result, fosters solidarity and security and promotes positive perceptions of performance (Dyer & Quine, 1998). According to Sverke *et al*. (2002), people who lack work-based social support find job insecurity challenging, and according to Hatton, Rivers, Mason, Mason, Kiernan and Emerson (1999), work-based social support is a valuable resource because the support that the staff provides to each other produces high-quality service and serves to enhance perceptions of performance. Therefore, when an employee receives work-based social support, he/she is likely to be less job insecure.

Received support, therefore, is essential to employee social networks, commitment within the organisation and performance (Sharrard, 1992). Work-based social support helps employees to re-examine the work situation so that it becomes more manageable and less threatening. Therefore, it may be argued that it could also assist employees to manage their perceptions and reactions when they are feeling (job) insecure. According to Rose, Ahuja and Jones (2006), work-based social support has a significant relationship with reduced staff stress and reduced employee insecurities within the work context. Work-based social support, therefore, plays a critical role in the relationship between job insecurity and its consequences (Cobb, 1976), and it has been found to have a moderating influence on dealing with the stress caused by job insecurity (Ashford, Lee & Bobko, 1989; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). Work-based social support within the workplace contributes extensively to protect individuals in insecure workplaces against reduced wellbeing and over-commitment. In addition, job insecurity, which has become a somewhat enduring situation, has revealed itself to have a negative effect on an individual's psychological health, job attitudes and work behaviour (Borg & Elizur, 1992; Barling & Kelloway, 1996).

The objective of this research was, therefore, to determine whether a relationship exists between job insecurity, work-based social support, organisational over-commitment and perceived performance amongst a sample of South African employees.

METHOD

Research design

A cross-sectional design with a survey as the data collection technique was used to achieve the research objectives whereby a sample was drawn from a population at a particular point in time (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1997). The survey as data collection method comprised questionnaires which were used to gather data about this population (Burns & Grove, 1993).

A cross-sectional design is advantageous in terms of comparisons because these can be drawn between different biographical groups, and it is practically useful for organisations and to address the descriptive and predictive functions associated with the correlational design (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1997).

Participants

Table 1 below gives the characteristics of the participants.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Participants (*n*=401)

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Type	Learner	230	52.6
	Trainer	171	39.1
Gender	Male	93	21.3
	Female	340	77.8
Household	Single	109	24.9
	Married or living with a partner	257	58.8
	Living with parents	43	9.8
	Divorced or separated	7	1.6
	Remarried	9	2.1
Education	Grade 10 (Standard 8)	52	11.9
	Grade 11 (Standard 9)	34	7.8
	Grade 12 (Standard 10)	196	44.9
	Technical College Diploma	70	16.0
	Technikon Diploma	34	7.8
	University Degree (BA, BComm, BSc, Honours)	38	8.7
	Postgraduate Degree (Masters or Doctorate)	1	.2
Language	Afrikaans	115	26,30
	English	25	5,70
	Sepedi	15	3,40
	Sesotho	89	20,40
	Setswana	52	11,90
	isiSwati	9	2,10
	Tshivenda	3	0,70
	isiNdebele	2	0,50
	isiXhosa	70	16,0
	isiZulu	16	3,70
	isiTsonga	21	4,80
	Other	9	2,10

Employment Status	Permanent	290	66,40
	Substitute position	2	0,50
	Employment by the hour	2	0,50
	Employment for a project	1	0,20
	Trainee	122	27,90
	Other	4	0,90
Part/ Full time	Full-time	418	95,70
	Part-time	10	2,30
Union member	Yes	324	74,10
	No	102	23,30

Of the total number of participants, 52,6% were learners while 39,1% were trainers. The sample also indicates that 77,8% were female and 21.3% male. About 64,6% of the participants have a level of education lower than a Grade 12, and 32,7% of the sample have some form of tertiary-level qualification (technical college diploma, technikon diploma, university or postgraduate degree). The majority (58,8%) of the participants is married or lives with a partner; 24.9% are single and 9.8% are living with their parents; 1.6% are divorced or separated; and 2.1% remarried. The sample consisted of 26,3% Afrikaans-speaking and 5,7% English-speaking participants. The languages Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, isiSwati, Tshivenda, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, isiTsonga and others are spoken by the majority of the participants, making up 65,6% of the sample. Regarding employment status, 66,4% participants are employed permanently, and 30% are trainees, in substitute positions or employed by the hour or for a particular project. Furthermore, 95,7% are employed on a full-time and 2.3% on a part-time basis.

Measuring battery

The instrument that was used consists of a compilation of several measures developed by several authors which also measures all the constructs applicable to the study. Consequently, the significant constructs that will be taken from the questionnaire are: job insecurity, work-based social support, organisational over-commitment and perceived performance.

Quantitative job insecurity: This scale consists of three items developed by Hellgren, Sverke and Isaksson (1999) and measures a concern and uncertainty regarding the future existence of employment. The response alternatives range from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree), and a high score on this scale represents a strong sense of quantitative job insecurity. For example, one item reads as follows: "I think my future prospects and opportunities within the organization are good." Several authors report a Cronbach alpha coefficient in excess of 0,70 for this scale (Ashford *et al.*, 1989; Hellgren *et al.*, 1999; De Witte, 2000).

The *qualitative job insecurity* scale consists of four items developed by Hellgren *et al.* (1999) and measures a concern about losing valued features of the job. A high score indicates a high level of qualitative job insecurity, and the response alternatives ranged from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree). A sample item reads as follows: "I enjoy being at my job." According to Ashford *et al.* (1989), Hellgren *et al.* (1999) and De Witte (2000), alpha coefficients larger than 0,83 for the total scale are reported.

Social support will be measured by a six-item scale measuring two factors (co-worker and supervisor support) based on Caplan *et al.* (1975). The response alternatives range from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree), and a high score on either scale reflects a sense that support is available. Therefore, items focus on the extent to which people surrounding the employee provide support, are good listeners and provide help. A sample item reads as follows: "I usually receive help from my colleague(s) when something needs to be done quickly." According to Brough and Frame (2004), the instrument proved reliable with an alpha-coefficient of between 0,90 and 0,84.

Over-commitment is the short version of the scale developed by Näswall *et al.* (2006) and measures over-commitment to the organisation. The response alternatives range from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree), and a high score reflects strong commitment to the organization. An example of a question relating to over-commitment would be: "Work rarely lets me go; it is still on my mind when I go to bed." Siegrist (2002) indicates that the instrument proved reliable with an alpha-coefficient of 0,81.

Perceived performance is measured by a five-item scale which was developed by Hall and Hall (1976). The response alternatives range from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree), and a high score

<u>reflects the perception that one's own performance is good.</u> According to Abramis (1994), the instrument proved reliable with an alpha-coefficient of 0.74.

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Statistical Analysis

The SPSS 17.0 for Windows program has been used to do the statistical analysis of the data. The reliability of the constructs was examined with Cronbach's alpha-coefficients (Clark & Watson, 1995). Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data (e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis). The relationships between variables have been determined through product-moment correlation coefficients. The moderating effect of work-based social support has been tested by means of regression analysis and with interaction terms. Interaction terms were created by setting the means of variables to zero and creating a product term for the independent variable(s) and the moderator (see Aiken & West, 1991).

RESULTS

The first table gives the descriptive statistics of the scales of interest and discusses the reliability of the scales.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of the Measuring Instruments

Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	α
Social support - colleagues	3,78	0,89	-0,56	-0,66	0,81
Social support - supervisor	3,47	1,09	-0,49	-0,39	0,86
Job insecurity - quantitative	2,42	1,06	0,39	-0,56	0,76
Job insecurity - qualitative	2,45	0,85	0,36	0,21	0,63
Over-commitment	3,25	0,76	-0,19	0,01	0,69
Perceived performance	4,20	060	-0,85	0,94	0,72

According to Table 2, acceptable Cronbach alpha-coefficients were obtained for most of the scales. Most of the alpha-coefficients were higher than the guideline of $\alpha \geq 0,70$ except those of job insecurity – qualitative and over-commitment. Even though the reliability coefficients of over-commitment and job insecurity – qualitative appear to be somewhat lower, they are retained for analysis due to the explorative nature of this study. It could also be of interest to establish whether different dimensions of job insecurity relate differently to the studied

outcomes. In addition, the scores for all of the scales were distributed normally, as indicated by their skewness and kurtosis. Table 3 gives the correlations between the variables.

Table 3

Correlation Coefficients between Job Insecurity, Work-based social Support and Over-commitment

		1	2	3	4	5
1	Work-based social support – colleagues		-	-	-	
2	Work-based social support – supervisor	0,44[**]				-
3	Job insecurity – quantitative	-0,56	-0,10[*]		-	
4	Job insecurity – qualitative	-0,10[*]	-0,15[**]	0,50[**]		
5	Over-commitment	-0,04	-0,05	0,21[**]	0,11[**]	
6	Perceived performance	0,42[**]	0,31[**]	-0,11[*]	-0,11[*]	0,18[**]

[*] Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level
[**] Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level
[+] Correlation is particularly significant $r \geq 0,30$ (medium effect)
[++] Correlation is particularly significant $r \geq 0,50$ (large effect)

According to Table 3, work-based social support from supervisors shows a practically significant relationship with work-based social support from colleagues, and in this regard, it has a positive relationship with a medium effect. Job insecurity – qualitative shows a significant relationship with work-based social support from supervisors (negative relationship with small effect). Qualitative job insecurity also has a particularly significant positive relationship with job insecurity – quantitative with a large effect. Job insecurity – quantitative has a statistically significant negative relationship with work-based social support from colleagues with a large effect. Over-commitment shows a particularly significant positive relationship with both quantitative and qualitative job insecurity (both small effects). Perceived performance shows particularly significant positive relationships with work-based social support from colleagues and from supervisors with a medium effect. Furthermore, it shows statistically significant negative relationships with both quantitative and qualitative job insecurity (also with small effect sizes). Perceived performance shows a particularly significant positive relationship with over-commitment with a small effect.

The final step of the analyses aims to determine if over-commitment and perceived performance can be predicted by means of the other variables and whether a moderating effect for work-based social support is evident.

Table 4

Multiple Regression Analysis with Over-commitment as Dependent Variable

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	*t*	*p*	*F*	*R*	R^2	ΔR^2
		B	**SE**	**Beta**						
1	(Constant)	2,76	0,12		23,59	0,00	10,20	0,22	0,05	0,05
	Job insecurity - Quantitative	0,11	0,40	0,150	2,68	0,01*				
	Job insecurity – Qualitative	0,09	0,49	0,101	1,81	0,71				
2	(Constant)	2,83	0,22		12,79	0,00	5,119	0,220	0,05	0,05
	Job insecurity - Quantitative	0,11	0,04	0,15	2,66	0,01*				
	Job insecurity - Qualitative	0,09	0,05	0,10	1,76	0,08*				
	Work-based social support – Colleagues	-0,00	0,05	-0,00	-0,08	0,93				
	Work-based social support - Supervisor	-0,01	0,04	-0,02	-0,34	0,73				
3	(Constant)	2,81	0,23		12,40	0,00	4,18	0,28	0,08	0,03
	Job insecurity - Quantitative	0,08	0,04	0,11	1,93	0,05**				
	Job insecurity - Qualitative	0,12	0,05	0,13	2,27	0,02*				
	Work-based social support - Colleagues	0,01	0,47	0,011	0,20	0,84				
	Work-based social support Supervisor	-0,02	0,04	-0,03	-0,640	0,52				
	Job insecurity - Quantitative _Social support – Colleagues	0,09	0,04	0,11	1,94	0,05*				
	Job insecurity - Quantitative _ work-based social support – Supervisor	0,03	0,03	0,05	0,82	0,42				
	Job insecurity - Qualitative _work-based social support – Colleagues	-0,14	0,06	-0,15	-2,46	0,14				
	Job insecurity - Qualitative _work-based social support - Supervisor	0,07	0,04	0,09	1,72	0,09				

* p≤0.05
** p≤0.01

According to the regression analysis reported in Table 4, it is evident that the workplace stressor variables including job insecurity (qualitative and quantitative), work-based social support and their interaction terms predict 8% of the variance in over-commitment. More specifically, it is evident that it is qualitative job insecurity and the interaction term of

quantitative job insecurity and work-based social support from colleagues that best predict over-commitment. Quantitative job insecurity is also a predictor of over-commitment at the $p \leq 0,10$ level. Next, the variables were dichotomised and the moderating effect graphically illustrated to gain a better understanding of the effect. The result is portrayed in Figure 1 below.
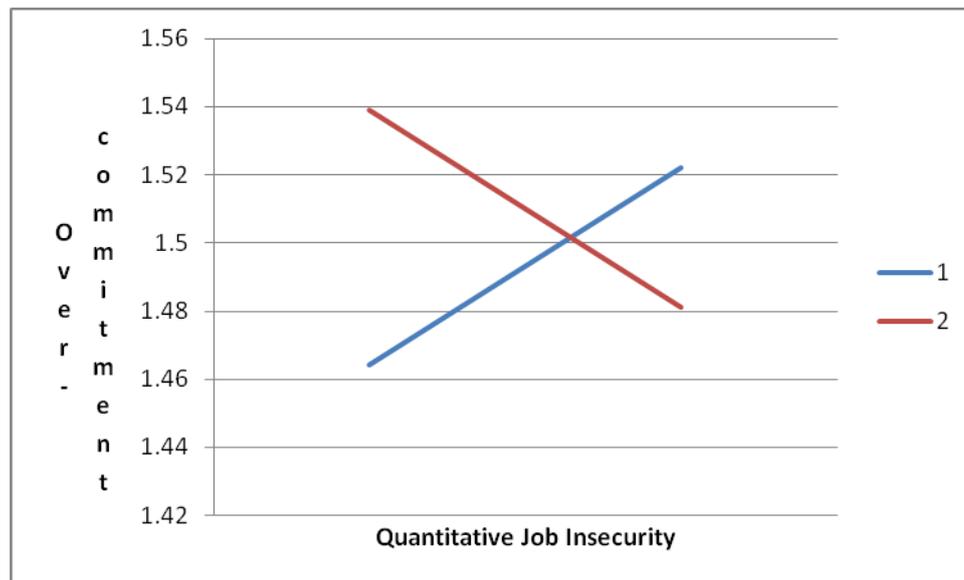

Figure 2: Interaction plot for levels of work-based social support between over-commitment and quantitative job insecurity (work-based social support: 1 = low; 2 = high)

Figure 1 above shows that at low levels of quantitative job insecurity, individuals with low levels of work-based social support from colleagues score lower in terms of their over-commitment when compared to individuals with high levels of work-based social support from colleagues. However, when one moves to high levels of quantitative job insecurity, the situation is completely reversed. Under high levels of quantitative job insecurity, individuals with high levels of work-based social support from colleagues score lower in terms of over-commitment, while those employees who have low levels of work-based social support from colleagues score higher in terms of their over-commitment. This graph illustrates that under conditions of high quantitative job insecurity, having work-based social support from colleagues protects individuals from becoming over-committed.

The final regression analysis tests the predictive value of the chosen variables in terms of perceived performance.

Table 5

Multiple Regression Analysis with Perceived Performance as Dependent Variable

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	*t*	*p*	*F*	*R*	*R²*	*ΔR²*
		B	**SE**	**Beta**						
1	(Constant)	4,44	,092		48,436	,000	4,020	,139[a]	,019	,014
	Job insecurity - Quantitative	-,05	,031	-,08	-1,48	,14				
	Job insecurity - Qualitative	-,05	,04	-,08	-1,37	,17				
2	(Constant)	3,12	,16		20,13	,00	28,19	,47[b]	,22	,21
	Job insecurity - Quantitative	-,04	,03	-,07	-1,48	,14				
	Job insecurity - Qualitative	-,02	,04	-,03	-,49	,63				
	Work-based social support – Colleagues	,25	,03	,36	7,48	,00				
	Work-based social support - Supervisor	,08	,03	,15	3,10	,00				
3	(Constant)	3,13	,16		19,43	,00	14,16	,47[c]	,22	,20
	Job insecurity - Quantitative	-,046	,029	-,083	-1,58	,11				
	Job insecurity - Qualitative	-,02	,04	-,02	-,41	,68				
	Work-based social support - Colleagues	,25	,03	,36	7,31	,00*				
	Work-based social support- Supervisor	,08	,03	,15	3,00	,00*				
	Job insecurity - Quantitative _Work-based social support – Colleagues	,02	,03	,03	,54	,59				
	Job insecurity - Quantitative _Work-based social support – Supervisor	,01	,02	,03	,50	,62				
	Job insecurity - Qualitative _Work-based social support – Colleagues	-,02	,04	-,03	-,46	,65				
	Job insecurity - Qualitative _Work-based social support - Supervisor	,01	,03	,02	,41	,68				

* $p \leq 0.05$
** $p \leq 0.01$

According to the regression analysis reported in Table 5, it is evident that the workplace stressor variables including job insecurity (qualitative and quantitative), work-based social support and their interaction terms predict 21.9% of the variance in perceived performance. Specifically, it is evident that it is only work-based social support from both colleagues and

supervisor that influences perceptions of performance. No moderating effect of work-based social support is, however, evident, and job insecurity makes no contribution to perceptions of performance.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between job insecurity and the work-related outcomes of over-commitment and perceived performance. An additional objective included investigating the moderating effect of work-based social support on the relation between perceived performance and over-commitment. The results illustrate that most of the measuring instruments utilised in this study are reliable in terms of their use within a South African context. The measures that were somewhat problematic in terms of their alpha-coefficients were job insecurity – qualitative and over-commitment. Therefore, the scales were investigated based on previous studies, and it was found that job insecurity is and could become problematic in the long run, irrespective of its intensity (Warr, 1987 and 1994). In addition, according to Van den Heuvel, IJmker, Blatter and De Korte (2007), over-commitment also displayed an alpha-coefficient that showed signs of being problematic.

Results obtained from this study indicate that the experience of work-based social support from colleagues and supervisors is relevant. As Caplan *et al*. (1975) illustrated, the more supervisors provide support, become good listeners and provide help, the more likely colleagues are to provide support too. The dimensions (qualitative and quantitative) of job insecurity are also strongly related, as previously found by Hellgren *et al.* (1999). Both dimensions of job insecurity also related negatively to both dimensions of work-based social support. This suggests a negative relationship between work-based social support and job insecurity – i.e. a high level of available work-based social support means less job insecurity. This negative relationship between work-based social support and job insecurity has previously been evidenced by Caplan *et al*. (1975) as well as Wilson, Deljoy, Vandenberg, Richardson and McGrath (2004). Over-commitment related positively to both dimensions of job insecurity, illustrating that higher levels of job insecurity are associated with individuals becoming over-committed. In earlier research (Wilson *et al*., 2004; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996; Lawler, 1986; Pearce, 1998), indications were that job insecurity has a negative effect on constructs like work-based social support and employees' perceived performance. If an

employee is job insecure, he/she is more likely to perceive him/herself as not performing, or if an employee experiences support, he/she will be more likely to perceive him/herself as performing. Lastly, perceptions of performance were also related positively to over-commitment, indicating that employees associate positive perceptions of their performance with being over-commitment, and vice versa: Being over-committed is seen as positively related to perceptions of performance. However, previous findings (Siegrist *et al.*, 2004; Hellgren, Sverke & Näswall, 2008; Åkerstedt & Nilsson, 2003; Siegrist, 1996; Sapolsky, 2004) concluded that over-commitment resulted in mental and physical fatigue, worrying, stress and other negative work-related consequences but rather not in a heightened perception of one's performance. Therefore, in the current study, it rather seems that being overcommitted is an indicator of performance. This presents an interesting variance when compared to the current sample of international results and is worthy of further investigation. It may be indicative of an unhealthy work attitude in the current sample. Meaning the results of the relationship between the two variable indicate that maybe trainers and trainees feel job insecure and over-committed therefore in that regard they feel threatened or maybe paid less, don't receive promotions and the required support thus this reason may lead to an unhealthy work attitude. Therefore due to the fact that trainers and trainees become over-committed because of job insecurity, they experience a feeling of losing their jobs and thus perform more.

It was seen that quantitative (i.e. the fear of losing the job completely) and qualitative (i.e. the fear of losing promotions, salary increases and other qualitative aspects of the job) job insecurity and the interaction between quantitative job insecurity and work-based social support from colleagues best predicted employees becoming over-committed. This result indicates that both dimensions of job insecurity are important in understanding over-commitment, as both of these directly relate to over-commitment. However, the moderating effect of work-based social support from colleagues is interestingly only indicated for quantitative job insecurity. Thus, where an employee fears losing the job in its entirety, work-based social support from colleagues plays an important role in protecting employees from becoming over-committed. Being over-committed has been shown to be bad for employees; therefore, work-based social support is important. Having visible support from higher management and providing the prospect that development will be measured and feedback be given may contribute to a high participation rate and create cohesion amongst employees

within the organisation (Gebhardt & Crump, 1990). Support, according to Golaszewski (2001), decreases turnover and early exit from the workplace and reflects the organisation as attractive and a sought-after employer. Support from both colleagues and supervisors also relates to an employee perceiving him/herself as performing. As was the case with earlier findings (Sarason, Levine, Basham & Sarason, 1983), similar conclusions were drawn: Low levels of work-based social support result in an employee experiencing low levels of perceived performance. Furthermore, this leads to an employee experiencing dissatisfaction within the workplace. Interestingly, job insecurity also did not play a role in predicting employees' perceptions of their own performance. Studies conducted by Jacobson (1985) and Greenhalgh and Sutton (1991) also found that job insecurity has unfavourable effects on outcomes for both the organisation and the employees. This means that it causes employees to withdraw from work and decreases their involvement, perception of performance, commitment or loyalty within the organisation. In addition, employees may become incapacitated by anxiety, leading to a drop in standards of performance. These results, again, present a unique finding in terms of the current investigation.

Recommendations and limitations

Based on the results presented and discussions provided, it was established that work-based social support from both colleagues and supervisors has an important impact on the relationship between employees' experience of job insecurity and their perceptions of performance and over-commitment. The recommendation, therefore, is that organisation should formulate structured support programmes for both colleagues' support and supervisors' support and implement these in the organisation. More studies can be conducted to determine which aspects will mediate the relationship between job insecurity and over-commitment. It is also suggested that teambuilding and team strengthening actions be instituted to focus on practices that will strengthen support among employees.

Moreover, supervisors should prepare and support employees adequately to deal with new business processes and to work with others. The organisation should at all times maintain a good relationship between itself and its employees, and it should make employees feel part of the organisation as this is one of the factors that lead to job insecurity if not implemented or addressed. A decrease in workload should be taken into account because this can help the trainee or trainer to think about what he/she does, rather than focusing on surviving. When

companies embark on cost savings, for instance cutting down on employee remuneration, they must also take into account that pressurising employees to work for less money can lead to insecurity, disloyalty, dissatisfaction, layoffs and all the other negative effects generally regarded as the principal causes of job insecurity amongst employees. Employees need to be motivated and reminded that despite the fact that some may and others may not advance in management, they should regard themselves as being meaningful contributors. In this way, loyalty and a sense of wholeness between the employees and the organisation will be established. Furthermore, good communication approaches at all levels in the workplace can limit the experience of job insecurity and allow employees to weather the changes in the organisation in a less stressful manner. This implies that effective and efficient communication should be ensured within business units.

Furthermore, a comparative and cross-cultural study of job insecurity, over-commitment, work-based social support and perceived performance should be conducted between different occupational levels and departments. The connection between job insecurity, over-commitment and perceived performance should be further researched to determine how levels of over-commitment relate to levels of perceived performance. Job insecurity, over-commitment and perceived performance should also be investigated in relation to other outcomes such as quality of work life, wellness and productivity.

In this research, several limitations can be reported. According to the nature of the sample, the participants were mostly Afrikaans-speaking when compared to individually spoken languages; therefore, it can be argued that the findings may be somewhat culture-specific. It should also be noted that the sample was based on the availability of respondents, and the participants were not selected randomly. Random sampling across various departments could have been a more suitable sampling method. One other limitation was that this study was conducted in one business unit only. Furthermore, rather than a longitudinal evaluation of employees' attitudes, opinions and feelings which may provide a better examination of job insecurity, work-based social support, perceived performance and over-commitment, only one design was utilised, namely a cross-sectional one which reflects employees' opinions, attitudes and feelings at a particular point in time only.

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CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an analysis and discussion of the literature and empirical results as well as to draw conclusions with regard to the research objectives which were set for this study. In addition, this final chapter aims to answer the research questions put forth in the first chapter. Limitations of the study will also be pointed out, while in the final instance, recommendations for the participating organisation and future research are made.

3.1   CONCLUSIONS

3.1.1   Conclusions from the literature

The following conclusions can be made in respect of the conceptualisation of the constructs of job insecurity, work-based social support, perceived performance and over-commitment:

Job insecurity was conceptualised as a stressor which affects not only the individual but also the work environment. It is seen as an individual's concern or uncertainty about the continuity and the future existence of his/her job. Not only is the uncertainty about the possible loss of one's job a strong stressor but also the uncertainty of re-employment and the fear of not finding other employment (Ferrie, 1997; Joelson & Wahlquist, 1987; Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996). Job insecurity has two dimensions according to Isaksson, Pettersson and Hellgren (1998), namely quantitative and qualitative job insecurity. Quantitative job insecurity was conceptualised as relating to the perceived threats of losing one's job itself, while qualitative job insecurity refers to the threats to or uncertainty about losing important job features and values, such as promotions, remuneration increases and future career development (De Witte, 2005a). Heaney, Israel & House, (1994); Dekker and Schaufeli (1995); Van Vuuren (1990) and Van Vuuren Klandermans, Jacobson and Hartley (1991) define job insecurity as a discrepancy between the levels of security people experience and the level they might prefer. In this study, job insecurity was also viewed as a stressor while it also contends that the stress process can lead to extra strain affecting employee (over-)commitment and low levels of perceived performance (Armstrong-Stassen, 2002; Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Dollinger &

Golden, 1992; Näswall, Sverke & Hellgren 2005; Petterson, Hertting, Hagberg & Theorell, 2005).

Work-based social support was conceptualised as the degree of support an employee experiences from people around him/her where these people are perceived as being good listeners or being there for the employee when help is needed (Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison & Pinneau, 1975). Previous studies established that this type of support promotes positive perceptions of one's performance, reduces stress within the workplace and fosters communication among employees (Dyer & Quine, 1998). Furthermore, it has been found that people who lack work-based social support finds job insecurity challenging and that work-based social support is a valuable resource since the support that the staff provides to each other produces high-quality service (Hatton Rivers, Mason, Mason, Kiernan and Emerson 1999; Dyer & Quine, 1998; Sverke, Hellgren & Näswall, 2002). According to Rose, Ahuja and Jones (2006), work-based social support has a significant relationship with reduced staff stress and reduced employee insecurities. Moreover, within this study, work-based social support was seen as a moderator, meaning it reduced levels of over-commitment stemming from insecurity amongst employees and was directly associated with employees' positively perceived performance.

Perceived performance was conceptualised as employees' perceptions about their own current level of performance at work. These are feelings that employees have towards their jobs, colleagues and organisation that lead to the organisation's growth and profitability (Heskett, Sasser & Schlesinger, 1997). Such positive perceptions of own performance have shown a strong positive relationship with the actual performance of employees (Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Dollinger & Golden, 1992). In addition, perceived performance was conceptualised as that construct which, when affected by negative experiences such as job insecurity, will lead to individuals perceiving themselves as not performing (Blatter & Bongers, 2002; Cheng, Kawachi, Coakley, Schwartz & Colditz, 2000; De Jonge, Bosma, Peter & Siegrist, 2000).

Over-commitment was conceptualised as the extent to which work issues are on the employee's mind outside of work and includes the perception of work spreading into other areas of life, not in terms of actual time spent on work tasks but time thinking about work

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(Näswall *et al*., 2006). Worrying and constant concern about uncertainty and unpredictability, restructuring, economic instability and other negative factors have been suggested as core elements of stress factors that cause the development of over-commitment (Dugas, Freeston, & Ladouceur, 1997; Sapolsky, 2004; Siegrist, Starke, Chandola, Godin, Marmot, Niedhammer & Peter 2004). It was found that over-committed employees tend to guess at all times how dedicated other individuals are in the organisation, and they try to handle over-commitment by demonstrating a pattern of thoughts, behaviours, and emotions characterised by an extreme striving at work and outside the work environment. Previous studies have also found that over-commitment may be related more directly to work conditions such as unclear work goals, economic situations, poorly specified work tasks and lack of feedback when work is completed as well as to other factors within the environment that increase levels of worrying due to uncertainty and unpredictability (Hellgren, Sverke & Näswall, 2008; Nolen-Hoeksema & Davis, 1999; Sapolsky, 2004; Siegrist, 1996).

3.1.2 Conclusions from the empirical study

Conclusions are drawn in the following section in respect of the specific research objectives set in Chapter 1 and the empirical findings derived from the present study.

- *To determine the relationship between job insecurity, work-based social support, organisational over-commitment and perceived performance*

In terms of the relationships between the observed constructs, it is seen that when employees experience high levels of job insecurity, they tend to be overcommitted and to perceive themselves as not performing. Consequently, perceived performance displayed a relationship with over-commitment, indicating these two experiences are positively related. Work-based social support additionally proved to have a positive influence on perceived performance as well, in that once an employee experiences high levels of social support from supervisors and/or colleagues, he/she is more likely to perceive him/herself as performing. According to Sverke *et al*. (2002), people who lack work-based social support find job insecurity challenging. Furthermore, Blatter and Bongers (2002), Cheng *et al*. (2000) and Hatton *et al*. (1999) state that work-based social support is an important resource and that job insecurity has a negative impact on one's perception of performance and intensifies the possibility of employees becoming over-committed.

- *To use job insecurity and work-based social support to predict outcomes such as organisational over-commitment and perceived performance*

According to Hall and Hall (1976); Godin, Kittel, Coppieters and Siegrist (2005); Mackie, Pikhart, Bobak, Pajak, Malyutina, Kubinova and Topor, (2004); Näswall, Sverke and Hellgren (2005); Blatter and Bongers (2002) and Cheng *et al*. (2000), job insecurity predicts over-commitment, and a high level of job insecurity has a negative impact on one's perception of performance. In the current investigation, it was seen that work-based social support did not predict over-commitment directly but moderated its relationship to over-commitment in such a way that in the presence of quantitative job insecurity, work-based social support from colleagues was associated with decreased over-commitment. On the other hand, work-based social support from both colleagues and supervisors directly predicted employees' perceived performance.

- *To determine whether work-based social support plays a moderating role between job insecurity on the one hand and organisational outcomes such as organisational over-commitment and perceived performance on the other*

Work-based social support was found to be a moderator only in relation to job insecurity and over-commitment. This means it was determined that a high level of quantitative job insecurity is moderated by work-based social support from colleagues. Thus, it decreases the possibility of an employee experiencing high levels of over-commitment due to quantitative job insecurity, provided work-based social support from colleagues is present. According to the regression results within this study, employees experiencing high levels of work-based social support from colleagues under high levels of quantitative job insecurity results in lower levels of over-commitment within an individual, while employees who have low levels of work-based social support from colleagues experience high levels of over-commitment. Work-based social support from colleagues protects individuals from becoming overcommitted; consequently, it is viewed as a moderator. It is only work-based social support from both colleagues and supervisors that influences perceptions of performance. However, no moderating effect of work-based social support was witnessed, and job insecurity makes no contribution to perceptions of performance. Dyer and Quine (1998) and

Sverke *et al*. (2002) state that work-based social support promotes positive perceptions of one's performance and reduces stress within the workplace. Furthermore, it encourages employees to cope better with demanding work and other work-related issues, which as a result fosters solidarity and security.

3.2   LIMITATIONS

The majority (26,3%) of the participants was Afrikaans-speaking; therefore, it can be argued that the findings may be somewhat culture-specific. The sample was based on the availability of respondents, and the participants were not randomly selected. Random sampling across various departments could have been a more suitable sampling method. One other limitation was that this study was conducted in one business unit only. Furthermore, rather than a longitudinal evaluation of employees' attitudes, opinions and feelings which may provide a better examination of job insecurity, work-based social support, perceived performance and over-commitment, only one design was utilised, namely a cross-sectional one which reflects employees' opinions, attitudes and feelings at a particular point in time only. And the alpha coefficient of qualitative-job insecurity can be a limitation as well because of the lows scale, which can be somehow unreliable.

3.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

3.3.1   Recommendations for the participating organisation

Based on the results presented and discussions provided, it was established that work-based social support from both colleagues and supervisors has a huge impact on the relationship between employees' experience of job insecurity and their perceptions of performance and over-commitment. The recommendation, therefore, is that the organisation should formulate structured support programmes for both colleagues' support and supervisors' support and implement these in the organisation so that employees can experience less job insecurity or over-commitment. It is also suggested that teambuilding and other team-focused initiatives be instituted to focus on practices that will strengthen support among employees.

Moreover, supervisors should prepare and support employees adequately to deal with new business processes and to work with others. The organisation should at all times maintain a good relationship between itself and its employees, and it should make employees feel part of the organisation as this is one of the factors that lead to job insecurity if not implemented or addressed. A decrease in workload should be taken into account because this can help the trainee or trainer to think about what he/she does, rather than having to focus on surviving. When companies embark on cost savings, for instance cutting down on employee remuneration, they must also take into account that pressurising employees to work for less money can lead to insecurity, disloyalty, dissatisfaction, layoffs and all the other negative effects generally regarded as the principle causes of job insecurity amongst employees.

Employees need to be motivated and reminded that despite the fact that some may and others may not advance in management, they should regard themselves as being meaningful contributors. In this way, loyalty and a sense of wholeness between the employees and the organisation will be established. Furthermore, good communication approaches at all levels in the workplace can limit the experience of job insecurity and allow employees to weather the changes in the organisation in a less stressful manner. This implies that effective and efficient communication should be ensured within business units.

3.3.2 Recommendations for future research

The limitations in the sampling method have been noted above. A stratified random-sample design which would ensure sufficient representation of the different groups in the total population of employees should be utilised in future studies. Longitudinal data will also clarify the causal relationships between these variables.

Furthermore, a comparative and cross-cultural study of job insecurity, over-commitment, work-based social support and perceived performance should be conducted between different occupational levels and departments. The connection between job insecurity, over-commitment and perceived performance should be researched further to determine why high levels of over-commitment are associated with high levels of perceived performance. Job insecurity, over-commitment and perceived performance should also be investigated in relation to other outcomes such as quality of work life, wellness and productivity.

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