

JOB INSECURITY, JOB SATISFACTION AND SITUATIONAL SENSE OF COHERENCE OF CIVIL SERVANTS IN THE JOHANNESBURG- WEST DISTRICT EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

By

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BA Hons Industrial Psychology

Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
Magister Artium in Industrial Psychology in the School of Behavioural Sciences at
the North-West University, Vaal Triangle Campus.

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May 2006



REMARKS

The reader is reminded of the following:

The references, as well as the editorial style as prescribed by the Publication Manual (*4th ed.*) 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 at the North-West University.

This research was funded by the NRF (National Research Foundation). The view and opinions expressed in this article are not necessarily the same as those of the Foundation.

This mini-dissertation is submitted in the form of a research article.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude towards various individuals who supported me throughout the completion of this mini-dissertation:

- First and foremost I am deeply grateful to my Creator, who blessed me with the opportunity to complete this research.
- My Husband Themba-Vincent for his continuous support, motivation, understanding and confidence in my effort throughout the difficult times.
- My son Manqoba–Karabo for his understanding.
- Ms Thandeka Mtlomelo for her assistance and courage throughout.
- My Mother Dilala for her words of courage.
- A special thank you to Dr. J. Bosman for her guidance, motivation and support as well as her advice regarding the statistical analyses of the data.
- Special thanks to Aldine Oosthuyzen for her assistance regarding the statistical processing
- Thanks to Vanessa Callow for her assistance.
- I would like to express my gratitude to the management of the participating institution, as well as the employees for completion of the questionnaires.
- To my friend Thuli Manaba for her assistance and patience.
- Lastly, I would like to extend my gratitude to my family, friends and colleagues who supported me.

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SUMMARY

Title: Job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence of civil servants in the Johannesburg-West District Education Department.

Key words: Job insecurity, job satisfaction, and situational sense of coherence

During the past few years, organisations throughout the public sphere have undergone dramatic changes due to extensive restructuring and mergers. These changes are caused *inter alia* by an accelerating pace of business, increasing economic activity, science and technology, public partnerships involving government and population, changing demographics, and education and training. Changes such as these usually result in job insecurity which in turn may lead to job dissatisfaction.

The objective of this study was to examine the possible relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence among civil servants in the Johannesburg-West District Education Department and, more particularly, to determine whether situational sense of coherence mediates the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction.

A survey design was used to realise the research objectives. The study population consisted of 120 civil servants in the Johannesburg-West District of Education Department. The Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ), the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) and Orientation to Life Questionnaire – Form S (OLQ - S) were used as measuring instruments. The findings showed that a negative correlation of medium effect was found between cognitive job insecurity and situational sense of coherence. Total job satisfaction displayed negative statistically significant correlations with all the job insecurity dimensions, although these correlations fell below the practically significant cut-off point. Analyses indicated that situational sense of coherence does not hold a statistically significant amount of predictive value with regard to job satisfaction, nor does job insecurity hold a statistically significant amount of variance with regard to job satisfaction, implying that situational sense of coherence does

not mediate the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction. Job insecurity was however found to hold some predictive value with regard to situational sense of coherence.

Limitations were identified and recommendations with regard to future research as well as for the organisation were made.

OPSOMMING

Titel: Werksonsekerheid, werkstevredenheid en situasionele koherensiesin van werknemers in die Johannesburg – Wes Distrik-Onderwysdepartement.

Sleutelwoorde: Werksonsekerheid, werkstevredenheid en situasionele koherensiesin.

Gedurende die laaste paar jaar het organisasies binne die openbare sektor dramatiese veranderinge ondergaan vanweë omvattende herstrukturering en samesmeltings. Hierdie veranderinge word veroorsaak deur die versnelde pas van besigheid, toenemende ekonomiese aktiwiteit, wetenskap en tegnologie, openbare vennootskappe tussen die staat en die bevolking, veranderende demografie, en onderwys en opleiding. Hierdie veranderinge veroorsaak gewoonlik werksonsekerheid wat op sy beurt aanleiding tot verlaagde werkstevredenheid gee.

Die doel van hierdie studie was om die moontlike verhouding tussen werksonsekerheid, werkstevredenheid en situasionele koherensiesin by werknemers in die Johannesburg-Wes Distrik se Onderwysdepartement te bepaal, en meer spesifiek om vas te stel of situasionele koherensiesin die verhouding tussen werksonsekerheid en werkstevredenheid medieer.

'n Opname-ontwerp is gebruik om die navorsingsdoelwitte te bereik. Die studiepopulasie het uit 120 werknemers van die Johannesburg-Wes Distrik se Onderwysdepartement bestaan. Die Werksonsekerheidvraelys, die Minnesota Werkstevredenheidvraelys en die Lewensoriëntasievraelys – Vorm S is gebruik as meetinstrumente. Die resultate het op 'n negatiewe korrelasie van medium effek tussen kognitiewe werksonsekerheid en situasionele koherensiesin gedui. Totale werkstevredenheid het 'n negatiewe statisties-beduidende korrelasie met al die werksonsekerheidsdimensies getoon, alhoewel hierdie korrelasies onder die praktiese betekenisvolle afsnypunt geval het. Regressie analise het getoon dat situasionele koherensiesin nie 'n statisties-beduidende mate van voorspellingswaarde gehad het met betrekking tot werkstevredenheid nie, en ook dat

werksonsekerheid nie 'n statisties-beduidende mate van variansie voorspel het met betrekking tot werkstevredenheid nie. Gevolglik kon daar afgelei word dat situasionele koherensiesin nie die verhouding tussen werksonsekerheid en werkstevredenheid medieer nie. Werksonsekerheid het egter voorspellingswaarde met betrekking tot situasionele koherensiesin.

Beperkinge is geïdentifiseer en aanbevelings is gemaak met betrekking tot toekomstige navorsing, asook vir die organisasie.

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

The study investigates the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence among civil servants in the Johannesburg-West District Education Department.

In this chapter, the problem statement is discussed and an outline is provided of the research objectives, research methods and chapter division.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Increased unemployment has most certainly become a global concern (Unemployment Issue, 2005). This is not surprising, considering that it is estimated that there are 35 million unemployed people in the industrial world (Unemployment Issue, 2005). More specifically, it is estimated that 30% of the world's labour force is either unemployed or underemployed. This job crisis is considered to be gripping both rich and poor nations (Newcombe, 1999).

During the last two decades, the many changes in the economies and labour markets of industrialised countries have exacerbated job insecurity (Kinnunen, Mauno, Nätti, & Happonen, 2000). The most obvious of these changes have been increased economic instability, frequency and deep periods of recession, increased unemployment, and rapid restructuring of the global and national economics (Howard, 2000).

In view of these global statistics, one would be naïve to assume that the South African workforce is not affected by this phenomenon. A review of some media coverage concerning this issue unanimously supports the assertion that virtually every sector of South African society is affected by increased unemployment (Newcombe, 1999). Statistics South Africa published a labour force survey (LFS) report which was taken in September 2004 indicating an official national employment rate of 26.2 percent (Lehlohlhla, 2006). Not only does South Africa have a high unemployment rate, but also the threat of transformation and restructuring seems eminent in all sectors of South Africa's economy (Sparrow & Cooper, 2003). The pervasive nature of retrenchment and restructuring in South Africa resulted in organised labour calling upon both government and big business to formulate a job insecurity

agreement to protect existing jobs in an attempt to stave off or curb the negative socio-economic ramifications of transformation and restructuring (Kompier & Cooper, 1999).

Government believes that reducing its expenditure and contracting out functions and activities to the newly established commercialised entities will reduce fiscal deficits to target viewed necessary for macro-economic growth (William, 2002). According to Brandon (1998), improving efficiency is another factor behind the restructuring exercise in private and public sector. There is realisation that government is not performing as well as it should (Brandon, 1998). Furthermore, there is widespread concern that government output (in terms of productivity and service delivery) does not justify the amount of (financial and human) resources invested (William, 2002). Government believes that transformation and restructuring of the public service will improve service delivery of government services (Resolution No.7 of 2005).

According to Greenglass, Burke, and Fiksenbaum (2002), organisations throughout the private and public sphere have undergone dramatic changes due to extensive downsizing, restructuring and mergers. A study conducted by Toropovsky (2004) demonstrates that job insecurity has been associated with psychological distress and poor health, and that restructuring and its changes can result not only in lower job satisfaction, but also in job insecurity. Regardless of whether job insecurity is operationalised from either a global or multidimensional point of view, it has generally been considered as a type of job stressor (Barling & Kelloway, 1996).

According to De Witte (1999), **job insecurity** relates to people in their work context who fear they might lose their jobs and become unemployed. Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans and Van Vuuren (1991) further define job security as a discrepancy between the level of security people experience and the level they might prefer. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984), in turn, define job insecurity as powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation. Furthermore, workers react to job insecurity and their reactions have consequences for organisational effectiveness. Job insecurity may be viewed as being an objective or subjective phenomenon, as possessing both cognitive and affective qualities which may be accompanied by fear concerning the continuity of one's job or job features (Newcombe, 1999).

According to Butler (2003), job insecurity has emerged as an important stressor in modern working life leading to job dissatisfaction, an increase in negative physical health, absenteeism, and higher reports of psychological distress. People develop affective and attitudinal attachments towards their workplace over time, which are demonstrated by high levels of commitment, satisfaction and trust. Feelings of job insecurity may threaten such basic attachments (Howard, 2000). The relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction is demonstrated by the research of Ashford, Lee, and Bobko (1989), who found a significantly lower level of job satisfaction among employees who felt insecure. Heany, Israel, and House (1994), as well as Probst and Brubaker (2001), found that job insecurity is associated with decreased levels of extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfaction. In a South African study, Heymans (2000) found that cognitive job insecurity is associated with decreased levels of intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. In his research, Newcombe (1999) found that those who were most dissatisfied with their jobs were those who felt most insecure, and vice versa.

Job satisfaction can be described as an affective or emotional reaction to a job resulting from the comparison of actual outcomes with those that are desired, expected or felt to be deserved (Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992). According to Cooper (1999), job satisfaction is a process whereby employees seek to achieve and maintain correspondence with their environment. This correspondence with the environment can be described in terms of individuals fulfilling the requirements of the environment and vice versa, which implies that individuals will experience job satisfaction if they feel that their individual capacities, experiences and values can be utilised in their work environment, and that their work environment offers them opportunities and rewards them accordingly (Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992).

Sense of coherence is a broad-band resource (Hobfoll, 2001), which is positively associated with coping with change and job satisfaction (Rothmann, Malan, & Rothmann 2001). Studies conducted by Rothmann (2001) found a positive correlation between sense of coherence and job satisfaction.

Sense of coherence describes a “salutogenic” orientation to life that makes successful coping possible by enabling individuals to learn to use their own resources to their best advantage when dealing with life’s challenges (Artinian, & Conger, 1997). In terms of its relationship with job insecurity, Hauge (2004) explains that an individual with a strong sense of coherence would appraise job insecurity as more understandable and manageable.

Artinian & Conger (1997) explains that situational sense of coherence is a narrower construct as opposed to dispositional sense of coherence, and describes the response that occurs in the period of time in which an individual is attempting to deal with a serious life event. Situational sense of coherence relates to the integrative potential in a person's understanding of his/her situation, his/her way of looking at the situation, and the ability to gather and use resources (Artinian & Conger, 1997).

Situational sense of coherence contains the same three dimensions as dispositional sense of coherence. However, according to Artinian & Conger (1997), the three dimensions reflect a present and specific orientation rather than a global orientation, which applies in the case of dispositional sense of coherence. The *comprehensibility* dimension relates to the extent to which one perceives the stimuli present in the situational environment as making cognitive sense and being consistent, structured and clear rather than disordered, random, or inexplicable. The *meaningfulness* aspect relates to the extent to which one feels that the problems and demands posed by the situation are worth investing time and energy into rather than viewing them as burdens. Lastly, the *manageability* aspect pertains to the extent to which one perceives the resources at one's disposal as being adequate to meet the demands posed by the stimuli present in the situation so that one does not feel victimised or treated unfairly.

Based on the above literature review, it is perceived that situational sense of coherence may play a mediating role in the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction (Artinian & Conger, 1997). According to Preacher and Leonardelli (2005), a variable may be considered a mediator to the extent to which it carries the influence of a given independent variable; in other words, mediation implies that an independent variable influences a mediator, which influences a dependent variable. In terms of this research, it is thus expected that job insecurity will influence a situational sense of coherence, which in turn has an impact on job satisfaction.

Government institutions, like other companies in South Africa, are undergoing dramatic changes since the democratisation of the country in 1994, and these changes are also brought about by globalisation (Unemployment issue, 2005). The Department of Education Johannesburg-West District is faced with the challenge of restructuring to improve their operational efficiency and effectiveness in order to provide improved service delivery.

On the basis of the above-mentioned problem statement, the following research questions emerge:

- ❖ How are job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence conceptualised in the literature?
- ❖ What is the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence of civil servants in the Johannesburg-West District Education Department?
- ❖ Can job insecurity predict job satisfaction of civil servants in the Johannesburg-West District Education Department?
- ❖ Does situational sense of coherence mediate the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction of civil servants in the Johannesburg-West District Education Department?

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

2.1. General Objective

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence of employees/civil servants within the Johannesburg-West District and to determine whether situational sense of coherence mediates the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction.

2.2. Specific Objective

- ❖ To conceptualise job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence from the literature.
- ❖ To determine the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence of civil servants in the Johannesburg-West District.
- ❖ To determine whether job insecurity can be used to predict job satisfaction of civil servants in the Johannesburg-West District.
- ❖ To determine whether situational sense of coherence mediates the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction of civil servants in the Johannesburg-West District.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Literature Study

The databases to be used are:

- ❖ Government Journals
- ❖ Library Catalogues
- ❖ Internet
- ❖ GDE Circulars and Acts
- ❖ GDE Newsletter
- ❖ Newspapers

3.2 EMPIRICAL STUDY

3.2.1 Research Design

The researcher will make use of a cross-sectional survey design to achieve the objectives of the study. More specifically, a correlational design has been decided upon to measure the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence (Mouton, 2003).

3.2.2 Participants

The targeted study population will consist of 150 workers at various levels within the Johannesburg-West District Education Department. The participants will be randomly selected from a wide variety of positions or levels within the institution.

3.2.3 Measuring Instrument

The following questionnaires will be used in the empirical study:

- ❖ *The Job Insecurity Questionnaire* (JIQ) by De Witte (2000) will be used to measure the perceived job insecurity. The Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ) consists of 11 items, which encapsulate both the cognitive and affective dimensions of job insecurity and are arranged along 5- point Likert- type scale with 1= *strongly disagree*, 3= *unsure* and 5= *strongly agree*. De Witte (2000) reported Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0,92 for the total scale; 0,85 for the affective scale and 0,90 for the cognitive scale. In a South African context, Heymans (2002) obtained an alpha coefficient of 0,81 for the total JIQ, and Elbert (2002) reported an alpha coefficient of 0, 84. Bosman (2005) obtained an alpha coefficient of 0, 72 for the affective job insecurity scale and 0,70 for the cognitive scale.

- ❖ The *Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)* (shortened version) (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967) indicates how satisfied or dissatisfied respondents are with their jobs by asking respondents to rate themselves on 20 questions, using a five-point scale (1 = *very dissatisfied* to 5 = *very satisfied*). The MSQ shortened form measures intrinsic job satisfaction, using items such as: "The chance to do things that doesn't go against my conscience" and extrinsic job satisfaction using items like: "The chance to be 'somebody' in the community". Hirschfeld (2000) found that a two-factor model (intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction) is superior to a one-factor model (total job satisfaction). Alpha coefficients were found to range from 0,87 to 0,95, which supports the internal consistency of the scale (Hirschfeld, 2000; Lam, Baum, & Pine, 1998). Buitendach and Rothmann (2004) obtained a reliability coefficient of 0,82 for the extrinsic job satisfaction scale and 0,79 for the intrinsic job satisfaction scale.
- ❖ The *Orientation to Life Questionnaire – Form S (OLQ-S)* (Antonovsky, 1987), will be used to measure the participants' situational sense of coherence. The items of the OLQ summarise the manageability, meaningfulness and comprehensibility dimensions of sense of coherence and are arranged along a seven-point scale. An example of a question relating to manageability would be: "Do you feel that people whom you counted on disappointed you?". An example of a question relating to meaningfulness would be: "How often do you get the feeling that there's little meaning in the things you do in your daily activities?", whereas an example of a question relating to comprehensibility would be: "Do you feel that your feelings and ideas are mixed-up?" In a South African study, comprising of both public and private sector employees, Grant (2005) obtained a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,77 for the total OLQ-S.

3.2.4 Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis will be conducted using the SPSS Inc (2005) and SAS Institute (2000). Alpha coefficients, inter-item correlation coefficients and confirmatory factor analyses will be used to determine the validity and reliability of measuring instruments. Descriptive statistics (mean, standards deviation, skewness and kurtosis) will be used to analyse the data. Pearson product moment correlation coefficients will be used to determine the extent to which one variable is related to another.

MANOVA and ANOVA will be used to determine whether demographic groups differ in terms of job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational aspects. Regression analyses will be

conducted to determine whether job insecurity holds predictive value with regard to job satisfaction, and to determine whether situational sense of coherence mediates the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction.

3.2.5 Research Procedure

A letter of permission will be sent to the Senior Manager of the Johannesburg-West District Education Department. The letter will request participation and provide motivation for the research. The test battery will be administered at the work premises on suitable dates. Ethical aspects will be discussed with the participants.

4. PROVINCIAL CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement, research objectives and research method

Chapter 2: Article: *Job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence of civil servants in the Johannesburg-West District Education Department.*

Chapter 3: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to examine the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence and, more particularly to determine whether situational sense of coherence mediates the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction. A cross-sectional survey design was used to test the research hypothesis and the study population consisted of 120 civil servants of Johannesburg–West District Department of Education. The results showed that a negative correlation of medium effect was found between cognitive job insecurity and situational sense of coherence. Total job satisfaction displayed negative statistically significant correlations with all the job insecurity dimensions, although these correlations fell below the practically significant cut-off point. Regression analyses indicated that situational sense of coherence did not hold a statistically significant amount of predictive value with regard to job satisfaction, nor did job insecurity hold a statistically significant amount of predictive value with regard to job satisfaction, implying that situational sense of coherence does not mediate job insecurity and job satisfaction. Job insecurity was, however, found to hold a statistically significant amount of predictive value with regard to situational sense of coherence.

OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie studie was om die moontlike verhouding tussen werksonsekerheid, werkstevredenheid en situasionele koherensiesin van werknemers in die Johannesburg-Wes-Distrik se Onderwysdepartement te bepaal, en meer spesifiek om vas te stel of situasionele koherensiesin die verhouding tussen werksonsekerheid en werkstevredenheid medieer. 'n Kruisdeursnee-opname-ontwerp is gebruik om die navorsingshipotese te toets en die studiepopulasie het bestaan uit 120 werknemers by die Johannesburg-Wes-Distrik se Onderwysdepartement. Die resultate het op 'n negatiewe korrelasie van medium effek tussen kognitiewe werksonsekerheid en situasionele koherensiesin gedui. Totale werkstevredenheid het 'n negatiewe statisties-beduidende korrelasie met al die werksonsekerheidsdimensies getoon, alhoewel hierdie korrelasies onder die prakties-beduidende afsnypunt geval het. Regressie-analise het getoon dat situasionele koherensiesin nie 'n statisties-beduidende mate van voorspellingswaarde gehad het met betrekking tot werkstevredenheid het nie, en werksonsekerheid het ook nie 'n statisties-beduidende mate van variansie met betrekking tot werkstevredenheid getoon nie. Dit impliseer dat situasionele koherensiesin nie werksonsekerheid en werkstevredenheid medieer nie. Werksonsekerheid het wel 'n statisties-beduidende mate van voorspellingswaarde met betrekking tot situasionele koherensiesin gehad.

¹ * The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are that of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the National Research Foundation.

Organisations in South Africa are faced with many challenges – funding arrangements, restructuring and transformation, insecure employment, the growth of private service providers and the shrinking of public service providers (Clark, 2005). Globalisation is affecting the way organisations function. As is the case in other industries, employees in government institutions have been at the receiving end of these developments Greenspan (2005). Budget cuts and other cost-cutting measures have resulted in job insecurity and low levels of pay and benefits for workers in institutions. Over past few years (NEHAWU, 2003) most institutions have initiated a process of restructuring that often results in job losses for workers in security, gardening, cleaning and other support and maintenance services, as these services are being privatised and outsourced by institutions.

According to Greenglass, Burke, and Fiksenbaum (2002), organisations throughout the sphere have undergone dramatic changes due to extensive downsizing, restructuring and mergers. Given the extent of downsizing that has taken place, millions of jobs have been lost. One indicator of the intensity of the debate on job insecurity is the importance of the media attention devoted to it (Clark, 2005). The past year in South Africa has seen a sharp rise in the number of stories relating to job insecurity. The stress literature suggests that fear of losing one's job could be as detrimental as losing the job itself, and numerous studies indicate that job insecurity may indeed have important consequences for both the individual and the organisation (Hellgren, 2005). Greenglass et al. (2002) indicates that research has shown that job insecurity has been associated with psychological distress and poor health. Research conducted by Feldt, Kinnunen and Mauno (2000) shows' that low job insecurity was related to a strong sense of coherence, which was, in turn, linked to a high level of general, as well as occupational well-being. The objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence, particularly investigating the possible mediating role of situational sense of coherence in the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction.

Job insecurity is defined as the fear of losing one's job, uncertainty regarding the future and doubts about the continuation of the job (Everett, 2004). According to Burchell (2003), the fear of redundancy is not the only aspect of job insecurity. Although many employees are not unduly worried about losing their jobs *per se*, they are, however, worried about the loss of valued job features, such as their status within the organisation and their opportunity for promotion.

According to Greenspan (2005), workers' perceptions of their job insecurity are determined by a complex mix of objective and subjective considerations, which are difficult to quantify precisely. In addition, these perceptions are important in their own right. Firstly, job insecurity is closely tied to individual well-being. Secondly, it has implications for the macro-economy, sometimes being linked with lower levels of consumer expenditure and greater wage restraint. Thirdly, job insecurity can also play a role in the employer–employee relationship. As tenure decreases, and as insecurity rises, there may be less incentive to invest in training, a greater likelihood of problems with workers morale and effort, and less of an opportunity to develop the various benefits of long-term attachment.

Mauno and Kinnunen (1999) indicate that research categorises the antecedents of job insecurity into three groups, being organisational and environmental circumstances (e.g. change), an employee's individual and positional characteristics (e.g. age) and an employee's personal characteristics (e.g. self-esteem). According to Bosman (2005), within the context of Affirmative Action and Employment Equity initiatives, it is likely that the non-beneficiaries of the new dispensation (i.e. white participants) will experience higher levels of job insecurity than the beneficiaries (i.e. black participants). Her findings that the white participants experienced statistically significantly higher levels of cognitive job insecurity compared to their black counterparts supported this notion. Based on the patriarchy theory, theories of gendered occupations and jobs, and theory of gendered organisation, Rosenblatt, Talmud, and Ruvio (1999) inferred that females, in general, should experience higher levels of job insecurity than males. These researchers found on a multidimensional measure of job insecurity, that males were more insecure, emphasising financial concerns, whereas females also experienced financial concerns, but emphasised intrinsic facets of their jobs. De Witte (1999) reports that potential unemployment is most distressing for respondents between the ages of approximately 30 to 50 years, seeming to be less problematic for younger and older respondents, the reason for this probably relating to the fact that younger respondents have less financial responsibilities and better prospects of finding a job in future, and older respondents can prepare themselves for a new role, being that of retirement (De Witte, 1999).

The relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction is demonstrated in the research of Ashford, Lee, and Bobko (1989) who found a significantly lower level of job satisfaction

among employees who felt insecure. Heymans (2002), in a South African study, found that cognitive job insecurity is related to decreased levels of intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. In a South African government organisation, Labuschagne (2005) also found a negative correlation between job insecurity and job satisfaction.

According to Lawler (2005), job satisfaction as a unidimensional construct relates to whether one is satisfied or dissatisfied with one's job. In contrast, Smith (2005) argues that job satisfaction is multidimensional; that is, one may be more or less satisfied with one's job, one's supervisor, one's pay, one's workplace, and so forth. Robbins (1998) describes job satisfaction as a general attitude towards one's job; the difference between the amount workers receive and the amount they believe they should receive. Job satisfaction has also been defined as the extent to which one feels positively or negatively about intrinsic or extrinsic aspects of one's job (Bhuian & Mengue, 2002). According to Mulinge (2003), job satisfaction refers to the degree to which an employee likes his/her job and is representative of various facets of work environment.

According to Bavendam's (2005) research, there are six factors that influence job satisfaction, namely opportunity, stress, leadership, work standards, fair rewards and adequate authority. Employees are generally more satisfied when they have challenging opportunities at work, when negative stress is low, when their managers are good leaders, when their entire workgroup takes pride in the quality of its work, when they feel they are rewarded fairly for the work they do, and when they have adequate freedom and authority to do their jobs.

According to Metle (2003), several theoretical perspectives (including the expectations theory) lend support to the proposition that significant relationships can be expected between demographic characteristics and job satisfaction. Buitendach and Rothmann (2005) found that black employees experienced lower levels of intrinsic job satisfaction as compared to the white employees. Metle (2003) notes that education contributes to job satisfaction indirectly by increasing both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, but diminishes job satisfaction by increasing occupational expectations. Buitendach and Rothmann (2005) found more highly qualified employees experienced higher levels of job satisfaction than employees with lower levels of education. Manski and Straub (2000) found that job insecurity tends to decrease with schooling.

Sense of coherence is a broad-band resource (Hobfoll, 2001), which is positively associated with coping with change and job satisfaction (Rothmann, 2001). Stanley (2001) indicates that job satisfaction is important because it affects, *inter alia*, tardiness, productivity and organisational effectiveness. According to Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert, and Hatfield (2002), job satisfaction has been linked with absenteeism and turnover in many studies. Individuals who are satisfied with their jobs are likely to be better ambassadors for the organisation and show more organisational commitment (Agho, Price, & Muller, 1992). It can be assumed that employees will react differently to the gradually changing characteristics of employment conditions and jobs (Roets, 2003). An individual's reaction may depend on a number of factors. Employees who feel that they could easily get work view the changing nature of work positively; on the other hand, those who hold the economic responsibility for their family may feel that they would experience difficulty in finding work; they thus regard this in a negative light. Whether or not employees deem their work as being agreeable determines job satisfaction levels. Intrinsic and extrinsic job characteristics are the two main factors that influence the level of job satisfaction. The presence of positive intrinsic factors leads to satisfaction, while the presence of positive extrinsic characteristics reduces dissatisfaction.

According to Antonovsky (1987), sense of coherence is defined as a relatively stable dispositional orientation because people display relatively stable differences in the way they appraise and cope with stressful situations. A strong sense of coherence may help prevent stress from turning into potentially harmful tension, which, in turn, may later develop into health problems (Antonovsky, 1987).

A person's sense of coherence is an important component of one's health and well-being (Antonovsky, 1993; Rothmann, 2003). Everyone appraises situations in their own distinct way, and those appraisals affect the perceived intensity of stressors. A strong sense of coherence is related to general well-being and emotional stability (Feldt, Kinnunen, & Mauno, 2000). According to Antonovsky (1987), a person with a strong sense of coherence selects the particular coping strategy that seems most appropriate to deal with the stressor being confronted. According to Hauge (2004), an individual with a strong sense of coherence would appraise job insecurity as more understandable and manageable, hence experiencing the negative outcomes of job insecurity as being less severe.

This research will focus on *situational* sense of coherence rather than *dispositional* sense of coherence. Situational sense of coherence is viewed as a narrower construct that describes the response that occurs during the period of time in which a person is attempting to deal with a serious life event (Artinian & Conger, 1997). According to Artinian and Conger (1997), situational sense of coherence measures the integrative potential in a person's understanding of his/her situation, his/her way of looking at the situation, and the ability to gather and use resources. According to Artinian and Conger (1997), situational sense of coherence contains the same three dimensions identified in dispositional sense of coherence, however reflecting a present, specific orientation rather than a global orientation. *Comprehensibility* is the extent to which one perceives the stimuli present in the situational environment as making cognitive sense and being consistent, structured and clear rather than disordered, random, or inexplicable. *Meaningfulness* is the extent to which one feels that the problems and demands posed by the situation are worth investing time and energy into rather than viewing them as burdens. *Manageability* refers to the extent to which one perceives the resources at one's disposal as being adequate to meet the demands posed by the stimuli present in the situation so that one does not feel victimised or treated unfairly.

Wissing and van Eeden (2002) are of the opinion that variables such as age, gender and ethnic/cultural context influence the manifestation of psychological well-being. They found significant differences between the scores of black and white groups on indices of psychological well-being, with the black group presenting with lower levels of psychological well-being, noting that these differences may result from different socio-cultural backgrounds, idiosyncratic factors and life circumstances. Similarly, Antonovsky (1979) indicated that resistance resources are lower in historically black communities. Consequently people from these groups are more prone to stress and a lower sense of coherence. According to Wissing and Van Eeden (2002), it can be expected that the new socio-political dispensation that guarantees equity and equality for all, and ensures human rights through the Constitution, would eventually bring about higher levels of psychological well-being in the historically disadvantaged group. Antonovsky (1991) argued that cultural, social and role patterns constructed for men and women, as well as lack of socio-economic value of women's contributions to society and the labour market play a large role in females' levels of psychological well-being. According to Bosman (2005), presently, one would have to interpret these findings within the context of the Employment Equity initiatives, striving for gender equality and female empowerment.

The objective of the study was to determine the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence. The study was completed in the, Johannesburg-West District Office of the Department in the Gauteng province. In this institution, changes have been taking place since the democratic elections in 1994. In the past, the Department of Education was divided into regions, later separated into 12 districts. During the restructuring process no jobs were lost, but many employees experienced difficulties in terms of their placement, for example having to relocate. Thereafter, employees were informed that a second restructuring would take place.

Research, as cited above, indicates that a link exists between high levels of job insecurity and low levels of job satisfaction; and therefore it is important to determine whether any variable mediates the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction. If situational sense of coherence is found to have a mediating effect on the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction, it will suggest that job insecurity and its negative effects can be managed through training and intervention. Based on the above problem statement, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H₁: Higher levels of job insecurity are associated with lower levels of job satisfaction.
- H₂: Situational sense of coherence mediates the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction.
- H₃: Significant differences exist in the job insecurity levels of different demographic groups.
- H₄: Significant differences exist in the job satisfaction levels of different demographic groups.
- H₅: Significant differences exist in the situational sense of coherence levels of different demographic groups.

METHOD

Research design

A cross-sectional survey was used to achieve the research objectives (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1997)

Participants

The study population consisted of 150 civil servants working at the Johannesburg-West District Office. A response rate of 80% (120 participants) was obtained. The biographical characteristics of the study population are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Participants (N = 120)

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male (1)	58	48,3
	Female (2)	60	50,0
	Missing	2	1,6
	Total	120	100,0
Marital Status	Single (1)	37	30,8
	Married (2)	52	43,3
	Divorced (3)	20	16,7
	Missing	11	9,17
	Total	120	100,0
Job level	Professional (1)	26	21,7
	Semi-professional (2)	38	31,7
	Skilled (3)	28	23,3
	Semi – skilled (4)	12	10,0
	Missing	16	13,3
	Total	120	100,0
Experience	1 to 5 years	29	24,2
	5 to 10 years	33	27,5
	10 to 20 years	37	30,8
	20 years and longer	18	15,0
	Missing	16	13,3
	Total	120	100,0
Qualification	Grade 12 and less (1)	48	40,0
	Diploma/degree (2)	41	34,2
	Post degree (3)	25	20,8
	Missing	6	5,0
	Total	120	100,0
Race	African (1)	70	58,3
	White (2)	24	20,0
	Coloured/Indian (3)	24	20,0
	Missing	2	1,6
	Total	120	100,0
Age	35 younger (1)	36	30,0
	35 – 45 (2)	62	51,6
	45 – Older (3)	19	15,8
	Missing	3	2,5
	Total	120	100,0

Fifty eight per cent of the participants were black, whereas 20% fell within the white category and 20% fell within Indian/Coloured categories. Fifty per cent were females, whereas 48% were males, Fifty two per cent fell in the 35 to 45-age range, whereas 30% fell in the age range 35 years and younger. 16% were 45 years and older of age. Forty per cent of participants had qualifications less than grade 12, whereas 34% had a diploma/degree and 21% had a post graduate degree.

Measuring instruments

For the purpose of this research, three questionnaires were used in the empirical study, namely the Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ) (De Witte, 2000) the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) shortened version (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967) and the Orientation to Life Questionnaire – Form S (OLQ -S) (Antonovsky, 1987).

The *Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ)* (De Witte, 2000) was used as a measure of job insecurity. The eleven items of the JIQ summarise both the cognitive and affective dimensions of job insecurity and are arranged along a five-point scale, with one (1) being "strongly disagree" and five (5) representing strong agreement. An example of a question relating to cognitive job insecurity would be: "I am sure I can keep my job", whereas an example of a question relating to affective job insecurity would be: "I am worried about keeping my job". The items on the JIQ measuring global insecurity are reported to have a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,92, and both scales (cognitive and affective) were shown to be highly reliable, with the six scales measuring cognitive job insecurity displaying a Cronbach alpha of 0,90; and the five items of the affective job insecurity scale having a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,85 (De Witte, 2000). According to De Witte (2000), the content of these two scales do not overlap, but nevertheless, they do show a high underlying correlation ($r = 0,76$; $p < 0,0001$). Labuschagne (2005) obtained an alpha coefficient of 0,79 for the JIQ. Bosman (2005) obtained an alpha coefficient of 0,72 for the affective job insecurity scale and 0,70 for the cognitive subscale.

The *Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)* (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967) indicates how satisfied or dissatisfied respondents are with their jobs by asking respondents to rate themselves on 20 questions, using a five-point scale (1 = "very

dissatisfied" to 5 = "very satisfied"). The shortened MSQ form measures intrinsic job satisfaction and extrinsic job satisfaction using aspects like: "The chance to be 'somebody' in the community", "The way my supervisor handles his/her workers", and "The praise I get for doing a good job". Hirschfeld (2000) found that a two-factor model (intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction) is superior to a one-factor model (total job satisfaction). Alpha coefficients were found to range from 0,87 to 0,95; which supports the internal consistency of the scale (Lam, Baum, & Pine, 1998; Hirschfeld, 2000). Buitendach and Rothmann (2004) obtained a reliability coefficient of 0,82 for the extrinsic job satisfaction scale and 0,79 for the intrinsic job satisfaction scale. Labuschagne (2005) obtained a reliability coefficient of 0,74 for the extrinsic satisfaction scale and 0,78 for the intrinsic satisfaction scale.

The *Orientation to Life Questionnaire – Form S (OLQ-S)* (Antonovsky, 1987), will be used to measure the participant's situational sense of coherence. The items of the OLQ summarise the manageability, meaningfulness and comprehensibility dimensions of sense of coherence and are arranged along a seven-point scale. An example of a question relating to manageability would be: "Do you feel that people whom you counted on disappointed you?". An example of a question relating to meaningfulness would be: "How often do you get the feeling that there's little meaning in the things you do in your daily activities?", whereas an example of a question relating to comprehensibility would be: "Do you feel that your feelings and ideas are mixed-up?" In a South African study, comprising of both public and private sector employees, Grant (2005) obtained a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,77 for the total OLQ-S.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The statistical analysis was conducted using the SPSS program (SPSS Inc, 2005). Cronbach alpha coefficients (α), inter-item correlation coefficients and confirmatory factor analyses were used to determine the validity and reliability of measuring instruments. Descriptive statistics (mean, standards deviation, skewness and kurtosis) was used to analyse the data. Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were used to determine the extent to which one variable is related to another.

MANOVA and ANOVA were used to determine whether demographic groups differ in terms of the job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational aspects. Regression analyses were conducted to determine whether job insecurity holds predictive value with regard to job

satisfaction, and to determine whether situational sense coherence mediates the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction.

RESULTS

Construct validity of JIQ, MSQ and OLQ-S

A simple principal components analysis was conducted on the 11 items of the JIQ on the sample of employees in civil servants in Johannesburg-West District Education Department. Analysis of eigenvalues (larger than 1) and scree plot indicated that two factors could be extracted, which explained 59,34% of the variance. A simple principal components analysis was also conducted on the 20 items of the MSQ. Analysis of eigenvalues (large than 1) and scree plot indicated two factors which explained 36,39% of the variance. Lastly, a simple principal components analysis was conducted on the 29 items of the OLQ-S. Analysis of eigenvalues (large than 1) and scree plot indicated that three factors could be extracted which explained 51,13% of the variance.

Descriptive statistics, Cronbach alpha coefficients and inter-item correlation coefficients of the JIQ, MSQ and OLQ-S for civil servants ($N=120$) working in the Johannesburg-West District Education Department are reported in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics, Cronbach alpha coefficients and Inter-item correlation coefficients of the Measuring Instruments

Test and subscale	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Inter-item r	α
JIQ_Affective	2,50	0,95	0,31	-0,34	0,46	0,79
JIQ_Cognitive	2,37	0,76	0,56	0,15	0,34	0,72
JIQ_Total	2,42	0,77	0,46	0,09	0,36	0,84
MSQ_Intrinsic	3,79	0,53	-0,36	-0,30	0,25	0,79
MSQ_Extrinsic	3,39	0,85	2,14	1,48	0,34	0,57
MSQ_Total	3,63	0,56	0,32	1,06	0,21	0,76
OLQ_Managability	4,58	0,96	0,00	0,17	0,11	0,33
OLQ_Meaningfulness	4,65	0,96	-0,42	-0,13	0,05	0,17
OLQ_Comprehensibility	4,85	1,23	-0,41	0,43	0,30	0,63
OLQ- Total	4,69	0,78	-0,10	0,38	0,13	0,64

Table 2 shows that acceptable Cronbach alpha coefficients were obtained on all scales with exception of the extrinsic subscale of the MSQ, as well as all three subscales of the OLQ-S. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the total OLQ-S also fell below the 0,70 cut-off point.

Given the poor reliability scores of the extrinsic job satisfaction subscales, as well as the three situational sense of coherence subscales, these subscales were excluded from any further analyses. The total OLQ-S was, however, retained given that the reliability coefficient was not extremely low as in the case of the manageability and meaningfulness subscales.

Skewness is a measure of 'lack of symmetry'. A distribution or data set is symmetric if it looks the same to the left and right of the centre point. Kurtosis indicates whether a data set is peaked or flat relative to a normal distribution. Data sets with high kurtosis tend to have a distinct peak near the mean, decline rather rapidly, and have heavy tails. Data sets with low kurtosis tend to have a flat top near the mean rather than a sharp peak. (<http://www.itl.nist.gov/div898/handbook>). Scores on all dimensions seem to be distributed normally (i.e. between -1 and + 1). Both the skewness and kurtosis of the extrinsic job satisfaction subscale fell very slightly above 1.

Next, MANOVA AND ANOVA analyses followed to determine the relationship between demographic groups regarding job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

MANOVA - Differences in Job Insecurity, Job Satisfaction and Situational Sense of Coherence of Demographic Groups

Variable	Value	F	Df	Error Df	p
Gender	0,85	1,99	9	107	0,04*
Race	0,68	2,48	18	212	0,00*
Age	0,73	1,90	18	210	0,01*
Experience	0,49	3,098	27	304	0,00*
Qualification	0,65	2,75	18	204	0,00*

*Statistically significant difference $p \leq 0,05$

In an analysis of Wilk's Lambda values ($p \leq 0,05$), statistically significant differences were obtained for gender, race, experience, age and qualification. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse the relationships between the dependent variables and the demographic variables.

Results demonstrated that significant differences existed between cognitive job insecurity ($p = 0,01$) and intrinsic job satisfaction scores ($p = 0,04$) of males and females. Males were found to experience lower levels of cognitive job insecurity and higher levels of intrinsic job satisfaction compared to the females. It was furthermore indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in the intrinsic job satisfaction levels ($p = 0,02$) among the Black and the Coloured/Indian groups, where the Coloured/Indian group experienced significantly higher levels of intrinsic job satisfaction. Significant differences were found in the affective job insecurity levels ($p = 0,04$), cognitive job insecurity levels ($p = 0,00$) and intrinsic job satisfaction levels ($p = 0,03$) among individuals of different ages, where the group between 35 - 45 years of age displayed higher levels of affective job insecurity, compared with individuals who were 35 years and younger, as well as those 45 years and older. Groups younger than 35 years of age displayed higher levels of cognitive job insecurity and intrinsic job satisfaction, compared with those individuals who were 35- 45 years of age, as well as those who were 45 years or older.

Further significant differences were found in the cognitive job insecurity levels ($p = 0,00$) and intrinsic job satisfaction levels ($p = 0,02$) of individuals with different degrees of experience, where the group with less than 5 years' experience displayed higher levels of cognitive job insecurity and intrinsic job satisfaction, compared to those individuals who have been working in the organisation for more than 5 years. It was found that there is a significant effect of qualification on the dependent variables cognitive job insecurity ($p = 0,00$), intrinsic job satisfaction ($p = 0,00$) and extrinsic job satisfaction ($p = 0,01$). Analysis of the dependent variables for each qualification group revealed that employees who have grade 12 or less and those who have degree diplomas or degrees experience higher levels of cognitive job insecurity compared to those individuals with a post-graduate degree. Individuals with grade 12 or less also displayed lower levels of intrinsic job satisfaction compared to those individuals with a degree/diploma or post-graduate qualification. Regarding extrinsic job satisfaction, results indicated that individuals with a post-graduate degree experience higher levels of extrinsic job satisfaction compared to those with a grade 12 qualifications or less.

The correlation coefficients between of the JIQ, MSQ and OLQ-S for civil servants are reported in Table 4.

Table 4

Correlation coefficients between the JIQ, MSQ and OLQ-S

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. JIQ_Affective	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. JIQ_Cognitive	0,66*††	-	-	-	-	-
3. JIQ_Total	0,91*††	0,91*††	-	-	-	-
4. MSQ_Intrinsic	0,07*	-0,03*	0,02*	-	-	-
5. MSQ_Total	-0,04*	-0,13*	-0,10*	0,85*††	-	-
6. OLQ_Total	-0,18*	-0,33*†	-0,28*†	0,12*	0,13*	-

* Statistically significant $p \leq 0.01$ † Correlation is practically significant $r \geq 0.30$ (medium effect)†† Correlation is practically significant $r \geq 0.50$ (large effect)

From Table 5 it can be seen that a negative correlation of medium effect was found between cognitive job insecurity and situational sense of coherence, implying that situational sense of coherence increases as job insecurity decreases. A similar statistically significant relationship was found between total job insecurity and situational sense of coherence, as well as affective job insecurity and situational sense of coherence, although these were below the practically significant cut-off point.

The correlation between intrinsic job satisfaction and the job insecurity dimensions were statistically significant, but unexpected in that the correlation between intrinsic job satisfaction and affective and total job insecurity was positive, suggesting that intrinsic job satisfaction increased as affective and total job insecurity increased. Total job satisfaction displayed negative statistically significant correlations with all the job insecurity dimensions, although these correlations fell below the practically significant cut-off point. Situational sense of coherence displayed a statistically significant correlation with intrinsic job satisfaction and total job satisfaction, implying that job satisfaction and situation sense of coherence increase commensurately.

Baron and Kenny (1986) recommend three steps in order to test for mediation. According to these authors, beta coefficients of different regression equations must be compared. First, the mediator should be predicted by the independent variable. Secondly, the mediator and the independent variable should predict the dependent variable. Thirdly, the dependent variable should be regressed on the independent variable, controlling for the mediator. If all steps

prove to be significant, perfect mediation holds when, controlling for mediator, the independent variable does not predict the dependent variable.

The relationships found between situational sense of coherence and job satisfaction, as well as job insecurity and job satisfaction, were not very strong. Regression analyses indicated that situational sense of coherence does not hold a statistically significant amount of predictive value with regard to job satisfaction, nor does job insecurity predict a statistically significant amount of variance with regard to job satisfaction. Consequently, it is clear that situational sense of coherence does not play a mediating role in the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction. Hypotheses 1 and 2 are thus rejected.

Regression analysis was, however, conducted with job insecurity (independent variable) and situational sense of coherence (dependent variable), controlling for the influence of demographic variables, the results of which are provided in Table 5.

Table 5

Regression analysis – Job Insecurity (Cognitive & Affective): Total Orientation to Life

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Model 1: Demographic variables

	Source of variation	Df	Sum of squares	Mean Square
R: 0,32				
R ² : 0,10				
Adjusted R ² : 0,06	Regression	5	6,85	1,37
	Residual	102	60,25	0,59
	$F = 2,32 \quad p = 0,05^*$			

Model 1: Demographic variables

	Source of variation	Df	Sum of squares	Mean Square
R: 0,43				
R ² : 0,18				
Adjusted R ² : 0,13	Regression	7	12,33	1,76
	Residual	100	54,78	0,55
	$F = 3,21 \quad p = 0,00^*$			

VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	B	SEB	Beta	t	p
Gender	-0,10	0,15	-0,61	-0,63	0,53
Race	-0,06	0,08	-0,07	-0,72	0,48
Age	-0,32	0,13	-0,34	-2,42	0,02*
Experience	-0,32	0,12	0,42	2,83	0,01*
Qualification	0,01	0,10	0,01	0,13	0,90
Gender	-0,02	0,15	-0,01	-0,12	0,91
Race	-0,07	0,80	-0,09	-0,88	0,38
Age	-0,33	0,13	-0,35	-2,59	0,01*
Experience	0,26	0,11	0,33	2,26	0,03*
Qualification	-0,00	0,09	-0,01	-0,06	0,95
JIQ_Affective	0,03	0,10	0,04	0,29	0,78
JIQ_Cognitive	-0,34	0,14	-0,34	-2,50	0,01*

*Statistically significant difference: $p < 0.05$

From Table 5 it is evident that age and experience contributed towards 6% of the variance in situational sense of coherence. In the second step, upon inclusion of affective and cognitive job insecurity, the adjusted R² increased to 13%, implying that job insecurity predicted 7% of the variance in situational sense of coherence. It is furthermore apparent that affective job insecurity did not predict a statistically significant amount of variance in situational sense of

coherence ($p = 0,78$), but rather that cognitive job insecurity ($p = 0,01$) held predictive value with regard to situational sense of coherence.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence of civil servants in Johannesburg-West District Department of Education. Differences in the job insecurity, situational sense of coherence and job satisfaction levels of different demographic groups were also investigated.

Factor analyses confirmed the two-factor structure of the JIQ and MSQ, as well as the three-factor structure of the QLO-S. The extrinsic job satisfaction scale, however, presented poor reliability and was not used in subsequent analyses. This does not correspond with the findings of previous researchers (e.g. Heymans, 2002; Labuschagne, 2005). The subscale of the OLQ-S, particularly the manageability and meaningfulness subscales, presented poor reliability coefficients. The comprehensibility subscale, as well as the total OLQ-S, presented slightly deficient reliability coefficients. Given the poor reliability scores of the three situational sense of coherence subscales, these subscales were excluded from any further analyses. The total OLQ-S was, however, retained; given that the reliability coefficient was not extremely low as in the case of the manageability and meaningfulness subscales.

A negative correlation of medium effect was found between cognitive job insecurity and situational sense of coherence, implying that situational sense of coherence increases as job insecurity decreases. A similar statistically significant relationship was found between affective job insecurity and situational sense of coherence, although this was below the practical significance cut-off point. The correlation between intrinsic job satisfaction and the job insecurity dimensions was statistically significant, but unexpected in that the correlation between intrinsic job satisfaction and affective and total job insecurity was positive, suggesting that intrinsic job satisfaction increases as affective and total job insecurity increase. The results do not correspond with previous findings (Ashford et al., 1989, Hartley et al., 1991, Heaney, Israel, & House, 1994).

The relationships found between situational sense of coherence and job satisfaction, as well as job insecurity and job satisfaction were not very strong. Regression analyses indicated that situational sense of coherence does not hold a statistically significant amount of predictive value with regard to job satisfaction, nor does job insecurity hold a statistically significant amount of variance with regard to job satisfaction. Consequently, it is clear that situational sense of coherence does not play a mediating role in the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were thus rejected. Regression analysis was, however, conducted with job insecurity (independent variable) and situational sense of coherence (dependent variable), controlling for the influence of demographic variables. It was established that job insecurity held a statistically significant amount of predictive value with regard to situational sense of coherence.

Bosman (2005) found differences in the cognitive job insecurity scores of different cultural groups, as she found that the white participants experienced statistically significantly higher levels of cognitive job insecurity compared to their black counterparts. This finding was not replicated in this study. It was, however, indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in the intrinsic job satisfaction levels of the black and the Coloured/Indian groups, where the Coloured/Indian group experienced significantly higher levels of intrinsic job satisfaction. Buitendach and Rothmann (2005) also found that black employees experienced lower levels of intrinsic job satisfaction as compared to the white employees. Results demonstrated that significant differences existed between the cognitive job insecurity and intrinsic job satisfaction scores of males and females. Males were found to experience lower levels of cognitive job insecurity and higher levels of intrinsic job satisfaction as compared to females. Based on the patriarchy theory, theories of gendered occupations and jobs, and theory of gendered organisation, Rosenblatt, Talmud, and Ruvio (1999) inferred that females, in general, should experience higher levels of job insecurity than males. These researchers found on a multidimensional measure of job insecurity, that males were more insecure, emphasising financial concerns, whereas females also experienced financial concerns, but emphasised intrinsic facets of their jobs.

Metle (2003) notes that education contributes to job satisfaction indirectly by increasing both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, but diminishes job satisfaction by increasing occupational expectations. In this study it was found that those who have grade 12 or less and those who

have diplomas or degrees experience higher levels of cognitive job insecurity and lower levels of intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction compared to those individuals with a post-graduate degree. Buitendach and Rothmann (2005) found more highly qualified employees experienced higher levels of job satisfaction than employees with lower levels of education. Similar to these research findings, Manski and Straub (2000) found that job insecurity tends to decrease with schooling.

Significant differences were found in the affective job insecurity levels, cognitive job insecurity levels and intrinsic job satisfaction levels of individuals of different ages. The group between 35 and 45 years of age displayed higher levels of affective job insecurity than their younger and older counterparts. This corresponds with De Witte's (1999) report that potential unemployment is most distressing for respondents between the ages of approximately 30 to 50 years, seeming to be less problematic for younger and older respondents. The reason for this probably relates to the fact that younger respondents have less financial responsibilities and better prospects of finding a job in future, and older respondents can prepare themselves for a new role, being that of retirement (De Witte, 1999). The finding that employees younger than 35 years of age displayed higher levels of cognitive job insecurity has not been replicated in other studies. The employees falling within the age category 35 years and younger also displayed higher levels of intrinsic job satisfaction than the older groups of employees. This does not correspond with the findings of Labuschagne (2005). Significant differences were found in the cognitive job insecurity and intrinsic job satisfaction levels of individuals with different degrees of experience. The group with less than five years' experience displayed higher levels of cognitive job insecurity and intrinsic job satisfaction, compared to those individuals who have been working in the organisation for more than 5 years. Based on these findings, hypotheses 3: Significant differences exist in the job insecurity levels of different demographic groups and 4: Significant differences exist in the job satisfaction levels of different demographic were thus accepted. Hypothesis 5, stating that differences exist in the situational sense of coherence levels of different demographic groups was rejected.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As recommended by Grant (2005), more research is required regarding the validity of the OLQ-S in the South African context, also investigating the cultural equivalence of the measuring instrument. This study should also be replicated within others settings and using larger samples. All data referred to in this study were obtained by means of self-report scales, which limit the generality of the findings to some extent. Self-report questionnaires increase the likelihood that at least part of the shared variances between measures could be attributed to method variance (Schaufeli, Enzmann & Girault, 1993). A cross-sectional design was used in this study, whereas a longitudinal design is generally more appropriate when making causal interpretations. It is recommended that research should take place in other Department of Education district offices and Head Office in order to improve the generalisability of research findings. This research can also be extended to other provinces in South Africa.

According to Heymans (2002) management needs to devise methods of keeping employees informed at all levels of development within the organisation which will serve as a “buffer” regarding feelings towards job insecurity. Heymans (2002) furthermore suggests that in order to be proactive contingencies need to be put in place to counter the emotional impact job insecurity might have on the workforce. Building trust, creating support and fostering concerns for others may offer some hope for mitigating the effects of job insecurity. In a similar vein, De Witte (2005) notes that the negative consequences of job insecurity can be avoided/mitigated through the reduction of unpredictability and uncontrollability. This can be achieved by means of communication, participation in decision making and increasing organisational justice. De Witte (2005) is furthermore of the opinion that job insecurity is exacerbated by a lack of communication about future events and that open, honest and early communication increases the predictability and controllability of future events. Participation in the decision-making process also heightens the predictability of events, and together with communication strengthens the perception that employees are treated fairly by the employer, i.e. the perception of organisational justice.

The organisation could manage employees’ sense of coherence by giving information in constant, structured, ordered and understandable format (Rothmann, 2001). Training and development programmes that are directed at developing sense of coherence should be

compiled and evaluated. Addressing the three identified components with regard to situational sense of coherence (i.e. comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness) would be required in this regard. Manageability within the workplace refers to experiences of an appropriate load balance and being provided with adequate resources such as knowledge, skills, materials, and equipment and meaningfulness in the workplace might, as an example, be affected by participation in decision-making (Antonovsky, 1987). Comprehensibility can be obtained by ensuring that employees experience their work description as clearly structured and consequential and understand where their work role fits into the entire work picture (Antonovsky, 1987).

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CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, conclusions will be drawn regarding the literature study and the results of the empirical research will be discussed. The limitations of the study will be highlighted and recommendations will be made for further studies.

3.1 CONCLUSION

In this section, conclusions are presented regarding the specific theoretical objectives and the results of the empirical research.

3.1.1 Conclusion regarding the specific theoretical objectives

Job insecurity has been defined as the fear of losing one's job, uncertainty regarding the future and doubts about the continuation of the job (Everett, 2004). According to Burchell (2003), the fear of redundancy is not the only aspect of job insecurity. Although many employees are not unduly worried about losing their jobs *per se*, they are, however, worried about the loss of valued job features, such as their status within the organisation and their opportunity for promotion. Within this research, job insecurity was however conceptualised (and measured) as a global concern (i.e. fear of job loss), consisting of an affective and cognitive component (De Witte, 2000).

Greenglass, Burke, and Fiksenbaum (2002) indicate that research has shown that job insecurity has been associated with psychological distress and poor health. Research conducted by Feldt, Kinnunen, and Mauno (2000) showed that low job insecurity was related to strong sense of coherence, which was, in turn, linked to a high level of general, as well as occupational well-being. The relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction is demonstrated in the research of Ashford, Lee and Bobko (1989) who found a significantly lower level of job satisfaction among employees who felt insecure. Heymans (2002), in a South African study, found that cognitive job insecurity is related to decreased levels of intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. In a South African government organisation, Labuschagne (2005) also found a negative correlation between job insecurity and job satisfaction.

According to Lawler (2005), job satisfaction as a unidimensional construct relates to whether one is satisfied or dissatisfied with one's job. In contrast, Smith (2005) argues that job satisfaction is multidimensional; that is, one may be more or less satisfied with one's job, one's supervisor, one's pay, one's workplace, and so forth. Robbins (1998) describes job satisfaction as a general attitude towards one's job; the difference between the amount workers receive and the amount they believe they should receive. In this research, job satisfaction was conceptualised as consisting of intrinsic and extrinsic aspects. Intrinsic job satisfaction is the value opportunity for intellectual fulfilment, creative self-expression, and the pleasure associated with task mastery on the job, and extrinsic job satisfaction is primary value remuneration and views work principally as a means to attaining such remuneration (Caroline, 2005).

Stanley (2001) indicates that job satisfaction is important because it affects, *inter alia*, tardiness, productivity and organisational effectiveness. According to Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert, and Hatfield (2002), job satisfaction has been linked with absenteeism and turnover in many studies (Vahtera, Kivimäki, & Pentti 2005).

Situational sense of coherence is a way of seeing the world or an orientation to life that facilitates successful coping. The sense of coherence comprises three dimensions: comprehensibility (the cognitive component), manageability (the instrumental or coping component), and meaningfulness (the motivational component) (Antonovsky, 1993).

3.1.2 Conclusion regarding the specific empirical objectives

The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence.

The first specific empirical objective was to determine the relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence of civil servants in the Johannesburg-West District. A negative correlation of medium effect was found between cognitive job insecurity and situational sense of coherence, implying that situational sense of coherence increases as job insecurity decreases. A similar statistically significant relationship was found between affective job insecurity and situational sense of coherence, although this was below the practically significant cut-off point. The correlations between intrinsic job

satisfaction and the job insecurity dimensions were statistically significant, but unexpected given that the correlation between intrinsic job satisfaction and affective and total job insecurity was positive, suggesting that intrinsic job satisfaction increases as affective and total job insecurity increases. Rannona (2003) found that a practically significant negative correlation exists between job insecurity and job satisfaction. Situational sense of coherence displayed a statistically significant correlation with intrinsic job satisfaction and total job satisfaction, implying that job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence increase commensurately.

With regard to the second specific empirical objective, which was to determine whether job insecurity can be used to predict job satisfaction of employees in the institution, the results of the regression analysis indicated that job insecurity does not hold a statistically significant amount of predictive value with regard to job satisfaction. Ashford et al. (1989) however found the contrary, i.e. that job insecurity held predictive value with regard to job satisfaction.

The third specific empirical objective was to determine whether situational sense of coherence mediates the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction. Research conducted by Feldt, Kinnunen, and Mauno (2000) showed that low job insecurity was related to strong sense of coherence, which was, in turn, linked to a high level of general, as well as occupational well-being. Similarly, it was expected that situational sense of coherence would mediate the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction. Given that job insecurity was not found to hold a statistically significant amount of predictive value with regard to job satisfaction, as well as the fact that situational sense of coherence was not found to predict a statistically significant amount of variance in job satisfaction, it could be concluded that situational sense of coherence does not play a mediating role in the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction.

3.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The following limitations can be identified in this study:

- ◆ A cross-sectional design was used in this study, which is not ideal for making causal interpretations. In future, longitudinal studies should be considered where inferences in terms of cause and effect can be made.

- ◆ The study was conducted in the one of the many districts of the Education Department, and as a result, the study population used was small, which made it difficult to generalise beyond the population.
- ◆ The entire targeted population did not fill in/respond to the questionnaire. The total population was 150, but only 120 questionnaires were received.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.3.1 Recommendations for the organisation and future research

The results of this study points to many avenues that can be explored further:

It is recommended that a larger, more representative sample is used in future, which will provide increased confidence that the results would be consistent across similar groups. A comparative and cross- cultural study of job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence within other various districts within the Education Department is required. In this study, a cross-sectional design was employed to assess interrelationship among variables within a population. For future research it is recommended that research be repeated using longitudinal study concerning the dynamics involved in job insecurity, job satisfaction and situational sense of coherence; this should be undertaken to gain greater understanding of these phenomena. The OLQ-S is a new questionnaire. As suggested by Grant (2005), research is needed regarding the reliability and validity of the OLQ-S in a South African context, also investigating cultural bias and equivalence.

Given that job insecurity was found to affect situational sense of coherence negatively, contingencies need to be put in place to counter the emotional impact that job insecurity might have on the workforce. Management needs to pay attention to employees' situational sense of coherence and ensure proper support. Change management diagnosis and interventions should be introduced into the institution. This analysis should be used to assist employees to deal with changes and should equip them to cope in a changing, challenging environment.

According to De Witte (2005), the negative consequences of job insecurity can be avoided/mitigated through the reduction of unpredictability and uncontrollability. This can be achieved by means of communication, participation in decision making and increasing organisational justice. De Witte (2005) is furthermore of the opinion that job insecurity is

exacerbated by a lack of communication about future events and that open, honest and early communication increases the predictability and controllability of future events. Participation in the decision-making process also heightens the predictability of events, and together with communication strengthens the perception that employees are treated fairly by the employer, i.e. the perception of organisational justice (De Witte, 2005). Addressing the three identified components with regard to situational sense of coherence (i.e. comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness) is required. Manageability within the workplace refers to experiences of an appropriate load balance and being provided with adequate resources such as knowledge, skills, materials, and equipment and meaningfulness in the workplace might, as an example, be affected by participation in decision-making (Antonovsky, 1987). Comprehensibility can be obtained by ensuring that employees experience their work description as clearly structured and consequential and understand where their work role fits into the entire work picture (Antonovsky, 1987).

3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, conclusions regarding the theoretical and empirical objectives were made. The limitations of the research were pointed out and recommendations were made for the organisation in which the study was conducted, as well as for future research. All theoretical and empirical objectives formulated for this research have been attained.

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