SETTING A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR JOB INSECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICAN ORGANISATIONS

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A NOTE TO THE TEXT

The reader is reminded of the following:

- The references as well as the style as prescribed by the *Publication Manual (5ᵗʰ 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 as from January 1999.

- The mini-dissertation is submitted in the form of a literature review and empirical results. The editorial style specified by the *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology* (which corresponds largely with the APA style) has been used, but the APA guidelines were followed in constructing tables and figures.

"To God all the Glory!"

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SUMMARY

Title: Setting a research agenda for job insecurity in South African organisations.

Key words: Job insecurity, antecedents of job insecurity, consequences of job insecurity, moderators and mediators of job insecurity.

In the current South African context, job insecurity has become a phenomenon to be reckoned with. Although research on this phenomenon is still scarce, a growing interest in the perceived experience of job insecurity and its different underlying constructs is obvious from the increase of job insecurity research. A comprehensive summary of previous research studies and relevant outcomes is therefore relevant. Up to now, South African studies on job insecurity have accepted the assumptions and context of international research studies on job insecurity. It is now time to investigate the influence of the South African context on this phenomenon and to include this background in future studies.

The main objective of this study was to review, investigate, compare, evaluate and interpret existing research, conducted internationally and nationally, in order to set a research agenda through proposing a theoretical model for job insecurity in South African organisations. The model will primarily serve as an academic tool to new research scholars to identify new research problems, existing sources of information, relevant measuring instruments, and contextual variables that may be of interest. The model will also be applicable as a management tool to understand and deal with job insecurity in South African organisations.

A qualitative, descriptive research design was followed to perform content analysis and an extensive literature review. Results of the qualitative content analysis were enhanced with semi-structured interviews with managers from different organisations ($N = 24$).

Results indicated gaps between international and South African research studies as well as the gaps indicated between theory and practice. This was indicated by a comparison between the South African research results and the results from the semi-structured interviews with selected managers. These results were integrated into a proposed model for job insecurity in order to serve as a guideline for future research. It also serves as a tool for managers to be

aware of the presence of job insecurity, and to enable them to improve their management intervention.

Conclusions and limitations of the study were discussed and recommendations for organisations and for future research were made.

OPSOMMING

Titel: Ontwikkeling van 'n navorsingsagenda vir werksonsekerheid in Suid-Afrikaanse organisasies.

Sleutelwoorde: Wersksonsekerheid, voorspellers van werksonsekerheid, gevolge van werksonsekerheid, mediërende faktore en modererende faktore van werksonsekerheid.

Werksonsekerheid het in die huidige Suid-Afrikaanse konteks 'n fenomeen geword wat nie buite rekening gelaat kan word nie. Toenemende belangstelling in die persepsiële ervarings van werksonsekerheid, sowel as die verskillende konstrukte wat werksonsekerheid onderlê, is waarneembaar in die toename van navorsing in hierdie veld, hoewel navorsing oor hierdie fenomeen in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks as skaars beskou word. 'n Omvattende opsomming van vorige navorsingstudies en die relevante uitkomste daarvan is as noodsaaklik aangedui. Huidige navorsing oor werksonsekerheid in Suid-Afrika het internasionale navorsingsbenaderings en kontekste aanvaar as uitgangspunt. Dit het tyd geword om die invloed van die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks op hierdie fenomeen te bepaal en verdere navorsing hierop te baseer.

Die hoof doelstelling van hierdie studie was om bestaande internasionale, sowel as Suid-Afrikaanse navorsingstudies te ondersoek, te evalueer en te interpreteer, om sodoende 'n navorsingsagenda met behulp van 'n voorgestelde teoretiese model vir werksonsekerheid in Suid-Afrikaanse organisasies daar te stel. Die model kan eerstens as 'n akademiese instrument gesien word om nuwe navorsingsprobleme te identifiseer, bewus te word van beskikbare literatuurbronne, geskikte meetinstrumente te ondersoek en geskikte veranderlikes te bepaal. Tweedens kan die model nuttig deur Suid-Afrikaanse bestuurders aangewend word om werksonsekerheid te verstaan en beter te hanteer.

'n Kwalitatiewe, beskrywende navorsingsontwerp is gevolg om 'n inhoudsanalise en uitgebreide literatuurstudie uit te voer. Die kwalitatiewe inhoudsanalise is ondersteun deur semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude wat met bestuurders van verskillende organisasies gevoer is ($N = 24$).

Die resultate het die gapings tussen internasionale en Suid-Afrikaanse studies beklemtoon, en ook die gaping aangedui tussen teorie en praktyk wat voortgespruit het uit die vergelyking van die resultate van Suid-Afrikaanse studies met die resultate van die semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude. Vervolgens is resultate van die studie geïntegreer in 'n voorgestelde model vir werksonsekerheid. Hierdie model kan dien as riglyn vir verdere studies in die veld van werksonsekerheid en as hulpmiddel benut word om werksonsekerheid te bestuur en intervensies te loods.

Gevolgtrekkings en beperkinge van die studie is bespreek en aanbevelings aan organisasies, sowel as vir verdere navorsing, is gemaak.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This mini-dissertation focuses on the current state of research in the field of job insecurity in South African organisations, in order to set a research agenda for future research, by proposing a theoretical model of job insecurity in South African organisations. The theoretical agenda also incorporates the views of prominent managers who are faced with dealing with the issue of job insecurity in their respective organisations.

In this chapter, the problem statement is discussed, whereupon the research objectives are set out. Following this, the research method is discussed and the division of chapters is presented.

1.   PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1.   Overview of the problem

Job insecurity amongst workers in South Africa has gained interest as a research topic as more and more organisations face a dynamic and changing environment in the world of work (Robbins, Odendaal, & Roodt, 2004). Job insecurity is a more complex concept than only keeping or losing a job. It is a broad spectrum, multi-dimensional concept, which includes various job features and different aspects of a job in totality (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984).

Research conducted in the field of job insecurity in South African organisations is scarce (De Witte, 2005). In a special edition on job insecurity of the *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, a few South African studies emphasised the idea that scientific analysis of job insecurity in South Africa is only starting to develop (*South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 2005, volume 31, nr. 4). Since 2002, the North-West University made a significant contribution towards job insecurity research in South African organisations, and scholars continue to research this field. Only two formal publications from other South African

institutions of research in this field could be traced in the South African and international literature. However, it appears that the time for synthesis and stocktaking is ripe. Researchers nationally need a comprehensive summary of previous research studies and relevant outcomes. An important question to answer will be what possible fields related to job insecurity still need to be studied in South African organisations. Scholars who want to research the job insecurity field need to know the answer to this question in order to choose relevant, practical, significant and feasible research titles. Given the changing nature of the business landscape in contemporary South Africa, information on job insecurity also seems relevant for managers faced with dealing with the phenomenon (Robbins et al., 2004).

The main objective of this study will be to review, investigate, compare, evaluate and interpret existing research, conducted internationally and nationally, in order to set a research agenda through proposing a theoretical model of job insecurity in South African organisations. An important objective in this regards will be to place the South African body of knowledge within the broader body of knowledge which has come into existence internationally. This model should primarily serve as an academic tool to conceptualise job insecurity in South African organisations, with consideration of the South African context. New research scholars should have the opportunity to use the model to identify new research problems, existing sources of information, relevant measuring instruments, and contextual variables that may be of interest. Ultimately, the model should also serve as a management tool in understanding and dealing with job insecurity in South African organisations.

1.2 Literature review

The purpose of the literature review is to identify gaps in existing knowledge, and to define the research problem. A general reflection about the development of the research problem will be presented and the main constructs of the research will be theoretically defined from the literature.

Job insecurity is no longer mainly found as a construct affecting lower class jobs. According to Burchell, Ladipo and Wilkinson (2002), this phenomenon is now equally spread across all levels of the workforce. The once thought-of as professional jobs are now made available on the same

casual basis as other positions. Job insecurity will not be a passing phenomenon; it will continue to impact on not only individuals and organisations, but also on the wider community context (Burchell et al., 2002; Lee, 2001). The changing world of work, which involves global competitiveness, the need for flexibility and the constant demand to do more with less, brings along the constant perception and fear of possible job loss (De Witte, 2000; Reisel, 2002). Although not much research has been done to prove the impact of job insecurity on the social context of the wider community, a few researchers are convinced that areas such as household stability, union member loyalty and quality of family life are affected by high levels of job insecurity in individuals (Charles & James, 2003; De Ruyter & Burgers, 2000; Sverke & Goslinga, 2003).

According to Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans and Van Vuuren (1991), conceptualising job insecurity requires three different considerations. Job insecurity can be viewed as an objective or subjective phenomenon (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), a cognitive or affective quality (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984) and as a perceived probability of job loss with an expectancy component, where the severity of job loss would present a value component (Hartley et al., 1991). Hellgren, Sverke and Isaksson (1999) added further dimensions to the conceptualisation of job insecurity in distinguishing between a qualitative and quantitative dimension. Quantitative job insecurity refers to concerns about the future existence of a current job, and qualitative job insecurity indicates the perceived threats to the quality of the employment situation (Hellgren et al., 1999). The quality of the employment situation may be signified by factors such as the possibility of promotions, salary increases and pension contributions (De Witte, 2005).

Different assumptions and underlying theories guide the conceptualisation of job insecurity. Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison and Pinneau (1975) created a model which categorises *job future ambiguity* as a subjective stressor and developed a multi-item scale measure to assess job insecurity. The unidimensional measure of Johnson, Messe and Crano (1984) measures only the fear of job loss as a single stressor. As early as 1984, Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt speculated that job insecurity was expected to become an even more important construct, worthy of measurement and especially management in organisations. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) studied the relationship between job insecurity and indicators of organisational effectiveness,

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such as productivity, turnover and adaptability. Gradually, a shift from global measures of job insecurity (Caplan et al., 1975; Johnson et al., 1984), towards a more multidimensional approach to measurement (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989; Reisel, 2002), took place.

Ashford et al. (1989) developed a multi-dimensional scale which captures threats against valued job features in addition to the threat of total job loss. Hartley et al. (1991) argued against the multidimensional measurement of job insecurity and view job insecurity as a specific concern about the *future* of a job. De Witte (2000) suggested that job insecurity should be measured globally as the perceived job insecurity of employees. His eleven-item scale (De Witte, 2000), where five items measure the cognitive, and six items measure the affective dimensions of job insecurity, has mostly been used to collect data in South African studies. The five-item global scale of Sverke et al. (2004) is the latest addition to conceptualising job insecurity through measurement. This measure assesses the relationship of job insecurity as a stressor in relation to its predictors and outcomes.

Most of the research done in South Africa conceptualised job insecurity from the viewpoint that the affective and cognitive qualities thereof will change, depending on various personal and environmental factors (Elbert, 2002; Heymans, 2002). In the light of the above-mentioned considerations in conceptualising job insecurity, and in response to various approaches to measurement of this construct, the current research will investigate existing South African research as far as possible, in order to set a research agenda through a theoretical model of job insecurity in South African organisations. Although a thorough theoretical overview would seem sufficient to *conceptualise* the construct, it is also necessary to *contextualise* the construct. To this extent, and to add practical relevance to the proposed model, semi-structured interviews with experts in the industrial and business environments will also be conducted in order to assess and incorporate their views regarding job insecurity in South Africa.

This research will review the antecedents of job insecurity, the moderating and mediating effects on the consequences of job insecurity for the individual, and the relevant organisational and social constructs identified in previous literature and research.

Job insecurity

Job insecurity has been defined in various ways. Caplan et al. (1975, p. 812) refer to job insecurity broadly as: "general cognitive uncertainty about future security". Greenhalgh (1983, p. 432) broadens this definition by stating that: "job insecurity can be defined as a feeling of powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a work situation". The inclusion of powerlessness into the definition acknowledges an affective component. Although Greenhalgh's definition (1983) includes an affective component to define job insecurity, it was not included in the measure (Reisel, 2002). Reisel (2002) further indicated that, except for Johnson et al. (1984), no other measure up to that point had included both a cognitive and an affective component of job insecurity.

Roskies and Louis-Guerin (1990, p. 346) refer to job insecurity as: "a concern about the possibility of employment uncertainty", and it may be argued that this definition includes both a cognitive and affective component. Reisel (2002) took the stance that a multiplicative approach to job insecurity will offer greater conceptual clarity to the construct. Job insecurity is defined by Reisel (2002) as the sum of cognitively experienced risks and affectively experienced fears. De Witte (2005) confirms this by differentiating between the measurement of cognitive and affective job insecurity. According to De Witte (2005), job insecurity can be defined as the cognitive probability of losing a job, and the affective experience of the concern with it.

Based on the above, job insecurity can be conceptualised as comprising of two components, being the recognition of threats to job security and the concern about these threats. This implies that the conceptualised model will include a cognitive and an affective job insecurity component. However, it is also of relevance to conceptualise job insecurity in South African organisations as having objective and subjective components, as well as qualitative and quantitative components, and these notions need further investigation.

Antecedents

To be viewed as an antecedent, factors should be defined as a possible cause, or in some cases even a predictor, of job insecurity (Dooley, 2003). Previous research defined antecedents from a number of perspectives and classifications. Primarily, antecedents can be defined as the possible causes of perceived job insecurity (Ashford et al., 1989; Hartley et al., 1991). De Witte (2005) classifies these antecedents into three levels: variables on a macro-level (organisational and national), individual background characteristics (age, gender, tenure) and personality traits (locus of control and negative affectivity). According to Hartley et al. (1991), organisational and positional variables (rank and qualification) are the most important antecedents to the subjective feeling of job insecurity. On the other hand, De Weerdt, De Witte, Cattellani and Milesi (2004) found the level of unemployment and the economical situation of the country to be strong antecedents of job insecurity. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) argued that the effect of the antecedent on job insecurity can be direct or indirect, implying that well-communicated (direct) messages of circumstances have a different effect on perceived job insecurity than rumours (indirect), spread about anticipated circumstances. According to Näswall (2004), there is a lack of international research that focuses on the possible antecedents of job insecurity.

In the current study, antecedents will be viewed as the possible causes (previous circumstances, background predictors and experiences) impacting on an individual's perceived job insecurity. Antecedents will be grouped into two main groups: macro-level antecedents, including organisational and political dynamics, and micro-level antecedents, including job and biographical characteristics.

Consequences

Most literature defines consequences as the negative results, or the effects, of job insecurity on the individual and the organisation (Ashford et al., 1989; De Witte, 1999; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Nolan, Wichert, & Burchell, 2000; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002; Sverke et al., 2004). As previously mentioned, job insecurity can be considered as a stressor, and therefore has a negative impact on employees' health and well-being (Siegrist, 1996).

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Individual changes because of job insecurity will have a direct as well as an indirect effect on the effectiveness of the organisation (Greenhalg & Rosenblatt, 1984). De Witte (2005) stated that dissatisfied and uncommitted employees may have a negative effect on the social atmosphere of the organisation. Feelings of job insecurity may also increase the turnover of the organisation beyond healthy levels (Bultena, 1998). Marais (2005) found that high levels of job insecurity are related to increased physical symptoms of illness in South African organisations. Another area which might be negatively affected because of job insecurity in an individual is the social component, however, not much literature could be found to support this notion. Larson, Weilson and Beley (1994) touched on this issue by indicating the impact of individual job insecurity on family well-being.

The proposed research agenda of this study will review consequences on three levels: individual, organisational and social. Individual consequences will be defined as the direct consequences because of individual job insecurity. Secondly, organisational consequences will be the indirect consequences suffered by the organisation due to the sum of individual consequences of job insecurity. Thirdly, social consequences are considered, which will be the indirect consequences of job insecurity, affecting the social environment of the individual and/or the organisation.

Social consequences can be seen as an addition to existing models, where only individual and organisational consequences are mentioned (Ashford et al., 1989; De Witte, 1999; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Sverke et al., 2004). Possible social consequences might include the deterioration of the family structure, impairment of interpersonal relationships, as well as an increase in crime, economical stress and unemployment. No scientific evidence for these theses could be found and further research and investigation are needed.

Mediators

A mediator is defined as the mechanism by which one variable affects another (Terre Blance & Durrheim, 2002). The effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable will be significantly reduced by controlling for the mediator (Sobel, 1982). The relationship between the mentioned variables is shown in the diagram below.

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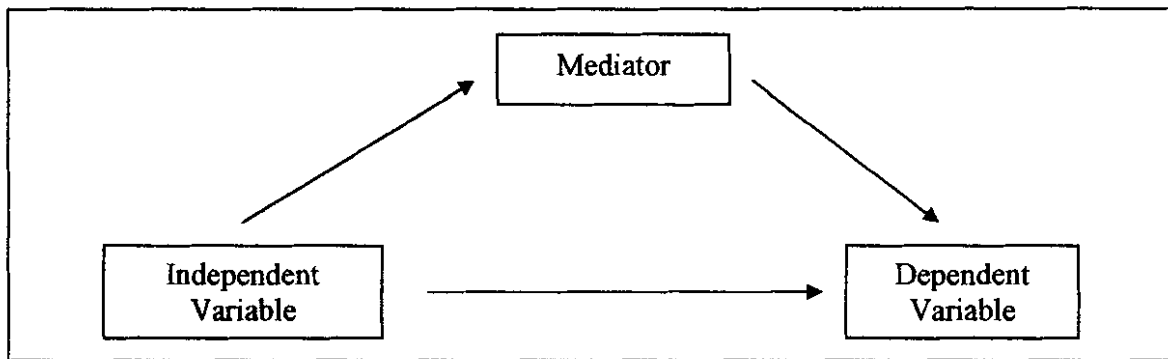
Figure 1. Diagrammatical explanation of mediation (Terre Blance & Durrheim, 2002).

Sverke et al. (2004) found that certain personality factors, namely locus of control, self-efficacy and affectivity, have an effect on the interpretation of the environment by the individual, and this could, in turn, affect the level of job insecurity. The current study will view mediators as variables that have an effect on the level of job insecurity. Previous findings on the mediating effect of self-efficacy, sense of coherence and coping skills, as well as work locus of control, will be evaluated to determine its position in the proposed research agenda.

Moderators

Terre Blance and Durrheim (2002) define a moderator as a variable that changes the impact of one variable on another. The relationship between variables is shown in the following diagram.
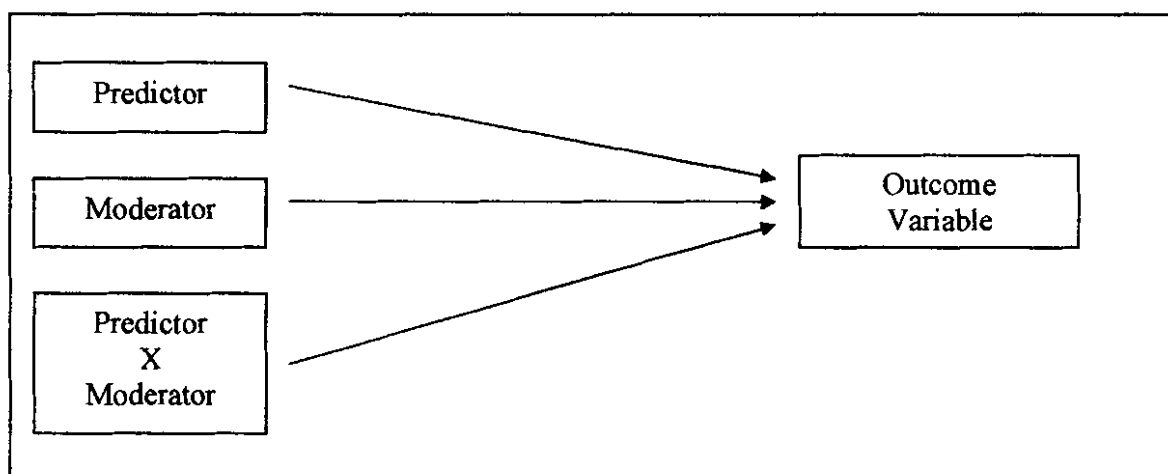
Figure 2. Diagrammatical explanation of moderation (Terre Blance &Durrheim, 2002).

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Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) postulated that individual differences could moderate the relationship between the experience of job insecurity and reactions to it. Since this postulation, various hypotheses of moderating effects have been tested. Feather and Rauter (2004) indicated that job status has a significant effect as a moderator on the individual consequence of organisational citizenship behaviour. Organisational justice and participation in the change process have a moderating effect on the impact of job insecurity on individual consequences (Brockner, 1990; Novelli, Kirkman, & Shapiro, 1995). Lim (1996) found that non-work-based sources of support such as family, friends and community support moderated the negative effects of job insecurity on life dissatisfaction, while work-based social support such as support provided by work colleagues and supervisors, buffered individuals against the negative effects of job dissatisfaction and the intensity to leave. De Witte (2005) suggests that employability, defined as the ability to find another job without trouble, can moderate the negative effect of job insecurity on general health. According to Jordan, Ashkanasy and Hartel (2002), emotional intelligence, defined as one's ability to remain emotionally stable during different circumstances, can also moderate individual responses to job insecurity.

The current study will view moderators as variables that could change the impact of job insecurity on individual and organisational consequences. Results of previous research will be evaluated to determine the moderating effect and position of variables such as gender, social status, trust, social support, psychological empowerment and emotional intelligence, as well as participation in change and employability, in the proposed agenda.

The following research questions can be formulated based on the above-mentioned description of the research problem:

- How is job insecurity conceptualised in international and national literature?
- How is job insecurity defined internationally and nationally, and which constructs or sub-dimensions underlie it?
- How is job insecurity measured in international and national research?
- What role does the South African context play in influencing the conceptualisation of job insecurity in South Africa?

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- What are the perceptions and general views of experts in the industrial and business environment on specific burning issues concerning job insecurity in South Africa?

- What are the trends of job insecurity research in South Africa, and how do these compare to international studies, and what recommendations can be made for future research regarding job insecurity in South African organisations?

2   RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In order to answer the above research questions, the following research objectives are set; divided into general and specific objectives.

2.1   General objective

The general objective of this research is to set a research agenda for job insecurity in South African organisations.

2.2   Specific objectives

Specific objectives of this research are to:

- Conceptualise job insecurity from the international and national literature.

- Define job insecurity from the international and national literature, and determine which constructs or sub-dimensions underlie it.

- Determine how job insecurity is measured in international and national research.

- Establish the role that the South African context plays in the conceptualisation of job insecurity in South Africa.

- Determine the perceptions and views of experts in the industrial and business environment on specific issues concerning job insecurity in South Africa.

- Establish the trends of job insecurity research in South Africa and how these compare to international studies, and make recommendations for future research regarding job insecurity.

3. PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

Social science intends to draw pictures of how things can be seen. The structure and final view of these pictures drawn in descriptive research depend on the style of questioning and answering. The difference in interpretation of the same picture is known as a paradigm (Weiten, 1992).

Paradigms are all-encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking which define the research nature and enquiry. This is done over three dimensions: ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (the relationship between the researcher and what can be known) and methodology (ways of practically studying what the researcher believes can be known). The three dimensions of a paradigm determine each other (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002). A certain paradigmatic perspective, that includes the intellectual climate and the market of intellectual resources, also directs this research.

3.1 Intellectual climate

The intellectual climate refers to the beliefs which tend to display the qualities of postulates or assumptions in a discipline. Beliefs of this nature are frequently neither testable, nor meant to be tested, but usually underlie testable statements (Mouton & Marais, 1996). The intellectual climate is one of the three subsystems (ontology, epistemology and methodology), which interact with each other and with the specific research domain as defined by the discipline. It can be seen as the different meta-theoretical values or beliefs held by the researcher working within a specific discipline (Mouton & Marais, 1996). In order to determine the intellectual climate of this research, the disciplinary relevance and meta-theoretical assumptions are discussed.

3.2 Discipline

The discipline in which a study is conducted provides a certain order and control to the study. It sets the boundaries for the working context and directs theoretical thinking and methodology (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002). This research falls within the boundaries of the Behavioural sciences and more specifically Industrial Psychology.

Behavioural science can be defined as a scientific discipline that deals with human action and seeks through observable and experimental methods to generalise human behaviour in society (Byrne & Lindgren, 1975; Gellerman, 1974). This study will observe human behaviour, experiences and action within a working context.

Aamodt (2004) defines Industrial Psychology as a branch of psychology that applies the principles of psychology into the workplace, in order to explain and enhance the effectiveness of human behaviour and cognition in the work situation. The current study considers job insecurity as a cause and contributor to ineffective behaviour in organisations. The outcome of this study aims to enhance the mutual effectiveness of all the functioning units in the organisation by clarifying and espousing a model for understanding of this construct.

The sub-disciplines of Industrial Psychology that are dealt with in this research are Personnel Psychology, Organisation Psychology and Employee and Organisational well-being.

Personnel Psychology can be defined as practices in areas such as analysing jobs, recruiting applicants, selecting employees, determining salary levels, training employees and evaluating employee performance with the aim to obtain a complete picture of what each employee does, often assigning monetary values to each position (French & Bell, 1999). Some of the practices defined in personnel psychology will be studied in the organisation to determine its relevance to the construct of job insecurity. Bernhard-Oettel, Sverke and De Witte (2005) found that the type of employment and the employment contract interact with perceptions of job insecurity, in that job insecurity tested higher among permanent employees and had less effect on part-time employees. In South Africa, new equity legislation drives the recruitment and selection of employees. Although this legislation serves to redress the wrongs of the past, it may leave some employees with greater perceived job insecurity (Robbins et al., 2004).

Aamodt (2004) defines Organisational Psychology as a science concerned with issues within an organisation, such as leadership, job satisfaction, employee motivation, organisational communication, conflict management, organisational change and group processes. The purpose is to determine employee attitudes and to obtain ideas of what employees believe to be the

organisation's strengths and weaknesses. The issues mentioned under the concern of Organisational Psychology will be studied and analysed, in order to clarify its relation to the concept of job insecurity in South African organisations. Heymans (2002) found cognitive job insecurity to be related to decreased levels of intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. The effect of job insecurity on the psychological makeup of employees in the organisation is stressed by the study of Bosman, Buitendach and Rothmann (2005), which indicated that increased levels of job insecurity were also related to increased burnout and decreased work engagement in employees.

Bergh and Theron (2004) define employee and organisational well-being as a study field concerned with the individual's psychological well-being and the effect thereof in the workplace. This study will be concerned with the evaluation, managing and conceptualisation of job insecurity, which may have a direct or indirect effect on employee and organisational well-being. In order to be able to manage the negative consequences of job insecurity on the individual and the organisation, management needs to understand the causes and dynamics of job insecurity. Research by Yousef (1998) found that increased levels of job insecurity are associated with decreased psychological well-being, decreased job satisfaction, decreased organisational commitment and an increase in turnover, all of which leave the organisation vulnerable and unhealthy. According to Fourie (2005), health complaints are positively related to the fear of losing a job and important accompanying job features. Research results of this kind will be analysed and interpreted to develop a research agenda for job insecurity in South African organisations.

3.3   Meta-theoretical assumptions

Six paradigms are relevant to this research. Firstly, the literature review is conducted within the humanistic paradigm and systems theory, and secondly the empirical study is done within the behaviouristic, interpretive, constructivist and salutogenic paradigms.

3.3.1 Literature review

The humanistic paradigm deals with individual engagement in life and ways of being in the world. It is oriented towards growth of individuals through the support of their own creative and self-initiated efforts. The paradigm is concerned with the nature of the self, the nature of existence and the nature of human engagement with the world. Issues of human value are fundamental to this paradigm (Carroll, 2004).

The following are basic assumptions of the humanistic paradigm (Decarvalho, 1991). Firstly, the realities people live in are constructed out of individual experience, history, values and perspectives. The influence of experience, history, values and perspectives on an individual's level of job insecurity is studied. Secondly, individuals are irreducible to the sum of their parts; the focus is on the whole person. The wholeness of the individual as study unit is important in studies of job insecurity. Probst (2002) argues that the holistic nature of individuals within their context must be valued when studying job insecurity. Thirdly, personhood is woven out of the individual's embeddedness in time, place, and relationships. Experiences of job insecurity reflect in individuals as embedded in their organisational and social contexts. Fourthly, relationships are an intrinsic part of being human and a human's way to turn to one another and their environment for comfort and a sense of meaning. This assumption is connected to job insecurity studies, which study the relationship between environmental and organisational changes and job insecurity. Fifthly, dialogue and communication are essential parts of humanness. Social support is seen as a possible moderator of the impact of job insecurity on its consequences. Furthermore, clear communication about possible retrenchments could act to relief individuals' job insecurity. In the sixth place, meaning is the product of individuals, communities, relationships and their interaction. Job insecurity is studied as a stressor caused by various antecedents and as impacting negatively on individual and organisational goals. Job insecurity derives meaning as it threatens individuals, communities and relationships.

In setting a research agenda for job insecurity in South African organisations, which could enhance decision-making and increase the effectiveness of organisations, the principles of Systems Theory will be utilised. Systems Theory can be defined as a complex of interacting

elements; as part-to-whole and whole-to-part thinking; about making connections between all related system elements, and the systems and its sub-systems that fit together into a whole that generates value-added outputs. It provides a conceptual framework that can enhance decision-making and improve cost effectiveness (Bucker, 2003).

In general, Systems Theory rests on many assumptions that underscore the whole and its interrelated parts; the organisation and complexity of the system; the relationships in and between the systems; the notion of boundaries and the hierarchical nature of the systems and sub-systems (Harvey, 2004; Whiteside, 1998).

Basic assumptions of Systems Theory (Franklin, Streeter, & Warren, 1998) relevant to this study are that nothing exists in isolation; everything is part of a larger whole; the whole is greater than the sum of the parts; the whole has one or more defining functions, and each part of the system is affecting and being affected by the others. Sub-systems may be sufficient in one or more systems for carrying out a sub-function of the whole, but insufficient for carrying out the function on its own. Once a part is taken away from the whole, the whole will never be the same.

In this study, the levels of job insecurity and the impact thereof will not be studied in isolation. All variables of interest will be seen as part of the larger whole. The theoretical model of job insecurity will be proposed as a complex multi-dimensional, interactive system.

3.3.2 Empirical study

The behaviouristic paradigm views observable behaviour, rather than internal thought processes, as the focus of human study. Learning is seen as manifested by a change in behaviour and the environment shapes the individual's behaviour. Reinforcement is essential to the learning process (Getzels & Taylor, 1975). In this study, human behaviour as manifested in the experience of job insecurity will be studied in the environment of the organisation, which will in turn have an influence on the individual's behaviour.

The interpretative paradigm is based on the assumption that research is done to attach meaning to the objective facts found in a positivistic paradigm. The nature of reality is of internal, subjective experience, following an empathetic, observer inter-subjective epistemology and using interactional, interpretative and qualitative methodology (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002). This study will aim to give meaning to the concept of job insecurity by a subjective literature review and qualitative data gathering methods.

The constructionist paradigm aims to show how versions of the social world are produced in discourse and demonstrates how these constructions of reality make certain actions possible and others unthinkable (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Reality is socially constructed. The relationship between the researcher and what can be known, is suspicious and constructed by the observer. Common methods used in the research process are deconstruction, textual analysis and discourse analysis (Terre Blanch & Durrheim, 2002). Textual (also known as content analysis) is, in turn, defined as the gathering and analysis from messages, words meaning, symbols, themes and written or spoken words (Neuman, 2000). This research will perform textual analysis through the deconstruction of exiting models and theories.

According to Antonovsky (1987), the salutogenic paradigm refers to the human ability to manage stress, stay healthy and achieve optimality, no matter what. As long as an individual is breathing, it is alive and capable op healthy functioning (Antonovsky, 1987). This research conceptualises job insecurity as a stressor that threatens individuals' health and achievement, and as such tests the human ability to handle stress. Job insecurity is perceived as a stressor, and individuals should react on it in an attempt to stay healthy and achieve optimality.

3.4 Market of intellectual resources

The market of intellectual resources refers to the epistemic status of scientific statements, which implies their status as knowledge-claims. It can be seen as a collection of beliefs divided into two main components: theoretical beliefs and methodological beliefs (Mouton & Marais, 1996).

3.4.1 Theoretical beliefs

Theoretical beliefs can be described as testable statements about the "what" and "why" aspects of human behaviour (Mouton & Marais, 1996). Theoretical beliefs in this research will be derived from macro psychological theories such as the cognitive behavioural theory.

A. Conceptual definitions

- Job insecurity is defined as a stressor with negative effects on the individual, organisational and social level. These negative effects lead to negative individual, organisational and social consequences.

- Antecedents of job insecurity are defined as the causes, predictors and background factors related to job insecurity.

- Consequences of job insecurity are defined as the outcomes, results and effects of perceived job insecurity.

- Mediators are defined as the mechanisms by which the perceived level of job insecurity will be affected.

- Moderators are defined as the variables that could change the impact of perceived job insecurity and the consequences thereof.

B. Models and theories

A model suggests ways to answer new questions. Models have a heuristic function and set an 'as if' framework (Mouton & Marais, 1996). By studying the construct of job insecurity, the researcher will reveal certain similarities or relationships and will present this in a structural model in order to set a research agenda for job insecurity in South African organisations. A theory serves as an orientation for gathering facts since it specifies the types of facts to be systematically observed. The elements or variables of a theory are logically interrelated and if a relevant theory exists, hypotheses or research questions can be deduced based upon particular relationships between these elements (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002).

Various existing models of job insecurity will be studied to find differences and similarities in order to develop a theoretical model of job insecurity for South African organisations. The model of Caplan et al. (1975), which categorises *job future ambiguity* as a subjective stressor, will be studied. Johnson et al. (1984) view job insecurity as a single stressor in their model. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt's (1984) model studies the relationship between job insecurity and indicators of organisational effectiveness. Ashford et al. (1989) developed a multi-dimensional model which captures threats against valued job features in addition to the threat of job loss. The model of Hartley et al. (1991) argues against the multidimensional measurement of job insecurity and views job insecurity solely as a concern about the future of a job. De Witte (2000) suggested in his model that job insecurity should be measured globally as the perceived job insecurity of employees, and the model of Sverke et al. (2004) studies the relationship of job insecurity as a stressor.

The proposed structural model for understanding job insecurity and outlining an agenda for research in South African organisations will be presented in Chapter 3.

3.4.2 Methodological beliefs

Methodological beliefs can be defined as methodological preferences, assumptions and presuppositions about what ought to constitute effective research. This is a belief which concerns the nature of social science and scientific research (Mouton & Marais, 1996).

Qualitative research is about the "ways of seeing". The goal of qualitative research is to gain understanding through a process of discovery. In this research, this goal will firstly be attained through a literature review of published research. Secondly, more popular media such as newspapers, government documentation and internet pages, are also considered to paint the context in which job insecurity manifests in South Africa. Basic assumptions of qualitative research relevant to this study are that qualitative research is primarily concerned with process, rather than outcomes or products; a phenomenological approach is used; reality is contextual and socially constructed; data is gathered to the point of saturation; flexibility is the method; qualitative research is descriptive, inductive, holistic and naturalistic (Killeen & O'Day, 2002;

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Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2005; Potter, 1996; Struwig & Stead, 2004; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002).

In this study, existing research will be studied along a temporal and developmental continuum. The multiple meanings of the different studies, conducted over time, will be analysed to derive differences, similarities and discrepancies, in order to give meaning to the construct of job insecurity in South African organisations. The study will be conducted with cognisance also of the unique South African context. As far as possible, literature will be reviewed up to a point where no new information is added. Except for the order of the literature review, no fixed method will be used. Results will be presented in a descriptive way, the details and specifics of data will be analysed to discover categories, dimensions and interrelationships. Job insecurity will be studied as a complex construct that is more than the sum of its parts. The research will be open to whatever emerges and predetermined constraints and outcomes will be avoided.

This study will not exist in isolation, but will build upon what has been done previously. To adhere to this assumption, previous studies in the field of job insecurity will be reviewed. The literature review as the main database to the study will include mostly recently published research, but also a review of historical material. The value and functions of a literature review, as outlined by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995), and relevant to this study, are:

- The literature review will broaden and refine existing knowledge to conceptualise job insecurity in South African organisations.
- The literature review will help to sharpen and clarify research questions of this study.
- The literature review will highlight gaps and under-researched areas in the field of job insecurity in South African organisations.
- The literature review will clarify theoretical, methodological and analytical issues in the job insecurity research field.
- The literature review will identify current debates and controversies not only in international texts, but also in South African publications.
- The literature review will show where the current research fits into the existing body of knowledge.

- The literature review will show that the current study is adding value to the understanding and knowledge of the job insecurity research field in South African organisations.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

The objective of the research design is to set a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between the research question and the execution or implementation of the research plan (Brickman & Rog, 1998).

This research can be classified as qualitative and descriptive; it will aim to describe the concept of job insecurity within South African organisations accurately, either through narrative type descriptions, classifications or through the description of, the measuring of the relationship between the components of job insecurity and its antecedents, outcomes and moderators/mediators within the organisation. The research is also explorative, as it makes an investigation into this relatively unknown area of research. This will be done by using an open, flexible and inductive approach. The findings derived from this applied research will have a practical application and will contribute to practical issues in the improvement of new research and of organisational functionality and growth. Analysis of existing literature on the concept of job insecurity in organisations will be conducted with an extensive literature review and generic comparisons.

In addition to the extensive, qualitative literature review, semi-structured interviews will be conducted to obtain specific quantitative data, and also to gather quantitative impressions from managers and consultants. The purpose of these interviews is to integrate the perceptions and views of experts in the industrial and business environment into the existing literature and previously done research in the field of job insecurity in South African organisations. The data gathered from the interviews will be interpreted and integrated into the proposed model.

The objective of this design is to guide the arrangement of conditions for analysis of data to combine relevance to the research purpose. It will provide a plan to execute the research in order to answer the research question (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002).

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The following steps will be used as guidelines to develop an intensive literature review, which will serve as data sample, for collection and analysis for this study (Finn, 2005):

- Refine the key concepts of the study to antecedents of job insecurity, consequences of job insecurity and mediator and moderator variables.
- Set the job insecurity phenomenon in context of the South African background.
- List all possible information sources.
- Use the relevant and appropriate sources to collect as much data as possible.
- Do information management by organising the data into categories.
- Analyse information by comparing results and conclusions of different authors and contrasting results that appear to lead to different conclusions.
- Reassess results in the light of new information that might not have been available to the original authors.
- Position the results of the literature review and the integrated data from the semi-structured interviews in the design of the current study.
- Report the results in article format.

4.1 Data sample

Qualitative data will be gathered through document analysis. International books on the subject of job insecurity; international research articles on job insecurity of the past 10 years; national research articles on job insecurity of the past 10 years, and dissertations and theses done in South Africa over the past 10 years will be considered. Popular media such as newspapers, government documentation and internet pages will also be considered and reviewed for information perceived as related to job insecurity.

Another source of data that will be used will be gathered in the form of semi-structured interviews. The target group will be managers from selected companies in South Africa. Data will be gathered until a point of data-saturation is reached. Data saturation is reached when no new or informing data items can be added to the existing data set (Neuman, 2000).

5. RESEARCH METHOD

This research, pertaining to the specific objectives, consists of two phases, namely a literature review and a qualitative study.

5.1 Phase 1: Literature review

- In phase 1, a complete review regarding job insecurity, antecedents of job insecurity, consequences of job insecurity, mediators and moderators of job insecurity is done.

The following resources will be utilised in this regard:

- EBSCO, PsychINFO and other electronic resources
- Internet resources
- Psychology journals
- Library catalogues
- Books
- Journals
- Research papers
- Unpublished theses and dissertations
- Newspapers
- Government legislation
- Conference proceedings

5.2 Phase 2: Qualitative study

Phase 2 consists of the following steps in the form of qualitative, descriptive and explorative research:

- An explorative and descriptive literature investigation into existing literature on the construct of job insecurity and its related concepts as described in the above literature review.

- Gathering qualitative data through document analysis.

- Analysing and interpreting of qualitative data.

- Conducting semi-structured interviews with selected managers in South Africa.

- Analysing data from interviews into identified themes.

- Quantifying, interpreting and integrating the data from the semi-structured interviews with existing literature.

- Conceptualising and defining the construct of job insecurity within South African organisations.

- Setting a research agenda for job insecurity in South African organisations.

- Writing up the research report.

6.   CHAPTER DIVISION

The chapters in this mini-dissertation are presented as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and problem statement

Chapter 2: Literature review and empirical results

Chapter 3: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

7.   CHAPTER SUMMARY

The problem statement of the study was outlined in this chapter. The research methodology was defined. Research objectives were set and the paradigmatic perspective of the research were described. Chapter 2 will present the results of the literature review and the empirical investigation.

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND EMPIRICAL RESULTS

SETTING A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR JOB INSECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICAN ORGANISATIONS[1]

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ABSTRACT

The general objective of this research was to develop a research agenda for job insecurity in
South African organisations. This agenda was developed by conceptualising and defining job
insecurity as well as determining which valid and reliable measuring instruments of job
insecurity exist. Trends in South African job insecurity research were investigated, the views
of experts in the world of work were incorporated, and the importance of acknowledging the
South African context was highlighted. A qualitative, descriptive research design was
followed to perform content analysis and an extensive literature review. Results of the
qualitative content analysis were enhanced with semi-structured interviews with managers
from different organisations ($N = 24$). Results were integrated into a proposed model for job
insecurity in order to serve as a guideline for future research and as a tool for managers to
recognise, prevent and manage job insecurity.

OPSOMMING

Die algemene doelstelling van hierdie navorsing was om 'n navorsingsagenda vir
werksonsekerheid in Suid Afrikaanse organisasies te ontwikkel. Die navorsingsagenda is
ontwikkel deur die konseptualisering en definiëring van werksonsekerheid sowel as die
identifisering van geldige en betroubare meetinstrumente van werksonsekerheid. Tendense in
Suid-Afrikaanse werksonsekerheidsnavorsing is ondersoek, die sienings van bestuurders in
die wêreld van werk is geïnkorporeer en die belangrikheid van erkenning aan die Suid-
Afrikaanse konteks in navorsing is uitgelig. 'n Kwalitatiewe, beskrywende

navorsingsontwerp is gevolg om inhoudsanalise en 'n uitgebreide literatuurstudie uit te voer. Ter ondersteuning van die kwalitatiewe inhoudsanalise en literatuurstudie is semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude met bestuurders van verskeie organisasies gevoer ($N = 24$). Die resultate van die studie is geïntegreer in 'n voorgestelde model vir werksonsekerheid. Hierdie model kan dien as riglyn vir verdere studies in die veld van werksonsekerheid en as hulpmiddel vir bestuurders om werksonsekerheid te identifiseer, voorkom en bestuur.

1. INTRODUCTION

The increase of research and literature on the topic of job insecurity over the past ten years emphasises the rapid increase in concern with this phenomenon, both nationally and internationally (De Witte, 1999; Elbert, 2002; Hellgren, Sverke, & Isaksson, 1999; Heymans, 2002; Labuschagne, Buitendach, & Bosman, 2005; Nolan, Wichert, & Burchell, 2000; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002; Sverke et al., 2004). Organisations and individuals worldwide are faced with contradicting pressures: the pressures of macroeconomics, globalisation and capital markets on the one hand, and the negative effect of the same factors on individual and organisational well-being on the other hand, have profound consequences for both individuals and organisations (Burchell, 2002; Heery & Salmon, 2000).

A major challenge and concern to South African organisations and managers is the increase in perceptions of job insecurity amongst employees on all levels of the organisational structure (Elbert, 2002; Labuschagne et al., 2005). The emergence of job insecurity in South Africa has become a given within the current business, economical and political environment (Sauer, 2003; Snoer, 2005). South African organisations cannot afford the additional material and psychological costs that may result from experiences of job insecurity, yet the impact of job insecurity on individuals and organisations has become inevitable (Botha, 2006; Van Schalkwyk, 2005; Van Zyl, 2005). The question is no more one about the existence of job insecurity in South African organisations, but the emphasis has shifted to measuring the impact thereof on the individual, the organisation and the social environment, as well as the creation of possible interventions to minimise the impact thereof.

From the literature it is evident that job insecurity has been conceptualised and defined in different ways by various researchers and writers (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989; Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison, & Pinneau, 1975; De Witte 2000; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt 1984; Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans, & Van Vuuren, 1991; Johnson, Messe, & Crano 1984; Reisel, 2002; Sverke et al., 2004). The common factor in the relevant publications is that job insecurity can be conceptualised as a perception which has predictive value as a cause of stress, and that it

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implies consequences for the individual and the organisation. Due to the subjective nature of this perception, individuals will have different reactions to this possible stressor (Sverke et al., 2004).

In clarifying the construct of job insecurity, the first and simplest route is to recognise what job insecurity is not. Job insecurity is not unemployment, but may be an experience prior to unemployment (Jacobson, 1991). When losing a job an individual has to develop a new role, namely one of job-seeking instead of working. Job insecurity, on the other hand, involves a change of attitude and behaviour within the same role (Jacobson, 1991). Also, work flexibility should not be confused with job insecurity. In the rapidly changing work environment, employees need to be more flexible and adaptable to change, forcing managers to simultaneously promote greater flexibility and implement interventions to minimise the consequences of possibly resulting job insecurity (Burchell, 2002; Chirumbolo & Hellgren, 2003; De Witte, 2005a; Green, Felstead, & Burchell, 2000). Flexibility implies that individuals need to be able to adapt to change. Individuals who struggle to manage change effectively may have increased feelings of job insecurity in environments that need flexibility in changing jobs (Green, Felstead, & Burchell, 2000).

Job insecurity has become an important phenomenon and therefore a response to the impact thereof, not only on the individual, but also on the organisational level, is needed. A study by Sverke and Goslinga (2003) revealed that job insecurity has immediate consequences, which may affect the attitudes of the individuals, and possible long-term consequences, which may affect an individual's health and behaviour. According to different studies, job insecurity is also related to work and organisational attitudes (Davy, Kinicki, & Scheck, 1997; Green et al., 2000; Human, 2002; Orpen, 1993). Knowing the individual and organisational consequences of job insecurity and all of its dimensions emphasises the need to investigate possible processes and factors that may moderate and mediate its effect. Ignoring or neglecting the current and evident future presence of job insecurity may result in drastic and negative results for individuals, organisations and global growth of business in South Africa (Bothma, 2005; Reynders, 2005).

The focus of this study is to investigate the current state of research on the phenomenon of job insecurity in South African organisations by analysing existing national and international

research conducted in this field. Research in the field of job insecurity started in earnest in 2002 in South Africa, and was mainly done at the North-West University. A few prior studies, done at other institutions in South Africa, are included in the investigation. Studies include investigations into the dimensions and measurement of job insecurity, predictive factors, consequences and possible moderators. A need to consolidate and integrate the findings into a proposed model was identified in order to capture the strings of individual research, and to consolidate and summarise existing knowledge. Results should guide future research in this field.

The necessity to set a research agenda for job insecurity in South African organisations has become a task of priority to guide researchers to choose relevant, practical, significant and feasible research projects in order to prepare managers to intervene with job insecurity issues in their organisations. It is important that future researchers and current managers have clear guidelines and tools to steer effective and relevant research and to support healthy individual and organisational development. The support of a theoretical model to serve as a research agenda for future research will provide not only guidance and structure to further research, but will also provide a fresh view on the methodology of investigation into the matter of job insecurity in South African organisations.

METHOD

A complete review regarding job insecurity, antecedents of job insecurity, consequences and mediators and moderators of job insecurity was conducted in the form of qualitative, descriptive and explorative research in the following steps:

- An explorative and descriptive literature investigation into existing literature on the construct of job insecurity and its related concepts was conducted.
- Qualitative data was collected through content (textual) analysis.
- The qualitative data was analysed and interpreted.
- Semi-structured interviews with selected managers in South African organisations were conducted.
- Data from interviews was analysed into five identified themes.

- The data from the semi-structured interviews was quantified, interpreted and integrated with existing literature in order to bring theory and practice together.

- The construct of job insecurity within South African organisations was conceptualised and defined within the current political, economical and social context.

- A research agenda for job insecurity in South African organisations was set through proposing a theoretical model.

2. RESULTS

2.1 CONCEPTUALISATION OF JOB INSECURITY FROM INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

Job insecurity has been conceptualised widely in international literature (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Hartley et al., 1991; Hellgren et al., 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Roskies & Louis-Guerin, 1990). As early as 1965, researchers and writers identified job insecurity as a phenomenon to be considered in the changing world of work (Kronhauser, 1965).

Throughout the literature, job insecurity has been conceptualised from two distinct perspectives; namely global and multidimensional. The global perspective underwrites the assumption that job insecurity can be conceptualised as the overall concern about the future of one's job (Hartley et al., 1991). Interestingly enough, the literature shows the use of this conceptualisation in the context of change or crises, such as political change, mergers or reorganisations. In these cases, job insecurity is normally considered to be the phase prior to unemployment (Dooley, 2003). Multidimensional conceptualisations conversely hold the viewpoint that job insecurity is a more complex phenomenon than only the fear of losing a job, and includes dimensions such as the fear of losing job features, including job stability, positive performance appraisal and promotion (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Jacobson, 1991).

The wide range of conceptualisations in the literature shows the importance and relevance of this phenomenon to the industrial and business environment. Many researchers and leaders in the academic field lead the search to arrive at a common conceptualisation of job insecurity and to

embed it into a structured model (Näswall, 2004). Up to this point, no single conceptualisation or model has been developed and commonly accepted. Sverke and Hellgren (2002), after an extensive literature review, came to the conclusion that a lot still needs to be done in order to understand the full extent of the nature of job insecurity and to develop psychometrically valid and reliable measures. Studying the conceptualisation of job insecurity from a global and multidimensional perspective in international literature led to the identification of five common themes in its conceptualisation:

1) Job insecurity is the perceived probability of job loss, for example during downsizing, when employees may experience an increased sense that there is a realistic chance that their jobs may become redundant.

2) Job insecurity consists of an objective and a subjective component, where the objective circumstances may influence the individuals' subjective feeling of job insecurity. Objective circumstances refer to the presence of causative or predicting circumstances such as cost savings, mergers and organisational change, while subjective feelings refer to the emotional perceptions and feelings due to the objective circumstantial experience of the individual.

3) Job insecurity has a cognitive and affective component, for example the likelihood to lose one's job is cognitively argued and gives rise to an affective reaction in the individual.

4) Job insecurity has qualitative and quantitative dimensions, where the qualitative dimension includes the threat to, or the uncertainty of losing job features and valued characteristics, while the quantitative dimensions refer to the threat of losing the job itself.

5) Job insecurity is a stressor in relation to its predictors and outcomes, for example new demands placed on the employee in order to keep his/her job.

A specific objective of this study is to analyse and interpret these themes in the available literature. Furthermore, the relevance of the themes in the current South African context and industrial and business environment will be discussed.

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2.1.1 Job insecurity as the perceived probability of job loss

The early global conceptualisations will be discussed under this heading. Hartley et al. (1991) and Johnson et al. (1984) did their research from this perspective. They hypothesised that job insecurity levels, such as the fear of losing one's job, will be significantly higher for employees working in an organisation undergoing change or a crisis. It is clear that a global conceptualisation will fit perfectly into this context, where most - if not all - employees should be experiencing a certain level of job insecurity.

Both studies found higher levels of job insecurity among individuals involved in organisations undergoing major changes such as restructuring and downsizing. Hartley et al. (1991) were especially concerned with the coping of individuals during organisational crises and found that some individuals could cope better than others. These researchers found that individuals with an internal locus of control, high value attributes of their work and a lower need for security, showed more efficient coping strategies to perceived feelings of job insecurity than individuals with an external locus of control, low value attributes of their work and a high need for security. Johnson et al. (1984) found that job performance among individuals who were affected by feelings of job insecurity due to organisational change was significantly lower than the individuals who showed less inclination towards such feelings.

No research conducted from this perspective could be found in South African studies on job insecurity. Future research must be cautious not to underestimate the relevance of this conceptualisation in studying the existence and level of job insecurity in organisations undergoing change and crises. For example, in the South African context, the gold mining industry is expected to shed 65 000 jobs by the end of this century (Lünshe & Paton, 2007). The South African work context is also characterised by major transformation in order to meet employment equity and affirmative action targets.

2.1.2 Job insecurity consists of objective and subjective components

One of Jacobson's (1991) distinctions of the multidimensionality of job insecurity from the global dimension was to conceptualise job insecurity as either an objective or subjective phenomenon. According to Jacobson, job insecurity can be conceptualised as an individual's subjective experience. Mauno, Kinunnen, Mäkikangas and Nätti (2005) suggested that job insecurity is a subjective estimation of one's chances to lose a job, which is based on the objective circumstances. According to Mauno et al., these objective circumstances become the antecedents of the job insecurity equation. Jacobson (1991) further argues that the objective available cues in the environment can be perceived by the individual as threats to his/her current job and/or position. These environmental cues may include things such as restructuring, retrenchments and downsizing.

Only a few South African studies of job insecurity were based on this conceptualisation (Leach, 2006; Makhobotloane, 2005; Peverett, 1994). These studies identified corporate downsizing, restructuring, organisational change and privatisation as important environmental cues to feelings of job insecurity for employees in the South African organisations which they studied.

2.1.3 Job insecurity has cognitive and affective components

Another distinction to the multidimensionality of job insecurity is the assumption that job insecurity has a cognitive and an affective quality (Jacobson, 1991). The cognitive quality refers to concern with the likelihood to lose one's job, while the affective quality includes the concern, beliefs and feelings about the insecurity (De Witte, 2000). According to De Witte, perceptions of job insecurity start with a cognitive appraisal of the future situation, which triggers emotions based on the meaning connected to the potential job loss, or the loss of job features.

Most of the studies done in South Africa on the topic of job insecurity were conducted from this perspective (Bosman, 2005; Botha, 2006; Elbert, 2002; Laba, Bosman, & Buitendach, 2004; Moeletsi, 2003), and found that individuals who cognitively persuade themselves of the possibility to lose their jobs also react emotionally on this cognition.

2.1.4 Job insecurity has qualitative and quantitative dimensions

Isaksson, Pettersson and Hellgren (1998) gave new dimensionality to the conceptualisation of job insecurity by adding quantitative and qualitative values to the conceptualisation of Greenhalgh and Rossenblatt (1984). Where Greenhalgh and Rossenblatt (1984) conceptualised job insecurity as an affective subjectivity, Isaksson et al. (1998) expanded on this definition by regarding job insecurity as thoughts on quantitative and qualitative losses of job features. Quantitative job insecurity is concerned with 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, salary increases and future career development (De Witte, 2005a).

Only one South African study (Fourie, 2005) approached job insecurity from this perspective. This study found that individuals will attempt to bring the threatening situation into conjunction with their own desires for the future.

2.1.5 Job insecurity is a stressor in relation to its predictors and outcomes

Mauno and Kinnunen (1999) conceptualised job insecurity as a stressor regardless of its conceptualisation as global or multidimensional. This view includes the application of stress theories into the research of job insecurity. Some research has been done from the stress framework, which holds that stressors such as demands placed on the employee and their experienced levels of the strain, may produce feelings of job insecurity (Ashford et al., 1989; De Witte, 2000; Mauno & Kinnunen, 1999; Siegrist, 1996; Sverke et al., 2004). Probst's (2002) integrated model of job insecurity confirms the perspective that job insecurity is a job stressor.

In addition to the conceptualisation of job insecurity as consisting of a cognitive and affective component, most research done on job insecurity in South African organisations adapted the assumption that job insecurity must be considered as a type of job stressor (Heymans, 2002; Jorge, 2005; Leach, 2006; Maree, 2004; Rannona, 2003). Both national and international literature on job insecurity mostly applied the transactional theory of stress and coping (Lazarus

& Folkman, 1984) to support the assumption that job insecurity can be defined as a stressor (Bartrum, 2006).

2.2 DETERMINING THE DIMENSIONALITY OF JOB INSECURITY FROM INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

2.2.1 Definitions of job insecurity

Ashford et al. (1989) argued that developing a specific definition for job insecurity was problematic due to the fact that job insecurity was often measured as a secondary variable. Job insecurity definitions vary with regard to the context of dimension, from global (also referred to as uni-dimensional) to multidimensional definitions (Bartrum, 2006).

Definitions of job insecurity were broadened over time by the increased interest in research of this phenomenon. The definition of Caplan et al. (1975, p. 812) of job insecurity as "general cognitive uncertainty about future security" is highlighted as one of the first formal definitions. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984, p. 438) broadened this definition by adding a multidimensional context, "job insecurity can be defined as a feeling of powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a work situation". This definition introduced a subjective, affective component.

Roskies and Louis-Guerin (1990, p. 346) referred to job insecurity as "a concern about the possibility of employment uncertainty" and thereby included both a cognitive and affective component. The definition of Jacobson (1991, p. 31), "job insecurity is a perceptual phenomenon" underscores the subjective experience of the insecure situation from the objective nature thereof. Isaksson et al. (1998) added the terms quantitative and qualitative job insecurity to the definition of job insecurity. Reisel (2002, p. 90) took the stance that a multiplicative approach to job insecurity will offer greater conceptual clarity, and defined job insecurity as "the sum of (cognitive threat + worry)". Reisel (2003) departed from research that defined job insecurity as powerlessness and states that job insecurity is not only a function of its antecedents, but also an addition of the emotional reactions to these antecedents. Probst (2003, p. 452) defined

job insecurity as "the perceived stability and continuance of one's job as one knows it". This definition does not explicitly include attitudinal or affective reactions to the perceived job insecurity. According to De Witte (2005a), the definition of job insecurity must include the assumption that job insecurity is a stressor, consisting of the cognitive probability of losing a job, and the affective experience of the concern thereof.

Most South African research on the topic of job insecurity accepted the definition and assumptions of De Witte, conducting research from the perspective that job insecurity is a stressor that consists of two distinct dimensions, namely the cognitive and affective (Bosman, 2005; Botha, 2006; Elbert, 2002; Laba, 2004; Moeletsi, 2003). A few other studies (Leach, 2006; Makhobotloane, 2005; Peverett, 1994) followed the assumptions and definitions of Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) and Ashford et al. (1989). One study (Fourie, 2005) adapted the definition and assumptions of Isaksson et al. (1998).

2.2.2 Antecedents of job insecurity

An antecedent of job insecurity is the collective term for the variables that either predict or cause the perception of job insecurity in individuals (DeWitte, 2005a). Sverke et al. (2004) showed a variety of possible antecedents to job security, for example restructuring, downsizing and economic globalisation. Mauno et al. (2005) were convinced that the objective circumstances of a job insecure situation can be defined as the antecedents of job insecurity.

When studying the antecedents of job insecurity, it is important to remember that individual appraisals of the environment are influenced by individual characteristics (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Ashford et al. (1989) defined antecedents as the individual and background factors predicting job insecurity. A summary of the possible antecedents found in reviewed literature and research is reflected in Table 1.

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Table 1

Results from the Analysis of Antecedents of Job Insecurity found in International and National
Studies

Categories of job insecurity antecedents	Antecedent	International studies	South African studies
Organisational	Acquisitions	(Burke & Nelson, 1998; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002)	
	Consolidation	(Lee, Colditz, Berkman, & Kawachi, 2004)	
	Corporate downsizing	(Brockner, 1992; Burke & Nelson, 1998; De Witte, 2005b; Cheng, Chen, Chen, & Chiang, 2005; Kets de Vries & Balazs, 1997; Lee et al., 2004; Näswall & De Witte, 2003; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002)	(Human, 2002; Laba et al., 2004; Sauer, 2003)
	Mergers	(Burke & Nelson, 1998; De Witte, 2005a; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002)	(Elbert, 2002; Tshabalala, 2004)
	Organisational change	(Lord & Hartley, 1998; Nickell, Jones & Quintini, 2002; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002)	(Human, 2002; Rannonna, 2003; Sauer, 2003)
	Privatisation	(Burke & Nelson, 1998)	
	Restructuring	(Cheng et al., 2005; De Witte, 2005a; Hellgren & Chirumbolo, 2003; Mauno et al., 2005; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002)	(Moeletsi, 2003; Peverett, 1994)
	Technological change	(Sverke & Hellgren, 2002)	
Political	Affirmative action		(Peverette, 1994)
	Deregulation of labour	(Cheng et al., 2005)	
	Employment legislation	(Sparrow, 1998)	(Bothma, 2005)
	Political change and new government policies	(Davey et al., 1997)	
	Unemployment	(Cheng et al., 2005; De Ruyter & Burgers, 2000; Domenighetti, D'Vanzo, & Bisig, 2000; Ferrie, 1997)	
Economical	Global competitiveness	(Cheng et al., 2005; Näswall & De Witte, 2003; Pelfrene et al., 2003; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002)	(Labuschagne, 2005; Rani, 2005; Reynders, 2005)
	Intense market competition	(Lee et al., 2004)	
	Recession	(Cheng et al., 2005; De Ruyter & Burgers, 2000; Dooley, 2003; Mauno & Kinnunen, 2002; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002)	
	Unpredictable economic situation	(Domenighetti et al., 2000; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002)	(Snoer, 2005)

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Table 1 continued

Results from the Analysis of Antecedents of Job Insecurity found in International and National Studies

Categories of job insecurity antecedents	Antecedents	International studies	South African studies
Job features	Need for flexibility	(Burchell, 2002; Chirumbolo & Hellgren, 2003; De Witte, 2005a; Green et al., 2000; Klein Hesselink & Van Vuuren, 1999; Näswall & De Witte, 2003; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002)	
	Non-permanent employment	(De Witte & Näswall, 2003; Green et al., 2000; Mauno et al., 2005; Näswall & de Witte, 2003; Strazdins, D'Souza, Lim, Broom, & Rodgers, 2004; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002)	(Botha, 2006)
	Work conditions	(Cheng et al., 2005; Domenighetti et al., 2000; Manski & Straub, 2001; McDonough, 2000; Strazdins et al., 2004)	(Bosman, 2005; Labuschagne et al., 2005; Reynders, 2005; Snoer, 2005; Van Greunen, 2004; Viljoen, 2004)
Biographical	Age		(Bosman, 2005; Botha, 2006; Bothma, 2005; Heymans, 2002; Human, 2002; Jorge, 2005; Laba, 2004; Leach, 2006; Marais, 2005; Peverett, 1994; Rani, 2005; Rannona, 2003; Sauer, 2003; Snoer, 2005; Van Greunen, 2004; Van Schalkwyk, 2005; Van Zyl, 2005)
	Core self-evaluations		(Maree, 2004)
	Cultural group or First Language	(Manski & Straub, 2001)	(Bosman, 2005; Botha, 2006; Bothma, 2005; Elbert, 2002; Heymans, 2002; Jorge, 2005; Laba, 2004; Leach, 2006; Marais, 2005; Maree, 2004; Orpen, 1993; Rani, 2005; Rannona, 2003; Snoer, 2005; Van Greunen, 2004; Van Schalkwyk, 2005; Van Zyl, 2005; Viljoen, 2004)
	Employability	(Domenighetti et al., 2000; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002)	
	Gender		(Botha, 2006; Bothma, 2005; Heymans, 2002; Jorge, 2005; Labuschagne, 2005; Leach, 2006; Marais, 2005; Peverett, 1994; Rani, 2005; Rannona, 2003; Van Greunen, 2004; Van Zyl, 2005)
	Level of Education or Qualification	(Domenighetti et al., 2000; Lee et al., 2004; Manski & Straub, 2001; McDonough, 2000; Näswall & De Witte, 2003; Green et al., 2000; Strazdins et al., 2004)	(Bosman, 2005; Botha, 2006; Bothma, 2005; Heymans, 2002; Human, 2002; Jorge, 2005; Leach, 2006; Marais, 2005; Peverett, 1994; Rani, 2005; Rannona, 2003; Sauer, 2003; Van Greunen, 2004; Van Zyl, 2005; Viljoen, 2004)
	Tenure		(Botha, 2006; Bosman, 2005; Heymans, 2002; Jorge, 2005; Laba, 2004; Leach, 2006; Maree, 2004; Marais, 2005; Peverett, 1994; Rani, 2005; Rannona, 2003; Sauer, 2003; Snoer, 2005; Van Greunen, 2004; Van Schalkwyk, 2005; Van Zyl, 2005; Viljoen, 2004)

Not much research to determine or measure the antecedents of job insecurity was found. Studies mostly assume the possibility that the context in which the study is taking place may cause or

predict job insecurity. According to Näswall (2004), there is a lack of international research that focuses on the possible antecedents of job insecurity. South African studies did not include or examine the South African political and/or economical background, but adopted the assumption that these should be significant role-playing factors from international studies. Most studies were conducted within the context of the presence of the antecedents. Antecedents that were used as variables in international studies are non-permanent employment, employability, education and culture group. Antecedents used as variables in South African studies are non-permanent employment, qualification, cultural group, core self-evaluations, age, gender and tenure. Table 1 also shows that no South African research on the variables of consolidation, acquisitions, privatisation, technology change, deregulation of labour, unemployment, political change and new government policies, recession, intense market competition, the need for flexibility and employability has been conducted.

2.2.3 Mediators of job insecurity

Mediators of job insecurity can be defined as the variables that reflect the way in which an independent variable influences job insecurity (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Mediators of job insecurity will intervene between antecedents of job insecurity and consequences of job insecurity, which will imply a causal order among the variables in the job insecurity model (Bartrum, 2006). A mediating relationship is indicated by a correlation between the mediator, the antecedent and the consequence (Aryee & Chay, 2001).

Not much research on mediating relationships of variables could be found in international literature and no research was done on mediating variables of job insecurity in South Africa. The mediating effect of performance appraisal and coping strategies has been researched internationally (Ferrie, Shipley, Marmot, Stanfield, & Davey-Smith, 1998). These studies found that effective performance management, which is perceived as fair to all employees, significantly mediates the relationship between the antecedents and the consequences of job insecurity. Probst (2002) investigated the possibility that powerlessness can be better considered as a mediating variable, rather than an aspect of job insecurity itself, and found that a sense of power may have a mediating effect on the work attitudes of some individuals. Mauno et al. (2005) and Feather

and Rauter (2004) studied the role of fixed-term employment versus the permanent job, and concluded that under conditions of high perceived job insecurity, having a fixed-term employment status mediates the relationship between job insecurity and job attitudes and well-being. Permanently employed individuals had more secure feelings about their jobs and engaged in more responsibilities and tasks. The assumption that the harmful effects of job insecurity can be mediated by the violation of the relational psychological contract was investigated by De Cuyper and De Witte (2006), who concluded that no support for such a hypothesis was found and recommended further research.

Davey et al. (1997) showed that job satisfaction and organisational commitment mediated the relationship between job insecurity and withdrawal cognitions. Dooley (2003) confirmed job insecurity as a mediator of health impacts on individuals during recessions. Chirumbolo and Hellgren (2003) found that the effect of job insecurity on turnover intention is mediated by organisational commitment and job satisfaction, which are usually defined as consequences themselves. They further showed that work attitudes partially mediate the effect of job insecurity on mental health complaints. This differential focus needs definite further investigation to determine the true position of job insecurity in a structural model. The suggestion here is that it may act as a mediator of other organisational attitudes, but may also act as predictor of certain outcomes.

2.2.4   Moderators of job insecurity

Moderators of job insecurity can be defined as variables that will change the impact of job insecurity on the consequence variables. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) postulated that individual differences such as gender and age could moderate the relationship between the experience of job insecurity and reactions to it.

The multiple consequences of job insecurity derived from the different studies, indicate the necessity to find preventive or buffering variables against the negative effects of job insecurity on both individuals and organisations (De Witte, 1999). Reisel (2003) found that powerlessness can moderate the effect of antecedents on job insecurity. This implies a two-way possibility to

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buffer both the level of job insecurity caused by the antecedents and the effect of job insecurity on the individual and the organisation. The specific objective of this study to investigate national and international literature to indicate moderating variables on the consequences of job insecurity, is showed in Table 2.

Table 2

Results from the Analysis of Moderators of Job Insecurity found in International and National Studies

Category of job insecurity moderator	Moderator	International studies	South African studies
Personal	Affectivity	(Hellgren et al., 1999; Näswall, Sverke, & Hellgren, 2005)	
	Age	(Charles & James, 2003; Domenighetti et al., 2000; Feather & Rauter, 2004; Lee et al., 2004; Lim, 1997; Manski & Straub, 2001; McDonough, 2000; Näswall & De Witte, 2003; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002)	
	Coping		(Fourie, 2005)
	Emotional intelligence	(Jordan, Askanasy, & Hartel, 2000, 2002)	
	Future literacy		(Bothma, 2005)
	Gender	(Charles & James, 2003; Cheng et al., 2005; Domenighetti et al., 2000; Feather & Rauter, 2004; Lim, 1997; Manski & Straub, 2001; Mauno & Kinnunen, 2002; McDonough, 2000; Nickell et al., 2002; Rosenblatt, Talmud, & Ruvio, 1999; Strazdins et al., 2004; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002)	
	Job Tenure	(Bender & Sloane, 1999; De Ruyter & Burgers, 2000; Green et al., 2000; Lim, 1997; Nickell et al., 2002)	
	Locus of control	(Näswall et al., 2005)	(Elbert, 2002; Human, 2002; Labuschagne, 2005; Van Greunen, 2004; Van Schalkwyk, 2005)
	Powerlessness/Psychological empowerment	(Reisel, 2003)	(Moeletsi, 2003; Mokhobotloane, 2005; Reynders, 2005; Sauer, 2003)
	Resilience		(Leach, 2006)
	Self-efficacy		(Bothma, 2005; Elbert, 2002; Human, 2002)
	Sense of coherence		(Elbert, 2002; Human, 2002; Van Schalkwyk, 2005)
	Socio-economic position	(Cheng et al., 2005; Domenighetti et al., 2000; Ferrie, 1997; McDonough, 2000)	

Table 2 continued

Results from the Analysis of Moderators of Job Insecurity found in International and National
Studies

Category of job insecurity moderator	Moderator	International studies	South African studies
Organisational	Company size	(Cheng et al., 2005; Strazdins et al., 2004)	
	Organisation type	(Domenighetti et al., 2000; Strazdins et al., 2004)	
	Organisational communication	(Mauno & Kinnunen, 2002)	
	Organisational culture	(Charles & James, 2003)	
	Organisational support	(Lim, 1997; Rosenblatt et al., 1999)	(Rani, 2005)
	Organisational Trust	(Kets de Vries & Balazs, 1997)	(Botha, 2006)
	Psychological contract	(King, 2000; Sutton, 1987)	
	Workplace control	(Barling & Kelloway, 1996; Büssing, 1999; Domenighetti et al., 2000; Mauno & Kinnunen, 2002)	
Job feature	Job position or Job category	(Dooley, 2003; Ferrie, 1997; Lee et al., 2004; Strazdins et al., 2004)	(Heymans, 2002; Laba, 2004; Leach, 2006; Marais, 2005; Rani, 2005; Rannona, 2003)
	Temporary work		(Botha, 2006)
Social structure	Cultural differences	(Probst & Lawler, 2006; Yousef, 1998)	
	Family responsibility	(Sverke & Hellgren, 2002)	
	Marital status	(Lee et al., 2004; Mauno & Kinnunen, 2002; McDonough, 2000; Strazdins et al., 2004)	
	Racial disparities	(Wilson, Eitle, & Beshin, 2006)	(Orpen, 1993)
	Social support	(Büssing, 1999; Kramer, 2004; McDonough, 2000)	(Makhobotloane, 2005; Rani, 2005)
	Union support or Union membership	(Bender & Sloane, 1999; Green et al., 2000; Hellgren & Chirumbolo, 2003; Sverke & Goslinga, 2003; Sverke & Hellgren, 2001)	(Heymans, 2002; Leach, 2006; Rannona, 2003; Van Greunen, 2004)

Moderation appears to be a difficult concept. No defined borders or rules to determine whether a variable is a moderator, mediator or antecedent could be traced. There exists a variance between studies in applying variables to the different categories. Large differences between South African studies and international studies were found. South African studies place tenure, age, and gender in the antecedent's category, while international studies place it under moderators. Clarification in this regard is necessary. Table 2 indicates that the variables of affectivity, gender, socio-economic position, age, emotional intelligence, job tenure, psychological contract, company size,

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organisational type, organisational culture, workplace control, organisational communication, cultural differences, marital status and family responsibility remain to be studied as moderators in the South African context.

2.2.5 Consequences of job insecurity

Consequences of job insecurity can be defined as the short and long-term consequences, outcomes, results, and effects of perceived job insecurity for individuals and/or organisations (Chirumbolo & Hellgren, 2003; De Witte, 1999). Some researchers also tend to include a social consequence of job insecurity (Charles & James, 2003; De Ruyter & Burgers, 2000; Sverke & Goslinga, 2003).

A whole range of possible consequences of job insecurity have been investigated by different research studies. A specific objective of this study is to determine the different consequences indicated in national and international studies. Table 3 shows the results from the analysis of various consequences found in different studies.

Table 3

Results from the Analysis of Consequences of Job Insecurity found in International and National Studies

Categories of job insecurity consequences	Consequence	International studies	South African studies
Individual consequences	Job satisfaction	(De Cuyper & De Witte, 2006; De Witte, 2005b; De Witte & Näswall, 2003; Feather & Rauter, 2004; Gillespie, Walsh, Winefield, Dua, & Strough, 2001; Lim, 1997; Mauno et al., 2005; Noblet & Gifford, 2002; Probst and Lawler, 2006; Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, 2002; Taris, 2002; Yousef, 1998)	(Heymans, 2002; Labuschagne, 2005; Marais, 2005; Moeletsi, 2003; Rani, 2005; Rannona, 2003; Selepe, 2004; Tshabalala, 2004; Van Zyl, 2005)
	Physical health/general health	(Barling & Kelloway, 1996; De Ruyter & Burgers, 2000; Domenighetti et al,. 2000; Ferrie, 1997; Ferrie, et al., 2001; Cheng et al., 2005; Lee et al., 2004; McDonough, 2000; Nolan et al., 2000; Pelfrene et al., 2003; Sverke & Helgren, 2002; Sverke et al., 2002; Strazdins et al., 2004)	(Fourie, 2005; Leach, 2006; Mokhobotloane, 2005; Marais, 2005; Rani, 2005; Selepe, 2004; Snoer, 2005; Van Zyl, 2005; Viljoen, 2004)

Table 3 continued

Results from the Analysis of Consequences of Job Insecurity found in International and National Studies

Categories of job insecurity consequences	Consequence	International studies	South African studies
Individual consequences continued	Burnout	(Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995; Mauno et al., 2005; Strazdins et al., 2004)	(Bosman, 2005; Laba, 2004; Makhobotloane, 2005; Marais, 2005; Selepe, 2004; Van Greunen, 2004; Viljoen, 2004; Van Zyl, 2005)
	Career Loyalty	(King, 2000)	
	Psychological health	(Büssing, 1999; Chirumbolo & Hellgren, 2003; De Ruyter & Burgers, 2000; De Witte, 1999; Domenighetti et al., 2000; Dooley, 2003; Ferrie, 1997; Hellgren & Chirumbolo, 2003; Kinnunen, Mauno, Nätti, & Happonen, 2000; Mauno & Kinnunen, 2002; McDonough, 2000; Mohr, 2000; Probst and Lawler, 2006; Strazdins et al., 2004; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002; Sverke et al., 2002)	(Makhobotloane, 2005; Marais, 2005; Orpen, 1993; Van Schalkwyk, 2005; Viljoen, 2004)
	Resistance to change	(Rosenblatt et al., 1999)	
Organisational consequences	Absenteeism	(De Ruyter & Burgers, 2000)	
	Job involvement/Work engagement	(Kuhnert & Palmer, 1991; Mauno & Kinnunen, 2002; Sverke et al., 2002)	(Bosman, 2005; Makhobotloane, 2005; Reynders, 2005; Selepe, 2004; Van Greunen, 2004; Van Zyl, 2005; Viljoen, 2004)
	Job performance	(De Cuyper & De Witte, 2006; De Ruyter & Burgers, 2000; Jordan et al., 2000; King, 2000; Rosenblatt et al., 1999; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002; Sverke et al., 2002; Yousef, 1998)	
	Job safety	(Feather & Rauter, 2004; Probst & Brubaker, 2001)	
	Job withdrawal	(Davey et al., 1997; Probst, 2002; Probst and Lawler, 2006; Sverke et al., 2002)	
	Organisational citizenship	(Feather & Rauter, 2004; King, 2000)	(Jorge, 2005)
	Organisational commitment	(Burchell, 2002; Davey et al., 1997; De Cuyper & De Witte, 2006; De Witte & Näswall, 2003; Feather & Rauter, 2004; Jordan et al., 2000; Lord & Hartley, 1998; Rosenblatt et al., 1999; Sverke et al., 2002; Yousef, 1998)	(Heymans, 2002; Jorge, 2005; Laba, 2004; Marais, 2005; Moeletsi, 2003; Peverett, 1994; Rani, 2005; Rannona, 2003; Selepe, 2004; Tshabalala, 2004)
	Organisational loyalty	(King, 2000)	
	Organisational trust	(Sverke et al., 2002)	
	Turnover intention	(Chirumbolo & Hellgren, 2003; Davey et al., 1997; Näswall & De Witte, 2003; Sverke & Hellgren, 2001; Sverke & Goslinga, 2003; Sverke et al., 2002; Mauno et al., 2005; Probst and Lawler, 2006; Rosenblatt et al., 1999)	
	Work wellness		(Bosman, 2005; Reynders, 2005; Selepe, 2004; Van Greunen, 2004)

Table 3 continued

Results from the Analysis of Consequences of Job Insecurity found in International and National Studies

Categories of job insecurity consequences	Consequence	International studies	South African studies
Social consequences	Household stability	(Charles & James, 2003;)	
	Quality of family life	(De Ruyter & Burgers, 2000)	
	Unemployment	(De Ruyter & Burgers, 2000)	
	Union loyalty	(Sverke & Goslinga, 2003)	
	Withdrawal from union membership	(Sverke & Goslinga, 2003)	

Although consequences of job insecurity to the individual and the organisation have been studied extensively, this does not negate any further need for research. According to De Witte (2005a), it is necessary to redo research topics in different countries in order to facilitate generalisation of results across the world. Keeping the different social, political and economic contexts of countries in mind, determining the differences in research results between countries must not be neglected. An important lacuna in South African research is reflected in Table 3 in that no studies investigating the social consequences of job insecurity have been undertaken. Also, factors such as career loyalty, resistance to change, job performance, job withdrawal, job safety, turnover intention, organisational trust, organisational loyalty and absenteeism have not received any attention in South African research.

2.3   MEASUREMENT OF JOB INSECURITY IN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

According to Probst (2003), a shortfall in job insecurity research is the lack of comprehensive conceptualisation and the development of valid and reliable measures. Operationalisation of the concept of job insecurity was driven by the conceptualisation and structural models (De Witte, 2005a). The variety of measurements (Ashford et al., 1989; Borg & Elizur, 1992; De Witte, 2000; Hartley et al., 1991; Kinnunen et al., 2000) and the different uses thereof, seem to indicate that job insecurity is best conceptualised as a complex, multidimensional phenomenon.

Measurement approaches used in different studies depend on the accepted assumptions and definitions integrated into the study. Existing measures can be divided into global and multidimensional measures with one to many items in a scale.

According to Jacobson (1991) and Manski and Straub (2001), global measures can be defined as measures that tap only one dimension, namely the fear of losing a job. On the other hand, multidimensional measures tap into dimensions such as the fear of losing one's job as well as the fear of losing some important job features.

Two separate studies have been conducted by separate researchers in different contexts to investigate and clarify unsolved issues in the debate of measuring job insecurity (Reisel, 2002; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). The results from both studies implicate that more research with extensive and new perceptions need to be done to possibly arrive at a final model, which will include a clear conceptualisation, definition and measurement of job insecurity as an integrated industrial phenomenon.

Reisel and Banai (2002) suggested that job insecurity need not be tested as a multidimensional construct. Their results indicated that the job feature dimension of multidimensional measures did not explain significant additional variance in the outcome variables. However, these results have not been replicated.

Table 4 (adapted and extended from the work of Reisel (2002) and Sverke and Hellgren (2002)) shows a summary of the available measures and their dimensions in international literature. An objective of this study is to indicate and discuss the use of these measures in South African research. The relevance, reliability and validity of the measures in the South African context will be highlighted.

Table 4

Summary of Job Insecurity Measures

Developer(s)	Date	Conceptualisation	Basic assumptions	Number of items	South African use and validation
Global measures					
Caplan, Cobb, French, van Harrison and Pinneau	1975	Job insecurity as the perceived probability of job loss	Job insecurity has a cognitive dimension Measures the certainty of the job and the level of career security	4	The use of this measure could not be found in any research done in South African organisations
Johnson, Messe and Crano	1984	Job insecurity as the perceived probability of job loss	Job insecurity has an affective dimension Measures the fear of job loss	7	The use of this measure could not be found in any research done in South African organisations
Van Vuuren	1990	Job insecurity as the perceived probability of job loss	Job insecurity has an expectancy dimension Measures the likelihood to lose one's job	4	Although some mention is made to the work of Van Vuuren in South African studies, no use was made of the measure
Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans and van Vuuren	1991	Job insecurity as the perceived probability of job loss	Job insecurity is a work stressor Job insecurity has an cognitive dimension Measures the expectancy of losing a job	3	The use of this measure could not be found in any research done in South African organisations
De Witte	2000	Job insecurity has a cognitive and affective component Job insecurity is a stressor in relation with its predictors and outcomes	Measures the perceived job insecurity encapsulating both the cognitive and the affective dimensions of job insecurity	11	Most of the studies done in South African research used this measure Construct validity in South African organisations was tested and confirmed Heymans (2002) reported an alpha coefficient of 0.81 for the cognitive dimension and an alpha coefficient of 0.89 for the affective dimension
Mohr	2000	Job insecurity as the perceived probability of job loss	Job insecurity has a cognitive-subjective dimension Measures the probability of job loss	1	The use of this measure could not be found in any research done in South African organisations
Probst	2003	Job insecurity is the perceived stability and continuance of one's job as one know it Job insecurity is a stressor in relation with its predictors and outcomes	Two measures are necessary to measure job insecurity: Job Security Index (JSI) and Job Security Satisfaction (JSS) Perceptions of job insecurity are not the same as the affective reaction to it	JSI=18 JSS=20	These measures do not yet feature in South African research
Sverke et al.	2004	Job insecurity is a stressor	Measures the relationship of job insecurity as a stressor in relation to its predictors and outcomes	5	The use of this measure could not be found in any research done in South African organisations

Table 4 continued

Summary of Job Insecurity Measures

Developer(s)	Date	Conceptualisation	Basic assumptions	Number of items	South African use and validation
Multidimensional measures					
Ashford, Lee and Bobko	1989	Job insecurity consisting of an objective and subjective component Job insecurity is a stressor in relation with its predictors and outcomes	Job insecurity must be measured on five different scales		A small number of studies conducted in South Africa used this measure (see table) The construct validity for use in South African organisations was found to be valid and reliable. All these studies recommended further testing and adaptation to the South African context
			The features of a job has importance	17	
			Perceived fear to lose job features	17	
			Total job importance	10	
			Perceived fear to lose the job itself	10	
			Powerlessness	3	
Roskies and Louis-Guerin	1990	Job insecurity has a cognitive and affective component	Measures the concern of employment uncertainty	5	The use of this measure could not be found in any research done in South African organisations
Borg and Elizur	1992	Job insecurity has a cognitive and affective component	The measure consists of two scales		The use of this measure could not be found in any research done in South African organisations
			The cognitive component	6	
			The affective component	3	
Isaksson, Hellgren and Petterson	1998	Job insecurity has qualitative and quantitative dimensions	The scale measures the quantitative dimension as the perceived threats to the continuation of the total job, and the qualitative dimension as the threat to the continuity of important job features	7	Only one study that used this measure could be found in South African research. The construct validity of the Job Insecurity Scale was investigated and showed acceptable reliability.
Kinnunen, Mauno, Nätti and Happonen	1999	Job insecurity consisting of an objective and subjective component Job insecurity is a stressor in relation with its predictors and outcomes	Four scales measure the subjective perceiving of the objective threats		The use of this measure could not be found in any research done in South African organisations
			The fear of job loss	4	
			The importance of the job	9	
			Probability of job loss	9	
			Powerlessness	3	

The measure of Ashford et al. (1989) appeared to be used most frequently in international studies. Lee, Bobko and Chen (2006) investigated the latest critique on the measure of Ashford

et al. (1989) that job features and powerlessness should be eliminated from the measure. Their results suggested otherwise and they argued for the continued validation of the current measure. Many international studies used self-developed measures consisting of one or more questions to measure levels of job insecurity in different situations (Wilson et al., 2006), while others used compiled instruments from different references of validated measures (Sverke & Goslinga, 2003). Quite a few studies adopted one or more items from Karasek's (1979) Job Content Questionnaire (JCQ) to measure the presence and level of job insecurity. This can provide proof of the assumption that the intensity, perception, antecedents and consequences of job insecurity may vary under different circumstances and in different contexts (Probst, 2003). Mauno, Leskinen and Kinnunen (2001) highlighted the limitation of job insecurity in that the measures, up to now, were developed to perform job insecurity research in times of organisational change. Only five of the investigated South African studies did not use the measure of De Witte (2000). Reasons for this may be the accessibility of the measure in the South African research field of job insecurity. The construct validity has been thoroughly tested and appears to be applicable for South African use.

2.4 RESEARCH TRENDS OF JOB INSECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICA WITH REFERENCE TO INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

All research done in South Africa on the topic of job insecurity that could be traced was investigated. Content (textual) analysis of the available dissertations, theses and other research studies was conducted. The analysis of the data is summarised in three tables. The purpose of the tables is to represent the qualitative data gathering in an informative format. The first table contains the demographic information of the research studies on job insecurity conducted in South Africa. The second table indicates the distribution of research done with the various variables that underlie the phenomenon of job insecurity as well as the different measures used in the investigated studies. The third table summarises the results of each study and indicates South African as well as international confirmation and contradiction of the results. Reference to link the same studies in the different tables is indicated by numbers. Studies are listed according to year of submission and alphabetically within the specific submission year. A description, interpretation and integration of the tables follow after the tables.

Table 5

Research Studies on Job Insecurity done in South Africa

Number	Title	Year of submission						Author	Type of study			Institution of studies		Published	
		00	02	03	04	05	06		Dissertation	Thesis	Other	NWU	Other	Yes	No
1	Correlations between job insecurity and psychological well-being among white and black employees in South Africa	93						Orpen, C			X		X	X	
2	The relationship of job insecurity and organisational commitment to attitudes of affirmative action	94						Peverett, M. R.	Honours				X		X
3	Job insecurity and psychological strengths of service workers in a parastatal		X					Elbart, J.	X			X			X
4	The relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction and organisational commitment of maintenance workers in a parastatal		X					Heymans, D. R.	X			X			X
5	The relationship between job insecurity, sense of coherence, self-efficacy and locus of control of human resource workers in a financial institution		X					Human, I. J.	X			X			X
6	Psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and job insecurity in divisions of a packaging organisation			X				Moeletsi, M. M.	X			X			X
7	The relationship between job insecurity, job satisfaction and organisational commitment in a mining organisation			X				Ramona, M. V.	X			X			X
8	Psychological empowerment, leadership empowerment and job insecurity within a steel-manufacturing environment			X				Sauer, D.	X			X			X
9	Job insecurity, burnout and organisational commitment of employees in a financial institution in Gauteng				X			Laba, K	X			X			X
10	Core self-evaluation and job insecurity of employees in a government organisation				X			Maree, M. A.	X			X			X
11	Job insecurity, job satisfaction, work wellness and organisational commitment in a petroleum/oil company				X			Selepe, C. M.	X			X			X
12	Job insecurity, organisational commitment and job satisfaction of engineers in a parastatal				X			Tshabalala, M. E.	X			X			X
13	Job insecurity and wellness of workers in a local government organisation				X			Van Greunen, T.	X			X			X
14	Job insecurity, burnout, job engagement and psychological well-being of workers at a government organisation				X			Viljoen, E.	X			X			X

Table 5 continued

Research Studies on Job Insecurity done in South Africa

Number	Title	Year of submission						Author	Type of study			Institution of studies		Published	
		O	02	03	04	05	06		Dissertation	Thesis	Other	NWU	Other	Yes	No
15	Job insecurity and wellness of employees in a government organisation						X	Bosman, J.		X		X		X	
16	Job insecurity, psychological well-being and the relationship with future literacy					X		Bothma, A. S.		X		X		X	
17	Job insecurity, coping and health-related behaviour					X		Fourie, A. M.		X		X			X
18	The relationship between job insecurity, organisational citizenship behaviours and effective organisational commitment					X		Jorge, A. C.	X			X			X
19	Job insecurity, job satisfaction and work locus of control of employees in a government organisation					X		Labuschagne, M	X			X		X	
20	Job insecurity, wellness and social support within a business unit of an electrical organisation					X		Makhobotloane, M.	X			X			X
21	Job insecurity, affective organisational commitment, burnout, job satisfaction and health of human resource practitioners in a chemical industry					X		Marais, J. A.	X			X			X
22	Job insecurity, work based support, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and general health of human resource professionals in a chemical industry					X		Rani, F. N.	X			X			X
23	Job insecurity, psychological empowerment and work engagement in a government organisation					X		Reynders, E.	X			X			X
24	Job insecurity and general health of employees in a government organisation in the Free State					X		Snoer, S. A.	X			X			X
25	Job insecurity and psychological well-being in a financial institution in Gauteng					X		Van Schalkwyk, S.	X			X			X
26	Job insecurity, burnout, work engagement, general health and job satisfaction in selected organisations in the Vaal Triangle					X		Van Zyl, Y.		X		X			X
27	The psychological contract and job insecurity of temporary employees contracted to a health insurance company	X						Botha, L. G.	X			X			X
28	Job insecurity, resilience and general health of motor-trade employees	X						Leach, R. J	X			X			X

O = Other year of submission; NWU = North-West University

Table 6

Variables Studied and Measurements Used in the Research Studies listed in Table 5

No	JI	JS	OC	B	WE	WW	PC	GH	PH	PE	SOC	SS	C	CSE	WLOC	TW	R	OCB	SE	UM	JC	CG	A	G	Q	T	JISI	JIS	JIQ	O
1	X								X													X				X				X
2	X	X	X																				X	X	X	X			X	
3	X		X								X				X				X			X	X	X	X		X			
4	X	X	X																	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
5	X		X								X				X				X			X	X	X	X		X			
6	X		X							X																	X			
7	X		X																	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
8	X									X													X		X	X	X			
9	X		X	X																	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
10	X													X													X			
11	X		X	X	X	X		X																			X			
12	X	X	X	X	X																						X			
13	X		X	X	X	X									X					X		X	X	X	X	X	X			
14	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		X											X	X		X	X	X			
15	X	X	X	X	X	X						X										X	X		X		X			
16	X												X						X			X	X	X			X			
17	X							X					X											X				X		
18	X		X															X				X	X	X	X	X	X			
19	X	X													X									X			X			
20	X	X		X	X			X	X	X		X																	X	
21	X	X	X	X	X			X	X												X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
22	X	X	X	X	X	X		X				X									X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
23	X					X				X													X				X			

| | | | | | | | | | | | **Variables** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | **Measure used** | | | |

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Table 6 continued

Variables Studied and Measurements Used in the Research Studies listed in Table 5

No	JI	JS	OC	B	WE	WW	PC	GH	PH	PE	SOC	SS	C	CSE	WLOC	TW	R	OCB	SE	UM	JC	CG	A	G	Q	T	JISI	JIS	JIQ	O
24	X							X														X	X		X		X			
25	X								X		X				X							X	X		X		X			
26	X	X		X	X			X														X	X	X	X	X	X			
27	X						X									X						X	X	X	X	X	X			
28	X							X									X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X

No = Number of study; JI = Job Insecurity; JS = Job Satisfaction; OC = Organisational Commitment; B = Burnout; WE = Work Engagement; WW = Work Wellness; PC = Psychological Contract; GH = General Health; PH = Psychological Health; PE = Psychological Empowerment; SOC = Sense Of Coherence; SS = Social Support; C = Coping; CSE = Core Self Evaluation; WLOC = Work Locus Of Control; TW = Temporary Work; R = Resilience; OCB = Organisational Citizenship Behaviour; SE = Self Efficacy; UM = Union Membership; JC = Job Category; CG = Cultural Group; A = Age; G = Gender; Q = Qualification; T = Tenure.

JISI = Job Insecurity Survey Inventory (De Witte, 2000); JIS = Job Insecurity Survey (Isaksson et al.,1998); JIQ = Job Insecurity Questionnaire (Ashford et al., Lee, & Bobko, 1989)

Table 7

Statistical Information, Results and International Confirmation of the Research Studies listed in Table 5

No	Study population	Research design	Study area	Results	Confirmation		Contradiction	
					VS	INT	VS	INT
1	N = 132	Cross-sectional survey design	Production workers	Job insecurity was positively related to anxiety and depression	X	X		
				White participants indicated lower levels of job insecurity than their black counterparts	X	X	X	
2	N = 62	Cross-sectional survey design	Multinational organisations	Correlations indicated that perceived job insecurity is positively related to negative attitudes towards affirmative action programmes				
				Job insecurity has negative correlations with organisational commitment	X	X		
3	N = 49	Survey design	Service workers	Blacks were found to be more insecure than whites	X	X	X	
				A practically significant relationship was found between job insecurity and sense of coherence		X		
				A practically significant relationship was found between job insecurity and generalised self-efficacy		X		
				No significant relationship was found between job insecurity and work locus of control	X		X	X
				Job insecurity was found to predict sense of coherence and generalised self-efficacy to a certain extent		X		
4	N = 178	Survey design	Maintenance workers	The cognitive scale of the JISI reported low internal consistency	X			X
				Job insecurity was not found to be related to job satisfaction			X	X
				Job insecurity was not found to be related to organisational commitment	X	X		
				No significant differences between the means of gender, race and age for job insecurity were found			X	X
				A practically significant difference of large effect was found for low qualification and job insecurity	X	X		
				A practically significant difference of medium effect was found for low tenure and job insecurity	X	X	X	X
				A practically significant difference of large effect was found for medium job category and job insecurity		X		
				Some negative relationship between job insecurity and union membership was found	X	X		

Table 7 continued

Statistical Information, Results and International Confirmation of the Research Studies listed in Table 5

No	Study population	Research design	Study area	Results	Confirmation		Contradiction	
					SA	INT	SA	INT
5	N = 47	Experimental design	Financial workers	The researcher postulates that job insecurity will decrease with age	X	X	X	
				It was found that higher levels of qualification correlates with lower levels of job insecurity	X	X	X	X
				The affective dimension of job insecurity was found to be higher than the cognitive dimension	X			
				It was found that a higher sense of coherence correlates with positive emotional experiences of job insecurity	X			
				No significant relationship was found between job insecurity and work locus of control	X		X	X
				No significant relationship was found between job insecurity and self-efficacy			X	
6	N = 119	Cross-sectional survey design	Packaging workers	A direct relationship between job insecurity and psychological empowerment was found	X	X		
				Higher levels of job satisfaction correlate with lower levels of job insecurity	X	X		
				A large part of the variance in job insecurity can be predicted by psychological empowerment	X	X		
7	N = 345	Survey design	Mine workers	No practically significant differences were found between gender and tenure for job insecurity	X		X	X
				Blacks were found to be more insecure than whites				
				The age group 35 years to 46 years experienced the highest job insecurity levels			X	X
				It was found that low qualification levels correlated with higher levels of job insecurity	X	X	X	
				It was found that semi-skilled work categories correlated with higher job insecurity levels	X	X		
				It was found that workers with union membership experienced higher levels of job insecurity	X	X		
				It was found that job insecurity is related to reduced job satisfaction	X	X		X
				Relationships of high job insecurity with low organisational commitment were found	X	X		
				It was found that a large part of the variance in job satisfaction and organisational commitment can be predicted by job insecurity	X	X		
8	N = 241	Correlation survey design	Steel manufacturing	Significant differences in levels of job insecurity in terms of qualification were found, employees with tertiary qualifications feel less insecure	X	X		X
				Psychological empowerment does not predict job insecurity			X	X
				No significant correlation between psychological empowerment and job insecurity was found				X

Table 7 continued

Statistical Information, Results and International Confirmation of the Research Studies listed in Table 5

No	Study population	Research design	Study area	Results	Confirmation SA	Confirmation INT	Contradiction SA	Contradiction INT
9	N = 146	Cross-sectional survey design	Financial institution	A practically significant positive correlation of large effect was found between job insecurity and burnout	X	X		
				A practically significant negative correlation was found between job insecurity and organisational commitment	X	X		
				The age group 25-35 indicated the highest job insecurity levels	X	X	X	X
				Practically significant correlations of large effect for the two race groups were found where white participants experienced more job insecurity than black participants	X		X	X
				No statistically significant differences between the job insecurity levels for tenure and job category were found	X		X	
				A practically significant percentage of the variance in organisation commitment and in burnout can be predicted by job insecurity	X	X		
10	N = 298	Cross-sectional survey design	Government organisation	Item 2 was eliminated from the JISI to obtain a better fit to the data	X			
				Whites experienced higher levels of cognitive job insecurity than blacks	X		X	X
				A practically significant negative relationship of medium effect was found between core self-evaluation and job insecurity	X			
				It was found that core self-evaluation holds predictive value with regard to job insecurity	X			
11	N = 66	Cross sectional survey design	Petroleum/oil company	A negative relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction as well as organisational commitment was found	X	X		
				Positive relationships were found between job insecurity and work engagement, burnout and general health	X	X		
				White employees were found to be more uncertain than black employees	X		X	X
12	N = 60	Survey design	Engineers	Levels of organisational commitment and job satisfaction had fairly high scores, which might indicate a relationship between job insecurity and organisational commitment and job satisfaction	X	X		
				The job insecurity measuring instrument used appeared to be valid and reliable for use in South African organisations	X			
13	N = 130	Cross-sectional survey design	Government organisation	Pearson product-moment correlations show that job insecurity is related to burnout	X	X		
				Job insecurity can be used in the prediction of burnout	X	X		
				No statistically or practically significant differences could be found between biographical groups	X		X	X

Table 7 continued

Statistical Information, Results and International Confirmation of the Research Studies listed in Table 5

No	Study population	Research design	Study area	Results	Confirmation SA	Confirmation INT	Contradiction SA	Contradiction INT
14	N = 296	Cross-sectional survey design	Government organisation	White participants experienced higher cognitive job insecurity than their black counterparts	X		X	X
				It was found that increased levels of job insecurity are associated with decreased levels of work engagement and general health	X	X		
				No significant correlation was found between job insecurity and burnout			X	X
				Job insecurity holds predictive value with regard to work engagement and general health	X	X		
15	N = 297	Cross-sectional survey design	Government organisation	No differences for job insecurity levels were found between groups based on age, qualification and tenure	X		X	X
				White participants showed higher levels of job insecurity than blacks	X		X	X
				Job insecurity and burnout was found to be statistically significantly related	X	X		
				Job insecurity was inversely related to work engagement	X	X		
				Negative affectivity showed a significant relationship with job insecurity and burnout, as well as lower engagement				
				Positive affectivity was associated with lower levels of cognitive job insecurity and burnout as well as higher levels of engagement				
				Affectivity partially mediated the relationship between cognitive job insecurity and burnout as well as work engagement				
16	N = 459	Cross-sectional institution design	Financial institution	Results indicated a statistically significant negative correlation between job insecurity and self-efficacy	X			
				A significant negative correlation between job insecurity and future literacy was found				
				A practically significant negative correlation of a medium effect was obtained between internal work locus of control and job insecurity	X	X		
				External work locus of control had a practically significant positive correlation of a medium effect with job insecurity	X	X		
				The age group of 36-45 experienced the highest levels of job insecurity	X			
				Black employees experienced significantly higher levels of future literacy when compared with white employees	X	X		
				No practically significant differences were found between the demographic variables gender and qualifications and job insecurity levels	X	X	X	X
				Multiple regression analysis indicated that self-efficacy, work locus of control and future literacy predicted job insecurity when controlling for biographical variables				

Table 7 continued

Statistical Information, Results and International Confirmation of the Research Studies listed in Table 5

No	Study population	Research design	Study area	Results	Confirmation SA	Confirmation INT	Contradiction SA	Contradiction INT
17	N = 206	Cross-sectional survey design	Managers in a mining industry	A positive relationship was found between qualitative and quantitative job insecurity	X			
				Both dimensions of job insecurity were positively related to health complaints	X			
				Qualitative job insecurity was a significant predictor of health complaints	X			
				Quantitative job insecurity did not play a role in predicting health-related behaviour.			X	
				Coping did not moderate the effects of job insecurity for employees with health complaints				
18	N = 80	Cross-sectional survey design	Privately-owned franchise stores	Acceptable Cronbach alpha coefficients were obtained on the measuring scale	X	X		
				No statistically or practically significant relationships could be found between total job insecurity and the other variables			X	X
				No significant differences were found with regards to job insecurity and gender				X
				No significant differences were found between black and white participants in their levels of job insecurity			X	X
				No significant differences in the levels of job insecurity were found between the different age groups			X	X
				No differences were found between the levels of qualification and the levels of job insecurity			X	X
19	N = 298	Cross-sectional survey design	Government organisation	Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients indicated that increased job insecurity is associated with lower levels of job satisfaction	X	X		
				Both the cognitive and affective subscales of job insecurity demonstrated a negative correlation with work locus of control	X	X		
				Regression analysis confirmed the partially mediating effect of work locus of control on the relationship between cognitive job insecurity and job satisfaction				
				White participants experienced higher levels of cognitive job insecurity than black participants	X		X	X
20	N = 209	Cross-sectional survey design	Electricity organisation	Practically and statistically significant positive correlations between burnout and job insecurity (job feature threats) were found	X	X		
				Practically and statistically significant negative correlations between work engagement, general and psychological health and job feature threats were reported	X	X		
				Regression analysis indicated that job insecurity has some predictive value with regards to the different wellness components	X	X		

Table 7 continued

Statistical Information, Results and International Confirmation of the Research Studies listed in Table 5

No	Study population	Research design	Study area	Results	Confirmation		Contradiction	
					SA	INT	SA	INT
21	N = 505	Survey design	Human resource practitioners in a chemical industry	The measuring instrument was found to be reliable and valid	X	X		
				No practically significant differences were found between individuals from different age, qualification, gender, culture, tenure or job category groups and levels of job insecurity			X	X
				Both subscales of job insecurity were practically and significantly related to burnout and psychological health	X	X		
				Cognitive job insecurity practically and significantly negatively correlated with subscales of job satisfaction	X	X		
				Low cognitive job insecurity was related to higher organisational commitment	X	X		
22	N = 114	Cross-sectional survey design	Human resource professionals in a chemical industry	Affective and cognitive job insecurity demonstrated a statistically significant negative correlation with emotional social support	X	X		
				Both subscales of job insecurity correlated practically and significantly negative with intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction		X		
				Affective organisational commitment demonstrated a statistically significant negative relationship with cognitive job insecurity	X	X	X	
				A statistically significant positive correlation was obtained with regard to affective and cognitive job insecurity and general health	X	X	X	
				No statistically or practically significant differences regarding job insecurity and various demographic characteristics, such as age, tenure, job category, qualification, gender and cultural group were found	X		X	X
				Regression analysis indicated that job insecurity holds predictive value with regard to job satisfaction and general health	X	X		
23	N = 297	Cross-sectional survey design	Government organisation	No practically significant correlation coefficients were found between the job insecurity scales and the psychological empowerment scale	X		X	X
				No practically significant correlation was obtained between total job insecurity and work engagement	X			X
				Cognitive job insecurity predicted work engagement statistically significantly		X		
24	N = 83	Cross-sectional survey design	Government organisation	No statistically or practically significant differences regarding job insecurity and general health were obtained between biographical groups concerning age, culture and tenure	X		X	X
				Results confirmed the reliability and validity of the measuring instrument	X	X		
				Affective job insecurity demonstrated an association with decreased levels of general health	X	X		
				Cognitive job insecurity did not correlate with any general health subscales				
				Multiple regression analyses indicated that affective job insecurity holds predictive value with regard to general and psychological health	X	X		

Table 7 continued

Statistical Information, Results and International Confirmation of the Research Studies listed in Table 5

No	Study population	Research design	Study area	Results	Confirmation SA	Confirmation INT	Contradiction SA	Contradiction INT
25	N = 146	Cross-sectional survey design	Financial institution	A statistically significant negative relationship with medium effect was detected between job insecurity and sense of coherence	X	X		
				No practically significant relationship exists between job insecurity and work locus of control			X	X
				The age group 24 and younger showed the highest levels of job insecurity and the lowest			X	X
				levels were found in the age group 56 and above		X	X	X
				Employees with a tenure of 16 years or more showed the highest levels of job insecurity			X	X
26	N = 216	Cross-sectional survey design	Selected organisations in the Vaal Triangle	No significant differences were found with job insecurity and age groups			X	X
				In terms of qualification and job insecurity, no significant differences was found			X	X
				No significant differences of job insecurity levels were found between gender groups			X	X
				Black participants reported higher levels of job insecurity than white participants	X	X	X	
				No significant differences were found with job insecurity and tenure		X	X	X
27	N = 149	Cross-sectional survey design	Health insurance company	The job insecurity measure demonstrated acceptable levels of internal consistency	X	X		
				Burnout was significantly positive related to job insecurity	X	X		
				Psychological health was significantly negatively related to affective job insecurity	X	X		
				Engagement was significantly negatively related to job insecurity	X	X		
				A practically significant negative correlation between cognitive job insecurity and general health was found	X	X		
				Job satisfaction was practically negatively related to cognitive job insecurity and statistically related to affective job insecurity	X	X		
				Job insecurity related strongly to factors of the psychological contract		X		
				The moderating effect of temporary work on job insecurity was marginal			X	
				Tenure showed a statistically significant negative relationship with job insecurity	X	X		
28	N = 207	Cross-sectional survey design	Motor-trade employees in Gauteng	Job insecurity and somatic symptoms, as well as social dysfunction and severe depression were statistically related	X	X		
				No significant relationship was found between job insecurity and resilience			X	
				It was found that resilience moderates the relationship between job insecurity and social dysfunction		X		
				No significant differences were obtained for any mean scores of job insecurity across the biographical characteristics			X	X

No =Number of study; SA = South Africa; INT = International

Tables 5, 6 and 7 report the results of a total of 28 studies in the field of job insecurity in South African organisations which were analysed.

Table 5 reports the demographic information of research studies on job insecurity done in South African organisations. Only two studies prior to the start of job insecurity research at the North-West University in 2002 could be traced in full manuscripts, and both were completed before 1994. Most of the studies at the North-West University were completed in 2005. Only three theses were completed, the rest of the studies were all Masters' dissertations. The results of only three of the studies were published. A great deal of similarity between the titles exists and titles tend to reflect only correlational studies of different variables.

The results in Table 6 show a clear picture of the distribution of variables in the different studies. It is evident that some variables have been studied repeatedly, while others were neglected. Except for 5 studies, all the others used the Job Insecurity Survey Inventory (JISI) of De Witte (2000). This implies that the majority of studies were conducted from the conceptualisation that job insecurity in South African organisation has a cognitive and an affective component and can be defined as a work stressor.

Table 7 includes the statistical information, results and international confirmation of the research studies listed in Table 5. Apart from the three doctoral studies, the study populations vary from a mere 40 candidates to a maximum of 350 in the Master's studies. The doctoral studies show samples sizes of between 216 and 459 participants. All the studies were done with a cross-sectional survey design. Populations were mostly derived from industrial settings as well as one or two financial, governmental, health and franchise environments. Target organisations were primary located in the Vaal Triangle region of South Africa. The results relating to job insecurity dimensions are listed, while the South African as well as the international confirmation and contradiction of results between the different studies with the same constructs are indicated.

The most notable agreements between the studies were shown for correlations of job insecurity with general and psychological health as well as studies done on the correlation between job insecurity and organisational commitment. Findings generally indicate that higher levels of job

insecurity are related to lower levels of organisational commitment. Studies conducted with burnout as a variable also show confirming results, that job insecurity is positively associated with burnout. All the studies that applied the JISI of De Witte (2000), agree on the construct validity of the measure for South African use.

Large differences between studies with the same variables but different organisational contexts were found. Some important differences were indicated between the biographical results of studies. A lot of contradicting results were found in the relationship between job insecurity and variables such as gender, cultural or language group, age, qualification and tenure. Some studies indicate practically and statistically significant correlations between job insecurity and work locus of control, while other studies did not report any relationship between these variables. Contradicting results were also found between studies that investigated the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction. Some studies showed significant correlations between these two variables while others did not find any relationship. One of the interesting contradictions between the South African studies as well as the international studies is that some studies found that black participants tend to have higher levels of job insecurity than their white counterparts, while others found that white employees have higher job insecurity levels than black employees. These results are contradictory to international studies, where it is mostly indicated that black employees experience higher levels of job insecurity than their white counterparts. The differences in the assemblage of the South African (mostly black) and international populations (mostly white) are an obvious explanation.

2.5   PERCEPTIONS AND VIEWS OF EXPERTS IN THE INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Practical relevance was added to the proposed model, by conducting semi-structured interviews with experts in the industrial and business environment in order to assess and incorporate their views regarding job insecurity in South African organisations. The interview questions are listed in the Appendix.

A total of 24 semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts in nine different industrial and business areas. The population included both male and female participants from a range of positions, ages, language groups and years of tenure. Companies from the provinces of Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Free State and the Western Cape were included. The biographical information is summarised in Table 8 to indicate the distribution of biographical variables. The type of company is listed alphabetically.

The data collected during the interviews has been analysed, interpreted and divided into five identified themes, which will be discussed individually. Final conclusions and interpretations will be integrated into the proposed model for future job insecurity research in South Africa.

Table 8

Summary of the Biographical Information of the Participants

Type of company	Gender		Position			Age in years				Language			Tenure in years		
	Male	Female	MD	Manager	Other	20-30	31-40	41-50	>50	Afr	Eng	Other	0-10	11-20	>20
Chemical	2			1	1		1	1		2			1	1	
Education	1			1				1			1				1
Financial		3		3			3			3			3		
Human Resource	2	2	3		1		1	2	1	2	2		2	1	1
Manufacturing	1	1		2			1	1		2				2	
Medical		3		3		1	1	1		3			3		
Mining		1		1			1				1		1		
Petro-chemical	3	1	1	3		1		2	1	3	1		1	1	2
Services	2	2		3	1	1	1	1	1	3		1*	3	1	
Totals	**11**	**13**	**4**	**17**	**3**	**3**	**9**	**9**	**3**	**18**	**5**	**1**	**14**	**6**	**4**

MD = Managing Director; Afr = Afrikaans; Eng = English

* This participant indicated their home language to be Hindi.

Participants were mostly female, and mostly Afrikaans speaking and on a managerial level. The age of most participants ranged between 31 and 50 years. Most had between 0 and 10 years tenure. Next; the identified themes from the interviews are discussed:

Theme 1: Defining job insecurity

All participants agree that job insecurity is a feeling of uncertainty, an awareness of the possibility to be replaced. Most ($n = 19$) agree that the concern is about the long-term continuity of a permanent job. Concerns are mostly about the job itself as well as the job position and future job prospects being threatened in some way. Job insecurity includes a strong uncertainty factor about the future of the job. Not only is the uncertainty about the possible loss of one's job a strong factor, but the uncertainty of re-employment and the fear of not finding alternative employment due to high unemployment rates were also highlighted. A large number of the interviewed participants ($n = 14$) emphasise the uncertainty of the current role in a specific position. Interestingly enough, seven of the participants independently said that job insecurity exists when the employee does not feel 100% sure about the future of his/her current job. Two of the participants claim that job insecurity is the stress an employee needs to perform to his or her best ability. A new point of view came from one of the participants who explained his concept of job insecurity as a needed factor to survive: the need for flexibility and to learn to overcome resistance to change. Eight participants agree that job insecurity leaves the individual feeling powerless. One of the participants has a very strong definition of job insecurity as a destructive negative state of affection that robs an individual of valuable positive energy.

Theme 2: Levels of job insecurity in the various organisations

One of the participants in the chemical industry reported high levels of job insecurity while the other one said it was risky to high, but at this stage *delicately* stable. The one participant in an educational setting believes job insecurity in educational institutions is at a medium level and will vary from individual to individual across different socio-political backgrounds. All participants from the financial organisations ($n = 3$) agreed that job insecurity in their companies is high. The four participants from human resource environments, mostly working as consultants, reported that the clients they work with do experience levels of job insecurity that are not necessarily healthy and may have negative consequences. Job insecurity in manufacturing organisations seems to be an evident problem in the sense that both the participants from this environment reported high levels of perceived job insecurity due to constant cost-saving

practices, where more has to be done with less, and a high need for flexibility exists. Two of the participants from medical settings reported no feelings of job insecurity in their organisations, while the other one working in the medical department of a mining company reported job insecurity to be problematic in her department. Also, the one participant in a senior management position of a leading mining company in South Africa reported his concern about the perceived levels of job insecurity in his company. Only one of the participants from a petro-chemical organisation reported the risk of job insecurity perceptions, while the others felt sure that job insecurity is not such a serious concern when compared to, for example, their experienced skills shortage.

The participants from the services environments are divided in their opinions. Some indicated concern about the level of job insecurity, while others felt that their clients experience high levels of job insecurity. The participants from a telecommunication company and an insurance company reported concerns about the levels of job insecurity. The concern from the telecommunication side was for the organisation itself, since this sector is diversifying, while from the insurance side the insecurity is felt in holding onto their clients. The participants from a law firm and a real estate respectively did not report any evidence of job insecurity in their organisations. Twenty of the participants agreed that job insecurity is a higher risk for white employees than for black employees, 18 are convinced that males will have higher levels of job insecurity than females, and 10 argued that the highest rates of job insecurity will be among white males over the age of 50.

Theme 3: Differences between national and global causes and predictors of job insecurity

Except for one participant, all agreed that levels of job insecurity and the possible causes thereof in South African organisations may be the same due to global organisational characteristics, but may also differ due to the political, economic and cultural differences from other countries. Most of the participants (n = 16) agreed that differences in levels of job insecurity will exist between developing and developed countries. South Africa is faced with a unique set of challenges in its young democracy which have to be considered when studying any psychological phenomenon. Participants mostly (n = 13) agreed that the perceived unstable political, economical and social

situation of South Africa itself causes employees in all South African organisations to have feelings of job insecurity on a continuum from very little to unbearable. This level of insecurity may be influenced by the listed causes.

The possible causes and/or predictors of job insecurity identified by the participants are reported in Table 9. The number of participants who indicated the possible cause or predictor is indicated in brackets behind each cause or predictor.

Table 9

Identified Causes and/or Predictors of Job Insecurity from the Interviews

Political	Economical	Organisational	Job features	Biographical
Education systems (17)	Global competitiveness (14)	Organisational communication (16)	Need for flexibility (13)	Cultural differences (15)
Unemployment rates (15)	Instability (11)	Constant cost savings (8)	Demand for longer hours of work (7)	Feelings of incompetence (11)
Employment legislation (13)	Exchange rates (3)	Downsizing (7)	Ruthless performance management (6)	Fitness to change (8)
Affirmative action(10)	Stock prices (2)	Organisational culture (7)	Level of strategic involvement (5)	Gender (6)
Black economic empowerment		Retrenchments (4)		Locus of control (5)
Recruiting of foreign skilled workers (9)		Structural changes (4)		Age (4)
		Technology changes (4)	Unstable job market (5)	HIV/AIDS (3)
Union communication (8)		Work ethics (4)	High-risk jobs (2)	Future literacy (2)
Employment equity(7)		Company size (2)		
Empowerment (6)		Voluntary packages (2)		
Social uncertainty (4)		Privatisation (1)		
Political ideologies (2)				

Table 9 indicates that most of the participants consider the most important political, economical, organisational, biographical and job-related causes and predictors of job insecurity to be the education system, global competitiveness, organisational communication, cultural differences and the greater need for flexibility respectively.

Theme 4: Consequences of job insecurity in South African organisations

Almost all participants (n = 19) stated that feelings of job insecurity leave employees with the responsibility of choices. The participants have a strong belief that employees have a choice to how they respond to their own feelings or perceptions of job insecurity. According to the

participants, these choices will be affected by the severity of the causes or predictors of job insecurity and by the intrapersonal and psychological fitness of the individual, as well as the availability of support systems. Consequences of job insecurity will be the result of the choices employees make.

It is important to note that, according to the participants, job insecurity does not always result in negative consequences but may have positive and sometimes necessary consequences if managed effectively. More than half of the participants (n = 14) said that job insecurity in manageable quantities will help employees to remain relevant to the reality of the organisation and will lead them to continuously update their knowledge and competencies. The largest concern to most of the participants is the loss of skills to other companies as well as the 'brain drain' of South African competence and knowledge to other countries.

Identified consequences as suggested by the 24 participants are listed in Table 10. The number of participants who indicated the specific consequence is added in brackets after the consequence.

Table 10

Identified Consequences of Job Insecurity from the Interviews

Individual	Organisational	Social
Stress (16)	Absenteeism (13)	Brain drainage (14)
Job satisfaction (13)	Loss of skills (12)	Unemployment (8)
Burnout (11)	Turnover intention (12)	Foster political and economical instability (7)
Irrational thinking and decision making (11)	Organisational commitment (9)	
Health consequences (9)	Reduced productivity(8)	Quality of life (6)
Depression (5)	Performance (7)	Union action (6)
Job-hopping (4)	Lack of loyalty (6)	Family relationships (4)
Lack of creativity (4)	Work engagement (5)	Social conflict (3)
Fight or flight reactions (2)	Distrust (4)	
Draining of energy (1)	Work errors (2)	

Table 10 indicates that on the individual, organisational and social levels, participants view stress (n = 16), absenteeism (n = 13) and the so-called 'brain-drain' (n = 14) as the most important consequences of job insecurity respectively.

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Theme 5: Plea for future research

The greatest concern expressed by almost all of the participants ($n = 21$) was that thousands of rands and hours of time are invested in research, but the knowledge and results are not communicated or shared with the relevant shareholders who may actually benefit from it. The plea was mainly to close the gap between theory and practice. Half of the participants ($n = 12$) indicated that their organisation could benefit from the current research studies on job insecurity in South Africa, if knowledge management started with sharing results and recommendations. More than half ($n = 17$) indicated the need for interventions which could assist employees to become fit for the future in order to be empowered to make better choices when feelings of job insecurity increase. A few ($n = 8$) indicated the need to assess and explain the role of leadership support in times of increased perceptions of job insecurity. A large number of the participants ($n = 17$) asked that the positive value of job insecurity to both the individual and the organisation must be investigated. Another need that was identified is to create interventions to help white South Africans to overcome their perceived feelings of job insecurity due to political changes. Nine of the participants indicated that the focus of research should now move to the development of interventions to alleviate the effect of job insecurity and its consequences. Participants also indicated the need to investigate the positive value of job insecurity feelings in manageable quantities.

2.6 THE INFLUENCE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT ON THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF JOB INSECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICAN ORGANISATIONS

Results from the intensive literature study and the qualitative investigation of national and international studies of job insecurity as well as the analysis of the semi-structured interviews with managers on the topic of job insecurity in South African organisations unfold the need and urgency to look into issues of the South African context that might influence the conceptualisation of job insecurity in South African organisations, as well as highlight related issues in need of further research.

Some issues that exemplify the current South African context and that may have an influence on job insecurity are affirmative action, black economic empowerment, employment equity, skill shortages and levels of unemployment (Dupper, 2005; Edigheji, 1999; Jinabhai, 2004). An in-depth investigation into the nature and complexity of these constructs is beyond the scope of this dissertation. The purpose of the specific objective is to emphasise the importance of context to future researchers in the field of job insecurity in South African organisations. The focus of this study is on areas of these constructs that probably relate to job insecurity. The analysis and interpretation of the literature investigation will be incorporated into the proposed model to set the research agenda for job insecurity in South African organisations.

Affirmative action (AA) refers to programmes and activities directed towards target groups in order to reduce inequalities from past and present discriminatory practices (Dupper, 2005). Adejumobi (2004) argues that AA brings along politics of social reform, which influence the organisation internally as well as externally. According to Johan van Zyl, group CEO of Sanlam (Anon, 2004), politics that are not communicated properly have the possibility to foster organisational instability and to create a growth area for gossiping and negative, mostly false perceptions within and among employees. Studies on job insecurity have proven that organisational instability is an antecedent or cause of individual perceptions job loss (Lord & Hartley, 1998; Nickell et al., 2002; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). Future research on the levels of job insecurity in South African organisations needs to include constructs such as AA in order to ensure validation true to the context of the studies. Less emphasis should be placed on the injustice of the past and more attention should be paid to a vision of the society we would ultimately like to attain, in which all people are treated as equals (Sapa, 2007). This assumption should urge researchers to develop interventions, which will foster better communication and positive attitudes in order to lower the effect of job insecurity on individuals and organisations.

Black economic empowerment (BEE) is a process of assisting and educating black people to enable them to contribute to the corporate business world (Anon, 2004). Socialist Robert Taylor argues that BEE is the policy of the South African government to address past injustice (http://crimexposouthafrica.wordpress.com). One of the adverse effects of BEE is that it urges white employees to leave their corporate positions to become self-employed (Cambell &

Hackett, 2006; Jackson, Alessandri, & Black, 2005). A possible hypothesis that needs to be tested in South African job insecurity research is that the presence of BEE practices in organisational structures may increase the perceived level of job insecurity, and that BEE may be a reason for white employees to have higher levels of job insecurity, followed by a higher intensity to leave, than their black counterparts. Research should not only focus on the measurement of job insecurity due to BEE, but on the development of interventions to alleviate the effect of BEE perceptions on white employees, for the targets as well as the results of BEE are essential for the country to grow effectively by using all its resources (Mbeki, 2003).

Employment equity (EE) does not only give everyone the ability to function and work as equals, but also to participate as equals in all spheres of life and civil society (Skosana, 2006). EE policies help to create a fairer playing field with respect to openings in the job market, allowing consideration of criteria that might seem irrelevant in employment decisions to some of the players (Schlemmer, 2005). Government spokesman, Joel Netshitenzhe, said that employment equity advocates recruitment strategies, targeted advertising, community investment, training and development in order to increase the pool of available candidates (Anon, 2002b). The Employment Equity Act (1998) places an obligation on employers to implement AA strategies in their organisations (Mamoojee, 2006). According to Hans van der Merwe, executive head of Agri South Africa, South Africa's history and political background as well as new government policies tend to foster resistance to change in previously advantaged employees (Van Zyl, 2006). Resistance to change in a threatening situation can mediate the outcomes of job insecurity. The subjective perception of the possibility of job loss or the need to change within the same job may trigger resistance to change within the individual (Rossenblatt et al., 1999). Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka said on 7 March 2007 that EE is here to stay, until the imbalances of the past are reduced (http://www.iol.co.za). This makes EE inevitably part of the South African context that may predict the levels of job insecurity due to the uncertainty of the future of one's job, which may be influenced by one's biographical background.

Skill shortage implies that the demand for skilled employees in various positions is much higher than the availability of qualified or even fairly qualified people (Hamlyn, 2007). The Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, stated in parliament that research figures indicated that South Africa

will need 50 000 new skilled artisans per year by 2010 (Hamlyn, 2007). South African finance minister, Trevor Manuel, said in a post-budget seminar that only seven per cent of matriculants had passed higher grade maths in 2006, and this led to a serious lack of quantitative skills in the country (http://business.iafrica.com). President Thabo Mbeki feels that skilled people are not immediately available within the South African society (Monare, 2005). The African National Congress (ANC) Youth League spokesman, Zizi Kodwa, stresses their concern that ongoing recruiting of skills from other countries, indicates that not much progress in the skills development programmes has been achieved (http://www.sabcnews.com). He argues further that appointing individuals with a lack of skills increases the amount of work stress to the point of dissatisfaction. The chairperson of the Joint Initiative for Priority Skill Acquisition (Jipsa) Gwede Mantashe, and the then President of the ANC Youth League, Fikile Mbalula, agree that the lack of skills and the recruitment of skills from abroad negatively affects the unemployment rates and the possibility for individuals to find a job or to lose a job once a more skilled worker is employed (http://www.sabcnews.com). It is thus evident proof that the skills shortage should be included as an influencing factor in the context in which job insecurity research in South African organisations is conducted.

The *unemployment* rate is the percentage of the labour force that actively seeks work, but is unable to find employment at a given time. Discouraged individuals, who are not seeking work due to the perception that the hope of finding it is extremely poor, are not counted as being unemployed or as part of the labour force (http://www.compcom.co.za). The magnitude of South Africa's unemployment crisis is showed in numbers. The *Business Day* of 11 April 2002 (Anon, 2002a) reported that 4.6 million people were at that stage unemployed in terms of the strict definition, and 8.3 million in terms of the broader definitions. The strict definition is defined as the percentage of the labour force that actively seeks work, but is unable to find work at a given time. The broader definition is defined as the percentage of the labour force that actively seeks work, but is unable to find work at a given time, plus those who are not seeking work because they believe the prospects of finding it are extremely poor. According to De Lange (2007), unemployment figures have decreased from 3.312 million in September 2005 to 3.217 million in September 2006 in terms of the strict definition. He also states that white males showed increased unemployment from 3.6% in September 2005 to 4.6% in September 2006. The rigidity

of South Africa's labour market due to labour legislation certainly does not promote employment (http://www.compcom.co.za). Stakeholders from the local government, researchers from North-West University and abroad, trade union representatives and practitioners in the field attended a local workshop on the issue of unemployment and well-being in the North-West (Anon, 2005), committing themselves to establish a closer relationship between science and practice to effectively address unemployment as one of the biggest challenges of democracy. Research to determine the possible influence of unemployment as an antecedent and/or an outcome of job insecurity as well as a possible social consequence is needed. The hypothesis that the cognitive awareness of levels of unemployment will increase feelings of job insecurity must be tested.

Studying job insecurity in South African organisations against the background outlined above might change the direction of future research in this field. Researchers should ask themselves if current studies represent the true South African context and background. The validity and reliability of international measures of job insecurity should be challenged and the possibility to create measures that fit the South African context must not be neglected. The majority of managers interviewed ($n = 18$) supported this notion.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to set a research agenda for job insecurity in South African organisations in order to serve as guidance to future research and as a management tool for addressing job insecurity. Existing research and literature was investigated, compared, evaluated and interpreted. The South African body of knowledge was incorporated into existing international literature and research. Job insecurity was conceptualised, defined and the measurement thereof investigated.

The research agenda will be proposed by means a theoretical model for job insecurity in South Africa in Chapter 3. Results obtained from the investigation into the international and South African research on job insecurity as well as the results from semi-structured interviews with managers from various South African organisations provided the background for the theoretical model.

Studying the different conceptualisations of job insecurity in international literature and research studies identified five distinct themes in the conceptualisation of job insecurity, namely job insecurity as a perceived probability of job loss (Hartley et al., 1991); job insecurity as consisting of an objective and subjective (Jacobson, 1991), cognitive and affective (De Witte, 2000) and quantitative and qualitative dimensions (Isaksson et al., 1998).

Job insecurity is also seen as a stressor (Probst, 2002). Most South African studies worked from the assumption that job insecurity is a stressor and consists of cognitive and affective components. South African studies were furthermore done from a multidimensional perspective, which assumes that job insecurity is more complex than only fearing the loss of a job - in contradiction to the global view of De Witte (2000).

When investigating the trend of research and the constant change in conceptions, a valid conclusion to the conceptualisation of job insecurity might be that still more characteristics and dimensions of this phenomenon are likely to be found and should be studied. A final, agreed upon conceptualisation does not seem near. No South African studies added to the growing theoretical background of conceptualising job insecurity, and rather applied existing measures and conceptualisations to the South African context.

A thorough literature review on the phenomenon of job insecurity revealed that no consensus regarding a definition for job insecurity has been reached either (Bartrum, 2006). Definitions are mostly derived from the different conceptualisations. Job insecurity was not defined within the South African context in any of the local studies.

Although similarities between South African and international organisations surely exist, this study underscores the importance of the political, economical and social background as important and influencing contextual variables. Results from the study indicate that some of the antecedents in national and international research are the same.
South African research has neglected the possible influence of the political, economic or social background on consequences of job insecurity for both the individual and the organisation.

Important political influences such as employment legislation, unemployment and the current education systems, economical influences such as global competitiveness, instability and exchange rates, as well as social background variables including family relationships, quality of life and the 'brain drain' need to be understood in relation to job insecurity.

Another important difference that needs to be clarified is that South African studies included most of the biographical variables as antecedents to job insecurity levels, while international studies mostly studied these variables as moderators to the impact of job insecurity on the individual and organisational consequences. International studies investigated variables such as gender, age, socio-economic position and tenure as moderators of the impact of job insecurity. International studies also investigated powerlessness as a moderator of the impact of job insecurity, while South African studies investigated psychological empowerment in the same context.

Studying the moderating variables of the impact of job insecurity on the consequences thereof resulted in four categories of possible moderators, namely personal, organisational, job features and social variables. Results from the investigation of mediating variables of job insecurity are vague. Not much research with mediating variables was found, and the influence of, and the place in the theoretical model, are not clear cut from existing literature. South African research showed a vague interest in testing for mediating variables.

Results from the analyses of the consequences of job insecurity in national and international studies showed two very definite categories which have up to now been properly researched, namely individual and organisational consequences. One relevant, but neglected category, namely social consequences, has also been identified and has not received much attention till now in international research, and no attention from any South African studies. A large degree of similarity exists between the consequence variables in national and international studies. Career loyalty and resistance to change as individual consequences and job performance, job withdrawal, job safety, turnover intention, organisational trust, organisational loyalty and absenteeism as organisational consequences of job insecurity, were not studied by any South African researchers. Work wellness, defined as maintaining high individual performance through

balance in life, balance at work as well as a productive workplace, was studied as an organisational consequence in a few South African studies, but not in any international studies.

A few international studies embarked on the quest for understanding job insecurity's impact on social consequences such as household stability, union loyalty, withdrawal from union membership, quality of life and unemployment. South African studies have not considered these social consequences.

Although Probst (2003) argued for a shortage of job insecurity measurements, not less than 12 measures were found in the international literature. Measures are divided into global and multidimensional measures, measuring the fear of job loss on the one hand, and the fear of job loss and the fear of losing important job features on the other. The multidimensional measure of Ashford et al. (1989) appeared to be used most frequently in international research, while the global, 11-item measure of De Witte (2000) was mostly used in South African research.

Regarding the validity of the measure for South African use, Viljoen (2004) and Bosman (2005) found that item 2 ("There is only a small chance that I will become unemployed") of the measure did not load on the cognitive or affective components underlying the measure, and suggested that item 2 should be excluded from the measure when used in South African organisations.

Convincing reliability evidence exists for both the affective (Van Zyl, 2005; Viljoen, 2004) and cognitive components (Heymans, 2002) of job insecurity in South African research. Different measures need to be tested for different circumstances (Probst, 2003). Future studies of job insecurity in South African organisations need to investigate the possible use and validation of other relevant measures in the South African context, since only three measures have been used in South African research. These include the Job Insecurity Survey Inventory (JISI) (De Witte, 2000), Job Insecurity Survey (JIS) (Isaksson et al., 1998) and Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ) (Ashford et al., 1989). The JISI was used in 23 of the 28 studies, the JIQ was used in three studies and the JIS was used in only one study. One study (Orpen, 1993) used an integrated approach from different measures. The validity of job insecurity measures under stable

circumstances in South African organisations also needs to be tested and further work regarding validation in a multi-cultural context is warranted.

The textual (content) analysis of the 28 South African research studies resulted in important information, such as the variables studied, measures used as well as conformation and contradiction in national and international research, for future post-graduate research on job insecurity in South Africa. The latest studies were done between 2002 and 2006. Only three of the 28 studies were Doctoral studies, while the rest were Masters' dissertations. Only two studies outside the North-West University could be traced.

In total, only three of the investigated studies were published in national publications. One of the investigated studies was done by an international researcher in South Africa and the results of the study were published in an international publication. Future researchers are recommended to be informed and attentive to previous research before undertaking research on the phenomenon of job insecurity, in order to ensure new and complementary results.

Results from the different variables and measurements studied showed that cultural group, age, tenure, qualification and gender were studied the most. These variables were mostly measured as possible antecedents to job insecurity. Consequence variables that were studied regularly are organisational commitment, job satisfaction, general health and burnout. Variables that appear in one study only are the psychological contract, coping, core self-evaluation, temporary work, resilience and organisational citizenship behaviour.

The impact of antecedents from various categories such as organisational, economical, political and specific job features was never measured as variables in any of the studies, but research was conducted from the assumption that the presence of these variables will lead to increased feelings of job insecurity. Some variables from international studies that have not yet received any attention in South African studies and might be of importance are technological change, deregulation of labour, unemployment, employment legislation and intense market competition. The research design used in all the South African studies was a cross-sectional survey design. A complete lack of longitudinal studies exists. The study populations used in the different studies

are also not representative of the larger South African context and results can therefore not be generalised. Except for a few doctoral studies, the populations used were rather small and not representative of all biographical levels (especially cultural and language groups).

Reported results from the different studies showed some confirmation and some contradiction with other South African and international studies. Most notably, these confirmations are the negative relationship between job insecurity, health conditions and organisational commitment, as well as the positive relationship found between job insecurity and burnout. The construct validity of the measuring instrument of De Witte (2000) was confirmed by all the South African studies.

Contradictions exist between the results of different studies that investigated different biographical variables such as gender, cultural group, age and tenure. Contradicting results were also found between studies that investigated the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction and work locus of control. No evidence could be found as to possible reasons for the contradictions which exist both nationally and internationally and this presents an important avenue for future research.

The results from the semi-structured interviews showed evidence of the gap between theory and practice and emphasised the importance of a real-world background in research studies. A conclusion to the different definitions supplied by the participants will include the fear of losing one's permanent job, supported by the fear of losing important job features such as benefits. This fear adds to existing stress levels and decreases energy levels.

Results indicated that levels of job insecurity differ in various organisations. Some organisations reported low or no presence of job insecurity, while others reported higher levels. Reasons for these differences might include factors such as the availability of the preferred skills, organisational culture and the efficiency of communication and leadership strategies within the different organisations.

Twenty of the participants agreed that job insecurity is a higher risk for white employees than for their black counterparts, while 18 are convinced that males will have higher levels of job insecurity than females and 10 argued that the highest rates of job insecurity will be among white males over the age of 50. One has to consider that most of the participants were Afrikaans-speaking (n = 18), and of these, 11 were males. This distribution may have influenced to skew results.

Participants reported quite a number of variables that could possibly cause or predict job insecurity, that have not been studied or mentioned in previous studies. Employment legislation, political ideologies, the unemployment rate, recruiting of foreign skilled workers, union communication, social uncertainty, education systems, economic instability, exchange rates, stock prices, organisational communication, company size, organisational culture, structural changes, constant need for cost savings, work ethics, the offer of voluntary severance packages, the need for flexibility, the unstable job market, ruthless performance management, demands for longer hours of work, high-risk jobs, levels of strategic involvement, feelings of incompetence, fitness for change, future literacy and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS form part of this list. These predicting factors were divided into political, economical, organisational and biographical factors, and factors related to the job itself.

The highest political factors indicated by the interviewed participants were the education system (n = 17) followed by unemployment (n = 15) and employment legislation (n = 13). Managers felt strongly that the current South African education system does not deliver the required skills and competencies needed in the South African working environment. Possible reasons for their viewpoint may be the general skills shortage that is experienced in the South African labour market (Hamlyn, 2007).

The two highest economical factors were indicated as global competitiveness (n = 14) and economical instability (n = 11). Global competitiveness is no new issue in the South African business language. To be able to compete with the international business market organisations, those in South Africa apply different measures to ensure maximum productivity and minimum costs (Robbins, Odendaal, & Roodt, 2004). The assumption of the participants that global

competitiveness of organisations may predict levels of job insecurity perception must be tested in future research.

High organisational factors were indicated as organisational communication ($n = 16$) and cost saving ($n = 8$). Managers tend to recognise the importance of effective communication systems in the organisation in order to ensure healthy and productive working conditions to all employees. Cost savings have become an evident part of strategic planning in surviving businesses.

Factors of job features with the highest scores were the need for flexibility ($n = 13$) and the demand for longer hours of work ($n = 7$). The ability to adapt and to show a wide range of competencies have become preconditions to employability. In addition to the need for flexibility, organisations demand productivity increases and employees are forced to work longer hours without reward.

The highest biographical factors were indicated as cultural differences ($n = 15$), followed by feelings of incompetence ($n = 11$). Cultural differences seem to be an evident issue in South African organisations and need to be investigated in order to help managers and employees to understand and cope better with these sensitive issues. It will be interesting to investigate the reasons for feelings of incompetence among employees. Connecting feelings of incompetence with studies on the current South African education system may lead to useful results.

Of all these indicated antecedents, only cultural differences were studied as an antecedent in South African research on job insecurity. This confirms the gap between practice and theory, and the variables mentioned here could be considered as priorities for future research.

A number of consequences from the interviews were identified for the individual, the organisation and the social contexts, most of which have not been studied before. These include draining of energy, fight-or-flight reactions, a lack of creativity, irrational thinking and decision-making and job-hopping as individual consequences. Loss of skills, absenteeism, lack of loyalty, distrust and work errors were noted as organisational consequences.

The so-called 'brain drain', which refers to the loss of skilled workers to the workforce of foreign countries and employees' age, activities of unions, family relationships, and social conflict that fosters political and economical instability, unemployment and quality of life were identified as social consequences.

The highest individual consequences were indicated as stress ($n = 16$), followed by (a loss of) job satisfaction ($n = 13$). Stress as the highest indicated individual consequence by the participants is no surprise and could be predicted due to the current concern about stress as a negative influence on the individual in the workplace (Rothmann, Jackson, & Kruger, 2003).

Job satisfaction can be defined as the positive or negative attitudes individuals show about their jobs and job-related issues such as remuneration, leadership and communication (Coetsee, 2003). Feelings of job insecurity will most certainly affect the attitude of individuals on their jobs and their feeling of satisfaction (Labuschagne, 2005).

The highest ratings for organisational consequences were absenteeism ($n = 13$), a loss of skills (n = 12), as well as turnover intention ($n = 12$). Managers report absenteeism to be high and are concerned about the hours of work lost due to absenteeism. The loss of skills and the intention to leave the company are related issues in South African organisations. The validity of including these constructs in a model for job insecurity needs further investigation. Indicated consequences of job insecurity for the social environment were 'brain drainage' with the highest rating ($n = 14$), followed by unemployment ($n = 8$).

White employees believe that they will only have jobs in South Africa up to the point when a suitable black individual can replace them, and this insecurity forces them to look for international opportunities. The impact of the relationship between brain drainage and employment legislation in South African organisations needs further investigation. Stress, job satisfaction and turnover intention were investigated as consequences in South African studies. Although this research is by no means conclusive, variables such as absenteeism, a loss of skills and the 'brain drain' may also be variables of interest for future studies.

An interpretation of the findings and conclusions of the results from this study is integrated in a final proposed theoretical model in Chapter 3. The model was adapted and expanded from the integrated model of job insecurity of Probst (2002, p. 144). The final model is derived from the development of three separate models.

The first (Figure 1) is a composition, interpretation and integration of the international literature study, while the second (Figure 2) is compiled from the data analysis, interpretation and integration of the South African research on the phenomenon of job insecurity. The third and final model (Figure 3) given here is a summary of the results from the semi-structured interviews conducted with managers from various organisations. The models encapsulate the constructs and dimensions of the job insecurity phenomenon.

Figure 1 includes the variables which have already been studied internationally and include the antecedents, mediators, moderators and consequences of job insecurity. The embeddedness of job insecurity within the different conceptualisations is indicated.

Figure 2 demonstrates the variables of job insecurity studied in South African research up to now. The model shows the relationships between antecedents, mediators, moderators and consequences of job insecurity. The South African context is included as background to the model.

Figure 3 shows a summary of the data from the semi-structured interviews and includes the researcher's own interpretations of placing the constructs indicated by the participants into the categories of antecedents, moderators, mediators and consequences.

Mediators
Performance appraisal
Coping strategies
Powerlessness
Fixed term employment
Organisational
commitment
Job satisfaction

Consequences

Antecedents

Political factors
Deregulation of labour
Unemployment
Political change
New government policies
Employment legislation

Economical factors
Global competitiveness
Recession
Intense market competition
Unpredictable economic situations

Organisational factors
Corporate downsizing
Restructuring
Mergers
Organisational change
Consolidation
Acquisitions
Privatisation
Technology change

Job features
Non permanent employment
Work conditions
Need for flexibility

Biographical factors
Education
Employability
Cultural group

Probability of job loss

Objective and subjective

Job Insecurity

Cognitive and affective

Qualitative and quantitative

Stressor

Individual
Job satisfaction
Physical health
Psychological health
Burnout
Career loyalty
Resistance to change

Organisational
Job performance
Job involvement
Organisational commitment
Job withdrawal
Job safety
Turnover intention
Organisational citizenship
Organisational trust
Organisational loyalty
Absenteeism

Social
Household stability
Union loyalty
Withdrawal from union membership
Quality of family life
Unemployment

Moderators

Personal factors
Affectivity
Locus of control
Gender
Socio-economic position
Age
Powerlessness
Emotional intelligence
Tenure

Oranisational factors
Psychological contract
Organisational trust
Company size

Type of organisation
Organisational culture
Workplace control
Communication
Support

Job factors
Position

Social factors
Racial disparities
Cultural differences
Marital status
Union support
Social support

Figure 1. Model for job insecurity compiled from the international literature review and content analysis

Mediators
Work locus of control

Antecedents

Political factors
Employment legislation
Affirmative action

Economical factors
Global competitiveness
Unpredictable economic situation

Organisational factors
Corporate downsizing
Restructuring
Mergers
Organisational change

Job features
Non permanent employment
Work conditions

Biographical factors
Qualification
Cultural group or first language
Core self-evaluations
Age
Gender
Tenure

Probability of job loss
Objective and subjective

Job Insecurity

Cognitive and affective
Qualitative and quantitative
Stressor

Moderators

Personal factors   *Job features*
Locus of control   Job category
Psychological empowerment   Temporary work
Coping
Resilience   *Social structure*
Self-efficacy   Racial disparities
Sense of coherence   Social support
Future literacy   Union membership

Oranisational factors
Organisational Trust
Organisational support

Consequences

Individual
Job satisfaction
General health
Psychological health
Burnout

Organisational
Work engagement
Organisational commitment
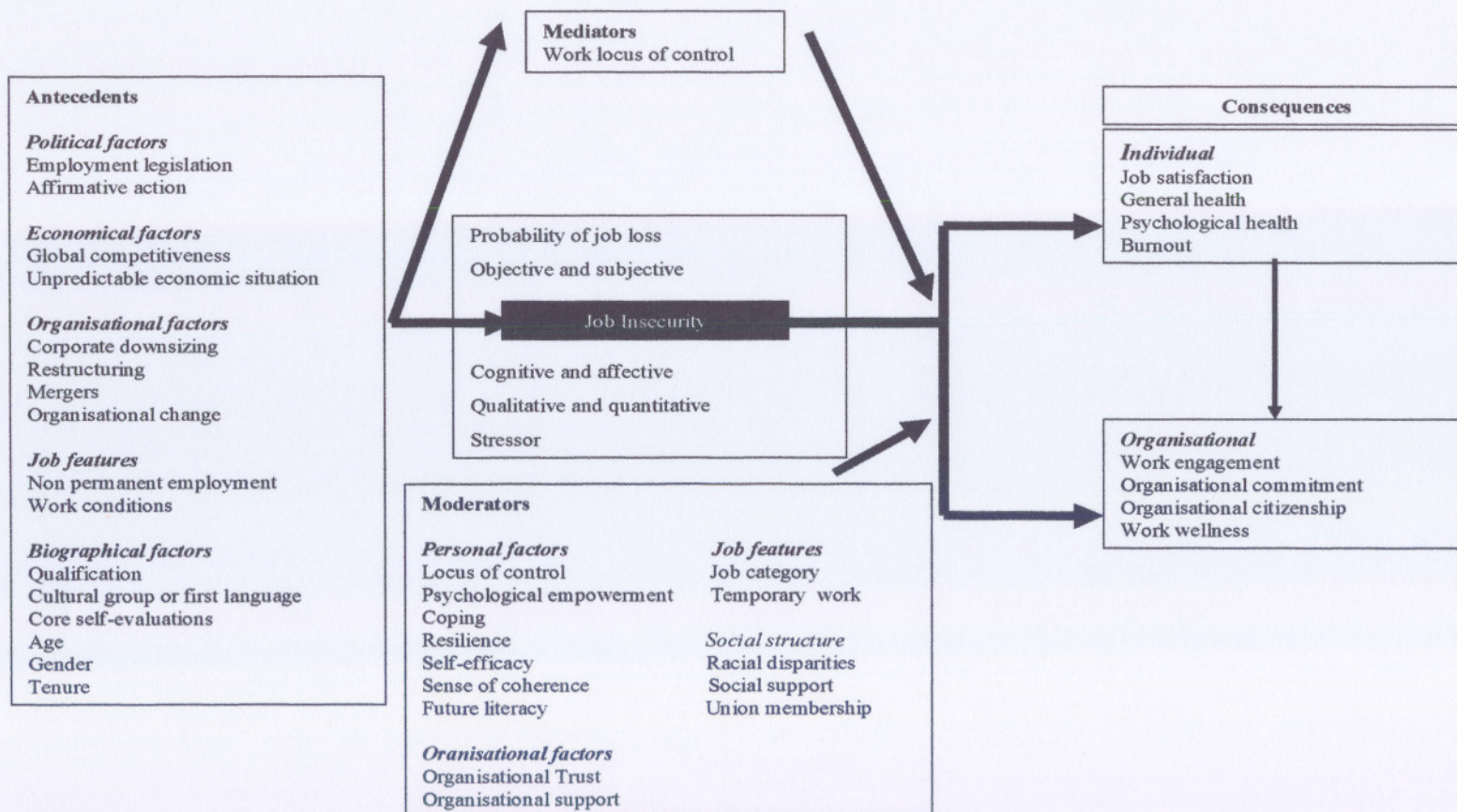Organisational citizenship
Work wellness

Figure 2. Model for job insecurity compiled from the national literature review and content analysis of the South African research on job insecurity
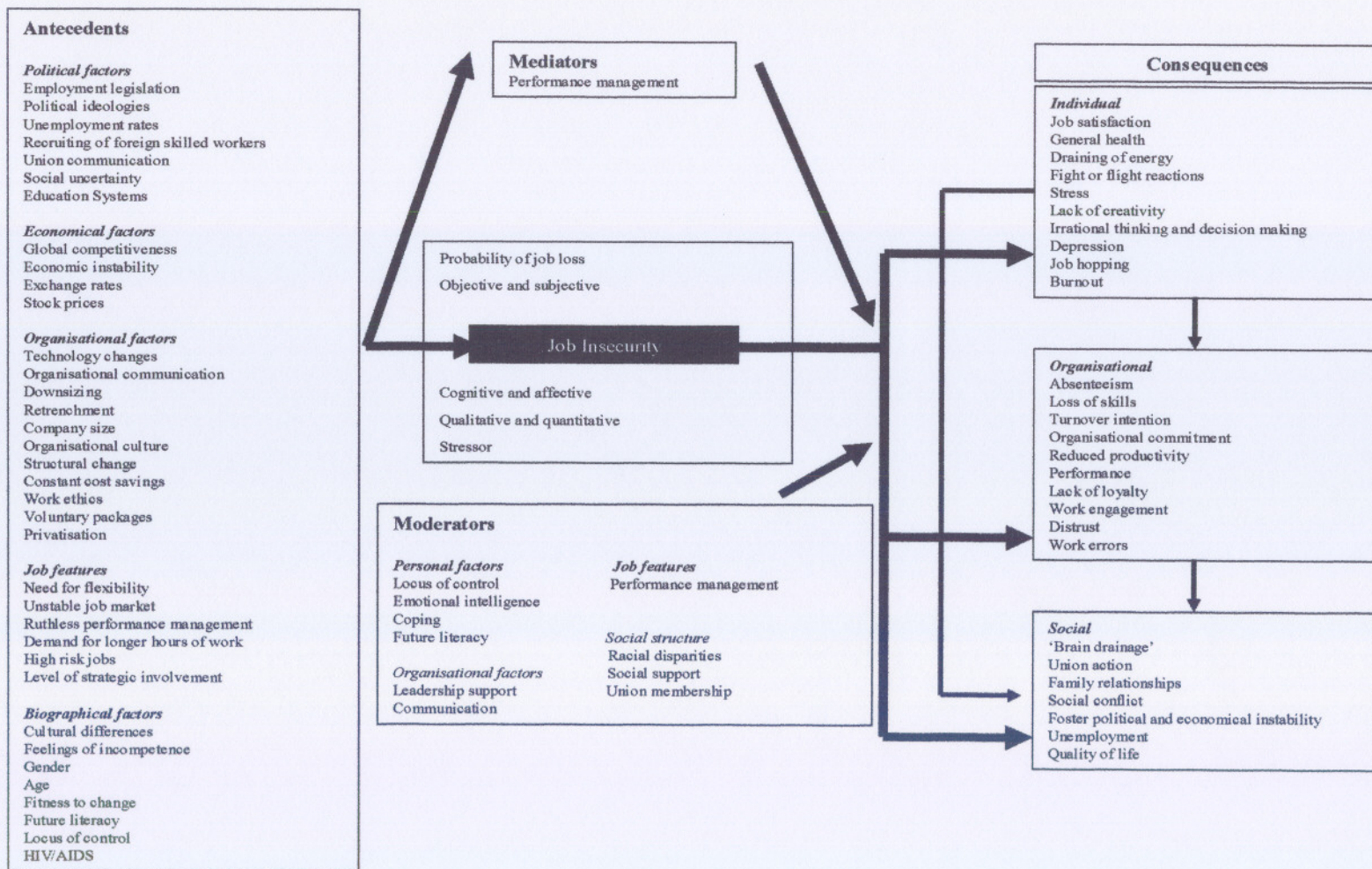
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Antecedents

Political factors
Employment legislation
Political ideologies
Unemployment rates
Recruiting of foreign skilled workers
Union communication
Social uncertainty
Education Systems

Economical factors
Global competitiveness
Economic instability
Exchange rates
Stock prices

Organisational factors
Technology changes
Organisational communication
Downsizing
Retrenchment
Company size
Organisational culture
Structural change
Constant cost savings
Work ethics
Voluntary packages
Privatisation

Job features
Need for flexibility
Unstable job market
Ruthless performance management
Demand for longer hours of work
High risk jobs
Level of strategic involvement

Biographical factors
Cultural differences
Feelings of incompetence
Gender
Age
Fitness to change
Future literacy
Locus of control
HIV/AIDS

Mediators
Performance management

Probability of job loss

Objective and subjective

Job Insecurity

Cognitive and affective

Qualitative and quantitative

Stressor

Moderators

Personal factors
Locus of control
Emotional intelligence
Coping
Future literacy

Organisational factors
Leadership support
Communication

Job features
Performance management

Social structure
Racial disparities
Social support
Union membership

Consequences

Individual
Job satisfaction
General health
Draining of energy
Fight or flight reactions
Stress
Lack of creativity
Irrational thinking and decision making
Depression
Job hopping
Burnout

Organisational
Absenteeism
Loss of skills
Turnover intention
Organisational commitment
Reduced productivity
Performance
Lack of loyalty
Work engagement
Distrust
Work errors

Social
'Brain drainage'
Union action
Family relationships
Social conflict
Foster political and economical instability
Unemployment
Quality of life

Figure 3. Model for job insecurity compiled from the semi-structured interviews conducted with managers from various organisations

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RECOMMENDATIONS

An important contribution to research in Industrial Psychology is made by the three models derived from the literature review and the empirical results. These models will be integrated into a theoretical model for job insecurity in South Africa in Chapter 3. The use of the individual models in this review to serve as a tool to guide future research must not be underestimated.

Future research should investigate different dimensions and conceptualisations of job insecurity in the South African context. Much work also remains in validating existing measures in the multi-cultural South African context, and investigating reliability, equivalence and (differential) item functioning across diverse cultural and language groups.

Future research should investigate the contradicting results highlighted in this review. These include investigating contradictions between different South African studies as well as contradictions between South African and international studies.

Results from the study of the South African context on job insecurity bear evidence of the importance of contextual studies. The current South African political, economical and social situation may definitely have an effect on the perceived feelings of job insecurity of individuals employed in South African organisations. This notion was confirmed by the results of the semi-structured interviews held with managers of various organisations.

Eminent hypotheses emerging from the semi-structured interviews, that need to be tested in future research may be: "White employees in South African organisations experience higher levels of job insecurity than their black counterparts" and "White men above the age of 50 will have the highest perceived levels of job insecurity in South African organisations".

The findings of this study have important implications for future research as researchers are prompted and encouraged to use new methodologies and apply different measurements when investigating job insecurity as a phenomenon in organisations within the South African context.

This study wants to highlight the relevance of context, time and circumstances to the differences in conceptualisation when undertaking studies on job insecurity.

LIMITATIONS

A few limitations were identified in this research. The limited time and the multitude of available literature forced one to be selective in data selection and opened the possibility to miss important and relevant information. The South African studies were mostly done at the North-West University and difficulty was experienced in collecting sources other than these. The population of the semi-structured interviews is not representative in regards to South African cultural groups. Given the perceptions noted in these findings, individuals from different cultural groups may have different experiences of job insecurity.

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CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions regarding the specific objectives of the study are presented in this chapter. Some limitations are discussed, followed by recommendations for organisations experiencing job insecurity issues, as well as suggestions for future research.

3.1   CONCLUSIONS

The first specific objective of this study was to conceptualise job insecurity from the national and international literature.

Existing literature conceptualises job insecurity according to two perspectives (Hartley, Jacobson, Kladermans, & Van Vuuren, 1991; Reisel 2002). The two perspectives, global and multidimensional, are evident throughout the literature and tend to separate researchers of the phenomenon of job insecurity into two distinct schools of study. The global conceptualisation, also referred to as uni-dimensional, describes job insecurity as a one-dimensional phenomenon, with the concern of future job loss as the only dimension (Johnson, Messe, & Crano, 1984; Van Vuuren, 1990). The multi-dimensional conceptualisation, on the other hand, argues for the existence of multiple dimensions of the phenomenon of job insecurity by adding the concern of job feature loss to the global perspective (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989; Roskies & Louis-Geurin, 1990). The intensive literature study revealed five themes of conceptualisation within the two distinct perspectives.

- Insecurity as a perceived probability of job loss (Hartley et al., 1991),
- Job insecurity consisting of an objective and subjective component (Jacobson, 1991),
- Job insecurity consisting of cognitive and affective components (De Witte, 2000),
- Job insecurity consisting of quantitative and qualitative dimensions (Isaksson, Petterson, & Hellgren, 1998), and

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- Job insecurity as a stressor (Probst, 2002).

A unique conceptualisation of job insecurity from a South African perspective does not exist and South African studies adopt the assumptions of international literature.

The second specific objective of this study was to define job insecurity from the national and international literature, and to determine which constructs or sub-dimensions underlie it.

Definitions of job insecurity include a vast variety of perceptions and dimensions. Some definitions narrow job insecurity down to a global dimension while others expand it into a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon. Continuous study of job insecurity tends to enhance the process of defining the term (Bartrum, 2006).

The dimensions of job insecurity include antecedents, mediators, moderators and consequences (Probst, 2002). Antecedents are the predictor or causal variables of the job insecurity equation (Sverke et al., 2004). Mediators reflect the way that the antecedents influence job insecurity and its consequences (Aryee & Chay, 2001). Moderators will change the effect of job insecurity on the individual and organisational consequences (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). Consequences include the outcomes, results and effects of job insecurity on the individuals, the organisation and the social environment (Chirumbolo & Hellgren, 2003). Each one of these dimensions includes a wide range of variables that have been studied by various researchers. Differences between the listed variables of job insecurity of international and South African research were presented.

No definition of job insecurity could be traced in South African literature. All South African studies included a wide range of internationally derived definitions and adopt the assumptions of these definitions.

The third specific objective of this study was to determine how job insecurity is measured in national and international research.

The literature review of job insecurity measures presents a range of available measures. These measures are divided into two distinct groups, namely global measures and multidimensional measures. Global measures only present data on the dimension of losing one's job, while the multidimensional measures include data on a second dimension of losing job features (Reisel, 2002). Eight global measures and five multidimensional measures could be traced. No clear guidelines or motivations as to when to use which type of measure were found.

South African research was mainly conducted with the Job Insecurity Survey Inventory of De Witte (2000). Up to now, no measures of job insecurity compiled specifically for the South African context exist.

The fourth specific objective of this study was to establish the role that the South African context plays in the conceptualisation of job insecurity in South Africa.

Results from the study showed that the South African context may have a definite influence on the levels of perceived job insecurity and on the possible individual and organisational, as well as social consequences of job insecurity. Five areas in the South African context were identified as necessary to include in job insecurity studies in South Africa. These areas include affirmative action defined as reducing inequalities from discriminatory practices (Dupper, 2005), black economic empowerment as the process of enabling black individuals to contribute to corporate business (Anon, 2004), employment equity which enforce equal rights to all (Skosana, 2005), skill shortage indicating a higher demand than availability of qualified individuals (Hamlyn, 2007) and unemployment, seen as the percentage of the labour force that is unable to find employment (http://www.compcom.co.za).

The fifth specific objective of this study was to determine the perceptions and views of experts in the industrial and business environment on specific issues concerning job insecurity in South Africa.

Five themes resulted from the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews with managers from various organisations ($N = 24$). An agreed upon definition from the first theme will include

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factors such as long-term continuity of a permanent job, concern of job loss as well as possible loss of a current job position or future job prospects and the uncertainty of re-employment. Results from theme two concluded that levels of job insecurity in different organisations may differ due to external and internal differences in organisational structures. In theme three, participants indicated education systems, global competitiveness, organisational communication, the need for flexibility and cultural differences as the most prominent causes or predictors of job insecurity in South Africa. Stress, absenteeism and brain drainage were regarded as the most significantt consequences of job insecurity as indicated from the results from the fourth theme. According to the views of the participants, the most significant requirement for future research would be to close the gap between theory and practice and also that the relevant results and recommendations from research studies must be communicated to the applicable organisations.

The last specific objective of this study was to establish the trends of job insecurity research in South Africa and how these compare to international studies, and to make recommendations for future research regarding job insecurity.

Results from the investigation into South African research on job insecurity revealed relevant information with regard to directions for future research on this phenomenon. Most of the 28 studies in the field of job insecurity research in South African organisations were conducted at the North-West University. Only three doctoral theses were completed and only three studies were published. The variables most frequently studied were job satisfaction, organisational commitment, burnout, general health, cultural group, age, gender, level of education and tenure. All the studies used cross-sectional survey designs and most of the studies were conducted in the Vaal Triangle area, which implies that the data might not be representative of the total South African population. Although a high degree of conformation between the different South African studies, as well as between South African studies and international studies exists, a few contradictions were illustrated. Some of the most important contradictions are differences in biographical results such as those for gender, age, language, qualification and tenure. Differences were also found between results from studies that investigated the relationship between job insecurity and work locus of control, as well as the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction. An important contradiction with regard to the South African context is the

discrepancies found between studies which consider differences between the levels of job insecurity among white and black individuals. Some South African studies concluded that white employees have higher levels of job insecurity than their black counterparts, while other South African and international studies indicate the opposite.

The general objective of this research was to set a research agenda for job insecurity in South African organisations.

Three models for job insecurity were compiled from the extensive literature review and empirical results in Chapter 2. The first model is an integration of the results from the international literature review, the second model shows the variables studied in South African research while the third model is a summary of the data derived from the semi-structured interviews. When compared, these models show agreement regarding the layout, structure and the listed variables. Comparing model 1 and 2 shows the gaps between South African and international research, while a comparison between model 2 and 3 indicates the gap between theory and practice. To fulfil the general objective of this study and to arrive at a conclusion of the results generated by the study, the three models have been integrated into a proposed theoretical model for job insecurity in South African organisations in order to set a research agenda which includes the relevant context. The models were adapted and expanded from the integrated model for job insecurity of Probst (2002, p. 144).
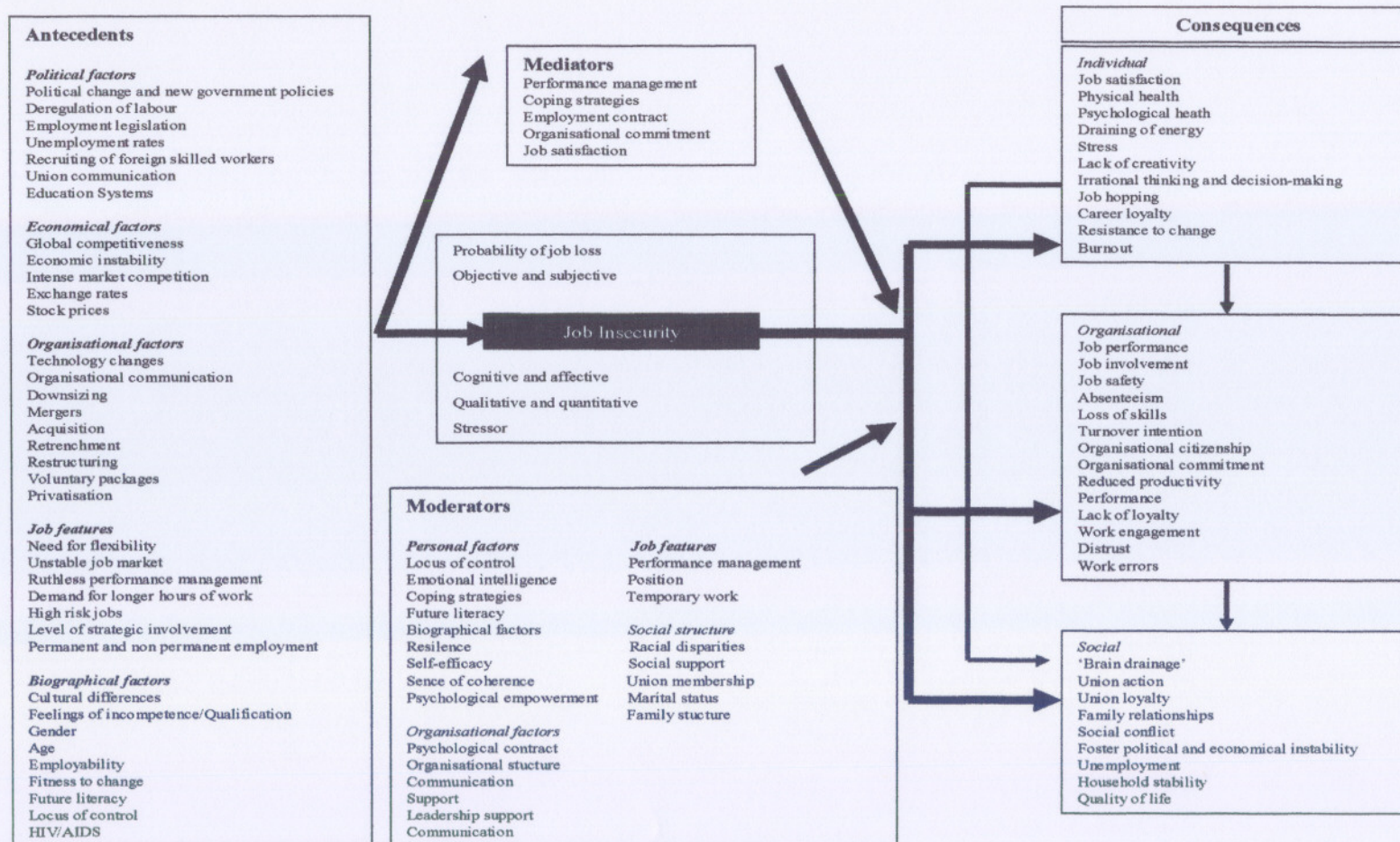
Antecedents

Political factors
Political change and new government policies
Deregulation of labour
Employment legislation
Unemployment rates
Recruiting of foreign skilled workers
Union communication
Education Systems

Economical factors
Global competitiveness
Economic instability
Intense market competition
Exchange rates
Stock prices

Organisational factors
Technology changes
Organisational communication
Downsizing
Mergers
Acquisition
Retrenchment
Restructuring
Voluntary packages
Privatisation

Job features
Need for flexibility
Unstable job market
Ruthless performance management
Demand for longer hours of work
High risk jobs
Level of strategic involvement
Permanent and non permanent employment

Biographical factors
Cultural differences
Feelings of incompetence/Qualification
Gender
Age
Employability
Fitness to change
Future literacy
Locus of control
HIV/AIDS

Mediators
Performance management
Coping strategies
Employment contract
Organisational commitment
Job satisfaction

Probability of job loss
Objective and subjective

Job Insecurity

Cognitive and affective
Qualitative and quantitative
Stressor

Moderators

Personal factors
Locus of control
Emotional intelligence
Coping strategies
Future literacy
Biographical factors
Resilence
Self-efficacy
Sence of coherence
Psychological empowerment

Organisational factors
Psychological contract
Organisational stucture
Communication
Support
Leadership support
Communication

Job features
Performance management
Position
Temporary work

Social structure
Racial disparities
Social support
Union membership
Marital status
Family stucture

Consequences

Individual
Job satisfaction
Physical health
Psychological heath
Draining of energy
Stress
Lack of creativity
Irrational thinking and decision-making
Job hopping
Career loyalty
Resistance to change
Burnout

Organisational
Job performance
Job involvement
Job safety
Absenteeism
Loss of skills
Turnover intention
Organisational citizenship
Organisational commitment
Reduced productivity
Performance
Lack of loyalty
Work engagement
Distrust
Work errors

Social
'Brain drainage'
Union action
Union loyalty
Family relationships
Social conflict
Foster political and economical instability
Unemployment
Household stability
Quality of life

Figure 1. Theoretical proposed model as research agenda for job insecurity in South African organisations.

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3.2 LIMITATIONS

The following limitations are apparent from this study.

The time limitation to complete the study caused selective data gathering from the mass of available international literature on the phenomenon of job insecurity. The process of selective data gathering could imply that important and/or relevant data in connection with the study was missed.

Difficulty was experienced in collecting studies conducted on job insecurity issues from other institutions than the North-West University. Only two of the 28 investigated studies were from other sources. This missing data, if any, could have contributed towards a different perspective than the one-sided perspective from the North-West University to the study.

The population of the semi-structured interviews did not represent all biographical features needed to generalise the results to the South African population. The study population was rather small and included mostly Afrikaans-speaking participants. A larger diversity in the study population is needed.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for organisations as well as for future research are presented below.

3.3.1 Recommendations for organisations

Management and employees need to be aware of the possibility of job insecurity perceptions and its consequences. To assist managers and employees in this task, it is of the utmost importance that results of relevant research studies must be communicated to the organisations which may benefit from it.

Managers must be equipped with tools to help them identify the causes and predictors of job insecurity in order to act pro-actively in preventing and minimising the consequences of job insecurity. The proposed model for job insecurity in South African organisations can serve as such a tool.

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Job insecurity may have negative effects on employees, the organisation as well as the social environment (Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, 2002; Viljoen, 2004). Therefore, interventions should be compiled and implemented to combat the prevalence of the negative effects of job insecurity. Lee and Ashford (1996) state that interventions should be designed in such a way that long-term benefits can be achieved in order to deal with causes at the root of negative job insecurity consequences. Furthermore, interventions should be introduced at all levels in the organisations. According to Burchell, Ladipo and Wilkinson (2002) job insecurity is a phenomenon that is equally spread across all levels of the workforce.

Effective communication systems must be regarded as very important in organisations which show a responsibility to the needs of their employees. The lack of good communication from leadership was identified as a common problem in organisations and as a moderator of perceived job insecurity in individuals (Mauno & Kinnunen, 2002).

Fair and consistent performance management systems must be in place in order to prevent and minimise perceived feelings of job insecurity which may lead to negative consequences for the individual, the organisation and the social environment. Ruthless performance management has negative effects on levels of job insecurity. Fair performance management practices will mediate the effect of job insecurity on individual and organisational consequences of job insecurity (Ferrie, Shipley, Marmot, Stansfeld, & Davey-Smith, 1998).

3.3.2 Recommendation for future research

An important contribution to research in Industrial Psychology has been made by the theoretical proposed model for job insecurity in South African organisations derived from the three models in Chapter 2. The model will serve as a tool to guide future research in order to help researchers choose relevant and feasible research titles and make a valid contribution to the knowledge pool of job insecurity. The models should be used to determine the less researched variables to avoid repetition in future research.

Future research should investigate different dimensions and conceptualisations of job insecurity in the South African context. Up to now, South African research mainly used global conceptualisations of job insecurity. It is necessary to determine the validity of multi-

dimensional conceptualisations of job insecurity in South Africa. Levels of fear to lose important job features must be investigated.

Job insecurity was mainly researched in the context of crises or change. Studies of job insecurity levels in organisations undergoing change or crises should be investigated in order to determine wether differences between different organisations exist. The existence and levels of job insecurity in organisations undergoing change and/or crises within the South African context should be compared with levels of job insecurity during stable and secure times.

Research of the job insecurity phenomenon in South Africa should aim to define job insecurity from a South African context in order to address South African issues. In order to reach such an aim, studies must include antecedents from the South African context as variables to the studies. Another issue that needs attention is the large gap in mediation and moderation variables in South African studies. Clearly defined borders to place variables in one of these categories do not exist and research is necessary to clarify these. A last aspect of defining job insecurity that was neglected up to now is the possible social consequences of job insecurity.

Much work also remains in validating existing measures within the multi-cultural South African context, and investigating reliability, equivalence and differential item functioning across diverse cultural and language groups.

Researchers must be encouraged to engage in more longitudinal studies in order to reach higher degrees of statistical validation. Larger, more representative populations are recommended for future studies. Doctoral studies may be a good alternative to the large number of Master's studies already completed. It is recommended that other institutions apart from the North-West University become involved in the study of job insecurity in South African organisations.

Future research should investigate the contradicting results highlighted in this review. These include investigating contradictions between different South African studies as well as contradictions between South African and international studies.

Results from the study of the South African context and job insecurity bear evidence of the importance of contextual studies. The current South African political, economical and social situation may definitely have an effect on the perceived feelings of job insecurity of individuals employed in South African organisations. This notion was confirmed by the results of the semi-structured interviews conducted with managers of various organisations.

Evident hypotheses emerging from the semi-structured interviews that need to be tested in future research may be: "White employees in South African organisations experience higher levels of job insecurity than their black counterparts" and "White men above the age of 50 will have the highest perceived levels of job insecurity in South African organisations".

Future research must intend to close the gap between theory and practice by including methods which will include the voice and practical insets of experts in the world of work. Methods should be implemented to communicate results effectively to those organisations which may benefit from the studies.

During the semi-structured interviews conducted in this study with managers from various organisations, participants indicated the importance of investigating the positive effects that job insecurity could have on the individual as well as the organisation.

The findings of this study have important implications for future research as researchers are prompted and encouraged to use new methodologies and apply different measurements when investigating job insecurity as a phenomenon in organisations within the South African context. This study wants to highlight the relevance of context, time and circumstances to the differences in conceptualisation when undertaking studies on job insecurity.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Research project into the phenomenon of job insecurity in South African organisations

Semi-structured interviews with senior management of selected organisations

Biographical data (for statistical use only)

Type of company:

Job title and/or level:

Gender:

Age:

Home language:

Number of years in

company:

Managers were briefed on the purpose of the current study. The semi-structured interview was facilitated in such a way to reveal answers to the following questions.

Questions on Job Insecurity

1 How will you define the concept of job insecurity in South African organisations?

2 Do you think job insecurity is a problem in your company and/or the companies you are working with?

   b. Why do you say that?

3 How will you describe the current intensity level of those that do experience job insecurity in your organisation?

4 What do you think are the main causes (or predictors) of job insecurity in your company?

   b. And in South Africa?

5 What consequences do you think job insecurity has or could have on the individual and/or your company?

b. And what will the effect be on the economical and political situation of the country?

6   Do you think the i) levels of and ii) the causes of job insecurity in South Africa differ from other countries?

b. And what will you say is the reasons for it?

7   How do you think research must address the construct/phenomenon of 'job insecurity' in order for your organisation to benefit from it?