Job insecurity, wellness and social support within a business unit of an electricity organisation

By

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REMARKS

The reader is reminded of the following:

- The references, as well as the editorial style as prescribed by the Publication Manual (4^{th} edition) of the American Psychological Association (APA) were followed in this thesis. This practice is in line with the policy of the Programme in Industrial Psychology at the North-West University.

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

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SUMMARY

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between job insecurity, wellness and social support of employees (*N=209)* within the business unit of an electricity organisation. A cross-sectional survey design was used. Constructs were measured by means of Job Insecurity Survey Questionnaire (JISQ), the Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey (MBI-GS), the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ), and the Social Support Questionnaire (SSO).

In terms of MBI-GS, only two subscales were used in this study, namely exhaustion and cynicism. Construct validity was established for the two factors. UWES is reflective of a one-factor model, which supported the findings of Rothmann and Storm (2003). The four-factor model of GHQ was supported consisting of somatic, anxiety / insomnia, social dysfunction and sever depression.

Positive statistically and practically significant correlations were found between total job threats and exhaustion and cynicism, indicating that higher threat levels can lead to higher exhaustion and cynicism levels.

A negatively statistically and practically significant correlation was obtained between powerlessness and exhaustion as well as cynicism. The regression analysis indicated that job insecurity have some predictive value with regards to the different wellness components researched in the study. Job insecurity was found to hold a significant amount of predictive value with regard to exhaustion (54%), social dysfunction (49%) and sever depression (50%). Although, job insecurity had very little predictive value with regards to social support (6%).

It is therefore recommended that Electricity organisations should put more emphasis on an open-communication strategy whenever they undergo any kind of restructuring or downsizing processes in order to enhance trust and loyalty from the workforce. The researcher would also like to reflect that the influential factor of the results of this research could be due to the diversity of participants, therefore further research is necessary in order to establish this observation.

OPSOMMING

Die primêre doelwit van die studie was om die verhouding tussen werksonsekerheid, welstand en sosiale ondersteuning van werknemers (*N=209*) in die besigheidseenheid van 'n elektrisiteitsverskaffingsorganisasie te ondersoek. 'n Dwarsnee opname ontwerp is gebruik. Konstrukte is gemeet deur middel van die "Job Insecurity Survey Inventory" (JISI), die "Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey" (MBI-GS), die "Utrecht Work Engagement Scale" (UWES), die "General Health Quesionnaire" (GHQ) en die "Social Support Questionnaire" (SSO).

In terme van die MBI-GS, is slegs twee subskale in hierdie studie gebruik, naamlik uitputting en sinisme. Konstrukgeldigheid is bewys vir hierdie twee faktore. Faktoranalise van die UWES het 'n eenfaktormodel aangetoon wat die bevindinge van Rothmann en Storm (2003) ondersteun. Die vierfaktormodel van GHQ is bevestig, saamgestel uit somatiese simptome, angs/slaaploosheid, sosiale disfunksie en ernstige depressie.

Positiewe statistiese en praktiese beduidende korrelasies is gevind tussen totale werksbedreiging, uitputting en sinisme, wat impliseer dat hoër bedreigingsvlakke tot hoër vlakke van uitputting en sinisme-vlakke kan lei.

'n Negatiewe statistiese en praktiese beduidende korrelasie was verkry tussen hulpeloosheid (omgekeerde skaal, hulploosheid word aangedui) en uitputting asook sinisme. Die regressie analise toon dat werksonsekerheid geringe voorspellingswaarde het met betrekking tot die verskillende welstandskomponente wat nagevors is in hierdie studie. Daar is gevind dat werksonsekerheid 'n beduidende hoeveelheid voorspellingswaarde toon met betrekking tot uitputting (54%), sosiale disfunksie (49%) en ernstige depressie (50%), alhoewel werksonsekerheid geringe voorspellingswaarde met betrekking tot sosiale ondersteuning (6%) toon.

Dit word derhalwe aanbeveel dat Elektriesiteitorganisasies meer klem plaas op openlike kommunikasie-strategieë, spesifiek waar herstruktuering plaasvind. Die beïnvloedingsfaktor van die resultate van hierdie navorsing kan wees as gevolg van die diversiteit van die deelnemers. Hoewel, verdere navoring is nodig ten einde die geldigheid van hierdie navorsingsbevindinge te ondersoek.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study deals with the possible relationship between job insecurity, wellness and social support of employees in a business unit of an electricity organisation. This chapter focuses on the problem statement, objectives, as well as the research method.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Since the late 1970s, economic recessions, industrial restructuring, technological change, and an intensified global competition have dramatically changed the nature of work (Howard, 1995). According to Sverke and Hellgren (2002) organisations in most industrialised countries have been involved in restructuring, layoffs and right sizing in their attempts to reduce labour costs and improve competitiveness. Millions of workers have been displaced while others have involuntary become part-time unemployed, hired on temporary employment contracts, or experienced a fundamental and involuntary change in their sets of beliefs about the employing organisation and their face in it (Jacobson, 1991). Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans and Van Vuuren (1991) mentioned that they have witnessed for many employees that the changes in working life over the past two decades have caused feelings of insecurity concerning the nature and future existence of their jobs.

According to Borg and Elizur (1992) these changes resulted in organisations becoming leaner in their operations, of which the Management Mantra became: "Do more with less" in an attempt to survive in difficult economic conditions. Hartley et al. (1991) added that the global information era contributed to the profound restructuring of work taking place, in order to be competitive. In their study, Hartley et al. (1991) have therefore mentioned that the world as such has become smaller and the tempo, at which work has to be completed, has increased drastically. Also, new flexible forms of employment are being introduced heightening the fear of redundancy.

Despite the necessity of these forced changes for organisational survival, employees may feel threatened since some might not see the need for change, others might fear the unknown, especially their job and financial security (Lord & Hartley, 1998; Nadler, 1987). These fears and

threats arise from perceptions of uncertainty and loss of control over the destiny of the job situation (Hui & Lee, 2000). Hence, the importance of job insecurity, as it deals with the continuing existence of an organisational member within an organisation and the loss of job implies loss of organisational membership (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Hui & Lee, 2000; Jacobson, 1991).

Bothma and Buitendach (2005) indicated that a survey of the literature reveals that attempts are made by organisations to orientate and educate employees about the challenging world of work or to enhance their employability. In their research, Bothma and Buitendach (2005) further stated that the provision of growth opportunities as well as possibilities to develop new competencies and skills to apply in new environments are also very limited. The employer should also develop and provide growth opportunities for employees that will enhance their career possibilities in and outside the organisation. Most employer organisations do not have any specific plan or strategy to orientate employees towards self-reliance. The new social support has moved away from the traditional parent on an adult relationship where the company is not responsible for the welfare of the employees (Bothma & Buitendach, 2005).

Looking at the South African context, Marais and Schepers (1996) also agree that companies are undergoing dramatic and unprecedented changes since democratisation of the country in 1994 and globalisation. Companies are becoming lean and mean, outsourcing non-core operations and mechanising to improve efficiency and effectiveness (Marais & Schepers, 1996). Maree (2004) mentioned that South African employees have to secure and sustain employment in an ever-shrinking labour market, making the prospect of unemployment a potential reality for many South Africans.

Bosman, Buitendach and Rothmann (2005) added that South African companies are exposed now more than ever to the effects of the world economy, technological advancement and tough international competition. Martins (2000) noted that employers attempt to move toward greater flexibility by expanding and shrinking the workforce to correspond with shifting production and service demands, resulting in a sense of job insecurity. Employees are therefore expected to give more in terms of time, effort, skills and flexibility, whereas they receive less in terms of career opportunities, lifetime employment, and job security. Rothmann (2003) adds by stating that the

environment in which South African employees (as well as those elsewhere in the world) have to function demands more of them than ever before.

With reference to the above discussion, the researcher is of the opinion that job insecurity has possibly become a major issue among the workforce in South African organisations, especially with the implementation of the government policies that are currently taking place such as, Labour Relation Act 66 of 1995, Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998, Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997, Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993, etc. These Acts were intended to promote the constitutional right of equality and the exercise of true democracy. But the researcher is of the opinion that their implementation could be creating a major discomfort to those who may not benefit from them, and this could lead to job insecurity. Hence the researcher will next discuss what the literature revealed about job insecurity and its impact to the individual and the organisation.

Job Insecurity

Job insecurity has been defined in different ways (De Witte, 1997, 1999; Hartely et al., 1991; Mauno & Kinnunen, 1999). Job insecurity has been defined as an individual's "expectations of continuity" (Davy, Kinicki & Scheck, 1997), "overall concern about the future existence of the job" (Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996), "perception of a potential threat to continuity in his or her current job" (Heaney, Israel & House, 1994) and "powerlessness to maintain the desired continuity in a threatened job situation" (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984), to give only a few definitions.

Literature usually conceptualises job insecurity from three general viewpoints, this being (1) global, (2) multi-dimensional concept and (3) a job stressor (Mauno & Kinnunen, 1999). According to the global view, job insecurity may be considered as the first phase in the process of job loss, where the threat of job loss or job discontinuity exists (Caplan, Cobb, Fresh, Van Harrison & Pinneau, 1980; Ferrie, 1997; Joelson & Wahlquist, 1987). Job insecurity thus relates to people in their work context who fear they might lose their jobs and become unemployed (De Witte, 1999).

Van Vuuren (1990) describes job insecurity as the concern a person feels about the continued existence of his/her job. As part of his studies, Van Vuuren (1990) identifies three components that are central to job insecurity. The first component refers to a subjective experience or perception, the second to uncertainty about the future, and the third component includes doubts about the continuation of the job. Within this framework of the multi-dimensional view of job insecurity, the concept refers not only to the amount of uncertainty employees feel about their job continuity, but also about the permanence of certain dimensions of the job, such as organisational benefits and promotion opportunities (Borg & Elizur, 1992; Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996).

According to De Witte (1999) and Van Vuuren (1990), job insecurity consistently presents itself as a stressor. With regard to consequences, a distinction is made between stress reaction and coping behaviour. Stress reaction refers to the consequences of the stressor for psychological well-being, while coping refers to the way in which the person deals with stress e.g. avoidance versus active response (De Witte, 1997). He further stipulated that job insecurity reduces the well-being of the individual. He revealed this through the study which was conducted among 600 employees in the U.K., whereby Burchell (1994) had found that a lower level of psychological well-being exists among those who felt insecure about their jobs. In addition, the study between the Netherlands and Israel, which was conducted by Hartley et al. (1991), reflected that insecure employees felt more depressed, and reported more psychosomatic complaints and negative emotional feelings.

According to Sardiwalla and Van den Berg (2005) work-related stressors are those that relates to the fact that employees work under conditions where they experience a lack of job security. This involves system-related stressors such as low pay, temporary positions, poor working conditions, and low employee status (Sardiwalla & Van den Berg, 2005). They further reflected that this lack of occupational security is tantamount to work overload. They also mentioned that employees could also deal with quantitative overload (the emotional stress and fatigue). All these stressors contribute to the development of chronic stress and burnout.

Snelgar (1990) reflected that stress is an individual's reactions to those characteristics of the work environment, which appear threatening. Stress points to a perceived poor fit between the

individual's capabilities and his/her work environment, in which either excessive demands are made upon the individual or the individual is not fully equipped to handle particular work situations (Sneglar, 1990).

Looking at the business unit of an electricity organisation where the study is conducted, the researcher is of the opinion that the following different stressors could be identified, namely: Organisational stressors, which according to De Witte (1997) are stressors including communication problems between workers and higher authorities. The researcher supports this by revealing that this could be based on the structure of the organisation, where you find that the reporting structure could be too vertical, and eliminates direct interaction between management and subordinates. Task characteristics, these could be divided into core characteristics and other characteristics. Looking at the amount of responsibility behind the process of generating electricity and the expected output that goes with it, workers could find themselves pressurised to maintain the quality management standard in order to provide the expected output. Environmental stressors could entail the environmental issues such as prevention of pollution around the business unit, sensitivity around the issue of waste material and disposal of chemical substances. The business unit is required to implement practices according to the government regulations. Remuneration and fringe benefits stressors, which the researcher suggests could be associated with unsatisfactory behaviour around remuneration benefits that are beyond the employee's control. Quantitative overload stressors, which the researcher suggests could be associated with the amount of work expected to be provided in a certain period of time. This could impact on the level of quality provided due to striving to complete the task in a record time and overlooking the quality of the job. All these could contribute to higher levels of stress.

Two theories of stress, the Person-Environment Fit theory of stress and the Affective Events theory may facilitate the study of the antecedents and consequences of job insecurity (Probst, 2002). Definitions of stress in the Person-Environment Fit theory of stress emphasise the match between characteristics of the person and the environment (Probst, 2002). Stress value depends on the perceived imbalance between the individual's perceptions of the demands made by the environment and the individual's perceived ability and motivation to cope with those demands (Probst, 2002). Job insecurity will thus be perceived by the employee as a change of a precursor to change that will demand adaptation, which may be difficult to meet and failure to cope with

these new demands may have significant consequences (Probst, 2002). From an Affective events theory perspective, characteristics of the work environment and events are subject to cognitive appraisal of how they promote or obstruct the attainment of goals (Probst, 2002). Therefore, stress will result if there is an identifiable goal obstruction, as well as a perceived imbalance between environmental demands and the employee's ability to cope with those demands. The resultant strain may become evident at a physiological, behavioural or psychological level, or any combination of these (Probst, 2002).

Literature suggests that perceptions of job insecurity might have detrimental effects on employee attitudes (Ashford, Lee & Bobko, 1989; Rosenblatt, Talmud & Ruvio, 1999; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002), may increase job dissatisfaction (Davy et al., 1997), may increase negative health outcomes (Hellgren & Sverke, 2003; Mohren, Swaen, Van Amelsvoort, Borm & Galama, 2003) and higher reports of psychological distress (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995; Probst, 2000). Moreover, employees with perceptions of low job insecurity are more likely to engage in work withdrawal behaviour (Q'Quin, 1998). Preuss and Lautsch (2002) mentioned that such employees could report lower organisational commitment, which often leads to employee turnover (Ashford, et al., 1989). Probst and Brubaker (2001) reflected that this can also lead to a decrease on safety of employees, their motivation and compliance, which in turn, lead to higher levels of workplace injuries and accidents as well as well-being (De Witte, 1999; Kinnunen, Mauno, Nätti & Happonen, 2000; Mohr, 2000). A downward spiral is created where productivity decreases and absenteeism increases, which might result in the competitive strength of the company being undermined (Hartley et al., 1991). The researcher is therefore of the opinion that all these negative outputs resulting from job insecurity could lead to burnout of the individual.

Having discussed job insecurity and understanding what the literature had to say about it, next, the researcher will discuss burnout in order to determine its relationship to job insecurity as well as the possible implications to the organisation.

Burnout

The result of prolonged stress is burnout (De Witte, 2000). Many definitions of burnout exist, but according to Pines and Maslach (1978), burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion

involving the development of a negative self-concept, negative job attitudes and loss of concern and feeling for customers.

Barnett, Brennam and Gareis (1999) defined burnout as a risk factor for personal dysfunction and negative work-related attitudes. The negative work-related attitudes include feelings that one has nothing more to give to one's work, judging people as somehow deserving of their troubles, and thinking your own accomplishments fall short of your own expectations, leading to negative self-evaluation of performance (Barnett, Brennam & Gareis, 1999).

Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) mentioned that burnout is primarily characterised by exhaustion accompanied by distress, a sense of reduced effectiveness, decreased motivation and the development of dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours at work Rothmann, Jackson and Kruger (2003) on the other hand, define burnout as a particular, multidimensional and chronic stress reaction which goes beyond the experience of mere exhaustion, being seen as the final step in a progression of unsuccessful attempts to cope with a variety of negative stress conditions. According to Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) stress should not be confused with burnout, while burnout may be regarded as a particular kind of prolonged job stress.

Dekker and Schaufeli (1995) further found that prolonged job insecurity was more detrimental to an employee's wellness than security about his/her job situation. Research of Dekker and Schaufeli (1995) showed that job insecurity is associated with a deterioration of psychological health, leading to psychological distress and burnout, as well as for job and organisational withdrawal.

Burnout is conceptualised as a three-dimensional phenomenon consisting of exhaustion, cynicism and professional efficacy, of which exhaustion is considered to be the most important dimension (Lee & Ashforth, 1990) that relates to the individual stress aspect of burnout, referring to feelings of being overextended and depleted of one's emotional and physical resources (Maslach, Shaufeli & Leiter, 2001).

Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) associate burnout with the unsuccessful progression of continued attempts to buffer the impact of environmental stressors, resulting in a general breakdown of resources, and ultimately in the inception of burnout. The *exhaustion* component predicts stress-

related health consequences and refers to feelings of being overextended and drained from one's emotional and physical resources (Maslach et al., 2001). In their study, (Maslach et al. 2001) it was also reflected that exhaustion is due to a combination of personal stressors and job and organisational stressors. People who expect a lot from themselves and the organisations in which they work tend to create more internal stress, which in turn leads to emotional exhaustion (Maslach et al., 2001). Similarly, emotional exhaustion is fuelled by having too much work to do, by role conflict, and by type of interpersonal interactions encountered at work. Frequent intense face-to-face interactions that are emotionally charged are associated with higher levels of emotional exhaustion (Maslach et al., 2001).

The *cynicism* component on the other hand, has been referred to as a negative, callous, or excessively detached response to various aspects of the job (Maslach et al., 2001). Bosman, Buitendach and Rothman (2005) added by stating that the reduced efficacy or accomplishment component is linked to the self-evaluation dimension of burnout, referring to feelings of incompetence and a lack of achievement and productivity at work.

From a theoretical point of view it could be argued that exhaustion and cynicism constitute the two key aspects of burnout, with exhaustion reffering to the fact that the employee is incapable of performing because all energy has been drained and cynicism reflecting that the employee is no longer willing to perform, because of increased intolerance of any effort (Schaufeli, 2003).

In terms of the antecedents of burnout, Schaufeli (2003) mentioned that a lot is known about variables that are related to burnout, but that relatively little is known regarding the causes and consequences of burnout. Schaufeli (2003) explains that from cross-sectional research it is known that burnout is particularly related to experienced qualitative and quantitative work overload, role problems (role ambiguity and role conflict), lack of social support (from colleagues and supervisors) and lack of self-regulatory job characteristics (feedback, autonomy, participation in decision-making). According to Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001), the concept of burnout has been experienced and enlarged in recent years by the positive antithesis of job engagement that allowed for the study of the full spectrum of worker's well-being, ranging from the negative (burnout) to the positive (engagement) states.

Work Engagement

In line with the increased focus of psychology on human strengths and optimal functioning, work engagement, although related to burnout, is viewed as the theoretical antithesis of burnout. However, Schaufeli and Bakker (2002) define engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption. Maslach and Leiter (1997) redefine work engagement as the theoretical antithesis of burnout.

Schaufeli, Salavona, Gonzáles-Romá and Bakker (2002) explained that *vigour* (opposite pole of exhaustion) is characterised by high energy levels, mental resilience when working, and willingness to exert effort into one's work and to persist even in the face of adversity. In their studies, Schaufeli et al. (2001) described *dedication* (the opposite pole of cynicism) as related to enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, challenge and a sense of significance, and they referred to absorption as a state where time passes quickly and where the individual has difficulty in detaching him/herself from work. Schaufeli and Bakker (2002) add that *absorption* approximately is the concept of flow, an optimal state of experience where focused attention, a clear mind, accord in body and mind, effortless concentration, complete control, loss of self-consciousness, distortion of time and intrinsic enjoyment is experienced.

Schaufeli et al. (2002) describe eight characteristics of engaged employees as follows: they take initiative and actively give direction to their lives; they generate their own positive feedback as encouragement; they also engaged outside their work-life; they have values and norms consistent with those of their employers; they too become fatigued, but experience a positive fatigue (tired but satisfied); they too experience burnout or have potential to become burnt out, but remedy this themselves; they too on occasion want to do something else besides work, and lastly; they do not suffer from enslavement to work.

The wellness component of this study is defined as burnout, work engagement as well as general health. Hence, according to Schaufeli (2003), Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), burnout and work engagement could be combined in a model of well being at work that distinguishes between two dimensions namely, identification with work (varying from cynicism to dedication) and mobilisation of energy (varying from exhaustion to vigour).

General health, which will next be discussed, is conceptualised by the theory of Goldberg and Hillier (1979), looking at four concepts, (1) somatic symptoms, (2) anxiety and insomnia, (3) social dysfunction, and (4) sever depression.

General Health

Brodsky (1988) mentioned that psychological well being is a complex construct, consisting of various dimensions. According to Brodsky (1988), psychological well-being has four specific characteristics, being (1) is subjective and emotional, (2) is a state as opposed to a continuous part of who we are, (3) is a product of personal endeavour, and (4) is more than the absence of negative affect and personal conflict, but comes from moving toward desired life goals. Brodsky (1988) identifies various antecedents of psychological well-being including stress, physical health, work and career paths and work environment. De Witte (1999) identifies four specific job characteristics, which correlates with well-being. They are (1) skills utilisation, (2) work load, (3) job insecurity, and (4) autonomy. As mentioned, literature indicates that job engagement can make a person feel energised and generate positive feelings of well-being (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2001; Turner, Barling & Zacharatos, 2002). Schaufeli and Bakker (2002) as well as Turner et al. (2002) stipulated that work could lead to illness, as well as good health, or it could require effort and be associated with negative feelings and a lack of freedom, or can give energy, enable development and generates positive feelings.

Having discussed the general health and employee well-being, the writer is of the opinion that it is also necessary to look at the level of social support that employees are getting from all relevant social categories. This could fasten the progress in decreasing the level of job insecurity and therefore enhancing the ideal learning organisation, which this business unit where the research is taking place is opting to achieve. In the preceding paragraph an overview of the approach to social support including its role in the organization according to literature is discussed.

Social Support

Recent reviews of literature indicated that social support has an important effect on health and well-being (Albrecht & Adelman, 1984; Gore, 1981; House, 1981; Leavy, 1983; Kessler, Price & Wortman, 1985). In order to achieve such work setting improvements, however, it is essential

to understand how social support operates in affecting health variables (Fusilier, Ganster & Mayes, 1986). Several researchers (Albrecht & Adelman, 1984; Gore, 1981; House, 1981; Leavy, 1983; Kessler et al., 1985) have suggested that the effects of social support may vary with regard to personal characteristics of the recipient of the support (Dean & Ensel, 1982; Etzion, 1984; Ganellen & Blaney, 1984).

Fulisier, Ganster & Mayes (1986) mentioned that social support has generally been found to have a positive effect on health outcomes. However, in their study, Fulsier et al. (1986) indicated that it has recently been suggested that the existence of these benefits are dependent on the source of support and the gender of the individual receiving the support (Fulsier et al., 1986). Leavy (1983) suggested that males benefit mainly from work-based sources of support while females rely on family and non-work sources. He attributed this difference to traditional values, which might emphasise family relationships for women and work concerns for men. Fulsier et al. (1986) further stated that findings suggest (a) that social support does have various beneficial effects on health outcomes, (b) that gender has little bearing on the amount of support received, and (c) there are few gender differences in the effects of social support on health.

Other research evidence suggests that social support will diminish the experience of job insecurity (Armstrong-Stassen, 1993) and lower its negative impact on well-being and work attitudes as well (Lim, 1996). Some aspects of social support may also be provided by the union (Armstrong-Stassen, 1993; Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995). In their study, Armstrong-Stassen (1993) as well as Dekker and Schaufeli (1995) mentioned that those involved with the unions are more likely to benefit from the positive support the union can provide, given that the employees trust the union to stand up for them during hard times. Hartley et al. (2001) as well as Sverke and Hellgren (2001) stated that Trade unions can help alleviate the feeling of powerlessness, since they are supposed to speak for the employee. They further mentioned that when the employee feels she/he can trust the union to prevent job loss, the employee may feel less job insecurity.

Rannona (2003) stated that against the background of different theoretical approaches, control at work provided an important alleviating resource with respect to work stress not only as a moderator but also as an additive main effect, i.e. control is contributing directly to increasing motivation, well-being, and health. In particular, the research centred on social support dealt with

the psychological structure and functioning of resources. Like control at work, social support is found to have a moderating influence on the relation between stress at work and different kinds of strain (Jackson, 1992), and in quite a few studies both social support and control at work-are investigated and revealed similar results (Baker & Baker, 1999).

While control at work and social support are also considered as main resources in dealing with the stress from job insecurity, Ashford et al. (1989) as well as Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) reflected that social support and control at work clearly contribute significantly in protecting individuals at insecure workplaces from dissatisfaction, reduced well-being, and somatic symptoms.

According to Callan, (1993), Dekker and Schaufeli, (1995), House, (1981), Lim (1996), social support can also be obtained from family, friends, managers and colleagues, and it is considered as an important factor in predicting how employees react to and cope with stress. Through contact with people, individuals have the opportunity to stay informed of recent happenings and can receive help in handling different situations (Sverke, Hellgren, Näswall, Chirumbolo, De Witte & Goslinga, 2004). Callan (1993) further reflected that social support is a type of external resource, as opposed to internal, personal resources. In constituting such an external resource, social support from others may increase the likelihood of individuals reacting in a problem focused-manner (Callan, 1993; Scheck, Kinicki & Davy, 1997). This is considered to be more constructive and useful in the long run than acting in an emotion-focused manner and trying to repress the feelings evoked by a situation (Callan, 1993).

Social support also affects the individual's interpretation of the situation in a positive way, in that the reaction to a stressor is mitigated by the positive feelings brought on by the support (LaRocco, House & French, 1980; Scheck et al., 1997). In addition Sverke et al. (2004) mentioned that a social network can function as a source of information in uncertain circumstances, and using social support can be a way of working through one's feelings.

Social support has also been suggested as a key variable in reducing the perception of stress (Viswesvaran, Sanchez & Fisher, 1999), and has been empirically identified as a moderator of the relationship between stress and health problems (Frese, 1999; Jackson, 1992). Sverke et al. (2004) considered social support to be important in the context of job insecurity. As any stressor,

Sverke et al. (2004) reflected that perceived job insecurity affects individuals negatively. The negative feelings that the job insecurity evokes may prompt employees to seek out the support of each other, to express their frustrations and fears, but also to seek alternatives and strategies for coping with the negative situation (Callan, 1993).

Investigating the current conditions within the business unit where this study was conducted, it came to the researcher's attention that there is a growing body of evidence which links the effects of job insecurity on job satisfaction, performance as well as stress. Stressful situations that occur in the workplace possibly have a significant effect on employee service delivery. The researcher is of the opinion that these stressful situations could be caused by a number of things, namely the demands of the job (expected output) versus knowledge and skills of the employees (competencies); technological changes that are taking place such as implementation of 'Zenzele' (computer system that promote individual responsibility to handle their own administrative processes); Implementations of the government Acts as reflected earlier, etc. As a result, job insecurity among employees has become a significant issue in this business unit. The emphasis was also put on an increased demand of physiological and psychological interaction within the business unit, which is lead by high level of exhaustion. Maslach, Scaufeli and Leiter (2001) found that exhaustion was associated with mental and physical strain, work overload, and job stress at work. These conditions raised concerns to the researcher to finally opt to conduct the study in order to intervene by finding the root cause within the business unit.

The main purpose of this research was to determine if there is a relationship between job insecurity, wellness and social support. The problem statement of this study can be summarised in Figure 1.

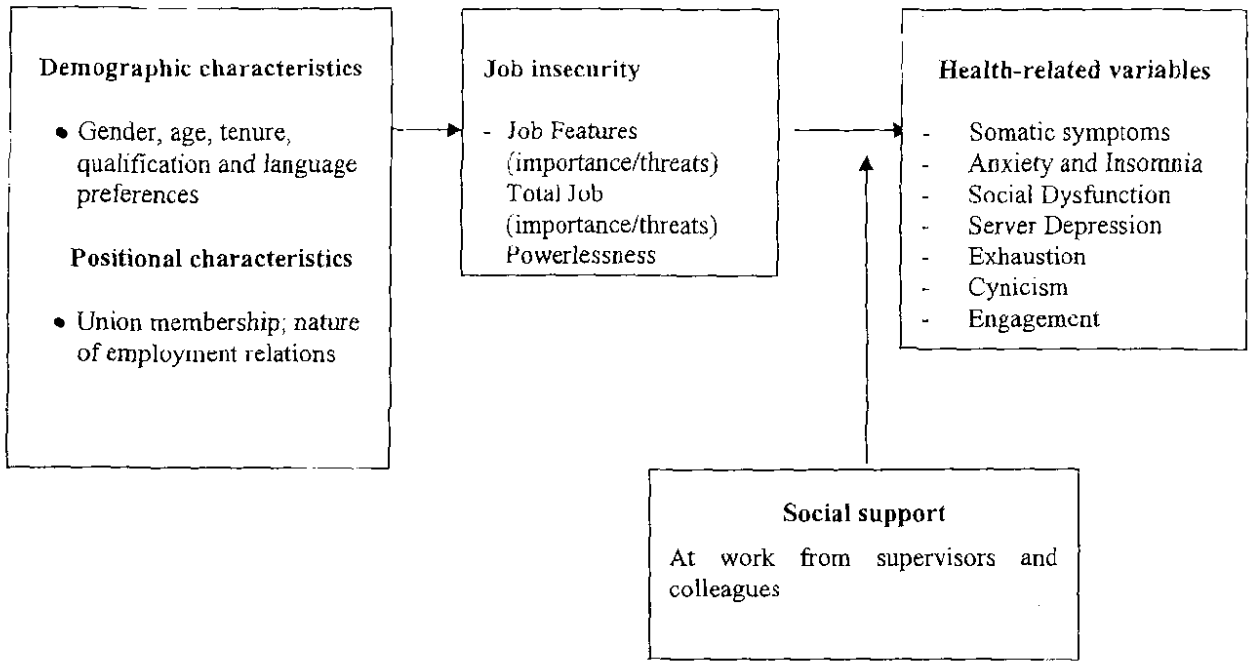

Figure 1. The adapted theoretical Model tested in this study by Probst (2003)

The following research questions arise on the basis of the description of the research problem:

- How are job insecurity, burnout, work engagement, general health and social support, conceptualised in literature?
- What is the relationship between job insecurity, burnout, work engagement, general health, and social support within a business unit of an electricity organisation?
- Are there differences between demographical groups (such as age, gender, educational, etc.) and their experience of job insecurity?

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.2.1 General Objectives

The objective of this research is firstly, to determine the relationship between job insecurity, general health and social support, in a business unit of an electricity organisation. Secondly, to determine whether support moderates the relationship between job insecurity, and general health.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

The specific research objectives are:

- To conceptualise job insecurity, burnout, work engagement, general health, and social support according to the literature.
- To determine the relationship between job insecurity, burnout, work engagement, general health, and social support within a business unit of an electricity organisation.
- To determine the differences between demographical groups (such as age, gender, educational, etc.) and their experience of job insecurity.

1.3 RESEARCH METHOD

The research method consists of two parts, a literature review and an empirical investigation.

1.3.1 Literature Review

The literature review focuses on the conceptualisation of job insecurity and its relationship to support, and general health. Results of previous research on job insecurity, and general health are analysed.

The following databases will be used as primary resources:

- Library Catalogues

- EBSCOhost
- Internet: Various search engines
- International Journals

1.3.2 Empirical Study

The empirical study entails that the specifically-stated objectives can be achieved as follows:

1.3.3 Research Design

It has been decided to make use of a quantitative cross-sectional survey design (Huysamen, 1993). Every individual in the study population is measured against the variables identified in the study at the same point in time, and the relationships between the measurements are determined. The correlation has been decided upon because the relationship between the constructs of job insecurity, job satisfaction and wellness will be investigated at the same point in time without any planned intervention. The research is therefore descriptive and explanatory (Mouton & Marais, 1992).

1.3.4 Participants

The study population consists of workers within a business unit in an electricity organisation, which is categorised into five different departments: Maintenance, Services, Engineering, Human Resources, and Operating Department. These workers will avail themselves voluntarily, at a given time, to participate in the study. Despite the limitations of availability sample, cognisance was taken of it and workers were encouraged to take part in the study. The study population will include workers with a random sample size of N=500 from the lowest level of employees to the top management. 20% as per each department was randomly requested to participate in the study, from all age categories. The respondents consist of artisan helpers (unskilled), general workers (semi-skilled), artisans (skilled). Technicians/Engineers, Supervisors, Team leaders and Managers (professional), inclusive of different gender and race groups.

1.3.5 Measuring Instruments

The following instruments are employed in the present study:

- *Job Insecurity Questionnaire* (JIQ) by Ashford, Lee and Bobko (1989) was used. This instrument was found by Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) who suggested that job insecurity is best measured as the interaction of several components. These are: the importance of and threats to various job features, the importance of and threats of a job itself, and powerlessness to prevent a loss. A 17-item subscale was constructed to include a comprehensive list of relevant job features. A range of job features was included to capture as extensively as possible the job features that are important to the employee study. Items concern promotion opportunities, freedom to schedule work, quality of supervision, access to organisational resources as well as task variety (Ashford et al., 1989). Subscales measuring both the importance and the likelihood of changes affecting total jobs were developed by Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984), on the basis of suggestions. In their study, they measured the components with ten items each, using different stems and responses categories (5-point scales) to reflect importance and likelihood. Sample items are: "How important to you personally is the possibility that you may be moved to a lower level job in the organisation?" and "How likely is it that you might be laid off for a short while?" Responses are then summed to these items separately to form importance and likelihood measures for the total job. Finally, to measure powerlessness, a subscale of three items namely (1) Job Features – importance/threats, (2) Total Job – importance/threats and (3) Powerlessness was devised with 5-point response formats ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree. "A sample item is: "I have enough power in this organisation to control events that might affect my job." In their study, Ashford, Bobko and Lee (1989), found each insecurity component to be having an adequate reliability estimate, with alphas ranging from 0,74 to 0,92. Two other job insecurity measures were used to evaluate the convergent validity and utilisation of their measure. The first was a four-item scale, developed by Caplan and colleagues (1975), which reflected the amount of certainty a person has about his/her future job and career security. The items, using a 5-point response format, include "How certain are you about what your future career picture looks like?" and "How certain are you about what your responsibilities will be six months from now?"

In determining the formulae used to achieve the level of job insecurity, Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) model, stipulate that job insecurity is multidimensional, consisting of five components. The first four make up what Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt labeled "severity of threat". This threat may pertain to various features of the job or to the entire job. Thus, the first component of the job insecurity construct is perceived threat to various job features such as opportunities for promotion and freedom to schedule work. However, Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) perceive the importance of each feature to an individual – the second component of the insecurity construct – weights the first dimension. To achieve this weighting, the perceived threat to each feature must be multiplied by its importance and the sum of scores for each feature in order to obtain an overall severity rating (Ashford et al., 2001).

- *The Maslach Burnout Inventory* – General Survey (MBI-GS) (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996) is used to measure burnout. Although the MBI-GS has three subscales, for the purpose of this study only two subscales will be used: Exhaustion (Ex) consisting of five items, e.g. "I feel used up at the end of the workday" and Cynicism (Cy) consisting also of five items, e.g. "I have become less enthusiastic about my work". Internal consistencies (Cronbach alpha coefficients) reported by Schaufeli et al. (1996) varied from 0,87 to 0,89 for Exhaustion, 0,73 to 0,84 for Cynicism. Test-retest reliabilities after one year were 0,65 (Exhaustion),and 0,60 (Cynicism) (Schaufeli, et al., 1996). All items are scored on a 7-point frequency rating scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (everyday). High scores on both Exhaustion and Cynicism are indicative of burnout. The following Cronbach alpha coefficients were obtained for the MBI-GS: Exhaustion, 0,88 and Cynicism, 0,79 (Storm, 2002).

- *The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale* (UWES) by Schaufeli et al. (2002) is used to measure the levels of engagement of the participants. The UWES includes three dimensions, namely vigour, dedication and absorption, which is conceptually seen as the opposite of burnout and is scored on a 7-point frequency-rating scale, varying from 0 ("never") to 6 ("every day"). The questionnaire consists of 17 questions and includes questions like " "I am bursting with energy every day in my work", "Time flies when I am at work" and "My job inspires me". The alpha coefficients for the three subscales varied between 0,68 and 0,91. The alpha coefficients could be improved (a varies between 0,78 and 0,89 for the three sub-scales) by

eliminating a few items without substantially decreasing the scales internal consistency. Storm (2002) obtained the following cronbach alpha coefficients for the UWES in a sample of 2396 members of the South African Police Service; Vigour: 0,78; Dedication: 0,89; Absorption: 0,78. Naudé (2003) reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,70 for vigour, a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,83 for dedication and a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,67 for absorption.

- *General Health Questionnaire* (GHQ) by Goldberg and Hillier (1979) will be used to measure psychological well-being. The scale is a screening test developed for the purpose of detecting non-psychiatric health symptoms. Items are scored on a four interval response mode ranging from 0 to 3, where 0 indicates no perceptions of mental health complaints and 3 indicates frequently perceived health complaints. Item 1-7 measure somatic symptoms for example "Been feeling run down and out of sorts", items 8-14 measure anxiety/insomnia for example "Lost much sleep over worry", items 15-21 measure social dysfunction for example "Felt on the whole you were doing things well" and items 22-28 measure severe depression for example "Felt that life is entirely hopeless" A high value on the GHQ is indicative of a hight level of psychological distress, whereas a low score implies a low level of psychological distress, indicating a high level of psychological well-being. Hellgren and Sverke (2003) reported an internal consistency reliability for the GHQ scale of 0,85 (time 1) and 0,83 (time 2). Oosthuizen (2000) found the following Cronbach alpha coefficients for the GHQ, somatic symptoms (0,76), anxiety/insomnia (0,83), social dysfunction (0,73) and depression (0,78). Oosthuizen (2001) obtained reliability co-efficient of 0,89 for the GHQ, which means the instrument can be used in South Africa.

- *Social support* (SSQ) will be measured inline with the modelling by House (1981). It is measured in respect to four contents (emotional, appraisal, informational, instrumental) and five resources (work supervisor, colleagues, spouse/partner, other relatives, friends). The five scales resulting from this operationalisation cover the important contents and a representative range of work and non-work related sources of social support and therefore include necessary functions of support. A Cronbach alpha of 0,8 was reported by Pearson (1986). It will be the first time this measuring instrument is used in South Africa.

1.3.6 Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis will be conducted using the SPSS programme (2003) as well as SAS (2000). Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis) will be used to analyse the data. Cronbach Alpha Coefficients, inter-item correlations and factor analysis will be used to determine the validity and reliability of the measuring instruments.

In addition to statistical significance, Pearson product moment correlation coefficients will be determined in order to indicate the extent to which one variable is related to another. A cut-off point of 0,30 which represents a medium effect (Cohen, 1988; Steyn, 2002) was set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients. MANOVA and ANOVA will be used to determine significance of differences between different demographic groups' levels of job insecurity.

Regression analyses will be conducted to determine the percentage of variance in the dependent variables that is predicted by the independent variables. A correlation can be better understood by determining r^2 (Cohen, 1988). The square of the correlation coefficient indicates the proportion of variance in any two variables, which is predicted by the variance in the other.

1.4 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The measuring battery will be compiled and arrangements will be made with participants to conduct the study, either individually or in groups. A letter from the writer endorsed by the business unit manager indicating the purpose indicating the purpose of the study (for research purposes only), the confidentiality of the data as well as the basis for participation shall be communicated to the participants before the test battery is administered. The criteria for participation will be to allow all those willing to those voluntarily to complete the questionnaire. The results will be analysed and feedback will be given to the maintenance department and sectional managers.

1.5 CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement and research objectives.

Chapter 2: Research article: Job insecurity, wellness and social support of employees in a business unit of an electricity organisation.

Chapter 3: Conclusions, Recommendations and Limitations.

1.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter sets out the problem statement, the aims of the research, the research method employed and the chapter division. Chapter 2 is the research article.

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CHAPTER 2

REASEARCH ARTICLE

JOB INSECURITY, WELLNESS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT OF EMPLOYEES IN A BUSINESS UNIT OF AN ELECTRICITY ORGANISATION

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J. H. BUITENDACH

I.J. HUMAN

ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between job insecurity, wellness and social support of employees (N=209) in a business unit of an electricity organisation. A cross-sectional survey design was used. Constructs were measured by means of Job Insecurity Survey Inventory (JISI), the Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey (MBI-GS), the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ), and the Social Support Questionnaire (SSO). Results indicated that Positive statistically and practically significant correlations were found between total job threats and exhaustion and cynicism, indicating that higher threat levels can lead to higher exhaustion and cynicism levels. It was further found that the regression analysis indicated that job insecurity have some predictive value with regards to the different wellness components researched in the study.

OPSOMMING

Die primêre doel van hierdie studie was om die verhouding te ondersoek tussen werksonsekerheid, welstand en sosiale ondersteuning van werknemers (N=209) in 'n besigheidseenheid van 'n elektriseteitsverskaffingsorganisasie. 'n Dwarsnee opname ontwerp was gebruik. Konstrukte is gemeet deur middel van "Job Insecurity Survey Inventory" (JISI), die "Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey" (MBI-GS), die "Utrecht Work Engagement Scale" (UWES), die "General Health Questionnaire" (GHQ) en die "Social Support Questionnaire" (SSO). Resultate toon dat positiewe statistiese en praktiese beduidende korrelasies gevind is tussen werksbedreiging, uitputting en sinisme. Dit toon dat hoër vlakke van werksbedreiging lei tot hoër vlakke van uitputting en hoër sinisme vlakke. Die regressie analise het aangedui dat werksonsekerheid 'n sekere voorspellingswaarde het met betrekking tot die verskillende welstand komponente wat in hierdie studie nagevors is.

Literature has reflected that working life has been subject to dramatic changes over the past decades (Gowing, Kraft & Campbell Quick, 1998; Howard, 1995; Pfeffer, 1998; Rifkin, 1995). In this context, job insecurity has emerged as an important construct. Sverke and Hellgren (2002) stated several reasons for this development, intensified global competition has forced organisations to cut production costs and become more flexible, periods of economic recession have lead to widespread organisational closure with unemployment and growing insecurity in its wake. Further, new technologies have paved the way to less labour intensive production and also restricted the employment alternatives of less skilled workers, the rapid industrial restructuring from the manufacturing of service production has called into question employees' views of the stability of their employers, and lastly a believe in the market-driven economy has changed government policies and in many countries resulted in relaxations of employment legislation (Davy, Kinicki & Scheck, 1997; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans & Van Vuuren, 1991; Sparrow, 1998).

As noted by Cascio (1998), organisations have two options to become more profitable, they can either increase their gains or decrease their costs, often by reducing the number of employees. A number of organisations have engaged in restructuring and large-scale workforce reductions in order to cut costs and improve organisational effectiveness and competitive ability (Burke & Nelson, 1998; Cameron, Freeman & Mishra, 1991; Kozlowski, Chao, Smith & Hedlund, 1993). Indeed, downsizing, or right-sizing (Hitt, Keats, Harback & Nixon, 1994), appears to be the standard solution in organisational attempts at improving organisational effectiveness and reducing labour costs.

As a consequence, many jobs have been eliminated, and the negative consequences of unemployment are well documented (Johad, 1982). Sverke and Hellgren (2003) also pointed out that there is substantial evidence to suggest that the nature of work has changed dramatically for those who remain employed. Employers in virtually every industrialised nation of the world are moving, in varying degrees, toward increased flexibility in how they staff their organisations (Klein Hesselink & Van Vuuren, 1999; Sparrow, 1998). Organisational striving for functional and numerical flexibility has resulted in demands for new types of skills as well as in changes in employment contracts (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). Most notably, organisations have shown increased interest in employing workers on the basis of short or fixed term contracts rather than

on the basis of implicit long-term contracts (McLean Parks, Kidder & Gallagher, 1998; Sverke, Gallagher & Hellgren, 2000). In addition, downsizing survivors have to do more with fewer resources, their work-load increases, and uncertainty regarding task performance is likely to be prevalent (Burke & Nelson, 1998; Hartley, 1991).

Job insecurity has thus received growing recognition in connection with increased unemployment and the use of large workforce reductions to improve organisational effectiveness and competitive ability (Hellgren & Sverke, 2003). Although research suggests that job insecurity is negatively related to employee work attitudes and well-being, Hellgren and Sverke (1999) indicated that some issues concerning these relationships have not yet been fully addressed. In their study, Hellgren and Sverke (1999) indicated that empirical research has not been systematically controlled for mood dispositions, although a growing body of literature suggests that this should be a standard procedure when self-rated stress reactions are measured. Most studies are cross-sectional and thus unable to control prior levels of the outcome variables (Hellgren & Sverke, 1999).

Job insecurity has been conceptualised from different points of view, that is (1) a global or (2) a multidimensional concept or (3) a job stressor (Mauno & Kunnunen, 1999). Job insecurity has been defined to the global definition, signifying the threat of loss or job discontinuity (Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison & Pinneau, 1980). Usually the global definition has been applied in the context of organisational crisis or change, in which job insecurity is considered the first phase in the process of job loss (Ferrie, 1997; Joelson & Wahlquist, 1987). The researchers (Borg & Elizur, 1992; Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996), who have adopted the multi-dimensional definition of job insecurity argue that job insecurity refers not only to the amount of uncertainty an employee feels about his or her job continuity, but also about the continuity of certain dimensions of the job such as opportunities for promotion or the possibility of being laid off for a short while (Ashford, Lee & Bobko, 1989; Borg & Elizur, 1992; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996; Rosenblatt et al., 1999).

Ashford, Lee and Bobko (1989) described five components of job insecurity (1) the severity of the threat concerning job continuity or aspects of the job; (2) the importance of job features, meaning that the fear of losing an important job feature is a cause of greater job insecurity than

the threat of losing a minor job feature; (3) the perceived threat of the occurrence which is expected to have a negative affect on an employee's total job situation; (4) the total importance of the changes mentioned above; and (5) powerlessness and referring to an employee's inability to control the threats described in the previous four components. Van Vuuren (1990) also conceptualised job insecurity as the concern felt by a person for the continued existence of his or her job and identifies three components. The first refers to a subjective experience or perception. The second to the uncertainty about the future and the third component includes doubts concerning the continuation of the job. For this study, job insecurity is adopted as a source of stress involving fear, potential loss, and anxiety (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). In their study, Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, (1984) also reflected that one outcome of such stress is strain in the form of somatic complaints like lack of sleep, dizziness, and loss of appetite.

With reference to the behavioural outcomes, researchers have reflected job insecurity as related to withdrawal behaviour and to stronger intentions to leave the organisation (Ashford, et al., 1989; Q'Quin, 1998), minimum ability to complete given task (Armstrong-Strong, 1993; Ashford et al., 1989; Preuss & Lautsch, 2002) and decreased safety motivation and compliance, which in turn, lead to organisational viability (Kets De Vries & Balaz, 1997), as well as well-being and wellness (De Witte, 1999; Kinnunen, Mauno, Nätti & Happonene, 2000; Mohr, 2000).

Sverke, Hellgren, Näswall, Chirumbolo, De Witte and Goslinga (2004) reflected job insecurity from a stress perspective. In their study, Sverke et al. (2004) indicated that stress is often described with the help of a model. They used a model developed by Katz and Kahn (1978). This model is characterised by the notion of stress as a process, originating in the interaction between the individual and the environment (See Figure 2).

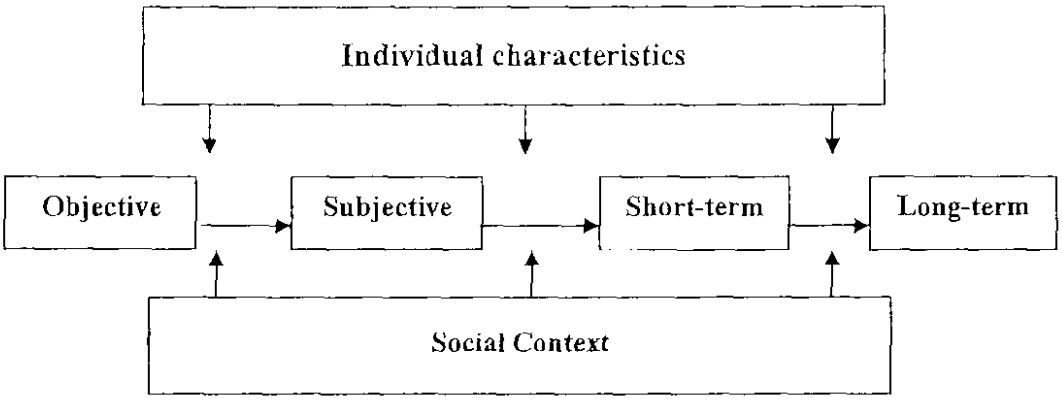

Figure 2: The stress process based on Katz and Kahn (1987) model.

This model describes the stress process whereby the individual creates a subjective or psychological conception of the objective reality, and it is this subjective interpretation which then triggers reactions – of a physiological, psychological, and behavioural nature, which is finally in the last stage of this process (Sverke et al., 2004).

Along this line, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have developed a theoretical framework that focuses more on the individual's affective and cognitive reactions and behaviours during stress experiences. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) also describe reactions to stress as being part of a process, starting from the person's appraisal of the situation. In their study, they reflected that when analysing the situation, the individual tries to establish whether it is irrelevant, positive, or stressful to him/her.

Furda and Meijman (1992) have also suggested that the predictability and controllability of the situation are important factors. Job insecurity implies unpredictability because of its uncertain nature (Furda & Meijman, 992). They reflected that this is due to the fact that an uncertain future makes it difficult to foresee what will happen, and subsequently how to act upon it. On the other hand uncontrollability is associated with a sense of powerlessness in maintaining employment (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). It is also described as something which is out of the employee's control whether he/she is allowed to keep the job or not.

In order to improve the understanding of how stress arises, and hence the understanding of the phenomenon of job insecurity, Sverke et al. (2004) built upon a stress model which was

developed by Siegrist (1996). This model emphasises the comparison that the individuals make between their efforts and the rewards they get from the same effort – the Effort - Reward Imbalance Model (Siegrist, 1996). This model also emphasises the importance of keeping or restoring important social roles in order to maintain a sense of mastery and control over the life situation. Siegrist (1996) refers to these social roles as status control. The researcher relates this model to the situation within the business unit, where employees weigh their contribution in value adding (working extra-mile) for the business to what they are remunerated in return. This situation could possibly enhance stress levels of employees especially if it is addressed to management and nothing is done about it.

Research conducted by Probst (2002) revealed that numerous consequences of job insecurity were mediated by work related attitudes and affective reactions. Job insecurity was found to hold important negative consequences to the individual, leading to increased withdrawal, and increased psychological distress (Probst, 2002). These negative consequences are referred to by Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001) as the individual experiences that are specific to the work context, and they therefore become burnout.

Maslach et al. (2001) noted that the danger that can take place when the person cannot balance between his/her work and personal life, has long been acknowledged. The researcher is of the opinion that this could possibly lead to stressful behaviour which may later turn into burnout. In their study, Maslach et al. (2001) as well as Van Dierendonck, Schaufeli and Buuk (1998) initially only associated burnout to people working in human services. However, the concept of burnout has recently been extended to all other professions and occupational groups (Maslach et al., 2001). In the following section, the researcher will elaborate more on burnout and its relation to job insecurity according to literature.

According to Rothmann, Jackson and Kruger (2003) burnout is a particular, multi-dimensional and chronic reaction which goes beyond the experience of mere exhaustion, being seen as the final step in a progression of unsuccessful attempts to cope with a variety of negative stress conditions. Burnout is also viewed as a psychological syndrome that develops in response to chronic inter-personal stressors on the job (Maslach et al., 2001) and may thus develop after prolonged exposure to job insecurity (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995; Westman, Etzion & Danon,

2001). It is primarily characterised by exhaustion accompanied by distress, a dysfunctional attitude and behavior at work (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). According to Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998), stress should not be confused with burnout, while burnout may be regarded as a particular kind of prolonged job stress.

The multi-dimensional theory of burnout conceptualises burnout in terms of its three core components: emotional exhaustion, cynicism and professional efficacy (Maslach, 1993; Maslach & Jackson, 1986). But in this study, the researcher will only focus on emotional exhaustion as well as cynicism. According to this multi-dimensional theory, burnout is an individual stress experience embedded in a context of complex social relationships, and it involves the person's conception of both self and others. In their study, Maslach (1993) and Maslach & Jackson (1986) refer to *exhaustion* as the fact that the employee is unable to perform because all energy has been drained, whereas *cynicism*, reflects indifference or a distant attitude towards one's work in general, rather than towards the recipients of one's service or personal relationships at work. Within South African studies burnout was found to consist out of two factors namely exhaustion and cynicism combined (Coetzer, 2004; Muller, 2004).

In the literature, De Rijk, Le Blanc and Schaufeli (1998) argue that utilising active strategies to deal with burnout, such as confronting the problem, buffers the effects of job stressors on negative job-related outcomes (burnout), while inactive efforts such as avoidance and drinking are associated with higher levels of burnout (Pines, Aronson & Kafry, 1981). These results are confirmed by Duquette, Kerouac, Sandhu, Ducharme and Saulnier (1995), who found that active strategies to deal with burnout leads to lower levels of negative job-related outcomes. More specifically, Anderson (2000) finds that when individuals are able to deal with burnout, feelings of cynicism decreased and their sense of professional efficacy increased. However, it did not save them from exhaustion.

Burnout has been rephrased by Maslach and Leiter (1997) as an erosion of engagement with the job. They reflected that what started out as important, meaningful and challenging could end up being unpleasant, unfulfilling and meaningless. Hence, energy was seen as what could turn into exhaustion, while involvement turning into cynicism and efficacy turning into ineffectiveness (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Accordingly, engagement is characterised by energy, involvement,

and efficacy – the direct opposite of the three burnout dimensions (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). In the next section, the researcher will elaborate more on work engagement in order to reflect its relationship to burnout.

In line with the increased focus of psychology on human strengths and optimal functioning, work engagement, although related to burnout, is seen as the theoretical antithesis of burnout (Bosman & Buitendach, 2005). Engagement is a positive, fulfilling and work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption (Maslach, Shaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Engaged individuals who view themselves as capable to deal with the complete demands of the job are likely to increase their productivity (Leiter & Harvie, 1998). Any occupation can be analysed in terms of a stress-interaction process in two elements, namely job demands and job resources (Jones & Fletcher, 1996; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2002). Schaufeli, Salavona, Gonzáles-Romá and Bakker (2002) explained the following: *Vigour* (opposite pole of exhaustion) is characterised by namely, high energy levels, mental resilience when working, willingness to exert effort into one's work and to persist even in the face of adversity; *Dedication* (the opposite pole of cynicism) is related to enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, challenge and a sense of significance; and *Absorption* refers to a state where time passes quickly and where the individual has difficulty in detaching him/herself from work.

Schaufeli and Bakker (2002) adds that absorption approximately is the concept of flow, an optimal state of experience where focused attention, a clear mind, accord in body and mind, effortless concentration, complete control, loss of self-consciousness, distortion of time and intrinsic enjoyment is experienced. According to South African studies, one of these factors namely absorption, showed problems of either low internal consistencies or poor loadings (Coetzer, 2004; Naudé & Rothmann, 2004; Rothmann, 2005; Storm & Rothmann, 2003; Van der Linde, 2004). Because of this, translation and simplification in the South African context should be considered (Rothmann, 2005). While work engagement is primarily characterised by vigour and dedication it is possible that absorption plays a less central role in the work engagement concept (Rothmann, 2005). Therefore the question arises whether absorption should be included in the measurement of work engagement (Coetzer, 2004; Naudé & Rothmann, 2004; Van der Linde, 2004).

According to Schaufeli, Salavona, González-Rom and Bakker (2002) engagement is a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on a particular object, event, individual or behaviour that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption. Vigour reflects the willingness and ability of the individual to invest effort in his/her job (Van Zyl, 2005). In his study, Van Zyl (2005) further indicated that this implies the presence of high levels of energy and mental resilience. Dedication refers to a sense of significance, enthusiasm and absorption whereas absorption reflects the full concentration and happiness of being engrossed in one's work (Van Zyl, 2005). Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001) reflected that time passes quickly when the individual is carried away by the job. Schaufeli et al. (2001) indicated that engaged employees have a sense of energetic and effective connections with their work activities and perceive themselves as being able to deal completely with their job demands.

In summary, burnout and engagement are conceptually related to each other, resulting in the identification of two work-related dimensions of well-being, namely (1) Activation, ranging from exhaustion to vigour; and (2) Identification, ranging from cynicism to dedication (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The researcher will next discuss the general health of employees in order to fully see the possibility of its relation to engagement as well as its impact on the business.

In terms of general health, literature has reflected that both physical and mental health tend to decrease as the experience of job insecurity increases (De Witte, 1999; Hartley et al., 1999). De Witte (1991) has further stated that utilisation of skills, work load, job insecurity and autonomy are the four specific job characteristics which correlate with well-being. Perceived job insecurity is detrimental for employee well-being and has often been reported to result in reduced psychological well-being, characterised by phenomena such as anxiety, depression, and irritation or in strain-related psychosomatic complaints (Catalano, Rook & Dooley, 1986). For the purpose of this research general health is conceptualised by looking at four concepts, which are: somatic symptoms, anxiety/insomnia, social dysfunction and depression (Goldberg & Hillier, 1979).

The research of Dekker and Schaufeli (1995) has reflected that job insecurity is associated with a deterioration of psychological health, leading to psychological distress and burnout, as well as for job and organisational withdrawal. According to Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998), burnout is associated with persistent, negative, work-related state of mind in normal people that are

primarily characterised by exhaustion, which is followed by distress, a sense of reduced effectiveness, low levels of motivation and development of dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours at work. Dekker and Schaufeli (1995) also indicated that prolonged job insecurity was more detrimental to an employee's health than security about his or her job situation. Hence, Van Zyl (2005) supported this by stating that it is evident that job insecurity can hold psychological, mental and emotional consequences for the individual.

De Witte (1999) reflected that the findings of job insecurity reduce the level of psychological well-being. He further stated that job security can be explained by differentiating between two factors that could be relevant in explaining the harmful impact of job insecurity, they are: predictability and controllability. Unpredictability includes lack of clarity about the future and lack of clarity about the expectations and behaviour that the employee should adopt (De Witte, 1999; Hartley et al., 1991). Uncontrollability has an impact because the lack thereof or the feeling of powerlessness towards the threat is considered to be the core of the phenomenon of job insecurity (De Witte, 1999).

Having discussed general health of employees, the researcher finds it necessary to explore around the issue of social support in order to see the possibility of the two increasing the level of job security. As reflected by Büssing (1999) organisations attempting to reduce costs, could put pressure on employees who remain at work to modify their jobs, accept alternative employment conditions or positions, relocate, all of which are likely to fuel job insecurity, and leave employees to work harder (intensify their work) in order to keep their jobs. He further mentioned that besides socio-demographic variables, such as gender, age and education, one must account for individual psychological differences. Given that job insecurity reflects a worry about losing the present job, this subjective experience is likely to have a strong psychological impact (Sverke, Hellgren & Näswall, 2002). In the next section the researcher emphasises the importance of social support from various categories of sources as well as its impact on the workforce.

Wilson, De Joy, Vanderberg, Richardson and McGrath (2004) defined social support as the concept emphasising the perceptions of employees about their overall work environment, particularly in terms of the climate for support, communication and involvement.

Literature suggests that social support at work may either have a direct effect on the level of strains independent of the level of job stressors (Andries et al., 1996; Loscocco & Spitze, 1990; Parasuraman, Greenhaus & Granrose, 1992; Payne & Jones, 1987; Roxburgh, 1996) or a buffering effect by moderating the stressor-strain relationship (Beehr, King & King, 1990; Cohen & Wills, 1985; Greller, Paesons & Mitchell, 1993; LaRocco, House & French, 1980; Terry Nielsen & Perchard, 1993; Viswesvaran, Sanches & Fisher, 1999).

Steyn (1990) found that the social status of employees could be improved by providing better salaries and service conditions, opportunities for advancement, recruitment, feedback and training. Lim (1996) supported this by stating that employees who receive support from work are described as more willing to remain with the organisation, in spite of turbulence. According to Lim (1996), support outside of work influenced the relation between job insecurity and life satisfaction. In his study, Lim (1996) reflected that individuals experiencing more support were more satisfied with life, despite job insecurity, than those reporting less support. The individuals receiving support from their spouse or family may also feel that they have access to economical support, which in turn can decrease the worry about job loss that is attributable to economical problems (Sverke et al., 2004).

The business unit in which the research was conducted has been engaged in a transformation drive. This means that they have been promoting Labour Relation Act 66 of 1995, Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998, Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997, Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993, etc. within the company (particularly in Management, Professional and Technical staff – i.e. middle and higher management). This company has also been engaged in Affirmative Action in terms of procurement services rendered being sourced from Affirmative Action (BEE) transactions, which clearly indicates that not everybody's service is required. Few sections within the business unit have also recently been outsourced. This was lead by management decisions upon reasons such as the *Organisational structure*, which required for instance the business to consider only few individuals (i.e. contractors) to handle certain tasks which are not necessarily required continuously due to technological improvements, this can also save costs as the business will not have to remunerate benefits such as leave, medical aids, pension funds etc, as this will only serve them as a support structure; *Social factors*, which serve the business as a project of contributing to the society by engaging in activities such as

promoting the awareness of HIV/AIDS, sports activities, etc. *Legal factors* which require the business to practice all its operations (technical and non-technical) according to the legal standards, etc. In light of all this information, it is evident that there are some strong winds of change heading this company, which is bound to cause some discomfort to some employees, as fear of the unknown could possibly affect them negatively.

Based upon the above problem statement, the following hypotheses are proposed for this research:

H1: There is a practically significant relationship between job insecurity and exhaustion.

H2: There is a practically significant relationship between job insecurity and cynicism.

H3: There is a practically significant relationship between job insecurity and work engagement.

H4: There is a practically significant relationship between job insecurity and general health.

H5: Different biographical groups experience the importance of job features differently.

H6: Different biographical groups experience the threats to job features differently.

H7: Different biographical groups experience the total job importance differently.

H8: Different biographical groups experience the total job threats differently.

H9: Different biographical groups experience powerlessness differently.

H10: Job insecurity holds predictive value with regards to burnout, work engagement and general health.

METHOD

Research Design

It has been decided to make use of a quantitative cross-sectional survey design (Huysamen, 1993). Every individual in the study population is measured against the variables identified in the

study at the same point in time, and the relationships between the measurements are determined. The correlation has been decided upon because the relationship between the constructs of job insecurity, job satisfaction and wellness will be investigated at the same point in time without any planned intervention. The research is therefore descriptive and explanatory (Mouton & Marais, 1992).

Participants

The study population consists of workers within a business unit in an electricity organisation, which is categorised into five different departments, namely Maintenance, Services, Engineering, Human Resources and Operating departments. These workers will avail themselves voluntarily, at a given time, to participate in the study. Despite the limitations of the availability of the sample, cognisance was taken of it and workers were encouraged to take part in the study. The study population will include workers with a sample size of N=209. The sample will be representative of all sections within each department, from all age categories. The respondents consist of artisan helpers (unskilled), general workers (semi-skilled), artisans (skilled). Technicians/Engineers, Supervisors, Team leaders and Managers (professional), inclusive of different gender and race groups. The characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Participants (N=209)

ITEM	CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	%
Gender (N = 209)	Male	94	45,0
	Female	115	55,0
Culture (N=209)	Black	140	66,9
	White	66	31,6
	Missing	3	1,5
Citizen (N=209)	SA	195	93,3
	Other	1	0,5
	Missing	13	6,2
Age (N=209)	24 – 35 years	74	35,4
	36 – 46 years	90	43,1

	46 years and older	44	21,1
	Missing	1	0,4
Qualifications (N=209)	Below Std 7	21	10,0
	Std 8 – 10	39	18,7
	Diploma	53	25,4
	Degree	29	13,9
	Degree +	66	31,6
	Missing	1	0,4
Tenure (N=209)	1 – 5 years	47	22,5
	6 – 10 years	82	39,3
	11 – 20 years	29	13,9
	Longer than 20 years	50	23,9
	Missing	1	0,4
Employee type (N=209)	Permanent employee	209	100,0

As indicated in Table 1, more females (55%) participated in the research. The majority of employees are black respondents (66,9%) and the dominant age group that participated is 36 – 46 years (43,1%). Most of the employees possess a tertiary qualification (31,6%). Years of service indicate that most employees have 6 – 10 years service (39,3%), most of the respondents are South African citizens (93,3%) and all the participants are permanent employees of the organisation. The assumption can therefore be made that the majority of the population consisted of black female employees in an older age group with tertiary qualifications.

Measuring Instruments

The following instruments are employed in the present study:

- The *Job Insecurity Questionnaire* (JIQ) by Ashford, Lee and Bobko (1989) was used. This instrument was found by Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) who suggested that job insecurity is best measured as the interaction of several components. These are: the importance of and threats to various job features, the importance of and threats of a job itself, and powerlessness to prevent a loss. A 17-item subscale was constructed to include a comprehensive list of relevant job features. A range of job features was included to capture as extensively as possible the job features that are important to the employee study. Items concern promotion opportunities, freedom to schedule work, quality of supervision, access to

organisational resources as well as task variety (Ashford et al., 1989). Subscales measuring both the importance and the likelihood of changes affecting total jobs were developed by Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984), on the basis of suggestions. In their study, they measured the components with ten items each, using different stems and response categories (5-point scales) to reflect importance and likelihood. Sample items are: "How important to you personally is the possibility that you may be moved to a lower level job in the organisation? " and "How likely is it that you might be laid off for a short while? " Responses are then summed to these items separately to form importance and likelihood measures for the total job. Finally, to measure powerlessness, a subscale of three items namely (1) Job Features – importance/threats, (2) Total Job – importance/threats and (3) Powerlessness was devised with 5-point response formats ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". A sample item is: "I have enough power in this organisation to control events that might affect my job". In their study, Ashford & Lee (1989), found each insecurity component to be having an adequate reliability estimate, with alphas ranging from 0,74 to 0,92. Two other job insecurity measures were used to evaluate the convergent validity and utilisation of their measure. The first was a four-item scale, developed by Caplan and colleagues (1975), which reflected the amount of certainty a person has about his/her future job and career security. The items, using a 5-point response format, include "How certain are you about what your future career picture looks like?" and "How certain are you about what your responsibilities will be six months from now?"

In determining the formulae used to achieve the level of job insecurity, the Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) model stipulates that job insecurity is multi-dimensional, consisting of five components. The first four make up what Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt labelled "severity of threat". This threat may pertain to various features of the job or to the entire job. Thus, the first component of the job insecurity construct is perceived threat to various job features such as opportunities for promotion and freedom to schedule work. However, Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) perceive the importance of each feature to an individual – the second component of the insecurity construct weights the first dimension. To achieve this weighting, the perceived threat to each feature must be multiplied by its importance and the sum of scores for each feature in order to obtain an overall severity rating (Ashford, Lee & Bobko, 2001).

- The *Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey* (MBI-GS) (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996) is used to measure burnout. Although the MBI-GS has three subscales, for the purpose of this study only two subscales will be used: Exhaustion (Ex) consisting of five items, e.g. "I feel used up at the end of the workday" and Cynicism (Cy) consisting also of five items, e.g. "I have become less enthusiastic about my work". Internal consistencies (Cronbach alpha coefficients) reported by Schaufeli et al. (1996) varied from 0,87 to 0,89 for Exhaustion and 0,73 to 0,84 for Cynicism. Test-retest reliabilities after one year were 0,65 (Exhaustion), and 0,60 (Cynicism) (Schaufeli, et al., 1996). All items are scored on a 7-point frequency rating scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (every day). High scores on both Ex and Cy are indicative of burnout. Storm (2002) confirmed the three-factor structure of the MBI-GS in a sample of 2396 SAPS members, but recommended that item 13 should be dropped from the questionnaire. She confirmed the structural equivalence of the MBI-GS for different race groups within the SAPS. The following Cronbach alpha coefficients were obtained for the MBI-GS: Exhaustion, 0,88 and Cynicism, 0,79 (Storm, 2002).

- The *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale* (UWES) by Schaufeli et al., (2002) is used to measure the levels of engagement of the participants. The UWES includes three dimensions, namely vigour, dedication and absorption, which is conceptually seen as the opposite of burnout and is scored on a 7-point frequency-rating scale, varying from 0 (never) to 6 (every day). The questionnaire consists of 17 questions and includes questions like "I am bursting with energy every day in my work", "Time flies when I am at work" and "My job inspires me". The alpha coefficients for the three subscales varied between 0,68 and 0,91. The alpha coefficients could be improved (varies between 0,78 and 0,89 for the three sub-scales) by eliminating a few items without substantially decreasing the scales internal consistency. Storm (2002) obtained the following Cronbach alpha coefficients for the UWES in a sample of 2396 members of the South African Police Service; Vigour: 0,78; Dedication: 0,89; Absorption: 0,78. Naudé (2003) reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,70 for vigour, a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,83 for dedication and a Ccronbach alpha coefficient of 0,67 for absorption.

- *General Health Questionnaire* (GHQ) by Goldberg and Hillier (1979) will be used to measure psychological well-being. The scale is a screening test developed for the purpose of

detecting non-psychiatric health symptoms. Items are scored on a four interval response mode ranging from 0 to 3, where 0 indicates no perceptions of mental health complaints and 3 indicates frequently perceived health complaints. Items 1-7 measure somatic symptoms for example "Been feeling run down and out of sorts", items 8-14 measure anxiety/insomnia for example "Lost much sleep over worry", items 15-21 measure social dysfunction for example "Felt on the whole you were doing things well" and items 22-28 measure severe depression for example "Felt that life is entirely hopeless" A high value on the GHQ is indicative of a high level of psychological distress, whereas a low score implies a low level of psychological distress, indicating a high level of psychological well-being. Hellgren and Sverke (2003) reported an internal consistency reliability for the GHQ scale of 0,85 (time 1) and 0,83 (time 2). Oosthuizen (2000) found the following Cronbach alpha coefficients for the GHQ, somatic symptoms (0,76), anxiety/insomnia (0,83), social dysfunction (0,73) and depression (0,78). Oosthuizen (2001) obtained reliability co-efficient of 0,89 for the GHQ, which means the instrument can be used in South Africa.

- *Social support* (SS) will be measured in line with the modelling by House (1981). It is measured in respect to four contents (emotional, appraisal, informational, instrumental) and five resources (work supervisor, colleagues, spouse/partner, other relatives, friends). The five scales resulting from this operationalisation cover the important contents and a representative range of work and non-work related sources of social support and therefore include necessary functions of support. A Cronbach alpha of 0,82 was reported by Pearson (1986). It will be the first time this measuring instrument is used in South Africa.

Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis will be conducted using the SPSS programme (2003) as well as SAS (2000). Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis) will be used to analyse the data. Cronbach alpha coefficients, inter-item correlations and factor analysis will be used to determine the validity and reliability of the measuring instruments.

In addition to statistical significance, Pearson product moment correlation coefficients will be determined in order to indicate the extent to which one variable is related to another. A cut-off point of $\leq 0,30$ (medium effect) (Cohen, 1988) is set for the practical significance of correlation

coefficients. MANOVA and ANOVA will be used to determine differences between different demographic groups' levels of job satisfaction and general health: demands, support, control and job insecurity within this business unit of an electricity organisation.

Regression analysis was conducted to determine the percentage of variance in the dependent variables that is predicted by the independent variables. A correlation can be better understood by determining r^2 (Cohen, 1988). The square of the correlation coefficient indicates the proportion of variance in any two variables, which is predicted by the variance in the other.

RESULTS

Construct Validity of the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI-GS)

A simple principle component analysis was conducted on the 9 items of the MBI-GS (Exhaustion and Cynicism), on the total sample of employees in a business unit of an electricity organisation. Analysis of eigen values (larger than 1) and scree plot supported the two-factor structure of the MBI-GS (Exhaustion and Cynicism), explaining 77,6% of the total variance.

Construct Validity of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale – UWES.

A simple principal component analysis was conducted on the 17 items of the UWES on the total sample of employees in a business unit of an electricity organisation. Analysis of eigen values (larger than 1) and scree plot indicated that only one factor could be extracted, explaining 81,8% of the total variance. The component matrix of the UWES is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Component Matrix for the items of the UWES for Employees in a Business Unit of an Electricity Organisation

	Component 1
1. I am bursting with energy in my work	-0,91
2. I find my work full of meaning and purpose	-0,91
3. Time flies when I'm working	-0,88
4. I feel strong and vigorous in my job	-0,90
5. I am enthusiastic about my job	-0,90
6. When I am working, I forget about everything else around me	-0,89
7. My job inspires me	-0,88
8. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	-0,86
9. I feel happy when I am engrossed in my work	-0,90
10. I am proud of the work that I do	-0,89
11. I am immersed in my work	-0,89
12. In my job, I can continue working for very long periods of time	-0,91
13. To me, my work is challenging	-0,92
14. I get carried away by my work	-0,92
15. I am very resilient, mentally, in my job	-0,93
16. It is difficult for me to detach myself from my work	-0,90
17. I always persevere at work, even when things do not go well	-0,92

The one-factor model corresponds with the findings of Storm and Rothmann (2003) as well as Bosman (2004), who found that a re-specified one-factor model fitted their data the best.

Construct Validity of the General Health Questionnaire – GHQ

A simple principal component analysis was conducted on the 28 items of the GHQ on the total sample of the employees in a business unit of an electricity organization. Analysis of eigenvalues (larger than 1) and scree plot supported the four-factor structure of the GHQ, explaining 68,8% of the total variance. Therefore it was decided to use the four factors of the GHQ, namely somatic symptoms, anxiety / insomnia, social dysfunction and severe depression.

Descriptive statistics, Cronbach alpha coefficients and the inter-item correlation coefficients of the JIQ, MBI-GS, UWES, GHQ and Social Support (SSQ) for employees ($N = 209$) working in a business unit of an electricity organisation are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Alpha Coefficients of the JIQ, MBI-GS (Exhaustion and Cynicism), UWES, GHQ and Social Support (SSQ)

Item	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Inter-item r	α
Job Insecurity						
Job Features Importance	46,84	10,56	-0,95	0,54	0,36	**0,90**
Job Features Threats	33,63	12,32	1,09	0,10	0,55	**0,95**
Total Job Importance	32,69	5,48	-1,35	1,79	0,43	**0,88**
Total Job Threats	33,95	6,69	-1,86	2,83	0,61	**0,93**
Powerlessness	3,88	1,74	2,29	5,26	0,79	**0,91**
Burnout						
Exhaustion	24,26	6,38	-2,27	4,74	0,79	**0,94**
Cynicism	23,69	6,33	-2,07	3,92	0,71	**0,92**
UWES						
Work Engagement	23,90	25,13	1,94	2,36	0,80	**0,98**
General Health						
Somatic Symptoms	23,53	3,93	-1,71	3,06	0,57	**0,90**
Anxiety / Insomnia	23,37	4,09	-1,76	3,57	0,56	**0,89**
Social Dysfunction	23,55	4,12	-1,60	2,59	0,61	**0,91**
Severe Depression	23,21	4,59	-1,88	3,84	0,67	**0,93**
Social Support	1,26	0,44	1,72	1,52	0,46	**0,92**

As indicated in Table 4, the Cronbach alpha coefficients of all the JIQ subscales are above the norm of $\alpha > 0,80$ according to the guidelines by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). This is the first study that the Ashford, Lee and Bobko (1989) questionnaire has been used to measure job insecurity, therefore no comparative Cronbach alpha coefficients could be found.

The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was determined in order to measure the linear relationship between job insecurity, burnout, work engagement, general health and social support in this study. The inter-correlations between the biographical variables, JOBF, MBI-GS, UWES, GHQ and SSQ are reported in Table 4.

Table 4

Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient between JIBF, MBI-GS, UWES, GHQ and SSQ

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Job Features Importance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Job Features Threats	0,33*†	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Total Job Importance	-0,27*	0,63*††	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Total Job Threats	-0,27*	0,63*††	0,67*††	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Powerlessness	0,21*	0,46*†	0,51*††	0,78*††	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Exhaustion	-0,28*	0,54*††	0,62*††	0,72*††	0,55*††	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7. Cynicism	-0,25*	0,60*††	0,61*††	0,76*††	0,58*††	0,89*††	-	-	-	-	-	-
8. Work Engagement	0,26*	0,61*††	0,57*††	0,78*††	0,63*††	0,72*††	0,75*††	-	-	-	-	-
9. Somatic Symptoms	-0,22*	0,48*†	0,58*††	0,69*††	0,58*††	0,68*††	0,70*††	0,69*††	-	-	-	-
10. Anxiety / Insomnia	-0,22*	0,46*†	0,57*††	0,65*††	0,52*††	0,67*††	0,70*††	0,66*††	0,83*††	-	-	-
11. Social Dysfunction	-0,27*	0,43*†	0,54*††	0,68*††	0,53*††	0,66*††	0,68*††	0,66*††	0,82*††	0,84*††	-	-
12. Severe Depression	-0,24*	0,45*†	0,52*††	0,70*††	0,57*††	0,66*††	0,69*††	0,70*††	0,84*††	0,84*††	0,85*††	-
13. Social Support	0,03*	0,13	0,00	-0,18	0,16	-0,05	-0,08	0,15	-0,04	-0,11	-0,08	-0,10

* Statistically significant $p \leq 0,01$

† Correlation is practically significant $r \geq 0,30$ (medium effect)

††Correlation is practically significant $r \geq 0,50$ (large effect) (Cohen, 1988)

For the purpose of this study, *r*-values $\leq 0,30$ will be accepted as practically significant. As indicated in Table 4, practically significant as well as statistically significant correlations of large effect were obtained between job features threats and exhaustion, indicating that the more threats to job features are experienced by an employee, the more exhausted the employee might become. A possible explanation could be that when job features are important to an employee and it is under threat, the employee might try to work harder in order to retain his position with the job features linked to it. Therefore due to the above mentioned result, hypothesis 1 can be accepted.

A positive practically- and statistically significant correlation of large effect was obtained between job features threats and cynicism, indicating that the higher the threats to job features, the more cynical the employee becomes. When threats are experienced, the employee might become cynical due to a feeling of negativity on the part of the employee. Therefore due to the above-mentioned result, hypothesis 2 can be accepted.

With regards to work engagement, a negative practically- and statistically significant correlation of large effect was obtained with job feature threats, implying that the more threats to job features are experienced, the less engaged the individual becomes towards his work. The individual might experience a threatening situation as insecurity; therefore the employee might not be motivated to be engaged in the work environment. Therefore due to the above-mentioned result, hypothesis 3 can be accepted.

Positive practically- and statistically significant correlations of medium effect were reported between job feature threats and the four subscales of the general health questionnaire, namely somatic symptoms, anxiety/insomnia, social dysfunction and severe depression. These correlations imply that the higher the threats to job features experienced by the employee, the more general health problems are experienced. A possible reason could be that a threatening situation might cause an employee to be worried, impacting negatively on the health of the employee. Therefore due to the above-mentioned result, hypothesis 4 can be accepted.

With regard to the importance of the total job, a negative practically- and statistically significant correlation of large effect was obtained with exhaustion, implying that when the total job is important to the employee, the less exhausted the employee will become. When an employee is in a position, performing work that he enjoys, it will not be as exhausting as performing work

that he dislikes. A negative practically and significant and statistically significant correlation of large effect was obtained between total job importance and cynicism, indicating that the employee becomes less cynical about the job when the total job is of importance

A positive practically- and statistically significant correlation of large effect was reported between total job importance and work engagement, implying that when the total job is important to the employee, the employee will be more engaged in the work environment. A reason might be that when an employee experiences the job as important, he might want to do more than what is officially required. A negative practically- and statistically significant relationship of large effect was obtained between total job importance and the four subscales of general health, namely somatic symptoms, anxiety / insomnia, social dysfunction and severe depression, indicating that when the total job is important to an employee, less general health problems as measured by the subscales might be experienced by the employee.

Positive practically- and statistically significant correlations of large effect were reported between threats to the total job and exhaustion and cynicism, implying that the more threats experienced with regard to the total job, the more exhausted the employee becomes in defending his position and also becomes more cynical towards the threatening situation. A negative practically- and statistically significant correlation of large effect was obtained between threats to the total job and work engagement, indicating that more threats can lead to an employee becoming less engaged in the work situation.

A negative practically- and statistically significant correlation of large effect was reported between total job threats and all the subscales of the general health questionnaire, implying that when more threats to the total job might be experienced, the more somatic symptoms, anxiety / insomnia, social dysfunction and severe depression problems can occur.

Due to the reverse scale of the powerlessness subscale of job insecurity, a high score implies that an employee feels that he possesses the power to deal with possible threats that might arise. A negative practically- and statistically significant correlation of large effect was obtained between powerlessness and exhaustion as well as cynicism, indicating that when an employee feels that he does have the power to control the threats, it is possible that the employee will be less exhausted and cynical about the threatening environment. A positive practically- and statistically

significant relationship of large effect was obtained between powerlessness and work engagement, leading to the assumption that an employee will be more engaged in his work environment when there is a feeling of powerfulness to cope with the threats.

Differences between Variables

Next, MANOVA and ANOVA analyses followed to determine the relationship between the scores of the JOBF, MBI-GS, UWES, GHQ, SSQ and various biographical variables such as gender, cultural group, age, qualifications and tenure, the results of which are reported in Table 5.

Table 5

MANOVA – Differences in Job Insecurity of Biographical Variables

Job Features: Importance (JOBF I)						
Variable	**Value**	**F**	**Df**	**Den Df**	**MS**	***P***
Qualification	0,58	5,69	20	644	94,66	**0,000***
Age	0,88	2,56	10	392	107,37	**0,005***
Service	0,84	2,26	15	538	104,48	**0,004***
Job Features: Threats (JOBF T)						
Variable	**Value**	**F**	**Df**	**Den Df**	**MS**	***P***
Qualification	0,58	5,69	20	644	109,96	**0,000***
Age	0,88	2,56	10	392	142,34	**0,005***
Service	0,84	2,26	15	538	142,26	**0,004***
Total Job: Importance (TJ I)						
Variable	**Value**	**F**	**Df**	**Den Df**	**MS**	***p***
Qualification	0,58	5,69	20	644	25,18	**0,000***
Age	0,88	2,56	10	392	28,16	**0,005***
Total Job: Threats (TJ T)						
Variable	**Value**	**F**	**Df**	**Den Df**	**MS**	***p***
Qualification	0,58	5,69	20	644	39,98	**0,000***
Age	0,88	2,56	10	392	44,07	**0,005***
Powerlessness (PW)						
Variable	**Value**	**F**	**Df**	**Den Df**	**MS**	***p***
Qualification	0,58	5,69	20	644	2,87	**0,000***

* Statistically significant difference: $p < 0,01$

In an analysis of Wilk's Lambda values ($p < 0,01$), statistically-significant differences were obtained between the job insecurity experienced for qualification, age and years' service, but not for any of the other categories, gender and cultural group. The relationship between job insecurity and the three biographical variables were further analysed to determine practical significance using ANOVA, followed by Tukey HSD tests.

The significance of differences in job insecurity levels of the different qualification, age and service groups is reported in Table 6.

Table 6

Differences in Job Insecurity Levels of different Qualification, Age and Service Groups

	Job Features : Importance (JOBF I)			
QUALIFICATION	**Mean**	***p*-value**	**RMSE**	**Cohen's d**
Below Std. 7	35,66			
Std. 8 - 10	47,43	**0,000***	9,73	**1,21††**
Below Std. 7	35,66			
Diploma	50,32	**0,000***	9,73	**1,50††**
Below Std. 7	35,66			
Degree	47,48	**0,000***	9,73	**1,21††**
Below Std. 7	35,66			
Degree +	47,39	**0,000***	9,73	**1,20††**
AGE				
24 – 35 years	48,75			
46 years +	41,81	**0,005***	10,36	**0,67†**
36 – 46 years	47,64			
46 years +	41,81	**0,005***	10,36	**0,56†**
SERVICE				
1 – 5 years	49,82			
20 years +	41,26	**0,004***	10,22	**0,83††**
6 – 10 years	48,25			
20 years +	41,26	**0,004***	10,22	**0,68†**
11 – 20 years	47,75			
20 years +	41,26	**0.004***	10,22	**0,63†**

Job Features: Threats (JOBF T)				
QUALIFICATION	Mean	*p*-value	RMSE	Cohen's d
Below Std. 7	23,61			
Degree	34,22	0,000*	10,48	1,01††
Below Std 7	23,61			
Degree +	42,48	0,000*	10,48	1,80††
Std. 8 - 10	28,10			
Degree +	42,48	0,000*	10,48	1,37††
Diploma	30,73			
Degree +	42,48	0,000*	10,48	1,12††
Degree	34,22			
Degree +	42,48	0,000*	10,48	0,78†
AGE				
24 – 35 years	35,15			
46 years +	27,13	0,005*	11,93	0,67†
36 – 46 years	35,48			
46 years +	27,13	0,005*	11,93	0,70†
SERVICE				
1 – 5 years	36,35			
20 years +	29,12	0,004*	11,92	0,60†
6 – 10 years	35,67			
20 years +	29,12	0,004*	11,92	0,54†
Total Job: Importance (TJ I)				
QUALIFICATION	Mean	*p*-value	RMSE	Cohen's d
Below Std. 7	35,38			
Degree +	30,00	0,000*	5,01	1,07††
Std. 8 - 10	35,10			
Degree +	30,00	0,000*	5,01	1,01††
Diploma	32,96			
Degree +	30,00	0,000*	5,01	0,59†
Degree	33,22			
Degree +	30,00	0,000*	5,01	0,64†

0,005*	5,30	0,53†
Threats (TJ T)		
p-value	RMSE	Cohen's d
0,000*	6,32	1,00††
0,000*	6,32	0,84††
0,000*	6,32	0,70†
0,000*	6,32	0,66†
0,005*	6,63	0,45
ssness (PW)		
p-value	RMSE	Cohen's d
0,000*	1,69	0,69†
0,000*	1,69	0,55†
0,000*	1,69	0,62†
0,000*	1,69	0,64†

Std. 7 group differed practically significant with a large
tion groups with regards to their experience of the
iat job features are less important to the lower-qualified
)s. Job features are also less important to the older age

AGE				
36 – 46 years	31,94			
46 years +	34,77	0,005*	5,30	0,53†
		Total Job: Threats (TJ T)		
QUALIFICATION	Mean	*p*-value	RMSE	Cohen's d
Below Std. 7	36,90			
Degree +	30,57	**0,000***	6,32	**1,00††**
Std. 8 - 10	35,92			
Degree +	30,57	**0,000***	6,32	**0,84††**
Diploma	35,00			
Degree +	30,57	**0,000***	6,32	**0,70†**
Degree	34,77			
Degree +	30,57	**0,000***	6,32	**0,66†**
AGE				
36 – 46 years	33,01			
46 years +	36,00	**0,005***	6,63	0,45
		Powerlessness (PW)		
QUALIFICATION	**Mean**	*p*-value	**RMSE**	**Cohen's d**
Below Std. 7	3,42			
Degree +	4,60	**0,000***	1,69	**0,69†**
Std. 8 - 10	3,66			
Degree +	4,60	**0,000***	1,69	**0,55†**
Diploma	3,55			
Degree +	4,60	**0,000***	1,69	**0,62†**
Degree	3,51			
Degree +	4,60	**0,000***	1,69	**0,64†**

* Statistically significant $p \leq 0,01$

† Practically significant $d \geq 0,50$ (medium effect)

†† Practically significant $d \geq 0,80$ (large effect)

It is evident from Table 6 that the below Std. 7 group differed practically significant with a large effect, from all of the other qualification groups with regards to their experience of the importance of job features in the sense that job features are less important to the lower-qualified group, than to the higher-qualified groups. Job features are also less important to the older age

group, 46 years and older, than to the younger age groups, the differences are practically significant with medium effect. A possible explanation could be that the younger age groups might still be with the organisation for a longer time period, making those features of more importance to them. Concerning years of service, participants with more service years in the organisation, 20 years and more, indicate that job features are less important to them, than employees with less years' service. The differences are practically significant of large and medium effect respectively. An assumption can be made that employees with less service years are still interested in job features; it can be a retention component to motivate them to stay with an organisation. No practically-significant differences could be found for gender and culture groups, therefore Hypothesis 5 can be partially accepted.

As indicated in Table 6, the Below Std. 7 qualification group reported lower levels, practically-significant large effect, of job feature threats experienced than the higher qualification groups. Employees with higher qualifications, tend to be in higher positions in an organisation and higher positions normally have more job features attached to the position, therefore it is possible that the higher qualified groups have more job features that can be threatened than the lower qualified group, leading to an enhanced experience of threats to the job features.

The younger age groups reported practically-significant, medium effect, higher levels of threats to job features than the older age group, 46 years and older. A possible explanation can be that younger employees are usually more focused on job features as they might experience it as a status symbol. Older employees might be in the phase of preparing for retirement, reverting their focus to retirement preparation. Employees with more service years, 20 years and more, are also less focused on threats to job features, as they might also be in a retirement mode, not focusing on job features and possible threats to them. As indicated in Table 6, no practically-significant differences could be established for gender and culture groups, therefore Hypothesis 6 can partially accepted.

Table 6 also indicates that when it comes to the importance of the total job, the less-qualified group, below Std. 7, indicates practically-significant differences, medium and large effect, with the more qualified groups. The total job seems to be more important to the less-qualified group than to the higher-qualified group, it might be due to the difficulties experienced finding other

work, especially if an employee is not qualified enough. The older age group, 46 years and older, also indicates a practically-significant difference of medium effect with the younger age group. The older age group experiences the importance of the total job as more important than the younger age group, possibly because at an older age it becomes more difficult to find another job. No practically-significant differences were obtained for gender, culture and service groups, therefore Hypothesis 7 can be partially accepted.

Concerning the threats experienced to the total job, practically-significant changes of medium and large effect were found for the lower-qualified group, below Std. 7, and the higher-qualified groups. The lower-qualified group experiences higher levels of threat to the total job, possibly due to limited opportunities in the labour market for lower-qualified groups and the supply of better-qualified individuals. As indicated in Table 6, no practically-significant differences could be established for gender, culture, age and service groups, implying a partial acceptance of Hypothesis 8.

With regard to powerlessness, Table 6 indicates that there are practically-significant differences of medium effect, between the experience of powerlessness by the lower-qualified group, below Std. 7, and the higher-qualified group. The lower-qualified group indicates higher levels of powerlessness than the higher-qualified groups, possibly due to the leverage that employees have with higher qualifications. No practically-significant differences were obtained for gender, culture, age and service groups leading to the partial acceptance of Hypothesis 9.

A multiple linear regression analysis (R^2) was used to determine the proportion of the total variance of one variable that is explained by another variable (Moore, 1995). The multiple linear regression analysis for this study was done to determine whether wellness components could be predicted by job insecurity used in this study. The multiple linear regression analysis with job insecurity as the independent variable and burnout (MBI Exhaustion, Cynicism), work engagement (UWES total), general health (somatic symptoms, anxiety / insomnia, social dysfunction and severe depression) and social support (SSQ) as the dependent variables were done. The results of job insecurity and exhaustion are indicated in Table 7. Therefore there is a predictive value between all the variables; this leads to the acceptance of Hypothesis 10.

The regression analysis reflected in Table 7 below indicates that the demographic variables contributed (especially qualifications) towards 11% of the variance in exhaustion. An R-value of 0,36 was obtained, which falls above the practical significance cut-off point (0,30) and the model was found to be statistically significant. Upon inclusion of job insecurity, the adjusted R^2 increased by 43%. A practically-significant R-value of large effect (0,75) was obtained. The impact of qualifications disappeared in the second step, implying that the impact of qualifications on exhaustion may well run through job insecurity.

Table 7

Regression Analysis – Demographic Variables and Job Insecurity: Exhaustion

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE				
Model 1: Demographic variables				
R: 0,36	Source of variation	*df*	Sum of	Mean
R^2: 0,13			squares	Square
Adjusted R^2: 0,11	Regression	5	1033,58	206,71
Standard Error: 5,81	Residual	196	6627,30	33,81
	$F = 6,11$ $p = 0,000$			
Model 2: Demographic variables and job insecurity				
R: 0,75	Source of variation	*df*	Sum of	Mean
R^2: 0,57			squares	Square
Adjusted R^2: 0,54	Regression	10	4316,61	431,66
Standard Error: 4,17	Residual	186	3240,79	17,42
	$F = 24,77$ $p = 0,000$			

VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION					
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	B	SEB	Beta	*t*	*P*
Gender	0,00	0,06	0,06	0,07	0,93
Culture	0,07	0,07	1,03	1,08	0,27
Age	-0,10	0,10	-0,82	-0,97	0,33
Qualifications	-0,42	0,08	-1,94	-5,12	0,00*
Tenure	-0,07	0,11	-0,43	-0,65	0,51
Gender	0,00	0,05	0,03	0,05	0,95
Culture	-0,01	0,05	-0,24	-0,33	0,73
Age	-0,13	0,07	-1,14	-1,84	0,06
Qualifications	-0,12	0,07	-0,56	-1,75	0,08

Tenure	0,07	0,08	0,41	0,80	0,42
Job Features Importance	-0,07	0,05	-0,04	-1,43	0,15
Job Features Threats	0,05	0,07	0,02	0,79	0,42
Total Job Importance	0,25	0,06	0,31	3,71	0,00*
Total Job Threats	0,54	0,09	0,52	5,93	0,00*
Powerlessness	0,02	0,07	0,08	0,31	0,75

* Statistically significant $p \leq 0,05$

Next, a regression analysis was done on job insecurity and cynicism as the dependent variable. The results are reported in Table 8.

The regression analysis reflected in Table 8 indicates that the demographic variables contributed (especially qualifications) towards 11% of the variance in cynicism. An R-value of 0,37 was obtained, which falls above the practical significance cut-off point (0,30) and the model was found to be statistically significant. Upon inclusion of job insecurity, the adjusted R^2 increased by 48%. A practically-significant R-value of large effect (0,78) was obtained. The impact of qualifications disappeared in the second step, implying that the impact of qualifications on cynicism may well run through job insecurity.

Table 8

Regression Analysis – Demographic Variables and Job Insecurity: Cynicism

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE				
Model 1: Demographic variables				
R: 0,37	Source of variation	*df*	Sum of	Mean
R^2: 0,13			squares	Square
Adjusted R^2: 0,11	Regression	5	1064,68	212,93
Standard Error: 5,82	Residual	196	6659,53	33,97
	$F = 6,26$ $p = 0,000$			
Model 2: Demographic variables and job insecurity				
R: 0,78	Source of variation	*df*	Sum of	Mean
R^2: 0,61			squares	Square
Adjusted R^2: 0,59	Regression	10	4545,07	454,50
Standard Error: 3,92	Residual	186	2861,24	15,38
	$F = 29,54$ $p = 0,000$			

VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION					
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	B	SEB	Beta	*t*	*P*
Gender	0,00	0,06	0,11	0,13	0,89
Culture	0,06	0,07	0,88	0,92	0,35
Age	0,07	0,10	-0,64	-0,75	0,45
Qualifications	-0,44	0,08	-2,04	-5,37	0,00*
Tenure	0,13	0,11	-0,74	-1,11	0,26
Gender	-0,00	0,04	-0,03	-0,05	0,95
Culture	-0,04	0,05	-0,60	-0,89	0,37
Age	-0,10	0,07	-0,85	-1,46	0,14
Qualifications	-0,09	0,06	-0,41	1,35	0,17
Tenure	0,02	0,08	0,11	0,23	0,81
Job Features Importance	-0,02	0,05	-0,01	-0,50	0,61
Job Features Threats	-0,08	0,06	-0,04	-1,20	0,22
Total Job Importance	0,15	0,06	0,18	2,36	0,01*
Total Job Threats	0,58	0,08	0,55	6,72	0,00*
Powerlessness	0,01	0,07	0,05	0,19	0,84

* Statistically significant $p \leq 0,05$

Table 9

Regression Analysis – Demographic Variables and Job Insecurity: Work Engagement

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE				
Model 1: Demographic variables				
R: 0,37	Source of variation	df	Sum of	Mean
R^2: 0,14			squares	Square
Adjusted R^2: 0,12	Regression	5	18145,8	3629,15
Standard Error: 23,50	Residual	196	108244,0	552,26
	F = 6,57 p = 0,000			
Model 2: Demographic variables and job insecurity				
R: 0,79	Source of variation	df	Sum of	Mean
R^2: 0,63			squares	Square
Adjusted R^2: 0,61	Regression	10	77412,6	7741,26
Standard Error: 15,48	Residual	186	44604,6	239,81
	F = 32,28 p = 0,000			

VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION					
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	B	SEB	Beta	t	P
Gender	-0,03	0,06	-2,01	-0,58	0,38
Culture	-0,09	0,07	-5,27	-1,37	0,17
Age	-0,01	0,10	-0,37	-0,10	0,91
Qualifications	0,45	0,08	8,45	5,51	0,00*
Tenure	0,22	0,11	5,22	1,94	0,05
Gender	-0,03	0,04	-1,72	-0,74	0,45
Culture	-0,00	0,05	-0,26	-0,09	0,92
Age	0,00	0,06	0,17	0,07	0,93
Qualifications	0,09	0,06	1,79	1,49	0,13
Tenure	0,08	0,08	1,98	1,04	0,29
Job Features Importance	0,05	0,05	0,11	0,99	0,31
Job Features Threats	0,14	0,06	0,29	2,10	0,03*
Total Job Importance	-0,00	0,06	-0,03	-0,10	0,91
Total Job Threats	-0,60	0,08	-2,30	-7,05	0,00*
Powerlessness	0,05	0,07	0,85	0,84	0,40

* Statistically significant $p \leq 0,05$

A regression analysis was done on job insecurity and work engagement as the dependent variable. The results are reported in Table 9.

The regression analysis as reflected above indicates that qualifications predicted 12% of the variance in work engagement, and the model was statistically significant. Upon inclusion of job insecurity, the R^2 increased by 49%. The impact of qualifications disappeared in the second step, implying that the impact of qualifications on work engagement runs through job insecurity. An R-value of large effect (0,79) was obtained.

A regression analysis was further done on the different subscales of general health, namely somatic symptoms, anxiety / insomnia, social dysfunction and severe depression. The results of somatic symptoms are indicated in Table 10.

The regression analysis reflected in Table 10 indicates that qualifications predicted 11% of the variance in somatic symptoms; the model was also statistically significant. Upon inclusion of job insecurity, the R^2 increased by 37%. The impact of qualifications disappeared in the second step,

implying that the impact of qualifications on somatic symptoms runs through job insecurity. In the second step, the impact of culture on somatic symptoms however became statistically significant. An R-value of large effect (0,71) was obtained.

Table 10

Regression Analysis – Demographic Variables and Job Insecurity: General Health Somatic Symptoms (HA)

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE				
Model 1: Demographic variables				
R: 0,37	Source of variation	df	Sum of	Mean
R^2: 0,13			squares	Square
Adjusted R^2: 0,11	Regression	5	417,82	83,56
Standard Error: 3,64	Residual	196	2603,56	13,28
	F = 6,29 p = 0,000			
Model 2: Demographic variables and job insecurity				
R: 0,71	Source of variation	df	Sum of	Mean
R^2: 0,51			squares	Square
Adjusted R^2: 0,48	Regression	10	1549,87	154,98
Standard Error: 2,78	Residual	187	1447,01	7,73
	F = 20,02 p = 0,000			
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION				
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	B	SEB	Beta	t	P
Gender	0,09	0,06	0,07	0,13	0,89
Culture	-0,00	0,07	-0,08	-0,13	0,89
Age	0,04	0,10	0,21	0,39	0,69
Qualifications	-0,44	0,08	-1,26	-5,34	0,00*
Tenure	-0,20	0,11	-0,74	-1,77	0,07
Gender	0,01	0,05	0,08	0,21	0,89
Culture	-0,12	0,05	-1,01	-2,11	0,03*
Age	0,00	0,07	0,02	0,05	0,95
Qualifications	-0,12	0,07	-0,35	-1,65	0,10
Tenure	0,00	0,09	0,00	0,02	0,98
Job Features Importance	0,00	0,05	0,00	0,01	0,99
Job Features Threats	0,04	0,07	0,01	0,63	0,52

Total Job Importance	0,20	0,07	0,15	2,72	0,00*
Total Job Threats	0,44	0,09	0,26	4,84	0,00*
Powerlessness	-0,13	0,08	-0,29	-1,62	0,10

* Statistically significant $p \leq 0,05$

Table 11

Regression Analysis – Demographic Variables and Job Insecurity: General Health Anxiety / Insomnia (HB)

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE				
Model 1: Demographic variables				
R: 0,40	Source of variation	df	Sum of	Mean
R^2: 0,16			squares	Square
Adjusted R^2: 0,13	Regression	5	527,17	105,43
Standard Error: 3,75	Residual	196	2761,14	14,08
	F = 7,48 p = 0,000			
Model 2: Demographic variables and job insecurity				
R: 0,69	Source of variation	df	Sum of	Mean
R^2: 0,48			squares	Square
Adjusted R^2: 0,46	Regression	10	1607,31	160,73
Standard Error: 2,99	Residual	187	1679,74	8,98
	F = 17,89 p = 0,000			
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION				
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	B	SEB	Beta	t	P
Gender	0,01	0,06	0,09	0,17	0,861
Culture	0,03	0,07	0,31	0,52	0,603
Age	0,07	0,10	0,39	0,70	0,482
Qualifications	-0,47	0,08	-1,41	-5,84	0,000*
Tenure	-0,25	0,11	-0,95	-2,20	0,028*
Gender	0,02	0,05	0,20	0,45	0,647
Culture	-0,07	0,05	-0,62	-1,21	0,227
Age	0,02	0,08	0,14	0,32	0,742
Qualifications	-0,20	0,07	-0,61	-2,65	0,008*
Tenure	-0,07	0,09	-0,28	-0,76	0,444
Job Features Importance	-0,02	0,05	-0,00	-0,40	0,683
Job Features Threats	0,08	0,08	0,02	1,04	0,297

Total Job Importance	0,22	0,07	0,17	2,98	0,003*
Total Job Threats	0,45	0,10	0,28	4,44	0,000*
Powerlessness	-0,04	0,08	-0,11	-0,55	0,576

* Statistically significant $p \leq 0,05$

Table 11 indicates that qualifications predicted 13% of the variance in anxiety / insomnia; the model was also statistically significant. Upon inclusion of job insecurity, the R^2 increased by 33%. The impact of qualifications remained in the second step, implying that the impact of qualifications on anxiety / insomnia does not necessarily run through job insecurity. An R-value of large effect (0,69) was obtained.

Table 12 indicates that qualifications predicted 13% of the variance in social dysfunction; the model was also statistically significant. Upon inclusion of job insecurity, the R^2 increased by 36%. The impact of qualifications remained in the second step, implying that the impact of qualifications on social dysfunction does not necessarily run through job insecurity. An R-value of large effect (0,72) was obtained.

Table 12

Regression Analysis – Demographic Variables and Job Insecurity: General Health Social Dysfunction (HC)

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE				
Model 1: Demographic variables				
R: 0,38	Source of variation	df	Sum of	Mean
R^2: 0,15			squares	Square
Adjusted R^2: 0,13	Regression	5	516,78	103,35
Standard Error: 3,83	Residual	196	2882,88	14,70
	F = 7,02 p = 0,000			
Model 2: Demographic variables and job insecurity				
R: 0,72	Source of variation	df	Sum of	Mean
R^2: 0,51			squares	Square
Adjusted R^2: 0,49	Regression	10	1758,02	175,80
Standard Error: 2,95	Residual	187	1632,34	8,72
	F = 20,13 p = 0,000			
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION				

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	B	SEB	Beta	t	P
Gender	0,02	0,06	0,17	0,30	0,75
Culture	0,05	0,07	0,45	0,73	0,46
Age	0,00	0,10	0,05	0,09	0,92
Qualifications	-0,44	0,08	-1,34	-5,44	0,00*
Tenure	-0,13	0,11	-0,49	-1,13	0,25
Gender	0,04	0,05	0,34	0,78	0,43
Culture	-0,03	0,05	-0,34	-0,68	0,49
Age	-0,02	0,07	-0,14	-0,31	0,75
Qualifications	-0,21	0,07	-0,64	-2,81	0,00*
Tenure	0,01	0,09	0,05	0,16	0,87
Job Features Importance	-0,08	0,05	-0,03	-1,47	0,14
Job Features Threats	0,18	0,07	0,06	2,38	0,01*
Total Job Importance	0,18	0,07	0,14	2,48	0,01*
Total Job Threats	0,57	0,09	0,36	5,79	0,00*
Powerlessness	-0,01	0,08	-0,04	-0,22	0,82

* Statistically significant $p \leq 0,05$

Table 13

Regression Analysis – Demographic Variables and Job Insecurity: General Health Severe Depression (HD)

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE				
Model 1: Demographic variables				
R: 0,39	Source of variation	df	Sum of	Mean
R^2: 0,15			squares	Square
Adjusted R^2: 0,13	Regression	5	660,07	132,01
Standard Error: 4,23	Residual	196	3509,55	17,90
	F = 7,37 p = 0,000			
Model 2: Demographic variables and job insecurity				
R: 0,72	Source of variation	df	Sum of	Mean
R^2: 0,53			squares	Square
Adjusted R^2: 0,50	Regression	10	2205,58	220,55
Standard Error: 3,22	Residual	187	1940,63	10,37
	F = 21,25 p = 0,000			

VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION					
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	B	SEB	Beta	t	P
Gender	-0,02	0,06	-0,22	-0,37	0,71
Culture	0,07	0,07	0,69	1,00	0,31
Age	0,02	0,10	0,17	0,27	0,78
Qualifications	-0,48	0,08	-1,62	-5,93	0,00*
Tenure	-0,27	0,11	-1,14	-2,36	0,01*
Gender	0,00	0,05	-0,02	-0,04	0,96
Culture	-0,01	0,05	-0,17	-0,30	0,75
Age	-0,00	0,07	-0,04	-0,09	0,92
Qualifications	-0,24	0,07	-0,83	-3,34	0,00*
Tenure	-0,12	0,09	-0,52	-1,34	0,17
Job Features Importance	-0,06	0,05	-0,02	-1,17	0,24
Job Features Threats	0,13	0,07	0,05	1,71	0,08
Total Job Importance	0,09	0,07	0,08	1,34	0,18
Total Job Threats	0,59	0,09	0,41	6,05	0,00*
Powerlessness	-0,05	0,08	-0,13	-0,63	0,52

* Statistically significant $p \leq 0,05$

Table 13 indicates that qualifications and tenure predicted 13% of the variance in severe depression; the model was also statistically significant. Upon inclusion of job insecurity, the R^2 increased by 37%. The impact of qualifications remained in the second step, implying that the impact of qualifications on severe depression does not necessarily run through job insecurity. An R-value of large effect (0,72) was obtained.

The regression analysis reflected in Table 14 indicates that demographic variables predicted 1% of the variance in somatic social support; the model was also not statistically significant. Upon inclusion of job insecurity, the R^2 increased by 5%. The model became statistically significant and an R-value of medium effect (0,33) was obtained.

Table 14

Regression Analysis – Demographic Variables and Job Insecurity: Social Support

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE				
Model 1: Demographic variables				
R: 0,18	Source of variation	df	Sum of	Mean
R^2: 0,03			squares	Square
Adjusted R^2: 0,01	Regression	5	1,42	0,28
Standard Error: 0,44	Residual	197	39,26	0,19
	F = 1,43 p = 0,214			
Model 2: Demographic variables and job insecurity				
R: 0,33	Source of variation	df	Sum of	Mean
R^2: 0,11			squares	Square
Adjusted R^2: 0,06	Regression	10	3,87	0,38
Standard Error: 0,39	Residual	187	29,81	0,15
	F = 2,42 p = 0,009			
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION				
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	B	SEB	Beta	t	P
Gender	-0,09	0,07	-0,08	-1,26	0,20
Culture	-0,12	0,07	-0,12	-1,66	0,09
Age	0,11	0,10	0,06	1,02	0,30
Qualifications	-0,00	0,08	-0,00	-0,00	0,99
Tenure	-0,04	0,12	-0,01	-0,34	0,72
Gender	-0,14	0,07	-0,11	-1,95	0,05
Culture	-0,10	0,07	-0,09	-1,34	0,17
Age	0,12	0,10	0,06	1,16	0,24
Qualifications	-0,06	0,10	-0,01	-0,59	0,54
Tenure	-0,02	0,12	-0,00	-0,20	0,83
Job Features Importance	0,02	0,07	0,00	0,34	0,72
Job Features Threats	0,14	0,10	0,00	1,38	0,16
Total Job Importance	0,26	0,10	0,02	2.62	0,00*
Total Job Threats	-0,24	0,13	-0,01	-1,85	0,06
Powerlessness	0,03	0,11	0,00	0,33	0,737

* Statistically significant $p \leq 0,05$

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between job insecurity (as measured by job feature importance, job feature threats, total job importance, total job threats and powerlessness), burnout (as measured by exhaustion and cynicism), UWES (as measured by work engagement), general health (as measured by somatic symptoms, anxiety/insomnia, social dysfunction and sever depression) as well as social support.

Only two of the subscales of the MBI-GS were used in this research, namely exhaustion and cynicism. Construct validity was established for the two factors. The results obtained in this study indicated a one-factor model for the UWES, which supports the findings of Rothmann and Storm (2003). The four-factor model for the GHQ was supported consisting of somatic symptoms, anxiety / insomnia, social dysfunction and severe depression.

Job insecurity was defined in this research by job feature importance, job feature threats, total job importance, total job threats and powerlessness. This is the first time that this job insecurity questionnaire by Ashford and Lee (1989) has been administered in South Africa; therefore no comparative statistical results are available.

Job feature threats indicated practically- and statistically significant correlations with exhaustion and cynicism, indicating that more threats to job features lead to employees being exhausted as well as cynical about their working environment. One possibility can be that employees tend to accept job features as a given when starting in a position, but when the job features are threatened, then it can have an impact on the experience of the employee. Job feature threats also reported a negative practically- and statistically-significant correlation with work engagement as well as general health, indicating that employees tend to become less engaged in their work environment when under threat, also placing stress on them, leading to a decrease in general health. This finding is supported by the study of Human (2005) who found a correlation of practically- and statistically-significance between levels of job insecurity and high levels of exhaustion and cynicism.

A negative practically- and statistically significant correlation was found between total job importance and exhaustion as well as cynicism, implying that the higher the importance of the

total job, the lower the levels of exhaustion and cynicism. Employees that find themselves in positions, performing the work they enjoy, tend to need less energy to perform these duties due to the importance of the duties, and they enjoy doing them. The enjoyment might also prevent the employee to become cynical about the work that needs to be done. A positive practically- and statistically-significant correlation was established between total job importance and work engagement, implying that the higher the importance of the total job, the more engaged the employee will be, possibly due to the importance of the job and the employee not wanting to loose it. Negative practically- and statistically significant relationships between total job importance and all of the general health subscales were reported, implying that higher importance of the total job can possibly lead to improved general health levels. An assumption can be made that a "happy" employee is a "healthy" employee.

Positive practically- and statistically significant correlations were found between total job threats (subscale of job insecurity) and exhaustion and cynicism (subscales of burnout), indicating that higher threat levels can lead to higher exhaustion and cynicism levels. When a threatening situation occurs, individuals tend to want to defend what they have, possibly leading to higher exhaustion levels and individuals becoming more cynical about their situation. A negative practically- and statistically significant correlation was obtained between total job threats and work engagement, as well as general health, implying that employees are less engaged in their work environment when under threat, and the threat might also cause stress leading to general health problems.

A negative practically- and statistically significant correlation was obtained between powerlessness (reverse scale, indicating powerfulness) and exhaustion as well as cynicism. When an employee feels that he has the power to withstand the threatening environment, it might lead to less exhaustion and cynicism. Powerlessness reported a positive practically- and statistically-significant correlation with work engagement as well as general health, implying that an employee who feels powerful, might be more engaged in his work and experience less ill health.

The regression analysis indicated that job insecurity has some predictive value with regard to the different wellness components researched in this study. Job insecurity was found to hold a

significant amount of predictive value with regard to exhaustion (54%), cynicism (59%) and work engagement (61%). With regard to the general health components, job insecurity had predictive value on somatic symptoms (48%), anxiety / insomnia (46%), social dysfunction (49%) and severe depression (50%). However, job insecurity had very little predictive value with regard to social support (6%).

The study had several limitations, of which reliance solely on self-report measures is one. According to Schaufeli, Enzmann and Girault (1993), the exclusive use of self-report measures in validation studies increases the likelihood that at least part of the shared variance between measures can be attributed to method variance. The size of the sample is also a limitation, specifically the distribution of race groups and the sampling procedure in the present study. In terms of research design, studies in future should focus on longitudinal research, forming a better understanding of the true nature of the relationship between job insecurity and the wellness components namely burnout, work engagement and general health.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study established that the components of job insecurity as used in this study, namely job feature importance, job feature threats, total job importance, total job threats and powerlessness, do have an impact on burnout, work engagement and general health, although no relationship could be established between job insecurity and social support. Further research should, however, be conducted on other biographical variables as well as social support.

South Africa is a multicultural society, but in this study, no practically-significant differences were obtained between the different race groups for the experience of job insecurity; further research in this regard would be recommended.

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CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, conclusions about the literature findings and the results of the empirical study are made. Limitations of the study are discussed and specific recommendations for the organisation, including future research are presented. The value in which this study has added towards industrial psychology as well as its significance will also be elaborated on.

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions are made in the following paragraphs in accordance with the specific literature objectives and the empirical findings obtained in the present study.

3.1.1 Conclusions regarding the specific theoretical objectives

In line with the first specific objective stated in chapter 1, job insecurity, burnout, work engagement, general health and social support were conceptualised from literature.

Job insecurity was conceptualised from literature as reflecting the degree to which employees perceive their jobs to be threatened and feel powerless to do anything about it (Ashford, Lee & Bobko, 1989). It was also found that researchers who have adopted a multi-dimensional definition of job insecurity, argue that job insecurity refers not only to the degree of uncertainty, but also to the continuity of certain dimensions, such as opportunities for promotion (Ashford, Lee & Bobko, 1989; Borg & Elizur, 1992; Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996). It was also found that job insecurity can be seen as a discrepancy between the level of security a person experiences and the level she or he might prefer (Jacobson & Hartley, 1991), and that consequently, job insecurity may also appear in seemingly 'safe' environment arrangements (Kinnunen, Mauno, Nätti & Happonen, 2000), where it may ultimately threaten basic attachments to the organisation such as commitment as well as satisfaction.

Burnout. Literature reflected that burnout as a prolonged response to chronic, emotional and interpersonal stress and is characterised by exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy. According to

Ashford and Lee (1990) burnout is conceptualised as a three-dimensional phenomenon consisting of exhaustion, cynicism and professional efficacy, of which exhaustion is considered to be the most-important dimension that relates to the individual stress aspect of burnout, referring to feelings of being overextended and depleted of one's emotional and physical resources (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Indeed, burnout is a particular, multi-dimensional and chronic stress reaction which goes beyond the experience, being seen as the final step in a progression of unsuccessful attempts to cope with a variety of negative stress conditions (Rothmann, Jackson & Kruger, 2003).

Work engagement. In the literature, work engagement is characterised by energy, involvement and efficacy. Maslach and Leiter (1997) reflected engagement as a positive, fulfillment, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption. In their study, they also indicated that individuals who are engaged are likely to increase their productivity. Schaufeli et al. (2001) described eight characteristics of engaged employees, which are among others: they take initiative and actively give direction to their lives, they generate their own positive feedback as encouragement, they also engage outside their work-life, they have values and norms consistent with those of their employers; they also can become fatigued but experience a positive fatigue (tired but satisfied), etc. In the literature, there are also six areas that contain critical factors that either cause the problems of mismatch and burnout or offer the solutions of a good fit and engagement. These factors contribute to exhaustion or sustain the energy, cause cynicism and produce lack of accomplishment and inadequacy or lead to effectiveness and achievement.

General Health. Literature showed that job insecurity is associated with impaired well-being (Barling & Kelloway, 1996; Hartley et al., 1991). De Witte (1999) and Hartley et al. (1991) reflected that both mental and the physical health tend to decrease as the experience of job insecurity increases. Brodsky (1988) mentioned the four specific characteristics of psychological well-being as follows: subjective and emotional, a state as opposed to a continuous part of who we are, a product of personal endeavour and moving towards desired life goals. Siegrist et al. (2004) indicated that if we observe the variety of functions fulfilled by employment in advanced societies, employment continues to play an important role in the health and well-being of adults.

De Witte (1999) added by reflecting that the perception that the current job might be lost reduces well-being, as work constitute the key to social participation and recognition.

Social Support. Literature reflected that social support has an important effect on health and well-being (Albrecht & Adelman, 1984; Gore, 1981; House, 1981; Leavy, 1983; Kessler, Prince & Wortman, 1985). Fulisier et al. (1986) mentioned that social support has generally been found to have a positive effect on health outcomes. However, they have also mentioned that it was recently suggested that the existence of these benefits is independent of the source of support and the gender of the individual receiving the support. Other research evidence had suggested that social support would diminish the experience of job insecurity (Armstron-Stassen, 1993) and lower its negative impact on well-being and work attitudes as well (Lim, 1996).

The research centred on social support dealt with the psychological and functioning of resources. Like control at work, social support is found to have a moderating influence on the relation between stress at work and different kinds of strain (Jackson 1992).

3.1.2 Conclusions regarding the specific empirical objectives

The objectives and the resultant findings of the empirical research are summarised as follows:

Regarding the MBI-GS, only two factors were used in this research, namely exhaustion and cynicism. Construct validity was established for the two factors. The results obtained in this study indicated a one-factor model for UWES, which supports the findings of Rothmann and Storm (2003).

JII was defined in this study by job feature importance, job feature threats, total job importance, total job threats and powerlessness. This is the first time that this job insecurity questionnaire by Ashford and Lee (1989) has been administered in South Africa; therefore no comparative statistical results are available. The findings in this regard indicated that more threats to job features lead employees being exhausted as well as cynical about their working environment.

Regarding MANOVA and ANOVA analyses, findings indicated that statistically-significant differences obtained were found between the job insecurity experienced for qualification, age and years' service, but not for any other categories, gender and culture group.

The analysis of Pearson correlations in this study indicated no practically- or statistically-significant correlations with job features importance.

The regression analysis indicated that job insecurity has some predictive value with regard to the different wellness components researched in this study.

3.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The following limitations can be identified in this study:

- Participants were not required to identify themselves and consequently not all questionnaires were returned, therefore it could not be determined which questionnaires were outstanding. The total population in this regard was 500, but only 209 questionnaires were received.

- The research group consisted of the employees from the business unit of an electricity organisation only, and therefore the possibility of a specific sub-culture within the whole generation division of electricity organisation influencing responses, is possible.

- Fear that information could be used against participants, although they were not required to identify themselves, haste in some instances to complete the questionnaires due to time constraints, might have had an impact on results.

- The study population was imbalanced in terms of race, whereas stratified random sampling may have been a more appropriate selection technique so as to ensure equal representation.

- The diversity of participants possibly could have influenced the results of research but further research is necessary to establish this observation.

- Consideration must also be given to the lack of longitudinal data, which is necessarily to match the dynamic character of job insecurity in order to be able to estimate its direct and moderated effects.

- As reflected in the study, job insecurity does not only stem from fear of losing the job, but it also explains the inequalities in the reward distribution systems, loss of promotional prospects, etc. Therefore, the Job Insecurity Survey Inventory in this regard is insufficient as

it only focuses on losing the job, and regards other sources of job insecurity as proposed by the multi-dimensional view.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.3.1 Recommendations for the organisations

Having organisational changes such as downsizing and restructuring, management should create an open-communication type of environment in order to establish trust relationship with employees. This can eliminate feelings of insecurity, and can give survivors of work change a sense of control over the situation.

Employees also appreciate more freedom in their jobs. By imposing more restrictions on how employees can perform their job, management will only be stifling any creativity on the employee's side.

Management and employees' skills levels must be developed in order to enable them to identify the emotional exhaustion before burnout comes into effect as well as effects of job insecurity. Therefore interventions should be implemented to combat the prevalence of both job insecurity and burnout.

Support services that can provide security feelings, must be available for employees and give them opportunity to discuss their problems and be assisted. Therefore it is important to have support from significant others during stressful times. Counselling services by psychologists or/and psychiatrist should also assist employees experiencing excessive stress and ongoing mental health.

Acknowledging good performance is also a very important instrument to enhance employees' effectiveness. According to Wevers and Steyn (2002) if employees receive acknowledgement for work well done, they will feel positive about themselves and will strive to maintain and even improve.

3.3.2 Recommendations for future research

The relationship between job insecurity, burnout, work engagement, general health and social support must be researched further in other South African organisations. This will ensure a meaningful South African job insecurity database being implemented. Research on these constructs must also take place together with the use of more developed measures of job insecurity, general health and social support.

For future research it is recommended that research be repeated using a longitudinal design where the sample of respondents are interviewed more than once in order to determine the direction and extent of change for individual respondents.

Job insecurity, general health and social support should be investigated in relation to other work outcomes such as productivity and turnover.

The effects that the implementation of legislative measures such as the employment equity bill, has on the job security perceptions of those affected, could prove valuable for future research.

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