

Special Issue on the Impact of Job Insecurity on Job Performance

Special issue call for papers from Career Development International

Paper submission deadline: 30th April 2018

Guest Editors

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Organizations today are in a constant flux of change. Change is important for any organization because, without change, organizations may lose their competitive edge and fail to meet performance benchmarks. At the employee level, however, changes oftentimes evoke feelings of job insecurity. Felt job insecurity concerns the “subjectively experienced anticipation of a fundamental and involuntary event related to job loss” (Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, 2002, p. 243). Felt job insecurity has traditionally been seen as a “hindrance stressor” – an undesirable work-related demand that interferes with work achievements (Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2000). The downsides of felt job insecurity have been widely documented (Cheng & Chan, 2008; Sverke et al., 2002): It deteriorates job attitudes, such as job satisfaction and commitment, and simultaneously impedes well-being and health. The effects of felt job insecurity for job performance, however, are far less straightforward.

The majority of studies point to a negative relationship between felt job insecurity and job performance (for meta-analyses see, Cheng & Chan, 2008; Gilboa, Shirom, Fried, & Cooper, 2008); others have found no significant relationship (e.g., Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989; Loi, Ngo, Zhang, & Lau, 2011); and still others have found a positive relationship (Probst, 2002; Probst, Stewart, Gruys, & Tierney, 2007). Some attempts have been made to explain these inconsistent findings. One route with building evidence is that the relationship is curvilinear rather than linear (Lam, Liang, Ashford, & Lee, 2015; Probst, Gailey, Jiang, & López Bohle, in press; Selenko, Mäkikangas, Mauno, & Kinnunen, 2013). Another route concerns the impact of moderating variables (Probst et al., in press; Selenko et al., 2013; Schreurs, van Emmerik, Guenter, & Germeys, 2012; Wang, Lu, & Siu, 2015). Moderators come in two broad categories: personal resources (e.g., optimism) and organizational resources (e.g., perceived organizational/supervisory support). Yet a third route concerns potential

competing mediators: felt job insecurity may be a stressor that depletes energy and engagement which then negatively affect job performance, yet it could also challenge employees to excel to keep their job (Staufenbiel & König, 2010).

Despite the progress made, our understanding of when and how felt job insecurity influences job performance is still far from complete. Studies in the realm of job insecurity research have traditionally borrowed theories and insights from related fields, social exchange dynamics and general stress and appraisal theories in particular: a shared feature is the assumption of overall negative effects associated with felt job insecurity, also in terms of job performance. Comparatively little theory-building has concerned aspects that may elicit better performance, in particular aspects related to job preservation motivation (Shoss, *in press*). Such motivation may serve individual interest, collective interest or both. Job preservation motivation serves individual interest for example when individuals perform well to fit in better, to fortify their position in the organization and ultimately to save their own job, perhaps even at the expense of colleagues. Or employees may excel to signal their worth to future employers. Job preservation motivation may also serve collective interest, for example when teams excel and thus enhance team and firm performance to reduce the need for layoffs. A potential fruitful avenue for research could be to probe the balance of negative and potential positive effects and the associated underlying dynamics in greater detail with a view on theory-building.

Another factor that is holding back the field is a systematic account of different facets of job performance, most notably task performance, organizational citizenship behaviour and counterproductive work behaviour (Harari, Reaves, & Viswesvaran, 2016; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). A plausible assumption is that the effect of felt job insecurity differs according to the strategic value employees attach to specific facets of performance. For example, employees may feel that some performance behaviors are more relevant to job preservation than others: making a good impression to authority and “standing out of the pack” may be more effective than working diligently without anyone noticing. In this respect, some authors have connected felt job insecurity and impression management, and successfully so (e.g., Huang et al., 2013), but the link with job preservation motives and different facets of job performance need to be demonstrated. Another plausible assumption is that felt job insecurity may increase contraproductive work behaviour as a way of revenge or to express frustration (e.g., De Cuyper, Baillien, & De Witte, 2013), or instead increase more positive work behaviour as a way of job preservation. The conditions that trigger those seemingly conflicting responses have not yet been probed in much detail. To advance our knowledge it appears important to not account for the type of job performance, but also to include the theoretical mechanisms, mediators and moderators, that explain the link between felt job insecurity and job performance.

The field is also plagued by various methodological issues. Most studies have used a cross-sectional design or only investigated the short-term effects of felt job insecurity. Accordingly, we know very little about the cumulative or long-term effects of felt job insecurity (Probst et al., *in press*) which could also indirectly affect performance. Also, very few studies have used objective performance indicators, and the use of other-rated performance indicators is still exception rather than rule. Hence, the use of rigorous research designs circumventing endogeneity-related problems (Antonakis, Bendahan, Jacquart, & Lalive, 2014) may greatly advance our understanding of the relationship between felt job insecurity and job performance. Along similar lines, most studies concern individual job performance, while comparatively little is known about felt job insecurity in relation to team or organization performance.

Our main aim in this Special Issue is to draw together a collection of high quality papers investigating the impact of felt job insecurity on job performance. Submitted papers might adopt within-person and between-person level of analysis, but preferably have a longitudinal or time-lagged design. Suggested themes might relate to the lacunae identified above, including:

- Theoretical mechanisms in the form of mediators that account for the relationship between felt job insecurity and job performance. One example is the simultaneous influence of job preservation motives and associated impression management, social exchange and stress mechanisms.
- Moderators that may explain the inconsistent findings on the relationship between felt job insecurity and performance. Moderators can be tied to the individual or can be embedded in the environment.
- The impact of felt job insecurity on different indicators of performance. These indicators may concern task performance, organizational citizenship behaviour and contraproductive behaviour but also indicators of job performance that are less common in the realm of job insecurity research: examples are innovative work behaviour, creativity, and proactivity.
- The impact of felt job insecurity on job performance as rated by different sources (e.g., self-rated, supervisor-rated, peer-rated) or at different levels (e.g., individual, team, organization).
- The use of performance as a strategic tool to reduce job insecurity.
- The impact of felt job insecurity on job performance both on the short-term (daily) and on the long term.

We welcome conceptual, theoretical, qualitative or quantitative papers. Contributions should report original research that is not under consideration at any other journal. This call for papers is open and competitive, and all submitted papers will be subjected to anonymous review by referees with expertise in the field.

Review process

Submitted papers will be subject to a double-blind review process and will be evaluated by the Guest Editors and expert reviewers. Authors should prepare their manuscripts for blind review.

Authors are encouraged to submit a structured abstract (objective, method, results, and conclusion) by December, 15 to receive feedback from the Guest Editors. The deadline for submissions of full papers is 1st April, 2018.

Please submit enquiries to Nele De Cuyper: nele.decuyper@kuleuven.be

Submissions should be made through ScholarOne Manuscripts:

<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/cdi>

Specific details on the format for submitted manuscripts can be found at the journal's website: <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/info/journals/cdi/cdi.jsp>

Please direct any general questions about the journal or any administrative matters to the Editor, Professor Jim Jawahar (jimoham@ilstu.edu)

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