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Examining occupational self-efficacy, work locus of control and communication as moderators of the job insecurity–job performance relationship

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831X09358629>

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ZORA URL: <https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-34814>

Journal Article

Accepted Version

Originally published at:

König, Cornelius J; Debus, Maike E; Haeusler, S; Lendenmann, N; Kleinmann, Martin (2010). Examining occupational self-efficacy, work locus of control and communication as moderators of the job insecurity–job performance relationship. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 31(2):231-247.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831X09358629>

Running head: JOB INSECURITY & PERFORMANCE

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This preprint version may not exactly replicate the final version – see also <http://eid.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/31/2/231>

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Abstract

Employees' performance has been shown to be moderately hampered by job insecurity. Based on conservation of resources theory, the study examined whether three possible resources (occupational self-efficacy, work locus of control, and communication) moderate the negative job insecurity-performance relationship. Analyses of a large Swiss dataset revealed two significant interaction effects: The higher job insecurity, the less influence work locus of control and perceived communication exert on the job insecurity-performance relationship. This suggests that work locus of control and perceived communication may be resources that can only act beneficially in a situation of low job insecurity.

Word count: 95

Keywords: job security – buffer variable – conservation of resources theory – organizational citizenship behavior – in-role behavior

Occupational Self-Efficacy, Work Locus of Control and Communication as Moderators of the
Job Insecurity-Job Performance Relationship

Job insecurity has become a 'hot topic' in work and organizational psychology during the last 20 years, and has recently been termed "one of the most important stressors in contemporary working life" (De Cuyper, Bernhard-Oettel, Berntson, De Witte, & Alarco, 2008, p. 493). Due to the upsurge of mergers and acquisitions, restructuring and related methods of adapting to the globalizing market (Hirsch & De Soucey, 2006), more and more people are feeling uncertain about the future existence of their jobs (Burchell, 2002). Job insecurity has been defined in numerous ways, such as a person's "expectations about continuity in a job situation" (Davy, Kinicki, & Scheck, 1997, p. 323) or the "perception of a potential threat to continuity in his or her current job" (Heaney, Israel, & House, 1994, p. 1431). What is inherent in all of these definitions is that job insecurity is a subjective phenomenon, with the subjectivity deemed to be a "cornerstone in most psychological definitions of the construct" (Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, 2002, p. 243).

Especially from the perspective of organizational success, job insecurity and its effects on performance at work appear relevant (cf. Reisel, Chia, & Maloles, 2005). Indeed, two recent meta-analyses on job insecurity (Cheng & Chan, 2008; Gilboa, Shirom, Fried, & Cooper, 2008) established a negative relationship between job insecurity and performance. Cheng and Chan (2008) found a significant negative relationship of $\rho = -.21$ between job insecurity and performance. Gilboa et al. (2008) found a similarly negative relationship between job insecurity and two performance measures (self-rated performance, $\rho = -.18$, and general performance, $\rho = -.19$, with general performance being a composite measure taking into account the intercorrelations among the source-specific measures included in it). Although none of the meta-analyses differentiated between in-role behavior (i.e., the required behavior of the job, Katz, 1964) and organizational citizenship behavior (i.e., a behavior that goes beyond what is expected and is in support of the organization, OCB, Organ, 1988),

primary studies (e.g., Armstrong-Stassen, 2005; King, 2000; Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996) show that job insecurity is often negatively related to both performance dimensions. What is more, the negative relationship between job insecurity and performance has also been supported on an organizational level (e.g., Reisel et al., 2005; Reisel, Chia, Maloles, & Slocum, 2007).

As job insecurity hampers performance at work, it becomes important for organizations to know which factors might buffer the negative effects of job insecurity, that is, what might be potential moderators in the job insecurity-performance relationship (see also Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, 2006). Hence, the aim of this study is to identify buffer variables on the relationship between job insecurity and two performance dimensions, namely task performance and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB, as a type of contextual performance). Several studies have hitherto investigated buffering variables in the relationship between job insecurity and typical strain variables such as psychological well-being, mental health, and tension (e.g. Näswall, Sverke, & Hellgren, 2005; Orpen, 1994). However, moderator studies have not focused on job performance as the central outcome variable. We use Hobfoll's (1989) conservation of resources (COR) theory to argue that occupational self-efficacy, work locus of control, and perceived communication might exert such a buffering effect.

Theoretical background

The negative relationship between job insecurity and performance can be explained in the light of COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989). The theory argues that people “strive to retain, protect, and build resources and that what is threatening to them is the potential or actual loss of these valued resources” (p. 516). Strain reactions occur if people experience (a) the threat of resource loss, (b) actual resource loss or (c) a lack of resource gain after resource investment. In COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), resources are “objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual or that serve as a means for attainment of these objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies” (p. 516).

According to Hobfoll (1989), employment is such a resource; hence, if a person feels that his or her job is threatened, he or she is likely to experience strain symptoms. Generally, when people feel a resource threat, an actual resource loss or a lack of resource gain, they strive to minimize net loss of resources (Hobfoll, 1989). In the case of job insecurity, people feel a threat to their highly valued resource of employment and therefore might withdraw from activities that further demand their resources. On the one hand, this behavior might impact task performance. People might try to minimize effort investment in any tasks at work they have to do and rather switch to activities that are less resource demanding. Possibly, they gossip, complain or search for a new job while at work; in sum, people may at best partly refrain from doing what is expected from them. On the other hand, if people reduce their efforts in their regular work behavior, they are very likely to also reduce investments in any type of contextual performance, such as OCB. Being altruistic and showing helping and supporting behaviors requires additional resource investment which people might possibly try to minimize in a situation when their job is in danger (Kaplan, Bradley, Luchman, & Haynes, 2009). Since it has been shown that both task performance and OCB require considerable resource investment (Binnewies, Sonnentag, & Mojza, in press), one might easily assume that in a situation where there is already a threat of resource loss (i.e., job insecurity), people refrain from investing their left resources such as energy into high performance.

However, if people face a situation of a threat to one of their resources or a resource loss, they are not solely helpless. Hobfoll (1989) argued that there are personal resources that have a stress resistance effect. In other words, such resources have the potential to buffer the loss effect of other resources. In the job insecurity-performance relationship, we assume that self-efficacy and locus of control have such a buffering effect

In 1977, Bandura introduced the concept of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977a, 1977b), and defined it as an individual's confidence or belief in his or her ability to successfully fulfill

a task. He described it as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance” (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). According to COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), self-efficacy can be considered an important personal resource aiding stress resistance. Self-efficacy can affect how people act when they feel any of their resources is in danger, when they encounter resource loss or a lack of resource gain. Self-efficacy determines how much effort people will invest and how long they may persist when dealing with obstacles (Bandura, 1977a). The same might apply to the threatening situation of job insecurity: The higher people’s self-efficacy, the less strain they experience when they feel their job is in danger. This means that high self-efficacy may have a buffering effect on the job insecurity-performance relationship. Hence, people with high self-efficacy may not be hampered in their performance to the same extent as people with low self-efficacy when faced with job insecurity. The moderating effect of self-efficacy in the context of resource loss has been shown in many studies (see also Betoret, 2006; Jex & Bliese, 1999; Matsui & Onglatco, 1992; Siu, Spector, Cooper, & Lu, 2005), but not yet for the job insecurity-performance relationship.

In Bandura’s (1986, 1997) theory, self-efficacy is not considered as a trait, but is instead seen as context-specific (i.e., some people experience themselves as self-efficacious only in some situations). Moreover, studies with context-specific self-efficacy measures have shown higher predictive validity than general measures of self-efficacy (e.g., Lent, Brown, & Gore, 1997). Since the current study takes place in an occupational setting, we focus on a context-specific form of self-efficacy, namely occupational self-efficacy, defined as “the competence that a person feels concerning the ability to successfully fulfill the tasks involved in his or her job” (Rigotti, Schyns, & Mohr, 2008, p. 238). On the basis of the findings and arguments mentioned above, we assume the following:

Hypothesis 1: Occupational self-efficacy moderates the relationship between job insecurity and job performance (the higher the occupational self-efficacy, the less negative the relationship between job insecurity and job performance).

COR theory can also be used to argue that locus of control moderates the job insecurity-performance relationship. Locus of control refers to an individual's perception about the underlying main causes of events in his or her life. Put differently, the concept describes whether people think that their destiny is controlled rather by themselves (i.e., internal locus of control) or by outside forces, such as fate or powerful others (i.e., external locus of control, Rotter, 1966). As in the case of self-efficacy, there is a context-specific version of the general concept of locus of control: work locus of control (Spector, 1988)¹. Following Hobfoll's COR theory (1989), people with an external work locus of control might be more severely hampered by the feeling that their employment situation is threatened than people with an internal locus of control. As a consequence, people who cannot counteract the threat of job loss with an internal locus of control might show lower performance than those who possess a high internal locus of control.

What is more, such a moderator effect would be consistent with evidence of the role of locus of control in stress research in general. For example, an internal locus of control was found to buffer the negative effects of work demands (Newton & Keenan, 1990). Concerning research on job insecurity, work locus of control was found to moderate the relationship between job insecurity and mental health complaints (Näswall et al., 2005) and between job insecurity and psychological well-being (Orpen, 1994).

¹ Our conceptualization of context-specific locus of control clearly differs from conceptualizations of control such as in the job demands-control model (Karasek, 1979). Whereas control in the JDC model is framed as a property of the work environment, we conceptualize control as a property of the person, being more or less overt depending on the context.

Hypothesis 2: Work locus of control moderates the relationship between job insecurity and job performance (the higher the work locus of control, the less negative the relationship between job insecurity and job performance).

In his theory, Hobfoll (1989) also defines energies as a resource category, including time, money, and knowledge. Transferred to the organizational context, perceived organizational communication as a form of knowledge can have the same buffering effect as personal resources. Perceived communication is the perception of an organization's flow of information about what is going on in the organization as honest, sufficient, and adequate (see Borg, 1989). Communication plays a central role in achieving good management and is one of the most recommended strategies for reducing insecurity during organizational change (Klein, 1996; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991). Until now, there has only been one study investigating moderating effects of communication when people felt job insecure (Vander Elst, Baillien, De Cuyper, & De Witte, 2010); most of the time, studies have found main effects of communication on the perception of job insecurity. Schweiger and DeNisi (1991) conducted a quasi-experimental study and showed that communication by the organization can help employees deal with insecure situations and prevent them from showing dysfunctional effects. They investigated two units that were set to merge, one which received an official announcement without any further information, and the other which additionally received a monthly newsletter, took part in weekly meetings, and whose employees were able to call a hotline in case of questions. Three months after the merger, the unit without additional communication had significantly higher job insecurity and strain ratings and lower job satisfaction, commitment and performance. Over time, job insecurity in both units rose, but job insecurity values soon stabilized in the unit with additional communication, and performance even rose in the long run. Similarly, M. A. Evans (1999) showed that the possibility of acquiring information about personnel reductions significantly reduced job insecurity and had beneficial effects on job satisfaction and performance (for a similar finding

see Adkins, Werbel, & Farh, 2001). Thus, by providing adequate information, organizations can mitigate the effects of uncertain situations such as job insecurity. If employees are officially informed about what is going on in the company, if they know about the economic situation, rumors are less likely to spread and built up. Hence, people experience a resource gain in the form of knowledge and control and are then better able to compensate their threat of resource loss. In sum, employees who receive adequate information are much less affected by high job insecurity than employees without adequate information. In other words, perceived communication may serve as a moderator in the job insecurity-performance relationship as it counteracts the threat of job loss. Hence, employees who perceive adequate and sufficient information may be less hampered in their performance when feeling highly job insecure as compared to employees who do not receive adequate information.

Hypothesis 3: Perceived communication moderates the relationship between job insecurity and job performance (the better the perceived communication, the less negative the relationship between job insecurity and job performance).

We tested all hypotheses with a sample of Swiss employees. Performance was differentiated into in-role behavior and OCB, following Hoffman, Blair, Meriac, and Woehr (2007). We measured self-rated and supervisor-reported performance in order to overcome the problems inherent in reliance on self-reports (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003; but see Spector, 2006, who argues that this thesis might be overstated).

Method

Participants

Participants were employees at a large Swiss logistics company. Data were collected only at the distribution base in Zurich, which had 668 employees in total. Overall, approximately 20% of all the employees at the distribution base do not have Swiss citizenship and 85% of the employees are male, most likely because many of the tasks required are physically demanding. The age range is between 30 and 50 years, and about a fifth of the

employees are in a leadership position. Many jobs are for unskilled workers, and around 10% of the employees work part-time. At the time of data collection, 14% of participants had been working in the company for less than five years, 18% between five and ten years, and the vast majority, that is 68%, had been working in the company for more than ten years. Participants were working in different fields: 55% in delivery, 15% in the indoor service, 13% in transport, and 8% in sortation. The remainder of participants indicated more than one field.

Coincidentally, shortly before the start of the data collection, it became known that the parent company (a public corporation) planned to convert the legal form of this wholly owned subsidiary company into an (also wholly owned) privatized one. Even though the company assured its employees that jobs would be safe, the privatization plan caused considerable disturbance and the union demanded an official employment guarantee. The union also questioned the lawfulness of the plan, leading the Federal government to ask for a legal review. Only a few days before the deadline of the survey, this review was received, stating that the privatization was not legal.

Employees received two questionnaires (and two pre-stamped return envelopes) from the leader of their unit, one for themselves, and another to be forwarded to their supervisor. A total of 311 employees returned their questionnaire (i.e., a response rate of 47%); of these 311 questionnaires, it was possible to match 273 with the supervisor ratings.

The highest proportion of participants (35.5%) were between 30 and 39 years old, 30.4% were between 40 and 49 years old, 18.5% were between 50 and 59 years old, and 11.2% were between 20 and 29 years old. Participants older than 60 years comprised only 4.2% of the sample. A total of 80.2% of the participants were male and 20.4% held a leadership position. Most of the employees had an organizational tenure of more than ten years (67.7%), 17.6% had a tenure between five and ten years, and 14.4% had a tenure of less than five years. The majority of participants (87.2%) were working full-time.

Measures

We used a Likert response scale ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (7) *strongly agree* for all measures, which we will now describe in detail.

Job insecurity. Job insecurity was measured with three items of the German cognitive job insecurity scale by Borg (1992, cf. also Staufenbiel & König, in press). The items focus on the perception of the likelihood of losing one's job (Borg, 1992), and are as follows: "In my opinion, I will keep my job in the near future", "My job is secure", and "In my opinion, I will be employed for a long time in my present workplace". The items were coded in reverse prior to the analyses.

Job performance. We measured task performance and contextual performance via a self-rating and a supervisor rating. Self and supervisor-rated task performance were assessed with five items by Williams and Anderson (1991), in their German version by Staufenbiel and Hartz (2000). Sample items for the self-rated version are: "I adequately complete assigned duties" and "I meet the formal performance requirements of the job".

OCB was assessed with 11 adapted items of the OCB scale by Williams and Anderson (1991), which we translated ourselves. Feedback from the executives of the company led us change some items. Sample items of the unchanged items are: "I help others who have heavy workloads", and "I take time to listen to co-workers' problems and worries". Concerning the changes, we deleted two items and changed the wording of a further two items. The item "I help others who have been absent" was deleted because the executives stated that work does not allow any postponement in some jobs. We also deleted the item "I take a personal interest in other employees" because executives perceived it as ambiguous. To make the items more suitable for the particular sample, they also suggested changing the wording of two further items. "My attendance at work is above the norm" was changed to "I am less absent from work than my colleagues", and the item "I adhere to informal rules advised to maintain order"

was changed into “I adhere to agreements that are beneficial for the workflow”. Furthermore, we created a separate version for the supervisors.

Occupational self-efficacy. We assessed occupational self-efficacy with the eight-item short form of the German occupational self-efficacy scale by Schyns and von Collani (2002). The short and the long version correlate highly ($r = .95$). A sample item is: “I feel prepared to meet most of the demands in my job.”

Work locus of control. Work locus of control was measured with the Work Locus of Control Scale by Spector (1988) in its German translation by Büssing and Glaser (1998). With a total of 16 items, the scale measures different loci of control (e.g., own performance, chance, other people). A sample item is: “On most jobs, people can pretty much accomplish whatever they set out to accomplish.” Higher scores indicate a more internal locus of control.

Communication. Communication was assessed with four items taken from Borg (1989). We took the following three items from the original version (own translation from German): “I always get the required information”, “I get information about the economic situation of the company”, and “I come to know important issues only through rumors” (reverse-coded). To fit better with the organizational context, the item “I know what is in my responsibility” was changed to “I know what the company expects from me”.

Results

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, zero-order correlations and reliabilities (Cronbach’s alpha) of all studied variables.

Insert Table 1 about here

To test the hypotheses, we conducted moderator analyses with hierarchical multiple regressions according to Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003). After centering the predictor variables, we entered the predictor variable and the moderator in the first step and their interaction term in the second step.

Hypothesis 1 stated that occupational self-efficacy moderated the relationship between job insecurity and job performance. The interaction term did not reach significance in any of the four performance ratings (see Table 2). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 could not be supported.

 Insert Table 2 about here

Hypothesis 2 stated that work locus of control moderated the relationship between job insecurity and the four performance ratings. The interaction term reached significance only when self-rated task performance was the dependent variable ($\beta = -.13, p < .05$, see Table 3). The interaction was different to what we had hypothesized: When job insecurity was low, the relationship between work locus of control and self-rated task performance was stronger compared to when job insecurity was high (see Figure 1).

 Insert Table 3 and Figure 1 about here

Hypothesis 3, stating that communication moderated the relationship between job insecurity and performance, was tested in the same way. The interaction term reached significance only in the case of self-rated task performance as the dependent variable ($\beta = -.13, p < .05$, see Table 4). Again, the interaction was different to what we had hypothesized: When job insecurity was low, the relationship between perceived communication and self-rated task performance was stronger compared to when job insecurity was high (see Figure 2).

Insert Table 4 and Figure 2 about here

Discussion

The goal of the present study was to identify possible moderators of the relationship between job insecurity and job performance. Specifically, we looked at occupational self-efficacy, work locus of control and perceived communication as moderators, whose importance was elaborated in the light of COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989). We proposed that self-efficacy, work locus of control, and perceived communication would each account as resources that buffer the negative relationship between job insecurity (i.e., a threat of resource loss) and job performance and tested these hypotheses for self- and supervisor-rated in-role performance and OCB. The data revealed significant interactions only for work locus of control and perceived communication on self-rated task performance, the direction of which differed from what we had originally supposed: When job insecurity was low, work locus of control and perceived communication were more strongly related to self-rated task performance compared to when job insecurity was high. Apart from this, our regressions revealed virtually no relationships between job insecurity and the performance ratings. However, there were strong relationships between self-efficacy, work locus of control, and perceived communication on the one side and self-rated performance on the other, and weak relationships between the same variables and supervisor-rated performance.

The interactions, although small in size, suggest that the resources locus of control and communication can only act beneficially in a situation of low job insecurity. The higher job insecurity becomes, the smaller the differences in self-rated performance between people with different levels of work locus of control and perceived communication become. This suggests

that the role that work locus of control and perceived communication play in the job insecurity-performance relationship gets smaller as job insecurity increases.

Admittedly, the results suggest something else than what we had hypothesized. However, there is an alternative way of looking at the results that also embeds our findings better into past research on predictors of performance. Testing interaction terms in multiple regression leads to the same statistical result independent from whether variable A is the predictor variable and variable B is the moderator or vice versa (Cohen et al., 2003). Hence, one could also view our results as suggesting that the positive relationship between locus of control or communication and self-rated performance is hampered by job insecurity. This result more clearly aligns with findings on the positive relationships between both locus of control or communication and performance (e.g., Linz & Semykina, 2009; Chen, Silverthorne, & Hung, 2006).

We did not find a significant interaction between occupational self-efficacy and job insecurity on self-rated task performance. It may be that in the context of job insecurity, self-efficacy is not a resource with the potential to compensate for the threat of job loss. If job insecurity is present, self-efficacy as a potential resource seems to play only a minor role.

No significant interactions were found for the other three dependent variables (self-rated OCB, supervisor-rated task performance and OCB). There are four aspects that might provide a reason for this. First, one might assume that the reason why we did not find any significant interaction for supervisor-rated performance measures but did find an interaction for one type of self-rated performance, might be due to common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). However, M. G. Evans' (1985) Monte Carlo study speaks against this argument. Evans investigated the impact of correlated error among dependent and independent variables and demonstrated that an artificial creation of an interaction term is not possible when no such interaction term actually exists. Thus, correlated error terms due to common method variance

may only result in an attenuation of interaction effects. Hence, it is unlikely that the interactions we found were due to common method variance.

Second, in the analyses in which the supervisor-rated performance measures were the dependent variables, downward method bias may account for the non-significant results (Conway, 2002). Downward method bias can occur if researchers are examining a relationship between two constructs that are measured by two methods (e.g., ratings by others and self-report). As each method has its unique sources of error variance, using different methods results in a bias that diminishes all relationships (Conway, 2002).

Third, the job characteristics of the sample may explain why we were unable to find significant interactions, especially for OCB. OCB is a behavior that requires certain situational characteristics or job characteristics to be executed. For example, Cappelli and Rogovsky (1989) showed that job autonomy and job variety are significant predictors of OCB. However, the management of the organization in which we gathered the data told us informally that job autonomy and job variety were not particularly high for most employees. Even though we used this feedback to adapt the OCB measure, we cannot rule out that work characteristics still made the systematic use of OCB rather unlikely.

Finally, specific characteristics of our sample may be another reason why we did not find interactions in the supervisor ratings. Our participants came from a logistics company, and in this line of business, employees are often out of the office. This implies that the supervisors do not have many opportunities to see and evaluate how employees perform, leading to the suggestion that supervisors may not be a highly valid source for their subordinates' performance. This argument is also consistent with the finding that self- and supervisor-ratings showed only a small amount of convergence.

Our results show that there were virtually no relationships between job insecurity and the performance ratings when the three predictor variables were controlled for. There was only a significant (positive) relationship between job insecurity and performance in two of the

twelve regressions that we ran. Although most studies revealed moderate negative effects of job insecurity on performance ratings (e.g., Armstrong-Stassen, 2005), there are also studies that found positive effects (e.g., Probst, Stewart, Gruys, & Tierney, 2007). Our findings might be interpreted in line with Staufenbiel and König's (in press) findings that job insecurity can have both positive and negative relationships with outcome variables such as performance. Although the negative path was predominant in their analyses, it might be the case that the two paths were equally strong in our sample. Further, through the finding of strong relationships between self-efficacy, work locus of control, and perceived communication on the one side and self-rated performance on the other, our results are in line with previous research findings (see e.g., M. A. Evans, 1999, for communication; e.g., Jawahar, Meurs, Ferris, & Hochwarter, 2008, for self-efficacy; e.g., Judge & Bono, 2001, for locus of control).

One finding merits further discussion: The strong negative correlation between job insecurity and the three resources self-efficacy, locus of control, and communication. Two interpretations seem plausible at this point. It might be that job insecurity affects a person's personality, meaning that people can also lose their stress resistance characteristics in face of a severe stressor such as job insecurity. Concerning communication, it might be that in the context of economic difficulties, companies try to maintain a low profile in order to prevent rumors and hysteria to spread among the employees. Looking at the relationships the other way round, it seems reasonable to assume that people with low self-efficacy and an external locus of control are likely to perceive high levels of job insecurity. This idea would be in line with the so-called perception mechanism that has been postulated in relation to negative affectivity (Spector, Zapf, Chen, & Frese, 2000). Spector and colleagues argue that negative affectivity makes people susceptible to experience negative emotions. In our case this would mean that people with an external work locus of control and those with low work-related self-efficacy may experience job insecurity more easily. Concerning organizational communication it might be the case that people who feel insufficiently informed more easily

feel job insecure because, for example, they believe the company hides distressing information from them, which in turn gives them the impression their job might be insecure. However, as our study is cross sectional in nature, we cannot test these interpretations. Although they both appear plausible, longitudinal data is needed to test them.

A possible limitation of our study might be seen in the low reliabilities of some measures, such as self- and supervisor-rated task and contextual performance (Cronbach's alphas were between .65 and .75) and perceived communication (Cronbach's alpha was .62). The reason why the reliabilities were so low may be twofold. First, we shortened scales due to feedback from the executives of the company we surveyed. The OCB scale originally consists of 13 items (Williams & Anderson, 1991), of which we only used 11, and the communication scale by Borg (1989) originally consists of eight items, of which we only used four in this study. Furthermore, based on feedback from the executives, we adapted some of the items in both the OCB and the communication scale in order to make them more suitable for the context of this company. This might also have led to the low reliabilities. Nonetheless, we were thankful for the feedback of the company. If we had left all items as they were, reliabilities might have been even lower due to misinterpretations and problems in understanding by the employees. A further limitation is certainly the cross-sectional design of the study, which did not allow testing causal inferences.

Future research should address the question of why it is generally so difficult to find moderators of the effects of job insecurity. Power limitations due to insufficient sample sizes as one potential factor can probably be ruled out, because other studies that found only limited evidence for moderator effects usually had fairly large sample sizes (e.g., Näswall et al., 2005).

There are some important conclusions and practical implications that can be drawn from our findings. Particularly, the strong positive main effects of self-efficacy, work locus of control, and communication on self-rated performance, and the (somewhat weaker) effects on

supervisor-rated performance indicate that organizations should create environments in which people feel self-efficacious, have a high internal locus of control, and feel well informed.

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Table 1.
Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach's Alphas, and Pearson Correlations.

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Job insecurity	3.09	1.18	.79							
2 Task performance (self-rating)	6.14	0.59	-.10	.73						
3 OCB (self-rating)	5.89	0.56	-.17**	.57**	.65					
4 Task performance (supervisor rating)	6.01	0.59	.08	.14*	.13*	.78				
5 OCB (supervisor rating)	5.61	0.68	.05	.13*	.27**	.52**	.75			
6 Self-efficacy	5.40	0.69	-.24**	.48**	.48**	.11	.04	.79		
7 Locus of control	4.75	0.77	-.40**	.23**	.34**	.08	.20**	.37**	.84	
8 Communication	5.64	0.82	-.36**	.31**	.39**	.08	.15*	.27**	.51**	.62

Note. *N* = 311 (self-rating), *N* = 273 (supervisor rating). Cronbach's alphas appear in italics along the diagonal. OCB = organizational citizenship behavior.

* $p < .05$ (two-sided), ** $p < .01$ (two-sided).

Table 2.

Regressing Performance Measures on Job Insecurity, Occupational Self-Efficacy, and their Interaction.

Predictor Variable	Task performance (self-rating)		OCB (self-rating)		Task performance (supervisor rating)		OCB (supervisor rating)	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
<i>Step 1</i>								
Job insecurity	.02	.04	-.06	-.06	.11	.14*	.06	.06
Self-efficacy	.49**	.49**	.46**	.46**	.14*	.14*	.05	.05
<i>Step 2</i>								
Job insecurity x Self-efficacy		-.04		-.01		-.11		.00
ΔR^2		.00		.00		.01		.00
Overall R^2	.23**	.23**	.23**	.23**	.02*	.03*	.01	.01
Adjusted R^2	.23	.23	.23	.22	.02	.02	.00	-.01

Note. $N = 311$ in self-ratings, $N = 273$ in supervisor ratings. Standardized regression coefficients are shown.

OCB = organizational citizenship behavior.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 3.

Regressing Performance Measures on Job Insecurity, Work Locus of Control, and their Interaction.

Predictor Variable	Task performance (self-rating)		OCB (self-rating)		Task performance (supervisor rating)		OCB (supervisor rating)	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
<i>Step 1</i>								
Job insecurity	-.02	-.03	-.06	-.07	.12	.10	.13*	.13*
Locus of control	.23**	.23**	.31**	.32**	.12	.12	.25**	.25**
<i>Step 2</i>								
Job insecurity x Locus of control		-.13*		-.08		-.08		-.01
ΔR^2		.02**		.01		.01		.00
Overall R^2	.05**	.07**	.12**	.12**	.02	.02	.06**	.06**
Adjusted R^2	.05	.06	.11	.11	.01	.01	.05	.05

Note. $N = 311$ in self-ratings, $N = 273$ in supervisor ratings. Standardized regression coefficients are shown.

OCB = organizational citizenship behavior.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 4.

Regressing Performance Measures on Job Insecurity, Perceived Communication, and their Interaction.

Predictor Variable	Task performance (self-rating)		OCB (self-rating)		Task performance (supervisor rating)		OCB (supervisor rating)	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
<i>Step 1</i>								
Job insecurity	.02	.01	-.04	-.05	.12	.11	.12	.12
Communication	.31**	.32**	.37**	.38**	.12	.12	.19*	.19*
<i>Step 2</i>								
Job insecurity x Communication		-.13*		-.08		-.08		.04
ΔR^2		.02*		.01		.01		.00
Overall R^2	.09**	.11**	.15**	.16**	.02	.02	.04**	.04*
Adjusted R^2	.09	.10	.15	.15	.01	.01	.03	.03

Note. $N = 311$ in self-ratings, $N = 273$ in supervisor ratings. Standardized regression coefficients are shown.

OCB = organizational citizenship behavior.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Figure Captions

Figure 1: Interaction between Job Insecurity and Work Locus of Control Concerning Self-Rated Task Performance.

Figure 2: Interaction between Job Insecurity and Perceived Communication Concerning Self-Rated Task Performance.

Figure 1.

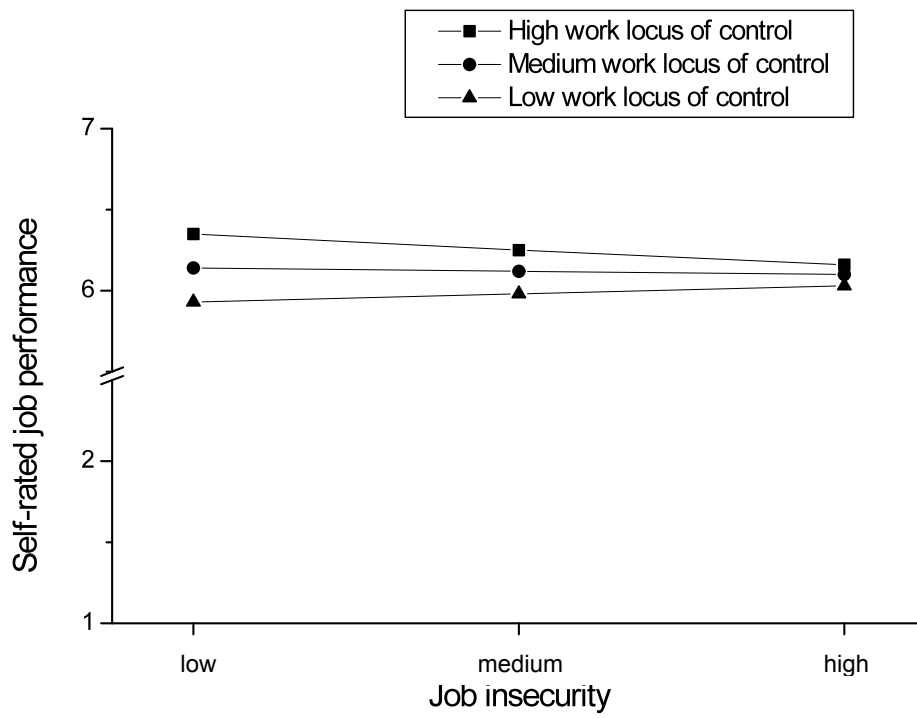


Figure 2.

