

## Job Insecurity and its Consequences in the Workplace: A Systematic Review of Empirical Evidence

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### ABSTRACT

Globalization, automation, and economic crises have intensified job insecurity, making it a critical issue in occupational health. This study presents a systematic review of the literature on job insecurity and its workplace consequences. Using PRISMA and SPIDER frameworks, a Scopus search with the keywords “job insecurity” and “impact” identified 12 relevant journals. The findings indicate that job insecurity leads to mental health problems such as stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout, and negatively affects job performance, productivity, and organizational commitment. These effects are influenced by cultural and industrial contexts, individual traits, and the level of support available. Factors such as locus of control, resilience, social support, and transformational leadership moderate or mediate these impacts. Job insecurity is not merely a labor market concern but a multidimensional challenge requiring proactive, evidence-based strategies to protect employee well-being and maintain organizational resilience in an increasingly uncertain employment landscape.

**Keywords:** *Job insecurity, Organization, Impact*

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### INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, labor market dynamics have undergone significant changes due to globalization, automation, and economic crises. These shifts have led to an increased prevalence of precarious and short-term contract work, contributing to rising job insecurity. This phenomenon has become a primary concern in occupational health, as job insecurity has been linked to various mental health issues, including stress, anxiety, and depression. A study by (Kite, 2005) defines job insecurity as the subjective perception of the possibility of future job loss, which can induce significant psychological distress. Numerous studies indicate a strong correlation between job insecurity and a decline in psychological well-being. A meta-analysis by Kim and von dem (Knesebeck, 2015) found that individuals experiencing job insecurity face a higher risk of developing mental health disorders compared to those with stable employment. Furthermore, research by (Llosa et al. 2018) revealed that job insecurity can lead to chronic stress, contributing to the long-term development of mental health conditions.

The impact of job insecurity on individuals has been demonstrated in various cross-cultural and cross-industry studies. (Cheng and Chan, 2008) found that anxiety stemming from job insecurity is more dominant among precarious workers. This anxiety can escalate into chronic stress if individuals perceive a lack of control over their employment conditions. (Schaufeli, 2016) showed that the mental burden of insecurity significantly contributes to burnout symptoms. (Probst, 2003) added that job insecurity can increase the likelihood of counterproductive behaviors such as tardiness and absenteeism. Disturbances like insomnia, emotional exhaustion, and decreased concentration are also commonly found in workers experiencing prolonged insecurity. Workplace well-being has thus become a strategic issue requiring comprehensive attention. In this context, job insecurity also reduces work engagement, lowers motivation, and erodes organizational commitment. This naturally impacts decreased productivity and organizational stability. Therefore, psychosocial risk management is crucial for maintaining business continuity and employee health.

In recent decades, labor market dynamics have undergone significant transformations due to globalization, automation, and economic crises. These changes have led to an increased prevalence of precarious employment and short-term contracts. Interestingly, several studies suggest that job insecurity can have psychological impacts equivalent to, or even worse than, unemployment. A study by (Burgard et al., 2009), for instance, indicated that individuals experiencing job insecurity reported higher rates of depression compared to those who were unemployed. This might be attributed to the continuous uncertainty and lack of control over their employment situation, which can escalate psychological pressure. Several factors can moderate or mediate the relationship between job insecurity and mental health. For example, social support and effective coping strategies can mitigate the negative impact of job insecurity on psychological well-being. (Probst and Brubaker, 2001) demonstrated that individuals with strong social support tend to be more capable of managing the stress associated with job insecurity. Furthermore, individual factors such as self-esteem and resilience also play a crucial role in determining the extent to which job insecurity affects a person's mental health.

While numerous studies have addressed job insecurity, their findings often lack uniformity due to variations in context, methodology, and population. Some studies highlight that the impact of job insecurity is more pronounced in low-wage and short-term contract jobs. Social and cultural contexts also influence the intensity and perception of job insecurity. For instance, in countries with robust labor protection systems, the effects tend to be milder compared to developing nations. Furthermore, various measurement instruments, such as the Job Insecurity Scale, yield differing results depending on the dimension analyzed. This underscores the need for a systematic screening and review of available evidence. A systematic review will help uncover consistent patterns and generalizable relationships. This approach also allows for the identification of existing research gaps. Consequently, a critical synthesis of relevant and reliable literature is required.

This article aims to conduct a systematic review of the scholarly literature on job insecurity and its various consequences in the workplace. Following a systematic approach as outlined by (Liberati et al., 2009), the literature search process will be conducted through academic databases such as Scopus. (Booth et al., 2016) emphasize the importance of using clear inclusion-exclusion criteria to ensure the quality of the studies examined. In this review, the focus

will be directed towards the psychological impacts (e.g., stress, anxiety), behavioral outcomes (e.g., turnover intention), and organizational consequences of job insecurity. (Tranfield et al., 2003) state that a structured systematic review can help bridge the gap between theory and practice. Additionally, this study will identify factors that moderate or mediate the relationship between job insecurity and these outcomes, such as social support or leadership style. A narrative approach will be used to present the results thematically and comprehensively.

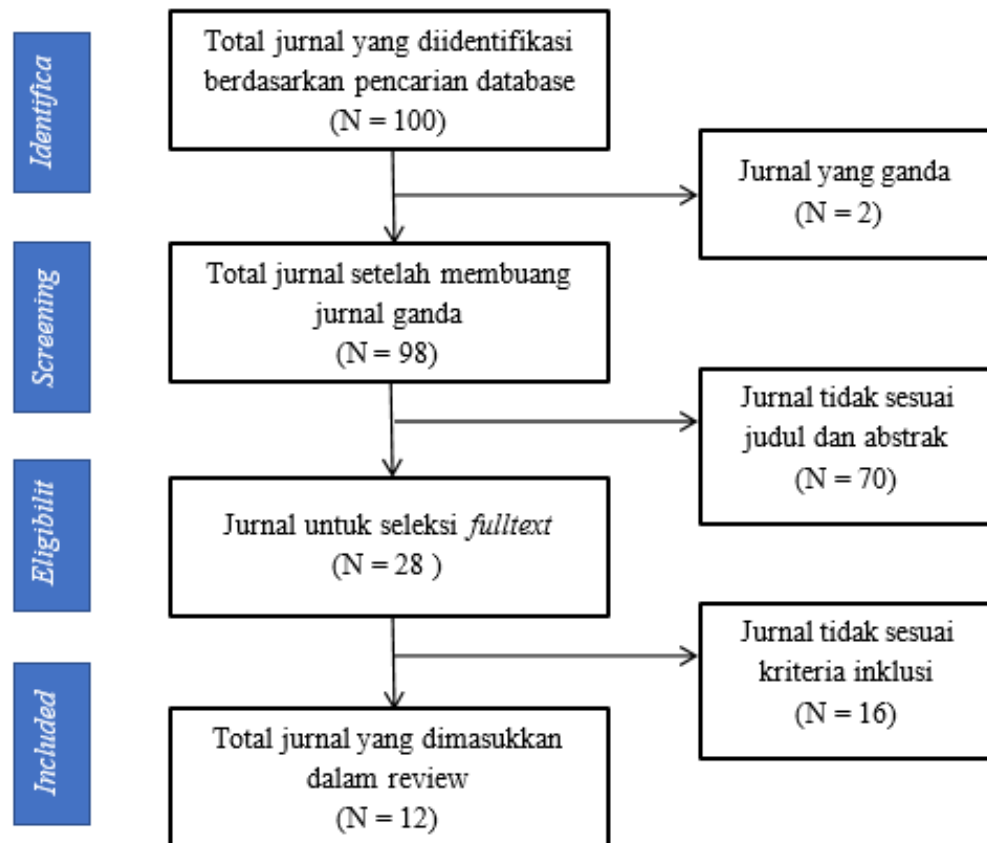
Based on the above explanation, it is important to emphasize that job insecurity is not merely an employment issue, but a multidimensional phenomenon with far-reaching implications for mental health, work behavior, and organizational stability. When left unaddressed, job insecurity can foster chronic psychosocial conditions that are detrimental to both individuals and the institutions in which they work. Therefore, this systematic review aims to identify consistent and relevant patterns of association between job insecurity and its various consequences, as well as protective factors that organizations can optimize. The findings of this review are expected not only to enrich the academic discourse but also to serve as a practical reference for formulating more humanistic and evidence-based employment policies. Thus, managing job insecurity can become an integral part of efforts to safeguard employee well-being and ensure organizational sustainability in the face of an increasingly dynamic labor market.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a systematic review design based on the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to ensure transparency and rigor in the literature review process (Page et al., 2021). This approach was selected because it provides a comprehensive synthesis of findings from quantitative studies that examine the relationship between job insecurity and mental health. The review process begins with the formulation of a systematic review question using the SPIDER framework (Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research Type): *What is the relationship between perceptions of job insecurity and mental health indicators (stress, depression, anxiety, burnout) in quantitative studies conducted among adult workers across various employment sectors?* The next step involves identifying relevant search terms and designing an appropriate search protocol. A comprehensive search list was then developed based on the selected terms. Keywords such as *job insecurity* and *impact* were used to search databases, particularly Scopus.

The next stage involved downloading all the identified journal articles and checking for duplicates using Rayyan. Following the duplication check, the screening process was conducted by reviewing the titles and abstracts. This study selection process was carried out in two phases. First, an initial screening was performed based on the titles and abstracts. Second, articles that passed the initial screening were further analyzed using their full texts. To enhance the efficiency and accuracy of the selection process, Rayyan was utilized as a supporting tool for sorting and marking articles that met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Articles with relevant titles and abstracts were then thoroughly assessed in their entirety. After the selection process from an initial pool of 100 articles, data from each eligible study were systematically extracted into a table format, including the authors' names, research subjects, countries, and key findings. Ultimately, only 12 journal articles met the inclusion criteria, specifically focusing on the impact of job insecurity.

**Figure 1**  
PRISMA Flow Diagram for Journal Selection



## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### RESEARCH RESULT

The impact of job insecurity is neither linear nor universal, as it is highly contingent upon cultural context, industry type, and individual characteristics. In developing countries with weak social protection systems, perceptions of job insecurity tend to be higher, particularly within the informal sector and contract-based employment. According to (Shoss, 2017), individuals with economically disadvantaged backgrounds and limited work experience are more likely to perceive heightened job insecurity. This perception is also shaped by information asymmetry between management and employees, wherein workers feel they have little control over their future within the organization. A study by (Vander Elst et al., 2014) distinguishes two forms of job insecurity: quantitative (the threat of losing one's job entirely) and qualitative (deterioration in job quality, such as status, salary, and autonomy). These two forms produce distinct psychological consequences. Quantitative insecurity is more frequently associated with existential stress and acute anxiety, whereas qualitative insecurity is linked to loss of work meaning and long-term dissatisfaction. Understanding this variation is crucial, as one-size-fits-all approaches to intervention are ineffective. In this regard, context-sensitive strategies tailored to

the specific needs of workers should be prioritized in the development of adaptive human resource policies.

Job insecurity is also influenced by internal individual factors such as locus of control, optimism, and coping style. Individuals with a strong internal locus of control tend to be more capable of facing job insecurity without experiencing significant psychological disturbances (Probst, 2003). They are more likely to perceive change as a challenge that can be managed rather than as a threatening event. In contrast, those with an external locus of control often feel that their working conditions are determined by external forces, making them more susceptible to feelings of helplessness. This is supported by the study of (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt, 1984), which found that perceptions of job insecurity are greater among individuals who adopt passive coping strategies and receive low levels of social support. Therefore, interventions should not solely focus on structural organizational policies but also on strengthening individuals' psychological resources. Enhancing employees' self-efficacy and resilience through training or organizational counseling may serve as a crucial step in mitigating the negative impacts of job insecurity. When individuals are able to regulate their emotional responses and apply adaptive strategies, job insecurity does not necessarily lead to maladaptive psychological outcomes.

There is also empirical evidence that job insecurity can be mediated or moderated by various psychological and organizational variables. For instance, work engagement and perceived organizational support have been shown to buffer the negative impact of job insecurity on employee well-being. According to research by (Mauno et al., 2014), employees who perceive strong organizational support are better able to maintain their commitment and motivation even in unstable work environments. Moreover, a positive supervisor-subordinate relationship serves as a crucial protective factor against the effects of job insecurity. Transformational, participative, and empathetic leadership styles foster trust and psychological safety among employees. Therefore, it is essential for organizations to focus not only on structural stability but also on the quality of interpersonal relationships within the workplace. By cultivating a supportive and inclusive organizational climate, job insecurity can be effectively mitigated and managed. Such interventions are particularly relevant in today's volatile work environment, including during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are several fundamental reasons why the issue of job insecurity warrants in-depth examination. Previous discussions have illustrated how individuals with high perceptions of job insecurity tend to experience declines in psychological well-being, work performance, and organizational loyalty. Furthermore, this section will explore various other adverse consequences that may arise when individuals are unable to manage the pressure stemming from job insecurity. Job insecurity has been associated with increased chronic stress, anxiety, sleep disturbances, and depressive symptoms, all of which significantly affect employees' quality of life. In the workplace, this condition often leads to counterproductive behaviors, such as interpersonal conflicts, reduced trust in management, and reluctance to engage in organizational activities (Shoss, 2017). On the other hand, some studies have also indicated that job insecurity may prompt a tendency toward overworking due to the pressure to retain one's job position (Probst & Brubaker, 2001). This phenomenon is not confined to a single country or region but represents a transnational issue influenced by economic structures, labor regulations, and sociopolitical stability. Therefore, a systematic review is crucial to identify how job insecurity affects workers across different

countries, taking into account variations in socio-cultural contexts, economic conditions, and employment policies. This study aims to synthesize empirical evidence from relevant scientific literature to better understand the range of impacts stemming from job insecurity.

**Table 1:** *List of Consequences of Job Insecurity in the Workplace*

No	Authors	Subjects	Consequences/Impacts	Country
1	Shengxian Yu, Zhong Wang, Wei Cai, and Xiaoxiao Gong	This study involved 316 hotel employees across various departments such as housekeeping, front desk, and food and beverage services.	Job insecurity indirectly affects service performance through two types of cognitive appraisal: Challenge Appraisal and Hindrance Appraisal.	China
2	Adeyale, A. Adekiya	This study did not involve direct empirical subjects but instead reviewed and synthesized findings from various previous studies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Triggers stress, anxiety, and other mental health disorders, while reducing job satisfaction and organizational commitment.</li> <li>• Leads to decreased productivity, increased employee turnover intentions, and creates a tense work environment with poor team collaboration.</li> </ul>	Nigeria
3	Maliha Sarfraz, Jamil Anwar, and S.A. Moshadi Shah	357 employees from the food and beverage industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreased Job Performance</li> <li>• Reduced Subjective Well-Being</li> </ul>	Pakistan
4	Sultana, N., Asaduzzaman, M., Siddique, A. B., Khatun, H., Bari, F. S., Islam, M. N., Tabassum, A., Mondol, A. S., Sayem, M. A., Abdullah, A. Y. M., Hossain, M. P., & Biracyaza, E.	Data were collected through an online questionnaire covering sociodemographic information, lifestyle, and work-related factors, with a sample of 445 humanitarian workers.	Mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and stress.	Bangladesh

5	Akmal Khudaykulov, Zheng Changjun, Bojan Obrenovic, Danijela Godinic, Hussain Zaid H. Alsharif, and Ilimdorjon Jakhongirov	283 white-collar employees in Jiangsu Province, China.	Job insecurity has a positive and significant impact on depression and anxiety among employees. In other words, the higher the perceived job insecurity, the greater the level of depression and anxiety experienced.	China
6	Concetta Russo and Marco Terraneo	This study analyzed data from the 2011 and 2016 European Quality of Life Survey, covering eight European countries.	Job insecurity has a significantly negative impact on workers' mental well-being, regardless of employment contract type. Both cognitive job insecurity (fear of job loss) and labor market insecurity (difficulty in finding new employment) lower psychological well-being scores (WHO-5) and increase the risk of stress, anxiety, and depression.	Italy
7	Giovanni Di Stefano, Gaetano Venza, and Davide Aiello	510 employees from four customer service (call center) departments in telecommunications companies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heightened job-related symptoms (such as stress and fatigue)</li> <li>• Lower job satisfaction</li> <li>• Increased intention to quit</li> </ul>	Italy
8	Anne Richter, Tinne Vander Elst, and Hans De Witte	699 employees from various sectors in Belgium.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased actual turnover</li> <li>• Elevated rumination (negative contemplation)</li> <li>• Disruption in focus and productivity</li> <li>• Job dissatisfaction</li> <li>• Decreased organizational commitment</li> <li>• Strained social relationships in the workplace</li> </ul>	Belgium
9	Bo Yang, Chaoyue Zhao, Yao Zhu, and Xianchun Li	134 full-time employees across various organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job insecurity triggers daily anxiety</li> <li>• Promotes ingratiation behaviors</li> </ul>	China

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heightens risks of deteriorating mental health and productivity</li> </ul>	
<b>10</b>	Zivile Stankeviciute, M. Isabel Sanchez-Hernandez, Egle Staniskiene	211 employees working in Lithuania.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diminished trust in the organization</li> <li>• Disrupted subjective well-being</li> <li>• Inhibited positive organizational dynamics</li> <li>• Potential decline in task performance</li> </ul>	Lithuania
<b>11</b>	Jihao Zhang, Shengnan Wang, Wei Wang, Geyan Shan, Shujie Guo, and Yongxin Li	The study involved 330 nurses from Henan Province, China.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased emotional exhaustion</li> <li>• Rise in presenteeism behavior</li> <li>• Lower psychological well-being</li> <li>• Reduced performance and productivity</li> </ul>	China
<b>12</b>	Dawei Wang, Xiaowen Li, Mengmeng Zhou, Phil Maguire, Zhaobiao Zong, and Yixin Hu	641 employees from four companies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreased employee innovative behavior</li> <li>• Defensive attitudes and withdrawal behaviors</li> <li>• Reduced organizational commitment Lower willingness to take initiative</li> </ul>	China

## DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents a comprehensive overview of the impacts of job insecurity as investigated by various scholars from different countries. Overall, the data indicate that job insecurity has widespread negative consequences at both individual and organizational levels. These impacts range from psychological issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion, as demonstrated by studies conducted by (Adekiya, 2015), (Sultana et al., 2022), (Khudaykulov et al., 2024), and (Russo & Terraneo, 2020). In addition, employees' subjective well-being tends to decline (Sarfraz et al., 2023; Stankeviciute et al., 2021). At the level of workplace performance and behavior, job insecurity has been shown to disrupt productivity and service quality. For example, (Yu et al., 2024) found that job insecurity indirectly affects service performance. Other studies have also reported decreased work performance (Sarfraz et al., 2023), increased actual turnover and turnover intention (Richter et al., 2020; Di Stefano et al., 2020), as well as presenteeism behavior (Zhang et al., 2020). It may also diminish organizational commitment (Richter et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2018) and inhibit employees' innovative behavior (Wang et al., 2018).

Geographical analysis shows that the issue of job insecurity is relevant across diverse cultural and economic contexts, with numerous studies conducted in China (Yu et al., 2024; Khudaykulov et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2018), as well as in countries such as Nigeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Italy, Belgium, and Lithuania. The methodologies employed also vary, ranging from empirical studies involving direct subjects (e.g., hotel employees, humanitarian workers) to literature reviews and secondary data analysis from large-scale surveys. The consistency of findings across these studies underscores the urgency for organizations to address job insecurity in order to safeguard employees' mental health, enhance performance, and foster a positive work environment.

Job insecurity is a global issue that transcends geographical boundaries and industrial sectors, with consistently detrimental effects on both employees and organizations. The synthesis of findings from various studies clearly shows that the sense of insecurity regarding one's employment not only triggers mental and emotional health problems but also undermines productivity, performance, and employee commitment. Therefore, it is imperative for organizational leaders and policymakers to proactively manage the factors contributing to job insecurity and to develop effective strategies to mitigate its impacts. Such efforts are essential to creating a more stable work environment conducive to employee well-being and organizational sustainability.

## **CONCLUSION**

Overall, it can be concluded that job insecurity is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that extends beyond employment aspects, with far-reaching consequences for mental health, individual behavior, and organizational stability. Various studies reviewed from China to Europe consistently demonstrate that the subjective perception of potential job loss or deterioration in job quality can trigger a range of psychological issues, including stress, anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion, and even burnout. In some cases, these impacts have been found to be as severe as, or even more severe than, the experience of unemployment itself, highlighting the chronic psychological pressure faced by workers who feel insecure. At the organizational level, job insecurity is also significantly correlated with decreased service performance, low productivity, increased turnover intentions and rumination, as well as erosion of trust and commitment toward the organization.

Despite the predominantly negative impacts, the complexity of job insecurity lies in its non-linear nature and its dependence on various moderating and mediating factors. Cultural context, industry type, social protection systems, and individual characteristics such as locus of control, resilience, and the availability of social or organizational support (e.g., transformational leadership) have all been shown to influence the intensity and manifestation of its effects. Therefore, this systematic review underscores the urgency of formulating policies and interventions that are not only structural in nature but also attentive to individuals' psychological needs and focused on building a supportive work climate. Consequently, managing job insecurity should be considered an integral part of business sustainability strategies, in order to safeguard employee well-being and maintain organizational stability amid the ever-evolving dynamics of the labor market.

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