Does Perceived Job Insecurity Affect Mental Health? Evidence from the 2021 Chinese General Social Survey

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Introduction

With rising global competition, industrial shifts, and economic recessions, an increasing number of employees face concerns about layoffs. The instability and unpredictability of labor markets impose significant psychological burdens on workers, often resulting in adverse health outcomes linked to job insecurity. Understanding the relationship between job insecurity and health is crucial for informing interventions aimed at improving workers' well-being. Previous research has established a connection between perceived job insecurity and poor health outcomes. After accounting for demographic, socioeconomic, and job characteristics, as well as prior health conditions, perceived job insecurity was found associated with deteriorating health among U.S. workers (Burgard et al. 2009). Similarly, McDonough (2000), using a national sample of Canadian adults, reported that high levels of job insecurity lead to lower self-rated health, increased psychological distress, and increased use of medication for symptom relief.

This study investigates the impact of perceived job insecurity on self-rated mental health using data from the 2021 Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS), a nationally representative sample. Employing structural equation modeling, we examine the relationship between the latent construct of

perceived job insecurity and various measures of mental well-being. We hypothesize that perceived job insecurity will be negatively associated with these mental well-being indicators, suggesting potential detrimental effects of perceived job insecurity on psychological health measures.

H1: Perceived job insecurity will be negatively associated with self-rated mental health.

H2: Perceived job insecurity will be negatively associated with self-rated mental health among different

H3: Perceived job insecurity will be negatively associated with self-rated mental health among different

Data and Methods

Data

CGSS

Measures

job insecurity: how to measure, 5;

mental health: how to measure, 3;

control variables: which variables, 2;

Analytical approach

model; estimator: "WLSMV", why?; which parameter (coeffient); MGA: how to do, which statistics?
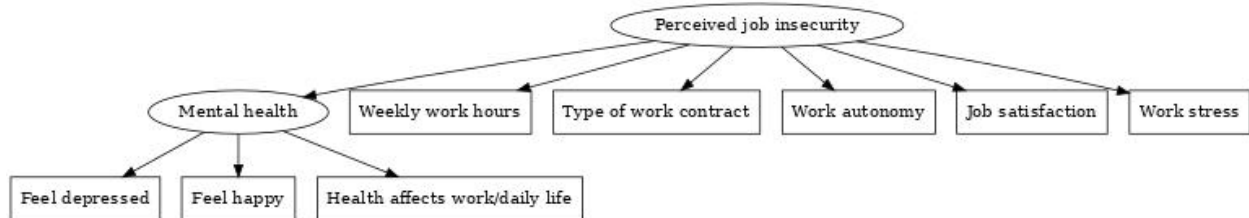

Figure 1: Structural Equation Model for Perceived Job Insecurity and Mental Health

Results

Descriptive statistics

Table 1: Weighted descriptive statistics (N = 993)

Variable	Mean (SD) / Percent
Weekly work hours	49.92 (16.15)
Type of work contract	
Infinite Term	26.0%
Fixed Term	40.5%
No Contract	33.5%
Work autonomy	
Completely Controlled By Self	13.2%
Mainly Controlled By Self	51.0%
Mainly Controlled By Others	22.5%
Completely Controlled By Others	13.2%
Job satisfaction	
Very Satisfied	12.1%
Satisfied	50.0%
Neutral	30.7%

Dissatisfied	5.2%
Very Dissatisfied	2.0%
Work stress	
Rarely	41.0%
Sometimes	32.9%
Often	17.7%
Always	8.3%
Feel depressed	
Always	0.8%
Often	3.7%
Sometimes	20.5%
Rarely	28.6%
Never	46.4%
Feel happy	
Never	0.7%
Rarely	3.1%
Sometimes	13.1%
Often	61.2%
Always	21.8%
Health affects work/daily life	
Always	0.2%
Often	1.8%
Sometimes	9.9%
Rarely	24.7%
Never	63.4%
Sex	
Female	45.4%
Male	54.6%
Party membership	
CCP	13.1%
Non-CCP	86.9%

Job insecurity and mental health

Table 2: Structural equation model results for the relationship between perceived job insecurity and mental health

	Estimate	Std. Err.	z	p
		Factor Loadings		

	Estimate	Std. Err.	z-value	p-value
Perceived job insecurity				
Weekly work hours	1.00+			
Type of work contract	−0.01	0.01	−0.49	0.624
Work autonomy	0.02	0.01	1.88	0.060
Job satisfaction	0.14	0.02	6.75	0.000
Work stress	0.13	0.02	6.85	0.000
Mental health				
Feel depressed	1.00+			
Feel happy	0.64	0.06	11.65	0.000
Health affects work/daily life	0.93	0.08	12.32	0.000
Regression Slopes				
Mental health				
Perceived job insecurity	−0.11	0.02	−6.60	0.000
Fit Indices				
χ^2(df)	102.92			
CFI	0.94			
TLI	0.91			
RMSEA	0.07			
Scaled χ^2(df)	130.71(19)			0.000

+Fixed parameter

job insecurity and mental health among different sex categories

Table 3: Perceived job insecurity and mental health among different sex categories without constraints

	Female		Male	
	Estimate	Std. Err.	Estimate	Std. Err.
	Factor Loadings			
Perceived job insecurity				
Weekly work hours	1.00+		1.00+	
Type of work contract	0.03	0.02	−0.02	0.02
Work autonomy	0.00	0.02	0.03**	0.01
Job satisfaction	0.18***	0.05	0.13***	0.03
Work stress	0.17***	0.04	0.14***	0.03
Mental health				
Feel depressed	1.00+		1.00+	
Feel happy	0.59***	0.07	0.66***	0.08
Health affects work/daily life	0.93***	0.11	0.88***	0.09
	Regression Slopes			
Mental health				
Perceived job insecurity	−0.15***	0.04	−0.10***	0.02

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χ^2(df)	125.32
CFI	0.93
TLI	0.90
RMSEA	0.07
Scaled χ^2(df)	156.47(38)***

[+]Fixed parameter

* $p<0.1$, ** $p<0.05$, ***$p<0.01$

Table 4: Perceived job insecurity and mental health among different sex categories without constraints

	Female		Male	
	Estimate	Std. Err.	Estimate	Std. Err.
	Factor Loadings			
Perceived job insecurity				
Weekly work hours	1.00[+]		1.00[+]	
Type of work contract	0.02	0.02	−0.03	0.02
Work autonomy	0.00	0.02	0.04**	0.02
Job satisfaction	0.16***	0.03	0.15***	0.03
Work stress	0.15***	0.03	0.15***	0.03
Mental health				
Feel depressed	1.00[+]		1.00[+]	
Feel happy	0.60***	0.07	0.65***	0.08
Health affects work/daily life	0.95***	0.11	0.86***	0.09
	Regression Slopes			
Mental health				
Perceived job insecurity	−0.12***	0.02	−0.12***	0.02
	Fit Indices			
χ^2(df)	126.87			
CFI	0.93			
TLI	0.90			
RMSEA	0.07			
Scaled χ^2(df)	154.09(39)***			

[+]Fixed parameter

* $p<0.1$, ** $p<0.05$, ***$p<0.01$

job insecurity and mental health among different party memberships

Table 5: Perceived job insecurity and mental health among different sex categories without constraints

	Non-CCP		CCP	
	Estimate	Std. Err.	Estimate	Std. Err.
	Factor Loadings			
Perceived job insecurity				
Weekly work hours	1.00^+		1.00^+	
Type of work contract	0.00	0.01	−0.03	0.02
Work autonomy	0.02	0.01	−0.03*	0.01
Job satisfaction	0.15***	0.03	0.12***	0.02
Work stress	0.14***	0.03	0.13***	0.02
Mental health				
Feel depressed	1.00^+		1.00^+	
Feel happy	0.69***	0.06	0.25**	0.10
Health affects work/daily life	0.94***	0.08	0.73***	0.21
	Regression Slopes			
Mental health				
Perceived job insecurity	−0.12***	0.02	−0.05***	0.01
	Fit Indices			
χ^2(df)	135.64			
CFI	0.93			
TLI	0.90			
RMSEA	0.07			
Scaled χ^2(df)	154.83(38)***			

$^+$Fixed parameter
* p<0.1, ** p<0.05, ***p<0.01

Table 6: Perceived job insecurity and mental health among different sex categories without constraints

	Non-CCP		CCP	
	Estimate	Std. Err.	Estimate	Std. Err.
	Factor Loadings			
Perceived job insecurity				
Weekly work hours	1.00^+		1.00^+	
Type of work contract	0.00	0.01	−0.04	0.02
Work autonomy	0.02	0.01	−0.03	0.02
Job satisfaction	0.13***	0.02	0.15***	0.03
Work stress	0.12***	0.02	0.16***	0.02
Mental health				
Feel depressed	1.00^+		1.00^+	
Feel happy	0.71***	0.06	0.23**	0.09

Health affects work/daily life	0.98***	0.08	0.63***	0.17
		Regression Slopes		
Mental health				
Perceived job insecurity	−0.09***	0.01	−0.09***	0.01
		Fit Indices		
χ^2(df)	143.75			
CFI	0.93			
TLI	0.90			
RMSEA	0.07			
Scaled χ^2(df)	162.85(39)***			

[+]Fixed parameter

* p<0.1, ** p<0.05, ***p<0.01

References

Burgard, S. A., Brand, J. E., and House, J. S. (2009), "Perceived job insecurity and worker health in the United States," *Social Science & Medicine*, 69, 777–785. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2009.06.029.

McDonough, P. (2000), "Job Insecurity and Health," *International Journal of Health Services*, 30, 453–476. https://doi.org/10.2190/BPFG-X3ME-LHTA-6RPV.