



The role of career adaptability and work conditions on general and professional well-being[☆]

Christian Maggiori^{a,*}, Claire S. Johnston^a, Franciska Krings^{a,b},
Koorosh Massoudi^{a,c}, Jérôme Rossier^{a,c,**}

^a Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research LIVES, University of Lausanne, Switzerland

^b Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Lausanne, Switzerland

^c Institute of Psychology, University of Lausanne, Switzerland

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 25 June 2013

Available online 14 July 2013

Keywords:

Career adaptability

Professional insecurity

Job strain

Professional well-being

General well-being

ABSTRACT

This study, conducted with a representative sample of employed and unemployed adults living in Switzerland ($N = 2002$), focuses on work conditions (in terms of professional insecurity and job demands), career adaptability, and professional and general well-being. Analyses of covariance highlighted that both unemployed and employed participants with low job insecurity reported higher scores on career adaptability and several dimensions (notably on control) than employed participants with high job insecurity. Moreover, structural equation modeling for employed participants showed that, independent of work conditions, adaptability resources were positively associated both with general and professional well-being. As expected professional outcomes were strongly related to job strain and professional insecurity, emphasizing the central role of the work environment. Finally, career adaptability partially mediated the relationship between job strain and professional insecurity, and the outcome well-being.

© 2013 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Several recent studies have examined the impact of the work situation, in terms of job insecurity and/or job strain, on professional well-being (e.g., Bakker, Demerouti, de Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003; Bosman, Rothmann, & Buitendach, 2005). However, the role and the impact of career adaptability resources (Savickas, 1997, 2005) in this process were not previously analyzed. Consequently, the main purposes of the current study were: (i) to evaluate the impact of job insecurity (past and future) and unemployment on career adaptability and well-being-related outcomes, and (ii) to investigate – within employed individuals – the relationships between career adaptability, professional insecurity and job strain and their effects on professional (i.e., job satisfaction and work-related stress) and general well-being (i.e., satisfaction with life and general health).

1.1. Labor market evolution and current context

Today's career and professional landscape is characterized by increasing instability and demands related to productivity, adaptation skills, flexibility and coping with constant uncertainty, fear of being laid off, and difficulties in finding a new and/or adequate job (Kalleberg, 2009; Rudisill, Edwards, Hershberger, Jadwin, & McKee, 2010). As a result of augmented organizational

[☆] This publication benefited from the support of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research LIVES – Overcoming vulnerability: Life course perspectives, which is financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation. The authors are grateful to the Swiss National Science Foundation for its financial assistance.

* Correspondence to: C. Maggiori, Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research LIVES, University of Lausanne, Bâtiment Géopolis-5793, CH-1015 Lausanne, Switzerland.

** Correspondence to: J. Rossier, Institute of Psychology, University of Lausanne, Bâtiment Géopolis-4207, CH-1015 Lausanne, Switzerland.
E-mail address: Jerome.Rossier@unil.ch (J. Rossier).

restructuring, downsizing or mergers, both job insecurity and the numbers of transitions throughout the working life have increased (Coetzee & de Villiers, 2010; Rudisill et al., 2010; Savickas, 2005). In other words, in this professional context employees can expect to more frequently encounter the risk of losing one's job (Fouad & Bynner, 2008) and hence, periods of unemployment (or partial-unemployment). Hence, individuals have an increased necessity to develop and manage their own career paths and the possibility for increased job strain (Rudisill et al., 2010). As defined by the Demand–Control Model (Karasek, 1979), job-related strain results from a combination of low job control or decision latitude and a high level of psychological job demands. Several studies (e.g. Bakker et al., 2003) reported that job resources and control (such as job autonomy) are associated with job involvement and professional satisfaction, whereas job demands influence burnout, health complaints and emotional exhaustion.

Unfavorable conditions at work and employment situations (such as unemployment, underemployment or employment instability) can have negative repercussions on the individuals' personal and professional development, and quality of life (DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1998; Klehe, Zikic, Van Vianen, & De Pater, 2011). Job loss and unemployment are frequently considered as major life stressors (Price, 1992) and their negative effect on well-being, individual functioning and general health is widely documented (e.g., McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005; Wanberg, 2012). In fact, several studies observed increased depressive symptoms, anxiety, social isolation, somatic complaints and lower self-esteem and perceived quality of life for unemployed workers and their families (e.g., McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). Compared to the employed, a number of studies showed that the unemployed reported diminished general well-being in terms of lower life satisfaction and self-esteem and increased anxiety and psychosomatic symptoms (e.g. Körner, Reitzle, & Silbereisen, 2012). However, Körner et al. (2012) point out that currently employed and unemployed individuals face similar labor market-related demands, such as difficulties in finding a new and/or appropriate job, career planning, and a lack of security in career paths. Moreover, the current profile of the employed is very heterogeneous, for example in terms of work activity rate (part-time vs. full-time), underemployment, type of contract (permanent vs. non-permanent), or job security. As a consequence of the growth of non-permanent employment contracts or underemployment situations, the work and career experience – with reference to expectation, career prediction and job security – is more and more varied (Coetzee & de Villiers, 2010). According to De Witte (2005, p. 1), job insecurity is “the perceived threat of job loss and the worries related to that threat” and involves a lack of certainty about the future. Job insecurity, which is considered as one of the most common sources of job stress, affects several indicators of health and both professional and general well-being (e.g., Hellgren & Sverke, 2003; Rosenblatt, Talmud, & Ruvio, 1999). In this regard, similar to unemployment, recent studies highlighted that perceived job insecurity during employment has comparable negative psychological effects (see De Witte, 2005).

In this professional environment that is marked by high job insecurity, career and personal resources – such as regulation skills, adaptability and self-awareness – are essential to face continuously changing environments and to respond to new and frequent demands (Hall & Chandler, 2005). Individuals need to have skills that allow them to quickly adapt to a variety of situations and changes (Savickas et al., 2009), such as job-loss.

1.2. Career construction theory and career adaptability

The Career Construction Theory (CCT) of Savickas (1997, 2005) presents a model for comprehending vocational behavior across life cycles. CCT incorporates and updates previous theoretical contributions and frameworks, such as Super's (1957, 1990), or Holland's (1997) concepts and presents three major components: Vocational personality, life themes and career adaptability (that addresses the coping processes). So, the career adaptability represents the “how” of vocational behavior (“how an individual constructs a career”) (Savickas, 2005). Given the dynamic nature of individuals and their contexts, peoples' adaptability is relative to the person–environment relationship and is in varying states of activation (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Savickas and colleagues (Savickas, 1997, 2005; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) define career adaptability as the “individual's resources for coping with current and anticipated tasks, transitions and traumas in their occupational roles that, to some degree large or small, alter their social integration” (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012, p. 662). Career adaptability is a hierarchical construct comprised of four global dimensions of resources called adapt-abilities, i.e.: concern, control, curiosity and confidence. *Concern* consists of the ability to be aware of and to plan for a vocational future. *Control* reflects the perceived personal control over the vocational future and the belief about personal responsibility for constructing one's career. *Curiosity* reflects the tendency to explore one's environment, for example by exploring possible-selves and future scenarios. Finally, *confidence* is the self-confidence in one's ability to face and to solve concrete vocational and career problems (for example by learning new skills) (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). These psychosocial resources are considered by Savickas (2005) as self-regulation capacities or skills that a person may draw upon to face and solve everyday life challenges. They help to form the strategies that individuals use to direct their adaptive behaviors (“adapting responses”).

As an important set of individual resources, career adapt-abilities influence several work or career related variables and outcomes to various extents, such as work engagement, job satisfaction, career anxiety, successful job transitions, work-stress, or job tenure (e.g., Brown, Bimrose, Barnes, & Hughes, 2012; Rossier, Zecca, Stauffer, Maggiori, & Dauwalder, 2012). Moreover, the relationship between personality dispositions and several work-related attitudes (such as work engagement) seems to be partly mediated by career adapt-abilities (e.g., Rossier et al., 2012). Recent studies bring to light the positive relationship to quality of life and self-esteem (e.g., Soresi, Nota, & Ferrari, 2012; Van Vianen, Klehe, Koen, & Dries, 2012). Regarding the employment situation, in Duarte et al. (2012) study, compared to employed individuals, unemployed reported higher scores on concern, control and curiosity dimensions. As argued by Zikic and Klehe (2006), job loss (and unemployment) as a life event is simultaneously stressful but may also trigger the use of adapt-abilities. During the job search process unemployed individuals have to activate and use a range of

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/886974>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/886974>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)