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Marianna GIUNCHI

Perceived Job Insecurity, Wellbeing and Transitions: From Biographical Interviews to Diary Study Approach

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et de Mme Chiara GHISLIERI (Université de Turin)

Jury :

Rapporteur·e :	Mme Anne-Marie COSTALAT-FOUNEAU	Professeur des Universités, Université Montpellier 3
Rapporteur·e :	M Alessandro LO PRESTI	Ricercatore e docente, Università degli Studi della Campania
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Membre du jury :	Mme Anne-Marie COSTALAT-FOUNEAU	Professeur des Universités, Université Montpellier 3
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TESI PRESENTATA DA
Marianna Giunchi

Perceived Job Insecurity, Wellbeing and Transitions: From Biographical Interviews to Diary Study Approach

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RIASSUNTO

Obiettivi – I cambiamenti avvenuti nel mondo del lavoro hanno determinato nei lavoratori un aumento dell'insicurezza lavorativa percepita, con conseguenze negative sul loro benessere. Questa tesi si propone di contribuire alla letteratura sull'insicurezza lavorativa presentando tre studi che indagano alcuni aspetti che necessitano approfondimento: i vissuti personali e le esperienze soggettive d'insicurezza, le sue conseguenze su alcuni risultati di benessere generale, le risorse e le strategie di *coping* come fattori che possono ridurre le percezioni e le conseguenze dell'insicurezza lavorativa.

Metodologia – I dati sono stati raccolti attraverso un approccio multi-metodo, composto da uno studio qualitativo tramite interviste biografiche, uno studio quantitativo tramite questionari auto-compilati e un *diary-study*.

Risultati – Nell'insieme i risultati evidenziano che l'insicurezza lavorativa è una percezione soggettiva e che persone nella stessa situazione possono riportare diversi livelli d'insicurezza. Fattori legati alla capacità delle persone di attivare risorse, personali e contestuali, e di mettere in atto strategie di *coping* efficaci concorrono nel determinare i livelli d'insicurezza lavorativa percepita e le sue conseguenze su benessere generale e traiettorie di vita.

Limiti – I limiti di questa tesi riguardano la metodologia: in generale tutti e tre gli studi non permettono di affermare la direzione di causalità tra le variabili osservate, utilizzano misure self-report e un metodo di campionamento di convenienza.

Implicazioni pratiche – I risultati di questa tesi incoraggiano la messa a punto di interventi e pratiche di sostegno e orientamento alla carriera, a livello individuale, in modo da aiutare le persone: a) a riflettere sui loro obiettivi personali e di lavoro b) ad identificare i modi migliori per attivare risorse personali e contestuali c) a mettere a punto strategie di *coping* efficaci per affrontare l'insicurezza lavorativa, le transizioni lavorative e preservare il proprio benessere.

Parole chiave – insicurezza lavorativa, benessere, strategie di *coping*

Insicurezza lavorativa percepita, benessere e transizioni: dalle interviste biografiche al *diary-study*

INTRODUZIONE

Negli ultimi decenni vari cambiamenti avvenuti nel mercato del lavoro, tra cui il fenomeno della globalizzazione, la rivoluzione tecnologica, la grande recessione del 2008, l'aumento della flessibilità e della concorrenza, hanno reso le prospettive lavorative sempre più indefinite e hanno determinato un aumento del sentimento di insicurezza lavorativa nei lavoratori (De Witte, De Cuyper, Vander Elst, Vanbelle & Niesen, 2012). L'insicurezza lavorativa è definita come la percezione soggettiva della possibile perdita del proprio lavoro (De Witte, 1999) ed è associata a numerose conseguenze negative sul benessere dei lavoratori (De Witte, Pienaar & De Cuyper, 2015). Dal momento che l'insicurezza lavorativa è riconosciuta come uno dei fattori di stress più importanti della vita contemporanea (De Cuyper, Bernhard-Oettel, Berntson, De Witte & Alarco, 2008), l'obiettivo di questa tesi è quello di contribuire alla letteratura sull'insicurezza lavorativa presentando tre diversi studi che indagano l'insicurezza lavorativa, le sue conseguenze e potenziali fattori di bufferizzazione.

L'insicurezza lavorativa è la paura di perdere il proprio lavoro e di divenire disoccupati (De Witte, 2005) e secondo Van Vuuren (1990) si caratterizza per: essere una percezione soggettiva, dunque persone nella stessa situazione possono percepire insicurezza in modi diversi; implica incertezza rispetto al futuro del proprio lavoro, contrariamente alla certezza della perdita; implica incertezza rispetto al mantenimento di alcuni aspetti del proprio lavoro (stipendio, orari, sede di lavoro, colleghi ecc.). Finora, tre meta-analisi (Cheng & Chan, 2008; Sverke, Hellgren & Näswall, 2002; Keim, Landis, Pierce & Earnest, 2014) e alcune rassegne (De Witte, 1999, 2005; Klandermans & Van Vuuren, 1999; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002) hanno ripreso i risultati complessivi presentati in letteratura sull'insicurezza lavorativa, ed il motivo per cui essa ha attirato un grande interesse da parte della comunità scientifica risiede soprattutto sulle sue conseguenze negative sul benessere dei lavoratori. L'insicurezza lavorativa è infatti considerata come uno *stressor* lavorativo, nella cornice teorica della teoria dello stress transazionale (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) e della teoria della conservazione delle risorse (Hobfoll,

2002). Secondo la teoria dello stress transazionale, di fronte ad un possibile *stressor* le persone compiono una prima valutazione per decidere se lo *stressor* è negativo per il proprio benessere e quindi rappresenta una minaccia; in caso affermativo poi compiono una seconda valutazione per decidere quali risorse mettere in campo per farvi fronte e limitarne le conseguenze negative. Inoltre, secondo la teoria della conservazione delle risorse, le persone tenderebbero a salvaguardare le loro risorse e differirebbero nel loro pool di risorse. Di conseguenza le loro percezioni d'insicurezza, nonché le sue conseguenze sarebbero determinate dalle risorse di cui dispongono e che devono mettere in campo per farvi fronte. Essendo il lavoro un aspetto importante della vita di ogni persona, che permette di far fronte a bisogni economici e sociali (Jahoda, 1982; De Witte, 2005), l'insicurezza lavorativa, come paura di perdere il proprio lavoro e divenire disoccupati, è valutata come una minaccia ed è verosimile che vengano attivate risorse e strategie di *coping* per farvi fronte.

La presente tesi risponde alla necessità di approfondire la conoscenza dell'insicurezza lavorativa in quanto fenomeno contemporaneo che influenza negativamente il benessere dei lavoratori ed emerge il bisogno di proporre pratiche ed interventi a loro sostegno. Quindi, allo scopo di contribuire alla letteratura sul tema e di proporre pratiche a sostegno dei lavoratori, tra i differenti studi possibili sull'insicurezza lavorativa, sono qui presentati tre studi che si focalizzano su tre particolari necessità e direzioni di ricerca.

In primo luogo, dal momento che la maggioranza degli studi sull'insicurezza lavorativa sono quantitativi, è necessario comprendere meglio attraverso un'analisi qualitativa approfondita i vissuti personali e l'interpretazione soggettiva di una situazione di insicurezza lavorativa, nonché quali strategie di *coping* specifiche le persone utilizzano per affrontare l'insicurezza lavorativa e quali conseguenze essa determina sulle traiettorie di vita e le scelte personali per il futuro. Inoltre, dato che gli studi empirici sull'impatto della flessibilità del mercato del lavoro sulla qualità della vita, che tengano conto di specificità nazionali, sono scarsi (Pochic, Paugam & Selz, 2003) occorre considerare, nell'indagine dell'insicurezza lavorativa e le sue conseguenze, diversi contesti nazionali e le specificità dei paesi.

In secondo luogo, come stress lavorativo, l'insicurezza lavorativa è stata associata a molte conseguenze negative sul benessere dei lavoratori, sia lavorativo che generale (De Witte et al., 2015). Tuttavia, nonostante la corposa letteratura, le relazioni tra

l'insicurezza lavorativa e alcuni risultati di benessere generale, come le percezioni di salute (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002) e la soddisfazione di vita (De Witte, 2005), non sono ancora chiare e necessitano un approfondimento. Inoltre, poiché i risultati della letteratura sulle conseguenze dell'insicurezza lavorativa non sono convergenti, è importante individuare potenziali fattori, come le strategie di *coping* specifiche (Mantler, Matejicek, Matheson & Anisman, 2005; Richter, 2011; Richter, Näswall, De Cuyper, Sverke, De Witte & Hellgren, 2013), che possano influenzare la relazione negativa tra insicurezza lavorativa e risultati di benessere non legati al lavoro.

Infine, poiché l'insicurezza lavorativa è una percezione soggettiva, le persone nella stessa situazione possono sentirsi più o meno insicure in base a differenze individuali o a fattori ambientali (Chen & Chang, 2008). Quindi sono necessari *diary-study* per esplorare le fluttuazioni dell'insicurezza lavorativa nel tempo e potenziali fattori che possano influenzare le percezioni d'insicurezza lavorativa nel tempo e possano determinare differenze nel come le persone riportano di percepire l'insicurezza lavorativa.

Al fine di rispondere a queste esigenze di ricerca, questa tesi presenta tre diversi studi che affrontano specifici obiettivi di ricerca attraverso un approccio multi-metodo.

STUDIO 1. Insicurezza lavorativa percepita, strategie di coping e traiettorie di vita nei giovani lavoratori precari con elevato titolo di studio (tra i 25 e i 35 anni) in Italia e Francia: uno studio narrativo.

I cambiamenti avvenuti nel mercato del lavoro hanno portato l'occupazione a divenire una preoccupazione comune in Europa (De Cuyper et al., 2008). Con l'obiettivo di colmare la disoccupazione e di aumentare la competitività del mercato, l'Europa ha promosso il paradigma della "flessicurezza" che ad una maggiore flessibilità del lavoro coniuga delle politiche sul lavoro atte a garantire la sicurezza dei lavoratori (Milner, 2012). Se la flessibilità è stata promossa dalla diffusione e l'utilizzo di contratti di lavoro atipici e temporanei, alcuni paesi d'Europa, caratterizzati da un mercato del lavoro poco flessibile, alti tassi di disoccupazione e deboli politiche sociali, non sono riusciti a garantire la sicurezza e ciò ha implicato che l'impatto del lavoro atipico abbia aumentato i vissuti di insicurezza, soprattutto nei giovani che entrano nel mercato del lavoro con

contratti sempre più precari che rendono loro difficile progettare la loro vita futura (Bertolini, Hofaecker & Torrioni, 2015).

La maggior parte degli studi che indagano l'insicurezza lavorativa e le sue conseguenze sono di tipo quantitativo e non rendono la complessità dei vissuti d'insicurezza e delle dinamiche coinvolte (Blustein, Kozan & Connors-Kellgren, 2013), come le strategie di *coping* e i fattori di bufferizzazione che entrano in gioco. Rispetto al *coping*, la letteratura qualitativa esistente (Bagnara & Bargigli, 2009; Heuven, Schaufeli & Bakker, 2009; Astarlioglu, Bayraktar Kazozcu & Varnali, 2011) ha indagato come i lavoratori reagiscono in situazioni di cambiamento organizzativo e sono state identificate soprattutto strategie di *coping* focalizzate sul problema del tipo ricerca di un nuovo lavoro o comportamenti di cittadinanza organizzativa per favorire la possibilità di mantenere l'impiego. Questi risultati sono però in contrasto con la letteratura sul *coping* (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) secondo cui di fronte ad uno *stressor* chiaro e facilmente individuabile risulterebbero più efficaci le strategie focalizzate sul problema; mentre nel caso di una fonte di stress poco chiara, come l'insicurezza lavorativa, caratterizzata da sentimenti di incertezza e incontrollabilità (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995), le strategie di coping focalizzate sull'elaborazione delle emozioni sarebbero da preferire.

Essendo i risultati discordanti, questo studio qualitativo si propone di approfondire queste tematiche tenendo conto delle specificità nazionali di Italia e Francia, due paesi che differiscono per i loro sistemi di welfare (Graziano, 2011). Nello specifico, il presente studio si chiede come i giovani vivano l'insicurezza lavorativa, quali strategie di coping utilizzino e quali risorse personali e contestuali attivino per farvi fronte, come progettino il loro futuro nella loro situazione di precarietà e se i giovani italiani e francesi presentino delle differenze, legate alle specificità dei due paesi.

La ricerca è stata approvata dal comitato bioetico dell'università di Torino ed ha coinvolto 22 giovani precari in Italia e 9 in Francia, selezionati in base all'età, il titolo di studio, la laurea magistrale e la situazione di lavoro precaria (contratto a tempo determinato, stage retribuito o borsa di studio). Le interviste sono state analizzate attraverso un approccio narrativo seguendo la tecnica di Blustein e colleghi (2013).

Rispetto ai vissuti d'insicurezza, alcuni giovani hanno riportato di essere preoccupati, soprattutto di avere paura di perdere l'autonomia conquistata e futura, mentre tra chi ha riportato di non essere preoccupato sono stati individuati alcuni fattori, come strategie di

coping e risorse personali e contestuali, che attenuano i vissuti negativi legati all'insicurezza.

Rispetto alle strategie di *coping* per far fronte all'insicurezza lavorativa, le strategie maggiormente evidenziate sono state il *coping* focalizzato sul problema, sia “micro”, quindi che attingono alle risorse della persona, come la ricerca attiva di un nuovo impiego; sia “meso”, alle risorse della rete, come chiedere aiuto alla propria rete di conoscenze sia informali che formali; sia “macro”, alle risorse istituzionali, per esempio partecipare a corsi di formazione promossi da enti pubblici. Ma in aggiunta sono state rilevate molte strategie focalizzate sulla rielaborazione emotiva e cognitiva della situazione, sia “micro”, come la rilettura in chiave positiva, il compromesso, l'accontentarsi, ma anche “meso”, ricerca di supporto emotivo dai propri cari e “macro”, rivolgersi ad un professionista, coach o psicologico, per gestire le proprie emozioni.

In ultimo, rispetto allo sguardo al futuro e alle traiettorie di vita, gli intervistati hanno mostrato di essere preoccupati per il raggiungimento dell'autonomia abitativa e dell'indipendenza economica ma alcune strategie come l'ottimismo, il pensiero positivo e il focalizzarsi sul presente sono emerse come efficaci nel contenere le loro preoccupazioni per il futuro.

Inoltre, i partecipanti hanno riportato di avere molti progetti per il futuro, come riprendere un percorso di formazione per aumentare le proprie competenze e la propria impiegabilità, ma anche andare all'estero, mettere su casa e famiglia.

In generale, in accordo con le teorie dello stress, i risultati hanno mostrato che i vissuti d'insicurezza sono meno negativi per chi ha delle risorse e mette in campo strategie di coping, che le strategie maggiormente utilizzate sono focalizzate sulla modifica della situazione e sulla gestione delle emozioni connesse ai vissuti d'insicurezza e che i giovani non rinunciano ai loro progetti per il futuro.

In ultimo, non sono state riscontrate differenze tra giovani Italiani e Francesi e ciò dimostra che l'insicurezza lavorativa è un fenomeno che interessa i giovani globalmente, nonostante le differenze tra i paesi, e che li impegna ad attivare risorse e strategie per farvi fronte.

Questo studio presenta diversi limiti legati all'approccio qualitativo: il campione degli intervistati è ridotto; i partecipanti allo studio sono stati selezionati tramite il passaparola e non è stato dato alcun compenso per prendere parte alla ricerca, quindi solo chi ha

accettato spontaneamente di partecipare allo studio è stato intervistato, di conseguenza le interviste presentano il punto di vista di un gruppo di giovani specifico in un dato momento e luogo; il campione che ha preso parte allo studio era costituito da giovani precari con elevato titolo di studio e in una situazione di elevata insicurezza lavorativa, quindi i risultati non possono essere generalizzati; inoltre la natura trasversale dello studio non permette di trarre delle conclusioni sull'effettiva efficacia delle strategie di coping emerse nel tempo.

Rispetto alle implicazioni pratiche, questo studio contribuisce al dibattito sull'insicurezza lavorativa come percezione soggettiva e preoccupazione globale per i lavoratori precari in Europa. Inoltre, dimostra che per alcuni giovani lavoratori precari può rappresentare un stress, anche nei paesi con migliori regimi di welfare (Kim, Muntaner, Shahidi, Vives et al., 2012). Ulteriori studi qualitativi transnazionali dovrebbero approfondire l'analisi di come l'esperienza di insicurezza lavorativa sia vissuta in vari paesi e come i giovani affrontino e proiettino la propria vita in questo clima di insicurezza lavorativa diffusa.

Inoltre, questo studio ha dimostrato che i giovani lavoratori insicuri non sono passivi ma si impegnano attivamente a contrastare l'insicurezza lavorativa attivando un processo che implica interconnessioni tra strategie di coping focalizzate sul problema e strategie incentrate sulle emozioni. Pertanto, per sostenere i giovani lavoratori precari nell'individuazione delle migliori soluzioni per migliorare la loro situazione, emotivamente e concretamente, i professionisti dovrebbero considerare ogni particolare personalità, situazione lavorativa e prospettiva di carriera e di vita. I ricercatori potrebbero così suggerire e attuare alcune buone pratiche per sostenere i giovani nello sviluppo di nuove competenze per essere resilienti e pronti ad affrontare la flessibilità e l'incertezza delle loro traiettorie lavorative (De Cuyper, Notelaers & De Witte, 2009; Savickas, Nota, Rossier et al., 2009). Inoltre, le istituzioni e le organizzazioni dovrebbero fornire loro corsi di orientamento alla carriera e sessioni di consulenza e corsi di formazione facilmente reperibili e accessibili.

Infine un'importante innovazione di questo studio riguarda l'impatto dell'insicurezza lavorativa sulle traiettorie di vita. Questo studio ha mostrato che il raggiungimento dell'autonomia dei giovani lavoratori precari è condizionato dalla loro situazione professionale, che alcuni di loro vivono ancora con la loro famiglia o dipendono

economicamente da essa, per cui la famiglia ha il ruolo principale nel sostenerli nei loro progetti per il futuro. Questi risultati dovrebbero influenzare i discorsi politici intorno alla questione della “vulnerabilità” dei giovani nel mercato del lavoro e dovrebbero essere proposte nuove politiche per sostenere i giovani e le loro famiglie nell’affrontare l’insicurezza lavorativa e nel costruire il loro futuro.

STUDIO 2. Le strategie di coping attenuano la relazione tra insicurezza lavorativa, salute auto-percepita e soddisfazione di vita?

L’insicurezza lavorativa è diventata una preoccupazione globale per i lavoratori e molti studi ne hanno investigato le conseguenze negative (De Witte, Pienaar & De Cuyper, 2015). La maggior parte degli studi si sono focalizzati però sulle conseguenze legate al lavoro, come gli atteggiamenti sul lavoro e i comportamenti organizzativi, meno studi sull’impatto dell’insicurezza sul benessere generale. Ciò per diverse ragioni: sia perché le relazioni tra insicurezza e benessere lavoro-correlato sono maggiori, sia perché i risultati sull’impatto dell’insicurezza sul benessere generale non convergono e quando convergono l’intensità delle relazioni differisce fra gli studi (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). Anche se la letteratura sulle conseguenze dell’insicurezza del lavoro non è convergente, diversi studi longitudinali hanno dimostrato che l’insicurezza lavorativa causa riduzioni della salute e del benessere, invece del contrario (De Witte et al., 2015). Pertanto, l’indagine sui possibili moderatori diventa importante per due ragioni: a) è importante individuare potenziali fattori che possano ridurre e tamponare gli effetti negativi dell’insicurezza lavorativa; b) poiché l’ampiezza degli effetti dell’insicurezza lavorativa sui risultati di benessere differisce tra gli studi, occorre tener conto di altri fattori come possibili spiegazioni della relazione tra l’insicurezza lavorativa e le sue conseguenze (Sverke, Hellgren & Näswall, 2002, Chen & Chang, 2008, Chen, 2013). Perciò diventa importante approfondire la relazione tra insicurezza ed esiti di benessere generale tenendo conto di quei possibili fattori che possono intervenire aumentandola o riducendola, quindi dei possibili moderatori.

Lo scopo di questo studio è quindi di investigare la relazione tra insicurezza lavorativa, salute auto-percepita e soddisfazione di vita ed il possibile effetto buffer di

strategie di coping specifiche per l'insicurezza di tipo *problem-focused* ed *emotion-focused* evitante.

Rispetto alla relazione tra insicurezza lavorativa e salute, l'interesse deriva dal fatto che i risultati non convergono. Alcuni studi hanno rilevato relazioni negative significative tra l'insicurezza lavorativa e le percezioni della salute (D'Souza et al., 2003; Ferrie, Shipley, Marmot, Stansfeld & Smith, 1995; Ferrie et al., 1998, 2005; Ibrahim, 2009; László, Pikhart, Kopp, Bobak, Pajak, Malyutina, Salavecz, & Marmot, 2010). Tuttavia, in alcuni studi la relazione significativa trovata non era forte e differiva per alcune caratteristiche demografiche, come il sesso, l'età (Regulier, 2008) e la classe sociale (Ibrahim, 2008), per la durata dell'esposizione all'insicurezza lavorativa (Burgard et al., 2009) e il livello di insicurezza lavorativa riportato (Kinnunen & Natti, 1994).

Mentre, rispetto alla relazione con la soddisfazione di vita, pochi studi l'hanno indagata accompagnandola a risultati di benessere lavoro-correlato, dove la relazione negativa tra insicurezza e soddisfazione di vita veniva spiegata con l'ipotesi dello *spillover*, secondo cui l'insicurezza diminuisce la soddisfazione sul lavoro e la sfera lavorativa si traspone sulla soddisfazione di vita generale (Lim, 1996); oppure con il modello della deprivazione (Jahoda, 1982), secondo cui il lavoro è un aspetto fondamentale per garantire i bisogni economici e sociali dell'individuo e quando è minacciato, visto che le teorie dello stress sostengono che l'anticipazione della perdita del proprio lavoro può avere le stesse conseguenze dell'attuale perdita, riduce la soddisfazione di vita.

Quindi lo studio ipotizza che l'insicurezza lavorativa presenti una relazione negativa con la salute auto-percepita e la soddisfazione di vita (H1).

Inoltre, dal momento che l'intensità delle relazioni tra insicurezza lavorativa e risultati di benessere varia, è necessario dedicare più attenzione a possibili moderatori. La letteratura si è concentrata soprattutto su moderatori di tipo contestuale, mentre meno studi hanno indagato le strategie di *coping* personali. Tra gli studi che hanno investigato il *coping* per far fronte all'insicurezza lavorativa i risultati non convergono: alcuni hanno rilevato che le strategie focalizzate sul problema aiutano a ridurre le conseguenze dell'insicurezza, altri il contrario; mentre altre ricerche hanno rilevato che le strategie focalizzate sulle emozioni hanno un effetto positivo, mentre quelle

sull'evitamento un effetto negativo. Una spiegazione a questa divergenza di risultati può derivare dal fatto che le strategie di *coping* differiscono a seconda della situazione e finora tutti gli studi hanno utilizzato misure del *coping* generali, non specifiche ad una situazione di insicurezza lavorativa.

Di conseguenza, sulla base della letteratura precedente, questo studio utilizza una scala del coping costruita ad hoc, con item ispirati a scale esistenti e già validate in letteratura, composta da strategie di evitamento e due tipi di strategie focalizzate sul problema, i comportamenti di ricerca del lavoro, del sostegno e delle opportunità di formazione e i comportamenti di cittadinanza organizzativa, che sono quei comportamenti extra-ruolo, dove ad esempio la persona si mostra più volenterosa, aiuta i colleghi, partecipa a tutte le riunioni nella speranza di non essere licenziata.

Sulla base degli studi precedenti sul *coping* e l'insicurezza lavorativa, viene ipotizzato che la messa in opera di strategie di evitamento aumenti la relazione negativa tra insicurezza e benessere (H2a) e che le strategie focalizzate sul problema (comportamenti di ricerca del lavoro, del sostegno e delle opportunità di formazione H2b; comportamenti extra-ruolo H2c) abbiano un effetto positivo e quindi la riducano.

Le ipotesi sono state testate in un campione di 769 lavoratori francesi, appartenenti a diverse categorie professionali. Sono state utilizzate tutte scale già validate in lingua francese, mentre per la scala del *coping* si è seguito il metodo della *back translation* e sono state testate le qualità psicometriche. Ai partecipanti veniva chiesto il livello di accordo su quali comportamenti avrebbero messo in atto di fronte alla possibilità di perdere il proprio lavoro: un esempio di item per il *coping* evitante è: “Mi sentirei sfiduciato a cercare un nuovo lavoro”; per il *coping* attivo di ricerca di lavoro, sostegno e opportunità di formazione: “Mi impegnerei attivamente a cercare nuove opportunità di lavoro (su annunci di giornali, siti internet, presentandomi direttamente in azienda)” o “Mi rivolgerei a persone che possano aiutarmi a trovare lavoro”; invece per i comportamenti di cittadinanza organizzativa: “Mi sforzerei di lavorare di più e mi proporrei per svolgere ulteriori compiti lavorativi”.

Sono state condotte analisi descrittive, correlazioni e analisi di regressione gerarchica con interazione e calcolo delle *simple slopes* tramite il software SPSS 24. Inoltre per tutte le scale è stata calcolata la consistenza interna tramite l'alpha di Cronbach.

I risultati delle analisi di regressione gerarchica hanno evidenziato che l'insicurezza lavorativa ha una relazione negativa con la salute auto-percepita e la soddisfazione di vita, quindi l'ipotesi H1 è confermata. L'unica interazione significativa è risultata quella con le strategie di *coping* del tipo comportamenti di ricerca del lavoro, del supporto e delle opportunità di formazione, dove un *coping* elevato è risultato attenuare la relazione negativa tra insicurezza lavorativa e risultati di benessere, soprattutto in una condizione di bassa insicurezza lavorativa, quindi l'H2b è confermata, mentre l'H2a e H2c non sono confermate.

In accordo con gli studi precedenti che hanno riportato che il coping attivo riduce la relazione negativa tra l'insicurezza lavorativa e gli esiti di benessere lavoro-correlato (Richter et al., 2013), questi risultati hanno mostrato che il fatto di impegnarsi in comportamenti di ricerca del lavoro, del sostegno e delle opportunità di formazione in una situazione di bassa insicurezza lavorativa possa avere un effetto positivo sulla relazione negativa tra insicurezza lavorativa e salute auto-percepita e soddisfazione di vita, riducendo l'impatto negativo che l'insicurezza ha sugli esiti di benessere. Mentre quando i lavoratori sono altamente insicuri l'effetto positivo di questi comportamenti sarebbe ridotto. In accordo con la teoria dello stress transazionale (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) e la teoria della conservazione delle risorse (Hobfoll, 2002), l'insicurezza lavorativa è una fonte di stress che i lavoratori interpretano come una minaccia ed attingono alle loro risorse nel tentativo di contrastarla, di limitare le conseguenze negative ad essa associate e per preservare il loro benessere. La teoria della conservazione delle risorse (Hobfoll, 1998) afferma che le persone si impegnano ad aumentare, conservare e proteggere le proprie risorse. Nel contrastare lo stress, gli individui utilizzerebbero le loro risorse e quindi cercherebbero di ottenere nuove risorse nell'intento di recuperare le risorse minacciate o perse. Quando l'insicurezza lavorativa è bassa, è probabile che essere impegnati in comportamenti di ricerca del lavoro, del sostegno e delle opportunità di formazione per contrastare la paura della possibile perdita del proprio lavoro si traduca in un guadagno di risorse. Ma quando l'insicurezza lavorativa è elevata la messa in atto di questi comportamenti potrebbe rappresentare un' "arma a doppio taglio", poiché attuando comportamenti per contrastarla, le persone ridurrebbero le loro risorse senza un nuovo guadagno, soprattutto se i risultati attesi non vengono raggiunti (ad esempio, trovare un lavoro più sicuro). Questi risultati sono in

linea con la letteratura generale sul *coping* secondo cui l'uso di strategie di *coping* in situazioni in cui la fonte di stress non è chiara e difficile da contrastare comporterebbe una perdita di risorse (Folkman et al., 1979).

Questo studio ha diversi limiti. In primo luogo, è uno studio di trasversale che non consente di affermare relazioni causali tra le variabili esaminate. Studi futuri, longitudinali o diari, dovrebbero esaminare gli effetti dell'insicurezza lavorativa nel tempo, verificando l'eventuale moderazione di strategie di *coping* specifiche. In secondo luogo, l'uso del questionario auto-compilato potrebbe portare a “gonfiare” i rapporti tra le variabili osservate dovute alla varianza del metodo comune (Conway, 2002). Ciononostante, quando vengono testate delle interazioni, la varianza del metodo comune rischia di attenuare piuttosto che rafforzare gli effetti di interazione (Conway & Briner, 2002), quindi le interazioni riscontrate dovrebbero essere abbastanza robuste. Una terza limitazione dello studio è il metodo di campionamento di convenienza che ha permesso di raccogliere un campione eterogeneo, anche se non rappresentativo della popolazione attiva in generale, quindi i risultati non possono essere generalizzati. Inoltre, la costruzione della scala di *coping* può presentare alcuni problemi a causa della selezione di item che rappresentano solo alcune strategie di *coping* specifiche tra tutti i modi in cui le persone potrebbero effettivamente affrontare l'insicurezza lavorativa. Ricerche future dovrebbero replicare questi risultati tenendo conto di strategie di *coping* più specifiche per contrastare l'insicurezza lavorativa, tratte dalla letteratura qualitativa sull'insicurezza lavorativa, ad esempio il volontariato, consultare un professionista ecc.

Tuttavia, questi risultati sono importanti da una prospettiva teorica in quanto possono essere considerati come un contributo per estendere la ricerca di eventuali moderatori dell'insicurezza lavorativa a strategie di *coping* personali specifiche contro l'insicurezza lavorativa invece che considerare solo risorse contestuali come ad esempio il sostegno sociale, la giustizia organizzativa o l'occupabilità.

In termini di implicazioni pratiche, questo studio contribuisce alla comprensione della relazione tra l'insicurezza lavorativa e gli esiti di benessere generale mostrando che l'insicurezza lavorativa è relazionata negativamente alla salute auto-percepita e alla soddisfazione di vita, indipendentemente dai risultati di benessere lavoro-correlati. Questi risultati suggeriscono che le ricerche nell'ambito della psicologia del lavoro e delle organizzazioni non dovrebbero trascurare l'impatto dell'insicurezza lavorativa sui

risultati di benessere generale e dovrebbero approfondire queste relazioni attraverso studi longitudinali per osservare come gli effetti dell'insicurezza lavorativa sui risultati del benessere generale si sviluppino non solo nel tempo, ma anche perdurino nel tempo e influenzino scelte e traiettorie di vita.

Inoltre, l'originalità di questo studio è rappresentata dall'indagine di strategie di *coping* specifiche contro l'insicurezza lavorativa come buffer nella relazione tra insicurezza lavorativa e risultati di benessere generale. In particolare, i risultati hanno mostrato che l'utilizzo di comportamenti di ricerca del lavoro, del sostegno sociale e delle opportunità di formazione potrebbe compensare la perdita di risorse e potrebbe essere importante per ottenere nuove risorse per coloro che hanno riportato una scarsa insicurezza lavorativa, mentre potrebbe consumare risorse aggiuntive (Bolino, Valcea & Harvey, 2010, Ito & Brotheridge, 2003), per coloro che hanno riportato di essere molto insicuri. Questi risultati hanno diverse implicazioni pratiche. Innanzitutto sottolineano l'importanza di considerare strategie di *coping* specifiche per contrastare l'insicurezza lavorativa, invece di stili di *coping* generali. Studi futuri dovrebbero sviluppare questi risultati esaminando il ruolo di buffer di altre strategie di *coping* specifiche contro l'insicurezza lavorativa. In secondo luogo, questi risultati hanno dimostrato che le persone potrebbero contrastare attivamente l'insicurezza lavorativa utilizzando comportamenti di ricerca del lavoro, del sostegno sociale e delle opportunità di formazione. Questa è una scoperta importante, perché l'insicurezza del lavoro è considerata uno *stressor* lavorativo difficile da affrontare e contrastare. I professionisti dovrebbero sviluppare pratiche e interventi, sia di consulenza privata che in ambito organizzativo, per aiutare le persone a sviluppare competenze nella ricerca del lavoro, nell'attivazione delle reti sociali e del network e nell'identificazione di opportunità di formazione per migliorare la propria sensazione di controllo e l'occupabilità personale.

Inoltre, come sottolineato da Stiglbauer e Batinic (2015), l'effetto delle strategie di *coping* attive potrebbe cambiare nel tempo: potrebbero avere effetti negativi a breve termine (a causa del consumo di risorse), ma effetti benefici a lungo termine (per il guadagno di nuove risorse). Dal momento che questo studio è trasversale, non consente di trarre conclusioni su questi effetti. Ulteriori studi longitudinali dovrebbero replicare questi risultati per osservare l'effetto di attenuazione della relazione negativa tra

insicurezza lavorativa e esiti di benessere da parte di strategie di coping specifiche focalizzate sul problema.

STUDIO 3. “Tre settimane di un lavoratore insicuro”. Diary-study sulle fluttuazioni dell’insicurezza lavorativa nel tempo negli insegnanti precari italiani all’avvicinarsi della fine del contratto.

L’insicurezza lavorativa è un fattore di stress e se molti studi ne hanno indagato le conseguenze, meno studi hanno approfondito come le percezioni di insicurezza evolvano nel tempo e quali risorse abbiano un effetto sulle percezioni di insicurezza nel tempo. Gli studi *diary* permettono di delineare i cambiamenti di una variabile nel tempo. L’obiettivo di questo studio è di investigare: a) come le percezioni d’insicurezza lavorativa degli insegnanti precari evolvano nel tempo all’avvicinarsi della fine del contratto; b) come gli insegnanti precari differiscano nelle loro percezioni di insicurezza; c) e quale ruolo hanno il supporto sociale da parte dei colleghi e del preside, come risorse, nel determinare le loro percezioni di insicurezza.

Il precariato degli insegnanti in Italia rappresenta un tema delicato e complesso ancora lontano da una risoluzione. Dopo un percorso di formazione che prevede laurea di secondo grado e tirocinio professionalizzante, gli insegnanti hanno accesso ai concorsi pubblici per entrare nelle graduatorie nazionali, che sono utilizzate dalle scuole per selezionarli ed assumerli con incarichi a tempo determinato finché non saranno assunti definitivamente dallo Stato in maniera permanente e le scuole potranno selezionarli come insegnanti di ruolo. Finché lo Stato non li assume permanentemente, i loro incarichi presso le scuole saranno temporanei e coincideranno con la durata di un anno scolastico, inizio settembre-fine giugno, al termine del quale essi saranno disoccupati in attesa della chiamata per un nuovo incarico per l’anno scolastico successivo (Grimaldi, 2013). Quindi essi sono a conoscenza della durata del loro incarico e possono chiedere, per i due mesi estivi scoperti, luglio e agosto, l’assegno di disoccupazione. Di conseguenza, gli insegnanti precari si trovano a vivere una particolare forma d’insicurezza oggettiva: essi sono a conoscenza della durata del loro incarico, sanno con certezza che perderanno il lavoro, e a ciò si somma l’attesa e

l'incertezza della chiamata per l'incarico temporaneo dell'anno successivo o dell'assunzione a tempo indeterminato da parte dello Stato e della chiamata dalle scuole per l'incarico permanente.

Diversi studi che hanno indagato le percezioni di insicurezza lavorativa in periodi di ristrutturazione organizzativa hanno rilevato che di fronte al cambiamento organizzativo l'insicurezza aumenta (Keim et al., 2014). Allo stesso modo si può immaginare che con l'avvicinarsi della fine del contratto la percezione di insicurezza lavorativa negli insegnanti precari aumenti, pertanto questo studio ipotizza che con l'avvicinarsi della fine del loro contratto di lavoro gli insegnanti precari riportino di percepire maggiore insicurezza lavorativa (H1).

Dal momento che l'insicurezza lavorativa è una percezione soggettiva e nella stessa situazione oggettiva persone diverse possono risentirne più o meno intensamente, è possibile che alcuni fattori contestuali, come il supporto sociale percepito sul luogo di lavoro da parte di colleghi e supervisori, possano influenzare le percezioni di insicurezza lavorativa. In letteratura il supporto sociale è stato maggiormente indagato nella relazione *stressor-strain*, ma alcuni studi ne hanno indagato la relazione diretta con lo *stressor* ed è stato visto che il supporto risulta ridurre la percezione dello *stressor*. Il contesto lavorativo ha un'influenza sull'esperienza di insicurezza e gli insegnanti precari a scuola possono sentirsi supportati dai colleghi e dal preside che potrebbero fornire rispettivamente aiuto nella gestione del carico di lavoro quotidiano ed informazioni su possibili opportunità di lavoro alternative (i colleghi) e feedback sul proprio lavoro e informazioni sul futuro del proprio impiego in quella scuola (il preside). Dal momento che il supporto lavoro-correlato è considerata un'importante risorsa del contesto lavorativo in situazioni di insicurezza lavorativa (Lim, 1996), è verosimile, come spiega la teoria della conservazione delle risorse, che gli insegnanti precari mobilitino le loro risorse sociali e che il supporto da parte dei colleghi e del preside attenui le loro percezioni di insicurezza, aumentando la percezione di controllo sulla loro situazione lavorativa. Quindi si ipotizza che il supporto da parte dei colleghi (H2a) ed il supporto da parte del preside (H2b) riducano le percezioni di insicurezza lavorativa degli insegnanti e che questi effetti si osservino nel tempo.

Lo studio ha coinvolto 47 insegnanti precari, di età media 34 anni e con un'anzianità media nella scuola dove insegnano inferiore a due anni. I partecipanti sono stati

contattati a tre mesi dalla fine del loro contratto, aprile 2017, e selezionati sulla base del loro incarico con scadenza al trenta giugno. Essi hanno prima compilato un questionario base dove è stata misurata la loro percezione generale di supporto da parte dei colleghi e del preside e poi per tre volte alla settimana per tre settimane a maggio 2017 hanno compilato un diary in cui riportavano le loro percezioni giornaliere di insicurezza.

Le analisi dei dati hanno compreso statistiche descrittive, correlazioni e consistenza interna delle scale tramite il software SPSS 24. Il cambiamento nel tempo delle percezioni di insicurezza lavorativa e le relazioni tra supporto da parte dei colleghi e da parte del preside e insicurezza lavorativa sono stati testati attraverso il LGM (Linear Growth Model) con variabili osservate in MPLUS 7.3.

I risultati hanno rilevato differenze tra i soggetti ed entro i soggetti nell'insicurezza misurata il primo giorno e differenze tra i soggetti nella percezione di insicurezza nel tempo. La percezione di insicurezza lavorativa non è risultata aumentare linearmente nel tempo all'avvicinarsi dello scadere del contratto ma, al contrario, alla prima misurazione ed all'ultima i livelli di insicurezza sono risultati coincidere. Inoltre sono state osservate delle fluttuazioni settimanali nelle percezioni di insicurezza lavorativa: la prima settimana l'insicurezza si riduce a metà e verso la fine della settimana, la seconda settimana aumenta ad inizio, metà e si riduce a fine settimana, mentre la terza settimana si riduce a metà ed aumenta alla fine. Rispetto all'effetto del supporto sociale sulle percezioni d'insicurezza, si è visto che il supporto da parte del preside ha un effetto positivo sulle percezioni di insicurezza e riduce le percezioni di insicurezza che gli insegnanti riportano nel tempo, mentre il supporto da parte dei colleghi non è risultato relazionato significativamente alle percezioni di insicurezza lavorativa nel tempo.

Di conseguenza la prima ipotesi dello studio non è confermata (H1): le percezioni di insicurezza non aumentano con l'avvicinarsi della fine del contratto e ciò dimostra come l'insicurezza sia una percezione soggettiva; anche l'H2a non è confermata: il supporto da parte dei colleghi non riduce le percezioni di insicurezza; mentre l'H2b è confermata: il supporto da parte del preside è una risorsa importante nel determinare le percezioni di insicurezza degli insegnanti precari probabilmente perché fornisce

informazioni o rassicurazioni sul lavoro e ridà agli insegnanti un po' di percezione di controllo.

Questo studio presenta vari limiti. Innanzitutto, la dimensione del campione relativamente piccola come spesso accade negli studi diary. Tuttavia, per monitorare le modifiche nel tempo, il numero di giorni e misurazioni è più importante del numero dei partecipanti (Ohly et al., 2010). In secondo luogo, il campione di questo studio include solo insegnanti precari e non tiene conto degli insegnanti permanenti, per cui i risultati non possono essere generalizzati nella popolazione degli insegnanti in generale. Tuttavia, tenuto conto della specifica natura del contratto degli insegnanti precari (che sono assunti dallo Stato e reclutati dalle scuole), l'indagine sulle percezioni di insicurezza lavorativa in un campione di insegnanti di ruolo, il cui impiego è fortemente protetto e garantito dal sistema, avrebbe probabilmente portato a risultati fuorvianti. Inoltre, il metodo del diario è metodologicamente complesso: per ottenere dati attendibili e validi, gli studi tramite diari devono raggiungere un livello di impegno e dedizione dei partecipanti raramente richiesti in altri tipi di studi. Per risolvere questo problema, questo studio ha privilegiato l'analisi di poche variabili attraverso l'uso di scale di misura con pochi item, in modo che il questionario giornaliero richiedesse pochi minuti per essere completato. Un altro possibile limite riguarda l'uso di una misura di insicurezza lavorativa che tiene conto solo della percezione della possibile perdita del proprio lavoro (De Witte, 2000), senza tener conto della paura di perdere altri aspetti del lavoro (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984, 2010), che possono essere importanti quando si considera la natura del lavoro precario degli insegnanti.

Nonostante questi limiti, questo studio è il primo ad indagare come le percezioni dell'insicurezza lavorativa evolvano nel tempo in un campione di insegnanti e ulteriori studi dovrebbero riesaminare queste ipotesi considerando alternativi aspetti e misure dell'insicurezza lavorativa.

Rispetto alle implicazioni pratiche, i risultati di questo studio dimostrano che le percezioni di insicurezza lavorativa non aumentano per gli insegnanti precari, all'avvicinarsi della fine del loro contratto. Quindi questo studio contribuisce a dimostrare la natura soggettiva dell'insicurezza lavorativa (Van Vuren, 1990) e mostra come in una stessa situazione obiettiva le persone si differenziano nella loro esperienza di insicurezza lavorativa (De Witte & Naswall, 2003). Ulteriori studi dovrebbero

esplorare le fluttuazioni delle percezioni di insicurezza lavorativa in altri tipi di lavoratori che si avvicinano alla fine del loro contratto.

Inoltre, questo studio ha dimostrato che è importante considerare potenziali fattori che influenzino le percezioni di insicurezza lavorativa. La ricerca ha mostrato che il sostegno sociale da parte del dirigente scolastico è molto importante per gli insegnanti precari. Quindi questo studio contribuisce a sostenere il rapporto diretto tra sostegno sociale e *stressor* (Fenlason e Beehr, 1994; Viswesvaran et al., 1999). Inoltre sottolinea che gli insegnanti precari che si percepiscono sostenuti dal preside riportano meno insicurezza lavorativa nel tempo.

Nel definire gli interventi per aiutare gli insegnanti precari a fronteggiare l'insicurezza lavorativa, i professionisti dovrebbero tenere conto di questi risultati e proporre iniziative di formazione per rendere gli insegnanti precari più consapevoli del nuovo ruolo che i presidi hanno nel processo di assunzione, alla luce della nuova legislazione italiana. Inoltre, le relazioni insegnanti-dirigente scolastico dovrebbero essere incoraggiate, in quanto sono veramente importanti per il benessere degli insegnanti e per costruire, sostenere e promuovere nella scuola un clima di apprendimento (Price & Moolenaar, 2015).

Inoltre, dal momento che sono previsti corsi di aggiornamento gratuiti per tutti gli insegnanti, anche se non obbligatori per gli insegnanti precari (Fusacchia & Luccisano, 2014), le scuole dovrebbero promuovere corsi di formazione per aiutare i precari a fronteggiare la loro situazione professionale e incoraggiare una buona comunicazione, scambi e relazioni positive con i colleghi e il dirigente scolastico.

Rispetto ai tre studi presentati, questa tesi approfondisce il fenomeno dell'insicurezza lavorativa sotto diversi aspetti e con diverse metodologie e fornisce risultati che si sommano alla letteratura sull'insicurezza, aggiungendo contributi importanti sotto il profilo delle strategie e risorse che possono ridurre le percezioni di insicurezza e le sue conseguenze.

I risultati di questa dissertazione hanno diverse implicazioni per la pratica.

Il primo studio ha permesso di approfondire l'esperienza soggettiva dell'insicurezza lavorativa e di individuare nel processo di contrasto dell'insicurezza lavorativa diverse risorse e strategie di *coping* specifiche che aiutano le persone a contrastare l'insicurezza

lavorativa e le sue conseguenze. In particolare, le strategie di *coping* focalizzate sul problema e le strategie di *coping* mirate all'elaborazione delle emozioni sono emerse come due aspetti che si intrecciano negli stessi tentativi di preservare il benessere in una situazione di insicurezza lavorativa. Ciò implica che i professionisti dovrebbero considerare la specificità dell'insicurezza lavorativa e promuovere lo sviluppo di risorse e di strategie adattamento più adattive, progettando interventi mirati e pratiche di consulenza (Savickas, 2012) e attività facilmente accessibili di supporto psicologico per aiutare i giovani ad adattarsi discontinuità.

Inoltre, i risultati del secondo studio hanno dimostrato che l'insicurezza lavorativa impatta negativamente la percezione di salute e la soddisfazione di vita, che possono aumentare quando le persone mettono in pratica alcune strategie di *coping* specifiche. Pertanto, nella progettazione di interventi per aiutare le persone a individuare strategie di *coping* efficaci per contrastare l'insicurezza lavorativa, i professionisti dovrebbero tener conto non solo degli obiettivi di carriera, ma anche aiutare le persone a elaborare i sentimenti associati alla loro situazione occupazionale e a definire l'importanza che un lavoro ha nel costruire la loro identità (Fryers, 2006) e nel contribuire al loro benessere e alla loro soddisfazione della vita. Per quanto riguarda le implicazioni per le risorse umane, le organizzazioni dovrebbero promuovere interventi che possano potenziare la capacità dei dipendenti di attivare risorse personali e contestuali per far fronte all'insicurezza lavorativa, fornendo, per esempio, formazioni alla leadership, chiarendo i ruoli, migliorando la disponibilità dei manager e dei superiori e facilitando la comunicazione e la partecipazione a decisionale (Callan, 1993; De Witte, 2005).

Inoltre, il terzo studio, in linea con i risultati del primo studio, ha individuato l'importanza del ruolo del sostegno sociale, come risorsa contestuale che può ridurre le percezioni di insicurezza lavorativa. Questo risultato dimostra che quando si affronta l'insicurezza lavorativa, l'attivazione delle risorse contestuali è un fattore chiave per determinare l'esperienza soggettiva di insicurezza. Pertanto, questo risultato suggerisce che gli psicologi del lavoro, nella progettazione dei loro interventi e pratiche per aiutare le persone a fronteggiare l'insicurezza lavorativa, dovrebbero concentrarsi sull'identificazione di quali risorse potrebbero aiutare maggiormente le persone a preservare il loro benessere.

In conclusione, in tutti gli studi è emersa la natura soggettiva dell'insicurezza lavorativa (Van Vuuren, 1990), che implica non solo che le sue percezioni varino tra i soggetti ma che anche le reazioni ad essa e i fattori che possono ridurre le sue percezioni e conseguenze sono soggettivi. Pertanto, i professionisti, nel progettare interventi e proporre soluzioni per ridurre l'insicurezza lavorativa e le sue conseguenze negative sul benessere delle persone, dovrebbero tener conto del livello individuale e accompagnare le persone nel loro processo di transizione lavorativa. Seguendo le raccomandazioni di Savickas e colleghi (2009), interventi di orientamento e *career guidance* potrebbero essere implementati per aiutare gli individui a riflettere sui loro obiettivi personali e di lavoro e per individuare i modi migliori per attivare risorse personali e contestuali per raggiungerli. Al fine di aiutare le persone a fronteggiare l'insicurezza lavorativa, i professionisti dovrebbero guidarli a scoprire strategie di *coping* specifiche che meglio si adattino a loro e consentano loro di aumentare le loro risorse e preservare il loro benessere.

RÉSUMÉ

Objectifs - Les changements dans le monde du travail ont entraîné une augmentation de l'insécurité de l'emploi perçue chez les travailleurs, avec des conséquences négatives sur leur bien-être. Cette thèse vise à contribuer à la littérature sur l'insécurité de l'emploi en présentant trois études portant sur des aspects qui doivent être étudiés davantage : les expériences personnelles et subjectives d'insécurité, ses conséquences sur certains résultats de bien-être général, les ressources et les stratégies de *coping* pour y faire face comme facteurs qui peuvent réduire les perceptions et les conséquences de l'insécurité de l'emploi.

Méthodologie - Les données ont été recueillies au moyen d'une approche multi-méthode, consistant en : une étude qualitative par entretiens biographiques, une étude quantitative par questionnaire auto-compilé et une étude par journaux de bord.

Résultats - Dans l'ensemble, les résultats montrent que l'insécurité de l'emploi est une perception subjective et que les personnes dans la même situation peuvent rapporter différents niveaux d'insécurité. Les facteurs liés à la capacité des personnes à activer les ressources, personnelles et contextuelles, et à mettre en place des stratégies de *coping* efficaces contribuent à déterminer les niveaux d'insécurité perçus et ses conséquences sur le bien-être général et les trajectoires de vie.

Limites – En général au niveau méthodologique les trois études ne permettent pas d'établir la direction de la relation entre les variables observées, elles utilisent des mesures d'auto-évaluation et une méthode d'échantillonnage de convenance.

Implications pratiques - Les résultats de cette thèse encouragent le développement de l'accompagnement individuel et de l'orientation professionnelle et des pratiques d'assistance afin d'aider les personnes: a) à réfléchir sur leurs objectifs personnels et de travail; b) à identifier les meilleurs moyens d'activer les ressources personnelles et contextuelles; c) à élaborer des stratégies d'adaptation efficaces pour faire face à l'insécurité de l'emploi, aux transitions professionnelles et préserver leur bien-être.

Mots-clés – Insécurité de l'emploi, bien-être, stratégies de *coping*

Insécurité de l'emploi perçue, bien-être et transitions : des entretiens biographiques aux journaux de bord

INTRODUCTION

Depuis quelques dizaines d'années, plusieurs changements qui ont affecté le marché du travail, comme le phénomène de la mondialisation, la révolution technologique, la grande récession de 2008, la hausse de la flexibilité et de la concurrence, ont rendu les perspectives de travail de plus en plus indéfinies et ont déterminées une augmentation du sentiment d'insécurité de l'emploi chez les salariés (De Witte, De Cuyper, Vander Elst, Vanbelle & Niesen, 2012). L'insécurité de l'emploi est définie comme la perception subjective de la possible perte de son emploi (De Witte, 1999) et elle est associée à de nombreuses conséquences négatives sur le bien-être des salariés (De Witte, Pienaar & De Cuyper, 2015).

Etant donné que l'insécurité de l'emploi est reconnue comme un des plus importants facteurs de stress de la vie contemporaine (De Cuyper, Bernhard-Oettel, Berntson, De Witte & Alarco, 2008), l'objectif de cette thèse est de contribuer à la littérature sur l'insécurité de l'emploi en présentant trois différentes études qui investiguent l'insécurité de l'emploi, ses conséquences et de potentiels facteurs de *bufferisation*.

L'insécurité de l'emploi est la peur de perdre son emploi et devenir chômeur (De Witte, 2005) et selon Van Vuuren (1990) elle se caractérise par le fait d'être une perception subjective, donc des personnes dans la même situation peuvent percevoir l'insécurité de manière différente ; elle implique l'incertitude concernant l'avenir de son emploi, contrairement à la certitude de la perte ; elle implique de l'incertitude concernant le maintien de certains aspects de son emploi (salaire, horaires, lieu de travail, collègues, etc.)

Actuellement, trois méta-analyses (Cheng & Chan, 2008; Sverke, Hellgren & Näswall, 2002; Keim, Landis, Pierce & Earnest, 2014) et différentes revues (De Witte, 1999, 2005; Klandermans & Van Vuuren, 1999; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002) ont résumé les résultats d'ensemble présentés dans la littérature de l'insécurité de l'emploi, et la raison pour laquelle ce phénomène a attiré un grand intérêt de la part de la communauté scientifique concerne surtout ses conséquences négatives sur le bien-être des salariés. Or, l'insécurité

de l'emploi est considérée comme un stress au travail, selon la théorie du stress transactionnel (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) et la théorie de la conservation des ressources (Hobfoll, 2002). En accord avec la théorie du stress transactionnel, confrontées à un possible *stressor*, les personnes évaluent si le *stressor* est négatif pour leur bien-être et donc s'il représente une menace (première évaluation); puis ils décident quelles ressources utiliser pour le confronter et pour limiter ses conséquences négatives (deuxième évaluation). De plus, selon la théorie de la conservation des ressources, les personnes tendraient à sauvegarder leurs ressources et se différencieraient dans leurs disponibilités de ressources. En conséquence, leur perception d'insécurité professionnelle et ses conséquences, seraient déterminées par les ressources dont elles disposent et qu'elles utilisent pour se confronter à l'insécurité de l'emploi. L'emploi est un aspect important de la vie de chaque personne puisqu'il permet de répondre aux besoins économiques et sociaux (Jahoda, 1982; De Witte, 2005). En conséquence, l'insécurité de l'emploi, comme peur de perdre son emploi et de devenir chômeur, est évaluée comme une menace et il est probable que les ressources et les stratégies de *coping* soient activées pour s'y confronter.

La présente thèse répond à la nécessité d'approfondir la connaissance de l'insécurité de l'emploi en tant que phénomène contemporain qui affecte négativement le bien-être des salariés et détermine la nécessité de proposer des pratiques et des interventions pour les soutenir. Ainsi, dans le but de contribuer à la littérature sur le sujet et de proposer des pratiques pour aider les salariés, parmi les différentes études possibles sur l'insécurité de l'emploi, les trois études qui sont présentées ici se concentrent sur trois besoins et orientations de recherche particuliers.

Tout d'abord, puisque la majorité des études sur l'insécurité de l'emploi sont quantitatives, il est nécessaire de mieux comprendre, grâce à une analyse qualitative approfondie, l'expérience personnelle et l'interprétation subjective d'une situation d'insécurité, ainsi que les stratégies d'adaptation spécifiques que les sujets utilisent pour faire face à l'insécurité de l'emploi et quelles conséquences elle a sur leurs trajectoires de vie et leurs choix personnels pour l'avenir. De plus, étant donné que des études empiriques sur l'impact de la flexibilité du marché du travail sur la qualité de vie, qui tiennent compte des spécificités nationales, sont rares (Pochic, Paugam & Selz, 2003), il

faudrait envisager, dans l'étude des conséquences de l'insécurité de l'emploi, des différents contextes nationaux et des spécificités nationales.

En second lieu, comme source de stress au travail, l'insécurité de l'emploi a été associée à des nombreuses conséquences négatives sur le bien-être des salariés, lié au travail et général (De Witte et al., 2015). Cependant, malgré la substantielle littérature, les relations entre insécurité de l'emploi et les résultats du bien-être général, comme la perception de santé (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002) et la satisfaction de vie (De Witte, 2005), ne sont pas encore claires et elles devraient être approfondies. En outre, étant donné que les résultats de la littérature sur les conséquences de l'insécurité de l'emploi ne convergent pas, il est important d'identifier les facteurs potentiels tels que les stratégies de *coping* spécifiques (Mantler, Matejcek, Matheson & Anisman, 2005, Richter, 2011, Richter, Näswall, De Cuyper, Sverke, De Witte & Hellgren, 2013), qui peuvent affecter la relation négative entre l'insécurité de l'emploi et les résultats de bien-être non liés au travail.

Enfin, l'insécurité de l'emploi est une perception subjective, donc les personnes dans la même situation peuvent ressentir plus ou moins d'insécurité en fonction des différences individuelles ou des facteurs environnementaux (Chen & Chang, 2008). Donc, il faut explorer par des journaux de bord les fluctuations de l'insécurité de l'emploi au fil du temps et les facteurs potentiels qui pourraient influencer la perception de l'insécurité de l'emploi dans le temps et pourraient entraîner des différences dans la façon dont les gens déclarent percevoir l'insécurité de l'emploi.

Afin de répondre à ces besoins de recherche, cette thèse présente trois études différentes qui abordent des objectifs de recherche spécifiques grâce à une approche “multi-méthodes”.

ÉTUDE 1. L'insécurité de l'emploi perçue, les stratégies de coping et les trajectoires de vie chez les jeunes salariés précaires avec un haut niveau d'études (entre 25 et 35 ans) en Italie et en France: une étude narrative.

Les changements intervenus sur le marché du travail ont conduit l'emploi à devenir une préoccupation commune en Europe (De Cuyper et al., 2008). Dans le but de combler

le chômage et de stimuler la compétitivité du marché, l'Europe a promu le paradigme de la « flexicurité » qui combine la flexibilité des emplois aux politiques du travail pour assurer la sécurité des salariés (Milner, 2012). Si la flexibilité a été favorisée par la propagation et l'utilisation de contrats de travail atypiques et temporaires, certains pays d'Europe, caractérisés par un faible marché du travail, des taux de chômage élevés et des politiques sociales faibles, n'ont pas réussi à assurer la sécurité et par conséquent le travail atypique a augmenté l'insécurité, en particulier chez les jeunes salariés entrant sur le marché du travail avec des contrats de plus en plus précaires qui rendent pour eux difficile la projection dans leur vie future (Bertolini, Hofaecker & Torrioni, 2015).

La plupart des études qui investiguent l'insécurité de l'emploi et ses conséquences sont quantitatives et n'entraînent pas la complexité des expériences de précarité et les dynamiques impliquées (Blustein, Kozan & Connors-Kellgren, 2013), telles que les stratégies d'adaptation et les facteurs d'atténuation qui entrent en jeu. Par rapport aux stratégies de *coping*, la littérature qualitative existante (Bagnara & Bargigli, 2009; Heuven, Schaufeli & Bakker, 2009; Astarlioglu, Bayraktar Kazozcu & Varnali, 2011) a étudié la façon dont les salariés réagissent aux situations de changement organisationnel et ont surtout relevé des stratégies d'adaptation axées sur le problème du type recherche d'un nouvel emploi ou du type comportements de citoyenneté organisationnelle qui favorisent la possibilité de maintenir son emploi. Cependant, ces résultats sont en contraste avec la littérature sur le *coping* selon laquelle, face à un facteur de stress clair et facilement identifiable, les stratégies axées sur le problème seraient plus efficaces ; tandis que, dans le cas d'une source de stress peu claire, comme l'insécurité de l'emploi, caractérisée par des sentiments d'incertitude et d'incontournabilité (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995), des stratégies d'adaptation axées sur les émotions seraient préférables.

En raison de ces résultats discordants, cette étude qualitative vise à approfondir ces questions, compte tenu des spécificités nationales de l'Italie et de la France, deux pays qui diffèrent dans leurs systèmes de protection sociale (Graziano, 2011). Plus précisément, la présente étude investigate comment les jeunes vivent l'insécurité, quelles sont les stratégies d'adaptation qu'ils utilisent et quelles ressources personnelles et contextuelles ils activent pour faire face à l'insécurité, comment ils planifient leur avenir dans leur situation précaire et s'il y a des différences entre les jeunes Italiens et Français, liées aux spécificités des deux pays.

La recherche a été approuvée par le Comité de bioéthique de l'Université de Turin et a impliqué 22 jeunes salariés précaires en Italie et 9 en France, sélectionnés en fonction de leur âge (entre 25 et 35 ans), de leur diplôme (niveau master) et de leur situation professionnelle précaire (CDD, stage payé ou bourse d'études).

Les entretiens ont été analysés via une approche narrative suivant la technique de Blustein et ses collègues (2013).

Par rapport à l'insécurité vécue, certains jeunes ont déclaré avoir été inquiets, surtout avoir peur de perdre l'autonomie conquise et pour l'avenir, alors que, parmi ceux qui ont déclaré de ne pas se préoccuper, certains facteurs tels que des stratégies d'adaptation et des ressources personnelles et contextuelles ont été identifiées comme facteurs qui atténuent les expériences négatives associées à l'insécurité.

Par rapport aux stratégies d'adaptation pour faire face à l'insécurité de l'emploi, les stratégies les plus fréquentes portaient sur le problème et étaient du type : « micro », basées sur les ressources de la personne, par exemple chercher activement un nouvel emploi ; du type « méso », qui s'appuient sur les ressources du réseau, tel que demander de l'aide au réseau social formel et informel pour trouver des opportunités d'emploi ; et du type « macro », sur les ressources institutionnelles, par exemple fréquenter des cours de formation à la recherche d'emploi fournis par les Universités et les organismes publiques. Egalement, de nombreuses stratégies axées sur la réélaboration émotionnelle et cognitive de la situation ont été détectés, du type « micro », tel que la lecture de la situation dans un esprit positif, ou le compromis, mais aussi du type « méso », comme la recherche d'un soutien affectif par ses proches et « macro », comme le fait de contacter un professionnel, un entraîneur ou un psychologue pour gérer ses émotions.

Enfin, en ce qui concerne le regard vers l'avenir et les trajectoires de vie, les répondants ont montré qu'ils étaient préoccupés par acquérir une certaine autonomie de vie (logement) et l'indépendance économique, mais certaines stratégies comme l'optimisme, la pensée positive et le fait de se concentrer sur le présent se sont révélées efficaces pour contenir les inquiétudes sur l'avenir.

En outre, les participants ont indiqué qu'ils avaient de nombreux projets pour l'avenir, tels que la formation continue pour accroître leurs compétences et leur employabilité, mais aussi partir à l'étranger, s'installer et créer une famille.

En général, selon les théories du stress, les résultats montrent : a) que l'expérience de la précarité est moins négative pour ceux qui ont des ressources et font face à l'insécurité de l'emploi avec des stratégies d'adaptation ; b) que les stratégies les plus utilisées sont axées sur la modification de la situation et sur la gestion des émotions ; c) que les jeunes n'abandonnent pas leurs plans pour l'avenir.

Enfin, il n'y avait pas de différences entre les jeunes italiens et les français, ce qui montre que l'insécurité de l'emploi est un phénomène qui affecte les jeunes à l'échelle globale, malgré les différences entre les pays, et qui les oblige à mobiliser des ressources et des stratégies pour y faire face.

Cette étude comporte plusieurs limites liées à l'approche qualitative : l'échantillon de répondants est réduit ; les participants à l'étude ont été choisis par le bouche à oreille et aucune rémunération n'a été donnée pour participer à la recherche, de sorte que seuls les participants qui ont accepté spontanément de participer à l'étude ont été interviewés, donc les entretiens présentent le point de vue d'un groupe spécifique de jeunes à un moment et à un lieu donnés ; l'échantillon qui a participé à l'étude était composé de jeunes avec un niveau d'études élevé et dans une situation de forte insécurité, de sorte que les résultats ne peuvent pas être généralisés ; en outre, la nature transversale de l'étude ne permet pas de tirer des conclusions sur l'efficacité effective des stratégies d'adaptation émergentes dans le temps.

Par rapport aux implications pratiques, cette étude contribue au débat sur l'insécurité de l'emploi en tant que perception subjective et préoccupation globale pour les salariés précaires en Europe. Il montre également que pour certains jeunes salariés précaires, il peut s'agir d'un stress professionnel, même dans les pays ayant de meilleurs régimes sociaux (Kim, Muntaner, Shahidi, Vives et al., 2012). D'autres études qualitatives transnationales devraient approfondir l'analyse de l'expérience de l'insécurité dans divers pays et de la façon dont les jeunes y sont confrontés et projettent leur vie dans ce climat d'insécurité généralisée.

En outre, cette étude a montré que les jeunes salariés précaires ne sont pas passifs, mais participent activement à la lutte contre l'insécurité de l'emploi par l'activation d'un processus qui implique des interconnexions entre les stratégies d'adaptation axées sur le problème et les stratégies axées sur les émotions. Par conséquent, pour soutenir les jeunes salariés temporaires à trouver les meilleures solutions pour améliorer leur

situation, émotionnellement et concrètement, les professionnels doivent tenir compte de chaque personnalité, de chaque situation particulière de travail et des perspectives de carrière et de vie subjectives. De cette manière, les chercheurs pourraient proposer et mettre en œuvre de meilleures pratiques pour aider les jeunes à acquérir de nouvelles compétences pour devenir résilients et être prêts à faire face à la flexibilité et à l'incertitude de leurs trajectoires de travail (De Cuyper, Notelaers & De Witte, 2009; Savickas, Nota, Rossier et al, 2009). En outre, les institutions et les organisations devraient leur fournir des cours d'orientation et de séances de conseils de carrière, ainsi que des cours de formation à la recherche d'emploi facilement accessibles sur le territoire.

Enfin, une innovation importante de cette étude concerne l'impact de l'insécurité de l'emploi sur les trajectoires de vie. Cette étude a montré que la conquête de l'autonomie des jeunes salariés temporaires est influencée par leur situation professionnelle, certains d'entre eux vivent encore avec leur famille ou dépendent économiquement sur elle, de sorte que la famille a le rôle principal pour les soutenir dans leurs projets d'avenir. Ces résultats devraient influencer le discours politique sur la question de la « vulnérabilité » des jeunes sur le marché du travail et de nouvelles politiques devrait être proposées pour soutenir les jeunes et leurs familles à faire face à l'insécurité de l'emploi et à construire leur avenir.

ÉTUDE 2. Les stratégies de coping atténuent-elles la relation entre l'insécurité de l'emploi, la santé auto-perçue et la satisfaction de vie ?

L'insécurité de l'emploi est devenue une préoccupation globale pour les salariés et de nombreuses études en ont étudié les conséquences négatives (De Witte, Pienaar & De Cuyper, 2015). La plupart des études ont porté sur les conséquences liées au travail, telles que les attitudes reliées au travail et les comportements organisationnels, moins sur l'impact de l'insécurité de l'emploi sur le bien-être général. C'est pour plusieurs raisons: a) à la fois parce que la relation entre l'insécurité de l'emploi et le bien-être au travail est plus élevé ; b) parce que les résultats sur l'impact de l'insécurité de l'emploi sur le bien-être général ne convergent pas ; c) lorsque il y a une convergence, l'intensité

des relations diffère entre les études (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). Bien que la littérature sur les conséquences de l'insécurité de l'emploi ne soit pas convergente, plusieurs études longitudinales ont montré que l'insécurité de l'emploi a des conséquences négatives sur la santé et sur le bien-être plutôt que le contraire (De Witte et al., 2015). Par conséquent, l'enquête sur les modérateurs potentiels devient importante pour deux raisons : a) il est important d'identifier les facteurs potentiels qui peuvent réduire et amortir les effets négatifs de l'insécurité de l'emploi ; (b) étant donné que l'ampleur des effets de l'insécurité de l'emploi sur les résultats du bien-être diffère entre les études, il convient de tenir compte d'autres facteurs comme explications possibles de la relation entre l'insécurité de l'emploi et ses conséquences (Sverke, Hellgren et Näswall, 2002, Chen & Chang, 2008, Chen, 2013). Il est donc important d'approfondir la relation entre l'insécurité de l'emploi et les résultats généraux du bien-être en tenant compte des facteurs possibles qui peuvent les augmenter ou les réduire, et donc des possibles modérateurs.

L'objectif de cette étude est d'étudier la relation entre l'insécurité de l'emploi, la santé auto-perçue et la satisfaction de vie, ainsi que le possible effet tampon des stratégies de *coping* spécifiques contre l'insécurité de l'emploi, axées sur le problème et axées sur les émotions.

Par rapport à la relation entre l'insécurité de l'emploi et la santé, l'intérêt provient du fait que les résultats ne convergent pas. Certaines études ont signalé des relations négatives significatives entre l'insécurité et les perceptions de santé (D'Souza et al., 2003; Ferrie, Shipley, Marmot, Stansfeld & Smith, 1995; Ferrie et al., 1998, 2005; Ibrahim, 2009; László, Pikhart, Kopp, Bobak, Pajak, Malyutina, Salavec et Marmot, 2010). Cependant, dans certaines études, la relation significative trouvée n'était pas forte et différait pour certaines caractéristiques démographiques telles que le sexe, l'âge (Regulier, 2008) et la classe sociale (Ibrahim, 2008), la durée de l'exposition à l'insécurité (Burgard et al., 2009) et le niveau d'insécurité de l'emploi signalé (Kinnunen & Natti, 1994).

En ce qui concerne la relation avec la satisfaction de vie, peu d'études l'ont étudiée en rapport avec les résultats du bien-être liés au travail, où la relation négative entre l'insécurité et la satisfaction de vie est expliquée par l'hypothèse de *spillover* selon laquelle l'insécurité de l'emploi réduit la satisfaction au travail et la vie professionnelle

se reflète sur la satisfaction de vie globale (Lim, 1996) ; ou avec le modèle de « privation » (Jahoda, 1982), indiquant que le travail est un facteur clé pour assurer les besoins économiques et sociaux de l'individu et lorsqu'il est menacé il réduit la satisfaction de vie, car, selon les théories du stress, l'anticipation de la perte de l'emploi peut avoir les mêmes conséquences que la perte actuelle.

Ainsi, l'étude suppose que l'insécurité de l'emploi ait une relation négative avec la santé auto-perçue et la satisfaction de vie (H1).

De plus, comme l'intensité des relations entre l'insécurité de l'emploi et les résultats du bien-être varie, il faut accorder plus d'attention aux modérateurs potentiels. La littérature se concentre principalement sur les modérateurs contextuels, tandis que moins d'études ont étudié les stratégies d'adaptation personnelle. Parmi les études qui ont étudié le fait de faire face à l'insécurité de l'emploi, les résultats ne convergent pas : certaines ont constaté que les stratégies axées sur les problèmes contribuent à réduire les conséquences de l'insécurité ; d'autres recherches ont révélé que les stratégies centrées sur les émotions ont un effet positif ; tandis que d'autres études ont montré que les stratégies basées sur l'évitement ont des effets négatifs. Une explication de cette divergence de résultats peut être due au fait que les stratégies d'adaptation diffèrent en fonction de la situation et, jusqu'à présent, toutes les études ont utilisé des mesures du *coping* générales qui ne sont pas spécifiques à une situation d'insécurité de l'emploi.

Par conséquent, d'après la littérature précédente, cette étude utilise une échelle de *coping* construite ad hoc, avec des items inspirés par des échelles existantes et déjà validées dans la littérature, composée de stratégies d'évitement et de deux types de stratégies axées sur le problème : le comportement de recherche de travail, de soutien et de possibilités de formation et les comportements de citoyenneté organisationnelle, qui sont ces comportements extra-rôle, où, par exemple, la personne est davantage disponible, aide ses collègues ou participe à toutes les réunions dans l'espoir de ne pas être licenciée.

Sur la base d'études antérieures sur le *coping* et l'insécurité de l'emploi, on a émis l'hypothèse que la mise en œuvre de stratégies d'évitement augmente la relation négative entre l'insécurité de l'emploi et les résultats de bien-être (H2a) et que les stratégies axées sur le problème (recherche d'emploi, de soutien et des possibilités de

formation H2b, les comportements extra-rôle H2c) aient un effet positif et réduisent donc cette relation.

Les hypothèses ont été testées dans un échantillon de 769 salariés français appartenant à différentes catégories sociaux-professionnelles. Toutes les échelles utilisées étaient déjà validées en langue française, sauf que l'échelle du *coping*, pour laquelle on a suivi la méthode de la traduction inverse et sur laquelle on a testé les qualités psychométriques. On a demandé aux participants le niveau d'accord sur les comportements qu'ils auraient mis en œuvre pour faire face à la possibilité de perdre leur emploi : un exemple d'item du *coping* d'évitement est « Je me sentirais méfiant(e) à l'idée de rechercher un nouvel emploi » ; des exemples d'item de *coping* centré sur le problème du type recherche d'emploi, de soutien et de formation « Je m'engagerais activement à chercher de nouvelles opportunités d'emploi (via des petites annonces, sites internet, en me présentant spontanément aux entreprises) » ou « Je m'adresserais à des personnes qui peuvent m'aider à trouver un emploi » ; un exemple d'item de comportements extra-rôle « J'essaierais de travailler plus et je me propose pour travailler davantage ».

Les analyses descriptives, les corrélations, l'analyse de régression hiérarchique avec interaction ainsi que le calcul des *simple slopes* ont été effectuées à l'aide du logiciel SPSS 24. De plus, la cohérence interne a été calculée pour toutes les échelles à travers l'alpha de Cronbach.

Les résultats de l'analyse de régression hiérarchique ont montré que l'insécurité de l'emploi a une relation négative avec la santé auto-perçue et la satisfaction de vie, de sorte que l'hypothèse H1 est confirmée. La seule interaction résultat significative a été celle des stratégies de *coping* du type de recherche d'emploi, de soutien et de formation, où un haut niveau de *coping* permet d'atténuer la relation négative entre l'insécurité de l'emploi et les résultats de bien-être, en particulier dans un état de faible insécurité, donc H2b est confirmé alors que H2a et H2c ne sont pas confirmés.

En accord avec des études antérieures, qui ont relevé que le *coping* actif réduit la relation négative entre l'insécurité de l'emploi et le bien-être lié au travail (Richter et al., 2013), ces résultats ont montré que s'engager dans des comportements de recherche d'emploi, du soutien et des possibilités de formation dans une situation de faible insécurité peut avoir un effet positif sur la relation négative entre l'insécurité de

l'emploi, la santé auto-perçue et la satisfaction de vie, ce qui réduit l'impact négatif que l'insécurité a sur les résultats du bien-être. Alors que lorsque les salariés souffrent davantage de l'insécurité, l'effet positif de ces comportements serait réduit. Selon la théorie du stress transactionnel (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) et la théorie de la conservation des ressources (Hobfoll, 2002), l'insécurité de l'emploi est une source de stress que les salariés perçoivent comme une menace et s'appuient sur leurs ressources dans la tentative de l'atténuer, de limiter les conséquences négatives qui y sont associées et de préserver leur bien-être. La théorie de la conservation des ressources (Hobfoll, 1998) indique que les personnes s'engagent à accroître, à conserver et à protéger leurs ressources. Dans la lutte contre le stress, les individus utilisent leurs ressources et cherchent donc à gagner de nouvelles ressources afin de récupérer les ressources menacées ou perdues. Lorsque l'insécurité est faible, il est probable que s'engager dans la recherche d'emploi, du soutien et des possibilités de formation pour contrer la peur de perdre son emploi résulte en un gain de ressources. Mais lorsque l'insécurité ressentie est élevée, la mise en œuvre de ces comportements pourrait être une « arme à double tranchant » car, en mettant en œuvre des comportements pour l'atténuer, les sujets réduiraient leurs ressources sans obtenir de nouveau gain, surtout si les résultats escomptés ne sont pas atteints (par exemple, trouver un emploi plus sûr). Ces résultats sont conformes à la littérature générale sur le *coping*, selon laquelle l'utilisation de stratégies d'adaptation centrées sur le problème, dans des situations où la source de stress n'est pas claire et difficile à contrer, entraînerait une perte de ressources (Folkman et al., 1979).

Cette étude comporte plusieurs limites. Premièrement, il s'agit d'une étude transversale qui ne permet pas d'établir des relations de causalité entre les variables examinées. Des études futures, longitudinales ou par journaux de bord, devraient examiner les effets de l'insécurité de l'emploi au fil du temps, en vérifiant la modulation possible de stratégies d'adaptation spécifiques. Deuxièmement, l'utilisation du questionnaire auto-compilé pourrait conduire à « gonfler » les relations entre les variables observées en raison du biais de méthode commune (Conway, 2002). Néanmoins, lorsque les interactions sont testées, la variance de méthode commune peut atténuer plutôt que renforcer les effets d'interaction (Conway & Briner, 2002), de sorte que les interactions trouvées peuvent être considérées assez robustes. Une troisième

limitation de l'étude concerne la méthode d'échantillonnage de convenance qui a permis de collecter un échantillon hétérogène, mais pas représentatif de la population active en général, de sorte que les résultats ne peuvent pas être généralisés. En outre, la construction d'une échelle du *coping* peut présenter certains problèmes en raison de la sélection d'items qui ne représentent que quelques stratégies d'adaptation spécifiques entre toutes les façons dont les gens pourraient réellement faire face à l'insécurité de l'emploi. Les recherches futures devraient répliquer ces résultats en tenant compte de stratégies d'adaptation plus spécifiques pour se confronter à l'insécurité de l'emploi, tirées de la littérature qualitative sur l'insécurité, comme le bénévolat, demander conseil à un professionnel, etc.

Cependant, ces résultats sont importants d'un point de vue théorique, car ils peuvent être considérés comme une contribution à l'extension de la recherche d'éventuels modérateurs de l'insécurité de l'emploi à des stratégies d'adaptation personnelles spécifiques contre l'insécurité professionnelle plutôt que d'envisager uniquement des ressources contextuelles telles que le soutien social, la justice organisationnelle ou l'employabilité.

En ce qui concerne les implications pratiques, cette étude contribue à la compréhension de la relation entre l'insécurité de l'emploi et les résultats du bien-être général, en montrant que l'insécurité est négativement liée à la perception de santé et à la satisfaction de vie, indépendamment des résultats de bien-être liés au travail. Ces résultats suggèrent que la recherche dans le domaine de la psychologie du travail et des organisations ne devrait pas négliger l'impact de l'insécurité professionnelle sur le bien-être général et elle devrait approfondir ces relations par des études longitudinales pour voir comment les effets de l'insécurité sur le bien-être général non seulement se développent dans le temps, mais aussi persistent au fil du temps et influencent les choix et les trajectoires de vie.

En outre, l'originalité de cette étude est l'investigation de stratégies d'adaptation spécifiques contre l'insécurité comme facteurs d'atténuation de la relation négative entre l'insécurité de l'emploi et les résultats de bien-être général. En particulier, les résultats ont montré que les comportements de recherche d'emploi, du soutien social et des possibilités de formation pourraient compenser la perte de ressources et ils pourraient être importants pour l'obtention de nouvelles ressources pour ceux qui ont signalé une

faible insécurité de l'emploi, alors qu'il pourrait consommer des ressources supplémentaires (Bolino, Valcea & Harvey, 2010, Ito & Brotheridge, 2003) pour ceux qui ont déclaré ressentir une insécurité de l'emploi élevée. Ces résultats ont plusieurs implications pratiques. Tout d'abord, ils soulignent l'importance de considérer des stratégies d'adaptation spécifiques pour contrer l'insécurité de l'emploi plutôt que des styles de *coping* généraux. Des études futures devraient développer ces résultats en examinant le rôle des tampons d'autres stratégies de *coping* spécifiques contre l'insécurité. Deuxièmement, ces résultats ont montré que les gens pouvaient contrecarrer activement l'insécurité de l'emploi en utilisant des comportements de recherche d'emploi, de soutien social et de possibilités de formation. C'est une découverte importante, car l'insécurité de l'emploi est considérée comme une source de stress difficile à traiter et à contrer. Les professionnels devraient développer des pratiques et des interventions, dans le cadre de conseils privés et organisationnels, pour aider les salariés à acquérir leurs compétences dans la recherche d'emploi, à activer les réseaux sociaux et à identifier les possibilités de formation pour améliorer le sentiment de contrôle sur leur situation professionnelle et leur employabilité personnelle.

En outre, comme l'ont souligné Stiglbauer et Batinic (2015), l'effet de stratégies d'adaptation actives pourrait changer avec le temps : ils pourraient avoir des effets négatifs à court terme (en raison de la consommation de ressources), mais des avantages à long terme (pour gagner de nouvelles ressources). Comme cette étude est transversale, cela ne permet pas de tirer des conclusions sur ces effets. D'autres études longitudinales devraient répliquer ces résultats pour observer l'effet tampon des stratégies de *coping* axées sur le problème au fil du temps dans la relation négative entre l'insécurité de l'emploi et les résultats de bien-être.

ÉTUDE 3. « Les trois semaines d'un salarié précaire ». Étude par journaux de bord sur les fluctuations de l'insécurité de l'emploi au fil du temps chez des enseignants précaires italiens à l'approche de la fin de leur contrat

L'insécurité de l'emploi est une source de stress et de nombreuses études ont étudié ses conséquences négatives sur le bien-être des salariés, moins d'études ont traité la façon

dont les perceptions d'insécurité évoluent au fil du temps et quelles ressources ont un effet sur les perceptions de l'insécurité rapportées dans le temps. Les études par journaux de bord permettent de détecter les changements d'une variable au fil du temps. Le but de cette étude est d'étudier : a) comment les perceptions d'insécurité de l'emploi des enseignants précaires évoluent à l'approche de la fin de leur contrat ; b) comment les enseignants précaires diffèrent dans leur perception d'insécurité ; c) quel rôle ont le soutien social de la part des collègues et celui du principal de l'école, en tant que ressources contextuelles, pour déterminer leur perception d'insécurité.

La précarité des enseignants en Italie est un thème délicat, complexe et difficile à résoudre. Après l'obtention d'un master 2 et la réalisation d'un stage professionnel, les enseignants ont accès aux concours publics pour entrer dans les classements nationaux, qui sont utilisés par les écoles pour les sélectionner et les embaucher pour des emplois à durée déterminée jusqu'à ce qu'ils soient définitivement assumés par l'Etat et les écoles peuvent les sélectionner comme enseignants titulaire. Tant que l'État ne les embauche pas en permanence, leur affectation dans les écoles sera temporaire et coïncidera avec la durée d'une année scolaire, du début septembre à fin juin, après quoi ils seront au chômage en attendant un appel pour une nouvelle affectation pour l'année scolaire qui suivra (Grimaldi, 2013). Ils connaissent donc la durée de leur affectation et peuvent demander pour les deux mois d'été où ils ne travaillent pas, juillet et août, une allocation de chômage. Par conséquent, les enseignants précaires se retrouvent sous une forme particulière d'insécurité objective : ils connaissent la durée de leur emploi, ils savent avec certitude qu'ils perdront leur emploi, à cela s'additionne l'attente et l'incertitude de l'appel pour une affectation temporaire l'année suivante ou du recrutement par l'État et de l'appel par les écoles pour l'affectation permanente.

Plusieurs études sur les perceptions de l'insécurité dans les périodes de restructuration organisationnelle ont révélé que, face au changement organisationnel, la perception d'insécurité de l'emploi augmente chez les salariés (Keim et al., 2014). De même, on suppose qu'à l'approche de la fin du contrat, l'insécurité de l'emploi perçue chez les enseignants précaires augmente, de sorte que cette étude suggère qu'en s'approchant de la fin de leur contrat d'emploi, les enseignants précaires peuvent ressentir davantage l'insécurité professionnelle (H1).

Puisque l'insécurité est une perception subjective et, dans la même situation objective, différentes personnes peuvent être affectées plus ou moins intensément, il est possible que certains facteurs contextuels tels que le soutien social perçu sur le lieu de travail par les collègues et les superviseurs puissent influencer les perceptions d'insécurité de l'emploi. Dans la littérature, le soutien social a été plus étudié dans la relation *stressor-strain*, mais certaines études ont étudié la relation directe avec le facteur de stress et ils ont constaté que le soutien réduit la perception du *stressor*. L'environnement de travail a une influence sur la perception d'insécurité et les enseignants précaires à l'école peuvent se sentir soutenus par les collègues et par le principal de l'école qui pourraient fournir de l'aide respectivement pour gérer la charge de travail quotidienne et partager des informations sur d'éventuelles possibilités d'emploi alternatives (collègues) et restituer des *feedbacks* sur leur travail et donner des informations sur l'avenir de leur emploi dans cette école (le principal). Étant donné que le soutien lié au travail est considéré comme une ressource importante dans l'environnement de travail en situations d'insécurité de l'emploi (Lim, 1996), il est probable, comme l'explique la théorie de la conservation des ressources, que les enseignants précaires mobilisent leurs ressources sociales et ce soutien de la part de leurs collègues et du principal réduise leurs perceptions d'insécurité, en augmentant la perception du contrôle sur leur situation professionnelle. Il est donc supposé que le soutien des collègues (H2a) et le soutien du principal (H2b) réduisent les perceptions de l'insécurité de l'emploi des enseignants et que ces effets sont observés au fil du temps.

L'étude portait sur 47 enseignants précaires à l'école, d'âge moyen de 34 ans, ayant une ancienneté moyenne dans l'école où ils enseignent depuis moins de deux ans. Les participants ont été contactés trois mois avant la fin de leur contrat, en avril 2017, et ont été sélectionnés en fonction de leur affectation expirant le 30 juin. Ils ont d'abord complété un questionnaire de base où leur perception générale du soutien par leurs collègues et le principal a été mesurée, puis trois fois par semaine pendant trois semaines en mai 2017, ils ont complété un journal dans lequel ils ont signalé leur perception quotidienne de leur insécurité de l'emploi.

Les analyses de données comprenaient des statistiques descriptives, des corrélations et la cohérence interne des échelles grâce au logiciel SPSS 24. Le changement au fil du temps des perceptions d'insécurité et la relation entre le soutien des collègues et du

principal et l'insécurité de l'emploi ont été testés à travers le LGM (Linear Growth Model) avec des variables observées dans le logiciel MPLUS 7.3.

Les résultats ont révélé des différences inter-sujets et intra-sujets dans l'insécurité mesurée le premier jour et des différences inter-sujets dans les perceptions de l'insécurité au fil du temps. La perception de l'insécurité de l'emploi n'a pas augmenté linéairement à l'approche de la fin du contrat, mais au contraire, à la première mesure et à la dernière, les niveaux d'insécurité étaient identiques. Les fluctuations hebdomadaires des perceptions de l'insécurité ont également été observées : la première semaine, l'insécurité diminue au milieu et vers la fin de la semaine, la deuxième semaine elle augmente au début, au milieu et se réduit à l'approche du week-end, alors que la troisième semaine elle se réduit au milieu et augmente à la fin. Par rapport à l'effet du soutien social sur les perceptions d'insécurité, on a vu que le soutien du principal a un effet positif sur les perceptions d'insécurité dans la mesure où il réduit les perceptions d'insécurité que les enseignants rapportent, par contre le soutien de la part des collègues ne se rapporte pas de manière significative aux perceptions d'insécurité.

Par conséquent, la première hypothèse de l'étude n'est pas confirmée (H1) : les perceptions d'insécurité n'augmentent pas à l'approche de la fin du contrat, ceci montre comment l'insécurité est une perception subjective ; même l'H2a n'est pas confirmée : le soutien de collègues ne réduit pas les perceptions d'insécurité ; tandis que l'H2b est confirmée : le soutien de la part du principal de l'école est une ressource importante pour déterminer les perceptions de l'insécurité chez les enseignants précaires, probablement parce qu'il fournit des informations ou des assurances sur l'emploi et donne aux enseignants un peu de perception du contrôle sur leur situation professionnelle.

Cette étude présente plusieurs limites. Tout d'abord, la taille de l'échantillon relativement petite, ce qui arrive souvent dans les études par journaux de bord. Cependant, pour surveiller les changements dans le temps, le nombre de jours et de mesures est plus important que le nombre de participants (Ohly et al., 2010). Deuxièmement, l'échantillon de cette étude comprend uniquement des enseignants précaires et ne tient pas compte des enseignants permanents, de sorte que les résultats ne peuvent pas être généralisés à la population enseignante en général. Cependant, compte tenu de la nature spécifique du contrat des enseignants précaires (employés par

l'État et recrutés par les écoles), l'enquête sur les perceptions de l'insécurité de l'emploi dans un échantillon d'enseignants titulaires, dont l'emploi est fortement protégé et garanti par l'État, aurait probablement conduit à des résultats trompeurs. En outre, la méthode par journaux de bord est méthodologiquement complexe : pour obtenir des données fiables et valides, les études journalières doivent atteindre un niveau d'engagement et de dévouement des participants rarement requis dans d'autres types d'études. Pour résoudre ce problème, cette étude a favorisé l'analyse d'un nombre limité de variables grâce à l'utilisation d'échelles de mesure avec peu d'items, de sorte que le questionnaire journalier prendrait quelques minutes à compléter. Une autre limite possible est l'utilisation d'une mesure d'insécurité qui ne tient compte que de la perception de la possible perte de l'emploi (De Witte, 2000), sans tenir compte de la peur de perdre d'autres aspects du travail (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984, 2010), ce qui peut être important lorsque l'on considère la nature de l'emploi des enseignants.

Malgré ces limites, cette étude est la première à investiguer comment les perceptions de l'insécurité de l'emploi évoluent au fil du temps dans un échantillon d'enseignants et d'autres études devraient réexaminer ces hypothèses en considérant d'autres aspects et mesures d'insécurité.

Par rapport aux implications pratiques, les résultats de cette étude montrent que les perceptions de l'insécurité de l'emploi n'augmentent pas chez les enseignants précaires, à l'approche de la fin de leur contrat. Ainsi, cette étude contribue à démontrer la nature subjective de l'insécurité de l'emploi (Van Vuren, 1990) et montre que dans la même situation objective, les sujets diffèrent dans leur expérience de l'insécurité professionnelle (De Witte & Naswall, 2003). D'autres études devraient explorer les fluctuations de la perception de l'insécurité de l'emploi chez d'autres types de salariés dont le contrat arrive à expiration.

De plus, cette étude a montré qu'il est important de tenir compte des facteurs potentiels qui influent sur les perceptions de l'insécurité de l'emploi. La recherche a montré que le soutien social du principal de l'école est très important pour les enseignants précaires. Ainsi, cette étude contribue à soutenir la relation directe entre le soutien social et le *stressor* (Fenlason & Beehr, 1994; Viswesvaran et al., 1999). Il souligne également que les enseignants précaires qui perçoivent d'être soutenus par le principal signalent percevoir moins d'insécurité professionnelle au fil du temps.

En définissant les interventions pour aider les enseignants précaires à se confronter à l'insécurité de l'emploi, les professionnels devraient tenir compte de ces résultats et proposer des initiatives de formation pour sensibiliser les enseignants précaires au nouveau rôle que jouent les principaux des écoles dans le processus de recrutement, à la lumière de la nouvelle législation italienne. En outre, les relations enseignants-principal devraient être encouragées car elles sont vraiment importantes pour le bien-être des enseignants et pour la construction, le soutien et la promotion d'un climat d'apprentissage dans les écoles (Price & Moolenaar, 2015).

En outre, étant donné que des cours de formation gratuits pour tous les enseignants sont fournis, même s'ils ne sont pas obligatoires pour les enseignants précaires (Fusacchia & Luccisano, 2014), les écoles devraient promouvoir des cours de formation pour aider les enseignants précaires à se confronter à leur situation professionnelle et encourager une bonne communication, des échanges et des relations positives avec les collègues et le principal de l'école.

CONCLUSION GENERALE

Par rapport aux trois études présentées, cette thèse approfondit le phénomène de l'insécurité de l'emploi dans différents aspects et avec différentes méthodologies et fournit des résultats qui s'ajoutent à la littérature existante sur l'insécurité de l'emploi, ajoutant des contributions importantes en termes de stratégies de *coping* et de ressources qui peuvent réduire les perceptions de l'insécurité et ses conséquences.

Les résultats de cette thèse ont plusieurs implications pour la pratique.

La première étude a permis d'approfondir l'expérience subjective de l'insécurité de l'emploi et d'identifier dans le processus de confrontation à l'insécurité de l'emploi différentes ressources et stratégies d'adaptation spécifiques qui aident les personnes à contrer l'insécurité de l'emploi et ses conséquences. En particulier, les stratégies d'adaptation axées sur le problème et les stratégies d'adaptation visant le traitement des émotions ont émergé sous la forme de deux aspects liés aux mêmes tentatives de préservation du bien-être dans une situation d'insécurité de l'emploi. Cela implique que les professionnels devraient tenir compte de la spécificité de l'insécurité de l'emploi et

promouvoir l'activation de ressources et la mise en œuvre de stratégies d'adaptation plus adaptées en concevant des interventions ciblées et des pratiques de conseil (Savickas, 2012), ainsi que des activités de soutien psychologique facilement accessibles pour aider les jeunes à s'adapter à la discontinuité.

En outre, les résultats de la deuxième étude ont montré que l'insécurité de l'emploi affecte négativement la perception de santé et la satisfaction de vie, qui peuvent augmenter lorsque les personnes s'engagent dans certaines stratégies d'adaptation spécifiques. Par conséquent, dans la conception d'interventions pour aider les personnes à identifier des stratégies de *coping* efficaces pour contrer l'insécurité de l'emploi, les professionnels devraient non seulement prendre en compte les objectifs de carrière, mais aussi aider les personnes à développer des sentiments associés à leur situation d'emploi, à définir l'importance de l'emploi dans la construction de leur identité (Fryers, 2006), dans la détermination de leur bien-être et de leur satisfaction à l'égard de la vie. En ce qui concerne les répercussions sur les ressources humaines, les organisations devraient promouvoir des interventions qui peuvent améliorer la capacité des employés à activer des ressources personnelles et contextuelles pour faire face à l'insécurité de l'emploi, en fournissant par exemple des cours de formation au leadership, en clarifiant les rôles au travail, avec l'amélioration de la disponibilité des managers et des supérieurs et en facilitant la communication dans les organisations et la participation des employés à la prise de décision (Callan, 1993; De Witte, 2005).

En outre, la troisième étude, conformément aux résultats de la première étude, a identifié l'importance du rôle du soutien social en tant que ressource contextuelle qui peut réduire les perceptions de l'insécurité. Ce résultat montre que dans une situation d'insécurité, l'activation des ressources contextuelle est un facteur clé pour déterminer l'expérience subjective de l'insécurité. Par conséquent, ce résultat suggère que les psychologues du travail, dans la conception de leurs interventions et pratiques pour aider les personnes à faire face à l'insécurité de l'emploi, devraient se concentrer sur l'identification des ressources qui pourraient aider davantage les sujets à préserver leur bien-être.

En conclusion, dans toutes les études, a émergé la nature subjective de l'insécurité de l'emploi (Van Vuuren, 1990), ce qui implique non seulement que les perceptions varient entre les sujets, mais aussi que les réactions et les facteurs qui peuvent réduire

ses perceptions et ses conséquences sont subjectives. Par conséquent, les professionnels, dans la conception d'interventions et dans la proposition des solutions pour réduire les perceptions d'insécurité de l'emploi et ses conséquences négatives sur le bien-être des salariés, devraient tenir compte du niveau individuel et accompagner les personnes dans leur processus de transition professionnelle. Suite aux recommandations de Savickas et collègues (2009), des pratiques d'orientation professionnelle et *career guidance* pourraient être mises en place pour aider les individus à réfléchir sur leurs objectifs personnels et de travail et à identifier les meilleurs moyens pour activer des ressources personnelles et contextuelles pour les atteindre. Afin d'aider les sujets à faire face à l'insécurité de l'emploi, les professionnels devraient les guider pour trouver des stratégies d'adaptation spécifiques qui leur conviennent le mieux et qui leur permettent d'accroître leurs ressources et de préserver leur bien-être.

ABSTRACT

Purpose – The changes in the labour market have led to an increase in perceived job insecurity among workers, with negative consequences on their wellbeing. This thesis aims to contribute to the literature on job insecurity by presenting three studies that deepen several aspects that need to be explored further: the personal and subjective experiences of job insecurity, its consequences on some general wellbeing outcomes, resources and coping strategies as factors that may reduce job insecurity perceptions and consequences.

Design/Methodology – Data were collected through a multi-method approach, consisting of a qualitative study through biographical interviews, a quantitative study through a self-reported questionnaire and a diary-study.

Results – Overall, findings show that job insecurity is a subjective perception and that people in the same situation can report different levels of insecurity. Factors related to the ability of people to activate resources, personal and contextual, and to put in place effective coping strategies contribute to determine to what extent job insecurity is perceived and its consequences on general well-being and trajectories in life.

Limitations – Limitations of this thesis concern the methodology: in general, the three studies do not allow to state any direction of causality between the studied variables, they all use self-reported measures and a convenience sampling method.

Practical implications – The results of this thesis encourage the development of practices of career support and career guidance, at individual level, in order to help people: a) to reflect on their personal and professional goals; b) to identify their best ways to activate personal and contextual resources; c) to develop effective coping strategies to address job insecurity, work transitions and to preserve their well-being.

Keywords – job insecurity, wellbeing, coping strategies

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INTRODUCTION

A deep transformation in the nature of work has occurred in the last decades due to different phenomenon that have globally interested world and European economy: a) the globalisation process of 1980's have brought international movement of goods and services, financial capital, information and people (Dreher, Gaston & Martens, 2008) and have increased the global competition (Brooks, Weatherston & Wilkinson, 2010); b) the technological revolution brought by the globalisation has transformed the way in which many people work (Litchfield, Cooper, Hancock & Watt, 2016), by enabling them to deal with increasingly complex demands and by allowing them to remain "connected" to their work, with possible consequences on their well-being in terms of work-family interference (Derks, ten Brummelhuis, Zecic & Bakker, 2014; Ghislieri, Emanuel, Molino, Cortese & Colombo, 2017); c) the "Great recession" of 2007-2009 have led to a rise in unemployment, especially for some groups of the labour force, such as male, young and less educated workers, as well as individuals from ethnic minorities (Elsby, Hobijn & Şahin, 2010; Verik & Islam, 2010); d) the increase in global competition has determine the need of maintaining competitiveness in the labour market insofar competition, by producing consumer savings, stimulates demand and leads to lower the prices for consumers by increasing their purchasing power (Lowe, 2009); e) as a way to promote competition, the labour market flexibilisation (Blanchard, Jaumotte & Loungani, 2014; Keeley & Love, 2010) has been enhanced by the reduction of labour costs through organisational operations of privatization, outsourcing, mergers, acquisitions and downsizing (Fapohunda, 2012; Litchfield et al., 2016) and at the same time through the introduction of atypical contract arrangements that have increasingly replaced long-term contracts (Kim, Muntaner, Shahidi, Vives et al., 2012).

All these changes have made workers' occupational prospects more indefinable and unpredictable (Savickas, 2012) and have raised their feelings of job insecurity (De Witte, De Cuyper, Vander Elst, Vanbelle & Niesen, 2012).

Since job insecurity is recognised as one of the most important stressor of the contemporary working life (De Cuyper, Bernhard-Oettel, Berntson, De Witte & Alarco, 2008), the aim of this thesis is to contribute to the literature on job insecurity by presenting

three different studies on job insecurity, its consequences and potential buffering factors.

Defining job insecurity

From the first publication on the topic that came out by Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984), the psychological concept of job insecurity has been defined in these 30 years by many authors. Job insecurity has been described as the “perceived powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation” (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984, p. 438), as the “subjectively experienced anticipation of a fundamental and involuntary event related to job loss” (Sverke, Hellgren & Näswall, 2002, p. 243), “the perceived threat of job loss and the worries related to that threat” (De Witte, 1999, p. 156; Sverke, Hellgren, Näswall, Chirumbolo, De Witte & Goslinga, 2004, p. 39). What all these definitions have in common is the idea that workers are concerned about the continuation of their job in the future (De Witte, 2005; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). In the literature, definitions of job insecurity adopt both a multidimensional and a global view (Keim, Landis, Pierce & Earnest, 2014). From a multidimensional view, job insecurity is a subjective experience that concerns different aspects: the threat of job loss, the desire for continuity in an employment situation, the risk of losing desirable job features, and the powerlessness to be able to do anything to change the situation (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984, 2010). Instead, according to a global view, job insecurity is the fear of workers they might lose their job and become unemployed (De Witte, 1999) and can be identified in three components: (a) it is a subjective perception; (b) it implies uncertainty about the future of the job; (c) it implies doubts on the continuation of some contents or specific aspects of the job as such (Van Vuuren, 1990). Regarding the first (a) and the second (b) point of this definition, a conceptual issue emerges and requires an additional distinction between *objective* versus *subjective* job insecurity (Klandermans & Van Vuuren, 1999; De Witte & Näswall, 2003). The *subjective* operationalization of job insecurity refers to the first characteristic identified by Van Vuuren (1990): job insecurity is a subjective perception, based on the individual’s interpretation of a work situation (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans & Van Vuuren, 1991; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002; Van Vuuren 1990). It is likely that people report different feelings of job insecurity and different consequences of job insecurity even when they live the same objective situation (Klandermans & Van

Vuuren, 1999; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). In other words, the same objective situation may be perceived in different ways by workers: some may feel insecure even if they have a secure job, for example because their work sector is in crisis or their expectations of job security from their organisation are high (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2007), or they do not feel supported at work (Lim, 1996), or they are under organisational change (Keim et al., 2014); whereas, others with insecure jobs and an objective precarious situation may not feel insecure, even though they will certainly be dismissed soon, for instance because they actively chose the temporary employment to be more flexible (Giunchi, Chambel & Ghislieri, 2015), or because they perceive themselves highly employable (Silla, De Cuyper, Gracia, Peiró & De Witte, 2009) or because they feel to be supported and guaranteed by the social security system (Kim, Muntaner, Vahid Shahidi, Vives, Vanroeleni & Benach, 2012). Secondly, the *objective* conceptualization of job insecurity refers to the second characteristic identified by Van Vuuren (1990): job insecurity differs from job loss because it refers to an anticipation of unemployment, created by an actual threat of job loss identified, for instance, with the temporary employment (Pearce, 1998) or with organizational change (Klandermans & Van Vuuren, 1999).

Furthermore, in the literature other categorizations of job insecurity are proposed: some researches differentiate between *cognitive* (perceived probability of job loss) and *affective* job insecurity (fear of become unemployed) (Hellgren, Sverke, & Isaksson, 1999; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002); others between *qualitative* (uncertainty regarding the continued existence of important job features, such as income, work schedule etc.) and *quantitative* (loss of the job itself) job insecurity (De Witte, 2005; Hellgren et al., 1999).

So far, three meta-analyses (Cheng & Chan, 2008; Sverke et al., 2002; Keim et al., 2014) and some reviews (De Witte, 1999, 2005; Klandermans & Van Vuuren, 1999; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002) resumed the overall results presented in the job insecurity research. The reason why job insecurity has attracted a lot of interest from the research community relies on its negative consequences: according to the transactional stress theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), job insecurity acts as a work stressor that leads detrimental effects on employees' wellbeing (De Witte, Pienaar & De Cuyper, 2015). Following the transactional stress theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), fearing the possibility of become unemployed, firstly people perceive

the possible job loss as a threat to their personal wellbeing (primary appraisal), because employment loss threatens the personal capability of fulfilling important life needs, such economical and social needs (Jahoda, 1982), secondly they activate resources and coping strategies to counteract it (secondary appraisal). The conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) integrates the stressor-appraisal process with the evaluation of personal resources of which individuals dispose. Accordingly, people perceive job insecurity as a threat and are more or less affected by its negative consequences depending on whether job insecurity leads them to a gain or loss of resources.

Research needs

The European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (2015) has pointed out that job insecurity has become a constant concern for workers and that's exactly why job insecurity attracts and needs the attention of the researchers community. Indeed, nowadays employees constantly face the threat and challenge of job transition (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002; Griep, Kinnunen, Nätti, De Cuyper, Mauno, Mäkikangas, & De Witte, 2016; Savickas, Nota, Rossier, Dauwalder, Duarte, Guichard & van Vianen, 2009) and organizations are not able anymore to guarantee a life-long employment, thus careers are the responsibility of employees (Savickas et al., 2009; Duarte, 2004). In this climate of widespread job insecurity individuals are required to find adaptive coping strategies and factors that may help them to counteract the stress of job insecurity and its negative consequences in order to preserve their wellbeing. For practitioners in work and organizational psychology it is of primary importance to investigate how people live job insecurity, how job insecurity affects their general wellbeing and how they can counteract, reduce and buffer job insecurity perceptions and consequences. In doing so researchers may suggest and implement some practices to support people in developing new competences and skills for being ready to face flexibility and becoming life-long learners who are able to be resilient facing job insecurity, to improve their employability and to maintain their wellbeing (De Cuyper, Notelaers & De Witte, 2009; Savickas et al., 2009). Therefore, every two years, two or more symposiums on the topic are organised at the *European Association of Work and Organisation Psychology - EAWOP* congress.

With the aim to contribute to the research on job insecurity, between all the possible

studies in the domain of job insecurity this dissertation focuses on three particular needs and directions of research.

First of all, since the vast majority of the studies on job insecurity are quantitative, the necessity to better understand through a deep qualitative analysis the personal living and the subjective interpretation of a job insecurity situation, as well which specific coping strategies people use to face job uncertainty and which consequences job insecurity determines on life trajectories and personal choices for the future. Furthermore, since empirical comparisons that take account of national specificities are always scarce upon the impact of labour market flexibilisation on the quality of life (Pochic, Paugam & Selz, 2003), there is a need to consider in the investigation of job insecurity and its consequences considering also country specificities.

Secondly, as a work stressor, job insecurity has been associated with a lot of negative consequences on employees' wellbeing at work and general wellbeing (De Witte et al., 2015). However, despite substantial literature has focused on the investigation of the consequences of job insecurity, the relations between job insecurity and some general wellbeing outcomes, such as general health (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002) and life satisfaction (De Witte, 2005), are still not clear and further studies are needed. Furthermore, since the results in the literature on the consequences of job insecurity are not convergent, it is important to individuate potential factors, such as personal specific coping strategies (Mantler, Matejcek, Matheson & Anisman, 2005; Richter, 2011; Richter, Näswall, De Cuyper, Sverke, De Witte & Hellgren, 2013), that may affect the negative relationship between job insecurity and wellbeing outcomes not related to work.

Finally, since job insecurity is a subjective perception, people in the same situation may feel more or less insecure according to individual differences or environmental factors (Chen & Chang, 2008). Thus diary studies are needed to explore the fluctuations of job insecurity over time and potential factors that may affect job insecurity perceptions over time and may determine differences in how job insecurity is perceived.

The present thesis

With the aim of answering to these research needs, this dissertation presents three different studies that address specific research aims by means of a multi-method approach:

Chapter 1 – STUDY 1. The first study is a qualitative research that investigates the experience of job insecurity in young highly educated precarious workers from Italy and France, aged between 25 and 35 years old. Through biographical interviews and a narrative analysis approach the living of insecurity is deepened to better understand how people cope and react to their forthcoming job loss and how they manage to live their job insecure situation and to project their future.

Chapter 2 – STUDY 2. The second study is a quantitative cross-sectional study, realized among a sample of workers with different type of contract and from different professional sectors in France, that aims to better understand the mechanisms involved in the relation between perceived job insecurity and general wellbeing outcomes, self-related health and life satisfaction, considering the potential buffering role of some specific coping strategies.

Chapter 3 – STUDY 3. The third study, carried out in Italy, is a diary-study that analyses the fluctuations in a three-week period of the perceptions of job insecurity among a sample of precarious school teachers and investigate the role of social support by colleagues and by the school principal as contextual resources that may affect job insecurity perceptions.

Finally, the key findings of the three studies are summarized and integrated in a general conclusion that proposes methodological considerations, practical implications and directions for future research.

STUDY 1

Perceived Job Insecurity, Coping Strategies and Life Trajectories among young highly educated precarious workers (between 25-35 years old) in Italy and France:

A narrative study

Abstract

Purpose – Work flexibility has enhanced job insecurity feelings, especially for young workers who often face insecure labour market positions (Baranowska & Gebel, 2010) that make it difficult for them to design their future (Bertolini, Hofaecker & Torrioni, 2015). The aim of this study is to deepen through a narrative approach the personal living of job insecurity, coping strategies and life trajectories of young highly educated precarious workers in Italy and France.

Design/Methodology – A total of 31 interviews were collected and were analysed following the Blustein and colleagues (2013) narrative procedure.

Results – Young workers that report not to suffer from job insecurity reported some personal strategies, as coping strategies, and contextual resources, as social support, that seem to help them in dealing with their situation. Furthermore, respondents answered not to give up to their life plans at both professional and personal levels. No differences were found between Italian and French respondents.

Limitations – The limitations of this study are: the modest size of the sample, the personal narratives that reflect individual experiences, thus the results may not be generalized, and the potential of bias from the investigators.

Research/Practical Implications – In line with previous studies, this study found that job insecurity, despite national specificities, is a global concern for young workers in Europe, who try to counteract it by activating resources and implementing coping strategies. Based on these findings, researchers should suggest and implement some practices to support young insecure workers in developing new competences and skills to face job insecurity.

Originality/Value – This study contributes to the literature on job insecurity by analysing through a qualitative study the personal experience of job insecure young workers and its association with coping strategies and life trajectories.

Keywords – Job insecurity, coping strategies, life trajectories

INTRODUCTION

The changes in the labour market and global economy that occurred in the last decades have led employment to become a common world and European concern (De Cuyper et al., 2008). In the attempt to full employment and to counteract the consequences of globalisation and periods of economic recession, Europe started to adopt specific strategies, for instance the European employment strategy (EES) in the 1990's based on the main principles of flexibility and security, the so called "flexicurity" (Milner, 2012). The notion of flexicurity emerged in the Netherlands in the mid 1990's with the idea that high levels of flexibility were essential to compete successfully in a globalized market and to afford high levels of employment security (Nardo & Rossetti, 2013). Therefore, to improve and create new pathways out of unemployment, Europe has encouraged countries to adopt the flexicurity paradigm under the challenge to reconcile greater flexibility, through flexible employment contracts, with the need to maximize security, through protective labour market policies (European Expert Group, 2007; Muffels & Luijkx, 2008; Wilthagen & Tros, 2004). The traditional employment relationships, characterized by open-ended contracts and high job security, did not seem to be anymore the best solution in the new economic scenario, characterized by periods of recession and economic recovery. Indeed, the labour market flexibility has prompted diverse forms of employment arrangements, which differ significantly from the standard contractual model, namely permanent contracts, in terms of the degree of employment and income security and the relative stability of the associated working and living conditions (Commission of the European Communities, 2006). Nowadays, employers require employees to adapt to the transformations that globalization imposes on organizations and are discouraged in hiring new staff under permanent contracts because of the excessively protective terms and conditions of standard contracts. Indeed, Europe stimulates employers to propose "atypical" contractual relations, that could facilitate job creation and assist both workers and enterprises by easing labour market transitions, assisting life-long learning and fostering the creativity of the whole workforce (Commission of the European Communities, 2006). Whilst the revision of contractual arrangements was necessary to expand and introduce new types of labour relations characterized by a higher flexibility, as demanded by the

globalized market, on the other end, the use of atypical employment has led to a reduction in social protection, to the disadvantage of employees (Tronti & Ceccato, 2005). Therefore, the spread of atypical work, which on the one hand has led to a business advantage, has also brought negative consequences for workers: a collapse of confidence in the ability to maintain their jobs, lack of job stability and job security, difficulty in designing their future, especially for young people, who enter for the first time the labour market and are looking for work experiences, not to mention the negative consequences from a social and relational point of view. As can be seen, atypical work, supported both by institutions as a response to youth unemployment and by organizations for a need for flexibility to counteract the economic crisis, would seem to represent a fairly high cost to pay for workers: job insecurity and precariousness (Di Novi, 2012).

The literature on temporary employment points out the negative consequences of job insecurity, especially for young workers in Europe that often face insecure labour market positions, namely atypical temporary employment arrangements (Baranowska & Gebel, 2010), and are likely to postpone important decisions in their private lives (Bertolini, Hofaecker & Torrioni, 2015). However, most of these studies are quantitative and they do not provide the level of depth available in qualitative studies (Blustein, Kozan & Connors-Kellgren, 2013).

The aim of this study is to understand the ways in which highly educated workers, aged between 25 and 35 years old, with a temporary contract, live their objective job insecurity situation, by using a narrative inquiry approach. Coping strategies are investigated to better understand how insecure young workers face job insecurity and their life trajectories are explored to deepen how job insecurity impacts their expectations and their projects for the future. Furthermore, since there is a lack of comparisons between countries in the literature of job insecurity, this study is carried out in Italy and France and considers potential national characteristics. By using a narrative approach, the interest of this study is to provide results that will contribute to the job insecurity literature and research, and sustain professional in developing consistent counselling practices (Blustein et al., 2013).

Coping with job insecurity

Facing a stressor, people are likely to mobilize the resources they dispose in the attempt

to counteract the stressor and its consequences. The ways in which a stressor can be managed are defined by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) as coping strategies, namely cognitive and behavioural efforts that people use to respond to specific external and/or internal demands by mobilising their resources. Coping styles can be differentiated in strategies focused to directly change the situation and manage the stressor, such as problem-focused coping; and strategies that address to deal with emotions and cognitions associated to the stressor, namely emotion-focused coping, both in a positive way, for example seeking of emotional social support, positive reinterpretation and optimism; or with a low profile through acceptance and compromise; or in a more passive way, such as to deny and escape from the situation, the so called avoidance coping (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989).

According to the transactional stress theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1998), facing the possibility to lose their job, people are likely to draw on the resources they dispose and implement coping strategies. However, there is no consensus on which coping strategies may be better to deal with job insecurity. Following the literature on stress and coping, the effectiveness of problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping depends whether the source of perceived stress is clear or not (Folkman, Schaefer & Lazarus, 1979, Pinquart & Silbereisen, 2008): problem-focused coping seems to be more effective when the source of stress can be clearly identified and contrasted directly; whereas, emotion-focused coping seems a better option if the source of stress is ambiguous, complex and personally relevant, thus it is better to deal with emotions and cognitions associated to it (Armstrong-Stassen, 2005; Folkman et al., 1979).

Job insecurity is not a clear problem that can be solved since it is a situation beyond individuals' control and, contrary to the certainty of dismissal, makes it hard to select which coping strategies are better to use (De Witte, 2005). In this case, the literature on stress suggests that the use of emotion-focused coping may be the best solution, whilst problem-focused coping strategies may result in a loss of resources (Folkman et al., 1979). However, since job insecurity is a subjective perception and people differ in their pool of resources, it is likely that in the same situation reactions can be very different: some people may prefer to react by actively looking for a new job; others may try to find the positive in their situation; others might prefer to avoid thinking about it etc.

Therefore it is important to ask people how they react to job insecurity to define which specific coping strategies have the better potential in helping people to deal with this type of stressor.

Asking people how do they cope with job insecurity

Some authors in previous qualitative studies have asked people that were passing through organisational change and crisis how they felt and what did they do to cope with the situation (Bagnara & Bargigli, 2009; Heuven, Schaufeli & Bakker, 2009; Astarlioglua, Bayraktar Kazozcua & Varnali, 2011).

Heuven and colleagues (2009) interviewed 25 employees working in companies during a process of restructuring and/or downsizing in the Netherlands. The majority of their respondents reported to react to job insecurity by actively searching another job, for example by looking for vacancies, by networking and writing applications. Other respondents were more stressed and reported to have developed several psychological problems and thus to be unable to start active job search. Furthermore, some other participants were unsure whether to leave open the option for internal replacement or to start an active job search.

Bagnara and Bargigli (2009) questioned 25 insecure employees working for companies in crisis in Italy. Among their respondents, the majority reported to adopt collective behaviours marked by passivity, with a fairly limited action of union demands. Furthermore, they answered to be more committed to the organisation, in the attempt to show their value for the company and avoid to be dismissed. The authors pointed out that for most interviewees the dread of job loss was due to their fear of not being able to find another job and of losing the credibility conquered till that moment, thus the interpretation of job insecurity as a stressor and the reactions to it depended on each employee's personal situation.

Furthermore, among the 22 employees interviewed by Astarlioglua and colleagues (2011), reactions to job insecurity were differentiated in being engaged in organizational citizenship behaviours and in job search behaviours depending on their personal characteristics and some organizational variables: those employees who felt to be fairly treated and supported by their organization were more likely to engage in extra-role

behaviours and undertake citizenship behaviours rather than engaging in job search behaviours. In addition, if employees were optimistic about the job and had positive affectivity, internal locus of control and self-esteem, they were more engaged in citizenship behaviours rather than job search behaviours.

Moreover, Blustein and colleagues (2013) interviewed 11 unemployed and underemployed adults to better understand their experiences and to learn how they were coping with job loss. They found that those who had more positive experiences of unemployment tended to utilize behaviours oriented to enhance personal employability, namely accessing training and education, networking, and behaviours directed to improve personal wellbeing, such as focusing on their own physical and mental health and positive reframing.

To summarize, despite the literature on stress and coping suggests that facing an uncontrollable stressor by engaging in problem focused coping strategies may result in a loss of resources, so far the qualitative studies that have interviewed people on how they deal with job insecurity suggested that active coping strategies are preferred and may be the most used coping strategies in dealing with job insecurity and job loss.

Differences between countries

Countries differ in their welfare state regimes and labour market policies, thus in their capability of absorbing unemployment and guarantee labour market flexicurity. Between-countries differences may potentially affect the experience of job insecurity, job loss and coping strategies that people use to deal with it (László, Pikhart, Kopp, Bobak, Pajak, Malyutina, Salavecz & Marmot, 2010; Kim et al., 2012), thus it is important to consider national specificities when investigating job insecurity.

Italy and France compared

Italy and France are two countries that differ in their overall design of welfare state regimes (Graziano, 2011). Regarding social policy, five models are identified in Europe: Continental (Bismarckian); Anglo-Saxon; Nordic; Southern European (Mediterranean) and Central/Eastern (Ferrera, 2013).

Italy belongs to the Mediterranean model, where employment protectionism is high and labour market is not flexible. In Italy the level of social assistance is much lower than in other countries, there is more segmentation of status and rights and therefore the access to social provisions is very much conditioned. Since government does not guarantee social protection, the family has the main role in supporting its socially unprotected members (Popova & Kozhevnikova, 2013). Furthermore, as pointed out by Guarnaccia and colleagues (2016), not only temporary contracts are often the only type of employment offered to workers but they do not provide them any type of guarantee and social and health care protection (e.g., sick compensations, maternity leave, retirement contributions, unemployment allowance). Therefore in temporary contracts the resulting feeling of insecurity predominates over flexibility. Nevertheless, the Italian labour reform of 2015, implemented by Renzi's government and known as the *Jobs Act*, aims to do several changes on the labour law, for instance, increasing the protection from redundancy, the unemployment allowances, to limit atypical contract arrangements in favour of permanent contracts, to promote flexibility and work-family balance and to define active labour policies to promote employment (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2015).

Regarding France, it is included in the Bismarckian welfare social model, where social support is given to those who have already been represented on the labour market, and it fully depends on their social accumulation (Popova & Kozhevnikova, 2013). This model is based on the principle of "security" and is identified by the numerous laws on employment protection and an important amount of regulation in the industry. If on one hand, the labour market tends to be rigid and slow to react to globalisation, on the other hand, the government provides generous unemployment benefits, high quality health care and disability pensions. As in Italy, in France the new labour law, namely the *Loi Travail* promoted in 2016 and continued by the Macron's government, aims, among other things, to increase the protection from redundancy and to redefine the unemployment allowances, to regularise night work and teleworking, as well as limiting the use of technology for work-related reasons on off-work hours (Ministère du Travail, 2017).

According to the last Employment Outlook (2016) by OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – after the two jobs laws proposed by the respective Governments (the *Jobs Act* in Italy and the *Loi Travail* in France), Italy still

remains among the last countries in Europe concerning quantity and quality of available jobs and has high and increasing levels of job insecurity (expected monetary loss associated with becoming and staying unemployed as a share of previous earnings), that is almost the double compared to the average rate in Europe (6.5 average rate in OECD countries, 11.8 in Italy, data from 2013). To the contrary, results from France report that the job insecurity rate is falling and is lower than the OECD countries average (4.6 in France, data from 2013).

Concerning the unemployment rate (the share of persons in the labour force, 15-64 years, in unemployment) the percentage in Italy in 2015 was 12,1% and in France was 10,1%. Despite the unemployment rate being closer, compared to the rate of job insecurity, Italy and France still differ for the impact of unemployment that is less in France where the unemployment protection system is higher (Paul & Moser, 2009; Sen, 1999; Wilkinson, 2000).

Furthermore, state aid in respect of allowances for children and family benefits is higher in France than in Italy and France is the first country in Europe for births rate, with 1.96 babies for woman, the so-called fertility rate (data from 2015, Eurostat, 2017); while in Italy an alarming declining birth rate is registering, with -17.000 births in 2015 compared to 2014, and a fertility rate of 1.35.

Another important difference concerns the so-called phenomenon of brain drain that is rising in Italy (Pelletier, 2011) among high-educated millennials, young born between the 1980's and the 2000's. Young people, after long degree programs, are facing the fear of unemployment and of limited perspectives offered by the national labour market of origins, thus they are emigrating in more healthy countries (mostly Northern European countries) with the expectation to find a better job and life opportunities (Becker, Ichino & Peri, 2004).

Results on the vulnerability to the negative consequences of job insecurity of specific groups within different countries are conflicting (Lázló et al, 2010). Therefore in this study age and educational level are taken into account.

Job insecurity, age and educational level

Concerning age, some authors suggested that job insecurity might lead to more negative

consequences for people at the middle of their working life, since unemployment is generally less acceptable for older employees due to their family responsibilities and a strong dependency on a secure income (De Witte, 1999; Sverke et al., 2002; Cheng and Chan, 2008) and because they are concerned for a lower level of occupational mobility (Kuhnert & Vance, 1992). Unemployment at other ages might be less detrimental as young individuals would maintain their “youth role” for a little longer, whereas older persons might consider early retirement (De Witte, 1999; Sverke et al., 2002). In their meta-analysis on the moderating effect of age in the relationship between job insecurity and consequences, Cheng and Chan (2008) reported that younger employees had more turnovers and felt themselves more employable, whereas older employees reported lower physical and psychological health.

Regarding education, some authors suggested that low-educated people are more negatively affected by job insecurity than those higher educated due to their lack of social and financial resources (Cheng et al., 2005; Sverke et al., 2002) and because they perceive less employability (Silla et al., 2009). However, Schaufeli (1992) reported that highly educated individuals may suffer from “status inconsistency” when faced with job loss and this would further increase strain and the risk of poorer health.

Therefore, it is important to investigate the experience of job insecurity through cross-national studies that consider specific groups (specific age and educational level) and national specificities.

Research questions

According to the literature presented above, this study seeks to add a unique perspective in the job insecurity literature by identifying, in the young precarious workers’ own words and stories, how they understand and manage their job insecurity situations and project their future.

As previous studies investigated job insecurity in employees who were under organisational change and crisis, this study considers workers who find themselves in an objective job insecurity situation, namely the temporary contract arrangement.

Moreover, nowadays, compared to the past, the age at which young people leave their family home and at which they settle down is postponed, especially when young people

undertake a long study program, thus they take more time to become autonomous and to make important life choices. For these reasons, this study considers workers who belong to the age group between 25 and 35 years old and with a high education level (a master degree, equivalent to four or five years of university studies).

Furthermore, since there is a growing interest in Europe for the issues of job insecurity and international empirical comparisons are always scarce upon the impact of labour market flexibilisation on the quality of life (Pochic, Paugam & Selz, 2003), this study aims to investigate possible differences in how young Italian and French precarious workers perceived, react and project their future in job insecurity situations.

Thus, the following research questions are formulated:

- 1. How do Italian and French young workers live their job insecurity situation? Do they differ in their way to experience job insecurity?*
- 2. Which are the coping strategies mostly used by young workers to face job insecurity? Do Italian and French young workers differ in their way to cope with job insecurity?*
- 3. How do Italian and French young workers project their future life trajectories (job, personal and family oriented)? Do they differ in their way to project their future?*

METHOD

Ethical statement

The present study involved human beings through the realization of semi-structured interviews. The Bioethical Committee of the University of Turin examined and approved the research project (14/7/2016). Since there was no medical treatment or other procedures that could cause psychological or social discomfort to participants, additional ethical approval was not required. The research was conducted in line with the Helsinki Declaration (World Health Organization, 2001). Participation in the research was

voluntary, without receiving any reward; participants signed the informed consent and anonymity was guaranteed through the choice of a pseudonym.

Participants and Procedure

The sample of the study was composed of 31 young precarious workers (with temporary contract or internship contract), gender balanced, aged between 25 and 35 years old, with high qualification (master's degree), in Italy and France (22 in Italy and 9 in France).

The recruitment was done through word-of-mouth and participants were selected based on the criteria of contract, age and study level, as mentioned previously. The interviews took place in a selected setting (office or house), thus to permit the interview recording (Table 1 provides a summary of the participants).

Table 1. Demographic profile of the participants.

	ITALY N=22	FRANCE N=9
Gender	10 Male	3 Male
	12 Female	6 Female
Age	Mean 28,56	Mean 28,77
	SD 2,76	SD 2,99
Relationship status	15 Single	7 Single
	2 Partnered	1 Cohabiting
	5 Cohabiting	1 Married
Contract type	16 Temporary contract	8 Temporary contract
	1 Stage	1 Stage
	3 Apprenticeship	
	1 Scholarship	
	1 Temporary agency contract	

Core interview questions

The interview outline was created through a review of the academic literature on job insecurity and job loss. Some workshops with brainstorming sessions between the researchers involved in the study permitted to outline the main themes to investigate, consistent with the research questions. The interview was organised in different content sections and a final section for collecting personal data. The main domains of the interview were identified and corresponded to the three different content sections in which the interview was organised:

- a) The first part was a section that deepened the subject's career path and the current job situation with a particular attention to subject's perceptions and living of job insecurity;
- b) The second part focused on the subject's periods of job loss and ways to deal with it;
- c) The third section investigated the plans and prospects for the future.

The interview outline was laid out with some "main questions" for each section (related to each main topic area) and with "follow-up questions" to be applied only if certain issues or sub-topics, such as feeling associated with job insecurity, coping strategies or personal and environmental factors, do not emerge from the interviewees' answers.

Before the interviews were conducted, the interviewers were trained on how to conduct the interviews thus to be empathetic and create an informal rapport with the participants to permit them to express themselves freely (Allodola, 2014).

Data analysis

Data analyses were conducted following Blustein and colleagues (2013) narrative procedure. The interviews were realized by three researchers, both in Italy and France. Before conducting the analysis, the interviewers organised a meeting to discuss the analytic procedure and to reach a consensus on the categories to identify in the main domains of the interview. The categories were classified in thematic and cross-thematic as following:

- 1. Work (thematic);
- 2. Job insecurity (thematic);
- 3. Coping strategies (cross-thematic);
- 4. Wellbeing (cross-thematic);

5. Future (thematic).

After the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed. Subsequently, the three researchers read separately each of the transcripts in their entirety and identified in each interview the main domains. For each domain they identified the different thematic and cross-thematic categories by selecting words and expressions that referred to the same topic.

For each category, relevant summaries and quotes were extracted and separately a set of codes was attributed, by associating thematic categories, for instance “work” coded “2”, to cross-thematic categories, namely “coping strategies” coded “A”. Furthermore, coping strategies were distinguished in: Problem Focused Coping (strategies used to deal directly with the problem, in order to solve it) that were coded « PFC » and Emotion-Focused Coping (strategies used to deal with the negative emotions associated to the stressor) that were coded « EFC ». Moreover, for each type of coping strategies were specified if they were MICRO (relying on oneself own resources and skills), MESO (“activating” resources and support from social networks) and MACRO (referring to policies and institutional resources and support).

After each researcher made separately the analysis of each interview, several meeting were organised to compare the analyses and to find a final agreement on interpretations and supporting quotes.

RESULTS

Four main topic areas related to the research questions were identified in the analysis:

1. *The personal experience and living of job insecurity and coping strategies and factors that affect the job insecurity experience;*
2. *Coping strategies against job loss;*
3. *Worries for the future and coping strategies and factor that affect the look that young workerse have towards the future;*
4. *Plans for the future and life trajectories.*

In this section, each of these themes is presented and examined with supporting quotes from the interviews. Italian and French interviews are analysed together and comments on differences are addressed in the discussion section.

1. The personal experience and living of job insecurity and coping strategies and factors that affect the job insecurity experience

The personal experience and living of job insecurity was investigated by asking participants the following question: “What worries you the most about your job insecure situation?” Two main trends emerged from the answers.

1.1 Worried people

Some respondents were worried for the insecurity of their job and perceived job insecurity as a stressor that reduced their wellbeing. They expressed feeling of distress, impotence and distrust for the future. Their negative feelings derived from the fear of precariousness, of not having a stable salary thus to permit to project their future and from the worry to need to restart from the beginning and to reinvent themselves.

“I’m worried that unfortunately I think it will end” (Sara, F, Italy).

“It stresses me” (Rose, F, France).

“The salary, not having a stability so you can see a future, which I do not see at the moment” (Costanza, F, Italy).

“The fact that it will be over and I will still have to re-invent myself” (Marco, M, Italy).

1.1 Factors that enhance the worries for the job insecurity situation

A link has emerged from interviews suggesting a strong relation between employment situation and gain of independence and economic autonomy. For interviewees, being economically independent, thus having a financial autonomy, appeared to be a chief element in the process of building their identity framework and the fear of losing the job putted this process into question. The concern for the job insecurity situation was enhanced by the worry to lose financial autonomy, life stability and conditions gained till that moment and by the threat not to be able to maintain them.

“I’m also worried because one says “now I’m working” but still think “and after?” Mostly because when you work you get used to so many things... the fact of also having an economic autonomy” (Clara, F, Italy).

“It is stressful, it is stressful because I am contractual so I never know at the end of the year where I will be after. Last year for example I was in a city, this year I managed to have a position in my city of origins, so I am happy, but I know that next year there may be no position, so I do not know where I will be next year, so it is this insecurity that, at the end of the year, stresses me” (Rose, F, France).

“The worry is the future” (Fabio, M, Italy).

1.2 Unworried people

To the contrary, other respondents reported not to be concerned for the insecurity of their job situation. In this case different ways and factors to manage the worries for the situation emerged.

1.2.1 Emotion-focused coping: optimism, positive thinking and positive reinterpretation

Some people reported some strategies that enabled them to live positively their job insecurity situation. As far as protective factors are concerned, at a micro level, from the interviews emerged personal aspects and subjective characteristics such as optimism and positive thinking. Optimism and the capacity to live more positively job insecurity seemed to be linked in a virtuous circle: the interviewees who seemed to perceive less negatively their job insecurity were also those who described themselves as more positive and optimistic about their situation. They reported the positive side of a temporary contract arrangement that permitted them to be flexible, to change, to learn new things and experiment new situations, thus it enhanced their feeling of being in control.

“I like the idea of a year here, a year there. Being able to change, always be in question, learn new things all the time” (Iris, F, Italy).

“I find that it is good. Because I like mobility. I like the fact of changing places, I like the fact that I’m free if I want to leave tomorrow” (Pauline, F, France).

“It’s just because everyone says “precarious” so you can supposedly be fired overnight. But it’s already the case on permanent contract, as long as they fire you, they tell you “It’s finished”, it’s the same” (François, M, France).

While for them it was more direct to interpret positively their situation, probably because their personality traits were more oriented to optimism, Maria needed to work deeply on her feelings and emotions to accept the uncertainty of her situation and to live it less negatively.

1.2.2 Emotion-focused coping: deep personal work on feelings and emotions management

Maria reported to have done a more deep work on her feelings and emotions to counteract the negative consequences of job insecurity. She understood that worrying was just detrimental for her and she started to relativize things:

“I realized that worrying was just bad for me and that’s why I started taking things as they came” (Maria, F, Italy).

1.2.3 Emotion-focused coping: adaptation

Furthermore, Maria was helped in dealing with her job insecurity feelings by her capability to adapt her expectation to the situation:

“I do not have big pretensions, fortunately I’m not a person who if he does not gain a 2000 euro salary gets frustrated” (Maria, F, Italy).

1.2.4 Emotion-focused coping: avoidance

For worried people the negative living of job insecurity was worsened by the uncertainty for their future. Consistently, respondents that were not worried reported to avoid thinking about the future, thus they preferred to live the moment and not to make projects for the future.

“There is nothing that worries me, if tomorrow it must end (the job), well it will be finished” (Philippe, M, France).

“I do not make long-term projects on this job because it’s not exactly what I want to do, so at the moment I took this opportunity, as long as I’m fine it will be fine” (Elia, M, Italy).

1.2.5 Emotion-focused coping: trust, self-confidence, personal employability

Other personal protective factors at micro level appeared to be some positive subjective attitudes towards life, such as confidence in the fate, and towards oneself, such as self-confidence and confidence in personal competences and employability.

“I am not stressed or anxious, I trust in fate, I tell myself that with my diplomas, with my experience, I could leave and find another job” (Philippe, M, France).

“I have never had this fear of staying at home without work” (Massimo, M, Italy).

1.2.6 Problem-focused coping: social support and extra-role behaviours

When people perceive a stressor they are likely to activate both personal and contextual resources. Work environment and contextual resources, such as work-related social support, revealed to be really important elements in determining to what extent people perceived job insecurity situation and which behaviours they were likely to undertake, such as extra-role behaviours to enhance their chances to remain in the organisation or job search behaviours that improve their chances to leave their organisation. Alessia, for instance, was confident that her good behaviour would enhance the resulting opportunities offered by contextual resources, such as the support from her supervisor:

“It’s a small environment. I’m not worried because I know if things go well and if I do well, I know he will keep me” (Alessia, F, Italy).

1.2.7 Problem-focused coping: strategic acting

Problem-focused coping strategies are oriented to directly deal with the stressor. In some cases, such as in the case of Alessia, good behaviours would enhance her chances to be supported by her supervisor and to be employed, thus in her case they created new resources. However, in some cases problem-focused coping to counteract negative

perceptions of job insecurity may result in a loss of energy and resources, especially when the situation does not change but, actually, become chronic. Dalia was concerned and anguished for not knowing where she would end the following year, thus she engaged in strategic thinking and active job searching in the attempt to counteract her insecurity feelings. But these ways, instead of helping her to counteract the stress, depleted her resources and led her to a waste of energy:

“There is this concern, always with this anguish to tell you “next year will I still do that?” I think in terms of strategy, so I consult the vacant places, you make your choices according to the offers and then there is this moment of anguish where you say “Will I be accepted, not accepted, what will happen”, I do not like this moment of floating and then this difficulty to be able to enrol you in something durable and suddenly to be confronted with an eternal recommencement. It is expensive in terms of energy” (Dalia, F, France).

2. Coping strategies against job loss

In the attempt to counteract a stressor, people activate their resources and implement coping strategies. Coping strategies are used to react to a stressful situation in the attempt to reduce its negative perceptions and consequences and to preserve personal wellbeing. On one hand, the use of coping strategies implies a loss of resources, but, on the other hand, represents a way to protect, preserve and potentiate resources. Coping strategies that young precarious workers use to deal with job insecurity and job loss were investigated by asking participants the following questions: “What did/do you do to counteract job loss?” “Who would you ask for help if you lost your job? And what would you do to find a new job?” Two styles of coping and several strategies were identified at micro, meso and macro level.

2.1 Problem-focused coping micro: job searching behaviours

The majority of respondents reported to engage in coping strategies that aimed to directly change their job insecurity situation. One of the most used strategies relying on personal resources was undertaking active job searching behaviours. Internet and online sites revealed to be important resources for searching a job. A lot of respondents preferred job

searching through Internet and online job sites, both to answer to ads and to present themselves by sending spontaneous applications.

“Going on the internet, sending CV, or if possible presenting myself” (Piero, M, Italy).

“I look for ads or in any case I submit a lot of CV to make me know” (Giulia, F, Italy).

Some of the most known online sites for job searching were cited, such as LinkedIn, Infojobs and Bakeca, as well as some less known resources.

“Looking on the Internet, mostly on Infojobs, Bakeca, LinkedIn, job sites, not just to ads, I also sent spontaneous applications (Costanza, F, Italy).

“Spontaneous application and answers to ads” (Rose, F, France).

In addition to these strategies, Domitouille also used a less known job site “Box my job” which she considered better for some functions that permitted to easily do job search and to make order in the job searching process:

“I do a lot of internet research, I post my CV online on different sites, I have a LinkedIn profile up to date in several languages, also a system called “box my job”: it is a platform that allows to select offers, put them in a kind of account and you can put the statuses: candidate, restarted, time. That is very useful, it suggests offers, according to which ones you have selected, so this is really a good tool to make order where we are in the research, because often we do an excel tables and it is not updated well and so it is not very useful” (Domitouille, F, France).

Even if Internet and online search were the most cited ways to look for job opportunities, some respondents reported to use more direct channels to find a job and to prefer going directly to present themselves on site:

“I go directly door-to-door” (Edouard, M, France).

“I try to distribute the CV either by door-to-door or by email” (Clara, F, Italy).

Furthermore, few participants indicated to still use traditional channels, such as ads on newspapers, word-of-mouth and even display small ads on store and shop boards.

“I look at the newspapers where there are ads, rather than the windows of the temporary employment agencies, or even I am basing a bit on the word-of-mouth” (Maria, F, Italy).

“Often word-of-mouth, especially for tutoring and baby sitting, sometimes through the insertion of little ads” (Viola, F, Italy).

2.2 Problem-focused coping micro: behaviours to enhance personal employability

In addition to job searching behaviours, several alternative ways have been identified as means to acquire competences and skills, to enhance personal employability, thus the chances to find a job, but also to feel recognised by the social community and to feel useful. Among the interviewees, there were those who identified themselves with their life choices strongly, through personal resources such as being venturesome and active. They perceived a force – the power of managing and buffering job insecurity via an optimistic proactive attitude towards life. Along with such aspect, the importance of acquiring know-how and learn emerged.

“I am active in the field of volunteering. I was cashier for two or three years of a sports company. And then I took part in the grass roots organisation of my small country of birth, where I’m also in the tourist pro-town of my country” (Luca, M, Italy).

“I do some volunteering around, then I do catechism and I do the animator on Sundays and Saturdays” (Roberto, M, Italy).

“I did volunteering with young people. I had absolutely no experience, but it was good” (Pauline, F, France).

“I did a volunteering experience in a humanitarian mission. It was a really rewarding experience on the human side, it made me feel useful” (Domitouille, F, France).

Louise was a member of an association that helped young graduates and unemployed people in their job searching process by providing them training courses and support in job searching:

“To find a job, I am part of an association that helps young graduates and unemployed people, I see a coach every week, she follows the evolution of my job search because while being on the internship I keep looking for a job, I remain in a research dynamic because you never know, the opportunities, I do not know if I will be hired afterwards. Through this association I see my coach every week or every other week and she encourages me to work my network” (Louise, F, France).

Furthermore, accessing training to enhance competences and skills represented another way for respondents to gain resources to counteract job insecurity and job loss but as well to restore control on their identity and their career construction process.

“...then even talking a bit around or even trying to do some training courses, especially English, but yes always looking for training, not to stay with your hands” (Iris, F, Italy).

“I would have an idea of the training that I would do if by any chance I found myself unemployed tomorrow” (François, M, France).

“I attend any workshop and meeting and anyway, one of the ideas of our company is to budget some of the money also by dedicating them to training” (Luigi, M, Italy).

In addition, going abroad represented another possible resource for participants to enhance their chances to find a job, by sending CVs and maintaining contacts abroad, and by having a work experience abroad even in a different field.

“I would send CVs, cover letters, here or abroad, I would contact maybe one or two friends who are abroad” (Philippe, M, France).

“I would like to have an experience abroad” (Marco, M, Italy).

“I think I would try with private schools, with employment agencies or abroad, I would definitely like to go abroad and do a work experience but not necessarily related to my specific skills” (Maria, F, Italy).

2.3 Problem-focused coping meso: social support searching behaviours

Problem-focused coping strategies emerged also at meso level, relying on contextual resources, that is informal and formal social support. Trying to keep their job or looking for a new job, some respondents reported that they have relied or would rely on informal social support resources, such as family, friends and relatives.

“I would go to ask friends and relatives if they know someone who might be interested in a figure like mine, with my CV” (Massimo, M, Italy).

“It is never by postulating spontaneously it is always via a person, either that they told me “we are looking for someone”, finally it is through the network” (Louise, F, France).

“It would be on my network rather, I think I would solicit my network to try to find solutions” (François, M, France).

In addition some respondents reported to rely on more formal social support resources, such as the job superior, the professor, colleagues at work or even institutional personalities, recognised as social resources that could provide consistent information and advices and have more influence in the job opportunities searching process.

“I will ask the strongest people! Such as ministers, ambassadors” (Edouard, M, France).

“A professor I have met during the PhD had told me the existence of this master, he reported that they were looking for professors and then he put me in contact with the director of the master, I applied and I was selected” (Carlo, M, Italy).

“We support each others between teachers, we speak among us and we make the information available to others” (Iris, F, Italy).

Furthermore, some respondents indicated to rely on their costumers and clients with whom they had established good relations, who could advise or directly provide them with job opportunities.

“I would probably first turn to the people with whom I created relationships in the workplace, in the sense, with the people I work with, perhaps the most important clients

who have been comfortable with me, so I would probably turn to them by saying that I'm looking for a new job and if maybe they either need me first or they know someone they might need. So then surely start from a network of job contacts and then I would go a bit further to look around" (Giulia, F, Italy).

"I would start by customers who trust me to try to understand if someone needs internal employees for his company. Otherwise, there are many colleagues who have companies, especially in Turin there are some realities and I would surely start looking at them" (Luigi, M, Italy).

2.4 Problem-focused coping macro: job searching behaviours and behaviours to enhance personal employability

Furthermore, problem-focused coping strategies were identified at macro level, thus based on institutional resources both used to look for job opportunities and to access training.

"I would take advantage of the networks that the Politecnico provides me" (Claudio, M, Italy).

"I would go to the Job Placement Office" (Federica, F, Italy; Rose, F, France).

"I participated to the Placement day organized by my University" (Elia, M, Italy);

"I participate to public calls" (Massimo, M, Italy).

Furthermore, other respondents reported to have used or would use training opportunities such as private and public training programmes.

Margherita, for instance, started a private master to specialise on her field of studies:

"I started a private master specialised on the field I wanted" (Margherita, F, Italy).

Giulia in addition to be registered to the job placement office and looking for job offers at employment agencies, wanted to always be informed and looked for seminars and workshops to learn how to ameliorate the CV and/or how to do a job interview:

“I am registered to the Job Placement Office. Furthermore I look for job offers at employment agencies. In general I am a curious person, so I keep myself updated on seminars on how to ameliorate the CV and/or workshops on how to do a job interview” (Giulia, F, Italy).

2.5 Emotion-focused coping micro

In addition to strategies directed to manage the problem and focused on changing the situation, many respondents reported the use of strategies aimed at dealing with cognitions and emotions associated with the job insecurity situation and the potential job loss. Concerning emotion-focused coping based on individual's resources, two main patterns were predominant. Job insecurity represented a difficult situation to deal with and people reacted differently according to their inter-individuals' differences: some people preferred to process the negative thoughts about job insecurity and some others preferred to concentrate directly to the positive aspects of the situation and used them to feel better, thus they focused directly on their wellbeing.

Some respondents preferred to have a discreet attitude towards their job situation and in looking for a new job. They oriented their emotions to accept the situation as it was by trying to have a low profile, being humble, being content, through compromise and adaptation that may help them to manage and reduce their expectations in the attempt to prevent strain and failure, even at the cost of working to gain experience without being paid or of accepting a lower paid job.

“I do not consider myself done, I want to start at the bottom. I started to work in this company in May, I was not paid, it was “a favour” they did to me, to make me see the selection process, because before I did something different, so I wanted to see the other side” (Costanza, F, Italy).

“For me it is good to do a job that I like very much even if I gain less than another one that I do not like but where I could earn more” (Sara, F, Italy).

“I always try to have the lowest profile, that is, in the sense I try to commit myself to the maximum but I do not have expectations, I do my part and then everything that comes

will be essentially earned, so not to create expectations that are then dropped” (Massimo, M, Italy).

“I do not like not to do anything, this would annoy me more than the economic question. I would do everything possible, even if it means accepting a lower paid job, thus not to be inactive” (Dalia, F, France).

Margherita showed herself really adaptive, for her when someone needs a job they should be ready to adapt to every situation, because every experience gives you something. In her case the fact of having a job that had nothing to do with the one she wanted gave her the strength to look for something better:

“I’ve always tried to go ahead saying that it will be useful anyway, but in general everyone should adapt, because if you need the job, you need it. The fact of having a job that had nothing to do with the one which I wanted gave me the strength to look around me for a possible window or a light that could just give me what I wanted to accomplish. I’ve always tried to go ahead saying that I’ll be doing something for myself” (Margherita, F, Italy).

To the contrary, other people identified themselves more with optimistic and proactive attitudes towards their situation, thus they reported more positive emotion focused strategies to deal with job uncertainty, such as positive reinterpretation, emotional processing of the situation, self motivation and self convincing. It is likely that in these cases the job insecurity counteracting process resulted in faster wellbeing outcomes, because these ways were directly focused to enhance wellbeing rather than to avoid negative consequences. Some respondents, for instance, forced themselves to resist in a job situation that they did not like and positively reinterpret the situation as a personal growth:

“I have lasted six months because I forced myself, so it was my choice. Let’s say that it also served me to do some experience and make me bones and tolerance. It was more than just a work experience, it was a personal growth” (Elena, F, Italy).

“I thought many times to give up, I was discouraged because my work was not recognised, but I tried to be strong and I kept going and I was ok, I learned a lot of things” (Fabio, M, Italy).

In other cases, the idea that they were doing a job that would not be the job of their lives, on which making projects, resulted in a protective factor. They were not stressed by their job insecurity situation that, actually, was a further motivation to be convinced that it was not the job of their life, thus it could be temporary without any psychological cost.

“I do not feel insecure actually, I need to tell myself that the work I do now I will not do it all my life since otherwise I cannot” (Philippe, M, France).

“Everything that is formative, all that gives you experience, not only at the technical level but also at personal level, I appreciate it anyway. However, I do not make long-term projects on this job because it’s not exactly what I want to do, so at the moment I took this opportunity, as long as I’m going to do well, then I could also decide within two months to go away and accept another job proposal” (Elia, M, Italy).

Furthermore, in many cases emerged for individuals the importance to have a job that corresponded to their study choices and that they liked and estimated useful. Therefore, it was not a random job that might enable an individual to be satisfied with his job situation. Doing any job or accepting more stable job arrangements may give a person a certain job security, but it could fail to mirror a person’s own personal identity, thus representing a psychological strain. Instead, if a job-identity match presents itself, both dimensions are there (i.e., job satisfaction and identity integration) and job insecurity negative consequences are diminished.

“I have always tried to do jobs that somehow correspond to what I was and I had studied” (Carlo, M, Italy).

“When my job does not satisfy me or if I have other needs I will move. I would struggle to do a job that is a end in itself” (Eva, F, France).

“For me it is important to do something that I appreciate, that I learn constantly, I must be interested, I also need to feel useful” (Louise, F, France).

“I have always tried to do what I liked or at least to make sure that I like it then, something that really interests me” (Olympe, F, France).

2.6 Emotion-focused coping meso

Strategies focused to deal with emotions were found also at meso level. In addition to be a way to find concrete job opportunities, social support resulted an important resource for processing emotions connected to a job situation. Indeed, to be ready to counteract efficiently job insecurity, some people may find helpful sharing their feelings with loved ones or whose are parts of their job and social context.

Some respondents indicated to refer to their informal social support resources to have help in managing their feelings connected to their job situation.

“From an emotional point of view, I think I would go to my parents” (Clara, F, Italy).

“I would refer to my girlfriend and sister, and then to my parents, probably in that order. From an emotional point of view they are definitely my main points of reference, and I know that anyway speaking with them would support me” (Luigi, M, Italy).

However, some people were more reserved and they preferred to deal with their problems by themselves, or they did not consider the support from friends and relatives because they did not think they could help them concretely to find a job, thus they preferred to rely on themselves.

“I would do it alone, I would do it alone, in the end I always did so” (Elena, F, Italy).

“I do not have any friends or relatives who can help me in a concrete way, that they may have positions for example in schools, so for now I would do by myself” (Viola, F, Italy).

“My family, I do not count on them. My friends, I do not count on them. It is always necessary that I rely on me and that I go by myself” (Edouard, M, France).

2.7 Emotion-focused coping macro

At macro level, strategies used to deal with emotions may be to ask for a professional help to process both negative emotions and to be accompanied in developing strategic job plans. In this second case, career counselling or outplacement practices are used to help people who undergo job transitions, however these practices are mostly used in more advanced career stages. Young people, even if they already have had several job experiences, are likely to still look to define their career trajectories, thus career guidance is probably more suited for them. Only two participants referred to have asked for professional help. Carlo needed to consult a psychologist because he found really difficult to deal with the negative emotions connected to his life situation:

“When I was in a deep crisis I went to a psychologist and it was very useful, it helped me, it was a poor year and it helped me so I could probably go back to her if I needed a strong support” (Carlo, M, Italy).

Instead, Louise was supported by a coach that helped her to develop her job search project:

“I see a coach every week, who sees a bit the evolution of my job search” (Louise, F, France).

3. Worries for the future and coping strategies and factor that affect the look that young workers have towards the future

The uncertainty of their job situation may make it difficult for young insecure workers to project their future. In order to deepen the relationship between job insecurity and the way that young people project their future, firstly a question on whether they had worries for the future was formulated: “Do you have any worries about significant life events in your future?” Two trends emerged.

3.1 Worried people

The employment situation resulted to be linked to the look at the future, since a job is important in fulfil individual's basic necessities, such as economical and social ones. Job at

risk determined the need to revise and to adapt personal life and projects to the situation. Individual attitudes towards life determined not just how a job insecure situation was lived but also how people thought about their future in a job insecurity situation. When someone was more optimist and prone to think positively, or had the support of contextual resources, he showed a positive look towards the future. To the contrary, people who had fewer resources and tended to look the negative of situations, or to be more passive, were more likely to be worried for their future.

Some respondents were worried for their future because of their job situation and they expressed negative feelings. Their worries, that affected their gain of autonomy and their look towards the future, concerned keeping their job, not becoming unemployed or not being able to achieve or maintain economical and housing autonomy, being employable or having good prospects.

“I have several concerns about the future in general” (Clara, F, Italy).

“The future, what I will do, maybe this contract at the university will end in two and a half years and within two and a half years I will find myself having a great experience within the university but no experience in the industry. So I do not know how much can I be spendable in the job market” (Piero, M, Italy).

“Absolutely worried, but I do not see any major solutions at the moment” (Giulia, F, Italy).

“I have the fear of seeing me as I am still alone and still living with my parents trying in many ways to leave but I cannot” (Federica, F, Italy).

“Unemployment scares me a lot” (François, M, France; Dalia, F, France).

3.1.1 Coping strategies to counteract the worries for the future

Several active behaviours were identified to reduce the worries for the future. Some respondents reported some problem-focused coping strategies, for example saving behaviours and budgeting, aimed at being prepared for the eventuality to stay unemployed for some time or to collect them in view of plans for the future.

“I decided not to squander all the salary. It would be beautiful, because of course having a full salary at your disposal and being alone (not having a family and children yet), I am a bit more free to spend it as I want, but I limit myself because it’s a fixed-term contract and I do not know how much time will pass before I get a new job” (Clara, F, Italy).

“We will continue to work and put some money aside until we have a bit to spend” (Giulia, F, Italy).

“I think of it, I already put money aside, a little every month” (Louise, F, France).

“Yes, put aside, have savings” (Rose, F, France).

3.2 Unworried people

In contrast, other respondents reported not to be stressed or concerned for their future, for instance, they were fatalist and restructured their way to think of tomorrow by living one day at a time:

“I live the future with great serenity, whatever happens, happens. At one time I thought maybe in an immature way that at certain age I would have done certain things, but now I think “let’s start with this, when it will be the time we will see the next step” (Alessia, F, Italy).

“I do not stress, anyway it is useless” (Philippe, M, France).

In this case different emotion coping strategies were found to manage the thoughts about the future.

3.2.1 Emotion-focused coping: optimism and positive thinking

Emotion-focused coping strategies such as optimism and positive thinking revealed to be good attitudes to face the thought on the future in job insecure situations.

“I’m optimistic, I say if it should happen I’ll think about it at the moment, I do not want to cross that bridge before” (Iris, F, Italy).

“I’m pretty confident for myself, in the sense that, I’m a cheerful person, I love life. I know I have a certain strength, in the sense that when a drama happens, well, I still manage to be happy” (Pauline, F, France).

Furthermore, Carlo, who had experienced a really difficult time and went to see a psychologist to overcome his crisis, never had a negative feeling thinking about the future:

“I am a positive and optimistic person, so I never think of these things. I have always suffered the present, never the prospect of the future” (Carlo, M, Italy).

3.2.2 Emotion-focused coping: avoidance

If for some people positive attitudes towards life helped to counteract the worries for the future, other respondents preferred more avoidance oriented strategies that protected them from worries and consequent strain, by for example not thinking at the future or by considering work as a purely selfish thing, with no influence on the future.

“I do not think too much of it because I am not sure that it serves that much to think about it. Finally if it happens, it happens and it will always be time to see what to do” (Olympe, F, France).

“Work at this stage of my life is a purely selfish thing, linked to my personal growth, I do not think about the future in that perspective” (Marco, M, Italy).

4. Plans for the future and life trajectories

Furthermore, plans for the future at job, personal and family level were investigated asking participants the following question: “Could you tell me something about your plans for your personal, family, educational and working life?”

4.1 Future educational and working plans

Job insecurity may represent a threatening situation that is likely to make difficult for young people to project their future. Some respondents were worried for their future and reacted putting in place active saving behaviours. In addition, positive thinking and avoidance attitudes resulted to be resources that help people not to worry for the aftermath.

Nevertheless, young people were more concerned by their daily life, whereas they seemed confident and hopeful in their future and indicated to have different projects for their life.

Some people reported to have training plans:

“I have this dream of going back to the university to take a law degree, which we will see. Of course, however, I would invest a lot in this new profession, so studying and training with things that I miss” (Carlo, M, Italy).

“From a professional point of view I have two projects in mind: do the exams to be Accounting Officer and Accounting Auditor and then probably this September I will apply for a second master degree still in the same field to have a mix of theoretical and technical skills” (Luca, M, Italy).

“I would like to keep training in my field” (Dalia, F, France).

Others respondents expressed the desire to do a work experience abroad:

“I would like to have a work experience abroad” (Piero, M, Italy).

“I am ready to go abroad” (Pauline, F, France).

4.2 Personal and family plans

Regarding personal plans, travelling represented for many respondents a project for the future.

“I would like to travel, because travelling fascinates me” (Alessia, F, Italy).

“I would like to visit India” (Elena, F, Italy).

“I really want to go abroad, discover the world” (Louise, F, France).

“I would like to do the tour of the world” (Dalia, F, France).

Furthermore, many participants expressed the desire to settle down and become autonomous or to earn money to be able to achieve it. For interviewees, housing autonomy and independence appeared to be chief elements in the process of building their identity framework, especially when they were regarded as the possibility to live independently from parents.

“I hope to leave my parents’ house and become autonomous” (Marco, M, Italy).

“I would like to be able to move in with my partner” (Costanza, F, Italy).

“I would like to settle in a place that is mine, to have enough money to have an apartment and to definitively leave my parents’ house” (Olympe, F, France).

Housing autonomy revealed to be a part of a stepwise acquisition process, which grew into independence gradually and was empowered by having a job and sufficient means. There was a volitional dimension to it and it was connected to one wanting to become oneself. The volitional dimension was strongly intertwined with a relational dimension, along which support coming from others reduced up to when independence was achieved, and, on entering adulthood, responsibility for others are taken (both in the direction of children and parents) as it was the case of Philippe that expressed the will to have a family in his future but he still lived with his mother and did not leave her house because he felt an obligation to take care of her:

“I would like to find a person and to have kids” (Philippe, M, France).

“My mother lives alone, she needs me. I could leave but I see it as a family duty, to my mother, I can not leave her, she begins to be old, she has no big financial income and so I stay there because my mother needs me” (Philippe, M, France).

And the case of Louise that described the fact of living with her parents as a status of child, expressed her desire to become autonomous and to have a family, but as well she realized that the gain of autonomy implied, with the time, an inversion of roles with her parents:

“With my parents it was nice but when someone is with their parents they have this status of child, they are also not autonomous and independent and psychologically they do not yet necessarily have a free-will and a true control on their life”

“I would like to be autonomous and independent”

“One day I will have a family. So I realize that my parents are getting older and that it is not yet the time when the relationship is reversed but I feel that I have duties towards my

parents and it is a moment of change because I will have to be present for them and I would like to take care of them” (Louise, F, France).

However, to the contrary, for some respondents the projection of having a family represented a threat to their autonomy and independence, thus they did not want it.

“I do not want to live together with my partner. I do not see kids in my future life. I want to be self-sufficient in my life, I do not see myself with children in the future and from a certain point of view I would like it to be so. I would not be me anymore because I would lose this aspect that characterizes me, where I bestow a cat” (Iris, F, Italy),

“I do not want to have a family, I do not want to have kids” (Edouard, M, France).

Another important aspect that emerged was the hope to be happy and to gain a peace of mind, thus to reach a wellbeing status that would not imply job insecurity.

“I would expect to be able to go to sleep quietly, without the anguish of never knowing what will happen tomorrow, if I can bring home something or not” (Giulia, F, Italy).

“I just hope to be happy” (Pauline, F, France).

All in all findings showed that job insecurity represented a concern for respondents, mostly for the present, and even if it determined some worries for the future, these worries are contained and did not seem to affect plans and trajectories for the future.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to deepen and describe the job insecurity living of precarious young and highly educated workers in Italy and France, investigating coping strategies and life trajectories, and to observe if different processes would emerge between the two countries. In order to do so, three research questions were formulated. The first research question concerned the experience of job insecurity in itself. Findings demonstrated that for some of the respondents, job insecurity was a stressor that led to worries and negative feelings. Employment is fundamental in guaranteeing the fulfilment of individuals’

economical and social needs (Jahoda, 1982) and in allowing the achievement of autonomy in life. Therefore, the threat of losing one's job is likely to lead to worries and strain, which are increased by the uncertainty for the future and by the fear to lose the achieved autonomy or the possibility to gain it. To the contrary, for other participants job insecurity did not lead to worries and strain. In this case, according to the transactional stress theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and the COR theory (Hobfoll, 2002) respondents reported mostly emotion-focused coping strategies to deal with the perception of job insecurity. Between the different emotion-focused strategies the ways that seemed more efficient to help young workers not to live negatively their job insecurity situation were optimism, positive thinking and positive reinterpretation, that can be seen as personal resources and individual traits against the stress of job insecurity (Carver & Connor-Smith 2010; Carver et al. 1993). Those who were less positively oriented in life, needed to do a deeper work on feelings and emotions to counteract the negativity of job insecurity: some of them found their ways to react in adaptation and some others preferred avoidance coping to counteract the negative experience of job insecurity. Furthermore, trust, self-confidence and personal employability were found to help people to perceive less negatively job insecurity, in accordance to previous studies that demonstrated that employability is an important factor to counteract job insecurity (Silla, De Cuyper, Gracia, Peiró & De Witte, 2008; De Cuyper, Baillien & De Witte, 2009; Aybas, Elmas & Dündar, 2015).

Moreover, some problem-focused coping strategies, such as engaging in good behaviours to encourage the support from the supervisor and the consequent possibility to be retained, resulted to be an important factor to reduce the negative experience of job insecurity, that is in line with previous literature that found the support by the supervisor as a buffer in the job insecurity-wellbeing relationship (Lim, 1997) and extra-role behaviours as coping strategies used by employees that felt supported by their organisations (Astarlioglu et al., 2011). Furthermore, another problem-focused coping strategy, such as strategic thinking and acting, was mentioned to counteract the negative experience of job insecurity. However, in accordance to the stress theory that suggests that problem-focused coping is a better strategy when the source of stress is clear, that is not the case of job insecurity, this strategy resulted more in a loss of resources than in a gain (Folkman et al., 1979). Overall these findings suggest that facing job insecurity young workers are likely to

mobilise their resources and use coping strategies to contrast the negative experience of job insecurity. Furthermore, among the participants, those who experience in the worst way job insecurity seem to have less resources and to activate less or less efficient coping strategies.

The second research question concerned the coping strategies used by young workers against job insecurity consequences, such as job loss and unemployment. In line with previous qualitative research, facing the possible job loss young workers responded to put in place several problem-focused coping strategies (Astarlioglu et al., 2011; Heuven et al., 2009). By relying on personal resources different problem-focused coping strategies were identified.

Firstly, some job search behaviours demonstrated to be efficient ways to directly address the problem and increase the chance to modify the job insecurity situation, by looking for a more secure job. Generally, interviewees have proven to be informed on the different possible ways and channels that can be used in job searching. Among them Internet and online job search, looking on ads and sending spontaneous applications were widely used. In addition, going door-to-door and traditional channels, such as ads on newspapers, word of mouth and even displaying small ads on stores and shop boards were reported. The fact that some ways were chosen rather than others resulted both from the particular type of job that in some case required specific channels of access, or from precedent individuals' successful experience in job search. Furthermore some respondent proved to be more prone to use certain channels rather than others because they participated in training courses, seminars and workshops.

Secondly, when the job situation did not allow identity completion, several behaviours, such as being engaged in volunteering, in local activities or associative participation represented strategies to cope with job insecurity and with the lack in the identity fulfilment. They permitted to counteract the job dissatisfaction connected to job insecurity by representing for people occasions to be venturesome and active, to be recognized by the social community and to display and acquire new competencies and skills (Nichols & Ralston, 2011). Therefore they may be seen as a way to enhance personal resources, empowerment, employability and the chances to find job opportunities (Kamerāde & Bennett, 2015; Slootjes & Kampen, 2017).

Furthermore, among the coping strategies relying on personal resources, accessing training to enhance competences and skills and going abroad represented other ways for respondents to gain resources to counteract job insecurity and job loss but as well to restore control on their identity and their career construction process.

The previous literature has shown that both work-related and not work-related social support buffers the negative relationship between job insecurity and wellbeing outcomes (Lim, 1996). Contextual support is really important when confronting with job stress, especially in the case of job insecurity, because it represents an additional source of resources that does not imply the consumption of personal ones. At meso level, young workers in job insecurity situations demonstrated to rely on both informal and formal social support. They looked for the support from their family, relatives and friends to find new job opportunities. If they were looking for keeping their job or to find similar jobs they relied more on work-related support, both vertical support, from their superiors, and horizontal support, from colleagues, because this type of support is more likely to increase their opportunity to be employed in the same organisation and to collect information and recommendations on similar job opportunities. Furthermore another source of support was the support from clients and costumers. It is likely that for those who had a job implying the contact with costumers and clients the fact of establishing good relations may turn in a selling point, because they could be of help and represent an alternative source of job opportunities.

In addition, regarding problem-focused coping strategies at macro level, findings indicated that young workers relied on institutional support by accessing job opportunities both through public body, such as the job placement centre, and institutional networks, such as the opportunities offered by university, like the placement days. Furthermore, respondents reported to access private and public training programmes to acquire new competencies in order to increase personal employability (Blustein et al., 2013).

In addition to problem-focused coping, several strategies aimed at dealing with cognitions and emotions associated with the job insecurity situation and the potential job loss have been identified at micro, meso and macro level, as complementary ways to counteract job insecurity.

Concerning emotion-focused coping based on individual's resources, findings suggest two patterns by which people manage their feelings associated with job insecurity. Some people concentrated directly to the positive aspects of their situation and used them to feel better, thus they were directly focused on increasing their wellbeing. For instance, they processed emotionally their situation in a positive way by self-motivation and self-convincing. Some others tried to preserve their wellbeing by focusing firstly on reducing job insecurity possible negative effects. For instance, they tried to manage and reduce their expectations by assuming a discreet attitude towards their job situation and by orienting their emotions to accept the situation as it was with a low profile, by being humble and content, and through compromise and adaptation.

Furthermore, in term of emotional protective factors, young precarious workers with high educational level were facilitated in managing negative feelings associated to job insecurity when their job was in line with their studies and their expectations, thus when they were satisfied with their job in terms of job characteristics and contents and did not suffer from "status inconsistency" (Schaufeli, 1992). Having a job that corresponded to their study choices and that they liked and estimated useful represented a protective factor and an emotional resource to be more prone to accept being in temporary and precarious contract arrangements.

Strategies focused to deal with emotions were found also at meso and macro level. In addition to be a way to find concrete job opportunities, informal and formal social support revealed to be for some respondents important resources for processing emotions connected to their job insecurity situation. Some people found helpful sharing their feelings with loved ones. Furthermore, some of them asked for professional help both to process negative emotions and to be accompanied in developing strategic job plans.

To summarize, results of this study confirmed that some problem focused coping strategies, already mentioned in the literature on job insecurity and coping, and some new active coping strategies, that not appeared in previous studies, are efficient ways to react to job insecurity. By implementing different types of active coping strategies young precarious workers could enhance the sense of being in control of their job situation, increase their job satisfaction and create, through having experiences and accessing training, further resources and opportunities.

Furthermore, the identification of several efficient emotion-focused coping strategies in addition to strategies direct to manage the problem and focused on changing the situation, suggest that facing job insecurity is a complex process that implies the use of different coping strategies that may go together and become two parts of the same job insecurity-counteracting process. Therefore it becomes important to consider both problem and emotion focused strategies together, in their intertwining relationships, when investigating job insecurity.

The third research question aimed to investigate how job insecurity affected the way in which people think and project their future. Investigating how young people live their present and project their future in job insecurity situations it is really important because temporary employment and job insecurity are likely to make difficult, for young workers, to design their future and bring them to postpone important decisions in their private lives (Bertolini, Hofaecker & Torrioni, 2015), thus leading negative consequences in the long run for the entire society. Results of this study showed that for young workers the living of job insecurity was strongly related to the thought towards the future. Young workers who showed more positive attitudes towards their job insecurity situation, such as optimism and positive thinking, as well as those who were more focused on living their present, revealed to be also positive in their look at the future. To the contrary, worries for the future were increased for those people who did not live day by day, who anticipated job loss and were still looking for housing autonomy and independence. These results are in line with the job stress theory that highlighted that the anticipation of unemployment can be as much detrimental as the job loss itself (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; De Witte, 2005) and with the studies that demonstrated that job insecurity makes it more difficult for young workers to gain or to maintain their residential independence from the parental home (Lee & Painter 2013; Von Wachter, Oreopoulos & Heisz, 2012) and to make other transitions, such as living in partnership and having children (Furstenberg 2010). Young workers worried for their future showed to put in place some problem-focused coping strategies, such as savings behaviours, in the attempt to be protected in case of unemployment and to make their projects more reachable in the short-run.

Furthermore, concerning plans for the future, findings demonstrated that young people have different projects for their life both at personal and work level. Therefore, even if job

insecurity makes it more difficult for them to achieve in the immediate some life objectives, they do not give up to their plans for the future and are confident and hopeful for the tomorrow.

Finally, no differences were observed in the way Italian and French young precarious workers feeling job insecurity, cope against it and project their future. These results may derives from the fact that job insecurity, beyond national specificities, is a common factor that engage young workers that find themselves in similar job insecure situations in developing strategies and in activating resources to face it (Tolgensbakk, Solstad Vedeler & Hvinden, 2017).

Limitations

This study has several limitations. Firstly, as it is a qualitative study, it has a modest size sample, which suggests that results should be viewed as the stories of a selected group of people at a given time and location.

Furthermore, the narratives reported reflect the experiences of individuals who have high levels of education and faced acute job insecurity, thus the results may not be generalized.

Another limitation is represented by the potential of bias from the investigators that may have influenced the inferences that were derived from the narratives.

In addition, interviewees were selected through the word of mouth and did not receive any compensation; so only those who accepted voluntarily to participate to the study were taken into account.

Furthermore, the interview outline may have led participants to respect the order of the questions and thus not telling their whole stories.

Moreover, the cross-sectional nature of data collected, as the interviews were made in a precise moment and time, determine that this study does not investigate the efficacy of the coping strategies to counteract job insecurity in the long run, thus it is not possible to determine if the coping strategies identified would be beneficial in reducing job insecurity negative feelings and consequences in time.

Despite all these limitations, this study used a methodology that have been used in previous studies on unemployment (cf. Gabriel et al., 2010) and is based on well-established practices in narrative inquiry.

Practical implications

This study contributes to the debate over job insecurity as a subjective perception and a concern for precarious workers in Europe. Furthermore, it shows that for some young precarious workers it can represent a work stressor, even in countries with better welfare regimes (Kim et al., 2012). Further cross-national qualitative studies should deepen the analysis of how job insecurity is experienced across countries and how young people cope and project their lives in this climate of widespread job insecurity.

Furthermore, this study has shown that young insecure workers are not passive but they actively cope against job uncertainty by activating a job insecurity-counteracting process that implies interconnections between problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies. Therefore in order to support young precarious workers in finding the best solutions to ameliorate their situation, both emotionally and concretely, practitioners should consider each particular personality, job situation and job and life prospects. Researchers may suggest and implement some practices to support people in developing new competences and skills for being ready to face flexibility and becoming life-long learners who are able to be resilient facing job uncertainty (De Cuyper et al., 2009; Savickas et al., 2009). Furthermore, institutions and organisations should provide them further career guidance and promote counselling and training courses.

Finally an important innovation of this study concerns the impact of job insecurity on life trajectories. This study showed that the gain of autonomy of young precarious workers is conditioned by their job situation, that some of them still live with their family or depend economically from it, thus family has the main role in supporting them and their plan for their future. These results should influence political discourses around the issue of youth's "vulnerability" in the labour market and new policies should be proposed to sustain young people and their families to overcome job insecurity and to build their future.

STUDY 2

Do coping strategies buffer the relation between job insecurity, self-related health and life satisfaction?

Abstract

Purpose – A lot of studies have investigated perceptions of job insecurity and its negative consequences on employees' wellbeing (De Witte et al., 2015), however results do not converge, especially regarding general wellbeing outcomes (De Witte, 2005). Therefore, this study deepens the relationship between job insecurity, self-related health and life satisfaction considering specific coping strategies that may reduce and buffer the negative effects of job insecurity (Sverke, Hellgren & Näswall, 2002).

Design/Methodology – The hypotheses were tested in a convenience sample of 769 employees in France. Data were collected with a self-report questionnaire and analysed with SPSS 24.

Results – Results showed that job insecurity was negatively related to self-reported health and life satisfaction; furthermore, problem-focused coping of the type job, social support and training searching behaviours was identified as a buffer in this negative relationship.

Limitations – Cross-sectional design, the use of a self-report questionnaire and the convenience sampling method are limitations of this study.

Research/Practical Implications – This study adds new insight on the general wellbeing outcomes - job insecurity relation and it contributes to the investigation of some specific coping strategies as buffering factors. Future longitudinal studies should look at the effects of job insecurity on wellbeing and at the buffering effect of coping strategies over time, testing the possible moderation of specific coping strategies.

Originality/Value – This study expanded the understanding of coping in the context of job insecurity by testing different forms of specific coping against job insecurity and including general job insecurity wellbeing outcomes.

Keywords – Job insecurity, coping strategies, self-related health, life satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Over the last thirty years, changes in the labour market have increased the perception of insecurity towards workers (Pieenar, De Witte, Hellgren & Sverke, 2013). The psychological concept of job insecurity refers to workers' concerns about the possible loss of their jobs and the fear of becoming unemployed (De Witte, 1999; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002) and it is considered as a work stressor, in the background of several general stress theories, namely the transactional stress theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989).

Firstly, according to the transactional stress theory, facing a stressor people undertake a double appraisal: a primary appraisal to decide if the stressor will harm and threat their wellbeing; if the stressor represents a threat to personal wellbeing, a secondary appraisal to react to the stressor by activating their resources and coping strategies, in order to preserve their wellbeing. In a job insecurity situation, due to the importance that employment has for individuals in guaranteeing the fulfilment of their economic and social needs (Jahoda, 1982), it is likely that people evaluate the possible job loss as a threat to their personal wellbeing (primary appraisal) and consequently activate resources and coping strategies to face it (secondary appraisal).

Secondly, the COR theory suggests that not just appraisals are important to face a stressor but also the general context and the resources people dispose. The principal mechanism of the COR theory is that people evaluate stressors on the base of the availability of their resources and their wellbeing depends on whether stressors lead to a gain or loss of resources. It derives that people may differ in their reactions to a stressor because they differ in their pool of resources (Hobfoll, 2002). In the specific context of job insecurity, where specific resources are threatened, namely economic security, financial stability, etc., it is likely that some employees may suffer more, while others might be less affected.

As a work stressor, job insecurity has been associated to negative consequences on employees' wellbeing at work and general wellbeing. Following the classification proposed by Sverke, Hellgren and Näswall (2002), the consequences of job insecurity can be organized in two branches: (1) the type of reaction, that distinguish between immediate and

long-term reactions; (2) the focus of the reaction, that distinguish between individual and organizational consequences (Figure 1).

Type of reaction	Focus of reaction		
		Individual	Organizational
	Immediate	Job attitudes	Organizational attitudes
	Long term	Health	Work related behaviors

Figure 1. Types of consequences of job insecurity

Some consequences of job insecurity, both at the individual and organizational level, develop in a short time period. Immediate reactions can concern individual attitudes towards the job, such as job satisfaction (Ashford, Lee & Bobko, 1989; Grunberg, Moore, & Greenberg, 1998; Lim, 1996; Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996), job involvement (Hollenbeck & Williams, 1986; Levanoni & Sales, 1990; Liou & Bazemore, 1994) and work engagement (Bosman, Rothmann & Buitendach, 2005); and attitudes towards the organization, namely organizational commitment (Borg & Elizur, 1992; Davy, Kinicki & Scheck, 1997; Iverson & Roy, 1994; Armstrong-Stassen, 1993; McFarlane Shore & Tetrick, 1991; Yousef, 1998), trust (Ashford et al., 1989; Liou, 1995; Borg & Elizur, 1992; Pearce, Branzkyicki, & Bakasci, 1994). While other consequences of job insecurity require a longer period of time to manifest: at individual level, mental and physical health (Kinnunen & Natti, 1994; Burgard, Brand & House, 2009), heart complaints and high blood pressure (Burchell, 1994; Van Vuuren, 1990), increased medical consultations (Roskies & Louis-Guerin, 1990), and burnout (Giunchi, Emanuel, Chambel & Ghislieri, 2016; Tilakdharee, Ramidial & Parumasur, 2010); at organizational level, work related behaviours, such as performance (Armstrong-Stassen, 1993, 1994; Dubinsky, Kotabe, Lim, & Wagner, 1997; Rosenblatt, Talmud & Ruvio, 1999) and turnover intentions (Ameen, Jackson, & Strawser, 1995; Ashford et al., 1989).

Job insecurity, self-related health and life satisfaction

Despite substantial literature has focused on the investigation of the consequences of job

insecurity, the relations between job insecurity and general wellbeing outcomes are still not defined. First, between the studies that have analysed the effect of job insecurity, the majority focused on work-related consequences, rather than not work related outcomes (De Witte, 2005). Second, comparing the strength of the association between job insecurity, occupational wellbeing and general wellbeing, higher relations were found for work-related outcomes (Sverke, Heelgren & Näswall, 2002). Furthermore, not all studies that have investigated the association between job insecurity and general wellbeing outcomes have found significant associations and, even when the findings were congruent, the strength of the relations varies substantially between studies (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). In particular, the relations between job insecurity and health and between job insecurity and life satisfaction demand more attention.

Regarding the association between job insecurity and health results do not converge. Several studies have found a significant relationship between job insecurity and specific indicators of physical health (Mattiasson, Lindgarde, Nilsson, & Theorell, 1990; Ferrie, Shipley, Marmot, Stansfeld & Davey-Smith, 1998), psychosomatic symptoms (Kinnunen & Natti, 1994), depression, distress and negative affect (Ibrahim, Smith & Muntaner, 2009; Burgard et al., 2009) and mental health (Hellgren and Sverke, 2003). Other studies did not find a significant relation between job insecurity and somatic and/or psychosomatic complaints (Ashford et al., 1989; Lindstrom et al., 1997; Büssing, 1999) and physical health (Hellgren and Sverke, 2003). All the differences in findings between the studies may be due to the use of different measures of health that proposed specific items for specific health problems that respondents may not have at the time they participate at the study (Lundberg & Manderbacka, 1996). Nevertheless, among the studies that have measured health through the same one-item scale results seem more congruent. All these studies have reported significant negative relations between job insecurity and perceptions of health (D'Souza, Strazdins, Lim, Broom & Rodgers, 2003; Ferrie, Shipley, Marmot, Stansfeld, & Smith, 1995; Ferrie et al., 1998, 2005; Ibrahim et al., 2009; László et al., 2010). However, in some studies the significant relation found was not strong and differ for some demographic characteristics, such as gender, age (Regulies, Aust, Burr & Bültmann, 2008) and social class (Ibrahim et al., 2009), for the length of the exposure to job insecurity (Burgard et al., 2009) and the level of job insecurity reported (Kinnunen & Natti, 1994).

Moreover, fewer studies have deepened the relationship between job insecurity and life satisfaction. Silla and colleagues (2008) have investigated the perceptions of job insecurity and health related outcomes, wellbeing and life satisfaction, in temporary workers differentiated in: “transitional temporaries”, “permanent temporaries” and “traditional temporaries”, on the base of the preference for the temporary contract and the level of employability perceived, from the highest to the lowest respectively. They found that traditional temporaries report less wellbeing and less life satisfaction than other temporaries. Furthermore, De Cuyper and colleagues (2008) have found a negative relationship between job insecurity and life satisfaction testing job insecurity as a mediator between employability and wellbeing outcomes. Moreover, in a recent study Griep and colleagues (2016) have compared insecure permanent employees and secure permanent employees with long-term and short-term unemployed individuals finding that secure permanent employees had higher life satisfaction than insecure permanent employees and that insecure permanent employees reported significantly higher life satisfaction than short-term and long-term unemployed individuals. Explain the relation between job insecurity and life satisfaction is more complex (De Witte, 2005). Lim (1996) have found associations between job insecurity and both job (dis)satisfaction and life (dis)satisfaction and he explained these results through the *spillover* hypothesis, by which attitudes towards work-life affect attitudes towards non-work life. Another possible explanation presented by Griep and colleagues (2016) relies on the literature of unemployment. According to the latent deprivation model (Jahoda, 1982) employment is fundamental to fulfil basic human needs such economical and social ones. The fear of losing the job and become unemployed involves frustration of these needs and the potential loss of economic and social resources (De Witte, 1999). The literature of stress suggests that the anticipation of a stressful event represents a source of stress equal or even worse than the event itself (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Accordingly, job insecurity, as the anticipation of the job loss, is likely to be as harmful as the actual job loss (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995; Sverke et al., 2002) and it is likely to decrease life satisfaction. Furthermore, some authors (Deci & Ryan, 1987) suggested that wellbeing is positively affected when people perceive they are in control of their environment. It follows that job insecurity, implying uncontrollability and unpredictability (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Van Vuuren,

1990), may negatively affects employees' life satisfaction due to the lack of self-determination and control that they perceive on their overall situation (Silla et al., 2008).

With regards on all the considerations above, the relation between job insecurity, health and life satisfaction, needs to be investigated further. Thus, in this study it is hypothesized the following:

H1: Perceived job insecurity relates negatively to self-related health and life satisfaction.

Job insecurity and coping strategies

Even if the literature on the consequences of job insecurity is not convergent, several longitudinal studies demonstrated that job insecurity causes reductions on health and wellbeing, instead of the contrary (De Witte et al., 2015), thus it is assumed that job insecurity is likely to lead detrimental effects on employee's wellbeing. Therefore the investigation of potential moderators becomes important for two reasons: first, it is important to individuate potential factors that may reduce and buffer the negative effects of job insecurity; furthermore, since the magnitude of the effects of job insecurity on wellbeing outcomes differs across studies, it is necessary to take into account other factors as possible explanations when investigating the relationship between job insecurity and its consequences (Sverke et al., 2002; Cheng & Chan, 2008). In a recent contribution Cheng (2013) pointed out that among the studies on the topic of job insecurity limited attention has been paid to possible moderators between job insecurity and employees' reactions, thus further studies are needed. So far, the majority of the studies have focused on contextual resources as possible buffers (social support, job control, employability, justice etc.) rather than on personal resources such as coping strategies (Armstrong-Stassen, 1994; Mak & Mueller, 2000; Mantler, Matejicek, Matheson & Anisman, 2005; Richter, 2011). This line of research seems of particular interest because job insecurity is characterized by feelings of uncontrollability and unpredictability (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Van Vuuren, 1990) and it goes beyond individuals' control. However, instead of being passive, people by activating resources and coping strategies would actively answer to the threat imposed by job insecurity and may be able to counteract its negative consequences. This implies that professionals are responsible for finding the best

ways people can cope with job insecurity in the attempt to help people to develop and put in place efficient coping strategies. Indeed, so far, some authors have started to explore personal coping strategies as possible moderators in the job insecurity-employees reactions relations (Cheng, 2014; Richter et al., 2013; Stiglbauer & Batinic, 2015).

Coping is defined by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) as “constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (p. 141). The main categorization of coping strategies distinguished between two broad coping styles: problem-focused and emotion-focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Problem-focused coping implies behaviours that are addressed directly to deal with the stressor and aim to change it or other aspects of the situation, such as active coping, planning, suppression of competing activities, restraint coping and seeking of instrumental social support (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989). Emotion-focused coping are the attempts that address to manage, by alleviating and reducing, negative cognitions and emotions connected to the stressor, such as seeking of emotional social support, positive reinterpretation, acceptance, or denial (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989). Moreover, a further categorization of emotion-focused coping distinguishes between avoidance coping, such as to deny and escape from the situation, and positive re-appraisal, such as to reinterpret positively the situation.

As mentioned previously, according to the transactional stress theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), individuals facing a possible job loss react by drawing on their personal resources and by implementing coping strategies. According to the literature, the effectiveness of coping strategies focused on emotions and coping strategies focused on the problem depends on the source of perceived stress (Folkman, Schaefer & Lazarus, 1979; Pinquart & Silbereisen, 2008). When the source of stress is clear, problem-focused coping seems to be more effective, because the problem is clearly identified and thus can be contrasted directly. When the source of stress is unclear, emotion-focused coping would seem to be the best choice, since the source of stress is difficult to identify and therefore difficult to counteract (Folkman et al., 1979). De Witte (2005) underlines that uncertainty about the future of the job, contrary to the certainty of dismissal, makes it hard to identify and utilize efficient coping strategies during the secondary appraisal. In fact the insecure

worker fears the loss of his job but is not certain that it will happen till the exact moment in which he is effectively dismissed. Therefore the source of stress is not the job loss itself but the constant fear that it might arrive. In this situation reactions could be very different: some people may anticipate the job loss starting to look for a new job; others may try to reinterpret the situation in a positive light; others might deny the possibility to loose their job or try not to think about it; and so on. What is evident is that job insecurity is not a clear problem that can be solved since it is a situation beyond individuals' control. In this case, the literature on stress suggests that the use of problem-focused coping strategies may result in a loss of resources (Folkman et al., 1979). Whereas, in the literature on job insecurity some qualitative studies and quantitative studies have investigated coping strategies, but results are mixed and not always convergent.

Among qualitative studies, Astarlioglua and colleagues (2011) conducted 22 in-depth interviews with individuals from different organizations, which function at different industries ranging from telecommunications to FMCG (Fast-Moving Consumer Goods). The aim of their study was to explore the general feelings of employees during crisis periods in addition to the way they cope with job insecurity. Their results suggest that among many coping strategies with job insecurity, employees may engage in organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB) or job search behaviours depending on personal and organizational variables. Furthermore Heuven and colleagues (2009) within the project SOCOSE (Occupational Transitions and Corporate Responsibility in Layoffs: A European Research Project), developed in five European countries, interviewed 25 workers in insecure job situations, working in companies in the process of restructuring and/or downsizing, in the Netherlands. The majority of their respondents reacted to the threat of being dismissed by actively searching another job by looking for vacancies, networking and writing applications. Some others proved to be unable to start active job search because of several psychological problems they had developed in reaction to the changes in their organization. Other participants felt unsure whether to leave open the option for internal replacement or to start active job search. Within the same project, in Italy, Bagnara and Bargigli (2009), among the 25 insecure workers they questioned, found that to cope with the situation the majority of cases adopted collective forms of behaviours marked by passivity, with limited support by union demands. Furthermore, in the majority of the cases

uncertainty seemed to determine an increased commitment, to avoid their being picked out for dismissal. The authors pointed out that the interpretation of job insecurity as a stressor and the reactions to it depended on the personal situation of each worker. Furthermore, they highlighted that for the most of the interviewed the dread of job loss was mostly due to their fear of not being easily re-employable and of losing their status. Moreover, some suggestions about coping strategies facing job insecurity may come from the literature on unemployment. Blustein and colleagues (2013) have interviewed eleven unemployed and underemployed adults with the aim to understand their experiences and to investigate the coping strategies they were using in facing job loss. They found different coping strategies participants have used throughout their period of unemployment: those who had more positive experiences of unemployment tended to utilize adaptive coping strategies and the major strategies they have identified were behaviours oriented to enhance personal employability, namely accessing training and education, networking, and behaviours directed to improve personal wellbeing, such as focusing on own physical and mental health and positive reframing.

Among quantitative studies results on the effects of emotion-focused coping are mixed, whilst for avoidance coping findings converge. In a previous study Mantler and colleagues (2005) investigated the role of coping strategies in buffering the relation between employment uncertainty and perceived stress. They verified that those in high uncertainty situation who used high emotional avoidance strategies reported more stress; however, neither problem focused coping nor emotional focused coping were found to moderate the influence of employment uncertainty on reported stress. Accordingly, in 2011 Richter found that those who experienced higher levels of job insecurity and who used avoidance coping to a higher degree reported lower levels of job satisfaction and higher levels of mental health complaints compared to individuals who did not use avoidance coping when job insecurity was high. Furthermore, she verified these results in a more recent study (Richter et al., 2013) where avoidance coping was found to strengthen the relation between job insecurity and turnover intentions. However, contrary to the stress theory assumptions, in 2011 Richter reported that emotion-focused coping had an adverse moderation effect for men in regard to job satisfaction and mental health, whilst in her study of 2013 (Richter et al., 2013), in accordance with the stress theory assumptions, reported that emotion-focused

coping was beneficial in the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

Some scholars, in accordance with the stress theory which states that due to the uncertainty of the source of stress, such as in the case of job insecurity, problem-focused coping strategies may result in a waste of resources (Folkman et al., 1979), have found that problem-focused coping does not decrease and in some cases even increases the magnitude of the stressor-strain relationship (Patterson, 2003; Stiglbauer & Batinic, 2015). Patterson (2003) examined the effects of coping and social support on psychological distress in response to stressful work and life events among police officers. He found a “reverse buffering effect” where, when problem-focused coping was high and stressful work events were high, distress increased; thus, it may be that problem-focused coping efforts were ineffective in response to a greater number of work events because when problem-focused coping strategies were utilized in response to situations with no solution, distress was likely to increase (Folkman & Lazarus, 1991). He drew the conclusion that the use of only problem-focused coping in response to work events was unlikely to be effective for reducing distress. Furthermore, Stiglbauer and Batinic (2015) explored the role of proactive coping in relation to both positive and negative aspects of employees’ wellbeing (happiness and depression) when confronted with job insecurity. Results showed that proactive coping was positively related to employees’ wellbeing if the perception of job insecurity was low. However, in the case of high job insecurity, the beneficial effect of proactive coping was present only among employees with high work involvement thus, if a person experienced job insecurity, the efficiency of proactive coping might depend on the person’s work-related attitudes and beliefs, such as work involvement, that served as coping resources.

To the contrary, some scholars have reported that problem-focused coping may be more beneficial in reducing the negative consequences of stress and job insecurity (Pinquart & Silbereisen, 2008; Richter, 2011; Richter et al., 2013). Pinquart and Silbereisen (2008) investigated the relation of perceived demands associated with social change in the domains of work and family life with depressive symptoms. They found that individuals with higher numbers of family-related demands had higher levels of depressive symptoms and that more depressive symptoms were associated with lower levels of problem-focused coping and higher levels of distancing. Furthermore, Richter (2011), investigating gender

differences in the job insecurity-work-related outcomes relations, found that change-oriented coping was a moderator only for women in the relation between job insecurity and job satisfaction, and between job insecurity and turnover intention. However, for those using more change-oriented coping, lower turnover intentions and higher job satisfaction were only reported among those who also reported experiencing low job insecurity. In a more recent contribution Richter and colleagues (2013), investigating the relation between job insecurity and some work-related outcomes, found that when problem-focused coping was high and job insecurity low job satisfaction increased and turnover intentions decreased.

Overall, results from the literature, both from qualitative and quantitative studies, do not converge. These conflicting results may be related to the fact that people generally use different coping strategies in different situations: coping preferences are mostly contextual and related to a specific type of problem (Grimaldi, Ghislieri, & Montalbano, 2009). Consequently, the analysis of general coping strategies may not be the best way to understand how individuals face job insecurity and to investigate the potential role of coping in buffering the relationship between job insecurity and wellbeing (Richter, 2011). Therefore, it is important to identify specific coping strategies against job insecurity to deepen their role as buffers in the stress-strain process involving job insecurity. The majority of the quantitative studies that have investigated the ways in which people cope with job insecurity have used general coping measures that lack the complex reality of the multiple and specific ways people could actually cope with the perception of job insecurity. To better understand the role of specific coping strategies that people use facing uncertainty of job loss in the job insecurity-wellbeing relationship, it is important to refer to those studies that have deepened the analysis of coping strategies against job insecurity through qualitative approaches. Therefore, based on previous qualitative literature on job insecurity, job loss and coping, some specific coping strategies to counteract job insecurity have been identified, distinguishing between:

- *Emotion-focused avoidance coping*: suspicion and distrust towards the professional future.
- *Problem-focused coping*: 1) Job, social support and training seeking behaviours – JSST-

SB and 2) Organisational Citizenship Behaviours – OCB.

Consistently with the findings that avoidance coping was not beneficial when facing job insecurity (Mantler et al., 2005; Richter, 2011; Richter et al., 2013), the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2a: Emotion-Avoidance coping buffers the negative relationship between job insecurity, self-related health and life satisfaction, so that the negative relationship between job insecurity and the outcomes is stronger under the condition of high compared to low emotion-avoidance coping.

Furthermore, since the majority of the studies, both qualitative and quantitative, have found support for problem-focused coping as a good strategy to counteract job insecurity consequences (Astarlioglou et al., 2011; Heuven et al., 2009; Pinquart & Silbereisen, 2008; Richter, 2011; Richter et al., 2013), this study hypothesizes as follows:

H2b: Problem-focused coping of the type JSST-SB buffers the negative relationship between job insecurity, self-related health and life satisfaction, so that the negative relationship between job insecurity and the outcomes is weaker under the condition of high compared to low problem-focused coping of the type JSST-SB.

H2c: Problem-focused coping of the type OCB buffers the negative relationship between job insecurity, self-related health and life satisfaction, so that the negative relationship between job insecurity and the outcomes is weaker under the condition of high compared to low problem-focused coping of the type OCB.

METHOD

Participants and procedure

The research involved a convenience sample of 769 French workers contacted throughout snowball exercise. They filled out a self-report on-line questionnaire. Among

participants 517 were females (67,2% of the sample) and 252 were males (32,8% of the sample). Their mean age was 29,79 ($SD = 7,51$, min 18 years old – max 66 years old); the 57% of the sample had an open-ended contract and the 43% a contingent contract (temporary, atypical or self-employed). Participants were from different occupational sectors, the 11,3 % worked in the industry, the 17,3% in the commerce, the 10,5 % in education and research and the 17,2% in health professions, remaining participants came from other different sectors (banking, assurance and finance; tourism; agriculture; craft; communications and IT; transports; social and environment sector; public administration etc.).

Measures

Job Insecurity. Job insecurity was assessed through the four items scale from De Witte's (2000) job insecurity measure, which had already been used in a previous study in France (Farzaneh, 2015). An example of job insecurity item was, "I feel insecure about the future of my job". The items were measured with a five-point scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). Cronbach's α in this study was .92.

Specific coping strategies. Specific strategies to cope against job insecurity were assessed by building ad hoc a scale composed of 11 items, taken and adapted from different scales already validated in the literature. Items from the original scales were adapted and translated into French following the translation/back translation technique (Behling & Law 2000). Participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7) concerning which behaviours they would assume facing the fear of losing their job. Three dimensions were identified:

- 3 items to assess emotion-focused avoidance coping (Callea, Urbini & Lo Presti, 2015), an example of item was "I would feel distrusted in looking for another". Cronbach's α for this scale was .82.
- 5 items to assess problem-focused coping, of the type job, social support and training searching behaviours (Kopelman, Rovenpor & Millsap, 1992), two examples of items were "I would actively commit to look for new job opportunities (on papers, web-sites, by going and introducing myself directly to the companies)" and "I would ask people

that could help me to find a job”. Cronbach’s α for this scale was .87.

- 5 items to assess problem-focused coping, of the type organisational citizenship behaviours (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 1990), an example of item was “I would try to work more and I would intend to fulfil further work tasks”. Cronbach’s α for this scale was .82.

Self-related Health. Self-related health was assessed by using a single item scale (Lundberg & Manderbacka, 1996), already used in a precedent French study (Peretti-Watel, 2006). Participants were asked to rate their health compared with their peers on a five-point scale (1=Very poor, 2=Not so good, 3=Fair, 4=Good, 5=Very good).

Life Satisfaction. Life satisfaction was measured through 5 items of the satisfaction with life scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985), already validated in a previous study in France (Pavot & Diener, 2007). An example of item was “In most ways my life is close to my ideal”. The items were measured with a seven-point scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (7). Cronbach’s α was .88.

Demographic characteristics. Finally, demographic characteristics such as gender (dummy coded: 0 = male and 1 = female), age (continuous variable), education (dummy coded: 0 = below university degree and 1 = university degree), and contract type (dummy coded: 1 = permanent and 0 = contingent) were included as control variables as their relation with this kind of variables is well established (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2003).

Data analysis

All the measures were available in French and have been used successfully in earlier studies, except for the coping scale of which the psychometric characteristics were tested.

To test the psychometric characteristics of the coping scale, the overall sample (N = 769) was randomly split into two subsamples: in the first subsample (N=382) an exploratory factor analysis (EFA – PC extraction) with the evaluation of the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett's test of sphericity, was performed by IBM SPSS 24; in the second subsample (N=387) a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA –

ML maximum likelihood) was performed by MPLUS 7.3 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2012). According to the literature (Bollen & Long, 1993) several goodness-of-fit criteria were considered: the χ^2 goodness-of-fit statistic; the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA); the Comparative Fit Index (CFI); the Tucker Lewis Index (TLI); the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Because the χ^2 is sensitive to sample size, the use of relative goodness-of-fit measures is strongly recommended (Bentler, 1990). The fit can be considered acceptable when the CFI and TLI are greater than .90 and the RMSEA is equal to or smaller than .08 (Awang, 2012; Bentler, 1990). Nevertheless, Hu and Bentler (1999) suggest more stringent criteria and propose to accept a model when the CFI and TLI are equal to or greater than .95, the RMSEA is less than .06 and the SRMR less than .08.

Specific coping strategies against job insecurity scale

Exploratory factor analysis results:

The chosen factor solution for specific coping strategies (Table 1) resulted in three factors. This solution explained 73.44% of the variance. All the three factors showed acceptable saturations corresponding to all items, with factor loadings above the conventional cut-off value of .40 (Hinkin, 1998).

The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett's test of sphericity indicated that conducting factor analysis on the data was appropriate:

KMO = 0.85; Bartlett's test = 4389.29 (df = 55; $p < 0.001$); 73.44% of explained variance.

Table 1. EFA solution (PC extraction, Promax rotation) for coping strategies.

	N=769
AC_1	.68
AC_2	.74
AC_3	.74
JSST-SB_1	.78
JSST-SB_2	.80
JSST-SB_3	.81
JSST-SB_4	.77
JSST-SB_5	.72
OCB_1	.60
OCB_2	.62
OCB_3	.50

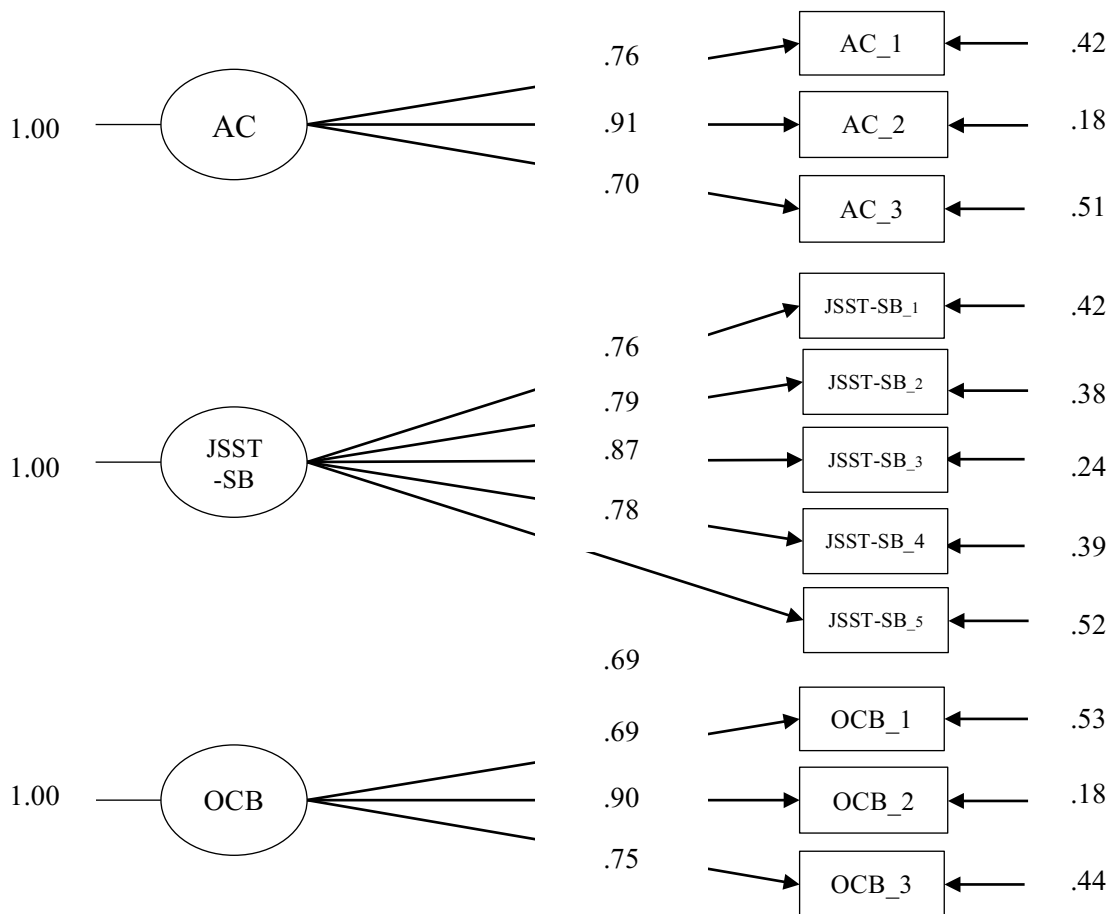
Confirmatory factor analysis results:

The three-factor solution of specific coping strategies showed a satisfactory fit to the data:

Results: χ^2 (39) = 117.38, $p = 0.01$; RMSEA = 0.07; CFI = .96; TLI = .95; SRMR = .06.

Standardized factor loadings ranged from .70 to .91, as Figure 1 shows.

Figure 1. CFA (ML estimation) standardized solution for coping strategies.



Descriptive statistics, correlations and alpha reliability for each scale were calculated.

To test the hypotheses, moderated hierarchical regression analyses were performed through SPSS 24 for self-related health and life satisfaction separately. The predictor (i.e. job insecurity) and the moderator variables (i.e. emotion-avoidance coping, problem-focused coping of the type job, social support and training search behaviours and problem-focused coping of the type organisational citizenship behaviours) were centred before calculating the interaction term by multiplying the predictor by each moderator (Aiken & West, 1991; Cohen, Cohen, West & Aiken, 2003). In the first step, gender, age, education and contract type were introduced as control variables. In the second step job insecurity was introduced as a predictor. In the third step coping strategies were entered as moderators. Finally the interaction terms were added in the fourth step. Finally, the direction of the significant interaction effects were explored and graphically illustrated by calculating the simple slopes scores of job insecurity on the outcomes at high (1 SD above the mean) and low (1 SD below the mean) scores of the moderator variables.

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, and correlations (N=769).

	M	DS	1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Gender	-	-	-									
2. Age	29.79	7.51	.03	-								
3. Education	-	-	.19***	-.04	-							
4. Contract	-	-	-.03	.35***	-.07	-						
6. Job insecurity	2.08	1.03	.02	-.06	-.03	-.31***	-					
7. Self-related Health	4.52	1.28	-.03	-.03	.13***	.02	-.14***	-				
8. Life satisfaction	3.59	.96	.01	.06	.11**	.10**	-.23***	.48***	-			
9. AC	4.38	1.51	.14***	.08*	.03	.07	.12**	-.02	.02	-		
10. JSST-SB	5.19	1.40	.15***	.10**	.07*	.22***	-.09*	.21***	.28***	.30***	-	
11. OCB	4.25	1.46	-.01	-.04	-.02	-.04	.00	.27***	.29***	.19***	.42***	-

Notes: JI, job insecurity; LS, life satisfaction; AC, avoidance coping; JSST-SB, job, social support and training searching behaviours; OCB, organizational citizenship behaviors.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 3. Summary of hierarchical regression analyses: moderation by coping strategies. Dependent variables: self-related health and life satisfaction.

	N=769				N=769			
	<i>Self-related health</i>				<i>Life satisfaction</i>			
	<i>Step 1</i>	<i>Step 2</i>	<i>Step 3</i>	<i>Step 4</i>	<i>Step 1</i>	<i>Step 2</i>	<i>Step 3</i>	<i>Step 4</i>
Gender (0=men, 1=woman)	-.05	-.05	-.06	-.06	-.02	-.01	-.03	-.03
Age	-.03	-.02	-.02	-.01	.04	.05	.05	.06
Education (0= < university, 1=university)	.12**	.11**	.11**	.10**	.12***	.11**	.11**	.10**
Contract (0=contingent, 1=open ended)	.04	-.01	-.02	-.05	.10**	.02	-.04	-.02
JI		-.14***	-.12**	-.13**		-.22***	-.21***	-.21***
AC			-.08*	-.09*			-.05	-.06
JSST-SB			.14**	.14***			.17***	.18***
OCB			.22***	.21***			.23***	.23***
JIxAC				-.06				-.05
JIx JSST-SB				-.08*				-.09*
JIxOCB				-.05				-.02
R ²	.02	.03	.12	.14	.02	.07	.17	.19
ΔR ²	.02*	.01***	.09***	.02***	.02**	.05***	.10***	.02***

Notes: JI, job insecurity; LS, life satisfaction; AC, avoidance coping; JSST-SB, job, social support and training searching behaviors; OCB, organizational citizenship behaviors.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

RESULTS

Table 2 illustrates correlations between the variables. Results indicate that job insecurity correlates negatively with the type of contract, thus those with contingent contract report higher job insecurity; furthermore, as expected, job insecurity correlates negatively with self-related health and life satisfaction.

Table 3 shows results of hierarchical regression analyses testing the buffering effect of specific coping strategies on the relation between job insecurity, self-related health and life satisfaction, while controlling for gender, age, education and contract type. Employees with higher education reported better health and higher life satisfaction. Just in the first step of the regression, contract type resulted related with life satisfaction, thus those with an open-ended contract reported more life satisfaction, but when introducing job insecurity the relation became not significant.

Hypothesis 1: self-related health and life satisfaction

Job insecurity was negatively related to self-related health ($\beta = -.14$, $p < .001$, $\Delta R^2 = .01$, $p < .001$) and life satisfaction ($\beta = -.22$, $p < .001$, $\Delta R^2 = .05$, $p < .001$). Employees who used problem focused coping strategies, both the type of job, support and training searching behaviours and organisational citizenship behaviours, reported better health and higher life satisfaction; whilst those who used emotion-avoidance coping against job insecurity reported less self-related health. No significant relation was found between the use of emotion-avoidance coping against job insecurity and life satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2a: moderation by emotion-avoidance coping

The second hypothesis concerned the interaction between emotion-avoidance coping and job insecurity in relation to self-related health and life satisfaction. The interaction term was not significantly related to the outcomes (self-related health, $\beta = .06$, $p = .13$, ns; life satisfaction, $\beta = -.05$, $p = .14$, ns) hence no moderating effects were found and H2a was not supported.

Hypothesis 2b: moderation by problem-focused coping of the type job, support and training searching behaviours

The third hypothesis predicted the interaction between problem-focused coping of the type job, support and training searching behaviours and job insecurity in relation to self-related health and life satisfaction. More specifically, it was expected that the negative relationship between job insecurity and wellbeing outcomes would be weaker when employees put in place more job, support and training searching behaviours (H2b). Results supported this hypothesis: the interaction term between job insecurity and problem-focused coping of the type job, support and training searching behaviours was significantly related to the outcomes (self-related health, $\beta = -.08$, $p < .05$; life satisfaction, $\beta = -.09$, $p < .05$).

The simple slope analysis showed a positive relationship between job insecurity and self-related health among employees with high problem-focused coping of the type job, support and training searching behaviours (+1 *SD*; $b = -.22$, $t(765) = -4.25$, $p < .001$) and a not significant relationship when problem-focused coping was low (-1 *SD*; $b = -.01$, $t(765) = -.20$, $p = .84$, ns) (see Figure 2).

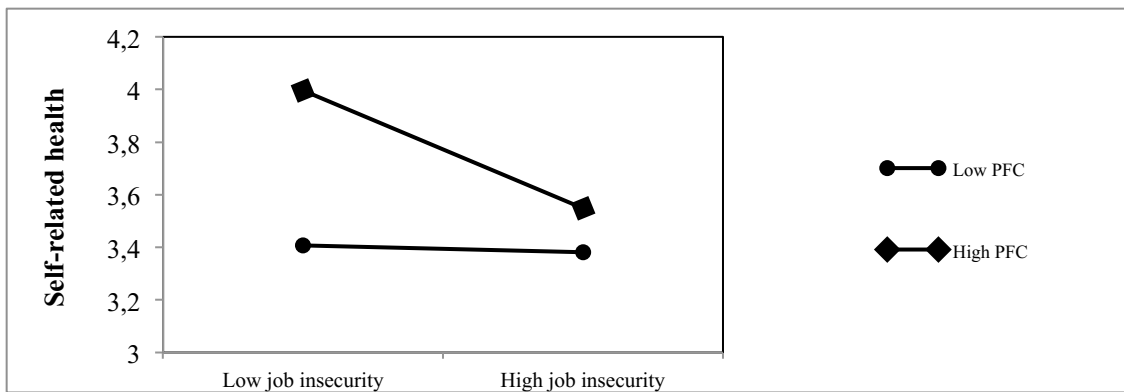


Figure 2. Interaction between job insecurity and PFC on self-related health.

Furthermore, the simple slope analysis showed a positive relationship between job insecurity and life satisfaction among employees with high problem-focused coping of the type job, support and training searching behaviours (+1 *SD*; $b = -.42$, $t(765) = -6.33$,

$p < .001$) and a not significant relationship when problem-focused coping was low (-1 SD ; $b = -.13$, $t(765) = -1.45$, $p = .15$, ns) (see Figure 3).

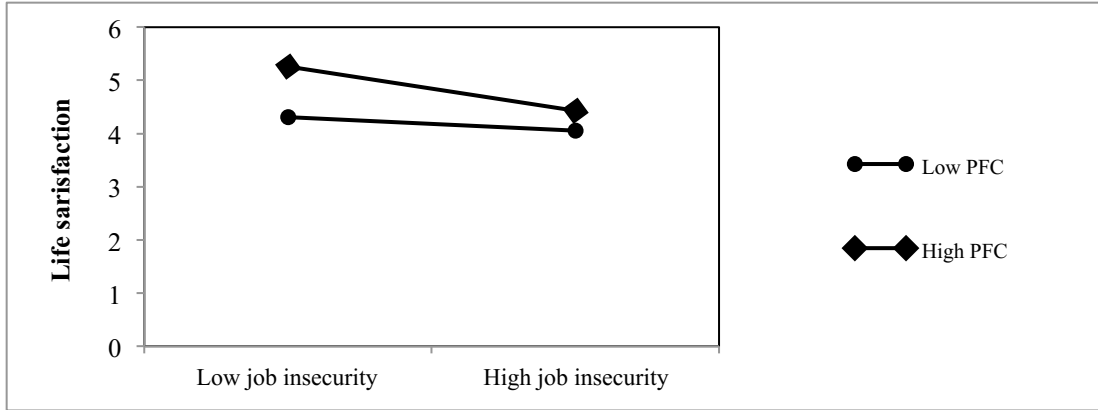


Figure 2. Interaction between job insecurity and PFC on life satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2c: moderation by problem-focused coping of the type organisational citizenship behaviours

The fourth hypothesis predicted the interaction between problem-focused coping of the type organisational citizenship behaviours and perceived job insecurity in relation to self-related health and life satisfaction. The interaction term was not significantly related to the outcomes (self-related health, $\beta = -.05$, $p = .22$, ns; life satisfaction, $\beta = -.02$, $p = .58$, ns), hence no moderating effects were found and H2c was not supported.

DISCUSSION

Since the majority of the studies focused on the relation between job insecurity and work-related outcomes (De Witte, 2005), the aim of this study was to deepen the relation between job insecurity and general wellbeing outcomes. According to the previous literature, hypothesis 1 (H1) supposed that job insecurity would negatively relate to self-reported health and life satisfaction. Results showed that job insecurity

related negatively to both self-reported health (D'Souza et al., 2003; Ferrie et al., 1995; Ferrie et al., 1998a, 2005; Ibrahim et al., 2009; László, et al., 2010; Scott-Marshall, 2010; Virtanen, Janlert & Hammarström, 2011) and life satisfaction (De Cuyper et al., 2008; Silla et al., 2009; Griep et al., 2016; Lim, 1996), thus H1 is confirmed. These results confirm that job insecurity is a stressor that leads detrimental effects on employees' general wellbeing. As in previous literature, the relationships found are weaker compared to relationships presented in the literature between job insecurity and work-related wellbeing outcomes (less than .25) (De Witte, 2005). Nevertheless, these results are important because they highlight that job insecurity is a stressor that autonomously affects broader aspects of wellbeing (De Witte et al., 2015).

With regard to the buffering effect of coping strategies, accordingly to the previous literature (Mantler et al., 2005; Richter et al., 2013), hypothesis 2a (H2a) predicted that emotion-avoidance focused coping would not be a beneficial strategy to cope against job insecurity and would strengthen the negative relationship between job insecurity and general wellbeing. Results did not support H2a. Job insecurity is a stressor that negatively impacts general wellbeing, probably because, as previous authors stated (Jahoda, 1982; De Witte, 2005; Sverke et al., 2002), it threatens important life needs, such as economic, financial and social ones. Thus, it is a difficult stressor to be ignored and people prefer to engage in active coping strategies to deal with it, such as problem-focused coping.

According to the previous literature, hypothesis 2b (H2b) assumed that problem-focused coping of the type job, social support and training searching behaviours could help people to gain new resources and thus buffer the negative relation between job insecurity and general wellbeing outcomes. Results showed that problem-focused coping of the type job, social support and training searching behaviours buffered the negative relationship between job insecurity, self-related health and life satisfaction, thus H2b is confirmed. In particular, these specific behaviours reduced the negative relationship between job insecurity and wellbeing when the perception of job insecurity was low, while it reduced less the negative effects of job insecurity on wellbeing when it was high. Accordingly to previous studies that found active coping to reduce the negative relationship between job insecurity and work-related outcomes

(Richter et al., 2013), these results showed that the fact of practicing active job, social support and training seeking behaviours has a positive effect on general wellbeing in a situation of low job insecurity, whilst when employees are highly insecure being engaged in job, social support and training seeking behaviours reduces less the negative relation between job insecurity and wellbeing. According to the transactional stress theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and to the COR theory (Hobfoll, 2002), job insecurity is a source of stress that people interpret as a threat and they draw on their resources in the attempt to counteract it, to limit its negative consequences and to preserve their wellbeing. The COR theory (Hobfoll, 1998) assumes that people strive to obtain, retain, and protect their resources. To counteract stress, individuals need to gain new resources and restore the threatened or lost resources. When job insecurity is low, it is likely that be engaged in job, support and training searching behaviours to counteract the fear of a possible job loss results in a gain of resources. But when job insecurity is high be engaged in job, support and training searching behaviours may be a “double cut weapon” because by implementing behaviours to counteract it, people would just decrease their resources without new gain, especially if the expected results are not achieved (for example, finding a more secure job). These results are in line with the general literature on coping, according to which the use of problem-focused coping strategies in situations where the source of stress is unclear and difficult to counteract would result in a loss of resources (Folkman et al., 1979).

Furthermore, hypothesis 2c (H2c) predicted that problem-focused coping of the type of organisational citizenship behaviours would be a beneficial strategy to cope against job insecurity because it may help people to feel more in control on their job context and would weaken the negative relationship between job insecurity and general wellbeing. Results did not support H2c. Since job insecurity is a source of stress that people cannot control, it is likely that being engaged in job, support and training search behaviours, by relying just on the person’s resources, enhances individuals’ feeling of being in control and creates new resources, whilst putting in place organisational citizenship behaviours relies more on contextual resources and instead of a gain on control might represents for people just an extra-effort and a lost of energies that does not guarantee in turn the certainty of being employed (Astarlioglu et al., 2011).

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, it is a cross-sectional study that does not allow stating causal relationships between the investigated variables. Future studies, longitudinal or diary, should look at the effects of job insecurity over time, testing the possible moderation of specific coping strategies.

Secondly, the use of the self-report questionnaire could lead to “inflate” the relationships between the observed variables due to the common method bias (Conway, 2002). Specifically when testing interactions, common method variance is likely to attenuate rather than to strengthen interaction effects (Conway & Briner, 2002). However, this means that the interactions found may be quite robust.

A third limitation of the study is the convenience sampling method that has allowed to collect a heterogeneous sample, although not representative of the active population in general, thus results cannot be generalized.

Furthermore, the construction of the coping scale may pose some problems due to the selection of items that represent only some specific coping strategies among all the ways people could actually cope with job insecurity. Future studies should replicate these findings taking into account more specific coping strategies against job insecurity, drawn from the qualitative literature on job insecurity, for example volunteering, go to see a professional etc.

Nonetheless, these results are important from a theoretical perspective as they can be considered as a contribution in expanding the research of possible job insecurity moderators to personal specific coping strategies against job insecurity rather than considering only contextual resources such as, for instance, social support, organizational justice or employability.

Practical implications

This study adds new insight on the relation between job insecurity and general wellbeing outcomes by showing that job insecurity relates independently from work-related outcomes to self-reported health and life satisfaction. These results suggest that researches in work and organisational psychology should not neglect the impact of job

insecurity on general wellbeing outcomes and should deepen these relationships through longitudinal studies to observe how the effects of job insecurity on general wellbeing outcomes develop not just over time but also may last over time and impact life choices and trajectories.

Furthermore, the originality of this study was the investigation of specific coping strategies against job insecurity as buffers in the job insecurity-general wellbeing outcomes relationship. In particular, results showed that the use of job, social support and training searching behaviours may compensate for resource loss and may be important for gaining new resources for those who reported low job insecurity, whilst it may consume additional resources (Bolino, Valcea & Harvey, 2010; Ito & Brotheridge, 2003), for those who were highly insecure. These findings have several practical implications. First they highlight the importance to consider specific coping strategies against job insecurity, rather than just general coping styles. Future studies should complement these findings by examining the buffering role of other specific coping strategies against job insecurity. Secondly, these results demonstrated that people could actively counteract job insecurity by using job, social support and training seeking behaviours. This is an important finding, because job insecurity is considered a job stressor, which is difficult to deal with. Professionals should develop practices and interventions, both in private counselling and in organisational settings, to help individuals to develop skills in job searching, in activating the social network and in identifying training opportunities to enhance their personal feeling of control and personal employability. Furthermore, as pointed out by Stiglbauer and Batinic (2015) the effect of active coping may change over time: it might have adverse effects in the short term (due to consumption of resources), but beneficial effects in the long term (due to gain of new resources). Since this study is cross-sectional, it does not allow drawing any conclusion on these effects. Further longitudinal studies should replicate these findings to observe the buffering effect of specific problem-focused coping strategies over time.

STUDY 3

“Three weeks of an insecure worker”. A diary study on job insecurity fluctuations over time among Italian precarious teachers coming closer to the end of their contract.

Abstract

Purpose – The negative consequences of job insecurity on wellbeing are well known (De Witte et al., 2015). Nevertheless, no attention has been paid to how job insecurity perceptions evolve over time and which factors, like social support, may have a role in affecting them. Therefore this study aims to follow precarious teachers over a three-week period, getting closer to the end of their contract, to explore how their job insecurity perceptions evolve over time.

Design/Methodology – A general questionnaire and a diary questionnaire (3 days a week for 3 consecutive weeks), were completed by 47 precarious teachers ($N=423$ data points). Data were analysed with MPLUS 7.3.

Results – Job insecurity did not increase with the approaching of the contract end and some significant inter-individual differences were found in the way job insecurity changed over time. Furthermore, the support by the school principal related with change in job insecurity over time ($B = -.07$, $S.E = .03$, $p < .05$, 95% CI $[-0.12; -0.00]$).

Limitations – The relatively small sample size, the sample that includes only precarious teachers and the methodology complexity of the diary are limitations of this study.

Research/Practical Implications – This study confirms that in a same objective situation people differ in their job insecurity experience (De Witte & Naswall, 2003). Furthermore, it shows that school principal's social support is very important for precarious teachers, thus practitioners should encounter these results and propose interventions to enhance the principal-teachers exchange relationships.

Originality/Value – This study contributes to the literature by investigating how job insecurity perceptions evolve over time and the role of social support.

Keywords – job insecurity perceptions, social support, diary-study

INTRODUCTION

Job insecurity is well known as a work stressor that leads detrimental effects on employees' wellbeing (De Witte et al., 2015). If the consequences of job insecurity are well-known and established through numerous cross-sectional and longitudinal researches, less literature has investigated how perceptions of job insecurity evolve over time and which factors may increase or decrease job insecurity perceptions and maintain their effect over time. Furthermore, since job insecurity is a subjective perception (Van Vuuren, 1990), people in the same situation may feel more or less insecure (De Witte & Naswall, 2003) according to individual differences or environmental factors (Cheng & Chan, 2008).

This study investigates how perceptions of job insecurity evolve over time in a sample of precarious Italian schoolteachers who are getting closer to the end of their contract. The precariousness of Italian schoolteachers is a complex phenomenon that has become over the years a structural part and a physiological trait of the public education system (Grimaldi, 2013). In Italy the MIUR (Ministry of Education, Universities and Research) uses fixed-term teachers to ensure the effective delivery of the training program offered by schools. The topics of recruitment and contractual status of teachers, together with those of their initial degree program and professional development, represents an object of intense politic debate that is on-going and in continuous definition. Nevertheless, the numerous successive legislative proposals of recent years find always very difficult to introduce substantive recruitment innovations that go in the direction of a resolution to the problem of precariousness (Grimaldi, 2013). Briefly, in order to become a teacher, one should hold a master degree that permits to access public competitions to be included in a national ranking list, which is used by schools for recruiting them on a temporary base till when they will be hired permanently by the State and there will be the possibility to be permanently employed by the school. Therefore, Italian precarious schoolteachers find themselves in a particular objective job insecurity situation. As long as their contract with the State is temporary, the school hires them on temporary base, thus they know the exact day of end of their job with no chances of being permanently employed because their job

situation depends on a national ranking list and on the system times and capacity to absorb them. However, they are entitled to ask the unemployment allowance for the months without job and then wait to be called by the schools for a new temporary assignment, or to be permanently employed by the State and to be called by the schools for a permanent position. Thus, even if they are precarious they know that they will be employed temporarily the year after or permanently in the future. Nevertheless, their precarious state has a strong impact on the educational policy cycles, on the generational replacement of the teaching staff, on the organizational life of the schools, and on their professional practices and life trajectories (Grimaldi, 2013).

For all these reasons, it is important to deepen the job insecurity perceptions of Italian schoolteachers and to explore how they evolve the more the end of their contract is approaching.

Previous studies have underlined that job insecurity perceptions increase when workers undergo organizational changes (Keim et al., 2014). Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the more precarious teachers are approaching to the end of their contract, the more they will perceive job insecurity.

Thus it is supposed the following:

H1: Job insecurity increases linearly the more the end of the contract is approaching.

Since people in the same situation can differ in their job insecurity perceptions (Van Vuuren, 1990), precarious teachers that live the same objective situation may feel more or less insecure. Inter-individual differences and contextual factors may contribute to explain why some people suffer more than others from job insecurity (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Hartley et al., 1991; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002; Van Vuuren 1990). Despite the clear link between job insecurity and wellbeing, unfortunately actions that can be taken by schools to prevent teachers' precariousness may be limited as the reasons often stem from the factors which are beyond their control, such as the regulation of the public education system. However, as definitions of job insecurity (with their emphasis on the role of subjective appraisal) imply a lack of control and predictability, schools attempts should instead focus on improving both teachers'

control and predictability (Probst, 2005). This could be accomplished in four ways: improving communication, participative decision-making and social support (De Witte, 2005; Collie, Shapka & Perry, 2012). This study focuses on social support. Social support can be informal and derives by the family and friends, or it can be formal thus derives from the work context, from colleagues and supervisors (Billings & Moos, 1981; Jackson, 1992). The forms of support are generally categorized as: “emotional”, offering caring, listening or advice; “instrumental”, supplying assistance and help in dealing with job demands (Billings & Moos, 1981; Näswall, Sverke & Hellgren, 2005; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984); or “informative”, communicating with others and being part of a social network, that can provide information and serve to decrease the ambiguity of a job situation (Jackson, 1992; Näswall et al., 2005; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Support, received in a work context from colleagues and supervisors, as a source of instrumental and informative support, is considered to be particularly important in reducing occupational stress in job insecurity situations (Swanson & Power, 2001). Therefore, this study considers exclusively work-related social support, from colleagues and from the school principal, that may enhance precarious teachers’ feeling of being in control on their job situation and work to affect and decrease their job insecurity perceptions.

Although the direct effects model of social support is most commonly investigated in terms of the correlation between social support and strains, social support can also have a direct effect by acting directly on stressors (Fenlason & Beehr, 1994; Viswesvaran, Sanchez & Fisher, 1999). It is intuitively appealing to consider that support from other people should reduce occupational stress. Various studies have suggested that social support can have a direct effect on the experience of both occupational sources of stress (stressors) and stress outcomes or strains (Fenlason & Beehr, 1994; LaRocco, House & French, 1980; Stansfield, Bosma, Hemingway & Marmot, 1998). However, this effect may take various forms. For instance, because lack of support constitutes a stressor in itself, there may be a negative stressor–support correlation. Alternatively, Wheaton (1985) argued that support resources are mobilized when stressors are encountered. The core idea in this version of the direct effects model is that when stressors come into play, individuals mobilize their resources and,

as a result, strain is reduced (Eckenrode, 1983), as it is also explained in the COR theory (Hobfoll, 2002). Thus, when experiencing a job insecurity situation, it is likely that individuals mobilize their social support resources and, as a result, social support may intervene by attenuating or preventing the stress appraisal response. In this direction, a meta-analysis on the role of social support in the stressor-strain relationship highlighted that the direction of the effects of social support on stressors was such that social support reduced the level of stressors experienced (Viswesvaran et al., 1999). That is, the perception that others can and will provide necessary resources may redefine the potential for harm posed by a situation and/or bolster one's perceived ability to cope with imposed demands, and hence prevent a particular situation from being appraised as highly stressful (Baqtayan, 2011).

So far, the literature on job insecurity has considered social support as a moderator in the negative relationship between job insecurity and wellbeing (Lim, 1996, 1997; Näswall et al., 2005). However, work-based support seems particularly important for Italian teachers, because it may be an important contextual resource (Näswall et al., 2005; Simbula, 2009) that may be helpful in reducing their perceptions of job insecurity (Bussing, 1999). Since in an objective job insecurity situation individuals' perceptions of the work context influence their experiences of job insecurity (Låstad et al., 2014), social support by colleagues and by the school principal might have a direct effect on job insecurity and reduce its perceptions, by enhancing their feeling of being in control. On one hand, colleagues may assist precarious teachers in facing work tasks and provide information about alternative employment opportunities; on the other hand, the school principal may provide information regarding the future of their employment situation in the school (Lim, 1996).

Hence, it is hypothesized the following:

H2a: Base social support by colleagues is related to teachers' job insecurity perceptions over time, thus to reduce their job insecurity perceptions.

H2b: Base social support by the school principal is related to teachers' job insecurity perceptions over time, thus to reduce their job insecurity perceptions.

Figure1. Hypothesized model: linear positive change in job insecurity the more the end of the contract is approaching.

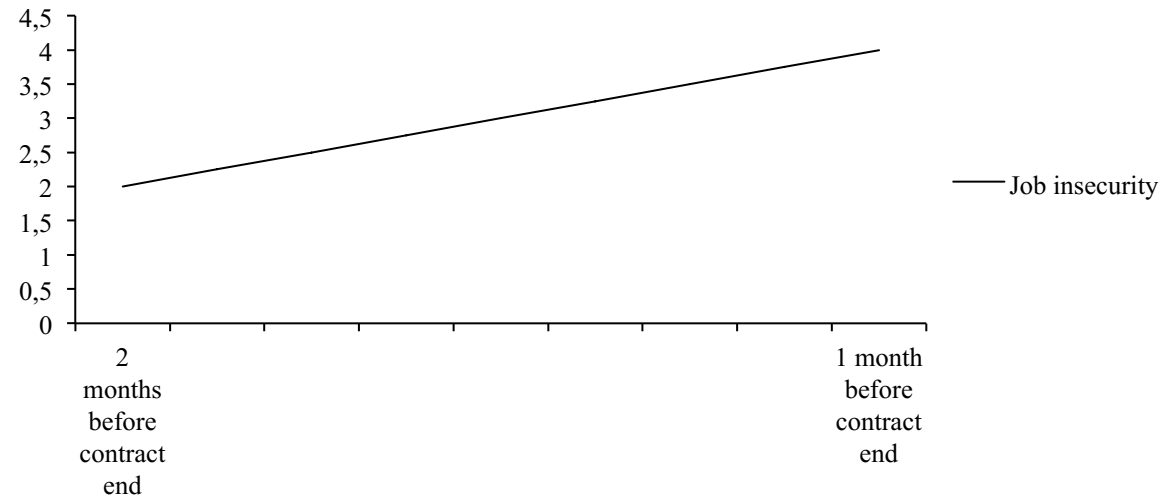
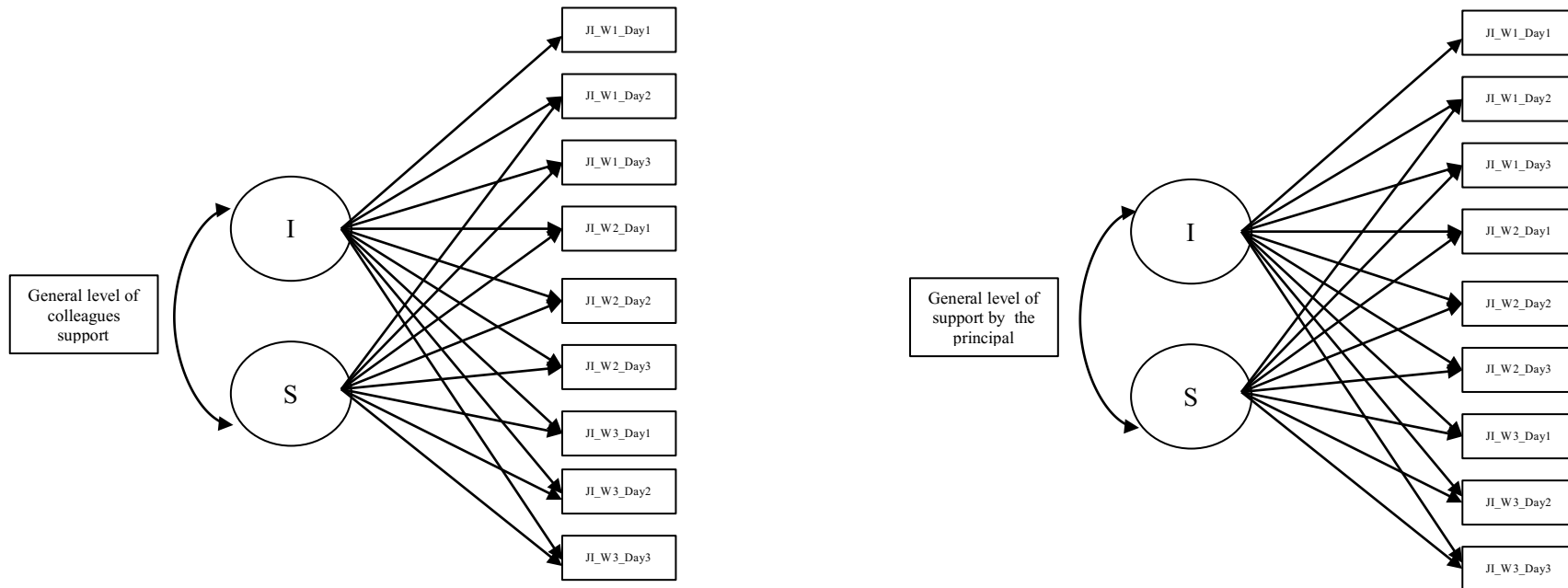


Figure2. Hypothesized model with social support.



METHOD

Participants and procedures

Teachers were contacted throughout snowball exercise and selected on the base of their temporary contract situation. They were instructed to fill in a general questionnaire, in which they provided some demographic data and information on the general level of the measured variables, before starting with the diaries. Then, one month before school end, they were asked to fill in the diary for three days par week for three consecutive working weeks, at the end of each day before go to bed.

Out of 69 people contacted, a total of 53 teachers answered the general questionnaire (76,8% response rate). Then, 47 out of 53 respondents returned the diaries completed (88,6% response rate). The total sample included 43 females (91,5%) and 4 males (8,5%). Their mean age was 34.89 ($SD = 8.43$, min 22, max 54); 40,4% of participants were single, 55,3% were married or cohabited and 4,3% were separated or divorced; 70,2% did not have children.

Among teachers, 19,1% worked in private schools and 80,9% in public schools; 25,5% worked in primary school, 25,5% in middle school and 48,9% in secondary school; among teachers working in secondary school, 12,8% worked in technical schools, 4,3% in trade schools, 25,5% in high schools. Mean seniority on the job was 20,32 months ($SD = 13.88$).

Measures

General questionnaire

General support by colleagues – Was measured through the job content questionnaire (Karasek, 1985), already used in previous studies in Italy (Baldasseroni, Camerino, Cenni, Cesana, Fattorini, Ferrario, Mariani & Tartaglia, 2001). The scale comprised four items on a four-point scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (5). An example of item present on this scale was, for instance, “People I work with are competent in doing their jobs”. Cronbach’s α in this study was .74.

General support by the principal of the school - Was measured through the job content questionnaire (Karasek, 1985), already used in previous studies in Italy (Baldasseroni et al., 2001). The scale comprised four items on a four-point scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (5). An example of item present on this scale was, for instance, “The principal of my school provides me with helpful advice on how to do my work”. Cronbach’s α in this study was .84.

Diary survey data

Daily perceived job insecurity - Was assessed through the four items scale from De Witte’s (2000) job insecurity measure, which had already been used in previous studies in Italy (Piccoli & De Witte, 2015). An example of job insecurity item was, “Today, I feel insecure about the future of my job”. The items were measured with a five-point scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (5). Cronbach’s α in this study ranged from .86 to .94 ($M=.91$).

Statistical analysis

Time-based diaries allow investigators to examine changes in levels of variables over time (Bolger, Davis & Rafaeli, 2003). In this study the repeated measures Linear Growth Model (LGM) approach with observed variables is used for modelling change in precarious teachers’ job insecurity perceptions, with the aim to investigate: (a) how do precarious teachers change in their perceptions of job insecurity the more the end of their contract is getting closer, and (b) how do social support by colleagues and by the school principal affect the change in their job insecurity perceptions over time.

Since the end of the contract was approaching it was supposed that feelings of job insecurity might increase linearly over time, thus change in job insecurity was modeled linearly. Data analyses regarding the assessment of change were performed through the LGM in MPLUS 7.3 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012). To model the change in job insecurity, the factor loadings for each variable at each time point were fixed at 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 for the day 1 to day 9. Day one was fixed as the intercept (0) to represent the first measurement occasion. The change (i.e. time-structured intra-individual variability) in job insecurity was then modeled through a second-order intercept and slope. The mean of the intercept represents the average job insecurity

perception of the sample on day one, while the variance of the intercept captures the amount of inter-individual difference in job insecurity perceptions on day one. The mean of the slope represents the average rate of change in job insecurity perceptions per day of the sample. A positive mean implies an increase and a negative mean a decrease over time. Finally, the variance of the slope represents inter-individual differences in the rate of change (Gross, Meier & Semmer, 2013).

Data analyses regarding the relation between base perceptions of social support by colleagues and by the school principal and job insecurity over time were as well performed through the LGM in MPLUS 7.3 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012). To test if social support by colleagues and social support by the school principal affected job insecurity perceptions over time, each type of base social support was entered in the model and regressed on each occasion of job insecurity, from day 1 to day 9. The change in job insecurity was modeled through a second-order intercept and slope. A statistically significant effect of each type of social support on job insecurity intercept means that base social support relates to job insecurity perceptions at day one; a statistically significant effect of each type of social support on job insecurity slope means that base social support relates to change in job insecurity perceptions.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics

The means, standard deviations and correlations for all study variables are presented in Table 1. Significant correlations were found between general level of social support by the school principal and day-level job insecurity.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations between base level social support and daily job insecurity.

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Base Colleagues Support	2.82	.50	-										
2. Base Principal Support	2.58	.56	.35*	-									
3. Ins_W1_Day1	3.50	.97	-.07	-.31*	-								
4. Ins_W1_Day2	3.43	.97	-.15	-.24	.81**	-							
5. Ins_W1_Day3	3.33	1.04	-.19	-.29	.81**	.94**	-						
6. Ins_W2_Day1	3.39	1.09	-.18	-.38*	.87**	.78**	.87**	-					
7. Ins_W2_Day2	3.44	1.06	-.14	-.36*	.84**	.70**	.80**	.96**	-				
8. Ins_W2_Day3	3.38	.98	-.08	-.17	.65**	.88**	.93**	.73**	.75**	-			
9. Ins_W3_Day1	3.43	.97	-.08	-.44**	.84**	.73**	.78**	.92**	.95**	.71**	-		
10. Ins_W3_Day2	3.39	1.04	-.05	-.45**	.81**	.74**	.78**	.89**	.91**	.71**	.95**	-	
11. Ins_W3_Day3	3.50	.96	-.19	-.35*	.82**	.70**	.78**	.92**	.94**	.71**	.94**	.96**	-

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

The reliability (Cronbach α) for each time point of job insecurity ranged from .86 to .94 ($M=.91$) regarded as an alternative indicator of the stability of the construct over time.

Regarding job insecurity, model fit results were as follows (AIC 629.92; BIC 655.82; Adjusted BIC 611.91). The growth model parameter estimates (i.e., means, variances, and co-variances) were also regarded with the goal of describing the nature of growth trajectories for job insecurity (Lance, Meade & Williamson, 2000).

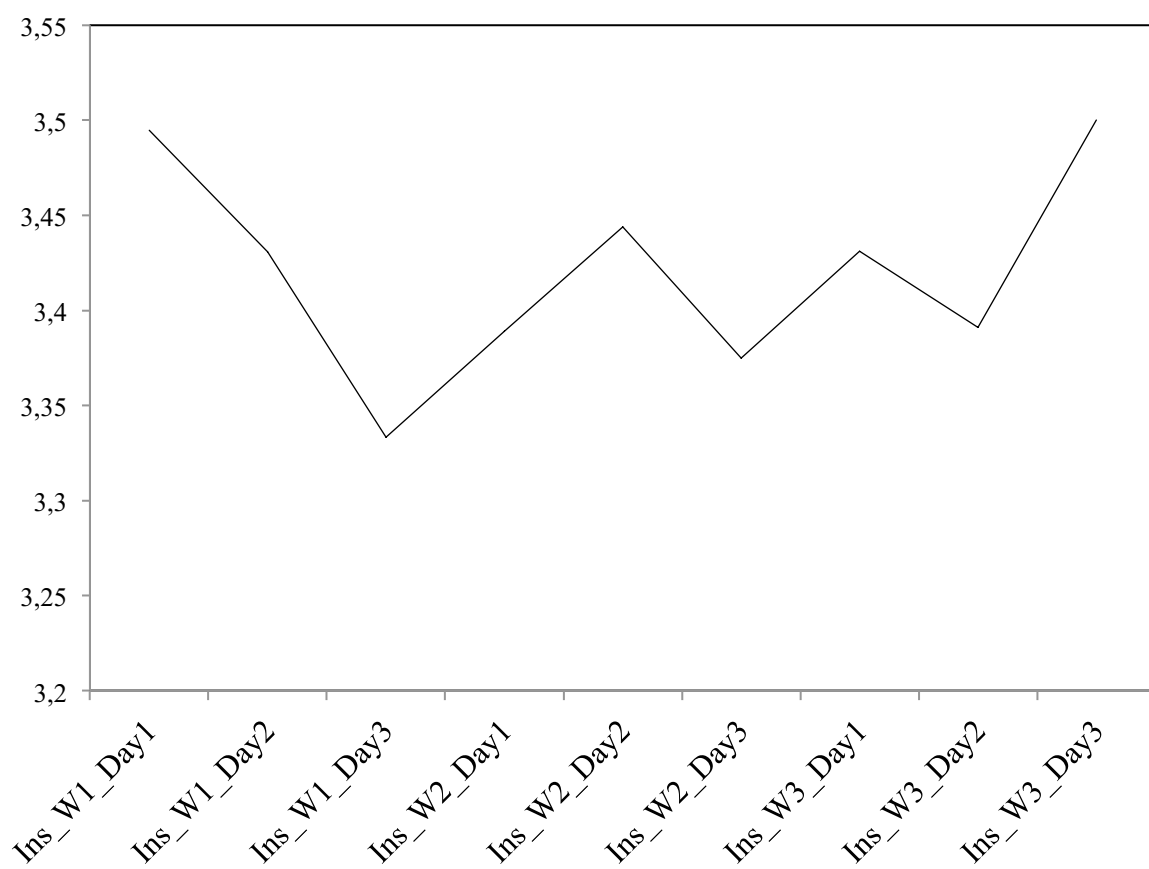
The covariance between job insecurity intercept and slope was not significant, $\sigma = 0.012$, $S.E = 0.014$, $p = .376$, 95%CI [-0.014; 0.039], meaning that job insecurity perceptions on day one did not effect perceptions of job insecurity over time.

Concerning inter and intra individual differences in job insecurity perceptions over time, results suggest that the mean, $\mu = 3.51$, $S.E = 0.14$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [3.251; 3.794] and variance, $\sigma = 0.79$, $S.E = 0.19$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.460; 1.179] of the intercept were positive and statistically significant. Therefore, significant inter-individual and intra-individual differences in job insecurity existed in the first week of the measurement (i.e., initial status).

The results further suggest that the mean, $\mu = -0.01$, $S.E = 0.01$, $p = .695$, 95% CI [-0.031; 0.016] of the slope was not significant whilst the variance, $\sigma = 0.003$, $S.E = 0.001$, $p < .05$, 95%CI [0.000; 0.005] of the slope was positive and statistically significant, however really small. This suggests that job insecurity does not increase steadily the more the end of the contract is approaching. As it is shown in Figure 3, fluctuations in job insecurity perceptions occurred at weekly level: in the first week job insecurity perceptions decreased in the middle and at the end of the week; in the second week they increased at the beginning and at the middle of the week and then decreased at the end of the week; in the third week they increased at the beginning of the week, decreased at the middle and then increased again at the end of the week. Furthermore, no differences were observed between the initial level and the final level of perceived job insecurity, since teachers reported the same level of job insecurity at the beginning of the first week and at the end of the third week ($M=3.50$). Finally, results show that there were small but still significant inter-individual differences in the way job insecurity changed over time.

Figure 3. Fluctuations in job insecurity perceptions over three weeks time, the more the end of the teachers contract is approaching.

Fluctiations in Job Insecurity over 3 weeks

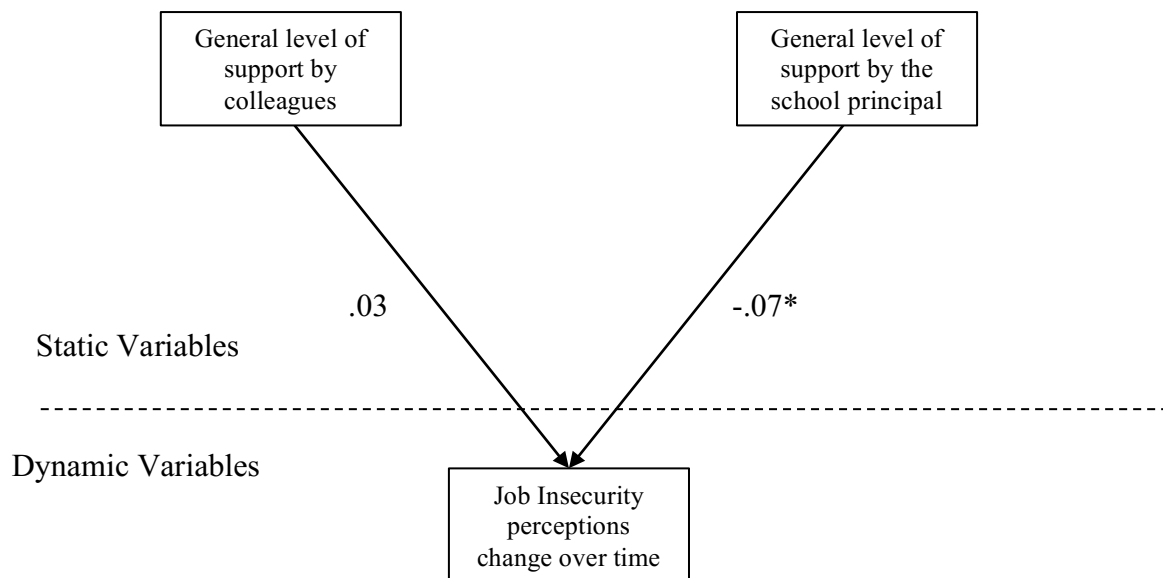


To test the second hypotheses on the effect of social support on job insecurity over time, the two type of social support were introduced as independent variable in the job insecurity growth model. To test model fit, the AIC and BIC fit indices were considered. As suggested by Kenny (2015), the AIC and BIC fit indices are comparative measures of fit and so they are meaningful only when two different models are estimated. Lower values indicate a better fit, so the model with the lowest AIC and BIC is the best fitting model. Therefore the model fit of the model with only job insecurity (AIC 629.92; BIC 655.82; Sample-Size Adjusted BIC 611.91) and the model fit of the model with social support by colleagues and social support by the school principal (AIC 625.099; BIC 658.402; Sample-Size Adjusted BIC 601.947) were compared. The model that took into account the two forms of social support resulted to be the best fitting model to the data with lower level of AIC and sample-size adjusted BIC.

The results of hypotheses testing suggest that support by colleagues did not relate with change in job insecurity over time, $B = .03$, $S.E = .02$, $p = .25$, 95% CI $[-.02; .08]$. Only the support by the school principal relates with change in job insecurity over time, $B = -.07$, $S.E = .03$, $p < .05$, 95% CI $[-.11; .00]$, as it is presented in Figure 4.

These results suggest that overall support by the school Principal is negatively related to job insecurity in a way that precarious teachers that reported high perceptions of support by the school principal report less feeling of job insecurity over time. Therefore support by the school principal affects job insecurity perceptions over time.

Figure 4. Hypothesized model. Effects of social support by colleagues and by the school principal on job insecurity perceptions over time.



Notes: * $p < 0.05$.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to investigate in a sample of precarious schoolteachers how job insecurity perceptions evolve over time and if social support by colleagues and by the school principal could affect and reduce job insecurity perceptions over time.

The school year end represents an important moment of change in the life of precarious school teachers because it matches with the end of their contract and the beginning of a brief period of unemployment in the meantime they wait for the temporary assignment for the year after or for being permanently hired by the State and thus permanently enrolled by the schools (Grimaldi, 2013). In line with the previous literature that has shown how job insecurity perceptions increase in period of

organizational change or crisis (Keim et al., 2014), the first hypothesis predicted that teachers' job insecurity perceptions would increase the more the end of their contract was getting closer (H1). Results showed that fluctuations in job insecurity perceptions occurred at weekly level and surprisingly no differences were observed between the initial level and the final level of perceived job insecurity, since teachers reported the same level of job insecurity at the beginning of the first week and at the end of the third week. Therefore, these findings demonstrate that teachers do not report more job insecurity the more the end of their contract is approaching, thus H1 is not confirmed. This may be explained by the fact that job insecurity is a subjective perception that is not just determinate by the objective precarious situation (De Witte & Naswall, 2003). Furthermore, it is possible that the particular situation of teachers precariousness, characterized by a temporary contract, followed by a period of unemployment and then by a new assignment, determines that precarious teachers' job insecurity depends more from other factors (such as personal characteristics like personal attitudes toward life, having family responsibilities, self-perceiving employable and contextual factors like work-related support, family and friends support and support by the system), than from the factual contract. This is in line with previous studies that have highlighted how job insecurity perceptions and consequences may be more determinate by other factors than exclusively by the temporary contract (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2006).

Since differences in job insecurity perceptions were observed at weekly level, it could be possible that some environmental factors contributed to affect them. In this study social support by colleagues and by the school principal were accounted as possible contextual resources that may affect precarious teachers' job insecurity perceptions. The literature on social support have highlighted its role in the stressor-strain relationship as a resource that can reduce the level of stressors experienced (Viswesvaran et al., 1999). Since the precarious teachers' job insecurity situation implies feeling of uncontrollability and unpredictability (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Van Vuuren, 1990), social support by colleagues (H2a) and by the school principal (H2b) were supposed to help precarious teachers in dealing with work tasks and provide them information on their employment situation (Lim, 1996), thus as factors that may enhance teachers' feeling of being in control and reduce their job insecurity perceptions. Findings showed that support by colleagues did not relate with job insecurity over time, thus hypothesis 2a is not supported.

However the support by the school principal was found to reduce precarious teachers' job insecurity perceptions in a way that when teachers have reported to feel more supported by their school principal they also reported lower levels of job insecurity over time (Fenlason & Beehr, 1994), thus hypothesis 2b is confirmed. This is an important finding because it contributes to sustain, in the stressor-strain relationship, the role of social support as a resource that can affect directly the stressor (Viswesvaran et al., 1999).

Regarding the fact that support by colleagues did not relate to job insecurity perceptions over time, it is possible that social support effects differ according to occupational groups, or types of stressors (Swanson & Power, 2001). Since this study focuses on precarious school teachers and their perceived job insecurity, these findings suggest that support by colleagues does not affect or reduce their job insecurity perceptions; whereas, support from the school principal is for them an important support resource in reducing their perceptions of job insecurity.

The changes that have occurred in the Italian school legislation in these years may explain these results. In the last years, in Italy principals did not have decision power on their teachers' employment future, neither permanent neither precarious ones, because they are publicly enrolled and it is the State that controls their employment situation. Nevertheless, the recent legislation, the so called "Buona Scuola", proposed in 2014 by the Renzi government and came into force in 2015, has given to the school principals the power to select and recruit the new permanent teachers (Fusacchia & Luccisano, 2014). It is still the State that hires the teachers permanently, nevertheless, starting from 2016, after they are hired permanently by the State, school principals have the possibility to select them for their school, by identifying, on the vacancies of each year, the teachers with the most suitable curriculum and training project for their institute, thus teachers are called by the schools on the base of the offer that they want to give to the students. Therefore, even if the moment in which the precarious teacher will be permanently enrolled depends on his position on the national ranking list, by entertaining good relationships with the school principals the precarious teacher could enhance his chances to be enrolled in the same school in the future.

Consequently, this study confirms that school principal's social support is an important resource for precarious teachers (Simbula, 2009) insofar as it provides school principals' feedbacks on their work at the school and thus it enhance their chances of gaining control on their job situation in preparation for future employment

transitions.

Limitations

This study presents several limitations. First of all, the relatively small sample size that often concerns diary studies. However, for tracking changes over time, a large number of days but few participants are needed (Ohly et al., 2010).

Secondly, the sample of this study includes only precarious schoolteachers and does not take into account permanent teachers, thus results cannot be generalised at the schoolteachers population in general. Nevertheless, considering the specific nature of school teachers' contract (they are employed by the state and recruited by the schools) the investigation of job insecurity perceptions in a sample of permanent school teachers, whose permanent employment is strongly protected and guaranteed by the system, would have probably led to misled results.

Furthermore, the diary method is methodologically complex: in order to obtain reliable and valid data, diary studies must achieve a level of participant commitment and dedication rarely required in other types of research studies. To address this, this diary study has privileged the investigation of few variables through the use of short scales, so that the diary questionnaire that was sent three times a week for three consecutive weeks could take few minutes to be completed. This also means the risk to report less in-depth of a phenomenon at each time of measurement (Bolger et al., 2003).

Another possible limitation to acknowledge concerns the use of a job insecurity measure that takes into account only the perception of the possible job loss (De Witte, 2000), without taking into account the fear of losing other aspects of the job (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984, 2010), that may be important when considering the nature of precarious teachers job situation. Nevertheless, this study is the first to investigate how perceptions of job insecurity change over time in a sample of schoolteachers and further studies should retest these hypotheses considering alternative measure of job insecurity.

Practical implications

This study contributes to the literature on job insecurity as it investigates the nature

of change in job insecurity perceptions. Despite previous study showed that job insecurity increases during periods of change (Keim et al., 2014), the results of this study show that job insecurity perceptions do not increase for precarious school teachers the more they are getting closer to the end of their contract. Therefore, in an objective job insecurity situation job insecurity perception fluctuations vary regardless the end of the contract is approaching. Thus this study confirms that job insecurity is a subjective perception (Van Vuren, 1990) and in a same objective situation people differs in their experience of job insecurity (De Witte & Naswall, 2003). Further studies should explore the change in job insecurity perceptions in other type of workers that are getting closer to the end of their contract.

Furthermore, this study has shown that it is important to consider potential factors that affect job insecurity perceptions. Finding showed that social support by the school principal is very important for precarious teachers. Thus this study contributes to sustain the direct relationship between social support and the stressor (Fenlason, and Beehr, 1994; Viswesvaran et al., 1999). Moreover it highlights that the perception of being supported by the school principal redefines for precarious teachers the potential for harm posed by their job situation and hence prevents their precarious situation from being appraised as highly stressful (Baqutayan, 2011).

Recommendations to help precarious teachers to face job insecurity should encounter these results and propose interventions to enhance the precarious teachers' awareness of the new role that principals have in the recruitment process, in the light of the new Italian legislation. Furthermore, the principal-teachers exchange relationships should be encouraged, as they are really important for teachers' wellbeing and in building, sustaining and promoting a successful school-learning climate (Price & Moolenaar, 2015).

In addition, since free refresher training courses are foreseen for all the teachers' staff, even if they are not compulsory for precarious teachers (Fusacchia & Luccisano, 2014), schools should promote training courses to help precarious teachers in facing their job situation and to promote good relationship and communication with colleagues and the school principal.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Over the past few decades the changes in the labour market and the increase of flexibility and competition have led governments, institutions and organisations to adapt employment regulation in the direction of *flexicurity* (Milner, 2012). New employment arrangements and atypical job contracts have been introduced, with the increase of the uncertainty about the security of workers' job in the future as a consequence (Benach, Vives, Amable, Vanroelen, Tarafa & Muntaner, 2014). In addition to temporary employment, periods of economic crisis and recession, organisational and state failure, have led the fear of losing the job to become a common concern for a lot of different type of workers in Europe. Since employment is an important aspect of everyone's life, as it fulfils individuals economical and social needs (Jahoda, 1982; De Witte, 2005), job insecurity, as the anticipation of job loss and unemployment, represents a threat that is likely to lead negative consequences on people's wellbeing (De Witte et al., 2015). Many studies have focused on the attempts to reduce employees' job insecurity by addressing mostly high levels, suggesting new policies and organisational good practices (Guarnaccia, Scrima, Civilleri & Salerno, 2016; Griep et al., 2016), because job insecurity is considered as a stressor beyond individuals' control (De Witte, 2005), thus the ways to counteract it may better rely on external resources, such as economic situation, organisational management, market employability etc. However, the previous literature on job insecurity and the studies presented in this dissertation demonstrate that job insecurity is spreading globally and can touch many different jobs and professions, several career stages, is a concern in wealthy as well as in less wealthy countries, and for all these reasons, is considered as one of the most important stressor of contemporary working life (De Cuyper et al., 2008).

Consequently, for practitioners in the field of Work and Organizational Psychology it is important to investigate deeply how individuals experience job insecurity and how they can react to it also at subjective level, by relying on their personal resources or by identifying and promoting resources from the context in order to increase the control on their job situation. Addressing the individual level and the subject's resources becomes really important because job insecurity is a global concern and people are required to become responsible for their own career

trajectories, insofar governments, institutions and organisations cannot anymore guarantee them job security (Savickas et al., 2009; Duarte, 2004).

In this respect, this dissertation has presented three different studies with specific research goals. Specifically, the aims of the studies presented above were: a) to deepen the personal subjective experience of job insecurity and to identify adaptive specific coping strategies against job insecurity; b) to investigate the buffering role of some specific coping strategies against job insecurity in the job insecurity-general wellbeing outcomes relationship; c) to explore the change in job insecurity perceptions over time and the role of work-related social support (support by colleagues and by the supervisor) as contextual resources that may affect job insecurity perceptions over time.

STUDY 1 aimed to deepen through a narrative enquire method the subjective living, interpretation and experience of job insecurity in young highly educated precarious workers in Italy and in France. Furthermore, it investigated how they react and counteract job insecurity and how job insecurity affects their look at and their project for the future, considering potential international differences.

Findings showed that job insecurity is experienced as a stressor when people are worried for their future and for losing or retarding the gain of personal autonomy. According to the transactional stress theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), the potential for harm of job insecurity is counteract by activating resources and by putting in place several coping strategies. Between them the most efficient strategies resulted focused on managing cognition and emotion, such as optimism, positive thinking and positive reinterpretation (Carver & Connor-Smith 2010), trust, self-confidence and personal employability (Aybas et al., 2015). Nonetheless, some respondents cited also problem-focused coping strategies, such as activating contextual resources, as social support (Lim, 1997), engaging in good job behaviours (Astarlioglua et al., 2011) and strategic thinking and acting.

Furthermore, results showed that young workers in job insecurity situations activate different strategies to prevent the consequences of their precarious situation, such as job loss and unemployment. The strategies were described as they relied on personal, social or institutional resources. Activating personal resources, individuals try to increase their chances to find a more secure job or to ensure the present job by

implementing problem-focused coping strategies: job searching behaviours (Astarlioglu et al., 2011), engaging in alternative activities, such as volunteering and associative participation (Blustein et al., 2013), or accessing training opportunities and having experience abroad; and emotion-focused strategies: looking at the positive aspects of the situation, reducing expectations and trying to match their job choices with their studies. Relying on contextual and social resources they reported to look for the social support (De Witte, 2005) from family, loved ones and friends to find concrete job opportunities; as well, both to find new job opportunities and to retain their job, they relied on the support from colleagues and supervisors, but also from costumers and client. Informal and formal social support represented also resources to lean on in order to process negative emotions connected with the situation. In addition activating institutional resources, findings indicated that young people were looking for job opportunities through public bodies and networks, such as the job placement centre and university placement days. Furthermore, they looked for training opportunities offered by organisations and institutions (Kohlrausch & Rasner, 2014) and some of them for a professional support to process the negative emotions connected to their situation.

Moreover, finding showed that for young workers the living of job insecurity was related to their thoughts towards the future. Those who were more optimists and present-oriented showed more positive attitudes towards the future; to the contrary, those who anticipated job loss and were still looking for autonomy were more worried (Lee & Painter, 2013). However, they were not passive in their situation and they showed to counteract their worries for the future by implementing active coping strategies, such as saving behaviours. Furthermore, job insecurity did not result to negatively affect their plans for the future, but just the possibility to reach them in the short run.

Concerning Italian and French participants, no national specificities were observed in their responses to job insecurity.

All these findings show that job insecurity represents a common concern for young workers that face daily job insecurity in Italy and in France, despite country and welfare state differences. This study proves that young precarious workers do not take job insecurity lying down, but they react to it by activating personal, contextual and institutional resources and by implementing coping strategies. Therefore, even if job insecurity is a threat that is difficult to counteract and to control, they try to actively

improve their job situation and they actively face their fears for the present and for the future. Taken together these findings are innovative as far as they demonstrate that the job insecurity-counteracting process is complex and involve different type of coping strategies and resources. Therefore, the study is significant at a theoretical, but also at a practical level, since it leads to consider how important is to address the experience of job insecurity at subjective level to deeply understand the involved mechanisms, in order to propose consistent practices to help people to directly react successfully to job insecurity.

STUDY 2 intended to investigate the effect of some specific coping strategies against job insecurity on the relationship between job insecurity and general wellbeing outcomes. Specifically, the goals of this study were: a) to deepen the relation between job insecurity, self-related health and life satisfaction, since the majority of the studies focalise on work-related wellbeing outcomes and results on the impact of job insecurity on general wellbeing outcomes are fragmented (De Witte, 2005); b) to investigate the buffering effect of some specific personal coping strategies, such as emotion-avoidance coping, problem-focused coping of the type of job, social support and training searching behaviours, and problem-focused coping of the type of organisational citizenship behaviours, in the relation between job insecurity, self-related health and life satisfaction.

Study results confirmed a negative relation between job insecurity, self-related health and life satisfaction. These findings are important as they contribute to the literature on job insecurity by adding new insight on the relationship between job insecurity and general wellbeing outcomes.

In addition, findings showed that problem-focused coping of the type of job, social support and training searching behaviours act as a buffer in the negative relationship between job insecurity, self-related health and life satisfaction, especially when job insecurity is low. These findings are innovative and offer more support for the conclusions of *STUDY 1* insofar they highlight the importance to consider specific personal coping strategies against job insecurity when studying the buffering effect of coping on the job insecurity-wellbeing relationship.

Furthermore, these findings demonstrate that people can actively counteract job insecurity by activating personal coping strategies. However, since the buffering effect of active coping is more useful for those who feel low job insecurity, this study

highlights that the use of job, social support and training searching behaviours may compensate for resource loss and may be important for gaining new resources for some people, whilst for others may represent a consumption of additional resources (Bolino et al., 2010; Ito & Brotheridge, 2003). Therefore, practitioners should take into account these results in counselling practice in order to assist people in finding the best coping strategies that could help them to preserve their wellbeing without consuming excessive resources.

STUDY 3 was realized by using a diary-method with the aim to describe the change in job insecurity perceptions in a sample of precarious schoolteachers getting closer to the end of their assignment; furthermore, it investigated how work-related social support, by colleagues and by the school principal, affects the change in job insecurity perceptions over time.

Findings showed that job insecurity perceptions did not increase linearly the more the teachers were closer to lose their job. Furthermore, social support by the school principal resulted to affect school teachers' job insecurity perceptions over time, in a way that those who reported to feel supported by their principal, reported to feel less job insecure over time.

This study is innovative as it investigates the change in job insecurity perceptions over time and as it does it in a sample of precarious schoolteachers. These types of studies are uncommon because it is really difficult tracking changes in job insecurity perceptions within a short space of time, outside an organisational context in crisis. This task was possible as precarious schoolteachers in Italy share the same type of contract and live the same state of precariousness.

In general results of this study contribute to the literature and offer support for the conclusions of *STUDY 1*: they confirm the subjective nature of job insecurity, since people in the same precarious situation perceive it differently (De Witte & Näswall, 2003); furthermore, they confirm that job insecurity perceptions are not just determinate by the employment situation, but there are other factors that can influence feelings of job insecurity (Sverke, Hellgren and Näswall, 2002); moreover, they add more insight to the role of social support as a contextual resource that can negatively affect and reduce the perception of the job insecurity stressor (Viswesvaran et al., 1999).

Limitations and directions for future research

Notwithstanding the originality of the findings reported so far, some limitations of this dissertation need to be mentioned.

The first limitation concerns the methodological perspective. STUDY 1 presents the limitations of the qualitative research, such as the small size of the sample, the potential of bias from the investigators, the influence of the interview outline in directing the participants' narratives. STUDY 2 is a quantitative study with a cross-sectional design, which does not permit to draw any conclusions in terms of causal effects in the relationships tested. STUDY 3 is a quantitative diary study that tests the effect of baseline independent variables, two types of work-related social support, on a dependent variable, job insecurity, measured repeatedly over time, therefore it excludes as well the possibility to state causality and that the direction of the relationship goes from social support to job insecurity and not the reverse. Despite all these methodological concerns, this dissertation adopts a multi-method approach that is encouraged in studies in work and organisational psychology (Molina Azorín & Cameron, 2010). The use of qualitative and quantitative approaches in combination has provided a better understanding of the job insecurity phenomenon than what an approach alone could do (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Further researches should adopt a multi-method approach in investigating job insecurity and should try to develop longitudinal or diary studies, especially to replicate previous findings and verify causality and reciprocal effects between the variables studied.

Secondly, all the three studies used only single-source self-report data, which raises the issue of the common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003), a recurrent question in Work and Organizational Psychology research (Spector, 2006). Future studies should include other source of data, such as supervisors reports, colleagues and family responses, as well as data derived from secondary sources, such as objective rates, archives (Shultz, Hoffman & Reiter-Palmon, 2005), in order to minimize the problems associated to the common method variance.

Furthermore, another limitation of the three studies regards the convenience sampling method used to select participants, which has permitted to collect heterogeneous samples, although not representative of the working population at large. Despite the fact that results of the studies, except for the third study, may be

applicable to different occupational groups, findings should be replicated in specific professional sectors, in order to identify more consistent conclusions and practical implications.

Finally, the first and the second study investigated the buffering role of specific coping strategies in the relation between job insecurity and wellbeing. However, the two studies are cross-sectional and do not permit to draw any conclusion on the effect of coping strategies over time, thus in determining the real beneficial potential of the identified specific coping strategies in buffering job insecurity perceptions and consequences. Further longitudinal studies should investigate the buffering role of specific coping strategies in the relationship between job insecurity and wellbeing outcomes with the aim to verify their efficacy and utility in time in preserving individuals' wellbeing. In addition to the effect of specific coping strategies, future research should also consider alternative ways, like recovery (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007), by which people may increase their resources in order to be ready to face job insecurity. Recovery strategies (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015) should be considered in future studies as they could help people to recover from job insecurity (Kinnunen, Mauno & Saltiloppi, 2010), by contributing in preserving their wellbeing.

Practical implications

The results of this dissertation have several implications for practice.

The first study has permitted to deepen the subjective experience of job insecurity and to identify in the job insecurity-counteracting process several specific coping strategies and resources that help people in dealing with job insecurity and its consequences. In particular, problem-focused coping strategies and emotion-focused coping strategies emerged as two parts of the same attempts to preserve wellbeing in a job insecurity situation. This implies that practitioners should consider the specificity of job insecurity and promote the development of most adaptive coping strategies and resources, by designing targeted interventions and counselling practices (Savickas, 2012) and easily accessible local activities of psychological support to help young people in adapting to discontinuity.

Furthermore, the results of the second study demonstrated that job insecurity affects negatively perceptions of health and life satisfaction, which can increase when people implement some specific coping strategies. Therefore, in designing

interventions to help people in identifying efficient coping strategies to counteract job insecurity, practitioners should take into account not only career goals but they should also help people in processing their feeling associated to their employment situation and in defining the importance that a job has in building their identity (Fryers, 2006) and in contributing to their wellbeing and life satisfaction. Concerning human resources implications, organisations should promote interventions that may empower employees' capacity to activate personal and contextual resources in order to cope against job insecurity, by providing training to leadership, by clarifying roles, by enhancing manager availability and by facilitating communication and participation in decision making (Callan, 1993; De Witte, 2005).

Moreover, the third study, in line with results of the first study, has identified the important role of social support, as a contextual resource that can reduce job insecurity perceptions. This finding demonstrates that when facing job insecurity, being able to activate contextual resources is a key factor in determining the experience of job insecurity. Therefore, this result suggests that professionals, in designing their interventions and practices to help people to face job insecurity, should focus in identifying which resources could help individuals to preserve their wellbeing.

In conclusion, in all the studies emerged the subjective nature of job insecurity (Van Vuuren, 1990), which implies not only that its perceptions vary between subjects but that also reactions to it and factors that may buffer it and its consequences are subjective. Therefore, professionals, when designing interventions and proposing solutions to reduce job insecurity and its negative consequences on people's wellbeing, should take into account the individual level and accompany people in their process of job transition. Following Savickas and colleagues (2009) recommendations, vocational interventions could be implemented to assist individuals in reflecting on their personal and job goals and in identifying the best ways to activate personal and contextual resources to reach them. In order to help people to face job insecurity, professionals should lead them to discover the specific coping strategies that best fit them and permit them to increase their resources and maintain their wellbeing.

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