ARTICLES

THE ROLE OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT IN JOB INSECURITY AND PERFORMANCE

Papel da percepção do suporte organizacional na insegurança e desempenho no trabalho

El rol de la percepción de apoyo organizacional en la inseguridad laboral y el desempeño

ABSTRACT

In this study, we develop a conceptual model of the relationship between job insecurity and job performance, which is mediated by affective organizational commitment and moderated via perceived organizational support in a Chilean company that has undergone downsizing. In this cross-sectional study, we focused on 400 Chilean employees from the retail sector. Our findings indicate that job insecurity negatively influences job performance, which is a relationship that is partially mediated by effective organizational commitment. Moreover, a high level of perceived organizational support helped intensify the effects of the relationship between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment. To minimize the negative effects of job insecurity on the active employees of a downsizing strategy, an effective intervention is required by developing a more realistic communication in terms of a worker's expectations toward the organization.

KEYWORDS | Downsizing, job insecurity, job performance, affective organizational commitment, perceived organizational support

RESUMO

Este artigo apresenta o desenvolvimento de um modelo conceitual da relação entre a insegurança laboral e o desempenho laboral, mediada pelo comprometimento organizacional afetivo e moderada pelo apoio organizacional percebido em uma empresa chilena, que sofreu um processo de downsizing. Este estudo baseou-se em um desenho de corte transversal em 400 funcionários chilenos do setor de varejo. Nossos resultados apontam que a insegurança laboral influencia negativamente o desempenho laboral, e tal relação é parcialmente mediada pelo comprometimento organizacional afetivo. Verificou-se também que um elevado nível de apoio organizacional percebido intensifica a relação negativa entre insegurança laboral e comprometimento organizacional afetivo. A fim de minimizar os efeitos negativos da insegurança laboral em relação aos sobreviventes de uma estratégia de downsizing, uma intervenção eficaz é sugerida por meio do desenvolvimento de uma comunicação mais realista em termos de expectativas do trabalhador em relação à organização.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE | Redução de pessoal, insegurança laboral, desempenho laboral, comprometimento organizacional afetivo, suporte organizacional percebido.

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RESUMEN

Este trabajo presenta el desarrollo de un modelo conceptual de la relación entre la inseguridad laboral y el desempeño laboral mediado por el compromiso organizacional afectivo y moderado por el apoyo organizacional percibido en una empresa chilena que ha sufrido un proceso de reducción de personal. Este estudio se basa en un diseño cross-sectional en una muestra de 400 trabajadores chilenos del sector minorista. Nuestros resultados señalan que la inseguridad laboral influye negativamente en el desempeño laboral; efecto que a su vez es mediado parcialmente por el compromiso organizacional afectivo. Además, se encontró que es probable que un alto nivel de apoyo organizacional percibido intensifique los efectos de la relación entre la inseguridad laboral y el compromiso organizacional afectivo. Con el fin de minimizar los efectos negativos de la inseguridad laboral en una estrategia de reducción de personal, se sugiere una intervención eficaz en los trabajadores sobrevivientes mediante el desarrollo de una comunicación más realista en términos de expectativas del trabajador hacia la organización.

PALABRAS CLAVE | Reducción de personal, inseguridad laboral, desempeño laboral, compromiso organizacional afectivo, apoyo organizacional percibido.

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INTRODUCTION

To survive in a global market characterized by high competition, over the past few decades, organizational restructuring via downsizing has become a popular solution (Guthrie & Datta, 2008; Shoss, 2017). Downsizing, as a management scheme, aims to eliminate positions or jobs to improve organizational efficiency, productivity, and/or competitiveness (Marques, Galende, Cruz & Portugal, 2014). This concept has also been viewed as a relevant issue for organizational and employment relations (Arshad & Sparrow, 2010; Meyer & Allen, 1991). For instance, Datta, Guthrie, and Pandey (2010) have highlighted many individual and organizational outcomes of such downsizing strategies; e.g., an important factor in the downsizing process is job insecurity, which has been criticized for its negative effect on both organizational and individual performance (Brockner, Grover, Reed, & Dewitt, 1992; Brockner et al., 2004; De Witte, 1999). Because of its importance, job insecurity is defined as the perceived fear of being dismissed from the workforce, as well as a stressor of a threatening work situation.

In this study, we consider that job insecurity may be generated via a downsizing context, which leads to a sense of uncertainty for employees who fear losing their job. Hence, there is a strong negative impact on their attitudes, emotions, and behaviors. In line with previous research (Antón, 2009; Appelbaum, Delage, Labib & Gault, 1997; Datta et al., 2010; Ruvio & Rosenblatt, 1998; Schumacher, Schreurs, Van Emmerik, & De Witte, 2015), we set out to understand the negative relationship between job insecurity and employees' job performance.

Moreover, in line with the definition of survivors, who are a group of workers that have not been laid off and remain in the organization (Brockner et al., 2004, p. 76), we consider that such employees develop a survivor syndrome (Appelbaum et al., 1997; Blackmore & Kuntz, 2011; Brockner et al., 1992; Sahdev, 2003). This syndrome is characterized by symptoms such as "anger, depression, fear, distrust, and guilt" (Devine et al., 2003 as cited in Marques et al., 2014, p. 933). Consequently, these negative emotions have a significant impact on how workers respond in terms of their attitude and work-related behavior (Brockner et al., 1992; López, Bal, Jansen, Leiva, & Alonso, 2017). Thus, in this study, we propose an affective mechanism that enables an understanding of job insecurity's negative correlation to job performance. In fact, we consider that affective organizational commitment can act as a mediator between job insecurity and job performance (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2006; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Wang, Lu, & Siu, 2015). Although job insecurity generates emotional reactions in employees, such as affective

organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991), in the context of downsizing, job performance is directly affected by job insecurity (Allen, Freeman, Russell, Reizenstein & Rentz, 2001; Schumacher et al., 2015). Thus, because of such importance and in line with similar studies (Arshad & Sparrow, 2010; Marques et al., 2014), we propose that affective organizational commitment assumes a partial mediatory role between job insecurity and job performance.

Although the literature distinguishes between the two other forms of commitment, i.e., continuance and normative (Meyer & Allen, 1991), affective commitment, which presupposes an emotional liaison and identification with organizational values and goals, is characterized by workers wishing to remain in the organization. This attitude subsequently promotes task performance and organizational citizenship behaviors (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). Furthermore, as shown by Rodrigues (2011), continuance commitment overlaps with organizational entrenchment and both are delimited by affective commitment, which represents an employee's emotional liaison with the organization.

Thus, we expect that perceived organizational support acts as a relationship mediator between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment, as well as this relationship to be stronger when employees perceive a high organizational support compared to when they perceive low organizational support. Perceived organizational support may be defined as the worker's belief of the organization's consideration of his/her contributions, and the extent to which the organization is concerned about the worker's well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). Based on employees' expectations that are not met by organizations, we propose a betrayal perspective (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998) to understand the influence of perceived organizational support on the relationship between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment. Bal, Chiaburu, and Jansen (2010) considered the betrayal perspective as the inconsistency of expectations in social relationships, i.e., the worker expects the organization to play a supporting role but the organization does not meet his/her expectations. Thus, we expect perceived organizational support to be a contextual factor that moderates the relationship between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment.

Finally, we present both theoretical and practical implications. Through theoretical implications, our model promotes understanding of negative effects of job insecurity on job performance. Moreover, we place greater emphasis on how this effect will partially mediate affective organizational commitment. Our study also contributes to the existing knowledge on the moderating role of perceived organizational support in the

relationship between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment. Thus, we believe a better understanding of the psychological dimensions that motivate organizational performance and, consequently, their contributions to the creation of a more robust theoretical background will be possible.

This study aims to provide practical information aiding the development of strategies that minimize the negative effects of job insecurity in both workers and organizations. Thus, to successfully plan and implement procedures for the post-dismissal working environment, possible suggestions are provided that may be used in the future. Finally, this study also aims to provide new evidence that will contribute to a better understanding of the employees' value within an organization such that the performance-related aims can be effectively achieved. Therefore, organizations should focus their efforts on establishing a solid employment relationship with their workers. To illustrate this relationship, a conceptual model has been developed, which is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Conceptual model of the current study
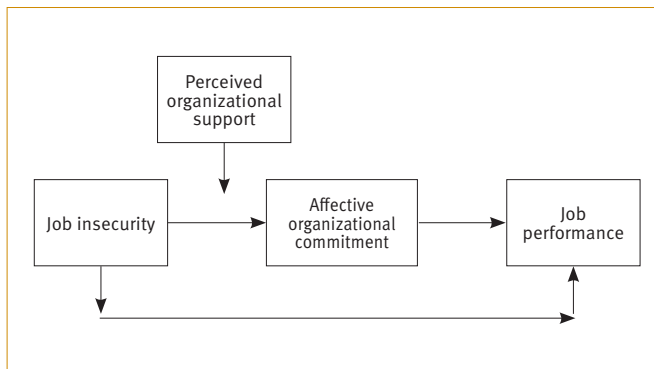
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Job insecurity and job performance

The environmental landscape, characterized by ever increasing and unstable changes, has prompted companies to adapt by developing management strategies such as downsizing. This process, viewed as a planned reduction of the workforce, is a means to increase organizational competitiveness and productivity (Datta et al., 2010). Similarly, changes in the industrial environment, which has shifted from a dominant manufacturing-based economy to a service-based economy, are one of the key factors responsible for generating job insecurity in employees' perception (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Sora, Caballer, & Peiró, 2010). Hence, because of the adoption of a strategy that achieves higher levels of performance with a lower

workforce, there has been a significant increase in the fear of being laid off (Lim, 1996; Roskies & Louis-Guerin, 1990). Given the importance of this context, job insecurity is defined as "the perceived powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation" (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984, p. 438) and a subjective and perceptual phenomenon (Brockner et al., 1992). This indicates that employees who experience job insecurity are uncertain if they will be able to continue working or whether they will lose their jobs in the near future (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). Thus, because of unexpected changes, a sudden shift from a feeling of security at the workplace to one of insecurity may negatively affect both the well-being and performance of workers (Blackmore & Kuntz, 2011).

Similar to previous studies (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960), our study is based on the social exchange theory, which provides an adequate perspective to understand whether job insecurity is negatively related to job performance. The social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960) states that reciprocity stimulates a feeling of obligation toward others, primarily because the latter have exhibited past behavior that has proven to be beneficial. Similarly, for individual performance, if an organization treats its employees fairly, they are expected to respond positively (Coyle-Shapiro, 2002; Turnley, Bolino, Lester, & Bloodgood, 2003). However, employees may decrease their level of individual performance when they feel betrayed by the organization (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2006; Robinson & Morrison, 1995). Similarly, when employees feel that the organizations have not fulfilled their obligations or kept their promises, their individual performance has been proven to be negatively affected (Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Turnley et al., 2003).

Thus, when workers feel that their position in the organization is threatened (i.e., job insecurity), they will perceive that the organization is not fulfilling its obligations and reciprocate with the similar levels of obligations toward the organization, resulting in lower performance (Ashford et al., 1989). For example, De Cuyper and De Witte (2006) and Armstrong-Stassen (1993) empirically confirmed that the perception of job insecurity was associated with a lower job performance (self-rated). Similarly, the meta-analytic research and review, developed by Cheng and Chan (2008) and Shoss (2017), respectively, supported this negative relationship between job insecurity and job performance. Based on this theory, an increased perception of job insecurity is expected to diminish the job performance of employees. Thus, hypothesis 1 has been formulated as follows:

H1: Job insecurity negatively influences job performance.

Affective organizational commitment as a mediator

Affective organizational commitment is one of the most important variables to explain how employees become attached to their organization because of job insecurity. Affective organizational commitment has been conceptualized as "an employee's emotional attachment, identification, and involvement with the organization" (Moshoeu & Geldenhuys, 2015, p. 26). Similarly, Luchak and Gellatly (2007) consider affective organizational commitment to be a subjective experience in which the worker perceives acknowledgment, on the part of the organization, of his/her own contributions. Employees who are emotionally committed to an organization may sense a feeling of belonging, which involves a spontaneous and personal desire to consider their own issues along with the organizational matters and develop their work better (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer, et al., 2002; Siders, George, & Dharwadkar, 2001; Tian, Zhang, & Zhou, 2014).

Furthermore, the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), "reflecting the socio-emotional aspects of the employment relationship, and thus the perceived quality of the employment relationship" (Bal et al., 2010, p. 257), may be used to understand the relationship between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment. As mentioned previously, this theory suggests that the parties of a relationship develop mutual exchanges and search for reciprocity. Thus, when the organization does not meet employees' expectations, such as providing job security, employees consider the organization to have failed in its reciprocity and reduce their level of affective commitment toward the organization (Arshad & Sparrow, 2010; Lee & Jeong, 2017). Thus, job insecurity plays a threatening role in terms of employees' interests and values, which weakens their affective organizational commitment (De Witte & Näswall, 2003). For example, Allen et al. (2001) observed that, during a downsizing process, a decrease in job security was a predictor of a decrease in organizational affective commitment. Marques et al. (2014) empirically confirmed this negative relationship between job insecurity and affective commitment during a downsizing process.

However, based on the hypothesis that emotional connections are relevant at workplaces, employees who are committed to the organization, whether simply because they like it or identify with it, are expected to maintain positive behaviors in terms of job performance (Casimir, Ngee Keith Ng, Yuan Wang, & Ooi, 2014; Ugboro, 2003; Wang et al., 2015). Balogun, Adetula, and Olowodunoye (2013) studied the importance of this influence by verifying the association of affective organizational commitment with high performance, high organizational citizenship behaviors,

and low absenteeism. Thus, for a downsizing process, it is our view that employees' negative appraisal of their job context (i.e., job insecurity) causes a reduction in their affective commitment, which may generate a negative result in the workplace, particularly in terms of their performance (Buitendach & De Witte, 2005; Cheng, Huang, Lee, & Ren, 2012; Lee & Jeong, 2017). In fact, Marques et al. (2014) showed that, during a downsizing process, job insecurity is negatively related to affective commitment, which was in turn related to innovative behaviors.

Therefore, in this study, we focused on the role of affective organizational commitment as a mediator in the relationship between job insecurity and job performance. Hence, hypothesis 2 was formulated as follows:

> H2: Affective organizational commitment will mediate the relationship between job insecurity and job performance such that job insecurity will negatively relate to affective organizational commitment, which will positively relate to job performance.

Perceived organizational support as a moderator of the relationship between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment

The concept of perceived organizational support is based on studies published by Eisenberger et al. (1986). Their definition referred to perceived organizational support as the dimension in which people believe that their organization considers their contributions and is concerned about their well-being. Moreover, perceived organizational support may be observed when employees feel valued by the organization (Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003; Kurtessis, Eisenberger, Ford, Buffardi, Stewart, & Adis, 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). This concept is considered important as it is based on the defense of a supportive work environment, which is often referred to as being responsible for improving the employees' work-related attitudes and behaviors in the context of downsizing (Tian et al., 2014). However, considering how employees perceive this support to understand its consequences is important.

In this study, we propose to explain the impacts of perceived organizational support, which moderates the relationship between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment. The betrayal perspective (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998) argues that when trust is violated, a high perception of support may aggravate the negative effects on workers' attitudes and work behaviors. In line with this assumption, Suazo and Stone-Romero (2011) observed that perceived organizational support strengthened the relationship between the psychological contract breach and violation, the negative relations between this

breach or violation, and supervisor-rated employee citizenship behaviors.

According to previous studies, the most significant act of betrayal involves the closest and most important relationships, among which the relationship with the organization may be included. In fact, Eisenberger et al. (1986) argued that employees developed perceived organizational support based on an accumulation of rewards received over time. Thus, an employee's history of rewards, which were obtained from various human resource practices and decisions, would contribute to perceived organizational support (Wayne et al., 1997). A downsizing process indicates that employees are not considered important for either the survival or success of the organization. Furthermore, it suggests disinvestment in employees and shows that their contributions are not recognized (Costa & Neves, 2017). Indeed, job insecurity caused by the downsizing process indicates an organizational disinvestment and under-commitment toward the employee. Therefore, this practice is inconsistent with the perception of a high support that is generated when higher expectations are associated with the role of employees; moreover, such practices lead to greater pressures and obligations because of increasing job insecurity (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Furthermore, according to the betrayal perspective framework (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998; Morrison & Robinson, 1997), failure of the organization to prevent instances of job insecurity may be considered as an act of betrayal too. This is because of errors in safeguarding the principles and expectations that are inherent to a good relationship between the worker and the organization. Employees expect their organizations to provide emotional support and resources, which will lead to attitudes of respect, trust, and mutual obligations (Lynch, Eisenberg, & Armeli, 1999). However, the employer's failure to prevent instances of increased job insecurity is considered to be an act of betrayal, to which workers will respond by changing their work attitudes and behaviors (Coyle-Shapiro, 2002).

Moreover, according to the hypothesis of expectation-violation, people tend to react strongly to another party's actions when they violate their prior expectations of behavior (Restubog & Bordia, 2006). Therefore, workers who report high levels of perceived organization support are possibly expected to be helped during a negative work experience such as a higher level of job insecurity. However, in organizations where the workers' expectations have not been fulfilled, the supportive relationship becomes part of the problem and further aggravates the situation of insecurity at the workplace. Thus, according to the expectation-violation framework, employees will decrease their affective commitment.

However, in situations of low organizational support, the theory primarily suggests that the relationship between job insecurity and work attitudes is insignificant (Bal, De Lange, Jansen, & Van der Velde, 2008; Bal et al., 2010). The reason is that an increase in job insecurity is another sign that workers are not being valued as members of the company (Aselage & Einsenberger, 2003). Thus, the slope obtained represents workers having low social exchange with their organization, which is essentially flat with low and high levels of job insecurity; consequently, the individual's attitudes remain unaffected.

Based on the abovementioned arguments, our study proposes that with an increase in job insecurity, workers reduce their individual emotional liaison and expect perceived high organizational support. Moreover, when perceived low organizational support is expected, workers do not alter their affective commitment as job insecurity increases. In conclusion, we may hypothesize as follows:

> H3: The relationship between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment will be moderated by perceived organizational support such that this relationship will be stronger when employees perceive high organizational support compared to when they perceive low organizational support.

METHOD

Design

An empirical study with a quantitative approach was developed to test our conceptual model (See Figure 1).

Participants

The participants were selected through a convenience sample that consisted of 400 Chilean employees who had survived a process of organizational restructuring of a private company in the retail sector. The retail sector was selected because it is a highly competitive industry and is significant to the national economy. Over the past few years, the retail sector has overcome numerous rearrangements, and in accordance with official reports, similar restructuring is foreseen in the near future.

In the sample, which was representative of employees from the retail sector, of the 558 employees, 400 employees returned completed questionnaires (response rate = 70%).

Table 1 lists the sample's demographic characteristics. We believe that the collected data are in accordance with the demographic trends of the Chilean retail sector. Moreover, according to the observations of Stecher (2012), retail companies

can be characterized by their workers' heterogeneous profiles, i.e., young and middle-aged males and females who may/may not have prior work experience and a level of schooling that ranges from incomplete school education to completed technical studies. Although there is such heterogeneity, there is a predominance of females (60–80% in the stores), young adults (60% under the age of 35 years), and low-skilled workers without much prior work experience and belonging to popular urban retail stores.

Table 1. **Demographic characteristics of the sample**

Gender %	Female	72.0
	Male	21.0
Age	Mean (SD)	34.91 (19.91)
Qualifications %[2]	Up to secondary	53.0
	Technical studies	31.0
	Degree	13.0
	Postgraduate studies	0.5
Tenure	Mean (SD)	3.79 (4.99)
Work experience	Mean (SD	6.45 (6.74)

These percentages do not add up to 100 as not everyone responded to this item

[2]These percentages do not add up to 100 as not everyone responded to this item

Procedures

The participants were contacted by the human resources department and an informed consent was obtained from them. The questionnaire was answered either at the beginning or end of the working day in one of the meeting rooms within the organization. One of the study's researchers met each group of participants to explain the purpose and requirements of the study. All the participants were assured of complete confidentiality and anonymity of their responses and informed that their participation was completely voluntary. The cover letter accompanying the questionnaire in all the surveys indicated that the study was conducted only for scientific purposes.

All measures used in the study were both translated and back-translated from English and Spanish by two of the authors, working independently, who adopted the proposals of Brislin (1970). To assess the questionnaires' usability, a pilot test of the Chilean version with 30 employees was conducted.

Measures

To measure job insecurity, we used De Witte's (2000) scale, which had six items (e.g., "I worry about keeping my job") that were answered on the Likert scale (1 = Completely disagree; 5 = Completely agree).

To measure effective organizational commitment, we used Cook's (1981) scale, which had five items (e.g., "Knowing that my own work had made a favorable contribution to the organization would please me") answered on the Likert scale (1 = Completely disagree; 5 = Completely agree).

To measure perceived organizational support, we used the scale developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986), which had seven items (e.g. "My organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part") answered on the Likert scale (1 = Completely disagree; 5 = Completely agree).

To measure perceived performance, we used Abramis' (1994) scale, which had six items (e.g., "Perform without mistakes?") answered on the Likert scale (1 = Completely disagree; 5 = Completely agree).

Lastly, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to evaluate the construct validity of the study variables as the scales that were used were Spanish translations of constructs that were validated in English. For this purpose, a five-factor model was tested using all items of the scales: job insecurity, affective organizational commitment, perceived organizational support, and perceived performance. Note that these analyses reported a poor goodness of fit of the model ($x2 = 837.121$, df = 338, p = 0.0000, RMSEA = 0.086, SRMR = 0.097, CFI = 0.77, and TLI = 0.74).

Based on the modification index (Byrne, 2012), we deleted one item each from the affective organizational commitment scale and the perceived organizational support scale and introduced some correlations between residual errors. These modifications resulted in an improvement in the model's fit ($x2 = 600.167$, df = 240, p = 0.0000; RMSEA = 0.038; SRMR = 0.091; CFI = 0.80; TLI = 0.80). The results showed empirical support for constructing the validity of the four-factor model (job insecurity, affective organizational commitment, perceived organizational support, and perceived performance).

Statistical analysis

For the data analysis, a three-step strategy was used. First, using the MPLUS 6 program (Muthén & Muthén, 2010), the factorial validity of the proposed model was evaluated via confirmatory factor analyses and a reliability analysis (Brown, 2006; Byrne,

2012). These analyses were performed to estimate the robustness of the proposed model's scales, which were supported by the procedure that was described by Bolger, Davis, and Rafaeli (2003).

At the second stage, based on the recommendations of Baron and Kenny (1986), the effects of mediation were examined. Subsequently, to confirm the mediation, the SOBEL (Preacher & Hayes, 2004) statistical test was performed. For this test, we evaluated whether the reduction of the relationship between the variables that were involved in the mediation was statistically significant. Lastly, at the third stage, the moderation hypothesis was evaluated via a moderate multiple regression analysis (RMM), according to the method suggested by Aiken, West, and Reno (1991). To reduce multicollinearity, the study's variables were centered before calculating interactions (Aiken et al., 1991). Finally, the sign and significance of the interaction terms to identify the address patterns of the variables were assessed. The slopes of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variables of each of the moderations that proved to be significant were represented by values of ±1SD from the average. These analyses were performed using the macro MODPROBE, which was developed by Hayes and Matthes (2009) for estimating the interactions of the moderate multiple regression analysis (RMM).

RESULTS

We evaluated a conceptual model that considered the relationship between job insecurity and job performance, which was mediated by affective organizational commitment and moderated using perceived organizational support.

Table 2 lists the means, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and realities of Cronbach's α in relation to the variables of this study. The correlation matrix shows that the relationship between job insecurity was significant and negative for the variables of affective organizational commitment, perceived organizational support and perceived performance. The mediating variable of affective organizational commitment was positively and significantly related to perceived performance. Moreover, the moderating variable of perceived organizational support revealed a significant relationship with perceived performance, job insecurity, and affective organizational commitment.

Because our sample showed high variability in some characteristics, i.e., age, organization tenure, and position, we decided to introduce these variables as control variables and introduced age (in years), organization tenure (in months), and position (dummy variable: 0 = operative and technical duties; 1 = supervisor and managers).

H1 stated that job insecurity was related negatively to job performance. Moreover, according to the results shown in Table 3, job insecurity was a significant negative predictor of performance (B = −0.156, p ≤ 0.05). Thus, H1 was supported.

H2 stated that affective organizational commitment would have a mediating effect between job insecurity and job performance. In line with this hypothesis, a significant and negative relationship between job insecurity and job performance became weaker when the mediator was integrated into the regression equation (Step 3, B = −0.134, p ≤ 0.05), which indicated partial mediation. Thus, H2 was supported (see Table 3).

H3 stated that perceived organizational support could moderate the relationship between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment. The results indicated that the interaction term was significantly related to affective organizational commitment (B = −0.193, p ≤ 0.05). Based on the results obtained, the relationship between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment was evidently stronger and more significant at higher levels (+1SD) of perceived organizational support and weaker and insignificant at lower levels (-1SD) of perceived organizational support (see Figure 2). These results supported H3.

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, and correlations of variables

|	M	SD	1		2		3		4
1. Job insecurity	2.52	0.78	(0.72)						
2. Affective organizational commitment	3.65	0.74	-0.172	*	(0.80)				
3. Perceived organizational support	3.37	0.76	-0.157	*	0.396	**	(0.83)		
4. Perceived performance	4.04	0.69	-0.196	**	0.403	**	0.302	**	(0.82)

Notes: Figures in parentheses indicate the reliability of scales *p ≤ 0.05; **p ≤ 0.01

Table 3. **Results of mediated regression for job performance***

Variable			B	SE	t	P
Direct and total effects						
Job performance regressed in job insecurity			-0.156	0.063	-2.463	0.015
Affective organizational commitment regressed in job insecurity			-0.164	0.086	-2.128	0.035
Job performance regressed in affective organizational commitment, controlling for job insecurity			0.325	0.066	4.380	0.000
Job performance regressed in job insecurity, controlling for affective organizational commitment			-0.134	0.058	-2.286	0.024
	Value	SE		p		
Sobel	-2.30	0.023		0.021		

* We presented the results of the second step after introducing the control variables in the first step: age (in years); organization tenure (in months); position (0 = operative and technical duties; 1 = supervisor and managers).

Figure 2. **Interaction effect of perceived organizational support in the relationship between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment**
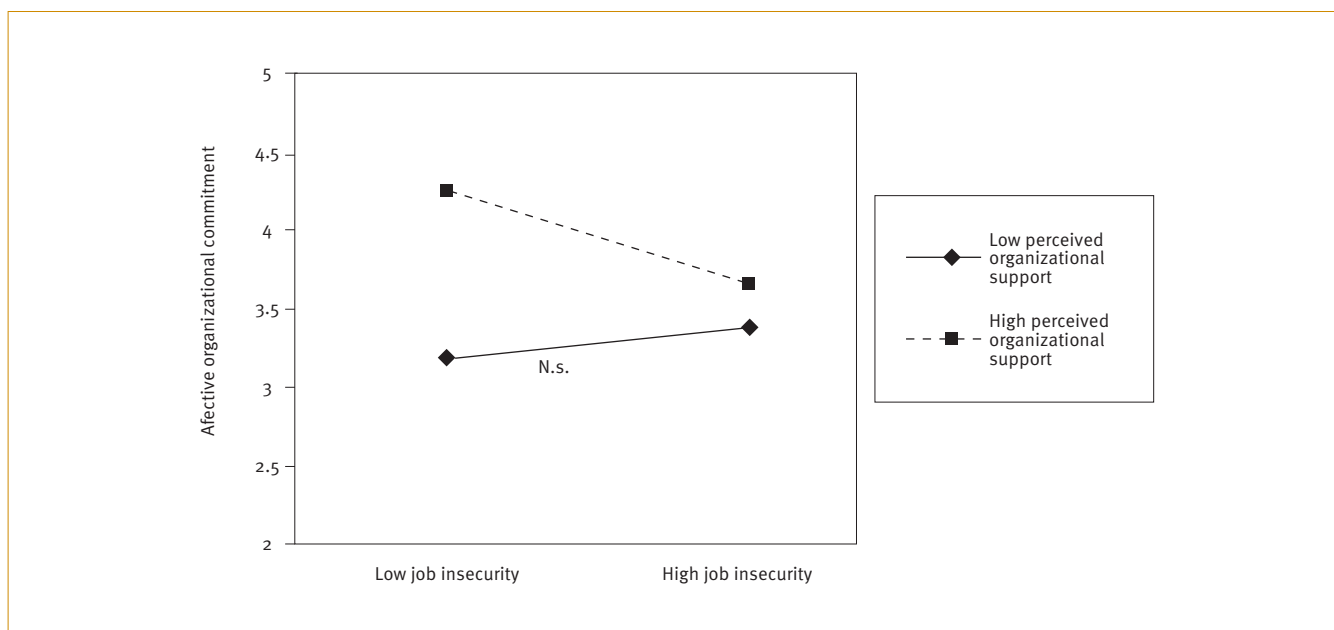
DISCUSSION

Theoretical implications

This study is based on theoretical and empirical outcomes and we sought to identify relations of the effects of job insecurity on job performance according to the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964).

Moreover, to understand this relationship, we set out to understand the mediating mechanism (Cheng & Chan, 2008; De Witte & Näswall, 2003; Ruvio & Rosenblatt, 1998; Schumacher et al., 2015; Sora et al., 2010; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002; Ugboro, 2003) and the moderating role (Bal et al., 2010; Blackmore & Kuntz, 2011; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Tian et al., 2014). The observed results of this study confirm the assumptions of the proposed model, i.e., job insecurity is negatively related to job performance, which is better explained by a partial mediation of affective organizational commitment. Moreover, our results

are consistent with those of the social exchange theory. Therefore, the relationship between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment will be significantly negative. This proves that the core principle of job insecurity playing a threatening role when it comes to employees' interests and values is correct, which ultimately weakens employees' affective organizational commitment. Thus, when employees perceive that organizations have not met their expectations of providing job security, they reduce their level of affective commitment to the organization (Allen et al., 2001; Arshad & Sparrow, 2010; Marques et al., 2014). Similarly, job insecurity induces a negative response to affective organizational commitment, which then reduces individual performance (Buitendach & De Witte, 2005; Cheng et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the relationship between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment is stronger at higher levels of perceived organizational support and insignificant at lower levels of perceived organizational support. Considering the data of previously published studies (Bal et al., 2010; Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998), the abovementioned evidence is in line with the betrayal perspective, i.e., employees perceive the support offered by organizations to be incoherent with their expectations. In fact, when employees perceive their work in a context that considers their contributions and well-being, they expect to receive organizational support to handle and cope with the stresses of uncertain situations (Kurtessis, Eisenberger, Ford, Buffardi, Stewart, & Adis, 2017; Shoss, 2017; Vandenberghe, Bentein, & Stinglhamber, 2004). However, when they perceive job insecurity caused by a downsizing process, they sense a disinvestment for the organization, which is inconsistent with the expectations involved in a supportive context. (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Costa & Neves, 2017). Therefore, if the perceived organizational support is not in line with employees' expectations, the betrayal effect may intensify the fear of losing the job and reducing affective organizational commitment (Fried et al., 2003; Siders et al., 2001). Thus, we have contributed to the literature on organizational relationships by highlighting contextual and emotional factors affecting individual performance caused by job insecurity.

CONCLUSION

This study presents certain limitations that may affect the analysis of results. It was impossible to arrive at any conclusions for causality because of the study's cross-sectional design; hence, we suggest developing longitudinal studies that may help to achieve causal considerations among these variables. Importantly, the sample consisted of workers who had survived an organizational process of downsizing at a Chilean company from the retail sector. Therefore, whether these findings can be extended to another related sample needs to be checked. Moreover, using self-reported variables may raise questions of common-method bias; thus, multiple procedures were used to minimize this effect. To avoid possible modifications and encourage consistent answers, confidentiality was assured to the participants. Furthermore, to generate a favorable environment and obtain realistic answers, the responses were stated to be neither right nor wrong.

Despite these limitations, some important practical implications can be derived from this study. For job insecurity, employees may experience perceptions of uncertainty, which leads to a fear of being laid-off and affects their performance. Indeed, reduced performance may cause weakening of efficiency and organizational effectiveness, which may have a financial impact. Hence, the impact of job insecurity is an important factor that needs to be addressed at workplaces because it involves employees who remain in the organization and survive a downsizing strategy; consequently, our results aim to endorse an efficient downsizing process.

Moreover, for organizations, as an effective intervention strategy, this study suggests that considering the implementation of actions is important. Furthermore, to promote an enabling environment that effectively helps develop affective organizational commitment among the surviving workforce and to prevent negative consequences in the employee–organization relationship, communication and clarification of expectations related to the organization needs to be encouraged.

However, in the relationship between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment, perceived organizational support assumes a significant role. To minimize negative results, the organization should consider the fear of being laid-off within the scope of the insecurity and downsizing process perceived by the employees. Moreover, organizations should consider employees' expectations more demonstratively, i.e., by trying to be more realistic, avoiding false beliefs, and giving emotional support to their workforce.

To summarize, this study sheds light on the negative relationship between job insecurity and job performance, a relationship that is partially mediated by affective organizational commitment. Moreover, a high level of perceived organizational support intensified the negative relationship between job insecurity and affective organizational commitment; however, in the presence of low levels of perceived organizational support, this relationship was observed to be insignificant.

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