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A Swiss-U.S. Comparison of the Correlates of Job Insecurity

Cornelius König

Universität Zürich

Tahira M. Probst

Washington State University Vancouver

Sarah Staffen

Universität Zürich

Maja Graso

Washington State University Vancouver

Sarah Staffen works now for Lodestone Management Consultants, Munich, Germany.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Cornelius J. König, Universität Zürich, Psychologisches Institut, Binzmühlestr. 14/12, 8050 Zürich, Switzerland. Email: c.koenig@psychologie.uzh.ch.

Abstract

Much is known about the general correlates of job insecurity but less about whether the strength of these correlations differs between countries. In order to fill this gap in literature, the current study explored the correlates to job insecurity as a function of the cultural value of uncertainty avoidance. Specifically, using two samples from countries with very different uncertainty avoidance orientations (Switzerland and the US), we tested whether the relationships of job insecurity with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention are stronger in the Swiss sample. As expected, Swiss respondents scored higher in uncertainty avoidance than their US counterparts. Contrary to expectation, however, the results showed that the relationships between job insecurity and outcomes were stronger in the US than in Switzerland. Substantial differences in the social safety net within the two countries are discussed as a plausible explanation of this finding.

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Global trade competition coupled with the demand for increased workforce flexibility, the fast pace of technological innovation, and government deregulation of industry have led to widespread corporate layoffs, workplace restructuring, and the increasing use of a contingent workforce (Gunter & van der Hoeven, 2004; Hirsch & De Soucey, 2006). These conditions virtually ensure that employees of the new millennium will experience a substantially different workplace environment than employees in decades past. Specifically, workers from around the globe must contend with the reality of rising job insecurity (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002).

Because job insecurity is a global phenomenon, it comes as no surprise that the topic has attracted global attention. A brief keyword search of articles indexed in PsycInfo on job insecurity revealed over 500 peer-reviewed articles in the past 25 years, stemming from authors located in Europe (e.g., Sora, Caballer, Peiró, & de Witte, 2009), Asia (e.g., Cheng & Chan, 2008), Australia (e.g., D'Souza, Strazdins, Broom, Rodgers, & Berry, 2006), the Middle East (e.g., Yousef, 1998), Africa (e.g., Bosman, Buitendach, & Rothmann, 2005), and North (e.g., Reisel, Probst, Chia, Maloles, & König, in press) and South America (e.g., Rodríguez Feijóo, 2004). This large body of accumulated research evidence indicates overwhelmingly negative correlates of job insecurity. A recent meta-analysis by Cheng and Chan (2008) comprised of 172 independent samples with 132,927 employees found that job insecurity was, for example, related to worse job performance (r_c = -.21), less trust in the organization (r_c = -.49), and worse psychological (r_c = -.28) and physical health (r_c = -.23).

Clearly, there has been widespread global interest in the topic of job insecurity and many studies have obtained diverse samples from multiple countries. For example, as early as 1991, van Vuuren, Klandermans, Jacobson, and Hartley examined the phenomenon of job insecurity in samples from Israel, the Netherlands, and the UK. More recently, Bacon and Blyton (2001)

examined the relationship between high involvement work systems and job insecurity in iron and steel organizations sampled from 30 countries. Finally, in their development of a cross-culturally appropriate measure of job insecurity, Lee, Bobko, Ashford, Chen, and Ren (2008) gathered data from the United States and China. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of job insecurity has rarely been examined from a deliberately cross-cultural perspective taking either cultural values or socio-economic conditions into account. Although job insecurity is globally researched, to date there are very few studies that explicitly set out to test theory-based hypotheses regarding cross-cultural differences in reactions to job insecurity. In a notable exception, Probst and Lawler (2006) compared the relationship of job insecurity with job attitudes as a function of the cultural values of individualism and collectivism and found that the relationships were more negative among collectivists than among individualists.

The purpose of the current study is to extend this fledgling area of cross-cultural job insecurity research to compare the relationships between job insecurity and several important and commonly studied job-related outcomes within the United States and Switzerland. Specifically, we first describe reasons why job insecurity is negatively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment and positively related to turnover intentions. Next, we discuss the cultural value of uncertainty avoidance, and explicate why cultural differences in uncertainty avoidance should play a role in predicting cross-cultural differences in the relationship between job insecurity and these job outcomes.

Job Insecurity's Relationship with Job Attitudes

Job insecurity is a stressor that can cause strain reactions (e.g., De Witte, 1999). According to stress theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), the strain elicited by a stressor depends on how a person appraises a stressor and on how many resources a person has. If people appraise a stressor as potentially harmful and threatening (instead of challenging), this triggers

negative emotions. A likely strategy for coping with a work stressor is to psychologically withdraw from work, and such a withdrawal is reflected in reduced work attitudes such as reduced job satisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, and higher turnover intentions. In the case of job insecurity, people will think about what it means to lose their jobs, and it is very likely that they agree with the literature (e.g., McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005) that being unemployed is an important and highly stressful life event. Thus, stress theory predicts that people are likely to react to job insecurity with withdrawal (i.e., lowered job attitudes).

Empirically, the negative relationship between job insecurity and several job attitudes is now well-established. Cheng and Chan (2008) reported correlations between job insecurity and job satisfaction of r_c = -.43, between job insecurity and organizational commitment of r_c = -.35, and between job insecurity and intentions to turnover of r_c = .32 in their meta-analysis, and this is in accordance with the previous meta-analysis by Sverke, Hellgren, and Näswall (2002).

Uncertainty Avoidance

As noted above, there has been very little research assessing the role that cultural values may play in how employees experience job insecurity. However, variations in cultural values can be expected to moderate the relationship between managerial practices and organizational effectiveness (Earley, 1993; Erez, 1994; Hofstede, 1991; Laurent, 1986). It has been theorized that for any managerial practice to be implemented successfully, there must be an *alignment* between the assumptions, values, and beliefs fundamental to the managerial practice and the culturally influenced assumptions, values and beliefs held by the employees being managed (Hofstede, 1993; Kirkman & Shapiro, 1997; Mendonca & Kanungo, 1994; Robert, Probst, Drasgow, Martocchio, & Lawler, 2000; Schneider, 1988). Theory would suggest that the properties inherent in the growing trends of organizational downsizing, restructuring, and layoffs

and the resulting change in the psychological contract held between employer and employee may be misaligned with certain cultural values held by employees. In particular for the current research, we were interested in the value of uncertainty avoidance.

According to Hofstede (2001), uncertainty avoidance (UA) reflects the society's level of tolerance for uncertainty (i.e., unstructured, unknown, or surprising situations). Populations with high UA scores have a low tolerance for uncertainty and will feel less comfortable in uncertain situations. High UA societies have a tendency to be rigid and a shared preference for clear rules, standardization of situations, as well as law and order. Low UA societies tend to accept ill-defined situations as something normal and therefore mind less about others having different opinions.

Research has found that Switzerland consistently scores higher in uncertainty avoidance than the United States (Hanges & Dickson, 2004; Hofstede, 2001). As early as the 1970s, Hofstede found that Switzerland had a lower tolerance for uncertainty than the United States. And, more recent research from the GLOBE leadership studies confirmed that this remains true today. Indeed, in their examination of 62 societies, the GLOBE results found Switzerland to score the highest of all societies on uncertainty avoidance (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004). This is pronouncedly different from the United States, where flexibility and openness to change are considered cultural cornerstones (House et al., 2004). As Hoppe and Bhagat (2007, p. 510) note:

> An interesting expression of the United States' openness to change and acceptance of uncertainty as a normal part of life can be gleaned from reactions to major layoffs in the U.S. economy. "A striking feature is how matter-of-factly – even happily– many elite workers are taking their 'reduction in force' notices…many workers have come to accept

the risk of layoff as the price of admission to the New Economy (McGinn & Naughton, 2001, p. 38)".

The Role of Uncertainty Avoidance for Job Insecurity

Based on stress theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), societal differences in uncertainty avoidance should matter for the appraisal of job insecurity: If people in a high UA society are confronted by job insecurity, they should perceive job insecurity as more threatening than people from a low UA society because of their general dislike of uncertain situations, and job insecurity might be a particular good example for a uncertain situation in the work domain. In other words, one could predict that the reaction to job insecurity would be more negative in societies that have a generally lower level of uncertainty avoidance.

Based on these stark contrasts in the evaluation of uncertainty avoidance, we hypothesize that the relationship between job insecurity and job attitudes (i.e., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions) would be stronger among Swiss employees than among their U. S. counterparts.

Although we hypothesize that the Swiss are less tolerant of uncertainty than the United States, and therefore, will have more negative reactions to job insecurity, one could also develop an alternative hypothesis predicting exactly the opposite. Specifically, as Hofstede (2001) notes, high UA societies will try to minimize uncertainty through the enactment and strict enforcement of laws, rules, and other safety and security measures designed to reduce such uncertainty. Therefore, one might expect that high UA societies such as Switzerland would have a stronger social safety net than low UA cultures such as the US, thereby buffering the negative impact of the potentially negative consequences of job insecurity and/or actual layoff. As a result, one might predict more negative reactions in a low UA society which places less emphasis on the

social safety net. However, because our study did not actually measure respondent perceptions of the social safety net, we are unable to directly test this alternative proposition.

Methods

Participants

In order to obtain a sample from multiple industries and organizations, we collected data from working students in Switzerland and the US using an online questionnaire. Swiss participants were either enrolled in a Master of Advance Studies course of a well-established university in the German-speaking region of Switzerland or in various part-time courses at four Universities of Applied Sciences in the same canton (i.e., the same geopolitical region). Participants could win vouchers for the cinema or for books. Because some participants were not currently working (n = 6), these participants had to be excluded, resulting in a final data set of n = 315. An overall response rate cannot be calculated because one university could not tell us how many students received the email with the link. In the other universities, the response rates ranged between 14% and 28% percent. One hundred and ninety-eight were male, 117 female. One person was younger than 20, 108 were between 20 and 29 years old, 99 between 30 and 39 years, 75 between 40 and 49 years, 30 between 50 and 59 years, and 3 people older than 60. Twenty-three were not Swiss citizen, and 222 had no children.

Forty-eight percent of Swiss participants worked full time; the remaining worked on average 68.6%-time (SD = 18.3), i.e., approximately 27 hrs/wk. Nineteen had been working in their current occupation for less than six months, 52 between six months and two years, 74 between two and five years, 83 between five and ten years, 66 between ten and twenty years, and 21 more than twenty years. Thirty-five had a temporary contract and 272 a permanent one. They

worked in various industries, with the four most common being computer/multimedia, social/health services, education, and civil service.

US participants studied at two campuses of a mid-sized nontraditional university located in the Pacific Northwest, were enrolled in Psychology or Business courses, and received class credit for their participation. An exact response rate cannot be calculated, because students interested in participating in research opportunities choose from a variety of studies posted online; therefore, it is thus unknown how many people saw the link to our study and chose to participate. Because some participants were not currently working (n = 193) or because of missing data (n = 7), these participants had to be excluded, resulting in a final data set of n = 488. Of these, 162 were male, 322 female, and 4 did not reveal their gender. One hundred and forty-six people were younger than 20, 295 between 20 and 29 years, 21 between 30 and 39 years, 18 between 40 and 49 years, 7 between 50 and 59 years, and 1 person did not reveal his/her age. Forty-nine were not US citizen, and 435 had no children.

Twenty-four percent of US participants worked full-time; the remaining worked on average 36.2%-time (SD = 19.6), i.e., 14.48 hrs/wk. One hundred and sixty-eight had been working in their current occupation for less than six months, 148 between six months and two years, 107 between two and five years, 44 between five and ten years, 15 between ten and twenty years, 3 more than twenty years, and 3 did not answer this question. One hundred and ninety-four had a temporary contract and 242 a permanent one. They worked in a variety of industries, with the four most common being general service industry, retail/sales, catering, and education.

Measures

The online survey contained the following measures which utilized a Likert response scale ranging from (1) *disagree strongly* to (5) *agree strongly* unless otherwise noted.

Job insecurity. This construct was measured with the four-item version (Staufenbiel & König, in press) of Borg's (Borg, 1992; see also Borg & Elizur, 1992) cognitive job insecurity scale that focus exclusively on the perception of the likelihood of losing one's job. Its (reverse-scored) items are: "My job is secure", "In my opinion, I will keep my job in the near future", "In my opinion, I will be employed for a long time in my present workplace", and "My workplace is secure in every respect."

Job satisfaction. Searching the literature for a job satisfaction scale that has been established in a English- and a German-speaking context, we realized that the US-American Job Satisfaction Index (Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992) is very similar to a German scale developed by Neuberger and Allerbeck (1978), even though they were independently developed. The only exception is that the Tsui et al. measure has an additional item ("I am satisfied with the pay I receive") that was translated for this study into German by the authors. The other items are: "I am satisfied with the nature of the work I perform", "I am satisfied with the person who supervises me – my organizational superior", "I am satisfied with my relation with other in the organization with whom I work – my co-workers or peers", "I am satisfied with the opportunities which exist in this organization for advancement and promotion", and "Considering everything, I am satisfied with my current work situation."

Organizational commitment. This construct was measured with a shortened version of the Affective Commitment scale by Allen and Meyer (1990) and its German version, respectively (developed by Schmidt, Hollmann, & Sodenkamp, 1998). As Meyer et al. (2002) showed in their meta-analysis, affective commitment is strongly correlated with job attitudes (e.g., job involvement) and behavioral outcomes (e.g., turnover, job performance), and these correlations are higher than the correlation of the two other commitment subscales with these constructs. The items were "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization", "I

enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it", "I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own", "I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one" (reverse coded), "I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization" (reverse coded), and "This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me". Because contact people in company for a previous research project suggested that one item ("I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organization") could be misunderstood if people work in a family-own corporation, this item was omitted.

Turnover intention was measured with the scale by Rosin and Korabik (1991, a German version can be found in Maier & Woschée, 2002). The three items are: "At this time in your career, would you want to quit this job if it were possible?", "Are you actually planning to leave your job within the next six months?" and "Are you actively searching for another job right now?" Anchors were yes = 1 or no = 0.

Uncertainty avoidance was measured with the uncertainty avoidance scale developed for the GLOBE project in its English and German version (Hanges & Dickson, 2004). Respondents are advised that they should answer the four items based on their perception of what American (or Swiss, respectively) culture is currently like. Sample items are "In this society, orderliness and consistency are stressed, even at the expense of experimentation and innovation" (answered on a 7-point Likert scale from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*) and "This society has rules or laws to cover _____ situations" (with options ranging between *very few* and *almost all situations)*.

Results

Assessment of Measurement Equivalence

Before testing our hypotheses, it was critical to first establish the measurement equivalence of our scales. Thus, a simultaneous factor analysis in several populations (SIFASP; Sörbom, 1974) was conducted on the scales for job insecurity, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intention, and uncertainty avoidance using LISREL 8 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). First, a listwise deletion was performed resulting in effective sample sizes of 478 and 315 in the U.S. and Swiss samples respectively. Next, three multi-item indicators were constructed based on their factor loadings for each scale in order to address the unreliable fit that can result from utilizing item-level responses (Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, & Magley, 1997). Finally, three nested measurement models were developed. Model A was the least constrained model where indicators could load only on one factor, but factor loadings and indicator means were allowed to vary across samples. Model B constrained factor loadings to be invariant across both samples, but the means were allowed to vary. Lastly, the fully constrained Model C added an equal intercepts constraint such that factor loadings and item means were not allowed to vary.

All estimated factor loadings were significant and reasonably close to 1.00 indicating that the assigned indicators measured their latent traits adequately. Fit indices for each of the measurement models are presented in Table 1. The results suggest that Model A has a satisfactory fit. The difference between Models A and B in χ^2 was significant (sequential χ^2 (10) = 93.13, $p < .01$) suggesting that factor loadings are not exactly equal across the two samples. However, the Model B fit indices still indicate a reasonably good fit to the data. Finally, the most constrained, Model C, yielded a dramatically decreased model fit. The sequential χ^2 (15) = 536.23 was quite large and significant ($p < .01$) indicating that there is significant decrease in fit between the Models B and C. The overall results of measurement equivalence testing indicate that Models A and B provide a reasonable fit to the data. However, the test of Model C indicates

significant differences between the two samples on the variables of interest, which is to be expected (and indeed predicted by the hypothesis).

Finally, we also conducted tests to evaluate the assumption of homogeneity of variance across our two samples. We tested this assumption in SPSS using Levene's test, which was non-significant (i.e., indicating homogeneity) for each dependent variable.

Descriptive Statistics and Tests of Hypotheses

Descriptive statistics and correlations among the variables of interest can be found in Table 2. T-tests indicate that organizational commitment was significantly higher in Switzerland ($t = 5.8$, $p < .01$, $d = .36$). Additionally, turnover intentions were significantly higher in the US ($t = 6.2$, $p < .01$, $d = -.46$). Finally, the significant mean difference in uncertainty avoidance ($t = 5.1$, $p < .01$, $d = .37$) replicated the finding of the GLOBE study (Hanges & Dickson, 2004) that uncertainty avoidance is higher in Switzerland than in the US.

To test our primary hypothesis, we conducted moderator analyses with hierarchical multiple regressions according to Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003). Although we tried to match samples as closely as possible, as noted earlier, there were nonetheless demographic differences between the two samples. Thus, in the first step, we entered control variables (gender, age, number of children, workload, employment contract, and organizational tenure). The addition of these control variables reduced our sample size to 738. Then we centered job insecurity and entered it and the moderator (i.e., country as a dummy-coded variable) in the next step, and then we entered their interaction term in the third step.

The results of these moderator analyses can be found in Table 3 and are visualized in Figures 1 to 3. As can be seen, country moderated the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction, job insecurity and organizational commitment, and job insecurity and turnover intention but not in the expected direction. The relationships between job insecurity and job

attitudes were more negative in the US than in Switzerland. (The same analysis without the control variables revealed highly similar effects.) Specifically, while job insecurity was related to worse job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions in both countries, these relationships were stronger in the US than in the Swiss sample. Below we discuss possible explanations for these seemingly counterintuitive results.

Discussion

Little is known about how people in different countries react to job insecurity. We expected that Swiss respondents would score higher in uncertainty avoidance because of previous large-scale research (e.g., Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004), and we were able to replicate this. We also expected that this cultural difference would translate into more negative relationships between job insecurity and our three job attitudes (job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions) among the Swiss than among the US participants. However, this was not the case, as the relationships were more negative in the US data.

What then might explain these unexpected results? If one adopts a dynamic perspective on societal values, it is clear that societies shape the way they operate because of their values. Applied to the current context, this might mean that high UA societies may try prevent and/or ameliorate the effects of such uncertainty. Thus, while one might predict (as we did) that individuals from higher UA societies would react more negatively to job insecurity, one might also expect that individuals living in a high UA society would benefit from those governmental safety nets put in place to buffer those consequences, thereby buffering the negative impact of the potentially negative consequences of job insecurity and/or actual layoff.

A review of the social safety nets developed to protect unemployed workers in Switzerland and the US suggests this may be a plausible explanation for our results and a fruitful

area to explore in future research. Specifically, in Switzerland, unemployment insurance provides benefits in the case of loss of employment to all persons who have been in gainful employment for at least 12 months during the two-year period immediately prior to unemployment. The unemployed receives 70% of his or her normal income during the last 6 months. Under certain conditions (e.g., an obligation to care for children), he or she receives 80% of the normal income. The maximum unemployment benefit is SFr.100,800 (US$89,300) per year. In addition, becoming unemployed has no effect on health insurance, as health insurance is compulsory in Switzerland.

Unemployment benefits in Switzerland are paid for two years, beginning from the first day where all claim prerequisites of the allowance are fulfilled. Under certain conditions, it can be extended. If people are without work through their own fault, entitlement to the benefit is suspended (up to 12 weeks.) If people are longer unemployed than two years, they are granted access to the Swiss social welfare program paid by the Swiss government. Each person in Switzerland is entitled to financial support to cover basic needs such as food, clothing, education and medical care. Social welfare can also cover the lease costs of an adequate flat. It is however expected that each person actively tries to (re-)integrate into the society.

The social safety net available to workers facing layoff is much weaker in the United States. Unemployment insurance is available to workers who have been with their employer for 12 of the prior 15 months and who lose their job through no fault of their own (i.e., are laid off rather than fired). Unemployment payments are only intended to provide temporary financial assistance to unemployed workers who are paid for a maximum of 26 weeks in most states. In general, benefits are based on a percentage of an individual's earnings over a recent 52-week period - up to a state-determined maximum amount. Although exact benefits vary from state to state, the minimally guaranteed benefits do not provide an income that would exceed the 2008

poverty threshold of US$10,400 per person established by the United States. For example, in Washington State (where our US data were collected), the maximum weekly unemployment benefit is US$541 (the minimum is US$129 per week). By way of comparison, the Swiss government would provide a maximum amount of US$1717 per week. Furthermore, most individuals secure health care coverage (i.e., health insurance) through their employer as part of their benefits package in the United States. Therefore, if one becomes unemployed, this usually results in the loss of health care insurance. Under the provisions of the 1986 Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA), laid off employees can opt to pay for continuing their health care coverage, but this option is often prohibitively expensive and is available only for a limited period of time following unemployment.

Based on this analysis, it is clear that the Swiss social safety net is stronger than that provided in the United States on several fronts (e.g., eligibility criteria, guaranteed duration of benefits, level of unemployment compensation, and post-layoff continuance of health care coverage), and these differences between the Swiss and the US social safety net are also confirmed by a recent analysis by the International Labour Organisation (2004) which classified Switzerland as exemplary in terms of its policies to protect workers but considered the US to offer far fewer economic security protections. These social safety net differences may offer a plausible explanation of our findings that the relationship between job insecurity and job attitudes is more negative in the US than in the Switzerland: Losing one's job has much more negative consequences for people in the US than in Switzerland. This would explain our initially puzzling empirical findings showing that job insecurity is related to more negative outcomes in the US compared to Switzerland.

Despite the intriguing nature of the results, there are several limitations that should be noted. First, our study relied upon the responses of working students. Some might argue that

these respondents are not representative of working population. In particular, our respondents were highly educated, and having a higher education may make it easier to find a new job. In addition, fully 1/3 of respondents were full-time employees in this study; and, the remaining part-time employees worked on average over 18 hours per week, which may also limit the generalizability of our findings. It should be noted, however, that being employed full-time is not generally a requirement for receiving unemployment benefits in either country.

A more important limitation is the recognition that there are many dimensions along which the United States and Switzerland vary. While differences in societal safety nets offer an explanation for the results of our study, there are certainly other plausible alternative explanations related to cultural, economic, and/or social differences. In particular, there are also significant differences in the unemployment rates in these two countries. The unemployment rate in the German-speaking region of Switzerland was about 3% at the time of the data collection (Federal Statistical Office, 2009), distinctively smaller than the US unemployment rate of 6% (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2008). Because of this higher unemployment rate, there may have been more competition for the remaining jobs which might enhance the negative effects of insecurity and threatened job loss independent of cultural differences in uncertainty avoidance or the social safety net. Therefore, future research on this topic should attempt to rule out these explanations. In a related fashion, it is also recommended that future research on this topic actually measures perceptions of the social safety net to determine if this is indeed a plausible explanation. Furthermore, the reliability of the uncertainty avoidance and the turnover intention scale were somewhat below the conventional .70 coefficient alpha standard (Lance, Butts, & Michels, 2006). Given the briefness of both scales, future research could add one or two items in order to reduce measurement error.

It is also important to point out that there often remains within the field of job insecurity research a lack of conceptual clarity between cognitive and affective insecurity, qualitative and quantitative insecurity, and subjective vs. objective job insecurity (see Klandermans & van Vuuren, 1999; Probst, 2008; and Sverke & Hellgren, 2002, for reviews). These distinctions may influence expectations regarding empirical findings. For example, the current study used a cognitive measure of job insecurity (i.e., one which solely measures perceptions regarding the likelihood of losing/retaining one's job). We specifically hypothesized that there would be differences in the ways in which the Swiss and US participants would react in response to the perception of job insecurity. Thus, it was important to use a measure of cognitive insecurity. However, we would not have expected country-level differences in the way in which individuals affectively react to job insecurity. In other words, given equivalent levels of negative affective reactions to a perceived level of job insecurity, we wouldn't have expected different attitudinal or behavioral outcomes between the US and Switzerland. Thus, it was important for us to use of measure capturing perceptions of job insecurity rather than a measure of negative affective reactions to that perception. Nonetheless, future research should carefully consider these distinctions and incorporate a variety of job insecurity measures to more fully investigate whether our results would be replicated using cognitive and affective, qualitative and quantitative, and subjective vs. objective measures of job insecurity.

The practical implications of this study are varied. Naturally, these results should be considered tentative and definitive policy recommendations should await further investigation into the topic to confirm the reasons for the different responses to job insecurity. However, it is important to note that the global economy affects all workers and equally important to note that the actual perceived level of job insecurity did not differ between the U.S. and Switzerland. Only their reactions to that job insecurity differed. Because the conditions that create job

insecurity are not going to disappear and because the consequences of job insecurity can be so devastating (see Cheng & Chan's 2008 meta-analysis), it is important to identify mechanisms for avoiding these outcomes. If, as we suspect, the reason for fewer negative outcomes of job insecurity among the Swiss is due to the differences in the social safety net, then one practical implication would be to recommend developing a stronger safety net for employees within the U.S. This win-win situation would not only benefit affected workers who become laid off, but might also lead to fewer negative consequences for job-insecure employees and their organizations.

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Table 1

Fit Indices for Measurement Models

Model	χ^2	*df*	χ^2/df	GFI	NNFI	SRMSR
Measurement						
A: unrestricted mean and factor loadings	509.46	160	3.18	0.93	0.89	0.06
B: restricted factor loadings	602.59	170	3.54	0.92	0.88	0.06
C: restricted mean and factor loadings	1138.85	185	6.15	0.89	0.75	0.07

Note. GFI = goodness-of-fit index, NNFI = non-normed fit index, SRMSR = standardized root mean square residual.

Table 2

Correlations, Reliabilities, and Descriptive Statistics

Variable	M_{CH}	SD_{CH}	α_{CH}	1	2	3	4	5
M_{US}				2.48	3.59	2.74 [a]	0.37 [a]	4.47 [a]
SD_{US}				0.85	0.71	0.71	0.35	0.90
α_{US}				.75	.76	.72	.58	.62
1 Job insecurity	2.37	0.88	.81		-.49**	-.41**	.51**	-.06
2 Job satisfaction	3.64	0.65	.77	-.36**		.52**	-.50**	.10*
3 Organizational commitment	3.02	0.65	.73	-.28**	.44**		-.45**	-.00
4 Turnover intention	0.21	0.35	.81	.39**	-.53**	-.31**		.01
5 Uncertainty avoidance	4.80	0.88	.63	-.02	-.08	.04	.06	

Note. CH = Switzerland; US = United States. $n_{CH} = 315$; $n_{US} = 488$. Correlations below the diagonal for the Swiss sample; correlations above the diagonal for the US sample.

[a] = significantly different from the Swiss mean ($p < .01$).

* $p < .01$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 3

Moderation Tests (Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses)

	Job satisfaction			Organizational commitment			Turnover intention		
Predictor	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Step 1 (control variables)									
Gender	.05	.05	.05	.02	.01	.01	-.02	.01	.01
Age	-.08	-.06	-.06	-.03	-.04	-.05	-.08	-.02	-.02
Number of children	-.03	-.02	-.02	.03	.04	.05	.11**	.08*	.08*
Workload	.04	.03	.02	.17**	.14**	.14**	-.05	.00	.01
Employment contract	-.01	-.11**	-.11**	-.04	-.06	-.06	.09*	-.04	-.04
Organizational tenure	.01	-.01	-.01	.14**	.11**	.12**	-.03	.01	.01
Step 2									
Job insecurity		-.45**	-.43**		-.34**	-.33**		.44**	.43**
Country		-.07	-.07		-.12**	-.12**		.23**	.23**
Step 3									
Job insecurity × country			-.09**			-.08*			.06 [a]
ΔR^2	.01	.19**	.01**	.08**	.12**	.01*	.03	.21**	.003 [a]
Overall R^2	.01	.20**	.21**	.08**	.19**	.20**	.03	.25**	.25**

Note: $N = 738$ (due to missing data). Standardized regression coefficients are shown. Gender coded as 1 = male, 2 = female. Employment contract coded as 0 = permanent contract, 1 = temporary contract. Workload: full-time coded as 100%, everything else also in percentage. Organizational tenure coded as 1 = less than 6 months, 2 = more than 6 months to 2 years, 3 = more than 2 to 5 years, 4 = more than 5 to 10 years, 5 = more than 10 to 20 years, 6 = more than 20 years. Country coded as -1 = Switzerland, 1 = US. Job insecurity was centered before calculating the interaction term.

[a] $p < .07$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Figure Captions

Figure 1: Interaction between Job Insecurity and Country on Job Satisfaction.

Figure 2: Interaction between Job Insecurity and Country on Organizational Commitment.

Figure 3: Interaction between Job Insecurity and Country on Turnover Intention.

Figure 1

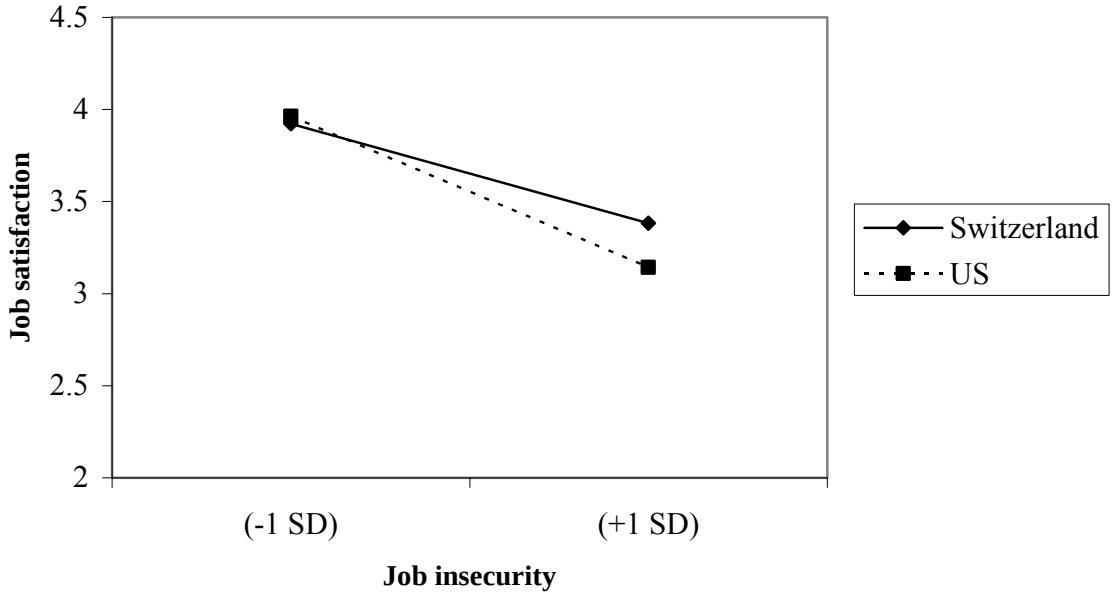

4.5
4
3.5
3
2.5
2
Job satisfaction
(-1 SD)
(+1 SD)
Job insecurity
Switzerland
US

Figure 2

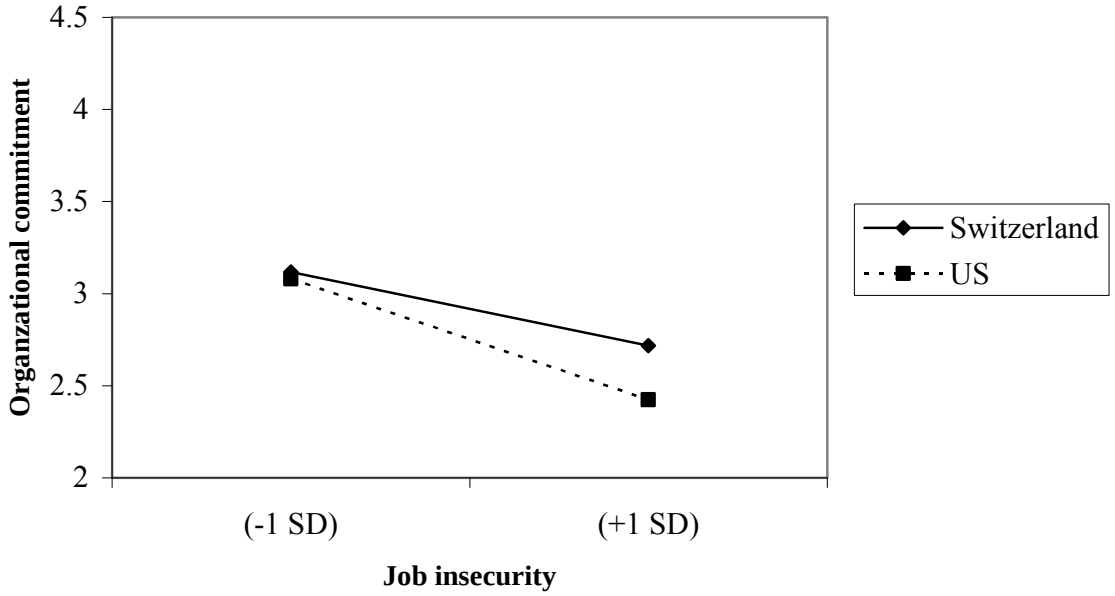
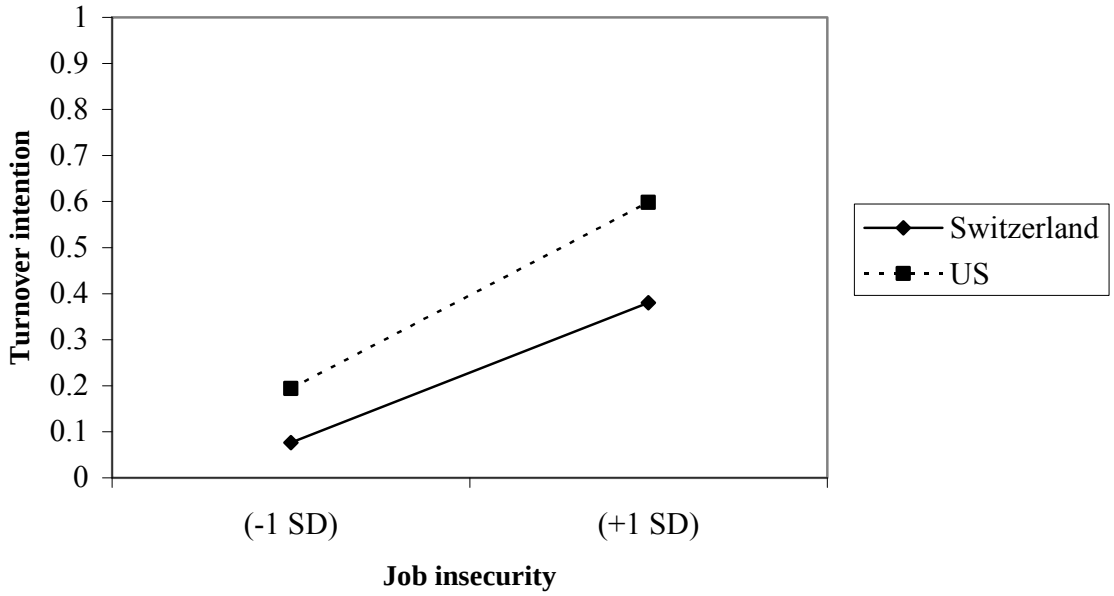

4.5
4
3.5
3
2.5
2
Organzational commitment
(-1 SD)
(+1 SD)
Job insecurity
Switzerland
US

Figure 3


1
0.9
0.8
0.7
0.6
0.5
0.4
0.3
0.2
0.1
0
Turnover intention
(-1 SD)
(+1 SD)
Job insecurity
Switzerland
US