

Beyond job insecurity – Concept, dimensions, and measurement of precarious employment

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ABSTRACT

Although precarious employment is a salient topic in both the societal and the scientific discourse, it has received limited consideration in the field of psychology. This study aimed at developing a psychological perspective on the topic rooted in sociological theory by classifying subjective experiences of precarious employment and developing a suitable measure. Following a thorough literature search, we chose the multidimensional concept by Klaus Dörre and colleagues as a comprehensive definition. We operationalized their five dimensions (reproductive-material, social-communicative, legal-institutional, status and recognition, meaningful-subject-related) and tested the „Subjective Experience of Work-related Precariousness (SEWP)“ scale in two preliminary validation studies ($n_1 = 268$, $n_2 = 216$). Results on the psychometric properties of the SEWP scale and its associations with both health-related outcomes and work-related behavior suggest a comprehensive, reliable, valid, and economic measurement of precarious employment. Finally, we discuss current strengths and weaknesses of this new measure under development and line out avenues for future research.

Keywords

Precarious employment flexibility – atypical employment – precarity – measurement – health – work behavior

¹ Christian Seubert and Lisa Hopfgartner have contributed equally to this research and the current paper; they therefore share first authorship.