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JOB INSECURITY AND JOB SATISFACTION IN THE GREEK PUBLIC SECTOR: THE CASE OF e-EFKA

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Abstract

The main objective of this article is the investigation of the correlation between the levels of job insecurity of the Electronic Unified Social Security Agency (e-EFKA) employees, the largest public insurance organization in Greece, and their job satisfaction. From the empirical research it emerged that the participants experience high levels of quantitative and qualitative job insecurity, which shows a negative and statistically significant relationship with job satisfaction in both its dimensions, i.e. intrinsic and extrinsic. Also, the stereotypical perception of the absolute job security of public employees is challenged by the results of the research, while suggestions for reducing their job insecurity by enhancing their job satisfaction are provided.

Keywords: Job insecurity, Job satisfaction, Public Sector, Greece

JEL Classification: J28, J45, M54

Introduction

In the last four decades, labor relations have changed dramatically, due to the ever-changing economic environment and the widespread tendency of companies to reduce operational costs related to human resources. However, at the same time, fundamental changes have been made in the work process and in the forms of employment of most of the Western countries (Callea, Urbini, Ingusci & Chirumbolo 2016; Reisel, Probst, Chia, Maloles & König 2010). These important

changes include the fragmentation of the labor market, the introduction of flexible forms of employment, the continuous increase of temporary or short-term employment contracts and finally, the rarity of stable and long-term employment (Zheng, Diaz, Tang & Tang 2014). Following the above, it was observed that private sector workers began to feel a growing sense of change and instability, while at the same time the levels of job security they enjoyed were drastically reduced (De Witte & Buitendach 2005; Green 2009; Zheng et al. 2014).

Nevertheless, despite the sense of threat experienced by workers in the private sector, workers in public organizations (globally) continued for decades to enjoy significantly higher levels of job security (Ugboro 2016), because their employment continued to be protected not only by labor laws, but also from strong trade unions (Rosenblatt & Ruvio 1996). However, the financial crisis of 2008 overturned the public sector dominance over the private sector, as swelling government deficits and shrinking gross domestic product (GDP), forced governments to make major cuts in public spending (Eurofound 2013). As a result, the quality of working conditions for civil servants drastically deteriorated, marking the end of their job security. This overturning of balances, in fact, became so great that recent research by Gallie, et al. (2017), concluded that public employees now, experience significantly more job insecurity compared to private employees, not only regarding the loss of acquired privileges of their employment (qualitative insecurity), but also regarding the loss of their job itself (quantitative uncertainty). These findings reveal the enormous amount of pressure that public sector employees have been under in recent years.

A typical example of workers who were significantly pressured, are Greek civil servants, who after 2010 and the outbreak of the economic crisis, lived in a working environment that suffered the most extreme state reforms ever implemented in an OECD country (Ioannou 2013). Therefore, with the aim of filling the existing research gap, this article investigates the levels of job insecurity in the Greek public sector, in relation to job satisfaction. The article includes five sections: in the first, a broad literature review is attempted for the conceptual determination of quantitative and qualitative job insecurity, as well as job satisfaction, while the relationship between these two variables is presented. The second section describes the sample and the research tool, and the third presents a statistical description of quantitative and qualitative job insecurity. The fourth section includes the empirical econometric model, the research results, as well as their interpretation. Finally, the fifth section presents the conclusions of the research, its limitations, as well as policy proposals, and suggestions for further investigation.

Literature Review

Job insecurity

The term job insecurity has been described by many researchers, using different definitions. First, Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984), define job insecurity as the inability to control and prevent data that may endanger the work situation of individuals. Subsequently, Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans and Van Vuuren (1990) define it as the difference between the levels of security individuals experience in their professional life, and the levels of security they would prefer to experience, while Green (2009) describes it as the feeling of loss of well-being that an individual feels when he or she receives uncertainty in the professional field.

The interpretation of job insecurity, however, is not limited solely to the lack of certainty about losing a job, but can also be extended to the threat that the workers feel about losing some important aspects of their employment (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt 1984). So, according to the above differentiated approach, the term of job insecurity includes two dimensions: the "quantitative" and the "qualitative". Specifically, *quantitative job insecurity* is exclusively linked to the possibility of losing the job itself, whilst *qualitative job insecurity* refers to the possible loss of essential characteristics of the job, such as salary or hierarchical degradation, the reduction of opportunities for personal development, the removal of the possibility to take initiatives and the worsening of existing working conditions (Callea et al. 2016; Hellgren, Sverke & Isaksson 1999).

Even though job insecurity may arise because of the stimuli that individuals receive from their work environment (such as mergers, reorganization, downsizing, etc.) (Lee, Bobko & Chen 2006), it is not necessarily related to the instability of labor relations (Zheng et al. 2014). Therefore, it should be distinguished from the actual loss of employment and unemployment, because while the loss of employment is an immediate event linked to the individual's concerns about how to manage his or hers dismissal and his or hers financial obligations, job insecurity is a daily stressful factor, because it constantly preoccupies the employee with the anticipation of the consequences of a possible removal (Heaney, Israel & House 1994). For this reason, Jacobson (as cited in Sverke, Hellgren & Näswall 2002) points out that when the actual job loss occurs, the person who until then lived with insecurity is "released" from at least one very stressful factor: that of uncertainty. This subversive view is also verified by the findings of the study by Dekker and Schaufeli (1995), who examined a group of approximately 100 employees from a large Australian public transport company, which was in the process of restructuring. Their research was conducted in two stages: the first stage involved filling out a questionnaire during the time which there was uncertainty about whether the participants would be fired or not, while the second stage involved the

same employees completing a similar questionnaire two months later. Comparing the two groups at two time points, it was demonstrated that the psychological well-being of those who knew they would definitely be fired had improved, whilst for the group that was still uncertain, it was found that in the second stage, they felt just as bad as in the first. Therefore, it was clearly illustrated that the certainty of dismissal appeared to be less psychologically aggravating than continued insecurity.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is emerging as one of the most intensively studied organizational variables in contemporary literature (Markovits, Davis & Van Dick 2007). In 1935 Hoppock defined job satisfaction as an internal experience, which comes as a result of the influence of many external factors and expresses the pleasure an employee derives from his or hers employment. Subsequently, in 1964 Vroom defined job satisfaction as the "emotional orientation" of individuals, in relation to their work roles (Aziri 2011), while in 1976 Locke described it as the set of positive and pleasant feelings that employees experience, according to their evaluation of their personal work experience (Locke, as cited in Clark 1996; Platsidou 2010). However, job satisfaction is not only limited to positive emotions, but generally expresses how people feel about their employment (Knoop 1995; Markovits et al. 2007). In this way, job satisfaction is considered as the degree to which an individual enjoys (when there is satisfaction) or does not enjoy (when there is dissatisfaction) his or hers job (Spector 1997).

For a better understanding of the term, many researchers divide job satisfaction into extrinsic and intrinsic (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran 2005; Markovits et al. 2007). The term *extrinsic job satisfaction* includes the satisfaction that arises in the individual from factors such as salary, the physical conditions of the work environment, the interpersonal relationships, and the policies of the human resources administration. Therefore, extrinsic job satisfaction is linked to quantitative and monetary aspects of work life, which are mainly under the control of the employer (Callea et al. 2016). In contrast, the term *intrinsic job satisfaction* includes the satisfaction an individual derives from the qualitative, non-monetary aspects of his or her employment that are experienced primarily internally by the employee. These aspects include creativity in the field of employment, the possibility of developing and exploiting abilities, as well as the feelings of personal achievement, independence and goal fulfillment (Callea et al. 2016; Markovits et al. 2007).

Regardless of how the concept of job satisfaction is formulated, it is a fact that it strongly remains subjective (Rodriguez-Pose & Vilalta-Bufi 2005), because the same working conditions are perceived in a different way by each employee. In

particular, Clark (1996) and Rodriguez-Pose and Vilalta-Bufi (2005), typically state that job satisfaction results from someone's subjective evaluation of their job and is influenced by countless factors depending on the type of employment of each employee or depending on the abilities they possess. For this reason, as early as 1977, Freeman has classified job satisfaction among the "subjective variables", which measure people's opinions, rather than the results of their actions (Freeman 1977).

Correlation between job satisfaction and job insecurity

As mentioned above, the modern unstable, demanding and competitive work environment causes strong feelings of ambiguity, stress, uncertainty and ultimately job insecurity in employees (Zheng, et al. 2014). This fact seems to have a strong negative effect on the levels of satisfaction that individuals derive from their work. The existence of a multitude of scientific studies that highlight the negative relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction, confirm this specific position, concluding that the insecurity associated with employment reduces the feeling of employee satisfaction (Buitendach & De Witte 2005; Callea et al. et al. 2016; De Cuyper, Notelaers & De Witte 2009; Heaney et al. 1994; Reisel et al. 2010).

However, employment conditions characterized by job uncertainty and ambiguity are an "indirect problem" for organizations, because the negative emotions of employees contribute to the reduction of their job satisfaction and, subsequently, to the manifestation of a series of negative behavioral reactions, such as absenteeism (Scott & Taylor 1985), stress (Terry, Nielsen & Perchard 1993), reduced organizational commitment (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky 2002) and reduced well-being (Jones 2006).

Data and Model Specification

The research presented in this article, on the one hand studies the intensity of job insecurity in the e-EFKA organization and, on the other hand, investigates the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction. The period in which it took place was July 30th to September 11th, 2020 and includes 432 employees, from 17 branches of the organization in question, located in the prefectures of: Achaia, Attica, Etoloakarnania, Corfu and Thessaloniki. Taking into account the fact that according to the official data of 2019, the total number of employees in e-EFKA was 8,502 people (according to Presidential Decree No. 8/2019), this sample constituted 5% of the total population. The demographics of the participants are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample.

	Absolute Frequency	Relative frequency
Age		
<39	65	15.05%
>=39	367	84.95%
Sex		
Men	137	31.79%
Women	294	68.21%
Education level		
Even secondary	161	37.27%
At least Tertiary	271	62.73%
Marital status		
Married	300	69.44%
Single/Divorced	132	30.56%
Total Years of Service		
Until 10	59	13.66%
11-20	183	42.36%
21-30	104	24.07%
31 and above	86	19.91%
Working Status		
Contract holders	65	15.05%
Permanent	367	84.95%

The questionnaire used to carry out the specific study consists of three (3) different research fields, which study: the demographics of the participants, their job insecurity and their job satisfaction.

More specifically, the first part of the questionnaire, which includes the demographic questions, examines the gender of the respondents, their age, their family status, their level of education (primary school graduates, high school graduates, technical institute graduates, university graduates, master's degree holders or doctoral degree, other), their total years of service in the organization (up to 10 years, 11-20 years, 21-30 years and at least 31 years), as well as their type of employment (permanent, indefinite or based on court contract).

The second part of the questionnaire, in which the issue of job insecurity is studied, was based on the Skills and Employment Survey 2012 (Cardiff University 2013). This questionnaire has the potential to examine, with high reliability, a wide range of work attitudes and behaviors. However, only the questions investigating job insecurity were selected and then translated and cross-culturally adapted from

English to Greek (after written permission was secured from the copyright holders), giving particular basis to the conceptual, semantic and functional equivalence of the attributed concepts (Galanis 2019). Participants were asked to rate their level of concern regarding the possibility of: a) not being treated fairly due to discrimination, b) having less involvement in issues related to how their work is performed, c) facing future changes which may make it more difficult to use their skills and abilities, d) facing changes which may reduce their remuneration, e) being transferred to a less interesting job within the e-EFKA and f) being dismissed in the future from their work. Response options were based on a four-point Likert scale: "not at all" worried, "not much", "quite" and "very".

The third part of the questionnaire, in which the levels of job satisfaction of the participants were studied, is based on the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (short form) (University of Minnesota 2020). The specific questionnaire was chosen as a competent research tool for drawing comparable conclusions, as it has a well-established theoretical background, is widely recognized in the scientific community and has been used by numerous scientific articles dealing with the job satisfaction of employees in the public sector (Abugre 2014; Bodur 2002; Bowling 2007; Martins & Proença 2012). The original format of the MSQ is in the English language. However, it did not need translation and cross-cultural adaptation, because it is provided translated into Greek from the official website of the University of Minnesota. It includes seventeen (17) questions, with which the degree of satisfaction of e-EFKA employees was investigated: 1) from the possibility of not being unemployed, 2) from the opportunity to be "someone" in their work, 3) from the way they are treated by their superiors, 4) by the ability of their superiors to make decisions, 5) by the ability to act according to their conscience, 6) by the ability to have stable employment, 7) by the opportunity provided to them to offer to other people, 8) from the opportunity to use their qualifications, 9) from the way in which e-EFKA implements its policy, 10) from the amount of their salary in proportion to the work they provide, 11) by the opportunities offered to them for promotion/advancement, 12) by the freedom to use their own judgment, 13) by the ability to use their own methods/ideas, 14) by their existing working conditions, 15) by the relations of associates between them, 16) from the recognition they receive and 17) from the sense of accomplishment they experience. Responses were selected on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "very dissatisfied", to "dissatisfied", "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied", "satisfied" and "very satisfied".

Job insecurity

The data obtained from the analysis of the relative frequencies, as presented in table 2 below, highlight the fact that the participants in the research experience high quantitative, but also qualitative job insecurity.

Table 2. Relative frequencies of categorical job insecurity variables.

Job Insecurity

	Not at all/Not much	Quite/A lot
<i>Quantitative Insecurity</i>		
Concern about the possibility of being fired	49%	51%
<i>Qualitative Insecurity</i>		
Concern about a pay cut	19%	81%
Concern about less participation in the way work is performed	22%	78%
Concern about unfair treatment due to discrimination	23%	77%
Concern about making skills harder to use	23%	77%
Concern about a less interesting job	31%	69%

Quantitative Insecurity

It deals with the anxiety about the possibility of dismissal and it was found that it concerns 51% of the participants. This specific finding disproves the general perception that Greek civil servants feel absolute job security due to their permanence. At the same time, it confirms a pivotal reversal of the security climate in the public sector worldwide, also identified in other studies (Gallie et al. 2017).

Factors such as partial permanence (provided for in Article 103 paragraph 4 of the Constitution - Constitutional Revision of 2008), the experience of the implementation of labor reserve measures and layoffs that took place in the years 2011-2014 (Law 4024/2011) and the continuous abolitions/ conversions/ mergers of public organizations (Law 3895/2010 and Law 4250/2014), seem to trigger the insecurity of Greek public employees regarding the possibility of their dismissal.

Qualitative Insecurity

The qualitative insecurity of the participants in this research is revealed through a series of factors: (a) *Concern about a pay cut*: it emerges as the greatest qualitative insecurity (81%) and it is not baseless, as of March 2010 and onwards (when the Greek financial crisis occurred), public employees have been tested by successive "waves" of wage cuts, which have drastically reduced their disposable income (Ioannou 2013). (b) *Concern about less participation in the way work is performed*: concerns 78% of the participants and reveals the helplessness they feel when work changes take place. The reason is the unilateral policy-making actions implemented after 2010, such as the abolition of social dialogue and the limitation of their rights only to unionize (Ioannou 2013). (c) *Concern about unfair treatment due to discrimination*: concerns 77% of the respondents and is based on the very structure of the Greek public administration, which favors the lack of meritocracy in the selection of staff members, due to the intense intervention of political parties to expand their clientele networks (Spanou 2008). (d) *Concern about the difficulty of using their skills*: also concerns 77% of participants and is probably due to the lack of a modern, holistic human resource management framework in the Greek public sector, even though after the escalating fiscal debt crisis of 2010, introduced sophisticated personnel management practices (Lampropoulou & Oikonomou 2018). (e) *Concern about a less interesting job*: concerns 69% of the respondents and is based on the wider climate of the administrative reorganization of the Greek public sector after the outbreak of the financial crisis, which forced a large number of public employees to move from their until then considered permanent jobs, to other positions either within the same service or in other organizations (articles 1 to 7 of Law 3895/2010 and articles 6 to 19 of Law 4250/2014).

Results and interpretation

The econometric analysis of the collected data was carried out with the statistical package Stata – Data Analysis and Statistical Software v.13.0.

The data belong to the category of cross-sectional data, which are the result of a collection of data, carried out at a single point in time and in a statistical unit. The use of this specific type of data is usually found when it is desirable to compare the differences that arise between selected subjects in an econometric model (Vamvoukas 2007).

Finally, the analysis of the data was carried out with simple multiple regression analysis, which is a reliable method of determining the variables that influence the issue under study, because it makes it possible to determine with certainty which of the factors under consideration are more important, which of them can be ignored and how they affect each other (Papadimitriou 2001).

In order to clarify how variations in subjective variables (i.e. demographic factors, intrinsic job satisfaction and extrinsic job satisfaction) affect the index of job insecurity, the following general form econometric model was estimated:

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta \Delta E_i + \gamma X_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Where Y_i refers to the degree of job insecurity for the i^{th} e-EFKA employee and is the dependent variable of the model (this variable is in logarithmic form). ΔE_i is a vector that includes the subjective variables for each e-EFKA employee (i.e. intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction). X_i is a vector containing all variables related to demographic characteristics of each participating employee (gender, marital status, age, employment status, total years of service, and education level). ε_i is the disturbance term for the i^{th} participant-employee of the survey, assuming that: $E(\varepsilon_i) = 0$ καί $\text{Var}(\varepsilon_i) = \sigma_\varepsilon^2$.

Correlation between job insecurity and intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction

The connection between the factors of job insecurity and job satisfaction, as well as the way in which one affects the other, are frequently encountered issues in recent years in scientific literature, as scholars are constantly trying to find means of mitigating the unpleasant feeling of job uncertainty. With the aim of contributing to this investigation, in this article the statistical correlation between these two variables is studied, through their econometric analysis.

The presentation of the results is by analyzing table 3, in which the elements of the econometric model are presented, where the degree of job insecurity is the dependent variable and the number of demographic variables, are independent, in combination with the work variables of the intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction.

The first column [1] shows the regression coefficients for each variable and whether it is statistically significant (at the 1%, 5% or 10% statistical significance level), column [2] shows the standard errors for each variable and column [3] shows the marginal effects, i.e. the predicted probabilities for each variable.

Additionally, column [1] of table 3 describes the effect of intrinsic job satisfaction on the dependent variable of job insecurity, while column [2] shows the effect of extrinsic job satisfaction on the dependent variable of job insecurity. Finally, column [3] shows, the effects that intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction have on the dependent variable together.

Studying column [1], regarding the demographic variables, when exclusively the independent variable of endogenous job satisfaction is introduced into the econometric model, then it is found that gender and employment status significantly contribute to shaping the levels of job insecurity of e-EFKA employees . On the contrary, it is concluded that age, level of education and marital status do not affect the degree of job insecurity.

Table 3. Determinants of job insecurity

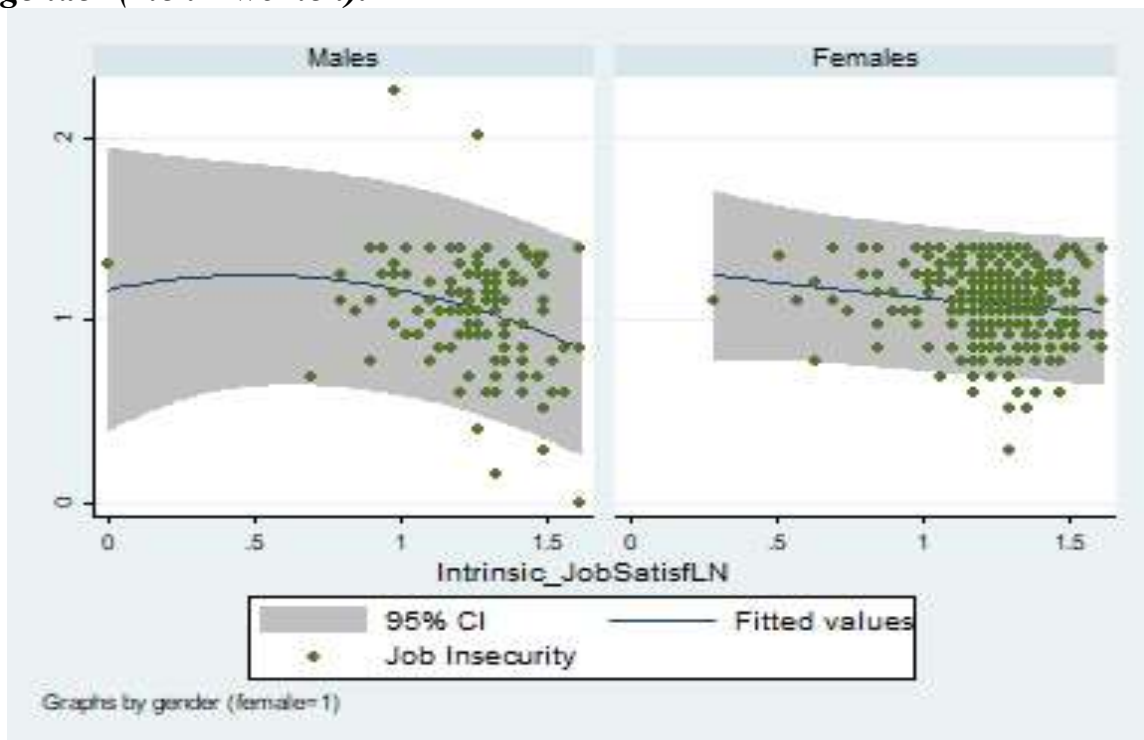
Y : ln (Job Insecurity)	[1]	[2]	[3]
Fixed term	1.304*** (0.081)	1.224*** (0.063)	1.275*** (0.080)
Demographics			
Women	0.047* (0.027)	0.045* (0.027)	0.045* (0.027)
>39	0.045 (0.030)	0.046 (0.030)	0.045 (0.030)
At least Tertiary Education	0.008 (0.026)	0.005 (0.026)	0.006 (0.026)
Single/Divorced	0.012 (0.024)	0.009 (0.023)	0.009 (0.023)
Permanent Employees	-0.091*** (0.031)	-0.093*** (0.030)	-0.091*** (0.031)
Job Satisfaction			
Intrinsic Job Satisfaction	-0.190*** (0.057)	-	-0.073* (0.081)
Extrinsic Job Satisfaction	-	-0.148*** (0.043)	-0.111** (0.060)
Observations	432	432	432
F-Stat	4.06	4.28	4.39
R2	0.069	0.076	0.077

Notes: All econometric models take into account participants' years of service. Standard errors are in parentheses. Statistical significance *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, *p<0.10

When only the effect of intrinsic job satisfaction is examined female participants appear more insecure at a 10% level of statistical significance, and with a

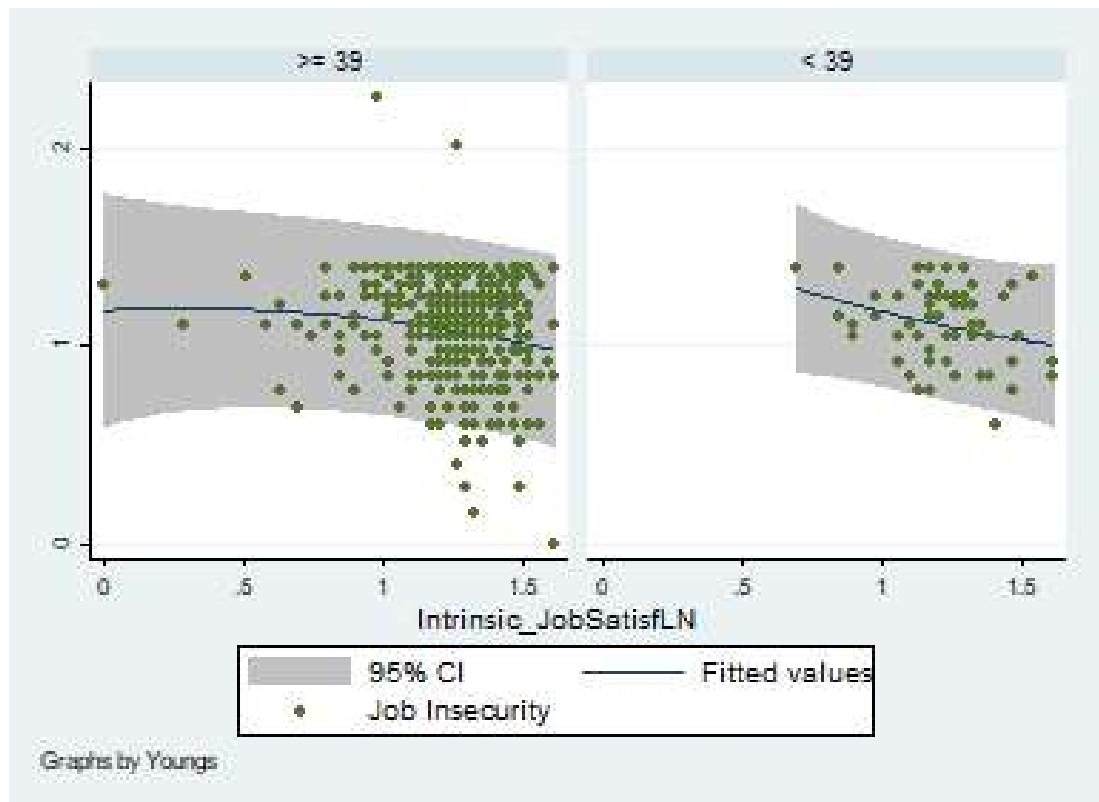
probability of 4.7% on average, we expect them to experience greater levels of job insecurity, relative to the male participants. So women who are intrinsically satisfied feel more job insecurity than men. These results are illustrated more precisely in graph 1 below.

Graph 1. The effect of intrinsic job satisfaction on job insecurity, according to gender (men – women).



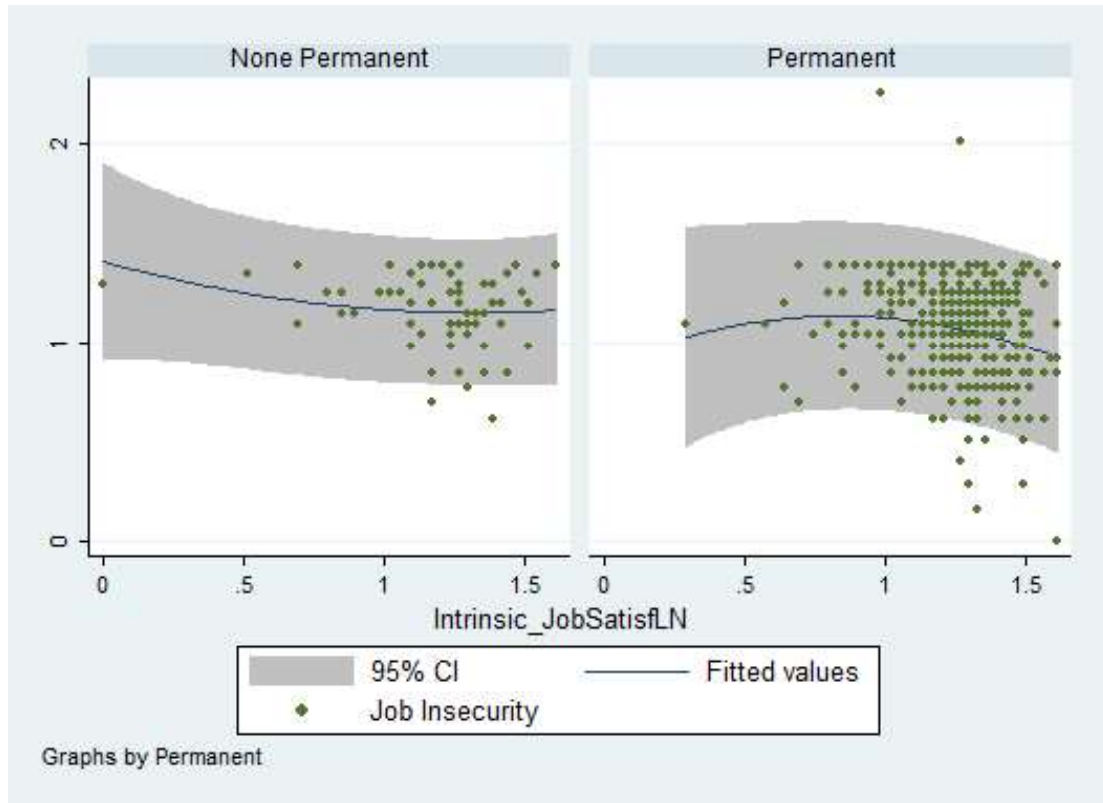
Moreover, analyzing table 3, it is concluded that when only the intrinsic job satisfaction variable is entered into the model, then the demographic factor of age is not statistically significant. This fact is illustrated in graph 2.

Graph 2. The effect of intrinsic job satisfaction on job insecurity, according to age (≥ 39 and < 39).



Regarding employment status, when the only variable entered into the model is intrinsic job satisfaction, it is found that permanent employees are less insecure at a 1% level of statistical significance and with a probability of 9.1% on average they are expected to experience less job insecurity compared to their indentured colleagues. So, permanent employees who are intrinsically satisfied feel less job insecurity than contract workers. These results are presented in graph 3.

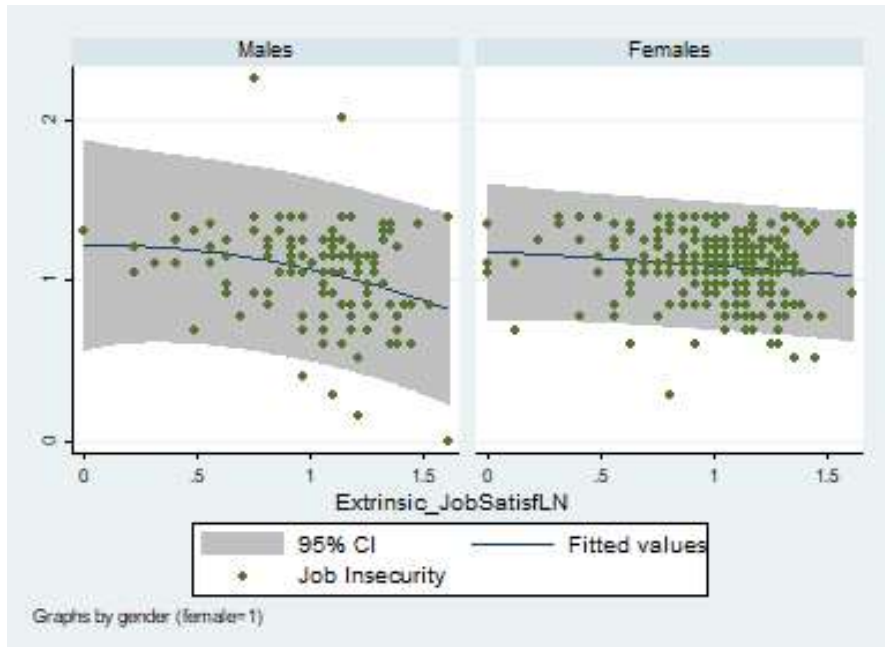
Graph 3. The effect of intrinsic job satisfaction on job insecurity, according to employment status (permanent-contract workers).



Analyzing column [2], regarding the demographic variables, when the independent variable of extrinsic job satisfaction is exclusively introduced in the econometric model, it is found that gender and employment status continue to significantly influence the levels of job insecurity of e-EFKKA employees. Also, it is concluded that age, marital status and level of education still do not affect job insecurity.

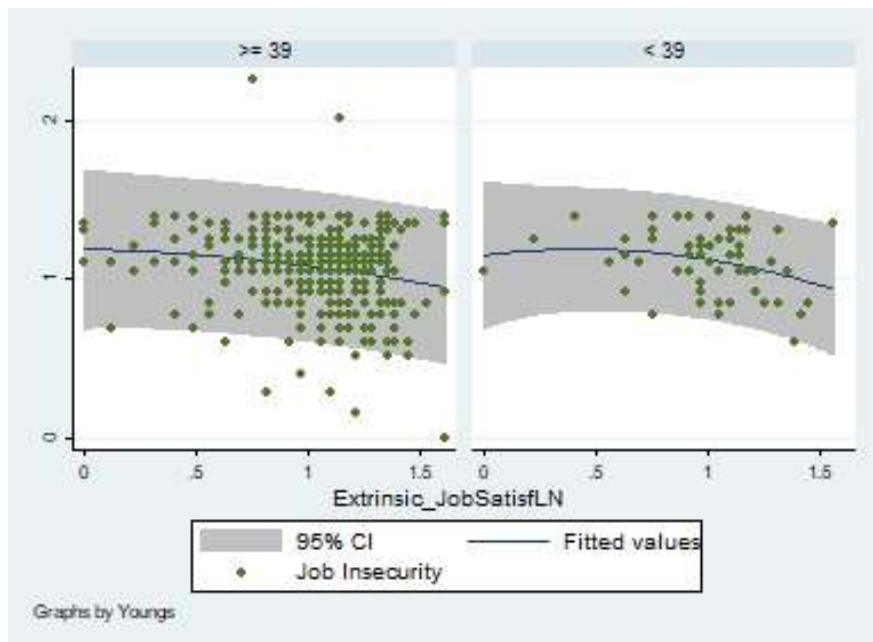
Furthermore, when only the effect of extrinsic job satisfaction is examined, female participants appear more insecure at a 10% level of statistical significance, and with a probability of 4.5% on average, we expect them to have greater levels of job insecurity, compared to male participants. So women who are extrinsically satisfied feel more job insecurity than men. These results are illustrated in graph 4 below.

Graph 4. The effect of extrinsic job satisfaction on job insecurity, according to gender (men – women).



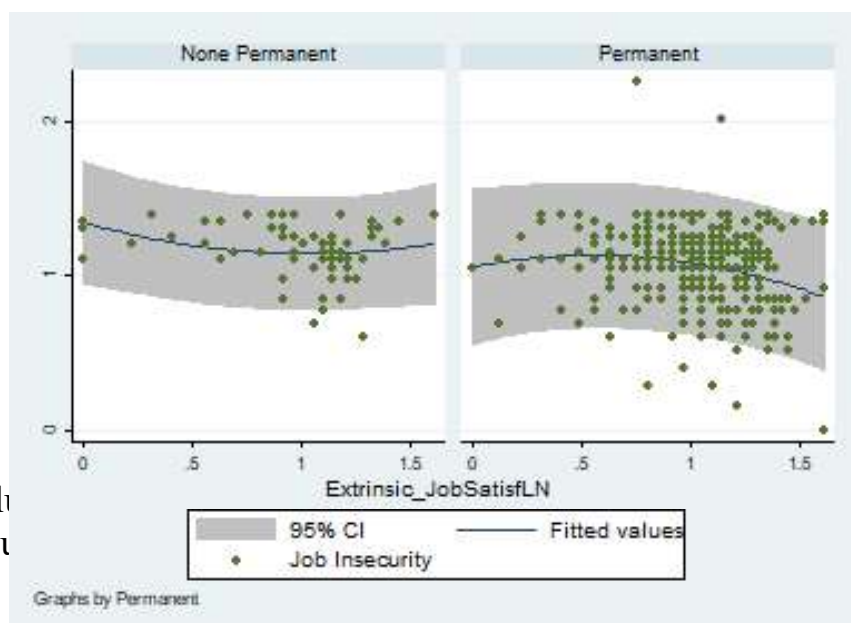
Also, when only the effect of extrinsic job satisfaction is examined (column [2]), it is found that the age factor is still not statistically significant (graph 5).

Graph 5. The effect of extrinsic job satisfaction on job insecurity, according to age (≥ 39 and < 39).



Subsequently, when examining only the impact of extrinsic job satisfaction on the levels of job insecurity (column [2]), it is found that permanent employees are less insecure at a 1% statistical significance level and with a probability of 9.3% on average, it is expected to feel less job insecurity than their contract colleagues. So, permanent employees who are extrinsically satisfied feel less job insecurity than contract workers. These results are shown in graph 6.

Graph 6. The effect of extrinsic job satisfaction on job insecurity, according to employment status (permanent-contractual)



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jointly entered into the econometric model, the analysis shows that gender and employment status retain their significant role in shaping the levels of job insecurity of e-EFKA employees, while age, level of education and family status still do not affect it. More specifically, women appear more insecure at a 10% level of statistical significance, and with a probability of 4.5% on average, we expect them to experience greater levels of job insecurity, compared to male participants. Additionally, in terms of employment status, permanent employees are found to be less insecure at a 1% level of statistical significance and with a 9.1% probability on average, they are expected to experience less job insecurity than contract workers.

Continuing the analysis of the subjective variables of intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction, their importance in shaping the overall insecurity of e-EFKA employees is highlighted. In particular, it is found that intrinsic job satisfaction moderates job insecurity at a significance level of 10% and with an average probability of 7.3%, when an employee is satisfied with the intangible aspects of his job (i.e. intrinsically satisfied), his job insecurity decreases. Also, it seems that extrinsic job satisfaction works as a factor in reducing the job insecurity of e-EFKA employees at a significance level of 5%, so with an average probability of 11.1%, when employees are satisfied with the material aspects of their work (i.e. extrinsically satisfied), their job insecurity is also reduced.

Therefore, the results of the research showed that the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction (endogenous and exogenous) is, in any case, negative. This finding is in line with a number of similar studies on this issue (Buitendach & De Witte 2005; Callea et al. 2016; De Cuyper et al. 2009; Heaney et al. 1994; Reisel et al. 2010) and confirms the fact that enhancing the participants' job satisfaction reduces their feeling of job insecurity.

The verification of this particular conclusion is important for the managers of e-EFKA, as it implies that at a time when the feeling of job insecurity among their employees is particularly strong, the negative effects associated with it (absenteeism, reduction of productivity, etc.) etc.), can be mitigated through enhancing job satisfaction.

Conclusions

Contributing to the expansion of the research concerning job insecurity and its effects on public servants, this article on the one hand examines the levels of job insecurity (qualitative and quantitative) of the employees of the country's largest state insurance organization (i.e. e-EFKA), in relation to their job satisfaction (endogenous and exogenous), and on the other hand, it broadens the research field, as it studies the relationship between job insecurity and demographic factors.

First of all, it emerged that e-EFKA employees generally experience high levels of job insecurity. This insecurity is strongly related to concern about losing their job itself (quantitative insecurity) and is not limited to concern about losing specific aspects of their employment (qualitative insecurity). Therefore, the findings confirm the marked deterioration in the quality of employment in the public sector found in the study by Gallie et al. (2017), while at the same time dispelling the stereotypical notion that public employees in Greece are completely safe, without the feeling of any kind of job insecurity.

Furthermore, from the investigation of the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction (endogenous and exogenous), it was concluded that both the intrinsic job satisfaction of e-EFKA employees (that is, the satisfaction stemming from the intangible and non-monetary aspects of employment), as well as extrinsic job satisfaction (i.e., satisfaction stemming from the material and monetary aspects of employment), can reduce the unpleasant feeling of insecurity, because their relationship with job insecurity was shown to be statistically significant. This result fully confirms the studies of Callea et al. (2016), De Cuyper et al. (2009) and Heaney et al. (1994), while only partially verifying the research of Buitendach and De Witte (2005), who found that only enhancing extrinsic job satisfaction moderates job insecurity. The above finding is important for the top management of e-EFKA, as it is proven that the insecurity of the employees of the organization is reduced, as long as the managers improve both the intangible and the material and monetary aspects of their employment, such as working conditions, salary and opportunities for promotion.

Regarding the effect of demographic factors (gender, age, education, marital status and work status) on the formation of job insecurity levels, it emerged that only the factors of gender and work status, affect the job insecurity of e-EFKA employees. More specifically, it emerged that those who experience higher levels of job insecurity are women and contract employees. The specific findings, through the analysis of the data studying, outline the profile of employees who experience the unpleasant feeling of job insecurity more strongly, making it easier to use targeted measures to mitigate it.

In particular, regarding the effect of the employment status of e-EFKA employees, it emerged that contract participants showed significantly higher levels of insecurity, compared to their counterparts with a permanent employment relationship. This finding is in full agreement with the results of the study by Conley (2002), while it only partially confirms the findings of the study by Gallie et al., (2017), because it only verifies the quantitative uncertainty part and not the one about the quality. The explanation of the specific differentiation, compared to this research, carried out in the United Kingdom, could be attributed to the rapid change of labor relations in the Greek public sector, during the period of the

economic crisis. During that time, the contract workers of the e-EFKA felt more instability and uncertainty in their working environment, compared to their colleagues with a permanent employment relationship, because they were the ones who, based on the “institution of the labor reserve”, were first removed from their jobs and then fired (Ministry of Administrative Reform and e-Government 2012).

Finally, regarding the gender factor, the conclusion that women experience significantly more job insecurity compared to their male counterparts, confirms the results of other studies, such as Linz & Semykina (2008) and Green (2009), while it does not agree with research that concludes that men experience greater anxiety and insecurity in the possibility of losing their job (De Witte 1999) and that in developed economies the differences in the levels of insecurity between men and women are statistically negligible (Elman & O Rand 2002; Gallie et al. 2017).

Of course, there are also limitations in our research, such as the following: Data collection was carried out through the use of questionnaires, which often include self-report and bias items (Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002), therefore to enhance research reliability, the combined use of qualitative methods, such as interviews, is recommended. The size and distribution of the sample (432 valid questionnaires from e-EFKA employees, in 5 prefectures), may in future research be larger on the one hand and include more prefectures on the other. Finally, the composition of the sample only includes employees of e-EFKA, a public organization that is under an administrative restructuring regime, which is probably a reinforcing factor for their job insecurity. Consequently, in order to draw generalized and reliable conclusions, which concern all public servants, it is advisable to expand the research to different organizations of the public sector.

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