The job security well-being nexus: A path analysis of economic, social, and mental health outcomes

 Masood Badri[1,2+]

 Mugheer Al Khaili[1]

 Hamad Al Dhaheri[1]

 Guang Yang[1]

 Muna Albahar[1,2]

[1]*Abu Dhabi Department of Community Development, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.*
[2]*United Arab Emirates University, Al Ain, United Arab Emirates.*
[1,2]*Email: Masood.Badri@addcd.gov.ae*
[1]*Email: Mugheer@addcd.gov.ae*
[1]*Email: Hamad.aldhaheri@addcd.gov.ae*
[1]*Email: Guang.Yang@addcd.gov.ae*
[1,2]*Email: Muna.Albahar@addcd.gov.ae*

(+ Corresponding author)

ABSTRACT

Job security is a key determinant of well-being, shaping individuals' experiences across economic, social, and psychological domains. This study investigates the job security–well-being relationship by examining the direct and indirect effects of job security on economic stability, job satisfaction, work–life balance, mental health, and subjective health among working individuals in Abu Dhabi. A path analysis was employed to assess the interconnected pathways between job security and various well-being indicators, while analysis of variance (ANOVA) explored demographic differences across gender, age, education, marital status, and region of residence based on data from 45,107 employed respondents. The results reveal that job security has a strong positive influence on job satisfaction, economic well-being, and work–life balance. In contrast, lower job security is significantly associated with increased mental distress and poorer health outcomes. The most substantial direct effect was found between job security and job satisfaction, whereas the strongest negative relationship was observed with mental health. Indirect effects suggest that economic and social factors mediate the relationship between job security and broader well-being. These findings underscore the multidimensional nature of employment stability and its implications for individual quality of life. The study offers practical insights for policymakers and organizational leaders seeking to reduce the adverse impacts of job insecurity by promoting supportive workplace environments and developing policies that enhance employment stability and social well-being.

Contribution/Originality: This study uniquely applies path analysis to a large-scale dataset to uncover both direct and mediated effects of job security on multiple well-being outcomes, integrating economic, social, and mental health dimensions an approach rarely applied within the context of Gulf labor markets.

1. INTRODUCTION

Job security is increasingly recognized as a cornerstone of individual well-being, influencing not only financial stability but also psychological health, social relationships, and overall life satisfaction. In today's dynamic employment landscape shaped by economic volatility, technological disruption, and shifting policy environments, secure employment plays a crucial role in reducing stress and uncertainty.

This study investigates the multifaceted effects of job security on well-being outcomes among employees in Abu Dhabi, focusing on economic stability, mental health, life satisfaction, social relations, work–life balance, and

1256

subjective health. Abu Dhabi's labor market, marked by demographic diversity and evolving economic conditions, offers a unique context for examining these relationships.

Previous research consistently links job insecurity to negative outcomes across well-being domains. Economic insecurity is associated with heightened financial stress and reduced household stability (Choi, Heo, Cho, & Lee, 2020; Giannetti, Madia, & Moretti, 2014; To, Gao, & Leung, 2020). Psychologically, job insecurity contributes to anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion affecting both job and life satisfaction (Drishti & Carmichael, 2022; Frone, 2018; Nemteanu, Dinu, & Dabija, 2021; Wang, Narcisse, Togher, & McElfish, 2024).

Social outcomes, such as diminished work–life balance and strained interpersonal relationships, often emerge as employees prioritize job retention over social and family engagement (Abdul Jalil et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2017; Sirgy & Lee, 2018; Yang, Qiu, Lau, & Lau, 2020). Health-related concerns, including chronic stress and lower subjective health have also been frequently linked to unstable employment (Burgard, Brand, & House, 2009; Ferrie, Shipley, Stansfeld, & Marmot, 2002; Graham, Sinclair, & Sliter, 2024; Green, 2020).

This study explores both the direct and indirect effects of job security on well-being indicators through an integrated path model.

The analysis provides a deeper understanding of how job security influences overall quality of life by examining the mediating roles of economic, psychological, and social dimensions. Furthermore, comparative insights across gender, age, education, marital status, and region are presented using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), offering valuable implications for labour market policy and targeted workplace interventions that promote resilience and well-being in Abu Dhabi.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Job security has long been recognized as a critical factor influencing individual well-being. It generally refers to the perceived stability of one's employment over time. One of the earliest definitions provided by Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) conceptualized job insecurity as a sense of helplessness regarding the potential loss of employment. Over time, this concept has evolved, distinguishing between *quantitative* job insecurity (concern about losing one's job altogether) and *qualitative* job insecurity, which pertains to fear about worsening employment conditions, diminished career prospects, or reduced benefits (Hellgren, Sverke, & Isaksson, 1999; Shoss, 2017; Witte, 2005).

Two dominant psychological frameworks offer insights into how job insecurity affects well-being. The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 2001) posits that threats to key resources, such as income, routine, and career development, cause stress.

Meanwhile, the transactional stress theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) emphasizes that individuals' responses to job-related uncertainty depend on how they interpret the threat and the strategies they employ to manage it. These theories offer a robust conceptual foundation for examining how job insecurity impacts individuals across various dimensions of life. Financial strain is one of the most immediate consequences of perceived job instability. The fear of job loss may lead to a sense of income uncertainty, particularly acute for individuals with lower incomes or part-time employment (Choi et al., 2020; Giannetti et al., 2014). Job insecurity can also disrupt household financial planning and spending behavior, indirectly reducing life satisfaction.

To et al. (2020) found that apprehensions about job continuity significantly shape financial behaviors which influence personal and family well-being. These findings highlight the importance of policy measures aimed at strengthening employment protections to safeguard financial security.

Psychological outcomes represent another important domain affected by job insecurity. Extensive research links employment instability to elevated levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Drishti & Carmichael, 2022; Nemteanu et al., 2021). Employees who fear job loss frequently experience chronic stress, which diminishes both work motivation and general well-being. According to Wang et al. (2024) and Frone (2018), individuals in precarious work

arrangements are especially vulnerable to mental health deterioration. Work is closely tied to identity and purpose; job insecurity can also erode life satisfaction (Nemteanu et al., 2021; Reisel, Probst, Chia, Maloles, & König, 2010).

Social well-being also suffers when employees feel uncertain about their employment. Job insecurity can disrupt work–life balance and place pressure on personal relationships. For example, individuals may overextend themselves at work to appear indispensable, reducing the time and energy available for social and family life (Abdul Jalil et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2020). This overcommitment can result in burnout, strained familial ties, and a decline in overall social engagement (Wang et al., 2017; Sirgy & Lee, 2018). The weakening of social networks may reduce emotional support systems that help individuals cope with occupational stress.

Job insecurity is linked to adverse physical health outcomes in addition to its psychological and social repercussions. Research indicates that individuals facing prolonged employment uncertainty report more frequent health complaints, including sleep issues, fatigue, and musculoskeletal pain (Burgard et al., 2009; Ferrie et al., 2002). Chronic activation of the stress response due to job instability may increase vulnerability to cardiovascular diseases and compromise immune function. Furthermore, job insecurity is associated with diminished subjective well-being, including reduced feelings of control and personal autonomy, both of which are closely tied to overall life satisfaction (De Witte, Pienaar, & De Cuyper, 2016). According to Green (2020) and Graham et al. (2024), adverse outcomes are most pronounced in economically disadvantaged populations, where job loss may result in immediate financial hardship and limited access to healthcare.

Recent studies have turned toward examining the mechanisms through which job insecurity impacts well-being. Methods such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and path analysis have shed light on the mediating variables that explain these effects. For example, research suggests that job satisfaction, financial stress, psychological resilience, and work-life balance act as intermediary pathways linking job insecurity to various outcomes (To et al., 2020). Abdul Jalil et al. (2023) and Yang et al. (2020) also highlight how disruptions to personal life caused by work-related stress can intensify mental health challenges. Scholars can better understand the broader implications of job insecurity across interconnected life domains by integrating these elements into comprehensive path models.

Moreover, individual-level factors significantly influence how job insecurity is experienced and internalized. Demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, education, and marital status often moderate its effects. For instance, women may face heightened anxiety due to added caregiving duties while men may report elevated stress tied to expectations around financial provision (Ervin, LaMontagne, Taouk, & King, 2024; Llosa & Félix, 2019). Younger employees are generally more susceptible to insecurity due to less stable early-career trajectories while older workers may fear unemployability if displaced (Yu, Langa, Cho, & Kobayashi, 2022). Educational attainment also plays a protective role. Individuals with higher qualifications tend to have more alternatives in the job market which buffers against insecurity (Bedemariam & Ramos, 2021; Cheng, Chen, Chen, & Chiang, 2005). Similarly, being married or having dependents can either amplify or mitigate stress related to job uncertainty, depending on family dynamics and shared resources. Although the existing literature offers comprehensive insights into the multifaceted effects of job insecurity, it remains heavily concentrated in Western labor contexts. There is limited empirical research examining how these dynamics unfold in non-Western settings.

To address this gap, the present study applies an integrated path modeling approach to analyze the direct and mediated effects of job insecurity on various well-being outcomes in Abu Dhabi. It also investigates how factors, such as age, gender, and education moderate these relationships. This research contributes not only to theoretical discourse but also to practical policy considerations tailored to the Abu Dhabi context by focusing on a distinct socio-economic and cultural environment.

3. METHODS AND DESIGN

This research adopts a quantitative methodology, employing path analysis to investigate the direct and indirect effects of job security on multiple dimensions of well-being among employed individuals in Abu Dhabi. The analytical

framework also incorporates ANOVA to explore variations across key demographic groups, including gender, age, education level, marital status, and geographical region.

3.1. Objectives

1. Analyse the impact of job security on psychological well-being, including mental health and life satisfaction.
2. Assess how job security influences social well-being, focusing on social relations and work-life balance.
3. Investigate the relationship between job security and health indicators, including subjective health perceptions.
4. Utilize path analysis to explore the direct and indirect effects of job security on overall well-being.
5. Compare job security perceptions across demographic factors such as gender, age, education, marital status, and region of residence using ANOVA.

3.2. Significance of the Study

This study reflects the significance of workforce stability versus vulnerability. Preliminary results suggest the majority (58.1%) of workers in Abu Dhabi expressed a certain level of job security.

However, concerns about job security do exist with 15.5% of the workforce experiencing some levels of job insecurity. While this is a minority, it still represents a significant number of workers who may be at risk of economic and psychological stress due to employment instability. 26.3% of workers reported a neutral stance on job security, suggesting that this group of workers could be at risk of shifting towards insecurity, depending on future economic or employment changes. The results of this study will have implications for workplace well-being as job insecurity is linked to lower well-being, financial stress, and mental health challenges. Policymakers and employers may need to identify factors contributing to job insecurity and implement strategies to improve job stability. Addressing concerns among insecure and neutral groups could enhance overall well-being and productivity in the workforce.

The methodological strategy adopted by this study enables a nuanced, layered understanding of how perceived job security influences multiple facets of well-being. It also facilitates the identification of mediating pathways and moderating demographic factors. The insights derived from this approach offer valuable implications for policy development and organizational practices aimed at enhancing workplace stability and employee well-being in the unique socio-economic context of Abu Dhabi.

3.3. Respondents

The data for this study were drawn from the 5th Cycle of the Abu Dhabi Quality of Life survey, comprising responses from 45,107 working participants in Abu Dhabi with diverse demographic backgrounds (see Table 1). Males (65%) constitute the majority of the workforce, while females (35%) also form a significant share. In terms of marital status, most respondents are married (76%), followed by singles (18.2%), with smaller proportions of divorced (4.9%), widowed (0.7%), and separated (0.6%) individuals. Education levels vary widely, with the largest group holding a university degree (39.7%), followed by 20.6% who completed pre-university education, and 17.7% holding a master's degree.

A smaller group includes 1.8% who are illiterate and 7.3% with basic literacy. Regionally, the majority (71.6%) live in the Abu Dhabi region, while 21.2% reside in Al Ain and 7.2% in Al Dhafra. Age-wise, the largest group falls in the 31-40 range (39.3%), followed by 41-50 (31.4%), with 16.1% aged 18-30 and 13.3% aged 51 or older. This demographic diversity provides a comprehensive understanding of job security perceptions across different backgrounds, allowing for meaningful comparisons and insights.

Table 1. Profile of respondents in the four groups and ANOVA scores

Bio-determinants	Number	Percentage	Means	Standard deviation	F-value	Sig.
Gender						
Male	29305	65.0%	3.556	1.085	25.719	0.000
Female	15802	35.0%	3.610	1.051		
Marital status						
Single	12121	18.224%	3.565	1.098	6.140	0.000
Married	34182	76%	3.543	1.053		
Divorced	2188	4.9%	3.575	1.118		
Widowed	307	0.7%	3.769	1.064		
Separated	260	0.6%	3.304	1.151		
Education						
Illiterate	828	1.8%	3.990	0.738	301.481	0.000
Read and write	3293	7.3%	4.129	0.750		
Pre-university level	9283	20.6%	3.759	1.104		
University	17906	39.7%	3.486	1.075		
Diploma post-university	4440	9.8%	3.453	1.072		
Master	8006	17.7%	3.386	1.060		
Doctorate	1351	3.0%	3.400	1.077		
Living region						
Abu Dhabi	32308	71.6%	3.509	1.072	217.075	0.000
Al Ain	9560	21.2%	3.727	1.068		
Al Dhafra	3239	7.2%	3.780	1.025		
Age category						
18-30	7242	16.1%	3.672	1.074	29.165	0.000
31-40	17718	39.3%	3.533	1.090		
41-50	14168	31.4%	3.571	1.071		
51+	5979	13.3%	3.590	1.019		

3.4. Survey Items

Based on the review of literature, some pre-analysis-related well-being indicators are presented in Table 2. It outlines the key determinants used in the study to assess the relationship between job security and well-being. The survey includes variables such as subjective health, mental health, income well-being, job satisfaction, work-life balance, social relations, and life satisfaction. Job security is the main variable measured alongside these well-being indicators to examine its broader impact. Composite measures (mental health, economic well-being, and social relations) ensure a holistic assessment with reliability scores confirming their validity.

Table 2. Items considered in the analysis

Determinants	Items or questions	Scale	Description
Job security	How *secure* is your job or main business?	1-5	1 (very insecure) to 5 (very secure)
Subjective health	In general, how do you personally assess your current *health status*?	1-5	1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)
Mental health	Composite *mental health* (extent of feeling sad or depressed, worry or anxiety, difficulty in concentration, physical pain, fear, loneliness, and boredom) with Cronbach's alpha of 0.896	1-5	1 (not at all) to 5 (to a great extent)
Economic well-being	Composite of three *economic well-being* items with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.819 are as follows: Is your household able to pay for its usual necessary expenses? How satisfied are you with your household income? How would you compare your household income with other families in Abu Dhabi?	1-5	1 (with great difficulty) to 5 (very easily), 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied), 1 (very low) to 5 (very high)
Job satisfaction	How do you rate your overall *job satisfaction*?	1-5	1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)
Work-life balance	How satisfied are you with the current *balance between your job and home life*?	1-5	1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)
Social relations	Composite of three *social well-being* items (In general, I am satisfied with my family life. I am satisfied with my relationships with other people I know. How would you describe the amount of quality time you spend with your family? (with Cronbach's alpha of 0.709)	1-5	1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), 1 (a very short amount) to 5 (a large amount)
Life satisfaction	How satisfied are you with your life nowadays?	0-10	0 (very low) to 10 (very high)

3.5. Pre-Analysis

Initial screening with simple regression tested each well-being variable against job security to determine if there was a significant association. Table 3 presents results from simple regression analyses where job security is the single independent variable tested against several well-being indicators. These results helped identify significant determinants for the study before applying path analysis. The standardized beta coefficients and t-values indicate the strength and direction of the relationships. All dependent variables showed statistically significant relationships with job security ($p < 0.001$). The indicators with significant regression results were then incorporated into a path analysis model to examine direct and indirect relationships among job security, economic, social, and psychological well-being.

Table 3. Individual regression analyses (job security as the single independent variable)

Dependent variables	Constant	Standardized beta	T-value	Sig.	Adjusted R²
Subjective health	2.571	0.272	57.536	0.001	0.074
Mental health	3.504	-0.307	-63.663	0.001	0.094
Economic well-being	2.040	0.283	48.859	0.001	0.080
Job satisfaction	1.803	0.524	130.13	0.001	0.275
Work-life balance	1.969	0.328	65.026	0.001	0.108
Social relations	2.967	0.271	52.259	0.001	0.073
Life satisfaction	4.335	0.337	72.714	0.001	0.114

3.6. Main Analysis: Path Analysis

SEM and path analysis were employed in this study to examine the direct and indirect effects of job security on various well-being indicators. Job security is expected to influence multiple well-being indicators simultaneously, making simple regression insufficient to capture the full complexity of relationships. Path analysis allows us to estimate direct, indirect, and total effects in a single model. The theoretical framework suggests that job security does not only have direct effects on well-being but also indirect pathways through economic and job-related factors. Path analysis also helps confirm and quantify these mediation effects. Unlike simple regression, which evaluates individual relationships, path analysis assesses the overall model fit, ensuring that the proposed structure adequately represents the data. The following statistical measures were applied to assess the fit of the path model: Degrees of freedom (indicates the number of independent values available to estimate parameters), Maximum Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square (tests the overall fit of the model by comparing observed and expected covariance matrices), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (measures how well the model fits the data with values below 0.08 considered acceptable), Normed Fit Index (NFI) and Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) (assess model fit relative to a null model with values above 0.90 indicating a good fit), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Incremental Fit Index (IFI) (compare the proposed model to an independent baseline model with values ≥ 0.95 preferred), Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) and Standardized RMR (SRMR) (measure residual differences between the observed and predicted relationships with lower values indicating better fit), and Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) and Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) (evaluate the proportion of variance explained by the model with higher values (>0.90) preferred) (Kline, 2015).

3.7. Further Analysis

In addition to path analysis, this study seeks to explore the variations in job security perceptions across key biographical factors, including gender, age, region of residence, marital status, and education level. ANOVA is applied to examine whether perceptions of job security significantly differ among various demographic groups. This approach allows us to determine which factors influence an individual's sense of job security by testing mean differences across these groups. Gender-based differences in job security could reveal inequalities in employment stability. Age groups may show variations, with younger workers potentially experiencing more insecurity. Regional analysis helps understand if job stability differs across areas in Abu Dhabi. Marital status could influence financial dependence and

perceptions of job security. Education level might determine career stability, as higher educational attainment may correlate with more secure employment. This additional ANOVA analysis ensures that the study not only measures overall job security effects but also highlights group-specific disparities, enabling more targeted policy recommendations.

4. RESULTS

The covariance matrix presented in Table 4 provides the pairwise relationships between the determinants in the path model, showing how each variable covaries with the others. Each entry represents the degree to which two variables change together with positive values indicating direct associations and negative values indicating inverse relationships. In this study, the matrix was used as the input for linear structural relations (LISREL) to estimate the path model, ensuring that the relationships between job security, well-being, and work-life factors were statistically assessed based on covariance structures rather than simple correlations (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993).

Table 4. The covariance matrix of determinants in the path model

Determinants	C5	D3A	E6	F1	CO	I12	O1	D1
C5: Economic well-being	0.999	------	------	------	------	------	------	------
D3A: Job satisfaction	0.452	0.991	------	------	------	------	------	------
E6: Work-life balance	0.416	0.493	0.986	------	------	------	------	------
F1: Subjective health	0.243	0.270	0.258	0.971	------	------	------	------
CO: Mental health	-0.37	-0.37	-0.42	-0.37	0.989	------	------	------
I12: Social relations	0.365	0.378	0.464	0.288	-0.464	1.002	------	------
O1: Life satisfaction	0.517	0.454	0.429	0.333	-0.475	0.485	0.986	------
D1: Job security	0.276	0.512	0.334	0.246	-0.281	0.271	0.309	0.981

The final path model demonstrates an excellent fit based on several statistical indicators (see Table 5). The non-significant p-value (>0.05) in the Chi-Square Test (χ^2 = 10.442 and p = 0.06698) suggests that the model's predicted covariance structure closely matches the observed data, meaning the model is well-specified. A very low RMSEA (<0.05) indicates an excellent fit, suggesting minimal error in the model. Fit Indices (NFI = 0.990, NNFI = 0.986, CFI = 0.991, IFI = 0.991, GFI = 0.999, and AGFI = 0.996) are all above 0.90 (with most >0.95), confirming that the model fits the data exceptionally well. The values of residual measures (RMR = 0.00193, Standardized RMR = 0.00194) are close to zero, meaning the discrepancy between predicted and actual values is minimal. The final path model is statistically robust with all goodness-of-fit measures indicating strong validity. The results confirm that job security significantly influences well-being indicators, and the model effectively captures the relationships among the variables.

Table 5. Final path model measurement stats

Path model measurement statistics.	Measurement results
Degrees of freedom	5
Maximum likelihood ratio chi-square	10.442 (P=0.06698)
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.0211
Normed fit index (NFI)	0.990
Non-normed index (NNFI)	0.986
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.991
Incremental fit index (IFI)	0.991
Root mean square residual (RMR)	0.00193
Standardized RMR	0.00194
Goodness of fit index (GFI)	0.999
Adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI)	0.996

Results in Tables 6, 7, and Figure 1 provide a comprehensive view of the final path model. The strongest direct effect is job security on job satisfaction (0.660). This is the strongest positive effect, indicating that job security significantly enhances job satisfaction. Employees who feel more secure in their jobs are much more likely to be satisfied with their work. Job security has a strong positive effect on work-life balance (0.436), showing that secure employees experience better harmony between work and home life. Higher job security leads to greater financial stability (0.436), as employees feel more confident in meeting their financial needs. While not as strong as economic effects, job security positively influences interpersonal relationships (0.154), likely due to reduced financial and work-related stress.

The negative impact of job security on mental health (-0.286) is the strongest negative effect indicating that lower job security is strongly associated with worse mental health. Workers who feel insecure in their jobs experience higher stress, anxiety, and emotional distress which aligns with psychological research on job insecurity. Job security also directly contributes to overall life satisfaction (0.0249), reinforcing its importance in well-being.

Table 6. Significant path estimates and z-values

From	To	Estimate	z-value	Sig.
Work-life balance	Job satisfaction	0.660	55.783	0.001
Job security	Job satisfaction	0.297	45.229	0.001
Work-life balance	Mental health	-0.409	-36.718	0.001
Work-life balance	Social relations	0.480	42.842	0.001
Job security	Work-life balance	0.436	34.052	0.001
Work-life balance	Job satisfaction	-0.414	-18.579	0.001
Work-life balance	Economic well-being	-0.459	-15.624	0.001
Mental health	Subjective health	-0.254	-37.880	0.001
Work-life balance	Subjective health	0.0269	3.779	0.001
Job security	Subjective health	0.102	15.417	0.001
Job satisfaction	Subjective health	0.0521	6.987	0.001
Economic well-being	Subjective health	0.0527	8.006	0.001
Social relations	Subjective health	0.0907	13.432	0.001
Job security	Mental health	-0.286	-47.754	0.001
Job satisfaction	Mental health	-0.236	-32.832	0.001
Mental health	Social relations	-0.425	-74.411	0.001
Job security	Social relations	0.154	26.937	0.001
Economic well-being	Mental health	-0.0516	-5.289	0.001
Job satisfaction	Economic well-being	0.414	36.946	0.001
Job security	Economic well-being	-0.105	-10.813	0.001
Job satisfaction	Life satisfaction	0.128	21.023	0.001
Job security	Life satisfaction	0.0249	4.583	0.001
Economic well-being	Life satisfaction	0.270	49.994	0.001
Work-life balance	Life satisfaction	0.0577	9.922	0.001
Subjective health	Life satisfaction	0.0936	18.355	0.001
Mental health	Life satisfaction	-0.171	-30.254	0.001
Social relations	Life satisfaction	0.198	35.637	0.001

The model also shows that there is an indirect pathway to life satisfaction through economic well-being (0.154). Employees with better job security enjoy higher income stability which positively impacts their life satisfaction. Satisfied employees tend to be happier with their lives overall (0.198) due to job security. Through work-life balance to life satisfaction (0.102), we note that secure jobs contribute to a balanced lifestyle, enhancing personal well-being. There are also other notable relationships, including job satisfaction to work-life balance (0.459), social relations to life satisfaction (0.198), as well as mental health to life satisfaction (-0.171), as poor mental health negatively impacts life satisfaction, reinforcing the need to address psychological stress.

As a final interpretation, work-life balance is a crucial determinant of well-being, influencing economic, social, and psychological outcomes. The strongest positive effect is on job satisfaction (0.660), while the strongest negative

effect is on mental health (-0.409). Life satisfaction is influenced both directly (0.270) and indirectly through job satisfaction, economic well-being, and social relations. The path model supports a holistic view of well-being, emphasizing the need for stable employment policies to promote happiness and mental health.

Table 7. Paths, direct, indirect, and total associations

| Path from	Path to	Direct	Indirect	Total
Work-life balance	Job satisfaction	0.660	-----	0.6602
Job security	Job satisfaction	0.297	0.28776	0.5847
Work-life balance	Mental health	-0.409	0.17944	0.5884
Work-life balance	Social relations	0.480	0.1738	0.6538
Job security	Work-life balance	0.436	-----	0.4362
Work-life balance	Economic well-being	0.459	0.2732	0.7322
Mental health	Subjective health	-0.254	0.0385	0.2925
Work-life balance	Subjective health	0.0269	0.12252	0.1494
Job security	Subjective health	0.102	0.12563	0.2276
Job satisfaction	Subjective health	0.052	0.27811	0.3302
Economic well-being	Subjective health	0.053	0.01311	0.0658
Social relations	Subjective health	0.091	-----	0.0907
Job security	Mental health	-0.286	0.1837	0.4687
Mental health	Social relations	-0.425	-----	0.425
Job security	Social relations	0.154	0.33576	0.4898
Economic well-being	Mental health	-0.052	-----	0.0522
Job satisfaction	Economic well-being	0.414	-----	0.414
Job security	Economic well-being	-0.105	0.4412	0.5472
Work-life balance	Economic well-being	0.459	0.2732	0.7322
Job satisfaction	Life satisfaction	0.128	-----	0.1281
Job security	Life satisfaction	0.0249	-----	0.0249
Economic well-being	Life satisfaction	0.270	-----	0.2704
Work-life balance	Life satisfaction	0.0577	-----	0.0577
Subjective health	Life satisfaction	0.0936	-----	0.0936
Mental health	Life satisfaction	-0.171	-----	-0.171
Social relations	Life satisfaction	0.198	-----	0.198
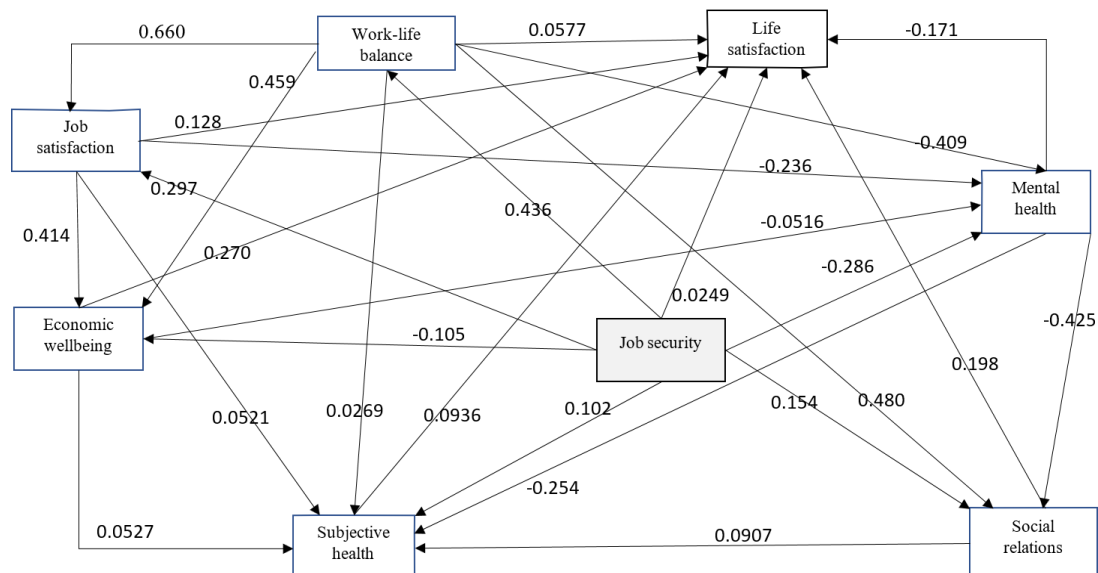
Figure 1. The final path model and estimates

The ANOVA results presented in Table 1 reveal significant differences in job security perceptions across various demographic groups ($p < 0.001$ for all factors), indicating that job security is not uniformly experienced among workers in Abu Dhabi. Females (M = 3.610) report slightly higher job security than males (M = 3.556) *(F = 25.719*

and p < 0.001). While the difference is small, it suggests perceptions of job stability vary by gender, possibly influenced by employment types or sector differences. Widowed individuals (M = 3.769) report the highest job security, while separated individuals (M = 3.304) report the lowest. Married (M = 3.543) and single (M = 3.565) respondents show similar levels of job security though slightly lower than widowed individuals. These variations may reflect economic stability and household dependency factors affecting perceptions of job security.

Higher education levels are associated with lower perceived job security *(F = 301.481 and p < 0.001).* Illiterate workers (M = 3.990) and those with basic literacy (M = 4.129) report the highest job security, whereas master's (M = 3.386) and doctorate holders (M = 3.400) report the lowest. This suggests higher education may increase career uncertainty, possibly due to higher job expectations or specialized skill demands. Workers in Al Dhafra (M = 3.780) and Al Ain (M = 3.727) report higher job security than those in Abu Dhabi region (M = 3.509) *(F = 217.075 and p < 0.001).* This suggests regional labour market conditions, job stability, or cost-of-living factors may play a role in perceptions of job security. Younger workers (M = 3.672) report higher job security than those in their 30s (M = 3.533) and 40s (M = 3.571) *(F = 29.165 and p < 0.001).* This suggests career progression concerns may lead to increased job security anxiety as employee's age.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings from our path analysis demonstrate that job security plays a central role in influencing various aspects of individual well-being exerting both direct and indirect effects. In alignment with prior research (Choi et al., 2020; Drishti & Carmichael, 2022; Giannetti et al., 2014; Nemteanu et al., 2021), our results show that increased job security enhances job satisfaction, economic well-being, and work–life balance. Conversely, lower perceived security is associated with elevated levels of psychological distress, particularly anxiety, depression, and emotional fatigue—an association also supported by Frone (2018) and Wang et al. (2024). These outcomes reflect the interdependent nature of well-being domains, underscoring that job security is not merely an economic concern but a foundational factor contributing to overall quality of life.

In terms of psychological well-being, the study reinforces that job insecurity undermines both job and life satisfaction while contributing to heightened emotional strain. These results lend empirical support to the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 2001) and transactional stress theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), both of which have previously been used to explain how resource loss or perceived threats can trigger negative emotional responses (Nemteanu et al., 2021; Reisel et al., 2010). Notably, our analysis reveals a strong direct relationship between job security and job satisfaction suggesting that perceptions of employment stability are essential for fostering psychological resilience a conclusion consistent with findings from Wang et al. (2024) and Frone (2018).

Our results also highlight the significance of social and health-related dimensions as mediating factors. Stable employment conditions were associated with improved interpersonal relationships and better work–life balance, which positively influenced subjective health and life satisfaction. These insights resonate with earlier studies linking job insecurity to adverse health outcomes, such as physical exhaustion, disrupted sleep, and increased vulnerability to chronic conditions (Abdul Jalil et al., 2023; Burgard et al., 2009; Ferrie et al., 2002; Yang et al., 2020). Our model illustrates how financial stress and strained social connections may act as indirect channels through which employment instability contributes to health deterioration, reaffirming the conclusions of De Witte et al. (2016) and Graham et al. (2024).

In addition to the core findings, ANOVA results point to significant disparities in how job security is perceived across demographic groups. For example, our analysis found that women generally reported slightly higher levels of job security compared to men. This outcome aligns with existing literature suggesting that differences in coping strategies, sectoral employment distribution, and family roles influence gender-based perceptions of job risk (Ervin et al., 2024; Llosa & Félix, 2019). Interestingly, higher education does not necessarily translate to greater job security, as higher education levels were associated with lower perceived job security, a pattern supported by Cheng et al.

(2005) and Bedemariam and Ramos (2021). This may reflect the heightened expectations and job-market competitiveness faced by highly educated individuals, especially those with specialized qualifications. These demographic insights suggest that targeted strategies are necessary to support groups more vulnerable to job-related uncertainty.

This study expands the literature by examining job security and well-being within the context of Abu Dhabi—a setting that has received limited attention in global research on labor and psychological outcomes. We not only confirmed the substantial direct influence of job security but also illuminated complex, indirect effects mediated through financial, psychological, and social factors by applying an integrated path modeling approach. These findings provide a valuable perspective on how employment stability contributes to well-being in a non-Western labor market.

Nonetheless, it is important to recognize the limitations of our study. The cross-sectional nature of the data and the reliance on self-reported measures limit the ability to establish causal relationships. Future research would benefit from incorporating longitudinal data and mixed-method designs to capture temporal patterns and deepen understanding. Such efforts would also help inform more effective policy and organizational interventions aimed at improving employment stability and promoting workforce well-being (Kline, 2015; Shoss, 2017; Witte, 2005).

6. CONCLUSION

This study affirms the central importance of job security in shaping the well-being of working individuals in Abu Dhabi. Secure employment was found to significantly support financial stability, improve job satisfaction and work-life balance, and reduce negative psychological outcomes, ultimately contributing to higher life satisfaction. Our integrated path model validated both the direct effects such as the strong positive relationship with job satisfaction and the indirect pathways through which employment stability influences health and well-being via economic and social mediators.

These insights align with prior literature (Frone, 2018; Nemteanu et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2024) while extending the discourse to a non-Western labour market context.

The analysis also reveals that individual experiences of job security vary meaningfully across demographic lines, particularly by gender, age, education, and marital status. These findings point to the need for policies that are sensitive to such differences and that address the unique challenges faced by specific segments of the workforce. While the use of cross-sectional data and self-reported measures places limits on causal interpretation, the study establishes a strong empirical basis for future research using longitudinal or mixed-method approaches.

Our findings emphasize the necessity of integrating job security into broader well-being and labor policy frameworks. In particular, the association between employment insecurity and deteriorating mental health highlights the urgency for expanding mental health resources in the workplace. Implementing employee assistance programs and promoting psychological well-being should be central to workplace policies, especially for those most vulnerable to job-related stress. The observed link between job security and economic well-being underscores the importance of labor policies that foster stable employment conditions, such as long-term contracts, equitable wages, and stronger legal protections. These measures are especially critical for groups at heightened risk of insecurity, including lower-income workers and expatriates.

The study also brings attention to the relevance of job security in achieving healthier work-life integration. Employers are encouraged to adopt more flexible and supportive work practices such as hybrid schedules and family-oriented policies, which not only enhance job stability but also contribute to improved life quality. Additionally, workforce development initiatives, such as upskilling and reskilling programs can strengthen employment resilience, helping individuals adapt to changing labor market conditions.

Finally, differences in job security perceptions across regions namely Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, and Al Dhafra, highlight the need for localized labor strategies. Tailoring economic development and employment initiatives to regional needs can foster more balanced and inclusive labor market outcomes. By pursuing evidence-informed policies that reinforce

employment stability and support worker well-being, Abu Dhabi can build a more resilient, productive, and socially sustainable workforce.

REFERENCES

Abdul Jalil, N. I., Tan, S. A., Ibharim, N. S., Musa, A. Z., Ang, S. H., & Mangundjaya, W. L. (2023). The relationship between job insecurity and psychological well-being among Malaysian precarious workers: Work–life balance as a mediator. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *20*(3), 2758. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20032758

Bedemariam, R., & Ramos, J. (2021). Over-education and job satisfaction: The role of job insecurity and career-enhancing strategies. *European Review of Applied Psychology*, *71*(3), 100632. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erap.2021.100632

Burgard, S. A., Brand, J. E., & House, J. S. (2009). Perceived job insecurity and worker health in the United States. *Social Science & Medicine*, *69*(5), 777–785. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2009.06.029

Cheng, Y., Chen, C. W., Chen, C. J., & Chiang, T. L. (2005). Job insecurity and its association with health among employees in the Taiwanese general population. *Social Science & Medicine*, *61*(1), 41–52. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2004.11.039

Choi, S. L., Heo, W., Cho, S. H., & Lee, P. (2020). The links between job insecurity, financial well-being, and financial stress: A moderated mediation model. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, *44*(4), 353–360.

De Witte, H., Pienaar, J., & De Cuyper, N. (2016). Review of 30 years of longitudinal studies on the association between job insecurity and health and well-being: Is there causal evidence? *Australian Psychologist*, *51*(1), 18–31. https://doi.org/10.1111/ap.12176

Drishti, E., & Carmichael, F. (2022). *Life satisfaction and job insecurity: Evidence from Albania*. Retrieved from (GLO Discussion Paper No. 1072). Global Labor Organization.

Ervin, J., LaMontagne, A.D., Taouk, Y., & King, T. (2024). Trajectories of job insecurity and the probability of poorer mental health among prime working-age Australian women and men. *Social Science & Medicine*, *349*, 116902. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2024.116902

Ferrie, J. E., Shipley, M. J., Stansfeld, S. A., & Marmot, M. G. (2002). Effects of chronic job insecurity and change in job security on self-reported health, minor psychiatric morbidity, physiological measures, and health-related behaviours in British civil servants: The Whitehall II study. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*, *56*(6), 450–454. https://doi.org/10.1136/jech.56.6.450

Frone, M. R. (2018). What happened to the employed during the great recession: A US population study of net change in employee insecurity, health, and organizational commitment. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *107*, 246–260. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.05.001

Giannetti, C., Madia, M., & Moretti, L. (2014). Job insecurity and financial distress. *Applied Financial Economics*, *24*(4), 219–233.

Graham, B. A., Sinclair, R. R., & Sliter, M. (2024). Job insecurity and health and well-being: What happens when you really need or love your job? *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, *45*(3), 674–695. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831X231183995

Green, F. (2020). Health effects of job insecurity. *IZA World of Labor*, *212*. https://doi.org/10.15185/izawol.212.v2

Greenhalgh, L., & Rosenblatt, Z. (1984). Job insecurity: Toward conceptual clarity. *Academy of Management Review*, *9*(3), 438–448. https://doi.org/10.2307/258284

Hellgren, J., Sverke, M., & Isaksson, K. (1999). A two-dimensional approach to job insecurity: Consequences for employee attitudes and well-being. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 8*, 179–195. https://doi.org/10.1080/135943299398311

Hobfoll, S. E. (2001). Social support and stress. In International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences. 14461–14465. https://doi.org/10.1016/B0-08-043076-7/03823-7

Jöreskog, K. G., & Sörbom, D. (1993). *LISREL 8: Structural equation modeling with the SIMPLIS command language*. Chicago, IL: Scientific Software International.

Kline, R. B. (2015). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling* (4th ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.

Llosa, J. A., & Félix, H. (2019). Job insecurity and mental health: The moderating role of coping strategies from a gender perspective. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10*, 419939.

Nemteanu, M.-S., Dinu, V., & Dabija, D.-C. (2021). Job insecurity, job instability, and job satisfaction in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Competitiveness, 13*(2), 65–82. https://doi.org/10.7441/joc.2021.02.04

Reisel, W. D., Probst, T. M., Chia, S. L., Maloles, C. M., & König, C. J. (2010). The effects of job insecurity on job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, deviant behavior, and negative emotions of employees. *International Studies of Management & Organization, 40*(1), 74–91. https://dx.doi.org/10.2753/imo0020-8825400105

Shoss, M. K. (2017). Job insecurity: An integrative review and agenda for future research. *Journal of Management, 43(6)*, 1911–1939. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206317691574

Sirgy, M. J., & Lee, D. J. (2018). Work-life balance: An integrative review. *Applied Research in Quality of Life, 13*, 229–254. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-017-9509-8

To, W. M., Gao, J. H., & Leung, E. Y. W. (2020). The effects of job insecurity on employees' financial well-being and work satisfaction among Chinese pink-collar workers. *SAGE Open, 10*(4), 2158244020982993. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020982993

Wang, Z., Liu, H., Yu, H., Wu, Y., Chang, S., & Wang, L. (2017). Associations between occupational stress, burnout, and well-being among manufacturing workers: Mediating roles of psychological capital and self-esteem. *BMC Psychiatry, 17*, 364. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-017-1533-6

Wang, M. L., Narcisse, M., Togher, K., & McElfish, P. A. (2024). Job flexibility, job security, and mental health among US working adults. *JAMA Network Open, 7*(3), e243439. https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.3439

Witte, H. D. (2005). Job insecurity: Review of the international literature on definitions, prevalence, antecedents, and consequences. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology, 31*, 1-6. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v31i4.200

Yang, X., Qiu, D., Lau, M. C., & Lau, J. T. (2020). The mediation role of work-life balance stress and chronic fatigue in the relationship between workaholism and depression among Chinese male workers in Hong Kong. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions, 9*, 483–490. https://doi.org/10.1556/2006.2020.00026

Yu, X., Langa, K. M., Cho, T. C., & Kobayashi, L. C. (2022). Association of perceived job insecurity with subsequent memory function and decline among adults 55 years or older in England and the US, 2006 to 2016. *JAMA Network Open, 5*(4), e227060. https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.7060