

THE DIFFERENCE A DOWNTURN CAN MAKE:

Assessing the Early Effects of the Economic Crisis on the Employment Experiences of Workers

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Key Findings

The information contained in this report can help managers and supervisors to consider how today's economic downturn may be affecting the everyday lives of employees at the workplace. With these insights, workplace leaders can take steps to provide the supports necessary to help maintain employee productivity and well-being.

Our analyses revealed that, overall, after the onset of the economic downturn:

- Employees perceived a decrease in their job security.
- Employees reported a drop in supervisor support.
- There was an increase in reported work overload.
- Perceptions of inclusion decreased.
- Perceptions job quality decreased.

And, when we examined whether these effects differed by age or changes in perceptions of job security, we found that after the onset of the economic downturn:

- The extent of the decrease in engagement scores became smaller and smaller with each successive age group.
- Perceptions of engagement, supervisor support, inclusion, and job quality declined for employees who felt that their job security had decreased, but it stayed the same or only slightly declined for those whose job security had stayed the same or increased.

Leading employers know that only those organizations that leverage the unprecedented age-diverse workforce will survive and thrive. Strategic workforce planning and talent management are more important today than ever before.

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The Sloan Center on Aging & Work is grateful for the generous support of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation for the Age & Generations Study as well as other Center activities. We also want to express our appreciation for the patient support of the 12 worksites that collaborated with us to make this study a success. The research team for the Age & Generations Study included (in alphabetical order): Elyssa Besen, Javier Boyas, Jackie James, Kathy Lynch, Christina Matz-Costa, Marcie Pitt-Catsoupes (Co-Principal Investigator), Michael Smyer (Co-Principal Investigator), Jennifer Swanberg, and Monique Valcour.

INTRODUCTION

For the past 5 years, two trends have jolted workplaces around the world out of the 1990s, business-as-usual approach: globalization and shifts in the age demographics. The current economic downturn has added shock waves to an already hyper-turbulent business environment. Recent research conducted by Watson Wyatt Worldwide suggests that 52% of the 245 U.S.-based companies in their study have already made layoffs (up from 39% 2 months prior), and 42% have already put salary freezes into place (an increase from only 13% 2 months prior).

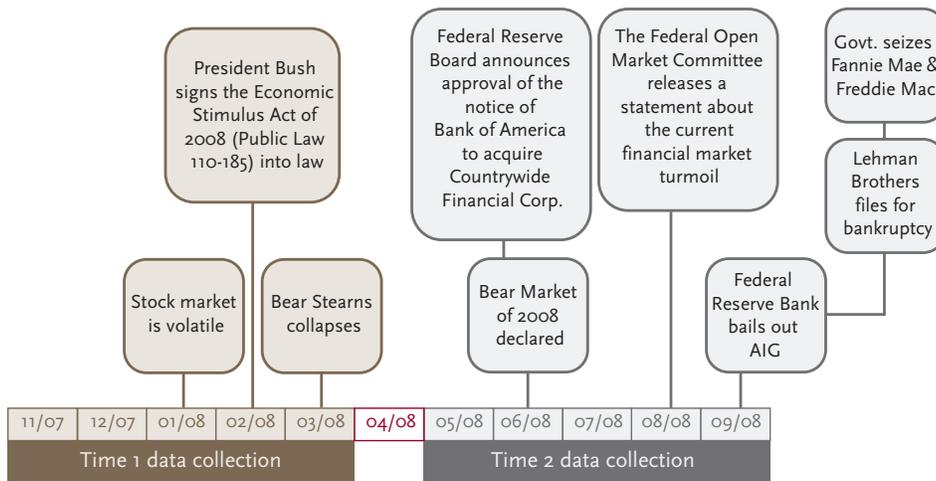
There is some evidence that the current economic crisis may be affecting employees differently depending on their age or career stage. For example, recent surveys indicate that older workers anticipate postponing retirement, in part due to concerns about decreases in the value of invested savings (Brown, 2000; Helman, Copeland, & VanDerhei, 2009). Further, changes in unemployment rates are being found to vary by age, with those in some of the younger age groups experiencing particularly high rates of unemployment (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). Recent statistics suggest, however, that older workers who are being laid off are having a harder time finding employment than younger workers (Luo, 2009).

Few studies thus far have assessed the impact that the economic downturn is having on employee perceptions of their employment experiences. Changes in employment experiences can be affected by shifts in job security, and the impact of these changes could vary depending on employee age. For example, it may be that older workers are not jarred as much by the economic troubles we are facing because they have experienced downturns in the past and have some perspective on the natural ebbs and flows of the market. On the other hand, many older workers who were contemplating retirement in the near future could be acutely affected by threats to their job security, fearing that they will have difficulty finding another job if they are laid off and will not have the opportunity to continue building the financial backing they need to be able to retire.

Before and After

Rather serendipitously, data collection points for the Age & Generations Study conducted by the Sloan Center on Aging & Work fell roughly before and after indicators of the “onset” of the 2008 economic crisis. As illustrated in Figure 1, the first period of data collection was completed at about the same time as the Bear Stearns collapse, with the second data collection period starting 2 months later. Therefore, our data provide some early insight into the impact that the onset of the economic crisis has had on employees’ assessment of their employment experiences.

Figure 1. Timeline for Key Markers of the Onset of the 2008 Economic Crisis and Data Collection for the Age & Generations Study



Source: <http://timeline.stlouisfed.org/pdf/CrisisTimeline.pdf>

Focus

This report focuses on the extent to which the onset of the current economic crisis has affected how employees assess their own employment experiences and whether changes in these assessments differ based on age and/or changes in perceptions of job security.

We use data from the 900 employees participating in the Age & Generations Study who responded to both the Time 1 and Time 2 surveys to explore the following questions:

- Have employee perceptions of job security been affected by the current economic downturn?
- Have levels of employee engagement changed since the onset of the economic crisis?
- Did employee perceptions of supervisory support change?
- Did employees report a change in work overload?
- Have employees felt a change in the extent to which they feel included in their work teams?
- Did employee assessments of the effectiveness of their work teams change?
- Did employees experience a change in job quality?

And, importantly:

- Do these effects differ for employees of different ages?
- Do these effects differ for employees who perceived a change in their level of job security?

About the Age & Generations Study

In consultation with organizational leadership, employees from nine organizations (12 worksites) across the country were invited to complete the Time 1 survey for the Age & Generations Study. Some 2,210 employees participated at Time 1, for an overall participation rate of 46.4%. Approximately 6 months later, employees from these organizations were asked to complete the Time 2 survey. Some 1,360 employees participated in Time 2, for an overall participation rate of 28.7%. Just under half of these respondents answered the survey at *both* Time 1 and Time 2. It is this group of approximately 900 employees that will be the focus of the current report.

I. PERCEPTIONS OF THE EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

In this report, we explore several important perceptions of the employment experience that could potentially have been affected by the recent economic downturn, including job security, employee engagement, supervisor support, work overload, inclusion, work team effectiveness, and job quality. In this first section, we provide just a bit of background information about these important aspects of employment experiences.

Job Security

Years before the current economic crisis, expectations about employment security and predictability had changed dramatically.

By the mid 1990s, many observers had noted that we had moved away from the old psychological and social contract, which contended that, under normal circumstances, employees who were working for profitable midsized to large organizations would have access to internal career ladders and would have opportunities to remain with the firm for virtually their entire careers.

The new social contract proposes that employees can hope to have opportunities to gain marketable experiences and competencies, but they should not necessarily expect long-term or continuous employment (Bluestein, 2006; Rubin & Brody, 2005; Stevenson & Moldoveanu, 1995).

In today's economy, job security has become a treasured – if not scarce – commodity. Unemployment rates have soared over the past several months. From March 2008 to March 2009, the unemployment rate has grown by 3.4 percentage points, from 5.1% to 8.5% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). This trend is particularly pronounced for workers aged 20 to 24, whose unemployment rates increased by 4.6 percentage points, from 9.4% to 14.0%, while the smallest increase was for workers aged 55 and older, with a 2.8-percentage-point increase, from 3.4% to 6.2%.

- For the Age & Generations Study, job security was measured using two items adapted from Oldham, Kulik, Stepina, and Ambrose (1986): “I feel secure in my job” and “Regardless of economic circumstances, I expect I will have a job at my current organization for at least 5 years.” Responses could range from 1 (*very inaccurate*) to 6 (*very accurate*). When we discuss change in perceptions of job security in this report, we created three categories: (1) employees whose job security decreased between Time 1 and Time 2, (2) those whose job security stayed the same, and (3) those whose job security increased.

Employee Engagement

Given the current economic challenges, employers are likely to put a premium on having fully engaged employees. Engaged workers are those who are willing to “go above and beyond” to get the work done and get it done well. In contrast, workers who are disengaged represent lost productivity and innovation.

Having highly engaged employees is crucial for organizational success, but it is not well understood how engagement has changed as a result of the economic downturn.

- For this study, employee engagement was measured using the nine-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9), developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003). Items asked respondents to indicate, on a scale of 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always [every day]*), how often they have had a series of nine feelings about their work. Sample items include “At my work, I feel bursting with energy,” and “I am immersed in my work.”

Supervisor Support

In good times and bad, supervisors and team leaders play a critical role in employee work experiences (Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). Supervisor support is related to employee job satisfaction, affective commitment, and turnover intentions (Ng & Sorensen, 2008). Supervisors can find that their employees need some extra support when businesses encounter new challenges.

- Supervisor support was measured using eight items adapted from Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley (1990). Respondents were asked to report the extent to which they agree with the statements such as “My team leader/supervisor supports my attempts to acquire additional training or education to further my career,” and “My team leader/supervisor gives me helpful feedback about my performance.” Responses could range from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*).

Work Overload

As more and more organizations respond to the economic downturn through downsizing, rightsizing, and organizational restructuring, it is becoming increasingly critical to pay attention to work overload as a job stressor. Most workplaces report that they have to do “more with less,” often resulting in expansions in the pace of work and the scope of employees’ responsibilities.

Work overload has been linked to employee health and well-being (Britt, Castro, & Adler, 2005). For this reason, employers must consider how job demands in the current organizational climate may have changed and how those demands may impact employee health.

- For the purposes of this study, work overload was measured by four items adapted from Wallace (1997) that asked the extent to which respondents agreed with statements such as “I do not have enough time to get everything done in my job,” and “My workload is too heavy.” The response scale ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*).

Inclusion

Inclusion and exclusion at the workplace can have profound effects on employees’ employment experiences (see Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998; Mor Barak, Findler, & Wind, 2003; Findler, Wind, & Mor Barak, 2007). The inclusion-exclusion continuum has been defined as “the degree to which individuals feel part of critical organizational processes such as access to information and resources, involvement in work groups, and the ability to influence the decision making process” (Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998, p. 48).

During difficult business cycles, employees may cope by “hunkering down,” but this adaptive style might put them at risk of feeling alienated from the mainstream.

- Inclusion was measured with ten items in total: Six items were adapted from Mor Barak's (2005) Perception of Inclusion-Exclusion Scale, one item from the National Study of the Changing Workforce (Families and Work Institute, 2002), and three original items. Items asked respondents to indicate, on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*), the extent to which they agreed with statements such as "I have a say in the way my work group performs its tasks," and "I feel that I have the cooperation of the people in my work group."

Work Team Effectiveness

Teamwork has become a virtual hallmark of the way we work in the 21st century. Successful teams have the potential to increase the productivity of their members. Furthermore, positive team experiences can enhance the quality of employees' employment experiences. Research suggests that diversity within teams can enhance team creativity but can introduce some challenges to communication (Christian, Porter, & Moffitt, 2006; Mannix & Neale, 2005; Rico, Molleman, Sanchez-Manzanares, & Vegt, 2007). Since age is one type of diversity, it is important to consider how age might affect team functioning and employee perceptions of team effectiveness.

- Work team effectiveness was measured using seven items developed by the Sloan Center on Aging & Work (2008). Respondents were asked to report the extent to which they agree with statements such as "The members of my work team use the resources available in an effective way," and "The members of my work team manage conflict within the team effectively." Responses could range from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*).

Quality of Important Job Characteristics

It can be argued that employee performance and productivity are highly related to the characteristics of the work itself. For example, the amount and variety of stimulation in one's work can serve to motivate workers and enable them to maintain a high level of performance (Scott, 1966), whereas routine, repetitive jobs are likely to serve as negative motivators of behavior (Hulin, 1971). Specifically, Hackman and Oldham (1980) suggest that the core job characteristics of skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback provide the room and incentive for employees to bring more of themselves into their work (Saks, 2006), resulting in positive outcomes for employers as well as employees.

In times of economic trouble, however, increased demands may be put on employees, and employees often find that their job responsibilities have shifted significantly. If these shifts reduce the positive, stimulating, motivating aspects of one's daily work, it could have negative work-related consequences. Employee perceptions of whether the core characteristics of their jobs have changed in a positive or negative direction could vary depending on their age or their perceptions of job security.

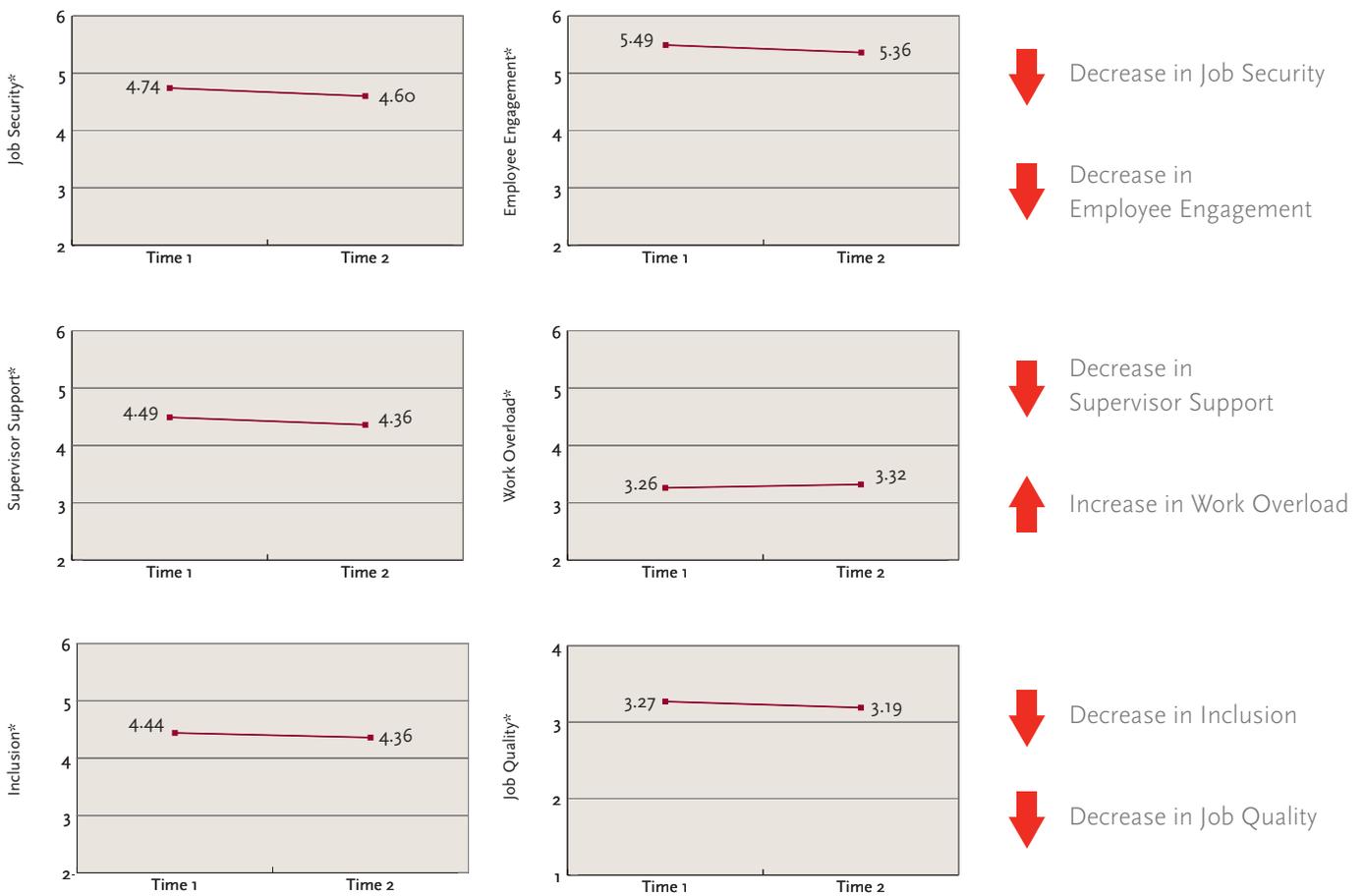
- In this report, we refer to these core job characteristics as perceived job quality (see Valcour, 2007). We measured job quality using six items in total: five from the Job Characteristics Inventory (Sims, Szilagyi, & Keller, 1976), plus one item modified from the Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Sample items include "To what extent does your job give you opportunities for independent thought or action," and "To what extent does your job give you opportunities to do a job from beginning to end (e.g., the chance to do the whole job)." The response scale for these items ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 4 (*to a great extent*).

II. THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

As can be seen in Figure 2, employee perceptions of job security, employee engagement, supervisor support, work overload, inclusion, and job quality decreased after the onset of the economic crisis. In contrast (and not unexpectedly), perceptions of work overload increased.

However, employee perceptions of the effectiveness of their work teams remained approximately the same, neither increasing nor decreasing after the onset of the economic crisis (therefore, the Time 1 and Time 2 measures are not displayed in Figure 2).

Figure 2. Change in Employee Perceptions



Note: Differences were statistically significant at the .05 level using paired samples t-tests. In other words, the differences would occur by chance less than 5 in 100 times.

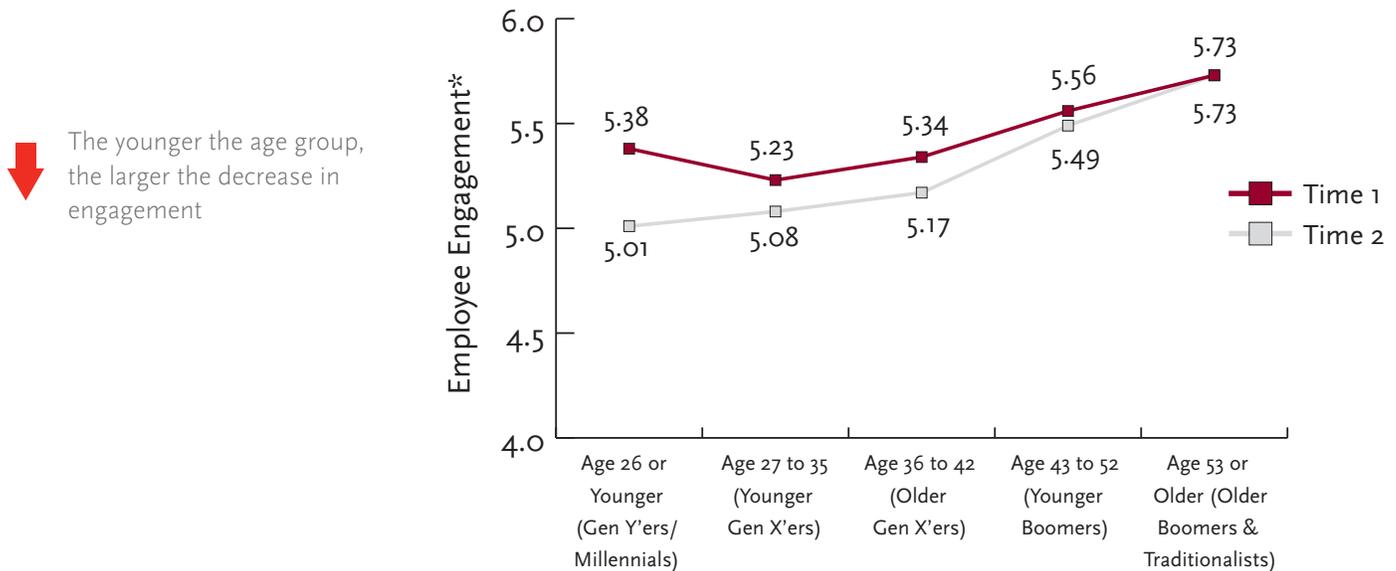
* See section I for true scale of all measures.

III. AGE, THE ECONOMIC CRISIS, AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

The extent to which employee perceptions changed after the onset of the economic crisis was found to vary by age group for employee engagement (see Figure 3).

As can be seen below, the extent of the decrease in engagement scores between Time 1 and Time 2 became smaller and smaller with each successive age group. For Younger Boomers and Older Boomers/Traditionalists, engagement scores hardly changed at all between Time 1 and Time 2.

Figure 3. Change in Employee Engagement by Age Group



Note: Within-person differences were statistically significant at the .05 level using a repeated measures analysis of variance. In other words, the differences seen in the extent of the Time 1–Time 2 change between employees of different age groups would occur by chance less than 5 in 100 times.

* See section I for true scale of all measures.

The extent of change in the measures of job security, supervisor support, work overload, inclusion, and job quality stayed relatively constant across age groups.

“Shortly after the Time 1 employee survey, a restricted 4-month hiring freeze at the University was put into place. This may have affected morale; however, the administration has stayed transparent in its communications and has tried to keep everyone well-informed, which we hope our employees have appreciated.”

- University of Kentucky

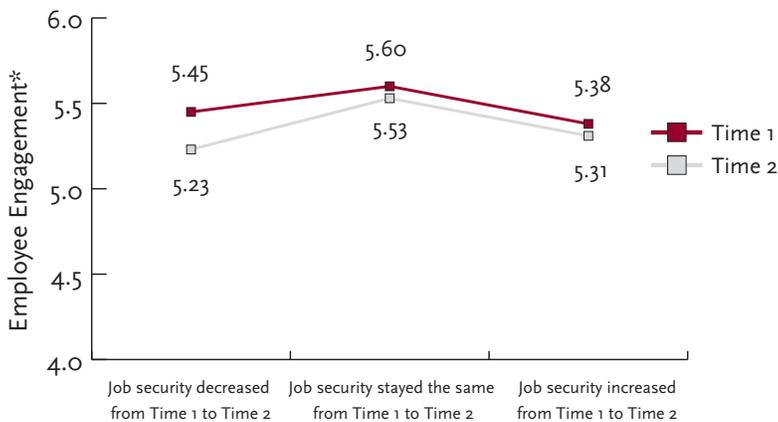
IV. CHANGES IN PERCEPTIONS OF JOB SECURITY, THE ECONOMIC CRISIS, AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

How might employee perceptions of changes in their own job security affect the extent to which their assessment of their employment experiences changed after the onset of the economic downturn?

We did find that changes in employee perceptions of their job security were related to changes in employee engagement, supervisor support, work overload, inclusion, workteam effectiveness, and job quality.

In fact, we found similar patterns for many of these findings (see Figure 4 through Figure 7): Those who felt that their job security decreased between Time 1 and Time 2 experienced a slightly greater decline in their assessment of the quality of their employment experience between Time 1 and Time 2 than those whose job security stayed the same or increased. In other words, employee perceptions of their level of engagement in their work, the supportiveness of their supervisors, the extent to which they felt included at work, and their job quality declined for employees who felt that their job security has decreased, but it stayed the same or only slightly declined for those whose job security has stayed the same or increased.

Figure 4. Change in Employee Engagement by Change in Job Security



↓ If perceived job security decrease, then larger decrease in engagement

Note: Within-person differences were statistically significant at the .05 level using a repeated measures analysis of variance. In other words, the differences seen in the extent of the Time 1–Time 2 change among employees in the different job security groups would occur by chance less than 5 in 100 times.

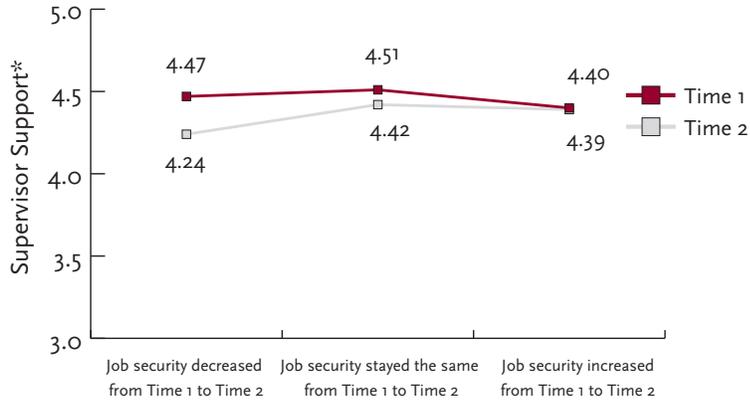
* See section I for true scale of all measures.

“Since the Time 1 employee survey we have seen and are addressing increased difficulty with work/life balance. This may be due in part to increasing workload as the hospital begins to tighten staffing due to recent economic pressures. We are working with our unit teams to manage these increased demands on staff.”

- Central Baptist Hospital

↓ If perceived job security decrease, then larger decrease in supervisor support

Figure 5. Change in Supervisor Support by Change in Job Security

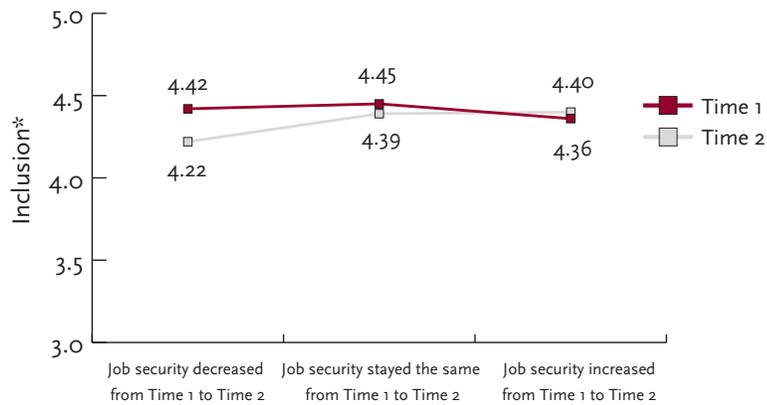


Note: Within-person differences were statistically significant at the .05 level using a repeated measures analysis of variance. In other words, the differences seen in the extent of the Time 1–Time 2 change among employees in the different job security groups would occur by chance less than 5 in 100 times.

* See section I for true scale of all measures.

↓ If perceived job security decrease, then larger decrease in inclusion

Figure 6. Change in Inclusion by Change in Job Security

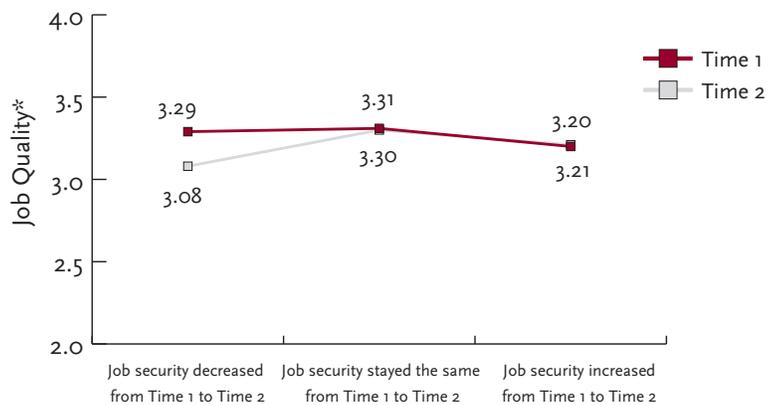


Note: Within-person differences were statistically significant at the .05 level using a repeated measures analysis of variance. In other words, the differences seen in the extent of the Time 1–Time 2 change between employees in the different job security groups would occur by chance less than 5 in 100 times.

* See section I for true scale of all measures.

↓ If perceived job security decrease, then larger decrease in job quality

Figure 7. Change in Job Quality by Change in Job Security



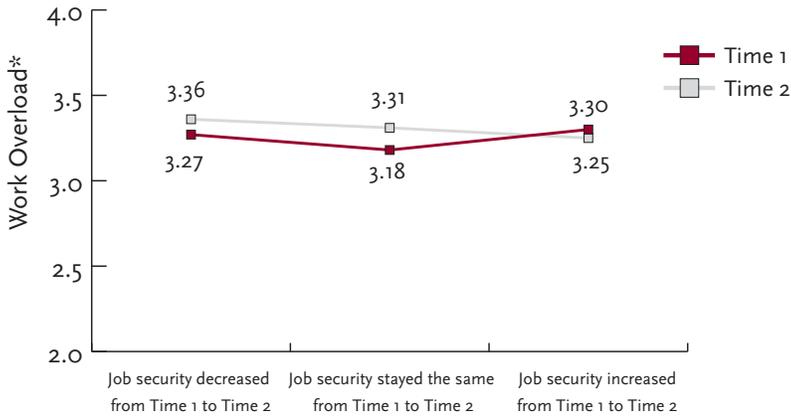
Note: Within-person differences were statistically significant at the .05 level using a repeated measures analysis of variance. In other words, the differences seen in the extent of the Time 1–Time 2 change between employees in the different job security groups would occur by chance less than 5 in 100 times.

* See section I for true scale of all measures.

We found slightly different patterns for work overload and work team effectiveness, however.

Those who felt that their job security decreased or stayed the same between Time 1 and Time 2 experienced a slight increase in work overload between Time 1 and Time 2, whereas those whose job security increased experienced a slight decline in their perceptions of work overload (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Change in Work Overload by Change in Job Security



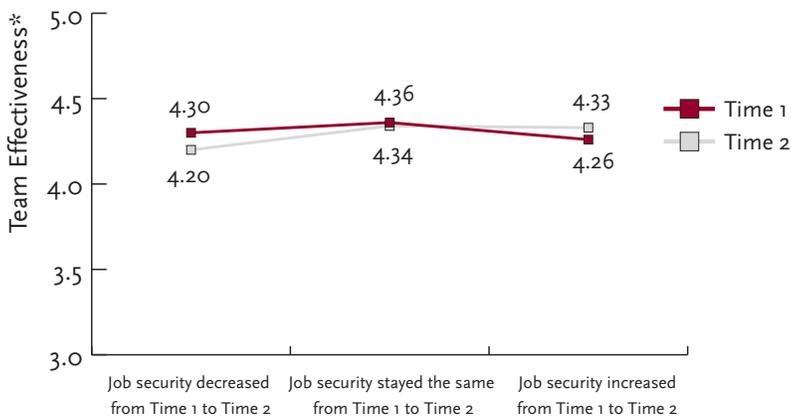
↑ If perceived job security decrease, then increase in work overload

Note: Within-person differences were statistically significant at the .05 level using a repeated measures analysis of variance. In other words, the differences seen in the extent of the Time 1–Time 2 change among employees in the different job security groups would occur by chance less than 5 in 100 times.

* See section I for true scale of all measures.

In terms of perceptions of team effectiveness, those who felt that their job security decreased perceived a slight decrease in team effectiveness between Time 1 and Time 2, whereas those whose job security increased perceived a slight increase in their perceptions of team effectiveness (see Figure 9). Those whose job security stayed the same, however, did not perceive an increase or decrease in work team effectiveness.

Figure 9. Change in Team Effectiveness by Change in Job Security



↓ If perceived job security decrease, then decrease in team effectiveness

Note: Within-person differences were statistically significant at the .05 level using a repeated measures analysis of variance. In other words, the differences seen in the extent of the Time 1–Time 2 change among employees in the different job security groups would occur by chance less than 5 in 100 times.

* See section I for true scale of all measures.

V. AGE, CHANGES IN PERCEPTIONS OF JOB SECURITY, THE ECONOMIC CRISIS, AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Finally, we assessed whether the extent to which employee perceptions changed after the onset of the economic crisis varied *both* by age *and* by changes in employee perceptions of their job security.

To make this a little simpler, we organized the employees into just two age groups: those under age 50 and those aged 50 or older.

We found that the extent to which employee perceptions changed after the onset of the economic crisis varied across age and job security groups for work team effectiveness (see Figure 10).

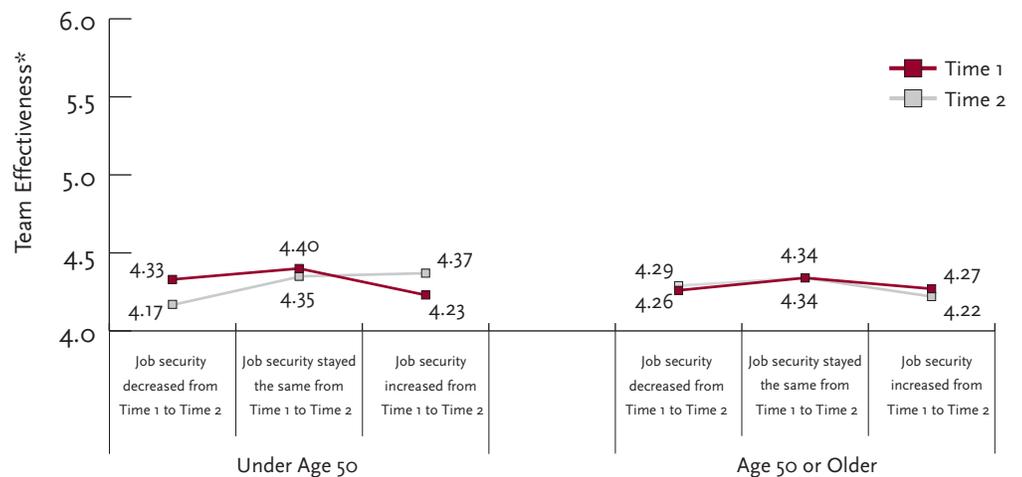
As depicted in Figure 10, we found that the relationship between changes in job security and assessments of work team effectiveness was different for those employees under the age of 50 and those aged 50 and older.

Among those under age 50 whose job security increased, perceptions of team effectiveness also increased between Time 1 and Time 2. But, for those under the age of 50 whose job security decreased or stayed the same, perceptions of team effectiveness decreased between Time 1 and Time 2.

In contrast, among those aged 50 and over, those whose job security increased perceived a decrease in the effectiveness of their work team between Time 1 and Time 2; however, those whose job security decreased or stayed the same perceived that the effectiveness of their work team remained pretty stable between the two data collection periods.

Figure 10. Change in Work Team Effectiveness by Age Group and Change in Job Security

- ↓ Among those under age 50, if perceived job security decrease, then perceived decrease in team effectiveness
- Among those age 50 or older, if perceived job security decrease, then perceived decrease in team effectiveness stayed approximately the same



Note: Within-person differences were statistically significant at the .05 level using a repeated measures analysis of variance. In other words, the differences seen in the extent of the Time 1–Time 2 change among employees in the different age/job security groups would occur by chance less than 5 in 100 times.

* See section I for true scale of all measures.

We did not find that the patterns of change in employee engagement, supervisor support, work overload, inclusion, or job quality were different when we considered the job security circumstances of those under the age of 50 and those who were 50 years of age and older.

“Since the Time 1 employee survey, there has been a big push at Fidelity to focus on employee engagement, including flexibility and how we are investing in our employees in the long run. It has become even more important to maintain this focus during the recent economic crisis.”

- Fidelity

WORKPLACE IMPLICATIONS

How can workplace decision makers use the information presented in this report? There are three important “take-away” messages:

1. Remain vigilant for signs of employee stress and strain, as indicated by decreases in their reports of the quality of their employment experiences.
2. Understand that employee perceptions of their own job insecurity may spill over into different aspects of their work experiences.
3. Consider that employee age might be related to the impact of the current downturn on their employment experiences.

The summary table below highlights some of the key findings and suggests some action steps that employers might take that promote Awareness to Action.

	Findings	Implications & Action Steps
<i>Job Security</i>	1. On average, employee perceptions of their job security decreased after the onset of the economic downturn.	Even for organizations that can avoid or limit the extent of layoffs, it is difficult for employers to mitigate the impact of job insecurity. It can be particularly helpful to create a culture of transparency and discussability. For example, supervisors can convene informal monthly “town halls” or coffee sessions during which current information about the organization’s strategies for “getting through the tough times” can be discussed. These events can be held live and/or made available via remote meeting technology.
<i>Employee Engagement</i>	1. Employee engagement decreased after the onset of the economic downturn. 2. The change in engagement scores before and after the onset of the economic downturn was most pronounced among employees in the younger age groups, and this change was almost nonexistent among those in the older generations. 3. Those whose job security decreased experienced a slightly greater decline in employee engagement after the onset of the economic downturn than those whose job security stayed the same or increased.	Our research suggests that older workers may employ coping strategies to stay engaged, even during the stresses introduced by the economic downturn. Managers and supervisors may be able to leverage existing employee networks to tap into these experiences. Employers can create opportunities for sharing between older workers and their younger colleagues who might be experiencing economic downturns for the first time.

	Findings	Implications & Action Steps
<i>Supervisor Support</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employees reported a drop in supervisor support between the two data collection periods. 2. Those whose job security decreased experienced a slightly greater decline in supervisor support after the onset of the economic downturn than those whose job security stayed the same or increased. 	<p>The economic downturn is also putting stress on supervisors, who, in turn, might not be able to provide the extent of support desired by employees.</p> <p>Employers may be able to improve the overall work environment by focusing on the needs of supervisors in addition to those of line employees.</p>
<i>Work Overload</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There was an increase in reported work overload after the onset of the economic downturn. 2. Those whose job security decreased or stayed the same experienced a slight increase in work overload after the onset of the economic downturn, whereas those whose job security increased experienced a slight decrease in work overload. 	<p>“Survivor” behaviors emerge during periods of economic stress. Behaviors such as the tendency to absorb the work of others—either those who have left or those who seem to be particularly stressed by the economic uncertainties—can add to pressures such as work overload.</p> <p>Managers and supervisors can be trained in how to recognize and address these behaviors, placing particular emphasis on those that can have negative consequences.</p>
<i>Inclusion</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perceptions of inclusion decreased after the onset of the economic crisis. 2. Those whose job security decreased experienced a slightly greater decline in feelings of inclusion after the onset of the economic downturn than those whose job security stayed the same or increased. 	<p>Supportive team interactions can help employees to gain some resilience as they attempt to cope with today’s economic turbulence.</p> <p>An increased focus on “strong effective teams” may be a useful way to indirectly provide additional support to all employees.</p>
<i>Work Team Effectiveness</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Age was related to differences in the relationship between job security and work team effectiveness. 2. Those whose job security decreased perceived a slight decrease in team effectiveness after the onset of the economic downturn, whereas those whose job security increased experienced a slight increase in their perceptions of team effectiveness. 	<p>Although it might seem counterintuitive, it is cost-effective to invest in team functioning during economically challenging times.</p> <p>Research tells us that ill-functioning teams can negatively impact important outcomes such as engagement, productivity, and efficiency. Employees who feel that the performance of their teams is lagging might be at risk for morale problems as well.</p>

	Findings	Implications & Action Steps
<i>Job Quality</i>	1. Perceptions of job quality decreased after the onset of the economic crisis. 2. Those whose job security decreased experienced a slightly greater decline in perception of job quality after the onset of the economic downturn than those whose job security stayed the same or increased.	Some organizations adopt a “command and control” approach to management during times of crisis. In many cases, management may not even be aware that this is happening. Employers may want to STOP and consciously check in with their employees about the extent to which abrupt changes in management style affect the quality of employees’ jobs.

CONCLUSION

It can be tempting for employers to take their eye off the ball of human capital investment during times of constrained resources. Yet, this is a time when careful investment in people strategies makes a lot of sense. Indeed, it will be employees who help to move organizations to the other side of this crisis.

The results of our analysis of the Time 1 and Time 2 data gathered as part of the Age & Generations Study suggest that perceptions of job security and employee age can affect how employees view their experiences at work. This can provide employers with some clues about the options they might have for positive interventions.

The Age & Generations Study at a Glance

We used surveys to gather the information from employees. Most organizations elected to complete the surveys online, but some employees used written questionnaires.

The employee survey asked a series of questions about employee perceptions of their work, organization/ department as a whole, work group, supervisor/team leader, work style, and outlook on life.

Although the data we have collected are very rich and allow us to examine a range of experiences at the workplace, readers should keep in mind that the findings may not be representative of all employees, departments, or organizations in the United States, nor are the respondent employees from each organization necessarily representative of the overall organizations where they work.

- The participating organizations are affiliated with a range of industry sectors: Two of the organizations are in the educational services industry; two are in health care and social assistance; one is in retail trade; two are in finance and insurance; one is in professional, scientific, and technical services; and one is in the pharmaceutical industry.
- Five of the participating organizations have a worksite located outside of the U.S. and four do not.
- All of the organizations in our sample are considered large businesses, each having over 1,000 employees. Four of the organizations had between 1,000 and 10,000 employees, four had between 10,000 and 50,000 employees, and one had over 50,000 employees.
- While four of the participating organizations are for-profit, five are nonprofit.

Notes on Analysis and Methodology

For this report, the sample has been weighted so that each department in the study is equally represented in summary statistics and analyses. This was done to account for the fact that some departments had a substantially larger number of respondents than others, and summary statistics and analyses could be skewed if any one department's responses were over- or underrepresented in the data.

As can be seen in Table 1 below, the general characteristics of employees who participated in the study at Time 1 (the full sample) were not greatly different from the characteristics of the employees who participated in both Time 1 and Time 2 (those described in this report).

Table 1. Employee Characteristics

	Employees Who Participated at Time 1 (full sample)	Employees Who Participated at Both Time 1 and Time 2 (those described in this report)
Approximate number of participants	2,000	900
% women	61.6%	63.4%
% men	38.4%	36.4%
% full-time	89.0%	89.0%
% part-time	11.0%	11.0%
% hourly employees	47.2%	48.7%
% salaried employees	51.8%	51.3%
Median wage for hourly employees	\$20/hour	\$20/hour
Median salary for salaried employees	\$71,000/year	\$75,000/year
Average age of employees	42 years	42 years
% under age 25	7.1%	7.1%
% aged 25 to 39	37.2%	35.8%
% aged 40 to 54	38.1%	39.6%
% aged 55 or older	17.5%	17.4%
% with supervisory responsibilities	34.7%	33.1%
% reporting that they have an additional job with a second employer	7.0%	7.2%
% temporary employees	4.9%	5.0%
% consultants	6.5%	7.0%
% reporting that they were "working in retirement"; that is, they had officially retired from a previous job	3.7%	4.5%

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The Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College

The Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College was founded in 2005. Working in partnership with workplace decision makers, the Center promotes the quality of employment for the 21st century multigenerational workforce. The Center strives to put evidence into practice to improve employment experiences for both employers and employees. We place a particular emphasis on workplace flexibility that supports 21st century ways of getting work done and enhances employees' work experiences. Our multitiered strategy includes combining employer-engaged research and academic rigor with innovative communications. We engage multidisciplinary teams of researchers from around the world to forward three research streams—the U.S. National Initiatives, the State Initiatives, and the Global Initiatives.

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The Center on Aging & Work is grateful for the continued support of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

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