

The show must go on: Pandemic consequences on musicians' job insecurity perception

Psychology of Music
2022, Vol. 50(6) 1976–2000
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DOI: 10.1177/03057356221081553
journals.sagepub.com/home/pom



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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to analyze the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on Italian musicians' perception of job insecurity. We collected the answers of more than 200 Italian musicians, and the data showed that musicians' perception of job insecurity increased in the post-pandemic period. Furthermore, we analyzed the different impact of two objective indicators of job insecurity, the pandemic outbreak and contracts, on strains and resources. We found that contracts are a strong predictor of perceived job insecurity even after the pandemic. Social support is vital in buffering job insecurity perception, motivation is a powerful moderator of emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions, and job insecurity is strongly related to the intentions of leaving the profession. In addition, the analyses have shown that the most detrimental effects are due to subjective job insecurity rather than from its objective indicators. Finally, as this study arose from an Australian research, we provide a brief comparison of the findings.

Keywords

job insecurity, music career, COVID-19, work motivation, coworker support, emotional exhaustion, drinking behavior

The COVID-19 pandemic deeply affected how we relate to the world (Atalan, 2020), not only from a physical and psychological point of view, but also from an economic one. Many people around the world have had to adapt the way they work to the new scenario, but musicians in particular seem to have been affected more than others (Botstein, 2019). During various national and global lockdowns, many musicians have lost working opportunities, and health-prevention measures have also made it difficult to organize concerts and get back to pre-pandemic occupation levels (Brunt & Nelligan, 2021).

According to Zwaan et al. (2009), the music job market has not always been one of the most fortunate, and being a successful musician is demanding. Musicians face lots of challenges

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beside the ones related to the market instability, both physical (Harper, 2001) and psychological (Jacukowicz & Wezyk, 2018; Parker et al., 2021; Vaag et al., 2014).

The goal of this article is to analyze objective and subjective job insecurity, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Italian musicians. The study is built on previous research conducted by Parker et al. (2021) and arises from their theoretical and literature frameworks, hypotheses, and methodological procedures. We will adopt two samples of musicians. The first was collected before the COVID-19 pandemic, the second after the outbreak of the pandemic.

Job insecurity

When compared to the general workforce, artists present some peculiarities, such as, according to Menger (1999, 2006), self-employment, freelancing, market excess of supply, unemployment, underemployment, income differences, and competition (Chafe & Kaida, 2020). Furthermore, according to Ellmeier (2003), in the cultural professions, academic workforce is increasing and there “is a high ratio of female professionals” (p. 11). By contrast, the artistic sector also presents some interesting opportunities, among the others, professional autonomy (Ellmeier, 2003; Hoedemaekers, 2018; Long, 2015; Menger, 1999, 2006; Parasuraman & Purohit, 2000), working flexibly (Frank & Sohn, 2011; Hausmann, 2010; Johansson, 2012; Menger, 1999, 2006), and, in the last decade, digitalization (Bartleet et al., 2019; Eiriz & Leite, 2017; Ellmeier, 2003). Finally, several studies (Dobson, 2011; Jacukowicz & Wezyk, 2018; Long, 2015; Parker et al., 2021) highlight the presence of so-called job insecurity, a psychological condition that manifests itself among workers who fear losing their job and becoming unemployed (De Witte, 1999).

Studies from different countries show differences in how musicians are employed, and indeed, according to the literature, country policies affect job insecurity and its perception (Ahearn, 2012; Shoss, 2017). For example, the United Kingdom has more freelance musicians than Germany (Harper, 2001). France and Switzerland differ in their access to unemployment benefit systems (Perrenoud & Bataille, 2017). Finally, in Italy, research conducted by Balestrino (2012) highlighted that Italian musicians often rely on forms of unreported employment.

However, studies from different countries almost unanimously state that job insecurity might have a detrimental effect on musicians' health. Among the negative outcomes, we highlight those that affect psychosocial health; we recall that “psychosocial” is defined by the American Psychological Association as “the intersection and interaction of social, cultural, and environmental influences on the mind and behavior” (VandenBos, 2007). Job insecurity could represent a long-lasting threat that could heighten both physical and psychological anxiety and make artists even more exposed to occupational strain (Barker et al., 2009). The literature reports many situations related to employment uncertainty that could bring stress in musicians' lives. One of them is the sense of non-personhood experienced by freelancers (Frederickson & Rooney, 1988) and the consequent sense of replaceability (Barker et al., 2009), which can affect the musicians' self-esteem (Frederickson & Rooney, 1988). Other conditions that may threaten musicians' health are the fear of not getting enough gigs (Cooper & Wills, 1989), and the reluctance in denouncing unhealthy working situations to maintain their job (Harper, 2001).

Job insecurity and the impact of a pandemic

Alongside the huge impact on people's psychophysical health (Kanekar & Sharma, 2020; Simba et al., 2020), the pandemic has brought several economic changes and threats to the stability of many workers' occupations. The recent pandemic has embittered and brought to

the attention of the media the difficult situation in which the vast majority of cultural workers and musicians struggle, as discussed by the European Parliament (Culture Action Europe & Dâmaso, 2021). At first, during the first lockdown, most of the artists acted resourcefully and resiliently. Yet, as time went on, the negative economic consequences of the pandemic became clear to everyone (Giuffrida & Tondo, 2020). And, at the end of the quarantine, musicians in precarious working conditions chose (Italian) squares and social media as a stage for their protests (Langfitt, 2020; Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, 2020).

In October 2020, Italian lyric-symphonic institutions and theaters were shut down and the interruption of the 2019–2020 season caused many negative financial consequences. Furthermore, in the foreseeable future, many precautions will be taken into consideration in organizing concerts to protect audience and workers' health, especially in the cold season (Adedokun et al., 2020).

In this new scenario, it is particularly interesting to study the job insecurity phenomenon, integrating its subjective and objective features. Following eminent contributions in the literature (De Witte & Näswall, 2003; Sverke et al., 2006), we accounted for objective aspects of job insecurity, including employment contracts and market situations. As Sverke et al. (2006) postulated in their model, we considered the pandemic outbreak as “situational cues” (p. 21) that may have influenced perceptions of job insecurity, and, following De Witte and Näswall (2003), temporary contracts as a measure of objective insecurity. We then hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1. Musicians after the pandemic will report higher levels of perceived job insecurity than before. In particular, we expect that musicians with insecure contracts after the pandemic will report the highest levels of perceived job insecurity.

Moreover, after the economic crisis of 2008–2009, many researchers investigated how those socio-economic events affected workers' relationships with their job (Voon & Ma, 2014), and De Cuyper et al. (2019) claimed that the economic crisis affected employment features in Europe. Following the literature on job insecurity and considering the Italian situation, we decided to take into account different sociodemographic indicators: gender, contractual forms, and Italian regions. As we wanted to take a particular perspective on the music industry, we also added music genre as an indicator. According to the literature, the most disadvantaged workers in the categories delineated above are women (Näswall & De Witte, 2003), workers with insecure contracts (Sverke et al., 2006), workers from southern Italian regions (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, 2021), and musicians from less-tutored musical genres (Dubard Barbosa et al., 2020):

Hypothesis 2. After the pandemic outbreak, the perception of job insecurity will be higher for women, workers with insecure contractual forms, musicians of Southern Italian regions, musicians of less-tutored musical genres (non-classical), and less-educated musicians.

As this study arises from the research questions developed by Parker et al. (2021), we are also interested in examining how social and personal resources interact with job insecurity and its strain outcomes, which can be defined as the negative responses to a stressor, in this case, job insecurity (Thatcher & Milner, 2003). Parker et al. (2021) found the following three potential negative outcomes related to career insecurity: problem drinking (Dobson, 2011), emotional exhaustion (Cooper & Wills, 1989; Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002), and intentions to leave the profession (Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002; Vaag et al., 2014). Hence, we developed the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3. Musicians reporting higher levels of objective job insecurity (pandemic outbreak and employment contracts) will be the ones with the highest levels of strain outcomes, in terms of emotional exhaustion, problem drinking, and intentions of leaving the profession.

Hypothesis 4. Musicians with higher levels of subjective and objective job insecurity will report the highest levels of strain outcomes, in terms of emotional exhaustion, problem drinking, and intentions of leaving the profession.

Parker et al. (2021) further hypothesized that career insecurity is moderated by the following two factors: social support and motivation. The authors adopted Conservation of Resources theory, a stress model that considers stress as a product of perceived threats to individuals' resources (Ford, 2009; Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018; Hobfoll & Leiberman, 1987; Parker et al., 2021).

Social support is known as a coping resource in stress management (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Sverke et al., 2006), can come from different sources: Family, colleagues, union membership (Sverke et al., 2006), and has been indicated as a potential buffer of job insecurity (Armstrong-Stassen, 1993; Sverke et al., 2006). In addition, for musicians, it is important to rely on a strong social network to have access to more working opportunities (Coulson, 2012).

Motivation is the second factor that Parker et al. (2021) found as a probable moderator of career insecurity. Motivation has been found in various studies as the driving force of the musical career, even from the earliest stages (Bertolini & Maggiora, 2016; MacNamara et al., 2008; Manturzewska, 1990), and some authors evidenced the dissimilarities in the effects that different kinds of motivation can have on career outcomes (Miksza et al., 2021; Parker et al., 2021). Similarly to Parker et al. (2021), we followed the classification of motivation given by Gagné et al. (2015), and considered the "autonomous motivation" and the "controlled motivation". Autonomous motivation refers to being motivated by the activity itself, whereas controlled motivation arises from extrinsic rewards (Gagné & Deci, 2005). In reviewing the literature on the matter of motivation (Hodgins et al., 2006; Knee & Zuckerman, 1998; Legault & Inzlicht, 2013), Parker et al. (2021) additionally suggested that autonomous motivation may be a protection factor against the detrimental effects of career insecurity.

As the pandemic outbreak changed many features of our lives (Atalan, 2020), we followed the considerations related to social and personal resources, and those relating to the impact of the pandemic on occupational situation, and developed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 5. (a) Musicians before the pandemic outbreak with higher social support experienced less job insecurity than after the pandemic outbreak. (b) Musicians with better personal resources experienced less job insecurity before the pandemic than after.

Hypothesis 6. After having controlled for job contracts, pandemic outbreak, sociodemographic characteristics, and negative affectivity, musicians with higher personal and social resources will report lower levels of strains due to perceived job insecurity.

Following Conservation of Resources theory, Parker et al. (2021) further proposed interesting interactions between social support and motivation. They argue that people with higher personal resources, such as autonomous motivation, are more able than others to benefit from external resources, in this case, colleague support (Parker et al., 2021). However, Parker et al. (2021) referred to the concept of "resource compensation" (Hobfoll & Leiberman, 1987) in

regard to the attitudes of musicians with higher levels of controlled motivation, that is being mostly motivated by external rewards such as, for instance, money (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Resource compensation indicates that people with fewer personal resources are more prone to take advantage of other available resources (e.g., social support; Hobfoll & Leiberman, 1987; Parker et al., 2021). Hence, since according to Gagné and Deci (2005) controlled motivation is more of a weakness than a resource, Parker et al. (2021) expected that musicians with higher controlled motivation would benefit from colleague support in coping with the detrimental effects of career insecurity.

It would have been interesting to provide a replication of these considerations. Unfortunately, the pandemic outbreak prevented us from gathering the proper number of respondents, and, as we will see in the next paragraph, our sample does not meet the criteria for conducting a replication study (Brysbaert, 2019; Patil et al., 2016).

Method

Research design and procedure

To collect the data, we used the Italian version of Parker et al.'s (2021) questionnaire. We adopted the back-translation model (Brislin, 1970) and adapted some items in order to be more suitable for an Italian sample. For example, we added some clarifications in an item of the TIS-6 (Roodt, 2004), and adapted the examples included in some items of the Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS) (Gagné et al., 2015). For more specifics, we invite the reader to consult the original scales provided in the references and in the Supplemental materials online. The descriptives on the measures can be found in Table 2.

We distributed the online questionnaires through social media, email invitations, and by leaving QR Code leaflets in music bookstores and libraries. The questionnaire was entirely anonymous, the participants could withdraw their participation any time, and the possibility to contact the researchers was provided. The inclusion criteria were being at least 18 years old and holding a musical occupation for at least 6 months. The participants of the first sample were recruited from October 2019 to March 2020. The second ones from March 2020 to September 2020, at the start of the first lockdown and before the start of the second one. We used R for the data analyses.

Participants

The main characteristics of the two samples are summarized in Table 1, Figures 1 and 2. However, not all participants completed the questionnaire; we will report the number of observations and dropout rate for each analysis.

Measures

The scales adopted in the survey are reported below. The sequence shown is that employed in the research. Responses ranged from 1 to 7. The labels have been aligned following Chiorri's (2011) suggestions for Italian questionnaires. We modified some of the ratings to uniform the questionnaire, and to conform to the ratings used in Parker et al.'s (2021) study. However, according to Dawes (2007), changing the rating from 5-point to 7-point Likert scale does not affect the data comparability.

The adopted measures were as follows:

Table 1. Samples Comparison.

	First sample, pre-pandemic	Second sample, post-pandemic
Respondents	172	83
Work experience	16.48 years (1–60, <i>SD</i> = 13.060)	17.06 years (1–45, <i>SD</i> = 12.74)
Age	36.18 years (18–73, <i>SD</i> = 13.85)	35.31 years (18–67, <i>SD</i> = 13.33)
Sex	44.8% women, 55.2% men	49.4% women, 50.6% men
Italian regions	18	13
High level of musical education	73.8%	75.9%
Achievers of at least one of the following goals	81.4%	92.8%
Competition prizes	53.5%	59.0%
Tour	51.2%	68.7%
Scholarship winners	45.3%	54.2%
Musical performances with world famous musicians	43.6%	65.1%
Selling own musical work	29.7%	30.1%
Music genres	80.8% classical musicians, 4.1% contemporary, 4.1% jazz, 1.7% movie and television, 1.2% pop, 2.3% rock, 1.7% dance music, 0.6% folk, 3.5 % other	84.3% classical musicians, 4.1% contemporary, 1.2% jazz, 2.4% movie and television, 2.4% pop, 4.8% rock, 1.2% folk, 1.2% world music, 2.4 % other
Music specialization	29.1% string players, 23.3% wind players, 9.9% singers, 8.7% pianists, 8.1% directors, 7.1% percussionists, 4.1% plucked string players, 4.7% other	39.8% string players, 21.7% wind players, 8.4% singers, 16.9% pianists, 1.2% directors, 3.6% percussionists, 3.6% plucked string players, 3.6% other
Holders of a secondary occupation beside the performance activity	55.8%	57.9%
Music teachers	34.3%	27.7%
Non-musical profession	11.0%	8.4%
Artistic workers	2.9%	1.2%
Other	7.6%	4.8%
Contractual forms	34.9% occasional work, 30.2% permanent, 16.9% non-written, 13.4% temporary, 3.0 % other	30.1% occasional work, 32.5% permanent, 21.7% non-written, 12.0% temporary, 3.6% other
Same musical occupation for at least 6 months	79.1%	81.9%

1. Job Insecurity: JIS-4 (De Witte, 2000; Rigotti et al., 2003; Vander Elst, De Witte and De Cuyper (2014)).
2. Motivation at Work: MWMS (Gagné et al., 2015).
3. Coworker support: Indicator Tool (Cousins et al., 2004).
4. Emotional Exhaustion: Il questionario Checkup organizzativo (Borgogni et al., 2005).
5. Trait Negative Affect: Negative Affectivity (Agho et al., 1992).
6. Turnover Intentions: TIS-6 (Giffen, 2015; Roodt, 2004).
7. Problem drinking: AUDIT (Babor et al., 2001).

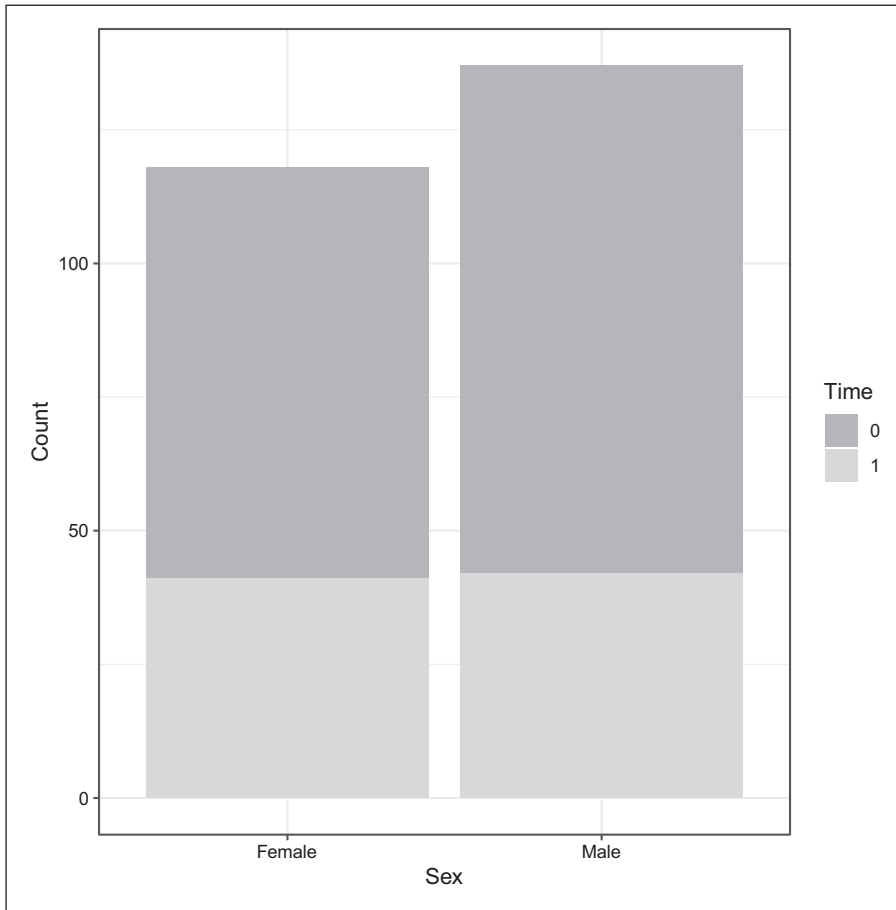


Figure 1. Female and Male participants Before and After the Pandemic Outbreak. Time: Pre-Pandemic = 0, Post-Pandemic = 1.

A discussion about the measures we used is reported in the Supplemental materials online. For the sake of brevity, the items are not reported; they are available from the authors upon request.

Confirmatory factor analysis

As in Parker et al. (2021), we tested the validity of the questionnaire using the approach suggested by Little et al. (2002). We performed a confirmatory factor analysis, and we parceled the scales with more than five items. The model with eight factors presented the following characteristics: $\chi^2(164) = 259.985$, $p < .001$, TLI = 0.931, CFI = 0.946, RMSEA = 0.055. These findings are in line with the ones of Parker and collaborators' (2021) study. The indicators presented good loadings, exception made for the controlled motivation.

As Parker et al. (2021) did, we also tested the one-factor model: $\chi^2(189) = 1,422.213$, $p < .001$, TLI = 0.235, CFI = 0.311, RMSEA = 0.183. Similar to the Australian study, the one-factor model did not fit the data.

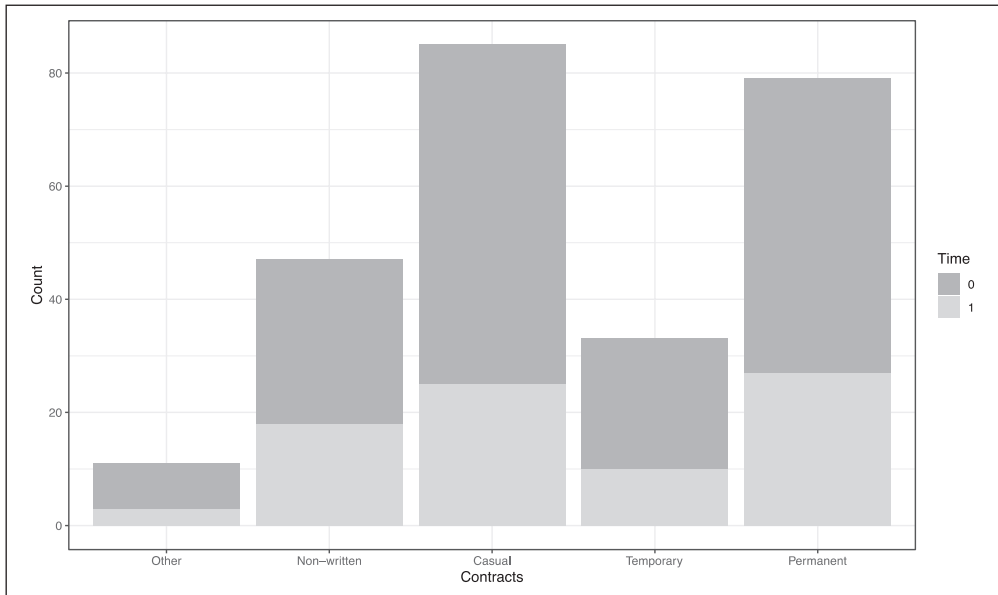


Figure 2. Contracts Held by the Participants Before and After the Pandemic Outbreak. Time: Pre-Pandemic = 0, Post-Pandemic = 1.

Results

Descriptive statistics

Age, work experience, and secure contracts negatively correlated with job insecurity. The pandemic outbreak and negative affectivity positively correlated with job insecurity (see Table 2). We found no differences in the perception of job insecurity among different Italian regions, $\chi^2(21) = 13.373$, $p = .895$, and among musicians of diverse musical genres, $\chi^2(9) = 13.196$, $p = .1539$. However, we found that musicians with permanent contracts reported significantly lower levels of job insecurity than musicians with other contractual forms $\chi^2(4) = 45.615$, $p < .001$. We also found that musicians with a traditional conservatoire musical degree reported significantly lower levels of job insecurity, $\chi^2(7) = 20.98$, $p = .0038$, compared to respondents with other music degrees (e.g., bachelor, master) or in absence of them (e.g., students). Finally, we found a statistically significant difference between men and women in their perceptions of job insecurity, $W = 8,945.5$, $p = .001$. Women reported more job insecurity than men. Although the literature on gender differences in job insecurity perception produces contrasting results (Sverke et al., 2006), our finding is in line with the study by Näswall and De Witte (2003).

Main analysis

Data analysis strategy. Several analyses were conducted to answer our research questions. We used regression analyses to establish the impact of the pandemic on perceptions of job insecurity, and the impact of objective and subjective job insecurity on strains. Beside boxplots, we adopted the Kruskal–Wallis test (Kruskal & Wallis, 1952), and the Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test (Mann & Whitney, 1947; Wilcoxon, 1945) to capture the difference in strains due to

Table 2. Correlations, Cronbach's Alphas, and Descriptive Statistics.

Variables	M	SD	Range	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Sex	-	-	1-2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Age	35.90	13.67	18-73	.125*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Work experience in music	16.67	12.93	1-60	.096	.91***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Trait negative affect	33.97	15.26	0-63	-.105	-.219**	-.174*	(.912)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Job insecurity	11.29	6.66	0-24	-.209**	-.372**	-.352***	.280***	(.893)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Work colleague support	14.25	5.12	1-22	-.002	.047	.043	-.264**	-.223**	(.885)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7. MAWS autonomous	27.45	3.95	8-30	-.012	.095	.111	-.126	-.073	.165*	(.875)	-	-	-	-	-	-
8. MAWS controlled	28.06	10.63	0-57	.012	-.200**	-.252**	.045	.099	.105	.060	(.785)	-	-	-	-	-
9. Problem drinking	3.67	3.03	0-21	.141*	-.199**	-.173*	-.029	.071	.017	-.120	.005	(.743)	-	-	-	-
10. Emotional exhaustion	7.83	5.52	0-27	-.133	-.069	-.104	.384***	.048	-.146*	-.293***	.044	.114	(.863)	-	-	-
11. Intentions to leave the profession	6.10	12.52	0-33	.012	-.234**	-.244**	.267**	.251**	-.156*	-.514***	.011	.046	.464***	(.701)	-	-
12. Pandemic	-	-	0-1	-.044	-.030	.021	.077	.212**	-.068	.262	.011	.040	.040	.100	-	-
13. Contracts	-	-	0-1	.095	.596***	.591***	-.051	-.443***	.025	.076	-.154*	-.008	-.009	-.217**	.023	-

Note. Women = 1, Men = 2; Contracts: Secure = 0 and Insecure = 1; Pre-Pandemic = 0 and Post-Pandemic = 1; Cronbach's Alphas are reported in parentheses on the diagonal.
 * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

objective job insecurity and the differences in perceived job insecurity due to different levels of education, regions, music genres, contractual forms, and gender. We performed the Chow test (Chow, 1960) to establish the role of social and personal resources before and after the pandemic. Finally, we replicated the analyses of Parker et al. (2021): Hierarchical moderated regression analysis and simple slopes analysis (Jaccard & Turrissi, 2003).

Kruskal–Wallis tests and Mann–Whitney–Wilcoxon tests for non-parametric samples. Participants have been coded as 0 for pre-pandemic and 1 for post-pandemic. Permanent contracts have been partitioned as secure (0), and the others as insecure (1). Pearson's chi-squared test revealed no differences in contract security before and after the pandemic outbreak, $\chi^2(1) = .052, p = .8202$.

Because the assumption of normality to conduct an ANOVA was not met, we used the Kruskal–Wallis test and the Mann–Whitney–Wilcoxon test for non-parametric samples. We conducted the Kruskal–Wallis test for contractual forms, $\chi^2(4) = 11.325, p = .02$; Italian regions, $\chi^2(12) = 18, p = .10$; music genres, $\chi^2(7) = 12.188, p = .09$; and levels of education, $\chi^2(7) = 13.535, p = .06$. We conducted the Mann–Whitney–Wilcoxon test for gender, $W = 882.5, p = .22$. Since only the differences for contractual forms are significant, we show them graphically using a boxplot (Figure 3). As we can see, after the pandemic outbreak, musicians with permanent contracts continued to have lower levels of perceived job insecurity. Hence, Hypothesis 2 was partially supported by the statistically significant lower levels of perceived job insecurity displayed by musicians with secure contracts.

We performed Kruskal–Wallis tests to determine the impact of different objective indicators of job insecurity on strains. No significant impacts were found for problematic drinking, $\chi^2(3) = 1.373, p = .7119$, or emotional exhaustion, $\chi^2(3) = 0.501, p = .919$. However, the Kruskal–Wallis test showed some interesting differences in terms of intentions to leave the profession (turnover intentions), $\chi^2(3) = 21.769, p < .001$. The boxplot in Figure 4 suggests that there are no significant differences as a result of the pandemic outbreak. Interesting and significant differences were found between secure and insecure contracts before the pandemic, yet the same difference did not remain significant after. The lowest levels of turnover intentions are for musicians with secure contracts before the pandemic outbreak. These findings for turnover intentions partially support Hypothesis 3.

Regression analyses. To determine the impact of the pandemic on perceived job insecurity, we conducted a regression analysis accounting for contract security (Table 3).

Main effects. The pandemic outbreak increased the perception of job insecurity, $\beta = .224, 95\% \text{ CI} = [1.595, 4.746], p < .001$, supporting Hypothesis 1. Secure contracts diminished the subjective perception of job insecurity, $\beta = -.449, 95\% \text{ CI} = [-7.998, -4.825], p < .001$.

Interactions. As we can see in rows 5, 6, and 7 of Table 3, we considered the interactive effects of pandemic and contracts. Musicians with less secure contracts reported higher levels of job insecurity after the pandemic, $\beta = .178, 95\% \text{ CI} = [0.612, 4.445], p = .001$. In the opposite scenario, secure contracts before the pandemic, the regression revealed the lowest score on job insecurity, $\beta = -.495, 95\% \text{ CI} = [-9.0135, -5.129], p < .001$. There were no significant effects for after pandemic outbreak and secure contracts, $\beta = .092, 95\% \text{ CI} = [-1.3863, 5.336], p = .25$.

With the second regression analysis, we examined the impact of subjective and objective job insecurity on strains. The model for problematic drinking, $F(4, 191) = 0.415, R^2 = .009$,

revealed no effects of subjective, $\beta = .075$, $p = .374$, or objective job insecurity. The respective combined effects of subjective job insecurity and secure contracts, $\beta = .057$, $p = .447$; subjective job insecurity and pandemic impact, $\beta = -.009$, $p = .912$; and subjective job insecurity, pandemic impact, and secure contracts, $\beta = -.007$, $p = .928$, were not statistically significant (Table 4).

Similarly, the model for emotional exhaustion, $F(4, 203) = 0.636$, $R^2 = .012$, revealed no significant effects of subjective, $\beta = .026$, $p = .747$, or objective job insecurity. The respective combined effects of subjective job insecurity and secure contracts, $\beta = -.074$, $p = .303$; subjective job insecurity and pandemic impact, $\beta = .037$, $p = .650$; and subjective job insecurity, pandemic impact, and secure contracts, $\beta = .051$, $p = .487$, were not statistically significant (Table 5).

As we can see from Table 6, there was a significant effect of perceived job insecurity, $\beta = .265$, 95% CI = [0.101, 0.383], $p < .001$, on turnover intentions. The regression evidenced also a negative combined effect of job insecurity and contracts, $\beta = -.168$, 95% CI = [-0.524, -0.052], $p = .02$, before the pandemic, on turnover intentions, suggesting that before the pandemic musicians with secure contracts, even under the condition of job uncertainty, were less likely to consider switching careers than others. This result suggests that only the perceived insecurity had detrimental effect on one of the three strain outcomes, hence Hypothesis 4 was partially verified only for turnover intentions.

Chow tests. We used Chow tests to determine the impact of the pandemic on the relationship between social and personal resources and perceived job insecurity, controlling for contracts. We performed regression analyses for each resource. The results remained consistent with and without controlling for contracts.

Coworker support diminished the perception of job insecurity both before, $\beta = -.16$, $p = .02$, and after the pandemic, $\beta = -.29$, $p = .007$. The Chow test, $F(3, 205) = 6.148$, showed a significant difference between the models conducted for both pre- and post-pandemic samples; in particular, we found an increase in absolute value of the effect of coworker support on perceived job insecurity after the pandemic.

We found no significant effects of autonomous motivation on subjective insecurity either before, $\beta = -.04$, $p = .63$, or after the pandemic, $\beta = -.07$, $p = .54$. The Chow test, $F(3) = 7.896$, showed a significant difference between the pre- and post-pandemic models; furthermore, the analyses revealed a non-significant decrease of the effect of autonomous motivation on perceived job insecurity after the pandemic.

When considering controlled motivation, the analyses displayed no significant effects both before, $\beta = .04$, $p = .53$, and after the pandemic, $\beta = -.14$, $p = .21$, on subjective job insecurity. The Chow test, $F(3, 205) = 8.463$, showed a significant difference between the pre- and post-pandemic models; also in this case, we can observe a non-significant decrease of the effect of controlled motivation on perceived job insecurity after the pandemic.

Hypothesis 5 was partially supported by our data. Chow tests evidenced significant differences in the models before and after the pandemic. Conversely, the regression analyses conducted for the impact of resources on job insecurity revealed that only coworker support had a significant impact on job insecurity perception before and after the pandemic. Contrary to our expectations, personal and social resources played a more crucial role after the pandemic outbreak, rather than before. Furthermore, analyses showed that coworker support after the pandemic was related to lower levels of job insecurity than before.

Hierarchical moderated regression and simple slope analysis. We conducted hierarchical moderated regressions. The dependent variables were the strains (problematic drinking, emotional

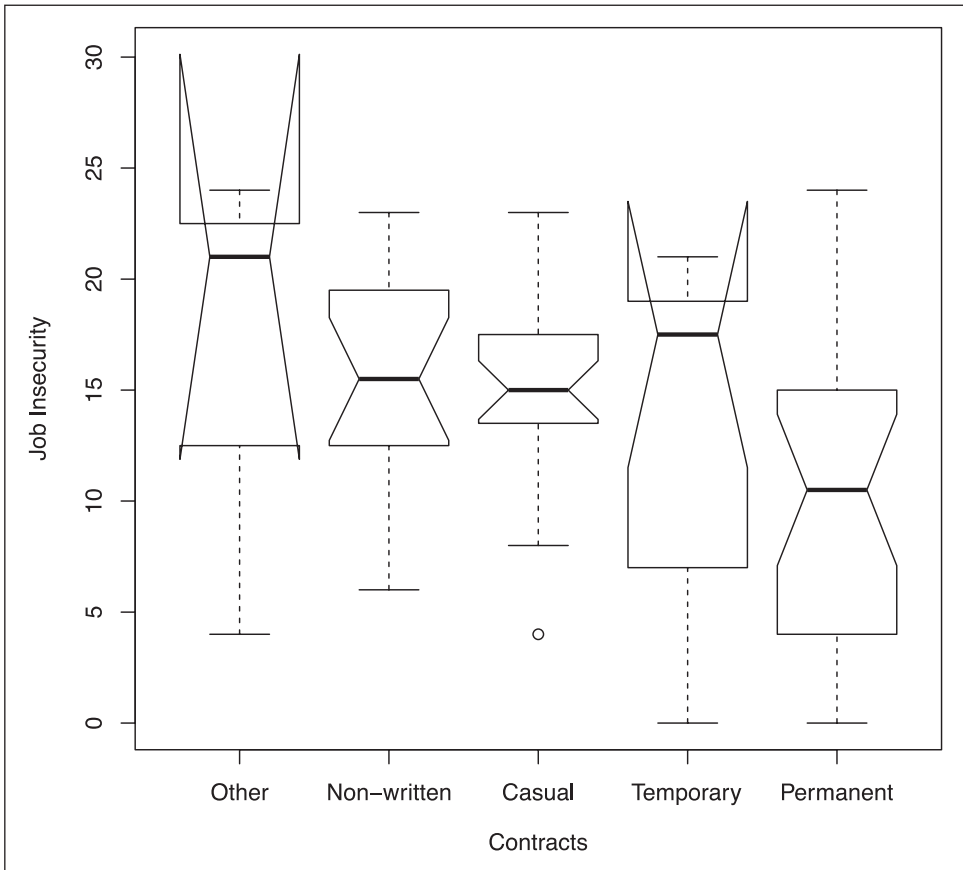


Figure 3. Job Insecurity Perception in Function of Contracts after the Pandemic Outbreak.

exhaustion, intentions to leave the profession) and the independent variables were job insecurity, work colleague support, autonomous and controlled motivations. At Step 1, we introduced the control variables (gender, work experience, negative affect, pandemic outbreak, and contracts), following Becker et al.'s (2016) suggestions. At Step 2, we added job insecurity, coworker support, and autonomous and controlled motivation. At Step 3, we inserted the interaction effects of job insecurity with the resources, and the interaction effects between the resources. At Step 4, we included the interaction effects of job insecurity with work colleague support and autonomous motivation, and job insecurity with work colleague support and controlled motivation. The R^2 differences from one model to the next, tested by conducting ANOVAs for each case, are displayed in Table 7.

More years of work experience related to lower levels of problem drinking, while negative affectivity was associated with higher levels of emotional exhaustion and intentions to leave the profession. Secure contracts were associated with higher problematic drinking. Men reported higher problematic drinking than women. Pandemic outbreak had no effect on any of the dependent variables. In the hierarchical moderated regressions, we controlled only for control variables that had a significant impact on the outcome variable. As in the Australian study, trait negative affect played an important role as control variable. There was only one

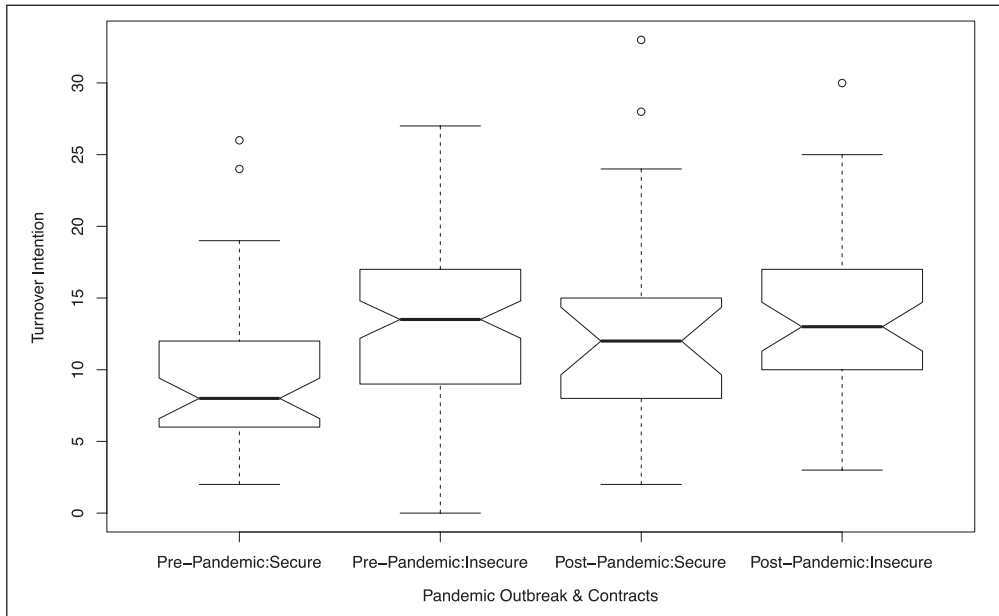


Figure 4. Turnover Intentions in Function of the Pandemic Outbreak and Contracts.

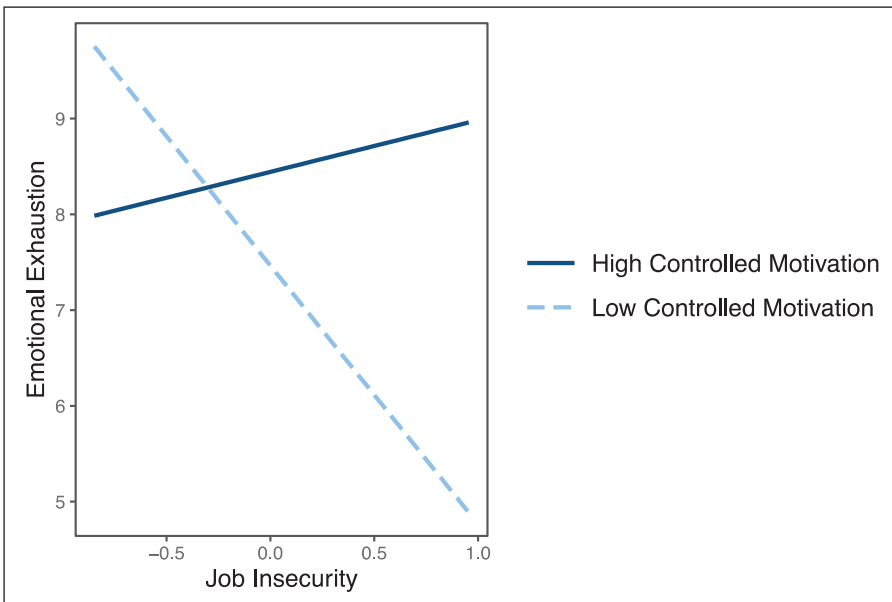


Figure 5. Two-Way Interaction between Job Insecurity and Controlled Motivation on Emotional Exhaustion.

significant interaction between controlled motivation and job insecurity on emotional exhaustion, $\beta = .15, p = .03, sr = .14, 95\% CI = [0.001, 0.022]$. This interaction did not hold without controlling for negative affect. With and without controlling for negative affect

Table 3. Regression of Pandemic and Contract Security on Job Insecurity Perception ($n=240$). Missing Data were 5.9% on JIS-4 of Job Insecurity, Indicating That Some Respondents Declined to Answer About Their Perceived Job Insecurity.

Effect	B	β	SE	95% CI		p
				LL	UL	
Main effects						
Intercept	12.288***	<.001***	0.519	11.265	13.310	<.001
After pandemic	3.170***	.224***	0.800	1.595	4.746	<.001
Secure contracts	-6.412***	-.449***	0.805	-7.998	-4.825	<.001
Interaction effects						
Intercept	12.491***	<.001***	0.548	11.4119	13.570	<.001
After pandemic: insecure contracts	2.528**	.178**	0.973	.6177	4.445	.001
Before pandemic: secure contracts	-7.071***	-.495***	0.986	-9.0135	-5.129	<.001
After pandemic: secure contracts	1.975	.092	1.706	-1.3863	5.336	.248

Note. Main effects: $N=240$, $R^2 = .247$, adj $R^2 = .240$, $F(2, 237) = 38.794^{***}$. Interaction effects: $N=240$, $R^2 = .251$, adj $R^2 = .241$, $F(3, 236) = 26.346^{***}$.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 4. Regression of Subjective and Objective Job Insecurity on Problematic Drinking ($n=196$). Missing data were 23.1% on AUDIT of Problematic Drinking, Indicating That Some Respondents Declined to Answer About Their Problematic Drinking.

Effect	B	β	SE	95% CI		p
				LL	UL	
Intercept	3.226***	<.001***	0.435	6.03	9.054	<.001
Job insecurity	0.034	.075	0.038	-0.1091	0.1518	.374
Job insecurity: secure contracts	0.048	.057	0.062	-0.3383	0.1056	.447
Job insecurity: after pandemic	-0.004	-.009	0.038	-0.1002	0.1603	.912
Job insecurity: after pandemic—secure contracts	-0.005	-.007	0.057	-0.1300	0.2721	.928

Note. $N=196$, $R^2 = .009$, adj $R^2 = -.012$, $F(4, 191) = .415$.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

alone, job insecurity had a significant impact, $\beta = .19$, $p = .002$, $sr = .18$, 95% CI = [0.062, 0.286], on turnover intentions. High levels of autonomous motivation negatively impacted on intentions to leave the profession, $\beta = -.48$, $p < .001$, $sr = .47$, 95% CI = [-0.93, -0.56], and emotional exhaustion, $\beta = -.25$, $p < .001$, $sr = .24$, 95% CI = [-0.53, -0.17]. The relation between autonomous motivation and intentions to leave the profession also held without controlling for negative affect, as for emotional exhaustion.

As we had a significant interaction between subjective job insecurity and controlled motivation on emotional exhaustion, we analyzed the relationship using simple slope analysis (Jaccard & Turrissi, 2003). The simple slope analysis showed that lower levels of controlled motivation were associated with lower emotional exhaustion at increasing job insecurity, $b = -2.70$, $p = .01$ (Figure 5). Hence, our Hypothesis 6 was not supported by data.

Table 5. Regression of Subjective and Objective Job Insecurity on Emotional Exhaustion ($n=208$). Missing Data Were 18.4% on Emotional Exhaustion Subscale of II Questionario Checkup Organizzativo of Emotional Exhaustion, Indicating That Some Respondents Declined to Answer About Their Emotional Exhaustion.

Effect	<i>B</i>	β	<i>SE</i>	95% CI		<i>p</i>
				<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
Intercept	7.542***	<.001***	0.767	6.0298	9.054	<.001
Job insecurity	0.021	.026	0.066	-.1091	.1518	.747
Job insecurity: secure contracts	-.0116	-.074	0.113	-.3383	.1056	.303
Job insecurity: after pandemic	.030	.037	0.066	-.1002	.1603	.650
Job insecurity: after pandemic— secure contracts	.007	.051	0.102	-.1300	.2721	.487

Note. $N=208$, $R^2=.012$, adj $R^2=-.007$, $F(4, 203)=0.636$.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 6. Regression of Subjective and Objective Job Insecurity on Turnover Intentions ($n=203$). Missing Data Were 20.4% on TIS-6 of Turnover Intentions, Indicating That Some Respondents Declined to Answer About Their Intentions to Leave the Profession.

Effect	<i>B</i>	β	<i>SE</i>	95% CI		<i>p</i>
				<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
Intercept	10.160***	<.001***	0.834	8.515	11.80559	<.001
Job insecurity	.242***	.265***	0.072	0.1005	0.3826	<.001
Job insecurity: secure contracts	-.288*	-.168*	0.1198	-0.5241	-0.05147	.017
Job insecurity: after pandemic	-.024	-.027	0.071	-0.1630	0.11509	.734
Job insecurity: after pandemic— secure contracts	.0163	.011	0.109	-0.1977	0.23035	.881

Note. $N=203$, $R^2=.091$, adj $R^2=.072$, $F(4, 198)=4.94$.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Discussion

This study shed light on the impact of the pandemic on the working lives of Italian musicians. Furthermore, it investigated the relationships between the objective and subjective experience of job insecurity, accounting for the following two different objective indicators: the secureness of contracts and the impact of a pandemic. Following the work of Sverke et al. (2006), the chance of having similar samples before and after the pandemic outbreak allowed us to draw some inferences on how global events can shape the perception of job insecurity. In addition, the analyses revealed the impact of the pandemic outbreak on coworker support, shed light on the importance of motivation, and highlighted how decisive job insecurity is in determining intentions of leaving the profession.

Job insecurity and the pandemic impact

From our analyses, it appears that the pandemic outbreak modified the perception of job insecurity among musicians, in line with the model proposed by Sverke et al. (2006).

Table 7. Hierarchical Moderated Regressions. Coworker Support and Motivation at Work are the Moderators of Subjective Job Insecurity ($n = 196$; $n = 199$; $n = 199$). Missing Data Were 23.1% on AUDIT of Problem Drinking and 22.0% on MPI of Trait Negative Affect, Indicating That Some Respondents Declined to Answer About Their Drinking Behavior and/or Negative Affectivity.

	Problem drinking β	Emotional exhaustion β	Intentions to leave the profession β
<i>Step 1</i> R^2	.09	.16	.14
Gender	.16*	-.07	.09
Work experience (years)	-.35***	-.09	-.13
Trait negative affect	-.06	.36***	.25***
Pandemic	.05	.03	.08
Secure contracts	.20*	.08	-.15
<i>Step 2</i> ΔR^2	.01	.06	.20
Subjective job insecurity	.10	-.11	.19**
Coworker support	.05	-.06	.00
Autonomous motivation	-.09	-.25***	-.48***
Controlled motivation	-.05	.09	-.01
<i>Step 3</i> ΔR^2	.02	.04	.02
Subjective job insecurity \times coworker support	-.05	.02	.04
Subjective job insecurity \times autonomous motivation	-.05	-.12	.13
Subjective job insecurity \times controlled motivation	.02	.15*	-.02
Coworker support \times autonomous motivation	.09	-.09	-.00
Coworker support \times controlled motivation	-.08	-.09	.08
<i>Step 4</i> ΔR^2	.00	.00	.00
Subjective job insecurity \times coworker support \times autonomous motivation	.05	.08	.00
Subjective job insecurity \times coworker support \times controlled motivation	-.00	-.03	.02
Overall R	.33*	.33***	.60***
Adjusted R^2	.05*	.22***	.32***
Overall F	1.81(14, 180)	5.72(12, 185)	8.75(12, 185)

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Musicians with secure contracts prior to the pandemic were those with the lowest scores on perceptions of job insecurity. We further observed that musicians with secure contracts, after the pandemic, did not significantly differ from their less-secure colleagues in their perceptions of job insecurity. On the other hand, contrary to our expectations, the pandemic similarly affected the various categories of musicians. However, musicians with permanent contracts, after the pandemic, continued to perceive less job insecurity than others. Consequently, our data suggest that even if the pandemic had a prominent impact on how musicians perceived job insecurity, the strongest antecedent remained the secureness of contract. Finally, it should be noted that we considered only quantitative and not qualitative aspects of job insecurity, such as, for instance, losing valued job features such as chances to perform and advancing one's career; for a discussion of the relationship between job insecurity and job strain see Vander Elst, Richter, et al. (2014).

Resources and strains

Job insecurity is strongly related to the intentions of leaving the profession, and this remained consistent also after the pandemic. We noticed that after the pandemic, musicians with secure and insecure contracts did not significantly differ in their turnover intentions as they did before. However, turnover intentions did not increase due to the pandemic alone, but in combination with the secureness of contracts. The pandemic (and contract secureness) seemed not to have any impact on problematic drinking and emotional exhaustion. We can examine the first situation arguing that musicians during national lockdowns had fewer possibilities for social gatherings and the drinking behavior almost remained unaltered. The result of emotional exhaustion was more surprising. In fact, as a research on emotional exhaustion in the Korean workforce recently highlighted (Hwang et al., 2021), we expected an increased emotional exhaustion also in our sample. We found an explanation in the nature of the measure we adopted. It could be that musicians were referring to their previous experiences in their responses, given that we measured work-related emotional exhaustion and that musicians worked less than usual during the national lockdown.

The analyses highlighted the prominent role of autonomous motivation. Autonomous motivation was found to be negatively related to emotional exhaustion and intentions of leaving the profession, demonstrating, in line with the literature (Miksza et al., 2021), how motivation is vital in persisting with this career even with its related insecurity, subjectively experienced and objectively determined by the outbreak of the pandemic. Our analyses also shed light on the importance of coworker support. Musicians with higher social support are less likely to perceive job insecurity, both before and after the pandemic outbreak, and controlling for the contracts. This is consistent with what is referred to in the literature as “professional sociability” (Dobson, 2011). One of the most important features of musicians’ work environment is the reliability on strategic networks and friendships. Typically, musicians with larger social networks have more work opportunities, for example in terms of gigs or pupils (Vaag et al., 2014). Our analyses further suggested that the pandemic affected how the social and personal resources moderated the relationship with job insecurity, in particular when considering the role of coworker support. Simple Slopes Analysis highlighted the role of controlled motivation: As job insecurity increases, musicians with lower levels of controlled motivation may be less likely to experience emotional exhaustion. However, some results, such as the one mentioned above, suggest the complexity of interactions we find when considering these constructs. Finally, according to our analyses, we argue that the most detrimental effects of job insecurity are determined from its perception rather than by its objective indicators.

Comparing Australian and Italian samples

This study differs from the one by Parker and collaborators’ (2021), and the differences between the two samples may have affected the nature of the results. The Australian musicians were more variously distributed across musical genres, and they presented more forms of precarious employment. The Italian musicians were mostly classical musicians. Since, as Cottrell (2002) states, classical musicians represent an exception in employment security, this characteristic may have led the analyses to different conclusions. Moreover, a larger percentage of Australian musicians reported having a secondary job beside the musical one. Both Italian and Australian musicians mostly referred to teaching as the secondary occupation, which is consistent with literature stating that teaching is a vital source of income (Bennett & Bridgstock, 2015; Fernández González, 2018). Both Italian and Australian musicians were mostly highly

educated and the majority of both groups achieved important goals during their musical career. Despite the differences, perceived job insecurity is a characteristic of the musical profession in both studies. Australian musicians reported having the most detrimental effects due to career insecurity. However, Australian musicians appeared to benefit better from the right mix of social and personal resources to buffer the negative effects of career insecurity. For example, Parker et al. (2021) highlighted that coworker support and autonomous motivation mitigate the emotional exhaustion experienced due to occupational uncertainty. In both populations, autonomous motivation emerged as an important personal resource and coworker support as a social one. Finally, it is important to emphasize that turnover intentions in both populations were strongly related to subjective and objective job insecurity.

Limitations and future research directions

The first limitation is the small size of the post-pandemic sample. Fewer than 100 participants have been gathered, many of them with a stable form of employment. The influence of this latter group on perceptions of job insecurity may have made the situation look less severe than what actually it is. Secondly, a real time-categorization has been difficult to establish. We arbitrarily decided to continue collecting the data also after the first quarantine, since the situation for musicians was still uncertain. Hence, for future studies, we will also use qualitative forms of inquiry to understand the phenomenon. Furthermore, it would be interesting to collect qualitative and quantitative data to longitudinally analyze how the experience of job insecurity changes over time in musicians in relation to their career stages or working characteristics, and to validate the measures used in this study for Italian samples. Finally, in future research, it will be interesting to consider how the pandemic may affect not only quantitative but also qualitative job insecurity, including for instance also the Qualitative Job Insecurity Measure (Blotenberg & Richter, 2020) among the adopted measures. With these data, it will be possible to examine the impact of the pandemic on music curricula at universities and music colleges, as well as on musicians of different musical genres, the emotional exhaustion caused by online teaching, and the impact on motivation that long-term playing without a real audience has for musicians.

Practical implications

The principal aim of this study was to analyze the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on Italian musicians' job insecurity. As Parker et al. (2021) underlined, these studies should foster the need to invest in the psychological preparation of musicians for their careers. Furthermore, in line with recent literature (Albinsson, 2018; Bennett, 2009; Bertolini & Maggiora, 2016; Bridgstock, 2013; Fernández González, 2018; Ghazali & Bennett, 2017; Johansson, 2012; Miksza et al., 2021; Schediwy et al., 2018; Toscher & Morris Bjørnø, 2019), these findings emphasize the importance of establishing market-oriented courses in music curricula to help students manage their resources, expand their skills, and build economically and psychologically sustainable careers. As a previously published study of academic career support for promising athletes has shown (Burns et al., 2013), career support programs are vital in enhancing students' self-efficacy in their future career decision making. In terms of musical higher education, it is also important to teach students how to develop and sustain a solid network of acquaintances to secure more working opportunities. Moreover, our discovery about the role of controlled motivation calls music teachers to be especially careful when examining what motivations in students hold up to the music profession, especially in a moment of such uncertainty.

Finally, the analyses suggested that musicians feel that their occupation is more jeopardized than before (Hypothesis 1). Moreover, job insecurity is known to reduce job satisfaction and also psychological well-being (De Witte, 1999). These two aspects need to be taken into account when planning an economically sustainable new start and managing the post-pandemic work environment.

Theoretical implications and conclusions

Job insecurity has been extensively studied in the international academic literature (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002; Sverke et al., 2006) and the Italian literature reflects this as well (Brondino et al., 2020). Italian academic research has not yet comprehensively investigated the construct in the musical work environment. This study examined the experiences of Italian musicians' and shed light on the consequences of subjective and objective job insecurity.

This research has also shown that musicians all over the world find a well-established work situation where insecurity is the main feature more than security. On one hand, these working conditions offer job flexibility and a wide range of opportunities. On the other hand, it brings not only negative financial but also psychosocial consequences. This study has shown that perceptions of job insecurity increase in relation to objective threats to the profession, indicating a relationship with contextual factors. We have shown that the recent pandemic increased perceptions of job insecurity and that contract security was a strong antecedent of subjective insecurity both before and after the pandemic outbreak.

Many musicians protested after the initial quarantine and expressed feelings of being let down by institutions (Langfitt, 2020; Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, 2020). During the summer of 2020, many concerts were able to take place in Italy, which partially alleviated the unemployment of many musicians.

Nonetheless, we must be aware that job insecurity brings many hindrances to the workers' psychological health. Hence, it is hoped that this research can raise awareness about this issue and foster the urge to provide psychological help at least to those most affected by the COVID-19 consequences, as it has been done for other workers (Miotto et al., 2020).

Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to the anonymous referees for their useful suggestions which helped us to improve the manuscript. Usual caveats apply.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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Supplemental material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

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