

## Precarious Work and its Impact on the Job Security: A Systematic Review during 2019-2023

Luis Fernando Espejo-Chacón<sup>1</sup>, Jose Junior Zavala-Amézquita<sup>2</sup>, Juana Maribel Manrique-Plácido<sup>3</sup>, Julio Enrique Pacheco-Torres<sup>4</sup>, Yuri Gagarín Gonzales-Rentería<sup>5</sup>

### Abstract

*This study reviewed the literature on precarious work and its impact on job security for workers between 2019 and 2023, using databases such as Scopus, Dialnet, Google Scholar, Scielo, Latindex, and Redalyc. A systematic review methodology was employed with search terms like "precarious work," "precarious employment," "mental health," and "job security." The years with the highest number of publications were 2019 and 2021, both with 9 studies. The United States had the most research, and English predominated as the language of the studies. The most frequent keywords included "precarious work," "precarious employment," "mental health," and "precarity." The "International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health" was the most relevant source, and most studies were original articles (82%). Precarious work was associated with both psychological and physical health issues, ranging from bodily injuries and poor quality of life to suicidal thoughts. The main factors affecting job security in precarious work include insecure jobs, low incomes, and inadequate work environments, leading to high job insecurity.*

**Keywords:** *Precarious work, job security, vulnerability, psychological illnesses, physical illnesses.*

### Introduction

All work should dignify the people who do it, however, there is job insecurity, referred to as a situation that affects more and more workers. This situation is characteristic of informal companies with little or no knowledge of labor rights. Unfortunately, it is increasing in many countries, generating volatile and undesirable jobs for a large part of the population. As a consequence, it reduces the protection of workers and produces intermittent, low-skilled jobs, thus exposing them to labor abuse, injustice and little economic benefit, harming their job security (Bhattacharya & Ray, 2021). Other authors such as Ravenelle et al. (2022) They describe precarious work that is so temporary that in some cases it can last only minutes; here we generally find the so-called contractors.

To say that a job is decent, it should at least meet four pillars: decent employment, social security, labor rights and social assistance (Hussain et al., 2019). The opposite of this is job insecurity, also known as underemployment, which is a type of employment relationship in which the benefits required by law are not established or provided, associated with informal employment and in some cases a lack of conditions for workers to carry out their work efficiently, generating uncertainty, physical and, above all, psychological problems (Cruz, 2021).

At an international level, this is a worrying issue, since job insecurity makes it a challenge for governments to improve this situation, given that these workers are the ones who drive the economy of a country, especially in countries where governments are concerned about the safety of workers (Aristizabal et al., 2019). The most serious thing is that, if a worker suffers from job insecurity and wants to assert his rights, the procedures or processes of claiming against the work-related injuries to which he has been subjected are cumbersome and tedious for those affected (Billias et al., 2023) And what is even more decadent is that there are countries like Italy where this situation is legalized by the state with informal contracts. This situation is increasing, generating psychological insecurity and economic difficulties among workers

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<sup>1</sup> Cesar Vallejo University, Peru.

<sup>2</sup> National University of Trujillo, Peru.

<sup>3</sup> Technological University of Peru, Peru.

<sup>4</sup> Cesar Vallejo University, Peru.

<sup>5</sup> Catholic University of Los Angeles of Chimbote, Peru

(Ferrante et al., 2019).

Throughout the world, this reality of underemployment was accentuated by the Covid-19 pandemic, especially in underdeveloped countries, with some countries being disadvantaged more than others. As many formal businesses closed due to the crisis, informal jobs increased, generating instability and insecurity, thus increasing the rate of precarious workers (Abdul Jalil et al., 2023). A clear example of this reality is India, where more than 90% of its population has informal, low-income employment and no social protection, since they live in a chronic and not episodic situation (Dhal, 2020).

In developing countries such as those in Latin America, this type of precarious companies represents around 80% of the total business economic sector, constituted as micro or small companies. This problem is stronger since the growth of the informal business sector is unbridled, causing them to lack policies to provide job security to their employees (Hussain et al., 2019).

This research is justified as it enriches the existing literature on precarious work and the most common consequences such as the psychological wear and tear it produces, frustration, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, decreased self-esteem (D'cruz et al., 2021), insecurity in income and hours, in some cases poor working conditions cause physical health problems such as body aches (Flores-Mariscal, 2021). While methodologically it is justified since using a prism guide the relationship between precarious work and its impact on job security will be measured.

Another very controversial and little-studied reality that causes grief at the work level is the one experienced by many migrants, especially in the Netherlands, suffering from labor discrimination, becoming the cheap labor force of the country to which they migrate, consequently suffering labor abuse, bringing with it an effect on mental health and little desire to continue in the migrated countries (Berríos-Riquelme, 2021). The other reality, no less worrying, is that experienced by working women, who experience precarious work in a sexist manner. They are further exploited without legal benefits or protection, blocking the possibility of accessing secure positions, suffering workplace harassment and remaining silent for fear of the reprisals they could suffer (O'Keefe & Courtois, 2019).

Regarding the above, a study is proposed to deepen knowledge within the specialization. The attention that precarious work and its impact on job security in workers attracts, leaves the main objective of the research: To review the state of the literature on precarious work and its impact on the job security of workers in the Scopus, Dialnet, Google Scholar, Scielo, Latindex and Redalyc databases during the period from 2019 to 2023. For this reason, the following specific objectives are proposed: To verify the state of the annual scientific production of the literature during the interval from 2019-2023; to identify which are the countries with the highest frequency of studies; on the other hand, to analyze which are the most predominant languages of writing of studies; also, to know the co-occurrence of keywords in the records included in the systematic review; to analyze which are the most relevant sources and databases; to describe which is the most frequent typology of studies published in the databases; detail the psychological and physical illnesses caused by exposure to precarious work; finally, the main factors of job insecurity that affect job security will be analyzed. Therefore, the following question arises.

**What is the general overview of published literature on precarious work and its impact on workers' job security in Scopus, Dialnet, Google Scholar, Scielo, Latindex and Redalyc during the period 2019-2023?**

## Methodology

This research has been inclined to develop a systematic literature review (SLR). In this sense, SLR is defined as a research that focuses on studying the state of the art recorded in the different databases, where finally a critical summary is made identifying patterns, strengths, weaknesses and possible opportunities in the face of the advances published in the collected studies, this in order to have a better scope of the data analyzed to be able to answer the research questions (Linares-Espinós et al., 2018), (Suyo-Vega et al., 2021).

It is relevant to note that the present research used the “PRISMA Declaration 2020”, which is a guideline for the presentation of research with the purpose of improving the integrity of articles in systematic reviews and meta-analyses (Urrútia & Bonfill, 2010). This method, known as PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and MetaAnalyses), is based on the acronym that stands for "Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses". PRISMA contains a sequence of clearly defined and reproducible steps that allow to distinguish between bibliographic records or references (obtained through electronic search strategies in bibliographic databases), full-text articles (required to assess their suitability) and individual studies (that meet the inclusion criteria and can be included in one or more publications so that the studies delimit these variables for the approach worked on) (Hutton et al., 2016).

It is important to highlight that PRISMA incorporates new conceptual and methodological approaches developed in recent years in the field of systematic reviews, which have generated significant advances in their evaluation and study. In summary, this methodology is revealed as a fundamental tool in the planning and execution of systematic reviews, ensuring exhaustiveness in the capture of reference information (Page et al., 2021).

For the process of identifying records, the use of various databases was considered. During this phase, the time interval from 2019 to 2023 was used for the inclusion and exclusion of studies. The study identification process is shown in Fig. 1.

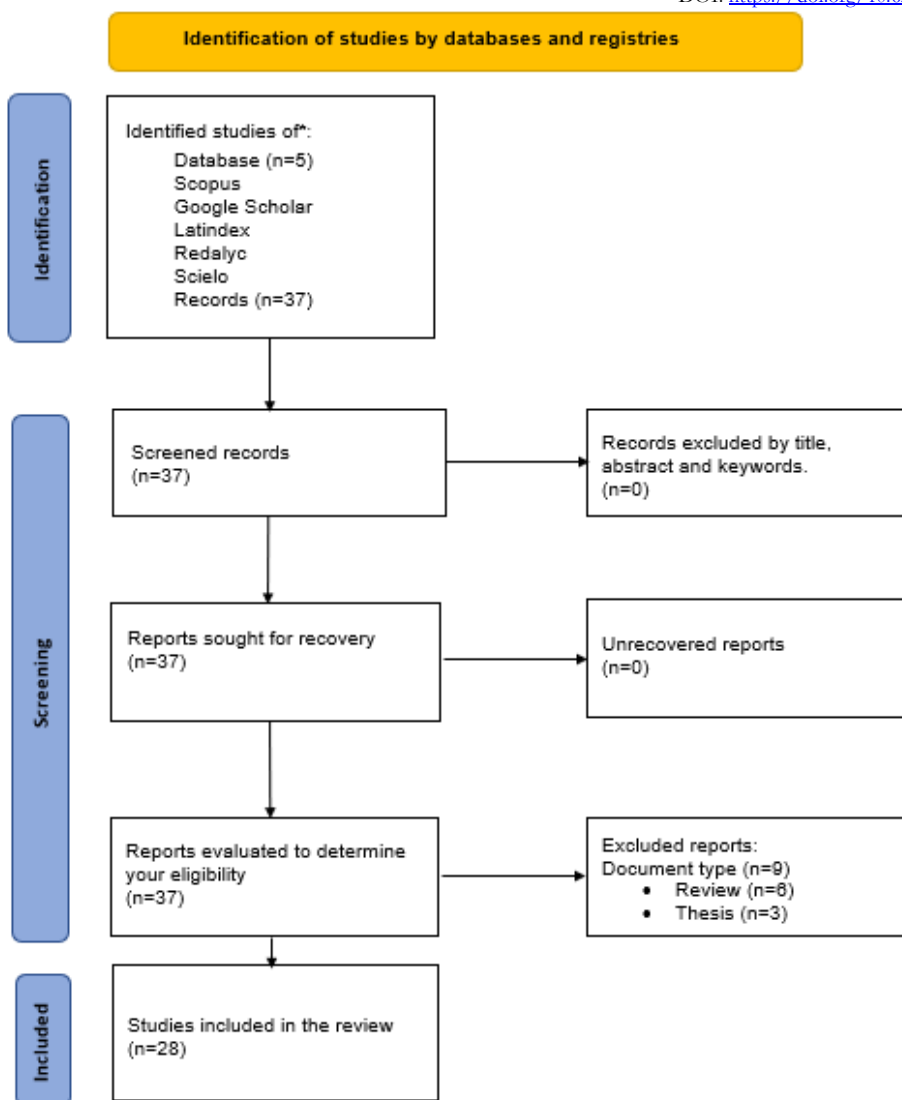


Fig. 1. PRISMA 2020 flowchart for systematic reviews.

The databases considered for the literature search were: Scopus, Google scholar, Latindex, Redalyc and Scielo. To identify records, various inclusion criteria were used, including the title or abstract containing the study variables, as a second inclusion criterion that the keywords are associated with the study variable "Precarious work, precarious employment, mental health and job insecurity", as a third criterion it was considered that the publication date ranged between the years 2019 and 2023, as a fourth criterion the language, the fifth criterion we considered the place of publication, as a sixth criterion open access articles were considered, as a seventh criterion the psychological or physical illnesses that workers exposed to precarious work could present were considered, as an eighth and last criterion we considered the economic and employment situation in which they live. Among the exclusion criteria, the exclusion of theses of any academic degree was taken into account.

## Results

The results phase of this study is composed of 28 studies included in the systematic review for their interpretation and identification of possible patterns, trends, strengths and weaknesses of the scientific production on precarious work and job insecurity.

*Rresults Bibliometrics**Abstract – Data Overview*

In Table I we can observe the articles that met the criteria to be included in the research. On one side we have the data of authors' surnames and years of publication, and in the other column the titles of the 28 studies included.

**Table I: Publications Included in the Systematic Review of Precarious Work and Its Impact on Work Safety: A Systematic Literature Review during 2019-2023**

Authors	Title of Study
Abdul Jalil et al. (2023)	The relationship between job insecurity and psychological well-being among Malaysian precarious workers: work–life balance as a mediator
Aristizabal et al. (2019)	The precarization of the Mexican nursing labor market: a repeated cross-sectional analysis for the period 2005–2018
Berrios-Riquelme (2021)	Labor market insertion of professional Venezuelan immigrants in northern Chile: precariousness and discrimination in the light of migration policy
Bhattacharya & Ray (2021)	Precarious work, job stress, and health-related quality of life
Billias et al. (2023)	“I grabbed my stuff and walked out”: Precarious workers' responses and next steps when faced with procedural unfairness during work injury and claims processes
Braga (2019)	A return of class struggle without class? Moral economy and popular resistance in Brazil, South Africa and Portugal
Chesters & Cuervo (2019)	Adjusting to new employment landscapes: Consequences of precarious employment for young Australians
Costa Júnior (2023)	Tired and exhausted: precarious workers in Brazilian fiction cinema
Cruz (2021)	Precarious work in Argentina, 2003–2017
D'cruz et al. (2021)	Special topics and particular occupations, professions and sectors
Dhal (2020)	Labor stand: Face of precarious migrant construction workers in India
Donnelly (2022)	Precarious work in midlife: long-term implications for the health and mortality of women and men
Ferrante et al. (2019)	Is the association between precarious employment and mental health mediated by economic difficulties in men? Results from two Italian studies
Florczak & Otto (2019)	Precarious work and labor regulation in the EU: current reality and perspectives
Flores-Mariscal (2021)	Determinants of the precariousness of agricultural day labor in Mexico: a historical-institutional analysis
Hurt-Suwan & Mahler (2020)	Social procurement to reduce precarious employment for Māori and Pasifika workers in the construction industry
Hussain et al. (2019)	Precarious or decent work? Perceived working conditions and life satisfaction of sme workers in Bangladesh
Lambert et al. (2019)	Precarious work schedules as a source of economic insecurity and institutional distrust
O'Keefe & Courtois (2019)	'Not one of the family': Gender and precarious work in the neoliberal university
Park et al. (2020)	Associations among employment status, health behaviors, and mental health in a representative sample of South Koreans
Pereira (2023)	The multidimensional construct of precarious work, the future of work, and workers' health

Ravenelle et al. (2022)	The side hustle safety net: precarious workers and gig work during COVID-19
Roque et al. (2022)	Precarious work and intermittent life trajectories in a Portuguese gig economy
Ryan et al. (2019)	Between the profit imperative and worker welfare: Can responsible companies stem the expansion of precarious work?
Scasserra & Partenio (2021)	Precarization of work and strategies of workers in digital platforms: work from home, union organization and dispute for rights in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic
Umičević et al. (2021)	Precarious work and mental health among young adults: a vicious circle?
Wiengarten et al. (2021)	Exploring the performance implications of precarious work
Wratny & Ludera-Ruszel (2020)	News Forms of Employment: Current Problems and Future Challenges

Source: Own elaboration

### *Annual Scientific Production*

The annual scientific production of the studies included in the review is important because it shows the general overview of the studies published in the searched databases so that the number of studies per year is quantified. Fig. 2 shows that the years with the highest scientific production are 2019 and 2021 with (n = 9) respectively for each of the years, these two years represent 64.3% of all studies. On the other hand, during the current year 2023, (n = 4) are being registered, which represents 14.3% of the studies included in the review. Finally, during the years 2020 and 2022, 3 studies were published in each year, these being the lowest publication rates of the records included, the studies of these years represent 21.4% of the total.

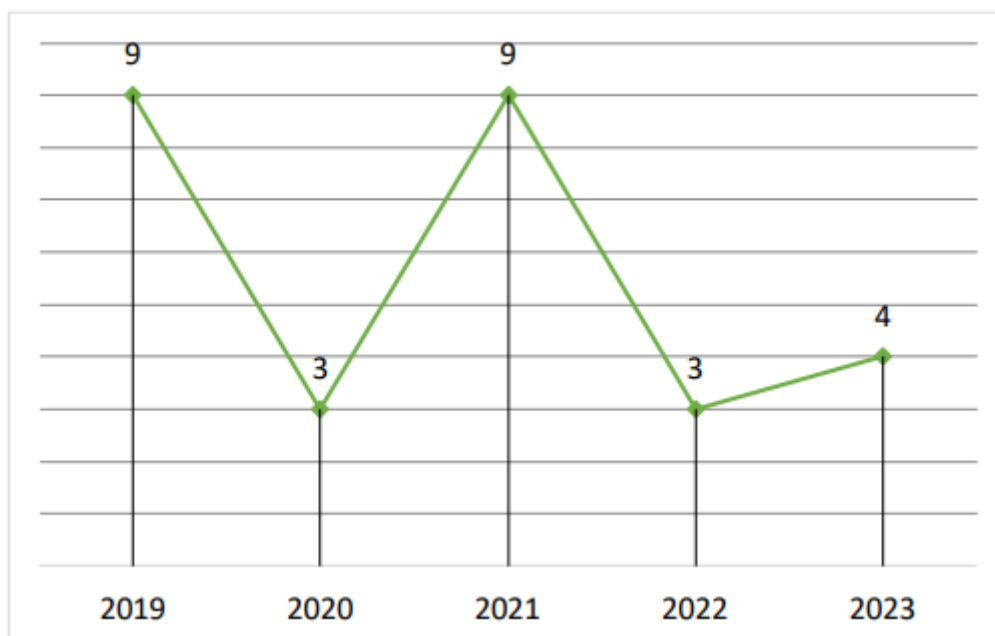


Fig. 2 Linear graph of the annual scientific production of the studies included in the systematic review.

Fig. 3 shows how research production has behaved in different countries over time, with the United States of America having a maximum of 4 studies where the research was developed, followed by Brazil with the publication of 3 publications on the study variables, followed by Argentina, Mexico, Singapore, United

Kingdom each with 2 publications, Finally we have the countries of Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Chile, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Malaysia, New Zealand, Portugal, Slovenia, South Korea with a lower number of publications on the analysis variables.

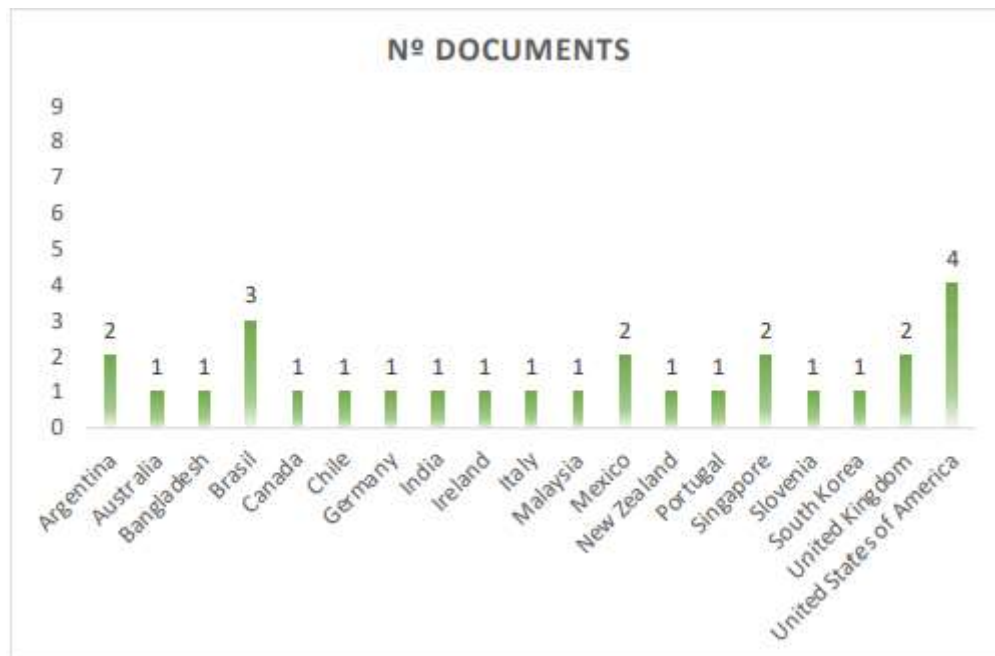


Fig. 3 Number of studies published according to the country from which the sample was taken.

In the 28 findings, the use of the languages English is identified with 24 studies included in the systematic review, Spanish with 3 publications and finally Portuguese with 1 study identified in the literature, which represent 86%, 11% and 3% respectively, as shown in Fig. 4.

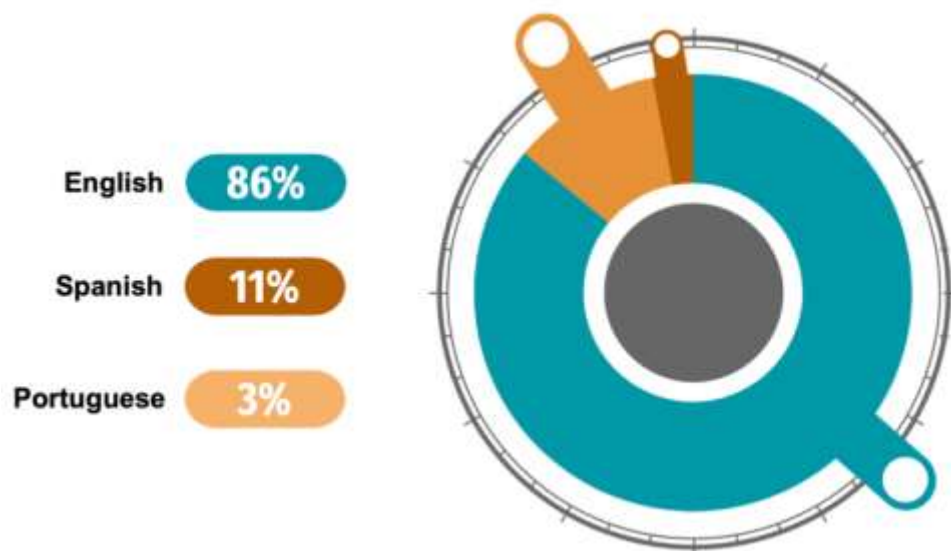


Fig. 4: Most frequent languages of the studies included in the systematic review.

After concluding the analysis of the most frequent words used in the research findings of the included

studies, and the frequency of their employability, the following cloud of recurrences of keywords was created, which shows: precarious work (7), precarious employment (4), mental health (3), precarity (3), gender (2), occupational health (2), precarious worker (2), inequality (2), young adults (2), work (2), unemployment (2), and with less interaction: trade union, COVID, platform capitalism, citizenship, SMEs, psychological well-being, occupational risks, return to work, pasifika, occupational injury, job quality, workers' compensation, highly skilled immigrants, ontario, procedural unfairness, autonomy, operational performance, job satisfaction, decent work, south-south migration, bangladesh, weariness, institutional trust, body, job stress, worker, health behavior, brazilian fictional films, precariousness scale, precariat, employers, Argentina, precariousness, public policies, job insecurity, labor market, social procurement, labor stand, life satisfaction, migrant labor, PLS-SEM, construction, work schedules, migration law, economic insecurity, government, academia, health-related quality of life, housework, health, nonstandard employment, mental disorders, employment status, coronavirus, general health, economic sociology, social protection in Health, occupations, occupational accidents, life trajectories, social citizenship, life course, gig work, mortality, organizations, value chains, gig economy, zero hours, work-life balance, denizens, precarious, financial strain, corporate social responsibility, mediation analysis, state regulation, agricultural day-laborers, labor, social security, women, history, Slovenia, México, sustainability, construction industry, Māori, as seen in Fig. 5:



Fig. 5 Most frequent keywords in the included studies on job insecurity.

Table II shows the most relevant sources of the 28 sources detected during the data identification phase. It can be seen that the “International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health” is the source with the highest frequency of publications on precarious work and job insecurity, with 2 published studies. The other sources showed at least 1 publication during the delimited period of time, as can be seen in Table 2.

Table II: Most Relevant Sources

Sources	Art.
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	2



Springer Nature Singapore	2
The Economic and Labor Relations Review	1
SSRN Electronic Journal	1
Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden GmbH	1
Sociological Perspectives	1
Sociology	1
Sociology & Anthropology	1
RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences	1
REMHU: Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Mobility	1
Region and society	1
Managing Global Transitions	1
Latin American Perspectives	1
Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online	1
Journal of Operations Management	1
Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation	1
Journal of Labor and Society	1
Journal of Health and Social Behavior	1
Journal of Construction Engineering and Management	1
Human Resources for Health	1
Gender, Work & Organization	1
Galaxy (Sao Paulo)	1
Edward Elgar Publishing	1
Public Health Cadres	1
BMC Public Health	1
American Journal of Industrial Medicine	1

In Fig. 6 the databases included in the systematic review are shown. It can be observed that the Scopus database leads the number of publications with (n = 17) or (21.4%), followed by Google Scholar with (n = 6) studies or (21.4%), then we have Scielo with 3 publications or (10.7%), finally, with a smaller number of publications we have Redalyc and Latindex with 1 publication in both cases, which in percentages each represents (3.6%).

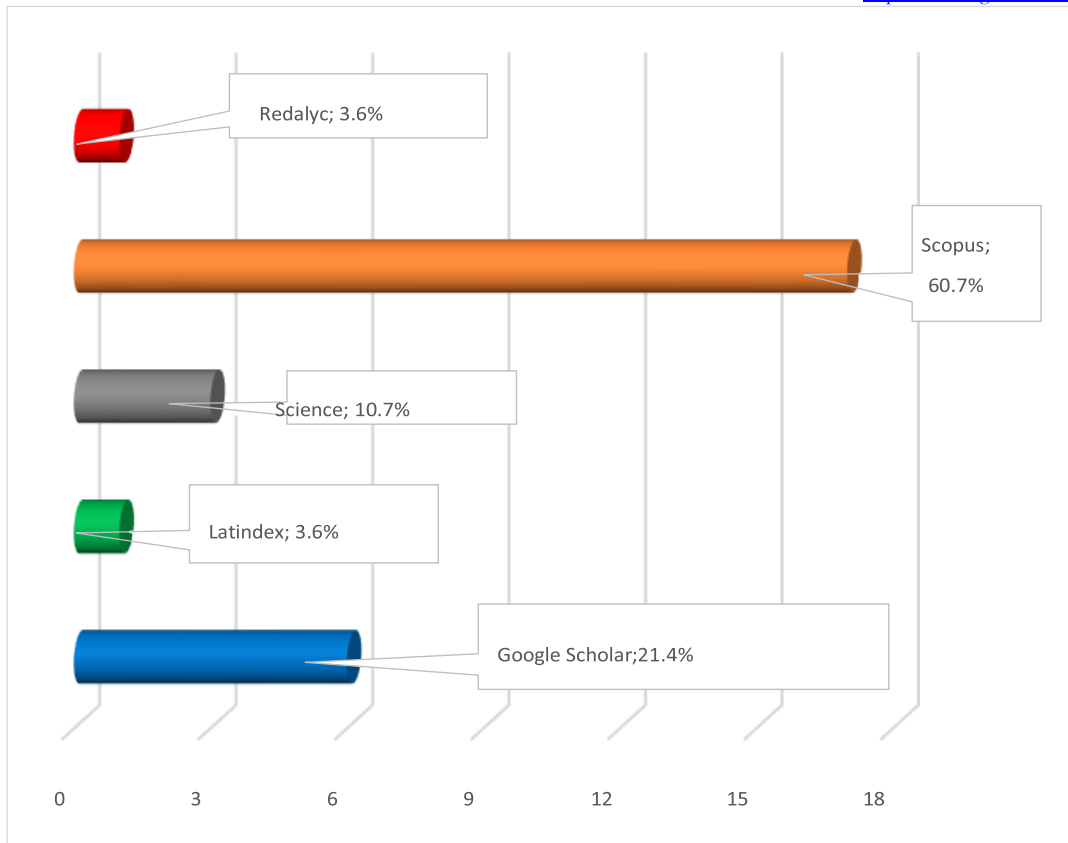
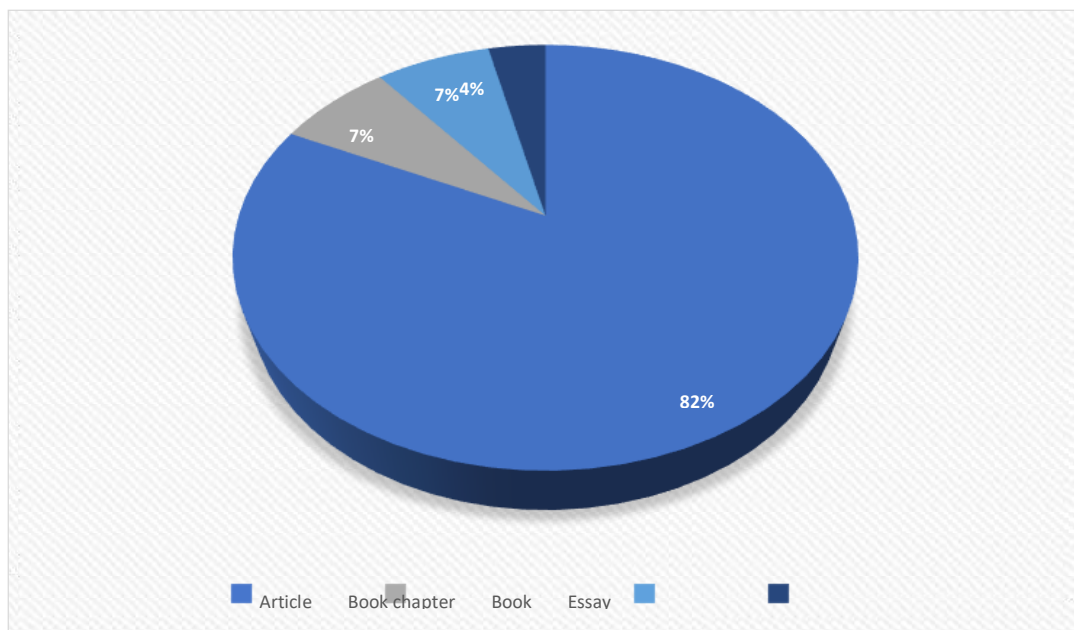


Fig. 6 Databases included in the systematic review.

In Fig. 7, the types of study publications can be seen, which would indicate that 82% of the findings correspond to “Article - original articles” with (n = 23) published articles, followed by (n = 2) or 7% belonging to “book chapter - Book chapter” and “book – Book” each. Finally, with 4% or (n = 1), the document type “Essay – Essay” was identified.

Fig. 7: Typology of documents of the studies included in the systematic review.



## Content Results

Table III describes the psychological and physical illnesses, where of the 28 studies included, 11 authors described the consequences of having precarious jobs, highlighting among the psychological illnesses: negative emotions, helplessness, stress, vulnerability, inability to control important aspects of one's own life, depression, autonomy, mental anguish, anxiety, suicidal behavior, anhedonia, sleep disorders, absenteeism, tiredness, discouragement and frustration, problems in family relationships, lack of motivation. Among the physical illnesses, 17 studies describe poor quality of life, risk of injury, work-related injuries, risk of mortality, cardiovascular diseases, alcohol problems, musculoskeletal pain, and weakness in the immune system.

**Table III: Psychological/Physical Illnesses**

	Psychological/Physical Illnesses
Abdul Jalil et al. (2023)	Negative emotions, helplessness, stress.
Berrios-Riquelme (2021)	Harmful effects on mental health, stress and vulnerability.
Bhattacharya & Ray (2021)	Poor mental health, stress, poor quality of life and risk of injury.
Billias et al. (2023)	Workplace injuries.
Chesters & Cuervo (2019)	Feelings of helplessness and inability to control important aspects of one's life, stress, mental illness and depression, autonomy.
Donnelly (2022)	It undermines mental health, increases risk of mortality, stress and cardiovascular diseases.
Ferrante et al. (2019)	Mental health problems, mental distress, anxiety disorders, depression, suicidal behavior, anhedonia.
Park et al. (2020)	Problematic alcohol use, depression and suicidal ideation or planning (suicidal tendencies), depression and sleep duration.
Pereira (2023)	Emergence of mental disorders, depression, sleep disorders, musculoskeletal pain and absenteeism.
Roque et al. (2022)	Tiredness, discouragement and frustration.
Umičević et al. (2021)	Psychosocial stress, emotional exhaustion, sleep disorders, anxiety and depression, problems in family relationships, lack of motivation, weakness in immune systems, exhaustion, overloaded and exhausted

Table IV describes the types of approach of the 28 studies selected for the systematic review, highlighting 15 quantitative studies and 13 qualitative studies.

**Table IV: Study Focus and Employment/Economic Situation**

	Approach	Employment/economic status
Abdul Jalil et al. (2023)	Quantitative	High job insecurity, insecure work is often irregular and unpredictable, low wages, lack of social security.
Aristizabal et al. (2019)	Quantitative	Minimum incomes other than those established by law, few formal contracts and social insecurity.
Berrios-Riquelme (2021)	Quantitative	Low-skilled jobs, low pay, discrimination and labor abuse.
Bhattacharya & Ray (2021)	Quantitative	Income inequality and job insecurity.
Billias et al.	Qualitative	Procedural injustice, unfair treatment, limited social security,

(2023)		inaccessible social benefits, insecure employment contracts, economic uncertainty and injustice.
Braga (2019)	Qualitative	Informal employment and precarious contracts
Chesters & Cuervo (2019)	Quantitative	Income insecurity, job insecurity, low levels of satisfaction and autonomy, atypical employment, long working hours and insecure jobs with short-term contracts.
Costa Júnior (2023)	Qualitative	Temporary contracts, subcontracts, informality and other forms of flexible work.
Cruz (2021)	Quantitative	Low productivity, low profitability and informal jobs.
D'cruz et al. (2021)	Qualitative	Particularly toxic social problem in the workplace.
Dhal (2020)	Qualitative	Income insecurity, job insecurity, skills insecurity and representation insecurity, low wages, poor working conditions, irregular availability of jobs, lack of social security, poor living conditions, apathy on the part of government and unions, and harassment by contractors and thugs.
Donnelly (2022)	Quantitative	Mainly high perception of job insecurity and insufficient working hours have long-lasting consequences for people, job insecurity, low pay/in women, worse health deterioration and high job insecurity in women.
Ferrante et al. (2019)	Quantitative	Job insecurity and employment instability.
Florczak & Otto (2019)	Qualitative	Atypical contracts.
Hurt-Suwan & Mahler (2020)	Qualitative	Low wages, poor qualifications and lack of training
Hussain et al. (2019)	Qualitative	Dissatisfaction with life
Lambert et al. (2019)	Quantitative	Financial insecurity, lack of quality employment and job insecurity.
O'Keefe & Courtois (2019)	Qualitative	Harassment, high salary progression, repeated career interruptions and risk of financial dependency, feminized atypical work, vulnerability to harassment in the workplace.
Park et al. (2020)	Quantitative	Working conditions are more unsafe and inadequate, patriarchy is marked, as is labour discrimination.
Pereira (2023)	Qualitative	Reduced social benefits, job insecurity, short-term contracts and low wages, under-dimensioning of temporary contracts.
Ravenelle et al. (2022)	Quantitative	Late payments.
Roque et al. (2022)	Quantitative	Low wages, informal work and inaccessibility to social protection.
Ryan et al. (2019)	Qualitative	Uncertain, unstable and high-risk jobs, zero-hour contracts.
Scasserra & Partenio (2021)	Qualitative	Lack of labor regulation and social protection.
Umičević et al. (2021)	Quantitative	Dissatisfaction with work.
Wiengarten et al. (2021)	Quantitative	Lack of motivation and commitment.
Wrattny & Ludera-Ruszel (2020)	Quantitative	Delayed wage payments, injustice and job insecurity

## Discussion and Conclusion

The systematic review of the literature on precarious jobs and their impact on job security during the years 2019-2023, demonstrates the importance of further research on this problem in the world (Aristizabal et al., 2019), since its impact on workers can be very harmful to the point where these workers exposed to this type of work come to think about death (Chesters & Cuervo, 2019), (Donnelly, 2022). Thus, the main objective of the study was to review the state of the literature on precarious work and its impact on the job security of workers in the Scopus, Dialnet, Google Scholar, Scielo, Latindex and Redalyc databases during the period from 2019 to 2023. The results show that it is a very little studied topic but of great impact, since workers exposed to these precarious jobs present both psychological and physical discomfort by not feeling supported by their governments and employers (Hussain et al., 2019). These precarious jobs are characterized by being insecure, volatile, salaries that do not allow them to satisfy their basic needs and environments that are not suitable for development (Donnelly, 2022), (Ravenelle et al., 2022) and (Park et al., 2020).

Likewise, the specific objectives that helped us verify the status of the annual scientific production of the literature during the interval of 2019-2023 were determined, identifying that the years with the highest scientific production are 2019 and 2021 with ( $n = 9$ ) respectively for each of the years, these two years represent 64.3% of the total studies. It was also found that the country with the highest research production in the study time was the United States of America with a maximum of 4 studies. On the other hand, the most predominant languages of writing on the subject of studies in the years analyzed were the languages: English with 86% studies, Spanish with 11% and Portuguese with 3% of the total studies. Similarly, the occurrence of key words in the records included in the systematic review was identified, finding: precarious work (7), precarious employment (4), mental health (3), precarity (3), followed by other words with less frequency in their use. Subsequently, the most relevant sources and databases were analyzed, finding the "International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health" as the source with the highest frequency of publication on precarious work and job insecurity with 2 published studies each. Within the predominant databases with the study variables, the Scopus database was found to be leading the number of publications with 17 (21.4%). Regarding the most frequent typology of studies published in the databases regarding the study variables, 82% are original articles. In addition, the psychological and physical illnesses that affect workers exposed to precarious jobs were described, finding that 11 studies describe negative emotions that can lead to thoughts of suicide and 17 studies comment on bodily injuries and poor quality of life, which demonstrates the conditions suffered by these workers and the little or no enthusiasm for thinking about a decent job (Bhattacharya & Ray, 2021), (Abdul Jalil et al., 2023), (D'cruz et al., 2021), (Donnelly, 2022).

Finally, the main factors of job insecurity that affect the job security of the most frequent workers are insecure jobs, income below that established by law, environments unsuitable for work, thus causing job insecurity, which coincides with authors who express the lack of regulation regarding the established labor laws and ensuring their safety (Park et al., 2020), (Pereira, 2023), (Umičević et al., 2021), (Wratny & Ludera-Ruszel, 2020).

In conclusion, the literature between 2019 and 2023 shows great concern about precarious jobs and how they are increasing in the different countries studied, seriously affecting job security, reflected in physical and psychological ailments, and even considering death as an option to escape this reality. It is of utmost importance to address this crucial issue for the scientific academic community based on the data of this research.

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