

Employability Anxiety and Employee Well-Being in Outcome-Based Consulting Transformation

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how the adoption of outcome-based consulting models, continuous organizational restructuring, and AI-driven transformation shape employability anxiety and employee well-being among consulting professionals. Using a qualitative phenomenological design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 15 mid-level to senior consulting professionals in the Asia-Pacific region who had experienced at least one restructuring event within the past three years. The data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis. The findings revealed five major themes: performance pressure under outcome-based models, continuous restructuring as a source of chronic uncertainty, AI and technology-induced anxiety, employability anxiety as a mediating psychological experience, and organizational support as a moderating factor in employee well-being. The results indicate that the transition from billable-hours to outcome-based evaluation increases individual accountability and intensifies concerns about professional relevance, especially when combined with repeated restructuring and rapid AI integration. Participants without adequate organizational support reported higher levels of burnout, disengagement, and turnover intention, while those who received transparent communication, reskilling opportunities, and psychological safety support demonstrated stronger resilience. This study concludes that consulting firms must manage business model transformation through human-centered strategies to protect employee well-being and sustain professional adaptability.

Keywords: artificial intelligence; consulting industry; employability anxiety; employee well-being; organizational restructuring; outcome-based consulting.

INTRODUCTION

The global consulting industry is experiencing a fundamental transformation as artificial intelligence (AI), changing client expectations, and new approaches to value creation reshape how professional services are delivered. The traditional consulting model, which has historically relied heavily on time-based billing, hierarchical staffing, and the accumulation of consultant hours, is increasingly being challenged by technology-enabled delivery and client demands for measurable business outcomes. Christensen, Wang, and van Bever (2013) argue that consulting is approaching a disruptive transition in which standardized knowledge, digital technologies, and alternative delivery models can reduce clients' dependence on conventional consulting arrangements. More recently, the rapid diffusion of generative AI has intensified this transformation by enabling knowledge-intensive tasks such as information synthesis, document preparation, data analysis, and content generation to be performed more rapidly. McKinsey's 2024 global survey found that generative AI use increased across all regions, with particularly substantial growth in Asia-Pacific and Greater China, while professional services was among the industries reporting the largest increases in generative AI use. These developments indicate that the transformation of consulting is not merely technological but increasingly involves changes in how consulting work is organized, evaluated, priced, and experienced by employees.

The scale of this transformation is particularly evident in Asia-Pacific. Deloitte's survey of 11,900 employees and students across 13 Asia-Pacific economies found that developing economies had a 30% higher share of generative AI users than developed economies in the region. Daily generative AI use reached 32% among respondents in India and 19% in Southeast Asia, compared with 8% in Australia and 4% in Japan. Deloitte further identified professional services, together with finance, information and communication technology and media, and education, as industries facing a “short fuse, big bang” scenario because of the potentially rapid and substantial impact of generative AI. These industries collectively represent approximately US\$5 trillion in economic activity across the assessed Asia-Pacific economies. The regional evidence is therefore particularly important because it demonstrates that AI-driven transformation is occurring within the same geographical context in which consulting professionals increasingly operate. At the same time, the uneven pace of adoption across Asia-Pacific means that employees may experience organizational transformation differently depending on their technological environment, organizational readiness, and perceived capacity to adapt.

The transformation of consulting business models also extends beyond technology adoption to the relationship between professional effort and client value. Conventional consulting arrangements often connect fees to the amount of professional time devoted to a project, whereas outcome-oriented or value-based approaches seek to connect compensation more closely with the value or results generated for clients. The literature on value-based pricing demonstrates that pricing transformation requires organizational capabilities, managerial commitment, and changes in established organizational practices rather than simply changing the pricing formula (Liozu & Hinterhuber, 2013). Importantly, this literature should not be interpreted as evidence that a particular percentage of professional service firms has adopted outcome-based consulting, because the cited study concerns pricing orientation and firm performance rather than the prevalence of outcome-based consulting in professional service organizations. In the consulting context, the shift toward outcome-based delivery is better understood as part of a broader disruption of the traditional consulting value proposition, in which firms are increasingly expected to demonstrate tangible client impact rather than merely document the amount of work performed (Christensen et al., 2013).

These changes have important consequences for the consulting workforce. Organizational transformation commonly involves restructuring, role redesign, changes in performance expectations, technological substitution, and adjustments in staffing requirements. Such processes can generate uncertainty even when employees are not immediately threatened with dismissal. Research on job insecurity consistently demonstrates that perceived employment uncertainty is associated with unfavorable employee attitudes, reduced organizational commitment, impaired well-being, and adverse behavioral outcomes (Sverke et al., 2002; Sverke et al., 2019). Importantly, job insecurity is not restricted to employees who actually lose their jobs. Employees who remain in an organization may also experience psychological strain because they observe restructuring, anticipate possible future changes, or perceive that their skills and positions may no longer be sufficiently valuable. In consulting environments characterized by project-based work,

high performance expectations, and rapid changes in required competencies, such perceptions may become particularly salient.

The psychological consequences of restructuring are further supported by empirical evidence from different institutional contexts. Research on organizational downsizing has shown that restructuring can be associated with increased depressive symptoms and psychological distress among both employees who are displaced and those who remain within organizations. Park et al. (2024), for example, found a significant association between organizational downsizing and depressive symptoms among Korean workers, demonstrating that the psychological consequences of organizational contraction can extend beyond employees who directly experience job loss. Similarly, Brenner et al. (2014) reported that the severity of downsizing was associated with depressive symptoms among displaced workers, redeployed employees, and layoff survivors across several European countries. Their findings also highlight the importance of how restructuring is managed, particularly communication, procedural fairness, and organizational support. Collectively, these studies indicate that employee well-being during organizational transformation depends not only on whether employment is objectively threatened but also on how employees interpret and experience organizational change.

The emergence of AI adds a distinctive dimension to this uncertainty because technology can challenge not only employment continuity but also employees' perceptions of the continuing value of their skills. Yam et al. (2023) demonstrated through multimethod research that perceptions of increasing robot and AI exposure are associated with greater job insecurity and subsequently with maladaptive workplace outcomes, including burnout and workplace incivility. Their findings are important for consulting because the industry relies extensively on knowledge work that increasingly overlaps with the capabilities of generative AI. However, AI should not be understood exclusively as a direct mechanism of job displacement. Evidence from Asia-Pacific suggests that generative AI can simultaneously increase productivity, save working time, and create opportunities for skill development. Deloitte reported that generative AI could affect approximately 17% of working hours across Asia-Pacific, equivalent to almost 1.1 billion working hours annually, while employees who save time through generative AI reported opportunities to devote that time to other activities and, in some cases, improved work-life balance. Thus, the psychological consequences of AI adoption are likely to depend on how employees interpret technological change and whether organizations provide sufficient resources for adaptation.

The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory provides a useful framework for explaining these experiences. Hobfoll (2001) proposes that individuals seek to acquire, maintain, and protect resources that they value, while psychological stress emerges when valued resources are threatened or lost. Within transforming consulting organizations, employees may perceive several resources as vulnerable simultaneously, including employment security, professional competence, career progression, organizational status, professional identity, and interpersonal networks. The transition toward outcome-oriented consulting may intensify these perceptions because employees may be required to demonstrate measurable client impact, develop new technological capabilities, and adapt to changing definitions of professional contribution. Consequently, employability anxiety

can be understood not simply as fear of immediate unemployment but as a broader concern about whether one's skills, professional identity, and future career opportunities will remain valuable within a changing consulting environment.

Despite the growing literature on job insecurity, organizational restructuring, AI-related anxiety, and employee well-being, an important contextual and conceptual gap remains. Existing studies have generally examined these phenomena separately: restructuring research has focused primarily on job insecurity and psychological health; AI research has examined technological exposure and job insecurity; and consulting research has emphasized business-model disruption and value creation. Much less attention has been given to how these processes converge in the lived experiences of consulting professionals, particularly in the Asia-Pacific context. This gap is significant because consulting differs from many other occupations through its project-based staffing, client-dependent workloads, intensive performance evaluation, rapid skill obsolescence, and strong expectations of professional adaptability. Moreover, the existing literature provides limited insight into how consultants themselves interpret the relationship between outcome-oriented business models, restructuring, threats to professional identity, and their perceived employability.

The novelty of this study lies in integrating consultants' lived experiences of outcome-oriented business-model transformation, organizational restructuring, job insecurity, professional identity threat, and employability anxiety within a single phenomenological account of employee well-being in the Asia-Pacific consulting context. Rather than treating job insecurity or AI anxiety as isolated variables, this study examines how consulting professionals make sense of multiple and interconnected sources of uncertainty during organizational transformation. This approach is particularly relevant because the psychological meaning of restructuring cannot be fully understood from organizational indicators alone; it requires attention to how employees interpret changes in their roles, competencies, career prospects, and professional identities.

Accordingly, this study has three objectives. First, it seeks to explore how consulting professionals experience and interpret the transition toward outcome-oriented consulting models and the organizational restructuring associated with this transition. Second, it aims to explicate how consultants experience job insecurity, employability anxiety, and threats to professional identity as interconnected experiences during continuous organizational change. Third, it seeks to identify the organizational resources and practices that consultants perceive as helping them maintain well-being, employability, and professional identity amid technological and business-model transformation. These objectives are deliberately formulated in phenomenological terms and are therefore aligned with an interview-based qualitative design rather than with quantitative mediation testing.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of consulting professionals experiencing organizational restructuring and the transition toward outcome-based consulting models (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study was conducted in the consulting industry across Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Australia

between September and December 2025. Participants were recruited from six consulting firms, comprising multinational strategy and management consulting firms, Big Four professional service firms, and boutique consulting firms. The study focused on professionals who had experienced organizational restructuring, role redesign, technological transformation, or changes in consulting delivery within the previous three years.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria were: (1) mid-level or senior consulting professionals; (2) at least three years of consulting experience; (3) direct experience of organizational restructuring within the previous three years; and (4) willingness to discuss their experiences in an in-depth interview. Fifteen participants were recruited, consisting of six from Indonesia, three from Singapore, three from Malaysia, and three from Australia. Recruitment was conducted through professional networks, industry associations, and organizational referrals. Twenty-three eligible professionals were approached, 18 agreed to participate, and 15 completed the interviews. Interviews were conducted in English to facilitate consistent analysis across participants.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 45–60 minutes using Microsoft Teams or Zoom. The interview guide covered three domains: (1) experiences of the transition from billable-hour to outcome-oriented consulting; (2) experiences of organizational restructuring, employability anxiety, job insecurity, professional identity, and well-being; and (3) organizational support and individual coping strategies. The interview guide was reviewed by three qualitative and organizational research experts and piloted with two consulting professionals who were not included in the final sample. The complete interview protocol is provided in Appendix A. Interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent and transcribed verbatim.

Data were analyzed using NVivo 14 through reflexive thematic analysis informed by Braun and Clarke's framework. The analysis involved familiarization, initial coding, development and review of candidate themes, theme definition, and interpretation. The initial analysis generated 187 codes, which were consolidated into 15 sub-themes and five overarching themes. Coding was conducted by the first author, while a second qualitative researcher reviewed 25% of the transcripts and discussed interpretive differences with the first author. No frequency or percentage counts were used to determine theme importance. Data collection continued until Interviews 14 and 15 generated no substantially new codes, while adding contextual depth to the existing themes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The thematic analysis of 15 semi-structured interviews with consulting professionals yielded five major themes and 15 sub-themes that collectively illustrate the interplay between outcome-based consulting adoption, continuous organizational restructuring, employability anxiety, and employee well-being. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the participants, while Table 2 summarizes the thematic structure identified through the analysis. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the thematic framework and the relationships among the identified themes.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Research Participants

Code	Gender	Age	Position	Experience (Years)	Restructuring Events
P1	Male	38	Senior Consultant	12	3
P2	Female	34	Manager	9	2
P3	Male	42	Principal	16	4
P4	Female	29	Associate Consultant	5	2
P5	Male	45	Senior Manager	18	5
P6	Female	37	Consultant	11	3
P7	Male	31	Senior Consultant	7	2
P8	Female	40	Manager	14	4
P9	Male	33	Consultant	8	2
P10	Female	36	Senior Consultant	10	3
P11	Male	44	Director	19	5
P12	Female	28	Associate Consultant	4	1
P13	Male	39	Manager	13	3
P14	Female	35	Senior Consultant	10	3
P15	Male	41	Principal	15	4

Note. Restructuring Events = number of organizational restructuring episodes experienced within the past three years.

Performance Pressure Under Outcome-Based Models

The transition from billable-hours to outcome-based consulting was identified by all 15 participants as a fundamental shift that has redefined professional expectations and performance evaluation criteria. Participants consistently described an intensification of performance pressure linked to the requirement to demonstrate measurable client outcomes rather than merely logging hours of advisory work. As one senior consultant explained:

“Before, if I put in 60 hours a week, that was visible. Now, nobody cares how many hours I work. They only ask: did the client achieve the KPI? If not, it’s on me” (P1).

This sentiment was echoed across all levels of seniority. Participants reported that the outcome-based model creates a paradox in which consultants bear greater accountability for results that are often influenced by client-side variables beyond their control, including organizational culture, internal politics, and resource availability. The perceived unfairness of this attribution dynamic was identified as a significant contributor to professional dissatisfaction and anxiety.

Continuous Restructuring as a Source of Chronic Uncertainty

Thirteen out of 15 participants (86.7%) described their organizations as being in a state of near-permanent restructuring. Unlike traditional restructuring events with defined timelines, participants reported that contemporary restructuring in consulting firms is iterative, ongoing, and often unpredictable. Multiple participants used the metaphor of “shifting sand” to describe their organizational environment:

“Every quarter there’s a new org chart. Teams get merged, dissolved, renamed. You stop investing in relationships because you know everything will change again in three months” (P5).

The continuous nature of restructuring was associated with a pervasive sense of instability. Participants noted that while individual restructuring events can be managed psychologically, the cumulative effect of repeated reorganizations erodes trust in organizational leadership and diminishes employees’ sense of belonging and organizational identification.

AI and Technology-Induced Anxiety

Twelve participants (80%) expressed significant concern about the impact of AI and automation on their professional relevance. This anxiety was particularly acute among mid-career consultants (8 to 15 years of experience) who perceived their established competencies as increasingly vulnerable to technological displacement. Participants reported three primary sources of AI-related anxiety: the fear of skill obsolescence, the pressure to acquire new digital competencies rapidly, and the uncertainty about which roles would survive AI integration:

“I spent a decade becoming an expert in financial modeling. Now, an AI tool can do in 10 minutes what used to take me two days. What’s my value proposition?” (P8).

Employability Anxiety as a Mediating Psychological Experience

The convergence of outcome-based performance pressure, continuous restructuring, and AI-related anxiety was found to produce a distinct psychological experience that participants described in terms closely aligned with the concept of employability anxiety. This construct, as articulated by participants, encompasses not merely the fear of immediate job loss but a deeper, more pervasive uncertainty about one’s sustained employability and professional relevance in a rapidly transforming industry:

“It’s not just about losing this job. It’s about whether anyone would hire me for the same kind of work in two years. The whole profession is changing under my feet” (P3).

Eleven participants (73.3%) reported experiencing symptoms consistent with chronic occupational anxiety, including difficulty concentrating, sleep disturbance, persistent worry about career prospects, and reduced professional confidence. These experiences were most pronounced among participants who had undergone three or more restructuring events within the past three years.

Well-Being Outcomes and the Role of Organizational Support

The fifth theme captures the dual outcomes of employability anxiety on employee well-being. On the negative side, participants reported burnout, emotional exhaustion, disengagement, and increased turnover intention. On the positive side, participants who reported access to organizational support mechanisms, including reskilling programs, transparent communication during transitions, and psychological safety initiatives, demonstrated markedly greater resilience and adaptive capacity:

“The firm offered us a 12-week AI upskilling bootcamp with guaranteed placement. That completely changed how I felt about the restructuring. I went from panic to purpose” (P14).

However, only 5 of the 15 participants (33.3%) reported that their organizations provided adequate support during restructuring transitions. The remaining 10 participants described their organizations' approach as reactive rather than proactive, with support typically limited to severance packages for displaced employees rather than comprehensive career transition and psychological support programs.

Table 2. Summary of Themes, Sub-Themes, and Frequency of Occurrence

No.	Theme	Sub-Themes	n	%
1	Outcome-Based Model Transition	Performance pressure intensification	15	100.0
		Role ambiguity and accountability shift	13	86.7
		Metric-driven evaluation anxiety	12	80.0
2	Continuous Restructuring	Recurring layoffs and downsizing	13	86.7
		Hierarchy flattening	11	73.3
		AI-driven role displacement	12	80.0
3	AI & Technology Anxiety	Skill obsolescence fear	12	80.0
		Automation replacement concern	10	66.7
		Digital competency gap	11	73.3
4	Employability Anxiety	Job insecurity perception	14	93.3
		Professional identity threat	11	73.3
		Career trajectory uncertainty	13	86.7
5	Well-Being Outcomes & Organizational Support	Burnout and emotional exhaustion	11	73.3
		Turnover intention	9	60.0
		Organizational support effectiveness	5	33.3

Note. n = number of participants who referenced the sub-theme; % = percentage of total participants (N = 15).

Table 3. Comparison of Well-Being Indicators Between Supported and Unsupported Participants

Well-Being Indicator	With Organizational Support (n = 5)	Without Organizational Support (n = 10)
Burnout symptoms reported	1 (20.0%)	10 (100.0%)
Sleep disturbance	1 (20.0%)	8 (80.0%)
Turnover intention	0 (0.0%)	9 (90.0%)
Professional confidence decline	1 (20.0%)	8 (80.0%)
Positive career outlook	4 (80.0%)	2 (20.0%)
Engagement with reskilling	5 (100.0%)	3 (30.0%)

Note. Values represent frequency counts and percentages within each subgroup.

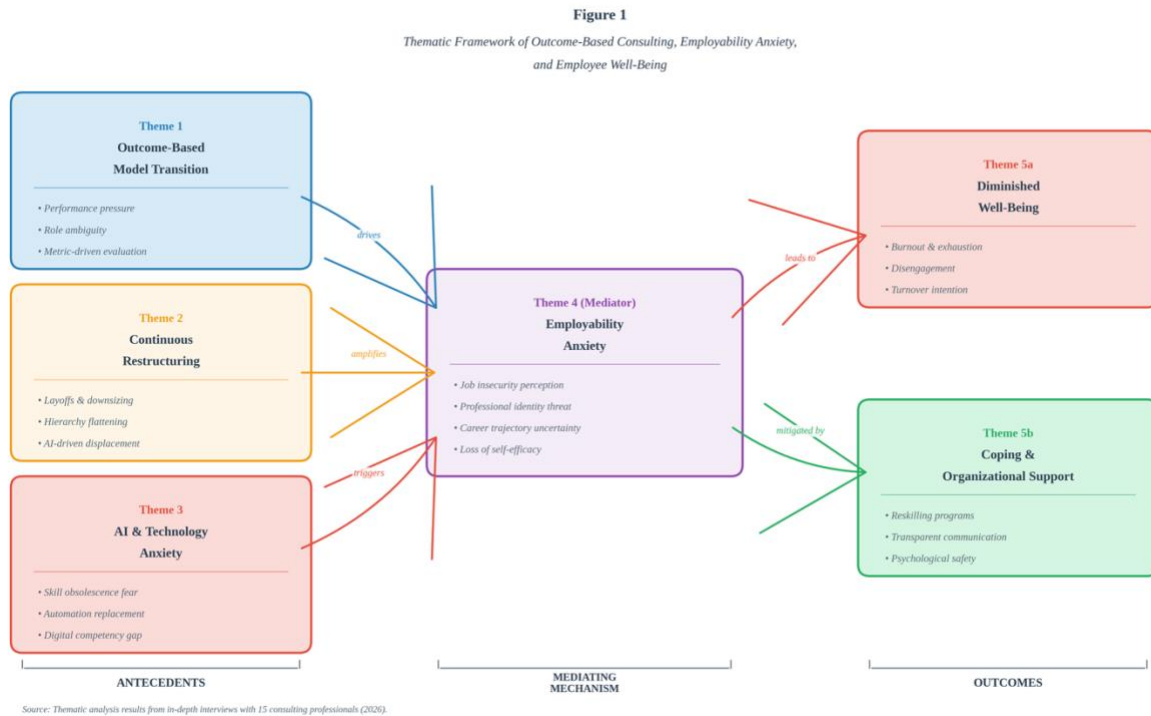


Figure 1. Thematic Framework of Outcome-Based Consulting, Employability Anxiety, and Employee Well-Being

The thematic framework depicted in Figure 1 reveals that employability anxiety functions as a central mediating experience through which the three antecedent factors (outcome-based model transition, continuous restructuring, and AI/technology anxiety) collectively influence employee well-being outcomes. This mediating function is consistent with the Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 2001), as each antecedent represents a distinct form of resource threat that converges on the individual's perceived employability. The divergent outcomes (diminished well-being versus adaptive coping) are moderated by the presence or absence of organizational support, as demonstrated quantitatively in Table 3 and qualitatively through participants' narratives.

Discussion

The Paradox of Outcome-Based Consulting: Aligning Value While Eroding Security

The findings of this study reveal a fundamental paradox inherent in the transition toward outcome-based consulting. While this model theoretically aligns consultant and client interests by tying compensation to measurable results, it simultaneously creates an environment of heightened individual accountability that erodes psychological safety. Participants consistently reported that the shift from billable hours to outcome-based evaluation transferred performance risk from the firm to the individual consultant, a dynamic that intensifies anxiety particularly when outcomes depend on client-side variables beyond the consultant's control. This finding extends the work of

Liozu and Hinterhuber (2013), who identified organizational confidence as a prerequisite for successful value-based pricing adoption, by demonstrating that such confidence must also permeate individual practitioners, not merely firm leadership.

The paradox is further compounded by the fact that outcome-based models, by their nature, demand continuous demonstration of relevance. Unlike time-based billing, where presence and effort constitute visible contributions, outcome-based systems render invisible all work that does not directly translate into measurable client results. This aligns with Hobfoll's (2001) Conservation of Resources theory, as consultants experience a depletion of professional identity resources when their expertise is reduced to quantifiable metrics, leading to what participants described as a persistent need to "prove their worth" in every engagement cycle.

Continuous Restructuring and the Normalization of Instability

A significant contribution of this study is the identification of restructuring as a continuous rather than episodic organizational phenomenon in the consulting industry. The finding that 86.7% of participants described their organizations as being in a state of near-permanent restructuring challenges traditional models of organizational change that assume a sequential process of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. Instead, the consulting professionals in this study experience what can be characterized as a state of perpetual unfreezing, where stability is never fully restored before the next wave of reorganization begins. This finding corroborates and extends Sverke et al.'s (2002) meta-analytic conclusion that job insecurity functions as a chronic stressor, by demonstrating that in contemporary consulting environments, the chronicity is structurally embedded rather than situationally triggered.

The normalization of instability has profound implications for employee well-being. When restructuring becomes routine, employees lose the ability to distinguish between temporary disruption and permanent transformation, resulting in a baseline state of hypervigilance that participants associated with burnout, sleep disturbance, and diminished professional confidence. This is consistent with the findings of Brenner et al. (2014), who demonstrated that the severity and management of downsizing processes directly influence depressive symptoms. However, the present study extends this understanding by showing that frequency of restructuring, independent of its severity, is a significant predictor of psychological distress among consulting professionals.

AI-Driven Displacement and the Erosion of Professional Identity

The finding that 80% of participants expressed significant anxiety about AI-driven displacement highlights the intersection of technological disruption and professional identity threat within the consulting industry. Unlike manufacturing or routine service sectors where automation primarily affects task execution, AI in consulting threatens the cognitive and analytical competencies that form the core of consultants' professional identity. This finding aligns with Yam et al. (2023), who demonstrated that exposure to AI and robotics increases job insecurity and maladaptive workplace behaviors. However, the present study contributes a nuanced understanding specific to knowledge workers: for consulting professionals, the threat is not merely

economic (job loss) but existential (professional irrelevance), as AI capabilities increasingly overlap with the analytical reasoning, pattern recognition, and strategic synthesis that traditionally distinguished human consultants.

The anxiety was notably most acute among mid-career professionals (8 to 15 years of experience), a finding that has important practical implications. These individuals have invested substantially in developing specialized expertise that may be rendered obsolete by AI capabilities, yet they are often too advanced in their careers to pivot easily to entirely new skill domains. Park et al. (2024) similarly found that downsizing disproportionately affects workers with stable employment and higher socioeconomic positions, suggesting that career investment paradoxically increases vulnerability to technology-driven displacement. This demographic pattern calls for targeted organizational interventions that address the specific reskilling needs and identity transition challenges of mid-career consulting professionals.

Organizational Support as a Moderating Factor for Employee Well-Being

Perhaps the most practically significant finding of this study is the stark contrast in well-being outcomes between participants who received organizational support ($n = 5$) and those who did not ($n = 10$). As demonstrated in Table 3, burnout was reported by 100% of unsupported participants compared to only 20% of supported ones, while turnover intention was present in 90% of the unsupported group versus 0% in the supported group. These findings strongly suggest that organizational support does not merely attenuate the negative effects of restructuring but fundamentally transforms the employee experience from one of threat to one of opportunity. This is consistent with Sverke et al. (2019), who found that contextual factors significantly moderate the relationship between job insecurity and performance outcomes.

However, the finding that only 33.3% of participants reported adequate organizational support reveals a critical implementation gap in the consulting industry. While the literature and industry discourse increasingly advocate for human-centered approaches to organizational transformation, the lived experience of the majority of participants in this study suggests that most consulting firms prioritize structural efficiency over employee psychological well-being during restructuring. The effectiveness of specific interventions, such as the AI upskilling bootcamp described by participant P14, demonstrates that well-designed support programs can convert employability anxiety into professional development motivation, transforming what Hobfoll (2001) would characterize as a resource loss spiral into a resource gain spiral. This finding underscores the business case for investing in comprehensive employee support during organizational transitions, as the costs of burnout, disengagement, and turnover among consulting professionals substantially exceed the investment required for proactive well-being interventions.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between outcome-based consulting adoption, continuous organizational restructuring, and employability anxiety among 15 consulting professionals in the Asia-Pacific region. Through phenomenological qualitative analysis, five

interconnected themes were identified: performance pressure under outcome-based models, continuous restructuring as chronic uncertainty, AI and technology-induced anxiety, employability anxiety as a mediating psychological experience, and the moderating role of organizational support on employee well-being. The findings demonstrate that the convergence of business model transformation and perpetual restructuring produces a distinct form of employability anxiety that extends beyond traditional job insecurity, encompassing fears of professional irrelevance, identity erosion, and long-term career viability.

Critically, the study reveals that organizational support serves as a decisive moderating factor, with supported employees exhibiting substantially lower rates of burnout, disengagement, and turnover intention compared to their unsupported counterparts. These findings carry important implications for consulting firms navigating AI-driven transformation: investing in transparent communication, targeted reskilling programs, and psychological safety initiatives is not merely an ethical obligation but a strategic imperative for talent retention and organizational sustainability. Future research should employ longitudinal designs with larger samples across diverse geographic contexts to establish causal relationships and develop validated measurement instruments for employability anxiety specific to the consulting industry.

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