Emotions as Turning Points in the Job Search and Job Choice for Novice Job Seekers

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Introduction

♦ The job search and choice process is how job seekers find employment options, pursue those options, and accept/decline offers
   • Job search strategies: focused, exploratory, and haphazard
   • Job choice strategies: criteria-driven and non-criteria driven
♦ Purpose of this study:
   • To analyze the presence and significance of emotion at defining moments of the job search
♦ Research question: How does emotion influence job search and/or job choice strategies (if at all)?

Method

Sample:
♦ Job seekers who had completed job searches in the previous two months (N=41)
  ♦ Approximately half were female (51.22%)
  ♦ Mean age was 20.17 years (SD = 1.26)
  ♦ Average of 2.73 past full-time jobs held (SD = 2.57)

Procedures:
♦ Retrospective interviews (~45 min)
  ♦ Participants graphed the timeline of their job search/choice process and made note of all turning points
  ♦ Participants walked the principal investigator through the different phases of their job search/choice chronologically
  ♦ Participants were compensated $35

Coding

♦ Interview transcripts were coded to classify job search and choice strategies of participants as emotion-driven or emotion-resistant
♦ Independently reviewed by two coders
♦ 90.24% agreement among coding results
♦ Coding inconsistencies were resolved through discussion

Results

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion-Driven</th>
<th>Emotion-Resistant</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63.41% of job seekers were emotion-driven</td>
<td>36.59% of job seekers were emotion-resistant</td>
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<td>Often had financial hardship or time pressure (58.33% faced financial pressures)</td>
<td>Often had access to financial or time-based resources (41.12% faced financial pressures)</td>
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<td>Emotion often led to a haphazard job search; 80% of haphazard job seekers were emotion-driven</td>
<td>66.67% of job seekers using a focused strategy were emotion-resistant</td>
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<td>Less motivated in job search upon experiencing emotion</td>
<td>Often did experience emotion, but it did not affect the job search/choice</td>
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<td>Tended to accept first job offer made, even if not “ideal” job</td>
<td>Often secured a good position very quickly and may have been affected by emotion had search been longer</td>
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<td>74.07% of non-criteria driven participants were emotion-driven</td>
<td>71.43% of criteria-driven participants were emotion-resistant</td>
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Discussion

♦ Effective job search and choice strategies are especially important for novice job seekers whose first full-time job can be a strong determinant of future career success
♦ Emerging trends indicated that emotion has a negative impact on job search and choice strategies
♦ Emotion-driven participants often experienced negative affect and lowered job search efficacy when searches did not progress as well as they expected
♦ Financial hardship and time pressures enhanced the effect of emotion
♦ Many participants lowered or abandoned their preferred criteria and accepted their first job offer
♦ Emotion-driven participants were four times more likely to employ haphazard search strategy
♦ Emotion often reduced job search clarity and thus quality of search

Implications

For Job Seekers
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<td>Set clear and realistic criteria before the job search to avoid lowering standards upon experiencing emotion</td>
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