

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 jobs 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

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

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

Set clear and realistic criteria before the job search to avoid lowering standards upon experiencing emotion

Predict the job search timeline and refer to it throughout the search to avoid premature frustrations and reduction of motivation

For Guidance Counselors:

Stress that the job search process is long and dependent on a combination of factors, such as effort, efficiency, and luck

Place more importance on providing emotional support throughout the whole job search process