

Job search intention, theory of planned behavior, personality and job search experience

Isabelle Fort, Catherine Pacaud, Pierre-Yves Gilles

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Isabelle Fort, Catherine Pacaud, Pierre-Yves Gilles

Abstract

The present study aimed not only to confirm the paths between theory of planned behavior variables and job search intention with a French sample, but also to test the moderating effects of job search experience and two personality dimensions (extraversion and conscientiousness) on these paths. One hundred and fifty-four participants rated these concepts on a series of scales. Results showed that the theory of planned behavior variables were significantly related to job search intention, and that extraversion and conscientiousness moderated the paths between attitude and job search intention. Results are discussed with reference to the literature and their practical implications.

Keywords: theory of planned behavior, extraversion, conscientiousness, job search, moderation

Résumé

Cette étude vise non seulement à confirmer les liens entre les variables de la théorie du comportement planifié et l'intention de chercher un emploi sur un échantillon Français, mais également à tester l'effet modérateur de l'expérience de la recherche d'emploi et de deux dimensions de personnalité (extraversion et caractère consciencieux) sur ces liens. Des échelles permettant d'évaluer ces concepts ont été administrées à un échantillon de cent cinquante quatre participants. Les résultats montrent que les variables de la théorie du comportement planifié sont significativement liées à l'intention de chercher un emploi et que l'extraversion et le caractère consciencieux modèrent les relations entre attitude et intention de chercher un emploi. Les résultats sont discutés au regard de la littérature et de leurs implications pratiques.

Job Search Intention, Theory of Planned Behavior, Personality and Job Search Experience

Unemployment is associated with lower levels of psychological health, lower levels of physical health, and an increased risk of suicide (Wanberg, 2012). This underscores the importance of investigating the determinants of successful job seeking in order to develop interventions that will help individuals find work. One relevant theory in this area is the theory of planned behavior (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1991). TPB states that intention is the proximal determinant of behavior, and is itself determined by three variables (attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control). Ajzen (1991) defines *intention* as the extent to which an individual is willing to try to perform a behavior, or the effort that he or she plans to allocate to performing that behavior. *Attitude* refers to the positive or negative evaluation of job seeking, and *subjective norm* to the perception of social pressure to perform (or not to perform) a behavior, and the desire to comply with that pressure. *Perceived behavioral control* is defined as “the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior” (Ajzen, 2002, p. 665). According to Ajzen (1991), perceived behavioral control is compatible with the concept of *self-efficacy* (Bandura, 1997), which refers to “judgments of how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations” (Bandura, 1982, p. 122) .

Job search and the theory of planned behavior

TPB has been applied to job seeking, with researchers investigating the relationships between job search attitude, subjective norm, job search self-efficacy, intention to search for a job, and job search behaviors (e.g., Caska, 1998; Song et al., 2006; van Hooft et al. , 2004a, 2005; Van Hooft et al., 2004b; Van Hooft and De Jong, 2009; Wanberg et al., 2005; Zikic and Saks, 2009) . These studies have shown that job search intention is significantly correlated with job search behaviors (Caska, 1998; Song et al., 2006; Wanberg et al., 2005; Zikic and

Saks, 2009). However, investigations of the paths between job search attitude, subjective norm, job search self-efficacy and job search intention have yielded inconsistent results. While studies have consistently highlighted significant relationships between subjective norm and intention, results concerning attitude are less congruent. Attitude is significantly related to job search intention in most studies (Song et al., 2006; van Hooft et al., 2004a, 2005; Van Hooft et al., 2004b; Van Hooft and De Jong, 2009; Zikic and Saks, 2009), although Wanberg, Glomb, Song, and Sorenson (2005), in a multi-wave study, found significant and nonsignificant correlations. Zikic and Saks (2009) also observed a significant but moderate path between attitude and intention. These inconsistencies can be explained mainly by the use of different attitude measures, for while participants in most of the studies (Song et al., 2006; van Hooft et al., 2004a, 2005; Van Hooft et al., 2004b; Van Hooft and De Jong, 2009) had to rate job seeking according to different adjectives, Wanberg et al. (2005) asked their participants if they had a positive or a negative attitude toward job seeking. The latter measure may be less sensitive, resulting in a nonsignificant effect. The scale used by Zikic and Saks is also different, as participants are asked about the benefits associated with finding a job. It therefore seems to measure outcome expectations, and as a consequence, the results it yields are difficult to compare with those observed in other studies. Results for self-efficacy show moderate paths to job search intention, whether these paths are significant (Caska, 1998; Van Hooft and De Jong, 2009; Wanberg et al., 2005; Zikic and Saks, 2009), or non-significant (Song et al., 2006; van Hooft et al., 2004a; Van Hooft et al., 2004b).

These inconsistencies may partially reflect the influence of moderating variables on the paths between job search attitude, subjective norm, job search self-efficacy and job search intention. A number of studies have highlighted the effects of moderating variables such as ethnic group (van Hooft et al., 2004a), individualism/collectivism (Van Hooft and De Jong, 2009), action-state orientation (Song et al., 2006), participant status (Van Hooft et al., 2004b),

and family situation (Van Hooft et al., 2005). Van Hooft and De Jong (2009) found that the attitude-intention path was stronger in individuals with low levels of collectivism, and that the subjective norm-intention path was stronger in individuals who had high levels of collectivism. In a similar vein, attitude has been found to be more strongly related to job search intention in native groups, while in ethnic minorities, subjective norm is more strongly related to intention (van Hooft et al., 2004a). The attitude-intention path is stronger in singles, and the subjective norm-intention path is stronger in participants with families (Van Hooft et al., 2005). The attitude-intention path is also stronger in unemployed participants than in employees (Van Hooft et al., 2004b), and in participants who exhibit high disengagement (Song et al., 2006).

New moderating variables

All the above moderating variables concern either the attitude-intention path or the subjective norm-intention path. Accordingly, we wondered whether other types of variables might moderate the self-efficacy-intention relationship in job seeking. Several moderating variables have been highlighted in areas other than job seeking. These variables include methodological variables, such as the measure of perceived behavioral control, the sample used (Notani, 1998), and variables related to the participants' experience, such as past experience with the behavior (Høie et al., 2010; Notani, 1998). Other studies have investigated more theoretical variables, such as the difference between perceived control and self-efficacy (Downs and Hausenblas, 2005), or personality variables (Rhodes et al., 2005). However, it is difficult to determine whether some of these moderating variables are relevant to job seeking on the basis of existing research in this area. Previous studies vary on several of these variables (e.g., sample used, measure of perceived control, sociocultural context), so it is impossible to isolate the role of just one of these moderating variables, because the results can be explained by their joint influence.

By contrast, to the best of our knowledge, no study has ever investigated the moderating effects on job seeking of past experience with the behavior or personality variables. According to Høie, Moan, and Rise (2010) past experience with the behavior could moderate the paths between TPB variables and intention in two opposite ways. First, people who are experienced with the behavior form intentions on the basis of their habits, not the TPB variables, so TPB variables only account for intention when individuals are not familiar with the task. Second, TPB variables based on prior experience are more liable to determine intentions because they are more stable and accessible, thus resulting in a stronger impact on intention in individuals who have experience with the task. Their study confirmed the second hypothesis. More specifically, Høie et al. (2010) observed that the paths between TPB variables and the intention to quit smoking were stronger when the number of quit attempts was high. This result means that in the case of repeated failures, TPB variables are more strongly related to intention. In a meta-analysis, Notani (1998) observed a similar result concerning perceived behavioral control. The paths between perceived control and intention varied according to past experience with the behavior. Perceived behavioral control was more strongly related to intention for familiar tasks than for unfamiliar ones. However, this result was explained differently. According to Notani (1998), past experience with the behavior moderated these paths because past experience results in interest and motivation (unlike the absence of experience, which entails anxiety), and this motivation then enables perceived control to be translated into intentions. So, we might expect that past experience with the behavior would moderate the paths between TPB variables and job search intention. More precisely, we might expect that individuals who have been searching for a long time have more experience with searching, may have experienced more failures, and their job search intention may thus be more strongly related to TPB variables, in accordance with results obtained by Høie, Moan, and Rise (2010). Indeed, Kulik (2001) observed that length of

unemployment was negatively related to job search intensity. This result was explained in reference to Vroom's expectancy theory: "the longer the period of unemployment and the higher the number of unsuccessful attempts to find a job, the lower one's expectations for success and the less effort will be made to find employment" (Kulik, 2001, p.24).

As for personality dimensions, Trafimow and Finlay (2001) showed that for some people, intention is primarily determined by attitude, whereas for other people, it is determined by subjective norm. Moreover, White et al. (2009) observed that these differences were related to dispositional variables. Regarding dispositional variables, it seems particularly relevant to investigate the moderating effect of the Big Five dimensions for several reasons. For a start, some Big Five dimensions appear to moderate the paths between TPB variables and intention in the area of health (Rhodes et al., 2002; Rhodes et al., 2005). Moreover, Kanfer, Wanberg, and Kantrowitz (2001) have highlighted the need to explain the mechanisms underlying the relationships between the Big Five dimensions and job search variables. Identifying a moderating effect of the Big Five dimensions on the paths between TPB variables and job search intention would do much to clarify how the Big Five dimensions and job search variables are related. We chose to focus on extraversion and conscientiousness, as these dimensions moderated the paths between TPB-variables, intention and behavior in a previous study (Rhodes et al., 2002). Moreover, these dimensions seem in theory the most relevant to be considered as moderator variables.

Roberts et al. (2005) examined the structure of conscientiousness in several questionnaires. They identified facets including dutifulness, dependability, morality, reliability, persistence, impulse control, and achievement. Individuals with high levels of conscientiousness are therefore sensitive to moral rules, have a high degree of self-control, are motivated by achievement, and plan how to attain their objectives. Hence, we can assume that their intentions are more strongly related to subjective norm, owing to the importance of

dependability and morality, as well as to self-efficacy, in that a high level of self-efficacy is also associated with persistence and a strong motivation to succeed. By contrast, individuals with low levels of conscientiousness are motivated neither by moral rules, nor by achievement, so their intention is preferentially related to their attitude. Extraversion encompasses gregariousness, assertiveness, ambition and reward-seeking (Barrick et al., 2005). Moreover, Barrick, Park, and Mount (2005) showed that self-monitoring, which is supposed to moderate the paths between dispositional variables and TPB variables, is most closely correlated with extraversion. Thus, individuals with high levels of extraversion (and self-monitoring) are self-confident and look for positive social feedback. We can assume that their intention is determined by subjective norm, in that it enables them to project positive images, and by self-efficacy, in that it helps them to achieve their goals. Individuals with low levels of extraversion (and self-monitoring) tend to behave in a fashion that is consistent with their beliefs, according to Barrick et al. (2005). Hence, their intentions are presumably determined by their attitude toward job seeking.

The present study therefore investigated the relationships between conscientiousness, extraversion, past experience with job search, TPB variables (attitude, subjective norm, and self-efficacy), and job search intention. More specifically, the primary purpose of our study was to examine whether personality dimensions and past experience with job search moderate the paths between TPB variables and job search intention. Its secondary purpose was to examine the extent to which previous results on the paths between TPB variables and job search intention can be replicated in French participants, for to our knowledge, no such study has so far been conducted in France. Identifying new moderating variables is of theoretical, but also practical worth, as it provides a more comprehensive picture of the paths between TPB variables and job search variables, but also a means of tailoring interventions to individual profiles. We expected to find stronger paths between TPB variables and job search

intention in individuals who have experience with job seeking. In participants with high levels of conscientiousness, we expected intention to be more strongly related to subjective norm and self-efficacy, while in participants with low levels of conscientiousness, we expected it to be related to attitude. We expected to see a similar moderating effect of extraversion, with stronger paths to subjective norm and self-efficacy for high-extraversion participants, and stronger paths to attitude in low-extraversion participants.

Method

Participants

A total of 154 jobseekers (83 men, 71 women) took part in this study, their ages ranging from 17 to 59 years ($M = 33.6$, $SD = 11.1$). Their education level varied from one to 20 years ($M = 12.4$, $SD = 2.4$), and 86% were unemployed and 14% still in employment. They had been looking for a job for a mean period of 10.7 months ($SD = 13.9$). Their job search duration varied between one day and six years. A total of 33 participants said they were looking for a job for the first time, and 120 said they had prior experience of looking for work. Participants were recruited at two centers offering help to jobseekers in the South of France (Cité des Métiers and a Pôle Emploi agency). These centers allow jobseekers to consult job offers and to attend workshops designed to help them find work. Participants were invited to take part in a study concerning job search activities on a voluntary basis. Those who agreed were given questionnaires to fill in on the spot.

Measures

Job search intention. Like Van Hooft et al. (2004) and Zikic and Saks (2009), we asked participants to indicate the extent to which they intended to perform 12 activities

regarded as important when looking for a job on a 5-point scale ranging from *Never* to *Very frequently*. These activities were job search behaviors featured in a scale developed by Blau (Job Search Behavior Index; Blau, 1993). This scale is psychometrically sound and has been used in many studies. Moreover, a French version of this scale was already available (Fort et al., 2011). The internal consistency of this scale, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, was .85.

Job search attitude. We developed a French version of some of the items in the scale used by Van Hooft et al. (2004). This scale was translated by two English-speaking persons. Then, translators selected, for each item, which translation best represented the meaning of the original item. The translated scale was then administered to some participants to make sure that items were clearly understood. Participants were asked to rate their job search on 5-point scales featuring pairs of adjectives as end points. In other words, they had to indicate the extent to which they considered looking for a job to be *useful-useless*, *advantageous-disadvantageous*, *interesting-uninteresting*, *dignifying-demeaning*, and *pleasant-unpleasant*. The internal consistency of our scale, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, was .77. A high score corresponded to a positive attitude toward job seeking.

Subjective norm. In line with Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), we drew up a list of relevant people in the job search area (career counselors, close family members and friends). Participants were then asked to indicate the extent to which they thought these people would want them to look for a job within the next three months, on a 7-point scale ranging from *You should not* to *You should*. A high score meant that, according to the participants, other people thought they should look for a job. Internal consistency, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, was .81.

Job search self-efficacy. We administered a French version of the "executing a job search" part of the Job Seeking Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Strauser and Berven (2006). We chose this scale because the other available scales either seemed too short (Van Ryn and

Vinokur, 1992) or else assessed areas other than job search, such as career decision making, as in the case of the Career Search Self-Efficacy Scale (Solberg et al., 1994). Although the Job Seeking Self-Efficacy Scale was designed to assess job search self-efficacy in individuals with disabilities, we chose to use it because this scale is psychometrically sound and because the items in the “executing a job search” part are also relevant for people without disabilities (e.g., “Determine what information should be included in my resume, identify the specific person to whom my cover letter should be sent, contact personal friends, co-workers, and former teachers to find potential job openings”). The procedure used to translate this scale was the same as the one used for attitude and described above. After translating this scale into French, we decided to reject two of the items because they nonetheless referred to disabilities. The final version contained 25 items rating the participant’s confidence in his or her ability to perform tasks related to the job search. Participants rated their level of confidence in doing what was described by the item on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 to 5. Internal consistency, as measured by Cronbach’s alpha, was .91.

Personality dimensions. Each of the two dimensions was assessed on 12 items drawn from the NEO-FFI and rated on 5-point scales. The NEO-FFI is a 60-item version of the NEO Personality Inventory. A French version of this questionnaire is available, and the psychometric qualities of this version have been documented (Rolland et al., 1998; Aluja et al., 2005). Internal consistency, as measured by Cronbach’s alpha, was .72 for conscientiousness and .53 for extraversion. As reliability was low for extraversion, we performed a principal component analysis in order to obtain several sub dimensions with a better reliability. We did not succeed in interpreting the solutions. We then tried to improve the reliability of this scale by removing items for which item total correlation coefficients were low (items 3, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 12). Internal consistency of this abridged scale was .66.

Past experience with the behavior was measured by two variables, job search experience and job search duration. We first asked participants if they were looking for a job for the first time or if they had prior experience in this area. We then asked them how long they had been looking for a job. This information was coded as the number of months the searching had lasted.

Control variables. As education level and age had been found to have significant effects on job search behaviors in previous studies (Kulik, 2001; Wanberg et al., 2000), we added a measure of these variables to control for their influence. Education level was measured as the highest level the participants had completed. This variable was coded as the number of years of schooling.

Results

Descriptive statistics and a correlation matrix are displayed in Table 1. Several correlations were significant and positive: between conscientiousness and extraversion, between TPB variables (except subjective norm) and intention, between job search attitude, subjective norm and job search self-efficacy, and between job search self-efficacy and personality dimensions. Job search intention was positively correlated with extraversion, but not with conscientiousness. Moreover, age was correlated negatively with subjective norm, positively with conscientiousness and with job search duration. Extraversion was also positively correlated with job search intention and job search attitude.

We then computed separate linear regressions for each moderating variable to test expected paths and moderation effects. We used listwise deletion to deal with missing data. We first computed the regressions with the control variables (gender, age, and education level), and TPB variables. In the second series of regressions, we entered the main effect of the moderating variable in the regression models and in a third step, we entered the interaction

effects between the TPB variables and the moderating variable. To avoid multicollinearity effects, we converted the variables we used to z scores before they were computed as interaction terms. Results are displayed in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

An examination of the main effects indicated that job search attitude, job search self-efficacy and subjective norm were significantly related to job search intention ($\beta = .23, p < .01, \beta = .44, p < .001, \beta = .21, p < .05$, respectively). Neither the paths between the moderating variables (job search experience, search duration, extraversion and conscientiousness) and job search intention nor the paths between control variables and job search intention were significant. An examination of the interaction effects indicated that the paths between job search self-efficacy, subjective norm and job search intention were not moderated by moderator variables. By contrast, the path between job search attitude and job search intention varied according to extraversion and marginally according to conscientiousness ($\beta = -.21, p < .05, \beta = -.13, p < .10$, respectively). Interaction effects are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Insert Figures 1 and 2 about here

Job search attitude was more strongly related to job search intention in low-extraversion participants than it was in high-extraversion participants, and more strongly related to job search intention in high-conscientiousness participants than in low-conscientiousness participants.

Discussion

The aim of this study was twofold. The first was to identify new moderating variables of the paths between TPB variables and job search intention, and the second was to examine

whether TPB variables were significantly related to job search intention in a French sample. To identify new moderator variables, we chose to focus on two types of variables: personality dimensions and job search experience. To this end, we administered several scales to a sample of jobseekers, and used linear regressions to test our hypotheses.

We looked at the direct effects of our variables before investigating their moderating effects. Our results showed that TPB variables were significantly correlated with job search intention. Indeed, as in previous studies, we observed a significant path between subjective norm and job search intention (Caska, 1998; Song et al., 2006; van Hooft et al., 2004a, 2005; Van Hooft et al., 2004b; Van Hooft and De Jong, 2009; Zikic and Saks, 2009). However, results relative to the paths between job search attitude, job search self-efficacy and job search intention were less consistent in previous studies. We supposed that the scale used to measure attitude could contribute to explain inconsistencies. Our results corroborate this explanation. We obtained a significant path between job search attitude and job search intention with a measure of attitude similar to that used in most previous studies. The path between job search self-efficacy and job search intention was moderate in previous studies, whether significant or not. We observed significant and strong paths between job search self-efficacy and job search intention. This divergence can be partially explained by the measure of self-efficacy we chose. Our scale contains more items than scales used in previous studies. That means that we asked self-efficacy judgments for a wider range of behaviors. This can result in more variability in our scale.

Based on previous research, we assumed that personality variables and job search experience would moderate the paths between TPB variables and job search intention. We expected past experience with job search to result in stronger paths between the TPB variables and job search intention (Høie et al., 2010). However, this moderating effect was not observed in our study. Neither the hypothesis advanced by Notani (1998), nor those advanced by Høie

et al. (2010) in other contexts are relevant in the job search context. The hypothesis that past experience with job search results in interest and motivation, unlike unfamiliarity, which entails anxiety, does not appear to be supported in job seeking (Notani, 1998). In the case of job searching, motivation and anxiety can be conceived of as a consequence of financial constraints, the desire to find a new job, or the fear of not finding one. Høie et al. (2010) identified two possible moderating effects of past experience with the behavior. On the one hand, intention could be based on habit; while on the other hand, TPB variables could be more accessible. Neither of these explanations corresponds to what we found, however, possibly because looking for work is a dynamic process. This conception implies that TPB variables can vary, and is hardly compatible with the notion of habit. Moreover, Van Hooft and De Jong (2009) suggested that in job searching, past experience is less important, because looking for work is a self-regulated, goal-directed behavior, and past experience with the behavior is more relevant in the case of behaviors with an automatic component (Van Hooft and De Jong, 2009). Hence, past experience with the behavior may be a moderating variable in some areas, but not in others.

In a similar vein, previous studies have highlighted the moderating effect of personality variables in the area of health (Rhodes et al., 2002; Rhodes et al., 2005). We assumed that intention would be determined more by perceived behavioral control and subjective norm in high-conscientiousness or high-extraversion participants, and determined more by attitude in low-conscientiousness or low-extraversion participants. Moderating effects were confirmed for job search attitude. Extraversion moderated the paths between TPB variables and job search intention for attitude. The path was stronger in low-extraversion participants. This result confirms the tendency of low-extraversion people to base their intentions on their own opinions rather than on other's opinion. Likewise conscientiousness marginally moderated the path between job search attitude and job search intention. This

result can be explained by the fact that individuals with low levels of conscientiousness are motivated neither by moral rules, nor by achievement, so their intention is preferentially related to their attitude. The absence of a moderating effect for other TPB variables may have been due to the intervention of contextual variables. For instance, in our study, job search intention could be determined by financial constraints or else by dissatisfaction with a current job.

Implications and limitations

Our results highlight not only the importance of designing interventions that target TPB variables, but also the need to tailor these interventions to people's levels of extraversion and to people's level of conscientiousness. Some interventions already exist (Creed et al., 2001; Sterrett, 1998; Vuori and Vinokur, 2005), but they are either focused on job search self-efficacy, or else have been developed in other contexts (Armitage and Talibudeen, 2010). Hence, it would be useful to stimulate job search attitude, subjective norm and job search self-efficacy via information, persuasion, the teaching of new skills and modeling, as is the case with TPB-based interventions in other areas (Hardeman et al., 2002). It also appears important to know how to stimulate each individual TPB variable, in order to focus the intervention on one of these variables according to people's levels of extraversion and conscientiousness. For instance, providing information about the relationship between job search intention, job search behaviors and job access would make it possible to stimulate attitude (Kothe et al., 2012).

In our study, we focused on variables that are known to moderate the influence of TPB variables on intention in areas other than job searching, and observed moderating effects of extraversion and conscientiousness with job search attitude. However, it may also be relevant to consider variables related to job search behaviors, such as financial hardship (Wanberg et

al., 1999), jobseeker reemployment constraints (Wanberg et al., 2002), or employment commitment (Wanberg et al., 2010). It is quite possible that these variables also moderate the paths between TPB variables and job search intention. For instance, in the case of weak reemployment constraints, TPB variables would have a greater impact on job search intention than in the case of strong reemployment constraints, where job search intention would be determined primarily by these constraints. It may also be that attitude contributes more strongly to job search intention in individuals exhibiting a high level of employment commitment. Moreover, we now need to identify the variables that moderate the relationship between job search self-efficacy and job search intention, in order to explain inconsistent results for this path, and improve knowledge about the differential efficiency of interventions targeting job-search self-efficacy.

Nevertheless, the present study had several limitations. For a start, it did not provide any information about concrete results, that is to say, actual job search behaviors, and whether or not participants subsequently found work. A longitudinal study therefore needs to be conducted, measuring personality dimensions, TPB variables, and job search intention in Wave 1, job search behaviors in Wave 2, and job search results in Wave 3. Second, we used self-report data, which can generate common method variance, particularly when they are cross-sectional, as they were in our study. The use of a longitudinal design might lessen this variance. Third, extraversion had only weak internal consistency, which may have weakened correlations between this dimension and other variables. Although the NEO-FFI has been used in previous studies and appears to be psychometrically sound (Burger and Caldwell, 2000; Wanberg et al., 2000), the use of another measure of extraversion would enable us to replicate our results with a more reliable scale. The weak internal consistency of extraversion also suggests that it is more relevant to consider the moderating effects of personality facets (e.g., gregariousness and assertiveness), rather than dimensions. This was not possible in our

study, because the factor analyses performed on the extraversion items did not allow us to identify any factors corresponding to personality facets. Fourth, the small size of the subsample of participants who had no experience of looking for a job may limit the generalizability of our findings. They therefore need to be replicated with larger samples. Fifth, the measure of past experience with job search needs to be improved. We used two measures: job search experience and job search duration. The use of job search duration implies that lengthy job search duration is associated with more experience, which is not necessarily the case and job search experience is a dichotomous variable. Another measure of experience would thus be more relevant.

In conclusion, the present study highlighted the moderating roles of extraversion and conscientiousness in the impact of instrumental attitude on job search intention in a sample of jobseekers. Hypotheses relative to other moderating variables and other TPB variables were not confirmed. These findings have practical implications, highlighting the need to tailor interventions designed to help people find work to their level of extraversion and of conscientiousness.

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Table 1

Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Gender ^a	.46	.50										
2. Age	33.59	11.11	.03									
3. Education level (years)	12.45	2.42	.15	-.10								
4. Job search intention	46.22	9.18	-.01	-.02	.08							
5. Job search attitude	19.41	4.19	-.03	.05	-.11	.43**						
6. Subjective norm	5.93	4.37	.07	-.22**	-.08	.16	.37**					
7. Job search self-efficacy	91.06	19.64	-.17	.01	.01	.53**	.36**	-.08				
8. Job search duration	10.70	13.90	.02	.28**	-.12	-.17	-.01	-.04	-.12			
9. Job search experience ^b	.78	.41	.03	.02	-.04	.08	.04	.09	-.01	.03		
10. Conscientiousness	49.32	6.23	.06	.17*	.14	.16	.12	.06	.27**	-.12	-.02	

11. Extraversion 23.11 3.83 .08 -.14 .10 .19* .19* .15 .30** -.08 -.07 .33**

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

^a 0 = male, 1 = female

^b 1 = no experience, 2 = prior experience

Table 2

Moderated regression analyses of job search intention on extraversion, conscientiousness, experience of job seeking, job search duration, TPB variables, and their interactions

	Model 1 (beta)			Model 2 (beta)			Model 3 (beta)			Model 4 (beta)		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Main effects												
Gender	-.02	-.02	-.02	-.02	-.01	-.02	-.02	-.03	-.02	-.02	-.04	-.02
Age	.03	.03	-.03	.03	.02	-.01	.03	.02	.01	.03	.01	-.01
Education level	.07	.07	.07	.07	.07	.06	.07	.07	.07	.07	.07	.07
Attitude	.23**	.23**	.15†	.23**	.18*	.17*	.23**	.23**	.12	.23**	.21**	.16*
Self-efficacy	.44***	.47***	.51***	.44***	.47***	.46***	.44***	.44***	.51***	.44***	.44***	.47***
Subjective norm	.21*	.21*	.17*	.21*	.22**	.26**	.21*	.21*	.27**	.21*	.23**	.26**
Extraversion		-.05	.02									
Conscientiousness					.01	.04						

Experience with job search		.06	.06		
Job search duration					
Interaction effects					
Attitude*extraversion		-.21*			
Self-efficacy*extraversion		.07			
Subjective norm*extraversion		-.01			
Attitude*conscientiousness					
Self-efficacy*conscientiousness					
Subjective norm*conscientiousness					
Attitude*experience					
Self-efficacy*experience					
Subjective norm*experience					
Attitude*job search duration					

Self-efficacy* job search duration														.02
Subjective norm* job search duration														.04
R2	.46***	.47***	.54***	.46***	.47***	.51***	.46***	.47***	.51***	.46***	.49***	.50***		
Adjusted R2	.43***	.43***	.50***	.43***	.43***	.46***	.43***	.43***	.46***	.43***	.45***	.45***		

† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 1

Simple regression slopes of job search attitude on intention for low and high levels of extraversion

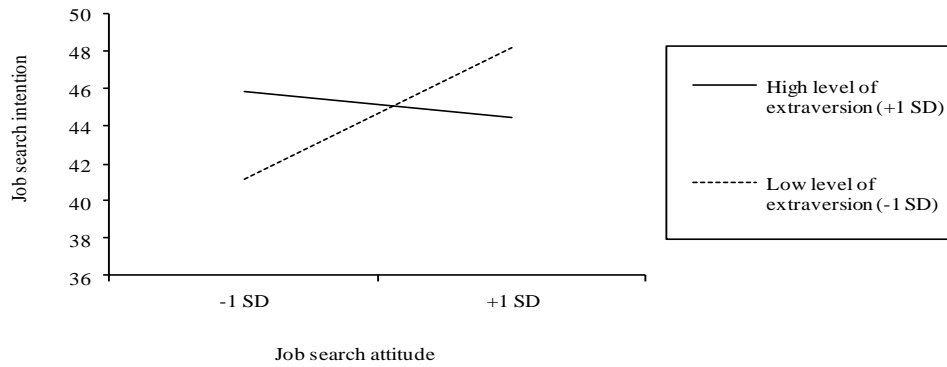


Figure 2

Simple regression slopes of job search attitude on intention according to job conscientiousness

