

PERCEIVED PROGRESS, AFFECT, AND INTENSITY: THE ROLE OF APPROACH-AVOIDANCE TEMPERAMENT AND OPTIMISM IN JOB SEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Job search is a self-regulated process during which job seekers evaluate the extent to which they are making progress toward finding a job. The purpose of this study was to better understand whether and how job seekers regulate their affect and the intensity of their behaviors during their search for employment. I drew upon control theory to examine the role of perceived progress on affect and job search intensity. I also extended prior research by differentiating the role of activated emotions (e.g., excitement, anxiety) from deactivated emotions (e.g., contentment, sadness) on job search intensity. Finally, I addressed calls to examine why some job seekers increase, while others decrease, their intensity, following the same level of progress. Specifically, I examined the role of optimism, and approach and avoidance temperaments in moderating the relationships between progress, affect, and intensity. Using weekly measures from a longitudinal sample of graduating students ($n = 157$), results showed that perceived progress was positively related to intensity and positive affect, and negatively to negative affect. Findings also showed that activated affect was positively related to intensity, whereas deactivated affect was negatively related to intensity. Finally, approach and avoidance temperaments moderated the relationships between perceived progress and both activated positive affect and deactivated negative affect. This study provides insights into the self-regulatory dynamics of the job search process, while also shedding light upon the role of progress, affect, and approach and avoidance temperaments in job search.