

## Self-Efficacy and the Internet Job Search:

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### Abstract:

Due to the high levels of unemployment in Israel in the past few years, the subject of job searching has become important to Israeli society. Unemployment leads to negative effects not only among those who are unemployed, but also among spouses and children. These negative effects can be both physical and psychological, such as high blood pressure, heart trouble, depression, and anxiety disorders. Fortunately, most of the harmful effects of unemployment are reversed or reduced after re-employment.

How is the transition made from unemployment to re-employment? Job search intensity, the frequency or extent to which individuals engage in specific job search behaviors, has been found to be positively related to re-employment. People who invest more time and effort in searching for a job have a better chance of finding a new job. A decade ago, if one wanted to search for a job, the most common methods were looking through the want-ads in the newspaper and using personal contacts (networking). However, the Internet has changed the job search process in the past ten years.

The Internet offers many new options for job searching, including websites with searchable databases of job listings and resumes, corporate websites offering online job applications, forums and chat rooms where one can get to know other people in the field and exchange career tips and advice. Currently, online job sites range from mere lists of job openings to all encompassing systems offering, in addition to job posting, also career assessment and counseling. In addition, the Internet has become a central tool for recruiting. Many companies rely solely on the Internet for finding job candidates and do

not advertise vacancies in the traditional media. Due to this, unemployed people who do not use the Internet in their job search are at a disadvantage. Notwithstanding, not all unemployed people use the Internet in their job search. The present research was conducted to discover what factors might prevent an unemployed person from using the Internet while looking for a job. The purpose of the study was to examine variables which might be connected to the Internet job search and to incorporate them into an Internet job search model.

The literature review reveals a lack of research on Internet job searching. Most studies on the Internet job searcher are descriptive and include analyses of demographic variables. Other studies focus on the Internet job search process from the point of view of the recruiter, and deal especially with perception of company attractiveness. To date there have been no studies on the factors which promote or inhibit use of the Internet for job searching among unemployed individuals.

The assumption underlying this research was that factors which were found in the past to influence both traditional job search intensity and Internet use will have a strong connection to the Internet job search. The factors included in the present research, which were hypothesized to be significantly related to the Internet job search were self-efficacy – specifically Internet self-efficacy and job search self-efficacy – and social support. In addition Internet use, traditional job search intensity, e-mail use, and spousal support were measured. All these variables were included in a proposed model of Internet job search which displays positive relations between these constructs (figure 6 page 53).

Three hundred and seventy-one unemployed Jewish Israeli job seekers approached in 17 government unemployment offices, filled out questionnaires. Findings show that all of the variables examined had a significant positive relationship with Internet job search intensity, besides

Additional results reveal that 73% reported that they used the Internet to look for a job. However, the average Internet job search intensity for the whole sample was 2.3 on a scale of one to five, which is low compared to the average traditional job search intensity of 3.2 in this sample. The Internet job searcher seems to be an educated male of any age, with home Internet access, who exhibits high Internet self-efficacy, Internet use and e-mail use, and who invests more time and effort on traditional job searching.

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