Impact of Positive Psychological Capital on Job Search Behaviour

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Introduction

- Youth unemployment is an important problem (in the world and in Turkey).
- Unemployment has significant psychological causes and consequences.
- Vocational counselors should be aware of the underlying psychological mechanisms to promote the job search activities.
- This study is an attempt to understand the individual factors influencing job search behaviour (JSB) of university graduates.
- Main objective: Findings of the study are expected to be useful in encouraging job search efforts.
- Other objective: Advancing theoretical delineation of the psychological job search process.
Literature Review
Job Search Behaviour

- Integral aspect of work life today
- An essential element of finding a job
- There is a strong relationship between job search and interviews attended -> number of job offers received
- Reasons of studying JSB:
  - high rates of unemployment
  - changes in the nature of work (flexibility)
  - organizational restructuring and downsizing (causing stress)
  - transition from school to work life (graduates) (The reason of our research)
Literature Review
Job Search Behaviour

- JSB has been studied extensively by economists since 1970’s (reservation wage, unemployment duration, etc.)
- Received attention from psychologists recently (since 1985’s)
- Call for research from the field of work psychology to determine the role of individual differences in explaining JSB.
Psychological point of view: Predictors of JSB

- Self-esteem (Ellis and Taylor, 1983)
- Big Five personality traits (Schmit et al., 1993)
- Among Big Five; openness, extraversion and conscientiousness (Wanberg et al., 2000)
- Positive affectivity (Cote, Saks and Zikic, 2006: 233)
- Internal locus of control (Caliendo et al., 2010)
- Positive psychological capital ???
Literature Review
Job Search Behaviour

Job search model (Soelberg, 1967)

Four-phase model:
1) Identifying an ideal occupation,
2) planning job search,
3) job search and choice,
4) decision confirmation and commitment.
Literature Review
Job Search Behaviour

Adopted Blau (1993)’s job search model

Two-phase model:

1) Preparatory job search behaviour:
   Individual’s realized effort to gather job search information

2) Active job search behaviour
   Includes applying for positions by sending out resumes and interviewing with prospective employers
   Ultimate aim: receiving job offers
Literature Review
Positive Psychological Capital (PsyCap)

- Positive Psychology
- Positive Organizational Behavior (POB)
- About “who you are” and “who you are becoming”
- Composed of 4 constructs:
  - Hope
  - Optimism
  - Resilience
  - Self-efficacy
Literature Review
Positive Psychological Capital (PsyCap)

Definition

“Individual’s positive psychological state of development, which is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resiliency) to attain success” (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007).
Hope
Positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy) and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)

Optimism
Generalized expectancy for favorable outcomes

Resilience
Ability to overcome or adapt to difficult situations such as extreme stress or adversity

Self-efficacy
Individual’s conviction about his abilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources and courses of action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given context
Literature Review
Job Search Self-Efficacy

- Self-efficacy: beliefs involving individuals’ judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute the actions required to attain designated types of performance (Bandura, 1997).
- Self-efficacy (task specific): implies a person’s belief that how well he can perform within that particular task (job search).
- Job search self-efficacy: individual’s belief that she is capable of performing the behaviors essential for obtaining a desired employment outcome.
Method
Sample

• 366 university seniors (63.3 % = female, 36.7 % = male)

• will be graduating and ready to look for employment opportunities within 6 months.

• from Kocaeli University, School of Economics and Administrative Sciences

• five departments:
  - Business (Bus),
  - Economics (Eco),
  - Labor Economics and Industrial Relations (LEIR),
  - International Relations (IR) and
  - Political Science and Public Management (PSPM)
## Method

### Sample

Table 1. Descriptives of the Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>350</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23,34</td>
<td>1,19</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>63,3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>36,7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Income (family)</strong></td>
<td>328</td>
<td></td>
<td>300</td>
<td>15000</td>
<td>2952,65</td>
<td>835,33</td>
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<td><strong>Department</strong></td>
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<td>66</td>
<td>18,2</td>
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<td>International Rel.</td>
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<td>9,9</td>
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<td>Public Management</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>18,8</td>
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<td>Double Major</td>
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<td>1,4</td>
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</table>
Method

Measures

**Job search behaviour**

- The scale is a modified version of Blau’s (1994) Job Search Behavior Scale
- Items were translated to Turkish and some of them were modified to modern job search techniques
- Items were grouped under one factor: JSB (originally, two factors: “preparatory job search behaviour” and “active job search behaviour”)
**Method**

**Measures**

*Positive Psychological Capital*

- PsyCap Questionnaire was designed by Luthans, Youssef and Avalio (2007)
- We used the scale which was slightly modified by Wisner (2008) to apply for college students.
- Originally 4 constructs, but PsyCap items grouped under one factor.
Method
Measures

**Job Search Self-Efficacy**

- We used Moynihan et al.’s (2003) scale.
- Sample items are: “I feel certain about my ability to get the job I want”, “I am certain that my job search will be successful”
Method
Hypothesized Model

H: PsyCap has an impact on job search behavior of graduating university students through the mediation of job search self-efficacy.
Method
Data Analysis

Descriptives of the study variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>N*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological capital</td>
<td>3,58</td>
<td>0,49</td>
<td>0,88</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job search self-efficacy</td>
<td>3,17</td>
<td>0,61</td>
<td>0,73</td>
<td>364</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job search behaviour</td>
<td>2,80</td>
<td>0,55</td>
<td>0,87</td>
<td>364</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* According to the missing value analysis, the percentage of missing values were below 5 %, so missing values were replaced by series means.
## Method

### Data Analysis

Intercorrelations among the study variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological capital (1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job search self-efficacy (2)</td>
<td>0.453**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job search behaviour (3)</td>
<td>0.100</td>
<td>0.162**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** significant at the 0.01 level
SEM
Job Search Behavior

Chi-Square=2074.01, df=462, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.098
ChiSquare=2074.01, df=462, P-value=0.00000
RMSEA=0.098
RESULTS
Structural Equations

\[ J_{Selfeff} = 0.58 \times PSYCAP, \text{ Errorvar.} = 0.67, R^2 = 0.33 \]
\[ (0.069) \quad (0.11) \]
\[ 8.34 \quad 5.89 \]

\[ JSB = 0.28 \times FSelfeff, \text{ Errorvar.} = 0.92, R^2 = 0.078 \]
\[ (0.065) \quad (0.13) \]
\[ 4.32 \quad 7.16 \]
## RESULTS

**Goodness of Fit Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Good Fit</th>
<th>Accepted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$/sd</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>$0 &lt; \chi^2$/sd $&lt; 2$</td>
<td>$2 &lt; \chi^2$/sd $&lt; 3$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P value</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
<td>$0.05 &lt; p &lt; 1.00$</td>
<td>$0.01 &lt; p &lt; 0.05$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>0.098</td>
<td>$0 &lt; \text{RMSEA} &lt; 0.05$</td>
<td>$0.05 &lt; \text{RMSEA} &lt; 0.08$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRMR</td>
<td>0.085</td>
<td>$0 &lt; \text{SRMR} &lt; 0.05$</td>
<td>$0.05 &lt; \text{SRMR} &lt; 0.10$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFI</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>$0.95 &lt; \text{NFI} &lt; 1.00$</td>
<td>$0.90 &lt; \text{NFI} &lt; 0.95$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>$0.97 &lt; \text{CFI} &lt; 1.00$</td>
<td>$0.95 &lt; \text{CFI} &lt; 0.97$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>$0.95 &lt; \text{GFI} &lt; 1.00$</td>
<td>$0.90 &lt; \text{GFI} &lt; 0.97$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGFI</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>$0.90 &lt; \text{AGFI} &lt; 1.00$</td>
<td>$0.85 &lt; \text{AGFI} &lt; 0.90$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Regression Analysis
(Dependent variable: Job search behaviour)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language knowledge</td>
<td>0.135 (2,585)**</td>
<td>0.159 (3,676)**</td>
<td>0.144 (3,358)**</td>
<td>0.095 (2,134)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer knowledge</td>
<td>0.185 (3,544)**</td>
<td>0.181 (4,201)**</td>
<td>0.128 (2,765)**</td>
<td>0.094 (2,027)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial hardship</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.550 (13,096)**</td>
<td>0.577 (13,540)**</td>
<td>0.603 (14,198)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.136 (2,886)**</td>
<td>0.082 (1,685)†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job search self-efficacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.184 (3,686)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R² = .059</td>
<td>R² = .361</td>
<td>R² = .373</td>
<td>R² = .395</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†p<0.10   *p<0.05   **p<0.01
DISCUSSION

- The study fills a gap in the positive psychology literature by finding a mediated relationship between psychological capital and job search behaviour.

- For the individuals who are employed, positive psychological capital is a good predictor for not searching a job (Avey, Luthans and Jensen, 1999: 686).

- Psychological capital has an impact on job search behaviour through the mediation of job search self-efficacy.

- Limitations:
  - Missing values might be a problem
  - May be other variables which have an impact on JSB, not included in the model (financial hardship, language and computer knowledge, etc. See regression analysis)
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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