PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS OF JOB SEARCH INTENTION AMONG FRESH GRADUATES FOR THE SUPPLY OF LABOUR FORCE IN THE DIGITAL ERA

Noor Zalina Zainal
Faculty of Business and Management
Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Selangor
Malaysia

Hanitahaiza Hairuddin
Faculty of Business and Management
Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Selangor
Malaysia

Erne Suzila Kassim*
Faculty of Business and Management
Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Selangor
Malaysia

*Corresponding author’s Email: ernekassim@uitm.edu.my

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editor@readersinsight.net
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Abstract

The goal of this study is to explore the psychological determinants that influence job search intention among fresh graduates. Digital innovations have changed the employment landscape that allows people to have flexible job opportunities. Building from the theory of planned behavior (TPB), subjective norms, job search attitude, self-efficacy and perceived behavior control were predicted to have positive effect on job search intention. A survey was conducted and the results of the regression test show subjective norms, job search attitude, and self-efficacy as determinants to job search intention, but the relationship between perceived behavioural control and job search intention was found to be negative. In fact, the strongest relationship is between self-efficacy and job search intention. The findings should alert employers, academic institutions and policy makers of the recent trend in employment, as the fresh graduates are one of the most valued supply of labour force. The study also highlights how digital era and the cyber community have shaped the younger generations perception of work engagement as the transition towards social mobility.

Research Highlights

A correlation test was executed to determine the association between variables based on the guidelines on the interpretation of correlation coefficient that was developed by (Salkind, 2017). The highest association is between perceived behaviour control and self-efficacy, followed by self-efficacy and job search intention. From the result, it could be concluded, when the respondents’ perception on their ability to control for the behaviour and their self-efficacy are high, they are more likely to have a higher intention to search for jobs. In relating the associations between subjective norms, job search attitude, perceived behaviour control, self-efficacy and job search intention all are significant.

Based on the results of hypotheses testing through multiple regression test, job search attitude, subjective norm, perceived behaviour control and self-efficacy is found to be significantly related to job search intention. However, the result also shows that there is a negative relationship between perceived behaviour control and job search intention. This means that the higher perceived behaviour control, the lower the job search intention.
Research Objectives

In the age of technological advances, graduates are the most valued source of labour force for any employers. While many studies have been conducted to assess skills and readiness of graduates to enter the job market, recent focuses are on skills demand and modern job market requirements (Figueiredo et al., 2017; Humburg et al., 2017; Matsouka & Mihail, 2016). Therefore, it raises the question of what determines fresh graduates to search for jobs? The issue is raised as being employed after many years at schools and tertiary education is one of the major transitions in life as it affects their social mobility (Ule & Leskošek, 2018). With digital innovations invading almost all aspects of life, employment is not an area of exception. The digital technology has allowed for easy access to being self-employed that offers almost similar or better values (Dong, 2019). Therefore, it is important to understand the psychological characteristics that explain what factors determine fresh graduate to search for jobs. Furthermore, focusing on fresh graduates as the major supply of labour force, and the availability of digital technologies in promoting for self-employment, the research attempts to examine the relationships between job search attitude, subjective norms, perceived behaviour control, self-efficacy and job search intention.

Methodology

The population of this research was fresh graduates and graduating students who were seeking for jobs, using the purposive sampling technique, also known as judgement sampling. In determining the sample size, it was done by utilizing the G Power software to estimate the minimum sampling size. Setting the predictors to four, an estimation of at least 105 samples was suggested by G Power. The items to measure all attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and job search intention were adopted from Van Hoye et al. (2015), while the items to measure self-efficacy was adopted from Saks et al. (2015). The survey was done...
via Google Form. The invitation to participate in the study was sent through social media and emails. A total of 150 data set was received and used for the analysis.

**Results**

Prior to the regression test, a correlation test was executed to determine the association between variables based on the guidelines on the interpretation of correlation coefficient that was developed by (Salkind, 2017).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Search Attitude (1)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective Norms (2)</td>
<td>.538**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Behaviour Control (3)</td>
<td>.516**</td>
<td>.371**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy (4)</td>
<td>.609**</td>
<td>.596**</td>
<td>.680**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Search Intention (5)</td>
<td>.537**</td>
<td>.599**</td>
<td>.315**</td>
<td>.633**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the result of the correlation test, the highest association is between perceived behaviour control and self-efficacy (r=.680, p=.000) and the second largest is between self-efficacy and job search intention (r=.633, p=.000). Moreover, the lowest association is between perceived behaviour control and job search intention (r=.315, p=.000).

From the result, it could be concluded, when the respondents’ perception on their ability to control for the behaviour and their self-efficacy are high, they are more likely to have a higher intention to search for jobs. In relating the associations between job search attitude, subjective norm, perceived behaviour control, self-efficacy and job search intention all are significant. The association between job search attitude and job search intention was positive, moderate and significant relationship (r=.537, p<0.01). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a moderate association between these two variables. The higher job search attitude, the higher intention of the respondents in job search intention.

Next, the association between subjective norm and job search intention was positive, moderate and significant relationship (r=.599, p<0.01). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a moderate association between these two variables. The higher subjective norm, the higher intention of the respondents’ in job search intention. In addition, the next association found between perceived behaviour control and job search intention is positive, significant but weak (r=.315, p<0.01). Therefore, it can be concluded the higher perceived behaviour control, the higher intention of the respondents’ in job search intention. Finally, the association found between self-efficacy and job search intention is positive, strong and significant relationship (r=.633, p<0.01). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a strong association between these two variables. The higher self-efficacy, the higher intention of the respondents in job
search intention. For the hypothesis testing, multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between variables.

Table 2. Hypotheses Testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T-value</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JSA – JSI</td>
<td>.202</td>
<td>2.621</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SN – JSI</td>
<td>.277</td>
<td>3.692</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBC – JSI</td>
<td>-.235</td>
<td>-2.928</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE - JSI</td>
<td>.504</td>
<td>5.373</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table above shows the results of the hypotheses testing, conducted as multiple regression test. Based on the results, job search attitude, subjective norm, perceived behaviour control and self-efficacy is found to be significantly related to job search intention, indicated by the significant p value of each relationship which is less than 0.05. The strongest relationship is between self-efficacy and job search intention (β = .504, p < 0.001), followed by social norms (β = .277, p < 0.001) and attitude (β = .202, p < 0.05). Therefore, H1, H2 and H4 are supported. However, the result also shows that there is a negative relationship between perceived behaviour control and job search intention (β= -.235, p<.05). This means that the higher perceived behaviour control, the lower the job search intention. In conjunction to this, H3 is not supported.

Table 3. Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.721a</td>
<td>.520</td>
<td>.506</td>
<td>.52528</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Efficacy, Job Search Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behaviour Control.
b. Dependent Variable: Job Search Intention

Based on the model summary, R value (0.721) indicates a high value of correlation. R2 indicates 52% of the total variation in job search intention, can be explained by the independent variables (job search attitude, subjective norm, perceived behaviour control and self-efficacy). The results indicate the another 48% of the variance is explained by other potential factors.

Table 4. ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>43.278</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.820</td>
<td>39.214</td>
<td>.000b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>40.008</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>.276</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>83.286</td>
<td>149</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ANOVA table above shows the results of regression test. This model is indicated by the significant value of F (39.214) which is greater than 1. Based on the results, the model of ANOVA is significant.
Findings
The results offer some interesting insights. While attitude, subjective norms and self-efficacy were found to determine the intention, perceived behavioural control was found to be in inverse relationship. Therefore, it calls for further investigation of why fresh graduates feel they have lack of sufficient control in their decision for employment. Lack of the control may cause several implications, especially to the adequate supply of labour force in supporting for macro-economic development. In addition, the control may also relate to how digital innovations have shaped the employment landscape today.

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References


Author’s Biography

Noor Zalina binti Zainal, Lecturer, Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia. She received her Bachelor Degree in IT from Universiti Utara Malaysia, and MSc. IT from Universiti Teknologi MARA. Her research interests are focused on open government data, information quality, halal, e-commerce, and e-government.

Hanitahaiza Hairuddin is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Technology MARA (UiTM). Hanitahaiza received her Bachelor Degree from Universiti Utara Malaysia and MSc in Information Technology from Universiti Sains Malaysia. Her PhD work explores on therapeutics approach for microenterprise development, and evaluates on its effectiveness. Her research interests are in the field of system analysis and design, community engagement and IT adoption.

Erne Suzila Kassim is an associate professor at the business faculty. Erne received her Bachelor Degree from Indiana University in Bloomington, USA, majoring in Economics and Sociology, MSc and PhD in IT, mainly specializing in digital innovations. She has been awarded with research grants for projects in e-learning, green IT, e-commerce and IT for micro-enterprises. Her research interests include social networking, social innovation and value creation.