
Predictors of job-search behaviors among Italian job-centers users

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✎ **ABSTRACT.** Una maggiore comprensione dei comportamenti di ricerca lavorativa è essenziale per meglio supportare gli individui alla ricerca di un'occupazione. Il presente studio, sulla base del modello di Kanfer e colleghi (2001), ha valutato tutta una serie di variabili quali potenziali antecedenti di tali comportamenti. I risultati, raccolti su 505 utenti dei Centri per l'Impiego, hanno mostrato che il livello d'istruzione, la personalità proattiva e l'autoefficacia nella ricerca lavorativa sono predittori significativi di tali comportamenti, individuando anche fenomeni di moderazione e mediazione. Tali evidenze sono state poi commentate sulla base della letteratura e delle loro implicazioni pratiche.

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✎ **ABSTRACT. Introduction:** Reaching a deeper understanding of job-search behaviors is essential in order to improve ways individuals can enter and remain into the labour market, especially in countries like Italy, characterized by increasing levels of unemployment and inefficient job-centers. Several psychological and situational factors predict job-search behaviors which, in turn, affect chances of reemployment. **Objectives.** This paper aimed to explore the role of several psychosocial (i.e. proactive personality and job-search self-efficacy), biographical (i.e. educational level) and socio-economic (i.e. social support and financial hardship) variables as predictors of job-search behaviors, building upon the theoretical model by Kanfer, Wanberg and Kantrowitz (2001). **Methods.** Data were collected among 505 Italian job-centers users via a self-report questionnaire. Hierarchical linear regressions were used to evaluate associations between variables and identify potential mediated/moderated effects. **Results.** Educational level, proactive personality and, above all, job-search self-efficacy proved to be main predictors of preparatory and active job-search behaviors; mediated and moderated effects were also found. **Conclusions.** Results were discussed on the basis of the current literature and provided an original and innovative contribution to this topic about the Italian situation which was largely unexamined. Moreover, evidence from this study can guide practitioners to tailor their counseling and re-employment support interventions.

Keywords: job-search behaviors, unemployment, job-search self-efficacy

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the role played by the predictors of job-search behaviors has become progressively more important in the light of the continued deterioration of the Western economies labour markets and, in particular, of their unemployment rates. In many countries, there has also been an increase in the average rate of entry into, and especially exit from, the labour market cause of increased flexibilization and precarization (Lo Presti, 2009), phenomena which promote the need, felt by public opinion, policy makers and practitioners working in employment services, to increase the employment opportunities of those who are currently looking for a job.

ISTAT data (2014a) depict the Italian situation as in progressive and worrying deterioration; the unemployment rate has increased from 8.2% in July 2011 to 12.5% in the third quarter of 2013; data even more alarming concern Campania region (ISTAT, 2014b), the most populous and rich region of Southern Italy which has suffered the most from the effects of the crisis due to processes of deindustrialization and loss of competitiveness of large productive sectors, and where the unemployment rate has risen from 15.5% in the second quarter of 2011 to 20.5% at end of 2013.