

Job Club Experience

April 2012 Update

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Mature Services
Employment & Training Solutions

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Executive Summary

In this report, the results reported in the first Job Club Experience report from October 2010 (included 63 participants from six job clubs offered between April and August 2010) is followed up with additional participants. The current report is based on 200 job club participants across 16 job clubs offered between April 2010 and November 2011. Overall, the findings from the initial report are supported with the additional data.

Participant experience was examined on seven dimensions: four dimensions regarding participant attitudes toward their job search (optimism, perceived stress, confidence, and general feeling toward job search) and three dimensions regarding participant perception of their learning during job club (excitement, usefulness of acquired information, learning of new technique). For data analysis strategy, we have employed one-way analyses of variance to examine group differences in job club experience and growth curve modeling to explore individual participant's patterns of job club experience over time.

Key findings from April 2012 Update:

- Participants experience during job club did not vary by participant location, marital status, or work history.
- Female participants reported higher level of perceived stress during job club compared to male participants.
- Non-white participants reported higher levels of optimism, confidence, positive feelings toward their job search and lower perceived stress than white participants.
- Participants with at least a Bachelor's degree reported lower level of optimism for job search compared to those without a four-year degree.
- Participants who have retired from their main career reported lower stress toward their job search and considered learning in job club less useful for their search than participants who are not retired.
- Participants varied in their initial experience of job club.
- Participants developed positive attitudes toward their job search (optimism, confidence, and positive feeling) and positive perception of their learning (perceived usefulness of acquired information, perception of learning new technique) over a 3-week period of job club.

Participant Characteristics

Demographics (N indicates a number of participants answered the item.)

Age

N = 188	Mean = 60.5	Range = 48-82
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Gender

N = 191	Male = 63	Female = 128
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Ethnic Background

N = 189	White = 106	Black = 79
	Hispanic = 1	Other = 3

Marital Status

N = 192	Married = 67	Single = 96	Other = 29
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Highest Education (N=190)

Some High School = 13	High School Diploma = 50	Some College = 61	Associate's Degree = 21	Bachelor's Degree = 36	Master's and Above = 9
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Career and Pension

Retired from Main Career

N = 183	Yes = 81	No = 102
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Primary Work History

N = 184	Blue Collar = 58	White Collar = 122
	Both = 4	

Social Security

N = 184	Yes = 77	No = 107
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Pension

N = 185	Yes = 63	No = 122
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401k or Other Defined Contribution Plan

N = 181	Yes = 41	No = 140
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Job Search

Reason for Job Search

N = 185	Career Change = 45	Lay-off = 69	
	Health issue = 5	Other = 66	

Work Preference

N = 186	Blue Collar = 50	White Collar = 126	No Preference = 10
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Preferred Work Schedule

N = 191	Full-time = 84	Part-time = 58	No Preference = 49
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Length of Job Search

N = 159		Mean = 10.7 Months	
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Job Club Experience by Group and Participant Characteristics

Consistent with the October 2010 report, participants' experience during job club was assessed from seven experience dimensions. Each participant reported their experience through surveys conducted at up to six separate classes during job club. For those participants who provided responses to the above questions across time, average scores were used.

Averaged job club experiences were compared by group characteristics (location) and by participant characteristics (gender, ethnic background, marital status, educational level, retirement status, and work history). Job club experience was measured by 7 questions on a 7-point scale:

1. How optimistic do you feel about your job search process today?
(1=Not optimistic, 7=Very optimistic)
2. How stressed do you feel today?
(1=Not stressed at all, 7=Very stressed)
3. How confident are you that you can successfully search for a job?
(1=Not confident at all, 7=Very confident)
4. When you think about your job search, how does it make you feel?
(1=Very bad, 7=Very good)
5. I am excited to learn new things about job search process.
(1=Strongly disagree, 7=Strongly agree)
6. The things I learned in job club so far are useful for my job search.
(1=Strongly disagree, 7=Strongly agree)
7. So far, I have learned new techniques about job search process in job club.
(1=Strongly disagree, 7=Strongly agree)

Location

Job club participants' experience did not differ by locations (Akron vs. satellite offices). This is consistent with finding from October 2010 report.

Gender

Overall male and female participants' experience was comparable across six out of seven experience dimensions. Female participants reported higher level of stress toward job search than male participants. This is consistent with the finding from October 2010 report.

Ethnic Background

Inconsistent with October 2010 report, the current study indicated that white and non-white participants differed in four out of seven experience dimensions. Non-white participants were more optimistic in searching for a job, more confident in conducting their job search, more positive about job search, and less stressed.

Marital Status

Participant experience did not vary by their marital status. This finding is consistent with the October 2010 report.

Education

Participants who obtained a four-year degree (Bachelor's degree) were less optimistic about their job search than those without a four-year degree. This is an additional finding compared to the October 2010 report. Participants' educational attainment did not differentiate their job club experience in any other experience dimensions.

Retirement Status

Unlike the October 2010 findings, participants in the current report varied in their job club experience by self-report retirement status. Participants who have retired from their main career reported less stress in job search and felt what they learned in job club less useful in their search. Retired and non-retired participants did not vary in any other experience dimensions.

Work History

Participant experience did not differ by their blue-collar and white-collar work history across seven experience dimensions. This is consistent with the finding from October 2010 report.

Job Club Experience Over Time

Difference in the beginning of job club

Consistent with the October 2010 report, there is a significant variability among participant experiences at the beginning of the job clubs. Participants differed on all seven experience dimensions. This indicates that job club participants' initial experiences at job club vary. Participants also reported different level of optimism, stress-level, confidence and general feeling toward job search, the extent to which they perceived the information and techniques covered in job club as new and useful for their job search

Overall change over time

Over a 3-week period of job club, participants' optimism, confidence, positive feeling, perceived usefulness of acquired information, perception of learning new technique have increased over time. During job club, participants became more optimistic, confident and gained positive feelings toward their job search. In addition, participants continuously considered the information they learned during job club sessions useful and new to them. Findings suggest that the patterns of development varied among participants for optimism, perceived usefulness and learning new technique. Overall there is an increase in these dimensions over time, but such pattern may vary by individual job club participants. Although there is no evidence of overall trend (increase or decrease), patterns of stress that participants felt over the 3-week period varied.

Initial experience and development during job club

The finding suggested the relationship between participant's initial experience and development over time for their perception of new learning. The participants who initially reported lower levels of new learning reported the steeper improvement over time on this experience dimension.