

# Researchers find planning, positivism influence employment success at different stages

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With America's unemployment rate higher than it has been in decades, many people find themselves looking for jobs. The process can be tiring and, in such a competitive climate, receiving that final job offer is challenging. In a new study, researchers at the University of Missouri focus on what job seekers need to get ahead of the competition. The Mizzou scientists found that certain planning activities and positive emotions have a large impact on success in finding a job.

"We found it most interesting that metacognitive activities— thinking about a plan, acting on a plan and reflecting upon that a plan— were important early in the [job search](#) while having positive emotions were important later in the job search," said Daniel Turban, professor and chair of the Department of Management in the MU Robert J. Trulaske, Sr. College of Business.

The study found that metacognitive activities, including goal setting and plan development, affect resume submission and success in first interviews, while the ability to maintain positive emotions plays a larger role during second interviews and receiving a final job offer. The researchers also examined how the [personality traits](#) of extraversion and conscientiousness affect metacognitive activities and positive emotions. Extraversion, how energetic and outgoing a person is, influenced both metacognitive activities and positive emotions. Conscientiousness, a person's self discipline and dependability, affected metacognitive

activities and directly influenced the number of final job offers received.

"Perhaps, conscientious [job seekers](#) conducted better quality job searches by scrutinizing their fit with prospective employers more carefully or more effectively following up with employers," Turban said.

The researchers administered three surveys to 327 job seekers. The first survey measured personality and demographic information, while the second survey measured positive emotions, metacognitive activities and employment outcomes. A third survey, measuring tapped employment outcomes, was sent to those still job hunting four to five months after the second survey.

Based on the study findings, Turban suggests job seekers make a plan and continuously assess their progress. It also is important to expect rejections and develop a coping strategy ahead of time. This should help maintain positive emotions throughout the process to improve those chances of getting a job, Turban said.

"Some of these recommendations seem like they are common sense, but they are just not that common. People don't have strategies, they don't assess their plans, and they don't think about their strategies and reflect on whether it's working or how to make them work better. They just don't do it," Turban said.

More information: "Effects of Conscientiousness and Extraversion on New Labor Market Entrants' Job Search: The Mediating Role of Metacognitive Activities and [Positive Emotions](#)." The study was published recently in *Personal Psychology*.

Source: University of Missouri-Columbia ([news](#) : [web](#))

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