

# Resume fraud linked to job search envy

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Unemployed job-seekers can be motivated to embellish their resumes when they are envious of peers, according to a study published in the *Academy of Management Journal*.

"Job search envy has the potential to produce negative or positive reactions," said the study's co-author Brian Dineen, associate professor at Purdue University's Krannert School of Management.

"We propose the envious reactions of job-seekers can be negative in the form of resume fraud, but can also be positive in the form of greater [job search](#) effort."

For the first part of the study, researchers surveyed 335 unemployed job-seekers. When job-seekers compared their search efforts to those of peers, they expressed greater likelihood to commit resume fraud – intentionally embellishing or fabricating information – to keep up.

"Envy resulted in resume fraud to a greater extent after a longer search, while it resulted in greater job search effort during a shorter search," Dineen said.

For the second part of the study, 49 graduate students were surveyed. Envy led to greater resume fraud during the job search phase, with greater effort more likely during the less critical internship-seeking stage.

Researchers found that both groups – the unemployed job-seekers and

the graduate students – responded to envy with resume fraud to a greater extent when job markets were strong.

"Can envy be more painful when jobs seem available? It was a surprising finding," Dineen said.

The study "Green by Comparison: Deviant and Normative Transmutations of Job Search Envy in a Temporal Context" is available at [amj.aom.org/content/early/recent](http://amj.aom.org/content/early/recent). Research was supported by a grant from the SHRM Foundation. The study was co-authored by Michelle K. Duffy, University of Minnesota; Christine A. Henle, Colorado State University; Kiyoun Lee, University at Buffalo.

The study provides professional recruiters insights into job-seekers' motivation, allowing recruiters to screen applicants more closely or provide counsel on managing [envy](#). Future research could offer qualitative insights into job search methods available to job-seekers to help lessen comparisons to peers.

**More information:** B. R. Dineen et al. Green by Comparison: Deviant and Normative Transmutations of Job Search Envy in a Temporal Context, *Academy of Management Journal* (2015). [DOI: 10.5465/amj.2014.0767](https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2014.0767)

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