Abstract

This study aims to enrich job search literature by examining the unique role of perceived job search events in predicting job search self-efficacy (JSSE) and two job search outcomes (i.e., perceived job search progress, the number of job offers) during the school-to-work transition. Two hundred and fourteen Chinese university graduates were asked to describe two representative job search events (one positive and one negative) and rate them on multiple dimensions (i.e., frequency, novelty, disruptiveness, criticality, and controllability). Content analysis reveals five categories of positive events (i.e., good preparation, social support, positive feedback, fair treatment, good luck) and five categories of negative events (i.e., inadequate preparation, fierce competition, negative feedback, unfair treatment, bad luck). Results from a two-wave study show that after individual differences in self-regulation strengths (i.e., proactive personality, approach-avoidance traits, core self-evaluation, career adaptability), baseline levels of JSSE and job search success are controlled (measured at Time 1), event content and dimensions account for 13% of the variance in JSSE at Time 2, which partially mediates the effects of criticality and novelty of positive events on perceived progress and number of job offers at Time 2. Additionally, negative events controllability and positive events frequency are directly related to perceived progress and number of offers, respectively, which JSSE cannot explain. This study advances the current understanding of the conceptualization and effects of job search events.

Keywords: job search events, job search self-efficacy, job search success

Role of Perceived Events in University Graduates' Job Search Self-efficacy and Success

Job search is a critical step in university graduates' school-to-work transition, and job search success plays a vital role in shaping their long-term career success (Saks, 2018). Given that university graduates are generally unfamiliar with the labor market situation and have limited professional networks to seek support (Boswell et al., 2011; Kanfer et al., 2001), they need to regulate themselves to meet job search challenges effectively. According to social cognitive career theory (SCCT, Lent & Brown, 2013; Lent et al., 1994, 2000, 2003), job search self-efficacy (JSSE), the belief that one is capable of performing the tasks required to obtain employment (Kanfer & Hulin, 1985), is an essential self-regulatory resource that leads to job search success (Boswell et al., 2011; Guan et al., 2013; Kanfer et al., 2001; Saks & Ashforth, 1999). While individual differences in traits and abilities have been established as significant antecedents of JSSE (Kanfer et al., 2001; Kim et al., 2019; Wanberg et al., 2002), SCCT also emphasizes that JSSE is not static and can be changed by the ongoing learning experience in job search (Lent & Brown, 2013; Lent et al., 1994, 2000, 2003).

Given that job search is a dynamic process characterized by the occurrence of various types of events, the perceptions of these events serve as meaningful learning materials for job seekers to seek feedback and reassess their JSSE (Lent & Brown, 2013; Lent et al., 1994, 2000, 2003). For example, events like receiving positive feedback from an attractive employer or an encounter with fierce competition from peers may beneficially or adversely influence job seekers' evaluations of their ability to achieve job search success. Lent et al. (1994) differentiate the objective and subjective aspects of events and emphasize individuals' active role in interpreting environmental inputs. That is, although individual perceptions cannot capture the full range of events in their job search, perceived events serve as critical proximal forces that drive JSSE, which eventually affect their job search outcomes. Despite this, empirical studies on perceived job search events are plagued by incomplete

conceptualization and limited understanding of the mechanisms underlying their effects on job search outcomes (Ali et al., 2016; Kreemer et al., 2018).

In the fields of life events and career events, both quantitative and qualitative approaches have been used to define and measure events (Akkermans et al., 2018). On the one hand, quantitative indicators such as frequency are adopted to represent the strength of events (e.g., Bright et al., 2009). On the other hand, the happenstance learning theory (Krumboltz, 2009; Mitchell et al., 1999), chaos career theory (Bright & Pryor, 2005), as well as event system theory (Morgeson et al., 2015) offer important insights into the categories (e.g., Betsworth & Hansen, 1996; Bright et al., 2009; Bright et al., 2005; Hirschi, 2010; Hirschi & Valero, 2017), valence (e.g., Frazier et al., 2009; Langston, 1994; Lindsey & Kelly, 2004; Seibert et al., 2013), and dimensions (e.g., influence and controllability; Bright et al., 2009; Seibert et al., 2013) of events. While the diverse theoretical perspectives highlight the significance of developing an integrative framework to understand perceived job search events and their effects, little empirical progress has been made in this area.

This study aims to address the above research gaps by theorizing and examining perceived job search events in a comprehensive way. To capture the qualitative and quantitative aspects of job search events, we focused on university graduates' job search process via a two-stage design. Participants were first asked to describe typical positive and negative job search events, which were then coded into different categories to capture their content. In addition, the dimensions of these events (Akkermans et al., 2018; Bright et al., 2009; Morgeson et al., 2015), such as their frequency, criticality, controllability, novelty, and disruptiveness, were also rated by the participants. By doing so, this study integrates multiple approaches and offers a comprehensive way to measure perceived job search events. Drawing upon SCCT, we further examined the mediation role of JSSE in explaining the effects of events on job search outcomes (i.e., number of offers and perceived job search progress). To

observe the unique effects of perceived events, we scrutinized job search literature and included important personality (i.e., proactive personality, approach-avoidance traits, core self-evaluations) and ability (i.e., career adaptability) constructs as control variables because they have been established as significant individual predictors for JSSE and job search outcomes (Brown et al., 2006; Duffy et al., 2019; Guan et al., 2013; Kanfer et al., 2001; Kim et al., 2019; Wanberg et al., 2002; Wanberg et al., 2012; Zimmerman et al., 2012). In sum, the purpose of this study was to offer a unified framework to understand the categories and dimensions of perceived job search events, as well as the extent to which JSSE mediates the relations between event dimensions and job search outcomes, after controlling for baseline levels of JSSE and several important individual differences characteristics. The theoretical model of this study is shown in Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Job Search Events: Conceptualization and Operationalization

Career theorists have always considered events as critical forces influencing individual career development. Hart et al. (1971) found that entry into an occupation is not only influenced by planning and preparation, but also by discrete events. Bandura (1982) analyzes how "chance encounter," which refers to "an unintended meeting of persons unfamiliar to each other" (p. 748), may lead to situations that dramatically change a person's life trajectories and career paths. Miller (1983) challenges the heavy reliance on analyzing individual and job market characteristics in career counseling, and argues that "happenstance" should be considered an important aspect of career choice. Happenstance learning theory (Krumboltz, 2009; Mitchell et al., 1999) also posits that individuals can create or engage in events through exploratory activities, which contribute to their learning experiences and development of adaptive capabilities. Chaos career theory (Bright & Pryor, 2005; Pryor &

Bright, 2003) considers events as vital dynamics that influence individuals' career decisions (e.g., Bright et al., 2005; Hart et al., 1971; Seibert et al., 2013), career transition processes (e.g., Haynie & Shepherd, 2011; Hirschi & Valero, 2017) and career success (e.g., Betsworth & Hansen, 1996; Hirschi, 2010).

Different categories of career events have been developed in previous research. For example, Betsworth and Hansen (1996) identified 11 types of serendipitous career incidents as perceived by older adults, including unexpected promotions or advancement, encouragement from others, unexpected opportunities to interest areas, and so on. Bright et al. (2005) added another four categories to this classification and developed 15 categories of events critical to the career decision-making process. In a more recent study, Seibert et al. (2013) examined several positive (e.g., promotion) and negative (e.g., departure of mentor) career shocks and their effects on individuals' pursuit of postgraduate education. These studies suggest that the content and categories of career events differ across career development stages (e.g., early, middle, or late stage) and the contexts of career transitions (e.g., school-to-work, work-to-school, work-to-work).

Given that perceived job search events represent university graduates' personal experiences that are "bounded in space and time" (Morgeson et al., 2015, p. 516), it seems inappropriate to impose the established event categories into this context. Instead, we drew upon the grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and applied an open-response approach established by prior event studies (e.g., Betsworth & Hansen, 1996). Specifically, we asked participants to describe job search events openly and spontaneously. The categories were derived from the individual responses from the research sample. As prior research suggests, it is crucial to differentiate events that have potential positive or negative impacts on job search success (Frazier et al., 2009; Langston, 1994; Lindsey & Kelly, 2004; Seibert et al., 2013).

We thus asked participants to report typical positive and negative events (i.e., event content) in their job search and coded their responses to different categories to capture their meanings.

Scholars have argued that because events diverge from the routine features of the environment and take place at discrete time points, changes in individuals' cognitions and psychological states are primarily dependent on individuals' subjective evaluations of event strength (Morgeson et al., 2015; Chacko & Conway, 2019; Crawford et al., 2019; Rauthman et al., 2015). Given that the content of events is interpreted via individuals' "internal psychological process" (Morgeson et al., 2015, p. 520), it is essential to assess participants' ratings of events on critical dimensions, such as level of frequency, influence, and controllability (Bright et al., 2009), to better understand event strength. Morgeson et al. (2015) reviewed previous conceptualization of events and outlined three aspects, namely criticality (i.e., the level of importance and essentiality of events), novelty (i.e., the extent to which an event is new and unfamiliar to a person), and disruption (i.e., the extent to which events are deviant from ordinary routines), as key dimensions of event strength. In line with these studies, we used both the categories and dimensions (i.e., frequency, criticality or influence, controllability, novelty, and disruptiveness) to measure job search events and examined their relations with job search outcomes.

Based on event theories and SCCT, we propose that the content of events (i.e., categories) offers a necessary basis for job seekers to evaluate events' characteristics (i.e., dimensions), which in turn influences JSSE and other job search outcomes. The following section develops specific hypotheses about the relations between these dimensions and job search outcomes. In addition to these formal hypotheses, we also explored the relations between event categories and event dimensions, and we expect that event categories have significant relations with event dimensions, but event dimensions should be the proximal predictors for job search outcomes. Combined, these analyses help to provide a

comprehensive view of the relations among event categories, event dimensions, and job search outcomes.

Event Dimensions and Job Search Outcomes

As mentioned above, we asked university graduates to report a typical positive and negative event in their job search. They were also asked to rate these events on frequency, criticality, controllability, novelty, and disruptiveness. From an SSCT perspective (Lent & Brown, 2013; Lent et al., 1994), we argue that the occurrence of job search events will change individuals' job search self-efficacy and eventually influence their job search results. The hypotheses related to these effects of events dimensions are discussed below.

The frequency dimension (i.e., how often similar events take place during one's job search) represents the extent to which an individual's job search is influenced by the accumulation of similar positive (or negative) events. Repeatedly occurring events may influence self-efficacy through the reinforcement process because ongoing reinforcements are more likely to facilitate internal attribution than a single reinforcement episode (McElroy, 1985). After repeated negative feedback, job seekers come to believe that effort is futile and failure is inevitable. This phenomenon has been labeled learned helplessness, which leads to a pessimistic attribution style (i.e., attributing undesirable events to internal factors such as lack of capability; Martinko & Gardner, 1987) and further decreases job applicants' self-efficacy. When positive events occur frequently, the positive reinforcements take effect such that individuals tend to attribute successful diagnoses to personal ability. This optimistic attribution leads to a belief that one can handle the various job search demands, thereby increasing JSSE (Lent et al., 1994). Compared with those having lower JSSE, job seekers with higher JSSE are more likely to regulate themselves towards better job search progress (Wanberg et al., 2010). Given that JSSE serves as a critical factor in predicting individuals'

job search progress and the number of offers (e.g., Brown et al., 2006; Guan et al., 2013), we proposed that:

Hypothesis 1: The frequency of positive events will be positively related to JSSE (H1a), which will mediate its positive effect on the perceived job search progress (H1b) and the number of job offers (H1c); for negative events, the above effects will be negative (H1d, H1e, and H1f).

The criticality dimension reflects the degree to which an event is important, essential, or a priority to the job search process (Morgeson & DeRue, 2006; Morgeson et al., 2015) and typically triggers job seekers' additional investments and changes (Vaara, 2003). In event system theory, Morgeson et al. (2015) included criticality as one of the important features reflecting events' strength. Further, they proposed that criticality has the potential to change an entity's behaviors.

In the context of job search, when individuals come across highly influential positive events (e.g., receiving very positive feedback from an important job talk), they may attribute this event to their job search skills, and their self-efficacy may be boosted. In contrast, when individuals come across negative events that are important and salient (e.g., being mistreated by a desired employer), these events remain a central focus where individuals have to invest their energy until they are resolved. Moreover, these adverse events may also serve as important negative feedback to individuals and make them lose confidence in their job search (Lent & Brown, 2013). Following these discussions, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2: For positive events, the influence dimension will be positively related to JSSE (H2a), which will mediate its positive effect on the perceived job search progress (H2b) and the number of job offers (H2c); for negative events, the above effects will be negative (H2d, H2e, and H2f).

Controllability is defined as individuals' perceived control over a job search event itself. Exerting control over a situation has been viewed as an important source of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982; Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Pajares, 1997). Control perceptions capture an individual's appraisal of an objective situation, whereas efficacy judgment considers individuals' expectations and convictions of what they can do in a given situation (Bandura, 1986). Events with high controllability may strengthen one's self-belief in directing the job searching process along the intended trajectory. In contrast, a lack of controllability may shake one's confidence in their abilities and autonomies in the current situation. Consistently, Schaubroeck and Merritt (1997) found that perceived control positively predicts employee self-efficacy when facing work stressors. Following this logic, the more controllable a job search event is, the greater an individual feels confident in their job search capabilities. This relationship should be applied to both positive and negative events. Considering JSSE serves as a critical factor in predicting individuals' job search outcomes, we proposed that:

> *Hypothesis 3:* For positive events, the control dimension will be positively related to JSSE (H3a), which will mediate its positive effect on the perceived job search progress (H3b) and the number of job offers (H3c); for negative events, the above effects will also be positive (H3d, H3e, and H3f).

Novel events represent stimuli that are less familiar to job seekers, and their effects on JSSE may depend on their valence and job applicants' attribution process. When positive and novel events happen, job applicants may attribute them to their capabilities, which may increase their JSSE. However, the novelty of these positive events may also make job applicants attribute them to external factors or luck, which will not increase their JSSE. On the other hand, when negative and novel events take place, job seekers may attribute them to personal constraints, which may lead to lower JSSE, but these events can also be attributed to

situational changes or bad luck. These discussions suggest that the effects of novelty may not be that straightforward; we thus tentatively hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 4: For positive events, the novelty dimension will be positively related to JSSE (H4a), which will mediate its positive effect on the perceived job search progress (H4b) and the number of job offers (H4c); for negative events, the above effects will be negative (H4d, H4e, H4f).

Lastly, for event disruptiveness, research has shown that disruptive negative events generally lead to feelings of being threatened (LoSavio et al., 2011) and low self-efficacy (Simpson et al., 2015). Similarly, in the job search context, when facing negative disruptive job events, individuals need to engage in effortful information processing to understand how to cope with them and resume their job search plans. This process may weaken individuals' confidence and make them view job search goals as less achievable, leading to a lower level of JSSE and success. However, when positive disruptive events occur (e.g., a sudden interview notice from an attractive organization that requires a reschedule of job search activities), despite the need to cope with the disruptions, the favorability of the event makes this effort a "sweet burden" that boosts one' JSSE and benefit subsequent job search success. We thus hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 5: For positive events, disruptiveness will be positively related to JSSE (H5a), which will mediate its positive effect on the perceived job search progress (H5b) and the number of job offers (H5c); for negative events, the above effects will be negative (H5d, H5e, H5f).

Method

Procedures and participants

Data were collected in the School of Finance of a university in Beijing, China. The research was approved by the research ethics committee of the Faculty. With the help of the

career center in the university, we sent email invitations to final-year Master's students. Students who planned to seek employment in their final year were invited to participate in this study. Students who were willing to participate were asked to sign consent forms and complete surveys online. They were informed of the general aim of this study and promised that the data would only be used for research purposes. Data were collected at two time points: At Time 1 (9 months before their graduation, when most of them were about to start their job search), participants were asked to rate their chronic levels of career adaptability, CSE, proactive personality, and approach-avoidance traits, as well as the baseline JSSE, perceived progress, and the number of job offers. At Time 2 (3 months before their graduation), respondents were asked to describe a typical positive and negative event during their job search and rate these events on the above-mentioned dimensions. Besides, they were also asked to rate their self-efficacy during the job search and report perceived job search progress as well as the number of job offers they had received. We included a specific introduction when asking participants to report event-related variables, such that participants were required to recall events that occurred between Time 1 and Time 2. Since the data were collected from 2018 to 2019 before the outbreak of COVID-19, our study was not influenced by the pandemic. The complete prompts we used to elicit the job events from participants are provided in Appendix A. Valid data across two-time points were obtained from a sample of 214 students, among whom 98 (45.8%) were females and 116 (54.2%) were males. The average age was 24.36 (SD = 1.04). All of our participants reported a positive and a negative job search event.

Measures

All measures in English were translated into Chinese (i.e., Mandarin) using a back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1970). Responses were collected using a five-point scale

which ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), except for the variable of job offer numbers. A list of items for studying variables is provided in Appendix B.

Job search self-efficacy (JSSE). JSSE was measured by a 10-item scale adapted from Saks et al.'s study (2015). The original scale contains two dimensions (job search self-efficacy behavior and job search self-efficacy outcome). We selected five items with the highest factor loadings from each dimension. Sample items are like "I have the confidence to search for and find good job opportunities" and "I have the confidence to be successful in my job search." At Time 1, participants were asked to rate their current self-efficacy; At Time 2, participants were asked to rate their self-efficacy during the job search. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .79 (Time 1) and .94 (Time 2).

Perceived job search progress. We measured perceived progress using two items from Wanberg et al. (2010): "I made good progress on my job search" and "I moved forward with my job search." The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .84 (Time 1) and .93 (Time 2).

The number of job offers. Consistent with previous studies (e.g., Brown et al., 2006; Côté et al., 2006), the number of job offers each participant received was used to reflect their job search success. A single question of "How many job offers have you received" was asked in the survey to indicate the number of job offers.

Frequency of job search events. Frequency was measured by two items: "similar events happened many times during my job search" and "similar events happened very frequently as I search for jobs." The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of this scale were .94 for positive events and .96 for negative events.

Criticality of job search events. Three items measuring criticality were adopted from previous research (Morgeson & DeRue, 2006). A sample item was "This event is important for my job search." The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of this scale were .80 for positive events and .86 for negative events.

Controllability of job search events. Two items measuring controllability were adopted from previous research (Bright et al., 2009). A sample item was "I have a lot of control over this event." The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of this scale were .88 (positive) and .90 (negative).

Novelty of job search events. Items measuring novelty were adopted from previous research (Morgeson, 2005). A sample item was "There is no clear or known way to respond to this event." The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of this scale were .91 for positive events and .87 for negative events.

Disruptiveness of job search events. Items measuring disruptiveness were adopted from previous research (Morgeson, 2005; Morgeson & DeRue, 2006). A sample item was "This event altered my normal way of job search." The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of this scale were .87 (positive) and .89 (negative).

Control variables. Because prior research has found that demographics are associated with job search attitudes and outcomes (e.g., Mau & Kopischke, 2001), gender (0 = *male,* 1 = *female*) and age (in years) were included as control variables in the analyses. Besides, we also controlled another four individual variables as described in the Introduction (i.e., career adaptability, core self-evaluation, proactive personality, and avoidance-approach temperaments). A 12-item career adaptability scale (Guan et al., 2018) was translated from Maggiori, Rossier, and Savickas's article (2017). A sample item was "I take responsibility for my actions" (α = 0.92). Regarding core self-evaluation, a 12-item scale (Guan et al., 2017) translated from the study of Judge, Erez, Bono, and Thoresen (2003) was adopted. A sample item was "I am confident I get the success I deserve in life" (α = 0.87). Proactive personality was measured with a 10-item scale (Cai et al., 2015) translated from the study of Seibert, Crant, and Kraimer (1999). A sample item was "I am always looking for better ways to do things" (α = 0.83). Finally, avoidance-approach temperaments were measured with a 12-item

approach-avoidance scale (Guan et al., 2017) translated from Elliot and Thrash's study (2010). Six items measured approach trait ($\alpha = 0.84$) and 6 items measured avoidance trait ($\alpha = 0.89$). Sample items were "By nature, I am a very nervous person" and "It doesn't take a lot to get me excited and motivated."

Data analytical strategies

We followed the grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and asked participants to recall and write down a job search event that happened to him/her that influenced his/her job search process. Following previous research (e.g., Betsworth & Hansen, 1996), we adopted the standard procedures described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to code and classify the events. First, each positive or negative event was listed on a separate index card. Second, two trained raters independently categorized these events. Third, the raters discussed their categories and developed agreed categories. Fourth, the raters reviewed the results and provided labels for the different types of events. The classification of job search events was described in the *Results* part.

We used multiple regressions in SPSS to examine our hypotheses. A bootstrapping approach in SPSS PROCESS v3.0 (Hayes, 2013) was used to test the mediating effects. Bootstrapping is recommended by scholars to test indirect effects because it takes the non-normal shape of sampling distributions into account (Hayes, 2013; Preacher & Hayes, 2008). In order to avoid multicollinearity influencing our results, all continuous variables were grand mean-centered prior to the examination (Aiken & West, 1991).

Results

Classification of job search events

For positive events, five categories were obtained from the coding processes: (1) good preparation (e.g., "The questions in written assessments and interviews were similar to those I had prepared for"); (2) social support events (e.g., "The job fairs and information sharing

service from the university helped me identify new job opportunities", "My academic supervisor offered suggestions to improve my resume"); (3) positive feedback from employers (e.g., "Receiving the first job offer at the early stage of job search"); (4) fair employer treatment (e.g., "The interviewer treated me in a fair and friendly way"); (5) positive events due to luck ("I thought I have done badly in the interview, but I got the offer in the end"). For negative events, five categories were obtained: (1) inadequate preparation (e.g., "I was late for the interview", "I was found lack of relevant experience*s*"); (2) fierce competition (e.g., "The competition was fierce during the job interview", "other applicants were very aggressive in the group tests"); (3) negative feedback from employers (e.g., "Unsuccessful interviews", "got rejected by the employer"); (4) unfair treatment by employers (e.g., "There was gender discrimination in the selection process", "Interviewer judged the candidates based on their appearance rather than competence"); (5) negative events due to bad luck ("I had to give up an important interview due to time clashes with another important one", "I broke my leg during job search"). These categories were dummy coded for quantitative analyses. The events due to good/bad luck were coded as reference groups because these two are more accidental, while other categories contain events triggered by either individuals or environmental factors.

Descriptive statistics and correlations

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of and inter-correlations among the study variables. Time 2 JSSE is positively correlated with positive events' frequency ($r = .27$, $p < .001$), controllability ($r = .33$, $p < .001$), criticality ($r = .39$, $p < .001$), disruptiveness ($r = .19$, $p < .01$), and negative event controllability ($r = .19$, $p < .01$). Time 2 perceived job search progress is positively correlated with positive event's controllability ($r = .23$, $p < .01$), criticality ($r = .39$, $p < .001$), as well as negative event's controllability ($r = .24$, $p < .001$), criticality ($r = .21$, $p < .01$), disruptiveness ($r = .15$, $p < .05$). In addition, positive event

disruptiveness (r = -.14, p < .05) and Time 2 JSSE (r = .16, p < .05) are correlated with the number of job offer at Time 2.

The results also suggest that event categories are related to dimensions. For positive events, social support is positively related to frequency (r = .18, p < .01) and disruptiveness (r = .14, p < .05), suggesting that compared to the category of good luck events (the reference group of positive evens), social support events occur more frequently but sometimes in a disruptive way in the job search. Also, positive feedback events are perceived as less disruptive compared to chance events due to good luck (r = -.15, p < .05). For negative events, compared with the category of bad luck (the reference group of negative events), events related to inadequate preparation are perceived as more critical (r = .14, p < .05), and employers' unfavorable feedback are rated more frequent (r = .18, p < .01). Also, fierce competition events are regarded as less disruptive (r = -.19, p < .01) and less novel (r = -.15, p < .05), implying those job seekers may have some anticipations of the situation and proactively make action plans to meet these challenges. In addition, the results show that frequently happening positive events are often controllable, critical, and disruptive, whereas frequently happening negative events are often novel, critical, and disruptive.

Insert Table 1 about here

Tests of Hypotheses

Table 2 shows the results of stepwise regression analyses for hypotheses testing. When predicting job search outcomes, in model 1s (model 1a, 1b, and 1c), only control variables were entered into the regressions; in model 2s (model 2a, 2b, and 2c), control variables and event-related variables were entered into the regressions; in model 3s (model 3b and 3c), control variables, event-related variables, and the mediator JSSE were entered into the regressions. In terms of the relations between event dimensions an JSSE, we found that positive event novelty and criticality are related to Time 2 JSSE in opposite directions

(Model 2a: β = -.17, p < .05 for novelty; β = .28, p < .001 for criticality). According to the ΔR^2 from Model 1a to Model 2a, the inclusion of events explains 13% additional variance in Time 2 JSSE (ΔR^2 = .13, p < .001).

The same pattern is found for positive event criticality and novelty in the prediction of perceived progress in Model 2b. Novelty is negatively related to perceived progress (β = -.18, p < .05) while criticality is positively related to it (β = .36, p < .001). Also, negative event controllability is positively related to perceived progress (β = .22, p < .01). After entering T2 JSSE in Model 3b, the effect of positive event novelty is no longer significant. The predicting effects of positive event criticality (β = .25, p < .001) and negative event controllability (β = .17, p < .05) are still significant but weakened. In addition, Model 3b shows that T2 JSSE is found positively related to perceived progress (β = .41, p < .001). As to R^2 change, the inclusion of events explains 20% variance in perceived progress from Model 1b to Model 2b (ΔR^2 = .20, p < .001), and the further inclusion of T2 JSSE in Model 3b added 13% additional variance in perceived progress (ΔR^2 = .13, p < .001).

With regard to the prediction of the number of job offers in Model 2c, only positive event frequency is positively related to it (β = .22, p < .05) among all of the event variables. In addition, Model 3c shows that T2 JSSE is also related to job offer numbers in a positive sign (β = .20, p < .05). As to R^2 change, the inclusion of events explains 5% variance in the number of job offers from Model 1c to Model 2c (ΔR^2 = .05, *ns*), and the further inclusion of T2 JSSE in Model 3c added 2% additional variance (ΔR^2 = .02, p < .05).

Insert Table 2 about here

To test the mediating effect, we conduct a bootstrap analysis with the 5,000 resampling method in PROCESS. In the prediction of perceived progress and the number of

job offers, we found the indirect effects of JSSE are positive in linking positive event criticality and the outcome variables (*estimate* = .15, 95% *CI* = [.05, .25] for perceived progress; *estimate* = .21, 95% *CI* = [.03, .43] for job offers) (H2b, H2c supported), but negative in linking positive event novelty and the outcome variables (*estimate* = -.06, 95% *CI* = [-.11, -.01] for perceived progress; *estimate* = -.08, 95% *CI* = [-.20, -.01] for job offers) (H4b, H4c not supported). Other hypotheses related to the mediation effect are not supported.

Discussion

This study examines the role of perceived job search events in the job search process, and the results show that both event frequency and dimensions contribute to job search outcomes. After the effects of baseline JSSE, job search outcomes, stable individual differences, and event categories are controlled, positive event novelty and criticality predict Time 2 JSSE, which are found to partially mediate their effects on Time 2 perceived progress and the number of job offers. Moreover, regression analyses show that negative event controllability and positive event frequency have direct effects on perceived progress and the number of job offers, respectively, which cannot be mediated by JSSE. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed below.

Previous research tends to focus on limited aspects of career events, thereby lacking a comprehensive understanding of the relations among different aspects of events and their effects on career-related outcomes (e.g., Bright et al., 2005; Hirschi, 2010; Morgeson et al., 2015). By integrating multiple events approaches (i.e., Akkermans et al., 2018; Bright et al., 2005; Bright et al., 2009; Morgeson et al., 2015; Seibert et al., 2013), the findings of this study enrich extant literature by conceptualizing and measuring perceived job search events with both quantitative and qualitative indicators. The analysis of the content of events revealed five categories of positive events and five categories of negative events. This classification provides a meaningful framework to capture the diverse job search events

among new entrants to the job market, which are distinct from previous event categories. These findings also highlight the importance of using a qualitative research approach to develop appropriate measures of events that are specific to certain career development contexts.

As discussed before, we assessed the content of events separately and controlled its impact in our analyses when testing the relationships between event dimensions and job search outcomes. The regression analysis (Table 2) does not show any significant effects directly from event categories on mediators or outcomes. Nevertheless, some content types have significant correlations with event dimensions (see Table 1). These results could indicate a perceptual overlap between content categories (not all) and dimensions of events. That is, one would describe the characteristics of an event based on the content this person experienced. This argument is also supported by Luhmann et al.'s (2021) study that there is empirical overlap between some characteristics of an event and the actual content of its situation. However, these results should be cautioned because we cannot draw causal conclusions from correlation analyses. Also, the correlation estimations between content and dimensions are relatively small, ranging from -.19** to .18**, suggesting that there are significant individual differences in perceiving and interpreting the characteristics of events. Future research on job search events will benefit from looking into potential moderators, such as individual differences (e.g., regulatory focus: Higgins, 1998; Higgins et al., 1997) or contextual factors (e.g., the relevance of an event to a person's goal: Levine & Edelstein, 2009), that influence individuals' sensemaking process following job search events.

Consistent with previous research (e.g., Bright et al., 2005; Hirschi, 2010), the results of this study suggest stable individual differences partly drive perceived job search events. On the one hand, the results indicate that individuals with a high level of self-regulation strengths tend to have better skills to cope with the challenges in job search, which leads to

more positive events. Consistently, for example, positive event frequency is positively related to CSE, proactive personality, approach trait, and negatively associated with avoidance trait. On the other hand, the results also show that individuals with high levels of self-regulation strengths are also more likely to experience challenging events during a job search (e.g., CSE positively related to fierce competition; proactive personality correlated with more negative treatment, more critical and disruptive events; approach trait related to more disruptive events). These findings may be explainable from a goal-setting perspective (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002): As individuals who possess more self-regulation strengths tend to set more challenging goals in their job search (e.g., only targeting those desirable organizations), they may come across more difficulties and obstacles in this process, which are reflected in their job search events.

Although there are significant correlations between individual differences and indicators of events, results of the regression analyses show that after the effects of individual factors are controlled, event indicators account for an additional 13% variance of Time 2 JSSE, 20% variance of perceived job search progress, and 5% variance of the number of job offers. When predicting Time 2 JSSE, the most salient predictors are positive events criticality and novelty. The effect of positive event criticality is in line with the social-cognitive perspective (Lent & Brown, 2013). Important positive events reflect individuals' capability to make significant progress over the job search process, thereby boosting individuals' confidence about their job search outcomes. Interestingly and counterintuitive, the results show a negative relationship between positive novel events and individuals' self-efficacy. A possible explanation is that although the positivity of novel events may facilitate individuals' job search process (e.g., receiving an interview but the format of the interview is novel), they come as a nonroutine (Hoffman & Ocasio, 2001), uncommon (Latane & Darley, 1969) or surprising way (Cornelissen, 2012), requiring individuals to put more efforts to

make sense and take extra actions to cope with, which consumes extra psychological resources and reduces their self-efficacy. This conjecture can be further explored in future studies.

The results showed that while JSSE partially mediates the effects of several event dimensions on job search success, negative event controllability and positive event frequency still have direct effects on perceived progress and the number of job offers, respectively. These findings suggest that more work needs to be done to fully examine the mechanisms underpinning the effects of events on job search success. For example, the lower controllability of negative events may increase the perceived difficulty to find a wanted job and further reduces individuals' goal commitment in the searching process (Wofford et al., 1992). The accumulation of positive events may lead to changes in individuals' social capital in job search, which leads to changes in employment opportunities and, thereby, increased job offers (Mouw, 2003). These possibilities should be examined in future research.

The findings of this study have important implications for job search counseling and training practices. The classification of 10 job search events can assist career counselors in evaluating university graduates' job search readiness and assessing their training needs. The reality checking exercise is viewed as an efficient tool for clients to be aware of the unpredictability and uncertainty in the career world (Bright & Pryor, 2005). Also, these results fit within a larger body of SCCT research (e.g., Lent et al., 1994) that has highlighted the role of JSSE in person-situation interaction. We reiterate the call for career interventions to focus on activities intended to improve gradates' JSSE when facing different types of events. This study shows that the subjective ratings of event dimensions play significant roles in predicting JSSE. When positive events are rated as more critical and less novel, they tend to have positive effects on job search self-efficacy. Therefore, career counselors could also

become more effective if using secondary control strategies that focus on reappraising existing problems as job search interventions and training tools (Rothbaum et al., 1982).

Limitations and future directions

Despite its strengths, this research has several limitations. First, we asked our participants to only recall one positive (negative) job search event, rather than using a multiple-event approach used in some studies where participants were asked to list all relevant events that happened within a certain period (e.g., Compas et al., 1987) or indicating their experiences towards a checklist of possible events (e.g., Suh et al., 1996). This approach could potentially lead to recalling bias. Specifically, previous research suggests that individuals do not recall all types of events equally well. For example, highly influential events with a lower level of controllability are found to be better remembered by participants (Bright et al., 2009). Although asking participants to recall events has been widely used (e.g., Morgeson & DeRue, 2006), the potential bias mentioned above may endanger the validity of the operationalization of events. Future studies may consider developing a comprehensive list of events and asking participants to rate the standardized measure (e.g., Bright et al., 2009). The findings of this study thus shed some light on the development of such a list. Also, regarding the dimensions of event, it would also be interesting to apply latent profile analysis to determine whether there are combinations of job search events that are distinguishable according to the dimensions profiles and to identify potential differences in job search outcomes associated with each profile.

Secondly, this study's recalling approach and two-wave design make it difficult to evaluate job seekers' short-term responses to events and their effects on job search success. The ratings of event dimensions only reflect job seekers' reflections rather than their immediate responses to those events. Also, the design of this study cannot provide sufficient information to understand how an event may evolve into other events and how multiple

events may produce unexpected effects in the job search. A diary study or experimental study should be adopted to understand these important questions better. Although we adopted a two-wave design, the sequence of questions was carefully designed so that the factual question like offer numbers were arranged at the end to avoid its influences on participants' psychological states. At Time 2, we first collected event-related and individual psychological variables, and then the offer-related questions were presented.

Conclusion

Despite the above limitations, this study provides a meaningful framework to capture the diversity of university graduates' job search events and operationalizes job search events in an appropriate and comprehensive approach. In addition, job search events are found to explain JSSE above and beyond individual differences in self-regulation strengths, and JSSE serves as an important mediator for the effects of events on the job search outcomes. These insights advance theories related to events and job search and carry important implications for job search counseling and training practices.

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Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, Reliability, and Correlations among Study Variables

Variables	Mean	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Age	24.36	1.05	-													
2. Gender	-	-	-.15*	-												
3. Job search self-efficacy T1	3.53	.88	.03	-.06	(.79)											
4. Perceived progress T1	2.82	.78	.15*	-.16*	.41***	(.84)										
5. Job offer T1	.17	.47	-.13	-.02	.05	.09	-									
6. Career adaptability T1	4.04	.52	-.02	-.07	.29***	.09	.15*	(.92)								
7. Core self-evaluation T1	3.66	.52	-.03	-.11	.24****	.11	.10	.53***	(.87)							
8. Proactive personality T1	3.78	.49	.07	-.15*	.35****	.21**	.17*	.57***	.43***	(.83)						
9. Approach T1	3.97	.57	.05	-.12	.23**	.10	.07	.55***	.51***	.52***	(.84)					
10. Avoidance T1	2.64	.78	-.08	.10	-.14*	-.09	-.07	-.19**	-.52***	-.25***	-.29***	(.89)				
11. Good preparation	-	-	.07	-.09	-.06	-.02	.07	.06	.05	-.05	-.05	-.01	-			
12. Social support	-	-	.01	.08	.08	.03	-.03	-.04	-.01	.02	.06	.00	-.72***	-		
13. Positive feedback	-	-	-.02	.02	-.01	.04	.06	-.01	.00	.04	.02	.03	-.18**	-.28***	-	
14. Fair treatment	-	-	-.11	.03	-.05	-.08	-.10	-.05	-.14*	-.02	-.08	.04	-.19**	-.29***	-.07	-
15. Inadequate preparation	-	-	.18**	-.11	-.06	.02	-.13	-.10	-.16*	-.10	-.08	.05	.22**	-.08	-.19**	.00
16. Fierce competition	-	-	-.16*	.01	.01	-.04	.05	.05	.15*	-.03	.10	-.07	-.12	-.02	.11	.04
17. Negative feedback	-	-	-.04	.01	-.10	-.18**	-.07	-.01	-.03	.02	-.05	.14*	.04	-.08	.16*	-.07
18. Unfair treatment	-	-	-.05	.09	.13	.14*	.19**	.09	.09	.14*	.09	-.13	-.18**	.17*	-.05	.05
19. Positive event frequency	3.37	1.15	.14*	-.09	.15*	.14*	.02	.20**	.14*	.27***	.14*	-.14*	-.08	.18**	-.09	-.12
20. Positive event controllability	3.50	.92	-.03	-.12	.11	.09	.17*	.17*	.12	.21**	.16*	-.20**	.06	.04	-.16*	-.06
21. Positive event novelty	2.68	1.06	.00	-.16*	.03	.02	-.01	.03	.02	.10	.08	.04	.00	-.06	-.02	.11
22. Positive event criticality	4.01	.68	-.01	-.05	.10	.06	.11	.19**	.11	.18**	.13	-.02	.07	.04	-.15*	-.06
23. Positive event disruptiveness	3.32	.92	.02	-.12	.10	.02	.01	.17*	.06	.19**	.15*	.00	-.03	.14*	-.15*	-.04
24. Negative event frequency	2.89	1.16	.12	.10	.00	-.08	.06	.05	-.04	.09	.00	.07	-.01	.07	.01	-.11
25. Negative event controllability	2.57	.99	-.02	-.23**	.08	.10	.00	.11	.03	.12	.08	-.04	-.04	.08	-.11	-.02
26. Negative event novelty	3.06	.88	.02	-.08	.00	-.01	-.04	.01	-.08	.02	-.07	.09	.01	-.08	.07	.08
27. Negative event criticality	3.25	.90	.01	-.13	.02	-.05	-.04	.04	-.16*	.06	-.01	.05	.04	-.02	-.05	.01
28. Negative event disruptiveness	3.08	.90	.10	-.03	.04	-.11	.01	.07	-.11	.11	-.04	.12	.07	-.02	-.05	-.02
29. Job search self-efficacy T2	3.82	.67	-.01	-.11	.26***	.17*	.09	.22**	.16*	.17*	.19**	-.11	-.05	.10	-.05	-.05
30. Perceived progress T2	3.73	.89	-.14*	-.09	-.03	-.04	.11	.11	.16*	.08	.07	-.06	.08	.00	-.07	-.08
31. Job offer T2	4.14	2.62	.07	.04	.04	-.08	-.01	.14*	.12	.09	.13	-.21**	-.02	-.08	.12	.08

Continued...	Mean	*SD*	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
15. Inadequate preparation	-	-	-																
16. Fierce competition	-	-	-.23**	-															
17. Negative feedback	-	-	-.39***	-.18**	-														
18. Unfair treatment	-	-	-.47***	-.21**	-.37***	-													
19. Positive event frequency	3.37	1.15	-.06	-.04	.06	.09	(.94)												
20. Positive event controllability	3.50	.92	.06	-.01	-.03	.02	.39***	(.88)											
21. Positive event novelty	2.68	1.06	.06	-.11	.02	.02	.08	.17*	(.91)										
22. Positive event criticality	4.01	.68	-.02	-.09	-.02	.10	.33***	.43***	.11	(.80)									
23. Positive event disruptiveness	3.32	.92	.03	-.14*	-.08	.10	.19**	.38***	.33***	.38***	(.87)								
24. Negative event frequency	2.89	1.16	-.05	.00	.18**	-.06	.38***	.16*	.21**	.19**	.14*	(.96)							
25. Negative event controllability	2.57	.99	.11	.11	-.04	-.13	.06	.26***	.21**	.06	.10	-.05	(.90)						
26. Negative event novelty	3.06	.88	.07	-.15*	.03	.02	.07	.07	.25***	.15*	.14*	.24***	.00	(.87)					
27. Negative event criticality	3.25	.90	.14*	-.07	.01	-.11	.00	.15*	.19**	.21**	.16*	.26***	.19**	.43***	(.86)				
28. Negative event disruptiveness	3.08	.90	.10	-.19**	.01	.00	.15*	.20**	.21**	.19**	.40***	.42***	.07	.44***	.63***	(.89)			
29. Job search self-efficacy T2	3.82	.67	-.07	.01	-.04	.08	.27***	.33***	-.07	.39***	.19**	.03	.19**	.00	.08	.08	(.94)		
30. Perceived progress T2	3.73	.89	-.01	.12	-.02	-.05	.13	.23**	-.07	.39***	.09	.08	.24***	.08	.21**	.15*	.49***	(.93)	
31. Job offer T2	4.14	2.62	.06	.04	-.12	.04	.11	-.06	-.12	-.05	-.14*	-.04	.03	-.05	.02	-.03	.16*	.08	-

Note. N = 214. T= time.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Table 2

Regression Analyses of Job Search Events on Job Search Self-efficacy, Perceived Progress, and The Number of Job Offers

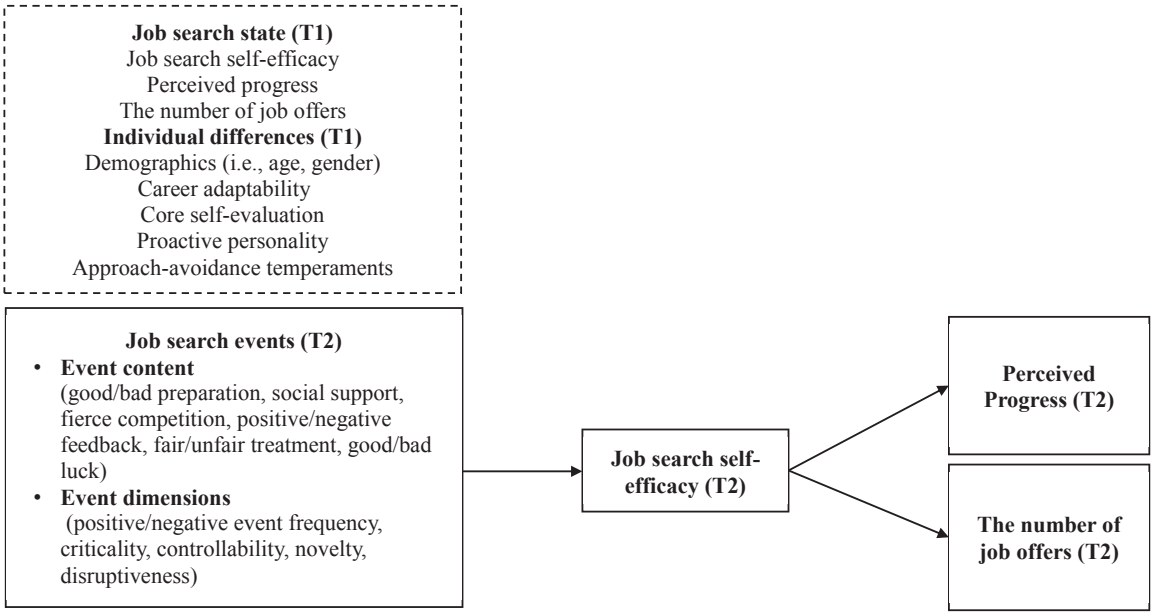
Variables	Job search self-efficacy(T2)		Perceived progress(T2)			The number of job offers(T2)		
	Model 1a	Model 2a	Model 1b	Model 2b	Model 3b	Model 1c	Model 2c	Model 3c
Control variables								
Age	-.03	-.02	-.13	-.13	-.12*	.07	.06	.06
Gender	-.08	-.06	-.10	-.05	-.03	.06	.07	.09
Job search self-efficacy (T1)	.18*	.15*	-.07	-.09	-.16*	.04	.04	.01
Perceived progress (T1)	.08	.05	-.04	-.03	-.05	-.13	-.17*	-.18*
The number of job offers (T1)	.05	.02	.08	.04	.04	-.02	.01	.00
Career adaptability (T1)	.12	.04	.04	-.06	-.08	.12	.09	.08
Core self-evaluation (T1)	-.02	.03	.15	.19*	.18*	-.06	.00	-.00
Proactive personality (T1)	-.04	-.09	.02	-.01	.03	-.01	-.04	-.02
Approach (T1)	.08	.09	-.02	-.01	-.05	.05	.07	.06
Avoidance (T1)	-.05	.00	.02	.03	.02	-.21	-.17*	-.17
Independent variables								
Good preparation		-.02		.20	.21		-.09	-.09
Social support		.04		.17	.16		-.14	-.15
Positive feedback		.04		.08	.07		.12	.11
Fair treatment		.05		.06	.04		.05	.04
Inadequate preparation		-.24		-.02	.07		.24	.29
Fierce competition		-.15		.08	.14		.07	.10
Negative feedback		-.18		-.04	.04		.03	.07
Unfair treatment		-.19		-.04	.04		.19	.23
Positive event frequency		.11		.03	-.10		**.22***	**.20***
Negative event frequency		-.02		.01	.02		-.07	-.06
Positive event controllability		.13		.01	-.05		-.13	-.16
Positive event novelty		**-.17***		**-.18***	-.11		-.10	-.07
Positive event criticality		**.28*****		**.36*****	**.25*****		-.02	-.07
Positive event disruptiveness		.02		-.06	-.07		-.09	-.10
Negative event controllability		.14		**.22****	**.17***		.08	.06

Negative event novelty		-.03		.02	.03		-.05	-.05
Negative event criticality		.02		.11	.10		.11	.10
Negative event disruptiveness		.03		.08	.07		.00	-.01
Mediators								
Job search self-efficacy (T2)					**.41*****			**.20***
Adjusted R^2	.07	.20	.02	.22	.35	.03	.08	.10
ΔR^2		.13***		.20***	.13***		.05	.02*

Note. N = 214. T = Time. Table entries represent standardized parameter estimates.
$^{*}p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model



Note. T1 = Time 1 (9 months before graduation); T2= Time 2 (3 months before graduation). Variables in the dotted box are control variables. Time 1 job search state (i.e., job search self-efficacy, perceived progress, the number of job offers) and Time 1 individual factors (i.e., age, gender, career adaptability, core self-evaluation, proactive personality, and approach-avoidance temperaments) were controlled in the model.

APPENDIX A

The complete prompts used to elicit the job events from participants are presented below.

1. Positive events:

"Please recall one typical event that had a positive impact on your job search outcomes, which happened during your job searching process in the last six months. Describe it in the blank sheet we provided for you. You may describe any kind of events."

2. Negative events:

"Please recall one typical event that had a negative impact on your job search outcomes, which happened during your job searching process in the last six months. Describe it in the blank sheet we provided for you. You may describe any kind of events."

APPENDIX B

Job search self-efficacy (Saks, Zikic, & Koen, 2015)

3. I have the confidence to prepare resumes that will get me job interviews.
4. I have the confidence to impress interviewers during employment interviews.
5. I have the confidence to prepare a sales pitch that will attract the interest of employers.
6. I have the confidence to find out where job openings exist.
7. I have the confidence to search for and find good job opportunities
8. I have the confidence to be successful in my job search.
9. I have the confidence to be invited to job interviews.
10. I have the confidence to get a job offer in an organization that I want to work in.
11. I have the confidence to get a job offer for a job that I really want.
12. I have the confidence to obtain a very good job.

Perceived job search progress (Wanberg, Zhu, & Van Hooft, 2010)

1. I made good progress on my job search.
2. I moved forward with my job search.

The number of job offers (Brown, Cober, Kane, Levy, & Shalhoop, 2006)

1. How many job offers have you received.

Frequency of job search events (Bright, Pryor, Chan, & Rijanto, 2009)

1. Similar events happened many times during my job search.
2. Similar events happened very frequently as I search for jobs.

Criticality of job search events (Morgeson & DeRue, 2006)

1. This event is important for my job search.
2. This event is of great significance to my job search.
3. I need to give this event a priority in my job search.

Controllability of job search events (Bright, Pryor, Chan, & Rijanto, 2009)

1. I have a lot of control over this event.
2. I am able to control this event.

Novelty of job search events (Morgeson, 2005)

1. There is no clear or known way to respond to this event

2. There is no understandable sequence of steps that can be followed by me in responding to this event.
3. There are no established procedures and practices for me to rely on in responding to this event.
4. I have to figure out how to deal with this event by myself when it happened.

Disruptiveness of job search events (Morgeson, 2005; Morgeson & DeRue, 2006)

1. This event altered my normal way of job search.
2. This event caused me to stop and think about how to respond.
3. This event required me to change my way of job search
4. This event influenced and changed the normal process of my job search.

Career adaptability (Maggiori, Rossier, & Savickas, 2017)

1. I think about what my future will be like.
2. I prepare for the future.
3. I am aware of the educational and vocational choices that I must make.
4. I make decisions by myself.
5. I take responsibility for my actions.
6. I count on myself.
7. I look for opportunities to grow as a person.
8. I investigate options before making a choice.
9. I observe different ways of doing things.
10. I take care to do things well.
11. I learn new skills.
12. I work up to my ability.

Core self-evaluation (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003)

1. I am confident I get the success I deserve in life.
2. Sometimes I feel depressed. (R)
3. When I try, I generally succeed.
4. Sometimes when I fail, I feel worthless. (R)
5. I complete tasks successfully.
6. Sometimes, I do not feel in control of my work. (R)
7. Overall, I am satisfied with myself.
8. I am filled with doubts about my competence. (R)

9. I determine what will happen in my life.
10. I do not feel in control of my success in my career. (R)
11. I am capable of coping with most of my problems.
12. There are times when things look pretty bleak and hopeless to me. (R)

Proactive personality (Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999).)

1. I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life.
2. Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change.
3. Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality.
4. If I see something I don't like, I fix it.
5. No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen.
6. I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition.
7. I excel at identifying opportunities.
8. I am always looking for better ways to do things.
9. If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen.
10. I can spot a good opportunity long before others can.

Avoidance-approach temperaments (Elliot & Thrash, 2010)

1. By nature, I am a very nervous person.
2. It doesn't take much to make me worry.
3. I feel anxiety and fear very deeply.
4. I react very strongly to bad experiences.
5. When it looks like something bad could happen, I have a strong urge to escape.
6. It is easy for me to imagine bad things that might happen to me.
7. When I see an opportunity for something I like, I immediately get excited.
8. I'm always on the lookout for positive opportunities and experiences.
9. It doesn't take a lot to get me excited and motivated.
10. When good things happen to me, it affects me very strongly.
11. When I want something, I feel a strong desire to go after it.
12. Thinking about the things I want really energizes me.

Note. The *R* in brackets indicates the items which need to be reversely coded.