Job Search Behaviors of Vocational and General High School Graduates: A Comparative Research

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Abstract: This study examines senior high school and vocational high school graduates' job search outcomes in Banten and West Java, Indonesia, high-unemployment regions. It examines how financial hardships, self-efficacy, and social support affect job search behaviors and outcomes. Survey research uses questionnaires to collect data. A cross-sectional time horizon is used to capture job search behavior in a non-contrived setting. Data from 512 female participants was analyzed to determine how variables affected job search outcomes. Data suggests that vocational high school graduates have stronger relationships between self-efficacy, job search behaviors, and outcomes than general high school graduates. It's important to tailor job search support and interventions to different educational backgrounds. This study sheds light on how financial hardship, self-efficacy, and social support affect job search behaviour and outcomes for Indonesian general and vocational high school graduates. For vocational graduates, self-efficacy indirectly affects job search outcomes through job search behaviors more than for general graduates. Vocational graduates are more affected by job search behaviors than general high school graduates. These findings demonstrate the differences in job search dynamics between educational backgrounds and suggest ways to tailor career support interventions to Indonesia's demographic bonus and Golden Indonesia 2045 vision.

Keyword: Job Search Behavior, Job Search Outcomes, Comparative, Vocational High School, General High School.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is currently experiencing a demographic bonus, with a large proportion of its population in the productive age range (15-64 years old). This demographic shift is expected to peak around 2030, providing a window of opportunity for economic growth leading up to the country's goal of achieving "Golden Indonesia" by 2045, which marks 100 years of independence (Teguh, 2019). The demographic bonus provides an opportunity to boost economic growth. Studies estimate it could increase annual real GDP growth by close to 1

percentage point during 2020-2050 (International Monetary Fund, 2016). In order to capture advantages of the demographic bonus, Indonesia need to focus on creating sufficient quality jobs to absorb the growing working-age population (International Monetary Fund, 2016), improving human capital through education and skills development (Adriani, D. & Yustini, 2021), increasing women's participation in the labor market and encouraging savings and productive investments (International Monetary Fund, 2016).

Indonesian government has been pushing to increase the ratio of vocational to general high schools to 70:30 by 2025. This policy aims to reduce dropout rates and increase workforce readiness, as only 17-20% of general high school graduates continue to higher education (Wahyudi et al., 2023). Both general and vocational high school graduates face high unemployment rates, with secondary education graduates having the highest unemployment rate at 8.89% as of August 2022. There is a mismatch between education system outcomes and labor market demands, leading to job mismatches and unemployment (Ariansyah et al., 2024).

Employers often complain about the low soft skills competency of vocational education graduates. There are a lot of high school students who don't fully understand how important soft skills are to success in both personal and professional life. Studies have shown that students like to learn soft skills through language classes and educational technology. This means that these skills need to be taught in a more unified way (Rahate Ellah & Azmi, 2023). Graduates of vocational high schools, particularly those that specialize in mechanical engineering, exhibit a notable lack of soft skills. Instructional models have been developed to address this gap, and research has identified 27 specific soft skills that are essential for these students. Nevertheless, the implementation of such models is not yet widespread (Hartanto et al., 2019). Lack of student engagement, insufficient parent collaboration, and an unsupportive school culture hinder vocational schoolteachers' efforts to integrate soft skills. These obstacles impede soft skill development (Syamsudin et al., 2018).

National Statistics Agency in Indonesia guided by The Labor Force Concept issued by International Labor Organization (ILO), conducted a Labor Force survey. And according to the Report of Labor Force Situation in Indonesia stated that, total Indonesian population at age 15 years and above, is around 211.59 million people by February 2023 (BPS-Statistics, Indonesia, 2023). From the total figure, 64.97 million people are considered as non-workforce. Of 64.97 million people of non-workforce, approximately 16.79 million people are attending school. Shown in Figure 1 of those 16.79 million people, approximately 14.36 million people (85.5%) are attending school at the age of 15 to 19 years old. National educational system in Indonesia for secondary educational level are consist of general high school and vocational high school (National Education System, 2003). Therefore, it is essential to equip these high school graduates, both general high school and vocational high school, with proper tools and understand components that influence their job search behaviors among these job seekers, especially those who are seeking for a job actively.

In order to take advantage of Indonesia's demographic bonus and achieve Golden Indonesia vision, which aims to transform Indonesia into a sovereign, advanced, fair, and prosperous nation by its centennial independence anniversary in 2045, especially related to human development, Republic of Indonesia Government through its Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology has compiled programs for the development of human capital. Average Indonesia's workforce (BPS-Statistics, Indonesia, 2023) is dominated by people with high school graduates, regardless from general high school or vocational high school. Therefore, it is becoming imperative to put more concerns in developing these graduates job seekers.

METHOD

The research objective is to investigate job search outcome achieved by individuals graduated from senior high school and individuals graduated from vocational high school, based on job search behaviors that positively related from individuals' financial hardships, self-efficacy, and social support (Kweitsu et al., 2022).

For research strategy, the study will be conducted using survey research with questionnaires as the primary data collection method, The medium interference of researcher allows for a certain degree of control and guidance in administering the questionnaires while still maintaining the authenticity of responses from the participants. The research will be conducted in a non-contrived setting. Questions drawn from previous studies, ensuring that they are relevant and validated and are distributed via online platforms. Responses are measured using a Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

The unit of analysis for this research comprises two distinct groups, which are individuals with minimum level of education senior high school or vocational high school in Banten and West Java area of Indonesia. These two groups will be examined separately to identify variations in job search behavior. The study employs a cross-sectional time horizon, which means that data will be collected at a single point in time, allowing for a snapshot of job search behavior among the participants at that specific moment. Multi-group analysis will be carried out to compare the hypothesis testing.

The study examines how job search behaviors, which are influenced by financial hardships, self-efficacy, and social support, affect job search outcomes. The study's objectives include examining the components that influence job search behaviors among these graduates, identifying the roles of financial hardships, job search self-efficacy, and social support in this process, and analyzing how job search behaviors mediate these components to affect job search outcomes.

Financial Hardships (FH)

The term of financial hardships in this article is referring to the financial requirements of an individual are determined by both their short-term ability to satisfy current living expenses and their long-term retirement security assessment (Kiymaza & Öztürkkal, 2019). Questionnaires related has 3 items, such as "How difficult is it for you to live from your total household income right now?".

Self-Efficacy (SE)

The term of self-efficacy in this article is referring to a job seekers' confidence in their competencies to look for and furthermore secure a job (Matijaš & Seršić, 2021). Questionnaires related has 6 items, such as "How confident are you in recognizing that their own strengths would increase the chances of getting a job?" and "How confident are you in contacting and persuading employers to consider them for the job?".

Social Support (SS)

The term of social support in this article is referring to the assistance, encouragement, and resources provided by others in their social environment to help the job seeker in their job search process (Holmstrom et al., 2015). Questionnaires related has 5 items, such as "How does people's comments influence your confidence in looking for a job?", and "How important is useful information about your job search from colleagues?".

Job Search Behaviors (JB)

The term of job search behaviors in this article is referring to the actions and strategies that individuals use to search for employment opportunities (van Hooft et al., 2021).

Questionnaires related has 6 items, such as "Read the help wanted classified ads in a newspaper, journal, or professional association.", and "Spoke with previous employers or business acquaintances about their knowing of potential job leads".

Job Search Outcomes (JO)

The term of job search outcomes in this article is referring to the results or consequences of an the job seekers' job search behaviors, such as interviews and job offers (van Hooft et al., 2021). Questionnaires related has 4 items, such as "How many interviews/job offers have you had in Indonesia?".

The research utilize purposive sampling as one of non-probability sampling, which in this case the aim of this study is to obtain 250 respondents with high school education level and 250 respondents of vocational high school education level. The number respondents are calculated based on assumption for each question required 10 respondents (Goodhue et al., 2012). Participants would be general high school graduates and vocational high school graduates within Banten Area and West Java Area, as the top two of unemployment rate with 7.97% and 7.89%, respectively (BPS-Statistics, Indonesia, 2023). This method ensures that the sample includes a specific number of participants from each group, although it may not be statistically representative of the population.

Statistical analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural–Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to investigate the relationships between multiple variables, including financial hardship, self-efficacy, social support, job search behaviors, and job search outcomes among high school and vocational high school graduates in the Banten and West Java areas of Indonesia.

Prior analysis, pretests of questionnaires are conducted to ensure their reliability and validity with 30 samples. Indicator loading threshold is cap at minimum 0.50, refering to [45] mentioned on PLS-SEM suggests that indicator loadings should be 0.708 or higher. However, they note that in exploratory research, loadings of 0.40 to 0.70 can be retained if removing the indicator does not increase composite reliability. They state that indicators with very low loadings (below 0.40) should be eliminated. [46] suggests that indicators with outer loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 should be considered for removal only if the deletion leads to an increase in composite reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) above the suggested threshold value. These sources collectively suggest that while 0.70 is often considered ideal, 0.50 is generally accepted as a minimum threshold for indicator loadings in PLS-SEM, especially in exploratory research (Henseler et al., 2009).

Furthermore, analysis involved examining the outer loadings matrix, a higher loading indicates a stronger relationship, suggesting that the indicator is a good measure of the latent construct. For instance, the loading of 0.919 for the indicator FH.3 on the latent variable Financial Hardship suggests a strong relationship, indicating that this indicator is a reliable measure of Financial Hardship.

The PLS-SEM analysis began with the assessment of the reflective measurement model to ensure the reliability and validity of the constructs. This involved assessing path coefficients, R-squared values, and significance levels to determine the impact of Financial Hardship, Self-Efficacy, and Social Support on Job Search Behaviors and Job Search Outcomes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis: Pls-Sem

Data Analysis: Reflective Measurement Model

In the context of PLS-SEM, a higher loading indicates a stronger relationship, suggesting that the indicator is a good measure of the latent construct. The indicator loadings shown in Table 9 represent the factor loadings of the observed variables (indicators) on their respective latent constructs in a structural equation model.

Financial Hardship: FH.1 has a loading of 0.720 on the Financial Hardship construct, indicating a moderately strong relationship. FH.2 has a loading of 0.647, suggesting a moderate relationship. FH.3 has the highest loading of 0.888, indicating a very strong relationship with Financial Hardship.

Job Search Behavior: JB.2 has a loading of 0.662 on the Job Search Behavior construct, suggesting a moderate relationship. JB.5 and JB.6 have high loadings of 0.863 and 0.861 respectively, indicating strong relationships with Job Search Behavior.

Job Search Outcomes: JO.1 has a loading of 0.822 on the Job Search Outcomes construct, suggesting a strong relationship. JO.2 has a loading of 0.870, indicating a strong relationship. JO.3 has the highest loading of 0.895, representing a very strong relationship with Job Search Outcomes. JO.4 has a loading of 0.859, also suggesting a strong relationship.

Self-Efficacy: SE.2 has a loading of 0.718 on the Self Efficacy construct, indicating a moderately strong relationship. SE.3 has the lowest loading of 0.566, suggesting a moderate relationship. SE.4 and SE.5 have higher loadings of 0.803 and 0.790 respectively, representing strong relationships with Self Efficacy.

Social Support: SS.1 and SS.5 has a loading of 0.764 and 0.803, respectively on the Social Support construct, suggesting a moderately strong relationship.

The constructs show varying levels of reliability and validity. Job Outcomes and Job Search Behavior exhibit strong reliability and validity across all measures. Financial Hardship and Self Efficacy have some concerns with Cronbach's alpha but are otherwise reliable and valid. Social Support has significant issues with Cronbach's alpha and rho_a, which could indicate that some items may not be consistent with the underlying construct. The AVE values for all constructs are above the threshold, suggesting that the constructs have good convergent validity.

The HTMT values are all below the recommended threshold of 0.85, indicating acceptable discriminant validity among the constructs. In summary, the table shows that most constructs demonstrate satisfactory reliability and validity, except for Social Support having a slightly lower AVE value.

Data Analysis: Structural Model Assessment – General High School Graduates

Following verification of the reflecting measurement model's robustness, we evaluated the structural model for every school type, paying special attention to important metrics including the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), R2 values, and Q2 values. From Table 12, Financial Hardship has a VIF value of 1.014 and both Self-Efficacy dan Social Support has value of 1.201, indicating no multicollinearity issues for this predictor. Job Search Behavior has a VIF value of 1.000, which is well below the commonly used threshold of 5 or 10, suggesting no significant multicollinearity concerns. Job Search Outcomes has a VIF value of 1.134, also indicating no multicollinearity problems. Self-Efficacy has a VIF value of 1.000, meaning there is no multicollinearity present for this predictor variable.

In this case, all VIF values are below the more conservative threshold of 3.3, well within the acceptable range. This suggests that there are no significant multicollinearity problems among the predictor variables in the structural equation model. Therefore, the collinearity statistics indicate that the predictor variables can be reliably used in the analysis without concerns about multicollinearity distorting the results.

Job Search Behavior has R-squared value of 0.162. This means that 16.2% of the variance in Job Search Behavior is explained by its predictor variables in the model. Job Search Outcomes has R-squared value is 0.141. This indicates that 14.1% of the variance in Job Search Outcomes is accounted for by its predictor variables.

R-squared is a statistical measure that represents the proportion of the variance for a dependent variable that is explained by the independent variables in a regression model. It ranges from 0 to 1, where higher values indicate a greater proportion of variance explained by the model.

An R-squared value of 0.162 suggests that the model explains 16.2% of the variance in Job Search Behavior. This is a relatively low value, indicating that while the model does capture some of the factors influencing Job Search Behavior, a significant portion of the variance is still unexplained. This suggests that there may be other important factors not included in the model that influence Job Search Behavior.

An R-squared value of 0.141 indicates that the model explains 14.1% of the variance in Job Search Outcomes. This is a low value, suggesting that there is still a substantial amount of variance that is not explained by the model. This implies that additional variables or factors might be needed to better explain the outcomes.

In summary, the R-squared values for Job Search Behavior and Job Search Outcomes indicate the model explain a portion of the variance, however there is room for improvement by potentially including additional relevant variables to better capture the factors influencing these outcomes.

Path Coefficients Direct Effect for General High School showing the following. Financial Hardship → Job Search Behaviors: The path coefficient is 0.206 with a p-value of 0.003. The path coefficient value indicates between Financial Hardship and Job Search Behavior a positive relationship and moderate effect size, implying that financial hardship has a noticeable but not overwhelming impact on job search behavior. And the p-value of the relationship between Financial Hardship and Job Search Behavior is considered statistically significant and there is sufficient evidence to conclude that financial hardship does indeed influence job search behavior.

Job Search Behaviors → Job Search Outcomes: The path coefficient is 0.376 with a p-value of 0.000. This indicates a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between Job Search Behaviors and Job Search Outcomes, suggesting the data supports the hypothesis that job search behaviors positively influence job search outcomes, and this effect is statistically significant.

Self-Efficacy → Job Search Behaviors: The path coefficient is 0.222 with a p-value of 0.000. This means that as self-efficacy increases, job search behaviors also tend to increase. The value of 0.222 suggests a moderate effect size, implying that self-efficacy has a noticeable impact on job search behaviors. This means that the observed effect is very unlikely to be due to chance, providing strong evidence that self-efficacy indeed influences job search behaviors.

Social Support → Job Search Behaviors: The path coefficient is 0.160 with a p-value of 0.013. Combining these two metrics shows that the data supports the hypothesis that social support positively influences job search behaviors, and this effect is statistically significant. Since this p-value is less than the commonly used threshold of 0.05, the relationship between Social Support and Job Search Behaviors is considered statistically significant. This means that the observed effect is unlikely to be due to chance, and there is sufficient evidence to conclude that social support does indeed influence job search behaviors.
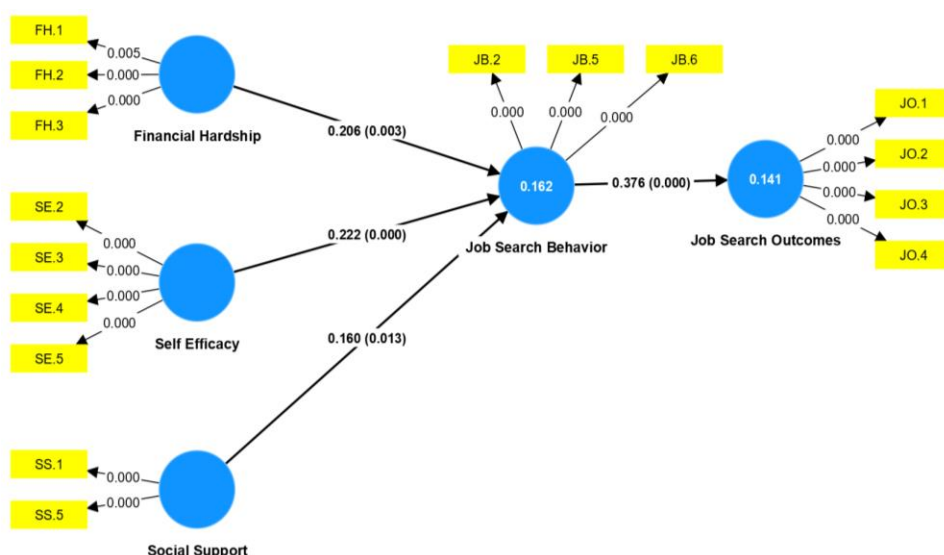
Figure 1. Hypothesis Testing - General High School

Path Coefficients Indirect Effect – General High School shows the following. Financial Hardship → Job Search Outcomes: The path coefficient is 0.077 with a p-value of 0.006. suggests that Financial Hardship affects Job Search Outcomes through mediating variables, such as Job Search Behaviors. Since this p-value is well below the commonly used threshold of 0.05, the indirect effect between Financial Hardship and Job Search Outcomes is means that the observed indirect effect is very unlikely to be due to chance, providing strong evidence that financial hardship influences job search outcomes through the mediating variable(s).

Self-Efficacy → Job Search Outcomes: The path coefficient is 0.083 with a p-value of 0.001. A value of 0.083 suggests a small but positive indirect effect, meaning that as self-efficacy increases, job search outcomes tend to improve slightly through the mediating variable(s). The data supports the hypothesis that self-efficacy positively influences job search outcomes through an indirect pathway, and this effect is statistically significant.

Social Support → Job Search Outcomes: The path coefficient is 0.060 with a p-value of 0.026. A value of 0.060 suggests a small positive indirect effect, meaning that as social support increases, job search outcomes tend to improve slightly through the mediating variable(s). A p-value of 0.026 indicates that there is a 2.6% chance that the observed indirect effect is due to random variation, assuming the null hypothesis (no indirect effect) is true. The p-value of 0.026 indicates that this indirect relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, the data supports the hypothesis that social support positively influences job search outcomes through an indirect pathway, and this effect is statistically significant.

Data Analysis: Structural Model Assessment – Vocational High School Graduates

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values in PLS-SEM results provided show for constructs like Financial Hardship, Job Search Behaviors, Job Search Outcomes, Self-Efficacy, and Social Support, with all reported VIF values below the commonly accepted threshold of 5. This suggests that multicollinearity is not a concern for these constructs within the model, indicating that the model's estimates are likely reliable and interpretable in terms of the individual effects of predictors.

R-squared, denoted as 0.287 for Job Search Behaviors and Job Search Outcomes in the provided PLS-SEM results, indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that is predictable from the independent variables. In this case, 28.7% of the variance in Job Search Behaviors and Job Search Outcomes can be explained by the model's predictors. This suggests

that the model has a moderate explanatory power. In other words, while the model does capture a significant portion of the variance, there is still a substantial amount of variance (71.3%) that is not explained by the model, indicating that other factors not included in the model may also be influencing Job Search Behavior and Job Search Outcomes.

Path Coefficients Direct Effect for Vocational High School showing the following. Financial Hardship → Job Search Behaviors, there is a statistically significant positive relationship between Financial Hardship and Job Search Behaviors, with a p-value less than 0.05, indicating strong evidence against the null hypothesis. With Path coefficient: 0.167, T statistic: 3.033 and P-value: 0.001.

Job Search Behaviors → Job Search Outcomes, there is a statistically significant positive relationship between Job Search Behaviors and Job Search Outcomes, with a p-value less than 0.001, indicating very strong evidence against the null hypothesis. With Path coefficient: 0.536, T statistic: 10.044 and P-value: 0.000.

Self-Efficacy → Job Search Behaviors, there is a statistically significant positive relationship between Self Efficacy and Job Search Behaviors, with a p-value less than 0.001, indicating very strong evidence against the null hypothesis. With Path coefficient: 0.388, T statistic: 6.585 and P-value: 0.000.

Social Support → Job Search Behaviors with Path coefficient: 0.198, T statistic: 2.900 and P-value: 0.002, showing that the value of 0.198 suggests a moderate effect size, implying that social support has a noticeable impact on job search behaviors. Since this p-value is well below the commonly used threshold of 0.05, the relationship between Social Support and Job Search Behaviors is considered highly statistically significant. These two metrics indicate a moderate and statistically significant positive direct effect, suggesting that increased social support leads to more active job search behaviors.
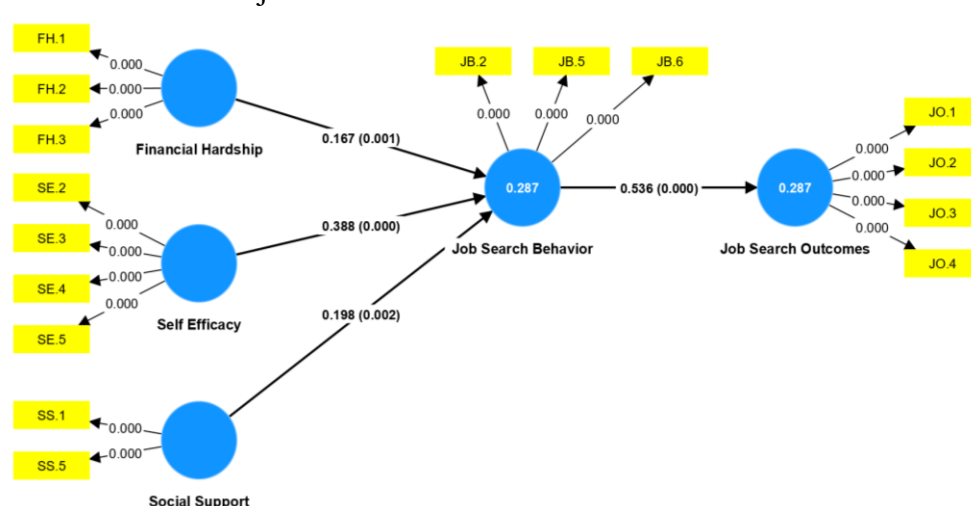

Figure 2. Hypothesis Testing - Vocational High School

The total indirect effect of Financial Hardship on Job Search Outcomes is 0.089, with a T statistic of 2.823 and a p-value of 0.002, indicating the data supports the hypothesis that financial hardship positively influences job search outcomes through an indirect pathway, and this effect is statistically significant.

The total indirect effect of Self-Efficacy on Job Search Outcomes is 0.208, with a T statistic of 5.314 and a p-value of 0.000, supports the hypothesis that self-efficacy positively influences job search outcomes through an indirect pathway, and this effect is statistically significant.

The total indirect effect of Social Support on Job Search Outcomes is 0.106, with a T statistic of 2.784 and a p-value of 0.003, supports the hypothesis that social support positively influences job search outcomes through an indirect pathway, and this effect is statistically significant.

In summary, the hypothesis testing results indicate that all the examined relationships are statistically significant. The positive path coefficients suggest that increases in the predictor constructs are associated with increases in the outcome constructs.

Discussion
Financial Hardship and the Relationship with Job Search Behaviors

Table 1. Comparison Financial Hardship to Job Search Behaviors

Financial Hardship → Job Search Behaviors	General High School Graduates	Vocational High School Graduates
Path coefficient	0.206	0.167
p-Value	0.003	0.001

Table 1 presents the relationship between financial hardship and job search behaviors among two groups: general high school graduates and vocational high school graduates. For general High School graduates, the path coefficient of 0.206 indicates a moderate positive relationship between Financial Hardship and Job Search Behavior. For Vocational High School graduates, the path coefficient of 0.167 also indicates a positive relationship, but it is slightly weaker compared to general High School graduates. Both relationships are statistically significant, but the effect for Vocational High School graduates is slightly more statistically significant (p-value of 0.001) compared to general High School graduates (p-value of 0.003).

It's important to note that both groups show a positive relationship, meaning that as financial hardship increases, so does job search behavior. While financial hardship also significantly impacts their job search behavior, the effect is slightly weaker. This might suggest that other factors, possibly related to their vocational training, also play a crucial role in their job search behavior.

Table 2. Comparison Indirect Effect of Financial Hardship to Job Search Outcomes

Financial Hardship → Job Search Behavior → Job Search Outcomes	General High School Graduates	Vocational High School Graduates
Path coefficient	0.077	0.089
p-Value	0.006	0.002

Table 2 explores the indirect effect of financial hardship on job search outcomes through job search behaviors. For General High School Students, Financial hardship has a small but statistically significant indirect impact on their job search outcomes. This indicates that interventions aimed at alleviating financial hardship could improve job search outcomes indirectly, possibly through enhancing job search behaviors.For Vocational High School Students, Financial hardship has a slightly stronger and statistically significant indirect impact on their job search outcomes.

The comparison indicates that financial hardship indirectly influences job search outcomes in both groups, with a slightly stronger effect for Vocational High School graduates. This suggests that financial hardship interventions could be particularly beneficial for Vocational High School graduates, potentially leading to better job search outcomes through improved job search behaviors or other mediating factors.

Self-Efficacy and the Relationship with Job Search Behaviors

Table 3. Comparison Self Efficacy to Job Search Behaviors

Self-Efficacy → Job Search Behaviors	General High School Graduates	Vocational High School Graduates
Path coefficient	0.222	0.388
p-Value	0.000	0.000

For Vocational High School graduates, the path coefficient of 0.388 indicates a stronger positive relationship between Self-Efficacy and Job Search Behavior compared to general High School graduates. Both general High School graduates and Vocational High School graduates, the p-value is 0.000. This indicates that the relationship is highly statistically significant for both groups, with an extremely low probability (less than 0.1%) that the observed effect is due to random variation. The direct effect of Self-Efficacy on Job Search Behavior is stronger for Vocational High School graduates (0.388) compared to general High School graduates (0.222). This suggests that self-efficacy has a more pronounced impact on job search behavior among Vocational High School graduates. This suggests that interventions to enhance self-efficacy could be particularly beneficial for Vocational High School graduates, potentially leading to more active and effective job search behaviors.

Table 4. Comparison Indirect Effect of Self-Efficacy to Job Search Outcomes

Self-Efficacy → Job Search Behaviors → Job Search Outcomes	General High School Graduates	Vocational High School Graduates
Path coefficient	0.083	0.208
p-Value	0.001	0.000

The indirect effect of Self-Efficacy on Job Search Outcomes is stronger for Vocational High School graduates (0.208) compared to general High School graduates (0.083). Both indirect effects are highly statistically significant, as indicated by the p-values of 0.001 for general High School graduates and 0.000 for Vocational High School graduates.

Self-efficacy has a small but statistically significant indirect impact on General High School graduates' job search outcomes. This indicates that interventions aimed at enhancing self-efficacy could improve job search outcomes indirectly, possibly through enhancing job search behaviors. While for Vocational High School Graduates, Self-efficacy has a moderate and statistically significant indirect impact on their job search outcomes. The comparison indicates that self-efficacy indirectly influences job search outcomes in both groups, with a stronger effect for Vocational High School graduates. This suggests that interventions to enhance self-efficacy could be particularly beneficial for Vocational High School graduates, potentially leading to better job search outcomes through improved job search behaviors or other mediating factors.

Social Support and the Relationship with Job Search Behaviors

Table 5. Comparison Social Support to Job Search Behaviors

Social Support → Job Search Behaviors	General High School Graduates	Vocational High School Graduates
Path coefficient	0.160	0.198
p-Value	0.013	0.002

General High School graduates, the direct effect (0.160) indicates a moderate positive relationship between Social Support and Job Search Behavior. As for Vocational High School graduates, the direct effect (0.198) is slightly stronger, suggesting a more substantial positive relationship between Social Support and Job Search Behavior. And both direct effects are statistically significant, with the effect for Vocational High School graduates being more significant (p-value of 0.002 vs. 0.013).

The stronger direct effect for Vocational High School graduates might be due to their more specific career focus and the potential for more targeted social support related to their chosen vocational field. These findings highlight the importance of fostering social support networks for both general and Vocational High School graduates, as it can significantly impact their job search behaviors. However, the slightly stronger effect for Vocational High School graduates suggests that tailored social support interventions might be particularly beneficial for this group in enhancing their job search efforts.

Table 6. Comparison Indirect Effect of Social Support to Job Search Outcomes

Social Support → Job Search Behaviors → Job Search Outcomes	General High School Graduates	Vocational High School Graduates
Path coefficient	0.060	0.106
p-Value	0.026	0.003

The indirect effect of Social Support on Job Search Outcomes is notably stronger for Vocational High School graduates (0.106) compared to general High School graduates (0.060). This suggests that social support has a more pronounced indirect impact on job search outcomes among Vocational High School graduates. Both indirect effects are statistically significant, with the effect for Vocational High School graduates being more significant (p-value of 0.003 vs. 0.026).

For General High School graduates, social support has a small but significant indirect impact on their job search outcomes. This suggests that enhancing social support could lead to modest improvements in job search outcomes through job search behaviors. Related to Vocational High School graduates, social support has a stronger and more significant indirect impact on their job search outcomes. This indicates that interventions to enhance social support could potentially lead to more substantial improvements in job search outcomes for this group, likely through more effective job search behaviors or other mediating factors.

The comparison reveals the stronger indirect effect for Vocational High School graduates might be attributed to more specific career goals, allowing for more targeted social support, potentially stronger connections between social support, job search behaviors, and outcomes in vocational fields, and possibility that social support plays a more crucial role in navigating the job market for vocational specializations. Benefits of Social Support, are

- Emotional boost: Supportive networks provide encouragement, motivation, and validation, which can help combat feelings of loneliness, frustration, and self-doubt often associated with job searching.
- Information and resources: Networks offer valuable information about potential job openings, industry insights, and connections to hiring managers or companies.
- Skill development and feedback: Feedback from trusted individuals can help you improve your resume, cover letter, interview skills, and overall job search strategy.
- Accountability and structure: Supportive networks can help you stay on track, set goals, and hold yourself accountable, providing a sense of structure and purpose.

Job Search Behaviors and the Relationship with Job Search Outcomes

Table 7 . Comparison Job Search Behaviors to Job Search Outcomes

Job Search Behaviors to Job Search Outcomes	General High School Graduates	Vocational High School Graduates
Path coefficient	0.376	0.536
p-Value	0.000	0.000

General High School graduates related to path coefficient of 0.376 indicates a strong positive relationship between Job Search Behavior and Job Search Outcomes. For Vocational High School graduates, the path coefficient of 0.536 indicates an even stronger positive relationship between Job Search Behavior and Job Search Outcomes. Both relationships are highly statistically significant, as indicated by the p-values of 0.000 for both groups. The comparison indicates that job search behavior directly influences job search outcomes in both groups, with a stronger effect for Vocational High School graduates. This suggests that interventions to enhance job search behaviors could be particularly beneficial for Vocational High School graduates, potentially leading to better job search outcomes due to their more focused and specialized job search strategies.

The higher path coefficient for vocational high school graduates implies that this group may experience a slightly stronger effect of job search behaviors on outcomes compared to general high school graduates. This could be due to a variety of factors, such as vocational training providing more targeted job search skills or better alignment with specific industry demands. Positive correlations based on the data we have gathered, influenced by various explanations as follows:

- Increased Effort and Persistence: Actively searching for jobs, applying to a significant number of relevant positions, and persisting through challenges are linked to higher chances of getting hired.
- Tailored Applications: Customized resumes and cover letters highlighting relevant skills and experience for each job significantly improve interview chances.
- Effective Networking: Building connections with professionals in your field opens doors to hidden opportunities and valuable information.
- Strong Interview Skills: Confidently communicating your value proposition, effectively answering questions, and demonstrating enthusiasm and engagement during interviews are crucial for securing job offers.
- Negotiation Skills: Advocating for yourself to obtain fair compensation and desired benefits shows your worth and increases job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Comparative research on job seekers, particularly those who are high school graduates, offers a multitude of practical and theoretical benefits that can significantly contribute to the understanding and improvement of job search processes, outcomes, and the broader implications for policy, education, and employment practices. Practically, such research can inform career guidance, curriculum development, policy making, and employer engagement strategies to better support high school graduates transitioning into the workforce. Theoretically, it enhances our understanding of job search behaviors, the impact of cultural and contextual factors, and the implications for social equity, providing a foundation for developing targeted interventions and policies. Moreover, by focusing on specific regions with high unemployment rates among high school graduates, this research underscores the importance of addressing the unique challenges faced by this demographic in the job market. Ultimately, comparative research on high school job seekers not only contributes to academic knowledge

but also has significant implications for economic development, social equity, and educational equity, highlighting the need for targeted efforts to improve employment outcomes for young people.

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