BE HAPPY, DON'T WAIT: THE ROLE OF TRAIT AFFECT IN JOB SEARCH

DANIEL B. TURBAN
University of Missouri

FELISSA K. LEE
Marquette University

SERGE P. DA MOTTA VEIGA
University of Missouri

DANA L. HAGGARD
Missouri State University

SHARON Y. WU
K12 Inc.

In this study we developed and tested a self-regulatory model of trait affect in job search. Specifically, we theorized that trait positive and negative affect would influence both motivation control and procrastination, and these mediating variables would, in turn, influence job search outcomes through job search intensity. Using longitudinal data from 245 graduating students who were searching for a full-time position, we found that positive, but not negative, affect influenced the self-regulatory variables of motivation control and procrastination, which in turn influenced the job search outcomes. Procrastination had direct effects on the number of first interviews, controlling for job search intensity, and on the number of second interviews, controlling for first interviews, suggesting the importance of timeliness of job search activities. We discuss the implications of such results for understanding the role of affect and self-regulation in the job search process and for measuring the quality as well as quantity (i.e., intensity) of job search tactics.

A job search is a time-consuming and emotionally charged process that involves substantial ambiguity as there are many possible ways to reach the goal of employment. During the search, job seekers need to use self-regulation strategies to manage their thoughts and behaviors as they attempt to accomplish job search behaviors in a timely manner and maintain effort during the job search (Kanfer, Wanberg, & Kantrowitz, 2001; Wanberg, Kanfer, & Rotundo, 1999). As such, a key factor distinguishing among equally qualified candidates is an effective self-regulation process, which is influenced by distal dispositional variables (Kanfer & Heggestad, 1997).

Affectivity may be among the most important distal dispositions to understand with respect to job search self-regulation because trait affectivity influences attention, perception, and cognitions (Elfenbein, 2007) and thus can influence how people engage in a job search. Nonetheless, the role of dispositional affect has been understudied in motivation frameworks (Seo, Barrett, & Bartunek, 2004), and limited research has investigated *whether and how* affective traits influence job search processes and success (Côté, Saks, & Zikic, 2006). The purpose of this study is to address this gap and examine the self-regulatory role of dispositional affect, which is theorized to influence the way a person is motivated and behaves (Seo et al., 2004; Seo, Bartunek, & Barrett, 2010). We are particularly interested in the impact positivity can play in effective self-regulation during the job search, in addition to the emphasis placed on controlling negative emotions. To explore these questions we use an approach and avoidance framework to examine how trait positive and negative affectivity are related to the self-regulatory variables of motivation control and procrastination, which in turn are related to job search intensity and outcomes. More specifically, using longitudinal data, we examine a model that looks at whether and how trait positive and negative affectivity influence job search processes and success.

Our study makes several contributions to the literature. First, we address calls (Kanfer et al., 2001) to delineate the processes through which relatively stable characteristics influence job search success. Specifically, as shown in Figure 1, positive and negative affectivity are distal variables that influence the proximal self-regulatory variables of motivation control and procrastination, which in turn influence job search outcomes through job search intensity. Notably, procrastination has received little attention in the job search literature, despite the clear relevance of this behavior for the job search process. Second, although scholars have called for research examining how affect influences job search processes and subsequent success, little research has examined the role of trait affectivity in the job search (Côté et al., 2006; Turban, Stevens, & Lee, 2009). We argue that the importance of positivity in the job search has been overlooked, at times
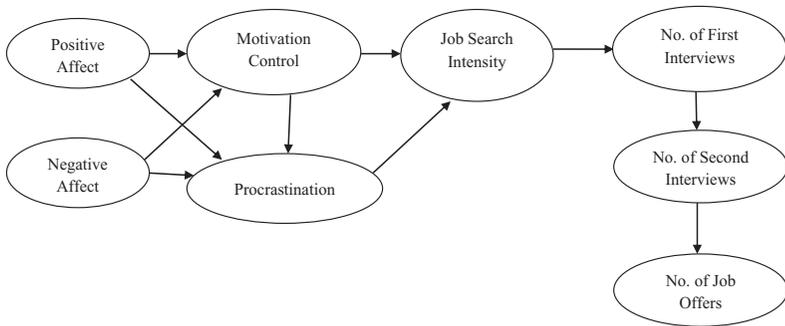
Figure 1: **Hypothesized Model.**

being confounded with an "absence of negativity." By examining both positive and negative affectivity in a self-regulatory model, we can better understand both affective patterns in their own right. Third, by examining job search intensity and sequential job search outcomes, we address calls in the literature to specify relationships among job search measures (Brasher & Chen, 1999) and further examine the unfolding process of job search (Saks, 2006). As such, we are able to examine factors that influence how success in early job search stages leads to success in later stages.

Background and Hypotheses

Approach-Avoidance Self-Regulatory Framework

The link between affect and self-regulation can be understood in terms of the approach and avoidance self-regulatory framework (Carver & White, 1994; Elliot & Thrash, 2001, 2002; Higgins, 1997). As noted by Elliot and Thrash (2001), the distinction between approach and avoidance motivation is an important conceptual lens for considering patterns of affect, thought, and behavior (Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Covington, 2001; Elliot & Thrash, 2002). The approach–avoidance distinction reflects two different approaches to goal striving. In general, individuals with an approach orientation are more likely to engage in goal-directed behavior, use active coping behaviors, and become more engaged in a given project or process. Individuals with an avoidance orientation are more sensitive to negative outcomes, more likely to experience greater anxiety, more likely to focus on alternative (and less threatening) activities, and more likely to avoid engaging with a particular goal or to delay pursuing a goal (Brockner & Higgins, 2001). Not surprisingly, people tend to accomplish more concrete goals (e.g., obtaining a job) by using an approach rather than an avoidance orientation (Kanfer & Heggestad, 1997).

Importantly, affect has been mapped onto the approach and avoidance framework such that positive affect is aligned with an approach orientation whereas negative affect is aligned with an avoidance orientation (Carver & White, 1994; Elliot & Thrash, 2002; Higgins, 1997). We theorize that the relatively stable traits of positive and negative affectivity predispose job seekers to view and pursue the job search from primarily an approach or avoidance orientation, in particular through self-regulatory behaviors. For example, individuals with more positive affectivity may view the job search process as an opportunity to get an interesting job (i.e., a reward) and approach the job search process with motivation and enthusiasm. However, job seekers with more negative affectivity may fear failing to get an adequate job and may therefore experience more stress and anxiety and tend to delay engaging in job search activities.

We investigate motivation control and procrastination, self-regulatory variables that reflect an approach and avoidance strategy, respectively. *Motivation control* refers to strategies used by individuals to stay focused and committed toward accomplishing one's goals (Creed, King, Hood, & McKenzie, 2009; Kanfer & Heggestad, 1997; Wanberg et al., 1999). Motivation control is an approach strategy as it includes self-initiated activities that help individuals maintain focus and effort on tasks leading to goal accomplishment (Kanfer & Heggestad, 1997). We extend job search research by examining *procrastination*, a self-handicapping strategy in which the person postpones or delays an intended course of action (Ferrari & Tice, 2000; McGregor & Elliot, 2002). Procrastination is an avoidance strategy as it involves activities and behaviors that result in avoiding or postponing tasks and decisions (Ferrari, Johnson, & McCown, 1995; Lay, 1986; Van Eerde, 2003). Thus, procrastination, by delaying the initiation of the search process or by completing low-priority activities, is a key way through which people demonstrate avoidance behavior during a job search. Although procrastination has not been investigated as a job search self-regulatory variable, we expect it is important because job seekers need to engage in goal-directed behaviors, such as completing applications and replying to potential employers, in a timely manner.

Although procrastination and motivation control represent avoidance and approach, respectively, they are not opposites, as they tap somewhat different self-regulatory actions: (a) initiating action and (b) maintaining focus and effort. For example, a person may be high on both procrastination and motivation control if the person begins tasks early but loses focus and commitment over time. Analogously, a person may have difficulty starting tasks early but have good motivation control skills once the task is started. In the following sections we elaborate our model as we discuss the hypothesized paths within the domain of job search.

Affect in the Job Search

Affectivity, which refers to a person's tendency to experience certain emotions across various situations, is considered a relatively stable attribute that influences motivation, how individuals approach various situations, and how information is encoded, stored, and retrieved (Baron, 2008; Elfenbein, 2007; Foo, Uy, & Baron, 2009; Seo et al., 2004). Consistent with much prior research, we conceptualize positive and negative affectivity as separate dimensions with distinct control mechanisms that reflect different biobehavioral systems (Seo, Barrett, & Jin, 2008; Tellegen, Watson, & Clark, 1999; Watson, Wiese, Vaidya, & Tellegen, 1999). Specifically, positive affectivity reflects the behavioral approach system whereas negative affectivity is associated with the avoidance system (Carver & White, 1994). In general, greater positive affectivity is associated with a tendency to experience more positive feelings such as enthusiasm, excitement, and alertness. Individuals with greater negative affectivity are more likely to experience feelings such as irritability, hostility, distress, and anxiety. We theorize that dispositional affect will influence the self-regulatory motivational processes needed to conduct a successful job search. As such, we extend previous research, which found effects for positive affect during the job search (Turban et al., 2009), by theorizing that both positive and negative affectivity influence self-regulatory mechanisms, in this case motivation control and procrastination, that are likely to link affectivity to job search success.

Positive affectivity. We theorize that positive affect energizes job seekers and thereby influences how job seekers regulate their job search process. Perhaps because of the emergence of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and positive organizational scholarship (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012) researchers have increasingly examined the role of positive affectivity and positive emotions in work settings (Sekera, Vacharkulksemsuk, & Fredrickson, 2012), although there is limited research in the job search process. We expect that individuals with greater positive affectivity are more likely to approach the job search with positive emotions such as enthusiasm, energy, and alertness. We draw upon Fredrickson's (2001) *broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions*, which notes that individuals with greater positive affectivity are more likely to engage in approach behaviors and to thus adaptively engage with their environment. More specifically, when individuals experience positive emotions they are more likely to have broader attention and cognitions, and a broader range of resulting behavior, which helps them develop personal resources that can be utilized in accomplishing goals, such as finding a job. For a job seeker, such personal resources might

include strategies for mentally encouraging oneself, analyzing feedback, setting goals, and identifying opportunities. In particular, job seekers with greater positive affectivity are more likely to stay energized following the inevitable rejections and stress that occur during the job search process (Baron, 2008; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002).

Recent models of goal striving and work motivation highlight the value of positive affectivity in generating proactive thoughts and behaviors (Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010; Seo et al., 2004). For example, Parker et al. (2010) argued that those higher in positive affectivity are likely to view themselves and possible options positively, to expect successful outcomes, to be internally motivated and committed to completing necessary tasks, and to be energized and action oriented. Applied to the job search process, these approaches suggest positive affectivity should prompt constructive approach-oriented strategies for finding employment.

Motivation control refers to self-regulatory strategies used by individuals to stay focused and committed toward accomplishing one's goals (Kanfer & Heggestad, 1997). Motivation control is theorized to be influenced by personality characteristics (Kanfer & Heggestad, 1997) and has been shown to be related to job search intensity and success (Creed et al., 2009; Wanberg et al., 1999). Because individuals with greater positive affectivity are more likely to have an approach motivation (Carver & White, 1994; Elliot & Covington, 2001), we theorize that positive affectivity will positively influence motivation control. Specifically, individuals with more positive affect, who have an approach motivation, and with greater resources to apply to the job search can better regulate their motivation using such strategies during the search.

Hypothesis 1a: Positive affectivity will be related positively to motivation control.

We extend prior research by examining procrastination as a self-regulatory variable in the job search. Procrastination, the delaying or postponing of an intended course of action (Ferrari & Tice, 2000; McGregor & Elliot, 2002; Wolters, 2003), has been studied in academic settings but has been relatively neglected in work settings (Steel, 2007). In academic settings, procrastination is associated with lower class performance and overall grade point average (GPA; see meta-analyses by Steel, 2007; Van Eerde, 2003). Such poorer performance may occur because procrastination is positively related to delay in starting the task and negatively related to time spent preparing for the task (Van Eerde, 2003). As procrastination is inconsistent with self-regulated learning (Wolters, 2003), we expect it is important in the job search process, which is a

self-regulated process in which job seekers need to learn how to conduct an effective search (Kanfer et al., 2001).

Procrastination is considered a self-handicapping strategy in which people engage in behaviors that allow them to manipulate attributions for failure or success. For example, when individuals delay starting a task, failure can be attributed to external obstacles and/or a lack of effort that protects the person's well-being (Ferrari & Tice, 2000; Van Eerde, 2000). Conversely, if the person accomplishes the task, success is attributed to personal characteristics and the overcoming of obstacles, which results in increased satisfaction and well-being. Meta-analytic results indicate that procrastinators tend to have higher self-handicapping and fear of failure motives (Steel, 2007; Van Eerde, 2000). Interestingly, some evidence suggests that procrastination enhances well-being early in a semester but results in lower well-being later in the semester (Tice & Baumeister, 1997). Thus, procrastination is a mechanism used to temporarily avoid a threat to protect short-term well-being but that has long-term costs (Tice & Baumeister, 1997; Van Eerde, 2000).

Procrastination is more prevalent in situations that provide evaluative information to a person and that are unstructured (Ferrari & Tice, 2000), characteristics that describe the job search. Furthermore, procrastinators are likely to perform poorly in situations and tasks that require timeliness (Piero, Giacomantonio, Pica, Kruglanski, & Higgins, 2011). To summarize, we expect procrastination is relevant to the job search because it is an important yet unstructured process with numerous self-regulatory tasks that require timeliness (e.g., prepare a résumé, find potential jobs, submit applications, follow up with potential employers).

We expect that positive affectivity will be negatively related to procrastination because high positive affect individuals are likely to have more resources at their disposal and therefore should feel less undermined by feelings of distress. As noted above, individuals with greater positive affectivity have more energy and are therefore more likely to begin tasks earlier and complete them in a timely manner (Steele, 2007; Van Eerde, 2000). In addition, individuals with greater positive affectivity are better able to cope with problems, presumably because the broader cognitions that result from positive affectivity lead to more creative solutions (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002). Finally, evidence indicates that individuals with greater positive affect are more likely to think and focus on the future (Foo et al., 2009). Specifically, they examined aspiring entrepreneurs and found that positive affect was positively related to future temporal focus, which in turn was related to effort devoted toward the new venture. Thus, we expect that individuals with greater positive affectivity will be less likely to delay starting the job search.

Hypothesis 1b: Positive affectivity will be related negatively to pro-
crastination.

Negative affectivity.   The role of negative affectivity on outcomes is
somewhat more complex than that of positive affectivity, which is proba-
bly why the impact of negative affectivity is less well understood (Barsade
& Gibson, 2007). In general, individuals higher in negative affectivity re-
port being more nervous and experiencing greater discomfort, anxiety,
and distress (Watson & Clark, 1984; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988).
Given the detrimental effects of anxiety on job search success (McCarthy
& Goffin, 2004), one might expect that negative affectivity would lead to
less success. Furthermore, individuals with greater negative affectivity are
more sensitive to punishment cues in the environment (Seo et al., 2008;
Watson et al., 1999). This increased sensitivity to punishment cues and
to potential negative outcomes can help individuals avoid aversive, and
potentially dangerous, stimuli but also can inhibit movement toward goals
(Carver & White, 1994; Higgins, 1997; Watson et al., 1999). To sum-
marize, negative affectivity has adaptive value by protecting individuals
from potentially dangerous situations but can be detrimental if it inhibits
movement toward beneficial outcomes.
    Meta-analytic results indicate that negative affectivity is negatively
related to job perceptions and attitudes and has a detrimental influence on
goal accomplishment and job performance (Kaplan, Bradley, Luchman,
& Haynes, 2009; Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, de Chermont, & Warren,
2003). Individuals with higher negative affectivity had greater stress and
withdrawal behavior and lower task performance and organizational cit-
izenship behavior. Such results suggest that negative affectivity would
lead to less job search success, although there is limited research and
it has produced mixed results. For example, Turban et al. (2009) noted
that negative affect was not related to any job search outcome, although
their study focused on the role of positive emotions. Similarly, Côté et al.
(2006) found that positive, but not negative, affectivity was related to
job search clarity and intensity, and suggested that positive affectivity
may be more important than negative affectivity in the job search pro-
cess. Nonetheless, Crossley and Stanton (2005) found that individuals
higher in negative affectivity had lower self-reported interview quality
and received fewer job offers. Notably, however, negative affectivity was
not related to job search intensity or to the number of interviews. Thus,
although the evidence linking negative affectivity and job search pro-
cesses is ambiguous, evidence indicates that negative affectivity can lead
to self-regulation problems (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), which sug-
gests further research is needed to examine the role of negative affectiv-
ity in the job search. Therefore, we extend prior research by examining

procrastination as a self-regulatory mechanism through which negative affectivity may be related to job search outcomes.

We theorize that negative affectivity, which reflects an avoidance orientation, will be positively related to procrastination, which is an avoidance strategy. As noted, the job search is a relatively ambiguous, unstructured, stressful, and long-term activity involving negative outcomes such as job rejections. Because individuals higher in negative affectivity tend to experience greater stress and anxiety and are more sensitive to potentially negative outcomes, they are more likely to attempt to avoid aversive situations that can lead to such negative outcomes. In particular, people are more likely to procrastinate in unstructured evaluative situations that are important to the individual and when the task is anxiety-producing and potentially aversive (Ferrari & Tice, 2000; Steel, 2007). Thus, we theorize that individuals higher in negative affectivity, who are more sensitive to potentially negative outcomes, are more likely to delay searching for the job.

Hypothesis 2: Negative affectivity will be related positively to procrastination.

The prediction for motivation control, however, is more complex. On the one hand, one might expect that negative affectivity will be negatively related to motivation control as individuals who tend to avoid potentially aversive situations might be less likely to plan the job search and to stay focused and committed during the search. On the other hand, although negative affectivity is adaptive by protecting individuals from aversive stimuli and the job search can lead to negative outcomes such as rejections, perhaps job search processes are not aversive stimuli to avoid, which would explain the null relationships between negative affectivity and job search processes (Côté et al., 2006; Crossley & Stanton, 2005; Turban et al., 2009). More broadly, motivation control is an approach variable, and there is not strong theoretical or empirical evidence to suggest that negative affectivity will lead to lower approach behaviors during the job search. Thus, rather than propose a specific hypothesis, we test the research question of whether negative affectivity is negatively related to motivation control. Although prior research has not found a relationship between negative affectivity and proactive, approach job search behaviors such as motivation control, we believe it is important to test such a relationship to provide insight into the role of negative affectivity in the job search.

Motivation Control and Procrastination in Job Search

Motivation control refers to self-initiated processes, such as goal setting, planning, imagining goal accomplishment, and other strategies, that

allow an individual to maintain high levels of effort and persistence toward an activity (Kanfer & Heggestad, 1997). Such approach strategies are thought to be particularly important when motivation can fade, such as during an extended job search. Some evidence indicates that motivation control is related positively to job search intensity (Creed et al., 2009; Wanberg et al., 1999). These studies are consistent with a broader range of research that found that such self-regulatory strategies help individuals sustain motivation during task pursuit (e.g., Kanfer & Heggestad, 1997).

In addition to replicating past research by proposing a positive relationship of motivation control with job search intensity, we extend such research by proposing that motivation control will be negatively related to procrastination. We expect that in an unstructured, long-term, and relatively complex process, such as the job search, individuals with stronger motivation control will be less likely to procrastinate. Related research in academic contexts indicates that self-regulated learners tend to demonstrate less procrastination (Steel, 2007; Wolters, 2003). Specifically, students who engaged in metacognitive strategies, such as planning, monitoring, and regulating their learning strategies, were less likely to procrastinate (Wolters, 2003). We extend the findings from academic settings to the job search process and expect a negative relationship of motivation control and procrastination.

Hypothesis 3a: Motivation control will be related positively with job search intensity.

Hypothesis 3b: Motivation control will be related negatively to procrastination.

Although procrastination is an important self-regulatory variable, only a few studies have examined its role in the job search (Lay & Brokenshire, 1997; Senécal & Guay, 2000; Van Hooft, Born, Taris, Van der Flier, & Blonk, 2005). Controlling for initial job search intentions, Lay and Brokensshire (1997) found that trait procrastination was related negatively to job search behaviors. Van Hooft et al. (2005) hypothesized that implementation intentions would be more weakly related to job search behavior when job seekers were higher on trait procrastination but did not find such an interactive effect for 175 unemployed job seekers in the Netherlands. In a sample of graduating university students, job-seeking procrastination was related positively to hopelessness in job seeking (Senécal & Guay, 2000). These studies suggest that procrastination can lead to lower job search intensity, although we found no study that investigated the role of procrastination on job search outcomes such as interviews and job offers. This gap in the literature is unfortunate

as timely responses to employers presumably provide a signal about applicant quality and thereby influence decisions about the applicant.

We expect that procrastination, an avoidance strategy defined as the delaying of an intended course of action, will influence the job search process, which requires job seekers to engage in activities over time to execute a job search. Meta-analytic evidence indicates that individuals higher in procrastination are more easily distracted, have less self-control and lower organization skills, and, perhaps not surprisingly, a larger gap between intentions and actions (Steel, 2007). Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, procrastinators do not fare well in situations and tasks that require timeliness (Piero et al., 2011). Although there is little research examining procrastination in the job search process, based on the meta-analytic evidence and the unstructured nature of the job search, we expect that individuals with higher procrastination will have lower job search intensity.

Hypothesis 4: Procrastination will be related negatively with job search intensity.

The Unfolding Process of Job Search

Researchers have noted the lack of consistency in how job search success has been operationalized and have emphasized the importance of specifying anticipated results among job search measures (Brasher & Chen, 1999). Furthermore, as noted by Saks (2006), the effectiveness of job search actions can vary depending upon the job search criteria measured. Unfortunately, we know little about what influences later job search outcomes (e.g., second interviews, job offers) controlling for prior success (Saks, 2006). For example, what influences whether applicants obtain job offers following a site visit? Although job search intensity is related to job search outcomes, we do not know how early job search success is translated into later success (Kanfer et al., 2001; Saks, 2006). Nonetheless, Turban et al. (2009) reported that Conscientiousness had a direct effect on the number of job offers received controlling for prior success (i.e., number of second interviews). They have also noted that we know little about factors that influence later job search success while controlling for prior success and called for such research.

We address this gap in the literature by examining the unfolding process of job search and by testing two theoretically relevant alternative models. The unfolding process of job search highlights that to obtain a job offer, job seekers need to be successful in earlier stages of the process, such as in interviews and site visits (Saks, 2006; Turban et al., 2009).

Thus, we examine job search intensity and three sequential outcomes: the number of first and second interviews, and the number of job offers received. Consistent with prior research and the unfolding process, we theorize that job search intensity is related to the number of first interviews and that success in early stages (e.g., number of first interviews) enables and is necessary for success in later stages (Kanfer et al., 2001; Saks, 2006; Turban et al., 2009). Also consistent with prior research, we do not state specific hypotheses for those direct paths (Turban et al., 2009). The two alternative models examine whether trait affectivity and self-regulation have direct effects on the job search outcomes beyond the effects of prior job search success.

Alternative Models

Direct effects of affectivity.   Evidence is mixed concerning whether affectivity will have direct effects on interview outcomes beyond the self-regulatory behaviors. As argued by Baron (2008), the enthusiasm of individuals with high positive affect can be contagious (e.g., Barsade, 2002) and can lead to greater persuasiveness. Similarly, Baron (1987) indicated that positive affect was related to higher ratings assigned to applicants in job interviews. In a recent study, Turban et al. (2009) found that positive affect had a direct effect on job search success and suggested that the effect may have resulted from emotional contagion processes (Barsade, 2002; Kelly & Barsade, 2001). However, as they did not investigate self-regulatory behaviors, their results do not provide insight into the possible direct effects of positive affectivity beyond self-regulatory behaviors. Based on the evidence that individuals with higher positive affectivity behave more enthusiastically and are more persuasive, which can result in emotional contagion, we examine whether positive affectivity has direct effects on job search outcomes. We also examine direct paths from negative affectivity to job search outcomes, as high negative affectivity individuals may act anxious during the interviews (McCarthy & Goffin, 2004) and thus receive lower ratings.

Direct effects of self-regulation.   We also examine whether motivation control and procrastination have direct effects on job search outcomes beyond the effects through job search intensity. As such, we explicitly test the assumption that self-regulatory variables influence job search success solely through their effects on job search intensity. Theoretically, one might expect that individuals with higher motivation control engage in additional and more thorough job search activities, such as researching the firm, that allow them to perform better during interviews than individuals with lower motivation control. In addition, procrastination may have direct

effects on subsequent job search success if applicants delay in responding to employers or in preparing for follow-up interviews (Piero et al., 2011).

Summary.   We extend prior research by examining whether and how trait positive and negative affectivity influence job search processes and success. Building on the self-regulation literature, we extend previous findings by examining procrastination, an avoidance strategy, and motivation control, an approach strategy. We test our model with longitudinal data from new labor market entrants who were actively searching for jobs.

Method

Procedure and Participants

Participants were graduating students at a large Midwestern university who were actively searching for a full-time position. To solicit participation, we visited classes with high percentages of graduating students and also invited participants via email using the college's career services office distribution list. We asked participants to complete two surveys, with Survey 1 administered in September and Survey 2 in December. This timetable coincided with the on-campus recruiting season at this campus. To boost retention, we provided $1.00 with the initial survey and sent reminders for the second survey. Survey 1 included the measures of positive and negative affectivity, job search self-efficacy, and demographic data, whereas Survey 2 assessed procrastination, motivation control, job search intensity, and the respondents' job search outcomes: the number of first interviews, follow-up interviews, and job offers received.

Survey 1 was completed by 295 graduating students who were searching for a full-time job across 2 academic years. The number of initial respondents was 122 for Year 1 and 173 for Year 2. Of the 295 individuals who completed the initial survey, 245 (83.1%) completed Survey 2 and were used in the subsequent analyses. Because of how we contacted potential participants, we cannot report an exact response rate. Anecdotal evidence indicated that some students accepted study packets in class because they knew about the $1.00 incentive in the envelope. Furthermore, the email from the career services office was sent to many students who were not eligible for the study (i.e., they were not graduating and searching for a full-time position). Given these data collection parameters, what follows is a conservative estimate of our response rate.

Approximately 900 students graduated each year of the data collection, although it is unlikely all were searching for a full-time position (e.g., some students already had a job offer, some were going to graduate school). Nonetheless, if all 900 students were actively searching for

a full-time position, our estimated response rates for Survey 1 would be approximately 14% and 19% for Year 1 and Year 2, respectively, although those are low estimates. We were not able to statistically compare nonrespondents to respondents, although our career services staff indicated that respondents appeared demographically similar to the graduating students who were searching for full-time positions. We did compare respondents who completed only the first survey to respondents who completed both surveys on gender, age, GPA, positive affectivity, and negative affectivity and found significant differences only for GPA. Results indicated that respondents who completed both surveys had a higher GPA (3.37 vs. 3.16) than respondents who completed only the first survey. Thus, we believe that our sample was relatively representative of the population of graduating students who were seeking a full-time position, although our sample had a higher GPA than participants who completed Survey 1 and, we expect, than nonrespondents.

Participants were 56% women, with an average age of 22 (ranging from 20 to 38) and an average GPA of 3.37. The sample included 91% Caucasians, 4% African Americans, and 3.5% Asian/Pacific Islanders; 98% were U.S. citizens. Most respondents (73%) were pursuing a BSBA, the remainder an MBA (27%); 31% were majoring in marketing, 23% in finance, 17% in management, and 18% in accounting.

Measures

Positive and negative affectivity. We measured positive and negative affectivity at time 1 using the Positive Affect and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988). As we were interested in trait affectivity, we asked respondents to indicate "how much you feel this way, in general" on a five-point scale from 1 = *rarely* to 5 = *very often*. Both positive and negative affectivity were measured with 10 items and the coefficient alphas were .87 and .84, respectively.

Motivation control. We used the five-item measure (alpha = .62) from Wanberg et al. (1999), which was also used by Creed et al. (2009). These prior studies reported an average coefficient alpha of .745, which is slightly higher than our estimate. Sample items include "I plan my job-search activities ahead of time" and "I set specific goals for myself."

Procrastination. We measured procrastination on Survey 2 with three items (alpha = .93) adapted from McGregor and Elliot (2002): "I procrastinate in dealing with my job search," "I put off completing tasks related to my job search," and "I often wait until the last minute to start tasks related to my job search."

Job search intensity. We used 15 items, adapted from Blau (1994), and instructed participants to "indicate the extent to which you have used

this tactic to find out about job openings in the last 3 months" using a five-point scale ranging from 1 = *very slightly or not at all* to 5 = *very frequently.* Sample items include: "Prepared/revised your resumé," "Used the Internet to locate job openings," "Filled out a job application," "Sent out resumés to potential employers," and "Talked with others (friends, relatives, faculty, etc.) about possible job leads." The coefficient alpha for job search intensity was .80.

Job search outcomes.   Respondents indicated the number of *first interviews*, *second interviews*, and *job offers* they had received.

Control variables.   Respondents' GPA, major, months of work experience, and job search self-efficacy were obtained on the first survey and were used in the structural model as predictors of job search intensity, and the number of first interviews, second interviews, and job offers. Job search self-efficacy was measured using Ellis and Taylor's (1983) 10-item measure. Sample items include: "I am confident of my ability to make a good impression," "I know exactly how to find the kind of job I'm looking for," and "Overall, I don't expect to be very good at job search." The coefficient alpha for job search self-efficacy was .85.

Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and correlations among our variables. Examination of these results indicates that positive affectivity is correlated with the self-regulation variables of motivation control and procrastination, and with job search intensity and the number of second interviews. Notably, however, negative affectivity is not correlated with any of the variables except for positive affectivity. In addition, both motivation control and procrastination are correlated with the job search outcomes as expected. Although such results provide preliminary information about the hypothesized relationships, we used structural equation modeling to examine the specific pattern of relationships hypothesized in Figure 1. We followed the recommendation by Anderson and Gerbing (1998) to estimate the measurement model before estimating the measurement and structural models simultaneously.

Tests of the Measurement Model

To test our measurement model we assigned three indicators to each of the five latent constructs. Procrastination had three individual items serving as the indicators. For the other latent constructs (positive affectivity, negative affectivity, motivation control, job search self-efficacy, and job search intensity), we grouped items into three parcels and used the parcels as indicators of the construct. Scholars recommend using parcels

TABLE 1
Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Positive affectivity	3.97	.54	(.87)											
2. Negative affectivity	2.05	.56	$-.31^{**}$	(.84)										
3. Motivation control	3.59	.68	$.14^{*}$	.04	(.62)									
4. Procrastination	2.55	1.21	$-.25^{**}$	.07	$-.38^{**}$	(.93)								
5. Job search intensity	2.71	.63	$.17^{**}$	.11	$.41^{**}$	$-.27^{**}$	(.80)							
6. First interviews	3.56	3.4	.03	.01	$.32^{**}$	$-.33^{**}$	$.38^{**}$	–						
7. Second interviews	1.97	1.94	$.14^{*}$	.02	$.30^{**}$	$-.39^{**}$	$.33^{**}$	$.71^{**}$	–					
8. Job offers	.86	1.11	.08	.00	$.17^{**}$	$-.31^{**}$	.09	$.37^{**}$	$.63^{**}$	–				
9. GPA	3.37	.38	.12	$-.07$	$.13^{*}$	$-.25^{**}$	$.15^{*}$	$.15^{*}$	.11	.08	–			
10. Self-efficacy	3.41	.59	$.36^{**}$	$-.12$	$.27^{**}$	$-.43^{**}$	$.22^{**}$	$.16^{*}$	$.28^{**}$	$.27^{**}$	.11	(.85)		
11. Work experience	32.43	31.96	$-.10$	$.15^{*}$	$-.07$	.05	$-.07$	$-.17^{**}$	$-.06$	.02	$-.31^{**}$	.06	–	
12. Major	4.02	2.11	.13	$-.05$	.04	.12	.09	$-.10$	$-.13^{*}$	$-.13^{*}$	$-.18^{**}$	$-.14^{*}$	.01	–

Note. $N = 245$; GPA = grade point average. Coefficient alpha along the diagonals.
$^{*}p \leq .05.$ $^{**}p \leq .01.$

rather than individual items to maintain appropriate item to subject ratios and because parcels result in solutions with less bias in path estimates (Bandalos, 2002). The measurement model fit the data well χ^2(192, N = 245) = 295.6, CFI = .95, IFI = .96, RMSEA = .05. We compared our six-factor model with several alternatives, including a five-factor model with indicators for motivation control and procrastination loading onto one construct; a four-factor model with indicators of motivation control, procrastination, and job search intensity loading onto one construct; and a five-factor model with indicators of positive and negative affectivity loading onto the same construct. The hypothesized measurement model fit the data better than did the alternative models, with all of the standardized path coefficients greater than .40 ($p < .01$), indicating a good-fitting measurement model.

Hypothesized Structural Model

We tested the fully mediated hypothesized model (see Figure 1, although in all the analyses the affect variables were correlated with each other and we controlled for the effects of GPA, major, work experience, and job search self-efficacy on job search intensity and outcomes) and two theoretically relevant alternative models. Table 2 provides the overall fit statistics for the model comparisons. As shown in Table 2, the hypothesized model provided a very good fit to the data χ^2(217, N = 245) = 386.7, (CFI = .92, IFI = .93, RMSEA = .057). In support of the hypothesized model, as can be seen in Table 3, positive affectivity was positively related to motivation control and negatively related to procrastination in support of Hypotheses 1a and 1b. Negative affectivity was not related to either of the self-regulation variables. Motivation control was positively related to job search intensity and negatively related to procrastination in support of Hypotheses 3a and 3b. Notably, however, we found no support for Hypothesis 4, as procrastination was not related to intensity. Finally, in support of the unfolding model of job search, intensity was related to the number of first interviews, which was related to the number of second interviews, which was related to the number of job offers. In summary, such results indicate that positive affectivity had a beneficial impact on the job search process, whereas negative affectivity had no impact. Although our hypothesized model had a very good fit to the data, other models could provide a better fit, and thus we investigated two theoretically relevant alternative models.

Alternative affectivity model. The first alternative model examined whether affectivity had direct effects on job search intensity and the outcomes in addition to the paths with the self-regulation variables. The

TABLE 2
Structural Model Comparisons

Model	Chi-sq	df	χ^2/df	CFI	IFI	RMSEA	Model comparison	χ^2 change	df Change
Hypothesized model	386.7	217	1.78	.92	.93	.057			
Alternative affectivity model									
#1: Direct paths from PA and NA to job search intensity and the three job search outcomes	380.3	209	1.82	.92	.93	.058	With hypothesized	6.4	8
Alternative self-regulation model									
#2: Direct paths from motivation control and procrastination to first and second interviews and to job offers	370.6	211	1.76	.93	.93	.056	With hypothesized	16.1[*]	6
Final model:									
Added direct paths from procrastination to first and second interviews	373.4	215	1.74	.93	.93	.055	With hypothesized	13.3[**]	2

Note. $N = 245$. PA = positive affectivity; NA = negative affectivity. [*]Change significant at .05. [**]Change significant at .01.

TABLE 3
Structural Model Coefficients

Paths	Hypothesized structural model		Final structural model	
	Estimate	Critical ratio	Estimate	Critical ratio
H1a: Positive affectivity to motivation control	.340	3.49	.341	3.50
H1b: Positive affectivity to procrastination	−.181	−2.22	−.178	−2.18
H2: Negative affectivity to procrastination	.011	.15	.012	.16
RQ: Negative affectivity to motivation control	.172	1.82	.171	1.81
H3a: Motivation control to job search intensity	.539	4.46	.528	4.42
H3b: Motivation control to procrastination	−.475	−4.96	−.478	−4.98
H4: Procrastination to job search intensity	−.106	−1.17	−.074	−.81
Job search intensity to first interviews	.475	6.27	.389	4.91
First interviews to second interviews	.695	15.47	.666	14.14
Second interviews to job offers	.594	11.47	.598	11.75
Procrastination to first interviews	–	–	−.199	−3.03
Procrastination to second interviews	–	–	−.135	−2.76

Note. Critical ratios greater than or equal to 1.96 are significant at $p \le .05$, two-tailed test.

model added a total of eight paths: from positive and negative affectivity to job search intensity and to the number of first interviews, second interviews, and job offers. The addition of these eight paths did not lead to a significant reduction in chi-squared (χ^2 change = 6.4 with 8 *df, ns*), and we thus accepted the more parsimonious mediated model.

Alternative self-regulation model. The second alternative model examined whether the self-regulation variables had direct influences on the job search outcomes beyond the paths through job search intensity. Specifically, we added six new paths: from procrastination and motivation control to first and second interviews, and to the number of first interviews, second interviews, and job offers. The addition of these paths resulted in a significantly better fitting model (χ^2 change = 16.1 with 6 *df, p* < .05). Examination of the results indicated that the paths from procrastination
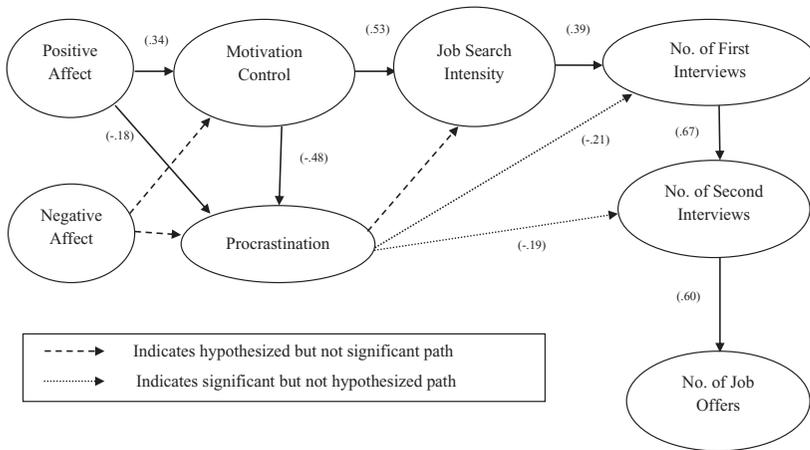
Figure 2: **Final Model.**

Note. Path coefficients are indicated in parentheses.

to first and second interviews were significant, although the paths from motivation control were not.

Final model. We tested a final model that added the two significant paths from procrastination to first and second interviews (see Table 3 and Figure 2). In general, results supported our hypothesized model, except for the nonsignificant effects of negative affectivity and the added paths from procrastination to first and second interviews. In addition, job search self-efficacy was related to second interviews. Results indicated that the model explained 35% of the variance in job search intensity, 27% of the variance in first interviews, 54% in second interviews, and 40% in job offers. Finally, results indicated that positive affectivity had significant (all $p < .01$) standardized indirect effects on job search intensity (.21), first interviews (.15), second interviews (.15), and job offers (.09). To summarize, positive, but not negative, affectivity, influenced job search success through increasing motivation control and reducing procrastination. In addition, individuals with greater procrastination had fewer first interviews, controlling for job search intensity, and fewer second interviews controlling for first interviews.

Discussion

We developed and tested a model examining whether and how trait affect was related to job search success. Based on the approach–avoidance framework, we examined the role of the self-regulatory variables of motivation control and procrastination between the distal variables of positive and negative affectivity and job search intensity and outcomes. Our study

makes three notable contributions. First, we found evidence for the importance of positive, but not negative, affectivity on job search success. This outcome provides insight into the role of positive affect in the self-regulation process and points to helpful future research questions regarding the role of negative affect. Second, we found interesting results about the role of procrastination in the job search process. Although procrastination was not related to job search intensity, it was related to the number of first and second interviews, controlling for prior success. Such results suggest the importance of the timeliness of job search activities. Third, our results provide additional information about the unfolding model of job search and suggest that researchers should examine job search quality (Van Hooft, Wanberg, & Van Hoye, 2013) in addition to job search intensity.

Individuals with higher trait positive affect had greater job search success as positive affectivity had a significant indirect effect on the job search outcomes, through motivation control and procrastination. These results extend Turban et al. (2009) who found that positive emotions experienced during the search were related to positive job search outcomes but did not examine how such processes occurred. Our results are consistent with Fredrickson's *broaden-and-build theory*, which proposes that individuals with higher positive affect are more likely to build personal resources that can be applied to the job search process. In addition, positive affectivity can help individuals overcome setbacks, perhaps through finding meaning in negative circumstances (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Thus, although additional research is needed to examine specific mechanisms, we expect that individuals higher on positive affectivity reacted better to rejections by thinking constructively about future outcomes and by using motivation control strategies at those points. Positive affectivity also may help job seekers, especially new labor market entrants, learn from rejections.

The finding that positive affectivity was related to more effective self-regulation processes extends research indicating that positive emotions can influence success in a wide range of contexts (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005) to the job search process. Our results also are consistent with the emphasis of positive organizational scholarship, which focuses on especially positive attributes and processes of organizational members (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003). Because the job search is considered a stressful activity, researchers have argued that job seekers need to control their negative emotions and cognitions during the search (McCarthy & Goffin, 2004; Wanberg et al., 1999; Wanberg, Zhu, Kanfer, & Zhang, 2012). Our results suggest that helping job seekers focus on their positive attributes is an alternative, and perhaps more effective, strategy for dealing with the job search process. We hope our study leads to more research examining positive attributes and processes job seekers can use

during the jobs search. For example, the examination of resilience, adapting positively to adverse situations (Caza & Milton, 2012), might provide insights into how job seekers handle the ups and downs of the job search (Wanberg, Zhu, & Van Hooft, 2010). In addition, evidence indicates that self-verification striving, an effort to make others know one's authentic self, influences the organizational entry process as well as newcomers' job attitudes and performance (Cable & Kay, 2012). Future research might extend those results and examine whether self-verification striving influences how individuals search for a job as well as their job search success.

Negative affectivity was not related to the self-regulatory variables or to the job search outcomes. Such results, coupled with other job search evidence, suggest that positive affectivity can be more important to the job search than is negative affectivity (Côté et al., 2006; Turban et al., 2009). The job search is typically conceptualized as a process in which job seekers experience disappointment, frustration, and stress. Thus, job seekers are thought to have to control their negative emotions using self-regulatory strategies, such as emotional control, to manage anxiety and other disruptive emotions as they work toward a goal (Kanfer & Heggestad, 1997; Wanberg et al., 1999). Note, however, that controlling disruptive emotions does not necessarily result in self-motivated actions toward goal accomplishment. As such, controlling negative emotions may not activate the resources needed to succeed in the job search. Thus, perhaps rather than attempting to simply control negative emotions that can result from the stress of the search, job seekers should be encouraged to engage in emotional regulation that leads to enhanced positive emotions, thereby increasing energy directed toward goal accomplishment (Quinn, Spreitzer, & Lam, 2012; Spreitzer, Lam, & Quinn, 2012).

Future research might examine whether trait negative affect has a moderating effect on self-regulatory variables rather than a direct effect. For example, negative affectivity may inhibit self-regulatory processes only when other traits or states are also present (e.g., low core self-evaluations or achievement orientation). In addition, trait negative affect may interact with rejections over time such that high negative affectivity individuals are more influenced by rejections than low negative affectivity individuals. We also urge researchers to examine changes in negative affect and search processes over time. Interestingly, recent research, based on control theory, suggests that *state* negative affect can have a beneficial influence on the job search process when it is seen as a discrepancy between a goal and progress toward that goal (Song, Uy, Zhang, & Shi, 2009: Wanberg et al., 2010). Thus, although trait negative affect did not influence the job search process, we encourage research to examine state negative affect, throughout the job search, to better understand whether and how negative affect influences the job search process.

The results for procrastination also were interesting. We theorized that the job search would be seen as an aversive, anxiety-inducing activity by individuals higher in negative affectivity and that they would, therefore, be more likely to delay working toward the employment goal than individuals lower in negative affectivity. However, negative affectivity was not related to procrastination. Evidence indicates that procrastination is more likely for aversive tasks (Steel, 2007), and perhaps even the individuals who were higher in negative affectivity did not experience the job search as an anxiety-producing aversive task in this situation. Or, perhaps procrastinators *perceived* that they have searched as intensively as those who have not procrastinated, when in fact their subjective judgment does not match objective rates of activity. Procrastinators tend to delay starting a task but may compensate by exerting more effort later in the process, in an attempt to "catch-up" (Steel, Brothen, & Wambach, 2001). Thus, perhaps procrastinators searched less intensively, but the additional activities concentrated at the end of the search process *felt* more intense to procrastinators, especially when viewed retrospectively.

The findings regarding procrastination provide insight into the importance of timing in job search activities and shed light on limitations of job search intensity. We theorized that individuals higher in procrastination are more likely to delay job search activities, leading to a negative relationship with job search intensity. Our results, however, did not support a relationship between procrastination and job search intensity, but did indicate a negative link between procrastination and interview success (i.e., number of first and second interviews offered). Perhaps procrastinators engaged in more intensity later in the process when it was less optimal. Job search intensity measures the frequency of job search activities but does not measure when such activities occurred. However, the direct negative relationship of procrastination with interview success suggests that the timeliness of job search activities may be important to measure, in addition to job search intensity. For example, perhaps individuals higher in procrastination, who tend to delay goal-directed actions, may have rushed and therefore submitted written materials that are of lower quality. Similarly, procrastinators may not have been as prepared for the interview and thus appeared uninformed or not as good a fit as an applicant who took the time to carefully research the organization's culture and mission. Procrastination also may affect follow-up actions such as sending a thank-you note or requested documentation. The job search provides many choice points relevant to timeliness, and yet the various ripple effects of procrastination in the job search are not well understood.

Scholars have noted that job search intensity explains a relatively small percentage of variance in job search outcomes and called for additional measures of the job search process (Kanfer et al., 2001; Wanberg, 2012).

The finding that both procrastination and the control variable job search self-efficacy influenced job search success, controlling for prior success, suggests that factors beyond job search quantity (i.e., intensity) influence job search outcomes, pointing to the importance of job search *quality* (Van Hooft et al., 2013), such as timely responses to employers. Unfortunately, however, we know very little about how job seekers turn initial interviews into subsequent job offers. We urge researchers to continue examining sequential models of the job search to better understand self-regulatory actions that influence whether an applicant advances from one stage of the job search process to another. As noted by Wanberg (2012), much job search research has examined intensity and ignored other important dimensions of the job search process such as persistence and quality. We believe a fruitful area for additional research is to specifically examine additional dimensions of job search beyond intensity to determine how and why initial success influences later job search success.

Limitations and Future Research

Although our study contributes to the job search literature, we acknowledge some limitations of our sample, measures, and methodology. First, we collected data from graduating students who as new labor market entrants are not representative of all job seekers. There are three subpopulations of job seekers—new entrants, job losers, and employed job seekers—and evidence indicates both similarities and differences in job search process across these subpopulations (Boswell, Zimmerman, & Swider, 2012). Thus, we encourage research to examine the extent to which our results generalize to other types of job seekers (e.g., job losers). For example, procrastination may be more influential for recently laid-off employees who do not have the structure of an impending graduation date as did our sample of graduating students.

Second, the measures of the self-regulatory variables, job search intensity, and outcomes were collected at the same time (i.e., the second survey). Although we carefully developed a theoretical rationale for our hypothesized relationships and measured objective and verifiable job search outcomes, as noted by an anonymous reviewer, job seekers' responses to the self-regulatory variables and job search intensity may have been influenced by their knowledge of their job search success. Thus, common method variance is an alternative explanation for those results. In addition, it is important to emphasize that because structural equation modeling cannot prove causality, we urge caution when interpreting our results. Thus, although other studies, which have collected data at different time periods, support our theoretical model (e.g., Turban et al., 2009;

Wanberg et al., 1999), future research might use more than two data collection periods. In addition, in some settings, it may be possible to collect data from secondary sources or to obtain objective measures of job search activities.

Third, although we focused on trait affect, we encourage future research to examine state affect to further understand the role of affect in the job search process. We expect that state affect, and changes in affect during the search, will have a different pattern of relationships with the outcomes than does trait affect (Crossley & Stanton, 2005; Wanberg et al., 2010). We also acknowledge that there are many other unmeasured variables that may explain the effects of dispositional affect on the job search. We examined motivation control and procrastination, based on the approach and avoidance framework, and we hope that other researchers will develop and test other models examining how trait affect relates to job search outcomes. In addition, given the relatively low coefficient alpha we found for motivation control, future researchers might consider developing additional items and/or alternative, measures. Finally, we measured relatively proximal outcomes associated with job search success but did not measure outcomes associated with the job, such as person–organization fit, job satisfaction, or starting salary. Clearly, additional outcomes would strengthen subsequent research.

In addition to these limitations, there were also strengths to this study. As noted above, we measured objective, verifiable outcomes that are important to job seekers. The data collection was longitudinal in nature, and we measured trait affect at a different time than the self-regulation variables and job search outcomes. In addition, by measuring later stages of job search success (e.g., second interviews) while controlling for earlier stages (first interviews), we were able to examine variables that influence success at each stage, controlling for prior success.

Future research might examine more specific measures of affect that take into account the activation of affect. We used the PANAS, the most widely used measure of positive and negative affect, so that we could compare our results with prior research. However, some models of affect differentiate activated and deactivated affect, which are presumed to have different influences on outcomes (Russell, 2003). For example, anxiety, which is a more activated negative emotion, may have different influences on the job search than depression, which reflects low activation. Analogously, enthusiasm may have different influences on the job search than contentment, which is a positive affect with lower activation. In particular, the activation level of positive and negative affect may have differential influences throughout the job search process. For example, based on the affect-as-information model of emotion (Carver, 2003; Carver & Scheier, 1990), anxiety may lead to increased effort early in the search if it

motivates a person to get going and address the source of anxiety (i.e., the need for a job). Over time, however, anxiety may lead to emotional exhaustion and may be detrimental to interview success (McCarthy & Goffin, 2004). However, depression, which is a deactivated negative affective state that slows people down, should have a detrimental influence on effort at all stages in the job search process. We encourage future research that specifically examines affect in terms of both pleasantness (positive and negative) and activation level.

On a related noted, it would be interesting to track positive and negative affect throughout the job search process. Based on evidence that positive affect can "undo" the effect of negative emotions (Fredrickson, Mancuso, Branigan, & Tugade, 2000), future research might examine whether positive affect buffers the effects of rejections during the job search. In addition, researchers might track affective reactions over time to investigate the influence of the positivity ratio, the ratio of positive to negative emotions (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005), as evidence suggests that ratio may be more important than just positive affect. Research can extend our results using daily diary methodologies (e.g., Song et al., 2009; Wanberg et al., 2010) to understand how specific job search activities influence subsequent success. Such a design would provide insight into the importance of timely actions and responses to employers. Thus, we encourage researchers to extend our results by examining affect and specific job search activities throughout the job search.

Implications for Practice

The finding that procrastination was negatively related to both first and second interviews has practical implications for both job seekers and career counselors. Based on evidence that self-imposed deadlines can reduce procrastination (Ariely & Wertenbroch, 2002), job seekers should be trained to set deadlines for specific job search activities and be aware of how their emotions can affect this self-regulation process. Furthermore, based on the implementation intentions literature, job seekers should be coached to plan their job search and to schedule specific times to accomplish the various activities involved throughout the process (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). Such intentions and planning are likely to help job seekers deal with rejections during the process and to increase job seekers' perceived control over the job search activities. Furthermore, implementation intentions may help control distractions and unwanted thoughts and feelings (Achtziger, Gollwitzer, & Sheeran, 2008). More broadly, training in implementation intentions may increase motivation control as job seekers make plans, set goals, and practice interviewing.

Our results, which demonstrate the importance of positive emotions, suggest the importance of training job seekers to maintain, even increase, positive emotions (e.g., excitement, enthusiasm) and behaviors deriving from trait positive affect during the job search. Although job seekers cannot change their trait positive affect, they can be trained to develop strategies and skills to increase adaptive emotions for the job search. For example, Algoe and Fredrickson (2011) described how to train emotionally resilient soldiers by training emotion-based skills and abilities that lead to adaptive emotions. Although job seekers may not experience as much stress as soldiers, we expect that emotional resilience training for job seekers would be beneficial. For example, job seekers could be trained to maintain positive emotions and engage in emotion regulation when receiving negative feedback from potential employers.

Finally, career counselors should be encouraged to help job seekers spend time reviewing their behaviors following job search activities. For example, when learning new skills, helping individuals learn from errors can lead to emotional and cognitive self-regulation (metacognitive activity) that subsequently positively impacts performance (Keith & Frese, 2005). More broadly, evidence indicates that individuals can learn from both success and failure, in particular if they focus on internal and specific causes for performance and consider errors that occurred and how to improve such errors (Ellis, Mendel, & Nir, 2006). Notably, the recommendation to engage in metacognitive activity following errors (and success) is consistent with recent evidence that metacognitive activities influence job search success (Turban et al., 2009). Thus, we encourage job seekers to reflect upon their job search activities and focus on what they can improve as well as what they did well; such reflections should be coupled with plans and goals with a timetable to avoid the pernicious effects of procrastination.

Conclusion

The job search process is an important activity. Our results indicate that trait positive affect influences the self-regulatory processes of motivation control and procrastination that lead to job search outcomes. We hope that future research will continue to investigate self-regulatory processes, such as procrastination, that link distal dispositions with job search success as understanding such self-regulatory processes provides theoretical insights as well as practical knowledge for job seekers (e.g., strategies to overcome procrastination). Finally, we hope our examination of the unfolding model of the job search leads to more research examining how success in the initial stages of the job search is converted to subsequent success and

stimulates research investigating job search quality in addition to job search intensity.

REFERENCES

Achtziger A, Gollwitzer PM, Sheeran P. (2008). Implementation intentions and shielding goal striving from unwanted thoughts and feelings. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *34*, 381–393.

Algoe SB, Fredrickson BL. (2011). Emotional fitness and the movement of affective science from lab to field. *American Psychologist*, *66*, 35–42.

Anderson JC, Gerbing DW. (1998). Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychological Bulletin*, *103*, 411–423.

Ariely D, Wertenbroch K. (2002). Procrastination, deadlines, and performance: Self-control by precommitment. *Psychological Science*, *13*, 219–224.

Bandalos DL. (2002). The effects of item parceling on goodness-of-fit and parameter estimate bias in structural equation modeling. *Structural Equation Modeling*, *1*, 35–67.

Baron RA. (1987). Mood of interviewer and the evaluation of job candidates. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *17*, 911–926.

Baron RA. (2008). The role of affect in the entrepreneurial process. *Academy of Management Review*, *33*, 328–340.

Barsade SG. (2002). The ripple effect: Emotional contagion and its influence on group behavior. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *47*, 644–675.

Barsade SG, Gibson DE. (2007). Why does affect matter in organizations? *Academy of Management Perspectives*, *21*, 36–57.

Blau G. (1994). Testing a two-dimensional measure of job search behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *59*, 288–312.

Boswell WR, Zimmerman RD, Swider BW. (2012). Employee job search: Toward an understanding of search context and search objectives. *Journal of Management*, *38*, 129–163.

Brasher EE, Chen PY. (1999). Evaluation of success criteria in job search: A process perspective. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *72*, 57–70.

Brockner J, Higgins ET. (2001). Regulatory focus theory: Implications for the study of emotions at work. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *86*, 35–66.

Cable DM, Kay VS. (2012). Striving for self-verification during organizational entry. *Academy of Management Journal*, *55*, 360–380.

Cameron KS, Dutton JE, Quinn RE. (2003). Foundations of positive organizational scholarship. In Cameron K, Dutton J, Quinn RE (Eds.), *Positive organizational scholarship* (pp. 3–13). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Cameron KS, Spreitzer GM. (Eds.) (2012). *The Oxford handbook of positive organizational scholarship.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Carver CS. (2003). Pleasure as sign you can attend to something else: Placing positive feelings within a general model of affect. *Cognition and Emotion*, *17*, 241–261.

Carver CS, Scheier MF. (1990). Origins and functions of positive and negative affect: A control-process view. *Psychological Review*, *97*, 19–35.

Carver CS, White TL. (1994). Behavioral inhibition, behavioral activation, and affective responses to impending reward and punishment: The BIS/BAS scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *67*, 319–333.

Caza BB, Milton LP. (2012). Resilience at work: Building capability in the face of adversity. In Cameron KS, Spreitzer GM (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of positive organizational scholarship* (pp. 895–908). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Côté S, Saks AM, Zikic J. (2006). Trait affect and job search outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *68*, 233–252.

Creed PA, King V, Hood M, McKenzie R. (2009). Goal orientation, self-regulation strategies, and job seeking intensity in unemployed adults. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *94*, 806–813.

Crossley CD, Stanton JM. (2005). Negative affect and job search: Further examination of the reverse causation hypothesis. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *66*, 549–560.

Elfenbein HA. (2007). Emotion in organizations. *The Academy of Management Annals*, *1*, 315–386.

Elliot AJ, Church MA. (1997). A hierarchical model of approach and avoidance achievement motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *72*, 218–232.

Elliot AJ, Covington MV. (2001). Approach and avoidance motivation. *Educational Psychology Review*, *13*, 73–92.

Elliot AJ, Thrash TM. (2001). Achievement goals and the hierarchical model of achievement motivation. *Educational Psychology Review*, *12*, 139–156.

Elliot AJ, Thrash TM. (2002). Approach-avoidance motivation in personality: Approach and avoidance temperaments and goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *82*, 804–818.

Ellis RA, Taylor MS. (1983). Role of self-esteem within the job search process. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *68*, 632–640.

Ellis S, Mendel R, Nir M. (2006). Learning from successful and failed experience: The moderating role of kind of after-event review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *91*, 669–680.

Ferrari JR, Johnson JL, McCown WG. (1995). *Procrastination and task avoidance: Theory, research, and treatment*. New York, NY: Plenum.

Ferrari JR, Tice DM. (2000). Procrastination as a self-handicap for men and women: A task-avoidance strategy in a laboratory setting. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *34*, 73–83.

Foo MD, Uy MA, Baron RA. (2009). How do feelings influence effort: An empirical study of entrepreneurs' affect and venture effort. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *94*, 1086–1094.

Fredrickson BL. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist*, *56*, 218–226.

Fredrickson BL, Joiner T. (2002). Positive emotions trigger upward spirals toward emotional well-being. *Psychological Science*, *13*, 172–175.

Frederickson BL, Losada MF. (2005). Positive affect and the complex dynamics of human flourishing. *American Psychologist*, *60*, 678–686.

Fredrickson BL, Mancuso RA, Branigan C, Tugade MM. (2000). The undoing effect of positive emotions. *Motivation and Emotion*, *24*, 237–258.

Gollwitzer PM, Sheeran P. (2006). Implementation intentions and goal achievement: A meta-analysis of effects and processes. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, *38*, 69–119.

Higgins ET. (1997). Beyond pleasure and pain. *American Psychologist*, *52*, 1280–1300.

Kanfer R, Heggestad ED. (1997). Motivational traits and skills: A person-centered approach to work motivation. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *19*, 1–56.

Kanfer R, Wanberg CR, Kantrowitz TM. (2001). Job search and employment: A personality-motivational analysis and meta-analytic review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *86*, 837–855.

Kaplan S, Bradley JC, Luchman JN, Haynes D. (2009). On the role of positive and negative affect in job performance: A meta-analytic investigation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *94*, 162–176.

Keith N, Frese M. (2005). Self-regulation in error management training: Emotion control and metacognition as mediators of performance effects. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *90*, 677–691.

Kelly JR, Barsade SG. (2001). Mood and emotions in small groups and work teams. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *86*, 99–130.

Lay CH. (1986). At last, my research article on procrastination. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *20*, 474–495.

Lay CH, Brokenshire R. (1997). Conscientiousness, procrastination, and person-task characteristics in job searching by unemployed adults. *Current Psychology: Developmental, Learning, Personality, Social*, *16*, 83–96.

Lyubomirsky S, King L, Diener E. (2005). The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success? *Psychological Bulletin*, *131*, 803–855.

McCarthy J, Goffin R. (2004). Measuring job interview anxiety: Beyond weak knees and sweaty palms. Personnel Psychology, *57*, 607–637.

McGregor HA, Elliot AJ. (2002). Achievement goals as predictors of achievement-relevant processes prior to task engagement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *94*, 381–395.

Muraven M, Baumeister RF. (2000). Self-regulation and depletion of limited resources: Does self-control resemble a muscle? *Psychological Bulletin*, *126*, 247–259.

Parker SK, Bindl UK, Strauss K. (2010). Making things happen: A model of proactive motivation. *Journal of Management*, *36*, 827–856.

Piero A, Giacomantonio M, Pica G, Kruglanski AW, Higgins ET. (2011). On the psychology of time in action: Regulatory mode orientations and procrastination. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *101*, 1317–1331.

Quinn RW, Spreitzer GM, Lam CF. (2012). Building a sustainable model of human energy in organizations: Exploring the critical role of resources. *The Academy of Management Annals*, *6*, 337–396.

Russell JA. (2003). Core affect and the psychological construction of emotion. *Psychological Review*, *110*, 145–172.

Saks AM. (2006). Multiple predictors and criteria of job search success. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *68*, 400–415.

Sekera LE, Vacharkulksemsuk T, Fredrickson BL. (2012). Positive emotions: Broadening and building upwards spirals of sustainable enterprise. In Cameron KS, Spreitzer GM (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of positive organizational scholarship* (pp. 168–177). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Seligman MEP, Csikszentmihalyi M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, *55*, 5–14.

Senécal C, Guay F. (2000). Procrastination in job seeking: An analysis of motivational processes and feelings of hopelessness. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, *15*, 267–282.

Seo M, Barrett LF, Bartunek JM. (2004). The role of affective experience in work motivation. *Academy of Management Review*, *29*, 423–439.

Seo M, Barrett LF, Jin S. (2008). The structure of affect: History, theory, and implications for emotion research in organizations. In Ashkanasy NM, Cooper CL (Eds.), *Research companion to emotion in organizations* (pp. 17–44). London, UK: Edward Elgar.

Seo M, Bartunek JM, Barrett LF. (2010). The role of affective experience in work motivation: Test of a conceptual model. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *31*, 951–968.

Song Z, Uy MA, Zhang S, Shi K. (2009). Daily job search and psychological distress: Evidence from China. *Human Relations*, *62*, 1171–1197.

Spreitzer GM, Lam CF, Quinn RW. (2012). Human energy in organizations. In Cameron KS, Spreitzer GM (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of positive organizational scholarship* (pp. 155–167). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Steel P. (2007). The nature of procrastination: A meta-analytic and theoretical review of quintessential self-regulatory failure. *Psychological Bulletin*, *133*, 65–94.

Steel P, Brothen T, Wambach C. (2001). Procrastination and personality, performance, and mood. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *30*, 95–106.

Tellegen A, Watson D, Clark LA. (1999). On the dimensional and hierarchical structure of affect. *Psychological Science*, *10*, 297–303.

Thoresen CJ, Kaplan SA, Barsky AP, de Chermont K, Warren CR. (2003). The affective underpinnings of job perceptions and attitudes: A meta-analytic review and integration. *Psychological Bulletin*, *129*, 914–945.

Tice DM, Baumeister RF. (1997). Longitudinal study of procrastination, performance, stress, and health: The costs and benefits of dawdling. *Psychological Science*, *8*, 454–458.

Tugade MM, Fredrickson BL. (2004). Resilient individuals use positive emotions to bounce back from negative emotional experiences. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *82*, 320–333.

Turban DB, Stevens CK, Lee FK. (2009) Effects of conscientiousness and extraversion on new labor market entrants' job search: The mediating role of metacognitive activities and positive emotions. Personnel Psychology, *62*, 553–573.

Van Eerde W. (2000). Procrastination: Self-regulation in initiating aversive goals. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, *49*, 372–389.

Van Eerde W. (2003). A meta-analytically derived nomological network of procrastination. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *35*, 1401–1418.

Van Hooft EAJ, Born MP, Taris TW, Van der Flier H, Blonk RWB. (2005). Bridging the gap between intentions and behavior: Implementation intentions, action control and procrastination. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *66*, 238–256.

Van Hooft EAJ, Wanberg CR, Van Hoye G. (2013). Moving beyond job search quantity: Towards a conceptualization and self-regulatory framework of job search quality. *Organizational Psychology Review*, *3*, 3–40.

Wanberg CR. (2012). The individual experience of unemployment. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *63*, 369–396.

Wanberg CR, Kanfer R, Rotundo M. (1999). Unemployed individuals: Motives, job search competencies, and job-search constraints as predictors of job seeking and reemployment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *84*, 897–910.

Wanberg CR, Zhu J, Kanfer R, Zhang Z. (2012). After the pink slip: Applying dynamic motivation frameworks to the job search experience. *Academy of Management Journal*, *55*, 261–284.

Wanberg CR, Zhu J, Van Hooft EAJ. (2010). The job search grind: Perceived progress, self-reactions, and self-regulation of search effort. *Academy of Management Journal*, *53*, 788–807.

Watson D, Clark LA. (1984). Negative affectivity: The disposition to experience aversive emotional states. *Psychological Bulletin*, *96*, 465–490.

Watson D, Clark LA, Tellegen A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scale. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *54*, 1063–1070.

Watson D, Wiese D, Vaidya J, Tellegen A. (1999). The two general activation systems of affect: Structural findings, evolutionary considerations, and psychobiological evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *76*, 820–838.

Wolters CA. (2003). Understanding procrastination from a self-regulated perspective. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *95*, 179–187.