

Optimizing Job Search: A Practical Guide to Using Personality Tests for Better Career Alignment

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 30 Dec 2024	The job search process can be a complex and challenging journey, particularly for individuals in Indonesia who seek opportunities that align with their skills, aspirations, and personality traits. This study explores the role of personality assessments in enhancing the job search process by providing a structured approach to career alignment. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected from 78 participants actively seeking new employment or career advancement opportunities. A structured questionnaire consisting of 21 questions was distributed through random sampling to capture diverse perspectives on the use of personality assessments in job searching. The survey results revealed key challenges faced by job seekers, such as difficulty finding job openings that match their skills (16.67%), aligning career goals with personal strengths (12.18%), preparing for interviews (14.10%), and identifying roles that fit their personality (9.62%). These findings highlight the need for more personalized and targeted job search strategies. Personality assessments, enhanced by technological advancements, are valuable tools for addressing these challenges. By helping job seekers gain deeper insights into their strengths, weaknesses, and preferences, these tools facilitate better job-person fit, improve job satisfaction, and streamline career decision-making. The study demonstrates the potential benefits of integrating personality assessments into the job search process, aiming to create a more efficient, effective, and personalized approach to career development. By offering a structured way to align personal characteristics with job opportunities, personality assessments can play a key role in improving the overall job search experience, reducing job mismatch, and helping individuals make more informed career choices and decisions. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to a better understanding of how personality assessments can optimize career pathways and improve the efficiency of the job search process. Keywords: Career development, challenges, job search, personality traits, technology.
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INTRODUCTION

Millions of individuals engage in job searches every year for a variety of reasons. Employed professional look for new jobs to improve their working conditions. Recent graduates engage in job market after finishing their education. Unemployed individuals search for work after being fired, laid off, or resigning. Caregivers need jobs after finishing their caregiving roles. For most people, job searching is not a one-time activity but a recurring experience throughout their careers [1].

According to Kanfer et al. (2001) and Van Hooft et al. (2021), job search is a multifaceted concept that refers to a goal-directed, motivating, and self-regulatory process involving behavior, affect, and cognition with the intention of preparing for, locating, and/or applying for work possibilities [2][3]. Previous research has largely concentrated on the time and effort people invest in job search activities, which is in line with a motivational interpretation of job search [4][5]. While meta-analyses have shown that measures of job search effort and intensity positively predict getting a job, and theory predicts that motivational intensity helps reemployment, effect sizes are generally small [2][3][6]. This understanding has led researchers to shift focus from the quantity of job search efforts to their quality and strategic direction. A growing body of work highlights the importance of clear goals, effective planning, and self-

regulation in navigating the job search process. Successful job seekers are not just those who apply to the most positions but those who adopt strategic approaches for setting specific goals, planning their actions, and adapting based on feedback. These self-regulatory behaviors help individuals target roles that are a better match for their skills, values, and career aspirations, ultimately leading to more satisfying employment outcomes [7].

In this context, personality assessments have gained prominence as valuable tools to help job seekers navigate the complexities of the job search. These assessments provide insights into an individual's strengths, weaknesses, and preferences, assisting them in clarifying career goals and directing their search toward roles that are a better match. With the advancement of technology, personality assessments have become more accessible and sophisticated. Online platforms and mobile applications now offer a variety of assessments, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and CliftonStrengths, which provide immediate feedback and customized career suggestions. These digital tools employ advanced algorithms and data analytics to increase the accuracy and relevance of assessments, making it easier for job seekers to identify career paths that align with their personal and professional attributes [8][9].

Despite the potential advantages of personality assessments, questions remain regarding their effectiveness and the best ways to integrate them into the broader job search strategy. This study aims to investigate the role of personality assessments in enhancing the job search process, specifically examining how they can guide job seekers toward better career alignment. By evaluating how these tools have adapted to digital formats and exploring their potential for helping individuals make complex career decisions, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how job searches can be optimized for greater success and job satisfaction. In an increasingly digital job search landscape, this study will also address the technological innovations that have transformed career assessments. The integration of AI and data-driven insights into personality assessments has the potential to significantly impact how individuals identify suitable roles and make informed career decisions. This research will explore these technological advancements and their implications for the future of job searching, emphasizing the importance of accurate, personalized, and data-driven career guidance.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Job Search Process

Job search encompasses a variety of activities aimed at securing employment. These activities often involve setting clear career objectives (e.g., determining the desired job type), developing or updating résumés, gathering information about potential employers, networking with professional contacts, applying for open positions, and preparing for interviews with prospective employers. For most individuals, the job search is a highly autonomous and self-regulated process, driven by specific goals and proactive behaviors. The extended nature of job searches can evoke a range of emotional responses, as individuals navigate the uncertainties of the labor market, the difficulties in finding suitable positions, and the challenges of handling rejection. Successful job search behavior involves strategic decision-making and effective planning, which are essential for long-term career development. This requires job seekers to structure daily activities, maintain motivation, and adjust their approach based on feedback and evolving circumstances.

Several theoretical frameworks have been employed to understand the goal-directed nature of job searches, including the theory of planned behavior, social cognitive career theory, goal-setting theory, and self-determination theory. These perspectives have been crucial in examining how individuals set goals, persist in their efforts, and modify their strategies throughout the search process [10]. Among these, self-regulation frameworks have been particularly influential in understanding job search behaviors. According to Kanfer et al. (2001) and Kanfer & Bufton (2015), self-regulation involves the ability to manage one's actions and emotions to achieve specific career goals, encompassing dimensions such as job search intensity (the effort invested in the search), job search content (the types and quality of search activities), and temporality (the continuity and adaptation of job search efforts over time) [2][10]. These dimensions have guided research on how variations in job search behavior impact both the job search experience and employment outcomes, providing insight into why some individuals are more successful than others in finding desirable jobs.

2.2 Personality Assessments and Career Alignment

Personality assessments have become an integral tool in career guidance, providing insights into an individual's unique traits, strengths, and potential work preferences. Research suggests that understanding one's personality can significantly influence job search strategies and career choices, as individuals are more likely to thrive in roles that align with their natural tendencies and strengths [11]. Tools like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and CliftonStrengths have gained prominence in this area, offering frameworks to help job seekers identify careers that are well-suited to their personality profiles [12]. Studies have shown that a good fit between an individual's personality and their chosen career, often referred to as person-job fit, can lead to higher job satisfaction, better performance, and increased organizational commitment [13].

The theory of person-job fit posits that when job seekers select roles that match their personality traits—such as extroversion, conscientiousness, or openness—they are more likely to experience positive work outcomes and long-term career success [14]. For example, research has demonstrated that individuals with high levels of conscientiousness tend to excel in roles that require organization and attention to detail, while those with high openness to experience are better suited to creative or innovative environments [15]. These findings support the use of personality assessments as a practical tool in refining career goals and directing job search efforts toward positions that align with inherent strengths [16].

In addition to aiding individual job seekers, personality assessments have become increasingly relevant to organizations seeking to optimize recruitment processes. Many employers use personality assessments to gauge candidates' compatibility with organizational culture, often referred to as person-organization fit. Studies suggest that employees whose values and behaviors align with the organizational environment are more likely to demonstrate commitment and remain with the organization over the long term [17]. This alignment not only benefits the employer by reducing turnover but also enhances the overall job satisfaction and well-being of the employee, reinforcing the value of personality assessments in career development [13].

2.3 Technology-Driven Enhancements

Recent advancements in technology have significantly reshaped the landscape of job searching and career assessment, leading to more sophisticated and accessible tools for both job seekers and employers. These innovations include:

a. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning have significantly advanced the field of personality assessments, providing more accurate and personalized career guidance. AI-driven platforms analyze patterns in large datasets, offering nuanced insights into an individual's personality traits that go beyond traditional assessments. These technologies allow for the development of tailored feedback, helping job seekers identify their strengths, weaknesses, and ideal work environments more precisely [18][19]. Research has found that AI-based tools could uncover subtle personality characteristics, improving the alignment between candidates and career roles. Moreover, AI enhances job matching by connecting personality profiles to suitable job opportunities, enabling more effective job search strategies [20]. This technological shift allows for a more data-driven approach, increasing the relevance of job recommendations and fostering better person-job fit.

b. Gamification and Interactive Assessments

Gamification has emerged as a significant trend in personality assessments, introducing interactive elements to engage job seekers more effectively. These assessments often incorporate scenarios, simulations, and game-like features to evaluate traits in a less formal and more engaging way [21]. Research indicates that gamified assessments reduce test anxiety, leading to more accurate and authentic responses from participants [22]. Additionally, interactive assessments have been found to increase completion rates, as users are more motivated to engage with gamified formats compared to traditional questionnaires [23]. The use of gamification not only makes personality assessments more enjoyable but also enhances their validity, providing richer data for career alignment.

c. Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR)

Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) are emerging technologies that are beginning to influence the job search and recruitment landscape. VR and AR create immersive environments that allow job seekers to experience simulated job scenarios, helping them better understand potential roles and organizational cultures [24]. These technologies offer a unique way to measure skills and competencies, providing a realistic context for personality assessments that traditional formats might miss [25]. Research has shown that VR-based assessments can enhance job seekers' ability to make informed career choices by allowing them to virtually "test-drive" careers, leading to more accurate and satisfying job matches [24]. The use of VR and AR represents a future-oriented approach to career guidance, offering deeper insights into the compatibility between job seekers and potential employers.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative research design to examine the impact of personality assessments on the job search process. Data were collected through a structured survey with 78 respondents who were actively engaged in or had recently completed a job search. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to ensure a diverse representation of job seekers, encompassing recent graduates, mid-career professionals, and individuals undergoing career transitions. The survey instrument consisted of a combination of closed-ended questions and Likert-scale items, designed to capture respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences regarding the use of personality assessments during their job search. The structured survey approach facilitated a systematic examination of the data, allowing for the identification of significant trends across the respondent pool. This methodology provided a solid empirical foundation for evaluating the role of personality assessments in enhancing the job search experience, contributing to a broader understanding of their practical application in career development.

RESULT

The results of this study provide a comprehensive overview of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, their current job search experiences, and the use of personality assessments during the job search process. This section examines key demographic factors such as age, gender, education level, and career stage, which offer context for interpreting the data. Additionally, the results explore the job search behaviors of respondents, highlighting their strategies, challenges, and preferred platforms for seeking employment. The role of personality assessments is also analyzed, focusing on their prevalence, perceived effectiveness, and the features that respondents find most valuable. These findings collectively offer insights into the diverse factors that influence job search strategies and career alignment.

4.1 Demographic

4.1.1 Age Group

The age distribution of the respondents shows a concentration among younger demographics, with the largest group being those aged 18-24 years, accounting for 56.4% of the sample. This is followed by the 25-34 age group, which constitutes 37.2% of respondents. Smaller portions of the sample are represented by individuals aged under 18 (3.8%) and those aged 35-44 (2.6%). The prominence of younger age groups in this study suggests that the findings may be particularly reflective of early-career job seekers and recent graduates.

4.1.2 Education Level

In terms of educational background, the majority of respondents hold a Bachelor's degree, comprising 60.3% of the sample. This is followed by Master's degree holders, who make up 19.2%, and those with a Senior High School diploma, accounting for 16.7%. A small portion of respondents have an Associate's degree (3.8%). This distribution suggests that the sample primarily consists of individuals with higher education qualifications, which may impact their expectations and strategies in the job search, as well as their interpretation of personality assessment results.

4.1.3 Career Stage

Respondents in this study span various career stages, with 32.1% identifying as job seekers actively looking for employment. Another significant group includes young professionals (early career stage), representing 28.2% of the sample. Final-year students, who are preparing to enter the job market, make up 19.2%. Other categories include freelancers and those in mid-career or senior professional stages, each representing 6.4%, while a small percentage of respondents (2.6%) are in mid-career. Additionally, 5.1% fall into an "Other" category, indicating diverse career paths. This diversity in career stages suggests that the data collected will reflect a range of perspectives on job searching, from those just entering the workforce to those with established careers seeking new opportunities.

4.2 Current Job Search Experience

4.2.1 Length of Time of Seeking a Job

The survey data indicates a varied range of job search durations among respondents, highlighting diverse experiences in the job market. The largest segment, 29.1%, reported actively searching for jobs for a period of 1-3 months, indicating a relatively recent engagement with the job market. Additionally, 21.8% of respondents have been searching for 3-6 months, while 18.2% have been involved in job searching for less than a month. A smaller proportion, 14.5%, has been looking for jobs between 6-12 months, and 16.4% have been engaged in the search for over a year. This distribution underscores the challenges some job seekers face, with a notable portion experiencing prolonged job searches that extend beyond six months.

4.2.2 Job Platform Usage

When examining the platforms utilized by respondents during their job search, LinkedIn emerges as the most frequently used platform, with 54.5% of participants relying on it for job opportunities. JobStreet follows as the second most popular platform at 18.2%, while Glints is utilized by 10.9% of respondents. Other platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok, and Kalibrr, have significantly lower usage rates, ranging from 3.6% to 1.8%. These findings suggest a preference for professional networking and established job platforms over more general or niche platforms, indicating the perceived value of LinkedIn's networking capabilities and job-matching features.

4.2.3 Job Platform Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the job platforms they used, utilizing a Likert scale from 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied). The results show that the majority of participants have a neutral view, with 47.3% rating their satisfaction as a 3. A positive experience is reflected in 29.1% of respondents who rated their satisfaction as 4, while a smaller group, 1.8%, expressed high satisfaction with a rating of 5. On the negative side, 12.7% rated their experience as a 2, and 9.1% were very dissatisfied, rating their experience as a 1. These mixed responses suggest that while many job seekers find the platforms adequate, there is room for improvement in meeting user expectations and facilitating effective job matches.

4.2.4 Pain Points

The survey data reveals a range of challenges faced by respondents during their job search. The most significant pain point is finding job openings that match their skills, as noted by 16.7% of participants. Preparing for interviews is another notable challenge, highlighted by 14.1% of respondents, while 12.2% struggled with aligning their career goals with personal strengths and networking with professionals. Other difficulties include receiving feedback from employers (9.6%), finding job openings that align with personality (9.6%), and understanding career paths (8.3%). Challenges related to application materials, such as writing resumes/CVs (9.6%) and cover letters (7.1%), were also mentioned. These insights suggest that job seekers encounter obstacles at multiple stages of the job search, from identifying suitable opportunities to refining application documents and preparing for interviews.

4.2.5 Personality Assessment Usage

The data indicates that personality assessments are becoming a common tool among job seekers, with 54.5% of respondents reporting that they have used personality assessments as part of their job search process. This suggests that more than half of the participants recognize the potential value of understanding their strengths, weaknesses,

and preferences to better align with suitable job roles. Conversely, 45.5% of respondents have not utilized personality assessments, which may indicate a lack of awareness, skepticism regarding their effectiveness, or a preference for other job search strategies. These findings highlight the growing but still mixed acceptance of personality assessments as a relevant tool for career alignment, signaling a need for greater improvement on how these tools can be effectively integrated into job search strategies.

4.3 Personality Assessment Experience

4.3.1 Types of Personality Tests

The survey data indicates a clear preference among respondents for the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), which is the most frequently used personality assessment, with 74.4% of participants opting for this tool. In contrast, other personality tests are used far less often, with the DiSC Assessment being chosen by 10.3% of respondents. CliftonStrengths and the Hogan Personality Inventory are equally represented, each selected by 5.1% of respondents. These findings suggest that MBTI remains the dominant choice for job seekers, potentially due to its widespread recognition and ease of interpretation. However, the lower usage of other assessments highlights a gap in diversity regarding the tools job seekers consider during the career planning process.

4.3.2 Helpfulness in Guiding Career Choices

The results show that personality assessments are generally seen as helpful by most respondents, but their perceived value varies. A significant portion, 16.7%, rated personality tests as very unhelpful, indicating that not all users find these tools relevant or accurate for their career needs. This highlights the need for further refinement of personality assessments to ensure they meet the diverse expectations of job seekers. The data suggest that while personality assessments have the potential to guide career choices effectively, there is still room for improvement to increase their reliability and applicability across various contexts.

4.3.3 Influence on Job Satisfaction & Performance

Personality assessments appear to have a notable impact on job satisfaction and performance among respondents. The majority, 60%, believe that these assessments strongly influence their job satisfaction, suggesting that understanding one's personality traits can play a crucial role in finding fulfilling work. Another 20% of participants feel that personality tests have a very strong influence on their performance at work. These findings underscore the importance of aligning job roles with individual personality profiles to enhance job satisfaction and effectiveness in the workplace.

DISCUSSION

The rapid advancement of technology in the job search process has created new opportunities to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of career development tools. As job seekers face an increasingly competitive market, there is a growing demand for personalized, data-driven solutions that go beyond the traditional methods of job matching. Here several recommendations that can be considered to better align job search platforms with the evolving needs of job seekers, enhancing both the user experience and the precision of job matches.

1. Personalize Job Search Experiences through AI and Data Integration

The data suggests that job seekers are looking for more personalized job opportunities that align with their unique skills, personality traits, and career aspirations. With 54.5% of respondents using personality assessments and a significant portion (16.7%) struggling to find job openings that match their skills, it's clear that existing job platforms are not fully tapping into the power of personalized, data-driven matching. To address this gap, platforms should integrate advanced AI-driven algorithms that combine personality data with traditional job search criteria like skills and job history. This would allow job seekers to receive more relevant job recommendations tailored not only to their professional background but also to their personality traits and career goals. Additionally, platforms could introduce adaptive career pathing tools that evolve with users as they progress in their job search. These tools could suggest job roles, career development resources, and job matching features that are continuously refined based on the user's

interaction and feedback. Personalizing job search experiences in this way could greatly enhance job seeker satisfaction by reducing the common pain point of job misalignment and improving overall match quality.

2. Foster Continuous Career Development through Integrated Learning and Personality Tools

A notable finding from the study is that 24.8% of respondents use personality assessments for self-awareness and personal growth, and another 20% use them for career planning. However, 16.7% of users rated personality tests as "very unhelpful" in guiding their career choices, suggesting that the assessments alone do not offer enough actionable insights. To increase the value of these tools, job platforms should go beyond static personality tests by integrating continuous learning and skill-building resources directly within the platform. For instance, after completing a personality assessment, users could be provided with personalized suggestions for online courses, certifications, or skill development activities that align with both their personality strengths and career goals. Furthermore, platforms could offer career development dashboards that track users' progress over time, including skills acquisition, job-fit assessments, and personality growth. These dashboards would provide tangible steps for users to develop their careers while offering personalized feedback on how to align their skills and personality with potential job roles. This approach would help job seekers make informed, proactive decisions about their career development, fostering long-term job satisfaction and reducing frustration during the job search process.

3. Gamify Job Matching with Interactive Personality and Skills Assessments

While personality assessments like MBTI are popular, their application in job search platforms can be enhanced with gamification and interactive features to increase engagement and provide more dynamic, actionable insights. Platforms could integrate interactive quizzes and scenario-based games that assess not only personality but also problem-solving abilities, teamwork skills, and leadership styles. This would allow users to engage with the platform in a more personalized and enjoyable way while gaining a deeper understanding of their strengths. For example, users could participate in a "career simulation" game, where they navigate different job scenarios to showcase their preferences, responses to challenges, and interpersonal skills. The data from these games could be used to provide more accurate personality and skills assessments, which could then be used to better match job seekers to roles that align with their traits and skills. This approach could make personality and skills assessments feel less static and more integrated into the job-seeking journey, encouraging users to engage more frequently and with greater purpose.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings from this study underscore the importance of improving the job search experience through personalized, data-driven approaches. The data reveals that a significant portion of respondents (54.5%) are using personality assessments during their job search, yet 16.7% of them find it challenging to find job openings that align with their skills, and 9.6% struggle with finding roles that match their personality. These insights highlight the gap between job seekers' expectations and the job matching capabilities of current platforms. Additionally, 47.3% of respondents report neutral satisfaction with job platforms, with 22.7% expressing dissatisfaction. This suggests that there is considerable room for improvement in how platforms match candidates with suitable opportunities.

To address these challenges, three key recommendations emerge from the findings. First, personalizing job search experiences through AI and data integration is critical. AI-driven algorithms that combine personality assessments, skills, and career goals can generate more accurate job matches. This approach would allow job seekers to receive recommendations tailored to their unique profiles, improving both their job search experience and the likelihood of long-term career success. Second, fostering continuous career development through integrated learning and personality tools can help job seekers not only find the right job but also continuously develop their skills and align their career aspirations with evolving market demands. Platforms can integrate personalized learning resources and offer career planning tools that evolve as users progress in their career journeys. Lastly, gamifying job matching through interactive personality and skills assessments can engage users in a more dynamic, enjoyable way. Gamified assessments could provide deeper insights into candidates' strengths and preferences while allowing them to explore different career paths interactively, helping them make more informed decisions and stay engaged throughout the job search process. Together, these recommendations could revolutionize the job search experience, making it more personalized, engaging, and ultimately more effective for job seekers and employers alike.

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