

Motivating and Counseling the Unemployed

Gera Noordzij

Motivating and Counseling the Unemployed

Motiveren en begeleiden van mensen op zoek naar werk

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door

Gerardina Noordzij
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Promotiecommissie

Promotor: Prof.dr. M.Ph. Born

Overige leden: Prof.dr. A.B. Bakker
Prof.dr. R.W.B. Blonk
Prof.dr. T. A. M. J. van Gog

Copromotoren: Dr. E.A.J. Van Hooft
Dr. H. Van Mierlo

Voor Marrit

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Introduction: History, Purposes,
and Guiding Questions

Chapter 1

During a 'learning goal orientation' training course for unemployed people, one of the participants, a woman in her forties, had a lot of resistance to participate in the course. I persuaded her to stay and assured her that all she had to do was sit down and watch. She persevered in her idea that this was a waste of time and even tried to convince me that I was also wasting my time. Two weeks after the training course, I called her for a follow-up interview to measure her job-search intentions and behavior. Her first response was: "I have to apologize for my behavior. After the training course I passed a temporary agency for elderly people and remembered what you had said about trying different strategies. And guess what, I now have a job and not just any job but exactly the job that I have wanted for so long".

This anecdote illustrates the potential impact that employment counseling and training courses can have on individuals who have lost their job. Losing one's job is a life event with far reaching economic, psychological, and physical consequences (McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005; Paul & Moser, 2009) and is considered to be one of the top 10 traumatic life experiences (Spera, Buhfeind, & Pennebaker, 1994). Besides these consequences, unemployment also deprives a person of the additional gains from being employed, such as time structure, personal identity, interpersonal contact, and activity (Jahoda, 1982; Warr, 1987). Furthermore, the negative consequences of being unemployed tend to increase with increasing duration of unemployment (Rowley & Feather, 1987).

Unemployment affects a substantial number of people in present day economies. For example, in the first three months of 2012, 11% of the labor force in Europe and 8.2% of the labor force in the United States were unemployed (Eurostat, 2012; U.S. Department of Labor, 2012). Approximately half of these individuals were long-term unemployed (i.e., more than six months) at that time. These numbers equal the numbers of the 1980s recession.

The prevalence of unemployment in combination with its severe negative effects highlights the general importance of trying to get unemployed people back to work. However, finding employment is a difficult task during which people are forced to cope with failures, negative feedback, and disappointing experiences. To deal with the difficulties of job seeking, many short-term and almost all long-term unemployed people get assistance from employment counseling agencies. Governments spend substantial amounts of money on employment counseling. For instance, in the U.S., expenses for job training and employment counseling in 2013 have been estimated at 12 billion dollars (Office of Management and Budget, 2012). In 2007, when starting this dissertation project, more than 2.5 billion Euro was spent on employment counseling and training courses in The Netherlands (Tempelman, Berden, & Kok, 2010). Despite these high investments the effectiveness of employment counseling appeared to be relatively low. For example, a paper by Groot and colleagues (2008) demonstrated that for individuals who get assistance from employment counseling agencies, the chance of becoming reemployed after 18 months of unemployment was only 0.9% higher compared to those who did not get assistance. In 2012, the budget for employment counseling in the Netherlands was reduced to 712 million Euros (Divosa, 2012). This large budget reduction was in part based on those inquiries

that indicated a very poor return on investment for employment counseling in the preceding years. However, in the unemployment literature indications have been found for effective employment counseling interventions and techniques (e.g., Brenninkmeijer & Blonk, 2011; Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009; Wooten, 1996), suggesting the importance of employment counseling to help unemployed job seekers find a job. It is therefore of utmost importance that we get more insight in and knowledge of counseling interventions and techniques that are helpful in speeding up reemployment and result in a better return on investment for the money spent on employment counseling.

Because of the lack of knowledge on effective counseling interventions and techniques and to get a deeper understanding on employment counseling effectiveness, the aim of the current dissertation is to provide insight into the factors that contribute to employment counseling effectiveness.

History of Employment Counseling

Research on unemployment has a long history, dating back to the 1930s. One of the first publications was the book of Jahoda, Lazarsfeld, and Zeisel (1933/2002), focusing on the deterioration of well-being of unemployed individuals and their families. After a very long hiatus of research on unemployment, the recessions of the 1970s and the 1980s put the topic of job loss back on the research agenda. That research first focused mainly on the negative consequences of job loss. Cross-sectional as well as longitudinal studies documented that unemployment contributes to poor physical and mental health and even suicide (e.g., Brodsky, 1977; Warr, 1982). At the same time, other studies provided strong evidence that reemployment restores health and well-being to levels found before job loss (e.g. Caplan, Vinokur, Price, & Van Ryn, 1989; Vinokur & Caplan, 1987). This work clearly illustrated the importance of reemployment. As a result, researchers broadened their attention to predictors of reemployment success and the use of employment counseling techniques that might influence those predictors.

One track of research concentrated on the individual and situational factors affecting successful reemployment. These individual and situational factors can be split into factors that are relatively stable and unchangeable by unemployed individuals (e.g., demographics, personality, social support) and factors that are more controllable by unemployed individuals (e.g., coping strategies, job search behavior; DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1986; Leana & Feldman, 1988). With their meta-analysis, Kanfer, Wanberg, and Kantrowitz (2001) identified job-search behavior as the strongest positive predictor of reemployment success. Other antecedent variables, such as demographics, personality, and self-regulation variables (e.g., self-efficacy, commitment), were also significantly related to reemployment success, but to a lesser extent than job search behavior. Nowadays, the research on individual factors affecting reemployment probabilities is broadened to include inquiries into the predictive value of characteristics such as employability (Koen, Klehe, & Van Vianen, 2010; McArdle, Waters, Briscoe, & Hall, 2007), job-search clarity and intensity (e.g., Saks, 2006; Taris, Heesink, & Feij, 1995; Wanberg, Glomb, Song, & Sorenson, 2005), and self-regulatory and goal-related variables (Côté, Saks, & Zikic, 2006; Creed, King, Hood, & McKenzie, 2009;

Song, Wanberg, Niu, & Xie, 2006; Turban, Stevens, & Lee, 2009; Van Hooft, Born, Taris, Van der Flier, & Blonk, 2004; Van Hooft, Born, Taris, Van der Flier, & Blonk, 2005; Wanberg, Kanfer, & Rotundo, 1999).

Another track of research concentrated on counseling and interventions aimed at improving job-seeking competencies and helping job seekers find employment. Counseling (then called 'vocational guidance') started before 1900 out of humanitarianism in response to the exploitation of children and adults (Pope, 2000). However, it was only since the 1970s that unemployment became a focus of the counseling literature and research (i.e., focused on employment or outplacement counseling) and that interventions were developed aimed at increasing reemployment probabilities for unemployed individuals. One of the first structured interventions for unemployed people reported upon was the 'Job Club' (Azrin, Flores, & Kaplan, 1975). This intervention was published in "Behavioral Research and Therapy", suggesting that it was a kind of therapy aimed at helping people overcome the negative effects of unemployment by means of finding a job. The program stressed techniques such as a "buddy system" and mutual assistance. Further research demonstrated strong positive effects of the 'Job Club' on reemployment (e.g., Azrin, Philip, Thienes-Hontes, & Besalel, 1980; Rife & Belcher, 1994) and nowadays all over the world there are Job Clubs in which unemployed individuals are gathered to help each other. Another world-wide applied intervention is the JOBS-program, developed in 1984 by the Michigan Prevention Research Center of the Michigan University, aimed at providing unemployed individuals with job-seeking skills to promote reemployment and combat feelings of helplessness and depression. JOBS has been shown to result in lower levels of depression (Vinokur, Price, & Schul, 1995), higher self-efficacy (Brenninkmeijer, Van Houwelingen, Blonk, & Van Yperen, 2006), more reemployment (Brenninkmeijer & Blonk, 2011), and higher quality of reemployment (Caplan, Vinokur, Price, & Van Ryn, 1989). Other interventions designed to expedite reemployment were, for example, a self-efficacy training (Eden & Aviram, 1993) and an intervention to reduce stress for managers who recently became unemployed (Saam & Wodtke, 1995). However, since the 1990s, psychological research has paid relatively little attention to designing and empirically testing interventions for unemployed people (see for an exception, Yanar, Budworth, & Latham, 2009). The literature on employment counseling was now mainly focused on the needs of the unemployed, for example by describing the phases of grief and stress following job loss (e.g., Aquilanti & Leroux, 1999; Kirk, 1994; Latack & Dozier, 1986). In the few research studies that empirically examined the effectiveness of employment counseling, client satisfaction was used as indicator of counseling effectiveness (Butterfield & Borgen, 2005; Wooten, 1996). However, as stated by Wooten, client satisfaction represents only one level of evaluation of employment counseling effectiveness and is mainly based on direct benefits perceived by clients such as the quality of the client-counselor relationship. Only one study explicitly tested the effectiveness of employment counseling, demonstrating that the intensity and comprehensiveness of support by employment counselors was positively related to reemployment probabilities (Westaby, 2004).

Concluding, there is a considerable and growing body of research concerning predictors of successful reemployment. At the same time, however, there are only a few theory-based and empirically supported

interventions for the unemployed, and there is hardly any research evidence concerning the effectiveness of employment counselors' job performance behavior and outcomes.

The Purposes of this Dissertation

In 2009, a successful intervention for unemployed job seekers, based on goal orientation theory (also referred to as achievement goal theory), was published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* (Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009). The research project reported in this dissertation has its foundation in the intervention described in that article. At that time, there was much debate about the usefulness of interventions and employment counseling techniques funded with money provided by the national government and municipalities. Some critics even arrived at the gloomy conclusion that employment counseling is a waste of time and money, because the costs outweigh the benefits (Groot, Hollanders, & Hop, 2006). This development forced employment counseling agencies to address the question of "How to increase employment counseling effectiveness?" There was a strong need for evidence-based, practically applicable interventions and guidelines for employment counseling. As indicated in the review above, although we know a lot about the predictors of job search behavior and employment success, little is known about the effectiveness of employment counseling and much remains to be done in this area. Therefore, the present dissertation is focused on the effectiveness of employment counseling and the role of achievement goal orientation therein.

With the overarching aim of providing insight into factors that contribute to employment counseling effectiveness, the purpose of this dissertation is twofold. The first aim is to further develop and validate a theory-based intervention for guiding and counseling unemployed people and to investigate its underlying self-regulatory mechanisms. The second aim is to expand current knowledge of employment counseling effectiveness. This dissertation includes a series of four studies (Chapter 2 to 5) that each contribute to one of the two central aims. Together, these studies are aimed at enhancing our insight into employment counseling effectiveness and yield practical recommendations that may help increase the effectiveness of current employment counseling practices.

Guiding Theories and Research Questions

Goal orientation or achievement goal theory (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliot & McGregor, 2001; VandeWalle, 1997) is the guiding theoretical framework for the research reported in this dissertation. In the literature there is a debate about the interchangeable use of the labels "goal orientations" or "achievement goals" to denote people's goal preferences in achievement situations. Elliot and Trash (2002), for example, argued that goal orientation refers to a broad orientation on achievement related variables, whereas achievement goals refer to more precise goal-focused strivings. Throughout the dissertation, the term "achievement goal orientation" will be used as suggested by Hulleman, Schrage, Bodmann, and Harackiewicz (2010), because it comprises the broad schema of achievement related variables, both as a situation-specific and as a more trait-like construct.

According to the original achievement goal orientation theory, there are two primary goal orientations that individuals can have when engaging in achievement-related behavior (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). A learning goal orientation (also referred to as mastery goals) reflects a focus on *developing* one's competence and mastering something new, whereas a performance goal orientation reflects a focus on *demonstrating* one's competence and thereby gaining positive judgments. Originally, achievement goal orientation was conceptualized as an individual difference variable, related to individuals' implicit theory of ability (Dweck, 1986). Specifically, conceiving ability as a malleable attribute that can be developed with effort and persistence (*incremental* implicit theory) induces a learning goal orientation. In contrast, conceiving ability as a fixed, innate attribute that is difficult to develop (*entity* implicit theory) induces a performance goal orientation. Empirical research, however, has demonstrated that whether individuals develop a learning or performance goal orientation also depends on situational characteristics (i.e., state goal orientation). Combining these perspectives, achievement goal orientation can best be conceptualized as a quasi-trait that may be influenced by situational characteristics (Button, Mathieu, & Zajac, 1996; DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). Previous research has used a variety of interventions to induce situational goal orientations, such as assigning or adopting an achievement goal or creating a learning or a performance climate, assuming that these manipulations affect people's achievement goal orientation in that situation (e.g., Kozlowski et al., 2001; Stevens & Gist, 1997).

Recent achievement goal orientation theory and research integrated the traditional distinction between learning and performance goal orientation with classic motivation theories (e.g., McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953), resulting in a 2 x 2 framework of goal orientation (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Pintrich, 2000b). In this 2 x 2 framework, learning and performance goal orientation are split into approach and avoidance components: 1) learning-approach goal orientation, focused on the development of competences and mastering something new; 2) learning-avoidance goal orientation, focused on avoiding incompetence and avoiding not mastering something new; 3) performance-approach goal orientation, focused on demonstrating competences to others and gaining positive judgments; and 4) performance-avoidance goal orientation, focused on avoiding demonstration of incompetence to others and avoiding negative judgments.

Meta-analytic reviews of experimental and correlational studies have demonstrated the importance of achievement goal orientation as a predictor of motivation, self-regulation, and performance (Payne, Youngcourt, & Beaubien, 2007; Rawsthorne & Elliot, 1999; Utman, 1997). Regarding the effects of achievement goal orientation in the job-search context, the importance of a learning-approach goal orientation in particular has been demonstrated in a correlational (Creed et al., 2009) and an experimental study (Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009). In the study by Van Hooft and Noordzij, unemployed people were trained to set learning-approach or performance-approach achievement goals for their job search behavior, assuming that these goals affect job-seekers' achievement goal orientation. The training on setting learning-approach achievement goals was found to be more beneficial for job-search intentions and behavior, and resulted in higher reemployment probabilities, compared to the training on setting

performance-approach achievement goals and also compared to a control training. However, this study failed to identify mediation effects and thus provided no insight into the factors that underlie the beneficial effects of learning-approach achievement goals on job search and reemployment.

Kanfer et al. (2001) defined job search as a dynamic self-regulatory and goal-oriented process and called for the investigation of job search from a self-regulatory perspective. Furthermore, as suggested by Dweck and Leggett (1988), achievement goal orientation serves as a 'cognitive mediator' between the task and goal achievement. Self-efficacy, strategy awareness, learning from failures, and intentions are some of the cognitive self-regulatory processes that have been shown to be related to achievement goal orientations (Fisher & Ford, 1998; Payne et al., 2007; Van Dyck, Van Hooft, De Gilder, & Liesveld, 2010; Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009). Together, these lines of thought draw attention to the first question of this dissertation: whether and to what extent the positive effects of a learning goal orientation intervention on job search and reemployment probabilities are caused by changes in job-seekers' achievement goal orientation (job search learning-approach, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance goal orientation) and cognitive self-regulatory processes (i.e., self-efficacy, strategy awareness, learning from failures, and intentions).

Research question 1: What are the cognitive self-regulatory processes that underlie the effects of a learning goal orientation intervention on job search and reemployment? Specifically,

- Are unemployed job seekers who participate in a learning goal orientation training more likely to be reemployed compared to unemployed job seekers who participate in a training standard in employment counseling?
- Does a learning goal orientation training result in a change in job seekers' achievement goal orientation for their job search activities?
- What are the causal effects of job-search achievement goal orientation on cognitive self-regulation (i.e., self-efficacy, strategy awareness, learning from failures, and intentions)?
- Does the improvement of cognitive self-regulation result in increasing reemployment probabilities?

This research question will be addressed in Chapter 2, based on a field experiment in which two interventions for unemployed individuals (i.e., learning goal orientation training and a control training) are compared with regard to the change in cognitive self-regulatory processes (i.e., job-search achievement goal orientation, self-efficacy, strategy awareness, learning from failures, and job-search intentions) and their effect on reemployment probabilities.

Job search is aimed at attaining a future goal (a job). Hence, job seeking is a goal-oriented and self-regulatory process. During this process, individuals searching for a job are provided with a flood of feedback on their job-search activities by employment counselors as well as through reactions on application letters and interviews. Feedback allows individuals to evaluate their job-search performance relative to their goal and is therefore an important mechanism that influences job-search behaviors over time. The effects of positive and negative feedback on motivation, self-regulation, and performance are

very complex (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Furthermore, the reactions on positive and negative feedback vary widely across individuals and situations, ranging from increasing effort and improvement of motivation and performance to a decline of motivation and performance, and task withdrawal. In order to increase reemployment probabilities, it is crucial that job seekers are able to maintain their motivation and self-regulation after positive as well as after negative feedback.

Achievement goal orientation theory predicts that the different goal orientations (i.e., 2 x 2 framework of achievement goal orientations) are differentially related to motivation and self-regulation and that these differential relationships emerge over time via the interpretation, evaluation, and acting on feedback (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). In the first study (Chapter 2), we only investigated the effects of learning-approach goal orientation. The effects of the other goal orientations thus remained unexplored. Most goal orientation theorists contend that learning-approach achievement goals have a positive effect on motivation and self-regulation, while this effect is negative for performance-avoidance achievement goals. For learning-avoidance and performance-approach achievement goals these effects are much more ambiguous. The consistent negative effect of especially performance-avoidance achievement goals raises ethical concerns with regard to studying the complete 2 x 2-model in a field setting. Moreover, the literature on the joint motivational effects of goal orientation and feedback yields inconclusive results that can best be explored in more detail under controlled experimental conditions. For the second study, we therefore chose an experimental design with a student population in a lab setting. Furthermore, research yielded inconclusive results regarding the differences in motivation and self-regulation for the four achievement goal orientations after positive and negative feedback (e.g., Button et al., 1996; Cianci, Schaubroeck, & McGill, 2010; Cron, Slocum, VandeWalle, & Fu, 2005). As such, feedback is a pivotal aspect of the job-search process, but current theory allows no clear conclusions about the combined motivational effects of achievement goal orientation and feedback. The second key question that underlies this dissertation therefore focuses on the motivational consequences of providing individuals with different achievement goal orientations and feedback.

Research question 2: What are the effects of the interplay between achievement goal orientation and feedback on motivation and self-regulation? Specifically,

- Are there different effects of positive and negative feedback on motivation and self-regulation (in terms of task persistence)?
- What are the effects of the four distinctive achievement goal orientations on motivation and self-regulation (in terms of task persistence)?
- Are the effects of positive and negative feedback on motivation and self-regulation (in terms of task persistence) dependent on people's achievement goal orientation?
- What is the optimal combination of achievement goal orientation and positive or negative feedback, regarding motivation and self-regulation (in terms of task persistence)?

Research question 2 will be addressed in Chapter 3 by means of a 4 x 2 (four achievement goal orientations and feedback valence) between-participants experimental study, examining the motivational

effects of the interplay between situational achievement goal orientation and feedback on task persistence.

One way of increasing employment-counseling effectiveness is with the implementation of evidence-based interventions for guiding and counseling unemployed people. However, counseling effectiveness is also determined by individual employment counselor behaviors. Many job seekers get assistance from employment counselors because for most job seekers job search is a highly stressful task that is relatively new and where failures and feedback are abundant (Wanberg, Zhu, & Van Hooft, 2010). Employment counselors help job seekers deal with these difficulties and, for example as stated by an employment counselor: *'I keep in contact with this organization, they know me and I know them. A few weeks ago they had a vacancy; the manager phoned me and asked me if I had a candidate. I had a client (very suitable for this job) who had told me that he is too anxious to do job interviews. So, I arranged that this client could start immediately. This week I phoned the employer and the client. Both are very satisfied, as am I. That is effective counseling'*. However, only a small body of research addressed counselor behavior (see for exceptions, Butterfield & Borgen, 2005; Wooten, 1996) so that our understanding of which counselor behaviors are effective remains limited. With the third research question, we aimed to identify employment counselor' behaviors that are effective as well as ineffective for bringing unemployed job seekers back to work.

Research question 3: What are effective behaviors of employment counselors? Specifically,

- What are the different categories of employment counselor behaviors?
- How can the categories of employment counselor' behaviors be organized into a phase-model of employment counseling?

This research question will be addressed in Chapter 4 by means of a qualitative study, using the Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954) to inductively develop a framework and a model of effective behaviors of employment counselors.

Behaviors of employment counselors might serve as indicators of their job performance. However, job performance has been defined in many different ways. Definitions and measurement of job performance vary in the extent to which they emphasize performance behavior (e.g., assisting people), subjective performance outcomes (e.g., performance ratings), or objective performance outcomes (Campbell et al., 1990). Each conceptualization provides a unique, meaningful perspective on job performance (Yammarino & Atwater, 1993).

Achievement goal orientation theory predicts that the different achievement goal orientations are differentially related to performance. Research has examined the relationship of achievement goal orientation with various performance outcomes. For example, a situational focus on learning-approach goal orientation compared to performance-approach goal orientation was found to be more beneficial for job-search intentions and behavior, and resulted in higher reemployment probabilities (Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009). However, much of the research on achievement goal orientation and performance

has been conducted with college students or children, investigating the relation between achievement goal orientation and academic or task performance (e.g., Butler, 1992; Button et al., 1996; Stevens & Gist, 1997). Relatively few studies have focused on the relation between achievement goal orientation and job performance (e.g., VandeWalle, Brown, Cron, & Slocum, 1999). In their meta-analysis, Payne and colleagues (2007) showed that learning-approach goal orientation was positively related to academic performance but not to task performance. For performance-approach goal orientation no relation was found with either academic or task performance. However, on average, both learning-approach and performance-approach goal orientations were positively (although weakly) related to job performance. In the study by Payne and colleagues there was no differentiation between different types of job performance indicators (i.e., behaviors, objective, or subjective job performance). This lack of differentiation between the indicators of job performance raises the question whether the relation between achievement goal orientation and job performance depends on the definition and measurement of job performance. For example, individuals with a performance-approach goal orientation are more likely to positively bias their self-ratings of job performance (Janssen & Van der Vegt, 2011), whereas learning-approach goal orientation has been related to objective job performance indicators (VandeWalle et al., 1999). It is therefore important that different job performance indicators are measured and examined simultaneously. This way of measuring job performance provides a more accurate and complete description of employment counselors' job performance, allowing for a more detailed investigation of the relation between employment counselors' achievement goal orientation and their job performance.

Research question 4: What is the relation between employment counselors' achievement goal orientation and their job performance? Specifically,

- Is it possible to identify different profiles of employment counselors based on objective, subjective, and behavioral job performance indicators?
- How is employment counselors' achievement goal orientation related to their job-performance profiles?
- Does the relation between employment counselors' achievement goal orientation and their job performance depend on the definition and measurement of job performance?

Research question 4 will be addressed in Chapter 5 by means of a cluster-analysis of employment counselors' job-performance indicators. These different clusters of job-performance indicators are subsequently related to employment counselors' achievement goal orientation to examine to what extent learning and performance achievement goal orientations are differentially associated with different employment counselor performance profiles.

Together, these four studies provide insight into the factors that contribute to employment counseling effectiveness. These overall factors will be discussed in the sixth and final chapter that will also include theoretical implications and opportunities for future research. Finally, suggestions for motivating and counseling the unemployed are provided.

Chapter 2

The Effects of a Learning Goal Orientation Training on Self-regulation: A Field Experiment among Unemployed Job Seekers

This chapter is accepted for publication as Noordzij, G., Van Hooft, E. A. J., Van Mierlo, H., Van Dam, A., & Born M. Ph. (in press). The effects of a learning goal orientation training on self-regulation: A field experiment among unemployed job seekers. *Personnel Psychology*. DOI: 10.1111/peps.12011

Abstract

Finding reemployment after job loss is a complex and difficult task that requires extensive motivation and self-regulation. The present study aimed to examine whether improving unemployed job seekers' cognitive self-regulation can increase reemployment probabilities. Based on the achievement goal orientation literature, we developed a learning goal orientation (LGO) training, which focused on goal setting aimed at improving rather than demonstrating competences and creating a climate of development and improvement. We predicted that the LGO-training would influence peoples' achievement goal orientation towards job seeking which in turn would relate to learning from failure, strategy awareness, and self-efficacy, leading to job-search intentions, resulting in increased reemployment status. Using a two-group quasi-experimental design with 223 unemployed jobseekers, we found support for these predictions, except for self-efficacy. The results suggest that an LGO-training is a promising tool to improve self-regulation in and effectiveness of job search.

Losing one's job is a life event with far-reaching economic, psychological and physical consequences (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Paul & Moser, 2009). Coping with job loss in terms of finding employment is a difficult task during which people are forced to cope with failure and disappointing experiences. Self-regulation during the dynamic process of searching for employment is therefore essential (Kanfer et al., 2001). Self-regulation in job search refers to cognitions and behaviors such as forming intentions, putting sustained effort into job search, coping with rejection, and persisting in the face of failure. These cognitions and behaviors have been found to increase the probability of reemployment (Kanfer et al., 2001), raising the question whether job-search effectiveness can be enhanced by interventions aimed at increasing job seekers' self-regulation skills. Previous studies provided important insights into training and development of self-regulation skills in general (e.g., Baumeister, Gailliot, DeWall, & Oaten, 2006; Bell & Kozlowski, 2008; Keith & Frese, 2008; Schunk & Ertmer, 2000). Furthermore, research has shown that unemployed people's self-efficacy, job-search skills, and reemployment status can be improved by training (Azrin et al., 1975; Caplan et al., 1989; Eden & Aviram, 1993; Rife & Belcher, 1994; Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009). However, very little is known about training and development of self-regulation in the context of job search, raising the question whether knowledge about self-regulation training can be generalized to the context of job search.

In the present study, we integrate this training research with more recent developments in the job-search literature related to the role of achievement goal orientation (Creed et al., 2009; Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009). Achievement goal orientation refers to people's goal preferences in achievement situations (Payne et al., 2007). Based on achievement goal orientation theory (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliot & McGregor, 2001; VandeWalle, 1997), we propose that achievement goal orientation importantly affects self-regulation during job search. Conceptualizing job search as a self-regulatory and goal-oriented process, we introduce a training program designed to change achievement goal orientation in job search, which should, in turn, improve job-search self-regulation and reemployment success. We compare this 'goal-orientation' training program with a training program on 'choice-making' in job search. The choice-making training is a commonly used training program in employment counseling to help people making choices about what type of job to pursue.

The present study contributes to the unemployment literature by 1) developing an intervention (i.e., learning goal training) that is more useful in employment counseling compared to existing interventions (i.e., choice-making training) and 2) improving our understanding of the effects of achievement goal orientation on self-regulation during job search. With this intervention study, we extend previous research on achievement goal orientation and job search (Creed et al., 2009; Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009) by examining the causal effects of achievement goal orientation rather than its correlates and by explicitly measuring the cognitive self-regulatory mechanisms that are triggered by changes in goal orientation. To achieve those aims, we compared the effects of a learning goal training and a choice-making training on self-regulation and reemployment using a three-wave pretest-posttest quasi-experimental field studying a sample of unemployed people searching for a job.

Self-Regulation and Job Search

Self-regulation refers to processes of “self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals” (Zimmerman, 2000, p. 14). These self-regulatory mechanisms enable individuals to guide their goal-directed activities over time and across changing situations. The literature on self-regulation distinguishes different phases of self-regulation, describing the distinct phases that individuals go through when pursuing goals (e.g., Ajzen, 1985; Gollwitzer, 1990; Karoly, 1993; Vancouver & Day, 2005; Zimmerman, 2000). Although researchers have proposed up to five phases of self-regulation, the core distinction is that between *goal choice* and *goal striving*. Goal choice refers to the process of selecting one or more goals, whereas goal striving refers to the process of implementing an existing goal by initiating action and putting forth effort, reflecting a continuous interplay of behavior and cognitions (Diefendorff & Lord, 2008; Gollwitzer & Brandstätter, 1997). Applying the two core phases of self-regulation to job search, the goal-choice phase reflects processes related to setting a reemployment goal, which is relatively straightforward, whereas the goal-striving phase refers to processes related to finding employment, which is often difficult and ambiguous. Our current focus is on the goal-striving phase of job search because this phase requires extensive self-regulation. Specifically, job seekers need to manage their thoughts, attention, emotions, and motivation to control the search process and deal with rejections, obstacles, and failure (Wanberg et al., 1999).

Self-regulation comprises three interdependent activities: self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-reaction (Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989). Self-monitoring refers to the self-observation of thoughts and actions. Self-evaluation refers to the comparison of current performance to the desired goal. Finally, self-reactions such as self-satisfaction and self-efficacy influence the reallocation of effort to achieve a goal or to withdraw. In the present study we use several cognitive self-regulatory constructs to assess job seekers’ self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-reaction: 1) the cognition that one can learn from search experiences and the failures and rejections associated with these experiences, 2) the awareness that there are alternative strategies one can use in case of failure or negative experiences, 3) self-efficacy about accomplishing job-search activities, and 4) planning to allocate effort to the job-search process by means of forming job-search intentions. The more job seekers are aware that they can learn from failure, that there are alternative strategies they can use, and that they are able to accomplish the task (i.e., self-efficacy), the more plans they make to search for a job, and, ultimately, the more likely they are to find a job.

Achievement Goal Orientation and Job Search

Kanfer et al. (2001) defined job search as a dynamic self-regulatory and goal-oriented process, occurring as a response to a discrepancy between people’s employment goal and their current situation, and argued that job-search behavior is similar to other self-regulated behaviors such as requisite behavior in highly autonomous jobs. Button et al. (1996) stated “goal orientation may have an important impact on self-regulatory processes that influence job performance over time” (p. 41). This statement is supported by Payne et al.’s (2007) meta-analysis, which demonstrated that achievement goal orientation is related

to self-regulation variables and job performance. Synthesizing these theoretical perspectives and empirical findings, we propose that achievement goal orientation strongly influences self-regulatory processes during job search.

Achievement goal orientation can be viewed both as a personality trait and as a personal preference that may be affected by situational characteristics (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). Trait achievement goal orientation represents one’s general goal preferences that are stable over time and across situations, whereas situational achievement goal orientation represents specific goal preferences for the task and context at hand (Payne et al., 2007). Recent achievement goal orientation theory and research has integrated the traditional distinction between learning and performance goal orientations (Dweck, 1986) with classic achievement motivation theories (e.g., McClelland et al., 1953), which states that behavior in achievement settings can be oriented towards the attainment of success (approach) or the avoidance of failure. This integration has resulted in a 2 x 2 framework with four achievement goal orientations: 1) learning-approach goal orientation, focused on the development of competences and mastering something new; 2) learning-avoidance goal orientation, focused on avoiding not mastering something and avoiding not developing competences; 3) performance-approach goal orientation, focused on demonstrating competences to others and gaining positive judgments; and 4) performance-avoidance goal orientation, focused on avoiding demonstration of incompetence to others and avoiding negative judgments (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Pintrich, 2000b; VandeWalle, 1997).

Meta-analytic reviews of experimental as well as correlational research have demonstrated that learning-approach (LGO), performance-approach (PPGO), and performance-avoidance (APGO) goal orientation are differentially related to intrinsic motivation (Rawsthorne & Elliot, 1999) and performance (Payne et al., 2007; Utman, 1997). These reviews suggest that APGO is negatively related to motivational processes and outcomes (in the few studies investigating learning-avoidance goal orientation similar relations were found, e.g., Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Van Yperen, 2003). LGO is generally associated with adaptive motivational processes and outcomes, whereas PPGO shows a more inconsistent outcome pattern. In part, the complex outcome pattern of PPGO can be explained by task characteristics. PPGO seems functional for routine tasks but dysfunctional when tasks are ambiguous (Winters & Latham, 1996) or when tasks are novel and have different stages (Earley, Connolly, & Ekegren, 1989). In contrast, LGO has been shown to be especially effective in early stages of skill acquisition (Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989) and for complex tasks (Seijts, Latham, Tasa, & Latham, 2004; Utman, 1997). Job search is a stressful, complex, and for most people new task with multiple stages during which obstacles, failure, and rejection are common. Therefore, of the four goal orientations, LGO likely is the most beneficial in job search. Thus, we propose that job seekers will benefit from a training program aimed at strengthening their LGO.

This line of reasoning is supported by a recent correlational study showing a positive relationship between trait LGO and job-search intensity (Creed et al., 2009). However, in their review on goal orientation, DeShon and Gillespie (2005) argue that the stable aspects of achievement goal orientation are more relevant to the goal-choice system whereas the malleable aspects of achievement goal orientation are more relevant to the goal-striving system. Given our current focus on the goal-striving

aspect of job search and following DeShon and Gillespie's line of reasoning, we theorize that job search is not only influenced by trait achievement goal orientation but also by situational achievement goal orientation. Dweck (2006) showed that people respond to training programs that seek to modify situational achievement goal orientation. We therefore developed a training based on the approach dimension of learning goal orientation with the aim of strengthening job seekers' situational LGO that is their LGO towards job search, and as such to improve their self-regulation in job search and enhance reemployment success.

Figure 1 (Model A) displays our research model, outlining the proposed effects of the learning-approach goal orientation training (i.e., LGO-training) on job-search goal orientation, cognitive self-regulation, and reemployment.

Hypothesized Effects of LGO-training

Elliot and Trash (2002) argued that achievement goal orientation influences the nature, focus, and quality of self-regulation. For example, when facing failure individuals with learning goals tend to analyze their own actions, change their strategies, and view effort as an effective way to develop their competences and accomplish their goals (Dweck, 1986; Nicholls, 1984). This reasoning is supported by research showing positive relations between LGO and meta-cognitive strategies such as planning and monitoring (Ford, Smith, Weissbein, Gully, & Salas, 1998; Pintrich, 2000b; Turban et al., 2009), a mastery-oriented approach towards errors (Van Dyck et al., 2010), and the use of different strategies (Fisher & Ford, 1998; Roedel, Schraw, & Plake, 1994; Winters & Latham, 1996). Thus, theory and research suggest that LGO is associated with adaptive reactions to complex tasks, exerting effort, persisting in the face of failure, using effective strategies, and learning from failure, resulting in increased performance and goal achievement.

Individuals searching for a job face many difficulties, rejections, and negative feedback. Negative feedback might be interpreted as personal failure and lack of competence, resulting in demotivation, lower self-efficacy, and giving up. LGO-training likely buffers against such adverse effects by broadening cognitions and making the job search experience less threatening. For example, LGO-training likely helps job seekers realize that failures are not negative but represent an opportunity to learn, makes them aware that there are alternative strategies they can use, and enhances their self-efficacy. In that way, LGO-training increases job seekers' motivation as indicated by intentions to invest effort in the job-search process, resulting in increased reemployment probabilities. Correspondingly, we expect that LGO-training positively influences unemployed job seekers' *reemployment status*, by positively affecting their self-regulation in terms of *learning from failure*, *strategy awareness*, *self-efficacy*, and *job-search intentions* through its effects on peoples' *achievement goal orientation* towards job search.

Reemployment Status

Achieving the goal of reemployment is a complex endeavor that results from cognitive as well as behavioral processes of self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-reactions during job search. An individual's achievement goal orientation might serve as a 'cognitive mediator' between the task and goal achievement, resulting in different patterns of motivation, behavior, and performance (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Previous studies have demonstrated that LGO is positively related to performance (Payne et al, 2007) and manipulating or training LGO in general has been found to result in higher performance, especially on complex tasks (Utman, 1997). As job search is a complex task, we expect that job seekers who receive LGO-training will have higher reemployment probabilities, compared to jobseekers who receive a standard choice-making training, which is not directed at setting learning goals and reframing job seeking as a learning experience.

Hypothesis 1: Unemployed job seekers who participated in the LGO-training are more likely to be reemployed after training than those in the choice-making training.

Job-Search Achievement Goal Orientation

The type of goal orientation an individual adopts in an achievement situation can be influenced by situational cues (Button et al., 1996). Researchers have used a variety of interventions to induce situational achievement goal orientation, such as goal content (i.e., assigning or adopting learning goals, Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001; Seijts et al., 2004; Van Yperen, 2003), goal framing (i.e., creating an LGO climate, Mangos & Steele-Johnson, 2001; Martocchio, 1994; Nicholls, 1984; Steele-Johnson, Heintz, & Miller, 2008; Stevens & Gist, 1997), or a combination of goal content and goal framing (Kozlowski & Bell, 2006). Previous training studies found differential effects for situational achievement goal orientation manipulations independent of individuals' trait achievement goal orientation (e.g., Kozlowski et al., 2001; Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009), thus demonstrating that achievement goal orientation can be considered a changeable situational characteristic (Button et al., 1996; DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). These studies implicitly assume that a goal content and/or goal framing manipulation affect people's achievement goal orientation. However, to our knowledge, no previous achievement goal orientation intervention study directly measured the effects of training on people's achievement goal orientation in a given situation. Therefore, it remains unclear whether results are actually caused by changes in people's achievement goal orientation or by other factors. In the present study, we explicitly assess the effects of LGO-training on participants' job-search LGO. In addition, we examine the effect of LGO-training on job-search PPGO and job-search APGO because the effects of LGO-training may not only occur through changes in job-search LGO but also through changes in job-search PPGO and job-search APGO.

To make predictions about the changes in job-search achievement goal orientation (LGO, PPGO, and APGO) caused by LGO-training, we rely on achievement goal orientation theory (e.g., Dweck & Leggett, 1988), the approach-avoidance distinction in motivation (Elliot & Convington, 2001), and the content of the training. First, early achievement goal orientation research suggests that climate perceptions

are precursors of situational achievement goal orientation (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). As LGO-training emphasizes a climate of developing competences, approaching challenges, learning something new, and mastering job-search, we expect that LGO-training strengthens job-search LGO. Second, we expect that the LGO-training negatively affects people's job-search APGO, which is the achievement goal orientation that is diametrically opposite to learning-approach goal orientation in the 2 x 2 framework. That is, by encouraging trainees to approach job search as a challenge and allow them to learn and develop, the LGO-training reduces their preoccupation with avoiding failure and rejections. Approach and avoidance motivation differ as a function of valence (Elliot & Convington, 2001): behavior is directed by a desirable event (i.e., approach) or by an undesirable event (i.e., avoidance). There is evidence that people process most stimuli in terms of valence, and that they do so unconsciously (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Chen & Bargh, 1999). Following this line of reasoning, we thus propose that LGO-training not only increase peoples' job-search LGO, but also weakens their avoidance motivation in job search (i.e., APGO). Third, the effects of the LGO-training on job-search PPGO are supposedly mixed. One the one hand, the LGO-training emphasizes an approach motivation climate and as such stimulates peoples' approach goal orientation. On the other hand, the LGO-training focuses on learning and developing competences, rather than demonstrating competences. By directing peoples' attention towards setting goals on learning and improving their job-search techniques, they will be less likely to focus on demonstrating competence, decreasing their performance goal orientation. Combining these opposing rationales, the LGO-training likely does not systematically alter peoples' job-search PPGO.

The choice-making training emphasizes a climate of making choices. However, the training is not directed to learning and developing job-search competence, achieving goals or approach and avoidance motivation. We therefore expect that that LGO-training aimed at developing competences and mastering job search strengthens job-search LGO and weakens job-search APGO as compared to the choice-making training.

Hypothesis 2: Compared to the choice-making training, LGO-training (a) positively affects unemployed peoples' job-search LGO and (b) negatively affects their job-search APGO.

Self- Regulation in Job Search

Learning from Failure. According to Barber Daly, Giannantonio, and Phillips (1994), job seekers need to learn from their search experiences and their failures in order to be effective in their job search. An important cognition in this context is the extent to which people perceive failures and rejections as negative indicators of performance (i.e., failing is bad) or as feedback that can be used to learn from. Extending error-management theory (Frese, 1991; Rybowskiak, Garst, Frese, & Batinic, 1999) to failure and rejections in job search, we suggest that job seekers benefit from a positive view on failure, errors, and setbacks. That is, whereas a negative view on failure likely results in discouragement during job search because failures are abundant, a positive view likely relates to persistence in the planning of job-search activities. Achievement goal orientation theory suggests that individuals high on performance goal

orientation (PGO) attribute failure and poor performance to personal inadequacy and therefore, failures are viewed as evaluative information about the self (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). In contrast, individuals high on LGO view failure and poor performance as reflecting their ability and therefore, failures are viewed as useful feedback that provides learning opportunities. In response to setbacks, people with a high LGO more likely will learn and change their job-search strategies and increase effort and people with a high PGO, especially those with a strong APGO, more likely withdraw from their job search. In a study on the relation between achievement goal orientation and feedback, VandeWalle, Cron, and Slocum (2001) indeed demonstrated that performance feedback on a first event resulted in a positive relation between LGO and performance a few weeks later. Combining error-management theory and achievement goal orientation theory, we expect that job-search LGO will relate positively and job-search APGO will relate negatively to job seekers' cognitions facilitating learning from failure during the job-search process.

Strategy Awareness. Job seeking requires a multiplicity of strategies (Barber et al., 1994; Saks & Ashforth, 2000; Saks, 2006). Because job seekers have a wide array of channels at their disposal to acquire information about job opportunities, they need to develop a strategy to accomplish their goals and analyze their goal progress to be able to adjust their strategy when necessary. However, many job seekers stick to their habits once they have chosen a certain strategy. For example, job seekers often use only formal channels, such as recruitment advertisements, even though informal channels such as personal contacts are known to increase one's chances to find employment (Wanberg, Kanfer, & Banas, 2000). Therefore, being aware of alternative strategies provide job seekers with the opportunity to select and apply the best strategy to the situation at hand, which likely results in the continued formation of job-search intentions in the face of difficulties, resulting in an increased likelihood of finding a job. Although some studies demonstrate that LGO is positively related to the number of strategies people use (Ames & Archer, 1988; Winters & Latham, 1996), we are not aware of any previous research on the cognitive component of strategies: strategy awareness. Achievement goal orientation theory suggests that LGO increases and PGO decreases the likelihood that individuals change their strategies after failure (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Nicholls, 1984). Extending this argument, we theorize that individuals with a strong LGO are likely more aware of the different strategies that one can use to accomplish one's goals. In contrast, individuals with a strong APGO more likely direct their attention to strategies they are familiar with, because familiar strategies offer safer ground for avoiding incompetence. We therefore expect that job-search LGO will relate positively and job searching will relate negatively to job seekers' awareness of the strategies they can use to accomplish their reemployment goal.

Self-Efficacy. Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) states that self-efficacy has a positive effect on performance because individuals with high levels of self-efficacy are motivated to intensify their effort and persistence and plan more activities. Sitzmann and Ely's (2011) meta-analysis grants further support to this idea, demonstrating that self-efficacy is one of the core constructs of self-regulated learning. These findings also apply to job-search self-efficacy, referring to job seekers' belief in their ability to

successfully perform job-search behavior, as meta-analytic findings identified job-search self-efficacy as an important predictor of job-search behavior (Kanfer et al., 2001; see also Saks, 2006). Dweck (1989) argued that individuals with a strong LGO view effort as an effective way to accomplish their goals and that these beliefs are facilitated by self-efficacy, suggesting a positive relation between LGO and self-efficacy. Indeed, in their meta-analysis, Payne et al. (2007) demonstrated that trait LGO positively and trait APGO negatively related to self-efficacy. Experimental studies showed that training or manipulating LGO improved self-efficacy (Kozlowski et al., 2001; Martocchio, 1994; Seijts et al., 2004). Based on these studies, we expect that job-search LGO will relate positively to jobseekers' self-efficacy and job-search APGO will relate negatively to self-efficacy.

Job Search Intentions. Intentions refer to the activities that people are planning to perform and to how much effort they are planning to exert (Ajzen, 1991). Intentions are the fundamental determinants of behavior as they capture the motivational factors that drive behavior. As such, intentions are important self-regulatory mechanisms. According to Ajzen, the concept of intention captures peoples' motivation: the stronger the intention, the more likely the behavior will be performed and the more likely the goal will be achieved. This relationship between intentions and behavior is firmly supported for a wide range of behaviors as is demonstrated in Sheeran's (2002) meta-analysis of 10 meta-analyses showing a strong relationship between intentions and behavior ($r = .53$). Also the job-search literature highlighted the importance of intentions. Barber and colleagues (1994) argued that job seekers need to develop a search plan and form intentions about the different sources they will use. Job-search intentions comprise the motivation to engage in job seeking and have been shown to relate positively to job-search behavior and intensity, number of interviews, and number of job offers (e.g., Song et al., 2006; Van Hooft, Born, Taris, Van der Flier, & Blonk, 2004; Van Hooft, Born, Taris, & Van der Flier, 2004; Wanberg et al., 2005). As such, forming intentions is an important cognitive self-regulatory mechanism increasing the likelihood of achieving the reemployment goal.

Achievement goal orientation theory suggests that individuals high on LGO increase effort after failure, since it makes people perceive effort as a means toward the accomplishment of their goals and to use more strategies and make more plans to achieve their goals (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988). For people high on PGO exertion of effort is viewed negatively because it is perceived as indicative of low ability. Therefore, people high on PGO likely make fewer plans, use fewer strategies, and set lower goals. Related to these theoretical principles, Payne et al. (2007) demonstrated that trait-LGO was positively related to self-set goals. However, the negative relation between PGO and self-set goals was only found for trait APGO and not for trait PPGO. Furthermore, using an experimental design Stevens and Gist (1997) found that LGO trainees planned to exert more effort into the trained task compared to PGO trainees. Extending this rationale to job-search achievement goal orientation (cf. Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009), a high LGO likely causes individuals to intend to invest more effort and to plan to use a larger set of job-search activities, resulting in more job-search intentions. Therefore, based on achievement goal orientation theory and previous studies, stating that a high LGO increases and a high APGO decreases

individuals effort expenditure, we expect that job-search LGO will relate positively and job-search APGO negatively to job-search intentions. In addition, based on achievement goal orientation theory and the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985; Dweck & Leggett, 1988) we expect that job-search achievement goal orientation is indirectly related to intentions through learning from failure, strategy awareness, and self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 3: Job-search achievement goal orientation affects cognitive self-regulation such that: (a) LGO is positively related to learning from failure, strategy awareness, self-efficacy, and job-search intentions and (b) APGO is negatively related to learning from failure, strategy awareness, self-efficacy, and job-search intentions.

Finally, as hypothesized, LGO trainees are more likely to be employed after training than choice-making trainees. Because of the effects of achievement goal orientation on self-regulation and the importance of self-regulation during job search, we expect that the effects of the LGO-training are explained by job-search achievement goal orientation (LGO and APGO), learning from failure, strategy awareness, self-efficacy, and job-search intentions.

Hypothesis 4: The effects of LGO-training on reemployment status are mediated by job-search achievement goal orientation and self-regulation mechanisms, such that LGO-training affects job-search goal orientation, which subsequently results in increased learning from failure, strategy awareness, and self-efficacy, which in turn enhances job-search intentions, finally resulting in higher reemployment status (see Figure 1: Model A).

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 245 unemployed job seekers registered at one of twelve different offices of a large reemployment-counseling agency in the Netherlands. Participants were assigned to the LGO-training ($n = 161$; 65.7%) or the choice-making training ($n = 84$; 34.3%), based on their ranking on the office list of unemployed job seekers (i.e., the first person on the list was assigned to the LGO-training the second person on the list was assigned to the choice-making training, and so on). The unequal distribution of participants between the two training conditions was due to logistic reasons. All twelve offices of the reemployment agency started with an LGO-training, followed by a choice-making training, and again an LGO-training. The idea was that they would end with another choice-making training. However, at that moment there was a lack of new job seekers to train and therefore, the agency decided to cancel this training.

Both training programs consisted of two sessions with a week in between and took place between April and October 2008, in groups of five to seven participants. Three participants were excluded from

the analyses because they gave an incorrect answer to the manipulation check question 'did you follow a training on setting learning goals or a training on how to make choices?' and 19 other participants were excluded because their employment status was not available. This resulted in a final sample of 223 participants: 51.1% were female, mean age was 48.3 years ($SD = 8.69$), and mean job-search time was 20 months ($SD = 19$ months). Twenty-two participants (9.9%) reported the equivalent of having less than 11 years of education, 94 participants (42.2%) reported 11 to 12 years, 22 participants (9.9%) reported 13 to 14 years, 59 participants (26.5%) reported 15-16 years, and 22 participants (9.9%) reported more than 16 years of education.

Data were collected at three points in time: before the first training session (T0), immediately after the second training session (T1), and twelve months after the training (T2). At T1, 174 participants completed the T1 questionnaire (response rate 78%). Twelve months after training (T2), participants' employment status was retrieved via the computer system of the reemployment-counseling agency.

To check for selective attrition, we compared T1-respondents with non-respondents on the T0-variables and training condition, using logistic regression analysis (Goodman & Blum, 1996). The logistic regression analysis provides a model chi-square for the null hypothesis that all coefficients for the terms in the model are 0. The result demonstrated no signs of non-random attrition, $\chi^2(11, N = 165) = 12.53, p = .33$, suggesting that non-response was evenly distributed across training conditions and that non-respondents at T1 did not differ from T1 respondents with regard to sex, age, years of education, condition, and the T0-variables LGO, PPGO, APGO, learning from failure, strategy awareness, self-efficacy, and intentions.

Training Programs

The LGO-training was based on achievement goal orientation theory (Dweck & Leggett, 1988) and previous goal orientation training studies (Kozlowski et al., 2001; Stevens & Gist, 1997; Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009). The choice-making training was based on the Balance Sheet Procedure of Janis and Mann (1977). A Balance Sheet is a scheme in which people can make a list of the positive and negative consequences of a choice they have to make. The choice-making training was chosen because it is commonly used in employment counseling, but conceptually very different from the LGO-training. Based on the content of the choice-making training we did not expect any influence of the choice-making training on achievement goal orientation and hardly any influence on self-regulation.

Both the LGO-training and the choice-making training consisted of two sessions of approximately three hours with a week in between and were given by professionally trained counselors from the reemployment-counseling agency. While the two training programs differed in content, they had the exact same structure and organization. The structure of the first training session was as follows: 1) a general motto, 2) an introductory round in which trainees introduced themselves, 3) an explanation of theory and examples of learning goals or balance sheets, 4) practice in setting learning goals or filling

out balance sheets, 5) feedback, and 6) a take-home exercise. The structure of the second session was as follows: 1) an evaluation of the past week concerning learning or making choices, 2) an explanation of theory and examples of learning goals or balance sheets, 3) a discussion of the take-home exercise, 4) setting new or improved learning goals or filling out new or improved balance sheets, 5) sharing the set goals or sharing the possible choices for the next weeks within the group, and 6) an evaluation of the training.

Consistent with previous studies on achievement goal orientation (Kozlowski et al., 2001; Linnenbrink, 2005; Stevens & Gist, 1997; Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009), we used goal content (setting learning goals) as well as goal framing (creating an LGO climate, conducive to learning and development) to induce situational LGO towards job seeking, during the LGO-training. For instance, an LGO climate was created by means of the motto of the training: "Goals will help you improve your job-search abilities" (cf. Stevens & Gist, 1997), and by means of a question for the introductory round: "What have you learned so far, either positive or negative, about job seeking". After that, participants spent a lot of time on practicing setting learning goals. They developed learning goals such as: "I want to learn how to look for job openings that are suitable for me". As part of the LGO climate, the trainer and the other participants provided positive as well as negative feedback on the learning goals that were set, and possible obstacles were identified and discussed (cf. Stevens & Gist, 1997).

In the choice-making training, cues were used to create an atmosphere conducive to making choices (Janis & Mann, 1977). For instance, the general motto was: "Making choices will help you in job search", and the introductory round was based on the question: "Which choices have you made in your job search so far". After that, participants spent a lot of time filling out and discussing balance sheets in order to make the right choices. An example of a balance sheet was a list of pros and cons of making a choice between working part-time or full-time.

Measures

Table 1 presents the coefficient alphas for all questionnaire measures. Unless stated otherwise items, were completed by using 5-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The items were administered in Dutch.

Situational Goal Orientation. Job-search achievement goal orientation was assessed at T0 and T1. We developed our measures based on the questionnaires developed by Breland and Donovan (2005) and VandeWalle (1997). These items were suitable in the domain of job search as they reflect the operationalization of LGO as 'challenge' and of PGO as 'appearance' (Hulleman et al., 2010). Four items were based on Breland and Donovan's (2005) situational LGO scale. The measures for situational PPGO and APGO were based on VandeWalle's (1997) achievement goal orientation scale, since Breland and Donovan did not differentiate between PPGO and APGO. All items were adapted to the job-search domain and were formulated as time- and situation-specific (see Appendix A for the exact items).

Learning from Failure. Learning from failure was assessed at T0 and T1 using three items adapted from the Error Orientation Questionnaire (Rybowiak et al., 1999). We selected these items based on their relevance to the job-search context, and adapted them to the context of failures and rejections during job seeking. The items were: “When something does not work out in my job search, I will do it differently next time”, “Rejections on my applications make me improve my job search”, and “When my applications are rejected, I think of how I can do it differently next time”.

Strategy Awareness. Strategy awareness was assessed at T0 and T1 using three items that we developed for the present study. The items were: “I think there are more ways to find a job than I have tried till now”, “I am constantly thinking of other ways to find a job”, and “I am open to other ways to find a job”.

Self-Efficacy. Self-efficacy was assessed at T0 and T1 using six items from Van Hooft, Born, Taris, Van der Flier, and Blonk’s (2004) job-search self-efficacy measure. A sample item is: “I have confidence in my abilities to make a good impression during job interviews”.

Job Search Intentions. Intentions were assessed at T0 and T1 by an eight-item index of job-search activities (Van Hooft, Born, Taris, Van der Flier, & Blonk, 2004) based on Blau’s (1994) job-search behavior scale. Participants were asked to indicate how much time they intended to spend on each activity (e.g., looking for job openings, preparing a resume, and networking) in the next six weeks. For instance: “In the next six weeks how much time do you intend to spend on looking for job openings in the newspapers and magazines per week?” Response options ranged from 0) “no time”, to 6) “more than 2 hours a week”.

A confirmatory factor analysis with the individual items serving as indicators of the seven latent variables (i.e., the three *job-search goal orientation*, *learning from failure*, *strategy awareness*, *self-efficacy*, and *intentions*) exhibited relatively poor fit indices, $\chi^2(443, N = 223) = 1034.68, p < .01, CFI = .85, RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .08$. We therefore removed three items because they displayed high cross loadings. Specifically, we removed one PPGO item (i.e., “In the next six weeks when I am searching for a job I want to make a good impression in job search and applying for jobs”) as there was a high cross-loading with self-efficacy, one item measuring intentions (i.e., “In the next six weeks how much time do you intend to spend on looking for job openings on the computer per week?”) as there were high cross-loadings with APGO and learning from failure, and one item measuring self-efficacy (“I have confidence in my ability to complete a good application letter”) as there was a high cross-loading with APGO. The respecified measurement model could be considered as acceptable to good, $\chi^2(351, N = 223) = 654.93, p < .01, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .06$, with all items exhibiting significant ($p < .01$) loadings on their intended latent variable. The respecified model fit the data better than any of the alternative measurement models that we specified. Alternative measurement Model 1 constrained the indicators of all variables to load on the same factor, to test if there is a single latent variable underlying the model, $\chi^2(370, N = 223) = 819.96, p < .01, CFI = .87, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .09$, and $\Delta\chi^2(19) = 165.03, p < .01$. Alternative measurement Model 2 constrained the indicators of self-efficacy, strategy awareness, learning from failure, and intentions to

load on the same factor, to test if there is a single latent variable underlying the cognitive self-regulatory factors, $\chi^2(367, N = 223) = 794.70, p < .01, CFI = .88; RMSEA = .07; SRMR = .08$, and $\Delta\chi^2(16) = 60.23, p < .01$. *Reemployment status.* Reemployment is usually measured as *employment status* at a given point (Saks, 2005). The data on employment status were collected from the reemployment counseling agency computer system, a year after the training. ‘Reemployed’ was defined as: ‘working for a minimum of 20 hours a week in a paid job for at least three months’. ‘Reemployed’ was coded as 1 and ‘not reemployed’ was coded as 0.

Training evaluation. At T1, immediately after the second training session, the training was evaluated with six items asking participants how satisfied they were with: 1) the trainer, 2) the content of the training, 3) the materials, 4) the organization, 5) their own contribution (e.g., involvement), and 6) the usefulness of the training in finding employment. In addition, participants were asked to rate the training in general: “How would you rate the total training program, on a scale from 1 (*very bad*) to 10 (*very good*)?”

Results

Before testing the hypotheses, we examined the effectiveness of the randomization of participants between the two training conditions using logistic regression analysis, which provide a model chi-square for the null hypothesis that all coefficients for the terms in the model are 0. ‘Condition’ was regressed on all T0-variables (i.e., sex, age, years of education, LGO, PPGO, APGO, learning from failure, strategy awareness, self-efficacy, and intentions) showing no significant differences between the conditions, $\chi^2(10, N = 163) = 5.44, p = .86$. In addition, we also examined possible differences in the evaluation of the training at T1. ‘Condition’ was regressed on the six evaluation variables, showing a significant effect, $\chi^2(6, N = 165) = 13.78, p < .05$. Inspection of the results showed a significant difference for the evaluation of the training materials (exp. $B = 0.39, p < .05$) and for the organization (exp. $B = 2.55, p < .05$) indicating that participants in the choice-making training were more satisfied with the training materials whereas, participants in the LGO-training were more satisfied with the organization of the training. There were no significant differences in evaluation of the trainer, the content, the contribution of the participants, and the perceived usefulness of the training. Furthermore, there was no significant difference in the overall rating of the training, $t(167) = 0.55, p = .59$. It therefore seems that participants did not consistently favour one training over the other.

Training Effects on Reemployment and Job-Search Goal Orientation

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and correlations between the measured variables. At T2, 28% of the participants who had attended the LGO-training were reemployed and 15% of the participants who had attended the choice-making training. This difference was significant, $\chi^2(223) = 4.73, p < .05$, supporting Hypothesis 1.

Table 1
Alphas, Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of all Variables

Variables	M(SD)	LGO training M(SD)	Control training M(SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Time 0:																					
1 Condition ^a																					
2 Sex ^b	0.49 (0.5)	0.47 (0.5)	0.53 (0.5)	-0.06																	
3 Age	48.3 (8.7)	48.9 (8.6)	47.2 (9.0)	.09	.12																
4 Years of Education ^c	2.48 (0.8)	2.50 (0.8)	2.38 (0.8)	.07	.05	.02															
5 LGO	3.71 (0.7)	3.72 (0.8)	3.69 (0.7)	.03	-.16	-.01	-.06	(.91)													
6 PPGO	2.94 (0.9)	2.97 (0.9)	2.88 (1.0)	.04	-.05	.01	-.05	.42	(.82)												
7 APGO	2.62 (0.8)	2.61 (0.9)	2.68 (0.9)	-.05	.03	.02	-.20	.03	.29	(.80)											
8 Learning from failure	3.17 (0.8)	3.20 (0.8)	3.15 (0.8)	.02	-.11	.04	.01	.42	.35	.10	(.72)										
9 Strategy awareness	3.63 (0.7)	3.63 (0.7)	3.66 (0.7)	-.02	.05	-.02	.08	.39	.15	-.07	.50	(.66)									
10 Self-efficacy	3.38 (0.8)	3.42 (0.8)	3.33 (0.9)	.05	.06	.17	.22	-.00	.20	-.09	.25	.17	(.84)								
11 Intentions	2.71 (1.0)	2.96 (0.9)	2.65 (1.1)	.04	-.01	-.01	-.03	.33	.34	.02	.27	.25	.29	(.87)							
Time 1:																					
12 LGO	3.69 (0.7)	3.79 (0.7)	3.48 (0.7)	.20	-.02	.11	-.18	.51	.20	-.06	.34	.41	.05	.28	(.93)						
13 PPGO	2.93 (0.7)	2.96 (0.7)	2.88 (0.8)	.05	.05	.17	-.09	.26	.52	.14	.46	.22	.25	.26	.40	(.78)					
14 APGO	2.48 (0.8)	2.35 (0.8)	2.76 (0.8)	-.24	.01	-.09	-.19	-.07	.00	.51	.12	-.04	-.25	-.21	-.02	.23	(.86)				
15 Learning from failure	3.39 (0.7)	3.43 (0.7)	3.32 (0.7)	.07	-.07	.09	-.10	.40	.37	.10	.63	.36	.25	.26	.52	.51	-.00	(.78)			
16 Strategy awareness	3.74 (0.6)	3.80 (0.6)	3.59 (0.7)	.15	-.03	-.06	-.06	.28	.18	-.10	.35	.43	.03	.23	.64	.29	-.11	.37	(.68)		
17 Self-efficacy	3.49 (0.7)	3.48 (0.7)	3.51 (0.7)	-.02	.05	.05	.20	-.05	.18	-.00	.26	.23	.72	.26	.11	.30	-.12	.32	.26	(.87)	
18 Intentions	2.88 (1.0)	3.00 (0.9)	2.58 (1.1)	.19	-.01	.06	-.05	.27	.28	-.05	.28	.23	.24	.72	.29	.34	-.15	.35	.28	.26	(.88)
Time 2:																					
19 Employment status	0.23 (0.4)	0.28 (0.5)	0.15 (0.4)	.15	.03	-.05	.11	-.01	-.07	-.09	-.05	.08	-.07	.11	.17	.02	-.03	-.04	.11	.07	.20

Note. Scores for variables 5 to 10 and 12 to 17 vary between 1 to 5. Scores for variables 11 and 18 vary between 1 to 6. For Time 0 N varies between 204 and 223. For Time 1 variables N varies between 153 and 174. For Time 2 employment status N = 223. LGO = Learning goal training; PPGO = Performance-approach goal training; APGO = Performance-avoidance goal training. ^a0 = Control training, 1 = Learning goal training. ^b0 = female, 1 = male. ^c1 = > 11 years, 2 = 11-12 years, 3 = 13-14 years, 4 = 15-16 years, and 5 = > 16 years of education. Correlations > .14, *p* < .05; Correlations > .19, *p* < .01.

A MANCOVA of the effects of training condition on job-search LGO, APGO, and PPGO, controlling for pre-training scores on these variables, shows a significant overall effect, $F(3, 146) = 7.15, p < .01$. Subsequent repeated measures ANOVAs on pre-training and post-training scores revealed an increase in job-search LGO, $F(1, 159) = 5.00, p < .05$, and a decrease in job-search APGO, $F(1, 153) = 5.67, p < .05$, for the participants of the LGO-training as compared to those of the choice-making training (Hypothesis 2 supported). There was no difference between the LGO-training and choice-making training in job-search PPGO, $F(1, 156) = 0.05, p = .88$.

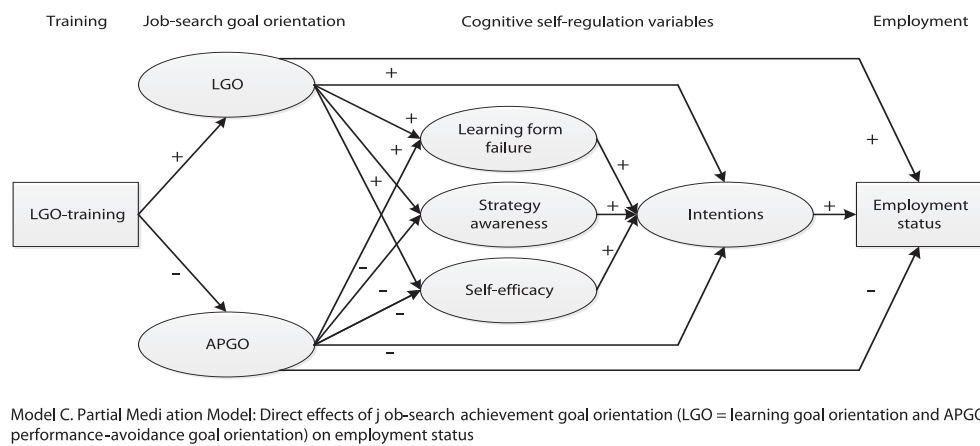
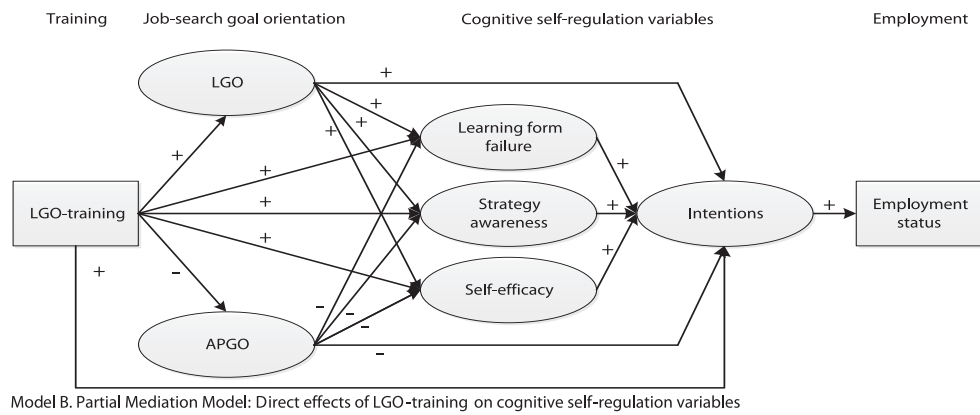
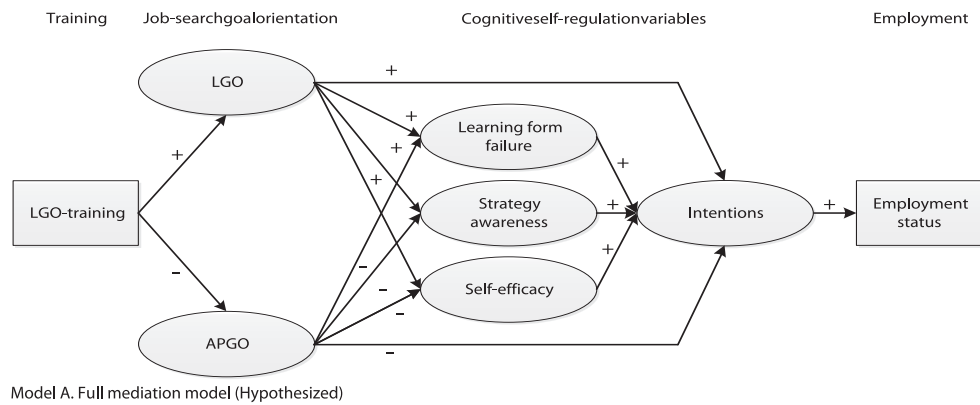
Model Testing

We tested our hypothesized model (Model A) and two alternative models (Model B and C; see Figure 1) with structural equation modeling (Arbuckle, 2007). The alternative models were developed to test the mediation as proposed by Hypothesis 4. Specifically, alternative Model B was constructed in order to test whether the effects of training condition on cognitive self-regulation were caused by its effects on job-search achievement goal orientation as expected, or whether training condition also directly impacts cognitive self-regulation (i.e., not fully mediated), as previous experimental studies found direct effects of LGO-training on different outcome variables (e.g., Kozlowski et al., 2001).

Alternative Model C was constructed to test whether the role of job-search achievement goal orientation in predicting employment status is mediated by cognitive self-regulation, as expected or whether job-search achievement goal orientation has direct effects on employment status (i.e., not fully mediated) indicating that there might be other variables explaining the effects (e.g., emotions, Pekrun, Elliot, & Maier, 2006).

We used cutoff values for fit indices as prescribed by Hu and Bentler (1999) and Mathieu and Taylor (2006): models with CFI values < .90, RMSEA values > .08, and SRMR values > .10, will be considered as having poor fit, those with CFI ≥ .90 to < .95, RMSEA .06 > to ≤ .08, and SRMR > .08 to ≤ .10, as having acceptable fit, and models with CFI ≥ .95, RMSEA ≤ .06, and SRMR ≤ .08, as having good fit. In addition, the fit of the alternative models will be compared with the fit of the hypothesized model by statistically testing the difference in χ^2 .

In all structural models the individual items served as observed indicators for the latent constructs. However, for the sake of clarity we did not show the items in the figures. For the items, all standardized path coefficients were greater than .50 (*p* < .01). As shown in Table 2, which provides overall fit statistics, the hypothesized model (Model A) exhibited acceptable fit indices, $\chi^2(336, N = 223) = 684.44, p < .01$, CFI = .89, RMSEA = .07, SRMSR = .07. Figure 2 depicts the standardized path coefficients. In support of Hypothesis 3a, the path coefficients between job-search LGO and the cognitive self-regulation variables were positive and significant (with the exception of the path coefficient between job-search LGO and self-efficacy which was marginally significant). Limited support was found for Hypothesis 3b, as job-search APGO was only significantly negatively related to intentions but not to the other self-regulation variables.



Note. Rectangles indicate observed variables and ovals latent variables.

Figure 1. Conceptual Models of Relationships between LGO-training and Employment Status.

In Model B we tested for possible direct effects of LGO-training on learning from failure, strategy awareness, self-efficacy, job-search intentions, and employment status, in addition to mediated effects through job-search LGO and job-search APGO. This alternative model did not result in improved fit, $\Delta\chi^2(5) = 3.64, p > .10$, and none of the path coefficients of the added direct paths was significant. In Model C we tested for possible direct effects of job-search LGO and job-search APGO on employment status. This alternative model did not result in improved fit, $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 1.33, p > .10$, and none of the path coefficients of the added direct paths was significant.

Table 2
Model Comparison

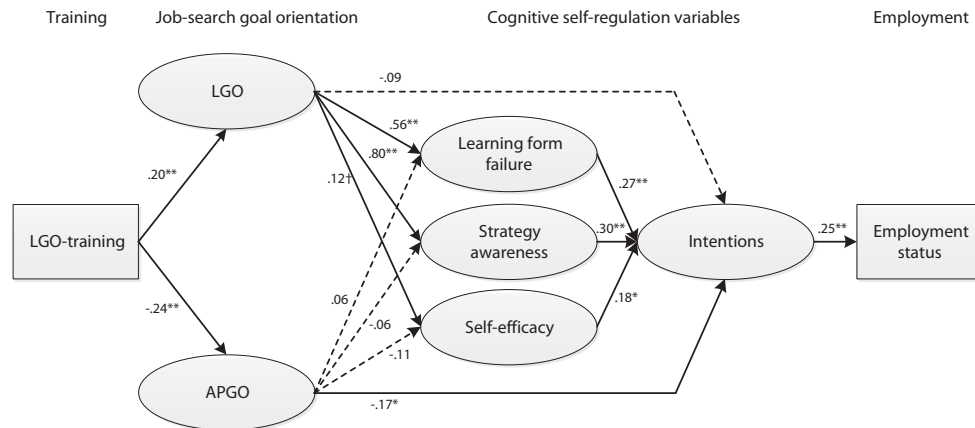
Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df ratio	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	Model Comparison	$\Delta\chi^2$	Change in df	Prob.
Null model.	3552.58	378	9.40	.20						
Model A: Hypothesized model.	684.44	336	2.04	.89	.07	.07	Null model – Model A	2868.14	42	$p < .01$
Model B: Hypothesized model plus direct effects of training on self-regulatory variables and employment status.	680.80	331	2.05	.89	.07	.07	Model A – Model B	3.64	5	ns.
Model C: Hypothesized model plus direct effects of LGO and APGO on employment status.	683.11	334	2.05	.89	.07	.08	Model A – Model C	1.33	2	ns.

Note. $N = 223$.

To further test the indirect mediated effects of LGO-training on cognitive self-regulation and employment status, we performed bootstrapping procedures. In that way we are able to examine the specific indirect effects of LGO-training through job-search LGO and APGO for each of the individual self-regulation variables and employment status. Bootstrapping procedures have been recommended to assess indirect effects with small to moderate samples (Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Shrout & Bolger, 2002). By extracting 2000 bootstrapped samples from the dataset based on random sampling with replacement we could test the strength of the relationships at once by calculating standardized indirect effects (*estimate*, i.e., the mean of the indirect effects computed over the 2000 samples), standard errors (*SE*, i.e., the standard deviation of the 2000 indirect effects), and the 90% confidence intervals of the distribution of 2000 means (*CI*). All indirect effects of LGO-training on the measured variables were significant except for self-efficacy. Learning from failure (*estimate* = .10, *SE* = .04, *lower CI* = .03, *higher CI* = .18, $p < .05$), strategy awareness (*estimate* = .18, *SE* = .06, *lower CI* = .08, *higher CI* = .28, $p < .01$), job-search intentions (*estimate* = .12, *SE* = .04, *lower CI* = .06, *higher CI* = .18, $p < .01$), and employment status (*estimate* = .03, *SE* = .01, *lower CI* = .01, *higher CI* = .06, $p < .01$) were all significant.

Furthermore, we examined the indirect effects of job-search LGO and APGO on employment status, showing significant indirect effects of job-search LGO (*estimate* = .09, *SE* = .04, *lower CI* = .04, *higher CI* = .16, *p* < .01) and job-search APGO (*estimate* = -.04, *SE* = .03, *lower CI* = -.09, *higher CI* = -.01, *p* < .05) on employment status.

Thus, combining the results of the model testing with the indirect effects tests we can conclude that Hypothesis 4 is partially supported. Specifically, the effects of LGO-training on employment status are fully mediated by job-search achievement goal orientation (i.e., LGO and APGO) and the cognitive self-regulation variables learning from failure, strategy awareness, and job-search intentions, but not by self-efficacy. In summary, results indicated that an LGO-training in job search strengthens unemployed individuals' job-search LGO and weakens their job-search APGO, resulting in more learning from failure, increased strategy awareness, leading to more job-search intentions, and higher reemployment probabilities.



Note. *N* = 223. All statistics are standardized path coefficients. Dashed lines are non-significant paths. Rectangles indicate observed variables and ovals latent variables (for all items constructing the latent variable, standardized path coefficients were above .50, *p* < .01). †*p* < .10. **p* < .05. ***p* < .01.

Figure 2. Final Model.

Discussion

The current study investigated the proximal and distal consequences of training learning goal orientation and setting learning goals (i.e., LGO-training) in job search. We tested a model examining how an LGO-training for unemployed job seekers influenced subsequent self-regulation and employment status, through achievement goal orientation in job search, by comparing the effects of the LGO-training with those of a choice-making training.

Major Findings and Theoretical Implications

We found support for many of the relationships outlined in our model. LGO-training positively affected cognitive self-regulatory variables (i.e., learning from failure, strategy awareness, and job-search intentions) and employment status, through situational LGO and APGO. Thus, a LGO-training in which unemployed job seekers set learning goals for their job-search process, was found to increase their job-search LGO but also decreased their job-search APGO. It seems that the LGO-training influences job seekers' cognitive framing of the job-search process, perceiving it more as a learning situation instead of a results-oriented situation. Moreover LGO-training was found to help job seekers deal with negative experiences, by viewing failure no longer as a problem but instead as something one can learn from. LGO-training was also found to change the awareness of job seekers about all the different strategies they can use. After the LGO-training, job seekers were more aware that they could go beyond their known, safe strategies, thinking of other more challenging strategies. Jobseekers, who think they can learn from failure and who are more aware of different strategies, were found to be more likely to plan job-search activities, resulting in higher probabilities to find a job.

The beneficial effects of LGO-training on self-regulation and reemployment in this study are in line with previous correlational (e.g., Button et al., 1996; Elliot, McGregor, & Gable, 1999; VandeWalle et al., 2001) and experimental studies (e.g., Kozlowski et al., 2001; Stevens & Gist, 1997; Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009), demonstrating positive effects of LGO on academic and job performance (Payne et al., 2007; Utman, 1997). The current study extends previous research by examining the underlying mechanisms explaining the positive effects of LGO-training on performance. Specifically, we extend previous findings by addressing the effects of LGO-training on cognitive self-regulation variables and by explaining these effects by situational goal orientation.

First, the present study introduces the cognitive self-regulation variables learning from failure and strategy awareness to the job-search literature, highlighting the importance of incorporating these variables in self-regulatory models of the job-search process. Previous theory has described job search as a self-regulatory process requiring self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-reactions, referring to self-regulation as a pattern of thinking, affect, and behavior (Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989; Kanfer et al., 2001). Research has found empirical evidence for the importance of cognitive self-regulatory variables in the job-search process. For instance, intentions have been found to be an important predictor of job-search behavior, number of interviews, and number of job offers (Song et al., 2006; Turban et al., 2009; Van Hooft, Born, Taris, Van der Flier, & Blonk, 2004). Replicating previous research, we also found evidence for the positive relation between job-search intentions and employment status. Extending previous findings and theorizing on job search, we found that learning from failure and the awareness of strategies are important factors in the job-search process, positively relating to job-search intentions. Moreover, these self-regulatory behaviors were found to be changeable by providing a training on learning goal orientation.

Second, we theorized that, based on the idea that achievement goal orientation can be influenced by situational cues (Button et al., 1996), the effects of LGO-training on self-regulation occurred through a change in people's achievement goal orientation towards job search. The positive effects of LGO-training on job-search LGO and the negative effects of LGO-training on job-search APGO provide support for this idea. Furthermore, job-search LGO and APGO fully mediated the effects of LGO-training on learning from failure, strategy awareness, job-search intentions, and employment status. We provide empirical evidence supporting the implicit assumption in previous studies (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Kozlowski et al., 2001; Steele-Johnson et al., 2008; Van Yperen, 2003) that the different outcomes of manipulating or training achievement goal orientation are caused by changes in situational goal orientation. Thus, training learning goal orientation and setting learning goals strengthens situational LGO and weakens situational APGO. Furthermore, we expected no effect of LGO-training on job-search PPGO. Indeed, the LGO-training was not found to influence job seekers' beliefs about demonstrating competences in job search and gaining positive judgments. So, although job seekers are more learning oriented and less performance-avoidance oriented after LGO-training, their ideas about proving to others how good they are in job-search activities did not change. These results show that LGO and PPGO are not opposite but rather unrelated constructs. However, in line with classic achievement motivation theories (e.g., McClelland et al., 1953) and the 2 x 2 framework of achievement goal orientation (Elliot & McGregor, 2001), LGO and APGO seem more opposite constructs as the LGO-training was found to simultaneously strengthen LGO and weaken APGO.

In addition to addressing the effects of LGO-training on achievement goal orientation and self-regulation cognitions, the present study extends previous experimental research on achievement goal orientation (e.g., Steele-Johnson et al., 2008; Stevens & Gist, 1997; Van Yperen, 2003) by demonstrating that training can result in positive outcomes in the long term. That is, finding effects of the LGO-training on both proximal outcomes such as self-regulation cognitions immediately after training and distal outcomes such as employment status a year later suggests that our training might cause changes in people's cognitions and behaviors towards job search and finding employment that lasted not only for the course of the training but remained active during a longer period.

An unexpected finding was that LGO-training did not affect self-efficacy directly or indirectly. This finding seems inconsistent with previous research reporting positive relationships between LGO and self-efficacy (Payne, et al., 2007), and research demonstrating that LGO-training raises self-efficacy after performing a task (Kozlowski et al., 2001). One explanation might be that the expected increase in self-efficacy occurred as much in the LGO-training as in the choice-making training. The choice-making training was based on the Balance Sheet of Janis and Mann (1977) and Janis and Mann provided evidence for the positive effects of filling out the Balance Sheet on making choices. Furthermore, this training is viewed as a useful tool in employment counseling, perhaps because of its effects on self-efficacy. Some support for this argument is indicated by a post-hoc repeated measure ANOVA on pre-training and post-training self-efficacy, showing that self-efficacy levels were higher after the second session of the training as compared to before the first session for both training conditions, $F(1, 158) =$

$8.29, p < .01$. There was no significant effect for condition, $F(1, 158) = 0.29, p = .59$. However, there was an interaction effect between time and training, $F(1, 158) = 4.84, p = .03$, showing a stronger increase in self-efficacy in the choice-making training compared to the LGO-training. Another explanation might be that participants in the LGO-training did not learn job search *during* the training because they only set learning goals, whereas the participants in the choice-making training actually made choices about their job search *during* the training. As such, it might be that the expected increase in self-efficacy for the LGO-training only occurs after a few weeks of actually engaging in learning job search. Therefore, future research should measure the development of self-efficacy over time.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Although our results are in line with achievement goal orientation theory and previous studies on goal orientation, an alternative explanation for the results could lie in what would seem to be the positive approach of the LGO-training. Participants may have viewed the LGO-training as more sensible and useful compared to the choice-making training, and trainers might have been more enthusiastic when delivering the LGO-training. As presented in the Results section, there were some differences between the two training conditions for the evaluation of training materials and the organization of the training. Participants in the choice-making training were more satisfied with the training materials and participants in the LGO-training were more satisfied with the organization. However, given that there was no difference in the evaluation of the trainer, the content and usefulness of the training, the contribution of participants, and the overall satisfaction with the training, this alternative explanation seems unlikely. Another related explanation might be that the LGO-training elicits different emotions compared to the choice-making training, as LGO is positively related to positive emotions and negatively to negative emotions (Pekrun et al., 2006; Pintrich, 2000a). However, because there was no difference between the LGO-training and choice-making training concerning satisfaction with the training, it seems unlikely that a possible difference in the elicitation of emotions during training can explain our findings. Nevertheless, it is a limitation to our study that we did not measure the elicitation of emotions. Therefore, in future research it would be interesting to investigate the effects of training goal orientations on affect-related outcomes, such as positive and negative emotions, distress, and well-being.

Further limitations concern the study design. First, although we made an effort to randomize participants as much as possible, in a field experiment like this it is almost impossible to assign participants completely at random. Therefore, some caution is warranted in interpreting the causal effects of the training. However, comparison of the participants of the two training conditions revealed no systematic differences in demographics and pre-training cognitions, suggesting that selection effects are unlikely to threaten the validity of our conclusions. Second, in our study we used a longitudinal design, as it allowed conclusions about proximal (i.e., self-regulation) and distal (i.e., reemployment) outcome variables. Despite our efforts to retain all participants some attrition occurred. Immediately after training, 174 participants completed the T1 questionnaire, yielding a response rate of 78%. However, because no signs of non-random attrition were found, it may be assumed that attrition did not pose a threat to the validity of our conclusions.

Another limitation might be that we did not measure trait achievement goal orientation. One's trait achievement goal orientation may influence a situational achievement goal orientation, as there is a positive correlation between corresponding trait- and situational goal orientations (Payne et al., 2007). It should be noted that we used an experimental design with random assignment of participants to training conditions. As such, it can be assumed that participants in both conditions are on average comparable regarding their trait goal orientation. Furthermore, in previous achievement goal orientation training studies (Kozlowski et al., 2001; Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009), training effects seemed to be independent of people's trait goal orientation. For instance, in the study by Van Hooft and Noordzij no support was found for interaction effects between trait achievement goal orientation and training effects. Furthermore, measuring situational achievement goal orientation and trait achievement goal orientation at the same time can be prone to common method bias caused by the fact that 'measures of different constructs measured at the same point in time may produce artifactual covariance independent of the content of the construct themselves' (p.882, Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Therefore, in our study we only measured job-search achievement goal orientation.

Lastly, the literature on achievement goal orientation described four distinctive achievement goal orientations: 1) PLGO (i.e., learning-approach), 2) ALGO (i.e., learning-avoidance), 3) PPGO, and 4) APGO (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Pintrich, 2000b). In our study we decided on ethical grounds to train only the learning-approach dimension of achievement goal orientation, because we did not want to provide unemployed job seekers with training with detrimental effects to their job-search process. The avoidance dimensions of achievement goal orientation are negatively related to motivation and performance (Payne et al., 2007; Rawsthorne & Elliot, 1999; Van Yperen, 2003) and although studies have identified positive effects resulting from PPGO (Elliot & Trash, 2002), PPGO is more suited to simple tasks rather than a complex task like job seeking (as supported by Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009). Therefore, in the current study we compared LGO-training with a training standard in employment counseling practice and viewed as effective in the job-search process. As such, our findings can be interpreted as conservative estimates of the effectiveness of the LGO-training. By choosing a useful training as the choice-making training, we were not investigating the effectiveness of the LGO-training itself, but rather the added value of the LGO-training over the choice-making training, which is a standard tool in reemployment counseling. Nevertheless, to further develop achievement goal orientation theory, future research on the 2 x 2 framework should be done (e.g., in a controlled lab setting with students) to investigate the effects of training PLGO, ALGO, PPGO, and APGO on situational achievement goal orientation, self-regulation variables, emotions, and performance.

Implications for Practice and Conclusion

In reemployment counseling, training job seekers is common practice. However, most of these trainings have not been investigated empirically (see for exceptions: Azrin et al., 1975; Caplan et al., 1989; Eden & Aviram, 1993). Therefore, our findings have important implications for job seekers and employment counselors. Knowing that self-regulation can be developed through LGO-training provides employment-

counseling agencies with a powerful tool in their aim to bring people back to work. As job seeking is a highly difficult task with a lot of pressure to perform well, it is important for employment counselors to help unemployed people viewing their job search as a learning situation that requires improving their competences in job search rather than viewing it as a results-oriented situation, which is the common practice at this moment in employment counseling (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2010). A learning goal orientation towards job seeking can be induced by counseling a job seeker to set learning goals (rather than performance goals), and framing the job-search process as a learning situation. This can be done either in group training setting as we did, or individual counseling sessions.

In conclusion, the present study has shown that achievement goal orientation is an important concept in the context of job search and reemployment. Furthermore, integration of self-regulation and achievement goal orientation theory appears to be a promising avenue for future research on job search. This study adds to the job-search literature by demonstrating that reemployment status can be predicted by more cognitive factors related to self-regulation, in addition to behavioral factors such as job-search intensity. Importantly, these cognitive factors (e.g., learning from failure, strategy awareness, and the forming of intentions) can be increased by training job seekers to adopt a learning goal orientation frame towards job seeking and to set learning goals in their job search.

Appendix A

Items of the Job Search Achievement Goal Orientation Questionnaire
(Based on Breland & Donovan, 2005 and VandeWalle, 1997)

In the next week when I am searching for a job

(Job-search Learning Goal Orientation)

- 1 ...I want to learn as much as possible about searching and applying for jobs.
- 2 ...I want to try to understand all procedures and activities in searching and applying for jobs.
- 3 ...I want to try to make myself familiar with difficult aspects of searching and applying for jobs.
- 4 ...I want to keep trying until I understand the things I do not yet understand about searching and applying for jobs.

(Job-search Performance-approach Goal Orientation)

- 5 ...I want to prove to others how good I am in applying for jobs and other job search activities.
- 6 ...I want to demonstrate to others how much I know about applying for jobs and other job search activities.
- 7* ...I want to make a good impression in job search and applying for jobs.
- 8 ...I want to do better than others in job search and applying for jobs.

(Job-search Performance-avoidance Goal Orientation)

- 9 ...I want to refrain from learning new things when there is a chance that I look incompetent to others.
- 10 ...I prefer avoiding failures in job seeking rather than learn something new.
- 11 ...I want to avoid job search activities in which I may come across as incompetent to others.
- 12 ...I want to avoid job search activities on which I might perform poorly.

*Item removed after confirmatory factor analysis

Chapter 3

Achievement Goal Orientation, Feedback, and Persistence

This chapter was presented at the 4th International Conference on Motivation, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, August 2012 and will be submitted for publication.

Abstract

We explored the interplay between achievement goal orientation and performance feedback on task persistence. Using a 4 x 2 between-participants experimental design, individuals were trained to set learning-approach, learning-avoidance, performance-approach, or performance-avoidance achievement goals for an upcoming task. After performing the task, they were provided with negative or positive performance feedback, followed by a free-choice task continuation period. Contrary to the assertions of the 2 x 2 model of achievement goal orientation theory, not only learning-approach, but also learning-avoidance achievement goals resulted in more task persistence compared to performance-avoidance achievement goals. A rank order effect for task persistence was found for the interplay between feedback and achievement goals, showing that learning-approach achievement goals combined with negative feedback resulted in the longest task continuation and performance-avoidance achievement goals combined with positive feedback in the shortest task continuation. Finally, for learning-approach and performance-avoidance achievement goals, but not for learning-avoidance and performance-approach achievement goals, negative feedback resulted in longer task continuation compared to positive feedback.

Motivation is a dynamic process that occurs over time and is related to performance in all stages of someone's career, whether within a job or in case of career transitions (e.g., job loss). Goal setting theory states: "the simplest and most direct motivational explanation of why some people perform better than others is because they have different goals" (Latham & Locke, 1991, p. 213). However, goal setting is not very effective when it is not accompanied by feedback (Latham & Locke, 1991; Locke & Latham, 1990). Feedback allows individuals to evaluate their performance relative to their goals and is therefore an important mechanism that guides and motivates performance behaviors over time. Positive feedback is thought to produce motivation by positive discrepancy creation, because individuals likely adjust goals upward after receiving positive feedback. In contrast, negative feedback is thought to produce motivation by creating awareness that goals are not met and motivates individuals to work harder or to change their strategies in order to decrease this negative discrepancy (Bandura, 1997; Ilies & Judge, 2005; Phillips, Hollenbeck, & Ilgen, 1996). However, feedback does not always lead to increased motivation and performance (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996), because feedback is not only an evaluation of objective outcomes but also a subjective evaluation of the self (Alicke & Sedikes, 2009; Jordan & Audia, 2012; Sedikes & Strube, 1997; Swann, Pelham, & Krull, 1989). The research presented here seeks to explore part of the differences in peoples' reactions to feedback by examining the interactive effect of achievement goal orientation and positive/negative feedback on motivation.

Achievement goal orientation theory suggests that the type of goals individuals strive for or want to avoid creates a framework for how people respond to feedback and their subsequent motivation (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Achievement goal orientation theory distinguishes between learning-approach, learning-avoidance, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance goal orientation (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Pintrich, 2000a). Individuals have a personal preference for one of the four achievement goal orientations; although an achievement goal orientation can also be induced by situational characteristics (Button et al, 1996).

In this article we propose that the type of achievement goal orientation influences motivation not only directly, but also in interaction with feedback. Specifically, we argue that the valence of feedback (success or failure) affects motivation in terms of task persistence depending on whether an individual sets learning-approach (i.e., mastering competence), learning-avoidance (i.e., avoiding incompetence), performance-approach (i.e., performing better than others), or performance-avoidance (i.e., avoiding performing worse than others) achievement goals.

The objective of our study is to explore the moderating effect of achievement goal orientation in the relation between feedback and motivation. Reactions on positive and negative feedback vary widely across individuals and situations, ranging from increasing effort to task withdrawal. Feedback research shows improvement as well as decline of motivation and performance in response to positive and negative feedback (e.g., Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Achievement goal orientation theory and research contend that the reactions to feedback are influenced by someone's achievement goal orientation (Cianci, Schaubroeck et al., 2010; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). However, the effects of the interplay between

achievement goal orientation and feedback on motivation are not clear. Therefore, it is of theoretical and practical importance to explore to what extent achievement goal orientation plays a role in the varied reactions on feedback. In sum, with this study we aim to shed light on the inconsistent and inconclusive results in the literature on the motivational effects of positive and negative feedback by exploring how inducing learning-approach, learning-avoidance, performance-approach, or performance-avoidance goal orientation goals affects task persistence following positive or negative feedback.

In what follows, we review the different perspectives in theory and previous research on the way in which feedback and achievement goal orientation are related to motivation. Using an experimental design inducing achievement goal orientation and manipulating performance feedback, we exploratory examine these relations in order to provide more clarity about the interplay between achievement goal orientation and feedback in affecting task persistence.

Feedback

Different researchers have tried to explain the effects of feedback on motivation and performance. Failures imply a discrepancy between the current and the desired end state (Frese, 1991) and have traditionally been considered as better motivators than success (Weiner, 1985). However, although people readily agree with the statement: "everyone can learn from failures", individuals usually prefer to prevent failures. This might explain why the effects of negative performance feedback (i.e., failure) and positive performance feedback (i.e., success) on motivation and future performance are very complex, showing improvement or decline in motivation and performance, or no effect at all (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). According to Carver and Scheier's (1998) control theory, when people fail to meet their goals, they become motivated to reduce the discrepancy between the actual state and the desired end-state. Also, Bandura's (1991) social-cognitive theory states that failing to meet goals increases motivation and task persistence but only if people remain confident that they can attain their goal. In contrast, rather than motivate to work harder, goal failure may also prompt people, for example, to focus on restoring their self-concept (Vancouver & Tischner, 2004), downward goal adjustment (Ilies & Judge, 2005), withdrawal from the task (Austin & Vancouver, 1996), or revise their goal (Williams, Donovan, & Dodge, 2000). Regarding success or positive feedback, social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 1991; Phillips et al., 1996) proposes that positive feedback will result in performance improvement or task persistence because the success experience provides positive reinforcement. In contrast, under assumptions of control theory (Carver & Scheier, 1998), when goals have been met (i.e., success) people decrease their effort and motivation because goal accomplishment ends the motivating effect of goal-performance discrepancy.

In sum, positive as well as negative feedback have been predicted to influence motivation. However, feedback theory and research provide little clarity about the effects of positive or negative feedback on task persistence. Therefore, in our study we will explore the effects of positive and negative feedback on motivation in terms of task persistence.

Achievement Goal Orientation

Achievement goal theory, also referred to as goal orientation theory, is a motivational theory that predicts that motivation is affected by the purpose of people's goals (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). Goals are internal representations of a desired state or result (Austin & Vancouver, 1996), and for achievement goals this state or result is defined in terms of competencies (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). The initial focus of the achievement goal literature was on two facets of competencies: learning (i.e., learning or task goal orientation), aimed at developing competencies and mastering something new, and performance (i.e., performance or ego goal orientation), aimed at demonstrating competencies (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Nicholls, 1984). Individuals pursuing learning achievement goals are supposed to believe that their competencies and abilities can be increased by sustained effort. In contrast, individuals pursuing performance achievement goals are supposed to believe that their competencies and abilities are fixed and that effort expenditure indicates low ability. Learning and performance achievement goals differ in terms of the standard used for evaluating performance (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Whereas individuals pursuing learning achievement goals use an absolute or intrapersonal standard to evaluate their competence (i.e., mastered the task or improved performance), individuals pursuing performance achievement goals use a normative or interpersonal standard to evaluate their competence (i.e., compared to others).

Achievement goal orientation theorists contend that learning and performance achievement goals produce different response patterns when facing obstacles and failures (e.g., Button et al, 1996; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). A learning-oriented response involves maintaining effort, learning from failures, and demonstrating positive affect under difficult conditions, whereas a performance-oriented response is characterized by deterioration of performance and demonstrating negative affect under difficult conditions. Therefore, learning and performance achievement goals have divergent consequences for intrinsic motivation. Learning achievement goals are posited to promote seeking challenging tasks, enjoyment, and feelings of autonomy and self-efficacy, all factors presumed to facilitate intrinsic motivation. In contrast, performance achievement goals are posited to evoke evaluative pressure and anxiety, factors presumed to undermine intrinsic motivation.

In more recent conceptualizations of achievement goal orientation, the distinction between learning and performance goal orientation has been crossed with an approach-avoidance distinction (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Pintrich, 2000). This was done based on classic conceptualizations of achievement goal orientation and motivation in which valence was proposed to be a fundamental dimension of competence (e.g., McClelland et al., 1953). People can construe standards as maximal goals they hope to attain (i.e., approaching a positive outcome) or as minimal goals they must attain (i.e., avoiding a negative outcome). The addition of an approach-avoidance distinction has resulted in a 2 x 2 model of achievement goal orientation, featuring 1) learning-approach, 2) learning-avoidance, 3) performance-approach, and 4) performance-avoidance goal orientation.

Elliot and his colleagues (e.g., Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Rawsthorne & Elliot, 1999) proposed that the approach-avoidance distinction is critical to understanding the relation between achievement goal orientation and intrinsic motivation. In line with Higgins's regulatory focus theory (1997), goals with a promotion (i.e., approach) function are seen as opportunities for maximal outcomes, whereas goals with a prevention (i.e., avoidance) function are seen as basic requirements necessary for minimal outcomes (Freitas, Liberman, Salovey, & Higgins, 2002). As such, an approach form of regulation, whether maximizing self-improvement (i.e., learning-approach achievement goals) or maximizing self-enhancement by outperforming others (i.e., performance-approach achievement goals) can produce feelings of excitement and pride and task involvement, processes that facilitate motivation and task persistence. In contrast, an avoidance form of regulation, whether minimizing being incompetent (i.e., learning-avoidance achievement goals) or minimizing looking incompetent relative to others (i.e., performance-avoidance achievement goals) can produce threat appraisal and feelings of anxiety, processes that are detrimental to motivation and task persistence.

Based on the distinction between learning-performance and approach-avoidance achievement goals, most achievement goal theorists contend that learning-approach achievement goals will have a positive and performance-avoidance achievement goals will have a negative effect on motivation and task persistence. Rawsthorne and Elliot (1999) meta-analyzed the experimental literature investigating this idea and indeed found that the pursuit of performance-avoidance achievement goals had an undermining effect on motivation (by means of task persistence) relative to the pursuit of learning-approach achievement goals. Furthermore, in a meta-analysis of correlational studies (Payne et al., 2007) learning-approach achievement goals were found to have a positive association and performance-avoidance achievement goals were found to have a negative association with motivation.

For performance-approach achievement goals, the approach form of regulation suggests a positive association with motivation. However, at the same time, individuals with performance-approach achievement goals are interested in social comparison, suggesting that there may be costs in terms of negative affect, worry, and reduced task interest (e.g., Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Pintrich, 2000b). In line with these predicted contradictory relations, research on performance-approach achievement goals shows positive, negative, or neutral relationships with motivation, (e.g., Cury, Elliot, Da Fonseca, & Moller, 2006; Payne et al., 2007; Rawsthorne & Elliot, 1999; Van Yperen, 2011). However, in the study by Rawsthorne and Elliot (1999), performance-approach and learning-approach achievement goals were equivalent in terms of their (positive) motivational effects.

The relation between learning-avoidance achievement goals and motivation is still subject to debate. Previous research suggests that because learning-avoidance and performance-avoidance achievement goals are both related to an avoidance form of regulation and to negative affect, they have similar effects in terms of motivation (Baranik, Stanley, Bynum, & Lance, 2010; Cury et al., 2006; Van Yperen, 2011). However, at the same time, individuals with learning-avoidance achievement goals are not interested in social comparison or self-improvement. In contrast, the learning component suggests that individuals

with learning-avoidance achievement goals may yield sustained effort and task interest. Therefore, learning-avoidance achievement goals are commonly proposed to be less deleterious for motivation than performance-avoidance achievement goals (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Confirming these two contradictory views for learning-avoidance achievement goals, Baranik et al. (2010), showed a positive relation between learning-avoidance achievement goals and negative affect and interest. In contrast, Van Yperen (2011) found no relation between learning-avoidance achievement goals and motivation or negative affect.

In sum, achievement goals have been predicted and found to be differentially related to motivation. Consistent results have been found for learning-approach and performance-avoidance achievement goals, with learning-approach showing positive and performance avoidance achievement goals showing negative associations with motivation. Although findings have been much more ambiguous for performance-approach and learning-avoidance achievement goals, these types of goals are likely to be less beneficial for motivation than learning-approach achievement goals but less detrimental than performance-avoidance achievement goals. In the present study, we explore the differences in motivation in terms of free choice task persistence for the four achievement goal orientations and their subsequent rank order in intrinsic motivation in a controlled experimental design.

Achievement Goal Orientation and Feedback

Performance feedback reflects an evaluation of one's performance outcomes as much as an evaluation of the self (Alicke & Sedikes, 2009; Jordan & Audia, 2012; Sedikes & Strube, 1997; Swann et al., 1989). These subjective interpretations, rather than any objective truth about performance, determine how people react to feedback (Audia & Brion, 2007). People have various motives when evaluating themselves in response to feedback. These motives include self-improvement (the desire to improve oneself), self-verification or self-assessment (the desire to confirm previous self-evaluations), self-enhancement (the desire to maximize the positivity of the self), and self-protection (the desire to minimize self-humiliation). These motives are proposed to guide self-regulation and subsequent performance. Self-improvement motives are evoked when there is a desire to change one's self-concept by learning, personal growth, and improvement (Elliot & Mapes, 2005; Sedikes & Strube, 1997). Self-verification motives are evoked when there is a desire to maintain consistency between self-conceptions and new self-relevant information or a desire to avoid an inconsistent and unstable self-concept (Swann, 1990). Self-enhancement and self-protection motives are evoked when there is a desire to elevate self-respect or to avoid reducing it and they both are driven by social evaluation (Alicke & Sedikes, 2009). The motives of self-improvement and self-enhancement are proposed to be approach motives, whereas the motive of self-protection is proposed to be an avoidance motive, and self-verification or self-assessment can be viewed both as an approach and as an avoidance motive (e.g., Elliot & Mapes, 2005).

Achievement goal orientation theory predicts that the different achievement goal orientations not only have differential relationships with motivation and performance but that these differential relationships emerge over time via the interpretation, evaluation, and acting on feedback (Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

Applying the motives of self-improvement, self-enhancement, self-verification, and self-protection to the 2 x 2 framework of achievement goal orientation (i.e., learning versus performance and approach versus avoidance achievement goals), positive and negative feedback are proposed to cause different patterns in motivation based on the underlying motives of self-evaluation for the four different achievement goal orientations.

Individuals high on learning-approach goal orientation are motivated by mastering a task, learning from failures, self-improvement, and in that way maximizing their sense of competence (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Indeed, Janssen and Prins (2007) demonstrated that a learning-approach goal orientation was related to seeking self-improvement information. Taking the role of feedback into account, the self-improvement motive associated with learning-approach goal orientation suggests that individuals with learning-approach achievement goals may benefit most from negative feedback because it provides long-term opportunities for learning and is indicative of the amount of effort allocated to the task (Dweck, 1986). In contrast, positive feedback provides no information for self-improvement. As such, negative feedback (i.e., failure) signals that one needs to increase effort and can learn from these failures and therefore, intrinsic motivation remains high. Empirical findings indeed show that individuals with learning-approach achievement goals respond to negative feedback by maintaining the allocation of resources to the task itself (Radosevich, Vaidyanathan, Yeo, & Radosevich, 2004; VandeWalle, et al., 2001), engaging in deep processing (Colquitt & Simmering, 1998; Steele-Johnson, Beauregard, Hoover, & Schmidt, 2000), and performing better compared to individuals with performance-approach achievement goals (Cianci, Schaubroeck et al., 2010; Cianci, Klein, & Seijts, 2010). Furthermore, achievement goal orientation theory and research (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Elliot & Mapes, 2005; Noordzij, Van Hooft, Van Mierlo, Van Dam, & Born, in press^a; Van Dyck et al., 2010) suggest that a learning-approach goal orientation causes people to interpret failure and errors as useful feedback that provides learning opportunities. However, self-improvement is an ongoing process that does not stop after positive feedback, even though positive feedback might be less motivating than negative feedback because it suggests that there is not much left to learn. In line with this argumentation, Cianci, Schaubroeck, et al. (2010) showed that individuals assigned with learning-approach achievement goals performed worse after they were provided with positive feedback compared to negative feedback.

Individuals high on learning-avoidance goal orientation are motivated by minimizing not being incompetent and avoiding doing worse than before (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). As such, regarding the evaluation of feedback, individuals with learning-avoidance achievement goals tend to hold self-verification motives, using themselves as referent and therefore will be focused on information that can reduce uncertainty about the self and their competencies (Baranik et al., 2010). Self-verification may be facilitated by both negative and positive feedback, since both provide accurate information about oneself and help to reduce uncertainty. Negative feedback indicates that one has failed one's basic requirement of not being incompetent and therefore individuals with learning-avoidance achievement goals might be motivated to reduce the incompetence. Positive feedback indicates that one achieved one's minimal goal and there seems no need to go on. However, self-verification is an ongoing process

of checking and verifying to reduce uncertainty and sustain existing self-beliefs (Sedikes & Strube, 1997). So, for individuals with learning-avoidance achievement goals negative feedback is assumed to be highly motivating resulting in task persistence but for positive feedback the effect on motivation is not clear.

Individuals high on performance-approach goal orientation are motivated by maximizing looking competent compared to others (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). As such, regarding feedback evaluation, individuals with performance-approach achievement goals tend to be motivated by self-enhancement (Janssen & Van der Vegt, 2011). In case of self-enhancement, negative feedback might be interpreted as a threat to the self but it can also be ignored, not accurately processed, or the standards of goals might be revised (Jordan & Audia, 2012). For individuals with performance-approach achievement goals, negative feedback indicates that one has failed to come across as competent (i.e., self-enhancement) and is regarded as predictive of future failures. This will cause these individuals to refrain from further effort (Dweck, 1986) and shift attention to the self (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Research on performance-approach achievement goals shows that negative feedback results in decreased task persistence and performance (e.g., Cron et al., 2005; Radosevich et al., 2004), reallocation of resources to ego management to restore the ego (Yeo & Neal, 2004), and withdrawal from the task (Button et al., 1996). With regard to positive feedback, achievement goal orientation theory (Dweck, 1986) predicts that a performance-approach goal orientation is related to task persistence, motivation, and better performance. Indeed, research showed that individuals with performance-approach achievement goals perform better after being provided with positive feedback compared to negative feedback (Cianci, Schaubroeck et al., 2010). In contrast, for individuals with performance-approach achievement goals when evaluating positive feedback with a self-enhancement motive, the evaluation of oneself will be satisfactory. Therefore, the self-enhancement motive has succeeded, leaving no reason to continue with the task (Alicke & Sedikes, 2009). In sum, for individuals with performance-approach achievement goals theory and research suggest that negative feedback results in decreased motivation but the effects for positive feedback on motivation and task persistence are inconsistent.

Individuals high on performance-avoidance goal orientation are motivated by minimizing looking incompetent compared to others (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). As such, when evaluating feedback, individuals with performance-avoidance achievement goals tend to be motivated by self-protection. The evaluation of oneself will be satisfactory when provided with positive feedback because it provides information that one accomplished their minimal goal of not looking incompetent compared to others. In this case, there is no further motive for task persistence so that motivation in response to positive feedback will be very low. In contrast, for a performance-avoidant individual, negative feedback represents a threat to self-protection and is accompanied by negative feelings, which is likely to result in downward goal adjustment in order to protect oneself against this threat (Elliot et al., 1999). Indeed, achievement goal orientation theory and research show that performance-avoidance achievement goals undermine intrinsic motivation (Cron et al., 2005; Elliot & McGregor, 1999). However, competing findings suggest that performance-avoidant individuals may try to protect themselves from the

threats induced by negative feedback by means of task continuation in order to re-attain the desired performance level and restore the minimal goal status of not looking incompetent (Alicke & Sedikes, 2009). So, for individuals with performance-avoidance achievement goals positive feedback is assumed to result in decreased motivation whereas for negative feedback the effects on motivation and task persistence are inconsistent.

In sum, existing theory and research on feedback and achievement goal orientation suggest that positive and negative feedback have different and complex effects on motivation depending on whether individuals have a learning-approach, learning-avoidance, performance-approach, or performance-avoidance achievement goal. Our review of the current state of the literature clearly shows that at this point, results about the differences in motivation between positive and negative feedback for the four achievement goals and their subsequent rank order remain inconclusive. The only combination that allows a clear a-priori prediction is that of negative feedback and learning-approach achievement goals, with previous work consistently suggesting that, compared to all other combinations, learning-approach oriented individuals who receive negative feedback will have a high motivation to persist (e.g., Alicke & Sedikes, 2009; Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Kluger & DeNissi, 1996). Therefore, with the present study, we aim to explore the comparative motivating effects of all achievement goal - feedback combinations, defining motivation in terms of free choice task continuation.

Method

Participants

Participants were 160 students from different departments of a Dutch university (64.6% female, 35.4% male; mean age of 21.03 years) who were randomly assigned to one of the eight conditions: learning-approach, learning-avoidance, performance-approach, or performance-avoidance achievement goal training condition and positive or negative feedback condition (see Table 2). They received course credits or 15 Euros for their participation.

Procedure

The experiment started with a brief explanation, which was the same for all conditions. Then, participants were trained to set a goal for the upcoming task based on one of the four different achievement goal orientations. Training took about 45 minutes and was given in groups of up to eight participants. For each participant, the training resulted in an individual goal statement (i.e., learning-approach, learning-avoidance, performance-approach, or performance-avoidance achievement goal) that they wrote down.

After the training each participant was led to an individual computer cabin and asked to put the written goal statement in front of their screen. All participants performed the same "Adobe Flash" (Adobe, 2010) task. *Flash* is a computer program developed to design animations, games, and websites. Participants were provided with an instruction manual on performing the Flash-task. The task consisted of successive

levels, starting simple with programming a colored screen and drawing clouds and birds, and rapidly increasing in level and complexity by making birds fly and letting mills run. At fixed points during the task, training condition-specific clues appeared on the screen. After 40 minutes, the participants were provided with feedback. The feedback was randomly provided with a positive (you have achieved your goal) or negative valence (you have not achieved your goal). As Chen and Mathieu (2008) stated that in case of learning goal orientation (approach and avoidance dimension), feedback should focus on intrapersonal standards, while in case of performance goal orientation (approach and avoidance dimension), feedback should focus on normative standards, we used feedback consistent with the learning and performance goal orientation training conditions. This resulted in eight different feedback messages that are displayed in the next section.

Finally, after feedback, we assessed motivation in terms of free-choice task continuation. Participants were given the option either to continue working on the tasks for up to 10 minutes (600 seconds) or to do something else (e.g., surfing the Internet). The computer recorded the time of task continuation.

Training conditions

The four training conditions were developed based on achievement goal orientation theory (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliot & McGregor, 2001) and previous achievement goal orientation training studies (e.g., Kozłowski et al., 2001; Stevens & Gist, 1997; Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009). All training groups had the same structure: a) a general framing, b) a brief explanation of the achievement goal orientation theory, c) practice in setting goals, and d) setting personal goals and taking the written goal statement to the computer task. Consistent with previous studies (Linnenbrink, 2005; Stevens & Gist, 1997; Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009), we used goal content as well as goal framing to induce a climate of learning-approach, learning-avoidance, performance-approach, or performance-avoidance goal orientation.

Specifically, the *learning-approach* training started with the general framing "Goals are helpful for learning Flash". The training climate was oriented towards learning, improvement, mastery, and the benefits of making mistakes. The training continued with an explanation of learning-approach goal orientation and the benefits of setting your own learning-approach achievement goal for the upcoming task. After an example of a learning-approach achievement goal was given, participants were invited to set their own achievement goal and put it on paper. Feedback was given, resulting in specific learning-approach achievement goals directed at the Flash task, thus providing each participant with his or her own goal (e.g., 'I want to learn programming in Flash'). Performance feedback after the task was positive ("You succeeded; you have met your goal. The computer has registered your learning on the task and compared it with what you wanted to learn. The output showed that you learned a lot so you have met your goal") or negative ("You failed; you did not meet your goal. The computer has registered your learning improvement on the task and compared it with what you wanted to learn. The output showed that you have not learned that much so you have not met your goal").

The learning-avoidance training started with the general framing, “Goals are helpful to prevent not mastering Flash”. The training climate was oriented towards preventing mistakes, worrying, and anticipating difficulties. The training continued with an explanation of learning-avoidance goal orientation and the benefits of setting your own learning-avoidance achievement goal for the upcoming task. After an example of a learning-avoidance achievement goal was given, participants were invited to set their own goal. Feedback was given, resulting in a specific learning-avoidance achievement goal directed at the Flash task, thus providing each participant with his or her own goal (e.g., ‘By following the manual step by step I will prevent myself from making mistakes and not learning Flash’). Performance feedback after the task was positive (“You succeeded; you have met your goal. The computer has registered your learning on the task and compared it with what you did not want to miss to learn. The output showed that you did not miss that much, so you have met your goal”) or negative (“You failed; you did not meet your goal. The computer has registered your learning and compared it with what you did not want to miss to learn. The output showed that you missed a lot in learning, so you have not met your goal”).

The performance-approach training started with the general framing, “Goals are helpful to perform better than others on Flash”. The training climate was oriented at competition and being number 1. The training continued with an explanation of performance-approach goal orientation and the benefits of setting ones’ own performance-approach achievement goal for the upcoming task. After an example of a performance-approach achievement goal was given, participants were invited to set their own goal. Feedback was given, resulting in a specific performance-approach achievement goal directed to the Flash task, thus providing each participant with his or her own goal. (e.g., ‘I want to be the best of our group in Flash’). Feedback after the task was positive (“You succeeded; you have met your goal. The computer has registered your performance and compared it with others. The output showed that you were one of the best performers, so you have met your goal”) or negative (“You failed; you have not met your goal. The computer has registered your performance and compared it with others. The output showed that you are not one of the best performers, so you have not met your goal”).

The performance-avoidance training started with the general framing, “Goals are helpful in not performing worse than others on Flash”. The training climate was oriented at competition and worrying of not becoming last. The training continued with an explanation of performance-avoidance goal orientation and the benefits of setting ones’ own performance-avoidance achievement goal for the upcoming task. After an example of a performance-avoidance achievement goal was given, participants were invited to set their own goal. Feedback was given, resulting in a specific performance-avoidance achievement goal directed to the Flash task, thus providing each participant with his or her own goal (e.g., ‘I want to prevent myself from being worse in Flash compared to my other group members’). Feedback after the task was positive (“You succeeded; you have met your goal. The computer has registered your performance and compared it with others’ performance. The output showed that you are not one of the worst performers, so you have met your goal”) or negative (“You failed; you have not met your goal. The computer has registered your performance and compared it with others’ performance. The output showed that you are one of the worst performers, so you have not met your goal”).

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations between all Variables

	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Age	21.03 (2.6)							
2 Sex ^a	0.65 (0.5)	-.25						
3 Learning-approach condition	0.24 (0.4)	.03	-.01					
4 Learning-avoidance condition	0.26 (0.4)	.04	-.06	-.33				
5 Performance-approach condition	0.26 (0.4)	-.05	.01	-.33	-.34			
6 Performance-avoidance condition	0.25 (0.4)	-.03	.06	-.33	-.34	-.34		
7 Feedback condition ^b	0.50 (0.5)	-.04	.05	.02	.02	-.03	-.01	
8 Task persistence	442 (161)	-.02	-.01	.15	.14	-.07	-.22	-.25

Note. N between 151 and 161. Score for variable 8 between 0 to 600 seconds.

^a 0 = male and 1 = female. ^b 0 = negative feedback, 1 = positive feedback.

Correlations > .11, $p < .10$; Correlations > .14, $p < .05$; Correlations > .20, $p < .01$

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients of the study variables are presented in Table 1 and 2. Before exploring the differences in task persistence for the achievement goal orientation x feedback combinations, we created three dummy variables for the achievement goal orientation training conditions (i.e., learning-avoidance, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance training, see also Table 3). The learning-approach training was used as reference category because of the consistent findings for learning-approach goal orientation regarding motivation (e.g., Rawstorne & Elliot, 1999; Payne et al., 2007). Feedback valence was coded “0” for negative and “1” for positive feedback.

Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations for Task Persistence for the Achievement Goal Training Condition – Feedback Combinations

Condition	Negative feedback			Positive feedback			Total		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Learning-approach condition	19	527.7	58.7	20	444.4	155.0	39	485.0	124.2
Learning-avoidance condition	20	504.5	84.5	21	455.7	160.0	41	479.5	129.6
Performance-approach condition	20	439.9	125.0	19	402.7	179.8	39	421.8	123.3
Performance-avoidance condition	20	456.5	158.4	21	301.1	219.9	41	380.7	204.2
Total conditions	79	481.3	117.7	81	401.6	187.2	160	441.5	160.9

Note. Scores for task persistence vary between 0 to 600 seconds.

We used regression analyses to test to what extent achievement goal orientation training and feedback valence predicted task persistence (see Table 3). In the first step of the regression analysis, task persistence was regressed on the three dummy variables for achievement goal orientation training and feedback valence. Results demonstrated a significant negative direct effect for feedback valence

($b = -.26, p < .01$), indicating that persistence was higher after negative feedback ($M = 481.3; SD = 117.7$) compared to positive feedback ($M = 401.6; SD = 187.2$). Furthermore, the results showed (marginally) significant negative direct effects for the performance-avoidance ($b = -.29, p < .01$) and the performance-approach training conditions ($b = -.18, p = .06$), indicating that participants in those two conditions had lower task persistence than those in the reference (i.e., learning-approach) training condition.

Table 3
Regression of Task Persistence on Achievement Goal Training Condition and Feedback Valence

Predictor	Task persistence (B)	
	Step 1	Step 2
<i>Step 1: Main effects</i>		
Learning-avoidance condition ^a	-.02	-.02
Performance-approach condition ^b	-.18†	-.17†
Performance-avoidance condition ^c	-.29**	-.28**
Feedback valence ^d	-.26**	-.25**
<i>Step 2: Moderator effects</i>		
Learning-avoidance condition x feedback valence		.05
Performance-approach condition x feedback valence		.06
Performance-avoidance condition x feedback valence		-.10
Multiple R	.14**	.16**
Δ R ²		.02
Adjusted R ²	.12	.12

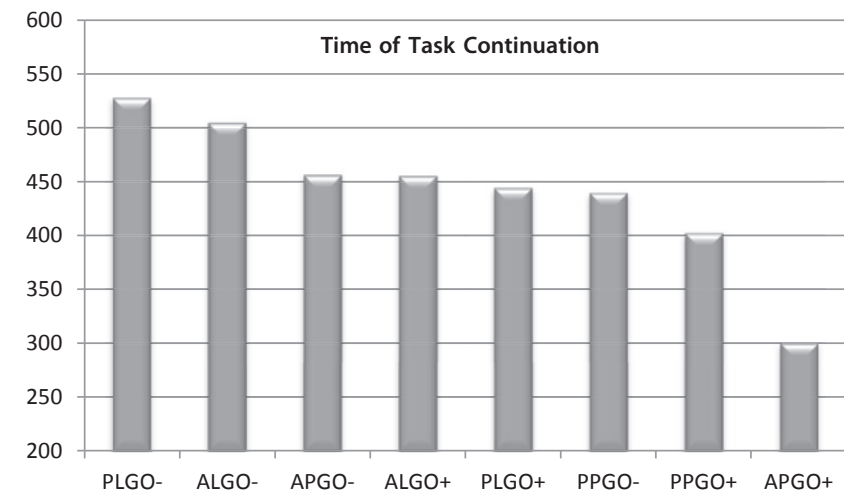
Note. $N = 151$.
^a Dummy variable with 1 = learning-avoidance. 0 = learning-approach, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance condition. ^b Dummy variable with 1 = performance-approach. 0 = learning-approach, learning-avoidance, and performance-avoidance condition. ^c Dummy variable with 1 = performance-avoidance. 0 = learning-approach, learning-avoidance, and performance-approach condition. ^d 0 = negative feedback, 1 = positive feedback. † $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$

To explore the rank order of achievement goal orientation training concerning task persistence in some more detail, we performed an ANOVA trend analysis with polynomial contrast. The results indicated a significant linear trend in the task persistence scores of the four achievement goal orientation training conditions, $F(3, 156) = 11.21, p < .01$. The learning-approach training showed the highest level of task persistence, $M = 485.0; SD = 124.2$, followed by the learning-avoidance, $M = 479.5; SD = 129.6$, the performance-approach, $M = 421.8; SD = 123.3$, and the performance-avoidance training, $M = 380.7; SD = 204.2$, which showed the lowest level of task persistence (see Table 2).

To test the combined effect of achievement goal orientation training condition and feedback valence on task persistence, we added the interaction terms of feedback valence with the three dummy variables for the achievement goal orientation training conditions (i.e., learning-avoidance, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance training) in step two of the regression analysis, using centered scores (Aiken & West, 1991). Results showed no significant interactions, suggesting that the interplay

of achievement goal orientation training and feedback valence yielded no unique outcome pattern in terms of task persistence.

These findings appear to suggest only independent direct effects of feedback valence and the different achievement goal orientation training conditions on task persistence. To further explore the rank-order of the combined effects of feedback valence and achievement goals, an ANOVA with polynomial contrast was performed. The ANOVA showed a significant linear trend in the task persistence scores of the eight achievement goal orientation training condition – feedback valence combinations, $F(7,152) = 7.55, p < .01$ (see Figure 1). Individuals in the learning-approach training who received negative feedback showed the highest task persistence ($M = 527.7$), while individuals in the performance-avoidance training who received positive feedback ($M = 301.1$) showed the lowest task persistence.



Note. PLGO = learning-approach, ALGO = learning-avoidance, PPGO = performance-approach, APGO = performance-avoidance condition. + = positive feedback, - = negative feedback.

Figure 1. Time of Task Continuation for Achievement Goal Training Condition x Feedback Valence.

Finally, to provide insight into the role of feedback valence for each of the four achievement goal orientations, we explored the differences between positive and negative feedback within each achievement goal orientation training condition. There was a significant difference in task persistence between positive and negative feedback for the learning-approach training, $t(37) = 2.24, p = .03$, and for the performance-avoidance training, $t(39) = 2.59, p = .01$, indicating that task persistence was higher after negative feedback compared to positive feedback in both training conditions. However, there were no significant differences in task persistence between positive and negative feedback for the learning-avoidance training, $t(39) = 1.23, p = .23$, and the performance-approach training, $t(37) = 0.75, p = .46$.

Discussion

The goals individuals want to achieve and the performance feedback they obtain constitute two important determinants of motivation. However, theory and research suggests contradictory effects of feedback and achievement goals on motivation. With the current study, we aimed to shed light on the inconsistent and inconclusive results in the literature on the effects of positive and negative feedback and the distinctive achievement goals on motivation in terms of task persistence. We were especially interested in exploring whether induced learning-approach, learning-avoidance, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance achievement goals were differently related to task persistence following positive (i.e., success) or negative (i.e., failure) feedback. The results showed that, on the whole, negative feedback results in higher task persistence compared to positive feedback. This finding is consistent with Carver and Scheier's control theory (1998), which proposes that failing to meet goals (i.e., negative feedback) increases motivation to reduce the discrepancy between the actual state and the desired end-state, whereas meeting goals (i.e., positive feedback) decreases motivation.

In line with achievement goal orientation theory and previous research (e.g., Carver & Scheier, 1998; Rawsthorne & Elliot, 1999), our findings show that learning-approach achievement goals were more beneficial for task persistence compared to performance-avoidance achievement goals. Whereas previous research on the learning-avoidance dimension of achievement goal orientation theory indicated that learning-avoidance achievement goals are deleterious for motivation and performance (Elliot & McGregor, 2001), we found learning-avoidance achievement goals to be as beneficial for task persistence as learning-approach achievement goals. This result might be even more relevant, knowing that 33% of individuals indicate that learning-avoidance achievement goals are their dominant goal (Van Yperen, 2006). Although our findings suggest that learning-avoidance achievement goals may have positive effects, it is important to take into account that previous studies have found learning-avoidance achievement goals to be related to negative affect, anxiety, stress, fear of failure, and low self-determination (e.g., Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Sideridis, 2007). Individuals with learning-avoidance achievement goals are motivated by the goal of not being incompetent and avoiding doing worse than before (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). In our study, no difference was found for the level of task persistence after positive and negative feedback, suggesting that individuals with learning-avoidance achievement goals are motivated by self-verification in order to reduce uncertainty about their competencies, regardless of feedback valence (Sedikes & Strube, 1997). This specific focus is likely to elicit continuous fear, anxiety, and stress, leading us to conclude that learning-avoidance achievement goals may be positive for motivation in terms of task persistence, but possible at high cost.

The pattern of results that emerged for the four induced achievement goals after positive and negative feedback is intriguing. We did not find significant interaction effects between the achievement goals and feedback valence. However, the interplay between achievement goals and feedback appeared more complicated, as we found a significant linear rank order effect for achievement goals combined with positive or negative feedback. Individuals with learning-approach achievement goals who received

negative feedback demonstrated the highest level of motivation and individuals with performance-avoidance achievement goals who received positive feedback demonstrated the lowest level of motivation. Furthermore, in line with Cianci, Schaubroeck et al.'s (2010) study on the effects of feedback on performance, we found that individuals with learning-approach achievement goals demonstrated a higher level of task persistence after negative compared to after positive feedback. However, in our study the level of task persistence after positive feedback was still relatively high, suggesting that for individuals with learning-approach achievement goals, task persistence is not only driven by self-improvement motives but, as suggested by Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), also by intrinsic motivation. Intrinsically motivating activities are activities that individuals engage in out of interest and enjoyment and are predicted to increase after positive feedback and decrease after negative feedback. Self-improvement, although internally controlled, is driven by instrumental reasons and is predicted to increase motivation after negative feedback and decrease motivation after positive feedback. As such, for individuals with learning-approach achievement goals, motivation for task persistence may be elicited by negative feedback in order to improve competencies, as well as by positive feedback facilitating intrinsic motivation.

Contrary to the assumptions of achievement goal orientation theory (Dweck, 1986) and the findings of Cianci, Schaubroeck et al. (2010), we found no differences in the level of task persistence after positive or negative feedback for individuals with performance-approach achievement goals. An explanation for this result might be that regardless of its valence, performance feedback causes performance-approach oriented individuals to sit back and refrain from further effort and persistence. Positive feedback satisfies their self-enhancement motive, while negative feedback indicates self-enhancement failure, both conditions that are unlikely to motivate free-choice task persistence for performance-approach oriented individuals. Alternatively, feedback effects might depend on the specific outcome that is examined. While we assessed the effects on task persistence, Cianci and colleagues (2010; 2010), as well as other studies on the effects of feedback on performance-approach achievement goals (e.g., Radosevich et al., 2004; VandeWalle et al., 2001) used subsequent performance level as the outcome variable. Self-enhancement motives after positive feedback might be more likely to affect behavior when subsequent performance is evaluated as compared to task continuation without evaluation. As such, the free-choice paradigm in our study might not have provided enough opportunities for further self-enhancement, whereas the prospect of subsequent performance evaluation might provide individuals with performance-approach achievement goals with the opportunity to show how good they are compared to others and by that maximizing their self-image.

A main finding of our study, consistent with achievement goal orientation theory and research, was that individuals with performance-avoidance achievement goals demonstrated the lowest level of task persistence (e.g., Cron et al., 2005; Rawsthorne & Elliot, 1999). However, when feedback valence was taken into account, a significant difference occurred between positive and negative feedback. It seems that for performance-avoidance oriented individuals, who tend to hold a self-protective motive, positive feedback signifies successful achievement of the minimal goal of not looking incompetent to

others and avoiding humiliation. This sense of goal fulfillment undermines motivation and willingness to continue working at the task. In case of negative feedback, we found no support for the suggested self-protective processes of downward goal adjustment and low motivation. Instead, task persistence was significantly higher after negative feedback compared to after positive feedback. Alicke and Sedikes (2009) argued that self-protection is by all means an avoidance motive, and in case of negative feedback, task persistence may serve to avoid humiliation. As such, individuals with performance-avoidance achievement goals may choose to continue working on their task after negative feedback in order to avoid the feeling of humiliation and being incompetent. In our study, this mechanism may have been especially likely given that the discrepancy between the current state (i.e., failing on not being last) and the desired end-state (i.e., succeeding in not being last) is small and seems to be controllable. This argument is supported by the results of Williams and colleagues (2000), who found that goals were increased when discrepancies were small and attributed to controllable causes.

Learning-avoidance achievement goals are relatively new in the achievement goal orientation theory. It is therefore noteworthy, that, our findings regarding learning-avoidance achievement goals displayed a pattern for task persistence after positive and negative feedback that differed from the pattern for learning-approach and performance-avoidance achievement goals (the goals with which they share the learning or the avoidance aspect). As stated before, feedback valence was not relevant to the task persistence of learning-avoidance oriented individuals, whereas for both learning-approach and performance-avoidance oriented individuals, task persistence was higher after negative compared to after positive feedback. As such, unlike the idea that avoidance goals (i.e., prevention focus, Freitas et al, 2002) are directed at achieving minimal goals, learning-avoidance achievement goals seem to be directed not only at achieving minimal goals (i.e., avoiding being incompetent) but also to achieving maximal goals (i.e., acquiring certainty about competencies). When receiving feedback, the self-verification motive of individuals with learning-avoidance achievement goals is likely to result in reduced uncertainty regardless of the valence of feedback. As suggested by Kanfer and Ackerman (1989) uncertainty is often unpleasant and can distract attentional resources away from the task. Therefore, reducing uncertainty might lead to higher motivation and task persistence.

Limitations and future research

The direct effects of feedback on motivation and task persistence are still on debate and although achievement goal orientation theory predicts that the different achievement goals might partly explain these differential effects, research is inconclusive about these effects. Therefore, our study was explorative in nature and future research should test the hypotheses that can be derived from our study. Of particular interest is the idea that, regardless of feedback valence, learning-avoidance achievement goals can be as motivating as learning-approach achievement goals in terms of task persistence, but probably with considerable costs in terms of individual wellbeing. Furthermore, it is interesting to investigate the role of self-verification as a motive for evaluating feedback for individuals with learning-avoidance achievement goals.

Another limitation might be that we used free choice task continuation as a measure of motivation and persistence. Other studies used subsequent performance level as an indicator for motivation and persistence, with participants being aware that their performance would be evaluated after the subsequent performance. It might be that, in our study, for individuals with performance achievement goals (approach as well as avoidance) who are driven by social evaluations, measuring task continuation without including another performance evaluation does not trigger their self-enhancement (i.e. performance-approach) or self-protection (i.e., performance-avoidance) motives. However, after negative feedback, individuals with performance-avoidance achievement goals demonstrated a high level of task persistence, indicating that task continuation as well as subsequent performance levels can be used as an indicator of motivation. Nevertheless, in future research, in order to uncover the influence of evaluation after a subsequent task, it would be interesting to use task continuation with and without subsequent feedback as a measure of motivation and persistence. In addition, to gain more in depth insight into task persistence motives, it would be useful to explore individuals' specific reasons for continuing with or withdrawing from a task.

Social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1991) proposes a boundary condition for the motivating effect of negative feedback, arguing that negative feedback only motivates when combined with sustained self-efficacy beliefs with respect to goal attainment. Although we did not take self-efficacy into account in the current study, participants' self-efficacy might have made them resilient to the negative feedback, resulting in stronger motivational effects compared to positive feedback. For future research, it might be interesting to investigate whether self-efficacy beliefs moderate the effect of negative feedback on motivation.

Finally, control theory (Carver & Scheier, 1998) as well as regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997) proposes that an approach or an avoidance motive combined with either positive or negative feedback elicit distinctive emotions, resulting in different performance outcomes. Individuals with an approach motive, for example, would experience elation after positive feedback and sadness after negative feedback. Therefore, it might be interesting to investigate the mediating role of emotions that are elicited by the interplay between feedback and the four achievement goals.

In conclusion, the effects of positive and negative feedback on motivation and task persistence are partly determined by the achievement goals set for a task. Learning-approach achievement goals combined with negative feedback resulted in the highest task persistence and performance-avoidance achievement goals combined with positive feedback in the lowest task persistence. Furthermore, learning-approach and learning-avoidance achievement goals resulted in more task persistence compared to performance-avoidance and performance-approach achievement goals.

Chapter

4

Getting Unemployed Job Seekers back to Work: The Development of a Process Model of Employment Counseling Behavior

An abbreviated version of this chapter is accepted for publication as Noordzij, G., Van Hooft, E.A.J., Van Mierlo, H., Van Dam, A., & Born, M. Ph. (in press). Getting unemployed job seekers back to work: The development of a process model of employment counseling behavior.

Career Development Quarterly.

Abstract

The aim of the present study was to propose a tentative model of employment counseling based on 31 critical-incident interviews with supervisors, employment counselors, and unemployed job seekers. The incidents (n = 599) mentioned in the interviews were inductively used to develop a categorization framework, describing behaviors of employment counselors. Based on the interviews, categories, and the incidents within these categories, we proposed a four-phased preliminary model of the employment counseling process. Our findings suggest that employment counseling is a complex and dynamic process, involving several distinct and consecutive steps focused on clients, governmental funding agencies, colleagues, and employers.

Job loss is one of the most important career changes in people's working lives (Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2008) and one of the top 10 traumatic life experiences (Spera et al., 1994). In the first half of 2011 14 million individuals in the US and 23 million individuals in Europe were unemployed, which means that 10% of the labor forces in both the U.S. and in Europe were unemployed at that time (Eurostat, 2012; U.S. Department of Labor, 2012). Approximately half of these individuals are long-term unemployed (i.e., more than six months). Unemployment has large psychological and health costs for the unemployed individuals as well as large economical costs for these individuals, their families, communities, and nations, including individuals' loss of earnings, reduced national productivity, and costs of social security programs and employment services.

Accelerated reemployment could yield significant benefits for national economies as well as for individuals' finances and well-being (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; G. C. Murphy & Athanasou, 1999; Wanberg, 1997). To speed up reemployment, governments spend substantial amounts of money on reemployment counseling. For instance, in the U.S., expenses for job training and employment services in 2011 have been estimated at 10 billion dollar (Office of Management and Budget, 2012). In 2008, The Netherlands spent 203 million Euros on reemployment programs for 200,000 unemployed job seekers (Tempelman et al., 2010). Previous research has shown that specific reemployment training programs are effective in speeding up reemployment. For example, participating in reemployment programs has been shown to result in more time spent on job seeking and a greater likelihood of reemployment (e.g. Rife & Belcher, 1994; Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009; Vinokur, Van Ryn, Gramlich, & Price, 1991; Westaby, 2004). Studies have also been conducted to examine the perceived effectiveness of employment counseling (e.g., Butterfield & Borgen, 2005; Guidon & Smith, 2002). However, these studies have focused exclusively on a small selection of client-centered behaviors (i.e. support or training). Moreover, coping with job loss and finding a new job is a complex task requiring various skills and behaviors (Barber et al., 1994; Kinicki, Prussia, & McKee-Ryan, 2000; Saks, 2006). It is also a task that for most job seekers is relatively novel and ambiguous (Leana & Feldman, 1988). Furthermore, setbacks and negative experiences are abundant during job seeking, making it a highly stressful task (Song, Uy, Zhang, & Shi, 2009; Wanberg et al., 2010). Thus, to deal with the difficulties of job seeking, many job seekers get assistance from employment counseling agencies (also called: career centers, employment centers, reemployment agencies, outplacement agencies, or job services).

Employment counselors operate within employment counseling agencies, helping job seekers overcome emotional barriers to reemployment (Guidon & Smith, 2002), acquire new skills (Kirk, 1994), and supporting them in their job search (Aquilanti & Leroux, 1999; Niles, 1996; Zikic & Klehe, 2006). Savickas (see also McAdams & Olsen, 2010; Savickas, 2011) differentiated between three basic services that can be provided by career counselors, depending on clients' needs: 1) vocational guidance: helping clients to find a matching job (i.e., client as actor), 2) career education: helping clients to develop new competencies for a job (i.e., client as agent), and 3) career counseling: helping clients to construct their career (i.e., client as author). In the current study, the focus is on vocational guidance and career counseling of unemployed job seekers. Therefore, we define employment counseling of unemployed

job seekers as *'the process of vocational guidance and career counseling that helps job seekers to construct their career and find a job'*, and employment counseling effectiveness as *'the degree to which counselors' behavior results in their clients getting reemployed in the right kind of jobs'*.

In reviewing the limited body of research on employment counseling, it becomes apparent that all counselor behaviors identified as effective are behaviors directed towards clients. Client satisfaction is commonly used as a criterion for identifying effective client-centered behaviors (e.g., Butterfield & Borgen, 2005; De Witte, Vandoorne, Verlinden, & De Cuyper, 2004; Wooten, 1996). However, as stated by Wooten, client satisfaction represents only one level of evaluation of employment counseling and is mainly based on direct benefits perceived by clients such as the quality of the client-counselor relationship or providing job search training courses. As will be demonstrated by the present study's findings, this exclusive focus on the client represents a rather narrow conception of employment counselors' behavior, since effective functioning was found to include behaviors towards other stakeholders, such as governmental agencies, colleagues, and employers. As such, the extant literature on employment counseling behavior notwithstanding, our understanding of effective counselors' behavior is still limited. Therefore, the present study was designed to establish a comprehensive overview of employment counselors' behaviors that are perceived as effective by unemployed job seekers, employment counselors, and their supervisors, broadening the focus to other stakeholders and further specifying the client-centered behaviors. In addition, we sought to integrate the counseling behaviors into a tentative process model of employment counseling. The acknowledgement of employment counseling as a process is well known in theory as well as in practice (e.g. Aquilanti & Leroux, 1999). Yet, to our knowledge the phases of distinctive behaviors of employment counselors and their relevance to counseling effectiveness have never been systematically examined, raising the question: "what are effective behaviors of employment counselors and how are these behaviors related to the phases of employment counseling".

The present study aims to contribute to the literature by proposing a dynamic process model of employment counseling effectiveness. Model development was informed by an extensive field study based on Flanagan's (1954) Critical Incident Technique (CIT), designed to generate a comprehensive overview of effective work behaviors of employment counselors. In addition to the theoretical contribution, the results of our study also contribute to the practice of employment counseling. For example, employment-counseling agencies can use our findings for the development of training and education programs for employment counselors, coaching, and performance management systems. That way, we aim to contribute to the improvement of current techniques of assisting unemployed individuals to go back to work.

Developing a Model of Counseling Effectiveness

We conducted an inductive theory-building study that focused on behaviors of employment counselors perceived to be effective and ineffective, using the CIT developed by Flanagan (1954). The CIT is suitable

for our purposes for a number of reasons. First, CIT is an exploratory method, enabling depth and breadth of insight into little known phenomena by collecting direct and detailed information of human behavior (Creswell, 1998). Second, the technique has been applied successfully in explorations of management and psychology processes, indicating that it is versatile (e.g., Campbell et al., 1990; Grant, Reimer, & Bannatyne, 1996; Motowidlo, Dunette, & Carter, 1990; Serenko & Turel, 2010; Taggar & Brown, 2001). Third, the CIT in general has been shown to generate both reliable and valid descriptions of observable work behavior (Anderson & Nilsson, 1964; Motowidlo et al., 1992). Lastly, the CIT allows researchers to capture the complexity of job behavior, can yield a complete description of job content, and can help distinguish between effective and ineffective job performance (Campbell et al., 1990; Motowidlo et al., 1992). Considering the need for depth and breadth of insight into the little known phenomenon of employment counseling, the CIT is a powerful, reliable, and valid technique for capturing the complexity of employment counseling by identifying effective and ineffective behaviors of employment counselors.

The CIT consists of a set of procedures for collecting and analyzing incidents. Flanagan (1954) defined an incident as 'any observable human activity that is sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and predictions to be made about the person performing the act' (p. 327). Critical incidents should be collected from subject matter experts, that is, individuals who are aware of the aims and the objectives of the job (Latham & Wexley, 1994). In the current study we defined incidents as descriptions of either effective or ineffective work behaviors of employment counselors. The CIT comprises five steps: 1) general aim 2) plans and specifications of the situation and the subject matter experts to be interviewed, 3) data collection, 4) data analysis, and 5) interpreting the data and reporting the results (see Figure 1). Following Druskat and Wheelers' (2003) study on effective leadership and Duriau, Reger, and Pfarrer's (2007) study, we analyzed the data and answered the research question by using a content analysis to develop a category framework of behaviors of employment counselors and a process analysis to reveal the process of effective counseling, resulting in a phase model of employment counseling behaviors. In the following, we describe the general aim (Step 1), the plans and specifications (Step 2), and the data collection (Step 3) of our study, followed by a description of the first phase of content data analysis, the interpretation of the content analysis and a report of the findings. Lastly, we describe the second phase of process data analysis, the interpretation of the process analysis, and a report of the findings.

Step 1 'General Aim'

In the first step of the CIT, researchers identify the general aims or objective of the activities under investigation (Flanagan, 1954), specifying precisely what activities one should engage in or refrain from to be judged as effective or not effective. The general aim was defined as identifying the activities that employment counselors employ in the process of offering vocational guidance and career counseling to help unemployed job seekers to construct their career and find a job.

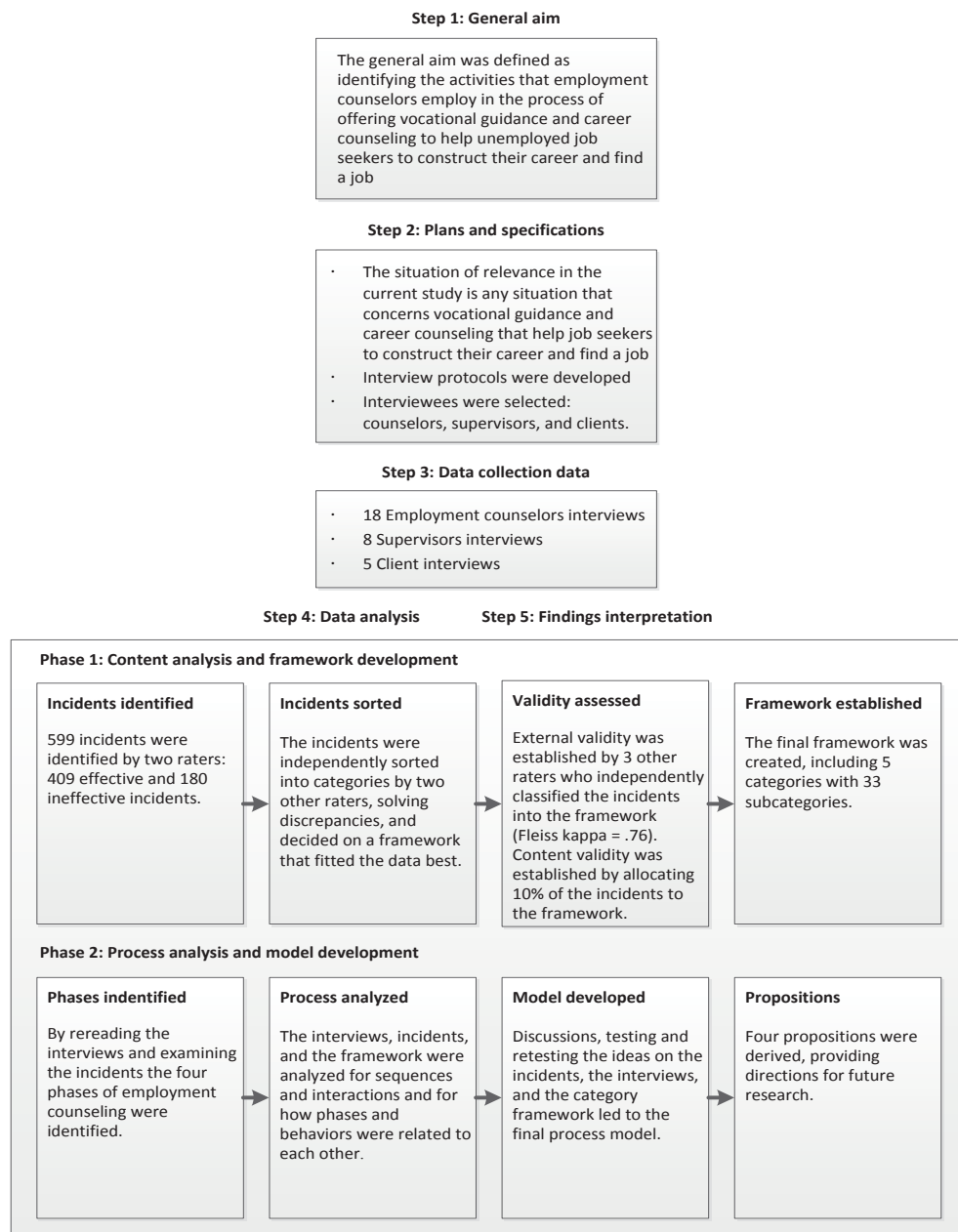


Figure 1. The Five Steps of the CIT (based on Flanagan, 1954).

Step 2 'Plans and Specifications'

In the second step of the CIT, researchers define the situation to be observed and identify the interviewees and the interviewers. The present study was conducted in one of the largest employment counseling agencies in The Netherlands, comprising 12 offices at different locations, employing almost 180 employment counselors who together counsel more than 10,000 clients a year. These clients received welfare, unemployment benefits or partial disability benefits. The 12 offices operate almost completely independent concerning policy, cooperation with other parties, and counseling practices. The situation of relevance in the current study is any situation that concerns vocational guidance and career counseling to help job seekers to construct their career and find a job.

One of the criticisms of CIT-studies is that many studies collect incidents from only one expert group's perspective (Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990). By seeking multiple perspectives, one can identify communalities in themes and increase the generalizability of outcomes (Chell, 2004). In the current study we identified three groups of subject matter experts: *employment counselors* since they perform the activities, and *clients* (i.e., unemployed job seekers) and *counselors' supervisors* since they both directly experience and observe the behavior of employment counselors. As such, we interviewed purposively sampled employment counselors as well as their clients (i.e., unemployed job seekers) and their supervisors to ensure that different perspectives on employment counseling were covered. We used stratified random sampling, and invited one client, one supervisor, and two employment counselors from each of the 12 offices (48 total) to be interviewed. Due to scheduling conflicts and time constraints, our final interview pool was 31. Of these participants, 8 were supervisors (4 men and 4 women), 18 were reemployment counselors (13 women and 5 men), and 5 were clients (4 men and 1 woman). The mean age of the interviewees was 42.3 years ($SD = 9.8$) for supervisors, 40.6 years ($SD = 7.5$) for employment counselors, and 36.6 years ($SD = 14.2$) for clients. The average tenure with the employment-counseling agency was 44.5 months ($SD = 34.4$) for supervisors and 45 months ($SD = 31.2$) for employment counselors. The mean duration of counseling that clients received by the agency was 18.4 months ($SD = 8.9$). The counselors and supervisors who were interviewed did not differ from the entire employment agency staff with regard to age, $t(184) = 1.09, p = .31$, or tenure, $t(164) = 1.10, p = .27$. The clients who we interviewed did not differ from the entire population of clients who received counseling in the interview period with regard to age, $t(791) = 1.18, p = .24$, or duration of counseling, $t(791) = 0.54, p = .59$. Therefore, the counselors, supervisors, and clients that we interviewed can be considered representative for the employment agency's staff and clients.

Step 3 'Collecting the Data'

Structured interviews were conducted with all participants based on interview protocols (see Appendix). The interview protocols were based on Latham and Wexley's (1994) study on the Behavioral Observation Scale (BOS). The interviews were conducted by the first author (15 interviews) and the fourth author (16 interviews). Both were familiar with the topic but not with the interviewees. The interviews started by asking counselors, supervisors, and clients about a specific incident in the past six months in which the behavior of an employment counselor was effective in helping people to find the right job. To

clarify and specify the incident, interviewers continued by asking four questions about every incident: 1) "What exactly did you (or the employment counselor) do that this behavior was effective?"; 2) "What was the result of this behavior?"; 3) "Was this behavior an example of effective behavior of employment counselors?"; and 4) "Was there anything you (or the employment counselor) could have done to be more effective?" The same procedure was used for ineffective incidents.

Prior to data collection, we performed a pilot to verify that the interview protocol indeed generated incidents of specific employment counselors' behavior and to ensure that the two interviewers conducted the interviews in the same way. To this end, both interviewers interviewed two staff members of the employment counseling agency. These interviews were audio-taped and listened to by the two interviewed staff members as well as the two interviewers. Inconsistencies between the two interviewers were clarified and resolved and the interview protocols were revised. Finally, the two interviewers interviewed each other to familiarize with the interview protocols.

Before the interview, interviewees were informed about the aim of the interview and were asked for permission to conduct the interview and audio-tape it. During the interview clients as well as employment counselors and supervisors were asked to describe at least two examples of effective and two examples of ineffective behavior. All interview tapes were fully transcribed.

Step 4 and 5: Phase 1 Content Data Analysis and Developing a Category Framework

We analyzed the manifest content of the transcripts with the objective of developing a categorization framework that describes the data in a useful and valid manner (see Figure 1). A categorization framework is a model that organizes identified critical behaviors into meaningful categories and subcategories. We based our procedure for this step on the guidelines and reliability checks offered by Flanagan (1954), Latham and Wexley (1994), and Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson, and Maglio (2005).

First, from the 31 interview transcripts we identified 599 critical incidents, reflecting effective (409 incidents = 68.3%) as well as ineffective behaviors (190 incidents = 31.7%) of employment counselors. We identified incidents based on three criteria (Bitner et al., 1990; Butterfield et al., 2005; Patrick, Scrase, Ahmed, & Tombs, 2009). Incidents had to involve 1) specific behavior of employment counselors, 2) a specific episode, and 3) behavior with a positive or negative effect on helping people find a job. Although Flanagan (1954) stated that 1,000 incidents are usually required to establish comprehensive coverage of critical behaviors for a skilled job, most CIT-studies concluded that 300 to 500 critical incidents are sufficient to reach saturation (e.g., Butterfield & Borgen, 2005; Latham, Fay, & Saari, 1979; MacLane & Walmsey, 2010). Before developing the categorization framework, we randomly removed 10% of the incidents ($n = 60$). These incidents were used in a later stage to examine the content validity of the categorization framework (Latham et al., 1979). The content validity check is reported below. It supported our conclusion that 599 incidents were sufficient to establish comprehensive coverage of critical employment counseling behavior.

Second, the remaining 539 incidents were categorized in three sub-steps. In the first sub-step, two raters (the second and third author) who are familiar with the CIT, independently sorted the incidents into meaningful categories. This analytic induction process consists of careful reading and repeated sorting of the incidents, and continuously refining and redefining the categories. There was no restriction on the number or type of categories. Finally, the two raters compared the categories that they both had defined independently and discussed differences. They solved discrepancies by rearranging and combining incidents until they decided upon a framework that fitted the incidents best. Based on Flanagan's (1954) criteria for categorization frameworks and Boyatzis' (1998) recommendations, the two raters decided on five clear and distinct main categories with concise and well-defined category labels and definitions, plus one 'undefined' category containing ambiguous incidents. The five main categories were divided into 33 subcategories.

In the second sub-step, three raters (others than the first-step raters) independently classified all 539 incidents into the categorical framework. This procedure represents an external validation of the framework, a step that is often omitted in CIT studies (Patrick et al., 2009). The three raters also allocated incidents that they felt did not fully describe specific behavior or were beyond the scope of the study, to the 'undefined' category. Since the CIT provides no solution for an 'undefined category', we added a third sub-step to our procedure.

In this third sub-step, the two raters from the first sub-step and one rater from the second sub-step examined and discussed all items that were allocated to the 'undefined' category by one or more of the first or second sub-step raters. Based on this analysis of the 'undefined' category, we dropped 63 incidents (= 11.7%; 27 ineffective and 36 effective incidents), either because they did not describe specific observable behavior or because they described multiple behaviors. This resulted in 476 remaining incidents (12.4% incidents from clients, 31.3% from supervisors, and 56.3% from employment counselors) divided into five main categories and 33 subcategories, describing effective and ineffective behaviors of employment counselors. A chi-square analysis confirmed that the distributions of effective versus ineffective incidents across employment counselors, supervisors, and clients did not differ significantly, $\chi^2(2, n = 476) = 2.16, p = .34$.

Finally, we checked the credibility and trustworthiness of the categorization framework by calculating the interrater reliability and establishing the content validity. We calculated interrater reliability for the assignment of the 476 incidents to categories by the three raters in the second sub-step. Interrater reliability is an important criterion of qualitative research and represents an essential step in validating coding schemes (Neuendorf, 2002). The percentage of overall agreement between the three raters for the five main categories was 80% and for the 33 subcategories 56%. Furthermore, we computed Fleiss' kappa (1971; Randolph, 2008) as an index of agreement beyond what could be expected by chance. Fleiss' kappa is an extension of Cohen's kappa (1960) for three or more raters. For the five main categories kappa equaled .76, indicating adequate agreement between the three raters above chance. For the 33 subcategories kappa was .55, indicating moderate agreement. Given the adequate agreement for the five main categories and the moderate agreement for the 33 subcategories, we concluded that the

reliability of the categorization framework was satisfactory. This means that it is very likely that any other rater will decide upon the same categorization framework. The content validity of the categorization was established based on the 10% ($n = 60$) incidents that were removed from categorization before the categorization process. Content validity refers to the extent to which the measure reflects the full domain of the concept being measured (Shippmann et al., 2000). In the CIT-procedure, content validity is considered adequate if the '10% incidents' describe no behavior that had not yet appeared in the previous incidents (Latham et al., 1979). This is an important check, given our purpose of generating a comprehensive overview of (in)effective behaviors. No new categories were needed to accommodate the additional incidents; the '10% incidents' all fitted the existing categories in the framework. Moreover, the '10% incidents' were evenly distributed among the 33 categories. These findings support the content validity of the category structure, indicating that a sufficient number of incidents were collected and that conducting more interviews will most likely not result in a different categorization framework.

Our final category framework includes five main categories and 33 subcategories (see Table 1). The five main categories are: 1) behavior towards governmental agencies, 2) behavior towards colleagues, 3) behavior towards employers, 4) behavior towards clients, and 5) general behavior. Categories, definitions, number, and examples of effective and ineffective incidents, are shown in Table 1. In what follows these categories and subcategories will be described.

Behavior towards Governmental Agencies. The first category in our framework is *Behavior towards governmental agencies*, including 22 incidents (4.6% of all incidents), 68% describing effective and 32% describing ineffective behavior. No distinct subcategories emerged.

Individuals who have lost their job need to sign up to governmental agencies to get their benefits. These governmental agencies have contracts with employment counseling agencies to provide unemployed individuals with assistance and guidance in their job search process. Good contacts between governmental agencies and employment counselors emerged as important in getting the parties aligned. Effective incidents in this category reflected behavior such as discussing problems with governmental agencies, asking for information, resolving conflicts, providing progress feedback, or defending clients, as pointed out by an employment counselor: *'I made it clear to the governmental agency that this man was depressed and therefore needed more time in his job search process.'* A related but ineffective incident was: *'I did not contact the governmental agency, although this client had a lot of physical problems that made it difficult for him to find a job.'*

Behavior towards Colleagues. The second category in our framework is *Behavior towards colleagues*, including 25 incidents (5.3% of all incidents), 72% describing effective and 28% describing ineffective behavior. Again, no distinct subcategories emerged.

Colleagues were found to be important for the employment counselors in our study. Although every counselor seemingly functions rather independently with his or her own client base, the incidents suggest that in order to be effective, counselors need to work together and help and support each other.

Table 1
Category Framework of Behaviors of Employment Counselors

Categories	Definition	Incidents N	% of total	Effective incidents Example	Ineffective incidents Example	N
Behavior towards Governmental Agencies						
1. General behavior directed at governmental agencies	Discussing problems, asking for information, and defending clients with governmental agencies.	22	4.6%	'I contacted the governmental agency because this client had so many problems. First, we have to deal with this problems before starting job search'	'I should have contacted the governmental agencies. Then I would have known that this client had a chronic disease'	7
Total Category 'Governmental Agencies'		22	4.6%			7 (32%)
Behavior towards Colleagues						
2. General behavior directed at colleagues	Sharing information with, giving support to and asking for support from colleagues.	25	5.3%	'You have to work as a team, in that way you are able to share your emotions about clients who are very annoying'	'When I told my colleagues about this angry employer, they said that I should have asked them for information about this employer'	7
Total Category 'Colleagues'		25	5.3%			7 (28%)
Behavior towards Employers						
3. Networking	Keeping and managing contact with employers and motivating them to cooperate.	19	4.0%	'Although I knew there was no vacancy, I made an appointment with this employer to keep in contact'	'When we started this project, we did not know employers. We should have start with building a network'	1
4. Matching	Searching for jobs and getting in touch with employers to look for jobs.	28	5.9%	'She (employment counselor) asked me (client) if I was interested in this job'	'This client had been in jail. I was not effective; I let him search for a job instead of contacting an employer to explain the situation'	3
5. Coaching and counseling	Coaching and counseling employers when they employ 'difficult' clients.	13	2.7%	'I told this employer about the things this client had to learn, you have to be honest'	'I told this employer that he was not fair to my client, then a conflict arose'	2
Total Category 'Employers'		60	12.6%			6 (10%)

Table 1
Category Framework of Behaviors of Employment Counselors (Continued)

Categories	Definition	Incidents N	% of total	Effective incidents Example	N	Ineffective incidents Example	N
Behavior Towards Clients							
6. Assessing	Assessing clients and their problems.	35	7.4%	'I sent her job openings because I estimated that she was able to react to these vacancies on her own'	18	'Because of his work experience, I overestimated this client'	17
7. Recognizing and taking away barriers to work	Identification of work barriers and helping to solve these barriers.	21	4.4%	'She (employment counselor) arranged everything so I (client) could get my driver's license'	17	'This client was not a native speaker and I should have applied at the governmental agency for a language course. In the end I did, but months were lost'	4
8. Confronting	Respond to clients' behavior and setting boundaries.	17	3.6%	'I asked this client (who could start in a new job) why he was reluctant and told him that he was moving backwards instead of forwards'	14	'I confronted this client with her behavior and she started to cry. As a result she reported me to the governmental agency'	3
9. Identifying needs and possibilities	Investigating needs and possibilities of clients and determining suitable jobs.	15	3.2%	'I offered this client a career test'	13	'This client wanted a particular job and I helped him find one. However, it turned out he was not suited for this job. It would have been better to have him do some tests'	2
10. Managing expectations	Clarifying expectations and giving information about the employment counseling process.	11	2.3%	'During the intake I asked the client about his expectations about me and I clarified my expectations about him'	7	'I did not set clear boundaries for this client, such as I expect this and you have to do that. So he blamed me for all his failures'	4
11. Providing self-insight	Providing self-insight to clients.	9	1.9%	'I tried to make this client aware of her skills and abilities'	7	'I should have said to this client that perhaps his problem was due to his own behavior'	2
12. Goal setting	Setting goals for or with clients	6	1.3%	'I set small goals for this client'	6	----	0
13. Giving assignments	Giving assignments to clients	10	2.1%	'I said to this client, here is the phone, you call this employer now'	8	'I gave him the assignment to look for jobs by himself but that turned out wrong for him'	2

Table 1
Category Framework of Behaviors of Employment Counselors (Continued)

Categories	Definition	Incidents N	% of total	Effective incidents Example	N	Ineffective incidents Example	N
14. Making agreements	Making agreements about job-search activities.	11	2.3%	'We (client and counselor) made specific agreements'	6	'I thought I made clear agreements about our appointments, however sometimes he showed up and sometimes he did not'	5
15. Direct assistance with job-search	Conducting job search activities with or for a client.	20	4.2%	'It was very important for me (client) that she (counselor) was present during my interview'	17	'I was working very hard for this client, looking for vacancies etc., however he just only said every time I showed him a vacancy: no, that is not my cup of tea. I should have had him take the initiative'	3
16. Training job-search	Training and exercising job-search activities with a client.	15	3.2%	'We (client and counselor) practiced the interview and because of that I could give direct feedback to this client'	12	'I pointed this client at an interview training, because I could not think of anything that could help him'	3
17. Giving tips and advices in job-search	Giving instructions about job-search activities so that clients themselves can perform activities.	12	2.5%	'I advised this client to look on the internet for vacancies'	12	----	0
18. Motivating	Stimulating, convincing, and making clients enthusiastic for a job.	18	3.8%	'This client did not like the job I offered her, but I said to her try, you have nothing to lose'	12	'There were moments that I (client) could not motivate myself for instance when I got a rejection. At these moments I could have used some motivation by my employment counselor'	6
19. Empowering	Giving confidence, naming capacities, and showing strong sides of clients.	10	2.1%	'When she did something well, I gave her compliments'	7	'It took only a short while to find a job for this client, however there was no time to give him confidence that he could do the job so I'm not sure he will manage this job'	3

Table 1
Category Framework of Behaviors of Employment Counselors (Continued)

Categories	Definition	Incidents N	% of total	Effective incidents Example	N	Ineffective incidents Example	N
20. Pushing	Being directive and stick to one's own plan.	11	2.3%	---	0	'I lost a lot of time to convince this client that he had to find a job and it failed because the client wanted to start a training'	11
21. Monitoring job-search activities	Checking for keeping up appointments and asking feedback about job search activities.	8	1.7%	'After two weeks, I called this client and asked if he had found any vacancies'	4	'This client acted as if he had found a job and I believed him; however there was no job and no employer it was a fake. I should have checked on him'	4
22. Mobilizing clients' environment	Contacting family, friends, and caretakers of clients and asking them to help.	8	1.7%	'I got in touch with the family of this client (with an autistic disorder) so they could help me and could call me when there were problems'	7	'This client was treated by a psychologist. Maybe it would have been wise to get in touch with this psychologist'	4
23. Explaining the content of jobs	Giving information about the content of jobs.	7	1.5%	'Because this client was not a native speaker, I explained everything about the job in English'	6	'I explained this client everything about the job; however it did not do any good. That was not effective'	1
24. Providing follow-up services	Monitoring and checking clients in their new jobs	19	4.0%	'I occasionally visit his workplace and check if everything is okay (client is a hooligan)'	14	'I only visit this client once at his workplace. At that moment he was satisfied however, at one point in time he resigned'	1
25. Communicating	Listening, asking questions, being sensitive, and empathic.	28	5.9%	'I listened and asked this client every time if I understood him well but I also asked critical questions'	21	'I (client) told my counselor that I was abused. Her reaction was not helpful'	5
26. Building and maintaining good relationship	Bringing clients at ease, being kind, and having a respectful and open attitude.	20	4.2%	'I (client) like this counselor because she talks about all kind of things and not only about jobs'	16	'There was no connection between the employment counselor and I (client). There was no communication, no trust, nothing. You have to stop it and hand me over to another employment counselor.'	7

Table 1
Category Framework of Behaviors of Employment Counselors (Continued)

Categories	Definition	Incidents N	% of total	Effective incidents Example	N	Ineffective incidents Example	N
27. Maintaining contact	Having regular contact with clients and keeping up contact.	17	3.6%	'This client performed the job search activities on her own, but I kept regular contact with her'	9	'I (client) think that the frequency of contact between the counselor and me should have been higher'	8
28. Being available	Being approachable and available for clients.	3	0.6%	'I (client) can always visit her (counselor)'	2	'There was an acute situation for this client, unfortunately I was not available'	1
Total Category 'Clients'		331	69.4%		226 (68%)		105 (32%)
<u>General behavior of employment counselors</u>							
29. Self-reflecting	Asking for feedback and reflecting on one's own behavior and results	10	2.1%	'Sometimes you have to recognize that you are wrong and you must have the courage to admit that this is the wrong way for this client'	3	'I should have asked this client what kind of job do you like but instead he reclined and I looked for the jobs'	7
30. Regulating own emotions	Coping with feelings towards clients, employers, colleagues, and agencies	9	1.9%	'It was a difficult client but the employment counselor always stayed calm'	1	'The client was very compelling and sometimes even aggressive and then I got angry that is not smart'	8
31. Planning and organizing	Planning, preparing, and organizing one's own job	5	1.1%	'Right now, I am busy with an Excel sheet, putting all my clients on a list with all the information needed'	3	'My work administration is not perfect at this moment so I only react to clients with problems and do not have regular contact with the clients who are doing well'	2
32. Keeping job knowledge up to date	Keeping the knowledge about rules, procedures, and syndromes up to date.	7	1.5%	'This employer knew nothing about labor costs etc., so we all figured it out for him and as a result he was willing to employ my client.'	3	'This client committed suicide, maybe when I would have had more expertise I could have helped him'	4
33. Keeping agreements	Keeping agreements towards employers, colleagues, clients, and governmental agencies	7	1.5%	'When I (client) called her (employment counselor), she said I call you back in a few hours and indeed she called me back in time'	3	'She (employment counselor) was always late'	4
Total Category 'General Behavior'		38	8.1%		19 (50%)		19 (50%)

Interestingly, many behaviors towards colleagues appear to relate only indirectly to the process of counseling. For example, many incidents concerned the sharing of success stories to motivate colleagues, or helping behavior such as sharing information about vacancies, employers, governmental agencies, rules, and procedures. An example of helping each other: *'I had a job opening in an organization to which I introduced some of my clients and some of the clients of my colleagues, so the organization could select the best client for the job.'* Incidents also described ineffective behavior towards colleagues, as is illustrated by an employment counselor: *'I gave a training course to client of a colleague of mine. The client was very motivated in my course, but according to my colleague he was lazy and did not do anything. Maybe I should have given feedback to this colleague about how he thinks about his clients.'*

Behavior towards Employers. *Behavior towards employers* includes 60 incidents (12.6% of all incidents), 90% of which describe effective behavior and only 10% describe ineffective behavior. Apparently, behavior towards employers is unlikely to turn into an adverse event and predominantly contributes to effective counseling. Three specific subcategories of behavior towards employers emerged during the categorization process: *networking*, *matching*, and *coaching and counseling*.

Rather than directly inquiring about a specific job for a specific client, *networking* refers to contacting employers, motivating them to cooperate with the agency, and actively maintaining this relationship. This represents an investment in the future counseling process. Employment counselors who maintain good relationships with employers and their companies can tap into this resource later to create openings for future clients. As a supervisor pointed out: *'I told this employer that his community involvement is important, so he might consider future opportunities for our clients.'* In another interview, an employment counselor explained that he was very successful by phoning employers he had never contacted, telling them about the agency and the clients: *'I told this employer who we are, what we do, and that there are possibilities to cooperate with advantages for everybody.'* Later on, this employer provided the opportunity for clients to gain work experience in his company.

Matching refers to situations in which employment counselors contact employers to discuss specific job opportunities and try to match employers and clients. For example: *'One of my clients wanted to work in a DIY-store; I called some DIY-employers and one of them said, okay he can come and have an interview.'* Clients also consider matching important for effective counseling, as one of them described: *'Talking about this employment counselor, she contacted me because she had arranged a job for me.'*

Coaching and counseling employers was also found to be important for effective counseling. That is, counselors sometimes need to coach the employer and the client in placement situations or when a specific job opportunity occurs. For example, an employment counselor described this incident: *'I talked to this employer about the possibilities of a job trial for this client and I offered him help with the client.'* Coaching and counseling employers often involved explaining the strengths and weaknesses of a client to help the employer deal with his or her new employee.

Behavior towards Clients. Although employment counselors' behavior towards colleagues, governmental agencies, and employers emerged as requirements for effective employment counseling in each interview, the majority of the incidents involved behavior towards clients. The category *Behavior towards clients* includes 331 incidents (64.9% of all incidents), 68% describing effective and 32% ineffective behavior. This category included several behaviors that were also reported in previous literature on employment counseling such as assessments and training of clients (e.g., Butterfield & Borgen, 2005; Wooten, 1996) and providing emotional and informational support to clients (e.g., Aquilanti & Leroux, 1999; Niles, 1996). Extending these previous descriptions of employment counseling, additional behaviors towards clients emerged during the categorization process, as our framework includes 23 subcategories of behavior towards clients. The subcategories were divided into A) subcategories including incidents that describe employment counselors' behavior preceding clients' actual job search process, B) subcategories including incidents that describe employment counselors' behavior during the actual job search process, C) a subcategory including incidents that describe employment counselors' behavior when clients have found a job (*providing follow up services*), and D) subcategories including incidents related to the communication and relationship with clients. In what follows, we describe the 23 subcategories in more detail.

A) Employment counselor behavior preceding job search. Of the behaviors preceding the actual job search process, behavior directed at assessing and diagnosing clients appears to be very important, since the subcategory *assessing* is the largest category in terms of the number of incidents it includes (i.e., 35). Assessing is directed at forming an impression of clients in terms of their appearance, their physical and mental state, and also their problems and challenges. For example, one employment counselor talked about a client with a slight intellectual disability: *'I wanted to get a clear picture of this client, and of course I can test him but if I really want to get a good idea about his skill and abilities I have to observe him and talk to him.'* The interviews indicated that *assessing* can also reflect incorrect judgment about a client. Other behaviors preceding actual job search, such as *identifying clients' needs and possibilities*, *managing expectations*, but also *confronting*, or *providing self-insight* are typically considered effective. This does not always mean, that clients directly respond in a positive way to these behaviors, as was pointed out by an employment counselor: *'This client only grumbled. What I did was saying that he should stop blaming others for everything that went wrong, that he had to take his own responsibility for his job search process. At first, he became very angry but in the end it worked out quite well and he did take his responsibility.'* Remarkably, clients hardly mentioned employment counselors' behavior preceding the job search process in their interviews. Apparently, the importance of these behaviors to the counseling process is mainly recognized by counselors and their supervisors. Clients only indicated recognizing and taking away barriers before starting their job-search process as very effective. Sometimes these barriers are easily to overcome, as illustrated by a client: *'I found it difficult to go to this governmental agency but my employment counselor went with me.'* But there are also long-standing, difficult problems and barriers such as debts, housing issues or addiction. An employment counselor told us: *'I found out that this client was addicted to drugs. The first step before we could start the job search process was getting rid of this addiction. So I talked to her and arranged help.'*

B) Employment counselor behavior during job search. Some of the employment counselor behavior during job search involves very specific behaviors like *training job seekers, giving tips and advice, or giving direct assistance in job search*. Other behaviors involve more general psychological assistance like *motivating, pushing, or empowering clients*. Giving compliments, validating clients, and reminding them of their strengths are examples of effective empowerment, for example: *'I mentioned all the positive skills and traits of this client. That is important: always show the positive things'*. The only subcategory that consisted solely of ineffective incidents was *pushing*, referring to overly directive behavior. An employment counselor described an incident of a client who was convinced that he was sick and she disagreed with him: *'In that case I started pushing and pulling, although I knew that pushing and pulling is never effective'*.

In the interviews with clients, the most frequently mentioned incidents involved giving tips and advice, direct assistance, and monitoring of the job search process. This suggests that clients tend to appreciate specific, tangible behavior. They mentioned behaviors such as writing resumes together, correcting resumes, and looking for vacancies as effective counseling behaviors. Although clients typically considered these behaviors effective, employment counselors also mentioned ineffective behavior related to providing direct assistance in job search, for example: *'I was working very hard for this client, looking for vacancies etc. However, every time I showed him a vacancy he just said, no, that is not my cup of tea. I should have had him take the initiative'*. Thus, although direct assistance can be effective in the job search process, there seems to be a balance between helping clients and let them take the initiative.

C) Providing follow-up services. The subcategory *providing follow-up services* includes incidents related to employment counselor behavior after a client has found employment. The aim of the employment counseling process is to guide and assist clients in their job search process. However, the data revealed that the counseling process should not end when clients find employment. That is, effective employment counselors were found to provide follow-up services to clients, as pointed out by a client: *'My employment counselor called me every two weeks to ask how things were at work'*. Employment counselors also mentioned behavior such as visiting clients at work, being present at evaluation interviews or appraisals, and emphasizing that clients can call them when they come across problems in their job.

D) Communication and relationships. The subcategories *communicating, building and maintaining relationships, maintaining contact, and being available* include incidents related to communication with clients and the relationship between clients and employment counselors. *Communicating* emerged as one of the largest categories in terms of number of incidents it includes (i.e., 28). Especially supervisors identified incidents in which communication was the main focus. For example, a supervisor explained: *'The client had an aversion towards everything including his counselor, so I gave this client an opportunity to tell me everything that bothered him'*. Other incidents reflected miscommunication or a lack of communication. The incidents suggest that *building and maintaining a good relationship* with clients is crucial for effective counseling throughout the whole employment counseling process, namely from the start: *'At the first contact you have to build a good relationship'*, until the end of the process: *'I called her immediately after I had heard she had found a job'*.

General Behavior of Employment Counselors. The last category contains incidents that describe general behavior of employment counselors. It includes 38 incidents (8.1% of all incidents), half of them describing effective behavior and half of them describing ineffective behavior. The category *General behavior of employment counselors* is divided into five subcategories: *regulating emotions, self-reflection, planning and organizing, keeping job knowledge up to date, and keeping agreements*.

The incidents and subcategories demonstrate that the job of employment counselor is a difficult job that requires self-control and stress tolerance. Employment counselors need to be able to reflect on their own behavior and regulate their emotions in order to stay calm in difficult situations with clients, employers, and governmental agencies. Most of the incidents in the subcategories *regulating emotions* and *self-reflection* described ineffective behaviors, suggesting the difficulty of self-control, as pointed out by a very tired employment counselor who spoke about his communication with governmental agencies: *'I sometimes get discouraged; You never speak to the right person and always phone at the wrong moment and then you get upset and postpone the activities for your client'*.

In line with the literature on job performance showing that conscientiousness is a predictor of effective job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991), the incidents in our study also demonstrate that behaviors related to conscientiousness such as planning, organizing and keeping agreements are essential behaviors to effectively perform the job of employment counselor. Not keeping up agreements can damage trust, as one client stated very clearly: *'She (counselor) promised me a lot but never kept her promises so I left the other employment agency and went to this one. My new employment counselor keeps her promises and if she fails she apologizes'*.

Job knowledge is also found to be important for work performance (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). Keeping job knowledge up to date was especially mentioned by counselors in relation to psychological or psychiatric problems. One counselor, for example said: *'I was not satisfied with how I handled this borderline client because I knew nothing about this disorder'*. Keeping job knowledge up to date can also be effective for helping employers, for example by knowledge of new regulations and procedures that benefit employers who are willing to employ a job seeker.

Step 4 and 5: Phase 2 Process Data Analysis and Developing a Tentative Process Model

'I keep in contact with this organization, they know me and I know them. A few weeks ago they had a vacancy; the manager phoned me and asked me if I had a candidate. I had a client (very suitable for this job) who had told me that he is too anxious to do job interviews. So, I arranged that this client could start immediately. This week I phoned the employer and the client. Both are very satisfied, as am I. That is effective counseling'

As indicated by this quote, the interviews with employment counselors, supervisors, and clients clearly showed that employment counseling is a complex and dynamic process with consecutive phases, requiring distinctive behaviors. The categories of the framework displayed in Table 1, reveal all sorts of counselor behaviors. However, these categories in isolation do not show the process of employment counseling because they do not directly reveal the antecedents or consequences of these behaviors

and they do not always directly indicate the purpose served by this behavior. For example, networking with employers is indicated as effective behavior: *'I keep in contact with this organization, they know me and I know them.'* However, this incident by itself does not reveal the purpose of this behavior or why it is effective. Getting back to the interview transcripts, the purpose for keeping in contact was explained: *'A few weeks ago they had a vacancy; the manager phoned me and asked me if I had a candidate.'* And the interview went on: *'I had a client (very suitable for this job) who had told me that he is too anxious to do job interviews.'* So, this counselor did an assessment and knew that it was not effective to let the client do an interview and helped the client by making a match between the organization and the client: *'So, I arranged that this client could start immediately.'* Finally, this counselor provided aftercare by phoning the client and the employer of the organization: *'I phoned the employer and the client. Both are very satisfied, as am I. That is effective counseling.'*

So, at this point, we decided to analyze the process of employment counseling by examining the incidents and rereading the interviews to find the deeper meaning embodied in the text. We used guidelines recommended by Corbin and Strauss (2008) to find the deeper meaning in the interviews. We looked for interactions between clients and employment counselors, sought to identify the function of each behavior, looked for general patterns in the data, identified conditions that contributed to the effectiveness of behavior, and the purposes and consequences of behaviors and by that uncover the process of employment counseling. After several discussions about the purpose of the behaviors described in the interviews, we inductively distinguished four phases of employment counseling behaviors: 1) the pre-conditional phase (behavior of counselors aimed at setting the stage and creating the preconditions for clients' job search and reemployment); 2) the preparation phase (behavior of counselors aimed at enabling clients to start searching); 3) the actual job-search phase (behavior of counselors aimed at assisting clients during their job search); and 4) the employment phase of counseling (behavior of counselors aimed at successful long-term employment for clients).

We then returned to the categorization framework with its categories and subcategories and focused on how these categories interact according to the four phases of employment counseling to describe the employment counseling process. We therefore, simultaneously examined the incidents, the interviews from which they were derived, and the category framework, guided by questions suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2008) to uncover processes. These questions are: What behaviors connect one sequence of events to another? Are behaviors aligned or misaligned? How do the consequences of one set of behaviors play into the next sequence of behaviors? For example, the data show that when clients enter the employment-counseling agency for the first time, it is crucial that counselors evaluate clients' physical and mental states, identify their resources, determine their needs and possibilities, and recognize potential barriers to work. From the data it became evident that such evaluation is important because much time can be lost (sometimes almost a year) when counselors fail to make an adequate assessment of clients' mental and physical state, and resources. In that case, counselors are not sufficiently aware of potential reemployment barriers, and clients start searching for jobs and counselors start matching employers and clients with little chance of success.

Finally, during the process analysis in which we continually tested and retested our ideas about the process of employment counseling on the incidents, the interviews, and the category framework, we developed a tentative process model of employment counseling. To further validate the model we asked five employment counselors how well the model fits the process of counseling and if they could identify themselves with the model. The counselors felt that the model with its distinctive phases and behavioral categories was a good description of the process of counseling. There was some discussion about behavior towards governmental agencies. Two employment counselors were working at a governmental agency themselves. However, they recognized behavior towards governmental agencies as very important for employment counselors working at employment counseling agencies. In the end, we proposed a tentative process model of employment counseling as displayed in Figure 2, showing that the process of employment counseling includes four distinctive phases of counseling in which behaviors have to be directed to different stakeholders.

Below, we organize our findings by these four phases of employment counseling. Within each phase, we describe the different categories of behaviors belonging to the phase and discuss the process through which these behaviors are linked to other phases in the model.

Pre-Conditional Phase. In the pre-conditional phase, behavior of counselors is aimed at setting the stage and creating the preconditions for clients' job search and reemployment. In the pre-conditional phase, behavior towards governmental agencies, colleagues, and networking with potential employers provides the boundary conditions for further effective employment counseling.

The data reveal that effective employment counseling requires a good relationship with governmental agencies. Employment counseling agencies depend on governmental agencies for their client supply. A good relationship with governmental agencies is thus required to maintain a regularly supply of clients and secure the future of the employment counseling agency. Moreover, a good relationship with governmental agencies makes it easier to approach them to discuss problems, ask for information, and inform them about clients. When governmental agencies provide employment counselors with extensive information about their clients, clients' assessment will be better and often more efficient. Also, when clients are not cooperative, governmental agencies are in the position to force them to cooperate. Several counselors described cases in which governmental agencies forced clients to cooperate with the counselor in order to help these clients overcome their barriers in their job search process.

Another precondition for effective counseling is a supportive climate and information sharing among employment counselors within an employment counseling agency (see Table 1 for quotes). Colleagues can help each other deal with difficult clients, sometimes even to the extent that clients are transferred to another counselor. Good contacts with colleagues will also increase the chances of matching clients and employers. For example a counselor said, *'I had contact with a big organization with a lot of vacancies. You must tell your colleagues as they may have clients suitable for the job.'*

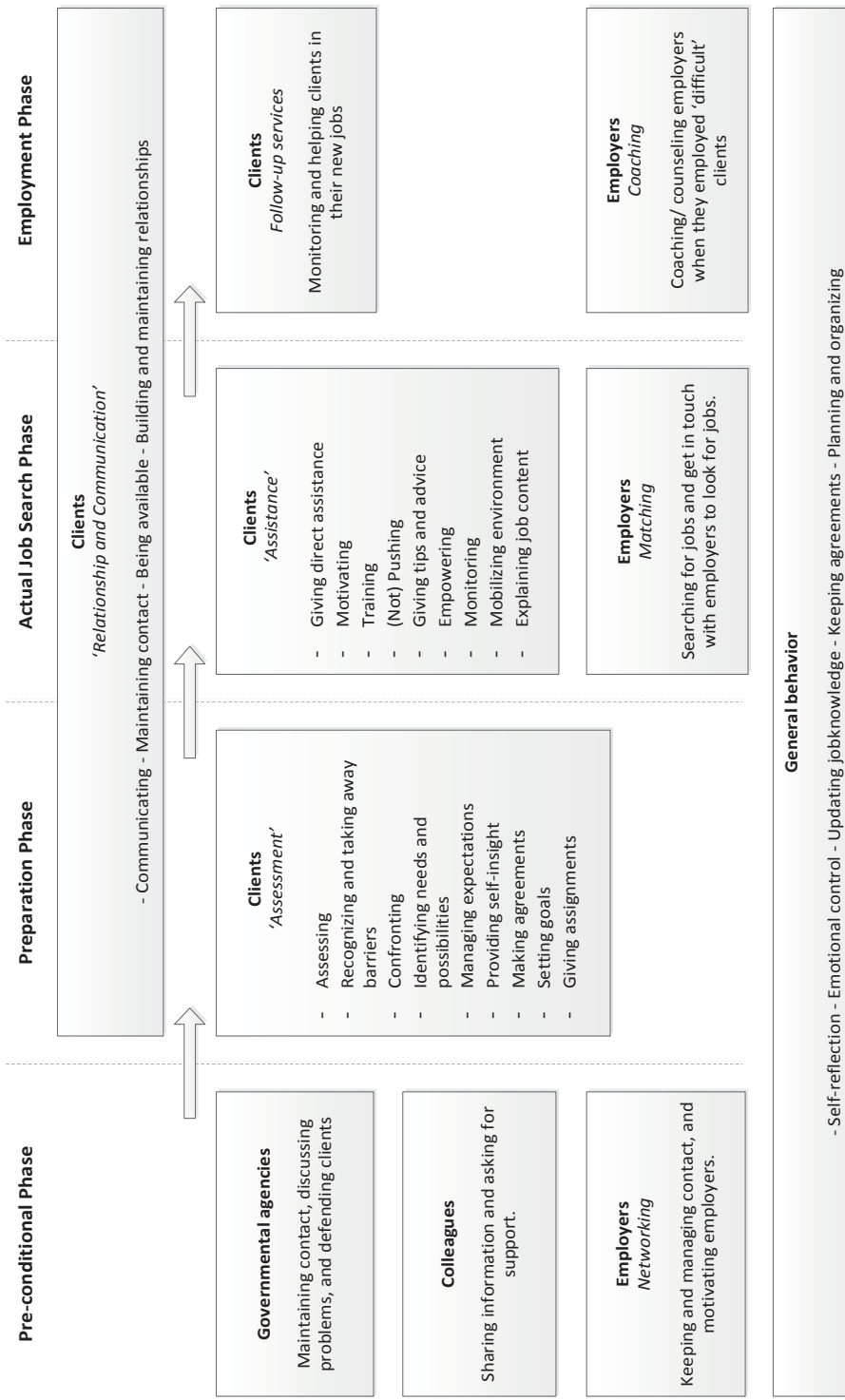


Figure 2. Proposed Tentative Phase Model of Effective Employment Counseling Behavior.

Finally, in the pre-conditional phase, networking with potential employers creates conditions for an effective counseling process. Networking involves motivating employers to cooperate with the agency and to provide job opportunities to clients. It allows counselors to build and maintain a database for potential jobs. Without a network, it will be much more complicated to arrange jobs and to match clients with employers, as pointed out by a supervisor *'When we started this project with a group of long-term unemployed people we did not know employers, so that the counselors could not call employers and try to find jobs for these clients. We should have started with building a network.'*

Together, a good relationship with governmental agencies, a climate of information sharing and support among colleagues, and networking with employers establish a general working context that facilitates and inspires the work of employment counselors, thus representing the foundation of an effective employment counseling trajectory.

Preparation Phase. In the preparation phase, behavior of counselors is aimed at enabling clients to start searching for a job. In their model of employment counseling, Aquilanti and Leroux (1999) argued that before the actual job search phase starts, clients have to move through a phase of assessing their work values, skills, interests, and personality styles by means of tests and exercises. In studies on client satisfaction, assessing skills and interests of clients (Butterfield & Borgen, 2005) and clarity of expectations (Wooten, 1996) are mentioned as important elements of the counseling process. Extending these findings, our data reveal additional counselor behaviors in the preparation phase that are required for employment counseling to be effective. Clarification of resources and potential barriers enhances clients' self-insight (sometimes by means of confrontation), increases the likelihood of overcoming barriers and allows a clear direction for change by setting goals, making agreements, and giving assignments. Employment counselors need to help clients deal with (potential) barriers that may hinder their job search and determine their needs and possibilities. An employment counselor clearly illustrated this: *'Clients can have all sorts of problems: addiction, debts, housing, or problems with their children. If you do not help these clients solve their problems, they are not ready to search for a job.'* These preparations should all precede the actual job search process of clients in an effective counseling trajectory.

Actual Job Search Phase. In the actual job search phase, behavior of counselors is aimed at assisting clients during their job search. Most of the previous literature on job search and employment focused on the actual job search phase, showing that job search is a complex, difficult, and highly stressful task (Saks, 2006; Wanberg et al., 2010) and for most job seekers relatively novel and ambiguous (Leana & Feldman, 1988). Self-regulation is therefore essential to stay motivated and persist in spite of setbacks, rejections, and disappointing experiences in job search (Kanfer et al., 2001). Therefore, employment counselors should help clients deal with those difficulties and support their self-regulation in the phase of actual job search, as the level of support given by counselors predicts the likelihood of becoming employed (Westaby, 2004). Unemployed individuals benefit from both instrumental (i.e., giving advice) and emotional support (i.e., providing trust) during their job search (Zikic & Klehe, 2006). Instrumental support such as training job search skills, providing direct assistance, empowering, giving tips and advice, monitoring job search activities, motivating clients, and explaining the content of a job is required for

effective counseling during the actual job search phase, while emotional support is required during the entire job search process, for example by building and maintaining a good client-counselor relationship.

In the actual job search phase, employment counselors' behavior is aimed at assisting clients in finding a job. On the one hand by helping and motivating clients in their job search process and on the other hand by actively looking for jobs and matching employers and clients. When a client finds a vacancy, for example, it is effective to call the employer and inform them about the client's interest and background and motivate them to hire this client. Many of the incidents indicated that timing is essential for successful matching. As soon as there is a vacancy or job opportunity, counselors should contact the employer, promote one of their clients or ensures them that a client will contact them immediately.

Employment Phase. In the employment phase behavior of counselors is aimed at securing successful long-term employment for clients. Employment counseling is successful when clients find employment. However, our data suggest that the counseling process should continue after reemployment in order to be effective. After assisting clients to find a job and matching between employers and clients, it is more likely that clients socialize well and keep their jobs if employment counselors provide clients with after care and ongoing support. Simple behaviors like calling clients to inquire how things are at work were often mentioned as very effective. Providing follow-up services to clients also involves helping clients with work-related problems or attending evaluation interviews.

In addition to coaching the reemployed clients, employment counselors should also coach and counsel employers, for instance by explaining them how to deal with specific clients and providing information about clients' strengths and weakness, but also by monitoring how clients are treated (e.g., following up on agreements about work hours and pay). Therefore, the aim of providing follow-up services to clients and coaching and counseling employers is to increase the chances of successful, long-term reemployment.

Behaviors relevant in Multiple Phases. As displayed in Figure 2, our data also suggest two sets of behaviors that are necessary in more than one phase of the employment counseling process: 1) 'communication and maintaining a relationship with clients', which influences counselors' effectiveness in all client-centered behaviors; and 2) 'general behavior of counselors', which influences counselors' effectiveness in all phases of employment counseling.

Throughout the employment counseling process the quality of the relationship between client and counselor is an important predictor of client satisfaction (Butterfield & Borgen, 2005; Wooten, 1996). However, apart from building and maintaining a good relationship with clients, effective counseling also requires clear communication, keeping in touch, and being available. Our data show that listening and asking questions are very important behaviors. An employment counselor mentioned a client who was angry and upset during a training course. By listening and asking questions, the counselor succeeded in calming him down. Eventually, the entire group of trainees became more motivated and eager to

learn because they observed that the client was taken seriously by the counselor. A good relationship between counselor and client, with clear communication, in which the counselor keeps in contact and is readily available increases the likelihood that clients will seek assistance in case of problems, will listen to advice, and will become motivated, thus enhancing the chances of (long-term) reemployment

Several general behaviors of counselors were identified that influence all phases of employment counseling and all stakeholders concerned; governmental agencies, colleagues, employers as well as clients. For example, employment counseling represents emotional labor. One of the main characteristics of an emotional labor job is the necessity of regulating one's emotions when the work role demands certain emotions to be expressed to clients (Grandey, 2000). To be effective, employment counselors need to regulate their emotions in order to stay calm in difficult situations with clients but also with employers and governmental agencies. Furthermore, counselors need to reflect on their own behavior and adjust their behavior in all phases of the counseling process when it's not effective (see Table 1 for quotes). Planning and organizing in employment counseling is important to dedicate enough time to clients, to look for vacancies, to contact employers and governmental agencies, and to share information with colleagues. Keeping agreements with clients, employers, colleagues, and governmental agencies creates trust and cooperation. Job knowledge benefits clients as well as governmental agencies, colleagues, and employers. For instance, knowledge of the latest rules and procedures can benefit employers who are willing to employ a job seeker.

Discussion

Theoretical Contributions and Propositions

Despite the widespread and increasing use of employment counseling for unemployed job seekers, we know relatively little about the process of employment counseling and what behaviors make employment counseling effective, raising the question "what are effective behaviors of employment counselors and how are these behaviors related to the phases of employment counseling?". To answer this question, we inductively developed a categorization framework and based on this framework we propose a tentative four-phased model of the employment counseling process. Our findings are depicted in Table 1, showing the behaviors perceived as effective for employment counseling and Figure 2, showing the proposed phase model of employment counseling.

The present study extends the literature on employment counseling and our understanding of the process of employment counseling in several ways. In listing these contributions, we arrive at four propositions based on the current study findings that provide directions for future research on employment counseling.

First, we specifically probed for both effective and ineffective behaviors in the interviews. Although at times, failing to perform effective behavior represents ineffective behavior (e.g., failing to regulate your own emotions), some incidents describe behavior that is inherently ineffective. Pushing clients,

for instance, was always considered ineffective. Furthermore, incidents in the subcategory 'assessing' included many ineffective behaviors, often related to the misjudgment of clients. This suggests that properly assessing clients is a crucial but complex job requirement that is susceptible to mistakes and misunderstanding. As such, our study identified behaviors that are perceived as facilitating effective job performance of employment counselors as well as behaviors that are perceived to obstruct effective performance and should be avoided.

Second, our framework captures specific, well-defined behaviors of employment counseling. Previous theoretical work on employment counseling (e.g., Aquilanti & Leroux, 1999; Borgen & Maglio, 2007; Niles, 1996) mainly emphasized broadly defined themes (e.g., 'supporting clients'), paying relatively little attention to the specific behaviors involved in implementing these themes. Sanchez and Levine (2009) emphasize the importance of identifying both the broadly defined themes in a job and the 'translation' of these themes into day-to-day behaviors in directing and influencing employee behavior toward the accomplishment of organizational goals. As such, our framework of broad categories and well-defined specific behaviors provides a solid base for developing or adjusting job descriptions for employment counselors. Our CIT approach resulted in detailed behavioral definitions of themes that were broadly identified and defined in previous research in employment counseling. For example, previous research highlighted the importance of the relatively broad theme of supporting clients (e.g., Zikic & Klehe, 2006). Our findings suggest that rather than representing a single broad category of counselors' behavior, *support* consists of multiple behaviors dispersed across all phases of the counseling process. Informational support was found to be important during the actual job search phase and included among other things, giving tips and advises, training, and direct assistance. Emotional support was found to be important during the entire process.

Third, whereas the main focus of previous literature in the area of employment counseling (e.g., Aquilanti & Leroux, 1999) and also of the job description for rehabilitation counselors in O*Net (Peterson, Mumford, Borman, Jeanneret, & Fleishman, 1999) is on behavior towards clients, our findings clearly show that behavior towards other stakeholders such as governmental agencies, colleagues, and employers are also perceived as being important for the effectiveness of employment counseling. This finding demonstrates that employment counseling likely should not be limited to client-centered behavior. Apart from assisting clients in their job search process, counseling also requires that counselors maintain good connections with governmental agencies, network with employers, share information with colleagues, match clients and employers, and coach employers. For future research to investigate, we therefore tentatively propose:

Proposition 1. Employment counseling effectiveness will be enhanced when employment counselors involve governmental agencies, colleagues, and employers in the counseling process by means of working together, consultation, asking for information, and giving information.

Fourth, our findings also add to existing knowledge about client-centered behavior. Previous empirical studies in this domain mainly focused on client satisfaction as criterion for effectiveness (e.g., Butterfield

& Borgen, 2005; Wooten, 1996), identifying counselors' behavior such as job search training, and keeping up relationships as predictive of client satisfaction. These are all behaviors that are directly visible to clients and such behaviors are most likely to contribute to client satisfaction (Wooten, 1996). Our findings are consistent with previous research in confirming the importance of several counselor behaviors that are directly visible to the client. Such behaviors include, for example, taking away barriers, providing direct assistance in job search, job search training, keeping in touch with clients, and maintaining a good client-counselor relationship. Extending previous research and theory, our results demonstrate that in addition to these more visible behaviors, behaviors such as assessing clients, exploring their needs, resources, and possibilities, setting goals, and mobilizing clients' environment are also perceived as crucial for effective employment counseling. Interestingly, such behaviors were mentioned by counselors and supervisors rather than by clients, confirming the lower visibility and salience of such behaviors for clients and demonstrating the added value of incorporating multiple parties in investigating employment counselor behaviors. Based on these findings we tentatively suggest:

Proposition 2. Effective employment counseling requires client-centered behaviors of counselors that are directly visible to clients (e.g., providing training) and behaviors that are less visible to clients (e.g., assessing clients) and therefore, multiple parties are needed when investigating employment counselors' behavior.

The fifth contribution is reflected by the presentation of a comprehensive model of employment counseling. Previous models of employment counseling (e.g., Aquilanti & Leroux, 1999) did not cover the complete counseling process and included only broadly defined client-centered behaviors. Our model distinguishes between four different phases, covering the entire counseling process, and identifies the specific behaviors towards governmental agencies, colleagues, employers as well as clients that are required in each of the four phases of counseling. As shown in the model, our results suggest that employment counseling comprises a pre-conditional phase, aimed at setting the stage and creating the preconditions for clients' job search and reemployment, a preparation phase, aimed at enabling clients to start their job search, an actual job search phase, aimed at assisting clients in their job search, and an employment phase, aimed at successful long-term employment for clients. Furthermore, our findings indicate that the four phases are consecutive and by that, the behaviors representing the distinctive phases are aligned. As displayed in the process model, we thus propose that behaviors perceived as representing the preconditions for effective counseling (i.e., good contacts with governmental agencies, a climate of information sharing and support with colleagues, and networking with employers) should be performed before starting the preparation phase. Similarly, we propose that before moving to the actual job search phase, counselors should perform the behaviors representing the preparation phase (i.e. adequate assessment of clients by counselors) that are perceived to ensure an effective counseling process. Furthermore, to increase the chances of long-term employment it is important that counselors provide follow-up services to clients and coach and counsel employers after counselors' behavior representing the actual job search (i.e. assisting clients in their job search and matching between employers and clients). For future research to investigate, we tentatively propose:

Proposition 3. Effective employment counseling involves four consecutive phases in which behavior representing these phases must be aligned: first, behaviors representing the preconditions for counseling, followed by behaviors representing the preparation for counseling, then, behaviors representing the actual job search, and finally, behaviors representing maintaining employment.

Finally, our data suggest two sets of behaviors that are necessary in more than one phase of the employment counseling process. The first set of behaviors is communication and maintaining a good relationship with clients. A good relationship with clear communication, in which the counselor keeps in contact and is readily available increases the likelihood that clients will seek assistance in case of problems, will listen to advice, and will become motivated, thus enhancing the chances of (long-term) reemployment. Although, we realize that maintaining a good relationship and communication with clients is reciprocal and hard to separate between behaviors from clients and from counselors, the behaviors perceived as effective were behaviors performed by counselors and not between client and counselors. The second set of behaviors are the more general behaviors of counselors influencing all phases of employment counseling and all stakeholders concerned (i.e., governmental agencies, colleagues, employers as well as clients). For example, our data suggest that employment counseling represents emotional labor. One of the main characteristics of an emotional labor job is the necessity of regulating one's emotions when the work role demands certain emotions to be expressed to clients (Grandey, 2000). Employment counselors need to regulate their emotions in order to stay calm in difficult situations with clients but also with employers and governmental agencies. Furthermore, counselors need to reflect on their own behavior and adjust their behavior in all phases of the counseling process when it's not effective. It therefore seems that communication and maintaining a good relationship with clients are perceived as being important for effective client-centered behavior in three phases of the process of employment counseling and that general behavior of counselors, such as emotion regulation and self-reflection are essential during all phases of employment counseling. Based on these findings, we therefore tentatively suggest the following:

Proposition 4. Effective employment counseling involves 1) adequate communication and maintaining relationships with clients during the preparation, the actual job search, and the employment phase of employment counseling and 2) adequate general behavior of counselors (i.e., emotion regulation, self-reflection, planning and organizing, keeping agreements, and keeping job knowledge up to date) during all four phases of the employment counseling process.

Both the model and the propositions are inductively developed based on our findings, and as such should be considered as preliminary, mainly serving as a direction for future research regarding employment counseling.

Limitations

This study was designed to establish a comprehensive overview of employment counselors' behavior and to develop a preliminary model of the employment counseling process. We used structured interviews

with various subject matter experts to gather rich and in-depth data. Although our interviewees can be considered as a good representation of the stakeholders involved in employment counseling, we collected our data in only one employment agency in only one country. Future research, therefore, is needed to test the generalizability of our category framework and process model in other agencies and other countries.

Our research focused on identifying behaviors of employment counselors that are perceived as effective or ineffective by clients, counselors, and supervisors. A limitation of our design was that it did not directly investigate observable behavior but rather probed participants' retrospective memory and their attribution of the outcomes. So, it might be that it is the meaning of events and behavior that is captured and not objective behavior itself. Also, social desirability may have affected our findings. For example, it might be that the behaviors found represent behaviors that participants perceived as effective rather than behaviors that are actually effective. However, the interviewees asked for incidents occurring in the past six months and sought for a very high level of detail of the incidents, and a stratified random sampling of clients, supervisors, and employment counselors of 12 independent offices was used, which may attenuate these concerns. Nevertheless, future research should empirically test our model and propositions using a quantitative prospective design with objective effectiveness measures as outcomes (e.g., employment status and quality).

Practical Implications

Our findings have several practical implications for employment counselors themselves as well as for employment counseling agencies.

First, there are implications for the employment counseling process itself. Counseling was found to be broader than direct assistance in job search or other client-centered behaviors. Additional requirements include, for instance, communication with employers and governmental agencies, and information sharing with colleagues. Moreover, our study suggests that employment counseling is a process that consists of four consecutive steps. First, the preconditions for counseling need to be established and maintained. Next, adequate assessment of clients is needed before they can be helped and guided in their job search and employers and clients can be matched. Finally, when clients found a job they should be provided with follow-up services and employers should be coached and counseled in order to increase the chances of long-term employment. Because the interviews indicate that not all counselors are aware of the importance of all these behaviors, counseling agencies may want to increase the awareness of their counselors regarding these behaviors.

Second, our findings can be used to reconsider and improve training and education programs for employment counselors. For instance, as maintaining good relationships with employers turned out to be perceived as important for effective counseling, training programs could focus on teaching counselors the networking skills that they need.

Third, agencies may also use our findings to review their hiring profiles. Until now, the focus has primarily been on counselors who excel in client-directed behavior. However, our findings suggest that other types of behavior are also perceived as important for an effective employment counseling process. The same applies to agencies' performance management systems, since these systems should reflect and reward the full spectrum of behaviors that are required for effectively guiding and assisting individuals to reemployment.

Lastly, our findings have implications for measuring the effectiveness of employment counselors and agencies. Traditionally, client satisfaction is considered an important indicator of effectiveness. Although client satisfaction certainly is an important criterion, in line with the job performance literature (e.g., Campbell et al., 1990; Motowidlo, Borman, & Schmit, 1997), from the interviews it became clear that employment counseling need also be measured by means of objective performance (i.e., the profit for the organization or time of counseling) or subjective performance (i.e., supervisory, peer, or self-ratings).

Conclusion

We designed this study to inductively build theory on counseling of unemployed job seekers by means of a critical incident study resulting in a preliminary process model of counseling. A next step would be to quantitatively test our proposed model. Importantly, future research should examine whether the counselor behaviors that we found to be perceived as effective or ineffective by job seekers, counselors, and their supervisors are also actually distinguishing effective and ineffective counselors in terms of objective counseling success. The model and the research propositions are aimed at guiding future research in this area. First, a measurement instrument for the behaviors of employment counselors should be developed and empirically tested. Next, empirical research is needed to validate the relationships as outlined in the process model and propositions. In addition to testing the proposed relationships of our model, future research should examine the wider generalizability and relative importance of the counselor behaviors that we identified.

Chapter 5

'I'm the Best': A Clarification of the Relation between Achievement Goals and Job Performance

This chapter was presented at the 15th Conference of the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology, Maastricht, The Netherlands, May 2011 and will be submitted for publication.

Abstract

Within achievement goal orientation theory there is an ongoing debate regarding the ambiguous relationship of learning and performance goal orientation with academic and job performance. The present study focused on job performance, arguing that these ambiguous relationships can be explained by the definition and measurement of job performance (i.e., objective versus subjective ratings). In a sample of 118 employees, cluster analyses identified four profiles of different combinations of objective and subjective job performance indicators. These profiles were compared on achievement goal orientation. The cluster with overall low job performers and the cluster with average job performers showed low to average scores on learning and performance goal orientation. The cluster with subjectively high job performers (i.e., high self- and supervisor-ratings and low to average financial performance) showed high scores on performance goal orientation. The cluster with objectively high job performers (i.e., high financial performance and average self-rating) showed high scores on learning and low scores on performance goal orientation. Our findings show that learning and performance goal orientation each are related to a specific performance profile, characterized by a unique pattern of job-performance scores. Such a pattern can only be uncovered when different performance criteria are considered simultaneously.

In recent years, achievement goal orientation theory, also referred to as goal orientation theory, has received much attention in research on motivation and performance in work organizations. According to this theory, individuals have two primary goals for engaging in achievement behavior (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Learning goal orientation reflects a focus on *developing* one's competence, whereas performance goal orientation reflects a focus on *demonstrating* one's competence. Learning goal orientation is generally considered to relate to adaptive motivational processes, whereas performance goal orientation shows a more diverse pattern of motivational correlates (Payne et al., 2007; Rawsthorne & Elliot, 1999; Utman, 1997). With regard to the prediction of academic and task performance outcomes, learning as well as performance goal orientation have generated mixed results (Linnenbrink-Garcia, Tyson, & Patall, 2008; Payne et al., 2007). These mixed results also apply to the relation between achievement goals and job performance. While some studies show positive relations for both learning and performance goal orientation with job performance (Porath & Bateman, 2006; Sujun, Weitz, & Kumar, 1994), other studies found that this positive relation only applied for learning goal orientation (VandeWalle et al., 1999), and still others found a negative relation between performance goal orientation and job performance (Brett & Atwater, 2001). In the current study we aim at clarifying these mixed findings, proposing that the relation of learning and performance goal orientation with job performance depends on the definition and measurement of job performance.

Achievement Goal Orientation

Achievement goal orientation theory is a motivational theory that predicts that motivation and performance is affected by the purpose of people's goals, defined in terms of competencies (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). The initial focus of the achievement goal literature was on two facets of competencies: learning, aimed at developing competencies and mastering something new, and performance, aimed at demonstrating competencies (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Nicholls, 1984). Individuals high on learning goal orientation are supposed to believe that their competencies and abilities can be increased by sustained effort. In contrast, individuals high on performance goal orientation are supposed to believe that their competencies and abilities are fixed. Learning and performance goal orientation create different frameworks of how individuals define and evaluate competence¹ (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Whereas individuals pursuing learning achievement goals use an absolute or intrapersonal standard to evaluate their competence (i.e., mastered the task or improved performance), individuals pursuing performance achievement goals use a normative or interpersonal standard to evaluate their competence (i.e., compared to others).

Learning goal orientation is considered to have a positive association with adaptive motivational processes (e.g., intrinsic motivation, persistence), whereas performance goal orientation has a more

¹ More recently, various authors (e.g., Elliot & McGregor, 2001; VandeWalle, 1997) have distinguished between approach and avoidance achievement goal orientations, in which learning and performance goal orientation are divided into approach and avoidance orientation. In the present study we specifically focus on the approach dimension of learning and performance goal orientation because these are also the focus of previous research on the relation between achievement goals and job performance (Payne et al., 2007).

uneven pattern, with adaptive, maladaptive, or neutral relationships with motivational processes (Payne et al., 2007; Rawsthorne & Elliot, 1999; Utman, 1997). Interestingly, despite the well-established positive relationship between learning goal orientation and *motivational processes*, research findings are rather ambiguous where it concerns the link between achievement goals and *performance outcomes* in various contexts. This ambiguity is the subject of ongoing debate among achievement goal researchers about conceptual and methodological differences that might affect or explain the mixed and inconsistent pattern of results for the associations between achievement goals and performance outcomes (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005; Harackiewicz, Barron, Pintrich, Elliot, & Thrash, 2002). In an attempt to solve this issue, Hulleman and colleagues (2010) meta-analyzed existing correlational research on achievement goals and outcomes and showed that the mixed findings can in part be explained by discrepancies in the *definitions of achievement goal orientation* used in different studies. We propose that an additional explanation lies in discrepancies in the *definition of achievement outcomes*. Until now, we know very little about the potential impact of the definition and measurement of job performance on its relationship with achievement goal orientation.

Definition and Measurement of Job Performance

Definitions and measures of job performance can be differentiated according to whether they focus on actions (i.e., behavioral aspects) or outcomes (Campbell et al., 1990; Kanfer, 1990). Actions or work behaviors refer to what individuals actually do in order to perform their job and be effective. Behaviors such as teaching, selling, managing, assisting people, and fixing cars determine individual effectiveness and are relevant for achieving organizational goals. Furthermore, when defined as an outcome, job performance can be classified into objective and subjective job performance (K. R. Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). Objective measures of job performance include financial performance, sales output, and sickness-absenteeism. Subjective measures of job performance typically involve performance ratings. Such ratings are subjective evaluations of the quality and quantity of behavioral and outcome aspects of task or job performance that can be obtained from supervisors, peers, or the employees themselves.

Objective measures and subjective ratings of the behavioral and outcome aspects of job performance have both advantages and disadvantages. Objective performance measures are objectively countable but may suffer from criterion deficiency because they may not include relevant behavioral aspects of performance and they may be influenced by situational characteristics that are unrelated to employee performance (e.g., economic conditions). Subjective ratings may suffer from rater effects. For example, self-ratings of performance are affected by leniency to the degree that self-raters over-rate their own qualitative and quantitative behaviors and performance (i.e., self-enhancement bias), and supervisor-ratings are prone to halo errors by allowing an overall impression of an employee to affect judgments along independent dimensions (Heidemeier & Moser, 2009; K. R. Murphy & Cleveland, 1995; Viswesvaran, Ones, & Schmidt, 1996). Rater effects have been shown to account for half of the variance in subjective performance ratings (Scullen, Mount, & Goff, 2000). These biases may explain the only modest relationships between different types of performance measures that have been reported in meta-

analyses. For example, Viswesvaran (2002) found a correlation of $-.17$ between sickness-absenteeism and objective performance (i.e., productivity), Heidemeier and Moser (2009) found a correlation of $.22$ between self- and supervisor-ratings, and Bommer, Johnson, Rich, Podsakof, and McKenzie (1995) found a correlation of $.32$ between objective performance (i.e., production quantity) and supervisor-ratings. However, although the limited agreement between the different measures of job performance is often considered to be measurement error, all various measures may also be viewed as providing meaningful complementary information (Scullen et al., 2000; Tornow, 1993; Yammarino & Atwater, 1993). The literature on 360-degree feedback (e.g., Atwater, Waldman, & Brett, 2002), for example, shows that different rating sources may each provide a different meaningful perspective on an employee's job performance. Furthermore, all types of objective performance measures have been demonstrated to distinguish effective from ineffective job performers, supervisor-ratings are seen as most reliable to assess job performance, and self-ratings have proven useful because the target individual is the best source of information about work behaviors (K. R. Murphy & Cleveland, 1995; Viswesvaran, 2002). Therefore, objective and subjective job performance indicators both represent useful performance measures that can be complemented with details on employees' work behaviors to identify a comprehensive employee job performance profile.

Achievement Goal Orientation and Job Performance

In their meta-analysis, Payne and colleagues (2007) showed that on average both learning and performance goal orientation is positively (though weakly) related to job performance. Since the authors did not differentiate between different types of job performance indicators, their findings allow no conclusions about potential differences between objective and subjective job-performance outcomes in the relation with learning and performance goal orientation. Regarding academic performance, Dompnier and Darnon and colleagues (2009; 2010) demonstrated that learning goal orientation is differentially related to objective and subjective academic outcomes. Students who displayed a strong learning goal orientation were perceived as effective by their teachers (i.e., subjective performance); however the display of learning goal orientation was not clearly related to objective academic success (i.e., objective performance). These differential findings for the relation between achievement goals and subjective and objective academic outcomes may also apply to performance outcomes at work. For example, regardless of their objective job success, employees with a strong learning goal orientation may tend to be hesitant to consider themselves high performers because their focus on improvement and learning implies that there is room for further growth and improvement ('I'm still learning and developing, so apparently I'm not yet the best job performer I can be'). Employees with a strong performance goal orientation, in contrast, are likely to perceive and present themselves as high performers in their ambition to demonstrate and maintain their superiority relative to others ('I am the best').

A study by Janssen and Van der Vegt (2011) supports the idea that performance goal-oriented employees tend towards self-enhancement, showing that employees with a strong performance goal

orientation are more likely to positively bias their self-ratings relative to supervisors. In line with this finding, the results of one of the studies included in Payne et al.'s (2007) meta-analysis demonstrated that salespeople with a strong performance goal orientation rated themselves as high performers. In contrast, salespeople's learning goal orientation was unrelated to their self-rated performance (Kohli, Shervani, & Challagalla, 1998). In another study included in Payne et al. (i.e. VandeWalle et al., 1999), learning goal orientation was related to objective ratings of job performance (i.e., actual number of products sold) whereas, performance goal orientation were unrelated to objective performance. Regarding supervisor-ratings, (Potosky & Ramakrishna, 2002) found no direct relationship with learning or performance goal orientation, whereas a more recent study found supervisor-ratings to be related to learning as well as performance goal orientation (M. Wang & Takeuchi, 2007). These results indicate that different job-performance measures seem to be differently related to learning and performance goal orientation.

As stated above, meta-analytic results show modest relationships between objective and subjective job-performance measures (e.g., Heidemeier & Moser, 2009; Viswesvaran, 2002) and different job-performance measures provide different meaningful perspectives on employees' job performance (e.g., Atwater et al., 2002; Scullen et al., 2000). Together, these findings suggest that an accurate and complete description of employees' job performance requires simultaneous, integrated scrutiny of different job performance indicators (i.e., objective and subjective outcomes, and work behaviors), resulting in detailed employee job-performance profiles. In the present study, we focus on such job-performance profiles that we subsequently link to achievement goal orientation. This approach allows a refined examination of the association between achievement goal orientation and job performance, which will help us to understand the mixed previous findings regarding the relation between achievement goals and job performance. To this end, we take a subject-centered (or configural) approach that takes into account the variations in how scores on different job-performance indicators are combined within employees. Similar subject-centered approaches have been used in previous research on organizational commitment (e.g., Sinclair, Tucker, Cullen, & Wright, 2005), unemployment (Wanberg & Marchese, 1994), work engagement and burnout (Luckx, Duriez, Klimstra, & De Witte, 2010), and contextual job performance (Coleman & Borman, 2000). Moreover, in educational psychology, subject-centered approaches are common in achievement goal orientation research (e.g., Daniels et al., 2008; Karabenick, 2003; Meece & Holt, 1993).

In sum, extant research has generated inconsistent findings regarding the relationship between achievement goals and job performance. We argue that these inconsistent findings are partly due to the differences in the definition and measurement of job performance. Therefore, it is important to examine objective as well as subjective indicators of job performance to describe the profiles of employees' job performance and their relation with achievement goals. In the present study, we used cluster analysis to identify groups of employees based on their job-performance profiles and examined whether these groups are characterized by different patterns of achievement goal orientation. With this approach, we aim to generate new insights into the relation between job performance and achievement goal orientation.

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations between all Variables

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1 Age	44.33	9.76																			
2 Gender ^a	0.69	0.47	.34																		
3 Tenure	8.30	6.57	.41	-.19																	
4 Financial performance	24.79	11.55	-.04	.05	.07																
5 Supervisor rating	4.82	0.70	-.01	.01	.26	.11															
6 Self rating	4.48	0.81	.18	-.27	.19	-.05	.23														
7 Sicknes-absenteeism ^b	0.16	0.37	.02	.05	.02	-.20	-.13	-.03													
8 Learning goal orientation	6.42	0.54	-.17	.08	-.10	.14	.08	.01	-.08												
9 Performance goal orientation	3.86	1.32	.13	-.29	.18	-.12	.05	.37	-.15	-.02											
10 Client Assessment	5.02	0.82	.09	-.04	.13	.06	.07	.16	-.03	.33	-.03										
11 Client Assistance	4.88	0.63	-.02	.10	.11	.03	.11	.12	.12	.30	-.05	.69									
12 Client Communication	5.72	0.70	.06	.03	.03	.10	.09	.11	-.02	.40	-.17	.80	.66								
13 Client After care	4.22	1.35	-.08	.03	.17	.09	.18	.16	.13	.21	.03	.45	.57	.43							
14 Governmental Agencies	3.76	0.86	.09	-.01	.00	.08	.08	.09	-.27	.12	.01	.40	.19	.32	.02						
15 Colleagues	4.41	1.01	-.15	.02	-.06	.12	.28	.19	.14	.31	-.11	.34	.45	.36	.35	.01					
16 Employers Networking	4.11	0.90	-.12	-.05	.03	.11	.09	.14	-.08	.19	-.06	.30	.49	.33	.37	.14	.49				
17 Employers Matching	4.10	1.14	-.10	-.00	.20	.05	.22	.18	-.15	.21	-.04	.29	.48	.30	.49	.07	.49	.70			
18 Employers Coaching	4.17	1.24	-.07	-.02	.15	.16	.19	.15	.10	.24	.01	.38	.47	.35	.78	.08	.35	.49	.60		
19 Emotion regulation	5.92	0.76	.08	-.16	.03	.01	-.01	-.00	-.04	.11	-.04	.16	.13	.20	.11	-.02	.06	.11	.14	.12	
20 Self-reflection	5.86	0.59	.04	-.07	-.03	.08	-.13	.09	-.04	.32	.02	.40	.39	.42	.34	.14	.15	.24	.22	.32	.12

Note. N = 118. Scores for variables 5 and 6 and 8 to 20 vary between 1 to 7.
^a 0 = male, 1 = female. ^b 0 = no or one day of absenteeism, 1 = more than one day of absenteeism.
 Correlations > .16, *p* < .10; Correlations > .19, *p* < .05; Correlations > .24, *p* < .01

Method

Participants

Participants in this study were 118 employment counselors (mean age: 44.3, $SD = 9.7$; mean organizational tenure: 8.3 years, $SD = 6.5$; 31% men and 69% women) and their supervisors ($N = 18$), working at one of the largest employment counseling agencies in The Netherlands. The agency counsels more than 10,000 clients a year. Those clients receive welfare, unemployment benefits, or partial disability benefits. Employment counselors assist and coach unemployed clients in finding a new job. The counselors generate income for the employment counseling company when their clients start in a job.

Measures

For each counselor, we measured objective job performance outcome indicators (financial performance and sickness-absenteeism), subjective job performance outcome indicators (supervisor rating and self-rating), and work behaviors such as assisting clients. Furthermore, employment counselors completed a questionnaire that measured their achievement goal orientation and demographical variables (age, sex, and organizational tenure). Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations between all measures.

Objective job performance indicators. Employment counselors' financial performance and sickness-absenteeism (both were available for nine months) were retrieved from the agency's database. In obtaining the financial performance data, several factors were taken into account in order to create a valid indicator. The mean of nine months of financial turnover for each counselor was corrected for the counselors' contract hours ($M = 34.4$; $SD = 6.0$). It was further corrected for their caseload in terms of the number of clients counseled ($M = 52$; $SD = 28$), because due to other activities (e.g., administrative tasks for the office that do not generate direct financial turnover) some counselors had lower case loads than others. The mean corrected financial performance was 24.79 ($SD = 11.55$) Euros per client counseled, per contract hour. Sickness-absenteeism was coded: 0 = no absenteeism or one day of absenteeism, and 1 = more than one day of absenteeism, for a period of nine months.

Subjective job performance indicators. To assess supervisor rated job performance, a 10-item scale was used that reflected supervisors' assessment of the overall functioning of an employment counselor, the know-how, the financial performance, and behaviors of the counselor towards clients, governmental agencies, employers, and colleagues. The 10 items were completed on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 = "insufficient", to 7 = "excellent" ($\alpha = .92$). Employment counselors' self-rated job performance was measured using a 3-item scale. Counselors rated their own performance in comparison to other counselors regarding their 1) financial turnover, 2) effectiveness, and 3) client satisfaction, using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = "much lower than other counselors", to 7 = "much higher than other counselors" ($\alpha = .69$).

Work behaviors. In addition to self-ratings of general job performance, we collected self-ratings on a set of specific work behaviors of employment counselors. Based on previous studies (e.g., Butterfield & Borgen, 2005; Westaby, 2004), interviews with employment counselors, supervisors, and clients, and in collaboration with the employment-counseling agency, we developed 115 items that represent 10 distinctive behaviors indicative of effective employment counseling (Noordzij, Van Hooft, Van Mierlo, Van Dam, & Born, in press^b). These behaviors were: 1) assessment of clients; 2) assisting clients; 3) providing follow up services to clients; 4) maintaining relationships and communication with clients; 5) behavior towards governmental agencies; 6) behavior towards colleagues; 7) networking with employers; 8) matching employers and clients; 9) coaching employers; and 10) self-regulation behaviors of counselors (i.e., regulating own emotions, keeping up appointments, keeping job knowledge up to date, planning and organizing, self-reflection). Counselors were asked to indicate on a 7-point scale to what extent they display each behavior. For each scale of work behaviors: $\alpha > .80$.

Achievement goal orientation. Employment counselors' achievement goal orientation was measured with 10 items from Janssen and Prins' (2007) work achievement goal orientation scale. On a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = "totally disagree" to 7 = "totally agree", counselors indicated to what extent they agreed with each of the five learning and five performance goal orientation items ($\alpha = .75$ for learning and $\alpha = .92$ for performance goal orientation). Items included: 'In my work it is important to me that I perform tasks that I can learn a lot of' (learning goal orientation) and 'In my work it is important to me that I perform better than others' (performance goal orientation).

Analyses

To analyze the relation between achievement goal orientation and the job-performance profiles based on the different performance indicators, we used hierarchical cluster analysis. Following suggestions of other researchers (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984; Pastor, 2010), we used Ward's method (1963) with squared Euclidean distance as the similarity distance (based on standardized variables). Cluster analysis is similar to exploratory factor analysis. However, while factor analysis is aimed at grouping variables, cluster analysis is aimed at grouping subjects based on their responses to a set of variables. Applied to the current study, Ward's method minimizes variances within groups of employees and maximizes the internal consistency with regard to combinations of job performance indicators. In order to create groups of employees with similar job-performance profiles we incorporated eight performance indicators into the cluster analysis: financial performance, supervisor-ratings, self-ratings, sickness-absenteeism, and four scales of employment counselors' work behavior that were well-established as predictors of effective counseling (i.e., assessment of clients, assisting clients, providing follow-up services, and communication with clients) in previous research (Butterfield & Borgen, 2005; Westaby, 2004; Wooten, 1996). To determine the optimal number of clusters we relied on the recommendations made by Pastor (2010) that different methods must be used in deciding upon the final solution. We inspected the dendrogram (a plot showing the progression of subjects being merged into clusters) and the coefficients (within-cluster error) in the agglomeration schedule.

Once clusters were established, we used one-way ANOVAs to compare clusters on the performance variables used in the cluster analysis. Furthermore, we compared the clusters on the performance indicators that were not used in the cluster analysis (i.e., work behaviors towards governmental agencies, colleagues, and employers, and general skills) and demographics, in order to provide external descriptors of the cluster solution. External descriptors serve to provide more information about each cluster, as well as to establish the validity of the cluster solution independent of the original cluster solution (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984). Lastly, we compared the clusters on achievement goal orientation as external descriptors in order to increase our understanding of the joint relation between achievement goal orientation and different indicators of job performance.

Results

The agglomeration schedule showed a 'jump' in the fusion coefficients between the four- and three-cluster solutions. According to Aldenderfer and Blashfield (1987, p. 57): "A jump implies that two relatively dissimilar clusters have been merged; thus the number of clusters prior to the merger is the most probable solution". Accordingly, a four-cluster solution appears to be most appropriate for our data. This conclusion was supported by the dendrogram. Thus, our data contained four unique groups in terms of combinations of job performance indicators. Using one-way ANOVAs and a chi-square test for gender, we found significant differences between the clusters on all measured variables except for the demographics and three out of five general behaviors (i.e., keeping agreements, planning and organizing, and keeping job knowledge up to date).

To aid interpretation of the clusters, we compared the clusters by classifying the standardized means of the variables greater than .3 as indicative of high job performance, standardized means between minus .3 to .3 as indicative of average job performance, and standardized means below minus .3 as indicative of low job performance. Table 2 presents the comparison of the clusters based on these score categories. In the following, we first describe the four clusters based on the eight variables used in the cluster analysis and the significantly different behavioral variables not used in the cluster analysis. Second, we describe the relation between the four clusters and achievement goal orientation (see Figure 1).

Cluster membership

Cluster 1: Overall low job performers. The employment counselors in Cluster 1 ($n = 40$) were characterized by lower than average scores on all work behaviors (with one exception). Further, this cluster is characterized by average supervisor-rated and financial performance, very low self-rated performance, and high sickness-absenteeism, indicating that these were the most ineffective employees. Therefore, we labeled counselors in Cluster 1 overall low job performers.

Table 2
Description of Clusters: High, Average, and Low Mean Standard Scores

	High standard scores (.30 or higher)	Average standard scores (.30 to -.30)	Low standard scores (-.30 or below)
Cluster 1: ($N = 40$) <i>Overall low job performers'</i>	Sickness-absenteeism (.35)	Financial performance (-.28) Supervisor rating (-.12) Performance goal orientation (-.01)	Self rating (-.47) Learning goal orientation (-.39) Assessment of clients (-.85) Assisting clients (-.81) Providing follow up services (-.57) Communication with clients (-.92) Governmental agencies (-.46) Colleagues (-.42) Networking (-.44) Matching (-.42) Coaching (-.53) Self-reflection (-.43)
Cluster 2: ($N = 37$) <i>Client-centered average job performers'</i>	Assessment of clients (.90) Assisting clients (.85) Communication (.94) Providing follow up services (.68) Coaching (.50) Regulating own emotions (.38) Self-reflection (.45)	Financial performance (-.20) Supervisor rating (.06) Self rating (-.14) Sickness-absenteeism (.05) Learning goal orientation (.19) Performance goal orientation (.26) Governmental agencies (.24) Colleagues (.26) Networking (.24) Matching (.26)	
Cluster 3: ($N = 30$) <i>Subjectively high job performers'</i>	Supervisor rating (.64) Self rating (.88) Performance goal orientation (.48)	Learning goal orientation (.13) Assessment of clients (.07) Assisting clients (.09) Communication with clients (.06) Providing follow up services (-.15) Governmental agencies (.22) Colleagues (.18) Networking (.19) Matching (.22) Coaching employers (.06) Regulating own emotions (-.23) Self-reflection (-.11)	Financial performance (-.30) Sickness-absenteeism (-.45)
Cluster 4: ($N = 11$) <i>Objectively high job performers'</i>	Financial performance (2.48) Supervisor rating (.48) Learning goal orientation (.43) Coaching employers (.41) Self-reflection (.31)	Self rating (-.25) Assessment of clients (-.13) Assisting clients (-.15) Communication with clients (.02) Providing follow up services (.20) Governmental agencies (.28) Colleagues (.15) Networking (.28) Matching (.16) Regulating own emotions (-.21)	Sickness-absenteeism (-.45) Performance goal orientation (-.39)

Note. Variables in bold letters are job performance indicators or achievement goal orientation. Variables in normal letters are job performance behaviors.

Cluster 2: Client-centered average job performers. The employment counselors in Cluster 2 ($n = 37$) were characterized by high scores on all client-centered work behaviors; suggesting that they invest a lot of time and effort in their clients. They also scored high on skills such as self-reflection and emotion regulation. However, they had average scores on almost all job performance indicators: self and supervisor-ratings, financial performance, and sickness-absenteeism. As such, we labeled counselors in Cluster 2 client-centered average job performers.

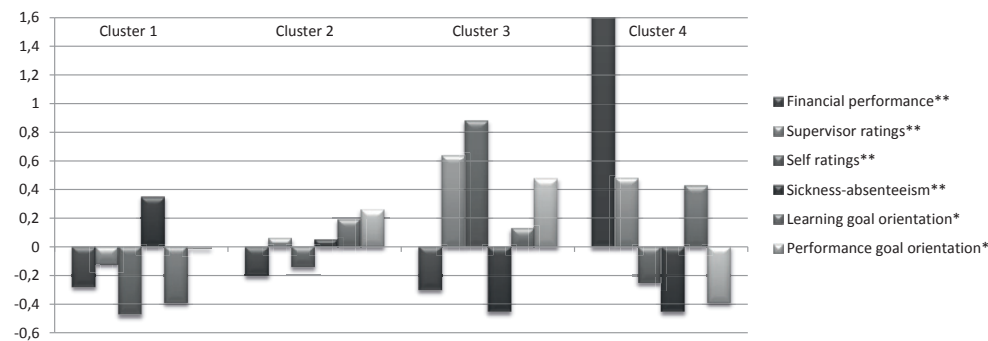
Cluster 3: Subjectively high job performers. The employment counselors in Cluster 3 ($n = 30$) were characterized by high scores on supervisor-ratings of performance. Furthermore, they perceived themselves as high performers. However, their financial performance and their scores on all work behaviors were average. Therefore, we labeled counselors in Cluster 3 subjectively high job performers.

Cluster 4: Objectively high job performers. The employment counselors in Cluster 4 ($n = 11$) reported average self-rated performance and scored average on most work behaviors. Yet, this cluster is characterized by very high scores on financial performance and high supervisor-ratings. Even though they do not describe themselves as such, counselors in Cluster 4 appear to be highly effective employees. They were labeled as objectively high job performers.

1 (overall low performing) employees scored significantly lower than both Cluster 2 (client-centered average performing) and Cluster 4 (objectively high performing) employees. For performance goal orientation, Cluster 3 (subjectively high performing) scored significantly higher than both Cluster 2 (client-centered average performing) and Cluster 4 (objectively high performing) employees. However, Cluster 3 and Cluster 1 employees did not differ significantly in terms of performance goal orientation.

Furthermore, we determined whether the correlations between learning goal orientation and job performance outcomes were significantly different from those between performance goal orientation and job performance outcomes using Fishers' Z transformation. For financial performance Fisher's $Z = 1.98, p < .05$, showing that the relation between financial performance and learning goal orientation was stronger than the relation between financial performance and performance goal orientation. For self-ratings of performance Fisher's $Z = 2.87, p < .01$, showing that the relation between self-ratings and performance goal orientation was stronger than the relation between self-ratings and learning goal orientation. We found no significant differences for the correlations of learning and performance goal orientation with supervisor-ratings of performance or sickness-absenteeism. For work behaviors, learning goal orientation was more strongly related with client assessment, Fisher's $Z = 2.82, p < .01$, client assistance, Fisher's $Z = 2.72, p < .01$, client communication, Fisher's $Z = 4.51, p < .01$, behavior towards colleagues, Fisher's $Z = 3.26, p < .01$, and self-reflection, Fisher's $Z = 2.36, p < .05$, compared to performance goal orientation. We found no significant differences between the relations of learning and performance goal orientation with the other work behaviors (i.e., client aftercare, behavior towards governmental agencies, behavior towards employers, and emotion regulation).

In sum, these results show that learning and performance goal orientation is differentially related to combinations of objective (i.e., financial performance) and subjective (i.e., self-ratings of job performance) job performance outcome variables and to work behaviors. Employees with high scores on performance goal orientation perceived themselves as very high performers but showed low to average financial performance. In contrast, employees with high scores on learning goal orientation perceived themselves as average performers, but showed high financial performance.



Note. Cluster 1 = Overall low job performers, Cluster 2 = Client-centered average job performers, Cluster 3 = Subjectively high job performers, Cluster 4 = Objectively high job performers. For sickness-absenteeism: a positive score means high sickness-absenteeism and a negative score means low sickness-absenteeism. ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$ differences between cluster means

Figure 1. Cluster Profiles based on Standardized Means of Objective and Subjective Job Performance Indicators and Achievement Goal Orientation.

Job-Performance Profiles and Achievement Goal Orientation

In addition to the differences between the four clusters in outcome and behavioral performance, the clusters were also found to differ in terms of achievement goal orientation. Significant differences emerged between the clusters for learning goal orientation, $F(4, 114) = 3.56, p < .05$, and for performance goal orientation $F(3, 114) = 3.91, p < .05$ (see Figure 1). Regarding learning goal orientation, Cluster

Discussion

This study aimed to increase our understanding regarding inconsistencies in research findings relating learning and performance goal orientation to job performance (e.g., Janssen & Van der Vegt, 2011; Kohli et al., 1998; VandeWalle et al., 1999). The clusters that emerged from our study demonstrate that the inconsistencies in previous research regarding the achievement goal orientation – performance outcome relationship may be due to the definition and measurement of performance outcomes, as different profiles of objective and subjective performance measures were differentially related to learning and performance goal orientation.

We identified four employee performance profiles. The *overall low job performers*, with weak learning goal orientation and average scores on performance goal orientation, were characterized by high sickness-absenteeism, average supervisor-ratings, average to low financial job performance, and low self-ratings and work behaviors. The *client-centered average job performers*, with average scores on learning and performance goal orientation, were also characterized by average scores on all job performance outcomes and work behaviors, except for the high scores on self-reflection and emotion-regulation and work behaviors directly involving clients. The *subjectively high job performers*, with strong performance and average learning goal orientation, were characterized by low to average financial performance, average scores on all work behaviors, and high supervisor and self-ratings of job performance. Finally, the *objectively high performers*, with strong learning and weak performance goal orientation, were characterized by high supervisor-ratings and high financial performance, average self-ratings of job performance and average scores on work behaviors except for high scores on self-reflection and coaching employers. These findings suggest that employees with weak or average learning and performance goal orientation are accurate in estimating their own job performance, whereas employees with strong learning or performance goal orientation showed downward (learning) or upward (performance) biases when estimating their own performance. Previous research on the relation between self-ratings of performance and financial performance demonstrated that people who underestimate their own performance tend to be more effective compared to people who overestimate their performance (Atwater, Ostroff, Yammarino, & Fleener, 1998). The present results suggest that these findings can be extended to learning- and performance goal-oriented individuals. In our study, employees with a strong learning goal orientation were very high performers in terms of financial performance but underestimated their own job performance, whereas employees with a strong performance goal orientation were less effective in terms of financial performance but overestimated their own job performance.

Previous research showed that performance goal-oriented employees tend to be prone to self-enhancement (Janssen & Van der Vegt, 2011). Our study extends these findings by showing that performance goal-oriented employees are also overestimated by their supervisors. An explanation for this finding can be found in achievement goal orientation theory (Dweck & Leggett, 1988), which suggests that performance goal-oriented individuals are motivated by positive judgments and feedback and try to avoid negative feedback as this undermines their ego. For them, the need for self-enhancement and positive feedback by supervisors is instrumental in protecting their 'ego' and maintaining their job motivation. Thus, they are likely to put effort into presenting themselves favorably towards supervisors. In contrast, learning goal-oriented individuals are not motivated by positive judgments from others but rather by the need to enhance their competencies, resulting in the idea that they are not yet the best job performer they can be, making it less likely that learning goal-oriented employees rate themselves as highly effective.

In line with previous research (e.g., Viswesvaran, 2002), sickness-absenteeism distinguished effective from ineffective job performers, with higher absenteeism for low job performers. Sickness-absenteeism did

not distinguish between employees with strong learning or performance goal orientation. Employees with high scores on either learning or performance goal orientation all had low absenteeism rates, suggesting the importance of a strong achievement goal orientation in general.

In sum, our results extend previous research on the relation between achievement goal orientation and job performance (Janssen & Van der Vegt, 2011; Kohli et al., 1998; VandeWalle et al., 1999; M. Wang & Takeuchi, 2007), by showing that subjective ratings and financial performance are differentially related to learning and performance goal orientation. In Payne et al.'s (2007) meta-analysis, a positive (though weak) relation was found between both learning and performance goal orientation and job performance. However, this meta-analysis allowed no conclusions about potential differences between objective and subjective job performance indicators. In our study, we used cluster analysis to identify groups of employees with different performance profiles based on combinations of performance behaviors and objective and subjective performance indicators. Employees with a performance profile characterized by high self and supervisor-ratings, low sickness-absenteeism, and average financial performance, were generally high on performance goal orientation. Employees with a performance profile of high financial performance, high supervisor rating, average self-rating, and low sickness-absenteeism were generally high on learning goal orientation. Thus, whereas learning and performance goal orientation were equally related to supervisor-ratings and sickness-absenteeism, they were differentially related to self-ratings and financial performance.

Limitations

Our study was not without limitations. Our cluster analysis was partly based on an inventory of effective behavior in an employment-counseling context in The Netherlands. Some caution is warranted when generalizing our findings to other jobs and countries. We would argue, however, that job performance of employment counselors is very similar to job performance in general, comprising multiple meaningful job behaviors that distinguished effective from ineffective job performers. Although the required performance behaviors might vary from job to job and from country to country, we have no reason to expect entirely different results in a different job context or in a different country. However, there might be a difference in the expression and value of learning and performance goal orientation between countries and organizations and therefore, to assess the generalizability of the results, further research should be conducted in different organizational settings and different countries.

Another limitation is represented by the high average score and limited variance on learning goal orientation, which might raise concerns about potential ceiling effects. However, in spite of the high average score we found significant differences between the clusters on learning goal orientation, which indicates that ceiling effects were probably limited if operative at all. Still, the high learning goal orientation score represents a distinct feature of our current sample, which might affect the generalizability of our findings to settings with different achievement goal emphases.

Finally, our study was exploratory in nature. The subject-centered cluster analysis approach differs from the more common variable-centered approach that would typically be based on a-priori hypotheses regarding the associations between the different job-performance indicators and achievement goals. Our aim was, however, to explore different types of job-performance profiles and their corresponding achievement goal scores. The cluster analysis approach is well suited for this purpose. It would be interesting for future research to take a confirmatory approach and test a-priori expectations that can be derived from our findings. In addition, based on our findings we would recommend that the differences between job-performance indicators are taken into account in future studies and meta-analytic endeavors in the domain of achievement goals and job performance.

Practical Implications and Conclusion

Many organizations explicitly or implicitly promote a performance-goal orientation in their organization by focusing on setting competitive targets and offering incentives for achieving them. However, in line with previous research (e.g., Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004; VandeWalle et al., 1999), our findings suggest that effective objective job performance is first and foremost associated with strong learning goal orientation. In general, our study inspires a number of practical guidelines and suggestions. First, in employee selection it would be beneficial to screen applicants on their learning goal orientation. Employees with an orientation towards learning goals are likely to persist when facing obstacles and failures, and have a preference for challenging tasks. Second, training and management strategies can help enhance employees' learning goal orientation and contribute to a learning goal-oriented work climate and thereby promote personal and organizational effectiveness. For example, managers can help employees who receive negative feedback interpret this feedback as diagnostic of their effort and an opportunity to improve instead of interpreting it as diagnostic of their ability, which is likely to undermine their motivation and willingness to invest further effort. Previous research has demonstrated that employee's achievement goal orientations can change under the influence of organizational climate and situational factors (Button et al., 1996; DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). Furthermore, individuals can be trained to change their achievement orientation in a given situation (e.g., Kozlowski et al., 2001; Noordzij et al., in press^a; Stevens & Gist, 1997). Finally, our study demonstrates that objective and subjective job performance indicators are both useful to distinguish high from low job performers, each providing a different perspective on an employee's job performance. However, in line with previous studies (e.g. Heidemeier & Moser, 2009; Viswesvaran et al, 1996), our findings show that subjective indicators must be used cautiously since employees with a strong performance goal orientation are prone to self-enhancement, whereas employees with a strong learning goal orientation are likely to underestimate their performance. Assessments of employees' job performance often have major implications for decisions regarding, for example, promotion, training, and rewards. Our study, suggests that in order to develop accurate job performance assessments, subjective and objective indicators should not be used interchangeably, but should be considered in combination.

Managers and supervisors need highly performing individuals to be successful as an organization. Our research suggests that achieving high job performance takes more than a focus on outcomes and demonstrating competencies and performance to others (i.e., performance goal orientation). Rather, it also takes a focus on the job itself and the willingness and ambition to improve the knowledge and competencies (i.e., learning goal orientation) that are required for successful job performance.

General Discussion

Chapter 9

Abstract

The present dissertation examined factors that contribute to effective employment counseling. It is concluded that achievement goal orientation theory is a useful theory for understanding how counseling effectiveness can be increased. First, learning goal orientation training resulted in more cognitive self-regulation in job search and higher reemployment probabilities among unemployed individuals compared to a standard training in employment counseling. Furthermore, learning goal orientation training was found to result in more adaptive reactions to positive and negative feedback compared to performance goal orientation training. Second, we developed a process model of effective behaviors of employment counselors. Employment counselors' profiles of effective behavior as well as objective and subjective job performance were differently related to counselors' achievement goal orientation, demonstrating that learning goal orientation is more beneficial for effective counseling compared to performance goal orientation. The research findings have important implications for organizations focusing on employment counseling and for governments and municipalities.

Losing one's job is a life event with far-reaching economic, psychological, and physical consequences. Accelerated reemployment could yield significant benefits for national economics as well as for individuals' finances and well-being. To speed up reemployment, governments spend substantial amounts of money on interventions and employment counseling. Despite these high investments there is a lot of debate about the usefulness of the interventions and employment counseling techniques funded with the money provided by the government and municipalities, raising the question of "How to increase employment counseling effectiveness?"

In the unemployment literature, indications can be found for effective employment counseling interventions and techniques (e.g., Brenninkmeijer & Blonk, 2011; Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009). The research project reported in this dissertation has its foundation in the intervention described in the publication by Van Hooft and Noordzij. This intervention was based on the achievement goal orientation theory (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988), indicating that achievement goal orientation is a promising concept to increase reemployment probabilities and employment counseling effectiveness. Guided by the achievement goal orientation theory, this dissertation was aimed at providing insight into factors that contribute to effective employment counseling. The first aim was to further develop and validate the theory-based intervention designed by Van Hooft and Noordzij (2009) for guiding and counseling unemployed people and to investigate the underlying self-regulatory mechanisms that explain its positive effects. The second aim related to expanding current knowledge of employment counseling effectiveness. Guided by four research questions, this dissertation featured a series of four studies that each contributed to these central aims.

Guiding Questions

In the introductory chapter, four research questions were raised that directed the research in the present dissertation. These questions related to 1) the cognitive self-regulatory processes that underlie the effects of a learning goal orientation based intervention on job search and reemployment, 2) the effects of the interplay between achievement goal orientations and feedback on motivation and self-regulation, 3) effective behaviors of employment counselors, and 4) the relation between employment counselors' achievement goal orientation and job performance. Guided by the four research questions, the main findings of the four empirical studies are discussed in the four sections below.

1) What are the cognitive self-regulatory processes that underlie the effects of a learning goal orientation intervention on job search and reemployment?

Van Hooft and Noordzij (2009) reported a learning goal orientation training (i.e., LGO-training) for unemployed individuals to be more beneficial for reemployment probabilities, compared to a performance goal orientation training (i.e., PGO-training) and a control training. In this study the LGO-training was compared with a PGO-training and a control training unrelated to job search or reemployment. Because Van Hooft and Noordzij did not use a control training that is standard in employment counseling practice, it was not clear whether the LGO-training was a better predictor for

reemployment probabilities than training programs that reflect the current standard in employment counseling. Furthermore, there was no measurement of the effects of the training programs on job-seekers' situational achievement goal orientation and it therefore remained unclear whether the positive results were actually caused by changes in people's achievement goal orientation or by other factors. Finally, in the study by Van Hooft and Noordzij no mediators were found for the training – reemployment status relationship, raising the question what mechanisms are able to explain the positive effects of the LGO-training on reemployment status. In order to answer this question (i.e., the first research question of this dissertation), a model was developed outlining the effects of LGO-training on cognitive self-regulation mechanisms (learning from failure, strategy awareness, self-efficacy, and job-search intentions) and reemployment through situational achievement goal orientation (Chapter 2). The model was tested by comparing the effects of the LGO-training with a standard training in employment counseling practice (i.e., choice-making training). Furthermore, in order to improve our understanding of the cognitive and behavioral self-regulatory mechanisms that are triggered by inducing achievement goal orientations, we examined the effects of situational achievement goal orientation on motivation and self-regulation after feedback (Chapter 3). In what follows, the main findings will be discussed. The findings are organized along the four sub-questions of the first research question. These four sub-questions are related to: 1) the effects of LGO-training on reemployability, 2) the changes in job seekers' achievement goal orientation caused by the LGO-training, 3) the effects of achievement goal orientation on cognitive self-regulation, and 4) the effects of cognitive self-regulation on reemployment probability.

First, the raw reemployment percentages showed that 12 months after training 28% of the unemployed job seekers who participated in the LGO-training and 15% of the unemployed job seekers who participated in the choice-making training were reemployed. This difference in reemployment percentages was significant. This result implies that job seekers who participate in the LGO-training are twice as likely to become reemployed compared to unemployed job seekers who participate in a training standard in employment counseling (i.e., choice-making training).

Second, the model showed that LGO-training increased job seekers' learning goal orientation for their job search and decreased their performance-avoidance goal orientation. Previous studies implicitly assumed that a goal content and/or goal framing manipulation affects people's goal orientation (e.g., Kozlowski et al., 2001; Stevens & Gist, 1997; Van Yperen, 2003). However, the present study is the first study showing that inducing learning goal orientation actually alters individuals' cognitive framing of a situation, perceiving it more as a learning-oriented situation and less as a results-oriented situation. In conclusion, the LGO-training changes job seekers' achievement goal orientation for their job search activities.

Third, job-search achievement goal orientation (i.e., job-search learning goal orientation and performance-avoidance goal orientation) fully mediated the effects of the LGO-training on learning from failure, strategy-awareness, and job-search intentions. More specifically, LGO-training was found to increase job-search learning goal orientation and decrease job-search performance-avoidance goal

orientation and this change in achievement goal orientation helped job seekers to deal with negative experiences, by viewing failure and negative feedback as something they can learn from (i.e., learning from failure) and helping them to become aware that they can go beyond their known, safe strategies, thinking of other more challenging strategies (strategy awareness). In sum, LGO-training affected job seekers' cognitive self-regulation processes (i.e., self-efficacy, strategy awareness, learning from failures, and intentions) through changes in job search achievement goal orientation

Fourth, previous research has found empirical evidence for the importance of intentions as a predictor of job-search behavior and number of job interviews (e.g., Turban et al., 2009; Van Hooft, Born, Taris, Van der Flier, & Blonk, 2004). In this dissertation evidence was found for the positive relation between intentions and employment status. Furthermore, two other cognitive self-regulatory mechanisms (i.e., learning from failures and strategy awareness) were also found to be important in the job-search process. Both, learning from failures and strategy awareness were positively related to job-search intentions. Job seekers who think that they can learn from failure and who are more aware of different strategies, were found to be more likely to plan job-search activities (i.e., job-search intentions). In sum, LGO-training resulted in the improvement of cognitive self-regulation processes, subsequently resulting in higher probabilities to find a job.

According to achievement goal orientation theory (Dweck & Leggett, 1988), individuals high on learning goal orientation view negative feedback as indicative of their effort and abilities and therefore are likely to learn, to increase effort, and to persist on a task, especially on a challenging task such as searching for a job. Chapter 2 demonstrated that individuals higher on learning goal orientation were more likely to perceive negative feedback as something they can learn from, resulting in a higher level of job-search intentions. The results of the study described in Chapter 3 mainly confirmed the findings of Chapter 2 in a more controlled lab-setting. In the study described in Chapter 3, individuals trained in learning goal orientation demonstrated higher task persistence after negative feedback than individuals trained in performance goal orientation. Furthermore, the results of the study described in Chapter 2 demonstrated that individuals high on learning goal orientation were more aware of different strategies they could use to achieve their goals. Therefore, negative feedback is likely to result in using alternative strategies in order to achieve one's goals instead of task withdrawal or downward goal adjustment. Applying this to job seeking, job seekers have to cope with negative feedback (e.g., rejections on application letters). Viewing job search as a learning-oriented situation instead of a performance or result-oriented situation buffers job seekers against negative feedback by means of the cognitive self-regulatory mechanisms. This results in more persistence in job-search activities and higher reemployment probabilities.

In conclusion, answering the first research question: *'what are the cognitive self-regulatory processes that underlie the effects of a learning goal orientation intervention on job search and reemployment?'*, setting learning goals and a climate of learning (i.e., learning goal orientation) results in positive changes in situational achievement goal orientation, more learning from failures (i.e., dealing with negative feedback), enhanced strategy awareness, stronger intentions, and - to a lesser extent - increased self-

efficacy. These mechanisms appear to be important cognitive self-regulatory processes underlying the positive effects of learning goal orientated interventions.

2) What are the effects of the interplay between achievement goal orientation and feedback on motivation and self-regulation?

Feedback is a pivotal aspect of the job-search process because it is constantly provided by employment counselors and governmental agencies and through reactions on application letters and interviews. Feedback allows individuals to evaluate their job-search performance relative to their goal. It is crucial that job seekers are able to maintain their motivation and self-regulation after positive as well as after negative feedback in order to increase their reemployment probabilities. However, the effects of positive and negative feedback on motivation and self-regulation are very complex (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Furthermore, the reactions on positive and negative feedback vary widely across individuals and situations, ranging from increasing effort and improvement of motivation and performance to a decline of motivation and performance, and task withdrawal.

As discussed in the introductory chapter as well as in several other chapters, the different achievement goal orientations are differentially related to motivation and self-regulation and these differential relationships emerge over time via the subjective interpretation and acting on feedback (Dweck, 1986). In the study described in Chapter 2, we only investigated the effects of learning-approach goal orientation, because we did not want to provide unemployed job seekers with an intervention that may be detrimental for their job search. The results of this study showed that a learning-approach goal orientation intervention had positive effects on job seekers' cognitive self-regulatory processes that likely buffer job seekers against the consequences of negative feedback. However, this study involved no manipulation of feedback and no measurement of the effects of learning-approach goal orientation when receiving negative feedback. Moreover, the literature on joint motivational effects of achievement goal orientation and feedback yields inconclusive results that can best be explored in more detail under controlled experimental conditions.

In order to answer research question 2 and investigate the joint motivational aspects of achievement goal orientation and feedback, Chapter 3 describes a study in which students were trained to set learning-approach, learning-avoidance, performance-approach, or performance-avoidance achievement goals (i.e., the 2 x 2 framework of achievement goal orientation) for an upcoming task. After performing the task they were provided with positive or negative performance feedback, followed by a free-choice task continuation period (i.e., task-persistence) as indication of motivation and self-regulation. In what follows, the main findings will be discussed. The findings are organized along the four sub-questions of the second research question. These four sub-questions are related to the effects of achievement goal orientation and feedback on motivation and self-regulation (in terms of task persistence): 1) the effects of positive and negative feedback, 2) the effects of achievement goal orientations, 3) the interaction effects of feedback valence and achievement goal orientations, and 4) the optimal combination of achievement goal orientation and feedback valence.

First, the results of the study showed that in general negative feedback resulted in higher task persistence compared to positive feedback. This finding is consistent with Carver and Scheier's (1998) control theory, which proposes that failing to meet goals (i.e., negative feedback) increases motivation to reduce the discrepancy between the actual state and the desired end-state, whereas meeting goals (i.e., positive feedback) decreases motivation. In sum, there are different effects of positive and negative feedback on motivation and self-regulation.

Second, in line with achievement goal orientation theory and previous research (e.g. Carver & Scheier, 1998; Rawsthorne & Elliot, 1999), learning-approach goal orientation was more beneficial for motivation and self-regulation compared to performance-approach and performance-avoidance goal orientation. Previous research on the learning-avoidance dimension of the achievement goal orientation theory indicated that learning-avoidance goal orientation is deleterious for motivation and performance (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). The current study, however, found a learning-avoidance goal orientation to be as beneficial for motivation and self-regulation (in terms of task persistence) as learning-approach goal orientation. In sum, a learning goal orientation (approach as well as avoidance learning goal orientation) is more beneficial for motivation and self-regulation compared to a performance goal orientation (approach as well as avoidance performance goal orientation)

Third, no overall significant interaction effect was found between the four achievement goal orientations and feedback valence, indicating that the effects of achievement goal orientation on task persistence did not significantly differ between positive and negative feedback. However, significant differences in task persistence were found after receiving positive or negative feedback within the achievement goal conditions. For learning-approach and performance-avoidance goal orientation but not for learning-avoidance and performance-approach goal orientation motivation and self-regulation (in terms of task persistence) was significantly stronger after negative feedback compared to positive feedback. In sum, the effect of positive and negative feedback on motivation and self-regulation depends on people's achievement goal orientation, but only for people with a learning-approach or a performance-avoidance goal orientation.

Fourth, it was found that learning-approach and learning-avoidance goal orientation were most beneficial for task persistence after receiving negative as well as positive feedback, compared to performance-approach and performance-avoidance goal orientation. Performance-approach goal orientation appeared most deleterious for task persistence after receiving negative feedback whereas performance-avoidance goal orientation appeared to be most deleterious after receiving positive feedback. Although the findings showed positive effects for learning-approach as well as learning-avoidance goal orientation after negative and positive feedback, previous studies have found that learning-avoidance goal orientation related to anxiety, stress, and fear of failure, whereas learning-approach goal orientation related to enjoyment (Baranik et al., 2010; Sideridis, 2007), suggesting that learning-approach goal orientation is preferable to learning-avoidance goal orientation.

Applying the results of the study described in Chapter 3 to job search, unemployed people need to set

learning-approach achievement goals for their job-search activities in order to cope with the constant flow of negative feedback on application letters and interviews. Individuals with learning-approach goals will be more likely to evaluate feedback with a self-improvement motive (Elliot & Mapes, 2005). For job seekers who have set learning-approach goals, negative feedback signals that one needs to increase effort and learn from these failures in order to improve themselves in job-search activities, resulting in task persistence. In line with this conclusion, in Chapter 2 we were able to demonstrate that unemployed people with a learning-approach goal orientation indeed tended to perceive negative feedback as something they could learn from, resulting in plans to increase effort by means of more job-search intentions and higher reemployment probabilities. Positive feedback provides no cues for self-improvement and therefore seems less useful for unemployed people with a learning-approach goal orientation. However, self-improvement is an ongoing process and even after positive feedback there may be still room for further improvement. Furthermore, under assumptions of the social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1991) positive feedback is likely to result in performance improvement and task persistence because the success experience provides positive reinforcement. "Improvement after positive feedback is most likely for those individuals who have strong sense of efficacy and the adoption of further challenges creates new motivating discrepancies to be mastered" (Bandura, 1997, p. 131). Bandura even stated that although negative feedback is most important to keep on track, from time to time there is a need of initiating new standards (Bandura, 1989). The positive relationship between learning-approach goal orientation and self-efficacy is well established (Payne et al., 2007), suggesting that for individuals with a learning-approach goal orientation positive feedback results in new motivating goals or standards for their performance. Therefore, unemployed people should be encouraged to set learning-approach achievement goals for their job search. This should help them cope with the negative feedback that is constantly provided by employment counselors and governmental agencies and through reactions on application letters and interviews. Moreover, although for unemployed people with learning-approach achievement goals negative feedback seems most warranted for their job-search persistence, from time to time it is also necessary to provide them with positive feedback in order to set higher goals, and buffer them against the undermining effects of negative feedback on their self-efficacy and positive affect (e.g., Ilies & Judge, 2005).

In conclusion, in answer to the second research question: *'what are the effects of the interplay between achievement goal orientation and feedback on motivation and self-regulation?'*, learning-approach goal orientation appeared to be more beneficial for motivation and self-regulation (in terms of task persistence), after negative as well as positive feedback, compared to performance-approach and performance-avoidance goal orientation. Furthermore, after negative feedback learning-approach achievement goals resulted in the strongest motivation and self-regulation (by means of task persistence). Although, there also were positive effects for learning-avoidance goal orientation after negative as well as positive feedback, previous studies have found learning-avoidance goal orientation to be related to negative affect, anxiety, stress, and fear of failure (e.g., Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Therefore, a learning-approach goal orientation seems preferable to a learning-avoidance goal orientation.

3) What are effective behaviors of employment counselors?

Research question 3 was answered in Chapter 4 by means of a qualitative study. The study described the inductive development of a categorization framework of effective and ineffective employment counselor behaviors and proposed a four-phased preliminary model of the employment counseling process. In this way, Chapter 4 aimed to contribute to theory and practice by establishing a comprehensive overview of effective employment counselor behaviors and by showing how these behaviors are related to the phases of the employment-counseling process.

In Chapter 2 and 3 we addressed the effectiveness of employment counseling and motivating unemployed people by developing an intervention for guiding and counseling unemployed job seekers and investigating its underlying mechanisms in terms of cognitive and behavioral self-regulation. However, counseling effectiveness is also determined by employment counselors' cognitions and behaviors. Until now, only a limited body of research addressed counselor cognitions and behaviors (see for exceptions, Butterfield & Borgen, 2005; Wooten, 1996). As such, relatively little is known about the effectiveness of what counselors do to help unemployed people back to work. In reviewing this research, it became apparent that all counselor behaviors that have previously been identified as effective were behaviors explicitly directed towards clients. Moreover, previous studies used client satisfaction as the main criterion for identifying effective client-centered behaviors. Client satisfaction, however, represents only one level of evaluation of employment counseling that is mainly based on direct benefits perceived by clients. This exclusive focus on the client represents a relatively narrow conception of employment counselors' behavior. Therefore, in order to answer the third research question, in Chapter 4 we aimed to establish a comprehensive overview of employment counselors' cognitions and behaviors that were perceived as effective and ineffective by unemployed job seekers, employment counselors, and their supervisors by means of an inductive theory-building study. As such, not only broaden the focus to other stakeholders but also were able to further specify the client-centered behaviors. In what follows, the main findings will be discussed. The findings are organized according to the two sub-questions of the third research question. The two sub-questions are related to: 1) the different categories of employment counselor behaviors and 2) the phase model of employment counseling.

First, based on 31 critical-incident interviews (Critical Incident Technique, Flanagan, 1954) with employment counselors, supervisors, and unemployed job seekers, 599 incidents were identified reflecting ineffective as well as effective behaviors of employment counselors. The incidents were used to develop a valid and reliable categorization framework of counselors' behavior and cognitions by using different raters in the different steps of categorization, and by checking the interrater reliability and the content validity. The final category framework included 33 subcategories of counselor behaviors and cognitions allocated to five main categories: 1) *behaviors towards governmental agencies*, 2) *behaviors towards colleagues*, 3) *behaviors towards employers*, 4) *behavior towards clients*, and 5) *general behavior of counselors*. For example, the main category 'behaviors towards employers' comprised three subcategories: networking (i.e., keeping and managing contact with employers and motivating them to cooperate), matching (i.e., searching for jobs and getting in touch with employers to look for jobs),

and coaching employers (i.e., coaching employers when they employ 'difficult' clients). A sample incident in the subcategory 'networking' from an employment counselor who was very successful by phoning employers he had never contacted before is: *'I told this employer who we are, what we do, and that there are possibilities to cooperate with advantages for everybody.'* As such, whereas the main focus of previous literature in the area of employment counseling (e.g., Aquilanti & Leroux, 1999) and also the job description for rehabilitation counselors in O'Net (Peterson et al., 1999) is on behavior towards clients, the categories described in Chapter 4 clearly show that behavior towards other stakeholders such as governmental agencies, colleagues, and employers were also perceived as being important for effective employment counseling. Previous theoretical work on employment counseling (e.g., Zikic & Klehe, 2006) mainly emphasized broadly defined themes (e.g., supporting clients). The present dissertation adds to literature by providing a framework described in Chapter 4 that captures well-defined, specific behaviors of employment counseling (e.g., giving emotional support, giving tips and advices). Furthermore, the framework consists of behaviors that are perceived as facilitating effective job performance of employment counselors (e.g., goal setting) as well as behaviors that are perceived to obstruct effective performance and should be avoided (e.g., pushing clients).

Second, because the categories in isolation do not show the process of employment counseling, a process model was developed based on the guidelines recommended by Corbin and Strauss (2008) to find deeper meaning embodied in a text. In this tentative model, we distinguished four phases of employment counseling. In the pre-conditional phase (i.e., the first phase), behavior of counselors is aimed at setting the stage and creating the preconditions for clients' job search and reemployment. In this pre-conditional phase, employment counselor behavior towards governmental agencies, colleagues, and networking with potential employers provides the boundary conditions for effective employment counseling. The preparation phase (i.e., the second phase) is aimed at enabling clients to start searching for a job. In this preparation phase, employment counselors' behavior is directed towards assessing clients' skills, interests, and potential barriers, and enhancing clients' self-insight. These behaviors increase the likelihood that unemployed job seekers are able to overcome barriers and create a clear direction for further counseling in the next phase, in which clients actually search for jobs. In the actual job-search phase (i.e., the third phase), behavior of employment counselors is aimed at assisting clients during their job search. In this phase, effective behaviors include providing clients with evidence-based interventions such as the learning goal orientation training described in Chapter 2, helping, and motivating them in their job-search process, but also actively looking for jobs and matching employers and clients. The final phase is the employment phase. In this phase, behavior of employment counselors is aimed at securing successful long-term employment for clients by providing them with after care and ongoing support. Furthermore, in the employment phase employment counselors need to both coach employers to help them dealing with specific clients and monitor how employers treat clients. Moreover, four subcategories of behaviors towards clients (i.e., communicating, maintaining contact, being available, and building and maintaining relationships with clients) appeared important in the second, third, and fourth phase of the employment counseling process. Finally, several other subcategories of more general behaviors of counselors affect all four phases of employment

counseling and all stakeholders concerned: governmental agencies, colleagues, employers, and clients. For example, counselors need to reflect on their performance (i.e., self-reflection) when behavior is not effective in order to adjust that behavior. They also need to control their emotions (i.e., emotion control) in difficult situations with clients but also with employers and governmental agencies in all phases of the counseling process. In sum, the 33 subcategories of employment counselor' behaviors can be organized into a four-phase model of employment counseling. These four phases comprise the preparation phase, the preparation phase, the actual job-search phase, and the employment phase.

In conclusion, in answer to the third research question: *'what are effective behaviors of employment counselors?',* effective counseling behavior comprises not only behaviors directed towards clients but also towards governmental agencies, employers, and colleagues. These findings demonstrate that examinations of effective counselor behavior should not be limited to client-centered behavior, as suggested in previous research (e.g., Aquilanti & Leroux, 1999; Wooten, 1996). The findings also showed that effective employment counseling requires client-centered behaviors of counselors that are directly visible to clients (e.g., providing training), as well as behaviors that are less visible to clients (e.g., assessing clients). Therefore, multiple parties are needed when investigating employment counselors' behavior. Furthermore, effective employment counseling involves four consecutive phases in which behavior representing these phases must be aligned: first, behaviors representing the preconditions for counseling, followed by behaviors representing the preparation for counseling, then, behaviors representing the actual job search, and finally, behaviors representing maintaining employment. Finally, effective employment counseling involves adequate communication and maintaining relationships with clients during the preparation, the actual job search, and the employment phase of employment counseling and adequate general behavior of counselors (e.g., emotion regulation and self-reflection) during all four phases of the employment counseling process.

4) What is the relation between employment counselors' achievement goal orientation and their job performance?

Employment counselors' behavior (see Chapter 4) is one of the indicators of job performance. However, definitions and measures of job performance can be differentiated according to whether they focus on behavioral aspects, objective outcomes, or subjective outcomes, all representing useful performance measures (Campbell et al., 1990; Kanfer, 1990; K. R. Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). Achievement goal orientation theory predicts that the different goal orientations are differentially related to performance. However, the literature shows mixed findings regarding the relation of learning and performance goal orientation with job performance (e.g., Janssen & Van der Vegt, 2011; Kohli et al, 1998; VandeWalle et al., 1999; M. Wang & Takeuchi, 2007). Furthermore, Payne and colleagues (2007) demonstrated that, on average, both learning-approach and performance-approach goal orientation were positively (although weakly) related to job performance. These authors did not differentiate between different types of job performance indicators (i.e., behaviors, objective, or subjective job performance), raising the question whether the relation between achievement goal orientation and job performance depends on the definition and measurement of job performance. Therefore, in order to answer the fourth research

question, employment counselor behaviors along with their objective (i.e., financial performance and sickness absenteeism) and subjective (i.e., supervisor- and self-ratings) job performance indicators were used to identify a comprehensive employment counselor job performance profile by means of cluster analysis. The resulting clusters of job-performance indicators were subsequently related to employment counselors' achievement goal orientation to examine to what extent learning and performance achievement goal orientation are differentially associated with different employment counselor performance profiles. In what follows, the main findings will be discussed. The findings are organized according to the three sub-questions of the fourth research question. The three sub-questions are related to: 1) the different job-performance profiles of employment counselors, 2) the relation between the job-performance profiles and achievement goal orientation, and 3) the definition and measurement of job performance as an explanation for the inconsistent findings in the relation between job performance and achievement goal orientation.

First, cluster analyses identified four profiles of employment counselors with different combinations of job performance indicators. One cluster was labeled '*overall low job performers*', and included employment counselors characterized by low self-ratings, low scores on work behaviors, high sickness-absenteeism, average scores on financial performance, and an average supervisor rating of their performance. The second cluster was labeled '*client-centered average job performers*', and included employment counselors characterized by average scores on almost all job performance outcome indicators and high scores on client-centered work behaviors. The third cluster was labeled '*subjectively high job performers*', and included employment counselors characterized by high self- and supervisor-ratings, but low financial performance, low sickness-absenteeism, and average scores on work behaviors. Finally, the fourth cluster, labeled '*objectively high job performers*', included employment counselors characterized by high financial performance, high supervisor-ratings, high scores on self-reflection, low sickness-absenteeism, and average scores on self-rating and most work behaviors. In sum, combinations of objective, subjective, and behavioral job performance indicators resulted in different profiles of employment counselors.

Second, the four clusters were also found to differ in terms of achievement goal orientation. Employment counselors included in the '*overall low job performers cluster*' were characterized by low scores on learning goal orientation and average scores on performance goal orientation. Average scores on learning as well as performance goal orientation characterized employment counselors included in the '*client-centered average job performer cluster*'. Employment counselors included in the '*subjective high job performer cluster*' were characterized by high scores on performance and average scores on learning goal orientation. Finally, high scores on learning and low scores on performance goal orientation characterized employment counselors included in the '*objective high job performance cluster*'. Previous research showed that performance goal oriented employees tend to be prone to self-enhancement (Janssen & Van der Vegt, 2011). The study described in Chapter 5 extends these findings by showing that employment counselors high on performance goal orientation are also overestimated by their supervisors. People high on performance goal orientation are motivated by positive judgments and feedback (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). It therefore, seems that they are likely to put effort into presenting

themselves favorably towards their supervisors, who rated them well regardless of their objective performance. In contrast, people high on learning goal orientation are less motivated by positive feedback. Rather, they are motivated by the need to enhance their competencies, resulting in the idea that they have to improve their job performance. Consequently, and consistent with our findings, they are less likely to rate themselves as highly effective, regardless of their objective job performance. Furthermore, employment counselors with low or average scores on learning and performance goal orientation seemed to be more accurate in estimating their own job performance (objective as well as subjective job performance), whereas employees with high scores on learning or performance goal orientation showed downward (learning) or upward (performance) biases when estimating their own performance. In sum, employment counselors high on learning goal orientation showed a profile of high financial performance and supervisor-ratings, and average self-ratings of job performance, whereas employment counselors high on performance goal orientation show a profile of high self- and supervisor-ratings of job performance but low to average financial performance.

Third, some evidence was found that the relation between achievement goal orientation and job performance is partly based on the definition and measurement of job performance. Previous literature shows mixed findings regarding the relation between learning and performance goal orientation and job performance (e.g., Kohli et al., 1998; VandeWalle et al., 1997). The study described in Chapter 5 demonstrated that employees (i.e., employment counselors) high on performance goal orientation rated themselves as high job performers and were also rated as high performers by their supervisors. However, they demonstrated low to average financial performance. Employees high on learning goal orientation rated themselves as average job performers but demonstrated high financial performance. These results suggest that subjective and objective ratings of job performance are differently related to employees' learning and performance goal orientation. In sum, it seems that the relation between achievement goal orientation and job performance is partly based on the definition and measurement of job performance.

Applying these findings to the effectiveness of employment counseling, employment counselors high on performance goal orientation seemed to be prone to self-enhancement, and were likely to be overestimated by their supervisors. Achievement goal orientation theory suggests that performance goal-oriented individuals are motivated by positive feedback and try to avoid negative feedback (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Indeed, Chapter 2 showed that having set a performance (i.e., approach) achievement goal seemed most deleterious for task persistence after receiving negative feedback. Thus, for employment counselors high on performance goal orientation, the need for self-enhancement and the tendency to present themselves favorably towards supervisors (i.e., subjective job performance indicators) is instrumental in maintaining their job motivation. In contrast, employment counselors high on learning goal orientation will likely learn from failures (see Chapter 2) and persist in the face of obstacles and negative feedback (see Chapter 3), which ultimately results in higher financial performance (objective job performance indicator)

In conclusion, with regard to the fourth research question, *'what is the relation between employment counselors' achievement goal orientation and their job performance?'*, counselors high on performance goal orientation showed high self-ratings and low to average financial performance, whereas counselors high on learning goal orientation showed high financial performance and average self-ratings. It seems that the relation between achievement goal orientation and job performance is partly based on the definition and measurement of job performance.

Contributions and Limitations

The overarching aim of this dissertation was to enhance insight into factors that contribute to employment counseling effectiveness. Guided by achievement goal orientation theory (Dweck & Leggett, 1988), the present dissertation addressed the factors that contribute to employment counseling effectiveness by further developing and investigating the cognitive self-regulatory mechanisms of a LGO intervention for unemployed job seekers (Chapter 2), by investigating the effects of achievement goal orientation and feedback (a pivotal aspect of the job-search process) on persistence (Chapter 3), by developing a model of effective employment counselors' behavior (Chapter 4), and, finally, by investigating the relation between employment counselors' achievement goal orientation and their job performance (Chapter 5). In this way, we were able to address the effectiveness of employment counseling and motivating unemployed job seekers not only by investigating the cognitions and behaviors of unemployed job seekers but also by investigating the cognitions and behaviors of employment counselors. Increasing counseling effectiveness and motivating unemployed job seekers, can only be done when both parties are included: job seekers as well as counselors.

Additionally, counseling effectiveness was investigated using a variety of research designs and methods, specifically: a) a field experiment among unemployed individuals comparing a LGO intervention with an intervention standard in employment counseling (Chapter 2), b) a lab experiment to investigate the effects of feedback and achievement goal orientation on motivation and self-regulation (Chapter 3), c) a qualitative study to reveal effective and ineffective behavior of employment counselors (Chapter 4), and d) a cluster analysis to investigate employment counselors' job performance (Chapter 5).

Apart from these strong contributions, the work presented in this dissertation of course has its limitations. The first limitation is related to the definition and conceptualization of achievement goal orientation. The literature on achievement goal orientation (e.g., Elliot & McGregor, 2001) described four distinctive achievement goal orientations (i.e., learning-approach, learning-avoidance, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance goal orientation). However, in the study described in Chapter 2 we decided on ethical grounds to train job seekers only in the learning-approach dimension of achievement goal orientation and compared this training with a training standard in employment counseling. In the study described in Chapter 5, we only measured employment counselors' learning-approach and performance-approach goal orientation. Despite the well-established negative relationship between performance-avoidance goal orientation and performance outcomes, previous research findings are

rather ambiguous where it concerns the link of learning-approach and performance-approach goal orientation with performance outcomes (e.g., Elliot et al., 1999; VandeWalle et al., 1999). We therefore explicitly measured the approach dimension of achievement goal orientation. However, for future research it would be interesting to measure the 2 x 2 framework of achievement goal orientation and investigate their relations with job performance.

In the study described in Chapter 3 all four dimensions of achievement goal orientation were used to investigate the interplay with feedback on motivation however, this was done in a student sample. Therefore, although strong conclusions can be drawn regarding the positive effects of learning-approach goal orientation regarding interventions for the unemployed, the feedback provided, and employment counselors' job performance, some caution is due when interpreting the effects of the other three dimensions of achievement goal orientation. However, based on Van Hooft and Noordzij (2009) and the results from the studies described in Chapter 3 and 5, it can be concluded that performance-approach and performance-avoidance goal orientations are less beneficial or even detrimental to job search and effective employment counseling. Based on the results described in Chapter 3, learning-avoidance goal orientation seems not as detrimental for motivation and self-regulation as described in previous research (e.g., Baranik et al., 2010). Nevertheless, the question remains what the effects of a learning-avoidance goal orientation are in the context of job search and employment counseling. In general, to further develop achievement goal orientation theory, future research should incorporate the 2 x 2 framework, investigating the effects of training learning-approach, performance-approach, performance-avoidance, and learning-avoidance goal orientation on situational goal orientation, self-regulation variables, emotions, and performance.

A second limitation is related to the design used in the study described in Chapter 2. We used a longitudinal design, which allowed to draw conclusions about proximal (i.e., cognitive self-regulation) and distal (i.e., reemployment status 12 months after training) effects of the LGO-training. However, we did not measure the development of cognitive self-regulatory processes over time. The results demonstrated that the LGO-training changed job seekers' cognitive self-regulation processes immediately after the training. Moreover, the effect of LGO-training on reemployment status was fully mediated by job search goal orientation, learning from failures, strategy awareness, and job search intentions as measured after training. We therefore, might assume that the difference in reemployment status is caused by the changes in cognitive self-regulation resulted from the LGO-training. But the results do not allow definite conclusions about the development of the cognitive self-regulatory processes over time as a cause of the differences in reemployment status between the LGO and the choice-making training. For future research, it would be interesting to measure the development of cognitive self-regulatory mechanisms over time and investigate the effects of LGO-training on this development.

A third limitation is also related to the study described in Chapter 2. The reemployment percentages reported in this study are somewhat different from the percentages reported in the study by Van Hooft and Noordzij (2009). In the study described in Chapter 2, 28% of the unemployed job seekers who

participated in the LGO-training were reemployed, as compared to 15% of the unemployed job seekers who participated in the choice-making training. In the study by Van Hooft and Noordzij, 33% of the unemployed job seekers who participated in the LGO-training were reemployed, as compared to 9.1% of the participants in a PGO-training and 10.7% of the participants in a control training. There are several reasons that might explain the differences in reemployment percentages. Most important, the economic situation: flourishing during the Van Hooft and Noordzij study (i.e., 2006) and diving into a recession (i.e., 2008-2009) during the study described in this dissertation (UWV, 2008). However, the economic situation does not explain why there is a larger difference between reemployment percentages across conditions described in the Van Hooft and Noordzij study compared to the percentages described in the current dissertation. One explanation might be that in the study by Van Hooft and Noordzij, training courses were delivered by the second author, whereas employment counselors delivered the training courses described in this dissertation. Although, these counselors were carefully trained to deliver the LGO-training, they might have lacked a thorough understanding of achievement goal orientation theory and therefore they might be less precise considering structure and content of the LGO-training. Another reason might be that the LGO-training described in the dissertation was compared with a training perceived as useful in employment counseling, whereas the LGO-training described in the study by Van Hooft and Noordzij was compared with training courses never used in employment counseling. More specifically, in the study by Van Hooft and Noordzij, the average reemployment percentage among participants in PGO-training and control training was 9.9%. In contrast, the reemployment percentage among participants in the choice-making training was 15%. These results suggest that the choice-making training might be more effective compared to the two training courses used by Van Hooft and Noordzij. Therefore, the findings of Chapter 2 can be interpreted as conservative estimates of the effectiveness of the LGO-training.

A fourth limitation may be the generalization of our results. Our studies are conducted in The Netherlands with its own social benefit system that guarantees a minimal income for everybody. This system differs from for instance, the United States, which has a social benefit system providing a minimal income after unemployment with a maximal duration of 26 weeks. Furthermore, the general strength, effects and value of learning and performance goal orientation might be different in other countries. Individuals in the United States, for example, tend to emphasize a performance goal orientation whereas people in China tend to emphasize a learning goal orientation (Xiang, Lee, & Solmon, 1997). Elliot, Chirkov, Kim, and Sheldon (2001) demonstrated that adopting avoidance achievement goals was a negative predictor of well-being in individualistic but not in collectivistic countries. Similarly in collectivistic countries both learning and performance goal orientation are positively related to enjoyment (C. K. J. Wang, Biddle, & Elliot, 2007; Xiang et al., 1997). In all, some caution is warranted when generalizing our findings to other countries with different social security systems and cultures. For future research, it will be interesting to address possible differences between countries regarding the effects of training achievement goal orientation and the effectiveness of employment counselors' behavior and job performance.

Finally, the study described in Chapter 5 was exploratory in nature, which deviates from the common standard of hypothesis testing. In this study we wanted to investigate the relation between job performance and achievement goal orientation. Meta-analytic results show modest relationships between different job performance measures (e.g., Heidemeier & Moser, 2009), and different job performance measures provide different meaningful perspectives on employees' performance (e.g., Atwater et al., 2002). Together, these findings suggest that an accurate and complete description of employees' job performance requires simultaneous, integrated scrutiny of different job performance indicators, resulting in detailed employee job performance profiles. We therefore focused on such job performance profiles, and subsequently linked those to achievement goal orientation by means of cluster analysis, using the recommended guidelines for cluster analysis as described by Aldenderfer and Blashfield (1984) and Pastor (2010). Cluster Analysis is a well-established method that has demonstrated its validity and reliability in previous studies (e.g., Motowidlo et al., 1992). The cluster analysis provided us with new insights into the relation between job performance and achievement goal orientation. Profiles of employment counselors were identified based on their job performance indicators and these clusters were compared with counselors' achievement goal orientation, instead of relating separate measures of job performance indicators with the distinctive achievement goal orientations. These positive features notwithstanding, it would be interesting to see to what extent the results can be replicated in a follow-up study. A similar recommendation can be made for the propositions derived from the study described in Chapter 4. These propositions on employment counseling effectiveness were developed inductively and provide hypotheses and directions for future research regarding effective employment counseling.

Science and practice: What they can learn from each other

The major purpose that guided the present research was to provide insight into factors that contribute to effective employment counseling. The practical relevance is three-fold. First, an evidence-based intervention for unemployed people (i.e., learning goal orientation training) demonstrated positive effects for counseling and motivating unemployed job seekers, in bringing them back to work. Second, employment counselors need to help unemployed individuals view their job search as a learning-oriented situation and help them set learning goals for their job search. This also requires that employment counselors and employment counseling agencies are oriented towards learning goals rather than performance goals. Third, effective behavior of employment counselors is broader than client-centered behavior alone. In order to be effective, employment counseling requires also behavior towards governmental agencies, employers, and colleagues. These behaviors are represented in four steps of employment counseling. These four consecutive steps are all important to bring unemployed job seekers back to work. In the following sections, the practical relevance of the study findings is discussed in more detail.

Providing an evidence-based intervention

The research presented in this dissertation yielded an evidence-based intervention with demonstrated effects on bringing unemployed people back to work. This intervention can help reemployment

agencies and governmental agencies increase their clients' reemployment chances. The learning goal orientation based intervention improves job seekers' self-regulation in job search by helping them view their job search as a learning-oriented situation rather than a result-oriented situation. For example, when facing failure, individuals with a learning goal orientation more likely analyze their own actions, learn from failures, seek for alternative strategies, and persist in their goal striving. These changes in self-regulation resulted in higher reemployment probabilities, suggesting long-lasting effects. Knowing that self-regulation can be developed through an LGO-training provides employment counseling agencies and their employment counselors with a powerful tool for bringing people back to work.

Creating a learning goal oriented climate and setting learning goals

A learning goal orientation buffers job seekers against the flood of negative feedback they face during their job-search process, thus emphasizing the role of employment counselors in helping unemployed individuals to set learning goals for their job search. Moreover, employment counselors can help job seekers view their job search as a learning-oriented situation, rather than view it as a result-oriented situation, which is the common practice at the moment in employment counseling. This can be done either in a group setting through training, but also in individual counseling sessions. Creating a learning goal oriented climate in group settings or during individual counseling can be achieved by 1) emphasizing the importance of trying different strategies, 2) helping job seekers to see failures as learning opportunities, 3) rewarding effort and persistence instead of rewarding performance, and 4) providing job seekers with negative as well as positive feedback. With regard to helping job seekers set learning goals for their job search, employment counselors should take care that the goals are directed at development, learning, and mastery of behavior, rather than at performance or behavioral outcomes (i.e., performance goals). An appropriate learning goal could be, for example, "I want to learn how to write good application letters", while a goal like "I want to be good at writing application letters", would be more performance goal oriented. Moreover, we would recommend that the learning goals are formulated by job seekers themselves and not by the employment counselor. By formulating their own goals, job seekers will be more committed to the goal and will perceived more control over it. The learning goals also need to be specific and challenging (but not overly challenging). In this way, unemployed job seekers can improve their job-search competencies; an improvement that will likely result in higher chances to find a job. As mentioned before, employment counselors need to help unemployed individuals view their job search as a learning-oriented situation and help them set learning goals for their job search. This also requires that employment counselors and employment counseling agencies are oriented towards learning goals rather than performance goals. In order to make counselors more learning goal oriented, employment counseling agencies can provide training programs on achievement goal orientation for their counselors and create a learning-oriented work climate.

Promoting behaviors of employment counselors

Because work behaviors of employment counselors have a substantial impact on the effectiveness of employment counseling, it is important that reemployment counseling agencies are aware of and act upon the work behaviors that were shown to be effective. Providing job seekers with direct assistance

in job search is commonly seen as effective employment counselor behavior and client satisfaction is commonly used as a criterion for identifying effective client-centered behaviors (Wooten, 1997). However, effective employment counseling is much broader than client-centered behaviors alone. Additional requirements include, for instance, behaviors towards other stakeholders such as employers and governmental agencies. Individuals who have lost their job need to sign up to governmental agencies to get their benefits. These governmental agencies have contracts with employment counseling agencies to provide unemployed individuals with assistance and guidance in their job-search process. Good contacts between governmental agencies and employment counselors are important to discuss problems, ask for information, resolve conflicts with clients (i.e., unemployed job seekers), or defend clients. For example, when a client has problems concerning housing, debts, or diseases (i.e., work barriers) time is needed to solve these problems before starting the job-search process. In case the governmental agency does not provide this extra time, the employment counselor needs to stand up for this client.

Going through the phases of employment counseling

Effective counseling is a process that consists of four consecutive steps: establishing and maintaining preconditions, adequate assessment of clients, assisting job seekers and matching clients and employers, and finally coaching employers and providing follow-up services. All steps are important to bring unemployed job seekers back to work and to increase the chances of long-term employment. During an interview with an employment counselor, the importance of the consecutive four steps was illustrated very clearly: 'I keep in contact with this organization and a few weeks ago the manager phoned me and asked if I had a candidate (i.e., step 1: establishing and maintaining preconditions); 'I had a client who had told me that he is too anxious to do job interviews' (i.e., step 2: assessment of clients); 'So, I arranged that this client could start immediately' (i.e., step 3: assistance in job search); and 'After a few weeks, I phoned the employer and the client; both are very satisfied' (i.e., step 4: follow-up services). To increase the likelihood that employment counselors will perform all these behaviors, counseling agencies can provide training and education programs on effective counseling and need to increase counselors' awareness of the consecutive four steps of employment counseling and the behaviors related to these steps.

Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation was to provide insight into factors that contribute to counseling effectiveness, more specific into factors that can increase this effectiveness. Motivating and counseling unemployed job seekers requires empirically supported interventions (i.e. Learning Goal Orientation training), effective behaviors of employment counselors, and employment counselors with a learning-oriented view on job search and reemployment. As a result, unemployed job seekers will be more inclined to set learning goals for their job search and will be better able to regulate their behavior and cognitions in job search, improving their chances of becoming reemployed. In that way, motivating and counseling unemployed people is no longer a waste of time and money but instead an effective way of bringing people back to work.

Samenvatting

(Summary in Dutch)

Samenvatting

In dit proefschrift zijn factoren onderzocht die bijdragen aan het verhogen van de effectiviteit van re-integratie voor mensen die langdurig werkloos zijn. Gebaseerd op de doeloriëntatie theorie werd aan de ene kant onderzocht wat de effecten zijn van re-integratie interventies op werk zoek motivatie en zelfregulatie en aan de andere kant welk gedrag van re-integratie professionals effectief is in het ondersteunen van werkzoekenden bij het vinden van een baan. Als eerste bleek een leerdoel georiënteerde interventie voor werkzoekenden te zorgen voor meer cognitieve zelfregulatie in het zoeken naar werk en meer kansen op het vinden van een baan dan een standaard interventie gericht op keuzes maken. Verder bleek in een lab-studie een leerdoel georiënteerde interventie te zorgen voor meer motivatie en zelfregulatie na het krijgen van negatieve feedback (iets waar werklozen veel mee te maken krijgen) dan een prestatiedoel georiënteerde interventie. Ten tweede werd op basis van interviews met werkzoekenden, re-integratie professionals en leidinggevenden een model ontwikkeld waarin duidelijk werd welk gedrag van re-integratie professionals effectief is in het ondersteunen van werkzoekenden om weer een baan te vinden en te houden. Tevens werd gekeken hoe profielen van re-integratie professionals gebaseerd op dit effectieve gedrag samen met hun objectieve en subjectieve werkuitkomsten, gerelateerd waren aan hun doel oriëntatie. Hieruit bleek dat voor professionals die werkzoekenden begeleiden naar een baan een leerdoel oriëntatie effectiever is dan een prestatiedoel oriëntatie. Deze resultaten hebben belangrijke implicaties voor gemeentes en organisaties die zich bezig houden met re-integratie en participatie.

Doel en achtergrond

In 2012 waren er in Nederland ongeveer een half miljoen mensen werkloos (6,4% van de beroepsbevolking). Het verliezen van een baan staat in de top tien van traumatische gebeurtenissen en heeft vergaande economische, lichamelijke en psychische consequenties niet alleen voor de persoon zelf maar ook voor familie en andere betrokkenen. Het is daarom van groot belang dat mensen die werkloos zijn zo snel mogelijk weer een baan krijgen. Het vinden van een baan is echter een moeilijke, en voor veel mensen vaak nieuwe taak waarbij ze moeten omgaan met veel negatieve feedback in de vorm van kritiek, teleurstellende ervaringen en afwijzingen. Dit geldt vooral voor mensen die langdurig werkloos zijn en al jaren aangewezen zijn op een bijstandsuitkering. Op dit moment wordt ook van deze mensen verwacht dat ze weer gaan participeren in de maatschappij bijvoorbeeld door vrijwilligerswerk en daarnaast actief op zoek gaan naar een betaalde baan. Re-integratie organisaties en de gemeentelijke sociale diensten ondersteunen mensen bij het vinden van een baan door middel van gesprekken, interventies en trainingen. Ondanks de vele miljoenen euro's die besteed worden aan re-integratie en participatie blijkt de effectiviteit van gebruikte interventies en technieken vrij laag te zijn en lijkt het beschikbare geld voor re-integratie en participatie niet altijd efficiënt gebruikt te worden. Toch zijn er onderzoeken die aantonen dat er re-integratie interventies en technieken zijn die effectief zijn in het ondersteunen van mensen om weer aan het werk te komen (bijv. Brenninkmeijer & Blonk, 2011; Van Hooft & Noordzij, 2009) en daarmee het belang duidelijk maken van re-integratie als middel om mensen die werkloos zijn zo snel mogelijk weer aan het werk te krijgen. Het algemene doel van dit proefschrift was dan ook om meer inzicht te krijgen in factoren die bijdragen aan het verhogen van de effectiviteit van re-integratie.

De onderzoeken beschreven in dit proefschrift zijn een vervolg op het onderzoek van Van Hooft en Noordzij (2009). In dit onderzoek werd een succesvolle interventie voor werkzoekenden beschreven die was gebaseerd op de doel oriëntatie theorie (Dweck, 1986). Hiermee werd duidelijk dat doel oriëntaties een goede bijdrage kunnen leveren aan het verhogen van kansen op het vinden van een baan en daarmee aan de effectiviteit van re-integratie. Het eerste doel van dit proefschrift was het verder ontwikkelen en valideren van de interventie van Van Hooft en Noordzij en het onderzoeken van de onderliggende zelfregulatie mechanismen die een mogelijke verklaring geven voor de positieve effecten van deze interventie. Het tweede doel was het vergroten van de kennis over de effectiviteit van re-integratie en daarmee het verhogen van deze effectiviteit. In de volgende paragraaf wordt de doel oriëntatie theorie uitgelegd, gevolgd door een overzicht van de belangrijkste bevindingen uit de vier studies beschreven in dit proefschrift aan de hand van vier onderzoeksvragen. Deze vragen zijn: 1) wat zijn de cognitieve zelfregulatie processen die een verklaring kunnen geven voor de positieve effecten van een leerdoel georiënteerde interventie voor werkzoekenden?, 2) wat zijn de effecten van de verschillende doel oriëntaties op motivatie en zelfregulatie na het ontvangen van feedback?, 3) wat zijn effectieve gedragingen van de re-integratie professionals? en 4) wat is de relatie tussen de doeloriëntatie van re-integratie professionals en hun werkprestaties? Als laatste volgen de praktische toepassingen van de bevindingen in dit proefschrift.

Doeloriëntatie theorie

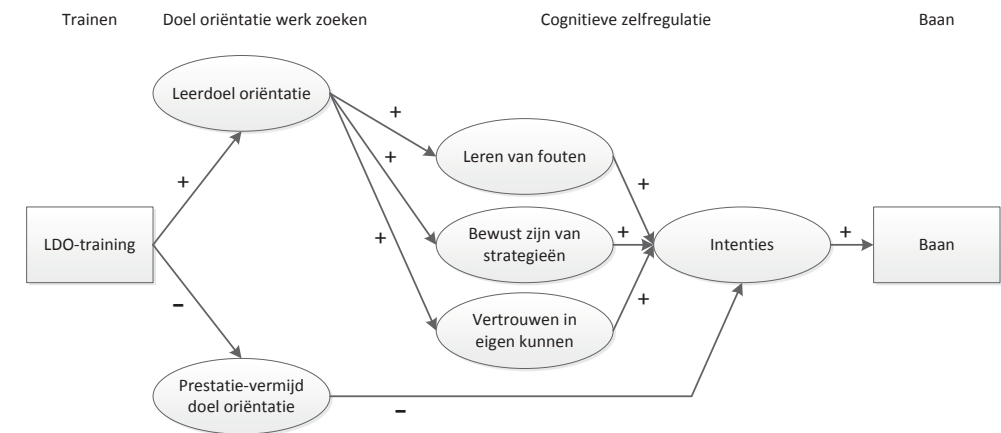
Mensen stellen doelen om een bepaalde uitkomst te halen (bijvoorbeeld 'ik wil een baan') maar het stellen van een doel maakt niet duidelijk wat de reden is waarom dat doel gesteld wordt. In tegenstelling hiermee maakt iemands doeloriëntatie duidelijk wat de reden is van een doel, waarom iemand iets wil bereiken. In eerste instantie werden twee typen doel oriëntaties onderscheiden: een leerdoel oriëntatie en een prestatiedoel oriëntatie. Bij een leerdoel oriëntatie is de reden van een doel het verbeteren van competenties en vaardigheden ('ik wil leren om een baan te vinden'), terwijl bij een prestatiedoel oriëntatie de reden van een doel is het demonstreren van competenties en vaardigheden ('ik wil laten zien dat ik de beste ben in het vinden van een baan'). Het begrip doel oriëntatie is geïntroduceerd door Carol Dweck (1986) naar aanleiding van haar onderzoek naar de motivatie van schoolkinderen. Terwijl sommige kinderen wanneer zij faalden op een taak afhaakten en hulpeloos reageerden, zagen anderen het falen juist als een uitdaging en reageerden met doorzetten. De kinderen die afhaakten bij falen hadden het idee dat hun vaardigheden vast stonden en niet konden verbeteren. Deze kinderen hadden vaak een prestatiedoel oriëntatie. De kinderen die doorzetten bij falen hadden het idee dat hun vaardigheden konden verbeteren en daarom gingen ze door. Deze kinderen hadden vaak een leerdoel oriëntatie. Dweck's indeling in leer- en prestatiedoel oriëntaties is later uitgebreid met een onderscheid in doel oriëntaties gericht op het streven naar succes (zoals geformuleerd door Dweck) en doel oriëntaties gericht op het vermijden van falen (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Hierdoor ontstonden vier doel oriëntaties: leer-streef, prestatie-streef, leer-vermijd en prestatie-vermijd doel oriëntatie. Uit onderzoek blijkt dat de verschillende doel oriëntaties verschillende relaties hebben met motivatie, prestaties en emoties (Payne et al, 2007). Een leer-streef doel oriëntatie heeft een positieve relatie met motivatie en vaak ook met prestaties, een prestatie-streef doel oriëntatie is niet gerelateerd aan motivatie en de resultaten voor prestaties zijn wisselend, een prestatie-vermijd doel oriëntatie leidt meestal tot negatieve resultaten en voor een leer-vermijd doel oriëntatie zijn nog weinig resultaten bekend. Voor wat betreft emoties blijken de streef doel oriëntaties meer samen te hangen met positieve emoties zoals enthousiasme en vrolijkheid en de vermijd doel oriëntaties meer met negatieve emoties zoals angst en stress.

Doel oriëntatie kan gezien worden als een soort persoonlijkheidseigenschap (iemand is in het algemeen meer leergericht of meer prestatiegericht) maar in bepaalde situaties of omstandigheden kan dit aangepast of veranderd worden. Het onderzoek beschreven in dit proefschrift is gebaseerd op de leer-streef doel oriëntatie (Onderzoeksvraag 1), de vier onderscheidende doel oriëntaties (Onderzoeksvraag 2) of op het onderscheid in leer- en prestatiedoel oriëntatie (Onderzoeksvraag 4).

1) Wat zijn de cognitieve zelfregulatie processen die een verklaring kunnen geven voor de positieve effecten van een leerdoel georiënteerde interventie voor werkzoekenden?

Om de eerste onderzoeksvraag te beantwoorden werd een model ontwikkeld om de mogelijke effecten te onderzoeken van een leerdoel georiënteerde interventie (LDO training) voor werkzoekenden (Hoofdstuk 2). Hierbij werd gekeken naar de effecten van cognitieve zelfregulatie processen (doel oriëntatie voor werk zoeken, leren van fouten, bewustzijn van strategieën, vertrouwen in eigen kunnen en intenties om werk te gaan zoeken) op het vinden van een baan. Het model werd getoetst door de

effecten van de LDO training te vergelijken met een interventie standaard in re-integratie (een training in keuzes maken). De deelnemers waren 245 mensen die langdurig werkloos waren en ingeschreven bij een landelijk opererende re-integratie organisatie. Ongeveer de helft van de deelnemers was vrouw, de gemiddelde leeftijd was 48 jaar en meer de helft van de deelnemers was lager opgeleid. De deelnemers kregen of de LDO training of de training in keuzes maken. Beide trainingen hadden dezelfde structuur en omvatten allebei twee sessies van drie uur. In de LDO training kregen deelnemers uitleg over de positieve effecten van een leerdoel oriëntatie en het stellen van leerdoelen en er werd een leerklimaat gecreëerd. Het belangrijkste onderdeel van de training was het zelf stellen van leerdoelen voor hun werk zoek activiteiten. Een voorbeeld van een leerdoel van een van de deelnemers is: 'ik wil leren om goede sollicitatiebrieven te schrijven'. In de training over keuzes maken kregen de deelnemers eerst uitleg over de positieve effecten van het maken van keuzes en werd een klimaat gecreëerd om keuzes makkelijker te maken. In deze training was het belangrijkste onderdeel het maken van keuzes volgens de zogenaamde 'balance sheets' (Janis en Mann, 1977). Een voorbeeld van een keuze die een van deelnemers wilde maken is: 'ga ik fulltime of parttime werken'. Alle voor- en nadelen voor henzelf maar ook voor hun omgeving werden opgeschreven om zo de keuze makkelijker te maken.



Figuur 1. Model met de effecten van de leer doel georiënteerde training.

De resultaten (zie Figuur 1) lieten zien dat de deelnemers aan de LDO training twee keer zoveel kans hadden om een baan te vinden dan de deelnemers die een training hadden gevolgd in het maken van keuzes. Dit effect werd veroorzaakt doordat bij de deelnemers aan de LDO training de doel oriëntatie over werk zoeken en hun cognitieve zelfregulatie processen veranderden. De LDO training zorgde voor een toename in een leer-streef doel oriëntatie en een afname in een prestatie-vermijd doel oriëntatie voor het zoeken van werk. Deze verandering in doel oriëntatie hielp deelnemers om beter te kunnen omgaan met de negatieve ervaringen bij het zoeken van werk doordat ze meer het idee hadden dat ze konden leren van fouten en negatieve feedback en doordat ze zich meer bewust waren dat ze ook op andere manieren naar werk konden gaan zoeken dan de manieren die ze tot nu toe gebruikten (bewustzijn van strategieën). Het idee dat je kan leren van fouten en de toename in het bewustzijn

van strategieën had als gevolg dat de deelnemers aan de LDO training ook meer intenties en plannen hadden om werk te zoeken dan de deelnemers aan de training in keuzes maken met als resultaat dat ze meer kans hadden om een baan te vinden dan de deelnemers van de training in keuzes maken. Opvallend was dat de deelnemers van beide trainingen meer vertrouwen hadden gekregen in hun vaardigheden om werk te zoeken (vertrouwen in eigen kunnen), wat de conclusie rechtvaardigt dat deze bestaande training zeker ook positieve effecten heeft.

Samenvattend, het stellen van leerdoelen en het creëren van een leergericht klimaat (leerdoel oriëntatie) voor het zoeken van werk zorgt voor positieve veranderingen in iemands doel oriëntatie ten opzichte van werk zoeken, het beter kunnen omgaan met negatieve feedback, meer leren van fouten, bewustzijn van meerdere strategieën om werk te zoeken, iets meer vertrouwen in eigen kunnen en meer plannen om werk te zoeken. Deze mechanismen blijken belangrijke cognitieve zelfregulatie processen te zijn die een verklaring geven voor de positieve effecten van een leerdoel georiënteerde training voor werkzoekenden op het vinden van een baan.

2) Wat zijn de effecten van de verschillende doel oriëntaties op motivatie en zelfregulatie na het ontvangen van feedback?

Werkzoekenden krijgen bijna constant te maken met feedback. Feedback door professionals van gemeentes en re-integratie bureaus (je solliciteert te weinig of je CV is niet goed) en nog belangrijker als reactie op sollicitatiebrieven en gesprekken (je bent afgewezen, niet goed genoeg of je voldoet niet). Het is daarom belangrijk dat werkzoekenden ondanks al die negatieve feedback hun motivatie en zelfregulatie op peil kunnen houden om zo hun kansen op het vinden van werk te verhogen.

Zoals al eerder beschreven hebben de verschillende doel oriëntaties andere gevolgen voor motivatie en zelfregulatie en deze verschillende gevolgen ontstaan via de verschillende interpretaties van feedback en het daaruit voortvloeiende gedrag (Dweck, 1986). Mensen met een leer-streef doel oriëntatie interpreteren feedback op basis van hun motief tot zelfverbetering. In tegenstelling hiermee interpreteren mensen met een prestatie-streef doel oriëntatie feedback op basis van hun motief om de beste te willen zijn. Mensen met een leer-vermijd doel oriëntatie zullen feedback meer zien als een middel om in te schatten of hun competenties nog op peil zijn en mensen met een prestatie-vermijd doel oriëntatie zullen feedback interpreteren op basis van hun motief om niet de slechtste te willen zijn.

De studie beschreven in hoofdstuk 2 (zie Onderzoeksvraag 1) liet zien dat de deelnemers na een LDO training meer leerdoel georiënteerd waren voor het vinden van een baan dan na een training standaard in re-integratie (keuzes maken). Daardoor waren ze meer geneigd waren om negatieve feedback te zien als iets waar je van kan leren (leren van fouten), met als gevolg meer plannen voor het zoeken van werk en meer kansen op een baan. In deze studie werd alleen de leer-streef doel oriëntatie onderzocht omdat de andere drie doel oriëntaties (prestatie-streef, leer-vermijd en prestatie-vermijd doel oriëntatie) mogelijk negatieve gevolgen zouden hebben voor werkzoekenden. Om de tweede onderzoeksvraag te beantwoorden 'wat zijn de effecten van de verschillende doel oriëntaties op motivatie en zelfregulatie

na het krijgen van feedback', werd daarom gebruik gemaakt van een lab-studie (Hoofdstuk 3). Studenten (160) werden getraind om leer-streef, prestatie-streef, leer-vermijd of prestatie-vermijd doelen te stellen voor een moeilijke computertaak die ze moesten gaan doen. Tijdens deze taak konden ze zelf bepaalde animaties maken met behulp van een handleiding. Na het uitvoeren van de taak kregen ze positieve of negatieve feedback (doel wel of niet gehaald) waarna ze mochten kiezen om door te gaan met de taak of om iets anders te gaan doen op de computer. Deze zogenaamde 'vrije-keus taak' is een indicatie voor motivatie en zelfregulatie.

De resultaten laten zien dat in het algemeen mensen die negatieve feedback kregen langer doorgingen met de taak om op die manier toch hun doel nog te halen dan mensen die positieve feedback kregen. Daarnaast bleken mensen die een leer-streef doel (bijv. 'ik wil leren een animatie te maken') of een leer-vermijddoel (bijv. 'ik wil voorkomen dat ik fouten maak bij het maken van een animatie') hadden gesteld langer door te gaan in vergelijking met mensen die een prestatie-streefdoel (bijv. 'ik wil de beste zijn van deze groep in het maken van een animatie') of een prestatie-vermijddoel (bijv. 'ik wil vermijden dat ik de slechtste ben in het maken van een animatie') hadden gesteld voor de taak. Verder bleek het doorgaan met de taak na positieve of negatieve feedback afhankelijk te zijn van het soort doel wat iemand had gesteld voor de taak. Na negatieve feedback gingen de mensen die leer-streef doelen hadden gesteld het langst door, gevolgd door mensen met leer-vermijd doelen en mensen die prestatie-streef doelen hadden gesteld voor de taak gingen het minst lang door. Na positieve feedback gingen de mensen het langst door die leer-vermijd doelen hadden gesteld, gevolgd door mensen met leer-streef doelen en mensen die prestatie-vermijd doelen hadden gesteld gingen het minst lang door met de taak.

Samenvattend, feedback heeft een verschillend effect op motivatie en zelfregulatie afhankelijk van het soort doel oriëntatie. Wanneer mensen feedback krijgen is het beter om meer leerdoel georiënteerd (streef en vermijd) dan prestatiedoel georiënteerd (streef en vermijd) te zijn. Een leerdoel oriëntatie zorgt dat motivatie en zelfregulatie niet afneemt na het ontvangen van feedback waardoor mensen volharden en doorgaan op de taak om zo hun doel te halen en dit geldt nog sterker na het ontvangen van negatieve feedback dan na het ontvangen van positieve feedback. Hierbij moet opgemerkt worden dat deze positieve effecten gelden voor zowel een leer-streef en een leer-vermijd doel oriëntatie maar dat een leer-vermijd doel oriëntatie vaak samenhangt met negatieve emoties zoals stress en angst terwijl een leer-streef doel oriëntatie vaak samenhangt met positieve emoties. Concluderend kan dan ook gesteld worden dat leer-streef doelen de voorkeur verdienen boven leer-vermijd doelen.

Wanneer deze resultaten worden toegepast op werkzoekenden dan lijken werkzoekenden het meeste voordeel te hebben wanneer ze leer-streef doelen stellen bij het zoeken van werk en het zoeken van werk zien als een leergerichte en niet als een prestatiegerichte situatie. Op deze manier kunnen werkzoekenden beter om gaan met de stroom van negatieve feedback die ze krijgen van re-integratie professionals en sociale diensten en als reactie op hun sollicitatiebrieven en gesprekken. Voor werkzoekenden met leer-streef doelen is negatieve feedback een signaal dat ze zich meer moeten inspannen en meer moeten leren van hun fouten om zo zichzelf te verbeteren in het werk zoeken

waardoor ze langer doorgaan en volhardend blijven in het zoeken van werk. De resultaten van de studie beschreven in Hoofdstuk 2 (zie Onderzoeksvraag 1) geven steun voor deze argumentatie. In deze studie bleken werkzoekenden die hoog scoorden op een leer-streef doel oriëntatie fouten te zien als iets waar je van kan leren wat er voor zorgde dat ze meer intenties hadden om te zoeken naar werk en dit had als gevolg dat ze meer kans hadden om een baan te vinden dan werkzoekenden die lager scoorden op leer-streef doel oriëntatie. Hiermee is niet gezegd dat voor werklozen positieve feedback geen voordelen heeft. Positieve feedback kan bijdragen aan het ervaren van positieve emoties, aan het vertrouwen in eigen kunnen en het stellen van hogere doelen. Alle drie factoren die de kansen op het vinden van werk mede verhogen. Uit de studie beschreven in Hoofdstuk 3 bleek dat een leerdoel oriëntatie zorgt voor meer motivatie en zelfregulatie dan een prestatiedoel oriëntatie bij zowel negatieve als positieve feedback. Bij een prestatiedoel oriëntatie kan positieve feedback een signaal zijn dat het doel bereikt is en daalt de motivatie en zelfregulatie terwijl bij een leerdoel oriëntatie motivatie en zelfregulatie op peil lijkt te blijven. Een leerdoel oriëntatie is daarmee een buffer tegen negatieve feedback maar ook een voordeel bij positieve feedback.

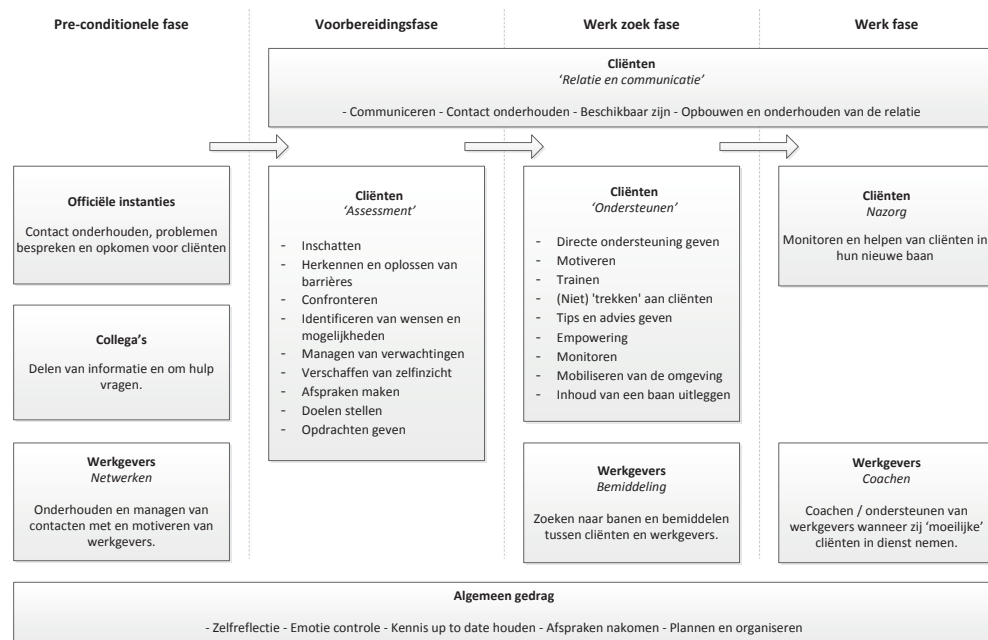
3) Wat zijn effectieve gedragingen van de re-integratie professionals?

De studies beschreven in Hoofdstuk 2 en 3 dragen bij aan de effectiviteit van re-integratie door het ontwikkelen van een interventie die de motivatie en de kansen op een baan van werkzoekenden verhoogt en door het onderzoeken van de onderliggende mechanismes van deze interventie in termen van cognitieve en gedragsmatige zelfregulatie. De effectiviteit van re-integratie wordt echter ook bepaald door de cognities en gedragingen van re-integratie professionals (re-integratie adviseurs, case managers, job coaches, werk coaches, re-integratie consultants, arbeidsadviseurs, loopbaanadviseurs of participatie coaches). Er is weinig onderzoek gedaan naar de effectiviteit van re-integratie professionals. Het onderzoek dat wel is gedaan legt de focus op gedrag van professionals dat gericht is op de mensen die zij moeten ondersteunen (cliënten) en is hoofdzakelijk gebaseerd op de tevredenheid van cliënten. Tevredenheid is een belangrijke maar beperkte factor in het bepalen van effectiviteit omdat het alleen gebaseerd is op de directe voordelen/nadelen die worden waargenomen door cliënten. Verder zijn de factoren die worden gemeten in eerder onderzoek vaak breed omschreven zoals bijvoorbeeld algemene tevredenheid of de mate van steun door een re-integratie professional. Daarom werd om de derde onderzoeksvraag te beantwoorden een kwalitatieve studie uitgevoerd met als doel een allesomvattend overzicht te verkrijgen van gedragingen en cognities van re-integratie professionals die worden gezien als effectief of ineffectief door cliënten, re-integratie professionals en leidinggevend (Hoofdstuk 4). De studie beschrijft de inductieve ontwikkeling van een categorisatie raamwerk van (in)effectieve gedragingen van re-integratie professionals. Dit raamwerk werd gebruikt om een model te ontwikkelen dat het re-integratie proces beschrijft in vier onderscheidende en opeenvolgende fases.

Als eerste werden volgens de procedure van de kritische incident techniek (Flanagan, 1954), gebaseerd op 31 interviews met cliënten, re-integratie professionals en leidinggevend, 599 incidenten geïdentificeerd die effectieve of ineffectieve gedragingen van re-integratie professionals beschreven. Deze incidenten werden gebruikt om een categorisatie raamwerk te ontwikkelen met 33 subcategorieën die verdeeld werden over 5 hoofdcategorieën: 1) *gedrag gericht op officiële instanties*, 2) *gedrag gericht op collega's*, 3) *gedrag gericht op werkgevers*, 4) *gedrag gericht op cliënten* en 5) *algemeen gedrag* van

re-integratie professionals. Als voorbeeld, de hoofdcategorie *gedrag gericht op werkgevers* omvat de subcategorieën 'netwerken' (contact onderhouden met mogelijke werkgevers en hen motiveren), 'bemiddelen' (gericht kijken of er vacatures zijn voor een bepaalde cliënt) en 'coachen' (werkgevers coachen hoe ze om kunnen gaan met nieuwe werknemers). Een voorbeeld van een incident uit een interview met een re-integratie professional van de subcategorie 'netwerken': *'ik belde deze werkgever en vertelde wie wij zijn en wat wij doen en dat er mogelijkheden zijn om samen te werken met voordelen voor alle partijen'*. Met dit raamwerk wordt duidelijk gemaakt dat willen re-integratie professionals effectief zijn, hun gedrag niet alleen gericht moet zijn op cliënten maar ook op officiële instanties, collega's en werkgevers. Verder maakt het raamwerk onderscheid in effectieve gedragingen (bijvoorbeeld: doelen stellen met cliënten) en ineffectieve gedragingen (bijvoorbeeld: 'trekken' aan cliënten) en zijn de subcategorieën zeer specifiek gedefinieerd in concreet gedrag (bijvoorbeeld: het mobiliseren van de omgeving van een cliënt)

Ten tweede, omdat de geïsoleerde categorieën nog niet laten zien hoe het proces van re-integratie verloopt, werd een model ontwikkeld waarin duidelijk wordt wat de onderscheidende en opeenvolgende fases van re-integratie zijn. Dit model is gebaseerd op de verbanden tussen de verschillende incidenten in de interviews en de categorieën van het categorisatie raamwerk. Na het zorgvuldig analyseren van de interviews bleken er vier fases in het re-integratie proces te kunnen worden onderscheiden (zie Figuur 2). Het gedrag van re-integratie professionals in de eerste pre-conditionele fase, heeft als doel voorwaarden te scheppen voor effectieve re-integratie. Dit betekent dat in deze fase het gedrag vooral gericht moet zijn op officiële instanties, collega's en werkgevers omdat op deze wijze de grenzen worden gesteld voor effectieve re-integratie. Wanneer bijvoorbeeld het netwerk met werkgevers goed is geeft dat meer kansen voor cliënten om aan het werk te komen. Het doel van de tweede fase, de voorbereidingsfase, is om het cliënten mogelijk te maken op zoek te gaan naar werk. Effectief gedrag in deze tweede fase draagt bij aan effectieve re-integratie in de volgende fase, de werk zoek fase. Wanneer in de voorbereidingsfase bepaalde barrières kunnen worden weggenomen maakt dat het vinden een baan makkelijker of wanneer de vaardigheden van een cliënt goed zijn ingeschat kan er in de volgende fase naar passend werk worden gezocht. Het gedrag van re-integratie professionals in de derde fase, de werk zoek fase, heeft als doel om cliënten te ondersteunen bij het vinden van een baan. Dit kan zijn door cliënten te laten deelnemen aan interventies zoals een leerdoel georiënteerde training (beschreven in Hoofdstuk 2, zie Onderzoeksvraag 1) of door te bemiddelen tussen cliënt en werkgever. In de laatste fase, de werk fase, is het gedrag van re-integratie professionals gericht op het succesvol laten voortduren van de baan voor cliënten door bijvoorbeeld werkgevers te coachen hoe om te gaan met deze specifieke cliënt of door cliënten regelmatig te bellen hoe het nu gaat in hun baan. Naast gedrag dat specifiek effectief is in een bepaalde fase zijn er gedragingen die belangrijk zijn voor effectieve re-integratie in de verschillende fases. Communiceren, contacten onderhouden met cliënten, beschikbaar zijn en het onderhouden van een relatie met cliënten zijn gedragingen die belangrijk zijn in zowel de tweede, derde als vierde fase van het proces. Verder zijn er meer algemene gedragingen van professionals zoals zelfreflectie, het reguleren van emoties, kennis op peil houden, afspraken nakomen en plannen en organiseren die bijdragen aan effectiviteit in alle fases van het re-integratie proces.



Figuur 2. Model met de vier fases van re-integratie.

Samenvattend, als antwoord op de vraag 'wat zijn effectieve gedragingen van re-integratie professionals' blijkt uit de studie beschreven in Hoofdstuk 4 dat dit meer is dan het direct ondersteunen van cliënten in het zoeken van werk. Effectieve re-integratie vereist ook dat re-integratie professionals goede connecties onderhouden met officiële instanties, informatie delen en samenwerken met collega's, bemiddelen tussen cliënten en werkgevers, werkgevers coachen en een netwerk opbouwen en onderhouden met potentiële werkgevers. Deze gedragingen kunnen onderverdeeld worden in 33 specifiek gedefinieerde subcategorieën. Sommige gedragingen van re-integratie professionals uit deze subcategorieën zijn zichtbaar voor cliënten (bijvoorbeeld het geven van trainingen of het onderhouden van contacten) en andere zijn meer onzichtbaar (samenwerken met collega's of de assessment van cliënten). Hiermee wordt duidelijk dat er meer partijen nodig zijn om de effectiviteit van gedragingen van re-integratie professionals te onderzoeken en dat dit niet alleen gebaseerd moet zijn op cliënten en hun tevredenheid. De 33 subcategorieën kunnen georganiseerd worden in een procesmodel van re-integratie met vier opeenvolgende fases: pre-conditionele fase, voorbereidingsfase, werk zoek fase en de werk fase.

4) Wat is de relatie tussen de doelorientatie van re-integratie professionals en hun werkprestaties?

De doel oriëntatie theorie (Dweck, 1986) voorspelt verschillende relaties tussen een leerdoel of prestatiedoel oriëntatie en prestaties, waarbij mensen met een leerdoel oriëntatie betere prestaties zouden leveren dan mensen met een prestatiedoel oriëntatie. Echter, uit meta-analytisch onderzoek blijkt dat zowel werknemers die hoog scoren op een leerdoel oriëntatie als ook werknemers die hoog

scoren op een prestatiedoel oriëntatie iets betere werkprestaties hebben dan werknemers die laag scoren op de twee doel oriëntaties (Payne et al., 2007). Werkprestaties kunnen onderscheiden worden in werkgedrag (zoals voor re-integratie professionals beschreven in Hoofdstuk 4, zie Onderzoeksvraag 3) en werkuitkomsten (Campbell et al., 1990). Werkuitkomsten zijn bijvoorbeeld iemands omzet of ziekteverzuim, de zogenaamde objectieve uitkomsten, maar ook beoordelingen van leidinggevenden of collega's of hoe iemand zichzelf beoordeelt, de zogenaamde subjectieve uitkomsten. Werkgedrag en objectieve en subjectieve werkuitkomsten geven allemaal een verschillend perspectief op werkprestaties. Om een complete beschrijving te krijgen van de werkprestatie van een werknemer is het dan ook van belang om de verschillende werkuitkomsten te combineren tot een gedetailleerd profiel van een werknemer. De vraag die daaruit volgt is of de relatie tussen doel oriëntatie en werkprestatie afhankelijk is van de manier waarop werkprestatie wordt gemeten? Om de vierde onderzoeksvraag te beantwoorden, werden door middel van cluster analyse het werkgedrag van re-integratie professionals (zie bij Onderzoeksvraag 3) samen met hun omzet en ziekteverzuim (objectieve werkuitkomsten) en de beoordeling door hun leidinggevenden en hun eigen beoordeling (subjectieve werkuitkomsten) gebruikt om werkprestatie profielen te identificeren. Daarna werd onderzocht wat de relatie was tussen de verschillende clusters en de doel oriëntatie van de re-integratie professionals. Op deze manier kon meer duidelijkheid worden gegeven over de relatie tussen de doel oriëntatie van werknemers en hun werkprestatie.

Er werden vier duidelijk onderscheidende clusters geïdentificeerd met verschillende combinaties van werkuitkomsten en gedragingen. Het eerste cluster kreeg als label 'laag presteerders'. Re-integratie professionals die onder dit cluster vielen gaven zichzelf relatief lage beoordelingen en scoorden laag op alle werkgedragingen, ze hadden een hoog ziekteverzuim en scoorden gemiddeld op omzet en beoordelingen door leidinggevenden. Het tweede cluster werd gelabeld 'cliëntgerichte gemiddelde presteerders'. De re-integratie professionals in dit cluster werden gekarakteriseerd door gemiddelde scores op bijna alle werkuitkomsten gecombineerd met hoge scores op cliënt gericht gedrag. Het derde cluster kreeg als label 'subjectieve hoog presteerders'. Re-integratie professionals in dit cluster werden gekarakteriseerd door een relatief lage omzet, gemiddelde scores op werkgedragingen, laag ziekteverzuim, zeer hoge scores op beoordelingen van leidinggevenden en een hoge beoordeling van zichzelf. Het laatste cluster werd gelabeld 'objectieve hoog presteerders'. Re-integratie professionals in dit cluster werden gekarakteriseerd door een hoge omzet, gemiddelde scores op de meeste werkgedragingen maar hoge scores op meer algemeen gedrag zoals zelfreflectie, laag ziekteverzuim, hoge scores op beoordelingen door leidinggevenden en een gemiddelde beoordeling van zichzelf.

Naast de verschillen tussen de vier clusters in werkuitkomsten en gedragingen van re-integratie professionals verschillen de clusters ook in de mate van leer- en prestatiedoel oriëntatie van professionals binnen een cluster. De re-integratie professionals in het 'laag presteerders' cluster scoorden laag op leerdoel oriëntatie en gemiddeld op prestatiedoel oriëntatie. De re-integratie professionals in het 'cliëntgerichte gemiddelde presteerders' cluster scoorden gemiddeld op leer- en prestatiedoel

oriëntatie. De re-integratie professionals in het *'subjectieve hoog presteerders'* cluster scoorden gemiddeld op leerdoel oriëntatie en hoog op prestatiedoel oriëntatie. Als laatste, de re-integratie professionals in het *'objectieve hoog presteerders'* cluster scoorden hoog op leerdoel oriëntatie en laag op prestatiedoel oriëntatie. Mensen met een leerdoel oriëntatie worden gemotiveerd door het verbeteren van competenties en vaardigheden en daarmee het verbeteren van hun prestaties. Als consequentie zullen zij zichzelf niet heel hoog beoordelen omdat er ruimte blijft voor verbetering. De resultaten van de studie geven steun voor deze gedachte, re-integratie professionals die hoog scoorden op leerdoel oriëntatie hadden een hoge omzet en werden ook hoog beoordeeld door hun leidinggevende maar ze onderschatten zichzelf en beoordeelden zichzelf als gemiddeld. In tegenstelling hiermee worden mensen met een prestatiedoel oriëntatie gemotiveerd door positieve beoordelingen van anderen. Ze willen graag laten zien hoe goed ze iets kunnen en overschatten daarmee vaak zichzelf. Steun voor deze redenering is dat de re-integratie professionals die hoog scoren op prestatiedoel oriëntatie ondanks een lage omzet aangeven dat ze goed presteren in hun werk en ook hun leidinggevende geeft ze een hoge beoordeling.

Samenvattend, combinaties van werkgedragingen en objectieve en subjectieve werkuitkomsten resulteerden in verschillende profielen van re-integratie professionals en deze profielen zijn verschillend voor wat betreft de mate van leer- en prestatiedoel oriëntatie. In antwoord op de vierde onderzoeksvraag, 'wat is de relatie tussen de doel oriëntatie van re-integratie professionals en hun werkprestaties' blijkt dat professionals die meer leerdoel georiënteerd zijn een hoge omzet hebben maar zichzelf als gemiddeld beoordelen terwijl professionals die meer prestatiedoel georiënteerd zijn een lagere omzet hebben en zichzelf als goed beoordelen. Het lijkt dan ook dat de relatie tussen doel oriëntatie en werkprestatie deels gebaseerd is op de manier waarop werkprestatie wordt gemeten waarbij objectieve en subjectieve werkuitkomsten verschillend gerelateerd zijn aan de verschillende doel oriëntaties. Wanneer deze resultaten worden toegepast op de effectiviteit van re-integratie kan voorzichtig geconcludeerd worden dat re-integratie professionals effectiever zijn wanneer ze meer leerdoel georiënteerd zijn en minder prestatiedoel georiënteerd.

Praktijk en wetenschap: wat kunnen we van elkaar leren?

Het belangrijkste doel van dit proefschrift was om meer inzicht te krijgen in factoren die bijdragen aan het verhogen van de effectiviteit van re-integratie en dan vooral voor langdurig werklozen. Hiervoor werd vanuit de praktijk een belangrijke bijdrage geleverd aan de wetenschap over re-integratie en participatie. Bijvoorbeeld door het afnemen van interviews met cliënten, re-integratie professionals en leidinggevendenden werd vanuit de praktijk inzicht gegeven in de gedragingen van re-integratie professionals die als effectief of ineffectief werden gezien in het proces van re-integratie (zie Onderzoeksvraag 3). Mede gebaseerd op deze informatie kunnen vanuit de wetenschap aanbevelingen gedaan worden voor de praktijk van re-integratie en participatie. De belangrijkste vier aanbevelingen zijn: 1) een evidence-based interventie (leerdoel oriëntatie training) positieve effecten te hebben voor het motiveren van werkzoekenden in hun zoektocht naar werk, 2) re-integratie professionals moeten

werkzoekenden helpen om leerdoelen te stellen en het werk zoeken meer te zien als een leergerichte situatie en het lijkt hierbij een vereiste dat re-integratie professionals en organisaties ook leergericht zijn, 3) om effectief te zijn moet het gedrag van re-integratie professionals niet alleen gefocust zijn op cliënten maar ook op officiële instanties, collega's en werkgevers en 4) het re-integratie proces kan gezien worden als uit vier opeenvolgende fases waarbij bepaalde categorieën van gedrag belangrijk zijn.

Leerdoel oriëntatie training

Het onderzoek in dit proefschrift liet zien dat een leerdoel georiënteerde interventie de zelfregulatie van werkzoekenden verbeterde doordat het zoeken meer werd gezien als een leergerichte situatie in plaats van een prestatiegerichte situatie. Bijvoorbeeld, bij het krijgen van negatieve feedback of bij falen zullen werkzoekenden die meer leerdoel georiënteerd zijn leren van de fouten, zoeken naar alternatieve strategieën en doorgaan met het zoeken van een baan. Deze veranderingen in zelfregulatie zorgden dat deelnemers aan de leerdoel georiënteerde interventie 2 keer zoveel kans hadden op het vinden van een baan dan de deelnemers aan een standaard interventie in re-integratie. Daarmee is deze leerdoel georiënteerde interventie een krachtig hulpmiddel voor organisaties die zich bezig houden met re-integratie en participatie om de kansen van cliënten op het vinden van een baan te verhogen.

Creëren van een leergericht klimaat en het stellen van leerdoelen

Het is belangrijk dat re-integratie professionals werkzoekenden helpen om het zoeken van werk meer te zien als een leergerichte situatie en hen helpen om leerdoelen te stellen voor het zoeken. Een leerdoel oriëntatie beschermt werkzoekenden tegen de constante stroom van negatieve feedback die ze krijgen tijdens hun zoektocht naar werk (zoals afwijzingen op brieven of constant te horen krijgen dat je te oud bent). Het is dan ook van groot belang dat re-integratie professionals werkzoekenden helpen met het stellen van leerdoelen, met het zien van werk zoeken als een leergerichte situatie in plaats van een prestatie- of resultaatgerichte situatie en door het creëren van een leergericht klimaat. Een leergericht klimaat kan gecreëerd worden in groepsbijeenkomsten en trainingen maar ook in individuele gesprekken door middel van: 1) werkzoekenden helpen om afwijzingen en falen te zien als leer mogelijkheden, 2) benadrukken dat het goed is verschillende strategieën uit te proberen, 3) het geven van complimentjes voor inspanning en volharding en niet voor prestaties, en 4) het geven van zowel positieve als leergerichte negatieve feedback. Bij het stellen van leerdoelen moeten re-integratie professionals erop letten dat 1) de doelen gericht zijn op ontwikkelen, leren of vaardigheden eigen maken en niet op prestaties of vergelijkingen met anderen (prestatiedoelen), 2) dat de werkzoekende de doelen zelf formuleert en opschrijft en niet de re-integratie professional, om zo het gevoel van betrokkenheid en controle te verhogen, en 3) dat de doelen specifiek en uitdagend zijn maar niet onmogelijk. Een voorbeeld van een leerdoel is bijvoorbeeld: 'ik wil leren hoe ik een goede sollicitatiebrief moet schrijven'. Een prestatiedoel is dan 'ik wil goed zijn in het schrijven van sollicitatiebrieven'. Dit laatste doel zorgt meestal niet voor verbeteringen maar wel voor teleurstellingen terwijl het leerdoel zorgt voor het verbeteren van de vaardigheid en daarmee op het verhogen van de kansen op een baan. Als logische consequentie van het feit dat re-integratie professionals werkzoekenden moeten helpen met

het stellen van leerdoelen en het zien van werk zoeken als een leergerichte situatie, is het belangrijk dat re-integratie professionals zelf en organisaties die zich bezig houden met re-integratie ook meer gericht moeten zijn op leren dan op presteren. Dit kan door middel van trainingen en het creëren van leergericht klimaat binnen organisaties.

Effectief gedrag van re-integratie professionals

Het werkgedrag van re-integratie professionals heeft een grote impact op de effectiviteit van re-integratie. Het is daarom belangrijk dat professionals zich bewust zijn van gedrag dat effectief is en zich ook op deze wijze gedragen. Vaak wordt het direct helpen van werkzoekenden (cliënten) gezien als effectief gedrag en wordt de tevredenheid van cliënten gebruikt als indicatie voor effectiviteit van gedrag. Het blijkt echter dat effectieve re-integratie veel meer omvat dan alleen gedrag gericht op cliënten. Het omvat ook gedrag gericht op officiële instanties en werkgevers. Een goed contact met officiële instanties of andere organisaties is belangrijk om problemen te bespreken, conflicten met cliënten op te lossen of om cliënten te verdedigen (bijv. bij uitkeringsinstanties). Goede contacten met (potentiele) werkgevers zijn nodig om cliënten aan het werk te helpen of te zorgen dat een werkzoekende eens een keer mag proefdraaien. Maar ook wanneer iemand aan het werk is zorgt een goed contact met een werkgever dat eventuele problemen snel zijn opgelost. Verder is goed contact met collega's ook belangrijk om informatie uit te wisselen (bijv. die werkgever daar heb ik goede ervaringen mee) of elkaar te steunen en samen te werken.

Fases van het re-integratie proces

Effectieve re-integratie is een proces dat bestaat uit vier opeenvolgende fases met daarin verschillende soorten gedrag van re-integratie professionals: 1) zorgen dat de pre-conditions goed zijn en blijven zoals bijvoorbeeld het netwerk met werkgevers, 2) voorwaarden scheppen voor het zoeken van werk bijvoorbeeld door het wegnemen van barrières of het inschatten van werkzoekenden, 3) het ondersteunen van werkzoekenden bij het zoeken en het bemiddelen tussen werkzoekende en werkgever en 4) nazorg verlenen en werkgevers coachen hoe om te gaan met bepaalde werknemers. Al deze stappen zijn vereist om werkzoekenden aan het werk te krijgen en aan het werk te houden. In een interview met een re-integratie professional werd zeer duidelijk gemaakt dat deze vier stappen nodig zijn om effectief te zijn als re-integratie professional: *'Ik had regelmatig contact met een bepaalde organisatie en een paar weken geleden werd ik gebeld door de manager met de vraag of ik soms een kandidaat had om bij hem te komen werken (stap 1, netwerken). Ik had een kandidaat die mij had verteld dat hij te bang was om op sollicitatiegesprek te gaan (stap 2, inschatten). Daarom zorgde ik ervoor dat die kandidaat gelijk aan de slag kon (stap 3, bemiddelen). Na een paar weken belde ik de werkgever en de kant, beide waren zeer tevreden (stap 4, nazorg).* Om te zorgen dat re-integratie professionals zich bewust worden van deze gedragingen en de vier fases van re-integratie zouden training en educatie programma's moeten worden aangeboden waarin duidelijk naar voren komt wat effectief gedrag is van re-integratie professionals.

Conclusie

Het doel van dit proefschrift was om meer inzicht te geven in factoren die bijdragen aan de effectiviteit van re-integratie en meer specifiek in factoren die een bijdrage kunnen leveren in het verhogen van deze effectiviteit. Het motiveren en ondersteunen van werkzoekenden in hun zoektocht naar werk vereist wetenschappelijk ondersteunde interventies (leerdoel oriëntatie training), effectief gedrag van re-integratie professionals en daarbij professionals en organisaties die gericht zijn op leren en niet op presteren. Als resultaat zullen werkzoekenden meer geneigd zijn om leerdoelen te stellen voor hun zoektocht naar werk en zullen ze beter in staat zijn om gedrag en cognities in werk zoeken te reguleren met als gevolg dat ze meer kans hebben op het vinden van een baan. Op deze manier wordt het geld dat beschikbaar is voor re-integratie en participatie efficiënt besteed en is het motiveren en ondersteunen van werkzoekenden een effectieve manier om hen weer aan het werk te krijgen.

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Dankwoord

Dankwoord

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Promoveren heeft veel weg van het zoeken van werk. Net als bij het zoeken van werk kan je tijdens een promotietraject beter leerdoel dan prestatiedoel georiënteerd zijn. Op die manier kan je beter omgaan met alle feedback die je krijgt door ervan te willen leren en nieuwe strategieën uit te proberen. Leerdoel georiënteerd zijn is vooral belangrijk om toch steeds weer door te gaan ondanks tegenslagen en afwijzingen. Maar jammer genoeg bestaat er in tegenstelling tot bij het werk zoeken geen training die je leert hoe je gemotiveerd kan blijven en die je leert hoe je leerdoelen kan stellen gedurende het promotietraject. Je zal het vooral zelf moeten doen. Gelukkig zijn er mensen om je heen die je helpen, opvangen, steunen, feedback geven, waarmee je kan discussiëren en misschien wel het allerbelangrijkste waar je veel van kan leren. Promoveren heeft nog een andere overeenkomst met het zoeken van werk en re-integratie. Beide processen bestaan uit onderscheidende fases die allemaal belangrijk zijn om zo tot een positieve uitkomst te komen. In het procesmodel van promoveren wat hier wordt beschreven zijn mensen of groepen van mensen genoemd met hun gedragingen die belangrijk zijn geweest gedurende het proces van mijn promotie (zie Figuur 1). Ik wil jullie op deze manier bedanken.

De pre-conditionele fase heeft als doel voorwaarden te scheppen voor een effectief promotietraject. Wanneer niet aan deze voorwaarden wordt voldaan is het bijna onmogelijk om succesvol te promoveren. Een belangrijke voorwaarde is om goede kamergenoten te hebben. Met die voorwaarde zit en zat het wel goed, Angela, bedankt voor de vier enerverende en heel gezellige jaren. Een andere voorwaarde is dat er (nu soms oud) collega's zijn waar het prettig is om mee samen te werken. Als eerste Benjamin, de discussies, de Engelse les, de gezamenlijke conferenties en nog veel meer waren voor mij vaak net de dingen die zorgde dat ik het traject kon volhouden. De collega's van de A&O sectie (Alec, Annemarie, Arnold, Benjamin, Daantje, Dimitri, Edwin, Eva, Heleen, Janneke, Jeroen, Jesper, Kimberley, Maria, Marjan, Rene en Wido) en speciaal het AIO/postAIO-clubje, gestart met Janneke, Maria en Benjamin en weer voortgezet met Jesper erbij. Leuk en goed dat het doorgaat. Verder horen hier alle collega's van de andere secties die ik niet allemaal kan noemen. Ook zij zijn een belangrijke voorwaarde al is het maar voor een gezellig praatje, om hulp te bieden of om mee te discussiëren over statistiek. De derde voorwaarde voor het scheppen van een effectief promotietraject is de ondersteuning van het secretariaat met Mirella en Iris. Bij een effectief promotietraject hoort ook het geven van onderwijs en dus is ook de ondersteuning van iedereen die met onderwijs te maken heeft, de mensen bij Psyweb en het onderwijsbureau met Marja voorop, onontbeerlijk.

Het doel van de tweede fase, de voorbereiding of start fase, is het mogelijk maken van het promotietraject. In deze fase moeten barrières worden opgelost en de vaardigheden van een promovendus goed worden ingeschat. De twee belangrijkste mensen in deze fase zonder wie dit hele project onmogelijk was geweest zijn Edwin en Arjan. Bedankt voor het oplossen van de barrières, voor het vertrouwen in mij en de onvoorwaardelijke steun. Jullie gezamenlijke sprong in het diepe heeft mijn promotie mogelijk gemaakt. Verder wil ik ook Agens bedanken voor de mogelijkheden die zij mij geboden hebben.

De derde fase is de fase tot aan de promotie, dan begint het echte werk. Marise, bedankt dat je mijn promotor wilde zijn in dit project. Ook al was het soms op een afstand, je was altijd betrokken bij mijn

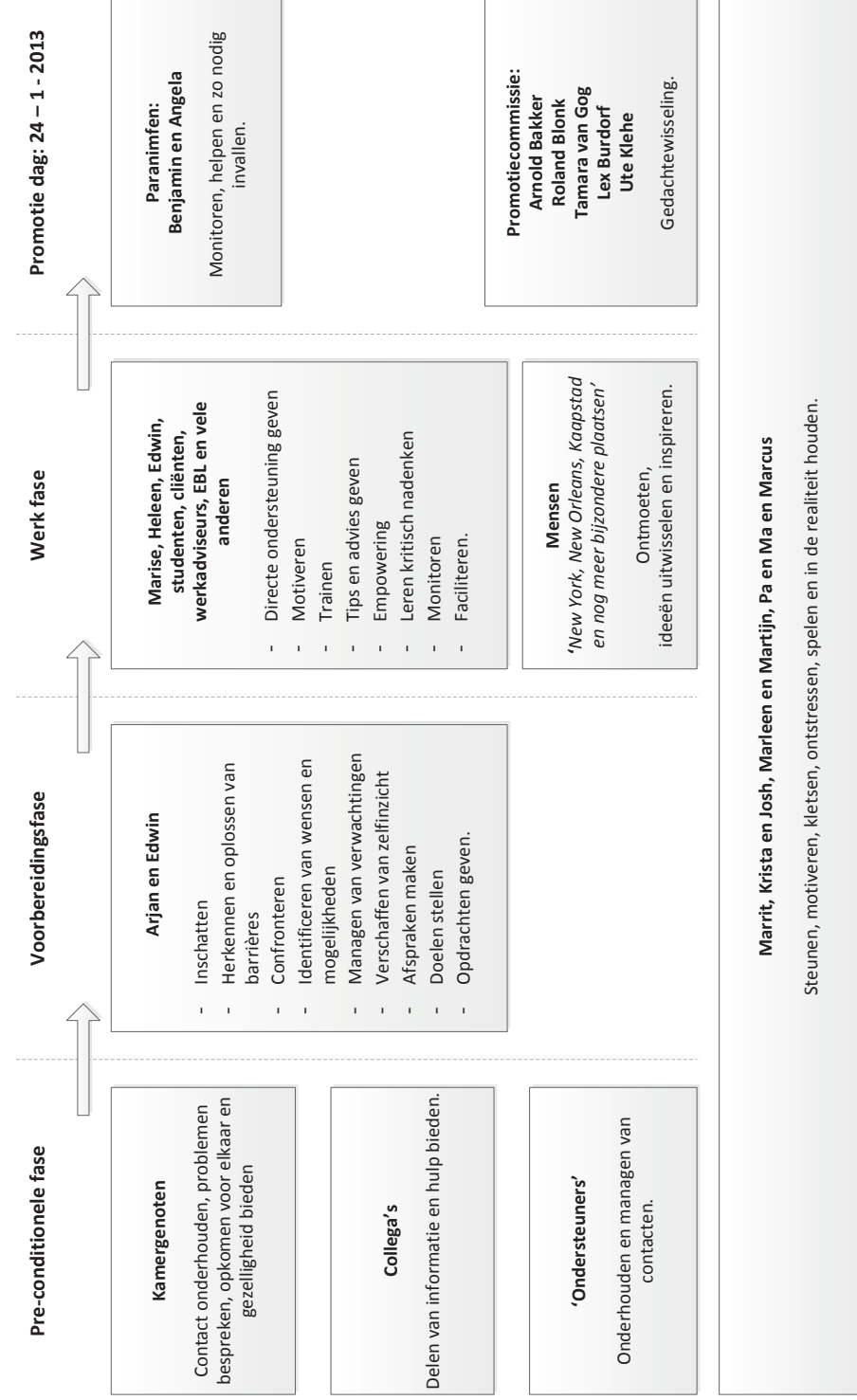
project en bij mij als persoon. Edwin en Heleen, als copromotors hadden jullie het niet altijd makkelijk met een eigenwijs en ouder iemand die al een hele carrière achter de rug had en die vooral alles zelf wilde doen. Ik kan niet genoeg benadrukken hoeveel ik van jullie geleerd heb, hoe jullie me hebben gestimuleerd om kritisch na te denken en om door te gaan ondanks alles. Dank jullie wel!

In deze fase horen ook de mensen thuis die het mogelijk maakten om het onderzoek te doen. Met name wil ik hier het EBL noemen, de studenten die meegeholpen hebben met data verzamelen (Freek en Rowan), cliënten en werkadvisers bij Agens, Machteld die geholpen heeft met het categoriseren en Bernice die zoveel werk heeft verzet als student-assistent. Dan als laatste van deze groep mensen Arjan. Mijn hele promotietraject ben je de vertrouwde factor geweest die nooit bang was om fouten te maken. Onze avonturen in Zuid-Afrika zijn misschien wel het meest waardevolle onderdeel geweest van het hele traject. Ons gezamenlijk falen heeft tot heel veel bijzonders geleid (wordt vervolgd!). In deze fase is ook het reizen belangrijk, nieuwe mensen ontmoeten, ideeën uitwisselen en inspiratie opdoen om zo weer gemotiveerd verder te kunnen werken.

De vierde en laatste fase van het promotietraject is eigenlijk maar 1 dag: de promotie zelf. Dank aan de commissieleden, Arnold Bakker, Roland Blonk, Tamara van Gog, Lex Burdorf en Ute Klehe dat jullie met zoveel enthousiasme deel uit wilden maken van mijn promotiecommissie en met mij van gedachte willen wisselen op mijn promotiedag. Dank aan Angela en Benjamin dat jullie mijn paranimfen willen zijn op deze dag. Ook al zijn jullie nu werkzaam op hele andere plaatsen, ik hoop dat het contact en de vriendschap blijft bestaan.

Als laatste de mensen die in alle fases een onmisbaar onderdeel zijn geweest. Marrit, jouw nooit stoppende geloof in mij, je energie en optimisme, het blijft een feestje. Krista en Marleen, ik hoop dat we nooit uitgekletst raken. Josh en Martijn, twee ICT'ers hoe verzinnen ze het maar jullie zorgen wel voor evenwicht. Pa en ma, dit hadden jullie nooit verwacht. Fijn dat jullie het kunnen meemaken. En als laatste dank aan kleine Marcus, leren en het leren van fouten is voor mij nog nooit zo duidelijk en zo gezellig geweest.

Gera



Figuur 1. Model met de vier fases van promoveren.

Curriculum Vitae

Curriculum Vitae

Gera Noordzij was born in Rotterdam on October 18th, 1957. From 1975 till 2002 she worked as a registered nurse and as a manager in different health-care organizations. In 2002 she started studying psychology at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. During her study she worked as a tutor at the Institute of Psychology at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. In 2006 she received her master degree in Work & Organizational Psychology and Clinical & Health Psychology. For her master thesis, she trained unemployed people to set learning or performance goals for their job search and investigated the effects on job search intentions and -behavior, and reemployment. Her master thesis was rewarded with the David van Lennep Prize. Immediately after her graduation she started as a scientific teacher at the Institute of Psychology at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. In September 2007, Gera started as a PhD student at the Institute of Psychology at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, studying the topic of employment counseling and achievement goal orientation. The results of the PhD project, which was co-financed with AGENS employment-counseling agency, are reported in the present dissertation. She presented her work at various scientific conferences (e.g., the Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, the International Conference on Motivation, the International Conference on Unemployment, Job insecurity, and Health) and published her work in journals such as Personnel Psychology and Journal of Applied Psychology. As a PhD student she taught a number of psychological and practical courses, coordinated bachelor courses, and supervised several bachelor and master theses. At the time of this writing Gera is employed as an assistant professor at the Institute of Psychology at the Erasmus University Rotterdam.

