The nonlinear relation between perceived employability and emotional exhaustion

Ellen Peeters

Nele De Cuyper
Hans De Witte

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Research Group Work, Organizational and Personnel
Psychology

Introduction (1/4)

Perceived employability:

‘The perceived likelihood of obtaining alternative employment (...) on the internal or external labor market’
(De Cuyper & De Witte, 2010).

- Perceived internal employability
- Perceived external employability

Emotional exhaustion:

Feeling of lack of energy due to ‘being over-extended and depleted of one’s emotional resources’
(Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001, p. 399)

Introduction (2/4)

Perceived employability

- Resource that promotes well-being and reduces ill-being (Berntson & Marklund, 2007)
- But: low correlations between perceived employability and emotional exhaustion
- Is it that simple or is it more complex?

Linear versus curvilinear relations (e.g. Dunford, Shipp, Boss, Angermeier, & Boss, 2012)

Introduction (3/4)

High perceived *internal* employability

- Social exchange theory (e.g. Chambel & Sobral, 2011)
 - Reciprocity (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011)

Introduction (4/4)

Very low perceived *external* employability

- Locked-in one's profession (Aronsson & Göransson, 1999)
- Reciprocity

Very high perceived *external* employability

- Social exchange theory (e.g. Emerson, 1976)
- Decision stress

Aim of this research:

- (1) Test nonlinear relations between perceived employability and emotional exhaustion
- (2) Compare perceived internal employability with perceived external employability in relation to emotional exhaustion

Hypotheses

- H1: Perceived internal employability relates negatively to emotional exhaustion (linear relationship)
- H2: Perceived external employability relates quadratic emotional exhaustion (curvilinear relationship)

Method (1/3)

Sample: 334 Participants

- Age:
 - Range: 20-61y
 - Average: 40y

Gender	N	%
Male	160	48%
Female	174	52%
Education level	N	%
Lower education	176	53%
Higher education	158	47%
Job level	N	%
Blue-collar	112	34%
White-collar	222	66%

Method (2/3)

Measures

- Perceived employability (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2008)
 - Perceived internal employability ($\alpha = .94$)
 - Perceived external employability ($\alpha = .93$)
 - Scale: 1-5
 - Internal: 8 items: e.g. *“I am optimistic that I would find another job with this employer, if I looked for one”*
 - External: 8 items: e.g. *“I am optimistic that I would find another job elsewhere, if I looked for one”*
- Burn-out (Dutch version (Schaufeli & Van Dierendonck, 2000) of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, Maslach & Jackson, 1981): 5 items
 - Emotional exhaustion ($\alpha = .91$)
 - Scale: 1-7
 - *“I feel burned out from work”*.

Method (3/3)

- Curve estimations
 - Based on all raw results
 - Aim: consider several types of relations (e.g. exponential, quadratic, linear)
 - R^2
 - Plots

Results

- Perceived internal employability
 - Linear: $\beta = -.14$, $p = .01$
 - Quadratic: $\beta = .22$, $p = .41$
- Perceived external employability
 - Linear: $\beta = -.03$, $p = .65$
 - Quadratic: $\beta = .60$, $p = .03$

Results

Emotional
exhaustion

Perceived internal employability

Results

Emotional
exhaustion

Perceived external employability

Discussion (1/2)

Conclusion:

- Higher perceived *internal* employability relates to lower emotional exhaustion
- Too high and too low perceived *external* employability relates to higher emotional exhaustion.

Limitation:

- Cross-sectional

Discussion (2/2)

Take home message:

- Downside of perceived employability
- Linear assumption can be false
- Importance of distinguishing between internal and external employability

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Thank you for your attention!

Any questions?

Ellen.Peeters@ppw.kuleuven.be

Correlation matrix

Correlations								
		GENDER	AGE	DIPLOMA	ORG-LEVEL	PE-I	PE-E	E-E
GENDER	Pearson Correlation	1	,012	-,002	,067	,172**	,096	-,025
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,831	,973	,245	,002	,086	,661
	N	336	336	336	302	320	320	320
AGE	Pearson Correlation	,012	1	-,226**	-,060	-,174**	-,386**	,047
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,831		,000	,300	,002	,000	,401
	N	336	336	336	302	320	320	320
DIPLOMA	Pearson Correlation	-,002	-,226**	1	,682**	,130*	,086	-,060
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,973	,000		,000	,020	,123	,282
	N	336	336	336	302	320	320	320
ORG-LEVEL	Pearson Correlation	,067	-,060	,682**	1	,199**	,008	-,015
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,245	,300	,000		,001	,891	,803
	N	302	302	302	302	290	290	290
PE-I	Pearson Correlation	,172**	-,174**	,130*	,199**	1	,239**	-,132*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	,002	,020	,001		,000	,018
	N	320	320	320	290	320	320	320
PE-E	Pearson Correlation	,096	-,386**	,086	,008	,239**	1	-,023
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,086	,000	,123	,891	,000		,679
	N	320	320	320	290	320	320	320
E-E	Pearson Correlation	-,025	,047	-,060	-,015	-,132*	-,023	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,661	,401	,282	,803	,018	,679	
	N	320	320	320	290	320	320	320

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).