



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

ARCHIVIO ISTITUZIONALE
DELLA RICERCA

Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna Archivio istituzionale della ricerca

“It Is All in the Game!”: The Role of Political Skill for Perceived Employability Enhancement

This is the final peer-reviewed author’s accepted manuscript (postprint) of the following publication:

Published Version:

Chiesa, R., Van der Heijden, B.I.J.M., Mazzetti, G., Mariani, M.G., Guglielmi, D. (2020). “It Is All in the Game!”: The Role of Political Skill for Perceived Employability Enhancement. *JOURNAL OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT*, 47(4), 394-407 [10.1177/0894845319832666].

Availability:

This version is available at: <https://hdl.handle.net/11585/745987> since: 2024-02-01

Published:

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1177/0894845319832666>

Terms of use:

Some rights reserved. The terms and conditions for the reuse of this version of the manuscript are specified in the publishing policy. For all terms of use and more information see the publisher's website.

This item was downloaded from IRIS Università di Bologna (<https://cris.unibo.it/>).
When citing, please refer to the published version.

(Article begins on next page)

”It is all in the game!” The Role of Political Skill for Perceived Employability Enhancement

Date of submission: January 23 2018

Resubmitted: July 23 2018

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

Abstract

The current study was aimed at assessing the extent that job-seeking networking may explain the positive association between career planning and self-perceived employability. In addition, the moderator role of political skill in strengthening the relationship between career planning and job-seeking behavior was explored. A sample of N = 2,561 students and graduates searching for jobs from one of the largest Italian universities filled out an online questionnaire. The hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling. Results showed that the positive relationship between career planning and self-perceived employability was mediated by job-seeking networking. Furthermore, the association between career planning and job-seeking networking appeared to be stronger for people who possessed greater political skill. This study may advance the comprehension of the added value of proactive career behaviors within the process that links career planning and self-perceived employability. In addition, primary intervention aimed at maximizing graduates' possibilities of attaining employment was suggested.

Keywords: Job Search, Career proactive behaviors, Perceived employability, Career planning, Job-seeking networking, Political skill

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

1
2
3 "It is all in the game!" The Role of Political Skill for Perceived Employability Enhancement

4
5 Introduction

6
7 Although the average unemployment rate in the European Union for people aged between
8
9 25 and 64 with a tertiary education (5.6 %) is about three time less than for those with a secondary
10
11 education qualification (17.4 %) (Eurostat, 2015), graduate-level credentials are not a guarantee of
12
13 employment success, because the opportunities for highly skilled employees are limited (Clarke,
14
15 2008). Therefore it is necessary to understand the possible antecedents of graduates' employability.
16
17 Despite the growing body of literature examining the relationship between higher education and
18
19 employability, the number of studies that examine the skills and attributes that are linked to new
20
21 graduates' employability is still limited (Tymon, 2013). Several employability definitions have been
22
23 developed. Among the various perspectives and levels that can be used to analyze employability,
24
25 this contribution focused upon a micro-individual level, in which employability may be described as
26
27 the individual's potential to be employed (Berntson & Marklund, 2007), or as the job opportunities
28
29 in the labor market, internal or external to the same organization (Forrier & Sels, 2003).
30
31 Specifically, perceived employability refers to the subjective perception of possibilities of
32
33 maintaining the current employment, or of future opportunities to secure an equal or better one
34
35 (Berntson, 2008; Vanhercke, De Cuyper, Peeters, & De Witte, 2014). This perception is highly
36
37 important because it is potentially associated with a personal feeling of security and independence
38
39 with regard to contextual circumstances (Berntson, 2008). Additionally, perceived employability is
40
41 known to be related to objective indexes as the national employment rate in a large sample of Italian
42
43 graduates (Caricati, Chiesa, Guglielmi & Mariani, 2016). Vanhercke and colleagues (2015)
44
45 classified perceived employability as an important resource within the Conservation of Resources
46
47 (COR) theory framework (Hobfoll, 1989; 2002). The COR theory argues that resources which
48
49 people strive to acquire and gather in order to cope with stressful situations include personal
50
51 characteristics, energies, objects, and conditions that are either valued by the individual, or that act
52
53 as a means of obtaining valued objectives . Firstly, perceived employability is an important resource
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

1
2
3 because it improves personal sense of mastery on career opportunities, which is essential to
4 survival in the current labor market (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; Schyns, Torka, &
5 Gössling, 2007) and to achieve career success (see Van der Heijden, De Lange, Demerouti, & Van
6 der Heijde, 2009). Moreover, perceived employability is associated with the gain of additional
7 resources through progression in education or job training (Wittekind, Raeder, & Grote, 2010).
8 According to COR theory, gaining new resources involves an investment of personal resources, so
9 the capability of gaining resources is higher for people who possess more resources. Given its
10 relevance, the present study is interested in understanding what extent a proactive approach to the
11 transition from university to work may influence perceived employability.
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21

22 Currently, the economic and technological changes that are affecting the world of work has
23 increased graduates' responsibility for the successful management of their own careers, especially
24 when they try to enter the labor market for the first time (Vanhercke, De Cuyper, & De Witte,
25 2016). This means that graduates need to define the type of job they want, and the competences that
26 this specific type of job requires in order to maximize their possibilities of securing employment
27 (Rothwell, Jewel, & Hardie, 2009). In other words, they need to build up a broad spectrum of
28 'knowing why', 'knowing how', and 'knowing whom' competences that are necessary in the age of
29 boundary-less careers (De Fillippi & Arthur, 1994). We consider career planning as a cognitive
30 aspect of proactive career behaviors related to the competence of "knowing why," while the job-
31 seeking networking may be defined as a proactive career behavior related to the competence of
32 "knowing how." Finally, concerning the competence of "knowing whom" we consider political
33 skill relevant. Ferris and colleagues (2005) define it as the ability to understand others and to
34 maximize relationships in order to achieve individual and organizational goals. Although its
35 positive effect on job performance and career success has been well documented (see for instance,
36 the recent meta-analysis of Munyon, Thompson, Summer and Ferris, 2015), the role of political
37 skill in managing the transition from university to work has not been explored yet. The current
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

1
2
3 study intends to test its moderating effect on the relationship between career planning and perceived
4 employability via job-seeking networking.

5
6
7 Career planning and perceived employability

8
9 In line with Career Construction theory, active career planning has been defined as an
10 important process of individual construction and reconstruction, clarification of career paths, and
11 formation of a coherent and meaningful identity (Savickas, 2002). De Vos and colleagues (2009)
12 considered career planning as a relevant indicator of the cognitive component of proactive career
13 behaviors during the transition from college to work, which means that it is part of preventive
14 actions implemented by individuals in order to identify and exploit job opportunities (Parker,
15 Williams, & Turner, 2006). It includes strategic vision of career development and of setting and
16 pursuing career objectives. As such, it corresponds to an individual's efforts to manage his or her
17 career consciously (Gould, 1979). Saks and Ashforth (2002) found positive relationships among
18 career planning, pre-entry and post-entry person-job and person-organization fit perceptions. In
19 addition, Zikic and Klehe (2006) reported that career planning was associated to re-employment
20 quality as well after a period of unemployment. As regards career and employability outcomes,
21 Spirk, Kauffeld, Barthauer, and Heinemann (2015) showed that an improvement in career planning
22 due to a career coaching intervention increased the perception of career success. Furthermore,
23 empirical evidence indicates that career planning was related to less career distress and to higher
24 perceived employability (Praskova, Creed, & Hood, 2015). The arguments mentioned above lead us
25 to hypothesize the following:
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44

45 H1. Career planning correlates positively with perceived employability.

46
47
48 The Mediating Role of Job-seeking Networking

49
50 Job-seeking networking is defined as "expressing those behaviors that are aimed at building,
51 maintaining, and using informal relationships, and that bring about the (potential) benefit to
52 facilitate work-related activities of individuals, by voluntarily granting access to resources and
53 maximizing common advantages" (Wolff & Moser, 2009, p.196). In this sense, it can be considered
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

1
2
3 as part of proactive career behaviors, which are actions set out by employees to achieve their career
4 objectives (Claes & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1998; King, 2004). Previous research has shown that
5 subjective and objective career success are positively related to networking. In particular, Langford
6 (2000) revealed that networking behaviors predict self-evaluation of career success and satisfaction,
7 current remuneration, and increments in income over the last five years. According to this author,
8 networking behaviors are relevant to an individual's career path because they entail extensive social
9 interactions with multiple subjects and constitute a plain expression of one's responsiveness to job-
10 related opportunities. Further results suggest that engaging in professional activities and adopting
11 behaviors aimed at increasing employees' internal visibility represent specific types of networking
12 behaviors that may positively affect long-term subjective and objective career outcomes, as
13 perception of career success, as well as number of promotions and total wage (Forret & Dougherty,
14 2004). In a similar vein, De Vos et al. (2009) found that networking predicts salary level and career
15 satisfaction measured one year later.

16
17
18 While the relationship between networking and career success has been well documented,
19 little is known about the relationship between networking and employability. Given that perceived
20 employability refers to the subjective perception of employment possibilities, we consider it a
21 subjective career success indicator. For graduates, employability deals with preparing for the
22 future's instability within the ambiguous constraints of the new careers, and it requires taking a
23 proactive approach. Proactively preparing for the attainment of personal career goals through career
24 planning enables the individual to perceive more control within an uncertain labor market, and to be
25 better equipped to select the career strategy that will realize one's personal career objectives. More
26 specifically, De Vos and colleagues (2009) showed that the cognitive mechanism of career planning
27 organized and enacted a specific career behavior as job-seeking networking, and we expect that
28 these actions oriented toward future career outcomes may enhance the self-perception of
29 employability. Therefore, we formulated the following hypothesis:
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

1
2
3 H2. Job-seeking networking mediates the relationship between career planning and
4
5 perceived employability.

6
7 The Moderating Effect of Political Skill

8
9 Analyzing the relationship of job search to re-employment, Wanberg, Kanfer, and Banas
10
11 (2000) defined job-seeking networking as a particular job search method that is used more or less
12
13 intensively by various job seekers. In particular, they indicated that differences in dispositional
14
15 tendencies, especially in extraversion, affected job-seeking networking intensity in such a way that
16
17 individuals with a higher score for extraversion displayed greater levels of job-seeking networking
18
19 intensity during the job search process, in comparison with individuals who were less extravert.
20
21 These authors found that people were less inclined to use this job search method if they worried that
22
23 the use of job-seeking networking may be perceived as an exploitation of friendship.
24
25

26
27 In this contribution, we aimed to understand how individual differences in competences that
28
29 are necessary for executing specific job-seeking networking behaviors may influence the
30
31 relationship between career planning, job-seeking networking, and perceived employability.
32
33 Specifically, we focused on individual differences in political skill, as “a comprehensive pattern of
34
35 social competencies, with cognitive, affective, and behavioral manifestations, which have both
36
37 direct effects on outcomes, as well as moderating effects on predictor–outcome relationships”(Ferris
38
39 et al. 2007; p.291) . As competencies, political skill consists of “a set of observable performance
40
41 dimensions, including individual knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors” (Athey & Orth, 1999,
42
43 p. 216). Munyon et al. (2015) confirmed it affects self-evaluations of self-efficacy and that it is
44
45 more predictive of task performance than extraversion. In this sense, in accordance with COR
46
47 theory, Ferris and colleagues (2007) underlined the fact that political skill plays a critical role of
48
49 internal resource that facilitates the acquisition and the protection of valued resources in the work
50
51 contexts. Politically skilled people are more confident about their ability to control images,
52
53 interactions, and impressions at work; thus, they are less likely to see their interpersonal situation as
54
55 stressful.
56
57
58
59
60

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

1
2
3 Although interpersonal skills are considered to be highly relevant for graduates'
4 employability (i.e., Andrews & Higson, 2008; Jackling & De Lange, 2009), very little is known
5 about their political skill. In general, political skill is "the mechanism through which goal-directed
6 behavior is activated in pursuit of interpersonal objectives and/or outcomes achievement" (Ferris et
7 al. 2007, p. 300). It means that political skill affects the way individuals assess personal resources
8 and establish values and goals. It is also associated with the ability to identify the appropriate
9 influence tactic for a given situation, and, subsequently, to execute the tactic effectively in order to
10 maximize its effect (Ferris, Treadway, Brouer, & Munyon, 2012). The competence in developing
11 and using diverse networks of people allows politically skilled individuals to build social capital
12 and leverage it in order to achieve personal goals. Accordingly, we expected that the cognitive
13 mechanism of career planning may induce job-seeking networking (being a specific type of
14 proactive career behavior), especially in the case of a great degree of political skill. Hence, we
15 formulated the third hypothesis:

16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31 H3. Political skill moderates the relationship between career planning and job-seeking
32 networking in a mediation model with perceived employability being the outcome.

33
34
35 The conceptual model framing the study variables in a moderated mediation relationship is
36 reported in Figure 1.

37 38 39 Method

40 41 42 Participants and Procedure

43
44 Subscribers to the electronic newsletter of one of the largest Italian Universities were
45 provided with background information about the general purpose of the study, including individual
46 factors influencing graduates' level of employability. They received an e-mail that invited people
47 who were searching for a job to participate in the research; it included a link to answer an online
48 survey. At the beginning of the survey, respondents' anonymity and data confidentiality were
49 emphasized. After completion, all participants obtained an individual profile reporting the main
50 results on their employability score and the association between this outcome and factors
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

1
2
3 investigated through the survey. A total of $N = 2,561$ people participated in the study: 56.9% of
4 them were students, 41.9% were just graduate, 0.2% did not indicate their state. Women formed the
5 majority (62%) and the average age was 24.68 ($SD = 2.24$), ranging from 21 to 32 years. Most
6 respondents held a masters degree (62.6%) and had at least one year of work experience during
7 university (78.2%).
8
9

Measures

10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
Career planning, job-seeking networking, and political skills were measured using scales
which were translated from the original English version into Italian as follows: a) translation of the
scales by two experts familiar with all the constructs and the English language; b) comparison
between the experts' two versions to produce a single version for every scale; c) back-translation of
this version by a mother-tongue English speaker—this translation was “blind,” that is, the original
versions of the scales were not known; d) definition of the final version in light of the indications
yielded by the entire translation process (Hambleton, Merenda, & Spielberger, 2005). The Italian
version of Berntson and Marklund's (2007) scale developed by Caricati et al. (2016) was used to
test perceived employability.

Career planning was measured using four items taken from the Career Planning scale
developed by Gould (1979). This measure has been widely used to test career self-management
strategies and proactive behaviors among university students, and it known to be correlated, for
instance, with intentions to pursue graduate education (Seibert, Kraimer, Holtom, & Pierotti, 2013),
career engagement (Hirschi, 2013), core-evaluation, and career adaptability (Neureiter & Traut-
Mattausch, 2017). A sample item was: “I have a strategy for achieving my career goals.” All items
were scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In
the present study, the reliability of this scale was $\alpha = .81$.

Job-seeking networking was assessed with five items from the nine-item Networking
Intensity scale (Wanberg et al., 2000). The one-factor structure of the scale showed by Wanberg et
al. (2000) was confirmed in subsequent studies (i.e. Lambert, Eby & Reeves, 2006). Lambert, Eby

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

1
2
3 & Reeves (2006) found that networking intensity was related to obtaining higher quality
4 information among white-collar job seekers. A sample item was: "In the last two weeks, how often
5 have you called or visited someone just to get more information about a certain job or place to
6 work?" These items were scored on a five-point frequency scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very
7 often). The internal consistency of this scale was $\alpha = .85$.

8
9
10
11
12
13 Perceived employability measure consisted in the Italian version of Berntson and Marklund
14 (2007)'s five-item scale developed by Caricati et al.(2016). The original version of the scale
15 performed well in previous studies (see Berntson, Näswall, & Sverke, 2010; de Cuyper et al.,
16 2011). Recently, it showed a positive association with career management competencies in a sample
17 of English business undergraduates (Jackson & Wilton, 2016). Caricati et al. (2016) confirmed the
18 uni-dimensional structure and invariance of the Italian version of the scale, and found a significant
19 correlation between this measure and the Italian national employment rate in a large sample of
20 graduates. A sample item was: "My competence is sought after in the labour market." All items
21 were scored on a five-point Likert scale with a response format ranging from 1 (strongly disagree)
22 to 5 (strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was $\alpha = .74$.

23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35 Political skill was assessed using the Interpersonal Influence scale taken from the Political
36 Skill Inventory (Ferris et al., 2005). This scale included four items that assess the respondents'
37 ability to adapt their behavior to various targets and contextual conditions in order to attain their
38 goals. Lvina et al. (2012) showed the cross-cultural invariance of the scale, and Munyon et al.'s
39 (2015) meta-analysis found that political skill was positively related to self-evaluations (i.e., self-
40 efficacy beliefs), work attitudes (i.e., job satisfaction and organizational commitment), and
41 negatively related to physiological strain. A sample item was: "I am able to communicate easily and
42 effectively with others." Participants were invited to specify their level of agreement with each
43 item, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The
44 reliability of the scale was $\alpha = .81$.

45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57 Strategy of Analysis
58
59
60

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

1
2
3 The forms of invariance at both the measurement and structural levels were tested using
4 structural equation modeling (SEM). To this purpose, the AMOS 22 software package with
5 maximum likelihood estimation methods (since the observed variables of the models displayed
6 normal distributions) was employed (Arbuckle, 2013). To interpret the significant interaction effect,
7 the full sample ($N = 2.561$) was divided into two groups using the cut-off points of 1 SD above and
8 1 SD below the mean: group one included participants reporting low political skill ($M \leq 3.38$; $N =$
9 366) and group two included participants with a high level of political skill ($M \geq 4.71$; $N = 514$).
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17

18 Measurement and structural invariance testing in SEM entailed a sequence of hierarchical
19 steps that compared several parameters of the hypothesized model across groups, in order to
20 determine the specific levels of between-group differences (Kline, 2016). Accordingly, the
21 hypothesized moderation effect was tested using three forms of invariance: configural invariance,
22 factorial invariance, and direct-effect invariance. Each model included all items as indicators of the
23 corresponding latent factor. Invariance was tested by computing the difference in the χ^2 values
24 across a series of nested models imposing constraints on the parameters (Yuan & Bentler, 2004).
25 When the chi-square difference value ($\Delta\chi^2$) between nested models is statistically significant, it
26 indicates that the models are not equal across differentiated groups. In contrast, a non-significant
27 $\Delta\chi^2$ implies that all specified equality constraints are acceptable. In addition to the χ^2 goodness-of-fit
28 statistic, the models' fit was also evaluated through the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), the Comparative
29 Fit Index (CFI), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). As a general rule,
30 an acceptable fit should report values greater than 0.90 for TLI and CFI, and equal to or lower than
31 0.08 for the RMSEA (Byrne, 2001).
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47

48 The prerequisite for testing invariance encompassed the estimation of the baseline model,
49 where no between-group constraints were imposed on the parameters, for each group separately.
50 This preliminary step was aimed at verifying that the model showed a satisfactory fit to the data for
51 both groups. Subsequently, configural invariance (Model 0) was tested in order to obtain a multi-
52 group representation of the baseline model. Specifically, this first step entailed the simultaneous
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

1
2
3 estimation of the unconstrained model across the two levels of political skill. Subsequent models at
4 increasingly more stringent levels were compared against this multi-group model, which
5 represented a baseline model. Factorial invariance was tested using a model wherein all estimated
6 factor loadings were constrained to be equal across both groups (Model 1). This second step was
7 aimed at determining whether the factor loadings from the observed indicators onto the latent
8 constructs were the same across the two differing levels of political skill.

9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16 As a final step of the moderation analysis, Model 2 was used to test for direct-effect
17 invariance. Accordingly, equality constraints were assigned to the direct relationship between the
18 latent constructs of career planning and job-seeking networking, in order to evaluate significant
19 differences in the strength of their association, according to the level of political skill.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29 Table 1 reports the means, standard deviations, correlations, and internal consistencies of the
30 variables under investigation. Pearson's r coefficients revealed that the associations between the
31 variables were significant and in the expected direction.

Model Testing

32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47 As reported in Table 2, the baseline model showed a good fit to the data, both when using
the entire sample, and within each separate group (i.e., low vs. high political skill); TLI and CFI
indices both exceeded 0.90 (Byrne, 2001), with a RMSEA < 0.08 . In the baseline model, all
indicators loaded significantly on their latent factors. In addition, career planning showed a positive
relationship with perceived employability ($\beta = 0.38$, $p = .000$), thus supporting Hypothesis 1.

48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60 The subsequent series of analyses used bootstrapping in order to assess the mediation effect
assumed in the study hypotheses. The indirect effect of career planning on employability through
job-seeking networking was significant as well ($p = .01$). More specifically, the bias-corrected
confidence interval (B-CCI) limits were equal to 0.019 and 0.037. These outcomes provided support
for Hypothesis 2.

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

1
2
3 Table 3 shows that the configural model in which no equality constraints were imposed
4 appeared to have a satisfactory fit to the data. Thus, the hypothesized model fitted well to the data,
5 for participants with both low and high political skill levels. As previously stated, the invariance
6 was assessed using the configural model as a criterion against which the subsequent models were
7 compared.
8
9
10
11
12

13 The second row of Table 3 indicates constraining factor loadings to be equal; the factorial
14 invariance model appeared to have a substantially comparable fit to the data ($\Delta\chi^2 = 17.77$, $\Delta df = 10$,
15 $p = .059$). Therefore, we accepted the more parsimonious Model 1, which hypothesized the
16 invariance of factor loading across the two groups.
17
18
19
20
21

22 Subsequently, the factorial invariance model (Model 1) was compared to the direct-effect
23 invariance model (Model 2), in which the path coefficient from career planning to job-seeking
24 networking was specified as invariant across the two groups. This approach ensured just one degree
25 of freedom in the chi-square difference test, implying that a $\Delta\chi^2$ higher than 3.84 is statistically
26 relevant at a significance level of $p = .05$. The direct-effect invariance model (Model 2) revealed a
27 better fit to the data in comparison with the factorial invariance model (Model 1) ($\Delta\chi^2 = 3.96$, $\Delta df =$
28 1 , $p = .047$). Moreover, the coefficient that described the relationship between career planning and
29 job-seeking networking was found to differ across the two groups of respondents. As shown in
30 Table 4, the relationship was statistically significant for those respondents who reported a high level
31 of political skill, yet career planning appeared to have no significant effect for graduates reporting a
32 low level of political skill. These results suggested that the relationship between career planning and
33 job-seeking networking was moderated by political skills, thus supporting Hypothesis 3 as well.
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47

Discussion

48
49
50 The current study aimed at exploring the association between cognitive and behavioral
51 components of proactive career behaviors respectively: career planning and job-seeking networking
52 on the one hand, and perceived employability on the other hand, within the theoretical perspective
53 drawn by Hobfoll's COR theory. In doing so, this study defined employability as the individual
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

1
2
3 opportunity to obtain employment on the labor market (Berntson & Marklund, 2007; Forrier &
4 Sels, 2003). As for the direct relationship between career planning and perceived employability, in
5
6
7 line with the notion of gain spiral formulated by COR theory, the individual resource of career
8
9
10 planning boosted each graduate's chance to attain the additional resource represented by his/her
11
12 possibility of being employed.

13
14 Moreover, this study provides empirical evidence for career construction theory that
15
16 considers career planning as a crucial indicator of the cognitive component of proactive career
17
18 behaviors: that is, the insights that people evolve into their own career ambitions (De Vos et al.,
19
20 2009). According to this perspective, career planning is deeply connected to job-seeking
21
22 networking, since it constitutes the cognitive mechanism that allows people to arrange and put into
23
24 practice specific career behaviors such as job-seeking networking. Our findings supported the
25
26 hypothesized mediation role of job-seeking networking in the association between career planning
27
28 and perceived employability, thus confirming the definition of job-seeking networking as a concrete
29
30 activity that enhances the likelihood of attaining individual career goals. In other words, the specific
31
32 type of networking aimed at supporting job searching corresponds to the behavioral component of
33
34 proactive career behaviors (e.g., King, 2004; Sturges, Guest, Conway, & Mackenzie Davey, 2002).
35
36 The results portray job-seeking networking as a specific strategy aimed at promoting graduates'
37
38 career paths through the enhancement of their employment possibility and, in this sense, they
39
40 expand previous research on the association between job-seeking networking on the one hand, and
41
42 career success indicators on the other hand (Forret & Dougherty, 2004).
43
44
45

46
47 Furthermore, this research represents an exploration of the circumstances under which
48
49 career planning may boost job-seeking networking. In particular, we focused on the personal
50
51 resource of political skill as the ability to take advantage of interpersonal relationships in order to
52
53 facilitate the attainment of personal career-related objectives (Ferris et al., 2005). Our results
54
55 indicate that the association between career planning and job-seeking networking is stronger for
56
57 graduates characterized by a high level of political skill. This outcome is consistent with the fact
58
59
60

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

1
2
3 that political skill allows people to develop networks and use them in order to achieve personal
4 goals (Ferris et al., 2007). In addition, it confirms previous evidence that dispositional
5 characteristics may influence the exploitation of a specific strategy such as job-seeking networking
6 (Wanberg et al., 2000). Thus, the cognitive mechanism of career planning has been shown to
7 promote a specific type of proactive career behavior—i.e., job-seeking networking—particularly
8 when graduates are highly competent in choosing a suitable influence tactic for each specific
9 situation (political skill).
10
11
12
13
14
15
16

17
18 All in all, the present findings represent a further step towards a deeper insight into the gain
19 spiral cycle that links two personal resources as career planning and perceived employability, with a
20 specific focus on job-seeking networking and political skill.
21
22

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

23
24
25
26
27 There are several limitations to this study. First, despite the large sample size, all findings are
28 based on cross-sectional, single-source data. Although we think it is unlikely that this may have
29 affected our results, more specific information about the stability and change of the model variables,
30 and about cross-lagged (i.e., over time) relationships may be provided by multi-wave research
31 designs (De Lange, Taris, Kompier, Houtman, & Bongers, 2004; Taris & Kompier, 2003). Further,
32 more evidence is needed to confirm the generalizability of our outcomes to other countries,
33 especially as we might expect that the prevalence and impact of the moderating effect of political
34 skill may differ across cultures (Lvina et al., 2012). Further research should consider the impact of
35 internal and external labor market opportunities in order to clarify the added value of proactive
36 career behaviors. Especially in cases of a serious lack of employment chances, high commitment, as
37 well as suitable career planning and job-seeking networking behaviors may be not enough to
38 maintain high levels of well-being and health (Mauno, Kinnunen, Mäkikangas, & Nätti, 2005;
39 Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, 2002) at the beginning of graduate careers. It is of utmost importance
40 to discover whether some other antecedents or moderators can make a difference to graduates in
41 terms of being able to secure the available jobs.
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

Practical Implications

Our findings suggest that graduates may differ significantly in their approach towards the labor market, as well as in the strategies adopted to both monitor and to manage their employability, which is a crucial resource in attaining high-quality employment, going beyond the critical situations (Vanhercke et al., 2015). Fortunately, higher education may contribute substantially to a graduate's perceived employability, and as a result, their overall employment outcomes (Thompson, Clark, Walker, & Whyatt, 2013). Current changes within the labor market have led to a new pattern of career progression that is less grounded in single organizations and specific job roles. Consequently, higher education institutions may support the employability of students and graduates by providing career-related courses or activities that are embedded in, and aligned with, the academic curricula. These courses or interventions should help graduates to be aware of their objectives, values, needs, abilities and labor market opportunities (career planning), and may guide them in developing proactive career behaviors such as job-seeking networking, in order to enhance their perceived employability.

The current study also points out that graduates need to possess a high level of political skill to translate their career planning into job search behaviors focused on networking. Consistent with previous findings, graduates are more likely to be employed if they are characterized by both hard and soft skills. Thus, both adaptive and social competences are needed in today's labor market, along with domain-specific knowledge and skills (Rodriguez, Patel, Bright, Gregory, & Gowing, 2002). Accordingly, our study encourages higher education institutions to pay close attention to the development of soft skills, especially interpersonal ones, as a specific facet of their curricula as well. Specifically, political skill can be substantially developed through training, role modeling, mentoring, and socialization (Ferris, Anthony, Kolodinsky, Gilmore, & Harvey, 2002). Professors should provide feedback to students on their academic performance, including their level of self-awareness in social circumstances, i.e. interactions during classes or oral exams, in order to

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

facilitate the development of the ability to adapt and calibrate their behavior in various situations in order to obtain the desired responses from others.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

References

- 1
2
3
4
5 Andrews, J., & Higson, H. (2008). Graduate employability, “soft skills” versus “hard” business
6 knowledge: A European study. *Higher Education in Europe*, 33, 411–422. doi:10.1080/
7 03797720802522627.
8
9
10
11 Arbuckle, J. L. (2013). *IBM SPSS Amos 22 user’s guide*. Armonk, NY: IBM.
12
13 Athey, T. R., & Orth, M. S. (1999). Emerging competency methods for the future. *Human Resource*
14 *Management*, 38, 215–226. doi: 10.1002/(SICI)1099-050X(199923)38:3%3C215::AID-
15 HRM4%3E3.0.CO;2-W
16
17
18
19
20 Berntson, E. (2008). *Employability perceptions: Nature, determinants, and implications for health*
21 *and well-being*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Department of Psychology, Stockholm
22 University, Stockholm.
23
24
25
26 Berntson, E., & Marklund, S. (2007). The relationship between perceived employability and
27 subsequent health. *Work & Stress*, 21(3), 279–292. doi:10.1080/02678370701659215
28
29
30 Berntson, E., Näswall, K., & Sverke, M. (2010). The moderating role of employability in the
31 association between job insecurity and exit, voice, loyalty and neglect. *Economic and*
32 *Industrial Democracy*, 31(2), 215–230.
33
34
35
36
37 Berntson, E., Näswall, K., & Sverke, M. (2010). Investigating the relationship between
38 employability and self-efficacy: A cross-lagged analysis. *European Journal of Work and*
39 *Organizational Psychology*, 17(4), 413-425, doi: 10.1080/13594320801969699
40
41
42
43
44 Byrne, B. M. (2001). *Structural equation modeling with AMOS: Basic concepts, applications, and*
45 *programming*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
46
47
48 Caricati, L., Chiesa, R., Guglielmi, D., & Mariani, M. G. (2016). Real and perceived employability:
49 a comparison among Italian graduates. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*,
50 38(4), 490–502. doi:10.1080/1360080X.2016.1182668
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

- 1
2
3 Claes, R., & Ruiz-Quintanilla, S. A. (1998). Influences of early career experiences, occupational
4 group, and national culture on proactive career behavior. *Journal of Vocational*
5 *Behavior*, 52(3), 357–378. doi:10.1006/jvbe.1997.1626
6
7
8
9 Clarke, M. (2008). Understanding and managing employability in changing career contexts. *Journal*
10 *of European Industrial Training*, 32(4), 258–284. doi:10.1108/03090590810871379
11
12
13 DeFillippi, R. J., & Arthur, M. B. (1994). The boundaryless career: A competency-based
14 perspective. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 15, 307–324. doi:10.1002/job.4030150403
15
16
17
18 De Lange, A. H., Taris, T. W., Kompier, M. A. J., Houtman, I. L. D., & Bongers, P. M. (2004).
19 Work characteristics and psychological well-being. Testing normal, reversed and reciprocal
20 relationships within the 4-wave SMASH study. *Work and Stress*, 18, 149–166.
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
- Eurostat (2015). Unemployment statistics. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics
- Ferris, G. R., Anthony, W. P., Kolodinsky, R. W., Gilmore, D. C., & Harvey, M.G.S. (2002). Development of political skill. In C. Wankel & R. DeFillippi (Eds.), *Rethinking management education for the 21st century* (Vol. 1, pp. 3–25). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.
- Ferris, G. R., Treadway, D., Brouer, R., & Munyon, T. (2012). Political skill in the organizational sciences. In G. Ferris & D. Treadway (Eds.), *Politics in organizations: Theory and research considerations* (pp. 487–529). New York: Routledge/Taylor and Francis.
- Ferris, G. R., Treadway, D. C., Kolodinsky, R. W., Hochwarter, W. A., Kacmar, C. J., Douglas, C., & Frink, D. D. (2005). Development and validation of the Political Skill Inventory. *Journal of Management*, 30(1), 126–152. doi:10.1177/0149206304271386

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

1
2
3 Ferris, G. R., Treadway, D. C., Perrewé, P. L., Brouer, R. L., Douglas, C., & Lux, S. (2007).

4 Political skill in organizations. *Journal of Management*, 33 (3), 290–320. doi:

5
6
7 10.1177/0149206307300813.

8
9 Forrier, A., & Sels, L. (2003). The concept employability: A complex mosaic. *International Journal*
10
11 of Human Resources Development and Management, 3(2), 102–124.

12
13 doi:10.1504/IJHRDM.2003.002414

14
15 Forret, M. L., & Dougherty, T. W. (2004). Networking behaviors and career outcomes: Differences
16
17 for men and women? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25, 419–437. doi:10.1002/job.253

18
19 Fugate, M., Kinicki, A. J., & Ashforth, B. E. (2004). Employability: A psycho-social construct, its
20
21 dimensions, and applications. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65, 14–38.

22
23
24 doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2003. 10.005.

25
26 Gould, S. (1979). Characteristics of career planners in upwardly mobile occupations. *The Academy*
27
28 of Management Journal, 22(3), 539–550. doi:10.2307/255743

29
30 Hambleton, R., Merenda, P. F., & Spielberger, C. D. (2005). Adapting educational and
31
32 psychological tests for cross-cultural assessment. Mahwah NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum
33
34 Associates Publisher.

35
36 Hirschi, A. (2013). Hope as a Resource for Self-Directed Career Management: Investigating
37
38 Mediating Effects on Proactive Career Behaviors and Life and Job Satisfaction. *Journal of*
39
40 Happiness Studies, 15 (6), 1495–1512. doi: 10.1007/s10902-013-9488-x

41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources. A new attempt at conceptualizing stress.

American Psychologist, 44, 513–524. doi:10.1037//0003-066X.44.3.513

Hobfoll, S. E. (2002). Social and psychological resources and adaptation. *Review of General*
Psychology, 6, 307–324. doi:10.1037//1089-2680.6.4.307

Jackling, B., & De Lange, P. (2009). Do accounting graduates' skills meet the expectations of
employers? A matter of convergence or divergence. *Accounting Education: An International*
Journal, 18(4-5), 369–385. doi:10.1080/09639280902719341

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

- 1
2
3 Jackson, D. & Wilton, N. (2016). Perceived employability among undergraduates and the
4 importance of career self-management, work experience and individual characteristics. *Higher*
5 *Education Research and Development*, 36 (4), 747-762. doi:10.1080/07294360.2016.1229270.
6
7
8
9 King, Z. (2004). Career self-management: Its nature, causes and consequences. *Journal of*
10 *Vocational Behavior*, 65(1), 112–133. doi:10.1016/S0001-8791(03)00052-6
11
12
13 Kline, R. B. (2016). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling* (4th ed.). New York,
14 NY: Guilford Press.
15
16
17 Lambert, T. A., Eby, L.T., & Reeves, M. P. (2013). Predictors of Networking Intensity and
18 Network Quality among White-Collar Job Seekers. *Journal of Career Development*, 32 (4),
19 351-365 2006. doi: 10.1177/0894845305282767.
20
21
22
23
24 Langford, P. H. (2000). Importance of relationship management for the career success of Australian
25 managers. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 52(3), 163–169.
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
- Lvina, E., Johns, G., Treadway, D., Blickle, G., Atay, S., Liu, Y., ... Ferris, G. (2012). Measure invariance of the Political Skill Inventory (PSI) across five cultures. *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management*, 12 (2), 171-192. doi: 10.1177/1470595812439870
- Mauno, S., Kinnunen, U., Mäkikangas, A., & Nätti, J. (2005). Psychological consequences of fixed-term employment and perceived job insecurity among health care staff. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 14(3), 209–237. doi:10.1080/13594320500146649
- Munyon, T.P., Thompson, J.K., Summer, K.M., & Ferris, G.R. (2015). Political skill and work outcomes: A theoretical extension, meta-analytic investigation, and agenda for the future. *Personnel Psychology*, 68 (1), 143–184. doi: 10.1111/peps.12066.
- Neureiter, M. & Traut-Mattausch, E. (2017) Two sides of the career resources coin: Career adaptability resources and the impostor phenomenon. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 98 (1), 56-69, doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2016.10.002.
- Wolff, H.G., & Moser, K. (2009). Effects of networking on career success: a longitudinal study.

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

- 1
2
3 Journal of Applied Psychology, 94 (1), 196-206. doi:10.1037/a0013350.
4
5 Parker, S. K., Williams, H. M., & Turner, N. (2006). Modeling the antecedents of proactive
6
7 behavior at work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(3), 636–652. doi:10.1037/0021-
8
9 9010.91.3.636.
10
11 Praskova, A., Creed, P. A., & Hood, M. (2015). Self-regulatory processes mediating between career
12
13 calling and perceived employability and life satisfaction in emerging adults. *Journal of Career*
14
15 Development, 42, 86–101. doi:10.1177/0894845314541517
16
17 Rodriguez, D., Patel, R., Bright, A., Gregory, D., & Gowing, M. K. (2002). Developing
18
19 competency models to promote integrated human resource practices. *Human Resource*
20
21 Management, 41(3), 309–324. doi:10.1002/hrm.10043
22
23 Rothwell, A., & Arnold, J. (2007). Self-perceived employability: Development and validation of a
24
25 scale. *Personnel Review*, 36, 23–41. doi:10.1108/00483480710716704
26
27
28 Rothwell, A., Jewell, S., & Hardie, M. (2009). Self-perceived employability: Investigating the
29
30 responses of post-graduate students. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 75, 152–161.
31
32 doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2009.05.002
33
34 Saks, A. M., & Ashforth, B. E. (2002). Is job search related to employment quality? It all depends
35
36 on the fit. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(4), 646–654. doi:10.1037//0021-9010.87.4.646
37
38
39 Savickas, M. L. (2002). Career construction: A developmental theory of vocational behavior. In D.
40
41 Brown & Associates. (Eds.), *Career choice and development* (4th ed., pp. 149–205). San
42
43 Francisco, CA: JosseyBass.
44
45 Schyns, B., Torck, N., & Gössling, T. (2007). Turnover intention and preparedness for change:
46
47 Exploring leader-member exchange and occupational self-efficacy as antecedents of two
48
49 employability predictors. *Career Development International*, 12, 660–679.
50
51 doi:10.1108/13620430710834413
52
53
54 Seibert, S., Kraimer, M.L., Holtom, B.C., & Pierotti, A. (2013). Even the Best Laid Plans
55
56 Sometimes Go Askew: Career Self-Management Processes, Career Shocks, and the Decision to
57
58
59
60

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

- 1
2
3 Pursue Graduate Education. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 98 (1), 169-182. doi:
4 10.1037/a0030882
5
6
7 Spurk, D., Kauffeld, S., Barthauer, L., & Heinemann, N. S. R. (2015). Fostering networking
8 behavior, career planning and optimism, and subjective career success: An intervention study.
9 *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 87, 134–144. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2014.12.007
10
11
12 Sturges, J., Guest, D., Conway, N., & Mackenzie Davey, K. (2002). A longitudinal study of the
13 relationship between career management and organizational commitment among graduates in
14 the first ten years at work. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 23(6), 731–749.
15
16
17 doi:10.1002/job.164
18
19
20
21
22 Sverke, M., Hellgren, J., & Näswall, K. (2002). No security: A meta-analysis and review of job
23 insecurity and its consequences. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 7(3), 242–264.
24
25
26
27 doi:10.1037/1076-8998.7.3.242
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
- Taris, T. W., & Kompier, M. (2003). Challenges in longitudinal designs in occupational health psychology. *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health*, 29, 1–4.
doi:10.5271/sjweh.697
- Thompson, L. J., Clark, G., Walker, M., & Whyatt, J. D. (2013). ‘It’s just like an extra string to your bow’: Exploring higher education students’ perceptions and experiences of extracurricular activity and employability. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 14(2), 135-147.
doi:10.1177/1469787413481129
- Tymon, A. (2013). The student perspective on employability. *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(6), 841–856. doi:10.1080/03075079.2011.604408
- Van der Heijden, B. I. J. M., De Lange, A., Demerouti, E., & Van der Heijde, C. M. (2009). Age effects on the employability-career success relationship. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 74, 156–164. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2008.12.009.
- Vanhercke, D., De Cuyper, N., & De Witte, H. (2016). Perceived employability and well-being: An overview. *Psihologia Resurselor Umane*, 14(1), 8–18.

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

- 1
2
3 Vanhercke, D., De Cuyper, N., Peeters, E., & De Witte, H. (2014). Defining perceived
4
5 employability: A psychological approach. *Personnel Review*, 43, 592–605.
6
7 doi:10.1108/13620431111115604
8
9 Vanhercke, D., Kirves, K., De Cuyper, N., Verbruggen, M., Forrier, A., & De Witte, H. (2015).
10
11 Perceived employability and psychological functioning framed by gain and loss cycles. *Career*
12
13 *Development International*, 20(2), 179–198. doi:10.1108/CDI-12-2014-0160
14
15 Wanberg, C. R., Kanfer, R., & Banas, J. T. (2000). Predictors and outcomes of networking intensity
16
17 among unemployed job seekers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85(4), 491–503.
18
19 doi:10.1037/0021-9010.85.4.491
20
21 Wittekind, A., Raeder, S., & Grote, G. (2010). A longitudinal study of determinants of perceived
22
23 employability. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31, 566–586. doi:10.1002/job.646
24
25 Wolff, H. G., Moser, K., & Grau, A. (2008). Networking: Theoretical foundations and construct
26
27 validity. In J. Deller (Ed.), *Readings in applied organizational behavior from the Lüneburg*
28
29 *Symposium* (pp. 101–118). Mehring, Germany: Rainer Hampp.
30
31 Yuan, K. H., & Bentler, P. M. (2004). On chi-square difference and z tests in mean and covariance
32
33 structure analysis when the base model is misspecified. *Educational and Psychological*
34
35 *Measurement*, 64, 737–757. doi:10.1177/0013164404264853
36
37
38
39 Zikic, J., & Klehe, U.C. (2006). Job loss as a blessing in disguise: The role of career exploration
40
41 and career planning in predicting reemployment quality. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 69,
42
43 391–409. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2006.05.007.
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Tables

Table 1.

Means, Standard Deviations, Cronbach's Alphas (on the diagonal), and Correlations Among all Study Variables (N = 2.561).

	r					
	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Career planning	3.31	.89	.81			
2. Job-seeking networking	2.80	.91	.21 ^{***}	.85		
3. Self-perceived employability	2.85	.73	.35 ^{***}	.22 ^{***}	.74	
4. Political skill	4.03	.66	.24 ^{***}	.29 ^{***}	.24 ^{***}	.81

Note: * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

Table 2.

Goodness-of-fit Indices

Baseline model	χ^2	df	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Full sample (N = 2.561)	856.69***	62	.913	.931	.071
Low political skill (N = 366)	207.21***	62	.877	.902	.080
High political skill (N = 514)	227.75***	62	.909	.928	.072

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; χ^2 = Chi-square, df = degrees of freedom; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

Table 3.

Invariance Tests across Political Skill Levels

Model	χ^2	df	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	Model comparison	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf
Model 0. Configural invariance (no constraints)	434.98 ^{***}	124	.897	.918	.053	–	–	–
Model 1. Factorial invariance (equivalent factor loadings)	452.75 ^{***}	134	.902	.916	.052	M1 - M0	17.77	10
Model 2. Direct-effect invariance (equivalent relationship between career planning and job-seeking networking in both groups)	456.70 ^{***}	135	.902	.915	.052	M2 - M1	3.96 [*]	1

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

Table 4.

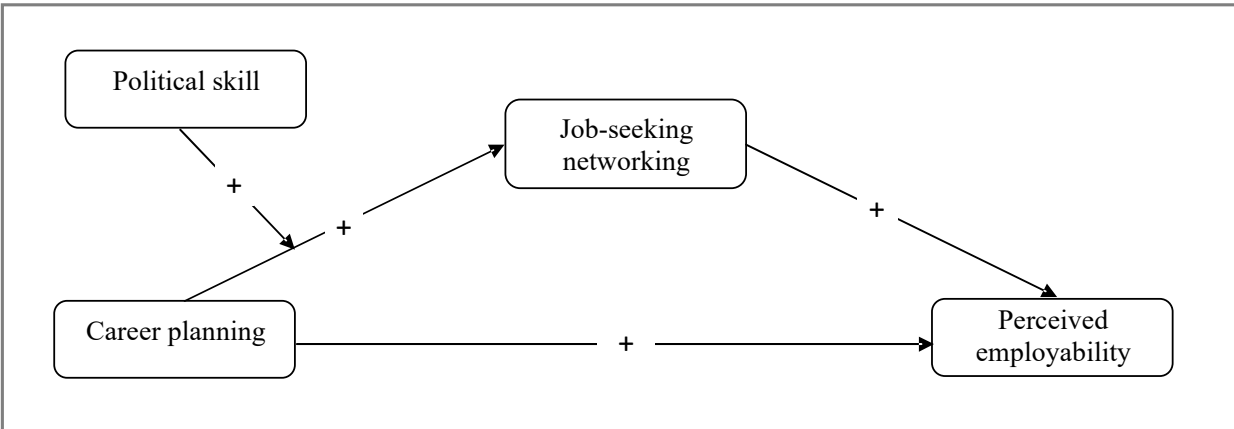
Standardized Regression Coefficients from Career Planning to Job-Seeking Networking

Career planning → Job-seeking networking	β
Full sample (N = 2,561)	.249**
Low level of political skill (N = 366)	.122
High level of political skill (N = 514)	.273**

Note: ** p < .01

POLITICAL SKILL FOR PERCEIVED EMPLOYABILITY

Figure



Note: The model predicts that career planning is positively related to job-seeking networking, which will subsequently increase perceived employability. Moreover, political skill is expected to foster the relationship between career planning and job-seeking networking, such that the effect is stronger for graduates reporting a high level of political skill.

Figure 1. Conceptual model of the moderated mediation relationship

Table 1.

Means, Standard Deviations, Cronbach's Alphas (on the diagonal), and Correlations Among all Study Variables (N = 2.561).

	r					
	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Career planning	3.31	.89	.81			
2. Job-seeking networking	2.80	.91	.21 ^{***}	.85		
3. Self-perceived employability	2.85	.73	.35 ^{***}	.22 ^{***}	.74	
4. Political skill	4.03	.66	.24 ^{***}	.29 ^{***}	.24 ^{***}	.81

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 2.

Goodness-of-fit Indices

Baseline model	χ^2	df	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Full sample (N = 2.561)	856.69***	62	.913	.931	.071
Low political skill (N = 366)	207.21***	62	.877	.902	.080
High political skill (N = 514)	227.75***	62	.909	.928	.072

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; χ^2 = Chi-square, df = degrees of freedom; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

Table 3.

Invariance Tests across Political Skill Levels

Model	χ^2	df	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	Model comparison	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf
Model 0. Configural invariance (no constraints)	434.98 ^{***}	124	.897	.918	.053	–	–	–
Model 1. Factorial invariance (equivalent factor loadings)	452.75 ^{***}	134	.902	.916	.052	M1 - M0	17.77	10
Model 2. Direct-effect invariance (equivalent relationship between career planning and job-seeking networking in both groups)	456.70 ^{***}	135	.902	.915	.052	M2 - M1	3.96 [*]	1

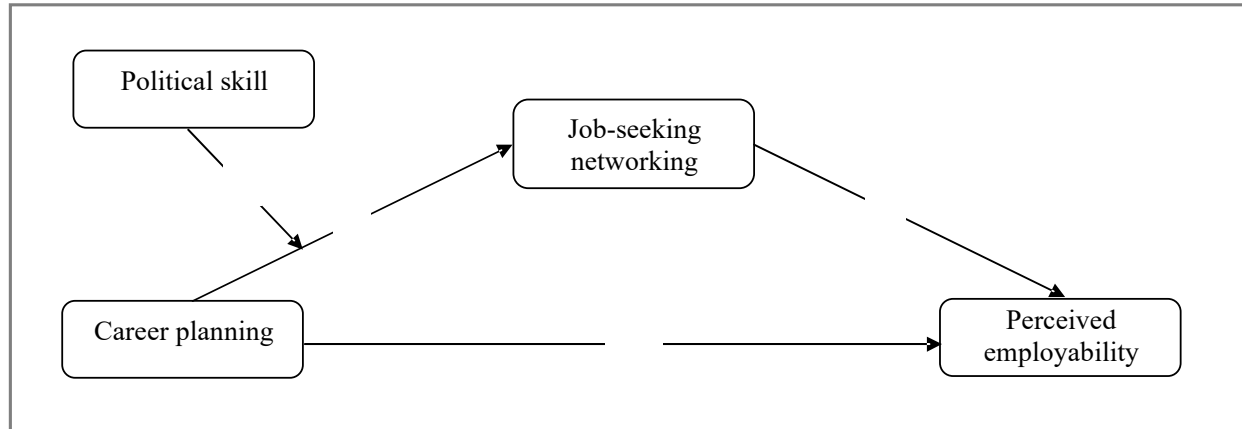
Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 4.

Standardized Regression Coefficients from Career Planning to Job-Seeking Networking

Career planning → Job-seeking networking	β
Full sample (N = 2,561)	.249**
Low level of political skill (N = 366)	.122
High level of political skill (N = 514)	.273**

Note: ** $p < .01$



Note: The model predicts that career planning is positively related to job-seeking networking, which will subsequently increase perceived employability. Moreover, political skill is expected to foster the relationship between career planning and job-seeking networking, such that the effect is stronger for graduates reporting a high level of political skill.

Figure 1. Conceptual model of the moderated mediation relationship