ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: EMPLOYMENT AND WELFARE-TO-WORK TRAINING INITIATIVES: THE EFFECTS OF PRE-TRAINING ATTITUDES ON JOB-SEARCH BEHAVIOR, EMPLOYMENT STATUS, AND JOB-SEARCH INTENDED EFFORT

Sylvia Bittle Patton, Doctor of Philosophy, 2003

Dissertation directed by: Vice Chancellor Irwin L. Goldstein
University System of Maryland

For over a decade, the issues of welfare reform and unemployment have been high priorities at the national level. Surveys were administered to participants in three training agencies to examine individual pre-training attitudinal and behavioral variables, including self-efficacy, employment commitment, and unemployment negativity. The study then examined the relationship between these variables and post-training job-search behavior, employment status, and job-search intended effort of unemployed trainees. The behavioral plasticity hypothesis was also explored in conjunction with the variables of general and specific self-efficacy, employment commitment, and unemployment negativity.

Hierarchical regression analyses of data from 121 participants revealed that pre-training specific self-efficacy and unemployment negativity were both significant predictors of post-training job-search behavior and frequency. Thus, trainees with higher levels of pre-training specific self-efficacy and unemployment negativity also reported more varied and frequent post-training job-search behavior. Further, results of logistic regression analysis indicated that unemployment negativity was a significant predictor of post-training employment status. Specifically, trainees with high initial levels of unemployment negativity were twice as likely to find post-training employment.

Although not hypothesized, the demographic variables of marital status, reasons for unemployment, and income also significantly predicted post-training employment status. More specifically, trainees who were single had a greater likelihood of post-training job placement in comparison to married trainees. Further, respondents who were unemployed because of a disability or other health-related issue were less likely to find employment after training than their counterparts. In addition, trainees with higher levels of income were more likely to find post-training employment than those with lower income levels. The behavioral plasticity effect, however, was not supported with either predictor variable when job-search behavior and frequency was used as the outcome variable.

Post-hoc analysis revealed pre-training employment commitment as a significant predictor of post-training employment status. Specifically, participants with higher levels of pre-training employment commitment were almost three-times more likely to find employment after training than their counterparts. Post-hoc analyses also found that both specific self-efficacy and unemployment negativity mediate the relationship between employment commitment and post-training job-search behavior and frequency. Several implications of the study are discussed and areas for future research are explored.

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by

Sylvia Bittle Patton

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Advisory Committee:

Vice Chancellor Irwin L. Goldstein, Chair/Advisor
Professor Paul J. Hanges
Professor Katherine J. Klein
Professor Benjamin Schneider
Professor Cynthia K. Stevens

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Yvonne S. Bittle. You have always inspired me. Thanks for being who you are. Thanks also to my husband, Myron, and son, Mylon Shalom.
I Love You, I Love You, I Love You!!!

I also dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my late grandparents, Adolph and Elma Streater, and my late cousin, Linda L. Lindsey.
Love Endures!!!

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Welfare reform has become a high priority on the national agenda. To date, the welfare system encompasses over 60 state and federal programs all designed to help people escape poverty (Buchsbaum, 1994). Over the years, many of these programs have been accused of being wasteful, ineffective and serving as excuses for people to live off of government handouts instead of getting jobs and bettering themselves (Buchsbaum, 1994; Jencks, 1994; and Tanner, 1995). In fact, Henly and Danziger (1996), argued that such public discourse about the "welfare problem" suggests that individuals receiving welfare are "undeserving" and that welfare programs reinforce the negative behavioral tendencies of welfare recipients by the choices they provide. The debate about welfare, according to Gueron (1987), poses a dilemma about whether it is "possible to assist the poor without, by that very act, giving people incentives for behavior that perpetuates poverty and dependency (p. 19)." According to the author, such debate poses questions about whether welfare reduces incentives for people to work and whether it actually promotes a "culture of poverty" (Gueron, 1987).

The current study examined welfare reform efforts in general and more specifically welfare-to-work and other employment training initiatives to determine the effects of pre-training attitudes on job-search behavior, employment

status, and job-search intention. This first section of the study provides an overview of previous welfare employment legislation, followed by a more in-depth discussion about the most current welfare-to-work initiative--The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). The specific mandates of the new legislation are explored, followed by a review of previous quantitative and qualitative research studies related to PRWORA and other welfare-reform efforts. In addition, several studies are presented that call for additional research and evaluation on welfare-to-work and unemployment efforts, particularly in relation to the role of pre-training attitudes and behaviors on job-search behavior and job procurement.

Welfare Employment Legislation

In 1967, the Work Incentive Program (WIN) was legislated and became the first federal mandate requiring all employable Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients to work or participate in some type of training for work (Dickinson, 1986). Although welfare employment initiatives have undergone several name changes (e.g., Community Work Experience Program (CWEP) or Workfare, Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program), since the implementation of WIN in 1967, one thing remains constant--the plethora of criticism surrounding the welfare system and its inability, as perceived by some, to move people from economic dependency to independence.

More recently, in an effort to address such on-going criticism and debate about the welfare system, former President Clinton, during his 1992 campaign, promised to revamp the welfare system and "end welfare as we know it." In August, 1996, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), was signed into law by the U.S. Congress (P.L. 104-193). This comprehensive bipartisan welfare reform bill repealed the long time entitlement program known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and replaced it with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The PRWORA dramatically changed the nation's welfare system into one that requires work in exchange for time-limited assistance and provides support for families moving from welfare to work.

Specifically, this legislation mandates a five year cumulative lifetime limit on the amount of time an individual can receive welfare benefits and, with limited exceptions, requires welfare recipients to engage in work activities to move from welfare assistance to permanent employment. The new statute requires that half of all single-parent families and a majority of all two-parent families on welfare must be enrolled in work training programs, or employed in order to receive any partial welfare subsidies such as child care assistance and health care coverage (Medicaid). Welfare recipients will not be given the option of remaining on welfare instead of working, neither will they be allowed to return to the public assistance rolls should their experiences in the workplace be unsuccessful.

According to Peter Edelman, former Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the Department of Health and Human Services, this bill simply utilizes a one-size fits all recipe and essentially says to recipients, find a job (Edelman, 1997).

Limitations of Welfare Reform Legislation

Many are already questioning the effectiveness of such a reform effort (e.g., Grubb, Badway, Bell, & Castellano, 1999; Lindhorst, Mancoske, & Kemp, 2000; Pierce, 1996; Young, 2000). Some have focused on the general shortcomings of the new legislation and question whether it will really facilitate self-sufficiency (e.g., Dickson & Tanner, 1996), while others (e.g., Lafer, 1992) describe it as being a clear formula for failure due to its combined characteristics of threatened sanctions and mandatory job training. Further, others have cautioned that one should be suspicious of any claims which assert that a welfare reform bill can turn most public assistance recipients into self-sufficient workers (Cancian & Meyer, 2000; Danziger & Lehman, 1996). Finally, Caputo (1997) explained that there are formidable obstacles facing such social policies, and suggested that current welfare reform efforts aimed at self-sufficiency may not result in a reduction in the use of public assistance per se, but result instead in a shifting reliance on welfare from one program to other public assistance programs.

Others have expressed concern about the time limits associated with the new reform effort. Ward (1997), for example, focused on the issue of the difficulty in enforcing time limits against people with no job skills, no opportunities, no transportation, and no child care. Likewise, McCloskey (1996), succinctly insisted that rigid deadlines would not make people self sufficient--family self sufficiency cannot be created by punitive decree if it can be created at all, according to the author. In addition, Alter (1996) concluded that it takes time for welfare recipients to exit AFDC, particularly long-term recipients who are very disadvantaged. The researcher maintained that it is a mean-spirited delusion if families are pushed and prodded off public assistance by tighter rules and limitations on the duration of benefits, then defined as self-sufficient just because they are off AFDC.

Further, others have argued about the reality of finding employment for welfare recipients given the scarcity of jobs in today's market. For example, some have noted that the labor market has two sides and that typical welfare efforts, like employment programs, only focus on the supply side (Caputo, 1989; Dimas, 1997; Gueron, 1987; Lafer, 1992). As further explained by the researchers, simply mandating work requirements for public assistance recipients or changing the terms of welfare guidelines will not impact employment levels if the demand is not there--jobs must be available for recipients who are being encouraged or required to find employment. Indeed, some (Buchsbaum, 1994; Harrison, 1997;

Whitman & Gest, 1995) have asserted that moving millions of low-income Americans from the relief rolls to the work rolls is a hard task even for the best work and training programs, because the work is simply not there--unless of course one aims to destroy the livelihoods of "permanent" employees.

Finally, and more specific to the current study on the effects of trainee attitudes on job-search behavior and employment, some critics of the new legislation have cast doubt on the effectiveness of any training efforts related to welfare reform. For example, some (e.g., D'Amico, 1996; Lafer, 1992; Tanner, 1995) recounted research findings that question the value of education and training as a viable solution to the employment of public assistance recipients. Still, others have suggested that it will be hard for welfare recipients to even acquire jobs that will allow them to foster skills that lift them out of poverty or lead to sustained employment (e.g., Harrison, 1997; Hershenson, 2001; Scott, London, & Edin, 2000). Indeed, Jencks (1994) posited that two decades of research studies have shown that although job training increases a public assistance recipient's chances of finding a job, it seldom has much effect on [what is needed for self-sufficiency]--high hourly wages. In fact, Neenan and Orthner (1996) found that participants actually left such training programs for wages that were too low to substantially improve their economic conditions beyond that of public assistance.

Positive Effects of Welfare Reform Efforts

On the other hand, some researchers have reported that training programs are in fact having somewhat of a positive impact on welfare-to-work efforts. Such impact, as suggested by some, should dispel the accusation that employment and training interventions do not work at all with welfare recipients. Gueron (1987) for example, reported on the success of four out of five state welfare employment initiatives which were included in a five-year randomized experimental design study conducted by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC). Specifically, the longitudinal study revealed that participants in the various states' work programs had a significantly higher rate of gains in employment than their counterparts in the control group who did not partake of any training. In addition, program participants were found to have significantly higher gains in average total earnings than those reported for control group members. Such longitudinal findings, as noted by Gueron (1987), make it invalid to argue that welfare employment initiatives have no value. Although such programs, as conceded by the researcher, cannot be expected to move substantial numbers of people out of poverty, they are however still worthwhile.

Similar positive findings have resulted from other longitudinal and cross-sectional quantitative studies as well as qualitative studies that have been conducted on different aspects of welfare reform efforts. Such studies, for example were conducted to determine how different states are implementing

welfare employment initiatives and the degree of success associated with the programs (Alter, 1996; Hagen & Lurie, 1995; Stokes & Brasch, 1997), which trainee factors predict post-program employment and earnings (Neenan & Orthner, 1996), compliance and satisfaction rates for participants in welfare-to-work programs (Hasenfeld & Weaver, 1996; Ricco & Hasenfeld, 1996), which welfare or unemployment intervention approaches and components are most effective (Opulente & Mattaini, 1997; Schneider, 2000; Vinokur, van Ryn, Gramlich, & Price, 1991), and the long-term effects of welfare-to-work programs (Rossi, 1997).

It is apparent that overall the research results on welfare-to-work initiatives vary. While some have reported that such programs indeed have a positive impact, albeit modest in some instances (e.g., Alter, 1997; Caputo, 1989; Dickinson, 1987; Goertzel & Cosby, 1997; Gueron, 1987; Kellam, 1995; Koenig, 1990; Laabs, 1998), others have offered findings which indicate that such programs have had an insignificant impact on the lives of welfare recipients (e.g., Churchill, 1995; D'Amico, 1996; The Economist, 1997; Lafer, 1992; Tanner, 1995). Perhaps some explanation for this variance in findings can be found in the criteria used in each study to gauge success or effectiveness. While some studies measured outcome--definitive success or failure of the intervention, others focused however on impact--effect or degree of change as a result of the intervention. Indeed, as implied by several researchers (e.g., Gueron, 1987;

Kellam, 1995; Koenig, 1990; Mead, 1997), differences in reports of actual program success or effectiveness are expected if some welfare efforts are measuring impact (e.g, where individuals would be if they had not received any program services), while others are focusing on outcomes (e.g., actual job placements or number of terminations from welfare caseloads).

Specific Examples of Welfare-to-Work Training Initiatives

Despite the mixed conclusions about the benefits of welfare reform and related training efforts, states and cities across the country are still proceeding quickly to continue implementing programs that are designed to address the federal mandate of welfare-to-work. Perhaps this is the case because it is a mandate and states really have no choice but to press forward with implementing some type of welfare employment efforts, or risk losing a substantial amount of federal funds. In fact, the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, specifically provides additional resources to achieve this welfare-to-work goal, by authorizing the Department of Labor to provide Welfare-to-Work (WtW) grants to states and local communities. These grants are for the sole purpose of providing transitional employment assistance to move hard-to-employ TANF recipients with significant employment barriers into un-subsidized jobs that offer long-term employment opportunities. This funding specifically provides many welfare recipients with job placement services, transitional employment, and job retention and support

services in order to achieve the ultimate goal of long-term un-subsidized employment and economic self-sufficiency.

The commonwealth of Virginia, for example, is already attempting to fundamentally change its welfare system by launching the centerpiece of its welfare reform efforts--the Virginia Initiative for Employment Not Welfare (VIEW) program (Carter, Dunbar, Micks, Brown, & Davis-Johnson, 1997). Likewise, the city of Lincoln, Nebraska has also implemented a holistic welfare reform program known as the Lincoln Action Program (LAP) (Stokes & Brasch, 1997). Further, California's mandatory welfare-to-work program, Greater Avenues to Independence (GAIN), serves as a model for many welfare reform efforts across the country, and is considered to be the largest mandatory welfare-to-work program in the country (Mead, 1997; Riccio & Hasenfeld, 1996). In fact, North Carolina's welfare-to-work initiative, Work First, formerly JOBS, is modeled after California's GAIN program. One of the underlying premises of North Carolina's Work First program, according to Ward (1997), is that welfare reform is impossible unless real jobs in the public and private sector are made available to the state's welfare recipients.

In general, these programs require that assessments be conducted to determine each recipient's skills, education, work history, and any barriers to employment and self-sufficiency. They also consist of job search and job readiness activities, skills/vocational training, life-skills training, mentoring, work

experience opportunities, job placement, job development, and post employment tracking and support. Participation is stringently enforced and emphasis is placed primarily on actual work over education and training (Caputo, 1989; J. Haynes, personal communication, October 7, 1997; Koenig, 1990; Opulente & Mattaini, 1997; Riccio & Hasenfeld, 1996). The overall goal of such programs is to help welfare recipients identify and overcome social and psychological barriers that may be hindering their ability to transition from welfare dependency to work. Typically, program participants who are assessed as being ready for employment are directed into job search and work experience programs, while recipients with more barriers to immediate employment are referred to education and training services (Hagen & Lurie, 1995).

Limitations of Research and Evaluation on Welfare Reform

Despite the extent of research conducted to date on welfare-to-work initiatives, several researchers have still expressed concerns about the paucity of research and evaluation in relation to such efforts (e.g., Dunnagan, Duncan, & Paul, 2000). For example, Mead (1997) stressed that evaluation is necessary and that welfare-to-work programs should be held accountable for the results they produce. Many (e.g., Gueron ,1987; Hagen 1994), are calling for additional research on welfare reform employment interventions in order to determine, for example, whether mandatory programs are in fact effective at addressing the

needs of those facing major barriers to employment, or the exact role that agencies and their personnel play in successful program implementation.

Further, others (e.g., Alter, 1996, Ozawa Kirk (1996) have suggested that additional research is needed in areas more relevant to training program participants in particular. While some individuals have posed questions about whether trainees are really acquiring employment skills and finding employment, others have posed questions about the quality of the employment being obtained by trainees--that is, whether employment actually leads to self-sufficiency or only "dead-end" jobs. Indeed, Tanner (1995), asserted that the true need is to evaluate and monitor such things as the proportion of trainees who actually leave welfare, whether they remain off welfare, and whether their income actually increases as a result of finding employment.

The Need for Additional Research on Pre-training Attitudes/Behaviors

Finally, and more specific to the current study, Neenan and Orthner (1996) argued that while there has been considerable interests during the past two decades in assessing the effectiveness of some aspects of welfare-to-work programs, little attention however has been given to the extent to which trainees' personal and attitudinal attributes developed before program participation are associated with post-program outcomes. They maintained that there is little understanding about the role that attitudes about work and welfare have in promoting movement toward employment among welfare recipients.

Subsequently, the researchers conducted a multi-year longitudinal tracking study of JOBS participants to determine the factors associated with post-training employment and earnings for program participants. The results of the study revealed that post-program employment and earnings could be predicted from the characteristics and attitudes (i.e., prior labor-force experience, work-related attitudes, human capital characteristics) that participants brought with them into the JOBS program.

Overall, the researchers found that participants' success in getting jobs and their earnings' experiences were more likely to be influenced by the attitudes, motivation, experience, and other related characteristics that trainees brought into the program, than by the training program itself or the enhancements that they received as a result of program participation. Neenan and Orthner (1996), therefore suggested that trainee attitudinal and psychosocial factors should be incorporated into research designs that aim to assess the relationships between welfare employment program enrollment and subsequent employment and earnings' experience for former participants.

Others have also underscored the need to identify those trainee attitudes and characteristics that are the most critical in a training context (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). For example, Noe and Schmitt (1986) contended that it is vital to determine the specific trainee characteristics and attitudes that influence the effectiveness of training, particularly if one is to understand how to increase the

likelihood that trainee behavior change and performance improvement will result from training participation. Similarly, Quinones (1995) asserted that little is really known about the relationships among pre-training characteristics and training outcomes. As cautioned by the researcher, pre-training individual characteristics can actually influence training outcomes beyond any training design effects. Subsequently, future training research must consider more than just the components of a training program, but must also examine variables that preclude the actual training intervention. It is therefore apparent that the impact of individual pre-training attitudes and characteristics on training effectiveness certainly warrants further study.

Despite such suggestions by Neenan and Orthner (1996) and others (e.g., Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Hoigberg & Berry, 1978; Martocchio, 1992; Noe, 1986; Noe & Schmitt, 1986; Quinones, 1995; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992), few studies conducted on employment and welfare-to-work programs have actually focused on trainee attitudes or psychosocial factors. Instead, many of the studies conducted to date have placed emphasis on the components of the programs themselves as opposed to the characteristics of the participants enrolled in them. More specifically, few studies have explored which pre-training individual variables, if any, preclude or facilitate success in welfare-to-work training programs. In addition, little is known about whether trainees who possess certain attitudes or characteristics prior to training, actually do better either during or after

training than their training counterparts who do not hold similar attitudes. Further still, little research exists regarding whether trainees with certain pre-training attitudes do better in different types of training programs, or if training program differences (i.e., training program length or intensity, training curriculum, and instructional methodology) impact the relationship between pre-training attitudes and post-training behavior.

Indeed, such pre-training attitudes and attributes are the focus of the current study. A review of the literature on unemployment reveals to some extent several pre-training attitudes and attributes that may be important to understanding the relationship between unemployment, training, and job procurement. These factors include, but are not limited to, such constructs as self-efficacy, employment commitment, and unemployment negativity (Banks & Henry, 1993; Eden & Aviram, 1993; Kessler, Turner, & House, 1989; Taris, Heesink, & Feij, 1995). Further, an examination of the literature also reveals, with some consistency that such variables should probably be considered as well, when exploring training efforts designed specifically to assist individuals with transitioning from public assistance to employment (Danziger, Kalil, & Anderson, 2000; Henly & Danziger, 1996; Opulente & Mattaini, 1997; Wanberg & Marchese, 1994; Westra, 2000). While some studies (e.g., Wanberg, Watt, & Rumsey, 1996) have examined many of the variables focused on in the current study, fewer however have explored all of the proposed variables in the context of

being important antecedents to training and post-training behavior of unemployed individuals receiving some form of public assistance. The following section addresses each concept (i.e., self-efficacy, employment commitment, and unemployment negativity) in turn and discusses its relevance to employment and welfare-to-work efforts.

Relationship Between Context Variables and Pre-training Attitudes

It is important, however, to first make a distinction between pre-training attitude variables--which are the primary focus of the current study, and context variables--which certainly also play a role in training effectiveness but will only be explored in a limited manner in this study. It is a well acknowledged fact that training programs do not exist in a vacuum (Goldstein, 1980, 1986). Rather they impact and are impacted upon by other systems and factors both within and outside of the organization. Likewise, trainees are influenced by many factors other than the abilities, attitudes, and characteristics that they bring with them into the training setting. One such factor is that of context variables. Several categories of context variables exist, namely, work context variables (e.g., organizational climate, management and work group support); training context variables (e.g., trainer style and ability, training method, training transfer factors); and social context variables (e.g., family support, labor market and industry trends, views of peers and family toward work or unemployment, parental economic status).

Indeed, a number of studies have recognized the effect of several context variables on trainee attitudes, trainee behavior and performance, and training effectiveness. For example, some work and organizational context variables which affect trainees and training effectiveness include organizational climate (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Eddy, Glad, & Wilkins, 1967; Kozlowski & Hults, 1987; Noe & Wilk, 1993; Ostroff & Ford, 1989; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978; Schneider, 1975 & 1985); situational constraints (Ostroff & Ford, 1989; Schneider, 1978); socialization processes (Feldman, 1989; Jones, 1986; Pond & Hay, 1989; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992); supervisory or management support (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Feldman, 1989; Ford, Quinones, Sego, & Sorra, 1992; Kozlowski & Hults, 1987; Morgan, Blonsky, & Rosen, 1970; Noe, 1986; Noe & Wilk, 1993; Sedwick & Bodwell, 1971; Triandis, Feldman, Weldon, & Harvey, 1975); and reference/peer group characteristics and work group support (Baratta & McManus, 1992; Ford et al., 1992; Gist, 1987; Noe, 1986; Noe & Wilk, 1993; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992, Triandis et al., 1975).

Further, some examples of training context variables that impact trainees and training effectiveness include training length or intensity (Hasenfeld & Weaver, 1996); instructional methodology and training content (Azrin, Philip, Thienes-Hontos, & Besalel, 1980; Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Eddy et al., 1967; Gist, 1989; Gist, Bavetta, & Stevens, 1990; Goldstein, 1989); trainer or instructor expectations (Eden & Ravid, 1982); training setting (Warr & Bunce, 1995); entry

into training or degree of choice (Azrin et al., 1980; Baldwin, Magjuka, & Loher, 1991; Clark, Dobbins, & Ladd, 1993; Hasenfeld & Weaver, 1996; Hicks & Klimoski, 1987; Mathieu, Martineau, & Tannenbaum, 1993; Mathieu, Tannenbaum, & Salas, 1992; Riccio & Hasenfeld, 1996; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992); framing, labeling, and notification of training (Hicks & Klimoski, 1987; Martocchio, 1992; Quinones, 1995); training transfer factors (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Clark et al., 1993; Ford et al., 1992; Gist et al., 1990; Goldstein, 1989; Huczynski & Lewis, 1980; Noe, 1986; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1991); and training situational constraints such as inadequate training practice time or limited training resources (Mathieu et al., 1992; Mathieu et al., 1993; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992).

Lastly, some examples of social context variables that impact trainees and training effectiveness include societal deficits, system restrictions, and social inequities, (Chilman, 1992; Triandis et al., 1975); welfare reform policy and related funding (Casse, 1997; Churchill, 1995; Edelman, 1997; Vosler & Ozawa, 1992); the labor market, demographic changes, unemployment rates, and jobs gap (Dooley & Catalano, 1988; Edelman, 1997; Goldstein, 1989; Kerlin, 1993; McCloskey, 1996; Opulente & Mattaini, 1997); the economy (Casse, 1997); economic development and industry trends (Holstein & Cohen, 1997); societal and family views towards public assistance or unemployment (Churchill, 1995; Hasenfeld & Weaver, 1996; Kerlin, 1993; Liem & Liem, 1988; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978); industry hiring wages and available benefits (Alter, 1996;

Churchill, 1995; Harris, 1993 & 1996; Kerlin, 1993; Nichols, 1979); transmission of intergenerational unemployment, poverty or welfare dependence (Caputo, 1997; Dolinksy, Caputo, & O'Kane, 1989; Duncan & Hoffman, 1988; Tiggemann & Winefield, 1989); and other barriers to employment and training such as the lack of reliable transportation or inadequate child care (Alter, 1996; Brooks & Buckner, 1996; Edin & Lein, 1997).

Although a thorough examination of context variables is beyond the scope of the current study, it is still important to recognize that the literature overwhelmingly suggests that such variables can and do influence pre-training attitudes, training outcomes, and post-training behavior. However, it is the intent of this study to mainly focus on some of the pre-training attitudinal variables that appear to be the most recurring in the literature on training for the unemployed, and which have been shown to be meaningful in the experience of unemployment, job-search behavior, and job procurement--particularly for public assistance recipients. This research study in no way intends to imply that the pre-training and outcome variables selected for exploration are the only factors that are important to training designed for unemployed individuals.

Self-Efficacy

In this section of the study an overview of the psychological construct of self-efficacy is provided, followed by a discussion about self-efficacy s value in the organizational context. A review of previous research on self-efficacy and its

important relationship to understanding the attitudes and behaviors of the unemployed is presented next. In addition, research highlighting the relationship between self-efficacy and the construct of behavioral plasticity is also discussed, followed by an overview of the current study s research hypotheses in relation to general and specific self-efficacy.

Definition of Self-Efficacy

While much of the research on self-efficacy has been generated by the field of Psychology, most of the research on welfare reform efforts however has been conducted within the disciplines of Social Work and Sociology--with the exception of the studies on the hard-to-employ or hard-core unemployed (HCU) (e.g., Friedlander & Greenberg, 1971; Goodman, Salipante, & Paransky, 1973; Kirchner & Lucas, 1972; O'Leary, 1972; Salipante & Goodman, 1976; Triandis et al., 1975) conducted in the field of Psychology, primarily before the introduction of the concept of self-efficacy. Given such, much of the literature on poverty, unemployment, and job procurement as it relates to public or social assistance recipients does not use the term self-efficacy per se, but rather focuses on related concepts like attitudes, self-image, feelings of defeat or helplessness, self-esteem, and statements of ability or inability (e.g., DeMott, 1995; Henly & Danziger, 1996; Opulente & Mattaini, 1997; Vosler & Ozawa, 1992).

Self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1977, 1986), is defined as one's judgments, beliefs, or evaluations about how well one can perform tasks or

behaviors. As further noted by Bandura (1986), self-efficacy is "concerned not with the skills one has but with judgments of what one can do with whatever skills one possesses" (p. 391). Two types of self-efficacy have been focused on in the literature (e.g., Eden & Kinnar, 1991), namely general self-efficacy and specific self-efficacy. General self-efficacy refers to a person's beliefs about self-competence to successfully perform activities in general, whereas specific self-efficacy refers to one s confidence in one s ability to successfully perform specific tasks or behaviors such as job-search activities or goal-setting and decision-making tasks. Further, Gist and Mitchell (1992), and Mitchell, Hopper, Daniels, George-Falvy, and James (1994) have asserted that an assessment of self-efficacy really reflects more than just an ability assessment, but also reflects a forward-looking prediction of how hard one will work--thus self-efficacy also includes some motivational components as well.

According to Bandura (1991) "people's beliefs in their efficacy influence the choices they make, their aspirations, how much effort they mobilize in a given endeavor, and how long they persevere in the face of difficulties and setbacks" (p. 257). Individuals with high self-efficacy beliefs, as further explained by Bandura (1982, 1991), put forth more effort to master challenging tasks than individuals with low self-efficacy beliefs. Eden and Kinnar (1991) concurred that self-efficacy positively affects one's willingness to commit oneself to the performance of a demanding task or challenge, and further explained that those

who harbor low self-efficacy are more likely to evade situations that would test their abilities. These individuals, as explained by the researchers, choose instead to fulfill their own prophecy of inability or incompetence by removing themselves from perceived challenging circumstances.

In addition, van Ryn and Vinokur (1992) explained that self-efficacy beliefs have been shown to increase one's likelihood of performing the behavior, persisting at the behavior, and improving the quality of performance. The researchers noted that since self-efficacy generates expectancies that one can perform a behavior successfully, the person's intentions to perform the behavior are likely to increase as well. On the other hand, if one has little confidence or self-efficacy in his ability to execute a behavior, then intentions to perform the behavior are likely to be undermined despite any attitudes toward the behavior (van Ryn & Vinokur, 1992).

Organizational and Training Research on Self-Efficacy

Gist (1987) further explored the concept of self-efficacy, but focused specifically on the value of the construct in an organizational context. To date, numerous other studies have been conducted on self-efficacy and have found that the construct is indeed related to various factors in the work and training environment including managers' organizational attainments (Wood & Bandura, 1989); motivation to learn (Quinones, 1995); diving training success (Ryman & Biersner, 1975); acquisition and use of computer software skills (Gist, Schwoerer,

& Rosen, 1989; Hill, Smith, & Mann, 1987); training fulfillment (Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, & Cannon-Bowers, 1991); employee self-management of job attendance (Frayne & Latham, 1987; Latham & Frayne, 1989); and acquisition and maintenance of interpersonal skills (Gist, Stevens, & Bavetta, 1991).

Further, others have reported relationships between self-efficacy beliefs and performance in military training programs (Tannenbaum et al., 1991); opportunities to perform job tasks (Ford et al., 1992); mid-course and post-training self-efficacy (Mathieu et al., 1993; Saks, 1995; Tannenbaum et al., 1991); idea generation skills of managers (Gist, 1989); role orientation for organizational newcomers (Jones, 1986); willingness to volunteer (Eden & Kinnar, 1991); organizational commitment and intention to quit the profession (Saks, 1995); tasks previews and task performance (Pond & Hay, 1989); decision processes and decision performance (Stone, 1994); setting goals and their relationship to task strategies and performance (Locke, Frederick, Lee, & Bobko, 1984); performance during skill acquisition (Mitchell et al., 1994; Noe, 1986; Warr & Bunce, 1995); training context (Martocchio, 1992, 1994); performance on training tasks (Cole & Hopkins, 1995; Mathieu et al., 1993); pre-training expectations and training reactions (Martocchio, 1994; Mathieu et al., 1993); and turnover and termination (Saks, 1995; Sherer, Maddux, Mercadante, Prentice-Dunn, Jacobs, & Rogers, 1982).

Gist et al. (1991), for example, examined the effects of self-efficacy and a training process on the acquisition and maintenance of complex interpersonal (i.e., negotiation) skills. The researchers found that pre-training self-efficacy was positively associated with initial and delayed (7-weeks post-training) performance on the task of salary negotiation. Likewise, Saks (1995) examined the concept of self-efficacy, specifically its effects on the relationship between training and newcomers' adjustment during their first year of employment in accounting firms. The results of the study revealed that participants' initial self-efficacy was significantly correlated with turnover, job performance, and post-training self-efficacy. The results also indicated that post-training self-efficacy was significantly correlated with the variables of professional commitment and intention to quit the organization.

It is clear from the previous studies that self-efficacy has emerged as an important variable in training related studies. Indeed, researchers (e.g., Latham, 1989; Martocchio, 1994; Saks, 1995) have maintained that much reward could be gained from an increased understanding of the role of self-efficacy in relation to training effectiveness, training outcome expectancies, and even post-training performance. In fact, Gist (1987) cautioned that delivering knowledge without regard to the levels of trainee self-efficacy may actually hamper learning. As concluded by some, given the important role of self-efficacy, it should not only be assessed as an outcome measure, but also as a process variable, and even as an

antecedent of training (Gist, 1987; Kraiger, Ford, & Salas, 1993; Mathieu et al., 1993; Noe, 1986; Tannenbaum et al., 1991; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992).

Self-Efficacy and Attitudes/Behaviors of the Unemployed

To date, much of the research on self-efficacy has been conducted in either educational or organizational settings, using students or employed individuals respectively. Fewer studies have been conducted, however, on the construct of self-efficacy as it relates to unemployed individuals. Even fewer studies have examined the variable as an antecedent of training with individuals who are unemployed. Given the fact that previous research has clearly substantiated the key role that self-efficacy plays in understanding behavior and performance in work and training settings, it seems only logical to also focus on this construct when studying unemployed individuals--be they voluntarily or involuntarily unemployed (i.e., unemployed due to plant closings, downsizing, or temporary lay-offs).

Indeed, several other studies have maintained the importance of self-efficacy in understanding the attitudes, behaviors, and experiences of the unemployed. Case in point, research has shown a relationship between self-efficacy and job-search efforts among unemployed individuals (Eden & Aviram, 1993; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Saks & Ashforth, 1999; Schmit, Amel, & Ryan, 1993; van Ryn & Vinokur, 1992; Wanberg, Kanfer, & Rotundo, 1999); willingness to engage in career-related activities of non-traditional occupations

(Nevill & Schlecker, 1988); financial independence self-efficacy in AFDC recipients (Houser, D'Andrea, and Daniels, 1992); career decision making (Bandura, 1982; Hackett & Betz, 1981; Taylor & Betz, 1983); reassurance of worth in disadvantaged job training participants (Wenzel, 1993); vocational/career interests (Lent & Hackett, 1987; Lent, Larkin, & Brown, 1989); coping with career-related events (Stumpf, Brief, & Hartman, 1987); effects of unemployment (Feather & O'Brien, 1986; Wanberg & Marchese, 1994); and coping with unemployment or job loss (Latack, Kinicki, & Prussia, 1995).

Houser et al. (1992), for example, purported that the theory of self-efficacy as proposed by Bandura (1977, 1986) offers a potentially effective method for developing strategies and programs to alter and change the self-efficacy and motivation of welfare recipients and the chronically unemployed. The researchers explained that knowledge about self-efficacy may be particularly important for individuals in social programs, in which many participants experience lower motivation and self-confidence due to experiences that may have inhibited the development of strong feelings of self-efficacy. In an effort to test their suppositions, Houser et al. (1992), developed a program designed to increase self-efficacy for individuals on AFDC. The results of the study revealed that the program employed to boost self-efficacy, resulted in significant changes in participants' specific self-efficacy over a relatively short time period. The authors subsequently concluded that it is important that researchers identify the

relationship between self-efficacy and positive short- and long-term behaviors for welfare recipients and the chronically unemployed.

In addition, Eden and Aviram (1993), also suggested that research needs to be conducted to gain a better understanding of the role of self-efficacy in facilitating employment for unemployed individuals. Self-efficacy, as discussed by the researchers, should be considered an important variable in unemployment research, because people whether unemployed or employed derive a major portion of their self-efficacy from work. The authors further explained that self-efficacy declines as the chronically unemployed or hard-to-employ cease believing in their ability to gain employment, and that the more prolonged the unemployment the greater the decline in self-efficacy. At the same time, according to the researchers, self-efficacy plays a crucial positive role because it has a motivating effect on the unemployed to actually seek jobs. Once the unemployed finds a job, declining self-efficacy rebounds and the cycle ends--thus, job procurement plays a restorative function (Eden & Aviram, 1993).

Likewise, Kanfer and Hulin (1985), also discussed the relationship between self-efficacy and employment efforts of the unemployed. As explained by the researchers, low self-efficacy in one's ability to perform a vital job search will likely inhibit job search efforts and thus prolong unemployment. In agreement, Stokes and Cochrane (1984), noted that researchers have found that during a period of high employment, if individuals continually fail to secure

employment and if there is social stigma attached to being unemployed, then feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt may eventually arise. Kanfer and Hulin (1985), have maintained that further research is therefore needed which examines individual differences in self-efficacy in relation to the specific behaviors that are required in order for individuals to transition from unemployment to employment. Agreement was echoed by Wenzel (1993), who posited that there is indeed a need for studies that examine the relationship between self-efficacy and actual job procurement among the disadvantaged unemployed. Since research has demonstrated that disadvantaged persons tend to underestimate their capabilities, as further explained by Wenzel (1993), it is important for researchers to understand the components that build confidence in the unemployed and/or underemployed relative to job procurement capabilities and successful employment experiences.

Further, other researchers (e.g., Gist, 1987; Goldstein, 1986; Goldstein & Gilliam, 1990; Offerman & Gowing, 1990) have suggested that training programs and other interventions aiming to assist the unemployed or disadvantaged must consider the role of trainee attitudes and characteristics such as motivation and self-efficacy. Indeed, Goldstein (1986) noted that solutions to the issues of the disadvantaged or hard-core unemployed may reside in focusing on training programs in remedial education, specific job skills, as well as motivational or attitudinal factors (e.g., self-efficacy). In agreement, Houser et al., (1992),

contended that training programs or interventions need to be developed that systematically and comprehensively address the special needs of the disadvantaged unemployed or welfare recipients, in terms of their career self-efficacy and ultimately their self-sufficiency and independence from public support.

Several other research studies on unemployment have similarly concluded that the concept of self-efficacy should be considered in programs targeting the unemployed. For example, Eden and Aviram (1993) found that pre-existing general self-efficacy was significantly related to job-search efforts in unemployed individuals. Further, van Ryn and Vinokur (1992) conducted a longitudinal randomized field study to examine the effects of job-search self-efficacy and other variables (e.g., attitudes toward job-search behavior, intentions to engage in job-search activity), on actual job-search behavior. The research revealed that job-search self-efficacy was a direct determinant of both job-search intention and job-seeking behavior. Just as importantly, the researchers also found that job-search self-efficacy had relatively durable effects on intention to engage in job search overtime, despite repeated failures to get a job. Subsequently, the researchers concluded that interventions that focus on enhancing self-efficacy are promising, especially in cases where success requires persistent coping behaviors over an extended period of time in spite of rejections or setbacks--which may actually be

the case with many individuals who are attempting to transition from welfare to employment.

Indeed, Kanfer and Hulin (1985) studied attitudinal (e.g., self-efficacy expectations, perceived reemployment difficulty) and behavioral variables (e.g., job search behavior, behavioral intentions) associated with employment following a period of involuntary job termination. They found that job search self-efficacy expectations were significantly related to reemployment status. Those participants who were reemployed at the time of follow-up (one-month later), tended to be the ones who had initially reported a higher level of confidence in their job search skills, and had engaged in a greater number of job search behaviors than their counterparts who were still unemployed. Thus, reemployment success was related to individual differences in job search self-efficacy expectations and job-search behavior. The researchers, therefore, concluded that training programs for the unemployed should place emphasis on improving trainees' confidence in job seeking skills and increasing the number of behavioral actions directly related to job search.

Self-Efficacy and Behavioral Plasticity

Similarly, other researchers have upheld the importance of exploring the role of self-efficacy in training, but have also alluded to a need for research that examines which trainees benefit most from self-efficacy interventions and other training initiatives (e.g., Caplan, Vinokur, Price, & van Ryn, 1989; Creed, Hicks,

& Machin, 1998; Eden & Aviram, 1993; Eden & Kinnar, 1991; Gist et al., 1991, Saks, 1995). In fact, some have suggested that the degree of training effectiveness may really be contingent upon the strength of a trainee's self-efficacy prior to training. That is, that some self-efficacy training interventions may be more effective for trainees with low pre-training self-efficacy than for those who enter training with high self-efficacy beliefs. This effect, formally termed by Brockner (1988) as behavioral plasticity, refers to the extent to which individuals actions are susceptible to influence by external and social cues (p. 27). As explained by Brockner (1988) the behavioral plasticity hypothesis suggests that individuals with low self-esteem/self-efficacy are more susceptible to influence by organizational events, seem to have a greater need for others approval, and tend to have a greater susceptibility to influence by negative feedback than their high self-esteem/self-efficacy counterparts. Thus, programs or interventions that work when applied to persons with low self-efficacy may not work with individuals high in self-efficacy, primarily as explained by Eden and Kinnar (1991), because the attitudes and behaviors of individuals with low initial self-efficacy are more yielding to external and social influences.

In fact, evidence of behavioral plasticity was found in a study on unemployment and self-efficacy conducted by Eden and Aviram (1993). Specifically, the randomized field study examined the impact of self-efficacy training on job-search activity and reemployment for individuals who had been

unemployed for up to four-months. The researchers found that pre-existing or initial self-efficacy had a positive effect on job-search behavior and that boosting general self-efficacy, through a self-efficacy augmentation workshop, caused an intensification of job-search activity particularly among those with lower initial self-efficacy levels. Overall, the study revealed that those with high initial self-efficacy were more likely to become reemployed. In addition and consistent with the hypothesis of behavioral plasticity, the researchers found that self-efficacy training increased employment among those participants low in initial self-efficacy, but had no impact on those participants who were high in initial self-efficacy. Such findings, as further noted by the researchers, indicate that initial or pre-training general self-efficacy may actually moderate the practical utility of training.

Moreover, Gueron (1987) also presented evidence which suggested that program impact varies from person to person depending on pre-training individual attitudes and characteristics. As noted by the researcher, some programs have a stronger impact on the unemployed--publicassistance recipients in particular -- who have obstacles to employment as opposed to those who are more job-ready. Specifically, the researcher found that there was a larger payoff in training and job placement for the long-term poor unemployed than for participants who were the most job ready (i.e., those who would likely find jobs on their own without

training intervention). Thus, training was not equally beneficial for all program participants.

In conclusion, it is therefore not only essential to determine the role of self-efficacy on training outcomes for the unemployed, but also just as important to assess the degree to which certain training programs are more likely to help certain participants--given such differences as their pre-training self-efficacy levels. Indeed, research has demonstrated that there is heterogeneity in the unemployment experience (e.g., Hepworth, 1980; Leana & Feldman, 1991; Klein, Amundson, & Borgen, 1992; Wanberg & Marchese, 1994), therefore it should not be assumed that all unemployed individuals need the same types of interventions. In fact, previous studies, as noted in the current study's literature review, have convincingly shown that unemployed individuals with low pre-training self-efficacy benefit more from different training components than those with high initial self-efficacy. Indeed, Eden and Kinnar (1991) have even cautioned that a failure to distinguish between trainees who are high and low on variables like self-esteem and self-efficacy might certainly cause their differential effects to independent variables to be less obvious.

Further, Gist et al., (1989) have also stressed the need for identifying pre-training individual differences relative to self-efficacy, and even suggested that there may be some merit in designing pre-training interventions to enhance self-efficacy prior to training for trainees who indicate low levels of pre-training self-

efficacy. In making a distinction between trainees (i.e., low vs. high self-efficacy) prior to training, it should then be easier to determine which trainees benefit most from different types of training programs. Indeed, as indicated by Baldwin and Ford (1988), there is a need for optimal matches between trainee individual characteristics and training-program design and content. If such suggestions are not considered, then a "one-size-fits-all" training stance could result in over-training for some participants and under-training for others--training ineffectiveness. Ultimately, the end result would be a waste of trainee time and a misuse of valuable training dollars.

The current study explored self-efficacy as a pre-training individual differences variable as opposed to an intervention variable. Given such, instead of designing a workshop to augment general or specific self-efficacy and training participants on such constructs, the study consisted of employment and welfare-to-work training programs that already use some type of training curriculum designed to enhance ability in job-search skills and other employment-related efforts. Given the goals of most local employment training interventions, the presupposition was made that although agencies may not formally or specifically refer to components of their training curriculum as self-efficacy enhancement or behavior modeling training, some aspects of this type of training--particularly in relation to the variables of general self-efficacy, job-search or pre-employment skills self-efficacy, and employment commitment--are still being implemented.

Research Hypotheses--Self-Efficacy

Based on previous research on self-efficacy and training, the hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1a: After controlling for individual differences in demographic and background variables, pre-training general self-efficacy (GSE) (Time1 (T1) and Time 2 (T2)) will be positively and significantly related to job-search behavior and frequency (Time 3 (T3)) and to employment status (Time 3 (T3)) (cf. Eden & Aviram, 1993; Gist et al., 1989; Gist et al., 1991; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Saks, 1995; van Ryn & Vinokur, 1992).

Hypothesis 1b: After controlling for individual differences in demographic and background variables, pre-training specific self-efficacy (SSE) (T1-T2) will be positively and significantly related to job-search behavior and frequency (T3) and to employment status (T3) (cf. Eden & Aviram, 1993; Gist et al., 1989; Gist et al., 1991; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Saks, 1995; van Ryn & Vinokur, 1992).

Hypothesis 1c: In relation to the behavioral plasticity hypothesis, it is predicted that trainees high on the pre-training measure of general self-efficacy (GSE) will respond differently to the training interventions (designed by the respective training agencies) than trainees who indicate low levels of initial GSE. An examination of results will reveal that the employment training interventions will raise job-search behavior and frequency and do so to a greater degree for

those with low rather than high initial GSE (cf. Brockner, 1988; Eden & Aviram, 1993; Eden & Kinnar, 1991; Gist et al., 1989; Gist et al., 1991; Gueron, 1987).

Hypothesis 1d: In relation to the behavioral plasticity hypothesis, it is predicted that trainees high on the pre-training measure of specific self-efficacy (SSE) will respond differently to the training interventions (designed by the respective training agencies) than trainees who indicate low levels of initial SSE. An examination of results will reveal that the employment training interventions will raise job-search behavior and frequency and do so to a greater degree for those with low rather than high initial SSE (cf. Brockner, 1988; Eden & Aviram, 1993; Eden & Kinnar, 1991; Gist et al., 1989; Gist et al., 1991; Gueron, 1987).

Employment Commitment

In this section of the study, an overview of the psychological construct of employment commitment is provided, followed by a review of research that highlights the important role of employment commitment in understanding the effects of unemployment particularly on those who receive some form of public assistance. Next, some focus is given to the relationship between employment commitment and the organizational variables of self-efficacy, job-search behavior and organizational commitment. In addition, research highlighting the relationship between the constructs of employment commitment and unemployment negativity is discussed, followed by an overview of the study s research hypotheses in relation to the variable of employment commitment.

Employment Commitment and Unemployment Research

Employment commitment as defined by Banks and Henry (1993) is the degree to which a person wants to be in paid employment or values the importance of having a paid job--thus it refers to the importance of work to an individual. The authors have posited that the concept of employment commitment plays a crucial role in understanding the effects of unemployment.

The variable of employment commitment appears to be very pertinent to studies focusing on welfare-to-work programs, particularly since some individuals question whether or not welfare recipients really value employment and self-sufficiency. Indeed, while some have suggested that welfare recipients are lazy, irresponsible, or not really interested in employment (e.g., Casse, 1997; Dickson & Tanner, 1996; Tanner, 1995; Whitman & Gest, 1995), others have overwhelmingly argued that most welfare recipients have a strong work ethic and would actually work if they were given feasible employment opportunities (e.g., Edin & Lein, 1997; Gueron, 1987; Hagen & Lurie, 1995; Halter, 1996; Henly & Danziger, 1996; Mills, 1996; Opulente & Mattaini, 1997; Schneider, 2000).

Taken as a whole, a great deal of the literature in this area concurs that most people on welfare would rather work instead of receiving public assistance. For example, Edin and Lein (1997) noted that most welfare recipients have worked in the past and want to work in the future. The researchers found that 85 percent of the recipients that they interviewed expressed a strong desire to leave

welfare for work. Likewise, Hagen and Lurie (1995) contended that research has consistently shown that welfare recipients as a group really desire employment. In agreement, Henly and Danziger (1996) argued that several stereotypes about welfare recipients are pervasive but unfounded. They offered, instead, data to contradict these stereotypic assumptions and subsequently concluded that there is little evidence to support the belief that welfare recipients lack attachment to values of work and self-sufficiency. Further still, Opulente and Mattaini (1997) explained that the welfare system is actually highly aversive to most recipients. In fact, the researchers have asserted that most recipients want to work, and would work, given the presence of necessary antecedents such as available jobs and required skills.

While Tanner (1995) concurred that there is no evidence to support the stereotype that people receiving welfare are lazy, he posited however that people remain on welfare because there are economic incentives for doing so. The author explained that since the combined tax-free value of welfare benefits is almost equal to the income that can be earned at many entry-level or low-paying jobs, the decision to choose welfare over work is a rational one, rather than one made because of a lack of a work ethic. Likewise, Nichols (1979) provided evidence which indicated that there will be increases in the probability of AFDC mothers working, if they engage in training which raises their actual wages. Work is therefore an incentive over welfare when it presents the opportunities for

recipients to increase their earnings. Thus, as alluded to by Tanner (1995) and other researchers (e.g., Caputo, 1989; Dickson & Tanner, 1996; Hershenson, 2001) in this area, certain antecedents (e.g., higher pay for entry-level work, clarification of work values, etc.) are necessary if work is to become a realistic alternative for welfare.

In fact, several researchers have suggested that if specific antecedents are addressed, or certain barriers to employment and self-sufficiency identified and reduced, then not only would individuals be able to transition from welfare to employment, but in most cases they would also be committed to doing so (e.g., Brooks & Buckner, 1996; Caputo, 1989; Carter et. al, 1997; Dickinson, 1986; Edin & Lein, 1997; Laabs, 1998; Opulente & Mattaini, 1997; Stokes & Brasch, 1997). Such barriers--some of which are actually context variables-- that some consider to be at the core of welfare dependency, include a lack of transportation, a lack of affordable and quality child care, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, inadequate housing or homelessness, a lack of basic skills or educational competency, a lack of motivation or self-confidence, physical or mental health problems, and little or no work experience, just to name a few. These barriers, if present, will inhibit a person from moving toward job readiness and employment. Thus, what may appear to be an overall lack of employment commitment may actually be a general inability to address a number of barriers that tend to impede one's transition towards independence.

The concept of employment commitment as it relates to unemployment has been explored by several researchers (e.g., Kanfer, Wanberg, & Kantrowitz, 2001; Pernice, 1996; Rowley & Feather, 1987; Warr, 1982) in an effort to determine any antecedent or outcome variables that are related to the construct. Banks and Henry (1993) for example, conducted a longitudinal study to determine whether employment commitment was a stable, dispositional aspect of work attitudes or a situationally based construct. The researchers found that employment commitment varied according to local labor market opportunities. That is, employment commitment was directly related to the social context variable of labor market unemployment levels. Specifically, people in locales with lower unemployment levels were found to have higher employment commitment than those in locales with higher levels of unemployment. Thus, employment commitment was not found to be stable over time.

The study also revealed that people closest to the labor market displayed the strongest commitment to employment, while those in an academic route showed less commitment to employment. In particular, individuals who viewed themselves as having a more direct route to employment exhibited stronger employment commitment than their counterparts who considered themselves to have more of an indirect route to employment (Banks & Henry, 1993). It is therefore conceivable, that a person who possesses employable skills and is able to transition immediately from welfare to work or has to complete only one

training program before becoming employed, should have a higher level of employment commitment than a person who has to complete an educational requirement and several training programs before she can access employment opportunities.

Employment Commitment in Relation to Other Unemployment Variables

The variable of employment commitment was also examined by Wanberg and Marchese (1994) in a study designed to assess its relationship with other variables germane to the unemployment experience. Results from the study indicated a relationship between level of employment commitment and job-seeking self-efficacy or confidence. Specifically, the researchers found that some individuals with high levels of employment commitment also had high levels of confidence in their own job-seeking skills, while those low on employment commitment were found to have low scores on job-seeking confidence.

In a similar study, Wanberg et al., (1996), assessed not just the relationship between job-seeking confidence and employment commitment, but also examined the relationship between commitment to employment and the dependent variables of job-seeking intention and job-seeking frequency. The researchers found that employment commitment was significantly and positively related to both job-seeking intention and job-seeking frequency. Individuals with higher levels of employment commitment tended to indicate greater intentions toward seeking employment in the upcoming months, and actually engaged in more job-seeking

behavior than those with lower levels of employment commitment. Likewise, other researchers (e.g., Feather & O'Brien, 1987; Wanberg et al., 1999) have also found a positive relationship between employment commitment and job-seeking behavior of the unemployed. Indeed, results from a meta-analysis conducted by Kanfer et al., (2001) also showed employment commitment to be positively and significantly associated with job-search behavior of the unemployed.

Further, some researchers have suggested that the concept of employment commitment as it relates to unemployment warrants further research, because employment commitment may actually be a partial precursor to the development of organizational commitment (Banks & Henry, 1993). If employment commitment is really somewhat of an indication of one's level of commitment or involvement and affective attachment to an organization (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979), then both employers and trainers could indeed benefit from further study in the area. Employers could benefit by assessing employment commitment prior to hiring a prospective employee. An assessment which focuses on identifying those applicants with high levels of employment commitment could perhaps help to reduce the frequency of organizational turnover.

In addition, gaining a better understanding of the relationship between the two variables would be of interest to employment trainers, because such information could possibly be used to design specialized programs to increase a trainee's level of employment commitment with the intentions of decreasing job-

hopping or job attrition. It is possible that a precursory relationship between employment commitment and organizational commitment might be found in the relationship between employment commitment and training program commitment or attrition, if such is found to exist. How beneficial and cost-effective it would be to employment trainers and organizations, if they could determine from assessments of pre-training employment commitment levels which prospective employees or trainees are most likely to leave the training program prematurely. Such information, if accurately assessed, might also provide some indication about those trainees who if hired or promoted would also ultimately leave the job prematurely. Some researchers (e.g., Mowday et al., 1979) have in fact maintained that there is a need for more information on some of the major antecedents of organizational commitment. Perhaps, particularly in relation to unemployed individuals, employment commitment may be one of the best places to focus some research attention.

Employment Commitment in Relation to Unemployment Negativity

Still, other researchers have explored other variables that appear to influence or temper employment commitment levels of unemployed individuals. Taris et al. (1995), for example, have asserted that individuals will be more committed to finding employment if they perceive that there are advantages to being employed, and also perceive that those advantages outweigh the advantages of being unemployed. Specifically, the more advantageous employment is

perceived to be, then the more committed the person will be to finding employment and the less satisfied the individual will be with the current state of unemployment. Thus, unemployed individuals will report more commitment towards finding employment if they are experiencing a great deal of dissatisfaction or negativity from their current state of unemployment than they would if such discomfort or distress were not present. As further alluded to by the authors, if the current state of unemployment is perceived to be negative and there is a high commitment to finding paid work, then the individual will be more likely to engage in job-seeking behavior. Employment commitment, therefore, is influenced in part by one's perceptions about the advantages or benefits related to employment or unemployment. Other studies (e.g., Feather & Davenport, 1981) have indeed confirmed such hypotheses.

The construct of employment commitment clearly deserves further research. As suggested by Fryer and Payne (1986), more information is needed on the construct of employment commitment, because such research could play a role in increasing our understanding about the overall unemployment experience. Indeed, previous unemployment-related studies have indicated that there is a relationship between the variables of employment commitment and unemployment negativity (i.e., discomfort with the current state of unemployment), but have also concluded that the two constructs are not one in the same (e.g., Caplan et al., 1989; Pernice, 1996; Wanberg et al., 1996; Warr &

Jackson, 1984). Therefore, both variables should be focused upon when assessing the behaviors and attitudes of the unemployed.

For example, Fryer and Payne (1986) alluded to a relationship between the variables of employment commitment and unemployment negativity. They posited that unemployed people with high levels of employment commitment will experience more unemployment negativity than unemployed individuals with low levels of commitment towards finding paid employment. Thus, the relationship between the variables appeared to be of an antecedent variable (i.e., employment commitment) and dependent variable (i.e., unemployment negativity) nature. The hypothesis was actually confirmed in a study conducted by Banks and Henry (1993) who reported that individuals with strong employment commitment were likely to have greater psychological distress or anxiety during unemployment than those with low employment commitment. The researchers concluded that the variable of employment commitment actually moderates the relationship between unemployment and unemployment negativity or dissatisfaction.

Similarly, Wanberg and Marchese (1994) also found a significant relationship between the variable of employment commitment and that of ability to cope during unemployment. Specifically, the study revealed that those who were better suited to cope with the state of unemployment were generally those with low levels of employment commitment. Thus, individuals with lower levels of commitment towards finding paid employment tended to experience less

unemployment negativity, and actually coped better with unemployment than their counterparts with higher levels of employment commitment.

Still further, Jackson, Stafford, Banks, and Warr (1983), conducted a longitudinal study to also examine the role of employment commitment in the unemployment experience. The analyses revealed that although the two constructs of employment commitment and unemployment negativity are indeed different in nature, there is indeed an important relationship between them. More specifically, the researchers found, as did Banks and Henry (1993) and Rowley and Feather (1987), that employment commitment moderates the relationship between unemployment and unemployment negativity or distress. Subsequently, individuals who experience unemployment negatively, in part, are those who tend to have a high level of commitment to finding paid employment (Creed et al, 1998; Jackson et al., 1983). Thus, during the unemployment experience, the degree to which individuals will experience unemployment negativity or dissatisfaction with their current state of unemployment will be contingent upon the degree of value they place on having a paid job.

It is apparent that research clearly suggests that employment commitment plays a role in the unemployment experience and therefore should be examined when exploring the relationship between unemployment, job-seeking behavior, and job procurement. Research also substantiates that the constructs of employment commitment and unemployment negativity are related. Conclusions

vary however as to whether the relationship between the two variables is one of an antecedent, mediator, moderator, or co-variable nature. The current study examined both constructs as pre-training individual differences variables or independent co-variables, as opposed to considering one to be an antecedent or moderator variable and the other an outcome or dependent variable. The variable of unemployment negativity, also being used as a predictor variable in the current study, is discussed in more detail in the next section.

Research Hypotheses--Employment Commitment

Based on previous research on employment commitment, as presented in the literature review, the hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 2a: After controlling for individual differences in demographic and background variables, employment commitment (T1-T2) will be significantly and positively related to job-search behavior and frequency (T3), and to job-search intended effort (T3) (cf. Banks & Henry, 1993; Feather & O'Brien, 1987; Taris et al., 1995; Wanberg et al., 1996).

Hypothesis 2b: The behavioral plasticity hypothesis as it relates to the pre-training measure of employment commitment will be examined as an exploratory hypothesis in this study, since previous studies (e.g., Creed et al, 1998) have examined this relationship and found little significant results. This study will explore whether trainees high on the pre-training measure of employment commitment will respond differently to the employment training interventions

(designed by the respective training agencies) than trainees who indicate low levels of initial employment commitment. Given such, an examination of results is anticipated to reveal that the employment and welfare-to-work training interventions have increased job-search behavior and frequency, and done so to a greater degree for those with low rather than high pre-training employment commitment (cf. Eden & Kinnar, 1991; Gist et al., 1989; Gist et al., 1991; Gueron, 1987).

Unemployment Negativity

In this section of the study, a review of the research on the overall effects of unemployment is provided, followed by an overview of the psychological construct of unemployment negativity. Next, a review of the research on the relationship between unemployment negativity, job-search behavior and job procurement is presented, followed by the current study s research hypotheses in relation to the variable of unemployment negativity.

Research on the Effects of Unemployment and Unemployment Negativity

Numerous studies have reported on the psychological effects and harmful consequences of unemployment (e.g., Banks & Henry, 1993; Dooley & Catalano, 1988; Frost & Clayson, 1991; Furnham, 1982; Kinicki, Prussia, & McKee-Ryan, 2000; Klein et al., 1992; Liem & Rayman, 1982; Sheeran, Abrams, & Orbell, 1995; Vinokur & Caplan, 1987; Vinokur & Schul, 1997). Feather (1992a), and Wanberg and Marchese (1994), for example, reported that overall, the literature

shows that joblessness has a negative impact upon the psychological well-being of an individual. In agreement, Winefield and Tiggemann (1994) stated that extensive studies in the area of unemployment have found that in general, the unemployed exhibit lower self-esteem, greater distress, and are more depressed than the employed. Still, others have found that overtime unemployment tends to increase an individual's level of stress (Frost & Clayson, 1991). As summed up by Fryer and Payne (1986), the data, both longitudinal and cross-sectional, provide evidence that groups of the unemployed have higher average levels of experienced strain and negative feelings, and lower average levels of happiness, present life satisfaction, experience of pleasure and positive feelings in comparison to employed people.

Given such, it seems most appropriate to explore the possible effects of unemployment negativity on job-search behavior and job procurement for individuals attempting to transition from welfare to work. In fact, several researchers (e.g., Creed et al., 1998; Ellis & Taylor, 1983; Kalil, Born, Kunz, & Caudill, 2001; Payne & Hartley, 1987; Steffy, Shaw, & Noe, 1989; Swinburne, 1981; Vinokur & Caplan, 1987; Wanberg, 1997; Winefield, 1995) have maintained that there is a need for more research on factors related to unemployment, in particular those which may be antecedents or consequences of job-search behavior and job procurement.

Unemployment negativity is concerned with how negative, upset, depressed, unhappy, or dissatisfied a person is about his/her current state of unemployment (Taris et al., 1995; Wanberg & Marchese, 1994; Wanberg et al., 1996). Klein et al., (1992), cited studies which suggest that although the unemployment experience is negative in general for most individuals, the intensity of the negative experience differs for individuals however based on actual or perceived causes for unemployment. They explained, for example, that the negativity and social stigma of the unemployment experience are more pronounced for social assistance or welfare recipients than they are for the general unemployed, such as those unemployed due to downsizing, layoffs, plant closings, etc. The researchers further expounded that not only is the negative experience of unemployment more pronounced for social assistance recipients in comparison to the general unemployed, but that recipients of public assistance often experience more pronounced financial deprivation and loss of self-esteem.

Unemployment Negativity and Behaviors of the Unemployed

Kessler et al., (1989) also examined the effects of unemployment, and found that unemployment indeed had substantial effects on an individual's level of distress. Surprisingly, the researchers found that high levels of unemployment-related distress or unemployment negativity, however, did not impede job-search efforts. In addition, individuals experiencing substantial levels of unemployment-related distress did not even have more difficulty in obtaining a new job. In fact,

the research revealed that high levels of distress were actually associated with an increased likelihood of unemployed individuals procuring employment within a one-year follow-up period.

In a similar study on unemployment, Wanberg et al., (1996) found that unemployment negativity was significantly and positively related to both job-seeking intention and job-seeking frequency. Individuals who expressed a great amount of dissatisfaction with their current state of unemployment tended to indicate greater intentions toward seeking employment in the upcoming months, and actually engaged in more job-seeking behavior than their counterparts who initially reported lower levels of unemployment negativity. However, unlike Kessler et al., (1989), Wanberg et al., (1996), did not find a significant correlation between unemployment negativity and actual job procurement or reemployment status. Thus, as supported by the literature, it appears that unemployment negativity or dissatisfaction with one's current state of unemployment tends to be associated with increased job seeking behavior and in some instances even job procurement.

Several researchers have also been interested in determining whether or not there are any residual effects associated with unemployment, particularly any long-term effects from unemployment negativity, once employment has been obtained. Winefield and Tiggemann (1990), for example, posed the question and found that once the unemployed in their study had found employment or had good

prospects for future employment, then their level of psychological well-being tended to improve over time. Kessler et al. (1989), also explored the variable of unemployment residual effects and found that levels of unemployment negativity or distress, declined dramatically for the unemployed in their study once the individuals had found employment. The researchers concluded that the worst psychological effects of unemployment can be minimized if there exist opportunities for employment.

Further, Wanberg (1995) also explored whether unemployment had lasting effects once employment had been obtained. Specifically, the researcher longitudinally assessed whether unemployed individuals tended to take jobs that were less satisfying than those they had before unemployment. The results revealed no residual effects--no trend was shown for individuals to be less satisfied with jobs following a period of unemployment. Thus, as substantiated by the literature, there are no apparent long-term effects from unemployment-related dissatisfaction once employment has been obtained--particularly when such employment is perceived by the individual to be secure.

Unemployment Negativity in Relation to Expectancy-Value, Employment Commitment, and Job-Search Behavior

In order to gain a better understanding about the role of unemployment negativity in facilitating or inhibiting one's transition from unemployment to employment, several researchers have applied the theory of expectancy-value

(Feather, 1959, 1982) in their unemployment studies (e.g., Vinokur & Caplan, 1987). Indeed, Winefield and Tiggemann (1994) suggested that emotional responses to unemployment might possibly be affected by expectations of employment and by commitment to work. The researchers maintained that expectancy-value theory may indeed be useful in understanding disappointment or negativity related to unemployment. Likewise, Feather (1992a) posited that expectancy-value theory is one possible approach to aid our understanding about the effects of unemployment and precursors to job-seeking behavior.

Expectancy-value theory, as explained by Feather (1959, 1982) asserts that a person's actions are related to the expectations that the individual holds and to the person's subjective values or valences about the outcomes that may occur following the action. Within the context of the areas of unemployment and job-search behavior, the theory implies that one should expect to find less evidence of job-seeking behavior among the unemployed: (1) who have a lower level of negativity about their current state of unemployment, (2) who have a lower subjective value about being employed, and (3) who have identified many positive alternatives to having a job. On the other hand, one should find more job-search behavior among those who: (1) are experiencing an intense amount of unemployment negativity, (2) have a high value for employment, and (3) have few, if any, positive alternatives to having a job (Feather 1992a).

Such assumptions were indeed confirmed in studies conducted by Feather and O'Brien (1987) and Feather (1992b), which examined job-seeking behavior among the unemployed. The studies found that there were significant positive correlations between job-seeking behavior and unemployment negativity. Specifically, those participants who felt the most negative about being unemployed were also the ones who were most likely to be seeking employment. On the other hand, those unemployed individuals who were satisfied with the present state of their life and felt less negative about unemployment were less likely to be engaging in job-search efforts.

Likewise, Taris et al., (1995) also utilized the expectancy-value model (Feather, 1982) to explore the behavior of unemployed people. Specifically, the researchers examined, longitudinally, the effects that attitudes toward unemployment have on job procurement--namely whether or not unemployed participants' evaluations about their current state of unemployment affect their job-seeking behavior. The results of the study were similar to those reported by Wanberg et al. (1996), and Kessler et al. (1989). Specifically, Taris et al. (1995), found that the more negative unemployment was considered to be by participants in the study, the greater their intentions to look for a job. In addition, the study showed that an individual's evaluation about his/her state of unemployment was affected by the expected advantages of employment as perceived by the individual. Thus, the more advantages employment was perceived to have, the

more negative the current unemployment situation was evaluated to be. On the other hand, if the current situation of unemployment was perceived to have more advantages than being employed, then the individual tended to express less negativity about being unemployed.

According to Taris et al. (1995), the implications of such results are that certain measures should be taken to make unemployment less attractive, since an unemployed person will not be motivated to look for employment if the current state of unemployment is too appealing. Similarly, Feather (1992a), concluded that future studies of job-seeking behavior should, in fact, explore the alternative activities and goals that exist for unemployed people in their daily lives, because if there exist many positive alternatives to having a job then such could inhibit job-search behavior. Perhaps, current policies like mandated work requirements, strict cumulative life-time limits for assistance, lowered welfare-benefits, and other related sanctions are intended to serve as the necessary measures to make unemployment less palatable and employment more appealing.

Research Hypotheses--Unemployment Negativity

It is evident from previous studies that the construct of unemployment negativity has emerged as an important variable in research on the relationship between unemployment, job-search behavior and frequency, employment status, and job-search intention. Based on previous research on unemployment negativity, the hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 3a: After controlling for individual differences in demographic and background variables, unemployment negativity (T1-T2) will be positively and significantly related to job-search behavior and frequency (T3), employment status (T3), and to job-search intended effort (T3) (cf. Feather, 1992a; Feather, 1992b; Feather & O'Brien, 1987; Kessler et al., 1989; Taris et al., 1995; Wanberg et al., 1996).

Hypothesis 3b: The behavioral plasticity hypothesis as it relates to the pre-training variable of unemployment negativity will be examined as an exploratory hypothesis in this study. Previous studies (e.g., Creed et al, 1998) have examined this relationship and found significant results, that is that participants who reported lower levels of well-being (high unemployment depression and distress) at the beginning of training made greater gains in improving well-being and interest in work by the end of training than their counterparts. However, the current study will assess changes in job-search behavior and frequency in relation to unemployment negativity as opposed to well-being and interest in work.

Given such, this study will explore whether trainees high on the pre-training independent variable of unemployment negativity will respond differently to the employment training interventions (designed by the respective training agencies) than trainees who indicate low levels of initial unemployment negativity. An examination of results is anticipated to reveal that the unemployment and welfare-to-work training interventions have increased job-

search behavior and frequency, and done so to a greater degree for trainees reporting low rather than high initial levels of unemployment negativity (cf. Creed et al, 1998; Eden & Kinnar, 1991; Gist et al., 1989).

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Participants

Trainees participating in employment readiness training programs being conducted in a metropolitan city in North Carolina were included in this field study. Surveys were administered to all trainees who agreed to participate in the study. A total of 189 pre-training (T1) surveys were administered during orientation at the training sites in the spring of 2002. Pre-training (T2) surveys were administered on-site one to two weeks later during the first week of training, and post-training (T3) surveys were administered on-site during the last week of training. Approximately 20% (38) of the respondents were ineligible for inclusion in the final sample because of employment at the beginning of training. Another 16% (30) of the surveys from respondents were not counted because either the trainees started the training one or more weeks after the program began (i.e., missing pre-training (T1) and/or pre-training (T2) data), or they did not complete the training (i.e., missing post-training (T3) data).

The final sample size for the study was 121 respondents, representing 64% of the total pre-training (T1) sample. This n of 121 was sufficient given that the necessary sample size for a study with the alpha level set at .05, and four independent variables is 84, in order to provide a medium population effect size at a power of .80 (Cohen, 1992). It should also be noted that all trainees who were

present during times when the surveys were administered, agreed to participate in the study, therefore eliminating the need for an assessment of the differences between respondents and non-respondents.

Two pre-training assessments, a post-training assessment, and agency follow-up data were obtained for each participant included in the final sample. In an effort to increase the study's participation rate, each organization was asked to allow for on-site administration of the assessments during mandatory orientation sessions (pre-assessment 1), the first week of training (pre-assessment 2), and during the last week of training (post-assessment). In order to be eligible for participation (inclusion in the final sample), individuals had to be unemployed without any permanent part-time or full time work for pay, and eligible for or receiving some form of public assistance (e.g., AFDC, TANF, JTPA, Medicaid, Vocational Rehabilitation Assistance, etc.). Because the study focused on attitudes and behaviors of the unemployed, surveys received from trainees who were currently employed either full-time or part-time were excluded before analyses were conducted. Thus, all trainees who participated in the study, whether or not they fit the profile for inclusion, received a small stipend of $3.00 after completing the assessments.

Training Programs

The training programs included in this study were located in a metropolitan city in North Carolina. At the time of data collection, spring 2002,

the general state of the economy in North Carolina was not very good due to a recession in the state that has been described by some as being more severe than that in the nation (cf. Walden, 2002). In addition, the tragic event of September 11, 2001, and its aftermath resulted in a dramatic increase in the unemployment rate for the state (e.g., 6.9% for the month of April, 2002) (Cartron & Mejia, 2002; Walden, 2002). Several major employers in the state were experiencing mass layoffs or going out-of-business entirely. Cartron and Mejia (2002) noted that low- and moderate-income families--indeed, characteristic of many of the participants in this study--were more severely affected by the state s sluggish economy due to the significant loss of jobs and income.

The programs in this study all offered training aimed at assisting the unemployed--particularly Work First/TANF, JTPA, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and/or Vocational Rehabilitation clients--with making the transition from unemployment to employment. The training programs emphasized basic education, vocational and pre-employability skills acquisition, life-skills enhancement, and job-search and placement assistance. In addition, the training programs included in this study met the criteria of offering some aspects of pre-employability skills and life-skills training in their curricula. Training programs only emphasizing basic education or specialized training (e.g., computer skills training), absent of any employability skills component, were not included in the study because such programs generally do not consider post-training employment

acquisition to be a primary training objective. These types of programs, therefore, would not have permitted the hypotheses to be properly tested. On the other hand, the training programs included in this study indicated a primary goal of providing unemployed participants with the necessary skills to obtain as well as maintain employment for pay. Thus, the more comprehensive the training program in scope, the more appropriate it was for this study. Indeed, Ting (1991) found that training programs offering basic and job skill training in a classroom setting were more likely to yield higher reemployment probabilities for the unemployed.

In relation to training program duration, welfare-to-work programs tend to vary in length. While some training programs may last for several weeks (2-4 weeks), other training programs however may last for several months (2-4 months) or even several years. The duration of most of the training programs at the local level however, tends to seldom extend beyond three months due to local mandates which limit the amount of time that public assistance recipients can spend in training without being employed in jobs for either pay or work experience. Thus, many of the local employment and welfare-to-work training initiatives occur in relatively short to moderate cycles.

Since one training site did not provide enough trainees across training cycles in order to derive an appropriate sample size for the study within a certain time-frame, it was therefore necessary to gather data from three different training agencies. The agencies were comparable in that the training programs for all three

agencies occurred at similar times during the spring of 2002, give or take one or two weeks. All three agencies were located within 2-3 miles of the city s downtown area or primary business district. Further, each of the three agencies offered full-time customized job-training programs which lasted on the average 8-10 weeks.

The training programs were also similar in overall design or format consisting of basic skills, life skills, pre-employment skills, computer skills, and some type of customized skills component (e.g., Call Center/Customer Service, Data Entry, Banking Technology, Office Information Systems, Medical Reimbursement, Medical Office Administration, etc.). In addition, each training program also provided job fairs, employer days and job placement assistance for program participants. Finally, all three agencies offered training curricula that would prepare their graduates for employment with organizations offering permanent employment, sustainable wages, and opportunities for growth and advancement. For example, Agency A primarily focused on employment opportunities in the areas of data entry, customer service, and medical office administration. Agency B targeted employers in banking and customer service, while Agency C focused mainly on employers in retail operations, customer service, and office technology.

Procedure

Participants were recruited from training agencies providing programs for the unemployed. To be eligible as a respondent, an individual had to be currently unemployed (engaged in no full-time or permanent part-time work for pay), and had to be eligible for or receiving some form of public assistance (e.g., AFDC, TANF, JTPA, Medicaid, Vocational Rehabilitation Assistance, WIA Assistance, etc.). Responses received from full-time or permanent part-time employed participants were not included in the final data analyses.

At the beginning of training, a general introduction about the study and its goals was provided. All trainees were then asked to complete a questionnaire designed to assess the variables of pre-training self-efficacy, employment commitment, unemployment negativity, and job-search behavior and frequency. Social support and encouragement, and social support employment status questions were also included for post-hoc exploration and agency purposes. Participants were also asked to provide responses to the questions pertaining to background and demographic variables. In an effort to control for the effect of regression towards the mean, the pre-training questionnaire was administered once during training orientation and again at the beginning of the actual training program. Thus, a pre-training (Time 1), pre-training (Time 2), post training (Time 3) data collection strategy was used (see Figure 1 for the diagram of the research design used in this study). Administration of the questionnaire

immediately before training helped to ensure that trainee responses were indeed antecedents to the training and not based on the training experience itself (Tannenbaum et al., 1991).

In an attempt to increase the response rate, I administered the pre-training and post-training surveys in person rather than using mail-out surveys or asking that agency trainers administer the surveys on my behalf. Participants completed the questionnaire either individually or in small group settings in the training centers. The questionnaire was administered in both written and oral form. The questionnaire was read aloud to all participants, and then participants were allowed time to complete each section of the survey. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants were assured of complete confidentiality of information provided. No names appeared on the survey, rather each questionnaire contained an identification number that was used to match surveys completed prior to training with those administered at the completion of the training program. Participants were asked to record their survey identification number on their training packets and were informed that they would need to use this number again at a later date. Participants were informed that the purpose of the identification numbers was to ensure that all respondents' pre-training surveys were correctly matched with their post-training responses. No two participants had the same identification number.

As an error-control measure, a sheet containing all survey identification numbers corresponding to the respective training site was circulated, and all participants were asked to initial the space beside their respective identification number. The identification sheet was used in the event any individuals misplaced their survey identification numbers, or did not have their training packets containing their identification numbers during the time when the post-training survey was administered. The identification sheet was also used to obtain follow-up data from the trainers/agencies about each trainee. However trainers/agencies did not have access to any individual surveys completed by trainees. After participants completed the pre-training surveys, I addressed any questions relevant to the study. Trainees were thanked for their participation in the first and second phases of the study respectively, and all participants who completed the pre-training questionnaires received a small stipend of $1.00 for each assessment completed.

At the conclusion of the training program, participants were asked to complete a post-training questionnaire designed to assess post-training self-efficacy, employment commitment, unemployment negativity, job-search frequency and behavior, employment status, and job-search intended effort. Again, social support and encouragement, and social support employment status questions were also included for post-hoc exploration and agency purposes. Once again, I provided an overview about the purpose and goals of the study prior to

administrating the post-training measure. The post-training questionnaire was also administered in written and oral form. The questionnaire was read aloud to all participants, and then participants were allowed time to complete each section of the survey. Participants were asked to locate their individual identification number, as assigned during the first phase of the study, and record the exact number at the top of their post-training survey. After participants had completed the survey, I addressed any questions relevant to the study. Trainees were thanked for participating in the study, and all participants who completed the post-training questionnaire received a small stipend of $1.00. Participants were asked to provide their names and mailing addresses if they wanted to receive a summary of the findings of the study and/or participate in any future follow-up studies.

In addition, in an effort to collect some hard criterion data on actual program outcomes, follow-up data were collected directly from each training agency. More specifically, following training, each agency's training coordinator was asked to provide job placement information (i.e., initial interview date, job placement status, hiring date, starting hourly salary, current employment status, and leave date if not still employed) on each trainee approximately one to two months after the completion of training.

Variables

The independent or predictor variables for the study consisted of (a) pre-training general self-efficacy (GSE), (b) pre-training specific self-efficacy (SSE), (c) pre-training employment commitment, (d) pre-training unemployment negativity, (e) pre-training job-search behavior and frequency (for exploratory purposes), and (f) training program site (only to assess any differences between the programs). Pre-training social support and encouragement was also assessed for agency and exploratory purposes. The dependent or outcome variables for the study consisted of (a) job-search behavior and frequency, (b) job procurement or employment status, and (c) job-search intended effort. Post-training measures of self-efficacy (GSE and SSE), employment commitment, unemployment negativity, and social support and encouragement were also assessed for agency and exploratory purposes. In addition, control variables consisting of (a) background and demographic information and (b) breadwinner status before entering training were also requested. The background and demographic information was included on the first pre-training survey only. The breadwinner status before entering training question appeared on the post-training assessment only. Information pertaining to whether participants were receiving some form of public assistance did not appear on the survey, but rather the information was obtained directly from training agency records since the programs included in this study requested this type of information from all participants before orientation.

Measures

Each participant in the study was asked to complete two pre-training and one post-training questionnaire. As part of the development process, the surveys were pilot-tested with a small sample to ensure clarity and acceptability of survey instructions and questions. When such was warranted, survey items were worded in the language of the agency or training program and the target population in an effort to yield more valid data from respondents (Alderfer & Brown, 1972). The pre-training surveys consisted of several sections that in order of presentation comprised a series of questions pertaining to the following: (a) general self-efficacy measure, (b) specific self-efficacy measure, (c) employment commitment measure, (d) unemployment negativity measure, (e) job-search behavior and frequency measure, (f) social support/encouragement and employment status measure, (g) background and demographic information (first pre-training survey only), and (h) training site information/trainee identification number.

At the completion of training, each trainee was asked to complete a post-training questionnaire consisting of the following sections: (a) general self-efficacy measure, (b) specific self-efficacy measure, (c) employment commitment measure, (d) unemployment negativity measure, (e) job-search behavior and frequency measure, (f) social support/encouragement and employment status measure, (g) breadwinner status before entering training measure, (h) job

procurement or employment status measure, and (i) job-search intended effort measure.

Given the fact that many of the measures (e.g., self-efficacy measures, employment commitment, etc.) included in the current study were self-report measures, some consideration was given to the possibility of self-report bias across measures. Since self-report measures tend to be the most appropriate for assessing perceptions, attitudes, and intentions, such measures fit the current study. Although the measure of job-search behavior and frequency could actually be categorized as a behavioral measure, an actual observation of each participant's behavior was not feasible in this study. Therefore, there was a need to rely on self-report data from the participants. However, taking into consideration that an assessment of the job-search behavior measure consisted of several items that focused on specific job-search behavior, concerns about self-report bias were hopefully addressed to some degree.

This study also used a survey technique suggested by Dr. Benjamin Schneider at the University of Maryland, College Park, which uses stop signs throughout a survey to indicate when new concepts are being introduced. Specifically all items tapping the same construct were put together on the survey. A symbol of a stop sign and the word stop in bold letters appeared at the beginning of each section introducing a new concept. Participants were instructed that when they saw either the word or symbol, they were to pause and

let the memories of the previous section fade. While this clicking-off strategy may not reduce self-report bias, it has been shown to diminish participants automaticity of responding to self-report survey items.

Further, to improve the validity of such measures, as discussed by Cascio (1987), respondents were assured of assessment confidentiality--responses to self-report measures would not be made public. In addition, data obtained from the training coordinators and/or trainers were also used to check the accuracy of some of the information (e.g., job placement information) provided by the trainees. This information also hopefully helped to control for some of the self-report bias. Still further, the limitations of self-report measures are also addressed in the discussion section of this study. Conclusions and generalizations derived from the study have been done in light of such limitations.

Self-Efficacy. In keeping with Bandura's definition of self-efficacy as being judgments individuals make about their own ability to successfully execute the behaviors or courses of action required to attain certain types of performance or produce a specific outcome, respondents' self-efficacy was assessed by a fifteen-item scale consisting of items and format adapted from Eden and Aviram (1993), Eden and Kinnar (1991), Feather (1992a), Houser et al. (1992), Jones (1986), Pond and Hay (1989), Sherer and Adams (1983), Sherer et al. (1982), and Taylor and Betz (1983). Self-efficacy encompasses the confidence that participants bring to the training or develop during training. Such confidence is

probably based on factors related to past successes with similar tasks and past experience in general (Gist et al., 1989).

In adherence to the suggestions of Eden (1988), Sherer and Adams (1983), and Sherer et al. (1982), relative to adopting the concepts of both general self-efficacy (GSE) and specific self-efficacy (SSE) when conducting research related to work issues, the self-efficacy scale used in this study included three items to assess GSE and twelve items to assess SSE. As explained by Eden and Kinnar (1991), general self-efficacy entails one's beliefs about self-competence in achievement situations in general, whereas specific self-efficacy refers to one's beliefs about personal achievement in specific ability-related situations. Thus, GSE is a belief about general self-confidence or ability, while SSE is a belief about specific performance--it is domain or situation related (e.g., job-seeking, training, or academic self-efficacy).

Consistent with several other research studies on self-efficacy as it relates to unemployment or employment (e.g., Eden & Aviram, 1993; Martocchio, 1994; Stumpf et al., 1987; and Wanberg et al., 1996), the current study phrased each item in a closed form and responses were scored using a five-point Likert-type scale. The continuum of response alternatives for the self-efficacy scale ranged from 1 (*none*) to 5 (*very much*). This response scale allowed for the assessment of respondents' self-efficacy level (i.e., the number of specific tasks that respondents believe they can perform successfully), and self-efficacy strength (i.e., the degree

of confidence respondents have in their ability to perform each of the tasks) (Bandura, 1977). Lent and Hackett (1987) also noted that a continuous scale should be a sufficient indicator of self-efficacy. Higher scores indicate higher levels of self-efficacy or confidence in one's own ability to successfully perform the various goal-related, training-related, and job-search tasks or behaviors.

Participants were asked to indicate the level of confidence that they have in their own ability to do several tasks. The three-item scale that was used to assess GSE included items such as the level of confidence I have in my own ability to Get something done once I decide to do it and Change any situation in my life that I am unhappy with. The twelve-item measure used to assess SSE asked participants to indicate their level of self-confidence in their ability to do such tasks as Complete the training program and Prepare a good resume. The coefficient alpha reliability estimates for the adapted GSE scale ranged from .70 to .73 for the pre and post assessments. The internal consistency reliability estimates for the adapted SSE scale ranged from .86 to .89 for the pre and post assessments. Any items exhibiting low average inter-item correlations were eliminated from the scale. However, in keeping with the suggestions of Kopalle and Lehmann (1997) such "trimming" of items was not done in an idiosyncratic manner but was done in a logical or theoretical way. Thus, items were not randomly dropped from the scale in order to achieve a higher Cronbach's alpha, rather the elimination of any items from the scale was done in a logical manner.

The complete list of items for both the GSE and SSE scales is provided in Appendix A.

Employment Commitment. Employment commitment or respondents' attitudes about the value of having paid employment, was measured by a seven-item scale consisting of items adapted from Banks and Henry (1993), Feather (1992a), Jackson et al. (1983), Payne and Hartley (1987), Pernice (1996), Rowley and Feather (1987), Wanberg et al. (1996), and Warr, Cook, and Wall (1979). All items in the employment commitment measure were phrased in closed form and were scored using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores indicate a higher commitment or value towards having paid employment.

Sample scale items include: Having any job is better than being unemployed and Once I have a job, it is important for me to keep it even if I don't really like it. The adapted scale s internal consistency reliability estimates as estimated by Cronbach s alpha ranged from .67 to .79 for the pre and post assessments. The complete list of items for the scale used in this study is provided in Appendix A.

Unemployment Negativity. Unemployment negativity or the extent of dissatisfaction, unhappiness, or depression that respondents experience as a result of their current state of unemployment, was assessed by a six-item scale consisting of items adapted from Feather (1992a), Feather and O'Brien (1986,

1987), Jackson et al. (1983), Taris et al. (1995), Wanberg and Marchese (1994), and Wanberg et al. (1996). Each item in the unemployment negativity scale was phrased in closed form and was scored using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores indicate a worse experience or a great deal of dissatisfaction with the current state of unemployment.

Examples of scale items include: I feel unhappy about being unemployed and When I think about being unemployed, I feel depressed. The alpha coefficients for the adapted scale used in this study ranged from .79 to .83 for the pre and post assessments. The complete list of items is presented in Appendix A.

Job-Search Behavior and Frequency. Job-search behavior and frequency, also referred to more recently as job-search intensity by Wanberg et al., (1999), was assessed by an eight-item scale. Participants were asked to indicate the frequency with which they have engaged in several job-search strategies within the last month. The items and format used in the job-search frequency and behavior scale was adapted from previous measures of job-search behavior as utilized in studies conducted by Blau (1994), Caplan et al. (1989), Kanfer and Hulin (1985), Taris et al. (1995), van Ryn and Vinokur (1992), and Wanberg et al. (1996). As suggested by Blau (1993), the job-search scale consisted of actual behaviors, because such a scale allows for investigation of whether some job-

search efforts explain trainees' post-training behavior (e.g., job procurement) better than others. Higher scores indicate more frequent and diverse job-search behavior. Sample scale items include: Within the last month, how often (frequently) have you engaged in the following job-search activities in an effort to find employment for yourself: Looked on the Internet, in the newspaper or other publications for job openings and Attended a job or career fair to identify employment opportunities.

A five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very frequently*) was used. As recommended by Blau (1994), a frequency range was given within each anchor, because respondents are more likely to correctly recall an approximate number of times versus an exact number of times that they engaged in a particular job-search behavior. Thus, the scale was as follows: 1 (*never*) (*0 times*); 2 (*rarely*) (*1 or 2 times*); 3 (*occasionally*) (*3 to 5 times*); 4 (*frequently*) (*6 to 9 times*); and 5 (*very frequently*) (*at least 10 times*). The internal consistency reliability estimates for this adapted scale ranged from .86 to .88 for pre and post assessments. A complete list of items is presented in Appendix A.

Training Program Site. Training program identification information was assigned after pre-training surveys were completed by participants. This information was used for analysis purposes to examine any differences between groups of respondents as a result of training program differences. Since data were collected across different training sites, the variable of training center was coded

as a control variable and dummy vectors were then created for each training program included in the study. There was a significant difference ($p<.05$) between training programs on only one criterion variable in the study--job-search behavior and frequency. This finding is explained in more detail in the Results section.

Demographic and Background Variables. Demographic and background data were also requested. The variables included the following: (1) Ethnicity, (2) Sex/Gender, (3) Age, (4) Marital Status, (5) Education (highest degree obtained), (6) Current Employment Status, (7) Length of Unemployment, (8) Reason for Unemployment if Unemployed, (9) Number of Children (your dependents for which you have financial responsibility), (10) Current Yearly Household Gross Income, and (11) Participation in Other Employment Training Programs in the Past Two-Years (excluding the current training program). The variables were used to describe the sample. Demographic and background data were also collected for post-hoc exploration purposes.

Social Support/Encouragement from Significant Others. Perceptions about social support and encouragement from significant others were also assessed. The social support and encouragement measure consisted of items and format adapted from Vinokur and Caplan (1987), and Vinokur, Schul, Vuori, and Price (2000). Sample items include: How much do you think that your spouse, partner, or another significant person in your life engages in the following

behaviors: Say things that raise your self-confidence and Make you feel that you can complete this training program. The continuum of response alternatives for the social support and encouragement scale ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*). Higher scores indicate higher levels of perceived social support and encouragement from significant others. The internal consistency reliability estimates for this adapted scale ranged from .88 to .89 for pre and post assessments.

In addition, participants were asked to indicate the current employment status of their spouse/boyfriend/girlfriend, significant other, either of their parents, and best friend. These items were used for post-hoc exploration. The complete list of items is presented in Appendix A.

Breadwinner Status Before Training. Participants breadwinner or wage earner status before entering training was also assessed. The breadwinner status measure consisted of an item adapted from Wanberg and Marchese (1994). Specifically, respondents were asked to answer the following question: (1) Before entering this training program, if you were unemployed, were you the primary breadwinner or wage earner for your household? Responses were scored using the following options: (1) I was not unemployed before entering this training program; and (2) I was unemployed before entering this training program, and (a) I was the primary breadwinner or wage earner in my household, or (b) I was not the primary breadwinner or wage earner in my household. This variable was

assessed at the end of the training program and was included for post-hoc exploration purposes.

Job Procurement or Employment Status. Job procurement or trainees' current employment status was assessed by a one-item scale. Specifically, participants were asked to indicate whether or not they had found employment. Participants were asked to circle one of two statements: "I have found employment" or "I have not found employment." Response options included: 1 (*not at all*), 2 (*yes, on an occasional basis*), 3 (*yes, on a part-time basis*), and 4 (*yes, on a full-time basis*). This response format was suggested by several members of my dissertation committee (Dr. Irwin Goldstein and Dr. Katherine Klein), and actually provided more information than a dichotomous yes or no response option. This outcome variable was assessed at the end of the training program. However, before final analyses were conducted, this variable was re-coded to a no or yes format, because all respondents either reported that they had not found employment, or that they had found full-time employment. Thus, the final coding was: 1 (*not at all*), and 2 (*yes, on a full-time basis*).

Job-Search Intended Effort. Job-search intended effort or respondents' determination to engage in job-seeking behavior, was assessed by two questions adapted from Turbin and Stevens (C. Stevens, personal communication, May 20, 1999), Vinokur and Caplan (1987), and Wanberg et al. (1996). Only if respondents indicated that they had not found a job by the end of training, was an

assessment done of their intention to actively seek employment over the next month. Specifically, respondents were asked to answer the following questions: (1) In the next month, how hard do you intend to look for a job, and (2) Over the next month, about how much time per week do you intend to spend (on average) searching for a job (e.g., contacting employers, attending interviews, sending out resumes, etc.)? A five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very hard*) was used for the first question. A five-point Likert-type scale was also used for the second question, but the scale was as follows: (1 = *almost no effort* (*less than 1 hour*); 2 = *a little effort* (*1-5 hours*); 3 = *moderate effort* (*6-12 hours*); 4 = *much effort* (*12-15 hours*); and 5 = *tremendous effort* (*more than 15 hours*)).

Research Analyses

The purpose of this field study was predicting the dependent variables of job-search behavior and frequency, employment status, and job-search intended effort from the independent variables of pre-training self-efficacy (GSE and SSE), employment commitment, and unemployment negativity (see Figure 2 for the research model used in this study). To test the hypotheses, the statistical procedure of multiple regression was used because this method allows for the incorporation of more than one continuous independent variable into the equation. As further noted by Agresti and Agresti (1979) and Lewis-Beck (1980), multiple regression is useful because it allows researchers to analyze partial relationships

between two variables while controlling for other variables. Thus, the effect of a particular independent variable is made more certain because the possibilities of distorting influences from the other independent variables are removed.

The statistical procedure of logistic regression was used to assess the multivariate contribution of the independent variables of self-efficacy, employment commitment, and unemployment negativity as predictors of the dependent variable of employment status. Logistic regression is the appropriate statistical method for the analysis of models with non-continuous or dichotomous dependent variables such as the outcome variable of employment status in the current study. The method of logistic regression is able to address the violations of the assumptions of the typical regression model in situations with dichotomous dependent variables (Demaris, 1992; Menard, 1995).

In an effort to minimize the loss of data and because no control group was included in the current study, the statistical procedure of regression analysis (i.e., hierarchical regression) was used to test the behavioral plasticity hypotheses instead of the more commonly used procedure of multifactor analysis of variance (e.g., Creed et al., 1998; Eden & Aviram, 1993; Eden & Kinnar, 1991; Gist et al., 1989; Gist et al., 1991; Gueron, 1987). If unemployed trainees with low levels of pre-training general and specific self-efficacy, employment commitment, and/or unemployment negativity made more gains after training on the constructs than their counterparts who indicated higher pre-training scores, then support would be

generated for the behavioral plasticity hypotheses. Probability for all statistical procedures was set at the $p<.05$ level.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Overview

The results of the research are presented in this section. Descriptive statistics and analyses for the study s demographic and background variables are presented first. Next, descriptive statistics and analyses for the study s predictor variables are presented. Finally, the results from the tests of the hypotheses are provided, followed by other significant findings and post-hoc analyses that although were not hypothesized in the current study, are still important to the area of employment training research. In addition, although no hypotheses were made regarding the variable of social support and encouragement, data were collected on this variable and therefore it was included in some of the analyses. The relationship between social support and encouragement and other variables in the current study is explored further in the Discussion section.

Descriptive Statistics for Demographic and Background Variables

Selected demographic and background variables, corresponding frequencies and percentages are presented in Table 1. As indicated in Table 1, the final sample size for the study was 121. Three agencies were included in the study, with participants from agencies A, B, and C, comprising 32%, 33 %, and 35% of the sample respectively. The sample was 71.1% female and 28.9% male. Of the 121 respondents, 83.5% were African-American/Black, 10.7% were

European-American/White, and 5.8% indicated other ethnic backgrounds (i.e., Asian-American/Pacific Islander, Native American/Indian, Hispanic, or multi-ethnic). Over 61% of the respondents were between the ages of 17-35 years, and 37.2% were between the ages of 36-55 years (range = 17-65 years). A little over 65% of the respondents were single, almost 20% were married, and the remaining 14.8% were previously married. Education levels ranged from less than high school diploma/GED to at least four years of college, with over 76% of respondents having completed high school or a GED program.

Of the 121 respondents, 11.6% had no children for which they had financial responsibility, 45.5% had 1-2 children, 39.7% had 2-4 children, and 3.3% had 5-6 children. A little over 45% of the sample had a current household gross income of less than $5,000.00 per year, and 25.6 % had an annual gross income between $5,000.00 and $20,000.00. Almost 50% of the sample had been unemployed anywhere from 1 week to at least 6 months, and over 49% had been unemployed for over 6 months to 36 months. Over 26% were unemployed because of a layoff, plant closing, or downsizing, 23.1% due to inadequate skills or the inability to find a job that would pay enough money for them to support their families, over 20% for other reasons (e.g., attending school or training, lack of transportation, relocation, etc.), over 18% because of a disability or other health-related issue, and 11.6% because of caretaker responsibilities for a relative or friend.

In addition, 61.2% (74) of the 121 trainees found full-time employment after completing training, whereas 38.8% (47) still remained unemployed at least 1-2 months after training had ended. Of the 74 trainees who obtained employment after completing training, 20 were from Agency A, 23 were from Agency B, and 31 were from Agency C.

It should be noted, that before final analyses, several of the demographic variables were re-coded. Specifically, with respect to the variable of ethnicity, several of the categories were combined and the final coding included the following: 1 (*African-American*), and 2 (*Other*). In addition, with respect to the variable of marital status, several of the categories were also combined and the final coding included the following: 1 (*Non-Married*) and 2 (*Married*).

Analyses for Demographic and Background Variables

Since data were collected across two time periods prior to training, scores from each predictor variable at T1 were averaged with scores from its corresponding predictor variable at T2, and an average score was derived for each predictor variable. The average predictor scores (T1-T2) were then used in all subsequent analyses. However, before averaging the predictor scores, inter-correlations among each predictor variable (T1) and its corresponding predictor variable (T2) were determined in order to justify the averaging of the T1 and T2 measures. Table 2 presents the inter-correlations among the variables, and as indicated inter-correlations ranged from .92 to .97 and were all significantly

positively correlated. More specifically, the inter-correlations among the predictors were as follows: GSE (T1) and GSE (T2) ($r\ (121) = .92, p \leq .001$), SSE (T1) and SSE (T2) ($r\ (121) = .97, p \leq .001$), employment commitment (T1) and employment commitment (T2) ($r\ (121) = .96, p \leq .001$), unemployment negativity (T1) and unemployment negativity (T2) ($r\ (121) = .97, p \leq .001$), job-search behavior and frequency (T1) and job-search behavior and frequency (T2) ($r\ (121) = .99, p \leq .001$), and social support and encouragement (T1) and social support and encouragement (T2) ($r\ (121) = .97, p \leq .001$).

Inter-correlations among the background and demographic variables, scales for the predictor variables assessed at (T1-T2), and dependent variables assessed at (T3) are presented in Table 3. Demographic and background variables are presented in the following manner: age, followed by children, education, ethnicity (1 = African-American, 2 = Other), gender (1 = Female, 2 = Male), income, length of unemployment, and then marital status (1 = Non-Married, 2 = Married).

The demographic variable of age was not significantly correlated with any of the predictor variables assessed at (T1-T2), or with any of the outcome variables assessed during (T3). Further, the background variable of number of children for which you have financial responsibility was also not significantly correlated with any of the predictor variables assessed at (T1-T2). However, the variable was positively and significantly correlated with job-search behavior and

frequency (T3) ($r\ (121) = .23, p \leq .01$). Thus, trainees with a greater number of children tended to report more frequent and diverse job-search behaviors at the end of training than did their counterparts.

The demographic variable of education was not significantly correlated with any of the study s predictor or outcome variables. Further, the variable of ethnicity was significantly negatively related to GSE (T1-T2) ($r\ (121) = -.22, p \leq .05$), SSE (T1 T2) ($r\ (121) = -.18, p \leq .05$) and social support and encouragement (T1-T2) ($r\ (121) = -.21, p \leq .05$), but was not significantly correlated with any of the other predictor or outcome variables. Thus, African-American trainees tended to indicate higher levels of pre-training GSE, SSE, and social support and encouragement than did their counterparts.

Further, as presented in Table 3, gender was significantly positively related to GSE (T1-T2) ($r\ (121) = .23, p \leq .01$), and significantly negatively related to job-search behavior and frequency (T1-T2) ($r\ (121) = -.24, p \leq .01$). Thus, female trainees reported higher levels of pre-training GSE, but lower levels of pre-training job search behavior and frequency than did male participants. Gender, however, was not significantly correlated with any of the other predictor or dependent variables.

In addition, the background variable of current yearly household gross income significantly and positively correlated with employment status (T3) ($r\ (121) = .17, p \leq .05$), but was not significantly related to any other predictor or

outcome variable in the study. Thus, those trainees who indicated higher levels of annual gross income also tended to be the ones who reported more post-training employment. Further, the variable of length of unemployment was significantly negatively related to employment commitment (T1-T2) ($r\ (121) = -.25, p \leq .01$), job-search behavior and frequency (T1-T2) ($r\ (121) = -.18, p \leq .05$), and employment status (T3) ($r\ (121) = -.21, p \leq .05$). Thus, trainees with longer periods of unemployment tended to indicate lower levels of pre-training employment commitment, less frequent and diverse pre-training job-search activity, and less job placement at the end of training than did their counterparts with shorter periods of unemployment. Finally, the demographic variable of marital status was not significantly correlated with any of the variables in the study.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the relationships between the categorical background variables of agency and reason for unemployment assessed at (T1), and the predictor variables (i.e., GSE, SSE, employment commitment, unemployment negativity, and social support and encouragement) and criterion variables (job-search behavior and frequency, employment status, job-search intended effort) assessed at (T3). ANOVA results that were significant for the background variable of agency are presented in Table 4. Of the variables assessed, ANOVA results from only one (i.e., job-search behavior and frequency) indicated a significant difference between the group

means for the variable of agency ($F(2, 118) = 3.30$, $p \leq .05$). The Scheffe post-hoc test ($p = .05$) indicated that participants from Agency B (*M = 4.02*) and Agency C (*M = 3.98*) had significantly higher levels of job-search behavior and frequency than their counterparts from Agency A (*M = 3.61*).

ANOVA results that were significant for the background variable of reasons for unemployment are presented in Table 5. Of the criterion variables assessed, ANOVA results from one (i.e., employment status) indicated a significant difference between the group means for the variable of reasons for unemployment ($F(4, 116) = 4.07$, $p \leq .01$). As presented in Table 5, the Scheffe post-hoc test ($p = .05$) indicated that participants who were unemployed because of a layoff, plant closing, or downsizing (*M = 1.72*), or for other reasons (e.g., attending school or training, lack of transportation, relocation, etc.) (*M = 1.84*), had significantly higher levels of post-training employment, than their counterparts who were unemployed due to a disability or other health-related issue (*M = 1.37*).

Descriptive Statistics for Predictor Variables (Scales)

Descriptive statistics and internal consistency reliability estimates for the scales and dependent variable measures used in the study are presented in Table 6. The internal consistency reliability for each scale was estimated using Cronbach s alpha as indicated in Table 7. Scale reliability estimates ranged from .71 for the GSE scale to .88 for the SSE, social support and encouragement, and

job-search behavior and frequency scales. More specifically, the alpha coefficients were as follows: GSE=.71, SSE=.88, employment commitment=.74, unemployment negativity=.83, social support and encouragement=.88, job-search behavior and frequency=.88, and job-search intended effort=.85. Thus, all scales used in the analyses had alpha coefficients at or above .70 and therefore met the minimum criterion for acceptable alphas and scale construction.

Inter-Correlations for Predictor Variables (Scales) and Dependent Variables

Inter-correlations among the scales for the predictor variables (T1-T2) and dependent variables assessed at (T3) are presented in Table 3, along with the correlations for the other variables in the study. Inter-correlation results are presented in the following manner: GSE, followed by SSE, employment commitment, unemployment negativity, job-search behavior and frequency (T1-T2), social support and encouragement, job-search behavior and frequency (T3), employment status, and then job-search intended effort.

As indicated in Table 3, GSE was significantly and positively correlated with SSE ($r\ (121) = .51, p \leq .001$), employment commitment ($r\ (121) = .19, p \leq .05$), and social support ($r\ (121) = .27, p \leq .01$), but was not significantly related to any of the other predictor or outcome variables. Thus, trainees with higher pre-training levels of GSE also indicated higher levels of pre-training SSE, commitment to finding employment for pay, and support and encouragement from family and friends. The variable of SSE was significantly positively related to

pre-training employment commitment (*r (121) = .30, p ≤ .001*), and social support (*r = (121) .30, p ≤ .001*), and the criterion variables of job-search behavior (T3) (*r = (121) .30, p ≤ .01*), and job-search intended effort (*r (121) = .29, p ≤ .01*). Therefore, participants who indicated higher levels of pre-training SSE likewise reported higher levels of employment commitment, and social support and encouragement than their counterparts. In addition, they also tended to indicate more frequent and diverse job search behaviors, as well as greater intentions to search for employment at the end of training than did those with lower initial levels of SSE.

As further noted in Table 3, the variable of employment commitment was significantly and positively related to unemployment negativity (*r (121) = .21, p ≤ .05*), social support (*r (121) = .21, p ≤ .05*), and the criterion variables of job-search behavior (T3) (*r (121) = .17, p ≤ .05*), employment status (*r (121) = .20, p ≤ .05*), and job-search intended effort (*r (121) = .25, p ≤ .01).* Thus, trainees who indicated higher levels of commitment to finding employment at the beginning of training, also indicated higher initial levels of discomfort about being unemployed, and more support from friends and family than did their training counterparts. Likewise, at the end of training, they also reported more varied and frequent job-search behaviors, more job procurement, and greater intentions to continue in their job-search efforts, than did participants with lower initial levels of employment commitment.

In addition, unemployment negativity was significantly positively correlated with job-search behavior and frequency (T1-T2) ($r\ (121) = .22, p \leq .05$), and job-search behavior and frequency (T3) ($r\ (121) = .27, p \leq .01$). Thus, trainees with higher initial levels of unemployment negativity also indicated more frequent and varied job-search behaviors both before and at the end of training than did their counterparts. The variable of job-search behavior and frequency (T3) was significantly positively correlated with the criterion variables of job-search behavior and frequency (T3) ($r\ (121) = .38, p \leq .001$) and job-search intended effort ($r\ (121) = .23, p \leq .05$). Thus, participants indicating more frequent and diverse job-search behavior before training, also indicated more varied and frequent post-training job-search activity and greater intentions to continue in their job-search efforts.

Further, social support was significantly and positively related to the criterion variable of job-search behavior and frequency (T3) ($r\ (121) = .20, p \leq .05$), but was not significantly correlated with any of the other outcome variables in the study. Thus, those trainees reporting more support and encouragement from friends and family at the beginning of training likewise reported more frequent and varied job-search behaviors at the end of training. In addition, the criterion variable of job-search behavior and frequency (T3) was significantly and positively correlated with the criterion variable of job-search intended effort ($r\ (121) = .42, p \leq .001$). Finally, there was a significant and positive relationship

between the post-training variable of employment status and that of job-search intended effort ($r\ (121) = .21, p \leq .05$).

Analyses for Predictor Variables (Scales)

Since a repeated measures design was implemented in the study, a repeated measures ANOVA was used to determine any overall effects for time and the source(s) of the significant changes in time periods where applicable. As indicated in Table 7, there was no significant difference ($F(1, 120) = .05, p > .05$) between the group means for GSE (T1) *(M = 4.19)* and GSE (T2) *(M = 4.18).* However, there was a significant difference ($F(1, 120) = 36.38, p \leq .001$) between the group means for GSE (T1) *(M = 4.19)* and GSE (T3) *(M = 4.53).* There was also a significant difference ($F(1, 120) = 43.49, p \leq .001$) between the group means for GSE (T2) *(M = 4.18)* and GSE (T3) *(M = 4.53).* Thus, there were significant changes between the group means for GSE (T1) vs. GSE (T3), and GSE (T2) vs. GSE (T3).

Repeated measures ANOVA results for SSE are presented in Table 8. As indicated, there was a significant difference ($F(1, 120) = 22.11, p \leq .001$) between the group means for SSE (T1) *(M = 4.35)* and SSE (T2) *(M = 4.30).* There was also a significant difference ($F(1, 120) = 36.17, p \leq .001$) between the group means for SSE (T1) *(M = 4.35)* and SSE (T3) *(M = 4.62).* In addition, there was a significant difference ($F(1, 120) = 51.64, p \leq .001$) between the group means for

SSE (T2) *(M = 4.30)* and SSE (T3) *(M = 4.62)*. Thus, there were significant changes between the group means for SSE for all three time periods.

Table 9 presents ANOVA results for the variable of employment commitment. As indicated, there was a significant difference ($F(1, 120) = 23.23$, $p \leq .001$) between the group means for employment commitment (T1) *(M = 4.21)* and employment commitment (T2) *(M = 4.13)*. There was also a significant difference ($F(1, 120) = 24.42$, $p \leq .001$) between the group means for employment commitment (T1) *(M = 4.21)* and employment commitment (T3) *(M = 4.45)*. In addition, there was a significant difference ($F(1, 120) = 40.59$, $p \leq .001$) between the group means for employment commitment (T2) *(M = 4.13)* and employment commitment (T3) *(M = 4.45)*. Thus, there were significant changes between the group means for employment commitment for all three time periods.

Repeated measures ANOVA results for the variable of unemployment negativity are presented in Table 10. As presented, there was a significant difference ($F(1, 120) = 11.80$, $p \leq .001$) between the group means for unemployment negativity (T1) *(M = 3.97)* and unemployment negativity (T2) *(M = 3.91)*. However, there was no significant difference ($F(1, 120) = .17$, $p > .05$) between the group means for unemployment negativity (T1) *(M = 3.97)* and unemployment negativity (T3) *(M = 3.94)*. There was also no significant difference ($F(1, 120) = .28$, $p > .05$) between the group means for unemployment negativity (T2) *(M = 3.91)* and unemployment negativity (T3) *(M = 3.94)*. Thus,

there were significant changes between the group means for unemployment negativity (T1) vs. unemployment negativity (T2), but not between the other time periods.

Finally, Table 11 presents ANOVA results for the variable of job-search behavior and frequency. As indicated, there was no significant difference ($F(1, 120) = .18$, $p > .05$) between the group means for job-search behavior and frequency (T1) *(M = 2.88)* and job-search behavior and frequency (T2) *(M = 2.88)*. However, there was a significant difference ($F(1, 120) = 121.04$, $p \leq .001$) between the group means for job-search behavior and frequency (T1) *(M = 2.88)* and job-search behavior and frequency (T3) *(M = 3.87)*. There was also a significant difference ($F(1, 120) = 126.84$, $p \leq .001$) between the group means for job-search behavior and frequency (T2) *(M = 2.88)* and job-search behavior and frequency (T3) *(M = 3.87)*. Thus, there were significant changes between the group means for job-search behavior and frequency (T1) vs. job-search behavior and frequency (T3), and job-search behavior and frequency (T2) vs. job-search behavior and frequency (T3).

In summary, for (T1 and T2), two of the scales (i.e., GSE and job-search behavior and frequency) showed no significant differences between the means for the two time periods, and for the other four scales, the mean values actually went down during (T2). However, with respect to (T1 and T3), and (T2 and T3), almost all of the scales, with the exception of one (i.e., unemployment negativity),

showed significant differences in a positive direction between each respective pre-measure and the post-measure.

Tests of Hypotheses

As hypothesized and as the research model presented in Figure 2 depicts, this study was designed to examine the effects of pre-training attitudes and behaviors on post-training job-search behavior and frequency, employment status, and job-search intended effort. Regression analyses results are presented in Tables 12-24. Hierarchical regression was used to test the relationship between the predictor variables (e.g., GSE, SSE, employment commitment, and unemployment negativity) and the outcome variables of job-search behavior and frequency, and job-search intended effort. Logistic regression was used to test the relationship between the pre-training variables (e.g., GSE, SSE, and unemployment negativity) and the post-training variable of employment status. In both analyses, variables were entered into the regression procedure in two steps (Step 1 = demographic and background variables, Step 2 = combined variables (demographic and background variables, and predictor variables/scales)).

Regression analysis, instead of the more commonly used MANOVA, was used to test for the behavioral plasticity effect in relation to GSE, SSE, employment commitment, and unemployment negativity. Specifically, results are presented in Tables 16, 17, 20, and 24. Since no control groups were used and all participants were exposed to the training condition, at the recommendation of

several of my committee members (Dr. Paul Hanges and Dr. Cynthia Stevens), the following was done: First, calculations of the interactions of the pre-measures with themselves were done. Thus, interaction terms were computed for each pre-measure. Next, hierarchical regression was conducted by entering a pre-measure on Step 1 followed by the interaction term on Step 2. The significance of increment in R^2 was checked at each step. A significant change in increment in R^2 for the interaction term indicated a non-linear change in the dependent variable, and thus provided support for the behavioral plasticity hypothesis for each respective pre-measure. After testing for the significance of the change, the interaction was plotted. Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6, depict the plots for each pre-measure in relation to the dependent variable of job-search behavior and frequency.

Hypothesis 1a: After controlling for individual differences in demographic and background variables, pre-training general self-efficacy (GSE) (T1-T2) will be positively and significantly related to job-search behavior and frequency (T3) and to employment status (T3). As shown in Table 12, the results of the hierarchical regression analysis show that GSE (T1-T2) was not significantly related to job-search behavior and frequency (T3) (β = -.12, p > .05).

To assess the relationship between GSE (T1-T2) and employment status (T3), logistic regression was used. As shown in Table 13, GSE (T1-T2) was not

significantly related to employment status (T3) (b = .04, p > .05). Thus, Hypothesis 1a was not supported.

Hypothesis 1b: After controlling for individual differences in demographic and background variables, pre-training specific self-efficacy (SSE) (T1-T2) will be positively and significantly related to job-search behavior and frequency (T3) and to employment status (T3). As shown in Table 14, the results of the hierarchical regression analysis show that SSE (T1-T2) was significantly positively related to job-search behavior and frequency (T3) (β = .25, $p \leq .01$).

To assess the relationship between SSE (T1-T2) and employment status (T3), logistic regression was used. As shown in Table 15, SSE (T1-T2) was not significantly related to employment status (T3) (b = .14, p > .05) after controlling for the demographic variables. Thus overall, Hypothesis 1b was partially supported.

Hypothesis 1c*:* In relation to the behavioral plasticity hypothesis, it is predicted that trainees high on the pre-training measure of GSE will respond differently to the training interventions (designed by the respective training agencies) than trainees who indicate low levels of initial GSE. An examination of results will reveal that the training interventions raise job-search behavior and frequency (T3) levels and do so to a greater degree for trainees with low pre-training levels of GSE.

Regression analysis was also used to test for the behavioral plasticity effect in relation to GSE. As shown in Table 16 and Figure 3, the behavioral plasticity hypothesis was not confirmed in relation to GSE ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $p > .05$). Pre-training GSE did not have a non-linear relationship with job-search behavior and frequency (T3). Overall, trainees with low initial GSE levels did not change differently with respect to job-search behavior and frequency (T3) than their counterparts with high initial GSE levels. Thus, Hypothesis 1c was not supported.

Hypothesis 1d: In relation to the behavioral plasticity hypothesis, it is predicted that trainees high on the pre-training measure of SSE will respond differently to the training interventions (designed by the respective training agencies) than trainees who indicate low levels of initial SSE. An examination of results will reveal that the training interventions raise job-search behavior and frequency (T3) levels and do so to a greater degree for trainees with low pre-training SSE.

Regression analysis was also used to test for the behavioral plasticity effect in relation to SSE. As shown in Table 17 and Figure 4, the behavioral plasticity hypothesis was also not confirmed in relation to SSE ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $p > .05$). Pre-training SSE did not have a non-linear relationship with job-search behavior and frequency (T3). Overall, trainees with low initial SSE levels did not change differently with respect to job-search behavior and frequency (T3) than

their counterparts with high initial SSE levels. Thus, Hypothesis 1d was not supported.

Hypothesis 2a: After controlling for individual differences in demographic and background variables, employment commitment (T1-T2) will be significantly and positively related to job-search behavior and frequency (T3), and to job-search intended effort (T3). As shown in Table 18, the results of the hierarchical regression analysis show that employment commitment (T1-T2) was not significantly related to job-search behavior and frequency (T3) ($\beta = .16$, $p > .05$).

To assess the relationship between employment commitment (T1-T2) and job-search intended effort (T3), hierarchical regression was also used. As shown in Table 19, employment commitment (T1-T2) was significantly positively related to job-search intended effort (T3) ($\beta = .30$, $p \leq .01$). Thus overall, partial support was found for Hypothesis 2a.

Hypothesis 2b: The behavioral plasticity hypothesis as it relates to the pre-training measure of employment commitment will be examined as an exploratory hypothesis. The study will explore whether trainees high on the pre-training measure of employment commitment will respond differently to the employment training interventions (designed by the respective training agencies) than trainees who indicate low levels of initial employment commitment. Given such, an examination of results should reveal that the training interventions have increased

job-search behavior and frequency (T3) and done so to a greater degree for those with low pre-training levels of employment commitment.

Regression analysis was also used to test for the behavioral plasticity effect in relation to employment commitment. As shown in Table 20 and Figure 5, the behavioral plasticity hypothesis was not confirmed in relation to employment commitment ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $p > .05$). Pre-training employment commitment did not have a non-linear relationship with job-search behavior and frequency (T3). Overall, trainees with low initial employment commitment levels did not change differently with respect to job-search behavior and frequency (T3) than their counterparts with high initial employment commitment levels. Thus, Hypothesis 2b was not supported.

Hypothesis 3a: After controlling for individual differences in demographic and background variables, unemployment negativity (T1-T2) will be positively and significantly related to job-search behavior and frequency (T3), employment status (T3), and to job-search intended effort (T3). As indicated in Table 21, the results of the hierarchical regression analysis show that unemployment negativity (T1-T2) was significantly positively related to job-search behavior and frequency (T3) ($\beta = .28$, $p \leq .01$) after controlling for the background variables.

To assess the relationship between unemployment negativity (T1-T2) and employment status (T3), logistic regression was used. As presented in Table 22,

unemployment negativity (T1-T2) was significantly positively related to employment status (T3) (b = .75, $p \leq .01$).

To assess the relationship between unemployment negativity (T1-T2) and job-search intended effort (T3), hierarchical regression was used. As shown in Table 23, unemployment negativity (T1-T2) was not significantly related to job-search intended effort (T3) (β = .10, p > .05). Thus overall, Hypothesis 3a was partially supported.

Hypothesis 3b: The behavioral plasticity hypothesis as it relates to the pre-training variable of unemployment negativity will be examined as an exploratory hypothesis. The study will explore whether trainees high on the pre-training variable of unemployment negativity will respond differently to the employment training interventions (designed by the respective training agencies) than trainees who indicate low levels of initial unemployment negativity. Given such, an examination of results is expected to reveal that the training interventions have increased job-search behavior and frequency (T3) and done so to a greater degree for those with low pre-training levels of unemployment negativity.

Regression analysis was also used to test for the behavioral plasticity effect in relation to unemployment negativity. As shown in Table 24 and Figure 6, the behavioral plasticity hypothesis was not confirmed in relation to unemployment negativity (ΔR^2 = .00, p > .05). Pre-training unemployment negativity did not have a non-linear relationship with job-search behavior and

frequency (T3). Overall, trainees with low initial unemployment negativity levels did not change differently with respect to job-search behavior and frequency (T3) than their counterparts with high initial unemployment negativity levels. Thus, Hypothesis 3b was not supported.

Other Significant Findings

While beyond the hypotheses presented in the current study, several other significant findings emerged from analyses of the results that are worth noting. More specifically, as noted in Table 22 (also in Tables 13 and 15), results from logistic regression analysis revealed that the demographic and background variables of marital status (b = -1.76, OR = .17, $p \leq .01$), reason for unemployment (b = -1.17, OR = .31, $p \leq .05$), and income (b = .35, OR = 1.42, $p \leq .05$), all emerged as significant predictors of employment status.

Post-Hoc Analyses on Predictor Variables

The hypotheses in the present study stated that single pre-training variables would predict specific outcome variables, after controlling for individual differences. Thus, each predictor variable was entered into a separate regression model, and was analyzed individually without the presence of other predictor variables. However, in an attempt to further explore the possible predictive relationships between the pre-training and outcome variables, a more stringent model was used in post-hoc analyses. With the goals in mind of confirming results from previous studies and possibly stimulating future research, analyses

were done on regression models testing all of the pre-training variables at the same time, to determine which of them would emerge as significant predictors of post-training behaviors.

One finding that is important to note, because of its consistency with previous studies and possible relevance to future studies focusing on employment training initiatives, is the significant positive relationship found between employment commitment (T1-T2) and employment status (T3). As presented in Table 25, the results of the logistic regression analysis show that employment commitment (T1-T2) was significantly related to employment status (T3) (b = 1.02, OR = 2.77, $p \leq .05$). Trainees with high pre-training measures of employment commitment were almost three-times more likely to find employment after training, than their counterparts with lower initial employment commitment levels. This finding in the study addresses, to some degree, the need for additional research on the variable of employment commitment in relation to the overall unemployment experience in general, and actual job procurement in particular.

Several other post-hoc interactions were tested in an effort to better determine the relationship between employment commitment (T1-T2) and job-search behavior and frequency (T3). The interactions were tested first of all, because the study s previous analyses did not show a significant antecedent-outcome variable relationship between employment commitment and job-search

behavior and frequency as hypothesized, but did show significant positive correlations between the two variables. Second, the interactions were tested because previous research (e.g., Banks & Henry, 1993; Jackson et al., 1983; Rowley & Feather, 1987; Saks, 1995) has suggested mediator and/or moderator effects in relation to several of the variables assessed in the current study.

The mediating effects of unemployment negativity (T1-T2) on the relationship between employment commitment (T1-T2) and job-search behavior and frequency (T3) was tested first. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), several conditions are necessary to assess for mediation. First, it must be demonstrated that the predictor variable (i.e., employment commitment (T1-T2)) is related to (correlated with or predictive of) the mediating variable (i.e., unemployment negativity (T1-T2)). As indicated in Table 3, the correlation between employment commitment (T1-T2) and unemployment negativity (T1-T2) was significant ($r\ (121) = .21, p \leq .05$). Thus, the first condition for mediation was supported.

Second, the predictor variable (i.e., employment commitment (T1-T2)) must be related to the outcome variable (i.e., job-search behavior and frequency (T3). As indicated in Table 3, the correlation between employment commitment (T1-T2) and job-search behavior and frequency (T3) was significant ($r\ (121) = .17, p \leq .05$). Thus, the second requirement for mediation was supported.

Next, the dependent variable must be regressed on both the predictor variable and the mediating variable, and it must be shown that the mediator (unemployment negativity (T1-T2)) is related to the dependent variable (job-search behavior and frequency (T3)) when the predictor (employment commitment (T1-T2)) is already in the equation. It should be noted that because of the significant correlation (see Table 3) between the background variable of length of unemployment and employment commitment (T1-T2) ($r\ (121) = -.25$, $p \leq .01$), length of unemployment was first entered into the regression equations to control for any potential bias that might result from the relationship between the two variables. As presented in Table 26, the regression results from controlling for length of unemployment and entering employment commitment (T1-T2) before unemployment negativity (T1-T2), indicate that unemployment negativity (T1-T2) explained a significant amount of incremental variance in job-search behavior and frequency (T3) ($\Delta R^2 = .06$, $p \leq .01$) above that explained by employment commitment (T1-T2).

Finally, it must be shown that the predictor variable (employment commitment (T1-T2)) has no effect on the dependent variable (job-search behavior and frequency (T3)) when the mediator variable (unemployment negativity (T1-T2)) is in the regression equation. In other words, the relationship between the predictor variable and the outcome variable must diminish to some degree after controlling for or holding the mediator constant. As presented in

Table 27, the regression results from controlling for length of unemployment and entering unemployment negativity (T1-T2) before employment commitment (T1-T2), indicate that employment commitment (T1 T2) explained less of the variance in job-search behavior and frequency (T3) ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $p > .05$) than when employment commitment was entered into the regression equation before unemployment negativity (see Table 26). Thus, it appears that all of the conditions for complete mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986) were met. Overall, the results indicate strong support for the mediating effects of pre-training unemployment negativity on the relationship between employment commitment and job-search behavior and frequency.

The mediating effects of SSE (T1-T2) on the relationship between employment commitment (T1-T2) and job-search behavior and frequency (T3) was also tested. The methods proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) were also used to test this mediating relationship. As shown in Table 3, the correlation between employment commitment (T1-T2) and SSE (T1-T2) ($r\ (121) = .30, p \leq .001$) was significant. Thus, the first condition for mediation was supported in that the predictor was related to the mediator. In addition, the second requirement that there be a relationship between the predictor variable and the outcome variable was also supported. As indicated in Table 3, the correlation between employment commitment (T1-T2) and job-search behavior and frequency (T3) ($r\ (121) = .17, p \leq .05$) was also significant.

Support for the next condition (i.e., the mediator is related to the dependent variable when the predictor is already in the equation) was also shown after regressing the dependent variable on both the predictor variable and the mediating variable, while again holding constant the variable of length of unemployment. As presented in Table 28, the regression results from entering employment commitment (T1-T2) before unemployment negativity (T1-T2) indicate that unemployment negativity (T1-T2) explained a significant amount of incremental variance in job-search behavior and frequency (T3) ($\Delta R^2 = .07$, $p \leq .01$) above that explained by employment commitment (T1-T2).

Finally, the remaining condition was also met in that the predictor variable had no effect on the dependent variable when the mediator variable was already in the regression equation. As presented in Table 29, the regression results from controlling for length of unemployment and entering SSE (T1-T2) before employment commitment (T1-T2), indicate that employment commitment (T1-T2) explained less of the variance in job-search behavior and frequency (T3) ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $p > .05$) than when employment commitment was entered into the regression equation before SSE (see Table 28). Thus, once again it appears that all of the conditions for complete mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986) were met. Overall, the results indicate strong support, as well, for the mediating effects of pre-training SSE on the relationship between employment commitment and job-search behavior and frequency.

It should also be noted that as a final control, all of the study s other demographic and background variables (i.e., education, age, ethnicity, marital status, number of children, income, and gender), were held constant before entering the predictor and the mediator variables into the regression equations, and the results were still the same. More specifically, regression results still showed significant support for both unemployment negativity (T1-T2) and SSE (T1-T2) as mediators of the relationship between employment commitment (T1-T2) and job-search behavior and frequency (T3), after controlling for all demographic and background variables.

Post-hoc analyses were also performed to further test the behavioral plasticity hypotheses in relation to the predictor variables in the study. Hierarchical regression analyses were performed in which job-search behavior and frequency (T3) was the dependent variable, and job-search behavior and frequency (T1-T2) in addition to GSE, SSE, employment commitment, and unemployment negativity were each used in turn as the predictor variables. Thus, job-search behavior and frequency (T1-T2) along with one other predictor variable (e.g., GSE) was entered into the regression equation first, followed by the interaction between the two variables being entered in step 2 of the equation. I then checked for a significant increment in R^2 specifically for the interaction term on step 2. These procedures were repeated for all of the other predictor variables. Regression results, however, still showed no significant support for the

behavioral plasticity hypotheses when job-search behavior and frequency (T3) was used as the outcome variable.

Finally, given the significant results from the ANOVA analysis for job-search behavior and frequency by agency (see Table 4), post-hoc analyses were conducted to determine any further interactions between the training sites and the predictor variables relative to job-search behavior and frequency (T3). First, the agency variable was effects coded/dummy coded and the agency information was carried into the hierarchical regression equations. Then interaction terms were created for each agency. Hierarchical regression analyses were then performed with the variable of agency and each predictor variable (i.e., GSE, SSE, employment commitment, unemployment negativity) on one step, and each respective interaction term on the next step. I again looked for significant increments in R^2, specifically for the interaction terms. However, regression results revealed no further support for agency effects when job-search behavior and frequency (T3) was the dependent variable.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Overview

The purpose of the present study was to examine the effects of the pre-training attitudes of self-efficacy, employment commitment, and unemployment negativity on job-search behavior and frequency, employment status, and job-search intended effort for unemployed training participants. Consistent with previous studies conducted by Caplan et al. (1989), Eden and Aviram (1993), Wanberg et al. (1999), and Wanberg et al. (1996), the current field study used a longitudinal as opposed to a cross-sectional design, and followed unemployed individuals over at least a two-month time period.

A more in-depth discussion of the research findings is presented in this section. A discussion of the findings related to some of the study s demographic and background variables, including some suggestions for future research, is provided first. Next, the research findings related to some of the study s predictor variables, including some future research suggestions, are discussed in more detail. Then, a discussion of the hypotheses that were supported and not supported by the research findings is provided. Next, a more in-depth discussion is provided about research findings that were beyond the scope of the current study, but were significant and therefore worth noting. Finally, several limitations of the research are discussed, followed by overall conclusions of the study.

Demographic and Background Variables

Several significant findings in relation to some of the study s demographic and background variables are further explored. First, the demographic variable of number of children for which you have financial responsibility was significantly positively correlated with job-search behavior and frequency. Therefore, trainees with a greater number of children tended to report more frequent and diverse job-search activities than did participants who had financial responsibility for fewer or no children. One possible explanation for this finding, is that those trainees with a greater number of children were under more pressure to find employment as soon as possible in order to provide for their household, and therefore engaged in more frequent job-search activities in an attempt to meet the need. On the other hand, participants with no children for which they had financial responsibility might not have had to concern themselves, as much, with providing for the needs of others, and therefore could afford to search for employment less frequently. Indeed, this explanation is consistent with findings from research conducted by Leana and Feldman (1995) which concluded that increased financial responsibilities are related to more active job-search efforts.

Another finding was that the background variable of length of unemployment was significantly negatively related to employment status. Thus, the longer the length of unemployment before training the less likely trainees were to find employment after training. One possible reason, is that individuals

unemployed for longer periods of time had encountered more rejection when seeking employment opportunities, and as a result had engaged in less diverse and less frequent job-search behavior overtime, because they had simply become less motivated to do so. This explanation is consistent with that of Stokes and Cochrane (1984), who noted that job-search efforts and job procurement may be inhibited, particularly during periods of high employment, if individuals continually fail to secure employment.

If such is true, then it might be important for training programs to provide participants who have been unemployed for a long period of time with more comprehensive training modules that focus on enhancing job-search self-efficacy and increasing motivation to find employment despite rejection. This more customized training approach for individuals who have been unemployed for a lengthy period of time seems important, particularly given the current economy and the increased unemployment rate, as well as the intense pressure on training agencies to provide programs that culminate in actual job placement as opposed to only job-search activity.

Predictor Variables

Several significant findings in relation to some of the study s predictor variables are further explored. First, the results indicated that SSE (T1-T2) was significantly positively related to post-training job-search intended effort (T3). Thus, trainees with higher levels of SSE (T1-T2) also reported significantly higher

levels of post-training job-search intended effort (T3). This is consistent with previous research findings by van Ryn and Vinokur (1992) who also found SSE (i.e., job-search self-efficacy) to be related to job-search intention. In fact, the researchers found that the relationship between the two variables persisted over time, even if individuals failed repeatedly in their attempts to find employment. These findings provide further support for why training programs for unemployed individuals should consider including training curriculum designed to augment SSE. More specifically, given the current high rate of unemployment and the increased competition for the available jobs in today s market, job-seekers need to have a great deal of confidence in their ability to find permanent employment despite continuous rejection.

The results of the current study also indicated that the variable of social support and encouragement (T1-T2), was significantly and positively correlated with post-training job-search behavior and frequency. Thus, participants who indicated high levels of social support and encouragement also tended to report more frequent and varied types of post-training job-search behavior, in an effort to find employment for themselves, than trainees with low levels of social support and encouragement. One explanation for this finding, is that those with a greater level of social support and encouragement also have a larger network of employed relatives and friends with access to more employment leads, than their counterparts with little social support and encouragement. This network of

employed friends and family members may have assisted them in their job-search efforts by referring them to prospective employers, providing them with access to reliable transportation to attend an interview or job fair, assisting them with completing an application or developing a resume, and/or aiding them in accessing employment information available through the Internet. Indeed, Wanberg, Kanfer, and Banas (2000), examined the role of networking in relation to unemployment, and found that networking intensity actually increased the probability of reemployment.

Another possible explanation for this finding is that those trainees with more social support were simply more motivated to continue their job-search efforts, despite setbacks, because they had a greater support base of family and friends validating rather than undermining their efforts. Thus, their friends and family members might have consistently encouraged them to continue their job-search efforts despite the disappointments. These findings parallel those from previous studies (e.g., Brasher & Chen, 1999; Caplan et al., 1989; Gowan, Riordan, & Gatewood, 1999; Schmit et al., 1993), that have found significant relationships between the variables of social support, job-search behavior, coping strategies during unemployment, and even job-search intention. In fact, Vinokur and Caplan (1987), and Wanberg et al. (1996), found that social support and encouragement positively predicted both job-seeking behavior and job-seeking intention. Given the results of the current and previous studies, the variable of

social support and encouragement should be taken into consideration when designing training programs targeting the unemployed.

Hypotheses

In general, the results showed some support for the present study s hypotheses. Hypothesis 1a, which predicted that a significant and positive relationship would be found between the antecedent variable of GSE (T1-T2) and the outcome variables of job-search behavior and frequency (T3), and employment status (T3), after controlling for demographic and background variables, was not supported. More specifically, hierarchical regression used to assess the relationship between GSE (T1-T2) and job-search behavior and frequency (T3) did not produce significant results. In addition, logistic regression used to assess the relationship between GSE (T1-T2) and employment status (T3) also did not provide support for this part of the hypothesis. It is possible that the GSE scale used in this study had too few items to really assess GSE. It is also a possibility that because the training programs in the study implement curricula that focus more on augmenting SSE, for the primary purpose of enhancing post-training behaviors that are specific to the world-of-work instead of tasks or behaviors in general, that another outcome measure consisting of items that were not domain specific would have resulted in different findings relative to this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1b, which predicted that a significant and positive relationship would be found between the antecedent variable of SSE (T1-T2) and the outcome variables of job-search behavior and frequency (T3), and employment status (T3), after controlling for demographic and background variables, was partially supported. More specifically, hierarchical regression used to assess the relationship between SSE (T1-T2) and job-search behavior and frequency (T3) produced significant results. The variable of SSE (T1-T2) emerged as a significant predictor of job-search behavior and frequency (T3). Thus, trainees with high levels of SSE (T1-T2) tended to report more frequent and varied types of post-training job-search behavior, in an effort to find employment for themselves, than trainees with low levels of initial SSE.

This study in general and the finding of the link between SSE and job-search behavior in particular, address to some degree the suggestions by several researchers (e.g., Eden & Aviram, 1993; Houser et al., 1992; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Wenzel, 1993) for additional studies focusing on the relationship between self-efficacy and employment efforts of the unemployed. This finding also confirms results from previous studies (e.g., Eden & Aviram, 1993; van Ryn & Vinokur, 1992; Wanberg et al., 1999) that found self-efficacy to be a significant positive predictor of job-search behavior. One possible explanation for this relationship is that, as noted by Eden and Aviram (1993), self-efficacy actually has a motivating effect on the unemployed to engage in job-seeking behavior.

Thus, those who have higher levels of self-efficacy are more motivated to find employment, and therefore engage in job-search efforts more frequently than individuals with lower levels of self-efficacy. Another explanation, somewhat relevant to the previous one, is that those with higher levels of SSE are simply more confident in their ability to engage in job-search efforts and even to procure employment. Thus, even in the face of several employment rejections, they continue to engage in frequent and varied job-search activities, because they are motivated by their confidence that they will eventually be successful in gaining some type of employment.

The second part of Hypothesis 1b, which predicted that pre-training SSE (T1-T2) would emerge as a significant predictor of post-training employment status, however, was not supported. More specifically, the results of the logistic regression analyses indicated that SSE (T1-T2) did not significantly predict employment status. It is possible that the relationship between pre-training SSE and post-training employment status is not of a direct nature, but actually mediated or moderated by another variable. This is certainly an important area for future research, given the fact that most employment training agencies are evaluated on effectiveness, and more times than not, effectiveness is measured in terms of the number of actual post-training job placements. It would be a tremendous asset if research identified as many of the pre-training or mediating variables as possible that actually predict post-training employment status.

Training agencies could then include comprehensive modules, specifically focusing on those variables, in their employment training programs in an effort to increase the placement rates for program participants.

Hypotheses 1c and 1d both tested for the behavioral plasticity effect, and proposed that trainees with high pre-training measures of GSE and SSE respectively would respond differently to the training interventions (designed by the respective training agencies) than trainees who indicated low levels of initial GSE and SSE. The results from regression analyses used to test for behavioral plasticity did not provide support for the hypotheses in relation to GSE or SSE. The findings, therefore, did not reveal that the employment training interventions had changed job-search behavior and frequency levels and done so to a greater degree for trainees with low pre-training levels of GSE and SSE respectively. Specifically, the relationships between each pre-training measure and job-search behavior and frequency were each of a linear as opposed to a non-linear nature, thereby providing evidence that the behavioral plasticity hypotheses were not supported in this study in relation to GSE and SSE.

There are several possible reasons why the behavioral plasticity effect was not confirmed in the current study, even though previous studies (e.g., Eden & Aviram, 1993; Eden & Kinnar, 1991), have found evidence of this effect. One such possibility is that the previous studies included an experimental and control group design, whereas the current study implemented a training-condition only

design. In addition, previous studies specifically implemented workshops or training programs designed to augment only one or two variables (e.g., GSE, SSE) in order to examine changes in the dependent variable. The present study, on the other hand, included training programs that had already been designed by the respective organizations instead of the researcher, and included training content focusing on many areas, as opposed to only one or two, in an effort to intensify post-training behaviors. Future research studies should perhaps employ experimental and control groups as done in the previous studies, and should also implement workshops or training components that focus on augmenting only one or two attitudes or behaviors (e.g., SSE and/or GSE, or employment commitment and/or unemployment negativity, etc.).

Hypothesis 2a, which proposed that after controlling for individual differences in demographic and background variables, employment commitment (T1-T2) would be significantly and positively related to job-search behavior and frequency (T3) and job-search intended effort (T3) was partially supported. Specifically, hierarchical regression used to assess the relationship between employment commitment and job-search behavior and frequency did not yield significant results for this part of the hypothesis. The findings indicated that employment commitment (T1-T2) did notpredict a significant amount of the variance in job-search behavior and frequency (T3). In other words, trainees with

higher levels of employment commitment prior to training did not report significantly higher levels of post-training job-search behavior and frequency.

Although the pre-training variable of employment commitment was significantly and positively correlated with the dependent variable of job-search behavior and frequency, surprisingly however, regression analysis did not reveal a predictive relationship between the two variables. It is surprising that the hypothesis was not confirmed, given the fact that the other pre-training variables of SSE and unemployment negativity, which were both significantly and positively related to employment commitment, also emerged as significant positive predictors of job-search behavior and frequency, yet employment commitment did not. One possible explanation is that the relationship between employment commitment and job-search behavior and frequency is not of an antecedent and dependent variable nature, but rather one where either employment commitment moderates the relationship between another pre-training variable (e.g., SSE) and the dependent variable, or where another pre-training variable (e.g., SSE, unemployment negativity) is functioning as a mediator between employment commitment and job-search behavior and frequency. As previously discussed, post hoc analyses revealed that both unemployment negativity and SSE do in fact mediate the relationship between pre-training employment commitment and post-training job-search behavior and frequency.

The second part of Hypothesis 2a which predicted that pre-training employment commitment (T1-T2) would emerge as a significant predictor of post-training job-search intended effort (T3), however, was supported. More specifically, the results of the regression analysis supported this part of Hypothesis 2a. Trainees with higher levels of employment commitment (T1-T2) reported significantly higher levels of job-search intended effort (T3). This finding from the current study confirms results from previous studies (e.g., Wanberg et al., 1996) which also indicated a significantly positive relationship between employment commitment and job-seeking intention. The current study also supports previous research, in that it found the relationship between the two variables to go beyond a correlational nature to one wherein pre-training employment commitment significantly predicted job-search intended effort. Further research should be done to replicate the findings. Future studies could perhaps explore other variables in relation to job-search intended effort, or even examine the moderating effects of job-search behavior and frequency on the relationship between employment commitment and job-search intended effort.

Hypothesis 2b, an exploratory hypothesis testing for the behavioral plasticity effect, proposed that trainees with high pre-training measures of employment commitment would respond differently to the training interventions (designed by the respective training agencies) than trainees who indicated low levels of initial employment commitment. Results from regression analysis used

to test for behavioral plasticity did not provide support for the hypothesis in relation to employment commitment. Thus, employment training interventions had not significantly changed job-search behavior and frequency levels and done so differentially depending on trainees' pre-training levels (i.e., high, low) of employment commitment. As previously discussed in relation to GSE and SSE, future studies testing for the behavioral plasticity effect should perhaps implement workshops or training programs designed to augment only one or two variables (e.g., employment commitment) in order to examine changes in the dependent variable (e.g., job-search behavior and frequency). The current study, however, included training programs consisting of training content focusing on many areas, as opposed to only one or two, in an effort to intensify post-training behaviors, which might explain to some degree why significant results were not found in relation to this exploratory hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3a, which indicated that a positive and significant relationship would be found between the antecedent variable of unemployment negativity and the outcome variables of job-search behavior and frequency, employment status, and job-search intended effort, after controlling for demographic and background variables was partially supported. To further explain, hierarchical regression used to assess the relationship between unemployment negativity (T1-T2) and job-search behavior and frequency (T3) yielded significant results. The variable of unemployment negativity (T1-T2) significantly predicted job-search behavior and

frequency (T3) when entered into the regression equation. In other words, trainees with more dissatisfaction and negative feelings about being unemployed tended to report more frequent and varied types of post-training job-search behavior in order to obtain employment for themselves, than did their counterparts with lower levels of initial unemployment negativity.

Consistent with the findings of several researchers (e.g., Kessler et al., 1989), high levels of unemployment negativity and dissatisfaction did not impede job-search efforts. Once again the current study and its findings answer the call, to some extent, of several researchers (e.g., Creed et al., 1998; Kalil et al., 2001; Wanberg, 1997; Winefield, 1995) for more research on factors related to unemployment, in particular those which may be antecedents or relevant in any manner to job-search behavior. One possible explanation for this relationship could perhaps be interpreted in terms of the theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). More specifically, individuals with higher levels of unemployment negativity, more so than their counterparts, experience more of a quandary when they are unemployed, and therefore must engage in more frequent and varied job-search behaviors in order to resolve the dilemma. Employment rejections might slow down their job-search efforts somewhat, but not totally deter them, because the need to resolve the conflict between unemployment negativity and their current status of being unemployed is much greater, and

causes more discomfort than the actual or imagined fear of rejection could ever cause.

The second part of Hypothesis 3a, which predicted that pre-training unemployment negativity would emerge as a significant predictor of post-training employment status, was also supported. More specifically, the results of the logistic regression analysis indicated that the variable of unemployment negativity (T1-T2) significantly predicted employment status (T3). In fact, trainees with high pre-training levels of unemployment negativity were twice as likely to find employment after training, in comparison to their counterparts who indicated low levels of pre-training unemployment negativity. This finding confirms that of Kessler et al. (1989), who also found that high levels of distress about unemployment were actually associated with an increased likelihood of unemployed individuals procuring employment. The researchers subsequently concluded that if opportunities actually exist for employment, then the worst psychological effects of unemployment can be overcome. It is possible that one explanation for this finding in the current study is that the participating training programs provided job placement assistance, conducted on-site job-fairs, and had well-established relationships with area employers, which all may have helped some trainees overcome the negative impact of unemployment and focus instead on the many opportunities for employment.

Another possible explanation for the finding is that because those with higher levels of pre-training unemployment negativity actually engaged in more frequent and various types of job-search behavior (as previously discussed), they also increased their opportunities for finding employment, and subsequently found employment at a higher rate than their counterparts. Indeed, meta-analytic findings by Kanfer et al. (2001), indicated a significantly positive relationship between job-search behavior and employment status. The current study s further confirmation that unemployment negativity predicts post-training employment status should be of value to employment training agencies, especially those that are outcome measures driven. Specifically, these agencies might benefit from assessing pre-training unemployment negativity levels and implementing training curricula designed to intensify trainees negative feelings about unemployment, while simultaneously increasing their understanding about the advantages of job procurement.

The third part of Hypothesis 3a, which predicted that pre-training unemployment negativity would significantly predict post-training job-search intended effort, however was not supported. Specifically, the results of the hierarchical regression analyses indicated that unemployment negativity (T1-T2) did not predict a significant amount of the variance in job-search intended effort (T3). It is possible that a different variable actually functions as a mediator between unemployment negativity and job-search intended effort.

Hypothesis 3b, an exploratory hypothesis testing for the behavioral plasticity effect, proposed that trainees with high pre-training measures of unemployment negativity would respond differently to the training interventions (designed by the respective training agencies) than trainees who indicated low levels of initial unemployment negativity. Results from regression analyses used to test for behavioral plasticity did not provide support for the hypothesis in relation to unemployment negativity. Therefore, employment training interventions had not significantly changed job-search behavior and frequency levels and done so differentially depending on trainees' pre-training levels (i.e., high, low) of unemployment negativity. As previously discussed, future studies testing for the behavioral plasticity effect should implement workshops or training programs designed to enhance only one or two variables (e.g., unemployment negativity) in order to examine changes in the dependent variable (e.g., job-search behavior and frequency).

Other Significant Findings

Several other significant findings emerged from analyses of the results that although beyond the scope of the current study, still warrant further discussion. For example, results from logistic regression analyses indicated that the demographic variable of marital status significantly predicted post-training employment status. More specifically, being unmarried increased the odds by over 75% of trainees finding employment at the end of training. Thus, trainees

who were single had a greater likelihood of job placement after training than their married counterparts.

One possible explanation for this finding is that single trainees had only one income source to rely upon, and therefore experienced greater pressure to secure some type of employment before their allowable unemployment benefits were expended, or TANF and/or WIA related sanctions, resulting in a decrease or termination of public assistance altogether, were imposed. In contrast, married trainees might not have been the primary breadwinner for their respective household, or if they were, maybe their spouses also contributed income that was significant enough to cover household expenses. Given such, it possible that the pressure to find some type of employment was not as great for married trainees as it was for their single counterparts. Indeed, previous research (e.g., Vuori & Vesalainen, 1999) has shown that the deterioration in one s financial situation--or maybe even the threat of loss of finances--was related to increased job-search behavior, and that this job-seeking activity actually predicted reemployment.

Analyses of logistic regression results also indicated that the background variable of reason for unemployment significantly predicted post-training employment status. Respondents who were unemployed because of a disability or other health-related issue were at least 60% less likely to find jobs after training than those who were unemployed because of other reasons such as relocation or a lack of transportation. One obvious explanation for this finding is that a disability

or health problem is probably a harder barrier to employment to overcome, particularly if it is a re-occurring or permanent condition, than that of getting settled after relocating to a new city or finding some reliable means of transportation. This finding is important to the unemployment literature because few studies, as noted by some (e.g., Wanberg et al., 1999), have explored the topic of job-search constraints [analogous to reasons for unemployment or barriers to employment] in general, and even fewer (e.g., Brooks & Buckner, 1996) have explored this issue, in particular, in relation to a sample of individuals receiving some form of public assistance. Indeed, considering the findings from the current study and those from Brooks and Buckner (1996), future research on unemployment should further examine this variable of constraints to job-search and/or employment, particularly when focusing on welfare-to-work training initiatives or job-search behaviors of chronically unemployed individuals.

Further, results from logistic regression analyses also revealed that gross annual household income significantly predicted post-training employment status. Trainees with higher levels of income were at least over 50% more likely to find employment after training than participants with lower income levels. One reason for this relationship might be that as income level increases, so do the opportunities and resources for exposure to more employment options. Another explanation might be that those with higher income levels also have a larger

network of employed relatives and friends with access to more employment leads, than their counterparts with lower levels of income.

Limitations and Conclusions

Several limitations of this study should be taken into consideration. First, as previously discussed, most of the assessments included in this study were self-report measures. While these types of measures are often the most common and practical methods to assess many of the variables in this study, there is still some concern about self-report bias across measures. However, relative to the measure of job-search behavior and frequency, hopefully the issue of self-report bias was addressed to some degree, because the assessment consisted of several items focusing on specific job-search activity (e.g., attendance at job fairs, contact with prospective employers, etc.), instead of one or two items about job-search activity in general.

In addition, as previously discussed, a clicking-off survey technique, developed by Dr. Benjamin Schneider, that has been shown to diminish participants automaticity of responding to self-report survey items was used in the study. Further, validity of the measures was hopefully improved somewhat because participants were assured that their survey responses would be confidential (Cascio, 1987). Finally, follow-up data were obtained from each training agency, and some of this information was used to confirm the responses (e.g., post-training employment status) provided by the trainees. Since follow-up

data obtained from each agency were used to verify each participant s employment status at least 30-60 days after training, the issue of self-report bias, particularly with respect to post-training employment status should be somewhat assuaged.

In addition, there was a potential concern regarding social desirability in responding to some of the items included in the survey. However, since participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality of responses, it is quite possible that social desirability had little effect. In addition, there was also a concern regarding researcher bias since I administered the surveys in person, rather than using mail-out surveys, or having staff from the respective training agencies administer the surveys on my behalf. In an attempt to reduce the threat of researcher bias, a standard administration process was followed for each agency. Specifically, instructions and examples were read verbatim from each survey, and overall information regarding the study was provided in writing and orally from a participant s informed consent form required by the University s Institutional Review Board when conducting research involving human subjects.

Another potential limitation of the study was the effect of regression towards the mean and pre-test sensitization. However, in an effort to control for both of these effects, the pre-training questionnaire was administered once during training orientation and again at the beginning of the actual training program. Thus, a pre-training (T1), pre-training (T2), post-training (T3) data collection

strategy was used for each agency. Administration of the questionnaire immediately before training helped to ensure that trainee responses were indeed antecedents to the training and not based on the training experience itself (Tannenbaum et al., 1991). Analyses of results from repeated measures ANOVA, indicated some significant differences between (T1) and (T2) administration of the pre-training measures. For example, there were significant differences between the means for SSE (T1 & T2), employment commitment (T1 & T2), and unemployment negativity (T1 & T2). It should be noted, however, that small differences between the means for (T1) and (T2) (i.e., .01 - .08) resulted in statistical significance. It should also be noted that when significant differences were indicated between (T1) and (T2), that the mean values actually went down during (T2).

More significant differences, however, were noted between each of the pre-training measures (T1 & T2) and each respective post-training measure (T3). For example, there were significant differences between the means for GSE (T1 & T3, and T2 & T3), SSE (T1 & T3, and T2 & T3), employment commitment (T1 & T3, and T2 & T3), and job-search behavior and frequency (T1 & T3, and T2 & T3). No significant differences between the means for unemployment negativity (T1 & T3, and T2 & T3) were found. The differences between the means for (T1) and (T3) (i.e., -.24 - -.99), as well as those for (T2) and (T3) (i.e., -.32 - -.99) were much larger than those for (T1) and (T2) (i.e., .01 - .08). These results provided

some evidence that the effects of regression towards the mean and pre-test sensitization had been controlled to a certain degree.

In conclusion, continued research on this topic would have useful applications for training agencies implementing employment interventions for unemployed individuals. As previously stated, such research should focus on identifying those variables that predict job-search behavior and especially post-training employment status, since training program funding providers often equate program effectiveness with percentage of actual job placements at the end of the training cycle. In addition, research should also focus on whether certain significant findings persist over time. For example, does the pre-training variable of employment commitment also predict job placement or organizational tenure overtime (e.g., 6 months, 9-12 months, 2 years or more after training)? Also, as previously discussed, the variables of social support and encouragement, as well as that of constraints to job-search and/or employment appear important for future studies on unemployment and welfare-to-work training initiatives. Further, follow-up studies exploring the behavioral plasticity effect in relation to employment variables are also warranted, because training agencies would benefit from knowing how to derive optimal matches between trainee individual characteristics and training program design and content.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Selected Demographic and Background Variables

Agency	Ethnicity
A 32% (39)	African-American/Black 83.5% (101)
B 33% (40)	European-American/White 10.7% (13)
C 35% (42)	Other 5.8% (7)
Gender	Marital Status
Female 71.1% (86)	Single 65.3% (79)
Male 28.9% (35)	Married 19.8% (24)
	Previously Married 14.8% (18)
Age	Education
17-25 29.8% (36)	Less than HS/GED 11.6% (14)
26-35 31.4% (38)	HS/GED 76.9% (93)
36-45 21.5% (26)	Assoc. Degree 7.4% (9)
46-55 15.7% (19)	BA/BS 4.1% (5)
56 and Over 1.7% (2)	
Children	Gross Annual Income
0 or N/A 11.6% (14)	Less than $5,000 45.5% (55)
1-2 45.5% (55)	$5,000-less than $10,000 11.6% (14)
2-4 39.7% (48)	$10,000-less than $15,000 6.6% (8)
5-6 3.3% (4)	$15,000-less than $20,000 7.4% (9)
	$20,000-less than $25,000 9.1% (11)
	$25,000-less than $30,000 9.9% (12)
	$30,000 and over 9.9% (12)
Unemployment Length	Reasons for Unemployment
1 Wk.-3 Mos. 23.1% (28)	Layoff/Plant Closing 26.4% (32)
3 Mos.-6 Mos. 24.8% (30)	Disability/Health 18.2% (22)
6 Mos.-1 Year 20.7% (25)	Inadequate Pay/Skills 23.1% (28)
1 Year-3 Years 28.9% (35)	Caretaker Relative/Friend 11.6% (14)
3 Years and Over 2.5% (3)	Other 20.6% (25)

Note. N=121. The "other" category for the variable of Race included Asian-American/Pacific Islander, Native American/Indian, and Multi-Ethnic respondents. The "other" category for the variable Reasons for Unemployment included School, Training, Lack of Transportation, Relocation, etc.

Table 2

Inter-correlations of Predictor Variables (T1) with Predictor Variables (T2)

GSE (T1) with GSE (T2)	.92***
SSE (T1) with SSE (T2)	.97***
Employment Commitment (T1) with Employment Commitment (T2)	.96***
Unemployment Negativity (T1) with Unemployment Negativity (T2)	.97***
Job-Search Behavior and Frequency (T1) with Job-Search Behavior and Frequency (T2)	.99***
Social Support (T1) with Social Support (T2)	.97***

Note. N was 121 for all variables. GSE (general self-efficacy), SSE (specific self-efficacy).
*** $p \leq .001$.

Table 3
Inter-Correlations for All Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	(–)						
2. Children	.27**	(–)					
3. Education	.19 *	.07	(–)				
4. Ethnicity	.07	-.07	-.05	(–)			
5. Gender	-.02	-.10	.04	.14	(–)		
6. Income	.22**	-.18*	.20*	.29***	.19*	(–)	
7. Length of Unemployment	-.09	-.04	-.01	.09	-.03	-.10	(–)
8. Marital Status	.27**	.02	.17	.14	.05	.46***	-.07
9. GSE (T1-T2)	-.06	.10	-.09	-.22*	.23**	.01	.12
10. SSE (T1-T2)	-.01	.17	-.02	-.18*	.06	.09	-.01
11. Employment Commitment (T1-T2)	-.11	.16	-.15	-.01	.04	-.10	.25**
12. Unemployment Negativity (T1-T2)	-.01	.07	-.16	-.01	-.16	-.13	-.03
13. Job-Search Behavior (T1-T2)	.08	.15	.15	-.11	-.24**	.05	-.18*
14. Social Support (T1-T2)	-.16	.11	-.16	-.21*	-.05	.05	-.06
15. Job-Search Behavior (T3)	.12	.23**	.14	-.09	-.10	.13	-.12
16. Employment Status (T3)	.02	.03	.03	-.09	.09	.17*	-.20*
17. Job-Search Intended Effort (T3)	.04	.13	.07	- .17	.04	.07	-.14

Table 3 (continued)

Inter-Correlations for All Study Variables

8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
(–)									
.03	(–)								
.13	.51***	(–)							
.01	.19*	.30***	(–)						
.01	-.09	-.03	.21*	(–)					
.03	.03	.16	.12	.22*	(–)				
.08	.27**	.30***	.21*	.06	.14	(–)			
.16	.05	.30***	.17*	.27**	.38***	.20*	(–)		
-.11	.03	.03	.20*	.12	.03	.13	.14	(–)	
.10	.08	.29***	.25**	.07	.23*	.18	.42***	.21*	(–)

Note. N was 121 for all variables. GSE (general self-efficacy), SSE (specific self-efficacy). Ethnicity re-coded to (1=African-American, 2=Other), Gender coded to (1=Female, 2=Male), Marital Status re-coded to (1=Non-Married, 2=Married).

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

Table 4

Results of One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Job-Search Behavior and Frequency (T3) by Agency

By	Job-Search Behavior and Frequency (T3) Agency				
Source of Variation	(N)	SS	DF	MS	F
		(Mean)		(SE)	
Between groups		4.14	2	2.07	3.30*
Agency A	(39)	(3.61)		(.15)	
Agency B	(40)	(4.02)		(.10)	
Agency C	(42)	(3.98)		(.12)	
Within groups		73.99	118	.63	
Total		78.12	120	(.07)	

Note. * $p \leq .05$.

Table 5

Results of One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Employment Status (T3) by Reason for Unemployment

Employment Status (T3) By Reason for Unemployment					
Source of Variation	(N)	SS (Mean)	DF	MS (SE)	F
Between groups		3.54	4	.88	4.07**
Layoff	(32)	(1.72)		(.08)	
Disability	(22)	(1.37)		(.11)	
Pay/Skills	(14)	(1.43)		(.14)	
Caretaker	(28)	(1.57)		(.10)	
Other	(25)	(1.84)		(.07)	
Within groups		25.21	116	.22	
Total		28.74	120	(.04)	

Note. ** $p \leq .01$.

Table 6

Number of Cases and Items, Descriptive Statistics, and Internal Consistency Reliabilities (Cronbach's Alpha) for all Scales

Scale	N	Number Of Items	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
General Self-Efficacy (GSE)	121	3	4.19	2.00	5.00	.68	.71
Specific Self-Efficacy (SSE)	121	12	4.35	1.58	5.00	.56	.88
Employment Commitment	121	7	4.21	1.29	5.00	.59	.74
Unemployment Negativity	121	6	3.97	1.33	5.00	.80	.83
Social Support	121	5	4.15	1.00	5.00	.91	.88
Job-Search Behavior/Frequency	121	8	3.87	2.00	5.00	.81	.88
Job-Search Intended Effort	121	2	4.55	1.00	5.00	.71	.85

Note. The Cronbach's Alphas reported for GSE, SSE, employment commitment, unemployment negativity, and social support represent measures collected during (T1). The Cronbach's Alphas reported for job-search behavior and frequency, and job-search intended effort represent measures collected during (T3).

Table 7

Results of Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for General Self-Efficacy (T1, T2, and T3)

			General Self-Efficacy		
Indicator	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*N*	*F (overall)*
GSE			(1, 120)	121	7888.26***
T1	4.19	.68			
T2	4.18	.62			
T3	4.53	.53			
t-contrasts		*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F (t-contrasts)*
T1 vs. T2		3.67	(1, 120)	3.67	.05
T1 vs. T3		14.81	(1, 120)	14.81	36.38***
T2 vs. T3		15.28	(1, 120)	15.28	43.49***

Note. *** $p \leq .001$.

Table 8

Results of Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Specific Self-Efficacy (T1, T2, and T3)

			Specific Self-Efficacy		
Indicator	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*N*	*F (overall)*
SSE			(1, 120)	121	11336.85***
T1	4.35	.55			
T2	4.30	.55			
T3	4.62	.42			
t-contrasts		*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F (t-contrasts)*
T1 vs. T2		.36	(1, 120)	.36	22.11***
T1 vs. T3		8.74	(1, 120)	8.74	36.17***
T2 vs. T3		12.62	(1, 120)	12.62	51.64***

Note. *** $p \leq .001$.

Table 9

Results of Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Employment Commitment (T1, T2, and T3)

		Employment Commitment			
Indicator	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*N*	*F (overall)*
Employment Commitment			(1, 120)	121	8611.00***
T1	4.21	.60			
T2	4.13	.62			
T3	4.45	.48			

t-contrasts	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F (t-contrasts)*
T1 vs. T2	.74	(1, 120)	.74	23.23***
T1 vs. T3	6.81	(1, 120)	6.81	24.42***
T2 vs. T3	12.02	(1, 120)	12.02	40.59***

Note. *** $p \leq .001$.

Table 10

Results of Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Unemployment Negativity (T1, T2, and T3)

		Unemployment Negativity			
Indicator	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*N*	*F (overall)*
Unemployment Negativity			(1, 120)	121	3773.36***
T1	3.97	.80			
T2	3.91	.79			
T3	3.94	.77			

t-contrasts	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F (t-contrasts)*
T1 vs. T2	.47	(1, 120)	.47	11.80***
T1 vs. T3	9.18	(1, 120)	9.18	.17
T2 vs. T3	.14	(1, 120)	.14	.28

Note. *** $p \leq .001$.

Table 11

Results of Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Job-Search Behavior and Frequency (T1, T2, and T3)

	Job-Search Behavior and Frequency				
Indicator	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*N*	*F (overall)*
Job-Search Behavior/Frequency			(1, 120)	121	2108.09***
T1	2.88	.95			
T2	2.88	.93			
T3	3.87	.81			

t-contrasts	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F (t-contrasts)*
T1 vs. T2	3.23	(1, 120)	3.23	.18
T1 vs. T3	118.27	(1, 120)	118.27	121.04***
T2 vs. T3	119.51	(1, 120)	119.51	126.84***

Note. *** $p \leq .001$.

Table 12

Hierarchical Regression Results using Demographic/Background Variables and General Self-Efficacy (T1-T2) to Predict Job-Search Behavior and Frequency

	Job-Search Behavior and Frequency (β)	
Variable/Predictor	Step 1	Step 2
Step 1:		
Demographic and Background Variables		
Education	.06	
Age	-.03	
Ethnicity	-.11	
Marital Status	.09	
Length Unemployment	-.09	
Children	.25**	
Income	.18	
Gender	-.10	
Step 2:		
Demographic and Background Variables		
Education		.07
Age		-.03
Ethnicity		-.09
Marital Status		.08
Length Unemployment		-.10
Children		.24**
Income		.17
Gender		-.12
Independent Variable (T1-T2)		
GSE (T1-T2)		.05
Multiple *R*	.36*	.37
R^2	.13*	.14
Adjusted R^2	.07*	.07
(df)	(8, 112)	(9, 111)

Note. Variables were entered into the regression equation procedure in blocks. Ethnicity re-coded to (1=African-American, 2=Other), Gender coded to (1=Female, 2=Male), Marital Status re-coded to (1=Non-Married, 2=Married).
* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

Table 13

Logistic Regression: Employment Status Regressed on Demographic/Background Variables and General Self-Efficacy (T1- T2)

	(*b* & *OR*)	
Variable/Predictor	Step 1	Step 2
Step 1: Demographic Variables		
Education	-.22, .80	
Age	-.08, .92	
Ethnicity	-.52, .59	
Marital Status	-1.44*, .24	
Length Unemployment	-.17, .85	
Reason Unemployment		
Layoff/Down-sizing	.32, 1.37	
Disability/Health	-1.00*, .37	
Caretaker Rel./Friend	-.55, .58	
Inadequate Pay/Skills	.06, 1.06	
Children	.42, 1.52	
Income	.28*, 1.32	
Gender	.48, 1.62	
Agency		
A	-.60, .55	
B	.13, 1.13	
Step 2: Demographic Variables		
Education		-.22, .81
Age		-.08, .92
Ethnicity		-.50, .60
Marital Status		-1.45*, .23
Length Unemployment		-.17, .84

(continued on next page)

Note. Predictors were entered into the regression equation procedure in blocks. Ethnicity re-coded to (1=African-American, 2=Other), Gender coded to (1=Female, 2=Male), Marital Status re-coded to (1=Non-Married, 2=Married), Employment status re-coded to (1=No Employment, 2=Employment). (*b*) = logistic regression coefficient for each step and (*OR*) = odds ratio.
* $p < .05$.

Table 13 (continued)

Logistic Regression: Employment Status Regressed on Demographic/Background Variables and General Self-Efficacy (T1- T2)

	(*b & OR*)	
Variable/Predictor	Step 1	Step 2
Step 2 (continued):		
Reason Unemployment		
Layoff/Down-sizing		.32, 1.37
Disability/Health		-1.00*, .37
Caretaker Rel./Friend		-.55, .58
Inadequate Pay/Skills		.07, 1.08
Children		.42, 1.52
Income		.28*, 1.32
Gender		.47, 1.60
Agency		
A		-.60, .55
B		.12, 1.13
Independent Variable (T1-T2)		
GSE (T1-T2)		.04, 1.04

Table 14

Hierarchical Regression Results using Demographic/Background Variables and Specific Self-Efficacy (T1- T2) to Predict Job-Search Behavior and Frequency

	Job-Search Behavior and Frequency (β)	
Variable/Predictor	Step 1	Step 2
Step 1:		
Demographic and Background Variables		
Education	.06	
Age	-.03	
Ethnicity	-.11	
Marital Status	.09	
Length Unemployment	-.09	
Children	.25**	
Income	.18	
Gender	-.10	
Step 2:		
Demographic and Background Variables		
Education		.07
Age		-.02
Ethnicity		-.05
Marital Status		.04
Length Unemployment		-.09
Children		.20*
Income		.15
Gender		-.12
Independent Variable (T1-T2)		
SSE (T1-T2)		.25**
Multiple *R*	.35*	.42**
R^2	.12*	.18**
Adjusted R^2	.06*	.11**
(df)	(8, 112)	(9, 111)

Note. Variables were entered into the regression equation procedure in blocks. Ethnicity re-coded to (1=African-American, 2=Other), Gender coded to (1=Female, 2=Male), Marital Status re-coded to (1=Non-Married, 2=Married).
* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

Table 15

Logistic Regression: Employment Status Regressed on Demographic/Background Variables and Specific Self-Efficacy (T1-T2)

	(*b* & *OR)*			
Variable/Predictor	Step 1		Step 2	
Step 1: Demographic Variables				
Education	-.22,	.80		
Age	-.08,	.92		
Ethnicity	-.52,	.59		
Marital Status	-1.44*,	.24		
Length Unemployment	-.17,	.85		
Reason Unemployment				
Layoff/Down-sizing	.32,	1.37		
Disability/Health	-1.00*,	.37		
Caretaker Rel./Friend	-.55,	.58		
Inadequate Pay/Skills	.06,	1.06		
Children	.42,	1.52		
Income	.28*,	1.32		
Gender	.48,	1.62		
Agency				
A	-.60,	.55		
B	.13,	1.13		
Step 2: Demographic Variables				
Education			-.19,	.82
Age			-.06,	.94
Ethnicity			-.51,	.60
Marital Status			-1.50*,	.22
Length Unemployment			-.18,	.83

(continued on next page)

Note. Predictors were entered into the regression equation procedure in blocks. Ethnicity re-coded to (1=African-American, 2=Other), Gender coded to (1=Female, 2=Male), Marital Status re-coded to (1=Non-Married, 2=Married), Employment status re-coded to (1=No Employment, 2=Employment).
(*b*) = logistic regression coefficient for each step and (*OR*) = odds ratio.
* $p < .05$.

Table 15 (continued)

Logistic Regression: Employment Status Regressed on Demographic/Background Variables and Specific Self-Efficacy (T1-T2)

	(*b & OR)*	
Variable/Predictor	Step 1	Step 2
Step 2 (continued):		
Reason Unemployment		
Layoff/Down-sizing		.31, 1.37
Disability/Health		-1.02*, .36
Caretaker Rel./Friend		-.50, .60
Inadequate Pay/Skills		.20, 1.22
Children		.35, 1.41
Income		.30*, 1.35
Gender		.49, 1.64
Agency		
A		-.55, .58
B		.09, 1.09
Independent Variable (T1-T2)		
SSE (T1-T2)		.14, 1.15

Table 16

Hierarchical Regression Results: Behavioral Plasticity Effect--General Self-Efficacy (GSE) and Job-Search Behavior and Frequency

	Job-Search Behavior and Frequency (β)	
Variable/Predictor	Step 1	Step 2
Step 1:		
GSE	.03	1.01
Step 2:		
GSE x GSE		-.99
R^2 Change (Increment in R^2)	.00	.01

Table 17

Hierarchical Regression Results: Behavioral Plasticity Effect--Specific Self-Efficacy (SSE) and Job-Search Behavior and Frequency

	Job-Search Behavior and Frequency (β)	
Variable/Predictor	Step 1	Step 2
Step 1:		
SSE	.28***	.26
Step 2:		
SSE x SSE		.01
R^2 Change (Increment in R^2)	.08	.00

Note. *** $p < .001$.

Table 18

Hierarchical Regression Results using Demographic/Background Variables and Employment Commitment (T1-T2) to Predict Job-Search Behavior and Frequency

	Job-Search Behavior and Frequency (β)	
Variable/Predictor	Step 1	Step 2
Step 1:		
Demographic and Background Variables		
Education	.06	
Age	-.03	
Ethnicity	-.11	
Marital Status	.09	
Length Unemployment	-.09	
Children	.25**	
Income	.18	
Gender	-.10	
Step 2:		
Demographic and Background Variables		
Education		.08
Age		-.01
Ethnicity		-.13
Marital Status		.07
Length Unemployment		-.05
Children		.22*
Income		.19
Gender		-.11
Independent Variable (T1-T2)		
Employment Commitment (T1-T2)		.16
Multiple *R*	.36*	.39
R^2	.13*	.16
Adjusted R^2	.07*	.09
(df)	(8, 112)	(9, 111)

Note. Variables were entered into the regression equation procedure in blocks. Ethnicity re-coded to (1=African-American, 2=Other), Gender coded to (1=Female, 2=Male), Marital Status re-coded to (1=Non-Married, 2=Married).
* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

Table 19

Hierarchical Regression Results using Demographic/Background Variables and Employment Commitment (T1- T2) to Predict Job-Search Intended Effort

	Job-Search Intended Effort (β)	
Variable/Predictor	Step 1	Step 2
Step 1:		
Demographic and Background Variables		
Education	.01	
Age	-.00	
Ethnicity	-.40*	
Marital Status	.11	
Length Unemployment	-.06	
Children	.13	
Income	.04	
Gender	.09	
Step 2:		
Demographic and Background Variables		
Education		.04
Age		.03
Ethnicity		-.45*
Marital Status		.05
Length Unemployment		-.02
Children		.09
Income		.05
Gender		.09
Independent Variable (T1-T2)		
Employment Commitment (T1-T2)		.30**
Multiple R	.30	.38
ΔR^2	.09	.14
Adjusted R^2	.02	.07
(df)	(8, 102)	(9, 101)

Note. Variables were entered into the regression equation procedure in blocks. Ethnicity re-coded to (1=African-American, 2=Other), Gender coded to (1=Female, 2=Male), Marital Status re-coded to (1=Non-Married, 2=Married).
* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

Table 20

Hierarchical Regression Results: Behavioral Plasticity Effect--Employment Commitment and Job-Search Behavior and Frequency

	Job-Search Behavior and Frequency (β)	
Variable/Predictor	Step 1	Step 2
Step 1:		
Employment Commitment	.17	-.67
Step 2:		
Employment Commitment x Employment Commitment		.86
R^2 Change (Increment in R^2)	.03*	.01

Note. * $p < .05$.

Table 21

Hierarchical Regression Results using Demographic/Background Variables and Unemployment Negativity (T1- T2) to Predict Job-Search Behavior and Frequency

	Job-Search Behavior and Frequency (β)	
Variable/Predictor	Step 1	Step 2
Step 1:		
Demographic and Background Variables		
Education	.06	
Age	-.03	
Ethnicity	-.11	
Marital Status	.09	
Length Unemployment	-.09	
Children	.25**	
Income	.18	
Gender	-.10	
Step 2:		
Demographic and Background Variables		
Education		.10
Age		-.03
Ethnicity		-.12
Marital Status		.06
Length Unemployment		-.07
Children		.23**
Income		.21*
Gender		-.06
Independent Variable (T1-T2)		
Unemployment Negativity (T1-T2)		.28**
Multiple R	.36*	.45**
R^2	.13*	.21**
Adjusted R^2	.07*	.14**
(df)	(8, 112)	(9, 111)

Note. Variables were entered into the regression equation procedure in blocks. Ethnicity re-coded to (1=African-American, 2=Other), Gender coded to (1=Female, 2=Male), Marital Status re-coded to (1=Non-Married, 2=Married).
* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

Table 22

Logistic Regression: Employment Status Regressed on Demographic/Background Variables and Unemployment Negativity (T1-T2)

	(*b & OR)*	
Variable/Predictor	Step 1	Step 2
Step 1: Demographic Variables		
Education	-.22, .80	
Age	-.08, .92	
Ethnicity	-.52, .59	
Marital Status	-1.44*, .24	
Length Unemployment	-.17, .85	
Reason Unemployment		
Layoff/Down-sizing	.32, 1.37	
Disability/Health	-1.00*, .37	
Caretaker Rel./Friend	-.55, .58	
Inadequate Pay/Skills	.06, 1.06	
Children	.42, 1.52	
Income	.28*, 1.32	
Gender	.48, 1.62	
Agency		
A	-.60, .55	
B	.13, 1.13	
Step 2:		
Demographic Variables		
Education		-.06, .94
Age		-.09, .92
Ethnicity		-.72, .49
Marital Status		-1.76**, .17
Length Unemployment		-.15, .86

(continued on next page)

Note. Predictors were entered into the regression equation procedure in blocks. Ethnicity re-coded to (1=African-American, 2=Other), Gender coded to (1=Female, 2=Male), Marital Status re-coded to (1=Non-Married, 2=Married), Employment status re-coded to (1=No Employment, 2=Employment). (*b*) = logistic regression coefficient for each step and (*OR*) = odds ratio.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 22 (continued)

Logistic Regression: Employment Status Regressed on Demographic/Background Variables and Unemployment Negativity (T1-T2)

	(*b & OR)*	
Variable/Predictor	Step 1	Step 2
Step 2 (continued):		
Reason Unemployment		
Layoff/Down-sizing		.37, 1.45
Disability/Health		-1.17*, .31
Caretaker Rel./Friend		-.57, .56
Inadequate Pay/Skills		.04, 1.04
Children		.43, 1.54
Income		.35*, 1.42
Gender		.72, 2.05
Agency		
A		-.64, .53
B		.18, 1.20
Independent Variable (T1-T2)		
Unemployment Negativity		.75**, 2.12

Table 23

Hierarchical Regression Results using Demographic/Background Variables and Unemployment Negativity (T1- T2) to Predict Job-Search Intended Effort

	Job-Search Intended Effort (β)	
Variable/Predictor	Step 1	Step 2
Step 1:		
Demographic and Background Variables		
Education	.01	
Age	-.00	
Ethnicity	-.40*	
Marital Status	.11	
Length Unemployment	-.06	
Children	.13	
Income	.04	
Gender	.09	
Step 2:		
Demographic and Background Variables		
Education		.02
Age		.00
Ethnicity		-.41*
Marital Status		.09
Length Unemployment		-.06
Children		.14
Income		.04
Gender		.11
Independent Variable (T1-T2)		
Unemployment Negativity		.10
Multiple R	.30	.31
ΔR^2	.09	.10
Adjusted R^2	.02	.02
(df)	(8, 102)	(9, 101)

Note. Variables were entered into the regression equation procedure in blocks. Ethnicity re-coded to (1=African-American, 2=Other), Gender coded to (1=Female, 2=Male), Marital Status re coded to (1=Non-Married, 2=Married).
* $p \leq .05$.

Table 24

Hierarchical Regression Results: Behavioral Plasticity Effect--Unemployment Negativity and Job-Search Behavior and Frequency

	Job-Search Behavior and Frequency (β)	
Variable/Predictor	Step 1	Step 2
Step 1:		
Unemployment Negativity	.26**	-.38
Step 2:		
Unemployment Negativity x Unemployment Negativity	.65	
R^2 Change (Increment in R^2)	.06**	.00

Note. ** $p < .01$.

Table 25

Logistic Regression:Employment Status Regressed on Demographic/Background and Predictor Variables (T1-T2)

	(*b & OR)*	
Variable/Predictor	Step 1	Step 2
Step 1: Demographic Variables		
Education	-.21, .81	
Age	-.07, .93	
Ethnicity	-.57, .57	
Marital Status	-1.48*, .23	
Length Unemployment	-.18, .84	
Reason Unemployment		
Layoff/Down-sizing	.31, 1.36	
Disability/Health	-.98*, .37	
Caretaker Rel./Friend	-.51, .60	
Inadequate Pay/Skills	.16, 1.17	
Children	.38, 1.46	
Income	.30*, 1.36	
Gender	.49, 1.64	
Agency		
A	-.56, .57	
B	.10, 1.12	
Step 2: Demographic Variables		
Education		.15, 1.16
Age		.03, 1.03
Ethnicity		-1.04, .35
Marital Status		-1.97**, .14
Length Unemployment		-.07, .93

(continued on next page)

Note. Predictors were entered into the regression equation procedure in blocks. Ethnicity re-coded to (1=African-American, 2=Other), Gender coded to (1=Female, 2=Male), Marital Status re-coded to (1=Non-Married, 2=Married), Employment status re-coded to (1=No Employment, 2=Employment).
(*b*) = logistic regression coefficient for each step and (*OR*) = odds ratio.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 25 (continued)

Logistic Regression: Employment Status Regressed on Demographic/Background and Predictor Variables (T1-T2)

	(*b & OR)*	
Variable/Predictor	Step 1	Step 2
Step 2 (continued):		
Reason Unemployment		
Layoff/Down-sizing		.25, 1.29
Disability/Health		-1.30*, .27
Caretaker Rel./Friend		-.50, .61
Inadequate Pay/Skills		.09, 1.10
Children		.37, 1.44
Income		.43**, 1.54
Gender		.51, 1.66
Agency		
A		-.75*, .47
B		.32, 1.38
Independent Variables (T1-T2)		
Employment Commitment		1.02*, 2.78
Unemployment Negativity		.78*, 2.19
Social Support		.07, 1.08
General Self-Efficacy		-.03, .97
Specific Self-Efficacy		-.14, .87
Job-Search Behavior (T1)		-.26, .77

Table 26

Regression Results for Employment Commitment (T1-T2) and Unemployment Negativity (T1-T2)

Job-Search Behavior and Frequency (T3)			
Adjustment Variable	R^2	ΔR^2	$\Delta F(df)$
Length of Unemployment	.02	.02	1.95(1, 119)
Employment Commitment (T1-T2)	.04	.02	2.75(1, 118)
Unemployment Negativity (T1-T2)	.09	.06	7.14**(1, 117)

Note. $^{**}p \leq .01$.

Table 27

Regression Results for Unemployment Negativity (T1-T2) and Employment Commitment (T1-T2)

Job-Search Behavior and Frequency (T3)			
Adjustment Variable	R^2	ΔR^2	$\Delta F(df)$
Length of Unemployment	.02	.02	1.95(1, 119)
Unemployment Negativity (T1-T2)	.08	.07	8.82**(1, 118)
Employment Commitment (T1-T2)	.09	.01	1.21(1, 117)

Note. $^{**}p \leq .01$.

Table 28

Regression Results for Employment Commitment (T1-T2) and Specific Self-Efficacy (T1-T2)

Job-Search Behavior and Frequency (T3)			
Adjustment Variable	R^2	ΔR^2	$\Delta F(df)$
Length of Unemployment	.01	.01	1.40(1, 119)
Employment Commitment (T1-T2)	.04	.03	3.20(1, 118)
Specific Self-Efficacy (T1-T2)	.11	.07	9.00**(1, 117)

Note. $^{**}p \leq .01$.

Table 29

Regression Results for Specific Self-Efficacy (T1-T2) and Employment Commitment (T1-T2)

Job-Search Behavior and Frequency (T3)			
Adjustment Variable	R^2	ΔR^2	$\Delta F(df)$
Length of Unemployment	.01	.01	1.40(1, 119)
Specific Self-Efficacy (T1-T2)	.10	.09	11.71***(1, 118)
Employment Commitment (T1-T2)	.11	.01	.70(1, 117)

Note. ***$p \leq .001$.

Figure 1
Research Design

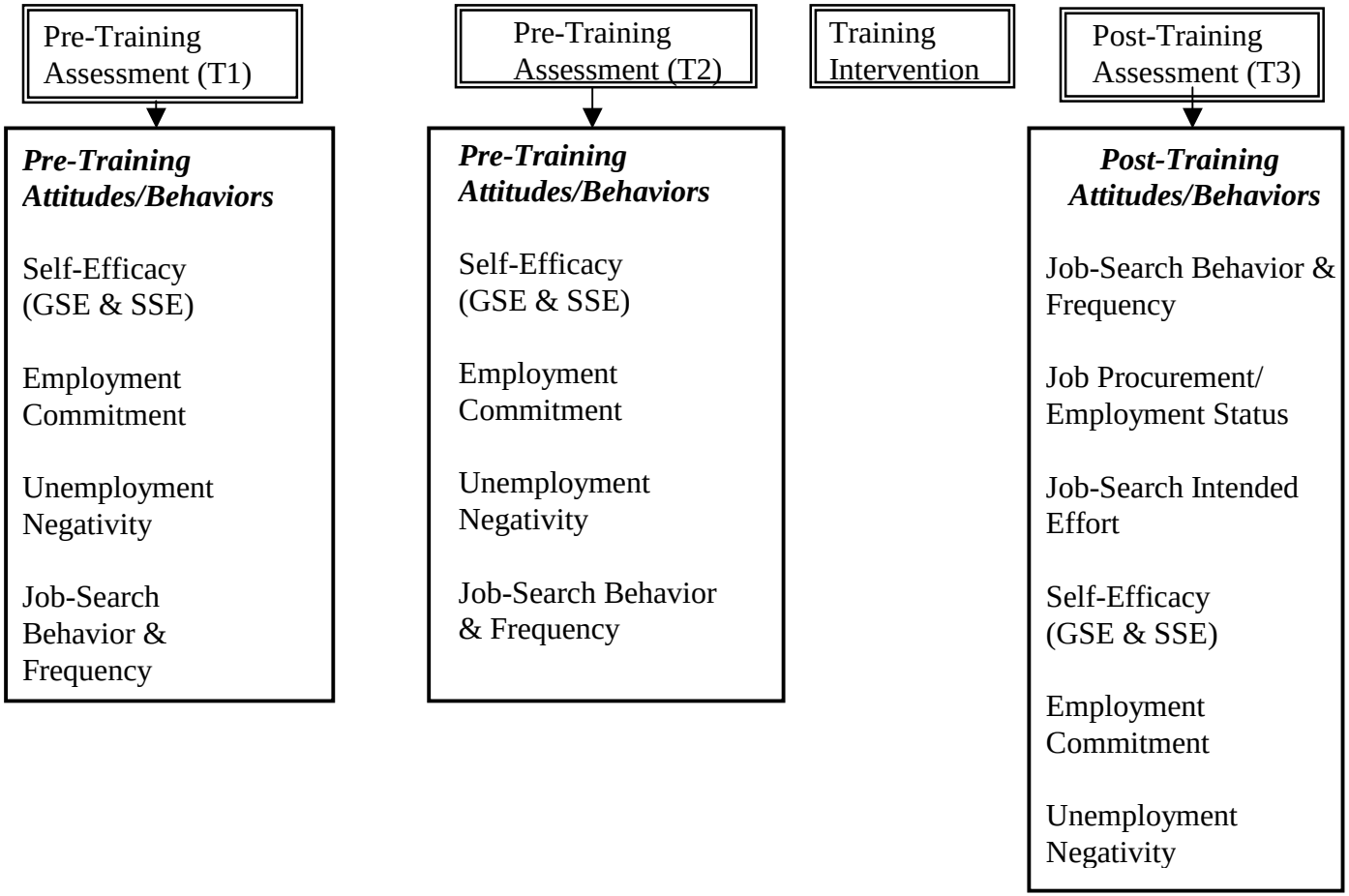


Figure 2

Research Model

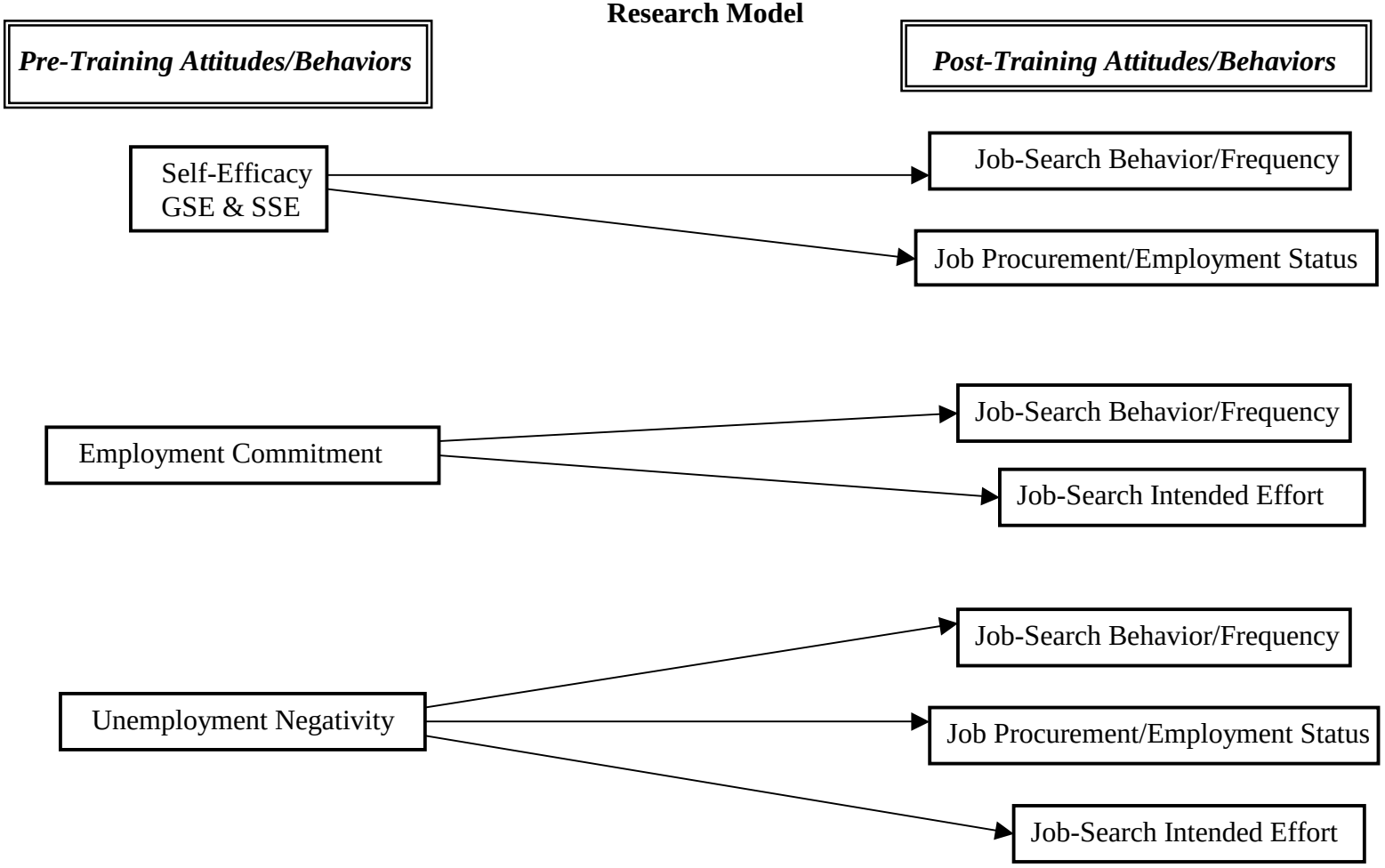
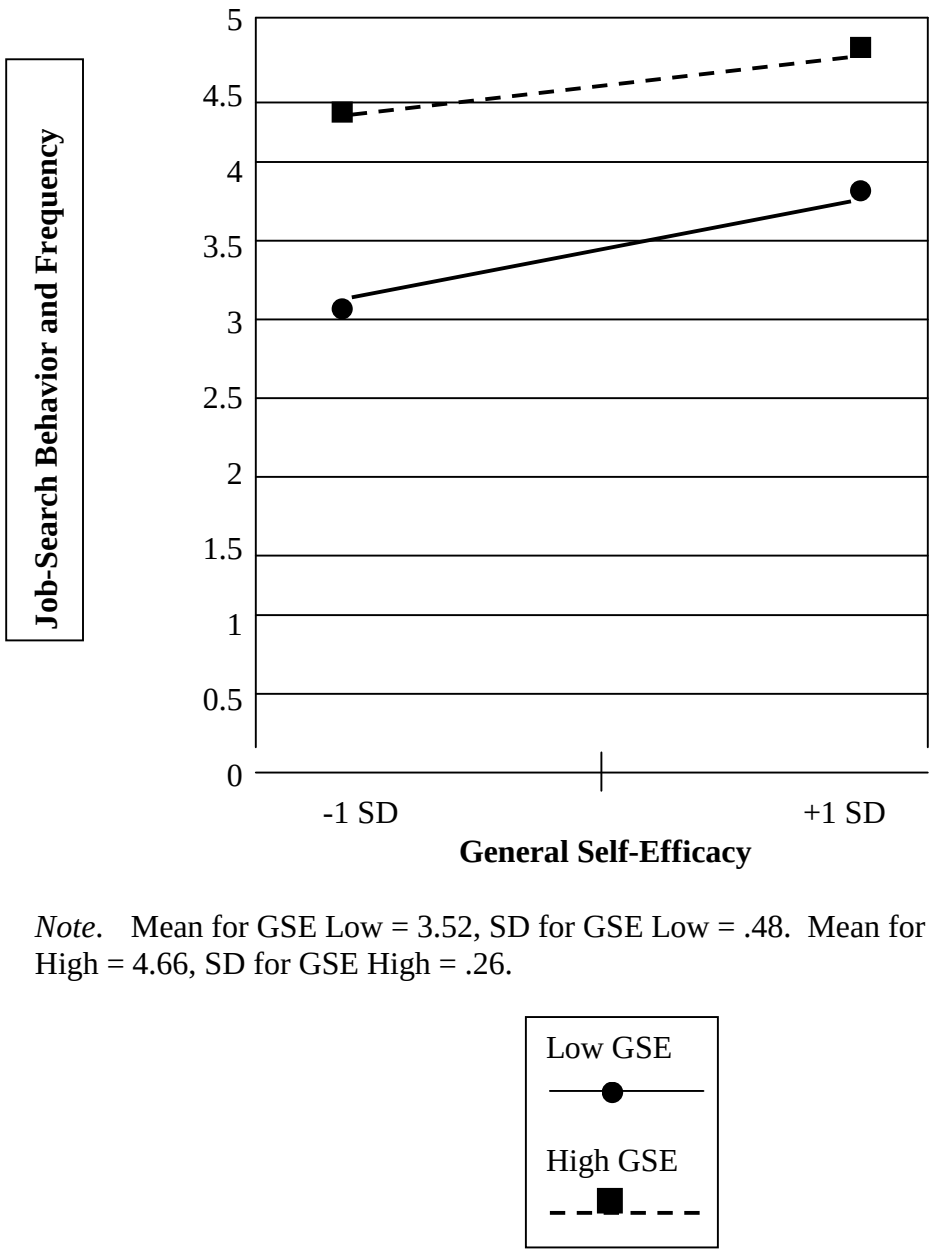
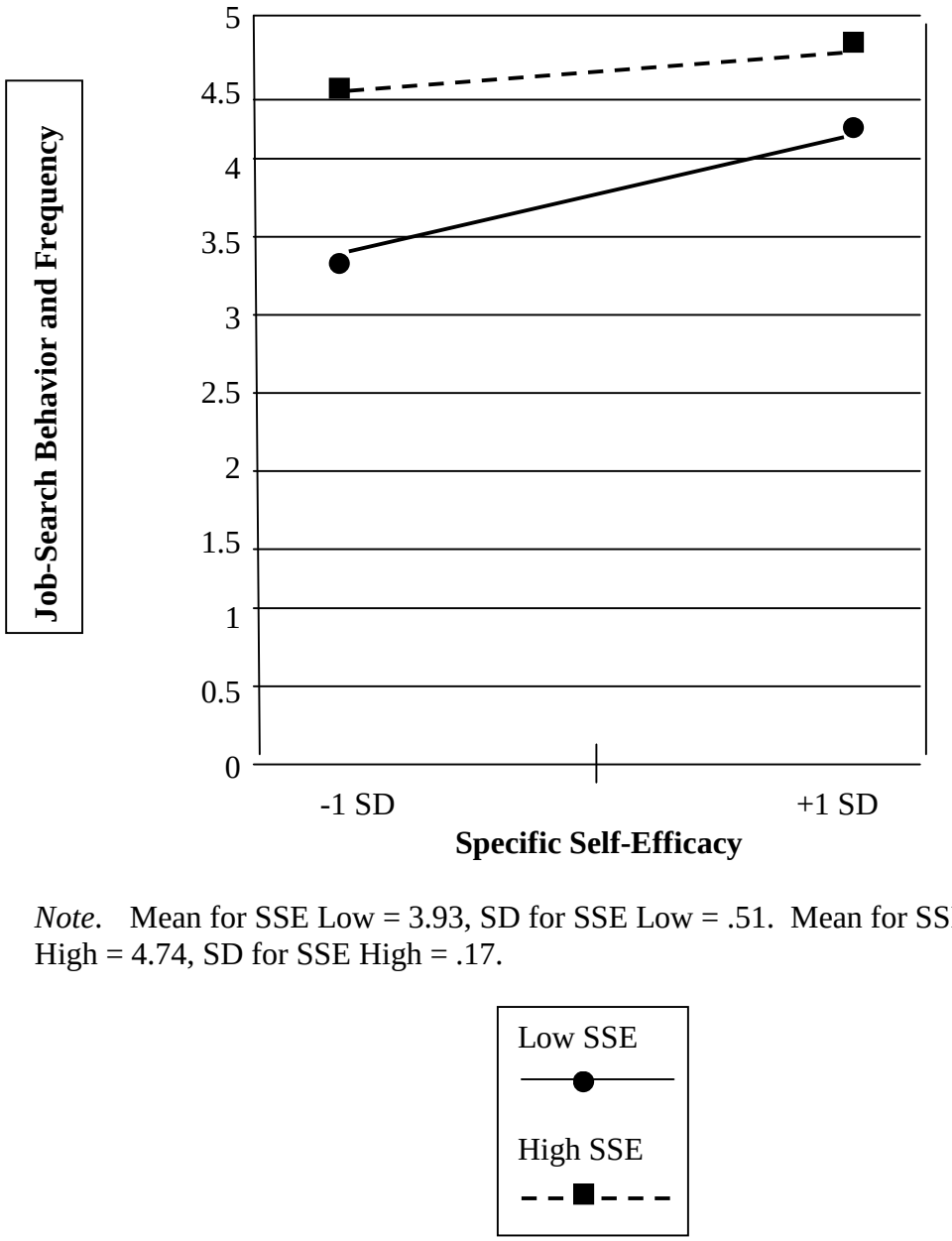


Figure 3. Change in Job-Search Behavior and Frequency as a Function of Pre-Training General Self-Efficacy (GSE)



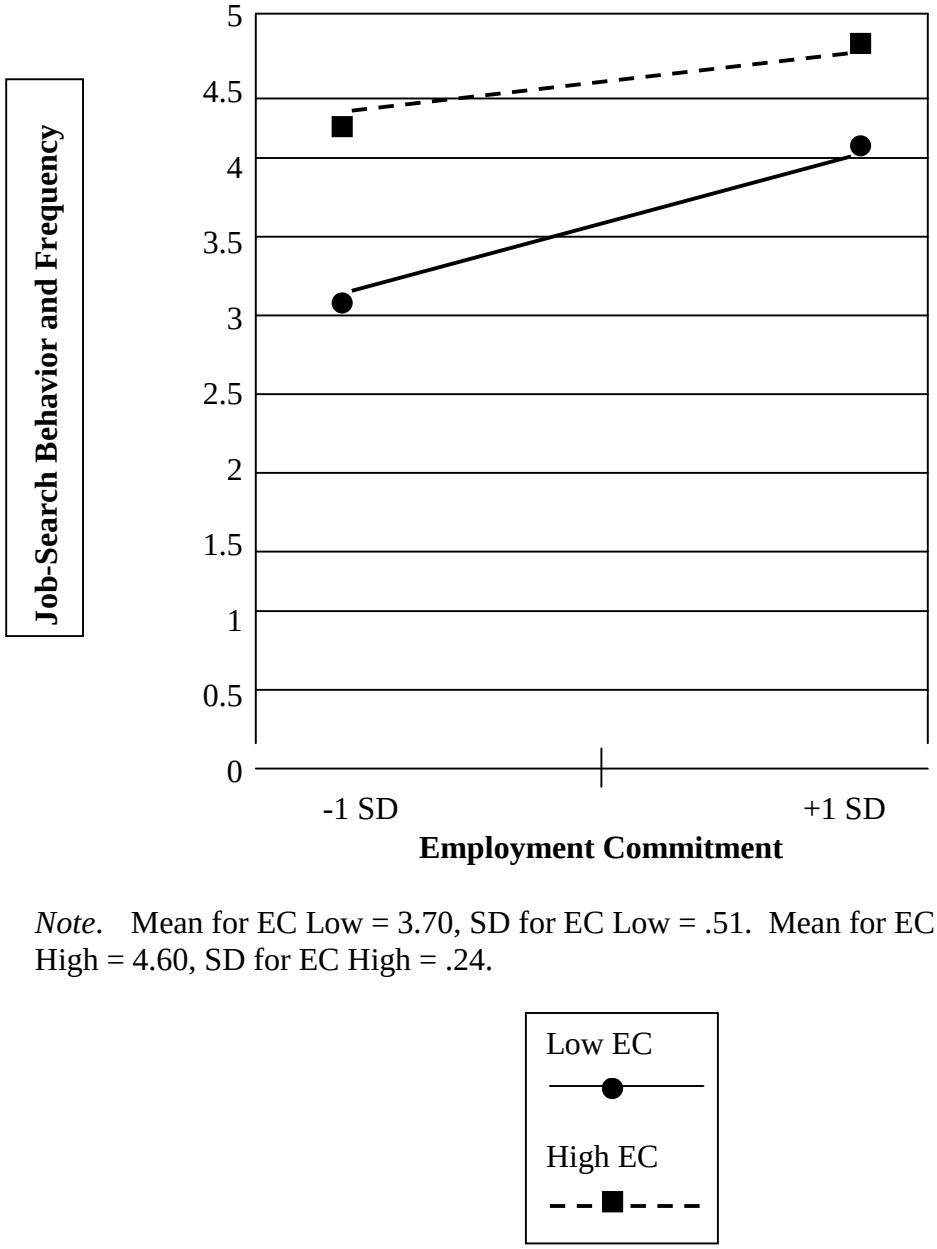
Note. Mean for GSE Low = 3.52, SD for GSE Low = .48. Mean for GSE High = 4.66, SD for GSE High = .26.

Figure 4. Change in Job-Search Behavior and Frequency as a Function of Pre-Training Specific Self-Efficacy (SSE)



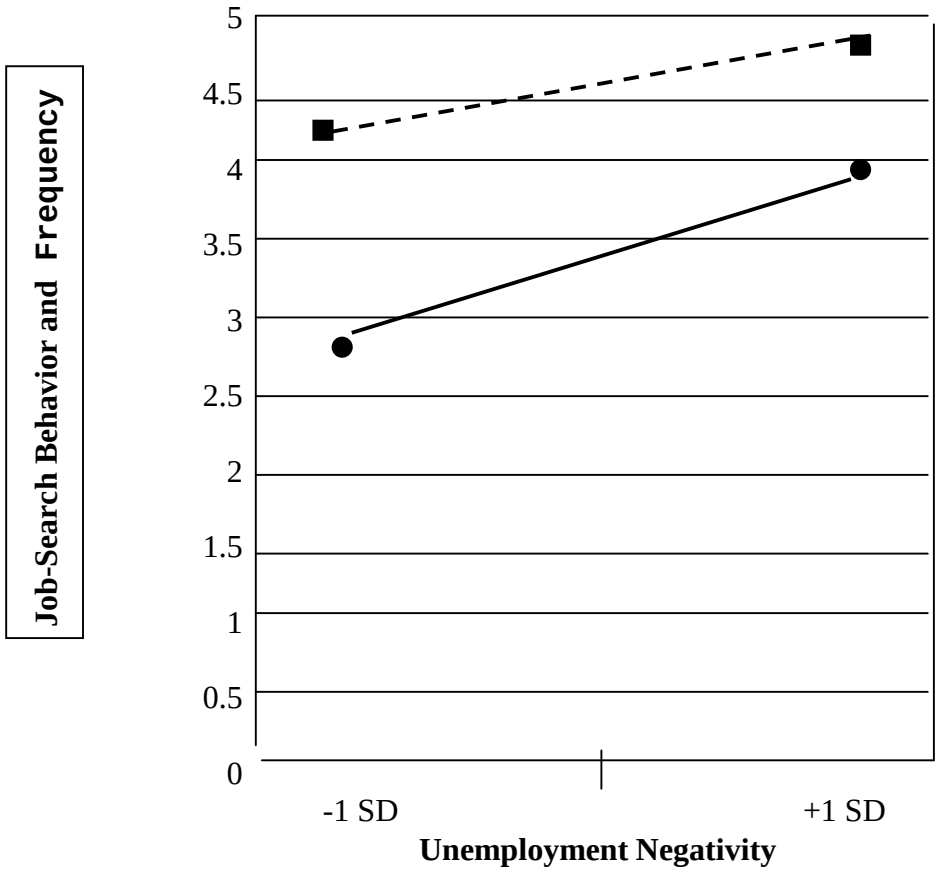
Note. Mean for SSE Low = 3.93, SD for SSE Low = .51. Mean for SSE High = 4.74, SD for SSE High = .17.

Figure 5. Change in Job-Search Behavior and Frequency as a Function of Pre-Training Employment Commitment



Note. Mean for EC Low = 3.70, SD for EC Low = .51. Mean for EC High = 4.60, SD for EC High = .24.

Figure 6. Change in Job-Search Behavior and Frequency as a Function of Pre-Training Unemployment Negativity



Note. Mean for UN Low = 3.33, SD for UN Low = .62. Mean for UN High = 4.59, SD for UN High = .29.

Appendix A
Survey Items

General and Specific Self-Efficacy Items

The level of confidence I have in my own ability to...:

1. Get something done, once I decide to do it.
2. Change any situation in my life that I am unhappy with.
3. Determine the steps I need to take to reach my goals in life.
4. Overcome any obstacles or challenges that I may encounter in this training program.
5. Do what is required to do well in this training program.
6. Complete this training program.
7. Prepare a good resume.
8. Contact employers about possible job openings.
9. Complete a job application.
10. Perform well in a job interview.
11. Make a decision about whether or not to accept a job offer.
12. Continue my job-search efforts, even after being rejected for a job that I really wanted.
13. Find some type of job, even if it is not one that I really want.
14. Find the job that I really want.
15. Find a job that pays enough for me to support myself and my dependents.

Employment Commitment Items

1. Having any job is better than being unemployed.
2. Once I have a job, it is important for me to keep it even if I don't really like it.
3. Even if I could receive public assistance or welfare for the rest of my life, I would rather work instead.
4. Being employed is very important to me.
5. Even if someone gave me a very large sum of money, enough for me to support myself and my dependents, I would still want to continue working somewhere.
6. I am committed to finding a job.
7. I can get satisfaction out of life if I have a job.

Unemployment Negativity Items

1. I feel unhappy about being unemployed.
2. When I think about being unemployed, I feel depressed.
3. I would prefer to be employed rather than unemployed.
4. I feel that my life is not fulfilled if I am not employed.

5. Being unemployed is a negative experience.
6. Unemployment upsets me.

Job-Search Behavior and Frequency Items

How often (frequently) within the last month have you engaged in each job-search activity in an effort to find employment for yourself...:

1. Looked on the Internet, in the newspaper or other publications for job openings?
2. Attended a job or career fair to identify employment opportunities?
3. Talked with friends or relatives specifically about job prospects or job leads?
4. Contacted an employment agency about possible job leads?
5. Completed a job application for a job opening?
6. Telephoned a prospective employer or about job openings?
7. Requested a job interview or informational meeting with a prospective employer?
8. Sent out resumes or letters of interest to potential employers?

Social Support and Encouragement Items

How much does he or she...:

1. Say things that raise your self-confidence?
2. Make you feel that you can complete this training program?
3. Make you feel that you can find the job that you really want?
4. Help you in your job-search efforts?
5. Make you feel that employment or finding a job is important?

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