**An Analysis of Job Hunting Techniques in the European Union:**

**A Comparison of a Northern and Southern Country**

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*While Spain and Sweden are both members of the European Union, they have very different cultures, GDP, and unemployment rates. The researchers sought to determine how university students in these countries conduct their search for employment. Over 600 responses were obtained and intriguing findings on their use of resumes, interviewing techniques, and a variety of job preparation skills emerged with differences on the variables of country, gender, personality type, and field of study.*

**Introduction**

A major purpose of higher education is to impart the prerequisite knowledge and skills to students who can become contributing members to society and the workforce. Through listening to hundreds of hours of lectures, writing papers, performing lab experiments, conducting research, and making presentations, students are honing their skills. Academics aside, all students commit themselves to the critical final task of finding a job. What methods are used and do students commit the same effort to prepare for entering the workforce as they did for their classes?

The European Union is a political and economic behemoth as its 28 states comprised of 510 million people share in the world’s largest economy (UN Statistics 2016). The researchers examined two-member countries which appear to be polar opposites; Sweden and Spain. The northern country of Sweden has a population of 9.8 million people, an unemployment rate of 6.9% and a per capita GDP of $49,700 making it the 25th highest on the planet. Conversely, Spain is a much larger southern country that has a population of 48 million people but a high unemployment rate which hovers at 22.7%. Further, Spain’s GPD is $36,500 which is ranked 94th (CIA WorldFactbook 2017). While the EU has the world’s largest economy, Spain and Sweden are very different in terms of their unemployment and thus provide a context for comparison. One should expect the respondents from Spain to be more aggressive and willing to utilize more methods to find employment since jobs in their country are scarce. Or, since Sweden has a much lower unemployment rate, are new entrants conditioned to be well prepared to compete with their peers?

It is important to study these two countries to determine what job search methods individuals are using, as they could be a case study for others seeking work both around the globe and in both affluent and disadvantaged areas. This provides insight into differences in strategies between the countries, as well as what works to find a job and what does not.

The purpose of this study is to determine if university students from these two countries utilized the same methods in preparing for their most important assignment: finding a job! The following research hypothesis guided this study.

H1: There is no difference in resume usage in students from Spain and Sweden.

H1a: There is no difference in resume usage in students from Spain and Sweden based on gender, personality type, and academic major.

H2: There is no difference in methods students from Spain and Sweden use to find jobs.

H2a: There is no difference in methods students from Spain and Sweden use to find jobs based on gender, personality type, and academic major.

H3: There is no difference in the methods students from Spain and Sweden use to prepare for their job interviews.

H3a: There is no difference in the methods students from Spain and Sweden use to prepare for their job interviews based on gender, personality type, and academic major.

**Literature Review**

The European workforce, due to its open accessibility of goods, services, and people, is comprised of both native and immigrant members. The majority of immigrants perform worse than their native counterparts in the labor market. That is, they have less success finding jobs and thus, have a higher rate of unemployment. In the European Union 15 (EU-15), the unemployment rate in 2010 for immigrants was 14.8 percent and 8.8 percent for natives. In addition, increased immigration coupled with the global financial and economic crisis, has severely impacted Spain’s labor market as the unemployment rate increased from 8.3 percent in 2007 to 20.2 percent in 2010 and to 23 percent in 2016 (Vazquez-Grenno 2017).

Some ways individuals seek to find job openings around the world are through newspapers, employment agencies, browsing the internet, and using local networks in the community (Calvo-Armengol & Zenou 2005).

*Informal Job Search*

Due to the difficulty in obtaining jobs, one researcher examined the most common job search methods in Spain and found the most utilized job search method among all unemployed workers were personal networks (72.6 percent) (Vazquez-Grenno 2017). Further, the level of education attained had an effect on the choice of job search methods, as those who had a university degree were less likely to turn to personal networks. Conversely, unemployed individuals with lower levels of education made more use of personal networks.

Research has underestimated the importance of personal contacts in helping with matching job-seekers as over half of all jobs were found through contacts. One study found that 45% of employed individuals in Spain used personal connections to get a job (Pellizzari 2004). In Spain, immigrants were more likely to use personal networks and were less likely to be registered in the public employment office. When examining by variables, males favored the use of direct methods and personal networks (Vazquez-Grenno 2017).

People searching for jobs in Spain not only reported they initially heard about their current jobs through casual ties, but also that social contacts actively influence the hiring process. These social networks have been described as “planning and managing social contacts and cultivating personal relationships in order to get a job” (Villar et al. 2000). There is substantial evidence that casual ties play a major role in the location of job openings and the placement of an unemployed person (Forse 1997; Lin & Dumin 1986; Silliker 1993). Further, researchers used an explicit micro scenario to describe how workers were linked to each other by Social Networks, which allow members to communicate to one another through word-of-mouth (Calvo-Armengol & Zenou 2005). Additionally, there is evidence that receiving positive support from social networks is significantly connected to job-hunting behavior, since it increases the knowledge of job chances and the intensity of job search (Rife & Belcher 1993; Wanberg et al. 1996). It also affects job-hunting strategies (Hajjar et al. 1993). Finally, it has been shown that most job leads come from social contacts (European Community 1999). According to the Household Panel, the influence of relatives, friends, or personal connections on finding a job varies a great deal between different European countries. In Holland, 17% of the people reported that other people were sources of help, England respondents reported 23%, in France, Greece, Portugal, and Luxembourg it was reported 30-35%, and in Spain, 40%.

In Sweden, informal contacts are also used by both firms and workers to fill vacancies and find jobs (Pellizzari 2004). Their importance in the labor market cannot be understated as their use has spawned many studies. Results suggest that compared to formal methods, informal contacts are a better way to send out information between job applicants and potential employers and should lead to matches of better quality and higher wages. Estimates indicate that informal search channels lead to significantly better paying jobs in Austria, Belgium, and the Netherland, while the opposite was found in Greece, Italy, Portugal, and the United Kingdom.

Ethnic differences and the access people have to informal networks affects individuals’ job search behavior (Montgomery 1991; Ioannides & Loury 2004). The job search theory predicts that unemployed workers should choose their search intensity and search methods (formal and informal searches) by comparing the returns and costs of the available alternatives” (Holzer 1988).

Findings suggest that job search is less successful for immigrant men in Sweden, but they are equally able to find work through both formal and informal methods (Frijters, Shields, & Wheatly-Price, 2005). One study found ethnic minority men were more likely to use informal search methods (Battu et al. 2011). These methods, however, were not the most effective methods for finding a job. One study found immigrants were more likely than their native counterparts to use social networks as their main search method, but they were still as likely as natives to find a job through those social networks (Giulietti, Schluter, & Wahba 2013).

Carlsson, Eriksson, & Rooth, 2014 found that immigrants use all search methods more than natives, but they rely more on informal search methods which for them was the most successful method for finding a job. However, using informal search methods was associated with lower wages than jobs found through other methods, but these methods are less costly and often lead to a job faster.

*Employment Agencies*

One of the most common ways individuals seek to find job openings in Spain is through the use of employment agencies (Calvo-Armengol & Zenou 2005).

Over 69% of unemployed job seekers used public employment agencies in Spain (Vazquez-Grenno 2017). The least utilized job search method was the use of private agencies (29.28 percent). Again, the level of education achieved affected the job search methods used, as those who had a university degree were more likely to use private agencies but were less likely to register at a public employment office. On the other hand, unemployed individuals with lower education levels used public job offices more often.

In Spain, individuals with experience were more apt to use more methods to finding jobs than those with no past experience (Vazquez-Grenno 2017). Immigrants were less likely to be registered in the public employment office than natives.

The government of Sweden requires all employers to notify the Labor-Market Board about all job openings. This does not guarantee all openings will be reported, but it is assumed that the Board is notified about most of the job openings available (Korpi 2001). The Labor-Market Board operates on a nationwide system with public employment agencies, with at least one office in each city. Future employers can find job information from the agencies through listings of job openings on a computer-based vacancy services, or the internet. The outcome is that Swedish job hunters have easy access to an alternative channel of information on vacancies throughout the country. Perhaps this is why social contacts may be less important for Swedish job searchers as 90 to 95 percent of job seekers visit employment agencies.

**Methods**

Students from universities in Spain and Sweden were asked to participate in a voluntary anonymous survey to ascertain how university students seek their first jobs after graduation. The respondents answered either “yes” or “no” for each question. Students self-identified their gender, their personality type; Introvert or Extrovert, and their academic major. Since Business was the top major and since breaking down the respondents by Arts, Sciences, and Education would not be meaningful, the academic major was split into the nominal variable of Business and Non-Business majors. Since the responses were nominal in nature, a Pearson’s R was the appropriate statistic to utilize to determine the strength and the magnitude of the differences. Calculations for each question were run on four variables: country, gender, personality type, and academic major.

Over six hundred usable responses were obtained, and the data was entered into SPSS for analysis.

A crosstab analysis by country, and then the independent variables of gender, personality, and major were then examined. SPSS provided the number of responses, the % of responses, the Pearson’s r for correlation and level of significance.

**Results**

Six hundred and ten usable responses were obtained, with two-thirds of the respondents from Sweden and one-third from students from Spain. The Swedish students were predominantly male and non-business majors, while the Spanish students were predominantly female and business majors. However, Extroverts were the dominant respondents from both countries in the same ratio (see Table 1).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 1 |   |   |   |   |   |
| Demographics |  |  | Spain | Sweden | Total |
| Number of Responses |  |  | 202 | 408 | 610 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Gender | Female |  | 61% | 42% | 48% |
|  | Male |  | 39% | 58% | 52% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Personality | Introvert |  | 30% | 30% | 30% |
|  | Extrovert |  | 70% | 70% | 70% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Major | Business |  | 72% | 46% | 55% |
|   | Other |   | 28% | 54% | 45% |

The following results tables will consist of the item or method, then columns for the two countries which depict the percentage of students who responded in the affirmative. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) measures the strength of the linear correlation between normally distributed variables. Its numerical value ranges from +1.0 to -1.0 and provides the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables. In general, a (r) value of .5 to 1.0 is considered a strong relationship, .3 to .5 is considered moderate, and .1 to .3 is considered to be a weak relationship. These weak relationships are mathematically different, meaning they would not have occurred by chance. A positive (r) value implies the greater value for the relationship lies with Spain, while the negative value implies the greater value for the relationship lies with Sweden. Significance (Sig) is the p-value to identify if the result is significant. The P value is a probability which can range from 0-1, however a correlation is not considered to be statistically significant if Sig is >.05. If Sig is .05, then there is only a 5% chance that the results were obtained by chance. Further, if Sig is .001, then there is a 1 in 1000 chance of the results occurring due to chance.

There are additional pairs of rows depicting Gender (female/male), Personality type (introvert/extrovert) and Academic Major (business/non-business). If significance was found, then the results would be listed. If those columns are blank there is no correlation differences with statistical significance to report.

The first question asked if the students had a current resume. Not surprising, over three-fourths of students did but there were not significant differences by the country level. Upon further examination, no differences were found by gender and personality type. However, the Swedish Business majors were the least likely to have a current resume. Their difference between the Business majors in Spain resulted in a weak but statistically significant manner (see Table 2).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 2 |  |  | Spain | Sweden |  | r | Sig |
| Have A Current Resume |  |  | 83% | 77% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | Spain | Sweden |  |  |  |
|  | Female |  | 84% | 83% |  |  |  |
|  | Male |  | 80% | 73% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Introvert |  | 81% | 77% |  |  |  |
|  | Extrovert |  | 84% | 76% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Business |  | 83% | 68% |  | 0.172 | .002 |
|   | Other |   | 79% | 84% |   |   |   |

Nearly half of the Spanish students used the same resume for every application, but only a quarter of the Swedish students did. However, weak but statistically significant differences were found in females, Introverts and Business Majors (see Table 3). Conversely, the next question sought to determine if the students tailored their resume for each job applied. Just over half of the Spanish students tailored their resume, but eighty percent of Swedish students tailored their resumes. This difference was statistically significant. Further, slight but statistically significant differences were found in Swedish females, Introverts and Business Majors (see Table 4).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 3 |   |   | Spain | Sweden |   | r | Sig |
| Do You Use the Same Resume for Every Application |  |  | 45% | 26% |  | 0.183 | .000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Female |  | 47% | 25% |  | 0.226 | .000 |
|  | Male |  | 45% | 27% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Introvert |  | 49% | 26% |  | 0.227 | .003 |
|  | Extrovert |  | 44% | 25% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Business |  | 46% | 25% |  | 0.213 | .000 |
|  | Other |  | 41% | 27% |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 4 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Do You Tailor Your Resume for Each Application |  |  | Spain | Sweden |  | r | Sig |
|  |  |  | 56% | 80% |  | -0.249 | .000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Female |  | 55% | 87% |  | -0.363 | .000 |
|  | Male |  | 52% | 74% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Introvert |  | 48% | 79% |  | -0.313 | .000 |
|  | Extrovert |  | 58% | 81% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Business |  | 55% | 77% |  | -0.235 | .000 |
|  | Other |  | 57% | 82% |  |  |  |

*Methods to find jobs*

Since there are many ways to find a job the respondents were asked which methods they used. Nearly half of Swedish students sought employment through classified ads, but only sixteen percent of Spanish used this method. Consequently, statistically significant differences were found across both genders, personality types, and academic majors (see Table 5).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 5 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Classified Ads to Find Jobs |  | Spain | Sweden |   | r | Sig |
|  |  | 16% | 48% |  | -0.308 | .000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Female | 21% | 56% |  | -0.343 | .000 |
|  | Male | 14% | 43% |  | -0.247 | .000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Introvert | 19% | 49% |  | -0.282 | .000 |
|  | Extrovert | 18% | 48% |  | -0.285 | .000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Business | 18% | 53% |  | -0.360 | .000 |
|  | Other | 13% | 44% |  | -0.260 | .000 |

However, when asked about the use of employment agencies, Spanish females, extroverts, and business majors were statistically more likely to utilize this service when compared to their Swedish peers (see Table 6).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 6 |   | Spain | Sweden |   | r | Sig |
| Do You Use Employment Agencies |  | 50% | 38% |  | 0.105 | .009 |
|  | Female | 55% | 38% |  | 0.171 | .004 |
|  | Male | 51% | 39% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Introvert | 43% | 41% |  |  |  |
|  | Extrovert | 60% | 38% |  | 0.201 | .000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Business | 52% | 36% |  | 0.163 | .003 |
|   | Other | 43% | 41% |   |   |   |

Interestingly, in this age of the Internet less than half of the students utilized online job sites. Spanish females were the most likely to use this method, but Swedish males and non-business majors were more adept in using online job sites, which resulted in a slight but statistically significant difference (see Table 7).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 7 |   | Spain | Sweden |   | r | Sig |
| Do You Use OnLine Job Sites such as Monster.com, Career Builder, etc |  | 40% | 44% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Female | 56% | 47% |  |  |  |
|  | Male | 29% | 42% |  | -0.114 | 0.047 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Introvert | 44% | 48% |  |  |  |
|  | Extrovert | 47% | 42% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Business | 44% | 41% |  |  |  |
|   | Other | 30% | 47% |   | -0.135 | .024 |

Personal referrals are often considered one of the most effective ways to find a job because the person making the referral is attesting to the applicant’s abilities and character. Over two-thirds of Swedish students realized that networking to obtain a personal referral could benefit them. In fact, since less than half the Spanish students employed this method, the difference was statistically significant. Further, statistically significant differences were found by Swedish males, Extroverts, and by both Business and Non-Business Major alike (see Table 8).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 8 |   | Spain | Sweden |   | r | Sig |
| Have You Sought a Personal Referral |  | 49% | 69% |  | -0.190 | .000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Female | 60% | 67% |  |  |  |
|  | Male | 41% | 70% |  | -0.245 | .000 |
|  | Introvert | 47% | 61% |  |  |  |
|  | Extrovert | 56% | 72% |  | -0.151 | .003 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Business | 53% | 68% |  | -0.160 | .003 |
|   | Other | 39% | 69% |   | -0.245 | .000 |

Internships are often a way to gain knowledge about the company and enable one to get their foot in the door. Often applicants rationalize and hope that if one does well, they will be offered a permanent position. Over one third of the students from both countries utilized this method. However, only the non-business Spanish students were significantly less likely to seek internships than their Swedish peers (see Table 9).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 9 |   |   |   |   |   |
| Seek Internships to Obtain a Job |  | Spain | Sweden |  | r | Sig |
|  |  | 38% | 35% |  |  |  |
|  | Female | 43% | 32% |  |  |  |
|  | Male | 40% | 38% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Introvert | 40% | 39% |  |  |  |
|  | Extrovert | 44% | 34% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Business | 46% | 36% |  |  |  |
|   | Other | 16% | 34% |   | -0.160 | .008 |

Another strategy is applying for jobs that were not advertised in the hope that the applicant might be fortunate to obtain a position. The Spanish students were twice as likely to employ this method than Swedish students. In fact, there were statistically significant differences by both genders and personality types as the Spanish students’ usage was twice that of Sweden. However, while Spanish Business students applied for unsolicited jobs at more than twice the rate of Swedish students, the Spanish non-business majors only slightly outpaced their Swedish counterparts (see Table 10).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 10 |   | Spain | Sweden |   | r | Sig |
| Do You Apply for Unsolicited Jobs |  | 40% | 20% |  | 0.211 | .000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Female | 47% | 20% |  | 0.290 | .000 |
|  | Male | 36% | 20% |  | 0.157 | .006 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Introvert | 42% | 19% |  | 0.233 | .002 |
|  | Extrovert | 45% | 21% |  | 0.254 | .000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Business | 45% | 20% |  | 0.266 | .000 |
|   | Other | 25% | 19% |   |   |   |

The next part of the questionnaire focused on how these students prepared for interviews. The first question sought to determine if students performed company research to help them prepare in advance of the interview. The Swedish students were 12% more likely to perform company research than their Spanish counterparts, which resulted in a slight but statistically significant difference. However, no differences by gender or personality type were found. Interestingly, Swedish females were the most apt to employ this strategy while Spanish non-Business majors were the least likely to perform research. If fact, Swedish non-business students were more than twice as likely to perform research which resulted in statistically significant differences (see Table 11).

*Interview Preparations*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 11 |   | Spain | Sweden |   | r | Sig |
| Do You Perform Company Research Before the Interview |  | 44% | 56% |  | -0.116 | .004 |
|  | Female | 50% | 60% |  |  |  |
|  | Male | 44% | 53% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Introvert | 47% | 55% |  |  |  |
|  | Extrovert | 49% | 57% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Business | 51% | 53% |  |  |  |
|   | Other | 23% | 58% |   | -0.282 | .000 |

Mock interviews are practice interviews which can be conducted by faculty or friends to give the student an opportunity to better prepare their interviewing skills by working the bugs out of their possible responses in a safe, low pressure surrounding. Interestingly, less than 10% of the Swedish students used this method while Spanish students were twice as likely to participate in practice interviews which resulted in a slight but statistically significant difference.

In fact, the largest variances of 15% were found with Female and Business students from Spain.

Further, Spanish extroverts were statistically more likely to participate in these practice interviews (see Table 12).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 12  |   | Spain | Sweden |   | r | Sig |
|  Mock Interviews |  | 19% | 9% |  | 0.142 | .000 |
|  | Female | 24% | 9% |  | 0.206 | .001 |
|  | Male | 17% | 10% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Introvert | 23% | 13% |  |  |  |
|  | Extrovert | 21% | 8% |  | 0.184 | .000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Business | 22% | 7% |  | 0.208 | .000 |
|   | Other | 13% | 11% |   |   |   |

Some careers such as marketing, design, and education are creative in nature. Often students in these academic programs keep samples of their work to showcase their creativity by maintaining a personal portfolio. Surprisingly, approximately 40% of students from both countries kept portfolios. However, Spanish introverts were nearly twice as likely maintain a portfolio, which resulted in a statistically significant difference over their Swedish peer’s (see Table 13).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 13 |   | Spain | Sweden |   | r | Sig |
| Do You Maintain a Personal Portfolio |  | 42% | 36% |  |  |  |
|  | Female | 47% | 39% |  |  |  |
|  | Male | 43% | 34% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Introvert | 47% | 25% |  | 0.217 | .004 |
|  | Extrovert | 45% | 41% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Business | 47% | 39% |  |  |  |
|   | Other | 29% | 34% |   |   |   |

Taking mock interviews a step further is applying for any position with the hope of getting an interview, not for obtaining the position, but to practice and improve one’s interviewing skills. The ethics of wasting an employer’s time aside, 15% of the Swedish students participated in this charade which differed statistically from the Spanish students. Interestingly, non-business Spanish students were the least likely to engage in this method and consequently, the Swedish non-Business students employed this questionable method in a statistically significant manner (see Table 14).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 14 |   | Spain | Sweden |   | r | Sig |
| Do you Seek Job Interviews Just to Practice Interviewing |  | 9% | 15% |  | -0.088 | .030 |
|  | Female | 11% | 18% |  |  |  |
|  | Male | 7% | 14% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Introvert | 11% | 15% |  |  |  |
|  | Extrovert | 10% | 15% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Business | 12% | 12% |  |  |  |
|   | Other | 2% | 18% |   | -0.181 | .002 |

Finally, the question was asked if the students did any preparation. Amazingly, one quarter of the respondents from both countries did not do anything to help themselves. Further, nearly one third of Swedish males did not prepare at all while Spanish introverts were the least likely not to prepare. Regardless, no statistical significant differences emerged (see Table 15).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 15 |   | Spain | Sweden |   | r | Sig |
| You do not perform any interview preparation |  | 24% | 25% |  |  |  |
|  | Female | 25% | 18% |  |  |  |
|  | Male | 27% | 31% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Introvert | 17% | 29% |  |  |  |
|  | Extrovert | 31% | 23% |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Business | 26% | 27% |  |  |  |
|   | Other | 20% | 24% |   |   |   |

**Hypothesis Testing**

*H1: There is no difference in resume usage in students from Spain and Sweden.*

**Not supported**- While over three-fourths of students from both countries had a current resume their usage was not statistically different. However, students from Spain were much more likely to use the same resume for every application they submitted. Conversely, Swedish were more apt to tailor their resume for each position they applied which resulted in statistically significant differences.

*H1a: There is no difference in resume usage in students from Spain and Sweden based on gender, personality type, and academic major.*

**Not supported**- Spanish business students were statistically more likely to have a current resume than their Swedish counterparts. Further, Spanish females, introverts, and business majors utilized the same resume at nearly double the rate of their Swedish peers, making the difference statistically significant. However, Swedish females, introverts, and business majors took the time and effort to tailor their resumes for each position application which resulted in statistically significant differences.

Having a resume and tailoring it for each position is critical. While most students from both countries had a current resume, the Swedish students were more apt to tailor theirs for each position they applied. Does this mean that the Swedish students were more conscientious and serious about their job search, or perhaps since there is such a low unemployment rate, these students felt they needed an edge to differentiate themselves?

*H2: There is no difference in methods students from Spain and Sweden use to find jobs.*

**Not supported**- Four out of the six approaches resulted in statistically significant differences in the methods used by students from the two countries. For example, Swedish students were three times more likely to utilize classified ads. This finding is reasonable since the Swedish government requires all employers to report job openings to the Labor-Market Board (Korpi, 2001). However, this study found only 38% of Swedish respondents utilized the services of employment agencies. This finding is contrary to the findings of Korpi, who found the services these agencies offer was used by an overwhelming percentage of the Swedish job seekers. Further, Swedes in this study favored seeking a personal referral. This finding supports the finding by Pellizzari who identified the value of informal contacts.

Spanish students were twice as likely to seek unsolicited jobs as their Swedish peers. With half of the Spanish respondents using employment agencies, this study confirms the findings of Calvo-Armengol & Zenou, 2005 and Vazquez-Grenno 2017. In addition, Vazquez-Grenno (2017) found nearly 73% of Spanish job seekers used personal networks while only half of respondents in this study utilized this method. However, Vazquez-Grenno observed that those who had university degrees were less likely to use personal referrals. Consequently, the results of these respondents support the findings of Vazquez-Grenno. However, no differences were found in those seeking internships or utilizing online job sites between the two groups of students.

*H2a: There is no difference in methods students from Spain and Sweden use to find jobs based on gender, personality type, and academic major.*

**Not supported**- Statistically significant differences were found with respect to at least one variable in all six methods studied. By both genders, personality type and academic business, Swedish students utilized classified ads with far greater frequency than their counterparts. Perhaps this greater utilization is due to the requirement for Swedish employers to post jobs on the employment board (Korpi,2001). Further, Swedish males and non-business majors were more apt to go to online job sites to find employment. In addition, Swedish males, extroverts and both business and non-business majors were statistically more apt to seek a personal referral. Interestingly, more than twice as many Swedish non-business majors utilized internships as a gateway to permanent employment. Perhaps these students realize that an internship can provide them with on the job training instead of academic training for the business world.

Approximately double the percentage of Spanish students of both genders, personality types, and business majors applied for unsolicited jobs. This higher utilization resulted in statistically significant differences. In addition, Spanish females, extroverts, and business majors were much more likely to use the services of employment agencies. Further, Spanish females were 50% more likely to both find jobs in the classified ads and seek personal referrals than Spanish males. But outcome is contrary to the findings of Vazquez-Grenno, 2017 who contends Spanish males favored the use of direct methods and personal networks.

*H3: There is no difference in the methods students from Spain and Sweden use to prepare*

 *for their job interviews.*

**Not supported**- Three of the five methods were found to have statistically significant differences. Swedish students were more likely to perform company research, and these respondents took real interviews as a way improve their interviewing skills. However, while low in percentage, more Spanish students participated in mock interviews. Nonetheless, there were no statistically differences were found in maintaining personal portfolios or not performing any interview preparation.

*H3a: There is no difference in the methods students from Spain and Sweden use to prepare for their job interviews based on gender, personality type, and academic major.*

**Not supported**- Statistically significant differences were found with respect to at least one variable in four of the five methods. More than double the percentage of Swedish non-business students performed company research and these same students participated in actual interviews just to gain practice.

However, Spanish females, extroverts and business majors were more likely to participate in mock interviews. In addition, nearly twice the percentage of Spanish introverts maintained a personal portfolio.

Remarkably, not doing any preparation was nearly identical by country and every studied variable. Consequently, no statistically significant differences were found by those not undertaking any preparation.

**Conclusion**

Before conducting the surveys, one could reasonably assume that students in a country with higher unemployment would be more aggressive in their efforts to seek employment. However, the outcomes of this assumption are mixed.

Resume usage was strong for both groups of students with the only variance appearing in the Business majors. The Spanish students were more prepared with regard to having a current resume. However, it was surprising to find approximately double the percentage of Spanish students used the same resume for all applications. Conversely, the Swedish students tailored their resumes for each position. Since most resumes and cover letters are done with word processing software, there is minimal excuse for not tailoring each application.

The Swedes led in utilizing classified ads due to governmental requirements for employers to post their positions centrally. However, the Spanish students favored employment agencies. Using these services, especially if there are fees attached, are more in demand when there is a shortage of positions.

In today’s internet age, it was astonishing to find such relative low usage amongst the students for finding positions. Interestingly, Spanish females most employed this method while Spanish males used this method the least. Perhaps firms are slow in posting positions on line or they may fear not being able to reach viable candidates who do not have internet access.

Since personal referrals were extensively utilized by Swedish students one can infer that culturally this is a preferred method. Close knit cultures rely on shared values. Perhaps the Swedish employers wish to attract like-minded applicants via this process. They know that if someone they trust recommends a candidate there is a strong chance that that candidate will espouse values and beliefs congruent with the organization.

An additional factor is the rapid increase in immigration, coupled with the global financial and economic crisis, has exasperated the already tight labor market (Vazquez-Grenno, 2017). While many of these workers flock to lower paying jobs, the intensify the job market by creating more competition for every job. This is especially true if the native or immigrant has more education or desirable skills. In addition, Battu et al. (2011) and Giulietti, Schluter, & Wahba (2013) contend that the personal referral is generally the most utilized job seeking method by immigrants. Often these individuals tend to stay below the radar and utilize their personal friendships to find work.

It was surprising that roughly half of the students from both countries performed research on the firm with which they would be interviewing. One would assume doing background research would be a widespread practice and if it isn’t then it should be encouraged for everyone. Incredibly, the concept of mock interviews was used by a distinct minority from the students of both countries. This practice can help relieve nervousness and enables applicants to better prepare for their “real” interviews with less anxiety and greater preparedness.

But perhaps the most frustrating finding is that one quarter of the students from both countries did not perform any interview preparation! Institutions in both countries need to stress how competitive their respective work environments are and educate the students on the need for preparation as their competition is no longer just local, but global.

Finally, differences in results may come from the participants themselves. This was a voluntary sample with students from one institution in Spain and one institution in Sweden. Their actions may not be indicative of the larger populations at other institutions or within their countries.

**Future Research**

Additional study could utilize these same questions and seek participants from other institutions in the same countries. In addition, other factors could be considered before selecting a position such as working in a family business, a private firm, or for the government. Further, an analysis of what salary levels were desired and a comparison of whether intrinsic or extrinsic benefits are more valued. Finally, the results of this study could be compared with other countries in the EU, with the USA, China, India, and South America.

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