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Job-search Activities, Job-Seeking Barriers, and Work Experiences of Transition-Age Youths With Visual Impairments

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Abstract

Introduction: The purpose of this study was to describe the job-seeking and work experiences of transition-age youth with visual impairments.

Methods: We analyzed follow-up data from a quasi-experimental study of a job search intervention conducted from 2016-2019. Participants were 88 youth with visual impairments from three states; approximately half received the job search intervention, and the other half served as a comparison group. Measures included job search activities and outcomes, job-seeking barriers, volunteer and work experiences, and parental support for job-seeking.

Results: Commonly reported job search activities were preparing or revising resumes, talking to people about jobs, submitting applications, and submitting resumes, but most participants performed these activities infrequently. Many job-seekers encountered barriers during their job search, and few searches resulted in paid employment. Participants generally reported moderate levels of preparation to handle job-seeking barriers and parental support for job-seeking. Intervention and comparison participants had similar results on most measures, with few exceptions.

Discussion: When youth actively search for a job but do not find one, their motivation to continue job-seeking may be reduced, particularly if their preparedness to overcome job-seeking barriers is low. Although many participants had some engagement in volunteer or work activities, short-term work experiences were the most common—and perhaps most misunderstood—work activity.

Implications for Practitioners: Youth with visual impairments may benefit from feedback on their job-seeking approach, application materials, and interview skills so they can make changes and determine how to focus or refocus their efforts. In addition to offering feedback,

service providers can provide ongoing support to youth job-seekers and encourage them to persist in their job search. Explicit discussions about different types of work activities may help transition-age youth understand how short-term work experiences differ from paid jobs.

Job Search Activities, Job-Seeking Barriers, and Work Experiences of Transition-Age Youth With Visual Impairments

Early work experiences are a key predictor of future employment for youth and young adults with disabilities (Landmark et al., 2010; Mamun et al., 2018; Mazzotti et al., 2016; Test et al., 2009; Wehman et al., 2015). Early work experiences also predict future employment for youth with visual impairments (i.e., those with blindness or low vision), as documented by multiple studies (Connors et al., 2014; Giesen & Cavenaugh, 2012; McDonnall, 2010a, 2011; McDonnall & Crudden, 2009; McDonnall & O'Mally, 2012) and a systematic review (Lund & Cmar, 2020). Thirty-eight percent of high school students with visual impairments had paid jobs in the prior year, and 12% participated in paid or unpaid school-sponsored work experiences (Lipscomb et al., 2017). The characteristics of early work experiences are also important to consider. School-sponsored work was not related to future employment for youth with visual impairments (McDonnall, 2010a; McDonnall & O'Mally, 2012), whereas finding jobs independently predicted better outcomes (McDonnall & O'Mally, 2012).

Job-seeking is an intentional, dynamic, self-regulated, goal-directed process that involves a series of activities directed toward obtaining employment (Bainbridge & Fujimoto, 2018; Kanfer et al., 2001; Wanberg et al., 2020). Job search behaviors typically follow a sequential progression (Barber et al., 1994; Blau, 1994; Saks & Ashforth, 2000), including preparatory and active phases (Blau, 1994). The preparatory phase encompasses planning and gathering information about job leads from various sources, and the active phase involves applying and interviewing for jobs (Blau, 1994). Job-seekers with and without disabilities progress through a similar sequence of activities; however, people with disabilities experience this process in fundamentally different ways and encounter unique barriers and facilitators (Bainbridge &

Fujimoto, 2018).

Job-seeking barriers for persons with visual impairments identified in previous studies included discrimination or negative employer attitudes (Antonelli et al., 2018; Crudden & McBroom, 1999; O'Day, 1999; Shaw et al., 2007; Silverman et al., 2019); lack of transportation (Antonelli et al., 2018; Crudden & McBroom, 1999; O'Day, 1999; Silverman et al., 2019); and inaccessibility (Grussenmeyer et al., 2017; Shaw et al., 2007; Silverman et al., 2019). Although only one study focused on youth with visual impairments (Shaw et al., 2007), job-seeking barriers for youth with other disabilities may apply to this population, including lack of support and low expectations of family members (Carter et al., 2020; Lindsay et al., 2015); poor social skills or limited connections (Carter et al., 2020; Lindsay et al., 2015); and lack of motivation or employment skills (Carter et al., 2020).

Job-seeking facilitators for people with disabilities included goal setting, personal networks, constructive feedback, encouragement, accessible information, transportation access, and job search training (Bainbridge & Fujimoto, 2018). Job search training has also been identified as an employment facilitator for people with visual impairments (Silverman et al., 2019). A comprehensive meta-analysis supported the efficacy of job search interventions in improving numerous job search and employment outcomes, especially for young job-seekers and job-seekers with health conditions or disabilities (Liu et al., 2014).

Several researchers have explored the job-seeking activities of persons with visual impairments. Adults used various job-seeking methods or sources, including newspaper advertisements or job listings (Crudden & McBroom, 1999; Leonard, 2002); networking (Crudden & McBroom, 1999; Leonard, 2002); assistance from vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies (Crudden & McBroom, 1999); and sending resumes or completing applications

(Leonard, 2002). Adults and college graduates submitted multiple applications or resumes but had few interviews (Antonelli et al., 2018; Silverman et al., 2019). Of youth with visual impairments who were not employed, 37% reported actively looking for work (Shaw et al., 2007). These youth spent little time searching for jobs, and some did not submit job applications or have interviews over the previous year. Most young adults and adults found jobs by themselves or through networking; others received assistance from VR counselors, job developers, recruiters, or employment agencies (Antonelli et al., 2018; Newman et al., 2011; Silverman et al., 2019), but teachers and counselors predominantly found jobs for youth (Wolffe & Sacks, 1997). Current information about job-seeking activities of youth with visual impairments is unavailable.

This study's primary purpose was to describe the job-seeking and work experiences of youth with visual impairments using follow-up data from a longitudinal research project. A secondary purpose was to describe these experiences by receipt of a job search intervention. Previous research has supported the intervention's effectiveness in increasing job search knowledge, behavior, and self-efficacy (Cmar & McDonnall, 2019, 2021). However, intervention recipients did not maintain the increased behavior over time or have higher employment rates than a comparison group (Cmar & McDonnall, in press). Those publications included a job search behavior index representing the number of different behaviors performed without differentiating between preparatory and active phases. Furthermore, they did not include specific job search activities, how frequently youth performed them, information about youths' volunteer experiences, or details about their work activities. This study builds on previous findings by focusing on job search activities, barriers, and outcomes; volunteer and employment experiences; and parental support during the project's final phase. Research questions included:

1. Which preparatory and active job search activities did youth perform most frequently?
2. What job-seeking barriers and problems did youth encounter? To what extent did youth feel prepared to handle potential barriers?
3. What were youths' job search outcomes?
4. What types of volunteer and work experiences did youth have? How did employed youth find jobs? What were the characteristics of their jobs?
5. What were youths' perceptions of parental support for job-seeking?

Method

We conducted a longitudinal quasi-experimental study to examine the effectiveness of a job search intervention. Eligibility criteria included being 15-22 years old when the study began, qualifying for special education or VR services for visual impairment, and not having a moderate or severe intellectual disability. Our sample included 88 participants who provided follow-up data at the final time point.

Participants

Participants' average age was 18.59 years (*SD* = 1.49, range 16-23). About half were female (52%, *n* = 46), 11% (*n* = 10) had a health condition, and 41% (*n* = 36) had an additional disability. The most common additional disability was physical disability (25%, *n* = 22), followed by attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (8%, *n* = 7). Most participants were either high school students (38%, *n* = 33) or college students (36%, *n* = 32). Table 1 provides additional demographic information. No significant between-group differences in characteristics were identified at follow-up.

Procedure

Mississippi State University's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human

Subjects approved the study protocol. Researchers recruited five cohorts of participants through organizations that serve individuals with visual impairments in three states. Agency staff identified eligible participants and shared study information with them and their parents/guardians, and we obtained parental permission and assent or consent from interested youth. Participants were assigned to the intervention or comparison group according to geographical location or enrollment in a transition program or course with one of our collaborators. The intervention group received a job search intervention, and the comparison group received usual services.

The intervention, *Putting Your Best Foot Forward* (*PYBFF*), is an adaptation of the *School-to-Work* program (Koivisto et al., 2002; Nykänen et al., 2012, 2014), a job search intervention developed in Finland for youth and young adults. *School-to-Work* is based on the Michigan Prevention Research Center's *JOBS* program (Caplan et al., 1989; Curran et al., 1999), an evidence-based, theory-driven intervention that aims to promote reemployment and positive mental health outcomes for unemployed adults. Our team modified *School-to-Work* to include disability-specific content and the six components of effective job search interventions identified by Liu et al. (2014) while retaining the original programs' foundational learning processes: active learning, trainer referent power, self-efficacy enhancement, social support from adults and peers, and development of strategies for overcoming barriers.

Two trainers (staff from our partner organizations) implemented *PYBFF* at each site. They received 8 hours of training that focused on implementing the program. Intervention participants received 35-40 hours of job search training over 5 or 10 days. Group sessions comprised 20 hours of activities, including group discussions, small-group exercises, brainstorming, and role-play exercises on topics such as transferable skills, soft skills, job lead

sources, networking, disclosure, accommodations, self-presentation, and interviewing. Individual sessions built on group session topics and consisted of 15-20 hours of facilitated hands-on activities, including creating a personal data sheet, filling out job applications, developing a resume, calling personal contacts and employers, finding job openings on the Internet, and interviewing. A comprehensive trainer's manual provided background information and step-by-step activity instructions. Additional information about the intervention, implementation by state, and intervention fidelity is available in Cmar and McDonnall (2021).

Data collection took place from 2016-2019. Participants completed four telephone surveys: a pretest, a 2-month posttest, and two follow-ups (8 and 14 months after pretest). Trained research staff administered each survey with youth individually. Surveys lasted 30-45 minutes and covered topics such as participant characteristics, job-seeking experiences and behaviors, volunteering, and employment. Participants received a $20 gift card for completing each survey plus an additional $20 gift card for completing all four surveys. Aside from basic demographic information collected at pretest, this study's primary data source was the final (14-month) follow-up survey (conducted a year post-intervention), which had a response rate of 96% (88/92).

Measures

Job Search Activities

Participants reported whether they searched for a job and how many times they performed 10 job search activities since the last survey (covering about 6 months). The activities were from existing job-seeking behavior measures (Blau, 1994; Saks & Ashforth, 1999; Vinokur & Caplan, 1987) with minor adaptations to capture contemporary job-seeking methods (e.g., email and Internet). We grouped the activities into preparatory and active phases (see Table 2) to

reflect the two empirically-validated dimensions of job search behavior (Blau, 1994). Due to very low frequencies among our sample, we collapsed Blau's 5-point scale into a 3-point scale: *never* (0 times), *occasionally* (1-5 times), and *frequently* (6+ times).

Job-Seeking Barriers

Job-seekers reported problems experienced during their job search. Participants who did not search for a job reported reasons for not searching. To measure preparation to handle potential job-seeking barriers, we used a two-item scale from *JOBS* research (Vinokur & Price, 1999). The items were "How much are you prepared to react to obstacles or challenges during your job search and have plans or ideas about what to do next?" and "How much do you feel prepared to put an obstacle or challenge behind you and then continue your job search?" (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *a great deal*). We generated aggregate scores from the mean of the two items (α = .70), with 1 indicating least prepared and 5 indicating most prepared.

Job Search Outcomes

Job-seekers provided information about their job search outcomes, including whether they found a job, offers received, and offers accepted. Participants who reported an unsuccessful job search also answered an open-ended question: "Why do you think you didn't find a job?"

Volunteer and Work Experiences

Participants reported whether they did any volunteer work on a regular basis since the last survey and provided details about their volunteer work. They also reported the number of paid jobs they had since the last survey. When participants reported at least one job, we asked follow-up questions to determine if each job was a short-term work experience (i.e., a short-term work activity sponsored by a school or rehabilitation agency) or a paid job. We identified additional short-term work experiences for some participants through agency records. Participants provided

information about each paid job, including job type, employment dates, hours worked, hourly pay, and how they found it.

Parental Support for Job-Seeking

Participants answered five questions about how their parents (or other people close to them) felt about their job search: (a) Overall, how much do your parents encourage you to find a job?; (b) How much do they want you to find a job?; (c) How much do they try to be helpful while you look for a job?; (d) How much do they expect you to have a job?; and (e) How much do they need you to have a job? (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *a great deal*). This measure is based on the Support for Job-Seeking Efforts scale (Vinokur & Price, 1999), with minor wording changes. We generated aggregate scores from the mean of the five items ($\alpha = .84$), with 1 indicating lowest support and 5 indicating highest support.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, percentages) were generated using SAS 9.4 to summarize participants' job-seeking and work experiences. We also computed medians and interquartile ranges for the job search activity variables (which were highly positively skewed) and means and standard deviations for work hours, hourly pay, preparation to handle barriers, and parental support. Although most data were quantitative, the authors independently coded the few open-ended responses and compared codes. If disagreement in coding occurred, the authors deliberated until reaching agreement.

Results

Job Search Activities

Table 2 provides medians and interquartile ranges for all job search activities, and Figures 1 and 2 provide percentages for the whole sample and each group. The medians ranged

from 0-2 across all activities. As presented in Figure 1, participants did the following preparatory job search activities most often (occasionally or frequently): preparing or revising resumes (75%, 66/88) and talking to people about jobs (74%, 65/88). More intervention participants reported working on their resumes occasionally or frequently (85%, 35/41) than comparison participants (66%, 31/47). Fifty participants (57%) searched for a job since the last survey; 24/41 (59%) intervention participants and 26/47 (55%) comparison participants. As shown in Figure 2, participants who searched for a job did the following active job search activities most often (occasionally or frequently): submitting applications (78%, 39/50) and submitting resumes (72%, 36/50). Slightly more intervention participants did active job search activities than comparison participants.

Job-seeking Barriers

Of participants who searched for a job, 72% (36/50) experienced at least one problem during their job search; 63% (15/24) of intervention participants and 81% (21/26) of comparison participants. The types of problems participants experienced are found in Table 3. Forty-three percent (38/88) of participants did not search for a job. Common reasons for not searching were participation in school or a training program (63%, $n = 24$), did not need to work (18%, $n = 7$), did not want to work (13%, $n = 5$), and loss of government benefits (8%, $n = 3$). Participants felt moderately prepared to handle potential job-seeking barriers ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.99$). Comparison and intervention participants reported similar levels of preparedness ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.97$ vs. $M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.01$, respectively).

Job Search Outcomes

Of participants who searched for a job, 44% (22/50) reported finding a job or receiving a job offer. Eleven of these participants only reported short-term work experiences without any

indication of other paid work or direct communication with employers about jobs; eight participants reported accepting job offers for work experiences. The other 11 participants received offers for paid jobs with employers; seven accepted the offers and four declined the offers. At the time of the survey, five participants had started the jobs, one was training for the job, and one had a job lined up for the next semester.

For the 28 participants who did not find a job, the most prevalent reasons were lack of jobs or job qualifications (25%, *n* = 7) and perceived discrimination due to their visual impairment or another disability (25%, *n* = 7). About 18% (*n* = 5) of participants were unsure about what went wrong, 11% (*n* = 3) reported scheduling conflicts or transportation issues, and 18% (*n* = 5) reported other reasons.

Volunteer and Work Experiences

Table 4 presents the percentages of participants who had volunteer and work experiences. A higher percentage of intervention participants had some type of work experience than comparison participants, which appears to be explained by their higher rates of volunteer work and short-term work experiences. Participants most commonly volunteered for community or nonprofit organizations (52%, *n* = 14), followed by school activities (33%, *n* = 9), church (15%, *n* = 4), summer camp (7%, *n* = 2), and family or neighbors (7%, *n* = 2); some volunteered for multiple organizations or people.

Fifteen participants had paid jobs that were not short-term work experiences. Job details and how participants found the jobs are in Table 5. Five participants were still working at jobs they found and started at a previous time point, of which two searched for another job. The other 10 participants began working at a new job since the last survey; five of them did not search for a job, presumably because their jobs (e.g., self-employment, working for family members) did not

require a traditional job search. Employed participants reported working on average 20.40 hours (*SD* = 11.96) a week; 87% (*n* = 13) worked part-time, and 13% (*n* = 2) worked full-time. Thirteen participants reported hourly wages from $7.25-$15.00 (*M* = $9.46, *SD* = 2.36). Two participants were not paid hourly. Nine participants were employed at the final follow-up survey.

Parental Support for Job-Seeking

Participants who were not working (*n* = 79) felt they had moderate parental support (*M* = 3.22, *SD* = 1.07) for their job-seeking efforts. Comparison participants (*M* = 3.41, *SD* = 1.03) perceived slightly higher support than intervention participants (*M* = 3.01, *SD* = 1.10).

Discussion

This study focused on the job-seeking and work experiences of youth with visual impairments using follow-up data collected 12 months after a job search intervention. We described participants' job search activities, job search outcomes, and factors that may influence them—namely, perceived barriers and parental support. About three-quarters of participants talked to people about jobs, did something to improve self-presentation, or worked on their resume at least once; however, most participants performed these activities infrequently—less than five times in 6 months. Most participants who searched for a job had minimal engagement in active job search activities. Many submitted few or no applications and resumes, as found by Shaw et al. (2007).

Job search activities were similar for intervention and comparison participants, with a few notable exceptions. A larger proportion of intervention participants worked on their resumes and performed active job search activities than comparison participants, though intervention participants performed these activities less frequently. One possible interpretation of these findings is that intervention participants focused on quality over quantity for their application

materials, an emphasis of *PYBFF*. Because job-seekers become more efficient and reduce their search intensity over time (Barber et al., 1994), and intervention participants commenced job search activities over a year earlier during *PYBFF*, other potential explanations include increased efficiency and reduced intensity, perhaps from discouragement. Although more intervention participants had job interviews, paid employment did not differ significantly by group during this project (Cmar & McDonnall, in press). Participants in both groups completed few interviews and had limited success finding a job, which may adversely impact their motivation to continue searching (O'Day, 1999). In addition to how often participants perform job search activities, job search quality and interview performance may be useful metrics to consider in future job search intervention studies.

Most participants encountered problems during their job search, as reported in previous studies (Antonelli et al., 2018; Crudden & McBroom, 1999; Shaw et al., 2007; Silverman et al., 2019). Not getting interviews after submitting applications was somewhat common in both groups but more widespread among comparison participants, whereas transportation issues and lack of qualifications were most common among intervention participants. Essentially, nearly a third of participants' job searches did not progress beyond the application stage. Getting no response after submitting applications could adversely impact job search self-efficacy (Bainbridge & Fujimoto, 2018) and make it difficult for youth to evaluate their efforts and progress. Participants' preparation to handle job-seeking barriers may serve as a protective factor by promoting continued job search efforts following rejection or setbacks (van Ryn & Vinokur, 1992).

Researchers have identified parental support and expectations as job-seeking barriers for youth with disabilities (Carter et al., 2020; Lindsay et al., 2015). However, lack of parental

support was not a prominent barrier for our sample, although participants' perceived parental support for job-seeking was not exceptionally high. Other factors—enrollment in school or a training program and not needing or wanting to work—appeared to be prominent influences on participants' decisions to not search for a job. Presumably, some participants *did* search for jobs despite attending school and not needing to work, a finding that warrants further investigation. Youth who only focus on their studies without obtaining part-time jobs may have difficulty entering the job market in the future, as documented by unemployed adults (O'Day, 1999).

Two-thirds of participants had some engagement in volunteer work, short-term work experiences, or paid employment. A smaller percentage of our sample volunteered than nationally representative samples of youth with visual impairments (Lipscomb et al., 2017; Newman et al., 2011), although intervention participants' volunteer activities were closer to national estimates. The intervention emphasized using specific examples from previous school, volunteer, and work experiences to demonstrate strengths and skills to employers. Intervention participants who lacked work experience may have sought volunteer and short-term work experiences to bolster their resumes, potentially explaining their higher engagement in these activities.

Participants typically found their paid jobs themselves or through friends or family members, as found for young adults and adults with visual impairments (Antonelli et al., 2018; Newman et al., 2011; Silverman et al., 2019). They reported less reliance on teachers and counselors to find jobs on their behalf than youth in an earlier study (Wolffe & Sacks, 1997). Participants commonly held jobs in the retail, restaurant, and clerical fields, which coincides with previous findings (Lindsay, 2011; McDonnall, 2010b).

Short-term work experiences sponsored by schools or rehabilitation agencies were the

most common work activity in this study. Research does not support associations between school-sponsored work activities and employment outcomes for youth with visual impairments (McDonnall, 2010a; McDonnall & O'Mally, 2012), and research on outcomes associated with agency-sponsored work experiences is unavailable. The implications of widespread participation in agency-sponsored work experiences are unclear despite increased provision of these experiences through pre-employment transition services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2018). As Nagle (2001) posited, extensive participation in short-term work activities may inadvertently promote reliance on the rehabilitation system rather than encouraging independence.

Limitations

Several limitations of this study are important to recognize. One limitation is reliance on self-report data to document participants' job-seeking and work activities, which may lack precision and be subject to social desirability bias. Another limitation is the lack of data on unpaid work activities other than volunteering. All participants were from three states, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Some of these limitations could be addressed in future investigations by having participants track their activities as they complete them, collecting comprehensive data on a broader selection of work activities, and replicating this study with a nationally representative sample. Finally, because employment outcomes following job search interventions may take years to emerge (Liu et al., 2014), and most participants were students, we recommend using extended follow-up data to assess postschool employment outcomes.

Implications for Practice and Research

Our findings have several implications for practitioners who serve youth with visual

impairments. Job search training may not lead to sustained job-seeking activities if youth lack incentive or motivation to find a job. Before and during their job search, youth may need support to recognize job-seeking barriers, generate solutions, and implement these solutions. Youth whose initial job-seeking efforts are unsuccessful may benefit from ongoing encouragement and feedback. Practitioners can encourage youth to reflect on their job-seeking approach and interview preparedness, provide feedback on application and resume quality (e.g., no typos, consistent formatting, no empty fields, appropriate content), and encourage them to make adjustments. Additionally, practitioners can support participation in meaningful work activities that align with youths' ages, interests, and experiences and encourage youth to seek paid employment during high school (Cease-Cook et al., 2015).

Youths' lack of differentiation between work experiences and paid jobs has been evident throughout this project (Cmar & McDonnall, 2019). In the current study, youths' tendency to report job offers for short-term work experiences provides further evidence of this issue. Youth may benefit from discussions about types of work activities and differences in the process of seeking and obtaining short-term work experiences versus paid jobs. For example, does signing up for a summer work experience program constitute finding a summer job? Does it require a job search? What is a job offer? Is a short-term work experience placement a job offer? Not addressing these topics may have broader implications, considering that evaluating employment outcomes—for research and non-research purposes—becomes more complex when youth report job offers and paid jobs that are actually short-term work experiences.

Several avenues of research would be instrumental in clarifying and extending our findings. It would be useful to explore how personal factors (e.g., motivation, work ethic, level of vision, additional disabilities), external factors (e.g., school demands, work expectations, peer

influences), and interactions between these factors influence youths' job-seeking activities and outcomes. Other intriguing directions for future investigation include qualitative analysis of youths' job-seeking experiences, perceptions and misconceptions of short-term work experiences, and how employers view these experiences when making hiring decisions. Finally, further research is needed to identify interventions that result in improved employment outcomes for youth with visual impairments, examine characteristics of their paid and unpaid short-term work experiences, and investigate relationships between volunteer and short-term work activities and future employment outcomes.

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Table 1

Participant Demographics (N = 88)

Variable	*n*	%
Race		
White	44	50
African American	37	42
Asian American	3	3
Mixed or multiracial	4	5
Hispanic ethnicity	7	8
Education level		
Less than high school degree	32	36
High school diploma or GED	34	39
Some college	18	20
Associate degree	3	3
Bachelor degree	1	1
Level of vision		
Totally blind	14	16
Legally blind	62	70
Other visual impairment	12	14
Overall health		
Fair	12	14
Good	23	26
Very good	28	32
Excellent	25	28

Table 2

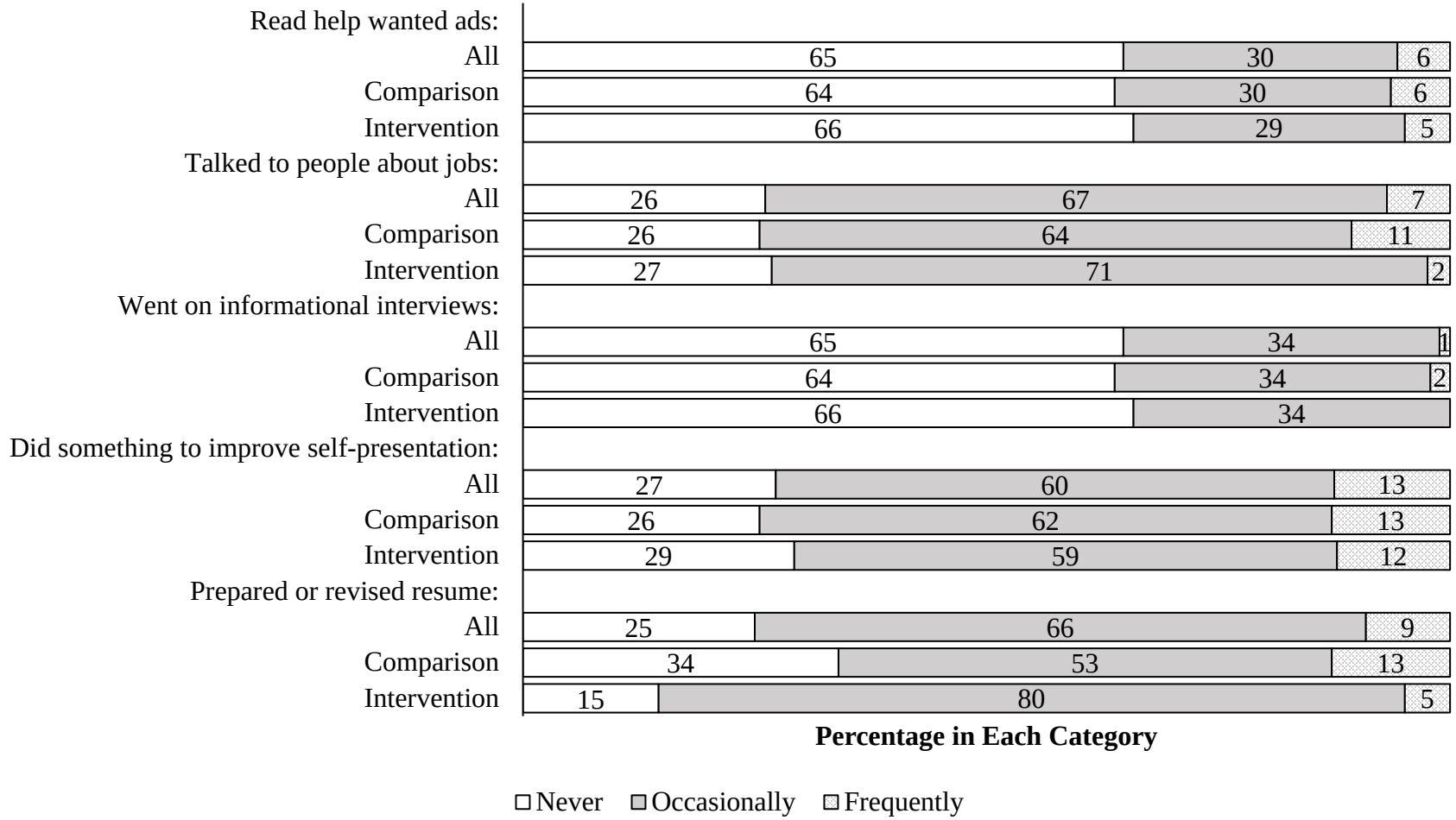
Medians and Interquartile Ranges for Preparatory and Active Job Search Activities

Activity	Mdn	IQR
Preparatory (*N* = 88)		
Read help wanted ads	0	0-2
Talked to people about jobs	2	0-4
Went on informational interviews	0	0-1
Did something to improve self-presentation[a]	2	0-3
Prepared or revised resume	1	0.5-3
Active (*N* = 50)		
Contacted employment agencies	1	0-2
Contacted potential employers	1	0-4
Submitted a resume	2	0-4
Submitted an application	2	1-7
Interviewed with a potential employer	0	0-2

[a] Examples include wearing the right clothes and getting a haircut.

Figure 1

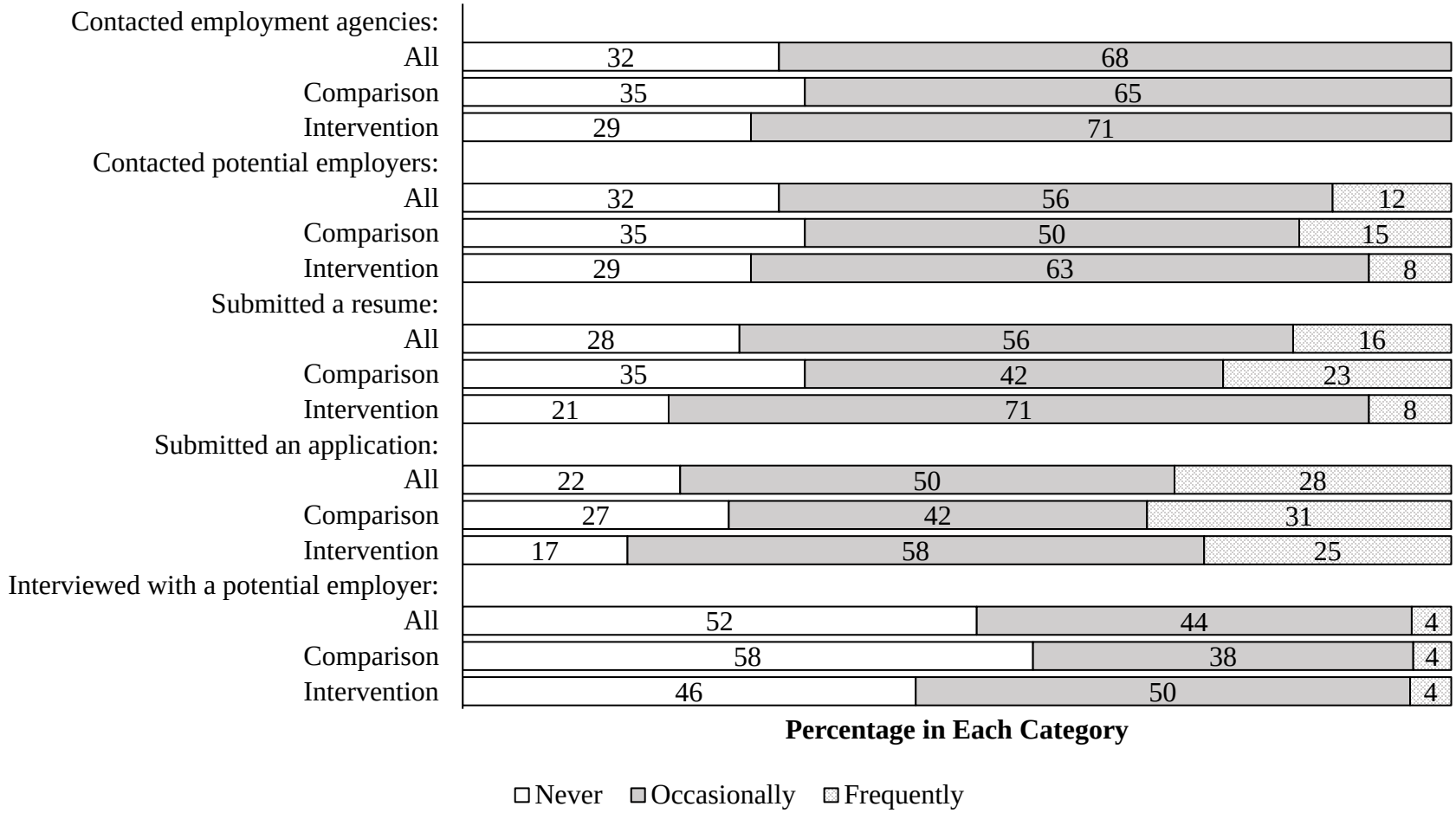
Preparatory Job Search Activities



Note. All $N = 88$, Comparison $n = 47$, Intervention $n = 41$.

Figure 2

Active Job Search Activities



Note. All $N = 50$, Comparison $n = 26$, Intervention $n = 24$.

Table 3

Problems Experienced During Job Search

Problem	Comparison (*n* = 26)		Intervention (*n* = 24)		All (*n* = 50)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Did not receive interview after application	9	35	6	25	15	30
Employer discrimination[a]	5	19	4	17	9	18
Transportation issues	3	12	5	21	8	16
Lack of qualifications for jobs	2	8	6	25	8	16
No job openings	3	12	3	13	6	12
Inadequate job search knowledge	1	4	1	4	2	4
Other	1	4	2	8	3	6

[a] Not hired due to visual impairment.

Table 4

Participant Work Experiences

Category	Comparison (n = 47)		Intervention (n = 41)		All (N = 88)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Volunteer work	10	21	17	41	27	31
Short-term work experience	15	32	22	54	37	42
Paid job	9	19	6	15	15	17
None of the above	22	47	7	17	29	33

Note. Some participants are represented in multiple categories.

Table 5

Information About Paid Jobs (N = 15)

Variable	*n*	%
Method used to find job		
Networking	9	60
Internet	5	33
Contacted employers directly	3	20
Other	1	7
Who helped find job		
Found the job themselves	6	40
Friend or family member	5	33
Someone at school	3	20
Vocational rehabilitation counselor	1	7
Type of job		
Retail	6	40
Restaurant	3	20
Clerical	2	13
Other	4	27