

Job Search Attitude Inventory™

JSAI

THIRD EDITION

Administrator's Guide

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Description

The *Job Search Attitude Inventory (JSAI)* is a brief, 32-item inventory designed to make job seekers more aware of their self-directed and other-directed attitudes about their search for employment. It compares the inventory takers' attitudes about the job search process with those of professional counselors trained in teaching job search techniques. Responses to each of the attitude statements are made directly on the *JSAI* booklet. The *JSAI* is self-scored; statements represent four scales of self-directed job search attitudes. Step-by-step scoring instructions, a scoring profile, and information to interpret the profile results are included, as well as suggestions for further exploration.

Preliminary data from the *JSAI* has shown it to be effective in many applications:

- ▲ Outplacement counseling
- ▲ Employment counseling
- ▲ Job search assistance
- ▲ Career counseling
- ▲ Career development workshops

- ▲ Rehabilitation counseling
- ▲ Correctional counseling
- ▲ Group assessment
- ▲ School-to-work transition programs
- ▲ College and university career planning centers

Administration

The *JSAI* is self-administered (for use with individuals or groups), and the inventory booklets are designed to be written in. This assessment can also be administered online. For details, go to www.jist.com. The readability of the assessment has been tested and is at or below the eighth grade level.

Individuals should be told why they are taking the inventory and how the results will be used. It is important that the test administrator not indicate a bias toward any response as being either good or bad. The *JSAI* should be administered in a quiet, well-lighted room. Interruptions should be avoided and outside distractions kept to a minimum. Step-by-step directions explain how respondents should mark their responses.



This booklet (ISBN 978-1-59357-335-5) is designed to accompany packages of the *Job Search Attitude Inventory*, Third Edition (ISBN 978-1-59357-334-8). © 2006 by John Liptak. Published by JIST Works, an imprint of JIST Publishing, 7321 Shadeland Station, Suite 200, Indianapolis, IN 46256-3923. Phone: 800-648-JIST. Fax: 877-454-7839. E-mail: info@jist.com. Web site: www.jist.com. All rights reserved. Duplication of this document is permitted for internal distribution to staff using the *Job Search Attitude Inventory*. No other use is permitted without written permission from the publisher. For a JIST catalog, call 800-648-JIST or visit www.jist.com.

The average administration time for the *JSAI* is approximately 20 minutes, depending on such factors as age and reading ability.

The test administrator should distribute a copy of the *JSAI* booklet, along with a pencil, to each participant. He or she should tell respondents that they should mark all their responses directly on the booklet. Demographic information should be completed at this point. Review "About the *JSAI*" with the individual or the group before beginning.

Make sure that each respondent understands how to mark his or her responses. In Step 1, respondents are asked to circle one (and only one) of the numbers to the right of each statement. Respondents are asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with each of the statements regarding the search for employment. Respondents are asked to use a four-point Likert scale that includes the following letter codes:

SA means Strongly Agree.

A means Agree.

D means Disagree.

SD means Strongly Disagree.

Make sure that all individuals taking the inventory understand the response scale. Emphasize that the *JSAI* is not a test; therefore, there are no right or wrong answers.

Stress that respondents should clearly circle only one response for each item, but they should respond to each of the 32 statements. Inventory administrators should allow as much time as needed to complete the *JSAI*. There is no time limit.

Scoring and Profiling

The *JSAI* was designed to be self-scored, and no other materials are needed to score or interpret the instrument. Self-scoring provides the person taking the inventory and the counselor with immediate results.

Tell the respondents the following:

- 1) The *JSAI* comprises four scales: Luck vs. Planning, Uninvolved vs. Involved, Help from Others vs. Self-Help, and Passive vs. Active. The items are grouped into four color-coded sections for easy scoring. In Step 2, respondents should add the total number of responses for each of the four sections and record each total in the

corresponding box beside it. There will be one score (number) for Luck vs. Planning, Uninvolved vs. Involved, Help from Others vs. Self-Help, and Passive vs. Active. These scores will each range from 8 to 32.

- 2) Transfer these scores to the number line in the profile to the right of each box in Step 3 by circling that number on the profile graph. Step 3 provides a guide for interpreting these scores.

Interpretation

The *JSAI* Profile provides information about the test takers' positive and negative job search attitudes. Respondents interpret their scores according to how highly they scored on each scale.

Scores between 8 and 16 indicate attitudes that are *other-directed*, i.e., the respondent believes that he or she needs the help of others to find a job. Scores between 17 and 23 are similar to those of most people who take the *JSAI*. Scores in this range suggest that, while the respondent is not completely dependent on others, he or she could take more control of the job search process. Scores between 24 and 32 indicate attitudes that are *self-directed*, i.e., the respondent believes that he or she can find a job largely through his or her own planning and effort.

The higher a respondent's score, the more positive his or her attitude about searching for a job. Means and standard deviation are provided in Table 5 later in this guide. The data was collected from both males and females, representative of urban, suburban, and rural populations from various regions of the United States.

Dimensions Measured by the *JSAI*

Current theory indicates that there are many important factors to consider when helping people in the job search process. Perhaps the most important among these are the individual's attitudes toward unemployment and searching for a job.

The purpose of the *JSAI* is to provide individuals with an overall picture of their attitudes in relation to the job search process. The attitudes covered in the inventory are crucial to an effective job search campaign. They were identified after a thorough review of the literature, case studies, and interviews with unemployed adults.

Theoretical Basis for the *JSAI*

The *JSAI* is based on the notion that self-directed motivation to search for a job can be enhanced by increasing a person's victor mentality, self-esteem, meaning in life, and career and life purpose. People who display other-directed motivation in their search for employment, however, exhibit tendencies of learned helplessness and victim mentality.

The *JSAI* is based on a landmark study that was conducted to determine the most important characteristics of a job search campaign. Helwig (1987) conducted this nationwide needs assessment in which 1,121 counselors employed in a variety of agencies were asked to determine information needed by job seekers. In his study, respondents were asked to rate 95 items on the basis of how important such knowledge, awareness, or ability would be in either helping them as a counselor to assist their students or clients to find a job or in helping clients to find a job through their own self-directed efforts. His study indicated that the possession of personal motivation and effective job search attitudes are as important or more important than job search skills and techniques.

Interestingly, "knowledge of the importance of personal responsibility in finding a job" rated the twelfth most important item, ahead of most of the job search items related to such behaviors as "ability to understand the employer's expectations for a specific position," "knowledge of the steps in job hunting," and "knowledge of where to find job openings." Similarly, employment counselors in the sample rated "knowledge of the importance of personal responsibility in finding a job" as the *most* important of the 95 items. Helwig concluded that "obviously, these employment counselors, who have been in the trenches for many years with many clients who are hard to place, realize the importance of client interest and motivation in finding work" (p. 88).

Learned Helplessness

In the development and implementation of the life skills program for offenders leaving prison (cf., Miller, 1997), Liptak (2000) developed the *Motivation Training* (MT) program. MT helps motivate people in their career development and search for employment. Based on Maslow's Theory of Motivation, the program has been shown to dramatically increase a person's self-directed job search attitudes. People who are self-directed tend to believe in planning a job search campaign rather than relying on luck. They are involved in the process, are

willing to help themselves, and take responsibility for a comprehensive job search.

On the other hand, people who are other-directed tend to be very passive and unwilling to help themselves in their search for employment. They want other people to "find a job for them." This negative attitude has been referred to as "learned helplessness." As a result of failing to influence outcomes in their lives, people perceive themselves as helpless and out of control in most situations.

Wood (1989) described helplessness as "a phenomenon that results when repeated life experiences are interpreted by people to be an indication that they are not in control of their own fate" (p. 4). According to a model of learned helplessness based on Attribution Theory (Abramson, Seligman, and Teasdale, 1978), individuals' attributions about their perceived inability to have any control over past situations tends to lead to expectations about what will occur in future situations. In their model, the attributions or explanations people use to answer the question "What caused this to happen to me?" cause helplessness deficits in the areas of cognitions (beliefs that events and/or failures are uncontrollable), motivation (passivity and withdrawal), and emotions (sadness, anxiety, and hostility). This, in effect, leads to the fourth deficit, low self-esteem, and then to further expectations of failure. The person lives with this self-fulfilling prophecy and tries to cope.

Liptak (2000) suggested that helplessness affects a person's career development and search for employment in many ways, including the following:

- 1) Learned helplessness affects your job search attitudes and behaviors. Learned helplessness results from the attributions you have made about the causes for your job loss and/or failure to find a new job.
- 2) The more severe you perceive the situation of your job loss, the worse your attitudes are about looking for another job. You see your situation as having been caused by others and that turning it around seems unlikely. You will become more passive in your search efforts. Helpless feelings also will increase over time.
- 3) The longer you have been out of work, the more intensely you will view your unemployment as irreversible. You have "learned" that unemployment is your only option.

- 4) You will probably also experience such feelings as isolation, depression, and apathy. You may feel pessimistic about your chances of getting a job and be dissatisfied with life in general.

Lock (2005) suggested that most people searching for employment believe they are powerless, but in reality the job seeker actually has as much power and control over the job search process as prospective employers. However, to have this power and control, job seekers must make up their minds from the start to take responsibility for their job search. He suggests that the best job hunters assume personal responsibility for finding a job and concludes that “professional career counselors, employment agency personnel, and college career services officials can help, but in the final analysis, the job seeker must put the words in the resume, complete the application form, do the company research, and face the employers in the interview” (p. 19).

Self-Directed and Other-Directed Job Seekers

Liptak (2000) suggested that there are two types of job seekers in the world: those who are *self-directed* and those who are *other-directed*. Self-directed job seekers are more aware of their own strengths and weaknesses than those who are other-directed. They are eager to learn more about their passions and their potential contributions to society. They are realistic about the time and effort needed to achieve their goals and they have a sense of purpose in their lives. Positive self-awareness is realizing and understanding that we all have the right to fulfill our own potential in life. It is realizing that such things as intelligence, financial status, religious beliefs, birthplace, sex, or the color of our skin do not measure our worth. Liptak suggested that our attitudes actually defined who we are and can become. He compared self-directed and other-directed job seekers in the following ways:

- ▲ Self-directed job seekers take full responsibility for what happens in their lives. They feel self-determined, meaning they have the freedom to make choices that determine their own destiny. Other-directed job seekers believe that fate and luck ultimately share the outcome of their lives. They believe that they are predestined to live a life that is primarily determined by circumstances outside of themselves. They also believe that you have to be “in the right place at the right time.”
- ▲ Self-directed job seekers know the role they fulfill in life and have set goals to reach their full potential. Extremely honest, they don't kid themselves about their strengths and weaknesses. Other-directed job seekers tend to sell themselves short and don't recognize or use their own unique gifts.
- ▲ Self-directed job seekers realize that finding a job is their responsibility. They seek out support, look for possible solutions to problems, take risks, and actively pursue their dreams.
- ▲ Self-directed job seekers have the desire to succeed and are motivated from inside to change for the better. They see risk as an opportunity and don't fear the outcomes. Other-directed job seekers, however, believe that someone owes them a job, or that it is the government's responsibility to find employment for them. They invent excuses for not getting things done. They wait, complain, and then often quit.

Dan Goleman (2000) suggested that all people, especially job seekers, must have the emotional intelligence skills needed to perform in a variety of situations. Goleman (1995) described emotional intelligence as a set of key skills, abilities, and competencies that, unlike traditional Intelligence Quotient (IQ) that is primarily innate, can be learned by anyone. He writes that emotional intelligence includes such skills as being able to motivate oneself, being persistent in facing obstacles and achieving goals, taking responsibility for one's actions, controlling impulses and delaying gratification, controlling one's moods, thinking rationally, and planning for the future.

Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2000) suggested that emotional intelligence is a set of abilities that account for how a more accurate understanding of emotions often helps people solve problems in their emotional lives. They define emotional intelligence as “the ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion in thought, understand and reason with emotion, and regulate emotion in the self and others” (p. 396). They see emotional intelligence as including such skills as actively pursuing goals, taking responsibility, not giving up, planning, and controlling one's own destiny. Such research reinforces the value of positive, self-directed attitudes in the job search process.

As can be seen from this review of the literature, self-directed job search skills are critical in conducting an effective job search campaign. With an increase in competition for available jobs, all of the research indicates that people who have the most effective self-directed job search skills will be the most employable.

Development of the *JSAI*

The rational-empirical method of test construction (Crites, 1978) was used in the development of the *JSAI*. The rational-empirical approach identifies the concepts or behaviors that are considered most important to measure. For the *JSAI*, the concepts or behaviors measured were identified from research and journal articles about a variety of job club and job search approaches. Latham (1987) has been the primary researcher in gathering preliminary data about positive and negative job search attitudes and behaviors.

This initial conceptualization and research on job search behaviors indicates that an individual's success in finding a job is largely determined by the individual's positive or negative job search attitudes.

Since no psychometric instruments were found that would assess an individual's job search attitudes, this self-administered inventory was developed.

Changes to the Third Edition

The third edition of the *JSAI* is based on the same validity and reliability studies as the second edition. Revisions were made to the overall structure and flow of the instrument, simplifying and reducing the number of steps in scoring to make it even easier and more accessible. In addition, suggestions for further research were added to enable respondents to further enhance their attitude toward finding employment. Other changes made to the third edition of the *JSAI* include the following:

- ▲ The number of items on the third edition of the *JSAI* remained the same, but items from each of the four scales were grouped together so that scoring and interpreting the *JSAI* are easier.
- ▲ The *JSAI* Profile was revised so that it could be read and interpreted more easily by respondents.
- ▲ Step 3 and Step 4 were combined to make administration and interpretation of the *JSAI* easier.

- ▲ A section was added to Step 4 titled "What I Can Do to Improve." In this section, respondents are asked to write about the things they can do in each of the four sections to improve their search for employment.
- ▲ Additional sources of information are included at the end of the assessment.

Reliability

Initial evidence of *JSAI*'s reliability was computed in terms of internal consistency (alpha coefficients) for adults (see Table 1), stability (test-retest correlations) for an adult population (see Table 2), and split-half reliability (see Table 3). The database consisted of more than 100 unemployed adults participating in outplacement counseling programs or workforce development programs. As can be seen in Table 1, the alpha coefficients for the *JSAI* ranged from a low of .85 to a high of .91. Table 2 shows that many of this initial pool of subjects were tested approximately three months later with the test-retest reliabilities ranging from .60 to .76.

To examine further evidence of the internal consistency of *JSAI* scales, split-half reliability estimates were also obtained. These coefficients, which ranged from .53 to .81, are presented in Table 3.

Validity

To develop realistic items, resource materials from case studies, interviews with unemployed adults, and research and journal articles about a variety of job clubs and job search programs were examined. It was determined from this review that the four scales which make up the *JSAI* represented attitudes contributing to a self-directed job search.

A pool of 50 statements was then derived representing the four scales. Three professional counselors from outplacement counseling, career counseling, and rehabilitation counseling fields reviewed and revised the draft statements. These counselors were instructed to place the statements into the most appropriate and descriptive scales. The statements were then reviewed and edited for style, clarity, and appropriateness for measuring positive and negative job search attitudes. Finally, statements were screened to eliminate any reference to race, sex, culture, or ethnic origin.

A sample population of unemployed adults was chosen to complete draft copies of the *JSAI* to gather statistical data about the inventory. From this research, a final pool of statements that measured each of the four job search attitudes was chosen, making a total of 32 statements for the combined scales of the *JSAI*. In addition, information was gathered concerning the inventory's content, format, and utility.

Concurrent validity for the *JSAI* is shown in the form of interscale correlations based on an adult sample (see Table 4). In general, these correlations are of low magnitude, the highest being .58. This evidence supports the independence of the scales.

In addition to computing alpha coefficients and interscale correlations, construct validity was computed for the *JSAI* (see Table 5). From an initial sample of 135 people, males (Mean = 20.00) and females (Mean = 19.62) both scored the lowest on the Passive vs. Active Scale. This suggests that taking a passive role in the job search process is the most common negative job search attitude. Similarly, both males (Mean = 26.77) and females (Mean = 26.00) scored highest on the Help from Others vs. Self-Help Scale. This suggests that finding a job on one's own—rather than relying on community or government agencies—is the most positive job search attitude for both sexes. The most noticeable difference between males and females occurred on the Uninvolved vs. Involved Scale. Although they both scored in the high (i.e., self-directed) range, males (Mean = 26.23) tended to be more self-directed than females (Mean = 24.39). This suggests that males tended to be a little more involved in the job search process than females.

Means and standard deviations have been subsequently calculated for groups taking the *JSAI*. The groups included offenders, welfare-to-work clients, community college students, and youth ages 12 to 18 (Table 6).

TABLE 1: Internal Consistency (Alpha Coefficients)

<i>JSAI Scales</i>	<i>Alpha Coefficients</i>
Luck vs. Planning	.85
Uninvolved vs. Involved	.88
Help from Others vs. Self-Help	.91
Passive vs. Active	.89

N = 135 Adults (Preliminary Sample)

TABLE 2: Stability (Test-Retest Correlations)

<i>JSAI Scales</i>	<i>Test-Retest</i>
Luck vs. Planning	.66
Uninvolved vs. Involved	.60
Help from Others vs. Self-Help	.75
Passive vs. Active	.76

N = 107 Adults (Preliminary Sample). Retest performed three months after original testing.

TABLE 3: Split-Half Reliability

<i>JSAI Scales</i>	<i>Split-Half</i>
Luck vs. Planning	.75
Uninvolved vs. Involved	.53
Help from Others vs. Self-Help	.72
Passive vs. Active	.81

N = 135 Adults (Preliminary Sample)

TABLE 4: Intercorrelations Among *JSAI* Scales

<i>JSAI Scales</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
Luck vs. Planning	1			
Uninvolved vs. Involved	.58	1		
Help from Others vs. Self-Help	.47	.45	1	
Passive vs. Active	-.21	-.19	.11	1

N = 135 Adults (Preliminary Sample)

TABLE 5: Means and Standard Deviations for Adults

<i>JSAI Scales</i>	<i>Total (N = 135)</i>		<i>Male (N = 70)</i>		<i>Female (N = 65)</i>	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Luck vs. Planning	22.19	2.12	22.46	2.22	21.92	2.43
Uninvolved vs. Involved	25.31	1.92	26.23	2.86	24.39	1.50
Help from Others vs. Self-Help	26.39	2.31	26.77	2.74	26.00	2.19
Passive vs. Active	19.80	2.18	20.00	2.42	19.62	2.22

N = 135 Adults (Preliminary Sample)

TABLE 6: Means and Standard Deviations for Selected Groups

<i>JSAI Scales</i>	<i>Offenders</i>		<i>WtW Clients</i>		<i>College Students</i>		<i>Youth</i>	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Luck vs. Planning	23.38	3.33	22.62	3.82	23.32	2.54	21.03	3.81
Uninvolved vs. Involved	24.49	4.69	24.91	3.57	25.29	2.61	18.92	5.02
Help from Others vs. Self-Help	26.84	3.81	26.58	3.72	26.35	2.71	18.07	4.17
Passive vs. Active	21.32	2.79	20.03	3.69	20.92	2.41	16.17	5.82

Offenders: N = 554 respondents; Welfare-to-Work (WtW) Clients: N = 296 respondents; College Students: N = 535 respondents; Youth ages 12-18: N = 308 respondents.

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About the Author

John Liptak, Ed.D., is one of the leading developers of quantitative and qualitative assessments in the country. He is the Associate Director of the Experiential Learning and Career Development office at Radford University in Radford, Virginia. He provides career assessment and career counseling services for students and administrators and interprets a variety of career assessments. Dr. Liptak focuses on helping students develop their careers by becoming engaged in a variety of learning, leisure, and work experiences.

In addition to the *JSAI*, Dr. Liptak has created the following assessments for JIST Publishing: *Career Exploration Inventory*, *Transition-to-Work Inventory*, *Job Search Knowledge Scale*, *Job Survival and Success Scale*, *Barriers to Employment Success Inventory*, and *College Survival and Success Scale*. Dr. Liptak consults on the development of assessments for schools and agencies around the country and has developed specialized assessment instruments for use with clients. He is a regular speaker at national and international conventions on the topic of assessment and assessment development and is also a JIST-certified trainer.