USE OF AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE-BASED RÉSUMÉ CRITIQUE PRODUCT AND CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION STUDENTS' JOB SEARCH OUTCOMES

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Work-integrated learning (WIL) programs are growing in post-secondary education, increasing the demand on career services. Researchers wanted to determine the impact on job search outcomes using an artificial intelligence-based (the "AI") résumé critique tool as an alternative to in-person résumé critiques. The results show that the AI improved student writing on their résumé but did not have an impact on job search outcomes.

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT?

WIL programs in post-secondary education have grown in recent years, increasing the demand for career service supports. Career service departments often support students by conducting one-on-one résumé critiques to improve the communication of their skills and overall employability. Career service administrators may consider using an AI-based product to review résumés to address the demand on staff resources. This research evaluates the relationship between co-op students' use of the AI and job search outcomes.

WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS DO?

The researchers conducted a study from May-August in 2020 within the University of Waterloo co-op program (a type of WIL where students alternate academic and work terms). These co-op students were looking to secure employment for September 2020.

Participants included a total of 105 undergraduate students from accounting and finance, math and engineering programs. Participants answered a questionnaire on their gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity. They were offered unsupervised use of the AI and provided consent for tracking of their use. The researchers tracked minutes spent using the product and the number of résumés uploaded. The researchers then looked at three job outcomes: the number of interviews the student had, how quickly they obtained their first job interview, and the ratio of job applications to interviews. They also looked at whether they were employed by the end of the study.

WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS FIND?

One in three study participants uploaded a résumé to the AI, and one in five uploaded multiple résumés. The up-take was low within the sample, which should be considered when balanced against the financial cost of the AI. The researchers also found that students who were new to the job search process were more likely to use the AI and uploaded more résumés than their more experienced peers. The students who uploaded multiple résumés improved their scores by 21.6% from their first uploaded résumé. The more time students spent on the AI and the more

résumés they uploaded, the greater the improvement in résumé scores.

However, the results suggested that there is no connection between use of the AI and job search outcomes—the number of résumés uploaded and the amount of time spent on the AI were unrelated to the number of invitations to job interviews. The researchers noted that this may be due to the AI only improving some aspects of the résumé like writing and grammar. Even though the AI improved the writing of the résumé, other students in the sample may have had more job experience which would have led to greater job search success, regardless of any improvements the AI made. The use of AI did not change or impact the skills or competencies the students had to offer on their résumé, nor did it improve the overall presentation of these skills in relation to the job application.

Consideration should also be given to the lack of connection between staff and students when using an AI-based product, as trust building and awareness of other career services may be lost. Researchers suggest that AI-based résumé critiques may not be effective in addressing the growing demand on career services.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS RESEARCH?

WIL practitioners, educators and career service providers can use this research to consider whether an AI-based résumé critique product would be beneficial to their career service department and/or improve the employability of students.

CITATION

Drewery, D., Woodside J., and Eppel, K. (2022, Aug 31-Sep 2). Use of an Artificial Intelligence-Based Résumé Critique Product and Co-operative Education Students' Job Search Outcomes [Paper Presentation]. WACE 2022 International Research Symposium, Kanazawa, Japan.

ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS

David Drewery is the associate director at the Work-Learn Institute at the University of Waterloo. Jennifer Woodside is the director of the Centre for Career Action at the University of Waterloo. Kristin Eppel is a manager at the Centre for Career Action at the University of Waterloo.

The Work-Learn Institute at the University of Waterloo is the only institute in the world dedicated to research on co-operative education and other forms of work-integrated learning.

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO | WORK LEARN INSTITUTE