



The Impact of Job Separation Experience on Job Search Duration

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the impact of job separation experiences, both voluntary and involuntary, on job search duration in Indonesia. Utilizing data from the 2023 National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas), the research employs an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression model with various control variables, including age, gender, marital status, household head status, household size, education level, training, and residential location. The analysis reveals that individuals who experience voluntary separation take longer to find new employment compared to those with involuntary separation. This study offers a novel approach by distinguishing between these two categories of job separation while exploring their interaction with individual characteristics. The findings are expected to provide empirical support for adaptive labor policies aimed at accelerating workforce transitions into stable and decent employment in Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

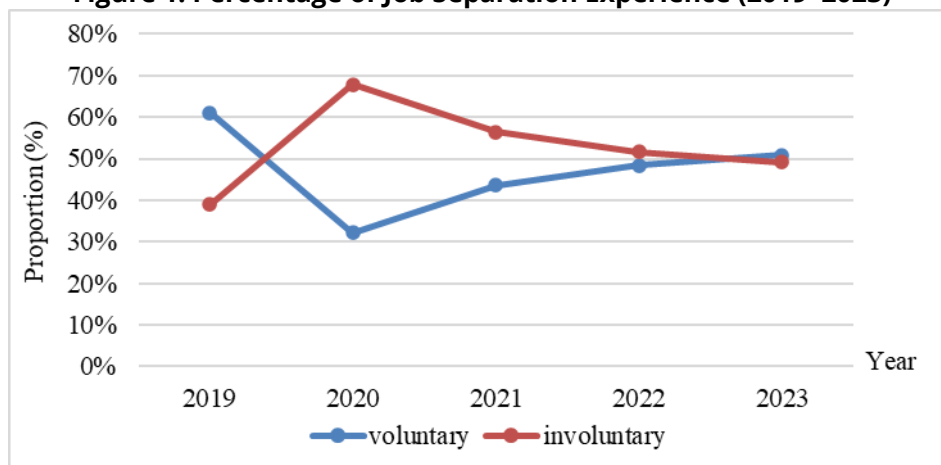
Job search duration reflects the of the labor market and has implications for both social and economic well-being. Prolonged job searches can lead to a decline in individual skills, forcing individuals to accept low-quality jobs efficiency, such as those with low wages or unstable working conditions (Caliendo et al., 2013). Long-term unemployment also carries the risk of reducing motivation, increasing dependence on social assistance, and slowing economic recovery (Filges et al., 2018). Moreover, it can hinder job matching, making it difficult for individuals to obtain employment that aligns with their skill sets (Lichter & Schiprowski, 2021).

Job separation experiences, whether voluntary or involuntary, influence the duration of job search and the transition to new employment. Voluntary separation, which is based on planned decisions such as pursuing better career opportunities or addressing personal needs generally makes individuals more mentally prepared, although their higher selectivity often prolongs the job search process (Pavlopoulos et al., 2014; Waters, 2007). In contrast, involuntary separation due to layoffs or company restructuring leads to emotional distress, social stigma, and a decline

in self-confidence, which slows down the job search and reduces the quality of subsequent employment. Involuntarily separated workers are often compelled to accept low-wage or suboptimal jobs in order to avoid long-term unemployment, although this can further erode motivation and prolong the unemployment spell (Malo & Muñoz-Bullón, 2008; Gallo et al., 2006).

The phenomena of the Great Resignation and the Global Layoff Wave reflect global labor market dynamics that influence patterns of voluntary and involuntary separation. The Great Resignation involved millions of workers in developed countries voluntarily leaving their jobs due to work-related stress, poor work-life balance, and the pursuit of better working conditions. In the United States, this phenomenon peaked in September 2021, when 4.4 million workers resigned in search of post-pandemic flexibility (Tessema et al., 2022). Similar trends emerged in Europe and Australia, particularly in the manufacturing, healthcare, and service sectors, driven by burnout and lack of flexibility (Artar & Balcioglu, 2023; Kuzior et al., 2022). The Global Layoff Wave refers to mass layoffs resulting from corporate restructuring, with the technology sector being the most affected due to efforts to cut operational costs and enhance competitiveness (Chebolu, 2021). The pandemic also significantly impacted the accommodation, food, and service sectors, which experienced higher levels of labor market inactivity compared to traditional unemployment (Verick et al., 2021). This wave of layoffs also affected developing countries such as Vietnam, where large-scale workforce reductions occurred in certain sectors, especially among firms that had high revenue before the pandemic (Le et al., 2023).

Figure 1. Percentage of Job Separation Experience (2019–2023)



Source: Sakernas 2023, processed by the author

In Indonesia, the patterns of voluntary and involuntary separation shifted between 2019 and 2023. During the pandemic, involuntary separation was dominant, whereas by 2023, both types had become more balanced. Voluntary separation frequently occurred due to burnout, job dissatisfaction, or the need for flexibility particularly in the healthcare, construction, and technology sectors with younger workers increasingly seeking work-life balance (Dechawatanapaisal, 2017; Marzuki et al., 2012; Masdupi et al., 2023). In contrast, involuntary separation, such as mass layoffs, worsened economic stability and worker well-being, forcing many to transition into the informal sector, accompanied by declines in income and productivity (Suryahadi et al., 2020). This situation underscores the importance of policies that support both types of separation in facilitating transitions to decent and stable employment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job search is a dynamic process influenced by market conditions, financial pressure, and individual preferences. Job search theory encompasses reservation wages, search costs,

imperfect information, and job offer trade-offs. Reservation wages tend to decrease under economic pressure, while search costs increase, creating an optimal point for accepting a job offer. Information uncertainty forces workers to choose between accepting an offer or continuing their search, with expectations of future offers diminishing over time. Voluntarily separated workers are generally more selective, whereas involuntarily separated individuals are more likely to accept suboptimal offers due to economic pressure (Conlon et al., 2018; Caliendo et al., 2010; Büyükbaşaran, 2020).

Voluntary separation occurs when workers intentionally leave their jobs to pursue career advancement, education, or better work-life balance, giving them greater control over their decision. These individuals tend to be better prepared and highly motivated, although their selectivity and high expectations often extend their job search duration (Byun & Raffiee, 2023; Masdonati et al., 2022). In contrast, involuntary separation takes place without the worker's consent, typically due to restructuring or unstable economic conditions. This creates uncertainty and psychological stress, often compelling workers to accept lower-paying jobs to avoid prolonged unemployment (Hill et al., 2023; Nikolova et al., 2021).

Labor force participation theory focuses on individual decisions to participate in the labor market, including the point at which individuals stop searching because they have secured suitable employment. This decision is influenced not only by labor supply but also by motivation, timing, and various personal and economic factors (Zamfir et al., 2021). The theory emphasizes that labor market participation is not solely a matter of searching for a job, but also about when individuals feel ready or motivated to engage in employment.

Job search duration is affected by factors such as age, gender, education, training, social status, and location. Younger workers tend to find employment faster due to their flexibility, while older workers face age discrimination and limited access to training opportunities (Guillemyn & Horemans, 2024; Van Borm et al., 2021). Women typically take longer to find work due to dual roles, whereas men tend to be more pragmatic and seek employment more immediately (Wachter & Holz-Rau, 2022; Damaske, 2020). Higher education can accelerate job search through better skills, knowledge, and professional networks, although high selectivity and labor market mismatches may sometimes slow the transition (Kucel et al., 2016; Albert & Davia, 2022). On the other hand, low-educated workers often become trapped in low-wage jobs due to limited skills and market mismatch (Abrassart, 2013). Market-oriented training programs are effective in narrowing skill gaps, accelerating re-employment, and increasing labor competitiveness (Kruppe & Lang, 2018). Social status such as marital status and family dependents also influences search intensity, where economic pressure may speed up the process, but family responsibilities often hinder it (Dew & Price, 2011; Enchautegui, 2022). Location also plays a role; urban workers tend to have better access to job opportunities, while rural workers face limitations due to infrastructure and fewer available positions (Zhang et al., 2023; Batista Duarte et al., 2023).

Previous research has not specifically examined the impact of voluntary and involuntary separation on job search duration, particularly in the Indonesian context. Most studies focus on developed countries with stable labor markets, whereas Indonesia faces challenges such as widespread layoffs, shifting skill demands, and less responsive labor policies (Dwianto et al., 2023). Individual characteristics such as age, education, and marital status further add to this complexity (Dong & Manning, 2017). Further research is needed to determine whether involuntary separation always has negative consequences or can, under certain conditions, accelerate the job search process.

This study aims to analyze the effect of job separation experience, both voluntary and involuntary, on job search duration in Indonesia, while accounting for demographic, social, economic, and residential location factors. The study offers novelty by distinguishing between these two types of separation—an aspect rarely addressed explicitly in previous literature—and

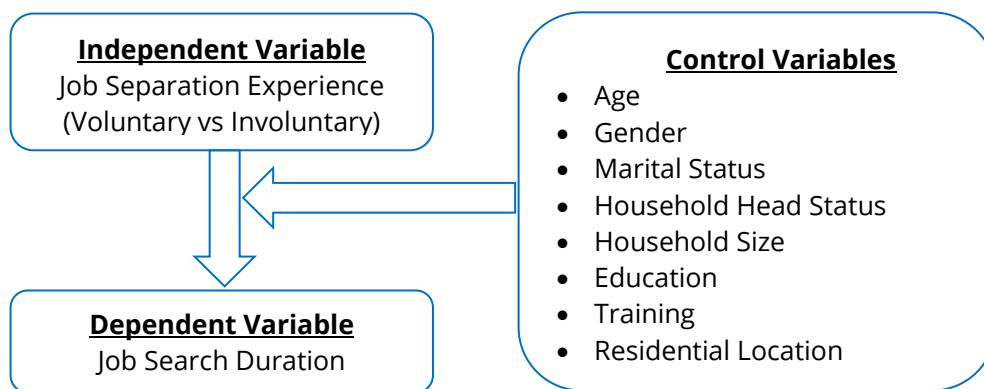
introducing new variables to explore their effects. Through this approach, the research seeks to enrich the literature on job search dynamics in Indonesia.

METHODS

This study utilizes cross-sectional data from the August 2023 National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas), published by Statistics Indonesia (BPS). The dataset contains demographic and socio-economic information on individuals, with geographic coverage extending to the district/city level, making it ideal for capturing the current dynamics of Indonesia’s labor market across various regions. With comprehensive and representative variables, Sakernas enables an analysis of the relationship between job separation experience (voluntary and involuntary) and job search duration.

The unit of analysis in this study is the working-age population (15–64 years) with prior job separation experience. This group is selected because the productive-age population reflects diverse labor market dynamics, while new entrants are excluded to avoid bias stemming from a lack of work experience. Focusing on individuals with prior work experience provides more relevant data and allows for more accurate analysis.

Figure 2. Analytical Framework



Source: processed by the author

The analytical framework employs job separation experience as the independent variable and job search duration as the dependent variable, with a set of control variables. The dependent variable is defined as $\ln(\text{Job Search Duration} + 1)$, the natural logarithm of the number of months spent searching for a job, with 1 added to accommodate zero values and prevent undefined results. This transformation addresses the right-skewed distribution, reduces heteroscedasticity, enhances model robustness, and allows the coefficients to be interpreted as relative percentage changes, thereby facilitating analysis and producing more representative results for understanding labor market dynamics.

Table 1. Operational Definitions of Variables

Variable Name	Variable Definition	Category/Measurement
Dependent Variable		
Ln(Job Search Duration +1)	Natural logarithm of the duration required to find a job or prepare for self-employment	Month
Independent Variable		
Voluntary	Individuals with prior voluntary and involuntary job separation experiences	0 = involuntary* 1 = voluntary

Control Variables		
Age	Respondent's age at the time of the survey	Tahun
Gender	Jenis kelamin	0 = Female* 1 = Male
Marital Status	Marital Status	0 = Never married* 1 = Ever married
Household Head Status	Household Head Status	0 = other* 1 = Household Head
Household Size	Household Size	Numeric count
Education Level	Highest level of education completed, categorized as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low education (no schooling/not completed primary school and completed primary school) • Medium education (completed junior and senior secondary school) • Higher education (completed tertiary education) 	0 = Primary* 1 = Secondary 2 = Tertiary
Training	Participation in training programs	0 = Never attended training* 1 = Attended training
Residential Location	Residential Location	0 = Rural* 1 = Urban

Source: processed by the author

This study employs the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method to analyze the relationship between job separation experience and job search duration. OLS is chosen for its ability to provide accurate estimates when the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity are satisfied. By applying the natural logarithm to the dependent variable, this method addresses heteroscedasticity, improves the accuracy of the results, and facilitates the interpretation of coefficients. The inclusion of control variables ensures that the analysis remains focused on the primary effect—namely, the influence of job separation experience on job search duration.

$$\ln(\text{Lama Mencari Kerja}+1) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Voluntary} + \beta_2 \text{Age} + \beta_3 \text{Gender} + \beta_4 \text{Marital Status} + \beta_5 \text{Household Head Status} + \beta_6 \text{Household Size} + \beta_7 \text{Secondary} + \beta_8 \text{Tertiary} + \beta_9 \text{Training} + \beta_{10} \text{Residential Location} + \varepsilon$$

The robustness check is conducted using the Oster Test to evaluate the stability of regression coefficients in relation to the influence of unobserved variables. This test measures the change in the coefficient of the main variable after adding control variables, where a stable coefficient indicates that the regression results are robust. The delta parameter ($\delta = 0.545$) represents the ratio of the strength of unobserved to observed variables, while $R_{\max} = 1.3$ indicates the upper bound of the R-squared value if all relevant variables were included. A coefficient that closely approximates the true beta supports the validity of a causal relationship between job separation experience and job search duration.

Heterogeneity analysis is conducted to explore variations in the relationship between job separation experience and job search duration across specific subgroups. The primary objective is to uncover distinct patterns that may not be apparent in aggregate analysis, thereby enriching the understanding of the causal relationship under investigation. Sub-sample regressions ensure

that the estimated causal effects are not only applicable in general but are also relevant at the group level for individuals with particular characteristics. This approach reduces noise and bias arising from intergroup differences in aggregate models, thus enhancing the robustness and relevance of the research findings.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

The distribution of job search duration based on voluntary and involuntary job separation provides an initial overview of job search patterns between the two groups. Table 2 presents summary statistics to support the empirical identification of differences in job search duration.

Table 2. Distribution of Job Search Duration by Job Separation Experience

Experience of Leaving Work	Observation		Average time spent looking for work (months)	Min	Max	Standar Deviasi
	Frequency	Percentage				
Voluntary	4.884	52.69	1,80	0	98	3,44
Involuntary	4.386	47.31	1,72	0	98	3,70

Source: Sakernas 2023, processed by the author

Individuals who voluntarily left their jobs account for 52.69%, which is higher than the involuntary group at 47.31%. The average job search duration for the voluntary group is 1.80 months, slightly higher than that of the involuntary group (1.72 months), with standard deviations of 3.44 and 3.70, respectively, indicating greater variation in job search duration among involuntary leavers. The minimum job search duration is 0 months, while the maximum reaches 98 months, reflecting a highly diverse range of job search periods.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

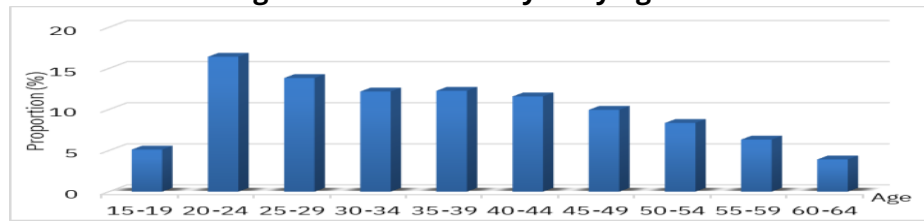
Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Long Time Looking for Work	9.270	0,752	0,654	0	4,595
Voluntary	9.270	0,527	0,499	0	1
Age	9.270	36,611	12,419	15	64
Gender	9.270	0,693	0,461	0	1
Marital Status	9.270	0,725	0,447	0	1
Household Head Status	9.270	0,498	0,5	0	1
Household Size	9.270	3,967	1,527	1	15
Education Level					
Primary*	9.270	0,527	0,499	0	1
Secondary	9.270	0,379	0,485	0	1
Tertiary	9.270	0,094	0,291	0	1
Training	9.270	0,231	0,422	0	1
Residential Location	9.270	0,563	0,496	0	1

Source: Sakernas 2023, processed by the author

Table 3. describes the characteristics of the research sample based on demographic, social, and economic profiles. The average log of job search duration is 0.752 with a standard deviation of 0.654, indicating considerable variation among individuals. Most respondents left their jobs voluntarily (52.7%), had an average age of 36.6 years, and were predominantly male (69.3%). A total of 72.5% of respondents were married or previously married, 49.8% served as household heads, and the average household size was four members. The majority had

completed primary education (52.7%), while 37.9% and 9.4% had completed secondary and higher education, respectively. Only 23.1% of respondents had participated in job training, reflecting low investment in skill development. Geographically, 56.3% resided in urban areas.

Figure 3. Units of Analysis by Age



Source: Sakernas 2023, processed by the author

The distribution of analysis units in Figure 3 shows that the 20–24 age group represents the largest proportion, reflecting the dominance of early productive-age individuals who are active, flexible, and open to job opportunities. The proportion gradually declines across older age groups, from 25–29 to 60–64 years, indicating a decrease in labor force participation with increasing age, particularly as individuals approach retirement.

Regression Analysis Results

Table 4. Estimates of the Effect of Job Separation Experience on Job Search Duration

Variable	Ln Job Search Duration				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Voluntary	0.070*** (0.014)	0.047*** (0.014)	0.048*** (0.014)	0.048*** (0.014)	0.049*** (0.014)
Age		-0.006*** (0.001)	-0.005*** (0.001)	-0.003*** (0.001)	-0.003*** (0.001)
Gender		0.060*** (0.015)	0.009 (0.018)	0.027 (0.018)	0.028 (0.018)
Marital Status			-0.098*** (0.022)	-0.063*** (0.022)	-0.056** (0.022)
Household Head Status			0.096*** (0.020)	0.085*** (0.020)	0.081*** (0.020)
Household Size			0.011** (0.005)	0.009** (0.005)	0.010** (0.005)
Secondary				0.145*** (0.017)	0.133*** (0.017)
Tertiary				0.294*** (0.029)	0.278*** (0.029)
Training				-0.020 (0.018)	-0.020 (0.018)
Residential Location					0.066*** (0.014)
Constant	0.715*** (0.010)	0.901*** (0.027)	0.890*** (0.035)	0.709*** (0.039)	0.678*** (0.039)
Observation	9270	9270	9270	9270	9270
R-squared	0.003	0.017	0.020	0.037	0.040

Standard errors in parentheses

* p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

Source: processed by the author

The stepwise inclusion of control variables improves the model's explanatory power for job search duration, as reflected in the increase in R-squared from 0.003 in the initial model to 0.040 in model (5)—approximately a 13-fold improvement. These control variables significantly enhance model specification and provide more accurate estimates. The effect of job separation experience remains statistically significant and consistent across all models, highlighting its relevance in explaining job search duration.

The estimation results in column (5), which includes all control variables, indicate that job separation experience influences job search duration with a positive coefficient of 0.049, significant at the 1% level. Individuals who voluntarily left their jobs spend, on average, 4.9% more time searching for a new job than those who separated involuntarily, holding all else constant. This difference reflects the higher expectations among voluntary leavers regarding flexibility, compensation, and career prospects, leading them to be more selective in accepting job offers. Financial support—such as savings or assistance from family—enables them to delay decision-making, which can further prolong the job search (McDow & Zabrocky, 2015; Da Motta Veiga & Gabriel, 2016). In contrast, involuntary workers often face financial pressure that compels them to accept the first available job. These findings underscore that voluntary separation has a significant effect on job search duration, with both personal and economic factors shaping re-employment outcomes (Masdonati et al., 2022).

Age has a negative effect, with a coefficient of -0.003, significant at the 1% level, meaning that each additional year of age reduces job search duration by 0.3%. Older individuals tend to be more efficient in securing new employment due to work experience, broader professional networks, and greater emotional maturity—even though their job search methods may be more limited (Guillemyn & Horemans, 2024; Mori et al., 2024). In contrast, the gender variable has a coefficient of 0.028 but is not statistically significant, indicating no notable difference in job search duration between men and women. This may be influenced by other factors such as labor market conditions or job preferences, which are not directly captured in the estimation (Wachter & Holz-Rau, 2022).

Marital status has a negative effect, with a coefficient of -0.056 and significance at the 5% level, indicating that married individuals are 5.6% faster in finding employment. Economic support from a spouse through pooled household income enables married individuals to be more selective, reducing financial pressure and facilitating a more efficient job search (Pilossoph & Wee, 2021). On the other hand, household head status shows a positive and significant effect, with a coefficient of 0.081 at the 1% level, indicating that household heads take 8.1% longer to find employment than non-household heads. Furthermore, household size has a positive coefficient of 0.01, significant at the 5% level. Each additional household member increases job search duration by 1%. Greater family responsibilities limit job search capacity, as attention is divided between seeking employment and caregiving, which lowers search intensity (Williams et al., 2021).

Both secondary and higher education levels show significant effects at the 1% level, with primary education as the reference category. A coefficient of 0.133 for secondary education implies that individuals with secondary education take 13.3% longer to find work than those with only primary education. Tertiary education yields a coefficient of 0.278, suggesting a 27.8% longer job search duration. This result reflects the higher expectations and selectivity of highly educated individuals regarding ideal jobs, as well as the potential mismatch between their skills and labor market demands (Albert & Davia, 2022; Merie et al., 2022). In contrast, training does not significantly affect job search duration. This lack of significance may be attributed to limitations in the Sakernas data, such as the timing, content, or relevance of the training provided. Moreover, irrelevant training is unlikely to affect either job search duration or job quality (Heinrich et al., 2013).

Residential location has a significant effect at the 1% level, with individuals in urban areas requiring 6.6% more time to find employment compared to those in rural areas. Urban labor

markets are more complex and offer a wider range of job opportunities; however, intense competition and skill mismatches often prolong the job search process (Batista Duarte et al., 2023; Draissi et al., 2023). Higher expectations regarding salary, career prospects, and flexibility also contribute to longer search durations (Bosworth & Venhorst, 2018). Conversely, job seekers in rural areas, facing more limited options, tend to accept offers more quickly to avoid unemployment—highlighting the contrasting impacts of urban and rural labor markets (Le-Dai et al., 2023).

Table 5. Estimates of the Effect of Job Separation Experience and Training on Job Search Duration

Variable	Long Time Looking for Work
1.Voluntary	0.074*** (0.015)
1.Pelatihan	0.038 (0.026)
1.Voluntary#1.Training	-0.107*** (0.033)
Control	Yes
Constant	0.666*** (0.039)
Observations	9270
R-squared	0.041

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Source: processed by the author

The estimation results in column (6) show that voluntary job separation has a coefficient of 0.074, significant at the 1% level, indicating that voluntarily separated individuals spend 7.4% more time searching for employment compared to those who separated involuntarily. The training variable shows no significant effect, either independently or in interaction, suggesting that current training programs may not yet be sufficiently relevant or targeted to enhance labor market competitiveness. These findings confirm that job separation experience is a primary factor influencing job search duration, while training does not make a significant contribution to accelerating the job search process.

The interaction term between voluntary separation and training has a coefficient of -0.107, significant at the 1% level. This indicates that individuals who voluntarily left their jobs and participated in training experienced a 10.7% reduction in job search duration compared to those who experienced only one of these conditions. This finding contradicts the initial assumption that voluntary separation prolongs the job search process. Training is shown to be effective in accelerating re-entry into the labor market for voluntary leavers by equipping them with new skills and improving their readiness to meet market demands. The effectiveness of such programs depends on the duration and relevance of the skills provided, with market-oriented training having been proven to expedite labor market transitions (McGuinness et al., 2011).

The estimation results also indicate that training alone does not significantly influence job search duration, possibly due to variability in program quality or a lack of alignment between the training content and labor market needs. However, when combined with voluntary job separation, its impact becomes both significant and negative, reducing the time spent in job search. This suggests that training is more effective for voluntary leavers, who tend to be more motivated and better prepared to utilize newly acquired skills. These findings highlight the importance of designing training programs that are specifically tailored to the needs of targeted groups in order to enhance their effectiveness.

Robustness Check**Table 6. Oster Test**

Regresi	Koefisien	R-squared	Bound Estimate (True Beta)	Delta	R-max
Uncontrolled	0.070	0.003			
Controlled	0.049	0.040	0.045	0.545	0.052

Source: processed by the author

The estimation results from the model without control variables show that the coefficient of the main independent variable is 0.070, with an R-squared of 0.003. After incorporating control variables, the coefficient decreases to 0.049, while the R-squared increases to 0.040, indicating that the controls help explain variation in job search duration without undermining the validity of the main relationship. Furthermore, the estimated true beta of 0.045 very close to the coefficient in the controlled model further reinforces the argument that the effect of the main variable is robust to bias. Therefore, the estimates in this study can be considered robust to omitted variable bias and approximate the true causal effect.

Heterogeneity Analysis

This approach stratifies the sample by gender, age, education level, and residential location to evaluate patterns of heterogeneity. Women face greater barriers in the labor market, including limited access and caregiving responsibilities, which exacerbate wage disparities (Posel et al., 2023). Workers over the age of 40 tend to remain unemployed longer due to lower search intensity and greater selectivity (Centeno et al., 2009). Individuals with primary education re-enter employment more quickly, while those with secondary education have the highest likelihood of re-employment. In contrast, higher education prolongs job search duration due to elevated expectations (Altindag et al., 2019). Urban areas tend to lengthen the job search process due to fierce competition and the demand for specific skills, whereas rural areas although more limited in opportunities facilitate quicker job acceptance (Hanson et al., 2010).

Table 7. The Effect of Job Separation Experience on Job Search Duration by Gender, Age, Education Level, and Residential Location

Variable	Gender		Age		Education Level			Residential Location	
	Female	Male	≤ 40	>40	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Rural	Urban
1.Voluntary	0,012	0,101***	0,061***	0,098***	0,114***	-0,002	-0,002	0,131***	0,024
	(0,028)	(0,019)	(0,021)	(0,023)	(0,019)	(0,029)	(0,084)	(0,022)	(0,021)
1.Training	0,007	0,048	0,029	0,035	0,044	-0,045	0,039	0,104**	0,009
	(0,050)	(0,030)	(0,033)	(0,044)	(0,050)	(0,035)	(0,085)	(0,043)	(0,032)
1.Voluntary#	-0,090	0,107***	0,104***	-0,074	-0,040	0,020	-0,209**	-0,107**	-0,095**
1.Training	(0,059)	(0,040)	(0,040)	(0,064)	(0,071)	(0,046)	(0,105)	(0,054)	(0,041)
Control	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	0,877***	0,616***	0,632***	0,389***	0,609***	0,832***	1,105***	0,622***	0,769***
	(0,070)	(0,044)	(0,037)	(0,077)	(0,055)	(0,061)	(0,144)	(0,059)	(0,053)
Observations	2.849	6.421	5.754	3.516	4.888	3.514	868	4.048	5.222
R-squared	0,064	0,031	0,028	0,037	0,022	0,013	0,018	0,037	0,038

Standard errors in parentheses

* p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

Source: processed by the author

The results presented in Table 6 reveal heterogeneity in the impact of voluntary job separation on job search duration based on gender. Among the female sub-sample, voluntary separation does not significantly affect job search duration. This may reflect the dual role of women as primary caregivers and their preference for flexible employment, which can limit their engagement in actively seeking new opportunities (Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013).

Training also exhibits no significant effect, indicating gender bias in the labor market, lack of recognition of acquired skills, and a tendency to seek highly flexible jobs (Kronberg, 2013). The interaction between voluntary separation and training remains insignificant, likely due to social expectations and the need for flexibility constraining the positive impact of training (Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013). Conversely, for the male sub-sample, voluntary separation yields a coefficient of 0.101 and is statistically significant at the 1% level, indicating that men tend to prolong their job search due to optimism and a greater tendency to wait for better offers (Cortés et al., 2023). Training itself remains insignificant, suggesting that social networks play a more dominant role for men in securing employment than formal skills (Zhou, 2019). However, the interaction term between voluntary separation and training is significant at the 1% level, with a coefficient of -0.107, indicating that training can mitigate the adverse effect of voluntary separation by enhancing skills, competitiveness, and confidence, as well as addressing skill mismatches (Gerst & Grund, 2022). Training also signals motivation and commitment to potential employers (Sumner & Niederman, 2004).

Among individuals aged ≤ 40 years, voluntary separation has a coefficient of 0.061 and is significant at the 1% level, suggesting that younger individuals tend to extend their job search due to higher selectivity regarding job type, compensation, and career prospects, even though they are more flexible in the labor market (Guillemyn & Horemans, 2024). The interaction of training with voluntary separation is significant at the 1% level, with a coefficient of -0.104, indicating that training accelerates job search by improving relevant skills and competitiveness (Kucel et al., 2016). In contrast, for individuals aged > 40 years, voluntary separation also shows a positive and significant effect (coefficient = 0.098 at the 1% level), reflecting greater challenges among older workers due to age discrimination, limited access to training, digital skill gaps, and market preference for younger labor (Van Borm et al., 2021). Training and its interaction terms are not statistically significant, underscoring the need for tailored programs for older workers and more inclusive labor market policies to facilitate their reemployment (Abrassart, 2013).

The analysis by education level indicates that individuals with only primary education face substantial challenges when re-entering the labor market following voluntary separation, as reflected in a significant coefficient of 0.114 at the 1% level. Their limited education restricts access to skilled jobs, forcing them to compete in a saturated segment of the labor market. Neither training nor its interaction with voluntary separation is significant, suggesting a mismatch between training content and specific market needs (Abrassart, 2013; Kohlrausch & Rasner, 2014). In the secondary education group, voluntary separation, training, and their interaction show no significant effects, consistent with the notion that individuals with intermediate education occupy a relatively stable position in the labor market, without distinct advantages or vulnerabilities (Vanoverberghe et al., 2023). Similarly, among the highly educated, neither voluntary separation nor training alone significantly affects job search duration, likely due to their academic credentials and professional networks maintaining their competitiveness (Barros et al., 2011). However, the interaction term is significant at the 5% level with a coefficient of -0.209, indicating that this combination accelerates the transition to high-quality employment through skill enhancement and targeted training programs tailored to maintain competitiveness among highly educated individuals (García-Aracil et al., 2004).

The effect of job separation also varies by residential location. In rural areas, voluntary separation increases job search duration, with a coefficient of 0.131 significant at the 1% level, due to a limited and less competitive informal labor market (Lindsay et al., 2003). Training is significant with a coefficient of 0.104 at the 5% level, although its effectiveness may be

constrained by the lack of market diversity. Many training participants migrate to urban areas for better job prospects, highlighting the need for localized training design (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2003; Bairagya, 2021). The interaction between voluntary separation and training is significant at the 5% level with a coefficient of -0.107, suggesting that training can improve competitiveness and reduce job search duration in rural contexts (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2003). Conversely, in urban areas, voluntary separation does not significantly influence job search duration but tends to prolong it due to preferences for strategic or flexible employment and higher competition (Di Addario, 2011). Training alone is also insignificant without adequate social networks or relevant experience, as employers tend to prioritize practical experience (Di Addario, 2011). However, the interaction between voluntary separation and training is significant at the 5% level with a coefficient of -0.095, indicating that training facilitates job search in urban areas by equipping individuals with specific skills aligned with market demands (Chen & Deng, 2019).

DISCUSSION

This study investigates the relationship between job separation experiences—both voluntary and involuntary—and the duration of job search in Indonesia, revealing that individuals who voluntarily left their jobs tend to take longer to re-enter the labor market compared to those who experienced involuntary separation. This finding reflects fundamental differences in motivation, expectations, and economic pressures between the two groups and confirms job search theory, which emphasizes the roles of reservation wages and individual preferences (Conlon et al., 2018; Caliendo et al., 2010). Voluntarily separated workers typically possess greater negotiating power and exhibit higher selectivity in accepting job offers, while involuntarily separated workers are more driven by immediate needs, prompting quicker acceptance of available jobs—even when the quality may be suboptimal. However, longer job search durations among voluntary leavers should not be interpreted as inefficiency; instead, it may reflect a more deliberate and targeted job search strategy. Conversely, rapid re-entry among the involuntary group could lead to job mismatch, overqualification, or high turnover, raising questions about the long-term effectiveness of such transitions.

Interestingly, the findings also demonstrate that job search duration is not solely determined by the type of job separation but is also influenced by more complex structural dimensions, such as educational background, age, and geographic location. This indicates that job separation experiences should not be understood as isolated factors but rather as interacting with individual demographic characteristics and broader socio-economic contexts.

Furthermore, these results challenge the conventional assumption that involuntary job separation necessarily entails more adverse labor market outcomes. In certain contexts, involuntarily separated workers actually exhibit faster reemployment responses. This raises a critical question: does faster reemployment truly reflect successful labor market reintegration, or does it instead signify a compromise in job quality.

Thus, this study not only highlights differential outcomes between the two categories of job separation but also invites a reconsideration of prevailing assumptions about job search efficiency and rationality. As evidenced by the findings, the job search process is not purely rational; it is shaped by a combination of external pressures, personal preferences, and structural constraints—many of which remain difficult to capture through purely quantitative measures.

CONCLUSION

Job search duration reflects labor market efficiency and the dynamics of unemployment in Indonesia. This study analyzes the impact of job separation experience, both voluntary and involuntary, on job search duration using data from the August 2023 National Labor Force

Survey (Sakernas) and the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method. Control variables include age, gender, marital status, household head status, household size, education, training, and residential location. The results show that individuals who voluntarily left their jobs took 4.9% longer—or approximately one additional month—to find new employment compared to those who left involuntarily. This is attributed to greater selectivity in accepting jobs, particularly regarding flexibility, compensation, and career alignment. Meanwhile, the interaction between training and voluntary separation shows that training reduces job search duration by 10.7%, or about one month and six days. This indicates that training is more effective when targeted toward voluntary leavers, who tend to be more motivated to utilize newly acquired skills.

LIMITATION

This study is subject to several limitations. First, the use of cross-sectional data from Sakernas restricts the ability to establish causality and to observe long-term employment trajectories. Second, the classification of job separation types is based on self-reported data, which may introduce recall bias or misclassification errors. Third, although various control variables were incorporated, unobserved confounding factors such as psychological well-being, individual motivation, and access to informal job networks could still influence job search duration.

These limitations may compromise the internal validity of the estimates, potentially attenuating or exaggerating the true effects of job separation types on employment outcomes. Nevertheless, the consistency of the results across model specifications suggests that the findings are reasonably robust and serve as a valuable foundation for future empirical research and policy development.

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