

RSAEM

RESEARCH SEMINAR IN APPLIED ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

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CAN A WEBSITE BRING UNEMPLOYMENT DOWN? EFFECTS OF A FRENCH ONLINE PLATFORM ON JOB SEARCH EFFICIENCY

This paper evaluates the impact of an online platform helping job seekers adopt effective job search strategies, using a large-scale randomized experiment. The platform combines labor market data from the French public employment agency and personal data from individual profiles to recommend users occupations and areas with high employment chances and to give them concrete tips to improve their job search methods. The experiment was conducted in collaboration with the French public employment agency on a sample of 212 277 job seekers from April to November 2017. An encouragement design led to a take-up rate of 26.2 % in the treatment group and virtually zero in the control group. Following individual trajectories over 18 months after the intervention, we do not observe any impact on job seekers' search effort and search scope, whether occupational or geographical. We find modest effects on search methods: job seekers using the website are more likely to rely on personal networks and to use resources provided by public employment services. However, we do not find any effect on self-reported well-being and on employment outcomes, both in the short run or in the middle run, indicating that more intensive interventions are required to bring unemployment down.