



# The relational nature of undergraduates' career management

**Dr Myrtle Emmanuel**  
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## Presentation objectives:

- Study background
- Research objectives
- Proposed model
- Research design
- Study results
- Research contributions
- Study limitations

# Study background(1):



- Relational approach to career management
- Careers and career management are ‘relationally and contextually embedded’ (see Popadiuk & Arthur, 2013:4)
- Multidisciplinary approach in career management studies (Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Inkson & King, 2011; Khapova & Arthur, 2011).
- Focus on **multiple concurrent relationships** (eg Chandler & Kram, 2010; Higgins, 2000, Malloy, 2005).
- **Antecedents and outcomes** of development networks.

# Study background (2):



- Socio-demography - a major limitation in traditional career theories - 'Missing persons' - need for more diverse samples (eg Blustein, 2001; Dries et al, 2008, Casper & Swanberg, 2011).
- Foundations of networks & Career success are laid early in the UG transition process.
- Importance of career management in HE (Bridgstock, 2009; HEFCE, 2010; Jamerson et al, 2012).
- **Conceptualisation of career management & career success for UGs is essential.**



# Study background (3):



‘Developmental network literature includes many areas in need of clarification and further exploration’ (Dobrow, Chandler, Murphy & Kram, 2011).

Little attention given to the importance DN on career outcomes

Focus on existing network structures in work environments

Very little DN research addressing concerns or behaviours of undergraduates



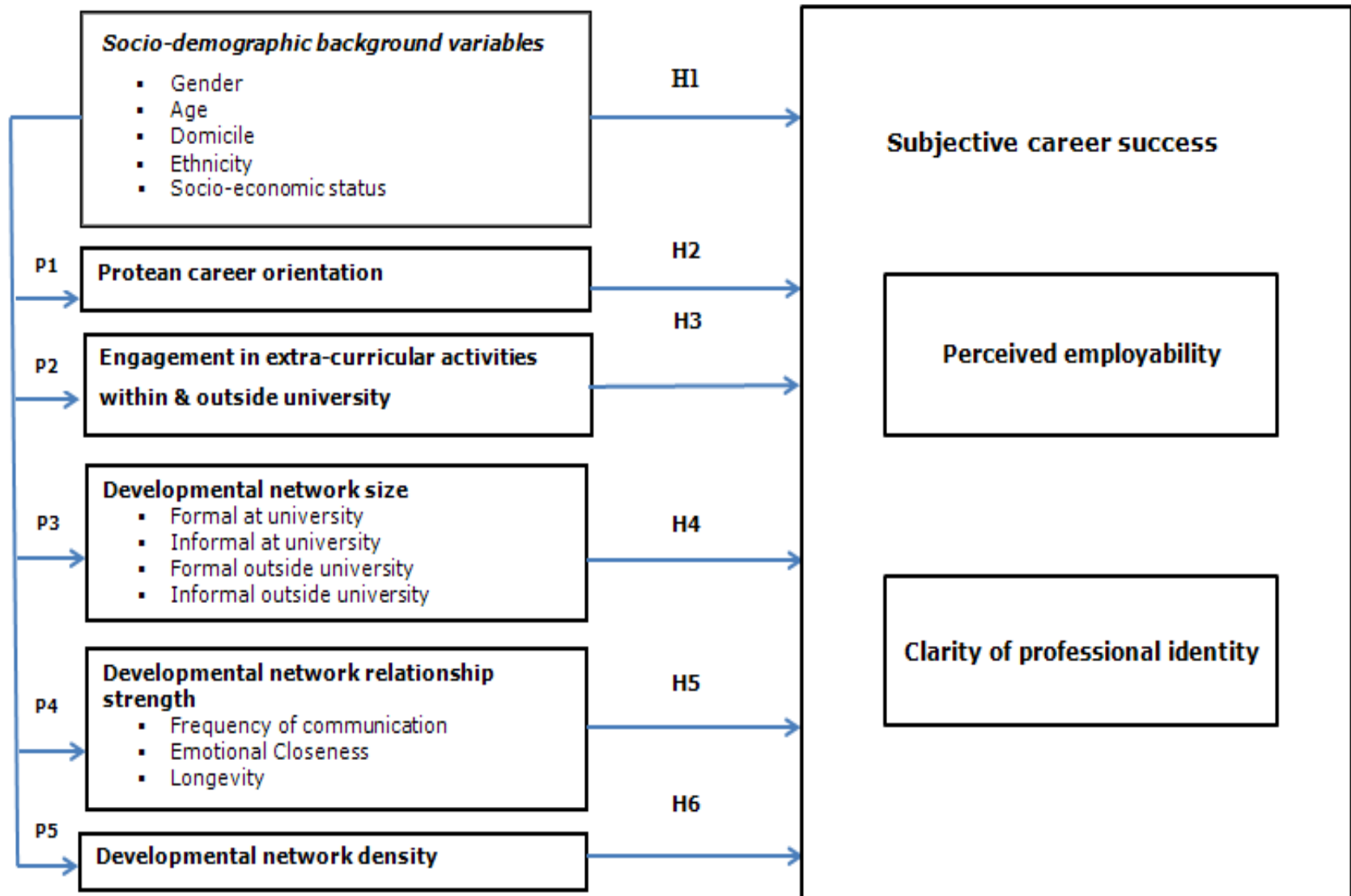
# Research aim & objectives:

**Aim:** To test a model on the relational nature of undergraduates' career management.

## **Objectives:**

- 1) To conceptualise career success in a way that is meaningful for undergraduates.
- 2) To conceptualise how undergraduates can engage in a relational approach to managing their career before entry into the labour market.
- 3) To develop a model of the antecedents of undergraduates' early career success and carry out a preliminary examination of these relationships.

Figure 3.1: Conceptual model on the relational nature of undergraduates' career management (T1)





# Some study hypotheses for T1:

**H1** Undergraduates' **socio-demographic background** including H1 (a) gender, H1 (b) age, H1 (c) domicile, H1 (d) ethnicity, H1 (e) socio-economic status will have a significant effect on their **subjective career success** in relation to perceived employability and clarity of professional identity

**H2** Undergraduates' **protean career orientation** will be positively associated with their **subjective career success** in terms of perceived employability (H2a) and clarity of professional identity (H2b).

**H3** Undergraduates' **engagement in extracurricular activities** within and outside the university will be positively associated with their **subjective career success in terms** of perceived employability (H3a) and clarity of professional identity (H3b).

**H4** Undergraduates **DN size** (in relation to the number of formal and informal developers within and outside the university) will be positively associated with their **subjective career success** in terms of perceived employability (H4a) and clarity of professional identity (H4b).



# Some study hypotheses for T2:



**H8** Undergraduates' **protean career orientation at T1** will be positively associated with their **subjective career success at T2** in terms of perceived employability (H8a) and clarity of professional identity (H8b).

**H9** Undergraduates' **engagement in extracurricular activities at T1** within and outside the university will be positively associated with their **subjective career success at T2** in terms of perceived employability (H9a) and clarity of professional identity (H9b).

**H10** Undergraduates' **DN size at T1** (in relation to the number of formal and informal developers) within and outside the university) will be positively associated with their **subjective career success at T2** in terms of perceived employability (H10a) and clarity of professional identity (H10b).

**H11** Undergraduates' **DN density at T1** will be negatively associated with their **subjective career success at T2** in terms of perceived employability (H11a) and clarity of professional identity (H11b).

# Research design



Large scale **online survey** sent to all **2<sup>nd</sup> year undergraduates** at Londonmet and Reading Universities.

## Questionnaire

- Name generator (eg Burt, 1984; 1997; Higgins 2004; Higgins & Thomas, 2007)
- Approx. 10-15 mins to complete.

## Time one

- Invited via email with a unique identifier
- Incentives - prize draws

## Time two (one year later)

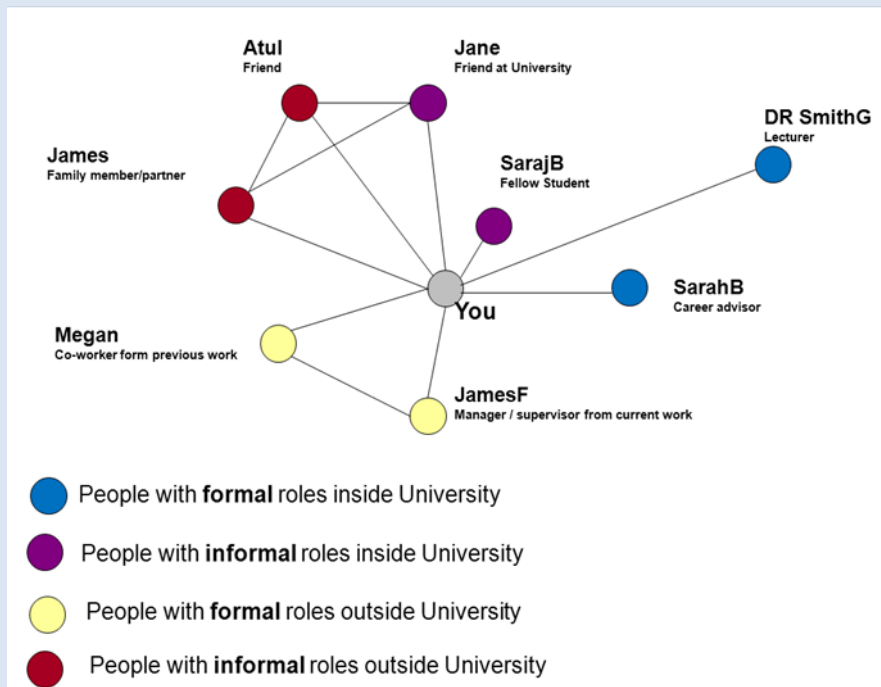
- Online questionnaire sent to all undergraduates who took part in T1 (now in and their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of their studies).
- 10 minutes to complete
- Prize draw
- Personal analysis with some preliminary results.

# An example of the diagram and graph for the student's personal analysis

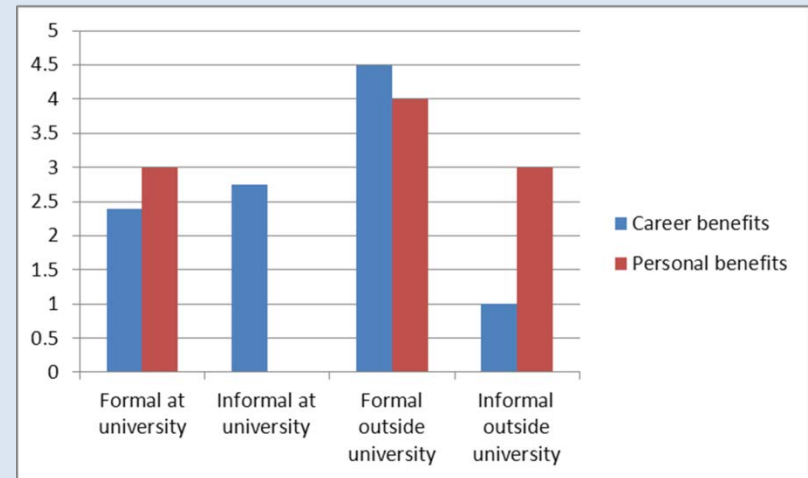


## Your development network structure

## The career and personal benefits you receive from your developers



**5 point Likert scale:**  
 1 = 'Never'  
 2 = 'To a limited extent',  
 3 = 'To some extent,'  
 4 = 'To a great extent'  
 5 = 'To a maximum extent possible'



A photograph of a tall stack of books in a library. The top book is open, and the pages are slightly yellowed. The background shows rows of bookshelves filled with books, slightly out of focus.

# Study results

# Students by population and sample



University	Population	T1 Sample	T2 Sample
Londonmet	4429 (59%)	311 (39%)	58 (26%)
Reading	3031 (41%)	482 (61%)	164 (74%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>7460</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>222</b>

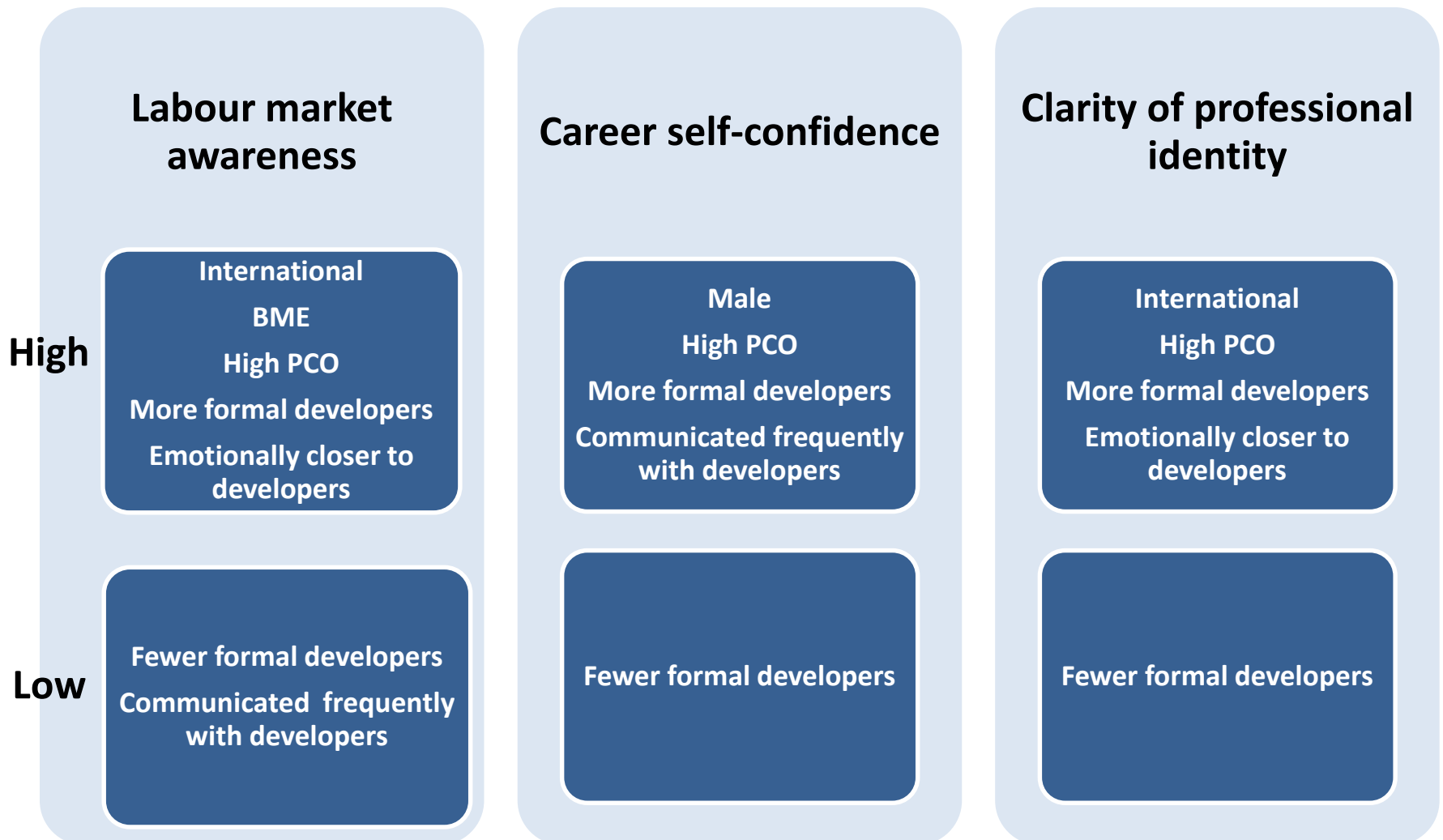
# Principal component analysis results for perceived employability at T1 & T2



	T1 Labour Market Awareness	T1 Career Self- Confidence	T2 Labour Market Awareness	T2 Career Self- Confidence
1. My degree choice rank (s) highly in terms of social status	<b>.65</b>	.04	.52	.14
2. People in the career I am aiming for are in high demand in the external labour market	<b>.72</b>	.08	<b>.61</b>	.34
3. My degree is seen as leading to a specific career that is generally perceived as highly desirable	<b>.75</b>	.16	<b>.76</b>	<b>.66</b>
4. There is generally a strong demand for graduates at the present time	<b>.69</b>	.12	<b>.66</b>	.18
5. I can easily find out about opportunities in my chosen field	.53	.27	.36	.49
6. The skills and abilities that I possess are what employers are looking for	.18	<b>.81</b>	.12	<b>.81</b>
7. I am generally confident of success in job interviews and selection events	.11	<b>.84</b>	.12	<b>.86</b>
8. I feel I could easily get a job that is in line with my education and experience	.19	<b>.83</b>	.24	<b>.81</b>
9. Employers specifically target this University in order to recruit individuals from my subject area (s)	.69	.22	.68	.13

Note: Varimax rotation was used in the principal component analysis and loadings greater than .60 are reported. The two rotated factors accounted for 56% of the total variance in T1 and 53% of the total variance in T2. Factor means are in bold and statements were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = 'Not at all, 5 = 'Maximum extent'). Time 1 (N= 793), Time 2 (N = 212).

# Characteristics of UGs in relation to the study's dependent variables



# Characteristics of UGs with higher numbers of formal and informal developers



## FORMAL-INTERNAL

*(ie university lecturers, personal tutors, career advisors)*

- Female students
- Young students

## INFORMAL-INTERNAL

*(ie peers on the course, university friends, student union, clubs and society peers)*

- International students

## FORMAL-EXTERNAL

*(ie managers/supervisors & co-workers from current and/or previous workplace)*

- Mature students

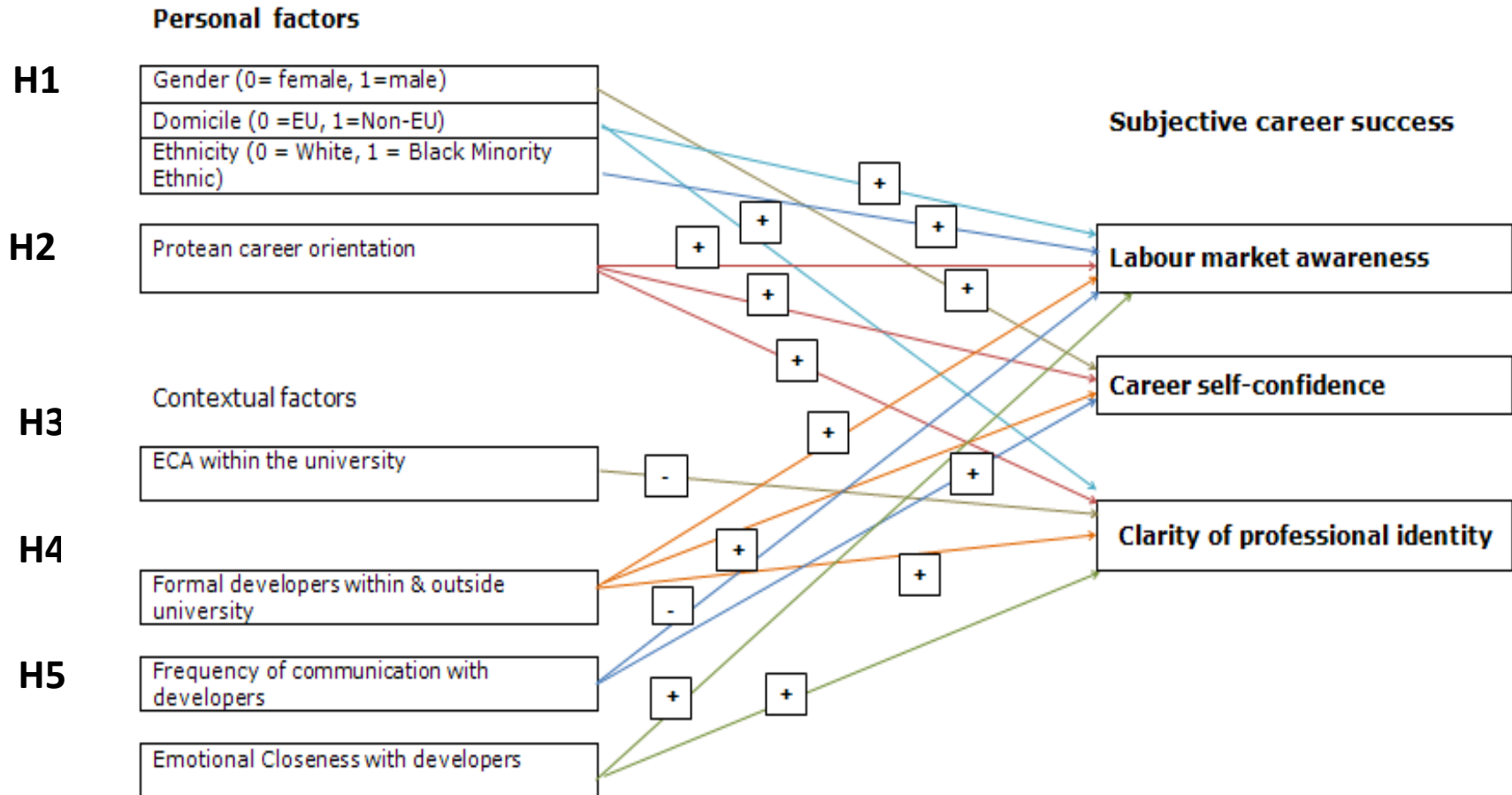
## INFORMAL-EXTERNAL

*(ie family members/partners, community members)*

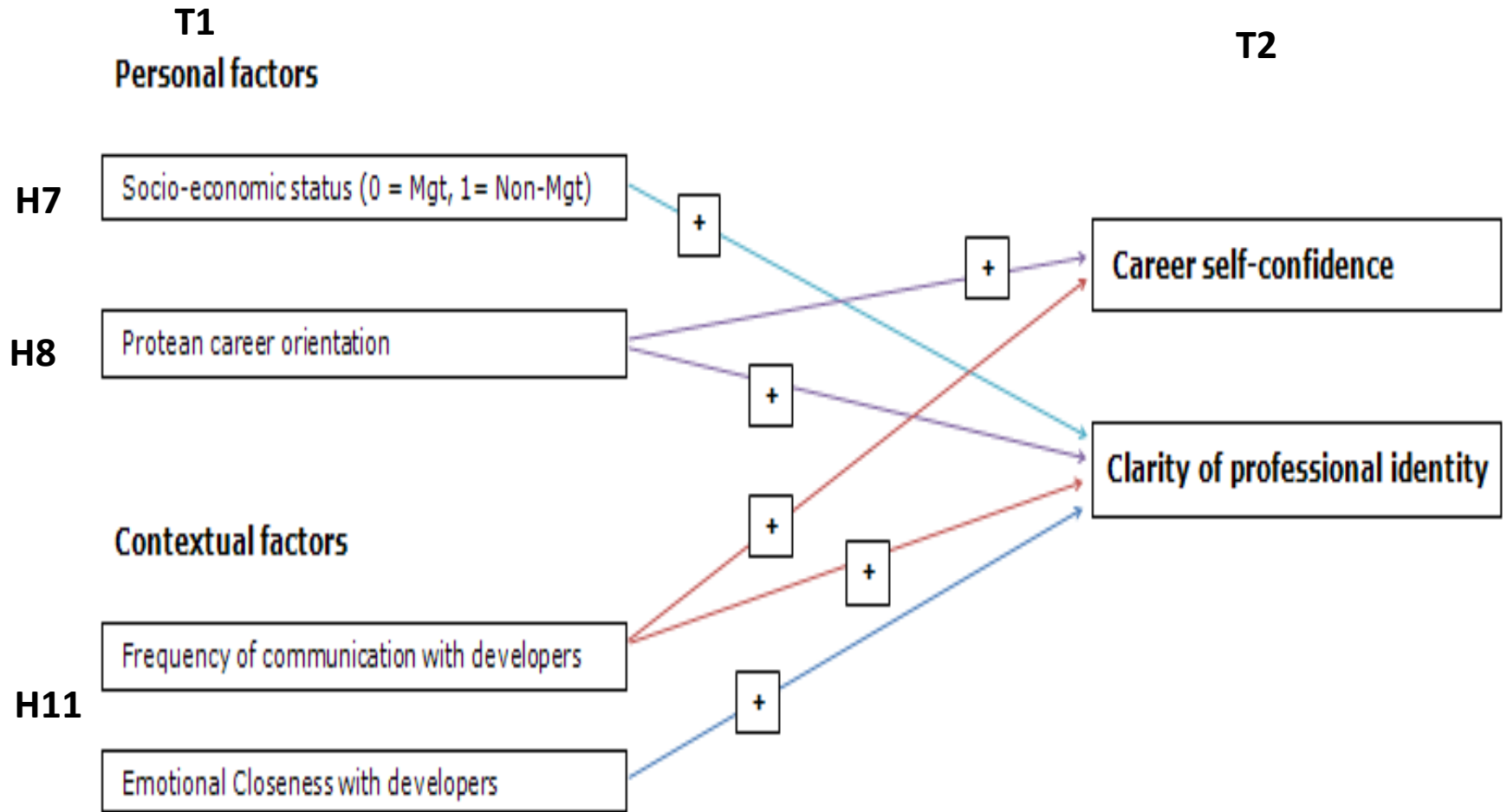
- Young students
- International students
- Higher SES students



# Summary of significant cross-sectional results



# Summary of significant longitudinal results



# Summary of longitudinal (post-hoc) results



## Personal Factors in T1

Gender (0 = female, 1 = male)

## Contextual Factors in T1

No of formal-internal developers

No of formal-external developers

Career support received from DN

Psychosocial support received from DN

Labour market awareness

Career self-confidence

Clarity of professional identity

Change in the number of formal-external developers

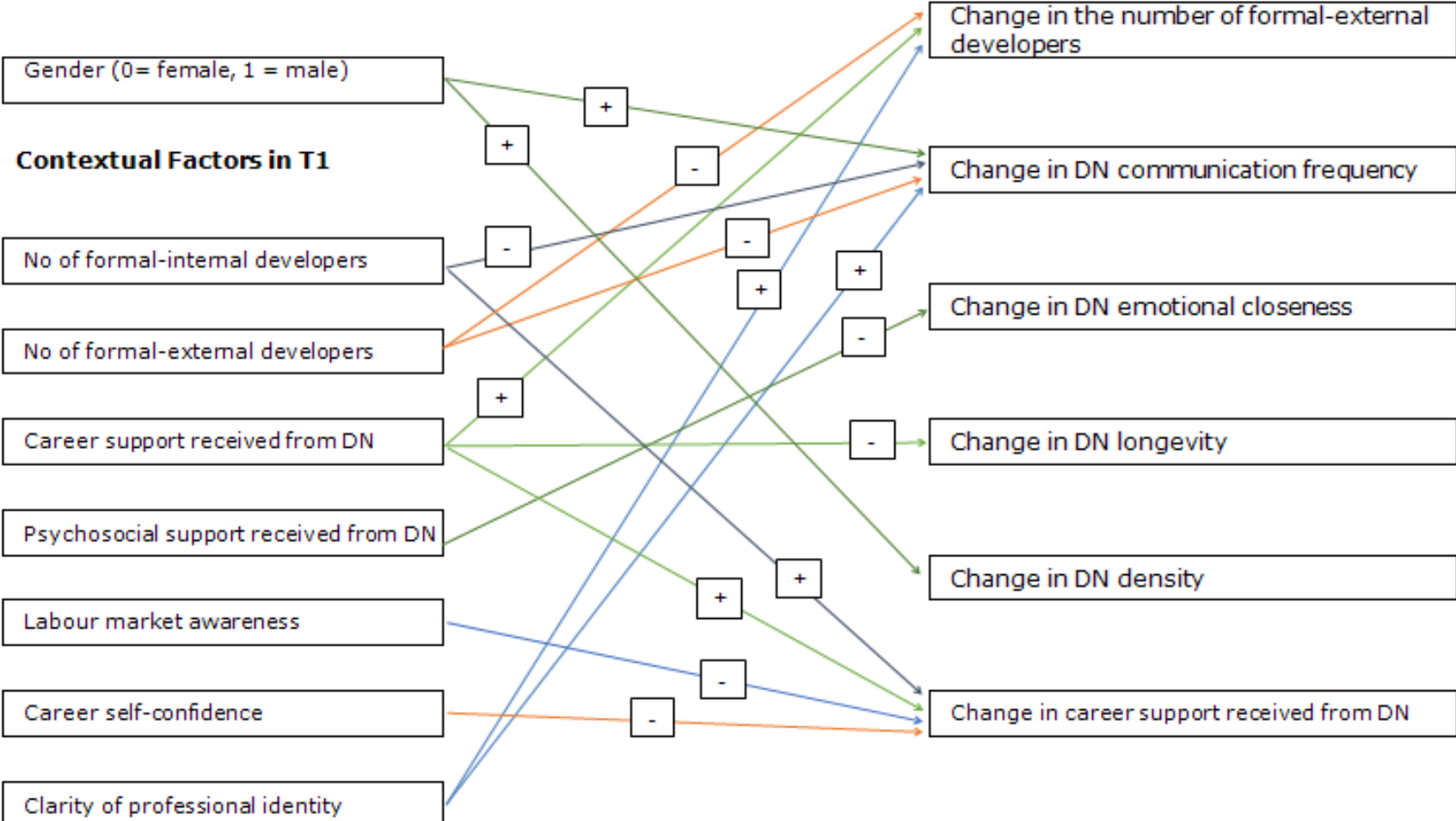
Change in DN communication frequency

Change in DN emotional closeness

Change in DN longevity

Change in DN density

Change in career support received from DN

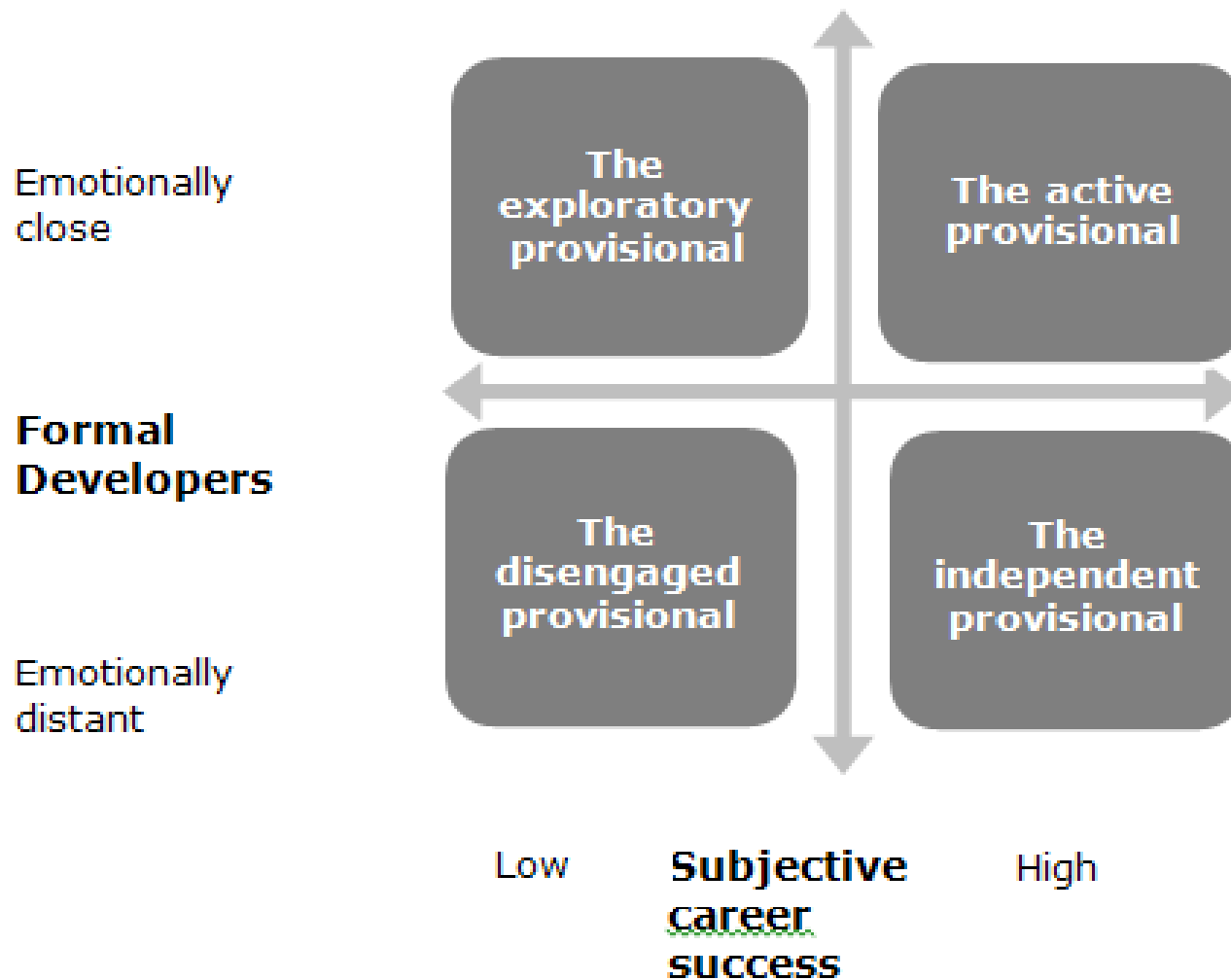


# Theoretical contributions



- 1) Insights into personal and contextual indicators of subjective career success for early-career individuals.
- 2) Examine role DN characteristics play in building repertoire of UGs' possible selves
- 3) Examined the disposition of early-career individuals that bring UGs' developmental relationships into being.
- 4) Extends the work of Ibarra's model of possible selves by providing a better understanding of UGs' personal and professional transformation process .
  - **Eg how UGs may fit between their provisional selves and the labour market during the process of transition from university to work.**

# Conceptual model showing how UGs' develop their 'provisional selves'

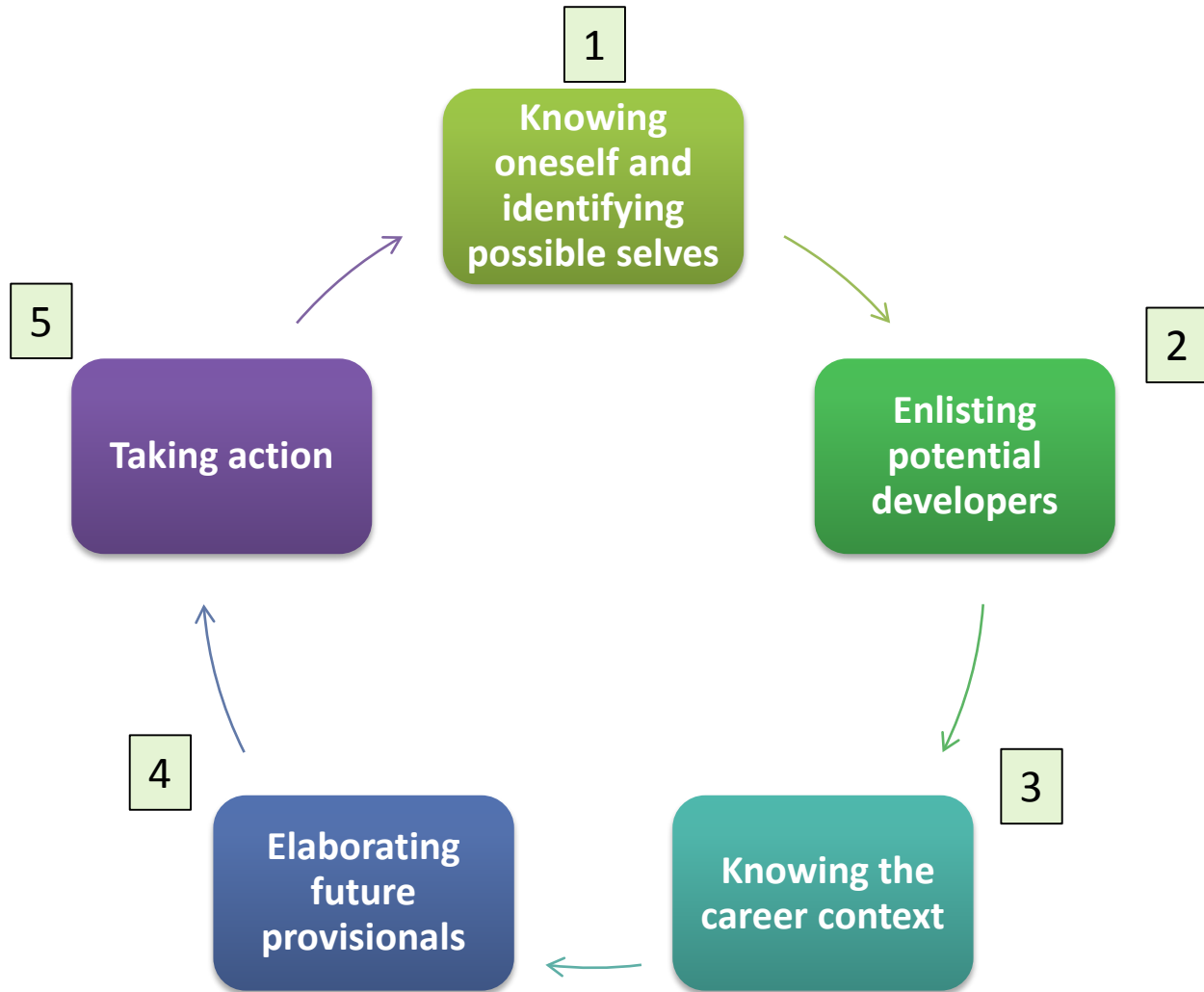


# Substantive implications for policy-makers



- **Engaging with the disengage** – employability is ideologically framed and focus on producing ‘employable’ graduates – may neglect socially disadvantaged (Moreau & Leathwood, 2006; Purcell, Elias, Davies, 2005; Wilton 2011).
- Employability initiatives likely to be centred around the ‘**active**’ or ‘**exploring**’ provisionals who often engage with formal developers to achieve their career aspirations.
- **Disengaged provisionals** may have:
  - high levels of anxiety and worry about applying for internship
  - avoid writing application form
  - avoid getting support from formal developers.
- Have a more **targeted approach for students who are disengaged in university life** and towards enhancing their employability.

# Five step developmental process:



**Table 8.4: Independent sample t-test for the five socio-demographic groups and labour market awareness for the entire undergraduate sample**



	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	289	.081	1.021	1.85	752	.07
Female	465	-.057	.980			
<b>Age</b>						
Young	173	-.036	.955	-.493	752	.62
Mature	581	.006	1.011			
<b>Domicile</b>						
Europe	582	-.098	.977	-4.25	701	<b>.00</b>
Non-Europe	121	.322	1.041			
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
White	537	-.101	.976	-4.28	747	<b>.00</b>
Black Minority Ethnic	212	.241	1.005			
<b>SES</b>						
Managerial	294	-.053	.993	-.807	723	.42
Non-managerial	431	.007	.978			





**Table 10.14: The multiple regression analysis results for the variables predicting a change in undergraduates' formal-external developers over time**

	<b>Regression Coefficient</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>t-statistic</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>VIF</b>
CPI (T1) (scale 0-7)	.218	.078	2.736	.009	1.028
DN size: formal-external (T1)	-1.132	.118	-9.617	.000	1.065
Career support received from developers (T1)	.179	.065	2.736	.010	1.066

Note: Dependent variable is 'Change in the number of formal-external developers'.  $R^2 = .746$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .722$ . Clarity of professional identity scale ranged from 0 -7. DN career support scale ranged from 0-5.

Regression results found 75% of the variation in the dependent variable was accounted for by a linear relationship with these three explanatory (or predictor) variables.

**Possible explanation:**

Students who started out with more formal external developers in T1 but were not receiving much in the way of career support and/or had a lower sense of CPI, tended to release some of these developers over the period.

Summary of PCA results for the dependant variable items Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization		Rotated Factor Loadings		
Item	* Reverse scores	Professional identity	Labour market awareness	Career self-confidence
I do not yet know what my career and professional identity is (PROF 4) -	<b>RS*</b>	<b>.87</b>	-.08	-.12
I am still searching for my career and professional identity (PROF 2) –	<b>RS*</b>	<b>.85</b>	-.04	-.08
I have developed a clear career and professional identity (PROF 1)		<b>.79</b>	.25	.28
I know who I am professionally and in my career (PROF 3)		<b>.72</b>	.28	.31
People in the career I am aiming for are in high demand in the external labour market (EMP 2)		.15	<b>.75</b>	.05
My degree is seen as leading to a specific career that is generally perceived as highly desirable (EMP3)		.23	<b>.73</b>	.08
My degree choice rank(s) highly in terms of social status (EMP1)		.11	<b>.66</b>	-.01
There is generally a strong demand for graduates at the present time (EMP 4)		.04	<b>.64</b>	.23
Employers specifically target this University in order to recruit individuals from my subject area(s) (EMP 9)		-.00	<b>.56</b>	.32
I am generally confident of success in job interviews and selection events (EMP 7)		.17	-.00	<b>.80</b>
I feel I could easily get a job that is in line with my education and experience (EMP 8)		.23	.16	<b>.78</b>
The skills and abilities that I possess are what employers are looking for (EMP 6)		.14	.13	<b>.76</b>
I can easily find out about opportunities in my chosen field (EMP 5)		.13	.34	<b>.46</b>
<b>Eigenvalues</b>		<b>4.65</b>	<b>1.70</b>	<b>1.43</b>
<b>% of variance</b>		<b>35.80</b>	<b>13.13</b>	<b>10.96</b>