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The Role and Effectiveness of Coaching in Increasing Career Self-Efficacy, Outcome Expectancies and Employability Efforts of Higher Education Students

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Presentation Outline

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Study Background

- Economic and political pressure on Higher Education Institutions to increase students' employability efforts (HEA, 2012) leading to marketisation, privatisation and Taylorism of HE (Freedman, 2011).

- Withdrawing of public subsides from universities and marketisation of HE resulting in education being treated as a business product in 'knowledge economy' and promoting students being seen as customers (Molesworth *et al.*, 2009).

- The notion of student as a customer being slowly internalised by academia and creating a difficult contradiction of maintaining academic standards whilst keeping customers satisfied (Mills, 2007).

Study Background

- Implications for post-1992 universities:
  - Being transformed into providers of narrow, vocational training and forced to act as corporate entities and "training wings of international corporations" (Walton, 2011:20);
  - Universities' position in the league table determines students' professional choices (Nixon, 2011; Allen & Ainley, 2007; Sutton Trust; 2005);
  - Students treated as compliant audience with universities' employability agenda focused on predicting and planning for skill gaps and getting the corporate job for students (Harvey, 2000) :
    - "the only conceivable purpose of going to university is to get the right sort of corporate job (...) the denial of any notion that education was about personal development in a wider sense, the pursuit of understanding, humanity and enlightenment for their own sake (...)" (Walton, 2011:20).

Study Background

- Factors Hindering Employability Efforts of post-1992 university students recruited under a widening participation agenda:

  - Lack of social capital (Hill, 2011, Smith, 2003);
  - Lack of interpersonal, communication, team-working and time management skills (Hill, 2011; Harvey, *et al.*. 1997);
  - Social background (Hills, 2011; Blasko *et al.* 2002);
  - Inability to demonstrate skills to potential employers (Hill, 2011);
  - Importance of role models (Catts, 2009; Craigh, 2003);
  - Universities' position in the league tables – post-1992 university students offered vocational training and struggling to find graduate employment in well-paid older professions (mostly offered to Russell Group students) (Nixon, 2011; Allen & Ainley, 2007; Sutton Trust; 2005).

Aims & Objectives

- To investigate whether career coaching is effective in increasing students', career self-efficacy, outcome expectancies and employability efforts.

- To explore what aspects of career coaching relationship are most important in changing students' career self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectancies and, subsequently, their employability efforts.

- To explore students' self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectancies.

- To examine whether ethnicity, gender, cultural and gender role models, socioeconomic background are important factors contributing to students' employability efforts.

Research Framework
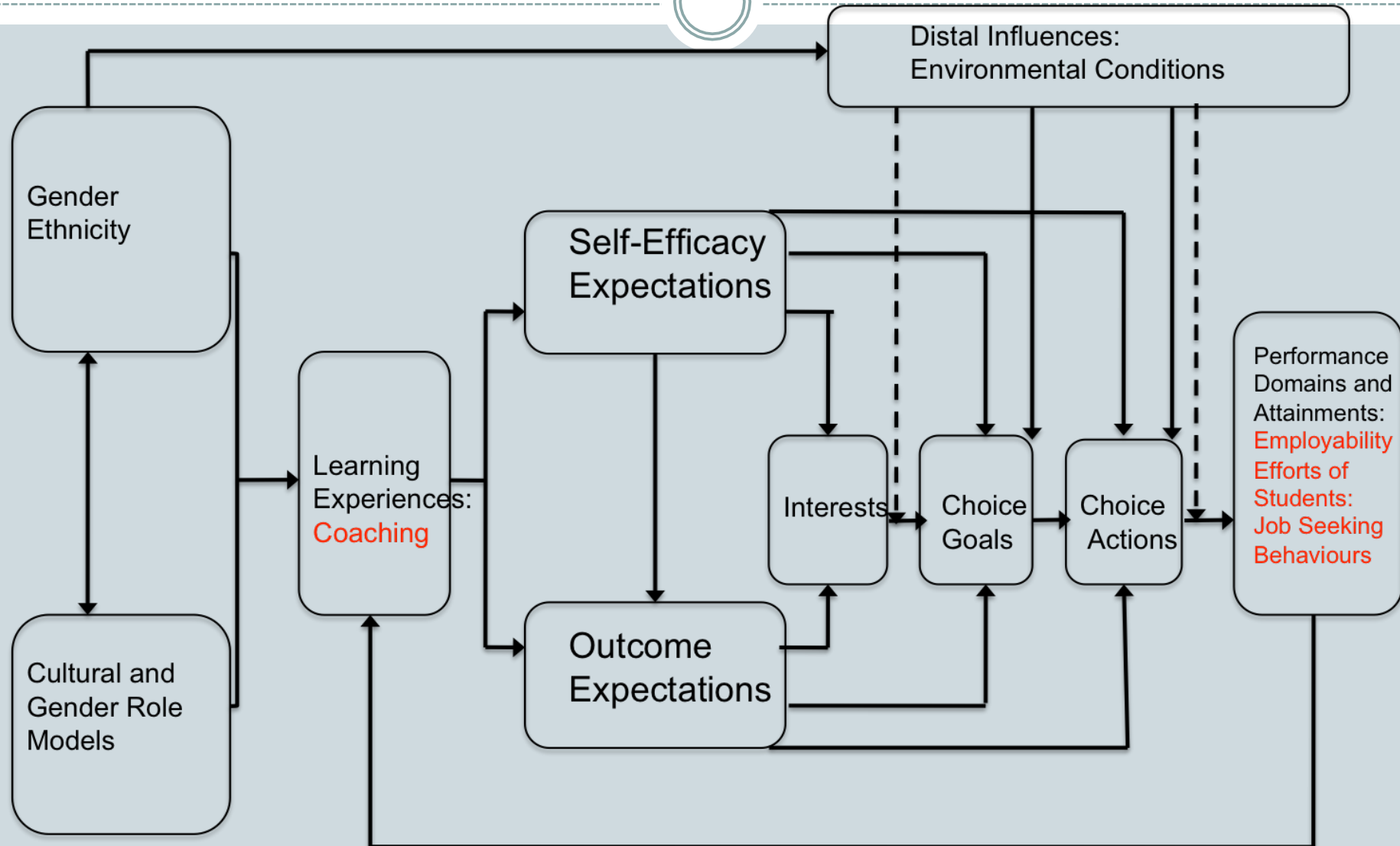
Adapted from Social Cognitive Career Theory (Brown and Lent, 2013)

Research Site

- University of Greenwich is a post-1992 university located in South East London, UK.

- The university has three campuses. Maritime Greenwich and Avery Hill.

- In 2014-2015 it had 21,274 enrolled students (19,671 university based) and 16,689 students enrolled in overseas partner institutions.

Research Site

- 76 per cent are undergraduate students and 24 per cent are postgraduate students.

- Female students are majority (56 per cent).

- Most students are 21 years old or younger (34 per cent).

- Students are ethnically mixed: White (50 per cent), Asian (20 per cent), followed by Black (13 per cent).

- Most students study full time (15,411 enrolled students) and most students study Subjects Allied to Medicine (5,238) followed by Business and Administrative Studies (4,407) and then Education (1,861) (UoG, 2016).

Sample Description

Characteristic	Sample Frequency	Valid Percentage of Total	Population Frequency	Valid Percentage of Total
Age				
under 21	639	67%	7,174	34%
21-24	200	21%	5,985	28%
25-29	34	3.6%	2,960	14%
>29	74	8%	5,155	24%
Gender				
Male	450	47.5%	9,292	44%
Female	498	52.5%	11,982	56%
Ethnicity				
White	363	38%	10,567	50%
Asian	248	26%	4,455	20%
Black	138	14.5%	3,761	17%
Chinese	146	15%	769	4%
Mixed	37	4%	898	4%
Other Ethnic Group	7	.7	572	3%

A Study Sample Comparison versus A University of Greenwich Population Profile (HESA, 2014)

The participants consist of Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 undergraduate Business Faculty students attending University of Greenwich in London.
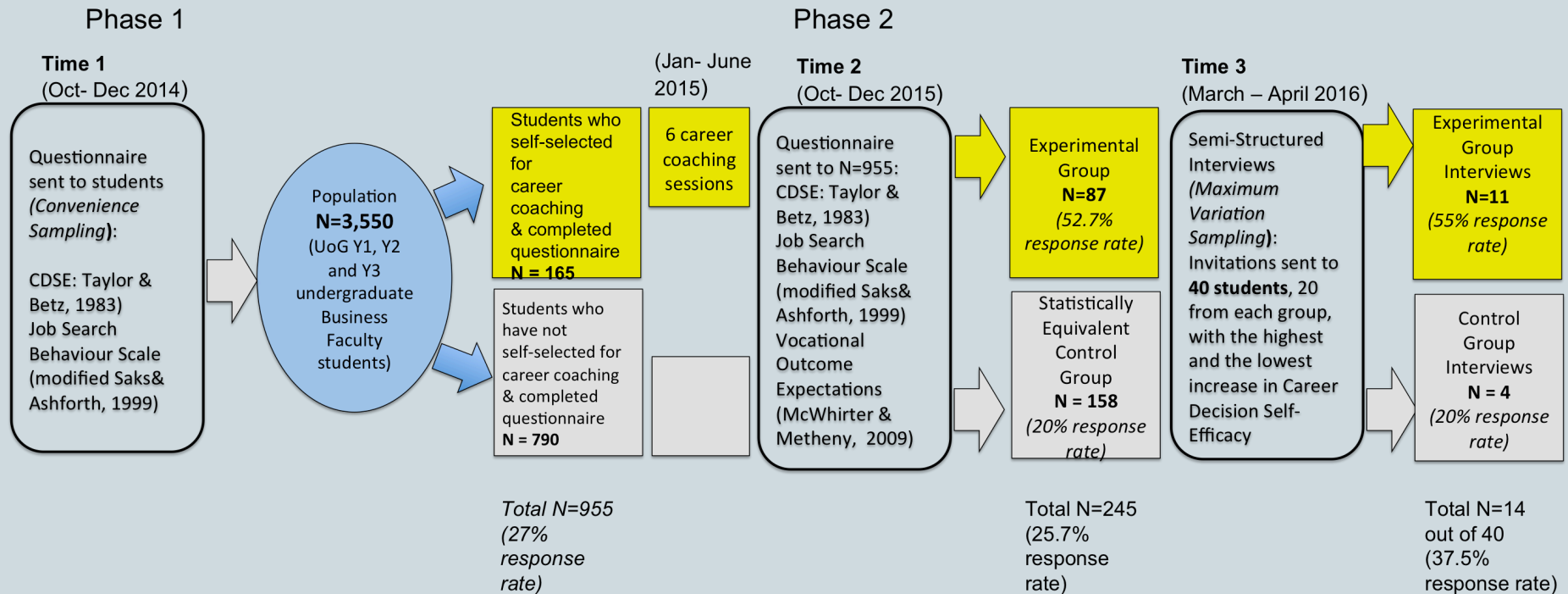
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- A case study of a post-92 university.

- Quasi-experimental and longitudinal.

- Convergent intervention mixed methods design that involves the separate collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.

- The intent was to merge the result of the quantitative and qualitative data analyses and to examine to what extend the quantitative results are confirmed by the qualitative results (Creswell, 2015).
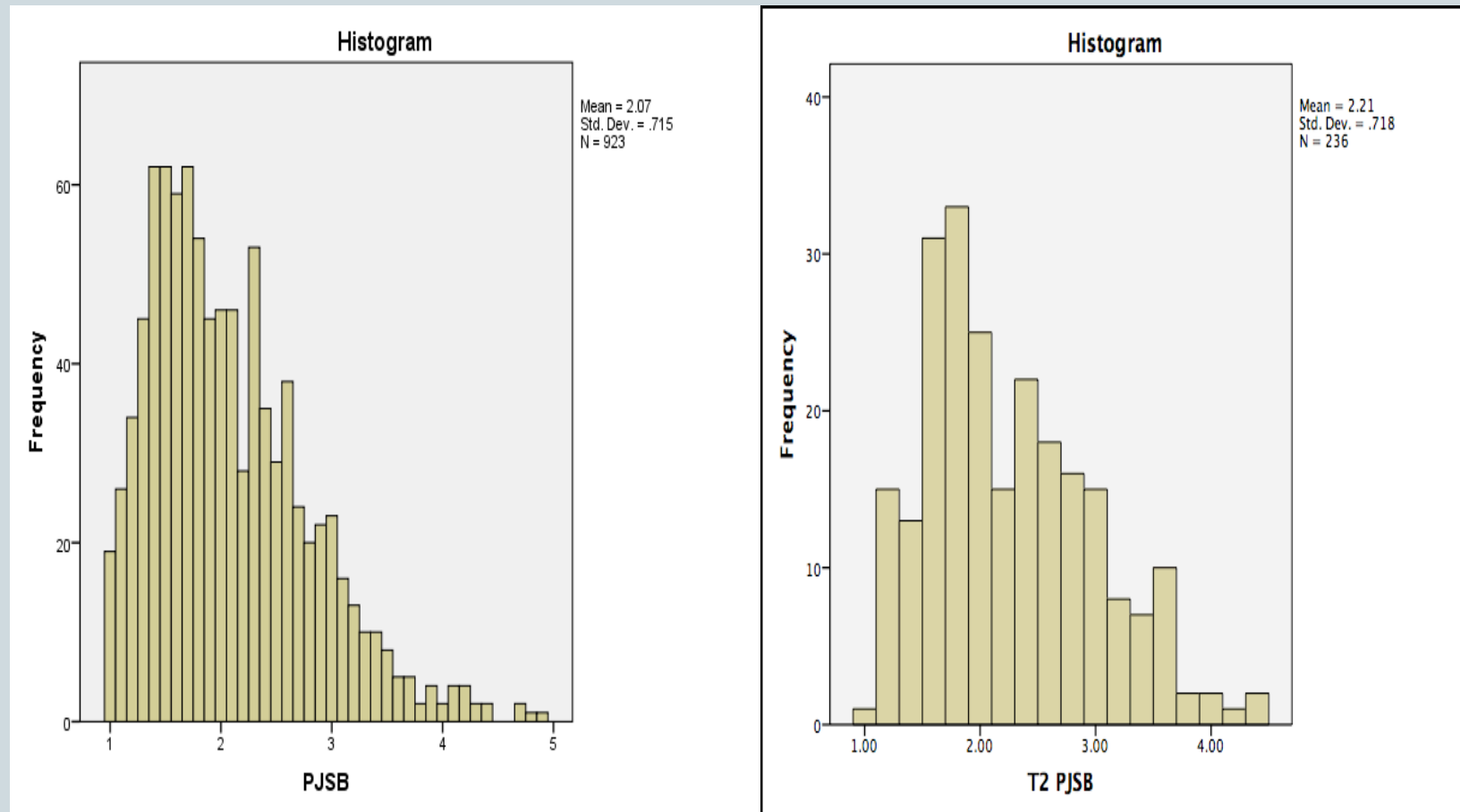
Research Design

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Phase 1

Phase 2

Time 1
(Oct- Dec 2014)

Questionnaire sent to students *(Convenience Sampling)*:

CDSE: Taylor & Betz, 1983)
Job Search Behaviour Scale (modified Saks& Ashforth, 1999)

Population
N=3,550
(UoG Y1, Y2 and Y3 undergraduate Business Faculty students)

Students who self-selected for career coaching & completed questionnaire
N = 165

Students who have not self-selected for career coaching & completed questionnaire
N = 790

Total N=955 (27% response rate)

(Jan- June 2015)

6 career coaching sessions

Time 2
(Oct- Dec 2015)

Questionnaire sent to N=955:
CDSE: Taylor & Betz, 1983)
Job Search Behaviour Scale (modified Saks& Ashforth, 1999)
Vocational Outcome Expectations (McWhirter & Metheny, 2009)

Experimental Group
N=87
(52.7% response rate)

Statistically Equivalent Control Group
N = 158
(20% response rate)

Total N=245 (25.7% response rate)

Time 3
(March – April 2016)

Semi-Structured Interviews *(Maximum Variation Sampling)*: Invitations sent to **40 students**, 20 from each group, with the highest and the lowest increase in Career Decision Self-Efficacy

Experimental Group Interviews
N=11
(55% response rate)

Control Group Interviews
N = 4
(20% response rate)

Total N=14 out of 40 (37.5% response rate)

Research Findings

Figure 1. Time 1 and Time 2 Preparatory Job Seeking Behaviours

Research Findings

CDSE Sub-Scales	Mean at T1	Mean at T2
Accurate self-appraisal	3.63	3.66
Gathering occupational information	3.57	3.68
Goal selection	3.54	3.58
Planning	3.44	3.51
Problem solving	3.36	3.43
Total CDSE	3.51	3.58

Table 1. Career Self-Efficacy Means at Time 1 and Time 2

Score Interpretation:
1.0 -2.5: Low to Little confidence: intervention needed
2.5 -3.5: Moderate Confidence: may need some help
3.5 -5.0: Good confidence. comfortable with this skill set

Time 1 CDSE Total Scores for Different Ethnicities
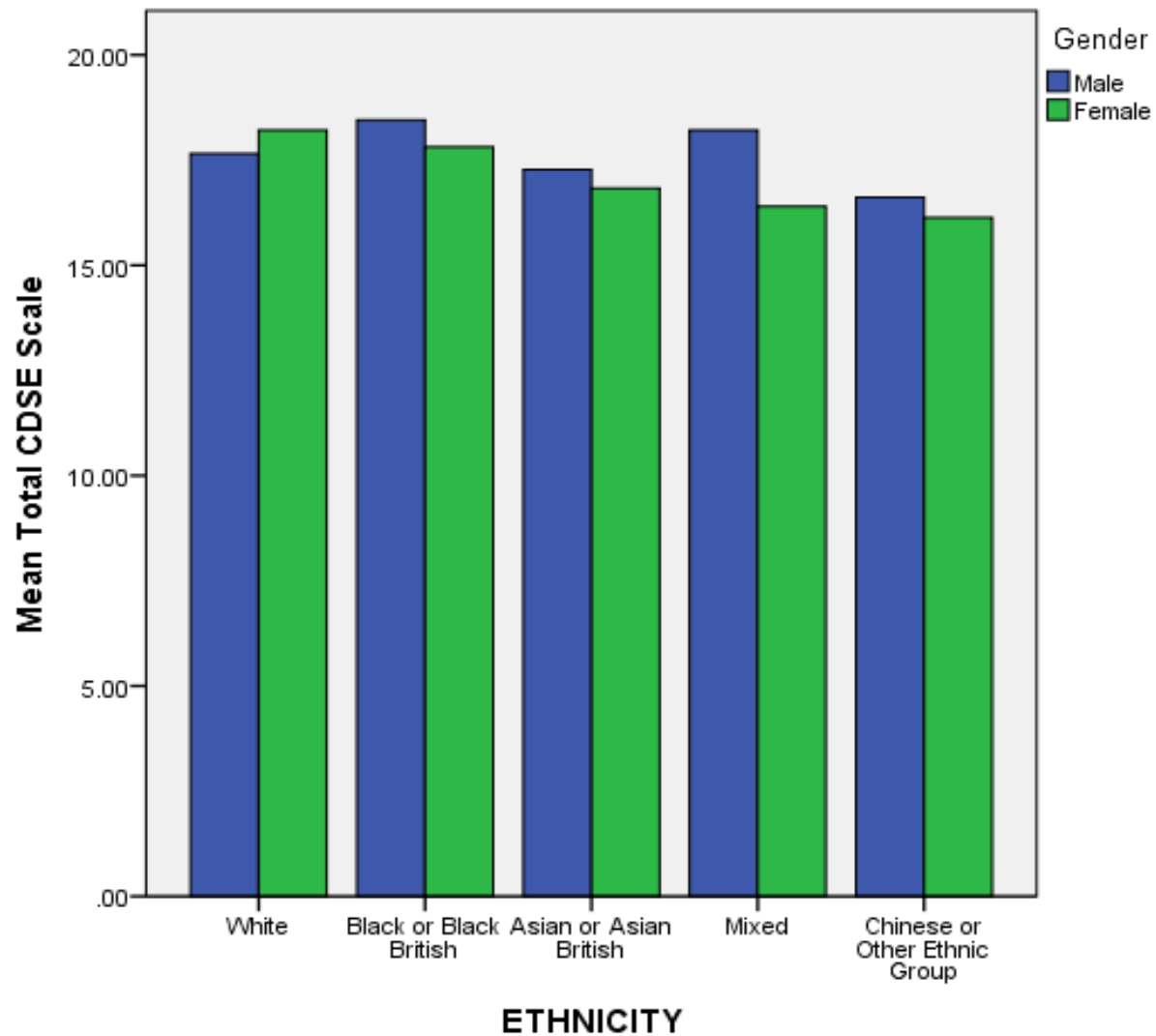
Research Findings

- Gender does not impact students' self-efficacy but **the interaction effect between gender and ethnicity is statistically significant**.

- Different ethnic groups have different levels of career decision self-efficacy levels. The highest scores are reported for **Black or Black British Male** (M=3.71, SD = 0.58) followed by White Female (M=3.64, SD=.57) and the lowest score for **Mixed Race Female** (M=3.28, SD = .57).

- Effectiveness of coaching intervention in increasing students' career self-efficacy and job seeking behaviours has not been confirmed by data.

Research Findings

	CDSE (n=955)	VOE (n=245)
PJSB	r=.326	r = .294
AJSB	r=.265	r =.232
JSI	r-=.213	r = .321
CDSE	r= 1.00	r =.497

Table 1. Correlations between CDSE, VOE and Employability Efforts of Students

Qualitative Sample Description

	Student Invited for Interviews (n=38)	Students Interviewed (N=15)
White	13	7
Asian	11	5
Black	10	1
Chinese	1	-
Other	3	2
Male	19	8
Female	21	7

Qualitative Research – Preliminary Data

- *Do you believe you have as many career options as others?*
  - I think if you focus on it then you can get it (...)
  - I think that everyone has open doors to get any job that they like only with an effort.
  - I can do anything so I can go into maths, I can go into teaching, I can go into accounting, I can go into investment banking and the country living is so free, that I can do whatever I want ... Yes, there's no barriers for me and there's no restrictions.
  - I think yes there is a wide variety of jobs I could get, but on the other hand (...) yes, I've- I've taken a first step but there would have to be like, further training to get into that job, yes, I believe.

- Effectiveness of career coaching
  - I maybe think differently about how I will do it and what is actually achievable realistically
  - with my self-confidence first of all
  - it helped me because I knew that I could- I had the potential to apply for an application because before I didn't think I had- because there's so many universities out there, so many students out there I thought I wouldn't have even a chance to get in with universities that were like, Oxford, Cambridge, LSE, I thought there was no- not even a chance for me to be able to get into the interview process because there's so many out there (...)
  - Um, confidence, a lot of confidence and when you have- when you have someone who's working in a big company that motivation to want to be like them does help as well because then you want- you want to be that person that lives in London, in the City and has a really great job and work in a big company like they do so it is really motivating and I think that gives you confidence to do better and I've seen it affect my uni work like I'm more focussed this year, I'm more prepared this year; I'm finding it hard but I'm dealing with it better.

- *But*:
  - if you want a job you can get it but I believe (...) people aim too low
  - I think it's just the way that people see those universities so when someone says I study at the London School of Economics everyone's so interested in that person, they just think it's you know, amazing but when for instance I was to say I study at Greenwich they're like, oh the area's nice isn't it like, it's they're not so interested (...)
  - when I went to the assessment centre most of the people there didn't actually go through the same application process because they had career fairs so they had an interview on the spot on the day in the university campus so yes, so um, so none of them actually went through the online test, they just got fast tracked (...), mainly the Russell Group universities.
  - one of my friends, he is black and he lives in Abbey Wood so when they saw .. they told that oh you live in Abbey Wood, oh so that area is not very nice known or something like that so they were like, OK, even if you have a strong CV they don't trust you- I don't know why there's a problem but I saw a case like that (...) they say that maybe because they do like say they can steal or they don't trust the- they don't trust them like, I don't know.
  - I feel like at Russell Groups people if they do work experience it's work experience that's useful they haven't got a part-time job in a shop they are doing, they are doing an internship in a big bank that's what they're doing to earn their money they don't need to work in the summer sorry they don't need to work in term time so I think it's just a very different kind of calibre of person difficult to pinpoint really (...)
  - people automatically think that because you're at a better university you've got better I'd say, academically you're better and then possibly experience-wise you're better so they- (...) most of the time they do have a higher chance of getting the job as soon as- as soon as the interviews see that you're from Cambridge or London School of Economics (...) they're perceived more as an- you know, they're kind of looked at as like, gold and they would be pulled by the employers.

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Source: University of Greenwich Conference: Embedding Our Employability in Curriculum: What Works? 20 March 2015 Joanna Molyn's presentation