



UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH



Measuring the Effectiveness of Career Coaching in Increasing Higher Education Students' Job Search Self-Efficacy and Job Search Behaviours

**JOANNA MOLYN
BUSINESS SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH
LONDON
MJ59@GRE.AC.UK**

The Aim of the Study



UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH



- To examine the role of coaching in HE.
- To examine empirically the effectiveness of coaching.
- To examine the link between career coaching, career self-efficacy and job-search behaviours in Higher Education (HE) context.
- To investigate whether career coaching can be effective in increasing HE students' levels of career self-efficacy job-search behaviours.

Research Rationale



- Coaching, as an industry, requires empirical studies in order to establish its effectiveness (de Haan, Culpin and Curd, 2011).
- A shift in an educational approach is needed due to the employability agenda, higher fees and higher expectations of students.
- Studies on self-efficacy for different educational groups and domains are needed (Shunk & Pajares, 2001).

Research Questions



UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH

- Is coaching effective in raising career self-efficacy of HE students?
- What aspects of career coaching relationship, are perceived by students and coaches, most effective in increasing student career self-efficacy?
- Is self-efficacy a significant factor in changing job search behaviours of HE students?
- What are the self-efficacy beliefs of HE students? Are they different for different groups of students?

Research Hypothesis



UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH



H₁: Coaching intervention is an effective tool in raising career self-efficacy of HE students and in increasing their job search behaviours.

H₂: Career self-efficacy of HE students is positively linked to their job search behaviours.

H₃: Different genders of students have different career self-efficacy levels.

H₄: Different ethnic groups of students have different career self-efficacy levels.

Research Framework



UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH

- The Social Cognitive Theory
- The SCT links self-efficacy to job seeking efforts:
 - a predictor of career behaviour (Hackett & Betz, 1981; Lent & Hackett, 1987)
 - linked to the career development process (Niles & Sowa, 1992)
 - correlated with motivation to seek or avoid career behaviours (Betz and Taylor, 2001)
 - is a mediator between personality traits and job search outcomes (Zimmerman *et al.*, 2012)
 - **one of the best predictor of job-searching behaviours (Zimmerman *et al.*, 2012; Niles and Sowa, 1992).**

Impact of the Research



UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH

- Providing an empirical study of effectiveness of coaching and aspects of coaching relationship that are most useful to students
- Impact on the university career coaching selection criteria and training
- Raising awareness of using coaching in HE
- Contributing to the research on the relationships between career-self efficacy beliefs and job search behaviours (Zikic & Saks, 2009)
- Van Hove (2013) and Betz & Vuyten (1997) propose that self-efficacy should be examined in further research and embraced by academic career counsellors as to its effect on individuals' job search behaviour.
- The results from the study may inform future intervention programmes that seek to promote the self-efficacy of disadvantaged and marginalised groups such as women, racial and ethnic minorities (Betz *et al.* 2005).
- It will be a longitudinal research investigating the nature and durability of changes following career self-efficacy interventions. This type of research has been called for by Betz and Taylor (2001).

Expected Findings



- Coaching is an effective tool to be used in Higher Education to increase students' self-efficacy and job seeking behaviours
- Certain aspects of career coaching relationship are most helpful to students and should be developed
- Students have different levels of self-efficacy
- Self-efficacy a significant factor in changing job search behaviours of HE students
- Career self-efficacy beliefs of HE are different for different groups of student.

Research Philosophy



UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH

- Mixed methods research that combines two paradigms (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011):
 - Post-positivism (quantitative phase)
 - Social constructionism (qualitative stage)

Research Design



UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH

- A quasi-experimental mixed-method approach
- ‘University of Greenwich’ Business School undergraduate students’ population of approx. 3,400
- Initial sample of 1000+
- Two samples: experimental and a control sample (predicted 200+ students in each sample)

TIME 1
(Oct – Nov 2014)

TIME 2
(Jun – July 2015)

Career-coached students
n=200+

Control group
n= 200+

Initial sample size
n=1,000+

Quantitative Approach

Measuring career-self efficacy using the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale – Short Form (CDSE: Taylor & Betz, 1983)

Measuring job-seeking behaviours using a modified Job Search Behaviour Scale (Saks & Ashforth, 1999)

6 career coaching sessions

Quantitative Approach

Time 1 measures repeated for a control and an experimental group.

Qualitative Approach

Key students, selected from the control and the experimental group will be interviewed.

Pre-intervention stage: Time 1



- A sample of 1000+ students from Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 undergraduate students population of approx, 3,300 students was drawn in October 2014 and completed a questionnaire measuring their Time 1 levels of career self-efficacy (CDSE: Taylor & Betz, 1983) and job search behaviour (modified Saks & Ashforth, 1999).
- Two groups: an experimental group (E) and a control group (C) - predicted 200+ students in each sample - will be selected from the above sample in January 2014.
 - An experimental group will consist of self-selected students participating in a career-coaching scheme.
 - A control group will be matched with an experimental group using *ANCOVA analysis*.

Pre-intervention stage: Time 1

- Quantitative analysis will be conducted:
 - to calculate mean Time 1 levels of students' self-efficacy and job-seeking behaviour. Time 1 data will be analysed according to gender, race, Year of Study, age and department to see if there are any significant differences.
 - *A bivariate correlation for an experimental group: A career-self efficacy scale results (CDSE: Taylor & Betz, 1983) at Time 1 and a Job Search Behaviour Scale results at Time 1 will be correlated with each other to measure any causal inferences. The coefficient of determination (R^2) will be computed to calculate variability between career coaching and self-efficacy.*

Intervention stage



- In the next stage, the experimental group will receive career-coaching lasting for 6 months from different career coaches based in the City of London.

Post-intervention Stage: Time 2



UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH



- Both groups of students will be given a career-self efficacy questionnaire (CDSE: Taylor & Betz, 1983) to measure their post-intervention career self-efficacy levels and Job Search Behaviour Scale (modified Saks & Ashforth, 1999) to measure their post-intervention job-search behaviours.
- Quantitative analysis will be conducted:
 - Comparing the means
 - *A bivariate correlation for an experimental group* to account for any changes in R^2 .
 - *A simple regression for an experimental group* will be used to predict how much the change in students' job search behaviours (a dependent variable) is predicted by a change in their career self-efficacy (an independent variable).
 - Students with the highest and lowest increase in self-efficacy will be identified to be interviewed.

Post-intervention Stage: Time 2



- Qualitative analysis:
 - Key students will be selected from both group and will be interviewed to explore any transitions in any students' career self-efficacy beliefs and their perception of the career coaching effectiveness.
 - Two focus groups consisting of students and career coaching will be held in order to present and validate preliminary findings.



RESEARCH CONTEXT

HE and Employability



UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH

- Increasing economic and political pressure on Higher Education Institutions (combination of higher fees and low economic growth) (HEA, 2012)
- Governments-imposed employability agenda a source of tension with regard to the role of HE
- Concerns about academic autonomy and promoting anti-intellectualism (Harvey, 2000)
- Education does not develop students life long learning and professional skills needed in a workplace (De la Harpe *et al*, 2000)
- ‘Education’ versus ‘training’ debate
 - Traced back to the competence-based education and training system (CBET) formally established in October 1986

HE and Employability



UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH

- **EDUCATION VIEW OF EMPLOYABILITY (Harvey, 2000)**
- Empowerment of students
- Students becoming lifelong learners
- Employability as a subset of transformative lifelong learning and not the primary focus of HE
- HE needs to be transformed
- Growth mindset and self-efficacy* important for employability skills (Knight and Yorke, 2001; Dweck, 1999)

*Self-efficacy as a person's beliefs in his/her capabilities and is required for an individual to move towards his/her achievement (Bandura, 1977)

- **TRAINING VIEW OF EMPLOYABILITY (Havery, 2000; Bates, 1999)**
- Aim of HE to implement occupational competence to meet the needs of employment
- Students treated as compliant audience
- Training graduates for jobs
- Instrumental approach to HE :
 - predicting and planning for skills gaps
 - preoccupation with graduates getting jobs
 - instrumental learning typical of the mass HE
- Traditional education task-driven system promotes fixed mindsets (Dweck, 1999)

Coaching in HE

EDUCATION VIEW

- To empower
- To encourage lifelong learning
- To promote independent thinking
- To increase resilience
- To develop growth mindset
- To increase self-efficacy

COACHING ROLE



Coaching in HE



UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH

- A shift in an educational approach is needed to promote students' empowerment (Harvey, 2000)
- Increasing number of universities have been providing coaching for researchers, VCs, Deans, HoDs but not for students (Vitae 2011)
- The London School of Economics (2013) provides coaching to its PhD students
- Leeds Metropolitan University has been developing The Personalised Curriculum Creation through Coaching (PC3) project. PC3 offers a framework that allows the university to incorporate coaching into the curriculum design. (PC3, 2013).

Coaching in HE

- Coaching has been confirmed as an effective learning tool (HEA, 2012; Skiffington and Zeus, 2003)
- A recent launch of the *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education* is indicative of coaching entering the educational sector
- Most sectors use coaching or some form of leadership training
- Royal Navy Leadership Academy is using coaching for all its cadets to increase their self-awareness and independent thinking

Coaching and Employability



- Coaching and Self-Efficacy:
 - Multiple studies confirmed that coaching had significant positive effect on self-efficacy (Baron *et al*, 2011; Baron and Morin, 2010; Evers, Brouwers and Tomic, 2006)
- Self-efficacy and Employability:
 - Incorporated into employability by Knight and Yorke (2001)
 - Kumar (2007) says self-efficacy plays a significant role in students' career choices
 - Self-efficacy part of Dacre Pool and Sewell (2007) employability model
 - Zikic & Saks (2009) identified the need for research to identify what job seekers can do in order to improve their self-efficacy.

Career Coaching at UoG



- Career Coaching Scheme (CCS) established in 2013 known as Mentoring Scheme.
- The Employability Office (EO) at the Business School and the Guidance & Employability Team (GET).
- Recruitment of students via emails and workshops in May (GET) and in November (EO).
- All interested students are required to fill in an application form stating their reasons and expected benefits of career coaching.

Career Coaching at the UoG



- Mentors are recruited by word of mouth and through professional contacts.
- Mentors often recommend future ones.
- Advisory Board heavily involved using professional contacts (usually via LinkedIn)
- Reaching out to the Alumni team
- No incentives offered but mentors find the scheme very rewarding

Selected Bibliography



UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH



- Bandura, A. (1977), 'Self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioural change', *Psychological Review* 41: 195-215
- Baron, L, Morin, L., and Morin, D. (2011). 'Executive coaching: The effect of working alliance –efficacy.' *Journal of Management Development*, 30(9): 847-864
- Betz, N. E., & Hackett, G. (1981). 'The relationship of career–related self- efficacy expectations to perceived career options in college women and men.' *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 28: 399-410.
- Betz, N. E., & Taylor, K.M. (2001). Manual for the career decision self-efficacy scale and CDMSE- Short Form. Available from: <http://www.mindgarden.com/products/cdse.htm#ms> (Accessed 7 November 2013)
- Blau, G. (1993). 'Further exploring the relationship between job search and voluntary individual turnover.' *Personnel Psychology*, 46, 313-330.
- Blau, G. (1994). 'Testing a two-dimensional measure of job search behavior'. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 59, 288-312.
- Gray, D.E. (2014), *Doing Research in the Real World* (3rd ed.), London: SAGE
- Kanfer, R., Wanberg, C. R., & Kantrowitz, T. M. (2001). 'Job search and employment: A personality motivational analysis and meta-analytic review'. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86, 837-855.

Selected Bibliography



UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH

- Lent, R. W., & Hackett, G. (1987). 'Career self-efficacy: Empirical status and future directions'. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 30: 347-382.
- Saks, A. M., & Ashforth, B. E. (1999). 'Effects of individual differences and job search behaviors on the employment status of recent university graduates'. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 54, 335-349.
- Sun, S., Song, Z., Lim, V.K.G. (2013). 'Dynamics of the Job Search Process: Developing and Testing a Mediated Moderation Model.', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 98(5), 771-784
- Taylor, K. M., & Betz, N. E. (1983). 'Applications of self-efficacy theory to the understanding and treatment of career indecision.', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 22, 63-81
- Van Hooft, G. (2013), 'Job Search Behavior as a Multidimensional Construct: A Review of Different Job Search Behaviors and Sources' In U. C. Klehe & E. A. J. van Hooft (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Job Loss and Job Search* (in press). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Vansteenkiste, M., Lens, W., De Witte, S., De Witte, H. & Deci, E.L. (2004). 'The 'why' and 'why not' of job search behaviour: Their relation to searching, unemployment experience, and well-being.' *European Journal of Social Psychology* (34): 345-363
- Zimmerman, R. D., Boswell, W. R., Shipp, A. J., Dunford, B. B., & Boudreau, J. W. (2012). 'Explaining the pathways between approach-avoidance personality traits and employees' job search behavior'. *Journal of Management*, 38: 1450-1475.