

# THE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF APPRENTICES: WHAT HAVE WE BEEN MISSING?

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## RATIONALE

- This study investigates the influence of higher education apprenticeship on the mental health and wellbeing (MHW) of apprentices.
- This stems from the little attention that the area has received globally, and from the findings of Umeokafor et al. (2020) that highlights a relationship between the features of higher education apprenticeship and MHW indicators.
- They struggle to balance domestic, work and school responsibilities and employers are unable to fulfil some of their obligations (Chankseliani and Relly 2015).
- The study follows on from Umeokafor et al. (2020) which shows that the delivery features of apprenticeship courses influence apprentices' mental health and wellbeing. However, the insight in this regard is limited.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the effects of apprenticeship delivery features on the mental health and wellbeing of apprentices in Kingston University?
- 2) What can be done to improve the mental health and wellbeing of apprentices in Kingston University?

## METHODOLOGY

- More than 23 percent of the apprentices, which is 33.6 percent of the sample (119) were surveyed using questionnaires and analysed by SPSS.
- Mean score, relative importance index and Kendall's tau-b tests were conducted.

## KEY FINDINGS

The apprentices view that to improve their mental health and well-being (MHW) the follow two were the most important:

The school needs to demonstrate a greater understanding of their diverse circumstances and commitments through greater accommodation of these. It has the means score (MS) of 4.54.



Lecturers/tutors need to be more approachable with the MS of 4.54.



The three highest MHW issues are caused by:

Stress caused by the apprenticeship programme (MS: 3.90).



Extent of affordable and comfortable living (MS: 3.53).



Thinking if what they are doing is worthwhile (MS: 3.50).



There are 54 co-relationships among the 10 measures of the characteristics of apprenticeships programme delivery and 21 MHW indicators. One example found that stress caused by the programme e.g. attending school, is correlated with the 'employer meeting their responsibilities in apprenticeship programs' ( $\tau_b = .288, p = .032$ ). Furthermore, another correlation was found between 'help with managing work, life and my school (KU) and my employer working together to support me in

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The design and delivery of the education curriculum should be inclusive of apprentices, focusing on their diverse circumstances.

Further research, using interviews, on the topic should be conducted.

There are provisions in places to make the lectures approachable, however, the attention of apprentices should be drawn more to these, and/or more provisions should be made to improve the approachability of lectures/tutors.

## REFERENCES

- Chankseliani, M., and S. J. Relly. (2015). From the Provider-led to an Employer led System: Implications of Apprenticeship Reform on the Private Training Market." *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 67 (4): 515–28.
- Umeokafor, N., Haroglu, H., Dixon, L., Turner, K. and Dyer, I. (2020) Investigating the delivery features of apprenticeship courses for apprentices' satisfaction and engagement in Kingston University, SADRAS Project, Kingston University.