

Adapt-Ability to the Rescue: Managing career transitions in turbulent times

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Background and reasons for the research

- Research suggests Postgraduate Research Students (PGR) often lack awareness of the wide range of career paths available to them (Uhlig 2014, Vitae 2012, Jackson 2007, DTI 2006, Roberts 2002)
- Career Construction, and in particular Savickas' Adapt-Ability concept, was identified as helpful to use with PGR (Uhlig 2014), since it offers a way of "connecting ... experiences through the present situation to the preferred future" (Savickas 2013 :159) and recognises the fast changing (WEF 2016, EEF 2018) and turbulent labour market (Bimrose and Dave 2007, Savickas 2015)
- Fuelled by a desire to facilitate best destination outcomes for PGR, this research investigated whether using Savickas' Career Adapt-Ability Inventory (CAAI-UK) with PGR would enhance reflection and generate discussions, which would facilitate transition into employment
- The findings would influence careers support to PGR, ensuring that they were ready, willing and able to make informed career choices



Data collection and analysis

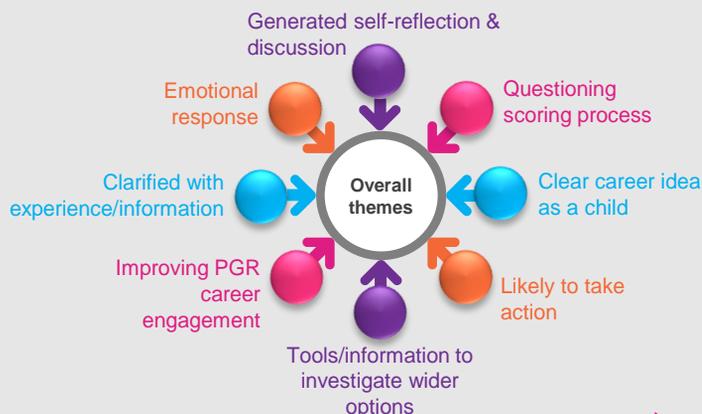
Research Questions

- 1 How can I use Savickas' Career Adapt-ability Inventory in career consultations to generate discussion?
- 2 How does PGRs' experience of completing the CAAI-UK encourage them to reflect on their career development?
- 3 How might the research findings influence the services provided to support PGRs' career development?

Data collection methods

- RQ1 Complete Reflective Field Sheet (RFS) on CAAI-UK completed during or prior to career consultation (6)
- RQ2 Focus groups (2 groups, total of 12 PGR)
- RQ3 Findings from RFS and focus groups

Thematic analysis themes



Key findings

- CAAI-UK completion aids self reflection and opportunity to step back/reflect is much valued by PGR in this study
- Using CAAI-UK in practice encourages a questioning style by the practitioner, this eases/generates discussion
- Scores identified areas in need of development – especially *concern* (about the future)
- Visual results and opportunity for discussion aided action identification and likely commitment to act
- Numerous ways to inform career practice were identified



Ways the research findings can inform career practice - across the 4 dimensions of Career Adapt-Ability

Concern

(about the future)

Use CAAI-UK in 1:1 and small groups

Compulsory careers session in Schools

Control

(take control and make decisions)

Train PGR Career Ambassadors

Encouragement to engage with career development earlier

Curiosity

(to explore options)

Promote tools to investigate wider options

Confidence

(to pursue aspirations)

1:1 Career appointment
Highlight wider options