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

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The Research Context

- A case study of a post-1992 London university
- Ethnically diverse undergraduate Business Faculty students
- Quasi Experimental Mixed Methods Longitudinal Research Design
- Measuring the effectiveness of career coaching scheme (known as *mentoring scheme)* in increasing students' self-efficacy (*Can I do this?*), outcome expectancy (*If I do this, what will happen?*) and employability efforts
- Social Cognitive Career Theory as conceptual framework

Students' Employability Efforts SCCT Framework
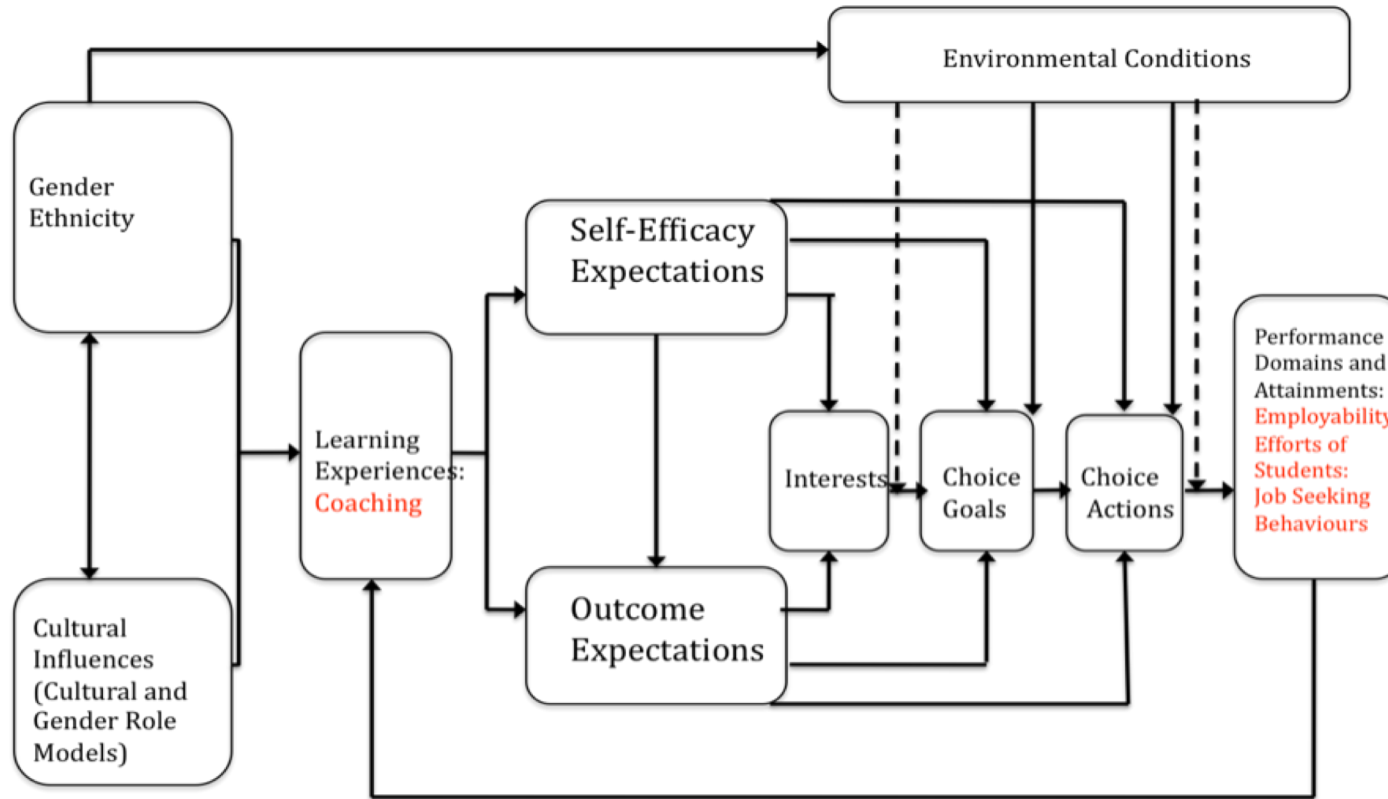
**Conceptual Framework adapted from SCCT (Brown & Lent, 2013)**

Aims of the Study

❑ To measure whether career coaching increases students' career self-efficacy and their employability efforts.

❑ To examine what aspects of career coaching relationship, from the students' perspective, make the career coaching process most effective in terms of increasing students' career self-efficacy, outcome expectations and employability efforts of students.

❑ To explore students' self-efficacy and outcome expectation beliefs and their contribution to students' employability efforts.

❑ To create and constructs new knowledge through introducing the Social Cognitive Career Theory as an employability framework for post-1992 university students. This approach allowed exploring whether ethnicity, gender, cultural and gender role models and socio-economic background are important factors contributing to students' employability efforts

Mixed Methods Research

- The *nesting integrated mixed methods design* (qual within QUAN) (Greene, 2007), i.e. the study's conceptual framework guided the primary QUAN method study (Greene, 2007).

- The (QUAN → *qual*) sequential design structure implemented in order to collect data and analyse the effectiveness of coaching (beginning with quantitative data) for primary purpose of the confirmation and hypothesis testing.

- The function of this design was *complementarity* (the QUAN results were used to evaluate the career coaching effectiveness whereas the *qual* results were used to evaluate outcomes of the career coaching process and to provide depth of understanding (Palinkas et al. 2011).

- The study's *iteration* stage occurred when the results of the QUAN are used to select a QUAL sample.

- The challenges of integration at the findings and the discussion phase in order to answer the research questions (Greene, 2007).

Initial Findings
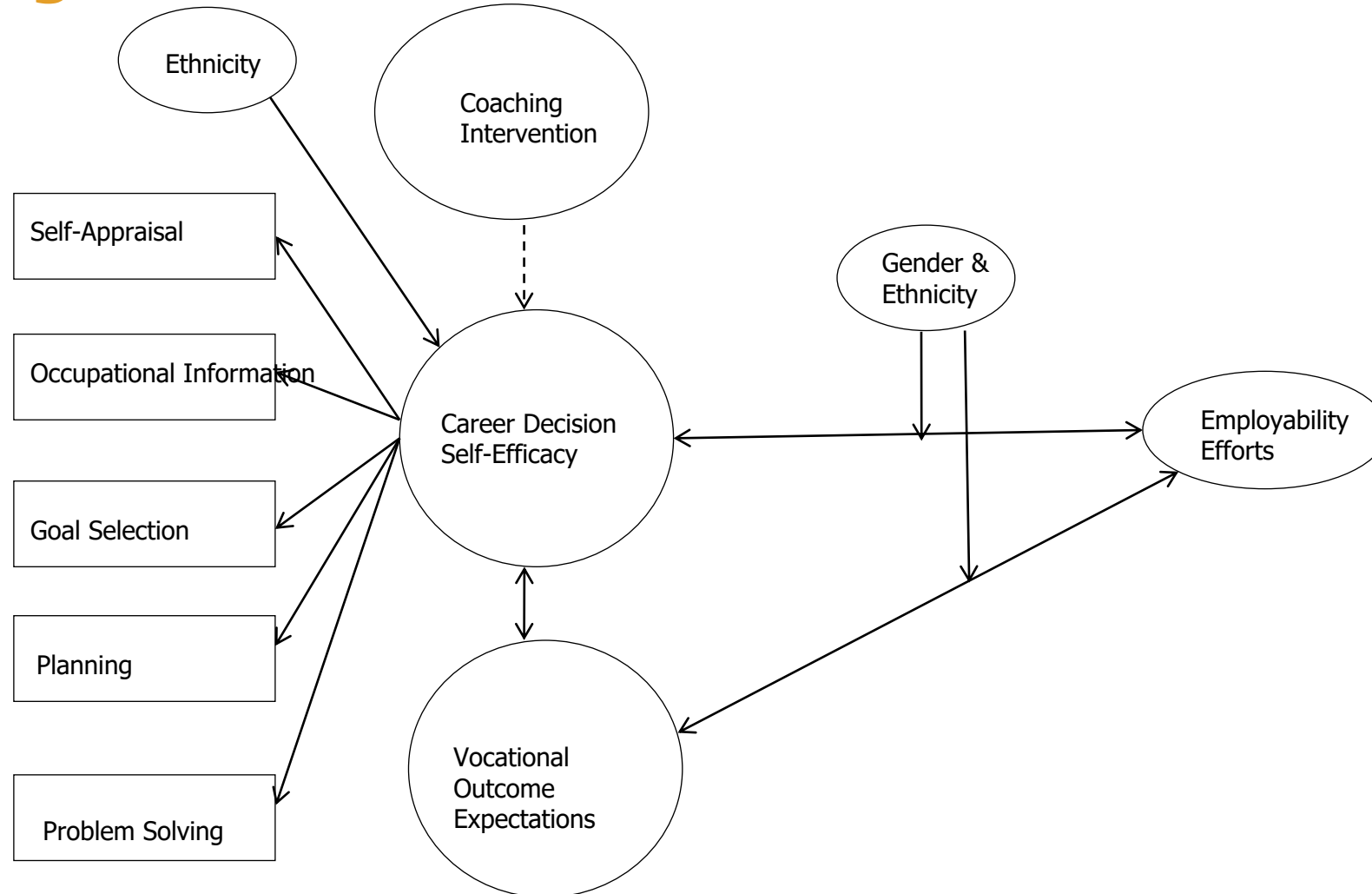
Effectiveness of Career Coaching

❑ MANOVA and t-test showed no statistical differences between the experimental and the control group in terms of their self-efficacy and employability efforts.

❑ However, the visual comparison of mean values at Time 2 with Time 1 shows that all mean values of the experimental group have increased and that all of them have outperformed the control group
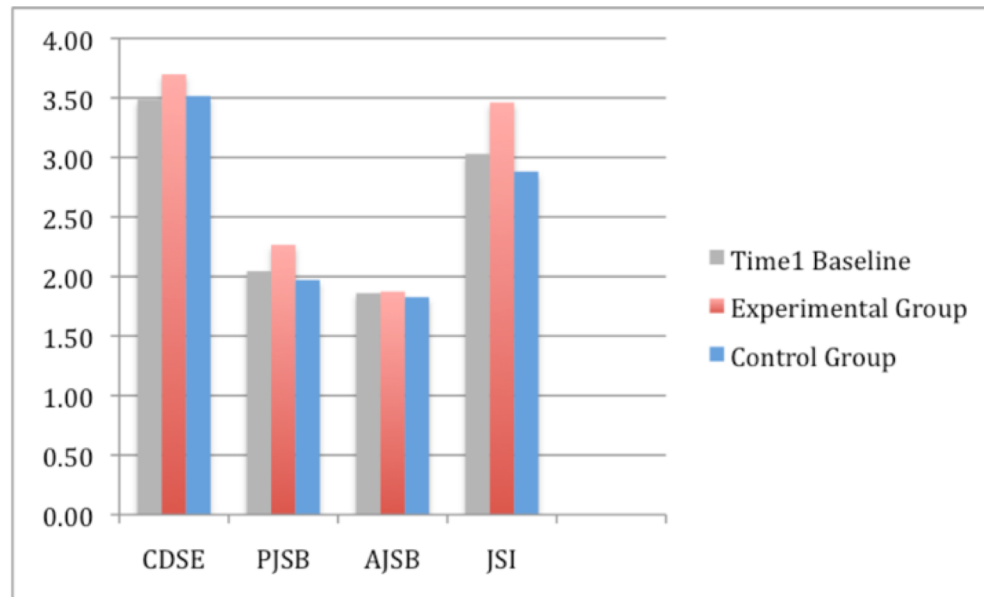
Effectiveness of Career Coaching

❑ Improved confidence

❑ Increased resilience

❑ Thinking differently

❑ More focused employability efforts

❑ More realistic expectations

Quality of Coaching Relationship

❑ Practical advice

❑ Trust

❑ Coach as a role model

Barriers to Students' Employability Efforts

❑ Difficult Online Application Process

❑ Perceived Preferential Treatment of Russell Group Students

❑ Competition from Russell Group

❑ Negative perception of University of Greenwich students

❑ Absence of Networks

❑ Perceived Ethnic Discrimination

❑ Low Outcome Expectations

Ethnicity Matters
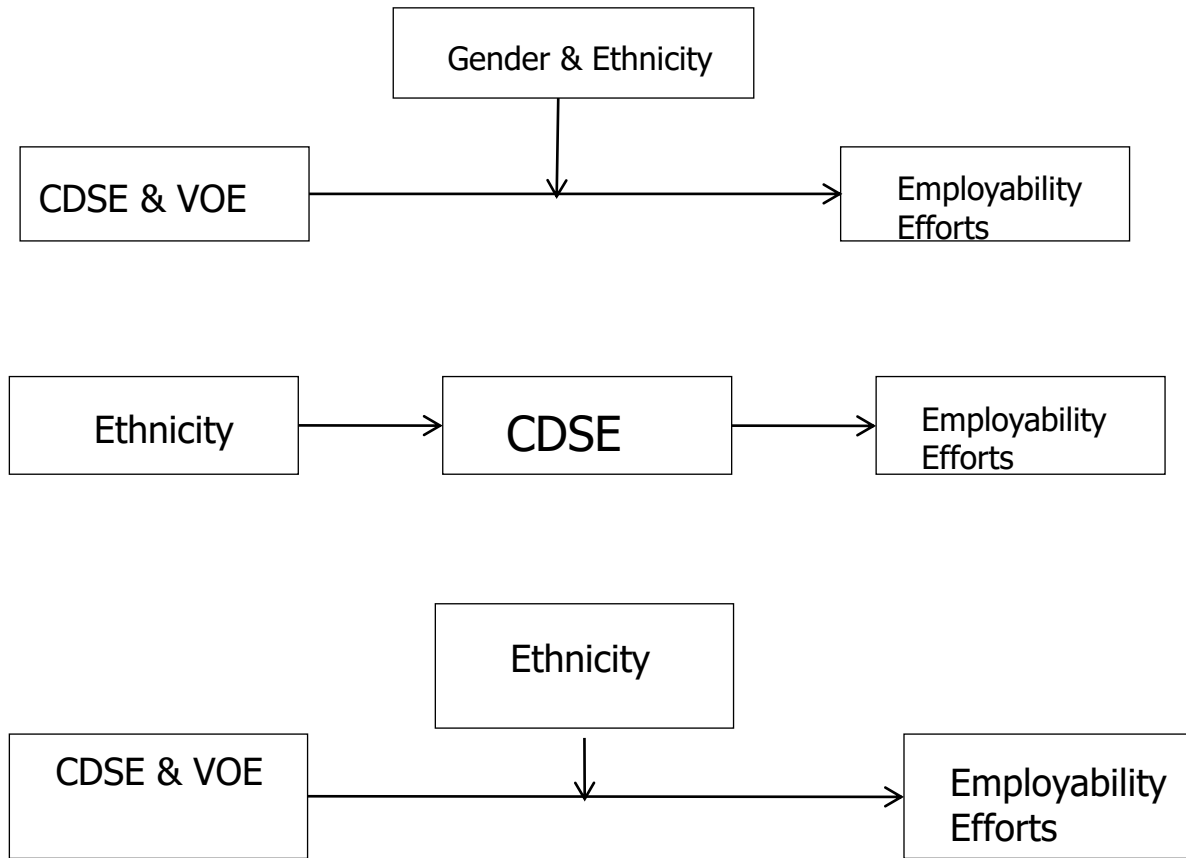
Ethnicity Matters

they didn't get the role like, none of us did except one person and I met like, he's the like, you could see that he would fit into that [....] he's um, Caucasian (...) I do feel like I was discriminated because of my race [Asian female] (...) you could see they all look the same and I don't think I would have fit in there (...)afterwards when I spoke to my friends about it even my friends felt the same so it wasn't just me (...) All the friends that applied. Male and female, Asian ... none of us got it so yes.

if you don't have a nice background as a black person(...) they [HR department] won't accept your application (...)Er, I just saw, like, 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 (...) they will find just excuses (...) they just find reasons (...) I was working there, I'm getting very well with the personnel (...) I was like, OK, you can't say anything (...) they say (...) they can steal or they don't trust the- they don't trust them like, I don't know.

Outcome Expectations

❑ Focus in the literature on self-efficacy.

❑ However, **outcome expectations** is also the statistically significant predictor of ALL employability efforts.

Implications for Practice

❑ Coaching might be a way to address the issues of lack of social capital and lack of role models for students' in post-1992 universities as part of universities' employability agenda.

❑ Career services should integrate sociocultural context (SCCT) into their career (Gloria and Hird, 1999; Leung, 1995)

❑ Ethnicity matters - career coaches need to guide students' understanding of whether and how they integrate their cultural factor and ethnic group expectations into their career decision-making (Gloria and Hird, 1999)

❑ Training of career coaching should also include self-efficacy enhancing strategies (Gloria and Hird, 1999) and outcome expectancy strategies.

Implications for Practice

❑ It is further recommended that effectiveness of the career coaching could be further increased by focusing on:

- planning (for example, making a plan of students' goals for the next five years; preparing a good CV; identifying employers, firms, and institutions relevant to their career possibilities; and successfully managing the job interview process);

- working with students outcome expectancies by coaching students in terms of their beliefs and aspirations and helping them to overcome their barriers;