

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

Contact: Eve Uhlig e.j.uhlig@outlook.com [LinkedIn](#)

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

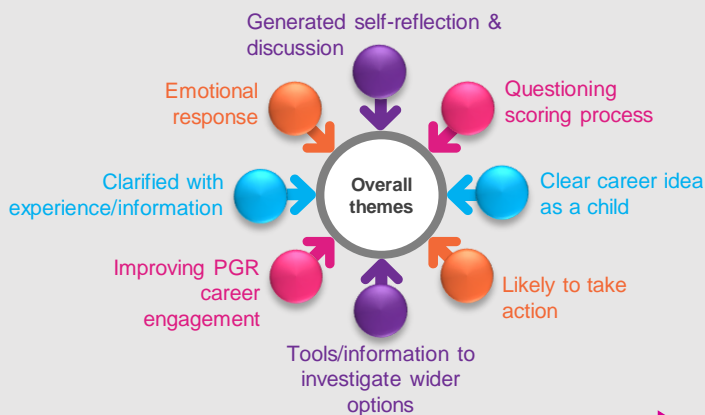
Research Questions

- 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

- RC1 Complete Reflective Field Sheet (RFS) on CAAI-UK completed during or prior to career consultation (6)
- RC2 Focus groups (2 groups, total of 12 PGR)
- RC3 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

