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**THE CAREER OF AN
OCCUPATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
GRADUATE: EMPLOYMENT,
EMPLOYABILITY AND IDENTITY**

V A Elsey

DOccPsych

2016

**THE CAREER OF AN
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GRADUATE: EMPLOYMENT,
EMPLOYABILITY AND IDENTITY**

Victoria A Elsey

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the University
of Northumbria at Newcastle for the
degree of Professional Doctorate in
Occupational Psychology

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Health and Life Sciences

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Abstract

This thesis explored the factors contributing to the employability and identity development of occupational psychology graduates at various career stages. A mixed methods approach was taken to achieve three broad aims of the professional doctorate: 1) raising awareness of employability within the occupational psychology (OP) profession; 2) improving theoretical understanding of employability applied to a domain specific occupational sample; and finally 3) enhancing the professional practice of the thesis author. A qualitative study using focus group methodology (N=6) and thematic analysis identified barriers and facilitators to OP employability culminating in six core themes of '*identity*', '*continuing professional development*', '*making a difference*', '*adaptability*', '*evidence-based practice*' and '*external environment*' (study 1). These themes were translated into an Occupational Psychologists Facilitators to Employability Scale (OPFES) which was assessed for its psychometric properties (N=88) using exploratory factor analysis. This study also detailed the development of a Subjective Career Satisfaction Scale (SCSS) (study 2). A revised version of the OPFES and measures of employability antecedents (Competence and Psychological Capital) and career success were distributed to the OP community (N=185). An analysis of the demographic data detailed the variety of OP careers. This study emphasised the potential challenges in creating a strong professional identity (study 3). Structural Equation Modelling determined the relationship between employability and career success (objective and subjective) where final models suggested different relationships between employability antecedents and objective and subjective career success (study 4). Finally, a narrative thematic analysis of OP stories (N=20) concluded the thesis (study 5). This study revealed the presence of five identity types: '*learners*', '*networkers*', '*compromisers*', '*achievers*' and '*career builders*'. Each type was present in the career stories adding further support for the concept of '*career identity complexity*'. Overall, findings indicated that the career of an OP graduate was varied, that multiple employability antecedents could enhance career success and that a diversity of strategies were utilised in identity formation. Support was provided for Career Construction Theory and the influence of human capital and personal resources in employability. Reflections on how the research outcomes have impacted on the thesis author's professional development are discussed throughout. The research programme contributes an evidence base for interventions that can inform MSc curriculum and the ongoing career and professional development of OccPsychs.

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I have had the pleasure of working with such a variety of OccPsychs, from the influential academics and practitioners whose work I admire and respect, to students and graduates embarking upon their careers, sharing their anxieties and experiences with me. I feel lucky to now sit on committees which can really impact on the profession, I do not believe that this would have happened had I not studied for this doctorate. I would like extend gratitude to the participants who have shared both personal and professional information; this has really advanced my understanding of the reality of working as an occupational psychologist and reinvigorated my own enthusiasm for careers and personal development. Thank you also to Georgina Wong and Dr Almuth McDowall for their passion in similar subjects to mine, and particularly to Almuth for recommending me as DOPTC Chair and involving me in shaping the profession. I am really looking forward to seeing the fruits of our labour!

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Authors Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted by the Faculty of Health & Life Sciences Ethics Committee on 10th September 2012, 20th September 2012, 11th September 2013 (amended 28th May 2014) and 20th October 2014.

I declare that the word count of this thesis is 62,156 (including tables and quotations)

Name:.....

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background

Chapters 1 and 2 set the context for the programme of research from both a professional practice (chapter 1) and research background (chapter 2) in line with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) definition of professional doctorates:

*"[professional doctorates] aim to develop an individual's professional practice and to support them in producing a contribution to (professional) knowledge."
(QAA, 2008, p.25)*

The author of this thesis is a Chartered Psychologist and Registered Occupational Psychologist with a background in consultancy who currently resides at Northumbria University as a Principal Lecturer. The research was initiated by an interest in the employability and career trajectories of occupational psychology (OP) graduates developed through experience as an MSc OP programme director, educator of MSc OP students, and recruiter of OP graduates. Further, the researcher is also active in the professional body, serving as the co-Chair for the Division of Occupational Psychology Training Committee (DOPTC), a member of the DOP Professional and Educational Qualifications Strategy Group (PEQ) and as a supervisor of Trainee Occupational Psychologists (TOPs). This chapter will summarise the professional context and developments within OP, setting the scene for chapter 2 which outlines the employability and career success literature which to date has not been specifically applied to this professional group.

1.2. The Context: what is Occupational Psychology?

OP is an area of applied psychology focused on human behaviour in the workplace (Zibarras & Lewis, 2013). Whilst OP is the term primarily used in the UK, variations can be seen across Europe and the world; for example Industrial and Organisational Psychology (I-O), Work Psychology, Organisational Psychology and Business Psychology. Hugo Munsterberg is credited as the creator of OP which stemmed from scientific management theories concerned with improving human performance and productivity at work through the study of individual differences (Steptoe-Warren, 2013). Over the lifespan of OP, the scope of work has diversified often in response to economic drivers and workplace changes. Primary applications include personnel selection and assessment, organisational change, motivation, employee engagement, training, career development, work-place health and well-being as well

as other more niche areas such as human factors and workplace rehabilitation. Occupational Psychologist (OccPsych¹) is a title which is protected by UK law and professional practise is regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). In order to become a Registered OccPsych individuals must have an undergraduate Psychology degree (or conversion) accredited by the British Psychological Society (BPS) and a BPS accredited MSc OP qualification (Stage one of the Qualification in Occupational Psychology). Achievement of Chartered Psychologist (C.Psychol) status with the BPS, Full Membership of the Division of OP (DOP) and Registered/Practitioner OccPsych status with the HCPC follows (referred to as Stage two of the Qualification in OP, or candidates can complete an HCPC Approved Doctorate in OP - of which at the time of writing there is only one in the UK). The process for becoming a Registered OccPsych is demonstrated in Figure 1.1. For an individual to continue to use the title Occupational Psychologist they must remain on the HCPC Register and update their professional practice. Appendix A explains the profession in further detail in a *Statement of Intent*, written by the author of the doctorate (Standards for the Accreditation of Masters and Doctoral Programmes in Occupational Psychology, 2015).

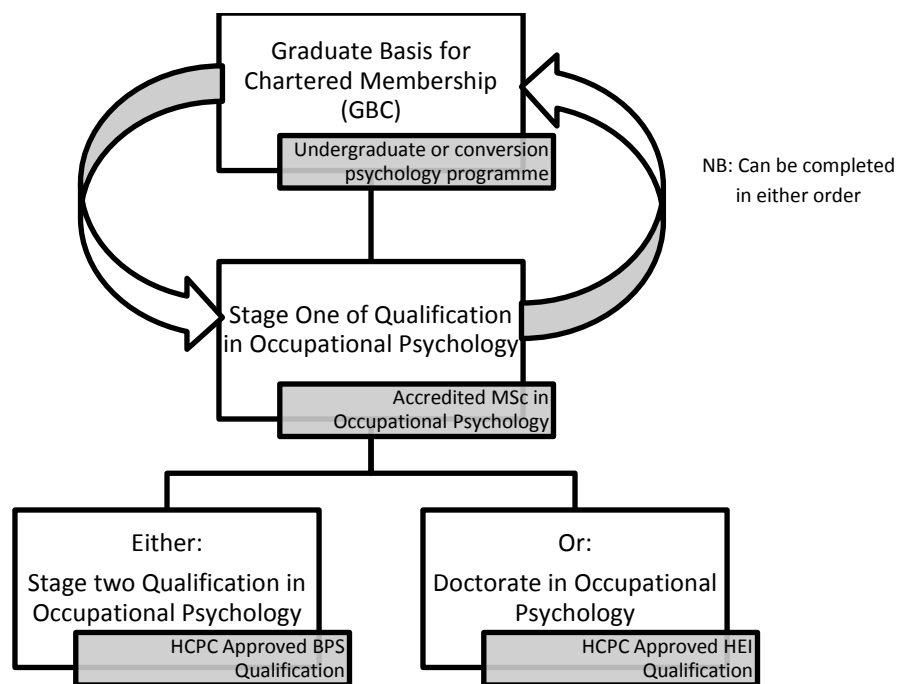


Figure 1.1: The Process for Becoming a Registered Occupational Psychologist (thesis author's interpretation)

¹ Note that the term OccPsych is used to explain the participant group in this research, not all are Registered/Practitioners

The main proponent of OP in the UK is the DOP. Their purpose is to be:

“the professional association for Occupational Psychologists and those in training in the UK. It provides a home, a champion, a source of support and development for Occupational Psychologists and trainees” (The Division of Occupational Psychology: Overarching Strategy 2011-2015).

The training and development of OccPsychs had remained relatively stable since the 1980s when a modularised curriculum was introduced. More recently however, work gained pace to ensure that OP training was fit for purpose. This can be traced back to the OP-First project, commissioned by the DOP in 2006 (OP-First, 2006)

The project took place over a period of 18 months and represented a breadth and depth look at the DOP membership and the state of play at the time, providing suggestions for moving OP forward. The broad aim was to:

“establish the identity of contemporary occupational psychology in a rapidly changing organisational and academic context and to define the knowledge, skills and competencies that underpin the profession” (p. 4).

The specific focus was on the following areas:

- **Future:** understanding the challenges and how things may change.
- **Identity:** identifying what makes OP unique and how this can be improved.
- **Recognition:** enabling OP to be seen as a profession which can add value to organisations.
- **Standards:** ensuring that standards are “rigorous” and maintained.
- **Talent:** managing talent in OccPsychs from their entry onto the route to chartered status and beyond.

The project sought to identify what OccPsychs *“actually do in their day-to-day work”* (p. 4) and to understand identity. The report gathered data from a range of sources such as employers and OccPsychs. Findings highlighted that data to understand whether graduates of MSc programmes found it easy to obtain jobs outside of the OP specific market did not exist. Further, reference was made to graduates of MSc programmes being *“churned out”* (p. 22) without the availability of jobs or demand for their skills. One key conclusion was that OP needed to ensure that there was a clear unique selling point (USP) to assure the sustainability of the profession.

Since this report much has changed in OP, specifically with respect to the HCPC becoming the regulator, yet between this time and 2011 the profession remained stagnant. In 2010, the outgoing DOP Chair Hazel Stevenson recognised that the OP-First project had relatively little impact upon the profession and so convened an Expert Panel with a focus on three main areas: identity, education and training for OccPsychs, and the relevance of the current curriculum (Expert Panel, 2012). Their panel approach was two-fold – discussion of the issues and consultation with DOP stakeholders (e.g. programme directors and MSc students). A total of 153 individuals responded to a survey which covered a range of aspects in relation to the project aims. Employability specific conclusions and recommendations included:

- Indications that general employability skills were not being taught to students i.e. communication skills, networking, project management.
- Ensure that programmes develop students' practical skills as well as theoretical knowledge in order to prepare them for potential roles.
- Importance of reviewing the OP curriculum which was developed in the 1980s with a module structure that did not allow scope to explain to students how OccPsychs work.
- Lack of accurate data being collected on DOP membership e.g. where they work, areas of competence etc.

Panel recommendations led to the launch of the new MSc curriculum in 2014 and formed the activities for a Professional and Educational Qualifications Strategy Group (PEQ), of which the thesis author is a member. The new curriculum was informed partly by two surveys: a consultation with current students (N=67) and recent graduates (N=78) (McDowall, Neale, & Wong, 2013) and a Horizon Scan of Current Employers of Occupational/Organisational/Business Psychologists (N=27) (2013). Findings indicated that the skills employers valued most - such as consultancy skills and business acumen - were not necessarily taught on MSc OP programmes, and that the eight core areas of OP should be updated to enable graduates to appreciate the links between theory and the practical realities of work. The new stage 1 curriculum focuses upon 5 knowledge areas and 2 applied or skills areas (see Figure 1.2 for a diagrammatic representation of the new curriculum). Recommendations suggested that work readiness of OccPsychs was an important consideration which has in part been addressed by the introduction of a new stage 1 (MSc) curriculum and the planned changes to stage 2 alignment. The thesis author

is actively involved in the developments via her role as co-Chair of the DOPTC (since 2013). This role has included supporting the implementation of the new MSc curriculum and sitting on PEQ to support development of the new stage two qualification (expected implementation April 2017).



Figure 1.2. Pictorial representation of the new Stage One Curriculum for Training Occupational Psychologists (from *Standards for the Accreditation of Masters and Doctoral Programmes in Occupational Psychology*, 2015, p.24)

The developments outlined clearly fall within an employability agenda, for example the DOP Overarching Strategy for 2011-2015 (new strategy due in January 2016) highlighted employability as one of five strategic objectives (alongside visibility, influence, competence and science) with the aim of:

“promoting opportunities for the employment of the profession within private and public sector organisations” (p. 3)

The strategies focus was limited to employment and aimed at early career OccPsychs e.g. advertising internships and career sessions on MSc programmes and not the full spectrum of the profession. As chapter 2 explains, employability is complex and different to employment (Clarke & Patrickson, 2008; Cranmer, 2006; Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007; Forrier & Sels, 2003; Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; Harvey, 2001). Skills that employers want in graduates are often best learned in the work environment and not taught in MSc programmes (Brown & Hesketh, 2004;

Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011). It is perhaps ironic that OccPsychs do not fully appreciate the concept of employability, particularly applied to their own profession, yet are suggested as the individuals who can help to understand the factors associated with employability and career success (Hogan, Chamorro-Premuzic, & Kaiser, 2013). Furthermore, the DOP focus has recently been on the educational process of OccPsychs and not on those individuals post degree and with Chartered/Registered status. Equally, they have targeted their efforts at members of the DOP, so limited focus has been placed on those individuals who have an accredited MSc OP degree but have not chosen to pursue Chartered or Registered status.

Whilst the DOP does offer support for career individuals in the form of an annual conference, a 'Learning a Living' Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme and a Leadership Development Programme (LDP), these activities only engage some OccPsychs. It therefore seems important to further understand employability within this professional group (DOP and non DOP members), as the OP-First (2006) and Expert Panel (2012) suggest little data exists in extending understanding of the career of an OP. Yet statements such as *"nearly all occupational psychology practitioners work for themselves or in small consultancies"* (Briner, 2010, p. 892), are made publicly without the corroborating data in support. Unlike other areas of applied psychology such as Clinical or Educational, there isn't an employer (i.e. the NHS) which regularly provides a structure for OccPsychs careers. Finally, in a recent article in OP Matters (the OP newsletter) suggestions were made that OccPsychs need to fully understand the professional brand, protect it, get the message out to others about the benefits of OP and adapt to a changing world in order to enable the profession to succeed and inspire the next generation (McDowall, Sealy, Redman, Chamorro-Premuzic, & Ogden, 2015). In order to do this well, it is important to engage with individuals and understand the reality of their career success and employability.

1.2.1. Evidence Based Practice

Utilising an evidence-based approach, Briner and Rousseau (2011) identified four components which can be applied to this context (Figure 1.3.). Firstly, an appreciation of the evidence gathered from external sources (for example the literature base on employability and careers), secondly understanding the perspectives of stakeholders (those individuals who have completed an MSc OP degree and are working in the field in a variety of contexts), thirdly identifying the

broader context which could impact upon decisions (such as the BPS and DOP but also the environmental context in which OP graduates work). Finally utilising the experience and judgements of the practitioner (as outlined in 1.1). When these four components align, sound and ‘evidence based’ decisions are made (Briner, Denyer, & Rousseau, 2009). Whilst the extant data from various DOP reports is helpful in framing the context of this doctorate, it fails to provide a broader perspective of the employability of OP graduates. Haasler (2013) stated that employability is important for every working individual yet those with occupational domain identity or strong technical skills may not have fully embraced the employability agenda. This is because instead of developing additional skills or “self-attributes” (p.241), they rely on their technical expertise to enable employability. Hence research is necessary to understand how OccPsychs manage their employability with the longer term aim of developing practical actions that can be taken to ensure ‘sustainable employability’ and ultimately career success.

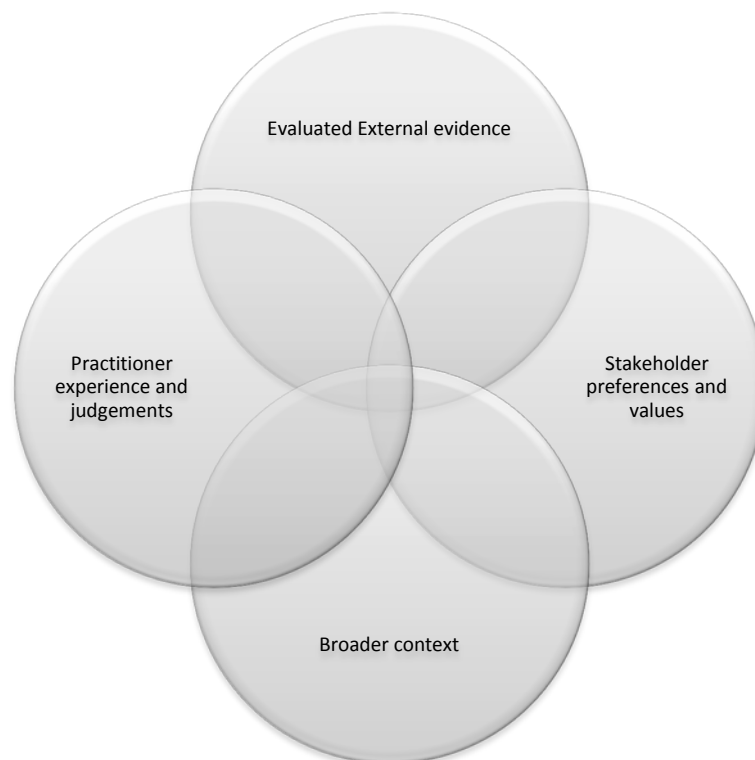


Figure 1.3. Briner and Rousseau (2011) approach to making evidence based decisions

1.3. Research Aims and Contributions

In light of the OP context, the research programme will focus upon the following research questions:

- What are the contextual, career specific issues relating to OP graduate employability and how do they impact upon career success?
- What is the relationship between competence employability, dispositions, contextual factors and career success in OP graduates?
- How are OP graduates' careers storied and narrated in the pursuit of identity and employability?

The doctorate research programme makes the following contributions:

- Development of an OP Facilitators to Employability Scale, outlining the factors that can support OP employability and career success (chapters 3 and 4).
- An appreciation of a range of employability factors which can support the objective and subjective career success of OccPsychs (chapter 6)
- Understanding the current employment position of OP graduates (chapter 5)
- Utilising a range of employability measures in UK populations, and a specific career domain (chapter 6)
- The development of 'types' to appreciate how OccPsychs develop their identity (chapter 7)
- An evidence base on which to develop OP employability interventions (chapter 8)

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter outlines the employability and career success literature in support of the research aims (1.3.). It presents a background to employability (2.1.), the theories, frameworks and measurement models currently utilised in the literature (2.2.) and the specific aims of the doctoral research programme (2.3).

2.2. Background to Employability	2.3. Theories, Frameworks and Measurement	2.4. Research Aims		
2.2.1. 'Career Employability'	2.3.1. What is Employability?	2.4.1. Aims Relating to the Professional Context		
	2.3.2. Theoretical Underpinnings	2.4.2. Aims Relating to Theoretical Understanding of Employability		
	2.3.3. Input and Output Employability	2.4.3. Aims Relating to the Researchers Own Professional Practice		
	2.3.4. Employability and Career Success			
	2.3.5. An Overarching Framework for Employability	2.3.5.1. Career Identity	2.3.5.2. Personal Adaptability	2.3.5.3. Social and Human Capital
	2.3.6. Antecedent Employability: Dispositions			
	2.3.7. Antecedent Employability: Competence			
	2.3.8. Self-Perceived Employability			
	2.3.9. Contextual Factors Impacting upon Antecedent and Self- Perceived Employability			
	2.3.10. Relationships Between Antecedents, Perceptions and Contextual Factors			

Figure 2.1. Chapter Two Structure

2.2. Background to Employability

Interest in 'employability' as a construct has grown in the UK over the past 20 years. Perhaps the earliest reference can be seen in an occupational context from the 1950s where Feintuch (1955) referred to 'employability' as the number of days an individual was employed pre and post a vocational intervention, a rather narrow definition (Forrier & Sels, 2003; Hogan et al., 2013). Since that time, research has been applied to three broad domains and has aimed to take a more holistic view of the construct (Nauta, van Vianen, Van der Heijden, van Dam, & Willemssen, 2009; Tymon, 2013).

Firstly, the unemployed and more marginalised groups such as disabled, ethnic minority groups or women in the workplace. The UK government has focused on policy development to tackle rising unemployment levels and ensure inclusion and as such the development of basic transferable skills to improve individual opportunity (Haasler, 2013; Holmes, 2001, 2015; Leitch, 2006). Critics argue that government interest lies in employment, not in employability as their ultimate aim is on the individual getting a job and not finding fulfilling or satisfying work (Tymon, 2013). Secondly, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have an interest in improving the employability of their graduates, focusing on skills provision and measuring perceptions of employability (Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011). Research in this area gained pace in the late 1990s (Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie, 2009) with a priority to respond to the dissatisfaction that employers expressed in the business readiness of graduates (Andrews & Russell, 2012). Further, in response to Government reports such as Dearing (1997) and Browne (2010) HEIs are expected to prepare students for the workplace. HEIs are measured against the Destination of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE) a metric to identify the percentage of graduates in graduate level jobs six months post-graduation (i.e. an employment measure). A large proportion of UK research focuses upon graduate employability and the mismatch between what graduates offer and what employers want (Tymon, 2013). Research in this sector has primarily targeted undergraduates (UG) and not post-graduates (PG) despite increasing numbers in both UG and PG courses, increased competition and the perception that a degree is now seen as a prerequisite for many roles (Tymon, 2013). The research has focused upon what HEIs can do to develop skills that employers value, yet fails to consider that these skills may be best learned in a working environment where students can reflect upon their own skill development within context (Brown & Hesketh, 2004; Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011). In the HEI context,

employability is a rather nebulous concept which is challenging to explain to stakeholders such as parents, students and academics (Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007). Finally, the continued rise in the term can be linked to organisational changes, namely the need for organisations and employees to be flexible and responsive in order to remain competitive into the 21st Century (Fugate et al., 2004). Within a framework of 'career', employability has gained significant attention in the last 15 years. Employability security is expressed as the new job security in a world where a job for life is less desirable or possible and a new psychological contract emphasising joint responsibility is inevitable (Clarke, 2008; Clarke & Patrickson, 2008; Forrier & Sels, 2003; Haasler, 2013). Ultimately it is clear that employability is no longer just relevant for graduates and marginalised groups (Forrier & Sels, 2003; Haasler, 2013), and in fact the focus on keeping work and surviving organisational restructures and changes has now received increased attention over simply finding a job (Berntson, Sverke, & Marklund, 2006; Clarke, 2008; De Cuyper, Raeder, Van der Heijden, & Wittekind, 2012). This professional doctorate is primarily concerned with 'career employability', and will utilise research conducted in both the unemployed and HEI sector where relevant.

2.2.1. 'Career Employability'

Changing organisational structures from more 'traditional' and 'hierarchical' to 'flatter' and 'matrix' has led to employees becoming more proactive in their pursuit of work and in creating their own roles in the workplace (Fugate et al., 2004; Wittekind, Raeder, & Grote, 2010). Career research suggests that 'jobs for life' no longer exist and employees have taken control of their career development from the employer (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Fugate et al., 2004). This has led to a shift in responsibility for employability with an increased emphasis on the individual maintaining their employability over the employer's or government's role in providing opportunities for it (Thijssen, Van der Heijden, & Rocco, 2008). Over the past 40 years career researchers have suggested that careers are 'boundaryless' (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) or 'protean' (Hall, 1976) rather than 'traditional' or 'organisational' both definitions emphasising that individuals move more freely between organisations, taking lateral rather than hierarchical moves with an increased focus upon the subjective (i.e. satisfaction) over the objective (i.e. salary or position). This requires a change in the way that individuals and organisations approach 'career' where employability is a potential organisational and individual resource to achieving workplace and individual success. This is particularly true where

organisations can no longer provide security within one workplace but can instead enhance their employees' employability both within and outside of the organisation (Clarke, 2008). Therefore those individuals who are better able to adapt, create their own successes and cope with change and uncertainty are more likely to be valued by employers (Clarke & Patrickson, 2008; Haasler, 2013; Harms & Brummel, 2013). Ultimately, the most employable individual will arguably secure their current and future employment status (De Vos, De Hauw, & Van der Heijden, 2011). Furthermore, organisations who invest in creating an 'employability culture' will encourage employees to capitalise in their own employability which in turn may decrease intentions to leave the organisation (Nauta et al., 2009). This is in part due to research indicating that this investment will *"make the individual feel valued, and produces a higher level of motivation and commitment"* (Lips-Wiersma & Hall, 2007, p. 788)

Career researchers debate the existence of protean and boundaryless careers over the traditional/hierarchical career, suggesting that empirical research which identifies that there has indeed been a fundamental shift is lacking (Rodrigues & Guest, 2010; Vinkenburg & Weber, 2012). Going forward, recognising that a range of careers exist, yet developing employability will be necessary regardless of whether an individual is looking to move upwards within a traditional structure, or laterally across organisational boundaries (Clarke & Patrickson, 2008; Dries, Forrier, De Vos, & Pepermans, 2014).

In summary the focus of this doctorate is on 'career employability' across the range of career contexts including traditional, boundaryless and protean, where strategies to enhance employability may be the key to unlocking many positive individual outcomes – such as career satisfaction.

2.3. Theories, Frameworks and Measurement in Employability Research

2.3.1. What is Employability?

A single, widely used definition applicable in all contexts does not exist in the literature (Forrier & Sels, 2003; Vanhercke, De Cuyper, Peeters, & De Witte, 2014; Tymon, 2013). Whilst this is true for many psychological constructs it is important that employability research doesn't fall into the 'jingle-jangle fallacy' (e.g. emotional intelligence (Evans & Steptoe-Warren, 2015) and engagement (Shuck, Ghosh, Zigarmi, & Nimon, 2013)) where many measures and definitions exist within the

domain thus assuming parity where it does not exist. More recently it is clear that researchers are taking care to define employability and ascertain relationships between the different 'types' (Vanhercke et al., 2014). The definition utilised throughout this doctorate is:

“the continuous fulfilling, acquiring or creating of work through the optimal use of competences” (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006, p. 453)

2.3.2. Theoretical Underpinnings

In such a diverse field it is perhaps not surprising that employability literature cites many theoretical underpinnings. Table 2.1. outlines the key theoretical positions along with examples of research in support of these theories. Recently Veld, Semeijn and Van Vuuren (2015) have suggested an *“interactionist perspective on employability”* (p.868) utilising more than one theoretical basis. For example Veld et al., (2015) utilised both Human Capital Theory (HCT) and Social Exchange Theory (SET) and hypothesised that in line with HCT, investment in training and development of competence would lead to enhanced perceptions of employability. Furthermore, SET emphasised reciprocity between the willingness of the individual and the organisation to develop skills proposing this would also enhance employability perceptions. Whilst their findings did not fully support their hypotheses in that willingness did not enhance the relationship between the activities offered by an organisation and the perceptions of employability, it offers an alternative approach to positioning employability within multiple theoretical frameworks which interact with one another.

In line with the interactionist perspective, this doctorate utilises Conservation of Resources (COR) (Hobfoll, 2001) as a broad theoretical framework. OccPsychs will acquire employability resources throughout their career (for example human capital) which will enhance their objective and subjective career success. COR has been suggested as a useful theory to unite differing employability perspectives cited in the literature (2.4.3) (Vanhercke et al., 2014). However, OccPsychs may also construct their careers depending upon the availability of certain resources which will in turn promote their perceptions of their own employability and career success (Career Construction Theory, Savickas, 2005).

Table 2.1.

Theoretical Positions of Key Employability Research

Theoretical Perspective	Proposed relationship to employability
Conservation of Resources (COR) (Hobfoll, 2001)	Employability is a personal resource which enables individuals to better cope with challenging situations (De Cuyper et al., 2012) and can promote wellbeing and career success (Vanhercke et al., 2014).
Broaden and Build (Fredrickson, 2001)	Jobs with good resources, impact upon enjoyment, concentration and flow which improves supervisors ratings of employability competence (Van der Heijden & Bakker, 2011).
Career Construction Theory (CCT) (Savickas, 2005)	Identity is constructed throughout a career; within this framework employability can be enhanced by identity (Savickas, Nota, Rossier, Dauwalder, Duarte et al., 2009; Nazar & Van der Heijden, 2012).
Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964)	An individual's investment in (for example) education, training, work experience, higher education, competence development, tenure all improve their employability (Becker, 1964; Berntson et al., 2006; De Vos et al., 2011; Fugate et al., 2004; Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005; Wittekind et al., 2010; Veld et al., 2015)
Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964)	Employability is the joint responsibility of an individual and organisation where balance should be struck between effort from the individual and support from the organisation, yet limited empirical support (Dries et al., 2014; Veld et al., 2015; Van Dam, 2004).
Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1986)	Employability relates to identity and can be socially constructed through interactions with others (Ashforth, 2000) as identity is both "relational" and "comparative" (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p.16).

2.3.3. Input and Output Employability

Within the psychology literature there are two dichotomous employability perspectives defined by authors as, "input" or "output" (De Cuyper et al., 2012; Vanhercke et al., 2014); "antecedent" or "outcome" (Dries et al., 2014); and "objective" or "subjective" (Berntson et al., 2006). Both perspectives are subjective but have different areas of focus (Vanhercke et al., 2014; Veld et al., 2015).

Input perspectives define employability as an antecedent made up of knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics (KSAOs) that may assist individuals in finding or retaining work. Forrier and Sels (2003) believed that employability could not be measured directly due to the range of components involved and should instead be measured by the "process that influences an individual's chances of a job" (p. 106). Examples include competences (e.g. Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006) and dispositions (e.g. Fugate et al., 2004) which could enhance an individual's employability. In contrast, *output* viewpoints measure employability

directly by asking individuals to make an assessment of their own ability to find jobs and remain in employment and is often called self-perceived employability (e.g. Rothwell & Arnold, 2007; Berntson et al., 2006). This approach assumes that the proof of employability is in employment or perceptions of achieving employment and this is what drives an individual to make positive or negative attributions of their employability (Dries et al., 2014). As such it typically involves individuals making an internal assessment of factors such as KSAOs, external issues (i.e. the availability of jobs) and other individual aspects such as confidence or socio-economic status. Research into output approaches has occurred primarily in organisational change settings to understand how perceptions of employability relate to factors such as life satisfaction, turnover intention (De Cuyper, Van der Heijden, & De Witte, 2011), and burnout (De Cuyper et al., 2012).

This professional doctorate will examine both 'types' of employability using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Antecedent approaches will be applied in identifying factors which can predict career outcomes and perceptions of employability will be examined qualitatively in order to add depth of understanding of the construct.

Whilst a significant body of literature exists on employability, empirical research is sparse. Exceptions are found in the Human Resource Management (HRM) field and typically outside of the UK where clear advancements in assessment of employability utilising Structural Equation Modelling exist (De Vos et al., 2011; Rothwell et al., 2009). Many UK publications focus upon proposing models or frameworks, particularly within an HEI context. This is indicative of employability as a relatively new research topic, and suggests the challenges of conducting empirical research in the field. Nonetheless further research is necessary to identify whether findings in other countries can be replicated in UK career populations, particularly in terms of understanding the relationship between antecedents of employability and in the prediction of career success.

2.3.4. Employability and Career Success

An important distinction is made between employability and employment. Industry typically utilises employment statistics e.g. 'in work' or 'not' as a measure of employability. In the career literature this is best recognised by utilising unemployed populations and tracking their employment pre and post an employability intervention (e.g. McArdle, Waters, Briscoe, & Hall, 2007). Additionally, HEIs utilise

DLHE data to identify the employability of graduates from their programmes compared to others. This approach has been criticised for being overly simplistic and focusing more upon the role of the university, assuming that they can somehow take credit for graduates' achievements (Harvey, 2001). The reality is far more complicated where external issues i.e. labour market forces and availability of work (Cranmer, 2006; Danson, 2005; McQuaid, 2006; McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005) and "*irrational activities of graduate recruiters*" (Harvey, 2001, p.1) play a part in the employment statistic. Employability is not a linear construct but rather one in which graduates and HEIs can influence, but ultimately it is the employer who turns employability into employment (Harvey, 2001; Wilton, 2014). Employability arguably "*is an attribution employers make about the probability that job candidates will make positive contributions to their organisations*" and unfortunately is not always one based upon fact and logic (Hogan et al., 2013, p.11). The majority of definitions of employability focus upon the ability of the individual to find work, keep work or find a new job if necessary (Brown, Hesketh, & Williams, 2003; Clarke, 2008) and fail to recognise the distinction between work and fulfilling work (Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). In other words understanding the difference between objective and subjective markers of success as an outcome of employability - and not as separate factors - is missing in the literature (De Vos et al., 2011).

Research has therefore clarified the important differentiation between employment and employability. It must be noted that employability does not necessarily lead to employment, thus highlighting the different features associated with both concepts (Harvey, 2001; Fugate et al., 2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Research on employability and career success has developed along parallel but separate paths, implying that there is a poor understanding of how the two are related to one another (De Vos et al., 2011; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Literature further suggests that the focus for psychological research into employability has been in identifying individual factors that predict career success (Hogan et al., 2013), and whilst this research is abundant the same focus has not been given to identifying what promotes employability (Baruch & Bozionelos, 2011). De Vos et al., (2011) believed that in the new working environment of boundaryless careers employability is paramount to ensuring career success, a view which is also supported by Fugate et al., (2004), Hall, Zhu and Yan (2002) and Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006). This relationship has received relatively little research attention in the UK.

Career success is typically defined in one of two ways; *objective* or *subjective* (Ng et al., 2005). Objective career success is primarily concerned with extrinsic factors such as salary, amount of promotions, organisational level, in other words factors which can be observed (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1994). Some researchers believe that this approach is necessary to ensure representative findings through utilising reliable and tangible standards (Hogan et al., 2013). More recent attention has been turned to subjective career success which is concerned with an individual's perceptions of their success (also labelled career satisfaction) which includes perceptions of added value in the marketplace (marketability) as well as satisfaction (De Vos et al., 2011; Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990; Hofmans, Dries, & Pepermans, 2008; Ng & Feldman, 2014; Spurk, Kauffeld, Barthauer, & Heinemann, 2015). This shift towards satisfaction could partly be due to the discussion presented earlier regarding changes to organisational structures from hierarchical to flat and thus a move from traditional to boundaryless careers (2.3) where measures such as number of promotions may no longer be indicative of success (Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003). However, critics argue that it does not provide sufficiently rigorous standards to produce generalised findings as typically those individuals who are happier tend also to rate most things more favourably (Hogan et al., 2013).

Studies of employability and career success have typically been conducted outside of the UK. For example, in the Netherlands by Van der Heijden and colleagues and in the US where more studies examine career success (for example Ng and colleagues). More cross cultural studies are required to understand how these concepts relate. It is only through conducting more research that it can be truly representative, particularly when utilised in meta-analyses studies.

The following section focuses upon both the antecedents of employability and objective and subjective career success, identifying where parity exists as well as how employability can serve as a predictor of career success.

2.3.5. An Overarching Framework for Employability

Three critical success factors in navigating the boundaryless career – “knowing how”, “knowing why” and “knowing whom” have been cited in the literature (Arthur, Inkson, & Pringle, 1999; Eby et al., 2003). Despite different employability perspectives (outlined in 2.2.3) these three factors can be used as an overarching framework in which to position employability research. Furthermore, whilst

employability perspectives may differ there is general consensus that it is a multidimensional construct (Fugate et al., 2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2005, 2006; Tymon, 2013) and consists of adaptive behaviours. As such it relates to the concept of career adaptability (Savickas, 1997, 2002, 2005; Savickas et al., 2009), which essentially focuses upon the resources that an individual possesses to enable them to not only manage current career related activities but to also look to the future to identify and adjust according to potential threats (Inkson, Dries, & Arnold, 2015). Career adaptability is discussed in more detail in chapter 7 and later in this section under the heading *personal adaptability*.

A widely cited employability conceptualisation by Fugate et al., (2004) brings to life to the knowing how, why and whom concept in the form of three “*multidimensional construct(s)*” (page 26). Figure, 2.2 outlines Fugate et al., (2004) model which, whilst theoretical, paved the way for a variety of research into these broad concepts by suggesting that employability could be measured thus making it an important consideration in careers (Hogan et al., 2013). Despite positioning employability as an antecedent, this model provides a contextual framework for employability research (both input and output). This is due in part to the vast majority of employability research fitting into one of the three employability constructs and essentially relating to the proposition that employability is a psycho-social construct. In its basic form, it consists of person-centred KSAOs which are not measured directly but rather through the factors of career identity, personal adaptability and social and human capital which combine to create employability. Individual agency was advocated embedding employability responsibility away from the organisation, hence it is domain independent. The following section details the three constructs making reference to both input and output employability research, and demonstrates the flexibility of the model.

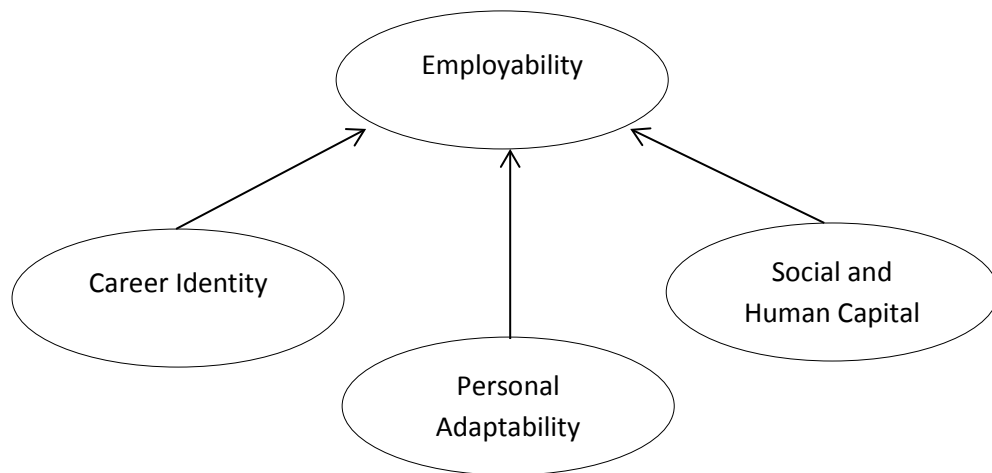


Figure 2.2. Fugate et al., (2004) Conceptualisation of Employability as a “multi-dimensional” construct

2.3.5.1. Career Identity

Career identity (i.e. an understanding of ‘self’ in a work context) was suggested as the driving force in motivating an individual to fulfil their employability potential. Individuals direct their energies based upon who they are or who they want to be in a work context (Fugate et al., 2004; London, 1983). Career identity also relates to goals, personality, values and includes a complex relationship between personal identity, role identity and organisational identity. Career identity (or ‘knowing why’) has been shown to relate to career success (subjective success, internal and external marketability) suggesting that those individuals with a strong identity will exert effort into developing those skills required to increase their organisational value (Eby et al., 2003).

Research into identity has utilised many measures making it difficult to truly appreciate the concept. Noe, Noe and Bachhuber (1990) developed a measure of career identity which focused upon whether activities individuals pursued were related to their job, for example “to what extent do you spend your free time on activities that will help your job?” (page 348). McArdle et al., (2007) utilised the career self-efficacy (Kossek, Roberts, Fisher, & Demarr, 1998) and career exploration survey (Stumpf, Colarelli, & Hartman, 1983) as identity measures. Fugate et al., (2004) argued that career identity was longitudinal as it required an understanding of the past, present and future. Furthermore, identities were

described as unique and individual, and only through developing identity would individuals achieve employability. This suggests that qualitative narrative techniques may enable a deeper understanding of the construct and can be explained by Career Construction Theory (CCT) as:

“the interpretive and interpersonal processes through which individuals construct themselves, impose direction on their vocational behaviour, and make meaning of their careers” (Savickas, 2013 in Brown & Lent p.147).

Proponents of CCT argue that the best career theories link the career to economic and cultural issues. For example Savickas (2005) suggested that the trait and factor approach of matching an individual to a job emerged in the 20th Century to increase productivity, something important for an output based economy seen during the industrial era. Swanson and Fouad (2015) further described how there has been a shift from a positivist epistemology in careers (e.g. objective matching approach) to a more “post-modern” (p. 206) epistemology where career identity is constructed by individuals through story-telling and meaning making. This reflects the changes to careers in the 21st Century outlined in this chapter (i.e. less traditional and more boundaryless) which arguably involves navigating many job changes while maintaining a clear personal and social identity (Savickas, 2005). This perspective is also echoed by research advocating the importance of developing identity in university graduates through encouraging reflection upon their experiences to foster employability (Brown & Hesketh, 2004).

Research into identity has recently taken a career narrative approach, where theorists and practitioners have suggested real benefits in enabling individuals to tell their own stories and make sense of their realities, as such a career can be “storied” rather than “measured” (Del Corso & Rehfuss, 2011, p.334; Savickas, 2005; Nazar & Van der Heijden, 2012). A narrative is not necessarily concerned with the facts but rather an individual’s perceptions of reality (Spence, 1982) as this is often what drives behaviour. Individuals therefore construct “*representations of realities*” (Nazar & Van der Heijden, 2014, p.147) based upon their experiences which enable them to direct their vocational choices through relationships with the outside environment. Narrative approaches enable individuals to understand the overarching identity from a perspective of where they have been, where they are now and where they would like to go in the future. This encourages next steps based upon an appreciation of values, motivations and strengths (Del Corso & Rehfuss, 2011).

In an employability context, Nazar (2008) investigated career identity through narratives of male Chilean managers summarising five main identities for this group. Those forged through 1) change and learning; 2) serendipity; 3) self-enhancement; 4) agency and 5) plateau. In subsequent research the impact of identity was investigated in perceptions of employability which reported that in 25 Chilean middle-aged miners employability could be explained by the career identity created from individual experiences. The term “*career identity complexity*” (p.152) was developed to explain how the diversity of experiences and social interactions could lead to the creation of an identity which explained the past, present and future work selves. As such identity was not formed by one experience but by many interlinking interactions including roles, relationships and events. This research was conducted in a specific population and the authors welcomed further investigation from a variety of sectors and countries to appreciate the applicability of their findings in a broader context (Nazar & Van der Heijden, 2012).

2.3.5.2. Personal Adaptability

A second construct of employability, *personal adaptability* was defined as possessing both the ability and desire to change to suit situations. Research has linked adaptability to positive career outcomes, in that those individuals who are better able to adapt to the environment tend to report more successful careers (Crant, 2000; Pulakos Schmitt, Dorsey, Arad, Borman et al., 2002; Savickas, 1997). As stated, adaptability is generally considered an important factor in employability and also relates to career success. *Proactive Personality* proposed by Bateman and Crant (1993) is often used as a pseudo measure of adaptability (Fugate et al., 2004; Fugate & Kinicki, 2008; McArdle et al., 2007) and suggests that proactive individuals will not only predict and plan for future challenges; they will also manipulate potential future outcomes to positive affect (Grant & Ashford, 2008). Researchers suggest that in the new career, proactive behaviours have become more important, enabling individuals to assume responsibility for career management (De Vos, De Clippeler, & DeWilde, 2009). Proactive personality has been linked to predicting achievement in academic contexts (Bateman & Crant, 1993), finding work (Brown, Cober, Kane, Levy, & Shalhoop, 2006) career success (Crant, 2000; Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999) career satisfaction and internal and external marketability (Eby et al., 2003) and career progression (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001a, 2001b). Two meta-analytic reviews indicate the presence of a relationship between proactive personality and objective career success (Ng et al.,

2005) and subjective career success (Ng & Feldman, 2014) and research also suggests that proactive personality is particularly important in the boundaryless career (Eby et al., 2003). See further reference to adaptability in 2.3.6. and 2.3.7.

2.3.5.3. Social and Human Capital

Finally, *social and human capital* refers to the size and strength of social networks as well as individual factors such as education, work experience, training etc. where education and experience have typically been suggested as the strongest predictors of career progression (Fugate et al., 2004). This area has perhaps received the most attention in career literature and is related to the concepts of “knowing how” and “knowing whom”. *Human Capital* refers to ‘what’ an individual knows and *social capital* ‘who’ an individual knows (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2006). Research into human capital is concerned primarily with the training, education and experience an individual has (Ng & Feldman, 2010). This is seen as an investment on the behalf of an individual (and potentially an organisation) and as such can lead to positive outcomes such as higher salaries or increased productivity (Becker, 1964; Berntson et al., 2006). There is also research to suggest that tenure relates to opportunities for promotion, and extrinsic career success markers such as higher pay and status (Judge & Bretz, 1991; Judge et al., 1994). Whilst traditionally research has indicated that human capital can boost employability and career success, more recently the relationship with career success has been challenged. For example, in their meta-analysis Ng and Feldman (2014) suggested that human capital or “skills related hurdles” (page 172) which included education, changes in job and employer and participation in training and development were not related to subjective career success with the exception of participation in training and development. This supports an earlier meta-analysis by Ng et al., (2005) which indicated that level of education was only moderately related to objective career success ($r=.21$). Hogan et al., (2013) reviewed the evidence relating to human capital and objective career success and suggested that across a range of studies the relationships were at best modest (between $r=0.21$ and $r=0.43$, with non-significant effect sizes of $d=.39$). This indicated that whilst there was a small relationship, other factors played a significant role in supporting career success which could be particularly true in professions where entry level qualifications are already high such as Occupational Psychology, Hogan et al., (2013) referred to this as being “smart enough” (p.5). Research suggests that graduate employers are less interested in the type of degree or level of qualification and favour more the personality or other softer, transferable skills

(Branine, 2008) which become the differentiating factors for individuals with already higher levels of qualification. This could potentially be due to assumptions made by employers that if an individual has a degree they must also have, for example intelligence and conscientiousness (Hogan et al., 2013).

Research has focussed upon the relationships between predictors (human capital) and outcomes (career success) and fails therefore to consider why these variables predict certain outcomes (Ng & Feldman, 2010). One piece of empirical research utilising meta-analytical structural equation modelling has suggested that the relationship between human capital (measured by level of education and organisational tenure) and objective career success is mediated by the relationship between cognitive ability and conscientiousness and in-role and extra-role performance (Ng & Feldman, 2010). However they stated that whilst they included conscientiousness as a mediator, some studies would imply that it is a disposition and thus predictor. They concluded that human capital has both a direct and indirect effect on objective measures of career success. Finally, research suggests that whilst human capital is made up of many facets, rather than looking at it as one whole, the different types of human capital should be identified and measured, particularly as there may be interrelationships between the factors i.e. level of education may impact upon tenure due to time spent on achieving an education (Ng et al., 2005; Ng & Feldman, 2010).

The importance of networks or *social capital* has been discussed with reference to both employability (Fugate et al., 2004) and career success (Eby et al., 2003; Ng & Feldman, 2014; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001). It is assumed that those individuals who make best use of their social networks will enhance their employability and also report higher career success, due to utilising social relationships in the pursuit of positive accomplishments (Coleman, 1990). Social capital has been conceptualised in a variety of ways including size and strength of networks (Fugate et al., 2004), external organisational relationships (Grimland, Vigoda-Gadot, & Baruch (2011), and support from mentors (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004). Eby et al., (2003) explained that this was evidence of “knowing whom” which consisted of participation in a mentoring relationship and the size of networks within and outside an organisation. With the exception of mentoring (which only significantly related to perceptions of external marketability), the size of internal and external networks related to perceptions of career success and internal and external marketability. Eby et al., (2003) concluded that qualitative

analysis to understand in further depth how careers evolve in different organisations and sectors would be beneficial, yet to date qualitative research into employability is sparse.

Whilst there is general consensus that social capital is important for employability and career success, interestingly the empirical evidence is modest in support of this claim. For example in a longitudinal study in an unemployed group in Australia McArdle et al., (2007) identified that whilst networking and social support contributed to employability at baseline, networking was not a significant contributor six months later. They concluded that some aspects of social support such as networking were important in securing initial employment as those with well-developed social networks will harness these in job search behaviours for example introducing them to career opportunities. This may be less important if they fail to find work and may withdraw from their social circle and therefore reduce their personal resources.

Whilst research has sought to measure social capital in terms of size and strength, perhaps understanding how networks are utilised at different career stages would be more beneficial. Research on social capital could benefit from qualitative methodologies to identify how networks are utilised, rather than whom or how many networks individuals have.

This section has summarised the three constructs outlined by Fugate et al., (2004) to provide a broad structure in understanding the concept of employability and the current research landscape into each of these constructs. Research outlined indicates the importance of studying various components of employability utilising mixed methods approaches and ensuring the appropriateness of these measures in context.

The following sections will focus upon two antecedent measures of employability (competence and dispositions), self-perceived employability as well as the individual factors which should be considered in employability research.

2.3.6. Antecedent Employability: Dispositions

Dispositions refer to the attitudes that individuals possess to enhance their employability (Vanhercke et al., 2014). This is best explained by Fugate (2006) and

Fugate and Kinicki (2008) who extended their initial conceptualisation to define employability as:

*“a constellation of individual differences that predispose employees to (pro) actively adapt to their work and career environments. Employability facilitates the identification and realization of job and career opportunities both within and between organisations. Conceived this way, employability is a **disposition** that captures individual characteristics that foster adaptive behaviours and positive employment outcomes” (Fugate, 2006, p. 20)*

Research by Fugate and colleagues attempted to make better links between the individual and the environment suggesting that employability is both reactive and proactive in that the individual must respond to the environment but must also be prepared for the future. The dispositional approach was defined as being something which ‘follows’ an individual independent of context. They proposed five dimensions based upon a literature review of applied research into careers with a specific emphasis on career adaptability (Savickas, 1997, 2002, 2005) and consisted: *openness to changes at work, work and career resilience, work and career proactivity, career motivation and work identity*. A Dispositional Measure of Employability (DME) tool was developed to measure the five related yet distinct dispositions as well understand its ability to predict outcomes such as positive emotions in relation to change and affective commitment to change (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008).

Alternative measures of dispositions include *willingness to change jobs* and *willingness to develop competences* (De Cuyper et al., 2012; Van Dam, 2004), *opportunity awareness* (De Cuyper et al., 2012; Wittekind et al., 2010), and *self-esteem* (Clarke, 2008; Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007; De Cuyper et al., 2012). Literature suggests that dispositions relate to a range of employment outcomes from burnout (De Cuyper et al., 2012) to one’s own perceptions of employability (Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007). Research has yet to demonstrate direct relationships with career success in working populations.

More recently organisational research has focused upon the concept of ‘psychological capital’ (PsyCap) proposed by Luthans et al., (2006). PsyCap is:

“an individual’s positive psychological state of development and is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering

toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success” (Luthans et al., 2006, p. 3).

It is described as a higher order factor than human and social capital. It is also argued that aspects of both human and social capital are essential in developing PsyCap but that PsyCap has a “*greater impact than social or human capital by themselves and that the whole (PsyCap) is greater than the sum of its parts (human and social capital)*” (Luthans et al., 2006, p.21). Perceived in this way it is possible that PsyCap may enable greater understanding as to why some individuals experience greater career success than others. In particular the suggestion that PsyCap can be enhanced adds a unique dimension from an applied perspective, indicating that in the construction of career certain developable personal resources could enable an individual to experience more positive outcomes.

PsyCap has been shown to predict a range of positive outcomes such as performance (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007), satisfaction and commitment (Larson & Luthans, 2006; Luthans, Norman, Avolio, & Avey, 2008), positive work attitudes (Larson & Luthans, 2006). In an educational context PsyCap has been found to relate to academic performance in business students (Luthans, Luthans & Jensen, 2012) and to be positively correlated to nursing students’ competence (Liao & Liu, 2015). In addition, research on the individual components of PsyCap has suggested positive relationships between efficacy and optimism and academic success (Valentine, DuBois, & Cooper, 2004), hope and academic performance (Snyder, Shorey, Cheavens, Pulvers, Adams et al., 2002) and resilience and academic performance (Martin & Marsh, 2008).

Whilst the literature examining the relationship between PsyCap and employability and PsyCap and career success is sparse, literature relating to individual components of PsyCap does exist. Perhaps greatest attention has been afforded to self-efficacy (SE) with research suggesting that there is a relationship between SE, salary and subjective career success (Abele & Spurk, 2009a). Research evidence is contradictory with some suggesting no link to career success whilst others proposing that career success can in fact predict self-efficacy. It is believed that this is due to self-efficacy being boosted by experiencing positive events rather than self-efficacy leading to positive experiences (in line with the original conceptualisation by Bandura, 1982). The issue is further complicated by authors

such as McArdle et al., (2007) utilising career self-efficacy as a measure of *Identity* when testing Fugate et al., (2004) model.

Generally there is broad agreement among employability researchers that self-efficacy is a related yet conceptually distinct construct to employability (Berntson, Naswall, & Sverke, 2008; Fugate et al., 2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). This relationship has only been empirically tested utilising perceived employability measures where it has been suggested that employability causes self-efficacy due to the accumulation of positive experiences (Berntson et al., 2008). Authors also suggested that utilising homogeneous occupational groups may be a way of establishing stronger relationships between self-efficacy and employability. Contrary to this, in a longitudinal study self-efficacy was also found to have a positive impact upon career success (status and salary) three years following graduation and career satisfaction seven years following graduation (Abele & Spurk, 2009a).

Other areas of PsyCap to receive research attention include *optimism* and *resilience*. For example career *optimism* has been linked to enhanced job satisfaction and external marketability in a study of 81 research assistants in Germany (Spurk et al., 2015). Optimism was proposed as an “*adaptive psychological resource*” (p. 143) which individuals could develop to support their career success. Resilience has been suggested as a predictor of job search behaviours in the unemployed, although this relationship was theoretical and not empirically tested (Fleig-Palmer, Luthans, & Mandernach, 2009). In an unpublished Master’s thesis psychological capital was found to be a predictor of employability in the unemployed (N=65) where resilience alone significantly predicted 39% of the variance in employability (Morrell, 2013). Finally, resilience has been suggested as an important personal resource to negotiate the new psychological contract (Luthans, Youssef-Morgan, & Avolio, 2015) and *work and career resilience* was also identified by Fugate and Kinicki (2008) in the DME.

Whilst *hope* has not received much research attention in an employability context, it does relate to goal setting which has been shown to relate to objective career success (Abele & Spurk, 2009c). Furthermore, Fugate and Kinicki (2008) referred to *career motivation* as setting goals and being a fundamental aspect of dispositional employability.

The research into dispositions is complex and consists of numerous definitions and conceptualisations. There is also a lack of clarity around what the factors are that make up the concept. Nonetheless, what is clear is that there are many potential individual, dispositional predictors of employability and career success. An appreciation of the dispositions which are necessary in an OP context could serve to support the debate (within a COR framework), and rather than being domain independent, perhaps developing an understanding of the factors necessary within a domain such as occupational psychology will be useful. Further, utilising the emerging yet under researched 'psychological capital' as an overarching framework in this domain will be interesting, particularly as research suggests it can be developed (Luthans et al., 2007).

2.3.7. Antecedent Employability: Competence and Competency

A second antecedent to receive empirical attention defines employability as a competence, in other words a set of abilities which can support employability (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2005, 2006; Veld et al., 2015). Whilst there is broad support for the relationship between competence employability and career success, to the author's knowledge there have been no studies conducted using UK samples.

In their conceptualisation, employability - like dispositions - consisted of five multidimensional competences and is often referred to as '*career potential*'. A competence relates to 'what' i.e. an achievement or a skill (Rowe, 1995). It is worth noting that Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden's (2006) employability definition also referred to "*fulfilling*" work which unlike others did not simply relate to employment, but additionally considered the subjective or career satisfaction aspect. Based upon an earlier conceptualisation suggesting that competence can support life-long employability (Van der Heijden, 2002), *occupational expertise* sits at the heart of the model and relates to technical or specialist knowledge owned by the individual. Within occupational expertise exists the notion of understanding strengths and development areas in a particular field and it is this concept which makes the competence model particularly relevant to an OP audience. Occupational expertise is complemented by four additional competences *anticipation and optimisation* (preparing for future challenges - a proactive competence), *personal flexibility* (being adaptable - an adaptive competence), *corporate sense* (an understanding of organisational issues - a political competence) and *balance*

(appreciation of both organisational and personal goals) (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006).

The competence approach sits between hard organisational approaches which focus upon 'management of labour' and softer approaches aimed at increasing employee commitment. It is argued that in order to perform competently i.e. "competent action" an individual's motives, personality, values etc. will all be important; yet the focus is upon the individual employability competence (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006 p. 452). In turn, employability competence could lead to improved career success i.e. a mediator particularly in middle to higher level employees and is therefore most relevant to professional workers.

Empirical research utilising the competence approach provides considerable support for the factorability of the multidimensional model and indicates predictive power of some aspects of burnout, particularly emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation (De Cuyper et al., 2012), objective and subjective career success (Forrier & Sels, 2003; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006; Van der Heijden, de Lange, Demerouti, & Van der Heijde, 2009), and is unique from constructs such as self-efficacy (Fugate et al., 2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006; Berntson et al., 2008).

Research utilising a competence approach has further indicated its flexibility as the measure developed by Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) has been used in both antecedent and self-perceived employability studies, the latter utilising a shortened version of the full competence measure focusing upon expertise and flexibility (De Vos et al., 2011). Perceptions of employability were found to mediate the relationship between competency development (both participation in and support for) and career success measured by marketability and career satisfaction (De Vos et al., 2011). This indicates that those employees and organisations who value continuous learning will in turn promote individual employability and perceptions of career success

Further research utilising a competence approach to employability (focusing upon occupational expertise, anticipation and optimisation, and personal flexibility) has suggested that formal and informal learning can improve an individual's employability and that older employees are less likely to take on formal learning which impacts upon their employability (Froehlich, Beausaert, Segers, & Gerken, 2014).

Whilst the greatest proportion of empirical research into employability competence has utilised Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden's (2006) assessment tool, some research exists which suggests that it can also be measured by job-related and transferable skills (De Cuyper et al., 2012; Wanberg, Hough, & Song, 2002; Wittekind et al., 2010). Additionally competency has been referred to by Eby et al., (2003) who suggested that three 'career competencies' identified earlier of *knowing why*, *knowing whom* and *knowing how* (based upon a theoretical proposition by Arthur et al., 1999) could predict perceptions of career success, and internal and external marketability in 458 alumni from a Greek university. They suggested that these three competencies were important in supporting individuals through the boundaryless career. In their approach the *knowing how* competency referred to career skills and job knowledge as something distinct from human capital yet related to continuous learning. They suggested that further research should focus upon understanding the relationships between specific factors indicating that perhaps certain aspects of *knowing why* (such as identity) may be antecedents of *knowing whom* (such as network development). They further proposed that a future focus should be placed upon appreciating the role of external and internal marketability as important to the career success relationship.

Whilst there is a wealth of research into the competence approach to employability, research on working UK populations is notably absent with primary foci being in the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Sweden among others, and often utilising specific organisational populations. Understanding whether this approach works across cultural boundaries and different careers in the prediction of career success is therefore necessary (De Cuyper et al., 2012).

2.3.8. Self-perceived employability

Self-perceived employability is receiving increased attention in the research literature (Veld et al., 2015), whilst not the primary focus of this doctorate the concept will be discussed with reference to identity formation (see also discussion of identity in 2.3.5.1.). The emphasis of this research has been around how to best measure employability directly where individuals make an assessment of their own ability to find work or remain in employment. This appraisal leads to an individualised positive or negative attribution of employability (Dries et al., 2014). Research into self-perceived employability has focused upon the development of tools to measure the concept and then relate these to organisational outcomes such

as burnout, engagement, commitment, participation in competency development (Berntson et al., 2008; Berntson et al., 2006; De Cuyper et al., 2012; De Cuyper et al., 2011; De Vos et al., 2011). Furthermore, literature suggests that individuals will act on their own perceptions of reality, therefore understanding perceptions of employability would seem important in determining how individuals may behave in the future (De Cuyper et al., 2011; Van Emmerik, Schreurs, De Cuyper, Jawahar, & Peeters, 2012). Rothwell and Arnold (2007) developed the self-perceived employability scale due to the lack of a satisfactory measure of this concept i.e. a direct measure of self-perceived employability. Their scale was trialled upon 324 Human Resources (HR) professionals. The results of principal components analysis revealed the presence of two dimensions *internal* (employability within the organisation) and *external* (employability outside of the organisation) which the authors defined as components of self-perceived employability. They identified that self-perceived employability was distinct yet related to concepts such as career success, supporting research suggesting that being employable will lead to greater career success (Hogan et al., 2013).

Whilst Fugate et al., (2004) model was particularly important in defining antecedent employability it is possible that individuals make an assessment of these factors in the appraisal of their employability and whilst not measured directly in this thesis are all important considerations. Previous sections also explained how self-perceived employability has been a consideration in both dispositional and competence employability. Career identity for example, has been demonstrated to be related to perceptions of employability in young adults in Australia (Praskova, Creed, & Hood, 2015) and Chilean managers (Nazar & Van der Heijden, 2012). Additionally, research suggests that human capital consists of perceptions of employability (Berntson et al., 2006), which contribute to a conceptual circularity.

In summary, whilst research has suggested that self-perceived employability can be measured, the concept will not be addressed quantitatively within the current thesis instead qualitative techniques will be utilised to gain depth of understanding as to how OccPsychs contextualise and explain their employability. The focus is also to utilise competence employability and dispositions to explain the relationship to career success. This approach links to recent literature which suggests that identities are shaped by ones interactions with the world and as such can be best told through stories (Del Corso & Rehfuss, 2011; Savickas, 2005; Nazar & Van der Heijden, 2012, 2014).

2.3.9. Contextual factors impacting upon antecedent and self-perceived employability and career success

The three approaches identified give insight into the factors which may lead to an employable and successful individual. These approaches alone are unlikely to account for all variance in career success (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Researchers have therefore sought to identify other contextual factors which impact upon an individual's employability and career success. The factors discussed here have been identified across the range of employability approaches (input and output).

Typically contextual factors are less controllable and may moderate the employability relationship. For example research consistently suggests that employability declines with chronological age utilising a range of employability measures (Clarke & Patrickson, 2008; Fugate et al., 2004; McQuaid, 2006; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2005; Van der Heijden et al., 2009). Age is also related to subjective career success (Ng et al., 2005) and organisational tenure (Eby et al., 2003). In addition, men tend to view themselves as more employable than women (Berntson et al., 2008; Flecker, Meil, & Pollert, 1998; De Cuyper et al., 2011) and typically report higher objective career success (Ng et al., 2005; Van der Heijden et al., 2009). Finally, those individuals higher up in an organisation view themselves as more employable (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007); and longest serving employees typically have more opportunities for promotion and higher pay (Judge & Bretz, 1991), but lower tenure individuals may also have more of an orientation towards employability (van Dam, 2004); geographic location and perceptions of local labour markets can also impact upon perceived employability (Berntson et al., 2006; McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005; McQuaid, 2006). With such a myriad of potential impact factors it is essential to ensure that individual and structural variables are controlled for in any employability research whilst also appreciating and accommodating the range of factors which could potentially serve as facilitators or barriers to employability and ultimately career success.

A recent meta-analysis by Ng and Feldman (2014) found no support for factors relating to individual background (such as gender, ethnicity, marital status, socioeconomic status) impacting upon subjective measures of career success. Yet previous employability research suggested that there were relationships between

these factors and an individual's rating of their employability, particularly age (Van der Heijden et al., 2009).

Whilst individual factors are considered important in employability, with the exception of age they have not been typically accounted for in antecedent approaches, with the focus being on their role in an individual's perceptions of their own employability i.e. output models. Furthermore, research into more structural issues i.e. those impacting from an external environment have received less attention, except for a small proportion on the impact of local labour markets on employability (McQuaid, 2006; McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005). Understanding the relationship between certain individual and structural or context specific factors is therefore an important avenue for research, particularly when attempting to identify what can facilitate or hinder an individual's employability within an occupational domain.

2.3.10. Relationships between antecedents, perceptions and contextual factors

At a surface level it is clear to see that there are crossovers between dispositions and competences, both claim that employability is an antecedent which is not measured directly but rather indirectly through multi-dimensional constructs. Both approaches identify adaptability as an essential aspect whether as a competence ('anticipation and optimisation') or disposition ('work and career proactivity'). Fugate and Kinicki (2008) argued that the essential difference is that a competence approach describes what people do whereas dispositional employability is more related to traits or what people have or bring with them to any work context. They further claimed that competences are situation specific, yet dispositions are not. Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) suggested that the competence measure is domain independent and can therefore be applied to a range of occupational groups, yet they argue that the *occupational expertise* element does depend upon achieving a certain level of proficiency within the domain. One difference is that competence measures are applicable at higher level occupations, those where being an 'expert' is essential. As such in a professional domain such as OP, a competence approach may have more relevance and help to define interventions to enhance employability. A further explanation is that competence employability could be a mediator between dispositions and career success outcomes, in that individuals may have particular dispositions towards developing competence which

could predict career success. A model demonstrating this approach can be seen in Figure 2.3. (based upon a presentation given by Van der Heijden (2015) and also mirrors the researchers own perspective defined by the literature review). Further support for this mediated model can also be assumed by Fugate and Kinicki's (2008) definition where it is proposed that dispositions serve to “*foster adaptive behaviours*” (p.504) which could explain competences. Empirical research testing these claims is missing in the extant literature.

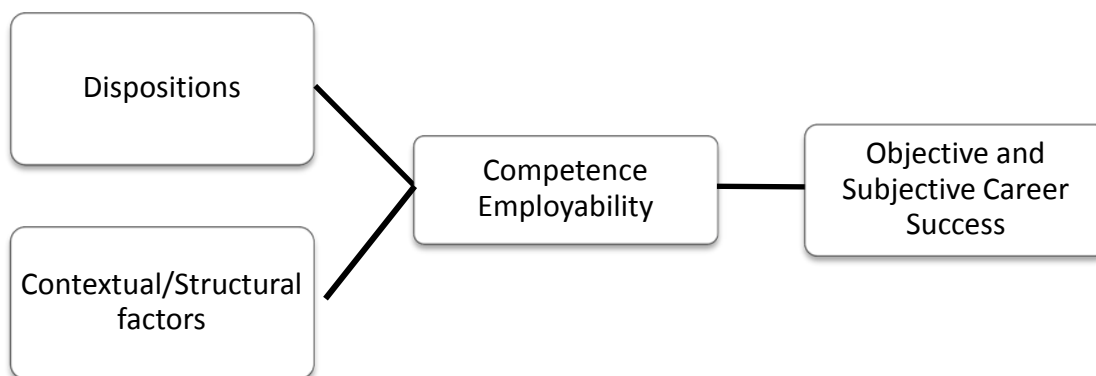


Figure 2.3. Competence employability as a mediator between dispositions, individual and structural factors and objective and subjective career success (based upon Van der Heijden, 2015)

Recent research has also intimated that utilising approaches to employability which account for occupational specific “*knowledge and skills, generic competences and dispositions can be important, particularly in the current era of changing job requirements*”. (De Cuyper et al., 2012 p.170). The essential argument here is that knowledge of a specific domain is no longer sufficient to meet the demands of employers in the current economic climate, as such utilising a range of both dispositions and competences is potentially the only way that an individual can ensure sustainable employability.

Understanding the relationship between employability competence and dispositions presents an important focus for future research. Vanhercke et al., (2014) for example summarised the psychological literature on employability, which supported claims made in this doctorate that the use of different definitions, participants and theories can lead to confusion in interpretation and applicability of results. Vanhercke et al., (2014) further suggested that even at the measurement level competence and dispositional approaches appeared similar, despite researchers suggesting that they were different. In conclusion measures used should be

conceptually distinct. There is also relatively little research identifying whether occupation specific factors (i.e. contextual or structural factors) can impact upon career success and should be considered. It could be argued that some aspects cannot be measured adequately in self-report psychometric tools (e.g. self-perceived employability and identity development), understanding qualitatively the individual predictors of career success and employability to enable more depth of analysis, particularly around identity formation is warranted (Nazar & Van der Heijden, 2012). It is also plausible that quantitative approaches have failed to adequately measure the intricacies of certain antecedents and as such this has led to conflicting findings, into the importance of factors such as social and human capital. In order to fully understand the employability and career success relationship in OccPsych graduates, utilisation of mixed methods will enable the researcher to not only appreciate which factors may impact upon OccPsychs careers, but also identify how they have been utilised to positive effect, and as such inform interventions at various career stages.

To conclude, the literature review has highlighted the current position in the employability literature and identified where this literature could add value when applied to an OP population. There are some important avenues for future research which will enable a breadth and depth look at the employability perspective of those individuals with an OP qualification and as such contribute to both theory and professional practice.

2.4. Research Aims

In light of the literature presented and occupational context multiple research aims have been proposed. These aims are threefold and intend to impact upon the professional context, theoretical understanding and the researchers own development of professional practice.

2.4.1. Aims relating to the Professional Context

At the broadest level the aims within this context refer to engaging the profession to raise awareness of the issues of employability. More specifically this includes:

- Identification of the OP specific barriers and facilitators to employability (chapters 3 and 4)

- Identification of the relationship between antecedent employability and career outcomes (chapter 6),
- Gathering intelligence on career destinations of MSc OP graduates (chapter 5),
- Appreciation of the reality of working as an individual with an OP qualification with specific reference to identity and self-perceived employability (chapter 7)
- A rationale to inform interventions improve employability for individuals, MSc Course Directors and the DOP (chapter 8)

2.4.2. Aims relating to Theoretical Understanding of Employability

Whilst the professional context will focus upon OP graduates specifically, the tools and approaches utilised have been based upon the best available evidence drawn from employability and career success literature. The research also aims to advance the understanding of antecedent employability as a predictor of objective and subjective career success and to understand the relationship between identity and employability. More specifically the research aims to:

- Utilise a mixed methods approach to advance the understanding of domain specific employability (all study chapters)
- Design a domain dependent tool to assess specific barriers and facilitators to employability (chapter 4)
- Test theoretical models of employability dispositions and competence in the prediction of career success (chapter 6)
- Utilise a narrative approach to understanding identity (chapter 7)
- Apply employability research in a UK specific population thus advance the research primarily seen on career employability outside of the UK (all chapters)

2.4.3. Aims relating to the Researchers own Professional Practice

The researchers own aims include:

- Becoming a more active voice within the professional body presenting the evidence achieved from this doctorate (chapter 8)

- Apply the learning from the doctorate to the researchers own professional context as a lecturer, supervisor of trainee OccPsychs and co-Chair of the DOPTC (chapter 8)
- Develop a deeper understanding of a broad range of qualitative and quantitative research methods (throughout the doctorate process)
- Dissemination of the research findings at various committees within the DOP and BPS (part of professional practice of the researcher, detailed in chapter 8)

Chapter 3. Employability, barriers and facilitators in the careers of Occupational Psychologists: a qualitative focus group study

3.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the first empirical study in this professional doctorate and aimed to identify the employability barriers and facilitators experienced by OccPsychs. It begins with a brief introduction to the study (3.1.1.), followed by the methodology (3.2), the results and discussion (3.3) and the conclusions and limitations (3.4). The chapter ends with implications for the following studies in the research programme (3.5). A diagrammatic presentation of the chapter structure is presented in Figure 3.1.

3.1.1. Introduction	3.2. Method	3.3. Results and Discussion	3.4. Conclusions and Limitations
	3.2.1. Design	3.3.1. Professional Identity	3.4.1. Implications for Future Studies
	3.2.2. Participants	3.3.2. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	
	3.2.3. Procedure	3.3.3. Making a Difference	
	3.2.4. Analysis	3.3.4. Adaptability	
		3.3.5. Evidence-Based Practitioners	
		3.3.6. External Environment	

Figure 3.1. Chapter three Structure

3.1.1. Introduction

Chapter one outlined the employability challenges in Occupational Psychology (OP) (1.2.) and previous literature indicated that developing an appreciation of the context specific or structural issues in career research was important (2.3.9). To date there

exists little evidence explaining the career routes and employability of Occupational Psychologists, other than anecdotal information from graduates, programme leaders and academics. This information is particularly necessary when discussing career options with prospective and current students who are now more than ever interested in studying for University degrees, with the hope that this will make them more employable (Rae, 2007). The doctorate research programme aimed to investigate employability and career success within the OP population, and whilst career employability research exists it has primarily been conducted outside of the UK and on more generalist working populations (see chapter 2). As the literature review outlined, the UK focus for research has primarily been in relation to improving employment prospects for the unemployed and for graduates from Higher Education Institutions, typically undergraduates. This led to challenges in investigating 'career employability' in a professional group of UK educated OccPsychs. Moreover, multiple theories of employability exist making it challenging to appreciate which would relate to an OP working population. Therefore, the research programme begins with developing an understanding of the specific contextual factors relevant to an OccPsychs career utilising qualitative methodology. Supporting the view that employability cannot be measured directly but rather through multidimensional antecedents which combine to create employability (Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007; Fugate et al., 2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). This ensured understanding of OP employability issues but also led to an evidence base on which to select tools and measures in subsequent studies, relevant to the OP population. The intention was also to utilise the findings of the qualitative research to inform the design of OP specific questionnaires.

The research question was: *what are the employability barriers and facilitators present in Occupational Psychology graduates careers?*

3.2. Method

3.2.1. Design

Qualitative methodology was employed to answer the research question, utilising a focus group technique with a cross section of OP graduates. The focus group approach enabled participants to express their opinions and views, to reflect upon each-others experiences and generate discussion and debate around the emerging themes (Smith, 2015). The main aim was to enable OccPsychs to discuss the

factors they perceived to be important in their careers with a specific emphasis on employability.

3.2.2. Participants

Participants were recruited from a University in the North of England. Primarily this was a purposeful sample, consisting of individuals who 1) contributed to OP at the University (through teaching, project supervision, consultancy or research) and 2) had all completed an MSc in Occupational Psychology (at any University), ensuring that there was a shared understanding of the knowledge base for OP training and a diversity of backgrounds and experiences. The sample constituted six participants with a breadth of experiences in applying Occupational Psychology in their careers as well as working with students and graduates from OP programmes. The diversity of this group might be considered a real strength of the study and represented a variety of work experiences including work as in-house practitioners, consultants, academics, and represented newly graduated, mid-career and experienced OP graduates. Table 3.1. presents a breakdown of the participant group.

Table 3.1.

Background information to Focus Group participants

Age	Gender	Where studied MSc	OP areas of work	Years' work experience	Professional status
21-26	Male	Northumbria	Human Computer Interaction, Research	1-5	None
21-26	Female (A)	Northumbria	Organisational Development, Human Resources, Research	1-5	Trainee Occupational Psychologist
21-26	Female (B)	Northumbria	Career Development, Research	1-5	None
27-30	Female	Nottingham	Research, selection, training, coaching	5-10	Chartered Psychologist and HCPC Registered
40+	Female	Hull	Career Development, Counselling, Coaching, Organisational Development, Change, Consultancy, Teaching, In House	20+	Chartered Psychologist and HCPC Registered
35-40	Male	Birkbeck	Employee Selection, Employee Relations, Human Factors, Consultancy, Teaching, In House	10-20	Chartered Psychologist

3.2.3. Procedure

Following ethical approval from the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Ethics Committee, potential participants were approached by email and asked if they would like to participate in the focus group. If they agreed, they were then sent a participant information sheet (see appendix B) identifying the research aims, that the researcher was interested in employability of OccPsychs with a particular emphasis on exploring the views, backgrounds and experiences of the group. Participants were informed that the focus group would last between 1 ½ and 2 hours and that it would be audio recorded and transcribed anonymously. The researcher then contacted participants to agree a mutually convenient time and date to conduct the focus group which then took place in a quiet teaching room in the university.

At the start of the focus group, participants were reminded of the nature of the project and asked to complete a consent form if they decided to continue with the research.

The discussion began with the researcher asking the group to consider why they chose Occupational Psychology as a career pathway. This enabled participants to reflect upon their choices to date and set the tone for the rest of the focus group. Further questions included “*what makes Occupational Psychologists different*”, “*how could we enhance the employability of Occupational Psychologists*” etc. (See appendix C for a full question topic list). Discussion followed a semi structured format allowing the emergence of new ideas and topics. The researcher probed where appropriate to clarify understanding and ensured that the discussion was brought back on topic where necessary. The approach taken was essentialist in that the experiences, meanings and reality of participants were important in defining the themes.

The focus group lasted for approximately 1 ½ hours and ended once participants had responded to all relevant questions and had the chance to add any of their own points relevant to the research question. It became clear that the topic had been exhausted when the conversation around OP and employability provided no new insights or opinions. Participants were thanked for their participation and handed a participant debrief (see appendix B).

3.2.4. Analysis

The recording was transcribed verbatim and entered into NVivo 10. Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase guide to conducting a thematic analysis was followed. In the *first stage* the researcher read through the transcript numerous times to appreciate the information discussed. Then (*stage two*) the researcher developed initial codes by finding features which related to the research question labelling them as ‘nodes’. Saliency of the comments was observed not a numeric count of instances of comments, e.g. one comment from the group may have led to lots of agreement and change in direction. 22 initial codes (appendix D) were generated which were grouped together to give a broader perspective of the data set and define fuller content of the focus group (*stage three*). For example codes titled ‘*evaluation*’, ‘*questioning*’ and ‘*evidence*’ were categorised together. At the end of this stage, there were seven broad themes (appendix E and F). These themes were then reviewed (*stage four*) ensuring there was sufficient representation and distinction between them (appendix G). At this stage a research assistant was employed to validate the themes developed by the researcher by following the same approach and conducting an independent thematic analysis. Seven themes were

also identified (appendix H) which were compared to the researchers own themes to ascertain similarities and differences and to ensure that the entire data set had been taken into account (appendix I). Two themes of *'challenging route'* and *'CPD'*, were referred to as *'progression'* by the independent researcher and were merged in the final coding due to the similarity in content and named *'CPD'*. Additionally the research assistant noticed the *'motivation and enthusiasm'* evident in the focus group. This had not been identified in the first coding, and was deemed appropriate to include under the broad theme heading of *'making a difference'*. This stage (*five*) led to six broad themes headings (appendix J). Finally (*stage six*) the researcher re-read the transcript to ensure that nothing had been missed in the coding and development of themes and identified suitable quotes to highlight the content along with a brief description of each theme (appendix K and section 3.3).

3.3. Results and Discussion

Six broad themes were identified to answer the research question *'what are the employability barriers and facilitators present in Occupational Psychologists' careers?'* Table 3.2 provides an overview of the themes. Each will be discussed in turn by presenting illustrative quotes within a framework of existing employability/career research to contextualise the experiences and aspirations of this group. The themes informed content for future doctorate studies.

Each theme had the potential to be both a barrier and a facilitator, depending upon the perspective of the individual making them useful for providing further insight into the individual and structural factors impacting upon employability. For example those OccPsychs working in areas where their identity was reinforced by their employer may perceive this as a facilitator; yet the opposite could be true where employers have no awareness of the OP context. As such, themes are presented primarily as facilitators to reflect the focus group discussion.

Table 3.2.

Overview of Themes from the focus group

Theme	Brief description
Professional Identity	OP is a well-established professional route in psychology, yet awareness of what OccPsychs do and their perceived organisational value can be limited.
Continuing Professional Development	OccPsychs keep on top of new developments in the area and they are always learning, reflecting on their practise and developing new skills and techniques throughout their career.
Making a Difference	OccPsychs are passionate about applying strategies to workplace issues to make a difference to the everyday working lives of individuals and organisations.
Adaptability	OccPsychs have a diverse skill set which is encouraged through the professional route to practice. This often requires adaptability in the way that workplace solutions are applied, particularly when change in organisations is commonplace.
Evidence Based Practitioners	OccPsychs are trained to use scientific method in their practise. Therefore they believe it is important to consider all available evidence in designing interventions and ensuring that the consultancy cycle is applied to all areas of work.
External Environment	OccPsych's careers are hugely impacted by external forces such as economic issues. Clients require different products and services during a recession.

3.3.1. Professional Identity

Essentially this theme referred to awareness of what OccPsychs do, the profession and the value that it could add to organisations. In relation to the research question, this theme could be viewed as both a barrier and a facilitator. For example, where clarity existed this could enhance OccPsychs careers; conversely where there was ambiguity this could make careers challenging. While the profession has existed for many years the group perceived that some employers, members of the public and other psychologists didn't necessarily hold a shared understanding of what an OP is or does:

"I have had both perspectives really in that, when I was working...in HR, fortunately I had teams that were very supportive and had done a little bit of research and knew a little bit about (and worked previously) with other occ psychs...unfortunately...working with non-occ psychs which didn't believe in occ psych, that I found really difficult...within our own field" and went on to say that OP is "not a role that's recognised by a lot of the population" and furthermore if this is the case "can't really expect the rest of the population to understand" (Female A, 21-26)

It would seem that there was sporadic understanding of OP experienced by participants. Both the British Psychological Society (BPS) and Division of Occupational Psychology (DOP) cite improving visibility and awareness of

psychology and occupational psychology as key strategic drivers for the future (BPS Strategic Plan, 2015-2020 & DOP Strategic Plan 2011-2015). Furthermore, the OP-First Project (2006) identified raising awareness of OP as a priority for the profession. It is therefore surprising that this remains a potential barrier for OccPsychs suggesting that more should be done to raise their profile due to the impact it can potentially have on their identity formation. Additionally, there was discussion around lack of clarity of the route to professional psychologist status and the differences between professional areas of psychology, expressing that stereotypes could be used in some instances but that they often led to further challenges:

“There are stereotypes though aren’t there...like when you say forensics...I would think well people might think of Cracker... as a forensic psych...but I don’t know what the stereotype is for an occ psych, other than I know people tend to label us as psychometricians, psychometricians is that the word? That’s [the] thing people associate with us and I have no interest in that whatsoever”. (Female, 40+)

A significant body of research to support this theme of ‘*professional identity*’ is discussed in the literature review (2.3.5.1.) indicating the role that identity has in the development of career and employability (Fugate et al., 2004; London, 1983; Eby et al., 2003).

The focus group offered insight into reasons for a lack of awareness which could be traced back to their undergraduate education, for example not being “*specially told in your 1st year... like the different... this where you could go, this what you would do etc etc*” (Male, 21-26), which was also echoed by more recent stories of working with undergraduate students believing that to become any type of psychologist you require a doctorate (Female A, 21-16). Additionally, the lack of a specific and unique selling point for OP over and above other professionals who do similar work was referenced. This was emphasised by positioning of OP within a business or psychology context and could emerge due to being educated in either psychology departments or business schools (Female, 40+ and Male, 35-40). The concluding remark in this discussion identified that business professionals would expect to receive expert solutions from business schools and wouldn’t necessarily immediately equate psychologists with business, implying that identity could be challenged:

“if an organisation thinks “oh I want to get a uni involved because of this workplaces issue” they will go to a Business School first” (Male, 35-40)

Finally within the *professional identity* theme, participants made reference to job titles and labels, indicating that there was a potential disparity between what an OP expects and what they experience which could cause challenges to their identity. This in part has been confounded by the recent change in legislation to protect the professional status of psychologists in the UK (1.2) where only individuals with accredited occupational psychology qualifications are permitted to call themselves occupational psychologists. There was disdain at the failure to protect the word ‘psychologist’ (Male 21-26) meaning that a range of titles could be utilised that were more readily recognised by the lay person, thus diminishing the need for pursuing chartered status:

“...the biggest employers of occ psychs in the UK call you a ‘work psychologist’, not an occupational, for whatever reason but even so there is ambiguity in the role title given”. (Female A, 21-26)

“I have never worked in a job with the Occupational Psychologist title...and few people tend to do that...they are an OD [organisational development] person or some form of consultant or business psychologist”. (Male, 35-40)

Whilst organisations would explain that utilising job titles other than ‘occupational psychologist’ is necessary in a litigious culture, particularly when referring to protected titles, it has led to *“ambiguity”* (Female B, 21-26) and further challenges to the identity of an OP and the marketability of the profession. This is further supported by the findings of the Expert Panel in (2012) that it was important to understand the unique selling point (USP) of OP, concluding that they are not necessarily well understood by individuals outside of the profession. From a practitioner perspective, there is work ongoing within the profession to address this issue. For example in the researcher’s role as co-Chair for the Division of Occupational Psychology Training Committee, a ‘Statement of Intent’ was produced which outlines what OP is, what OccPsychs do and how to become an OccPsych. The aim of this statement is to develop marketing materials across the professional routes to use to raise the profile of applied psychology in the UK and develop a shared language (appendix A).

Interestingly lack of a *professional identity* also appears to be a concern for OccPsychs United States counterparts ‘Industrial and Organisational (I-O) Psychologists’. Focal journal articles suggest that the future training for I-O

Psychologists needs to be better linked to the future requirements of employers (Byrne, Hayes, Mort-McPhail, Hakel, Cortina, & McHenry, 2014). This is despite the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014) labelling it first in the top 20 growing occupations in the USA, with targeted growth between 2014 and 2022 expected to be 53%. In an ABC News report, Farnham (2014) asked the question “*I-O Psychologist: what the heck is that?*” implying that despite its targeted growth, little awareness was present as to what it was. Nonetheless, news reports like this can be useful in communicating what the profession is to a broader audience and unfortunately this does not currently exist in the UK.

It would appear that the ‘*professional identity*’ theme is complex and requires further research to understand what it means to the careers of OccPsychs and particularly their employability. This is particularly in light of research referring to identity as a “cognitive compass” (p.17) which directs individuals in their careers (Fugate et al., 2004). Without greater clarity on what OP identity is and how it develops it is difficult to fully appreciate the employability challenges facing OccPsychs. Therefore, research as part of this doctorate programme will unpick the identity theme using a variety of approaches. Firstly, to measure the external awareness of OP (chapter 4), secondly to take a snap shot of career in the form of a demographic study (chapter 5) and finally to explore the depth of OP identity in a narrative study (chapter 7).

3.3.2 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

A salient theme in the focus group was that of continuously developing as a professional, driven both by the accrediting body standards but also a desire to learn and improve. There was general agreement that OccPsychs were always learning and that this started very early in their careers. Pursuing chartered status could be viewed as the beginning of OccPsychs professional careers:

“it’s such a long route...but even when you get there...you’re at the bottom of the rung...you’re at the start of your career”. (Female A, 21-26)

This view was reflected by the whole group despite the range of experience presented, for example one participant talked about how their “*best work is yet to come*” (Female, 40+) despite being an experienced OP. This was echoed by another participant who explained that “*I understand Occupational Psychology but I’m forever going to be learning*” (Female, 27-30). Words such as “*long route*”

(Female A 21-26) and “*long journey*” (Female B, 21-16) were utilised in expression of the continuous learning, enhancement and reflection that came with having an OP qualification.

This theme appeared to facilitate OP employability as the more an individual learned the more value they could add to an organisation. This relates to the concept of maximising human capital to remain employable (Fugate et al., 2004) and indeed research has identified CPD as essential to career enhancement and an antecedent to employability (Collin, Van der Heijden, & Lewis, 2012; Forrier & Sels, 2003; Nauta et al., 2009; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007; Wittekind et al., 2010). Participants expressed a desire to progress and a real commitment to CPD, as described in the quote below:

“maybe that’s what distinguishes us from other people as well...I mean I’m sure they are committed to CPD but whether they view it like we do, which is yeah, we get better, we are also learning, we are always strengthening these particular areas, you know, our education is never complete” . (Female, 40+)

CPD often leads to the development of transferable skills (Clarke, 2008) it is possible therefore that those investing time and effort into CPD may be viewed favourably by employers as they bring new and valuable skills with them. Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) discussed how CPD and lifelong learning are often considered necessary in developing employability competence. They argued that ‘*occupational expertise*’ was an important human capital aspect of maintaining employability and that during a recession redundancies were most likely to impact upon those employees whose occupational expertise was lacking or outdated. Dacre-Pool and Sewell’s (2007) CareerEDGE model also emphasised CPD defined as ‘transfer of generic skills’ valued by employers when recruiting graduates. A body of literature around the skills required of graduates and employees consistently points to the importance of lifelong learning. A study by Hinchliffe and Jolly (2011), for example, identified that 78.3% of employers surveyed wanted graduates to demonstrate an interest in learning and development at appointment to a job. More recently Haasler (2013) identified the increasing emphasis placed upon continuous learning in employability literature, explaining that in a knowledge economy it will be necessary to constantly learn. Therefore, individuals who could demonstrate how their CPD has been applied to improve their practice arguably secure their employability. Finally the DOP Horizon Scan of Current Employers (2013) identified self-development as an important skill for OccPsychs with over

80% of employers suggesting that it was either 'very important' or 'somewhat important'

In summary, CPD as an aspect of human capital appeared to be a facilitator to OccPsychs employability as it could potentially enable them to be successful across a range of situations, including turbulent financial times. Furthermore, the theme was related to possessing a strong commitment to CPD, over and above formal qualifications. This theme will be taken forward into subsequent studies by examining the role of CPD in enhancing OP career success (chapter 4 and 6), but also in understanding the role of formal qualification such as chartered status in enhancing career potential and success, in both chartered and non-chartered individuals (chapter 7).

3.3.3. Making a Difference

The desire to “*make a difference*” (Female, 40+) to working lives was defined as the reason why OP appealed as a profession and what appeared to drive and motivate participants in their work. Within this context participants emphasised a focus on supporting individuals at work to be “*happy*” (Female B, 21-26) and productive. Participants described unhappy individuals in the workplace and therefore developed an interest in workplaces and psychology (Female, 27-30). Essentially, whilst psychology has a range of applications, the appeal for this group was around working with “*everybody rather than just small populations like clinical psychology*” (Male, 21-26), thus impacting upon a broader scale. When participants communicated this desire it appeared as a strong motivator and passion. Participants expressed a further interest in not only focusing on individual or one-to-one relationships but also have a greater impact on a larger scale:

“I think that’s why I am interested in OD [organisational development] and Change because it’s making a difference at an organisational level”. (Female, 40+)

Whilst this appeared to be an attractive factor for individuals entering the profession, it was difficult to appreciate whether this would translate to enhance employability or indeed whether this desire would be valued by employers, particularly as there is little literature on this theme within an OP context. Nevertheless, the Horizon Scan of Current Employers (2013) did identify that approximately 55% of respondents believed that a unique selling point for OccPsychs was that they took a holistic, consultative view of the world with a concern for individuals. Further qualitative

comments suggested that OccPsychs were “*helping people to be the best that they can be*” (p.10) Nonetheless, the passion, motivation and enthusiasm as an underpinning theme may make a difference to OccPsychs perceptions of employability.

This desire to make a difference to working lives appeared to facilitate OP’s careers, appreciating the value that OP could add to individuals and/or organisations and being motivated to ensure that the work they do enables them to do this. There is however little support from research literature on the benefits of this theme to employability and as such will be progressed throughout the doctorate in an appreciation as a facilitator of career success (chapter 6) and its role in the development of OP identity (chapter 7). Additionally, this desire may be apparent in all psychology or helping professions so perhaps is not unique to OccPsychs, yet the differentiating factor may be application to work contexts.

3.3.4. Adaptability

Another salient theme related to the diversity of skills, and ability to adapt to developments within the OP profession. This could partly be due to the breadth of knowledge areas which are learned and developed on MSc programmes, as well as trainee practitioners having to demonstrate competence in applying these knowledge areas in their stage 2 qualification. It is also possible that due to their training OccPsychs were acutely aware of the necessity to adapt to future challenges in the workplace and utilising “*creativity*” (Female A, 21-26) in the way that they approached their careers. The group reflected that OP work was diverse which engendered an ability to adapt solutions to suit the context:

“you can always apply different skills and hopefully open up different opportunities even if the initial thing you thought you would do, you can’t do”. (Female A, 21-26)

“...businesses are always going to be changing, there is always going to be a new challenge that pops up”. (Female B, 21-26)

This construct has perhaps received the most empirical support in the literature, with the belief that adaptability is necessary in the new working world (2.3.5.2.). Referred to as ‘*personal adaptability*’ (Fugate et al., 2004), ‘*personal flexibility*’ (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006), ‘*proactive personality*’ (Crant, 2000) and simply ‘*adaptability*’ (Savickas, 1997). Not only has it been linked to an individual’s ability to look ahead to anticipate the future challenges, it is also believed to be

valued by employers and related to career success (Crant, 2000; Pulakos et al., 2002; Fugate et al., 2004; Seibert et al., 1999; Zacher, 2014).

The ability to adapt and creatively apply knowledge and skills was not just reflected in quotes from participants but also through the diversity of OP related experience that they had, where the majority of the knowledge areas were represented (e.g. employee selection, career development, organisational development etc.) demonstrating real depth and breadth of application. Interestingly, OccPsychs are often viewed as 'workplace' experts yet across their careers they may specialise their practise in two or three applied areas. Therefore, whilst they have a breadth of knowledge (from the MSc programme), their applied experience may be more specialised. This links to the '*professional identity*' theme, where employers may not be aware that all OccPsychs experiences and specialisms are different and thus may add to confusion over what they do. This could also benefit OccPsychs who take a broad perspective to their work in that impact may be felt across the business and not just in one area:

"when I was doing career development, aspects of kind of personal development, the kind of coaching and counselling side of it, obviously not qualified to do that but you get all of that in as well and then, it's kind of, you can see you are helping like with the recruitment, selection of it because you are advising on that and.. it's just, it all kind of merge.. your knowledge of all areas all kind of...do blend in..." (Female B, 21-26)

Participants expressed that this ability to be diverse often meant creating their own work opportunities in areas where they may not obviously exist as well as breaking down barriers in perceptions of where OccPsychs can add value, for example:

"...crafting a place for an Occupational Psychologist, rather than waiting for one to come along...I think it's just important to remember what you are interested in and how you can apply it and not just looking at it as straightforward OP cos I think it fits into a lot of different places now" . (Female B, 21-26)

In the focus group, participants articulated a need to be adaptable to change but also to look ahead to create roles which fit better with their career identity (as discussed in professional identity in 3.3.1) relating to the perception that adaptable individuals are better able to craft (Arnold, 2011). Being able to shape work and roles appeared to be important in enabling OccPsychs to apply their knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics across different work environments.

Research suggests that individuals who are highly 'proactive' in their personality i.e. they are motivated to influence their work environments and effect change are also more likely to report career success in subjective and objective terms (Pulakos et al., 2002). Tims, Bakker and Derks (2012) additionally suggested that proactive individuals were more likely to craft their work environment leading to higher levels of engagement. Whilst not in an employability context it could be argued that adaptability and job crafting may also lead to other positive outcomes such as career success and employability.

Therefore, in support of prior literature it would appear that participants viewed adaptability as an essential facilitator to their career success and a potential antecedent of employability. Adaptability will be explored throughout the doctorate process, due to the wealth of literature linking it to employability and career success (chapters 4, 6 and 7).

3.3.5. Evidence-Based Practitioners

Participants believed that the use of evidence or science in their practice supported their careers, one participant specifically stated *"evidence-based"* (Male 21-26) when asked to define OP. The consensus was that this *"psychology grounding"* and *"scientific questioning"* (Female, 40+) drove OccPsych's practise. Participants expressed that they could add value to organisations by providing a service which wasn't about *"quick fixes"* (Female, 40+) but rather testing the evidence base:

"you know if we do something there is an evidence base behind it, you know where it has come from, you know who has developed it" (Male, 35-40)

Participants explained that an evidence base would consist of them utilising theory (Female B, 21-26) and research literature to design interventions, evaluating their success (Female A, 21-26) and adopting a consultancy approach (Male, 35-40). Evidence-based practice (EBP) was introduced in 1.2.1 as a framework for approaching the research programme. This was partly due to challenges made in the academic literature that OP wasn't evidence-based, utilising interventions which were not grounded in scientific rigour (e.g. emotional intelligence, coaching) (Briner & Rousseau, 2011). The salience of this theme could have been due in part to this recent literature, with OccPsychs having a greater awareness of the importance of demonstrating their rigour. However, it could be the case that career success and employability may indeed be impacted by the use of EBP in OP. Furthermore,

participants explained that practitioners often conducted research and researchers did applied work, suggesting that OccPsychs needed to utilise both a research base and practitioner experience (Female, 27-30).

Participants did not just pay lip service to EBP, they also discussed the positive outcomes that could be achieved by applying rigour:

“...if you don't evaluate something properly, you never get the answers...you never find whether it's really worked”. (Female A, 21-26)

Thus, regardless of whether this theme has emerged as a response to the environment, it was clear that OccPsychs in this group had embraced the importance of EBP and saw it as an essential antecedent to their employability. Related to this, there was also a discussion around whether the make-up of the group would lead them more naturally to conclude that EBP was essential, referring to participants as a “*select sample*” (Female, 40+) being based in an academic environment. Nevertheless, this echoed the findings from Horizon Scan of Current Employers (2013) which highlighted that nearly 90% of employers believed that the ‘evidence-based scientist-practitioner approach’ was a unique selling point for OccPsychs. The report also indicated that over 90% of employers asked believed that using evidence to balance an argument was either a very or somewhat important skill for OccPsychs to have. However, comments also indicated that this was not unique to OccPsychs and that other employees (such as HR, Management Consultants etc.) would also claim this as one of their unique skills. Findings from a survey by McDowall et al., (2013) of current MSc students and recent graduates identified that 88% of respondents believed that EBP was a unique selling point of OccPsychs. The uniqueness of this theme to OccPsychs is unknown, nonetheless, the evidence from a range of sources suggests that OccPsychs ability to be evidence- based was a potential facilitator to their employability.

3.3.6 External Environment

Participants discussed that OccPsychs roles could be impacted by external forces such as economic issues potentially dictating the type of work they pursued. For example, one participant commented that employee selection, once a stable role for OccPsychs may be impacted by the economic recession:

“...because of the economy the last few years there is nobody recruiting, never mind recruiting people to recruit people”. (Female A, 21-26)

Participants expressed a need to look for work elsewhere due to a perception that OP roles were diminishing (Female B, 21-26). There was a perception that the economic recession of 2008 had negatively impacted OccPsychs. Employability literature typically focuses upon the individual factors and fails to address external issues such as availability of jobs. This has led to criticisms of the narrow perspective taken which suggests that individuals have complete control over their careers. Indeed research has suggested that consideration needs to be taken of the external factors impacting upon employability such as availability of roles, business confidence and local labour markets (Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007; McQuaid, 2006; McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005). Additionally, Arnold (2011) postulated that further research should focus upon the tension between what an individual offers to the job market and what the job market wants.

This was further highlighted by more positive quotes suggesting that OP graduates could compete for jobs which traditionally may not have appealed to them, indicating that the external forces could also work in their favour:

“if you compare like, people from an MRes masters who are trained in research and then us who are more industry-side, us three have come from the occ psych and have gone onto research jobs here.. where people who do the MRes here, don't necessarily get the research jobs which is quite.. I think it's because we are.. we do some experience while doing the masters and I think that enhances, sort of, employability which I think they quite like here anyway” (Male, 21-26)

“a lot of staff confirm that occ psych stand out when they apply for these research posts” (Female, 40+)

It is perhaps not surprising that this issue arose in the current and uncertain economic climate, particularly as OccPsychs may work as freelance consultants offering services to organisations as well as being employed 'in-house'. However, this is also a potential issue for in-house OccPsychs, as typically in a recession people development opportunities are cut. This is evidenced by the Chartered Institute for Personnel Development (CIPD) Learning and Development Reports which indicated that training budgets had been cut in one third of UK organisations in 2009 and of 700 organisations surveyed more than half had to cut training budgets in 2010.

Linking back to the other themes identified here, it could be argued that those individuals better able to “*adapt*” will also cope better with the external

environmental changes. Therefore whilst the external environment was viewed as a barrier to career development and employability, it may only be a barrier if other aspects are not attended to, such as CPD and adaptability. OccPsychs have also maintained their careers through previous economic recessions (e.g. during the early 90s). Furthermore, Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) discussed how “*anticipation and optimisation*” were important employability competences in helping individuals to prepare for changes which may occur in the future. This competence also links to the focus group theme of “*adaptability*” as Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) explained that employees have to “enact” their roles “creating the future themselves” (p.454), therefore preparing for external or market changes i.e. being proactive, not reactive. In light of the study findings, the research literature on employability and the general OP context, gaining a deeper understanding of how external factors may impact as an antecedent of careers success will be considered in future studies within this doctorate (chapter 6).

All themes will be assessed further throughout the doctorate, identifying their role as facilitators of career success (chapters 4 and 6) and looking at their perceived value in OP career journeys (chapter 7).

3.4. Conclusions and Limitations

This focus group sought to understand the barriers and facilitators present in an OccPsychs career with an emphasis on employability. Findings suggested that there were multiple antecedents present thus providing some support for a multidimensional view of employability within OccPsychs (Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007; Fugate et al., 2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Results indicated that there were some clear barriers such as lack of an external “*professional identity*” which made it difficult for OccPsychs to market themselves and therefore create demand for their services. Facilitators were also present such as a strong desire to “*make a difference*” to the working lives of individuals and to organisations. This may indeed be what drives OccPsychs in their careers and perhaps they seek opportunities which would enable them to apply psychology to help employees and employers. Participants also discussed how their training encouraged “*adaptability*” potentially an important facilitator, enabling them to identify or create congruent roles. Constructs such as adaptability and identity had been previously evidenced in the employability literature. Importantly, the group did

present more facilitators than barriers and therefore they were emphasised in the transcript.

Two themes which emerged from the focus group and were previously unseen in the employability literature were “*making a difference*” and “*evidence based practice*”. Whilst empirical support has not been identified through general employability literature there is evidence from practitioner reports adding weight to their importance in an employability context (Horizon Scan of Current Employers, 2013; Expert Panel, 2012; McDowall et al., 2013).

The focus group has provided insight into the barriers and facilitators to OP employability and discussed with reference to the academic literature and practitioner reports, yet it is not without limitations. Firstly, the organisational specificity of the participants potentially led them to focus upon aspects which were relevant only for them working within their organisation or academia. Whilst efforts were made to ensure representation from a variety of career paths, it cannot be ignored that they all worked in an academic institution. Therefore, the next stages of the research will seek to validate the themes by developing an OP Facilitators to Employability Scale (OPFES) and testing it on a cross section of OccPsychs (chapter 4). Moreover, the focus group served two purposes, firstly to respond to the research question and secondly to bring the OP group together to identify a stream of work for them to take forward to improve the OP provision in their workplace. This potentially overcomplicated the focus group and left participants unsure whether to focus upon their internal role or externally. With hindsight, these two activities should have been conducted separately.

A simplistic approach was taken to identifying the key barriers and facilitators, partly due to thematic analysis being a descriptive approach to qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). No attempt was made to look at the relationships between these themes, despite the potential of overlap and that some may be antecedents of employability e.g. CPD whereas others may be measures of career success e.g. making a difference. Whilst that was not the intention of the study, a thematic map is presented in appendix E which demonstrates the potential relationships between themes. There is literature to suggest that interactions between employability antecedents is common, for example Fugate et al., (2004) suggested that career identity and personal adaptability were related and used the example that an individual’s career identity may focus an individual to be more adaptable. In this

case OccPsychs who wanted to have an OP identity may have adapted to follow career paths which were in keeping with this identity. Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) suggested that the dimension of 'Occupational Expertise' was a requirement in the achievement of career success and that the concept of employability will constitute a high degree of occupational expertise. The study outlined in chapter 4 demonstrates the uniqueness of the themes and only distinct themes will be taken forward for further analysis.

Finally, in 2012 the DOP conducted research into the values of OccPsychs, the researcher participated in this research. These values were: 1) evidence based approach, 2) authenticity and integrity, 3) growth and development, 4) making a difference, 5) inclusive and adaptive. There are clear links to the focus group themes which was conducted at a similar time to the values project. Unfortunately, to date (November 2015) there has been no action with regard to these values, they do not appear on the DOP website or in any recent documentation. Perhaps the findings of this study will encourage the DOP to reinstate the values project, enabling OccPsychs to feel part of a wider community who share values.

3.4.1. Implications for Future Studies

Whilst not a theme, a clear concern raised in the group was in relation to professional sustainability, with a general concern over the future of the profession. Generating an understanding of OccPsychs careers, from the perspective of a cross section of OccPsychs, utilising mixed methods will add an evidence base to existing professional body initiatives to improve visibility and OP identity. This is a shared responsibility which concerns students, graduates, employers, the professional body, MSc programme providers and practitioners alike. This will be referenced throughout the doctorate.

The data from this study alongside existing research reports will be utilised to develop an OPFES (as an antecedent of employability and career success) and an OP specific Subjective Career Satisfaction Scale (as an outcome measure) (chapter 4). The questionnaires will then be utilised alongside well established measures of employability and career success to model the relationship between various components of employability and objective and subjective career success (chapter 6). The findings of this study will inform the design of a questionnaire to understand more about the careers of OccPsychs (chapter 4).

Chapter 4: Development of a ‘Facilitators to Employability Scale’ and ‘Subjective Career Satisfaction Scale’ for Occupational Psychologists

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter outlines the development of an Occupational Psychology Facilitators to Employability Scale (OPFES) and a Subjective Career Satisfaction Scale (SCSS). It begins with a brief introduction to the study (4.1.1.), followed by the study methodology (4.2), the results of face and content validity studies (4.3) and exploratory factor analysis, differential validity, predictive validity and reliability analyses (4.4.) and concludes with a discussion and implications for subsequent studies (4.5). A diagrammatic presentation of the chapter structure is presented in Figure 4.1.

4.1.1. Introduction	4.2. Method	4.3. Results of Preliminary Validity Studies	4.4. Results of Stages Three to Six	4.5. Discussion
4.1.1.1 Occupational Psychology Facilitators to Employability Scale (OPFES)	4.2.1. Design	4.3.1 Stage One: Face Validity	4.4.1. Stage Three: Determining OPFES Factor Structure	4.5.1. The OPFES and SCSS
4.1.1.2. Subjective Career Satisfaction Scale (SCSS)	4.2.2. Participants	4.3.2. Stage Two: Content Validity	4.4.2. Stage Three: Determining OP SCSS Factor Structure	4.5.1.1. Professional Identity
4.1.2. Research Aims	4.2.2.1. Stage One: Face Validity		4.4.3. Stage Four: Differential Validity	4.5.1.2. Continuing Professional Development
	4.2.2.2. Stage Two: Content Validity		4.4.3.1. Age Relationships	4.5.1.3. Making a Difference
	4.2.2.3. Stage Three to Six: PCA, Differential and Criterion-Related Validity and Reliability		4.4.3.2. Gender Differences	4.5.1.4. Evidence-Based Practice
	4.2.3. Materials		4.4.4. Stage Five: Predictive Validity	4.5.1.5. Adaptability
	4.2.3.1. Stage One: Face Validity		4.4.5. Stage Six: Reliability Analysis	4.5.1.6. External Environment
	4.2.3.2. Stage Two: Content Validity			4.5.2. Differential Validity
	4.2.3.3. Stage Three to Six: PCA, Differential Validity, Criterion- Related Validity and Reliability			4.5.3. Implications for Practice
	4.2.4. Procedure			4.5.4. Limitations and Further Research
	4.2.4.1. Stage One: Face Validity Study			
	4.2.4.2. Stage Two: Content Validity Study			
	4.2.4.3. Stage Three to Six: PCA, Differential Validity, Criterion- Related Validity and Reliability			

Figure 4.1. Chapter Four Structure

4.1.1. Introduction

The literature review highlighted the complexity associated with measurement of employability and the associated relationships between demographic variables such as age and gender. Research has focused upon a broad range of occupations and settings (including career, higher education and the unemployed) and not on context specificity (see 1.2.1). Therefore chapter 3 outlined the first empirical study in the doctorate to generate a deeper understanding of the facilitators to employability for OccPsychs, linking to academic theory, empirical and professional body research. The findings of this study indicated six potential facilitators: *professional identity, continuing professional development, making a difference, evidence based practice and external environment*. The literature review identified the relationship between employability and career success (2.3.4.) and outlined the need for cross cultural studies to further test this relationship. It is the aim of this chapter to develop an Occupational Psychology Facilitators to Employability Scale (OPFES) and a Subjective Career Satisfaction Scale (SCSS).

4.1.1.1. Occupational Psychology Facilitators to Employability Scale (OPFES)

As outlined in the literature review (2.3.5.) antecedents to employability typically fall into one of three areas '*career identity*', '*adaptability*' or '*human and social capital*' (Fugate et al., 2004). Within this framework two approaches exist which have dominated the literature: dispositions (Fugate et al., 2004; Fugate & Kinicki, 2008) and competence (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Within each approach there exist tools to measure the attitude towards employability (dispositions) and the ability to be employable (competence). Dispositions and competence will be considered in chapter 6 of this doctorate.

Tools measuring antecedents to employability are designed to be domain independent. Whilst the study outlined in chapter 3 identified some similarities between OP themes, for example '*adaptability*' was evident in many models, there were also some differences. This was not just observed in the themes of *making a difference* and *evidence based practice*, but also in the way that the themes were conceptualised. For example, in the OP context *professional identity* referred to an external awareness and appreciation of OP, whereas in the extant literature career identity has been measured by questions around career self-efficacy (Hackett & Betz, 1981; Kossek et al., 1998), activities pursued in relation to career (Noe et al.,

1990) and career exploration (Stumpf et al., 1983). Research further suggests that rather than retro fitting tools to existing theories, designing specific measures can be more beneficial (McArdle et al., 2007). Therefore the OPFES was developed, to add to the existing literature on measures of competence and dispositions and identify whether contextual factors could enhance competence and/or career success. Additionally, as research into OP employability is limited (1.2.) and due to the limitations outlined in the focus group, validating these themes in a cross section of OccPsychs was necessary prior to any further analysis.

4.1.1.2. Subjective Career Satisfaction Scale (SCSS)

As the aim of this doctorate was to explore the relationship between employability and career success it was important that fit for purpose measures were utilised. Perhaps the most widely utilised measure of subjective career success was developed by Greenhaus et al., (1990). This eight item measure has been adapted by researchers and utilised in employability and career success literature. For example research by De Vos et al., (2011) used four items from the scale to determine a relationship between competency development and career success. Hofmans, et al., (2008) conducted empirical research into Greenhaus et al., (1990) scale and suggested that caution should be made when applying subjective career success measures across populations. They indicated that different measures of success could lead to different results and therefore suggest that newer measures should be “*inclusive and workable*” (p.402). Furthermore, as the potential pool of participants will consist of recent graduates, mid-career and later stage OccPsychs, it is essential that measures of success are appropriate for this audience.

In light of this, developing a thorough understanding of what subjective career success (or satisfaction) means to an OP audience is necessary to ensure appropriateness of the measure. Utilising an evidence based practice approach, the tool will be developed based upon current literature, practitioner experience and the findings from the focus group (chapter 3). This tool will also be validated and tested for reliability in this study.

4.1.2. Research Aims

This research aimed to assess the psychometric properties of an OP employability scale developed following the focus group outlined in chapter 3. The purpose was to utilise the tool throughout the doctorate process to understand more about the

contextual issues impacting upon employability and career success of OccPsychs. Specifically the research aimed to:

- Explore and define the underlying factor structure of the OP Employability Facilitators Scale and the Subjective Career Satisfaction Scale
- Identify age or gender relationships in the sample
- Understand the relationship between the two measures
- Ascertain the reliability of both scales

4.2. Method

4.2.1. Design

A non-experimental survey design was employed. A combination of approaches to ascertaining reliability and validity were utilised, as described by Hinkin (1995, 1998) which would reduce the potential amount of disadvantages of any one approach. An iterative six stage approach was utilised, summarised in Figure 4.2.

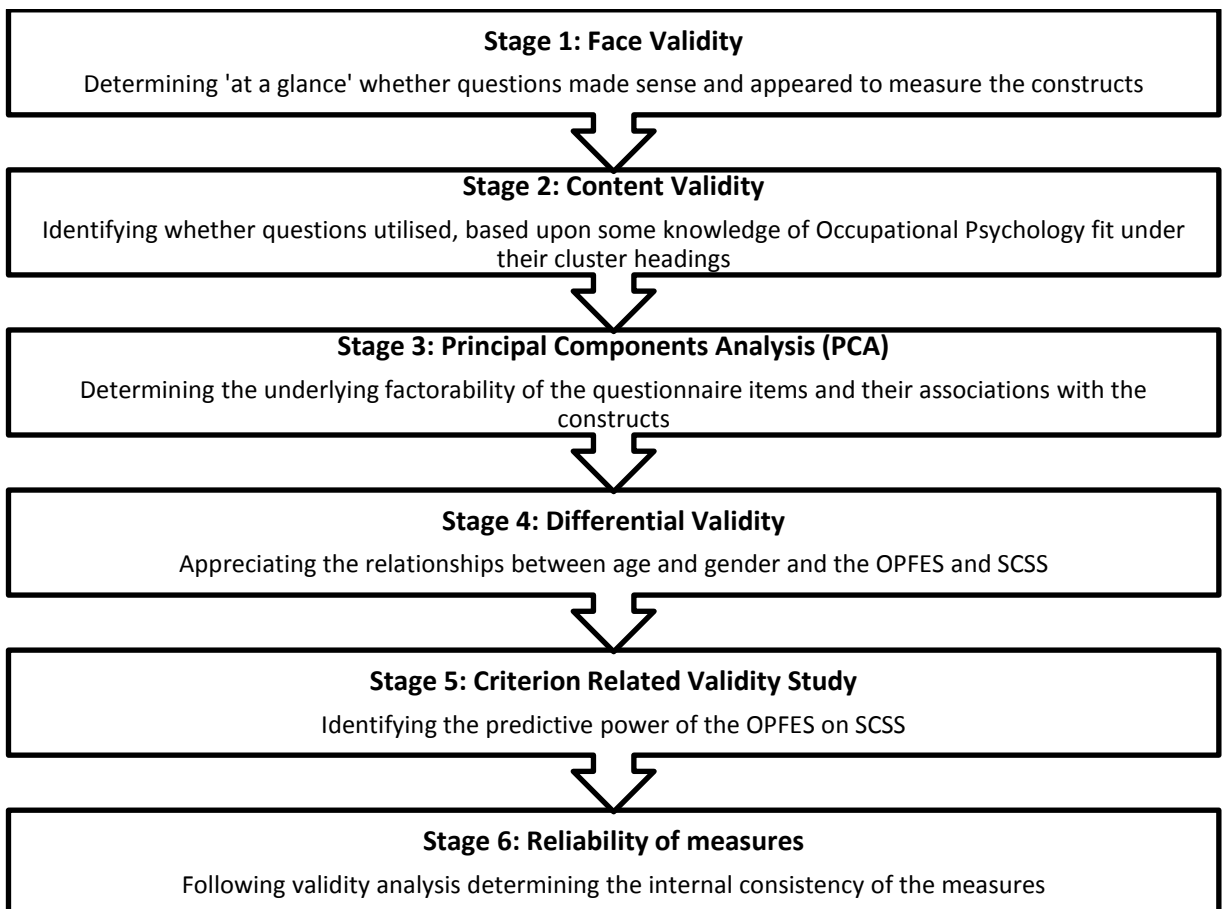


Figure 4.2. Staged process to determining validity and reliability of OPFES and SCSS

4.2.2 Participants

4.2.2.1. Stage one: Face Validity Study Participants

Three Occupational Psychologists who had taken part in the focus group and the doctorate research supervisors (one qualitative and one quantitative researcher) participated in this stage. This ensured that there were clear links between the questionnaire and the focus group and also served as an initial validation that the scale measured items relevant to the focus group discussion. This process was essentially an administrative/checking exercise to ensure that the items appeared related to the broad theme of OP employability and to ensure appropriate scale use and grammar. Therefore, no demographic data was collected from participants.

4.2.2.2. Stage Two: Content Validity Study Participants

10 MSc Occupational and Organisational Psychology students participated in this stage of the research and acted as reviewers. Again, no other demographic data was collected as responses were related to the tool properties and not participant data.

4.2.2.3. Stages Three to Six: PCA, Differential Validity, Criterion Related Validity and Reliability Participants

All participants must have studied a BPS accredited MSc in Occupational Psychology or equivalent, this enabled equivalence in education and thus eliminated educational background as a confounding variable. A total of 130 participants started the questionnaire, however 42 participants left sections blank and were therefore removed from the data set. In total 88 completed questionnaires were utilised. Of these 88, 65 (74%) were female and 23 (26%) male. Ages ranged from 22 to 61 years with a mean age of 35.15 (SD=10.05). Participants had graduated from their programmes between 1987 and 2015 with 47% graduating since 2010.

4.2.3 Materials

4.2.3.1. Stage one: Face Validity Study Materials

In this stage, participants were given a version of the questionnaire and asked to provide verbal comments to the researcher. No other materials were utilised.

4.2.3.2. Stage two: Content Validity Study Materials

In this stage, participants were each given an instruction sheet outlining how to conduct the activity, definition of each of the themes under study, and a mapping spreadsheet with the questionnaire items and theme headings (see appendix L). No other materials were utilised.

4.2.3.3. Stage three: PCA, Differential Validity, Criterion Related Validity and Reliability Materials

Three questionnaires were utilised in this stage: 1) demographic data (age, gender, year graduated from MSc programme); 2) Subjective Career Success; 3) OP employability. These questionnaires are summarised below.

4.2.3.3.1. Demographic Data

Prior research into employability has indicated age and gender relationships (for example Van der Heijden et al., 2009). Therefore participants were asked these questions along with the year that they graduated to gain insight into the make-up of the group i.e. recent or experienced graduates.

4.2.3.3.2. Subjective Career Satisfaction

Perceptions of career success were measured with an eight item Subjective Career Satisfaction Scale (SCSS). Items were similar in nature to the scale developed by Greenhaus et al., (1990), although updated and adapted to an OP audience. The adaptations were based upon the findings from the focus group, practitioner experience and current literature, this ensured that the challenges of working as an OP were considered. The eight items were:

- I am satisfied with my career progress to date
- I have taken jobs which are worthy of me
- I have taken jobs which match my career aspirations
- I have taken jobs which match my skills level
- I believe that I am progressing my career the direction that I want to go
- I found it easy to find a job after graduating
- I have been able to apply my Occupational Psychology knowledge since graduating

- I am currently in an Occupational Psychologist role (or related field)

The Career Success Scale was recorded on a 6 point rating scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

4.2.3.3.3. *OP Employability Items*

This questionnaire consisted of 34 questions measuring 6 facilitators of OP employability identified in the focus group in chapter 3 (*Professional Identity, Continuing Professional Development, Making a Difference, Adaptability, Evidence Based Practice and External Environment*). Questions were designed to relate to each theme, using quotes from the focus group, ensuring that the wording reflected the perceptions of the group adequately. Literature was consulted to ensure that jargon was not used which could be misinterpreted by participants. This included the research into Evidence-Based Practice by Briner and Rousseau (2011) utilising 1) practitioner experience, 2) contextual evidence, 3) best available evidence and 4) the viewpoints of those who the decision may impact upon. Whilst this was not used verbatim it did lead to the inclusion of questions such as “*I consider the impact of the work I do on who it may affect*” and “*I gather evidence from a range of sources to inform decisions and/or design*”.

The questionnaire items for each theme can be found in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1.

Theme headings and OP Employability Questionnaire items

OP Theme	Questions
Professional Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My employer is aware that I have an Occupational Psychology qualification • My employer values my Occupational Psychology knowledge • My employer understands what an Occupational Psychologist does • My colleagues understand what an Occupational Psychologist does • The general public have a good awareness of the benefits an Occupational Psychologist can bring to an organisation
Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I keep my Occupational Psychology knowledge up to date • I pursue Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities in relation to Occupational Psychology (e.g. conference attendance, training courses, reading relevant publications etc.) • I pursue CPD activities in relation to my current role • I believe that it is important to keep my Occupational Psychology knowledge and skills up to date • I am always learning new things • I spend time reflecting on my own development and how I can make changes in the future
Making a Difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel that my role allows me to make a difference to the working lives of individuals • I feel that my role allows me to make a difference to organisations • I feel that the individuals I work with benefit from my knowledge of Occupational Psychology • My Occupational Psychology knowledge helps me to make a difference to my organisation/clients • I am passionate about Occupational Psychology • I am motivated to continue in this profession for the rest of my career
Adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can apply my knowledge to a broad range of scenarios • I can apply my skills to a broad range of scenarios • I am able to apply Occupational Psychology knowledge creatively • I apply many of the knowledge areas that I was taught at MSc level • I have been able to shape my role/s to match my skills and knowledge • I have a diverse range of skills
Evidence Based Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I evaluate the success/impact of the work that I do • I have opportunities to apply Occupational Psychology knowledge/theory to the workplace • I gather evidence from a range of sources to inform decisions • I consider the impact of the work that I do on who it may affect • I am inquisitive and ask lots of questions • I use science/theory in my work
External Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupational Psychology can be applied in all economic climates • The economy dictates the type of work that I do • The economy has made it difficult for me to find work • My skills and experiences are in demand • Due to issues out of my control I am not able to pursue the career path that I would like to

Responses to each item were recorded using a six point Likert scale with 1 representing 'strongly disagree' through to 6 'strongly agree'. Four items in the *External Environment* theme were worded negatively and therefore needed to be reverse scored to keep the scale consistent throughout the questionnaire.

4.2.4 Procedure

4.2.4.1. Stage one: Face Validity Study Procedure

In order to ascertain content validity, a light touch qualitative approach was initially taken to check for relationships between questions asked and themes. Individuals were approached separately by the researcher and asked if they could comment on the content of the questionnaire using the following questions:

- *Does the questionnaire make sense, is it easy to follow?*
- *Do the areas covered seem accurate in relation to employability of Occupational Psychologists?*
- *Is there anything missing (what and why)?*
- *Is there anything that should not be included (what and why)?*

The qualitative and quantitative researchers were also asked to comment on scale and the wording of questions.

4.2.4.2. Stage two: Content Validity Study Procedure

During this stage a more formal approach was utilised where data was collected in relation to the theme alignment activity. Participants were e-mailed an instruction sheet, theme definitions and mapping document to assign questionnaire items to theme headings (appendix L) which they completed and returned to the researcher.

4.2.4.3. Stages three to six: PCA, Differential Validity, Criterion Related Validity and Reliability Procedure

Following ethical approval from the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences ethics committee at Northumbria University, participants were recruited via online survey through various social networking sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Professional contacts of the researcher were also e-mailed and asked if they would like to participate including fellow panel members of the DOPTC and the PEQ Group. The research was advertised at the DOP conference where the researcher

was presenting. The aim was to use a snowballing effect, asking contacts to pass on the advert to their networks. Participants who were interested in taking part in the study clicked a link to Qualtrics (www.qualtrics.com) where they were directed to a participant information sheet outlining the nature of the research and what their participation would involve. They could then choose to participate by completing an online consent form and by providing an anonymous identifier so that their data could be withdrawn at a later date if requested. Following consent, participants were then taken via the Qualtrics system to the study questionnaire. Firstly participants completed three demographic questions (age, gender and year graduated) and then the subjective career success and OP employability items. Participants took approximately 10 minutes to complete the study, after which they were directed to a participant debrief page reminding them of the purpose of the survey and how to withdraw their data if required. Finally, participants were thanked for their time in completing the survey. Data was then downloaded into SPSS for analysis.

4.3. Results of Preliminary Validity Studies (stages one and two)

4.3.1. Stage One: Face Validity Results

The five reviewers provided comments in relation to the overall content of the questionnaire for example stating that *“it covered the main points from the focus group”* and *“did feel related to OP employability”*. There were some minor word changes and corrections of spelling, however this approach also led to some queries over whether the *Professional Identity* theme was adequately covered. An original item *“there is good awareness of the benefits an Occupational Psychologist can bring to an organisation”* was challenged by reviewers who believed it lacked clarity and to avoid confusion should be contextualised to *“the general public have a good awareness of the benefits an Occupational Psychologist can bring to an organisation”*. Furthermore, there were queries related to two items measuring the *Making a Difference* theme relating to being passionate and motivated by OP. These items had emerged in the focus group as sub headings of this theme so the researcher made the decision to leave them in the questionnaire but identify through further analysis whether they were appropriate in their allotted theme.

4.3.2. Stage Two: Content Validity Results

The researcher merged the completed spreadsheets and identified where there was agreement in item allocation (see appendix M). For an item to be taken forward for further analysis the researcher followed guidelines set by Hinkin (1998) suggesting that 70% agreement would constitute a relatively stable item.

The results of this analysis led to 12 items being removed from the OPFES as there was considerable disagreement as to the theme under which the item sat and none being removed from the Subjective Career Success Scale. Interestingly the two items raised under the *Making a Difference* theme that led to confusion in the face validity study also led to challenges in this study with reviewers assigning them across themes or into the 'doesn't fit' category and were therefore removed. A total of 22 items were included in the OP Employability study and all 8 remained in the Subjective Career Success Scale study.

Whilst 35% of the items were removed, the researcher was confident that the original concept of the themes remained. See Table 4.2 for a full list of items remaining following this stage.

Table 4.2.

OPFES Items Remaining following Content Validity Study (strikethrough shows removed items)

OP Theme	Questions
Professional Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My employer is aware that I have an Occupational Psychology qualification • My employer values my Occupational Psychology knowledge • My employer understands what an Occupational Psychologist does • My colleagues understand what an Occupational Psychologist does • The general public have a good awareness of the benefits an Occupational Psychologist can bring to an organisation
Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I keep my Occupational Psychology knowledge up to date • I pursue Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities in relation to Occupational Psychology (e.g. conference attendance, training courses, reading relevant publications etc.) • I pursue CPD activities in relation to my current role • I believe that it is important to keep my Occupational Psychology knowledge and skills up to date • I am always learning new things • I spend time reflecting on my own development and how I can make changes in the future
Making a Difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel that my role allows me to make a difference to the working lives of individuals • I feel that my role allows me to make a difference to organisations • I feel that the individuals I work with benefit from my knowledge of Occupational Psychology • My Occupational Psychology knowledge helps me to make a difference to my organisation/clients • I am passionate about Occupational Psychology • I am motivated to continue in this profession for the rest of my career
Adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can apply my knowledge to a broad range of scenarios • I can apply my skills to a broad range of scenarios • I am able to apply Occupational Psychology knowledge creatively • I apply many of the knowledge areas that I was taught at MSc level • I have been able to shape my role/s to match my skills and knowledge • I have a diverse range of skills
Evidence Based Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I evaluate the success/impact of the work that I do • I have opportunities to apply Occupational Psychology knowledge/theory to the workplace • I gather evidence from a range of sources to inform decisions • I consider the impact of the work that I do on who it may affect • I am inquisitive and ask lots of questions • I use science/theory in my work
External Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupational Psychology can be applied in all economic climates • The economy dictates the type of work that I do • The economy has made it difficult for me to find work • My skills and experiences are in demand • Due to issues out of my control I am not able to pursue the career path that I would like to

4.4. Results of Stages Three to Six: PCA, Differential Validity, Criterion Related Validity and Reliability

4.4.1 Stage Three: Determining OPFES Factor Structure

Prior to performing PCA, the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. Inspection of the correlation matrix (Table 4.3) revealed the presence of many coefficients of 0.3 and above (Field, 2013). Of particular interest were the correlations between items measuring the same theme. These were typically higher than correlations across themes. There were also some poor relationships which could be an early indicator that not all items were measuring the same concept. One item designed to measure the external environment theme did not correlate with any other items at above 0.30 and as recommended by Field (2013) was removed from further analysis:

1. The economy dictates the type of work that I do (Ext)

There were no items correlating above 0.8 suggesting that multicollinearity was not a concern.

Inspection of the diagonal elements of the anti-image correlations revealed that all were above 0.5 and many in excess of 0.7, therefore appropriate for further analysis. The determinant was 1.912E-6 (0.0000019) which although less than the recommended 0.00001, was deemed to be within acceptable levels to continue with the analysis.

The sample size of 88 represented a subject to variable (SVR) 4:1. Whilst researchers disagree on an appropriate sample size there is general agreement that more is better. Costello and Osborne (2005) noted that approximately one sixth of the papers they reviewed had SVRs of 2:1 or less and roughly 40% of papers published with an SVR of less than 5:1. With the relatively small sample size noted here, the communalities and factor loadings were important.

Table 4.3.

Correlation Matrix of OPFES Items (N=88)

	ID1	ID2	ID3	ID4	CPD1	CPD2	CPD3	CPD4	CPD5	CPD6	MAD1	MAD2	MAD3	MAD4	Adapt1	Adapt2	Adapt3	EBP1	EBP2	EXT1	EXT2	EXT3	
ID1	1																						
ID2	0.630	1																					
ID3	0.496	0.714	1																				
ID4	0.249	0.279	0.321	1																			
CPD1	0.157	0.294	0.323	-0.044	1																		
CPD2	0.376	0.283	0.211	0.066	0.560	1																	
CPD3	0.142	0.302	0.327	0.117	0.670	0.436	1																
CPD4	0.088	0.117	0.237	0.055	0.499	0.180	0.671	1															
CPD5	0.317	0.251	0.237	0.206	0.327	0.495	0.535	0.412	1														
CPD6	0.216	0.266	0.187	0.141	0.465	0.459	0.598	0.506	0.644	1													
MAD1	0.513	0.380	0.408	0.098	0.223	0.421	0.321	0.267	0.423	0.165	1												
MAD2	0.531	0.387	0.391	0.222	0.126	0.292	0.231	0.235	0.395	0.207	0.652	1											
MAD3	0.492	0.394	0.399	0.148	0.394	0.558	0.438	0.370	0.434	0.357	0.663	0.647	1										
MAD4	0.547	0.419	0.461	0.262	0.368	0.507	0.337	0.303	0.442	0.377	0.625	0.738	0.817	1									
Adap1	0.103	0.045	0.090	-0.097	0.077	0.183	0.290	0.186	0.335	0.202	0.186	0.236	0.151	0.080	1								
Adap2	0.169	0.211	0.157	0.068	0.337	0.268	0.516	0.242	0.406	0.451	0.317	0.254	0.247	0.365	0.469	1							
Adap3	0.075	-0.054	-0.090	0.023	0.072	0.226	0.232	0.263	0.426	0.326	0.225	0.216	0.068	0.103	0.514	0.364	1						
EBP1	0.264	0.130	0.169	0.012	0.178	0.242	0.244	0.211	0.467	0.315	0.325	0.372	0.285	0.363	0.315	0.266	0.474	1					
EBP2	0.382	0.215	0.266	0.042	0.247	0.311	0.315	0.204	0.412	0.257	0.387	0.373	0.401	0.430	0.140	0.198	0.320	0.613	1				
Ext1	0.048	0.032	0.108	0.266	-0.028	0.065	0.026	0.013	0.048	0.190	-0.175	-0.076	-0.120	-0.011	0.094	0.085	-0.028	-0.071	-0.143	1			
Ext2	0.211	0.163	0.125	0.311	0.001	0.261	0.169	0.040	0.236	0.253	0.169	0.350	0.210	0.300	0.211	0.214	0.199	0.093	-0.001	0.299	1		
Ext3	0.280	-0.022	-0.020	0.025	0.022	0.217	0.143	0.076	0.226	0.171	0.253	0.207	0.286	0.253	0.395	0.217	0.284	0.106	0.023	0.159	0.360	1	

In order to determine the six factor structure of the remaining 21 items of the questionnaire as conceptualised from the focus group analysis (chapter 3) and findings from face and content validity analyses (4.3.1 and 4.3.2.) Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was utilised. Analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS V21 with oblique rotation (direct oblim), fixed to the six factors representing the a priori themes developed from the focus group. PCA groups the original themes into linear components and explains the total variance accounted for by these variables. This was sufficient to empirically study the data set (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013), but does not necessarily suggest that the components are representative of the wider population.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.77, exceeding the recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser, 1970, 1974) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) reached statistical significance ($p < 0.001$), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. The communalities table indicated the presence of communalities between 0.556 and 0.828 which is well within the acceptable range and as no communalities were less than 0.4 indicated good relationships between the items (Costello & Osborne, 2005). The scree plot (Figure 4.3) revealed that two components could adequately explain 45.33% of the variance at the first point of inflection. Hinkin (1998) suggested that 60% of total variance explained can be used as a minimum acceptable level. Furthermore, Field (2013) outlined that scree plots are more reliable when there are over 200 participants and summarised work of Kaiser (1960) who recommended looking for eigenvalues of greater than 1 when utilising smaller sample sizes. Eigenvalues (greater than 1) indicated that 71.99% of the variance could be explained by the original six factor structure. To assist the interpretation of the components, oblim rotation was performed which revealed a relatively simple structure. It was clear that whilst there were some statistically distinct factors, some items also loaded onto more than one factor (see pattern matrix presented in Table 4.4 and structure matrix in Table 4.5). The pattern matrix (Table 4.4) demonstrates the unique contribution of each item to a factor and was therefore used in the allocation of items to factor headings, as recommended by Field, 2013. The structure matrix (Table 4.5) provides information on the correlations between items, thus shows that there were relationships between the items and factor headings.

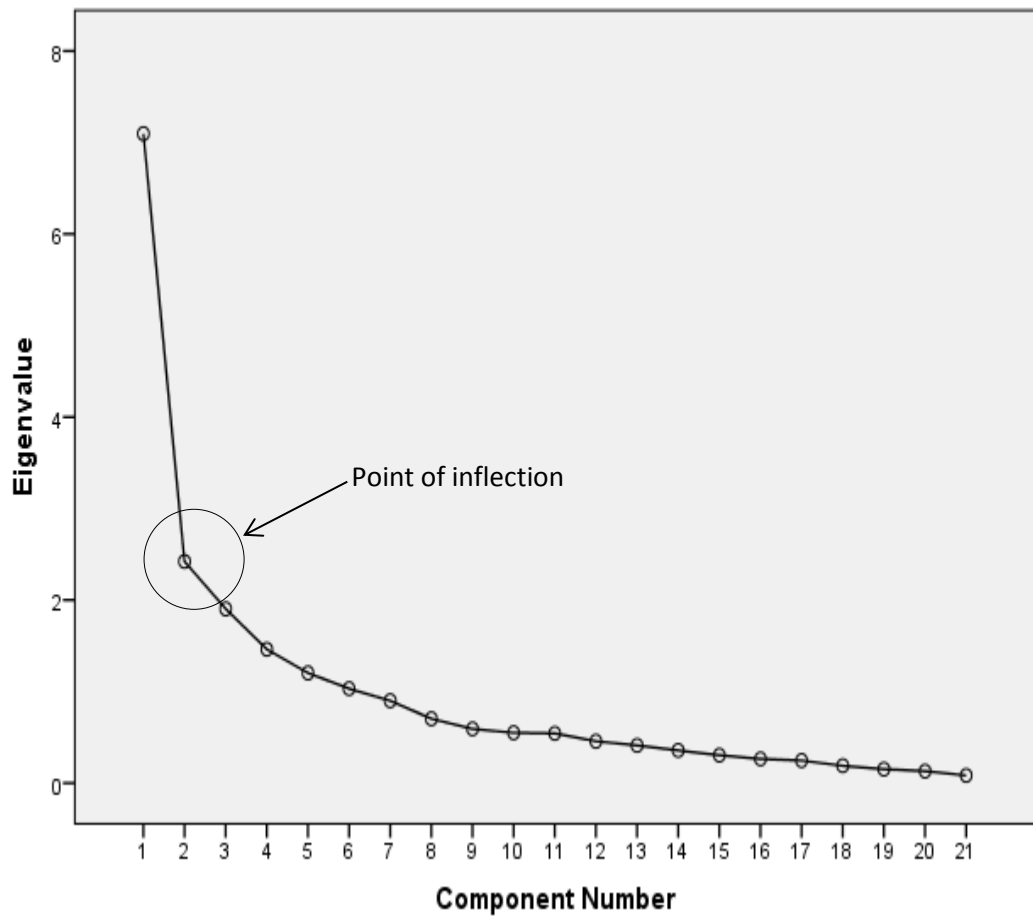


Figure 4.3. Scree plot demonstrating point of inflection at two factors

Table 4.4.

Initial pattern matrix of six fixed factors showing unique contributions of each item to the component and Eigen values

Questionnaire Item	Component					
	1 (MAD)	2 (ID)	3 (CPD)	4 (EBP)	5 (Ext)	6 (Adapt)
I feel that the individuals that I work with benefit from my knowledge of Occupational Psychology (MAD)	0.802					
My Occupational Psychology knowledge helps me to make a difference to my organisation/clients (MAD)	0.732					
I feel that my role allows me to make a difference to the working lives of individuals (MAD)	0.666					
I feel that my role allows me to make a difference to organisations (MAD)	0.621					
I pursue CPD activities in relation to my current role (CPD)	0.549		-0.453			
My employer understands what an Occupational Psychologist does (ID)		-0.856				
My colleagues understand what an Occupational Psychologist does (ID)		-0.850				
My employer is aware that I have an Occupational Psychology Qualification (ID)	0.462	-0.508				
I pursue Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities in relation to Occupational Psychology (e.g. conference attendance, training courses, reading relevant publications etc.) (CPD)			-0.825			
I keep my Occupational Psychology knowledge up to date (CPD)			-0.829			
I believe that it is important to keep my Occupational Psychology knowledge and skills up to date (CPD)			-0.720			
I spend time reflecting on my own development and how I can make changes in the future (CPD)			-0.717		0.308	
I am always learning new things (CPD)			-0.432	-0.398		
I gather evidence from a range of sources to inform decisions (EBP)				-0.835		
I use science/theory in my work (EBP)				-0.768		
I have a diverse range of skills (Adapt)				-0.546		0.498
The general public have a good awareness of the benefits an Occupational Psychologist can bring to an organisation (ID)					0.819	
The economy has made it difficult for me to find work (Ext)					0.679	
I can apply my skills to a broad range of scenarios (Adapt)						0.891
Occupational Psychology can be applied in all economic climates (Ext)	0.486					0.548
I am able to apply Occupational Psychology knowledge creatively (Adapt)			-0.358			0.581
Eigen Values	7.096	2.422	1.903	1.462	1.203	1.032
% of Variance	33.793	11.533	9.062	6.961	5.729	4.915

Table 4.5.

Initial structure matrix of six fixed factors showing unique contributions of each item to the component

Questionnaire Item	Component					
	1 (MAD)	2 (ID)	3 (CPD)	4 (EBP)	5 (Ext)	6 (Adapt)
I feel that the individuals that I work with benefit from my knowledge of occupational psychology (MAD)	0.868	-0.360	-0.440			
My Occupational Psychology knowledge helps me to make a difference to my organisation/clients (MAD)	0.844	-0.426	-0.379	-0.364		
I feel that my role allows me to make a difference to the working lives of individuals (MAD)	0.765	-0.412		-0.384		
I feel that my role allows me to make a difference to organisations (MAD)	0.746	-0.413		0.428	0.316	
I pursue CPD activities in relation to my current role (CPD)	0.626		-0.564			
My employer understands what an Occupational Psychologist does (ID)	0.344	-0.882				
My colleagues understand what an Occupational Psychologist does (ID)	0.324	-0.882				
My employer is aware that I have an Occupational Psychology Qualification (ID)	0.626	-0.633				
I pursue Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities in relation to Occupational Psychology (e.g. conference attendance, training courses, reading relevant publications etc.) (CPD)			-0.820			
I keep my Occupational Psychology knowledge up to date (CPD)			-0.879			
I believe that it is important to keep my Occupational Psychology knowledge and skills up to date (CPD)			-0.740			
I spend time reflecting on my own development and how I can make changes in the future (CPD)			-0.771	-0.341	0.381	
I am always learning new things (CPD)	0.395		-0.602	-0.575	0.392	0.337
I gather evidence from a range of sources to inform decisions (EBP)				-0.862		
I use science/theory in my work (EBP)	0.375			-0.809		
I have a diverse range of skills (Adapt)				-0.599		0.631
The general public have a good awareness of the benefits an Occupational Psychologist can bring to an organisation (ID)		-0.350			0.786	
The economy has made it difficult for me to find work (Ext)	0.359				0.742	0.364
I can apply my skills to a broad range of scenarios (Adapt)						0.873
Occupational Psychology can be applied in all economic climates (Ext)	0.485					0.631
I am able to apply Occupational Psychology knowledge creatively (Adapt)			-0.494			0.628

In order to maintain statistically rigorous standards as well as preserve the original meaning of the scale as much as possible, the researcher developed a set of criteria based upon the literature to inform decisions about item/factor fit. The first criterion was to retain items with component values greater than 0.4 (Field, 2013; Hinkin, 1998). Secondly, to remove items which cross loaded onto more than one component with values greater than 0.5 (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Finally, retaining or moving items only where it made coherent sense in relation to the a priori themes. Upon inspection of the pattern matrix (detailing the unique contribution of each item to factor) and in applying these criteria, no items were removed from the questionnaire, but some were re-allocated to different factor headings. See Table 4.6. for a summary of the criterion analysis.

Table 4.6.
 Criterion analysis of questionnaire items demonstrating final decisions

Item	Criterion			Outcome
	1	2	3	
I pursue CPD activities in relation to my current role (CPD)	Yes	No	No	Retain item in <i>CPD</i> theme
My employer is aware that I have an Occupational Psychology Qualification (ID)	Yes	No	No	Retain item in <i>Identity</i> theme
I spend time reflecting on my own development and how I can make changes in the future (CPD)	Yes	No	No	Retain item in <i>CPD</i> theme
I am always learning new things (CPD)	Yes	No	?	Item could be related to <i>evidence based practice</i> but better fit original theme of <i>CPD</i> as it related to learning and not application of practice. Retain in <i>CPD</i> .
I have a diverse range of skills (Adapt)	Yes	No	No	Retain item in <i>adaptability</i> theme
The general public have a good awareness of the benefits an Occupational Psychologist can bring to an organisation (ID)	Yes	No	Yes	Item did not load onto its original theme of <i>identity</i> but rather <i>external</i> theme. As it was related to external perceptions (i.e. outside of the organisation) it was moved to the <i>external</i> theme.
Occupational Psychology can be applied in all economic climates (external)	Yes	No	Yes	Item did not load onto its original theme of <i>external</i> but rather <i>Making a Difference</i> and <i>Adaptability</i> . As the focus was more in line with the <i>adaptability</i> theme it was therefore reclassified.
I am able to apply Occupational Psychology knowledge creatively (Adapt)	Yes	No	No	Retain item in <i>adaptability</i> theme

Note: 1= >0.4; 2= cross loading >0.5; 3= coherence

In total two items were reclassified, all others remained in their original theme areas. Two components only consisted of two items each therefore could be perceived as relatively unstable components (evidence based practice and external environment). The researcher took the decision to leave these items in the questionnaire and test their reliability and predictive validity in further analyses (4.4.4. and 4.4.5.).

4.4.2. Stage Three: Determining OP Subjective Career Success Factor Structure

The same process prior to performing PCA was followed as in 4.4.1. Inspection of the correlation matrix (Table 4.7.) revealed the presence of many coefficients of 0.3 and above (Field, 2013). Inspection of the diagonal elements of the anti-image correlations revealed that all were above 0.5 and many in excess of 0.7, therefore deemed appropriate for further analysis. The determinant was 0.01 greater than the recommended 0.00001.

In order to assess the single factorability of the 8 item Subjective Career Success Scale PCA was conducted using IBM SPSS V21, no rotation was performed on the data as a simple one factor solution was requested.

Table 4.7.
Correlation Coefficients between Subjective Career Satisfaction items (N=88)

	SCSS1	SCSS2	SCSS3	SCSS4	SCSS5	SCSS6	SCSS7	SCSS8
SCSS1	1.00							
SCSS2	0.484	1.00						
SCSS3	0.345	0.773	1.00					
SCSS4	0.566	0.702	0.587	1.00				
SCSS5	0.490	0.715	0.469	0.745	1.00			
SCSS6	0.427	0.752	0.703	0.723	0.764	1.00		
SCSS7	0.539	0.670	0.489	0.665	0.832	0.742	1.00	
SCSS8	0.372	0.595	0.611	0.729	0.574	0.634	0.577	1.00

Note: questionnaire items:

1. I found it easy to find a job after graduating
2. I have been able to apply my psychology knowledge since graduating
3. I am currently in an occupational psychologist role
4. I am satisfied with my career progress to date
5. I have taken jobs which are worthy of me
6. I have taken jobs which match my career aspirations
7. I have taken jobs which match my skills level
8. I believe that I am progressing my career in the direction that I want to go

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.86, exceeding the recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser, 1970, 1974) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) reached statistical significance ($p < 0.001$), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. The scree plot (Figure 4.4) indicated that two factors could adequately explain 77.12% of the variance, however Eigen Values (greater than 1) with one factor could explain 67.12% of the variance (deemed more suitable with smaller sample sizes). As there was only one factor to test no rotation was conducted on the data (see component matrix Table 4.8). No items were removed from the analysis and the original version of the questionnaire was taken forward for reliability analysis (4.4.5.)

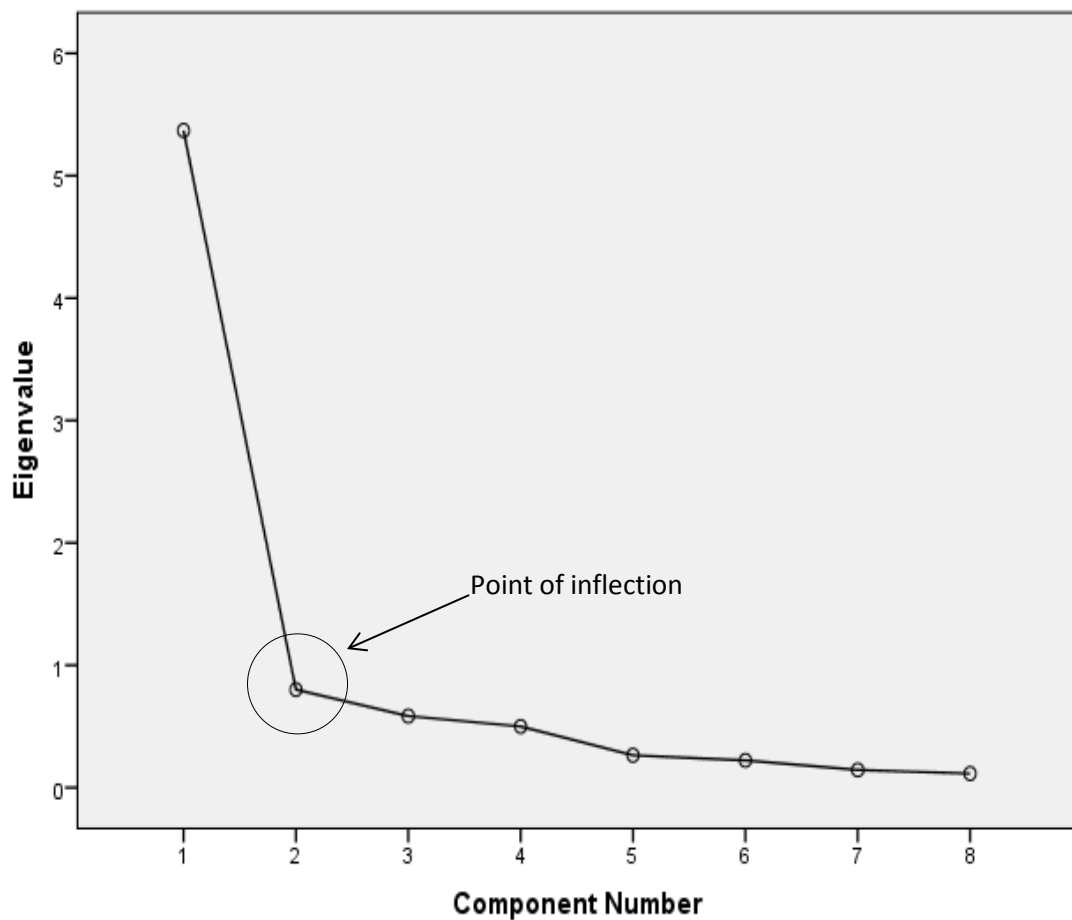


Figure 4.4. Scree plot demonstrating point of inflection at two factors

Table 4.8.

Component Matrix for Subjective Career Success

	Question	Factor Loading
1	I found it easy to find a job after graduating	0.625
2	I have been able to apply my psychology knowledge since graduating	0.875
3	I am currently in an occupational psychologist role	0.762
4	I am satisfied with my career progress to date	0.877
5	I have taken jobs which are worthy of me	0.864
6	I have taken jobs which match my career aspirations	0.888
7	I have taken jobs which match my skills level	0.848
8	I believe that I am progressing my career in the direction that I want to go	0.780
	Eigen Values	5.369
	% of Variance	67.117%

4.4.3. Stage Four: Differential Validity testing for relationships between demographic variables and OPFES and SCSS

4.4.3.1. Age relationships

Correlations were conducted on the data to identify whether there were any relationships between age and OPFES and SCSS. Table 4.9. demonstrates these relationships and suggests that older participants reported higher scores on all OP Employability items (except external environment) and the Subjective Career Success Satisfaction Scale.

Table 4.9.

Correlations between age and OP Employability and Subjective Career Success Items

Factor Heading	Age
Identity	0.301**
Continuing Professional Development	0.410**
Making a Difference	0.395**
Adaptability	0.211*
Evidence Based Practice	0.303**
External Environment	0.044
Subjective Career Satisfaction	0.368**

4.4.3.2. Gender Differences

Independent samples t-tests were conducted on the data to ascertain whether there were any gender differences in the OP Employability or Subjective Career Success Measures.

Results of independent samples t-tests (Bonferroni corrected) indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between males and females on either the OPFES or the SCSS.

4.4.4. Stage Five: Predictive Validity of OPFES on SCSS

In order to ascertain the predictive power of the OPFES in determining Subjective Career Satisfaction a hierarchical multiple regression was conducted where age was controlled for in the first step of the analysis (as suggested in prior research and due to the findings from this study). This provided insight into the criterion-related validity of the OPFES and followed the process outlined by Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) in constructing their competence measure of employability.

Subjective Career Satisfaction was significantly predicted by age ($p < 0.01$) and the OP Employability Scale ($p < 0.01$). Model two accounted for 61% of the variance in Subjective Career Success, an increase of 48% from model one with only age included. A significant model was observed $f(1, 85) = 17.661$, $p < 0.01$. Identity, Making a Difference and Evidence Based Practice made significant unique contributions to the prediction of subjective career satisfaction (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10.

Results of Hierarchical Multiple Regression in Predicting Subjective Career Satisfaction items 9N=172)

Model	Predictors	B	SE	B	P
1	Individual Control Variables	3.16	0.42		P<0.01
	Constant				
2	Age	0.04	0.01	.37	P<0.01
	OP	-0.98	0.77		P=0.20
	Employability Constant				
	Age	0.01	0.01	.08	P=0.32
	Identity	0.39	0.08	.43	P<0.01
	Continuing Professional Development	-0.07	0.13	-.05	P=0.60
	Making a Difference	0.27	0.12	.23	P=0.02
	Adaptability	0.18	0.16	.09	P=0.26
	Evidence Based Practice	0.26	0.10	.20	P=0.02
	External Environment	0.13	0.08	.12	P=0.13
		R² = 0.135 (model 1)			
		R² = 0.61 (model 2)			

4.4.5. Stage Six: Reliability Analysis

Following the validity analyses, reliability analyses were conducted on the remaining questionnaire items using Cronbach's Alpha to ensure internal consistency of the items. Table 4.11 demonstrates the findings of this analysis:

Table 4.11.

Reliability analysis and means and standard deviations for each scale on the OPFES(N=88)

Factor	M(range)	SD	α
Identity	4.63 (1-6)	1.26	0.826
Continuing Professional Development	5.06 (2-6)	0.78	0.856
Making a Difference	4.80 (1-6)	0.99	0.899
Adaptability	5.13 (3.5-6)	0.60	0.705
Evidence Based Practice	4.91 (2.5-6)	0.92	0.760
External Environment	3.05 (1-5)	1.08	0.474
Subjective Career Satisfaction	4.65 (1-6)	1.15	0.922

Scores on the OP Employability Scale are mainly negatively skewed with participants typically scoring at the higher end of the scale, indicating that participants rated themselves above average for most items. All items except external environment demonstrated an acceptable level of alpha normally deemed to be 0.70 and above (Hinkin, 1998).

4.5. Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore and define the psychometric properties of two scales developed specifically for the purposes of this doctoral research programme: the OP Employability Facilitators Scale and Subjective Career Satisfaction Scale, with the purpose of utilising them in a subsequent study (chapter 6).

4.5.1. The OPFES and SCSS

The Principal Components Analysis confirmed the presence of six OP facilitators to employability and broadly represented the original factor structure of the questionnaire. PCA led to amendments to two items from the OPFES because either they did not load onto their original theme headings, or they loaded onto more than one and better fit with an alternative theme. Two factors (*external environment* and *evidence based practice*) were viewed as potentially unstable due to only retaining two items. Further analysis revealed that *evidence based practice* both predicted subjective career satisfaction and was a reliable component and was

therefore retained in the questionnaire. However, the *external environment* theme was not a predictor of subjective career satisfaction, nor did it reach an acceptable alpha value and was therefore removed from the questionnaire. Interestingly however one original external environment item did remain in the questionnaire under the *adaptability* theme (*'occupational psychology can be applied in all economic climates'*) thus indicating that (as suggested in chapter 3) an ability to be adaptable may buffer against certain external environmental issues.

The final OPFES therefore consisted of 19 items measuring five facets of: professional identity, continuing professional development, making a difference, adaptability and evidence based practice and are listed in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12.

Final Version of the OPFES following reliability and validity analysis

OP Theme	Questions
Professional Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My employer is aware that I have an Occupational Psychology qualification</i> • <i>My employer understands what an Occupational Psychologist does</i> • <i>My colleagues understand what an Occupational Psychologist does</i>
Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I keep my Occupational Psychology knowledge up to date</i> • <i>I pursue Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities in relation to Occupational Psychology (e.g. conference attendance, training courses, reading relevant publications etc.)</i> • <i>I pursue CPD activities in relation to my current role</i> • <i>I believe that it is important to keep my Occupational Psychology knowledge and skills up to date</i> • <i>I am always learning new things</i> • <i>I spend time reflecting on my own development and how I can make changes in the future</i>
Making a Difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I feel that my role allows me to make a difference to the working lives of individuals</i> • <i>I feel that my role allows me to make a difference to organisations</i> • <i>I feel that the individuals that I work with benefit from my knowledge of Occupational Psychology</i> • <i>My Occupational Psychology knowledge helps me to make a difference to my organisation/clients</i>
Adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I can apply my skills to a broad range of scenarios</i> • <i>I am able to apply Occupational Psychology knowledge creatively</i> • <i>Occupational Psychology can be applied in all economic climates</i> • <i>I have a diverse range of skills</i>
Evidence Based Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I gather evidence from a range of sources to inform decisions</i> • <i>I use science/theory in my work</i>

Support was provided for the single factor OP Subjective Career Satisfaction Scale. The OP SCSS was found to have a simple single factor structure comprising of

eight items with acceptable reliability. Further research is necessary to determine the relationship between the OP Subjective Career Success Scale and other measures of Subjective and Objective Career Success and will form part of a Confirmatory Factor Analysis study (chapter 6).

The detailed psychometric study provided an opportunity to explore the OP Facilitators in more depth and to appreciate the relationships between items developed for the questionnaire and the theme headings. A brief summary of each theme heading and reflections are presented below (chapter 3 outlined the key literature in relation to the theme headings and is therefore not repeated).

4.5.1.1. Professional Identity (ID)

From the five original *identity* items, disagreement between reviewers in the content validity study led to the removal of one item (*my employer values my Occupational Psychology knowledge*). Following PCA an additional item was reclassified under the *External Environment* theme (*the general public have a good awareness of the benefits an Occupational Psychologist can bring to an organisation*). Upon reflection there was a link here to the external issues discussed in the focus group and clearly lack of awareness from the general public could be deemed an external environmental issue. This theme demonstrated sound reliability and also made a unique contribution to the prediction of *Subjective Career Satisfaction*. With the removal of one item the theme was conceptually related to immediate colleagues and employers understanding or awareness of OP.

4.5.1.2. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

This theme was perhaps the least contentious for reviewers in the content validity study where 100% agreement was achieved for all items falling into the CPD theme. Following PCA these six items remained. This is not surprising due to the reinforcement of the importance for OccPsychs to keep their CPD up-to-date, particularly to maintain registered status with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) who refer to CPD as “...an important part of registrants' continuing registration with the HPC. We expect registrants to continue to develop their knowledge and skills while they are registered so we can be confident that they are able to practise safely and effectively” (HCPC Website, accessed 1st April 2015). Whilst the items within this theme were reliable, it did not make a significant contribution to Subjective Career Satisfaction thus indicating it may not be a

differentiating factor in OccPsychs perceptions of career success. This could potentially be due to the earlier discussion around the salience of CPD for OccPsychs, suggesting that it is an essential facilitator for OccPsychs to maintain, in fact the mean score for this theme was at the “agree” category on the scale and was negatively skewed indicating that participants scored towards the positive end of the scale.

4.5.1.3. Making a Difference (MAD)

From the original six items, four items remained in this theme heading following the content validity study. The resulting four items represented a more coherent theme related to the impact an OccPsych had in improving individuals working lives. This theme made a unique contribution to predicting career satisfaction where individuals reporting higher scores on Making a Difference also reported high levels of Subjective Career Satisfaction and achieved sound reliability coefficients.

4.5.1.4. Evidence Based Practice (EBP)

The content validity study led to the removal of 4 items as they were not clearly conceptualised into this heading, leading reviewers to assign the questions to other themes such as *making a difference* and *continuing professional development*. For this reason these items were removed from further analysis and upon reflection it is clear why these issues were raised. For example one item “*I consider the impact of the work that I do on who it may affect*” could potentially have been confusing as it has two parts 1) considering impact and 2) who is affected. Reviewers placed this item into *Continuing Professional Development*, *Making a Difference*, *Career Success* and *Doesn't Fit* categories. Interestingly, none placed it under the EBP theme heading.

However, two EBP items remained which generally explained the heading well – gathering evidence to inform decisions and using science or theory in work. This related to how OccPsychs described EBP in the focus group and additional items were included based upon Briner and Rousseau’s (2011) theory of evidence based practice. It is possible that OccPsychs did not fully identify with the concept of EBP as conceptualised by Briner and Rousseau (2011). As the focus of this research is identifying what predicts OccPsych career success it was perhaps overly ambitious to utilise a set of criteria from EBP research that may not have related to the actual practice of OccPsychs in the current job market. The two remaining EBP items had

reliability coefficients and also made a unique significant contribution to the prediction of Subjective Career Satisfaction.

4.5.1.5. Adaptability

The content validity study led to three items being removed which caused confusion among the reviewers (Table 4.2.). This led to a theme which was related to application of skills yet still reflected the original discussion (3.3.4). The two removed items referred to 'knowledge' which reviewers had placed into the CPD theme, Career Success, EBP and Doesn't Fit categories. The question relating to shaping roles was placed in the career success category potentially as reviewers perceived it as an outcome or marker of success; therefore those individuals who had shaped their career could be viewed as more successful than those who hadn't. Whilst it was not entirely clear why reviewers felt that these items did not fit in the adaptability theme, in order to ensure consistency with the approach taken they were removed from any further analysis. The three items which remained were deemed to adequately represent the theme heading.

Following PCA a further item was grouped with the original three items which was *Occupational Psychology can be applied in all economic climates*. This item was originally assigned to the external environment theme; however it was clear that it fit with the other content items related to applying skills. It was therefore retained with the adaptability items.

This theme achieved acceptable reliability coefficients, although had a relatively high average with most participants scoring the items between 3.5 and 6 (average of 5.13 or agree). This theme did not provide a significantly unique contribution towards the prediction of Subjective Career Satisfaction. The reason for this is not clear, particularly as adaptability has been well researched in the employability field and has emerged as an important antecedent of career success (Crant, 2000; Fugate et al., 2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006; Zacher, 2014). It could be that this theme has not been conceptualised in the same way as previous studies and this explains why it failed to be a significant predictor. Further exploration is necessary to ascertain the relationship between adaptability as defined in the OP context and other more established measures (see chapter 6).

4.5.1.6. External Environment

From the five original external environment items, two were removed following the content validity study due to disagreement by reviewers (Table 4.2.). A further item *'the economy dictates the type of work that I do'* was removed following inspection of the correlation matrix as it did not correlate above 0.3 with any other item. PCA led to a further item moving to the adaptability theme (*Occupational Psychology can be applied in all economic climates*), and a further item moving into this theme from the identity items. These remaining two items (*the general public have a good awareness of the benefits an Occupational Psychologist can bring to an organisation* and *the economy has made it difficult for me to find work*) were therefore related to issues outside the control of the individual. This theme did not reach an acceptable alpha level in the reliability analysis, nor did it make a unique contribution to the prediction of career success.

The items in this theme were the only ones in the scale which were negatively worded and research suggests that this can lead to the production of factor structures which do not make conceptual sense (Netemeyer, Bearden, & Sharma, 2003). This could potentially confound the results and whilst the area was deemed important in the focus group the measurement of the concept has proved difficult. Further research utilising qualitative methodology will seek to understand the role that the external environment plays in the formation of an OccPsychs career (chapter 7).

4.5.2. Differential Validity

There was a significant relationship between age and each employability item indicating that older participants rated the items higher than younger participants. Age and employability have been shown to be related with older employees typically reporting lower employability (Van der Heijden, Van Vuuren, Kooij, & De Lange, 2015). Research also suggests that ratings of employability may peak mid-career, indicating this is the time that an individual feels at their most employable (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007; Van der Heijden et al., 2009). The mean age of the participants was 35.15 years indicating a relatively mid-career group. Further research to understand this relationship will be conducted in the chapter 6, particularly in understanding whether age moderates the relationship between employability and career success (Van der Heijden, Gorgievski, & De Lange, 2015).

4.5.3. Implications for Practice

Initial results are promising for the underlying factorability of the OPFES and SCSS suggesting they do measure the constructs. They could be utilised to enhance employability and career success of OccPsychs, particularly through self-assessment. For example, the OPFES might enrich the MSc provision by encouraging students to self-assess to appreciate the factors which could develop their employability. Importantly it could be utilised by these individuals to identify whether OP is indeed a good professional fit. In order to be employable OccPsychs potentially require an interest in making a difference to working lives, have a desire and ability to apply an evidence base (among other things) to their practice and if these areas don't appeal to them, the profession may not be appropriate. Practising OccPsychs could find benefit in the questionnaire by identifying areas in which to focus their future development. Finally, the DOP may be interested in surveying their members using the scale to take a strategic overview of the employability of the profession and create opportunities to enhance career potential. Whilst initial results support the suggestion that OP specific facilitators exist and can lead to improved perceptions of career success, further research as part of this doctorate will expand upon the implications for practice by providing a stronger evidence base upon which to make practitioner decisions.

4.5.4. Limitations and further research

The process followed for establishing the psychometric properties of the OP Employability measure was partially based upon the approach taken by Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) in the development of their competence measure of employability. There are however some differences. For example, Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden used supervisor ratings as well as self-ratings in order to determine discriminant validity. This approach was not utilised in the current study due to participants being individual and not organisational samples. It could not be assumed that all individuals would have a supervisor, due to the indication that many OccPsychs are self-employed. Whilst the inclusion of supervisor ratings could enhance the accuracy of self-report measures to protect against common method bias (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006), there is also research to suggest self-ratings can provide insight into an individual's behaviour (Vazire & Mehl, 2008). In addition, the study was concerned with how employable and satisfied individuals believed themselves to be, rather than an

objective measurement of their competencies. Only subjective career success was measured and not objective, further testing of the questionnaires in chapter 6 will also utilise objective measures of success.

The sample size in the current study could be a confounding factor. Whilst an ideal number of participants for validity studies is not present in the literature, there is general consensus that more is better. Definitions of what 'more' means are wide ranging. Costello and Osborne (2005) conducted research into the sample sizes utilised in validity studies to identify the accuracy of the outcome dependent upon size. They noted that SVRs or 2:1 yielded 10% accuracy in identifying the correct factor solutions, whereas SVRs of 20:1 yielded accurate results 70% of the time. Accuracy was defined as items loading into the correct factor. In order to understand the impact of the small sample size further confirmatory factor analysis will be conducted with a larger sample. However, it must be noted that studies with OccPsychs typically yield low sample sizes (see chapter 2).

The choice of student participants for the content validity study may have led to less agreement between certain items on the scale. For example, it was particularly challenging to achieve agreement on the *evidence based practice* scale, which may be due to a lack of understanding of the construct, rather than the items being inappropriate. Potentially it would have made sense to include a range of 'experts' to conduct this study, however the researcher was conscious of maximising participation in subsequent studies and therefore did not want to utilise individuals who would be eligible for completing a later survey.

Finally, this research was designed to test the psychometric properties of two scales, further research is essential utilising these scales and existing measures of both employability and career success (objective and subjective) to identify whether the context specific tools unique contribution to the study of employability and career success. This will be developed in a modelling study in chapter 6.

Chapter 5 outlines the demographic data collected from participants to explore educational background, role and professional membership adding further detail to the discussion around what OccPsychs do.

Chapter 5: What do Occupational Psychologists do? An exploration of educational background, role and professional membership?

5.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter outlines the findings of a survey designed to capture demographic data from individuals who have studied a BPS accredited MSc in Occupational Psychology or equivalent. It begins with a brief introduction to the study (5.1.1.), followed by the study methodology (5.2) and results (5.3) and concludes with a discussion of the key findings, limitations and implications for further research (5.4.). A diagrammatic presentation of the chapter structure is presented in Figure 5.1.

5.1.1. Introduction	5.2. Method	5.3. Results	5.4. Discussion
5.1.2. Research Aims	5.2.1. Design	5.3.1. Education	5.4.1. Education
	5.2.3. Participants	5.3.1.1. Educational Background	5.4.2. Job/Role
	5.2.3.1. Participant Backgrounds: Age, Gender, Ethnicity	5.3.1.2. Role of MSc in Preparing for Work	5.4.3. BPS Membership
	5.2.4. Materials	5.3.2. Job/Role	5.4.4. Limitations and Practical Implications
	5.2.4.1. Education	5.3.2.1. Employment Status and Job Titles	
	5.2.4.2. Job/Role	5.3.2.2. Work Experience	
	5.2.4.3. BPS Membership	5.3.2.3. Sector and Location	
	5.2.5. Procedure	5.3.2.4. Level	
		5.3.2.5. Salary	
		5.3.3. BPS Membership	

Figure 5.1. Chapter Five Structure

5.1.1. Introduction

According to the Expert Panel (2011) (1.1) despite attempts to gather information, very little is known about where OccPsychs work and their areas of competence due to “a lack of accurate information being collected on the DOP membership” (p.12). This further extends to individuals graduating from MSc OP programmes,

who don't necessarily pursue DOP membership. Typically research conducted by the DOP yields low response rates (e.g. the member engagement survey 2012 received 169 responses from invites sent to 3173 (5%)) and is usually directed at those individuals who are members of the Division of Occupational Psychology (DOP). As discussed in the focus group (chapter 3), the OP-First Project (2006) and the Expert Panel (2012), DOP Membership Surveys (2011, 2012) OccPsychs lack a *Professional Identity*. The DOP reports have focused upon the role of the professional body in developing a clearer unique selling point (USP) to support identity, with a specific emphasis upon members of the DOP. The most recent membership survey of 2012 suggested that 69% of members felt that the DOP were not doing a good job in promoting OP to the mainstream media. In contrast, this doctorate is concerned with how OccPsychs navigate the career landscape and make the best use of the opportunities open to them. Chapter 7 will focus upon a deeper analysis of this subject.

Research focused solely upon DOP members does not provide the full picture of the extended OP community, including those individuals who have studied an MSc Occupational Psychology and perhaps were undecided about their next steps. At the time of writing this doctorate, there is no known research focused upon this group and therefore no data to understand what career options are available to individuals regardless of membership status. The aim of this study was not to repeat surveys which had already been conducted as part of the DOP strategy, but to broaden the scope to include non DOP members and to specifically focus upon a surface level quantitative analysis of job titles, sectors, level, geographic location and membership status. This information will be particularly useful to students and recent graduates as it will give an indication of where to begin to look for work whilst also building a picture of the current job market for OP graduates. At a time where higher education is facing increased pressure to demonstrate that graduates are employable (Andrews & Russell, 2012; Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011), understanding the role of education in employment is timely and necessary, particularly in demonstrating the value of post graduate study over undergraduate.

5.1.2. Research Aims

The aim of this exploratory chapter is to understand the current position of OP in the UK, to appreciate the employment context and build up a picture of the OP working population. This will also help to set the context and provide an evidence base for

future studies. As such it was data, not theory driven; findings are discussed with reference to other reports such as OP-First (2006) and implications for the profession highlighted. This chapter aims to bridge the gap between what is known and what is believed about the work of OccPsychs, not just those who are pursuing OP as a profession but for any individual who has studied an MSc in Occupational Psychology.

5.2. Method

5.2.1. Design

A non-experimental, survey design was employed to collect demographic data assessing a variety of employment (this chapter) and employability (chapter 6) factors. Questions were based upon suggestions from previous DOP reports (5.1.1.), findings from the focus group (chapter 3), and from the census for items such as ethnicity. Additionally, the researchers own knowledge as an Occupational Psychologist, educator of OccPsychs, supervisor for the Stage two qualification (formerly referred to as 'chartership') and co-Chair of the DOPTC was utilised.

5.2.3. Participants

Participants were required to have completed a BPS accredited MSc Occupational Psychology (or equivalent) in order to be eligible to participate. This ensured that qualification level was controlled, but also that all participants would have been taught similar degree programmes (based upon Graduate Basis for Chartership from an undergraduate degree or conversion programme and Stage One Qualification in Occupational Psychology from an MSc in Occupational Psychology). It additionally ensured that participants were eligible for Chartered Status with the BPS and Practitioner OP status with the HCPC, therefore assuming an equal playing field as much as possible and thus controlling for some human capital elements.

A total of 236 participants started the questionnaire; however 18 participants did not disclose any demographic information and were removed from the data set. In addition, 33 participants did not complete the questionnaires and according to the participant information participants were informed that to withdraw their data they could simply close down the survey. In these cases it was assumed that participants had decided to withdraw. In total 185 questionnaires were utilised, a withdrawal rate of 22%.

5.2.3.1. Participant backgrounds: Age, gender, ethnicity

163 participants disclosed their age with a mean of 34.45 years (SD=8.93), a summary of range is provided below:

- 28 (17%) aged between twenty two and twenty six;
- 38 (23%) aged between twenty seven and thirty;
- 33 (20%) aged between thirty one and thirty four;
- 30 (18%) aged between thirty five and forty;
- 34 (21%) aged between forty one and fifty nine.

184 participants disclosed their gender, 138 (75%) were female and 46 (25%) were male.

Finally, participants were asked to state their ethnicity. 185 participants responded with the majority (n=126; 68%) White British, 34 (18%) as other white, 8 (4%) as Asian, 6 (3%) as Mixed background, 6 (3%) as Black and 5 (3%) as Chinese.

5.2.4 Materials

A questionnaire was developed by the researcher to gather biographical data from the participants. There were 28 questions in total, which included three questions relating to age, ethnicity and gender. The researcher was also interested in three 'meta' categories related to 1) education, 2) job/role, and 3) BPS membership status of participants. Within each category questions were designed to capture information from participants to build up a broad picture of their collective profiles:

5.2.4.1. Education

There were seven questions in this category which asked participants to state their undergraduate and post graduate degree classifications, which knowledge area they studied for the MSc thesis and any participation in doctorate study for example "have you completed a doctorate"? Finally, three additional questions to identify the role of the MSc in careers for example "my master's qualification was important in securing my first role upon graduating". These three items were scored on a 6 point scale from 1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree.

5.2.4.2. Job/Role

Participants were asked a series of 13 questions with both free text and drop down options to understand their work experiences. For example participants were asked to state their current role by entering a “*full and specific job title*”. Questions were also asked about current level, sector in which the participants worked, employment status, annual gross salary, and geographic location.

5.2.4.3. BPS Membership

Participants were asked to choose the BPS membership options which applied to them (HCPC Registered OccPsych, BPS Chartered Psychologist, Member of the DOP, Practitioner in Training/Stage two Qualification in OP, considering enrolling upon stage two, not going to pursue chartered status, none). Additionally, they were asked to rate on a six point scale from 1=strongly disagree to 6= strongly agree the extent to which “*chartered status is important to my career success*”.

A copy of the survey (which includes briefing and debriefing) can be found in appendix O.

5.2.5. Procedure

Following ethical approval from the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Ethics Committee at Northumbria University, the researcher advertised the questionnaire on various social networking sites such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook, targeting groups which may contain individuals with an MSc in Occupational Psychology such as ‘*psychology in business*’ and ‘*division of work and organisational psychology*’. E-mails were also sent out to contacts of the researcher which included alumni from Northumbria University, Programme Directors from all UK accredited degree programmes and other professional contacts, who were asked to pass the survey on to their contacts. The aim was to use a snowballing approach to capture those individuals who perhaps studied for an MSc but then did not go on to pursue OP or become a member of the DOP. Regular reminders were also sent to each social networking site. The study was advertised at the annual DOP Conference (via a poster). Participants who were interested in taking part in the study followed a link to SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com) where they were taken to a participant information sheet outlining the nature of the research and what their participation would involve. They could then choose to participate by

completing an online consent form and providing an anonymous code word so that they could identify their data should they wish for it to be excluded at a later date. Participants were asked if they would like to receive feedback, be entered in to a prize draw to win an Apple iPad (as compensation for their time) and participate in follow up interviews. If they selected yes to any of these questions they were asked to provide their e-mail address so that the researcher could contact them in the future. Following consent, participants were taken to the study questionnaires. The first set of questions were the detailed biographical questions (the focus of this chapter), followed by a series of questionnaires presented in chapter 6. Once participants had completed all questions, taking approximately 30 minutes, they were taken to a participant debrief page reminding them of the purpose of the survey and how to withdraw their data if required. Finally, participants were thanked for their time.

5.3. Results

Prior to conducting any analyses data was cleansed for missing values and inaccuracies or errors. Corrections were made in the annual salary free text box to ensure that all responses were on the same scale (i.e. removing letters such as 'k' to represent thousand). Additionally, in some cases questions were deliberately open, but to make sense of them for data analysis purposes they were categorised into groups. Examples included job title, geographic location and membership status. No other corrections were made to the data.

The following sections demonstrate the descriptive statistics for the biographical questions broken down into the three categories of *education* (5.3.1.), *job/role* (5.3.2), and *professional membership* (5.3.3.). Inferential statistics such as t-tests, one way Anovas and correlations were conducted where necessary to understand the potential implications and relationships between questions.

Since the research is concerned with the employment of individuals with an MSc in Occupational Psychology, all participants have been included in the results. Results were analysed to identify whether there were differences between those individuals in an OP role versus those who were not. These findings are dispersed amongst different sections and highlighted where relevant.

5.3.1. Education

Participants responded to ten questions related to education to present an indication of their relative backgrounds (i.e. human capital) as well as their perceptions of the value of their MSc to their career.

5.3.1.1. Educational Background

These questions related to university of MSc study, thesis area, award achieved and year of graduation in order to appreciate the educational backgrounds of participants. 184 participants provided the university where they studied their MSc (see Figure 5.1.).

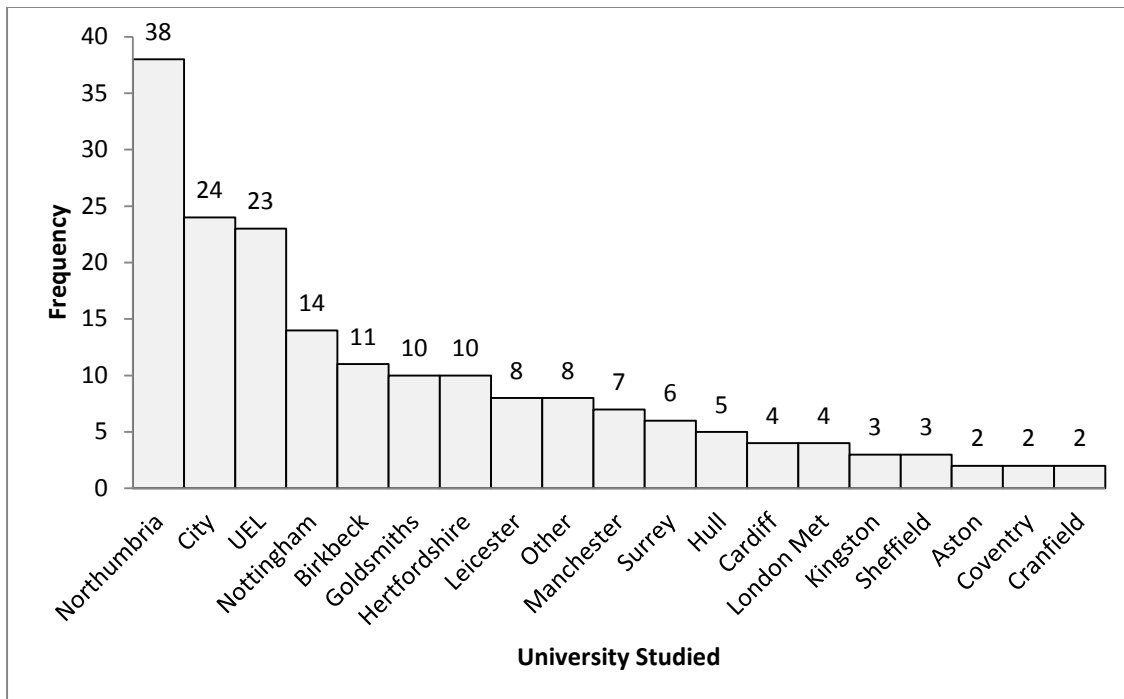


Figure 5.1. Frequency chart demonstrating where participants studied their MSc in Occupational Psychology

It is clear from Figure 5.1. that a greater proportion of participants ($n=38$) studied at Northumbria University than any other institution, followed by City University ($n=24$) and UEL ($n=23$). However, the majority of universities offering accredited MSc Occupational Psychology programmes were represented and this also demonstrated a good geographic spread of participants.

In relation to MSc study, participants were asked which of the eight core areas of OP their thesis was most closely aligned to, Figure 5.2. presents the findings (note that this research was conducted prior to changes to the stage one curriculum)

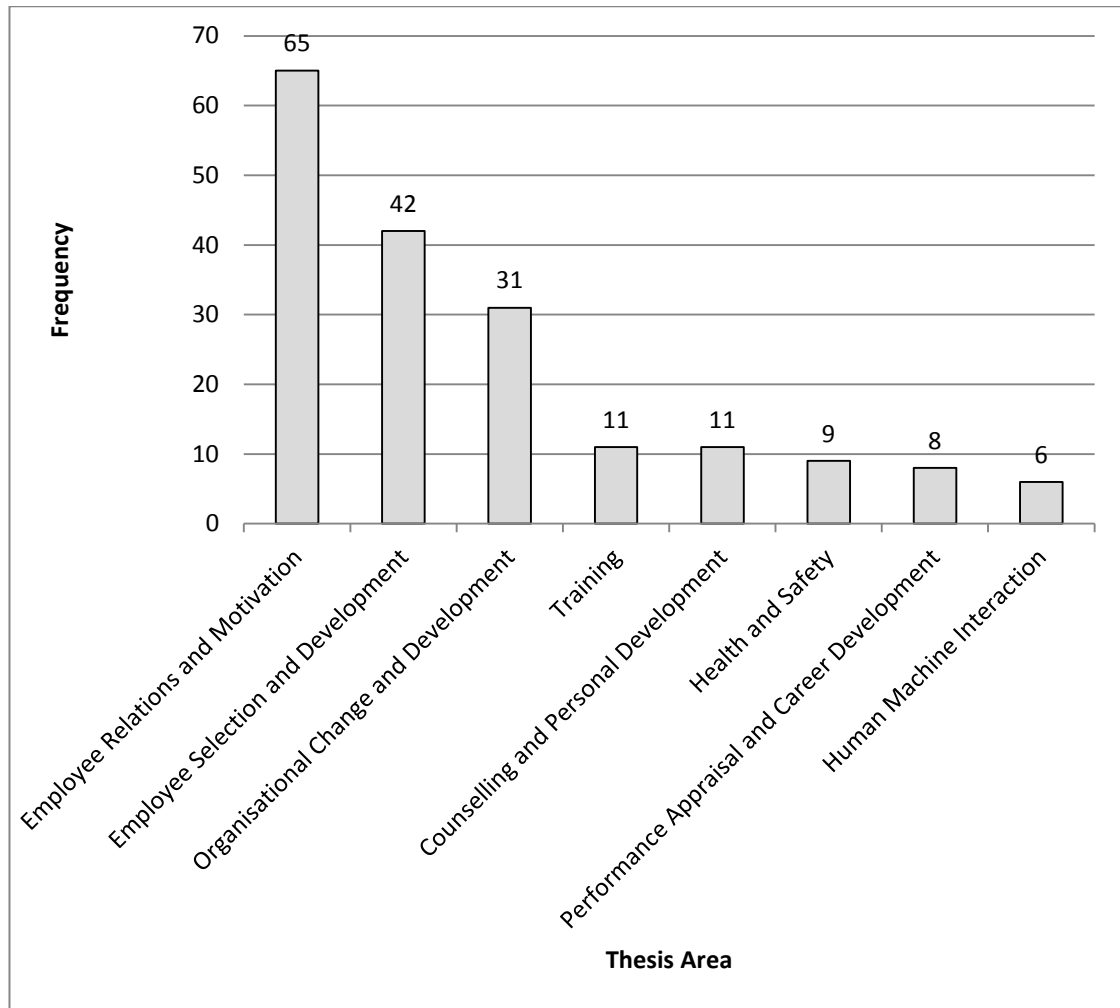


Figure 5.2. Distribution of participants by MSc thesis topic area

Figure 5.2. indicated that the majority of participants conducted their thesis in either Organisational Development and Change, Employee Relations and Motivation or Employee Selection and Development representing 75% of participants and making these popular areas for study amongst participants. These differences could be due to supervisor preference, student interest and ease of recruiting participants/designing studies. Chi-square analyses suggested that there was no association between thesis area and whether participants were in an OP role or not.

Participants were asked to indicate when they graduated from their MSc in Occupational Psychology (see Figure 5.3.) and what award they achieved. 181 participants provided the year that they graduated as indicated in Figure 5.3. Whilst

there was a range from 1987 to 2014, the majority of participants (n=125, 69%) had graduated post 2006.

When asked to identify the award achieved, 48% (n=84) achieved a commendation or merit, 28% (n=50) were awarded a pass, 24% (n=42) received a distinction, representing a good spread of abilities among the participants. Nine participants did not respond to this question but had commented in free text that they were awaiting their results or their MSc had not been graded in this way.

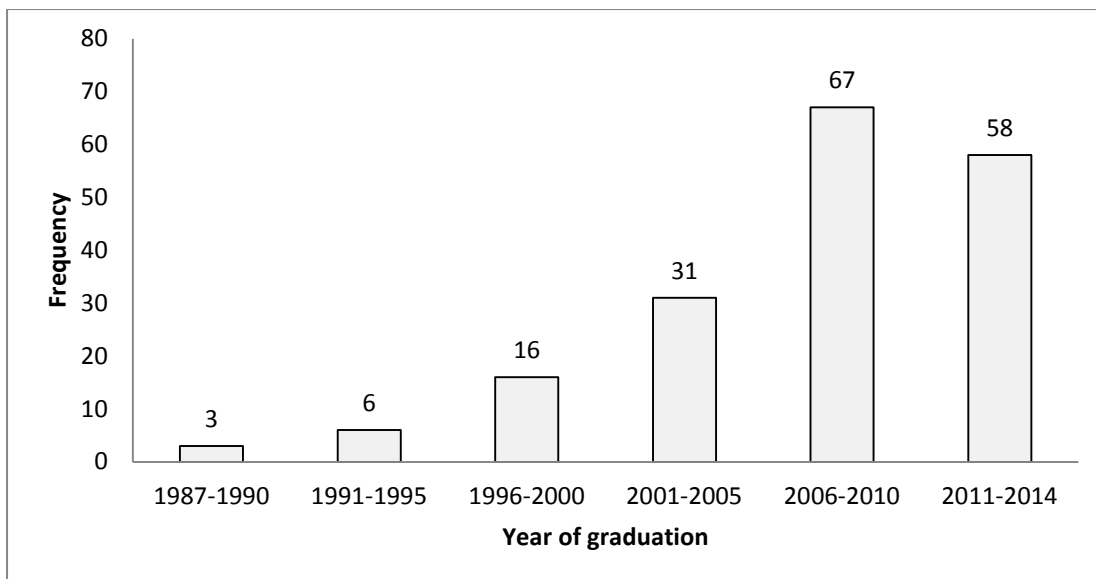


Figure 5.3. Distribution of participants by year of MSc OP graduation

Finally, in the education demographic questions participants were asked a series of questions relating to doctorate level study to give an indication of whether they had studied or intended to study at this level.

Out of 183 participants who responded to the question *“have you completed a doctorate”*, 178 participants (93%) had not studied at this level. Interestingly when asked whether they intended to study for a doctorate 86 out of 182 (47%) responded that they had no intention of studying to this level. 8% (n=14) were already studying; 16% (n=37) were considering it and 25% (n=45) indicated that they were unsure. Of those already studying for or considering studying the range of doctorates included PhDs or Professional Doctorates in Occupational, Clinical, Counselling, Educational or Positive Psychology or in Education.

5.3.1.2. Role of MSc in Preparing for Work

A final set of questions related to participants perceptions of their MSc in securing roles and preparing them for work. Three questions were utilised where participants were asked to rate their agreement on a 6 point scale from 1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree (Table 5.1.)

Table 5.1.

Frequency and percentage of responses on questions relating to the importance of MSc in preparing individuals for work

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	\bar{x}	SD
My masters qualification was important in securing my first role upon graduating (N=184)	15 (8%)	16 (9%)	13 (7%)	24 (13%)	37 (20%)	79 (43%)	4.57	1.66
My masters qualification was important in securing my current role (N=184)	17 (9%)	9 (5%)	12 (7%)	25 (14%)	37 (20%)	84 (45%)	4.67	1.63
My masters qualification prepared me for work (N=185)	14 (8%)	15 (8%)	20 (11%)	67 (36%)	48 (26%)	21 (11%)	3.99	1.36

Table 5.1. indicates that participants were generally positive about the importance of their master's qualification with the majority of ratings at the positive, 'agree' rather than 'disagree' side of the scale. Interestingly, question 3 "my masters qualification prepared me for work" demonstrated a greater spread of marks across the positive end of the scale and a lower mean than the other two questions.

Finally, in order to ascertain whether perceptions of the MSc were impacted by whether participants were in an OP role Bonferroni corrected independent samples t-tests were conducted on the three questions. Results of these analyses indicated that there was a significant difference in perceptions between participants on the first two questions (Table 5.2.). Perhaps not surprisingly, participants who were in OP related roles believed that the MSc was more instrumental in securing this role than those who weren't. There wasn't a significant difference between participants on whether the MSc prepared them for work.

Table 5.2.

Results of Independent Samples *t*-test identifying significant differences between those in an OP role and those not in an OP role (Bonferroni corrected)

Question	N	\bar{x}	SD	t	DF	p	Eta squared
My masters qualification was important in securing my first role upon graduating	OP (n=153)	4.77	1.55	3.34	36.99*	0.006	0.018 (small)
	Non OP (n=30)	3.53	1.88				
My masters qualification was important in securing my current role	OP (n=154)	5.06	1.37	8.50	181	<0.005	0.045 (small)
	Non OP (n=29)	1.62	1.42				

Note: *Levene's test due to unequal variance

The results of the educational demographic questions indicated that whilst sample size was small there was a good range of geographic locations, universities, qualification and perceptions of MSc study. Whilst it can't be assumed that this is representative of the educational experiences of all OccPsychs, it does indicate that in terms of education, there was no clear bias in participants. Perhaps the only area for concern is the greater amount of participants who had studied at Northumbria University.

5.3.2 Job/Role

The second set of questions referred to participants' current job and included items relating to employment status, type of job, employment sector, level and salary. Within this section of questions, where participants were not currently employed they were asked to refer to their most recent role. As in the previous section the results are organised by descriptive statistics and concludes with a series of inferential analyses.

5.3.2.1 Employment status and job titles

This was primarily an employed sample with 95% (175/185) participants expressing that they were employed in one or more jobs. Of those not in work 7 were students and 3 were currently out of work.

Participants were asked to provide a full and specific job title, enabling them to explain in their own words what they did. The information provided was then utilised

to inform role categories to present a broader picture of what participants did. Figure 5.4. presents a summary of the responses which is also organised by whether participants believed they were in an OP related role (n=154) or not (n=30) (N.B. one participant failed to provide a job title so was not included in the analysis).

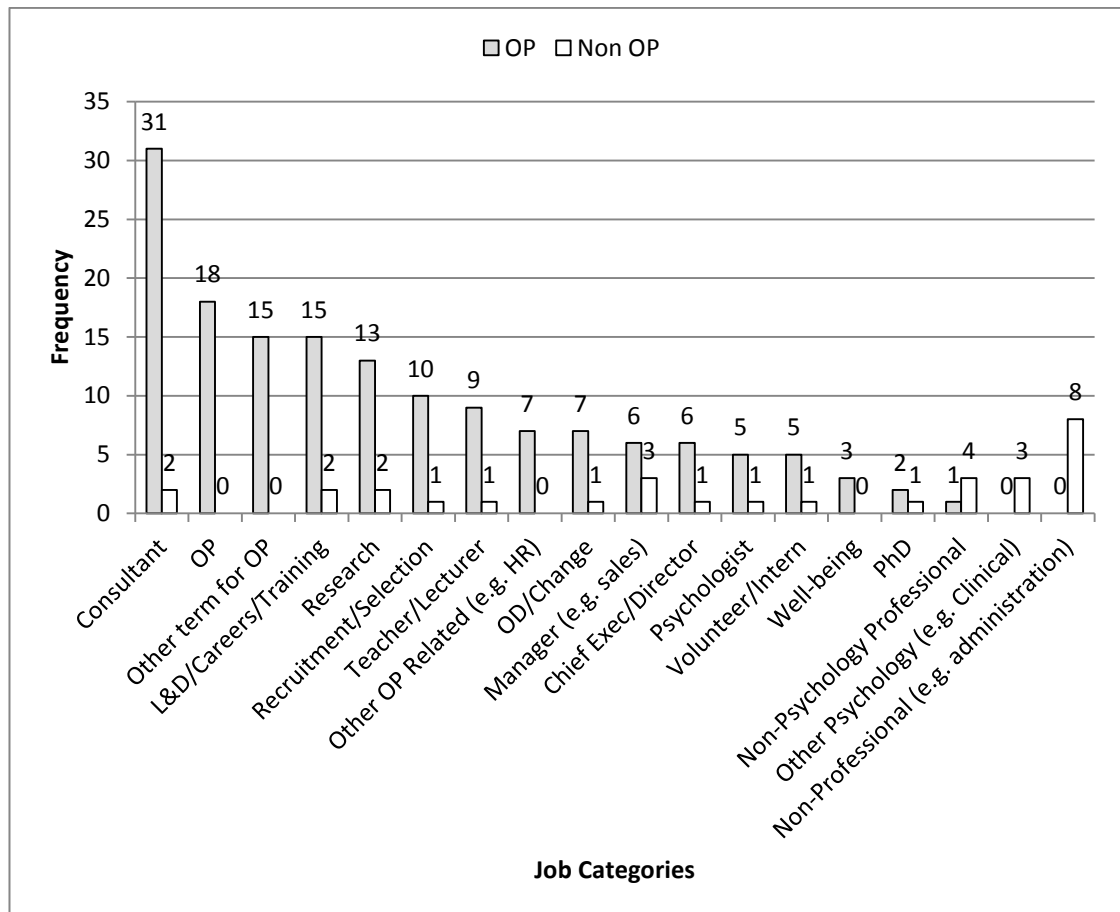


Figure 5.4. Job categories defined by participant job titles and grouped by OP and non-OP related roles (n=184)

Out of 184 participants who provided their job titles, there were almost 100 different variations of titles. These included level differences such as Psychologist, Higher Psychologist and Senior Psychologist and HR Coordinator, HR Advisor, HR Business Partner for example. Where participants utilised the word ‘consultant’ at various levels (senior, principal etc.) they were categorised into the consultant category. Where participants were explicit about the type of consultant e.g. OD consultant they were categorised into the field most closely related to the type of work, in this case OD/Change. Clearly the majority of participants with an OP qualification categorised themselves as ‘consultants’ (n=33), with the smallest proportion working in the well-being field (n=3). Interestingly where participants determined that they did not work in an OP related field in some cases the job titles

did appear related for example “test developer”, “employment consultant”, “Learning and OD Business Partner”. Others were clearly not related e.g. “health” or “domestic assistant”, “retail assistant”. There was also evidence of participants working in other fields of psychology such as clinical or health. The breadth of job titles and areas suggests that there are opportunities for individuals with OP qualifications to work in a variety of areas which could be considered a strength but also potentially a challenge to their identity.

Of these participants, 81% (n=149) suggested that they were employees, 16% (n=30) were self-employed without employees and 1% (n=2) were self-employed with employees and 2% (n=3) indicated that their employment was not categorised in any of these ways.

5.3.2.2. Work Experience

Participants were asked both how many years work experience they had in total (N=180) and how many years’ experience they had prior to completing their MSc OP degree (N=182). Table 5.3. demonstrates that prior to completing the MSc, 32% of participants had no work experience and 40% had between 1 and 5 years’ experience. Total years’ experience was relatively evenly split between participants with the greatest number of participants (29%) in the 11-20 years’ experience category.

Table 5.3.

Analysis of years’ work experience prior to completing MSc and in total

Question	Mean	SD	0	1-5	6-10	11-20	21+
1 (N=182)	5.46	6.46	58 (32%)	73 (40%)	32 (18%)	13 (7%)	6 (3%)
2 (N=180)	13.63	9.27	3 (2%)	43 (24%)	46 (25%)	53 (30%)	35 (19%)

Note: Question 1: Number of years’ experience prior to completing the MSc

Question 2: Number of years’ experience to date

5.3.2.3. Sector and Location

In order to appreciate whether OccPsychs work across sectors, they were asked to state the sector in which they worked. 185 participants responded, 57% (n=106) stated that they worked in the private sector, 31% (n=58) worked in the public

sector, 5% (n=10) in the voluntary sector and 7% (n=11) chose the 'other' option to which they responded that they worked across sectors or in consultancy.

Participants were asked to identify the geographic location in which they worked, to appreciate where OccPsychs were based. Figure 5.5. demonstrates the findings of this analysis, split by whether participants defined their role as OP related or not.

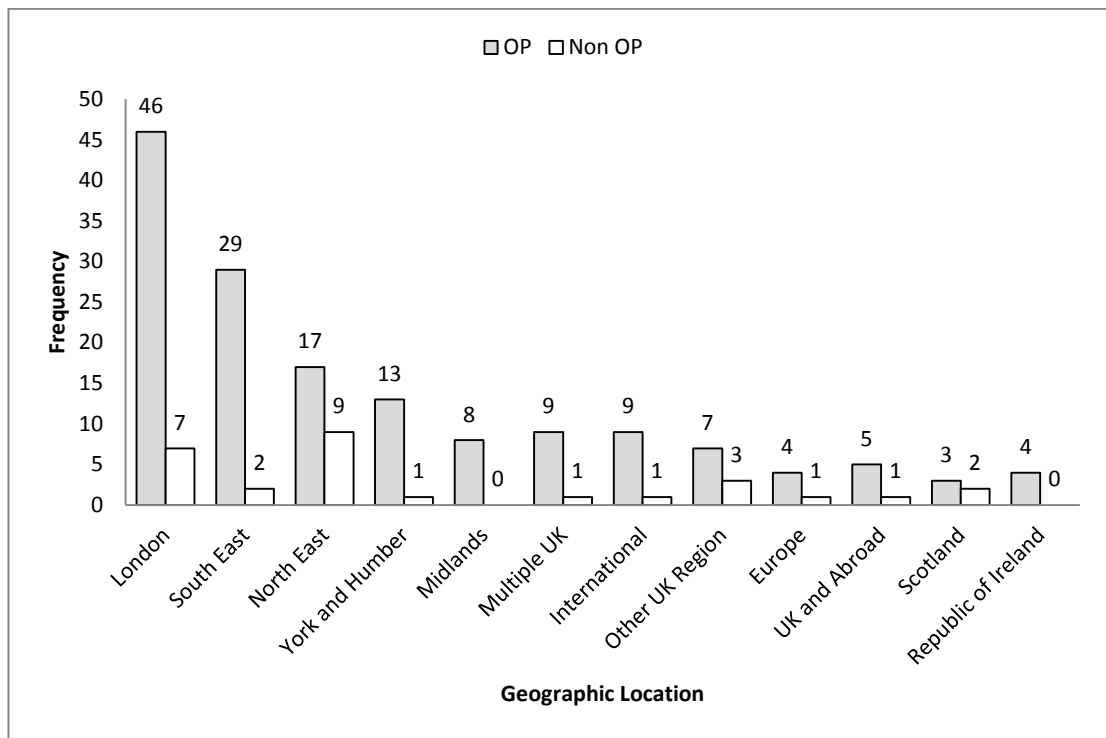


Figure 5.5. Analysis of participants by OP related roles and the geographic location in which they work (N=182)

46% (n=84) of participants worked in London or the South East, representing the greatest proportion of participants from this survey. 21% (n=40) worked in the North East or York and Humber. 12% (n=21) of participants worked outside of the UK (internationally and in Europe) in locations such as Australia, New Zealand, Kenya, United Arab Emirates and Russia. 6% (n=10) of participants worked in multiple UK locations. Whilst there was diversity in location, most participants were based in the South of the country and in the North East/York and Humber (potentially representing the relationship between the researcher and the participants).

Interestingly, there was a variation between participants stating that their role was in OP. For example, in the North East 47% of participants were in OP related roles compared to 85% of participants who lived in London and 69% of participants who

lived in the South East. This potentially indicated that those participants based in the North East may have found it more difficult to find OP related work.

5.3.2.4. Level

Participants were asked to state their current level by choosing from one of seven options from entry/trainee to chief executive (Figure 5.6.).

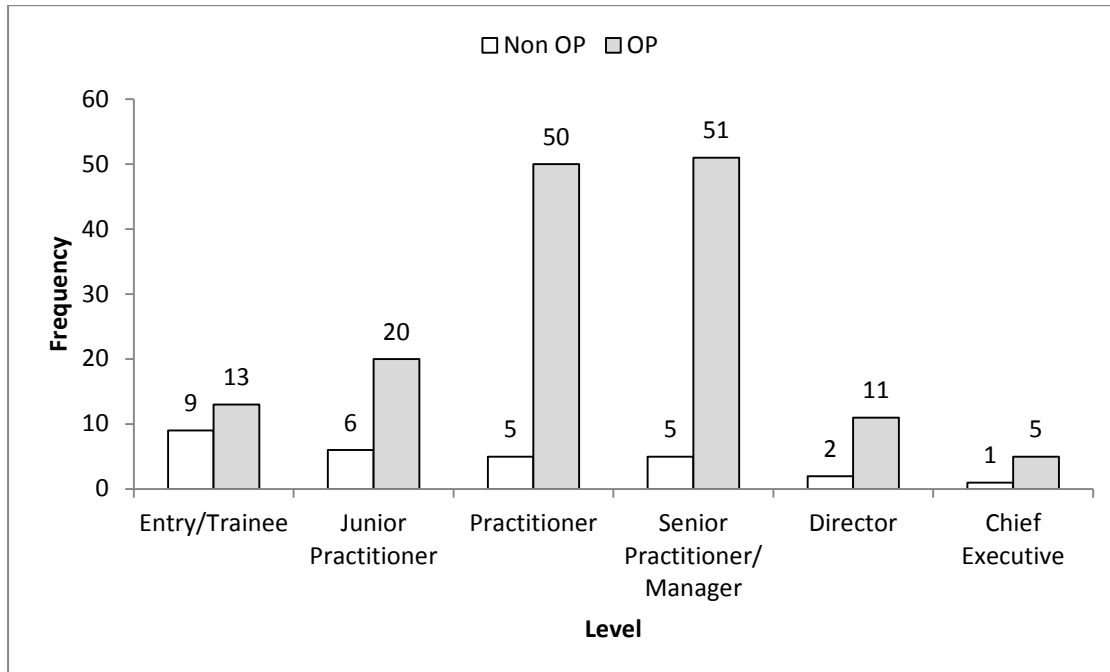


Figure 5.6. Participant employment level grouped by OP and non OP related roles (N=178)

178 participants responded, 57% described themselves as either practitioner (n=50) or senior practitioner/manager level (n=51). There was a difference in pattern for OP versus non OP roles where 54% of non OccPsychs described themselves as either entry/trainee (n=9) or junior practitioner (n=6), compared to 22% in the OP category. In order to determine whether there was a significant difference between groups, the categories were collapsed into *entry/trainee/junior*, *practitioner*, *senior practitioner*, *director/chief executive*. A Chi-square test for independence indicated a significant association between level and OP related roles, $\chi^2 (3, n=178) = 12.134$, $p = 0.007$, Cramer's $V = 0.263$ (medium effect). It should be noted that the assumptions of χ^2 were violated as the count of Directors in non OP related roles was 3, less than the 5 recommended.

Finally, in order to appreciate 'level' further, participants were also asked whether they managed any staff. 183 participants responded to this question with 70% (n=128) indicating that they didn't manage any staff. 21% (n=38) managed less

than 10 staff, 5% (n=10) managed between 10 and 20 staff and 4% (n=7) managed 20 or more staff.

5.3.2.5. Salary

The final question in the job/role category asked participants to state their annual gross salary. This gave an indication of how much individuals with an OP qualification earn, but also determined whether salaries differed by a range of human capital (age, gender) and structural issues (location, sector). 148 participants disclosed their salaries (range £6,000 to £100,000) with an average of £36, 147 (SD = £16,493).

Independent samples t-tests were performed on the data, the findings of which are presented below.

- Those in an OP role (n=132, m = £37, 246, SD = £15,816) reported significant higher salaries than those not in an OP role (n=16, m = £27,082, SD = £19,568) $t(146) = 2.364$, $p = 0.019$, eta squared = 0.016 (small).
- Those in the public sector (n=50, m=£32, 588.98, SD=£14,217) reported significantly lower salaries than those in the private sector (n=83, m=£37,992, SD=£15,191) $t(131) = -2.035$, $p = 0.044$, eta squared = 0.015 (small). (N.B. there were insufficient participants to include voluntary sector participants).

T-tests conducted upon differences between gender, those working in the North or South of England and Full time or Part time revealed no significant differences.

Finally, the relationship between salary and age was investigated using Pearson correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a medium, positive correlation between the two variables $r = 0.499$ $n=131$, $p<0.001$, indicating that salary increased with age.

5.3.3 BPS Membership

Participants were asked about their membership status to gather a surface level indication of whether participants with an MSc in OP were also members of the BPS or DOP and what grade of membership they held. It is possible for individuals to hold more than one level of membership (i.e. Chartered and HCPC Registered);

therefore participants were simply asked to tick all options which applied. The results of these questions were then grouped into five categories to best represent the membership data (Table 5.4.). In total 107 participants responded that they were members of the DOP.

Table 5.4.

Frequency of BPS and DOP membership status by OP and non OP related roles

Membership status	All	OP	Non OP
HCPC and/or Chartered	59	55	4
Considering enrolling on Stage 2 Qualification in OP	46	38	8
Practitioner in Training (enrolled on Stage 2)	22	18	4
Member of the DOP (no other level stated)	20	17	3
None (including not pursuing Chartered status)	38*	26	11
Total	185	154	30

* one participant in this category did not state whether their role was OP related or not

Table 5.4. indicates that participants represented the range of membership options. Whilst this analysis did not include every membership grade (e.g. graduate level), it did provide an indication of the role of professional membership. Interestingly, 68% (n=26) of participants who were in OP related roles indicated that they either had no membership of the professional body or were not planning on pursuing this. Furthermore, there were a number of participants who held or were working towards Chartered or Registered status who were not in OP related roles.

Participants were further asked to state whether chartered status was important to their career success (Table 5.5.)

Table 5.5.

Responses to “chartered status is important to my career success” by membership grade

Membership	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	x	SD
All Grades	182	11% (21)	11% (20)	12% (23)	23% (42)	23% (42)	18% (34)	3.91	1.61
HCPC and/or chartered	59	3% (2)	3% (2)	5% (3)	31% (18)	27% (16)	31% (18)	4.66	1.25
Considering enrolling on Stage 2 Qualification	45	2% (1)	13% (6)	17% (8)	30% (14)	15% (7)	20% (9)	4.04	1.38
Practitioner in Training (enrolled on Stage 2)	22	9% (2)	5% (1)	0% (0)	9% (2)	55% (12)	23% (5)	4.64	1.47
Member of the DOP (no other level stated)	20	20% (4)	10% (2)	30% (6)	15% (3)	20% (4)	5% (1)	3.20	1.54
None (including not pursuing Chartered status)	36	32% (12)	24% (9)	16% (6)	13% (5)	8% (3)	3% (1)	2.47	1.44

Table 5.5. shows that participants who were HCPC/Chartered, considering enrolling on Stage 2 or already enrolled on Stage 2 agreed with the statement that chartered status was important to their career success. Those participants who suggested that they were only members of the DOP or with no BPS membership disagreed with this statement, perhaps unsurprisingly. However, it was also interesting that there was a range of responses across the scale, even for those individuals with HCPC/Chartered status.

The results of an independent samples t-test revealed that there was no significant difference between those individuals in an OP role versus those not in an OP role.

Finally, understanding whether membership made a difference to salary was analysed using the general linear model (GLM). Whilst results violated the assumptions of equal variance (Levene’s test = 0.008), it is generally assumed that GLM is sufficiently robust in the case of independent groups design. The results of this analysis indicated that membership had a significant effect on salary $F(4, 143) = 7.683, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.177$ (moderate effect). Table 5.6. presents the

results of the post hoc Tukey test to determine where differences lay between groups.

Table 5.6.

Means and differences between means in salary for each membership grade

Condition	Mean	Trainee	Considering	None	DOP
HCPC/Chartered Trainee	£44,976	£12,885 p=0.016	£17,378 p<0.001	£10,406 p=0.049	£9,944 p=0.138
	£32,090	-	£4,492 p=0.832	£4,658 p=0.984	£5,065 p=0.978
Considering	£27,597	-	-	£3,976 p=0.405	£4,445 p=0.454
None	£34,569	-	-	-	£4,809 p=1.000
DOP	£36,147	-	-	-	-

Tukey post hoc comparisons identified that HCPC/Chartered status ($m=£44,976$) produced significantly higher salaries than trainee OccPsychs ($m=£32,090$), $p=0.016$; those considering enrolling on the stage 2 qualification ($m=£27,597$), $p<0.001$ and those with no membership status ($m=£34,569$), $p=0.049$.

5.4. Discussion

The aim of this chapter was to explore the educational backgrounds, job/role information and BPS membership data of a group of individuals with a BPS accredited MSc in OP (or equivalent title). The purpose was threefold; firstly to present an in depth look at the three categories of education, job/role and BPS membership, secondly to provide detailed background information to participants for a structural equation modelling study outlined in chapter 6 and finally, to identify potential practitioner or professional body actions and recommendations as a result of the findings.

Results are discussed under the three categories: education, job/role and BPS membership. Not all findings will be discussed, only those which are noteworthy or potentially areas of strength or concern for the profession and the data set.

5.4.1. Education

The results of the education category suggested that a range of participants were included in the research from a cross section of HEIs and who had graduated since 1987. The interesting results in this section were in relation to doctorate level study. Whilst few participants (17%) indicated that they had studied towards a doctorate

qualification, 49% indicated that they were either considering studying at this level, were already studying or were unsure. This may represent a shift in perceptions of the role of doctorate study for an OP audience. Indeed, achieving the Stage Two Qualification in OP is deemed to be at doctorate level, yet OccPsychs do not receive the doctorate award. It may be that individuals are beginning to consider advancing their qualifications to bring them in line with other psychology professions or that they are moving away from OP in favour of PhDs or other psychology doctorates. An 'Independent Review of the Qualification in Occupational Psychology (Stage 2)' (Ingman, 2014) commissioned by the DOP following the stage one review, indicated that the professional doctorate route is gaining interest from DOP members too. For example the review suggested that 35.4% of participants would have considered a professional doctorate (as one potential) option over the BPS accreditation route (52.1% were unsure). This was despite a lack of clarity over whether this qualification would be appreciated by employers. Findings such as these are perhaps demonstrative of a changing landscape in the education and qualification route for OccPsychs, it may be that over time and with planned changes to the stage two qualification (of which the researcher is part of) uncertainty may dissipate as a greater clarity over the future of the qualification is presented.

Of further interest in this category were participants' perceptions of the importance of their MSc qualifications. Whilst there was general positivity, there were also differences between participants in OP roles and those not in OP roles. Perhaps unsurprisingly, participants who did not classify themselves in OP roles also rated the importance of their MSc in securing their first role since graduating and their current role as less important than those in OP roles. Although it is not clear why this difference exists, it is possible that participants only rate the success of their degree on the content areas taught and if they are not utilising the content it was not seen as important. MSc programmes teach a variety of transferable skills which could potentially enhance employability, therefore helping students to appreciate the value of the OP degree, regardless of OP relatedness of role is important. It is also possible that job crafting where OccPsychs learn to redesign their jobs in the pursuit of greater satisfaction (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2008) may be useful for these individuals, ensuring that they are making the most of opportunities to apply OP. Of course, it is also possible that individuals have not typically felt that the courses have taught transferable skills in the past which would echo both academic research

and practitioner reports suggesting that graduates are not fully prepared for work and lack basic business skills (Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011; Expert Panel, 2012).

5.4.2. Job/role

A particularly interesting finding was the diversity of roles present in the sample from related fields such as HR to teachers and lecturers. This is a particularly positive finding and indicates that these individuals are competitive across a range of roles and sectors (public, private, voluntary). Levels ranged from entry to chief executive, representing a broad spectrum. 18% of participants worked in a consultancy environment (both self-employed and in house) which is traditionally a role associated with OccPsychs, potentially due to their training in the consultancy approach. Additionally, and contradictory to unqualified statements seen in a mainstream OP newsletter “*nearly all occupational psychology practitioners work for themselves or in small consultancies*” (Briner, 2010, p.892); the majority of OccPsychs in this sample were employed (81%) compared to 17% self-employed (with and without employees). The data from this study suggests that individuals with an OP background are employed in-house and across a range of roles.

Findings corroborated OP-First (2006) which suggested that OccPsychs were most likely to be employed in the following areas:

- Recruitment and selection/assessment.
- Training/teaching.
- Research.
- Organisational change/development.
- Counselling/coaching.

In contrast to OP-First, the current study did not focus upon employers of OccPsychs, but rather asked participants with an MSc in OP to state their job titles. OP-First (2006) also identified that there were potentially more OP graduates than jobs for them. Findings of the current study indicate that these individuals can be successful in a range of roles, not just OP specific ones. Clearly further research is necessary to support this claim and will be explored in chapter 6 to identify the relationship between employability and career success.

Whilst the range of roles that individuals with an MSc OP occupy is positive, it could potentially be an indication of an identity challenge. This would support some

negative views expressed in the OP-First (2006) report that OP would become less discernible from other aligned professions. The roles that participants classed as OP related could equally be occupied by individuals with an HR or Organisational Behaviour qualification. Nonetheless, individuals with OP qualifications do appear competitive in this market and potentially can still add value to their aligned professional counterparts. Developing a further appreciation as to how this happens will be explored in chapter 7.

OP related roles were observed more frequently in individuals working in London and the South East compared to other geographic locations. Those individuals working in the North East reported a greater prevalence of non OP related roles. This is potentially an issue of availability of roles outside the south, but could also be indicative of individuals choosing to move away from OP roles or not being able to identify the OP qualities in their roles. Further analysis to appreciate the challenges of geography on career will be explored in chapter 7.

Finally, there were some clear salary differences where those in OP roles earned significantly more than those not in OP roles as well as differences in public versus private sector (although small effect sizes observed). Additionally, older participants earned significantly more than younger participants. Whilst tempting to presume that those in OP related roles may also be older than non-OP roles (assuming that age and experience are related), in this sample the average age for those in OP related role (n=135) was 34.33 and those in non-OP related roles (n=27) was 34.37, therefore representing a similar demographic. Perhaps OP related roles are more technical in nature and therefore attract higher salaries, which can be corroborated by the range of roles and the higher prevalence of non-OP roles being non-professional, administrative type roles. This is a complex relationship and appreciating the factors which impact upon salary as a measure of objective career success is necessary and will be explored further in chapter 6 and 7.

5.4.3. BPS Membership

The final category referred to (some) membership categories of the BPS. Interestingly a cross section of memberships was observed in the sample. The majority of participants (126/182) were associated with Chartered/Registered status (either already registered, a trainee or considering registering), therefore skewed towards BPS professional membership. Participants were generally positive about the importance of chartered status to their career success with 65% scoring on the

'agree' side of the scale. This percentage was higher in HCPC/Chartered OccPsychs (89%) and Practitioners in Training (87%). 65% of those considering enrolling agreed with this statement, which is indicative of some uncertainty in the benefits of the qualification. However in those participants who were DOP members only or with no BPS membership the pattern was different. 60% of DOP members and 72% of non-members disagreed with this statement. This indicates that these individuals see little benefit in becoming a Chartered Psychologist or Registered Occupational Psychologist. This finding (if representative of individuals with MSc qualifications) is concerning for the professional body and the future of OP, suggesting that more should be done to promote the value of Chartered/Registered status. Particularly as there was a small percentage of those already Chartered or Registered who disagreed with this statement. Findings here echo those of the Independent Review into Stage Two (Ingman, 2014) which suggested a review of the qualification to bring it in line with the new stage one. The recommendations went further than an alignment of curriculum areas additionally suggesting a re-launch of the qualification (recommendation 12). The doctoral researcher is part of the committee reviewing the qualification which is expected to launch in April 2017, following approval from the Partnership and Accreditation Committee (expected January 2016) and Membership Standards Board (March 2016) and HCPC (to be confirmed). One further observation was that there were HCPC/Chartered OccPsychs who were not working in OP related fields and as the antithesis some individuals working in OP related roles without further OP qualifications. This represents a real challenge in the OP field, and particularly proving the worth of the qualification in OP.

Finally, and of interest for current and recent MSc students is the indication that Chartered/Registered OccPsychs earn significantly more than trainees, those considering enrolling on stage two and those with no membership status. Identifying whether this is the case in a larger sample could be an important consideration for the DOP and Qualifications Board in promoting the value of the qualification.

5.4.4. Limitations and Practical Implications

Whilst some interesting and thought provoking findings emerged from the data, there were a number of limitations which must be discussed, particularly to ensure that results are viewed with caution.

Firstly, and perhaps most obvious was sample size. Although, 236 participants started the questionnaire there were only 185 usable data sets. There were a greater proportion of younger participants (graduated since 2004) as well as a high instance of those in the North East and graduating from Northumbria University. This potentially reflects the location of the researcher and personal contacts completing the questionnaire. As such there is the possibility the findings are not representative of all MSc OP graduates. When also relating this to findings of DOP reports such as DOP Membership Engagement Survey (2012, N=169), e-survey of current MSc OP students and graduates (McDowall et al., 2013, N=145), Horizon Scan of Current Employers of OccPsychs (2013, N=27), Expert Panel (2012, N=153) and Independent Review of the Qualification in OP (Stage 2) (2014, N=105). It is clear that participation rates in most surveys of this type are low (except for the OP-First project where data was collected between 2004 and 2006 yielded 584 responses). The reason for lower response rates since this time is not known, but it perhaps represents apathy amongst DOP members or a lack of identity with the professional body. For that reason, the current research was open to any individual with an MSc in OP, which it was assumed would lead to a greater response rate. Unfortunately this was not the case despite the snowballing effect used by the researcher. It is possible that individuals who were eligible to participate didn't as they may have assumed that the research was not relevant to them i.e. if they had not pursued an OP career. Potentially, the amount of time that the survey was open for was insufficient (OP-First was collected over 2 years). The main source of data collection was online, which may have excluded participants who do not use social media such as Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn etc. Finally, it may have been easier to reach individuals who were associated with the DOP in some way or who had retained their OP connections such as following groups on twitter, contact with their programme leaders etc. which could have unintentionally failed to attract a broader range of individuals not working in OP related areas. However, there were individuals who were not in OP related areas who participated in the survey, which does provide a unique insight into their perceptions. Additionally, the aim of this survey was not to repeat DOP surveys but to appreciate the broader employment context of individuals with an MSc in OP. Following this survey, the researcher is currently working (as co-Chair of the DOPTC) to identify ways to collect data from MSc students and graduates, to ensure that a broad picture develops over time of the career development of these individuals. It may be necessary as part of this process to engage with members of other professional bodies such as the Association for Business Psychologists (ABP) and Chartered

Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) where some OPs may more readily identify.

Secondly, not all career relevant information was collected in this survey for example A-Level results have been found to be representative of success in Clinical Psychology training (Scior, Bradley, Potts, Woolf & Williams, 2014). Further, this chapter does not outline whether participants were satisfied with their career progress and focuses only upon salary as an indication of success. This will be pursued in chapter 6 when looking at the relationship between employability and career success. It may have been helpful to identify membership status other than the ones selected by the researcher for example ABP, CIPD, Ergonomics Society, and even different levels within the BPS e.g. graduate member, fellowship etc. Whilst this would have been interesting, it would have also made the questionnaire incredibly cumbersome for participants to complete and may have resulted in further drop-out rates. A pragmatic approach was taken which led to questions being asked of the most salient points in OP at the time of the survey. As it stands the results provide a useful and surface level look at some of the variables relevant to an OccPsychs career. It also highlights the challenges present with focusing upon employment and not employability as the data raises as many questions as it answers. Further studies in this doctorate will investigate empirical relationships between employability and career success (also utilising demographic data, chapter 6) and explore using narratives the identity of OccPsychs. This will enable a further depth of analysis of additional factors not taken into account in this study identifying how OccPsychs navigate the career landscape (chapter 7).

Finally, asking participants to state their job title (current or most recent) gives an arbitrary view as job titles don't typically explain what OccPsychs do. For this reason participants were asked to state whether this role was OP related so that the researcher did not make assumptions based upon title. This research may be criticised for not asking about the tasks or duties that individuals perform as part of their roles (as seen in the OP-First report, 2006). However, the intention was to learn more about the job titles that individuals have, as this is typically how current MSc students and recent graduates define jobs. This information may be useful in helping these individuals to narrow down their job search and it was for this reason that this question was utilised. Further data collection, as part of the DOPTC survey defined above will seek to address this issue.

Chapter 6: Testing the fit of employability models

6.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter details the approach taken to ascertain the relationship between employability and career success in an Occupational Psychologist (OP) population. It begins with a brief introduction (6.1.1.), followed by method (6.2.), results (6.3.) of a series of statistical analyses and ends with a discussion of key findings (6.4.). The chapter summary is presented in diagrammatic form in Figure 6.1.

6.1.1. Introduction	6.2. Method	6.3. Results	6.4. Discussion
	6.2.2. Participants	6.3.1. Preliminary Analyses	6.4.1. Stage One: Establish a Relationship Between the Variable
	6.2.3. Materials	6.3.1.1. Ascertaining Relationships and differences between variables	6.4.1.1. Hypothesis 1a: Psychological Capital and Competence
	6.2.3.1. Predictor Variables	6.3.1.1.1. General Linear Model	6.4.1.2. Hypothesis 1b: OP Facilitators and Competence
	6.2.3.1.1. Psychological Capital	6.3.1.1.2. Independent Samples T-Test	6.4.1.3. Hypothesis 1c: OP Facilitatos and Psychological Capital
	6.2.3.1.2. OPFES	6.3.1.1.3. Chi Square Test of Independence	6.4.2. Stage Two: Ascertaining the Fit of the OPFES and SCSS using CFA
	6.2.3.2. Mediator: Employability Competence	6.3.1.1.4. Relationships between moderators, predictors and outcome variables	6.4.3. Stage Three: Identifying Best Fitting Model
	6.2.3.3. Outcome Variables: Career Success	6.3.2. Data Analysis Strategy	6.4.3.1. Hypothesis 2a: Subjective Success
	6.2.3.3.1. Objective Career Success	6.3.3. Stage One: Establishing a Relationship between Study Variables	6.4.3.2. Hypothesis 2b: Objective Success
	6.2.3.3.2. Subjective Career Success	6.3.4. Stage Two: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)	6.4.4. Limitations and Links to Future Research
	6.2.4. Procedure	6.3.5. Stage Three: Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)	6.4.5. Practical Implications
		6.3.5.1. Hypothesis 2a	6.4.6. Conclusions
		6.3.5.2. Hypothesis 2b	
		6.3.5.3. Summary of Stage Three: Hypotheses 2a and 2b	

Figure 6.1. Chapter Six Structure

6.1.1. Introduction

The literature review identified the rationale for employability being instrumental to both objective and subjective career success. Two antecedent approaches were discussed: competence (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006) and dispositions (Fugate et al., 2004) along with reference to contextual issues which can impact upon careers. Based upon this review chapter 3 outlined the findings of a focus group to understand the contextual barriers and facilitators to OP employability; chapter 4 presented the development of an OP Facilitators to Employability Scale (OPFES) and Subjective Career Satisfaction Scale (SCSS), and chapter 5 detailed the findings of a study to understand more about the educational, employment and membership backgrounds of OccPsychs. This chapter brings together the OP specific research with more established measures of employability in predicting the career success relationship.

The literature review outlined a rationale for measuring competence employability (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006) in the prediction of objective and subjective career success (Forrier & Sels, 2003; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006; Van der Heijden et al., 2009), which has not been thoroughly tested in UK populations. Additionally, a focus upon fixed or personality dispositions such as proactive personality (Seibert et al., 2001a, 2001b) whilst thought provoking does not address the more developable or state like dispositions that individuals possess to support their career success. As such, the literature review outlined a case for utilising Psychological Capital (PsyCap) (Luthans et al., 2006) as a measure of dispositions which could predict employability and career success. Finally, the rationale for analysing context specific facilitators which can promote employability and/or career success was also provided, and necessary given the current OP landscape outlined in the literature review.

The relationship between dispositions, OP facilitators and competence is of value to explore further, particularly as research evidence suggests that contextual factors are important to both career success and employability, and the limited yet promising relationships between elements of psychological capital and career success. Research to date has not thoroughly established what leads to or enhances competence employability, and as such it is hypothesised that there will be relationships between elements of psychological capital, competence employability and OP contextual facilitators.

Hypothesis 1a: there will be a positive relationship between psychological capital and competence employability

Hypothesis 1b: there will be a positive relationship between OP facilitators and competence employability

Hypothesis 1c: there will be a positive relationship between OP facilitators and psychological capital

An additional focus of this chapter is to determine, using structural equation modelling the relationship between contextual facilitators and psychological capital (as predictors), competence employability (as a mediator) and outcome measures of objective and subjective career success. A model which has been theoretical proposed, yet not empirically tested (2.3.10., Figure 2.3.) will be evaluated. As such the following hypotheses will be tested.

Hypothesis 2a: Competence employability will mediate the relationship between psychological capital and objective success

Hypothesis 2b: Competence employability will mediate the relationship between psychological capital and subjective career success.

6.2. Method

6.2.1. Design

A correlational, cross-sectional design was utilised to understand the relationship between the various predictors (OP facilitators and psychological capital), mediators (competence employability) and outcome variables (objective and subjective career success).

6.2.2. Participants

Participants completed the online survey outlined in chapter 5, which involved the collection of demographic information as well as participation in the study questionnaires outlined here. As such only key participant information is repeated here. In total there were 185 usable questionnaires consisting of 46 males and 138 females (1 participant did not disclose their gender). 163 participants provided their age which ranged between 22 and 59 years (average of 34.45, SD=8.93). 180 participants disclosed their number of years work experience which was between 1

year and 41 years, with an average of 13.63 (SD 9.27). 12% (n=21) of participants graduated between 1987 and 1999, 49% (n=89) between 2000 and 2009, and 39% (n=71) between 2010 and 2014. 32% (n=59) were Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Registered and/or Chartered Psychologists, 24% (n=46) were considering enrolling on the Stage 2 Qualification in OP, 12% (n=22) were Trainee Occupational Psychologists, 21% (n=38) had no BPS membership and 11% (n=20) stated that they were members of the DOP (i.e. without any other category selected). Finally, 85% (n=154) stated that they were working in OP or related fields.

6.2.3. Materials

All questionnaires were self-report so in order to reduce the possible impact of common method bias the researcher followed the procedure outline by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee and Podsakoff (2003) by assuring participants of anonymity and confidentiality, that responses were individual i.e. no right or wrong answers, and responses would be analysed collectively and not individually. The questionnaire was also independent of any organisation or professional body, and different scales were utilised to minimise acquiescence. In total there were 5 constructs measured by 5 questionnaires (in addition to the demographic questions outlined in chapter 5). The measures are summarised in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1.

Measures used to determine predictor, mediator and outcome variables.

Factors	Construct being Measured	Observed Variables
Predictors (6.2.3.1)	Psychological Capital (Luthans et al., 2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hope • Optimism • Resilience • Self-efficacy • Identity • Continuing Professional Development • Making a difference • Adaptability • Evidence Based Practice • Occupational Expertise
	OP Facilitators (see chapter 4 for scale development)	
Mediator (6.2.3.2)	Competence (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipation and Optimisation • Personal Flexibility • Corporate Sense • Balance • Current Level (Entry/Junior, Practitioner, Senior Practitioner/Manager, Director/Chief Executive)
	Objective Career Success	
Outcome Variables (6.2.3.3)	Subjective Career Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross annual salary • Subjective Career Satisfaction Scale (SCSS) (See chapter 4) • Perceived External Marketability and Perceived Internal Marketability (Johnson, 2001, as cited in Eby et al., 2003)

6.2.3.1. Predictor Variables

6.2.3.1.1. Predictor Variable one: Psychological Capital (PsyCap)

To measure psychological capital (PsyCap) the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) (Luthans et al., 2006) was utilised. This is a state-like measure of the four constructs of psychological capital and developed from a large body of literature on each of the four constructs (self-efficacy by Parker, 1998; optimism by Scheier & Carver, 1985; hope by Snyder, Sympson, Ybasco, Borders, Babyak, & Higgins, 1996; and resilience by Wagnild & Young, 1993). There were 24 items and 6 questions for each construct, rated on a scale of 1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree. Reliability coefficient alpha levels for the individual constructs have been reported as varying between 0.66 and 0.89. In the current study self-efficacy was 0.87, hope 0.85, resilience 0.69, optimism 0.77. Example items are provided in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2.

Example items for each PsyCap construct.

Construct	Example question
Hope	At the present time I am energetically pursuing my work goals
Optimism	I always look on the bright side of things regarding my job
Resilience	I usually take stressful things at work in my stride
Self-Efficacy	I feel confident analysing a long-term problem to find a solution

The authors of PCQ believed that PsyCap was a higher order construct made up of the four elements of Hope, Optimism, Resilience and Self-efficacy which reports more consistent alpha levels for the entire questionnaire in excess of 0.80.

6.2.3.1.2. Predictor Variable Two: OP Facilitators to Employability

Details of this scale were presented in chapter 4. By way of a short summary, the scale measured OP resources which could facilitate employability and career success and thus measured contextual facilitators of employability. The final questionnaire consisted of 19 items across 5 dimensions and produced reliability coefficients (brackets indicates coefficients from the chapter 4) of identity 0.86 (0.83), CPD 0.80 (0.86), making a difference 0.89 (0.90), adaptability 0.73 (0.71) and evidence based practice 0.72 (0.76). Example questions are presented in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3.

Example items from the OP Facilitators Scale

OP Facilitator Dimension	Example Item
Identity	<i>My employer is aware that I have an Occupational Psychology Qualification</i>
Continuing Professional Development	<i>I keep my Occupational Psychology knowledge up to date</i>
Making a Difference	<i>I feel that my role allows me to make a difference to the working lives of individuals</i>
Adaptability	<i>I can apply my skills to a broad range of scenarios</i>
Evidence Based Practice	<i>I gather evidence from a range of sources to inform decisions</i>

6.2.3.2. Mediator: Employability Competence

Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden's (2006) questionnaire was used to measure employability competence. The questionnaire consisted of 47 items, measuring 5 dimensions of employability. The authors described these five dimensions of *Occupational Expertise* a domain specific dimension, supplemented by four other, yet more generic competencies of *Anticipation and Optimisation*, *Personal*

Flexibility, Corporate Sense, and Balance (Table 6.4.). This competence measure was suitable for this research as it takes account of the importance of being an expert (thus linking to the professional nature of OccPsychs) as well as more general competences relevant to all individuals.

Scoring of the questionnaire was on a seven point scale where a one represented the lower end of the scale. Different scales were used in the questionnaire ranging from 1=not at all; 7=to a considerable degree to 1=with great difficulty; 7=very easily.

Good internal consistency for each of the five dimensions was observed (Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden, 2006 coefficients in parentheses) for balance 0.88 (0.78) , anticipation and optimisation 0.71 (0.81), corporate sense 0.85 (0.83), personal flexibility 0.79 (0.79) and occupational expertise 0.92 (0.90)

Table 6.4.

Summary of the 5 Dimensions of van der Heijde and van der Heijden's (2006) Employability Competence Measure

Dimension	Description	Example Item
Occupational Expertise	Knowledge of the profession or domain, explained as an important <i>human capital</i> element in organisations. Belief that Occupational Expertise is a large proportion of employability	<i>I consider myself competent to engage in in-depth, specialist discussions in my job domain.</i>
Anticipation and Optimisation	Preparing for the future challenges of work in a positive way with the overall aim of leading to strong job and career outcomes	<i>I am focused on continuously developing myself</i>
Personal Flexibility	Adapting to changes both internal and external to enable easy movement between jobs. Similar to adaptability but in this context it is seen as a prerequisite.	<i>I adapt to developments within my organisation</i>
Corporate Sense	Understanding the professional context of the workplace and the need for organisational citizenship behaviour. Also refers to the many roles that individuals play within an organisation.	<i>In my work I take the initiative for sharing responsibilities with my colleagues.</i>
Balance	Appreciating the conflicting demands of the workplace, balancing an individual's own interests with those of the organisation	<i>My work and private life are evenly balanced.</i>

6.2.3.3. Outcome Variables: Career Success

6.2.3.3.1. Outcome Variable One: Objective Career Success

Objective career success was measured by two items: gross annual salary and current level (1=Entry/trainee; 2=Junior Practitioner; 3=Practitioner; 4=Senior Practitioner/Manager; 5=Director; 6=Chief Executive), participants were also given the option to state an alternative level should they desire. Due to small sample sizes the six categories were collapsed into 4 where entry/trainee and junior practitioner were merged into one category and director and chief executive also merged into one category.

6.2.3.3.2 Outcome Variable Two: Subjective Career Success

Subjective Career Success was measured by three scales: 1) perceived external marketability, 2) perceived internal marketability and 3) subjective career satisfaction scale (SCSS).

- Perceived External and Internal Marketability

These two scales have previously been used as measures of Subjective Career Success and were developed by Johnson (2001) in an unpublished thesis (De Vos et al., 2011; Eby et al., 2003). Perceived External Marketability was measured by three questions for example *“I could easily obtain a comparable job with another employer”*. Perceived Internal Marketability was also measured by three questions for example *“My company views me as an asset to the organisation”*. Both measures were scored on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Internal reliability for both measures has been previously reported as 0.73 (internal) and 0.74 (external) (Eby et al., 2003), for this study the internal reliability coefficients were 0.75 (internal) and 0.77 (external).

- Subjective Career Satisfaction Scale (SCSS)

This scale was developed for the purposes of this doctorate (see chapter 4) and consisted of 8 items, relevant to OP careers, for example *“I believe that I am progressing my career in the direction that I want it to go”*. This scale was scored on a six point rating scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Internal reliability was 0.90 (0.92 in chapter 4).

6.2.4. Procedure

The procedure for participants completing the survey is outlined in chapter 5 (5.2.5).

6.3. Results

6.3.1. Preliminary Analyses

Firstly, data was checked for missing values, where this was the case mean imputation was conducted using IBM SPSS (v22) 'replace missing values' function. This was only permitted where items had less than 10% missing data and on this data set the highest amount of missing values was 9%. This was not performed on the variables age, gender, years' experience, level and salary. Descriptive statistics for each of the variables in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5

Means and Standard Deviations of Predictor and Predicted Variables

Main Factor	Dimensions	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Competence Employability	Balance	185	4.08	0.78
	Anticipation and Optimisation	185	4.25	0.66
	Corporate Sense	185	4.47	0.85
	Personal Flexibility	185	4.44	0.53
	Occupational Expertise	185	4.90	0.59
	Hope	185	4.70	0.68
Psychological Capital	Optimism	185	3.72	0.62
	Resilience	185	4.60	0.59
	Self-Efficacy	185	4.85	0.72
	Identity	185	4.65	1.32
	Continuing Professional Development	185	4.90	0.77
OP Facilitators	Making a Difference	185	4.78	1.01
	Evidence Based Practice	185	4.77	0.93
	Adaptability	185	4.88	0.72
Objective Career Success	Gross Annual Salary	148	£36,147	£16,493
	Current Level	178	N/A	N/A
	Junior Practitioner	47		
	Senior Practitioner	54		
	Director	56		
	Perceived Internal Marketability	185	3.70	0.75
Subjective Career Success	Perceived External Marketability	185	3.24	0.82
	SCSS	185	4.55	1.03

Table 6.5 indicates that participants were generally positive about most aspects of their career with a slight negative skew. This is common in social sciences literature where normal populations tend to be reasonably content (Pallant, 2013).

6.3.1.1. Ascertaining relationships and differences between variables

ANOVAs, t-tests, Pearson's chi-square tests and correlations were conducted on the data to identify whether there were group differences or significant relationships between individual factors and predictor and outcome variables and therefore to ascertain which variables should be controlled for in subsequent analysis. Age, gender, length of service, geographic location, working hours (full-time or part-time), whether in an OP role and employment status (self-employed or employed) were all analysed (after Spurk et al., 2015 p. 139). Where significant differences were observed the variables were subsequently controlled for in the Structural Equation Models.

6.3.1.1.1. General Linear Model (GLM)

The results of a series of GLMs to ascertain whether differences existed between levels of membership revealed the presence of significant differences in salaries (5.3.3.), subjective career success, identity, CPD, MAD, occupational expertise and self-efficacy.

A statistically significant difference between membership categories and subjective career satisfaction was observed $F(4,180) = 5.448, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.108$ (moderate effect). The results of Tukey's post hoc test demonstrating where differences lay (Table 6.6). Whilst results violated the assumptions of equal variance (Levene's test = 0.003), it is generally assumed that GLM is sufficiently robust to cope with this.

No further differences were observed between membership and outcome variables.

Table 6.6.

Means and differences between means in subjective career satisfaction for each membership grade

Condition	Mean	Trainee	Considering	None	DOP
HCPC/Chartered	4.98 (n=59)	0.35 P=0.609	0.65 p=0.009	0.89 p<0.001	0.40 p=0.496
Trainee	4.63 (n=22)	-	0.29 p=0.775	0.53 p=0.258	0.06 p=1.000
Considering	4.33 (n=46)	-	-	0.24 p=0.803	-0.24 p=0.895
None	4.09 (n=38)	-	-	-	-0.48 p=0.404
DOP	4.55 (n=20)	-	-	-	-

For the **predictor variables**, the following differences based on membership status existed.

A statistically significant difference was observed in the following:

- OPFES Identity; $F(4,180)=5.330$, $p<0.001$, eta squared=0.106 (moderate). Post-hoc comparisons using Tukey test indicated that the mean score for HCPC/Chartered ($m=4.94$, $SD=0.96$, $n=59$) differed significantly from those with no DOP membership ($m=3.83$, $SD=1.50$, $n=20$). $p<0.001$ (Levene's=0.003).
- OPFES CPD; $F(4, 180)=4.507$, $p=0.002$, eta squared=0.091 (moderate). Tukey post-hoc comparisons indicated that the mean score for HCPC/Chartered ($m=5.14$, $SD=0.68$, $n=59$) differed significantly from the mean score for those with no membership status ($M=4.51$, $SD=0.90$, $n=38$), $p=0.001$ (Levene's = 0.178)
- OPFES MAD; $F(4, 180)=2.756$, $p=0.029$, eta squared=0.058 (small-moderate). Tukey post-hoc comparisons indicated that the mean score for HCPC/Chartered ($m=5.09$, $SD=0.69$, $N=59$) differed significantly from the mean score for those with no membership status ($M=4.48$, $SD=1.26$, $N=38$). $P=0.029$ (Levene's=0.008)
- PsyCap dimension of Self-Efficacy; $F(4, 180)=3.25$, $p=0.013$, eta squared=0.067 (small-moderate). Tukey post-hoc comparisons revealed that HCPC/Chartered ($M=5.05$, $SD=0.67$, $N=59$) differed significantly from those considering enrolling ($m=4.59$, $SD=0.70$, $n=46$), $p=0.009$. (Levene's=0.507)

For the **mediator** variables one significant difference emerged:

- Occupational Expertise $F(4,180)=5.080$, $p=0.001$, $\eta^2=0.101$ (moderate) Tukey post-hoc comparisons indicated that the mean score for HCPC/Chartered ($M=5.16$, $SD=0.47$, $N=59$) differed significantly from the mean score for trainees ($M=4.69$, $SD=0.61$, $N=22$), $p=0.008$, those considering enrolling ($m=4.78$, $SD=0.58$, $n=46$), $p=0.005$ and those with only DOP membership ($m=4.74$, $SD=0.71$, $n=20$), $p=0.030$, but not from those with no DOP membership. (Levene's= 0.803)

6.3.1.1.2. Independent Samples T-Test

Chapter 5 (5.3.2.5.) outlined significant relationships between OP related roles and sector with salary, but not with full and part time or those based in the north or south. For consistency, independent samples t-tests were conducted with the additional predictor, mediator and outcome variables. There were significant differences reported between OP ($n=154$) and non OP ($n=30$) related roles on the following variables:

- OPFES identity; $t(182)=9.187$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2=0.034$ (small) (OP $m=4.99$, $SD=1.06$, non OP $m=3.01$, $SD=1.17$)
- OPFES CPD; $t(182)=4.322$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2=0.022$ (small) (OP $m=5.01$, $SD=0.69$; non OP $m=4.38$, $SD=0.92$)
- OPFES MAD; $t(34.123)=5.947$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2=0.027$ (small) (OP $m=5.01$, $SD=0.80$; non OP $m=3.63$, $SD=1.21$)
- OPFES Adaptability; $t(182)=2.714$, $p=0.007$, $\eta^2=0.014$ (small) (OP $m=4.95$, $SD=0.70$; non OP $m=4.56$, $SD=0.82$)
- OPFES EBP; $t(34.997)=2.915$, $p=0.006$, $\eta^2=0.015$ (small) (OP $m=4.87$, $SD=0.84$; non OP $m=4.22$, $SD=1.17$)
- PsyCap Optimism, $t(182)=3.133$, $p=0.002$, $\eta^2=0.016$ (small) (OP $m=3.78$, $SD=0.59$; non OP $m=3.40$, $SD=0.72$)
- SCSS; $t(33.547)=6.645$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2=0.03$ (small) (OP $m=4.80$, $SD=0.77$; non OP $m=3.25$, $SD=1.23$)
- Internal marketability; $t(35.817)=2.960$, $p=0.005$, $\eta^2=0.015$ (small) (OP $m=3.79$, $SD=0.69$; non OP $m=3.27$, $SD=0.91$)

In all cases those in OP roles scored significantly higher than those not in OP related roles.

There were also significant differences in public (n=58) versus private sector (n=106) on the following variables:

- OPFES CPD; $t(162)=2.326$, $p=0.021$, $\eta^2=0.014$ (small) (public $m=5.10$, $SD=0.72$, private $m=4.81$, $SD=0.77$)
- PsyCap Hope; $t(162)=-2.537$, $p=0.012$, $\eta^2=0.015$ (small) (public $m=4.56$, $SD=0.69$; private $m=4.82$, $SD=0.61$)
- Competence Corporate Sense; $t(162)=-2.006$, $p=0.046$, $\eta^2=0.012$ (small) (public $m=4.32$, $SD=0.83$; private $m=4.59$, $SD=0.83$)
- Internal; $t(92.755)=-4.808$, $p<0.001$, $\eta^2=0.025$ (small) (public $m=3.32$, $SD=0.83$; private $m=3.91$, $SD=0.62$)
- External; $t(162)=-2.442$, $p=0.016$, $\eta^2=0.015$ (small) (public $m=3.03$, $SD=0.86$; private $m=3.35$, $SD=0.77$)

In all cases except the OP Facilitator of CPD those in the private sector scored on average higher than those in the public sector.

Finally, there were significant differences between full (n=133) and part-time (n=45) employees and the following variables:

- PsyCap Hope; $t(176)=2.599$, $p=0.010$, $\eta^2=0.015$ (small) (FT $m=4.78$, $SD=0.65$; PT $m=4.48$, $SD=0.72$)
- Competence CorpSense; $t(176)=2.883$, $p=0.004$, $\eta^2=0.016$ (small) (FT $m=4.58$, $SD=0.82$, PT $m=4.17$, $SD=0.86$)
- OPFES MAD; $t(176)=2.837$, $p=0.005$, $\eta^2=0.016$ (small) (FT $m=4.91$, $SD=0.95$, PT $m=4.42$, $SD=1.14$)
- Internal Marketability; $t(176)=2.246$, $p=0.026$, $\eta^2=0.013$ (small) (FT $m=3.78$, $SD=0.71$; PT $m=3.49$, $SD=0.67$)

In all cases full-time employees scored significantly higher than part-time employees.

The variables outlined here are potential moderators in the relationship between employability and career success and will therefore be controlled for in further analyses.

6.3.1.1.3. Chi Square Test of Independence

The results of Chi-square tests of independence indicated a significant association between membership status and level (junior, practitioner, senior practitioner and director) χ^2 (6, n=159) = 34.979, $p < 0.001$, Cramer's V = 0.33 (large).

There was also a significant association between whether individuals were self-employed or employed by an organisation and level χ^2 (3, n=175) = 48.592, $p < 0.001$, Cramer's V = 0.54 (large).

It must be noted that these tests did violate the assumptions of χ^2 due to low sample sizes, yet were included to give an indication of the differences between variables.

6.3.1.1.4. Relationship between potential moderators and predictor and outcome variables

A series of correlations were conducted to identify whether there were any significant relationships between age and experience and the predictor and outcome variables (Table 6.7.).

Table 6.7.

Correlations between moderators (age and experience) and predictor and predicted variables

Predictor and Outcome Variables	Age	Experience
Salary	0.499**	0.445**
Subjective Career Satisfaction	0.006	0.072
Perceived Internal Marketability	0.066	0.077
Perceived External Marketability	0.030	0.019
ID	-0.134	-0.049
CPD	0.156*	0.257**
MAD	0.194*	0.239**
Adapt	0.142	0.212**
EBP	0.414	0.210**
Self-efficacy	0.343**	0.364**
Hope	0.193*	0.210**
Optimism	0.137	0.224**
Resilience	0.136	0.221**
Balance	0.107	0.100
Anticipation and Optimisation	0.197*	0.249**
Corporate Sense	0.193*	0.272**
Personal Flexibility	0.131	0.176*
Occupational Expertise	0.310**	0.312**

Note: **-significant at the 0.01 level, * - significant at the 0.05 level

Age and experience were not found to significantly relate to all variables, for example there was no relationship between age or experience with any of the subjective career success measures.

The results of the analyses presented here will be included in the SEM models in 6.4.5. in order to control for individual differences or professional factors (such as membership) which may moderate the relationships between the predictor and outcome variables i.e. where variables had significant relationships with predictors and outcome variables.

6.3.2. Data Analysis Strategy

A three stage process was employed to test the hypotheses. Firstly, it was necessary to establish that there was a relationship between the various model variables in order to warrant further analyses. Once this relationship was established Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted on the OP Context and Subjective Career Success Measures items to establish whether they were multidimensional models, and also to identify the best fitting models to take forward for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Finally, the full hypothesised models were

tested using SEM as well as testing alternative models to ensure the best fit. The process is summarised in Figure 6.2.

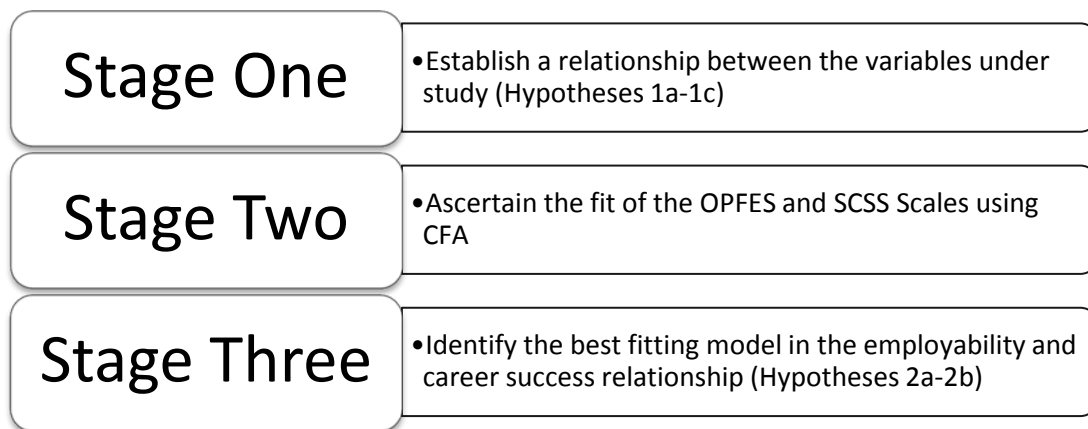


Figure 6.2. Three staged process to testing the study hypotheses

6.3.3. Stage One: Establishing a relationship between the study variables (hypotheses 1a-1c)

Correlational analyses were conducted to establish whether relationships existed between the study variables. The results of these correlations are presented in Table 6.8.

The analysis revealed the presence of many correlations significant at the 0.01 level thus supporting hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c. Interestingly the highest significant correlation between competence employability and PsyCap was with occupational expertise and self-efficacy (0.657) suggesting that those individuals who have sound domain knowledge also feel more confident in finding solutions to problems. Additionally the PsyCap domain of hope was strongly positively correlated with the competence dimension of personal flexibility (0.638), indicating that those individuals who were pursuing work goals were also more adaptable to internal and external developments in their roles. The OPFES component *adaptability* correlated strongly with competence dimensions corporate sense (0.542), personal flexibility (0.492) and occupational expertise (0.506) in addition to the PsyCap dimension (hope). This suggests that participants who believed they could apply their skills and OP knowledge creatively were also more aware of their professional context (and demonstrating organisational citizenship behaviour), adaptable internally and externally and were more actively pursuing their work goals.

The OPFES component of identity attracted the fewest significant correlations between variables, except for subjective career satisfaction (0.666). There was also a negative correlation between salary and identity and whilst not significant it was approaching significance. This indicates that those participants working in environment where their colleagues and managers were aware that the participants had an OP background reported lower salaries than those whose colleagues and managers were not aware. Of interest were the relatively low correlations between all variables and objective measures of career success (salary and level), with the strongest relationship with the competence measure of occupational expertise (0.310).

Table 6.8.

Correlations between predictor and predicted variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
1 Salary	1.00																			
2 Level	0.495	1.00																		
3 SCSS	0.299	0.219	1.00																	
4 Int	0.269	0.170*	0.443	1.00																
5 Ext	0.275	0.132	0.173*	0.310	1.00															
6 Bal	0.107	0.143	0.356	0.230	0.103	1.00														
7 AntOp	0.197*	0.150*	0.124	0.179*	0.279	0.288	1.00													
8 CorpSe	0.193*	0.312	0.294	0.495	0.179*	0.296	0.504	1.00												
9 PersFle	0.131	0.188*	0.262	0.350	0.358	0.326	0.518	0.587	1.00											
10 OccEx	0.310	0.431	0.318	0.311	0.284	0.350	0.464	0.549	0.610	1.00										
11SE	0.091	0.389	0.119	0.265	0.262	0.258	0.441	0.581	0.568	0.657	1.00									
12 Hop	0.165*	0.282	0.338	0.407	0.299	0.347	0.537	0.578	0.638	0.588	0.640	1.00								
13 Res	0.090	0.174*	0.129	0.219	0.282	0.388	0.406	0.325	0.505	0.465	0.433	0.477	1.00							
14 Opt	0.101	0.217	0.371	0.330	0.242	0.408	0.385	0.422	0.499	0.467	0.440	0.580	0.591	1.00						
15 ID	-0.134	0.093	0.666	0.369	0.103	0.256	0.052	0.205	0.082	0.190	-0.027	0.173*	0.096	0.216	1.00					
16 CPD	0.156*	0.209	0.462	0.147*	0.129	0.218	0.432	0.372	0.344	0.349	0.325	0.434	0.257	0.381	0.344	1.00				
17 MAD	0.194*	0.393	0.616	0.433	0.136	0.178*	0.242	0.503	0.382	0.384	0.269	0.450	0.193	0.359	0.470	0.549	1.00			
18 EBP	0.142	0.170*	0.530	0.310	0.240	0.230	0.491	0.385	0.368	0.456	0.251	0.424	0.248	0.395	0.427	0.515	0.527	1.00		
19 Adapt	0.141	0.276	0.395	0.435	0.310	0.310	0.423	0.542	0.492	0.506	0.458	0.603	0.386	0.405	0.309	0.460	0.600	0.490	1.00	

Note: All correlations significant at the 0.01 level unless otherwise stated

* - Significant at the 0.05 level

Bold and Italics – not significant

6.3.4. Stage Two: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of OP Facilitators (OPFES) and Subjective Career Satisfaction Scale (SCSS)

Prior to testing the full hypothesised models it was necessary to determine on a priori grounds whether the OPFES and SCSS developed in chapter 4 represented viable models. Therefore Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to ascertain fit was conducted. Alternative models were tested at the item level initially to identify the best fitting models which in each case consisted of checking for a one factor structure, uncorrelated factors, correlated factors and second order, multidimensional structures (see Table 6.9.).

The present sample size was approaching 200 (N=185) deemed adequate for conducting CFA. In determining model fit the main values of interest were the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), CMIN (chi-square), CMIN/DF and Comparative Fit Indices (CFI). Certain goodness of fit measures are more impacted by sample size such as χ^2 which typically reports poor fit in large sample sizes (Byrne, 2001). RMSEA values are consistently seen as more accurate measures of fit due to the robustness in coping with model misspecification and because a confidence interval is also provided (MacCallum & Austin, 2000). Garson (2010) further recommends utilising the normed χ^2 (CMIN/DF) which is also less impacted by sample size. RMSEA and CFI are typically more accurate fit measures with smaller sample sizes (Fan, Thompson, & Wang, 1999). According to criteria set by Browne, Cudeck, Bollen and Long (1993) RMSEA values below or equal to 0.05 represent good fit, below or equal to .08 indicate acceptable fit. The closer the CFI value is to 1 the better the fit (Garson, 2010). Furthermore, Schumacker and Lomax (1996) suggested that a ratio of between 1 and 5 on χ^2 /df (normed χ^2 according to Jöreskog, 1969) indicates that the model fits the data where value less than 2 indicates better fit (Garson, 2010). Modification indices were utilised, but only between items which made conceptual sense as derived from the initial model i.e. within and not across constructs.

Table 6.9.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis for OP Facilitators Model

Model Number	Chi-Square	CMIN/DF	CFI	RMSEA (CI)
1	χ^2 (136) = 307.199, $p < 0.001$	2.259	0.909	0.083 (0.070-0.095)
2	χ^2 (132) = 599.986, $p < 0.001$	4.545	0.711	0.139 (0.128-0.150)
3	χ^2 (122) = 268.745, $p < 0.001$	2.203	0.909	0.081 (0.068-0.094)
4	χ^2 (127) = 273.443, $p < 0.001$	2.153	0.909	0.079 (0.066-0.092)

Note: *Model 1: One Factor Model; Model 2: Uncorrelated Factors Model, removed one ID item due to standardised estimate of 1.05; Model 3: Correlated Factors Model; Model 4: Second Order, Multidimensional model

Table 6.9. indicated that the second order, multidimensional model (4) was the best fitting to the data achieving acceptable fit on three of the four indices (χ^2 (127) = 273.443, $p < 0.001$; CMIN/DF = 2.153, CFI= 0.909, RMSEA=0.079).

Next, the Subjective Career Success model was tested, consisting of three scales (SCSS, perceived internal and perceived external marketability). The three models were tested together to identify whether the SCSS added any discriminant validity to the marketability scales (Table 6.10)

Table 6.10.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Subjective Career Success

Model Number	χ^2	CMIN/DF	CFI	RMSEA
1	χ^2 (65) 87.518, $p = 0.033$	1.346	0.985	0.043 (0.013-0.065)
2	χ^2 (73) 187.492, $p < 0.001$	2.568	0.926	0.092 (0.076-0.109)
3	χ^2 (70) 148.251, $p < 0.001$	2.118	0.949	0.078 (0.060-0.095)
4	χ^2 (70) 148.251, $p < 0.001$	2.118	0.949	0.078 (0.060-0.095)

Note: *Model 1: One Factor Model; Model 2: Uncorrelated Factors Model, Model 3: Correlated Factors Model; Model 4: Second Order, Multidimensional model

Table 6.10. indicated that model one (a one factor model, which included all items) was the best fitting (χ^2 (65) 87.518, $p = 0.033$; CMIN/DF=1.346, CFI=0.985, RMSEA=0.043). This model achieved good fit across all of the indices and indicated that the SCSS was measuring similar constructs to the marketability scales.

6.3.5. Stage three: Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) (hypotheses 2a-2b)

Due to the relatively small sample size and the potential for measurement error, it was not possible to utilise full disaggregation models when testing hypothesised structures. Therefore items were parcelled (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002) in their respective models. This reduced the number of parameters to estimate thus enabled model fit, whilst retaining the integrity of the a priori models. Table 6.11. indicates the best fit statistics for each of the parcelled models.

Table 6.11.

Best fitting parcelled models and fit indices

Model Number	χ^2	CMIN/DF	CFI	RMSEA (CI)
1 OPFES	χ^2 (5) 9.374, p=0.095	1.875	0.985	0.069 (0.000-0.136)
2 PsyCap	χ^2 (14) 17.011, p=0.256	1.215	0.996	0.034 (0.000-0.083)
3 Competence	χ^2 (5) 1.866, p=0.867	0.373	1.000	0.000 (0.000-0.053)
4 Subjective Success	χ^2 (14) 24.872, p=0.036	1.777	0.983	0.065 (0.017-0.106)

Note: *Model 1: OP Context Parcelled Means for each Factor; Model 2: Psychological Capital, two parcels per factor; Model 3: Competence Employability Parcelled Means for each Factor; Model 4: Subjective Career Success, two parcels for SCSS, and correlated at item level for perceived external and perceived internal marketability.

Interestingly all models best fit according to their factor means except PsyCap, which proved more difficult to fit. This led to a correlated factors model (hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy) with two parcels per factor, suggesting that in this sample the four constructs were not second order, hierarchical as previous research suggested.

The models with the best fitting indices were taken forward to test hypotheses 2a and 2b in the following sections.

6.3.5.1: Hypothesis 2a: Competence employability as a mediator between OP contextual facilitators and psychological capital and subjective career success

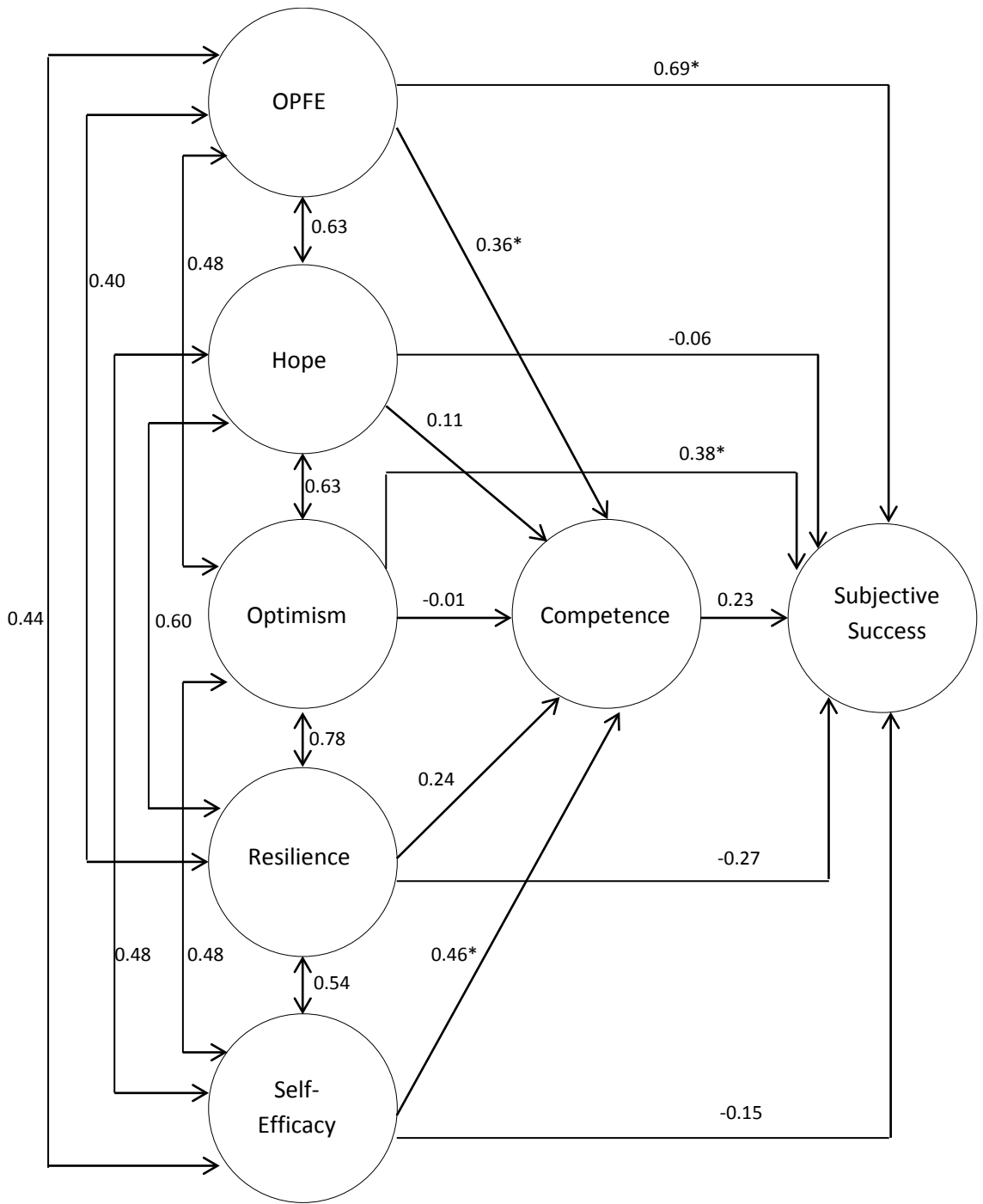
Hypothesised model (2a) was tested and compared to various alternative models in order to ascertain best fit (Table 6.12) between predictors, mediator and subjective career success.

Table 6.12.
Hypothesised Model Fit for Subjective Success

Model Number*	χ^2	CMIN/DF	CFI	RMSEA (CI)
H2a	χ^2 (395)=733.099, p<0.001	1.856	0.893	0.068 (0.060-0.076)
AM1	χ^2 (390)=688.329, p<0.001	1.765	0.905	0.064 (0.056-0.072)
AM2	χ^2 (390)=682.883, p<0.001	1.751	0.907	0.064 (0.056-0.072)
AM3	χ^2 (395)=692.320, p<0.001	1.753	0.906	0.064 (0.056-0.072)
AM4	χ^2 (392)=703.736, p<0.001	1.795	0.901	0.066 (0.058-0.074)

Note: * H2a = hypothesised model; AM1=all factors co-vary and predict subjective success; AM2=all factors co-vary, mediated by competence and all predict subjective success; AM3=OP contextual factors as mediator; AM4=PsyCap as mediator.

Table 6.12. indicated that alternative model 2 where OP Facilitators and the PsyCap components co-varied and predicted career success, but were also mediated by competence i.e. partial mediation χ^2 (390)=682.883, p<0.001 CMIN/DF=1.751, CFI=0.907, RMSEA=0.064 (0.056-0.072). Whilst alternative models 1 and 3 also demonstrated similar fit indices, the CFI for model 2 was slightly closer to 1 and therefore selected as the best fitting model.



*indicates significant estimate

Figure 6.3. Best Fitting Model in the prediction of Subjective Success (partial mediation model)

6.3.5.2: Hypothesis 2b: Competence employability as a mediator between OP contextual facilitators and psychological capital and objective career success

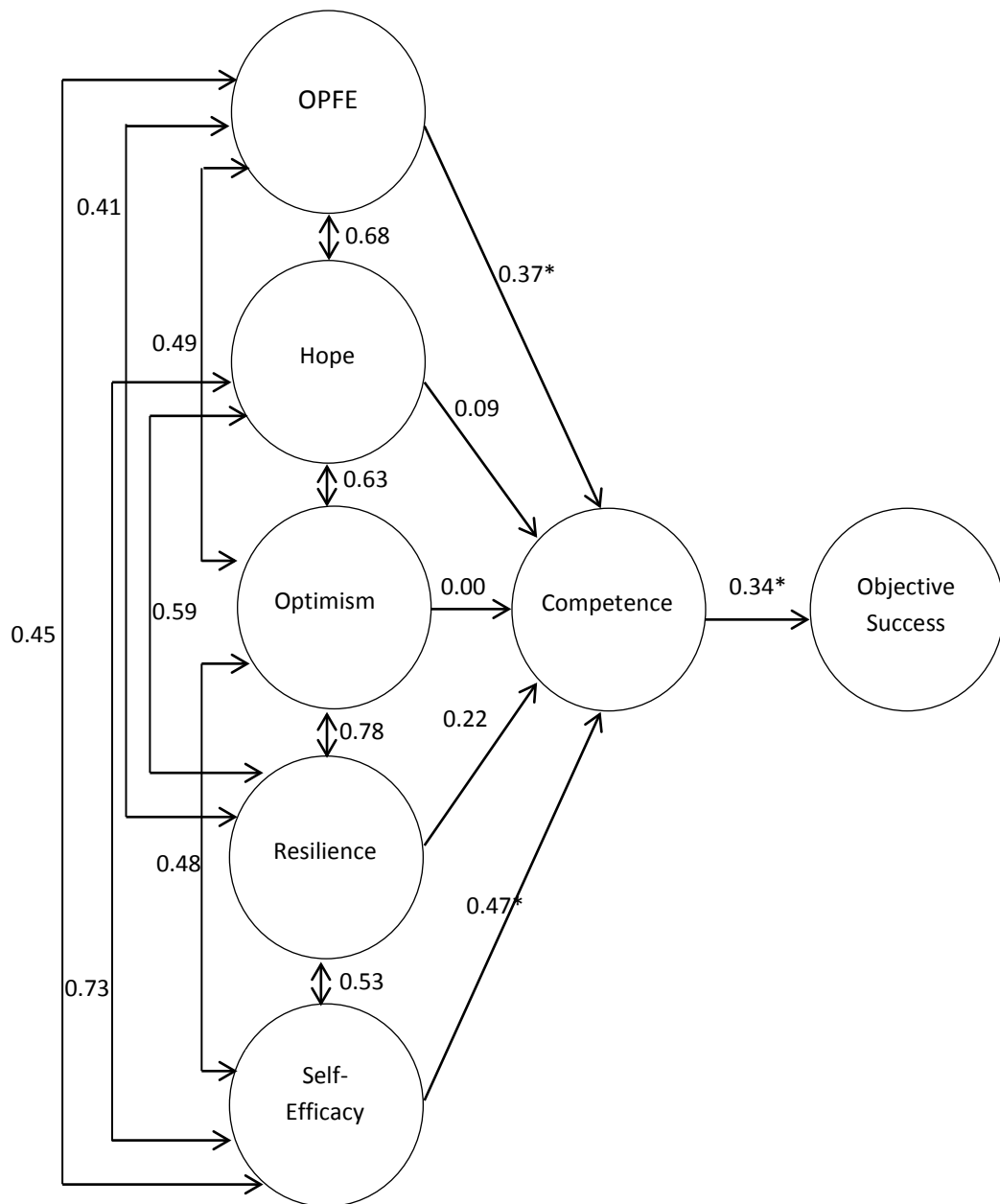
The process outlined in 6.4.5.1. was followed to test hypothesis 2b in the prediction of objective career success. The findings of the model testing are presented in Table 6.13.

Table 6.13.
Hypothesised Model Fit for Objective Success

Model Number*	χ^2	CMIN/DF	CFI	RMSEA
H2b	χ^2 (224)=396.654, p<0.001	1.770	0.926	0.065 (0.054-0.075)
AM1	χ^2 (219)=395.919, p<0.001	1.808	0.924	0.066 (0.056-0.077)
AM2	χ^2 (219)=392.891, p<0.001	1.794	0.926	0.066 (0.055-0.076)
AM3	χ^2 (224)=404.892, p<0.001	1.808	0.923	0.066 (0.056-0.076)
AM4	χ^2 (221)=397.803, p<0.001	1.800	0.924	0.066 (0.055-0.076)

*H4b = hypothesised model; AM1=all factors co-vary and predict subjective success; AM2=all factors co-vary, mediated by competence and all predict subjective success; AM3=OP contextual factors as mediator; AM4=PsyCap as mediator.

Table 6.13. demonstrated that the hypothesised full mediation model was the best fitting, where competence employability mediated the relationship between contextual factors, psychological capital and objective career success χ^2 (224)=396.654, p<0.001, CMIN/DF=1.770, CFI=0.926, RMSEA=0.065 (0.054-0.075). Therefore hypothesis 2b was supported. The best fitting, hypothesised model is presented in Figure 6.4. All standardised estimates were positive.



* indicates significant estimate

Figure 6.4. Hypothesised, best fitting model for Objective Success

6.3.5.3. Summary of Stage Three: hypotheses 2a and 2b

To summarise, hypothesis 2a was partly supported by a partial mediation model demonstrating the best fit to the data. Competence and OP Facilitators and the four PsyCap components predicted subjective success, this relationship was also mediated by competence.

Hypothesis 2b was supported where competence did fully mediate the relationship between OP Facilitators and the four component of PsyCap with objective career success.

6.4. Discussion

This is the first study to empirically test the combination of state like dispositions, contextual facilitators and competence employability in the prediction of objective and subjective career success. In addition, research into OP populations has typically focused on recent graduates (McDowall et al., 2013) or those who are members of the BPS and DOP in particular (Expert Panel, 2012), this fails to include those individuals who have an OP background but who have not joined the BPS/DOP. This research addressed this gap with the aim of understanding the specific OP graduate context. Findings are discussed in line with the three stage process outlined in the results.

6.4.1. Stage One: Establish a relationship between the variables under study

The findings supported hypotheses 1a, 1b and 1c there was a positive relationship at the dimension level between OP Facilitators, psychological capital and competence employability. The relationships provided additional support for the factorability of the OPFES, indicating that it measured related yet distinct factors to employability competence and PsyCap.

6.4.1.1. Hypothesis 1a: psychological capital and competence

The relationship between psychological capital and competence employability suggested that those individuals who scored highly on *hope, optimism, resilience* and *self-efficacy* also reported higher scores on the five employability competence dimensions. This indicates that in order to achieve competence, certain non-stable traits are essential. Providing support for Liao and Liu (2015) who examined the relationship between psychological capital and nursing students' perceptions of competence. They suggested that psychological capital was instrumental in harnessing and developing workplace competence. This result adds to literature indicating that psychological capital can predict positive workplace outcomes such as well-being (Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010) and performance and satisfaction (Luthans et al., 2007).

Psychological capital related positively to OP facilitators in the current study. Literature suggests that positive emotions can lead to increased ability to harness personal resources such as creativity (Fredrickson, 2001). Assuming that this is true, developing non-stable traits in OccPsychs could potentially lead to a feeling of increased resources which has been shown to impact upon engagement and performance (Luthans, Avey, Avolio, & Peterson, 2010). Potentially, whether the contextual issues are viewed as barriers or facilitators could also be determined by an individual's psychological capital, implying that attitude is an important factor in careers. Clearly further research should seek to establish this link across a range of professions, sectors and countries, but the findings in this study suggest that this is an important avenue for future work in the field of positive organisational psychology.

6.4.1.2. Hypothesis 1b: OP Facilitators and Competence

The relationship between competence employability and OP facilitators is not surprising given that both measure skills that could support an individual's employability. However, it was anticipated that the strongest correlation would be between *adaptability* and *personal flexibility*, but this was not the case. The strongest correlations observed (>0.50) were between *adaptability* and *corporate sense* and *occupational expertise* and *making a difference* and *corporate sense*. Therefore OccPsychs who believed they could apply their skills and knowledge creatively also had a good understanding of their professional context and knowledge of their domain. This links to career adaptability (Savickas, 1997, 2002, 2005) which can lead to successful career outcomes. Additionally, the relationship between *making a difference* and *corporate sense* which relates to organisational citizenship behaviour (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006) could be explained by individuals feeling that they added value to individuals and organisations.

Lastly, the OP Facilitator of *identity* possessed non-significant positive correlations with *anticipation and optimisation* and *personal flexibility* indicating that whether employers and colleagues had a good understanding of the value of OP did not relate significantly to whether individuals could adapt to internal and external challenges. It could be that those individuals with a stronger OP identity had less need to consider these aspects of employability competence due to feeling valued by their organisation.

6.4.1.3. Hypothesis 1c: OP Facilitators and PsyCap

The strongest correlation between OP Facilitators and PsyCap components was with *adaptability* and *hope* (0.603) indicating that those individuals who could apply their OP knowledge and skills were also actively pursuing work goals. This makes conceptual sense in that individuals who harness their ability to adapt pursue personal goals. Interestingly the competence employability dimension of *personal flexibility* also demonstrated a strong positive correlation with hope, which corroborates this statement. This also relates to proactive personality which consists of setting goals and has been linked to adaptive behaviours. Indeed proactive personality has been utilised as a measure of adaptability in research (Seibert et al., 2001a, 2001b; McArdle et al., 2007). Moderate correlations (between 0.173 and 0.458) were reported for the rest of the scale suggesting that PsyCap and OP facilitators were indeed related yet conceptually different to one another.

Again the OP Facilitator of *identity* did not significantly correlate with self-efficacy and resilience indicating no relationship between these variables; individuals with high self-efficacy and resilience did not report high levels of OP identity, thus indicating that these personal resources do not lead to stronger identity in OccPsychs.

Whilst the correlations provided support for the hypotheses, they explained little about the relative prediction between variables. As such SEM was utilised to understand the intricacies of these variables in the prediction of career success.

6.4.2. Stage Two: Ascertainning the fit of the OPFES and SCSS using CFA

The initial process of fitting the various multidimensional models led to structures which best fit according to theoretical proposition and prior empirical research, except for Subjective Career Success and PsyCap. Whilst PsyCap is explained as a higher order construct where the whole is better than the sum of its parts (Luthans et al., 2006), the current study indicated that each dimension was unique for OP audiences. This supports research by Van den Heuvel, Demerouti, Bakker & Schaufeli (2010) who suggested that certain personal resources such as resilience should be researched separately, particularly important when designing interventions in organisations.

Subjective Career Success best fit as a one factor model where the three elements of SCSS, perceived external and perceived internal marketability were measured at item level. This is contrary to previous research which suggested that they were related yet distinct constructs (Eby et al., 2003; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). It is possible that these factors were all perceived in the same way by the OP participants under the umbrella of subjective career success and that perhaps there were internal processes not measured by the questionnaires which were causing these responses. Pan and Zhou (2015) suggested that measures of unidimensional subjective career success are flawed due to woolly and inappropriate definitions which typically focus upon past achievements rather than future potential. Whilst the best fitting model was taken forward in subsequent analyses it should be viewed with caution due to the unusual results found here (see also 6.4.3.), and further research should seek to clarify how OccPsychs construe success (see chapter 7).

6.4.3. Stage three: Identifying the best fitting model in the employability and career success relationship

The primary aim of this chapter was to understand the role of psychological capital, OP contextual facilitators and competence employability in the prediction of objective and subjective career success (hypotheses 2a and 2b). Prior research has not sought to establish a relationship between these variables and instead has focused upon individual predictors. However, literature has suggested that competence employability could be a mediator between dispositions, contextual issues and career success and that was the purpose of this study. The findings indicated that for objective career success competence employability did indeed mediate the relationship between non stable dispositions (psychological capital) and contextual facilitators (hypothesis 2b); this was not the case for subjective career success (hypothesis 2a). In this model competence employability partially mediated the relationship between predictors (OP Facilitators and PsyCap components).

Overall, these findings suggest that competence employability and psychological capital are important in objective and subjective career success. The different causal models however provide further support that objective and subjective career success are distinct constructs which can be enhanced in different ways (Ng et al., 2005).

6.4.3.1. Hypothesis 2a: Subjective success

Some support was provided for hypothesis 2a as competence employability was a partial mediator in the relationship between OP facilitators and psychological capital. The addition of PsyCap dimensions is unique and indicated that self-efficacy made a significant contribution to competence and optimism to subjective success. This supports literature that optimism was an important factor in external marketability and job satisfaction (Spurk, et al., 2015). It could of course indicate that happy people generally make more positive appraisals (Hogan et al., 2013). The greatest and significant contributor to subjective success appeared to be OP Facilitators (explaining 53% of variance) providing support for developing an appreciation of contextual factors through which to enable career success (McQuaid, 2006; McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005).

An unexpected finding in the model was that self-efficacy, resilience and hope had negative relationships with subjective success (although not significant). Therefore when taking into account the variance in subjective career success and the relationships between all predictor variables, those individuals with higher self-efficacy, resilience and hope reported lower levels of subjective career success. Therefore, those individuals who had greater confidence, ability to bounce back and goal setting were less satisfied or potentially more critical of their achievements than those who had low self-belief who were perhaps more content. Bandura (1997) postulated that individuals with higher self-efficacy also tended to set themselves more challenging goals which could explain the negative relationship with career success, particularly given the relationship between self-efficacy and hope (i.e. goal setting) in this study. The research evidence on the relationship between subjective career success, self-efficacy and goal setting (i.e. hope) is mixed. Abele and Spurk (2009c) were interested in the relationship between career self-efficacy, career-advancement goals and career satisfaction seven years following graduation. 734 individuals from a range of careers participated and results indicated that whilst self-efficacy related positively to career satisfaction, goal setting had a negative impact. They concluded that it may take more time to become satisfied, particularly if individuals set challenging goals. This could also be argued for self-efficacy, with the passing of time and as individuals achieve more career successes they may begin to appraise their successes more favourably and develop more confidence in their abilities. To the authors knowledge there is no specific research exploring the link between resilience and subjective career success, but rather focuses upon the

role of resilience in job search behaviours (Fleig-Palmer et al., 2009). Whilst the negative relationship present here was non-significant, it does indicate that further research exploring the relationship between resilience and subjective career success is warranted. Indeed this is potentially a concerning finding which could indicate that OccPsychs don't have sufficient resilience and as such may have 'settled' for careers which may not match their desires.

Interestingly, unusual results can often be found in the career literature, for example Bozionelos (2004) concluded that conscientiousness was not important to career success, which was counterintuitive to what would be predicted. It would appear that there are complex relationships between dispositions and subjective career success and this warrants further examination across a range of occupational samples to facilitate broader understanding. Of particular interest is identifying potential reasons why high optimism, yet low self-efficacy, resilience and hope relate to subjective career success; across career populations.

6.4.3.2. Hypothesis 2b: Objective Success

Support was provided for hypothesis 2b, indicating that competence employability mediated the relationship between psychological capital, OP facilitators and objective career success. Therefore personal resources such as psychological capital and OP facilitators can lead to an individual feeling competent about their employability and in turn promote positive objective outcomes such as salary and organisational level. This theoretical proposition has not been previously empirically tested. It is important to note that the significant predictors in the model were OP Facilitators and self-efficacy predicting competence employability which in turn significantly contributed 12% of the variance in objective career success (supporting De Vos et al., 2011; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Whilst only 12%, as noted by Van der Heijden and Bakker (2011) due to the complex nature of the factors in employability, any prediction in variance is indicative of a relationship. This notion can arguably be extended to objective career success. Linking to Bandura's (1986) original conceptualisation of self-efficacy as an individual's belief in their own ability to perform, the relationship with perceptions of competence employability was expected. It also supports the perspective that SE is different to employability, but is contradictory to findings that SE will not lead to improvements in employability (Berntson et al., 2008). That being said, this research was related to competence as an antecedent, not perceptions of employability.

The relationship between OP contextual facilitators and competence suggested that those individuals with a clear identity, who made a difference in their work, pursued CPD, applied OP creatively and utilised an evidence based approach also possessed more employability competence and therefore reported higher salaries and levels in organisations. The suggestion therefore hard work is valued and rewarded by organisations often referred to as 'merit-based career success' is supported (Ng et al., 2005), particularly as age, experience and membership were also important in the objective success relationship. Furthermore, support is provided for the human capital proposition by Fugate et al., (2004) suggesting that knowledge could enhance career success gained through experiences and the development of expertise (Van der Heijden, 2002). These findings require scholars to consider what predicts competence across a range of professions, particularly as this study focused upon OP specific contextual facilitators which are not necessarily applicable to other careers. The final study in this doctorate will explore the role of objective markers of success in the identity formation of OccPsychs (chapter 7).

6.4.4. Limitations and links to future research

Whilst the strength of this study was in establishing a relationship between psychological capital, contextual facilitators, competence and career success, it is important to recognise that there were several limitations in the approach (limitations such as sample size and recruitment discussed in chapter 5 are relevant here and therefore not repeated).

Firstly, whilst efforts were taken to reduce the effects of common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003), the study was essentially self-report and cross-sectional making it difficult to draw inferences outside of this specific population. This is perhaps most notable in the relationships found between the OPFES and SCS Scales. Both scales were designed specifically for this study and were highly correlated, suggesting that they were measuring similar constructs. Whilst this could be a flaw in the measurement models, it should not be dismissed as it is possible that subjective success is attributed to many of the factors in the OPFES and rather than these being predictors of subjective success, they are indeed measures of it. For example, Arnold (2011) argued that better career success measures are required, such as how meaningful individuals work is. This links to the *making a difference* construct which could be argued is a measure of OP success. Furthermore, objective measures of level and salary were also utilised to

counteract the issues of common method bias. Research investigating these constructs should perhaps utilise a multi-method approach such as supervisor ratings of factors such as employability and indeed a measure does exist (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Unfortunately in the era of the boundaryless career and with OccPsychs often working on a self-employed basis it was not possible to guarantee the availability of a supervisor in all cases so to maximise participation this approach was not utilised.

Secondly, in such a complex area it was only possible to measure certain characteristics as hypothesised by the study. On that basis fixed personality traits were not measured or controlled for and neither were aspects of social capital which have been proposed as essential to employability and career success (Eby et al., 2003; Fugate et al., 2004; Ng & Feldman, 2014). Whilst this research primarily focused upon competence and non-stable traits it was not possible to state whether fixed dispositions, social capital or other variables not controlled for could have led to a better fitting model. However, the narrative study in chapter 7 aims to explore in depth identity development.

Thirdly, the measures of the outcome variables may not have fully reflected the complexities associated with career success. Arbitrary measures of level and gross annual salary were utilised for objective success due to the challenges associated with alternative indicators such as number of promotions (often used in the literature) particularly in the boundaryless career which is not necessarily defined by upward progression. Participants in both full and part time employment were utilised in the study and whilst there was not a significant difference between the salaries of these two groups, it was not clear whether participants were stating their actual salary or what their salary would be if they were full time. Issues with the subjective career success measures were considered earlier. However, Dries (2011) suggested that the positivist emphasis on objective measures of career success has not enabled a thorough understanding of the concept of career success in modern workplaces. They also explained that subjective career success has been typically overlooked in the career literature. Van den Born and Van Witteloostuijn (2013) argued that objective and subjective career success could be explained by different characteristics and investing time in understanding the potential trade-offs between the two would be worthwhile. Further research in this doctorate (chapter 7) will seek to identify how OccPsychs construe their success

through identity development which may give further insight into the attributions of success that they make.

Fourthly, the sample size was approaching 200 (N=185) which is usually an acceptable cut off for conducting SEM. Nonetheless in order to account for possible error, items were parcelled to provide indications of the constructs. This is not unique and many studies operate at a parcelled level (e.g. Abele & Spurk, 2009a, 2009c; De Hauw & De Vos, 2010; Little et al., 2002; Van der Heijden & Bakker, 2011), however it does mean that the unique contribution of each individual variable was not established and could potentially lead to model misspecification particularly in multidimensional models (Little et al., 2002). Ideally therefore SEM would be conducted at the item level. Despite efforts made to recruit participants including personal contact, advertising on social media, requesting participants at the Division of Occupational Psychology Annual Conference and visiting a large employer of OccPsychs there were only 185 usable questionnaires. Some participants also failed to provide age and salary which were important constructs under study meaning that sample size in these models were reduced further. Participants may have been wary of providing personal information and perhaps if age and salary categories had been used, more participants would have provided this information. Despite the disappointing sample size, it does reflect the sample sizes of studies with this group of participants (see chapter 3 and chapter 5).

Finally, it may not be possible to achieve a grand fitting model which accounts for all of the careers open to OccPsychs, indeed Van den Born and Van Witteloostuijn (2013) suggested that identifying a universal way of achieving success is perhaps not possible. Using contingency theory they argued that the concept of strategic fit is more important where the interplay between the internal and external environment is considered. This would suggest that rather than looking at the OP profession as a whole utilising individual jobs or roles and identifying those characteristics they lead to in these specific contexts may be more worthwhile. Modelling this level of detail may be a long way off given the range and variety of OP jobs, although the final study (chapter 7) seeks to explore different roles of OccPsychs in more depth using narrative approaches to understanding identity formation.

6.4.5. Practical implications

This study has important implications for those individuals training OccPsychs on MSc programmes and in supporting their career development post MSc. Firstly, the findings suggest that self-efficacy is a personal resource which could support individuals in competence development, overcoming contextual issues and in potentially enhancing career success. As such it would seem beneficial to work with students, and graduates to develop their self-efficacy. Due to the large proportion of early career participants in this study, it is important to point out that becoming a competent OP is a long process, but that developing expertise and becoming an HCPC Registered Practitioner did relate to both objective and subjective career success (although controlled for in SEM). Perhaps offering support to new graduates in their workplaces and maintaining contact to the profession would be a worthwhile investment of time. The role of mentors, coaches, supervisors etc. will be explored in the next chapter but it is assumed that they could play a part in this transition period, which links to the concept of liminality where individuals are no longer a student, but not yet an OP. There appears an opportunity here to really support career development and respond to the critique that MSc providers are simply *churning out* graduates (OP-First, 2006). Furthermore, when linking this to the demographic data, there are many potential career avenues that an individual can take which can lead to registered status. This information should be shared with MSc students, recent graduates and MSc programme providers so that they can provide good career support using informative data. There is also a role here for the professional body and in the researcher's capacity as co-Chair of the DOPTC; she has developed a questionnaire to be sent to all recent graduates so that good quality data can be collected on their experiences post MSc. This has received full support from the DOPTC.

Career practitioners might also want to consider the context specific factors in any career and as well as understanding the concepts of employability and career success on a global level, investing time in understanding different professions may be worthwhile.

6.4.6. Conclusions

In conclusion, despite limitations this study was the first to explore the range of predictors and competence employability as a mediator on objective and subjective career success. When applied to OccPsychs there were clear indications that

contextual facilitators related to employability and career success and the role of self-efficacy in competence employability as well as optimism in predicting subjective success. The final study in chapter 7 focuses upon OP identity and how it is developed through narrative interviews.

Chapter 7: Employability and Identity Development: A Thematic Analysis of the Career Stories of Occupational Psychologists

7.1 Chapter Overview

As the final empirical study, this chapter defines how OccPsychs develop their identity and how this relates to their perceptions of employability. The chapter begins with an introduction to the study outlining the approach taken (7.1.1.), follows with a methodology (7.2) and results (7.3). Finally, the discussion explains the findings in line with previous literature and outlines limitations and directions for future research (7.4)

7.1.1. Introduction	7.2. Method	7.3. Results	7.4. Discussion
	7.2.1. Participants	7.3.1. The Learner	7.4.1. Strengths and Limitations
	7.2.2. Procedure	7.3.2. The Networker	7.4.2. Practical Implications and Conclusions
	7.2.3. Data Analysis	7.3.3. The Compromiser	
		7.3.4. The Achiever	
		7.3.5. The Career Builder	

Figure 7.1. Chapter Seven structure

7.1.1. Introduction

Previous chapters have sought to identify the employability barriers and facilitators (chapter 3), develop an OP Facilitators to Employability (OPFES) and Subjective Career Satisfaction Scale (SCSS) (chapter 4), present an indication of what OccPsychs do (chapter 5), and finally to model the relationship between various employability antecedents and objective and career success (chapter 6). The findings so far have indicated that there were a wide range of career options open to OP graduates. Furthermore, there were different relationships present between employability antecedents and career success (objective and subjective). Psychological Capital (PsyCap) components and employability competence were important in the prediction of subjective career success. Whilst these factors also related to objective career success, OP contextual facilitators and PsyCap components were predictors mediated by competence employability (see chapter 6). Practical applications have emerged from these findings which can support those delivering MSc programmes as well as individuals who have already graduated from OP courses.

Throughout each study there was underpinning reference to the identity of OccPsychs. For example, a *professional identity* theme emerged during the focus group (chapter 3) which referred to perceptions and awareness of OccPsychs. The demographic study (chapter 5), whilst demonstrating a range of career options, highlighted that there was not necessarily a clear career path for an OccPsych which could challenge identity development. The moderating role that OP related jobs played in the employability and career success relationship (chapter 6) additionally suggested that identity may be driven by perceptions and as such may be part of subjective success. Research has sought to reconceptualise career success, suggesting traditional measures (e.g. salary, hierarchical progression and satisfaction with these measures) may be inadequate due to individual ways in which individuals experience success (Gunz & Heslin, 2005). This is particularly in the era of 'boundaryless' (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) and 'protean' (Hall, 1976) careers. It is entirely possible that definitions of success may develop throughout an individual's career as their identity also develops and changes through the lifespan (Dries, 2011). Research therefore suggests that it is important to understand the "*process by which people construct the meanings of career*" (Dries, 2011, p.376; Dries, Pepermans, & Carlier, 2008), calling into question the positivist approach of measuring success, but perhaps also identifies a link between success and identity

in that both may change and develop over time. Whilst researchers have indicated that identity is an important construct in both employability and career success (e.g. Fugate et al., 2004), the empirical research to evaluate the notion is sparse (Allen, 2011). Furthermore, identity research has received limited attention in career contexts, meaning that “*conceptual frameworks*” indicating how narratives contribute to the development of career identities are limited (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; pp 135). This is despite relatively early indications that qualitative analysis to understand in depth how careers evolve, both across organisations and sectors was necessary (Eby et al., 2003).

Identity is defined as “*the internalized and evolving story that results from a person’s selective appropriation of past, present and future*” (McAdams, 1999; p.486). Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) provides a conceptual framework on which to understand identity development in a career context identifying that an individual’s meaning of self is derived from personal factors such as personality as well as those socially constructed through relationships with others (Ashforth, 2000). This process of understanding one’s self in the world through experiences and interactions is what develops identity (LaPointe, 2010).

The literature review positioned career identity as paramount in employability development (Brown & Hesketh, 2004; Fugate et al., 2004; Holmes, 2001, 2015) making reference to Career Construction Theory (CCT) Savickas (1997, 2002, 2005). Post-modern theorists and practitioners alike suggest real benefits in enabling individuals to tell stories to make sense of their realities and thus appreciate how individuals navigate their careers. The central argument is that traditional matching approaches fail to account for the contextual and social issues evident in today’s careers where change and adaptability are commonplace (Savickas, 2005; Del Corso & Rehfuss, 2011). The narrative approach to understanding identity formation in the context of CCT and SIT provides a valuable framework for career researchers to understand how individuals maintain their identity and employability.

Through a narrative approach an individual begins to understand the overarching career identity by discussing the past, the present and the ideal future (Rehfuss, 2009). An understanding of identity can then raise awareness of the important next career steps, helping an individual to articulate their own values and motivations and identifying the role that they would like to play in the world (Del Corso &

Reh fuss, 2011). Narratives are therefore not factual accounts of the past but rather an individual's perception of their own reality which shapes their future choices (Spence, 1982). This approach can enable the researcher or career counsellor to learn how an individual makes sense of the world and their own place within it (Murray, 2003)

There are also potential positive outcomes for participants too as narratives can help individuals define their own sense of 'self', understanding the rationale behind their decisions. In a career context, reflection and defining the 'work self' may help an individual to understand why they have made certain career decisions and what next career steps would support their identity and potentially employability (Nazar & Van der Heijden, 2012).

Due to the challenges present in an OP career (see literature review, chapter 1) and the outcomes of the research programme so far indicating identity as an underpinning concern for OccPsychs; utilising a CCT theoretical basis will add to the detailed results obtained so far, building a richer picture of the career landscape for OccPsychs. In an environment where there is no one employer, where self-employment is commonplace and where individuals can potentially add value in a range of roles, a narrative approach will enable graduates from accredited OP programmes to describe (in their own words) how they have built their identity and what factors have been instrumental in shaping this. Therefore the aim of this chapter is to address the following research question: what are the different ways in which OP graduates develop their identities?

7.2. Method

7.2.1. Participants

Participants were recruited from study 3 and 4 (chapters 4 and 5) by indicating their interest in follow up interviews in the consent information. 94 participants initially indicated that they would like to participate and were sent an e-mail in May 2014 asking them to contact the researcher if they would still like to participate (appendix P). Of this group, 25 replied showing further interest and were asked to indicate their availability between June and July 2014. 20 participants were available for interview during the suggested timescales and interviews were booked and conducted face to face, via telephone or Skype in order to accommodate a range of geographic locations and time constraints. The remaining 5 individuals were placed

on a waiting list should any further participants be required. See Table 7.1 for participant demographics, followed by a collective summary in table 7.2. It is clear that a range of ages, geographic locations, years' work experience, job/roles, and whether working in an OP field or not were represented by the participants.

Table 7.1.

Biographical information by participant

Participant	Age	Gender	Job Title	OP role (Y/N)	Employed or self employed	Geographic location	Total years' work experience	Length of time in OP field	Membership status
1	40+	F	Senior Lecturer in Occupational Psychology	Y	E and SE	North East (Newcastle)	37	37	Chartered and Registered
2	22-26	M	Psychology Project Co-ordinator	Y	E	London	3	6 months	Member DOP
3	40+	F	English Teacher	N	E	Saudi	40+	Never	None
4	35-39	F	Psychologist	Y	E	Yorkshire	18	8	Trainee
5	35-39	F	Higher Psychologist	Y	E	Yorkshire	15	7	Chartered and Registered
6	22-26	F	Senior Learning and Development Advisor	Y	E	North East	10	5	Trainee
7	31-34	F	Business Psychologist	Y	SE	North East	20	6	GBC, BPS Member
8	35-40	M	Work Psychologist	Y	E	North East	17	8	Trainee
9	27-30	F	Consultant	Y	E	Surrey SE	5	5	Trainee
10	22-26	M	Account Manager	N	E	North East	1	0	Graduate Member
11	31-34	M	Senior Psychologist	Y	E	North Yorkshire	19	10	Chartered and Registered
12	27-30	F	Consultant Psychologist	Y	E	Derby, Midlands	5	3-4	Graduate Member BPS
13	27-30	M	Trainee Clinical Psychologist	Y	E	North East	11	4 (prior to clinical)	Chartered and Registered
14	27-30	F	Senior Consultant	Y	E	London	8	5	Trainee
15	31-34	F	Training Designer	Y	E	North East	11	8	None
16	22-26	M	PhD/Demonstrator	N	E (and studying)	North East	9	4	None
17	35-39	F	Senior Occupational	Y	E	Farnborough,	12-13	11-12	Chartered and

18	27-30	F	Psychologist Researcher Organisational Psychology	in	Y	E	Hampshire Manchester	8	9 months	Registered Graduate member, about to enrol on QOccPsych
19	35-39	F	Managing Consultant		Y	E	Guildford, Surrey	14	14	Chartered and Registered
20	40+	F	Self-employed Occupational Psychologist		Y	SE	North East	27	18	Chartered and Registered

Table 7.2:

Breakdown of participant data by demographic variables

Demographic Variable	Breakdown of results
Age	22-26 (n=4); 27-30 (n=5); 31-34 (n=3); 35-39 (n=5); 40+ (n=3)
Gender	Male 30%; Female 70%
OP Related Role	Yes = 80%; No = 20%
Employed vs Self Employed	Self Employed = 10%; Both = 10%; Employed = 80%
Geographic Location	North East = 45%; Yorkshire = 15%; London and South East = 25%; Other = 15%
Total Years work experience	1-10 (n=8); 11-20 (n=9); 21-30 (n=1); 31-39 (n=1); 40+ (n=1)
Length of time in OP field	0-1 (n=4); 1-10 (n=12); 11-20 (n=3); 31-39 (n=1)
Membership status	COP and HCPC (n=7); DOP Member (n=5); Trainee (n=5); None (n=3)

7.2.2. Procedure

A narrative or story telling interview approach (Maitlis, 2012) was taken where the participants were encouraged to describe their career from *“the moment they made the decision to pursue occupational psychology to present day”* (see appendix Q for an interview plan). This *“generative narrative question”* (Riemann & Schutze, 1987, p.353 as cited in Flick, 2014) is typical of many used to begin a narrative interview. Participants were encouraged to explain their career history and choices, uninterrupted by the researcher. This approach was recommended by Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000) who emphasised the importance of the narrative being led by the participant and not the interviewer. This enabled participants to talk in their own words about their career as an OccPsych prior to the researcher asking any questions to clarify understanding. The end of the narrative account was typically indicated by questions from participants checking that they had given sufficient information or by finishing with *“that’s it”* style comments, referred to by Flick (2014) as a coda. Following this questions were asked based upon the content of the story i.e. seeking clarification or aiming to understand and explore in more depth (e.g. *“You also mentioned things about wanting to be stretched, in the roles that you’ve said you’ve enjoyed, the words you used were things like being in demanding roles and felt challenged and stretched. Is that something that’s important to you?”*) and in line with the research question often referred to as the ‘balancing phase’ (e.g. *“How do you think the occupational psychologists can fix that, what do you think we need to do?”* and *“Why do you think that employers have chosen you for the jobs that you have had in the past?”*). Furthermore, all participants were asked to discuss the future and how they felt about their own employability and career going forward, this enabled an understanding of the beginning, transition and future work self, a salient feature in narrative career

accounts. The second part of the interview was therefore semi-structured in nature and sought to ensure that similar questions were asked of all participants. At the end of the interview participants were thanked for their time and the interview ended. Interviews were audio recorded and typically lasted between 50 and 70 minutes.

7.2.3. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was utilised to analyse the interview transcripts and develop a typology of career identity. Thematic analysis was chosen due to its flexible nature (Cooper & Mackenzie-Davey, 2010) to generate themes from individual interviews and make sense of the collective data. Maitlis (2012) described thematic analysis as the “most common type of narrative analysis” (p. 494) which is primarily interested in the “what” rather than “how” of the transcription. Following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phase guide to conducting thematic analysis (process outline in chapter 3, 3.2.3.), five identity types emerged (appendix R and S). In order to ensure researcher reflexivity and rigour a number of approaches were taken. Firstly a reflective log was taken after each interview noting initial thoughts in relation to content and process to “*foster ongoing reflexivity*” (Riessman, 2008, p.191). Secondly, the researcher reviewed the codes after five and fifteen interviews had taken place to ensure that codes had not been repeated and merged any that had. Thirdly, an independent researcher reviewed one transcript with reference to the research question. Codes generated from this transcript (appendix T) from both researchers were then discussed and mapped against the broad themes developed by the principal researcher (appendix U). Whilst codes sometimes differed between researchers they fell into one of the five broad types, suggesting that any differences were down to semantics and labelling rather than broad theme meaning (appendix U). Finally, the initial themes were discussed with two participants who also read draft versions of the chapter to ensure that they reflected their narrative accounts. Whilst these procedures did not lead to adaptations, the reflexive nature ensured that the outcome was based upon the content provided during the interviews and not driven by the researchers own experiences as an OP (see 8.2.3.2.).

7.3. Results

Five themes were identified which explained how OP identity was developed. These themes were translated into types (appendix V) to help characterise the

stories to which they related. Reference was made to the impact that identity has on employability.

These identity typologies were: 1) learner, 2) relationship builder/networker, 3) compromiser, 4) achiever, 5) career builder (see Table 7.3. for a summary). All identity types were present in each participant's career story however their salience varied according to participants' circumstances and life stage.

Table 7.3:
Summary of the five main employability identity taxonomies

Identity	Brief description
The Learner	This identity type was interested in gaining a solid theoretical foundation through education. They also described how learning from practical experiences (positive and negative) shaped their identity as an employable OP.
The Relationship Builder/Networker	This type expressed the value placed upon networking and developing lasting relationships with individuals who could support their employability. Managers and mentors were most often referred to.
The Compromiser	For these individuals OP employability identity was formed through the compromises that an individual has made throughout their career such as choosing location over jobs, coping with the economic uncertainty and managing work-life balance. Often described here was making the most out of their career based upon factors that were perhaps out of their control.
The Achiever	Achievers were characterised by their outcomes, and their identity was formed through success. For some this was objective success such as achieving chartered status, or being promoted, whilst for others this related to feeling confident to present themselves as an OP. Achievers aimed to find an organisation or role which fit their own values or personality in some way.
The Career Builder	These individuals were acutely aware of gathering experiences which could help them to create their identity, there was a sense of openness to experiences rather than forward planning to their stories. They also expressed skills in selling themselves and crafting their roles to ensure that they could add value to organisations.

7.3.1. The Learner

Learners were individuals who described education and learning as important factors in their pursuit of employability identity. Achieving a solid grounding in psychological theory was paramount, as was ensuring that every job, post qualifications gave them the opportunity to learn. This type was typically expressed when looking back over early decisions made and instrumental career forces; it was also discussed by participants when looking to their future career. For a number of

participants experiences on the undergraduate psychology degree first encouraged them to pursue a career in occupational psychology:

“...why did I choose occupational psychology? Uuhhmm, I think I might start with the time when I was an undergraduate” (participant 12)

At this stage, participants were learning about what they enjoyed, where their interests lay and what career they desired. Whilst an interest in psychology was clear, participants described a process of ruling out other professional routes (such as clinical psychology) in search of a career which would enable them to apply psychology to a broad population. Participants also found links between their own work and their studies, as participant 2 described:

“I found the social psychology more interesting because I could actually see it...and one of the places I started to see it mostly was at work because I had lots of interactions with customers, colleagues, managers” (participant 2)

Stories such as these emphasised that in developing an identity participants were looking to validate their own learning and experiences and where they could identify how the two were related, an identity as an OP began to develop. There was also a sense that MSc courses which linked theory and application really helped participants to understand how they could become an OP, as described by participant 14:

“...the way in which the course is structured and the content within those courses was really valuable in terms of the theory and applying...and being able to apply that theory into practice...working out how you would then apply them into businesses...probably the best part of the master's degree...some of the core consulting skills that we learnt in the degree and I think that is really critical for occupational psychology, so on top of learning all of the science behind it, it's actually really important to understand...how to apply” (participant 14)

Participant 4 transferred university part way through her course, going from an applied course to a more theoretical one and commented that she “*could have easily not identified myself as an occupational psychologist from that [the second] masters*”. This stressed that the educational experiences could support or hinder the development of an OP identity.

Stories characterised by learning also emphasised that the strong theoretical underpinning psychological knowledge enabled participants to understand human behaviour and appreciate why individuals behaved in particular ways. For example, participant 7 believed that this foundation also gave her a career advantage and

encouraged the development of a strong identity built upon knowledge which helped her appreciate *“how things would work in practice”*.

Not all stories of learning and education were positive, indeed some participants described negative experiences of MSc OP study which led to pursuing an alternative career path; therefore the OP identity was never formed. Participant 3’s story was characterised by a negative educational experience which formed her first real opinion of OP:

“on the first day of the masters...lecturer...looked around and he said none of you...no six of you are actually going to be Occupational Psychologists...I feel quite angry I feel like I was erm...hoodwinked actually.....I was expecting to have a career...got nothing” (participant 3)

This participant further described that simply studying the MSc did not guarantee a career in OP; echoed by participant 2 who believed that their OP course gave a *“romantic view”* of the reality of working as an OP and the reality was not experienced until entering the workplace. Additionally, participant 19 explained that the MSc course did not fully equip her for working in a test publishing environment despite learning about the relevant theories as part of the course.

Whilst experiences of MSc study were mixed, it was clear that this educational experience was formative for many OccPsychs and indeed may be the stage at which some decided to pursue a career as an OP and others decided that it was not the identity they desired. For others (such as participant 18) it served as an anchor which encouraged them to seek out roles so as to be able to apply their learning and not waste their investment in their qualifications.

Alongside the formal educational environment, *learners* commented on their desire to improve and acquire knowledge, emphasised by participant 12 when describing her future career plans:

“I want to learn and I feel like [I] am still learning uhm and am more keen on keep learning” (participant 12)

This was supported by participant 4 who believed that learning characterised her current role and enhanced her own OP identity. The match between her ‘role’ and ‘individual’ identity was a big attraction to remaining in the organisation rather than looking for work elsewhere. Participant 8 described being attracted to his current

role because of the “*opportunities for training and development*” which would enhance his career.

Learning was described at various stages in an OccPsychs career path. In early career it was primarily developed through undergraduate and postgraduate provision. For some participants this continued throughout their career where roles characterised by the opportunity to learn were desirable in maintaining an OP identity. Whilst education and learning could support the development of an OP identity, it was also clear that negative experiences could hinder this. Potentially, this was due to a poor fit between the individual and the profession which was not recognised until studying the subject.

7.3.2. The Networker

Networkers were individuals who surrounded themselves with individuals who could support and shape their OP identity. These relationships served different purposes at various stages of an OccPsych’s career, in some instances individuals offered advice whilst in others they were fundamental in securing new roles.

Perhaps the first network that OccPsychs developed was with their course tutors (both undergraduate and postgraduate) and colleagues on the course. For example participant 11 described a conversation with an MSc programme leader when considering studying an OP programme:

“...asked them questions around how I would get into this and what would you be looking for erm...and the advice I got was to try and go get some experience of psychology within the workplace erm... and if I was struggling to do that ...working in a big organisation so I could understand how organisations operated” (participant 11)

At this stage the course director offered advice which could support the individual in pursuing an OP career. In this case the individual followed the advice and now works in the OP profession since completing their OP MSc.

Formal and informal mentoring relationships were also described by participants as formative identity development experiences by “*influence[ing] my decisions*” (participant 14) and also as a critical friend encouraging them to consider moving jobs or gaining further experiences. Participant 1’s story was characterised by multiple mentors at different stages of identity development:

“a couple of people in my life have been important mentors...where I’ve been at my best in my career is where...there’s been somebody else had an important role, either challenged me, stretched me, created opportunities for me” (participant 1)

Role models were described as important to some *networkers* particularly in observing how a successful role model has enacted their identity. For example participant 4 was struggling to understand how to be a successful female within her working environment; she therefore identified a “*strong female figure*” who could mentor her through this challenge.

Other important relationships were described, for example with managers, friends, colleagues and university lecturers. Participant 11 explained how previous managers had supported their identity development:

“I’ve had some really good managers who have been really helpful in both giving me opportunities but also working with you to find what opportunities I wanted to get to progress in terms of personal development as a manager, technical development as a psychologist or actually progression in terms of promotion” (participant 11)

In addition, *networkers* who nurtured their contacts explained that benefits often occurred over a longer period of time; for example participant 12 recalled a scenario where she received a job offer from an individual she had worked for as an intern:

“six months into my role I got a call from the contacts I made during my time as an intern at [organisation] when my manager then said ‘I am building a team...I need people can you come and help?’” (participant 12)

This participant described many scenarios where her contacts had been influential in securing work as an OP, emphasising how identities formed through networks could enhance employability.

Identities developed through networking were abundant in the career narratives, explaining how both formal and informal opportunities to enhance career were utilised:

“I think having a really good network of people who kept in touch with me like from the masters and that’s been a massive factor, there’s definitely something about networking and having a network of people who you can turn to and ask questions or get support from. I don’t think I’d be in the position I was now if I didn’t have that network.” (participant 13)

Developing a network was not only described as important but also necessary due to the perception that OP was a small profession so making good impressions was essential, participant 10 offered this piece of advice:

“the other thing is contact, it’s a very small field, you need a lot of people that you know because many people do get their current jobs because somebody recommended them...” (participant 10)

In support of this, participant 5 explained that it was not only having a network that was important, but *“working with other occupational psychologists”* who can really help cement an OP identity and act as a *“massive support network”*. This network was therefore not purely for promoting job opportunities but also to share ideas, discuss projects and validate an individual’s own identity. This support group often made the difference between working as an OP or not.

At the macro level organisations which provided support for development were also discussed by *networkers*, for example participant 14 explained how her employer had funded her stage two qualification in OP:

“I have been given various opportunities to be able to progress and if it wasn’t [for] the organisation as a whole to give them opportunities then I probably wouldn’t have this support that I needed financially.” (participant 14)

In summary, *networkers* described career scenarios where other individuals had been influential in developing their identity. This was particularly emphasised where participants had nurtured a network of individuals who were either OccPsychs or who had a good understanding of the OP profession such as mentors or managers. It would appear that these supportive relationships made the difference between developing an identity as an OP or gravitating towards alternative career paths.

7.3.3. The Compromiser

Compromisers referred to balancing ‘work self’ and ‘personal self’, or merged identities. For example, geographic location was described by these individuals as an important factor in their OP identity which created a perception of less availability of attractive job opportunities. Furthermore, work-life balance issues were described, particularly balancing personal (i.e. family) commitments and work. For these individuals multiple and sometimes competing identities were balanced throughout their career. A definitive factor in the pursuit of an OP identity was related to the profession and explicitly a perceived lack of opportunity to work in

desired roles. Participant 12 described challenges that she had faced in her own career around an external appreciation of what OP was and what OccPsychs could offer:

“uhm it’s been challenging I think, I think its opportunity as... I mean at the end of the day consultancy positions or positions where we can apply our skills as an OP doesn’t come around very often there are not many of the roles uhm and I think part of the challenge is, is not articulating uhm what we can offer to our potential employers but for them to recognise that we can offer help, so...it’s a two-way street isn’t it? So I think in terms of our ability to say what we can offer that’s one thing, for them to be open to us offering resources is another” (participant 12)

Compromisers provided overwhelming evidence of a lack of good quality career opportunities and choice, particularly when non-career factors (i.e. family) were important considerations. Thus many had opted for roles which lacked congruence with their expected OP identity, perhaps best explained by participant 19:

“I think it is generally a problem in occupational psychology is that there aren’t that many big jobs...in reality there is no opportunity, nor do I think I’m really in a good position working part-time when there are other people full time who don’t even consider that they have a chance either” (participant 19)

Interestingly *compromisers* were more noticeably aware of the challenges presented by the economic recession of 2008 explaining that entry level roles were typically being filled by more experienced OccPsychs, leading to less opportunity for those newer to the profession. Moreover this had impacted upon the availability of roles and encouraged a need to be flexible to cope with the uncertainty and changes that this inevitably brought. Participant 2 described how her identity had developed as a result of the economic downturn:

“I guess a lot of people have new jobs at the moment because companies are starting to recruit again, so partly I think that I’ve got this job because of my own effort and background, but I think my job exists in the first place because the economy’s turned around and I think that’s the whole harsh reality that I learnt over the last kind of five to seven years is that is doesn’t matter how intelligent you are, how much work you put in, the economy goes up or down and it becomes more competitive and things become more difficult” (participant 2)

One *compromiser* explained that he had pursued a career in clinical psychology following a frustrated job hunt for OP roles, feeling that he had to not only sell himself at interviews but also promote the profession. This career change had interestingly led to more opportunities to apply OP in a clinical setting:

“I think the move into clinical...I was really conscious of different people and staff members who were having mild to moderate mental difficulties with depression and anxiety and that’s such a massive work issue but then also...staff sickness and recruitment...my skills from the occupational psychology background hadn’t necessarily prepared me to the extent I would need in clinical settings...On the clinical training...at least 30% of my training on the three years is about managing teams and doing recruitment...organisational psychology is valued by clinicians” (participant 13)

Compromisers also described challenges in identifying with particular roles, for example the use of alternative titles such as work psychologist, business psychologist, organisational psychologist as well as the crossover between professions including Human Resources (HR), Learning and Development (L&D) and Organisational Development (OD). This led to a confused identity, for example feeling that unless a job title was OP they had somehow failed in their career. Participant 14 described how there was an *“educational-type piece of work”* to be done to raise the profile of OP and also the importance of professional membership which could support OccPsychs:

“...people not obviously understanding what a psychologist is, definitely not knowing what an occupational psychologist is... In the OP committee...they said they find it hard to explain to people what they do so I do think between ourselves we need to get that image bit more sorted out...“what I mean is we need employers to recognise what they are [occupational psychologists] because my employer wouldn’t care at the minute if I’m chartered or not, don’t really mean anything to them” (participant 6)

As well as economic issues and external perceptions of OP, participants explained how factors such as geography and work-life balance had impacted upon their career identity through limiting their options and choices. For example, *compromisers* believed that OccPsychs based in the South East of the UK and London in particular may have a broader range of career options due to a view that *“there aren’t a huge amount of occupational psychology jobs out there, especially in the north” (participant 18)*. Additionally, there was a perception that working in the North as an OP made it *“tough” (participant 15)* to find alternative roles. This clearly was a *“formative part” (participant 1)* of some OP’s careers who made a conscious effort to stay in the North and therefore *“take a portfolio based approach” (participant 1)*.

Compromisers whose OP identity was defined by work-life balance also described feeling *“restricted” (participant 5)* and concerned for their future should they lose their jobs, partly due to the suggestion that *“it’s better for my family for me to work part time” (participant 4)*. Achieving work-life balance was cited as a reason for a

change in identity, for example participant 17 identified a notable shift in her career aspirations following starting a family:

“I considered myself quite ambitious at work before I went on maternity leave, my ambition at work dropped off slightly when I was pregnant...two different parts of my brain compete, there is still the part of me that thinks I should be getting promoted and I should be getting pay rises...and then the other part of me is going I would quite like to just be at home and just be a mum...18 months back and I am still trying to find exactly where that balance is and where my career will go next” (participant 17)

For *compromisers* part-time and flexible working arrangements were described as a necessary consideration in their roles, yet there was also an element of guilt expressed and potentially tensions between identities. For example the dichotomy between wanting to be fully engaged at work yet not feeling able to due to other commitments and vice versa, as expressed by participant 19:

“I am incredibly lucky to have a part-time consultancy role because I know they are not easy to come by...I work 7 to 2, four days a week in term time and 7 to 3.30 three days a week during the holidays so it is really flexible...it also has an impact in terms of how I feel involved in the organisation...I do feel like I need to be on call 24/7 which goes against the part-time work...” (participant 19)

Therefore whilst *compromisers* may have chosen work opportunities which were congruent with their work and home identities, they also expressed concern that they were not achieving what they had originally set out to, emphasising that identity can change and develop over the lifespan. Many *compromisers* focused upon their future selves and how their identity may change depending upon circumstances going forward.

7.3.4. The Achiever

Achievers were characterised by stories of success (both objective and subjective) which solidified their identity development. Objective success markers were defined by receiving external recognition or validation such as hierarchical progression, achieving chartered status etc. Subjective success was classified as a personal judgement made by an individual that they were in a career or role which was congruent with their own values. Subjective markers typically included adding value, feeling confident, being autonomous and making a difference.

Purely objective measures of success defined by achievers included a desire for status and recognition achieved through the stage 2 qualification (referred to as chartered status by many participants):

“I was also quite attracted by the idea of having a professional status in the field and professional membership and occupational psychology offered that...I would have status really” (participant 11)

Alongside status, some *achievers* explained how hierarchical progression and increased responsibility was a sign that they were a successful OP and reinforced their OP identity. Participants described that they were “*actively seeking promotion*” (participant 5) or “*trying to get promoted in the next year or two*” (participant 9), suggesting that advancement or achievement of a higher grade or level were considered in their identity development.

Interestingly, whilst remuneration was discussed by participants, this did not appear to shape their identity suggesting that the two factors were not necessarily linked and rather focusing upon the more subjective markers as indicators of success and identity development:

“my salary went up hugely...but it didn’t take me any nearer perhaps down the occupational psychology route” (participant 20)

The first and perhaps most obvious achievement in the pursuit of an OP identity was achieving chartered status. For those *achievers* not yet chartered this was described as being a driving force in their career and those who were chartered described feeling part of the profession and thus establishing an OP identity and in making them marketable externally to their organisation:

“I got chartership in 2011 and registered in the same year and I’ve got to be honest I’m pleased that I did that. Although it’s not a pre-requisite to the role I’m doing now it’s a personal achievement and maybe looking to pursue things differently in the future I think I’m pleased that I did do it...I feel competent in the experience that I’ve got and to have someone say ‘yeah you’re competent to do that role’, and I think it just gives me a bit more confidence behind that” (participant 5)

This quote highlights the relationship between objective markers of success and the impact that this achievement can have on an individual's feelings of confidence and competence (i.e. subjective success).

Participants challenged themselves to develop their confidence leading to a stronger sense of OP identity. Often this was following achieving chartered status

as the process enabled them to pursue a breadth of opportunities which they may not have accessed otherwise:

“I have probably built in confidence because I have more experience of working with different clients, with different people, with different situations so naturally get more confidence with more experience you have” (participant 14)

Perhaps contradictory to *compromisers*, *achievers* explained how being a Chartered and Registered Practitioner gave them “*cred[ibility]*” (participant 20) and despite a general lack of awareness from employers about the specific detail, they could recognise that it was a professional qualification and therefore valued. This had formed a strong part of *achievers*’ identity which remained throughout their career as a driving force for their future. *Achievers* therefore believed that professional membership enhanced their employability, particularly where employers were aware that there was an evidence-base or “*science*” (participant 6) behind decisions and interventions.

At the more subjective level, *achievers* emphasised that their identity was enriched by doing meaningful work, as expressed by participant 14:

“I think for me it’s just being able to really relate to the work that you are doing and seeing the difference that it makes and the impact that it has on the people that you are working for or with or the organisations or clients that you are working with...and being able to see how they have changed as a result of your work...” (participant 14)

This sense of adding value and doing the work of an OP led to feelings of pride for the profession, suggesting that there was some value in pursuing professional qualifications for these individuals. Participant 1 depicted a scenario where she was asked to deliver a piece of work which she perceived as simple, but upon reflection realised that the delivery of the work was the culmination of many years of experience which she had completed because she was an OP:

“...that was me at my best doing a bit of that and that was because I am an occ psych...I don’t think there’s any other, I don’t know how; I don’t think that would be arrived at in any other way” (participant 1)

This links to the concept of being an authentic practitioner, where *achievers* expressed constantly reflecting upon their roles, ensuring that theories learned were applied to their own careers. For example, participant 9 explained that if “*you’re coming to work and you’re bored to tears with it*” then ideally pursuing alternative employment was necessary. This suggestion highlights the importance of

achievement at work which could be in the form of being challenged. Furthermore, participants expressed the importance of achieving autonomy and control at work and pursuing roles which enable this:

“my role’s changed massively in that time and probably autonomy is the thing that I strive to get throughout that time, and that’s what’s changed in my role is the level of autonomy and responsibility I have is massively different from five years ago” (participant 11)

Finally, *achievers* desired individual and organisational congruence as a driver; participant 7 and participant 20 had explicitly become self-employed so that they could enact an identity consistent with their values. Clarity in decisions wasn’t always expressed so simply for participants, many (early career OccPsychs) making trade-offs between interesting work and achieving “fit” (participant 16). Some expressed hope that their future identity would more closely match preferred identity to enable greater satisfaction and happiness

7.3.5. The Career Builder

Career Builders valued experience, crafting roles and adopted alternative career strategies to develop their OP identity. For example at entry to the profession these individuals described how pursuing many experiences, learning how to find work and promote themselves would support their identity development. Job crafting was adopted as a strategy to enable *career builders* to enact their chosen identity by shaping their roles to fit their aspirations.

An underpinning theme for *career builders* was a lack of a clear strategy in driving their careers and more evidence of serendipity, where participants described how they “fell into” (participant 6) roles and the profession and made the most of opportunities presented to them. Ultimately, it was these roles and opportunities that had shaped their identities:

“I started looking for jobs in HR [human resources] and happened to be on xxx university website...stumbled across the occupational psychology degree, by chance read through the description of what it was...light bulb moment...oh my God, that’s what I want to do” (participant 7)

Career builders were aware of the job market and how to sell themselves, perhaps best expressed by participant 20:

“instead of going in thinking that I have never been an occupational psychologist and a lot of what I offered was very relevant so it’s getting them to see that that stuff can be helpful and useful to them” (participant 20)

These participants also described how utilising strategies learned on the MSc programme could be helpful in securing roles, such as knowledge of interview practice and how to present themselves at interviews.

Career builders appeared acutely aware of how others perceived their careers and the impact that this could have on their identity. This was perhaps explained through tensions over tenure and the benefits of broad versus specialist careers – both perspectives were apparent in the transcript. Participant 17 for example was concerned that after 10 years’ experience she had not developed a “specialism” with her identity formed around being a generalist OP. This was in contrast to participant 16 who had entered into a particularly specialist area of OP, relatively early in his career and was anxious about becoming “too niche”. In addition, there was a focus upon the future and next career steps, developing strategies to enable them to enact their identities. Participant 19 believed that her role was very specialist which was causing concern for her future employability; therefore rather than seek an alternative role she decided to pursue other opportunities alongside her job to broaden her experience:

“in reality I think now I have been ready to broaden out again and actually possibly one of [my] motivations for joining the DOP and getting involved with the DOP is to give me a bit more breadth” (participant 19)

Openness to experience also characterised this type, often describing how experimenting with their career, taking opportunities as they became available and generally gathering experiences was seen as a way to develop OP identity. Strategies utilised included work shadowing, volunteering and internships, which were all identified as alternative ways of securing longer term roles. Identity was clarified through these more ‘low stakes’ experiences where OccPsychs could try out different roles to identify which ‘best fit’, often combining roles to see what they enjoyed:

“so then I was working for them part time and doing little bits and bobs of freelance work” (participant 17)

There were also examples of negative career experiences, emphasising the importance to *career builders* of trying jobs out and reflecting upon their experiences. These experiences were believed to be “formative” (participant 1) in

that they helped OccPsychs to understand their desired identity. Additionally, participant 12 suggested that OccPsychs should broaden their experiences and consider working outside of the UK. In fact, some *career builders* believed that these experiences would enable employability due to a perception that OccPsychs were adaptable, as described by participant 17:

*“we are valued for our ability to turn our hand to a whole variety of things”
(participant 17)*

Finally, *career builders* seemed able to identify ways to enact OP or “*play*” (participant 4) with roles to apply their learning. The perception that OP was “*very applicable*” (participant 10) to the workplace, indicating a strong professional rather than role identity had developed. For example, participant 11 described how a major organisational restructure had led to an opportunity for him to apply for a different role, which although not the role he desired “*there might be some scope to change it and to make it more achievable*” (participant 11).

7.4. Discussion

The narratives indicated that OccPsychs developed their identity in various ways throughout their career. Support was provided for identity being multi-faceted and enacted through a diversity of experiences (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Nazar & Van der Heijden, 2012). Identity salience was also observed, dependent upon life stage for example, working mothers described compromise as an identity marker in their careers. This suggests that identities can alter depending upon life events relating to the situational relevance and social importance defined by Ashforth (2000). This indicates that at any given time individuals make an assessment of their current situation and the factors that are relevant and important to their identity.

At early career stages it would appear that education and learning were important drivers for many OccPsychs, their experiences during undergraduate and master's programmes served to affirm or alter their OP identity (*learners*). As OccPsychs progressed through their career, alternative identity drivers were apparent, some utilising networks to support their identity (*networkers*), whilst others reinforced their identity through the achievement of objective and subjective outcomes (*achievers*). Furthermore, identity could be forged through a more experiential approach (*career builders*) and finally for some the path to identity development was shaped by a collection of work and non-work related forces (*compromisers*). OccPsych's stories described past experiences which had shaped their present realities as well as

identifying how their future self may develop as a result of their reflections and amendments to their identities.

There was evidence in support of the concept “*career identity complexity*” described by Nazar and Van der Heijden (2012) (p.152) where multiple and diverse experiences lead to identity formulation. Individuals with more varied experiences have more complex identities which are shaped through numerous interactions (Ashforth, 2000; Nazar & Van der Heijden, 2012). This was observed in the narratives, those individuals who were more advanced in their careers had typically adopted numerous ‘types’ and as such developed more complex identities. For example participants looked back over their careers and described an early career shaped by *learning* and education, mid-career influenced by *compromise* and a later identity driven by a desire to *achieve* and fulfil potential. Participants depicted scenarios when their identity was reinforced or challenged by life events (i.e. *compromisers*) or individuals (i.e. *networkers*). The range of experiences seemed to reinforce participants’ belief in their employability, particularly described by *career builders*, *networkers* and *achievers*. Contrary views were provided by *compromisers* who described concerns over their employability due to constrained options and ability to gain further experiences. Support was provided for research by Amundson, Borgen, Iaquinta, Butterfield and Koert (2010) who suggested that the whole self and not just the career self was considered in career choices. This relates to Fugate et al., (2004) description of identity as a central driver for employability enhancement, where those individuals who perceived an identity abundant with resources had a more positive view of their future.

Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005) was reinforced suggesting that careers are storied, adapting to changing environments and therefore cannot be ‘measured’ in postmodern societies (Del Corso & Rehfuss, 2011). Individuals were not necessarily pursuing a fixed path but rather exploring opportunities and adapting to changing environments, the process of adaptation constructs the past and present identity as well as shaping the possible future self (Savickas, 2005). Further support for identity being formed through experience was provided by Amundson et al., (2010) who suggested that career decisions were based upon three factors: 1) relationships; 2) meaning; 3) economic realities. All three factors were present in the OP career narratives, yet interestingly the factor of achieving meaning centred around creating an identity, suggesting that individuals pursue career paths based upon forming or changing identity.

The findings add validity to the concept of Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and latterly Applied Social Identity Approach (ASIA) (Haslam, 2014) where *networkers* and *achievers* identified that being part of a group of occupational psychologists or even being an OP could enhance their identity. SIT posits that identities are both “*relational*” and “*comparative*” (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; p.16) in that individuals compare themselves to others with the identity they desire. This was obvious in the *achievers* who wanted to be confident like other OccPsychs (participant 13) and *networkers* who described the importance of good role models (participant 4). SIT could also explain the difficulties encountered by participants around awareness and appreciation of OccPsychs, in that it was challenging to create a critical mass or to know ‘who’ or ‘what’ to identify with which could undermine their identity formation. Furthermore, *learners* described how their experiences of MSc programmes and stories of the reality of working as an OP led to a desire to be part of the ‘group’ or not (participant 3). This reflects the conclusions made by Nazar and Van der Heijden (2012) who suggested that within SIT individuals, particularly within specialist professions identify with those who are also part of that group. Where positive affirmations were made self-esteem was boosted, yet if this was incongruent with the desired identity the opposite was observed.

There was evidence of the concept *entry shock* where newcomers to OP had expectations which did not match reality. Ashforth (2000) described that this could lead to participants learning about their new role identity, changing themselves to match the role or crafting the situation to meet their perceptions of identity. All three options were described in the narratives for example, a *learner* decided not to join the profession as it lacked congruence with her identity, *career builders* had crafted roles to match their identity or where identity had been challenged e.g. *compromisers* who had assumed alternative roles.

Narrative researchers argue that transitions or turning points (Cooper & Mackenzie-Davey, 2010; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Nazar & Van der Heijden, 2012; Riessman, 2008) are necessary in identity development; this was observed in those participants described as *compromisers*. These types expressed future career concern particularly when considering alternative options should their current roles cease to exist. It is possible that *compromisers* had experienced more challenges to their identity and been forced to consider who they were in both a work and home context. These experiences served to alter their career identity and led to the

complexity described by Nazar and Van der Heijden (2012), particularly when modifying ones' identity through a diversity of experiences. Related to the concept of *movement capital* (Forrier & Sels, 2003; Veld et al., 2015) it was possible that these individuals perceived themselves as less employable due to limited options, not through ability but by factors often out of their control. This is consistent with SIT which suggests that even factors perceived to be part of the identity through lack of choice (such as geography or external issues) are also maintained (Ashforth, 2000). Often despite the negative feelings associated with them and the potential threats to employability. This relates to career adaptability within a CCT framework and in the era of boundaryless careers could be a potential threat to OccPsychs employability. The suggestion that globalisation and increased use of technology should mean that individuals can do a job anywhere in the world (Woods & West, 2010) is not necessarily permeating into reality.

Nonetheless, there was support for boundaryless and protean careers, for example *achievers* evidenced 'values congruence' as an important identity marker, seeking opportunities to live their values. *Career builders* had identified ways of circumventing role descriptors to ensure that they identified with the profession, regardless of role. It is possible that *career builders* perceived an abundance of opportunity and therefore openness to experience enhanced their perceptions of employability (Nazar & Van der Heijden, 2012). Interestingly this is in contrast to research which suggests that career preparation is a crucial success factor in developing identity (Praskova et al., 2015).

Role transition was described by *career builders* particularly when discussing the challenges of being a specialist or generalist OP. This future career concern links to career adaptability (Savickas et al., 2009) where individuals ensured that they were prepared for future challenges. This was depicted by those participants who had a specialist career being anxious that this would lead to negative impressions of their employability. Rousseau (2011) explained that those individuals who had worked for the same employer for a longer period of time believed that they were less marketable than those who had moved around. This rhetoric relates to the suggestion that in constructing identities individuals will transition into roles which lead to progress, and particularly in maintaining a socially desirable perception (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). Noticeably, when participants discussed changing jobs they had typically created a positive reason which included wanting to use their degree (participant 18), improved work-life balance (participant 17) and autonomy

(participant 11). This was perhaps most obvious when participants discussed choices to become self-employed which would give them the chance to have an identity which was congruent with their values (participant 20).

Finally, whilst salient identities could be observed in all participants characterised by one of the five types, there was also evidence of what Ashforth (2000) termed *global identity*. Many participants, regardless of type or career stage talked about wanting to be part of the OP profession, whose global identity was about being an occupational psychologist and where roles assumed during the career would challenge or support this global identity.

7.4.1. Strengths and Limitations

The research responded to suggestions from Nazar and Van der Heijden (2012) that further research into identity and employability utilising a narrative approach across sectors and countries was necessary. Additionally, the doctorate studies up to this point (chapters 3-6) indicated that identity was a concern in OP employability. The approach taken to understanding identity and its relationship to employability enabled a clearer understanding of what it felt like to be an OccPsych. This included how OccPsychs navigated the world and made sense of the complexity of managing a career within changing organisational structures and personal circumstances. Utilising a narrative and semi-structured interview approach depth of understanding was achieved where the stories were driven by the participants and not measured against a specific set of criteria or pre-existing knowledge.

Whilst pure narratives cannot be generalised to populations and are not able to demonstrate cause and effect (Chase, 2005), the thematic approach taken to understand career stories led to a typology of career identity which will be useful in developing theories of career and potential interventions for OccPsychs. The indication is that identity is complex and emerges throughout the career, building in experiences which serve to confirm or challenge the future identity. The approach assisted in developing an understanding of how OccPsychs had constructed their identity and its impact upon employability and therefore did not specifically focus on the future self which would have strayed further into a career counselling session. However, participants commented that they found it useful to reflect upon their career and identify formative moments encouraging them to consider their future. Further research should challenge OccPsychs to cogitate how their past and

present will shape their future and should be an important consideration in applied interventions.

The participant pool was deliberately diverse; although this led to difficulties in appreciating the fuller context of individual stories. Future research could reanalyse the narratives by age or career stage to identify whether there were idiosyncrasies between those OccPsychs with more experiences compared to those in early career. This is particularly important going forward due to the suggesting that developing a strong identity can encourage flexibility which not only supports employability generally but also during turbulent times (Simosi, Rousseau, & Daskalaki, 2015). Furthermore, there were only two self-employed individuals in the sample and a greater majority of participants were based in the North East of England. Building upon this and conducting regular narratives with a selection of OccPsychs would enable broader understanding of the developing identities and the transition or turning points in their careers.

Finally, some participants struggled with the narrative approach, stating that they would prefer to respond to questions and others used the interview as an opportunity to explain where the issues may be with the profession. Others however offered very clear accounts of their past career up to present day. Riessman (2008) explained that the approach can be confusing and that participants don't always tell stories in a chronological way. In order to prepare for this, participants were encouraged to think about or chart their own career history and key decisions from the beginning of their career to the present day. Furthermore it was explained that any formative moments in driving their career would be useful to consider. It was clear in the interviews that some participants had done this and therefore found the process of talking through their stories more straightforward, although some had not. In future interviews of this type it may be helpful to allow participants some time at the beginning of the interview to reflect and thus enable them to give fuller accounts of their career stories.

7.4.2. Practical implications and conclusions

The research provides support for adopting a narrative approach to career counselling. Findings indicated that individuals were not only a collection of their knowledge, skills and abilities but were also constantly adapting to a changing world, adjusting their identity in the pursuit of employability. Offering OccPsychs regular opportunities to narrate their career stories could help them to clarify their

past decisions and future directions, enabling the development of a story which could support their identity development and potentially employability (Ashforth, 2000). Furthermore, OccPsychs should be encouraged to gain a breadth of experiences through career mobility as diversity of experience was valued for employability (Nazar & Van der Heijden, 2012). This concept can be communicated through the changes to the Stage 2 Qualification in OP ensuring that breadth of experience remains an important part of the process.

There are implications for those individuals working in career guidance or counselling and perhaps suggests that traditional approaches to career guidance are no longer appropriate. Dries (2011) suggested “*career counsellors need to be co-participants or co-constructors of their clients’ life stories and encourage them to tell their untold stories*” (p.379). This is supported by Amundson et al., (2010) who suggested that rather than a career guidance counsellor matching individuals to jobs they should act as a facilitator, encouraging individuals to choose their own path.

The typology developed from the career stories provides an important framework for career discussion with OccPsychs in training. Explaining that identity and employability develops over time and through utilising a range of approaches and support mechanisms. This could give OccPsychs the confidence to adapt to the work environment and accept that identity may be challenged. Whilst the narratives were not necessarily representative of every OP, sharing OP stories could support early career OccPsychs struggling to identify their fit in the OP world. Explaining that multiple identities are possible could serve to promote the diversity of the profession and encourage those in early career to persevere in the field.

Chapter 8: Discussion

8.1. Chapter Overview

The concluding chapter of the professional doctorate is a discussion of the five doctorate research studies. Each study was discussed in the respective chapters, therefore the focus of this chapter is to discuss findings with reference to the three broad research aims outlined in the literature review (chapter 2). Next is an outline of the limitations associated with the research programme (8.3.) and suggestions for future research and applied work (8.4.). The chapter concludes with a summary (8.5.). The chapter structure is presented diagrammatically in Figure 8.1.

8.2. Discussion with Reference to the Three Original Aims			8.3. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research
8.2.1. Contribution to the Professional Context	8.2.2. Contributions to Theoretical Understanding of Employability	8.2.3. Contributions to the Researchers own Professional Practice	8.3.1. Chapter Summary
8.2.1.1. Job Crafting	8.2.2.1. Mixed Methods Approach to Investigation	8.2.3.1. My Role in the Professional Body	
8.2.1.2. Self-Efficacy	8.2.2.2. Theoretical Underpinnings	8.2.3.2. Duality of Role and Reflexivity	
8.2.1.3. Profile Raising	8.2.2.3. Multidimensional Employability and UK Context	8.2.3.3. Changing Landscapes	
8.2.1.4. Destination Data		8.2.3.4. My Development as a Researcher	
		8.2.3.5. Sharing Learning	
		8.2.3.6. Unintended Consequences	

Figure 8.1. Chapter Eight Structure

8.2. Discussion with reference to the three original aims

This professional doctorate aimed to understand the employment, employability and identity challenges in individuals with a BPS accredited MSc in Occupational

Psychology (or equivalent). The rationale was developed from the thesis author's own professional practice and as driven by professional body reports and academic literature relating to the changing landscape of OP (chapter 2). Three broad aims (professional context, theoretical understanding and professional practice) provided a focus for the development of research studies and are discussed here with reference to the findings and implications.

8.2.1. Contributions to the professional context

The primary aim was to provide a rationale for interventions to enhance the employability of OccPsychs. This was developed through identifying the barriers and facilitators to employability (chapter 3), gathering intelligence of OP graduate destinations (chapter 5), understanding the relationship between employability and objective and subjective career outcomes (chapter 6), and identifying the role of identity in employability (chapter 7). As such a number of interventions are recommended.

8.2.1.1. Job or Career Crafting

Firstly, each study has pointed to the concept of *job crafting*. In chapter 3 this was referred to in the *adaptability* theme through the creation of work and job opportunities. In chapter 5 role diversity and participants perceptions of OP relatedness were thought provoking, indicating potential to shape roles into OP. Finally, in chapter 7 both *career builders* and *compromisers* made reference to 'crafting roles' which were synonymous with their own identity. Job crafting is a strategy which enables employees to reinvent their roles, leading to a feeling of satisfaction and engagement (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Demerouti, 2015; Demerouti & Bakker, 2014). Learning to craft could encourage more OP graduates to apply their OP knowledge. This could enhance satisfaction and counterbalance the challenges present such as no main employer and competition for roles from allied professionals. Thus enabling OccPsychs to identify with the profession rather than their roles/job titles. This is supported by the relationships present between both the competence measure of employability (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006) and the OP Facilitators to Employability scale leading to improved subjective success (chapter 6). These both include elements of flexibility and adaptability - important employability drivers (Fugate et al., 2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). To encourage crafting, OccPsychs across the career spectrum would need to be equipped with the knowledge and skill to craft, which could

additionally enable profile-raising through adding value to workplaces (8.2.1.3.). Potentially, crafting could expand the possibilities of the roles which are viewed as 'OP related'. Research suggests that whilst roles which enable greater autonomy also afford opportunities to craft, it is also possible to craft in more inflexible environments (Berg et al., 2008). Job crafting may also be a relevant skill to those pursuing the new stage 2 qualification, through supervisors encouraging their trainees to see the OP value in the work that they do. This could encourage more OP graduates to embark on the qualification who aren't in 'traditional' OP roles, particularly if it is perceived as achievable. Crafting therefore has potential individual and professional benefits.

8.2.1.2. Self-efficacy

Secondly, self-efficacy was a predictor of employability competence in both objective and subjective career success models (chapter 6). *Achievers* (chapter 7) discussed how confidence developed through their pursuit of qualifications and as they gained more experiences. Therefore, fostering environments where students and OP graduates develop confidence will likely encourage employability competence and ultimately career satisfaction. This is a consideration for MSc programme providers who may consider sourcing opportunities for work-related learning where students apply their knowledge and skills whilst studying (in addition to the MSc thesis). In fact, the Dearing Report (1997) suggested that every university student should be offered the chance to do a placement. Whilst practice is variable in universities, research suggests that employers now also recruit to placements and can therefore subsequently offer paid work opportunities which is why those students who undertake placements are more likely to secure paid employment (High Fliers, 2015). Literature typically refers to undergraduates (perhaps due to the DLHE metric providing impetus for this research), but it could also be the case for postgraduate students. Whilst in practice this may be challenging, it is probable that most PG students have work experience or are working alongside their studies, they could be encouraged to share their experiences and make links to the theoretical components of their degree to boost their confidence. Particularly when related to job crafting, it is possible to suggest that gaining entry into an organisation which boosts confidence and then crafting a role could lead to improved employability and career satisfaction. Additionally, the professional body could look to improve their internship opportunity list and to encourage more post graduate students to apply utilising a range of media. This

may also necessitate dialogue about the value of OP with a range of employers (8.2.1.3). Finally, due to increased pressure on universities, and the fact that most MSc OP programmes are one year in duration, it may not be possible to offer formal placement opportunities. The increased focus in the new curriculum on applied skills may see improvements in confidence and longer term career satisfaction for OccPsychs.

8.2.1.3. Profile Raising

Thirdly, there were clear concerns over the future of OP, particularly in relation to an external appreciation of what they do (chapter 3 and chapter 7). This suggests that effort should be placed on raising the profile of OP and ultimately the demand for their services. Encouraging students and graduates to be confident in expressing what an OP is, and to be prepared with an 'elevator pitch' may support this, particularly due to the suggestion that most individuals don't know what OP is (chapter 3). Presenting a realistic view of the challenges that OccPsychs face upon graduating is essential, particularly due to findings from the focus group (chapter 3) that the reality of work does not always match the theoretical perspective. The *statement of intent* (appendix A) presents, in simple terms what OccPsychs do and will be utilised to develop a shared language in which to express the benefits of OP. As such, it may also be valuable to develop OP graduates 'sales technique' so that they feel capable of selling both themselves and the profession. The researcher aims to work with the DOPTC, DOP and the Qualification in Occupational Psychology (QOP) Board to be a collective voice in promoting the profession outlining the potential benefits to employers of individuals with OP qualifications. Introducing current students to graduates, at various stages is also good practice (see chapter 7), yet opportunities seems sporadic. The researcher presented at an event in Sheffield in May 2015, with the North East of England Branch (NEEB) of the DOP. The aim was "*to provide the delegates with advice and support to help them decide which area(s) of Occupational Psychology interested them and how to sell their skill set to gain a job in this field.*" (Murray, de Kort, & Carter, 2015). At the same time an event was held in Brighton by the Wessex Branch of the DOP. These events appeared to engage the audiences to think broadly about their careers and options open to them. More events are planned for 2016 (one hosted by the thesis author). Perhaps more local events such as the North East Networking Group (hosted by the doctoral researcher 8.2.3.), or the Psychology in the Pub events run by DOP may encourage communities of practice and learning rather than larger but

less frequent events. Regular events could bridge the gap between the reality and the expectation of working as an OccPsych. A recent paper published by the DOP suggested that OccPsychs need to “develop a clear identity and voice” (p.10) so that awareness is raised of the uniqueness of OP and the contributions that they can make (Hardy, 2015). Additionally, opportunities to promote the concept that hard work is rewarded (Ng et al., 2005) linking to the concept of *occupational expertise* as a competence to develop to enhance employability. In summary and in support of Veld et al., (2015) employability is a joint responsibility of practitioners, education providers, students, graduates and others.

8.2.1.4. Destination Data

Finally, there continues to be a need to gather destination data first identified in OP-First (2006) and corroborated by the Expert Panel (2012). Chapter 5 outlined how data such as this could be utilised to raise awareness and understanding of the profession. Continuing to gather this data may help to develop a broad picture of how (or indeed if) OP is changing. The BPS is currently conducting a longitudinal survey (Morrison-Coulthard, 2015) on psychology graduates where employability and employment are areas for concern. This study tracks graduates over seven years from 2011 onwards from a selection of UK universities. Recently, results suggested that it can take at least three years for psychology graduates to establish a career in psychology. The doctorate researcher is currently investigating ways of collecting data from MSc OP graduates to provide better quality information to OP students and graduates on the reality of negotiating an OP career, and the DOP intends to run another member engagement survey in 2016. In addition to collecting data, ensuring that OccPsychs know how to reflect, not just upon their practice but also on their careers, successes, development areas and direction will be a necessary pre-cursor to gathering good quality data. This was also identified by participants in chapter 7 who found the process of reflecting useful in determining their motivations and future direction.

In summary, the findings in relation to the professional context support prior research in the field (e.g. OP-First, 2006); yet also offer practical suggestions for making improvements to the experiences of OP graduates. The next logical step is to begin to develop the interventions described to engage OccPsychs at various career stages.

8.2.2. Contributions to theoretical understanding of employability

Following a substantial literature review, the research programme responded to suggestions to utilise career employability models in UK populations, due to a wealth of research being conducted in the Netherlands. Additionally, employability research has been criticised for failing to account for contextual issues, particularly when understanding how careers are formed and how individuals perceive success (McQuaid, 2006; Arnold, 2011). Thus developing an appreciation of how these issues relate to employability and career success was an essential focus here. Employability research has emphasised measurement, developing tools and models to show causal relationships. Whilst this is important, the lack of qualitative research meant that a thorough appreciation of the individual experiences had not been considered.

8.2.2.1. Mixed Methods Approach to Investigation

The use of mixed methods AKA “*the third paradigm*” (Denscombe, 2008, p.270) enabled a breadth and depth of understanding of the employability challenges faced by OccPsychs and assumed a critical realist ontological perspective. In addition, the triangulation approach adopted of referring back to academic literature, practitioner experience, and professional body reports to validate findings is part of this paradigm. Research into employability has typically assumed a positivist approach where antecedents of employability are measured and discussed with reference to relative predictions of one factor over another. Whilst this research goes some way to examining the concept, it fails to consider the meaning making or social interactions relevant in careers. As such, a small body of research has looked at factors such as identity and employability, with an interest in how individuals narrate their careers (Nazar & Van der Heijden, 2012). This professional doctorate sought to utilise the most appropriate methods to answer the research questions (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The findings when taken together add real depth of insight into the employability of OccPsychs and suggest an approach which could be applied to other professions. As such, assumptions made from the quantitative studies (chapters 4, 5 and 6) were contextualised by the depth of information provided from the qualitative studies (chapters 3 and 7). The use of mixed methods provides an alternative perspective to employability and career research and suggests that utilising the best approach, rather than a positivist or ideological standpoint will likely lead to the most practically useful results, particularly in a complex arena such as

careers (Ackroyd, 2004). In addition this supports suggestions by Vanhercke et al., (2014) that employability perspectives are dependent upon the aim of the research. Where the aim is to identify strengths/weaknesses a dispositional approach can be useful, competence can support personal development planning and self-perceived employability can be useful to appreciate an individual's position in the labour market. Additionally, each approach may require mixed methods to support interventions and encouraging more qualitative research to add depth to the construct is warranted, over and above the use of narrative approaches.

8.2.2.2. Theoretical Underpinnings

From a theoretical standpoint (and in line with critical realism) support for an *"interactionist perspective to employability"* (Veld et al., 2015, p.868), where both Conservation of Resources (Hobfoll, 2001) (including human capital) and Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005) was evident. Firstly, chapters 3 and 4 outlined the barriers and facilitators present in OP's careers, indicating that those individuals who could harness personal resources can better cope with challenges and thus report greater success. Interestingly, chapter 3 although focused upon barriers and facilitators, led to the development of a facilitators to employability tool. This was due to the potential barriers typically being phrased as factors (or resources) that could also facilitate employability. Chapter 6 outlined the relationships between resources such as competence, OP facilitators and the four components of psychological capital. Self-efficacy was observed as a significant personal resource in the relationship between competence and objective and subjective career success. Additionally, optimism was a significant predictor of subjective success, as was OP Facilitators. This contributes to the theoretical understanding of the resources that individuals utilise to harness their career success. Chapter 7 corroborated the findings from chapter 6 outlining how developing confidence (i.e. self-efficacy) was necessary to achieve employability. Findings indicate that further research should focus upon these developable antecedents and their impact upon employability and career success, particularly as not all factors were positively related e.g. resilience.

Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005) is the *"process through which individuals construct themselves, impose direction on their vocational behaviour and make meaning of their careers"* (Savickas, 2013, p.147). The premise that career identity is constructed throughout career and can contribute to perceptions of one's

employability was adopted. CCT links to the perspective that traditional and hierarchical careers are no longer the norm (i.e. boundaryless career notion) suggesting that flexibility and adaptability are key. This was supported in chapter 3 through the concept of *adaptability* and chapter 6 in the respective roles of OP Facilitators (which included adaptability) and employability competence (consisting of *personal flexibility* and *anticipation and optimisation*). Clear reference to CCT was present in the narratives (chapter 7) where OccPsychs described their career history, drawing upon formative moments which shaped their identity. These experiences shaped the individuals view of their own identity within context, something which would be difficult to understand utilising a positivist approach.

8.2.2.3. Multidimensional employability and UK context

The notion that employability is multidimensional (Fugate et al., 2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006) and that identity is complex and multifaceted (Nazar & Van der Heijden, 2012) was supported by this doctorate. It is unlikely that single measures or approaches taken at one point in time will account for all of the possible factors which could impact upon employability. This makes it a challenging area to research, and as such it is important for academics and practitioners alike to support the development of a deeper understanding of the construct, and not assume that the proposing theoretical models is sufficient. This is particularly important in the HE sector, where interventions are put in place to enable employment (marketed as employability) based upon theoretical models and without a depth of understanding of the complex nature of the concept. In addition, to the author's knowledge this is one of the first pieces of research to apply the concepts to UK career populations. The findings suggest applicability across culture, although did identify different relationships between employability competence and objective and subjective career success. Future research should focus upon the suitability of these tools and methods across a range of UK samples, but the researcher also cautions that an awareness of context is necessary, and has been shown to relate to the employability/career success relationship. Furthermore, in support of recent research (Arnold, 2011; Dries, 2011; Van den Born & Van Witteloostuijn, 2013) alternative approaches to measuring career success are necessary in the current era of the boundaryless career. Additionally, the qualitative approach adopted in this doctorate may provide a useful structure to understand the depth of perspectives around career success, prior to adopting potentially outdated measures.

In summary, the aims around contributions to theory have been met, yet further research is also identified which will strengthen theoretical knowledge of these complicated concepts.

8.2.3. Contributions to the researchers own professional practice

This section is presented in the first person in line with the reflexive nature of the research aim. The introduction outlined my motivations for completing a doctorate on this subject, so the reflections presented here are as a result of my professional doctorate journey.

8.2.3.1. My role in the professional body

An important driver for the professional doctorate was to reflect upon my own development as a researcher practitioner. These aims included becoming more involved in the wider professional issues through membership of committees within the BPS and DOP. Since embarking upon the doctorate in 2010 and following a period of maternity leave (January 2011 – September 2012), I have become an active voice within various committees. Whilst on maternity leave I applied to become a member of the Division of Occupational Psychology Training Committee (DOPTC), and subsequently (May 2013) became co-Chair of this committee. This was due to sitting as a 'visitor in attendance' at a meeting of the Expert Panel set up to review the MSc curriculum in OP in 2012. This has presented opportunities to run accreditation visits with HEIs offering BPS accredited MSc programmes, giving an insight into the variety of ways in which OccPsychs are trained and prepared for work. My key achievements in the DOPTC have included:

- Identifying a need to bring more practitioners into the DOPTC (as it had become a committee solely represented by academics). After some consultation, we now have one practitioner member and more vacancies to fill.
- Supporting MSc programme directors through the implementation of the new MSc OP curriculum, at a liaison event in June 2014 and through informal conversations with programme directors relating to the challenges they faced.
- Writing a statement of intent to appear in the accreditation handbook and be utilised for marketing materials and common language going forward. This was informed in part by the doctorate research (appendix A).

- Piloting an employer and programme director liaison event (November 2015) to bring academics and practitioners together. This event will be repeated to involve more employers and students in 2016
- Improved links with the Qualifications in OP Board and DOP.

Future plans include:

- Working with the DOPTC to gather intelligence data on the career journeys of OP graduates to chart their progress over time and further appreciate their career paths (discussed in 8.2.1.). This was agreed at the November 2015 meeting.
- I have been asked to deliver a session for DOP Scotland to work with trainee OccPsychs on how to job craft, this was as a result of a conversation with the Chair of DOP Scotland who was interested in the findings of my doctorate.

As co-Chair of DOPTC I also sit on the Professional and Educational Qualifications (PEQ) group which is currently reviewing the Stage Two Qualification in OP. I have enjoyed working at this level and it has given me the opportunity to informally share my own learning as part of the doctorate process and I am excited to see the fruits of our labour in the new qualification due to launch in 2017. I believe that my presence at these committees resulted in me being asked to review MSc OP programmes at two separate universities as part of various validation events and subsequently to be invited as external examiner for a UK based MSc Occupational and MSc Business Psychology programme (starting in January 2016).

8.2.3.2. Duality of Role and Reflexivity

I have experienced tensions as both an academic teaching MSc OP students and wanting to support their employability and as a registered practitioner wanting to encourage graduates to enter the profession and pursue chartered status. The focus of this doctorate was in supporting the full spectrum of OP graduates, not solely those who wanted to join the profession, however I am acutely aware that for sustainability of OP graduates must pursue professional membership to work in the field. This did present challenges in the research programme, as (particularly for the qualitative element) I was not an impartial researcher but also an OP myself. It is therefore possible that I missed opportunities to explore in depth comments made by participants due to my own perceptions or believing that I understood the point

made. Whilst, approaches such as using independent researchers and member checking were utilised, to ensure that the transcription process was not biased towards my own opinion (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002), it was not possible to have each interview independently verified. Nevertheless, this is a challenge present in all qualitative research, and part of my own learning has been to develop confidence in managing the lack of a 'perfect' approach, recognising that my role as a researcher is to promote my findings, having utilised reflexivity and rigour whilst also outlining the potential limitations of the approaches taken.

8.2.3.3. Changing Landscapes

A key challenge has been to stay on track with the changes within the BPS and whilst be aware of them, not let them drive my research. At times this has been difficult, for example many of my original aims for the doctorate were already being developed by the BPS/DOP (such as the MSc curriculum review), therefore becoming an active member was necessary to ensure that I did not repeat the work of the professional body. I believe that the focus upon employability of those with an MSc OP qualification is unique. The BPS/DOP identified employability as a concern, and have prioritised changes to the curriculum for stage one and two, and not upon the broader issues of employability in OP graduates regardless of membership status. This is however anecdotal and based upon informal conversations between myself and my own personal contacts who are not aware of the changes in the profession that have been and are being made.

8.2.3.4. My Development as a Researcher

A further aim was to enhance my own understanding of a range of qualitative and quantitative methods. This has been where the greatest learning has occurred. I lacked a great deal of confidence in research methods, having worked as a practitioner for a number of years and relying upon my knowledge of small selection of methods. The doctorate has encouraged me to broaden my scope and use the methods which best answer the research question i.e. mixed methods. Taking an experiential learning approach I have developed a working knowledge of techniques such as exploratory factor analysis using principal components analysis and confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling. I learned to use NVivo to manage qualitative data, and whilst I had experience of running focus groups and interviews (as a practitioner), I had not used narrative techniques or full thematic analyses. I am proud of my development in these areas and feel confident

that I can not only apply them to my own work going forward but that I will be a better supervisor of undergraduate and postgraduate students too. In fact, I am supervising both undergraduate and postgraduate students to conduct research into employability, with the aim of disseminating more UK based research in academic fields.

8.2.3.5. *Sharing Learning*

I have shared my learning of OP employability throughout the doctorate process in my teaching on the MSc Occupational and Organisational Psychology at Northumbria University. This has been in the form of running employability workshops and events with students and encouraging them to think broadly about their career e.g. identify ways to craft roles, enterprise activities etc. I also teach a module called 'Learning and Development in Organisations', which I have developed to include employability as a topic area. The aim is to encourage students to consider how these theories apply to their own careers but to also engender an appreciation of the ways in which employers can promote employability in their workforce, and how coaching and learning contributes to employability. I lead a North East Networking Group which has financial support from the BPS Networking and Member Engagement Group which attract both respected practitioners and researchers to speak on topical issues. This enables regional OccPsychs (and aligned professions) to share their experiences with an interested support group. Additionally, I was invited to speak about professional doctorates at an event for MSc students at Sheffield University in June 2015, where I also shared some of the findings of my work and took the opportunity to network with students and graduates who attended the event. Finally, I have presented at the DOP Conference in 2014 and 2015 sharing regular progress and findings with conference delegates (from students to experienced practitioners). I have plans to more formally share findings with PEQ and the wider DOP community through media such as OP Matters.

8.2.3.6. *Unintended Consequences*

Perhaps an unintended consequence of my doctorate research was becoming the employability lead for the psychology department. This has meant developing a more varied understanding of employability issues which affect HEI and career. I have applied my theoretical understanding of a range of employability tools and techniques to the department, and implemented initiatives to support our students'

employability. These include developing better links with the career service to develop targeted interventions for students such as career networking events with a range of professionals. I have also supported improvements to the guidance tutorials to encourage tutors to engage students in their employability enhancement throughout their degree. Further, I have set up research projects with a local graduate recruitment agency specifically investigating the employability perceptions of psychology students. This led to an internally funded research project with colleagues looking at career self-efficacy in students. There is a long way to go with this role, but being able to apply my doctorate research to a broader audience has been enjoyable. There are of course challenges that I have encountered, for example the rather narrow perspective taken in HEI (see chapter 2) with a focus upon employment as a metric via the DLHE survey. As a practitioner occupational psychologist and employability researcher, I am aware that this is a rather arbitrary measure of employability. Nonetheless, it is the metric used by the sector and as such important to engage with it as one potential indicator of employability. However, gathering data (qualitative and quantitative) to support the metric has helped to build a broader picture of the challenges faced.

In conclusion, I believe that I have achieved the original aims of the doctorate. I am a more engaged member of the professional body and more acutely aware of research methods and how to design studies using mixed methods. I have started to share findings and have plans for further dissemination, as well as attempting to publish findings of the doctorate in peer reviewed journals; something which I did not have the confidence to do prior to embarking on the professional doctorate.

8.3. Limitations and suggestions for the future

A number of limitations were present in the research which could have impacted upon the findings. There were clearly limitations in the cross sectional design approach adopted in this research programme, sample size and the use of self-report measures, leading to the potential for common method bias. The study chapters outline these limitations as well as the approaches taken to overcome the potential impact (4.5.4., 5.4.4. and 6.4.4.). Additionally, limitations have been presented in 8.2.1., 8.2.2. and 8.2.3. with reference to the three broad aims of the doctorate.

Further limitations identified include utilising the same participants in chapters 5, 6 and 7. This challenges the validity of the results, particularly as those participants

who conducted narrative interviews had been exposed to questions around what might comprise employability which may have primed their responses. However, this approach was taken to ensure that a range of participants were utilised in the narrative interviews (thus relying on more than the researchers own personal contacts). There was also a gap of at least 3 months between the two studies therefore it was unlikely that by this point participants would recall the questions asked in the survey. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the perceptions provided in the studies were drawn from the same populations. Whilst this means that the qualitative data added depth to the quantitative data is it also possible that had a different set of participants been utilised, alternative results may have been reported. Again this adds weight to the suggestion that gathering longitudinal data from OP graduates is warranted, and over time a clear picture will emerge of the employability issues associated with this group. This doctorate serves as an important indicator of some current employability challenges.

Not all of the factors which could account for employability and career success were measured in the research studies. This was partially accounted for by the use of mixed methods and looking in depth at identity and social capital in the narrative study (chapter 7). However, it is possible that other measures such as personality in particular proactive personality (Seibert et al., 1999; Seibert et al., 2001a) and professional commitment (e.g. Allen, 2011) may have a role to play in employability. Unfortunately, it was not possible to measure all factors associated with employability and instead a decision to utilise those most relevant derived from a practitioner perspective to OccPsychs – based upon the findings of the focus group (chapter 3) and professional body reports (chapter 2). This was in line with the evidence-based practice model identified in chapter 2. Again, results of this doctorate could lead to the inclusion of metrics in future research with OccPsychs (such as that suggested in 8.2.1.). But additionally, the mixed methods (including triangulation) approach (Denscombe, 2008) ensured opportunities were available for any issues not ‘measured’ yet important to OP careers to be raised in the studies.

A further complication of the doctorate research was the pace with which changes were made to the professional context (8.2.3.), therefore meaning that constant adaptations were made to the research programme to ensure that these changes were accounted for. For example, the original proposal was to involve employers of OccPsychs, but a Horizon Scan was conducted by the DOP in 2013. Therefore

in order to not repeat this study, the focus of the doctorate was adapted to be specific to OP graduates and to utilise professional body reports in the design. Going forward research should focus upon identifying where OccPsychs work and whether their employers are aware that they have OP qualifications, this could prove fruitful in engaging with a broader range of OP employers, over and above those who know that they employ OccPsychs.

The competence approach to employability (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006) was utilised primarily with pseudo measures of dispositional employability (in the form of PsyCap, a personal resource) and an additional contextual measure (OP Facilitators) were utilised. These approaches were perceived as most relevant to the OP audience (chapter 2) and could lead to the development of relevant interventions to boost employability. However there are validated measures of dispositional employability (e.g. Fugate & Kinicki, 2008) and self-perceived employability (e.g. Rothwell, Herbert, & Rothwell, 2008), which were not adopted in the studies. Perceptions of employability are accounted for in the competence measure (De Vos et al., 2011), and whilst it can be interesting to know how employable an individual feels the purpose of this doctorate was to provide a basis for developing interventions going forward. Nonetheless there does exist a gap in the literature to understand the relationships between the different 'types' of employability (Vanhercke et al., 2014). The researcher is currently engaged in supervising an undergraduate project to gather this data and assess the relationship.

Finally, the sample utilised in the studies were skewed towards younger participants i.e. 93%, n=151/163 were 50 or younger). This is potentially due to a belief that this research was not relevant to those more experienced or older participants. In fact some participants in this category withdrew their data as they felt that they should not participate in case it skewed the results. This was despite the research being open to all individuals with an MSc in OP. In future, engaging with these individuals and making it clear that the research relates to them will be important. It is also possible that the reason that there were more 'employed' than 'self-employed' OccPsychs was due to this issue, perhaps those with more experience were also self-employed and therefore did not see the relevance of OP employability research. Additionally, there is a suggestion that employability declines with age (particularly over 50 years) (Van der Heijden et al., 2015). It would be interesting to test this assumption by recruiting an older OP audience and compare their experiences to

their younger counterparts, potentially identifying whether there is a tipping point or plateau of employability.

8.3.1. Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the key findings and recommendations in respect of the aims of the professional doctorate. The research programme provides a basis on which to develop interventions to improve the employability of OccPsychs utilising their own interpretations of the concepts. Activities already underway and planned have been outlined, emphasising the shared responsibility of OccPsychs and stakeholders, utilising the evidence gathered as a foundation. This doctorate has paved the way for more UK based research utilising the three core employability concepts across a range of careers, where research findings can support employability interventions. This chapter concludes the doctoral research programme.

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Appendix A: Statement of Intent

Appears in The British Psychological Society Standards for the accreditation of Masters & Doctoral programmes in occupational psychology October 2015 (accessed 17th November 2015) http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/Public%20files/PaCT/occupational_accreditation_2015_web.pdf

What is Occupational Psychology?

Occupational Psychology (OP) is concerned with the behaviour, performance, health and well-being of individuals in work and organisational situations. Essentially it is about *applying the science of psychology to people at work*, therefore employing an evidence base to their workplace interventions. Occupational Psychologists are interested in how individuals, groups and organisations behave and function. The broad aim of OP is to increase the effectiveness of the organisation and improve the job satisfaction of individuals. The work of an Occupational Psychologist can be diverse with potential roles including self-employed consultancy, in-house technical experts, Human Resources, Organisational Development and academia.

OP delivers tangible benefits by enhancing the effectiveness of organisations and developing the performance, motivation and well-being of people in the workplace. Occupational Psychologists are skilled in the development and utilisation of a range of tools and techniques which they apply to many workplace settings including psychometric assessment, recruitment and selection, learning and development, occupational well-being, organisational change, coaching, job design and human factors. They can provide solutions to a host of workplace problems such as how to recruit the best quality employees, how to engage the workforce and improve their well-being, how to tackle workplace stress, developing employees etc. OPs will draw upon a diverse evidence-base to design various interventions and are governed by a strict ethical code. They are also interested in evaluating the benefits of their work to ensure that the products and services that they offer really do make a difference to the individuals and organisations that they work with.

Where do Occupational Psychologists work?

Occupational Psychologists work with organisations and businesses of all sizes across the private and public sectors. You will find OPs working in Government and public services, in leadership development centres and consultancies. They work alongside other professionals such as managers, HR, union representatives, training advisors and specialist staff within client organisations.

A fully qualified Occupational Psychologist will be registered with the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC), and will have been assessed to ensure that they meet the minimum standards for safe and effective practice. Registered Occupational Psychologists and individuals with an initial OP qualification (i.e. an MSc) might also use titles such as Business Psychologist, Work Psychologist, and Organisational Psychologist as well as technical specialist titles such as Organisational

Development Business Partner or Human Resources Consultant. They can also be found in other functions such as marketing. This enables greater application of the principles of OP in the workplace; it is however worth confirming whether the individual is a Registered Occupational Psychologist to ensure their competence and experience in the discipline.

Occupational Psychologists are most commonly found in the following workplace settings:

- **The Private Sector:** Occupational Psychologists offer a range of consultancy services whether as in-house (such as those employed in banks) or external consultants (for large consultancies or working as independent practitioners). Both in-house and external consultants can specialise in a variety of core areas of OP (such as selection and assessment), or offer a range of occupational psychology services across the breadth of the knowledge areas in OP. Internal consultants can often be employed within functional roles in organisations such as Learning and Development, Organisational Development or Human Resources. OPs are also recruited for their technical and statistical knowledge in the development of specialist assessment tools including ability, situational judgement and personality measures. Typical employers for these skill areas are psychometric test publishers. OPs working within these settings are also often employed as external consultants offering bespoke assessment and development services or may find that their career can progress in this way.
- **The Public Sector:** roles within this sector can be broad ranging from offering specialist rehabilitation support to individuals in the workplace to working within HR and Organisational Development Departments providing services across the range of OP knowledge areas. OPs are often also involved in training individuals within their own organisations on specific areas of specialism such as how to interview candidates. Examples of public sectors organisations which employ occupational psychologists include the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), The National Health Service (NHS), Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the Home Office.
- **Academia or research roles:** OPs are also employed within academic institutions as lecturers in psychology or business schools, often running accredited MSc Occupational Psychology programmes. They will typically be involved in research or consultancy as part of their role. Furthermore, OPs are attractive to other organisations which specialise in research around workplace issues and providing policy advice, these organisations may be aligned to universities.

What does ‘Registered Occupational Psychologist’ and ‘Chartered Psychologist’ mean?

The term Occupational Psychologist is a protected title and is regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). By employing a Registered or

Practitioner Occupational Psychologist you can be sure that the individual has met the “*standards for training, professional skills, behaviour and health*” to appear on the HCPC’s Register with the aim to regulate the profession and protect the public. In order to use this title, individuals must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). This will involve completing The British Psychological Society’s Stage 2 Qualification in Occupational Psychology (leading to Chartered Status) or equivalent qualification that has been approved by the HCPC (such as an approved Professional Doctorate). Contact the HCPC for more information on the entry requirements for their register.

Chartered Status (C.Psychol) is the benchmark of professional recognition. It reflects the highest standard of psychological knowledge and expertise. C.Psychol is a mark of experience, competence and reputation for anyone looking to learn from, consult or employ a psychologist. The title is legally recognised and can only be conferred by the British Psychological Society under the [Royal Charter](#), which was granted in 1965 and gives national responsibility for the development, promotion and application of psychology for the public good.

Qualifying for chartered membership status is a significant achievement, requiring high levels of academic attainment, periods of supervised practice and applied experience, a commitment to lifelong learning, and an engagement with the broader issues facing the profession.

To become a Chartered Member of the Society through the occupational psychology training route, an individual will have achieved the following:

- Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership (GBC) by completing a Society accredited degree or conversion course

AND

- Society accredited Masters in Occupational Psychology
- Stage 2 of the Society’s Qualification in Occupational Psychology (two years of supervised practice)

OR

- Doctorate in Occupational Psychology

Appendix B: Briefing and Debriefing for Focus Group Study (Chapter 3)

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

INFORMATION TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

1. What is the purpose of the project?

The purpose of the project is to identify how academic provision can support the employability and professionalism of occupational psychologists. The Psychology Department at Northumbria University has a history of recruiting occupational psychologists since the inception of the MSc Occupational Psychology degree in 2000. Since then there have been developments in the research, teaching and consultancy work carried out by occupational psychologists within the department, however no information exists as to whether these developments promote the occupational psychology profession and whether they improve the employability and professionalism of students and staff. The researcher is keen to explore the views and backgrounds of the occupational psychologists within the psychology department with the aim of identifying good practice which has been experienced both at Northumbria and beyond and ideas for how to take the occupational psychology provision forward.

2. Why have I been selected to take part?

You have been selected to take part as you have completed an MSc in Occupational Psychology and are currently employed within the Psychology Department at Northumbria University, or you are a PhD student.

3. What will I have to do?

You will be asked to take part in a focus group run on campus with other members of the psychology department who have an MSc in Occupational Psychology. As part of this focus group you will be asked to discuss a series of questions relating to your experiences of the occupational psychology and your own ideas for progressing the provision at Northumbria University. The focus group should take between 1 ½ and 2 hours. Furthermore, at the end of the focus group you will be asked if you would like to take part in an interview which will explore some of the findings of the focus group further with you. It is expected that the interview may be between 1 and 1 ½ hours and will be arranged once data has been analysed from the focus group. Both the interview and focus group will be recorded.

4. What are the exclusion criteria (i.e. are there any reasons why I should not take part)?

There are no exclusion criteria, as long as you have completed an MSc in Occupational Psychology and are working within the psychology department or are a PhD student.

5. Will my participation involve any physical discomfort?

It is not expected that participation will involve any physical discomfort. You are asked to take part in discussion as part of a focus group and a one to one interview with the researcher.

6. Will my participation involve any psychological discomfort or embarrassment?

It is not expected that participation will involve any psychological discomfort. The questions ask you to reflect upon your experiences of being an occupational psychologist and your ideas for the future. All procedures involved in this study have been fully risk-assessed.

7. Will I have to provide any bodily samples (i.e. blood, saliva)?

No

8. How will confidentiality be assured?

The research team has put into place a number of procedures to protect the confidentiality of participants. These include:

- You will be allocated a participant code that will always be used to identify any data that you provide.
- Your name or other personal details will not be associated with your data, for example the consent form that you sign will be kept separate from your data.

Only the research team will have access to any identifiable information; paper records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and electronic information will be

stored on a password-protected computer. This will be kept separate from any data and will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

9. Who will have access to the information that I provide?

Any information and data gathered during this research study will only be available to the research team identified in the information sheet. Should the research be presented or published in any form, then that information will be generalized (i.e. your personal information or data will not be identifiable).

10. How will my information be stored / used in the future?

All information and data gathered during this research will be stored in line with the Data Protection Act and will be destroyed 7 years following the conclusion of the study. During that time the data may be used by members of the research team only for purposes appropriate to the research question, but at no point will your personal information or data be revealed. Insurance companies and employers will not be given any individual's information, samples, or test results, and nor will we allow access to the police, security services, social services, relatives or lawyers, unless forced to do so by the courts.

11. Has this investigation received appropriate ethical clearance?

Yes, the study and its protocol has received full ethical approval from the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences ethics committee.

12. Will I receive any financial rewards / travel expenses for taking part?

There are no financial rewards or travel expenses.

13. How can I withdraw from the project?

The research you will take part in will be most valuable if few people withdraw from it, so please discuss any concerns you might have with the investigators. During the study itself, if you do decide that you do not wish to take any further part then please inform one of the research team as soon as possible, and they will facilitate your withdrawal and discuss with you how you would like your data to be treated in the future. After you have completed the research you can still withdraw your data by contacting one of the research team (their contact details are provided in the following section), give them your participant number or if you have lost this give them your name.

14. If I require further information who should I contact and how?

If you require any further information please contact the researcher Vicki Elsey on 0191 2437480 or vicki.elsey@northumbria.ac.uk

If you have any concerns or worries concerning the way in which this research has been conducted, or if you have requested, but did not receive feedback from the researcher concerning the general outcomes of the study within a few months after the study has concluded, then please contact Nick Neave via email at nick.neave@northumbria.ac.uk

PARTICIPANT DEBRIEF SHEET

1. What was the purpose of the project?

As you may be aware there have been many developments in the Occupational Psychology services offered as part of the psychology department at Northumbria. For example a professional doctorate introduced in 2010, a consultancy named Vital Work launched in 2011 and an increase in the amount of Occupational Psychologists employed within the department. These changes have all been put in place with the aim of improving the occupational psychology provision as well as developing the skills of occupational psychology students and staff. However, research has not been conducted on how these changes have improved the employability and professionalism of occupational psychologists. The purpose of the project was to understand more about the experiences of the staff and PhD students currently working and studying at the university, to identify areas of good practice as well as ideas for further development both in the field and within the university.

2. How will I find out about the results?

The focus group data and interview data will be collated and key themes drawn up. The researcher then aims to run a group presentation to share this information with you. If you would prefer an e-mail summary can be sent to you once the data is collated.

3. What will happen to the information I have provided?

All information and data gathered during this research will be stored in line with the Data Protection Act and will be destroyed 7 years following the conclusion of the study. During that time the data may be used by members of the research team only for purposes appropriate to the research question, but at no point will your

personal information or data be revealed. Insurance companies and employers will not be given any individual's information, samples, or test results, and nor will we allow access to the police, security services, social services, relatives or lawyers, unless forced to do so by the courts.

4. How will the results be disseminated?

The data might be published in a scientific journal or may be presented at a conference, but data will be generalized, and your data/personal information will not be identifiable.

5. Have I been deceived in any way during the project?

There has been no deception involved.

6. If I change my mind and wish to withdraw the information I have provided, how do I do this?

The research you will take part in will be most valuable if few people withdraw from it, so please discuss any concerns you might have with the investigators. During the study itself, if you do decide that you do not wish to take any further part then please inform one of the research team as soon as possible, and they will facilitate your withdrawal and discuss with you how you would like your data to be treated in the future. After you have completed the research you can still withdraw your data by contacting Vicki Elsey (01912437480 or vicki.elsey@northumbria.ac.uk) give her your participant number or if you have lost this give her your name.

If you have any concerns or worries concerning the way in which this research has been conducted, or if you have requested, but did not receive feedback from the researcher concerning the general outcomes of the study within a few months after the study has concluded, then please contact Nick Neave via email at Nick.Neave@northumbria.ac.uk

Appendix C: Focus Group Schedule (chapter 3)

Focus group questions:

Introduction:

- Reminder of the purpose of the focus group (from participant briefing information)
- Confidentiality
- Ground rules – i.e. no discussion with others outside of the group

Questions:

1. What about occupational psychology appealed to you as a profession?
2. In which areas have you worked? Are there areas which you would like to work in but haven't?
3. Have your ambitions been realised through studying OP?
4. What differentiates OP? How did you learn this? How do you demonstrate it?
5. How did your MSc prepare you for becoming an occupational psychologist?
6. When did you feel like you were an occupational psychologist (what was the turning point)/what do you think you will need to feel like an occ psych? (Depending upon whether registered/trainee/none)
7. What would support you to feel like an OP – what do you need to get there?
8. What does being an occupational psychologist mean?
9. Which places are the most well known for occ psych (research, consultancy, teaching or all three) [*bring along print outs of some centres for excellence, ask to read and rate*]
 - a. What is it that makes them well known?
 - b. What are they known for?
10. How might employability of OPs be enhanced?
11. Explore the university's reputation for OP and how it may be enhanced.

Conclusion:

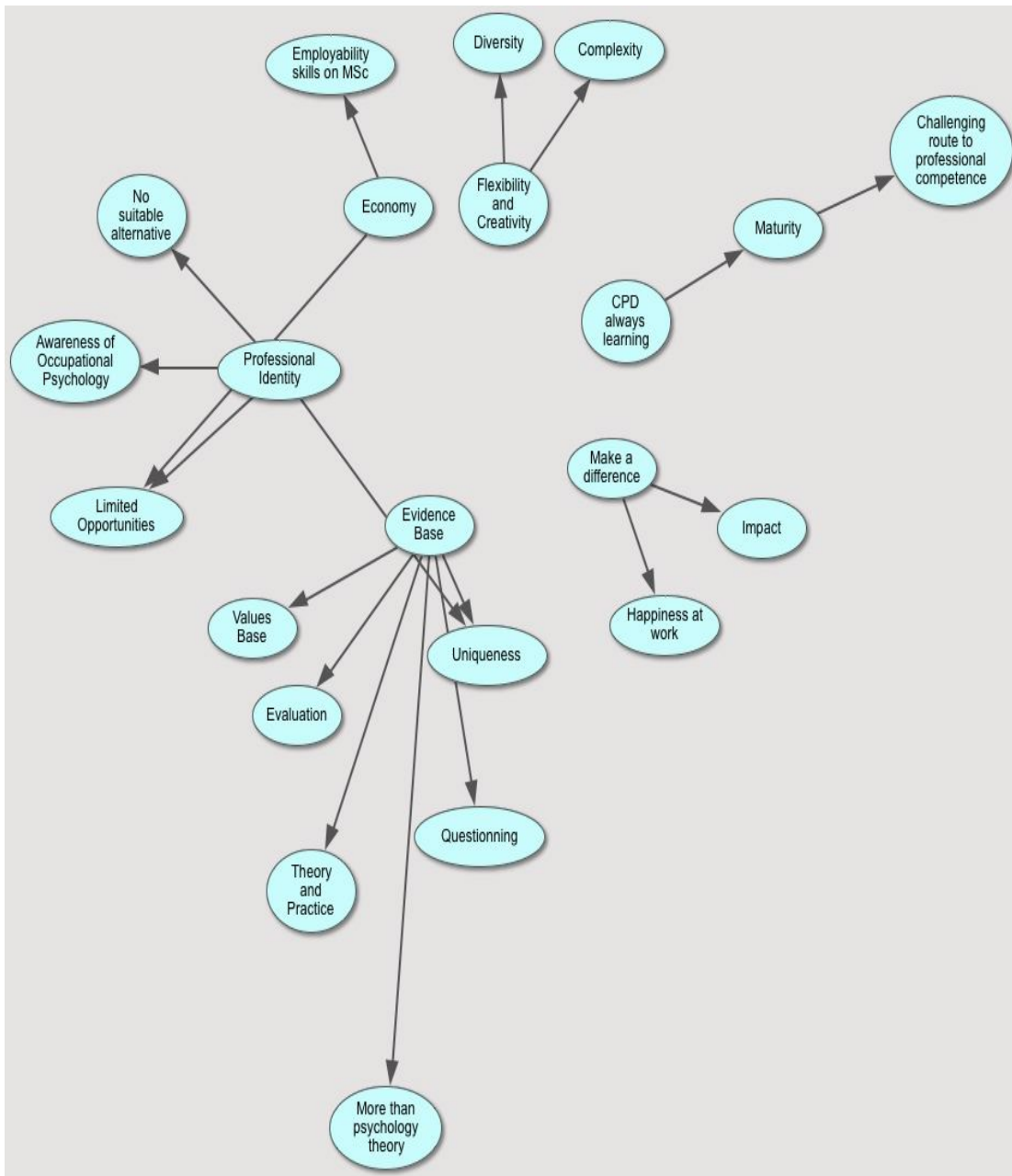
- Summary of the session
- Debrief

- Thank for participation
- Hand out consent for interviews

Appendix D: Initial Focus Group Codes (chapter 3)

1. Uniqueness
2. Values base
3. Theory and Practice
4. Questioning
5. Professional Identity
6. No suitable alternative
7. More than psychology theory
8. Make a difference
9. Evaluation
10. Impact
11. Happiness at work
12. Evidence base
13. Limited opportunities
14. Employability skills on MSc
15. Economy
16. CPD always learning
17. Maturity
18. Diversity
19. Flexibility and creativity
20. Complexity
21. Challenging route to professional competence
22. Awareness of occupational psychology

Appendix E: Demonstration of initial codes and their relationships (chapter 3)



Appendix F: Mapping of initial codes into broad headings (chapter 3)

Initial Theme Headings	Codes
Make a difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a Difference • Happiness at Work • Impact
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complexity • Flexibility and Creativity • Diversity • Employability skills on MSc
Challenging Route to Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maturity • Challenging Route to Professional Practice
Continuing Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maturity • CPD Always Learning
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy • Employability Skills on MSC • Limited Opportunities
Evidence Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation • Uniqueness • Values Base • Questioning • More than Psychology Theory • Theory and Practice • Evidence Base
Appreciation of OP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of OP • No Suitable Alternative • Professional Identity • Uniqueness • Limited Opportunities

Appendix G: Initial themes based upon researchers first coding (chapter 3)

Theme	Brief Description	Example Quotes
Make a difference	Occupational Psychology is about making a difference to the everyday working lives of individuals. Applying strategies to workplace issues which help to improve the working lives of individuals. Also, making a difference at the organisational level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I wanted to make a difference to everyday lives” (Pp5) • “It’s like, kinda making an impact into people enjoying their roles, cos you always hear people like not happy at work and complaining...” (Pp2) • “it’s more about impacting upon people everyday” (Pp4) • “it just has an impact upon everybody rather than just small populations like clinical psychology” (Pp1) • “I think that’s why I am interested in OD and Change because making a difference at an organisational level” (Pp5) • “I’m applying that to make a difference” (Pp5)
Flexibility	The work of an occupational psychologist is perceived as being diverse meaning that solutions to workplace issues need to be applied flexibly. The learning that the professional route to practice gives an occupational psychologist means that skills are learned and transferred in a variety of contexts, often ones that individuals have not worked in before.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “career development side...long-term unemployed...long-term sick back to work” (Pp2) • “research...selection and assessment, training...coaching...career development” (Pp3) • “organisational development...academia” (Pp4) • “career development, counselling stuff. Personal development...human machine interaction...designing environments and work...OD and change” (Pp5) • “my experience would just come under the HCI angle and that’s where my PhD would fit” (Pp1) • “selection...employee relations and motivation...training, human factors...stress stuff and risk assessments...impact on teams...research” (Pp6) • “you can always apply different skills and hopefully open up different opportunities even if the initial thing you thought you would do, you can’t do” (Pp4) • “...crafting a place for an occupational psychologist, rather than waiting for one to come along...I think it’s just important to remember what you are interested in and how you can apply it and not just looking at it as straightforward occupational

		<p>psychology cos I think it fits into a lot of different places now” (Pp2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I have never worked in a job with the occupational psychology title and...few people tend to do that..they are an OD person or some form of consultant of business psychologist” (Pp6) • “I felt that because those job titles aren’t there as such that, with occupational psychology on, you are not titled that, I think I was...quite fearful of losing what I have trained as and losing that skill...remind yourself, you are using the skills and reviewing and just keeping up to date with your skills” (Pp2) • “there is always going to be a new challenge...ever changing business cycles” (Pp2) • “...out of those 8 areas I think there are some of those areas which I think I am advanced in and I would say I’m a chartered psychologist in those areas. In other areas, I don’t think, I’m not” (Pp6)
Challenging route to practise	<p>There are many challenges along the way in becoming an Occupational Psychologist. Once the chartership process is complete this then leads to occupational psychologists feeling that they are ready to practice independently, however are still on the bottom rung of their career. There are also issues with comparability between psychology professions e.g. prof doc, chartership, MSc. Which can lead to confusion with students, employers etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “it’s such a long route...but even when I get there...you’re at the bottom of the rung...you’re at the start of your career” (Pp4) • “if you look at clinical and educational, they have specific routes where the opportunities are created...” (Pp4)
Continuing Professional Development	<p>The role of an occupational psychologist involves keeping on top of learning, reflecting on practice and developing new skills and strategies as they emerge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “maturity and experience that means that it is iterative and I do, I think that my best work is yet to come” (Pp5) • “I understand occupational psychology but I’m forever going to be learning” (Pp3) • “maybe that’s what distinguishes us from other people as well...I mean I’m sure they are committed to CPD but whether they view it like we do, which is yeah, we get better, we are also learning,

		<p>we are always strengthening these particular areas, you know, our education is never complete” (Pp5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “it’s just and on-going training thing” (Pp2)
External	The role of an occupational psychologist is hugely impacted by external forces such as economic issues e.g. personnel selection may no longer occur in a recession.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...because of the economy the last few years there is nobody recruiting, never mind recruiting people to recruit people” (Pp4) • ...economy and things because it’s kind of like actually looking for places where you wouldn’t, that you wouldn’t naturally go if the occ psych jobs were there” (Pp 2)
Evidence base	The training of an occupational psychologist is about using evidence based practice. Therefore it is important to consider all evidence that is available (research, prior consultancy, your own experiences etc.) in designing interventions and ensuring that the consultancy cycle is applied to all areas of work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “it’s the core approach that we take, you know if we do something there is an evidence base behind it, you know where that has come from, you know who has developed it” (Pp6) • “needs to be backed up with evidence...making sure that it is based on theory and then you are going to evaluate it” (Pp2) • “the sort of the research background and the understanding of literature and things like that makes a difference” (Pp4) • “we are just more questioning, more challenging, more open to, you know, ways to approach things, whereas they are looking for quick fixes or they don’t really test the evidence base” (Pp5) • “I think sometimes that means that people don’t ask the question if you don’t evaluate something properly, you never get the answers...you never find whether it’s really worked” (Pp4) • “evidence base, because an HR person will look at the legal base...we are not just constrained by, you know, the legal frame that’s there, we can look at actually what are the other opportunities there, erm, how can we approach that situation based on the theory and evidence that we have got” (Pp6) • “we take that consultancy approach of how that fits in, we evaluate it, if we are not able to evaluate it (because of one reason or another), we know it is missing and it’s those kind of approaches that irrespective of a job title should always have, otherwise we are just a HR Consultancy or something else” (Pp6) • “makes you more inquisitive” (Pp4) • “ethics and knowing that we don’t want to cause psychological harm” (Pp4)

<p>Appreciation of OP</p>	<p>Despite occupational psychology being a profession for many years, employers and organisations are still not sure what they do. In fact, many individuals trained in psychology don't know what an occupational psychologist is.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I have had both perspectives really in that, when I was working within the [organisation] in HR, fortunately I had teams that were very supportive and had done a little bit of research and knew a little bit about (and worked previously) with other occ psychs...unfortunately...working with non-occ psychs which didn't believe in occ psych, that I found really difficult...within our own field” (Pp4) • “there are stereotypes aren't there...but I don't know what the stereotype is for an occ psych other than I know people tend to label us psychometricians” (Pp5) • “if people in our own field don't know what we are we can't really expect the rest of the population to understand what we do either and I think that is something that really does need work” (Pp4)
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Appendix H: Independent Researcher Report (Chapter 3)

This report was written for the researcher following an independent thematic analysis by a research assistant and outlines 7 themes which emerged from this stage:

1. Evidence based practitioners.

One factor that appears to be unique to occupational psychologists is their need to be evidenced based practitioners. There is a strong feeling that the work they do should be based in psychology and science. In practice this means that their decisions have an “*evidence base behind it*” and their practices are “*based on theory*”. Clearly this is an important skill to have as it is described as the “*core approach we take*”. Interestingly, it appears to be this “*psychology grounding*” and “*scientific questioning*” which makes occupational psychologists unique. Occupational psychologists appear to be aware of this distinction between themselves and others, primarily based in HR, and identify their degree in Psychology as the cause. It may be the case that it is the skills learnt throughout the psychology degree that cause the occupational psychologists approach to be heavily scientific and therefore different to their peers in the workplace who “*don’t really test the evidence base*”. This is further acknowledged by a participant who identifies the difference clearly when they state:

“erm.. evidence base.. because a HR person will look at, the legal base.. the practices that they have always used.. and.. and.. the kind of.. consistent practices at the time... er.. er.. and they will only introduce change if novel, new approaches are introduced to them.. erm.. and to look at the new things HR have introduced, its either been for a legal change or its been through occupational psychologists doing stuff”

Perhaps then it is this solid base in science that makes occupational psychologists employable. However, one participant did identify that it could be the case that not all occupational psychologists are like this and instead it is just this particular group “*we are a bit of a select sample anyway because we have ended up in academia...(group agreement)...We obviously value the scientific evidence base*”.

2. Diverse range of skills.

Another factor of interest is the diverse range of skills that occupational psychologists appear to have. This may be due to the requirements of the role where to become an occupational psychologist you must be competent in eight different areas to ensure chartership. However, it is uncertain whether individuals become occupational psychologists because they have a range of skills and therefore they are able to meet the criteria, or rather, that they develop these skills in pursuit of being occupational psychologists. Clearly there is an expectation that an occupational psychologist will have this range of skills. This is acknowledged by individuals teaching on the masters programme for occupational psychology:

“expecting to be ethical, reflective practitioners who are enthusiastic, keen, pursue their own research interests, want to make a difference.. are you know, evidence based “

The range of skills appears to be necessary to the role of the occupational psychologist who seems to have a variety of roles within the workplace and could therefore explain their employability:

when I was doing career development, aspects of kind of personal development, the kind of coaching and counselling side of it, obviously not qualified to do that but you get all of that in as well and then, its kind of, you can see you are helping like with the recruitment, selection of it because you are advising on that and.. its just, it all kind of merge.. your knowledge of all areas all kind of ..do blend in...

As well as a diversity in the range of skills each occupational psychologist has, there also appears to be diversity in the range of skills between the occupational psychologists as well *“because of the diversity of us, is what we can make sure it suits our needs and design things around what we are interested in as well.. erm.. I think it can be done “*.

3. Motivation and Enthusiasm.

Another collective feature of the occupational psychologist is their ability to be motivated and enthusiastic about the area which they work within. Interestingly, it appears that the participants have the same motivations for pursuing a career in the area. That is, the idea of wanting to help the general population rather than a specific group of people. The impact that work could have on the everyday lives of individuals was acknowledged and it was found that the participants wanted to aid others in reducing the negative impact that work could have. These ideas are expressed by participants who stated that they wanted to *“make a difference to everyday lives”* and also *“making an impact into people enjoying their roles”*. Further to this motivation to aid individuals, is the motivation to succeed in the area that they are working within and an enthusiasm to progress which seems to be a consistent theme within the data. One participant refers to the fact that their enthusiasm is their *“biggest strength”* and that *“we are all really keen...you know..whenever we meet we are, we are all we have got this idea and you know, we are not burnout as such, we are all keen to be doing things..”*. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that development within their organisation will be *“because of the passions of the people around the table”*. Perhaps it is this combination of motivations and enthusiasm that are unique to occupational psychologists.

4. Creativity.

Another skill that seems to be present throughout is the ability of occupational psychologists to be creative. In this context, this means that occupational psychologists are able to craft their own job role. This is identified by a variety of the participants at different times:

I think that’s quite interesting about the like, the economy and things because its kind of like actually looking for places where you wouldn’t.. that you wouldn’t

naturally go if the occ psych jobs were there. So it's kind of like crafting a place for an occupational psychologist rather than waiting for the job to come along so.

Similarly, a participant highlighted that this ability to be creative was due to the nature of occupational psychology and the training route as it is not a specific route like clinical or educational psychology:

“whereas with us because you gone out.. have to go out yourself.. it means that you have got a hell of a lot of independence and creativity.. erm.. and in some respects it can be more difficult I feel but I think because of that.. that could be why it is viewed as a lesser.”

It could be that occupational psychologists by nature have developed the skill to be creative, or perhaps, because of the uncertainty surrounding their job, they have no choice but to develop the ability to craft their own positions if they are to have success in this field. Interestingly, occupational psychologists seem to be creative in developing additional projects above the typical job role. This aspect is prevalent throughout the latter part of the focus group where the participants discuss the idea of creating an occupational psychology group within the university *“is it the formal university processes of coming together as a group or is it just saying, actually we have got a shared activity we are gonna identify ourselves as this group, give us this title.. and not be embarrassed to say this is what we do ”*

5. Progression

Another element that appears evident is progression. The occupational psychologists seem to acknowledge that their role consists of a constant pursuit of the next stage of development. This idea that it is a *‘long route’* and *‘long journey’* is consistently referred to. It seems to be the case that as an occupational psychologist, whether you are in training or have reached chartership, you are still looking to develop your skills further and progress. This is identified by a participant who stated *“you always feel like you are moving forward through occupational psychology and learning”*. This is supported by a participant who stated that even when you have reached chartership *“then your still...your at the bottom of the run...so your newly qualified..so yes, you have finished those qualifications but your at the start of your career really.”* This point was reiterated by another participant who stated *“its just kind of taking it step at a time but its knowing that the goals there and that..I will..achieve it...one day hopefully..erm..but I think it is very much..I don't know whether I will ever feel fully..like..I am...this..I am an occupational psychologist.”* The fact that you need to progress is not seen as a negative thing but instead part of the role and even an opportunity. As well as accepting that progressing is a requirement of the job, they highlighted that they would like to progress and that there is a desire to progress:

“but I want to...kind of build on what I have got..but means starting as a novice in a..in kind of training...I think it's a weird profession” and but it might be because you never know what kind of.. challenge you are going to be presented with next because businesses are always going to be changing, there is always going to be a

new challenge that probs up so I think its just.. having the ability to deal with those but like I say, there is going to be a new one..”

Perhaps it is this desire to progress and further themselves that makes this group of people unique.

6. Lack of identity

Another theme which appears to be present within the text is the ambiguity surrounding the role and consequently the lack of identity around the position of an occupational psychologist. Whilst there are clearly essential criteria to become an occupational psychologist, there is uncertainty from people who are not in the field as to what the position entails. The participants discuss the topic of the title of the role and highlight that *“you don’t get that official label either so its kind of your personal label rather than an official label”*. Furthermore, there is little continuity within the title even by those people who have an increased understanding of the role of the individual *“ there’s not many..because even the [organisation]..the biggest employers of occupational psychs in the country call you a work psychologist, not an occupational...for whatever reason but so even there...there is ambiguity in the role titles its given so I think that can cause confusion.”* Furthermore, it is stated that *“they don’t protect the psychologist title”*. The negative impact surrounding the ambiguity of the position is highlighted by the participant who stated *“ I don’t think it is.. from my experience because I think.. we need more people to know what it is we do so that it can be valued more and if there is lots of ambiguity.. I don’t think that’s necessarily good”*. It is unsurprising then that the people in this area of work often state that they don’t feel like they are an occupational psychologist *“but I didn’t...wouldn’t say I felt like an occ psych”*.

This theme of a lack of identity may be related to the idea of progression and creativity. It could be that the desire and need to progress and the necessity to be creative within the job role is due to the lack of identity they have experienced in the field. It seems logical that if occupational psychologists are restricted by their professional identity and the reaction of those around them, that they would develop the ability to be creative to develop their own identity. Indeed, it would be imperative to ensure their own progression as it is unlikely that they would receive aid from others who do not identify with what they do.

7. Job location and role

Despite being classed as psychologists, Occupational psychologists can be found in other areas of academia and also in a professional setting. For example, business schools within a University and both large and small businesses for example the [organisation], as mentioned previously. It seems that the job location may have an impact on job role and what you do is dependent on where you are located. As occupational psychology *“...fits into a lot of different places right now”* there is a variety of different places to work, however, there seems to be a preference for being linked to a psychology department:

“..its not that wouldn’t be impossible here.. my personal view is that it should be within psychology and as we have discussed, there is a blurring of what we are and

I think remove us from even the departmental attachment.. is not necessarily a good thing because it doesn't necessarily then make it obvious that there's grounding in actual psychology".

The negative aspects of being in a business setting rather than a psychological base are highlighted by participants who stated *"I just wonder what you get out of being linked to a business school and how your identity gets constructed".* Furthermore, a participant stated:

"I think.. its gets.. tends to be more skewed as organisational stuff... which isn't what its all about.. its from my point of view.. that's my favourite area.. but I think when its in a business school its organisational, they don't have the diversity of.. erm.. subject attention I think.. when you position it as a link to psychology.."

There certainly seems to be a preference for being in the psychology department, perhaps because this setting gives "a little bit of legitimacy to it" (as in the role) and also one participant identified that as there is a difference between psychologists and those working in business and consequently there would be negative reasons for being associated with departments that are different to psychology:

"are you taught by psychologists, for example or are you taught by HR people and.. is it their specialism therefore you do start to [49.06 – inaudible] the identity.. I think it would depend on the actual situation but.. think for all the things that we have said what we value about our profession.. its foundation... you know, the fact that we are different from business people, business professions.. I think there would be some problems with that... economic benefits maybe, and profile raising benefits but identity, professional identity.. some challenges".

However, participants also realised that there are benefits to working with a business department *"in occupational psychology, we don't compete with other psychologists for our work, we do compete with business schools for our work.. erm.. on a project by project basis.. if.. an organisations thinks "oh I want to get a university involved because of this workplace issue".. they will go to the business school first".* This suggests that whilst there are clearly difficulties with being linked to the business department in terms of identity and role, this link may be beneficial in terms of opportunities for work.

It is acknowledged in the field that the occupational role is about *"bringing practice and research together"* and therefore you can do both academic research and also practical consultancy work *"what I would say are better ones.. it's two sides of the same coin, you could do consultancy and you are collecting data and analysing it which is kind of what you do in research anyway so its not a massive thing to branch between the two and most of them do I think.."* Rather than being seen as a negative in the sense of a lack of identity, the opportunity for different job roles and locations are seen as being a positive opportunity *"but I think the benefit with occupational psychology is that we can have consultancy, so we do have consultancy and so you have got that as well, you are not just relying on research."*

In essence, this diversity in the job role means that occupational psychologists can find themselves in a variety of settings and working in different areas. It could be this range that allows psychologists to be employable.

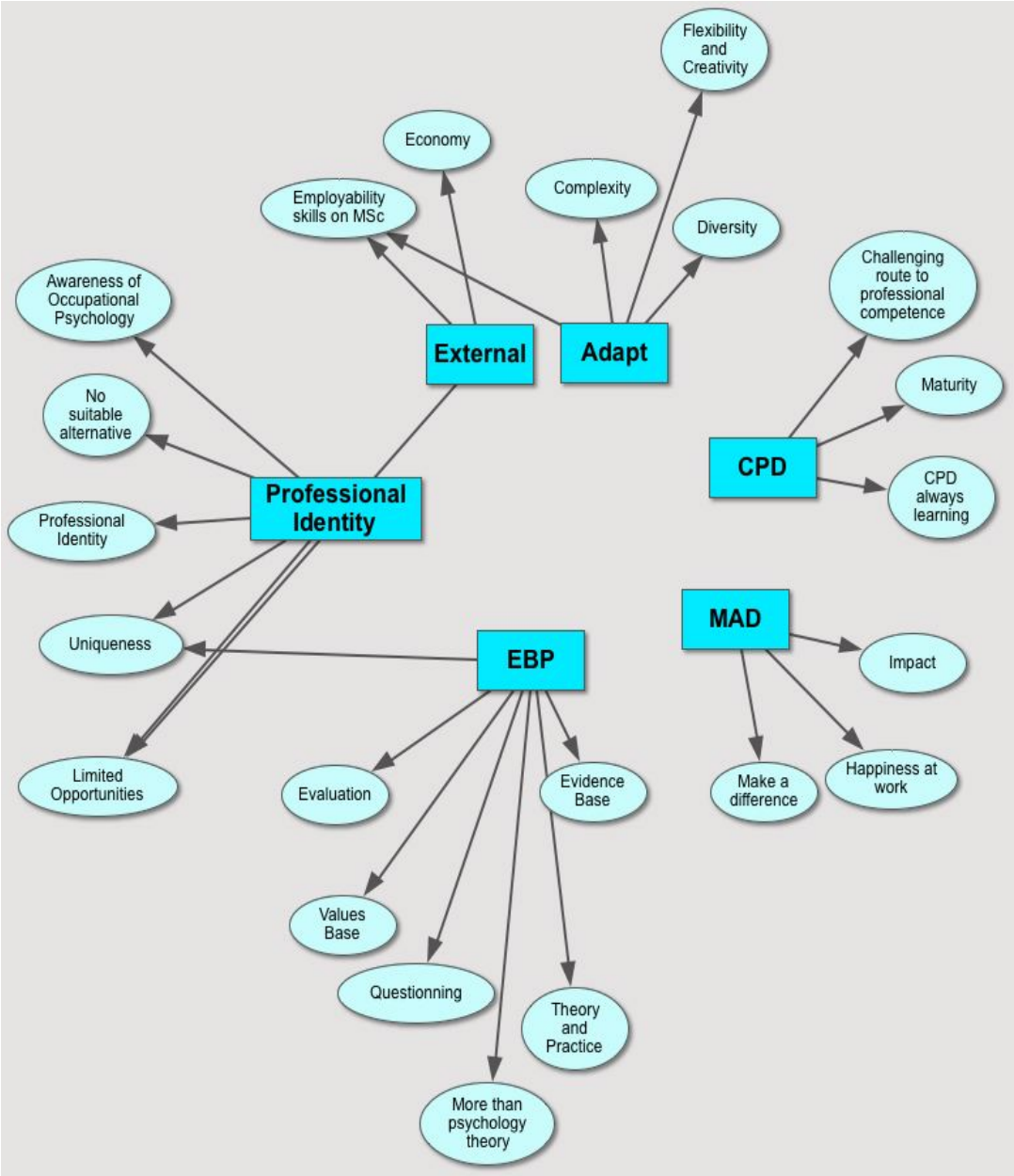
Appendix I: Initial Theme Mapping between researcher and independent analysis (chapter 3)

Initial theme from researcher	Theme from independent coding
Evidence Based Practice	Evidence based practitioners
Flexibility	Diverse range of skills Creativity
Making a Difference	Motivation and enthusiasm
Continuing Professional Development	Progression
Challenging route to practise	Progression
Appreciation of OP	Lack of identity Job location and roles
External	Job location and roles

Following this analysis *continuing professional development* and *challenging route* were merged and *motivation and enthusiasm* was included in *making a difference*.

Additionally final theme headings were changed to reflect the context more appropriately.

Appendix J: Final Thematic Map Demonstrating new headings (chapter 3)



Appendix K: Final theme Headings, Descriptions and Example Quotes (chapter 3)

Sections underlined represent additions following second coding

Theme	Brief Description	Example Quotes
Making a difference	Occupational Psychology is about making a difference to the everyday working lives of individuals. Applying strategies to workplace issues which help to improve the working lives of individuals. Also, making a difference at the organisational level. <u>Occupational psychologists are all passionate about the area they work in.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I wanted to make a difference to everyday lives” (Pp5) • “It’s like, kinda making an impact into people enjoying their roles, cos you always hear people like not happy at work and complaining...” (Pp2) • “it’s more about impacting upon people everyday” (Pp4) • “it just has an impact upon everybody rather than just small populations like clinical psychology” (Pp1) • “I think that’s why I am interested in OD and Change because making a difference at an organisational level” (Pp5) • “I’m applying that to make a difference” (Pp5) • <u>“making an impact on people enjoying their roles”</u> • <u>“[enthusiasm]...biggest strength”</u> • <u>“we are all really keen...you know...whenever we meet we are, we are all we have got this idea and you know, we are not burnout as such, we are all keen to be doing things”</u> • <u>“because of the passions of the people around the table”</u>
Adaptability	The work of an occupational psychologist is perceived as being diverse meaning that solutions to workplace issues need to be applied flexibly. The learning that the professional route to practice gives an occupational psychologist means that skills are learned and transferred in a variety of contexts, often ones that individuals have not worked in before. <u>This therefore</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “career development side...long-term unemployed...long-term sick back to work” (Pp2) • “research...selection and assessment, training...coaching...career development” (Pp3) • “organisational development...academia” (Pp4) • “career development, counselling stuff. Personal development...human machine interaction...designing environments and work...OD and change” (Pp5) • “my experience would just come under the HCI angle and that’s where my PhD would fit” (Pp1)

	<p><u>relates to employability in that OPs are required to have a diverse range of skills which they can adapt creatively to the work that is available.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “selection...employee relations and motivation...training, human factors...stress stuff and risk assessments...impact on teams...research” (Pp6) • “you can always apply different skills and hopefully open up different opportunities even if the initial thing you thought you would do, you can’t do” (Pp4) • “...crafting a place for an occupational psychologist, rather than waiting for one to come along...I think it’s just important to remember what you are interested in and how you can apply it and not just looking at it as straightforward occupational psychology cos I think it fits into a lot of different places now” (Pp2) • “I have never worked in a job with the occupational psychology title and...few people tend to do that..they are an OD person or some form of consultant of business psychologist” (Pp6) • “I felt that because those job titles aren’t there as such that, with occupational psychology on, you are not titled that, I think I was...quite fearful of losing what I have trained as and losing that skill...remind yourself, you are using the skills and reviewing and just keeping up to date with your skills” (Pp2) • “there is always going to be a new challenge...ever changing business cycles” (Pp2) • “...out of those 8 areas I think there are some of those areas which I think I am advanced in and I would say I’m a chartered psychologist in those areas. In other areas, I don’t think, I’m not” (Pp6) • <u>“because of the diversity of us, is what we can make sure it suits our needs and design things around what we are interested in aw well..erm...I think it can be done”</u> • <u>“whereas with us because you gone out...have to go out yourself...it means that you have got a hell of a lot of independence and creativity...erm...and in some respects it can be more difficult I feel but I think because of</u>
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		<p><u>that...that could be why it is viewed as lesser</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “it’s such a long route...but even when I get there...you’re at the bottom of the rung...you’re at the start of your career” (Pp4) • “if you look at clinical and educational, they have specific routes where the opportunities are created...” (Pp4) • “maturity and experience that means that it is iterative and I do, I think that my best work is yet to come” (Pp5) • “I understand occupational psychology but I’m forever going to be learning” (Pp3) • “maybe that’s what distinguishes us from other people as well...I mean I’m sure they are committed to CPD but whether they view it like we do, which is yeah, we get better, we are also learning, we are always strengthening these particular areas, you know, our education is never complete” (Pp5) • “it’s just an on-going training thing” (Pp2) • <u>“you always feel like you are moving forward through occupational psychology and learning”</u> • <u>“it’s just kind of taking it a step at a time but it’s knowing that the goals are there and that...I will...achieve it...one day hopefully...”</u>
CPD	<p>There are many challenges along the way in becoming an Occupational Psychologist. Once the chartership process is complete this then leads to occupational psychologists feeling that they are ready to practice independently, however are still on the bottom rung of their career. There are also issues with comparability between psychology professions e.g. prof doc, chartership, MSc. Which can lead to confusion with students, employers etc. <u>The role of an occupational psychologist involves keeping on top of learning, reflecting on practice and developing new skills and strategies as they emerge.</u></p>	
External	<p>The role of an occupational psychologist is hugely impacted by external forces such as economic issues e.g. personnel selection may no longer occur in a recession.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...because of the economy the last few years there is nobody recruiting, never mind recruiting people to recruit people” (Pp4) • ...economy and things because it’s kind of like actually looking for places where you wouldn’t, that you wouldn’t naturally go if the occ psych jobs were there” (Pp 2)
Evidence based practitioners	<p>The training of an occupational psychologist is about using evidence based practice. <u>Occupational psychologists believe that it is important to use science.</u> Therefore it is important to consider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “it’s the core approach that we take, you know if we do something there is an evidence base behind it, you know where that has come from, you know who has developed it” (Pp6) • “needs to be backed up with evidence...making sure that it is based on theory and then you are going to evaluate it”

	<p>all evidence that is available (research, prior consultancy, your own experiences etc.) in designing interventions and ensuring that the consultancy cycle is applied to all areas of work. This is an area which appears to differentiate from other related fields such as HR</p>	<p>(Pp2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “the sort of the research background and the understanding of literature and things like that makes a difference” (Pp4) • “we are just more questioning, more challenging, more open to, you know, ways to approach things, whereas they are looking for quick fixes or they don’t really test the evidence base” (Pp5) • “I think sometimes that means that people don’t ask the question if you don’t evaluate something properly, you never get the answers...you never find whether it’s really worked” (Pp4) • “evidence base, because an HR person will look at the legal base...we are not just constrained by, you know, the legal frame that’s there, we can look at actually what are the other opportunities there, erm, how can we approach that situation based on the theory and evidence that we have got” (Pp6) • “we take that consultancy approach of how that fits in, we evaluate it, if we are not able to evaluate it (because of one reason or another), we know it is missing and it’s those kind of approaches that irrespective of a job title should always have, otherwise we are just a HR Consultancy or something else” (Pp6) • “makes you more inquisitive” (Pp4) • “ethics and knowing that we don’t want to cause psychological harm” (Pp4) • <u>“psychology grounding”</u> • <u>“scientific questioning”</u> <p><u>BUT group may be unique “we are a bit of a select sample anyway because we have ended up in academia...(group agreement) we obviously value the scientific evidence base”</u></p>
<p>Professional Identity</p>	<p>Despite occupational psychology being a profession for many years, employers and organisations are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I have had both perspectives really in that, when I was working within the council in HR, fortunately I had teams

	<p>still not sure what they do. In fact, many individuals trained in psychology don't know what an occupational psychologist is. <u>The role can be ambiguous with no clear "job description".</u></p>	<p>that were very supportive and had done a little bit of research and knew a little bit about (and worked previously) with other occ psychs...unfortunately...working with non-occ psychs which didn't believe in occ psych, that I found really difficult...within our own field" (Pp4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "there are stereotypes aren't there...but I don't know what the stereotype is for an occ psych other than I know people tend to label us psychometricians" (Pp5) • "if people in our own field don't know what we are we can't really expect the rest of the population to understand what we do either and I think that is something that really does need work" (Pp4) • <u>"you don't get that official label either so it's kind of a personal label rather than an official label"</u> • <u>"there's not many because even the [organisation]...the biggest employers of occupational psychs in the country call you a work psychologist, not an occupational...for whatever reason but so even there...there is ambiguity in the role titles it's given so I think it can cause confusion"</u> • <u>"we need more people to know what it is we do so that it can be valued more and if there is lots of ambiguity...I don't think that's necessarily good"</u> • <u>"are you taught by psychologists, for example or are you taught by HR people and...is it their specialism therefore so you start to [49.06 - inaudible] the identity...I think it would depend on the actual situation but ...think for all the things that we have said that we value about our profession...its foundation...you know, the fact that we are different from business people, business professions...I think there would be some problems with that...economic benefits maybe, and profile raising benefits but identity, professional identity...some challenges"</u>
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Appendix L: Content Validity Study Instructions (chapter 4)

Instructions:

1. Familiarise yourself with the definitions of the various constructs on the following page. Once you are happy that you understand the construct, please refer to the spreadsheet, which contains the questionnaire items.
2. Read each item carefully and decide which construct you believe best applies to the item, only one construct may be selected.
3. Once you have made a decision, please insert an 'X' in the corresponding box. If you feel that the item does not fit a construct then please insert an 'X' in the 'doesn't fit' box. If you feel that the item is ambiguous and could fit into more than one box, please insert an 'X' in the 'doesn't fit' box.
4. Each item should have only one 'X' assigned to it.
5. Please turn the page for the construct definitions.

Thank you for your time

Construct	Brief description
Professional Identity	Occupational Psychology is a well established professional route in psychology, yet awareness of what OPs do and their perceived organisational value can be limited.
Continuing Professional Development	Occupational Psychologists keep on top of new developments in the area and they are always learning, reflecting on their practise and developing new skills and techniques throughout their career.
Making a Difference	Occupational Psychologists are passionate about applying strategies to workplace issues to make a difference to the everyday working lives of individuals and organisations.
Adaptability	Occupational Psychologists have a diverse skill set which is encouraged through the professional route to practice. This often requires adaptability in the way that workplace solutions are applied, particularly when change in organisations is commonplace.
Evidence Based Practitioners	OPs are trained to use scientific method in their practice. Therefore they believe it is important to consider all available evidence in designing interventions and ensuring that the consultancy cycle is applied to all areas of work.
External Environment	Occupational Psychologist's careers are hugely impacted by external forces such as economic issues. Clients require different products and services during a recession.
Career success	Concerned with OPs personal satisfaction with their career progression as well as their ability to apply OP knowledge and find related work.

Appendix M: Content Validity Study: Completed frequency spreadsheet (chapter 4)

theme	Question	ID	CPD	MAD	Adapt	EBP	Ext	success	DF
Adapt	I am able to apply Occupational Psychology knowledge creatively (Div)				7	1		1	1
Adapt	I apply many of the knowledge areas that I was taught at MSc level (Div)		1	1	1	3		2	2
Adapt	I can apply my knowledge to a broad range of scenarios (Div)		1		6	1		1	1
Adapt	I have been able to shape my role/s to match my skills and knowledge (Div)		1		3			4	2
Adapt	I can apply my skills to a broad range of scenarios (Div)				10				
Adapt	I have a diverse range of skills (Div)				9			1	1
CPD	I keep my Occupational Psychology knowledge up to date (CPD)		10						
CPD	I spend time reflecting on my own development and how I can make changes in the future (CPD)		10						
CPD	I pursue CPD activities in relation to my current role (CPD)		10						
CPD	I believe that it is important to keep my Occupational Psychology knowledge and skills up to date (CPD)		10						
CPD	I pursue Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities in relation to Occupational Psychology (e.g. conference attendance, training courses, reading relevant publications etc.) (CPD)		10						
CPD	I am always learning new things (CPD)		10						
EBP	I am inquisitive and ask lots of questions to clarify understanding (EBP)		5		2	1		2	2
EBP	I use science/theory in my work (EBP)					9		1	
EBP	I evaluate the success/impact of the work that I do (EBP)		6	1		2		1	
EBP	I consider the impact of the work that I do on who it may affect (EBP)		1	7		x		2	2
EBP	I have opportunities to apply Occupational Psychology knowledge/theory to the workplace (EBP)		1		3	3	2	1	1
EBP	I gather evidence from a range of sources to inform decisions					9		1	1

	and/or design (EBP)								
Ext	The economy has made it difficult for me to find work (Ext)						7	2	1
Ext	Occupational Psychology can be applied in all economic climates (Ext)			1			7		2
Ext	Due to issues out of my control I am not able to pursue to career path that I would like to (Ext)						6	3	1
Ext	The economy dictates the type of work that I do (Ext)						10		
Ext	My skills and experiences are in demand (Ext)	2			1		3	2	2
Ext	I have had to look for work in areas that I wouldn't normally due to the economy (Ext)				1		7	1	1
ID	My employer understands what an Occupational Psychologist does (ID)	10							
ID	My employer values my Occupational Psychology knowledge (ID)	6		1	1				2
ID	My employer is aware that I have an Occupational Psychology qualification (ID)	10							
ID	My colleagues understand what an Occupational Psychologist does (ID)	10							
ID	The general public have a good awareness of the benefits an Occupational Psychologist can bring to an organisation (ID)	10							
ID	I understand how Occupational Psychology differs from other applied areas of Psychology (ID)	10							
MAD	My Occupational Psychology knowledge helps me to make a difference to my organisation/clients (MAD)			10					
MAD	I feel that the individuals that I work with benefit from my knowledge of Occupational Psychology (MAD)			9					1
MAD	I am motivated to continue in this profession for the rest of my career (MAD)		2	x				5	3
MAD	I feel that my role allows me to make a difference to the working lives of individuals (MAD)			10					
MAD	I feel that my role allows me to make a difference to organisations (MAD)			10					
MAD	I am passionate about Occupational Psychology (MAD)	1		5					4
Succe	I found it easy to find a job after graduating						1	9	

ss									
Succe ss	I have been able to apply my occupational psychology knowledge since graduating		1			2		7	
Succe ss	I have taken jobs which match my career aspirations							9	1
Succe ss	I have taken jobs which match my skills level			1				9	
Succe ss	I believe that I am progressing my career in the direction that I want to go							10	
Succe ss	I am currently in an occupational psychologist role (or related field)	2						7	1
Succe ss	I am satisfied with my career progress to date							10	
Succe ss	I have taken jobs which are worthy of me							10	

Appendix N: Participant Information, Consent, Study Questionnaires and Debrief Validity Study (chapter 4)

Participant Information

PROJECT TITLE: Determining Validity Of A Measure Of Occupational Psychologists Employability

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Vicki Elsey

The purpose of this information sheet is to provide you with sufficient information so that you can then give your informed consent. It is thus very important that you read this document carefully, and raise any issues that you do not understand with the investigator.

1. What is the purpose of the project?

The purpose of the project is to determine the psychometric properties of a measure of Occupational Psychologists Employability. The researcher is interested in the reliability and validity of this measure in order to later determine whether these factors contribute to the career success of Occupational Psychologists.

2. Why have I been selected to take part?

You have been selected to take part as you have a BPS accredited MSc in Occupational Psychology and you are either pursuing or hoping to pursue a career in Occupational Psychology.

3. What will I have to do?

You will be asked to agree to participate in the research and also provide a memorable code word so that you can identify your own data at a later date should you wish to. You will then be asked to answer some biographical questions such as age and gender. Following this you will be asked to respond to questions in relation to OP Employability on a six point rating scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It is expected that participation will take up to 10 minutes.

4. What is the exclusion criteria (i.e. are there any reasons why I should not take part)?

The only reason not to take part is if you have not completed a BPS accredited MSc in Occupational Psychology or you are not pursuing a career in Occupational Psychology.

5. Will my participation involve any physical discomfort?

No

6. Will my participation involve any psychological discomfort or embarrassment?

No

7. How will confidentiality be assured?

The researcher has put into place a number of procedures to protect the confidentiality of participants. These include:

You will be asked to provide your own memorable participant code that will always be used to identify any data that you provide.

Your name or other personal details will not be associated with your data, for your consent information and data will be stored in separate files

Only the research team will have access to any identifiable information; data will be stored online on a password protected computer, accessed only by the researcher. Data will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

8. Who will have access to the information that I provide?

Any information and data gathered during this research study will only be available to the research team identified in the information sheet. Should the research be presented or published in any form, then that information will be generalized (i.e. your personal information or data will not be identifiable).

9. How will my information be stored / used in the future?

All information and data gathered during this research will be stored in line with the Data Protection Act and will be destroyed 7 years following the conclusion of the study (or should the research be published, data will be kept for a period of time deemed appropriate by the publisher). During that time the data may be used by members of the research team only for purposes appropriate to the research question, but at no point will your personal information or data be revealed. Insurance companies and employers will not be given any individual's information, samples, or test results, and nor will we allow access to the police, security services, social services, relatives or lawyers, unless forced to do so by the courts.

10. Has this investigation received appropriate ethical clearance?

Yes, the study and its protocol has received full ethical approval from the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Ethics Committee.

11. Will I receive any financial rewards / travel expenses for taking part?

There are no financial rewards or travel expenses.

12. How can I withdraw from the project?

Please discuss any concerns you might have with the investigators. During the study itself, if you do decide that you do not wish to take any further part then please inform one of the research team as soon as possible, and they will facilitate your withdrawal and discuss with you how you would like your data to be treated in the future. After you have completed the research you can still withdraw your data

within one month of your participation by contacting one of the research team (vicki.elsey@northumbria.ac.uk), and give them your participant number. After this date, it may not be possible to withdraw your individual data as the results may already have been published.

13. If I require further information who should I contact and how?

If you require any further information please contact the researcher Vicki Elsey on 0191 2437480 or vicki.elsey@northumbria.ac.uk

CONSENT

Please read the following statements and tick the box below to give your consent to participate:

I have carefully read and understood the participant information	
I know who to ask if I have any questions and how to contact them	
I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason for withdrawing and without prejudice.	
I agree to participate in this study	

ELIGIBILITY

Please read the following statements and tick the relevant box.

I have completed a BPS Accredited MSc Occupational Psychology (or equivalent title)	
I am currently pursuing or aiming to pursue a career in Occupational Psychology	
Yes, I meet the eligibility criteria	

YOUR PARTICIPANT CODE

Please enter a memorable code which you can use to identify your data. Please avoid using options such as 123 or ABC. Please make your code unique and memorable to you.

--

ABOUT YOU

Please insert your age in years	
Are you?	Male/Female
Please indicate the year you graduated from your MSc in Occupational Psychology (or equivalent title)	

OP EMPLOYABILITY

Please answer the following questions on a six point scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly agree. If you are self-employed or freelance, please replace the word 'employer' with 'client' to represent individuals or organisations who employ you on projects.

(see chapter 4 for questions)

PARTICIPANT DEBRIEF

PROJECT TITLE: Determining Validity Of A Measure Of Occupational Psychologists Employability

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Vicki Elsey

1. What was the purpose of the project?

The purpose of the project was to assess the psychometric properties of a measure designed to assess OP Employability. This information will be used to inform the factor structure of the measure and then analysed alongside measures of employability and career success.

2. How will I find out about the results?

A revised version of the questionnaire will be e-mailed to you should you wish to receive it, this will include the questions which have been determined to present a reliable and valid measure. If you would like to receive this, please e-mail the researcher vicki.elsey@northumbria.ac.uk

3. What will happen to the information I have provided?

The information that you have provided will be compiled with information from all participants and collectively analysed to identify which aspects of the questionnaire present the most reliable and valid measure.

4. Have I been deceived in any way during the project?

No

5. If I change my mind and wish to withdraw the information I have provided, how do I do this?

Please discuss any concerns you might have with the research. During the study itself, if you do decide that you do not wish to take any further part then please inform the researcher as soon as possible, and she will facilitate your withdrawal and discuss with you how you would like your data to be treated in the future. After you have completed the research you can still withdraw your data by contacting Vicki Elsey (vicki.elsey@northumbria.ac.uk or 0191 2437480) within one month of your participation and give her your participant number or if you have lost this give her your name. After this date, it may not be possible to withdraw your individual data as the results may already have been published.

If you have any concerns or worries concerning the way in which this research has been conducted, or if you have requested, but did not receive feedback from the researcher concerning the general outcomes of the study within a few months after the study has concluded, then please contact Nick Neave via email at nick.neave@northumbria.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

Appendix O: Briefing and Debriefing (chapters 5, 6 and 7)

(please note published questionnaires are not included here, for OPFES and SCSS refer to chapter 4)

Participant Information

PROJECT TITLE: Occupational Psychology: Understanding Employability 1
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Vicki Elsey

The purpose of this information sheet is to provide you with sufficient information so that you can then give your informed consent. It is thus very important that you read this document carefully, and raise any issues that you do not understand with the investigator.

1. What is the purpose of the project?

The purpose of the project is to identify the themes which can lead to successful employment of Occupational Psychologists at various stages of their career. Furthermore the project aims to identify which employability skills Occupational Psychologists possess and how satisfied they are with their career progress to date. This project forms part of a Professional Doctorate in Occupational Psychology looking into the employability of Occupational Psychologists.

2. Why have I been selected to take part?

You have been selected to take part as you have studied a BPS accredited MSc in Occupational Psychologist (or equivalent such as business psychology, work psychology, industrial psychology etc.), and are an Occupational Psychologist OR are a Trainee Occupational Psychologist.

3. What will I have to do?

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire which draws together current research into employability skills along with research from other sources such as the British Psychological Society's Division of Occupational Psychology and a focus group completed with staff and PhD students from Northumbria University as to the skills that are necessary for Occupational Psychologists. Furthermore you will be asked some biographical questions such as age, number of years work experience etc. It is expected that it will take approximately 20 minutes to complete the online questionnaire. If you would prefer a paper copy of the questionnaire to complete then please inform the researcher. As a follow up to the questionnaire the researcher is also interested in interviewing participants to discuss the concept of Occupational Psychologist employability further. Interview questions will be determined by the findings of the questionnaire but may include as an example "please describe what you believe has made the most difference to your employability as an Occupational Psychologist". It is expected that this interview should last no more than one hour and will be recorded for audio. If you are interested in participating in this interview then please tick the relevant section on the consent form.

4. What are the exclusion criteria (i.e. are there any reasons why I should not take part)?

The only reason to not take part is if have not studied an MSc in Occupational Psychology (or equivalent)..

5. Will my participation involve any physical discomfort?

No

6. Will my participation involve any psychological discomfort or embarrassment?

No

7. Will I have to provide any bodily samples (i.e. blood, saliva)?

No

8. How will confidentiality be assured?

The researcher has put into place a number of procedures to protect the confidentiality of participants. These include:

- You will be asked to choose your own participant code which only you can identify. This information will be used to identify your data.
- Any personally identifying information (such as your or e-mail address which will be used to keep in contact with you) will be stored on a password protected computer.

Only the research team will have access to any identifiable information; paper records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. This will be kept separate from any data and will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

9. Who will have access to the information that I provide?

Any information and data gathered during this research study will only be available to the research team identified in the information sheet. Should the research be presented or published in any form, then that information will be generalized (i.e. your personal information or data will not be identifiable).

10. How will my information be stored / used in the future?

All information and data gathered during this research will be stored in line with the Data Protection Act and will be destroyed 7 years following the conclusion of the study. During that time the data may be used by members of the research team only for purposes appropriate to the research question, but at no point will your personal information or data be revealed. Insurance companies and employers will not be given any individual's information, samples, or test results, and nor will we allow access to the police, security services, social services, relatives or lawyers, unless forced to do so by the courts.

11. Has this investigation received appropriate ethical clearance?

Yes, the study and its protocol has received full ethical approval from the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences ethics committee.

12. Will I receive any financial rewards / travel expenses for taking part?

As reimbursement for your time you will be entered into a prize draw to win an Apple iPad. For completing the questionnaire you will gain one entry to the prize draw, if you also agree to participate in the interview you will achieve a further entry into the prize draw and if you are randomly selected to and participate in the interview (and you do participate) you will achieve a further entry. In order to be entered into the prize draw the researcher will save your email address (if you provide this on the survey) to a separate file.

13. How can I withdraw from the project?

The research you will take part in will be most valuable if few people withdraw from it, so please discuss any concerns you might have with the researcher. During the study itself, if you do decide that you do not wish to take any further part then please inform the researcher as soon as possible, and she will facilitate your withdrawal and discuss with you how you would like your data to be treated in the future. After you have completed the research you can still withdraw your data within a month by contacting Vicki Elsey (vicki.elsey@northumbria.ac.uk or 0191 2437480) with your participant code.

14. If I require further information who should I contact and how?

If you require any further information please contact the researcher Vicki Elsey on 0191 2437480 or vicki.elsey@northumbria.ac.uk or the principal supervisor Mark Moss (mark.moss@northumbria.ac.uk).

Consent

I have carefully read and understood the participant information	Yes/No
I know who to ask if I have any questions and how to contact them	Yes/No
I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason for withdrawing and without prejudice	Yes/No
I have completed a BPS accredited MSc Occupational Psychology programme (or equivalent e.g. business psychology, work psychology, industrial psychology etc.)	Yes/No

I agree to take part in this study	Yes/No
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Please tick all which apply:

I would like to receive feedback on the overall results of the study I would like to be entered into the prize draw to win an Apple iPad	
I would like to participate in follow up interviews and understand that my interview will be recorded	
If you have chosen any (or all) of the options above please also include your e-mail address here:	

Your participant code

Please enter a code which only you know which can be used to identify your data. Please avoid using options such as 123 or abc which other participants may also use. Please make your code unique to you and memorable.

Your participant code _____

About You

Please note that some questions refer to 'your employer', where you are self-employed, please answer these questions as best as you can reflecting up your clients or individuals/organisations who use your services.

How old are you?	
Are you	Male/Female
What is your ethnicity?	White British White Irish Other White background Black or Black British-Caribbean Black or Black British-African Other Black background Asian or Asian British-Indian Asian or Asian British-Pakistani Asian or Asian British-Bangladeshi Other Asian Background Mixed White and Black African Mixed White and Black Caribbean Other Mixed background Chinese Other (please specify):

How many years work experience do you have? Please indicate to the nearest year	
Where did you study your BPS accredited MSc Occupational Psychology (or equivalent e.g. Work Psychology, Business Psychology, Organisational Psychology)	Aston University Birkbeck, University of London Bristol, University of Cardiff University City University Coventry University Cranfield University Glasgow Caledonian University Gloucestershire, University of Goldsmiths, University of London Heriot Watt University Hertfordshire, University of Hull, University of Kingston University Leeds, University of Leicester, University of Liverpool John Moores University London Metropolitan University Manchester, University of Northumbria University Nottingham, University of Queen's University Belfast Sheffield, University of Strathclyde, University of Surrey, University of University of East London Wolverhampton, University of Worcester, University of Other (please specify)
What year did you graduate from your MSc?	
What was your undergraduate degree classification?	1st 2:1 2:2 3rd
What was your MSc degree classification?	Distinction Commendation/Merit Pass Other (please specify)
How many years of relevant work experience did you have prior to starting the MSc? Please indicate to the nearest year	
Which area was your thesis most closely aligned to?	Employee Selection and Development Employee Relations and Motivation Organisational Change and Development Human Machine Interaction Health and Safety

	<p>Training Counselling and Personal Development Performance Appraisal and Career Development</p>
Are you (please tick all that apply)	<p>Registered/Practitioner Occupational Psychologist (HCPC) Chartered Psychologist (BPS) Member of the Division of Occupational Psychology Practitioner in Training/on Stage Two of the Qualification in Occupational Psychology Considering enrolling on Stage Two of the Qualification in Occupational Psychology (chartership) Not going to pursue chartered status None of the above</p>
Have you completed a doctorate?	<p>No Yes, PhD Yes, Professional Doctorate in Occupational Psychology Yes, Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology Yes, Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology Yes, Professional Doctorate in Health Psychology Yes, Professional Doctorate in Sport Psychology Yes, Professional Doctorate in Forensic Psychology Yes, Professional Doctorate in Educational Psychology Other (please specify):</p>
Are you thinking about studying for a doctorate?	<p>No Yes, already studying Yes, considering applying Unsure</p>
If you are already studying for, or considering applying for a doctorate, please state which doctorate (e.g. PhD, DClin, DOcc etc.)	
What best describes your main employment status?	<p>In work (employed in one or more jobs) A student (full or part time) Out of work (redundant, looking for work) Other (please specify):</p>
What is your current role (please enter full and specific job title, if you ARE NOT CURRENTLY EMPLOYED please refer to your	

MOST RECENT role)?	
Is this role occupational psychology (or related e.g. learning and development, training, work psychology, business psychology, management)	Yes No
How long have you been in this role? Please indicate in to the nearest year	
In which sector are you employed?	Public Private Voluntary Other (please specify):
Is this role (please tick all that apply)	Full-time Part-time Permanent Fixed term Casual
Please state the geographical area in which you work (e.g. country and city such as UK, London)	
In your main job are you:	An employee Self-employed or freelance without employees Self-employed with employees None of the above
How many employees do you manage?	Less than 10 10-20 20+ I don't manage any staff
What is your current annual gross salary?	
What is your current level/grade	Entry/trainee Junior Practitioner Practitioner Senior Practitioner/Management Director Chief Executive Other (please specify):

Participant Debrief

PROJECT TITLE: Occupational Psychology: Understanding Employability 1
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Vicki Elsey

1. What was the purpose of the project?

The purpose of the project is to identify the themes which can lead to successful employment of Occupational Psychologists at various stages of their career. Furthermore the project aims to identify which employability skills Occupational

Psychologists possess and how satisfied they are with their career progress to date. This project forms part of a Professional Doctorate in Occupational Psychology looking into the employability of Occupational Psychologists

2. How will I find out about the results?

A general summary of the results will be emailed to you if you wish to receive it. This summary will be collective data and will not identify any one individual by name.

3. What will happen to the information I have provided?

The information that you have provided will be analysed along with information from all participants and to identify general themes relating to employability of occupational psychologists. The data may be used in conference presentations or written publications but please be assured that information will be presented as collected data and not associated with any one individual.

4. Have I been deceived in any way during the project?

No

5. If I change my mind and wish to withdraw the information I have provided, how do I do this?

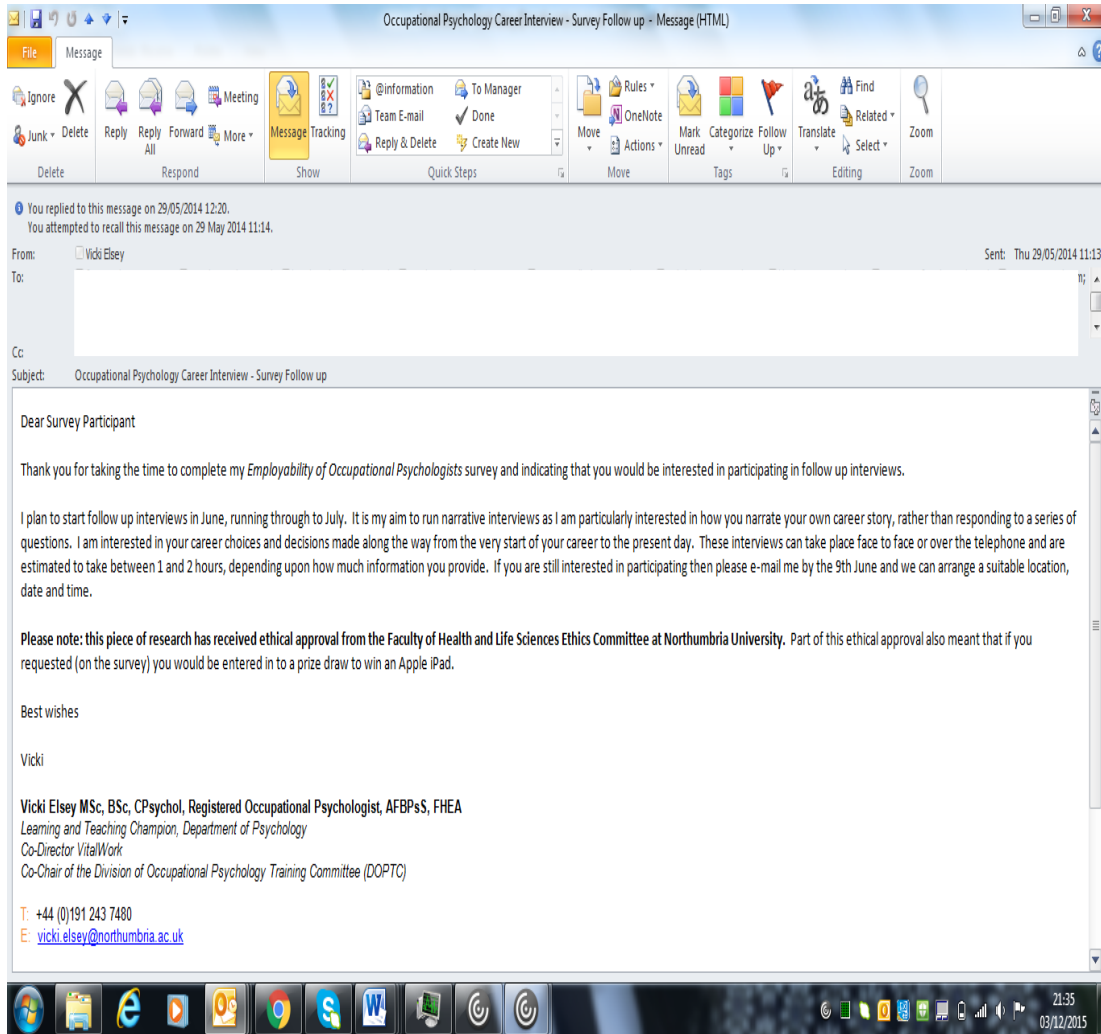
The research you will take part in will be most valuable if few people withdraw from it, so please discuss any concerns you might have with the research. During the study itself, if you do decide that you do not wish to take any further part then please inform the researcher within one month, and she will facilitate your withdrawal and discuss with you how you would like your data to be treated in the future. After you have completed the research you can still withdraw your data by contacting Vicki Elsey (vicki.elsey@northumbria.ac.uk or 0191 2437480) and giving her your participant code.

If you have any concerns or worries concerning the way in which this research has been conducted, or if you have requested, but did not receive feedback from the researcher concerning the general outcomes of the study within a few months after the study has concluded, then please contact the Chair of Ethics, Nick Neave via email at nick.neave@northumbria.ac.uk

End of questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey.

Appendix P: Participant invitation (chapter 7)



Narrative interview confirmation - Message (HTML)

You forwarded this message on 11/06/2014 15:06. Sent: Wed 11/06/2014 15:01

From: Vicki Elsey
To:
Cc:
Subject:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a follow up interview on Employability of Occupational Psychologists. Your interview is booked for 5pm on the 12th June and I will call you on

In preparation for this interview, it may be useful if you could think about or chart your own career history and key decisions made along the way from the beginning of your career to the present day. Any formative moments in driving your career would be useful to consider too.

Please note that I will be recording this interview so that I have an accurate record of our conversation. This recording will be transcribed verbatim by a member of the research team and deleted as soon as this transcription has occurred. Any identifiable information such as names or places of work will be anonymised.

I look forward to speaking to you soon.

Best wishes

Vicki

Vicki Elsey MSc, BSc, CPsychol, Registered Occupational Psychologist, AFBP'sS, FHEA
Learning and Teaching Champion, Department of Psychology
Co-Director VitalWork
Co-Chair of the Division of Occupational Psychology Training Committee (DOPTC)

T: +44 (0)191 243 7480
E: vicki.elsey@northumbria.ac.uk

Search cannot return results for this view. [Click here for more information.](#)

Appendix Q: Narrative Interview Plan (chapter 7)

Aim

To understand Occupational Psychologists' career stories, career paths and employability. What opportunities they have had, what decisions they have made from the very start of their career to present day and what has driven these decisions.

Research Question

What is the 'career' of an Occupational Psychologist? What are the critical/defining career moments for Occupational Psychologists?

Opening Question

1. I would like to understand more about your career as an Occupational Psychologist. The best way to do this will be to start with your first decision to pursue Occupational Psychology, then tell me about your career from that point to the present day. Please take your time in doing this, and also give details, everything is of interest to me that was important to you. (adapted from Flick, 2014).

Follow up questions will depend upon what the participant says but could potentially include:

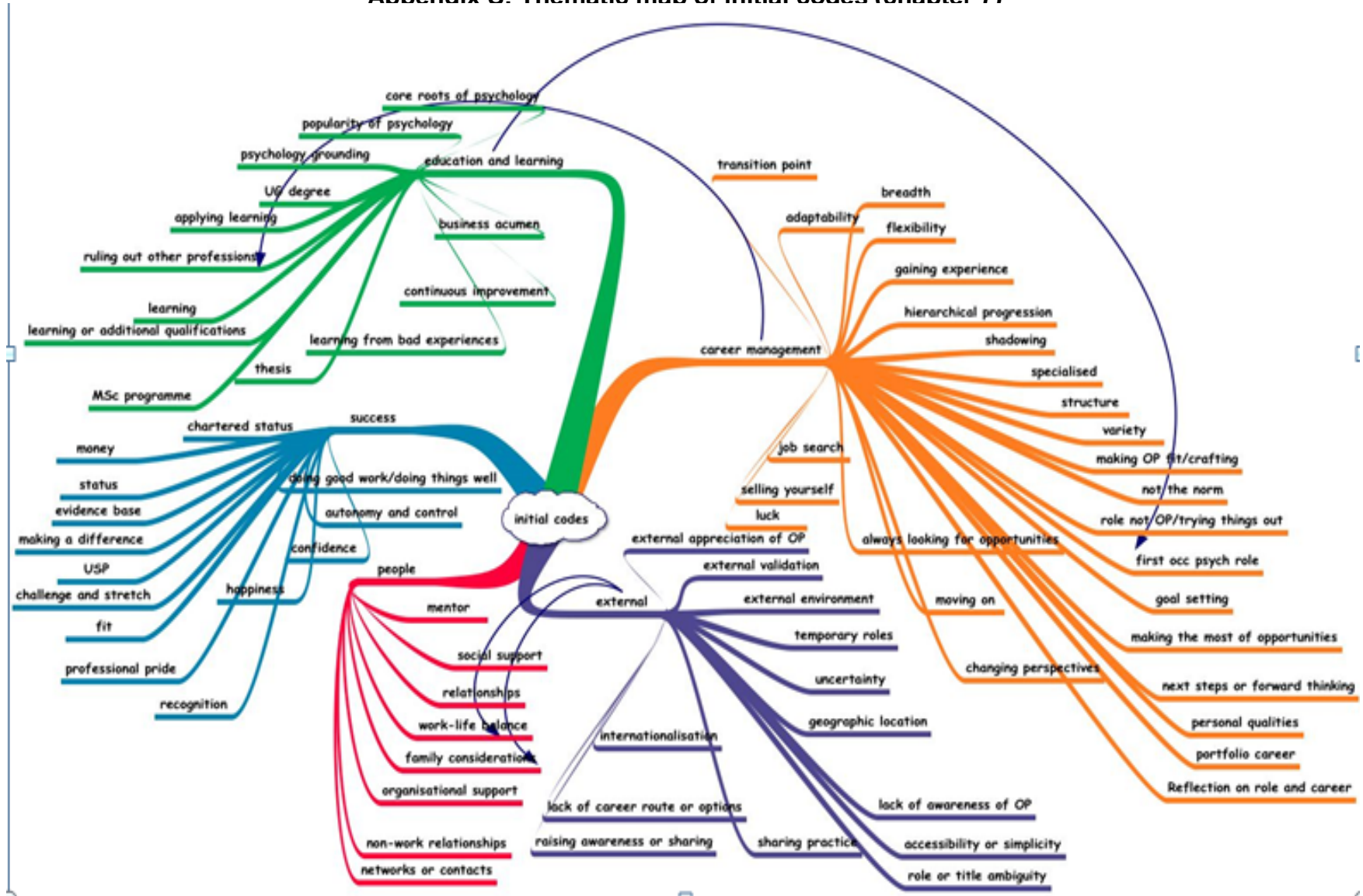
2. Why did you decide to study Occupational Psychology?
3. How did you make the decision to pursue occupational psychology as a career? OR
4. How did you make the decision that occupational psychology was not the career for you?
5. What factors have you taken into account when moving between jobs/careers?
6. What is your current thinking regarding your career as an X?
7. How does the future look?

Appendix R: Initial codes from narrative interview (chapter 7)

1. Adaptability
2. Breadth
3. Flexibility
4. Gaining Experience
5. Hierarchical progression
6. Shadowing
7. Specialised
8. Structure
9. Variety
10. Making OP fit role or crafting
11. Not the norm
12. Role not OP or trying things out
13. First Occ Psych role
14. Job search
15. Selling yourself
16. Always looking for opportunities
17. Aspirations or working towards something
18. Goal setting
19. Making the most of opportunities
20. Moving on
21. Next steps or forward thinking
22. Changing perspectives
23. Luck
24. Personal qualities
25. Portfolio career
26. Reflection on role and career
27. Ruling out other professions
28. Transition point
29. Core roots of psychology
30. Popularity of psychology
31. Psychology grounding
32. UG degree
33. Applying learning
34. Business acumen
35. Continuous improvement
36. Learning
37. Learning from bad experiences
38. Learning or additional qualifications
39. MSc programme
40. Thesis
41. External appreciation of OP
42. External validation
43. External environment
44. Temporary roles
45. Uncertainty
46. Geographic location
47. Internationalisation
48. Lack of awareness of OP
49. Lack of career route or options
50. Raising awareness of sharing
51. Accessibility or simplicity
52. Sharing practice

53. Role or title ambiguity
54. Chartered status
55. Money
56. Status
57. Doing good work or doing things well
58. Evidence base
59. Making a difference
60. USP
61. Autonomy and control
62. Challenge and stretch
63. Confidence
64. Fit
65. Happiness
66. Professional pride
67. Recognition
68. Mentor
69. Networks or contacts
70. Non-work relationships
71. Family considerations
72. Work-life balance
73. Organisational support
74. Relationships
75. Social support

Appendix S: Thematic map of initial codes (chapter 7)



Mapping of nodes onto initial theme headings (demonstrated in a table)

Theme Heading	Nodes
Career Management	Adaptability Breadth Flexibility Gaining Experience Hierarchical progression Shadowing Specialised Structure Variety Making OP fit role or crafting Not the norm Role not OP or trying things out First Occ Psych role Job search Selling yourself Always looking for opportunities Aspirations or working towards something Goal setting Making the most of opportunities Moving on Next steps or forward thinking Changing perspectives Luck Personal qualities Portfolio career Reflection on role and career Ruling out other professions Transition point
Education and Learning	Core roots of psychology Popularity of psychology Psychology grounding UG degree Applying learning Business acumen Continuous improvement Learning Learning from bad experiences Learning or additional qualifications MSc programme Ruling out other professions Thesis
External issues	External appreciation of OP External validation External environment Temporary roles Uncertainty Geographic location Internationalisation Family considerations Work-life balance Lack of awareness of OP Lack of career route or options

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raising awareness of sharing Accessibility or simplicity Sharing practice Role or title ambiguity
Markers of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chartered status Money Status Doing good work or doing things well Evidence base Making a difference USP Autonomy and control Challenge and stretch Confidence Fit Happiness Professional pride Recognition
People or relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentor Networks or contacts Non-work relationships Organisational support Family considerations Work-life balance Relationships Social support

Process showed some links across themes e.g. family considerations and work-life balance also related to external issues.

Appendix T: Independent coding of one transcript (chapter 7)

1. Chartership
2. Clear career path
3. Companion job (related but not OP)
4. Developing transferable skills
5. Disability
6. Drawing on previous skills and experience
7. First job after graduating
8. First OP role
9. Frustration
10. Generalist versus specialist
11. Hierarchical environment
12. Interim experience
13. Internal progression
14. Interviewed
15. Luck
16. Moving into new areas
17. Non OP role – relevant to OP
18. Psychometric tools
19. Regrets or change anything
20. Relevant previous experience
21. Researching career options
22. Sector change
23. Senior OP responsibilities
24. Specialist
25. Specialist early in career
26. Transition
27. Working alongside OP
28. Comfort
29. Motivation
30. Alumni or former students guidance
31. Attractive factors for OP
32. Early career support
33. Guest speakers
34. OP as an undergraduate option
35. Training
36. Undergraduate degree
37. Unrelated job funds masters
38. Bureaucracy
39. Change of structure
40. Environment
41. Geographic mobility
42. Less for more
43. Less opportunity for OP
44. Need for OP
45. Rejecting alternatives
46. Autonomy
47. Employable
48. Empowering
49. Evidence based practice
50. Fit with personal interests
51. Independence
52. Job fit – convenience

53. OP knowledge base
54. Professional status
55. Progression
56. Satisfaction
57. Structure
58. Transferable
59. Working independently
60. Advice receipt
61. Family ties
62. Networking
63. Outside work commitments
64. Social support
65. Supportive managers

**Appendix U: Mapping independent coding onto researchers themes
(chapter 7)**

Theme Heading	Nodes
Career Management	Companion job (related but not OP) Developing transferable skills Disability Drawing on previous skills and experience First job after graduating First OP role Frustration Generalist versus specialist Hierarchical environment Interim experience Internal progression Interviewed Luck Moving into new areas Motivation Non OP role – relevant to OP Psychometric tools Regrets or change anything Relevant previous experience Researching career options Sector change Senior OP responsibilities Specialist Specialist early in career Transition Working alongside OP
Education and Learning	Alumni or former students guidance Attractive factors for OP Early career support Guest speakers OP as an undergraduate option Training Undergraduate degree Unrelated job funds masters
External issues	Bureaucracy Change of structure Environment Geographic mobility Less for more Less opportunity for OP Need for OP Rejecting alternatives Outside work commitments Family ties Clear career path
Markers of Success	Autonomy Comfort Employable Empowering

	Evidence based practice Fit with personal interests Independence Job fit – convenience OP knowledge base Professional status Progression Satisfaction Structure Transferable Working independently Chartership
People or relationships	Advice receipt Family ties Networking Outside work commitments Social support Supportive managers

All independent coding mapped on to the five thematic areas identified by the researcher, suggesting that the groupings were accurate.

Appendix V: Final types, description and quotations (chapter 7)

Type (and reference to theme)	Description	Indicative quotations
<p>The Learner (Education and Learning)</p>	<p>This identity type was interested in gaining a solid theoretical foundation through education. They also described how learning from practical experiences (positive and negative) shaped their identity as an employable OP.</p>	<p><i>“...why did I choose occupational psychology. Uuhhmm, I think I might start with the time when I was an undergraduate”</i> (participant 12)</p> <p><i>“...all that gives this great underpinning knowledge that enables me to understand how things would work in practice”</i> (participant 7)</p> <p><i>“I found the social psychology more interesting because I could actually see it...and one of the places I started to see it mostly was at work because I had lots of interactions with customers, colleagues, managers”</i> (participant 2)</p> <p><i>“...the way in which the course is structured and the content within those courses was really valuable in terms of the theory and applying...and being able to apply that theory into practice...working out how you would then apply them into businesses...probably the best part of the master’s degree...some of the core consulting skills that we learnt in the degree and I think that is really critical for occupational psychology, so on top of learning all of the science behind it, it’s actually really important to understand...how to apply”</i> (participant 14)</p> <p><i>“...whether it just comes from the reality of the degree and the masters doesn’t get you a job”</i> (participant 3)</p> <p><i>“I think it was very different to what I had anticipated...it was the first time that I got to see lots of different ways that...occupational psychologists can be used”</i> (participant 13)</p> <p><i>“I don’t think they would have.. I wouldn’t have probably got through interviews if it wasn’t for doing the occupational psychology masters”</i> (participant 14)</p> <p><i>“I decided that actually it would be really great to go back to my occupational psychology roots, I felt ashamed to waste the masters and all of the learning that I had from my degree so I decided to enrol on the qualification in occupational psychology stage 2 because I found supervisor and was working on that whilst I was on a talent leadership type role at XXX”</i> (participant 14)</p> <p><i>“on the first day of the masters they’d got a new lecturer in...he looked around and he said</i></p>

		<p><i>none of you...no six of you are actually going to be Occupational Psychologists...I feel quite angry I feel like I was erm...hoodwinked actually.....I was expecting to have a career...got nothing” (participant 3)</i></p> <p><i>“I also love the idea of being a PhD student” (participant 19)</i></p> <p><i>“I want to learn and I feel like [I] am still learning uhm and am more keen on keep learning” (participant 12)</i></p> <p><i>“so I think I have extra things that I bring in aside from the masters and I’ve never stopped learning and that is something that’s really important to me...I think that’s part of the reason why I enjoy my job because it gives me the opportunity to keep, and there’s so much I don’t know and so much I want to know and it’s just so fascinating really that it just keeps me interested. So that’s something that I kind of need as well, to think about learning and to know that I’m learning” (participant 4)</i></p>
<p>The Relationship Builder/Networker (People and relationships)</p>	<p>This type expressed the value placed upon networking and developing lasting relationships with individuals who could support their employability. Managers and mentors were most often referred to.</p>	<p><i>“...asked them questions around how I would get into this and what would you be looking for erm...and the advice I got was to try and go get some experience of psychology within the workplace erm... and if I was struggling to do that ...working in a big organisation so I could understand how organisations operated” (participant 11)</i></p> <p><i>“a couple of people in my life have been important mentors...where I’ve been at my best in my career is where...there’s been somebody else had an important role, either challenged me, stretched me, created opportunities for me” (participant 1)</i></p> <p><i>“...people that I worked with at XXX and XXX, they have guided or at least had conversations with me around potential options and maybe influenced my decisions to go down certain routes and work for certain companies” (participant 14)</i></p> <p><i>“who’s willing to shape, someone who’s willing to offer their time and someone who’s patient with the mentee”. (participant 12)</i></p> <p><i>“I’ve had some really good managers who have been really helpful in both giving me opportunities but also working with you to find what opportunities I wanted to get to progress in terms of personal development as a manager, technical development as a psychologist or actually progression in terms of promotion” (participant 11)</i></p> <p><i>“I have been given various opportunities to be able to progress and if it wasn’t [for] the organisation as a whole to give them opportunities then I probably wouldn’t have this support that I needed financially.” (participant 14)</i></p> <p><i>“six months into my role I got a call from the contacts I made during my time as an intern at</i></p>

		<p><i>xxx when my manager then said ‘I am building a team...I need people can you come and help?’ (participant 12)</i></p> <p><i>“I think having a really good network of people who kept in touch with me like from the masters and that’s been a massive factor, there’s definitely something about networking and having a network of people who you can turn to and ask questions or get support from. I don’t think I’d be in the position I was now if I didn’t have that network.” (participant 13)</i></p> <p><i>“the other thing is contact, it’s a very small field, you need a lot of people that you know because many people do get their current jobs because somebody recommended them...” (participant 10)</i></p> <p><i>“I’ve got to be honest, it does help working with other occupational psychologists because we’ve got a massive support network and it’s good for throwing ideas around.” (participant 5)</i></p> <p><i>“There is something about the immediate group of people that I work with...they are quite a unique bunch compared to [other organisations]...there is something quite nice about that bunch, they are very supportive...makes for quite a nice working environment” (participant 17)</i></p>
<p>The Compromiser (External issues)</p>	<p>For these individuals OP employability identity was formed through the compromises that an individual has made throughout their career such as choosing location over jobs, coping with the economic uncertainty and managing work-life balance. Often described here was making the most out of their career based upon factors that were perhaps out of their control.</p>	<p><i>“one of the drivers for going back to XXX was that its only 15 minutes from my house which is really nice and they do flexi time and things like that so there was definitely that pull...” (participant 17)</i></p> <p><i>“I considered myself quite ambitious at work before I went on maternity leave, my ambition at work dropped off slightly when I was pregnant...two different parts of my brain compete, there is still the part of me that thinks I should be getting promoted and I should be getting pay rises...and then the other part of me is going I would quite like to just be at home and just be a mum... 18 months back and I am still trying to find exactly where that balance is and where my career will go next” (participant 17)</i></p> <p><i>“I am incredibly lucky to have a part time consultancy role because I know they are not easy to come by...I work 7 to 2, four days a week in term time and 7 to 3.30 three days a week during the holidays so it is really flexible...it also has an impact in terms of how I feel involved in the organisation...I do feel like I need to be on call 24/7 which goes against the part time work...”(participant 19)</i></p> <p><i>“we’ve got an eighteen month old daughter so again she’s settled with a nursery and a group of friends” (participant 11)</i></p> <p><i>“I have security and my family now are very prominent in my life so it’s about providing my daughter with opportunities and if I can do that through my work y’know that’s what I want to</i></p>

		<p>do” (participant 8)</p> <p><i>“uhm it’s been challenging I think, I think its opportunity as... I mean at the end of the day consultancy positions or positions where we can apply our skills as an OP doesn’t come around very often there are not many of the roles uhm and I think part of the challenge is, is not articulating uhm what we can offer to our potential employers but for them to recognise that we can offer help, so...it’s a two-way street isn’t it? So I think in terms of our ability to say what we can offer that’s one thing, for them to be open to us offering resources is another”</i> (participant 12)</p> <p><i>“probably a lack of opportunity sort of on face value, like when I look in the BPS appointments memorandum there’s nothing there...feeling quite hopeless I think about how you could develop”</i> (participant 13)</p> <p><i>“I think it is generally a problem in occupational psychology is that there aren’t that many big jobs...in reality there is no opportunity, nor do I think I’m really in a good position working part-time when there are other people full time who don’t even consider that they have a chance either”</i> (participant 19)</p> <p><i>“...difficult finding first of all psychology related vacancies that were entry level and then when you’d go it was just layers and layers of graduates, so there was my year, there was the year before me that had graduated, there was the year before them...just so much competition for them and I know loads of people who were technically over qualified going for entry level positions”</i> (participant 2).</p> <p><i>“I think you have the naïve view that it will generally be easy once you’ve done a masters and a degree and you’ve got some work experience but I think I hadn’t quite appreciated just how difficult it could be to get involved with things or tell people what you do”</i> (participant 13)</p> <p><i>“I think the move into clinical...I was really conscious of different people and staff members who were having mild to moderate mental difficulties with depression and anxiety and that’s such a massive work issue but then also...staff sickness and recruitment...my skills from the occupational psychology background hadn’t necessarily prepared me to the extent I would need in clinical settings...On the clinical training...at least 30% if my training on the three years is about managing teams and doing recruitment...organisational psychology is valued by clinicians”</i> (participant 13)</p> <p><i>“I guess like throughout my career I’ve heard words like psychologists, occupational, organisational, I’ve heard business and they do actually feel like different identities as well,</i></p>
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		<p><i>they feel like very different roles but they are fundamentally the same set of skills, well educational training...some people identify with the work psychologist title and some people identify with the organisational psychologist title, most people don't understand the occupational element.” (participant 13)</i></p> <p><i>“...everybody in this field should be called a work psychologist...It's very difficult to go on and put a definition or put a title in front of psychologist...so the occupational word probably might as well be changed to something very vague...” (participant 10)</i></p> <p><i>“it's in competition with the HR qualifications but I didn't realise that” (participant 3)</i></p> <p><i>“...people not obviously understanding what a psychologist is, definitely not knowing what an occupational psychologist is... In the OP committee...they said they find it hard to explain to people what they do so I do think between ourselves we need to get that image bit more sorted out.” (participant 6)</i></p> <p><i>“it's the responsibility of people that are or class themselves as occupational psychologists so those people that are trainees or chartered to be able to tell the story that they are working with so it enhances awareness that way...it is also the responsibility of the BPS to be able to build reputation” (participant 14)</i></p> <p><i>“what I mean is we need employers to recognise what they are [occupational psychologists] because my employer wouldn't care at the minute if I'm chartered or not, don't really mean anything to them” (participant 6)</i></p> <p><i>“I've been actively seeking promotion here ever since I got promoted but unfortunately as it's the public sector there's been pay freezes and no promotions at all unfortunately” (participant 5)</i></p> <p><i>“...we started having those conversations when the recession was hitting...when I first went in...I said how is the economy affecting you guys here...it's affecting us quite a bit where we are because government is making cuts and they said oh to be honest it hasn't really hit us, we seem to be alright. Three weeks later they pulled the job because it suddenly hit them and they realised that businesses were stopping spending money on stuff” (participant 17)</i></p> <p><i>“I guess a lot of people have new jobs at the moment because companies are starting to recruit again, so partly I think that I've got this job because of my own effort and background, but I think my job exists in the first place because the economy's turned around and I think that's the whole harsh reality that I learnt over the last kind of five to seven years is that is doesn't matter how intelligent you are, how much work you put in, the economy goes up or</i></p>
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		<p><i>down and it becomes more competitive and things become more difficult” (participant 2)</i></p> <p><i>“I like living in the north east and I like working in the north east and I think my impression was all of the jobs tend to be around London and it’s just too far away for me actually. So I was reluctant to move, not necessarily to London but just the south in general...I think that was maybe because I was potentially going down a different route rather than just traditional occupational psychology” (participant 13)</i></p> <p><i>“it’s been a formative part and important feature of my career that I’ve made it north east based. I’ve had to take that portfolio based approach” (participant 1)</i></p> <p><i>“if I didn’t have a job with them anymore, how I would find a job within the geographic location that is doing training design sort of thing...I think it would be tough” (participant 15)</i></p> <p><i>“I think there is still a lot of ‘cred[ibility]’ with saying that you are an occupational psychologist” (participant 20)</i></p> <p><i>“in my experience it’s been helpful in terms of getting a job and people seeing the value...I think it’s the science of what I think” (participant 6)</i></p>
<p>The Achiever (Success)</p>	<p>Achievers were characterised by their outcomes, and their identity was formed through success. For some this was objective success such as achieving chartered status, or being promoted, whilst for others this related to feeling confident to present themselves as an OP. Achievers aimed to find an organisation or role which fit their own values or personality in some way.</p>	<p><i>“I got chartership in 2011 and registered in the same year and I’ve got to be honest I’m pleased that I did that. Although it’s not a pre-requisite to the role I’m doing now it’s a personal achievement and maybe looking to pursue things differently in the future I think I’m pleased that I did do it...I feel competent in the experience that I’ve got and to have someone say yeah you’re competent to do that role, and I think it just gives me a bit more confidence behind that” (participant 5)</i></p> <p><i>“it’s given me that opportunity to work on things that I wouldn’t normally have done...There were a couple of projects that I definitely wouldn’t have been involved in...” (participant 9)</i></p> <p><i>“actual baseline money wasn’t really and still isn’t a real motivator” (participant 15)</i></p> <p><i>“I know what I am not driven by, I am not driven by money. I would like more money as everyone would and I don’t think I am necessarily entirely fairly paid at the moment, when I see other jobs around but it wouldn’t just be oh I can get x amount of money that the job that would be great” (participant 17)</i></p> <p><i>“my salary went up hugely...but it didn’t take me any nearer perhaps down the occupational psychology route” (participant 20)</i></p> <p><i>“for me it’s not just about money I need to be enjoying what I’m doing and kind of getting the benefit to be able to achieve something” (participant 5)</i></p> <p><i>“I wanted what I thought was the best organisation to work for and I guess xxx had the</i></p>

		<p><i>biggest known consultancy firm and the one that seemed to have the best reputation so that was what attracted me to them” (participant 19)</i></p> <p><i>“I was also quite attracted by the idea of having a professional status in the field and professional membership and occupational psychology offered that...I would have status really” (participant 11)</i></p> <p><i>“at the time I wanted to have that managerial responsibility and I do enjoy that aspect of my job but I also feel that I have learned quite a lot from doing that now and whilst each new person that I manage presents new learning opportunities, I felt like I needed that opportunity at the time... at the time that was important to me” (participant 19)</i></p> <p><i>“I’ve been trying to pick up a lot and trying to progress and trying to get promoted in the next year or two” (participant 9)</i></p> <p><i>“I think for me it’s just being able to really relate to the work that you are doing and seeing the difference that it makes and the impact that it has on the people that you are working for or with or the organisations or clients that you are working with...and being able to see how they have changed as a result of your work...” (participant 14)</i></p> <p><i>“...that was me at my best doing a bit of that and that was because I am an occ psych...I don’t think there’s any other, I don’t know how; I don’t think that would be arrived at in any other way” (participant 1)</i></p> <p><i>“my role’s changed massively in that time and probably autonomy is the thing that I strive to get throughout that time, and that’s what’s changed in my role is the level of autonomy and responsibility I have is massively different from five years ago” (participant 11)</i></p> <p><i>“I like the control that comes with self-employment” and “autonomy is a really important driver for me” (participant 20)</i></p> <p><i>“but hopefully a bit more autonomy as well...that can be irritating when...I’m happy to send out so it can be irritating to have to pass through so many people. So to move up the chain a bit means it passes through fewer people...just being trusted to make decisions” (participant 9)</i></p> <p><i>“if I had a choice I would preferably pick an organisation which better fit my interests and values” (participant 16)</i></p> <p><i>“I mean with the team that I work with here we’re very similar, we’re not particularly that outgoing or pushy or anything like that. So it carries a group of people who are quite similar to me who I’m friends with sort of not working in a competitive environment, I wouldn’t do well</i></p>
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		<i>in that kind of environment at all, it'd be really horrible and stressful"</i> (participant 9)
The Career Builder (Career Management)	These individuals were acutely aware of gathering experiences which could help them to create their identity, there was a sense of openness to experiences rather than forward planning to their stories. They also expressed skills in selling themselves and crafting their roles to ensure that they could add value to organisations.	<i>"you need experiences, just to build the experiences no matter whether they are good or bad, you like them or don't like them, they are formative"</i> (participant 1) <i>"I think that my career decisions for the future have been heavily influenced by the company I'm in now, because it is my first psychology related role and I'm a project co-ordinator at the moment but I'm hoping to move to a bigger project manager [role]"</i> (participant 2) <i>"if I had a bad day at work I like to job hunt...I do keep a fairly regular eye out on what else is out there just because I think its interesting...it's also good to see [what] opportunities there are because you never know when your dream job might come up"</i> (participant 17) <i>"that's the main ideas why I'm still looking and if I found somewhere tomorrow I would still be looking the day after, but I'm always looking"</i> (participant 10) <i>"they became really interested in the skills I could bring to recruitment and organisational change and staff stress and staff sickness and again I think I just had to be really bullish about things and just say can I do this, can I get involved in this, this is what I can do and then ended up developing quite a lot for the service"</i> (participant 13) <i>"there's something about using your initiative as well in looking at job adverts and things that, I think when I did the masters I was looking for an occupational psychologist job or something related to work psychology but then just using your imitative and thinking what skills can I use for this job and what can I bring to this job and then demonstrating that really"</i> (participant 13) <i>"well I guess it's useful knowing how interviews work, I used to always use the CAR approach...but having knowledge of interviews and job competencies and things like that...you have these knowledge and skills of what recruiters are looking for so that is useful"</i> (participant 16) <i>"instead of going in thinking that I have never been an occupational psychologist and a lot of what I offered was very relevant so it's getting them to see that that stuff can be helpful and useful to them"</i> (participant 20) <i>"I'm applying for a job that I actually don't want to do...but I'm quite comfortable that there would be an opportunity if I did get that job, there might be some scope to change it and to make it more achievable"</i> (participant 11) <i>"so whilst there are set ways of doing things, there is always [ways] in which you can play with them and I have certainly tried to use my occupational psychology background as far as possible when applying some of the certain methods that we have here"</i> (participant 14)

		<p><i>“was it breadth of expertise or did I just want to be exposed to different areas to decide what I liked” (participant 1).</i></p> <p><i>“my only concern is whether I am actually getting too niche...” (participant 16)</i></p> <p><i>“I don’t really have a specialism whereas I think a lot of occupational psychologists who have got 10-12 years experience like me would be assessment specialists or training specialists or I don’t know..” (participant 17)</i></p> <p><i>“at that point I decided that if I was going to specialise in the selection area I would rather work for a selection occupational psychology firm which specialises in that area” (participant 19)</i></p> <p><i>“in reality I think now I have been ready to broaden out again and actually possibly one of [my] motivations for joining the DOP and getting involved with the DOP is to give me a bit more breadth” (participant 19)</i></p> <p><i>“I am sort of open to anything with doing all the different tasks that get thrown at me” (participant 17)</i></p> <p><i>“...so I’ve always been like yeah I’ll give that a go” (participant 6)</i></p> <p><i>“I know although I’ve done lots of training I’ve not got a massive amount of work experience and I feel like that’s what I need to work on over the next years is finding areas that I’m most comfortable in and what’s the most valuable and useful” (participant 6)</i></p> <p><i>“so then I was working for them part time and doing little bits and bobs of freelance work” (participant 17)</i></p> <p><i>“we are valued for our ability to turn our hand to a whole variety of things” (participant 17)</i></p> <p><i>“I would be keen for other people to know is be open to opportunities not just in the UK” (participants 12)</i></p>
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