

Organisational Psychology Research Project: Evaluation of UnglueYou® Workshops

by Rachael Kraft (rachaelnkraft@gmail.com), supervisor: Libby Drury (l.drury@kent.ac.uk)
University of Kent, Canterbury, UK.

Abstract

Purpose of study: Self-efficacy (belief in one's ability) is a key psychological process in successful back-to-work transitions. This research evaluated the presence of self-efficacy and other related processes in workshops provided by UnglueYou®. **Design and methods:** 71 participants provided testimonials following participation in UnglueYou® workshops. Testimonials were thematically coded and tested for inter-rater reliability. **Results:** Themes of self-efficacy, mindfulness, creativity, therapy, and motivation were frequently expressed, while a sense of control was expressed moderately, and instances of anxiety and organisational identity were low. **Implications:** A continued focus on workshop participants' self-efficacy and motivation is recommended to improve successful back-to-work transitions. The development and inclusion of activities aimed at encouraging a sense of control and organisational identity could provide additional avenues to further enhance workshops.

Background

Self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to succeed and is important for personal success and confidence (Lopez et al., 2009; Phillips et al., 1997). The ability to persevere and maintain self-assurance can help individuals overcome a variety of obstacles, including life transitions (Bandura et al., 1983; Salehi et al., 2016). Those who are high in self-efficacy are more likely to be assured of their capacity for achievement, while those who are low in self-efficacy are more likely to be discouraged by failure (Bandura & Cervone, 1983). Further benefits of self-efficacy include contributing to successful work and life transitions by fostering coping mechanisms for stress and work-related challenges (Consiglio et al., 2013; Bandura & Schunk, 1981, 1997; Bandura et al., 1982). In particular, research has shown that self-efficacy is key for work transitions (Pinquart et al., 2003).

Other psychological processes have been identified as promoters of self-efficacy. These include locus of control (LoC), or one's perception of control over events in life (internally or externally); motivation, or what drives an individual (intrinsically or extrinsically); organisational identity (the strength of an internalised work identity) and mindfulness, or purposeful attention and self-awareness. Previous research suggests these processes have positive relationships with self-efficacy and thus may improve successful work-transitions. Based on this research, we first ran a quantitative pilot test to examine which processes predict self-efficacy. We then conducted qualitative exploratory analysis to explore the presence and strength of these processes in testimonials of participants who had taken part in back to work support programmes (Kraft, 2017).

Pilot Test

110 students completed questionnaires measuring self-efficacy and processes previously linked to self-efficacy. Multiple linear regression analysis revealed that LoC (the perception of internal control), integrated regulation (or an internalised value of an activity) and organisational identity (or the degree of identification with an organisation) were all significant predictors of self-efficacy (Kraft, 2017). These findings highlight the importance of these processes for increased self-efficacy.

Main Study Methods¹

Testimonials from 71 previous participants of UnglueYou® workshops were qualitatively analysed (female = 62, male = 7, prefer not to say = 2)². These testimonials were taken from UnglueYou®'s website, archives and paper and online questionnaires. Eligible participants were required to be over 16 years of age, and to be either enrolled or previously enrolled in an UnglueYou® workshop. Participants consisted of three subgroups: (1) participants on maternity leave, (2) participants who were unemployed or on career gaps, and (3) past participants prior to January 2017. Participant responses were thematically coded by two researchers for the presence of self-efficacy, LoC, four factors of motivation (integrated regulation, introjected regulation, external regulation, and intrinsic motivation), creativity, organisational identity, mindfulness, anxiety, and therapeutic effects (Bandura & Cervone, 1983; Rotter, 1966; Tremblay et al., 2010; Mahmood et al., 2016; Selenko et al., 2017).

Results

Tests of agreement (Cohen's κ) confirmed there was reliable consistency between the two coders (see Table 1 and 2). Results indicated that the most frequently occurring psychological processes mentioned by participants were: mindfulness, self-efficacy, motivation, creativity, therapeutic effects, control, organisational identity and anxiety.

Mindfulness. Mindfulness was the most frequently mentioned process with an average of 61.5 out of 71 participants, or 87%, expressing this theme. Examples included participants stating their wish *"to live just one day at a time,"* or affirming that they *"must be mindful."* A majority of participants also claimed to have gained an insight into themselves or a personal situation following participation in the workshop.

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy was reported by an average of 35.5 of 71 participants, or 50%, with many participants indicating feeling more confident following the workshop. Examples of expressions included: *"I have more confidence about the future"*, *"Feeling more comfortable acknowledging my 'stripes' and therefore more confident to share with others"* and having more *"confidence in my abilities."*

Motivation. 33 out of 71 participants, or 46% mentioned motivation. Based on WEIMS theory of motivation (Tremblay et al., 2010) this process was split into four factors: intrinsic motivation, integrated regulation, introjected regulation, and external regulation).

The most frequently occurring factor was integrated regulation, with an average of 17 out of 33 participants, or 52%, between judges. Examples of integrated regulation included: *"Looking at possibilities for the future that I created in the collage gave me the motivation I need to change my career path"*. For intrinsic motivation, 11.5 out of 33 participants, or 35% expressed this theme. Examples included *"I will benefit in thinking through my values more to help me get fire in my belly! A sense of belief and excitement in planning my next steps"* and *"I am looking ahead to start living again."*

External regulation was expressed by an average of 11 out of 33 participants, or 33%. Examples included: *"Being able to provide financially for my family,"* and *"Earning a living to support my family."* Many participants indicated themes of *"money"* or related terms as a motivating factor for their personal development. Lastly, introjected regulation was reported by an average of 3.5 out of 33 participants, or 11%. Examples included: *"my collage motivated to make changes as I wasn't prepared to keep feeling that way,"* and was often reminiscent of expressed guilt, or self-worth contingencies amongst participants.

¹ This research was conducted per the British Psychological Society's *Code of Conduct (2009)* and the Data Protection Act (1998), and was approved by the Psychology Ethics Committee at the University of Kent. Means of obtaining consent was approved by the Psychology Ethics Committee at the University of Kent.

² Mean age could not be determined due to missing data from participants. Quantitative data was also gathered from workshop participants, but was insufficient to conduct meaningful statistical analysis.

Creativity. Creativity was expressed by an average of 28 out of 71 participants, or 39%. Expressions of this theme included utilizing words such as “creative,” “fun,” “inspirational,” or directly stating they “came away with a creative collage.”

Therapy. Therapeutic effects were expressed at an average of 26.5 out of 71 participants, or 37%. Expressions of this theme included using words such as “therapeutic,” “calm,” “peaceful,” or “relaxing” in their responses.

Locus of Control. Control expressed by an average of 20.5 out of 71 participants, or 29%. Examples of internal LoC, a leading promoter of self-efficacy, included: “That the answer is within me--I don’t need to wait for anyone else to help me sort out my life!” and “I have choice freedom where I let other things/substance/people have power.”

Organisational Identity. An average of 13.5 out of 71 participants expressed organisational identity, or 19%. One participant stated directly that “work is a part of my identity” while other participants mentioned themes of overall identity such as “to feel I am someone other than a mother.” However, this was the second least frequently occurring theme likely due to the unemployment situation of many of the participants.

Anxiety. Anxiety was expressed by an average of 7.5 out of 71 participants, or 10.5%. Expressions of this theme included many participants feeling “stuck” or “unsure”. Low instances of this theme possibly suggest lowered anxiety following workshops.

Table 1. Results of the thematic coding

	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge Average	Agreement (κ)
Mindfulness	60 (85%)	63 (89%)	87%	.455*
Self Efficacy	37 (52%)	34 (48%)	50%	.522*
Motivation	33 (46%)	33 (46%)	46%	.545*
Creativity	21 (30%)	35 (49%)	39%	.547*
Therapeutic	32 (45%)	21 (30%)	37%	.560*
Control	23 (32%)	18 (25%)	29%	.489*
Organisational identity	17 (24%)	10 (14%)	19%	.413*
Anxiety	9 (13%)	6 (8%)	10.5%	.481*

Note. 71 participants. *= significant, $\kappa \geq .4$, $p < .001$.

Table 2. Results of thematic coding for factors of WEIMS (motivation).

	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge Average	Agreement (κ)
Intrinsic motivation	13 (.33%)	10 (29%)	35%	.741*
Integrated regulation	18 (48%)	16 (45%)	52%	.536*
Introjected regulation	3 (9%)	4 (13%)	11%	.850*
External regulation	13 (42%)	9 (29%)	33%	.679*

Note. 33 participants. *= significant, $\kappa \geq .4$, $p < .001$.

Summary and Recommendations

The results show that workshop participants reported high expressions of self-efficacy, mindfulness, creativity, therapeutic effects, and medium levels of control, suggesting participants may feel an increase of these psychological processes following the workshop. Other results indicate low expressions of anxiety post workshop, suggesting that this workshop may lower anxiety levels.

Based on these results, several recommendations for future UnglueYou® workshops can be determined. As self-efficacy is key for work transitions, identifying a high prevalence of self-efficacy in workshop participants' testimonials indicates a valuable outcome of the intervention. Future workshops should aim to continue fostering self-efficacy. The pilot study (although with students and not workers) suggested that self-efficacy is predicted by perceived control, motivation and organisational identity. Workshop participants frequently mentioned motivation, but control and organisational identity were mentioned to a lesser degree. A future focus on these latter two processes may improve work transitions and increase the value of the workshop. However, activities designed to increase organisational identity may be challenging for unemployed participants, but could provide a key process for those returning to previous employment, such as post maternity leave. Ultimately, this research suggests that by focusing on fostering these psychological processes, the likelihood of transition success can be increased. Measurement and comparison of these processes before and after the workshops is recommended to confirm results and accurately inform workshop directions.

References

- Altman, D. G. (1999). *Practical statistics for medical research*. New York, NY: Chapman & Hall/CRC Press.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: W.H. Freeman.
- Bandura, A., & Cervone, D. (1983). governing the motivational effects of goal systems. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *45*, 1017-1028.
- Bandura A., Reese L., Adams N. E. (1982). Microanalysis of action and fear arousal as a function of differential levels of perceived self-efficacy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *43*: 5-21.
- Bandura A., Schunk D. H. (1981). Cultivating competence, self-efficacy, and intrinsic interest through proximal self-motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *41*: 586-598.
- Bandura, A., & Wood, R. E. (1989). Effect of perceived controllability and performance standards on self-regulation of complex decision making. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *56*, 805-814.
- Cogswell, J. & Negley, S. K. (2011). The effect of autonomy-supportive therapeutic recreation programming on integrated motivation for treatment among persons who abuse substances. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, *45*(1). 47-61.
- Consiglio, C., Borgogni, L., Alessandri, G., & Schaufeli, W. (2013). Does self-efficacy matter for burnout and sickness absenteeism? The mediating role of demands and resources at the individual and team levels. *Work & Stress*, *27*(1), 22-42.
- Kraft, R. (2017). *Self-efficacy and Supporting Work Transitions*. University of Kent, Canterbury.
- Landis, J. R., & Koch, G. G. (1977). The measurement of observer agreement for categorical data. *Biometrics*, *33*, 159-174.
- Lopez, S., Snyder, C., & Maddux, J. (2009). Self-Efficacy: The Power of Believing You Can. In *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (p. The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology, Chapter 031). Oxford University Press.
- Mahmood, L., Hopthrow, T., & Randsley de Moura, G. (2016). A Moment of Mindfulness: Computer- Mediated Mindfulness Practice Increases State Mindfulness.
- Phillips, J., Gully, S., & Murphy, Kevin R. (1997). Role of Goal Orientation, Ability, Need for Achievement, and Locus of Control in the Self-Efficacy and Goal-Setting Process. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *82*(5), 792-802.
- Pinquart, Juang, & Silbereisen. (2003). Self-efficacy and successful school-to-work transition: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *63*(3), 329-346.
- Salehi, A., Harris, N., Coyne, E., & Sebar, B. (2016). Perceived control and self-efficacy, subjective well-being and lifestyle behaviours in young Iranian women. *Journal Of Health Psychology*, *21*(7), 1415-1425.
- Riach, K., & Loretto, W. (2009). Identity work and the 'unemployed' worker: Age, disability and the lived experience of the older unemployed. *Work, Employment And Society*, *23*(1), 102-119.
- Rotter, J. B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. *Psychological Monographs*, *80*(1), Whole no. 60
- Selenko, E., Mäkikangas, A., & Stride, C. (2017). Does job insecurity threaten who you are? Introducing a social identity perspective to explain well-being and performance consequences of job insecurity. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, *38*(6), 856-875. Doi:10.1002/job.2172
- Taylor, M. S., Locke, E. A., Lee, C., & Gist, M. E. (1984). Type A behavior and faculty research productivity: What are the mechanisms? *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, *34*, 402-418.
- Tremblay, M., Blanchard, C., Taylor, S., Pelletier, L., & Villeneuve, M. (2010). Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale: Its Value for Organizational Psychology Research (vol 41, pg 213, 2009). *Canadian Journal Of Behavioural Science- Revue Canadienne Des Sciences Du Co*, *42*(1), 70.