

**Faculté de psychologie et des sciences
de l'éducation**

Career Adaptability and Self-Efficacy in the process of job seeking

**Comparison between Belgium and Germany regarding
the influence of Job Experience and Job Search Experience
on Career Adaptability and Job Search Self-Efficacy
for Master's students and recent graduates.**

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I. INTRODUCTION

Many authors point out the current evolution to a globalizing and increasingly complex world, that makes labour markets uncertain and unpredictable (Hirschi, 2013; Le Corff & Gingras, 2011; Maggiori, Rossier, & Savickas, 2017; Rottinghaus, Day, & Borgen, 2005; Saks, Zikic, & Koen, 2015; Savickas, 2005; Tladinyane & Van der Merwe, 2015). Due to those consequential societal changes, psychological resources, such as Career Adaptability and Job Search Self-Efficacy (JSSE), become more and more precious for workers and job seekers. In effect, research show that those resources facilitate, among other things, the mastering of career transitions (Savickas, 2005), for example by increasing one's sense of power (Hirschi, 2009), one's Job Search Behaviour (Eden & Aviram, 1993; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Wanberg, Kanfer, & Rotundo, 1999) and -Outcomes (Brown, Cober, Kane, Levy, & Shalhoop, 2006; Eden & Aviram, 1993; Ellis & Taylor, 1983; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Moynihan, Roehling, LePine, & Boswell, 2003; Saks & Ashforth, 1999).

The aim of this study is to add new findings to the current literature about Career Adaptability and JSSE, since there is a lack of research about explanation variables that are linked to the individual's history. Hence, focusing our research on career guidance, we chose to investigate the impact of Job Experience and Job Search Experience on Career Adaptability and JSSE. Additionally, in the spirit of globalization, we do not limit the research to one country, but also investigate possible international differences. In effect, student's Job Experience seems to differ in the two countries, chosen to be compared: Belgium and Germany¹ (Baccichet, 2017; Middendorff et al., 2017; NSSO Statistics Department, 2018; Vendramin, 2007). Therefore, the first four research questions lead, step by step, to the last all-embracing research question, whether the national context has an impact on the Job Experience and the Job Search Experience, and in this way on Career Adaptability and JSSE.

This study focuses on a specific population that could benefit significantly from developing Career Adaptability and JSSE: students at the end of their master as well as

¹ The choice of these two countries is due to the fact that the author of this study has grown up in both countries and has noticed some fundamental differences concerning the educational system and career perspectives which seem to be worthy to be investigated further within this context. And indeed, another study already stated significant differences between Belgium's and Germany's values (Spector, 2001).

recently graduates. Indeed, thousands of them are facing every year a major life-changing event when graduating and starting the process of their first big job search. Career counsellors and (political) educational programs should use the findings of this and other studies about Career Adaptability, JSSE, Job Experience and Job Search Experience, in order to help those young people to master successfully their school-to-work-transition. In effect, the decisions they are making at this stage of life can significantly affect their later career success (Saks, 2018).

This thesis is divided into two parts: The first is theoretical, the second empirical. The theoretical framework of this thesis covers three chapters, starting with a detailed presentation of the resource Career Adaptability. The second chapter focuses on the second resource that is subject of this study: JSSE. The third chapter compares the two investigated countries, Belgium and Germany, in terms of their higher education system as well as the respective standards, facilities and restrictions concerning the execution of student jobs.

In the second part, the empirical part, first of all, the five research questions and the eleven hypotheses will be explained. Subsequently, the methodology of this study is presented. Then, the statistical analyses and their results will be presented. In the last chapter, the discussion, the results will be interpreted according to theory before highlighting its limits and the future leads.

II. THEORETICAL PART

Chapter 1

Career Adaptability

1. Introduction of the first chapter: Why is Career Adaptability important?

As stated in the introduction, the world, and thus careers and workplaces, become uncertain and unpredictable (Le Corff & Gingras, 2011; Maggiori et al., 2017; Saks et al., 2015; Savickas, 2005; Tladinyane & Van der Merwe, 2015). Our industrial society with its factory system evolved to a knowledge-based society that does not focus on factories anymore but on information technology (Savickas, 2005) and global, quick interactions, and thereby becomes more complex and dynamic (Hirschi, 2013; Rottinghaus et al., 2005). Therefore, workers and future workers are more and more confronted with instability and transitions and, hence, need – more than ever – the ability to adjust in a flexible way to the given context, or briefly said: “adapt-ability” (Le Corff & Gingras, 2011; Maggiori et al., 2017; Tladinyane & Van der Merwe, 2015).

First, the origin of the Career Adaptability concept will be presented, more precisely how Super (1983) invented and Savickas (1997) extended it. Subsequently, the concept will be defined and described. Finally, its implications and antecedents will be presented.

2. The origin of the concept of ‘Career Adaptability’

Career adaptability is the core construct in Super’s life-span approach (Savickas, 1997), which revolutionised the field of the career development psychology (Hirschi, 2013; Le Corff & Gingras, 2011) and helped to form the base of today’s career counselling (Savickas, 2001).

In the first part of the 20th century, the current approach of assessment in educational and vocational counselling was based on the *matching model* (Super, 1983). In vocational assessments people were matched to positions accordingly to their profiles of abilities, interests and values which are supposed to be stable (Super, 1983). The most popular example therefore is John Holland’s *theory of Vocational Choice* (1973) (Le Corff & Gingras, 2011).

In the middle of the second part of the 20th century, Super criticised that this individual-differences-perspective on occupations and workers neglects the longitudinal perspective (Savickas, 2001). Hence, instead of continuing focussing on how

individuals differ from each other and how they fit into diverse occupations, he got interested in how they develop their work roles throughout their lives (Savickas, 2001). He described the process in which individuals improve their vocational coping strategies and thus access to jobs in which their abilities will be better used and their needs better satisfied (Savickas, 2001). This focus on the career development contributes to the paradigm change to the *developmental approach*.

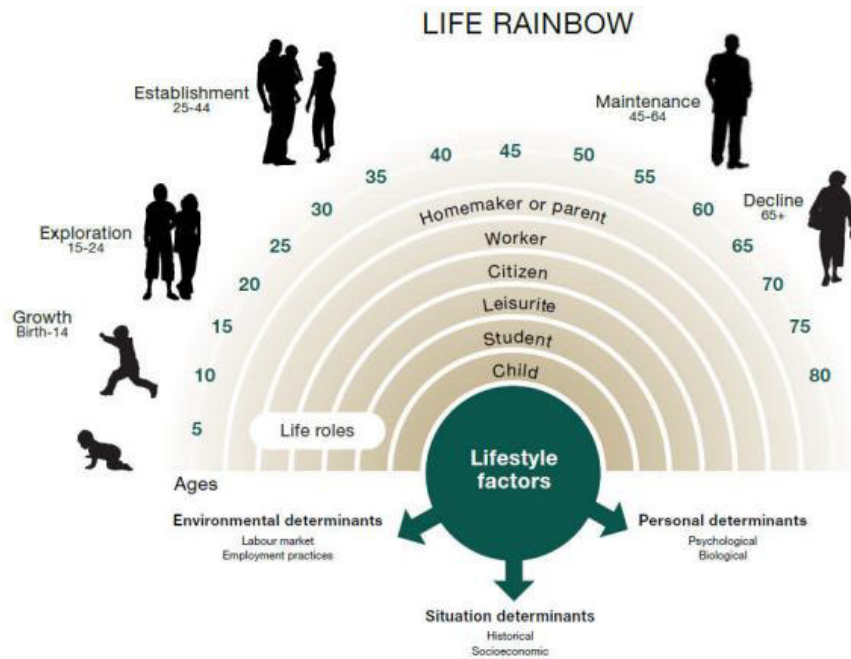
In 1997, the concept of career adaptability was adopted and developed further by Savickas for the applicability in a multicultural society and global economy (Savickas, 2005). It became the central concept of his *career construction theory* (CCT; Savickas, 2005, 2002, 1997) and contributed thereby to the development of the *(socio-)constructivist approach* which emphasizes the dynamic between the individual and the environment (Nils, 2018; Savickas, 2005).

2.1. Super and the developmental approach

Super's approach doesn't consist of one specific theory but rather in three interrelated theories: Career Development Theory (1957), Developmental Self-Concept Theory (1981) and life-span, life-space theory (1990) (Hirschi, 2013; Le Corff & Gingras, 2011; Savickas, 1997).

In his life-span, life-space theory (1990) he postulated that one's career development proceeds in five determined and orderly sequences. These five stages represent a development aim and are named after it (Le Corff & Gingras, 2011): *growth*, *exploration*, *establishment*, *maintenance* and *decline* (Hirschi, 2013). They are chronologically related to a certain life span and thus age and social norms and expectations, beyond the individual differences such as someone's preferences (Hirschi, 2013; Nils, 2018; Savickas, 2001). Besides of the first stage, people have to pass three development tasks in each of these stages in order to pass to next stage and thus move toward a desirable end state of maturity (Savickas, 2005). During this process individuals would construct their personal and professional identities (Nils, 2018) and thus unfold their career. According to Super, the career is not only formed by the job, but also by one's other important life roles (Le Corff & Gingras, 2011; Salomone, 1996), such as being a parent, citizen, 'leisurite', student or child (see illustration below). His "life-career rainbow" model illustrates this interaction of environmental,

personal and situational determinants which influence and explain one's career (Salomone, 1996) (see illustration below).



Source : Nils, F. (2018). *Parcours scolaire et orientation*, LPSYS2412. Unpublished document, Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve.

During the first stage (“growth”) (0 – 14 years), people develop their self-concept and positive self-esteem, their attitudes and their needs, in order to learn adaptive work habits and attitudes for the future. The second stage (“exploration”) (14 – 24 years) is the typical life span for “trying out” in order to find the best fit on the personal and professional level. In the third stage ("establishment") (25 – 44 years) people are expected to find a corresponding occupation, and thus to stabilise in this permanent job, and then to advance – whether in the same organisation or a new one. During the fourth stage (“maintenance”) (45 – 64 years), people should adjust and hold on in order to maintain and improve their position. In the fifth and last stage (“decline”) (after 65 years) it’s time to disengage step by step his professional responsibilities and prepare for retirement and thus for other activities (Nils, 2018; Savickas, 2001).

These five sequences represent a cycle that an individual pass while developing his/her career from the beginning to the end of their life (“*maxi cycle*”). But there are also “*mini cycles*” where individuals undergo these stages in a much shorter time span: during moments of destabilisation, whether produced by career transitions (e.g. starting

a new job or position) or by perturbing personal and/or socio-economical events (e.g. divorce) (Le Corff & Gingras, 2011; Nils, 2018; Savickas, 2005).

By recommending paying more attention to the dynamic nature of the career tasks (Super, 1983), Super paved the way for the *constructivist approach*. According to him, the individual is always in interaction with his environment (Le Corff & Gingras, 2011; Savickas, 1997; Super, 1983). He compares career adaptability with Piaget's model of adaptation (1969). In both cases, the individual must find a good balance between accepting the impact of the environment on him (assimilation) (e.g. of pressures from the world of labour) or making himself an impact on his environment (accommodation) (e.g. doing some modifications) (Super & Knasel, 1981).

2.2. Savickas and the constructivist approach

On the one hand, many searchers agree that Super's ideas have been innovative and a big turn for the vocational psychology (e.g. (Le Corff & Gingras, 2011; Savickas, 2001). Savickas (2001) emphasizes that Super's theory is applicable in diverse cultures and countries as it focusses on general career development, and not on specific occupations (as the matching model or trait-and-factor theory does it).

On the other hand, Super's approach, is too parsimonious to explain the whole complexity of the vocational choosing (Le Corff & Gingras, 2011) and needs some review (Savickas, 2001) and specifications (Hirschi, 2013). Savickas and other authors (e.g. Hirschi (2013)) criticised the fact that (1) Super's theory was not one integrated theory but three segmented theories and that (2) it represents an augmentation of the early twentieth-century matching paradigm, rather than an alternative, more contemporary theory (Savickas, 1997).

In Savickas' opinion, (1) his *Theory of Career Construction* integrates all the segments of Super's *life span, life space approach* into one comprehensive theory (Rottinghaus et al., 2005; Savickas, 2005) and (2) is even more adapted to our times where technology and economy are changing faster (Savickas, 1997). Indeed, today's turbulent society doesn't provide stable and orderly environments anymore, but forces individuals to react to various external influences (Savickas, 2005). Thus, one's development is not normative and uniform anymore, but differs between people according to their individual situation.

Furthermore (3), he insists that the life-cycle transitions (like for example the transition from school to work which is subject of this master thesis) would represent more an adaptive challenge, and less a maturational task (Savickas, 1997, 2005). For him, career development is not a discovery of pre-existing objective facts, but a subjective construction, as the individual engages in an active process of making meaning of his past memories, present experiences, and future aspirations (Savickas, 2005).

3. Career Adaptability

3.1. Definition

Super and Knasel (1981) were the first one who put forward the term ‘Career Adaptability’. After three decades, Super criticised his own originally chosen term ‘career maturity’ (or ‘vocational maturity’) and recommended to replace it by ‘Career Adaptability’ (Le Corff & Gingras, 2011; Super & Knasel, 1981). Both terms shall describe “*the coping behaviours necessary for dealing with career development tasks at any life stage*” but the word ‘adaptability’ would avoid any questionable reference to maturation or growth, and thus would be applicable to any age. Moreover, this new term would emphasize the interaction between the individual and the environment. Since then, the term Career Adaptability became the nomenclature (Rottinghaus et al., 2005).

Since then, Savickas (1997) refined Career Adaptability as “the readiness **to cope with the predictable tasks** of preparing for and participating in the work role and with the **unpredictable adjustments** prompted by changes in work and working conditions”, and as a set of “**attitudes, competencies, and behaviours** that individuals use in **fitting themselves to work that suits them**” (Savickas, 2013). Indeed, the latin roots of the word “to adapt” mean “to fit” or “to join” (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Hirschi (2013) added that “the aim of this matching process is to have a working situation in which the work supports and confirms the own **self concept**.” In 2005, Savickas reinforced the link to Super’s approach and put forward a second definition: “The attributes that individuals need to **successfully engage the tasks** inherent in mini-cycle transitions and maxi-cycle stages [...]. Adaptability involves **adjusting** to vocational development tasks, occupational **transitions**, and personal traumas **by solving problems** that are usually unfamiliar, often ill-defined, and always complex”.

By transitions Savickas understands transitions like from school to work, from job to job, and from occupation to occupation (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

In conclusion, both, Savickas and Super, proposed the concept of Career Adaptability. However, they differ one from another since Super's conception refers to a normative development and an inner predetermined maturation process, whereas Savickas focuses on the context, the environment that forces individuals to adapt to, and this in a flexible and not predetermined way (Hirschi, 2013; Le Corff & Gingras, 2011; Savickas, 2005).

3.2. The 4 components of Career Adaptability

Today researchers use Savickas' concept of Career Adaptability which consists of four psychosocial resources and transactional competencies that support self-regulation strategies with the objective of achieving adaptation goals (Koen, Klehe, & Van Vianen, 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Concretely, they are called the 4Cs (concern, control, curiosity and confidence) and represent the ability to plan, to make decisions, to explore and to solve problems.

- The first facet of Career Adaptability is **concern**: People who are concerned about their career look ahead and are aware of the future, and thus plan their desired future career by considering past experiences (Maggiori et al., 2017; Savickas, 2005; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).
- The second facet of Career Adaptability is career **control**: This resource represents a person's beliefs about her responsibility for her own career and a person's ability to effectively exercise control over her present and future vocational situation (e.g. proving efforts and persistence and decisiveness) (Koen et al., 2012; Maggiori et al., 2017; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).
- The third facet of Career Adaptability is **curiosity**: People who are curious about their career tend to think about themselves in different vocational situations, roles and environments, to seek information and to explore opportunities. As a result, they become able to evaluate the degree of matching with their different career options in a realistic way (Koen et al., 2012; Maggiori et al., 2017; Savickas, 2005)
- The fourth facet of Career Adaptability is **confidence**: People who are confident about their career, perceive a higher self-efficacy to overcome obstacles and thus

to successfully achieve their career aspirations. They won't give up that quickly and will persist in actively solving the given problems. (Koen et al., 2012; Maggiori et al., 2017; Savickas, 2005)

3.3. Outcomes of Career Adaptability

Consequently, there are various positive outcomes that have been reported in different studies. Career Adaptability seems to predict **academic success** (Rottinghaus et al., 2005), employees' subjective **career success** and subjective **career satisfaction** (Zacher, 2014a), **life satisfaction** (Hirschi, 2009), **sense of power** (Hirschi, 2009) and **comfort with one's educational and career-related plans** (Rottinghaus et al., 2005).

It also seems to help people **mastering vocational/career transitions** (Savickas, 2005), for example it augments job seekers' **job search self-efficacy** (Guan et al., 2013) and **(re-)employment quality** (Koen, Klehe, Van Vianen, Zikic, & Nauta, 2010). The effect on job search self-efficacy will be deepened in the following chapters.

3.4. Antecedents of Career Adaptability

The Career Adaptability resources described below are not stable traits, but they are malleable, as they can change over time as a function of different factors (Guan et al., 2013; Koen et al., 2012; Zacher, 2014a, 2014b). Koen et al. (2012) found out that they can be influenced even by only a one-day-training. They can be viewed as human capital that is developed through experience and thus depending on the context and **culture** (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Zacher, 2014b). Indeed, the countries differ in the degree of stimulating and promoting or impeding the development and expression of these resources (Dries, Van Esbroeck, van Vianen, De Cooman, & Pepermans, 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). This point will be deepened in chapter 3.

Besides the cultural factor, there are other factors Career Adaptability depends on. Concerning the demographical characteristics, the researches are not totally conclusive. According to Dries et al. (2012) and Hirschi (2009) there is no relation between **age** and Career Adaptability, whereas the researches of (Hou, Leung, Li, Li, & Xu, 2012; Tladinyane & Van der Merwe, 2015; Zacher, 2014a) indicate the contrary, at least for some of the Career Adaptability's facets (in Zacher's study (2014a) the older participants were less concerned and perceived more control). The researches about

gender seem to be likewise inconclusive (Patton & Creed, 2001). For example, Hirschi (2009) did not find a correlation, but Hou et al. (2012) reported that the male participants scored higher in all the facets except concern than the female participants did. People's or people's parents **educational level** does not seem to influence the level of Career Adaptability (Dries et al., 2012; Hirschi, 2009), but the **immigration background and the race group** seem to have an impact (Hirschi, 2009; Tladinyane & Van der Merwe, 2015).

Beyond the demographical factors, one's general **positive emotional disposition** and one's **perceived social support** seem to have an influence on the development of Career Adaptability, in both cases a positive one (Hirschi, 2009).

4. Conclusion of the first chapter

In conclusion, this chapter showed that before, in the era of linear and more predictable careers, the matching and developmental approach made sense. But in today's instable world of labour these approaches are not appropriate anymore, and the more recent findings of the, among others, constructivist perspective should be taken into account. In these days and age the capacity to adapt is crucial for surviving in the quickly changing world of labour and thus the concept of Career Adaptability which was proposed by Super (1983), extended by Savickas (1997) and since then largely investigated by numerous researches is important to consider in the debate on career development.

Career councillors and (political) educational programs should try to foster Career Adaptability as it represents crucial resources that help students, job seekers and employees to cope with the various tasks and challenges, they must deal with for their entire life. Beneficiaries would become more concerned and curious about their future; they would perceive more confidence in their capacities as well as more control of the situation. As a result, developing one's Career Adaptability will enable him or her to better master his/her career transitions – which, as said before, are getting more and more numerous in our times, and especially for the target group of this study, university graduates, as they are little familiar yet with the job search process.

Chapter 2

Job Search Self Efficacy (JSSE)

1. Introduction

Another important self-regulatory resource for coping with the increased instability in employment is Job Search Self-Efficacy (hereafter abbreviated with JSSE) (Liu, Huang, & Wang, 2014; Saks et al., 2015). With careers not being strictly linear anymore but consisting of different job experiences, job seeking has become a common task for adults and a crucial stage in their career development (Bao & Luo, 2015; Liu et al., 2014; Saks et al., 2015).

In this chapter, we are first going to explain the concept of JSSE and its origin. Subsequently its antecedents and outcomes will be presented. Finally, before concluding the chapter, the practical implications for career counselling will be subject of discussion.

2. Origin, definition and description of JSSE

2.1. Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy expectations reflect “*people’s conviction in their own effectiveness*” that will determine in which degree “*coping behavior will be **initiated**, how much **effort** will be expended, and how long it will be **sustained** in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences.*” (Bandura, 1977). Bandura explains: When people believe that a given situation exceeds their coping capacities, they feel threatened and tend to avoid said situation rather than getting involved. In this case of effort reduction and abandonment, they miss their chance to get rid of their self-debilitating expectations and fears. In contrast, people that perceive a situation as intimidating but still persist until mastering it, will witness increased self-efficacy beliefs and decreased defensive-avoidant behaviour.

However, self-efficacy expectation is not the only factor to predict the desired performance or outcome. It also requires the appropriate capabilities as well as the adequate incentives (Bandura, 1977). But if these other two factors are given, strong self-efficacy expectations will help people to set and pursue challenging goals until achieving them, without being daunted by the obstacles and difficulties they encounter (Bandura, 1977).

2.2. Job Search Self-Efficacy (JSSE)

These self-efficacy beliefs differ in magnitude, strength and generality. Concerning the generality, this means that they can be specific to a certain task or treatment situation (Bandura, 1977; Moynihan et al., 2003). In effect, in 1983 two publications suggested a type of self-efficacy that is specific to job search and thus a more precise predictor of Job Search Behaviours and outcomes than the global measure of self-efficacy. First, Taylor and her colleague Betz proposed the concept of “career-related self-efficacy” as a method to assess self-efficacy expectations specifically with respect to career decision-making tasks (Taylor & Betz, 1983). Later in the same year, the same author and her other colleague Ellis investigated the role of self-esteem in the job search process (Ellis & Taylor, 1983). This concept, where all the three authors refer to, and which is now commonly called “job search self-efficacy” describes *“the expectations of mastery over the behaviours prerequisite to reemployment, that is, Job Search Behaviours”* (Kanfer & Hulin, 1985).

Accordingly, a high level of JSSE increases the probability of having a positive attitude during the job searching process, thus to solve potential problems and challenges, and as a result to find a good fitting job (Bao & Luo, 2015). Conversely, people having a low JSSE manifest a lower job search efficiency. In effect, they tend to underestimate their abilities and thus to opt for jobs that are below their level of competence. Furthermore, they engage less in necessary job search activities whereby they risk missing good job opportunities.

3. Antecedents & Outcomes

3.1. The antecedents of JSSE

Self-efficacy expectations may result from various sources and thus can be modified by them (Taylor & Betz, 1983). In his model of global self-efficacy Bandura (1977) suggests for principal sources: performance accomplishments, verbal persuasion, vicarious experience/ learning/ modeling and physiological states.

- **‘Performance accomplishments’** mean experiences of successfully performing the behaviours in question (Taylor & Betz, 1983), in the case of job search accordingly the past job search experiences. Fort, Jacquet, and Leroy (2011), Kanfer and Hulin (1985) and Liu et al. (2014) found evidence that this part of

Bandura's theory is applicable to the job search process (e.g. the learning of skills related to job search or career decision that may lead to the perception of job search progress), whereas Moynihan et al. (2003) did not.

- Kanfer and Hulin (1985) as well as Fort et al. (2011) also confirm Bandura's factor '*verbal persuasion*' (e.g. encouragement and support provided by the instructor in a JSSE training).
- The '*vicarious experience/ learning/ modeling*', or more specifically the observations of others engaged in job search, also seems to be an antecedent for JSSE (Kanfer & Hulin, 1985).
- The fourth source, '*physiological state*', refers to the emotional arousal that a person experience. According to Bandura (1977), an individual's anxiety linked to the behaviour in question covaries inversely with the level and strength of his or her self-efficacy beliefs. Hence, the higher his or her self-efficacy expectations are with respect to the given behaviour, the less anxious he/she should be about it, and vice versa. The research made in the course of this study did not reveal any findings that would confirm or infirm the applicability of this factor from Bandura's global self-efficacy theory to the more specific job search self-efficacy.

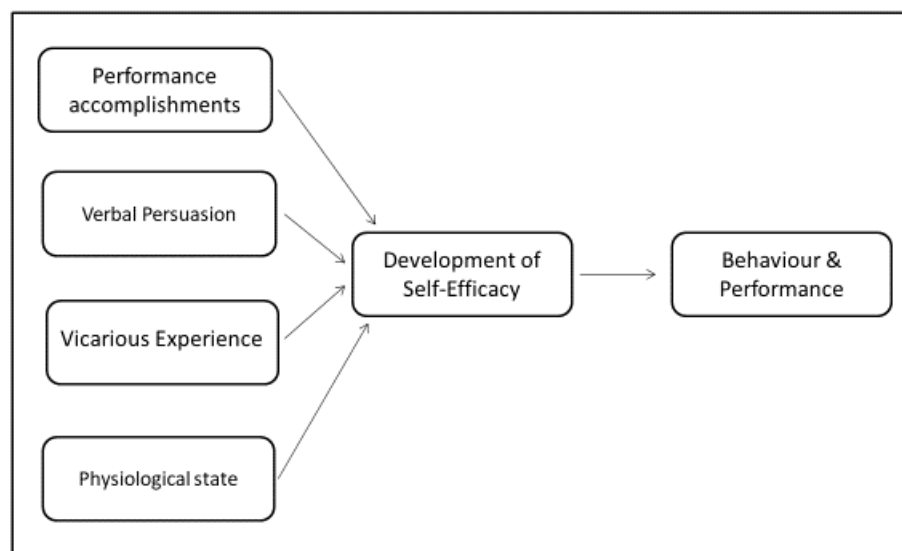


Figure 1. Antecedents and Outcomes of Self-Efficacy

Beyond Bandura's basic model, the personality seems to be another factor that also influences the development of JSSE. In effect, people with a high level of **extraversion** (Kirk, 2016; Zimmerman, Boswell, Shipp, Dunford, & Boudreau, 2012), of **conscientiousness** (Kirk, 2016; Schmit, Amel, & Ryan, 1993 quoted by Moynihan et al., 2003) and of **proactivity** ((Brown et al., 2006) tend to have a higher level of JSSE, whereas **neuroticism** was associated with lower JSSE (Zimmerman et al., 2012).

Furthermore, various researches found evidence for the relation between general **self-esteem** and JSSE (Moynihan et al., 2003).

The adaptive resource **Career Adaptability**, that has been described in the previous chapter, also seems to be positively related to JSSE. According to Guan et al. (2013), the facets 'career concern' and 'career control' served as the strongest predictor for JSSE. These findings are coherent as Career Adaptability gives the impression that one possesses various psychological resources for coping with the challenges emerging during the career (Guan et al., 2013).

Contrarily to what one could expect, in the research of Moynihan et al. (2003), the **grade point average at school or university** and the **number of Job Experience** have not turned out to be significant predictors for JSSE. Nevertheless, the authors suggest to further investigate these factors before making a final conclusion about their impact in the development of JSSE.

And, in fact, Kirk's findings (2016) suggest that at least **the current employment status** does have an impact on the level of JSSE. By questioning leavers of higher educational she observed that those who were already in employment or enrolled for further study reported a higher level of JSSE than those who were unemployed at the moment of the survey.

3.2. The outcomes of JSSE – introduction

JSSE has an impact on three types of outcomes: Job Search Intention, Job Search Behaviour and Job Search Outcomes.

But before discussing these outcomes, some nuances need to be made. By investigating the effects of JSSE it is important to distinguish *Job Search Behaviour* and *Job Search Outcomes*. On the one hand, there is the Job Search Behaviour that a job seeker can engage into, and which is conceptualized as the investment of effort and time

in order to gather information about the labour market - irrespective of the consequences (Bretz Jr, Boudreau, & Judge, 1994). On the other hand, there are multiple aspects of Job Search Outcomes a job seeker can achieve as a result of his job search. They will be presented in detail in the next subsection.

Previous researches on JSSE often have neglected this distinction which often led to a certain confusion in their measurement of JSSE. Therefore, in this master thesis, JSSE will be distinguished in accordance with the concept it refers to: Job Search Behaviour or Job Search Outcomes. Saks et al. (2015) suggested a two-factor model of JSSE which reflects the two different types of self-efficacy beliefs that a job seeker can have and that can not be measured by the same items: (A) **JSSE-B**, which is “the belief or confidence that he/she can successfully perform specific Job Search Behaviours (e.g., to plan and organize a weekly job search schedule)”. Consequently, JSSE-B predicts the best jobs search behaviour; (B) **JSSE-O**, which is “the belief or confidence that he/she can successfully obtain Job Search Outcomes (e.g., more than one good job offer)”. Thus, JSSE-O is the strongest predictor for Job Search Outcomes.

Concerning the Job Search Behaviour, another distinction must be made as there are two different stages: *preparatory Job Search Behaviour* and *active Job Search Behaviour* (Blau, 1994). The first stage, the **Preparatory Job Search Behaviour** refers to activities like looking for Job Search Information and identifying potential hints and targets during the planning phase (e.g., reading job 11ads) (Blau, 1994; Brown et al., 2006; Saks et al., 2015). The second stage, **Active Job Search Behaviour** means the actual job search activities aiming to achieve these targets set before (e.g., submitting one’s application, doing interviews) (Brown et al., 2006; Saks et al., 2015) and thus the individual’s commitment to his or her job search (Blau, 1994).

In conclusion, JSSE-B predicts Job Search Behaviour and JSSE-O predicts Job Search Outcomes (Saks et al., 2015), whereas Job Search Behaviour (preparatory and active) is not only an outcome of JSSE but also represents a proximal antecedent for Job Search Outcomes (Brown et al., 2006; Caplan, Vinokur, Price, & Van Ryn, 1989; Moynihan et al., 2003; Saks et al., 2015). While discussing the effects of JSSE, people should be aware of these distinctions, as there is a risk to confound the different concepts and thus

to measure different things. Such an inconsistency in measuring JSSE and its outcomes questions the validity of the measures and the findings from studies that used different measures and makes it difficult to compare the results across studies (Saks et al., 2015).

3.3. The outcomes of JSSE

After these clarifications, the three types of possible outcomes of JSSE are going to be presented in detail now: Job Search Intention, Job Search Behaviour, and Job Search Outcomes.

Concerning the relation between JSSE and **Job Search Intention** there is an inconsistency in the literature. Most of the studies found evidence for it (Brown et al., 2006; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Moynihan et al., 2003; Saks et al., 2015), but some did not (Van Hooft, Born, Taris, & van der Flier, 2004).

The significant relation between JSSE and actual **Job Search Behaviour** has been reported various times (Bao & Luo, 2015; Brown et al., 2006; Eden & Aviram, 1993; Fort et al., 2011; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Liu et al., 2014; Moynihan et al., 2003; Saks & Ashforth, 1999). As explained previously, Bandura's theory (1977) suggests that self-efficacy increases one's efforts, persistence and goal-directed activity. Indeed, people having high levels of JSSE seem to put more behavioural efforts to achieve their goal of finding a job (Eden & Aviram, 1993; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Wanberg et al., 1999).

However, Bao's and Luo's results (2015) suggest that this effect is moderated by the individual's level of proactivity. It seems that people who are less proactive would remain nevertheless passive and stagnate by inertia - even those who have a high level of JSSE. Hence, in case of little proactive people even a high level of JSSE would not effectively lead to more Job Search Activities (Bao & Luo, 2015).

Furthermore, as already mentioned, JSSE is a principal predictor for **Job Search Outcomes** as well (Brown et al., 2006; Eden & Aviram, 1993; Ellis & Taylor, 1983; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Moynihan et al., 2003; Saks & Ashforth, 1999).

As stated before, Job Search Outcomes describe various aspects of what a job seeker could search for. A job seeker having a high level of JSSE is more likely to

receive a high **number of job offers**² [higher level of quantity] (Moynihan et al., 2003; Saks et al., 2015), to receive **offers from a preferred employer** [higher level of quality] (Moynihan et al., 2003), to spend less **time in the searching process** (Kanfer, Wanberg, & Kantrowitz, 2001), to be successfully (re)employed (Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Kanfer et al., 2001; Saks & Ashforth, 1999), and to be actually satisfied in the new job (Zimmerman et al., 2012).

In turn, the experience of quickly finding a job, and thus not having to bear a prolonged period of unemployment, is a factor of protection against deterioration of the job seeker's mental health (such as feelings of helplessness, higher level of stress, depression, anxiety, distress and psychosomatic symptoms) that is a typical consequence of long-term unemployment (Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Paul & Moser, 2009; Wanberg et al., 1999).

4. Implications

As JSSE has so many positive effects on job search, it is a promising resource that is worth to foster for example through career training and counselling (Bao & Luo, 2015; Liu et al., 2014; Moynihan et al., 2003; Saks & Ashforth, 1999). This may be especially useful for young graduates as they are only little familiar with the labour market and the job search process (Guan et al., 2013). In effect, this target group, that is in focus of this study, does not have any or only little experience of mastery in this domain. But as mentioned before, according to Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977), the experience of mastery (or 'performance accomplishment') is one of the four factors that contributes to the development of self-efficacy and thus the perception of control over and confidence in the job search process they are confronted with for the (almost) first time.

Hence, during job search interventions the traditional focus on interests, knowledge and skills could be enhanced by self-efficacy approach. In effect, interventions that improve the participant's debilitating beliefs and thus increase their

² Contradictory to what one could expect, JSSE does not augment the number of interviews participated in, but 'only' the number of received job offers (Moynihan et al., 2003). These authors surmise that people having a higher level of JSSE may feel less need to cast a wide net for being successful - which has been shown to be true. In effect, they turn out to convert more effectively their interviews into offers.

self-efficacy in the job search domain should lead to decrease their anxiety and thus their avoidant behaviour with respect to job search (Moynihan et al., 2003; Taylor & Betz, 1983).

As mentioned before, the four main sources of information through which self-efficacy beliefs are formed and by which they can be modified are (1) *performance accomplishments/ experience of mastering*, (2) *verbal persuasion*, (3) *vicarious learning/modelling* and (4) *emotional arousal* (Bandura, 1977). Hence, interventions aimed to foster JSSE should focus on these factors (Fort et al., 2011; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Liu et al., 2014; Moynihan et al., 2003; Taylor & Betz, 1983). For example (1) the training should convey job search related skills (e.g. how to write a resume, or a cover letter), (2) provide encouragement and support for the participants, (3) give the opportunity to hear about or meet peers that did successfully manage their job search and reached the outcomes they were seeking for, and (4) minimise negative emotional arousal, such as anxiety.

Concerning the last point, Liu et al.'s meta-analytic review (2014) showed that contrarily to their expectations, the specific intervention in stress management does not seem to be necessary, as they did not find any support for their hypothesis that managing stress is a crucial component of successful job search interventions – neither in a direct way, nor mediated by self-efficacy. This absence of an effect was observed for both types of stress management, which is the inoculation against setbacks during job search (as it is for example used in one of the most frequently used job search intervention: the JOBS program (Caplan et al., 1989; Vinokur & Schul, 1997), as well as the general mental health promotion (e.g., relaxation, planning pleasant activities, promoting positive thinking). They surmise that the stress management may be implicitly already embedded in the other components that are fostered by the interventions, and thus, that by increasing these components (e.g. job search related skills), participant's negative emotional arousal (e.g. anxiety) is going to decrease automatically.

Saks et al. (2015) points out that not only on the theoretical level (e.g. measuring JS-outcomes) but also in the practice it is important to make the distinction between JSSE-B and JSSE-O. According to him, at the initial stage of a job search training or

counselling, the emphasis should be on the JSSE-B, and not yet on the JSSE-O. Hence, first, the job seekers should get information about the job search process and increase their confidence in their capacity to engage in the various Job Search Behaviours. Only then, when the participant's JSSE-B beliefs are strong enough, the intervention's focus could move from knowledge and skill development onto performance outcomes, and thus the development of JSSE-O. If there is too early an overemphasis on the outcome it could harm the participant's Job Search Behaviour.

However, JSSE is not the only resource to focus on. For example, as explained in the previous chapter, the level of **Career Adaptability** does also have a crucial impact on efficiently mastering job search. Other studies suggest that other components of **job search motivation** [such as **proactivity** (Bao & Luo, 2015; Liu et al., 2014), **goal setting** and **social support** (Liu et al., 2014)], as well as **job search clarity** (Bao & Luo, 2015) are other important factors for facilitating a successful job search that could be added to the traditional interventions that focus generally on interests, knowledge and skills. In effect, their meta-analytic review that summarized the data from 47 independent samples of 9575 job seekers Liu et al. (2014) found that the crucial factor for successful job search interventions is the synergistic effect of combining activities that foster the development of skills (job search skills and self-presentation) with activities that enhance motivation (self-efficacy, proactivity, goal setting, social support).

5. Conclusion

5.1. Elaboration of the research questions 1-3

The literature review presented in this chapter leads to three of the five research questions (RQ) of this master thesis:

- RQ 1: Does Career Adaptability influence JSSE?
- RQ 2: Does Job Search Experience influence JSSE (**and Career Adaptability*)?
- RQ 3: Does Job Experience influence JSSE (**and Career Adaptability*)?

** Additionally to JSSE, we are going to add the other self-regulatory resource treated in this study and presented in chapter 1: Career Adaptability.*

Furthermore, it is the base on which we decided our measurement of JSSE for the empirical part of this study.

These inferences will be reexplained in the methodology part, subsequence “Reminder of the research questions and elaboration of the hypothesis”.

5.2. Conclusion of this chapter

This chapter outlined a second important self-regulatory resource for the job search process: JSSE. In effect, as job search has become a daunting and recurrent task for many individuals, especially for new labour market entrants like the target group of this study (Liu, 2014), this resource seems to be another significant predictor for facilitating job search and (re-)employment.

First, Bandura’s theory of general self-efficacy (1977) and how this theory was related and thus specified to the job search process by Taylor and Betz (1983), has been presented. Second, the antecedents and outcomes of JSSE have been worked out, where the link to the likewise self-regulatory resource Career Adaptability, presented in chapter 1, was highlighted. Third, the implications for vocational counselling were discussed and specific interventions were suggested that focus on fostering JSSE. Finally, the research questions for this study that result of this chapter have been listed and will be further completed by concrete hypothesis in the methodology part.

Chapter 3

Comparison of the Belgium and German cultural context

1. Introduction

Another dimension that is going to be investigated by this study is the **cultural context**. As mentioned in the general introduction, this chapter entails a comparison of the two countries Belgium and Germany. First, the development of the two psychological resources that were presented in chapter one and two is going to be the focus of this national comparison. Second, the variable **student's Job Experience** that has been mentioned in the context of the first two chapters will be discussed deeper and likewise compared according to the two countries. In both parts, possible reasons for the national differences in terms of Career Adaptability, JSSE and Job Experience will be suggested.

2. Comparison of Belgium and Germany in terms of Career Adaptability and JSSE

As mentioned in chapter one, Career Adaptability resources are not stable traits (Koen et al., 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Zacher, 2014b), but their development depends on the context and culture. Different countries provide different opportunities and boundary conditions for the development and expression of psychosocial resources (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). For example, the more stable a country's economy, the better the job prospects of university graduates, and thus being adaptable might be less essential for finding a good job opportunity (Koen et al., 2012).

Concerning the two countries that are going to be compared in this study, another study that assessed culture values revealed some significant differences between Belgium's and Germany's values (Spector, Cooper, & Sparks, 2001). According to this research, it seems that compared to Germany, in Belgium there is a particularly high score of uncertainty avoidance. This might have a hindering influence on their development of Career Adaptability, as it means a higher risk aversion and a higher resistance to change. This might explain the fact that Belgians seem to have a preference for traditional psychological contracts with focus on loyalty, stability and job security (Janssens, Sels, & Van den Brande, 2003; Sels, Janssens, & Van Den Brande,

2004; Sels, Janssens, Van den Brande, & Overlaet, 2000) Open-ended contracts are common, and turnover rates – and thus career transitions – are rather low (Sels et al., 2000). Similarly, in the international comparison study by Dries et al. (2012), Belgians had a lower score in Career Adaptability than other countries investigated in this study, including Germany.

Furthermore, compared to Germany, there is generally a particularly highly developed power distance in Belgium (Spector et al., 2001), which could make it more difficult for Belgians to develop confidence in their capacities to successfully deal with the job searching process in which they will be confronted with hierarchies and be dependent on power differences. The current literature seems to lack specific results regarding the relation between the cultural context and JSSE, and Bao and Luo (2015) call up to further research. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effect of external factors on self-efficacy during job search, such as cultural and social norms.

Since Belgium is a country that reconciles different regional and cultural identities (The Dutch community comprising 59%, the French community 40% and the German-speaking community 1%) (Dries et al., 2012), it must be explicitly mentioned that the study participants are exclusively from the French-speaking Belgian population. Since Belgium's French-speaking population is more typical Latin (Dries et al., 2012), whereas Germany is typical Germanic, it is likely that these two populations are going to show differences in their developed level of the psychological resources, Career Adaptability and JSSE.

3. Comparison of Belgium and Germany in terms of student's Job Experience

3.1. National differences in work scope

According to different research findings, it seems that German students work more often during their studies than Belgian students. Every 4 years, the German Student Services (DSW) and the Higher Education Information System (HIS), supported by the German Ministry of Education and Research, conducts a huge survey that investigates the current social and economic state of German students (Middendorff et al., 2017). The 21st version conducted in 2016 relies on data from 55.219 students and showed that more than two thirds (69%) of the German students are working regularly during their

studies. Sometimes their professional activity is divided into 3 different jobs. Regionally, this rate can reach almost 80%. In comparison, it seems that in Belgium it is less common for students to work during their studies, as only every second student (49%) is having a regular student job (Vendramin, 2007).

Another way to compare the amount of time that Belgian and German students are spending on student jobs is the average salary per year. In 2016, German students earned on average 4615 € per year (Middendorff et al., 2017), whereas Belgian students not even earn half of that: according to Baccichet (2017), a student's average annual salary in Belgium is 2030 €, and according to the 2016 statistics of the National Social Security Office it was only 1772 € (NSSO Statistics Department, 2018). This significant discrepancy of annual income must be linked to a large extend to the amount of hours they invest in their student jobs, since the minimum salaries for the students of these two countries are comparably similar³.

3.2. Possible motivations for doing a student job

In both countries the same percentage of students do not receive any financial support from their parents: 14% of the Belgian students (Baccichet, 2017), and 15% of the German students (Middendorff et al., 2017).

The German students that are having a student job indicate several motivations for it: 72% want to have their own income in order to be able to "afford a little more", 62% want to have more independency of their parents, 59% depend on this money in order to cover their subsistence, for 53% it represents an opportunity to get professional experience and 36% aim to establish connections for further occupations (Middendorff et al., 2017).

3.3. National differences as possible reason for the different work scope

Students' housing situation

Differences between both countries exist in the housing situation of the students. Compared with Belgian students, only 20% German students continue living at their parent's house, which enables them to save money. The greater proportion (80%) of

³ Minimum salary per hour during the survey period of this study : in Germany 8,84 € (Steinborn, 2017); in Belgium between 7,94 € and 9,68 €, according to the age ("Job étudiant: résumé de la législation ", 2018)

students live alone or in flatshares (Middendorff et al., 2017). In Belgium only 50% of the students have to pay additional rent for flat-sharing community (Leurquin & Van Reeth, 2018). These differences could be due to the fact that Belgium's surface (30,688 km²) is 11 times smaller than Germany's surface (357.386 km²), which considerably reduces travel distances. Hence, in Belgium there is a greater chance that students can reach their university within a reasonable amount of time and cost from their parents' house, whereas for German students, this would often not be a realistic option. All the less because German students are often unable to choose their place of study: German universities do not accept everybody – as it is common in Belgium – but they choose their students according to a certain *numerus clausus* (Akkermans, 2008), which grants a large number of students to have access to their preferred field of study (Kreckel, 2015). Accordingly, many German students are forced to change their city and to rent a flat or a room on their own, if they are not willing to choose another field of study at a university where they would be accepted and that is closer to home.

In conclusion, since a higher proportion of German students are paying additional rent every month, they probably spend and thus need more money, what could be one explanation of the observation that German students work more during their studies compared with Belgian students.

National education system

In addition to the student jobs that help students cover their financial needs, the differences between the Belgian and the German education system might play a role in this research question. Educational programs for young people aged 14 – 25 years which are designed with a dual formation that cumulates and alternates studies (theoretical part of the formation) with a job (practical part of the formation) are five times more common in Germany (24%) than in Belgium (5%) (Poulet-Coulibando, 2008). Accordingly, it is possible that there are more German students that collect Job Experience during their educational path than Belgians generally do.

Availability and the legal framework of student jobs

Furthermore, concerning the student jobs (and no dual studies) in Belgium, a reduction has been observed during the last years – less and less student jobs are available (Baccichet, 2017). In addition to that, the reduction concerns especially those jobs that relate to the students' studies and thus only limitedly useful for their career (Baccichet,

2017), which may reduce the attractiveness of doing a student job in Belgium. In effect, it seems that the lower a country's revenue per habitant and the higher its unemployment rate, the less student jobs are accessible (Poulet-Coulibando, 2008). Hence, it seems to be more difficult for Belgian students to find and get a student job than for German students.

Another point that makes it more difficult for Belgian students to collect Job Experience during their studies could be the fact that the Belgium law restricts the quantity of hours that a student is allowed to work in addition to his/her studies. Since January 1st 2017, students should have no professional activity other than a student job for more than 475 hours a year (Baccichet, 2017; Euridyce, 2018). Otherwise they and their employers would have to pay national insurance contributions from which they would otherwise be exempt. In Germany, there is a similar regulation but less strict: if German students want to avoid unnecessary national insurance contributions, they should not exceed 20 hours a week of working during the official lecture period of 26 weeks, which allows German students to work up to 520 hours already only during this period. Additionally, during the non-lecture period there are no limitations at all (Moeller, 2015), which gives the possibility for German students to work much more hours than Belgian students would be allowed to.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter a new dimension has been added: the national context. So far, little research has been carried out regarding the cultural impact on the two psychological resources that have been presented in the first two chapters, Career Adaptability and JSSE. Concerning Career Adaptability, its development seems to be influenced by the national and cultural context (Dries et al., 2012; Koen et al., 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Concerning JSSE, other researchers point out the need of further investigation in this area. As Spector et al. (2001) indicate some significant differences between Belgian and German values, it makes especially sense to pay further attention to this issue.

Furthermore, the variable "job experience" has been discussed deeper. As explained in chapter one and two, it is possible that Job Experience is an influencing factor for the development of JSSE and that it should be further investigated. Concerning its influence on Career Adaptability, currently there is still a lack of

research, and the conducted studies concerning the similar concept of Career Maturity (Super & Knasel, 1981) do not show consistent results (Patton & Lokan, 2001).

Regarding the national comparison that is another focus of this study, the Job Experience of Belgian and German students does indeed seem to differ. When comparing different national studies, it seems that the amount of time that German students invest in student jobs as well as the amount of money they earn in those jobs is considerably higher (Baccichet, 2017; Middendorff et al., 2017; NSSO Statistics Department, 2018; Vendramin, 2007). Different possible reasons for these differences have been suggested: The students' housing situation, the national education system, the availability of student jobs and the legal framework for student jobs.

III. EMPIRICAL PART

Chapter 4

Research Investigations

RQ1: Does a relation exist between Career Adaptability and JSSE?

Based on our previous theorizing, we expect that Career Adaptability is positively associated with JSSE. Both are important self-regulatory resources that help people to cope with career transitions. The process of job search is one of those transitions and is becoming more and more common in today's world of labour which becomes increasingly unstable and unpredictable (Le Corff & Gingras, 2011; Liu et al., 2014; Maggiori et al., 2017; Saks et al., 2015; Tladinyane & Van der Merwe, 2015). The findings of Guan et al. (2013) suggest that these two predictors for (re-)employment are correlated (Koen et al., 2012; Moynihan et al., 2003; Saks et al., 2015). It even seems that Career Adaptability (especially its facets 'career concern' and 'career control') increases JSSE.

- Hypothesis 1: **Career Adaptability is positively related to JSSE.**

RQ2: Does a relation exist between the variable Job Search Experience and the variables Career Adaptability and JSSE?

According to Bandura (1977), experiences of successful performance accomplishments increase self-efficacy expectations with respect to those tasks. Consequently, job seekers who have already accomplished successful job searches before, should have a higher level of JSSE.

Nevertheless, it is highly probable that this positive correlation between Job Search Experience and JSSE appears only (or will be even stronger) under two conditions: if the past applications have successfully led to a new job/internship; or, in other words, if the attempt to find a job was a success [condition 1: success] and if the job seeker attributes his success to his own capabilities and efforts, instead of external factors [condition 2: personal attribution] (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, he/she must be convinced that the good quality of his/her application – and thus his or her behavioural attainments – has led to the job offer. He/she must be convinced that it was the good

quality of his/her application, and thus his/her behavioural attainments, that have led to the job offer.

- **Hypothesis 2: Previous Job Search Experience is positively related to the level of JSSE**

Concerning the relation between our second self-regulatory resource Career Adaptability and job search experience, there seem to be no hints in the current literature review.

Various antecedents of Career Adaptability have already been investigated. In effect, the meta-analysis of Rudolph, Lavigne, and Zacher (2017), that is based on 90 studies, shows that numerous variables measuring adaptivity (cognitive ability and personality traits such as big five traits, self-esteem, core self-evaluations, proactive personality, future orientation, hope, and optimism) are significantly positively related to Career Adaptability, which supports Savickas' Career Construction Theory. But so far, unstable variables and trait-like psychological characteristics have been neglected. Nevertheless, variables that are linked to the individual's history, such as previous job search experiences or job tenure, are likewise highly probable to influence the development of Career Adaptability. That is why we want to investigate in this research the impact of Job Search Experience on Career Adaptability as well.

- **Hypothesis 3: Previous Job Search Experience is positively related to the level of CA**

RQ3: Does a relation exist between the variable Job Experience and the variables Career Adaptability and JSSE?

The findings of Moynihan et al. (2003) suggest that there is no correlation between Job Experience and JSSE. However, these authors explicitly request further investigations before making conclusions concerning the role of Job Experience in the development of JSSE. In Kirk's findings (2016) university leavers who are employed showed a higher level of JSSE than those who did not have a job yet. This significantly higher confidence of university graduates in their job search capacities leads us to conclude that not only Job Search Experience but even Job Experience might have a positive

impact on JSSE. As the whole world of labour and the linked job search process are mostly or even totally new for students and recent graduates, it is possible that the ones who already have some Job Experience feel more reassured, less impressed, doubtful and anxious concerning their overall job and job search skills. This could have a positive effect on the development of JSSE as Bandura (1977) postulates that negative emotional arousal hinders the development of self-efficacy.

- Hypothesis 4: Job Experience is **positively related to the level of JSSE**.

As explained for our 3rd hypothesis, it seems that variables linked to the individual's history, such as previous Job Search Experience or job experience, have been neglected in the current literature of the psychological resource of Career Adaptability. We suggest that not only Job Search Experience but also Job Experience itself increases the development of Career Adaptability.

- Hypothesis 5: Job Experience is **positively related to the level of Career Adaptability**.

RQ4: Is there a difference in terms of Job Experience and Job Search Experience between Belgian and German students?

Because there is a lack of research that compares both Belgium and Germany in terms of the student's amount of Job Experience and job search experience, this present study is investigating it. As explained in the third chapter, it seems that German students work more often in addition to their studies than Belgium students (Middendorff et al., 2017; Vendramin, 2007). Consequently, if German students actually do have more work experience than Belgium students, it is very likely that German students also carry out more job search during their studies. Hence, we suggest the following two hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 6: **The German Master graduates and “almost graduates” have more Job Search Experience than the Belgium graduates and “almost graduates”.**
- Hypothesis 7: **The German Master graduates and “almost graduates” have more Job Experience than the Belgium graduates and “almost graduates”.**

RQ5: Are Career Adaptability and JSSE influenced by the national context, mediated by Job Experience and Job Search Experience?

Seemingly, the Belgium cultural context is less favourable for developing Career Adaptability and JSSE than the German cultural context (Dries et al., 2012; Middendorff et al., 2017; Poulet-Coulibando, 2008) and Belgium students have less Job Experience and hence less Job Search Experience than German students do (Bacchichet, 2017; Euridyce, 2018; Middendorff, 2017; Vendramin, 2007). Therefore, we suggest the following four hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 8: The German Master graduates and “almost graduates” have a **higher level of Career Adaptability** than the Belgium graduates and “almost graduates”, which is mediated by their Job Search Experience.
- Hypothesis 9: The German Master graduates and “almost graduates” have a **higher level of Career Adaptability** than the Belgium graduates and “almost graduates”, which is mediated by their Job Experience.
- Hypothesis 10: The German Master graduates and “almost graduates” have a **higher level of JSSE** than the Belgium graduates and “almost graduates”, which is mediated by their Job Search Experience.
- Hypothesis 11: The German Master graduates and “almost graduates” have a **higher level of JSSE** than the Belgium graduates and “almost graduates”, which is mediated by their Job Experience.

Chapter 5

Methodology

1. Design

The questionnaire has been presented as an online survey. There is one French and one German version.

In order to assure that the two versions do not diverge from one another because of language biases, we used scales that have been validated in French and German. The items that have been created and added by us, have been translated to and backwards, involving two native speakers for every language. Afterwards, both versions have been tested by four external testers and optimised before publishing.

Participants of this study were recruited by sharing the advert with the author's private network, Facebook groups for students, the psychology faculty of the Belgium university "UCL", the linked Career Center "CIO de Louvain-la-Neuve", and the Career Centers of arbitrary chosen German Faculties.

In order to assure that we investigate the participants in the same moment of their academical cycle, the French version has been published in August, which represents the last month of the academical year in Belgium, whereas the German version has been published in September, as the academical year starts one month later in Germany, in October.

When opening the link to the online survey, participants are informed briefly about the aim of the study. Before starting the survey, they must provide their free and informed consent and confirm that they correspond to following three **participation criteria** [block1]: (1) They have done the majority of their studies either in Belgium or in Germany, (2) they are either going to finish their master's degree in the following 12 months ("master students") or they have already finished it recently ("graduates") but that in any case (3) they have not found a job yet. Otherwise they are gently informed that they do not match the necessary criteria for this study.

Those who fit are redirected to the three big theme blocks of questions: **general information** [block 2], **JSSE** [block 3 or 4], **Career Adaptability** [block 3 or 4]. The order of block 3 and 4 was not predetermined but changed for the different participants in order to prevent a bias of decreasing attention and concentration for the last block. In

the last block, participants received an acknowledgement for their participation and the offer of receiving the results in the end of the study. Another attempt to motivate the participants to take and finish this survey in order to reduce the dropout rate have been several encouraging phrases between the different blocks of the questionnaire.

2. Instruments and measures

As explained before, the online survey consisted of three main blocks of questions:

Block 2: General information

In this part general information about the participants have been assessed such as their gender, their age during their graduation, their field of study and it's job prospections, the duration of their study, their willingness to find a job in the near future, their Job Search Experience and their job experience. Internships are explicitly counted as equal to jobs.

Block 3: Scale of Career Adaptability

The level of Career Adaptability was measured by the validated French and the validated German version of the short form of the 'Career Adapt-Abilities Scale' (CAAS-SF) (Maggiori et al., 2017). The scale consists of 12 items that altogether indicate the level of Career Adaptability. Each dimension of Career Adaptability (Career Concern, Career Curiosity, Career Control, Career Confidence) is assessed by three items. Higher scores represent a higher level of Career Adaptability. Participants replied on a 5-point Likert-type rating scale ranging from 1 "I do not feel confident" to 5 "I feel totally confident".

Block 4: Scale of JSSE

In order to assess the level of JSSE the first 10 items of Saks', Zikic's, Koen's JSSE Scale (2014) was used. These 10 items measure the dimension of JSSE that corresponds to Job Search Behaviour (e.g., "plan and organize a weekly job search schedule") – whereas the remaining 10 items would measure Job Search Outcomes (e.g., "obtain more than one good job offer") which we do not focus on in this study. As explained in

the second chapter of the literature, this distinction between Job Search Behaviour and Job Search Outcomes is crucial for the fidelity of a study. In effect, while comparing the results of different studies, there should not be any confusion which one of the two dimensions of JSSE has been assessed (Saks et al., 2015).

Inspired from Liu et al.'s meta-analysis (2014) we completed this 10-items-JSSE-scale with further 8 items in order to have three items measuring each of the six components that Liu et al. found out to be crucial for efficient coping with the challenging process of job search: *job search skills* (e.g. "Use social networks to obtain job leads"), *self-presentation* (e.g. "Impress interviewers during employment interviews"), *proactivity* (e.g. "Make "cold calls" that will get you a job interview"), *goal setting* (e.g. "Plan and organize a weekly job search schedule"), *social support* (e.g. "Involve actively peers, family and friends to obtain tangible support (e.g., arrangements for transportation, allowances, read through resumes") and *stress management* (e.g. "Consider setbacks (e.g., negative feedback) as temporary and helpful for future job search strategies and efforts."). Consequently, participants obtaining high scores in this co-constructed scale are supposed to be less in need of interventions supporting them in their job search process than participants having a high score.

The participants gave their agreement likewise on a 5-point Likert-type rating scale that ranged from 1 "not confident at all" to 5 "totally confident".

Chapter 6

Results

1. Sample/Participants

Of initially 259 participants in the online survey, 169 participants could be finally integrated in the sample for the present study since some of them did not fit the study's access conditions and some abandoned the survey in an early stage; this represents a dropout rate of 34.75%.

Gender. The sample consists of 128 women (76%) and 41 men (24 %).

State of career. There are 129 students (76%) finishing their studies in less than 12 months, and 40 participants (24%) who recently graduated but have not find a job yet.

Field of study. Nearly half of the participants are students or graduates in Psychology (48%). The other fields of studies are represented by maximum 7% of the sample.

Nationality. 106 of the participants (63%) do/did their studies in Belgium (from now on called “Belgian participants” or “Belgians”) and 63 of the participants (37%) do/did their studies in Germany (from now on called “German participants” or “Germans”).

Table1. Characteristics of the participants (a) (n=169)

Characteristics	number	%
Gender		
Women	128	76
Men	41	24
State of Career		
Students (max. 12 months left)	129	76
Graduates (without job)	40	24
Field of study		
Psychology	80	48
Political and Social Sciences	11	7
Sciences	9	5
Others	69	40
Nationality		
Studied in Belgium (“Belgians”/”Belgian participants”)	106	63
Studied in Germany (“Germans”/”German participants”)	63	37

Age. On average, at the moment of their master's degree graduation, the Belgian participants are 24.5 years old (age mean = 24.5; SD = 0.28), ranging from 19 to 45 years. On average, the German participants are 3 years older (age mean = 27.5; SD = 0.37), ranging from 23 to 38 years.

Duration of studies. On average, the German participants finish their studies one semester later than the Belgians do. In effect, the Belgian participants need one semester more than the standard period of study (5 years / 10 semesters) to finish their studies (duration mean = 1.13; SD = 1.46), which means 11 semesters in total, whereas the Germans need 2 additional semesters (duration mean = 2.38; SD = 2.09), which means 12 semesters in total.

Table 2. Characteristics of the participants (b) (n=165)

Characteristics	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Mean Age at Graduation				
Belgian participants	24.5	0.28	19	45
German participants	27.5	0.37	23	38
Number of semesters exceeding the 5-year standard period of study				
Belgian participants	1.13	1.46	0	6
German participants	2.38	2.09	0	6

2. Statistical results

All analyses were carried out using the IBM SPSS Statistics 25 Package. The significance threshold is defined at $\alpha \leq .05$.

1. RQ1: Does a relation exist between Career Adaptability and JSSE?

In order to investigate the relation between Career Adaptability and JSSE, Pearson's correlation coefficient has been calculated.

1.1. H1: Career Adaptability is positively related to JSSE.

The Pearson's correlation coefficient is .70 ($p \leq .001$) which indicates a significant positive correlation between Career Adaptability and JSSE. Based on this result, we can **confirm** hypothesis H1.

2. RQ2: Does a relation exist between the variable Job Search Experience and the variables Career Adaptability and JSSE?

The amount of Job Search Experience has been measured on a level of **time** (“How much time have you already invested in searching a job/internship?”) and on a level of **number** of applications (“What is the number of jobs/internships for which you have already applied in total?”).

As in both cases the answer format has been suggested in several ordinal categories [e.g. from category 1 (“no job at all”) to category 8 (“more than 50 jobs”)], the Spearman's correlation coefficients has been chosen in order to calculate the correlation between Job Experience and the two psychological resources that are subject of this study (Career Adaptability and JSSE).

2.1. H2: Previous Job Search Experience is positively related to the level of JSSE

In contrast to the expected positive correlation between the **amount** of Job Search Experience and JSSE, a **significant negative correlation** was observed. Indeed, when Job Search Experience is measured in number of applications, the Spearman's correlation coefficient is -.27 ($p = .002$), and when it is measured in time spent for the

research of jobs or internships, it is $-.30$ ($p < .001$). Accordingly, as no positive association could be observed, **hypothesis H2 must be rejected.**

Concerning the two conditions mentioned in Bandura's theory (1977) and presented in the methodology part, the following results have been obtained:

The job seeker's **success** in finding a job ("percentage of applications that resulted in the job/internship in question"), a **significant positive correlation** with his/her level of JSSE could be observed ($r = .29$; $p < 0.001$).

The fact if the job seeker attributes this success to his/her own capabilities and efforts rather than to external factors, or in other words the **personal attribution** of his/her success in finding a job, is **not associated** with his/her level of JSSE ($r = .17$; $p = 0.04$).

2.2. H3: Previous Job Search Experience is positively related to the level of CA

The Spearman's correlation coefficient indicates a significant negative correlation between the two variables Job Search Experience and Career Adaptability – regardless of whether the amount of Job Search Experience is measured in terms of number of applications ($r_s = -.22$; $p = .01$) or in terms of time spent in the research of jobs or internships ($r_s = -.27$; $p \leq .001$). Accordingly, **hypothesis H3 needs to be rejected.**

3. RQ3: Does a relation exist between the variable Job Experience and the variables Career Adaptability and JSSE?

The amount of Job Experience also has been measured on a level of **time** ("estimation of all working hours added up") and on a level of **number** of jobs ("the number of jobs or internships you have had in total so far"). As in both cases the answer format has been suggested in several ordinal categories [e.g. from category 1 ("no job at all") to category 8 ("more than 50 jobs")], the Spearman's correlation coefficients has been chosen in order to calculate the correlation between Job Experience and the two psychological resources that are subject of this study (Career Adaptability and JSSE).

3.1. H4: Job Experience is positively related to the level of JSSE.

Regardless whether Job Experience is measured in number of student jobs and internships ($r_s = -.05$; $p = .60$) or in time spent in student jobs or internships ($r_s = .15$ ($p = .09$), no significant association could be observed between Job Experience and JSSE by calculating the Spearman's correlation coefficient. Based on these results, we **cannot confirm** hypothesis H4.

3.2. H5: Job Experience is positively related to the level of Career Adaptability.

Regarding the Job Experience measured in number of student jobs and internships, the Spearman's correlation coefficient is $.02$ ($p = .86$) which does not indicate any significant correlation between Job Experience and Career Adaptability. When measuring Job Experience in time spent in student jobs or internships, no significant correlation between Job Experience and Career Adaptability can be observed either ($r_s = .07$; $p = .40$). Hence, we must **reject** hypothesis H5.

4. RQ4 : Is there a difference in terms of Job Search Experience and Job Experience during the studies between Belgians and Germans?

In order to compare the Belgians' and the Germans' Job Experience and Job Search Experience during their studies, several independent t tests have been realised.

4.1. H6: The German Master graduates and "almost graduates" have **more Job Search Experience** than the Belgium graduates and "almost graduates".

4.1.1. Descriptive Statistics

The Belgians' mean score of the Job Search Experience measured in **time** is 3.70 (corresponding to more than 8 but less than 40 hours), whereas the Germans' mean score is higher with 4.02 (corresponding to more than 40 but less than 80 hours).

When measuring the mean score of Job Search Experience in **numbers of applications**, it is 3.14 in Belgium (corresponding to 5-10 applications), whereas in Germany it is lower (2.84; corresponding to 1-5 applications).

Thus, no clear tendency can be observed. Depending on the measure of Job Search Experience (in time or in number) both groups have either a higher or a lower mean score.

4.1.2. Inferential Statistics

For the two following analysis 153 participants have been considered (n=153).

No significant difference of the Job Search Experience (measured in spent **time** in the research of jobs or internships) between the Belgian and German participants could be observed ($t(151) = -1.22, p = 0.23$). When measuring Job Search Experience in **number of applications**, no significant difference between the Belgian and German participants could be observed either ($t(151) = 0.96, p = 0.34$).

According to both observations, H6 needs to be **rejected**. There was no evidence found that German Master graduates and “almost graduates” have more Job Search Experience than the Belgium graduates and “almost graduates”.

4.2. H7: The German Master graduates and “almost graduates” have more Job Experience than the Belgium graduates and “almost graduates”.

4.2.1. Descriptive Statistics

Belgians’ mean score of the Job Experience measured in **time** is 5,77 (corresponding to more than 480 but less than 1000 hours), whereas the mean of German participants’ Job Experience is 7.27 (corresponding to more than 2000 but less than 4000 hours). Furthermore, there are Belgians who don’t have any work experience at all, whereas the German participant who has worked the least in this sample did work more than 40 hours.

When measuring Job Experience in **job numbers**, the mean score is similar in both countries: 2.29 in Belgium and 2.64 in Germany, corresponding both to 1-5 jobs.

4.2.2. Inferential Statistics

For the first analysis 150 participants have been considered (n=150).

A significant difference in the Job Experience (measured in **time** spent) between the Belgian and German participants could be observed ($t(148) = -4.62, p < 0.001$).

According to this result, we can **confirm H7** that German Master graduates and “almost graduates” have more Job Experience than the Belgium graduates and “almost graduates”.

The second analysis (n=149) supports likewise the hypothesis H7. Indeed, when the Job Experience is measured in **number of jobs or internships**, the results show a lower but significant difference between the Belgian and German participants as well ($t(95.74) = -2.11, p = 0.04$).

5. RQ5: Are Career Adaptability and JSSE influenced by the national context, mediated by Job Experience and job search experience?

In order to test the mediation effects mentioned in the methodology part, linear regressions were calculated for each of the following hypotheses. Firstly, the relation between the independent variable ‘nationality’ and the dependent variable ‘Career Adaptability’ or ‘JSSE’ has been tested. Secondly, ‘Job Search Experience’ (once measured in numbers of jobs and internships, and once in time spent for those jobs and internships) has been added as second independent variable. Thirdly, the relation between both independent variables has been controlled. In all cases, the subcategory ‘Belgian nationality’ has been recoded with -0.5, and the subcategory ‘German nationality’ with +0.5 in order to allow a linear regression with categorical variables.

5.1. H8: The German Master graduates and “almost graduates” have a higher level of Career Adaptability than the Belgium graduates and “almost graduates”, which is mediated by their Job Search Experience

The results showed (N = 140; Career Adaptability mean = 4.09; SD = 6.05) that at a significance threshold of 0.05 being Belgian is not significantly related to Career Adaptability ($\beta = -0.18, SE = 0.11, p = 0.096, \text{adjusted } R^2 = 0.01$). However, at a significance threshold from 0.1 results would indicate a significant positive relation. Indeed, when comparing both nations’ mean with an independent t-test, the Belgian participants show a higher mean score of Career Adaptability (4.16) than the German participants (3.99). Nevertheless, this difference is not significant ($t(88.55)=1.59; p = 1.16$).

When adding the variable ‘Job Search Experience’ (measured in number) as independent variable, results show that both variables, ‘nationality’ and ‘Job Search

Experience' are related to Career Adaptability (nationality: $\beta = -0.21$, $SE = 0.10$, $p = 0.04$; Job Search Experience: $\beta = -0.08$, $SE = 0.03$, $p = 0.003$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.07$). However, when 'Job Search Experience' is measured in time, no significant relations can be observed.

Furthermore, results show that there is no relation between the independent variable 'nationality' and the second independent variable 'Job Search Experience' ($\beta = -0.29$, $SE = 0.31$, $p = 0.34$, adjusted $R^2 = -0.001$).

Hence, contrary to our expectations we **cannot confirm** that 'Job Search Experience' is a mediating variable between the explanatory variable 'nation' and the outcome variable 'Career Adaptability'.

5.2. H9: The German Master graduates and "almost graduates" have a higher level of Career Adaptability than the Belgium graduates and "almost graduates", which is mediated by their Job Experience

As shown in hypothesis H8, at a significance threshold of 0.01 being Belgian is positively related to Career Adaptability

When the variable 'Job Experience' is measured in number and added as independent variable, both variables, 'nationality' and 'Job Experience' are significantly related to Career Adaptability (nationality: $\beta = -0.21$, $SE = 0.11$, $p = 0.048$; Job Experience: $\beta = 0.11$, $SE = 0.05$, $p = 0.04$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.04$). The sample used for this multiple regression consists of 137 participants. Nevertheless, when 'Job Experience' is measured in time, no significant relations can be observed.

Moreover, a positive relation between the independent variable 'nationality' and the second independent variable 'Job Experience' can be observed ($\beta = 0.35$, $SE = 0.19$, $p = 0.03$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.03$). This confirms that 'Job Experience' is a mediating variable between the explanatory variable 'nation' and the outcome variable 'Career Adaptability'.

Based on the present results, we **reject hypothesis H9** suggesting that German graduates and 'almost graduates' have a higher level of Career Adaptability than Belgian graduates and 'almost graduates', which is mediated by their Job Experience. On the one hand, the **mediation effect on the relation between nationality and career adaptability could be confirmed**, on the other hand, contrary to our expectations it seems to run in **the opposite**. Not the German graduates and 'almost graduates' but the

Belgian ones seem to have a higher level of Career Adaptability than Germans, and this relation seems to be mediated by their level of Job Experience.

5.3. H10: The German Master graduates and “almost graduates” have **a higher level of JSSE** than the Belgium graduates and “almost graduates”, which is mediated by their Job Search Experience

5.4. H11: The German Master graduates and “almost graduates” have **a higher level of JSSE** than the Belgium graduates and “almost graduates”, which is mediated by their Job Experience

The data collected on a sample of 141 participants (JSSE mean = 3.58; SD = 0.60) showed that there is no relation between nationality and JSSE ($\beta = 0.01$, SE = 0.11, $p = 0.94$, adjusted $R^2 = -0.01$). Hence, we cannot confirm neither hypothesis H10, nor hypothesis H11 since they both imply the assumption that nationality augments JSSE.

Chapter 7

Discussion

In the following, the results of the present study will be contrasted with the results described in the research literature. Additionally, limitations of the study will be discussed and recommendations for future research will be presented.

1. Interpretation of the results

RQ 1 : Does a relation exist between Career Adaptability and JSSE?

Guan et al. (2013) have shown that the adaptive resource Career Adaptability is positively related to JSSE. Career Adaptability (especially its facets ‘career concern’ and ‘career control’) seems to increase JSSE. As expected, the present results support this positive correlation. Guan et al. (2013) suppose that people having a great Career Adaptability have the impression of possessing various psychological resources which help them to cope with eventual challenges emerging during their professional career. As the process of Job Search might represent such a challenge, especially in today’s labour market which becomes increasingly unstable and unpredictable (Le Corff & Gingras, 2011; Liu et al., 2014; Maggiori et al., 2017; Saks et al., 2015; Tladinyane & Van der Merwe, 2015), it is not surprising that people scoring high in Career Adaptability likewise show high scores in JSSE.

RQ 2: Does a relation exist between the variable Job Search Experience and the variables Career Adaptability and JSSE?

JSSE

Bandura (1977) postulates that the experiences of successful performance accomplishments would increase one’s self-efficacy expectations with respect to those tasks. In this sense, we expected that job seekers who already have accomplished successfully job search before, would have a higher level of JSSE. That is why we have investigated three aspects of Job Search Experience: firstly, the amount (measured on a

level of number of applications and on a level of time spent for those applications), secondly, the success of those applications, and thirdly, the internal or external causal attribution that the job seeker makes with regards to his/her success.

Our results show that the amount of Job Search Experience is not positively related to JSSE, but on the contrary, even a moderate, negative correlation has been observed. This means, that the participants who have already postulated for many jobs and who have spent much time for their job search showed a rather low score in their JSSE. At first glance, these results might seem surprising.

A possible explanation could be that the variable “Job Search Success” moderates the effect between amount of Job Search Experience and JSSE. This means that the job seekers who did invest already a lot of time and energy in job search might be frustrated and unsettled at some point in cases when their job search did not lead to success. This explanation would support Bandura’s theory (1997) suggesting that the fact of having accomplished a given task already before or not is not enough to increase one’s self-efficacy expectations. He postulates that in order to foster one’s self-efficacy, the accomplished task must lead to success [condition 1: success] and the person must attribute the cause of this success to his own efforts, but not to external factors [condition 2: personal attribution]. Regarding condition 1, our results indeed show a moderate positive correlation between the job seeker’s success in job seeking and his/her JSSE. This means that a moderate tendency could be observed that people succeeding in finding a job also have a higher score in JSSE. Nevertheless, regarding condition 2, no association between the causal attribution of this success and JSSE was found. Hence, our findings do only partially confirm Bandura’s theory (1997). Further research is necessary to examine the supposed moderation effect of Job Search Success on the relation between the amount of job search and JSSE and to verify if the causal attribution really does not have an impact.

Furthermore, other factors could be suggested and tested in order to explain the negative relation between the amount of Job Experience and JSSE. For example, the personality could have an influence at this point. As mentioned in chapter two, Bao and Luo (2015) found out that a high level of proactivity is the condition to the positive effect of JSSE on active Job Search Behaviour. The relation between the amount of Job Experience and JSSE might likewise be influenced by the fact if the job seeker feels rather proactive or not. Similarly, other characteristics that are generally considered as favourable for a successful job search, such as being generally self-confident, charming,

convincing, etc. might be moderators influencing the effect of the amount of Job Experience on JSSE. Indeed, a jobseeker who has a lot of job experience, but who knows about his difficulty to get into action or to present him/herself, might finally feel less confident about his/her skills for the future job search than a jobseeker with few Job Experience but being aware of his/her proactive and charming personality.

Career Adaptability

As there are still very few researches about Career Adaptability and variables that are linked to the individual's history, such as previous job search experiences, we decided to investigate the relation between those two variables as well. Similar to the results concerning JSSE, the present results show that the amount of Job Search Experience is moderately, negatively correlated with Career Adaptability. In the case of Career Adaptability a possible explanation might be that the more people focus on job search and thus get more conscious about eventual difficulties and challenges, the more they feel overwhelmed and anxious about it.

RQ 3: Does a relation exist between the variable Job Experience and the variables Career Adaptability and JSSE?

Regarding the correlation between Job Experience and the two adaptive resources Career Adaptability and JSSE our expectations haven't been confirmed neither. No matter how measured (on a level of numbers of jobs or on a level of time spent in those jobs), Job Experience does not seem to be associated with Career Adaptability or JSSE in any way. These results are consistent with the findings of Moynihan et al. (2003). Furthermore, Patton and Lokan (2001) summarized similar findings for the case of Career Maturity, being a very similar concept to Career Adaptability. They mention three studies (Niles & Herr, 1989; Luzzo, McWhirter & Hutcheson's, 1997; Loughlin & Barling, 1998) where, contrary to prediction, no association between Job Experience and Career Maturity could be found. They suggest that this lack of relation might be explainable with the fact that the Job Experience might not have been congruent with the student's aspirations and thus not beneficial. Indeed, Baccichet (2017) reported in Belgium such a mismatch between the students' jobs and their studies, and he concludes as well a limited usefulness of those students jobs.

RQ 4: Is there a difference in terms of Job Experience and Job Search Experience between Belgian and German students?

Job experience

A further aim of this study is to fill the gap in research regarding the international comparison of Belgium and Germany, in terms of the student's amount of Job Experience and job search experience. According to national studies (Middendorff et al., 2017; Vendramin, 2007), it seems that German students work more often during their studies than Belgian students do. In Germany more than two thirds (69%) (Middendorff et al., 2017) of the students are working regularly, whereas in Belgium this is the case for only half of the students (49%) (Vendramin, 2007). The present results confirm our assumptions. German students have significantly more Job Experience than Belgian students, which means that they generally have done more jobs or internships and especially that they spend until four times more time for it.

Possible reasons for this difference could be: The students' housing situation, the national education system, the availability of student jobs and the legal framework for student jobs. Firstly, it seems that German students more often live in own or shared flats which means an additional rent to pay (Leurquin & Van Reeth, 2018; Middendorff et al., 2017). Secondly, practical orientated educational programs (including internships) are five times more common in Germany than in Belgium (Poulet-Coulibando, 2008). Thirdly, student jobs seem to be less available in Belgium than in Germany (Baccichet, 2017) what might be linked to the country's economic situation (Poulet-Coulibando, 2008) as well as the legal restrictions of the execution of student jobs that are less advantageous for Belgian students willing to work (Baccichet, 2017; Euridyce, 2018; Moeller, 2015).

Furthermore, the fact that Belgian students generally complete their studies earlier than German students could be linked to those described differences. In effect, Belgian students take less years to complete their master's degree (see appendix table 3) and are generally younger at the time of graduation and thus career entry (see appendix table 4). Within the framework of this study, it is not possible to say if this is a cause or a consequence, but there could be a relation between the longer study duration, the higher age and the greater Job Experience that can be observed among German students.

Job Search Experience

However, according to our results, there is nothing to suggest that German students also have more experience in finding a job. One possible explanation for this is that these are smaller part-time jobs that do not require a traditional large application process to which our measurement of Job Search Experience referred to. It is possible that German students usually get their jobs through classified ads or word-of-mouth propaganda (e.g. tutoring⁴, babysitting, music lessons, waitering, hostess, etc.) and thus do not feel more experienced and confident in facing their first big job hunt after graduating.

RQ 5: Are Career Adaptability and JSSE influenced by the national context, mediated by Job Experience and job search experience?

At a significance threshold of 0.05 none of our four assumed mediating relations could be confirmed by the present results. However, when allowing a 10% chance of error, the mediating effect of Job Experience between nationality and Career Adaptability suggested by hypothesis H9 would be significant. Using a significance threshold of 0.10 might be judged as too large by some researchers, but if the results of this study are used as simple indicator for further studies using a bigger sample, this effect is worth to be discussed in detail.

Regarding the mentioned mediating effect tested in hypothesis H9, results suggest that, contrary to our expectations, it is not the German graduates and ‘almost graduates’ but the Belgian ones who have a higher level of Career Adaptability. These findings are surprising, as previous findings of this study showed that Germans have more Job Experience during their studies than Belgians do (see results of hypothesis H7).

A plausible explanation that Job Experience might reduce the development of Career Adaptability is not likely either, since no negative correlation has been observed between those two variables (see results of hypothesis H5).

⁴ A very popular format for student part-time jobs in Germany is, for example, the job of an assistant researcher at one's own university. In Germany, many of the tasks typically performed by doctoral students in Belgium are usually performed by the students themselves - whether as assistants for the professors' research projects or as tutors for practical courses accompanying lectures.

Hence, the only possible explanation is that one or more, still unknown, variables are influencing this mediation relation. But since there has hardly been any other research on this specific topic so far, the current literature does not provide any clues on possible further mediator or moderator variables. Therefore, further studies should investigate those – at first glance seemingly contradictory – findings in order to better understand the effect of Job Experience on the development of Career Adaptability. For example, the qualitative aspect of job experience, the way the jobseeker has experienced his previous jobs, could be a possible moderating variable worthy to examine. Indeed, the present findings could be explained by the fact that if the German students of our sample have been rather discouraged by the insight into the world of labour (e.g. experience of powerlessness instead of control, or experiences that have affected self-confidence), their Job Experience may have rather reduced than fostered their Career Adaptability.

2. Contributions and limitations

The study represents an interesting contribution to the literature. Indeed, to our knowledge, it is the first study to compare the students' career perspectives in Belgium and Germany (including among others their Career Adaptability, their JSSE, their Job Experience and their job search experience). Furthermore, it contributes to filling the lack of researches about variables that are not stable and trait-like psychological characteristics but variables that are linked to the individual's history, which are likewise highly probable to influence the development of Career Adaptability.

Nevertheless, this study is not without limitations. There are several drawbacks on the methodical and constructional level.

Firstly, the calculating Job Experience and Job Search Experience has proven difficult. On the one hand, because there is not only the quantitative aspect but also the qualitative aspect (e.g. did the job search lead to success?). On the other hand, because the quantitative amount is not easy to estimate for the participants. Since very few students had a regular and consistent job throughout their studies, it is a considerable cognitive effort for the participants to look back and remember all the jobs they have ever done and to estimate their total number of hours. It is therefore not unlikely that participants at this point were motivated only to a limited extent to perform this

calculation accurately. In addition, regardless of motivation, calculation errors or memory gaps can simply falsify the data. In order to facilitate the conditions for the participants, the questionnaire of this study was designed in such a way that they had to give their Job Experience and Job Search Experience in rough categories instead of giving their own precise assessment. The disadvantage of this rough estimation is that no more differentiated comparison is possible in cases where the majority of participants chose the same category. In such a case, a more nuanced subdivision of this frequently chosen category would have been more favourable.

Secondly, the questionnaire for the JSSE has not been revalidated after extending the validated one Sak's, Zivic's and Koen's JSSE scale (2015) with 8 more questions, inspired by the results of Liu's, Huang's and Wang's meta-analysis (2014).

Thirdly, all results are based on self-rated questionnaires which means that they are potentially biased, notably regarding social desirability (Van de Mortel, 2008). Since no social desirability control scale has been used (due to consideration of the survey's length and thus the participant's motivation), we do not know the impact of the participant's tendency to present a favourable image of themselves. However, such an effect needs to be assumed as many questions might have been perceived as an evaluation of their previous performance and reached success regarding their career, which is in our days a sensitive topic due to the increasing societal pressure of performance (Ahlers, 2015), especially for students (Turiaux & Krinner, 2014).

Fourthly, the generalizability of the present findings is limited due to the unbalanced representation of our sample (76% women versus 24% men; 49% students or graduates in psychology versus 51% all the other fields of study; 63% Belgians versus only 37% Germans). Besides, the fact that psychology students seem to be less likely directly employed after studies (Kirk, 2016) might additionally affect the generalizability of our findings since half of our sample consists of psychology students or recently graduates.

Fifthly, a substantial part of the participants was recruited via the author's private network, which might have led to a selection of participants belonging to the same social and geographical milieu (Louvain-la-Neuve for the Belgian participants and Berlin for the German participants).

Sixthly, the cross-sectional and thus descriptive nature of this study does not allow to make any inferences regarding the identified associations. The proposed interpretations would benefit from being studied experimentally and/or longitudinally.

In addition, in this study, no control variables were taken into account. Indeed, the effect of certain demographic, personality characteristics or emotional states (e.g. depression or low general self-esteem) has not been controlled.

3. Implications for research and praxis

The results obtained offer future avenues for research, as was emphasized throughout the discussion.

First of all, it is crucial to find an efficient way how to operationalize the variables Job Experience and Job Search Experience that meets general consensus. As explained in the limitations' section, the variables Job Experience and Job Search Experience are not easy to measure if you want to combine easy feasibility for the participants with obtaining precise results. Besides, as long as there is no commonly used measurement, like a validated scale, it might be difficult to compare different studies and to draw conclusions.

In addition, regarding the lack of research in the current literature concerning the effect of individual and malleable characteristics, such Job Experience as well as Job Search Experience on the two resources Career Adaptability and JSSE, we call on for further investigations. Firstly, because according to Vendramin (2007) the Belgium young employees who had a student job once turned out to be less likely to fall into unemployment, which suggests that Job Experience is a relevant variable in the field of career guidance for students. Secondly, because Bandura's (1977) often-acquired theory on the development of self-efficacy gives the promising hint that successfully accomplished performance leads to more self-efficacy with respect to the performed tasks.

The effects of mediating or moderating variables should be especially considered as they might explain for example the unexpected negative correlation between Job Search Experience and JSSE as well as Career Adaptability (see hypotheses H2 and H3), as well as the unexpected fact that the national group of our sample that has less Job Experience shows higher scores in Career Adaptability (see hypothesis H9).

Last, the fact that the observed greater amount of Job Experience of German students seems to be linked to a longer duration of the studies and a higher age at graduation (detailed analyses can be viewed in the appendix, tables 3 and 4) opens an

interesting starting point for research on higher educational systems. Further research is needed to investigate the causality, i.e. whether German students do not find enough time to study due to their high investment of time in student jobs, and therefore their studies are unintentionally protracted, or whether they extend their studies deliberately in order to work more. It would also be interesting to investigate how satisfied students are with their chosen model of student life and to compare this satisfaction internationally. In addition, one could add variables such as graduation results, success in finding a job after graduation, or even for a long-term study, variables such as success and satisfaction in later careers. Such a comparison could lead to conclusions as to which study system is more meaningful and should therefore be pursued in the future.

IV. CONCLUSION

The main objective of this thesis was to contribute filling the lack of research on variables predicting Career Adaptability and Job Search Self-Efficacy (JSSE) and being linked to the individual's history. The role of the individually differing Job Experience and Job Search Experience in the development of those two psychological resources was investigated. Furthermore, the dimension of the national context was considered as being possibly associated with all the four presented variables. Since previous research has shown that Career Adaptability and JSSE are beneficial in career transitions, this study focused on the population of almost or recently graduates on the verge of entering the world of labour.

Firstly, consistent with the literature, the presented results confirm the association between the two investigated psychological resources Career Adaptability and JSSE.

Secondly, according to our expectations, results show a relation between Job Search Experience and JSSE. Nevertheless, this relation turned out to be negative instead of positive, as we would have assumed according to the theory about Self-Efficacy. The fact if the performed job search led to success or not seems to be an interfering factor, also put forward in the theory about Self-Efficacy and thus worthy to be investigated further. Concerning Career Adaptability, no evidence for a relation with Job Experience could be found.

Thirdly, also contrary to our assumptions, results do not show any association between Job Experience and both resources, Career Adaptability, nor with JSSE.

Fourthly, as we expected, German students had higher Job Experience than Belgium students, whereas this difference could not be observed for Job Search Experience.

Fifthly, none of the assumed mediating relations between the nationality, Job Experience or Job Search Experience and the two resources, Career Adaptability and JSSE, could be observed. However, when accepting a lower level of significance, results confirm that the relation between nationality and Career Adaptability is mediated by Job Search Experience. As hints for further research, explanation attempts and thus new hypotheses have been put forward for all unexpected findings.

Beyond the examination of our hypotheses, the results could also be used to gather first indications regarding the international differences in the implementation of the Master's program and its consequences. Research investigating the international differences of educational programs could benefit from those findings.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the operationalisation of the variables Job Experience and Job Search Experience turned out to be difficult. Researchers are thus invited to develop a valid scale in order to meet general consensus, which is indispensably for the comparability of different studies on the same subject.

In conclusion, this study was the first, to our knowledge, to explore Career Adaptability and JSSE in the context of Job (Search) Experience and international differences in the same time. Despite the limitations concerning the measurement of Job Experience and Job Search Experience as well as the representativity of the used sample, this opens new avenues of research.

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VI. APPENDIX

Appendix 1 – Tables

Table 3. Independent t-test comparing the average period of study up to the Master's degree in Belgium and Germany

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
duration of studies	Equal variances assumed	12,022	,001	-4,529	163	,000	-1,254	,277	-1,800	-,707
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,173	99,464	,000*	-1,254	,300	-1,850	-,657

* p < .001

Table 4. Independent t-test comparing the average age of the students at graduation in Belgium and Germany

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
age	Equal variances assumed	2,168	,143	-6,378	167	,000*	-2,954	,463	-3,869	-2,040
	Equal variances not assumed			-6,353	128,829	,000	-2,954	,465	-3,874	-2,034

* p < .001

Appendix 2 – Online Survey (French Version)

Start of Block: 1) Bienvenue

BIENVENUE DANS NOTRE ETUDE

Ta participation est très précieuse pour notre recherche dans le domaine de l'orientation professionnelle! MERCI !

Ce questionnaire te prendra approximativement 15 minutes.

Tes réponses seront enregistrées au fur et à mesure. Du coup, si nécessaire, tu peux t'arrêter à tout moment et reprendre jusqu'à une semaine plus tard en utilisant le même lien et le même PC/gsm.

Sache qu'il n'y a pas de bonnes ou de mauvaises réponses aux questions!

En participant à cette étude, tu donnes ton consentement libre et éclairé.

Tu acceptes que les résultats de cette étude soient utilisés à des fins scientifiques non-lucratives en respectant ton anonymat.

Page Break

Avant de commencer, nous te prions de confirmer que tu te retrouves dans les 3 critères suivants :

Critère 1

- ☐ Tu as fait tes études (bachelier et/ou master) en Belgique.
 - ☐ Tu as fait tes études (bachelier et/ou master) en Allemagne.
-

Critère 2

- ☐ Tu fais des études en droit, médecine et/ou enseignement.
 - ☐ Tu fais un master dans un autre domaine d'étude.
-

Critère 3

- ☐ Dans maximum 12 mois tu auras terminé ton master et avec ce diplôme-là tu pourras, en principe, entamer une recherche d'emploi.
 - ☐ Tu auras terminé ton master dans plus de 12 mois.
 - ☐ Tu as déjà terminé ton master mais tu n'as pas encore été engagé(e) sur base de ce diplôme.
-

Tu vas obtenir ton diplôme de master dans combien de mois exactement ?
[réponse en mois, Ex. si 12mois, alors mettre "12"]

Tu as obtenu ton diplôme de master il y a combien de mois?
[réponse en mois, Ex. si 8 mois, alors mettre "8"]

Nous te remercions beaucoup pour ta volonté de participer à notre étude !

Malheureusement nous ne pouvons pas t'inclure dans notre étude car tes études font partie de celles qui dépassent la durée officielle pour un master (5 ans) dans au moins un des deux pays que nous comparons (la Belgique et l'Allemagne).

Une belle journée à toi!

Nous te remercions beaucoup pour ta volonté de participer à notre étude !

Malheureusement à l'heure actuelle, nous ne pouvons pas encore t'inclure dans notre étude car nous nous focalisons sur les personnes qui sont très proches de la période de recherche d'emploi, ou qui y sont déjà.

Ce serait génial si tu pouvais remplir ce questionnaire lorsque tu te situeras à maximum 12 mois de la fin de ton Master!

Une belle journée à toi!

End of Block: 1) Bienvenue

Start of Block: 2) Questions générales

QUELQUES QUESTIONS GENERALES

(partie 1 sur 3) **Merci de répondre aux questions suivantes en cochant et remplissant les cases.** [Si tu souhaites nuancer une de tes réponses aux questions qui suivent, tu trouveras à la fin de cette section un espace pour faire des commentaires.]

Tu es :

☐ une femme

☐ un homme

Au moment de l'obtention de ton diplôme de fin d'études, quel âge auras-tu / avais-tu?

[réponse en années]

Souhaites-tu trouver un job dans les 6 mois suivant l'obtention de ton diplôme?

☐ oui

☐ non

TES ÉTUDES

Ton domaine d'étude :

[Les cases avec les tirets sont à ignorer! Merci.]

☐ Sciences agronomiques et ingénierie biologique

☐ - _____

☐ Théologie

☐ Sciences politiques et sociales

☐ Sciences psychologiques et de l'éducation

☐ - _____

☐ Sciences de l'ingénieur et technologie

☐ Art de bâtir et urbanisme

☐ - _____

☐ Art du spectacle et technique de diffusion et de communication

☐ - _____

☐ Sciences

☐ - _____

☐ Sciences biomédicales et pharmaceutiques

☐ Sciences de la santé publique

- ☐ Sciences de la motricité
- ☐ - _____
- ☐ Philosophie
- ☐ Langues, lettres et traductologie
- ☐ Histoire, histoire de l'art et archéologie
- ☐ Information et communication
- ☐ - _____
- ☐ Criminologie
- ☐ Sciences économiques et de gestion
- ☐ - _____

Quel est l'intitulé exact de tes études ?

La durée officiellement prévue pour un master est de 5 années.

Et toi, tu penses obtenir ton diplôme ... [juin ou août = 0, +2, +4, +6]

[janvier = +1, +3, +5, +7]

- ☐ ... **sans dépasser** le nombre d'années officiellement prévu [Ex. obtenir mon master en juin ou août après 5 ans]
- ☐ ... en dépassant le nombre d'années officiellement prévu de **1 quadrimestre** [Ex. obtenir mon master en janvier après 5 ans et demi]
- ☐ ... en dépassant le nombre d'années officiellement prévu de **2 quadrimestres** [Ex. obtenir mon master en janvier après 6 ans]
- ☐ ... en dépassant le nombre d'années officiellement prévu de **3 quadrimestres**
- ☐ ... en dépassant le nombre d'années officiellement prévu de **4 quadrimestres**
- ☐ ... en dépassant le nombre d'années officiellement prévu de **5 quadrimestres**
- ☐ ... en dépassant le nombre d'années officiellement prévu de **6 ou plus quadrimestres**

**La durée officiellement prévue pour un master est de 5 années.
Et toi, tu as obtenu ton diplôme ...**

- ☐ ... **sans dépasser** le nombre d'années officiellement prévu *[Ex. obtenir mon master en juin ou août après 5 ans]*
- ☐ ... en dépassant le nombre d'années officiellement prévu de **1 quadrimestre** *[Ex. obtenir mon master en janvier après 5 ans et demi]*
- ☐ ... en dépassant le nombre d'années officiellement prévu de **2 quadrimestres** *[Ex. obtenir mon master en janvier après 6 ans]*
- ☐ ... en dépassant le nombre d'années officiellement prévu de **3 quadrimestres**
- ☐ ... en dépassant le nombre d'années officiellement prévu de **4 quadrimestres**
- ☐ ... en dépassant le nombre d'années officiellement prévu de **5 quadrimestres**
- ☐ ... en dépassant le nombre d'années officiellement prévu de **6 ou plus quadrimestres**

Selon toi, quelle est la probabilité de trouver du travail dans ton domaine d'étude endéans les 6 mois suivant l'obtention de ton diplôme ?

- ☐ 10%
 - ☐ 20%
 - ☐ 30%
 - ☐ 40%
 - ☐ 50%
 - ☐ 60%
 - ☐ 70%
 - ☐ 80%
 - ☐ 90%
 - ☐ 100%
-

TON EXPERIENCE DANS LA RECHERCHE DE TRAVAIL
(y compris de stages)

Quel est le nombre de jobs/stages pour lesquels tu as déjà postulé au total ?

- ☐ aucun
- ☐ 1-5
- ☐ 5-10
- ☐ 10-15
- ☐ 15-20
- ☐ 20-30
- ☐ 30-50
- ☐ Plus que 50

Combien de temps as-tu déjà investi dans la recherche d'un travail (y compris de stages) ?

[temps consacré à rechercher des lieux de travail/stages, à rechercher des informations en discutant avec d'autres ou sur internet, rédaction des CV et lettres de motivation, à l'écriture des mails, à appeler, à passer des entretiens, etc. ...]

- ☐ 0 heures
- ☐ Quelques heures, mais moins que 8 heures
- ☐ Plus qu'un jour (> 8heures)
- ☐ Plus qu'une semaine (> 40heures)
- ☐ Plus que deux semaines (> 80 heures)
- ☐ Plus qu'un mois (> 160heures)
- ☐ Plus que 3 mois (> 480heures)
- ☐ Plus que 6 mois (> 1000heures)

Pour l'ensemble de ta recherche de travail, quel est le pourcentage de candidatures qui ont abouti à l'obtention du job/stage en question ?

- ☐ 10%
- ☐ 20%
- ☐ 30%
- ☐ 40%
- ☐ 50%
- ☐ 60%
- ☐ 70%
- ☐ 80%
- ☐ 90%
- ☐ 100%

Parmi les candidatures qui ont abouti à un job/stage, pour combien as-tu réellement fournis des efforts afin qu'elles soient de bonne qualité ?

- ☐ 10%
- ☐ 20%
- ☐ 30%
- ☐ 40%
- ☐ 50%
- ☐ 60%
- ☐ 70%
- ☐ 80%
- ☐ 90%
- ☐ 100%

TON EXPERIENCE DE TRAVAIL

(y compris de stages)

Quel est le nombre de jobs/stages que tu as déjà eu au total ?

- ☐ aucun
- ☐ 1-5
- ☐ 5-10
- ☐ 10-15
- ☐ 15-20
- ☐ 20-30
- ☐ 30-50
- ☐ Plus que 50

Ton expérience de travail au total :

[Estimation de toutes les heures sommées, supposé que 8h par jour, 5jours par semaine, 4semaines par mois]

**Proposition: Tu pourras peut-être plus facilement estimer le temps si tu calcules avec ton argent gagné dans le passé (1 heure de travail = environ 10€)*

- ☐ jamais
- ☐ Plus que 1 jour (> 8h)
- ☐ Plus que 1 semaine (> 40h)
- ☐ Plus que 1 mois (> 160h)
- ☐ Plus que 3 mois (> 480h)
- ☐ Plus que 6 mois (> 1000h)
- ☐ Plus que 1 an (>2000h)
- ☐ Plus que 2 ans (> 4000h)
- ☐ Plus que 4 ans (> 8000h)
- ☐ Plus que 6ans (> 1200h)

As-tu des commentaires ou des précisions à ajouter pour cette partie ?

Page Break

Félicitations! La moitié du questionnaire est faite.
Les questions suivantes auront un format plus simple, tu verras...

End of Block: 2) Questions générales

Start of Block: 3) JSSE: la recherche de travail

QUELQUES QUESTIONS PAR RAPPORT A LA RECHERCHE DE TRAVAIL (partie 2 sur 3)

Nous te prions d'indiquer ton degré de confiance à pouvoir mettre en place les comportements suivants.

	pas du tout confiant(e)	assez peu confiant(e)	ni confiant(e), ni pas confiant(e)	assez confiant(e)	tout à fait confiant(e)
Utiliser des réseaux sociaux pour obtenir des pistes d'emploi.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Préparer des CVs qui te permettront d'obtenir des entretiens d'embauche.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Faire bonne impression sur les interviewers pendant des entretiens d'embauche.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Faire des candidatures spontanées qui te donneront un entretien d'embauche.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
S'entretenir avec des personnes afin d'obtenir des informations par rapport aux métiers et aux jobs qui t'intéressent.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Savoir bien se présenter afin de susciter l'intérêt des employeurs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Planifier et organiser un programme hebdomadaire de recherche de job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trouver des postes vacants.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Utiliser une variété de sources* afin de trouver des opportunités d'emploi. [<i>*internet, Forem, CIO, ...</i>]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Chercher et trouver des bonnes opportunités d'emploi.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Identifier des types d'emploi où tes compétences pourraient être pertinentes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fixer des objectifs concrets concernant l'activité, le métier, le type d'emploi et le niveau de salaire que tu désires.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Atteindre chaque semaine les buts fixés pour une recherche d'emploi.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Impliquer activement des connaissances, la famille, les amis afin d'obtenir du soutien concret pour la recherche d'emploi (ex. aide pour des trajets, soutien financier, relectures de dossiers de candidature).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Impliquer activement des connaissances, la famille, les amis afin d'obtenir du soutien affectif pendant la recherche d'emploi (ex. encouragement et réassurance).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Considérer des contretemps (ex. feedback négatif) comme temporaires et utiles pour de futures stratégies et efforts de recherche d'emploi.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Planifier des solutions alternatives ou préventives afin de surmonter des obstacles ou des contretemps (ex. faire des appels de suivi chez des employeurs).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Utiliser des méthodes de réduction de stress (ex. relaxation)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

End of Block: 3) JSSE: la recherche de travail

QUELQUES QUESTIONS PAR RAPPORT A TON PROJET PROFESSIONNEL

(partie 3 sur 3)

Nous te prions d'indiquer ton degré de confiance par rapport à ta capacité à mettre en place les comportements suivants.

	Je me sens incapable de...	Je me sens plutôt incapable de ...	Je ne me sens ni capable, ni incapable de ...	Je me sens plutôt capable de ...	Je me sens tout à fait capable de ...
... réfléchir à ce que sera mon avenir.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... me préparer à mon avenir.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... devenir conscient(e) des choix de formation et de profession que je dois faire.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... prendre moi-même mes décisions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... prendre la responsabilité de mes actes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... compter sur moi-même.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... chercher les occasions de progresser en tant que personne.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... explorer les options avant de faire un choix.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... observer différentes manières de faire les choses.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... prendre soin de bien faire les choses.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... acquérir de nouvelles compétences.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... développer mes capacités.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Nous te remercions beaucoup pour le temps et l'énergie que tu as consacrés pour répondre à ces questions !

Tes réponses sont très précieuses pour notre recherche!

Cette recherche a pour but de mieux comprendre différents facteurs dans la recherche d'emploi chez les étudiants en fin de leur cursus et les jeunes diplômés entrant bientôt au marché de travail.

Concrètement nous étudions les différents liens entre leur expérience de travail, leur sentiment d'efficacité personnelle dans la recherche d'emploi, leur sentiment d'adaptabilité de carrière et leur contexte nationale (le pays d'études: Belgique versus Allemagne). Si tu veux connaître les résultats de cette étude, tu peux envoyer un mail à milena.treu@student.uclouvain.be et nous t'enverrons un résumé des résultats dès que l'étude sera terminée (prévu pour juin 2019).

Espace pour des commentaires éventuels :

End of Block: 5) Fin

Appendix 3 – Online Survey (German Version)

Start of Block: 1 Bienvenue/Willkommen

HERZLICH WILLKOMMEN BEI UNSERER STUDIE

Deine Teilnahme ist von großem Wert für unsere Recherche im Bereich der Berufsorientierung. Danke!

Dieser Fragebogen wird etwa 15 Minuten dauern.

Deine Antworten werden Abschnitt für Abschnitt gespeichert. Du kannst also, falls nötig, zu jedem Zeitpunkt pausieren und den Fragebogen innerhalb der folgenden 7 Tage vervollständigen, sofern Du denselben PC/Handy benutzt.

Es gibt keine guten/richtigen oder schlechten/falschen Antworten.

Indem Du diesen Fragebogen ausfüllst, willigst Du auf freiwilliger Basis ein, dass die Ergebnisse dieser Studie zu wissenschaftlichen Zwecken (ohne finanzielles Ziel) verwendet werden.

Deine Anonymität wird hierbei gewahrt.

Zu Gunsten der besseren Übersichtlichkeit wird hier der Begriff "Master" als Synonym für jegliche Diplom-Studiengänge verwendet, deren Regelstudienzeit ebenfalls 5 Jahre beträgt.

Bevor Du beginnst, bitten wir Dich zu bestätigen, dass Du Dich einem der folgenden 3 Kriterien zuordnen kannst:

Kriterium 1

- ☐ Du hast Dein Studium (Bachelor oder Master) in Belgien gemacht.
- ☐ Du hast Dein Studium (Bachelor oder Master) in Deutschland gemacht

Kriterium 2

- ☐ Du studierst Jura, Medizin und/oder Lehramt.
 - ☐ Du machst einen Master/Diplom in einem anderen Studiengang.
-

Kriterium 3

- ☐ In spätestens 12 Monaten wirst Du Deinen Master beenden, und mit diesem Abschluss wirst Du Dich -vom Prinzip her- auf Jobsuche begeben können.
- ☐ Du wirst Deinen Master erst in mehr als 12 Monaten beenden.
- ☐ Du hast Deinen Master bereits abgeschlossen, aber seitdem noch keinen Job auf Basis dieses Abschlusses begonnen.

In wie viel Monaten genau wirst Du Deinen Master abschließen?

[Antwort in Monaten, z.B. wenn in 12 Monaten, dann "12" eingeben]

Vor wieviel Monaten genau hast Du Deinen Master abgeschlossen?

[Antwort in Monaten, z.B. wenn vor 8 Monaten, dann "8" eingeben]

Wir danken Dir herzlich für Deine Bereitschaft an unserer Studie teilzunehmen!

Leider können wir Dich nicht in die Studie mit einbeziehen, da Dein Studiengang Teil derer ist, die die Regelstudienzeit von 5 Jahren in mindestens einem der beiden Länder, welche wir vergleichen (Belgien und Deutschland), überschreiten.

Alles Gute Dir!

Wir danken Dir herzlich für Deine Bereitschaft an unserer Studie teilzunehmen!

Leider können wir Dich zur Zeit noch nicht in die Studie mit einbeziehen, da wir uns auf die Personen fokussieren, die sich kurz vor oder bereits in der ersten großen Jobsuche befinden.

Es wäre super, wenn Du diesen Fragebogen erneut öffnen würdest, sobald es nur noch maximal 12 Monate sind, bis Du Deinen Masterabschluss in der Tasche hast!

Wir wünschen Dir alles Gute!

End of Block: 1 Bienvenue/Willkommen

EIN PAAR ALLGEMEINE FRAGEN

(Teil 1 von 3) **Bitte beantworte die folgenden Fragen durch Ankreuzen oder Ausfüllen der Felder. Danke!**

[Falls Du Deine Antwort(en) erläutern willst, hast Du am Ende dieses Abschnitts Gelegenheit, einen Kommentar zu verfassen.]

Du bist:

☐ eine Frau

☐ ein Mann

Wie alt warst Du/ wirst Du sein zu dem Zeitpunkt, an dem Du deinen Master abgeschlossen hast / abschließen wirst? [Antwort in Jahren]

Willst Du in den ersten 6 Monaten nach Abschluss Deines Masters einen Job finden?

☐ ja

☐ nein

DEIN STUDIUM

Dein aktueller Studienbereich bzw. Studiengang :

☐ Agrar- und Forstwissenschaften --> **Agrarwissenschaften und Bioingenieurwesen**

☐ Agrar- und Forstwissenschaften --> ANDERE:

☐ Gesellschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften --> **Theologie**

☐ Gesellschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften --> **Politik- und Sozialwissenschaften**

☐ Gesellschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften --> **Psychologie und Erziehungswissenschaften**

☐ Gesellschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften --> ANDERE:

☐ Ingenieurwissenschaften --> **Ingenieurwissenschaften und Technologie/Verfahrenstechnik**

☐ Ingenieurwissenschaften --> **Baukunst und Städtebau/Städteplanung**

☐ Ingenieurwissenschaften --> ANDERE:

☐ Kunst, Musik, Design --> **Darstellende Kunst, Kommunikationstechnik**

☐ Kunst, Musik, Design --> ANDERE:

☐ Mathematik, Naturwissenschaften, Informatik --> **Naturwissenschaften**

☐ Mathematik, Naturwissenschaften, Informatik --> ANDERE:

☐ Medizin, Gesundheitswissenschaften --> **Biomedizin und Pharmawissenschaften**

☐ Medizin, Gesundheitswissenschaften --> **Gesundheitsforschung / Public Health**

☐ Medizin, Gesundheitswissenschaften --> **Bewegungswissenschaften (Sport, Physiotherapie, ...)**

☐ Medizin, Gesundheitswissenschaften --> ANDERE:

☐ Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaften, Kunst und Gestaltung --> **Philosophie**

☐ Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaften, Kunst und Gestaltung --> **Sprachen und Übersetzung**

☐ Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaften, Kunst und Gestaltung --> **Geschichte, Kunstgeschichte und Archäologie**

☐ Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaften, Kunst und Gestaltung --> **Information und Kommunikation**

☐ Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaften, Kunst und Gestaltung --> ANDERE:

☐ Wirtschafts- und Rechtswissenschaften --> **Kriminologie**

☐ Wirtschafts- und Rechtswissenschaften --> **Betriebswirtschaft, Volkswirtschaft, Management**

☐ Wirtschafts- und Rechtswissenschaften --> ANDERE:

Wie genau heißt Dein Studiengang?

**Die Regelstudienzeit für einen Master beträgt normalerweise 5 Jahre.
Und Du, wann wirst Du Dein Studium vorraussichtlich abschließen?**

- ☐ ... innerhalb der Regelstudienzeit.
- ☐ ... mit **einem Semester** über die Regelstudienzeit hinaus.
- ☐ ... mit **2 Semestern** über die Regelstudienzeit hinaus.
- ☐ ... mit **3 Semestern** über die Regelstudienzeit hinaus.
- ☐ ... mit **4 Semestern** über die Regelstudienzeit hinaus.
- ☐ ... mit **5 Semestern** über die Regelstudienzeit hinaus.
- ☐ ... mit **6 Semestern oder mehr** über die Regelstudienzeit hinaus.

**Die Regelstudienzeit für einen Master beträgt normalerweise 5 Jahre.
Und Du, wann hast Du Dein Studium abgeschlossen?**

- ☐ ... innerhalb der Regelstudienzeit.
 - ☐ ... mit **einem Semester** über die Regelstudienzeit hinaus.
 - ☐ ... mit **2 Semestern** über die Regelstudienzeit hinaus.
 - ☐ ... mit **3 Semestern** über die Regelstudienzeit hinaus.
 - ☐ ... mit **4 Semestern** über die Regelstudienzeit hinaus.
 - ☐ ... mit **5 Semestern** über die Regelstudienzeit hinaus.
 - ☐ ... mit **6 Semestern oder mehr** über die Regelstudienzeit hinaus.
-

Wie hoch ist Deiner Einschätzung nach die Wahrscheinlichkeit, innerhalb der ersten 6 Monate nach Abschluss Deines Studiums einen darauf basierenden Job zu finden?

- ☐ 10%
- ☐ 20%
- ☐ 30%
- ☐ 40%
- ☐ 50%
- ☐ 60%
- ☐ 70%
- ☐ 80%
- ☐ 90%
- ☐ 100%

DEINE ERFAHRUNG IN DER JOBSUCHE
(Praktika mit inbegriffen)

Auf wie viele Jobs/Praktika hast Du Dich insgesamt schon beworben?

- ☐ keine
- ☐ 1-5
- ☐ 5-10
- ☐ 10-15
- ☐ 15-20
- ☐ 20-30
- ☐ 30-50
- ☐ Mehr als 50

Wie viel Zeit hast Du schon in die Jobsuche (bzw. Praktikum) investiert?

[Suchen einer freien Stelle/Praktikumsplatzes, Internetrecherche oder Gespräche mit Bekannten um an nützliche Informationen zu kommen, Verfassen der Lebensläufe und der Bewerbungsschreiben, E-Mail-Verkehr, Telefonate, Bewerbungsgespräche, etc. ...]

- ☐ 0 Stunden
- ☐ Ein paar Stunden, aber weniger als 8 Stunden
- ☐ Mehr als 1 Tag (> 8 Stunden)
- ☐ Mehr als 1 Woche (> 40 Stunden)
- ☐ Mehr als 2 Wochen (> 80 Stunden)
- ☐ Mehr als 1 Monat (> 160 Stunden)
- ☐ Mehr als 3 Monate (> 480 Stunden)
- ☐ Mehr als 6 Monate (> 1000 Stunden)

Mit Blick auf die gesamte Job/Praktikumssuche, die Du bisher schon durchgeführt hast, wie viel Prozent Deiner Bewerbungen haben dazu geführt, dass Du den jeweiligen Job/Praktikum dem Ende auch erhalten hast?

- ☐ 10%
- ☐ 20%
- ☐ 30%
- ☐ 40%
- ☐ 50%
- ☐ 60%
- ☐ 70%
- ☐ 80%
- ☐ 90%
- ☐ 100%

Für wie viele dieser Bewerbungen, welche letztendlich auch zu einem Job/Praktikum geführt haben, hattest Du Dich angestrengt und Dich um eine gute Qualität Deiner Bewerbung bemüht?

- ☐ 10%
- ☐ 20%
- ☐ 30%
- ☐ 40%
- ☐ 50%
- ☐ 60%
- ☐ 70%
- ☐ 80%
- ☐ 90%
- ☐ 100%

DEINE ARBEITSERFAHRUNG

(Praktika mit inbegriffen)

Wie viele Jobs/Praktika hast Du insgesamt schon gehabt?

- ☐ keine
- ☐ 1-5
- ☐ 5-10
- ☐ 10-15
- ☐ 15-20
- ☐ 20-30
- ☐ 30-50
- ☐ Mehr als 50

Deine Arbeitserfahrung insgesamt :

[Schätzung aller Arbeitsstunden zusammengezählt - ausgehend von 8h pro Tag, 5 Tage pro Woche, 4 Wochen pro Monat]

**Vorschlag: Du kannst Deine Arbeitszeit vielleicht besser schätzen, wenn Du die Stunden anhand des Geldes, das Du insgesamt schon verdienst hast, ausrechnest (1 Arbeitsstunde = ca. 10€)*

- ☐ nie
- ☐ Mehr als 1 Tag (> 8h)
- ☐ Mehr als 1 Woche (> 40h)
- ☐ Mehr als 1 Monat (> 160h)
- ☐ Mehr als 3 Monate (> 480h)
- ☐ Mehr als 6 Monate (> 1000h)
- ☐ Mehr als 1 Jahr (>2000h)
- ☐ Mehr als 2 Jahre (> 4000h)
- ☐ Mehr als 4 Jahre (> 8000h)
- ☐ Mehr als 6 Jahre (> 1200h)

Hast Du Erläuterungen oder einen Kommentar zu diesem Abschnitt ?

Page Break

***Glückwunsch! Die Hälfte des Fragebogens ist liegt hinter Dir.
Die nächsten Fragen werden ein leichteres Format haben, Du wirst sehen...***

End of Block: 2 Questions générales/Allg. Fragen

EIN PAAR FRAGEN BEZÜGLICH DER JOBSUCHE

(Teil 2 von 3)

Wie zuversichtlich bist Du, die folgenden Tätigkeiten durchführen zu können?

	gar nicht zuversichtlich	wenig zuversichtlich	weder unzuversichtlich, noch zuversichtlich	recht zuversichtlich	absolut zuversichtlich
Soziale Netzwerke nutzen, um Hinweise für potentielle Jobs zu bekommen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lebensläufe so vorbereiten, dass Sie zu Bewerbungsgesprächen eingeladen werden.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Die Interviewer während der Bewerbungsgespräche beeindrucken.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Initiativanrufe tätigen oder Initiativbewerbungen schicken, um ein Vorstellungsgespräch zu erhalten.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gespräche führen, um Informationen über die für Sie interessanten Berufe und Jobs zu erhalten.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sich so präsentieren, dass das Interesse des Arbeitgebers geweckt wird.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Einen wöchentlichen Zeitplan für die Arbeitssuche planen und organisieren.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Herausfinden wo es freie Stellen gibt.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Eine Vielzahl von Quellen* nutzen, um Jobmöglichkeiten zu finden. [<i>*Internet, Arbeitsamt, Berufsinformationszentrum, ...</i>]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Nach guten Arbeitsmöglichkeiten suchen und welche finden.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Die Berufsarten ausfindig machen, in der Deine Fähigkeiten relevant sein würden.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Konkrete Ziele bezüglich der gewünschten Tätigkeit, des Berufsfeldes und des Gehalts setzen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Die wöchentlichen Ziele, die Du Dir für die Arbeitssuche gesetzt hat, einhalten.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Aktiv Bekannte, Familie, Freunde einbinden, um konkrete Unterstützung bei der Arbeitssuche zu erhalten (z.B. Fahrdienste, finanzielle Unterstützung, Korrekturlesen der Bewerbungsunterlagen)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Aktiv Bekannte, Familie, Freunde einbinden, um emotionale Unterstützung während der Jobsuche zu erhalten (z.B. Ermutigung und Zuversicht)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rückschläge (z.B. negatives Feedback) als vorübergehend und als hilfreich für zukünftige Strategien und Bemühungen bei der Arbeitssuche einstufen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Alternativpläne haben, um Hindernisse zu überwinden und Rückschläge zu überwinden (z.B. Folgeanrufe bei Arbeitgebern machen).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Methoden der Stressreduzierung nutzen (z.B. Entspannung).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

End of Block: 3 JSSE: la recherche de travail/Jobssuche

Start of Block: 4 CA: projet professionnel/berufliche Laufbahn

EIN PAAR FRAGEN BEZÜGLICH DEINER BERUFLICHEN LAUFBAHN

(Teil 3 von 3)

Wie groß ist Dein Vertrauen in Bezug auf Deine Fähigkeit, die folgende Dinge zu tun?

	Ich fühle mich unfähig ...	Ich fühle mich eher unfähig ...	Ich fühle mich weder unfähig noch fähig ...	Ich fühle mich recht fähig ...	Ich fühle mich absolut fähig ...
... darüber nachzudenken, wie meine Zukunft sein wird.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... mich auf die Zukunft vorzubereiten.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... mir der Entscheidungen bewusst zu werden, die ich bezüglich Ausbildung und Beruf treffen muss.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... selbst Entscheidungen zu treffen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... Verantwortung für mein Handeln zu übernehmen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... auf mich selbst zu zählen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... nach Gelegenheiten zu suchen, um als Person zu wachsen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... Möglichkeiten zu erforschen, bevor ich eine Entscheidung treffe.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... verschiedene Arten wahrnehmen, Dinge zu tun.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... darauf zu achten, Dinge gut zu machen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... neue Fertigkeiten zu lernen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... meine Fähigkeiten zu entwickeln.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

End of Block: 4 CA: projet professionnel/berufliche Laufbahn

Start of Block: 5 Fin/Ende

Wir danken Dir herzlich für die Zeit und die Energie, die Du aufgebracht hast, um die Fragen zu beantworten!

Deine Antworten sind sehr wertvoll für unsere wissenschaftliche Recherche!

Ziel dieser Studie ist es, verschiedene Faktoren in der Jobsuche bei Studenten, welche sich am Ende ihres Masters befinden und solche, die ihr Studium gerade abgeschlossen haben, besser zu verstehen.

Ganz konkret untersuchen wir die Beziehung zwischen ihrer Arbeitserfahrung, ihrem Gefühl von Selbstwirksamkeit in der Jobsuche, ihrem Gefühl von 'Career Adaptability' und ihrem nationalen Kontext (die zu vergleichenden Länder: Belgien und Deutschland).

Falls Du mehr zu den Ergebnissen dieser Studie wissen möchtest, kannst Du eine Mail an milena.treu@student.uclouvain.be schicken und wir werden Dir eine Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse zukommen lassen sobald die Studie beendet sein wird (vorgesehen für Juni 2019).

Raum für eventuelle Kommentare:

End of Block: 5 Fin/Ende

In our increasingly complex and unpredictable world of labour, psychological resources such as Career Adaptability and Job Search Self-Efficacy become more and more precious for workers and job seekers. Therefore, many studies have been conducted on antecedents of Career Adaptability and Job Search Self-Efficacy. However, only few is known about how this data is impacted by the individual's history. Hence, this study investigated the relation between Career Adaptability and Job Search Self-Efficacy with the individually differing Job Experience and Job Search Experience of almost and recent graduates. Furthermore, in the spirit of globalization, the role of international differences has been explored by comparing Belgium and Germany.

The results of this study suggest that there are only few associations between the investigated variables: First, contradictory to the current literature, Job Search Experience seems to be negatively related to Job Search Self-Efficacy. Then, as expected, German students seem to have more Job Experience than Belgian students. Lastly, the results give indication that the relation between nationality and Career Adaptability might be mediated by Job Search Experience.