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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN

EMPLOYABILITY AND HOPE

A Dissertation in Education
with a Concentration in Curriculum Studies

by

Christa G. Hinton

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

June 2012

EMPLOYABILITY AND HOPE

We approve of the dissertation of Christa G. Hinton
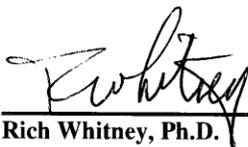
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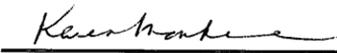
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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to quantitatively examine the relationships between employability and hope. Using a sample of 266 Master of Business Administration students at a large Midwestern private university, this study hypothesized that one, there was a relationship between hope and employability and two, of the predictor variables, agency was more likely than pathways to predict employability. Results indicated that there is a correlational relationship between hope and employability. Regression analysis revealed that agency predicts employability. Implications for career professionals include the ability to enhance employability through increasing hope, increasing the motivation to reach career goals through the careful selection of goals that are best suited to the individual, and increasing student/client employability through enhancing the career professional's level of hope.

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Acknowledgements

This dissertation is the compilation of four years of work that was made possible through the support of my committee members, colleagues and family. With this in mind, I am truly appreciative of the support that I have received from my committee members, Dr. Karen Monkman and Dr. Lisa Gundry. Special thanks and gratitude go to my Chair, Dr. Rich Whitney. As his first doctoral student, Dr. Whitney shepherded me through the dissertation process and was supportive when I was feeling a bit hopeless about hope.

I am very grateful to Dr. Joe Filkins, who coordinated my data collection, reviewed my work and assisted me during those times of quantitative quandary. I am thankful to have Dr. Lawrence Hamer as my friend and colleague who through this process, served as a sounding board, as well as a reminder of my determination to stay on course. I am appreciative of the emotional support I have received from my Doctor of Education cohort of friends and colleagues, especially Jill Hollembeak and Vincent Wiggins.

Finally, I would like to thank my life partner and best friend, Beth Dodge, and our children Ella and Clara. The past four years were possible because of their unwavering love and support. Thank you, Beth, for all that you have shouldered during my quest to realize this degree. I love you very much and will be forever grateful for the time that you *graciously* provided so that I could do what I needed to do to reach this goal. Your absolute faith in me helped me to stretch even further than I knew was possible.

Chapter One

Introduction

Overview

Historically, an individual's career was viewed as occurring in a linear fashion, usually within one or two companies over the course of one's work life. Beginning in the 1990s, there was a major shift in the psychological contract between company and employee (Uchitelle, Battenberg, & Kochan, 2007; Thijssen, Van der Heijden, & Rocco, 2008). Job security in exchange for employee loyalty was a thing of the past. Along with this shift came changing notions of employability. Once viewed as a macro concept, employability came to be seen as a component of individual career management. The concept of career has evolved from a traditional linear, company-related concept to a non-linear and more personal development notion in which individuals are engaging in more proactive and self-directed vocational behavior. Subsequently, enhancing one's overall employability has become a major focus for many individuals and companies (Thijssen, Van der Heijden, & Rocco, 2008). Maintaining and enhancing one's employability is a continuous endeavor (Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006) and therefore can be seen as a challenge for some. Optimism and self-efficacy are individual attributes that have been associated with the challenge of employability (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). Dispositional hope has been shown to be conceptually similar to self-efficacy and optimism in that all three are concerned with goal attainment (Snyder et al., 1991). Therefore, the premise of this study was that there is a relationship between hope and employability. The following sections in this introduction will give an overview of the study.

Statement of the Problem

The premise of this study was that there is a relationship between hope and employability. Exploring the empirical relationship between employability and hope would seem to be the natural progression within the study of contemporary careers and may bring further insight into what may influence an individual's employability. This is a timely topic, however, there has been no academic study regarding the relationship between hope and employability. This study fills the gap in the literature and serves to offer insights into the relationship between employability and hope.

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to use quantitative analysis to acquire knowledge regarding the relationship between hope and employability. Specifically, this research looked at the relationships between dispositional hope and its subscales, agency and pathways (Snyder, Irving, & Anderson, 1991) with employability and its subscales, self-perceived employability, ambition, and university commitment (Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie, 2009).

Research Question and Hypotheses

Research question. The premise of this study was that there is a relationship between hope and employability. As a career management professional, it had always been of interest to me why some individuals could navigate their employability better and more efficiently than their peers. As the literature review reveals, hope has been shown to influence several aspects of life, including academics and workplace performance. There had been no study regarding the relationship between hope and employability.

Therefore, the research question that this study was concerned with was: Is there a relationship between hope and employability?

      Hypothesis 1. Workplace studies suggest that employees who have high levels of hope are likely to be motivated and more self-assured when accomplishing a task. They are also expected to create alternative pathways when obstacles arise (Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weixing, 2005). High-hope people are more likely to find benefits in coping with stressors (Affleck & Tennen, 1996), such as the pursuit of lifetime employability, by generating and utilizing more pathways/strategies (Snyder, Harris et al., 1991). Higher levels of hope have been found to increase workplace performance (Adams, Snyder et al., 2002; Combs, Clapp-Smith, & Nadkarni, 2010; Peterson & Byron, 2008; Peterson & Luthans, 2002). Therefore, it is hypothesized in this study that there is a relationship between hope and employability.

      Hypothesis 2. Since the 1990s, the concept of career has evolved from a traditional linear, company-related concept to a non-linear and more personal development notion in which individuals are engaging in more proactive and self-directed vocational behavior (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Contemporary notions of employability have been closely associated with personal motivation (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004). In hope theory, agency is the motivation required to reach a goal (Snyder et al., 1991), whereas pathways is the strategy to reach a goal. Therefore, it is hypothesized in this study that agency is more likely than pathways to predict employability.

Significance of the Study

This study explored the relationship between employability and hope. It was hypothesized that there is a relationship between hope and employability. Additionally, it was hypothesized that agency is more likely than pathways to predict employability. Establishing a relationship between hope and employability contributes to contemporary career literature. This study may benefit career professionals in their daily practice through the understanding that levels of hope may influence employability. There has been research that suggests that even small amounts of hope can be enhanced in order to realize better outcomes (Lopez, Rose, Robinson, Marques, & Pais-Ribeiro, 2009). This suggests that confirming a relationship between hope and employability may provide avenues for further research into the development of employability through the enhancement of hope.

Summary of Methodology

This study was designed to understand the relationships between employability and hope in a sample of Master of Business Administration (MBA) students. The study was descriptive and correlational in nature. Onwuegbuzie and Daley (1999) was used as a model for this study as these researchers used correlations and linear regressions to look at the relationship between hope and self-perception in a sample of graduate students. According to Mertler and Vannatta (2005), correlational methods are used to describe associations between variables and to predict participants' scores on one variable from their scores on other variables. This type of empirical approach was appropriate for this study as the objective was to depict the relationships between the components of dispositional hope and employability.

Definition of Terms

 Hope. Hope is defined as the positive motivational state derived from the interaction of goal directed energy and a plan to meet those goals (Snyder, Irving, & Anderson, 1991). Hope possesses three basic components: (a) goals; also called *anchors* (b) thoughts regarding achieving the goals; referred to as *pathways* and (c) the motivation to achieve the goals; referred to as *agency* (Snyder, 2002).

 Employability. Employability is defined as "the perceived ability to attain sustainable employment appropriate to one's qualification level" (Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie, 2009, p. 154). This definition is future-oriented and acknowledges the emergence of the *new psychological contract*, which maintains that the employee is responsible for the proactive strategies that promote and sustain *lifetime employability*. The maintenance and enhancement of *lifetime employability* is a continuous, forward-looking and goal-directed endeavor (Heijde & Van Der Heijden, 2006), which may be a challenge to some individuals.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

As stated in the introduction, the premise of this study was that there is a relationship between hope and employability. The following literature review will elaborate on this premise. First, employability will be discussed, followed by a review of hope.

Employability

Introduction to the concept of employability. There has been considerable interest in employability in recent years due, in part, to the recent economic downturn experienced by the global economy. As such, the study of employability has become relevant and timely (Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie, 2009). This increased interest in the subject of employability has led to the creation of a large body of literature, primarily quantitative in nature, that can be distilled down into three somewhat overlapping areas of focus (Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie): societal employability (Bowers-Brown & Harvey, 2004; Hillage & Pollard, 1998), organizational employability (Forrier & Sels, 2003) and individual employability (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie). Employability has different goals depending on which focus is being utilized. Due to this, there is no one single definition of employability that is consistently cited in the literature (Forrier & Sels; Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). These three areas of employability research inform part of a larger discourse on individual career management. First, societal employability will be explored.

Employability from a societal perspective focuses on the larger, macro issues that are of interest to policymakers. It was first introduced by Beveridge (1909) in his exploration of the reasons for unemployment in the United Kingdom. Employability became of interest to policy makers in the United States as they attempted to understand and influence patterns of employment. Over the years, government policy regarding employability has been largely defined by changing notions of the concept employability and its application to the larger society. For example, in the early twentieth century, employability was defined in terms of the segments of society that were able to work versus the segments that were not able to work, such as the elderly (de Grip, van Loo, & Sanders, 2004). This was termed *dichotomic* employability (Gazier, 1999). The following historical review of societal employability is meant to give the reader an indication of the wide range of definitions and goals of employability, even within one focus area.

In the booming post-war period of the 1950s, *socio-medical employability* (Gazier, 1999) became popular, as the shortage of skilled workers caused companies to recruit from previously neglected segments of the population such as those that were physically or mentally disabled or socially disenfranchised (de Grip, van Loo, & Sanders, 2004). During the late 1950s and 1960s, employability was defined as the individual potential to become employed. This concept was referred to as *manpower employability* (Gazier). During this time, the promotion of employability was a function of macroeconomic government policy (de Grip, van Loo, & Sanders). Policymakers focused on increasing worker self-confidence and other individual attitudes that may have affected overall employability. In the late 1960s and very early 1970s policymakers

shifted the focus from the measurement of attitudes to more attention on the workers'

knowledge and skills relative to the market value of these assets. The focus of

employability was a desire for full national employment through comprehensive

government policies and national skill development (Brown & Hesketh, 2004; Berntson,

Sverke, & Marklund, 2006; Almeida, 2007; Tome, 2007; Thijssen, Van der Heijden, &

Rocco, 2008; Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie, 2009). As the US economy experienced

periods of inflation, recession, and high unemployment for much of the 1970s, a shift

away from viewing employability through the societal lens was facilitated by an oil

embargo in 1973 and the interruption of the oil supply in 1979. During this time,

employability was viewed as *labor market performance* (Gazier) driven by the wages that

an individual earned, which defined their human capital (de Grip, van Loo, & Sanders).

The concept of human capital is also of interest to organizations and human resource

departments. As we will see in next section, organizational human resource management

has played a major role the development of concepts of employability and career

management.

Employability, the company, and career management. As we have seen from

the previous review of societal employability, the concept of employability has been

viewed as more of a macro concept. Contemporary research on employability has

expanded its meaning, and views it as a component of individual career management

(Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). In this more micro context, employability resides within the

individual but it can be shaped by the company to gain a versatile workforce (Forrier &

Sels, 2003). The following section takes a look at the research on the changing

relationship between the company and the individual employee and how this shift has affected the research on contemporary views of individual employability

It is generally agreed upon that historically, an individual's career was viewed as occurring in a linear fashion, usually within one or two companies over the course of one's work life (Thijssen, Van der Heijden, & Rocco, 2008). The mentality of the employee moving up the corporate ladder seemed to be measured by the extrinsic rewards of getting a job with an established company with annual raises and promotions (Hall, 1976; Rosenbaum, 1979). This relationship between company and employee was based on the implicit agreement, or psychological contract, that in exchange for employee loyalty, the company would give job security (Rousseau, 1989).

This psychological contract was generally defined as the mutual expectations that both company and employee have about an individual's career management (Thijssen, Van der Heijden, & Rocco, 2008). This implicit career management contract resulted in the creation of a strong social norm in the US. This social norm was the foundation for the expectation that employees could look forward to long-term employment with a company in exchange for behaviors that signaled allegiance to the company (Rousseau, 1989). This implicit agreement meant that individual employees did not have to think about their own employability. However, during the 1980s and early 1990s the needs of companies began to change. Companies began requiring a more versatile workforce in order to stay competitive (Thijssen, Van der Heijden, & Rocco). To assist with this need for flexibility, companies began to offer training and development programs in order to retain highly educated and versatile employees. The introduction of training and development programs was a human resource strategy that encouraged an individual's

employability through fostering the employee's ability to acquire and retain work as a result of company-related career development initiatives (Baruch, 2001; Forrier & Sels, 2003; Van Dam, 2004). This shift changed the understanding of job security (Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie, 2009). The move away from the company offering job security in exchange for employee loyalty had begun.

Due to a housing market bubble in 2007, a major financial crisis occurred. As a result of the financial crisis, the US, and subsequently the industrialized world, plunged into a recession. Organizations downsized over four million employees (Goodman & Healy, 2009). The national US unemployment rate surged to almost ten percent (Chappell, 2009). The literature generally agrees that traditional job security no longer existed, and the individual employee was now charged with creating their own job security through individual career management strategies.

Employability and the individual. During the 2007-2009 recession, struggling companies cut costs through massive lay-offs. This was a huge signal that traditional job security did not exist as it had in the past. Additionally, environmental changes such as globalization, increased workforce diversity, outsourcing, downsizing, the use of temporary and part-time workers and organizational-wide restructuring have demonstrated the move away from the traditional relationship between company and employee (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). This change significantly impacted the goal of employability by moving the focus of that goal from the company to the individual employee (Thijssen, Van der Heijden, & Rocco, 2008). Currently, the employee and the company are both concerned about employability and both have to take care of themselves in this new structure of thinking about work and careers. For the individual

employee, there is a great deal of independence regarding choice of career path and career trajectory. It is up to the individual to proactively seek out employment opportunities and to increase their skills as they feel necessary. The trade-off for attaining this independence has been the loss of traditional job security once offered by companies (Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie, 2009).

Since the 1990s, the concept of career has evolved from a traditional linear, company-related concept to a non-linear and more personal development notion in which individuals are engaging in more proactive and self-directed vocational behavior (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Subsequently, the study and research of the contemporary career has evolved from a traditional concept of employment to one that has a much broader and deeper meaning (Vigoda-Gadot & Grimland, 2008). This includes viewing career as development of the self. The emphasis on career as self-development occurred simultaneously with the shift in career management focus from the company to the employee (Hall & Mirvis, 1995).

Contemporary perspectives on career. As the responsibility of career management and employability shifted from the company to the individual employee, two somewhat similar theories emerged to explain contemporary careers (Arthur, 2008). The *protean* career model and the *boundaryless* career model are independent but related concepts (Briscoe, Hall, & Frautschy DeMuth, 2006). Both are widely cited in the literature, and have influenced much of contemporary career literature. This research study is mostly concerned with the *boundaryless* career model because it has given rise to contemporary views of individual employability. However, the *protean* career model is so widely cited in contemporary career literature and has significantly influenced

research on careers that, for comprehensive purposes, it must be briefly explained in the next section.

The concept of the *protean* career (Hall, 1976; Hall, 2002) focuses on subjective career success through a self-directed approach (Briscoe, Hall, & Frautschy DeMuth, 2006). This concept is named after the Greek god Proteus, who could easily change his shape. Hence, the protean careerist has the essence of pliability and has the ability to repackage knowledge, skills and abilities in order to remain employable in an ever-changing marketplace (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). The *protean* careerist has a versatile orientation, places a high value on freedom, considers continuous learning as very important and pursues intrinsic rewards (Sullivan & Baruch). For example, the *protean* careerist would be proactive in their pursuit of opportunities, experiences, and positions and may not rely on their company's timelines, career paths or promotions. The *protean* careerist is probably more comfortable with setting high career goals, taking risks and seeking out changes in their work situations.

The *boundaryless* career (Arthur, 1994) is concerned with crossing both subjective and objective aspects of career. Subjectively, individuals have different career goals, and place different values on such things as income level, job security, and the ability to have work-life balance. Alternatively, an individual's career is more public in that it is concerned with an individual's social role and job title and therefore, it is can be used as an objective measure of success.

Overall, an individual concerned with a *boundaryless* career seeks independence from traditional organizational careers and usually seeks career opportunities from multiple companies (DeFillipi & Arthur, 1996). For example, an academic, consultant or

tradesperson may seek work opportunities from a variety of people and organizations. Likewise, an individual may gain additional education, which may lead them to transition into an entirely different functional area within a different company or the same company. Interest in the *boundaryless* career phenomenon is related to notions of the *new psychological contract* (Uchitelle, Battenberg, & Kochan, 2007; Thijssen, Van der Heijden, & Rocco, 2008), which will be discussed next.

The new psychological contract. Both the *protean* and *boundaryless* career models focus on individual preference when it comes to career management (Briscoe, Hall, & Frautschy DeMuth, 2006). Subsequently, important life factors such as living longer, changes in family structures (e.g., single parenting, responsibilities of elder care and dual-career couples) are causing individuals to take stock in their attitudes and behaviors regarding their career (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). These career attitudes and behaviors are in flux as individuals continue to strive for meaning in their work and career (Vigoda-Gadot & Grimland, 2008). Career attitudes and behaviors are also changing in response to self-reflection and re-evaluation (Ibarra, 2003). In the *new psychological contract*, individuals are being driven more by their own personal agendas and motivations than by traditional organizational career management practices (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). This shift appears to be related to the loss of job security as outlined in the previous section. The study of boundaryless careers is directly related to the change in the psychological contract between the company and employee. The *new psychological contract*, also referred to in the literature as the new social contract (Altman & Post, 1996), includes the changes that have occurred in the perception and

expectation regarding the individual's role in the self-management of employability (Thijssen, Van der Heijden, & Rocco, 2008).

The *new psychological contract* makes the relationship between employee and company increasingly transactional (Clarke, 2008). Individuals are adapting to a more transactional company-employee relationship by increasingly demonstrating career attitudes and behaviors that foster their own career development and employability rather than relying on the organization to provide the answers (Hall, 2004; Rousseau, 1989). For example, if an individual demonstrating a new psychological contract has career goals that reflect values and aspirations that are counter to the values and aspirations of their current company, the individual may choose to move to a different company that shares their core beliefs and values. Likewise, other individual employees are proactively making choices about skill acquisition and education in order to become and remain employable.

Proactivity and adaptability are the building blocks of the *new psychological contract* (Van der Heijden, 2005). The *new psychological contract* emphasizes the use of individual proactive strategies that promote and sustain *lifetime employability*, which is defined as an individual's ability to manage lifetime careers stages (Thijssen, Van der Heijden, & Rocco, 2008*). Lifetime employability* has now become the alternative to lifetime employment (Forrier & Sels, 2003; Thijssen, Van der Heijden, & Rocco). Maintaining *lifetime employability* requires proactive, adaptable behavior (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008).

For the purposes of this study, employability will be defined as "the perceived ability to attain sustainable employment appropriate to one's qualification level"

(Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie, 2009, p. 154). This definition is future-oriented and acknowledges the emergence of the *new psychological contract*, which maintains that the employee is responsible for the proactive strategies that promote and sustain *lifetime employability*. The maintenance and enhancement of *lifetime employability* is a continuous, forward-looking and goal-directed endeavor (Heijde & Van Der Heijden, 2006), which may be a challenge to some individuals.

Goals are a relevant issue for any individual, but especially for those who are faced with stressful challenges such as maintaining or enhancing employability over one's lifetime. Employability, as well as the concept of hope, can be conceptualized as cognitive processes related to the pursuit of goals (Hurley, 2004). Hope serves as a protective element during stressful times (Curry, Snyder, Cook, Ruby, & Rehm, 1997) such as when pursuing an advanced degree in order to maintain or enhance employability. Though both related to the pursuit of goals, employability and hope have not yet been linked in the literature.

Hope

This section of the review will examine the concept of hope and will demonstrate that there is some evidence of a relationship between employability and hope.

Introduction to the concept of hope. The word *hope* is used frequently in everyday language and it has a variety of everyday definitions. Subsequently, the magnitude of the use of the word hope made it challenging to comprehensively evaluate its use. However, the literature generally agrees that the phenomenon of hope has been around for a thousand years (Rand & Cheavens, 2009). In Greek mythology, Pandora released all of the evils of mankind out of her box; only hope remained (Harrison, 1900).

Most scholarly research on hope appears to be cluster within the broad area of medicine. Qualitative studies on hope have been conducted more in the last five years than in the last 10 years. Searches revealed 482 studies since 2001: 201 studies were done between 2001 and 2005; and 304 studies were conducted since 2006. These occurred primarily in journals of nursing, palliative care, and mental health. Quantitative studies on hope reveal a similar pattern: 56 studies were conducted since 2001. Of those, 25 were done between 2001 and 2005; 31 studies have been conducted since 2006.

Early research on hope. The literature shows that the study of hope began to flourish beginning in the early 1960s. Hope became the research focus of a few major psychiatrists (Frank, 1968; Menninger, 1959) and psychologists (Cantril, 1964; Erikson, 1964; Mowrer, 1956; Stotland, 1969). Several of these early scholars identified hope as a one-dimensional construct that concerned the overall perception that goals could be met. (Frank, 1968). In 1991, C. Rick Snyder, the clinical and positive psychologist, developed the most commonly recognized definition of hope (Carver & Scheier, 2002; Luthans & Jensen, 2002; Rand & Cheavens, 2009; Snyder, 2002).

Snyder developed the basic foundation of his hope theory beginning in the mid-1980s when he was researching the excuses people gave when mistakes were made (Snyder, 2002). Through his research on how people explain the things that they do not want, Snyder hypothesized that the focus that people have on the things they do want is the process of hope (Rand & Cheavens, 2009). Snyder chose to focus his hope research on the cognitive aspect of thinking (Snyder). This research was the basis for the notion that thinking was the process that led to the desire to seek goals. In order to completely

understand the concept of hope, it is important to be aware of the details of Snyder's hope theory.

      Snyder's hope theory. Snyder and his colleagues spent many years developing and refining their definition and application of hope theory (2002). Snyder specified that hope possesses three basic components: (a) goals, also called *anchors*; (b) thoughts regarding achieving the goals, referred to as *pathways*; and (c) the motivation to achieve the goals, referred to as *agency*. Hope is defined as the positive motivational state derived from the interaction of goal directed energy and a plan to meet those goals (Snyder, Harris et al., 1991). These basic components of hope theory can be brought together to form a more complete model of hope as outlined in Figure 1 (page 47). The individual components of Snyder's hope theory will now be explained in greater detail.

      Hope theory is fundamentally anchored by the understanding that much of human behavior is goal-directed (Rand & Cheavens, 2009). Goals are the foundation and cognitive component (Snyder, 2002; Rand & Cheavens) that can be verbally stated or mentally visualized (Rand & Cheavens). Goals can be short-term or long-term in nature (Snyder), and can span a continuum of importance, specificity and value (Rand & Cheavens).

      There are two basic types of goals: approach and avoidance (Rand & Cheavens, 2009). An example of an approach goal would be a person wanting to get an advanced degree to become more employable. An example of an avoidance goal would be a person working longer hours to avoid being downsized.

      Hope theory, like similar constructs, are built upon the premise that human beings have the ability to link the present to anticipated futures (Snyder, 2002). Pathways

thinking is the road that links the present to an imagined future. It is our ability to plan one or more routes to a desired future outcome (Snyder). Researchers have found that high-hope individuals create and articulate multiple routes to goal attainment (Irving, Snyder, & Crowson, 1998; Snyder et al., 1991). This is particularly important when barriers to goal achievement arise.

For example, an individual may want to go back to school to increase employability, but time may be limited due to working longer hours. In high hope individuals, pathway thinking would create multiple ways to achieve the goal of attending school. Those individuals that only had one or two ways to achieve their employability goals would have a much lower probability of success. Pathways thinking is the first dimension of Snyder's hope theory. Agency thinking, or the motivation required for goal achievement, is the second dimension.

Agency thinking is the motivational core of hope theory. It is the perceived ability to use pathways to achieve goals (Snyder, 2002). Agency thinking is important for all goal attainment. It becomes even more critical during times of goal obstruction (Snyder). If we take the previous example of the individual seeking to increase employability, agency thinking is the willpower required to create multiple strategies for attending school.

Optimism and self-efficacy and their relationship to hope and employability.

Dispositional optimism and dispositional hope are occasionally used interchangeably within the literature (Peleg, Barak, Harel, Rochberg, & Hoofien, 2009). The optimism construct and Snyder's hope theory, have some shared points. Both share the belief that human behavior is goal directed and that abstract goals must be distilled

down into concrete steps in order to be attained (Scheier & Carver, 2002). The theories diverge when defining the assumed role for perceptions of agency-like thought. For Scheier and Carver (2002), optimism relates to general outcome expectancies (i.e. confidence), whereas for Snyder (2002), hope relates to personal agency. An optimist may believe that things may turn out how she envisions; however, she may not have the pathways necessary to pursue and achieve goals (Shorey, Snyder, Rand, Hockemeyer, & Feldman, 2002). Optimism is thought to be a prerequisite for adaptability at work (Ashford & Taylor, 1990). Employable people possess a portfolio of attributes that that are necessary for adaptation (Fugate and Kinicki, 2008) and therefore, must possess optimism.

Like hope theory, self-efficacy requires a goal-related outcome (Snyder, 2002). Self-efficacy stems from a perception that a person *can* perform the actions in a specific situation; hope, on the other hand, comes from a belief that a person *will* initiate and continue the goal-directed actions (Rand & Cheavens, 2009). Employability, like hope, is a distinct but related concept to self-efficacy (Berntson, Näswall, & Sverke, 2008).

Hope, academics and the workplace. Students with high hope have been found to have greater feeling of inspiration and confidence by their goal pursuit than those with low hope (Snyder et al., 1996). Student goals regarding employment go hand-in-hand with goals of academic achievement (Rand & Cheavens, 2009). Based on the information that this review has revealed so far, it makes sense that high hope trait would correspond with greater academic achievement; the literature supports this assertion (Snyder, Hoza, Pelham, & Rapoff, 1997; Snyder, 2002; Snyder, Shorey et al., 2002).

Students with high hope do well because they find multiple pathways to academic achievement and are motivated to reach those goals (Snyder, 2002).

Workplace studies suggest that employees who have high levels of hope are likely to be motivated and more self-assured when accomplishing a task. They are also expected to create alternative pathways when obstacles arise (Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weixing, 2005). High-hope people are more likely to find benefits in coping with stressors (Affleck & Tennen, 1996), such as the pursuit of lifetime employability, by generating and utilizing more pathways/strategies (Snyder, Harris et al., 1991). Higher levels of hope have been found to increase workplace performance (Adams et al., 2002; Combs, Clapp-Smith, & Nadkarni, 2010; Peterson & Byron, 2008; Peterson & Luthans, 2002).

Employability and Hope

The examination of the relationship between employability and hope is a timely subject for investigation. Contemporary notions of employability focus on the individual behaviors and attributes that make someone employable. Maintaining or enhancing employability requires proactively setting and accomplishing career goals. Similarly, the study of hope seeks to explain why some individuals achieve their goals, including career or employability goals, in the face of challenges that may affect well-being or performance.

Maintaining and enhancing one's employability is a continuous endeavor (Heijde & Van Der Heijden, 2006) and therefore can be seen as a challenge. Optimism and self-efficacy are individual attributes that have been associated with the challenge of employability (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). Dispositional hope has been shown to be

conceptually similar to self-efficacy and optimism in that all three are concerned with goal attainment (Snyder et al., 1991). Goal attainment is an element of employability (Fugate & Kinicki) and hope (Snyder et al.). The premise of this study is that there is a relationship between hope and employability. Exploring the empirical relationship between employability and hope would seem to be the natural progression within the study of contemporary careers and could bring further insight into what may influence an individual's employability.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This section describes the quantitative method design that was selected to conduct this study. A review of the research question, the hypotheses and limitations of the study introduce this discussion. Next, there is an explanation of the quantitative components of the study including sampling, data collection, and instrumentation.

Research Question

The premise of this study is that there is a relationship between hope and employability. As a career management professional, it has always been of interest to me why some individuals can navigate their employability better and more efficiently than their peers. As the literature review revealed, hope has been shown to influence several aspects of life, including academics and workplace performance. There has been no study regarding the relationship between hope and employability. Therefore, the research question that this study will be concerned with is: Is there a relationship between hope and employability?

Hypotheses

Workplace studies suggest that employees who have high levels of hope are likely to be motivated and more self-assured when accomplishing a task. They are also expected to create alternative pathways when obstacles arise (Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weixing, 2005). High-hope people are more likely to find benefits in coping with stressors (Affleck & Tennen, 1996), such as the pursuit of lifetime employability, by generating and utilizing more pathways/strategies (Snyder et al., 1991).

Higher levels of hope have been found to increase workplace performance (Adams et al., 2002; Combs, Clapp-Smith, & Nadkarni, 2010; Peterson & Byron, 2008; Peterson & Luthans, 2002). Since the 1990s, the concept of career has evolved from a traditional linear, company-related concept to a non-linear and more personal development notion in which individuals are engaging in more proactive and self-directed vocational behavior (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Contemporary notions of employability have been closely associated with personal motivation (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004). In hope theory, agency is the motivation required to reach a goal (Snyder et al.), whereas pathways is the strategy to reach a goal. Therefore, the hypotheses for this study were:

1. There is a relationship between hope and employability.

2. Of the predictor variables, agency is more likely than pathways to predict employability.

Design

This study is designed to understand the relationships between employability and hope in a sample of Master of Business Administration (MBA) students. The study was descriptive and correlational in nature. Onwuegbuzie and Daley (1999) was used as a model for this study as these researchers used correlations and linear regressions to look at the relationship between hope and self-perception in a sample of graduate students. According to Mertler and Vannatta (2005), correlational methods are used to describe associations between variables and to predict participants' scores on one variable from their scores on other variables. This type of empirical approach was appropriate for this study as the objective was to depict the relationships between the components of dispositional hope and employability.

Sample

The population for this study was currently enrolled MBA students attending a large, private Midwestern university. The scales were emailed to 1207 current MBA students through a centralized research department within the university (n=266). Analysis revealed that the 266 participant demographics closely aligned with the overall MBA population demographics at this university.

Protection of Human Participants

Several procedures were used to ensure that participants' rights were protected. This study was submitted to and approved by the DePaul University Institutional Review Board (IRB #CH091911EDU). The researcher coordinated data collection with a researcher from the centralized research department to recruit participants.

Data Collection

Data was collected from December 12, 2011 through January 13, 2012. The scales were emailed to 1207 MBA students, utilizing the emailed information sheet (Appendix A) as an introduction to the survey. After taking the survey using Qualtrics, the debriefing document (Appendix B) was shown to the participants as the final page of the survey. The participants were protected from the exact nature of the study in order to prevent any preconditioning regarding the Trait Hope Scale. The debriefing document explained that the Future Perspectives Scale was the Trait Hope Scale.

The Future Perspectives Scale was the Trait Hope Scale, which measures dispositional hope. The name of the scale was changed to minimize inferences regarding the definition of hope; using the word hope may have called to mind definitions of spirituality or religion, which may have skewed the way that the statements were

interpreted. The employability scale measured levels of employability. Hope variables were correlated to employability variables in order to fulfill the objective of this research, which was to examine the relationship between hope and employability. The demographic questionnaire was prepared by the principal investigator as part of this study in order to look at demographic variables as they relate to hope and employability as well as to compare whether or not the participants resembled the sample.

Instruments

The instruments utilized in this study will now be examined in detail. Subscales, instrument reliability and Cronbach's alpha measures will be reviewed.

Trait Hope Scale. The Trait Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1991) (Appendix C) measured dispositional hope. The Trait Hope Scale is a 12-item scale, of which four are *agency* items, four are *pathways* items and four are fillers. The scale is designed to measure *agency*, the perceived success of goal achievement, and *pathways*, the perceived ability to find ways to accomplish goals (Snyder et al.). Empirical research has demonstrated that the Trait Hope Scale is a reliable and valid measure. Cronbach's alpha ranges from .74 to .84 for the Trait Hope Scale; .71 to .76 for the Agency subscale; and .63 to .80 for the Pathways subscale (Snyder et al.). Test-retest reliabilities indicated acceptable correlations at the 3 week (.85); 8 week (.73); and 10 week (.76 and .82 in two samples) intervals (Snyder et al.). Overall, measures of internal consistency have been good for the Trait Hope Scale.

Employability scale. Employability (Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie, 2009) (Appendix D) was measured by a 29 item scale designed to measure self-perceptions of employability, ambition and university commitment. This scale is relatively new in the

literature (Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie). Cronbach's alpha was .84 for the employability scale. Scale reliabilities for self-perceived employability and university commitment were both good (.84 and .90 respectively). A less satisfactory coefficient was found for ambition (.61).

Demographic questionnaire. Demographic data (Appendix E) was collected including gender, age, ethnicity, graduation date, undergrad GPA, graduate GPA, years of work experience and information regarding previous career changes. This data was collected using a questionnaire developed by this researcher. Employment goals go hand-in-hand with goals of academic achievement (Rand & Cheavens, 2009). Studies have shown that age influences perceived employability (Wittekind, Raeder, & Grote, 2010).

Treatment of Data

Qualtrics generated the data in Excel and PASW. Pre-analysis data screening consisted of analyses of missing data, outliers, normality, linearity and homoscedasticity (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). Demographic data was analyzed using measures of central tendency. Relationships among relevant variables were initially analyzed using correlations. Linear regression was then used to explore empirical support for the research hypothesis with hope as the predictor variable. This type of empirical approach was appropriate for this study (Chang, 1998) as the objective was to explore the relationships between the multiple variables within hope and employability. The level of statistical significance used in all of these tests was $p = .05$ as this is the level accepted in social science research (Brace, Kemp, & Snelgar, 2009).

Chapter Four

Results

Pre-Analysis Data Screening

Pre-analysis data screening consisted of analyses of missing data, outliers, normality, linearity and homoscedasticity (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). Out of a population of 1207 currently enrolled MBA students, 299 completed the surveys, for a response rate of 25%. Missing data analysis revealed that 33 participants completed only the first survey and were removed from the data set (n=266) (Mertler & Vannatta). An outlier analysis was conducted. Five outliers were detected, removed and correlations were run with and without the outliers. There was no difference in the scoring between the data sets with and without the outliers; therefore, the outliers remained in the final data set (Mertler & Vannatta).

An analysis of normality revealed a positive kurtosis and a negative skew for both hope and employability. A positive kurtosis indicates that the distribution is leptokurtic, with a tall, thin peak and short tails (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). A negative skew indicates a clustering of cases to the right and the left tail is extended with only a few number of cases (Mertler & Vannatta). This means that most participants scored at the high levels of the scales. Bivariate scatterplots revealed a linear relationship and homoscedasticity between hope and employability (Mertler & Vannatta).

Demographic Information

The population consisted of MBA students at a large, private Midwestern university. There were 266 participants. Analysis revealed that participant demographics closely aligned with the overall MBA population demographics at this university. An

analysis of the demographic information indicated that 63% of the participants were male and 37% of the participants were female. Only 3% of the participants were under the age of 25, 65% were between the ages of 25-30, 15% were 31-33 years of age, 9% were 34-36, and 8% were older than 37 years of age.

The participants overwhelmingly identified as Caucasian at 81%. Eight percent were Asian/Asian American, 5% were African/African American, 3% were Latino, 2% identified as Other, and 1% of the participants were Native American. The majority of participants, 44%, expected to graduate in 2012, followed by 35% in 2013. Thirteen percent expected to graduate in 2011, 6% in 2014, and 2% expected to graduate in 2015.

Undergraduate GPA was reported by 38% of the participants as 3.5 and above, 42% reported undergrad GPA between 3.0-3.49, 16% 2.5-2.99, and 4% reported undergrad GPA 2.0-2.49. Graduate GPA was reported by 10% of the participants as 4.0; 68% reported 3.5-3.99, 19% reported 3.0-3.49, and 3% reported graduate GPA as 2.5-2.99.

Cumulative work experience for 12% of the participants was 1-3 years. Forty-one percent had 4-6 years, 24% had 7-9 years, 12% reported 10-12 years, 6% had 12-14 years, 4% had more than 15 years, and 1% had less than one year of work experience.

An undergraduate degree in business was reported by 55% of the participants. Forty-five percent indicated that their undergraduate degree was not in a business discipline. For 94% of the participants, this was their first Master degree, while 6% indicated that this was their second graduate degree. Forty-six percent of the participants had never experienced a career change; however, 66% indicated that they expected to use this Master of Business Administration degree to enable a career change in the future.

For the purposes of this study, a career change could mean a promotion, a lateral move, or a total shift in job function.

Variable Relationships and Internal Consistency

Descriptive statistics were reviewed as an initial analysis of the data (Brace, Kemp, & Snelgar, 2009; Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). In the present study, means were utilized so that comparisons could easily be made between the instruments. Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations and Cronbach's alpha pertaining to the hope and employability scales and subscales.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations and Cronbach's Alpha of Hope and Employability Scales and Subscales

Measure	Subscales	# of test items	Mean	SD	α
Hope			**3.29**	**.335**	**.75**
	Agency	4	3.32	.417	.69
	Pathways	4	3.27	.373	.62
Employability			**3.78**	**.392**	**.87**
	Self-Perceived Employability	16	3.49	.412	.78
	Ambition	6	4.21	.461	.63
	University Commitment	7	3.64	.672	.89

Note: The Hope scale uses a 4 item scale where higher values indicate higher levels of hope.
The Employability scale uses a 5 item scale where higher values indicate higher levels of employability.

Snyder (1995) reported that a summed score of 24 on the Hope Scale approximates high hope. A score of 24 translates into a mean score of 3.0 out of a possible 4.0. For the present sample, the mean score for the total hope scale was 3.29, which suggests that the majority of participants thought in ways that were very hopeful. Cronbach's alpha test of internal consistency was performed in order to determine how well each of the individual test items measured a single uni-dimensional construct. Results yielded moderate to high levels for all scales used in this study. Specifically, coefficients were .69 and .62 for agency and pathways subscales of the Trait Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1991). Cronbach's alpha for the Trait Hope Scale was .75.

Rothwell, Jewell, and Hardie (2009) do not explicitly indicate what score definitively indicates high levels of employability. The authors do infer that a mean score of 2.5, (the mid-point) or higher approximates higher levels of employability (Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie, 2009). The mean score for the total employability scale was 3.78 out of a possible 5.0, which suggests that the majority of participants had high expectations of employability. Internal consistency results yielded moderate to high levels for all scales used in this study. Cronbach's alpha were .78, .63, and .89 for self-perceived employability, ambition and university commitment subscales of the employability scale (Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie). Cronbach's alpha for the Employability scale as a whole was .87.

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis of the present study stated that there is a relationship between hope and employability. In order to test this hypothesis, correlations were performed to assess the relationship between hope and employability. The correlation was statistically

significant ($r = .344, p < .001$). The correlation between hope and employability was .344, with 12% of the variance in employability attributed to hope (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). There was a positive moderate significant relationship between hope and employability such that as hope rises, so does employability. Correlations were performed to assess the relationship between the subscales of hope and employability. Table 2 presents the correlations among hope and employability subscales.

Table 2

Correlations and Significance among Hope and Employability Subscales

		1	2	3	4
1	Agency				
2	Pathways	.474*			
3	Self-Perceived Employability	.326*	.242*		
4	Ambition	.480*	.279*	.311*	
5	University Commitment	.091	.065	.513*	.235*

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

An examination of the subscales revealed a statistically significant relationship between agency and self-perceived employability ($r = .326, p < .001$) and ambition ($r =.480, p < .001$). There was a positive moderate relationship between agency and self-perceived employability and ambition such that as agency rises, so do self-perceived employability and ambition. The correlation between agency and self-perceived employability was .326, with 11% of the variance in employability attributed to agency. The correlation between agency and ambition was .480, with 23% of the variance in ambition accounted for by agency. The relationship between agency and university commitment was statistically not significant ($r = .091, p = .14$).

A statistically significant relationship was found between pathways and self-perceived employability ($r = .242$, $p < .001$) and ambition ($r = .279$, $p < .001$). There was a positive weak relationship (Brace, Kemp, & Snelgar, 2009) between pathways and self-perceived employability and ambition such that as pathways rises, so do self-perceived employability and ambition. The correlation between pathways and self-perceived employability was .242, with 6% of the variance in employability attributed to pathways. The correlation between pathways and ambition was .279, with 8% of the variance in ambition accounted for by pathways. The relationship between pathways and university commitment was statistically not significant ($r = .065$, $p = .14$).

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis of this study stated that of the predictor variables, agency would be more influential than pathways in predicting employability. A regression was performed to assess whether agency and pathways were statistically significant predictors of employability. All variables were entered simultaneously. The regression results showed that the model with 2 predictor variables was statistically significant ($R = .362$, $F(2, 263) = 19.799$, $p < .001$). The model as a whole accounted for 13% of the variability in employability ($R^2 = .131$).

According to the standardized beta coefficients, only one of the predictor variables was a statistically significant predictor of employability. Agency predicted employability ($\beta = .316$, $t = 4.835$, $p < .001$) such that as agency increased so did employability. Pathways was not a statistically significant predictor of employability ($\beta = .082$, $t = 1.256$, $p = .210$).

Chapter Five

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between hope and employability. Specifically, this research looked at the relationships between dispositional hope and its subscales, agency and pathways (Snyder, Irving, & Anderson, 1991) with employability and its subscales, self-perceived employability, ambition, and university commitment (Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie, 2009). Correlations were performed in order to study the relationships between the variables. A regression was conducted to assess whether agency and pathways were statistically significant predictors of employability. A discussion of the hypotheses, the implications and limitations of the study, as well as future areas of study follows.

Hypothesis 1

The findings of this study suggest that overall, an MBA student's level of hope is related to his or her level of employability. Preliminary statistical analysis revealed a moderate correlation between overall hope and overall employability. Generally speaking, these findings serve to support the relationship between hope and employability. Hope is initiated within the individual and stems from the belief that a particular goal can be achieved (Snyder et al., 1991). In this study that goal was employability.

Correlations among the subscales of hope and employability revealed a moderately strong and statistically significant positive relationship between agency and pathways with self-perceived employability and ambition. Generally speaking, agency is

the motivation and pathways is the strategy (Snyder et al., 1991) to attain the goal of employability. Therefore it is not surprising that the data revealed a relationship between the two hope variables and self-perceived employability indicating, that as motivation and strategizing rises, so does one's self-perception of employability.

Maintaining employability requires proactive, adaptable behavior (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008) and employability is related to career motivation (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004). Ambition was included in the current employability survey as a substitute for perceptions of career success (Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie, 2009). Therefore, it makes sense that ambition, as a component of employability in the present study (Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie) is related to agency and pathways thinking. As motivation and strategizing rise, so does the perception that the goal of career success will be achieved.

Results indicated that there was no significant statistical relationship between agency and pathways with university commitment. Because the perception of a University's reputation or brand could be seen as an asset in a crowded labor market, the authors of the employability scale included university commitment as a variable (Rothwell, Jewell, & Hardie, 2009). Studies indicate that MBA rankings, which reflect reputation, play a significant role in a prospective student's choice of MBA program (Blackburn, 2011). In this study, the participants attended an MBA program that was moderately ranked among business programs in the US (Best Graduate Schools, 2012). This may account for the lack of relationship between the variables in this study. Hope, as reflected through the variables of agency and pathways, may be found to be related to university commitment in participants attending top-ranked MBA programs.

Hypothesis 2

The present study found that of the predictor variables, agency predicted employability. Contemporary notions of employability have been closely associated with personal motivation (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004). In Hope theory, agency is the motivation required to reach a goal (Snyder et al., 1991), whereas pathways is the strategy to reach a goal. Therefore, it makes some sense that agency is more likely than pathways to predict employability.

Participants that experienced increased agency would therefore be more apt to feel more employable. Consequently, MBA students in the sample, when possessing a higher degree of hope, are likely to achieve employability from the perspective of increased agency through their belief that the goals that they set can be achieved (Snyder et al., 1991). Given the ability of agency to predict employability, it is likely that the successful process of achieving and maintaining lifetime employability arises, in part, from the knowledge that challenging goals can be accomplished.

Implications

We have moved from the concept of lifetime employment, which was largely the responsibility of the company, to lifetime employability, which sits squarely on the shoulders of the individual (Forrier & Sels, 2003; Thijssen, Van der Heijden, & Rocco, 2008). Maintaining and enhancing one's employability is a continuous endeavor (Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006) and therefore can be seen as a challenge for some individuals. For this reason, it is important to explore ways that individuals can increase their employability, such as through the enhancement of hope.

The results of the present study indicate that there is a relationship between hope and employability. Results also demonstrate that that hope influences employability through agency thought processes, and that enhancing hope influences employability. These results have implications for career professionals who assist people with enhancing and maintaining lifetime employability (Figure 2). Taking steps to improve hope in an individual may ultimately enhance employability, even perhaps beyond one's natural capabilities.

Studies demonstrate that hope scores can predict outcomes beyond natural abilities. Specifically, there is some evidence that enhancing hope will augment predictions of athletic outcomes beyond natural aptitude (Curry et al., 1997) and that the Hope Scale scores boost actual academic performance beyond natural abilities and prior grades (Snyder et al., 1991; Snyder, Shorey et al., 2002). Furthermore, there has been research that suggests that even small amounts of hope can be enhanced in order to realize better outcomes (Lopez et al., 2009).

Given the correlation established in the present study between hope and employability, improving one's hope may be a critical component of the enhancement of employability. Practically speaking, increasing hope could be accomplished through: administering the Hope scale, discussing the baseline score and Hope theory's relevance to the employability process; identifying important career goals and outlining pathways and specific agency thoughts related to each career goal; visualizing and verbalizing each career goal; and creating a check-in process between the individual and the career professional in order to talk about the progress in reaching each career goal (Lopez et al., 2009).

The strongest correlation in the present study was found between ambition and agency. It may be that increasing student/client agency may increase their perception of future career success. Studies show that greater motivation is exhibited when attempting to reach goals that are best suited to the individual (Snyder, 2002). Specifically, agency, or motivation, may be enhanced through recalling previous successes, reframing goals as challenges rather than threats, or choosing goals that appear to be more reachable (Snyder, 1995). Career professionals may facilitate the increase of hope and therefore influence employability through the creation and implementation of one-on-one sessions with an individual, through job search groups, or within a classroom setting.

Interestingly, a career professional's level of hope may affect student/client levels of employability. Correlational evidence has revealed that the hope of rehabilitation staff members has a positive and significant correlation with the level of hope reported for their clients (Crouch, 1986). Therefore, a career professional's level of hope may be transferred to their clients. This suggests that in order to be more effective, career professionals may want to review their personal level of hope and to enhance it as needed.

Limitations

The external and internal validity of the findings of this study are potentially limited for a few reasons. As this was a correlational study, a causal relationship between hope and employability cannot be assumed. Additionally, the sample involved in this research was limited to both one geographic area (the urban Midwest) and one population (Master of Business Administration students). Given the lack of previous research linking hope and employability, it is not known if these findings would be applicable to

other populations in other parts of the world. Also, the internal validity of the findings of this study could be potentially limited due to maturation issues involving the length of the instruments. Finally, there may be an issue of experimenter effect as some of the students may know the researcher and answer the questions differently than if they had no knowledge of, or relationship with, the researcher.

Directions for Future Research

The findings of the present study contribute to the literature pertaining to hope theory and employability theory. Hope theory and employability theory are applicable to workplace settings (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008; Luthans & Jensen, 2002). Therefore, the extent to which relationships between hope and employability can be generalized may have implications for career professionals. During this time of continued economic uncertainty (Baker, Bloom, & Davis, 2012), it may be important to understand how hope may influence employability over the long term through conducting longitudinal studies. Additionally, as this was a correlational study, further research is needed to evaluate the cause and effect relationship between employability and hope. It may also be important to explore how hope and university commitment correlate in a sample of students attending a highly ranked MBA program. Finally, given that 66% of the participants in the present study planned on utilizing their MBA to enable a future career change, it would be useful to understand how the relationship between hope and employability may influence the ability to make career changes.

Summary

The purpose of this study has been to examine the relationships between hope and employability. While the limitations of this study may invite a cautious interpretation and application of the findings, this research has successfully detected a relationship between hope and employability. It has also been found that agency, a dimension of hope, can predict employability. The findings of the present study contribute to the literature pertaining to hope theory and employability. Subsequent research can be used to confirm the relevance if the findings when other populations are assessed.

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Figure 1
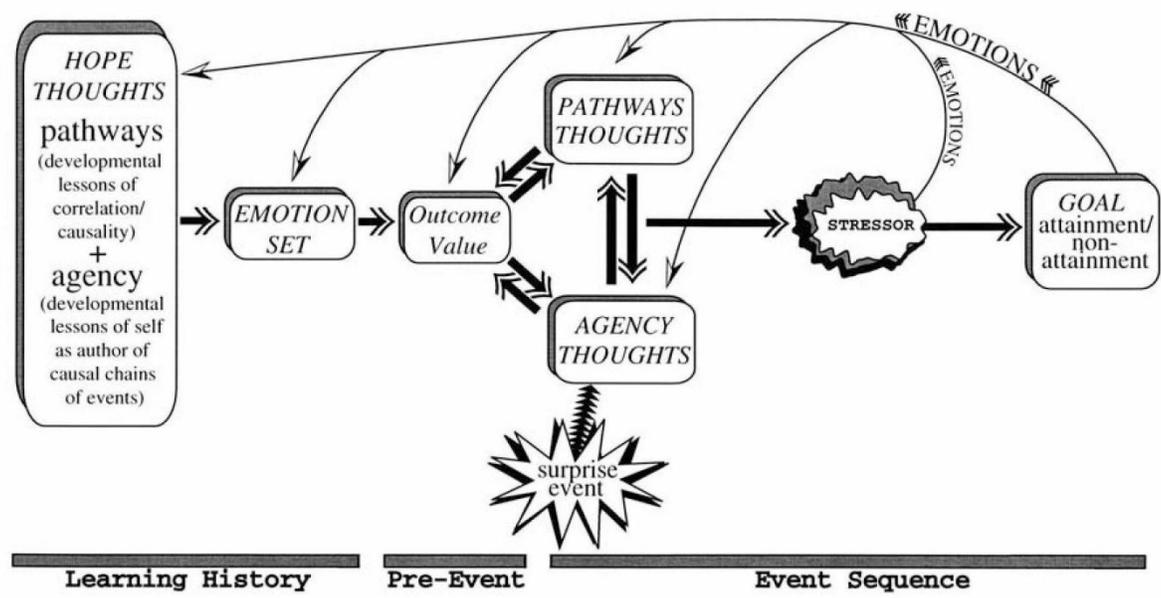
Figure 1. *Schematic of feed-forward and feedback functions involving agency and pathway goal-directed thoughts in hope theory.*

(Snyder, 2002, p. 254)

Figure 2

Strategies
to increase
career hope

Increased career agency
&
Increased career
pathways

Increased levels of
employability

Enhanced
career
outcomes
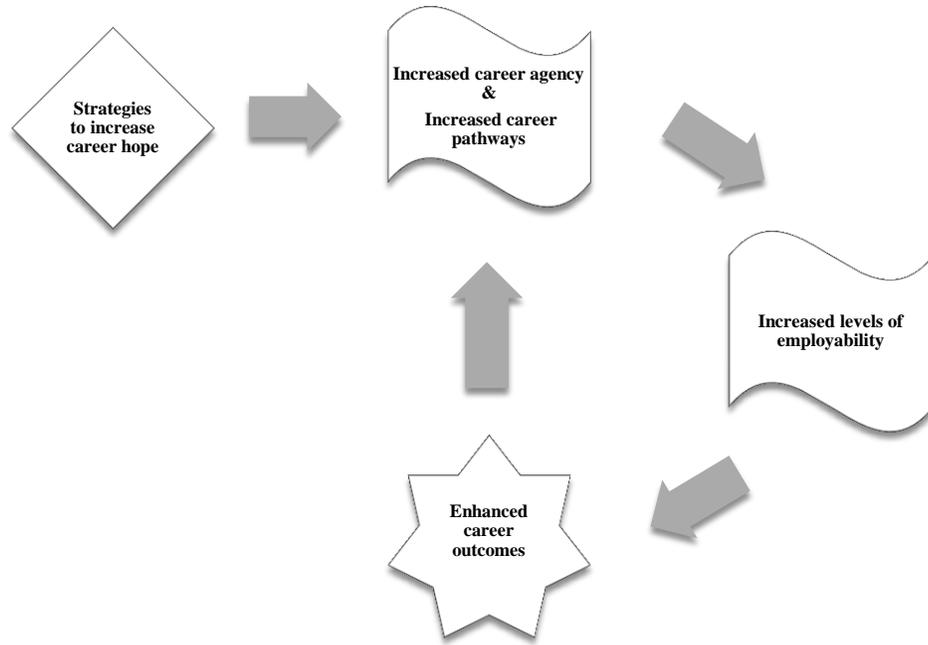
Appendix A

Emailed Information Sheet

Employability Study

Hello -

You are being asked to participate in a research study being conducted by Christa Hinton, a graduate student at DePaul University as a requirement to obtain her Doctorate degree. This research is being supervised by her faculty advisor, Dr. Rich Whitney.

We are asking you because we are trying to learn more about the career process. This study will take about 10 minutes of your time.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to complete three brief questionnaires which will include questions about the career process, including questions about employability, future perspectives and demographic information. The Future Perspectives Scale includes questions about setting and achieving goals. The Employability Scale includes questions about your currents studies, your career goals, and your desired work. The Demographic Questionnaire includes questions about your age, ethnicity, GPA, and type and number of degrees.

Follow this link to the Survey: Employability Study
<http://depaul.qualtrics.com/WRQualtricsSurveyEngine/?Q_SS=8C7uAxBixQu7m4I_eR
7xonZL9HzSzPu&_=1>

All responses are anonymous and will be kept strictly confidential. You can choose not to participate. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to participate or change your mind later.

If you have questions about this study, please contact: Christa Hinton, 312-362-5424; chinton@depaul.edu; Dr. Rich Whitney, by phone at 773-325-4065; rwhitne5@depaul.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Susan Loess-Perez, DePaul University's Director of Research Protections at 312-362-7593 or by email at sloesspe@depaul.edu.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter!

Appendix B

Debriefing Document

Thank you for participating in my research. I would like to let you know that the career process that I am studying looking at the relationship between employability and hope. The future perspectives scale that you filled out was the hope scale. I purposefully referred to the hope scale as the future perspectives scale so that there would be less bias regarding the subject of hope and its many meanings.

Christa Hinton

Appendix C

The Trait Hope Scale

Directions: Read each item carefully. Using the scale shown below, please select the number that best describes YOU and put that number in the blank provided.

1 = Definitely False

2 = Mostly False

3 = Mostly True

4 = Definitely True

_____ 1. I can think of many ways to get out of a jam.

_____ 2. I energetically pursue my goals.

_____ 3. I feel tired most of the time.

_____ 4. There are lots of ways around any problem.

_____ 5. I am easily downed in an argument.

_____ 6. I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are most important to me

_____ 7. I worry about my health.

_____ 8. Even when others get discouraged, I know I can find a way to solve the problem.

_____ 9. My past experiences have prepared me well for my future.

_____ 10. I've been pretty successful in life.

_____ 11. I usually find myself worrying about something.

_____ 12. I meet the goals that I set for myself.

Appendix D

Employability Scale

Directions: Read each item carefully. Using the scale shown below, please select the answer that best describes YOU and circle that answer.

SD = Strongly Disagree

D = Disagree

N = Neither agree nor disagree

A = Agree

SA = Strongly Agree

1. I achieve high grades in relation to my studies.

    SD   D   N   A   SA

2. I regard my academic work as top priority.

    SD   D   N   A   SA

3. Employers are eager to employ graduates from my University.

    SD   D   N   A   SA

4. The status of this University is a significant asset to me in job seeking.

    SD   D   N   A   SA

5. Employers specifically target this University to recruit individuals from my concentration.

    SD   D   N   A   SA

6. My University has an outstanding reputation in my field(s) of study.

    SD   D   N   A   SA

7. A lot more people apply for my degree than there are slots available.

    SD   D   N   A   SA

8. My chosen subject(s) rank(s) highly in terms of social status

    SD   D   N   A   SA

9. People in the career I am aiming for are in high demand in the external labor market.

    SD   D   N   A   SA

10. My degree is seen as leading to a specific career that is generally perceived as highly desirable

    SD   D   N   A   SA

11. There is generally a strong demand for graduates at the present time.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

12. There are plenty of job vacancies in the geographical area where I am seeking.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

13. I can easily find out about opportunities in my chosen field.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

14. The skills and abilities that I possess are what employers are looking for.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

15. I am generally confident of success in job interviews and recruiting events.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

16. I feel I could get any job so long as my as my skills and experience are reasonably relevant.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

17. I want to be in a position to do mostly work which I really like.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

18. I am satisfied with the progress I have made meeting my goals for the development of new skills.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

19. I have clear goals for what I want to achieve in life.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

20. I regard myself as highly ambitious.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

21. I feel it is urgent that I get on with my career development.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

22. What I do in the future isn't really important.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

23. I tell my friends that this is a great University to attend.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

24. I find that my values and this University's values are very similar.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

25. I am proud to tell others that I am at this University.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

26. Being at this University really inspires the best in me in the way of study performance.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

27. I am extremely glad I chose this University over others I was considering at the time I joined.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

28. I really care about this University and its future.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

29. For me this is the best of all Universities for me to attend.

     SD   D   N   A   SA

Appendix E

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Your Gender: (circle one)   (0) Female   (1) Male

2. Your Age: (circle one)   (0) 22-24 years
                                   (1) 25-27 years
                                   (2) 28-30 years
                                   (3) 31-33 years
                                   (4) 34-35 years
                                   (5) 36-38 years
                                   (6) 39-41 years
                                   (7) I am older than 41 years

3. Your Ethnicity: (circle one)   (0) African/African American
                                   (1) Asian/Asian-American
                                   (2) Caucasian
                                   (3) Latino
                                   (4) Native American
                                   (5) Other

4. Your Expected Graduation: (circle one)   (0) 2011
                                              (1) 2012
                                              (2) 2013
                                              (3) 2014
                                              (4) 2015
                                              (5) My expected graduation is
                                                  beyond 2015

5. Your Cumulative Undergrad Grade Point Average: (circle one)
                                              (0) 1.99 or below
                                              (1) 2.0 to 2.24
                                              (2) 2.25 to 2.49
                                              (3) 2.5 to 2.74
                                              (4) 2.75 to 2.99
                                              (5) 3.0 to 3.24
                                              (6) 3.25 to 3.49
                                              (7) 3.50 to 3.74
                                              (8) 3.75 to 3.99
                                              (9) 4.00

6. Your Cumulative <u>Graduate</u> Grade Point Average: (circle one)

            (0) 1.99 or below
            (1) 2.0 to 2.24
            (2) 2.25 to 2.49
            (3) 2.5 to 2.74
            (4) 2.75 to 2.99
            (5) 3.0 to 3.24
            (6) 3.25 to 3.49
            (7) 3.50 to 3.74
            (8) 3.75 to 3.99
            (9) 4.00

7. Years of work experience (not counting internships): (circle one)

            (0) Less than 1 year
            (1) 1 to 3 years
            (2) 4 to 6 years
            (3) 7 to 9 years
            (4) 10 to 12 years
            (5) 12 to 14 years
            (6) More than 15years

8. Do you have an undergraduate degree in a business discipline? (circle one)
   (0) Yes (1) No

9. Is this your first Master degree? (circle one)
   (0) Yes   (1) No

10. How many times have you changed careers? (circle one)

            (0) Never changed
            (1) 1
            (2) 2
            (3) 3
            (4) 4
            (5) 5
            (6) 6 or more

11. Will you use your graduate degree to enable a career change? (circle one)
   (0) Yes   (1) No