The usefulness of adopting eCoach for teaching career development

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Background

Career development is an essential aspect for university students which includes career planning (Stoeber et al., 2016).

eCoach is a popular web portal for career development which has latest career-related advice, tutorials, tools and views from recruiters.

There are several technological tools available through eCoach (eCoach, 2014);
- Career planning tool.
- CV builder tool.
- Interactive Elevator Pitch Builder tool.
- Interview Simulator tool.

Limited research on career development and planning for computing students; majority of literature represents the career development in general or non-computing sectors (Jung, Y. & Takeuchi, N. 2016).

Therefore, this study aims at the effectiveness of adopting eCoach for teaching career development for computing students.

Overview of career development tools

Career planning tool: helps learners to answer the questions such as "who am I?" and "what can I do?" at the start of planning their careers (Stoeber et al., 2016).

CV builder tool: helps and guides students in preparing their CVs (see Figure 1). This tool takes the student through different sections of a CV such as profile, education, work, achievements, skills, other and references (eCoach, 2014).

Interactive Elevator Pitch Builder tool: students can build their own pitch quickly and easily with the help of examples and useful advice using this tool. Student could use the result of this tool in order to address the employer during the first few minutes of the interview (Lindsay & DePape, 2015).

Interview Simulator tool: has an auto-generated mock interview or browse the questions employers voted the most trustworthy (Rook, 2013).

Methodology adopted

A quantitative approach was used based on the nature of this study (Saunders et al., 2009).

Student perspective - student feedback were collected through a questionnaire survey which measures usefulness of four career development tools in preparation of applying for industrial placements.

Purposive sample - 56 computing students who enrolled in Professional Computing module (Level 5) 2015/16. A part of their module assessment was to effectively use these career development tools in order to find a suitable placement.

Quantitative data collected were analysed using frequency graphs (Saunders et al., 2009).

Data analysis

Effective response rate: 85.71% (48/56*100). Out of 51 survey responses received, 3 were incomplete. Therefore, 48 complete responses were considered (out of 56 sample) for data analysis process. The questionnaire was distributed among all 56 students.

Four career development tools in eCoach were assessed based on how much they were useful in preparation of applying for suitable placements.

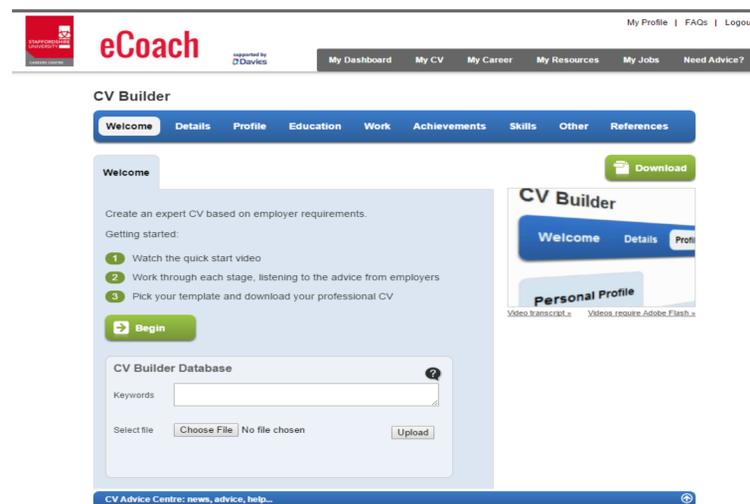Data were fed into SPSS software in order to produce frequency graphs.

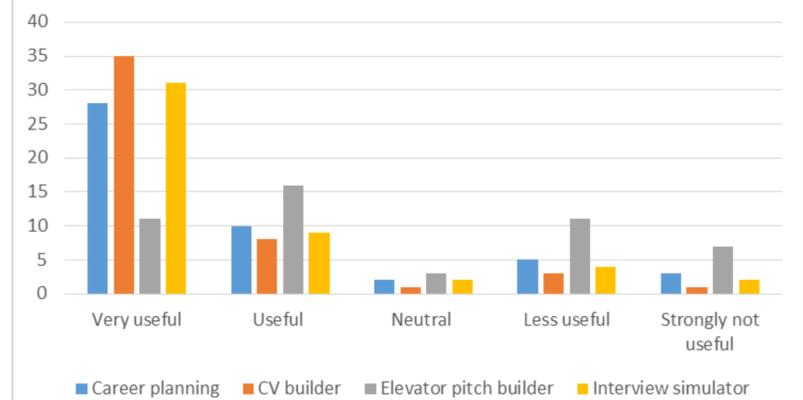**Figure 1:** CV Builder tool

Figure 2: Usefulness of career development tools

Discussion on results

CV builder is the most useful tool based on student responses (see Figure 2). 73% (35/48*100) of students expressed that this tool is very useful in preparation of applying for suitable placements.

Interview simulator and career planning tool are the next best useful tools respectively.

Generally, all tools were very useful for students except for Elevator pitch builder. Elevator pitch builder was considered as less useful and strongly not useful based on 37.5% of student responses.

However, overall all four tools are in the range of very useful and useful.

Conclusions

This study evaluated the effectiveness of four main career development tools available in eCoach for preparation of applying for industrial placements within computing students.

This study demonstrates the usefulness of adopting various technological tools to teach career development for students.

Limitations: only considered computing students, and there was not enough time to evaluate the usefulness of other aspects of eCoach.

Future work: extend the study to consider students of other faculties and schools. And assess other aspects of eCoach to enhance teaching career development.

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