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***Developing the Young Workforce: key influences for young people
in Scotland for choosing apprenticeship pathways into the world
of work***

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Abstract

The transition into world of work is a focus in educational and skills policy in Scotland. This dissertation examines the influences that affect young adults' choice—from their perspective—to complete modern apprenticeships in Scotland and enter the labour market via the vocational route. The study is a qualitative case study of 10 young adults that have completed a modern apprenticeship in an office-based setting. The collected data consists of ten semi-structured interviews, which were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings indicate that the key influences for young people's decision-making are school careers advisors, parents and relatives, peers, and online resources such as 'My World of Work'. In most cases the young people utilised careers advisors and online resources as their primary sources of information about apprenticeships and job roles. For some, the parents, relatives, and peers added to the information, but these groups predominantly provided other forms of influence. Parents, relatives, and peers linked opportunities to young people, assisted in the application process, and provided other support and approval that influenced the young people's choice to apply into apprenticeships. Further research should include a broader sample and include the influencer side of the relationship to provide a more complete picture of the influences.

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List of Abbreviations

- DYW: Developing the Young Workforce policy
- EPPE: Education, Public Policy and Equity
- ESRC: UK Economic and Social Research Council
- FE: Further Education
- HE: Higher Education
- MA: Modern Apprenticeship
- RQDA: R Qualitative Data Analysis software package
- SDS: Skills Development Scotland
- SNP: Scottish National Party

Chapter 1: Introduction

“Degrees of underemployment: fresh grads stuck in a bind” reads the headline of a recent *Business Times* (Mui, 2018) article, and it is not unique in its bleak message about the labour market realities that many younger people face when entering the labour market—even with high levels of qualifications. *Forbes* (Cooper, 2018) also reported that skills in the labour force are being underutilised in several sectors in the UK. The challenges young people face when making educational and careers choices affecting their future are numerous with the precarious labour opportunities affecting even those with degrees (Standing, 2011). It is not only a problem for the young people, but for governments as well, who are concerned about the having the needed skills in the workforce. As a result, policies such as Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) in Scotland are enacted which strive to link the employers and schools to make the vocational path to work more visible for the young people.

This dissertation focuses on reasons why people choose the apprenticeship path into the labour market over the academic path, and what information they use to inform a choice that will have great effects for their career biographies. This chapter outlines some changes in developed societies that provide the backdrop for the young people’s choices when they think about their careers and education. Changes in economic structures as well as the nature of prolonged education and learning are outlined, as well as how they might affect the transition from schooling to the labour market that young people face. Finally, this chapter contains a brief summary of the researcher’s background, and the research questions the study seeks to answer.

Transitions from education to work and expectations of continuous training have never been straightforward or easy. However, it has been suggested that transitions have become less certain and more ‘flexible’—a term often seen in policies that support the development—in post-industrial societies. What is meant by post-industrial society, and how it differs from a previous industrial society, has been debated in the literature (Livingstone, 2012; Kumar, 2005; Krugman, 2007). Commonly the term post-industrial society refers to a society where industrial manufacturing of products is not the driving force of the economy (Kumar, 2005; Peters, Besley & Araya, 2014).

Instead, these post-industrial societies are marked by a larger service sector, and sometimes re-skilling or up-skilling of the labour force to utilize the new automation technologies is

included in the definition (Livingstone, 2012; Bailly & Léné, 2015). Developed economies of the West are often thought to be post-industrial economies, and the relative importance of the service sector to the economy reflects this in the UK where services have grown to cover 80% of the GDP (ONS, 2016). The changes mean that fewer people work in manufacturing and more people work in different service sectors. Qualifications and education are increasingly important, and people are expected to keep updating their knowledge throughout their life-courses (Livingstone, 2012). This continuous learning after the initial education and training is referred to as lifelong learning. Whether the differences in skills training and lifelong learning are qualitative changes in how things are done or if they are a continuity of previous developments, is a contested issue (Livingstone, 2012). However, for the purposes of this dissertation it is sufficient to acknowledge that this is the context in which the lifelong learning (LLL) and skills policies are being designed in these countries.

The term 'lifelong learning' has come to encompass several different meanings, but the commonality across the uses of the term is that it refers to a learning process that is not limited to formal schooling done in early life but learning that happens throughout person's life-course (Centeno, 2011; Edwards, 2007). Since the 2008 financial crisis, which hit the young people especially hard (UNRIC, 2012), LLL and skills policies have often been aimed at addressing youth unemployment and providing means for young people to get onto the slowly recovering labour market (Kothoff et al., 2017).

The author of this dissertation comes from a working-class background in rural Finland. Author's interest in the transitions from school to work were sparked after coming to the UK in 2012 to start his higher education – a MA in Psychology was completed in 2016 and an MSc in Education, Public Policy and Equity (EPPE) was completed in 2017 (Simonen, 2016; 2017). The transition to work or a type of further education and training, which differ in many ways between the countries, became a personal research interest partially due to most of the researcher's peers having gone to vocational education while he chose to pursue the academic pathway. The EPPE master's dissertation reviewed the evidence for developed economies changing into knowledge economies and inspected the role of lifelong learning in the developed economies was a part of it (Simonen, 2017). The decision-making process and the influences affecting the educational and career choices are a specific point of interest, which is why the topic of the current dissertation was chosen in agreement with the supervisors who obtained the funding for the larger study on vocational learning to which this enquiry belongs (part of a 1+3 ESRC-SDS scholarship).

Research questions

The focus of this dissertation is on modern apprenticeships that are aimed at young adults, who in this dissertation refer to 18- to 25-year olds. While the policy includes 16- to 25-year olds, for the purposes of this dissertation ‘young adult’ refers to 18- to 25-year olds due to participant access. Development of apprenticeships and the vocational education pathways has been an emphasis for the Scottish government’s education and skills policy. This is demonstrated by the national Developing the Young Workforce policy (DYW; Education Scotland, n.d.; Scottish Government, 2018) and it is part of three pillars of education and skills policy in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2018). The DYW programme is primarily motivated by economic reasons, making it an instrumental LLL policy that aims to reduce youth unemployment and foster vocational paths from education to labour market by increasing the number of young people attending apprenticeship routes (Education Scotland, n.d.; Scottish Government, 2014). The national DYW policy is examined closer later in Chapter 2, but this dissertation aims to find out if some of the measures that constitute the DYW programme—or similar measures—have had an effect on the decision-making of young people who have gone into modern apprenticeships in Scotland.

Specifically, the current research aims to identify different factors that play into young adults’ choice for going into apprenticeships that are linked to the modern apprenticeship programme in Scotland. The main research questions are:

- 1) Who are the key influencers for young people in the choice for going into an apprenticeship?*
- 2) How do the key influencers affect the decision-making?*
- 3) What means of influence have most affected the young people?*
- 4) What views do young people have about their apprenticeships and future prospects after the completion of their apprenticeship?*

The dissertation is divided into 5 chapters. After the introductory chapter, Chapter 2 consists of a literature review of the relevant topic areas for the current study. The main research areas include youth research—especially youth transitions from education to work—as well as literature on lifelong learning and skills policies across the West, the UK, and Scotland specifically. Chapter 3 covers the research design of the dissertation and rationales behind the choices made in the design. Chapter 4 outlines the findings of the research and presents the

research evidence gathered through interviews. This chapter also discusses the findings of the dissertation in the context of youth transitions. Research and practical implications, as well as limitations of the study and issues for further research are considered in the Chapter 5.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter consists of a literature review covering different relevant areas of research and policy literature for the current study. The first section discusses the research surrounding youth and early adulthood as the studied population in the study consists young adults. The second section outlines the debate in youth transitions literature about the relative influences of structures vs. agency, while the third section discusses the transitions in more detail. The fourth section discusses the role of lifelong learning and skills policies in youth transitions to labour market and the fifth section outlines the skills policy landscape in Scotland from late 1990s to today as that is the context in which the current research takes place.

2.1 Youth and early adulthood

Youth is conceptualised in scholarly literature as a phase of life between childhood and adulthood (Côté & Bynner, 2008; Furlong, Woodman & Wyn, 2011). While the phase coincides with a specific age range in most Western countries, it is not tied to a physical age but rather a social expectation (Wyn & White, 2015). It has been suggested that the youth phase that has become longer in societies in the post-industrial era (Furlong, Woodman & Wyn, 2014). Youth studies is a field that covers different elements of young adults' experiences and factors affecting their lives during the period of youth, approaching the topic from different angles and disciplines that include sociology, anthropology, economics, and other social sciences (Woodman & Bennet, 2015; Atkinson, 2007).

Youth has come to be divided into early and late youth in contemporary research due to its increased length over the years (Furlong, Woodman & Wyn, 2011). Late youth has also been commonly called 'early adulthood' (Côté & Bynner, 2008). The term refers to a phase during which a person is on their way to adulthood but does not yet have all the commitments that are considered to be part of it (Côte & Brynner, 2008). The list of commitments includes having an occupation, developing a worldview, and being in a conjugal relationship (Côté & Bynner, 2008).

Whether or not a prolonged youth period is a new development has been a topic of some debate. The prolonged young adulthood is argued to have been occurring for a long time among some social classes. An example of this is the former servant classes, who often took the steps to full adulthood later (Côte & Brynner, 2011). Instead of the development being a new phenomenon, it has been argued that the prolongment of early adulthood is affecting

larger and different groups of people. This is due to young adults spending more time in education, leading to reduced rates labour market participation in secure jobs (Wyn 2014). Therefore, a major affected group is the large student population existing in today. This ensures that it is not only those in low socioeconomic classes (SEC) experiencing this but also those in middle classes (Côte & Brynner, 2011). The large number of people affected from different SECs and the strains the development has on welfare spending has made it a significant policy issue (Wyn, 2014).

The field of youth studies has commonly been portrayed as divided into two branches: ‘youth cultural studies’ and ‘transitional studies’ (Furlong, 2015). These approaches employ different methodologies, focus on different aspects of youth experiences. The two branches have not been communicating much to each other over the years (Furlong, Woodman & Wyn, 2011). While cultural studies branch has focused on lived experiences of young people and on small scale studies, transitional studies have paid attention to the effects of societal structures on young people’s life trajectories, primarily employing large quantitative methodologies and longitudinal designs (Furlong, Woodman & Wyn, 2011). Bridging the two sides together could help develop a better picture of early adulthood experiences (Woodman & Bennett, 2015). The current study attempts to address the gap by utilising methodologies traditionally used in the cultural studies branch to answer questions traditionally asked in the transitional studies.

2.2 Structure vs. agency

While the division between the cultural and transitional branches has possibly resulted in a fragmented picture of early adulthood experiences, there is additional division that has greatly affected the discussions of young adulthood transitions. This is the division between structuralists and individualists (Furlong, 2009).

Structuralists argue that the societal structures—including socioeconomic status, gender, occupation, and ethnicity—are the most significant factors affecting individuals’ life courses (Furlong, 2009; Evans, 2002). On the other hand, individualists argue that the structuralists’ theory is not applicable in post-industrial societies and posit that individual agency is what determines individuals’ life courses (Furlong, 2009; Evans, 2002). This view has been expressed through different theories, one of which is the individualization thesis by Beck (1992).

Individualists' argument is that the society has changed so that social class no longer has an effect on person's trajectory, and consequently people construct reflexive biographies that draw from several influences outside the socioeconomic group they are born into (Atkinson, 2007; Atkinson, 2010). While the prevalent inequality between people is not being questioned by individualists, some authors argue that social class does not have an effect on it as it did in the past (Atkinson, 2010; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Previous studies indicate that class still influences personal trajectories, for example through different resources, and the understanding of class effects has become more nuanced than in the past (Atkinson, 2010). Some argue that the individualization as Beck meant it is foisted on young adults through the structures which forces them to be reflexive and make choices about their education and careers that personalise the risk (Roberts, 2009). In either case, the decisions made by the young people are constrained by several different factors. Not only are social connections opening opportunities, but cultural and social capitals are in effect creating a range of considered realistic possibilities that the actors choose between (Atkinson, 2010; Atkinson, 2017).

The debate about the importance of societal structures versus agency on individuals' trajectories or personal biographies has often centred around their effect on social mobility in society (Atkinson, 2007; Evans, 2002; Furlong, 2009). While the current study does not focus on social mobility, it draws from the debate about the factors that influence person's choices for their future.

The metaphors used for the individual's navigation from schooling to work have changed overtime as understanding of the different factors influencing the process have developed (Furlong, 2009). While the individualization thesis by Beck (1992) is often critiqued, the importance of personal agency in decision-making has garnered attention. Subsequently, the metaphors used in the transition literature have changed from pathways and trajectories towards biographies (Furlong, 2009). The new terminology recognises the individual agency and puts it towards the centre stage as people are expected to take personal responsibility and make choices of their future within the societal framework that they inhabit. The structural factors are acknowledged to be important by most researchers (Evans, 2002; Woodman, 2009) and they limit personal agency through the options that the individuals consider for their life courses. This has been argued to be the position that was taken by Beck in his individualization thesis (Woodman, 2009), but other ways to frame this include 'bounded agency' (Evans, 2002). The current study is interested in how different influences and

influencers in young adults' lives affect the decision-making when young adults consider their biographies and future options after schooling.

2.3 Transitions from education to work

Transitions from education to work have changed around the world in the past decades, but the discussion in this section focuses on the changes in that transition process in the UK. The changes in the paths from education to work have changed as the opportunity structures around the transition have changed (Roberts, 2009). The opportunity structures refer to different personal factors, such as education, labour market practices at the time of transition, and the family origins among others (Roberts, 2009).

However, it is important to note that the changes to the transition into adulthood have not been equal to all social groups. As Furlong and colleagues (Furlong, Woodman & Wyn, 2011) note, the most economically advantaged people have retained the past progression from education to work much the same as they have done during the industrial era, which is often the comparison point. This advantaged group uses the same public schools as before, and which still lead most people into the best ranked universities, which lead to same most desirable jobs (Furlong, Woodman & Wyn, 2011). It is important to note this continuity since often research has focused on those that have experienced most change (Evans, 2002; Roberts, 2009).

While there is continuity among some social classes, there are several observed changes in young adults' transitions. The first notable trend is a prolonged stay in education. Whereas before one could leave school at the age of 14 and go work in some of the numerous low-skill jobs that functioned as an entry level to the labour market now that is not possible. The compulsory schooling age has gone up twice (Furlong, 2009) and is now 16, resulting in longer stay in schooling for many who do not see the reason for it and would like to go to employment sooner. However, some still do not complete their GCSE qualifications and decide to go straight into labour market from school without formal qualifications (Furlong, 2009). In Scotland, most school leavers go into further study of some kind and an increasing number of people stay in education until S6, past the age of compulsory education (Scottish Government, 2018), demonstrating the trend towards a longer stay in education.

In addition to compulsory schooling age becoming higher, the labour market has changed in the past decades and the opportunities for entry level jobs are not what they used to be

(Furlong, 2009; Roberts, 2009). Instead, people educate themselves further as has been encouraged by policies and rhetoric over the past decades. However, this development is not without issues. In the UK, as in many other European countries, there is a skills mismatch where there are too many skilled people in some sectors of the economy for the number of jobs available in the labour market (Reymen et al., 2015). This has then subsequently led to degree inflation instead of meeting demand for more skilled labour.

The transition from education to work has therefore become both longer and more competitive. In the past the ‘academic path’ has been strongly encouraged in schools. Young adults are expected to complete more schooling past the compulsory education age in colleges, universities, and other types of further education. The vocational path has not been as strong in the UK as in other places as apprenticeships became scarcer, but there have been efforts to strengthen the vocational path to work alongside the academic path.

One of the methods utilised by policy makers to strengthen the vocational pathway from school to work is using lifelong learning and skills policies to bridge the gap between education and work. Next, we will look further into the concept of lifelong learning, and how it has become a part of young people’s life courses.

2.4 Lifelong learning in labour market transitions

Lifelong learning is a broad concept and it has been formulated in different ways. Sometimes it has been conceptualised broadly, including skills that are relevant economically—i.e. skills relevant for employability—coupled with skills that assist with engagement in society and cultural identity development. This includes skills such as democratic engagement and construction of social knowledge, both of which have been argued to be important in LLL (Huhana Mleck, 2011). This broad concept of lifelong learning is the original vision, but often LLL is conceptualised more instrumentally. The instrumental LLL’s aim to address the need for providing and updating economically relevant skills that maintain or improve employability (Titan, Burciu, Manea & Aderlean, 2014). When considered this way, LLL becomes a part of a skills development agenda, a role it has often been since the 2008 financial crisis and resulting recession. The instrumental policies have tended to be the main focus in the EU, which has also influenced the LLL policies elsewhere in the world (Huhana Mleck, 2011). While the current study pays attention primarily to skills focused LLL policies and on transition to labour market, it is important to keep in mind that the narrow approach is

not without its problems and it has been criticised for reducing LLL into a skills policy rather than utilising it more fully as originally intended.

There is no indication that LLL policies in EU have become more numerous, according to a recent Young Adult research project conducted in 9 European Union countries, but the policies had tended to shift from comprehensive policies towards instrumental policies (Kothoff et al., 2017). The instrumental LLL policies often come under skills policies instead of educational ones (Kothoff et al., 2017). In Scotland, the LLL policies aimed at young people (between 16-24 years old) have focused primarily on addressing youth unemployment (Lowden, Valiente, Capsada-Munsech, 2016), reflecting the wider trend in Europe to utilise the LLL and skills policies to address the issues in local labour markets and paying attention to the economically relevant skills.

2.5 Skills policies in Scotland

Lifelong learning in Scotland has been developed both regionally and on a national level. The different regions have had their individual skills policies and lifelong learning policies for young people after the end of compulsory education, or they have implemented a national policy regionally. The focus of Scottish LLL and skills policies has been towards 16- to 24-year olds (Lowden, Valiente, Capsada-Munsech, 2016). The current Scottish approach to education and skills policy rests on three policy pillars: Getting it Right for Every Child, Curriculum for Excellence, and Developing the Young Workforce (Scottish Government, 2018). This study is interested in the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) strategy as it has become a policy that attempts to bring schools and employers closer together through different means to strengthen the vocational route to the labour market (Scottish Government, 2018).

Modern apprenticeships (MA)—the apprenticeships programme that the current study's participants are a part of—were introduced in Scotland and rest of the UK in 1994 (Callacher, Whittaker & Crossan, 2004). The apprenticeships were primarily introduced to provide medium skilled labour for the local employers (Callacher, Whittaker & Crossan, 2004), but they contain a range of different apprenticeship programmes today. MAs in Scotland are maintained by Skills Development Scotland (SDS), a national skills body that gets direction from the Scottish Government for its functions (Skills Development Scotland, 2018a). While MAs are one of the most important forms of apprenticeship, they are not the only one. SDS' apprenticeships consist of modern apprenticeships, graduate apprenticeships, and recently

added foundational apprenticeships (Skills Development Scotland, 2018b). However, as MAs are the most numerous, most widespread, and the best-established form of apprenticeship, they are the focus for the dissertation.

MAs consist of various apprenticeship frameworks—75 different ones for different sectors in Scotland—and they provide training matching the standards of the relevant organisations defining the minimum skills levels in each sector (Skills Development Scotland, 2017). The current study is not attempting to cover different sectors, rather focusing on two different MA programmes in similar sectors.

The wider skills policy framework in Scotland has changed in the past 20 years compared to England. Before the Scottish government gained devolved powers in education and skills policy in 1999, it had the largely the same national skills policy as England as it was decided in the UK parliament (Payne, 2009). After the introduction of devolution, the Scottish Labour coalition government did not diverge much from the UK labour government's approach that emphasised skills supply, especially that of high skilled labour supply (Payne, 2009; Keep, 2017). The New Labour government's aim was to boost the skills supply to remain competitive with other highly developed nations and to reduce the "skills gap" (Payne, 2009). This has deemed to be insufficient by researchers, including those who made the original report on which the New Labour skills policy approach was based on.

Once the Scottish National Party (SNP) formed a government, a larger divergence in the skills policies between Scotland and England emerged (Payne, 2009; 2012; Keep 2017). The aim of the skills policy shifted from providing a more skilled workforce towards providing a workforce that the local employers needed, emphasising skills utilisation in the workplace (Payne, 2009; Grant, Maxwell & Ogden, 2013). This approach emphasised matching of skills to employer needs rather than just supplying more highly skilled labour since, as the 2010 skills strategy put it, "Making more effective use of skills is of fundamental importance in leading Scotland back to a higher level of productivity and sustainable growth" (Scottish Government, 2010, p.42). The difference in the underlying philosophy has led to an approach in Scotland that aims not to focus only on skills supply side to increase productivity, but to pay more attention to skills utilisation and to the relevance of skills in the workplace (Grant, Maxwell & Ogden, 2013).

Post 2008 recession, the skills policy approach adopted by the Scottish Government included policies such as Opportunities for All (Scottish Government, 2012), which focused on 16-19-

year olds were not engaged in education or in employment. This demonstrated the emphasis on using the skills policies to address the rising youth unemployment that happened at the time. The current policy landscape started taking form after the release of the “Education working for all: Developing Scotland’s young workforce” report, which outlined recommended measures targeting young people who do not choose the academic path leading to university (Scottish Government, 2014). The recommendations from the report took shape in the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) programme. While the programme still had a major focus in reducing youth unemployment, it included other features that aimed to bring about a closer relationship between the employers and the schools.

DYW is a major national policy that is being implemented regionally and through collaboration between different levels of governance as well as national organisations such as the SDS (Scottish Government, 2014). The national DYW policy includes several policy measures in its strategy, but they all build towards a single overall goal: connecting the employers and the education system better to improve the transition from education to labour market. (Scottish Government, 2014). A goal of the policy is to make the vocational pathway from school to work more attractive and to bolster the apprenticeships. The approach adopted by the policy relies on the strong links between schools, colleges, and employers to make the vocational pathways more available and better known (Scottish Government, 2014). This is to ensure that the young people have the information to make informed choices about their careers through employer involvement in schools and through improved careers guidance (Scottish Government, 2014). The parity of esteem between different apprenticeships and HE/FE is important as shown in studies in England, where the issues with esteem has resulted in some of the apprenticeships becoming tied to specific employers without adequate opportunities for progression due perceived lack of value (Brockman & Laurie, 2016).

The implementation of the DYW strategy is done through seven stages across seven years (Scottish Government, 2014). Currently, several of the policy measures are implemented. These include stronger links between local employers and schools through means such as workplace visits, local employer visits to schools where the employers can talk about what they do, and what careers they have; employer links where the students can get work experience in the local companies during schooling; setting up foundational apprenticeships where students can do vocational courses as a part of their comprehensive schooling. These are all part of the strategy to inform young people so that they can make decisions regarding their career paths (Scottish Government, 2018) and in building their personal biographies.

The approach outlined in the policy is very similar to the vision of Beck, who put forward the individualization thesis or reflexivity thesis (Atkinson, 2010) where the structures of the society are pushing people towards individualization rather than it necessarily being initiated by the individual. In this instance, the young people are expected to be reflexive decision makers (Atkinson, 2010; Roberts, 2009) and the focus of the policy is to provide them with the resources to make an informed decision about their future (Scottish Government, 2018).

The current study attempts to find what forms of influences and influencers are the most important when young adults are making their choices. In practice this means examining how the different influences in schools for example affect young adults' choices. The study is also interested in the structural influences like social contacts and social- and cultural capital, and their effect in the decision-making. By inspecting the influences in the decision-making process, we can gain understanding on whether the linking measures the DYW strategy employs are recognised by young adults and if they have found them helpful for their decision-making when choosing to go to a modern apprenticeship. The research also contributes to the transition literature, inspecting the relative importance of different influencing factors for the young people's decisions regarding their career biographies.

2.6 Summary of chapter 2

The second chapter outlined the literature of the field in which the dissertation is situated as well as the policy context in which the research takes place. Youth studies is an established field in social sciences that has been focusing on different aspects of young people's lives, including their transitioning into the labour market. One of the major debates in the field has been the importance of personal agency vs. social structures in their effects on the young people's decision making and career choices. Earlier research indicates that both are important, but that the social structures limit the agency of the young people in different ways. Over time, the structural pressures have changed and the contemporary social structures affecting the young people's choices have been formed over years of political decisions as well as the 2008 economic recession, which has affected the policies that support young people's learning over their life-courses. The policies in Scotland have been aimed at improving the youth employment, making the lifelong learning and skills policies focused on economically important skills. This priority in youth skills and employment can be seen in DYW policy which aims to bolster the vocational route to the world of work.

Chapter 3: Research design

This chapter outlines the research design used in this dissertation. The first section outlines the methodology used in the study, including the data collection and data analysis methods. The second section provides an outline of the participants that took part in the study. The final section contains a brief discussion about the ethical considerations in the study.

3.1 Methodology

This dissertation utilises qualitative research methods in the form of a case study. Types of cases vary between different studies, but they attempt to capture a phenomenon or group worth studying to learn something new or to refine theory (Alasuutari, Bickman & Brannen, 2008). The case in this study is composed of young people who have gone into office-based apprenticeships in Scotland. The apprenticeships share not only settings, but the roles also require similar skills such as good communication.

As outlined in the first section of the literature review, much of the youth transitions literature has tended to focus on large-scale quantitative methods. However, the quantitative methodologies have their limitations and are less suited for gaining insight into the decision-making processes when young people make choices about their future pathways. The choice to conduct qualitative semi-structured interviews was done for several reasons.

First, the semi-structured interviews are well-established for gaining insight about person's views and personal experiences (Berg, 2007). Semi-structured interviews allow for a degree of flexibility to focus on areas that might emerge as especially important during the interview (Berg, 2007). The method has been used in some labour market transition research (Atkinson, 2010) that sought to investigate how agency and structure affected people's career paths, making it an established research method in the field, even if quantitative methodologies have historically been dominant. The explored themes can be seen in the appendix I. The table contains the analysed themes and examples of coded transcript that form the themes. The interview schedule used in the data collection can be found in appendix II.

This case study uses live interviews, conducted either face-to-face or through video calling software Skype. The interviews conducted face-to-face in same space were done at Skills Development Scotland facilities in Glasgow (co-funder with the UK Economic and Social Research Council of the four-year project to which this enquiry belongs). Some of the

participants resided further away from Glasgow and the most feasible way to conduct the interviews was to do them through Skype video-call service. Meetings with the participants were scheduled by the SDS, who provided the participants' contact details for the researcher.

The interviews were conducted and transcribed by the researcher. Prior to conducting the research interviews a pilot interview was conducted with a person from the researcher's social networks. The interviews lasted between 20 and 30 minutes. The transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a versatile analysis method that shares commonalities with techniques such as grounded analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, thematic analyses have been criticised for not disclosing the theoretical positioning of the analysis, rendering the analysis less useful (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The current study has utilised theoretical thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis is conducted utilising a theoretical framework based on the transition literature and it is reflected in the research questions. It is influenced by Bourdieu's work on class and effects of the availability capitals on decision-making. The study attempts to see which influences were most important for the young adults and what kind of social capital they might require for access. The approach is similar to that taken by Atkinson (2010) who investigated life-courses of individuals using qualitative interview methodology. The thematic analysis was done with the assistance of the R Qualitative Data Analysis (RQDA) software package (Huang, 2016) in R software. The RQDA package was used as it was a free and easy to access package for the R data-analysis program, which the researcher had used previously for other data-analysis. The combined length of the interview transcripts from 10 interviews (font size 12, Times New Roman, double spaced) ran a total of 91 pages. Conducting the data analysis using specialist software was primarily done to make it easier to keep track of the codes and themes to maintain a systematic data-analysis, which the specialist software can help with (Odena, 2013).

3.2 Participants

The participants for the study were recruited with the help from Skills Development Scotland, who contacted potential participants that fit the parameters of the study (SDS then linked the participants with the researcher, who conducted the interviews, but was not involved in any other way with data collection). The parameters for the young people group of participants in the study were the following: participants aged between 16 and 25 years, and either completing or recently completed a Modern Apprenticeship. The researcher had obtained a PVG certification allowing to work with under 18-year olds prior to the data collection. The

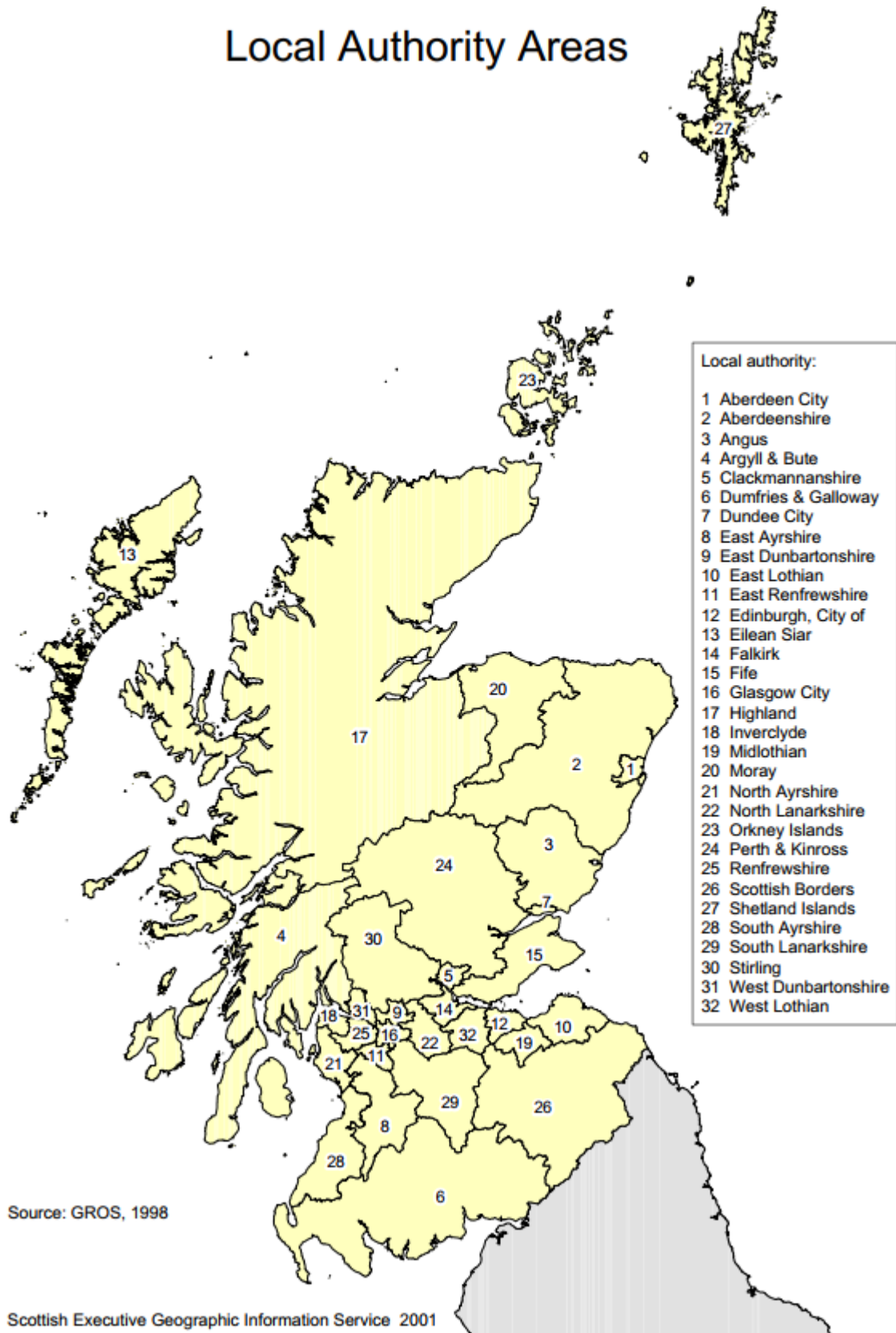
participants were recruited from primarily from the greater Glasgow region. However, five young people were recruited from outside the Glasgow region and come from Edinburgh, Inverness, and Aberdeen regions. A map of Scotland and its division into local authority areas can be seen in illustration 1.

The young people group of participants for the study were between 19 and 23 years old at the time of the interviews. The apprenticeships they had done were diverse. Some were longer than others, and some are a part of a longer chain of apprenticeships that correspond to increasingly higher qualification levels. The length of the apprenticeship programmes and the general field are summarised in table 3.1. To ensure confidentiality, the individual ages and locations are not disclosed in this report. However, the skills that the apprenticeships taught and required had a broad range, as can be seen in the results chapter of this study.

Table 3.1: Participants		
Participant pseudonym	Apprenticeship field (MA)	Apprenticeship length
Margaret	Youth support	2 years
Jack	Business and administration	1 year
Catherine	Business and administration	2 years
Elizabeth	Business and administration	2 years
Helen	Youth support	2 years
Alex	Youth support	2 years
Mitchel	Youth support	2 years
Steven	Youth support	2 years
Stephanie	Youth support	2 years
Judith	Business and administration	2 years

Illustration 1: Map of Scotland (Scottish Government, 2005)

Local Authority Areas



3.3 Ethical considerations

The study design was approved by the University of Glasgow College of Social Sciences ethics committee. The main ethical considerations in the dissertation study consisted of ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, as the topic itself is not likely to be distressing to discuss. For the purposes of ensuring the anonymity of the participants, their individual ages are not reported in the study and only a broad description of their field of work is provided to ensure that their identities are not decipherable from the information provided in this dissertation.

The participants were provided a plain language statement prior to their participation to the study, and all participants signed a consent form. These forms can be found in the appendixes III and IV. The plain language statement informed the participants about the purpose of the study, what taking part involves, provided contact details, and outlined how their participation is kept confidential as well as ensuring that the participants are aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any point. The process was done within the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) guidelines, particularly ensuring that the responsibilities towards participants such as right to withdraw and consent were met.

3.4 Summary of chapter 3

This chapter discussed the research design of the study, outlined who took part in the study, and summarised the ways in which ethical considerations were accounted for in the study. The chosen research design was a qualitative case study that utilised thematic analysis. Participants were recruited from around Scotland from two different kinds of office-based apprenticeships to form the case of the study. The primary ethical considerations consisted of ensuring the anonymity of the participants and the study was approved by the University of Glasgow College of Social Sciences ethics committee.

Chapter 4: Findings and discussion

This chapter discusses the fieldwork findings of the study, which consisted of the semi-structured interviews with the ten participating young people. The discussion of the results is divided into four sections and each of them consists of a number of themes. Findings for each theme and subtheme are shown through supporting quotes. A sample of the filled data matrix containing the main research themes is provided in Appendix I, the findings aim to provide answers to the four research questions outlined in the 1st chapter:

- 1) Who are the key influencers for young people in the choice for going into an apprenticeship,*
- 2) how do the key influencers affect the decision-making*
- 3) What means of influence have most affected the young people, and*
- 4) what views do young people have about their apprenticeships and future prospects after the completion of their apprenticeship.*

The results discussion starts with the decision-making process and motivations in section 4.1. This discussion revolves around the different approaches that the young people took when considering apprenticeships as an option for themselves. Section 4.2 outlines the different influences, whether people or other resources, that affected their choices or aided in some ways in the application process. This section aims to answer the research questions 1, 2 and 3 of the dissertation. Finally, section 4.3 briefly outlines the future plans of the young people, showing the variety that the young people have in their personal career biographies. This is to answer the fourth research question.

4.1. The decision-making process and motivations

The participants in the study came from different backgrounds, each with a different set of motives for wanting to do an apprenticeship and a different approach to the information seeking process. This section focuses on outlining these motives to provide context for the different effects of influences for the young people.

4.1.1. Motivations for applying to an apprenticeship

The young people usually had several motivations, or things they wanted to achieve, that they considered when making the decision on what they want to do after school. The following factors were what the young people were seeking from their options and what attracted the young adults to the apprenticeships that they were doing. This provides context for the kinds of information and influence that the young people found to be useful in their decision-making process.

Income

Several participants in the study wanted to have a job and an income. The reasons for wanting income were not always something that the participants elaborated on, but the desire to earn an income was a motivator for many participants

“Erm, it’s just money to be honest.” Jack

However, some outcomes or secondary effects of having income were mentioned by some of the participants. First, income was a means for a more independent life that contains further possibilities.

“Money as well yeah. Able to be quite independent instead of going into uni and having to get a loan again.” Mitchel

A second reason for desiring an income was to do with making the work itself feel satisfying, and to feel valued as a worker on top of being able to be more independent.

“It’s like an incentive as well. When you’re getting that amount of money then it helps you kind of work harder I think.” Elizabeth

Training and support

Support in a workplace was another motivation that participants wanted. Support consisted of several different forms, the main ones being training and supporting people in their tasks when there was a need for it.

The longer training period that allowed one to learn the job without the pressure to quickly learn new tasks without formal training was valued. When this was paired with the fact that it

was still a paid job as well as receiving training, it was a desirable combination that was easier to approach than just a full-time job.

“I thought, if I’m getting paid then that’s basically... it’s a full-time job, you’re getting trained, it’s comfortable. Like I wouldn’t be comfortable jumping into something that I would have to learn like within a week. Whereas within MA you learn in two years.” Jack

Support was an important factor for some of the participants and it ensured both their enjoyment at work and their successful completion of the training. The appreciation and need for a good support structure at the apprenticeship placement was expressed by Alex:

“Just the sort of support I’ve got along the path has been ... good for my development so far. I certainly wouldn’t have been able to get along so well so far without that support there. ... So that’s a huge thing I think everybody needs to have.”

A participant that experienced both HE and apprenticeship environments appreciated the higher level of support in the apprenticeship, which was something that they were seeking after their time in HE:

“Biggest one with uni was that, the jump from school to uni you find your... it’s more self-study. It’s all on you. There’s not a lot of, much support I find. ... In apprenticeship, if you’re in the office you can just ask anyone really, everyone’s got time for you.” Mitchel

Job fulfilment

This meant different things for each participant as one might expect in a situation where the apprenticeship programmes differed. For many participants, job fulfilment meant doing a job that helps other people, contributes to the well-being of others and the community in a way that the young adult felt played to their strengths.

“I knew I was good at speaking to people and err I wanted a job that could help people, but I didn’t want anything that was kind of hands on.” Margaret

“when this apprenticeship came up, it was teaching, and it was helping but in a completely different way. So that’s why it jumped at me and I liked it.” Helen

For some, a fulfilling job meant that the task was not repetitive and that there were opportunities to advance and improve one's work practices. Job fulfilment in this case appeared to stem from personal enjoyment and desire to gain mastery.

“One of my sort of... bugbears of the [previous job] was that I could work there for another twenty years and I would still be on a same sort of level. Doing the same job, same wage, same everything. Erm... but in [current organisation], that's an opportunity that I've got now. Everything's constantly changing and I'm climbing that ladder to get to my final goal basically.” Alex

Participants who either sought a job that helped others or was perceived to be fulfilling for oneself were either primarily interested in a field of work. In that case whether the job was an apprenticeship appeared to be a secondary benefit. Those that sought both a specific job or a field alongside the support structures and learning method had a more limited pool of opportunities which contained the apprenticeships.

Learning method

Work-based learning was actively being sought by some of the participants, which in many cases was the reason why university or college did not appeal to them.

“It would be my preferred style of learning I guess. Learning while doing it.”

Catherine

For those that did not want to do 'book learning', the options were largely limited to either finding a full-time job that they qualified for or finding an apprenticeship. This directed the way they sought different options. In some cases, those who had a strong motivation to find something that was practical, and where learning was work-based, wound up being interesting in the apprenticeship structure first. The field of work that appealed to them came secondary.

Qualifications

Learning method and income motivations were often paired with the desire to achieve a qualification instead of just working. Indeed, the qualification on top of work experience made apprenticeship a much more appealing option than just working, even for those who had worked before. Several participants had worked either full-time or part time prior to the apprenticeship. For them, acquiring a qualification from work on top of income was seen as

an almost unreal opportunity. Qualifications sometimes constituted the whole motivation to go into an apprenticeship:

“And getting a qualification erm... was really good and then earning money at the same time was very... it seemed... like before I’d heard of the apprenticeship it seemed like oh that would kind of unheard sort of thing.” Steven

“Erm... just kind of earning, get a qualification, didn’t really have any other reasons” Stephanie

Location

Finally, location was an important factor for several people and was considered by the participants when assessing the different options available. One of the appeals of apprenticeship was its local nature for some of the participants.

“Erm, I never really wanted to move at that point, far away from where I stayed ... so because it was in the area and it was, you know, a training opportunity I think that was one of the main reasons why I ended up choosing that.” Margaret

“I live quite near the town, so I knew I wouldn’t have to travel like ages away to get there, so it’s easy for me to get to.” Elizabeth

The variety in the reasons for applying to MAs among the participants was striking. Each participant sought a different combination of things from their jobs or training, and apprenticeships happened to be the option that were the most suitable option. The wide range of things that the participants sought from their apprenticeship experience speaks for the range of opportunities that they offer to young people.

4.1.2. Options and time taken to choose

Some participants had not considered apprenticeships until they had left school and started their path towards other opportunities. These other opportunities included further study in college and starting work without an apprenticeship programme. In these cases, the option to do an apprenticeship was not considered by the participants until they saw an advertisement for an interesting position.

“It was when I saw this opportunity come up.” Helen

Some other participants had spent a long time looking at different options before applying for an apprenticeship as they wanted to find suitable long-term career. In these instances, the participants were often working at least part-time while making the choice, thus having the resources at hand to be able to wait longer for opportunities.

“yeah it did take a while, you know it was a few months, but it was worth it in the end. ... I was taking a lot of care and time to make sure it was the right thing.” Steven

It was common across participants to start considering apprenticeships either at the end of schooling, or even after spending time at HE or FE institutions. The options that the participants were considering for themselves varied greatly. Some participants were primarily considering different apprenticeships. This was as they were not interested in HE or FE either because they did not want to do more full-time study, or they had tried HE or FE and did not enjoy it.

“I suppose that learning on the job appealed more to me than going back to full time study like in school.” Catherine

Others had placements in colleges or universities that they considered to be backup options in case they did not get the apprenticeships they applied for.

“I already had a placement in college to do events management so, I was sort of half-and-half. I wasn't sure and had a sort of backup plan.” Stephanie

The range of considered options demonstrates the reasons why people apply for apprenticeships. The reasons were either for the appealing field of work, or the apprenticeship structure and work-based learning itself. The two reasons are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but often one of motivation preceded the other. The participants had either started looking for apprenticeships and found an interesting field, or they were looking for options in a field that interested them and found an apprenticeship. This resulted in a different set of options that they were considering.

4.2. Sources of information and influence

The sources of information that affected the participants' choices to do an apprenticeship were as varied as their situations, and different influencers affected them at different times. This section outlines the different sources of information that emerged during the interviews

and discusses the ways in which they contributed either for information provision or other forms of support based on the interview data.

Peers

Peers have been found to be an influential group in many ways in past studies. They have been found to affect appearances, lifestyle choices, as well as career and educational choices (Naz, Saeed, Khan, Khan, Sheikh & Khan, 2014). While the findings suggest that peers influence the career choices, it has not been clear what form the influence takes. To gain a better idea of the peer group influences, participants were asked if they knew others who had gone to do apprenticeships before them. There was no clear pattern in this regard. Some participants had friends who had completed apprenticeships in various different fields, while in other cases the participant was the only person in their circle of friends who had done an apprenticeship. The friends of participants who were completing apprenticeships often did different types of apprenticeships than the participants.

“Actually... I don't think I do. All of my pals are in university.” Alex

Those who had friends that went on to do apprenticeships did not necessarily know more about the apprenticeships than those whose friends went to HE or FE instead. Friends of the participants were rarely sources of information about apprenticeships. Instead, friends were more commonly linking and highlighting different apprenticeship opportunities to them. Those without friends who had done apprenticeships lacked this source of information and had to utilise other sources.

“Because my friend worked in a, where it came about, in the [a company] as a modern apprentice. And he said there's another opportunity coming up, you should apply.” Steven

The linking of opportunities happened both in one-to-one situations containing specific recommendations as well as through social media. In one instance a person was linked to opportunities by their peer through a Facebook post. These more public posts can influence wider sections of young adults' peer groups without specific targeting and they pose an interesting form of information sharing.

While the information that peers in apprenticeships provided often helped the participants to either find an apprenticeship or start the search for opportunities, this was not the only form of support that the peers provided. More commonly, peers were a group that the participants

had consulted during their decision-making process when they were considering applying to an apprenticeship. This form of support from peers was available even to some of those whose friend did not do apprenticeships themselves.

“...talking about with friends like what the job role was and the more I talked about it and explained it to them, the more they kind of said that it sounds perfect for me really.” Helen

However, not everyone consulted their friends and peers about their career choices, instead these discussions were reserved for closer family members for some of the participants.

“I didn’t really discuss it with my friends. More with my family.” Alex

School and careers advisors

Schools were one of the places where every participant got information about apprenticeship. There was variation in the kinds of information they received, and how useful this was thought to be. As schools were providing more general advice about career options, not just information about apprenticeships, the amount of information about apprenticeships in relation to the HE and FE options was one of the focus points in this analysis. First, it was thought that information of apprenticeships’ existence was conveyed well to the participants in schools.

“apprenticeships were always mentioned for what I can remember, as an option.”

Margaret

“I would say in school is when I first understood and was spoken to and explained what modern apprenticeship was.” Helen

The knowledge gained about apprenticeships in school was basic and some felt that “I just knew the bare minimum.” (Jack). The information given in school tended to consist of “just where to find apprenticeships, where to look for them, little bit about them.” (Catherine).

The basic nature of the information the participants received at school resulted to a situation where in many cases the range of opportunities contained in apprenticeships was not well-understood until they encountered further information detailing the opportunities after schooling was finished. For many this formed impression that MAs catered to a limited range of career options.

“When I was at school they ... talked about the sort of construction industry, the modern apprenticeship. I think it was the beginning of like the NHS having modern apprenticeships. And sort of your usual hairdresser ones and stuff as well.” Helen

More recent additions to apprenticeship options were just being introduced in schools when some of the younger participants were attending, but the effects were still limited.

“The stuff with like foundation apprenticeships where you could do like a day at uni or at a college and have a work placement. It was just starting to happen and there wasn't a lot about them at the time.” Mitchel

Besides the range of apprenticeship options being insufficiently conveyed to many of the participants in school, there was also a feeling that the HE and FE were the primarily promoted options for the participants in schooling.

“In terms of when I was coming up to leaving school, I got the impression that maybe if you had a certain level of education that you were almost expected to go to university.” Margaret

University was considered to be the default option for a young adult if they were doing well in school. When this was combined with the information about apprenticeships being limited, it resulted in some of the participants only considering apprenticeships after they had tried HE/FE and not enjoyed it. These structural influences in schools appear to be powerful and they appear to have limited the options that the participants initially considered for their career pathways. This finding reflects the study by Atkinson (2010) where some options were either considered a more natural fit and thus others were not considered to the same degree.

This perception issue ties to the prestige problem of apprenticeships that was discussed by Brockman & Laurie (2016). For most participants in this study, the consideration of apprenticeships started after coming across a specific apprenticeship opportunity rather than them actively looking at different apprenticeship options at the beginning. However, as discussed earlier, some sought different apprenticeships from the beginning and narrowed down their interests afterwards.

Those participants who had some knowledge of the careers advising in schools today thought that the situation had changed since their schooling. The breadth of opportunities in apprenticeships was thought to be better conveyed and advertised to the young people today than it was before.

The people in schools who conveyed most of the information to participants were careers advisors. While the information provided to participants was perceived to be limited, the careers advisors were nonetheless considered to be some of the most important and frequently mentioned information sources about apprenticeships.

Participants also approached careers advisors after they finished schooling. These meetings were thought to be very helpful. While advisors were rated as some of the most useful information sources, they were thought to be important in other ways as well. The other support that the advisors reportedly provided were varied, but three main ones were helping the participants to learn more about the specific positions they were interested in, scoping out possible options for them at the time they were making the choice, and highlighting different online resources for the young people.

In some instances, the careers advisors played an even bigger role as they provided similar support that parents provided for the young people, nudging them towards the opportunities. This demonstrates the effectiveness of such support when it might not be readily available from other sources.

“He came in and said to me ‘you’d be really good at this’ and he put me forward for it. And it was kind of, he talked me into doing it because it was a really good opportunity.” Judith

Parents and relatives

Parents and relatives were not often reported to be the primary sources of information about apprenticeship. However, in a couple of instances they supplemented the information that the young people received from schools’ career advisors, especially if the parents or relatives had done apprenticeships themselves. When asked what kind of information parents provided, Catherine stated:

“just like... general like what it was and when I was looking at apprenticeships they assisted me as well.”

However, parents and relatives mostly assisted in other ways. One of the ways was to link the young people with opportunities as was the case with Jack

“...one of my dad’s friends. Who was actually an intern here. She said to me that I should consider it.”

Parents often also provided practical help with application process.

“mom and dad were proactive in helping me to find apprenticeships as well... With finding vacancies and drafting my cover letter. My mom helped with my CV and stuff like that.” Jack

Additionally, parental approval was important for the choices that the young people made, and they were consulted by most participants.

“Family was a big one. So obviously talked it through with them. ... Erm, got some feedback that I should be going for it.” Helen

Parental opinions were thought to be important factor for those that automatically went to HE or FE without considering apprenticeships.

“I suppose I was quite lucky in the fact that I had erm... quite good family support erm... I think that so many young people do have that and that’s quite a big factor in that they didn’t choose an apprenticeship.” Margaret

Parental approval and assistance was valued, and the practical assistance was often very important, especially when it came to the application. The connections that the parents had, if they were used to seek opportunities, were recognised to be an important advantage in a competitive labour market

“But it’s all about using your networks at the end of the day so. I did just that.” Alex

Other resources

Finally, information from job adverts and online resources were found to be important for information. First, job adverts were the place where information about fields of interest and apprenticeship structures was often first sought. The adverts frequently contained the bulk of the information that the young people were seeking, especially for those that did not feel like they needed a comprehensive understanding of the role prior to the application for the position.

Online resources were highlighted to the young people by careers advisors. The resources most commonly mentioned were myworldofwork.co.uk and apprenticeships.scot. They were sometimes used as primary information sources about apprenticeships and sources for opportunities.

“This is where—you know, after registering at the ‘my world of work’ website that—that I found there was other avenues and it wasn’t just—cause it was mainly construction—I would say that’s cool” Steven

The value of these services appeared to be high for the participants as it was often the only source of information about specific apprenticeships. The websites were also a source for possible opportunities in cases where this information was not provided to participants through word of mouth connections in their social networks. Thus, these services were an important source of information not only for providing useful information, but for being universally and equally accessible. The online services were also used by the participants to bolster their understanding of any of the issues that they wished to find more information on.

“And also, like having a look myself, looking on the internet, going to the website ‘my world of work’ erm, and seeing that apprenticeship was an option ... That sort of bulked it out a bit more” Steven

The Scottish government’s (2018) skills policy has aimed improve support services for students and help them in their career path choices, and these services are seemingly fulfilling that need for young adults in this study. These services are also being advertised by the careers advisors as highlighted earlier on, making them valuable for people regardless of their social resources at the start of the decision-making process. However, there can be some regional differences in the opportunities that are available even if the tools are equally accessible. This was what one participant thought regarding the opportunities that they had in the region.

“Possibly in my area it’s a bit more rare for these types of apprenticeships to come up so I wonder if that maybe contributed to not being as aware of different kinds of apprenticeships.” Margaret

4.3. Apprenticeship experience and future plans

This final section of the results discussion contains an overview of the kinds of future plans that the young people had as well as some reflection on how they found their apprenticeship experience to be.

4.3.1 Apprenticeship experience

The apprenticeship experience was a positive one among the participants, regardless of the time they took to consider their options or if they were especially well-informed prior to entering their apprenticeship. The most important factor for the positive experience was often

identified to be the amount of support that they young people experienced during their apprenticeships.

“I think that’s really been good for my development so far. I certainly wouldn’t have been able to get along so well so far without that support there.” Alex

The level of support experienced by the participants was thought not to be universal across different companies. Additionally, the learning environment was viewed very positively among the participants. The setting of the apprenticeships, which in this case study was an office setting for all of the participants, was considered a relaxed and comfortable setting for learning.

“I’d always kind of been keen to work in an office. Just the kind of environment... Just quite laid back and... but still official at the same time. And just the ability to be a bit more free.” Jack

While the learning experience was enjoyable for the participants, the change to work-based learning was not without its challenges. The amount of previous work experience differed among the participants. Those with previous full-time work experience did not find the transition as challenging. Academic experience was helpful in the transition as well.

“I went straight from college to... the apprenticeship so academically it wasn’t a big change, but I suppose I was working full time and doing a qualification at the same time. So, I do not think it was a dramatic change” Stephanie

However, some participants with less work experience found that the transition from previous schooling and part-time work experience into full-time work and work-based learning contained some challenges.

“It’s quite different. I thought that school day was quite long, but I didn’t realise until I started working full-time—umm you know how tiring it can be and while you’re training as well.” Margaret

The skills that were gained from the apprenticeships were wide-ranging, but also dependent on the apprenticeship program. The valued skills were often work-role specific, which included the ability to use the tools that the job required or learning the specific communication skills used in the work environment. The skills that they learned were deemed to be relevant and needed in their roles. Additionally, the participants reported that

their confidence had greatly increased during their apprenticeship, helping them face new challenges more readily.

The participant accounts demonstrated that the experience of apprenticeship had been rewarding and satisfactory. This was expected as earlier findings of MA programme satisfaction conducted by the Skills Development Scotland (2016) indicated that 87% modern apprentices were satisfied with their MA programmes. However, the participants in this study often felt that the schools are not providing the skills necessary for the world of work. Most helpful prior experience was usually from previous work experience or from HE/FE. Some of the participants would have experienced the changes in schools' increased connections to local employers during their schooling, but the ages of the participants did not appear to have an impact on the personal experiences about the usefulness of schooling during the MA.

4.3.2 Future plans and perceived opportunities

This last part of the results section focuses on the young people's views about their future prospects and their projected future careers. The findings from the interviews are reflected against the findings from official statistics about apprenticeships, and the data from the interviews is used to explore the certainty and concreteness of the young people's career plans.

Earlier studies into MAs indicated that 91% of those who completed their MA were in employment six months afterwards with two-thirds being employed in the workplace where they completed their apprenticeship (Skills Development Scotland, 2016). The participants in this study had also completed their MAs prior to the interviews and were either in employment or on higher-level apprenticeships at the time of the interviews, reflecting the outcomes of the earlier SDS study. The participants, with one exception, wanted to continue on their MA career paths and were primarily considering opportunities within that field.

Most of the participants had laid out a plan for their career at least in some detail. Some were planning some slight changes in location in future. Other were considering work in a slightly different kind of role that their qualifications would help them achieve.

All of the participants found their apprenticeships to be useful and the learned skills to be relevant for their work both now and in future. This was the case even for a participant who did not see themselves continuing in their MA field. That participant felt the MA had given them useful general skills and confidence to move on to a new target career path. The person

also had a plan for when they were intending to change careers, and what they were hoping to achieve prior to the change.

Other participants, who were intending to continue in their respective fields, also had a good idea where they saw themselves in the next five to ten years in their careers. For some, the target position or role within their companies involved further training and they were working to get the qualifications for their positions.

“it’s quite a clear path as well for what I’m doing. ... So, at the moment its... the only promotions are really working through these stages that take you to [job role].”

Mitchel

Some had already achieved the qualifications required for their target positions. In these cases, focus was on gaining further relevant experience to get into the positions that they wanted to reach. Alternatively, they were looking into the next opportune time to make the desired changes, whether that change was relocation or a different role.

“I can see me doing for the next one or two years but 5 years I want to move on to something... a bit more challenging.” Elizabeth

None of the participants in the study indicated that they wanted to stay in their current positions for the foreseeable future, but the participants were happy about their current position in their projected career paths. The participants felt that they had sufficient opportunities to achieve the changes they wanted in future. It was agreed that the apprenticeship had provided participants with the necessary tools to an access to the next step on their path to realising the goals.

4.4 Summary and discussion

The research questions are discussed one by one in this section using the data from the study outlined above as well as sources from the relevant literature. The findings for the research questions are summarised individually.

1) Who are the key influencers for young people in the choice for going into an apprenticeship?

The key influences for young people were not same in all cases. The variation in the important influencers is important to note, but most important influencers were careers advisors, family members, and peers. These three groups influenced the choices of young people in different ways. The participants also utilised online resources that affected their decision making. While they are not a person that influenced the decision-making, they are included here due to their significance in the decision-making process.

2) How do the key influencers affect the decision-making

The ways in which the key influencers affected the choices of young people was divided into three categories in the analysis. First, information provision; second, linking of opportunities; third, other support. The influencers could have affected the choices of the young people in more than one way, but each group of influencers offered predominantly one or two forms of support.

Despite the differences in people's backgrounds or approaches, the most commonly reported information sources about apprenticeships were schools—specifically the careers advisors in schools—as well as online resources that they often found through the careers advisors. The schools and careers advisors provided basic information about apprenticeships to the participants. While the information did not always provide a complete picture of the apprenticeship opportunities, it was nonetheless valuable to the participants. The careers advisors also linked opportunities and they were sought for advice and support in the application process. The participants felt that the schools encouraged attendance to HE and FE over apprenticeships, especially if one's grades were good, echoing the findings of Atkinson (2010) where the expectations were similarly built in to people's educational trajectories. The way information was conveyed in schools was important. The relative amounts of focus apprenticeships had compared to universities during career fairs signalled to the participants that schools valued HE/FE more than apprenticeships.

The second group of important influencers was parents and relatives. They appeared to have a multifaceted influence on young people's career choices, beyond simply providing information on what is a good idea for a future career. In fact, information provision was only a small part of their role. Instead, the attitudes that the parents had towards different choices appeared to have a strong effect on the young people's perception about the value and validity of their options. Additionally, parents and relatives were part of the participants' social network that was utilised to find opportunities in the labour market, including

apprenticeships. Compared to the schools and careers advisors, this social capital resource varied more between people. Even if same information is provided to young people, the parental response to the information could influence whether the young people find the opportunities valuable or not. Finally, parents also provided support in the application process. The support usually consisted of helping to draft a cover letter and a CV, which are important pieces in the applications.

In the current study, peers appeared to exert two types of influence towards the participants when it was sought: information and affirmation. Sometimes peers pointed out opportunities like ones that they had chosen to pursue, which in this instance meant pointing out other apprenticeship opportunities or pointing out online resources. Other times peers were consulted on whether an opportunity seemed like it was worth pursuing. Out of the three influencer groups, the importance of peers varied most for the participants in the study. However, peers overall were not the most important information source for the young people and other parts of their social networks fulfilled that role instead.

Finally, online resources were often the first place where young people sought information and opportunities on their own. Sometimes this was the starting point, at other times they had heard of an opportunity and used the online resources to seek more information about them. In both cases, the information they found online contributed to the basic information about apprenticeships they learned from school careers advisors. Online resources were also one of the primary sources of information about the specific job roles in different apprenticeships.

3) What means of influence have most affected the young people?

It is difficult to say what was the most influential form of support or information and this differed between participants. However, it was important that the mix of the three kinds of support outlined above was present for the participants. When it comes to information provision, school careers advisors and online resources were the most commonly named important sources. The sources of information influenced the young people's choices, both positively and negatively. As some participants reflected, if they had known of the range of apprenticeship options earlier, they would have applied to the opportunities earlier. This makes the easily and equally accessible information an important piece in the decision-process.

For the two other types of support it is more difficult to say what source of information was the most influential. Some participants consulted peers and parents about their options, others

focused just on consulting parents. However, career choice approval from the consulted groups—especially that of parents—appeared to be important and was evident in each participant’s case in the current study.

Combined, the resources outlined in this chapter provided a sufficiently comprehensive idea of the job roles and the apprenticeship structure to the young people that they did not feel like they were missing anything when applying for the apprenticeships or when they prepared for the interviews. The information about job roles and apprenticeships was often gained through sources that were accessible for all. However, other support during the application and decision-making process was more bound to the person’s social resources. Parents, relatives, and peers often played an important role when the participants were considering on acting on the information they had acquired. Additionally, sometimes the social resources in a form of contacts linked opportunities to the young people, in addition to the online resources that linked opportunities more widely to the participants.

4) what views do young people have about their apprenticeships and future prospects after the completion of their apprenticeship?

The apprenticeship experience was positive for all of the participants in the study, and there was a sense that the skills they had learned during their training were useful and directly applicable to the tasks that they did in their work. This is a good sign of effective training, and most participants completed their training faster than they were required. Both findings are a good sign of the effectiveness of the apprenticeship training, and—as discussed in the next chapter—they align well with the Scottish Government’s (2018) educational and skills policy goals.

The fast completion of the training programmes might have been due to the good levels of support that the young people experienced during their apprenticeship. The levels of support were attributed to be some of the main reasons why the apprenticeship experience was so positive and effective. The attention paid to the support of young people in apprenticeships appears to be desired and effective.

The participants found their prospects to be good. The opportunities were perceived to be present for both moving up to higher positions and into different roles later on. For some, this career ladder was highlighted as one of the most important features of apprenticeship. The opportunities for jobs were not thought to exist just in the central belt of Scotland either. In

fact, the local nature of many of the positions was a notable appealing factor in the apprenticeships and the jobs themselves for the young people.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

The findings of this dissertation highlight the broad appeal of the apprenticeships to the young people interviewed. It appears that the different programmes can cater to a variety of motivations to go into apprenticeships, and even only two different office-based apprenticeships demonstrate a great variety of reasons to choose an apprenticeship pathway. The study also highlights the variety of educational and work histories of the people who apply for apprenticeships. Some applied soon after schooling, others after working for a while post-schooling, and finally others went to apprenticeships after doing some HE or FE. The participants constituted both young women and men, and the current study did not find gendered patterns in the findings.

The influences that affected the young people's choices were similarly wide-ranging, but some key influencers emerged from the data. In terms of important information sources that provided the basis for making an informed choice, two sources of information appeared to be important most frequently. These were school careers advisors and different online resources, such as My World of Work and Apprenticeships.scot. These were not the only sources of information used by the young people as discussed in the earlier chapters, but they are important not only due to them being frequently used but also for their broad accessibility to people with different resources. However, the information gained in school—which formed the basic information that the young people built on—was often found to be limited and something that needed improving.

5.1 Policy implications

Thus, the aim to provide better information to young people, as indicated in the Scottish government (2018) 15 to 24-year old learner journey review, appears to be a good approach to address the weak links in knowledge about apprenticeships. Changes to careers advice and guidance are something that the young people themselves called for, especially better communication of the breadth of possibilities and their validity. If the opportunities are not talked about, the opportunities risk being thought to be 'too good to be true'. The resources that the government policy aims to bolster—careers advising and guidance, as well as more extensive work-based learning—could serve to address the prestige deficit that apprenticeships currently have compared to the HE and FE pathways to the world of work. This was identified by several young people in the study and it was thought that especially

some parents saw apprenticeships as a lesser option compared to HE and FE. This finding of a perceived prestige disparity is reflected in earlier research in the UK (Brockman & Laurie, 2016; Atkinson, 2010).

Other forms of influence were primarily sought from one's social resources, namely parents, relatives, and peers. These influences included approval from the social groups, as well as other forms of support such as practical assistance with CV and cover letters for the applications. These forms of influence were important for both the decision to apply and for the successfulness of the young people's applications to the apprenticeships. The forms of influence were drawn from the individual social networks, making them difficult to address through changes into the educational policy. Few of the participants thought that some other young adults did not consider applying to apprenticeships due to perceived limited range of opportunities. Parental disapproval and pressure to apply to HE or FE was thought to be an important factor here and ensuring that the parents have up-to-date information about the apprenticeships—possibly gained through their children's school—could be effective to address the issue.

The access to information about specific apprenticeships was found to be relatively easily accessible through online resources, but whether or not a person accessed them depended on knowing enough about apprenticeships to start with, and the social approval towards apprenticeships. Nonetheless, the online resources were found to be very helpful by the participants and something that could be accessed after schooling. It appears that investment in the online resources is worth the cost.

There is a need to discuss the apprenticeship image problem. This was a factor in many participants' decision-making or the reason they did not consider the apprenticeships earlier on in their lives as apprenticeships were thought to only be for those interested in the manual labour fields. Addressing this could especially help to attract young adults into the office-based MA programmes. While this perception was in many instances deemed to be changing by those that had some knowledge of the schooling and the careers information provided to young people today, more work is needed to address the issue.

5.2 Research contribution

This is the area in which this dissertation primarily contributes to the structure vs. agency debate in the youth studies literature. The findings suggest that the young people sometimes

had strong personal preferences on what they wanted from their work and sought to inform themselves about the different options available to them. This resembles what Atkinson (2010) found in his study on the young people's influences and self-reflexivity when applying to HE. The interviews did not explicitly indicate that the participants were facing the narrative that they were not good enough for universities contrary to some of Atkinson's cases. Instead, the study suggests that young adults were weighing between several options and sought the option that matched their preferences. However, the social and societal factors found influencing the choices of the young people in the Atkinson study were similar in the current study. The social influences were most notable in the social approval from parents and peers as well as in the support provided to the young people by the approving parents and peers. Some of the preferences—such as preference towards book learning—could be influenced by the family's resources and priorities as Atkinson (2010) suggests, but the current study did not focus on this.

5.3 Limitations and further research

While this dissertation provides a detailed view of the different influences that affected young people's choices to go into an apprenticeship, it can only provide a limited picture. The participating young people came from specific office-based apprenticeships and work at a company that might not provide a generalisable environment for other cases, even in the same types of jobs. Additionally, this dissertation is focused on the young people's side of the influence equation. It would be important to better understand the aims of the important influencers as well and this is something that further research should address. Finally, the current study is limited by its methodology. While the design utilised in the current study is a good way to obtain a detailed snapshot of the examined case, it is not without its issues. The participants in this study had just recently finished their MAs, and therefore the reflection about their decision-making before applying for the MAs is necessarily retrospective. A longitudinal design, possibly combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies, where participants were followed from the time of their application to the completion of the apprenticeships would not have this weakness. However, that design was not feasible for the current dissertation.

Further research should be expanded to a larger and more diverse sample of participants to get a better idea of not only of the factors affecting those who want office-based apprentices in specific fields, but more broadly across different sectors of the economy. The important

information affecting choices could be very different in these instances. Additionally, future research should aim to get a better understanding of the influencers' aims and ways of influencing the young people's career choices. The researcher intends to further explore the key influences of the young people's decision making in his PhD research.

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Appendix I

The interview data matrix sample

Participant	Theme 1: Key influencers	Theme 2: Important forms of influence
Margaret	<p>Parents:</p> <p><i>“I suppose I was quite lucky in the fact that I had erm quite good family support ... They didn’t kind of push me down a certain path. Err... and were quite open to different options that were out there.”</i></p> <p>School:</p> <p><i>“In terms of when I was coming up to leaving school, I got the impression that maybe if you had a certain level of education that you were almost expected to go to university.”</i></p> <p><i>“When I was at school it was my careers advisor on year six I think, and she’d mentioned that [apprenticeship] as a possibility. Obviously, I didn’t know about this apprenticeship at the time, but she mentioned it and she also kind of helped me draw out what things I was wanting from a job.”</i></p> <p>Peers:</p> <p><i>“friends were quite supportive.”</i></p>	<p>Opportunity links:</p> <p><i>“It was my mom who found this job online and was look ‘Oh, have you seen this ’”</i></p> <p>Information:</p> <p><i>“I’ve always known that apprenticeships are around”</i></p> <p><i>“towards the end of school, I started to see people going into different kinds of apprenticeships and not just the kind of traditional ones.”</i></p> <p>Other support:</p> <p><i>“They [parents] weren’t bothered so long as it was, you know, it was going to be a good job for me or I was going to be happy”</i></p>
Jack	<p>School</p> <p><i>“In school it would have been careers advisors and guidance counsellors”</i></p> <p><i>“to be honest I didn’t really, I didn’t really pick up that much from my careers advisor about apprenticeships.”</i></p> <p>Family networks</p>	<p>Theme 2: Important forms of influence</p> <p>Opportunity links</p> <p><i>“she [father’s friend] got in contact with me and said listen, there’s some apprenticeship vacancies.”</i></p> <p>Information</p> <p><i>“Main source of information was career’s advisor and guidance counsellors, internet and sort of stuff like that.”</i></p>

	<i>“one of my dad’s friends. Who was actually an intern here. She said to me that I should consider it.”</i>	
Catherine	<p>Theme 1: Key influencers</p> <p>School</p> <p><i>“My careers advisor at school.”</i></p> <p>Parents</p> <p><i>““Also my parents chose the apprenticeship route themselves so I got all the information I needed.”</i></p> <p>Online</p> <p><i>“I suppose I was looking on SDSs website for apprenticeships and apprenticeships.scot.”</i></p>	<p>Theme 2: Important forms of influence</p> <p>Information</p> <p><i>School: “Umm just where to find apprenticeships, where to look for them, little bit about them.”</i></p> <p><i>“Also my parents chose the apprenticeship route themselves so I got all the information I needed.”</i></p> <p>Application assistance</p> <p><i>“when I was looking at apprenticeships they assisted me as well.”</i></p>

Participant	Theme 3: Forms of support	Theme 4: Future opportunities
Margaret	<i>“I remember feeling like everyone was quite supportive of my choice to do it... There wasn’t anything specific that I can remember. And my family kind of helped me erm... when I applied. Like they read over what I’d written and stuff so that I hadn’t missed anything.”</i>	<p><i>“I have just started the next part of the training. I think because there’s like a 5-year plan at the moment I’m sticking with that.”</i></p> <p><i>“the skills I’m getting from it are quite transferable, so I can take it to erm other kinds of work”</i></p>
Jack	<i>“I think I was pretty well supported. My mom and dad were really behind the idea. Erm... I think it was pretty okay.”</i>	<i>“I think it was vital to get in to secure my position that I’ve got just now. The modern apprenticeship. I think if I didn’t have that qualification I wouldn’t be able to do what I do just now. So, no I think it has been really beneficial and it has opened a lot of doors and even being in this position you can get experience here, like further up the ladder if you want to. Erm, but no, I think it has opened a lot of doors for me. A lot of jobs I couldn’t have applied for before. That I can now.”</i>

Catherine	Theme 3: forms of support <i>Parents: “Just how... explaining things and if there was parts of the applications I did not understand.”</i>	Theme 4: Future opportunities <i>“I suppose yeah there is room for to move up within the business, umm to be a manager. But I’m quite happy in the level that I’m at now. And could be for a few years to come.”</i>
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Participant	Theme 5: Apprenticeship experience	Theme 6: Reasons for choosing apprenticeship pathway
Margaret	<p><i>“Quite different to school. I think it’s a completely different style of learning to when you’re at school.”</i></p> <p><i>“And also going to like full-time employment as well and training at the same time you know. It’s quite different.”</i></p> <p><i>“I thought that school day was quite long, but I didn’t realise—until I started working full-time—umm you know how tiring it can be and while you’re training as well. But you know, I like it. I’ve gotten used to the style of working now, I do like it.”</i></p>	<p>Location</p> <p><i>“a big thing that made me choose an apprenticeship was that... I was going to be local.”</i></p> <p>Qualification</p> <p><i>“I think the fact that I’m getting some kind of qualification out of it as well was important for me. Erm... yeah, because there’s always, you’re always looking out for what’s next.”</i></p> <p>Helping people</p> <p><i>“I knew I was good at speaking to people and err I wanted a job that could help people, but I didn’t want anything that was kind of hands on.”</i></p> <p>Earn and learn</p> <p><i>“I’m still learning but I’m doing a job as well so it just fitted what I wanted.”</i></p>
Jack	<p><i>“It’s an office atmosphere. You need to be err... changes in language used and stuff like that. ... I think I grasped it quite quickly. But no, I enjoyed the challenge of adapting to my new workplace.”</i></p>	<p>Work environment</p> <p><i>“I’d always kind of been keen to work in an office. Just the kind of environment.”</i></p> <p><i>“I disliked the school environment and I just always preferred a working environment.”</i></p> <p>Money</p> <p><i>“Erm, it’s just money to be honest.”</i></p> <p>Qualification</p>

		<i>"I knew I wanted to work, and I thought I could work and, in an apprenticeship, I could get a qualification at the same time."</i>
Catherine	<p>Theme 5: Apprenticeship experience</p> <p><i>"I left school after my exams and started in [company] within a few weeks afterwards. Umm the apprenticeship wasn't too bad. A bit challenging at times but the support [company] gave allowed me to complete it."</i></p>	<p>Theme 6: Reasons for choosing apprenticeship pathway</p> <p>Preferred alternative</p> <p><i>"I knew I didn't want to go to college or university, so I explored the apprenticeship route and just applied to many apprenticeships"</i></p> <p>Learning style</p> <p><i>"just learning on the job. It would be my preferred style of learning I guess. Learning while doing it."</i></p>

Participant	Theme 7: Skills	Theme 8: Hesitations
Margaret	<p>Confidence</p> <p><i>"I've always been quite good at communicating but I think since I've started here I've really built my confidence a lot."</i></p> <p>Communication</p> <p><i>"...communication in general and I wouldn't give a second thought to kind of answer the phone and not know who's on the other end whereas before I was a bit reluctant to do that"</i></p>	<p><i>"it wasn't like I hesitated to do it."</i></p> <p><i>"I think before ... if someone had mentioned doing an apprenticeship but hadn't said, you know, what kind of apprenticeship, I might have been a bit hesitant thinking... I don't know, probably just going back to that kind of construction and not really knowing what it was."</i></p>
Jack	<p>Confidence</p> <p><i>"yeah, it's been useful [training] erm, and generally confidence as well, it's been boosted."</i></p> <p><i>"The amount of confidence I've gained from this. I was really shy before but like now this has been a big boost of confidence for me."</i></p>	<p><i>"There wasn't really any reason why I wouldn't have done it. Erm, maybe confidence but nah. I think it was pretty okay."</i></p>

	<p>Data analysis</p> <p><i>“Data analysis as well. I got to do data analysis.”</i></p> <p>Events management</p> <p><i>“really enjoyed he events stuff, the events module. I’ve done quite a lot of those since then because I’ve become a permanent.”</i></p>	
Catherine	<p>Theme 7: Skills</p> <p>Confidence</p> <p><i>“definitely more confidence and within the workplace.”</i></p> <p>Communication</p> <p><i>“knowing how to do my job now has provided me with essential skills ... Definitely communication skills”</i></p>	<p>Theme 8: Hesitations</p> <p><i>“No, everything was clear. I got the information I needed and the job description was good.”</i></p>

Appendix II

Interview schedule for young person interviews

I just want to remind you of few things before we start with the interview.

First, your name and the name of the apprenticeship setting will be confidential. Second, while I am partly funded by SDS this interview is for my own dissertation rather than to assess the apprenticeships on behalf of SDS, and finally, some quotations may be presented anonymised alongside quotations from other interviewees in the final dissertation.

Go through the consent form.

Do you have any questions about the study, or the information sheet, or anything else before we start?

Views about apprenticeships and doing an apprenticeship:

- So, you're currently doing an apprenticeship or have recently completed one. I would just like to start with some of your views and opinions about apprenticeships.
 - What is your apprenticeship on?
 - What field of work?
 - What position is the training for?
 - How have you found the apprenticeship so far?
 - Has it been a big change from schooling, is it enjoyable, maybe challenging?
 - Did schooling prepare you for the challenges in apprenticeship?
 - What are your thoughts about the skills that the apprenticeship has provided you with so far?
 - Useful, career specific skills maybe?
 - Soft skills, i.e. working with others, communication skills
 - Do you know others who have chosen to go into apprenticeships?

Choice to go into an apprenticeship:

- As you know from the information sheet, I am interested in how you ended up choosing to go and do an apprenticeship, so I have a few questions related to this.
 - First, how long you have you been interested into the field of work that you're now completing your apprenticeship on?
 - Is there anything specific that interested you in the field?
 - The methods that the work is done, something about the work itself that especially interested you?
 - When is the first time that you became aware of the option for doing an apprenticeship?
 - Where did you first learn about the options? School, family, friends?
 - When did you first start considering an apprenticeship as an option for yourself?
 - Thinking back to when you were making the choice of whether or not to go into an apprenticeship, what were your main reasons for choosing it?
 - Think of some possible reasons and follow-up questions related to them.
 - The profession appealed to me

- Anything specific about the profession? Status, the way it is conducted, tools that are being used?
 - Didn't like book learning
 - The hands-on approach was appealing, has the way of learning to practice your craft turned out to be what you expected?
 - Wanted to earn money/ learn a trade faster
 - Job concerns and wanting to earn money
 - Friends went into apprenticeships
 - Parents recommended it
- Were there any reasons that you thought it might not be appealing to you or did you have any reservations about doing an apprenticeship?
 - Thought that it might not work out?
 - Too different from what you have done before?

Information about apprenticeship:

- You've mentioned some of your reasons for choosing an apprenticeship. I'd like to take a slightly different angle into the decision-making process that you went through and discuss the sources of information you had
 - Could you tell me what kinds of information about apprenticeships you learned from school?
 - How about from friends, parents or maybe relatives?
 - Did you seek out the information or did you receive it without really looking for it?
 - Anyone else? From internet, places like SDS?
 - Do you think the information you got from these people affected your choice?
 - Was there any type of information about apprenticeships that you thought was most appealing to you when making the decision?
 - Was there any kind of information or assistance that you would have liked to have, but did not have at the time?

Future plans:

- We are almost finished here, I just have a couple of questions about your plans and goals for future
 - Do you want to continue in the same field of work that you're currently learning in future?
 - Maybe in the next 5 and 10 years. Get an idea about the detail and certainty of their biographies.
 - How do you feel about the opportunities that you have in your field?
 - In Scotland? Beyond Scotland, e.g. England, Wales, Northern Ireland....Europe, beyond Europe?
- **Is there anything else you would like to add that I may have missed in my questions?**
 - What would you like to pass onto SDS? (I'm not doing this for SDS, but as they are funding my dissertation I will send them a summary when I finish). Anything that could be organised better/more efficiently?

Appendix III



College of Social
Sciences

Plain Language Statement

Study title: Implementation of 'Developing the Young Workforce' lifelong learning policy apprenticeships in workplace settings: key influencers/actors for young people

Researcher: Petri Simonen

Contact email: 2033998s@student.gla.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr. Oscar Odena

This research is undertaken as part of Public Policy Research, MRes degree.

Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to investigate the implementation of apprenticeship programmes. The study is interested in finding out how young adults end up choosing to go to apprenticeship programmes. This involves finding out the reasons for choosing an apprenticeship and finding out the different factors and people that influenced the choice.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to take part in the study as you are a young adult (16-25 years old) and you are in an apprenticeship programme that the study is interested in.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Your choice to participate or not will not have an effect on your apprenticeship in any way.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part in the study, you will be interviewed by the researcher about the topic of the study. The interview should last between 30 and 45 minutes. The researcher would like to record the interview for transcribing purposes. After the interview there will be time to discuss the interview topic and any other questions that you might have about the research. In total, the interview and post-interview discussions are estimated to take between 45 and 60 minutes.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and no identifiable information will be shared to any organisations or individuals outside the researcher and their supervisor. You will be identified by an ID number. Any information about you will have your name and other details that could be used to identify you removed so that you cannot be recognised from it.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this study will be used to write a dissertation for MRes Public Policy Research degree. If you are interested learning about the findings of the study, you can request information to be sent to you either in person or by sending an email to researcher using the address supplied in the 'Contact for Further Information' section. The results of the study should be ready by the end of August 2018. You will not be identified in any report that is made on the basis of this data. The research data will be destroyed after the study has been finished.

Who has reviewed the study?

The project has been reviewed by the School of Education Ethics Forum.

Contact for Further Information

If you wish to ask for further information, please contact the researcher using the following email address:

2033998s@student.gla.ac.uk

Dr. Oscar Odena: Oscar.Odena@glasgow.ac.uk

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact the School of Education Ethics Officer [Dr. Kara Makara Fuller](mailto:Dr.Kara.Makara.Fuller@glasgow.ac.uk) email: Kara.MakaraFuller@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix IV



University
of Glasgow
College of Social
Sciences

Consent Form

Title of Project: Implementation of 'Developing the Young Workforce' lifelong learning policy apprenticeships in workplace settings: key influencers/actors for young people

Name of Researcher: Petri Simonen

Supervisor: Dr. Oscar Odena

- I confirm that I have read and understood the Plain Language Statement/Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
- I consent to interviews being audio-recorded.
- I understand that I can ask to see the interview transcripts of my interview
- I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonym.

I agree to take part in this research study

I do not agree to take part in this research study

Signatures

Name of Participant Signature

Date

Name of Researcher Signature

Date