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Title: SOCIAL TOURISM AND SELF-EFFICACY

Subtitle: Exploring links between tourism participation, job-seeking and unemployment

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Abstract: Social tourism is assumed to provide important psychological benefits for economically and socially disadvantaged populations. This study examines empirically whether these individual benefits are associated with socioeconomic benefits to society by focusing on unemployed individuals. Psychological benefits are addressed in terms of self-efficacy, and socioeconomic benefits, in terms of job-search behaviour. Findings from mixed-methods data reveal that holidays create enabling environments, which bring about positive changes in participants' self-efficacy, contributing to positive effects on their job-search behaviour. Positive effects are also identified with regard to behaviours towards alternative paths to employment, such as volunteering. Given that these behavioural changes comprise major determinants of reemployment, it is suggested that social tourism may hold potential for incorporation into existing unemployment policies.

Keywords: self-efficacy; job-seeking; social tourism; unemployment policy; mixed methods

1. INTRODUCTION

Social tourism research to date has tended to focus on the individual benefits arising from the participation in holiday tourism of economically and socially disadvantaged populations (e.g. Smith & Hughes, 1999; McCabe & Johnson, 2013). This population group falls into Haukeland's (1990) 'Type C Non-Travellers', encompassing those who *"are constrained from*

travelling because they are placed in an unsatisfactory social situation (e.g. lack of economic means, health resources, personal freedom, etc.)" (p. 179). Therefore, there is an underlying assumption that social tourism is a positive activity, part of the 'social' good, reducing inequalities amongst different populations. However, there are equivocal interpretations on the outcomes of tourism in different country contexts. In Belgium and Spain, for instance, where social tourism has been long practiced and forms part of social policy (McCabe, Minnaert, & Diekmann [eds], 2011), the wider benefits are recognised, such as its contribution to the generation of employment and to the economic sustainability of host communities that suffer from seasonality (European Commission, 2010). But in other countries, such as the UK and the USA, where social tourism is not publicly adopted, its wider socioeconomic benefits have yet to be fully acknowledged (Minnaert, Maitland, & Miller, 2009). Indicative of this, is that successive UK governments have seen social tourism as a form of welfare, and a burden on taxpayers (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Tourism, 2011).

Yet research on social tourism for low-income groups has been consistent in asserting that cost-effective social tourism programmes can yield positive psychological effects on participants and their families. Furthermore, research, identifies that these effects, such as increases in family and social capital (e.g. Minnaert et al., 2009), self-esteem (e.g. Minnaert, Stacey, Quinn, & Griffin, 2010), quality of life and subjective well-being (SWB) (e.g. McCabe & Johnson, 2013), can lead to changes in attitudes and behaviours, which could be linked to wider societal benefits. For example, enhanced psychological health can reduce public healthcare costs, which, together with improved family relations can contribute to the reduction of anti-social and other criminal behaviours, and boost one's chances of securing employment (O'Connell, Boat, & Warner, 2009). However, the evidence, concerning direct linkages between individual and wider socioeconomic benefits accruing from social tourism participation, remains weak, which has limited the expansion of public support for social tourism in many countries.

The aim of this paper is to investigate linkages between potential psychological benefits of social tourism participation and socioeconomic benefits. In doing so the study contributes to knowledge on the multidimensional benefits of tourism, and to debates on the potential inclusion of social tourism in government policy agendas. The study focuses on unemployed individuals who were financially supported in taking a holiday break by the independent UK charity, the Family Holiday Association. Psychological benefits were examined through self-efficacy beliefs (SE), and socioeconomic benefits through job-search behaviour (JSB). These

two constructs have not previously been studied within the context of tourism. However, SE is conceptually linked to constructs that have been found to be positively influenced by tourism participation, such as self-esteem (Minnaert et al., 2010) and SWB (McCabe & Johnson, 2013). Indeed, all three constructs have been related to positive psychology (Maddux, 2002). Self-efficacy, in turn, has been found to have positive effects on peoples' JSB (e.g. Liu, Huang, & Wang, 2014).

The focus on SE and JSB is crucial as they concern aspects of human cognition and behaviour, which are under-researched in social tourism studies. Whilst it has been argued that tourism can lead to transformation and self-development (e.g. White & White, 2004), few studies have applied psychological measures to understand the specific ways that tourism can impact on psychological states. SE comprises a major determinant of human motivation and functioning (Bandura, 1997), while JSB is a key antecedent of reemployment (Wanberg, Hough, & Song, 2002). The focus on unemployed individuals is critical for two main reasons: first, it concerns a large and vulnerable sub-group of the wider low-income population; and second, it addresses a current socioeconomic problem of high unemployment across Europe (Eurostat, 2016). In addition, and given that participants were adults with at least one dependent child, and, in the majority, were long-term unemployed (over 12 months) (Begum, 2004), the study also addresses the issue of prolonged unemployment in the UK (Office for National Statistics [ONS], 2016), a factor which can have negative effects on the developmental trajectories of children, and their future life chances, including employment (D'Addio, 2007). Thus understanding key antecedents of reemployment does not only have an impact on job-seekers, but also on wider social issues relating to the future of their children, too (e.g. potentially breaking future unemployment cycles).

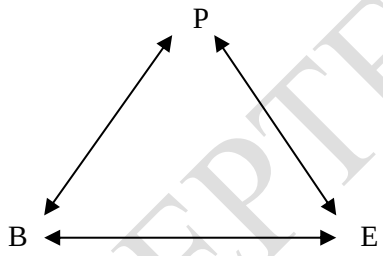
2. SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS

The idea of SE has roots in philosophy and psychology (Gecas, 1989), but was first conceptualised in White's (1959) theory of effectance motivation. White (1959, p. 329), asserted *"the existence of an intrinsic motivation (effectance motive), which develops gradually through prolonged transactions with the environment"* and described the experience produced as *"a feeling of efficacy or competence."* Bandura (1977) later formalised this conceptualisation, defining SE as *"people's beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over events that affect their lives"* (1989, p. 1175). Thus, SE can be regarded as "*an optimistic*

and self-confident view of one's capability to deal with certain life stressors" (Scholz, Dona, Sud, & Schwarzer, 2002, p. 242).

The concept of SE is based on social cognitive theory's postulate that a person operates within an interdependent causal structure, which Bandura (1986, 1997) calls 'triadic reciprocal causation'. Thus, "*interpersonal factors (cognitive, affective, and biological events); behaviour; and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another bidirectionally"* (Bandura, 1997, p. 6) (Figure 1). In this structure, these influences are not of equal strength, and their relative importance is different under different circumstances (Bandura, 2012).

Figure 1 Reciprocal causation



Source: Bandura, A. (1997).

Note: B=behaviour; P=internal personal factors; and E=external environment

According to social cognitive theory, an individual's SE, whether it is accurate or faulty, is based on some principal sources of information: enactive mastery experiences; vicarious experiences of observing others performances; verbal persuasion and allied types of social influences; physiological and emotional states, which help them judge their capabilities and vulnerabilities; and changing environmental conditions (Bandura, 1986). Moreover, the impact of available information on efficacy beliefs depends on how the individual cognitively processes this information into SE judgements (Bandura, 1997). For example, the extent to which enactive mastery experiences alter perceived efficacy during an activity will depend on several factors, such as knowledge gained from past experience (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), physical and emotional states, and situational circumstances (Bandura, 1977). Once SE information is interpreted, SE beliefs are formed, which contribute to the quality of human functioning (Bandura, 1997).

SE has mainly been studied as a task-specific competence belief or specific self-efficacy (SSE), applying Bandura's (1977) early conceptualisation. More recently, generalised self-efficacy (GSE) has been developed as an extension of SSE and has seen increasing adoption in psychological research (Scherbaum, Cohen-Charash, & Kern, 2006). Personality psychologists have conceived SE as a generalised trait that represents "*one's belief or perception in his/her overall ability or competence"* (Eden, 2001, p. 75). In other words, and as Eden & Kinnar (1991, pp. 771-772) assert, "*GSE is a cognition about general self-competence, whereas SSE is a cognition about specific performance."*

2.1 Self-efficacy, job search behaviour and unemployment

While SE is not the sole determinant of human motivation and action, it has been argued to be a more important determinant of behavioural changes than other mechanisms (e.g. self-esteem) through which personal agency is exercised (Bandura, 1997). Due to its central role in human motivation and functioning, SE has become one of the most widely studied variables in several fields, such as social psychology, public health, education, and organisational research (Schwarzer [ed], 2014).

Similarly, SE has been of special interest in psychological studies on unemployment (e.g. Eden & Aviram, 1993; Vinokur & Schul, 2002). SE is argued to be directly linked to unemployment, because individuals derive a major proportion of their SE from work, the lack of which, weakens SE (Warr, 1987, 2007). Moreover, circumstances that are caused or strengthened by unemployment, such as financial hardship, poor living conditions, dysfunctional family relations, and social isolation, contribute to a further decline in unemployed individuals' psychological health, including SE (Jahoda, 1982; Bandura, 1997). Indeed, low-levels of SE can have dramatic implications for people's lives as they prohibit normal everyday functioning. Furthermore, individuals with low SE do not believe that they are capable of overcoming life difficulties, and as a result, are less motivated to take positive change actions (Bandura, 2012).

For unemployed individuals a crucial first step towards positive life changes is to search for and find work. Although securing employment depends on several factors, many of which are out of the individual's control (e.g. economic recession), JSB is an important determinant of reemployment (Wanberg et al., 2002). JSB refers to *"a purposive, volitional pattern of action that begins with the identification and commitment to pursuing an employment goal […]*

During job search, individuals generally undertake a variety of activities and use a variety of personal resources (e.g. time, effort social resources) for the purpose of obtaining employment" (Kanfer, Wanberg, & Kantrowitz, 2001, p. 838). However, job-search is generally a stressful and challenging process, containing discouragement and frustration. Although people show some variability with regard to JSB, there is a consensus that when unemployment and the job-search process extend over time, mental and physical energy, as well as self-confidence reduce further (van Dam & Menting, 2012). Consequently, people tend to become discouraged, spend less time looking for work, and often withdraw, at least temporarily, from the labour-market (Krueger & Mueller, 2011).

Given that JSB is a self-regulatory process that refers to a pattern of thinking and affect, several variables (e.g. psychological, sociodemographic, situational, etc.) can influence this process (Wanberg, Zhu, & van Hooft, 2010). Among these variables, SE has a principal role. Higher levels of SE have been found to be positively associated with job-search motivation (Vinokur & Schul, 2002) and job-search intensity (Wanberg, 2012). It is for this reason that numerous psychology studies on job-search and reemployment have focused on training programmes specifically designed to boost unemployed individuals' SE (Liu, Huang, & Wang, 2014).

2.2 Linking social tourism, self-efficacy, and job-search behaviour

Social tourism refers to the inclusion of economically and socially disadvantaged groups in holiday tourism through various forms of support of a well-defined social nature (McCabe et al., 2011). Social tourism has been found to hold important benefits, both for individual participants, and the host-communities at destinations. With regards to the former, several studies have linked social tourism to positive psychological effects for social tourists (e.g. McCabe & Johnson, 2013). In terms of the latter, social tourism is considered to be an efficient stimulus to the tourism economy, since it largely consists of domestic tourism activity in the low-season, and therefore extends employment in destinations, boosts hotel occupancy, and provides tax revenue (McCabe et al., 2011).

The proposed link between social tourism and psychological benefits is grounded in the notion that people who benefit from social tourism are suffering numerous disadvantages, such as low income, disabilities, mental and physical health issues, and this is certainly the case in some studies. For example, McCabe and Johnson found that self-reported levels of subjective wellbeing amongst their subjects were well below the UK national average (2013). However,

the variety of systems of, and therefore criteria for support for, social tourism in different countries necessitates a note of caution in making generalisations about the psychological effects, as some systems do not award support on the basis of disadvantage. Additionally, there is very limited evidence on both the personal and destination effects of social tourism, and no extant research connecting tourism participation with self-efficacy, with the exception of one study from an educational context, showing that participants in student teaching abroad reported an increase in their SE (Quezada, 2004). However, despite the absence of any strong empirical evidence, there are good reasons to believe that this relationship may exist, and more specifically that a holiday experience could affect SE. These reasons stem from the close relationship between SE and specific psychological benefits that can accrue from tourism participation.

There is a plethora of evidence both in the wider tourism, and social tourism literature, that tourism participation potentially provides several psychological benefits for tourists, in both affective and cognitive effects. Holiday-taking, as a break from the constraints of everyday life, contributes to stress mitigation, relaxation, and restoration (e.g. Pearce, 2005), while simultaneously, comprises a cognitive experience that widens horizons and can result in self-development (e.g. White & White, 2004). Such cognitive changes are the result of learning processes embedded in the holiday experience (Minnaert et al., 2009).

Indeed, the main characteristics of the tourism experience, such as the physical displacement of people from their normal surroundings (Ryan, 2002), and the provision of novel situations, can give tourists the chance for exploration; an important requirement for learning (Jarvis, 2006). Given that SE is a cognitive construct with a strong affective component, and that cognitive changes are long known to result from a process of learning, holiday-taking could positively influence tourists' SE (Gibson, 2004). As Bandura (1997, p. 147) explains, "*a change in environmental setting can instantly alter what preoccupies one's thinking."* In the case of economically and socially disadvantaged populations, such as unemployed individuals, living in deprived environments, a new and relaxing environment could be particularly influential in terms of cognitive changes (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), such as SE increases. Moreover, leisure activities, like tourism participation, share similar psychological benefits with employment; so could benefit unemployed individuals (Glyptis, 1989; Goodman, Geiger, & Wolf, 2016).

This hypothesis is further strengthened by evidence from social tourism research; in that particular psychological benefits of tourism for low-income groups, such as increases in SWB (McCabe & Johnson, 2013) and self-esteem (Minnaert et al., 2010), are closely related to SE. Indeed, all three constructs have been related to positive psychology and share conceptual similarities, such as a central affective component (Maddux, 2002). Affective states play a dual role in SE, as they are both sources of SE information, and major activating processes of this information (Bandura, 1997). Moreover, self-esteem and SE have a common component, that is, self-confidence (as cited in Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach, & Rosenberg, 1995), and have been found to influence each other (e.g. Eden & Aviram, 1993). With regards to potential effects of social tourism on unemployed individuals' JSB, given that social tourism participation is not directly related to employment, no direct relationship is expected. However, social tourism has been found to positively influence career decisions (Minnaert et al., 2009). In a similar vein, it has been argued that holiday-taking may *"enable the unemployed to be 'inverted', to adopt new personas and behave in different ways"* (Smith & Hughes, 1999, p. 126). Although different behaviours may include JSB, any effects of social tourism on unemployed people's JSB are more likely to be indirect, through positive psychological effects (e.g. SE increases).

These potential direct and indirect linkages between social tourism, SE and JSB, are examined in the current study, which asks three main questions: 'To what extent does social tourism participation affect unemployed individuals' SE?'; 'To what extent do changes in unemployed individuals' SE affect their JSB?'; and 'How are the effects on unemployed individuals' SE and JSB manifested?'

3. METHODOLOGY

A classic mixed-methods approach was utilised, combining surveys and semi-structured interviews, in which both methods of data collection were given equal status (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Data were collected in three different time points, over a seven month period, between August 2011 and February 2012. However, the two data sets were analysed in parallel, which is a widely used analytic strategy in mixed-methods research, and has been associated with triangulation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The quantitative phase aimed to examine any pre- and post-holiday changes in participants' SE, and any effects of changes on JSB. SE was studied as general self-efficacy (GSE) and job-finding self-efficacy (JFSE), whereas JSB was examined as job-seeking activity (JSA); thus, measured in terms of intensity.

The aims of the qualitative phase were: to investigate if SE and JSB changes were attributable to the holiday; how these effects were manifested; and whether they extended over time.

The study was conducted in Great Britain with the support of the Family Holiday Association, a national charity and major provider of social tourism in the UK. Participants were unemployed adults, who went on a holiday-break with financial support from the charity. The selected participants had not been on a holiday for the past four years; they were on a low-income; have children living at home, and were between 18-50 years of age. Hence, for this study's purpose, disadvantage is addressed in terms of unemployment, and its negative socioeconomic consequences (e.g. low-income and social exclusion). The first three selection criteria were set by the Family Holiday Association and apply to all people seeking the charity's support. The fourth criterion was set by the researchers with the aim to identify adults in their most active working years; thus, more likely to be active job-seekers. Eligible individuals were identified from the charity's database, through purposive sampling; a strategy that is appropriate when studying rare and/or marginalised populations (Henry, 1990).

3.1 Quantitative phase

The quantitative phase utilised a pre- and post-test non-experimental design with data being collected through a two-stage survey, once before and once after the holiday. While it is acknowledged that this design is limited by the absence of a control group, the difficulty in identifying individuals who shared the same sociodemographic characteristics and eligibility criteria with the 'experimental' group meant that the use of a control group was not feasible (Blundell & Costa Dias, 2000). However, this limitation mainly applies to single-method research designs and can be counterbalanced through a qualitative study phase (Robson, 2002).

Before launching the survey, a pre-test was conducted, which served as a proxy pilot study, and resulted in recommendations for slight wording modifications (from formal to more everyday language) (Tables 2 & 3). The use of existing scale measures, and the conduct of pre-test, aimed to ensure validity and reliability. After the pre-testing, potential participants were sent a letter inviting them to participate in a self-administered mail questionnaire survey. However, due to poor responses, a multi-mode strategy was adopted, including telephone surveys, to increase participation. In total, 263 individuals were contacted before the holiday, and 73 completed the survey (28% response rate). Respondents were contacted again after the holiday and were asked to complete a post-holiday survey within two months; a time-frame

that has been used in several psychology studies on SE and JSB (e.g. Eden & Aviram, 1993). This relatively long time-interval was expected to eliminate any effects of transient mood (Morris, 2012), which could have affected the results. In total 57 post-holiday surveys were completed, giving a 78% response rate (22% of the original sample).

While this is a relatively small sample size, it is important to note that this is fairly common in research on rare/or marginalised populations, as access to these groups is usually more problematic compared to typical survey populations (Rothbart, Fine, & Sudman, 1982). Furthermore, widely-cited studies on SE and job-seeking, among unemployed people have had relatively small sample sizes (e.g. Kanfer & Hulin, 1985 [*N*=35]; Eden & Aviram, 1993 [*N*=66]). However, it is acknowledged that low response rates could bias the sample and restrict the external validity or generalisability of the findings. Although this is less problematic in mixed-method research, and having a low response rate does not necessarily translate to a large non-response error (Krosnick, 1999), the possibility of non-response bias was tested through early-late responses.

The characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1. Overall, respondents' profiling variables are balanced throughout the study. The prevalence of females can be attributed to the sampling frame (65.4% women), which can lead to the assumption, that, perhaps, women are more likely to apply for financially supported holidays by charitable bodies. Furthermore, participants, and their families, went on a similar type of holiday (e.g. caravan holidays) at British seaside resorts with similar destination attributes (e.g. Devon Cliffs, Norfolk, and Skegness). Most of them (70.2%) had a short-break between three and four nights, while the rest (29.8%), undertook longer, seven night, holidays.

Table 1. Respondents' background characteristics

		Pre-holiday survey		**Post-holiday survey**		**Interviews**	
Variables	**Values**	**Freq.**	**%**	**Freq.**	**%**	**Freq.**	**%**
Gender	Male	18	25.4	16	28.1	5	38.5
	Female	53	74.6	41	71.9	8	61.5
Age	18-29	26	36.6	20	35.1	3	23.1
	30 and over	45	63.4	37	64.9	10	76.9
Unemployment length[a]	Short-term	8	11.3	6	10.5	1	7.7
	Long-term	63	88.7	51	89.5	12	92.3
Education[b]	Lower	54	76.0	43	75.4	7	53.8
	Higher	17	24.0	14	24.6	6	46.2

Last occupation[c]	Blue-collar	64	90.0	52	91.2	11	84.6
	White-collar	7	10.0	5	8.8	2	15.4
Restrictions to work[d]	None	18	25.4	13	22.8	3	23.1
	Restrictions	53	74.6	44	77.2	10	76.9

Note: the definitions below are based on UK/European standards.
a. Short-term: up to 12 months, and long-term: over 12 months; b. Lower education refers to compulsory education in the UK (up to the GCSE), while higher education, to the post-compulsory education (NVQ/SVQ and above) (Barnes, 2011); c. Blue-collar work includes elementary and customer service occupations, such as factory workers, cleaners, and bar/restaurant staff, while white-collar refers to managerial and professional occupations (ONS, n.d.); d. Restrictions include caring responsibilities and ill-health.

General Self Efficacy (GSE) was measured using a revised version of the 8-item New General Self Efficacy (NGSE) scale developed by Chen, Gully, & Eden (2001). The items were rated on a five-point Likert scale. The NGSE scale is one of the three most frequent measures of GSE. However, it has been found to be superior in terms of construct validity, and has demonstrated high reliability (Scherbaum et al., 2006). The scale items in this study had equally high reliability, with coefficient alphas of .87 at Time 1, and .92 at Time 2, respectively.

Table 2. New General Self-Efficacy Scale

Original	Revised
1. I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself.	1. I will be able to achieve a goal that I have set.
2. When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.	2. When facing a difficult task, I am certain that I can do it.
3. In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me.	3. I can achieve outcomes that are important to me.
4. I believe I can succeed at most any endeavour to which I set my mind.	4. I can succeed at most things to which I set my mind to.
5. I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.	5. I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.
6. I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.	6. I can perform well on many different tasks.
7. Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.	7. Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.
8. Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.	8. When things are tough, I can perform quite well.

Source: Chen, G., Gully, S. M. and Eden, D. (2001)

Job-finding self-efficacy (JFSE) was measured with the single-item 'I can find paid work if I want to', and a five-point response. The item is conceptually based on reemployment efficacy and has been used in previous studies (e.g. Epel et al., 1999). Single or global items have long been used in survey research to measure a variety of constructs and are particularly useful when the group of interest is frail or vulnerable, as they minimise the burden on individuals (Bowling, 2005). Test-retest reliability was measured using the pre-test post-test Pearson's correlation coefficient. The correlation was significant at the $p < .01$ level, but the score r (57) = .46 did not indicate high test-retest reliability, which is common in single-item measures.

JSB was measured using the Job-Seeking Activity (JSA) Scale (Vuori & Vesalainen, 1999). The scale condensed all the core items that can be found in other widely used JSB scales and was specifically developed for use among unemployed individuals. The original JSA scale is a 7-item measure, which was slightly amended.

Table 3. Job search behaviour scale

Original	Revised
Have you been searching for a job during the past month? (yes/no) Those who answered 'yes' were further asked: 1) Have you been looking for vacancies at the local employment office? 2) Have you been following newspaper advertisements of vacancies? 3) Have you contacted employers without 'official' advertisements of vacancies? 4) Have you been asking friends and neighbours for job opportunities? 5) Have you been looking for vacancies in other than your previous profession? 6) For how many vacancies have you applied for during the past month?	Have you been searching for a paid job during the past month? (yes/no) Those who answered 'yes' were further asked: 1) Have you been looking for job in the job centre? 2) Have you been looking for a job in the newspapers or on the internet? 3) Have you contacted employers directly (e.g. door to door, by telephone)? 4) Have you been asking family, friends or neighbours for job opportunities? 5) Have you been looking for a job in a different sector than before?

Source: Vuori, J. & Vesalainen, J. (1999).

The scale had an introductory question 'Have you been searching for a job during the past month?' with a dichotomous response format 'yes' or 'no'. Those who answered 'yes', were asked how frequently during the past month had they been engaged in five job-seeking activities (items 1-5). With regard to the introductory question, the Cohen's Kappa of .58 ($p <$ .000) was slightly lower than the usual limit of .70. Kendall's tau correlation for the JSA items was relatively high (.64 at the $p < .01$).

Various tests were run to determine whether data obtained for SE, JS and JSA from different survey modes were comparable. Results did not reveal any statistically significant differences in the variables' scores for different survey modes; thus, permitting data to be pooled together. To test for non-response bias, early responses were compared with late responses. Participants who responded up to two weeks after the holiday were grouped as early respondents and those who responded later than two weeks and up to two months were grouped as late respondents. The tests showed no statistically significant differences between early and late responses.

Both parametric and non-parametric statistics were used according to the different measurement type of the variables. Due to the fact that the JSB measure had two components with different levels of measurement, the dichotomous JS and the rank-ordered JSA, paired-samples t-tests were used to assess changes in GSE and JFSE, a McNemar's test to assess any change in JS, and a Wilcoxon signed rank test for JSA. For GSE and JFSE, independent-samples t-tests were used; for JS and JSA, non-parametric techniques were used; Chi-square tests for independence (with Yates Continuity Correction) and Mann-Whitney U tests, respectively. Finally, the relationship between pre- post-holiday SE change, and JSA after the holiday was investigated using Kendall's tau correlation.

3.2 Qualitative phase

In the qualitative phase of the study, data were collected using semi-structured interviews. The fieldwork was conducted over a three month period, between three and six months after the holiday, so as to allow for the emergence of mid-term effects. Respondents who had completed the two-stage survey were asked, through an invitation letter sent to their welfare agents, to participate in a face-to-face interview. In total, thirteen individuals agreed to be interviewed. Some interviews took place in the welfare agents' workplace, some in participants' homes, and some over the phone (where participants could not attend a face-to-face interview). Welfare agents had to be present during the interviews due to ethical reasons. Interviews were audio recorded with participants' permission, and pseudonyms assigned to protect interviewees' anonymity.

The interview questions were influenced, to a large extent, by previous psychology, unemployment, and social tourism research (Table 4).

Table 4. Interview-guide

1. Where did you go on holiday? For how many days? Did you like the place?
2. What did you enjoy the most about your holiday? Probe: Can you please tell me more about that? Is there anything else?
3. How have you been feeling since the holiday? Probe: How do you explain this? Is there anything else?
4. Has the holiday affected the way you see yourself as a person? If probed: How do you explain this? Is there anything else?
5. How do you see life in general since the holiday? Probe: How do you explain this? Is there anything else?
6. How do you see difficulties/challenges since the holiday? Probe: How do you explain this? Is there anything else?
7. What do you think about your ability to find work since the holiday? Probe: How do you explain this? Is there anything else?
8. Have you thought of looking for work since the holiday?
If YES ask: Has the holiday affected your motivation to search for work? If probed: How do you explain this? Is there anything else?

If NO ask: What kind of job would you like to find now or in the future? Probe: Has the holiday experience affected this choice? If probed: How do you explain this? Is there anything else?
9. Have you been on a job-interview since the holiday?
If YES ask: How did you feel during the interview? Probe: How do you explain this? Is there anything else?
If NO ask: How do you feel about going on a job-interview since the holiday? Probe: How do you explain this? Is there anything else?
10. Do you think that you have learned anything in general from the holiday experience?
If YES ask: Can you please tell me more about that? Is there anything else?
If NO ask: Do you think that the holiday had any other benefit for you? If probed: Can you please tell me more about that? Is there anything else?

Data were transcribed verbatim and analysed using thematic analysis as it offers the necessary flexibility that the exploration and interpretation of complex socio-psychological phenomena requires (Boyatzis, 1998). The analytic strategy followed a hybrid process of inductive and deductive thematic analysis. This approach allowed the researchers to explore emergent issues raised by respondents alongside those driven by the theory. Data were analysed through a combination of within-case and cross-case analysis. First, each transcript was coded separately in order to focus on each case's dynamics and then coding progressed amongst different cases (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Quantitative Phase

Overall, results showed increases in participants' SE and JSB after the holiday-break (Table 5). However, not all of these increases reached statistical significance. With regard to GSE, the paired-samples t-test did not reveal any statistically significant difference in pre- post holiday GSE scores (p = .37, n.s.). This confirms the stability of SE, as a generalised trait, over time (Chen et al., 2001). In this respect, large GSE increases reported in previous studies could be attributed to the fact that these studies used interventions exclusively designed to boost people's GSE, and of much longer duration than a short holiday-break (Eden & Aviram, 1993). In relation to this, the holiday length was not found to have any significant effect on SE and JSB changes.

Table 5. Pre- and post-holiday SE and JSB

	Pre-holiday	Post-holiday
Self-efficacy (SE)		
General self-efficacy (GSE)	3.92 (.61)	4.00 (.71)
Job-finding self-efficacy (JFSE)	3.04 (1.13)	3.49 (1.12)
Job-search behaviour (JSB)		
Job-seeking (JS)		
Yes	31.6%	40.4%

No	68.4%	59.6%
Job-seeking activity (JSA)	5.0	5.0
Have been looking in the job-centre		
No not at all	73.7%	64.9%
1-2 times during the past month	15.8%	12.3%
Every week during the past month	7.0%	19.3%
Every day during the past month	3.5%	3.5%
Have been looking in the newspapers or on the internet		
No not at all	71.9%	66.7%
1-2 times during the past month	5.3%	1.8%
Every week during the past month	15.8%	19.3%
Every day during the past month	7.0%	12.3%
Have contacted employers directly (e.g. door to door, over the phone)		
No not at all	75.4%	66.7%
1-2 times during the past month	12.3%	8.8%
Every week during the past month	8.8%	17.5%
Every day during the past month	3.5%	7.0%
Have been asking family/friends/neighbours for job opportunities		
No not at all	75.4%	64.9%
1-2 times during the past month	10.5%	10.5%
Every week during the past month	7.0%	15.8%
Every day during the past month	7.0%	8.8%
Have been looking for a job in a different sector than before		
No not at all	75.4%	71.9%
1-2 times during the past month	8.8%	7.0%
Every week during the past month	10.5%	12.3%
Every day during the past month	5.3%	8.8%

Notes: For the continuous variables, means, and standard deviations (in parenthesis) are given; for the ordinal variable median is given; for the categorical variable and the individual JSA items the proportion of participants in different categories is given.

In addition, participants' baseline GSE was relatively high, for unemployed people, thus making the margins for any significant increases after the holiday-break particularly low. In contrast, people with low SE are more susceptible to external influence (e.g. experiments) than are those with high SE (Bandura, 2012). Given that differences can be "masked in analyses of all participants together" (Eden & Aviram, 1993, p. 353), the effect of differences in baseline GSE on post-holiday GSE changes were tested. Baseline GSE was dichotomised into low and high, with scores up to three ('neutral' option in response format) being treated as low GSE, and scores over three as high GSE. The independent-samples t-test showed a statistically significant difference in scores for respondents with low pre-holiday GSE (p = .002). The large magnitude of the differences in the means (eta squared = .17), indicated that 17% of the variance in pre- post-holiday GSE change is explained by differences in baseline levels of GSE. In other words, participants with low baseline GSE reported much larger GSE changes after the holiday-break than participants with high baseline GSE.

With regards to the reported high baseline GSE scores among the sample, two possible explanations are offered: participants' mental adaptations after a prolonged period of unemployment, and the role of anticipation. The first explanation is akin to the argument that mental health may improve as unemployment prolongs, because the person may adapt to the situation (Warr, 1987). The second explanation involves participants feeling efficacious at the time of the pre-holiday measure due to their anticipation of the forthcoming holiday-break. Considering that the measure was taken very close to the holiday departure date, and that all participants had not been on a holiday-break for at least four years (and some never), it could be argued that the anticipation of going on a holiday positively affected their mood and/or gave them a sense of achievement, which, in turn, boosted their GSE (Bandura, 1986; Miller, 2012). This explanation is also consistent with findings from earlier social tourism research (e.g. Smith & Hughes, 1999). Finally, background characteristics were not found to have any statistically significant effects on pre- post-holiday GSE change.

With regard to JFSE, a statistically significant increase was found in participants' pre- and post-holiday scores (p = .005). This is also a confirmation that SSE is more malleable over time than GSE (e.g. Schwoerer, May, Hollensbe, & Mencl, 2005). Among the background variables, 'restrictions to work' was the only item that was found to have a significant effect on pre- post-holiday JSFE change (p = .028). Participants who did not have any restrictions reported significantly larger increases in their JFSE levels after the holiday-break than participants with restrictions, such as childcare. This finding fits with extant research that women's attitudes to work are often affected by their heavier domestic responsibilities, such as childcare (Plantenga & Remery, 2009).

Changes in participants' pre- post-holiday JSB were mixed. With regard to the first component of JSB, the dichotomous JS, the proportion of participants looking for work after the holiday-break (40.4%) increased when compared with the proportion prior to the holiday (31.6%), but the change was not statistically significant (Exact Sig. = .227). Considering the identified SE increase, and the link between travel and widening of one's horizons and life perspectives (e.g. Minnaert et al., 2009), this finding could potentially be attributed to the possibility that some participants had been seeking entrepreneurial opportunities instead of jobs (e.g. Cassar & Friedman, 2009) or had found work after the holiday (e.g. Wanberg, 2012).

With regard to the main component of JSB, the ordinal JSA scale, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test revealed a statistically significant increase in participants job-search intensity, following the holiday [z = -2.425 (based on positive ranks), p = .015, with a medium effect size (r = .23)]. The median score, remained stable (Md = 5.0), however, this also includes participants who did not search for work (68.4% before, and 59.6% after the holiday). Thus, the unchanged median reflects the fact that most participants continued not to search for work after the holiday-break. On the other hand, after looking closer into the data and the individual JSA items composing the scale, some important shifts in the frequency of specific job-seeking patterns were identified. These shifts were further tested through separate Wilcoxon signed-rank tests, revealing statistically significant increases in four out of the five JSA items (Table 6).

Table 6. Pre- post-holiday changes in JSA individual items

	z	***p***	***r***
JSA[a]	-2.034	0.042**	0.19
JSA[b]	-1.697	0.090*	0.16
JSA[c]	-2.594	0.009**	0.24
JSA[d]	-2.446	0.014**	0.24
JSA[e]	-1.364	0.172	0.13

Notes: z is based on positive ranks; *p < .10, **p < .05
a. Have been looking for a paid job in the job centre; b. Have been looking for work in the newspapers and/or on the internet; c. Have contacted employers directly (e.g. door to door, over the phone); d. Have been asking family, friends and/or neighbours for paid job opportunities; e. Have been looking to a different sort of job to what you have had before.

Testing for any effects of pre- post-holiday SE change on JSB concerned only JFSE and search intensity, given that changes in GSE and JS were not statistically significant. The relationship between participants' pre- post-holiday JFSE change, and job-search intensity (JSA) after the holiday-break, was investigated using Kendall's tau correlation. There was a statistically significant correlation between the two variables (r = .29, n = 57, p = .009), with high levels of JFSE associated with higher levels of job-search intensity. This finding confirms previous findings in the psychological literature (e.g. Wanberg, 2012).

4.2 Qualitative Phase

Overall, findings from this phase confirmed positive changes in participants' SE and JSB in the mid-term, and suggested that these changes were attributable to the holiday. However, effects were not universal among all interviewees, and especially with regard to JSB, mainly

linked to specific restrictions to work expressed by some participants. On the other hand, the holiday was found to have positive effects on these participants' behaviours towards alternative paths to employment, such as volunteering.

4.2.1 Effects on self-efficacy

The interview data suggests that the majority of participants experienced positive changes in their SE as a result of the holiday. These effects, however, were less noticeable in terms of GSE and JFSE, and more concerned with forms of SE, such as parental and social SE. Furthermore, complex relationships between the holiday and different forms of SE were identified. In many instances, positive effects of the holiday on one form led, in turn, to positive effects on other forms.

A strong theme among the data was the effects of successful enactive mastery experiences during the holidays. These experiences mainly concerned improvements in family and social relations, two basic domains of social life, which according to participants' narratives had been chronically problematic. Such improvements are amongst the clearest benefits of social tourism for low-income families (e.g. Minnaert et al., 2009). Within the context of unemployment, they are of vital importance due to the detrimental effects that unemployment has on family and social relations, and, in turn, on unemployed individuals' self-concept and psychological health (Jahoda, 1982; Warr, 2007). Within the specific context of SE, these improvements gave participants first-hand evidence about their capabilities to exercise control over these challenging life domains, and boosted their parental and social SE, respectively:

> *I do feel more confident to be the parent, if you know what I mean […] I know that I'm capable of, you know, capable of filling the day, capable of feeding [...] Just be a better parent really (*Jenny).

> *It's been since I've come back, yes definitely, I feel like I can talk to anyone now [...] I don't know, before I went, I can talk to people and be around people but I'd rather be the one in the corner, quiet, you know (Anne).*

These realisations are significant considering that interviewees expressed well-established doubts about their capabilities as parents and social beings, with negative effects on their overall human functioning. Successful enactive mastery experiences during the holiday provided participants with authentic and direct evidence that they are capable of exercising control over their family and social lives, and to build a robust belief in their SE (Bandura,

1986). Furthermore, and given that parental and social identities are integral components of an individual's identity, increases in parental and social SE may, in turn, have positive effects on people's GSE and self-image; positively affecting their human functioning in general (Bandura, 1997). Indeed, the findings indicated that increased parental SE had positive effects on their GSE:

> *Since the holiday the stresses are still there but I can cope with them better now. I've had the time to go away and calm down and come back...like the parenting thing (Dave).*

The positive effects of parental and social SE on general and job-finding SE, respectively, support findings from previous research about the close interrelationships between different forms of SE, and the tendency of specific forms to generalise (Chen et al., 2001):

> *I felt really important, I felt like any other person because before I never thought I would afford...I would go to any holiday [...] I feel like everybody else. No I don't feel like there are some other things I cannot do, I feel like I can also, I was also in a holiday (Maria).*

As this comment illustrates, going on a holiday can be in itself a successful enactive mastery experience for individuals. For deprived populations, positive tourism experiences can be perceived as an accomplishment, and boost their self-esteem (Minnaert et al., 2010). In addition, the qualitative findings support the positive and strong relationship between self-esteem and SE (Maddux, 2002).

4.2.2 Effects on job-search behaviour

The exploration of any effects on unemployed individuals' JSB resulted in mixed findings. Positive effects were mainly manifested through increased SE, and participants' perceptions of the holiday as an incentive towards employment. Non-effects were almost exclusively the result of important restrictions to work (e.g. childcare).

Effects of increased SE were most noticeable with regard to social SE. Examples of these effects are captured in the following comments from Lily and Jenny:

> *I usually used to be a little bit anxious about talking to people I don't really know, and being away with people who you don't know…I've started to talk to other people [...] it just made me think that I can communicate a lot better than I think I can, so in terms of interview I guess I won't be as anxious when talking to people I don't know (Lily).*

> *I did go for an interview not a long ago...um and I phoned up and asked if they've made their decision, and apparently hadn't got the job. But I asked feedback I asked for it. Before probably I wouldn't have (Jenny).*

These comments are suggestive of the strong influence that social SE can have on job-search activities that require personal contact. Such activities are stressful for most people and especially for those who do not feel confident about their social and interpersonal skills. In this respect, increased social SE can be particularly helpful due to its positive effects on the way job-seekers perceive these activities, and consequently, on the way they actually experience these activities (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). These findings also demonstrate that feeling efficacious in a specific social situation, can generalise to different social situations (Bandura, 1997). Moreover, findings highlight the importance of on-site tourist experiences, in terms of the opportunities they offer for social interaction.

In addition, positive effects of increased general confidence, as a result of the holiday, on JSB were also reported. Dave, for instance, explained:

> *Before the holiday I was starting to wind down and think what's the point, you know, you get to that point when you've applied for that many jobs and you think 'well I'm never gonna get a job so what's the point?' [...] But then I had the holiday, a little break from it and the confidence came back and the push came back (Dave).*

It could be argued that the holiday-break provides a pathway to recreation and restitution for unemployed people in much the same way as for working people.

A rather unexpected but clear pattern among the interview data, concerned participants' perception of the holiday-break as an incentive towards paid employment. Responses show that they viewed paid employment as the only way they would have further opportunity to take a holiday-break. Amongst those, Maria, who found a job after the holiday, explains:

> *Well it just motivated me that maybe if I can find work, I will be able to take my family on holidays, and then maybe we could do more of those kind of things like going on holiday (Maria).*

The importance of holiday-taking in low-income groups' attitudes towards employment has been mentioned in a recent sociological study conducted by Shildrick, MacDonald, Webster, & Garthwaite (2012); however, there were no existing links between this perception and

increased JSB. The findings from this study show that such links do exist, and confirm the role of incentives in human motivation. The holidays kept participants motivated and committed in job-seeking, at a particularly crucial stage of the process. Job-search persistence is significant when unemployment prolongs and the person experiences feelings of helplessness, and reduced motivation (van Dam & Menting, 2012). Moreover, the assumption made during the quantitative analysis, that some participants may had found a job after the holiday, is confirmed. This finding, however, did not form a strong pattern within the data, and, therefore, needs to be treated with caution.

Positive effects on JSB were not universal among all respondents; however, consistent with prior research, important barriers to employment, such as caring responsibilities and depression, prevented some from looking for work (e.g. Vinokur & Schul, 2002; Dorling, 2010).

4.2.3 Effects on behaviours towards alternative paths to employment

Amongst the interviewees who did not actively search for work, however, positive effects on job-seeking related behaviours were identified. These were behaviours towards alternative paths to employment and mainly concerned volunteering work. An important source of these effects was direct observation related to on-site tourist activities:

> *Little things that I've looked into like volunteering...I really do enjoy children's company and I'm looking into at the moment […] When we were on holiday they had these sessions for arts and craft with the children […] it made me really think about it a lot, in terms of working with children. They were doing painting with their feet and hands and I just looked in and actually think I would enjoy doing that (Lily).*

Observing the behaviour of others is amongst the main factors that can influence new patterns of behaviour (Bandura, 1997). Within the context of this study, effects of the holiday on alternative pathways are significant as they reflect indirect effects of the holiday on JSB. Firstly, alternative paths to employment, such as volunteering are indications of the person's commitment to future employment. But most importantly, they comprise preparatory steps towards employment, which can eventually enhance job prospects (Kanfer et al., 2001). Under these circumstances, looking for alternative paths to employment can be seen as the first step towards a new start in participants' lives. In this respect, the holiday's role is significant as it can help vulnerable people to stand up on their own feet again (Smith & Hughes, 1999).

Finally, the data did not reveal any relationship between the holiday and seeking alternative entrepreneurial opportunities to paid employment, thus, disconfirming the assumption made earlier, during the quantitative analysis. However, that said, two interviewees did report that they would like to pursue an entrepreneurship career in the future. Although this is an anecdotal finding, it does offer some support for a link between travel and widening of life perspectives (e.g. Minnaert et al., 2009), which could be explored in future research.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The emerging social tourism research on various aspects of positive psychology has hinted at the psychological benefits that tourism participation holds for low-income groups. This study has added significantly to our understanding of the psychology of these groups in relation to the effects of social tourism amongst unemployed people. Due to the close relationship between SE with JSB, and the role of JSB as a key antecedent of reemployment success, this study asserts that timely intervention in the form of supported holidays by public or public-private funding could potentially be used alongside existing unemployment programmes, and help perhaps to enhance their effectiveness. This combined approach could enhance unemployed individuals' mental health, motivation to find a job, and even shape new career aspirations and lifestyles.

Findings demonstrated that short holiday-breaks for unemployed people can facilitate increases in their SE and bring about positive changes in their job-search and job-search related behaviours. Despite the limitations that the sample size may impose upon a study's conclusions, this was compensated by the richness of the qualitative data. Qualitative findings in particular, highlighted the fundamental role that the holiday environment played, through creating enabling conditions and safe spaces, which assisted in the generation of positive cognitive and behavioural changes amongst unemployed individuals. With regards to any possible association between the destination choice and the aforementioned effects, the homogeneity of the destinations, in terms of available facilities and geographical characteristics, strengthen the evidence that the identified effects are mainly attributable to the destination as a new environment (with all the elements that comprise this environment), and not to the destination choice *per se*.

Overall, mixed-methods data showed positive effects on different forms of SE, namely, GSE, JFSE, parental and social SE. However, while mixed-methods data provide stronger evidence for conclusions than single-methods data (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), the small sample size of the study's quantitative phase necessitates that caution must be applied, especially in relation to the estimation of true effects, and the generalisability of findings. Similarly, the significance of the JFSE increase should be viewed with caution due to the use of a single-item measure in the quantitative phase of the study, and the fact that this increase did not form a strong pattern within the qualitative data. Nonetheless, findings were consistent with previous research, which found SSE to be more malleable over time (Schwoerer et al., 2005), GSE more stable as age increases (Chen et al., 2001), and baseline SE particularly influential upon the degree of SE change (Bandura, 2012). Amongst the active job-seekers, there were significant increases in job-search intensity, particularly with regard to job-search activities that require personal contact. In addition, participants' perceptions of the holiday as an incentive towards paid employment had clear positive effects both on their job-search and job-search related behaviours.

In terms of psychological benefits, findings strengthened the evidence base about the close relationship between social tourism participation and core aspects of positive psychology. The contribution of social tourism to the positive mental health of unemployed individuals, and the direct behavioural effects of improved mental health, could potentially have novel policy implications on welfare and unemployment benefits spending for Governments. However, we can make no claim about the extension of these effects beyond the time period of the study. Although the study provides some evidence of social tourism's positive effects in the middle-term, any long-term effects also depend on a plethora of other factors, including the everyday challenges that individuals continue to face upon return. In this respect, this study's findings offer policy implications that go beyond tourism, as they highlight the limitations that restrictions to work may impose on interventions, which aim to boost unemployed individuals' JSB. Although not looking for work can be a personal choice, in the case of people with compound disadvantages (e.g. low-income, single-parenthood, and depression), it is often the only 'choice' (Dorling, 2010; Shildrick et al., 2012). Consequently, the effectiveness of such interventions depends, to a large extent, on other policy issues such as affordable childcare and efficient mental healthcare services (e.g. Ha & Miller, 2015).

Considering that it is the first research of its kind to study SE within the context of the tourist experience, and the aforementioned limitations of this study, further research is needed to explore the effects of tourism participation on SE, addressing various forms of SE, and utilising larger samples, and different research-designs. In line with this recommendation, time series data could shed more light into the possible effects of holiday anticipation on baseline GSE, thus, offering clearer results regarding the statistical significance of any pre- post-holiday GSE changes. Moreover, and given that major background characteristics of this study's sample (e.g. long-term unemployment, caring responsibilities) significantly affect JSB, future studies need to be conducted amongst unemployed individuals who do not face major restrictions to work (e.g. short-term unemployed men), exploring the extent to which holiday-taking can play any role in preventing unemployment from extending over time. Finally, considering that the study is based on UK/European standards, additional empirical work within other geographical contexts is needed.

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