



Kuder Adult Follow-Up Study: Survey of Kuder[®] Journey[™] Users, 2012

June, 2013 / Dr. Jerry Trusty / The Pennsylvania State University

Correspondence regarding this study should be directed to Dr. Jerry Trusty,
Department of Educational Psychology, Counseling, and Special Education,
The Pennsylvania State University; University Park, PA, jgt3@psu.edu

Abstract

In Spring of 2012, 412 U.S. adults who had used Kuder® Journey™ responded to an online survey. Twenty-five U.S. states were represented, along with two U.S. territories. The survey solicited responses on users' perceptions of the helpfulness of Journey and its components. Users rated Journey as highly helpful in their career planning and career development, with a majority rating Journey as highly helpful in (a) self-awareness (learning interests, skills, and values), (b) setting career goals and making plans, (c) developing motivation for education and career, and (d) generating hope for the future. There were few differences in ratings by gender, racial-ethnic group, or by employment status (unemployed, part-time employed, full-time employed). There were consistent differences in ratings by age group, with younger respondents rating Journey as more helpful as compared to older respondents.

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Educational and career planning are salient in the career development of adults across the lifespan (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2013; Trusty, 2002). The National Career Development Guidelines (NCDG, 2004) highlight the importance of career planning and career management across people's working lives, emphasizing three domains, including personal-social development, educational achievement and lifelong learning, and career management.

The purposes and goals of Kuder Journey (Kuder, 2013) are highly consistent with the purposes and goals of the NCDG (2004). Kuder Journey is an Internet-based career planning system designed for postsecondary students and adults. Journey focuses on helping these adults (a) acquire self-knowledge (e.g., interests, skills, values); (b) gain knowledge of educational and vocational opportunities (e.g., educational options, knowledge of occupations); and (c) find a match between their personal characteristics and their careers, including setting goals, developing plans, and taking actions toward meeting goals. Both Kuder Journey and the NCDG focus on lifelong learning, managing career transitions, using career assessments, developing career plans, and responding to changing employment trends and situations.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study was to determine adults' perceptions of the helpfulness of Kuder Journey in various areas of educational and career development. Adults who responded to the survey had recently completed one or more assessments and components of Journey, and their experiences are likely recalled readily. It is assumed that most survey respondents are, to some degree, actively engaged in career planning and goal-setting; and thus, such a study seems timely. Because educational and career planning have immediate salience, participants' responses are likely reflective of their actual experiences.

A secondary purpose of the present study was to assess demographics. Assessing demographics (e.g., age, gender employment status) allowed the researcher to disaggregate responses (e.g., helpfulness of Journey by gender and by racial-ethnic group).

Methods

Development of the Survey

The survey assessed participants' demographics, perceptions of Journey's overall helpfulness, and perceptions of the helpfulness of Journey's separate components. A total of 39 items were included.

General Perceptions of Journey's Helpfulness

Of the 39 items, 11 items were developed to assess respondents' overall perceptions of the helpfulness of Journey across various components and materials participants had used. Respondents rated Journey's

helpfulness on an 11 point scale ranging from 0 (not helpful at all) to 10 (most helpful). These 11 items were grouped into the following four areas:

1. Self-awareness (leaning their interests, skills, and values – three items).
2. Awareness of educational and career goals and making plans (developing goals, formulating plans – five items).
3. Developing motivation for education and career (improving educational performance, motivation for success in work – two items).
4. Generating hope for the future (one item).

The 11 survey items were developed from two major sources: (a) from the goals, purposes, and components of Kuder Journey and (b) from the National Career Development Guidelines (2004). The two sources are related to one another in important ways, with most of the items being attributed to both sources.

Items from Kuder Journey. Journey has 12 major components:

1. Kuder® Career Interests Assessment™ (KCIA)
2. Kuder® Skills Confidence Assessment™ (KSCA)
3. Kuder® Work Values Assessment™ (KWVA)
4. Kuder Person Matches
5. Occupational Search and Information
6. College Search
7. Learning About College Majors
8. Financial Aid
9. Resume Builder
10. Job-Seeking Information
11. Personal Portfolio
12. E-Portfolio

(Note that the names of some of these components have changed due to new versions being introduced in August of 2012, after data collection was completed.)

Self-awareness is the major purpose of Journey’s assessments of interests, skills, and work values. Results from these assessments, particularly the interest assessment, are used to generate priority lists of occupational clusters most directly related to users’ indicated interests. Education and work knowledge, planning, and goal setting are directly related to the remaining components of Journey.

In addition, a survey item was included to assess Journey’s helpfulness in giving adults hope for their futures. Hope is a relatively new concept in the career development literature, and research on hope is somewhat limited (Niles, Amundson, & Neault, 2010). Hope, however, is emerging as an important concept, acting as a means for implementing career self-efficacy and leading to positive career development actions.

Items from the National Career Development Guidelines. The NCDG (2004) contains multiple indicators around self-knowledge; knowledge of education, work, and the economy; and managing careers. Several indicators focus on decision making, goal setting, and motivation for education and work.

Items specific to Journey components. In addition to the 11 items assessing Journey’s overall helpfulness, 12 items corresponding to the 12 Journey components were included in the survey. Respondents rated the helpfulness of separate Journey components on an 11-point scale (0 to 10) with 0 being not helpful at all to 10 being most helpful. Note that most users do not use every Journey component, and many users may use only one or two. On these 12 items, survey respondents were instructed to rate only those components they had completed.

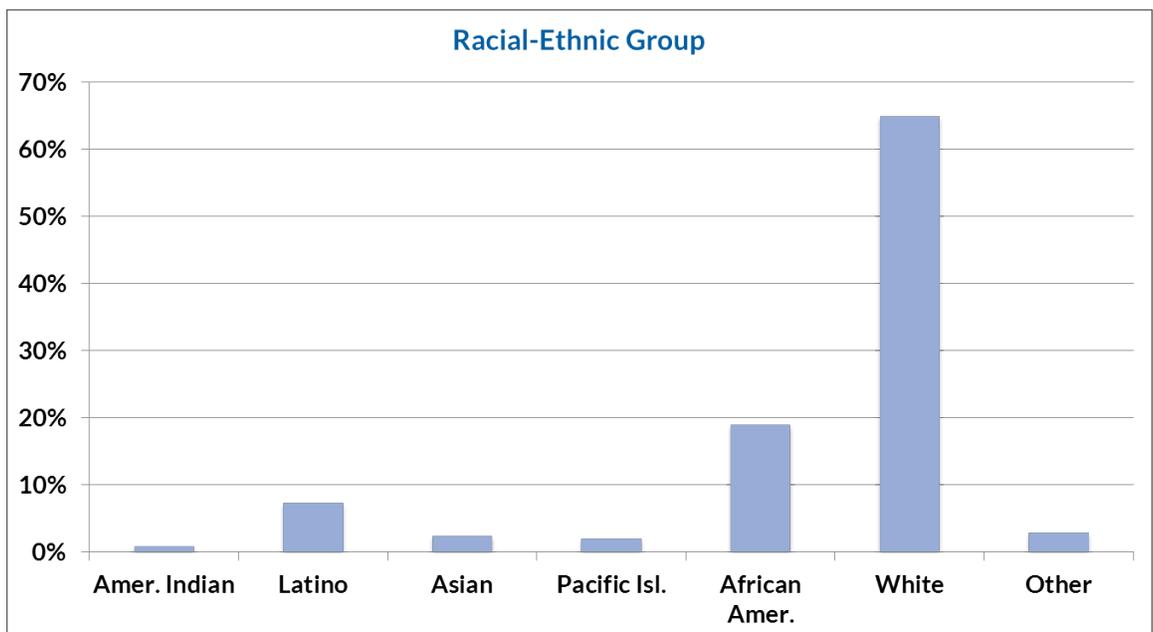
Survey Procedures

The survey was developed in Spring of 2012. It was piloted with a small group of users; and after editing, the survey was posted on Survey Monkey, a popular online survey tool. Respondents were solicited via email from the Kuder Journey database. Respondents were entered into a random drawing for one of five prizes (electronic media tools). The survey was available to Journey users for three weeks.

At the end of three weeks, the responses were downloaded. All data from respondents who were ineligible for the study were removed. Fifteen respondents were disqualified from the study because of severely incomplete responses on the survey.

Participants

A total of 412 respondents had valid data on the survey. Twenty-five U.S. states were represented, along with two U.S. territories. The largest numbers of respondents were from Arkansas (68), South Carolina (57), Kansas (46), and Texas (36). The sample represented all regions of the U.S., but the South and Midwest were somewhat overrepresented. The states in the Northeast region were underrepresented, although there were respondents from New Jersey, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire.



- Latinos and Asians were underrepresented in the sample.
- African Americans were overrepresented in the sample.
- A small percentage of the participants indicated race-ethnicity as American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, or Other.

Age and Gender of Respondents

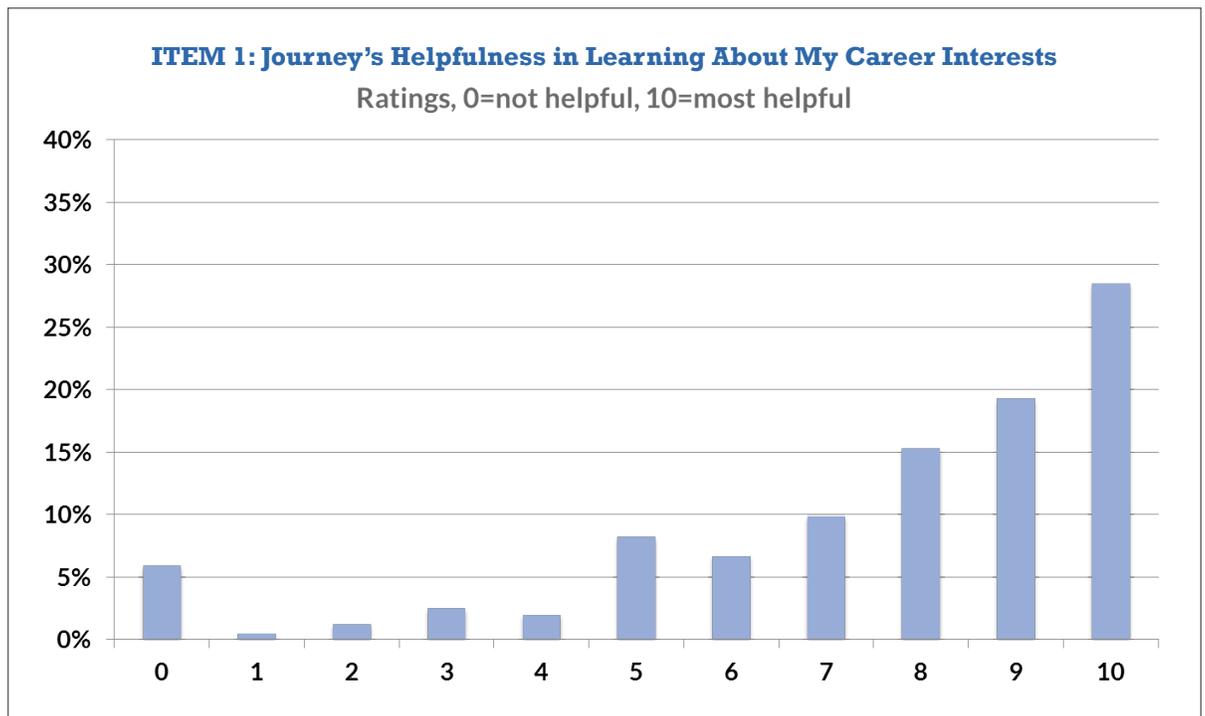
Of survey respondents, 71% were women and 29% were men. Thus, men are under-represented in the sample. The ages of participants was highly variable.

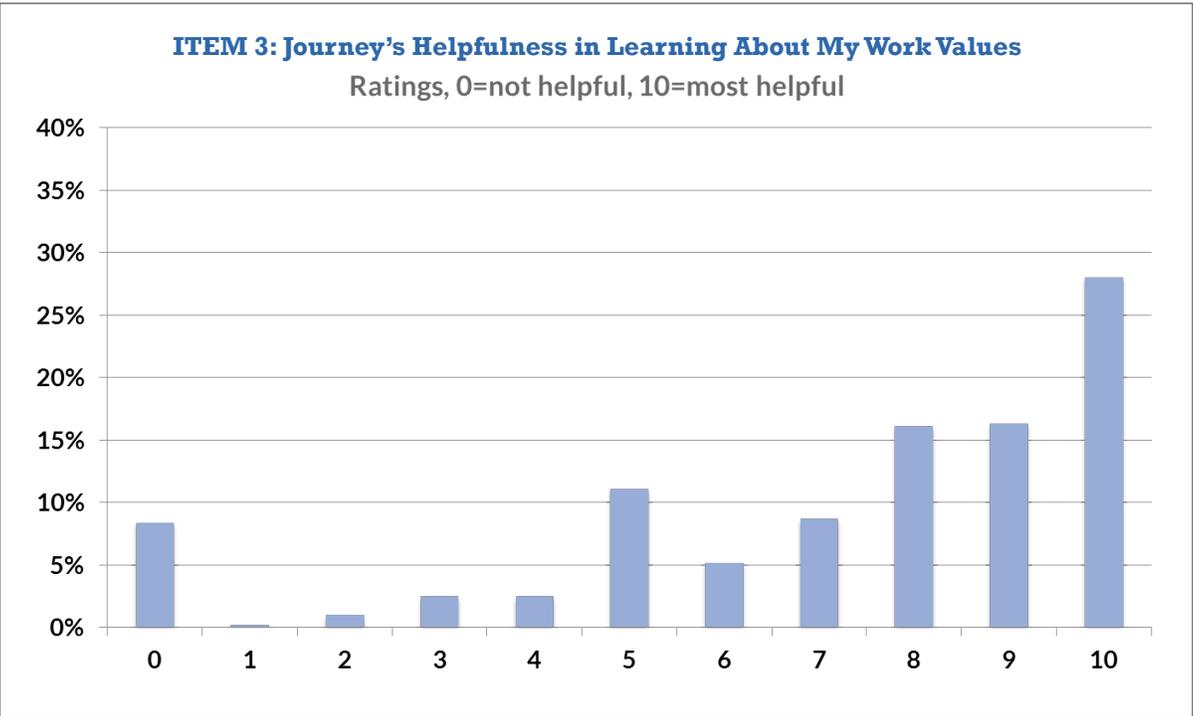
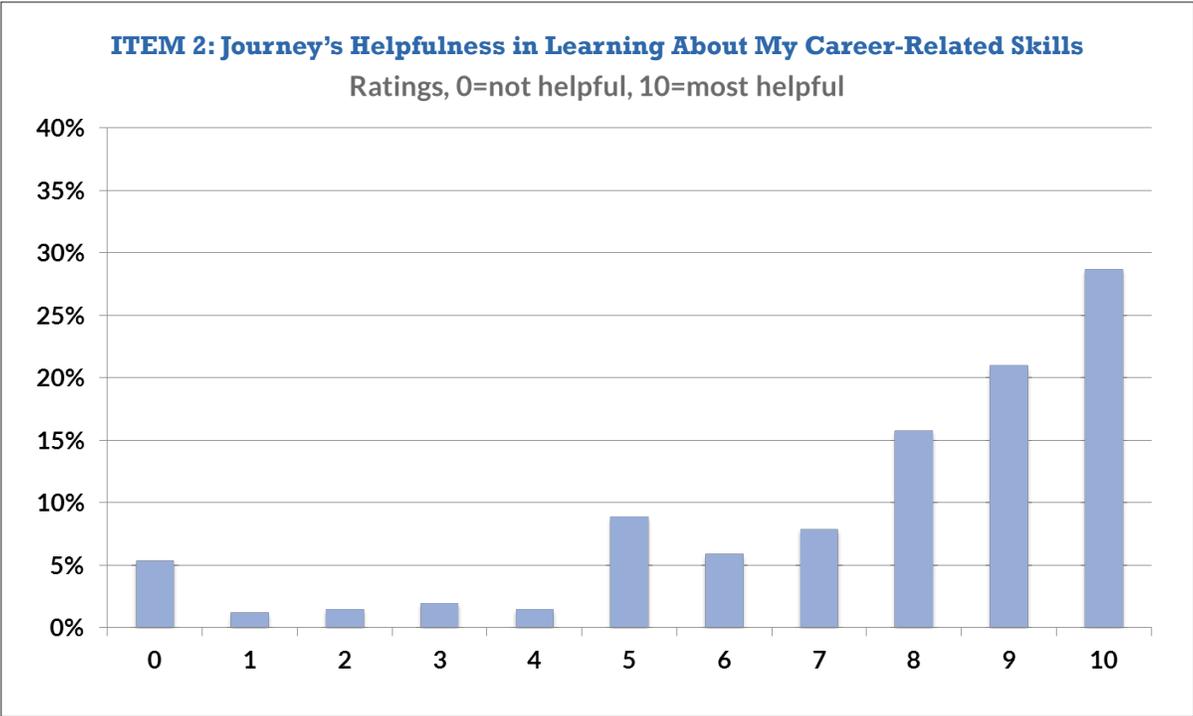
Age	Percent
18 - 20	8%
21 - 25	14%
26 - 30	10%
31 - 35	10%
36 - 40	11%
41 - 45	12%
46 - 50	10%
51+	25%

Results and Discussion

Users' Overall Ratings of Journey

Aggregated Findings. Users were asked to rate Journey's helpfulness on 11 items in the areas of self-awareness, career goal setting and planning, motivation for education and work, and hope for the future. Participants were asked to respond to Journey's helpfulness in general (across all Journey assessments, products, and materials) and not only related to a specific Journey component. Their responses on the 11-point scale are indicated in the following figures.

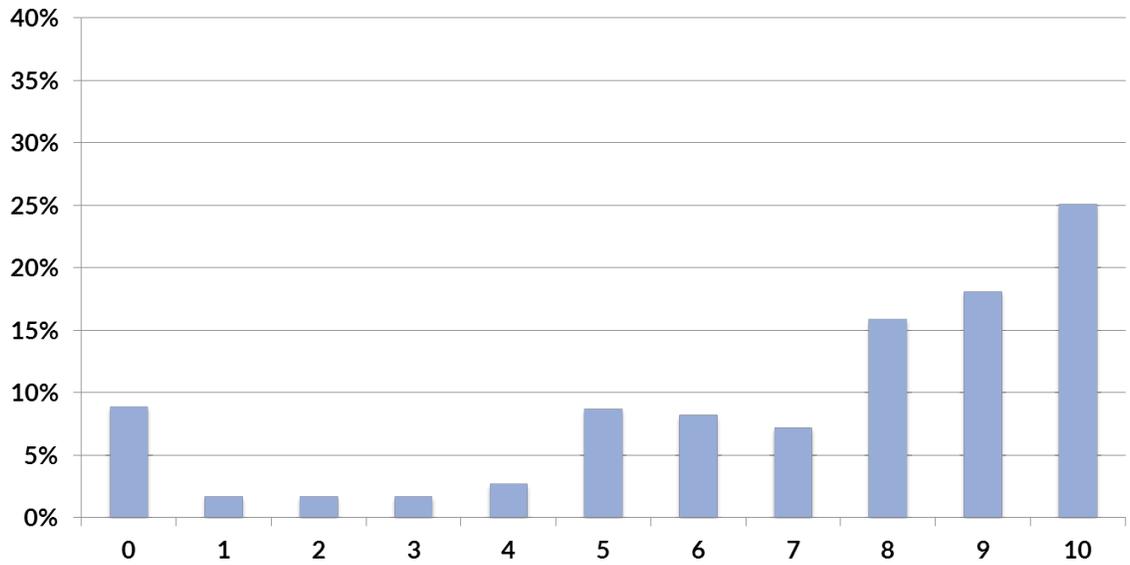




- A clear majority of respondents rated Journey as highly helpful (rating of 7 or higher) in learning their career interests (73%), career-related skills (74%), and their work values (69%).

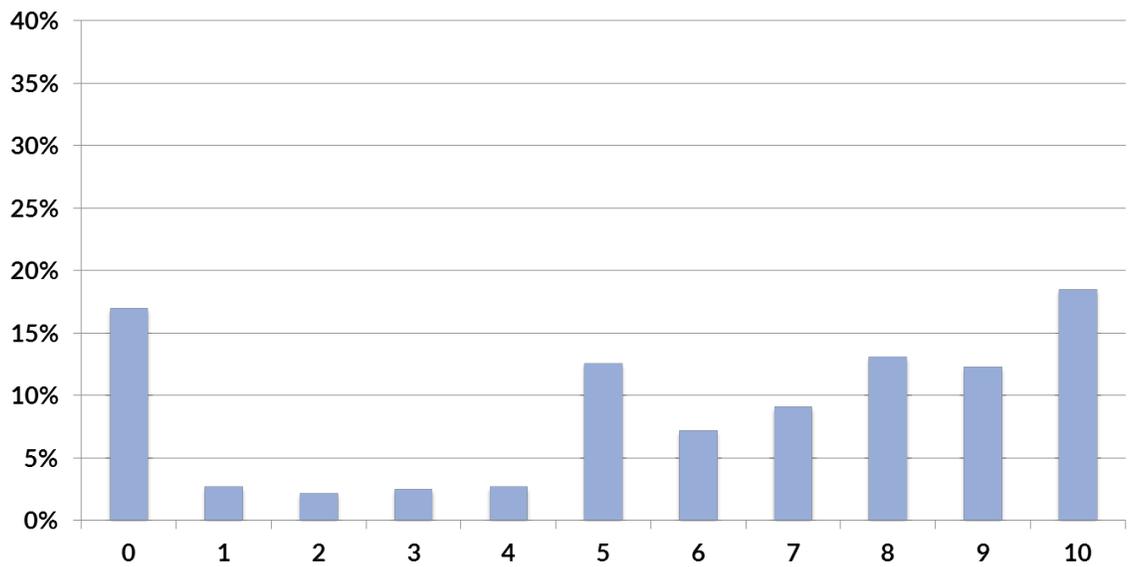
ITEM 4: Journey's Helpfulness in Learning About Careers and Educational Programs

Ratings, 0=not helpful, 10=most helpful



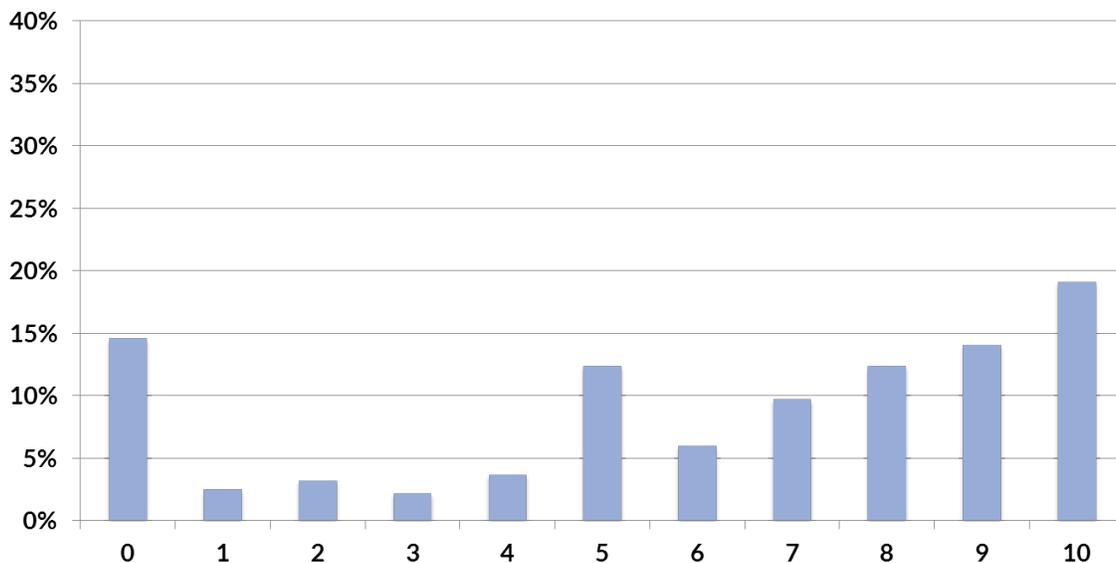
ITEM 5: Journey's Helpfulness in Choosing My Postsecondary Program or College Major

Ratings, 0=not helpful, 10=most helpful



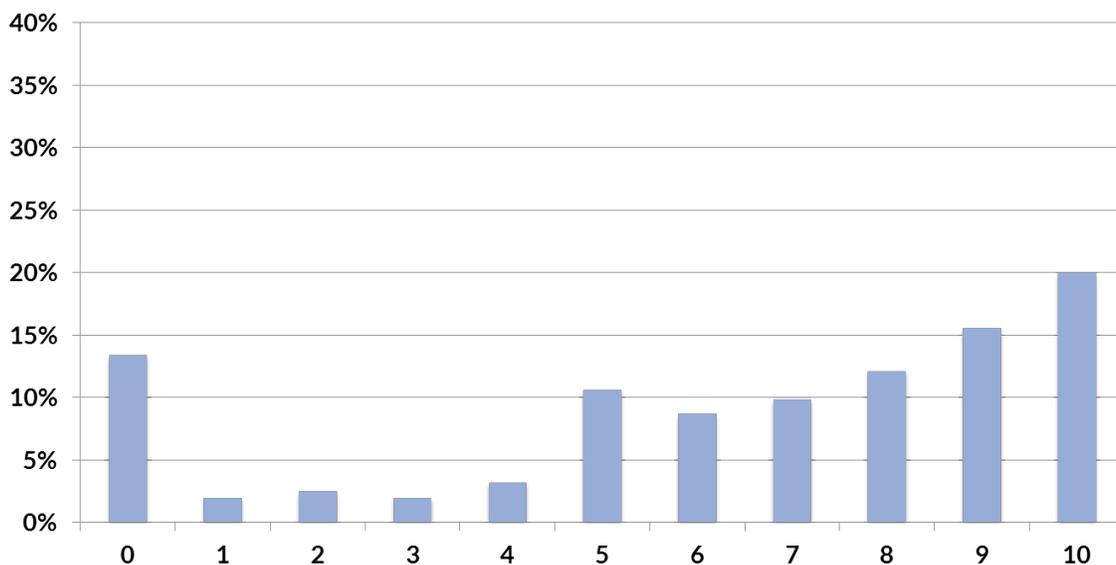
ITEM 6: Journey's Helpfulness in Setting Career-Related and Educational Goals

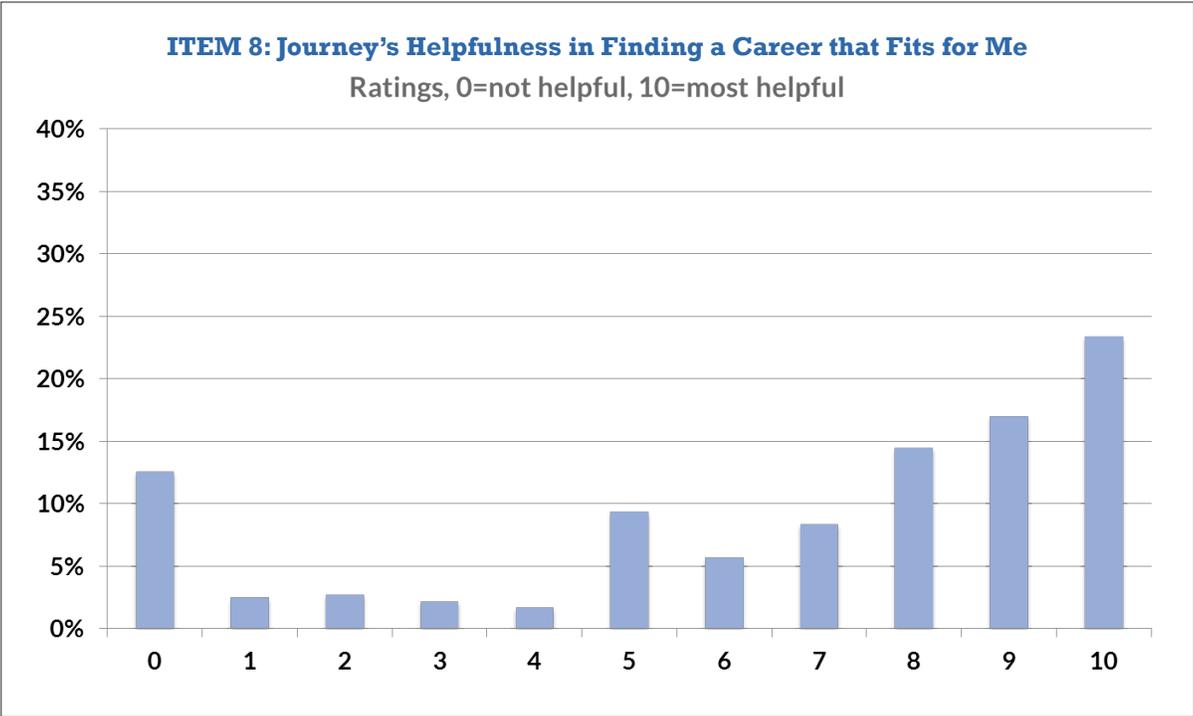
Ratings, 0=not helpful, 10=most helpful



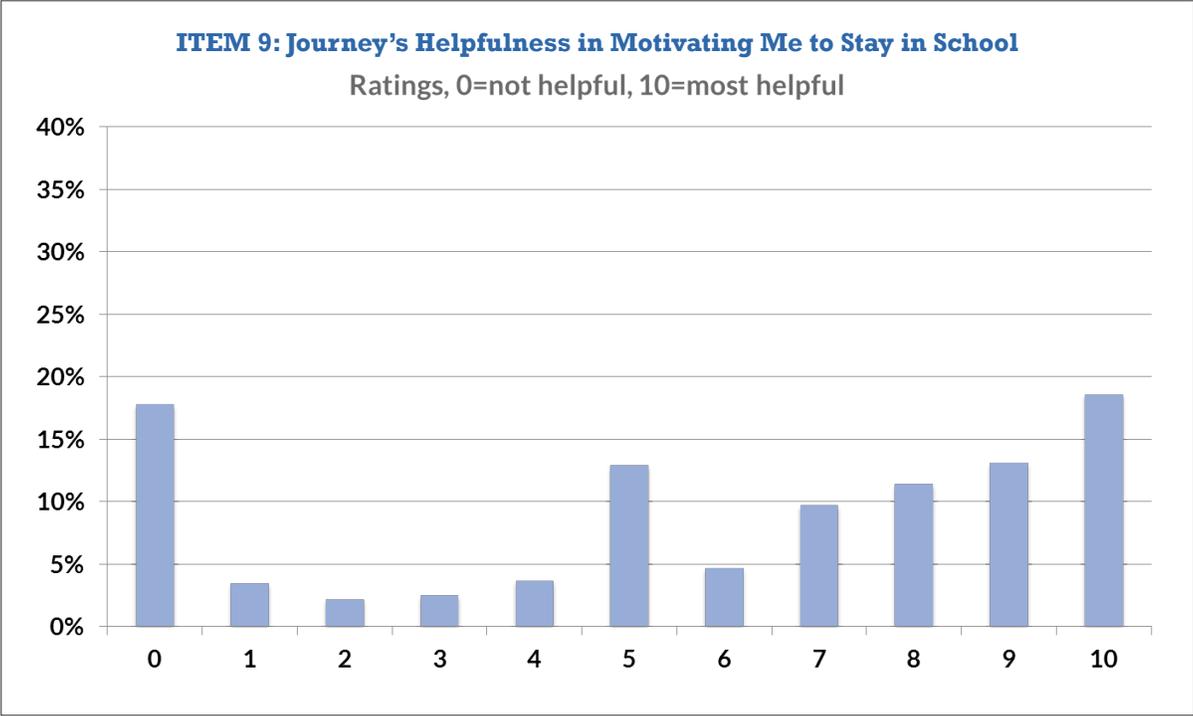
ITEM 7: Journey's Helpfulness in Making Educational and Career Plans

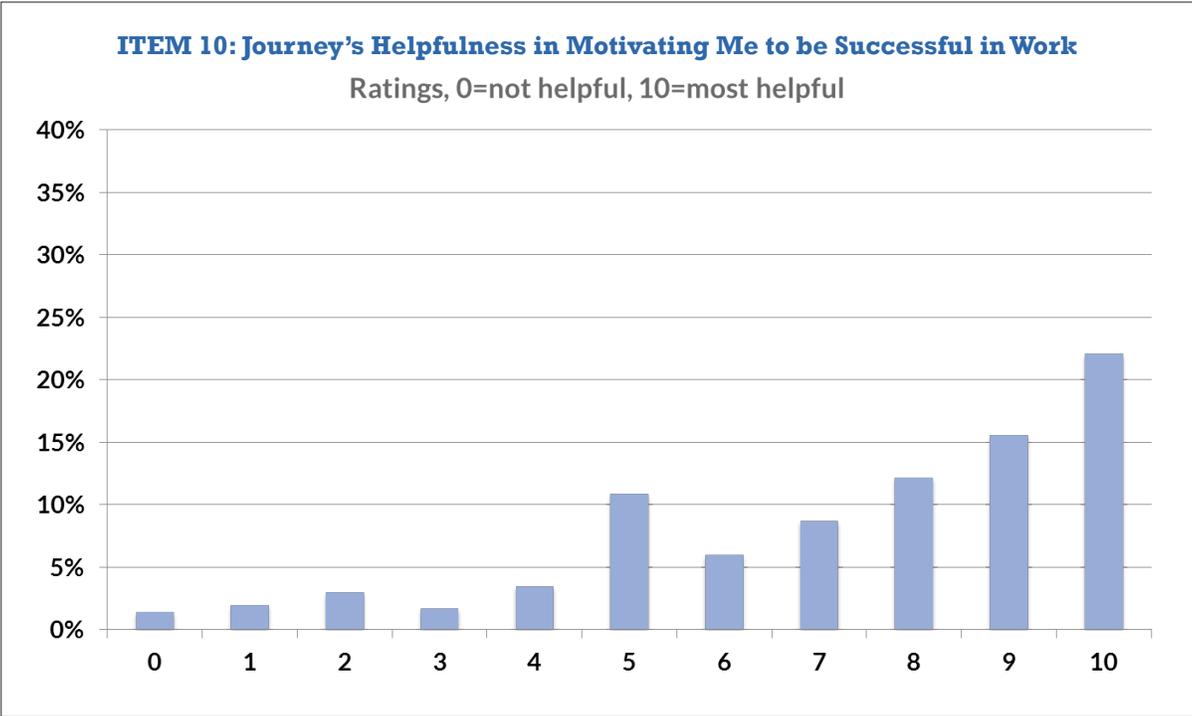
Ratings, 0=not helpful, 10=most helpful



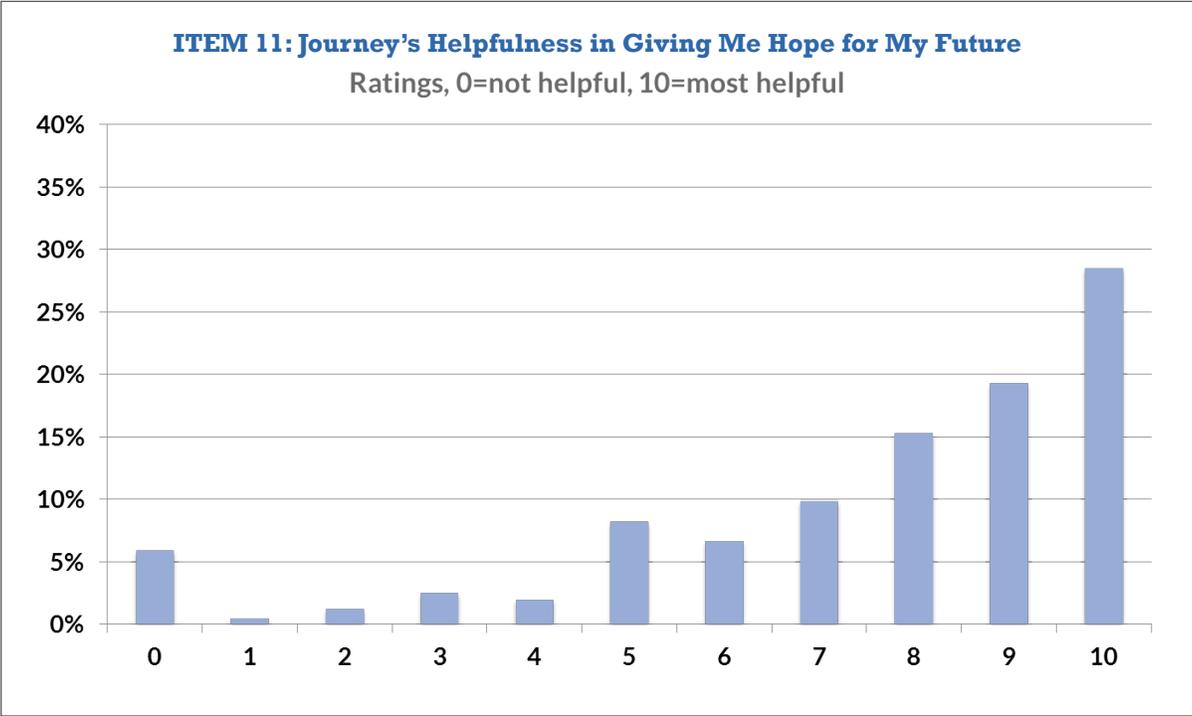


- A majority of respondents rated Journey as highly helpful (rating of 7 or higher) on each of the five items on career planning.
- Of the five items, the highest rated were for Item 4 (learning about various careers) and Item 8 (finding a career that fits for me).
- Slightly lower ratings (e.g., choosing a postsecondary program or college major, Item 5) were likely due to items being out of context for older participants.





- A majority of respondents rated Journey as highly helpful (rating of 7 or higher) on each of the two items on motivation.
- Note that “motivating me to stay in school” may be out of context for many older respondents, and this is likely why 18% of respondents rated Journey as not helpful at all on Item 9.



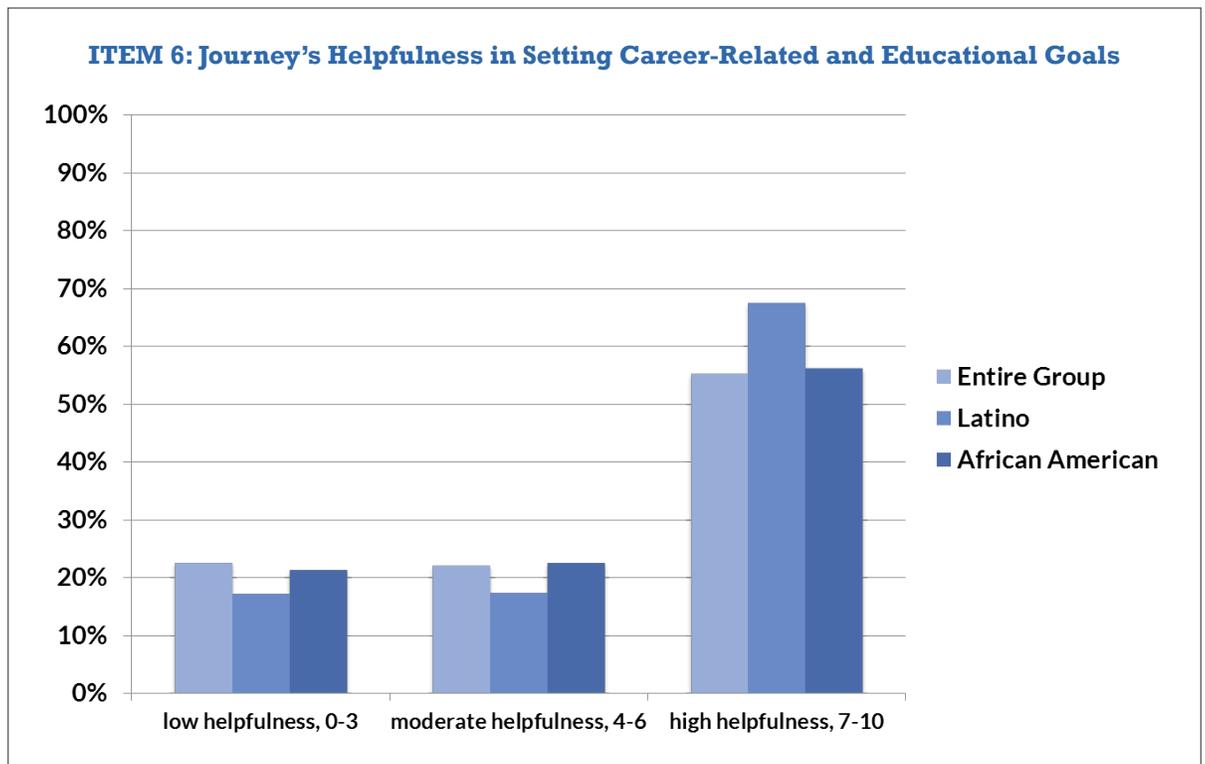
- A clear majority of participants (61%) rated Journey as highly helpful in giving them hope for the future.

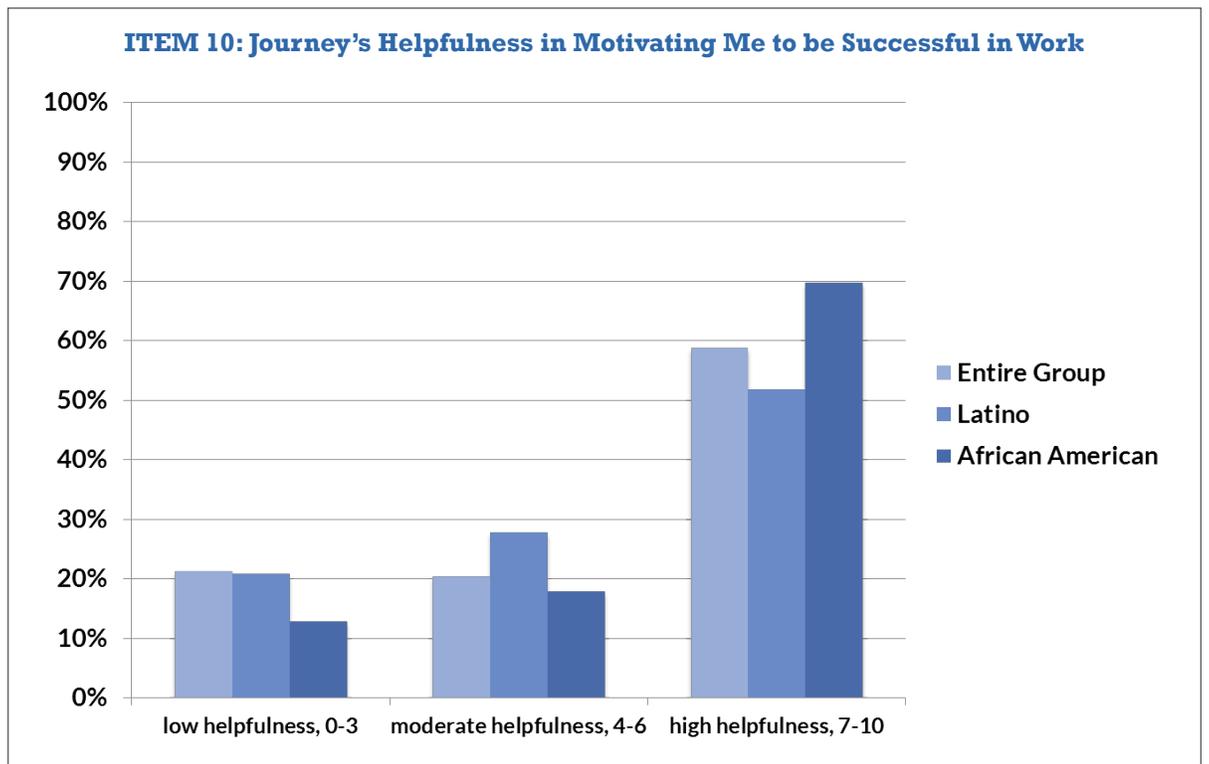
Results From the 11 General Items Disaggregated by Race-Ethnicity. The numbers of respondents was large enough for analyses in only two non-White groups, African Americans and Latinos. Selected results are presented in the subsequent figures. Note that the “entire group” includes all respondents, including African Americans and Latinos.

For the following items, only small differences by racial-ethnic group were found, and these figures will not be presented:

- Item 1 – interests
- Item 2 – skills
- Item 3 – values
- Item 4 – careers and educational programs
- Item 5 – choosing postsecondary programs or college majors
- Item 7 – making career plans
- Item 8 – finding a career that fits
- Item 9 – motivation to stay in school
- Item 11 – hope for the future

The following are figures for Items 6 and 10, for which there were differences by racial-ethnic group:





- For racial-ethnic groups overall, there were few differences, and these few differences were not large.

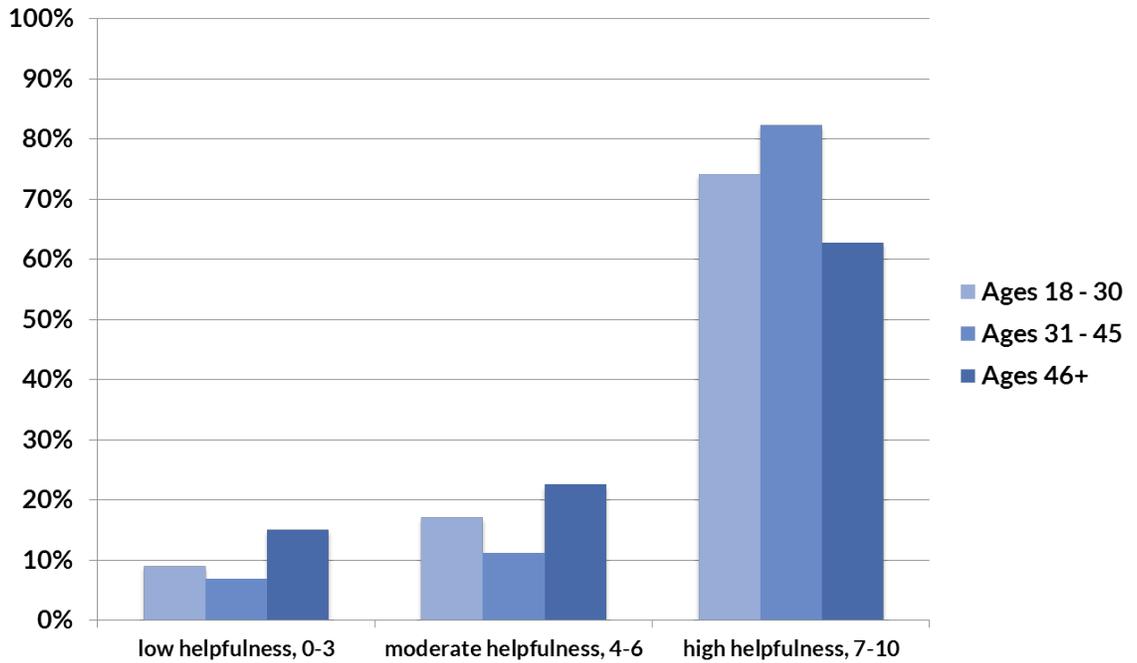
Perceptions of Journey's Helpfulness Disaggregated by Gender. On the 11 items, only one revealed a gender difference in perceived helpfulness. That is, on Item 8 (finding a career that fits for me), a higher percentage of women (65%) than men (58%) found Journey as highly helpful. Other differences on high helpfulness between women and men were less than five percentage points.

Journey Helpfulness Disaggregated by Age Group. The sample was split in to three age groups, producing an almost equal three-way split of the sample:

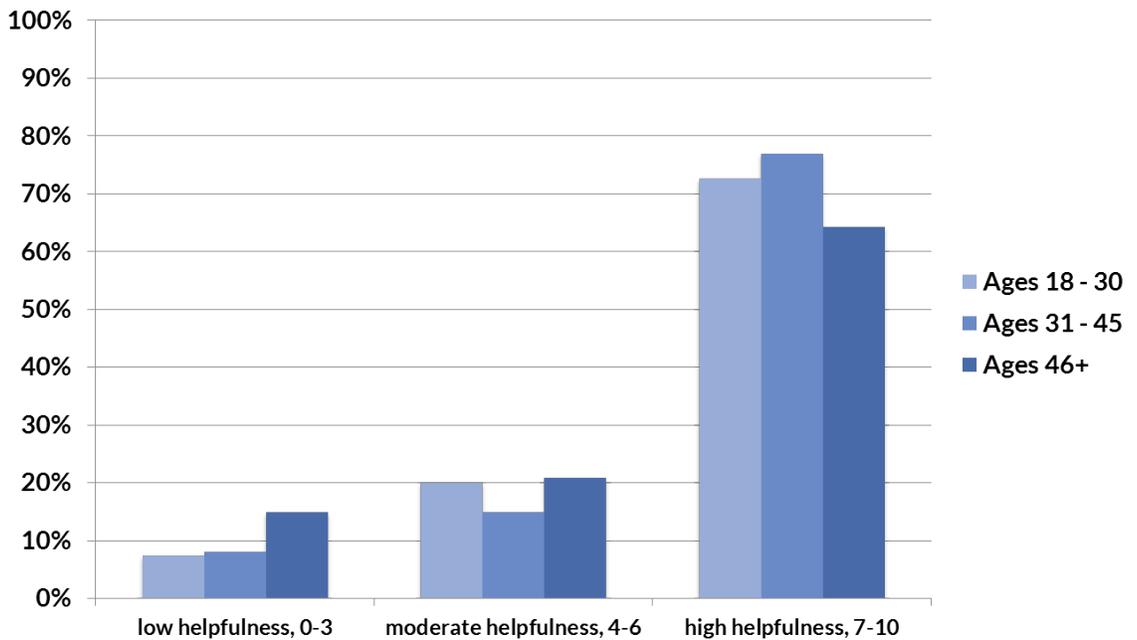
- 18-30, n = 135
- 31-45, n = 135
- 46 and above, n = 134

Responses by age group on the 11 items are presented in the following figures.

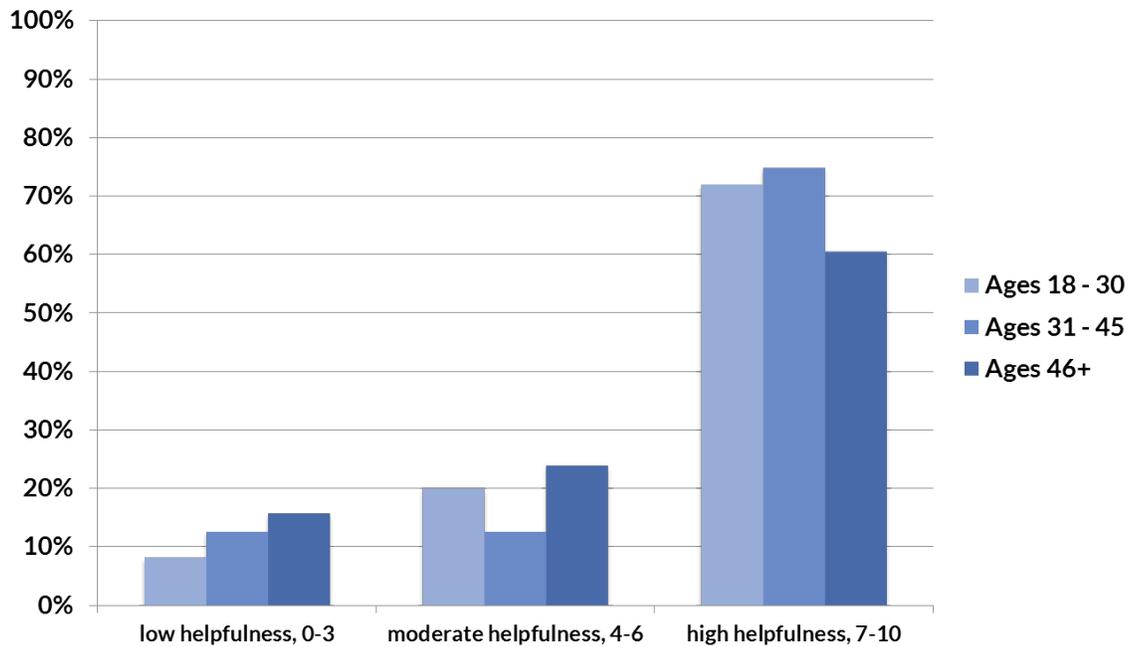
ITEM 1: Journey's Helpfulness in Learning About My Career Interests



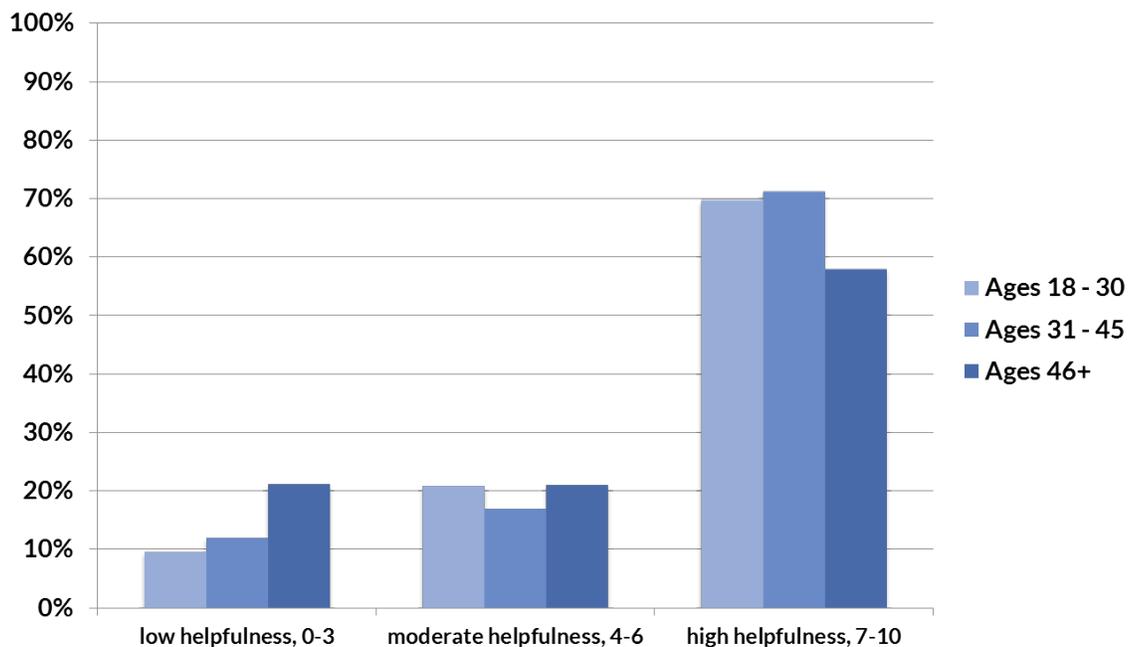
ITEM 2: Journey's Helpfulness in Learning About My Career-Related Skills



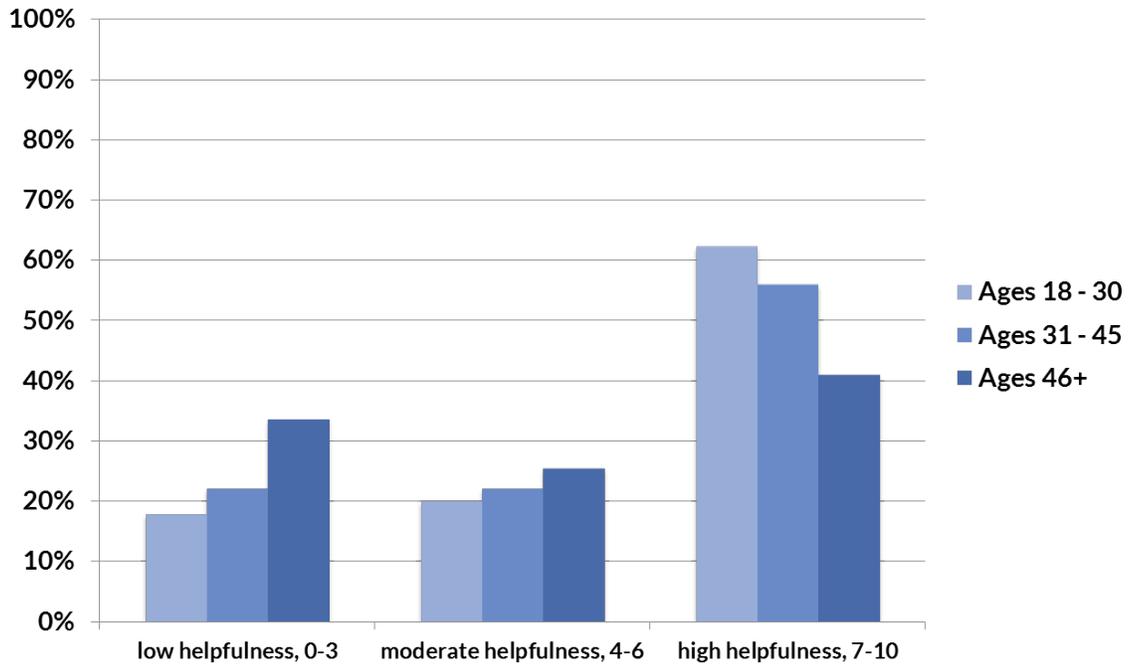
ITEM 3: Journey's Helpfulness in Learning About My Work Values



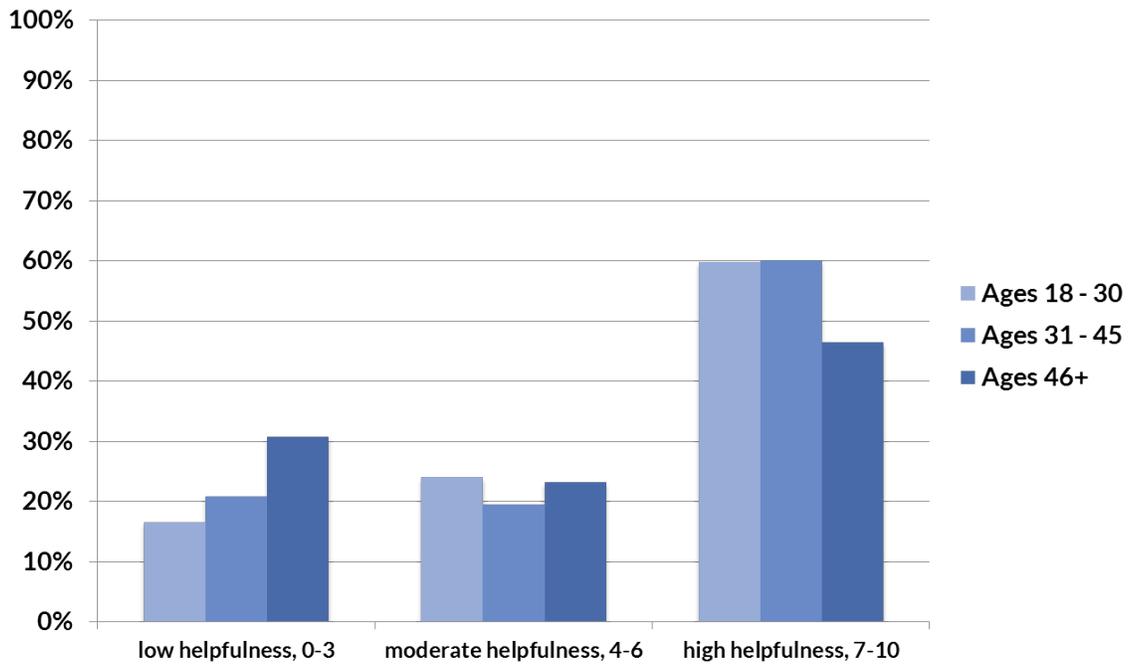
ITEM 4: Journey's Helpfulness in Learning About Careers and Educational Programs



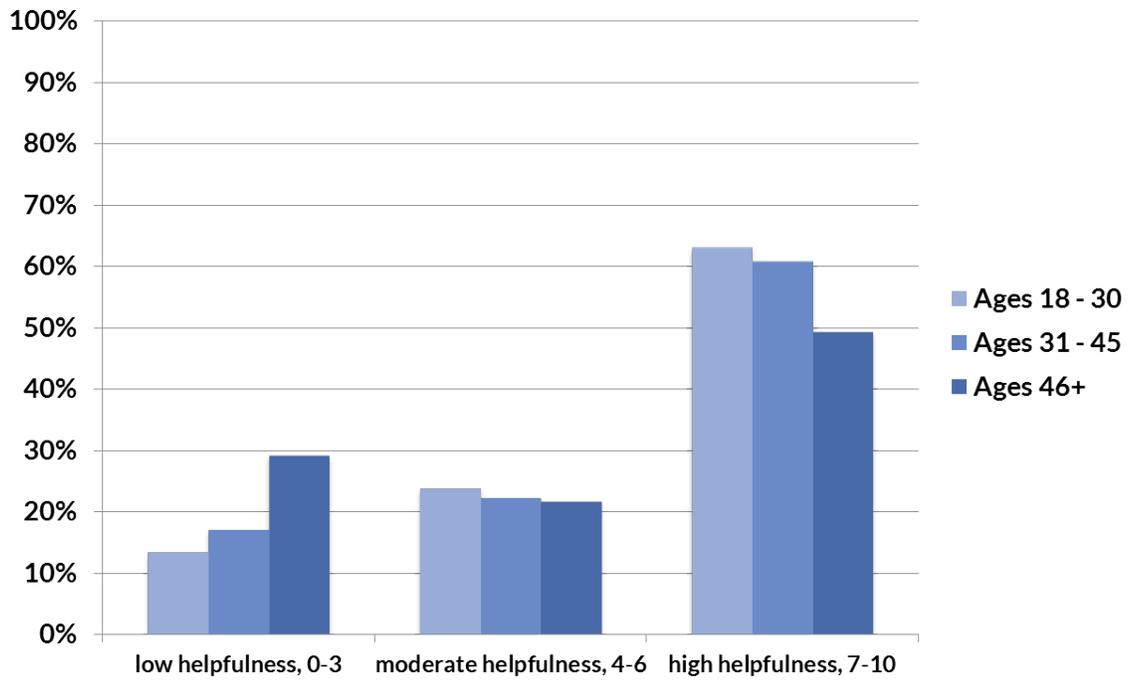
ITEM 5: Journey's Helpfulness in Choosing My Postsecondary Program or College Major



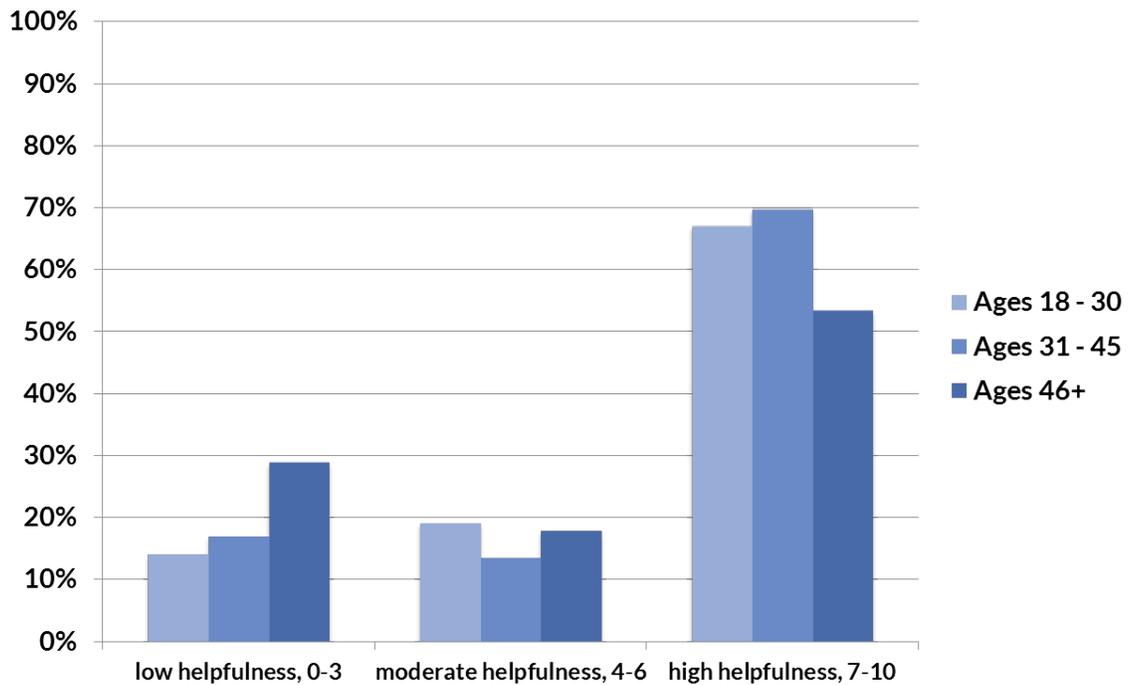
ITEM 6: Journey's Helpfulness in Setting Career-Related and Educational Goals

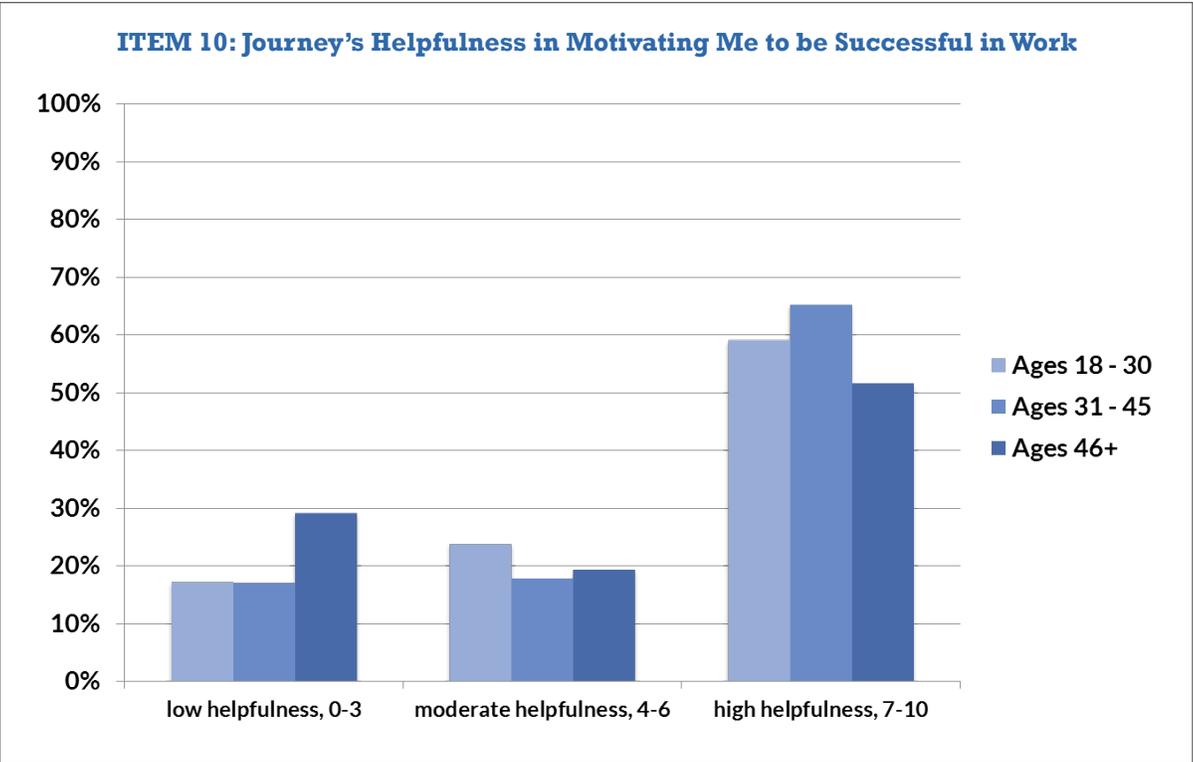
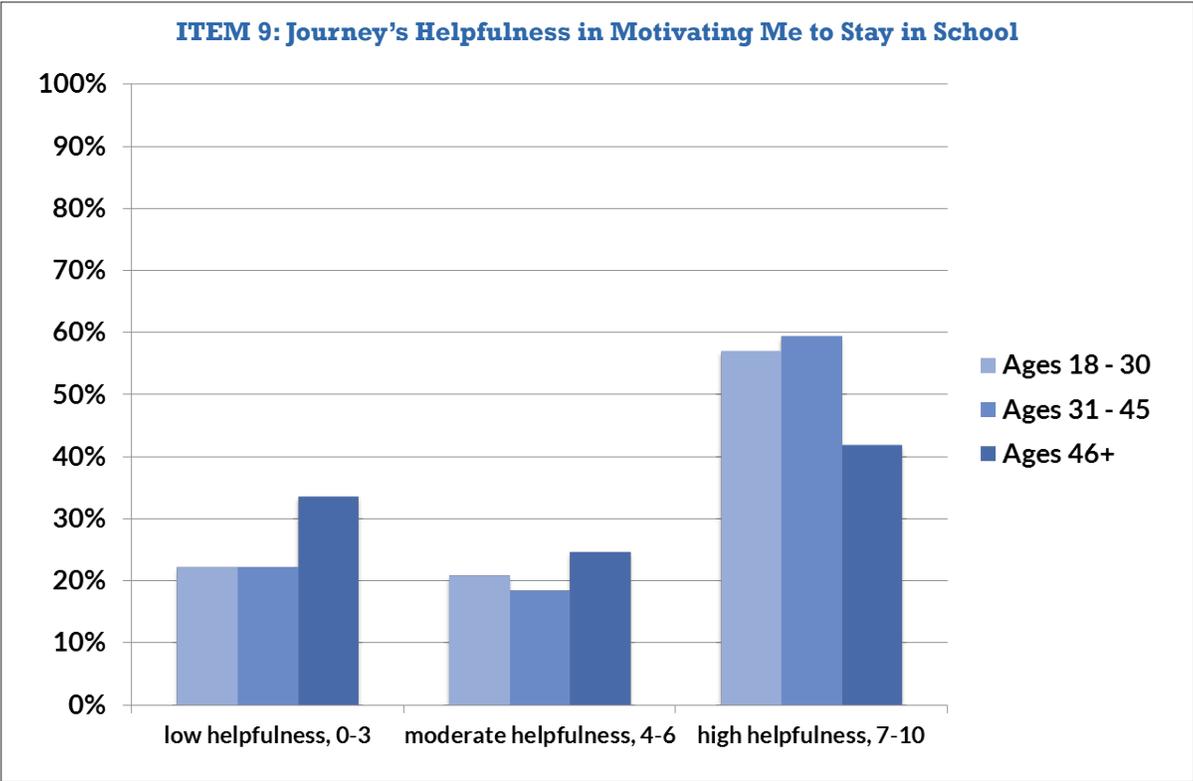


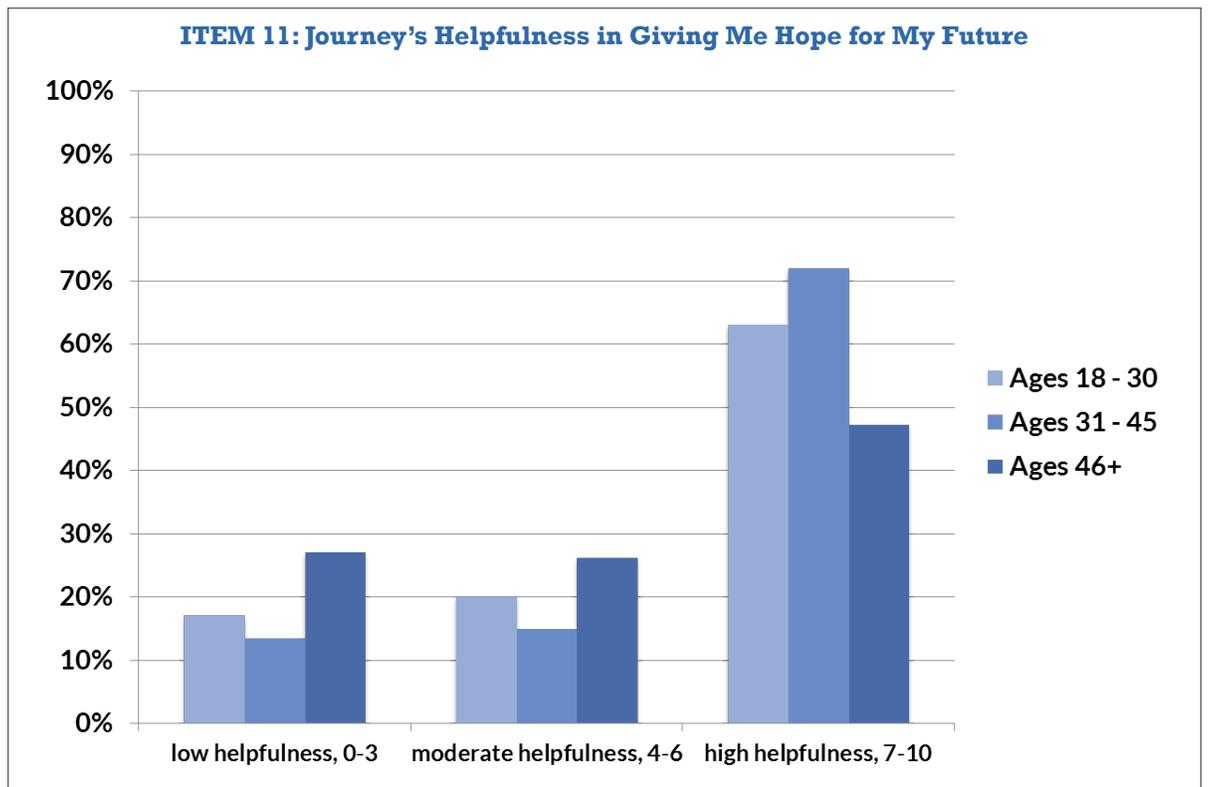
ITEM 7: Journey's Helpfulness in Making Educational and Career Plans



ITEM 8: Journey's Helpfulness in Finding a Career that Fits for Me







The most consistent differences in perceptions of the helpfulness of Journey were for the older group (ages 46 and above). That is, the older group consistently perceived Journey as less helpful across the 11 items. These differences in percentages were large in some cases. For example, 72% of respondents in the 31-45 age group perceived Journey as highly helpful in giving them hope for the future, whereas only 47% in the 46+ group perceived it has highly helpful. Across all 11 items, there were few and small differences between the two younger age groups (18-30, 31-45).

Perceptions of Journey's Helpfulness Disaggregated by Employment Status Groups. The sample was split in to three employment groups:

- Unemployed, n = 116
- Employed Part-time, n = 94
- Employed Full-time, n = 191

Differences across employment status groups were few and not large. However, on some items, those who were employed full-time rated the helpfulness of Journey slightly lower. For example, on high helpfulness in motivation to be successful at work (Item 10), percentages were 62% for unemployed, 57% for part-time employed, and 53% for full-time employed. On high helpfulness in giving hope for the future (Item 11), percentages were 67% for unemployed, 60% for part-time employed, and 55% for full-time employed.

Users-Ratings of Specific Components of Journey

Respondents rated the helpfulness of 12 separate Journey components. Participants were instructed to rate only the components that they had used.

Percentages of Respondents who Rated Separate Journey Components as Low, Moderate, and High in Levels of Helpfulness

	Low Helpfulness (0 to 3)	Moderate Helpfulness (4 to 6)	High Helpfulness (7 to 10)
Kuder Career Interests Assessment	8%	20%	72%
Kuder Skills Confidence Assessment	6%	21%	73%
Kuder Work Values Assessment	11%	23%	66%
Person Matches	14%	26%	60%
Occupational Search and Information	10%	19%	71%
College Search	17%	23%	60%
Learning About College Majors	14%	23%	63%
Financial Aid	19%	23%	58%
Resume Builder	16%	22%	62%
Job Seeking	15%	27%	58%
Personal Portfolio	16%	24%	60%
E-Portfolio	19%	27%	54%

In the table, note that a majority of participants rated each of the components as highly helpful (rating of 7 or higher). The Journey interest assessment, skills assessment, and the occupational search and information were the highest rated components. The E-Portfolio, Job Seeking Information, and Financial Aid Information had lower ratings of helpfulness; however a majority of respondents rated these as highly helpful.

Summary of Findings

Adults who were recent users of Kuder Journey were surveyed in the Spring of 2012. The 412 respondents were from 25 U.S. states and two U.S. territories. The sample somewhat reflected the U.S. racial-ethnic makeup, with African Americans overrepresented and Asians and Latinos underrepresented in the sample. More women (71%) than men (29%), responded to the survey. The ages of respondents were highly variable, with 25% of respondents being age 51 or over.

Adults' responses on the survey showed that most perceived Kuder Journey as highly helpful in multiple areas of their career planning and career development, including their self-awareness, knowledge of opportunities and career planning, motivation for education and career, and their hope for the future. For example, 73% of respondents rated Journey as highly helpful in learning their career interests; 74% rated Journey as highly helpful in learning their career-related skills; 63% rated it as highly helpful in finding a career that fits, and 61% rated Journey as highly helpful in giving them hope for the future. On all 11 items on which adults provided overall ratings of Journey, a majority rated it as highly helpful.

In disaggregated analyses on the 11 items, there were few differences by racial-ethnic group or by gender. There were consistent differences in ratings by age group. That is, the 46 years and older group consistently rated the helpfulness of Journey lower than the younger age groups (ages 18-30, ages 31-45). The two younger groups differed little from one another.

Adult participants also rated the separate Journey components (e.g., interest assessment, E-Portfolio). For each of the 12 components, a majority of adult respondents rated them as highly helpful. Highest helpfulness ratings were for the Interest Assessment, Skills Assessment, and the Occupational Search and Information.

Results from this study support the efficacy of Kuder Journey. A clear majority of adults perceived Journey as highly helpful in (a) learning about themselves, (b) learning career opportunities and making plans, (c) motivating them to be successful, and (d) giving them hope for their futures. It is encouraging that most adults saw Journey as highly helpful in their educational and career development.

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