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Building Career Management Skills



Edited by Laurent Sovet, Anne Chant,
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In Memory of Prof. Ronald G. Sultana

This book is dedicated to the memory of Prof. Ronald G. Sultana.

Ronald, thank you for the moments you gave us, for the laughter and humility you carried so naturally, for your wisdom and warmth, your inspiration and unwavering dedication. Few have shaped the international guidance community with the depth and generosity that you did.

You had a rare gift, the ability to build bridges between disciplines, paradigms, and ways of thinking. You recognised the worth in every perspective, wove them into a larger vision, and helped us move beyond quarrels of method and value in the search for a greater good. With a friendly yet compelling voice, you invited us to question easy assumptions about career education, counselling, and guidance, and in doing so, you touched and taught thousands.

We will miss you deeply. It pains us to know there will be no more conversations, no more moments of shared thought. Yet gratitude softens the sorrow, for we are thankful to have walked a part of life's road with you. May peace be with you, and may your loved ones carry the comfort of knowing how brightly you shone in the lives of others.

Preface

Thank you for 'virtually' picking up this book. It has been produced and made openly accessible to the communities of careers practice by the NICE Foundation, with financial support from the Paris Cité University (*Université Paris Cité*). The chapters in this volume originate from the NICE Academy, held in Paris, France, from 2 to 5 November 2021, under the theme 'Building Career Management Skills'. Each chapter reflects elements of the event and illuminates a different perspective of the nature, importance and development of career management skills (CMS) – both in theory and in practice. In keeping with one of the NICE Foundation's core principles, the book aims to bridge theory and practice in this field.

From a NICE Academy to the next

The importance of bridging theory and practice in promoting CMS became strikingly clear during a collaborative workshop at our first NICE Academy in Kraków, Poland, in 2018, moderated by Johannes Katsarov and Erik Zeltner. The session, which explored how CMS could be promoted and assessed within career guidance and counselling, attracted overwhelming interest, to the point that participants crowded into a small room with far too few chairs. Along with four other workshops, its aim was to explore how specific competences of career professionals, as defined in the European Competence Standards of NICE Foundation (Schiersmann et al., 2016), could be developed and assessed in academic training.

For 90 minutes, we debated how practitioners might assess their clients' CMS and how training programmes could equip them to do so. At first, the discussion seemed straightforward: several academics pointed to existing instruments for assessing people's readiness to manage their careers. The conversation focused on whether these tools were valid for different target groups. Then a practitioner raised a practical challenge: How could she administer a psychometric questionnaire on CMS when she had only 15 minutes with each client and needed to focus on their most urgent issues? The question stopped us in our tracks. Everyone agreed that it would be extremely useful for practitioners to quickly assess a client's competence in handling career-related challenges, yet no one could suggest a method that worked within the constraints of practice.

We had uncovered a blind spot, a real-world problem for which current theories and models offered no solution.

One year later, the NICE Academy was held in Split, Croatia, from 9 to 12 October 2019. During the event, Laurent Sovet proposed an informal lunchtime discussion on the training of career management skills, as part of a market for ideas on collaboration. When dozens of participants expressed interest in this discussion, along with another workshop on career education, we realised that the topic had once again attracted far more attention than we had anticipated. It was here in Split that the idea for a NICE Academy dedicated to Career Management Skills was born, and where Laurent Sovet invited us to host the next Academy in Paris.

Career management skills as a common compass in our communities

Since its very beginning in 2009, the NICE Foundation has recognised the importance of building CMS. This has been at the core of what career practitioners are expected to achieve in the professional role of career education. Since the first NICE Handbook (Schiersmann et al., 2012), career education has been identified as one of the five core competences to be developed through academic training in career guidance and counselling. We define career education as the ability of career professionals to 'teach and train people to develop the career management competences they need for managing education, training and career transitions' (Schiersmann et al., 2012, p. 55). More specifically, our network of more than 40 academic training providers across 28 European countries agreed that the focus of career education is to teach:

> *"People how to become aware of their strengths (interests, values, abilities, competences, talents, etc.), how to use systems and techniques of gathering information on available jobs, vocational and educational training, how to plan, manage, implement and review their career, and how to apply effectively for working or learning opportunities (Schiersmann et al., 2012, p. 66)."*

We wrote this at a time when many in our network questioned whether it was appropriate to say that career professionals had an educational role. This remains true today, as career education is still often seen as the responsibility of teachers and course providers rather than career counsellors (Hooley et al., 2015; Joho et al., 2024). We fully support

the view that schools should play a central role in promoting and fostering career management skills. As Laura Nota and colleagues (2012) have emphasised, career professionals alone cannot provide all the career-related training that citizens require. Dedicated programmes are essential for different groups – including children, migrants, and people with disabilities – to equip them with the competences needed to manage their careers as autonomously as possible.

Nevertheless, even career professionals whose primary focus is counselling have an important educational role to play (Niles & Azra Karajic, 2008). As quality standards for career guidance and counselling emphasise (e.g., Schiersmann et al., 2016), it is poor practice for professionals to simply tell clients what to do. Instead, clients should be able to understand and adopt the reasoning behind the guidance they receive – ideally to the point where they can apply the same reasoning to similar challenges in the future. In this sense, career counselling is often inherently educational, for example when professionals help clients identify goals for their career development. It is therefore crucial for career professionals to quickly determine whether a lack of certain CMS may be contributing to a client's difficulties. Recognising this need led NICE to formulate the following competence standard for the training of career professionals: 'Career professionals [need to be] ready and willing to assess the career management competences and learning needs together with clients, applying appropriate instruments and approaches' (Schiersmann et al., 2016, p. 56).

From inspiration to publication

The more we realised that this competence standard was more an aspiration than a reflection of current practice, the more we saw the need for a special publication to attract fresh research on promoting CMS, alongside the planned NICE Academy in Paris. In late 2019, the Board of the NICE Foundation committed to this goal. The result is the book you are now virtually holding in your hands.

Bringing this book to life, and hosting the corresponding NICE Academy in Paris, took far longer than we anticipated. Shortly after we began preparing the call for contributions, the global Covid-19 pandemic struck. Our board meetings quickly shifted to urgent questions: whether, how, and when we could still hold the Paris Academy, and what impact the pandemic might have on citizens' careers and the work of career professionals. As emphasised by Jos Akkermans and colleagues (2020), CMS were also critical for managing the career implications of the pandemic. Individuals across all sectors

faced unprecedented uncertainty, rapid shifts to remote work, job losses, and changes in labour market demand. For many, this meant reassessing career goals, acquiring new skills, and adapting to unfamiliar work environments. In this context, the focus of the Paris Academy on CMS gained even greater urgency and relevance.

When the Paris Academy finally took place in November 2021, the world had experienced lockdowns, partial reopenings, vaccinations, travel bans, and restrictions. Originally scheduled for September 2020, the event was postponed and redesigned as a hybrid format to enable the widest possible participation. After more than a year of delay, it was a joy to reconnect, both in person and virtually. Among the notable keynote speakers, we will remember in particular the meaningful contribution of Ronald Sultana, who offered a critical and insightful reflection on CMS through the lens of work education in formal learning settings. His passion and unwavering commitment to advancing social justice were both inspiring and deeply appreciated by all who attended. This volume also includes a posthumous contribution from him, allowing his voice, ideas, and vision to continue guiding the field. In recognition of his remarkable impact and legacy, we have dedicated this book to him.

As editors of this book, we hope you will find its contents valuable in deepening your understanding of the complexity of career management skills across diverse contexts and in recognising their importance for all client groups. As a foundation dedicated to advancing the competences of career practitioners, we also trust that this book will support educators in embedding these skills into the curricula of future career professionals. We would like to personally thank all those who contributed to the creation and success of this book, including the authors, reviewers, organising team, and colleagues whose dedication, insights, and support made this publication possible.

Laurent Sovet, Anne Chant, Johannes Katsarov, Jacques Pouyaud
Editors

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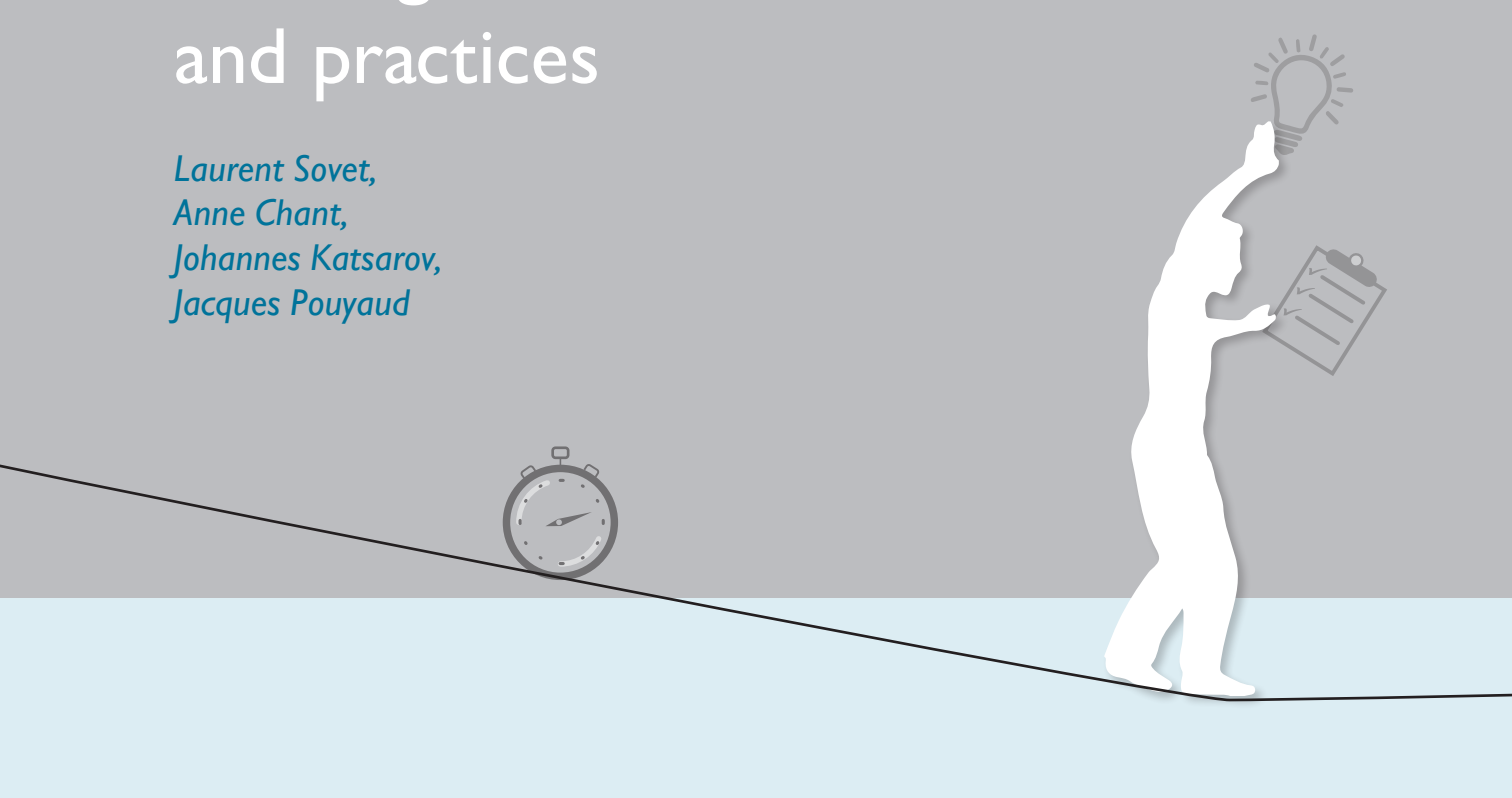


01

Career management skills in the 21st century: Foundations, challenges and practices

Laurent Sovet,
Anne Chant,
Johannes Katsarov,
Jacques Pouyaud





Abstract

This chapter introduces *Career management skills in the 21st century: Foundations, challenges, and practices.* Career management skills (CMS) are increasingly recognised as a central outcome of career guidance and counselling, enabling individuals to navigate complex, uncertain, and rapidly changing life and work contexts. Over the past decades, multiple conceptualisations of CMS have emerged, reflecting diverse theoretical, policy, and practice perspectives. This edited volume seeks to contribute to current debates by bringing together international research and practice. It is organised in four sections. The first section establishes the theoretical and conceptual foundations of CMS. The second section examines how CMS are shaped by diverse contexts, identities, and circumstances. The third section explores the role of practitioners in designing, delivering, and sustaining CMS development. Finally, the fourth section presents practical strategies for embedding career education across different educational and guidance settings.

Keywords

career management skills, career guidance, career education, career counselling, career development, career theory

> *"Career is not a single moment of decision when we choose one job over another. It is deeply woven into the ongoing fabric of our lives. Our careers are conducted continuously, and they develop in social and political contexts that provide contrasting opportunities and limitations. Career is all around us and there is no escape from it, because it describes the coming together of our life, our learning, and our work. Career is important to the lives of individuals across the world and to the societies in which they live. (McCash et al., 2021, pp. 8–9)."*

Career development in the 21st century

In 2008, the Council of the European Union defined lifelong guidance as a 'continuous process that enables citizens at any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which those capacities and competences are learned and/or used.' In the preamble of

Lifelong guidance is inseparable from the development of career management skills.

this resolution, lifelong guidance was framed as a key instrument for promoting employability, social inclusion, active citizenship, and lifelong learning, underscoring its strategic role in responding to rapid social, economic, and labour market changes across Europe. Consequently, lifelong guidance is inseparable from the development of career management skills (CMS), which equip individuals with the competences required to navigate their lives in the complexity of the 21st century.

In a world increasingly characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA; Bennett & Lemoine, 2014), this vision has gained even greater relevance, as individuals must continuously adapt to shifting contexts while constructing meaningful and sustainable careers. Among contemporary career development theories, the Life Design paradigm (Savickas et al., 2009) offers a holistic framework for understanding how individuals construct their life and career paths. It emphasises the importance of 'contextual possibilities, dynamic processes, non-linear progression, multiple perspectives, and personal patterns' (Savickas et al., 2009, p. 239). As noted by Canzittu (2022), the challenges of the current context underline the need to promote and reinforce career education, with particular emphasis on competency-oriented approaches that strengthen individuals' capacity to act, adapt, and thrive across the lifespan.

This volume seeks to address these questions and contribute to contemporary debates on CMS and their implications for career guidance and counselling.

Policymakers, researchers, and practitioners appear to converge on the critical role of CMS in personal and career development (Sovet et al., 2021). However, several important questions remain: how CMS are conceptualised and operationalised, how they may vary across individuals and contexts, how they can be assessed, which practices best support their development, and how they can be integrated into educational systems. This volume seeks to address these questions and contribute to contemporary debates on CMS and their implications for career guidance and counselling.

Conceptualisations of career management skills

Emergence and definitions

CMS are intrinsically linked to career education. As Guichard (2001) observed, this connection was already apparent in the early work of Frank Parsons, who, in *Choosing a vocation* (1909), outlined pedagogical exercises to develop transferable skills for career development. After the Second World War, the emergence of developmental theories of vocational choice advanced by researchers such as Donald E. Super and Eli Ginzberg,

along with the US Career Education Movement of the 1970s, further reinforced CMS as a critical outcome of career education (Guichard, 2001; Hoyt, 1982; Rojewski, 2006). In contemporary terms, career education is defined as 'the totality of experiences (school-based and otherwise) that help individuals acquire and use the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to make work a meaningful, productive, and satisfying part of life' (Rojewski, 2006, p. 101). Today, many education and lifelong guidance systems around the world adopt CMS frameworks as a structured basis for designing, implementing, and evaluating career education programmes and activities (Einarsdottir et al., 2023; Hooley et al., 2024; Neary et al., 2016; Sultana, 2012).

Today, many education and lifelong guidance systems around the world adopt CMS frameworks as a structured basis for designing, implementing, and evaluating career education programmes and activities.

The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (2012) defines CMS as 'a range of competences which provide structured ways for individuals and groups to gather, analyse, synthesise and organise self, educational and occupational information, as well as the skills to make and implement decisions and transitions' (p. 21). If this definition is widely used to provide a broad description of CMS, it has been interpreted and operationalised in diverse ways across countries and contexts, reflecting differing policy priorities, educational traditions, and labour market conditions (Neary et al., 2016; Sultana, 2012). Variations in understanding may also exist within countries (Kauppila & Kettunen, 2025; Kettunen et al., 2020; Neary et al., 2016). Currently, multiple terms are used in institutional and scientific literature to designate CMS (Bangali & Guillemette, 2021; Sultana, 2012), including *career management competencies, career learning, career development skills, career skills, career literacy, career self-management skills, career readiness,* and *career competencies*. In some cases, CMS are not explicitly named but appear as implicit dimensions within broader categories such as personal agency, resources, capital, or capabilities. Without a unified view, some of these terms are used interchangeably, while others are tied to specific countries, organisations, or theories, shaping the diverse ways in which CMS are conceptualised, taught, and assessed. Sultana (2012) concluded that 'different terms in use reflect different approaches and underpinning philosophies, anchored in national or regional histories and cultures which should be acknowledged and valued' (p. 228). The chapters in this volume highlight the wide variation in how CMS are defined and applied, offering insight into both the richness and the complexity of the field. Overall, this diversity of terminology and interpretation underscores the need for a clear conceptual foundation, providing a common reference point for research, policy, and practice in career education and guidance.

The chapters in this volume highlight the wide variation in how CMS are defined and applied, offering insight into both the richness and the complexity of the field.



Two main conceptions

Providing a comprehensive overview of the theoretical models underpinning CMS is particularly challenging, given the sheer number and diversity of approaches that have emerged across contexts and disciplines.

Providing a comprehensive overview of the theoretical models underpinning CMS is particularly challenging, given the sheer number and diversity of approaches that have emerged across contexts and disciplines (Sovet et al., 2021). At least two broad movements can be distinguished.

Developmental approach of career behaviours. In 1955, Super introduced the construct of *career maturity* to describe the extent to which individuals are prepared to make age-appropriate career decisions, considering both the career development tasks they face and their broader psychosocial development. These career development tasks were largely framed in terms of the CMS to be acquired (Levinson et al., 1998). Building on this foundation, Crites (1973) developed the Career Maturity Inventory, which included five career choice attitudes (i.e., involvement in the choice process, orientation toward work, independence in decision-making, preference for career choice, and conceptions of the career choice process) and five career choice competencies (i.e., self-appraisal, occupational information, goal selection, planning, and problem-solving). Together, these dimensions captured the conative and cognitive processes that underpin effective career decision-making.

After several decades of research on career maturity, scholars began to critique its reliance on age-related benchmarks and linear developmental assumptions, as well as its limited consideration of individual and social contexts (Patton, 2006; Watson, 2019). In response to these limitations, a call for refinement was necessary. As Patton (2006, p. 127) observed, "in his later writings, Super himself proposed a change in terminology from 'career maturity' to 'career adaptability' to better convey the range of career-related attitudes, knowledge, and skills at the various stages and transition points in career development." In a constructivist view, Savickas (2005) defined *career adaptability* as the self-regulatory psychological resources that enable individuals to cope with changing work roles and conditions. In this vein, career adaptability can be regarded as an antecedent of CMS rather than a substitute, providing the underlying psychosocial foundation upon which CMS are built and enacted. Today, career maturity continues to be invoked as a theoretical model for assessing CMS (Patillon et al., 2018).

From new career orientations to career self-management. In the 1990s, new career orientations were described to capture the profound changes affecting work and employment relationships (Hall, 1996). Among the most influential career orientations, *boundaryless careers* (Defillippi & Arthur, 1994) and *protean careers* (Hall & Mir-

vis, 1995) can be cited. The first emphasises that career development extends beyond the boundaries of a single employment setting, encompassing transitions across organisations, occupations, and even geographical locations. The second highlights the growing need for individuals to take greater responsibility for managing their own professional trajectories, guided by self-directedness and values-driven choices. Both orientations share a focus on individual agency and adaptability, reflecting a broader shift away from stable, organisationally anchored career paths toward more flexible, self-managed approaches to career development (Hirschi & Koen, 2021).

As noted by Defillippi and Arthur (1994), these new orientations marked a shift from competency-based organisational approaches to competency-based career approaches, where individuals build and mobilise their own career capital across contexts rather than relying solely on organisational structures. The authors operationalised these resources as career competencies across three broad categories: *know-why* (i.e., values, motivations), *know-how* (i.e., career relevant skills and job-related knowledge), and *know-whom* (i.e., social and professional networks). Accordingly, career competencies are defined as the 'knowledge, skills, and abilities central to career development, which can be influenced and developed by the individual' (Akkermans et al., 2013, p. 246).

Over the last two decades, several theoretical and empirical approaches have been used to operationalise career competencies from a career self-management perspective. A recent meta-analysis (Talluri et al., 2024) showed that these approaches share important similarities, often drawing on the original framework proposed by Defillippi and Arthur (1994), while also displaying singularities that reflect variations in theoretical foundations, cultural contexts, and target populations. Overall, career competencies remain a dynamic topic in career studies and are frequently used as a lens through which to understand and apprehend CMS (Bangali & Guillemette, 2021; Paradniké et al., 2016).

As a concluding reflection on the conceptions of CMS, it can be observed that many approaches focus on identifying key dimensions, with factor analyses frequently employed to provide empirical evidence for their multidimensionality (Sovet et al., 2021). Rough comparisons suggest the presence of some common dimensions across models (e.g. self-knowledge, occupational information), despite their distinctive epistemological underpinnings. Nevertheless, developing an exhaustive, contextualised, or even universal theoretical framework for CMS remains a critical challenge. This difficulty strongly resonates with the struggles faced by policymakers in their unsuccessful attempts to establish a common European framework (Hooley et al., 2013; Sultana, 2012).

Developing an exhaustive, contextualised, or even universal theoretical framework for CMS remains a critical challenge.

Promoting and fostering career management skills

The development of CMS does not occur in isolation; it requires intentional support from multiple levels of society. In this regard, we emphasise the complementary role of (a) education systems and lifelong guidance policies, (b) career practitioners, and (c) the research community.

Role of education systems and lifelong guidance policies

Education systems play a central role in fostering CMS by integrating career education into curricula and offering dedicated guidance activities.

Education systems play a central role in fostering CMS by integrating career education into curricula and offering dedicated guidance activities (Guichard, 2001; Hughes et al., 2016; Rojewski, 2006; Sovet et al., 2025). Overall, career-related activities within educational settings are highly heterogeneous, varying in their objectives and formats. In some contexts, they may take the form of isolated interventions such as career days, workshops, or counselling sessions, while in others they are embedded as structured, developmental programmes spanning multiple school years (Guichard, 2001). A growing body of research has demonstrated both the effectiveness of school-based career guidance (Hughes et al., 2016) and its return on investment (Percy & Hooley, 2024), showing positive outcomes not only for individuals but also for societies. Nevertheless, as Canzittu (2022) emphasised, it is crucial to account for the diversity of learner profiles and needs when delivering contextualised career education in schools. Striking a balance between collective programmes and individualised support therefore remains a key challenge.

There is broad agreement that high-quality career guidance and counselling services are essential for supporting lifelong learning and the development of CMS.

There is broad agreement that high-quality career guidance and counselling services are essential for supporting lifelong learning and the development of CMS (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021). This underscores the global responsibility of governments to design and sustain policies that ensure equitable access, quality provision, and long-term investment in career guidance systems (Robertson, 2021). At the national level, however, such services do not always form a unified system; rather, they often consist of a patchwork of structures that may in some cases complement one another, while in others remain fragmented or even conflicting (Borbély-Pecze et al., 2022; Watts & Sultana, 2004; Zhang, 2016). Nevertheless, they should ultimately be conceived and organised as a coherent national system. As point out by Borbély-Pecze et al., (2022), 'understanding the nature, goals, and capacities of countries' career/lifelong guidance systems also requires an in-depth knowledge of these countries' cultural heritage, including values and other features, which are bound up with a country's history' (p. 69). The *Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance in-*

to lifelong learning strategies, adopted by the Council of the European Union in 2008, reflects this perspective by calling on Member States to develop lifelong guidance systems that are accessible, coherent, and tailored to national contexts while aligned with shared European priorities. Over the past decade, significant progress has been made across Europe, with improvements in access to guidance services, enhanced policy coherence, and stronger integration of career education within lifelong learning frameworks (European Commission, 2020). For instance, some national organisations have introduced portfolio approaches to support both the assessment and the development of CMS (Sultana, 2013).

In addition, many countries have introduced CMS frameworks or competence standards to provide a structured basis for career guidance policies. Often referred to as 'Blueprint' frameworks, these represent structured sets of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable individuals to manage their careers effectively, supporting them in making informed decisions, navigating transitions, and constructing meaningful life and work paths (Hooley et al., 2013; Neary et al., 2016). Typically, their elements have been developed by leaders and experts in the career development field through a blend of conceptual reflection and iterative processes of consultation and refinement (Hooley et al., 2013). They serve as an interface between policymakers, career practitioners, resource developers, and individuals (Hooley et al., 2013), while in educational settings they can foster internal and external collaboration to deliver effective and coherent career education curricula (Sovet et al., 2025; Vaughan, 2010). While offering promising perspectives for supporting the development of CMS, further research is needed to better understand the different ways in which CMS frameworks are built, implemented, and used, as well as to examine their outcomes for both individuals and society.

CMS frameworks represent structured sets of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable individuals to manage their careers effectively, supporting them in making informed decisions, navigating transitions, and constructing meaningful life and work paths.

Role of career practitioners

Career practitioners form a heterogeneous professional group that varies considerably across countries, education systems, and labour market contexts (Arthur, 2008). They may include advisers, counsellors, psychologists, teachers, social workers, employment service staff, and coaches. In some countries, clear distinctions exist between practitioner roles and professions, whereas in others the boundaries are more fluid and overlapping (Bimrose & Brown, 2019). The NICE Foundation distinguishes three main clusters of career practitioners (Schiersmann et al., 2016): *career advisers*, who provide basic information and support; *career professionals*, who deliver career guidance and counselling; and *career specialists*, who possess advanced expertise, such as in managing career services, conducting supervision, undertaking research, or delivering academic train-

ing. This diverse landscape raises critical challenges, including issues of professional identity (Bimrose & Brown, 2019), the recognition and coordination of different practitioner roles (Vaughan, 2010), and the definition and development of the competencies required for effective career guidance and counselling (Schiersmann et al., 2016).

Despite their diverse backgrounds, career practitioners share a set of core competences that enable them to provide effective guidance. Building on an integration of the critical tasks inherent to career practice, the NICE Foundation developed European competence standards that distinguish six horizontal core competences (Schiersmann et al., 2016): generic professional competences, career counselling competences, career education competences, career assessment and information competences, career service management competences, and social systems intervention competences. More recently, the role of teachers as career practitioners has attracted growing attention (Joho et al., 2024; Rice & Hooley, 2024). Joho et al. (2024), for instance, conducted a systematic review of teachers' competences in career guidance and identified five distinctive domains: content knowledge, pedagogical-content knowledge, pedagogical-psychological knowledge, organisational knowledge, and counselling knowledge. In a complementary perspective, Rice and Hooley (2024) argue that teachers should take a more active role in supporting students' CMS development.

Teachers should take a more active role in supporting students' CMS development.

Niles (2014) identified four critical challenges for advancing career practitioners as a profession: the need for stronger public policies addressing career development, greater standardisation of competencies, more innovative training programmes, and stronger demonstration of evidence-based practices. He noted that many countries have since implemented standardised training for career practitioners. In parallel, several national and international organisations have developed qualification standards to further support their professional development (Arthur, 2008). At the European level, the NICE Foundation has placed particular emphasis on establishing high quality standards in the training and professionalisation of career practitioners. Its *raison d'être* is captured in its stated aim 'to establish European competence standards that support the academic training of career practitioners, enable the mutual recognition of relevant degrees, and ensure the quality assurance of career guidance and counselling programmes, while also reflecting societal challenges, labour-market needs, and the latest academic knowledge underpinning career guidance and counselling' (Schiersmann et al., 2016, p. 11). By strengthening the professionalisation and competence standards of career practitioners, these initiatives ultimately enhance their capacity to foster the development of CMS.

By strengthening the professionalisation and competence standards of career practitioners, these initiatives ultimately enhance their capacity to foster the development of CMS.

Role of innovation and research in career guidance and counselling

Kettunen (2023) defines innovation in the context of career development as 'new theories, methods, services, practices, techniques, tools, or institutional structures to produce a significant change in career service delivery' (p. 467). In other words, innovation may emerge from the efforts of policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and, more broadly, all individuals who influence the ways in which career services are conceived, organised, and implemented. Innovation is particularly crucial for developing contextualised practices that address the needs of underrepresented or marginalised groups, as well as for responding to the new challenges imposed by a rapidly changing context (Maree, 2019). In this sense, innovation represents a constant reference point in the evolution of career development and can be stimulated by building stronger bridges and fostering translational dialogues between research, practice, and public policies.

A central dimension of innovation in career guidance and counselling is the promotion of evidence-based practices. Currently, several meta-analyses offer a comprehensive view of the effectiveness of career interventions on various career-related outcomes (e.g., Brown et al., 2003; Özlem, 2019; Soares et al., 2022; Whiston et al., 2017). These studies not only highlight the positive impact of career interventions on variables such as career indecision but also provide valuable insights for identifying best practices. Importantly, they contribute to translating research findings into practical tools and methods that can be applied across diverse contexts, thereby strengthening the relevance and legitimacy of career guidance in education, employment, and lifelong learning systems. Nevertheless, more research is needed to investigate the extent to which career interventions foster the development of CMS, and to capture how these competences evolve across different settings, populations, and stages of the life course (Akkermans et al., 2015; Bridstock, 2009).

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As described in the previous part of this chapter, research also plays a pivotal role in advancing the operationalisation and assessment of CMS. Despite growing consensus on their importance, CMS remain complex and multidimensional, with variations in how they are conceptualised and measured across theoretical approaches, countries, and contexts (Patillon et al., 2018; Sultana, 2012; Sovet & Jacquin, 2021; Sovet et al., 2021; Talluri et al., 2024). CMS occupy different positions within contemporary career theories. For example, the Social Cognitive Model of Career Self-Management (Lent & Brown, 2013) conceptualises CMS as one facet of broader career-adaptive behaviours, whereas in the Self-regulation Model of Career Competencies (Talluri et al., 2024), CMS

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hold a central and explicitly defined role as the core mechanisms that drive career development. This diversity of perspectives highlights the need for more integrative approaches that can bridge theoretical traditions and provide a coherent framework for understanding and operationalising CMS. Finally, most contemporary measures of CMS rely on self-assessment methods (Sovet & Jacquin, 2021). Future research should therefore investigate alternative approaches, such as performance-based tasks, multi-informant assessments, or longitudinal designs, to capture more nuanced and dynamic aspects of CMS and to better evaluate their development over time.

Overview of the book

Together, these sections aim to provide a comprehensive, critical, and practice-oriented exploration of CMS in the 21st century.

The rest of the edited volume is composed of 16 chapters, divided into four distinctive but complementary sections. Together, these sections aim to provide a comprehensive, critical, and practice-oriented exploration of CMS in the 21st century. They move from conceptual clarity to contextual understanding, then to the role of professionals, and finally to strategies for putting ideas into practice.

Conceptual foundations for career management skills

The chapters in this first section lay the theoretical and conceptual foundations for understanding CMS, offering both critical perspectives and practical frameworks that inform the rest of the volume.

In Chapter 2, *Career management skills and the political work of work education*, Ronald G. Sultana critically examined the CMS concept, arguing that it can individualise and depoliticise structural inequalities in the labour market. Drawing on extensive international experience, he contrasted compliance-oriented models – focused on employability within existing economic systems – with transformative approaches that promote critical thinking, democratic participation, and social justice. Using composite portraits, he illustrated how educators navigate tensions between preparing students for work and fostering critical awareness. The author called for a morally engaged pedagogy that equips learners not only to adapt, but to question and transform the socio-economic conditions shaping their lives.

In Chapter 3, *Career self-management as resource management through action regulation*, Dawa Schläpfer, Francisco Wilhelm, and Andreas Hirschi conceptualised CMS as the ability to manage personal and contextual resources effectively over the lifespan. Drawing on resource management and action regulation theory (Glaub et al., 2014; Raabe et al., 2007), they framed CMS as four iterative phases: clarifying goals, mapping resources and barriers, developing action strategies, and monitoring or adapting plans. Each phase requires specific competencies such as self-awareness, networking, planning, and feedback use. The framework provides practitioners with a structured yet adaptable approach to fostering agency, resilience, and adaptability, enabling clients to achieve meaningful career goals in evolving contexts.

In Chapter 4, *Career development and active participation of individuals in contexts of instability and change*, Pilar Mamolar, Alejandro Iborra, and Beatriz Malik-Liévano explored how individuals navigate career development amid uncertainty and constant labour market change. They presented a theoretical and empirical model comprising five dimensions: (a) security or development orientation, (b) career direction, (c) commitment to development, (d) reflective awareness, and (e) self-confidence. Drawing on data from diverse occupational groups, they examined how age and professional status shape subjective career patterns, revealing distinct profiles. The chapter emphasised the need for educational and counselling strategies that strengthen agency while acknowledging structural constraints, aiming to foster sustainable employability and active participation across the life course.

In Chapter 5, *Complexity competence as basis for career management*, Christiane Schiersmann argued that in an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world (i.e. VUCA world) shaped by globalisation and digitalisation, the ability to navigate complexity has become a core requirement for successful career development. Drawing on systems theory, synergetics, and complex problem-solving models, she proposed a comprehensive competence profile encompassing cognitive, personal, social, and reflective dimensions. This profile emphasised skills such as analysing complex systems, tolerating ambiguity, fostering resilience, and engaging in systematic reflection. The author also discussed implications for competence assessment and the design of educational and training programmes that can cultivate complexity competence across diverse contexts.



Diversity and contextual influences on career management skills

The chapters in this section examine how CMS are shaped by the diverse contexts, identities, and circumstances in which individuals live and work.

The chapters in this section examine how CMS are shaped by the diverse contexts, identities, and circumstances in which individuals live and work. They highlight the ways in which developmental stage, gender, disability, migration background, and other contextual factors influence the development and application of CMS, and they demonstrate the need for guidance approaches that are equitable, inclusive, and responsive to these differences.

In Chapter 6, *Career adaptability and its relationship to career-related behaviours in early and middle adolescence*, Iva Šverko and Toni Babarović examined how adaptability resources (i.e., concern, control, curiosity, and confidence) relate to career readiness, career decidedness, and engagement in career construction among Croatian students aged 11–14 and 15–18. Using the Career Construction Model of Adaptation (Savickas, 2002), they found that career concern was the strongest predictor of positive career behaviours across both age groups, with career control playing an additional role in early adolescence and career confidence in middle adolescence. The study underscored the importance of tailoring career interventions to developmental stages while integrating both school-based workshops and digital tools to enhance career development.

In Chapter 7, *Gender stereotyping in the world-of-work: The role of gender-related variables in predicting vocational interests*, Toni Babarović, Dora Popović, and Iva Šverko explored how gender, gender roles, and work values shape the people–things dimension of vocational interests among university students. Their analysis showed that gender remained the strongest influence, with femininity and social-oriented values also linked to stronger people-oriented interests. Levels of gender stereotyping were generally low to moderate and affected men and women in similar ways, though men showed slightly higher stereotyping overall. The authors argued that fostering CMS requires actively challenging gender norms in career education, broadening exposure to diverse occupations, and reducing gendered cues in learning and work environments.

In Chapter 8, *Career development of people with disability: A case study of a young man with visual impairment*, Paola Magnano, Rita Zarbo, and Andrea Zammitti applied the Life Design (Savickas et al., 2009) and Systems Theory Framework (Patton & McMahon, 2015) approaches to show how narrative career counselling can support inclusion. Using the My System of Career Influences (McMahon et al., 2013) tool in 11 online sessions during the pandemic, they helped Paolo, a young man with a rare visual condition,

map influences, identify strengths, and create an actionable plan. The process shifted his focus from limitations to possibilities and led toward stable employment. The chapter emphasised personalised, context-sensitive guidance, involvement of significant others, and digital delivery to overcome access barriers.

In Chapter 9, *Fostering career management skills in refugee women in Italy*, Patrizia Zanibon, Lea Ferrari, and Teresa Maria Sgaramella developed and piloted a three-session narrative tool, based on the Systems Theory Framework (McMahon et al., 2013), to support CMS among five refugee women from sub-Saharan Africa. Structured storytelling enabled participants to identify resources, recognise barriers such as language, childcare, and employer bias, and develop strategies and goals, strengthening their agency and career planning. The chapter stressed the importance of personalised guidance, linking clients' networks with local services and employers, building knowledge of labour rights and job search, and using narrative approaches to connect past experiences to concrete future actions.

The role of practitioners in shaping career management skills

The chapters in this section focus on the pivotal role practitioners play in designing, delivering, and sustaining CMS development across diverse settings. They illustrate how professionals in education, guidance, and training adapt their practice to changing labour market conditions, institutional contexts, and learner needs, while also shaping the environments in which CMS can flourish.

The chapters in this section focus on the pivotal role practitioners play in designing, delivering, and sustaining CMS development across diverse settings.

In Chapter 10, *The role of career coaching in building career management skills needed in a post-Covid world*, Emma Harrison examined how career coaching can strengthen lifelong guidance by fostering CMS responsive to labour-market volatility and inequality after the pandemic. Through a critical review, she argued that coaching's collaborative ethos empowers clients, builds critical consciousness, and supports access to decent work, especially for those most affected by Covid-19. Distinguishing coaching from counselling, she highlighted evidence of its impact on goal attainment, resilience, and behavioural change. The chapter urged practitioners to upskill in coaching, embed social-justice aims in guidance, and make coaching methods widely accessible.

In Chapter 11, *Can teachers support adolescents' development of career management skills?*, Katja Driesel-Lange, Jerusha Klein, Ulrike Weyland, and Svenja Ohlemann reported a four-wave study of German secondary students that tracked changes in CMS over one

school year and tested whether perceived teacher support fostered development. They found that teacher support positively influenced multiple facets of CMS, particularly the knowledge-related aspects and several motivational and action facets. Gains were strongest among students who started with lower initial levels. Self-knowledge and stress management were less responsive, indicating limits to what classroom relationships can shift. The chapter called for stronger teacher preparation in career guidance and closer collaboration with external counsellors in multi-professional teams.

In Chapter 12, *Liminal professional identity: Third space professionals and evolving career development practice in higher education*, Siobhan Neary, Nalayini Thambar, and Franka Zlatic examined how UK higher education careers professionals have adapted to rising tuition fees, a stronger employability focus, and performance metrics. Based on focus groups, a survey, and interviews during the COVID-19 pandemic, they described 'third space' roles that bridge academic and professional domains through curriculum delivery, teaching, and digital engagement. These roles offered opportunities but also challenges, including evolving identities, skill demands, and institutional tensions. The chapter called for greater recognition of careers professionals' strategic contributions and support to navigate their multifaceted roles.

In Chapter 13, *Developing career development centres and teaching career management skills to future career counsellors in Iraq*, Katia Terriot, Valérie Cohen-Scali, and Karine Terrade described a multi-year initiative to establish career development centres (CDCs) at the Universities of Mosul and Nineveh. The project trained higher education teachers to act as career practitioners through an eight-day programme, a CMS activity guidebook, and the creation of an operational framework. Despite challenges such as political instability, gender norms, and limited job opportunities, the initiative benefitted from strong institutional backing and collaboration. The chapter highlighted the potential of CDCs to enhance employability, challenge restrictive gender roles, and support social and economic development when adapted to local contexts.

Strategies for implementing career education

The chapters in this section present practical strategies for delivering career education in diverse contexts.

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The chapters in this section present practical strategies for delivering career education in diverse contexts. They highlight school-based initiatives, online and blended programmes, practitioner training, and integrative curricula, demonstrating how CMS can be adapted to different learner needs and settings. Together, they underline the value of

innovative methods, strong partnerships, and context-sensitive approaches in fostering lifelong career development.

In Chapter 14, *Basic education and (early) career education: A practical case study from Kosovo*, Denis Simon described the *Career Orientation Clubs* initiative, developed by GIZ and the Kosovo Career Development Foundation, to strengthen CMS among lower-secondary students. Implemented in twenty schools, the clubs offered extracurricular activities such as self-recognition exercises, occupation exploration, soft-skills training, and project-based learning. These student-led, teacher-mentored clubs aimed to link basic education with labour market needs, foster lifelong learning attitudes, and improve employability. The chapter highlighted the value of early, school-based career education, teacher involvement, and sustained partnerships for building transferable skills and supporting smoother school-to-work transitions.

In Chapter 15, *Jump into your future!: An online programme for the enhancement of career management skills*, Andrea Zammitti, Paola Magnano, Rita Zarbo, and Giuseppe Santisi presented and tested an online career intervention for emerging adults based on the Life Design paradigm (Savickas et al., 2009). The programme combined fifteen self-reflective activities in a virtual classroom with three group meetings, leading participants through past, present, and future exercises on risk intelligence, courage, career adaptability, self-efficacy, optimism, and hope. Pre- and post-assessments indicated gains across these resources. The authors argued that technology-supported, narrative career counselling can strengthen CMS during the university-to-work transition and recommended wider use of flexible online formats to reduce access barriers.

In Chapter 16, *Open and distance learning: Discovering, informing, supporting mobility in guidance (DINAMO)*, Isabelle Dekeister, Graziana Boscato, Yvan Couallier, and Manon Dangel-Klein presented an online training on international mobility for lifelong guidance practitioners, launched by Euroguidance France. The course comprised four modules covering the history and benefits of mobility, key European tools (e.g., Erasmus+), types of mobility, and counselling methods for mobility-related interviews. Each module integrated case studies, resources, and a final assessment leading to an open digital badge. Hosted on a learning platform with peer forums, DINAMO fostered competence-building and cross-border collaboration, aiming to broaden access to mobility-informed guidance.

In Chapter 17, *Developing career management skills: Calling for an integrative perspective in career education programmes*, Teresa Maria Sgaramella and Lea Ferrari argued for integrating social-emotional learning and systems thinking in early career education. They presented two school-based paths. The first, *Systems of Thrust*, used My System of Career Influences (McMahon et al., 2013) to map personal, close, and wider contexts. The second, *Sustainability Agenda*, linked work exploration to the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, n.d.). Across four sessions, pupils strengthened confidence, concern, and control, reduced negative future views, and articulated more specific, community-oriented career goals. The authors called for curricula that embed the development of CMS in school education, beginning in childhood, and which connect personal resources with social responsibility.

Closing reflections

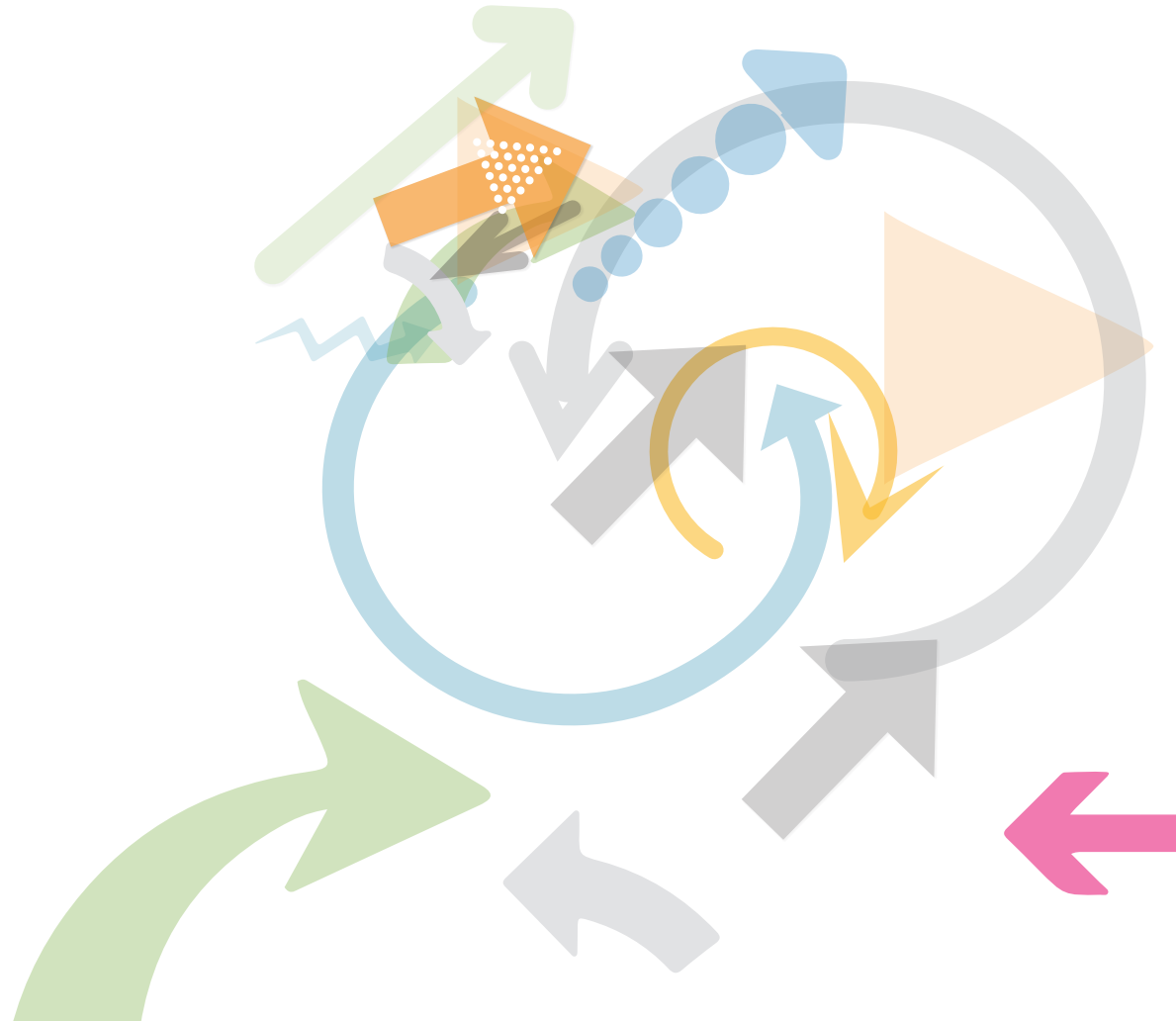
Bridge and integrate diverse perspectives, ranging from individual career development to labour-market policy, and draw on a wide array of scientific approaches.

The contributions in this volume feature the state of the art in conceptualising, promoting, and measuring CMS. They bridge and integrate diverse perspectives, ranging from individual career development to labour-market policy, and draw on a wide array of scientific approaches. While many questions remain, it is clear that CMS are highly beneficial for citizens' career development – especially in societies characterised by constant technological and social change, value pluralism, and shifting labour markets and education systems. In assessing CMS, we are dealing with a complex set of attitudes, knowledge, and skills that help citizens plan and navigate their careers, understand complexity, cope with challenges, reflect on their motivations and competencies, and much more. Diverse career interventions have been shown to promote these vital abilities. We hope that this volume will support future generations of career practitioners and researchers in devising ever more effective approaches to career guidance and counselling.

Since a diverse array of CMS can be fostered, future research needs to explore the effectiveness of different approaches in reaching a wide range of learning outcomes, while taking into account contextual factors and individual differences among learners. We also hope to see novel training approaches emerge (e.g., through the use of virtual reality, serious games, and AI-powered coaching), and that existing career education systems will continue to be evaluated, adapted, and improved. We look forward to increasingly refined understandings of CMS, along with more helpful tools for assessing the relevant abilities and attitudes. On the one hand, research will benefit from more valid and reliable measures. Novel avenues for measurement, such as performance in sim-

ulations, may transcend traditional self-assessments. On the other hand, practitioners require easily applicable instruments that can be used in work with clients to identify strengths and resources, and to customise activities focused on building essential CMS. Finally, we hope to see stronger integration of career education into both education and employment policy over the coming decades – policies informed by state-of-the-art research, grounded in best practices, and supported by systematic monitoring of CMS development through formal education.

In expressing these hopes for the future, we once again thank all contributors to this volume for their dedication and patience, and we look forward to even more international exchange on this important topic in the years to come.



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Section 1

Conceptual foundations for career management skills



02

Career management skills and the political work of work education

Ronald G. Sultana



Abstract

This chapter critically examines the concept of career management skills (CMS) within the broader context of work education, contending that the dominant CMS discourse often serves to individualise and depoliticise structural inequalities in the labour market. Drawing on extensive international experience and qualitative research, the author interrogates the reductionist assumptions underpinning CMS frameworks and advocates for a more expansive and emancipatory vision of work education. The chapter contrasts hegemonic forms of practice – which prioritise preparing learners to conform to existing economic structures – with counter-hegemonic approaches that foster critical reflection, democratic participation, and social justice. Through the use of composite portraits, it illustrates how educators negotiate the tension between supporting students' employability and promoting critical awareness. Ultimately, the chapter argues for a morally engaged pedagogy that equips learners to understand, question, and transform the socio-economic conditions that shape their lives.

Keywords
career management skills, work education, critical pedagogy, social justice, educational inequality and transformation

Introduction

The rise and rise of CMS

This volume is about career management skills (henceforth, CMS) – a term that, like many others in our field, seems to have emerged in the English-speaking world, and which has consequently been adopted in several European, non-English speaking countries, as the present volume testifies. In recent years, and largely thanks to a series of overlapping cross-country reviews carried out by a variety of international organisations (see Watts, 2014 for a synthesis), as well as to the influence of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN), CMS have featured highly on the agenda. Curricular frameworks have been developed, policy proposals have been tabled at national and regional levels, resources for practitioners have been produced, and research into different aspects of CMS has been carried out in several countries (see, *inter alia*, Sultana, 2012; Thomsen, 2014).

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International discussions about CMS have taken different learning contexts into account, including both the education (e.g., schools and community-based organisations) and labour market sectors (e.g., Public and Private Employment Services; within companies). Underpinning this widespread interest in CMS is the argument that all citizens, starting from children and young people right up to adults, can benefit from learning more about themselves, about the opportunities available to them, how to make wise decisions when it comes to 'designing' one's life course, and how to implement decisions and choices made at different transition points. The ultimate goal is that, thanks to CMS, individuals are more likely to enjoy improved prospects for fulfilment and for flourishing at work, and in life more generally.

The rise and rise of CMS should be interrogated, for the underpinning drivers are multiple and even contradictory.

One should also add that historically there is a tendency for the bonds between school and work to be tightened during periods of economic instability and rapid transformation, provoking 'moral panics' about young people's purported lack of preparation for the world of work (Carnoy & Levin, 1985). Economic problems are often exported onto schools, as it is politically expedient to blame education schools and teachers for all sorts of ills that governments find difficult to resolve. From this critical perspective, therefore, the rise and rise of CMS should be interrogated, for the underpinning drivers are multiple and even contradictory.

The politics of terminology

While I have been involved in many of the international studies regarding CMS in both the labour market and education sectors, for the purpose of this chapter I will give most of my attention to schools. I will also be using the term 'work education' rather than CMS. This connects better to the critical perspectives that I have hinted at above, as the term opens up important conversations and considerations that a focus on 'skills' tends to omit, perhaps even suppress.

I have three inter-related objections to the term CMS, at least in the way that it is often deployed. Firstly, the term 'career' tends to have associations with white collar work and the *professions*, subtly but surely bracketing considerations of other types of occupations that do not enjoy equivalent regard or status. Secondly, the term 'management' places an emphasis on the *volitional* aspect of life-design, with the implication being that success in the transitions to work is dependent on one's ability to 'manage' the process, signalling personal deficit if one is not successful. Thirdly, the word 'skills' tends to reduce the interaction between educator and student to a *technical* (i.e., 'how to') accom-

plishment, where systemic problems and challenges (such as unemployment) are narrowly defined and expected to be overcome through competence development.

Thus, in my view, the CMS discourse, when used uncritically, runs the risk of being reductionist, leading to the *individualisation* of problems and the *responsibilisation* of individuals. This happens at the cost of considering the social and system-caused origins of the frustrations and precarity that are experienced at the personal level. While young people can certainly benefit greatly by having the skills required to make a transition to independent and productive lives, education is more than that. It is a *moral enterprise* (Huebner, 1996) where discussions about the forms of life that we wish to see in the world – including at work – remain crucial. This vision for – and mission of – education is very much at the heart of leading educational philosophies the world over, past and present. Using the term 'work education' is, in my view, more likely to lead to considerations of such matters.

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CMS: The state of the art

Key concerns …

Much of what has been written about CMS – including in this volume – focuses on the formal curriculum, understood here to refer to the selection of knowledge that is deemed by those in authority to be of value to learners. We now have several national curriculum frameworks, many of which target a core knowledge base that is shared by proponents in the USA, Canada, and Australia, among others (Hooley et al., 2013). Several other countries, as evident in a number of chapters in this volume (e.g., Scotland), and elsewhere (*inter alia*, Gravina & Camilleri, 2020) have examined these frameworks carefully when developing their own work learning programmes. The main preoccupations of those promoting CMS have been threefold:

We now have several national curriculum frameworks, many of which target a core knowledge base that is shared by proponents in the USA, Canada, and Australia, among others.

a. Adequate *coverage* of topics, often organised around what Bruner (1960) refers to as a 'spiral curriculum', whereby the same or similar themes (e.g., decision-making; self-presentation; finding job vacancies) appear across different year groups, taking into account developmental concerns;

b. *Manner* in which these learning objectives feature in the formal school curriculum, with some opting for a stand-alone timetabled subject, others embedding different

aspects of it in other curricular areas (e.g., Personal and Social Education, languages, social studies, drama), while yet others organising special, one-off sessions, often as part of the extra-curricular programme. In some cases, more than one of these curriculum delivery modalities is present in the same institution;

c. Appropriate *pedagogies*, often involving experiential and interactive teaching in classroom, online, and workplaces (e.g., during work shadowing or work experience visits; as part of Junior Achievement and Young Enterprise programmes). Assessment strategies, if at all present, usually set out to help students reflect on what they learn about work in different contexts, such as through keeping a portfolio (Sultana, 2013);

d. Persons involved in *delivering* the curriculum, with some schools having specialised teachers (usually part of the career guidance team), while others also drawing on the business community to make an input (e.g., as guest speakers at events; providing mentoring), on parents (e.g., sharing their own career journey and experience), and on ex-students, who can serve as role models. In some countries, the work learning programme is entrusted to external agencies, such as Public Employment Services (PES), which are considered to be more knowledgeable about the labour market than teachers are. In the case of PES, students go to labour offices where they also access resources regarding work requirements, opportunities and so on.

… and gaps

A first gap refers to a lack of understanding of what it is that teachers *actually teach*, and what students *actually learn* about the world of work.

While the above aspects of work education initiatives are important, they nevertheless manifest at least three significant and inter-related gaps, especially if we adopt a view of education that is close to that of the likes of John Dewey, Paolo Freire, and other critical pedagogists.

A first gap refers to a lack of understanding of what it is that teachers *actually teach,* and what students *actually learn* about the world of work. There is often a big difference between the declared curriculum on the one hand, and the implemented one on the other. Indeed, ethnographies of schooling reveal major incongruencies and even contradictions between the two. Observation of lessons and interviews with students after lessons to see what they have learnt are very revealing and full of surprises, and we have become increasingly aware of the fact that both teachers and students actively construct their understanding of the world and not just passively accept what policy or curriculum mandate. Equally if not more revealing is the difference between what a

school claims that it stands for, and the socialisation experiences it promotes. Any attempt to truly understand the kind of work education that a school provides needs to capture these processes. It is difficult for students to break the hegemony of common sense in their relationship to the world if what they experience at school narrowly mirrors and corresponds to life at work (Takemura, 2018).

Little attention has been given to the so-called 'informal', 'implicit', or 'hidden' curriculum.

This brings us to a second gap in current thinking on CMS. It seems to me that little attention has been given to the so-called 'informal', 'implicit', or 'hidden' curriculum, i.e., the messages that the school gives about life generally, and work in particular, through the social relations it encourages and the values and ethos it promotes. Dewey, for instance, was very conscious of this aspect of schooling. He designed his schools as laboratories for democracy, such that by living a democratic form of life, students would be able to imagine work relations that were equally democratic. In his schools, students co-designed their learning programme with their teachers, were actively and creatively involved in developing their own interests and in learning through implementing meaningful projects, and had a significant say in the management of their school. Dewey's conviction was that through such experiences students would be able to transfer their learning, dispositions and skills to their future workplaces, expecting these to be equally facilitative of self-fulfilment and personal growth in a supportive community. As he famously contended in his *Pedagogic Creed*, 'Education is a process of living and not a preparation for future living' (1897, p. 79).

A third and related gap that I observe refers to the lack of sufficient attention given to the critical examination of the *ideological* underpinnings of both the explicit and implicit CMS curriculum – even if, as some of the chapters in this volume suggest, concerns with social justice are increasingly on the agenda. In other words, and in my view, many mainstream CMS programmes tend to take for granted, and as given, the world of work as it is currently organised, and are therefore hegemonic. The emphasis is consequently placed on adapting and fitting in rather than on decoding and making sense of what is going on, and how the social relations of production give rise to different forms of oppression and exploitation. Dewey once again helps us understand what is at stake here. As one of the most influential critics of the capitalism of his time, Dewey argued that education entails much more than preparing students to 'adapt' to the existing industrial regime, adding 'I am not sufficiently in love with the regime for that' (1915).

This chapter sets out to at least partly address these three gaps by asking such questions as: what are we actually teaching students through our CMS programmes and through the forms of life that we promote at school? What kind of work are we preparing stu-

dents for? Are we helping them decode what is going on? Whose interests are being served? Such questions, and others like them, raise issues of *relevance* (i.e., does our curriculum correspond to the realities of work, in all its diversity and with all its complex, often rapid transformations?). They also raise issues of *social justice* (i.e., does our programme promote a critical understanding of work, such that learners value the access it *ought* to give to dignity, livelihood, and personal fulfilment to all?). Such questions require the drawing up of an extensive research agenda that is well beyond the scope of this chapter. In what follows I will nevertheless engage with some of these issues, in the hope that the insights generated will prove useful to those working in this field.

The political underpinnings of CMS

Methodological and theoretical considerations

Let me first clarify where I stand in relation to work education. Such positioning is important because, as has already been claimed, teaching is a moral activity, one that entails adopting a normative stance regarding aspects of life that truly matter. Neutrality is therefore a fiction that has long been debunked, and we are now acutely aware that even silence about specific topics – constituting what some refer to as the 'null curriculum' – is a political act. I will therefore provide some background that will serve both to nail my flag to the mast, as well as to show how I arrived at the analysis adopted.

My thinking about work education started off as a practicing counsellor in schools in Malta, my birthplace, and became the object of doctoral research in New Zealand.

My thinking about work education started off as a practicing counsellor in schools in Malta, my birthplace, and became the object of doctoral research in New Zealand (Sultana, 1987). Since then, I have been involved in a range of work education activities that include comparative studies across Europe (Watts & Sultana, 2004) and the Middle East and North Africa region (Sultana & Watts, 2008; Sultana, 2017), support in policy and curriculum development in several countries (*inter alia*, Sultana, 2014), visits to scores of schools, and training of career guidance staff in various parts of the world. In this chapter I draw on this rich experience to highlight some of the learning that has been accumulated over the years. I will do this by presenting a composite portrait that integrates insights generated in a range of different education contexts. 'Composite portraits' are qualitative depictions that are created when aspects of observations and experiences in different settings (in this case, educational institutions) are amalgamated in order to create one seamless narrative. This serves to illustrate a broader point, and to propose an argument in a more persuasive manner. The different components of the

narrative are true inasmuch as they did actually happen, but they are woven together to create a cohesive portrait (Willis, 2019).

The portrait I present is based on qualitative data, underpinned by an understanding of schools as complex institutions that up till relatively recently remained a 'black box', with most studies focusing on statistical analyses of input (e.g., social background of students) and output (attainment). It was largely thanks to Paul Willis' celebrated ethnographic study of a school in Birmingham (1977) that a whole tradition of doing research differently took off. By sheer good fortune for our field, Willis' study focused on work education and career guidance, and on how the interactions between students, families and the school ultimately helped reproduce social class trajectories. In other words, Willis showed why working-class kids end up in working-class jobs, not *despite* the school, but *because* of it. Willis' participant observation approach enabled him to see career teachers at work, and capture the social and pedagogical relations and processes by means of which the school inculcated values, dispositions and attitudes.

My own approach to understanding what happens in schools draws on Willis' research both in terms of methodology, as well in terms of sociological analysis. For Willis, as for many other educational researchers from the 1980s onwards, a key preoccupation was whether schools *reproduced* the social order (which many saw as oppressive and unjust to specific groups of people), or whether it can be a force for transformation. In his study, Willis highlighted the reproductive and hegemonic force of schooling, a leitmotif that was also at the heart of other sociologists of his generation, such as Bernstein (1975) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1977). Several ethnographies revealing the inner workings of educational institutions (*inter alia*, Bagley et al., 2018; Griffin, 1986; Walker, 1988) reinforced our understanding of the dark side of schooling, despite their claims to be beacons of enlightenment, emancipation, and social mobility. Others however found such accounts too deterministic and reductionist (inter alia, Kemmis & Fitzclarence,1986): yes, schools were indeed complicit in reproducing the social order, but they could also be counter-hegemonic and transformative, both in the critical knowledge they shared with learners, and in the social relations they promoted. Schools were thus increasingly seen to be characterised by processes of conflict and contestation, negotiation and exchange, resistance and accommodation… and also as sites of hope (Freire, 1972, 2021).

In the composite portrait that follows I will engage with the reproduction/transformation paradigm in an effort to show how our work learning programmes tend to gravitate towards a reproductive rather than a transformative agenda, though elements of both

Awareness of the ensuing contradictions and tensions can be the basis for critical reflections on the kinds of educational experiences that we promote. It will also help us consider how our well-intentioned efforts live up to the responsibility we have to provide an authentic education that is inspired by a thirst for social justice.

often co-exist at the same time. Awareness of the ensuing contradictions and tensions can be the basis for critical reflections on the kinds of educational experiences that we promote. It will also help us consider how our well-intentioned efforts live up to the responsibility we have to provide an authentic education that is inspired by a thirst for social justice (Sultana, 2021).

Reinforcing the social order through the explicit and hidden curriculum

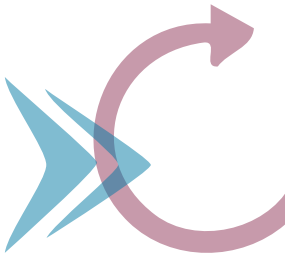
In my experience, schools that are mostly oriented to reproducing and reinforcing rather than challenging the organisational principles of society generally, and of work in particular, typically manifest a number of characteristics. Through curricula and social relations, such schools tend to inculcate those qualities appreciated by employers, and specifically those qualities functional to an economy prone to cyclical crises. The messages that are overtly given in such status quo-maintaining schools are overwhelmingly of the type that urge students to fit into and to perform in the world of work *as it is*, rather than considering its historically contingent nature by exploring alternative forms of producing and distributing wealth across space and time. The organisation of the forces of production is thus often presented in an a-historical, reified manner, with employers being promoted uncritically as rightfully placed in positions of power deserving not only the surplus value of workers' labour, but also the latter's respect, obedience and co-operation.

In such schools too, most of the ideas communicated by teachers about work are idealised, with work presented either as a self-fulfilling activity (with examples typically drawn from professional careers), or as drudgery (often with reference to factory work).

In such schools too, most of the ideas communicated by teachers about work are idealised, with work presented either as a self-fulfilling activity (with examples typically drawn from professional careers), or as drudgery (often with reference to factory work). Teachers generally avoid controversial issues such as exploitation, the role of trade unions, the impact of negative globalisation on the availability and distribution of meaningful work, the unequal access to a living wage, the deepening gaps between the haves and have nots, the differential wage paid to women compared to men for the same work done, and so on. While it is not uncommon for teachers to consider the (often intersectional) impact of gender and ethnicity on one's experience of oppression at work, class is less readily discussed or taken into account as a factor that severely limits access to the good things of life, including decent work. In many cases, teachers admit to avoiding such issues out of self-censorship, fearing the accusation of being political, and possibly a backlash from parents. In some cases, however, this suppression is actually mandated by those in authority. A recent case in point is when the UK government banned English

schools from using resources from organisations whose expressed beliefs included the end of capitalism (Jones, 2020).

Schools that are not critical of the world of work tend to promote social relations that correspond to behaviours and dispositions that are valued by employers. Such correspondence is not necessarily intentional, but it is no less productive of attitudes, personalities, and expectations. Hegemonic schools therefore tend to emphasise authority and hierarchy, and value and reward docility. Teachers function as experts and as dispensers of knowledge as codified in canonical texts, while disregarding the knowledge and experience that learners bring with them. Such 'banking' forms of education contrast with Deweyian and Freirean approaches that see learning as a dialogic process, one that encourages active, creative and critical participation in the learning process, valuing collaboration and exchange in making sense of the world.



The identifying features of such banking education are well-known: the latter relies on external motivation, requiring an instrumental investment of oneself into the tasks at hand and a high degree of self-denial, given that personal satisfaction does not accrue from the process. It also fosters competitive relations between students, and acquiescence to authority, which they are encouraged to see as legitimate, complementary to their interests, and hence beneficial. All such dispositions are functional to the workplace in neoliberal societies. This of course does not mean that teachers set out to prepare 'factory fodder', as they have often – and not altogether wrongly – been accused of doing. Rather, we have here a good example of 'structural causation', where, in their efforts to do the best for their students by equipping them for the world of work as it currently organised, they end up reproducing those qualities that are, from a normative view, questionable, and sometimes even reprehensible.

Many of the work education programmes that I have come across present the hierarchical arrangement of labour as a given, a social arrangement that falls under the regime of 'common sense'. So too are the differential status and rewards afforded to different workers. Students are expected to take their place in this occupational ladder, but all too often little light is shed on the influence of ethnicity and gender – and even less so of class – in determining specific locations on the ladder, and the results of that location for their future lives. Rather, career educators who have not integrated a critical dimension in their work often participate in defining the 'realistic' and the 'appropriate' for particular students (Colley, 2000), thus facilitating the process by means of which working class kids get working class jobs.

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In such schools, the only explanations offered to individuals for their reduced life-chances and lower positions in the wider social structures are that they had not striven hard enough to deserve better. Personal responsibility for system-caused injustice is therefore encouraged by an unproblematic promotion of certification, despite students' first-hand knowledge that it is often who you know, not what you know that mattered when it came to clinching a job.

Unemployment as a subject, and therefore the crisis in capital accumulation generally, is either not referred to at all, or else 'explained' in common-sense ways: people are unemployed because they did not want to look for a job or because they did not have the career management skills to look for one. Teachers therefore encourage patience, perseverance and competitiveness in the job-search process. If this fails to secure employment, then many CMS programmes resort to inviting young people to 'enjoy leisure', to learn how to manage their lives and their money, and to keep themselves busy. Teachers make little if any attempt to explain and discuss how the contemporary economic model came about, how it works, its strengths as well as its failings. In other words, material lives are not situated within a historical perspective where specific economic, political and ideological decisions (e.g., the state's engagement with globalisation; tax regimes and their impact on the sustainability of welfare states; policies regarding the redistribution of wealth, and so on; exploitation of natural resources to the point of causing a climate crisis) are made by people in power. Economics is moreover generally presented as a science rather than as a value system.

The above portrayal presents a rather dismal picture of what schools do, especially when we set up emancipatory forms of education as the standard against which to measure our efforts.

Emancipatory work education

The above portrayal presents a rather dismal picture of what schools do, especially when we set up emancipatory forms of education as the standard against which to measure our efforts. Teachers, including career education staff, tend to teach *for* rather than *about* work – a distinction that Simon and his colleagues also drew in their influential book on a critical pedagogy of work education (1991).

Like other social sites, schools constitute a contested terrain, where hegemonic and counter-hegemonic agendas and practices are likely to co-exist at one and the same time.

It is important here to recall that this is a *composite* portrait, useful inasmuch as it draws our attention to processes and dynamics that manifest themselves to a different degree in different schools. I have never observed schools that are wholly or exclusively hegemonic: the democratic impulse and the thirst for fairness, decency, and social justice always find ways of seeping through. Most schools fall on a continuum in their struggle with the dilemma of helping students adapt and fit in, while at the same time encourag-

ing them to be critical and to imagine different and more equitable ways of being in the world. Like other social sites, schools constitute a contested terrain, where hegemonic and counter-hegemonic agendas and practices are likely to co-exist at one and the same time. This helps us move away from a somewhat simplistic and crass view of the education system as simply an instrument of the capitalist class. Rather, schools are to be seen as sites 'of conflict over the production of knowledge, ideology, and employment, a place where social movements try to meet their needs and business attempts to reproduce its hegemony' (Carnoy & Levin, 1985, p. 50).

The next composite portrait therefore sets out to highlight how emancipatory practices manifest themselves in the everyday lives of schools, showing how educators engage with the possibility and necessity for alternative practice. All of us are likely to know teachers and schools that oppose bureaucratic control and institutional definitions of the 'legitimate' curriculum and 'appropriate' pedagogy, encouraging critical thinking and action among their students. Indeed, many of us count ourselves among such progressive educators.

The next composite portrait therefore sets out to highlight how emancipatory practices manifest themselves in the everyday lives of schools, showing how educators engage with the possibility and necessity for alternative practice.

As with the case of hegemonic schools, counter-hegemonic work education can take place at a variety of levels. Schools are complicit in challenging the status quo by the very fact of catering for different groups of students in terms of class, gender and ethnic background. In making such choices, schools are also making a statement about their willingness to participate in the struggles within the state for civil liberties and democratic rights in all their forms. Indeed, there is a whole tradition in the sociology of education that documents the way schools that cater almost exclusively for one social group give very different messages about work to their students. Schools catering for the elite tend to promote the knowledge and personal dispositions that are functional to the higher echelons of the employment and employer market, while schools whose students are mostly from the working class emphasise quite different knowledges and personal qualities. The latter are equally functional, but this time to the requirements of the corresponding strata of manual labour (Anyon, 1981; Luke, 2010).

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Counter-hegemonic action can be engaged in by solitary teachers in the privacy of their classrooms, courageously working against the grain. One such teacher that I had the privilege of observing led one of the most impressive emancipatory work education programmes that I have ever observed. Indeed, she promoted critical thinking to such an extent that she ended up being ostracised by colleagues who preferred to play it safe and felt that she was a destabilising influence in the school. She invited students to problematise, question and challenge several practices in the labour market that were

taken for granted despite being oppressive and exploitative. She thus is one of the very few examples I have come across of a teacher who tackled the issues of class head-on, persuaded of its centrality in shaping our experience of life.

Some of the schools I have worked in or observed had groups of teachers involved in community-based activism promoting the rights of ethnic minorities and of women.

Individuals within institutions can be a powerful force for change, even if we need to be wary of the call for heroic individualism as promoted by such films as *Dead Poet's Society, Stand and Deliver*, or *To Sir with Love* (Giroux, 1993; Trier, 2000). Counter-hegemonic education is however more likely to be effective when educators come together to shape school structures, curricula, and ethos, and when such action draws inspiration from, and feeds into wider social movements. Some of the schools I have worked in or observed had groups of teachers involved in community-based activism promoting the rights of ethnic minorities and of women. Such involvement in social movements was a natural extension of their work in schools, and vice-versa, constituting as it did an ideological critique of both education and the wider social order.

Inspiration for such political positions and activity can come through from a variety of sources. One Catholic school, for instance, articulated its education vision by explicitly referring to a set of ethical and political values which emphasised the rights of the oppressed in society, and argued for a better a more equitable social system. The religious brothers running the school claimed a number of core aspirations which gave their school its 'special character', including appeals to 'defuse competition, respect differences, foster cultural groups, find work for unemployed, provide experiences of success for each, educate to change society and not merely to fit into it, denounce and resist where necessary, highlight social injustices such as racism, provide media education, teach change agent skills.'

Based on over 40 years of research in schools, class and a consideration of work from a political economy perspective do not often feature in progressive schools.

Another Catholic school, this time run by the Jesuits, invited members of their staff who had worked with the 'campesinos' in Latin America, and who were inspired by liberation theology, to speak about their experiences in the 'comunità di base' (basic communities) – grass roots organisations that militated against the exploitation of the landless peasants by a small yet powerful élite. Students were encouraged to be 'men for others', and to put the common good before private interests. The theme of exploitation at work, and the organisation of the economy in such a way that it benefited the few were frequent themes addressed during assembly.

As noted earlier, and based on over 40 years of research in schools, class and a consideration of work from a political economy perspective do not often feature in progressive schools. Emancipatory messages concerning work are more likely to be given in

regard to gender and racial equity. One school, for instance, adopted a very strong feminist agenda, and was particularly well-organised in its efforts to politicise and conscientise its students regarding the state of women's oppression in the labour market. Its highly developed feminist programme encouraged students to consider roles and occupations outside the traditionally female, and as a school functioned consistently as a political site in the construction of feminist discourse and subjectivities through both its formal and informal curriculum.

This agenda took the form of an extensive campaign under the heading of *Girls Can do Anything,* co-ordinating with regional efforts in the same direction made by the Department of Labour and, at the national level, with media advertising challenging conservative thinking about women. This campaign transformed the school's material environment (through posters, exhibitions and murals), introduced technical and craft workshop options for girls, recruited men to do the cleaning of the premises, invited women who worked in non-traditionally female jobs to speak to students about their experience of career, and generally strove to address issues related specifically to women and work. Gender-informed work education programmes are not uncommon in schools the world over, but few that I have observed are as thorough, consistent and effective in promoting critical thinking about women's oppressive experiences in the labour force.

Race-based inequality at work is also an aspect of transformative work education that one can come across in several contexts. Many work education programmes set out to enhance the status and educational aspirations and achievement of minority populations. Some curricular frameworks and teachers overtly confront the prevailing racialised job apartheid, and encourage minority and majority students to critically examine their stereotypes about which work was appropriate for which ethnic groups. One school introduced a compulsory, time-tabled curricular area celebrating indigenous knowledge and culture, with the principal addressing assemblies in one of the minority languages, and inviting leaders from minority groups to take the podium from time to time. Cultural representations and knowledge forms specific to minority groups – including music, art, and approaches to mathematics alternative to the Western canon – were celebrated in the school, encouraging indigenous students to stand tall and to question their subordinate status in other social sites in the community, including in the labour market.

Some curricular frameworks and teachers overtly confront the prevailing racialised job apartheid, and encourage minority and majority students to critically examine their stereotypes about which work was appropriate for which ethnic groups.

Discussion

Readers involved in work education will most likely recognise themselves and their schools in the composite portraits presented above. Let me again reiterate that I am not suggesting that a school is *either* reproductive *or* transformative, or that one is either a hegemonic teacher, or a counter-hegemonic one. In most cases, educators find themselves on the horns of a dilemma as they struggle with two contradictory aspirations: to help students develop the knowledge and attitudinal skills that are necessary for them to find and keep employment on the one hand, while also promoting an authentic education that helps to decode the world around us on the other.

What can be referred to as the 'job-getting imperative' achieves further prominence with teachers when work becomes scarcer to find. Teachers, even progressive ones, are understandably uneasy about promoting values and behaviours that jeopardise employment opportunities, so while they realise that it is not their job to teach persons to fit nicely into the conveyer belt, they are also aware that if their students are to survive, they will have to fit.

Educators are therefore confronted by what has been referred to as the 'adjust/challenge dilemma'.

Educators are therefore confronted by what has been referred to as the 'adjust/challenge dilemma' (Prilleltensky & Stead, 2012). Dilemmas are situations where any choice that is made is likely to lead to equally undesirable outcomes, and teaching inevitably involves many dilemmas that cannot be resolved at an individual level since their origin is in the social order. From this perspective, contradictions between what teachers understand their responsibility to be, and what they actually do is not the product of confused minds, but rather the result of teachers' immersion in sets of social relations that reflect conflicting interests and orientations. Thus, decisions made about what to teach – including an emphasis on 'employability' (Sultana, 2024), which is at the heart of CMS as traditionally understood – may have less to do with the ideals of justice and equality which teachers generally endorse, and more with the practical concerns of achieving a livelihood for their students, even if this ends up generating actions that lend support to the socialisation and allocation of students into an unequal world of work.

This, however, does not let us as educators off the hook. For there are other reasons to account for the tendency to avoid the political nature of work education. Some still see themselves as primarily technicians or public servants whose role is to implement rather than to conceptualise their curricular and pedagogical work. While recent notions of teacher professionalism have emphasised the importance of 'reflective practitioners', of 'communities of practice', and of 'school-based reform', the culture of individualism still

tends to predominate, and indeed, the preponderance of teacher-proof curricular packages, with objectives, lesson outlines, resources and assessment procedures determined by central education authorities and/or by corporate interests, lead to further deskilling (Priestley et al., 2016). Moreover, a humanistic, learner-centred and psychologistic conception of teaching and learning – arguably especially prevalent among those involved in work education – tends to render us blind to social phenomena in contrast to individual characteristics… a tendency all too effectively reinforced by the culture of responsibilisation that is far too ready to impute failure to individual rather than systemic deficits (Sultana, 2024).

The lack of political literacy can also be imputed to the social class location of teachers, who are likely to see their interests as converging with those of the upwardly mobile and conservative middle class. As the teaching profession becomes more proletarianised, and as incomes increasingly fail to give teachers access to the quality of life they aspire to, there is more of a possibility that their empathy with the precariat becomes enhanced, leading to a deeper understanding of the way their actions relate to the wider structure of society. Those who do have such an understanding might be hampered by the lack of examples of curricula, resources and pedagogies that support the development of the kind of critical education that addresses democratic issues – in the world of work and elsewhere. This is precisely why the few examples of critical work education that we have – exemplified by the likes of Simon et al. (1991) and Midttun and McCash (2019) – are so important, pointing as they do towards alternative ways of exploring the theme of work with our students, encouraging us all to move from a language of critique to a language of possibility.

The lack of political literacy can also be imputed to the social class location of teachers, who are likely to see their interests as converging with those of the upwardly mobile and conservative middle class.

Conclusion

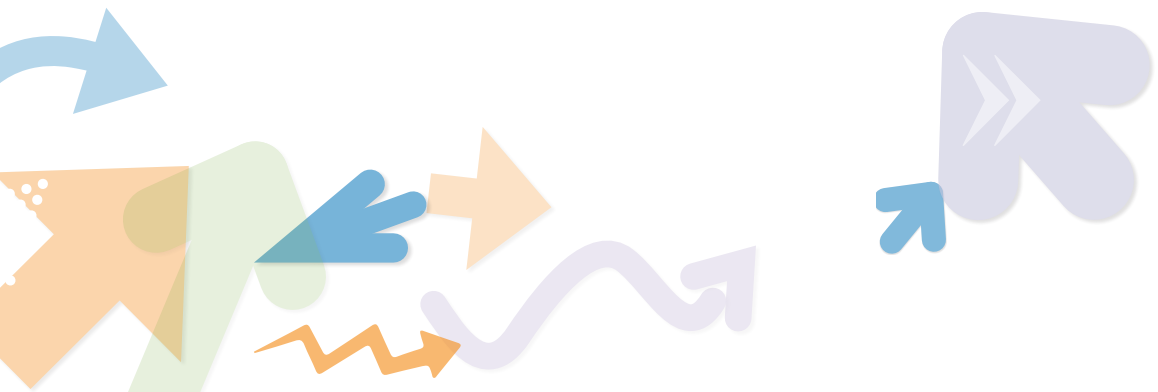
What I hope to have done with this chapter is to show that as work educators, we do have a choice as to whether our activity in schools and in other learning contexts serve to take the social order for granted – and in the process reinforcing it – or to provide the intellectual tools and resources to critically understand it, with a view to promoting social justice. As educators, our task is to enhance knowledge and learning. And yet it behoves us to ask: 'What knowledge?' 'Towards which ends?' 'In whose interest?' In considering such questions, we would do well to reflect on Wrigley's wry comment, when he remarked that 'Capitalism needs workers who are clever enough to be profitable, but not wise enough to know what's really going on' (2009, p. 62). Emancipatory work education is precisely about helping those in our care 'wise up' to the relationship between

What I hope to have done with this chapter is to show that as work educators, we do have a choice as to whether our activity in schools and in other learning contexts serve to take the social order for granted – and in the process reinforcing it – or to provide the intellectual tools and resources to critically understand it, with a view to promoting social justice.

society and the economy, understanding who stands to gain and who to lose by the way things currently stand, and explore more socially just alternatives. What is particularly exciting at this moment in history, when the pandemic as much as the climate crisis have helped us question what we have often taken for granted, is that new forms of thinking about, organising and performing work are emerging. Such 'real utopias' (Wright, 2010) constitute 'territories of hope' reminding us that another world is possible.

Change, in other words, comes about by working at different levels, in alliance with other like-minded persons who have social justice at heart.

Such a political understanding of our work as educators is not beyond our grasp, with each one of us finding their own way of being political. Not all of us are called to be politicians, to lead social movements, or to be constantly in the limelight afforded by social media. That does not make counter-hegemonic work at the grass roots level any less valuable. As a teacher remarked to a leading scholar, known internationally for his efforts to promote critical education, 'So much of the literature I read hold up only one standard for social change: major social transformation. There's something arrogant about that, it seems to me, for it discounts the daily good work that thousands of people do to effect micro-level change, to incrementally build community' (Mike Rose, cited in Torres, 2009, p. 61). Change, in other words, comes about by working at different levels, in alliance with other like-minded persons who have social justice at heart.



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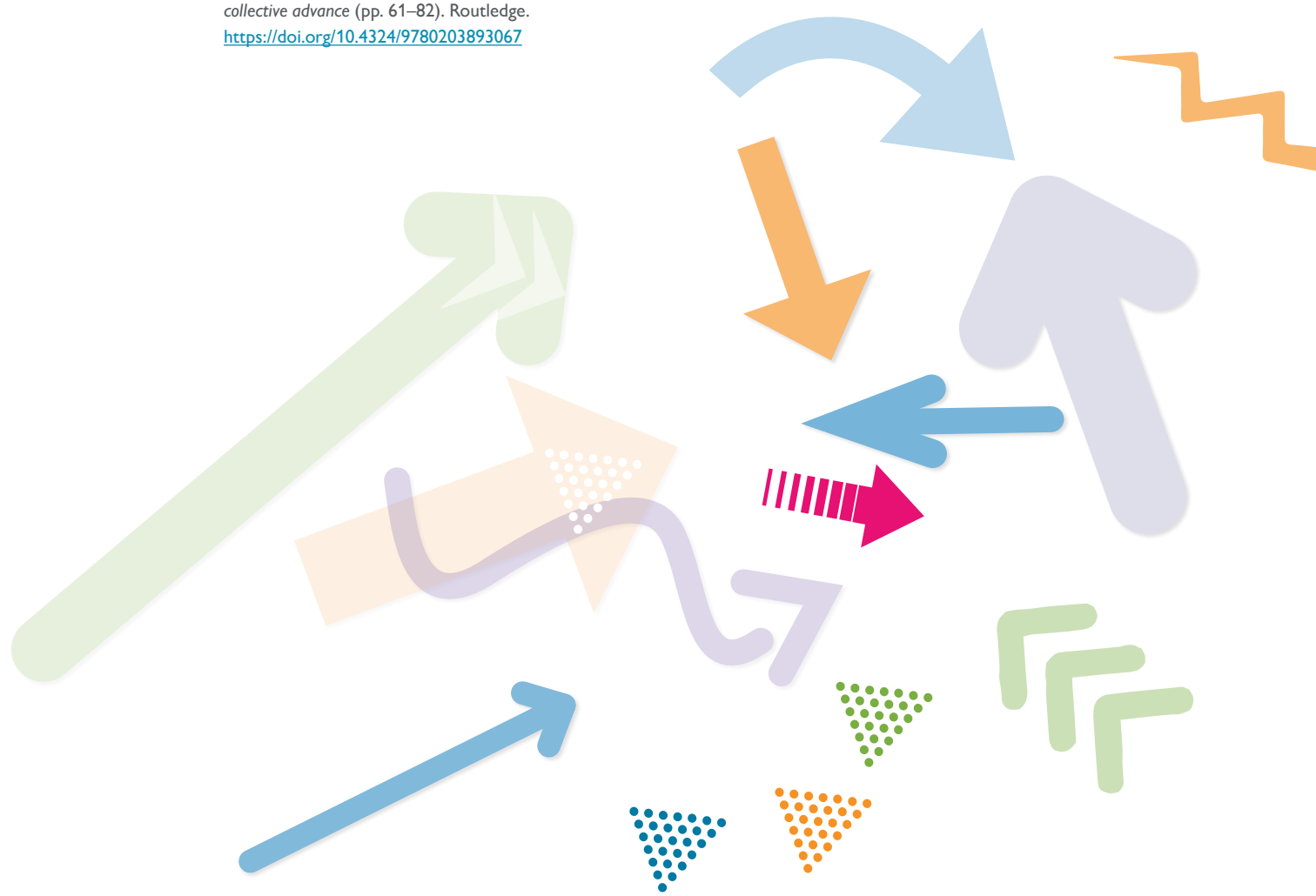
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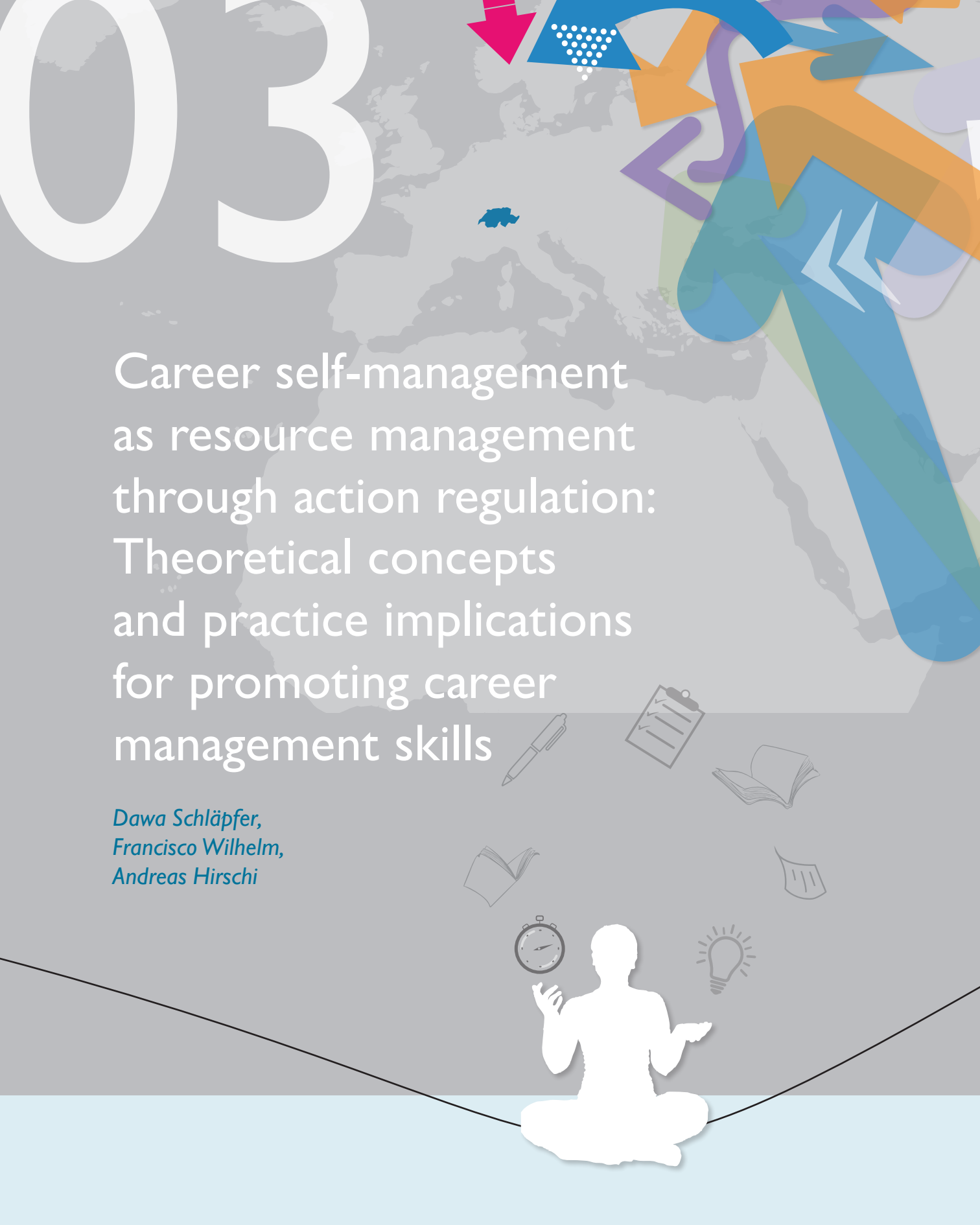
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03

Career self-management as resource management through action regulation: Theoretical concepts and practice implications for promoting career management skills

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Andreas Hirschi



Abstract

Career management skills are important in today's labour market, which is characterised by increased volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. This chapter aims to provide a better understanding of core career management skills by presenting a framework which sees career self-management as an active process of resource management. Based on this perspective, career self-management consists of building, maintaining, and applying knowledge and skills, psychological (motivational/attitudinal), and contextual resources through various career self-management behaviours. Moreover, career self-management skills can be enhanced throughout the lifespan by presenting career self-management as an action-regulation process. This process consists of four phases in terms of

1. goal setting and development,
2. mapping the environment for goal-relevant resources and barriers,
3. planning and execution of behaviours, and
4. monitoring and feedback processing.

Based on this conceptualisation of career self-management, we discuss how practitioners can assist clients in this process across different action regulation phases of career self-management.

Keywords
career resources, action regulation, career self-management, career self-management skills

Introduction

The fourth industrial revolution (Schwab, 2016) and the current developments in labour markets and global economies are presumed to bring volatility, ambiguity, and complexity to the professional environment for workers across the skills spectrum (Hirschi, 2018; Wilhelm & Hirschi, 2019). There is a shift in responsibility for career development from employers to employees (Arnold, 2005; Sultana, 2012), and this calls for people to be proactive regarding their careers (Seibert et al., 1999). This notion is exemplified by projections that around half of the global workforce will require major reskilling or upskilling by the year 2025 (World Economic Forum, 2020). Likewise, the

Career self-management skills are crucial in today's volatile, uncertain, and complex labour market.

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (2008) points towards the need for reforming guidance policies and practices to support learning for all ages and in a broad range of settings. Additionally, according to the World Economic Forum (2020), the top skills which are seen as rising in prominence to gear towards 2025, mostly include skills in self-management, such as active learning, resilience, stress tolerance, and flexibility. The changes in career development due to such trends are likely to result in increased job and career insecurity, especially when workers are left to face these changes unprepared (Wilhelm & Hirschi, 2019) and require a high degree of personal initiative (Fay & Frese, 2001). Active career self-management is an important factor for achieving career wellbeing and satisfaction and puts emphasis on personal agency (Raabe et al., 2007; Wilhelm & Hirschi, 2019). Through promotion of career self-management, employees can be empowered to master their career-related challenges autonomously and develop individualised professional goals, identify their existing competencies, and take action to improve their careers, enabling them to access and effectively use the full range of resources within themselves and their environment.

The objective of this chapter is to provide a better understanding of career management skills based on conceptualizing career self-management (CSM) as an active process of resource management (Hirschi et al., 2019; Hobfoll et al., 2018; Spurk et al., 2019). We further suggest how career management skills can be enhanced throughout the lifespan by presenting CSM as an action regulation process (Hirschi & Koen, 2021) consisting of four specific phases with corresponding necessary skills in CSM.

Career management skills

This chapter integrates resource management with action regulation theory to conceptualise CSM.

Career management skills have become an important focus in the implementation of vocational education programs and professional competency-based curricula in all European countries, yet a uniform definition of career management skills is difficult to achieve (Sultana, 2012). For example, Bridgstock (2009) defined career management skills as 'the abilities required to proactively navigate the working world and successfully manage the career building process, based on attributes such as lifelong learning and adaptability' (pp. 34–35). Sultana (2012) defined career management skills as 'a whole range of competences which provide structured ways for individuals and groups to gather, analyse, synthesise and organise self, educational and occupational information, as well as the skills to make and implement decisions and transitions' (p. 229). Yet a different take is presented by Hooley et al. (2013), who state that career management skills are used to describe skills, attributes, attitudes, and knowledge that indi-

viduals need to actively manage their careers in flexible and dynamic labour markets throughout the lifespan. A common factor across different definitions is the stated importance of career management skills to prepare individuals and make them capable of dealing with career-related challenges throughout their lives. Additionally, these definitions stress the importance of attitudes, abilities, competencies, or other aspects. However, even though there seems to be a consistency, there is still a difficulty in discerning which specific constructs constitute key career management skills. Definitions sometimes remain vague in this regard or existing frameworks consist of a large range of different facets, which are hard to put into a coherent framework. As stated by Hooley et al. (2013), "...the notion of a Europe-wide 'reference framework' or 'blueprint' may be considered to be highly problematic." (p. 120).

To address this issue and provide a theoretically grounded framework of career management skills, we herein conceptualise career management skills based on a resource management and action regulation approach to CSM. This framework expands and refines the understanding of career management skills in the way that key career management skills are skills necessary to successfully engage in CSM behaviours needed to build, maintain, and apply different types of resources to attain personally valued career goals (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Framework of career management skills



Career self-management as resource management

Career self-management (CSM) is an active process of managing personal and contextual resources to achieve valued career goals.

According to Hirschi (2012), conceptualisations of CSM in the literature often overlap considerably but also differ in their components. One common feature of different conceptualisations of CSM is that they usually focus on specific career management behaviours (Hirschi, 2012). CSM behaviours are intentional, self-initiated, self-targeted behaviours aiming at substantially enhancing work-related experiences in the mid- or long-term within and outside of organisational contexts (Wilhelm & Hirschi, 2019). Beyond its focus on proactive behaviours, CSM also encompasses cognitive components (Hirschi & Koen, 2021). Thus, CSM can be regarded as an umbrella term that includes various cognitive and behavioural activities to manage one's career (Hirschi & Koen, 2021), such as collecting important information about one's values, interests, skill strengths and weaknesses, identifying career goals, executing career planning, skill development, networking, or boundary management (Claes & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1998; King, 2004; Kossek et al., 1998; Noe, 1996; Sturges, 2008).

Another common feature of CSM is its focus on managing resources that are beneficial for career success and coping with career-related challenges (Hirschi, 2012; Lent & Brown, 2013; Spurk et al., 2018). Multiple resource frameworks have been developed, which often share the differentiation of personal resources (such as skills and attitudes) and social or contextual resources (such as social support) (e.g., Hirschi, 2012; Parker, 2002; Peeters et al., 2019). For example, the career resources framework (Hirschi, 2012; Hirschi et al., 2018) proposes three overarching dimensions of career resources: human capital resources, social/environmental resources, and motivational/psychological/identity resources. Each of these resource dimensions is composed of multiple specific career resources. The framework further suggests that career management behaviours have to be applied to develop, maintain, and apply these career resources.

This integrative view on CSM thus suggests that CSM is a process of resource management where successful career development across the lifespan consists of building, maintaining, and using different personal and environmental resources through the application of different career management behaviours. However, the career resources framework (Hirschi, 2012; Hirschi et al., 2018) focuses more on the type of necessary resources to successfully develop a career and less on the process by which individuals can manage these resources effectively. To provide more focus on the process aspect as a foundation to identify key career management skills, we next present an action-regulation perspective on CSM.

Career self-management as an action regulation process

Effective CSM follows four phases: goal setting, resource mapping, action planning, and feedback processing.

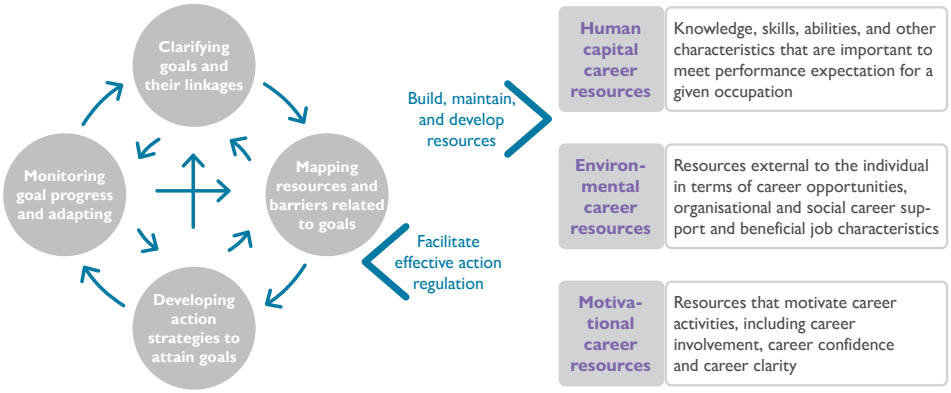
Action regulation theory is a general theory of human behaviour and explains how cognitive processes are used to regulate goal-oriented behaviour (i.e., action). Individuals are seen as active, embedded agents whose actions shape and are shaped by the environment (Frese & Zapf, 1994; Zacher & Frese, 2018). A central feature of the theory is the segmentation of action regulation into multiple phases: (a) goal development and selection, (b) mapping the environment for resources and barriers, (c) planning, (d) monitoring of execution, and (e) feedback processing, with the latter two sometimes merged into one phase (Hirschi, 2020). Persons do not necessarily adhere to the phases in a conscious and deliberative manner, nor do persons necessarily rigidly follow this sequence; rather the action process sometimes requires going back and forth or omitting steps in the action sequence (Zacher & Frese, 2018). When applying this concept to CSM, this means that the action regulation of CSM can range from a highly conscious, proactive, integrated process to a more reactive process that occurs as a response to external cues and events (e.g., Barney & Lawrence, 1989; Gould & Penley, 1984; King, 2004, 2010).

Action regulation theory is useful for the present purpose of outlining key career management skills since it provides not only a *descriptive* account of the action regulation process but can also be used in a *prescriptive* account of what constitutes effective and successful action regulation (Glaub et al., 2014; Raabe et al., 2007). Several authors have drawn from the action regulation literature in building more practice-oriented work, such as a framework of job search quality (Van Hooft et al., 2013) or a whole-life career-counselling framework (Hirschi, 2020). When applying action regulation theory to CSM, we propose that successful CSM can be described in terms of the characteristics that each of the action phases and their associated outcomes should have (see Figure 3.2). For example, the clarifying goals and their linkages phase is successful when persons are aware of their motivations for selecting a goal and when the selected goal has properties such as high goal clarity and compatibility with other goals.

CSM emphasises individual proactivity and responsibility in navigating career challenges.

In a nutshell, based on these theoretical frameworks, CSM is characterised by behavioural and cognitive activities that are integrated into an action regulation sequence, and directed at the management of its primary outcomes, precisely career resources. In turn, these resources facilitate effective and efficient action regulation, that is, they influence the quality of the career self-management process.

Figure 3.2 CSM as an action regulation and resource management process



An integrative model of career management skills

Based on the proposed framework shown in Figure 3.2, the following question arises: which career management skills are needed to effectively regulate each of the action phases and master their associated tasks? For instance, to make life/work-enhancing decisions (e.g., to pay more attention to one's work-life balance), one needs to clarify goals and understand the linkages between those goals. This involves clarifying demands associated with one's life roles, values that guide one's life, and the interrelation of the multiple goals persons strive for in their work-life and other life domains. Thus, self-awareness is an important career management skill for goal clarification, development, and selection (Greenhaus et al., 2010; Stickland, 1996) because it enables the successful execution of behaviours such as values clarification and prioritisation. Based on the principal tasks associated with each action regulation phase, related career management skills can be formulated and can be promoted in career guidance. This is clearly portrayed in Table 3.1, where a general overview of this issue is presented.

The framework allows to succinctly capture which principal tasks and aims exist for successful CSM, describe which career management skills are important in this phase, and how these skills can be promoted by corresponding career counselling activities. Each of the phases are thoroughly described in the coming paragraphs to elaborate what each of the action regulation phases entail and point to possible career counselling activities related to each of the phases.

Table 3.1 Overview of the key phases, tasks, and skills in career self-management

Phases of action regulation	Phase 1: Clarifying personally valued goals	Phase 2: Mapping resources and barriers	Phase 3: Developing action strategies	Phase 4: Monitoring goal progress and adapting
Learning areas	• Develop understanding of yourself to build and maintain a positive self-concept • Make life/work-enhancing decisions	• Locate and effectively use life/work information • Understand the relationship between work and society/economy	• Interact positively and effectively with others • Create and manage a career plan that meets your career goals • Secure/create and maintain work • Maintain balanced life and work roles	• Change and grow throughout one's life • Participate in life-long learning supportive of life/work goals • Understand the changing nature of life/work roles
Principal tasks and core aims in the stage	• Understanding and assessing the most important life roles • Identifying and reflecting on centrally valued goals in each life role • Clarifying and understanding the facilitating and inhibitory linkages between goals	• Identifying and understanding available personal (e.g., characteristics and competencies) and contextual (e.g., family, organisational, and societal factors) resources and barriers that help/ inhibit goal attainment	• Identifying and developing specific actions steps and strategies by breaking down longer-term abstract goals into shorter-term, specific sub-goals • Learning to prioritise goals and identifying goals that can temporarily be postponed • Formulating, changing, and developing new goals in accordance with resources and barriers	• Specifying when and how to monitor if the actions correspond to plans and have the desired effects • (Self-)monitoring changes that occur in role expectations, resources, and barriers and necessitate adapting goals • Seeking, evaluating, and processing feedback, and adapt goals, action plans, and behaviours based on feedback of goal attainment and progress
Key career management skills	• Self-awareness • Knowing-why competencies • Self-management skills (i.e., perception and appraisal of one's values, abilites, interests, and goals) • Reflection on motivation (i.e., the ability to reflect on one's values, passions, and motivation)	• Knowing-whom competencies • Career building skills (e.g., finding and usage of information about one's career and labour market; being able to effectively identify and choose career development opportunities) • Reflection on qualities (i.e., reflection on strengths, shortcomings, and skills with regard to one's career)	• Knowing-how and knowing-whom competencies • Career building skills (e.g., representing one's skills and abilities in an attractive way, creating strategic personal and professional relationships, knowing how long to stay, when to capitalise an opportunity, and the ability to move quickly when a new opportunity arises) • Communicative career competencies (i.e., networking and self-profiling) and behavioural competencies (i.e., work exploration)	• Meta-cognitive skills • Emotion regulation skills • Career control (i.e., the active influencing of learning and work processes related to one's career)

Phase 1: Clarifying goals and their linkages

Setting clear, compatible, and meaningful career goals is the foundation of successful CSM.

The first phase of action regulation involves clarifying career-related goals and the linkages among these goals as well as the linkages with goals of other life-domains. Based on the 'Blueprint' framework for career management skills (Hooley et al., 2013) the important learning areas in this phase are the development of an understanding of oneself, to build and maintain a positive self-concept, as well as the making of life/work-enhancing decisions. The core aim of the first phase is the selection of centrally valued career goals that have beneficial properties, such as clarity, commitment, and compatibility with other goals (Van Hooft et al., 2013). Several tasks need to be accomplished to arrive at such goals. The clients need to understand their current most important life roles and what they want to achieve in their career, principled on their values. Furthermore, the clients need to consider how their goals relate to one another in terms of their complementary or conflicting linkages amongst their goals (Hirschi, 2020; Kruglanski et al., 2002).

Career management skills that are most important in this stage are referred to as self-awareness (Greenhaus et al., 2010; Stickland, 1996), knowing-why competencies (Parker, 2002), or reflective competencies (Akkermans, Schaufeli et al., 2013). For example, in Akkermans, Brenninkmeijer et al.'s (2013) framework of career competencies, reflective competencies includes reflection on motivation (i.e., the ability of people to reflect on values, passions, and motivation). Being clear on one's motivation helps to choose centrally valued goals.

Career counselling can assist clients in successful goal development and selection through values clarification and prioritisation. For example, narrative and constructionist approaches (e.g., Savickas, 2012) could be used to help clients identify core values and construct meaningful identities across different roles. In addition, more traditional, quantitative self-assessments of values, vocational interests, or vocational preferences (Whiston, 2008) could be used to help clients identify meaningful career goals. Borrowing from other disciplines, the Acceptance Commitment Therapy branch of psychotherapy has also developed several interventions for the purpose of values clarification (Barney et al., 2018; Hayes et al., 2006). Note that to explore the linkages of career goals to nonwork goals, counselling needs to also take into account nonwork-related aspects of the client's life and major goals and demands in these roles (Hirschi, 2020; Savickas et al., 2009).

Phase 2: Mapping resources and barriers

Identifying and leveraging personal and contextual resources is essential for achieving career objectives.

The second phase involves mapping resources and barriers that facilitate or inhibit the attainment of the goals set in the first phase. The associated learning areas in this phase are the localisation and effective use of life/work information as well as the understanding of the relationship between work and society/economy (Hooley et al., 2013). The key aim of the second phase is to identify personal (e.g., personality traits and competencies) and contextual (e.g., family, organisational, and societal factors) resources and barriers that help or inhibit goal attainment (Hirschi et al., 2019). It also includes reflection on one's attitude towards the possible obstacles and resources in the environment and oneself.

Key career management skills in this stage are knowing-whom competencies (Parker, 2002), career building skills (Bridgstock, 2009), and reflection on qualities (Akkermans, Brenninkmeijer et al., 2013). The identification of contextual resources and barriers is facilitated by knowing-whom competencies, which enables persons to identify which social resources (e.g., network contacts) they can use to achieve their career goals. The identification of personal resources is facilitated by *reflection on qualities*, defined as 'reflecting on strengths, shortcomings, and skills with regard to one's personal career' (Akkermans, Brenninkmeijer et al., 2013, p. 249). Career building skills link contextual and personal resources and barriers by enabling persons to find and use information about one's career and labour markets, and being able to effectively identify and choose the best opportunities for career development (Bridgstock, 2009).

In this stage of the framework, career counsellors can help clients map internal and external resources and barriers. They can support clients by supporting them to define resources that they consider important with regards to their goals, and what they want to use or promote in course of their career process. Career counsellors can assess clients' resources and barriers that are helping/inhibiting them from attaining their work-life goals (Hirschi, 2011). Assessment of career resources can occur in a structured manner through (semi-)structured interviewing, or the use of a psychometrically validated questionnaire, such as the Career Resources Questionnaire (Hirschi et al., 2019; Hirschi et al., 2018), or the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Regarding barriers, there are only a few quantitative assessments available, however a qualitative assessment may be more helpful since barriers are often less standardisable than resources. Clarifying individual resources can help clients to understand how their resources are associated with their goals and supports counsellors and clients with a foundation to plan further actions to augment, maintain, or use existing resources.

Phase 3: Development of action strategies to attain goals

Effective action plans balance specificity with flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances.

After clients' career goals are clarified and related career resources and barriers are identified, the focus of the third phase lies in developing action strategies that help clients achieve their goals and assisting clients in implementing the action strategies. To achieve this, the longer-term abstract work-life goals identified in the first phase are translated into shorter-term, specific sub-goals. Resources and barriers as well as priorities and interdependencies among multiple goals and actions (Ballard et al., 2018; Unsworth et al., 2014) should be taken into account, as it is important for the creative generation of options for action and the translation of the goals into a concrete plan of action. Thus, the third phase of the framework includes the development of action strategies based on the knowledge of the previous two phases (Hirschi et al., 2020).

In the third phase, career counsellors can go ahead and support clients in developing specific action strategies under consideration of their resources and barriers (Zacher & Frese, 2018). Various possible action strategies have to be generated and evaluated. For example, strategies focused on human capital development will require a greater share of knowing-how competencies, while strategies focused on social resources (e.g., networks and mentors) will require knowing-whom and communicative competencies (Akkermans, Schaufeli et al., 2013; Parker, 2002). Important skills for human capital development include *work exploration* (i.e., the active exploration and search for work-related and career-related opportunities on the internal and external labour market (Akkerman, Schaufeli et al., 2013), and skills such as knowing how long to stay in a role, when to exploit new employment or training opportunities, and last but not least the ability to move quickly once an opportunity arises (Bridgstock, 2009).

Important skills for building social resources include *networking* competencies, defined as 'the awareness of the presence and professional value of an individual network, and the ability to expand this network for career-related purposes' (Akkermans, Brenninkmeijer et al., 2013, p. 251) and *self-profiling* competencies, that is, the presentation and communication of one's personal knowledge, abilities and skills to the internal and external labour market (Akkermans, Brenninkmeijer et al., 2013). If we take the 'Blueprint' framework for career management skills (Hooley et al., 2013) into account, the important learning areas in this phase are to interact positively and effectively with others, to create and manage a career plan that meets one's career goals, to secure/create and maintain work as well as to maintain balanced life and work roles.

Career counsellors should ensure that the resulting action strategy is both flexible and specific. Specific and difficult goals have been shown to raise motivation (Latham & Pinder, 2005), and such goals make it easier for the client to monitor goal progress. Thus, clients could be assisted and encouraged to develop more specific, lower level, proximal short-term goals and to identify specific actions that help to achieve the higher-order goals identified in phase one of the framework (Hirschi, 2020). Another component can be the consideration of goal multifinality (i.e., specific actions or lower-level goals can lead to the attainment of multiple higher-level goals) and equifinality (i.e., different actions or lower-level goals can lead to the same higher-level goal; Kruglanski et al., 2002, 2012). This helps clients to consider how actions affect multiple goal attainment, for instance across different life roles. As an example, Hirschi et al. (2019) present four action strategies (i.e. allocating, changing, sequencing, and revising) that allow clients to develop strategies of how resources can best be deployed to meet goals across life roles; to identify ways how additional resources can be generated or how existing barriers can be reduced; to identify goals that can be postponed temporally to first focus available resources on other goals; and to change or abandon some goals to establish new goals that better fit with the available resources and barriers. Moreover, a positive attitude by the clients towards their personal goals is important and can be encouraged by the career counsellor (Hirschi, 2011). For example, clients' confidence in their own abilities could be strengthened by pointing out role models who have achieved a similar career goal. In addition, any negative attitudes towards implementation should be discussed and followed up with the client, if necessary, through personal counselling.

Phase 4: Monitoring goal progress and adapting

Feedback and self-monitoring are critical for adjusting strategies and ensuring progress toward goals.

Career planning is a dynamic process that, especially in the face of a rapidly changing world of work, requires continuous self-reflection on flexibility (Hirschi, 2011; Lent, 2013), personal goals, and changing decisions in the course of one's career. Thus, the core aims of the fourth and last phase are the monitoring of goal progress, obtaining feedback on how one is doing in relation to attaining goals, and processing this feedback to improve goal attainment (Zacher & Frese, 2018). This relates to the following learning areas: to change and grow throughout one's life, to participate in life-long learning supportive of life/work goals, and to understand the changing nature of life/work roles (Hooley et al., 2013).

To ensure that clients are aware of complications arising during the implementation of their initial action strategies and to ensure behavioural flexibility in responding to

these complications meta-cognitive skills and a process-oriented mindset are required to monitor and adapt one's career. Moreover, effective monitoring of goal progress requires clients to leverage feedback from others to overcome their blind spots. Obtaining feedback from others is therefore critical in this phase and can be achieved by direct inquiry or more indirectly via observing the reactions of others (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). Gaining honest and valuable feedback from others requires social and communication skills, but also emotion regulation skills. Seeking out positive feedback merely as a tool to feel good about oneself is unlikely to result in feedback that is truly valuable for goal attainment (Anseel et al., 2007). Therefore, clients need self-awareness to understand their motivations in seeking out feedback. Likewise, dealing with negative feedback requires emotion regulation skills: with a lack of emotion regulation skills, clients may dismiss negative feedback to protect their sense of self even when the feedback is accurate and potentially valuable to improve goal attainment. The behavioural career competency *career control* (i.e., the active influencing of learning and work processes) of Akkermans, Brenninkmeijer et al.'s (2013) framework of career competencies can be brought in connection with the fourth and last stage of the counselling framework.

In this phase, counsellors and clients can reflect on what has changed, how the clients feel at the current time, and what important insights they have gained from the process. An important component is the monitoring of the extent to which behaviours help to attain goals and adjust behaviours and action plans accordingly if goal progress is insufficient or too slow (Hirschi et al., 2020). The following questions could guide this process: 'How did the clients experience the process of executing their action plans? Did they make progress towards their goals, and at the desired speed? What was unexpected? Which resources and activities could they use particularly well? Which resources and activities could be strengthened or still need to be promoted? Which obstacles did they confront and how did they handle them?'. Perhaps the biggest current obstacle to successful counselling at this phase is that many career guidance programmes do not allow for periodic follow-up sessions that may occur months after the main career counselling is complete. Therefore it may be important to ensure that clients have means of engaging in this phase through self-directed activities such as reflective exercises. Another possibility is to use online counselling sessions for such follow-up support, which might be easier and more convenient to conduct.

Conclusion

Due to the difficulties in the development of a European Blueprint (Sultana, 2012) and the fact that education systems are informed by different curricular and pedagogical traditions (Alexander, 2001; McLean, 1990) we presented a general framework based on theory that helps to provide an integrative view on career management skills. The proposed career management framework offers a systematic approach based on resource management and action regulation that can be a basis to derive career-counselling interventions. In career interventions programs, career management skills are considered as rising in importance, since they are critical for students, job seekers, and workers to succeed in their careers (Sultana, 2012). To facilitate career counselling activities for skills development, we broke down the rather abstract construct of career management skills to the level of individual action and clarified the skills required for successful action regulation in each of the action phases. The proposed framework describes a general process for different interventions which is versatile enough to allow integrating a range of specific counselling approaches and techniques and to be adapted to specific target groups. The framework could also be integrated into blueprints of more general career guidance frameworks (e.g., Hooley et al., 2013; Reardon et al., 2000) by providing a focus on the content areas that counsellors and programs should pay attention to (Hirschi, 2012). The herein proposed perspective and framework may be fruitful as a foundation for future career counselling practice and interventions as well as for policy-makers. Overall, the presented framework promotes a holistic view of career management skills and an active and flexible approach to achieve personally important goals in various areas of life.

Counsellors can guide individuals through CSM phases using tools like self-assessments and narrative approaches.



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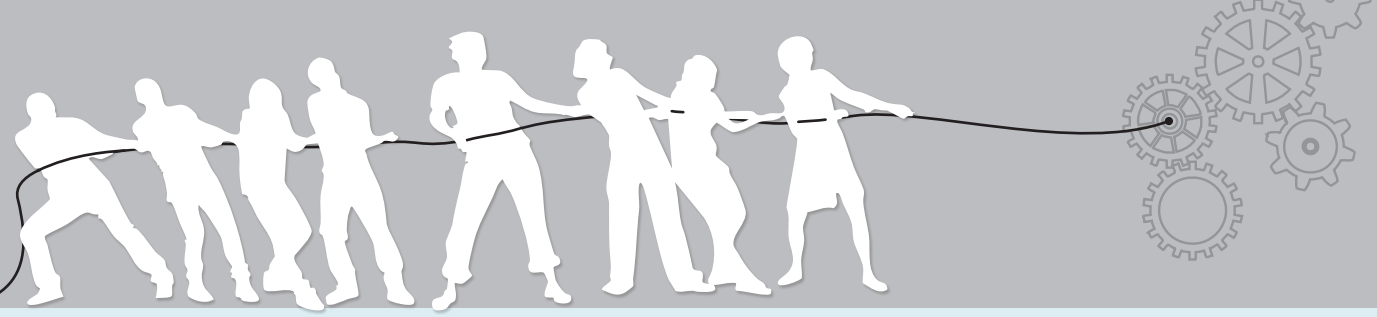
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04

Career development and active participation of individuals in contexts of instability and change

Pilar Mamolar,
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Abstract

Career issues are a major part of the enormous challenges of how to live in a market economy. Designing one's career and life involves understanding the complex relationships between the individual's agency and intentionality, and the social structure of risks and opportunities that characterise labour markets. The active participation of individuals in these structures suggests the development of models that address this difficult relationship, and explore the tensions, difficulties, and conflicts between personal and social demands. In this chapter, we present a theoretical and empirical approach to observe subjective ways of constructing identity as a development process based on five dimensions:

1. security or development orientation,
2. sense of 'where to go',
3. commitment to development,
4. reflective awareness and
5. self-confidence.

These dimensions could dance or stumble in an environment characterised by change and a constant demand for re-adaptation.

Keywords
Career design, career identity, agency & structure, career management skills, subjective careers.

Instability and change: Challenges for research and practice

The crises we face in the first two decades of this century – financial, health, war, humanitarian – have only increased the risks that societies transfer to individuals regarding work and the construction of their life/career projects. Adults of all ages will have to face difficult situations related to work and manage continuous career changes and transitions in the risk societies (Beck, 1992, 2000).

In a global and market economy, the processes of appropriation and re-appropriation of skills characteristic of modernity (Giddens, 1995) imply a constant updating of competencies acquired through work, education, and training experiences. Having the necessary qualifications and skills to get or keep a good job is a necessary condition but does

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not guarantee individuals the continuity or advancement in their careers. The processes of appropriation and re-appropriation of skills and competencies are reconfigured in companies, as common practices to address talent gaps (Agrawal et al., 2020), and involve strategies of *Reskilling* (retraining or reinvention in something new); and *Upskilling* (improvement or qualifications added to what is done). However, this will affect a smaller proportion of workers. For full-time and permanent workers (1 in 4 workers according to International Labour Organization [ILO], 2015), companies – especially the most competitive ones – will continue to be an excellent provider of training and training experiences. Based on their performance and potential, full-time wage earner workers could have contingent plans to deal with changes in technologies, production processes or management skills. However, workers who are not part of these business strategies will rely on their own resources and strategies to move between jobs, professions, companies, and occupations. For the most vulnerable sectors worldwide (i.e., youth, women, and lower-income and less-skilled workers), opportunities for development and recovery will be difficult, and many disadvantaged individuals and groups risk being excluded from the labour market (ILO, 2021).

Improving employability through skills development[1] is only part of the challenge of working and living in a globalised world. The problems arising from job loss and job insecurity have a direct impact on people's lives and character, and influence in different ways their self-perceptions and future projections (Sennett, 1998). Thus, being promoted, fired, outsourced, or excluded from the labour market, are not only events that happen to us, but also create meanings about who we are and how we interpret what we do (Wenger, 1998).

Workers' difficulties to remain active or employable from multiple careers (Kerka, 2003) or fragments of work (Sennett, 1998) often exceed personal strategies for successfully coping with this task, especially in situations of vulnerability. Inequalities and the lack of opportunity and choice in a world of potentially multiple opportunities to design one's own life and career constitute 'a source of despair rather than personal enrichment' (Giddens, 1995, p. 112). For some people, depending on their situation, age, qualifications, economic resources, professional status..., this search for opportunities could be stimulating. For many it will entail significant risks, in the form of insecurity, social isolation and depression due to unemployment or underemployment (Schiersmann et al., 2012).

[1] Transferable skills and qualifications that strengthen the ability of individuals to take advantage of the education and training opportunities open to them with a view to finding and retaining decent work, progressing in the enterprise or when changing jobs, and adapting to changing technology and labour market conditions (Levaggi, 2004).

Designing one's own career and life will not only depend on the competencies and agency of the new flexible, self-managed and self-directed workers (Harrison, 2000). It may require a deeper analysis of the *subtle game* that operates between *agency* as intentionality to shape future action plans that and play an active role in their own development (Bandura, 2001); and the *social structure* of risks and opportunities that characterise labour markets, determine the match between supply and demand and skills required to perform these occupations (Forrier et al., 2009). Career is about making choices, but it is also about recognising the constraints that today's unequal societies impose on those choices (Hooley, 2021).

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Career issues reflect the enormous challenges of how to live in a global, technological, market economy. The transitions that individuals will make in their lives demand constant reflection on themselves and their environment, as well as the possibility of imagining possible *selves* over time (Savickas et al., 2009). The difficulty to access, remain active, and create opportunities in a highly demanding and excluding labour market, shapes the identities of young and older workers. Such demands or expectations point towards other forms of work readiness and career management, as well as new strategies to ensure a sustainable employability, which promote the development of individuals and groups taking into consideration their personal interest and assets (Watts, 2006).

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Individuals of any age and professional status will be faced with the task of constructing their careers and designing their lives, attending personal and social demands. These new workers will need to constantly reinvent themselves and adopt a strategic mindset, which implies the ability to identify career opportunities that connect with their lives (Guichard, 2012). However, the possibility of participating in a social structure through work, without giving up development, as an expression of one's aspirations and personal assets, cannot be taken for granted or depend only on the initiative of individuals. To create opportunities (e.g., for learning, work, study, employment, entrepreneurship), we need to explore ways of active participation and to do so in a differential manner for each person.

To move forward, we need to challenge some of the assumptions present in classic career intervention models. These include: (a) assuming that if individuals have the aptitude and ability, the social context will provide them with the expected career path (Borgen et al., 2016); (b) transferring to individuals certain biases or expectations about development, qualifications, or adaptation to socio-labour structures, according to a certain corporate or market logic, without exploring and interpreting personal and social tensions, conflicts, and contradictions (Jansen & Wildemeersch, 1996; Wildemeersch & Stroobants, 2009); and (c) considering the risks of foregrounding agency, without addressing structure (Forrier et al., 2009).

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A more holistic and ecological career design perspective encourages us to think about all that constitutes a decent job and a good life. For both young people entering the workforce and older workers, the opportunity to develop a fulfilling career is to help them see the big picture and find some meaningful relationship between their lives and the environment in which they live. In doing so, we will be creating the possibility to explore how their careers and their actions can shape the context in which they live (Irving, 2018; Hooley, 2021).

This issue refers us to the role of guidance in facilitating the active, reflective, and creative participation of people in the social sphere and developing their potential as agents who participate in their environment and not simply as job seekers. On the other hand, the constant change and reformulation of goals and participation projects in social structures requires greater complexity in terms of learning as a mediating process that connects people with their environment through acts of meaning (Bruner, 2009). This learning will imply changes that point to the development of one's own identity as a creative process, where the individual will give sense and meaning to his or her experience by interpreting the current contexts (Meijers, 1998). The socio-labour transitions faced by workers throughout their lives demand learning that allows for a better and more complex understanding of themselves, their environment, and the relationship between both, according to the classic formula of Parsons (1909). Transitioning between occupations, jobs, or projects, and managing the demands related to socio-labour roles, requires putting the self in perspective 'in relation to' different experiences and unforeseen or unwanted changes.

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With all these challenges in mind, we wanted to explore subjective career patterns or ways of constructing development and advancement of any individual or group at any given point in a career.

In this chapter, we present an empirically based theoretical model for career management in contexts of instability and change. The model presents five dimensions: (1) security or development orientation, (2) sense of 'where to go', (3) commitment to development, (4) reflective awareness and (5) self-confidence. Using data collected from the sample for model validation, we present different patterns or subjective ways of constructing a career according to age and professional status. These patterns could facilitate o limit career movements in an environment characterised by change and a constant demand for readaptation. The analysis is based on the practical application of the IDeCaA Inventory[2] (Mamolar 2018; 2022), to observe career patterns with individuals and groups.

[2] IDeCaA stands for *Identidad de Carrera y Autodirección (Career Identity and Self-direction)*

New measures to differentiate heterogeneous career patterns

The main measures of vocational identity assessment have been influenced by Marcia's identity model as one of the main paradigms in identity research (Marcia, 1966, 1980, 2002). The Vocational Identity Status Assessment (VISA; Porfeli et al., 2011) is based on Marcia's (1966) identity statuses (i.e., achieved, moratorium, excluded and diffuse). The VISA is composed of three dimensions – career exploration, career commitment and career reconsideration – and six subscales that assess vocational processes as indicative of identity progress.

The need to distinguish between vocational status and vocational identity as a more stable pattern of career interests, goals, and skills, motivates the construction of the Vocational Identity Measure (VIM) by Gupta et al. (2015). The result is a 20-item questionnaire, using a five-point Likert scale – in degrees of agreement-disagreement – that attempts to reflect a concept of vocational identity as a 'crystallised product based on life experiences' (Gupta et al., 2015, p. 3).

Developments in Career Construction Theory have highlighted the need for self-regulatory resources to solve the complex problems associated with vocational tasks (Savickas, 2005). This is the theoretical foundation of the CAAS (Career Adapt-Abilities Scale) by Savickas & Porfeli (2012). The CAAS was built on the theoretical basis of the main vocational tasks: orientation, exploration, establishment, management, and disengagement. Individuals would complete this cycle of adaptive performance that begins and ends with the acquisition or disengagement from a role or job. Adaptability resources are psychosocial constructs and competencies, acquired through education and experience that support self-regulation tasks. The CAAS is composed of four subscales, which measure concern, control, curiosity, and confidence as psychosocial resources for managing vocational development tasks and job transitions. Each consists of six items rated by the individual in degrees of strength – from the strongest to the least strong.

Although the concept of identity linked to vocation, profession and more recently career construction, has gained prominence in recent years, we are still far from using models and measures that capture identity as a dynamic process that is likely to better describe the self-regulatory activity needed to manage the demands derived from the current context (Serafini & Adams, 2002).

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The model we present is based on a dynamic and functional identity conception, and agency as a capacity that allows the individual to create a certain sense of direction and to generate courses of action in contexts of change. The resulting five-dimensional IDe-

CaA Inventory – drawn from an initial seven-dimensional model (Mamolar, 2022) – is intended to observe career patterns, as subjective ways of constructing development and advancement. Such ways may either dance or stumble with an environment characterised by change, and a constant demand for re-adaptation. This model suggests learning strategies from an educational, transformative, and critical perspective. An example item for each of the five dimensions can be seen in the theoretical model (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 The theoretical model

Dimensions	Definitions	Learning/strategies	Sample items
I. Security or Development Orientation (9 items)	Explores the person's priorities and preferences toward development (i.e., understood as orientation toward expressing one's career aspirations and interests), and stability, as orientation toward job security and stability. It is of interest to know if there is a useful or appropriate balance in relation to the person's situation at a current time or career transition.	To seek a certain balance between security and development needs, to perform in a secure manner. This dynamic balance will be different for each person at different times in his or her career. This will involve addressing the needs of the individual, taking care of the short term (i.e., to meet security related needs), without losing sight of medium to long-term development.	'My need for job security limits my professional development.' 'I prioritise job stability over development and learning.' 'I put aside my professional preferences to better adapt to my environment.'
II. Career Direction (sense of 'where to go') (9 items)	Explores the person's readiness to create a sense of where to go or sense of self-direction that connects experience with meaningful future goals, as an expression of one's aspirations or interests.	Learning to create one's own sense of direction (i.e., connecting personal interests, characteristics, and expectations with opportunities in the socio-labour environment). Creating the necessary bridges between the current situation and a desirable future situation.	'When I think about my future, I have a sense of where I want to go.' 'My professional choices are consistent with what I want to become.' 'The idea of what I want to become helps me to progress.'

III. Commitment to development (15 items)	Explores the person's motivation to maintain active interests and commitments to development based on opportunities, concerns, challenges, projects, or goals.	Learning to manage one's own motivation and create useful commitments to one's own development over time. Learning to create development opportunities that connect with one's life (i.e., beyond attachment to a role, job, profession, organisation).	'I feel motivated to create new possibilities for professional development.' 'I am committed to the pursuit of new professional goals.' 'My current professional challenges stimulate me to learn.'
IV. Reflective Consciousness (6 items)	Explores the disposition for reflective thinking that allows the person to put into perspective their own frames of reference, thereby improving their understanding of themselves and the environment in which they take part.	Learning to observe our frames of reference and gaining a certain perspective on events and situations. Encourage a type of reflexivity or recursiveness that facilitates a better understanding of changes related to oneself, in a constantly changing and transforming environment.	'I challenge my own criteria and my way of seeing things.' 'I think critically about the values transmitted by my own culture.' 'I am aware of changes in the way I understand myself.'
V. Self-Confidence (12 items)	Explores the presence or absence of feelings of fear, indecision, confusion, or lack of confidence often present in career transitions.	Learning to identify the feelings that accompany ongoing transitions and thereby the ability to manage them to support development. Learning to identify and manage feelings and emotions to move forward effectively, successfully, or creatively.	'My lack of confidence limits my professional development.' 'I feel anxious about exploring new career options.' 'The feeling of fear in new situations slows down my professional development.'

People, at different points in their paths and situation, will need to change and construct new reflexive identities, considering real opportunities and risks. Career identity, from the agency perspective, is defined as the willingness to direct development intentionally, adopting a strategic mind-set that allows the individual to explore and identify career opportunities by connecting personal and social demands (Côté & Levine, 2015; Guichard, 2012; Wildemeersch & Stroobants, 2009). From this perspective, identity is linked to learning as a creative process from which the individual generates courses of action and constructs one's own reflective biography from life experiences (Law et al., 2002).

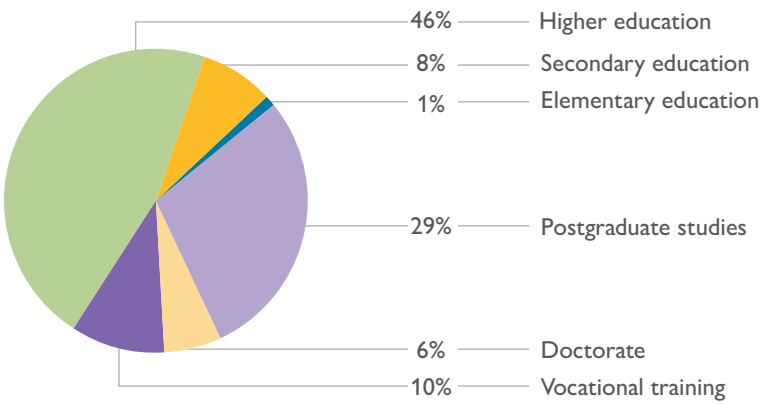
The relationship between identity, learning and career has far-reaching implications. Individuals have the potential to be an active part of change in an ever-changing society. The processes that drive the individual are not only career moves based on roles, professions, or evolutionary stages in their maturation process, but the ability to construct new understandings of self in an environment that constantly demands (re)adaptation. This issue will become more evident in some career transitions, especially when the need to actively participate and connect personal needs with socio-occupational demands may be more pressing.

Method

Sample

The IDeCaA Inventory was validated with a sample of 366 persons with the following distribution: 63.1% women, 36.9% men; aged between 23 and 65 (M = 44.28; SD = 10.09), most of them Spanish (89.9%). The sample is mostly composed of people who have a higher education degree (see Figure 4.1). Regarding professional activity, most people were employed at the time of evaluation: either self-employed (20.5%) or employees as salaried workers (57.1%). The rest were unemployed (15.3%), in professional retirement (3%) or performing other types of activities (4.1%).

Figure 4.1 Educational level achieved by the components of the sample



Instrument

We used the five-dimensional, 51-item IDeCaA Inventory (Mamolar, 2018). The informants responded on a six-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 *(I do not identify at all with this statement)* to 6 *(I can fully identify with this statement)*. The item writing required an exploratory formulation in each of the dimensions, with the aim of creating or renewing: a) some kind of balance between a security and a development orientation; b) some sense of direction in situations of instability and change; c) new opportunities and new commitments to development; d) a reflexive awareness of one's own frames of reference; e) appropriate self-confidence and determination in spite of difficulties. The overall Cronbach's for the whole scale was 0.96. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the five dimensions and the associated standard error of measurement regarding the data of the study sample were calculated (see Table 4.2). In four of the five dimensions the value of 0.80 is exceeded, a value that is usually used as a reference by several authors (George & Mallery, 2003; Gliem & Gliem, 2003). In the case of Reflective Consciousness, the results are more modest and reflect the shorter length of the scale compared to the rest (six items).

Table 4.2 Reliability and standard error of measurement of the IDeCaA Inventory

Dimensions	α	SEM
Development-Security	0.84	8.12
Career Management	0.83	8.20
Commitment with Development	0.88	6.90
Reflective consciousness	0.68	11.36
Self Confidence	0.87	7.10

Procedure for data collection

The questionnaire was sent by email to a sample of 366 adults, 231 people included in a database of professionals linked to a company with a Business-to-Consumer (B2C) strategy; and 135 third-year undergraduate students at the Faculty of Education of the National University of Distance Education (UNED). The questionnaires were completed online, using the Google Forms application. Participants were informed of the objectives of the study and how the results would be used, and they gave their signed informed consent. Participation was voluntary, and assurances were given in all cases that the data collected would be kept confidential and used only for the purposes of the research. This procedure conforms to international Standards for Educational and Psychological testing defined by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education (2014).

Results

Exploratory factor analysis

To evaluate the factor structure of the IDeCaA Inventory, a parallel analysis, based on principal components (Horn, 1965), was carried out to find out how many factors to extract; and the unweighted least squares (ULS) methods for extraction and Promin for rotation, all applied to the matrix of polychoric correlations between items. First, the results of the parallel analysis indicated five factors to be retained. This pentafactorial structure was adopted as good, which meant that these five dimensions were able to explain a high percentage of the variance of the items (35.65%) (see Table 4.3). The

current five-dimension structure of the questionnaire is the one with the greatest explanatory power, according to the empirical evidence obtained and described in another article (for further psychometric details, see Mamola, 2022).

Table 4.3 Percentage of variance explained by each dimension of the IDeCaA Inventory

Dimensions	Explained variance
Development-Security	8.134%
Career Management	10.887%
Commitment with Development	4.843%
Reflective consciousness	4.907%
Self Confidence	6.884%
Cumulative explained variance	35.655%

To complement the study of the internal structure of the inventory, the correlation matrix between the direct scores of the five dimensions evaluated was calculated (see Table 4.4). The pattern of the results reveals the central role of Commitment to Development; the relationship between the dimensions Commitment to Development and Career Direction; and the relationship between Self-Confidence and Development and Security.

Table 4.4 Correlation between the dimensions of the IDeCaA Inventory

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Development-Security	1				
2. Career Management	0.180	1			
3. Commitment with Development	0.295	0.636	1		
4. Reflective consciousness	0.067	0.226	0.365	1	
5. Self Confidence	0.518	0.431	0.487	0.114	1

Multivariate analysis of variance

A correlational study was carried out, using the five factors measured by the Career Identity Scale as dependent variables, and age (A: below 39; B: between 40-49 and C: between 50 and 65 years old) and *professional status* (self-employed worker, wage earner and unemployed) as independent variables.



We also performed a MANOVA, where the dependent variables were the five measures of the Career Identity Scale, and the fixed factors were age and professional status. To verify *post hoc* group differences, Scheffé and Least Significant Difference (LSD) methods were used. The statistics used to measure the effect were Pillai's trace (*F*) and partial eta squared (η^2_p), which indicates the effect size. According to conventional thresholds, η^2_p values less than 0.06 were considered small, values between 0.06 and 0.14 were considered medium, and values greater than 0.14 were considered large (Field, 2013). All statistical analyses were performed with SPSS 25.

Hypothesis testing

The initial hypothesis established positive relationships in the five dimensions of the inventory and the more active and participative status in the socio-occupational structure. It could be expected that wage earners and self-employed workers would have higher scores on career direction, commitment to development and self-confidence. Especially workers with a secure position might have less fear, feeling of emptiness or indecision about their career, and therefore more self-confidence than the other groups. On the other hand, and in the development-security dimension, average and balanced scores between development and stability were to be expected in this group. In the group of unemployed workers, we expected to confirm the lowest results in all dimensions, especially after a certain age (40–49). As for reflective consciousness, age could play an important role, higher in the younger group and stabilising at high values with increasing age.

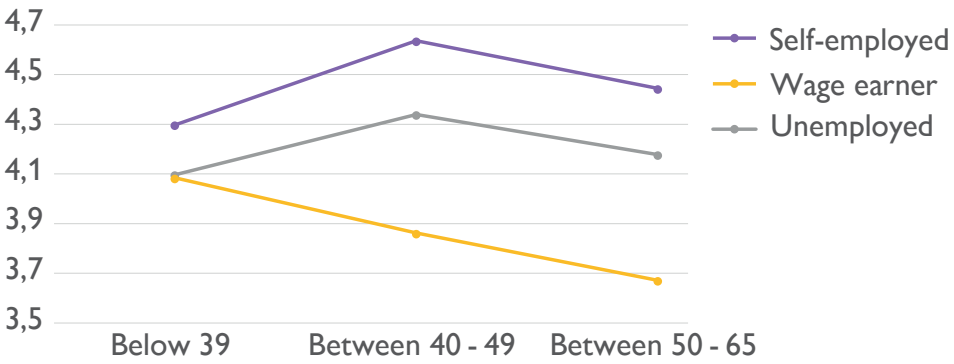
The study of simple effects between groups regarding age confirmed three significant effects in Reflective Consciousness, $F(3, 290) = 3.31$, $p = 0.038$, $\eta^2_p = 0.023$, with the youngest group scoring statistically higher than the older group ($\Delta M = 0.23$, $p = 0.015$); Self-Confidence and Determination, $F(3, 290) = 4.47$, $p = 0.012$, $\eta^2_p = 0.031$. In this case, post hoc analysis revealed significant differences between both older age groups (40–49 and 50–65) and the younger group, with a mean difference of $\Delta M = -0.36$ ($p = .005$) and $\Delta M = -0.34$ ($p = .01$), respectively.

Regarding professional status, three variables showed simple effects: Security and Development, $F(3, 290) = 11.1$, $p = 0.000$, $\eta^2_p = 0.073$; Commitment with Development, $F(3, 290) = 6.73$, $p = 0.001$, $\eta^2_p = 0.045$, and Self-Confidence and Determination, $F(3, 290) = 4.00$, $p = 0.019$, $\eta^2_p = 0.027$. Post hoc analysis showed higher differences in self-employed compared to wage earner workers regarding Security and Development

($\Delta M = 0.60$, $p < 0.001$) and Commitment with Development ($\Delta M = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$), and higher results in self-employed compared to wage earner workers ($\Delta M = 0.49$, $p < 0.001$) and unemployed ($\Delta M = 0.45$, $p = 0.005$) regarding Self-Confidence and Determination.

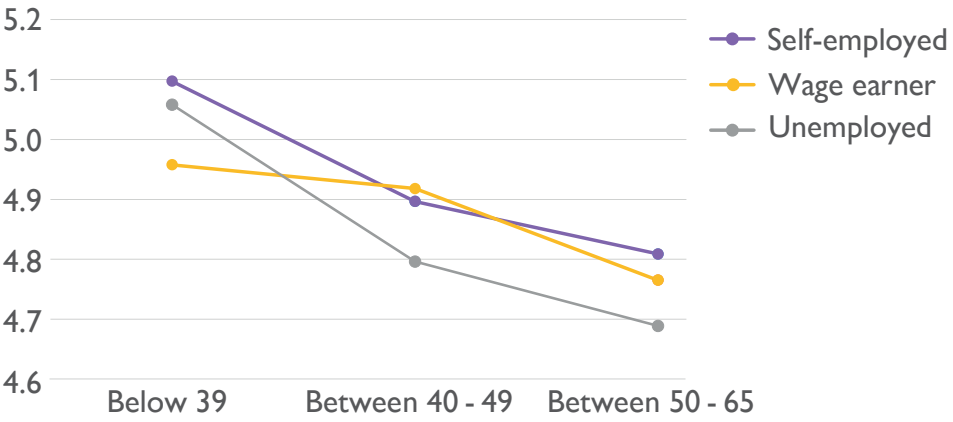
No significant interaction effects were found between age and professional status. However, the following graph is presented to illustrate the distinct age-related profiles of the three professional groups.

Figure 4.2 Age and professional status profiles in Development and Security



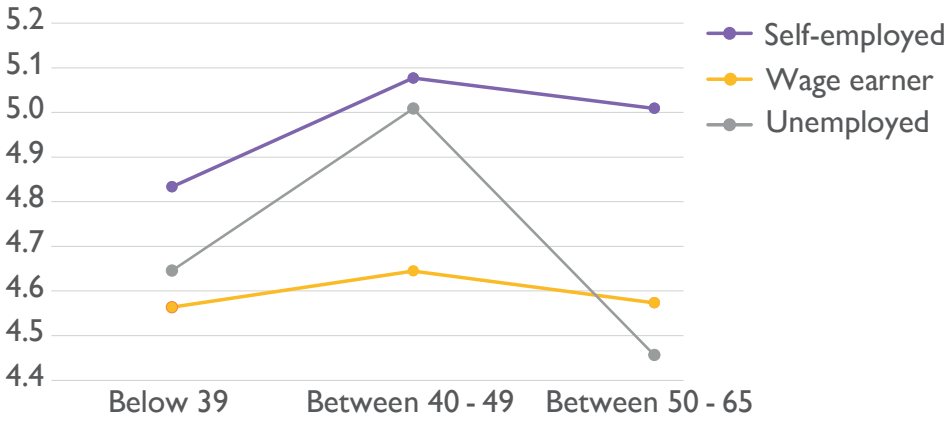
In the Development and Security dimension, we observed significant differences between the groups. The self-employed workers prioritise development and the expression of their own career aspirations over security, and they do so progressively with age and especially in the 40–49 age group. After that age, the curve suggests a greater balance between development and security. Unemployed workers show a similar pattern, with significantly lower values. Wage earner workers show scores close to the average in the first age group and a progressive orientation towards job security and stability after the age of 39. From that age onwards, their development orientation decreases, prioritising job security, in contrast to the other two groups. We could say that those who represent a traditional employment model, seek, value, and prioritise the security offered by a position and potential income over development as an expression of their own aspirations. This orientation could present them with a potential weakness in the event of job loss or unexpected change.

Figure 4.3 Age and professional status profiles in Reflective Consciousness



In the Reflective Consciousness dimension, differences were observed only in relation to age, not professional status. All three groups showed high scores in reflective consciousness at the beginning of the career and before the age of 39. As they advance in age, reflective awareness declines regardless of professional status. Maturity could mean less critical and reflective thinking, having consolidated frames of reference, values, and beliefs. However, from the point of view of current career challenges, this crystallisation could jeopardise the ability to learn how to learn in a demanding context with high re-adaptation demands.

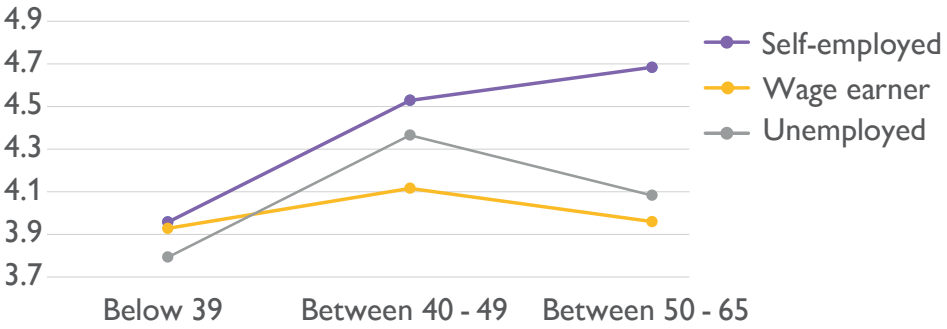
Figure 4.4 Age and professional status profiles in Commitment with Development



In the Commitment with Development dimension, we observe differences between the groups. Commitment to development increases similarly in the self-employed and unemployed up to the age of 40–49. After this age, the commitment of the unemployed falls towards the lower values of the scale, especially in the 50–65 age group. It is striking that wage earner workers show values below average in all age groups. According to these data, we could say that a wage-earning employment modality (i.e., working for others) could discourage commitment to development or motivation to initiate new projects and new career opportunities. If this is the case, we can anticipate potential risks in case of unexpected transitions such as a layoff. Wage earner workers who are laid off may feel not only the angst that comes with job loss, but the lack of motivation and commitment to development, which could hinder and limit the search for career opportunities that connect with their lives.



Figure 4.5 Age and professional status profiles in Self Confidence



Self-employed individuals exhibit higher levels of self-confidence – or, conversely, lower levels of fear, indecision, and emptiness – compared to the other two professional statuses, particularly in the most mature age group (50–65), where they achieve the highest scores. At the beginning of their careers, all groups report similarly low levels of self-confidence. The trajectories of the self-employed and unemployed are comparable up to the age of 40–49; however, beyond this point, the unemployed experience a marked increase in feelings of fear and emptiness. Notably, wage earners consistently report low levels of self-confidence across all age groups, with especially pronounced deficits among the youngest and oldest participants.

Discussion

In this chapter, we presented a practical application of a model grounded in a theoretical and empirical approach to career identity assessment from an agency perspective. In doing so, we offered a partial response to some of the unresolved questions raised by Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005). Specifically, we sought to provide empirically based evidence of the nuanced ways in which this grand theory captures proactive and adaptive career development processes – including the role of context – while adopting a person-centred approach that acknowledges the heterogeneous patterns of career construction across individuals (Rudolph et al., 2019).

We used the IDeCaA Inventory to look at subjective career patterns or ways, according to age and occupational status. The general starting hypothesis established positive relationships in all five dimensions of the psychometric scale with respect to the more active and participative status in the socio-occupational structure. More experience and more job stability would lead to higher scores. In contrast to the self-employed and salaried workers, the unemployed would have the lowest scores on all five dimensions.

Contrary to our expectations, this hypothesis was not confirmed. This outcome highlights, first, a clear distinction between objective careers – defined by positions or statuses within organisational structures – and subjectivity, which has become a central feature of contemporary career paths (Guichard, 2012). Additionally, it underscores the dialectical relationship between objective and subjective careers, emphasizing the importance of understanding individuals' needs within their specific contexts through dynamic models and ecological approaches (Collin & Young, 1986).

Our results underscore the dialectical relationship between objective and subjective careers, emphasizing the importance of understanding individuals' needs within their specific contexts through dynamic models and ecological approaches.

The results for self-employed workers aligned more closely with our initial hypothesis. These individuals appear to possess greater resources and strategies for navigating career paths amid instability and change, as evidenced by high and above-average scores across nearly all dimensions – particularly in the older age groups. In contrast, the pattern observed among salaried workers – characterised by lower and more linear scores across all five dimensions and age groups – suggests that this group may be especially vulnerable in the face of shifting labour market conditions, as is currently the case. Such workers may struggle to manage unexpected transitions or adapt effectively to unstable situations.

Unexpectedly, the results for unemployed individuals did not fully support our initial expectations, at least not in the first two age groups. Up to the age of 40–49, their developmental trajectory closely resembled that of the self-employed. However, beyond this point, their scores declined significantly, indicating potential challenges in maintaining or developing career management skills. This decline suggests a need for more targeted support from this age onward, aimed at fostering new orientations and enhancing opportunities for active engagement in socio-occupational structures – thereby reducing the risk of isolation or social exclusion.

It is also noteworthy that younger individuals exhibit the highest levels of reflective awareness, with this capacity gradually declining with age and increased work experience. The data reveal a consistent downward trend in reflective consciousness across

all professional groups and employment statuses, reaching its lowest point during middle age.

The five dimensions of the IDeCaA Inventory suggest strategies and learning from an educational, transformative, and critical perspective. It measures each of these five dimensions to explore meaning-making processes during ongoing transitions.

The five dimensions of the IDeCaA Inventory suggest strategies and learning from an educational, transformative, and critical perspective. It measures each of these five dimensions to explore meaning-making processes during ongoing transitions. From an orientation point of view, it aims to facilitate reflective processes of exploration and meaning making about oneself, the environment, and the relationships between them (Parsons, 1909).

We highlight, on the one hand, the implications of this chapter for the research on groups and individuals' career patterns and, from there, designing differential interventions for individuals at a given point in their career paths. On the other hand, the low results we observed in the groups that maintain a stable relationship with employment suggest the need for educational interventions, as stability can change quickly. Both interventions, as a response to a supervening crisis and more preventive interventions to acquire a strategic mind-set, could be useful for any worker today.

The IDeCaA Inventory suggests learning strategies to manage change and maintain sustainable and sustained employability over time. Being part of the group of salaried workers (at a specific moment), does not necessarily prepare us to advance in our career in the future.

To influence the complex relationship between agency and structure slightly, it is necessary to aim higher in terms of learning and employability. This means that we will have to develop new learning and strategies to manage career development, considering our personal interests and assets, but also the opportunities and potential risks.

To influence the complex relationship between agency and structure slightly, it is necessary to aim higher in terms of learning and employability. This means that we will have to develop new learning and strategies to manage career development, considering our personal interests and assets, but also the opportunities and potential risks.

From the data obtained with this sample and the main empirical analyses, we can provide evidence on the usefulness of this tool to identify career patterns at a given point in time in the trajectories of self-employed, employed, and unemployed workers. This does not imply causal and generalisable relationships for other groups and contexts. Rather, we suggest that subjective career patterns, as influenced by current contexts, might suggest relevant and necessarily contingent lines of educational intervention and action.

Limitations and future research lines

The present chapter aims to translate research findings into practical insights for the scientific and professional communities, building on prior work in which we established evidence for the reliability and convergent validity of the IDeCaA Inventory (Mamolar, 2022). However, confirmatory factor analyses are still underway to strengthen the empirical foundation of our five-dimension model.

One notable limitation of this chapter is the composition of the sample, which consists predominantly of individuals with higher education degrees. Future research should aim to include a more diverse range of professional backgrounds to enhance the generalisability of the findings.

As a future line of inquiry, we propose further investigation into educational and counselling interventions with individuals and groups, specifically focused on developing career management skills. A mixed-methods approach – integrating both qualitative and quantitative analyses – could provide deeper insight into changes in career identity and agency, as well as the development of a strategic mindset that enables individuals to meaningfully engage with their contexts and manage their careers more effectively.



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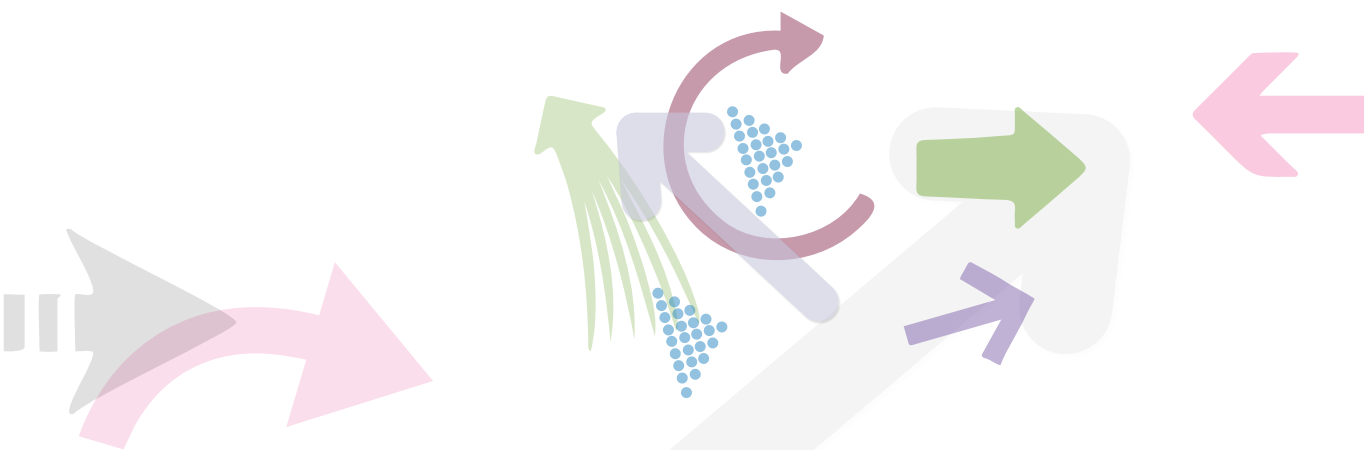
Appendix

Table S1 Mean scores and standard deviations of the IDeCaA inventory by professional status

	Self employed (*n* = 75)		**Wage earner (*n* = 162)**		**Unemployed (*n* = 56)**	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Development and security	4.49	0.71	3.88	0.91	4.19	0.86
Career direction	4.93	0.65	4.75	0.70	4.75	0.76
Commitment with development	5.00	0.59	4.59	0.70	4.71	0.74
Reflective consciousness	4.88	0.75	4.88	0.56	4.87	0.70
Self confidence	4.05	1.02	4.01	0.83	4.05	1.01

Table S2 Mean scores and standard deviations of the IDeCaA inventory by age group

	23–39 (*n* = 120)		**40–49 (*n* = 134)**		**50–65 (*n* = 111)**	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Development and security	4.12	0.90	4.14	0.90	4.07	0.89
Career direction	4.74	0.77	4.81	0.64	4.83	0.72
Commitment with development	4.59	0.68	4.81	0.66	4.67	0.73
Reflective consciousness	4.98	0.60	4.90	0.67	4.80	0.64
Self confidence	3.89	1.00	4.21	0.95	4.25	0.85



05

Complexity competence as basis for career management

Christiane Schiersmann

Abstract

The central thesis of this chapter is that, in light of the challenges posed by societal and labour market transformations driven by megatrends such as digitalisation and globalisation, complexity competence has become a key resource for successful career development. Addressing this issue requires a systemic approach. Following a discussion of various systems theories and competence frameworks, a complexity-oriented competence profile is presented. This profile encompasses cognitive, personal, social, and reflective competences related to navigating complexity.

Keywords
complexity, system theories, competence concepts, competence profile

Introduction

Due to general trends in our society – like digitalisation and globalisation, amongst others – we live in a very complex world, which goes along with volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, the so-called VUCA-world (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). In this societal context, educational, vocational, and professional decisions are also very complex. Standardised career paths loose relevance. Young people and adults face the challenge of constructing their individual career development on their own. This starts with the decision for a school type, goes beyond the choice of vocational or study programmes, the direction of career development, the necessity to often re-adjust one's career development, the selection of further training programmes and goes to the re-entry in the labour market after family – or job-related career breaks. This increasing individualisation of life design opens up a larger scope for choices, but also implies more risks and uncertainty.

Furthermore, occupational routines also become increasingly complex. Low skilled jobs will be diminishing, because they will be overtaken by computers. The remaining or newly-developing jobs will be challenging and require high qualification profiles. This implies complex decision-making situations that cannot be handled on the basis of routine strategies. Instead, creative solutions are required. Everybody will have to be able to cope with uncertainties and dilemmas. In this context, a competence to deal with this complexity is not only relevant for leaders or counsellors, but for everybody. In the future, the capacity to deal with complexity will be a core competence for successful career

In the future, the capacity to deal with complexity will be a core competence for successful career management.

management. Monocausal and linear models of thinking and acting are no longer adequate to cope with current and future challenges of career development. What is necessary is a systemic approach that focuses on influencing factors that interact with each other, self-dynamics, and sudden changes of systems.

In the present chapter, different system and complexity theories are presented. They form the background for the elaboration of a competence profile for dealing with complexity. The theory of synergetic and complex problem solving are selected as its foundation. After a brief sketch of the underlying understanding of competence, the competence profile will be presented and explained. It comprises four areas: complexity-related cognitive competences, personal, social competences, and reflection competences.

Systemic and complexity-related theories as basis for complexity competence

Nowadays, the term complexity is widely used, but there are very different definitions (Strunk, 2019). Following Dörner and Funke (2017) complexity can be characterised by the following features:

a. Often, the situation must be understood as a dialectical type of problem: at the outset, neither the goal is clearly defined, nor are the necessary steps to achieve it sufficiently known. For instance, a person may be seeking a new career path that involves frequent communication with customers, yet she remains uncertain about the sector in which she would like to work.

b. There is a multitude of potential goals *(polytely)*, which makes decision-making more complex. For example, an individual may be seeking a job that involves intensive contact with clients or customers, while also aspiring to earn a good salary – something that is often lacking in the social sector. Additionally, she may be unwilling to relocate, further complicating the decision process.

c. There is also a large variety of factors influencing a situation and some influencing variables may remain unknown *(intransparency)*. The influencing variables involved are linked to each other in different densities, intensities and types, either in the same direction or in opposite directions (rectified or counter-curved).The complexity of the course of a (social) system in time leads to its own dynamics and is neither predictable nor directly controllable.

In order to deal with this complexity appropriately, linear models of thinking are not suitable because they cannot adequately capture the interactions. The latter is achieved by systemic or complexity-related thinking, which focuses on feedback, self-dynamics and sudden changes of systems. Complexity theories are therefore closely linked to systems theory approaches. The difference lies, among other things, in the conceptual orientation either to systems in general or to complex systems in the narrower sense. However, the term 'systemic' is nowadays used in a very inflationary way. It is not possible to speak of systems theory; rather, many variants have emerged, based on different scientific disciplines and theoretical approaches. Schiepek et al. (2013) are even of the opinion that no characteristics can be identified that can be regarded as a common unique selling point of the various systemic approaches. In numerous publications, it is not possible to find out exactly which systemic concept is used as a basis.

It is not possible to speak of systems theory; rather, many variants have emerged, based on different scientific disciplines and theoretical approaches.

The first concepts of a systems theory, created as early as the 1940s, aimed to develop a universal explanatory model that would provide a basis for different scientific disciplines from natural science to sociology. The biologist Bertalanffy (1970) is one of the best-known representatives of such a general systems theory. Cybernetics has a central influence on systemic thinking. It was founded by Wiener (1952) in the 1940s. First-order cybernetics started from simple control loops. In the 1970s, Foerster (1985) developed second-order cybernetics. This theory emphasises that the person observing is always part of what he or she is observing.

In addition, scientific and epistemological approaches also form part of the foundation of systemic concepts. The Chilean neurobiologist Maturana (1982) introduced constructivism into systemic thinking. From this perspective, human cognition – as a function of the organism – is fundamentally subject-bound and therefore not directly transferable between individuals. Maturana and Varela (1982) also developed the concept of autopoiesis (self-generation) to describe the distinctive organisation of living systems. Autopoietic systems are characterised by their ability to produce and reproduce the very components that constitute them, for as long as the system remains viable. A key insight that remains relevant today is that autopoietic systems cannot be directly controlled by external influences. However, they can be perturbed or stimulated if external inputs resonate with internal states of the system that permit – or necessitate – a response.

Another strand of systems theory is rooted in communication theory, which was developed during the 20th century by researchers at the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto, California. Gregory Bateson (1904-1980) – a biologist, anthropologist, and psychologist – was one of its key founders. The research group later included other influential

figures, such as the Austrian analytical psychotherapist Paul Watzlawick (1921-2007), the Argentine paediatrician and child psychiatrist Salvador Minuchin (1921-2017), and the American social worker Virginia Satir (1916-1988). Communication theory offers an approach to applying general systems theory to social systems. The five axioms of human communication highlight the inherent complexity of interpersonal exchanges. Notably, paradoxical communication situations – such as the concept of the double bind – were also explored in this context (Watzlawick et al., 2017). This approach remains influential both in the German-speaking world and internationally. It is also well established in the global discourse on career development and counselling, as illustrated by the work of McMahon and Patton (2018). While this approach has generated a range of systemic methods, it has seen limited theoretical advancement over time.

In Germany, the sociological systems theory developed by Luhmann (1984) holds considerable prominence, although it has not been widely adopted in international discourse. Within this theoretical framework, language plays a central role in translating observation into description, particularly when transferring scientific or technical phenomena to the realm of social systems. Luhmann defines communications – not individuals – as the fundamental elements of social systems. In his view, people constitute an essential environmental condition for the emergence of communication and, consequently, of social systems, but they are not themselves part of the system. His theory is descriptive in nature. The exclusion of the subject and the absence of concepts for individual action can be disconcerting, to say the least. Furthermore, this branch of systems theory lacks direct empirical grounding, particularly in terms of quantitative research, and it offers no concrete or practical strategies for intervention.

More recently, synergetics as a theory of self-organisation has played an increasing role as a specific approach to systems science.

More recently, synergetics as a theory of self-organisation has played an increasing role as a specific approach to systems science. This theory focuses on the *process* of change: it describes self-organisation that cannot be directly controlled from the outside (Haken, 1984; Haken & Schiepek, 2010). It examines the emergence of patterns and the transitions that occur within them – for instance, shifts from disorder to order or from one established order to another. Originally rooted in physics (e.g. the behaviour of laser light), these insights have since been applied across a wide range of disciplines. They are now considered in fields such as (neuro)biology, as well as in social science and the study of social systems (Haken & Schiepek, 2010; J. Kriz, 2017; Schiersmann & Thiel, 2018).

A self-organising system is about the mutual interaction of many elements and processes. A distinction is made between a microscopic and a macroscopic level. At the micro-

scopic level, the system consists of many components, such as the psychological dimensions of a person. If there is sufficient interaction between the elements that exist on the microscopic level, a macroscopic pattern can emerge, such as a certain self-concept. This pattern then binds the individual elements, drastically reducing their degrees of freedom. If, for example, it is anchored in a person's self-concept that she perceives herself as professionally unsuccessful, then it is difficult to notice events that deviate from this. There is thus a circular causal effect not only between the elements of the system, but also between the micro and macro level (Haken & Schiepek, 2010).

Self-organisation presupposes a system-internal activation (energisation). Influencing variables that activate and modulate the internal interactions of the elements of the system are called control parameters. These maintain existing patterns or promote their destabilisation. Due to processes of positive feedback, relatively small variations can trigger the dormant change potential and thus lead to far-reaching effects. As soon as the fluctuations triggered by these parameters reach critical values, the system behaviour can change abruptly and new patterns emerge (Haken & Schiepek, 2010). In physical systems, for example, energy supply such as light or heat represents a control parameter. For example, heat on the cooker causes the water to start boiling and therefore to reach a new state. In social systems, it is not possible to assume a physical process that triggers energy. Therefore, transferring this concept from a scientific to a social context is not easy. In social systems, for example, the motivation to change a job and the available resources for this could be important control parameters. Haken and Schiepek (2010) have derived so-called generic principles for promoting self-organising developments from synergetics, brain research, chaos theory, and the findings of psychotherapy research. These offer a general orientation for any design of order change. They represent rather socially related principles of action to support change processes.

Finally, the concept of complex problem solving should be highlighted as a variant of systems theory. It is a systemically oriented phase model that explicitly accounts for complexity (Dörner et al., 1999; Funke et al., 2018). However, this model should not be understood as rigid or strictly linear; the process does not necessarily need to follow a fixed sequence. One may begin with diagnosis, clarification of objectives, or the generation of solution ideas. Frequently, it is both necessary and beneficial to move flexibly between the different steps (Dörner, 2007). Revisiting these phases multiple times should be regarded as an iterative process. Given the feedback between phases and the unpredictability of future developments, planning at every stage must be considered provisional. The phases are best understood as a logical structure – a framework that outlines task-related requirements for comprehending and influencing complex situations.

The concept of complex problem solving should be highlighted as a variant of systems theory.

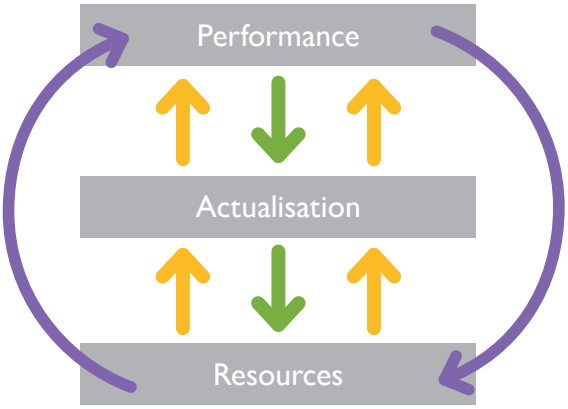
The competence construct

In this contribution, I propose using the term 'career management competences' instead of 'career management skills'. The debate on competence has gained significance in recent decades, and the specialist literature has become almost unmanageable. At a more general level, Erpenbeck and Rosenstiel (2007) stated: 'Competences characterise the ability of people to find their way around open and unmanageable, complex and dynamic situations in a self-organised way.'[1]

In the debate on competences, two basic directions can be identified: the cognitive-oriented and the performance-oriented (Erpenbeck, 2009). The first direction is characterised by the fact that a (rather) narrow understanding of cognition is in the foreground, and motivational and affective aspects are (rather) not taken into account – at least not in the empirical assessment of competence. At the centre of this design of the competence construct are context-related, delimited domains of knowledge and their application (such as reading comprehension and mathematical problem-solving, as surveyed in the PISA study) (Erpenbeck, 2009). In contrast, the performance-oriented approach focuses on the connection between competence and action: It assumes that both individual resources and observable performance are important for competent action. Resources include knowledge, skills, emotion, and motivation. The following considerations use the performance-oriented concept. Figure 5.1 illustrates this conceptual context.

[1] Author's own translation.

Figure 5.1 Competence and competence development as recursive process



Source: Based on Schiersmann et al. (2017, p. 14).

On the lower level, you will find the individual resources; on the upper level, you will find performance as observable action. The connection between those two levels has to be established conceptually. The term 'actualisation' (middle level) refers to the part of this process which is not visible and at best accessible via the person himself. The suggestion is to take into account certain meta-competences for this purpose, which enables individuals to make adequate use of their resources in a concrete situation in order to cope with the situation successfully (Schiersmann et al., 2013; Weinert, 2001).

Profile of complexity competences

The last two theories previously presented, the synergetics and the theory of complex problem solving, form the basis for the following classification of competences in order to deal with complexity. They are linked together because they each emphasise different aspects. The designing of career development situations requires a (vague) imagination about which work steps or phases have to be passed through within such a complex process. Therefore, it is obvious to refer to the theory of complex problem solving. Despite all the uncertainty of development processes in complex systems, it is helpful and necessary to have a minimum of an orientation from which the process can be shaped. Although a systemic problem-solving model is crucial for provisional planning, it is evident that development processes do not proceed linearly, but by leaps and bounds. This might concern sudden changes of the labour market situation due to an economic crisis, or the exchange of the management in a firm to allow sudden upward steps on the career ladder. Synergetics captures the dynamics and thus unpredictability of development processes in a particularly convincing way. It thus differs substantially from sociological systems theories or older cybernetic or communication theory concepts (Mainzer, 2005). Finally, the emphasis on the importance of systematic reflection characterises this concept as a complex learning process.

There is existing preparatory work for such a competence profile. These publications use the term 'system competence'; however, this term appears unsatisfactory, as systems can also be trivial, and the authors refer to different system theories. Nevertheless, the conceptualisations of system competence provided offer a solid foundation for further developing the concept of complexity competence (König et al., 2005; Köster & Kruse, 2012; Kriedel, 2017; Manteuffel & Schiepek, 1993; Schiepek, 2020). For further details on these concepts, see Schiersmann and Hausner (2021).

The following four competence areas were derived from the synergetics and the complex problem solving theory as well as from the above-mentioned publications on system competence:

a. complexity-related cognitive competences;
b. complexity-related personal competences;
c. complexity-related social competences; and
d. reflection competences.

Whilst the complexity-related cognitive competences are explained in greater detail, the other categories are addressed only briefly.

Complexity-related cognitive competences

Creating a stable framework for the unstable situation

In order to cope with unstable and complex situations, it is crucial to establish a stable framework. In the context of career development, this may involve identifying individuals or environments that offer trust, as well as reliable feedback and support during periods of uncertainty. Such individuals might include family members, friends, colleagues, or professional counsellors.

Paying attention to resonance

This competence highlights the fact that developmental processes have their own inherent momentum, which can only be accelerated to a limited extent (Haken & Schiepek, 2010). Any desired change must align with the individual's current cognitive-emotional state (state of mind). Plans or actions that are not congruent with this state are unlikely to succeed, as the system effectively has 'no antennae' to register them. In this context, it is also essential to consider whether the timing is appropriate – whether there is a favourable moment (*kairos*) – for initiating new steps in the career development process.

Analysing and understanding complex systems

A crucial competence consists in being able to analyse and understand complex systems. In the process model of complex problem solving, the analysis of the initial situation is about the diagnosis of influencing factors and their interactions. Synergetics emphasises that it is important to identify existing (and usually undesirable) patterns in the system under consideration. The system's internal and external boundary conditions must also be taken into account. The internal boundary conditions are about an individual's learning history. As for external boundary conditions, relevant environments – such as labour market conditions – play a role. Both can promote or hinder development processes, and either or both can be an influencing factor for the emergence of the current situation or a resource for change strategies. The analysis includes:

a. the capacity to identify formal and informal rules within the system and to detect patterns;
b. understanding the short-term and long-term consequences of the interaction of elements within the system and to adjust to different speeds of development;
c. dealing with limits of planning and controlling the system because small changes can trigger great effects;
d. not taking over unfiltered opinions of others, but carrying out a picture and an assessment on one's own;
e. not only taking seriously information that corresponds to one's own perception of a situation, but also considering other perceptions
f. not looking at subfields of the situation separately, but focusing on their interrelationship; not hastily switching from one section to a new one, without having analysed the former one sufficiently; and
g. limiting the analysis of the situation to a suitable temporal and energetic extent, which allows a balance between a too superficial analysis and unproductively getting stuck in the problem area.

Visualisation methods, especially systemic modelling of the initial situation in the sense of constructing a network of different influencing factors and the resulting patterns, are suitable for realising this principle of action (Schiersmann, 2012).

Developing goals and creating a sense of purpose

The next competence concerns the identification of goals. However, at the outset of a complex development process marked by uncertainty, goals are often difficult to define precisely and may need to be adjusted over time. Synergetics highlights that development goals must be experienced as meaningful by the individual and should align with their core life concepts in order to foster genuine commitment. If this alignment is lacking, there is a risk that impulses will not be recognised or acted upon, as the system lacks the 'antennae' to perceive them. In this context, it is crucial to:

a. concretise objectives by defining subgoals and intermediate objectives;
b. not pursue too many objectives simultaneously;
c. balance different objectives based on their importance or urgency;
d. reveal mutually-exclusive objectives;
e. examine the fit of objectives with personal beliefs and life designs;
f. draft objectives not as statements about undesirable conditions, but as ideas about the desired status(es);
g. consider the framework of the aspired objectives;
h. assess the side effects and repercussions of the defined objectives; and
i. re-examine, in the course of the process, whether the envisaged objectives are still suitable.

Activating control parameters

It is important to develop clarity about the key influencing factors that can support professional development. For example, is it the expected salary, the nature and content of the work, or the value placed on specific skills or talents? Identifying such factors enhances one's prospects for development, as they can be interpreted as success factors.

Planning implementation and stimulating the destabilisation of old patterns

In the context of complex problem solving, this competence refers to the development of concrete steps for further career development and the planning of their implementation. Synergetics emphasises the goal of opening up new perspectives and possibilities of experience in order to 'disturb' (that is, destabilise) existing patterns of cognition, emotion, and behaviour that are no longer experienced as suitable. To this end, it

is important and helpful to acquire new information or to adopt new perspectives on the situation under consideration. So, it could be helpful to know what family members, friends, or colleagues think about one's situation and potential future. In this context, what is relevant is:

a. finding a balance between a too-detailed and a too-vague planning;
b. considering the time-bound aspects: checking what could be quick effects, what might be delayed impacts;
c. identifying the appropriate dosages of activities in the foreseen period of time;
d. considering given frameworks in the planning;
e. considering potential side effects;
f. reflecting upon whether an activity that was successful in earlier times could be transferred to a new situation;
g. clarifying whether the necessary resources are available for the planned actions; and
h. maintaining the complete overview of the activities.

Implementing plans and supporting symmetry-breaking

Within the model of complex problem-solving, this competence is essentially about implementing the plans developed and controlling them. In the language of synergetics, 'symmetry' means that an old pattern is in a state of critical instability and thus a new desired pattern can potentially be realised with equal probability (Haken & Schiepek, 2010). Small fluctuations can be decisive. It is important not to leave this decision to chance, but to look for starting points to implement at least some structural elements of a new pattern with the associated actions and emotions. What matters here is:

a. having in mind possible changes to the framework;
b. not only having the most urgent aspect in mind, but also the overall context;
c. appreciating intermediate successes;
d. permitting and accepting errors, and
e. remaining open to criticism.

Ensuring evaluation and restabilisation and checking transfer

In the context of complex problem-solving, this competence is concerned with the evaluation of the results achieved. In this context, synergetics also aims to stabilise the new and positively-evaluated cognitive, emotional, and/or behavioural patterns to transfer them into everyday action. The person should ideally identify with the new order and

its framework. Psychologically, it is about integrating the new pattern into the existing self-concept and linking it with existing cognitive-emotional schemata as well as looking for ways to possibly transfer these experiences and results to other situations. Important is:

a. measuring and assessing the results of the process with regard to quantitative and qualitative aspects on the one hand, and with regard to subjective as well as indicator-based criteria on the other hand; and

b. undertaking a short-term and a mid-term evaluation of the results, as well. Short-term effects can quickly grind down, while other effects appear only after a while.

Complexity-related personal competences

In order to cope with complex problems and the non-linearity of complex systems, specific personal competences are necessary. They refer to the point of how individuals are steering themselves. Important in this context are, at least, the following aspects:

Ambiguity tolerance

Ambiguity tolerance – also referred to as tolerance of instability or uncertainty – refers to the competence not only to endure contradictions, but also to handle them constructively. This involves avoiding black-and-white thinking and instead accepting that a given situation or piece of ambiguous information may contain both positive and negative elements. Such information can be difficult to interpret, and it may be challenging to resist the tendency to evaluate it in a purely positive or negative light.

Resource activation

In order to handle complex situations, it is important to ascertain and to activate one's own resources and not to focus on possible deficits. It is very helpful to develop a realistic self-perception, self-confidence, self-control, and self-motivation (W. C. Kriz, 2016).

Resilience

As complex systems are developing a life of their own with limited predictability, and as interventions may produce effects only with time delay or show effects at unexpected points, they produce stress. Therefore, it is necessary to develop resilience. Resilience means the energy to cope with defeats, to accept things the way they are, and to make the best of a given situation (such as an unsuccessful application or a period of unemployment). The ability to identify something positive in any situation is the basis for resilience.

Emotion regulation

In order to cope with complex situations, it is important to evoke positive emotions and perhaps even fascination concerning the tasks to be mastered.

Creativity and innovation

The process of handling complex situations that are connected with uncertainty requires innovation, and innovation requires creativity: the process opens a scope of possibilities, and handling these can be interpreted as a creative act. Here, the term 'creative' refers to new ideas and the term 'innovation' to the implementation of new ideas.

Mindfulness and self-care

Mindfulness and self-care prevent losing sight of the essentials, especially in a stressful situation.

Ensuring one's own attitudes and common set of basic values

In unstable situations, it is important to identify one's own mental models and to either hold on to one's specific opinions, attitudes, and basic values or modify them in situationally-specific ways.

Complexity-related social competences

Communication and cooperation competences

Very seldom will individuals solve complex situations on their own. In most cases, persons are integrated in a vivid social dynamic. Concerning career management, parents, friends, or colleagues might be involved. Therefore, it is necessary to have elaborated communication and cooperation competences at one's disposal. In particular, it is important to be able to:

a. analyse and develop social relationships;
b. develop empathy for others' perspectives;
c. show sensitivity to the receptiveness of communication partners; and
d. clearly identify roles and responsibilities of cooperation partners.

Competence to deal with conflicts constructively

In complex situations with many interactive influencing factors, conflicts will occur. Consequently, the ability to handle conflicts in a constructive manner is an important part of complexity competences. This includes the following points:

a. being aware of one's own attitude concerning conflicts;
b. being able to identify specific types of conflicts (like role conflicts, conflicts concerning objectives or values, or conflicts of assessment);
c. being able to temporarily overtake the perspective of one's opponent; and
d. being able to identify the escalation level of a conflict, and to decide whether the controversy can be handled by the involved partners on their own or whether support through an moderator or mediator is necessary.

Reflection competences

The complexity and associated uncertainty of development processes cannot be avoided. However, systematic reflection processes can help to handle such cognitively and emotionally unsettling situations like career management. This reflection competence refers back to all the dimensions mentioned before, such as reflecting upon one's own cognitive performance in dealing with nonlinear systems as well as with complexity-related personal and social competences. The process of reflection can be characterised

as a disturbing, but also as a creative process (Thiel, 2016). On the basis of developing new perspectives through reflection, new and better-justified decisions can be made and further planning can be undertaken.

In fast-moving times, it may seem counterintuitive to devote attention to the time-consuming task of reflection. However, Nobel Prize laureate Daniel Kahneman (2015) implicitly underscores the importance of reflection through his distinction between two systems of thought. He differentiates between the more intuitive 'System One', which governs fast, routine thinking and is essential for managing everyday life, and the more rational 'System Two', which allows for the consideration of conflicting interpretations. Kahneman critiques an overreliance on fast thinking and advocates for the conscious engagement of slow thinking. This slower mode of thought supports the integration of diverse perspectives, enables the recognition – at least in part – of one's own cognitive biases, and encourages attention to uncertainty and doubt. As such, it facilitates more accurate and considered reasoning. This characterisation captures the essence of reflection.

Although the term 'reflection' is often used, there are little elaborated concepts. Only very few relevant publications systematically grasp this term, and definitions and use of methods vary widely (Schiersmann & Thiel, 2019). For this reason, in the following, a classification is suggested, which distinguishes between new informations or perspectives and their assessment on the one hand and between self- and contextual-reflection on the other hand.

Distinction between new perspectives and their assessment

This distinction between new perspectives and their assessment refers to the famous sentence that reflection concerns 'a difference that makes a difference' (Bateson, 1994, p. 582). From my point of view, a concept of reflection should imply two central and related aspects: the first step is to identify something subjectively new concerning cognition, emotion, and/or behaviour. The naming of new information, critical questioning of generalisations, or taking up new positions of perception can be helpful in this context.

In a second step – and this is essential for this definition of reflection – the focus is on a well-founded evaluation of the new: Is what is experienced as new/different (and by whom) perceived as significant, important, and useful for the system? Why is this

the case? Through the fact that the new is also explicitly justified, and thus only really understood, it can become part of the new thinking and acting, the (self-)consciousness, or the identity of persons. These two dimensions show a parallel to neurobiological findings: 'Accordingly, the cortical memory system asks: Is this new (= a difference)? The limbic evaluation system with its emotion patterns asks: Is this important (= does this make a difference to me)?' (Roth, 2003). There, we also find a distinction between information and assessment.

Distinction between self- and context-reflection

The term self-reflection is often used in the literature instead of the term reflection (Greif, 2008). However, it is indispensable – especially in the context of a complexity-related concept – to complement the self-referential aspect with a context or structural reflection that addresses the social, organisational, and societal framework conditions. This is frequently neglected. It is a matter of focussing on the environmental influences of one's own actions, because these affect the subjective scope for action. This means examining which environmental factors influence the realisation of subjectively-important perspectives and ideas in a supportive or obstructive manner. Concerning career development, this could be members of the family, friends, or colleagues as well as the labour market situation.

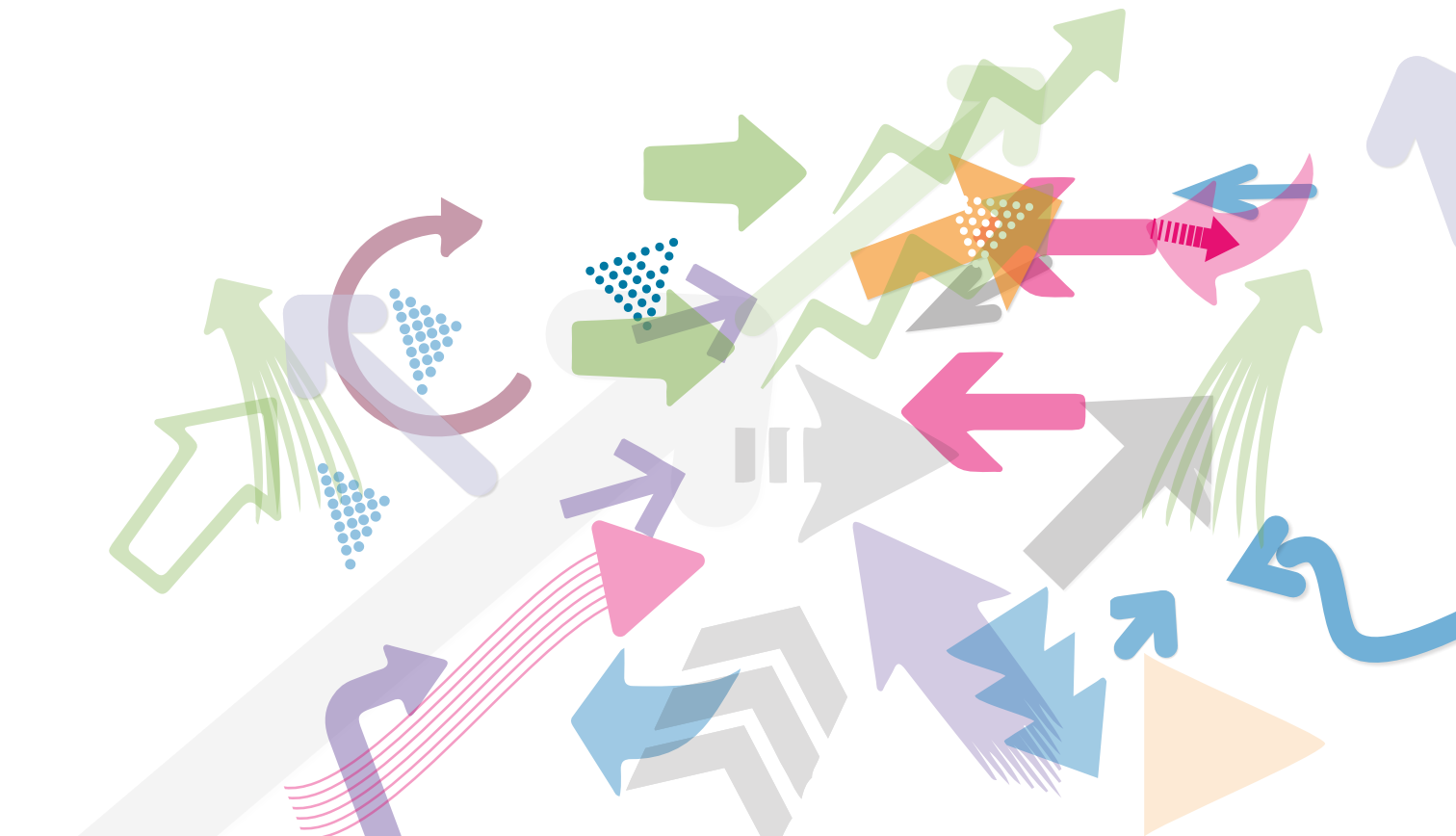
Outlook

In this chapter, it was argued that complexity competence nowadays is a crucial competence in order to design a successful career. A competence profile based on the theory of complex problem solving and the synergetics has been explained against the background of different system and complexity theories. Four competence areas have been derived from this. Having done this, some challenges for future work on this issue remain.

In order to work with this competence profile, the degree of concreteness of the different competences has to be increased. This is especially needed in order to document complexity competences. Recording competences in an appropriate way is by no means trivial, especially if one wants to meet the demand to capture competences in real or at least simulated action situations. The development of suitable instruments is, therefore, an important challenge. Different methods can be used to record competences,

each of which takes different aspects of competence into account. In a project of the Institute for Educational Science at the University of Heidelberg and the National Forum on Counselling, a broad recording of the competence of counsellors was tested on the basis of a self-/foreigner assessment sheet, text vignettes, video vignettes, session sheets, and the observation of simulated or real situations (Schiersmann et al., 2017). This project was based on a systemic understanding of counselling, so it focused on counsellors and it did not specifically aim to record complexity competence; however, these methods can be transferred in order to measure career development competences in the general population.

A competence assessment should never be an end in itself. Rather, it should provide a good basis for further competence development strategies. This requires also demanding initial and continuing education and training programmes, which take up the competence orientation in didactics. Specific learning settings in the context of education and training can contribute to competence development. These include simulation games often used in the context of system competence (W. C. Kriz, 2000; Manteufel & Schiepek, 1993). Likewise, various forms of professional or collegial supervision or coaching can promote competence development.



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Section 2

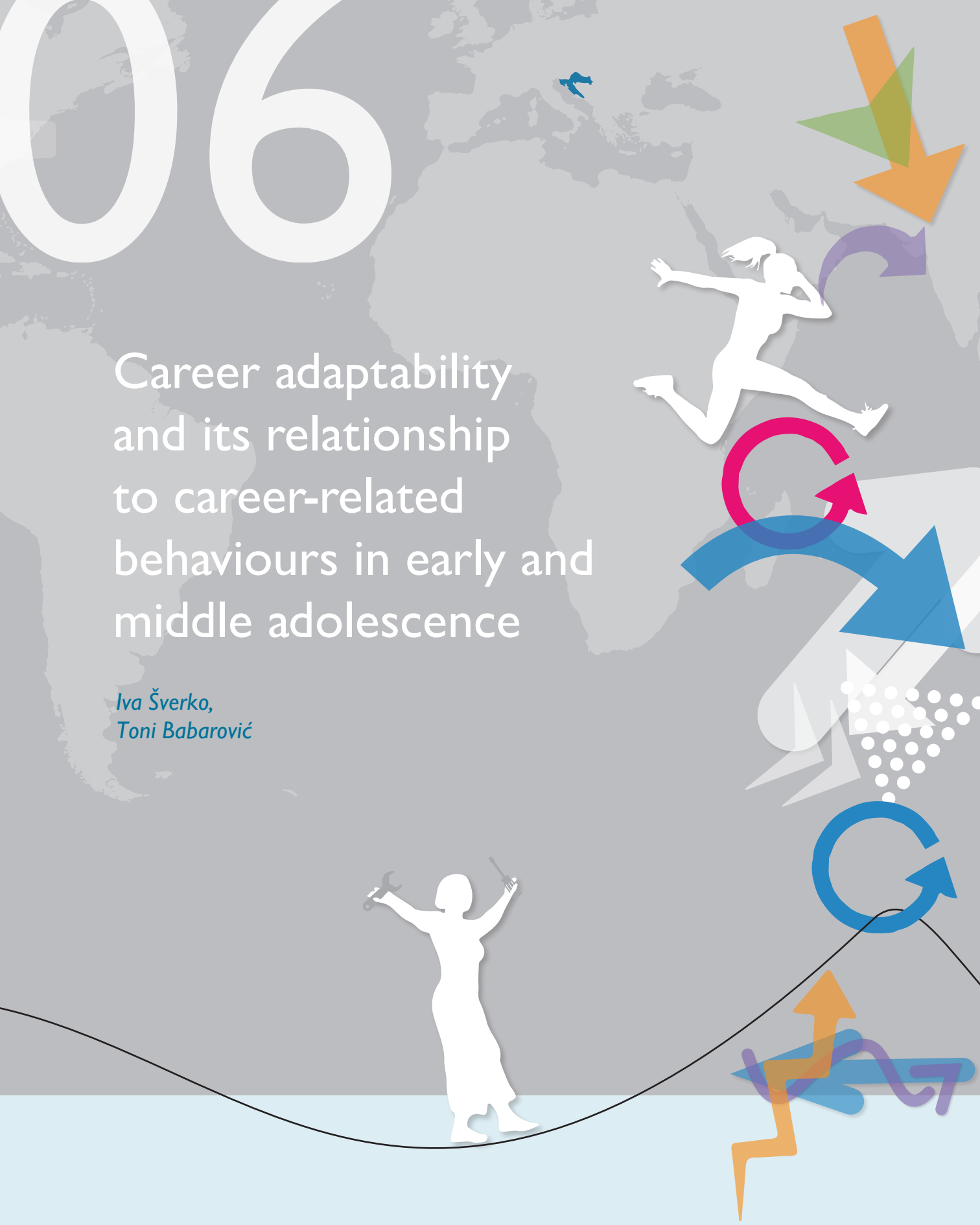
Diversity and contextual influences on career management skills



06

Career adaptability and its relationship to career-related behaviours in early and middle adolescence

Iva Šverko,
Toni Babarović



Abstract

The aim of this study was to evaluate the relationship between adaptability resources and adapting responses in the framework of the Career Construction Model of Adaptation (CCMA). As the model proposes that career adaptability fosters career adapting responses, we expected a positive relationship between career adaptability facets and career readiness, career decidedness and engagement in career construction. However, due to the different career development tasks that characterise early and middle adolescence, we wanted to explore possible different relationships among constructs in two age samples. In samples of 404 early adolescents (11 to 14 years) and 430 middle adolescents (15 to 18 years), we applied the *Career Adapt-Ability Scale* (*CAAS*) as a measure of adaptability resources and scales that measure career readiness, career decidedness and engagement in career construction as adapting responses. As this is the first application of CAAS in a sample of early adolescents in Croatia, we evaluated the structural validity of scale and revealed its adequate psychometric properties. Results further stressed the importance of career concern for explored career construction behaviours in both age groups, but also the particular importance of career control in early adolescence and career confidence in middle adolescence. Observed results are discussed from a practical point of view, stressing the importance of different career interventions, such as school career workshops or online career counselling, that can foster career construction in early and middle adolescence.

Keywords
career adaptability, career readiness, career decidedness, engagement in career construction, adolescents, Career Construction Model of Adaptation

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Introduction

The Croatian schooling system is composed of 8-year primary education after which students choose secondary, and later tertiary, education. This means that at the end of primary school, as early as at the age of 14 years, students have to make their first important career decisions that will affect their future careers. However, Croatian primary school students start thinking about their careers only in the last grade of secondary school and are very prone to accept parental suggestions about their future career op-

Croatian primary school students start thinking about their careers only in the last grade of secondary school and are very prone to accept parental suggestions about their future career options.

tions (Šverko & Babarović, 2020). They are not ready to make autonomous and mature career decisions at the age of 14 and therefore it is very important to help them to start thinking about their future careers much earlier. This is the reason why it is important to study career construction of early adolescents to see when and how they make their career decisions.

In this chapter, we aim to explore the career construction process of early and middle Croatian adolescents and to discuss possible differences and similarities in its dynamics. We will rely on the Career Construction Model of Adaptation (CCMA; Savickas, 2002), which describes the course of career development through four dimensions of adaptation. Results of this study will shed light on career construction in early and middle adolescence and will suggest possible career interventions that may be applied in schools to foster career construction at an early age.

Theoretical background

Career construction starts with the first orientation towards the role of work in young childhood and goes on through different life stages in which individuals choose and develop careers, till they start to adapt to the withdrawal from working life.

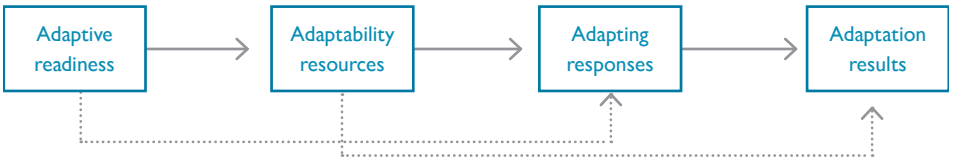
Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 1997; 2013) proposes the CCMA that explains the process of career development during the life span of an individual. Career construction starts with the first orientation towards the role of work in young childhood and goes on through different life stages in which individuals choose and develop careers, till they start to adapt to the withdrawal from working life. As Super (1953; 1957) proposed, in adolescence career development is characterised by the Exploration stage (14 to 24 years). In this period adolescents are getting to know better and better their career preferences and capabilities, which allows them to develop a clearer picture of their career-self. At the same time, they explore different occupations and educational programmes to find the most suitable career options. They form their career identity, they make important career decisions, and they actualise themselves in the world of work through the accomplishment of career developmental tasks (Savickas, 2002).

The process of career construction is described through the CCMA (Savickas, 2002; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012b; Savickas et al., 2018). The model depicts career construction through relationships between four dimensions: adaptive readiness, adaptability resources, adapting responses, and adaptation results. Four dimensions form an interactive sequence of basic personal characteristics, psychological capacities, career behaviours and career outcomes. According to the model, desirable personal characteristics *(adaptive readiness)* enhance strong psychological capacities *(adaptability resources)*, which foster adequate career behaviours *(adapting responses)* that lead towards opti-

mal career outcomes *(adaptation results)*. This sequence represents the process of career construction in any life stage.

Four dimensions form an interactive sequence of basic personal characteristics, psychological capacities, career behaviours and career outcomes.

Figure 6.1 The career construction model of adaptation



The career construction model of adaptation is shown in Figure 6.1 with direct (full line) and indirect (dotted line) paths between adaptation dimensions (adapted from Savickas et al., 2018).

Adaptive readiness is the first dimension in the model, and it represents basic personal prerequisites for career construction. Individuals vary according to numerous personal characteristics, and some of them are more desirable in the process of career construction. Certain personal traits facilitate career development, such as proactivity, flexibility, future orientation, extraversion, conscientiousness, self-esteem, core self-evaluations and good intellectual capacities (Hirschi et al., 2005; Rudolph, Lavigne, & Zacher, 2017). These traits represent aspects of adaptive readiness and facilitate the development of adaptability resources and therefore enhance the process of career construction.

Individuals with high career adaptability have good resources for career construction, as they are focused on their careers, they explore different future options, and independently and confidently make career decisions.

Adaptability resources form the second dimension of the model. These resources represent self-regulation mechanisms or capacities that a person can rely on in the process of career construction (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012b). Savickas (1997) defines them as career adaptability, or the ability to cope with career development tasks, transitions or traumas. Career adaptability consists of four resources for adaptation – concern about ones' vocational future *(career concern)*, personal control in preparation for one's vocational future *(career control)*, curiosity to explore different vocational identities and outcomes *(career curiosity)* and self-confidence to pursue personal aspirations *(career confidence*; Savickas, 2002; 2013). Individuals with high career adaptability have good resources for career construction, as they are focused on their careers, they explore different future options, and independently and confidently make career decisions. Strong adaptability resources encourage active adapting responses, or career construction behaviours.

Active and committed career construction behaviours ultimately lead to positive adaptation results.

Adapting responses are seen as the third dimension of the model. They represent different behavioural constructs that imply active work on awareness and realisation of one's career goals. They are reflected in the crystallisation of the vocational self-concept, exploration of various occupations and educational programmes, making career decisions, the development of needed professional skills and experiences, and transitioning from school to work (Savickas et al., 2018). They may also include career exploration and planning, career decision-making self-efficacy and career decision-making difficulties (Hirschi et al., 2015; Šverko & Babarović, 2019). Active and committed career construction behaviours ultimately lead to positive adaptation results.

Adaptation results are the fourth dimension of the model. They represent career outcomes that individuals may achieve through the career construction process. Career outcomes may be nested in the working domain, for instance, job satisfaction, career stability, work engagement, or work performance. They are also reflected in the field of academic outcomes, such as study satisfaction and academic achievement, or general life outcomes, for example subjective well-being and positive affect (Perera & McIlven, 2017; Rudolph, Lavigne, & Zacher, 2017; Rudolph, Lavigne, Katz, & Zacher, 2017; Savickas et al., 2018).

The results supported the important mediating role of career adaptability in both models, and also stressed the unequal contribution of four adaptability resources in career construction process. Among four adaptability resources, career concern and career control were the most prominent determinants of adapting responses.

Recent studies have confirmed the validity of the career construction model of adaptation. Empirical studies (Hirschi et al., 2015; Savickas et al., 2018) and meta-analyses (Rudolph, Lavigne, & Zacher, 2017; Rudolph, Lavigne, Katz, & Zacher, 2017) confirmed that better adaptation results are achieved with greater adaptive readiness, stronger adaptability resources and more active adapting responses. In Croatia, the validity of CCMA was confirmed in two samples of secondary school students (Šverko and Babarović, 2019). These findings have stressed that adaptability resources and adapting behaviours played a mediating role in the process of career construction, and that adaptive readiness indirectly and directly influenced adaptability resources, adapting responses, and adaptation results. The results supported the important mediating role of career adaptability in both models, and also stressed the unequal contribution of four adaptability resources in career construction process. Among four adaptability resources, career concern and career control were the most prominent determinants of adapting responses (Šverko & Babarović, 2019), which was also observed in earlier studies (Hirschi et al., 2015).

Research goals

This chapter aims to further explore the previously observed importance of concern and control for different measures of adapting responses. For this purpose, we will explore relationships between career adaptability resources (concern, control, curiosity, and confidence) and adapting responses (career readiness, career decidedness, and engagement in career construction). We will probe for multivariate relationships among these two sets of constructs in samples of early and middle adolescents. We will study how career adaptability relates to adapting responses, to see which adaptability resources (career adaptability facets) may affect which adapting responses (career readiness, career decidedness and engagement in career construction) in particular adolescence period (early or middle adolescence). This study presents the first attempt to study the career construction process in samples of Croatian early adolescents. This is also the first application of the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012b) in a sample of early adolescents in Croatia.

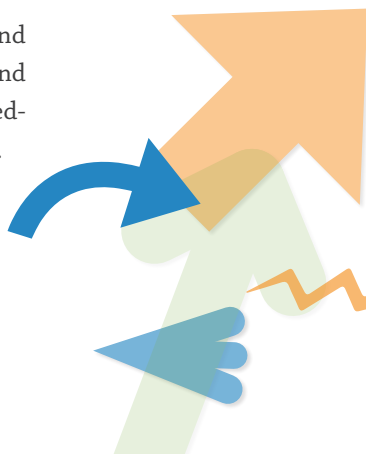
This study presents the first attempt to study the career construction process in samples of Croatian early adolescents.

We intend to explore the career construction process of early and middle adolescents (aged 11 to 14 years and 15 to 18 years) and to discuss possible differences and similarities in its dynamics. We will firstly evaluate and compare psychometric properties of Career Adapt-Abilities Scale in early and middle adolescents' samples. Secondly, we will study age differences in adaptability resources and adapting responses in two samples. Finally, we will explore the possible different contribution of four career adaptability facets in explaining career readiness, career decidedness and career engagement in the two age samples.

Method

Participants

Respondents were 404 early Croatian adolescents aged 11 to 14 years (51% male and 49% female), and 430 middle Croatian adolescents aged 15 to 18 years (28% male and 72% female). Early adolescents were enrolled in 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade of primary education, while middle adolescents in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade of secondary education.



Measures

Career-Adapt Abilities Scale measures career adaptability or personal resources for career construction.

The *Career-Adapt Abilities Scale* (CAAS; Savickas & Portfeli, 2012b) measures career adaptability or personal resources for career construction. It is 24-item scale that reflects four career adaptability resources (concern, control, curiosity, and confidence) and yields the total score representing overall career adaptability. Each facet is represented by six items, each scored on a 5-point Likert scale. The scale has shown strong evidence of psychometric validity as observed in different international samples (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012a). The excellent reliability and invariant hierarchical four-factor structure of the CAAS were confirmed on several samples of middle adolescents in Croatia (Šverko & Babarović, 2016; Babarović & Šverko, 2016), but this is the first application of CAAS in a sample of early adolescents. Thorough information on its reliability and validity on this samples is presented in the Results section.

The Career Readiness Scale is a unidimensional measure that captures an individual's personal belief on having adequate knowledge of oneself and the world of work.

The *Career Readiness Scale* is a unidimensional measure that captures an individual's personal belief on having adequate knowledge of oneself and the world of work, and a perceived easiness and motivation to make career choice. The scale consists of four items that are measured on 5-point response scale. The scale was newly developed for the purpose of this study and its psychometric properties have been confirmed in both samples. Internal reliability was adequate in both adolescents' samples (α_{early} = .78; α_{middle} = .83), and strong convergence to the first component was clearly observed. In the early adolescents' sample, the first component explained 60.78% of item variance, and factor loadings were in the range .69 to .86, while in the middle adolescents' sample the first component explained 67.13% of item variance, and factor loadings were in the range .73 to .88.

The Career Decidedness Scale is a unidimensional measure that refers to the career choice, clarity and certainty and commitment to a career choice.

The *Career Decidedness Scale* is a unidimensional measure that refers to the career choice, clarity and certainty and commitment to a career choice, and was developed for the purpose of this study. The four 5-point Likert-type items are homogeneous, as internal reliability was excellent (α_{early} = .91; α_{middle} = .93), and strong convergence to the first component was clearly observed in both samples. In the early adolescents' sample, the first component explained 77.93% of item variance, and factor loadings were in the range .85 to .91, while in the middle adolescents' sample the first component explained 82.06% of item variance, and factor loadings were in the range .88 to .92.

The *Engagement in Career Construction Scale* is a unidimensional measure that captures the personal feeling that it is the right time to actively pursue behaviours towards career decision making. The scale was developed for the purpose of this study and consists

of four 5-point Likert-type items. Internal reliability was adequate (α_{early} = .72; α_{middle} = .80), and a strong convergence to the first component was observed in both samples. In the early adolescents' sample, the first component explained 55.15% of item variance, and factor loadings were in the range .57 to 83, while in the middle adolescents' sample the first component explained 62.91% of item variance, and factor loadings were in the range .74 to .84.

The Engagement in Career Construction Scale is a unidimensional measure that captures the personal feeling that it is the right time to actively pursue behaviours towards career decision making.

Procedure

Students were contacted in their schools and were invited to take part in the survey, which was previously approved by Croatian Ministry of Education as a part of the big research project Free Career Choice, focused on adolescents' career development. Students were given a verbal explanation of the project, the description of their possible participation, and were instructed to give their parents a written description of the project, which also included a parental consent form. Approximately 80% of students received the necessary parental consent to participate in the survey.

The data collection was conducted by computerised testing. All instruments were placed on a data collection website that was accessible online. Approximately half of the participants filled-out questionnaires during their regular teaching activities in a computer classroom with the supervision of a researcher, while others received an e-mail that invited them to participate online, from their homes, without supervision. Data analyses showed that both methods of data collection were valid and fully comparable due to the measure invariance (results can be obtained on request). Therefore, in this study the full sample of adolescents was used, irrespective of the method of data collection.

The data collection was conducted by computerised testing.

Results and interpretations

Psychometric evaluation of applied scales

Table 6.1 shows descriptive statistics and reliabilities for all scales. Observed alpha coefficient indicates good internal consistency of scales in both samples, especially when having in mind the shortness of applied scales (career adaptability facets consist of six items each, while scales that address adapting responses consist of four items each).

Therefore, all applied measures show good internal consistency, regardless of the age of participants.

Table 6.1 Descriptive statistics and reliabilities of scales in four age samples

	Early adolescents			Middle adolescents		
	M	*SD*	*α*	*M*	*SD*	*α*
Adaptability resources						
Career concern	3.91	.69	.85	4.01	.64	.86
Career control	3.91	.62	.79	3.86	.62	.78
Career curiosity	3.92	.63	.81	4.00	.54	.77
Career confidence	4.02	.60	.84	3.78	.60	.84
Adapting responses						
Career readiness	3.43	.88	.78	3.16	.90	.83
Career decidedness	3.40	.95	.91	3.08	1.00	.93
Engagement in career construction	3.02	.86	.72	3.40	.89	.80

Due to the model fit indices the expected four-factor structure of CAAS was confirmed in the sample of Croatian early adolescents (11 to 14 years old).

As this is the first application of CAAS in primary school samples in Croatia, we evaluated the proposed four-factor model of CAAS with intercorrelated factors using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The indicators for the proposed model showed good model-data fit according to Hu and Bentler's (1999) criteria in the primary school sample. Due to the model fit indices $\chi 2 = 495.78$, $\chi 2/df = 2.02$, CFI = .934, NFI = .878, RMSEA = .051, 90% CI = .045 to .058, the expected four-factor structure of CAAS was confirmed in the sample of Croatian early adolescents (11 to 14 years old).

Multi-group measurement invariance assesses the (psychometric) equivalence of a construct across groups and demonstrates that a construct has the same meaning to those groups. Measurement invariance across groups is prerequisite to comparing group means. The three measurement invariance steps were considered to ensure group means comparison by latent constructs (factors):

1. configural, equivalence of model form;
2. metric (weak factorial), equivalence of factor loadings;
3. scalar (strong factorial), equivalence of item intercepts (Putnick, & Bornstein, 2016).

To assess the measurement invariance of the CAAS model in primary and secondary school subsamples a multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA) was performed. We tested the sequence of nested and hierarchical ordered models by adding one parameter restraint at a time (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002; Vandenberg & Lance, 2000). If two nested models showed a decrease in CFI or NFI greater than or equal to .01 or an increase in RMSEA greater than or equal to .01, the more restrictive model should be rejected (Chen, 2007; Cheung & Rensvold, 2002).

To assess the measurement invariance of the CAAS model in primary and secondary school subsamples a Multi-Group Confirmatory Factor Analysis (MGCFA) was performed.

The configural invariance showed acceptable fit to the CAAS four-factor structure in two samples demonstrating that the constructs (latent factors) have the same pattern of item loadings (Table 6.2). As the configural invariance was confirmed, the next step was to test the weak factorial invariance (metric invariance) showing that each item contributes to the latent construct to a similar degree across groups (equivalence of the item loadings on the factors). The metric invariance was also confirmed (Table 6.2). As the metric invariance was supported, the next step was to test for the scalar invariance, or equivalence of item intercepts. Scalar invariance indicates that mean differences in the latent construct capture all mean differences in the shared variance of the items. In our data the strong factorial invariance was confirmed only by RMSEA measure, but not by other fit indices (Table 6.3). Only once the configural, metric, and scalar invariances have been clearly confirmed, is the researcher free to compare group means on the latent factors. As in our samples strong factorial invariance was just partly confirmed, so testing the group means differences in CAAS scales should be interpreted with caution.

Therefore, the MGCFA mainly confirmed the structural invariance of the CAAS in early and middle adolescent samples in Croatia but pointed to the need to be careful when interpreting group mean differences in CAAS scales.

MGCFA mainly confirmed the structural invariance of the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale in early and middle adolescent samples in Croatia but pointed to the need to be careful when interpreting group mean differences in CAAS scales.

Table 6.2 Testing the structure invariance of Career Adapt-Abilities Scale in early and middle adolescent samples

Type of invariance	χ^2/df	CFI	NFI	RMSEA	ΔCFI	ΔNFI	ΔRMSEA
Configural	2.77	.887	.835	.047			
Metric	2.77	.882	.828	.047	.005	.007	.000
Scalar	3.32	.839	.785	.054	.043	.043	.007

Age differences in adaptability resources and adapting responses

To explore the possible influence of age on adaptability resources and adapting responses, we conducted two Multivariate Analyses of Covariance (MANCOVA). When testing age differences in two sets of constructs, we controlled for gender, as the two age samples differ according to their gender structure. Results indicate interesting changes in adaptability resources and adapting responses in the two age samples.

To explore the possible influence of age on adaptability resources and adapting responses, we conducted two Multivariate Analyses of Covariance (MANCOVA).

Multivariate test showed weak differences in four career adaptability resources over the age of participants (η = .089; Table 6.3), while the effect of gender as a covariate was negligible (η = .006). At the univariate level, weak age differences were observed only for career confidence, and not for the other career adaptability resources (career concern, career control and career curiosity). Primary school students perceive themselves somewhat more confident in making career decisions than their older colleagues (Table 6.1). Although this finding may seem unexpected, secondary school students previously reported experiencing pressure to make their career decision (Šverko & Babarović, 2020) which is likely to reduce their perceived confidence in making career choices.

Table 6.3 Testing the age differences in career adaptability resources in early and middle adolescent samples

	Wilks λ	*F*	df_1; df_2	*p*	η
Multivariate effects of age	.911	19.48	4; 797	<.001	.089
Multivariate effect of gender (covariate)	.994	1.24	4; 797	.292	.006
Univariate effects of age on:					
career concern		5.01	1; 800	.025	.006
career control		.51	1; 800	.474	.001
career curiosity		2.29	1; 800	.131	.003
career confidence		29.83	1; 800	<.001	.036

Older students face more complex career construction tasks which they perceive to be demanding. This makes them feel less ready and less decided when choosing future career.

Another MANCOVA pointed to the existence of small age differences in three adapting responses at the multivariate level (η = .070, Table 6.4), but also to the weak effect of gender covariate (η = .021). At the univariate level, weak age differences were observed in all adapting responses (Table 6.4). Estimated marginal means were very similar to the means reported in Table 6.1 due to the weak gender effect. As can be seen from Table 6.1, younger students express greater career readiness and career decidedness than older students, but lower engagement in the process of career construction. Although

the observed changes may seem inconsistent, we find them explainable. Older students face more complex career construction tasks which they perceive to be demanding. This makes them feel less ready and less decided when choosing future career. On the other hand, engagement in career construction is more firmly nested into timely appropriateness of making career decisions and therefore it less affected by the complexity of career construction tasks than career readiness and career decidedness. This is the reason why older students reported stronger engagement in career construction.

Table 6.4 Testing the age differences in adapting responses in early and middle adolescent samples

	Wilks λ	*F*	df_1; df_2	*p*	η
Multivariate effects of age	.930	20.79	3; 829	<.001	.070
Multivariate effect of gender (covariate)	.979	5.91	3; 829	<.01	.021
Univariate effects of age on:					
career readiness		15.06	1; 831	<.001	.018
career decidedness		16.59	1; 831	<.001	.020
engagement in career construction		29.12	1; 831	<.001	.034

Relationships between adaptability resources and adapting responses

It can clearly be seen from Table 6.5, that career adaptability resources and adapting responses were interrelated in both adolescents' samples. The pattern of correlations is similar in both samples.

Career adaptability facets were moderately interrelated in both samples, but still somewhat stronger intercorrelations were observed in the primary school sample. Among adapting responses, career readiness and career decidedness were strongly interrelated in both samples, while engagement in the career construction process represents a quite distinctive construct which is only weakly related to them.

Relationships between adaptability resources and adapting responses were mainly moderate in both samples. Career readiness and career decidedness have shown stronger relationships to career adaptability resources than engagement in career construction. Also, career curiosity had somewhat lower correlations to adapting responses, particularly in the secondary school sample. Gender was mainly uncorrelated to both career adaptability resources and adapting responses in both age samples.

Relationships between adaptability resources and adapting responses were mainly moderate in both samples. Career readiness and career decidedness have shown stronger relationships to career adaptability resources than engagement in career construction.

Table 6.5 Correlations between adaptability resources and adapting responses in primary school sample and secondary school sample

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Gender (1)		.04	-.15**	.02	-.03	-.09	-.11*	.08
Concern (2)	-.06		**.43****	**.51****	**.42****	**.47****	**.49****	.39**
Control (3)	.06	**.53****		**.44****	**.59****	.37**	.34**	.12*
Curiosity (4)	.05	**.65****	.60**		.45**	.18**	.15**	.23**
Confidence (5)	-.01	**.56****	.75**	.67**		**.43****	.35**	.11*
Career readiness (6)	.00	**.42****	.38**	.27**	.34**		**.81****	.20**
Career decidedness (7)	.04	**.47****	**.47****	.37**	**.41****	**.76****		.23**
Engagement in career construction (8)	.13*	.38**	.09	.16**	.11*	.29**	.22**	

Note. Below the diagonal – primary school sample, above the diagonal – secondary school sample; gender 1=M, 2=F; correlations greater than .40 are printed boldface.

To study interrelations among explored variables, we conducted three multiple regression analyses in each age sample to explore the contribution of career adaptability resources for the prediction of adapting responses (career readiness, career decidedness and engagement in career construction).

As can be seen in Table 6.6, four career adaptability resources explained a somewhat greater amount of variance of career readiness and career decidedness than of engagement in the career construction process. Also, in the primary and secondary school samples, a different pattern of important predictors of adapting responses was observed.

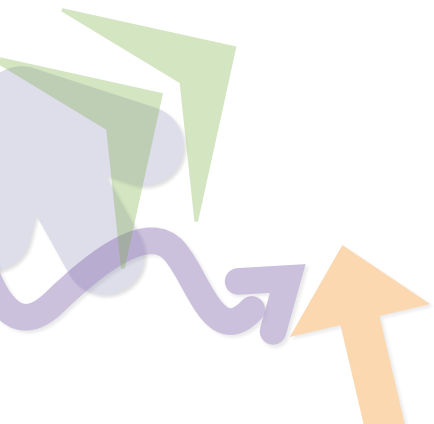


Table 6.6 Contribution of career adaptability in the prediction of career readiness, career decidedness and engagement in career decision in primary and secondary school samples: results of regression analyses

	Early adolescents			Middle adolescents		
	Career readiness	Career decidedness	Engagement in career construction	Career readiness	Career decidedness	Engagement in career construction
Concern	**.34*****	**.31*****	**.51*****	**.41*****	**.48*****	**.39*****
Control	**.24****	**.30*****	-.10	.12*	.13	-.06
Curiosity	-.13*	-.03	-.08	**-.21*****	**-.22*****	.08
Confidence	.06	.03	.04	**.27*****	**.17****	-.06
R	.47	.54	.40	.57	.55	.40
R^2	.22	.29	.16	.32	.30	.16
Adjusted R^2	.21	.28	.15	.31	.29	.15
p	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001

Note. Standardised regression coefficients significant at .01 are printed boldface.

In the early adolescents' sample, career readiness was dominantly predicted by career concern (β = .34) and control (β = .24), with a smaller contribution of curiosity (β = -.13), while the total of variance explained was 21%. A similar pattern was observed for career decidedness, which was explained by career concern (β = .31) and control (β = .30), making the total of 28% of VAF. On the other hand, engagement in career construction was explained solely by career concern (β = .51; VAF = 15%).

In the middle adolescents' sample, career readiness was dominantly described by career concern (β = .41), but also by confidence and curiosity (β = .27 and β = -.21, respectively), while the total of explained variance amounted to 31%. A similar pattern is observed for career decidedness, which was explained by career concern (β = .48) and also by curiosity and confidence (β = -.22 and β = .17, respectively), making the total of 29% of VAF. Further, engagement in career construction was explained solely by career concern (β = .39; VAF = 15%).

These results yield several conclusions regarding career construction in adolescents. First of all, concern about one's vocational future is the first and the foremost predictor of career adapting behaviours. Regardless of age, students who are more concerned about their vocational future also behave and act towards their vocational goals – they are more ready to make career decisions, they are more decided about their career goals, and they are more engaged in career construction process.

Regardless of age, students who are more concerned about their vocational future also behave and act towards their vocational goals – they are more ready to make career decisions, they are more decided about their career goals, and they are more engaged in career construction process.

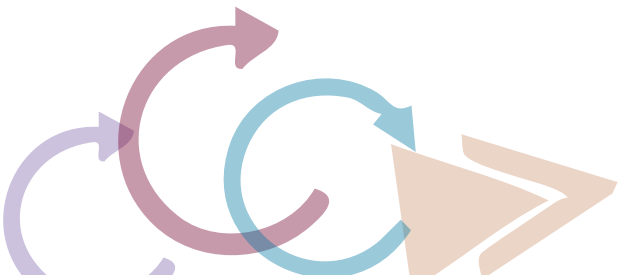
Further, control is an important predictor of career adapting behaviours in early adolescence. Early adolescents in primary schools who feel that they have more control over their vocational future also express more adapting responses. On the other hand, control is not an important predictor of adapting responses in middle adolescence.

The contribution of confidence has a different pattern in the two age samples. While in early adolescence the contribution of confidence is negligible, in middle adolescence it plays an important role in explaining variance of career behaviours. Most likely the importance of confidence rises due to the complexity of career development tasks that middle adolescents are faced with and due to the perceived stressfulness of career decision making that they have been reported (Šverko & Babarović, 2020).

Most likely the importance of confidence rises due to the complexity of career development tasks that middle adolescents are faced with and due to the perceived stressfulness of career decision making that they have been reported.

It is also important to take a glance at the negative contribution of curiosity in explaining adapting responses in both samples. As career adaptability facets share a great amount of common variability, curiosity acts as a suppressor variable in the regression equation. Curiosity controls the residual variance of other adaptability facets and improves their predictive value in explaining adapting responses. It is likely that curiosity as a construct also includes the unproductive curiosity or over-extensive exploration of various career options, also presented in other career adaptability behaviours which is unrelated to career readiness and career decidedness.

Finally, it is also interesting to note that, both in early and middle adolescence, engagement in the career construction process is determined solely by concern, in contrast to career readiness and career decidedness for which other adaptability resources also play an important role. As stated previously, engagement in the career construction process is the perception that this is the right time to construct career, so the focus on the future plays the main role. Therefore, the perception of the timely need to engage in the career construction process is defined only by the concern about a vocational future.



General discussion

The findings of this study point to the somewhat different process of career construction in early and middle adolescence of Croatian students. Career concern is the most important predictor of career behaviours in both developmental periods, but in early and middle adolescence different adaptability resources play an additional role – career control in early adolescence, and career confidence in middle adolescence. Although these findings are related to the Croatian educational context, which is important limitation of this study, some general conclusions regarding favourable career counselling practices in early and middle adolescence may be derived.

Career concern is the most important predictor of career behaviours in both developmental periods, but in early and middle adolescence different adaptability resources play an additional role – career control in early adolescence, and career confidence in middle adolescence.

Our findings suggest different practices in two developmental periods. To foster career readiness, career decidedness and engagement in the career construction process of adolescents it is necessary to work on adolescents' orientation towards career future. Numerous career development school programmes have career concern in their focus, as they consist of workshops that enable students to start thinking about their future plans and career options. However, our data suggest that it is also very important to work on enhancing career control of early adolescents and to encourage them to actively take charge of their future. Further, it is also of great importance to reassure middle adolescents to feel more confident in dealing with career development tasks and to gain stronger beliefs in their personal strengths when making career choices after secondary school. Career development school programmes should consist of workshops that at the same time encourage students to focus on the future, and include career-related tasks to deal with, which makes students take personal control and gain confidence when dealing with career construction.

Career development school programmes should consist of workshops that at the same time encourage students to focus on the future, and include career-related tasks to deal with, which makes students take personal control and gain confidence when dealing with career construction.

Career development school programmes have evidenced positive effects on career readiness of students, as shown by meta-analyses (Oliver & Spokane, 1988; Whiston et al., 1998), and therefore they should be integrated into the school curriculum. Workshops organised over a longer period of time can enable students to raise their career readiness and to recognise in a timely manner the adequate career choices. In addition to typical career workshops, there are also many free digital career guidance tools. Such computer systems began to be developed and used as early as the 1960s and are today generally accepted career counselling tools (Harris-Bowlsbey, 2013). Previous research has shown that the use of computer systems has numerous positive effects on various elements of career development. Their application acts to increase self-efficacy in career decision-making and reduce career indecision (Betz & Borgen, 2009; Eveland et al., 1998; Fukuyama et al., 1988; Probert et al., 1988). The positive effects of computer systems are al-



so visible in the development of a clear vocational identity (Mau, 1999), a higher level of career maturity (Luzzo & Pierce, 1996) and in subsequent greater satisfaction with a chosen career (Gati et al., 2006). Nevertheless, a meta-analysis comparing different modalities of career counselling interventions showed that the use of computer systems supplemented and supported by face-to-face counselling resulted in significantly better results compared to computer use alone (Whiston et al., 2003). Structured workshops and group career development programmes combined with computer-assisted counselling have also been shown to have a good effect (Oliver & Spokane, 1988).

Integrating freely accessible career programmes and tools into the school curriculum, alongside group or individual counselling sessions, could ensure that all students receive the necessary assistance and support for their career development.

In Croatia, there are several freely accessible digital tools designed for guiding young people in vocational pursuits. These include the Career Development School Programme for primary and secondary schools (Babarović et al., 2020; Perry et al., 1999a, 1999b, 2006a, 2006b), and online resources such as Career Path and Careers Guide (Babarović & Šverko, 2012; Šverko et al., 2002; Šverko & Babarović, 2020). Extensive validation processes have underscored the suitability of these tools for use. Integrating freely accessible career programmes and tools into the school curriculum, alongside group or individual counselling sessions, could ensure that all students receive the necessary assistance and support for their career development.

Career counselling within schools is pivotal in reaching students who might lack motivation in pursuing their careers or who may not actively seek professional guidance. The school environment presents a distinct opportunity to provide assistance and support to all students, thereby nurturing individual well-being and furthering the progress toward a fairer society.

Ensuring the availability of career development programmes for all students is paramount. Career counselling within schools is pivotal in reaching students who might lack motivation in pursuing their careers or who may not actively seek professional guidance. The school environment presents a distinct opportunity to provide assistance and support to all students, thereby nurturing individual well-being and furthering the progress toward a fairer society. Future research efforts should focus on evaluating the effectiveness of such interventions within the broader European context. It is imperative to develop counselling practices that cater to students from diverse backgrounds and regions, offering consistent career support that aligns with the interconnected global landscape of work and education.

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07

Gender stereotyping in the world-of-work: The role of gender-related variables in predicting vocational interests

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Abstract

The unequal representation of men and women in different disciplines has mostly been attributed to existing gender differences in vocational interests. Besides gender, previous research identifies other gender-related variables that contribute to this gender gap. The present chapter aims to determine the role of gender roles and work values as predictors of vocational interests, over and beyond biological gender, as well as the importance of vocational gender stereotyping in interests formation of men and women. The sample consisted of 319 university students (196 females) who responded to an online questionnaire composed of the Values Scale, Personal Globe Inventory, Sex Role Inventory, and Gender Stereotyping of Activities Scale. Hierarchical regression analysis found that participants' gender, gender roles, and value orientations explained 28.2% of the people–things interest variance. Gender remained the best predictor of interests, but social values and femininity explained additional interests' variance. The moderation analysis showed that gender stereotyping has small and similar-size effects on males' and females' interests. This research confirmed some findings of previous studies and provides possible guidelines for attracting young people to the currently gender-disproportionate work areas.

Keywords
vocational interests, gender roles, gender stereotyping, value orientations

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Introduction

The unequal representation of men and women in different disciplines continues to be a major issue in the modern workforce. Specifically, according to the Croatian Bureau of Statistics (2019), there is currently the greatest gender discrepancy in the construction (88.4% male workers), and mining sectors (86.9% male workers). In contrast, women are predominant in the fields of education (78.4% female workers) and health/social care (78.4% female workers). These gender discrepancies are already evident when young girls and boys make choices about their future occupations by selecting specific vocational schools and colleges, which later restrict entry into other occupational fields (Cheryan et al., 2017).

There is currently the greatest gender discrepancy in the construction (88.4% male workers), and mining sectors (86.9% male workers).

Although gender segregation in career choices is well-known and recognised around the world, gender differences seem to be persisting and are in some fields even greater than the decade before (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2017). For example, the number of men employed in the Education, Health and Welfare (EHW) sector is dropping, while the share of women increased by only 1% in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) occupations. The same trend has also been observed in Croatia.

The number of men employed in the Education, Health and Welfare (EHW) sector is dropping, while the share of women increased by only 1% in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) occupations.

The Croatian Ministry of Science and Education introduced STEM scholarships, based on international guidelines, as part of their strategic plan to attract more students to STEM college programmes, as well as to gain a diverse representation of students from various backgrounds (Croatian Ministry of Science and Education, 2019). Another initiative, which is specific to the Croatian context, includes efforts of attracting more students into vocational programmes after the completion of elementary school, since these often gender-specific programmes are facing low enrolment rates in recent years (Croatian Ministry of Science and Education, 2019). This chapter hopes to contribute to the growing literature regarding gender-specific stereotypes of the world of work by studying these differences in the Croatian context.

Formation of gender-specific vocational interests

Evolving evidence suggests that unequal gender representation in certain vocational fields cannot be explained by differences in innate abilities (Else-Quest et al., 2010; Spelke, 2005). For instance, a large meta-analysis that focused on gender differences in mathematics found that, although there was only a small difference in mathematics achievement, boys had significantly more positive attitudes and affect towards maths (Else-Quest et al., 2010). This shows that there are preferences that are linked to gender, and Ceci et al. (2009) recommended that researchers who are studying prevailing gender differences in various fields need to shift their attention to gender differences in vocational preferences in early adolescence or even middle childhood.

Although there was only a small difference in mathematics achievement, boys had significantly more positive attitudes and affect towards maths.

This suggestion is consistent with classic Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise (1981). The theory highlights the process of implementation of the self as one of the most important tasks in vocational development. Importantly, since gender is commonly a strong and salient feature of the self, individuals tend to disregard the disciplines they do not find suitable for their gender very early in their vocational development (Gottfredson, 1981). At the same time, when evaluating many possible voca-

tional choices, individuals are faced with the difficult task of forming the image of various disciplines and their environments. Since young people do not necessarily have all the information needed for painting a realistic picture of these fields, they commonly rely on subtle cues when assessing whether the field's work culture is more masculine or feminine, by observing significant others in these fields or media representations of the field (Diekman et al., 2017).

From the perspective of vocational interests and Holland's (1997) theory, the greatest gender divergence in interest can be expected along the people–things dimension underlying Holland's RIASEC circumplex. Su et al. (2009), in their comprehensive meta-analysis confirmed this expectation, and empirically demonstrated that sex differences are largest along the people–things dimension. Interest in male and female activities starts to develop in early childhood (Gottfredson, 1981; Tracey, 2001; Tracey & Ward, 1998), followed by the formation of gender-stereotyped interest in school activities during elementary school (Tracey & Ward, 1998). These gender differences in interest became more pronounced with the shift from elementary school into middle school (Tracey, 2002a) and persist through entry into college (Tracey & Robbins, 2005).

The greatest gender divergence in interest can be expected along the people–things dimension underlying Holland's RIASEC circumplex.

Above gender: Gender roles, value orientations and vocational interests

Although biological sex plays a role, the level of adherence to gender-specific vocational interests can vary based on an individual's endorsement of wider gender roles. Gender roles are socially ascribed rules of behaviours, experiences, and actions that are expected of a person and associated with his or her gender (Bem, 1981). As such, they can be a major force in developing gender-specific interests and behaviours in a vocational domain as well. For instance, women who show more adherence to feminine norms, such as being relationship-oriented or being domestic, are less likely to enter or major in STEM fields in college (Beutel et al., 2018; Simon et al., 2017), while men who are majoring in traditionally masculine fields typically report more characteristics associated with masculinity, such as emotional control (Beutel et al., 2019). Based on this evidence, we hypothesised that greater adherence to gender roles will be positively related to gender-specific vocational interests. More specifically, we expected more masculine students to express more interest in things, and more feminine students to express more interest in people. Since gender roles can be separated from biological sex, we also hypothesised that gender roles would have additional influence on the people-things interest dimension, over and above participants' gender.

More specifically, we expected more masculine students to express more interest in things, and more feminine students to express more interest in people.

Apart from the perception of oneself in the world of work, another important influence on vocational interests formation is the perception of the work itself. Specifically, some career fields are perceived as fulfilling social goals, such as altruism or social interaction (Matskewich & Cheryan, 2016). This is said to have important implications for gender-specific occupational choices because evidence suggests women are more likely to engage in activities that can lead to fulfilment of social goals (Konrad et al., 2000). For instance, greater adherence to social values among women was associated with less interest in majoring in STEM fields, which stereotypically are seen as offering limited chances of fulfilling social goals, and this was confirmed with both correlational and experimental evidence (Diekman et al., 2010; Diekman et al., 2011).

In contrast, research is continually finding that men value utilitarian work outcomes, such as prestige and income, more than women do (Sharabi & Harpaz, 2013; Super & Šverko, 1995; Warr, 2018; Weisgram et al., 2011), even though this difference is narrowing in Western societies (Diekman et al., 2011). Utilitarian values are also seen as being compatible with occupations that are typically focused on things rather than people (Diekman et al, 2010). These differences in work values are believed to influence gender-specific occupational choices (Eccles & Wang, 2016; Weisgram et al., 2010). The most valuable evidence comes from longitudinal studies, where results highlight the importance of work values when choosing different high school programmes and later careers (Eccles & Wang, 2016; Tellhed et al., 2018). For instance, one study showed that communal career goals can, in part, explain the gender differences in educational choice, but that agentic goals (e.g., status) are equally desirable for both girls and boys (Tellhed et al., 2018). Still, when made to choose, boys reported a somewhat stronger preference for agentic over communal goals than girls did (Tellhed et al., 2018).

One study showed that communal career goals can, in part, explain the gender differences in educational choice, but that agentic goals (e.g., status) are equally desirable for both girls and boys.

Therefore, given these previous findings, we expected to find that female students have higher social value orientation, while male students have higher utilitarian value orientation. More importantly, we hypothesised that the two value orientations have different influences on people–things interest orientation, over and above participants' gender. We expected that higher social value orientation will predict greater interest in people, and conversely, that higher utilitarian value orientation will predict greater interest in things.

Gender stereotyping and gender-specific vocational interests

Studies measuring gender stereotypes of various career fields consistently find that some fields are typically more readily associated with men or women, when both explicit and implicit measures are used (Nosek et al., 2009; Smyth & Nosek, 2015). These gender stereotypes can affect interests and future occupational choices, as suggested in prior research (Cheryan et al., 2013; Cheryan et al., 2009; Cundiff et al., 2013; Forsman & Barth, 2016; Kiefer & Sekaquaptewa, 2007). Gender stereotyping of different disciplines tends to vary by age, reaching its peak during early adolescence (Hoff et al., 2018; Katz & Ksansnak, 1994; Liben & Bigler, 2003; Miller & Budd, 1999; Trautner, 1992). Since studies show that after this age gender stereotypes usually show a decrease in magnitude, we propose that our sample of university students will stereotype to a small or moderate extent.

Gender stereotypes can affect interests and future occupational choices.

In our final predictions, we hypothesised that gender has a moderating effect on the relationship between gender stereotyping and the people–things interests dimension. We suggest that male students who report more gender stereotypes are more interested in things, while female students who report more gender stereotypes are more interested in people, following traditional gender norms and associated interests. Furthermore, besides the obvious difference in direction of correlations between stereotypes and the people–things interest dimension for males and females, we can hypothesise that the effect of gender stereotyping on interests will be greater for males than females. This hypothesis is derived from previous research findings that males are somewhat more prone to gender stereotyping (Baber & Tucker, 2006; Hentschel et al., 2019; Katenbrink, 2006; Katz & Ksansnak, 1994; Miller & Budd, 1999; Reid, 1995), which could result in a bigger effect of stereotypes on vocational interests for males.

We suggest that male students who report more gender stereotypes are more interested in things, while female students who report more gender stereotypes are more interested in people, following traditional gender norms and associated interests.

Aims

The present chapter aims to examine the associations between gender-related variables, and vocational interests among Croatian students, the role of these variables in predicting vocational interests and the differential effect of gender stereotyping on vocational interests among males and females.

Accordingly, the following research problems were set to:

1. Examine the correlations between gender, gender roles, value orientations, and vocational interests
2. Examine the importance of gender, gender roles, and value orientations for explaining vocational interests.
3. Examine the potential moderation effect of students' gender on relation between gender stereotyping, and vocational interests.

Method

Participants

The research was conducted on a convenience sample of students at the University of Zagreb. The sample consisted of 196 females and 123 males (N = 319), ranging in age from 19 to 33 years (M = 23.03; SD = 2.23). Students in the sample were from various faculties, mostly from the Faculty of Medicine (n = 53), the Faculty of Philosophy (n = 25), the Faculty of Economics (n = 24) and the Faculty of Law (n = 24). The rest of the sample includes students from the: Faculty of Croatian Studies; Catholic University of Croatia; Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Studies; Faculty of Political Studies; Faculty of Teacher Education; Faculty of Architecture; Academy of Fine Arts; Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing; Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture; Faculty of Science; Faculty of Agriculture; Faculty of Food Technology and Biotechnology; Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology; Faculty of Civil Engineering; Faculty of Transport and Traffic Sciences; Faculty of Pharmacy and Biochemistry; Faculty of Textile Technology; Faculty of Mining Geology and Petroleum Engineering; Faculty of Kinesiology; and Zagreb University of Applied Sciences.

Instruments

Personal Globe Inventory – Mini (Tracey, 2002b)

Personal Globe Inventory – Mini (PGI-Mini) was developed as an abbreviated version of the Personal Globe Inventory (PGI; Tracey, 2002b) to measure preferences in occu-

pations and activities, as well as the level of competence demonstrated in those activities. The PGI interest questionnaire was validated on Croatian samples (Šverko, 2008; Šverko & Babarović, 2016), and then the translated items that corresponded to the abbreviated version were selected. PGI-Mini, as well as its extended versions, measures results on eight major interest groups and two scales of prestige: Social Facilitating; Managing; Business Detail; Data Processing; Mechanical; Nature/Outdoors; Artistic; Helping; High Prestige; and Low Prestige. All items consist of specific activities, such as 'Seat patrons at a restaurant' or 'Install electrical wiring' for which participants answer using the rating scale from 1 *(Strongly dislike)* to 7 *(Strongly like)*. In this research, PGI-Mini is used as a measure of vocational interest on dimension people–things, since it is strongly related to gender differences in interests and the occupations chosen later on. The total score on this dimension was calculated as a sum of the weighted values of the individual subscales representing interests in people-related activities on the one hand, and interests in things on the other. Furthermore, the score of the participants on the people–things interest dimension was calculated as the difference between these two subscales. A higher result on the dimension of people–things interest meant a greater interest for activities that involve people, and less interest in activities related to things. In previous research, PGI-mini has shown adequate reliability (Tracey, 2016). In this research, the reliability score of the people–things scale calculated after extracting the general factor was satisfactory (α = .70).

Value Scale (Super & Šverko, 1995)

The Values Scale was designed to measure 20 work values that form five value orientations: utilitarian (i.e., advancement, prestige, economic security and achievement); social (i.e., social relations, social interaction, working conditions, cultural identity, participation in decision-making, & altruism); self-actualising (i.e., ability utilisation, creativity, personal development, & aesthetics); individualistic (i.e., lifestyle, autonomy, authority, & variety); and adventurous (i.e., risk, & physical activity). In this paper, the abbreviated version consisting of 60 items was used (Babarović et al., 2017), and the task of participants was to estimate the subjective importance of each statement using a scale from 1 *(Mostly unimportant)* to 4 *(Very important)*. Items include various goals that an individual can achieve through their work, such as: '… use all my skills and knowledge'; '… live according to my own ideas'; and '… help people with problems'. The total result for each value orientation is calculated as the arithmetic mean of the importance of the items that represent a particular value orientation. In this study, we used only two value orientations, social and utilitarian value orientations, and their reliability was α = .856 and α = .863, respectively.

Gender Stereotyping of Activities Scale (adaptation of the Inventory of Children's Activities; Tracey & Ward, 1998)

The items with the lowest means formed a set of predominantly masculine activities, and those with the highest arithmetic means formed a set of predominantly feminine activities. In this way, 8 items were retained to form a subscale of gender stereotyping – four masculine and four feminine items.

An adapted version of the Inventory of Children's Activities (ICA) was used to measure gender stereotyping of different activities. The original version of this questionnaire measures interests and perceptions of competence in different activities in children and adolescents. In the version used in this paper, the instructions given to the participants before answering the questionnaire were changed, by asking them to rate how suitable each activity is for males and females on a scale from 1 *(A lot more for men)* to 5 *(A lot more for women)*, with a mean value of 3 *(both for men and women)*. As in the original version, the questionnaire consisted of 30 items with examples of different activities, such as: 'Understand how something works'; 'Take things apart'; 'Looking in a microscope'; and 'Taking care of young children'. In order to obtain a set of activities that participants perceive as most suitable for women and men, the arithmetic mean of the results for each of the items was calculated. The items with the lowest means formed a set of predominantly masculine activities, and those with the highest arithmetic means formed a set of predominantly feminine activities. In this way, eight items were retained to form a subscale of gender stereotyping – four masculine and four feminine items. Items were re-coded in such a way that a higher score indicates more pronounced gender stereotyping. Results are calculated by transforming the scale's raw scores into scaled scores that range from 0 to 2. The raw scores '*both for men and women*' (value 3) are scaled into value 0; '*a little more for men/women*' (values 2 and 4) are scaled into value 1, while '*a lot more for men/women*' (values 1 and 5) are scaled into value 2. Therefore, the item score ranges from 0 (the most neutral rating) to 2 (the maximum stereotyping rating). The total score was calculated as the sum of the scores on the corresponding eight items and ranges from 0-16. The gender stereotyping scale in this sample showed high internal reliability: $\alpha = .92$.

Bem Sex-Role Inventory (Bem, 1981)

An abbreviated version of the Bem Sex-Role Inventory was used to measure the expression of the feminine or masculine gender role of the participants. An abbreviated version of this questionnaire was validated on a Spanish sample (Fernández, 1991), and adequate psychometric characteristics were found. The Sex-Role Inventory measures the expression of various characteristics that are considered more appropriate for women and men in most contemporary cultures. In this version, there are 12 such characteristics, of which six were feminine (e.g., warmth or sensitivity to the needs of others) and the other six measured masculine traits (e.g., dominance or leadership ability). The task of the participants is to assess the extent to which they identify with these traits on a

scale from 1 *(Does not fit my traits at all)* to 7 *(Fully fits my traits)*. The total score for each subscale was calculated as the sum of the scores on the corresponding items. Both subscales in this sample showed high reliability of α = .86 for the femininity subscale and α = .82 for the masculinity subscale.

The Sex-Role Inventory measures the expression of various characteristics that are considered more appropriate for women and men in most contemporary cultures.

Procedure

The data was collected as a part of a pilot study of the big research project *Free Career Choice*, which focused on adolescents' career development. After obtaining the ethical consent for conducting this research from the Ethical Committee of the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences in Zagreb, an online questionnaire was constructed via Google Forms. At the very beginning of the questionnaire, the participants were presented with a short invitation to participate in the research, in which the purpose of the research was explained and participants were informed about the anonymity of their data. Participants could opt out of the questionnaire at any time. The invitation also listed the contacts of the researchers allowing the participants to contact them for feedback or results. On the first page of the questionnaire, participants had to indicate whether they agreed to participate in the survey, which was considered as their informed consent. The data collection was conducted using online groups of students, mailing lists, or social networks. Data collection took place from May to July 2020, and the duration of the assessment was 15 minutes on average. The obtained data were further processed in the IBM SPSS Statistics 23 (2015).

The data was collected as a part of a pilot study of the big research project Free Career Choice, which focused on adolescents' career development.

Results

The descriptive results (see Table 7.1. below) showed that students on average do not have very pronounced gender stereotypes of activities (M = 5.59; total range: 0 to 16), suggesting that certain traditionally male activities are not perceived as predominantly suitable for men, and that perception of typical female activities also deviate from traditional gender roles. The results also showed that participants are somewhat more motivated by utilitarian values in work, such as economic security and prestige rather than by social values, such as social relations or altruism. Furthermore, participants also showed a greater interest in people than in things and showed more feminine than masculine characteristics in the overall sample. These findings – related to interests and gender roles – may be due to the higher representation of women in the sample, or the self-selection of participants with greater interest in participating in research of this type.

Traditionally male activities are not perceived as predominantly suitable for men, and that perception of typical female activities also deviate from traditional gender roles.

Table 7.1 Descriptive statistics

	N	Min	Max	M	SD	Skew-ness	Kurto-sis
Masculinity	319	12.00	42.00	28.41	6.61	-1.15	-2.33
Femininity	319	6.00	42.00	32.61	6.28	-5.93	2.81
Social values	319	1.44	4.00	3.14	0.46	-6.14	2.75
Utilitarian values	319	1.83	4.00	3.39	0.44	-0.67	0.10
Gender stereotyping	306	0.00	16.00	5.59	4.67	2.14	-3.54
People–Things Interests	319	-10.50	9.66	1.23	3.78	-2.46	0.75

Females, students who more strongly adhered to feminine gender role and those with higher social values showed greater interest in activities involving other people, while students with more masculine characteristics showed greater interest in activities dealing with things.

Table 7.2 presents interrelations between gender, gender roles, gender stereotyping, work values and people–things interests. Regarding the students' interest orientation, people–things interests were weakly to moderately positively related to gender, femininity, and social values, and very weakly negatively related to masculinity. In other words, females, students who more strongly adhered to feminine gender role and those with higher social values showed greater interest in activities involving other people, while students with more masculine characteristics showed greater interest in activities dealing with things. Other correlations indicated the positive weak to moderate interrelatedness of gender, social values, and femininity. This cluster of positively related variables indicates that social values are endorsed more by females and those who attached greater importance to their feminine role. Masculinity was viewed as a remote construct, unrelated to the previously mentioned cluster of variables, and just weakly related to utilitarian values. Career gender stereotyping showed just very weak negative correlations with gender, femininity, and people-things interests. This indicated that males, those who have a weaker femininity role, and those who are more interested in things are somewhat more prone to career gender stereotyping.

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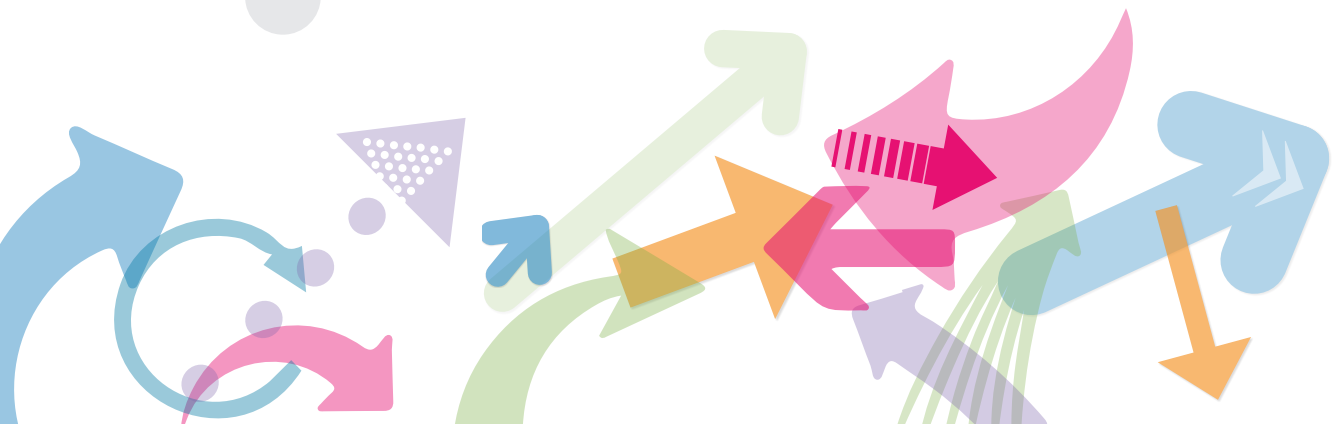


Table 7.2 Interrelations between gender, gender roles, work values, career gender stereotyping, and interests

	G	F	M	SV	UV	GS
1. Gender						
2. Femininity	.226**					
3. Masculinity	-.042	-.047				
4. Social values	.301**	.437**	.096			
5. Utilitarian values	.174**	.159**	.216**	.486**		
6. Gender stereotyping	-.187**	-.161**	-.059	-.037	.016	
7. People–Things Interests	.458**	.293**	-.114*	.343**	.061	-.115*

Note: ** p < .05 ** p < .01; Gender: 1-Male, 2-Female; People–things interests: reversely coded (higher values indicate higher interests in people)*

In order to reveal the individual and group contribution of predictors in explaining the people–things interests, a three-step hierarchical regression analysis was performed. As can be seen in Table 7.3 below, in the first step of the analysis, gender explained 20.7% ($F = 84.2$, $df1 = 1$, $df2 = 317$, $p < .001$) of the variance of the people–things interest dimension. In the second block, two gender role variables were added, and they explained an additional 4.5% of the variance of people–things interests ($\Delta F = 9.6$, $df1 = 2$, $df2 = 315$, $p < .001$). Gender remained the most significant predictor, followed by femininity as an additional significant predictor of interests. Masculinity did not prove to be a significant predictor of interests in this step. In the final step of the analysis, two value orientations were added, which explained additional 3.8% of the interests variance ($\Delta F = 8.48$, $df1 = 2$, $df2 = 313$, $p < .001$). Gender remained the best predictor of interests, followed by social values, femininity, and utilitarian values. Due to the insignificant correlation between utilitarian values and interests ($r = .061$, $p > .05$; Table 7.2), it seems that utilitarian values have a suppressing effect in the model mostly through social values (correlation between social and utilitarian values is $r = .486$, $p < .01$). Therefore, gender, social values, and femininity were significant predictors that positively predicted people–things interests in the complete model, while utilitarian values acted like a suppressing variable in the model. This means that females, individuals with stronger social values and more feminine characteristics showed a greater interest in people, or that, vice versa, males, those with lower social values and less feminine characteristics had more interests in things. The complete model predicted 28.2% of variance of interests ($F = 26.01$, $df1 = 5$, $df2 = 313$, $p < .001$).

Gender remained the best predictor of interests, followed by social values, femininity, and utilitarian values.

Table 7.3 Results of hierarchical regression analysis and the contribution of blocks and individual variables in predicting interests (N = 319)

Block	Variable	Steps (standardised regression coefficients)		
		1	2	3
Gender	Gender	.458**	.410**	.375**
Gender roles	Femininity		.196**	.115*
	Masculinity		-.088	-.090
Value orientations	Social			.249**
	Utilitarian			-.127*
	R	.458**	.505**	.542**
	R2	.207**	.248**	.282**
	ΔR2	.210**	.045**	.038**

Note: ** p < .05 ** p < .01; Gender: 1-Male, 2-Female; People–things interests: reversely coded (higher values indicate higher interests in people)*

Since the previous research has established the importance of gender stereotyping in shaping the interests of men and women, we wanted to examine how gender stereotyping can affect the interests of male and female university students, separately.

the previous research has established the importance of gender stereotyping in shaping the interests of men and women, we wanted to examine how gender stereotyping can affect the interests of male and female university students, separately. In order to identify differences in the relationship between gender stereotyping and people–things interests using the participants' gender, we tested the moderation effect of gender in the relationship between gender stereotyping and people–things interests. The sample was first divided by students' gender and two linear regressions were performed in each of the subsamples. The dependent variable in both analyses was the people–things interest dimension, and the predictor variable was gender stereotypes. In this manner, we could examine whether gender stereotyping would have different effects on students' interests depending on their gender. As can be seen from Table 7.4, below, stereotyping significantly predicted interests in male students, while it had an insignificant effect on the interests of female students. In order to determine whether this difference was statistically significant, the z-value of the difference between the absolute value of non-standardised coefficients (b) was calculated. The value obtained (z = 1.42; p > .05) indicated that the observed difference in the effect of gender on the relationship between feminine stereotyping and interests was insignificant.

Table 7.4 Regression coefficients of feminine and masculine stereotyping in predicting interest in male and female students

		b	*se*	*ß*	*t*	*p*
Gender stereotyping	Males	-.207	.072	-.262	-2.882	.005
	Females	.082	.051	.113	1.608	.110

Discussion

The first aim of this research was to examine the associations between gender-related variables and the people–things interest dimension. As expected, females reported greater interest in people than males, who scored lower on the people–things interest dimension, indicating greater interest in things. Regarding gender roles, femininity was significantly positively associated with interest in people, while masculinity was negatively related to this interest dimension, indicating that individuals with more masculine characteristics are more often interested in activities involving mechanical manipulation and hands-on activities. Masculine characteristics may underlie interest in pursuing careers in disciplines that are more things-oriented, such as the disciplines in the STEM field. Furthermore, social values were positively related to interest in people as well, while utilitarian values did not correlate significantly with the interest dimension. It could be that students with a high utilitarian value orientation perceive the possibility of reaching their career goals in various disciplines, both those that are more oriented to people as well as those more oriented to things.

Regarding gender roles, femininity was significantly positively associated with interest in people, while masculinity was negatively related to this interest dimension, indicating that individuals with more masculine characteristics are more often interested in activities involving mechanical manipulation and hands-on activities.

Regarding associations between various gender-related variables, the correlation analysis showed some deviation from the expected results for gender roles. Although females still showed more feminine characteristics, there was no relationship found between gender and masculinity. An explanation of these results can be found in changes in the perception of contemporary gender roles. Modern women are likely expected to develop characteristics that were more socially appropriate for men in the past, such as decision-making or leadership (Bem, 1981). On the other hand, female gender and femininity are, as expected, significantly positively associated with social values. This result is in line with expectations, as previous research has shown that for most women social values are salient (Konrad et al., 2000). Therefore, it is expected that female students will show greater interest in those activities in which they are more likely to meet social values. However, the unexpected result is that females have somewhat more

Modern women are likely expected to develop characteristics that were more socially appropriate for men in the past, such as decision-making or leadership.

pronounced utilitarian values than males in this sample. Moreover, femininity is to a small extent positively related to utilitarian values. These results could be the manifestation of changes in prevailing gender norms in the world of work. Although recent findings suggest that men still highly value income, there is some evidence that gender differences in traditionally male-specific values, such as prestige, are slowly diminishing (Warr, 2018).

These results could be the manifestation of changes in prevailing gender norms in the world of work. Although recent findings suggest that men still highly value income, there is some evidence that gender differences in traditionally male-specific values, such as prestige, are slowly diminishing.

Interestingly, both femininity and masculinity are shown to be associated to some extent with a utilitarian value orientation. The explanation of this finding could be twofold. Firstly, Diekman et al. (2011) report a reduction in gender differences in the importance of values, which may explain why both, masculine and feminine gender roles, can be realised in disciplines that offer the possibility of satisfying utilitarian motives, such as law (Diekman et al., 2010). The second explanation can be related specifically to the sample which includes only university students. University education for all students in different fields provides fulfilment of utilitarian values to a large extent (i.e., advancement, prestige, economic security, achievement), and the expected gender-roles differences in this sample were thus reduced.

The correlation analysis also showed that female students and students with more feminine characteristics have slightly lower gender stereotypes. This finding corresponds to several research findings that indicated that men tend to have stronger stereotype endorsement and that women show greater gender role flexibility and less traditional attitudes (Baber & Tucker, 2006; Hentschel et al., 2019; Katenbrink, 2006; Katz & Ksansnak, 1994; Miller & Budd, 1999; Reid, 1995).

Female students and students with more feminine characteristics have slightly lower gender stereotypes.

In order to determine whether people–things interests can be explained based on gender, gender roles, and value orientations, a hierarchical regression analysis was performed. These predictors explained 28.2% of the variance of people–things interests, where a significant predictor was students' gender, followed by social value orientation and femininity. In addition to the expected finding of gender and social values as predictors of interest, this analysis showed that feminine characteristics managed to further predict interest above gender and values. These findings advocate for the importance of feminine characteristics and social values in shaping interests, which may partially explain the persistence of gender imbalance in specific fields at the university level (Beutel et al., 2018; Simon et al., 2017). Utilitarian value orientation acted as a suppressor variable in the model. Interestingly, the utilitarian values do not predict the interests of students directly, but possibly act by social values suppressing the error variance of the utilitarian values in the model. This finding can be explained by the existence of a gen-

Men tend to have stronger stereotype endorsement and that women show greater gender role flexibility and less traditional attitudes.

eral factor in values scales' scores (Schwartz, 1992). Taken together, these results point to the importance of gender-related variables in the prediction of vocational interests, even above gender itself. However, in the final step of our model gender continued to be the best predictor of interests, and only one-third of interest variance was explained. Thus, it can be argued that there are other variables related to students' gender that can explain unequal gender representation in the modern workforce, which need further investigation.

These results point to the importance of gender-related variables in the prediction of vocational interests, even above gender itself.

Our results further showed that students stereotype various activities, which can traditionally be considered more appropriate for men and women, to a small or moderate extent. The results that gender stereotyping is not so pronounced in university students' sample is in line with findings that gender stereotyping reaches its peak during early adolescents and then gradually decreases with age (Hoff et al., 2018; Katz & Ksansnak, 1994; Liben & Bigler, 2003; Miller & Budd, 1999; Trautner, 1992). However, the variance (standard deviation) of gender stereotyping was large, indicating huge variability in gender stereotyping among students. This is supported by the observed negative kurtosis which indicates that the distribution of gender stereotypes is flatter than a normal curve and has higher tails.

Previous research has shown different effects of gender stereotyping on the interests of men and women (Cundiff et al., 2013), so moderation analysis was conducted to determine whether a gender moderation effect on the relationship between gender stereotyping and interests existed. The results of the moderation effect of gender on the relationship between gender stereotyping and people–things interests showed that the expected direction of the regression coefficient (i.e, negative for males and positive for females), but the size of stereotyping effect on interest did not significantly differ among male and female students. These findings indicate that gender stereotyping has no substantial effect on interests, even in gender-specific subsamples, and that this small effect of gender stereotyping on interests is similar for male and female students.

These findings indicate that gender stereotyping has no substantial effect on interests, even in gender-specific subsamples, and that this small effect of gender stereotyping on interests is similar for male and female students.

Limitations

This research was conducted on a convenient sample of students at the University of Zagreb, which prevents the generalisation of results to the wider population. Furthermore, given that the sample in this research consisted of university students whose interests were already formed, and certain career decisions were made, younger participants should be included in future research. A younger sample would likely provide a

better insight into the importance of gender stereotyping in interest formation and the subsequent actual choice of high school or university. Sinclair et al. (2019) showed that gender stereotyping of the occupations had more effect on the choice of high school programmes than on the choice of the programmes that lead to tertiary education.

Other limitations relate to the instruments used in this study. The gender role questionnaire (Bem, 1981) is a long-standing instrument and may not fully cover the characteristics that would be most associated with present female or male gender roles. Furthermore, the gender stereotyping questionnaire was created based on the children's interest inventory and measures gender stereotyping of specific activities, which makes it difficult to correspond to gender stereotyping of more comprehensive areas of work. Also, recent research in measuring attitudes is increasingly inclined to implicit measures, which could certainly contribute to less socially desirable answers in the gender-stereotyping scale.

Practical implications

Previous research has shown that gender stereotyping of certain career fields, as well as the subsequent sense of belonging, can be experimentally influenced by changing gender-stereotypical cues from the physical work environment (Cheryan et al., 2009). Simple changes in the physical space of the faculty can thus attract more men and women who often give up careers in certain areas due to the fear of not belonging (Stephens et al., 2012) or perceived inability to achieve the work values that they strive for in work (Diekman et al., 2010). Educational institutions that aim to attract students to gender minority programmes should start to identify factors in the advertising that maintains gender stereotypes. The image that educational institutions promote through media and social networks can greatly influence interest in enrolling in a particular programme (Diekman et al., 2017). Thus, it is important to ensure that the impression potential students get about an educational institution is not based on gender stereotyping cues. This is especially important if we consider the results of previous research that has shown that the public perception of the work tasks and goals achieved in certain jobs is often not in line with the actual situation (Boucher et al., 2017). It is possible that such a misperception about different disciplines also leads to reduced expectations of men and women about the goals they can achieve within a particular job. Diekman et al. (2011) proved that framing the field of STEM as a discipline through which social goals can be achieved increases interest in STEM for women, while unchanging the interests of men. For example, although scientists often collaborate on projects, and

It is important to ensure that the impression potential students get about an educational institution is not based on gender stereotyping cues.

develop devices and applications with the final goal of improving the quality of life of people, these tasks may be less emphasised as part of the work of scientists, leading to reduced interest in such disciplines in people who are predominantly oriented towards social values.

Also, it is important to recognise the role of significant others in the social environment, such as parents, peers, or teachers, that influence young people's stereotypical images of different disciplines. Well-designed interventions and school programmes aimed to reduce gender stereotypes of different disciplines can provide comprehensive and less stereotyped information about occupations, and can involve parents and teachers to reduce their stereotyping of the world of work.

Finally, although overall gender stereotyping did not prove to be very prominent in this sample, it should be noted that it is more pronounced in males, making it more likely that such stereotyping will play a role in their choice of later profession. This is perhaps not an unexpected finding, since some evidence suggests that in Croatia there are more women employed in traditionally masculine professions than the EU average, but far fewer men are resisting these stereotypes the same way (European Institute of Gender Equality, 2017). Therefore, it seems that career interventions aimed at higher education choices could be focused on a reduction of vocational gender stereotypes of men, which provides a shift from traditional interventions focused on the empowerment of women in earlier career transitions.

Well-designed interventions and school programmes aimed to reduce gender stereotypes of different disciplines can provide comprehensive and less stereotyped information about occupations.

Although overall gender stereotyping did not prove to be very prominent in this sample, it should be noted that it is more pronounced in males.

Conclusion

This research aimed to determine gender-related correlates and predictors of people-things vocational interests among students at the University of Zagreb, as well as to determine the importance of vocational gender stereotyping in maintaining gender-related vocational differences. Correlation analysis showed significant associations of various gender-related variables with the people–things interest dimension. As expected, females reported greater interest in people, while males had a greater interest in things. The gender roles of masculinity and femininity were shown to be weakly to moderately related to interests. Femininity was positively related to interests in people, while masculinity was weakly related to interests in things. Moreover, as expected, social values were positively associated with interests in people, while utilitarian values were weakly related to interests in things.

It seems that career interventions aimed at higher education choices could be focused on a reduction of vocational gender stereotypes of men, which provides a shift from traditional interventions focused on the empowerment of women in earlier career transitions.

Regression analysis predicting people–things interests based on gender, gender roles, and value orientations, managed to explain 28.2% of the vocational interest variance. In the first step, students' gender explained 20.7% of the interests' variance, followed by gender roles in the second step, which further explained another 4.5% of the vocational interest variance. In the last step, value orientations further explained an additional 3.8% of the variance. Accordingly, the best predictor of people–things interests was gender, followed by social value orientation and femininity.

Regarding the gender stereotypes, the results showed a generally low to moderate tendency of students to gender stereotype different activities, but male students held a somewhat higher level of gender stereotypes than females. The moderating effect of gender on the relationship between gender stereotyping and people–things interests was not confirmed. Gender stereotyping has a somewhat bigger effect on interests in the male rather than the female sample, but these effects are rather small and unsubstantial.

The evidence shows that vocational gender stereotypes usually decline with age.

Future research should be conducted on more representative samples, and wider scope of gender-related variables should be included. Moreover, since the evidence shows that vocational gender stereotypes usually decline with age, this field could benefit from studying the effects of gender-related variables on interests formation in younger samples, such as elementary or high school students.



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08

Career development of people with disability: A case study of a young man with visual impairment

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Abstract

Vocational guidance and career counselling are called to reclaim their social mission: social and ethical values, attention to conditions of greater vulnerability, caring for people, and for life contexts, thus enriching with inclusive and sustainable actions the reflections already expressed in the Life Design approach. In fact, if the transition from adolescence to adulthood often requires numerous changes, these changes become challenges when dealing with disabilities. Young adults with a visual impairment – similarly to people with other disabilities – might show higher risk for reduced participation and social exclusion. The aim of the case study here reported is presenting a career counselling intervention that improved the career management skills of an individual with visual impairment. The career counselling intervention has been conducted using a qualitative and narrative instrument, the My System of Career Influences; it is grounded on the systems theory framework (Patton & McMahon, 2015) and invites the users to explore the different systems of influences that may have acted in the past, present or will show up in the future on one's own development of career. It is based on reconstruction and co-construction – together with the counsellor – of life and career histories, often characterised by strong entry barriers to the workforce, and by prejudices and stereotypes related to disability. Former work experiences, interests, values, decisional style and meaning of work have been investigated; moreover, the intervention promoted a range of competences to collect, analyse, and organise information on self, education, and occupations, developing the skills to make and implement decisions and career transitions.

Keywords

Inclusion, narrative career counselling, disability, visual impairment

Introduction

The current context, characterised by rapid social and technological changes and by phenomena that increase risky situations, as globalisation, unemployment, sense of insecurity and precariousness (Beck, 2015), has promoted a growth in transnational mobility and competitiveness based on an increase in low-cost productivity. The problems affecting large swathes of the population – employment instability, precarious employment, unemployment, discrimination, and migrations – have amplified the disadvantages when it comes to accessing and staying in the employment market.

lems affecting large swathes of the population – employment instability, precarious employment, unemployment, discrimination, and migrations – have amplified the disadvantages when it comes to accessing and staying in the employment market (Duarte & Cardoso, 2018). Some key labour market data, from European Parliamentary Research Service (2020 reveal striking differences between people with and without disabilities: more than double as many people with disabilities are economically inactive, and their unemployment rate is also twice as high. The low employment and activity rates of persons with disabilities suggest that significant barriers exist for persons with disabilities in accessing the labour market (Lecerf, 2020). As furthermore highlighted in the eport published by the European Parliamentary Research Service (Lecerf, 2020), the quality of work should be considered, for instance in 2018, persons with disabilities were more likely to face in-work poverty risk than those without disabilities (EU-SILC, 2018). Additionally, the Eurofound study (2018) confirms the crucial role of employment as a primary inclusion factor: in fact, the feeling of being excluded from society by people with disabilities is related to being employed or not.

Persons with disabilities were more likely to face in-work poverty risk than those without disabilities.

The economic constraints and the rapid changing in work are associated to some new threats, identified by Santilli et al. (2020), as (1) socio-economic inequalities due to the neo-liberalism concept of the markets and consumptions; (2) super-diverse societies, characterised by a growing number of people with different cultural, linguistic, socio-economic background (Vertovec, 2019); (3) disruptive effect of technology, that pushes organisations to search continually for further 'innovations' in order to survive (Downes & Nunes, 2014), and to replace human workforce, not only in routine jobs; (4) being entrepreneurs of themselves, having the propensity to consider flexibility, short-term contracts, precarious work, etc. (Adamson, 2017). This means that the 'ideal worker' is, as depicted by Schouten (2017), a person who works a lot, who puts his/her job first, and is not side-tracked by personal and family problems. This last point is particularly relevant for our reflection, as being different from this model could led to new marginalisation and could exacerbated the existent gaps toward disadvantaged peoples in terms of career development.

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At this point, we agree with Santilli et al. (2020), that vocational guidance and career counselling must activate a sense-making process regarding its social mission. This refers to social and ethical values, attention to conditions of greater vulnerability, caring for people, and for life contexts (Solberg & Ali, 2017), thus enriching with inclusive and sustainable actions the reflections already expressed in the Life Design approach (Savickas et al., 2009). Additionally, the career counselling programmes and interventions must be designed through the guidelines proposed by the 2030 Agenda for Sus-

tainable Development (unric.org/it/agenda-2030). This Agenda (ONU, 2015) specifies that sustainable development requires concerted efforts toward building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and the planet. Sustainable development is possible only through harmonising the three core elements: economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. These core elements are all crucial for the well-being of individuals and societies. Indispensable requirements for sustainable development are eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion.

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Youth and emerging adulthood for persons with visual impairments

Visual impairment affects about 19.2% of European population and the 8.7% of young adults (aged 15-29 years) in European Union (last update March 2019, ec.europa.eu/eurostat) The broad category of visual impairment often includes various degrees of vision loss and variations in visual functioning.

In general, the transition from adolescence to adulthood is often accompanied by various challenges (Wood et al., 2018): young adults face important changes related to study, work and housing (Živčić-Bećirević et al., 2020). These changes become challenges when dealing with disabilities (Stewart et al., 2010). Elsman, van Rens and van Nispen (2017) highlighted that young adults with a visual impairment might show higher risk for reduced participation in work and social life, and social exclusion. In fact, previous studies have found that visually impaired young adults frequently have no paid job compared to young adults without visual disabilities (Capella-McDonnall, 2011; Shaw et al., 2007). In absence of any gap in education or graduation rates, external factors such as negative attitudes of employers and inaccessible work environments have also shown to be a major barrier to employment (McDonnall et al., 2014). The study conducted by Elsman et al. (2017) has shown that study and work are major challenges in the lives of young adults with visual impairment (Newman et al., 2011).

Lund and Cmar (2020) conducted a systematic review of the literature on employment in transition-age youth with visual impairments. According to the literature, the most assessed predictors of employment include education, previous work experience, gender, and severity of visual impairment. In Lund and Cmar's analysis, level of education and previous work experience were the two most consistently strong predictors of employment outcomes, suggesting that both academic preparation and vocational guid-

ance may be useful for increasing the employment success of youth with visual impairments. On a broader reading, these findings provide some support for the core role of the vocational guidance and career counselling programmes for youth with visual impairments.

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It seems that the majority of students with special educational needs find it difficult to make decisions, use the acquired skills, accept responsibility and self-evaluate (Pipeková, 2004). Moravcová (2004) defined a series of factors affecting careers construction in students with visual impairments. Some of these factors are similar to the factors identifiable for students without disabilities (intellect, talent, interests and family traditions), other are related to the specific experience and the quality of relationship with the context (early diagnosis of disability, adequate care and education; early training in compensation and re-education techniques; need for personal assistance; availability of support from institutions).

Therefore, career construction is not a simple process, especially for persons with visual impairment and making an effective career plan requires a qualified career guidance and counselling (Omede, 2013). This suggests the use of a *tailor-made* approach, avoiding pre-packaged solutions, and focusing on both individual and contextual resources and (real and perceived) barriers.

Narrative career counselling

Career counselling activities to support the career construction of individuals with disability has primarily the purpose of promoting the inclusion mainly through two methods. The first is to direct attention to the contextual determinants which, if adequately stimulated and involved, could reduce the risk of marginalisation; whilst the second method proposes preventive and supportive personalised interventions that pose the centrality of individuals and of their rights (Nota et al., 2015). Career counselling for inclusion focuses on both individual and contextual resources and barriers, stimulating contexts to accommodate people with all their diversities, with the aim to enable everybody to learn, work and collaborate with others (Nota et al., 2015; Shogren, 2013).

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The Life Design (LD) paradigm (Savickas et al., 2009) offers the framework to overcome linear and predictable views of career paths, in favour of a holistic, circular, and contextual reading. The emphasis given to narrative approaches within LD allows the identification of 'the themes and new meanings in order to activate deconstruction, re-

construction, and co-construction processes which are particularly relevant in identity construction and future time perspective' (Sgaramella et al., 2015, p. 231). Through narratives, people with (and without) disabilities, can redefine themselves as individuals, activating a sense-making process to their lives and their difficulties (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013).

Within the social constructionist paradigm proposed by LD, the Systems Theory Framework (STF) of career development (Patton & McMahon, 2015) offers useful methods and instruments to activate the process of co-construction, focusing its attention on the relationship between individuals and their systems of influences. The STF's contextualisation (Patton & McMahon, 2015) of the individual comprises: (a) the intrapersonal influences that are embodied in the individual (e.g., physical attributes, values); (b) the influences that constitute the individual's interpersonal and social relationships (e.g., friendships, family); (c) and the environmental and societal system (e.g., school, work, government). From the STF's point of view, a person cannot be considered as an entity distinct from context, but only as a person-in-context. In summary, the STF presents a four-dimensional framework of an individual: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental-societal influences, in and across time (McIlveen & Midgley, 2015). As proposed and developed in career counselling studies (Patton & McMahon, 2014), the individual system (which includes psychological, biological, and physical influences) crosses with the influences from the social system (family, peers, educational institutions, workplace). These two systems interact with the broader context of an environmental-societal system that includes the influences of political decisions, socio-economic status, employment markets. The interactions within and among these systems are dynamic and framed in the context of past, present, and future times. In a very recent work (Magnano et al., 2021), we have highlighted that, in the career development context, this approach not only provides a theoretical account from a system perspective, but also supports a holistic visualisation of career development whilst it stimulates individuals to tell stories about the nature and the relevance of the systemic influences on their lives, particularly on their career development (McMahon & Patton, 2018; McMahon et al., 2015). This may prove useful for both clients and career counsellors in facilitating the clients' inclusion and helping them move forward in designing their futures.

So, career counsellors are required to give space to the complexity of individual stories, emphasise the dynamic and interacting nature of the map of personal systems of influences in individuals' lives, and refer to the meanings that those individuals assign to their stories (Magnano et al., 2021).

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Paolo's story

Paolo (the name is a pseudonym) is a 23-year-old man affected from birth by a rare form of Aniridia, a disease that causes severe consequences to the visual system, including a significant reduction of vision. He attended primary and secondary schools in his town of origin. To attend college, he decided to move to a bigger city where he lived in a residence which housed people with visual impairment. He is also a father of a child who is now two years old. Paolo came in contact for the very first time with the Italian Union of the Blind and Partially Visual Impaired. Thanks to this Union, he got the opportunity to attend a three-year professional training course after having achieved a high school Diploma in Human Science. At the end of this course, he obtained the status of telephone operator. Subsequently, he was invited to attend a training course for a tour operator. The training included a previous career counselling activity, which Paolo attended, and this process is presented as a case study for this paper.

The career counselling activities

The career counselling activities carried out were part of a wider plan promoted by the Italian Blind Union and Region of Sicily aimed at 'the inclusion and the enhancing of human resources and of the territory'. The informed consent to the participation was acquired for the whole project. The plan consisted of four parts:

1. Career counselling
2. Classes
3. Placement
4. Job Coaching

The career counselling activity lasted 35 hours for a total of 11 online meetings. This took place in June/July 2020 with a synchronous method (the face-to-face activity was not allowed owing to the restrictions due to the Coronavirus pandemic). The remote activity was an unusual counselling method for the participant, even though this method was not totally new. During the pandemic, the web has proved to be an excellent antidote for the impossibility of encountering people, enabling to keep the relationships either on a work or personal level. On one hand, whilst such sudden upheaval of the routine linked to various contexts such as work, educational, counselling and life in general it has created adjustment difficulties. Whereas, on the other hand, it has been called into question which function these technological tools, which sometimes they have been

'demonised' and designated to a subsidiary role if not even marginal, would have had in different circumstances (Magnano et al., 2021).

The online activity allowed a recording of the whole plan to be made and also made the participant aware of his technological and digital skills, which encouraged the improvements of these abilities. The career counselling activity can be briefly divided into 3 main phases:

Phase 1: The exploration of the resources and past experiences

In this phase, we used the initial interview contained in the My System of Career Influences (MSCI, that is presented below), a General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES; Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 2010 – sample item 'I can solve difficult problems if I try hard') which evaluates the set of beliefs about the ability to cope with difficult situations and the 'Self-portrait' activity. The 'Self-portrait' activity is organised as follows: two identical lists of adjectives and capacities are presented to the client and to his/her relative or friend (in Paolo's case it was his girlfriend). Then they had been asked to what extent they believed they could assign the qualities proposed to the client. The subsequent comparison of the two lists allowed the highlighting of his strengths and weaknesses and helped the counsellor to work on the sense of self-efficacy of the client.

Phase 2: Meaning and giving new meanings to the development of a career

This phase is composed of all the systems of the MSCI, the accomplishment of Paolo's personal system of influences and the consideration of it, which was carried out either through the section of the MSCI called 'Reflecting on My System of Career Influences', and the ad-hoc created interview called 'The Contact Line'. The Contact Line interview tries to focus on any 'constant' that recurred along the career evolution process (aspects of one's character, self-perceptions of adequacy/inadequacy, elements that can create conditions of vulnerability such as disability, gender, or racial origin) through a series of questions such as: 'Do you feel you have done a little or a lot in your career so far?' 'Is there something you can find recursively in every job you have done?' which are aimed at helping to hold together all the reflections that have emerged on one's own systems of influence.

Phase 3: A plan for the implementation of necessary strategies to achieve the objectives

During this phase it was proposed the final section of the MSCI and the preparation of a CV.

The My System of Career Influences

Users are invited to explore different influences that may have acted in the past, present or will show up in the future on one's own development of career.

The My System of Career Influences (MSCI; McMahon et al., 2013) is a qualitative career assessment instrument based on the STF (Patton & McMahon, 2015) which invites the users to explore different influences that may have acted in the past, present or will show up in the future on one's own development of career. The MSCI presents itself as a booklet that clients can work on, page by page, stimulating the narration of current and previous career's story and providing useful ideas for the co-construction, with the counsellor, either of new meanings or a launch site for future plans. It includes the following sections (McMahon et al., 2013):

a. My current professional situation: this initial interview invites the client to reflect on a series of questions regarding job aspirations, work experiences, roles in one's life, decisions made and support networks.
b. Thereafter, the client is encouraged to identify and reorder by importance the influences through a series of diagrams partially sketched and to be completed, which are named: thinking about who I am, thinking about the people around me, thinking about the environment and the society, thinking about my past, present and future.
c. Starting from the reflection on the influences identified in the systems just cited, the client is now invited to create one on his own, which is 'Representing My System of Career Influences.' It is a graphic and custom representation of influences that he believes they have had the most impact on his choices of career taking into consideration his past, present, and future.
d. The next step expects that this visual representation can be transformed in a narrative way in the form called 'Reflecting on My System of Career Influences', through the guide of a series of questions that stimulate the attribution of meaning and the learning starting from one's own stories of career.
e. The final step called 'My action plan', represents the area to identify all the steps required to put into action the career decision making.

The instrument has been successfully used with different clients, including young people with disadvantaged backgrounds (Albien & Naidoo, 2017; Sgaramella, 2013), into thinking about and telling stories about their futures. The instrument has been built to allow a flexible administration in one or more sections (e.g., McMahon & Watson, 2008; Watson & McMahon, 2006) in accordance with the needs of the individual. This allowed the merging, at intervals, of the different sections of the MSCI useful activities for the implementation of individual resources to the consideration of strengths and weaknesses of the client and to deepen the reflection on some key elements emerged in the narration.

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Paolo's System of Career Influences

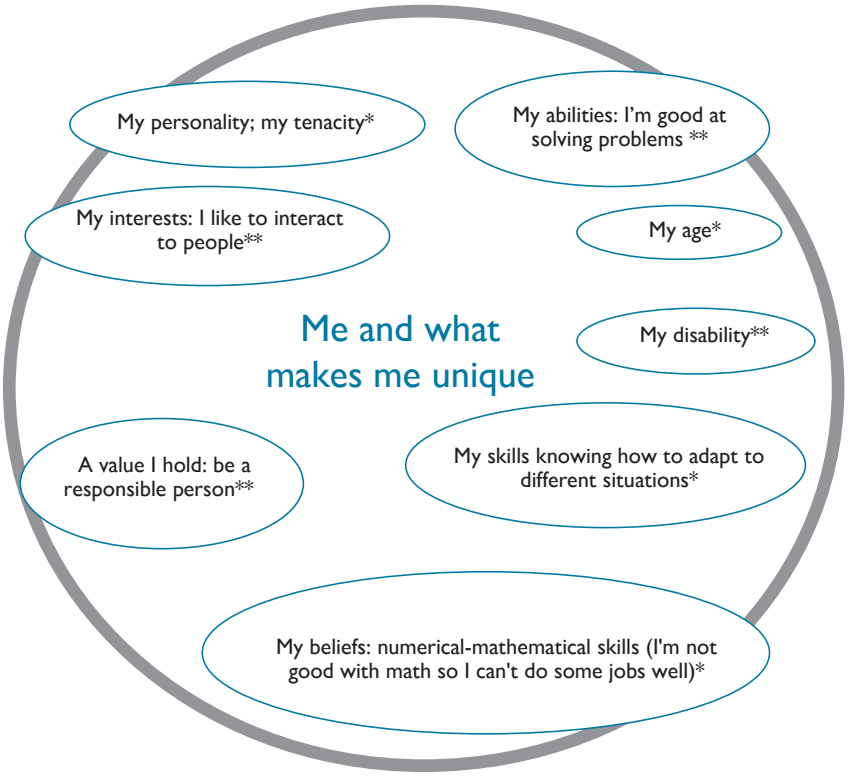
1. Thinking about who I am

When a person makes the decisions, there are many factors that may affect them. The choices are the result of emotional, motivational, cognitive, and mental processes, the persons' self-esteem, their capabilities, strengths and what they believe about their weaknesses.

The thoughts generated from Figure 8.1 called 'I think about who I am' are presented through the representation that the client has on personal characteristics and their role played in important choices, either in a positive or negative way.



Figure 8.1 I think about who I am



*Notes: *relevant influences; **most important influences*
Source: Paola Magnano, Rita Zarbo, Andrea Zammitti

In Figure 8.1, strongly emerges how Paolo's disability has had a crucial role on the career development. He says:

> *"If I did not have a disability, I would have tried many other types of careers, I would have had more possibilities, opportunities and especially in critic economic moments I would have sought a job to have a source of income."*

The topic of the disability occurs at different times in either direct or indirect way, even in other systems (see Figures 8.2, 8.3, 8.4) contained in the booklet, as a negative element and strongly binding. However, in Figure 8.1, many positive elements emerge during the career counselling activities.

Within the positive characteristics that Paolo considers important, he is confident in his own problem-solving strategies, and he says:

> *"The quantity of time I use depends on the problems I have to solve, but in general I manage to have different solutions to handle problematic situations or adversities."*

Moreover, he mentions his own values, such as sense of duty and moral responsibility, by saying:

> *"I would much prefer to earn my keep rather than have it provided (referring to his disability allowance)."*

Despite not having any established working plan yet, he highlights how important it would be for him to relate with people as a core part of the job, as he considers himself as a self-determined person, and able to adapt to different situations. Furthermore, he would consider the exploration of different possibilities and the risks linked to the insecurity as an advantage rather than disadvantage. He claims:

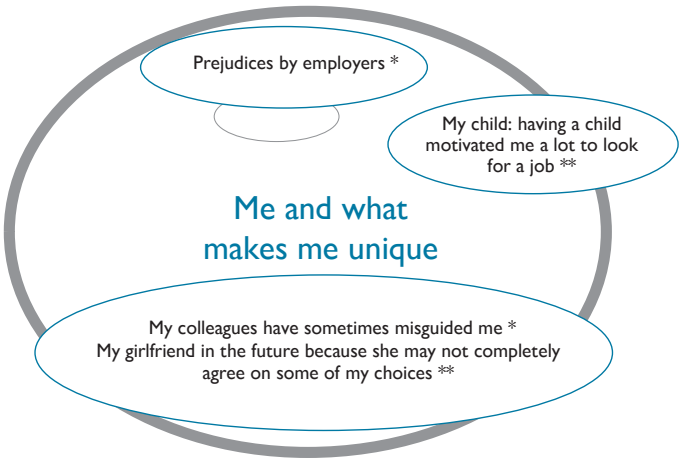
> *"Being only 23, I can afford to take risks and, if eventually I haven't succeeded, it will have served as an experience in life. This is important to understand whether a job meets your needs."*

2. Thinking about the people around me

When people make decisions about their careers, they are often influenced by the people around them both in everyday life and in the workplace.

The diagram called 'Thinking about the people around me' (Figure 8.2) simulates the analysis of the social network around the client by helping to focus attention on the significant people who can have a great impact on decision-making, acting as motivators or discouragers of work-related choices.

Figure 8.2 Thinking about the people around me



Notes: **relevant influences; **most important influences*
Source: Paola Magnano, Rita Zarbo, Andrea Zammitti

Having had a child at an early age helped Paolo to develop a great sense of responsibility. He said:

> *"My son motivated me to seek a job to support him; with a job I could think how to satisfy his needs."*

Moreover, thinking about a future with his current girlfriend encourages him to find solutions and alternatives that may be beneficial for both. He said:

> *"It is important in a couple to see what the other person thinks about a decision and to come to a solution that works for the couple."*

In this system (Figure 8.2), he listed supportive and motivating influences in either private and familiar environments, as just shown, while the working environment is characterised by negative and limited influences. In fact, in Paolo's diagram (Figure 8.2) emerges the regret of following the wrong advice given by his former colleagues

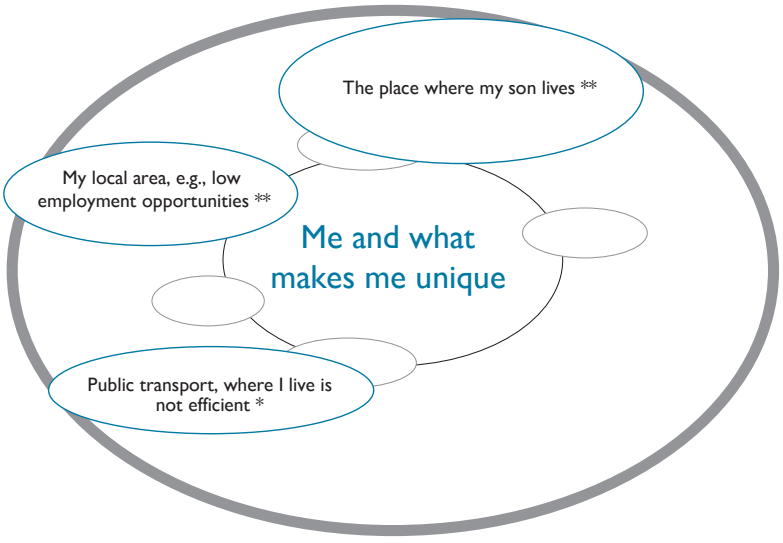
and most of all the bitterness of receiving prejudices for his disability by his employers. Paolo refers to an occasion in which he had the opportunity to work in a bar. He says:

> *"Even though it was not what I was hoping to do, I needed it for a period', but the employer considered him inadequate once he found out his disability. He claimed: 'they don't even give you a chance to prove yourself."*

3. Thinking about the environment and the society

Within the influences that can act on the development of the career, some of them are linked to environmental factors from the social context, in which the persons should realise their own working experiences. The active contribution of each person plays a fundamental role in the elaboration and understanding, either positive or negative, of the environmental influences.

Figure 8.3 Thinking about the environment and the society



Notes: **relevant influences, **most important influences*
Source: Paola Magnano, Rita Zarbo, Andrea Zammitti

Referring to the macro area of environmental influences (from an objective point of view and not based on the specific needs of the person), Paolo's diagram (Figure 8.3) shows difficulties caused by the lack of working opportunities in the place where he lives. The economy of the town where Paolo comes from is mainly based on agriculture (also his father and his brother work in this field, but he has always tried to avoid it) and leaves little room for other job opportunities.

On the other hand, in the diagram the influences linked simultaneously to environmental aspects and to Paolo's particular needs emerge. Besides the necessity to live and find a job that allows him to go and see his son with relative ease, even if he is far away, the other one is the difficulty to move from a place to another due to his disability.

Owing to his visual impairment, Paolo cannot obtain a driving licence, and this obliges him to use public transports, which are not very efficient, and this reduces his independence. He said:

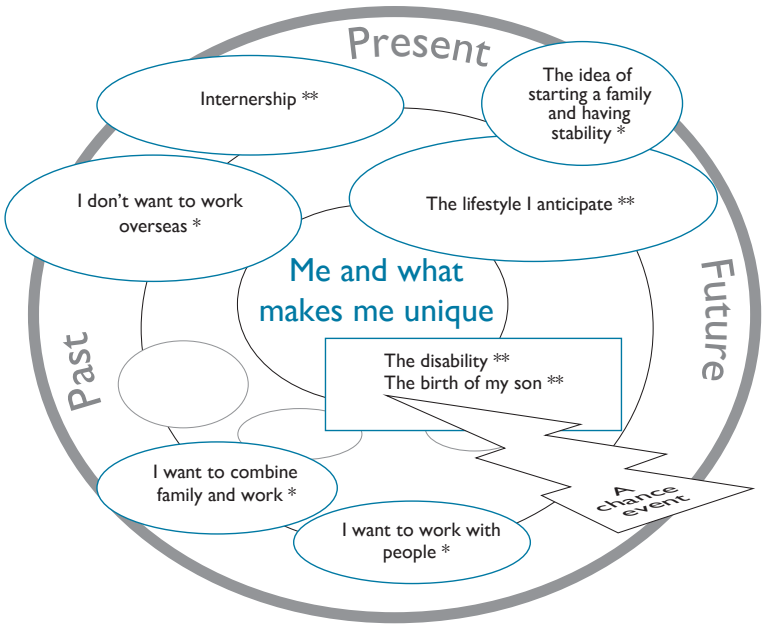
> *"Public transport, where I live is not eligible and it does not allow me to move easily, even to reach nearby places. By car it would take 20 or 30 minutes to reach the city while by bus it takes at least an hour and a half, so I cannot move whenever I want, and I would risk arriving late. Plus, I would not be able to work on Sundays because there are no buses available. Because of this I would have to find expensive alternatives such as renting a house, or I would have to bother someone to drive me to work. I guess if I moved out somewhere else this would impact me less as the quality of transport is far way better."*

4. Thinking about my past, present and future

Some influences, that are included in past diagrams, may have played a role in people's lives from their past, present, and even their future. The burden of such influences often can be particularly strong in moments and circumstances that were different at that moment the influence appeared initially. Moreover, decisions are sometimes influenced by unpredictable events and considerations for one's future.



Figure 8.4 Thinking about my past, present, and future



Notes: **relevant influences, **most important influences*
Source: Paola Magnano, Rita Zarbo, Andrea Zammitti

In Paolo's diagram (Figure 8.4), previous and current influences and future prospects seem to be intertwined with each other. He stresses how past internship experiences have marked milestones in his career development. Within his past placements, Paolo has kept the feeling of having had an important role that rewards him and made him feel a sense of self-efficacy to problematic tasks and situations that needed to be faced with rapidity. Referring to the experience in which he worked as a telephone operator carried out in a hospital switchboard, Paolo says:

> *"Helping and working with various people pleased me and what I enjoyed the most was to relate to people with a higher role than mine. I had to be able to handle these kinds of tasks' (He is proud of the fact that he has had the ability to know how to deal with people: an informal, dialectical and reassuring way to provide information to an elderly lady and a formal, accurate and concise way to give information to the doctors to pass on the call)."*

Besides admitting that sometimes he felt the necessity to be guided with more accuracy by his supervisors, and he said:

> *"They took what I was doing for granted, which meant I did not receive any kind of gratification, advice or constructive criticism to improve my abilities and performances."*

Paolo recognises that he had the opportunity to improve his skills and try new working environments (during college, he already carried out an internship in which he collaborated with kindergarten and primary school teachers). These experiences helped him to define his aspirations, attitudes and interests and he hopes that this will also happen when he will undertake the internship as tour operator (which is included in the training course that he is currently attending).

> *"This placement, as the previous ones, could give me the competencies for my future in addition to organising skills, keeping to the timetable and responsibility. It really makes you understand what a job is."*

Again, Paolo's disability has a central role in this system and this unpredictable condition shaped his professional and personal plan during the years; in fact, he often tries to understand the causes of his pathology, but even today he wonders:

> *"Why me? Not even the doctors have been able to give me a clear explanation."*

In Figure 8.4 this weight seems to be surmounted by an even casual bigger event: the birth of his son.

During the years in which he lived in the institute, Paolo developed an intimate relationship with a girl who was blind since birth. The news of the pregnancy caught both by surprise. Paolo was frightened, he did not have a job and, even worse, he was concerned that the child would have eyesight problems like its parents. He admits he has had thoughts of interrupting the pregnancy, as he was not courageous enough to go through with it. Though once he held the baby all his concerns vanished. Now, the only important thing was to think how to provide for the baby. He said:

> *My son changed my life and my lifestyle. He is above everything and my economic priorities change, too. I could have helped him if he would develop a visual impairment. I had no one to help me, but he would have me and his mother. Fortunately, (now the baby is almost 2 years old) we are quite sure that he will not develop any kind of a similar disease.*

The influences that have been just described, constitute for Paolo landmarks to establish future prospects. He would want to combine family life and employment,

> *Without giving up one or the other, even if it means more sacrifices,*

to guarantee to himself and his son a comfortable and dignified lifestyle and someday indulge in some whim:

> *I would not mind a dinner out or a trip, after all you do not live for working but you work for having a good life.*

5. Representing My System of Career Influences

The previous steps of the MSCI (Figures 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4) constitute the chance to reflect upon the potential influences that have acted (in a conscious or unconscious way) on the development of the client's career, the 'Representing My System of Career Influences' (Figure 8.5) gives the opportunity to create a graphic and custom representation of what the individual considers important, in a timing perspective, for the formulation of an action plan that enables him to put into place the actions aimed to the achievements of his future goals.

Through a guided reflection of previous systems (Figures 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4), retracing with the counsellor the narration of the stages that have marked the focal points of the development of his career, the co-construction of the meaning of what has emerged can be manifested through its restorative strength.

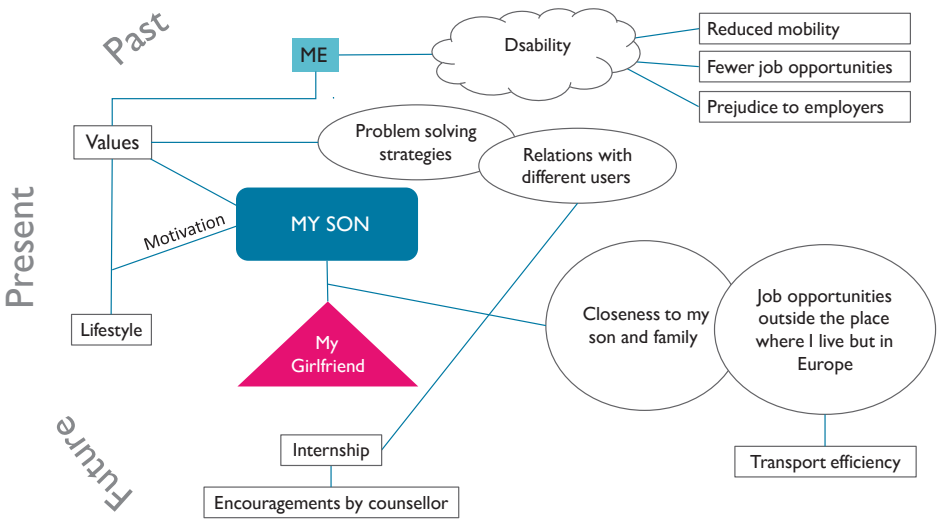
Figure 8.5 shows, in a clear way, the two casual events (mentioned by Paolo) which have strongly affected his career development. The first one is his disability and the other the unexpected birth of his son.

Paolo has gradually shifted his attention towards his strength rather than his weaknesses, stimulating his sense of self-efficacy (values and problem-solving strategies).

The disability is associated again to the difficulties, barriers, stereotypes, and prejudices that Paolo has had to face in various circumstances. And yet, all these elements are collocated in a part of the diagram related to the past, suggesting how – during the career counselling – Paolo has gradually shifted his attention towards his strength rather than his weaknesses, stimulating his sense of self-efficacy (values and problem-solving strategies). The diagram used for the present events has a central area that shows the massive influence of his son (which seems to combine the entire system and acts as a powerfully motivating element) and the influence of his current girlfriend. This representation probably will last in the future.

In this last custom diagram, Paolo places his expectations of a dignified lifestyle, the prediction to combine work and family one day and the willingness to get back to challenging new job opportunities by starting from the internship he will attend shortly thereafter, and the encouragements received by the counsellor.

Figure 8.5 Representing My System of Career Influences



Source: Paola Magnano, Rita Zarbo, Andrea Zammitti

By observing his custom system, Paolo was surprised at the presence of the abilities he was not aware of, or did not expect to have an impact either on the choices he had made or on the evolvement of his career. Moreover, he also had the opportunity to attribute a positive meaning to previous experiences. He says:

> *"I was amazed by the stimulus received during the career counselling because I had discovered I could do things that I felt curbed to do. I thought the problem-solving skills were related to the way I am, but I did not really think they could help me in my choices. Professionally, the internships I did allowed me to expose and prove myself the know-how."*

Paolo was surprised at the presence of the abilities he was not aware of, or did not expect to have an impact either on the choices he had made or on the evolvement of his career.

These last claims enclose the deep value that the reflection process has had on the career development and re-definition of the client. Paolo realises that he has gained the awareness he could have had of various opportunities for his future. To achieve these new intentions, in the very last phase of the counselling, he prepared a Curriculum Vitae and a proper action plan which contains the steps to take to achieve his professional objectives like the improvement of information skills, European PC Licence, take the internship as tour operator and apply to be part of the School Staff System.

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Reflections and conclusions

The career counselling path carried out has highlighted some of the characteristics that a good career counselling process should include, starting with the request for service, to avoid some of the critical issues that could affect its effectiveness.

In Paolo's case, he did not explicitly choose to undertake the career counselling path, but it was an opportunity offered as part of his training course. At first, Paolo was disoriented and confused at the start of the career counselling activities, as he had different expectations due to the fact that usually, career counselling interventions to focus on the work on individuals' own resources. This ambiguity and divergence of what was expected, and the subsequent sense of perplexity, created some difficulties to the counsellor in establishing an initial constructive contact between with the client. Building rapport at this preliminary stage of the career counselling process, is very important because allows space to clarify the methods and goals of the interventions and to proceed more smoothly and effectively in the co-construction of career meanings (e.g. Bedi, 2004; Taveira et al., 2017). Once having overcome the initial scepticism, the counsel-

ling can become very stimulating, as generally many important elements from the past experiences emerge, allowing to give order, dignity and meaning to them in view of the future career construction.

In addition, the needs dictated by the Coronavirus pandemic determined the disruption of the face-to-face mode typically used for career counselling activities in favour of the online mode. This, on the one hand, highlighted the problems associated with the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) in counselling (e.g. inadequate access to ICT or information, inadequate skills, competencies and integration (Kettunen & Sampson, 2018). But on the other hand, in the specific case of people with disability, this could be an advantage, saving them the travel (difficult due to the lack of public transportation and/or the impossibility of acquiring a driver's license because of the disability) necessary to reach the physical location where counselling would take place. Moreover, the online activity allowed easily to record the whole plan and to make the participant aware of his technological and digital skills, which encouraged the improvements of these abilities.

It also allowed the counsellor to have several 'virtual' contacts with significant others in Paolo's story, including his girlfriend, who was often with him when he participated to the meetings. The breaks during the meetings, in particular, became a moment of sharing between the counsellor, the client and the significant others, who represent a pivotal node in the support network.

Finally, another aspect that emerged from the counselling experience, as suggested in the paradigm of Life Design (Savickas et al., 2009), is the need to consider the function of the career counselling interventions over time.

Repeatedly, Paolo turned to the counsellor in the months following the counselling, to share updates on the implementation of his action plan, to make decisions on the adjustments (dictated by the evolution of the situation) to be made to it, to ask for information or more simply to express gratitude for the successes he had achieved. This underscores the need to conceive of guidance actions not as satellites in people's lives, limited to a single moment in their lives, but as lasting actions throughout the course of the individuals' career development.

The need to conceive of guidance actions not as satellites in people's lives, limited to a single moment in their lives, but as lasting actions throughout the course of the individuals' career development.

We report, as example, two emails received by the career counsellor sent by Paolo. Approximately six months later from the end of the career counselling activity:

> *"Dear R. (counsellor), sorry to bother you, but I have to tell you something important! I've found a job, it's a stable contract, I've moved from Sicily, but I have good opportunities to get back home and to my son in a few years. In the meantime, I'm not foreclosing myself from other alternatives (you were right, creating a range of possibilities helps not to get stuck in having to do something just because it's the only possible thing to do at that moment). I'm studying to get my European PC License [...] as soon as the school personnel lists open, I'll get in, could you update me on the timing?"*

Some months later:

> *"Dear R. I have proceeded to produce all the documents for inclusion in the ranking and am applying right now, know however that you have also influenced my girlfriend, she has joined me in the place where I live now, and she will also apply! Thanks for everything!"*

In summary, the reported case study is an example of how guidance interventions can be a useful instrument to restore clients' sense of agency with respect to the creation of future career planning. To this end, narrative methodologies prove to be particularly effective in supporting the co-construction together with the counsellor of career meanings also for people with vulnerability or disability. On the other hand, these methodologies imply a great deal of attention to the personalisation of career interventions and the specific needs of each individual and an active commitment on the part of both the client and the counsellor. Finally, the use of ICT in career guidance and counselling represents today a great opportunity to overcome the barriers of an in-presence setting but requires practitioners to gain competence and confidence in existing and emerging technologies in order to consider their usefulness and potential for clients, accepting that technologies could be a potentially valuable tool that can assist them in doing their work (Kettunen et al., 2013).

To this end, narrative methodologies prove to be particularly effective in supporting the co-construction together with the counsellor of career meanings also for people with vulnerability or disability.

This underlines the value of career counselling as a powerful tool both for supporting career choices and for social inclusion, but at the same time requires professionals to constantly update their career counselling practices.

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09

Fostering career management skills in refugee women in Italy

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Abstract

Refugee women constitute approximately 50% of the global refugee population and are exposed to many discriminations and risks in terms of both their gender and their complex condition as a migrant (UNCHR, n.d.). Among the many challenges, work represents a way to promote their emancipation and participation in new living contexts. Following a literature review, in this paper we discuss how career counsellors can help this target group to acquire career management skills and move towards career planning. A three-session interview is proposed as an effective strategy. Based on the systemic and narrative approach for assessment and intervention, developed by McMahon and collaborators (2006, 2018), a focused storytelling 'Today, Yesterday and Tomorrow interview' is designed and tested with a group of five refugee women. The results obtained from thematic analyses show the usefulness of these interviews in bringing out personal and contextual resources and strengths, boosting career management skills and planning the future steps. Implications for career counsellors are also discussed.

Keywords
refugee women, interview, career counselling and guidance

Introduction

Globally, of the millions of people who are forced to flee their country of origin due to war or serious violations of fundamental human rights, approximately 50% are represented by women and girls. As for Italy, Nigeria is currently the country from which the largest number of women are seeking asylum (47.1%), followed by Syria (8.1%) and Somalia (6%). Overall, the women amount to 7,756 persons, accounting for 19.5% of the refugee population (Siproimi, 2019). The growing number of women and girls is often correlated to the conditions of fragility and vulnerability and situations of victimisation linked to the phenomenon of exploitation and trafficking as well as to the episodes of violence suffered during the migratory journey (UNHCR, n.d.).

Globally, of the millions of people who are forced to flee their country of origin due to war or serious violations of fundamental human rights, approximately 50% are represented by women and girls.

Although gender is not explicitly mentioned in the definition of refugee pursuant in Article 1 of the Geneva Convention, for decades it has been a recognised principle that, to

As with other forms of persecution, violence already suffered in the past (although not necessary for the recognition of protection) is considered an indication of danger in prognostic assessment in the case of repatriation.

arrive at accurate decisions on applications for a refugee status, the definition should be interpreted considering possible gender aspects. In Italy, in line with the guidelines and practices already shared at the international level, the Legislative Decree no. 251/07 transposing the Qualification Directive (Direttiva 2004/83/CE) in the list of persecution acts argues that the refugee status can be recognised for people who demonstrate a well-founded fear of suffering; in the event of repatriation; acts of physical or mental violence, including sexual violence (paragraph 2, letter a) or acts specifically directed against a gender (paragraph 2, letter f). As with other forms of persecution, violence already suffered in the past (although not necessary for the recognition of protection) is considered an indication of danger in prognostic assessment in the case of repatriation.

The phenomenon of women seeking asylum as victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation is also ascribed to this perspective (Notratta, 2014). The experience of trafficking generally refers to serious forms of violence and exploitation, such as rape, reduction into sexual slavery, sexual prostitution and acts that represent forms of persecution related to gender. In addition to the persecutions already suffered, trafficking victims might also suffer retaliation or re-trafficking if they return to their country of origin, especially if the authorities of the country are not in a position or do not want to provide protection to the victims. In addition, we should consider all forms of female genital mutilation that violate a range of human rights of girls and women, emphasising non-discrimination, protection from physical and mental violence, the best possible health standards and, in the most serious cases, the right to life itself.

Therefore, it is not difficult to understand that women seeking international protection and refugees hosted by Italian national reception system as well as of other countries, present several psychological and psychopathological problems related to having suffered extreme trauma. Taking care of people with such vulnerabilities and specific needs involves greater complexity in terms of personal actions, such as performing a needs analysis, managing the emergence of discomfort, building a trust relationship and contextual actions, such as strengthening networking with local, both public and private, stakeholders, as well as external professionals and experts that can support the treatment, rehabilitation and the paths to inclusion.

Migrant women, more often than men, are forced to endure conditions of loneliness and segregation in the country of resettlement and are often obliged by the sociocultural norms to bear the family responsibilities.

All this is confirmed by the international literature, which highlights how migrant women, more often than men, are forced to endure conditions of loneliness and segregation in the country of resettlement and are often obliged by the sociocultural norms to bear the family responsibilities (Rashid & Gregory, 2014; Sin et al., 2010). Having to devote themselves to taking care of the family, raising children and managing household tasks

considerably reduces their possibility of being able to search and find satisfactory employment. Further difficulties regarding the path towards inclusion in the labour market can be related to poor language skills, non-recognition of qualifications obtained in the country of origin, prejudices and discrimination related to gender by employers.

To effectively support women seeking international protection and refugees in their path towards social and work inclusion, it is important to support them in identifying the resources and strengths on which to focus, as well as the requirements, including those related to family management, which should be included in the definition of career goals and projects to maximise their work–life balance. As highlighted by Abkhezr et al. (2017, 2018), adopting narrative methodologies allows career counsellors to deepen the issues related to career development and highlight significant aspects and factors useful for reconstructing women's work-life design in the host country. These methodologies are recognised as approaches that go beyond the simple collection of data and shift the focus to subjective experiences and contents related to life and career paths (Reid & West, 2016).

Adopting narrative methodologies allows career counsellors to deepen the issues related to career development and highlight significant aspects and factors useful for reconstructing women's work–life design in the host country.

The opportunity to talk about oneself with the support of a career counsellor allows women to become protagonists of their career and life projects; reconsider their personal and career lives; re-signify their own path; create connections among the present, past and future and increase their sense of agency (McMahon & Watson, 2012). The narrative, if articulated with respect to what happened in the past and extended to thoughts about the future, can allow career counsellors to facilitate the refugees in highlighting the elements to be considered when operating as the main actors in the implementation of their own inclusion projects. Finally, the analysis of the narratives carried out by the career counsellors can facilitate the counsellors themselves and the reception programme teams to identify at an early stage the weaknesses and frailties, alongside the resources, of the immigrants, which, if not understood, can limit the involvement and success of professional inclusion paths.

The main aim of this study is, therefore, to describe the development of the Today, Yesterday, and Tomorrow interview (TYTI), which, by adopting specific procedures in the analysis of narratives, addresses intra-individual, systemic and contextual factors analysing the past, present and future time zones as exemplified below. The tool allows the counsellors to explore the constellation of meanings of future career life of the groups of people and to better understand and reframe the individual story. The interview and the related coding schema have been mainly developed with a practical aim, even if they can potentially be used exclusively for future research purposes.

The Today, Yesterday, and Tomorrow interview (TYTI) allows the counsellors to explore the constellation of meanings of future career life of the groups of people and to better understand and reframe the individual story.

Developed for people mainly with a story of migration, this paper presents the first pilot study used to interview a group of women from sub-Saharan African countries. In particular, we show the effectiveness of the tool and methodological choices adopted for supporting the career counsellors in:

1. **Identifying and describing the resources** their clients can count on to define and progress in their work inclusion project. These resources, in line with recent theoretical approaches to career counselling and guidance, include positive attitudes, such as optimism, courage, hope (Marsay, 2020), adaptability components (Savickas, 2005), career management skills and values and beliefs about life and work that may play a role in defining work goals.

2. **Identifying both resources and barriers** characterising the social and environmental systems in which they are immersed and the ones they will have to face to progress in their career projects.

3. **Identifying their relevant strategies** by reviewing the repertoire of strategies they have already implemented to effectively face the difficulties during their travel to implement their life project.

This study is developed along three main steps that guide the analysis towards the final section: (a) describing the tool and its specific principles; (b) collecting a preliminary set of narratives to identify the emerging themes and codes and start developing a system of codes to be used while analysing narratives for career and guidance counselling and (c) describing three case studies to highlight the usefulness and potential of the interviews to analyse narratives collected for career and guidance counselling.

Narrative tools based on the system theory framework are particularly effective in analysing the influences that originate from their individual, social and social-environmental systems, in representing maps of professional influences and then in outlining an action plan.

TYTI: Its rationale and structure

Overview

As shown in the literature, narrative tools based on the system theory framework are particularly effective in analysing the influences that originate from their individual, social and social-environmental systems, in representing maps of professional influences and then in outlining an action plan (McMahon et al., 2005; McMahon & Patton, 2006). This approach is particularly relevant to understanding and analysing the professional development of refugees, since the migratory journey from the country

of origin to the host country is characterised by continuous, complex and demanding changes concerning both individual and socio-environmental systems (Magnano et al., 2021; McMahon & Patton, 2018). The need to migrate can arise within each of these systems and/or from the interactions between them, such as the ways in which the journey is developed and the opportunities for change that can be built once people arrive in the host country. Specific attention has been paid to developing the interview questions that can facilitate the emergence of narratives related to resources, such as career adaptability. As many studies have already pointed out (for more, see the British Journal of Counselling and Guidance 2021, special issue), the possibility for refugees to effectively manage the inclusion process largely depends on being able to review their life and professional history, given the obstacles faced and the skills acquired through overcoming them. Recognising their own strengths and resources allows counselee to count on them and move forward with the support of the counsellor in the process of reconstructing their life paths in the host country.

TYTI, the narrative tool used in this study, finds its theoretical background in the system theory framework and, more specifically, in the systems addressed and basic choices made in the interview 'My system of career influences' designed by McMahon and Patton (2006). As readers will see, what specifically characterises this new tool is a greater space for narratives as stories in the three temporal zones investigated and key levels addressed in the analysis of the narratives.

This new tool is a greater space for narratives as stories in the three temporal zones investigated.

Structure of TYTI

The interview is designed along with the clients' personal history. Some preliminary questions focus on personal data and reasons for career counselling.

The first part, '**My stories of today'**, focuses on the activities people are currently engaged in; the context within which the interviews are conducted; the persons with whom the clients relate in carrying out the described activities; the positive aspects, attitudes and characteristics that make those persons positive in their opinion; what suggestions they propose and what they think of their work goals. These questions are meant to support the clients in reflecting upon their personal strengths and resources and to point out what characterises the social system of reference at the time of the administration of the interview. The final questions aim at stimulating the respondents to bring out the competencies, skills and resources related to their current experience.

The second part, '**My stories of yesterday**', supports the clients in describing the work activities that characterise their past experiences. Here again, the questions are meant to support them in reflecting upon their personal strengths and resources and pointing out what characterises the social system in their past. A specific section consists of questions that stimulate the respondents to narrate their professional story and bring out competencies, skills and resources eventually related to the past work experience and to identify the strategies put in place to address the obstacles encountered in the country of origin along the migration path and to link them with the current experience.

The last part, '**My stories of tomorrow'**, investigates the future projects by talking about the future, asking to imagine it, deciding what they want for the future, listing events and changes they would like to see happening in the future as well as what should be done to make the first of these projects to happen, and so for the others mentioned, and what can motivate them in committing themselves to making these goals attainable. It explores both personal and professional aspects, as well as the level of agency they believe they can invest in to reach relevant goals.

Participants

In this study, TYTI was tested with five women. Two of them were applicants for international protection, and three were refugees involved in two different welcome and integration programmes developed for people in need. The interviewed women were recruited thanks to their collaboration with the social workers who met them in the welcome programme they were engaged in. The respondent's signed consent was obtained before beginning the interview. A brief description of the five women is presented below; of course, using pseudonyms.

Women were recruited thanks to their collaboration with the social workers who met them.

Faith, the first participant, aged 54, is living in a welcome housing for extremely marginalised people, held by a stakeholder of the Third Sector, in collaboration with the social services of Faith's town. This Nigerian woman was referred to 'Sportello Lavoro' (Job Service) by a social worker who oversaw her inclusion project and asked for a psychologist specialising in career counselling to support her in searching for a job.

Cynthia, similar to Faith, is a 34-year-old Nigerian woman living in a welcome apartment for people in need. She has three 10-, 6- and 3-year-old children. At the time of the interview, her husband was in jail. She was referred to a career counsellor because she

had just ended her intern period as a maid. As the social worker said, she needs someone who can help her to acquire some skills and knowledge of how to find a job by herself.

Joy comes from Nigeria and is living in a welcome apartment for extremely marginalised people in her hometown. She is 30 years old and is 5 months pregnant. She would like to get back to work when her child is able to go to kindergarten. Her social worker thinks that she needs to be helped by a career counsellor so that she can define her own career plan. Her husband is unemployed, and they have a three-year-old son.

Aminata is 34 years old, a single mother with a two and a half-year-old daughter. Aminata comes from Senegal and asks for international protection. She is living in a welcome apartment for foreign people in her hometown. She was sent to a career counsellor by her social worker because she asked for some help to find a job.

Vera comes from Cameroon and is 46 years old. She was received in a welcome apartment for foreign people. She did an internship in a social cooperative, where she used to recycle second-hand clothes, and now she is attending a course to become a home-helper. Vera has three children in Cameroon: they are 21, 18 and 10 years old. She was sent to a career counsellor by the manager of the welcome organisation, where she was given support in defining her career project.

Interview data collection and emerging themes

The interviews were conducted by the career counsellor as part of the career counselling and guidance programme proposed to women with a history of migration to support their inclusion. Each interview was conducted in a room dedicated to counselling at the location of the services that adhered to this specific programme. The TYTI was applied at the beginning of the career counselling and guidance programme to clarify strengths and weaknesses and to start reflecting on them from the beginning. The interview lasted three one-hour sessions. Three women were able to understand and speak Italian at a basic level sufficiently for conducting the interview, the other two had poorer language knowledge. Especially in these cases, the counsellor aided in verifying her understanding, summarising what the woman said and asking for clarification if necessary. English or French was used when the conversation in Italian was not progressing.

A thematic analysis was conducted following the methodology suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006).

All the interviews were recorded and transcribed. A thematic analysis was conducted following the methodology suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). After preliminary familiarisation with the collected data, a first coding of the relevant elements was performed. Subsequently, the codes were organised into possible themes and sub-themes, which were reviewed in phase four and labelled in phase five. The last phase involved drafting the result report, which was later used by the career counsellor in two main ways. At the end of the three sessions, a meeting was held with each woman to describe and discuss the interview process and results together with the aim of highlighting the salient elements in relation to their future career projects and proposing possible future career counselling and guidance goals. In this regard, the work done by the counsellor with three of the five participants is described below to offer a look at the entire process. Finally, a meeting was held with the project teams, aimed at describing the main results of the interviews and providing additional information for improving and resizing the inclusion project for each participant.

The report included ten identified themes, along with their sub-codes. They were organised along the time orientation perspectives of the past, present, and future, as summarised in Table 9.1. This schema was used by the career counsellor, who is also one of the authors of this paper, as a framework to organise the obtained information, reflect on the specificity of each narrative, develop a deep and empathetic understanding, as well as to find points of continuity and discontinuity in the time and contexts, thus helping each woman in reframing their story and finding new meanings and future possibilities. This last point will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

1 The Past: Systemic and personal, challenging and supporting determinants

1.1 Social and contextual causes that pushed people to migrate. The answers show that the interviewed women left their country because there were no job opportunities: *'So I moved to Italy, there were no job opportunities in Nigeria'* (Joy). *'I came to Italy. It was hard for me to live without my husband and with two children in Nigeria – school, food, everything…'* (Faith). Furthermore, the themes underline that women moved to run away from oppression: *'My husband is dead, and he left me with two children. After that, I had another child. I was alone with three children… I had lots of problems with his family, my husband's family'* (Vera).

1.2 Difficulties experienced and resources developed in the home country and during the migration journey. The difficulties reported during the interviews were generally accompanied by the description of the strategies, skills and emotional resources that the women developed, which helped them in facing the difficulties. Some difficulties are related to contextual limitations. For example, Aminata said, *'I have to help my family, my son is ill, he has a disability and in Senegal medical therapy is expensive. I must be strong; I must be strong for him'*. Others are related to traumatic experiences; for example, Vera talked about what happened to her during the migratory journey: *'... for instance, during the time I spent in the desert, I never thought I could have the strength to face something like this... as well as the sea traversal... too hard... too much, but I did it, before this I didn't know, I was able to face something like this'*.

1.3 Professional resources. The analysis highlighted that these women possess several job skills that resulted from the experiences gained in their country of origin. We can list several career resources, such as flexibility: *'In my country I worked as a shop assistant, I started to sell clothes and shoes, after that I left that work to start to sell fruit and vegetables. I have done a lot of different jobs, I didn't have much time, I have always been used to work'* (Vera) and creativity:*'... I used to be a musician, I studied music at home, and I was a poet (Faith); 'In my country I was trained in tourism, and I actually may continue'* (Vera). They also possess technical and soft skills useful for various jobs: *'I learned to cook all the Nigerian dishes'* (Cynthia); *'I learned how to behave with customers, to have patience and self-control, to manage difficulties with people who didn't want to pay for phone calls, to be able to sell cosmetic products'* (Joy).

Job skills that resulted from the experiences gained in their country of origin.

2 The Present: Systemic and personal, supporting and challenging conditions

2.1 Significant social systems in the host country, where individuals find help and support to pursue their goals, result in support for their inclusion. Faith spoke about people whom she meets at the church: *'I go to the church to pray and sing; there I find my friends whom I talk to and pray with. One of them helped me to search for jobs, she wrote for me my curriculum vitae and she suggested where to submit it'*. Cynthia, instead, stated, *'If I need something, the health workers help me. My social worker helps me, she tells me not to give up and to keep on searching for a job'*. Similarly, Vera states, *'A woman from my church's choir, where I go to sing, accompanied me to the place where she works to submit my curriculum vitae'*.

The interviewed women made explicit references to their difficulties in finding a job in Italy.

2.2 Individual and contextual job-related barriers in the host country. The interviewed women made explicit references to their difficulties in finding a job in Italy. Individual and contextual factors sometimes interact with each other, such as not having a car and, at the same time, not having public transportation that allows people to arrive at the workplace. Cynthia, for example, said, *'In Italy you can't find a job you enjoy; I like to cook but I am not a professional, I should take a course to learn how to cook Italian dishes. They called me to some restaurants, but they were too far away, and the bus did not go there, and I did not have a car'*.

2.3 Personal strengths refer to their own positive attitudes, sometimes developed in the country of origin but emerging as salient and fostered in the host country. About the economic difficulties that Joy is trying to overcome, she said, *'It was bad because at first, we had our own home, we were fine because we had a place where our sons could grow up. I just didn't know how to do it, but I stayed strong, and I went to ask for help from the social worker who put me and my sons in a municipality flat which I share with other two women and their sons'*.

2.4 Personal career vulnerabilities refer to both the lack of skills in addressing career-related problems, career decision-making and job-search opportunities. They also include limited knowledge about the language and laws related to workers' rights. Cynthia said, *'Sometimes I submit my curriculum vitae to the employment agency, but they never called me'*, and Faith stated, *'Once a week I go to the employment agency, I walk a lot. I wait for God to help me'*.

3. The Future: Personal resources and needs

3.1 Resources useful to define career goals, such as interests, efficacy beliefs and professional values. About her professional preferences, Aminata, for example, stated, *'I like to help sick people. Yes, I like it'*, and Cynthia stated, *'I love cooking... but I also like doing housework'*. During the interview about her efficacy beliefs, Joy stated, *'The job at the City Hotel gave me the chance to understand that I can be good at working with people with difficulties'*.

3.2 Needs related to work–life balance. One of the interviewed women, Joy, who has three underage sons, said, *'I would like to have a job that allows me to spend time with my sons, a job that lasts from the morning to 3pm'*.

3.3 Need to economically support the family in the country of origin. For example, Aminata, during the interview, reiterated several times her plan to help her mother, her son and all her relatives who live in conditions of poverty in Senegal: *'My plan consists of providing a house to my family because in the current house it rains from the roof and if it rains, my mother can't sleep'.*

3.4 Work-related future goals. Some participants listed their future goals in Italy: *'For my future I would like to get a job and have a house here for me and my daughter and move on'* (Aminata).

Table 9.1 Themes and sub-codes emerging in the three time zones

Themes	Sub-codes
The Past: systemic and personal, challenging and supporting determinants	
Social and contextual causes that pushed people to migrate	No job opportunities
	Run away from oppression
Difficulties experienced and resources developed in the home country and during the migration journey	Contextual limitations
	Traumatic experiences
Professional resources	Career resources, such as flexibility and creativity
	Technical and soft skills useful for various jobs
The Present: systemic and personal, supporting and challenging conditions	
Significant social systems in the host country	
Individual and contextual job-related barriers in the host country	
Personal strengths emerged as salient and fostered in the host country	
Personal career vulnerabilities	The lack of skills in addressing career-related problems
	Limited knowledge about language and laws related to workers' rights
The Future: personal resources and needs	
Resources useful to define career goals, such as interests, efficacy beliefs and professional values	
Needs related to work–life balance	
Need to economically support the family in the country of origin	
Work-related future goals	

Stories of continuity and discontinuity across time and contexts

The reconstruction of each story created by the counsellor and discussed with the woman during the career and guidance counselling session.

In this section, the three richest of the five narratives are described to show the reconstruction of each story created by the counsellor and discussed with the woman during the career and guidance counselling session. We focus here on the three narratives from diverse sub-Saharan African countries as examples of the variability of experiences and cultural contexts that underlie the inclusion process in the host country. A similar analysis was conducted for the other two women. Starting from the present and considering the three time zones, each story is described here to show the process of rereading and reshaping done by the counsellor taking into consideration the schema that emerged in the first phase of this paper (Table 1). The elaboration of the schema provides the counsellor with a framework for understanding and moving towards a re-meaning of the stories specifically concerning the future career path. The points of continuity and discontinuity in each story, as well as the resources and constraints, were offered as reconstruction moments and can be appreciated by the readers as possible pillars for building the future.

Case story 1: Joy (34 years old)

Current life

Ms Joy has been in Italy since 2010. When taken in charge, she described her current situation as 'bad'. In fact, she said that she does not have an economic income and has to rely on social services for the purchase of food and subsistence goods both for herself and her three minor children. Ms Joy does not work and she lives in a community shelter, more specifically, in an apartment, with other refugee women who are in extreme poverty.

Through the interview, Ms Joy elicited her powerful psychological resources and coping strategies, which are emotion control, perseverance in moving on and overcoming difficulties and reliance on religious faith in the hardest moments. As the counsellor highlights, these resources and strategies are also very useful in facing the barriers connected to the job search. Particularly interesting is the analysis of the themes linked to Ms Joy's social system, which is almost exclusively formed of people from her cultural and geographic context of origin who help the lady with managing her children and job

search. In her social support system, Ms Joy has a relevant and recognised role, as she is the 'head of catechists' in the church she attends. Owing to this role, she can implement the abilities she possesses in planning and managing the teaching and entertainment activities addressed to the children in her community. In addition, she can satisfy her professional values related to helping others.

History

Referring to the terrible experiences of the past that Ms Joy faced during the migration route, she said, 'During the journey to reach Italy, I had been shut in a detention centre in Libya. You could not go out and there was no food. I did not suffer any violence, but some people were beaten. While I was there, fortunately my husband was with me. I kept thinking 'When is all this going to finish?'. I held on and I did not give up. Now I am here. When the time to cross the sea came, they loaded us onto a boat. We were all huddled together, there was no water or food, and it was very cold at night.

We stayed on the boat for three days. When it looked like the engine had broken, we were spotted by a patrol boat and they rescued us. There are times during the day when I think back to that situation and thank God for saving me and getting me here. When I was on the boat, I prayed all the time, it was the only thing I could do'. Ms Joy's psychological resources also refer to the difficult situation she had to face: 'My husband was arrested. I was not working at the time because I had to look after my children, and I was left completely alone. I did not know what to do because overnight he did not come home, and I did not have any money. For a few days, some friends helped me, but when I no longer had any money to pay the rent, I had to leave the apartment. I was with a friend of mine for a while, but I could not stay with her anymore. It was feeling bad because my husband and I had our own house before; we were fine because we had our own place to raise the children. I did not really know what to do but I had to be strong, and I asked the social worker for help. She placed me and my children in an apartment that is owned by the municipality, and now I share it with two other women, both with children'.

Answering the questions connected to the story of 'yesterday', the acquired professional skills (i.e. technical skills related to sales, control skills and relational skills) emerge in relation to the working experiences she had in her country of origin and in Italy. Ms Joy said, 'I learned to relate to the people present in the structure (i.e. homeless shelter managed by a social cooperative situated in the city where the lady lives). Some of those

people have problems. Many guests of the structure are often drunk or have mental problems. When you relate to them, you must be careful because they can become very aggressive. I learned to be patient and have self-control. I think I am good at this work because I am very patient, and I know how to relate to people with difficulties. I learned to do so in my country when I had to get the customers to pay me for the phone calls in the shop that I talked to you before. You had to be patient and able to agree to get the money without the others getting angry. In the Albergo Cittadino (i.e. homeless shelter) there is a similar situation…'.

Future story

Find a job that allows her to balance work activities and childcare.

As for future projects, Ms Joy repeatedly expresses her need to find a job that allows her to balance work activities and childcare. As concerns her definition of 'career goals', she reflects, with the support of the career counsellor, on her work experiences with vulnerable people in the Italian context. These experiences allow her to think about different professional activities compared to the ones she had defined in her country of origin. Owing to these reflections, she can reconsider the possibility of searching for job opportunities based on her propension to help other people, her empathy skills and her relational ability.

Case story 2: Aminata (35 years old)

Current life

Ms Aminata defines her situation as 'delicate' because she does not have a job and needs money to send to her mother, who lives in Senegal and looks after her son, who has a major disability due to a car accident. The thoughts of not giving up, 'staying strong' and persevering 'in moving forward' despite the problems are some of the many strengths that the lady elicits during the interview.

The considerable efforts made by the lady to increase her language skills, which are quite poor, and her willingness to study and update information to find better job opportunities are important strengths to consider in carrying out her inclusion project.

Ms Aminata's some points of weakness emerge from the interview related to 'Today'. They refer to her knowledge level of the Italian language and her reference social system, which, even in her case, is composed almost exclusively of people from her country of origin, except for the professionals who work in the structure where she lives. Ms Aminata says that she does not trust the women from English-speaking African countries with whom she lives with. This is because she is not able to communicate efficiently, as she does not speak English, and they do not speak either French or Italian. In addition, they have different approaches and ways to educate their children. These women, however, help her manage her daughter whenever she has to attend the job interviews or career training courses.

Points of weakness emerge from the interview related to 'Today'.

History

Ms Aminata is a widow. During the interview, many obstacles emerged, which she had to face both in her country of origin and in Italy. As for the Italian context, she said that some people wanted to force her into prostitution to pay a debt when she contracted a fellow countryman to reach Europe. She managed to run away with courage and determination from the persecutors. This happened because she asked for help in her social network, which she started to build when she arrived in Italy. Speaking of her career, Ms Aminata, with the support of her career counsellor, reconsiders her work experiences, both in her country of origin and in Italy. In doing so, she considers several acquired abilities and competencies that she is not so conscious about. Ms Aminata especially recognises that she is a good listener and has empathy and relational abilities, also developed while taking care of her child with a disability. These experiences could be useful in carrying out work activities of assistance and satisfying the basic needs of the elderly or disabled people. Listening to her work experience stories, it is clear that Ms Aminata has insufficient knowledge about the legislation that protect the rights of workers. This condition puts her at risk of possible exploitation by employers.

Future story

Speaking of her future career, she stated that she needs to find a job that allows her to take care of her daughter. She is interested in working as a home assistant, a job with which she nourishes her interests and self-efficacy beliefs.

Find a job that allows her to take care of her daughter.



Case story 3: Vera (age 46)

Current life

Talking about her current situation, Mrs Vera described the job search activities in which she is engaged, highlighting the important contribution that derives from the support of local people known for attending the church, which is in the building where she lives. They provide her with information about the job opportunities and help her to make resumes. Answering the first questions of the interview, Mrs Vera talked about her strong motivation to work and get busy, as well as learn new things and attend professional training courses to increase her work knowledge and skills. In this regard, Vera said, 'I like to learn something I don't know how to do, and I like to do, try to know how to do new things'. At the first meeting, this lady was waiting to resume the participation in a home care course that was interrupted due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

History

Dramatic experiences in the country of origin and on her migratory journey to Europe.

During the interview, Mrs Vera remembered her dramatic experiences in the country of origin and on her migratory journey to Europe. After getting married very young under the conditions of poverty in which her family lived, she was involved in managing her husband's farm, selling fruit and vegetables to wholesalers, and thus developing important selling skills.

Following threats by family members who wanted to take over their land, her husband was killed, and she had to leave her home and property, finding herself with nothing and three young children to raise. Mrs Vera said that she did not give up and continued with various jobs, always in the context of the market of vegetables and rare leafy vegetables, which she herself collected in the nearby forest, particularly appreciated by the customers.

As the persecution against her family continued, the lady decided to flee to Europe, and a compatriot, with the promise of a safe and well-paid job in the United Arab Emirates, convinced her to leave with her. Once she crossed the borders of Cameroon, the lady was deprived of all money and documents and was taken to Libya against her will. She was sold as a slave to a family of very wealthy Libyan people. The lady said that she worked as a maid and cleaner for 18 months without receiving any salary and was

forced to work from the morning until midnight. Re-narrating her work–life path gave space to the career counsellor to support Mrs Vera's reflection on the important psychological resources developed when facing the very hard experiences she lived through without losing the hope of being able to escape and see her children again, with whom she no longer had contact since her departure from Cameroon, on persevering in trying to find a way out of the situation in which she found herself, and on the coping strategies linked to her faith in God and praying. All these resources supported her during both her time in Libya and the crossing of the Mediterranean Sea, an experience that she remembers with great terror. The second meeting with Mrs Vera indicated that to cope with the psychological suffering related to the experiences lived in Libya, she is meeting with a psychotherapist.

Future story

Mrs Vera revealed she would like to become a home assistant, even though she realises that it is a job where she could be employed for a short time. In the same time, she expressed her great interest in working in Italian factories where food production and storage procedures are carried out, although she had never been able to express it despite having already participated in career counselling. This is also linked to her plan to start a fruit and vegetable canning company in Cameroon if she will ever be able to return once the lawsuit against the people who persecuted her will end. The interest in creating a canning company emerges from having observed the high wastage of fruits and vegetables in her country in the absence of industries that can perform the transformation processes and the conservation of fresh food.

Conclusion

Through these interviews, the key elements were identified that helped the interviewed women become more aware of their career goals and define their career plans with the support of the career counsellor. This process confirmed the existence of a strict link between assessment and intervention, which qualifies this tool as useful not simply for collecting information but also for engaging respondents and activating a process of change (McMahon & Watson, 2012). In particular, the emerging themes facilitated the identification of suggestions for improving career management skills in three main directions. The first direction concerns the description of knowledge and skills that are prerequisites for a job placement, such as linguistic ones and those related to laws regu-

Improving career management skills in three main directions.

lating employment relationships. This, in turn, will allow them to understand the relevant information regarding how to take care for and defend themselves from potential exploitation by the employer. Ms Aminata's story can be considered prototypical with regards to this issue. Insofar, during the career guidance, the lack of understanding of the questions asked during the job interviews, as well as the possible risk of being involved in non-transparent work situations, as she is unaware of the workers' rights in Italy, have clearly emerged.

Further relevant aspects concerned the development of career management skills related to career goals and professional projects, as well as knowledge of how to search for work effectively. Through the interviews, the absence of strategies aimed at clearly identifying work activities and, above all, random strategies to search for job opportunities emerged (i.e. difficulty of knowing how to proceed, steps to undertake in searching for work and channels and tools to use). For instance, the temporal perspective adopted by Mrs Vera brought out interests and preferences in the professional field that she had never made explicit, and this may have an agentic value in the job search.

These 'knots' may influence the development of future goals and projects, both already addressed or under development in the host country.

A third element emerged from the analysis of the social systems within which the refugee women are immersed and those that bind them to their country of origin. These 'knots' may influence the development of future goals and projects, both already addressed or under development in the host country. The need for these women to build bonds with the people living in the host country and coming from countries other than their own, and the difficulty in communicating and interacting with them due to the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds emerged as barriers to overcome. Meanwhile, they highlighted the important support they receive in managing children and finding a housing solution once they are discharged from the programmes of hospitality. Above all, the social network concerns the involvement of locals, who can help to understand how things work from a social and working viewpoint and can provide information and contacts for searching professional opportunities. This opens a wide door for community involvement.

Finally, we reaffirm the usefulness of the narrative tool TYTI at the core of the project, which we started with African women. First, we value it as a tool that counsellors could apply to support women seeking international protection and refugees who are experiencing the change and work transitions in identifying their strengths and psychological resources. The opportunity to re-read their stories allowed them to reformulate their own career projects. They acquired new awareness about the skills and resources they have gained, often at a high price, during the challenges they faced in their country and

along the migratory journey. This formed a basis for them to start thinking about the new skills they could learn and the necessary steps required to move forward. In the future, we hope to extend its use to other people in need.

Second, this tool allows identifying the relevant social systems and the links people can count on to fulfil their project goals towards social and work inclusion. The analysis of these systems also covers relationships with family members still living in the country of origin, whose needs affect the formulation of their work goals. This gives career counsellors the opportunity to increase the level of agency and motivation of clients to undertake actions and persist in psychoeducational activities aimed at developing knowledge and competencies that are relevant to managing autonomous job searches and effectively participating in job interviews.

Third, TYTI effectively highlights the relevant aspects of fragility. The following are the vulnerabilities and potential weaknesses that emerged from the thematic analysis of the collected data. (1) The lack of knowledge and skills required in problem-solving and professional decision-making to manage periods of work transition that migrants and refugees are usually confronted with. (2) The limited ability to defend themselves against exploitation conditions at personal and work levels because of the lack of knowledge of the social, organisational and institutional rules that regulate employment and workers' rights in the host country. (3) The lack of social networks on which to lean for managing the difficulties tied to inclusion and within which to create contacts with native people, which are also relevant for employment opportunities. (4) Impact of traumatic experiences in the country of origin, along the migratory journey and again in the host country, which can negatively influence the motivation and commitment to proceed in the implementation of their inclusion projects. These aspects are particularly relevant for many national and international reports as well as for studies that have attempted to target aspects that should be considered by professionals and stakeholders working towards the work and social participation of people with a story of migration (Sgaramella et al., 2017).

The information collected using TYTI was useful not only for formulating projects aligned with the resources but also for identifying the fragilities during the assessment. It can support a decision on the type of action to be taken and the goal to pursue; psycho-educational interventions aimed at the development of skills useful to independently manage work transition; the process of seeking job opportunities, training courses aimed at increasing the basic knowledge and skills crucial for a successful social and cultural integration in the community of reference or psychotherapeutic paths

Identifying the fragilities during the assessment.

aimed at supporting the persons in overcoming psychological problems resulting from the traumas suffered during the migratory journey.

The reflexive skills of the career counsellor played a crucial role in recursively returning to the collected information.

Finally, the reflexive skills of the career counsellor played a crucial role in recursively returning to the collected information, both for approaching deeper nuances of meaning in the content and for the emotional aspects of both the clients and the counsellor. As suggested by the Gibbs cycle (Gibbs, 1988), this process facilitates a higher understanding of the counsellor's position as an agent of change in the clients' life as well as in the counsellor's growth as an effective practitioner.





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Section 3

Role of practitioners in shaping career management skills



10

The role of career coaching in building career management skills needed in a post-Covid world

Emma Harrison



Abstract

This chapter discusses career management skills and social justice and considers how a range of factors may shape attainment of career management skills. The importance of practitioners recognising both traditional and non-traditional ways of developing skills is highlighted. The Covid-19 pandemic and existing trends in labour markets are explored and attention is drawn to how the most vulnerable have been disproportionately affected. Issues of power and the need for career guidance interventions that redress this balance, are collaborative and promote emancipation from oppressive systems and structures are discussed. An argument is offered that states a new generation of career management skills are needed to enable access to decent work and ways of overcoming the disadvantage caused. An innovative approach to career guidance for a new world of work is needed and the case for career coaching is presented as a solution. Career coaching, with its collaborative and co-constructing ethos enables client empowerment, and potential minimisation or negation of the adverse effects of Covid-19, marginalisation and other contextual factors. Significantly, career coaching can raise critical consciousness and aid the fight for social justice.

Keywords
career coaching, social justice, Covid-19, labour markets

Introduction

An interesting challenge that one experiences when writing about the careers profession is the lack of consensus over the words and terms used to convey our activities. Is it career guidance or career counselling? Are we careers advisers or consultants? Are we educators, psychologists or sociologists? Attempts have been made to use terms that signify the breadth of our activities, for example we might call ourselves careers advisers who practice career education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) as is common in the UK. We might adopt the American name of career counsellors and provide lifelong guidance as is popular in countries in mainland Europe (Niles et al., 2019). The International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (2018) uses the term education and vocational guidance practitioners. The possibilities are seemingly endless. In this chapter I shall use the terms careers practice and careers guidance

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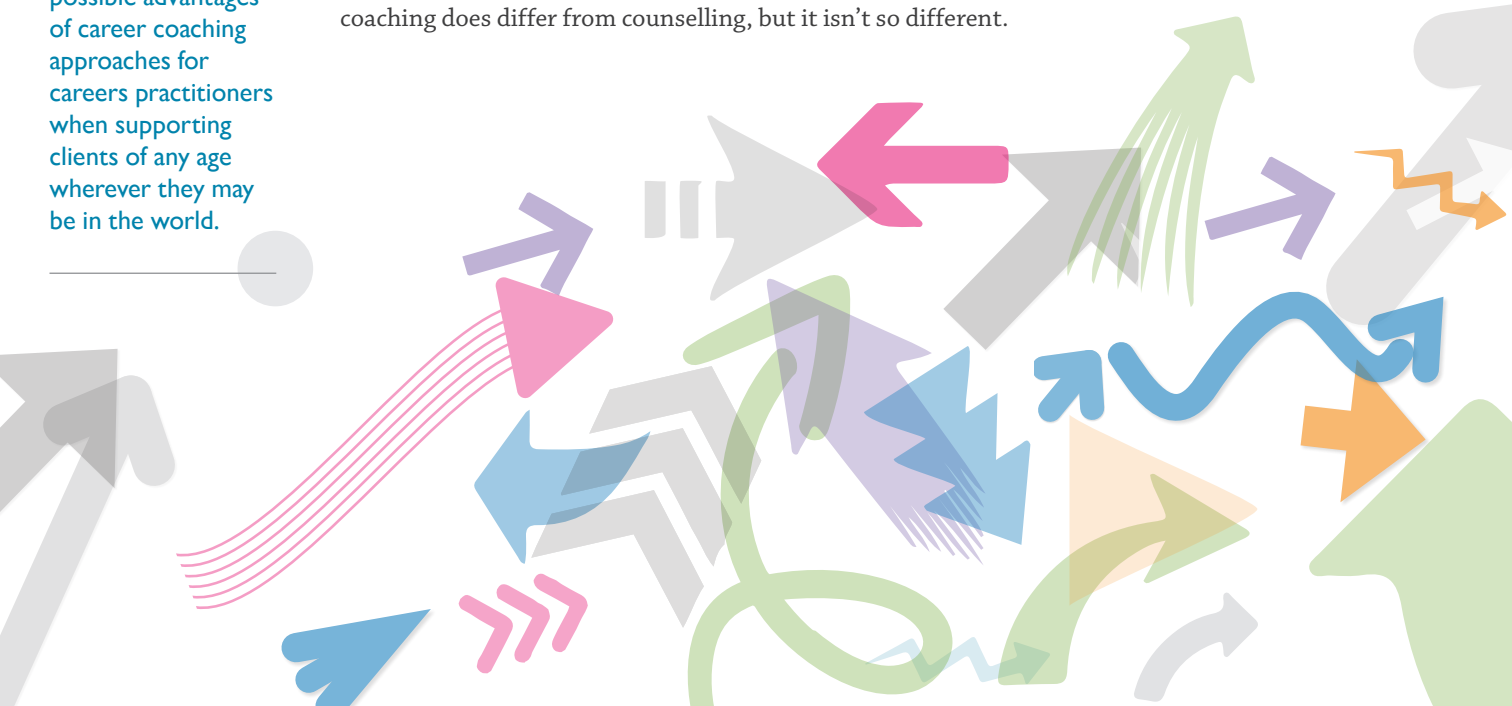
as umbrella terms that signify a wide range of careers interventions. The term careers practitioner(s) will be used to mean any careers professional.

Traditional career counselling approaches are not sufficient to respond to client needs caused by predicted labour market trends – such as globalisation and technological advancement – and unpredicted changes caused by the pandemic. Now, perhaps more urgently than ever before, our profession is in need of radical rethinking to ensure we can meet the needs of individuals and societies, to mitigate the damaging and lasting work-related effects caused by Covid-19, raise awareness of inequality and contribute to the creation of a more socially just world.

Traditional career counselling approaches are not sufficient to respond to client needs caused by predicted labour market trends – such as globalisation and technological advancement – and unpredicted changes caused by the pandemic.

A crucial component of lifelong guidance is to teach career management skills and this guidance may take the form of advising, counselling, mentoring, informing and signposting (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, 2015; Hooley, 2014). In this paper I will undertake a review of the literature to explore how career coaching may be an important, yet currently overlooked, activity that should form part of lifelong guidance. In this article I also aim to discuss the possible advantages of career coaching approaches for careers practitioners when supporting clients of any age wherever they may be in the world. I additionally posit that encouraging careers practitioners across the world to undertake training or qualifications in career coaching and using these methods with all clients will contribute to the fight for social justice in our field and prevent coaching from being an elitist intervention reserved for the middle classes and middle managers. Van Esbroeck and Athanasou (2008) ask 'is coaching so different from counselling? Or is coaching a matter of applying counselling methods?' (p. 5). This chapter argues that coaching does differ from counselling, but it isn't so different.

In this article I also aim to discuss the possible advantages of career coaching approaches for careers practitioners when supporting clients of any age wherever they may be in the world.



A brief history of careers practice and key definitions

Within our profession, it is agreed that as societies developed from agricultural to the information age thus the primary function of our practice also evolved. Below is a time-line demonstrating these changes or sequentially occurring 'waves':

Table 10.1 Evolution of careers practice

Dates	Wave	Characteristics
1850–1909	Mentoring	Occupational inheritance where children learned the craft of their parents and/or elders.
1910–1949	Vocational guidance	Aligned to the trait and factor/matching approaches of Parsons (1909) and Holland (1959), vocational guidance involved assisting clients to understand oneself, understand jobs and select a good 'fit'.
1950–1999	Careers education/development	Career education is defined as learning the skills needed to cope with transitions (into the workplace, between jobs etc.) in a largely stable labour market.
2000–today	Career counselling	Career counselling offered a new approach in career guidance that is a process-driven, subjective and emotional domain. Career counselling can be understood through constructivist, narrative and life design paradigms. The three aspects are interrelated with the core beliefs that through the telling and retelling of stories, individuals can construct knowledge and meaning about their career story within the context of their life stories.

Notes. *Adapted from Busacca & Rehfuss, 2017; Hartung, 2019; Savickas, 2019; Savickas & Savickas, 2019*

The challenge of defining our practice is more pertinent in recent years with a plethora of offerings coinciding with the fourth 'wave' of career counselling beginning in the early 2000's. One might argue that it is during this period that our profession has experienced rapid growth and development alongside growing complexities associated with labour markets and careers. Table 10.2 below offers a list of definitions that is not exhaustive but highlights some of the discrepancies in our profession:

Table 10.2 Defining careers practice

Author	Definition
Peavy, 2004, p. 20	Constructivist career counselling involves 'negotiation and co-participation'.
Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe (NICE)	NICE previously used the term career guidance and counselling professionals (Schiersmann et al., 2012), however more recently has adopted the term career practitioners (Schiersmann et al., 2016) in a bid for inclusive terminology in Euro-centric careers practice. NICE defines six roles that are essential components of career guidance and counselling, these are: career educator; career information and assessment expert; career counsellor; programme and service manager; social systems intervener and developer; and career guidance and counselling professional (Schiersmann et al., 2012, pp. 44–45). In their discussion of the NICE professional roles, Schiersmann et al. (2012) articulate the functions of a career counsellor as helping clients to make meaning and understand their situation, find solutions and make career-related decisions. The NICE role of career educator involves supporting clients to develop career management skills and to increase clients' awareness of their own strengths.
Watson, 2016	The field of careers guidance is dominated by counselling and assessment.
McMahon et al., 2002, cited in Patton and McMahon, 2016	Constructivist career counselling is 'less directive' however, career counsellors are not purely constructivist in their practice and that they likely utilise both logical positivist and constructivist approaches. Logical positivist career counselling views the counsellor as knowing best, imparting expert knowledge and information, outcome focused and values facts over feelings.
Gati et al., 2019	Career counsellors are 'decision advisers' who help clients make 'optimal and feasible' choices.
Hartung, 2019	Career counselling helps clients to make meaning in their lives holistically and understand how work may be used in the pursuit of a more authentic self.

NICE defines six roles that are essential components of career guidance and counselling, these are: career educator; career information and assessment expert; career counsellor; programme and service manager; social systems intervener and developer; and career guidance and counselling professional.

Niles et al., 2019, p. 531	Career counselling is a formal relationship either one-to-one or in a group setting, that supports clients with career concerns such as transitions and career decision-making and help clients to cope more effectively with their career challenges.
Savickas and Savickas, 2019	Career counselling is 'empowering individuals to make educational and vocational choices that match their abilities and interests to occupational requirements and rewards' (p. 26). Career counselling refers to the wide range of interventions within careers practice.
Brown and Lent, 2020, pp. 12–14	'Services offered to resolve or prevent problems with work behaviour' rather than as one form of intervention under the umbrella term of career guidance. The functions of career counselling can broadly be attributed to three categories. These are: help in making and implementing career-related decisions; help in adjusting to work and managing one's career; and help in negotiating career transitions and work/non-work life roles.
McMahon and Watson, 2020	Career counselling is one form of practice in career guidance.

Whilst some may call for standardisation of terminology in our profession (Niles et al., 2019, p. 531) such an agreement is unlikely for a number of reasons. Instead, our goal should be to ensure practices that are appropriate for diverse clients and practitioners worldwide, and not necessarily for universality of practice. Career guidance needs differ by country and are shaped by economic and political factors. As Sultana (2017) comments, such requirements even shape the definition of career guidance; regions that prioritise neoliberal agendas tend to define career guidance with emphasis on individual agency and choice, whereas a definition that seeks emancipation from oppressive systems will focus on contextual factors which shape our lives. For the purpose of this article, the definition provided by McMahon and Watson (2020) is shared by the current author.

Our goal should be to ensure practices that are appropriate for diverse clients and practitioners worldwide, and not necessarily for universality of practice. Career guidance needs differ by country and are shaped by economic and political factors.

Career guidance in a post-Covid world

The importance of career management skills is well documented, and the benefits of competence include social equity and inclusion, as well as educational and economic outcomes (Hooley, 2014; Sultana, 2012). Arguably the most significant advantage of career management skills is experienced by the individual who is better able to manage the challenges of their career and career-related decisions.

The importance of career management skills is well documented, and the benefits of competence include social equity and inclusion, as well as educational and economic outcomes.

Career management skills are defined as a wide range of 'competences which provide structured ways for individuals and groups to gather, analyse, synthesise and organise self, educational and occupational information, as well as the skills to make and implement decisions and transitions' (Sultana, 2012, p. 229). Career management skills comprise a toolkit that individuals develop by building on existing strengths and understanding the attributes, attitudes and knowledge needed to self-manage an unpredictable, uncertain and sometimes insecure career or pattern of work that is subject to continual changes, thus adaptability and resilience are synonymous (Bridgstock, 2009; Hooley et al., 2013).

Sultana (2012) notes that we must approach career management skills, and our role in facilitating clients' development of them, critically to ensure that greater emphasis is not placed on individuals to manage their careers through the attainment of an ever-growing list of skills and competences and that any failure to secure decent work or successfully navigate a career is not seen as a personal failing. One way in which we can do this is by ensuring we are aware of the contextual factors which may influence clients' ability to access decent work and achieve career aspirations. Careers practitioners must be able to identify a wide range of career management skills that clients may have developed through experiences and methods that differ from traditional approaches or those experienced and/or favoured by the careers practitioner. Understanding is needed of the ways in which factors such as age, gender, socio-economic status, education, health, religion, etc. may shape the attainment of career management skills. The role of the careers practitioner in career management skills development of clients should be to enable them to identify, understand and make meaning from their current knowledge and past and present experiences (Sultana, 2012). This process will enable the identification of skills to which the individual already possesses a foundation (and likely values) and can be further built upon. As Sultana (2012) states, some career management skills should be 'caught' and not 'taught' (p. 234) which highlights the need for careers practitioners to be skilled in this process.

Careers practitioners must be able to identify a wide range of career management skills that clients may have developed through experiences and methods that differ from traditional approaches or those experienced and/or favoured by the careers practitioner.

The fourth industrial revolution has created rapid change in labour markets and working conditions. Globalisation and expansion into new markets, increased outsourcing abroad, digitalisation and technological advancements including artificial intelligence (AI), automation, machine learning and codification as well as other developments in the Information Age has changed the landscape of work across the globe (Delautre et al., 2021). These advancements have led to a decrease in middle-skilled and middle-income jobs and a rise in low-skilled, low-paid and high-skilled, high-paid jobs. This 'hollowing out' or job polarisation also requires workers to be more flexible and able to respond to further change (McIntosh, 2013).

Across the globe, workers are increasingly unable to access decent work, and through necessity they engage in informal (in 2016, 61% of workers worldwide were in informal employment), precarious and low-paid work, and experience poor working conditions (International Labour Organization, 2020a). In-work poverty continues to be a serious concern many are experiencing; worldwide in 2019, one in five workers did not earn enough to lift themselves out of poverty. Young people and women are more likely to experience barriers to decent work; in the European Union 43.5% of young workers were in temporary employment in 2018. Women are more likely to work part-time, and considerably more likely to work in lower paid industries and job roles. In 2015, across the OECD countries, 84% of employed women were working in the services sector (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017).

Indeed, prior to Covid-19 it was acknowledged that a significant challenge facing the careers profession and policy-makers is how we can support people to transition from sectors where jobs are in decline to new roles in emergent industries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019). The pandemic has heightened inequalities and weaknesses in labour markets. Low-wage workers, those in insecure and informal employment, women and young people have been disproportionately affected and more likely to lose their job (International Labour Organization, 2020b, 2021). Across OECD countries 10 million more people are unemployed than prior to the pandemic (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021). Sectors with high numbers of people in insecure employment have been most affected by Covid; the food and services sector, retail and manufacturing have experienced huge job losses (International Labour Organization, 2021). Growth sectors such as information and communication, finance and insurance have continued to experience growth. In 2020, 8.8% of global working hours were lost, this is equivalent to 255 million full-time jobs.

Indeed, prior to Covid-19 it was acknowledged that a significant challenge facing the careers profession and policy-makers is how we can support people to transition from sectors where jobs are in decline to new roles in emergent industries.

The impact of Covid-19 combined with existing labour market trends such as automation and technological advancement has resulted in a greater and urgent need for lifelong learning (International Labour Organization, 2020b) and guidance. Responsiveness to recent changes in the labour market (both predictable and unpredictable) is vital and a new generation of career management skills and systems of lifelong learning are needed and must be a human-centred approach. Individuals, especially young people and women as well as others severely and negatively impacted by the pandemic, must be supported to access decent work and overcome the disadvantage caused (International Labour Organization, 2021). Segovia and Chaca (2021) argue that an innovative approach to helping young people develop career management skills and the digital skills needed for the future of work is critical. They go on to highlight the importance of equipping young people with the skills for self-learning and preparedness for lifelong

Responsiveness to recent changes in the labour market (both predictable and unpredictable) is vital and a new generation of career management skills and systems of lifelong learning are needed and must be a human-centred approach.

Careers practitioners and guidance services must be able to respond to the complex and different needs of the labour market actors of today and the future; these are individuals who will experience a greater number of job and career changes in technologically advanced and digitalised workplaces, whilst attempting to overcome obstacles caused by the pandemic.

learning to ensure sustained access to decent work. Careers practitioners and guidance services must be able to respond to the complex and different needs of the labour market actors of today and the future; these are individuals who will experience a greater number of job and career changes in technologically advanced and digitalised workplaces, whilst attempting to overcome obstacles caused by the pandemic.

Avila (2021) advocates for systems of career guidance that are multi-levelled and targeted depending on clients' closeness to the labour market. This offering might include a basic level of support that involves career guidance activities such as assisting clients in understanding and making sense of their current situation and opportunities, action planning, and support and advice on job searching. At the next level, there is a more intensive support for complex issues and this could involve career counselling, career coaching, skills development as well as signposting to other services as might be appropriate. Additionally, a recent international survey researching how the career guidance profession is responding to the pandemic supports demand for individualised solutions such as 'career counselling, coaching, mentoring and psycho-social support' (CEDEFOP et al., 2020, p. 17). Individuals worldwide will traverse new and unfamiliar terrain as they heal from the challenges of the pandemic; there will be a significant requirement for career adaptability and responsiveness to unplanned career changes (Krumboltz, 2009).

At the heart of our profession is the quest for social justice and we therefore are compelled to empower clients to overcome experiences of marginalisation and economic constraints.

At the heart of our profession is the quest for social justice and we therefore are compelled to empower clients to overcome experiences of marginalisation and economic constraints. The Psychology of Working framework (Blustein et al., 2008) positions itself as an inclusive career theory that considers marginalised and oppressed individuals and groups without (much) career volition and the impact of the continuous change of the economic landscape on workers. It seeks to inform career practitioners of experiences of work and access to work that are representative of diverse global citizens and not only the predominantly white, middle-class, educated male, European/North American/Australian research subjects (and often researchers) who have informed preceding career theories. Blustein et al. (2008) highlight four objectives careers practitioners should realise to ensure an inclusive practice: fostering empowerment, fostering critical consciousness, promoting clients' skill-building for the changing workforce, and providing scaffolding in the support of volition. Blustein's (2006) definition of empowerment is particularly pertinent to this article as he states it is 'the development of goal-directed behaviours that also lead to mastery within relevant domains' (p. 278). Empowerment can provide clients with the skills, confidence and resources to identify and realise their career or work-related aspirations (Richardson, 2000, cited in Blustein et al., 2008). The fourth objective – to provide scaffolding in the support of volition – is

also significant to the current discussion as Blustein et al. (2008) state that 'scaffolding refers to the use of multiple sources of intervention' (p. 301).

The case for career coaching

Coaching can be defined as 'the art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another' (Downey, 2003, p. 21). A review of the literature demonstrates that coaching enhances goal attainment, resilience, wellbeing, and helps clients develop self-insight (Grant et al., 2009; Grant et al., 2010; Passmore & Theeboom, 2016). A meta-analysis that reviewed 18 research papers on the topic of coaching found that coaching has a positive effect on skills, wellbeing and resilience (Theeboom et al., 2014).

Career coaching can be understood as enhancing self-development and often involves the setting and achievement of goals (Reid, 2016, p. 16). Yates (2014) defines career coaching as a process that is 'grounded in evidence-based coaching approaches', incorporates theories and is more likely than other forms of career guidance to use tools such as drawing, writing, collage, role play, visualisation, etc. (p. 2). Career coaching also has a strong positive and solutions-focused objective and is commonly associated with solutions-focused coaching (Reid, 2016). There is considerable overlap in meaning and function between career coaching and counselling (Brown & Lent, 2020; Reid, 2016; Yates, 2014), however coaching is dependent on collaboration and is a relationship-based learning and development process (Passmore & Lai, 2019; Reid, 2016). Career coaches facilitate, they do not guide, direct or instruct; they support clients to develop greater insight and move closer to their goals (Passmore & Lai, 2019). A common objective for career coaching is positive behavioural change (Passmore & Lai, 2019; Reid, 2017) and many tools, techniques and approaches used have theoretical foundations in psychotherapy. An example of this is cognitive behavioural coaching which has been adapted from cognitive behavioural therapy and aims to help clients identify erroneous thinking and self-limiting beliefs which may impact their work or career. As Yates (2014) notes, it is used to enable clients to identify their responses – thoughts, feelings, behaviours – to events and modify them to achieve a more positive outlook and adapt future behaviour. Career coaching may be particularly useful when working with the clients to recognise and further develop their skills and strengths (Heppner & Heppner, 2014; Schultheiss, 2020).

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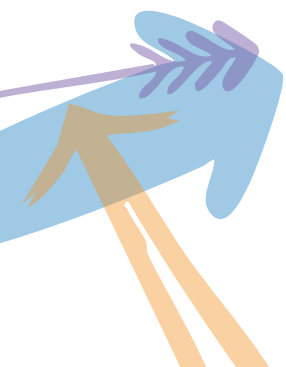
It is imperative that our profession adapts and rises to meet the challenges ahead of us. Research conducted before Covid-19 found the guidance needs of individuals have not been met (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, 2015, p. 14) and that we must

deconstruct the existing career counselling approaches and reconstruct them to reflect the realities of our clients (Watson, 2016, p. 47). There is a growing demand for careers interventions that foster collaborative relationships between the clients and practitioners, co-construct meaning and understanding, and less expert-led guidance (International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance, 2018; McMahon et al., 2014).

Careers practitioners should utilise approaches that develop clients' social support, critical consciousness and proactive personality as these attributes may minimise or negate the adverse impacts of such marginalisation and other contextual factors.

Careers practitioners should utilise approaches that develop clients' social support, critical consciousness and proactive personality as these attributes may minimise or negate the adverse impacts of such marginalisation and other contextual factors, an approach that according to Autin and Duffy (2019) is supported by research findings. They go on to advocate for careers practitioners to embrace cross-disciplinary collaborations with the aim of promoting client wellbeing. Gati et al. (2019, p. 135) promote the need for career practitioners to be flexible and apply a range of interventions, including coaching, to best respond to client needs. Niles et al. (2019) highlight the importance of continuously updated and developed training and qualifications for careers guidance practitioners. This is especially important in light of the recent and on-going rapid pace of change in labour markets and the world of work exacerbated by the pandemic.

The National Career Development Association (2020), in 'Minimum competencies for multicultural career counselling and development', explicitly lists the competency of 'coaching, consultation and improvement performance' in which it states the practitioner engages in coaching and is appropriately trained to do so. In their comparison of competence frameworks against the NICE core competences, Katsarov et al. (2012) identified the category of competences regarding the performance of career guidance and counselling processes in direct client interaction as being common across the different frameworks. They split this competence into three main subcategories: career education, career information and assessment, and career counselling. In the third subcategory of career counselling, Dauwalder (2011, cited in Katsarov et al., 2012) explicitly lists competencies of career counselling and career coaching, stating that counselling includes clarifying the client's needs and defining the objectives, establishing and framework and agreeing on the intervention, delivering the intervention and continuously evaluating the service. Career coaching is combined with guidance and is described as summarising the client's situation, action planning, guiding and supporting, and evaluating progress against the action plan.



Schiersmann et al. (2012) also acknowledge the growing demands for careers practitioners to have greater awareness of clients' contexts and the increased need for approaches that centre on personal development and self-management, such as career

coaching. Career counselling has typically been a practice that is popular in Western and developed countries and with individuals who are white and middle-class (Arulmani, 2014; Watson, 2016), thus there exists a disconnect between those most at risk and with the greatest need in the labour market and the provision of career counselling (McMahon & Watson, 2020). These inequalities in the labour market have been amplified by Covid-19. Though approaches and techniques vary depending on geopolitical factors, policy, organisation and even by individuals, career counselling tends not to discuss issues of power such as how power relates to work and issues of oppression, liberation and wellbeing, and also the power dynamic between a counsellor and a client. The counsellor as an expert places clients as passive recipients of ideas or information, rather than co-constructors in the relationship (Prilleltensky & Stead, 2012). Discussing gender inequality in work and career (e.g., discrimination, gendered work roles and status, harassment, stereotypes, wage gaps), Schultheiss (2020) conducted a review of the literature on the topic and states that there is a lack of awareness and understanding of these factors. She calls for careers practitioners to discuss issues of inequality relating to gender and intersections of social identity and to work with the clients to enable them to form strategies to challenge these conditions. In addition to identifying and developing the skills, career coaching sessions can also focus on contextual and oppressive factors (Fabian & Morris, 2020).

The International Labor Organization (2020b) argues that the impact of Covid-19 on labour markets and economies is compelling governments to prioritise skills development and lifelong learning. Avila (2021) highlights recent developments and calls for further change in careers practice and for a service that prioritises empowerment of individuals, and which move away from traditional action planning towards interventions that are co-constructed, enable the overcoming of barriers and the development of adaptability and resilience to manage lifelong career and learning. CEDEFOP and a range of international organisations (2020) state that the Covid-19 recovery period is an opportune time for career guidance reform offering governments an opportunity to 'rethink career guidance provision from a systemic perspective' and that this could involve guidance that is more collaborative and 'is underpinned by effective strategies for career management skills development' (p. 17). Calls for such reform existed prior to the pandemic, with the objective of creating career guidance systems that contribute to social justice (Hooley et al., 2017; McMahon & Watson, 2020); with the heightened and accelerated inequities caused by Covid-19 the case for reformation is now urgent. CEDEFOP et al. (2020) also highlight the essential role careers guidance plays in supporting clients to recognise and build career management skills such as adaptability and resilience, which will be vital for individuals as we navigate a post-Covid world.

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Our profession will experience a new demand to support clients with more intense and complex familiar challenges as well as novel dilemmas as a consequence of Covid-19. There is a need for careers practitioners to reskill and upskill (CEDEFOP et al., 2020) to ensure a service that is empowering and useful to clients, challenges systemic injustice and benefits labour market functioning and societies. Increased qualification and training opportunities in career coaching would be advantageous in enabling our profession to rise to the challenge we face.

Whilst it may not be possible for our profession to agree on common terminology, a valuable action we can take is to call for definitions of career guidance that are emancipatory and aid social justice. Sultana (2017) proposes the following:

> *"Career guidance entails a dialogic, mutually pedagogical relationship, that serves to conscientise individuals and groups about the social forces that define the world of work and that affect the range of opportunities available to them, while at the same time equipping them with the political skills, networks, community resources, values, and dispositions to struggle for social and work arrangements that are equitable and just, where one's development and self-fulfilment advances the development and fulfilment of others. (p. 11)"*

The foundations of coaching are what may make it most suitable for careers practice in a post-Covid world; its positive psychology, solutions-focused and collaborative brand may encourage engagement with the most disadvantaged and harder to reach. Interventions that focus on deficits and problems with individuals who likely already feel marginalised will not be helpful, but an approach that encourages identification and growth of existing skills could have lasting positive effects. Solutions-focused coaching that does not dwell in past problems but instead empowers individuals to find the ways forward will likely build self-efficacy beliefs. Collaborative coach-coachee relationships will enable clients to feel empowered and a greater sense of agency (Mumby, 2020). Coaching can lead to powerful critical consciousness, for example in helping clients to connect personal difficulties to systemic issues of oppression and discrimination (Macadam, quoted in Mumby, 2020). Collins (also quoted in Mumby, 2020) describes an example of this in action: in group coaching individuals are encouraged to uncover and rewrite untrue limiting assumptions, which may take the form of internalised homophobia, racism, misogyny etc., discuss and reflect on them.

Career coaching also has a role to play in the fight for social justice. The individualisation caused by neoliberal societies results in oppressive ideologies being internalised as socially prescribed roles that influence peoples' identities. Shoukry (2016) states that 'this is where coaching becomes critically relevant for social change' (p. 178). Social change begins with individual empowerment, recognising and reframing dysfunctional beliefs, and gaining authenticity. He contrasted pedagogical traditions to position coaching for social change, and this can be adapted to careers practice. The humanistic paradigm that we associate with constructivist career counselling positions clients as having a self-knowing consciousness, whereas a critical paradigm for social change states that individuals are social actors with socially constructed consciousness. Within constructivist career counselling, knowledge is subjective and innate, success largely depends on individualism and the end goal is usually realisation of authentic self. Career coaching (or wider practice) within a critical paradigm views knowledge as socially constructed, success depends on ideology critique and social action, and the objective is social change and liberation from oppression. Shoukry proposes the Coaching for Emancipation framework, which consists of four stages: empowering dialogue: supporting the client to develop self-efficacy, agency and meaning-making; retelling narratives: through the use of story-telling clients re-author their lives, naming oppression in their lived experience and authoring a narrative of liberation; renewing beliefs: clients understand and challenge the structures of their beliefs; and fighting back: engaging in reflective actions of resistance and change.

Career coaching also has a role to play in the fight for social justice.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the challenges facing the careers guidance profession already highlighted before the Covid-19 pandemic, including the difficulties in defining our practice, growing labour market inequality, and too much focus on educational transitions and not enough on identifying and building career management skills. It also discussed the urgent need for our profession to adapt and for practitioners to upskill in the wake of the rapid changes and growing complexities and inequities caused by Covid-19 to ensure the best possible outcomes for clients. The importance of careers practitioners understanding contextual factors that impact and influence clients' careers and job patterns was discussed, as was the need for professionals to identify career management skills that may have been developed via non-traditional methods. Of particular note to this article is the role of career guidance in the pursuit of social justice. Issues of power and the need for career guidance interventions that redress this balance, are collaborative and promote emancipation from oppressive systems and structures were also discussed. Helping relationships where knowledge and meaning are co-construct-

This chapter has explored the challenges facing the careers guidance profession already highlighted before the Covid-19 pandemic, including the difficulties in defining our practice, growing labour market inequality, and too much focus on educational transitions and not enough on identifying and building career management skills.

ed and contextual and oppressive factors can be acknowledged and explored are paramount to the argument presented.

The primary argument of this chapter is that we must continue to evolve our professional practice and expand the toolkits we utilise in career guidance to incorporate career coaching approaches. Career coaching offers an opportunity for practitioners to contribute to the quest for social justice by utilising an approach that facilitates the identification, learning and development of career management skills and is a relationship that is collaborative rather than directive and places the client as the expert in their own life.

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We work with diverse clients who are navigating unique challenges which will only become more complex as we transition into the post-Covid era. As our clients' needs have grown and changed it is to be expected that careers practitioners need an ever-increasing robust toolkit of approaches and techniques upon which we can rely and expertly utilise in response to clients' presenting concerns. Careers practitioners must adapt to meet the needs of clients and enable them to develop the skills needed to navigate the challenges they face (Savickas & Savickas, 2019). It is this process of reimagining and reinventing our approaches, tools and techniques that ensures our services remain useful.

This chapter has contributed to the discourse on the urgency of rethinking our practice to ensure we can meet the challenges ahead caused by expected and unexpected changes to the world of work and labour markets. Inequality, marginalisation and discrimination within the labour markets will be significantly increased as a consequence of Covid-19, and the clients who are already hard to engage will be at risk of not recovering in their careers without radical change in our profession. Vital objectives of inclusive careers practice are fostering empowerment, fostering critical consciousness, promoting clients' skill-building for the changing workforce, and providing scaffolding in the support of volition (Blustein et al., 2008), and this article has discussed the ways in which career coaching has the potential to deliver some of these more effectively than other interventions. Whilst career coaching may provide benefits to individuals and wider societies, for effective reform the governments must enact significant policy changes that reduce or eliminate individualisation. These policies must explicitly aim to reduce inequalities and improve access to decent work for all. Never before has there been a greater need for socially just careers guidance.

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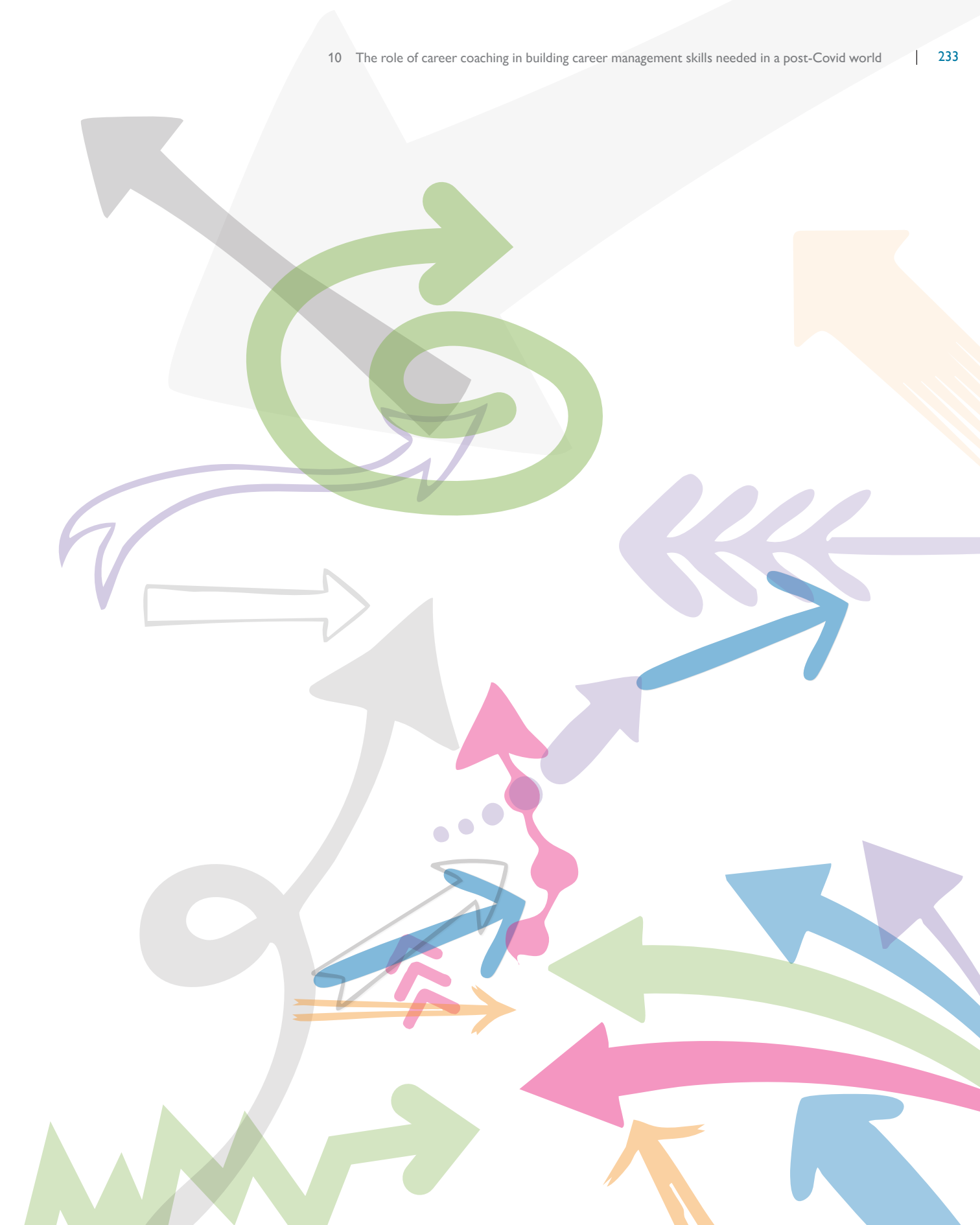
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11

Can teachers support adolescents' development of career management skills?

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Abstract

Each adolescent's career development path is unique and depends on a multitude of cognitive, motivational, and action-oriented factors. If students in school receive individual support, positive effects on their career management skills can be observed. In particular, teachers at grammar schools stimulate knowledge-related aspects of career competence, especially by providing informational support. In this four-wave long-term study, we investigated how adolescents (*N*1-4 = 1,433) develop facets of career competence within one school year. Furthermore, we analysed the effects of perceived teacher support on the development of career competence, controlled for the type of school. Conclusions are drawn both regarding higher education didactics in terms of teachers' qualifications for career guidance and in terms of the specific contributions of other actors such as external career counsellors. The limitations of the study and implications for further research are discussed.

Keywords
career management skills, teacher support, adolescents, development, regression.

Introduction

Due to labour market-related dynamics and, above all, changing personal needs, career development has become a lifelong task shaping one's own professional biography and requiring a unique set of skills to manage occupational transitions (Savickas, 2012). Considering foundations for successfully managing one's professional career are already laid during adolescence (Driesel-Lange et al. 2020), we addressed the issue of adolescents' career development in this study. Specifically, we looked at career competence, which enables them to confidently define their concrete options for the transition from school to work. Career competence is defined as 'a bundle of specific cognitive abilities, motivational orientations, and action skills enabling a person to make a well-founded decision after school and to manage relevant situations throughout his/her career' (Driesel-Lange et al., 2010, p. 11). This understanding of career competence is closely related to the concept of career management skills, which can be viewed as 'the skills to research opportunities, make choices and secure places on courses or jobs' (Andrews & Hooley, 2018, p. 60). According to Andrews and Hooley (2018), the development of career management skills should be a desired outcome of career education in schools. Career competence can thus be understood both as a prerequisite or foundation of career management skills and as an element thereof.

Career development has become a lifelong task shaping one's own professional biography and requiring a unique set of skills to manage occupational transitions.

The development of career management skills should be a desired outcome of career education in schools.

Teachers (can) positively impact the career competence development of their students.

Not only educational opportunities, but also social support are needed to foster the career development process. Therefore, the current chapter analysed the extent to which teachers (can) positively impact the career competence development of their students. To this end, we first examined the process of career development in adolescence. Next, we expanded on the theoretical-conceptual link between career competence (in adolescence) and concepts of career management skills, which particularly find application in research and counselling among adults. Subsequently, we outlined the model of career competence on which our study is based. Since the German School Act defines schools as the anchor point for all career-related activities, we outlined how career education is integrated in the German school system as well as its goals and existing challenges. The aim is to explain the important role of teachers as guides and counsellors.

Fostering career development in adolescence

Career development tasks, as explained by Super et al. (1963), can be viewed as individual steps in the process of career development: First, choosing a career must be accepted as a task that involves setting a career goal. To approach this goal, it is necessary to distinguish between interests, abilities, and values. To come up with realistic ideas of possible career outlooks, information and experience must be gathered. Next, alternatives must be narrowed down, and future job-related decisions must be made (Bergmann, 2004).

Factors such as economic and geographical conditions and students' learning experiences also influence individual decisions, opportunities, and trajectories.

The process of career development in adolescence is challenging mainly for two reasons. First, adolescents must deal with several other pressing developmental tasks while preparing their first career choice. These include accepting and dealing with physical changes, detaching from one's parental home, and developing one's own identity (Lohaus & Vierhaus, 2015). Second, the challenging environment in which career choices are made must be considered. A variety of endogenous and exogenous factors are at play (Patton & McMahon, 2017). For example, gender as well as social and cultural backgrounds are important predictors of career development (Beicht & Walden, 2019). Factors such as economic and geographical conditions and students' learning experiences also influence individual decisions, opportunities, and trajectories. Overall, a linear course of career development is very rare (Ohlemann, 2021). Rather, it is a process in which decisions are developed and discarded at an individual pace following unique patterns (Rahn et al., 2011). Therefore, identifying and addressing specific needs in the context of individual career development remains a challenge.

Empirical studies have shown different career development profiles varying within a school year cohort (Driesel-Lange & Kracke, 2017; Ohlemann & Driesel-Lange, 2018, 2019). Over time, career-related development processes can progress at different rates, stagnate, or even have a regressive character in terms of certainty and decisiveness (Ohlemann & Driesel-Lange, 2019). Career development and the transition after school should therefore be understood as a complex, contextual, and dynamic phenomenon incorporating past experiences, present challenges, and future aspirations (Patton & McMahon, 2017). A successful transition is the result of a well-founded career choice based on one's own abilities, interests, values, and goals on the one hand and knowledge of occupational requirements and possible returns on the other. This means career competence is always connected with cognitive, motivational, and action-oriented facets that are actively acquired during a long-term process.

Career development and the transition after school should therefore be understood as a complex, contextual, and dynamic phenomenon incorporating past experiences, present challenges, and future aspirations.

Driesel-Lange et al. (2010) have constructed a model of career competence addressing adolescent career development. This model outlines individual subtasks that constitute an autonomous and self-directed career choice. It postulates that young people require specific self- and career-related knowledge as well as planning and decision-making knowledge. Furthermore, motivational attitudes such as curiosity and confidence are indispensable. Finally, taking concrete action (such as exploring occupational environments) is central to making well-founded post-school career choices (Driesel-Lange et al., 2010; Driesel-Lange et. al. 2020). With this in mind, it becomes clear that acquiring career management skills and career competence, respectively, requires explicit outside support. Learning opportunities to obtain the described knowledge, skills, and abilities as well as the development of motivational attitudes are just as important as the promotion of practical experience, which in turn stimulates knowledge and motivation.

Driesel-Lange et al. (2010) model of career competence outlines individual subtasks that constitute an autonomous and self-directed career choice.

Supporting the transition from school to work

As career development is a learning and development task, long-term and continuous pedagogical support is key. In this context, schools should play a key role. Germany has a federally organised education system regulated by the 16 federal states. As a result, the education system itself as well as the implementation of career guidance [1] are quite heterogeneous. Depending on the state, primary schools range from four to six grades. Subsequently, most German students attend one of several secondary school types. With regard to tertiary education, there is – generally speaking – a binary system allow-

[1] In accordance with Andrews and Hooley (2018) we use the term 'career guidance' to subsume all careers interventions in school.

ing students to start an apprenticeship after grade nine or ten, or to go to university after grade twelve or thirteen.

Preparing students for the decision of which educational career to pursue is just as much a task of school-based career guidance as the promotion of life-long career competence (Driesel-Lange et al., 2020). On average, career guidance in Germany begins in year seven and is compulsory in all types of secondary schools (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2017). Apart from that, the regulation of career guidance varies from state to state (Schröder, 2020, for an overview).

For several decades, school-based career guidance in Germany has been viewed critically (Schudy, 2002, for an overview). Points of criticism include lack of effectiveness, lack of a theoretical foundation, insufficient individualisation, lack of proper evaluation, unbalanced distribution across schools leading to higher education entrance qualifications (e.g., Brüggemann, 2010; Brüggemann et al., 2017; Driesel-Lange, 2011; Driesel-Lange et al., 2020; Driesel-Lange & Weyland, 2021; Ohlemann, 2021). Especially at the Gymnasium (i.e., secondary school comparable to a British grammar school preparing students for higher education at a university), a void in the curricular must be deplored (Bigos, 2020; Müller, 2002).

In Germany, career guidance is compulsory in all types of secondary schools, but its rules for implementation are highly heterogenous due to the federal education system.

To understand the key problems of school-based career guidance in Germany, a brief review of the recent history of the emergence of this pedagogical task is essential. Career guidance has a long tradition in Germany (Bigos, 2020, for an overview). Regarding the binary post-school system, 'work-focused' career guidance gained pedagogical legitimacy because of the great need for young people to find an apprenticeship and a job after school in the first two decades after World War II (Dedering, 2002). As of 1971, the Federal Employment Agency was legally obliged to support schools by offering career counselling (Strijewski, 2002). Since the Gymnasium focuses on preparing students to attend university, it is not surprising that these schools were mostly neglected in the discussion until the end of the 1980s (Driesel-Lange, 2011). Not until 1993 was career guidance made compulsory for all types of secondary schools up to grade ten (Dedering, 2002).

Career guidance has a long tradition in Germany, albeit with a focus on practical work and apprenticeships. This explains its persistent lack at the German Gymnasium, which stands partly to this day.

Dedering (2002) criticised the continued failure to provide a theoretical foundation for career guidance in the further revisions of school curricula. The lack of theory in school-based career guidance and the lack of meaningful evaluation are also evident (Driesel-Lange et al., 2011). Today, the framework concepts developed for school-based career support in some German federal states at least contain partial theoretical references

or foundations (e.g., Landesinstitut für Schule und Medien Berlin-Brandenburg, 2018; Thüringer Ministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur, 2013).

The crucial points of career guidance outlined above must not only to be discussed in relation to their content-related instructional and extracurricular design. Since teachers in particular are responsible for implementing career guidance, it must be clarified how teachers in Germany are prepared for this task and what effect their support can have on adolescents.

One major untapped potential in German schools: Missing nationwide mandatory qualifications for teachers regarding career guidance. Because the more career-guidance trained teachers are active at a school, the greater the perceived feeling of support among adolescents.

The qualification of teachers for the task of career guidance is not uniformly regulated in Germany. While some extra training for teachers is obligatory in select states (Schröder, 2020), career guidance as an important task only plays a marginal role in the initial training of teachers (Dreer & Weyer, 2020). This is particularly detrimental as studies have shown the great importance of teacher training in career guidance. The more career-guidance trained teachers are active at a school, the greater the perceived feeling of support among adolescents (Engleitner & Schwarz, 2006). Compared to non-trained teachers, trained ones rate their abilities to support young people in class as higher. In addition, qualified teachers are more likely to say they are able to organise career guidance activities at school and have the ability to form partnerships with non-school partners (Dreer & Weyer, 2020). Finally, while teachers often underestimate their personal importance for students, they tend to overestimate their own qualifications (Dreer, 2013; Dreer & Kracke, 2013).

The crucial role of teacher support

In accompanying the career development of adolescents, social support by teachers plays a central role. On the one hand, social support refers to quantity, i.e., the extent of involvement in a social network and thus the degree of opportunities for support, e.g., through friends, family, and acquaintances (Schindler, 2012). On the other, the quality of social support is important (Schwarzer & Leppin, 1989). Social support can thus be understood as an 'interaction between two or more people in which the aim is to change a problem state that causes suffering in an affected person, or at least to make it easier to endure this state if nothing can be changed objectively' (Schwarzer, 2000, p. 52). In empirical research, social support has been modelled in different ways (Schindler, 2012, for an overview). The primary focus is on different dimensions of social support, which increase in importance according to the need for support. Above all, emotional, informational, and instrumental support are emphasised (Knoll & Kienle, 2007).

Social support by teachers (emotional, informational, and instrumental) plays a central role, both in terms of quantity as well as quality.



Regarding adolescence, a positive effect of social support can be assumed in dealing with both school performance requirements and puberty-related challenges. This assumption is supported by empirical data. Learners perform better in school and display a greater sense of competence if they are supported. They also find more help in dealing with challenges (Bandura, 2005; Wang & Eccles, 2012). Social support from teachers has a positive effect on a student's interest in lessons, general attitudes towards school, and socially responsible behaviour (Wentzel, 1998). Several negative experiences among young people are also mitigated by social support, and when they experience difficulties, they are less likely to give up (Brown, 2017).

Adolescents who feel supported by their social environment rate their preparation for the transition to post-school educational pathways as better.

With regard to career development, merely knowing that social support in the decision-making and transition process is available has a positive influence among adolescents (Garcia et al., 2015). Adolescents who feel supported by their social environment rate their preparation for the transition to post-school educational pathways as better. They are also better at dealing with possible career-related barriers (McWhirter et al., 1998).

Teachers offer help in several ways, providing both formal and informal support. For example, they may provide feedback on job applications and encourage young people to pursue their goals even when obstacles arise. Furthermore, they provide information relevant to career choices and initiate exploration activities (Donoghue, 2008). In this context, Schindler (2012) provided an overview of the results of cross-sectional studies on the connections between perceived social support and the development of knowledge relevant to career development, motivational aspects, behaviour in the career development process, as well as the career decision itself. The following overview highlights the central findings with regard to social support provided by teachers:

- Young people who receive social support generally achieve increased self- and career knowledge (Lapan et al., 2007).
- Adolescents who receive social support make more strategical decisions about their career and study plans, e.g., they choose their school electives more carefully and can formulate more precise career goals (Lapan et al., 2007; Mayhack & Kracke, 2010).
- Higher self-efficacy (Mayhack & Kracke, 2010) and a positive view of the self and the professional world of work overall (Carver et al., 2010) are evident among young people who receive social support.
- Ali and McWhirter (2006) showed positive correlations between teacher support and job-related self-efficacy and job-related outcome expectations.
- Hirschi et al. (2011) found a positive correlation between teacher support and exploration, both in terms of self and in terms of the world of work.

- A broad meta-study found that career conversations with teachers are linked to reduced likelihood of NEET status and higher earnings in Canada. In Australia and the United Kingdom, such conversations are associated with both increased career satisfaction and life satisfaction (Covacevich et al., 2021).

In the long term, it has been shown that young people are more optimistic and satisfied after leaving school if they have received social support. On average, they have a higher level of education (Lapan et al., 2007). They are more likely to follow through with career aspirations and are better able to pursue professional goals (see Schindler, 2012). In the short and medium term, skills acquired in the career choice process also have positive outcomes in other contexts: Students may use the acquired soft skills in everyday school life, behave more prosocial, and achieve better grades (Lapan et al., 2007). Conversely, young people show lower educational motivation and lower graduation intentions if they are discouraged by their teachers criticising their abilities (Schuchart, 2009).

In Germany, the type of school plays a decisive role when it comes to the type of support provided. On average, students at the *Gesamtschule* (i.e., comprehensive school) benefit from the care and emotional support provided by teachers (Helsper & Hummrich, 2009). In comparison, adolescents at the *Gymnasium* (i.e., grammar school) generally perceive a distanced relationship with their teachers, as the focus is primarily on subject performance. This becomes especially clear in concrete subjects: teachers' social orientation is lowest in the subjects of German and maths (Baumert et al., 2004).

Adolescents at the Gymnasium (i.e., grammar school) generally perceive a distanced relationship with their teachers, as the focus is primarily on subject performance.

In the context of career development, Schindler (2012) examined perceived social support among students. Adolescents at secondary schools focusing on the intermediate, apprenticeship-qualifying post-school certificate are more likely to report perceiving social support from teachers and to benefit regarding key career-related factors such as self-efficacy, exploration, and planning, among others. For adolescents at the *Gymnasium*, positive correlations were found only in terms of self-efficacy. Driesel-Lange et al. (2018) have shown in a longitudinal study with German *Gymnasien* students that the cognitive dimension of career competence in particular can be influenced by teachers, while motivational and action-oriented factors were stimulated less. Perceived social support seemed to have a long-term impact: Adolescents assessed themselves, their career prospects, and the professional world increasingly realistically with a time lag.

An empirical view on perceived teacher support and career development

This study focused on the influence of social support from teachers on the development of career competence. Career competence includes career management skills, such as the ability to shape one's career and, in adolescence especially, to deal with the transition from school to work. It incorporates empirically validated predictors of successful career development in its modelling. These include self- and labour market knowledge, process knowledge and skills (e.g., planning, exploration, and decisiveness), as well as metacognitions (e.g., self-confidence and a positive self-concept) (Hirschi, 2010, for an overview). The career competence model on which this study is based integrates cognitive, motivational, and action-oriented prerequisites that young people of different age groups require. In the process of career development, adolescents are required to deal with career-related demands in such a way that they are ultimately able to implement a well-founded career choice. The process of career development is supported by four phases in which four corresponding knowledge facets, motivational aspects, and action-oriented are formed individually in twelve facets (Driesel-Lange et al., 2020). This longitudinal study intended to provide an empirical foundation for the discussion of more differentiated support for adolescents regarding perceived teacher support.

Research question and hypotheses

Our research question focused on the variation between students with regard to *career competence* development depending on perceived *teacher support*.

In view of the research gaps described above, this study aimed to build on existing knowledge with regard to career development, in particular the development of career-related competences of adolescents in the context of teacher support. Our research question focused on the variation between students with regard to *career competence* development depending on perceived *teacher support*.

Based on the above discussed findings, we formulated the following hypotheses:

- **H1:** Higher perceived teacher support affects the development of career competence among adolescents.
- **H2:** The level of perceived teacher support affects the development of career competence regarding first wave initial values.

Methodology

Sample

The tablet-based survey took place in September 2018, January 2019, June–July 2019, and January 2020 during regular class hours at the respective schools. Students' participation was voluntary. The participants received a small gift (e.g., candy, chocolate bars) at the end of the survey. Overall, it represents a long-term study over four waves. The measurement points mainly considered here represent the first two waves of the four sampling periods. This sample included 1,530 adolescents (56.7 % female, 42.5 % male, 0.8 % not reported) who were enrolled in one of nine schools (four *Gesamtschulen* and five *Gymnasien*) in the German federal states of North Rhine-Westphalia and Berlin. The students were in grades 9, 10, and 11, which represents an age range from 14 to 17.

This sample included 1,530 adolescents (56.7 % female, 42.5 % male, 0.8 % not reported) who were enrolled in one of nine schools (four *Gesamtschulen* and five *Gymnasien*) in the German federal states of North Rhine-Westphalia and Berlin.

Regarding the descriptive evaluations of teacher support, measurement points two to four were considered separately. These samples included 1,803 adolescents at measurement point two (56.5 % female, 43.5 % male), 1,727 adolescents at measurement point three (56.3 % female, 43.7 % male), and 1,612 adolescents at measurement point four (58,1 % female, 41,9 % male).

Instrument

In each wave, career competence was measured with 37 items on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 *(not at all/not important)* to 7 *(strongly/very important)*. The items were taken from the standardised diagnostic questionnaire of career competence (Kaak et al., 2013) based on the theoretical model of career competence by Driesel-Lange et al. (2010). Career competence includes 12 subscales (facets) that differentiate between knowledge-related, motivational, and action-related competences. Table 11.1 provides an overview of the corresponding facets with example items and the corresponding Cronbach alpha values found in the present study.

Students also rated perceived social support provided by teachers (measured with 10 items, 7-point Likert-scale) by answering a modified version of Schindler's (2012) scale (Driesel-Lange et al., 2018) in the second, third, and fourth waves. Table 11.1 includes an example item and the corresponding Cronbach alpha values.

Table 11.1 Overview career choice competences and teacher support

Scale (*k* Items)	Example items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Self-knowledge (3)	I can accurately assess my abilities.	.72-.80
Occupational knowledge (3)	I know how vocational training programs or academic studies are organised.	.81-.83
Knowledge of prerequisites (3)	I know exactly how to prepare for my future job.	.87-.90
Planning knowledge (2)	For the time being, I have set clear goals in order to move closer to starting my career.	.79-.81
Career concern (3)	It is important for me to clarify which professions I am suited for.	.83-.90
Career control (3)	I am already thinking about what I want to be.	.85-.88
Career curiosity (4)	I enjoy exploring new professions.	.67-.70
Career confidence (4)	How much do you trust yourself to describe what your dream job should look like.	.81-.83
Exploration (3)	How often have you purposefully asked several people in the last few months for information about occupations and training opportunities.	.85-.88
Self-regulation (3)	If something that I wanted to do goes wrong, I want to find out the reasons.	.77-.78
Problem-solving (3)	I trust myself to find a solution if I were to suddenly drop in my school performance.	.80-.86
Stress management (3)	Thinking about my future profession is a burden for me.	.81-.82
Teacher support (10)	Most of my teachers support me in finding out what my strength is.	.93

Note. *The first value represents the first measurement point's alpha value. The second value represents the second survey wave's reliability value. Teacher support was surveyed from measurement point two onward.*



Design

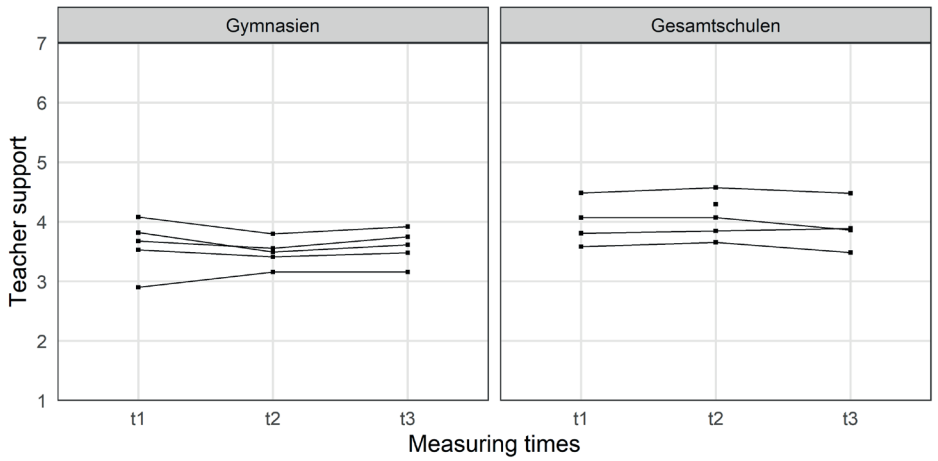
We looked descriptively at teacher support in terms of both type of school and individual school. We conducted hierarchical multiple linear regressions. In two steps, we first introduced the facets of career competence as dependent variables, while the baseline scores (t1) of each facet and perceived teacher support at t2 served as independent variables. In the second step, we added two-way-interactions between participants' career competence facets (t1) and perceived teacher support (t2) to the regression. Analyses were performed using SPSS (Version 27) with the add-on programme PROCESS (Hayes, 2018).

Results

The perceived level of teacher support differed between the various types of school. Adolescents at *Gesamtschulen* (i.e., comprehensive schools) generally rated perceived teacher support as higher. It is also notable that the values remained stable over time. At the same time, it must be mentioned that schools not only differed with regard to school type. There was a variance between every individual school. Figure 1 shows the perception of teacher support over three measuring points in two different school forms. The three measurement points represent a period of one school year, starting in January 2019. As mentioned before, the complete study included four measurement points, the first of which did not measure teacher support. In total, the values of five *Gymnasien* (i.e., grammar schools) and four *Gesamtschulen* (i.e., comprehensive schools) were considered in this publication. At the baseline (second measurement time point), the mean score was M = 4.07 (SD = 1.41, n = 797) for *Gesamtschulen* and M = 3.48 (SD = 1.39, n = 1013) for *Gymnasien*. At the third measurement time point, the mean was M = 3.51 (SD = 1.25, n = 906) for *Gesamtschulen* and M = 4.01 (SD = 1.40, n = 736) for *Gymnasien*. At the last measurement point, the mean score was M = 4.01 (SD = 1.40, n = 736) for *Gesamtschulen* and M = 3.51 (SD = 1.30, n = 994) for *Gymnasien*.



Figure 11.1 Perceived teacher support depending on school form and individual school



To test our first hypothesis (higher perceived teacher support affects the development of career competence among adolescents), we conducted a hierarchical multiple linear regression model for each of the twelve facets. As our focus in this study lay on the effects of perceived teacher support, we report the main effects. As Table 11.2 shows for all facets, the total R-square was highly statistically significant and of a similar size between .19 and .36, representing a similarly good model fit for career competence facets. However, this does not apply to self-knowledge and stress management; consequently, these two facets were not significant and therefore were not reported.

In general, it is noticeable that the initial starting value always had a positive effect (standardised β: .03 to .56) on the development of career competence. It is also particularly striking that teacher support always had a positive effect (standardised β: .02 to .22) on development. This is strongest for the following facets: career curiosity, which focuses on the readiness of adolescents to be and remain open to new professional opportunities or alternatives. A similarly sized effect could be observed for career control (standardised β: .19), planning knowledge, and career confidence (both standardised β: .18).

Table 11.2 Results regressions

Career competence facets (CCF)	M_{t1} (SD_{t1})	M_{t2} (SD_{t2})	ΔR^2	Df (within groups)	CCF_{t1} β	Teacher $support_{t2}$ β	Interaction CCF_{t1} x teacher $support_{t2}$ (p)
Self-knowledge	5.5 (1.1)	5.3 (1.2)	.21	1518	.45**	.04	.459
Occupational knowledge	4.0 (1.6)	4.2 (1.4)	.25**	1517	.44**	.16**	.288
Knowledge of prerequisites	4.7 (1.6)	4.4 (1.7)	.36**	1516	.56**	.13**	.848
Planning knowledge	4.3 (1.8)	4.1 (1.7)	.28**	1517	.46**	.18**	.938
Career concern	6.2 (1.0)	5.8 (1.3)	.30**	1513	.03**	.02**	.079
Career control	5.2 (1.4)	4.9 (1.4)	.27**	1512	.47**	.19**	.888
Career curiosity	5.0 (1.5)	4.8 (1.5)	.19**	1506	.34**	.22**	.001**
Career confidence	5.3 (1.2)	5.0 (1.3)	.21**	1501	.40**	.18**	.239
Exploration	3.4 (1.7)	3.5 (1.7)	.26**	1495	.45**	.17**	.365
Self-regulation	4.9 (1.4)	4.7 (1.4)	.30**	1482	.49**	.17**	.005**
Problem-solving	5.1 (1.2)	5.2 (1.3)	.19**	1458	.39**	.14**	.009**
Stress management	4.4 (1.6)	4.5 (1.5)	.18	1441	.42**	.01	.012*

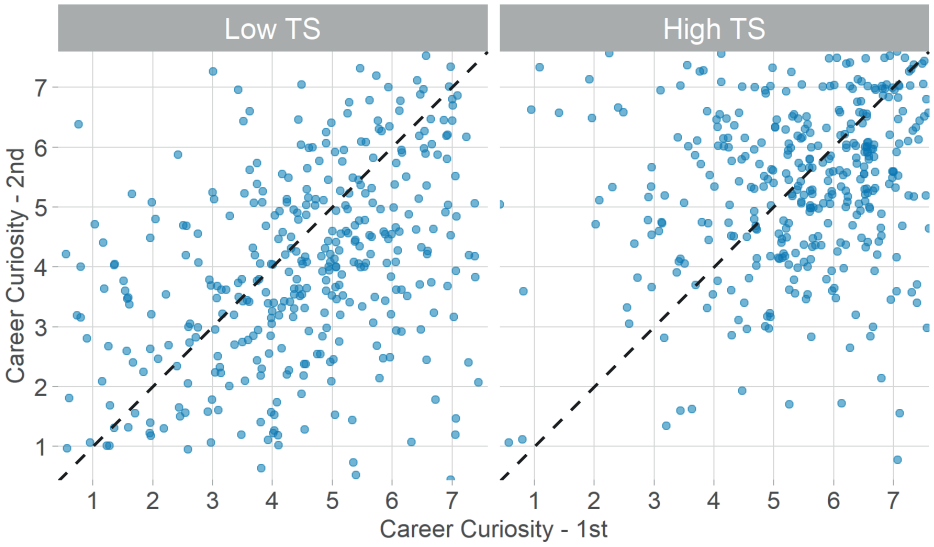
Note. ** p < .05, ** p < .01*

Our second hypothesis focused on the effect of the level of perceived teacher support on the development of career competence regarding different starting points. This helps us to understand whether teacher support is impactful and, in particular, whether specific groups – as measured by their starting point – benefit more than others. To this end, interactions between perceived teacher support and students' initial career competence scores were tested. Additionally, three interactions were identified: career curiosity, self-regulation, and problem-solving. Self-regulation means students consciously set goals, monitor their plans and achievements, and obtain and process information relevant for them. Problem-solving means students are able to develop new solutions or alternative scenarios when difficulties arise. Figure 11.2 illustrates how teacher support influences the development of career curiosity. Each point represents a specific student whose position within the plot is determined by the first and the second measurement of the level of the student's career curiosity. Points above the diagonal represent students whose career curiosity increased between the first and second measurement time points, points below the diagonal are students whose career curiosity decreased. It is

The higher the perceived teacher support, the stronger the students developed overall. This was valid especially for students with low initial values.

particularly striking that the higher the perceived teacher support, the stronger the students developed overall. This was valid especially for students with low initial values.

Figure 11.2 Interaction between perceived teacher support and career curiosity



Discussion

The results of the study show the great importance of teachers in career guidance. It becomes clear that all adolescents benefit from the support they perceive. A differentiated look reveals three essential aspects. Firstly, it is possible to address those adolescents whose facets relevant to career choice were previously rather weakly developed. Secondly, the facets that seem to develop are those that address the specific abilities and skills of problem solving and regulation. Thirdly, attitudes that prevent a narrow vocational decision and stimulate exploration can be positively developed.

The results of the study show the great importance of teachers in career guidance.

It is worth mentioning that in this study, subjectively perceived support is recorded and analysed in the context of perceived competence. Here, the question arises to what extent objective criteria of support as well as competence assessment can further illuminate these findings (Dreer, 2013). Furthermore, the question arises to what extent the

teacher support scale actually reflects the school climate or the support performance of individual teachers. Since the instrument refers to 'most teachers', no clear distinction can be made here. Moreover, the development in some facets of career competence could not be explained at all – or only slightly – by perceived teacher support. It remains to be investigated whether other persons (e.g., career counsellors) represent an influencing factor. Furthermore, it ought to be analysed how different professions might support adolescents' career development in multi-professional teams and which strategies and instruments in their profession-related linkage show positive effects on the development of career competence.

Overall, it became clear in this study that teachers cannot stimulate all facets of career competence. Self-knowledge, for example, may be an area that is not accessible for career guidance support. This could be a result of the constellation of the teacher-student relationship, among other things, which is very much shaped by the focus on performance development, especially at the *Gymnasium* level. It is likely that young people do not reveal their personal desires, life goals, and resources if they do not perceive the relationship with their teachers as a possible venue for their personality development. However, supporting a reflexively controlled individual development of adolescents is a central concern of career guidance. With this in mind, teachers also play a central role in the context of school and teaching development. According to the results of this study, measures for career orientation implemented at the didactic level are only effective if the teachers themselves become the focus of the didactic events. The prerequisite for this is that they recognise the importance of social support and align their actions accordingly. This is especially true if this conviction plays a role within the context of the individualised guidance of their students, which would become evident through a special commitment and an equally open and constructive attitude toward career guidance and the pupils themselves. Young people seemed to perceive different levels of commitment here, which could also be related to the perspective of the individual school on career guidance and the resulting culture in the respective school. This is at least suggested by the differences between the individual school locations.

Teachers must recognise the importance of social support and align their actions accordingly.

As a result of the empirically proven statement that the social support of teachers is considered a predictor for successful career development processes, there are curricular implications for the multi-phase training of teachers in Germany. The four phases of study – preparatory service, career entry and in-service, as well as further training – must be differentiated. Firstly, career guidance should be a curricular component at all teacher training locations within the framework of the study programme and should be addressed in both the educational science and the didactic contexts. This would also en-

shrine career guidance as a cross-curricular topic in the degree programme. Although the promotion of individual learning is addressed in the standards of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the States in the Federal Republic of Germany (see, among others, *Kultusministerkonferenz*, 2019), the important task of career guidance should be emphasised more explicitly. Secondly, in terms of teacher training, attention should be paid to learning opportunities that enable direct application and reflection in the context of, for example, labs that have been set up with occupation-related and subject-related model practices. In view of the importance of non-cognitive competence facets (Baumert & Kunter, 2006), which are also discussed in teacher education research and which include teachers' own convictions and values, this component itself should be the subject of reflection in higher education didactics. Furthermore, considering the teachers' own professional development, the question arises how this topic should be treated in the subsequent phases of teacher education. For example, in the second phase (i.e., preparatory service), one could ask to what extent the topic might be integrated more strongly within teaching practice, and whether it could be analysed and further developed from a subject-didactic point of view.

In view of the limitations of support by teachers, the question of professional learning communities of different actors in career guidance arises in the context of school and teaching development. In multi-professional teams, the cooperation of career guidance counsellors, school social workers, and teachers can be determined and secured in terms of their roles and tasks. In this way, the topic of career guidance is not only to be jointly developed in its didactic orientation. It can at the same time be linked to a research concern in the context of action and practice research (Altrichter et al., 2018) with regard to one's own understanding of professionalism as a reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983). This would direct a kind of researching view towards career guidance with which a constant conceptual development would correspond. With regard to the quality development process at one's own school – insofar as career guidance is understood as an integral part of school and teaching development – including evaluative measures, which at the same time rely on a systematic science-practice exchange, would be beneficial (Driesel-Lange et al., 2011).



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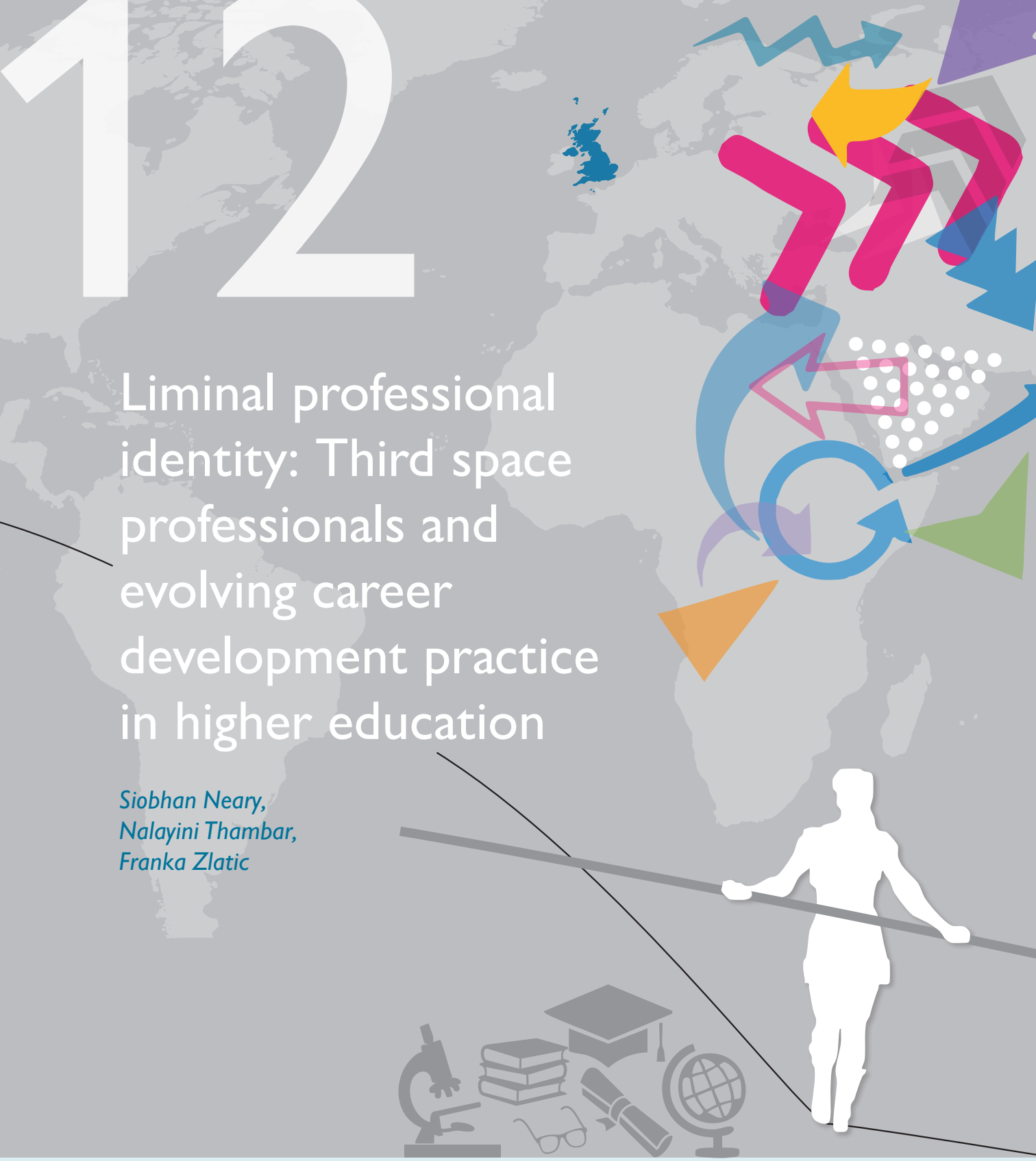
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12

Liminal professional identity: Third space professionals and evolving career development practice in higher education

Siobhan Neary,
Nalayini Thambar,
Franka Zlatic



Abstract

The role of career development practitioners working in higher education has evolved significantly over recent years in the UK. This has been influenced by the increase in student fees, a greater focus on employability, and the impact of metrics used to 'assess' the quality of the student experience. This research project presents a landscape where the decentralisation of services and embedding of careers work within the curriculum is creating a new quasi-academic role for higher education careers practitioners in which previously defined boundaries become more transparent. Using the 'third space professional' as an underpinning concept, this study presents the challenges practitioners face resulting from varying value placed on higher education careers services across institutions and an increasing focus on one-to-many rather than one-to-one interventions. The research presents the skills and knowledge practitioners identify as being required to be impactful, specifically the importance of digital literacy and strategic relationships, in establishing recognised and effective practice.

Keywords
Higher education careers services, career guidance, identity, curriculum, third space professionals.

Introduction

Over the last decade or so, higher education in the UK has experienced significant change resulting from government policy. The most significant has been the introduction of higher tuition fees (England, Wales, and Northern Ireland) which, as a result of the Browne's review (2010) were increased to £9000 (currently, £9250) per academic year. This has positioned the relationship between students, institutions, and their families as being more transactional, resulting in a greater interest in 'value for money' from the investment (Nijjar, 2009). Allied with this has been an increased focus on employability and ensuring that graduates are attaining employment within roles that are identified as commensurate with their academic level and skills. Graduate employment metrics have increasingly become a tool to rank universities. Collectively these measures have highlighted the role of careers services in universities and the extent to which

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students have access to the help and support needed to maximise graduate opportunities.

The present chapter was conceived to explore how these various changes were perceived by higher education careers practitioners. It examined how they defined the skills and knowledge they needed to be effective in meeting both their institutions' and their students' expectations, and finally how these transformations were affecting their role and professional identity. To explore the evolution of roles, the research draws from Whitchurch (2015) who examines the concept of the third space professional, which describes the intersection between professional and academic spheres in higher education. We argue that career development practice is increasingly occupying this third space.

The study took place in the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic; as such, many colleagues were working in dynamic circumstances while continuing to support their students.

Literature review

The increased use of metrics to assess the outcomes of publicly-funded services is not new. Muller (2018) describes how living in an era of measured accountability is perceived as transparency. Increasingly, measures are applied to all elements of the student experience, including National Student Survey – which explores satisfaction with their studies and institution – Destinations of Leavers of Higher Education, now Graduate Outcomes, the Longitudinal Education Outcomes – examines the destinations of students after graduation – and Teaching Excellence Framework – quality of undergraduate teaching. Collectively many of these measures contribute to the rankings and league tables for universities, thus encouraging institutions to be complicit so as not to be disadvantaged in the marketplace.

Over recent years, employability has become an increasingly important metric and has become inexorably linked with student tuition fees.

Over recent years, employability has become an increasingly important metric and has become inexorably linked with student tuition fees. The term employability is generally accepted within higher education as the skills, understanding, and personal attributes which enable individuals to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupation (Knight el al., 2003). As such, careers support facilitates career decision-making and transition aligning with university priorities (graduate-level destinations) and strongly reflects Sultana's definition of career management skills as the ability to make and implement decisions and transition (Sultana, 2012). As such, the graduate premi-

um, which links higher earning potential to achieving a degree level qualification, has become a powerful driver, resulting in employability as a sector-wide priority, positioning career services firmly in the spotlight (Thambar, 2019). In turn, this has foregrounded graduate destinations and employability as a 'measure' of return on investment by students and their families (Christie, 2017).

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As the concept of employability has become highly profiled within higher education, so the focus of how students access support to develop their employability skills has also attained greater purchase. Students are expected to have the skills, behaviours, and attitudes that will support them to effectively transition into the workplace (Artess et al., 2017). This has given rise to a diversification of employability delivery modes with a greater focus on curriculum-related activity and digital solutions.

The type and range of skills careers professionals need to be effective has evolved as the use of digital has become more prevalent in day-to-day practice. One of the emerging problems relates to the increasing use of digital skills and practitioners' readjustment to acquiring the necessary skills: 'The careers profession, however, needs to embrace, further, innovation and change, so that the full potential of ICT can be used to deliver 'more for less' in a manner that motivates users of services to access learning and labour market opportunities' (Bimrose et al. 2011, p. 4).

On the basis of their findings, Kettunen et al. (2015) argue that it is important to develop pre-service and in-service training of careers practitioners and support for deepening their social media competence. Thus, it primarily refers not to a particular set of technologies but to types of practices. In order to consider the usefulness and potential of existing and emerging technologies, it is essential that careers professionals be appropriately trained in this area.

Whitchurch (2008) used the phrase 'third space professionals' to describe a growing number of roles and services which neither conduct research nor deliver teaching in higher education. These include the student experience, careers advice, alumni, recruitment and community outreach. In such environments, staff with both professional and academic backgrounds have become involved in broad-based projects arising from public service and market agendas. The former includes, for instance, widening participation and community regeneration, and the latter business partnership and knowledge transfer. Careers services are increasingly involved in teaching and learning, extra-curricular skills awards, work placement creation and support, and enterprise and business start-up activity (Thambar, 2016). As a result, boundaries are being breached between

Careers services are increasingly involved in teaching and learning, extra-curricular skills awards, work placement creation and support, and enterprise and business start-up activity (Thambar, 2016).

professional and academic spheres, and between internal and external constituencies (Whitchurch, 2015). This evolution of service provision and roles impacts the professional identity of careers professionals, contributing to fragmentation: 'Advisers described the multiple identities they inhabit and that their current role is far away from what they were originally trained to do when careers advice was anchored by individual guidance with a client that could be seen repeatedly' (Christie, 2016, p. 79). With growing responsibilities within the role and developing changes that influence the position, advisers have difficulty with the multitude of expectations they are trying to manage. Additionally, the job title attributed influenced how they were externally perceived, reflected how they perceived themselves, and impacted their professional identity (Neary, 2014).

Methodology

Central to this research was the opportunity to engage with and capture careers professionals' perceptions and views about how they felt their roles were evolving. To achieve this, a constructivist approach was adopted utilising a four-phase model which included a literature review, focus groups, a survey, and in-depth qualitative interviews. To ensure that the various constituencies within HE in the UK were included, we adopted purposive sampling reflecting the four primary types of institution: Russell Group (i.e., 24 research-intensive universities), pre-1992, post-1992, and specialist (special-focus, i.e., Art).

Findings

The pandemic impacted some of the data collection: only one focus group was possible, the survey attracted 84 responses, and 10 interviews took place with practitioners representing the four constituencies. Respondents were predominantly female (77%), were aged between 41–60 (66%), and had worked in higher education careers services for between 5–20 years (63%). Although this was a smaller number than expected, these responses reflected the demographic being sought – namely, those who had experience of working in higher education careers for an extended period.

Location and relationships

Across the diverse range of roles and institutional positions occupied by the careers professionals that responded to this study, the definition of their role had a strong common theme: to support students in their career development and planning, including the navigation of recruitment processes. However, the context in which they delivered their work varied across institutions.

There was evidence that the location of careers professionals in the Higher Education institutions varied. Three locations were identified: a centrally-located careers service working with academic discipline areas, decentralised and located within the academic discipline area, or employed independently by the discipline area and not connected to the careers service. Allied with this was the employability focus in discipline areas, resulting in other individuals with an employability-related role – this could include academics, heads of departments, placement tutors, and others. This relates well with Whitchurch's work (2015) and locates employability as a shared space in which both careers professionals and non-careers professionals coexist.

The extent to which the employability activities are effectively aligned is contested. However, the importance of employability was perceived to elevate the careers professional and their contribution to the academic department. This was often strategic (for example, supporting the development of employability strategies and contributing to the achievement of positive outcomes on measures such as the National Student Survey and Teaching Excellence Framework).

Modes of delivery

This focus on employability also contributed to how careers professionals engage with academic departments and how services are delivered (more specifically, a move to integrated curricular delivery). Practitioners spoke about the importance of embedding careers activities within the curriculum rather than being 'bolted on,' and integrated practice was perceived as having greater credibility. These activities were often in partnership with academics; 61% of respondents identified an increase in their work with academics with a focus on employability, work-based learning, and career development. Success in achieving this is dependent on variables including the discipline area and senior leaders' recognition of the value of careers support; frequently, it is due to the personality of the practitioner, and their ability to forge strong working relationships.

This focus on employability also contributed to how careers professionals engage with academic departments and how services are delivered (more specifically, a move to integrated curricular delivery).

Careers practitioners increasingly need teaching skills as well as one-to-one career guidance and counselling expertise to be effective in meeting organisational/ student needs.

As a result of curriculum-focused activities, practitioners have sought to undertake teaching qualifications offered by the Higher Education Academy (HEA): over 30% of respondents had achieved a HEA awarded qualification, but overall, 46% had attained a teaching qualification. This suggests that careers practitioners increasingly need teaching skills as well as one-to-one career guidance and counselling expertise to be effective in meeting organisational/student needs.

The Covid-19 pandemic also acted as an accelerant to the delivery of online services, with a need for rapid implementation: with many careers professionals working from home during the first lockdown in the UK, the challenges were multiple. This move necessitated a rapid development of digital skills in order to interact with students on a one-to-one and one-to-many basis. It highlighted the need for proficiency in the use of social media both as a contributor but also as an important source of labour market information in a fast-changing environment. Services adapted quickly, moving one-to-one career guidance sessions, employability workshops, and employer events online. It was reported that often there were greater numbers of students engaging online than there was in physical, on-campus activities.

Respondents conveyed a sense of achievement in the speed and effectiveness of their transition to online delivery, and excitement at the possibilities that online activities might now open up in terms of modes of delivery and opportunities for student and employer engagement. This obviously raises questions as to how services will continue to evolve as technological advances become more sophisticated. . It also points to skills that practitioners now require in digital literacy: creativity in the use of technology and social media. Although many colleagues felt confident with these new approaches, some of the long-established staff felt challenged and lacked confidence with some of the changes.

Knowledge, skills, and training

The range of organisational locations, modes of delivery, and the configuration of careers professional roles have diversified the skills and expertise perceived as necessary in order to fulfil the practitioner role. The expertise most commonly identified by respondents was an understanding of labour market information: reflecting the expectation that careers professionals will act as a bridge between the student experience, academia, and the world of work. Although there has been a move away from one-to-one interactions, guidance skills and the ability to provide individual support still featured

strongly as skills required to be effective. Over the last five to 10 years, practitioners felt that they had developed the ability to be creative and adaptive and that they needed a broader knowledge of international labour markets and an understanding of the cultural needs of international students, as this – prior to the pandemic – had been a specific growth area for HE institutions in the UK.

The development of pedagogical knowledge was also considered to be of growing importance. Seventy-five per cent of respondents cited developing career-related curriculum and 59% cited teaching as a typical activity in their role; however, when respondents were asked about their 'areas of expertise,' curriculum development, teaching, and academic liaison were identified less frequently. This suggests that the evolving nature of the role – increasingly focused on one-to-many – may not yet be fully internalised by practitioners. It also indicates how practitioners' professional identities may currently be in transition.

Professional identity

Professional identity has been strengthened through the increased profile of careers, employability activities, and metrics as a contributor to institutional profile.

This study suggests that a stronger but more diffuse professional identity is developing across the higher education careers profession. Professional identity has been strengthened through the increased profile of careers, employability activities, and metrics as a contributor to institutional profile. Additionally, increased alignment and the incorporation of career development learning into the academic curriculum has fostered some tensions and contradictions within that identity. Those in roles based in academic departments – rather than in centralised services – felt their profile was enhanced by that association and the insights they gained, and conveyed confidence in their position within their institution. Yet, they felt some uncomfortable distance from their core source of professional identity – the careers service – and those with the same professional background and qualifications. This tension was experienced in reverse by some of those respondents based in careers services who felt they had a stronger professional profile as a result of involvement in wider projects and university-wide activity rather than their careers and employability-focussed work.

Respondents spoke of having to 'forge your own identity' in many cases, reflecting that these newer identities rendered their conventional higher education careers professional job title less relevant given that it did not represent the full breadth of the role any longer. The term 'careers consultant' has become the recognised job title with 66% of respondents now using this. When questioned about more traditional job titles such as

careers adviser, practitioners felt that the term 'adviser' was too reductionist and 'consultant' better reflected the wider role they inhabited. Nomenclature was seen as important, with 88% of respondents strongly agreeing/agreeing that job title was important in defining their professional identity.

The variety of roles undertaken by careers professionals as a result of institutional approaches to employability – not least the extent of academic alignment – suggest that there is a weaker collective professional identity under the 'banner' of careers and employability than there might have been 10 years ago. However, when considering the higher education careers profession through the lens of Whitchurch (2015), there is a coherence to these evolving identities: careers professionals typically operate as third space professionals traversing academic and student experience domains to develop and deliver their expert services.

Conclusion

The move to integrated curricular delivery modes speaks not only to rationalisation of resources but also to the evolution of practice towards an educative paradigm.

The role of the higher education careers professional has always been dynamic, but the last 10 years have introduced a greater imperative to adopt to the political drivers that are shaping not just education but the delivery of careers and employability support. This study spotlights the evolving nature of practice and how higher education careers professionals are adapting to new contexts and ways of working. The move to integrated curricular delivery modes speaks not only to rationalisation of resources but also to the evolution of practice towards an educative paradigm. Practitioners have generally responded positively, largely due to the perceived credibility that academic-focused delivery offers. The pandemic has irrevocably changed how services are delivered and accessed; although technology was inevitably increasing its role in service delivery, it is now dominant. This has necessitated careers professionals to adapt and adopt new ways of working and develop the skills and mindset to be effective. Inexorably, this leads to fluid and dynamic professional identity. Whitchurch (2015) offers some potentially unifying concepts that can help to maintain a collective professional identity for higher education careers professionals and a shared articulation of their value and contribution, despite the institutional influences on their individual roles and experiences.

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13

Developing career development centres and teaching career management skills to future career counsellors in Iraq

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Abstract

The French Institute for the Study of Work and Career Guidance (INETOP-CNAM) is conducting a series of training sessions over a two-year period to support the establishment of career development centres at the Universities of Nineveh and Mosul in Iraq. The primary aim of this training programme is to develop the career management skills of a group of higher education teachers, enabling them to become career counsellors and assist students in planning their careers. This chapter is composed of four parts. The first focuses on the political, economic, socio-cultural, and educational contexts; the second describes the career development centres (CDCs) at the Universities of Mosul and Nineveh; the third addresses the development of career guidance and counselling training for career counsellors; and finally, the fourth presents a SWOT analysis of the methods introduced.

Keywords
career-management skills, Iraq, counselling training, counsellors, career centre.

Introduction

Overview

As Iraq is a politically, economically and socially unstable country, robust measures are needed to encourage stability, economic prosperity and social development. The opportunity to contribute to Iraq's stability is what motivated Expertise France[1] to contact the French Institute for the Study of Work and Career Guidance (INETOP-CNAM) in Paris and suggest supporting the gradual introduction of career development centres (CDCs) at the Universities of Mosul and Nineveh. Each centre's mission is to inform students of training programmes, careers and the job market, and raise awareness among teachers of the importance of helping students think about their future careers and entry into the world of work. CDCs can play a role in boosting the country's economic and social development by helping students develop their career management skills (CMS).

Career Development Centres can play a role in boosting the country's economic and social development by helping students develop their career management skills.

[1] Expertise France is a French public agency that designs and implements international technical cooperation projects

CMSs encompass a whole range of competencies that provide structured ways for individuals and groups to gather, analyse, synthesise and organise self-knowledge and educational and occupational information, as well as the skills to make and implement decisions and transitions (Sultana, 2012). They are considered necessary for all citizens, regardless of age or nationality, given the realities of the job market (Savickas, 2019). According to Gille and Sovet (2019), the skills necessary in the 21st century fall into three main categories: knowledge of self, knowledge of the economic environment, and knowledge of education systems. Like any other skills, they can be broken down into information, expertise, and soft skills, are gradually acquired over the course of a lifetime, and can be combined.

Political, economic and socio-cultural context of Iraq

Since the defeat of the Islamic State, the political climate has been improving. The war resulted in extensive destruction – in particular, the Islamic State caused significant damage to the country's infrastructure. Several buildings at the University of Mosul were destroyed. This has had an impact on the activities of the teachers, who have sometimes had to work without adequate premises or equipment.

Only 12% of women and 26% of young people were employed. The situation today remains largely unchanged.

The economy in Iraq showed signs of recovery in 2016, with growth of around 13%, but the political context prevented this trend from continuing in 2017. In 2018, thanks to a more stable political context, growth resumed but remained at a lower level than expected. In 2019, the gross domestic product (GDP) rose by 3.9% due to oil production, reconstruction and improved security and domestic demand (International Monetary Fund, 2020).

Finally, there is very little diversification among the professional sectors, since the economy depends heavily on the oil sector. As the government is the country's leading employer, the private sector accounts for only a small share of the job market.

As for the job market in 2019, according to the World Bank (2020), Iraq's job market was characterised by a 48.7% employment rate (one of the world's lowest). The overall unemployment rate in that same period, according to the International Monetary Fund (2020), was 7.9% (compared to 9.9% in 2017-2018). It was even higher for young people and women. Only 12% of women and 26% of young people were employed. The situation today remains largely unchanged. Many experience difficulty finding work, or at least work that matches their qualifications (Hoffman & Jamal, 2012). Some 17% of the working population is underemployed. Finally, there is very little diversification among the professional sectors, since the economy depends heavily on the oil sector. As the government is the country's leading employer, the private sector accounts for only a small share of the job market.

Iraq's socio-cultural context is marked by two main characteristics. On the one hand, family influence on individual psychological development is significant – Iraq is a collectivist society (Hofstede, 2001). People do not act autonomously but rather as members of a group or organisation. An example of this is a mindset based on external causal attribution, in which individuals ascribe their own and others' behaviour to external causes or environmental factors (Heider, 1958). As gender roles are also highly traditional, jobs are often sex-typed and it is very difficult for individuals to contravene such gender-based expectations.

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The higher education system in Iraq

Iraq currently has 35 public universities and 51 private ones. Five universities, four of them public (Baghdad, Mosul, Al-Mustansiriya, Salahaddin) are members of the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (Francophone University Agency), a global network of French-speaking higher education and research institutions. Higher education in Iraq can be characterised by four key attributes:

Higher education in Iraq can be characterised by four key attributes.

1. University specialisations are based essentially on academic performance – the programme of study a student pursues depends on the scores he or she earns in secondary school. Furthermore, to be accepted in an educational programme, the applicant must provide a certificate of completion of secondary education or vocational secondary education. The students with the best performance on the exams at the end of secondary school are able to choose their preferred university specialisation.

2. Programmes of study are very hierarchical. Students prioritise the specialisations that are the most prestigious (such as medicine and engineering) and have the greatest prospects for employability post-graduation – in particular those in the public sector – even if they are not genuinely interested in the corresponding programme of study. To be admitted to a school of engineering, medicine, architecture or science, students must have achieved top scores in the science portions of their secondary school exam.

3. Teaching is 'imposed from above' and traditional, with little active learning. The textbooks and equipment used are sometimes obsolete and out of step with the realities of today's workplaces.

4. Finally, opportunities for international mobility (e.g., internships, scholarships) are very limited.

The CDCs of the Universities of Mosul and Nineveh

The Universities of Mosul and Nineveh each have a CDC directed by a career counsellor-coordinator dedicated full-time to the role.

The Universities of Mosul and Nineveh each have a CDC directed by a career counsellor-coordinator dedicated full-time to the role. Two part-time employees also work at the University of Mosul's CDC. Many higher education teachers are invited to participate voluntarily in various activities offered by the CDC. The University of Mosul is the second-largest university in Iraq, after Baghdad. Founded in 1967, it is now composed of 67 faculties and has nearly 60,000 students. The University of Nineveh comprises only two faculties – medicine and electronic engineering – and has around 2,000 students.

Roles and typical activities of the CDCs

The CDCs' main role, as defined by the universities, is to help students find employment (enter the job market) and to serve as an interface between the university and the world of work.

In line with this mission, prior to our project, the CDCs were already offering three types of activities:

1. Organisation of summer in-company internships. The CDCs help students secure summer internships. The methods each university uses for this differ depending on whether the placements are with public or private companies, among other factors. The CDCs must also ensure the reliability of the businesses that take on the interns.

2. Support with writing CVs, interview preparation, and organisation of job fair-style events, at which employers, recruiters, and educational institutions provide information to students. The CDC in Mosul offers such an event once per year, but the coordinators would like to organise them twice a year.

3. Development of relationships with public and private companies, including the creation of a database of contacts.

The CDC in Mosul has also established partnerships with external non-profit organisations to train students in soft skills.

Role of the CDC counsellors

Thirty-two teachers were asked by the universities to participate in CDC activities and to make occasional contributions by assisting with the activities described above. Some contribute in other ways, depending on their skills and on their own initiative. They are not professional career counsellors, but specialists in other fields (e.g., medicine, engineering, data science, education) who offer career support in addition to their main responsibilities.

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Summary and goals

We took all these contextual aspects into consideration when creating the support programme, designed to help higher education teachers learn how to assist students more effectively in acquiring CMS. Indeed, these CDCs encounter many difficulties as they strive to achieve their goals. Some are structural, such as the lack of available jobs. Others are linked to the lack of tools and documents available at the CDCs. Still others relate to the limited skills of the teachers responsible for this mission, making it more difficult for them to provide services such as career counselling interviews.

However, developing CMS makes it possible to create opportunities to help individuals understand how the job market works, develop strategies to enter it, and recognise the limitations imposed by sex-typed roles, religious affiliations, cultural identities, and other forms of stereotyping (Irving, 2010, cited by Sultana, 2012). These skills can be a source of empowerment. Moreover, although acquiring CMS cannot directly create jobs, they can be considered an asset that the government and private sector can leverage to better match employment demand and supply (Sultana, 2014). CDCs can, for example, encourage students to pursue training that is more likely to lead to employment or to consider careers outside those defined by traditional gender-based expectations. They can also promote entrepreneurship or play a role – albeit a modest one – in combating poverty and social exclusion.

While CDCs and the development of CMS will not resolve underemployment, they can contribute to the achievement of broader social and economic goals. The main challenge is to introduce a contextualised, indigenous model that cannot be separated from the country's social realities and specific needs, as described above (Leung et al., 2009). Ho (1998) defines the term 'indigenous' as the study of human behaviour and mental processes in a cultural context, based on the values, concepts, belief systems, methods, and resources of the specific cultural groups being studied.

The main challenge is to introduce a contextualised, indigenous model that cannot be separated from the country's social realities and specific needs.

We will now explain the methods used to develop and empower these centres.

Developing career guidance and counselling training for career counsellors

The programme commenced in 2019 and continues to this day.

Participants

We are assisting approximately 32 teachers at the two universities of Mosul and Erbil. Their average age is 40, and currently, all but one of the participants are men. Their experience volunteering at the CDCs ranges from a few weeks to two years, but they are generally inexperienced. Most of them are staff members at the University of Mosul.

Training of higher-education teachers

Before beginning to train the teachers, we carried out a needs analysis. As a first step, we met with them in groups of 15 over two full days (16 hours) in the city of Erbil, in Iraq's Kurdistan region. They participated in activities designed to elicit their perception of the context and their needs in terms of CMS and training. The activities chosen were also intended to foster a group dynamic conducive to future engagement in their work at the CDCs. Two interpreters were also involved.

This phase led to the preparation of a needs analysis report, which included a training and support plan for the year 2019. In addition to the contextual aspects outlined in the first part of this chapter, this phase enabled us to identify the CMS that higher education teachers considered priorities. One of these, regarded as one of the three most essential skills, was gaining familiarity with the economic environment, businesses, and careers (Council of the European Union, 2004; Gille & Sovet, 2019). They also emphasised the importance of developing psychosocial attributes such as motivation, communication skills, a sense of personal effectiveness, and self-confidence. Two other CMS areas – namely self-knowledge (i.e., the ability to evaluate oneself, understand one's own characteristics, and describe the skills acquired through formal and informal education) and knowledge of education, training, and certification systems – were not spontaneously mentioned by the higher education teachers.

We therefore designed an eight-day training programme (64 hours, delivered in two four-day sessions), which was offered in September and December 2019. It focused on

the needs identified by the higher education teachers and the goals of Expertise France, while also taking into account international standards relevant to the CDCs' activities and the full range of CMS (Schiersmann et al., 2016).

The programme was designed to strengthen the counsellors' capacities in terms of knowledge, technical expertise, and soft skills. In developing it, we drew on reference tools published by the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG, 2018) and the European Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe (Schiersmann et al., 2016). For example, we developed exercises to teach interview techniques (i.e., individual or group; structured, semi-structured, or unstructured; and motivational interviewing).

The programme was designed to strengthen the counsellors' capacities in terms of knowledge, technical expertise, and soft skills.

Table 13.1 Counsellor training programme

CMS area	Knowledge	Cross-functional soft skills	Expertise
Self-knowledge	• Young adult psychology • Transition process • Role of self-esteem, motivation, creativity, decision-making processes and values in choice of orientation	• Listening • Oral communication • Teamwork	• Analysing student needs • Giving an interview • Organising and conducting a group workshop
Knowledge of the economic environment	• Knowledge of businesses and the job market (e.g., basic knowledge of human resources, corporate culture, the sociology of organisations, information about the Iraqi job market)		• Delivering informational workshops on the world of work • Performing surveys
Knowledge of education systems	• Knowledge of education pathways and the education system in Iraq		• Delivering informational workshops on training programmes

For example, in the self-knowledge area, the sub-area of values was addressed during a training session that included a definition of values, theoretical models, a questionnaire-based evaluation, and examples of value-focused workshops for students.

Activities such as role-plays and mini-projects were developed and implemented, then followed up with theoretical input and discussion.

In line with recommendations for developing CMS (Gille & Sovet, 2019), we aimed to ensure the active involvement of the higher education teachers. Activities such as role-plays and mini-projects were developed and implemented, then followed up with theoretical input and discussion.

The development of the CDCs

While the training sessions were underway, various initiatives were launched to support the development of the CDCs. First, we created a short methodological guidebook for higher education teachers to use in helping students develop CMS. This guidebook consists of 16 sheets covering four key areas:

1. Preliminary information: Key principles of career guidance, individual counselling interviews, group facilitation, and definitions of CMS.

2. Support for self-knowledge: Identifying personal values and interests, describing skills, and developing a career plan.

3. Support for acquiring knowledge of the world of work: Understanding key sectors, economic context, company structures, main business functions, characteristics of the labour market, conditions for entering the workforce by sector, writing CVs and cover letters, job interview preparation, and principles of entrepreneurship.

4. Information on training options: An overview of educational and training pathways.

The guidebook also includes suggestions for student activities. For each activity, it specifies the CMS being developed and the professional skills required of counsellors.

The guidebook also includes suggestions for student activities. For each activity, it specifies the CMS being developed and the professional skills required of counsellors. To familiarise teachers with the guidebook, two remote video-conference sessions were organised with full participation. As a starting point, we invited the teachers to share common student queries related to career guidance, whether individual or general. These questions then served as a basis for exploring how the guidebook could be used to analyse and respond to students' concerns.

Secondly, we supported the CDCs in drafting a framework document to guide their operations. To this end, four three-hour sessions were held with a pilot group consisting of CDC-affiliated higher education teachers, the CDC directors from Mosul and Nineveh, and managers from Expertise France. The purpose of this document was to help identify and structure short-, medium-, and long-term development needs. Active and experiential methods were used throughout, including workshops, discussions with European CDC directors, and brainstorming sessions between teachers and CDC leadership.

The final stage of this phase involves co-developing a set of support tools for students, in collaboration with a group of volunteer higher education teachers. Subsequent phases will focus on implementing training initiatives to support teachers in delivering selected activities from the guidebook. These will include session planning and delivery by teachers, followed by post-session debriefings and suggestions for improving content.

Throughout the project, we have also supported Expertise France in discussions with university department heads to develop a structured guidance programme aligned with the three approaches outlined by Gille and Sovet (2019): Allocating time within students' timetables for career guidance activities; Co-creating mini-projects with students; Embedding career guidance within academic subjects taught by each adviser.

Finally, it is essential to work with university leadership to formally recognise the role of career counsellors – in terms of salary, workload, and professional skills. As mentioned earlier, the teachers currently carry out this work on a voluntary basis.

It is essential to work with university leadership to formally recognise the role of career counsellors – in terms of salary, workload, and professional skills.

4. SWOT analysis of the implementation of counselling, education, and guidance for Iraqi teachers.

This section is devoted to a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) used to evaluate the project.

Strengths: the pedagogy and the conditions under which the training was implemented

It is essential to have a certain degree of flexibility when designing and delivering training in a field of practice and research that differs significantly from the participants' original academic background. The agency of the French ministry for which we are

working provides access to several meeting spaces, including an amphitheatre, as well as computers and video projectors. This allows us to implement a wide range of activities, alternating between short lecture segments and individual or small-group exercises. These activities often involve movement, role-playing, brief presentations, and discussion.

We also give participants the opportunity to test the support tools and methods themselves. As the training sessions are spaced out over time, we can ask participants to apply what they have learned in their real-life career guidance work with students between sessions. This gap enables them to reflect on the techniques, promoting analysis and a deeper understanding of how career counselling integrates with their primary teaching responsibilities.

As mentioned earlier, we assess participants' knowledge before and after the two training sessions (Part 1, Sub-phases 2 and 3) using a questionnaire. So far, the results show that, on average, participants demonstrate only modest improvement in theoretical knowledge (a two-point increase overall). However, while theoretical understanding improves only slightly, we have observed a shift in their professional attitudes as they begin to acquire practical expertise – such as interviewing techniques.

Weakness: uncertainty about how to adapt the approach to the local cultural context

The main difficulty lies in the challenge of indigenising the project. The political context and ongoing instability make it difficult, during brief stays of only a few days at a time, to fully grasp the mindset of the local population. We make the most of every opportunity for informal interaction with participants in order to remain connected to the local culture and to more effectively adapt the models and practices we teach. The Kurdish interpreters we work with play a key role in helping us understand certain participant attitudes and in contextualising their questions.

A second challenge relates to the counsellors' tendency toward external causal attribution. At the outset, they often focus on the (very real) obstacles they face, which hinder their ability to implement activities for students. In response to this, we consistently encourage them to consider what they can do personally, as career counsellors, to overcome these difficulties. This approach allows for incremental progress and helps to strengthen their sense of agency and capacity for action.

Opportunities: a system that is gradually taking shape

Many countries in the Middle East are working to develop career guidance systems to help young people acquire the skills they need to shape their futures (Sultana, 2014). As mentioned above, Iraq's two main universities – Mosul and Nineveh – are currently engaged in this process of change. The rectors of both universities support the initiative led by the French agency. The current plan is to establish these two universities as a pilot project, with a view to expanding the approach to other educational institutions across Iraq.

Many countries in the Middle East are working to develop career guidance systems to help young people acquire the skills they need to shape their futures.

Threats: socio-economic and cultural difficulties intensified by the Covid-19 pandemic

This project faces a number of significant threats. Due to the pandemic, activities have had to be conducted remotely. Iraqi universities have experienced multiple closures, which has made it difficult to pilot and evaluate the career guidance tools with students. The support also remains unstable, as it relies primarily on a foreign partner – France. Furthermore, Iraq continues to face a range of serious economic, cultural, social, and political challenges, all of which pose ongoing risks to the successful and sustained implementation of the initiative.

Iraq continues to face a range of serious economic, cultural, social, and political challenges, all of which pose ongoing risks to the successful and sustained implementation of the initiative.

Conclusion

This brief chapter has outlined the methods used to support the gradual introduction of CDCs at the Universities of Mosul and Nineveh in Iraq, as well as the provision of career guidance and counselling training for future career counsellors, with due consideration for the country's specific context. These centres have the potential to contribute to Iraq's economic and social development by helping students cultivate their CMSs.

The project is being implemented over several years in successive phases: analysing needs and context; delivering training; providing tools and a formal CMS guidebook; and drafting a CDC framework document. The central challenge lies in developing a contextualised, indigenous model – one that is inseparable from the country's social realities and specific needs. Based on our experience, we can highlight a few key factors that had to be taken into account when designing this type of localised training model.

The project is being implemented over several years in successive phases: analysing needs and context; delivering training; providing tools and a formal CMS guidebook; and drafting a CDC framework document.

Firstly, for the programme to be truly contextualised, time needed to be spent understanding the local environment. The initial needs-analysis phase was vital. Conducted through group discussions and questionnaires with future training participants, it allowed us to assess how they perceived their roles as teachers and prospective counsellors. However, once the first session began, it became clear that this phase had been insufficient – we also needed to engage directly with students. An initial meeting with a student group proved highly valuable in identifying specific barriers and enablers in their daily lives. Ongoing dialogue with the participants throughout the training has also been essential. This regular feedback allowed us to continuously adapt the programme to their needs and knowledge levels.

Secondly, the heterogeneity of the counsellors presented another challenge. They did not share the same experience within the CDCs, nor did they have a common foundation in training, needs, or even definitions of career guidance or CMS. As such, a shared professional culture needed to be built gradually – meeting by meeting, discussion by discussion – which requires time and sustained engagement.

A third issue relates to the role and representation of women. As previously noted, the development of CMS creates opportunities for individuals to devise strategies for entering the workforce and to recognise the constraints imposed by gendered roles (Irving, 2010, cited in Sultana, 2012). During the needs-analysis phase, some counsellors raised the issue of gender inequality. For example, they noted that certain sectors, such as teacher training, were reserved for women, and that contacting female students was sometimes difficult, as this could only be done via their father, brother, or husband. In one exercise where counsellors were asked to imagine an ideal CDC, the topic of gender diversity quickly emerged. Should male and female students share a space during group sessions, or not? This question led to a valuable discussion. It is also important to note that only one of the participating counsellors is female.

The indigenous model emerges through the ongoing transformation of how both trainers and participants understand and approach career guidance and CDCs. These two perspectives evolve throughout the training and increasingly allow for mutual understanding. Ultimately, the indigenous model seems to be less a predefined set of criteria and more a continuous process of adaptation – one that unfolds through a series of formal and informal exchanges across various stages of the project.

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Section 4

Strategies for implementing career education



14

Basic education and (early) career education: A practical case study from Kosovo

Denis Simon



Abstract

Kosovo's two participations in the PISA study (2015/2018) ruthlessly laid bare its educational sector's weaknesses: Kosovar students lack critical thinking skills, creativity and problem-solving skills, and the country's educational system does not prepare its young people adequately for their future professional careers. Furthermore, the public educational system does not offer any high-quality career orientation for lower- and upper-secondary school students, and Kosovar teachers often lack the capacity to build their students' career management skills. Finally, a cooperation between lower-secondary schools and enterprises or businesses hardly exists. Against this backdrop, the present chapter addresses the facilitation of the transition from lower-secondary education to the labour market and is based on two guiding questions: a) how can lower-secondary students be better prepared for the needs of the labour market, and b) what kind of instruments could teachers use to help students obtain and develop relevant knowledge, skills and capacities. By focusing on the interventions implemented by the Basic Education project in Kosovo, the example of the '*Career Orientation Clubs*' will be discussed in this paper. This instrument, established at twenty champion schools, aims to improve the career management skills of lower-secondary students and offers career orientation through a number of relevant activities.

Keywords
Kosovo, PISA, basic education, career orientation, skills development

Introduction

The Republic of Kosovo has been independent since 2008 and is therefore Europe's youngest state.[1] Given that Kosovo sees its future in the EU in the long run, convergence with European standards in the education sector seems inevitable. Despite the profound reforms Kosovo's educational system has undergone since the early 2000s, capacities at all levels of the educational sector are still not sufficient to achieve the devel-

[1] Kosovo declared self-independence from Serbia in 2008. Although the USA and most member states of the European Union (EU) recognised Kosovo's declaration of independence from Serbia back then, Serbia, Russia and a significant number of other countries – including several EU member states – did not.

opment objectives of the Kosovar Government in terms of inclusive and qualitative education. As Sommers and Buckland (2004) have pointed out in their study on rebuilding Kosovo's education system, one of the reasons for that might be that Kosovo's educational system is still rooted in the past and therefore shows 'remarkable resilience and cannot easily be displaced by new frameworks, no matter how rational or progressive the new frameworks appear' (Summers & Buckland, 2004, p. 150).

Kosovo's Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) has also recognised the need for reform of its educational system, and particularly of its career guidance system. For instance, it published a *Strategy Paper* on professional practice in which several strategic priorities are listed, aiming to improve the current system. These strategic priorities include, for example, provision of a framework for coordinated work of local actors and an increase in the number of employers providing places for professional practice and enhancing the quality of professional practice in order to equip teachers with knowledge, skills and appropriate support mechanisms (MESTI, 2013). One year earlier, MESTI published its *Core Curriculum for Lower Secondary Education*, which dedicates an entire section to the development of the so-called life skills (i.e. personal development skills), in addition to skills which are clearly related to the field of career counselling and orientation (MESTI, 2012).

Despite the reforms and new methodological approaches introduced to Kosovo's educational system over the years, it has remained a challenge to 'strike a balance between enduring traditions and visionary changes' (Sommers & Buckland, 2004, p. 150). To mention one challenge: particularly inter-curricular skills (e.g. communication skills, problem-solving skills), which are considered quite important for life and work, remain underdeveloped and need to be addressed comprehensively. Therefore, it is no surprise that Kosovo's first-time participation in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2015 placed Kosovo among the three lowest performing countries, showing that Kosovar students lack critical thinking, problem-solving and creative skills. Unfortunately, Kosovo's second participation in PISA in 2018 did not show any improvement at all, as the country is still placed among the three lowest performing countries.[2] Apart from the fact that Kosovar students lack important skills, the country's educational system does not prepare its young people adequately for their future professional careers either. It does not offer high-quality career education for lower- and upper-secondary school students and Kosovar teachers often lack the capacity to foster their students' career management skills, or in other words: Kosovar students

Apart from the fact that Kosovar students lack important skills, the country's educational system does not prepare its young people adequately for their future professional careers either.

[2] Whereas the performance of Kosovar students in reading and mathematics slightly increased in 2018 compared to 2015, there was a significant drop of their performance in science (PISA, 2018).

are not properly prepared for the needs of the labour market. Finally, a cooperation between lower-secondary schools and businesses as well as an exchange between students/teachers and entrepreneurs hardly exists.

In the light of these challenges, the project 'Capacity Development in the Basic Education Sector in Kosovo' (CDBE), which is implemented by the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) *GmbH*[3] on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), supports Kosovo's Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) to foster the educational reform process through the involvement of the main stakeholders at all levels (e.g. official institutions, parents, children, teachers and civil society organisations).

During its previous project phase (1 April 2019 – 31 March 2021), the programme particularly focused on the linkages between basic education and career education. In order to link basic education with career orientation/education, GIZ joined forces with *Kosovo Career Development Foundation* (KCDF), a national consultancy agency and non-profit organisation working in the field of career development and career management (KCDF, 2021a). KCDF was tasked to establish *Career Orientation Clubs* at the project's twenty champion schools and integrate them into the existing school structures.[4] This joint extra-curricular activity was first implemented between May 2020 and February 2021 and it complemented other extra-curricular interventions such as *Theatre Clubs*, *Media Clubs*, *Science Clubs* which were implemented by different partner organisations at the champion schools.[5] Earlier this year, additional funding could be secured so that the cooperation with KCDF resumed, resulting in the continuation of the *Career Orientation Clubs* at the project's twenty champion schools in July 2021. Apart from introducing three new modules – including (1) resolving conflicts and mediation; (2) studying effectively and different learning styles; (3) video production/editing – to the clubs' existing curriculum during its current six-month implementation phase (July – December 2021), the main focus of KCDF is to enhance the students' capacities to sustainably operate the *Career Orientation Clubs* by themselves once funding has ceased.

[3] The *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) GmbH has been working in Kosovo since 1999 and currently implements projects in the fields of democracy, civil society and public administration, sustainable economic development as well as energy and environment.

[4] *Champion schools* are innovative primary and lower-secondary schools which are supported by the Basic Education project. They pursue an inclusive and comprehensive approach by linking all the main stakeholders within the educational system (school authorities, parents, students/teachers) and by offering a broad spectrum of extra-curricular activities and lessons to all children, irrespective of their ethnic background. The twenty champion schools are located in seven municipalities in Kosovo.

[5] The purpose of these different 'school clubs' (e.g. Media Clubs, Theatre Clubs, Science Clubs, *Career Orientation Clubs*) was to offer lower-secondary students the opportunity to 'try things out', to follow their interests and thereby to discover their talents, develop certain skills and obtain necessary qualifications.

The aim of the *Career Orientation Clubs* is to offer early career education through a number of relevant activities (e.g. skills development classes) by which lower-secondary students (grades 7-9) could foster their career management skills and competencies, whilst also obtaining important social-emotional as well as technical skills which are essential for mastering the challenges of the 21st century.

The aim of the *Career Orientation Clubs* is to offer early career education through a number of relevant activities (e.g. skills development classes) by which lower-secondary students (grades 7-9) could foster their career management skills and competencies, whilst also obtaining important social-emotional as well as technical skills which are essential for mastering the challenges of the 21st century. Of particular interest was (and still is) the question how the transition from lower-secondary education (via) upper-secondary education to the labour market can be facilitated. The methodological framework, developed by GIZ and KCDF, was based on two guiding questions: 1) what does it take to better prepare students for the needs of the labour market, and 2) what kind of instruments could teachers use to help students obtain and develop relevant knowledge, skills and capacities. By focusing on the interventions of GIZ and KCDF in Kosovo, the example of the *Career Orientation Clubs* will be discussed throughout this 'reflection on practice' paper. Throughout this paper, a number of examples of activities conducted within the *Career Orientation Clubs* will be presented and discussed within the framework of career education and its general principles and concepts.

Career Orientation Clubs: One approach to link basic education and early career education

The Career Orientation Clubs are student-driven initiatives that entail extracurricular activities and are managed by 15 students from grades 7, 8 and 9 (12 to 15-years old) and one mentoring teacher.

According to Hoyt (1977), career education can be broadly defined as efforts to help young people acquire and use the knowledge, skills and attitudes to prepare them for the demands of the labour market. Others, like the OECD, refer to career education or career guidance as 'services and activities intended to assist individuals of any age and at any point throughout their lives to make educational, training and occupational choices' (OECD, 2004, p. 10). Against this backdrop, GIZ and KCDF's joint cooperation of implementing *Career Orientation Clubs* at the twenty champion schools between May 2020 and February 2021 (and currently since July 2021) must be viewed. Its main objective was and still is to encourage professional growth of and provide career education for lower-secondary school students through a variety of activities, project-based learning and workshops.

The *Career Orientation Clubs* are student-driven initiatives that entail extracurricular activities and are managed by 15 students from grades 7, 8 and 9 (12 to 15-years old) and one mentoring teacher. They are authorised and supported by the respective school's management and their overarching objectives are:

- Empowering students to take up volunteer work;

- Helping students to obtain and develop the necessary life skills, e.g. communication and interpersonal skills, creative/critical thinking skills, decision-making/problem-solving skills;
- Helping students to obtain and develop the necessary career management skills, e.g. technical and profession-related competencies and skills which are required to master the relevant tasks involved;[6]
- Training, coaching and mentoring of staff (teachers/directors/quality coordinators), e.g. familiarisation with the concept of the Career Clubs, support in the implementation of the project activities.

Throughout its first implementation period (May 2020 – February 2021), the overall project comprised three phases:

1. Establishment of the *Career Orientation Clubs*, including selection of the mentoring teacher and the club's secretariat at the twenty champion schools;
2. Holding of first meetings with all clubs to discuss the concept of the *Career Orientation Clubs* and the activities to be implemented; capacity-building support was rendered to the clubs' secretariats through busulla.com training measures, Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and a comprehensive soft-skills training;
3. Provision of guidance and support to the *Career Orientation Clubs* during the implementation process, such as: a presentation of the busulla.com skills platform, several lectures on IDPs, the organisation of sessions on self-recognition as well as on exploring occupation and forms of employment, and finally, the implementation of a project idea to encourage project-based learning at school (KCDF, 2021b).

As has been mentioned, KCDF has been implementing activities within the *Career Orientation Clubs'* framework at the twenty champion schools since July 2021 due to additional funding. Within the six-month implementation period (until December 2021), new activities – such as mediation and conflict resolution – were added to the existing clubs' curriculum to further enhance the capacities and skills of both students and teachers. Also, KCDF and the staff (students/teachers) who are responsible for running the *Career Orientation Clubs* are currently developing plans as to how the clubs can be made sustainable after December 2021.

[6] 'Soft skills' such as communication, interpersonal skills, presentation as well as problem-solving skills are considered a part of the wider 'life skills' concept. Since the boundaries between 'life skills' and 'soft skills' are often blurred, and for convenience's sake, both terms are used synonymously throughout this paper. On the other hand, career-orientation skills are often clearly defined competencies and skills which a person is required to possess to accomplish a certain job or task.

In the following, three examples have been selected as they emphasise the importance of career education starting as early as during lower-secondary schooling. The following examples have been selected: 1) a self-recognition and exploring occupations session, 2) training on soft skills, 3) a project-based learning activity.[7]

The purpose of the self-recognition session was to complete an IVAP test (interests, values, abilities and preferences) as well as a personal potential test. This was facilitated through the career test section on the busulla.com homepage. Such a method is widely recognised as being the first step in the career orientation process as it helps students to identify their interests, personal values, professional preferences and skills/competences. It thus may pave the way for students to recognise their own potential concerning their favourite occupation(s) or future career choice(s). The self-recognition session was coupled with a follow-up session on exploring occupations and various forms of employments. At these sessions, students obtained information about more than 300 occupations and learned about what particular knowledge, skills and qualifications are required and what kind of benefits each profession could bring. By inviting entrepreneurs, business owners, and people from various professional backgrounds, students could learn first-hand what kind of skills and qualifications are required in certain professions.

The second example which is highlighted here is the *Career Orientation Clubs*' training on soft skills. This training was based on KCDF's Soft Skills Module, which was specifically developed for this purpose. Throughout this module, the students partaking in the *Career Orientation Clubs* invited other students from their school to have an interactive and comprehensive an approach as possible. During this training, students were familiarised with the importance of soft skills in today's world of work. As mentioned before, soft skills may be considered as communication skills, team skills, social/intercultural skills. Apart from becoming familiar with the importance of these skills within the world of work, the students also learned about which occupations require certain skills and competencies and were able to align their soft skills to the respective occupation and its requirements. Throughout the sessions, the students were able to improve their (soft) skills by participating in interactive group work sessions, e.g. job interviews and other interactive activities.

[7] Initially, all activities had been planned to be conducted as contact lessons. Due to the outbreak of Covid-19 in March 2020, KCDF and the schools were forced to conduct the activities virtually through a number of platforms, e.g. ZOOM.

Thirdly, the last activity being cited here is the project-based learning which was conducted by the *Career Orientation Clubs*. This was a project which the club members decided upon themselves and which focused on a number of skills and their practical application: critical thinking skills, communication skills as well as teamwork and interhuman interaction. To accomplish the task, the *Career Orientation Clubs*' members received the project-based learning material from the team of KCDF. Based on the material they had received, the *Career Orientation Clubs* organised virtual team meetings to determine which idea would work and how the respective project-based task could be implemented. The project-based tasks included anti-bullying campaigns, helping families in need, recycling projects as well as awareness-raising projects. As the tasks did not necessarily focus on occupations as such but rather on the use of a certain set of skills and competences, students were able to put their previously acquired knowledge to practice and could thereby further improve their skills.

Conclusion

The foregoing has been a description and analysis of the *Career Orientation Clubs* which were established at twenty champion schools in Kosovo between 2020 and 2021. As additional funding could be secured, the clubs resumed their activities in July 2021 and are currently being implemented until December 2021. The purpose of this 'reflection on practice' paper has been to discuss a number of activities that were designed to help lower-secondary students (grades 7 to 9) obtain and develop both soft/life skills as well as career orientation skills. The activities discussed throughout this paper included self-recognition and exploring occupations sessions, soft skills training, and project-based learning. It was argued that by starting with career education and providing career guidance services as early as grade 7 (lower-secondary school), students have the possibility and the time to explore their own potentials, preferences and can develop and enhance certain skills which are required in today's world of work. Since the target group also included students of the 8th and 9th grades, sustainability was guaranteed, as 7th and 8th grade students could carry on with the activities offered by the *Career Orientation Clubs* in the following school year.[8] With regard to the clubs' curriculum and its contents, 'self-exploration' and 'learning about myself' were particularly mentioned as positive feedback by participants. The overwhelming majority of students stated they

[8] Depending on the school and the extra-curricular activities it offers, 9th grade students might continue with the career education and enjoy the career guidance services provided by the upper-secondary school before either leaving school and join the labour market through VET (usually after 10th grade) or continuing with their education (until 12th grade).

Students were grateful to receive information and guidance as to what kind of professional opportunities there are and what is needed to pursue a certain career path.

were grateful for the opportunity to learn cooperation and communication with others and could thereby develop and enhance their personal skills and competencies as well as identify their own strengths and weaknesses. Also, students were grateful to receive information and guidance as to what kind of professional opportunities there are and what is needed to pursue a certain career path. Furthermore, the students highly appreciated that they were shown ways and methods to improve their weaknesses and/or to tackle personal difficulties.

Another reason in favour of offering career education and career guidance services for lower-secondary students is that it is intrinsically linked to essential aspects such as lifelong learning (which in itself is coupled with active labour market policies) and it enables students/young people to 'construct their own career' and to foster their career self-management skills. Also, by connecting students with entrepreneurs, business owners, various professionals, including parents, they learn first-hand what is required to succeed in a particular career. At the same time, involving teachers/mentors in all activities from the very beginning proved to be highly beneficial because they became familiar with the instruments used in career education as applied by KCDF and could thus apply them in their lessons (e.g. soft skill training). For instance, a workshop with each *Career Orientation Club* secretariat was held in September 2020. Its purpose was to present and discuss the plan of activities which was later sent to the mentoring teachers for further feedback and input. By this interaction between KCDF, the *Career Orientation Clubs* and schools, a comprehensive feedback mechanism was established. Thus, the teachers/mentors not only became (more) familiar with the instruments of career orientation/education but they could also enhance their own knowledge of the appropriate use of them through KCDF's support and guidance throughout the *Career Orientation Clubs* programme. However, it was recommended that the mentoring teacher who supports the clubs should be a teacher of the clubs' members, i.e. he/she should know the students of grades 7 to 9 personally as this might have a positive impact on the interaction between the students and mentoring teachers and thus on the whole dynamic of the clubs. This was not the case in all schools which caused a delay in the implementation of the clubs' activities. Another recommendation was that teachers should encourage more students to become members of the *Career Orientation Clubs* and support them with ideas and materials as well as by promoting the clubs' activities on the schools' social media pages.

All in all, it can be stated that the activities of this joint project have offered a solid basis for enhancing the schools' capacities for a successful implementation of career education and career guidance services in the coming years. Although the joint coopera-

tion between the Basic Education project and KCDF will end in December 2021, KCDF has pledged to continue supporting the *Career Orientation Clubs* at the twenty champion schools. At the same time, endeavours are being undertaken to institutionalise the *Career Orientation Clubs* across all lower-secondary schools. Thereby, any obstacles related to the long-term sustainability of the existing *Career Orientation Clubs* would be removed, and it would also pave the way for replicating the concept of career education and career guidance in the remaining schools.[9] In the end, the ultimate objective of all interventions in the field of career education and career guidance is to provide young people with the required skills and qualifications which help them to increase their employability and prepare them for the challenges and demands of the labour market of the 21st century.



[9] At the moment of writing this paper, a group of experts from Kosovo's Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and external experts are currently working on a new administrative instruction (AI) on career guidance (CG), in which the concept of the Career Orientation Clubs could be conveniently integrated.

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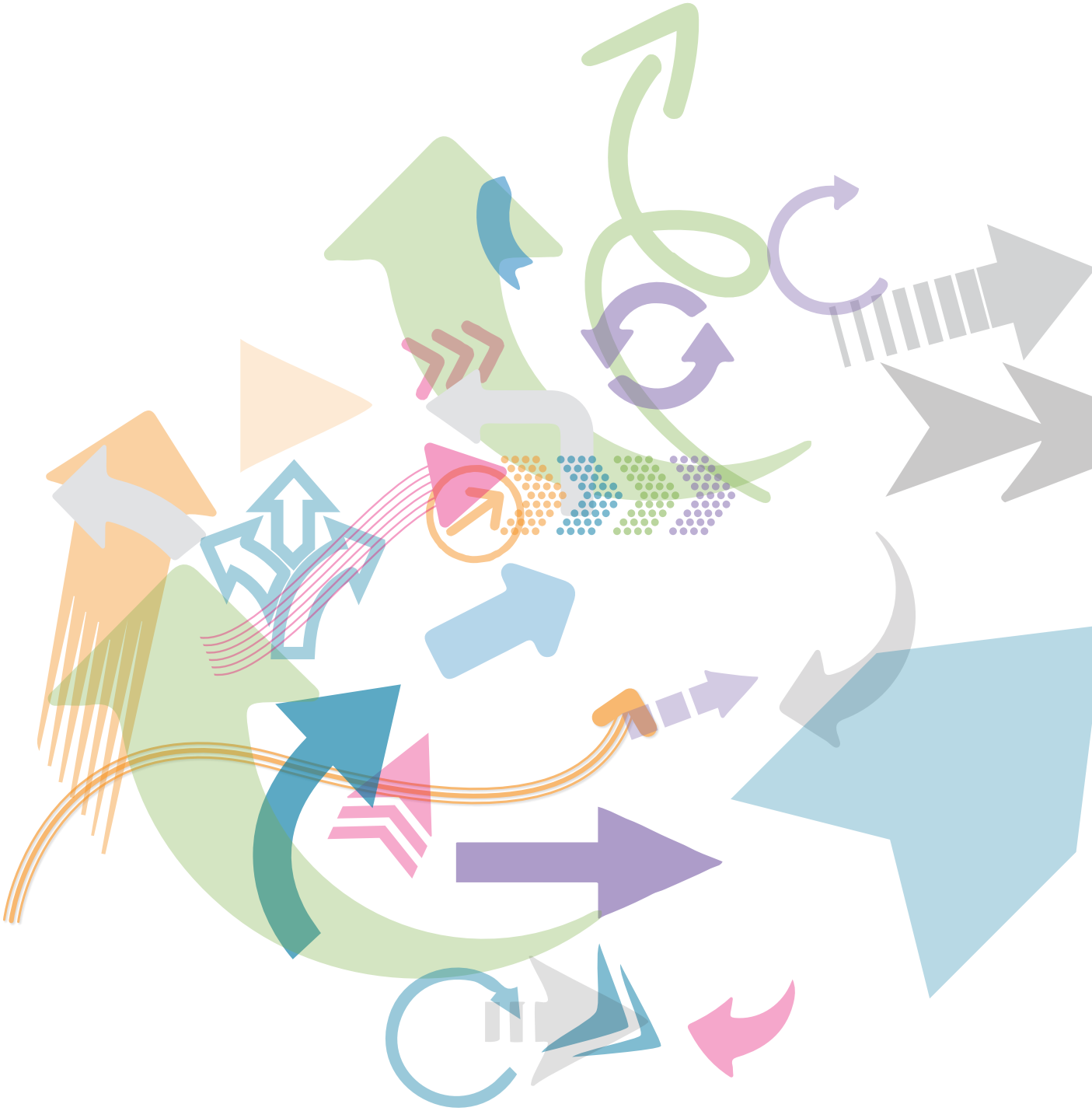
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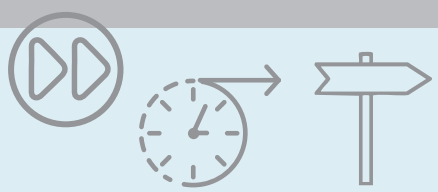


15

Jump into your future!: An online programme for the enhancement of career management skills

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Giuseppe Santisi





Abstract

The world of work today is characterised by complexity and change, and the resulting challenges are particularly demanding for emerging adults. The challenges presented in the career construction – in the period of emerging adulthood – together with the risky conditions of the working and social environments, can led both to adaptive and maladaptive outcomes; improving the psychological resources could help young adults in meaning making to the occurring events, subsequently developing effective strategies in managing uncertainty and risks. The online programme *Jump into your future!* is aimed to improve the career management skills; it is based on the Life Design paradigm and has the purpose to enhance the dimensions that will allow future workers to actively participate in their professional choices and decisions. The programme includes 15 online steps, conducted in a virtual class and three group meetings. Sixty undergraduate students participated in the programme and demonstrated greater levels of personal resources at its end.

Keywords
Risk intelligence, personal resources, online career intervention, decent work

Introduction

In a risky society (Beck, 2014), uncertainty and frequent changes are prominent characteristics. The first two decades of the 21st century have been characterised by increasing risky situations (e.g., globalisation, unemployment, sense of insecurity and precariousness, social inequality) due to rapid social and technological changes. These situations require new ways of reading the social and working contexts, as well as new psychological resources to deal with them. Subsequently, the increasing negative perception of the future could affect feelings of discomfort and hopelessness (Nota & Rossier, 2015). The concept of 'boundaryless career' (Arthur & Rousseau, 2001) is the most explicative definition of the forms that careers can assume (Magnano et al., 2021). This is particularly evident in emerging adulthood (Jensen, 2011), which is defined as a time of instability, characterised by frequent changes in job, educational directions and core life dimensions.

During this period of time, the emerging adults are focused on exploring life options, and this represents a major challenge for employers, career counsellors and higher education institutions (Murphy et al., 2010). The authors propose that the way of dealing with the increase in opportunities and the decrease of immediate responsibilities, is largely differentiated among diverse individuals: as highlighted by Murphy et al. (2010), many emerging adults view the multitude of options as exciting and empowering, others become psychologically paralysed, indolent, and in extreme cases, depressed as they leave higher education in search of their identity – an identity often most clearly expressed through the exploration of a meaningful career (Kenny & Sirin, 2006; Mortimer et al., 2002). The challenges presented in the college-to-work transition and in the career construction – during emerging adulthood – together with the risky conditions of the working and social environments, can lead to both adaptive and maladaptive outcomes (Arnett, 2000). Therefore, enhancing psychological resources could help young adults develop effective strategies for meaning-making, allowing them to manage uncertainty and risk in a constructive rather than maladaptive way. Murphy et al. (2010) emphasise that promoting the capacities to identify risks, uncertainties, fears, could help emerging adults in building their strengths and in learning to use their resources that will increase these strengths in the future situations. The programme *Jump into your future!* has been developed based upon the framework of the Life Design paradigm. This model provides constructs and methodologies for understanding and supporting emerging adults in career transition. The constructs of career adaptability and subjective risk intelligence, together with the core constructs of the positive psychology – such as courage, optimism, hope, self-efficacy – constitute the focus of the intervention, that uses the career construction and the challenges of career transitions as background themes in the stimuli proposed during the programme. Given today's globalised workforce, these constructs offer useful resources to enable individuals in actively adapt and flourish in the working world (Blustein, 2006). When emerging adults exit higher education and begin their transition to the working world, they are embarking on the first of potentially many career transitions, which will require varying degrees of career management skills and adaptability over time (Murphy et al., 2010).

Enhancing psychological resources could help young adults develop effective strategies for meaning-making, allowing them to manage uncertainty and risk in a constructive rather than maladaptive way.

Psychological resources

As stated in a recent study by Magnano et al. (2021), career transitions represent the critical steps to increase feelings of uncertainty and the experience of concern and discomfort for individuals. Savickas (2011) identifies unpredictability as the prominent characteristic of careers and work in the third millennium, emphasising that individu-

als should be enabled to respond adaptively to continuous changes, dealing effectively with instability that characterises the world of work. A successful career transition can depend on individuals' career management skills in different contextual conditions related to the transition and on the full use of their psychological resources (Santisi et al., 2018). The continuous process of adaptation, resulting from person-environment integration is at the basis of successful career development (Savickas, 2002, 2005): when individuals respond effectively to the environmental challenges through acquiring career management resources (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012), they are moving forward the active construction of their careers. The programme *Jump into your future!* has focused its attention on the psychological resources listed below, related to the career management skills.

A successful career transition can depend on individuals' career management skills in different contextual conditions related to the transition and on the full use of their psychological resources.

Subjective risk intelligence

Subjective risk intelligence can be defined 'as the capacity of a person to effectively assess the pros and cons of a decision in situations in which not all outcomes are totally expected' (Craparo et al., 2018, p. 968). Individuals with high level of subjective risk intelligence are more able to effectively evaluate the risks, considering their advantages and disadvantages, approaching them as an opportunity more than like a threat as well asfeeling more able to manage a lack of information, or to perceive uncertainty as an opportunity. In this construct, the term risk is considered as an adaptive dimension which allows an individual to focus not only on the negative aspects of a risky opportunity, but to assess its potential benefits (Evans, 2012). Accordingly, in the subsequent theorisations (Craparo et al., 2018), risk is characterised by positive attitude toward uncertainty, self-efficacy, imaginative capability and stress management. As underlined by the authors, subjective risk intelligence can be considered as one of the psychological resources that helps individuals to cope with an unstable world and to sustain and manage the world's increasing unpredictability and uncertainty. Subjective risk intelligence can be involved in career transition processes, playing a role in self-employment and entrepreneurship propensity, and affecting career adaptability (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012), job satisfaction, and career success (Craparo et al., 2018).

Career adaptability

In a recent work, Ginevra et al. (2018, p. 2) have defined career adaptability as 'a self-regulatory, transactional, and flexible competency for coping with developmental tasks,

present and future changes in the career context, promoting adjustment and successful transition across the career lifespan (Rossier, 2015; Rudolph et al., 2017).' Career adaptability is an essential resource to help individuals in dealing with their uncertain working future, with unfavourable working conditions, in coping with career future-fears (Rossier, 2015), actively adapting to changes in career, and finally increasing their well-being (Savickas et al., 2009). Career adaptability comprises four factors, the so-called four Cs: (a) concern, that is related to the positive view of the future; (b) confidence, one's ability to anticipate the success when facing challenges, that, in turn allow obstacles to be overcome and therefore enables the pursuit of career-related goals (Savickas, 1997); (c) curiosity, related to the propensity for exploration of new possibilities and opportunities; and (d) control, the individual's perception of being able to implement an adequate decision-making process.

Higher levels of career adaptability have been shown to be associated with higher levels of optimism, persistence, self-efficacy, an ability to search for information, a commitment to career choices and career decision-making, as well as an ability to imagine multiple possible future scenarios, and a lower possibility of perceiving internal and external career barriers (Ginevra et al., 2016; Soresi et al., 2012; Wilkins et al., 2014). Longitudinal studies have also shown that career adaptability facilitates young people in improving their career management skills (Neuenschwander & Garrett, 2008; Patton et al., 2002). Furthermore, Pouyaud et al. (2012) have found that career adaptability has a negative correlation with fear of failing with regard to career, suggesting that higher levels of career adaptability are related to higher engagement with the future rather than a fear of failure (Ginevra et al., 2018).

Courage

Courage is a behavioural construct characterised by the presence of fear, the intentionality of the action, and the significant goal (Norton & Weiss, 2009). Courage helps people to resist succumbing to external problems and maintain a desire to complete goals that are significant to the individual (Magnano et al., 2019). Courage is also linked to individuals' intentionality to pursue a significant goal;in several studies (Fowers et al., 2017) courage has been found to enable individuals to protect something considered important, despite humans' vulnerability. Therefore, if courage presents these features, our future can be considered something important to protect, especially in periods of transition and insecurity. Previous research has shown that courage plays the role of a protective factor in dealing with risky and stressful conditions (Magnano et al., 2017),

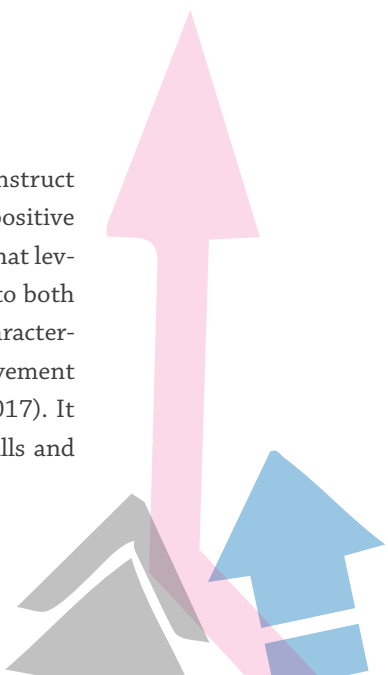
in implementing coping strategies, making career choices and in career planning career despite existing fears (Watson, 2003). Job changes, frequent career and life transitions and the perceived risk for future prospects can be ae source of fear, while courage, as a psychological resource, can be an adaptive behaviour which supports individuals in facing the demands coming from their work contexts and the difficulties related to career transitions (Santisi et al., 2020). Ginevra et al. (2018, p. 459) stated that courage can be defined as 'an adaptive behaviour to cope with career development tasks and changing work and career conditions and for promoting life satisfaction'.

Optimism

Optimism can be defined as the tendency or attitude to interpret situations and events positively (Sheldon & King, 2001), and to expect positive outcomes even in the face of obstacles (Scheier & Carver, 1985). It is connected with a series of adaptive psychological qualities (Segerstrom, 2010) and to academic and professional success (Segerstrom, 2007; Solberg Nes et al., 2009). Individuals who have higher levels of optimism experience less psychological distress, even when things do not coincide with their expectations (Carver et al., 2010). Optimism is also considered an important predictor for career goals, planning, exploration (Patton et al., 2004) and psychological well-being (Scheier et al., 2001 Young people with higher levels of optimism have lower psychological maladjustment and aggressiveness as well as higher life satisfaction and self-esteem (Chang, 2001; Chang et al., 1997; Extremera et al., 2007). Furthermore, research on decision-making strategies in adolescence shows that higher levels of optimism positively correlate with more adaptive decision-making styles (Magnano et al., 2015).

Hope

According to Snyder's theory (1994), hope is a positive cognitive-motivational construct based on the assumption that human actions are goal directed. Focusing on the positive developmental characteristics of adolescence, Schmid et al. (2011) have shown that levels of intentional self-regulation and of a hopeful future can predict belonging to both the positive development trajectories in adolescence and the negative ones characterised by depressive symptoms and risky behaviours. Studies on academic achievement reveal that hope predicts better academic-related outcomes (Marques et al., 2017). It has also been found that high-hope students have greater problem-solving skills and



employ fewer disengagement strategies to cope with stressful academic situations than low-hope students (Chang, 1998).

Furthermore, hope has been considered an important construct involved in working related behaviours and outcomes. Hope in the working context has been studied almost exclusively in the framework of Positive Organisational Behaviour (Luthans & Avolio 2009), where it is one of the constituents of psychological capital (Luthans, 2002; Luthans & Youssef, 2004) together with optimism, efficacy, and resilience (Luthans et al., 2007). The hope dimension is conceptualised according to Snyder's (1994) proposal as the perseverance toward goals and, when necessary, the capacity to redirect paths to goals in order to succeed (Luthans et al., 2007).

As stated by Niles et al. (2010, p. 102), 'being hopeful is essential for managing one's career development. Hopefulness relates to envisioning a meaningful goal and believing that positive outcomes are likely to occur should specific actions be taken. Having a sense of hope allows the person to consider the possibilities in any situation and propels the individual to take action.' In a study of graduate students, Alexander and Onwuegbuzie (2007) found that those with higher levels of hope were less likely to procrastinate on tasks. These findings highlight the importance of having a sense of hope in managing various aspects of career development, as hope enables individuals to believe they can take specific steps to achieve their future goals (Niles et al., 2010).

Self-efficacy

Over the last twenty years, previous research has demonstrated that self-efficacy relates strongly and significantly to several academic positive outcomes and career-related dimensions. First, self-efficacy determines the degree to which individuals initiate and persist with tasks (Bandura, 1986). Regarding the academic outcomes, numerous studies have demonstrated that academic self-efficacy is a reliable predictor of salient psycho-educational outcomes, such as motivation and academic success (Richardson et al., 2012; Robbins et al., 2004). Self-efficacy has also been shown to be a strong motivational factor involved in students' academic task choices (Pajares, 2008) and in the use of effective self-regulatory learning strategies (Walker et al., 2006). In Kitsantas et al.'s research (2008), self-efficacy was found to be a predictor of academic performance as well as academic achievement (Boerchi et al., 2021).

In career theory, the Socio-Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) model highlights the role of self-efficacy beliefs in career development (Lent et al., 1994, 2002). In a longitudinal study, Pinquart et al. (2003) found that individuals with high self-efficacy beliefs and better grades were less likely to become unemployed and more likely to be satisfied with their jobs. This was further underlined by Grether et al. (2018) who found transitions are generally characterised by experiences of novelty, ambiguity, and insecurity (Caspi & Moffitt, 1993; Perrig-Chiello & Perren, 2005), and self-efficacy beliefs are essential in successfully mastering the associated challenges (e.g., Chemers et al., 2001; Pinquart et al., 2003; Rigotti et al., 2008).

Representations of work and decent work

The psychological concept of work encompasses several core meanings: the expression of individuals' identity; the possibility of acquiring a particular social status, prestige, and power; the opportunity to both participate in social exchange and to provide something economically or socially meaningful to the community. The recent definitions of the concept of work are in line with the Psychology-of-Working Framework (PWF; Blustein, 2001, 2008), according to which people can meet three basic needs with work: (1) survival and power needs, (2) relationship needs, and (3) self-determination needs. Many people work primarily to meet survival needs (Blustein, 2006); however, work can help to meet higher-order needs that are related to relationships with colleagues and intrinsic rewards, all factors that relate to meaningful work (Blustein et al., 2008; Grant, 2007). Studies have also demonstrated that meaningful work can positively predict life satisfaction (Magnano et al., 2019) as well as influencing an individual's personal fulfilment (Kahn, 2007).

The term 'decent work' was coined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as a way of describing employment that is productive, offers security and equitable growth opportunities for employees, respect for human rights, prospects for individual development and social integration. In a recent study aimed at providing a transdisciplinary perspective on decent work, Di Fabio and Maree (2016) proposed a review of the notion of decent work from the point of view of different disciplines that are involved in its definition: the philosophical perspective (Peruzzi, 2015) focuses on the intrinsic concept of dignity included in decent work, that together with equity, freedom, and security, constitute its core aspects. The analysis of the juridical point of view underlines the respect of basic rights, as the freedom to choose employment and equitable working conditions (Faioli, 2009). When considered from an economic perspective, the focus of

Developing an awareness of decent work, especially in young adults, has become an essential issue from a social, economic, and psychological point of view.

decent work is placed on adequacy and equity of remuneration, independent of sex, race or any other individual differences, as well as on the safety in the workplace and balancing work-life balance. As underlined in a very recent study (Magnano et al., 2021), these characteristics when linked to the concept of work can undoubtedly be considered essential at a political, economic, social, and scientific level. The existence, in the current labour market, of many examples of illegal, underpaid, and dangerous jobs demonstrates that there is still a lot of room for the application of these principles (Magnano & Zammitti, 2020). However, developing an awareness of decent work, especially in young adults, has become an essential issue from a social, economic, and psychological point of view, as it is a tool for fighting poverty (Sengenberger, 2001), and a prerequisite for the psychological health of individuals and groups (Blustein, 2008; Paul & Moser, 2009).

The programme *Jump into your future!*

This online programme was developed using the Life Design framework (Savickas et al., 2009). This approach takes into consideration that the individual lives in a rapidly evolving context and reacts actively to these changes (Almudever et al., 1999). Consequently, career counsellors must take these changes into account and can no longer rely on the notion of stability that characterised the world of work up until the last century. In a career intervention, attention must be paid not only to the content of the activities but also to how these activities are proposed (Vondracek & Fouad, 1994), for example the careers counsellor works with the client to co-construct their life project (Masdonati & Dauwalder, 2010). In order to achieve this it may be necessary to work with the client around developing their personal resources. This can be achieved with the aid of technology, with online professional counselling experiences were already known among guidance practitioners (Walsh, 2010) and proved to be equivalent to de visu ones (Pordelan et al., 2018; Santilli et al., 2022). Already in 2004, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) supported the need to exploit Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to increase access and improve the efficiency of career guidance services at international level (OECD, 2004).

Among the advantages identified in the use of ICT we find the fact that interventions can be conducted at any time and place most convenient for clients; moreover, the interventions significantly reduce some of the potentially discouraging factors from accessing career counselling services, such as lack of anonymity and stigma (Gati et al.,

2003). The programme *Jump into your future!* aimed to exploit the advantages of the use of ICT by combining them with the purposes of Life Design (Savickas et al., 2009).

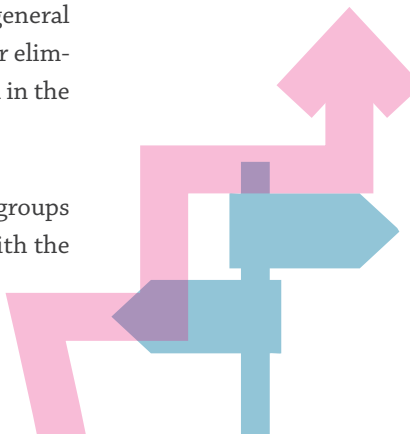
We tested the programme in the Italian context. Education in Italy includes the following cycles: Children can attend nursery school (from birth to three years) and infant school (from three to six years), but neither of these options are compulsory. From the age of six, compulsory education begins, with primary school (from six to ten years), junior high school (from 11 to 13 years) and high school, from 14 years; the latter is mandatory up to the age of 16 years. Those who continue to attend high school receive a diploma and can access higher education e.g. University. Degree programmes may either follow a single-cycle structure (lasting five or six years) or be divided into a two-tier system comprising a first-cycle degree (three-year course) and a second-cycle master's degree (two-year course). Students then encounter a major life transition as they move from education to the world of work. This is a particularly important milestone in emerging adults' lives, during which students must develop the necessary resources to actively adapt to the world of work and promote their well-being (Magnano et al., 2021). For this reason, we believe that the time that coincides with studies can be the best moment to equip students with the necessary resources to prepare for their future.

Participants and procedure

A total of 61 participants took part in the study: 8 of them were male and 53 female and were of an average age of 22.69 years (*SD* = 1.97). All participants were students in a degree course in psychology and had completed an an internship. In exchange for their participation, the students received validation of a few hours of internship in the form of university training credits. The students did not receive any economic compensation. At the time of the study, all of the students were attending a first-level degree course.

Students participated in a career counselling programme delivered primarily online. A preliminary version of the programme was tested with two small groups of students (three or four participants per group). This version was used solely to gather general feedback on the programme. Based on this feedback, several activities were either eliminated or modified. The students involved in these initial trials were not included in the subsequent evaluations presented in this chapter.

After defining the programme, we recruited other students and formed four groups composed of 15 to 16 participants. Each group participated in three meetings with the



career counsellor (initial, ongoing, and final) interspersed with some online activities that will be described below. Virtual classrooms were created for online activities. Students received the activities every three days and only the career counsellor had access to the participants' reflections. This ensured the strict confidentiality of the data. All participants completed both the pre-programme and post-programme measurements.

Sections

The programme was divided into three sections (see Table 15.1) during which participants were presented with stimulus materials in the form of cards with open questions, readings, videos, films, or life stories; students were invited to report their reflections in writing.

Section 1 was based on personal reflections relating to one's past. This section was preceded by a 2-hour meeting with the career counsellor. During this meeting, the objectives of the course were explained to the participants and technical information was provided on the use of the virtual classroom. The second section included reflections on one's present situation.

During the Section 2, there was a further meeting with a career counsellor lasting a further two hours. During this meeting, the career counsellor discussed everything that had emerged up to this point and suggested other elements to reflect on, including dimensions of the programme and on the participant's own self.

Finally, the Section 3 referred to the future. During this section, the participants carried out reflection activities on the future and built their career plans. At the end of the programme, the participants received a letter entitled 'letter to me ...' which summarised all the activities carried out within the course. In this case, the letter began with a reflection on one's past, the changes that have taken place and which have led to the current situation and ended with a reflection on one's future, which included one's work desires.

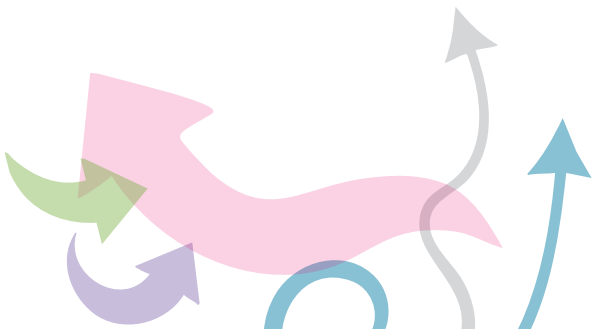


Table 15.1 Contents of the programme Jump into your future

Sections	Exercises	Dimensions	Activities
Introduction	Welcome		
Section 1	1 Passages	Past and change	Analysis of change and exploration of the past
	2 Fears	Change and fears	Recognition of fears and how they are overcome
	3 Risk	Risk-intelligence	Identification of moments in the past in which one took a risk
	4 Courage	Courage	Reflections on past situations
Section 2	5 Hope and Optimism Videos	Hope and Optimism	Watching motivation video and reflections
	6 The meaning of life	Hope and Optimism	Reading a book and reflections
	My resources	Self-knowledge	Analysis of personal resources
	7 Risk	Risk-intelligence	Watch risk videos
	8 Courage	Courage	Reading a stimulus story and reflections
Section 3	9 Kindness	Life Satisfaction	Be kind to others
	10 My self-efficacy model	Self-Efficacy	Identification of a self-efficacy model for the future
	11 Film	Courage and decent work	Watching and commenting on a film
	12 Decent work	Decent work	Reflections on the future work
Closing	Personal reflections		

Section exercise

Prior to the start of the programme, a meeting was facilitated by a career counsellor, during which the objectives of the programme and information about the use of the virtual classroom were shared. Participants were informed that only the career counsellor would have access to their reflections.

Section 1 focused on participants' past and included four exercises done in online mode. In Exercise 1, participants watched a video and reflected on change; after the vision, the participants had to write the most significant changes in their life. A positive vision of change was proposed. Exercise 2 added the theme of fear. Participants were asked to ac-

knowledge their fears and reflect on past situations in which they had managed to overcome the fear of something. Following the same modality, in the subsequent exercise, participants were asked to identify situations in which having risked had some successes. Finally, the last exercise of this section involved watching two videos on courage and reflecting on courageous moments experienced in the past.

Section 2 included four exercises carried out online and a group meeting face-to-face, central to the online activities. In this section, the focus was on the importance of personal resources and self-knowledge, with an emphasis on the present. The first exercise in this section involved watching two videos and writing their own reflections. Exercise 2 invited participants to read a small book on the meaning of life and to write down their reflections. During the face-to-face meeting, participants carried out self-discovery activities: they analysed their resources and began to write their professional project. In the next two online exercises, participants watched videos (Exercise 7) and read a stimulus story (Exercise 8) before writing down their reflections.

The third section focused on the future and included four online exercises. The first exercise asked participants to perform acts of kindness towards someone: each participant had to perform one act of kindness per day for five days. The second exercise asked participants to identify a model of self-efficacy that might offer them inspiration in the future: the subject was asked to think of a person with high self-efficacy and reflect on how to use this model in the future. The last two exercises of this section asked participants to watch a film and reflect on the concept of decent work and how they would like their future work.

During the final meeting, participants were given a summary of all the activities, entitled 'letter to me...' which collected the reflections carried out and which included their future professional project.

Results

To evaluate the effectiveness of the programme statistical analysis was conducted using JASP software. This software allowed the identification of any significant changes between the pre-programme phase and the post-programme phase. Furthermore, participants were asked evaluative questions at the beginning and the end of the program; allowing the researchers to review the programme qualitatively.

Table 15.2 summarises the results of the quantitative analyses. After the course, the participants showed improvements in the following dimensions: risk intelligence, courage, career adaptability, self-efficacy, optimism, and hope. We calculated Cohen's *d* index to evaluate the effect size; the improvements were large in the dimension of risk intelligence and medium in all the others.

Table 15.2 Results of the comparison between pre-programme and post-programme

		M	*SD*	*p*-value	Cohen's *d*
Risk Intelligence	Pre-programme	71.951	10.075	.000	.84
	Post-programme	78.410	10.845		
Courage	Pre-programme	29.803	5.753	.009	.34
	Post-programme	31.311	6.329		
Career adaptability	Pre-programme	102.541	10.834	.006	.37
	Post-programme	106.000	10.817		
Self-Efficacy	Pre-programme	38.410	5.786	.003	.40
	Post-programme	40.246	5.884		
Satisfaction	Pre-programme	23.328	5.907	.226	.16
	Post-programme	24.098	6.177		
Optimism	Pre-programme	20.803	4.788	.002	.41
	Post-programme	22.377	5.093		
Hope	Pre-programme	27.639	4.340	.008	.35
	Post-programme	28.918	4.436		
Pessimism	Pre-programme	10.557	3.575	.548	.07
	Post-programme	10.262	4.045		

Regarding the qualitative analyses, participants answered the following questions: how do you see yourself in a year? How do you see yourself in five years? What do you think of the risk? What is work for you? What is decent work for you?

Analysing the answers, the participants seemed to have reflected on their long-term future. A comparison of the pre- and post-programme answers to the question 'how do you see yourself in a year?' did not highlight any difference. For example, the participant #2 replied to the pre-programme: 'in a year I will see myself as a graduate' and at the end of the programme 'in a year I will be engaged in studying for the master's degree.' Participant #32 answered 'graduate' in the pre-programme and 'engaged in studies' in the post-programme. However, if the answers to the question 'how do you see



yourself in five years?' are reviewed, the participants showed some differences. For example, participant #50 in the pre-programme answered, 'I hope to be able to realise my dreams' and in the post-programme 'in 5 years I will be realised'; participant #58 answered 'I have no idea' before the programme and 'I'll be a worker' in the end.

As for the answers to the question 'what do you think about risk?', some participants gave a much more complex definition of risk after the programme. For example, participant #8, before the programme answered, 'I am not a person who loves risk' and after the training he wrote 'I think that within our life we have often settled in our comfort zone for fear and for not to be exposed to sorrow and suffering. But the comfort zone is nothing more than a cage that we have built for not facing the challenges that life places in front of us. Not trying only for fear of failure does not allow us to grow and experience. This is the reason why in life it is essential to take risks for what makes us happy because even if it goes wrong, it is always better than not having tried.' Similarly, participant #17 before the course answered 'all the choices that we are called to make in life include a potential risk. Not choosing means being paralysed so even if it is often frightening it is necessary to take risks and consequently responsibility' and after the programme he wrote 'I think that to live fully it is necessary to have courage and risk. If we never put ourselves off balance to avoid the risk of failing and being injured, we would end up running the much greater risk of living an empty life. To live our life at 360 degrees it is necessary to learn to grasp it when we feel we really want something. In that case, regardless of the result, it will never be a mistake. Go as it goes, it will always be worth it. I learned, maybe late and at my expense, that it is better to repent of having done something than to repent of not having done it. We have only been received one life; we cannot waste it living it from cowards.'

The concept of work is described similarly both before and after the program. For example, before the programme participant #50 wrote that work 'is an activity that allows you to live well' and after the programme 'it is something essential that allows you to live'; participant #53 before the programme described the work as 'that activity that allows to feel fulfilled' and after the course 'an activity that allows people to fulfill themselves and earn for a living.' The concept of decent work is described in a more complex way after participating to the program: participant #60 wrote that decent work is 'a path that guarantees you economic stability' before the program, while after specifying that 'A job is dignified when, in addition to being well paid and therefore not underpaid, it satisfies the person, is fair and guarantees the same treatment for all'; in the same way, participant #53 described decent work as 'an activity that is carried out respecting the person' in the initial phase and as 'that activity that allows the fulfillment

and well-being of people. It offers opportunities, freedom to choose one's employment, equity, security conditions and conditions of dignity and respect for the person' in the final phase.

Conclusions

This study pioneered a programme to equip college students with the tools they need to manage the transition to work.

The working environment in Italy makes many demands on those who, after graduation, would like to find employment consistent with their interests. In Italy, unemployment rose by 9.0% in 2020 and with an unemployment rate of 29.7% among young people (ISTAT, 2021). This percentage was likely exacerbated by the global coronavirus pandemic, which started in 2020 (ILO, 2020).

Those who are about to enter the world of work are less likely to find a job. To prevent unemployment, this study pioneered a programme to equip college students with the tools they need to manage the transition to work. Given that some dimensions can foster entry into the world of work and promote professional success (Savickas, 1997, 2005; Savickas et al., 2009), we have developed a programme aimed at improving risk intelligence, courage, career adaptability, hope, optimism, and self-efficacy.

The group of students involved, after participating in the program, showed higher levels in the dimensions involved. The effect size analysis confirms these results. This means that we have been able to provide students important psychological tools for the realisation of their professional project. The results were confirmed by both qualitative and quantitative analyses.

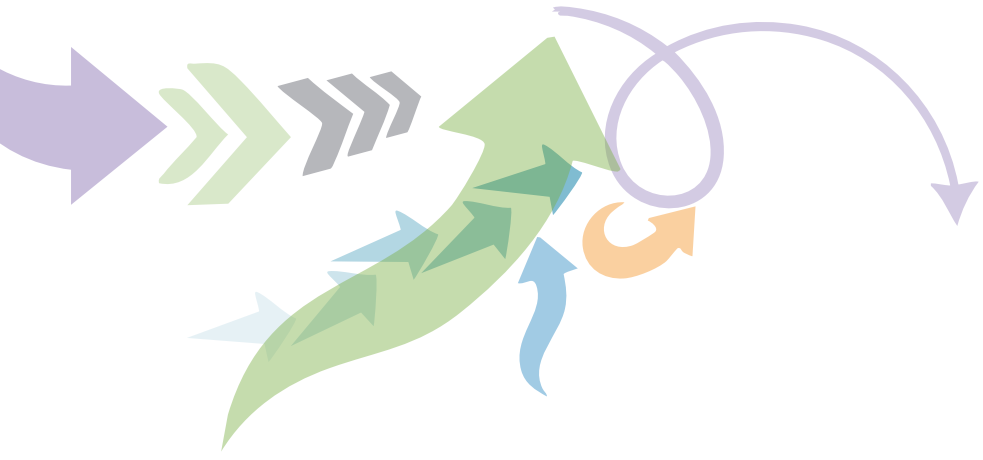
Moreover, this study allows us to state that career counselling models based on the life design approach (Savickas et al., 2009) can also be used by exploiting the advantages of technology. The internet is a complex phenomenon, increasingly intertwined in every aspect of people's life, learning and work (Hooley, 2012). As a result, the use of social media in activities related to career design and construction has increased considerably in recent years (Kettunen et al., 2013). Many researchers have highlighted the potential of this tool in the service of career counselling (Bimrose et al., 2011). Technology applied to career counselling and career education, in line with the suggestions of Life Design paradigm, can be useful in promoting the development of new skills, stimulating reflection and supporting/facilitating the acquisition of useful knowledge for dealing with professional transitions in the most consciously and satisfactorily way.

Career counsellors can use this type of intervention to foster professional development in young people that are facing challenging transitions. The activities and methods can also be adapted to younger groups aiming the same purposes, as shown by other experiences (Santisi et al., 2021; Zammitti, 2021; Zammitti et al., 2020).

However, it must be considered that this programme was developed to encourage personal and professional development in college students, without considering specific populations at risk. In this case, interventions should be more personalised and take longer to take (Hirschi & Lage, 2010).

A limitation of this study relates to the fact that the evaluation was based on changes between pre and post programme. 6- or 12-month follow-up should also be included to check if students continue to show the same changes.

The data collected this study is compelling in its results, which demonstrate that this programme can be an effective way of using technology in career counselling practices.



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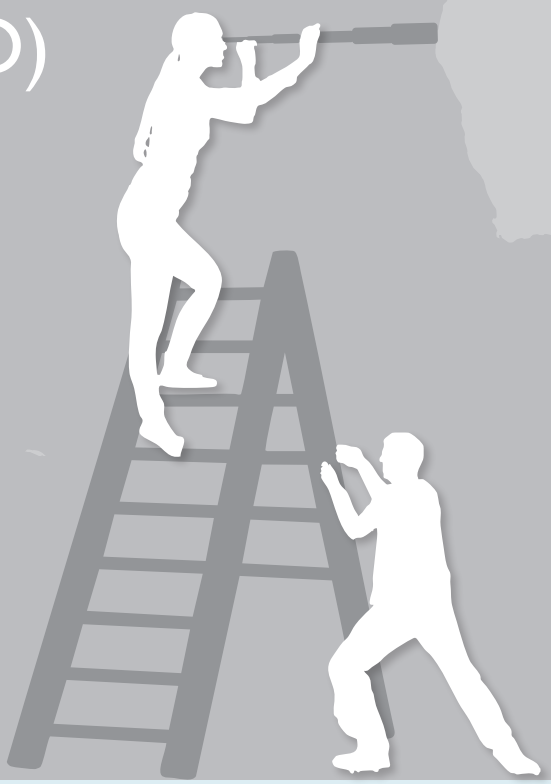
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16

Open and distance learning: Discovering, informing, supporting mobility in guidance (DINAMO)

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Abstract

In order to adapt to guidance projects open to an international dimension, Euroguidance France has set up an online training course. Euroguidance is a European network dedicated to promoting mobility in guidance and enhancing the professional skills of guidance practitioners. The course, called DINAMO, aims to develop professional competencies in guidance counselling related to international mobility. t is intended for all lifelong guidance practitioners who face the dual challenge of conducting guidance interviews and providing counselling that extends beyond national borders. DINAMO consists of four modules available free of charge online, each taking approximately three hours to complete: 1) A historical overview of international mobility and migration, 2) A introduction to European tools that support mobility and migration, 3) An overview of the various forms of mobility, and 4) An introduction to guidance counselling in the context of mobility. At the end of each module, a digital badge is awarded upon successful completion of an assessment. A dedicated forum allows for peer-to-peer exchange and encourages collaboration. In addition, course content is illustrated with real-life guidance scenarios to support the acquisition of practical knowledge and skills.

Keywords
International mobility, lifelong learning, guidance counselling, remote training platform, technology use, transversal competences, employability

DINAMO consists of four modules available free of charge online, each taking approximately three hours to complete.

The possibility of internationalising one's education and training has become a prominent contemporary trend in global relations. It can benefit both individuals and society by fostering the development of new skills, open-mindedness, and adaptability. The DINAMO (Discovering – Informing – Supporting Mobility in Guidance) online training platform has been developed since 2019 by the Euroguidance France network to support guidance practitioners in acquiring competences related to international lifelong guidance. This includes addressing questions such as: 'I am looking for guidance to help me study or train in my country, but also abroad,' regardless of age, employment status – be it school pupil, student, employee, or job seeker – or disability. Euroguidance is a European network of national resource and information centres that supports guidance practitioners and policy makers from both the education and employment sectors. It provides high-quality information on lifelong guidance and mobility for learning purposes.

Introduction

There are many reasons for choosing to study abroad, reflecting the increasing openness of our society to the world. Sometimes it is a choice, but in other cases it is a necessity in the context of globalisation trade, or climate change. Focusing on guidance in an international context is justified by the widespread international exchanges we see in contemporary society whether in terms of human relationships – including situations of expatriation and migration – or economic and cultural exchanges. This internationalisation was once again illustrated during the coronavirus crisis, as different countries gradually experienced similar situations. Despite the containment measures imposed everywhere, international relations continued in new forms, making extensive use of remote communication technologies and social media. Learners continued to be taught – or trained – wholly or partly by distance in synchronous mode – allowing direct exchanges – or in asynchronous mode – at their convenience while students' guidance and career choices were supported and continued even on mobility plans abroad.

The DINAMO training platform

DINAMO stands for 'Discover, Inform, Support Mobility in Guidance'. It is an online training for lifelong guidance professionals designed in four separate modules (see Table 16.1).

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Table 16.1 Structure and content of the DINAMO training programme

Module	Title	Description	Key elements
Module 1	Historical overview of mobility	A brief historical review of global migration and mobility trends, including current statistics. Highlights specific skills and competences gained through mobility as a foundation for understanding the benefits of international training.	Introduction to mobility, current trends, benefits of learning abroad
Module 2	European tools supporting mobility	An overview of key European tools that facilitate and enhance mobility experiences for learners and workers.	Erasmus+, ECTS, EQF, Europass, EURES, ENIC-NARIC

Module	Title	Description	Key elements
Module 3	Mobility experiences	A breakdown of various types of mobility experiences, both formal and informal, with a special focus on accessibility for people with special needs.	Study, volunteering, training, apprenticeship, working abroad
Module 4	Mobility guidance counselling	Introduces a counselling approach based on methods used by guidance psychologists in French public guidance centres (CIOs), focusing on mobility-related interviews.	Methodology of guidance interviews, CIO framework, practical application

For each module, there is a common framework: an introduction and overview of the skills to be developed, knowledge elements, practical cases, summary sheet, available resources to learn further and a final assessment. When the score is higher than 9/10, then a digital open badge is awarded. A badge is a digital image providing information about the achievements, skills, competences or qualities of an individual acquired through non-formal or informal education. For training organisations, to deliver open badges is an innovative way of competence recognition, providing modular and cumulative accreditations, adding playfulness in the learning context, generating interest and maintaining motivation for learners or tracking their progress. Today, the DINAMO open badges attest to the successful completion of the final module assessment questionnaires with a score of at least 9 out of 10. As the European Europass portal is intended to store relevant lifelong learning files (e.g., CVs, diplomas, badges), the DINAMO badges have been designed to be deposited there. They are intended to be developed in the future to adapt to possible developments in terms of certification.

A badge is a digital image providing information about the achievements, skills, competences or qualities of an individual acquired through non formal or informal education.

The training course has been accessed for sessions of a few weeks. Each session includes an exchange forum opportunity for peer-learning, managed by a Euroguidance facilitator. Volunteer professionals register freely by opening a personal account on the dedicated website: www.euroguidance-formation.org. They decide when they want to take part in the training. As DINAMO was designed on a MOODLE platform, Euroguidance owns the rights to it, which makes it easier for the platform to be developed. It has been previously introduced to European Euroguidance and EURES professionals, some of whom had tested it. Moreover the Nordic Baltic guidance professionals group is relying on it as a basis to develop their own training platform. In France, it might be transposed into the national training portal for education staff. Professionals working for

France Travail – the public employment service in France – are also interested in joining it. The universal MOODLE platform provides free dissemination as a tool whose development can be easily customised and shared. During 2019–2020, the following figures illustrate the participation of professionals in the training modules:

- **Module 1:** 380 guidance professionals attended, with 56 earning a badge after successfully completing the knowledge test
- **Module 2:** 181 participants, with 26 badges awarded
- **Module 3:** 135 participants, with 27 badges issued
- **Module 4:** 134 attendees, with 32 badges awarded

Modifications were introduced after a questionnaire survey was submitted to 30 professionals who completed the entire training course, only 12 responded. In response to their feedback, the improvements implemented concerned the formulation of questions, the length of parts, and the presentation of the required time. Overall, the feedback was very satisfactory. The 2021 version provides for some changes with the introduction of a more interactive training course for a group of 25 volunteer trainees, meeting during synchronous exchanges at the beginning of each sequence and associated with a Facebook group. A time limit will also be introduced (15 days per module), which the coronavirus crisis had not allowed to be implemented in 2019-20 as initially planned.

Guidance and mobility: What are the issues?

Practitioners can integrate the topic of mobility into a guidance interview with a client based on his or her personal life expectations. The theorical model is the dialogue based on life design (Guichard et al., 2017). The aim would be to take into account the individual's personal values in order to support him or her in setting up an individual life design project taking into account a broad geographical area.

Sometimes, a training project may seem more attractive when it is designed in another education system because it could offer the opportunity to improve both language and coping skills while studying.

Sometimes, a training project may seem more attractive when it is designed in another education system because it could offer the opportunity to improve both language and coping skills while studying. In France, since 2017, all secondary schools are involved in a school partnership and the public authorities have set a target for 400.000 French students to engage in Europe by 2024. Moreover, some higher education institutions have significantly increased their requirement for international mobility which is even compulsory in some cases (engineers, managers). Some students or profession-

als consider a mobility experience as a real added value on their CV (Coelen & Gribble, 2019). Others are looking for expertise in a particular field to generate a greater confidence in an international environment, or just a distinctive work experience. Although the democratic aspect of mobility and its effects on employability are discussed (Ballatore, 2015, 2017), it is clear that there are social and intercultural benefits (Brassier-Rodrigues, 2015, 2016). Given that this is the case, guidance practitioners realise that this opportunity should be offered to all, including minorities such as disadvantaged groups or people with special needs. This is also the focus of the European erasmus+ programme promoting lifelong learning for all people in Europe. From this perspective DINAMO used as a training tool that strengthens professionals' feeling of European citizenship and consequently that of their audience : by promoting a mobility, especially in Europe, it encourages this feeling of belonging. Finding out about cultural and educational differences abroad is generally experienced positively. This feeds curiosity and open-mindedness, which are highly valuable skills in the 21st century (Leppänen et al., 2014). In the face of with new situations, this fosters improved coping skills, new intercultural competences (Wodociag et al., 2020) and adaptation to the environment (Bennett, 1993; Lysgaard, 1955; Rohrlich, 1993).

Guidance practitioners realise that this opportunity should be offered to all, including minorities such as disadvantaged groups or people with special needs.

Enhancing guidance professional competences

DINAMO is addressed to all lifelong guidance professionals and has been designed by guidance professionals working in many field: education, vocational training and employment. This common training can facilitate exchanges between them. DINAMO also includes opportunities for exchanges via a social area and the setting up of a social media group. This opportunity to develop relationships easily, hold discussions and even cooperate online can be more restricted in the physical world. On the other hand, it is an active training where professionals engage themselves in a lifelong learning process that enables them to better understand the situation of their clients, who tell them about their individual pathways and ask questions about guidance and career choices.

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After completing DINAMO, on the basis of scenarios and after evaluation by questionnaires, guidance professionals are trained to acquire the following professional competences:

- Identify different learning mobility experiences abroad.
- Organise the stages of a mobility project abroad.
- Understand some mobility programs (Erasmus+) to present to their clients.

- Manage a guidance interview in a context of mobility abroad.
- Propose relevant forms of learning mobility abroad tailored to the client and the context.
- Use and advise on European resources facilitating learning mobility.
- Prepare a client step by step for a learning mobility abroad.
- Support a client to identify competences acquired during a learning mobility abroad.

DINAMO is also based on the deep empirical experience of some of the authors, French guidance professionals who specifically focused on international mobility (Euroguidance network).

Conclusion

DINAMO is a training media that is adapted to the present time: Easy to develop, allowing synchronous or asynchronous exchanges, open to interactivity, and promoting peer-learning. However, it requires particular attention to the overall organisation through a qualitative pedagogical approach that sets guidelines to support the learning process but also standards for the competences to be acquired. This professional training tool is based more on empirical practice than on any real theoretical basis, but there is ongoing Research on the effects of mobility. To illustrate the current importance of this theme, Université de Haute-Alsace (Haute Alsace University) has just inaugurated a transversal chair on interculturality in 2020 to conduct research in this area. Many reports based on statistics highlight the enrichment of the acquired skills after a mobility experience, in particular soft skills such as autonomy, adaptation, self-confidence, and open-mindedness (Observatoire Erasmus+ France / Éducation Formation, 2020). However, some Research studies in sociology point to the initial social specificities of the most mobile students, who often come from privileged social strata (Ballatore, 2015, 2017). There is therefore a need to democratise the mobility offers in order to be able to grant this type of opportunity to all groups, including those who are furthest away from having access to mobility (jobseekers, students undergoing vocational training or living in distant areas – urban or rural – and students with disabilities). For this reason, the training of guidance counsellors in mobility counselling is a way of democratising this trend. The provision of a free online training platform for guidance professionals appeared to be a relevant tool in this respect.

It requires particular attention to the overall organisation through a qualitative pedagogical approach that sets guidelines to support the learning process but also standards for the competences to be acquired.

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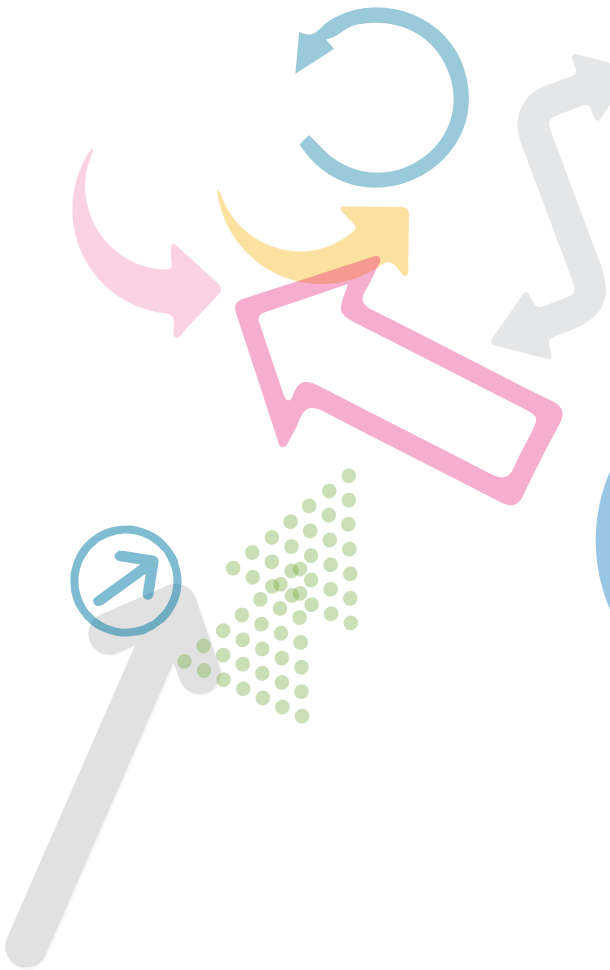
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17

Developing career management skills: Calling for an integrative perspective in career education programmes

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Abstract

In the last decades, we have seen an expansion in the focuses and goals of career education programmes and the strengthening of different theoretical and empirical approaches, which emphasise the ways in which development expresses itself and the role of contextual factors and, more recently, their integration into the developmental perspectives of the whole child.

After summarising the actions and programmes that have their foundations in these choices and approaches, the attention will shift to programmes conveying an integrative perspective in career education. Two educational paths will be presented. The first, *Systems of Thrust*, is more oriented to a systemic perspective, discovering the positive contribution of each individual and networking system in reaching personal and common goals; the second, *Sustainability agenda*, is instead aimed at discovering personal strengths and potential future roles within the sustainable development goals (SDG's) 2030 Agenda. Finally, implications for career practitioners involved in educational contexts will be proposed.

Keywords
career education, child development, systemic approach, SDGs

Introduction

Career management skills entail a set of multifaceted skills, attitudes, and competencies needed to help individuals identify their strengths, develop career learning goals and take action to enhance their careers (ELGPN, 2012; Sultana et al., 2016). They support individuals in leveraging educational and career opportunities, handling difficulties in the workplace, and maintaining balance among various roles at work, education, and family (ELGPN, 2012; Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou & Drosos, 2010).

Children, as future adolescents and adults will live in a globalised society characterised by high insecurity, challenges, and rapid changes. If the fourth industrial revolution, as described by Schwab (2015) could be considered a megatrend that reshapes our lives such that we struggle to predict it, then the school curricula need to consider it if we wish to have youth ready to enter and contribute to the economies of the future. Con-

Children, as future adolescents and adults will live in a globalised society characterised by high insecurity, challenges, and rapid changes.

sidering in-depth knowledge about traditional subjects, such as linguistics, mathematics, and technology, the agenda of future core skills includes complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy (World Economic Forum, 2017, 2018). That is, students should be helped to develop a deep understanding of themselves in their contexts and to make responsible decisions for themselves and others. The knowledge developed while exploring influences from their present and future at proximal and distal levels, such as familial and educational environments and national and global ones, supports individuals developing a critical consciousness, understand the complex dynamics and take actions that reduce inequalities (Kenny et al., 2019).

Accordingly, working to enhance career development in the childhood strengthens the foundation of career development across the lifespan, enlarging its potential transformative role for the individual and the community (Cinamon et al., 2019; Kenny et al., 2019; Magnuson & Starr, 2000; Watson et al., 2016).

By exploring the existing and most often used programmes in career education worldwide, two main tracks are identified, and a third one is recently developing.

The first track focuses on actions supporting knowledge development about the world of work.

The first track focuses on *actions supporting knowledge development about the world of work*. With these kinds of actions, children are required to imagine doing various work tasks themselves, having different jobs, and being a part of different work settings. They are asked to project the self into the world of work (e.g., a future worker self) to establish a budding worker identity (Porfeli et al., 2013). These programmes have their roots in studies that have investigated the development of occupational knowledge in children (Cinamon & Yeshayahu, 2021;Ferrari et al., 2015).

The second track of actions aims to support positive youth development.

The second track of *actions aims to support positive youth development*. Strengthening confidence, competences and attitudes is at the core of these actions (Gewirtz & Youssef, 2016; Weine et al., 2012). Children and adolescents are then involved in programmes of diverse lengths to guarantee a satisfying quality of life and wellbeing. The focus is, in fact, on promoting a future of quality by planning individual, small-and large-group educational programmes to be implemented before a career transition occurs and before an unexpected event makes a person more vulnerable to discomfort or non-effective decisions. These interventions stimulate positive person–environment interactions, promote proactive career behaviours and open them to developing and applying different resources for positive career development (Sgaramella et al., 2015).

Dedicated special issues proposed, in 2015, in the *International Journal for Education and Vocational Guidance and, in 2019, in the Journal of Career Development* and the book entitled 'Career exploration and development in childhood: Perspectives from theory, practice and research' edited in 2018 by Watson and McMahon, and the more recent from the same authors on childhood career development learning in the *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling* in 2022, offer important evidence of the growing interest in children's career development by international scholars, of the expansion in the focus and goals of career education programmes and the strengthening of different theoretical and empirical approaches. Emphasis was devoted to the ways in which development expresses itself and the role of contextual factors and, following the Third Wave of Education, their integration into the developmental perspectives of the whole child. Compared to the previous ways of education, the third way is characterised by a shift towards learning and teaching paradigms, for educational reforms to meet the new millennium challenges and address contextualised multiple intelligence, in which globalisation, localisation, and individualisation are called into action. The multilevel and integrated efforts are expected to provide 'unlimited learning opportunities for students to develop their lifelong capacity for multiple thinking and creativity for sustainable development in the 21st century' (Cheng, 2019, p. 11). Following this line, the call for an integrative perspective is foreseen. The attention to social and emotional learning (SEL) and 'whole child' development is one of the expressions of this perspective in recent studies, insofar as it seems to play several key roles in successful development. Children with strong social-emotional skills do better in school because they are more engaged, can cooperate with, and learn from others. Studies have shown that healthy social-emotional development in early childhood induces better outcomes in adulthood, such as improved health, better jobs, and more stable relationships (Domitrovich et al., 2017; Rea et al., 2019; Taylor et al., 2017). Evidence-based socio-emotional learning integrated into school curricula has shown higher academic success (e.g., better grades, higher engagement, adjustment, perception of mastery over the environment), adding to the development of new learning and means to handle global demands, labour relations, whether technical or interpersonal. A first attempt at an integrated career education programme has been recently proposed to Portuguese adolescents. The authors proposed two modules focusing, respectively, on social-emotional competences and career skills, such as the exploration of professional and educational opportunities, and interests. The programme was effective in increasing career competences, specifically information-seeking behaviours from diverse sources and people (Leal et al., 2020).

These findings call for an integrative perspective with the goal of fostering the Awareness of the Systems in Current Life and Active Involvement in Future Communities. As

Lerner (2011) underlined, individuals are embedded within systems characterised by contextual, ecological, developmental assets and relationships that shape learning and development (Osher et al., 2020). The main assets are represented by other individuals or the social system, which includes peers, family, mentors, teachers, coaches and leaders of other relevant social groups. Institutions, broader categories of the social system for each individual, for example, schools and other community or sport groups are also included as well as opportunities for interpersonal interaction and collaboration, which will more often exist within these social systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Patton & McMahon, 2014; Theokas & Lerner, 2006). As Lerner (2011) underlined, an individual plays a role in the living contexts, and recursive mutuality characterises the impact of the individual on the context and the context on individuals. Following Skorikov and Vondracek (2011), context's systems are relevant in child development: observations of attitudes towards work within families, cultural stereotypes, and models in the media may influence children's understanding of the world and their occupational identities alongside the range of pathways to the future, openness, and commitment to future goals The role is then recognised in career education as being effective in helping youth understand the contextual drivers that influence their development. So far, it can also support school engagement, a critical consciousness development, assuming an active role in transforming the life of all (see *Journal of Career Development* special issue). In the dynamic interplay, career management skills should then also involve the ability to read the complexities and interrelations across the contexts and how all of this could impact the development of the individuals and their proximal and distal environment of life.

Two tracks, in career education actions, which are potentially imperative for building career management skills, arise from these reflections. The first one drives attention to discovering personal strengths while introducing and focusing more on developing awareness of personal roles and influences from the contexts, thereby adopting a systemic perspective. The second track, still moving along an integrative approach while driving the attention to discovering personal strengths and roles in the community, introduces and orients the attention to sustainable development goals (SDGs) 2030 Agenda in mind and to possible personal contributions in building future communities.

Objectives

The current chapter aims is to provide evidence for the efficacy of these two sets of actions in promoting changes in the awareness of resources and attitudes that the recent

studies mentioned consider as the core of the new vision of career management skills for future adults, namely systems of influence (or systems of trust) and sustainability agenda. An explicit choice in this study is to describe them not as contrasting actions but as two specific sequential steps. Following this choice, basic qualitative and quantitative analyses were conducted. The first implementation of the two trainings developed according to each of the two paths will be presented to highlight their specific impact on learning and potentials for the development of career management skills.

Following suggestions from positive psychology, several psychological attitudes and resources dimensions have been targeted because they are recognised as resources and psychological capital in navigating work and life challenges:

- **Optimism** is relevant in future planning, as it drives a person towards putting more effort and persists to reach relevant future wishes, alongside positively facing experiences and challenges (Scheier & Carver, 1985).
- **Hope** is associated with positive career-related variables, such as vocational identity, career decision self-efficacy, and career-related beliefs (Amundson & Niles, 2013; Yakushko & Sokolova, 2010) and with educational achievement (Kenny et al., 2006). Both optimism and hope are considered here, as the literature has shown that they are two distinct constructs that may coexist in the same individual (Benyamini, 2005).
- **Time perspective**, is considered a prime variable in influencing individuals in proactively setting up their goals and expectations, regulating their behaviours and continually monitoring their performance on given tasks (Husman & Shell, 2008; Park & Jung, 2015).
- **Career adaptability** in recent literature is associated with career development and management skills and is conceptualised as a 'meta-competency' able to predict relevant advancement in career development alongside professional effectiveness, and facilitating the acquisition of other, more specific, competencies (Hartung & Cadaret, 2017; O'Connell et al., 2008; Zammitti et al., 2020).
- **Meaning in life and work-related goals** are proposed as relevant measures.

Furthermore, this chapter seeks to identify the specific development of knowledge associated with participating in each of the two paths and their specific impact on the psychological resources and attitudes just mentioned.

Participants

Two middle schools from Northeast Italy participated in both programmes of activities. Participants aged between 12 and 14 attended the second year of lower secondary school. As requested by the Italian school system, they were then expected to make their choice of upper secondary school in a few months. This makes career education programmes salient for this group of students and calls for early career education.

For the first track, hereafter named ST (Systems of Thrust), 47 children – including 15 boys and 32 girls – participated in the programme. Their mean age was 12.7 (*SD* = .42). Also, 73 children – including 38 boys and 35 girls – participated in the second track, Sustainability Agenda, hereafter named SA. Their mean age was 12.9 (*SD* = .35). Participants were randomly assigned to the two interventions according to the time the school received the parents' written consent to participate.

Teachers participated in the programmes and contributed to the active involvement of the children. Materials designed to gradually activate and reinforce the awareness and knowledge developed were given to teachers for further use in school.

Basic and general choices underlying the two programme tracks

The two integrated tracks of actions comprised four sessions each and were conducted over a four-week period, with one session being conducted per week.

The structure of each session

Each session lasted approximately two hours and comprised four main steps. The first step, goal exploration and sharing knowledge, focused on the topic addressed. Some basic elements characterised the activities:

i. a description of the circumstances in which the behaviour/attitude was expected or expressed;
ii. a definition of the actions and tasks that the participants were expected to carry out;
iii. indicators of the achievement of the goals and learning.

The third part, reflective time, was designed to enable participants to stop and understand the value and the meaning of the activity conducted and the value for themselves. For instance, to connect activities to future goals, they were asked to think about the implications for their future work activities.

At the end of each session, to stimulate the learning generalisation in relevant contents, participants identified, together with the conductor, ways to share with classmates. For instance, they proposed games with cards and posters to explore concepts together with classmates and share with family by asking them to search for images or words that could best represent some ideas that emerged at school and share them with parents.

To facilitate learning, various strategies were used, from simple instructions to examples.

Procedure

In a preliminary session, participants were informed about the general aim of the programme and about the intervention schedule. Then, they were asked to complete the set of questionnaires and answer an interview described later. One week after the preliminary session, the participants started the programme, which was proposed during school time not as additional activity. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, only conductors had the information relevant to match the profiles emerging from the pre- and post-assessment. Additionally, teachers were given the results emerging from the whole group of participants. After the participants in the programmes had completed the four sessions, they were again involved in answering a set of questionnaires and the interview.

Indicators of change and learning

Several quantitative tools were then used to search for changes in psychological resources and attitudes and learning of specific knowledge:

- **Future time orientation.** To address this dimension, a subscale from the *Design My Future Questionnaire* (Santilli et al., 2017) was used. The instrument comprises 21 items assessing resilience (e.g., *I think I'm able to challenge the difficult situations that may arise in the future for me)* and future orientation (e.g., *Looking ahead and thinking about what will happen in the future make me feel full of energy)*. Participants

responded to each item on a scale from 1 *(not strong)* to 5 *(strongest)*. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was .82.

- **Hope, Optimism, and Negative vision of the future.** This scale (Ginevra et al., 2017) comprises 20 items assessing orientation towards hope, optimism, and pessimism. Participants responded to each item on a scale from 1 *(not strong)* to 5 *(strongest)*. The scale measures the orientation towards hope (e.g., In the future I will be involved in very important projects), optimism (e.g., *I consider myself as a person who thinks positively)*, and negative vision (e.g., *It is useless to hope in the future: I cannot do what I have in mind)*. In this study, Cronbach's alphas ranged from α = .76 to α = .81.

- **Career adaptabilities.** To address these dimensions, the *Career Adapt-Ability Scale – Italian Form* (Soresi et al., 2012) was used. Participants responded to each item on a Likert scale ranging from 1 *(not strong)* to 5 *(strongest)*. The 24 items were combined into a total score indicating career adaptability and were also grouped into four six-item subscales that measure adapt-ability resources of concern (e.g., *Realising that today's choices shape my future)*, control (e.g., *Counting on myself)*, curiosity (e.g., *Investigating options before making a choice)*, and confidence (e.g., *Working up to my ability)*. For this sample, Cronbach's alpha for the four subscales ranged from α = .73 to α = .88.

For each participant, changes in the scores from the baseline to the end of the educational programme were analysed.

Two qualitative tools were also used, one for each track:

- **The first one,** *The wheel of my life*, based on a qualitative tool often used in career coaching (Yamashita & Kato, 2014), requires respondents to identify the things that they believe are important and by colouring an area of the wheel assign the specific space in the wheel, that is in their current and future lives.

- **The second one,** *My goals,* is a qualitative interview on future goals (Sgaramella, 2018), asking participants to list three goals they have for eight different life domains regarding work-related future job activities and professional roles participants imagined for their future.

For these tools, the number of answers provided to the questionnaires and the diverse themes or goals identified in the life domains were counted and then analysed.

First track: Me and My Systems of Thrust (ST)

Activities

Participants participated in creating their own stories using My Systems of Career Influences (MSCI Adolescent version; McMahon et al., 2017), a qualitative career assessment instrument guided by Systems Theory Framework applied to career counselling (McMahon & Patton, 2006). Already, Howard et al. (2015) showed that children could generate, identify, and describe influences that shape career choice and aspiration, and understand their own experiences related to career development. Recently, Sgaramella (2022) described systems of influences that characterise children and adolescents and the specific involvement of both micro and macro systems. Participants worked through a booklet page-by-page reflecting on several diverse influences in their life. They were asked to write on a map the influences they could identify in their lives regarding the specific system addressed. They are then also required to specify the most important ones.

In the first meeting, *Meaning in Life*, after sharing knowledge on the idea that the word conveys and on meaningful actions for the models analysed, participants worked to complete different association tasks. They were required to associate a target word (for instance, to work) with an adjective that, according to them, best described the word. Participants shared the associations produced, and during the Reflection Time, answering some questions, they were helped to think about their own associations and on the uniqueness of the ones produced by group members.

In the second meeting, *My story and my closest systems*, after sharing knowledge and ideas related to the keywords associated with target concepts (e.g., interests, strengths) participants were asked to reflect on themselves, paying attention to their strengths, their uniqueness, and the influences that come from people in their closest environments, like family and friends. In the Draw on the Map Exercise, they had to represent the influences they identified on a map and identify those that had a specific relevance. During the Reflection Time, they were asked to comment on what they saw on the map, thus supporting the development of awareness of personal uniqueness, persons, and influences around them.

In the third meeting, *Me and the larger systems* around me, after sharing knowledge on the definitions more frequently provided on the target concepts, participants were

asked to Draw on the Map to identify elements and influences in their lives that come from the people they met and from the situations that occurred in their wider contexts, from the school to the neighbourhood, from the city to the larger communities. Again, during the Reflection Time, they were asked to comment on what they saw in the map, thus supporting the development of awareness of personal uniqueness, persons, and influences around them.

In the fourth meeting, *My System of Thrusts,* participants were provided with an example of Systems of Influences developed by a peer. They were instructed to return to the single maps they had worked on in the previous sessions, selecting the influences they identified. They were then required to Draw My Systems of Thrust and use them to develop their own representation.

Afterwards, during the reflection time, they could reflect on insights gained by answering a set of reflective questions that enabled them to elicit meaning and learning alongside actions, they foresee in their next future to keep active and leverage their positive thrusts. At the end of the activities, participants drew their new *Wheel of my current and future Life*.

Changes and learning path working on Systems of Thrust

Qualitative data analyses were performed using SPSS 20.0. First, *t*-tests were used to highlight potential differences due to gender on scores obtained on each dimension addressed in the analysis. No significant difference was found. A series of repeated measures ANOVA was then performed with the resources as the dependent variables and time (baseline vs post educational activity assessment) as the independent variable.

We start by considering results on adaptability components. An account of the means (see Table 17.1) shows that participants scored higher on Confidence at the post-test, $F(1, 47) = 6.92$, $p < .01$, $\eta 2_p = .50$. Participating in the educational activity increased the belief that they can turn their goals into reality, successfully overcome obstacles, and reach their goals. Regarding other adaptability resources, participants' scores did not increase significantly after the intervention with respectively, Concern, $F(1, 47) = 2.92$, p = ns, Control, $F(1, 47) = 6.9$, p = ns, and Curiosity, $F(1, 47) = 1.89$, p = ns.

Table 17.1 Changes in the awareness of resources and attitudes after participating in the path 'Me, and My Systems of Thrust'

Variables	***Systems of Thrust***			
	Pre-test		***Post-test***	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Concern	20.52	4.09	20.05	3.88
Control	22.24	3.39	21.99	3.49
Curiosity	21.01	3.57	2103	3.87
Confidence	20.95	3.74	22.36	3.58
Hope	24.03	4.18	24.12	4.39
Optimism	21.96	4.41	22.27	4.25
Negative vision	15.11	5.14	13.42	4.39
Future time perspective	48.48	8.53	47.64	10.25

For attitudes toward future, the results revealed a significant effect on negative vision about the future, $F(1, 47) = 7.62$, $p < .01$, $\eta 2_p = .041$. Participants scored significantly lower in the negative vision and higher on optimism, although the latter was not significant, $F(1, 47) = 2.433$, p = ns. No significant change was detected in the level of hope they ascribed themselves, $F(1, 47) = 2.433$, p = ns. By participating in the activity, the adolescents recognised themselves as persons who think positively and, concurrently, reduced their negative expectations of future development of their life situation in the beliefs of being unable to reach in their future what they care about most. We then moved to qualitative analysis of themes that emerged from the Task, The wheel of My Life, that is, meanings that characterise their representation of current and future life, answers provided, that is, what they believe is important, were grouped into meanings more broadly referring to work (e.g., finding a work, having a good job), meanings more specifically mentioning work activities (e.g., working to save animals, programming video games for young children), and meanings related to other life domains (e.g., living with family, having leisure time activities); these were grouped together given the limited number of responses.

Table 17.2 Meanings emerging from the answers to the path 'Me, and My Systems of Thrust'

	General Work-Related Meanings	Work-Specific Activities	Other Domains	Total Answers
	F (%)	*F* (%)	*F* (%)	*F*
Pre-test	10 (28.6)	19 (54.3)	6 (17.1)	35
Post-test	9 (14.8)	41 (62.2)	11 (18)	61

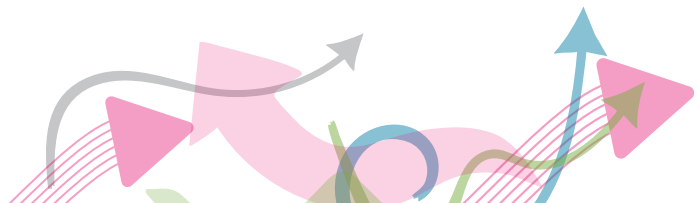
While in the baseline, 12 participants (25%) had difficulty in identifying themes; all participants could identify and mention relevant meanings in the final assessment. As shown in Table 17.2, after participating in the programme, their total number raised, and the increase was particularly marked for their mention of meanings of specific professional activities.

The answers were additionally grouped according to the System of Influence they referred to: Self, Close Systems (i.e., family and peers) or Wide systems of reference (i.e., large community or environmental systems). A closer look at the systems involved in the work-related themes (Table 17.3) shows that both the themes more frequently mentioned were related to the possibility of expressing themselves, their interests, and their strengths, and these themes were even more frequently mentioned at the end of the training.

Table 17.3 Systems involved in meaningful themes related to work identified in the Path 'Me, and My Systems of Thrust'

	Self expression	Close systems	Wide systems	Work-related themes
	F (%)	*F* (%)	*F* (%)	*F*
Pre-test	13 (44.8)	9 (31)	7 (24.2)	29
Post-test	27 (54)	8 (16)	15 (30)	50

More attention emerges to wider systems (the community, large environments) in the meaningful themes they mentioned.



Second track: Me, work, and our sustainable future

Activities

Participants participated in analysing the meaning and the content of professional activities in current times, in developing knowledge on the SDGs and the relationship with their future as citizens and workers in future communities.

In the first meeting, work, study, and leisure time, participants were given some basic ideas on how work changes along the history and were invited to list their ideas regarding the concepts of work and define what a good job and a good work environment are. They were provided with information on ideas that people have about work. Similarly, they also focused on study and leisure time activities to address the diverse roles they have in their current life. Afterwards, they were asked to reflect on the diverse ways to look at work, study and leisure time and to identify their own views.

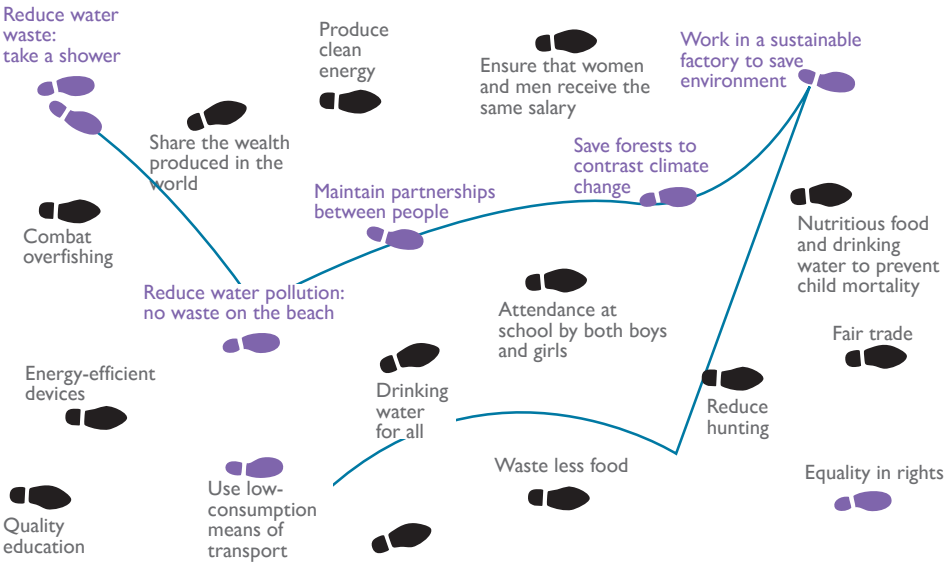
During the second meeting, Knowing people at work, the focus was on the activities associated with some professions. Participants were asked to describe it by indicating the tools used by the professional, who could use the service they offered, what were the tasks and roles associated with that job, the places where they were located, and the people they met. Afterwards, they were asked to reflect on these dimensions, referring to the work activities analysed.

The third meeting, The Agenda and its Goals, focused on exploring the goals proposed by the 2030 Agenda. The activities proposed to the children involved asking questions about the different appropriate actions facilitating the achievement of the proposed goals. An example of the activity proposed is the Find the right key to open the door of … Several keys represented the specific goals in the Agenda (e.g., health and wellbeing or gender equality, clean water or green energy, dignifying work and reduction of inequalities), while the doors represented the triple bottom lines (i.e., people, planet, profit, with this last represented as economic wellbeing and an inherent result of providing value to the people and to planet). Afterwards, they were asked to reflect on how many actions could be performed to support the goals analysed.

The fourth meeting, Me and Work at the Time of the Agenda, after deepening on the contents of the 17 goals, focused on identifying professionals who contribute or could contribute with their work to the achievement of each of the 17 goals proposed by the

Agenda. An activity proposed My Footprints to the Future, by colouring the footprints, they were asked to identify the path that connected a goal of the Agenda with actions (footprints) that a professional could carry out. They were then invited to reflect on the ones in which they could foresee themselves involved in and colour them (see Figure 17.1).

Figure 17.1 An example of the activity my footprints to the future



Note: *The choices made by one participant are reported.*

Participants in this group, both at the baseline and at the end of the programme, answered the questions in the interview My Goals.

Changes and learning path working on the Sustainability Agenda

As for the first track, differences due to gender in scores obtained on each dimension were addressed in the analysis. No significant difference emerged using t-test. A series of repeated measures ANOVA was performed with the resources as the dependent var-

iables and time (baseline vs post-educational activity assessment) as the independent variable.

We start by considering results on adaptability components. An inspection of the means (see Table 17.4) shows that the group showed higher scores on Concern and Control at the post-test, with respectively, $F(1, 73) = 7.01$, $p < .01$, $\eta 2_p = .54$, and $F(1, 73) = 5.38$, $p < .02$, $\eta 2_p = .43$. Participating in the educational activity increased the extent to which the adolescents were involved, which made them more future-oriented and committed to preparing for upcoming career tasks or challenges. It also increased the extent to which they ascribed themselves the responsibility of actively influencing their development with effort and persistence. For other adaptability resources, participants' scores did not increase significantly after the intervention, with respectively, Confidence, $F(1, 73) = .69$, p = ns, and Curiosity, $F(1, 73) = 1.92$, p = ns.

Table 17.4 Changes in the awareness of resources and attitudes after participating in the path 'Me, Work and Our Sustainable Future'

Variables	The Sustainability Agenda Group			
	Pre-test		Post-test	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Concern	21.38	3.41	22.36	3.31
Control	21.91	3.55	22.94	3.58
Curiosity	21.34	2.88	21.69	3.45
Confidence	22.91	3.68	22.72	3.80
Hope	24.13	3.98	25.19	4.34
Optimism	19.90	4.48	19.88	4.56
Negative vision	12.23	4.33	12.94	4.51
Future time perspective	48.38	7.74	51.66	7.11

Concerning attitudes towards the future, the results revealed a significant effect on negative vision about the future, wherein after the intervention, participants had significantly higher scores on the hope, $F(1, 73) = 4.83$, $p < .03$, $\eta 2_p = .47$. However, no significant change was detected in the level of optimism and negative vision they ascribed themselves, with respectively, $F(1, 73) = .72$, p = ns., $\eta 2_p = .021$, and $F(1, 73) = 1.09$, p = ns, $\eta 2_p = .035$]. Additionally, for future orientation, a significant increase after participating in the training was evidenced, $F(1, 73) = 9.48$, $p < .01$, $\eta 2_p = .62$, with participants more positively oriented towards their future life and goals.

Moving to the qualitative analysis of changes in goals, the answers provided were grouped into goals referring to family, goals related to work activities, study, and personal growth (see Table 17.5). A closer look at the Table 17.5 shows an increase in the number and distribution of future goals listed by participants across the categories identified, both at baseline and after the programme. More frequently goals mentioned refer to work activities and to personal growth (i.e., developing competencies, exploring new interests and contexts).

Table 17.5 Future goals and intended actions of SA group participants

	Family	**Work**	**Leisure time activities**	**Study**	**Personal growth**	**Total goals**
	F (%)	*F* (%)	*F* (%)	*F* (%)	*F* (%)	*F*
Pre-test	3 (6.7)	28 (55.5)	12 (26.7)	3 (6.7)	2 (4.4)	45
Post-test	12 (12.2)	63 (64.3)	5 (5.1)	8 (8.2)	10 (10.2)	98

Given the specific focus of this track, we analysed the work activities mentioned considering the 17 SDGs proposed by the United Nations for 2030. As shown in Table 17.6, 68% (17 out of 25) of the work-related goals at baseline can be described following SDGs, while, at the post-test, the percentage rises to 73% (46 out of 63).

Table 17.6 Career goals and planned actions of SA group participants

	Protecting natural environment and sea	Protecting and taking care of animals	Constructing innovative tools and machines	Helping persons in need or poor	Fighting inequalities at work, gender discrimination	Total SDGs oriented works
	F (%)	*F* (%)	*F* (%)	*F* (%)	*F* (%)	*F*
Pre-test	5 (29.4)	3 (17.6)	2 (11.8)	5 (29.4)	2 (11.8)	17
Post-test	11 (23.9)	9 (19.6)	5 (10.9)	15 (32.6)	6 (13)	46

Observing Table 17.6, besides mentioning the trends towards a change in some categories after participating in the training programme, it is worth underlining the vari-

ous types of work-related goals the participants described using a language that recalls 2030 SDGs.

More specifically, we can identify:

- **Goals focusing on people:** Poverty (SDG1), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG10), Reducing Inequality (SDG9), Gender Equality (SDG5);
- **Goals focusing on planet:** Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG6), Climate Action (SD13), Life on Land (SDG15);
- **Goals contributing to societal development and innovation** (SDG9).

A widening in the opportunities to be actively involved in actions supporting positive community development clearly emerges.

Discussion

It is first of all worth highlighting the learnings and the potentials of the two paths and how they can contribute to the enrichment of theoretical and practical knowledge and provide added value for career development.

With the first path, the participants explored influences at proximal, both personal, familial and educational systems alongside the more distal systems, both national and global ones. The activity was effective in:

- **Strengthening their positive beliefs** that they can turn their goals into reality, successfully overcome obstacles and reach their goals, reaching in their future what they care about most, and strengthened by the increase in a specific adaptability resource-confidence.
- **Supporting meaning-making,** as evidenced by the increase in the number of meaningful themes mentioned after participating in the activities.
- **Supporting the interplay of persons and contexts** with systems of reference (i.e., Self, Close, and Distal systems of reference) entering the process of meaning making.

Participants increased their awareness of themselves and of the influences that thrust them in their choices and active involvement in life. Awareness of self, others, and the environment is considered 'pivotal' to obtain the full range of human knowledge and ac-

With the second path, the participants oriented themselves to the future and explored it with the lenses and goals suggested by sustainability principles.

tions (Kelly, 2017), necessary when individuals are facing hard times (Ardelt & Grunwald, 2018), and a key component in navigating challenges to positive development (Malti & Noam, 2016).

With the second path, the participants oriented themselves to the future and explored it with the lenses and goals suggested by sustainability principles. The activity was effective in supporting the following:

- **Active involvement and future orientation,** committed to preparing for upcoming career tasks or challenges.
- **Sense of responsibility** in actively influencing their development.
- **Hopes** about their general future projects and wishes.
- **A more defined and concurrently innovative picture** of the work activities they would prefer to be engaged in in their future.
- **A widening in the opportunities** to be actively involved in actions supporting positive community development.

Each of the two paths seems helpful in developing a critical consciousness and assuming a perspective that addresses complex dynamics and reduces inequalities (Kenny et al., 2019). Both seem effective in enlarging the potential role of the individual and the community (Cinamon et al., 2019; Kenny et al., 2019; Magnuson & Starr, 2000; Watson et al., 2016) that can derive from being aware of the systems they live in, how they influence them but also of the role they can have in the future of the community. Additionally, the analysis of qualitative answers provides evidence that the activities proposed effectively infuse the working goals of the adolescents' higher interests and the investment for SDG. Their considerations, and the increased interest mainly refer to environmental and social sustainability components. This result is particularly promising not only for personal career development, enriching it with new aspects, but also for the attention devoted to taking care of and improving the planet and community life. This suggests that career counselling and guidance could then actively pursue and contribute to achieving the SDGs and value their role for equality and social justice.

Back to our main questions and towards the proposal

This study's main goal is to provide evidence for the efficacy of these two sets of actions in promoting changes in the awareness of resources and attitudes that can be considered the core of the new vision of career management skills for future adults.

This study's main goal is to provide evidence for the efficacy of these two sets of actions in promoting changes in the awareness of resources and attitudes that can be considered the core of the new vision of career management skills for future adults.

Overall, the two sets of activities could increase the positive resources of participants, making them more ready to consider the complex interrelations that characterise their systems of life and start including sustainability issues in their career and life project. Interestingly, the training programmes were conducted in class with all the students. This convenience sample was characterised by the heterogeneity of students who attended Italian mainstream education and included students with diverse sociocultural backgrounds, school achievement, disabilities, and other vulnerabilities. As the trainer reported, this was a point of interest since giving voice to all with the diverse activities allowed them to be more aware of challenges and strengths at individual, interpersonal, and contextual levels. This kind of reflection supports the benefit of conducting such types of activities in an inclusive context close to the real-life environment, where the SDGs could be experienced and practiced, and not only learnt in an abstract way. Results clearly show that the two sets of activities significantly impact different student's resources and attitudes. As mentioned before, more than contrasting the two paths and choosing one for the efficacy in stimulating change, both should be provided to students to offer opportunities to achieve the whole development of the individuals.

The specificity of the impact and outcomes of the actions proposed in this analysis, with the first acting on the awareness side and the second on the agentic side to change personal and community life, suggests their conceptualisation as temporally contiguous paths to propose in the given order for consecutive actions conducted in the school context in pluriannual, and even more extended versions. Further research studies may investigate more specifically how to combine them to address specific students' needs.



Moreover, the results from this first implementation of the two paths clearly underline the need to integrate career development skills with social and emotional learning. They parallel the recent theoretical proposal made by Howard and Ferrari (2022) who highlighted the need to integrate these activities in the curricula development since the first phase of ideation of early career education. It also becomes clear that helping students understand how psychological resources and attitudes and career development are related provides an added value for the full development of their career and education (Herr, 2001; Munhoz & Melo-Silva, 2011) while contributing to their identity development and learning strategies they can use to help them grow as active citizens.



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Career management skills are increasingly recognised as a core outcome of career guidance and counselling, equipping individuals to navigate complex, uncertain, and rapidly changing learning and work environments. Over recent decades, varied conceptualisations of career management skills have emerged, reflecting diverse theoretical, policy, and practice perspectives. The present volume contributes to these debates by bringing together international research and practice. It is structured into four sections that address the conceptual foundations of career management skills, examine their development across diverse contexts, consider the role of practitioners, and explore strategies for implementation. Collectively, the chapters offer critical insights and practical approaches to advance understanding and strengthen the integration of career management skills within education, guidance, and employment systems worldwide.