NICEC
NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CAREER EDUCATION AND COUNSELLING

CDI CAREER DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

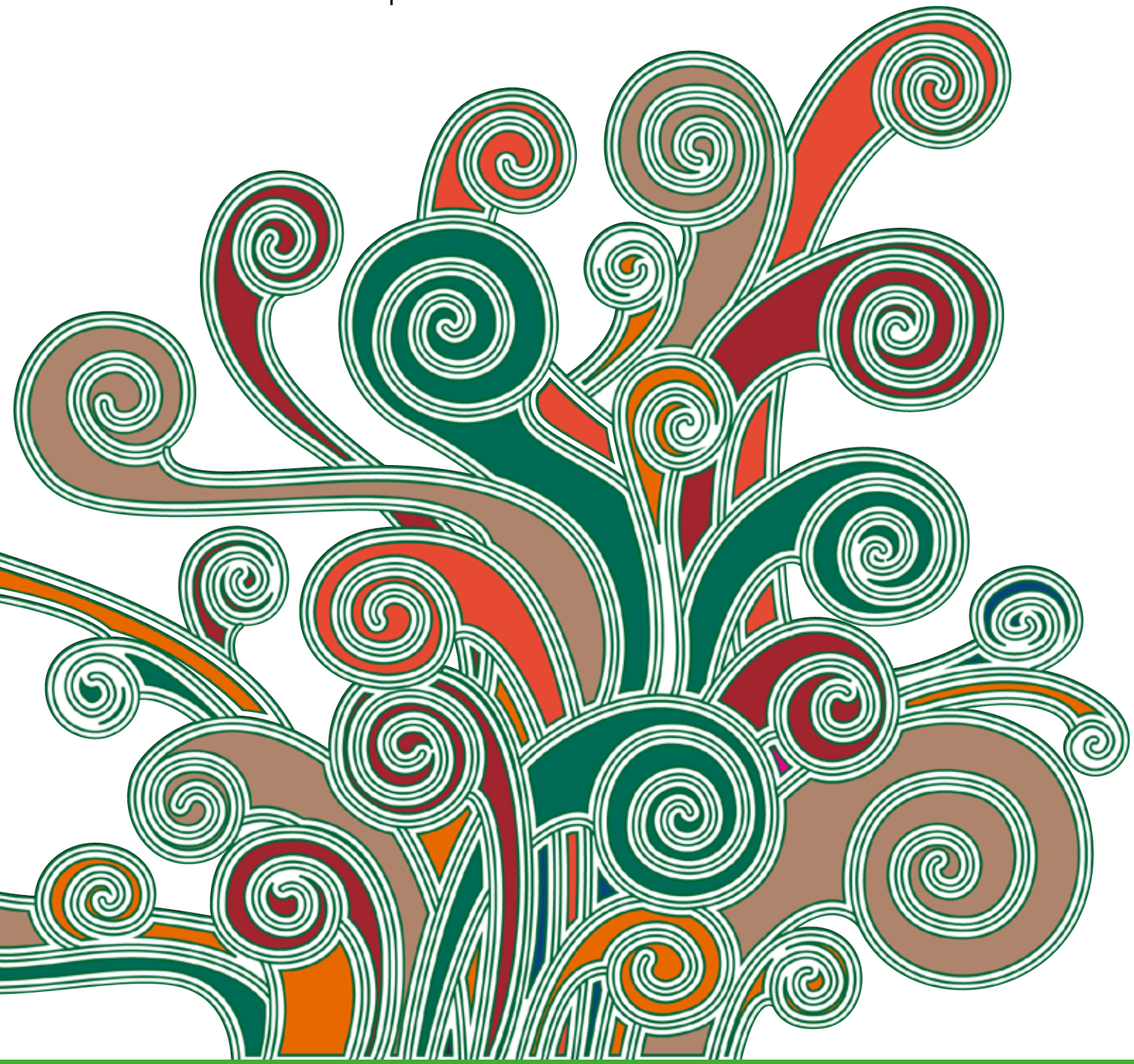
Published in partnership with the CDI

Print: ISSN 2046-1348
Online: ISSN 2059-4879

JOURNAL OF THE

National Institute for Career Education and Counselling

October 2020 | Issue 45



Promoting research and reflective practice in career development

NICEC

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CAREER EDUCATION AND COUNSELLING

NICEC STATEMENT

The Fellows of NICEC agreed the following statement in 2010.

'The National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (NICEC) was originally founded as a research institute in 1975. It now plays the role of a learned society for reflective practitioners in the broad field of career education, career guidance/counselling and career development. This includes individuals whose primary role relates to research, policy, consultancy, scholarship, service delivery or management. NICEC seeks to foster dialogue and innovation between these areas through events, networking, publications and projects.

NICEC is distinctive as a boundary-crossing network devoted to career education and counselling in education, in the workplace, and in the wider community. It seeks to integrate theory and practice in career development, stimulate intellectual diversity and encourage transdisciplinary dialogue. Through these activities, NICEC aims to develop research, inform policy and enhance service delivery.

Membership and fellowship are committed to serious thinking and innovation in career development work. Membership is open to all individuals and organisations connected with career education and counselling. Fellowship is an honour conferred by peer election and signals distinctive contribution to the field and commitment to the development of NICEC's work. Members and Fellows receive the NICEC journal and are invited to participate in all NICEC events.

NICEC does not operate as a professional association or commercial research institute, nor is it organisationally aligned with any specific institution. Although based in the UK, there is a strong international dimension to the work of NICEC and it seeks to support reflective practice in career education and counselling globally.'

NICEC FELLOWS

David Andrews, Jane Artess, Charlie Ball, Lyn Barham, Anthony Barnes, Charlotte Chadderton, Anne Chant, Fiona Christie, Kate Mackenzie Davey, Gill Frigerio, Russell George, Bob Gilworth, John Gough, Peter Harding, Keith Hermann, Wendy Hirsh, Tristram Hooley, Heather Jackson, Claire Johnson, Mark Larbalestier, John Lees, Phil McCash, Rosemary McLean, Stephen McNair, Robin Mellors-Bourne, Nicki Moore, Marian Morris, Rob Nathan, Siobhan Neary, Claire Nix, Emma Pollard, Peter Robertson, Janet Sheath, Michelle Stewart, Nalayini Thambar, David Winter, Julia Yates.

Emeritus Fellows: Lesley Haughton, Ruth Hawthorn, Leigh Henderson, Charles Jackson, Jennifer Kidd, Allister McGowan, Barbara McGowan, Mary Munro, Hazel Reid, Jackie Sadler, Tony Watts.

NICEC INTERNATIONAL FELLOWS

Michael Arthur, Gideon Arulmani, Lynne Bezanson, Tibor Bors Borbely-Pecze, Jim Bright, Sareena Hopkins, John McCarthy, David McCormack, Col McCowan, Peter McIlveen, Mary McMahon, Annemarie Oomen, Peter Plant, James P. Sampson Jr, Ronald G. Sultana, Rie Thomson, Raimo Vuorinen.

CO-EDITORS OF THE JOURNAL

October 2020 issue:

Anouk Albien
anouk-jasmine.albien@psy.unibe.ch

Bo Klindt Poulsen
Sanna Toiviainen
Miika Kekki
Tristram Hooley

April 2021 issue:

Phil McCash
p.t.mccash@warwick.ac.uk

Fiona Christie
Eileen Cunningham
Kath Houston

October 2021 issue:

Michelle Stewart
michelle.stewart@canterbury.ac.uk

EDITORIAL BOARD

Lyn Barham, Anthony Barnes, Alison Dixon, Charles Jackson, Phil McCash, Claire Nix, Hazel Reid, Peter Robertson and Michelle Stewart.

TITLE

The official title of the journal for citation purposes is *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling* (Print *ISSN 2046-1348; online* ISSN 2059-4879). It is widely and informally referred to as 'the NICEC journal'. Its former title was *Career Research and Development: the NICEC Journal*, ISSN 1472-6564, published by CRAC, and the final edition under this title was issue 25. To avoid confusion we have retained the numbering of editions used under the previous title.

AIMS AND SCOPE

The NICEC journal publishes articles on the broad theme of career development in any context including:

- Career development in the workplace: private and public sector, small, medium and large organisations, private practitioners.
- Career development in education: schools, colleges, universities, adult education, public career services.
- Career development in the community: third age, voluntary, charity, social organisations, independent contexts, public career services.

It is designed to be read by individuals who are involved in career development-related work in a wide range of settings including information, advice, counselling, guidance, advocacy, coaching, mentoring, psychotherapy, education, teaching, training, scholarship, research, consultancy, human resources, management or policy. The journal has a national and international readership.

Designed & typeset by J. G. Wilkinson. Printed by Micropress Printers Ltd, Reydon, Suffolk IP18 6SZ.

JOURNAL OF THE
National Institute for Career Education and Counselling

October 2020, Issue 45

Contents

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Manuscripts are welcomed focusing on any form of scholarship that can be related to the NICEC Statement. This could include, but is not confined to, papers focused on policy, theory-building, professional ethics, values, reflexivity, innovative practice, management issues and/or empirical research. Articles for the journal should be accessible and stimulating to an interested and wide readership across all areas of career development work. Innovative, analytical and/or evaluative contributions from both experienced contributors and first-time writers are welcomed. Main articles should normally be 3,000 to 3,500 words in length and should be submitted to one of the co-editors by email. Articles longer than 3,500 words can also be accepted by agreement. Shorter papers, opinion pieces or letters are also welcomed for the occasional 'debate' section. Please contact the relevant issue co-editor(s) prior to submission to discuss the appropriateness of the proposed article and to receive a copy of the NICEC style guidelines. Final decisions on inclusion are made following full manuscript submission and a process of peer review.

SUBSCRIPTION AND MEMBERSHIP

The journal is published in partnership with the CDI twice a year and is available both in print and online (Print ISSN 2046-1348; Online ISSN 2059-4879). Institutional subscription (online only) costs: £120 (plus VAT where applicable). Annual print subscription costs £30 UK, £35 Europe outside UK or £40 outside Europe, including postage. Individual online subscription costs £25 (plus VAT where applicable).

Membership of NICEC is also available (£75 pa or £50 pa for full-time students). Members receive the journal, free attendance at NICEC events and other benefits.

For information on journal subscription or membership, please contact: membership@nicec.org

COPYRIGHT AND DISCLAIMER

PUBLISHER

The *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling* is published in partnership with the CDI by: National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (NICEC), The Lodge, Cheerbrook Road, Willaston, Nantwich CW5 7EN.

www.nicec.org

10.20856/jnicec.4501

Listening to new voices in the career development field

This issue of the NICEC journal presents the work of a number of 'early career researchers'. The term 'early career researcher' can be a difficult one in a field such as career development where relatively few people begin to research until they are already well into their own careers. Many of our authors have a history as practitioners of various kinds, which provides context and inspiration for their decision to begin to undertake research and publish. However, all of the lead contributors to this issue represent new voices that are beginning to shape the career development field through their research and writing.

By explicitly giving space to new voices in the field NICEC aims both to support the growth of the individuals participating in the issue and to showcase new ideas, theories and approaches. The current historical moment is characterised by technological change, political instability, global inequality and of course Covid-19. Everywhere we look our world is changing and the possibilities for career and for the provision of career education and guidance are changing with it. Because of this it is vital that we continue to search for new theories and listen to new voices in the field.

The editors for this issue came together through the European Doctoral Programme in Career Guidance and Counselling (ECADOC). We are Danish, English, Finnish and South African and sometimes resident in Norway and Switzerland as well as the above countries. The issue was therefore an exercise in international collaboration. It has its origins somewhere amidst summer school debates about career theory and research methods in the heat of the island of Malta during the 6th ECADOC summer school. But it developed further in Copenhagen at the *Critical perspectives on agency and social justice in transition and career development* conference organised by the Nordic Network on Transitions, Career and Guidance (NoRNet). As the editorial team was finalised we shifted from working at the periphery of European conferences and began to collaborate online. By the time the editing was beginning in earnest we were confined to our houses by Covid-19 and learning to work together through Zoom and other online tools.

We invited papers from new researchers in the field on *any* subject related to career development. We welcomed submissions from different research traditions (qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods and conceptual) and invited contributors to explore career and career education and guidance across the life-course. We were overwhelmed by interest and were able to select the most interesting and high-quality submissions that we received. Submissions were selected based on any of the following criteria: 1) the innovativeness of the research presented; 2) evidence of collaboration either at national or international level; and 3) whether the research addressed issues of diversity and inclusivity.

Before we introduce the articles in this issue, we will briefly provide some words about the ECADOC programme and the challenges of being an early career researcher in the field of career guidance and counselling.

The European Doctoral Programme in Career Guidance and Counselling (ECADOC)[1]

ECADOC brings together doctoral candidates working on career and career guidance from higher education institutions across Europe and beyond. This initiative embeds early career researchers in a supportive research community and encourages them to develop high quality and ethically sound career and guidance related research in Europe and across the world.

ECADOC was co-funded by the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning Programme from October 2013 to November 2016. The vision was to set up a sustainable European Doctoral Programme

1 For more information on ECADOC please visit http://www.larios.fisppa.unipd.it/ecadoc/

specialising in career guidance and counselling research. ECADOC network members and alumni come from more than 30 European countries and beyond. The initiative is backed by all of the main organisations supporting career guidance research internationally including the Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe (NICE), the European Society for Vocational Designing and Career Counseling (ESVDC), the International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), the network of career counseling and guidance programs at higher education institution in the Nordic and Baltic countries (VALA), the Nordic network for Research on Transitions, Career and Guidance (NoRNet) and Euroguidance. These bodies and a range of national organisational and research groups help to recruit participants to the programme each year.

ECADOC's core activity is the organisation of an annual summer school that brings together researchers from across Europe and beyond. The summer school typically takes the form of a one-week doctoral course containing lectures, workshops and an innovative approach to mentored peer learning called 'collective academic supervision' (Nordentoft, Thomsen, & Wichmann-Hansen, 2013). The summer schools include opportunities for PhD candidates to work with internationally renowned career guidance researchers, practitioners, and policy makers, as well as the editors of several journals. The summer school creates an opportunity for the organising committees to offer focused lectures on specific research themes, methods and ethics in career research in collaboration with the leading international scholars in the community. ECADOC has also offered a space where participants have been able to 'find each other' and connect around their mutual research themes and interests, resulting in fruitful discussions and joint international research projects.

Following the end of European Commission funding for ECADOC, the network of European higher education institutions engaged in the programme continued to organise the yearly ECADOC Doctoral summer school on a voluntary basis. Even Covid could not put a stop to the network with the organising team at Jönköping University in Sweden, led by Dr. Ingela Bergmo-Prvulovic, transforming the 2020 ECADOC summer school into an online event. Although researchers were unable to come together in Sweden, they were able to continue to exchange information and ideas and build a community between early stage researchers and more experienced scholars. This exchange and network building lies at the heart of ECADOC and all scholars are encouraged reach out to each other for collaboration, support and feedback in order to advance our field of research as a community of scholars. ECADOC 2021 will be hosted by Napier University in Edinburgh and led by NICEC's own Dr. Pete Robertson.

ECADOC has also facilitated and enabled participants to build other forms of collaboration. These include joint conference symposia such as the early stage researchers' symposia that have taken place at the International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance conference, collaborative publications like the *New perspectives on career counseling and guidance in Europe* book (Cohen-Scali, Nota, & Rossier, 2018) including Weber et al.'s (2018) development of a future research agenda for the field. This issue of the NICEC journal is the latest example of the kind of international, cross-disciplinary collaboration that ECADOC seeks to foster.

We encourage early career researchers to seek out information about ECADOC and how to participate in summer schools and be part of the international and diverse academic community. And we encourage experienced career researchers to actively look at the outcomes of ECADOC and engage in the discussion on the topics raised by early career researchers. We also encourage more established researchers to offer to host a future summer school.

Early career researchers in the careers field

Being an early career researcher comes with quite a few career-related issues. The working conditions for early career researchers are often characterised by precarious employment with few opportunities for advancement (Courtois, & O'Keefe, 2015; Herschberg, Benschop, & Van den Brink, 2018). This general problem is exacerbated for researchers working in a small, inter-disciplinary field like careers where the number of full-time and permanent academic roles is very limited.

Many careers researchers find themselves in broader academic groups like lifelong learning, education, work-life studies, sociology, or psychology with only a

few colleagues who share their interest in career and career guidance. In this situation it can be hard to find people to talk to about your work and your research interests. The ECADOC network has sought to address this by forming an international community of like-minded individuals in the careers field. It provides participants with social and professional connections and solidarity and gives them close colleagues with the same academic preoccupation and theoretical field. These relationships endure beyond the immediate interaction of the summer school and lead to people becoming close colleagues, sparring partners, collaborators and constructive critics even when they live in different countries. This is a huge strength for the coming generation of career researchers that this network has been built already very early in their career.

ECADOC has shown that the number of doctoral students in the field is higher than ever and growing continuously. This is something that we celebrate as it contributes to a vibrant research culture and increases the capacity for research, evaluation, and the development of new theory. But, simultaneously, for those individuals pursuing a research career within the field it raises the question of how it is possible to create a successful career which enables them to make use of their skills and knowledge whilst also securing decent pay and conditions. For some this is about thinking about how they can forge a research career path outside of the traditional setting of universities and research institutions. In this sense, ECADOC can also be one potential networking platform to enable unconventional career steps or moves.

About this issue

As stated earlier, for this issue of the NICEC Journal we invited papers from new researchers on any subject related to career development. In the following section, we will give a short introduction and some insights into the articles making up this issue. They are presented in their order of appearance. They represent different research traditions, look into various phenomena and concepts within career development, and come from various geographical locations across the globe. The articles selected for publication reflect some of the most topical issues in the field: how career guidance could reach out to people in disadvantaged and marginal positions; how we could think through 'social justice lenses' in career guidance; how changes in the labour market structures could affect young people's entries to working life and how families, communities and broader cultural contexts come to frame the enactment of careers for different individuals.

In the first article, **Anouk J. Albien** takes on the important question of how career development interventions can lead to lasting changes. In her article, she explores how life-design career counselling supports change in a group of disadvantaged South African adolescents. Drawing on a qualitative post-intervention evaluation of the adolescents' participation in the intervention, she shows how it elicited long-term changes in career development and facilitated reflective processes. She ends the article by discussing the implications of this for both research and practice.

Next, **Jeanine van Halteren** reflects critically on guidance interventions for the marginalised. She presents findings from her small-scale exploratory study into the lives and careers of survivors of contemporary slavery. Through the analyses of various data produced in the project, such as field notes, interviews and visual data van Halteren arrives at C.A.R.E. – connection, engagement, acknowledgment and respect – as key elements in delivering meaningful and context-sensitive support into the lives and careers of people considered 'marginal'.

In their article, **Petra Elftorp and Lucy Hearne** bring another 'marginal voice' to the discussion on careers and career interventions, focusing on experiences of adults with dyslexia. The authors draw from Axel Honneth's conceptions of recognition together with an interactionist and non-reductionist biopsychosocial (BPS) model of disability to examine adults' experiences on dyslexia from a social justice point of view. Elftorp and Hearne analyse experiences of misrecognition and transformative experiences of recognition and offer some valuable implications for both individual and collective career guidance practices.

Esther Galfalvi, Tristram Hooley and Siobhan Neary explore whether young people use or expect to use the gig economy for their careers. The size of the so-called 'gig' economy, working mediated through online platforms such as Uber or Ebay, is increasing globally each year. Drawing on interviews with young people age 16-19, the authors discuss how young people in England perceive the gig economy

and whether they feel that it will be relevant to their careers, with a view to discussing if the gig economy should be included in careers education programmes or guidance.

Mara Šimunović, Iva Šverko, and Toni Babarović discuss how the recognition of parental career-specific behaviours as well as parents' understandings of the potential benefit of these behaviours could facilitate their children's career adaptability. Implications for special counselling interventions are provided for students who perceive that their parents are not providing enough career-related support. These address the gap that exists between parents and their children in understandings of the world-of-work.

The next article comes from **Emily Róisín Reid** who originally wrote it in response to the NICEC Bill Law Memorial Award. In the article Emily looks at how Law's (1981) Community Interaction Theory helps to explain the career journeys of medical students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. She argues that Law's perspective remains relevant to the endeavour of widening participation to higher education and suggests that guidance practitioners have an important role to play as applied psychologists and sociologists.

Deborah Crook presents an example of rights-based research in her article, where she addresses what kind of perspectives young people in northwest England have about enablers and barriers to continued education. She has applied participatory methods for young people to imagine steps towards future possible selves, including collaborative story-making with researchers. As an outcome, she questions models of aspiration-raising that prioritise particular trajectories, and emphasises the importance of inter-generational relationships, and especially the role and support of significant adults in the lives of young people.

The last article in this edition is an elaboration of a career counselling intervention within the Life Design paradigm applied in the collectivist cultural context of urban India. **Aparna Bhalla and Gill Frigerio** provide a critical engagement with different career counselling methods and their theoretical underpinnings through an exploration of them with two clients. They use a step-by-step method to assess their usefulness in this collectivistic context and what implications these findings could have in facilitating the career transitions and trajectories for Indian clients, whose career needs are unique and culturally informed.

We hope that these articles provide proof of the ongoing innovativeness of our field. At the same time, we hope they will be a source of inspiration and offer an insight into the latest trends and ideas within career development research. Enjoy reading of these articles and listening to these new voices!

Anouk J. Albien, Bo Klindt Poulsen, Sanna Toiviainen, Miika Kekki & Tristram Hooley, Editors

References

Cohen-Scali, V., Nota, L. and Rossier, J. (2018). *New perspectives on career counselling and guidance in Europe.* Springer: Cham.

Courtois, A. D. M., & O'Keefe, T. (2015). Precarity in the ivory cage: Neoliberalism and casualisation of work in the Irish higher education sector. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 13(1), 43-66.

Herschberg, C., Benschop, Y., & Van den Brink, M. (2018). Precarious postdocs: A comparative study on recruitment and selection of early-career researchers. *Scandinavian Journal of Management,* 34(4), 303-310. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2018.10.001

Law, B. (1981). Community interaction: a 'mid-range' focus for theories of career development in young adults, *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 9(2), 142-158. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069888108258210

Nordentoft, H. M., Thomsen, R., & Wichmann-Hansen, G. (2013). Collective academic supervision: A model for participation and learning in higher education. *Higher Education*, 65(5), 581-593. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-012-9564-x

Weber, P. C., Katsarov, J., Cohen-Scali, V., Mulvey, R., Nota, L., Rossier, J., & Thomsen, R. (2018). European research agenda for career guidance and counselling. In V. Cohen-Scali, L. Nota, & J. Rossier. (Eds.) *New perspectives on career counseling and guidance in Europe* (pp. 219-250). Springer: Cham.

10.20856/jnicec.4502

Exploring processes of change in a life-design career development intervention in socio-economically challenged youth

Anouk J. Albien

Previous research has sought to identify the underlying processes and mechanisms that lead to lasting changes in a client's career development, yet more research needed to understand what elicits effective changes. The present research will explore how life-design career counselling supports change in a group of disadvantaged South African adolescents. The present research study will focus on a post-intervention qualitative strand, which included evaluative worksheets completed post-intervention (n = 265) and a focus data six months later (n = 6). Braun and Clarke's (2006) content analysis was used to group themes according to the Career Construction Theory (CCT) and process constructs of narrative career counselling. Qualitative findings provide evidence that the intervention had elicited long-term changes in career development and facilitated reflective processes. Implications and recommendations for research and practice will be discussed.

Introduction

South Africa, like many other nations, faces multiple challenges in creating work opportunities and reducing unemployment (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Contextual factors, such as unemployment, a weak national economy and shifting entry requirements into occupations, constantly impact South African individuals and make career development processes inherently complex (Stead & Watson, 2017). South African youth (aged 15 to 34) are especially vulnerable in the labour market, with an unemployment rate of 63.4 % (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Approximately 56.4% of the 10.3 million South African youth (aged 15 to 24 years) are reported not to be in employment, education or training (Statistics South Africa, 2019). However, career interventions can support youth to exit transcend poverty as a long-term objective and can yield positive short-term effects on grades attained, school attendance, tertiary education enrolment and employment outcomes (Perry & Smith, 2017; Tripney & Hombrados, 2013). A call has been made for unique career techniques that are applicable to specific locations, times and spaces, such as that of Kayamandi (where this study was conducted), to address the subjective and personal meanings ascribed to career choices (Maree, 2010).

The present research study took place in the peri-urban informal settlement called Kayamandi Township. It is situated on the slopes of the Papegaaiberg and the edges of the northern outskirts of the Stellenbosch Cape Winelands district (co-ordinates 33.9183° S, 18.8448° E) about 50 km from Cape Town. During Apartheid, Kayamandi was a settlement for Black migrant farm workers. Due to continued migration rates the township continued to increase size and there is still ongoing migration from the Eastern Cape in the search of better career opportunities. The Kayamandi context is characterised by high levels of unemployment, rising crime rates, lack of adequate housing structures and sanitation, gang-related activity, substance abuse and scarce low skilled occupations. In order to address these complex issues in diverse cultural environments, the postmodern career counselling approach has been advocated by Maree and colleagues (2006) in a South African context. Therefore, the present research aims to assess whether a Life-design career intervention elicited any long-term

changes in career development and reflective processes by exploring process constructs of change.

Theoretical overview

Career counsellors employing post-modern career counselling approaches use story-telling or narrative approaches that apply communication microskills, which are also utilised in therapeutic counselling (E.g., Egan, 2009). Savickas (1993, p. 212) claims that a "career is personal" and individuals can unearth subjective career realities through the telling of their own stories (McMahon & Patton, 2002). Previous studies in a South African context have shown that Life-design counselling helps clients to use their lived-experiences and narratives to develop an inner stability that is needed to overcome career-related uncertainty and barriers, as well as remain hopeful and employable (Maree, 2015a, 2015b, 2017).

The Life-design counselling model (Savickas et al., 2009) is informed by, and at the same time actualises, the self-construction theory (SCT) (Guichard, Pouyaud, De Calan, & Dumora, 2012) and the career construction theory (CCT) (Savickas, 2011a). The SCT views people as proactive agents who use prospective reflexivity to construct versions of themselves in their life domains at given time points to negotiate transitions and personal experiences (Guichard & Lenz, 2005; Mahoney, 2002). The identification of central different selves, known as subjective identity forms (SIFs) are tied to a career-life choice and resulting in an action plan (Guichard et al., 2012; Savickas, 2015a).

The CCT was used in the present research as a theoretical framework to facilitate understanding of an individual's vocational personality (who he/she is), career adaptability (how to adapt) and life themes (what work roles are valued) in an individual's narratives (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012a, 2012b). According to Savickas (2013a, 2013b), there are four proposed dimensions of 'adapt-abilities'. The first dimension is *concern*, which involves a future orientation, whereas *control* refers to self-regulation and responsibility for career decisions. In contrast, *curiosity* describes career exploration activities and *confidence* refers to self-efficacy and the ability beliefs that an individual holds.

The versatility and applicability of the life-design model has been critiqued by Watson (2013), due to the lack of choice faced by many individuals in their career trajectories. As a result, research has been conducted across diverse settings, that include developed and developing country contexts with individual and group formats to assess the suitability of the life-design model (Maree, 2016, 2017). Thus far, research studies have determined the applicability of the CCT to population groups which had non-normative career paths or multiple transitions because career adaptability dimensions were deemed flexible enough to be assessed quantitatively and qualitatively (McMahon, Watson, & Bimrose, 2012a). Therefore, the present research adds to the existing research base on the applicability of the life designing approach to non-western and non-European contexts.

The successful designing of career-lives entails reflexive construction, deconstruction, co-construction (i.e., collaboration between client and counsellor), and reconstruction of a career- life story (Savickas, 2011b). There are three broad phases (Savickas, 2015b) namely: 1) encouraging clients to tell small stories (constructions); 2) reconstruction of small stories into larger stories; and 3) co-construction of future stories. In practice, career counsellors require skills to facilitate the recursive process constructs of connectedness, reflection, meaning-making, learning and agency to help clients actualise their identities (McMahon, 2005). *Connectedness* refers to attachment or belonging to familial, communal or spiritual domains (i.e., a common humanity termed "Ubuntu" in the African context (Mkhize, 2011), which influences identity construction, well-being and personal resources. *Reflection* refers to a thought process from a starting point of doubt or conflict to culminating in a different view of a situation (McMahon, Watson, Chetty, & Hoelson, 2012b). *Meaning-making* refers to individuals' understandings, and insights into their coexistence in action and context (Chen, 2011), facilitated by the identification of life themes or patterns that connect life stories into a coherent narrative. *Learning* refers to a recursive process that moves between action, reflection, thought processes, planning and new action sequences (Hawkins & Shohet, 2000) based on new understandings or knowledge gained to allow new planning and enactment of those career plans. *Agency* refers to a client's personal

initiative, responsibility or ownership of a personal narrative to take the necessary steps to combine action and intention in a career trajectory (Young & Domene, 2011).

Goals of the study

The present research explores the process constructs of change with life-designing theoretical underpinnings in a group of disadvantaged South African adolescents to assess whether a career intervention any elicited long-term changes in career development and reflective processes.

Methods

Research design

The present research study will focus on a qualitative strand post-intervention of a mixed-methods intervention study (Albien, in press). This qualitative data included evaluative worksheets completed by the participants post-intervention (n = 265) and a focus group data six months later (n = 6). Evaluative worksheets included reflective questions that allowed an exploration of the participants' subjective career development changes after an intervention, which were further explored using a focus group interview. The interview schedule was adapted from the reflective questions posed in the *Shaping Career Voices Intervention Booklet* (for more information on the group career intervention please see Albien (2019), as well as from feedback questions which assessed the value that participants attached to the career intervention.

Participants

In the qualitative phase of the study, post-intervention written reflections and intervention feedback were collected from all the participants at T4 (n = 265) to determine if the career intervention had elicited processes of change. However, only the participants who exhibited the highest changes in scores were selected, and a content analysis was conducted on 47 evaluation and reflective worksheets. In the sample of 47 Black township high school learners, the age range was between 15 and 20 years old (M = 17, SD = 1.15). The participants consisted of 12 (26%) males and 35 (74%) females. In the focus group, a sample of six participants (5 girls and one boy) between the ages of 17 and 20 years old (M = 18, SD = 1.25) was selected to be interviewed based on a significant increase in scores post-intervention.

Procedure

Permission to conduct the research and publish the findings was obtained from the Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee, Western Cape Education Department, the participating schools, the learners and their parents. Anonymity and confidentiality of all participants was ensured. isiXhosa translators were present whilst the qualitative worksheets were completed in English guided by bilingual explanations, after the translations were deemed confusing in the articulation of career counselling constructs.

Data analysis

NVivo Qualitative Research Software (Version 11) was used to facilitate Braun and Clarke's (2006) steps of a thematic analysis of narrative themes based on the CCT framework (Savickas, 1997, 2005) and process constructs of narrative career counselling (McMahon et al., 2012b). An immersion in the data occurred, whereafter initial codes were generated for important sections of the transcribed text. The relevant coded data was then sorted into themes using the *CCT dimensions* (i.e., concern, confidence, control, curiosity and co-operation) as a coding schedule. The data was also coded according to the *narrative process construct dimensions* (i.e., reflection, connectedness, meaning-making, learning and agency). Research assistants transcribed, captured, and performed the initial data coding, which was reviewed with inter-rater reliability checks until themes were redefined and renamed and supported by verbatim extracts.

Results and discussion

The present research results contribute to the limited base of evidence for the effectiveness of the life-designing approach in a group format an in a non-western and non-European context. Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis (2006) allowed extracted themes to be grouped according to CCT and process construct dimensions, as seen below.

Theme	Sub-theme	CCT	Process constructs
1. Elimination of negative influences	1.1 Negotiating the community Gaze	Co-operation	Agency
	1.2 Decreased self-doubt	Control	Meaning-making
2. Acceptance of alternative career identities	2.1 New career opportunities	Curiosity	Learning
	2.2 Increased career flexibility	Confidence	Learning
3. Need for co-operation	3.1 Need for an accessible mentor	Co-operation	Connectedness
	3.2 Family as a support system	Co-operation	Connectedness
4. Increased self-reflection	4.1 Integration of personal variables in career choices	Curiosity	Reflection
	4.2 Linking the past, present and future	Concern	Meaning-making

Table 1: Themes and sub-themes grouped according to CCT and process constructs

The extracted themes indicated that the participants received the *Shaping Career Voices Intervention* positively, and that the intervention facilitated career development processes that lasted up to six months after the intervention. There were four themes and each of these themes were linked to change process constructs in order to assess underlying processes of change elicited by the intervention. However, only long-term follow-up studies would be able to assess if these intentions were successfully carried out or if the participants wavered in their perseverance when faced with collective needs (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004).

The first theme was *elimination of negative influences*, which included: 1) *negotiating the community gaze*, and 2) *decreased self-doubt*. These two sub-themes were grouped under the process constructs of agency and meaning-making. The first sub-theme had to do with the pressure that the community itself placed on the participants. Community members were seen to 'make you doubt yourself' (P.201), 'make you think it is not possible' (P.246), and 'ask you why you think you are so special that you will succeed where others have failed?' (P.74). Due to this negative gaze, individuals would mislead community members until they had achieved a visible measure of success, which then would prove to them and the others around them that they were making their dreams become a reality. Therefore, there was a constant tension between showing off the materialistic indicators of success that were achieved as self-worth markers (Swartz, 2011) to be viewed as 'somebody' (P.39) and hiding failures or endeavours that had not yet led to fruition in order to prevent someone from 'stealing your success' (P.27).

The second sub-theme of *decreased self-doubt* was an interesting finding because increased uncertainty could be linked to an active engagement with a future time perspective. As a result, participants felt more at ease with the uncertainty involved in career exploration processes and viewed career-life planning as a continuous process (Maree, 2017). Participants used the following phrases to describe their decreased self-doubt: 'You know or have faith that you will make it happen if you take the right steps' (P.239), 'I don't doubt myself anymore, I think I need to ask, learn and keep moving to get there' (P.176), 'that voice that told me you can't, I have learnt to talk back to it and say with no doubt I can' (P.185), and 'my self-doubt caused me to stop moving, I can't allow fear to do that to me' (P.90).

The second theme was the *acceptance of alternative career identities*. Within this theme there were two sub-themes: 1) *new career opportunities*, and 2) *increased career flexibility.* These sub-themes were linked to the process construct of learning, whereby new knowledge

was included in participants' narratives and their career behaviours changed. In the first sub-theme, the participants visibly expanded their range of career options, by mentioning new careers that they still wanted to examine. The participants said: 'There are so many bursaries for different careers, now I must look which one fits to me' (P.10), 'I now get excited to look at what career I will have one day – what sort of person will I become?' (P.70), 'my family did not have these options, so now I need to be brave enough to dive in and explore' (P.69), and 'yes it's scary, but it's like hunting for treasure, you can't give up quick' (P.40).

The final sub-theme was *increased career flexibility*, and here participants had shifted from their initial ideas of 'sticking to a career' to acknowledge how many career changes people around them had undergone and the need to be flexible. The participants had shifted their ideas from a fixed career informing their SIF to an idea of success that could be reached in multiple ways following different career paths. An increased commitment was seen to making a success of themselves, regardless if 'I may start in one career and then land up somewhere else and that is ok, I have made peace with that' (P.159) and 'I am more open to changes in my career ideas' (P.175) and 'If I am open to new career ideas I may find something would never have found otherwise' (P.129).

The third theme was the *need for co-operation,* which included: 1) *the need for accessible mentors* and 2) *family as a support system*. These sub-themes show the process construct of connectedness. The first sub-theme of *the need for accessible mentors* was a significant change that emerged from the intervention with the presence of visible role models (i.e., Fieldworkers). The participants explained that they now understood 'how important it is to have someone to share your career ideas with to gain another point of view' (P.91), 'it needs to be someone who understands the struggle' (P.76) and 'has tips for you how to get to your dream' (P.120). This was a significant change from the deception that was emphasised in theme one, and participants now invested energy in developing trusted social networks that could facilitate their career development (Maree 2015a, 2015b; Savickas 2011a, 2011c).

Secondly, the sub-theme of *family as a support system* was in line with ubuntu cultural underpinnings (Kamwangamulu, 1999; Owusu-Ansah & Mji, 2013). Participants had been socialised into a collective self-hood, where these individuals are expected to: 'respect and take care of the elders' (P.6), 'take their parents and family's advice and apply it' (P.91), 'not to embarrass the family name' (P.2), 'not waste time trying to learn something, find something that you can do' (P.1). However, this family critique had to be managed in order to find a sense of self that was embedded in the collective self-hood. After the intervention a shift was noticed where family members proved supportive if career ideas were openly discussed. Participants mentioned that 'so now they see I am busy making future plans and they say they will do whatever they can to help me' (P.178), 'you know they really changed towards me, they became so supportive when they saw I am making an effort' (P.99), 'they now share any information they hear about with me' (P.50), and 'it has really opened channels of communication in my family' (P.119).

The fourth theme was *increased self-reflection* and included: 1) *integration of personal variables in career choices*, and 2) l*inking the past, present and future*. These sub-themes can be linked to the process constructs of reflection and meaning-making. The first sub-theme included a deeper look inward, as participants had previously not spent time 'listening to my inner voice – what is it that I want?' (P.87) and also had not 'considered what I am actually good at and how this links to a career choice' (P.97). The notion that a career was separate from what the participants enjoyed or were good at was a shared idea, where 'a career is a means to an end' and 'a way to pay the bills' (P.101). Participants mentioned that they had never before considered that they 'had a unique set of skills' (P.46). Instead, 'everyone in the community is seen as the same' (P.129) and that they now 'spent time to think about what values, skills and personality traits they want to match with a career' (P.87). This is a significant change elicited by the intervention. During the intervention, emphasis was placed on work environments and personal traits matching or not matching, as well as the consequences of a mismatch (Dawis, 1996; Dawis & Lofquist, 1976; Swanson & Schneider, 2013).

The last sub-theme of *linking the past, present and future* indicated that a future time perspective had been developed. Participants were now actively linking

previous success experiences as vicarious examples of mastery to draw on in the face of career uncertainty and anxiety to work towards a clear SIF. The following comments were made: 'I used to spend so much time in the now, not thinking what has shaped me, not looking forward, now that has changed' (P.145), 'I learnt to join the dots in my story and I need to keep linking the past, present and future events to make a complete story' (P.26), 'The present is not enough, I need to link what I do today to create a different tomorrow' (P.14) and 'At first I didn't understand, how the past influences the present which determines the future, but now I do and it has changed my life' (P.151).

Patterns of change: Integrating process constructs

Participants indicated that the intervention had facilitated changes in their career planning and exploration approaches using connectedness, learning, reflection, meaning-making and agency. They stated that they projected themselves more into the future, perceived fewer career barriers, and were better at making their intentions result in career behaviors (Soresi, Nota, & Ferrari, 2012). There was an increased awareness of their connectedness or social embeddedness as well as how this may have limited their previous career exploration due to collectivistic obligations. A tension was reflected between acknowledging the need for co-operation to gain detailed career information, and guarding fragile career dreams from people in the community who were likely to reinforce self-doubt or fear of failure. As a result, the participants reported increased agency in the form of self-efficacy, self-worth and personal responsibility for being the authors of their own work-in-progress stories. In addition, there was better integration of past, present and future behaviours, as well as insight into personal variables that had shaped their career decision-making processes, which can be ascribed to their meaning-making processes. At six-months post-intervention, the feedback remained consistent, which indicated the effectiveness and the staying power of the intervention.

Implications for local and global career counselling practices

The focus on a low-income population group is a limitation of the present research, and, as a result, the data obtained represents only a small segment of the heterogeneous South African population. Although, explanations in isiXhosa and English were added throughout the research process, there is always a danger that nuances may not have been captured in English, as they would have been in isiXhosa. Future research is needed to assess the applicability and efficacy of the CCT and process of change constructs across socio-economic milieus in South African as well as other marginalised adolescent population groups worldwide.

Although these career decision-making difficulties amongst youth are a shared world-wide phenomenon, lessons can be learnt from the current research study. Western or developed world contexts are facing new issues of diversity and multiculturalism as never before due to increasing numbers of displaced and migratory population groups. Therefore, research conducted in multi-cultural contexts, such as South Africa, may prove extremely beneficial in providing examples of life-designing career counselling approaches to guide vocational decision-making processes. Specifically, career counsellors need to consider how they best can play a facilitative role by including process constructs of meaning-making, learning and connectedness between past and present, as well as including the client's personal, communal and social context. These process of change constructs need to be included in career counselling sessions, whilst targeting CCT dimensions, to facilitate change and act as qualitative change indicators to assess whether career interventions were effective.

References

Albien, A. J. (2019). In search of addressing people's career adaptability and career identity needs: Constructing the Shaping Career Voices Intervention. In J.G. Maree (Ed.), *Handbook of Innovative Career Counselling* (pp.269-288). New York, NY: Springer.

Albien, A. J. (in press). Development of vocational identity and shifting vocational identity statuses: Outcomes of a life design-based contextually grounded career intervention on socio- economically challenged youths. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*.

Arulmani, G., & Nag-Arulmani, S. (2004). *Career counselling: A handbook*. New Delhi, India: Tata McGraw-Hill.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706QP063OA

Chen, C.P. (2011). Career meaning making: An essential in life. In M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), *Career Counseling and constructivism: Elaboration of constructs* (pp. 39-55). New York: Nova Science.

Dawis, R.V. (1996). Vocational psychology, vocational adjustment, and the workforce: Some familiar and unanticipated consequences. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 2(2), 229-248. https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8971.2.2.229

Dawis, R.V., & Lofquist, L. H. (1976). *Personality style and the process of work adjustment. Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 23(1), 55-59. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.23.1.55

Egan, G. (2009). *The skilled helper* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks Cole.

Guichard, J., Pouyaud, J., De Calan, C., & Dumora, B. (2012). Identity construction and career development interventions with emerging adults. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 81(1), 52-58. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2012.04.004

Guichard, J., & Lenz, J. (2005). Career theory from an international perspective. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 54(1), 17-28. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2005.tb00137.x

Hawkins, P., & Shohet, R. (2000). *Supervision in the helping professions* (2nd ed.). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Kamwangamulu, N. M. (1999). Ubuntu in South Africa: A sociolinguistic perspective to a pan-African concept. *Critical Arts*, 13(2), 24-41. https://doi.org/10.1080/02560049985310111

Mahoney, M. J. (2002). Constructivism and positive psychology. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 745-750). London, UK: Oxford University Press.

Maree, K. (2017). Utilizing career adaptability and career resilience to promote employability and decent work and alleviate poverty. In J.G. Maree (Ed.), *Psychology of career adaptability, employability and resilience* (pp. 349-373). New York: Springer.

Maree, J. G. (2016). Career construction as a way of resolving career indecision. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 30(3), 170-192. https://doi.org/10.20853/30-3-665

Maree, J. G. (2015a). Research on life-design in (South) Africa: A qualitative analysis of outcomes of six case study participants. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 45, 332-348. https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246314566785

Maree, J. G. (2015b). Poverty and life-designing. In L. Nota & J. Rossier (Eds.), *Handbook of the life-design paradigm: From practice to theory and from theory to practice* (pp. 233-248). Göttingen, Germany: Hogrefe.

Maree, K. (2010). *Career counselling: Methods that work*. Cape Town: Juta and Company Ltd.

Maree, K., Ebersöhn, L., & Molepo, M. (2006). Administering narrative career counselling in a diverse setting: Trimming the sails to the wind. *South African Journal of Education* 26(1), 49-60.

McMahon, M. (2005). *Career counselling: Applying the systems theory framework of career development. Journal of Employment Counselling,* 42, 29-38. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1920.2005.tb00896.x

McMahon, M., & Patton, W. (2002). Using qualitative assessment in career counselling. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 2(1), 51-66. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1014283407496

McMahon, M., Watson, M., & Bimrose, J. (2012a). Career adaptability: A qualitative understanding from the stories of older women. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 80(3), 762-768. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2012.01.016

McMahon, M., Watson, M., Chetty, C., & Hoelson, C. N. (2012b). Examining process constructs of narrative career counselling: An exploratory case study. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 40(2), 127-141. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2011.646949

Mkhize, N. (2011). Connectedness and dialogism in career theory and practice. In M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), *Career Counseling and constructivism: Elaboration of constructs* (pp. 87-99). New York: Nova Science.

NVivo. (2012). *Qualitative data analysis Software; Version 10*. QSR International Pty Ltd. https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo.

Owusu-Ansah, F. E., & Mji, G. (2013). African indigenous knowledge and research. *African Journal of Disability*, 2(1), 1-5. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v2i1.30

Perry, J. C., & Smith, C. (2017). Career choice and poverty. In G. B. Stead & M. B. Watson (Eds.), *Career psychology in the South African context* (3rd ed., pp. 158-173). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Savickas, M. L. (2015a). *Life-design counselling manual*. Publisher: Author.

Savickas, M. L. (2015b). Career counselling paradigms: Guiding, developing, and designing. In P. J. Hartung, M. L. Savickas, & W. B. Walsh (Eds.), *APA handbook of career intervention*, (Vol. 1, pp.129-144). Washington: American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/14438-000

Savickas, M. L. (2013a). The theory and practice of career construction. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counselling: Putting theory and research to work* (2nd ed., pp. 147-186). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Savickas, M. L. (2013b). The 2012 Leona Tyler award address: Constructing careers—Actors, agents, and authors. *The Counselling Psychologist*, 41(4), 648-662. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000012468339

Savickas, M. L. (2011a). Prologue: Reshaping the story of career counselling. In K. Maree (Ed.), *Shaping the story: A guide to facilitating narrative career counselling* (pp. 1-3). Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Savickas, M. L. (2011b). *Career counselling*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Savickas, M. L. (2011c). Constructing careers: Actor, agent, and author. *Journal of Employment Counselling*, 48(4), 179-181. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1920.2011.tb01109.x

Savickas, M. L., Nota, L., Rossier, J., Dauwalder, J. P., Duarte, M. E., Guichard, J., Soresi, S., Van Esbroeck, R., & Van Vianen, A. E. M. (2009). Life-designing: A paradigm for career construction in the 21st century. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour,* 75(3), 239-250. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2009.04.004

Savickas, M. L. (2005). The theory and practice of career construction. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counselling: Putting theory and research to work* (pp. 42-70). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons.

Savickas, M. L. (1997). Career adaptability: An integrated construct for life-span, life-space theory. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 45, 247-259. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.1997.tb00469.x

Savickas, M. L. (1993). Career counselling in the postmodern era. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy: An International Quarterly*, 7(3), 205-215. https://doi.org/10.1891/0889-8391.7.3.205

Savickas, M. L., & Porfeli, E. J. (2012a). Career Adapt-abilities Scale: Construction, reliability, and measurement equivalence across 13 countries. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 80(3), 661-673. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2014.02.011

Savickas, M. L., & Porfeli, E. J. (2012b). Career Adapt-abilities Scale-USA form: Psychometric properties and relation to vocational identity. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 80(3), 748-753. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072717722767

Soresi, S., Nota, L., & Ferrari, L. (2012). Career Adapt-Abilities Scale-Italian form: Psychometric properties and

relationships to breadth of interests, quality of life, and perceived barriers. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 80(3), 705-711. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2012.01.020

Statistics South Africa. (2019). *Mid-year population estimates: 2019*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

Stead, G. B., & Watson, M. B. (2017). Indigenisation of career psychology in South Africa. In G. B. Stead & M. B. Watson (Eds.), *Career psychology in the South African context* (3rd ed., pp. 210-218). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Swartz, S. (2011). *Ikasi: The moral ecology of South Africa's township youth*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Wits University Press.

Tripney, J. S., & Hombrados, J. G. (2013). Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) for young people in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Empirical Research in Vocational Education and Training*, 5(1), 3. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED558002.pdf

Watson, M. (2013). Deconstruction, reconstruction, co-construction: Career construction theory in a developing world context. *Indian Journal of Career and Livelihood Planning*, 2(1), 3-14.

Young, R.A., & Domene, J.F. (2011). The construction of agency in career counselling. In M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), *Career Counseling and constructivism: Elaboration of constructs* (pp. 25-38). New York: Nova Science.

Acknowledgements

This research was funded by the South African National Research Foundation Innovation Scholarship (Grant number: AEMD160619172334) and Stellenbosch University Postgraduate Merit Bursary. Thank you to all the participants and fieldworkers that took part, as well as Prof. A.V. Naidoo for his supervision.

For correspondence

Dr. Anouk. J. Albien,
Research Affiliate at the University of Stellenbosch, Department of Curriculum Studies, South Africa

and

Early career researcher at the University of Bern, Work and Organisational Psychology Division, Switzerland (ORCID: 0000-0002-2355-9451).

All correspondence to be addressed to

anouka@sun.ac.za

10.20856/jnicec.4503

The last thing they need is career counselling! Critical reflections on interventions for the inclusion of marginalised people

Jeanine van Halteren

This article examines interventions for the inclusion of marginalised people, through a presentation of the results from a small-scale exploratory study into the lives and careers of female sexworkers and survivors of modern slavery. Data (field notes, narratives and visual data) was analysed with the *Listening Guide*, a voice-centered relational method, and visual analysis methods. Results suggest that reaching out to the communities and enabling multiple channels for interaction can deliver meaningful support to the lives and careers of people considered marginal. Based on the results, implications for practice are further discussed, and a different approach is suggested.

Introduction

Given current global challenges, such as the socio-economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a high risk of inequities and exclusion increasing in society. To address this, societies need to invest in their people, especially those in precarious situations, such as those who are at risk of exploitation and long-term marginalisation through modern slavery. Poverty and social injustice are complex phenomena, rooted in cultural and political structures, which need to be addressed on macro, meso- and micro-level (Roberts, 2004; Sultana, 2014).

Career practitioners, working directly with people at the micro-level, have a unique opportunity to help people 'invest in their futures and to overcome structural and societal barriers' (International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance [IAEVG], 2019), and to 'promote equity, fairness, compassion, respect and justice for all, whatever their economic status' (Irving, 2016, p.8).

This study explored the life and career development of one particular group of marginalised people living in Norway, sex workers and survivors of modern slavery, and the interventions aimed at this group . The research questions were 1) What are the participants' perceptions concerning the women's needs for support? and 2) What kind of interventions seem to support the women's life and career development and facilitate inclusion? Research data was produced through ethnographic, narrative and creative participatory methods. Research questions were answered by adopting the *Listening Guide* (Gilligan & Eddy, 2017), a voice-centered relational method, and visual analysis methods (Mannay, 2016).

Career interventions for marginalised people

In career counselling, interventions for the inclusion of marginalised people tend to be preventative (i.e. trying to stop young people from pursuing a path that will increase inequities and exclusion) or reintegrative (i.e. trying to bring excluded groups back into society) (Watts, 2001). The role of career guidance in the social and work inclusion of marginalised people goes back to the field's origins. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century philanthropists reached out to migrants and those living in poverty, offering charity and personal forms of mentoring. Frank Parsons (1909), considered 'the founding father' of vocational counselling, established the Vocation Bureau in Boston (Hartung & Blustein, 2002) and inspired

many to see 'career as fit' (Pryor & Bright, 2011), career development as linear, and career choice as a controllable cognitive activity.

We seldom hear about Helen Bradford Thompson Woolley and M. Edith Campbell, who advocated for social justice and could be considered 'the founding mothers' of career guidance (Burns, 2009). By 1921, these women had created one of the most progressive programs in the USA, at the Vocational Bureau of Cincinnati. Here, they provided career counseling, protection and services to many marginalised groups, the physically and mentally challenged, juvenile delinquents, women and children.

Following on from these early examples, career guidance has been strongly engaged with social justice and the inclusion of marginalised people into work and society. Recent work has focused on celebrating this tradition of social justice and providing it with stronger theoretical underpinnings (Hooley et al., 2018, 2019).

Despite this strong social justice tradition, career is often seen as a normative concept which is not easily accessed by those outside of the mainstream. Career is considered an individual endeavor and a linear trajectory, from school to work and through the labour market. In this understanding, some people, the young and homeless, paperless refugees or survivors of modern slavery, do not seem to 'fit in'. If the idea of career is not made accessible to them, there is a danger that they become 'invisible' to career guidance services and practitioners.

The alienation of some groups, from career guidance services, is particularly clear in relation to those who have been coerced into work or who operate mainly in the informal economy (Watts, 2015). The global business of modern slavery, facilitated by digitalization and modern technology, generates a yearly profit of 150 billion US dollars (Kara, 2009; Drejer & Bales, 2018), through exploitation of approximately 40.3 million victims, including 9000 in Norway, mostly in fishing, agriculture, construction, tourism and sex industry (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2017; Arnegaard & Davis, 2019; Norwegian Agency for Development of Cooperation (NORAD), 2020).

Modern slavery is rooted in economic and political structures and needs to be approached strategically on multiple levels, through international cooperation with a long-term perspective (Drejer & Bales, 2018; Arnegaard & Davis, 2019). The Norwegian government has made efforts to combat modern slavery, through international and domestic initiatives, involving local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), to provide legal guidance, health services and housing (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019).

In many cases, complexities of documentation make it less likely for victims to access welfare services, and some refuse help for a variety of reasons, often related to the complexity of their personal circumstances (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2007). Sex workers and survivors, often facing stigmatization and exploitation (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2007), have an understandable mistrust of services provided by the state and NGOs. Survivors who consider pressing charges against their perpetrators, are allotted a 'reflection period' and a temporary residence permit. The majority, often illegal immigrants, are forced to return to their country of origin, and in danger of being re-trafficked (Brunovskis, 2007, 2012).

An exploratory study

This article reports on a small-scale exploratory study (van Halteren, 2018) conducted by the author, a professional artist, educator and career practitioner. The object was to gain insight into the life and needs of a particular group of marginalised people, survivors of modern slavery, and to use these insights to inform career counselling practice.

The study had a qualitative research design, including creative research methods (Mannay, 2016). The combination of (non- and) participant observation, interviews and participatory visual data production, enabled the collection of data from multiple sources at various times. Prior to commencing the study, ethical clearance was obtained. Participants, all adults, recruited through NGOs, were informed and gave consent to use and disseminate data. NGO staff-members assisted the author during field work. NN, in charge of the women's shelter and group-meetings, became a key informant and door opener to the 'invisible' people.

The author attended ten weekly group-meetings (approximately three hours each, organized and led

by staff-members) with 5–15 people who identified as female, (former) sex workers and survivors of modern slavery (hereafter called women) in Norway. She observed and participated in group-activities (meals, mingling and meditation) and had several individual 'career conversations' (inspired by, but not based on Savickas' (2015) counseling manual) with two women, in their habitat. They were asked to describe their childhood, educational and work-experiences, current situation and imagined future. In addition, they were asked to describe what and/or who they needed to realise their (career-) dreams.

Supplementary thematic interviews were conducted with four female staff-members from two NGOs, involved in interventions for the inclusion of this group. Furthermore, eleven women (three chose to observe) and four staff-members participated in a workshop. They were asked to choose and assemble elements (e.g. photos, text, coloured paper) from magazines provided, to create an A3-collage, depicting their present or future self. This researcher-led creative activity was designed to be non-invasive, facilitate reflections on personal identities, and cultivate a sense of community.

The study generated a large collection of data produced by the researcher (photos, fieldnotes, audio-recordings) and by participants (collages). Recordings were transcribed, auteur-checked and analyzed with the *Listening Guide* (Gilligan et al., 2003; Gilligan & Eddy, 2017), a voice-centered relational method, grounded in psychoanalytic theory, 'intended to systematically interpret the many layers of voice contained within a person's expressed experience' (Gilligan et al., 2003, p.157). This method consists of a series of steps, each requiring active presence, responsive listening and a desire to engage with the storyteller.

1. Listening for the plot, the "scenery" in the narrative: what happens where, when, why and with whom. Who or what is missing, what themes, metaphors or images are used, what is the sociocultural context, are there contradictions or silences?
2. Listening for the I and the rhythm in the storyteller's voice: How does the I behave and act in this "scenery"? Here, *I-poems* are composed by highlighting and separating every I-phrase (subject and verb) from the narrative, and listing these in the same order, starting a new line with each phrase, like lines in a poem. This, in order to discern what is not explicitly uttered, but core to the narrative's message.
3. Listening for Contrapuntal Voices. This means listening to the quality or musicality of the storyteller's voice: are there different voices, interplay, harmonies, dissonances and tensions with parts of itself? 'This step not only picks up on what is being said or what may be silenced. Listening for different voices and their counterpoint further nuances our understanding of the data by resisting binary categories or dichotomies.' (Gilligan & Eddy, 2017, p.79). Here, research questions are used as a touchstone to identify the voices that are relevant for the inquiry.
4. After multiple listenings, results are assembled to compose an analysis. Here, the researcher returns to the research questions, asking "what was surprising and if so, what was it and why?" This brings back her own voice and creates a string of evidence, connecting the questions with the interpretation.

The results (themes, contrapuntal voices and I-poems) were used as points of reference for the analysis of the collages ('self-wish-images'), using basic art-history principles: composition, content, context, and connotation (Mannay, 2016).

The next four sections will present the results, first focusing on the practitioners' perspectives of the women's needs for support, then moving on to the women's' experiences, and demonstrating different ways in which contextually sensitive and community-based career interventions can support and facilitate inclusion.

Professionals as gatekeepers for career interventions

The author conducted several short, semi-structured interviews with NGO-staff, who were employed as social workers, health care professionals or teachers. These practitioners took two main approaches to their work. The first approach was as an expert,

providing information and medication, who viewed women as traumatised victims in need of protection. The second approach was as an idealist, providing compassion and provision, who viewed women as hurt fellow human beings with basic needs. Neither type considered career support an important part of their services.

The author was denied access to the survivors. The professionals argued that the women were too vulnerable, and that career counselling was not appropriate.

> Your research is very important, but … these people are too fragile to share their traumatic stories. They need professional care, the last thing they need is career counselling!

After several months of unsuccessful recruitment, the author was approached by NN, representing an NGO involved in interventions for (former) sex-workers and survivors of modern slavery. She asked, 'What's in it for them?' The author was invited to a group meeting, but not allowed to interview. NN instructed 'you must stay in the back of the room, observe and wait until they approach you'.

The author experienced an ethical dilemma: should she accept (risking that the women would neither approach nor give consent to further research) or reject (risking failed recruitment and the need to study a different group)? Could career counselling elements be implemented without compromising her research? Agreement on NN's terms would provide a unique opportunity to meet these women. Acknowledging and responding to their needs could be considered ethically sound. Hence, the author chose a different, more vulnerable role and changed the research design. The interviews (renamed 'career conversations') were postponed and replaced with (non-) participant observations and the offer of a creative group-workshop.

Reaching out to people considered vulnerable

Weekly group-meetings were held in an old building, situated in a 'dodgy' part of town, where substance

Figure 1. A 'dodgy' part of town
(photograph taken by the author)

abusers, sex workers and others living on the margins, would mingle during the night. In order to enter, one would have to cross a scarcely lit, public archway, decorated with graffiti, bearing the unmistakably smell of bodily fluids, the ground covered with garbage, used needles and condoms. A stark contrast to the interior, which was clean, candlelit, decorated with flowers, art, background music and the smell of fresh coffee. The room (approximately 30 square meters) had a kitchen corner, a bathroom (with shower), a piano on a stage, and was furnished with small tables and chairs. As only women were allowed in the entrance, the front-door was always guarded.

The author's first encounter with this group evoked strong emotions. Being a single woman, entering an unfamiliar neighborhood, known for criminal activities, on a dark winter's night, she felt vulnerable and powerless. Here, she was not applauded for her academic endeavors or professional skills, but merely tolerated as an alien visitor. At the end of the first meeting, introduced by NN, she was approached by a woman with aggressive body language: 'What took you so long? We need your help!' Over the weeks, others

followed, sharing their stories or asking for career services.

At most meetings, some would come early (to freshen up or check the latest donation of clothing), others late, but all were welcomed and included. Staff-members took time to relate to each of them. Some women flocked together (speaking the same foreign language) laughing out loud, others sat silently, crouching on a chair in the corner. In the beginning of fieldwork, the author was met with scepticism and women kept their distance. Over time, they seemingly accepted her, as she was frequently hugged and included in 'girl-talk' (about fashion, hairstyles, children or men). The author, instructed to cause no harm to vulnerable people, was surprised by their agency, generosity and resilience. She was invited to join in on other activities and asked to come back and provide career services. As one woman said, 'The NGO helps, they are sweet, and I am grateful, but they can't help me write a CV you know?'

Engaging in indirect career conversations

The women laughed and gesticulated, but also paused and sighed, obviously struggling to find words. Some conversations were extremely uncomfortable to listen to, partially due to content, mostly due to their body language and the sound of silence, containing emotions too strong for words. The author offered time-out, but the women insisted on sharing. As one described, it is 'so painful, but good to realise how far I've come!' They expressed feelings of shame and loneliness but also gratefulness to staff-members, faith (in Mother Nature, Jesus Christ or God) and hope for the future: 'I can do it! With God, all things are possible!' They described themselves as hurt but resilient, strong, creative and adaptable, making a clear distinction between past, present and future. 'I was lost but now I'm found! I am a survivor!' Whether describing retrospectively or imagining future, they never used career vocabulary, but expressed a need for help to survive and overcome social and structural barriers. 'I need to support my family. How can I start my own business?'

Finding a common language through a creative workshop

The workshop engaged the women in creating an individual collage each, which would depict her present or future self. During the workshop the women, laughing and cooperating to find useful elements, seemed excited and eager to create.

> Oh! I want this, they're cute [cuts out flowers] flowers are nice, the feeling and they are attractive [pastes flowers on paper]. This is perfect for, ooooh, my PERFECT one is this one [finds image she likes particularly well]! I LOVE this! Oh YES, this one is CUTE! [cutting and pasting while humming a song].

In the end some rose and presented their product, explaining their choice of material, cheered on by the others. 'Soooo beautiful! I want you to drive me in that car!'

Most collages showed nature (explained as the preferred environment), artifacts (explained as hobbies) or people (differing in color, age, gender and body shape) in pairs or engaged in group activities (explained as the need to be loved and belong).

Figure 2. Collage produced by a participant
(photograph taken by the author)

This collage (figure 2) in hues of pink, black and white, containing text (lifestyle, perfect home, future, glamour) and images (flowers, white interior, one black car and three white women, facing different ways), was presented by a black woman. She described it as follows:

> I love beautiful cars. I dream of owning my own. I don't have money to buy one, but in the future, I hope. This is the dreamhouse, I love the style! It is clean, neat and a comfortable place to live. The women are beautiful, and I am beautiful also! [holding up her collage, obviously content] So cool! I want the future to be like this!

Her collage and presentation are a stark contrast to her past, growing up in poverty.

Afterwards, several women admitted they were surprised by their own and others' collages. The workshop seemed to provide a new language to express emotions too large for words, build relationships, enable career conversations and provide a sense of community-building.

Situating careers and lives in context

The women, differing in skin color, age, gender, body shape and country of origin, had similar experiences with oppression, abuse and poverty. They grew up in precarious situations, at risk of exploitation and long-term marginalisation. One was sent away, age six, to work for others. 'It was a really difficult life. I needed to have my mother, but she could not take responsibility for all of us, I had to move out'. Another, evicted by religious parents for being a pregnant teenager, took random jobs to survive. 'I was 14, I wanted to become a nurse, but had to quit school and work'. Several women attended school and aspired, but could not afford, to study. Only one woman remembers a school counselor, encouraging her not to drop out, but she felt the need to work in order to survive. 'So, the money stopped all. I didn't have any hope again to go to school'.

These women longed to be loved and belong. They aspired, hoped and dreamt, but lured by fake scholarships, promises of work or marriage, ended up as sex workers in Europe. 'She broke her promises! Before I came, she said something different and when I came, this wasn't our agreement! We had fights and quarrels many times.'

Neither sex work nor slavery were career choices. They were exploited, subjected to horrific cruelty, robbed of their freedom, forced to labor and denied basic human rights. Their stories show how career and life develop simultaneously. Neither can be planned in detail as both are shaped by responses to societal and structural barriers. Some elements influenced career development as expected (personal conditions, ambitions, self-efficacy and time), others more than expected (culture and context). Two unforeseen elements (the emotional and spiritual dimension) appeared to be determinants, and two major themes were: the power of words and relationships.

Conclusions and implications for practice

The results of this study indicate a discrepancy in the women's expressed needs and the practitioners' assumptions of the women's needs. In addition, they differ in opinions on the women's identity, role and career readiness. Furthermore, results indicate that the NGO's interventions meet the women's need for compassion, medication and provision, but fail to meet their need for career services.

The author was surprised by the absence of career practitioners, the lack of inter-professional cooperation in interventions, the impact of the emotional and spiritual dimensions, and the resilience and agency of the women considered vulnerable.

The women, sheltered, safe, and supervised, longed to make their own (career-) choices, but were, to a large degree, underestimated and hindered from doing so. Staff showed genuine interest and concern but left them with little or no control. Access to career support was withheld, based on the assumption that they did not need it and that it would be irrelevant. These assumptions were problematic and condescending, as these women, survivors, caretakers and role-models, had valuable (vocational and life-) skills and were eager to participate and contribute, but needed help to overcome structural and societal barriers. Professionals making assumptions about people's needs are in danger of cementing victim-roles and dysfunctional narratives.

Professional interventions should be knowledge-based and respectful. This study suggests career interventions

can be used to support the inclusion of these women or other marginalised people. Central to this is providing access to different forms of career support and not making assumptions on behalf of the people involved.

Professionals working with marginalised people need to co-create complimentary career interventions and involve their target group. Recent research shows a minor increase in user-involvement, but survivors of modern slavery are seldom included, despite their unique insight in the need for preventive or rehabilitative interventions (Arnegaard & Davis, 2019). Such interventions could include a range of activities and career conversations woven into the daily life activities of the target group. This would require professionals to leave their comfort zone and take time to reach out, relate and listen responsively to marginalised people in their habitat, instead of assuming their needs and offering career services at fixed locations during office hours.

This relational, attentive listening (Gilligan et al., 2003) relates to the philosophical ethics of 'the humanism of the Other' which, according to Levinas (2003) surpasses charity, as we only can understand our own humanity through the humanity of others. 'No one can stay in himself; The humanity of man, subjectivity, is a responsibility for others, an extreme vulnerability' (Levinas 2003, p.67). 'The other's material needs are my spiritual needs' (2003, p.xxxiv). According to him, we need to relate, respond and care for each-Other, as this will give purpose and make us human. In meeting the Other we face ourselves, realising we too are the Other. Based on this and the author's fieldnotes, confirming humanising can be time-consuming and uncomfortable, practical guidelines of C.A.R.E. were developed to facilitate inclusion:

> **C**onnect. Be vulnerable. Leave your comfort zone and meet 'the Other' where (s)he is.
>
> **A**cknowledge you too are 'the Other'. All human beings have equal rights and basic needs.
>
> **R**espect. Be humble. Recognize your incompetence and need for 'the Other's' expertise.
>
> **E**ngage. You are interconnected with 'the Other'. Listen and co-create inclusive communities.

Every human being has purpose and potential to participate and contribute. One should not underestimate the value of personal encounters where people are seen, heard and respected for who they are, not for what they do or have. Creative or meditative activities (Hansen & Amundson, 2009), resonating with people's emotional and spiritual dimension, may help express phenomena too large for words, and help someone regard oneself and others as unique and equal. Unfortunately, many minorities and oppressed groups face societal and structural barriers. Despite their valuable skills (needed in, but not always certified by society) they are at risk of exploitation, long-term social marginalisation and a life in poverty.

Poverty and social injustice are complex phenomena, rooted in cultural and political structures, and need to be addressed on all levels. On micro-level, career practitioners have a unique opportunity to promote equity, respect and justice for all, and to help individuals overcome societal and structural barriers. Indeed, career interventions can facilitate inclusion provided practitioners take time, to listen and C.A.R.E., to acknowledge the impact of the emotional and spiritual dimensions, criticise oppressive discourse, customise communication and career services, and engage in inter-professional cooperation to co-create inclusive communities for all.

References

Arnegaard, T. J. & Davis, T. (2019). *Kartlegging av moderne slaveri og anbefalinger til norsk innsats for bekjempelse av moderne slaveri i utviklingssamarbeidet (Mapping of modern slavery and recommendations for the Norwegian Government's development programme to combat modern slavery)*. Retrieved from Oslo: https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/modern_slavery/id2670039/

Brunovskis, A. (2007). Hjemme best? Situasjonen for hjemvendte ofre for menneskehandel på Balkan og i Øst-Europa. *Tidsskrift for kjønnsforskning*, 1, 21-36.

Brunovskis, A. (2012). *Balancing protection and prosecution in anti-trafficking policies: a comparative*

analysis of reflection periods and related temporary residence permits for victims of trafficking in the Nordic countries. Belgium and Italy. Copenhagen: Norden.

Brunovskis, A., & Surtees, R. (2007). *Leaving the past behind?: when victims of trafficking decline assistance*. Oslo: Fafo.

Burns, S. T. (2009). Legacy of the vocational Bureau of Cincinnati: Research advances social justice. *Career Development Quarterly,* 57(3), 237-247. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2009.tb00109.x

Drejer, C., & Bales, K. (2018). *#SlaveTech: A snapshot of slavery in a digital age*. Oslo: Skaperkraft Frekk forl.

Gilligan, C., & Eddy, J. (2017). Listening as a path to psychological discovery: an introduction to the Listening Guide. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 6(2), 76-81. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-017-0335-3

Gilligan, C., Spencer, R., Weinberg, M. K., & Bertsch, T. (2003). On the Listening Guide: A voice-centered relational method. In P. M. Camic, J. E. Rhodes, & L. Yardley (Eds.), *Qualitative research in psychology: Expanding perspectives in methodology and design* (pp. 157-172). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/10595-009.

Hansen, F., & Amundson, N. (2009). Residing in silence and wonder: career counselling from the perspective of 'being'. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 9(1), 31-43. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-008-9149-5

Hartung, P., & Blustein, D. (2002). Reason, intuition, and social justice: Elaborating on Parson's career decision-making model. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 80(1), 41-47. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2002.tb00164.x

Holland, J. L. (1997). *Making vocational choices : a theory of vocational personalities and work environments* (3rd ed.). Odessa, Fla: Psychological Assessment Resources.

Hooley, T., Sultana, R. G., & Thomsen, R. (2018). *Career guidance for social justice: Contesting neoliberalism*. London: Routledge.

Hooley, T., Sultana, R. G., & Thomsen, R. (2019). *Career guidance for emancipation: Reclaiming justice for the multitude*. London: Routledge.

International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) (2019). 2019 IAEVG Communiqué on Inclusive Societies Investing in their People. https://iaevgconference2019.sk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/IAEVG-Communiqué-2019-Final-copy-Sept-10.pdf

International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2017). Global estimates of modern slavery: Forced labour and forced marriage. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575479.pdf

Irving, B. A. (2016). Reflections on career practice for challenging times: A critical dialogue. Paper presented at the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance Madrid, Spain.

Kara, S. (2009). *Sex trafficking: Inside the business of modern slavery*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Levinas, E. (2003). *Humanism of the other*. Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois Press.

Mannay, D. (2016). *Visual, narrative and creative research methods: application, reflection and ethics*. London: Routledge.

Norwegian Agency for Development and Cooperation (NORAD) (2020). Programme document for the Norwegian Government's development cooperation programme to combat modern slavery. https://norad.no/contentassets/2a14f61b5c87441bbd337e2fa0cc1118/programme-document-for-the-norwegian-governments-development-cooperation-programme-to-combat-modern-slavery.pdf

Pryor, R., & Bright, J. (2011). *The chaos theory of careers: A new perspective on working in the twenty-first century*. New York, London: Routledge.

Savickas, M. (2015). *Life-Design Counseling Manual* (PDF). Vocopher. http://www.vocopher.com/LifeDesign/LifeDesign.pdf

Sultana, R. (2014). Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will? Troubling the relationship between career guidance and social justice. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 14(1), 5-19. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-013-9262-y

van Halteren, J. (2018). *The Sound of Silence. Karriereveiledning for inkludering: utforskning av karriereutviklingen hos Jane, som overlevde moderne slaveri (Career Counselling for inclusion: an exploratory study of career development in Jane, a survivor of modern slavery).* University of South-Eastern Norway, Kongsberg. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/11250/2580157

Watts, A. G. (2001). Career guidance and social exclusion: A cautionary tale. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 29(2), 157-176. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069880020047111

Watts, A. G. (2015). The implications of school-leaver unemployment for careers education in schools. In T. B. Hooley, L. (Ed.), *Career Development Policy and Practice: The Tony Watts Reader* (pp.187-204). Stafford: Highflyers.

For correspondence

Jeanine van Halteren,
PhD candidate,
OsloMet - Oslo Metropolitan University

jeavan@oslomet.no

10.20856/jnicec.4504

Understanding guidance counselling needs of adults with dyslexia through the lens of a critical-recognitive social justice perspective and a biopsychosocial model of disability

Petra Elftorp & Lucy Hearne

This article draws on the findings from a qualitatively-led sequential mixed methods doctorate study which was located within the Irish Adult Educational Guidance Services (AEGS) and focused on the guidance counselling needs of adults with dyslexia. Honneth's (2003) conceptions of recognition, equality and social justice, and the interactionist and non-reductionist biopsychosocial (BPS) model of disability (WHO 2011) provided an opportunity to examine and interpret the findings as matters of social justice. The wider application of Honneth's theory and the BPS model to career counselling practice are also considered.

Introduction

Disability has been described as 'the poor relation' on the diversity spectrum (Berry, 2017) and it has also received limited attention in the field of career counselling, despite a substantial body of literature suggesting that individuals with disabilities face complex barriers in relation to career opportunities (Riddick, 2012). As dyslexia is a relatively prevalent, yet often poorly understood disability in adults, the aim to understand career counselling needs of adults with dyslexia through a social justice lens emerged.

This article will first present the context of the study, followed by the methodology and the key findings of the research. The findings are then discussed and finally, the wider application of both Honneth's critical-recognitive theory and the BPS model of disability are discussed.

The Irish Adult Educational Guidance Service

This study was situated in Ireland, and more specifically in the nationwide Adult Educational Guidance Service (AEGS) which is positioned as an embedded service within the Further Education and Training (FET) sector. The function of the AEGS is to offer 'impartial adult education information, one-to-one guidance and group guidance, which will help people to make informed educational, career and life choices' (Ireland, Department of Education and Skills [DES], 2012, p.3). This is offered free of charge at pre-entry, entry, on-going, pre- and post-exit (DES, 2012).

The Irish holistic and integrated approach includes personal/social, educational and career guidance (Hearne & Neary, 2020) and the AEGS remit is to work with 15 target groups who 'experience particular and acute barriers to participation', including adults with disabilities (DES, 2012). Whilst a large number of adult learners with disabilities participate in FET, disability supports has been insufficient, sporadic and varied throughout the country (Elftorp, Hearne & Coughlan, 2018; Houses of the Oireachtas, 2019; McGuckin, Shevlin, Bell & Devecchi, 2013).

Dyslexia and Disability Debates

There are several contested debates surrounding dyslexia and whilst consensus is rare, most definitions and theorists concur in terms of the core

characteristics of dyslexia, namely: difficulties with fluent and accurate reading and/or spelling (Elbro, 2010; Elliott & Grigorenko, 2014; McPhillips, Hazzard, Beck, Casserly & Tiernan, 2015).

Underlying perspectives and political interests naturally influence how we define and assess dyslexia, not least due to the association with resources and legislated obligations to support individuals with disabilities (Kirby, 2019). There are three major disability perspectives and the traditional medical model identifies dyslexia as a deficit within the individual and a 'medical' response to a diagnosis therefore relates to remediation of the key characteristics (Barclay, 2011). The 'social' perspective takes the opposite position, as it attributes the dyslexic difficulties to the social context and environment (Howard, 2003; MacDonald, 2009). Whilst the medical model neglects context, the social model does not account for the challenges or potential physical pain an impairment may incur (Danermark & Gellerstedt, 2004). A third disability model, which incorporates both the medical and the social models, is promoted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2011) as the biopsychosocial, or BPS model, where a disability is understood as: 'a dynamic interaction between health conditions and contextual factors, both personal and environmental' (WHO, 2011, p.4). The BPS model of disability draws on the work of Engel (1977) which was originally positioned in medicine and has since also influenced health psychology for example. In this article, however, 'BPS model' refers to WHO's (2011) use of the concept in relation to understanding disability. It is acknowledged that although clear categorisation of factors is useful from a theoretical perspective, the factors may be more difficult to distinguish in practice. Nonetheless, the BPS-model offers a more holistic and non-reductionist approach to conceptualising dyslexia compared to other models (Shakespeare, 2006).

A Social Justice Perspective Fit for Purpose

A particular underpinning of the study was its critical-recognitive social justice perspective which emerged over time through extensive exploration of some major philosophers (e.g. Fraser & Honneth, 2003; Rawls, 1999; Sen, 2014; Young, 1990), as well as literature within the career counselling field (e.g. Arthur, 2014; Blustein, 2011; Hooley, Sultana & Thomsen, 2018; Irving, 2013; Plant & Kjaergard 2016; Reid & West, 2018) and the disability field (e.g. Danermark & Gellerstedt, 2004; Shakespeare, 2006).

Distributive and recognitive perspectives can be seen as two major and opposing social justice standpoints. In brief, distributive perspectives aim to erase differences and inequalities through redistribution of resources (Rawls, 1999). It is associated with meritocracy and critical thinkers have critiqued its lack of regard to context, power and oppression (Young, 1990). In contrast, recognitive perspectives focus on embracing and respecting group differences, and have thus been associated with 'identity politics' and critiqued for accentuating differences (Riddell, 2009).

Fraser and Honneth (2003) both offer plural conceptions of social justice, where Fraser focuses on status and representation, while Honneth's theory is foremost relational and intersubjective. Honneth (2003) defines 'recognition' as the process of being cared for, respected and held in esteem by others and in legislation. These are seen as necessary conditions for the development of self-determinism, identity formation, and social justice. Honneth's theory has been critiqued for inadequately recognising the importance of multiple group affiliations, particularly for people with disabilities (Sen, 2014; Thomas, 2007). Nonetheless, when pairing Honneth's theory of recognition with a non-reductionist model of disability, it allows us to consider not just intersubjective experiences and social structures, but also 'biology', in the analysis of disability research (Danermark & Gellerstedt, 2004; Shakespeare, 2006). It becomes clear then that social justice must incorporate both relational and institutional recognition, as well as distribution of arrangements to accommodate and compensate for biological impairments.

Methodology

The aim of this study was to investigate the guidance counselling needs of adults with dyslexia using a mixed methodology underpinned by a critical pragmatic research paradigm (Midtgarden, 2012). Pragmatism allowed for flexibility and inquiries into practical and social problems and this study drew primarily on

some of the more critical works by Dewey (1973), where human experience is the focal point. This critical pragmatic approach was a cyclical process where knowledge, actions and beliefs were re-negotiated on a continual basis by the researcher (Morgan, 2014).

The complexity of the topic demanded a triangulation approach whereby the 'voices' of both adults with dyslexia and guidance practitioners who support them could be included and valued (Creswell, 2009). Thus, the study involved two phases of data collection. In the initial and exploratory stage of the research, an online questionnaire was distributed to all guidance counsellors working in the Adult Education Guidance Services in 2012 (see Elftorp & Hearne, 2014). From a social justice perspective, it was important to ensure that the career counselling 'receivers' were prioritised (Thomsen, 2012). Subsequently, the weight of the study was on the qualitative phase, where the experiences of 14 adult learners with dyslexia were explored through semi-structured face-to-face interviews which varied in length, from 40 to 90 minutes. In total, ten men and four women, aged 18 to 67, who had experience of further education in adulthood were interviewed. They were recruited through gatekeepers in AEGSs and through the Dyslexia Association of Ireland. The purpose of interviewing adults with dyslexia in this study was not simply to allow their voices to be heard, but also to acknowledge them as contributors to a wider debate on social justice concerns.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework for thematic analysis was used to analyse the data and it provided the necessary flexibility to avoid the risk of trying to fit complexities and nuances into an over-rigid structure. 'Social justice' and 'recognition' were sensitising concepts which provided a reference point and a way of drawing attention to the issues which this study set out to examine (Bowen, 2006).

Overall, the benefits of the methodology used, involve the context-rich and experience-near findings anchored in 'the personal voices and collective narratives of underrepresented people' (Blustein, McWhirter & Perry, 2005, p.158). The prioritisation of the qualitative findings was essential (Shakespeare, 2006) and the methodological pluralism resulted in complementary and more comprehensive findings than a mono-method study would have (Perry, 2009).

Findings

The overall findings identified both barriers and enablers to social justice for adults with dyslexia, as well as appropriate career counselling interventions. This article primarily presents selected themes from the overall findings from the study which have particular social justice implications (for a comprehensive account of all findings, see Elftorp, 2017). The findings reported here relate to experiences of misrecognition; transformative experiences of recognition; and appropriate interventions. All extracted quotes are using pseudonyms.

Experiences of misrecognition

Several of the adults with dyslexia in this study used the term 'struggle' repeatedly in relation to experiences on biological, psychological and social levels: On a 'biological' level, the struggle involved day to day frustration and coping with the difficulties of reading fluency and spelling accuracy. These symptoms primarily translated into difficulties with note-taking and completing written tasks, assignments and examinations within a specified timeframe. For those with significant difficulties, everyday life was impacted, from sending text messages to friends, paying bills and travelling independently.

However, the narratives of most of the interviewees focused on the psychological and social struggles to a much greater extent. Several accounts reveal experiences of misrecognition that had a historical basis in their formative education, including being subjected to pejorative labels such as 'slow' or 'stupid', segregated from peers and humiliated in school:

> They'd [teachers] get everyone to stand up and only allowed to sit down after you had the correct answer. So inevitably I was the last one standing for about two years running. And ah, you can imagine that it would shake your confidence just a little bit! [sarcasm]
>
> (Sean, 20s)

Several of the interviewees also had a sense that others had low expectations of them in relation to their education and career. For example:

> …there was one [teacher] that used to throw me a sewing basket and say 'Here, do that! That's all you'll ever be able to do in your life!'
>
> (Catherine, 50's)

The same interviewee ('Catherine') had also been physically abused for being 'lazy' in school. The misrecognition they experienced clearly affected their self-esteem and led to feelings of frustration, anxiety, fear and shame. As a result of these experiences, some were reluctant to engage in education as adults and some also felt that their career progression was slow or static as a result.

Transformative Experiences of Recognition

Two types of experiences appeared to have a transformative effect on the dyslexic adults' self-perceptions. Firstly, being diagnosed with dyslexia provided validation of their personal struggles, confirmation of their intelligence and a sense of personal vindication, particularly for those who had not been diagnosed during childhood:

> I just got that acceptance in myself then that 'I'm actually alright, I'm not stupid.'
>
> (Ben, 40s)

For Catherine (50s) who was physically and mentally abused as a child due to what was mislabelled as 'laziness' by teachers, the diagnosis provided a sense of relief that she was not to 'blame':

> I remember when she told me I had it, it was like somebody hit me a kick in the stomach. And I actually couldn't believe the shock when she was telling me. I felt like getting sick. And then I just started crying and all of a sudden I felt this relief.
>
> (Catherine, 50s)

However, positive outcomes post-diagnosis appeared to be contingent on developing a nuanced conception of dyslexia, time to process a new 'identity label', and access to some form of follow-up support. Furthermore, the financial cost and lack of funding for a formal dyslexia assessment for adults in Ireland were identified as a significant barrier. Moreover, access to support requires self-disclosure of dyslexia, which was emotionally taxing and deeply uncomfortable for most of the adults, due to a fear of ableism:

> I don't work in an environment where educational weaknesses are accepted …you'd be treated differently, let's just say.
>
> (Dan, 30s)

The other key transformative experience involves an environment where dyslexia was normalised. Five of the 14 adults in this study had participated in Dyslexia Association of Ireland's full-time and year-long 'Career Paths for Dyslexia' course where having dyslexia was an entry criteria. For the course participants, it was the first time in their lives they felt part of a dyslexic community which 'turned everything on its head' (Ben, 30s). It meant that the shame and anxiety they felt in other settings evaporated and it enabled a greater sense of self-acceptance.

Some of those who did not have the opportunity to be part of a dyslexia community expressed a desire to meet others who could 'really understand' them and their experiences:

> I've never met someone with dyslexia except for myself. And I would love to meet someone with dyslexia who is successful and who has been through the… been through what I've been through.
>
> (Colin, 20s)

Outside of a dyslexia community, disclosing one's dyslexia also appeared more challenging for most of the dyslexic adults and both Ciaran (50s) and Dolores (50s) felt as if they had to 'pretend to be normal' in many situations.

Appropriate Interventions

Some of the dyslexic adults benefitted from a guidance counsellor advocating on their behalf, whilst others had found their 'voice' over time and developed the ability to self-advocate.

The guidance counsellors identified the complexity and challenge in advocating for clients who did not have a formal diagnosis, as it is often a prerequisite for access to disability support and accommodations. As such, advocacy appears to often be related to accessing an

assessment service as the financial cost is a barrier for many adults, including several of the adults in this study.

Those who self-advocated appeared to have developed a level of critical consciousness which both helped them re-frame their self-perceptions and develop the confidence to ask for support:

> I'm not thick, I'm quite intelligent. And I'm not arrogant, I just know that it could be explained in a different way. And I ask for it.
>
> (Sean, 20s)

Overall, it was evident that the level of support the adults with dyslexia had received varied greatly in relation to both adult career counselling and learning support in the FET sector. Some adults were keen to find ways of reducing the literacy related impact of dyslexia, through assistive technology for example. However, others stressed that guidance counsellors should place more emphasis on helping them develop coping strategies and self-acceptance, rather than trying to 'fix' their literacy difficulties. Although the findings suggested that the most common outward referral destination for clients with dyslexia was the Adult Literacy Services, some guidance counsellors recognised that general adult literacy provision was inappropriate when dyslexia is present.

Discussion of findings

The prevalence of experiences of the relational misrecognition identified in this study have been noted in dyslexia research for some time (Claassens & Lessing, 2015; Young Kong, 2012). The findings also concur with previous social and behavioural research in terms of the negative effects such social pathology can have on the identity-formation and self-esteem of individuals (Evans, 2014; Tanner, 2009; Thomas, Graham, Powell & Fitzgerald, 2016).

Whilst some individuals in this study internalised negative discourses about themselves and about dyslexia, others 'spoke out' against ableism and struggled for recognition of people with dyslexia. Honneth (1995) holds that although a struggle for recognition usually begins with feelings of anger and shame, the individual must also be able to cognitively identify that such feelings are caused by an injustice done to them. In other words, a precondition for struggles for recognition is what Freire (1970) would call critical consciousness.

One of the most important factors identified in this study as facilitating a process of reframing self-perceptions and developing critical consciousness included a dyslexia diagnosis. In contrast, previous research and debates on the practice of dyslexia diagnosis are contentious and includes compelling arguments against the practice of diagnosing dyslexia, such as the risk of self-fulfilling prophecies and lowered expectations (Elliott & Grigorenko, 2014; McPhillips et al., 2015; Riddick, 2012). However, the findings of this study suggest that such risks are linked to *any* negatively perceived 'learner labels' (e.g. slow or stupid), and not dyslexia per se (Elliot & Grigorenko, 2014; EU High Level Group of Experts on Literacy, 2012).

Intersectionality comes into play too, as any financial barriers to accessing diagnostic services, and in extension educational supports, is placing socio-economically disadvantaged adults with suspected dyslexia at particular risk of not accessing appropriate support (Harkin, Doyle & McGuckin, 2015). This has major implications for the public policy goals of social equity and promotion of equal opportunities as it makes for a rather inequitable situation for adult learners with dyslexia in the Irish education system (European Commission, 2010; OECD, 2004).

The second transformative experience which contributed to critical consciousness was being part of a dyslexia community. The specific group environment was permeated by what Honneth (1995) refers to as 'solidarity'; a form of mutual recognition and appreciation for the unique contribution of each individual, and a cultural climate where self-esteem can flourish. This type of environment, where dyslexia is normalised, has been found to be hugely beneficial in previous studies, albeit difficult to locate in practice (Bell, 2009; Young Kong, 2012). Furthermore, career counselling in the community has been emphasised by Thomsen (2012; 2017) who proposes collective and context-sensitive career counselling practices. Similarly, the importance of outreach practices for widening access to career counselling has been emphasised at policy level for some time (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, 2012).

Whilst dyslexia communities may be scarce, group solidarity may be found in voluntary and advocacy groups which aim to increase esteem for the dyslexic community by working to 'raise the value of the abilities associated with' dyslexia (Honneth, 1995, p.127). On a 'macro' level, implications of these findings also concern the responsibility of educational institutions and employers to create a cultural climate of respect and solidarity, as well as providing 'reasonable accommodations' to 'level the playing field' (Duggan & Byrne, 2013; Honneth, 1995; Thomas et al., 2016).

It is also worth noting that dialogue and storytelling can facilitate the vocalisation of pertinent issues and in a group setting in particular, it supports sharing of experiences of misrecognition which in turn can help develop a normative language (Pilapil, 2020). Where peer groups are not available, one-to-one career counselling and qualitative research also have a role in facilitating storytelling though narrative approaches (e.g. McMahon & Watson, 2013).

The relevance of Honneth's critical-recognitive theory and the BPS model to career counselling practice

Honneth's critical-recognitive theory has been applied and adapted in a number of fields, such as social work (Houston, 2015), disability (Maia & Vimieiro, 2015), wellbeing (Thomas et al., 2016), poverty (Pilapil, 2020) and 'non-traditional learners' in higher education (Fleming & Finnegan, 2011). However, it does not appear to have been discussed in great depth in relation to career counselling (although recently touched on by Bakke, Barham and Plant (2020) and Reid and West (2018) for example).

Nonetheless, the relevance of Honneth's theory to career counselling is apparent if we accept his contention that the aim of social justice is to create the social conditions necessary for individuals to have an equal chance to achieve self-realisation. Furthermore, identity and self-perceptions are central in this theory and are key concerns in the career counselling process, not only because it affects psychological wellbeing, but also because of its relationship with self-realisation and action (Honneth, 1995; 2003). Honneth's focus on dialogue, narratives, and allowing the voice of the individual to be heard also imply applicability in career counselling practice (McMahon & Watson, 2013; Pilapil, 2020). The idea of critical consciousness in socially just career counselling has been emphasised previously (Hooley et al., 2018), and it has the potential to open up for a dialogue with clients about whether the barriers they face in their careers should or could be challenged, either on an individual/micro or on a macro level (Prilleltensky & Stead, 2012).

Honneth's theory also helps explain the positive and transformative effects of being part of a 'dyslexia community'. In terms of career counselling practices, this suggests that there is a need to further explore collective and context-sensitive career counselling practices (Thomsen, 2017). It is, nonetheless, important to note that Honneth has been critiqued for not adequately recognising the importance of multiple and complex group affiliations (Danermark & Gellerstedt, 2004; Sen, 2014; Thomas, 2007). This critique is particularly relevant in relation to dyslexia and other disabilities, as there is typically no unifying culture or language within the 'group' (Shakespeare, 2006). In light of this critique, it is proposed here that the BPS model of disability (WHO, 2011) can complement and enhance the critical-recognitive theory.

The key advantage of adopting the BPS model of disability is that it allows for a complex and multi-layered understanding of a person's experiences. Further, neutrality is an underlying principle which means that the person is free to interpret their disability, or parts of it, as negative and/or positive and for that to change over time.

The BPS model also supports the concept of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which is an emerging approach to education where a recognition of 'difference' is embedded into the design of the mainstream provision (see for example McCarthy, Quirke & Treanor, 2018). Following such a model, careers practitioners can employ a sensitivity to the possibility that a disability may be present, even when it is not obvious at first 'sight'. This is particularly important in the context of 'hidden' and stigma-laden disabilities, such as learning disabilities, reduced hearing, mental illness, chronic pain etc. The BPS model has also been applied in relation to people suffering from addiction (Skewes & Gonzales, 2013) and it has a wider

relevance in career counselling. For example, some careers may be inaccessible due to 'biological' factors such as height, age, gender or allergies.

Another advantage of the BPS-model is that it considers intersectionality, as gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic class, also influence how disability and life in general is experienced by the individual (WHO, 2011). Intersectionality allows for a deeper and layered understanding of experiences of social injustice (Jerlinder, Danermark & Gill, 2009).

Conclusion

Whilst adults with dyslexia is a heterogeneous group, the findings of this study confirmed that in addition to literacy related difficulties, inter-subjective experiences of misrecognition are common. Honneth's (1995) critical-recognitive social justice theory helps to make sense of the impact such experiences can have on ones self-perceptions and opportunities, as well as explaining why some subsequently struggle for recognition. Meanwhile, WHO's (2011) BPS model of disability complements Honneth as it allows for a recognition of experiences related to the 'biological' level, as well as recognising complex group affiliations. It is also argued here that these theories can be adopted to other guidance contexts and working with other marginalised groups.

References

Arthur, N. (2014). Social justice and career guidance in the age of talent, *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 14(1), 47-60. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-013-9255-x

Bakke, I.M., Barham, L., & Plant, P. (2020). As time goes by: Geronto guidance, in E. H. Haug, T. Hooley, J. Kettunen, R. Thomsen (Eds) *Career and Career Guidance in the Nordic Countries* (pp.339-356). Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke.

Barclay, L. (2011). Justice and disability: What kind of theorizing is needed?, *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 42 (3), 273-287. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9833.2011.01533.x

Bell, S. (2009). Exploring support for dyslexic adults in the English workforce: Lessons learnt from the story of an adult dyslexia group, *Support for Learning*, 24(2), 73-80. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9604.2009.01402.x

Berry, A. (2017). *Disability is the poor relation of identity politics*. https://disabilityarts.online/magazine/opinion/disability-poor-relation-identity-politics/

Blustein, D. L., McWhirter, E. H., & Perry, J. C. (2005). An emancipatory communitarian approach to vocational development theory, research, and practice, *The Counseling Psychologist*, 33, 141-179. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000004272268

Blustein, D. (2011). A relational theory of working, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 79(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2010.10.004

Bowen, G. A. (2006). Grounded theory and sensitizing concepts, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(3), 12-23. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690600500304

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Claassens, T. & Lessing, A. (2015). Young adult learners with dyslexia: their socio-emotional support needs during adolescence, *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 25(1), 32-36. https://doi.org/10.1080/14330237.2015.1007599

Creswell, J.W. (2009). Mapping the field of mixed methods research, *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 3(2), 95-108. https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689808330883

Danermark, B. & Gellerstedt, L.C. (2004). Social justice: redistribution and recognition-a non-reductionist perspective on disability, *Disability & Society*, 19(4), 339-353. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687590410001689458

Dewey, J. (1973). *Lectures in China, 1919-1920*, Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii.

Duggan, C. & Byrne, M. (2013). *What works in the provision of higher, further and continuing education, training and rehabilitation for adults with disabilities? A review of the literature*. Trim, Co. Meath: National Council for Special Education. Retrieved from: http://

ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Report_15_Adult_Ed_09_04_14.pdf

Elbro, C. (2010). Dyslexia as disability or handicap: When does vocabulary matter?, *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 43(5), 469-478. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022219409357349

Elftorp, P. (2017). *A study of the guidance counselling needs of adults with dyslexia within the Irish adult educational guidance service*. Unpublished Thesis. University of Limerick. https://ulir.ul.ie/handle/10344/6498

Elftorp, P. & Hearne, L. (2014). An investigation of the guidance counselling needs of adults with dyslexia in the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative (AEGI), *Adult Learner: The Irish Journal of Adult and Community Education*, 70-83. https://www.aontas.com/assets/resources/Adult-Learner-Journal/AONTAS%20Adult%20Learner%20Journal%202014.pdf

Elftorp, P., Hearne, L. & Coughlan, B. (2018). What adult learners with dyslexia can tell us about the 'temperature' of adult learning, *Adult Learner: The Irish Journal of Adult and Community Education,* 36-49. https://www.aontas.com/assets/resources/Adult-Learner-Journal/14668_Aontas_Adult_Learner_2018_WEB%20new%2023-11-2018.pdf

Elliott, J. G. & Grigorenko, E. L. (2014). T*he dyslexia debate*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Engel, G. L. (1977). The need for a new medical model: a challenge for biomedicine, *Science*, 196(4286), 129–136. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.847460

Evans, W. (2014). 'I am not a dyslexic person I'm a person with dyslexia': Identity constructions of dyslexia among students in nurse education', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 70(2), 360–372. https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.12199

European Commission (2010) *European Union disability strategy 2010-2020: A renewed commitment to a barrier-free Europe*. Brussels: European Commission. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0636:FIN:en:PDF

European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (2012). *Lifelong guidance policy development: A European resource kit*. http://www.eucen.eu/images/posts/elgpn_resource_kit_2011-12_web.pdf

European Union High Level Group of Experts on Literacy (2012) *Final report*. http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/doc/literacy-report_en.pdf

Fleming, T. & Finnegan, F. (2011) *Non-traditional students in Irish higher education: A research report*. http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/280551

Fraser, N. & Honneth, A. (2003). *Redistribution or recognition? A political-philosophical exchange*, London: Verso.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Herder and Herder.

Grummell, B. & Murray, M.J. (2015). A contested profession: Employability, performativity and professionalism in Irish further education, *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 47(4), 432-450. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2015.996867

Harkin, E., Doyle, A., & McGuckin, C. (2015). Screening and assessment of Specific Learning Disabilities in higher education institutes in the Republic of Ireland, *Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools*, 25(Special Issue 01), 13-23. https://doi.org/10.1017/jgc.2014.15

Hearne, L. & Neary, S. (2020). Let's talk about career guidance in secondary schools! A consideration of the professional capital of school staff in Ireland and England. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-020-09424-5

Honneth, A. (1995). *The struggle for recognition: The moral grammar of social conflicts*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Honneth, A. (2003). 'Redistribution as recognition: a response to Nancy Fraser', in N. Fraser & A. Honneth (Eds.), *Redistribution or recognition? A political-philosophical exchange* (pp.110-197). London: Verso.

Hooley, T., Sultana, R. & Thomsen, R. (2018). *Career guidance for social justice: Contesting neoliberalism*. New York: Routeledge.

Houses of the Oireachtas (2019). *Joint Committee on Education and Skills Report on Education inequality & disadvantage and Barriers to Education*. https://

data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint_committee_on_education_and_skills/reports/2019/2019-06-05_report-on-education-inequality-disadvantage-and-barriers-to-education_en.pdf

Houston, S. (2015). 'When I look I am seen, so I exist to change': Supplementing Honneth's recognition model for social work. *Social Work and Society*, 13(2). http://www.socwork.net/sws/article/view/437

Howard, M. (2003) *An 'Interactionist' perspective on barriers and bridges to work for disabled people*, Institute for Public Policy Research. http://www.ssab.gov/DisabilityForum/MarilynHowardPaper.pdf

Ireland, Department of Education and Skills (2012). *Adult Education Guidance Initiative (AEGI): Operational guidelines*. http://www.ncge.ie/uploads/AEGI_Operational_Guidelines_2012__FINAL.pdf

Irving, B. A. (2013). Access, opportunity, and career: supporting the aspirations of dis/abled students with high-end needs in New Zealand, *International Journal of Inclusive Education,* 17(10), 1040-1052. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2012.728634

Jerlinder, K, Danermark, B. & Gill, P. (2009). Normative approaches to justice in physical education for pupils with physical disabilities-dilemmas of recognition and redistribution, *Disability & Society*, 24(3), 331-342. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687590902789495

Kirby, P. (2019). Literacy, advocacy and agency: The campaign for political recognition of dyslexia in Britain (1962–1997), *Social History of Medicine*. https://doi.org/10.1093/shm/hkz030

MacDonald, S. J. (2009). 'Windows of reflection: conceptualizing dyslexia using the social model of disability', *Dyslexia*, 15(4), 347-362. https://doi.org/10.1002/dys.391

Maia, R. C. M. & Vimieiro, A. C. (2015). Recognition and moral progress: A case study about discourses on disability in the media, *Political Studies*, 63, 161–180. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.1208

McCarthy, P., Quirke, M. & Treanor, D. (2018). *The role of the disability officer and the disability service in higher education in Ireland*. Dublin: AHEAD Educational Press.

McGuckin, C., Shevlin, M., Bell, S. & Devecchi, C. (2013). *Moving to further and higher education - an exploration of the experiences of students with special educational needs*. Trim, Ireland: NCSE. http://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Report_14_Higher_Ed_09_04_14.pdf

McGuinness, S., Bergin, A., Kelly, E., McCoy, S., Smyth, E., Whelan, A., & Banks, J. (2014). *Further education and training in Ireland: past, present and future*, Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute. https://www.esri.ie/pubs/RS35.pdf

McMahon, M. & Watson, M. (2013). Story telling: crafting identities, *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 41(3), 277–286. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2013.789824

McPhillips, T., Hazzard, D., Beck, G., Casserly, A. & Tiernan, B. (2015). *Dyslexia in Ireland, North and South: Perspectives on developments since publication of the Dyslexia Reports (2002)*, SCoTENS. http://scotens.org/site/wp-content/uploads/Dyslexia-in-Ireland-Views-regarding-the-provision-for-pupils-with-dyslexia-since-the-publication-of-the-Task-Force-Reports-North-and-South-2002-DyslexiaNS.pdf

Midtgarden, J. (2012). Critical pragmatism: Dewey's social philosophy revisited, *Journal of Social Theory*, 15(4), 505–521. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431011432373

Morgan D. L. (2014). Pragmatism as a paradigm for social research, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(8), 1045-1053. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800413513733

Organisation of Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) (2004) *Career guidance and public policy: bridging the gap*. Paris: OECD.

Perry, J.C. (2009). A combined social action, mixed methods approach to vocational guidance in efficacy research, *International Journal of Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 9(2), 111-124. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-009-9158-z

Pilapil, R. D. (2020). Beyond Redistribution: Honneth, Recognition Theory and Global Justice, *A Journal of Philosophy and Social Theory*, 21(1), 34-48. https://doi.org/10.1080/14409917.2020.1744281

Plant, P. & Kjaergard, R. (2016). From mutualism to individual competitiveness: Implications and challenges

for social justice within career guidance in neoliberal times. *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling*, 36, 12-19.

Prilleltensky, I., & Stead, G. B. (2012). Critical psychology and career development: Unpacking the adjust–challenge dilemma, *Journal of Career Development*, 39(4), 321-340. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845310384403

Rawls, J. (1999). *A theory of justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reid, H. & West, L. (2018). Connecting big and intimate worlds: Using an auto/biographical research imagination in career guidance, in T. Hooley, R. Sultana & R. Thomsen (Eds.), *Career guidance for social justice: Contesting neoliberalism* (pp.227-240). New York: Routeledge.

Riddell, S. (2009). Social justice, equality and inclusion in Scottish education, *Discourse*, 30(3), 283-297. https://doi.org/10.1080/01596300903036889

Riddick, B. (2012). Labelling learners with SEND: the good, the bad and the ugly, in A. Squires (Ed.), *Contemporary Issues in Special Educational Needs* (pp.25-34). Maindenhead: Open University Press.

Sen, A. (2014). Justice and identity, *Economics And Philosophy*, 30(1), 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266267114000017

Shakespeare, T. (2006). *Disability rights and wrongs*. Abington: Routledge.

Skewes, M. C. & Gonzales, V. M. (2013). The Biopsychosocial Model of Addiction, *Principles of Addiction*, 1. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-398336-7.00006-1

SOLAS (2014). *Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019*, Dublin: SOLAS. https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Further-Education-and-Training-Strategy-2014-2019.pdf

Tanner, K. (2009). Adult dyslexia and the 'conundrum of failure', *Disability & Society*, 24(6), 785-797. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687590903160274

Thomas, C. (2007). *Sociologies of disability and illness: Contested ideas in disability studies and medical sociology*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Thomas, N., Graham, A., Powell, A. M., and Fitzgerald, R. (2016). Conceptualisations of children's wellbeing at school: The contribution of recognition theory, *Childhood*, 23(4), 506-520. https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568215622802

Thomsen, R. (2012). Guidance in communities - A way forward?, *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling*, 28: 39-45.

Thomsen, R. (2017). *Career guidance in communities: A model for reflexive. practice*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

World Health Organization (WHO) (2011). *World report on disability*. www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report.pdf

Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and the politics of difference*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Young Kong, S. (2012). The emotional impact of being recently diagnosed with dyslexia from the perspective of chiropractic students, *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 36(1), 127-146. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2011.606898

For correspondence

Dr. Petra Elftorp,
Lecturer in Education,
University of Limerick

petra.elftorp@ul.ie

Dr. Lucy Hearne,
Waterford Institute of Technology

10.20856/jnicec.4505

Are young people aged 16-19 using or expecting to use the gig economy for their careers?

Esther Galfalvi, Tristram Hooley & Siobhan Neary

Amid growing precarity and zero hour contracts, the 'gig economy' represents a new way of working mediated by web technology. Workers can sign up to a work platform – a website or smartphone program that manages the work automatically – and take on work at the tap of a button. Some platforms manage labour, such as driving for Uber or delivering food for Deliveroo, while others manage retail activity, such as Ebay or Etsy.

Recent research has shown that a significant number of people are using platform work to earn money, with over half being young people aged 16-34. While there are some data regarding satisfaction levels and attractors, there is little research examining specific age segments of workers, or the relationship between platform work and career.

Using data from focus group interviews with school and Further Education college students, this paper will discuss findings from research investigating how young people in England aged 16-19 perceive the gig economy and whether they feel that it will be relevant to their careers, with a view to discussing whether it may be necessary to include in careers education programmes or guidance.

The interview data indicate that these participants were occasionally using platforms to make money, and a few were earning regularly, usually on retail platforms. While some interviewees appreciated the autonomy and flexibility promised by gig economy work, the uncertainty, perceived low status, and lack of career progression prevented them from taking it seriously as a career option. Instead, they preferred traditional forms of work that provide more stability and organisational support - an increasingly rare commodity in a labour market that is changing rapidly in the opposite direction. We conclude that while there may be little value in giving detailed individual guidance on the gig economy, it could be valuable to use it as a way of teaching young people about the labour market and different types of employment

Introduction

From food deliveries to Ikea furniture construction to selling hand-made socks on the internet, the online gig economy is becoming a small but significant fixture in the labour market. The power of digital technologies to connect people has caused an explosion in the number of websites and telephone applications[1] (apps) that facilitate work and commerce. One consequence of this is that it makes it possible for anyone with a skill or something to sell to find their market. Figures measuring participation vary according to the definition of 'gig economy work', but in the United Kingdom, between four and ten percent of the working population are involved (Huws et al., 2017; BEIS, 2018). There is also evidence that participation in the gig economy is growing at a significant rate with numbers doubling between 2016 and 2019 (TUC, 2019). Young people aged 16-25 make up one-fifth of gig economy participants (Huws et al., 2017).

In this article, we present 16-19 year olds' experiences and views of the gig economy and discuss whether it

1 Applications (or apps) are software programs that run on smartphones to perform a specific function such as calendars, online shopping, or games

should be addressed in schools and Further Education (FE) colleges. We examine data from eight focus group interviews in schools and FE colleges to see the extent to which they were using or were interested in platform work for their careers, and whether they wanted advice on the gig economy from advisers.

Defining career

It has often been pointed out that the notion of career itself is not fixed; it changes over time and according to context (Reid, 2016). Research on young people's attitudes towards career suggests that the word evokes some ambivalence, sometimes seeming too formal or demanding to accept fully (Moore & Hooley, 2012). The definition of career we use here is inferred from the responses of the participants themselves, which we summarise as 'a long-term progression of paid work'.

What is the gig economy?

The term 'gig economy' has been used to describe short-term freelance work and self-employment. Recently it has come to be used more specifically to describe freelance work using online websites and smartphone apps, sometimes known as 'platforms'. These platforms provide a way for people to monetise their unused assets – including their spare time. They are peer-to-peer, connecting individual users rather than matching companies with workers (as CV sites or traditional job-searching sites tend to do). Gig economy work usually fits into two or three categories: labour platforms (such as Uber[2], Deliveroo[3], and Fiverr[4]); retail platforms for new or second-hand items (such as Ebay[5], Etsy[6], and Depop[7]), or rental platforms (such as Airbnb[8]). Some research into the gig economy confines its focus to labour platforms (BEIS, 2018, for example), but in this paper, we define the gig economy more widely to include retail platforms (as selling commodities is still a type of labour, even if it is not paid by the hour). Platforms that facilitate access to high-value goods and property have not been included because young people have not usually had time to accumulate such assets.

Background

Conventional forms of employment require both a legal and psychological contract that binds the employer and employee together beyond the performance of a single task. Theorists like Arthur and Rousseau (1996) and Hall (1996), have championed 'boundaryless' and 'protean' careers, arguing that the legal and psychological apparatus of conventional organisational relationships are limiting and need to be transcended by agentic and entrepreneurial workers. The development of the gig economy has been embraced by some of their followers who have seen it as a way to dissolve organisational boundaries and provide individuals with a mechanism to build portfolio careers which are no longer controlled by a single employer (Kost, Fieseler, & Wong, 2019).

Not everyone is as optimistic about the potential of the gig economy to transform the nature of career for the better. Gig work is by its nature insecure and temporary because of the way it is atomised into individual tasks or sales. Some have criticised the gig economy for a one-sided erosion of organisational relationships, resulting in a system that takes the worker's labour without offering much in return (Perera et al., 2020). Rather than heralding a new age of boundaryless careers, Gonzalez (2019), a politician from California, where the state government has sought to regulate the gig economy, describes it as 'nothing short of a modern-day sharecropping business', suggesting that it resembles feudal economic arrangements.

It has been a challenge for governments to identify and make decisions about the place of platform work in the labour market, partly owing to the comparative novelty of the online gig economy; its roots in the 'sharing economy' (Uber still sometimes styles itself as a 'ridesharing' platform); and the claims of platform organisations that they simply provide the infrastructure for people to organise their own work.

2 Uber is an online provider of taxi services, food delivery and other logistical services. See https://www.uber.com/

3 Deliveroo is an online food delivery service. See https://deliveroo.co.uk/

4 Fiverr is a matching site for a large variety of desk work on a task-by-task basis. See https://www.fiverr.com/

5 Ebay is a retail auction site for new or used goods. See https://www.ebay.co.uk

6 Etsy is a retail site for (usually but not exclusively) hand-made goods. See https://www.etsy.com

7 Depop is a retail site for new or second-hand fashion items. See https://www.depop.com

8 Airbnb is a holiday letting site. See https://www.airbnb.co.uk/

This has allowed some gig economy companies to claim that they are not employers and to avoid liability for things like insurance, sick pay and holiday pay, resulting in an increase in precarity for workers (Hern, 2020).

One of the key debates in which this research sought to intervene was whether young people view the gig economy positively and are happy to accept precarity in pursuit of boundarylessness. It has been suggested that 'Generation Z' is uniquely adaptable in the workplace and labour market, and that this generation does not require the security sought by previous generations (Ekong, 2019). However, researchers are keen to point out the weak evidential basis of these generational generalisations and highlight the need for more evidence (Duffy et al., 2017). Generational narratives are just one explanation for why there might be differences between the perspectives of young people and older people, but there is very limited evidence about what young people think about the gig economy. In this article we provide insights from research that explores perceptions of the gig economy with young people.

Methodology

We were keen to find out what students thought about the gig economy, how this related to their life plans and career aspirations, and whether they felt that the gig economy would be a fruitful addition to their career education in school or college. This, we felt, would go some way to answering the question of whether it is necessary to update schools' careers strategies with guidance on the gig economy.

Data were gathered from eight focus group interviews with 16-19 year olds from eight schools and FE colleges in England. These were selected for diversity of geography and type of institution: four state schools, two independent (fee-paying) schools, and two FE colleges. The sample was recruited through a survey of careers practitioners prior to the main data collection, and through other network connections.

Focus group interviews were used to access multiple perspectives and explore 'group meanings, processes, and norms' (Bloor et al., 2001, p. 12). Interviews were conducted (and then analysed) using principles drawn from mindfulness practices: trying to perceive reality with as few preconceived notions as possible; using (self-)reflective practice to perceive one's own preconceptions, judgments, and conditioning; and having an awareness of and compassion for the experience of others (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998). Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed in several cycles: first with a line-by-line coding approach resulting in 700 detailed codes, which were then grouped into categories and finally arranged according to larger themes. This level of detail was deemed necessary to understand participants' views more accurately and represent the multiplicity of perspectives (Charmaz, 2006). Numbers in groups ranged from 3 participants to 15. Some were classes of IT or Business students, which sometimes resulted in greater awareness of the gig economy as it is in the Business curriculum, but other groups were mixed. Pseudonyms have been used for all participants to preserve anonymity.

Young people's views on gig economy and career

Participants in the group interviews reported a range of experiences associated with the gig economy, but few regarded the activity as suitable for their careers. Although a few interviewees could see the potential in the gig economy to provide lifelong work, they did not see it as applying to them personally, and were put off by the lack of stability, progression, and insufficient support from platform companies. Consequently, they were unsure about the value of careers professionals providing information and advice about the gig economy as a career choice.

Ways of earning online

Some participants reported using a variety of ways to earn money online, usually on retail platforms. While some reported being aware of peers using labour platforms such as Deliveroo, none reported using labour platforms themselves. Gaming, social media, and retail platforms were already being used by many participants as customers and adapted by some to earn money. Many participants had sold at least one item of unwanted clothing on social media or a retail platform; a small number had tried out their entrepreneurial skills with more regular selling of

higher value items such as limited-edition clothing; and some participants reported earning or winning money on online games platforms.

A side-gig

Participants almost all felt that the gig economy was a useful tool that could be used in their spare time for extra money rather than a desirable career path. Interviewees usually spoke about the work in terms of its practical benefits: quick money, convenience, flexibility, and few demands on time or commitment: 'It's just a really quick way to make money without having a big commitment like a job' (Kevin). They saw these qualities as suiting the gig economy to take a supporting role in their careers, for example by allowing them to: save money for university, make their initial entry into the labour market, gain some experience or skills, or get extra money while studying. A few participants highlighted autonomy as a desirable feature; one participant expressed that 'You're the boss. You're in control of what you're doing' (Henry). However, though participants found these features attractive, they were not enough to entice them to consider the gig economy for their careers.

Financial uncertainty

Participants perceived several shortcomings when discussing the gig economy. These included a lack of financial stability, status, progression, and organisational support. As one interviewee put it, 'It doesn't feel like a reliable source of income, more a fill your spare time with stuff [...] to get some extra money, rather than make a career out of it' (Colin). The unreliability of income was concerning to many participants, both in providing a present sense of security and in planning for the future; as one participant said: 'If you had a family, you'd want to know that in five years I'm still going to have a job and still be earning money' (Bob).

Lack of status and legitimacy

Another feature missing from gig economy work was status and legitimacy. Participants notably contrasted the gig economy with a 'proper job' or their eventual 'actual job', a phrase laden with values of what constitutes desirable work, and often spoke of its value for 'others', but not for themselves. One participant said, '[It's] more aimed at the lower end, working class people [...] just wanna get the money because they want to see ends meet. [...] Whereas us coming out of A levels, we've got higher prospects...' (John). This sense among participants that gig work was of low status was linked to the beliefs that the work was unlikely to lead anywhere and that it was low-skill: 'Anyone could do it. You don't need any skills whatsoever' (Joy).

No progression or organisational support

Several participants spoke about a lack of progression in platform work; as one interviewee put it, 'It's not really a career path [...] there's no clear progression. It's just a set job that you do' (Nyandak), suggesting that this was integral to their concept of career. No participants articulated the idea of the 'portfolio career' (Hopson, 2010) or described an ambition to self-author their own brand of progression; nor did it seem that participants had absorbed the cultural narrative of 'the heroic entrepreneur' (Dodd et al., 2013: p. 69).

There was also a concern over the lack of organisational support and the risks of self-employment:

> It's high risk because if you're an Uber driver and your car's broken, then you're out of work until it's fixed or if you're sick you get no sick pay. You get no holiday pay either. (Jacob)

Some participants felt that the contact with the company was missing; one said, 'You probably never get to see or speak to anyone from that organisation' (John). The perception of little organisational support may have contributed to concerns around personal safety as well, with (usually female) participants frequently expressing concerns about contact with strangers.

Discussion

Rather than being happy to be set free in a shifting sea of digital possibility, our participants were not convinced by the trade-off between increased flexibility and a lack of progression, stability, and a sustained relationship with an employer. The motivational theories of Maslow and Herzberg can help us to understand why (Maslow, 1954; Herzberg,

1966). While Maslow's framework is not uncontested (see for example Hofstede, 1984), it can still provide a useful model for thinking about why the gig economy was not popular among our participants, presenting problems in all the categories in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954). Physiological and safety needs cannot reliably be met due to the gig economy's lack of financial stability and its issues around personal safety. Social needs cannot be met as workers do not have contact with each other or people in the organisation. Status and esteem needs cannot be met because of the low status of the work in the eyes of participants. Finally, self-actualisation needs cannot be met, as many participants perceived limited opportunity for career movement.

Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation can add texture to this analysis. Most of the positive attributes of the gig economy could be considered 'motivators' (which promote satisfaction), while those that were absent are primarily 'hygiene factors' (the absence of which causes dissatisfaction) (Herzberg, 1966). Too many hygiene factors (perhaps better articulated here as 'must-haves') appeared to be absent, which could account for participants' reluctance to consider platform work for their careers. This could also explain why only a minority of gig economy workers more generally - not just young people - are prepared use platforms as their main source of income.

The youth of our participants may be significant in explaining their concern over organisational support. Brown et al. (2020) describe career capital as the 'resources necessary to make role transitions', which can broadly be categorised as 'knowing self', 'knowing how' and 'knowing whom' (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1994, cited in Brown et al., 2020, p. 4). Young people, with limited work experience and at the early stages of developing their networks, may use their first jobs to accumulate such capital. Although the gig economy provides some practical experience, as Kost et al. (2018) have observed, its flat hierarchical structure means that it does not allow for the accumulation of most kinds of career capital. The absence of the support of co-workers, management and mentoring, and the 'psychological contract' (Kost et al., 2018; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) was perceived as undesirable and problematic by the participants in this study.

This lack of reciprocity between platform and individuals was not usually framed by participants as exploitation; it was rather seen as a standing quality of the gig economy, which they could take or - more likely - leave. Our participants' desire for more supportive relationships and stability contradicts media narratives about Generation Z's flexibility. Though many of our participants felt that the work was accessible, they did not see it as the start to their careers. As one participant summarised, 'if I think of career, it's long-term and stable, and [the gig economy] is not necessarily stable or long-term' (Zoe).

Should the gig economy be addressed in schools and colleges?

The role of advisers

Participants usually did not want their careers advisers to advise them on the gig economy. While some said that it would be good to have the information available to 'someone' who needed it, this was rarely seen as relevant to themselves (with a few exceptions). Indeed, some even wanted their advisers to discourage them from using it. This may result from the perceived lack of relevance of the gig economy to their concept of career, meaning that they believed that it was not relevant to a careers adviser's role. One student said, 'You wouldn't go to your careers adviser to find a part time job. Because when you think of our careers adviser, you think universities, [...] what you want to do in the future'. Most students agreed that advisers should speak on the topic only if asked or if relevant - although one business student said that he would be 'pretty disappointed' if an adviser was not able to advise on gig economy work.

The gig economy as career currency

While participants saw little point in getting advice about pursuing work within the gig economy, some recognised that engagement with the gig economy could give them some currency for their CVs or act as a stepping-stone to better things, as this comment from an FE student demonstrates:

> If you've done quite a while on using Taskrabbit […], you could put on your CV the different

> things you'd have done. But if it was more one of the art-oriented ones, like Fiverr and doing graphic design, you could use them as examples when you go on to apply for a graphic design job.
>
> (Claire)

As Hooley (2012) has pointed out, 'digital career literacy' is increasingly necessary to navigate the requirements of new recruitment strategies in online environments, with one aspect of this being the need to curate an effective online presence (Hooley, 2012, p. 3). Platform work could be used to help students to develop their digital career literacy by helping them to identify career learning and experiences in their online activities, and provide evidence of their skills and capabilities to future employers and learning providers. However, this also raises concerns about surveillance and requires students to carefully manage their private online presence and consider its interaction with their nascent online professional or career-relevant online presence (Hooley & Cutts, 2018).

Teaching about the gig economy

Discussion of the gig economy could be helpful for young people to explore ideas about different models of work and career, helping them to develop their career management skills. Key to this is thinking about ideas like precarity and the psychological contract, both to explore what young people are looking for from work and to examine the ethical and political implications of different forms of work. These topics could be introduced in a wider careers education programme, where they could be explored as part of labour market intelligence (LMI) gathering and evaluation; some researchers have already proposed models that would accommodate this (McCash, 2010; Hooley, 2015). Awareness of the issues around the gig economy was varied between individuals and groups, but all groups were prepared to offer spontaneous views, many of which mirrored the main critical discussions of the gig economy in the media.

This study has helped us to understand young people's activities and views on the gig economy, towards answering whether schools and FE colleges should consider its inclusion in the curriculum. It does not seem necessary for advisers to be able to advise individuals on specific platforms, as few students are using it on more than a casual basis. However, it is important to be aware of its position in the labour market, as online forms of work are likely to grow (particularly as the Covid-19 epidemic may push more work in this direction), and it also could prove a valuable heuristic tool with which to explore career definitions with young people.

References

Arthur, M. B. & Rousseau, D.M. (1996) (Eds.). *The boundaryless career: A new principle for a new organisational era*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bentz, V. M. & Shapiro, J. J. (1998). *Mindful inquiry in social research*. London: SAGE Publications.

Bloor, M. (2001). Focus groups in social research. [electronic resource]. London: SAGE Publications.

Brown, C. Hooley, T. Wond, T. (2020). Building career capital: developing business leaders' career mobility. *Career Development International*, 25(5), 445-459. https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-07-2019-0186

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory*. London: SAGE Publications.

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) (2018). *The characteristics of those in the gig economy*. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/687553/The_characteristics_of_those_in_the_gig_economy.pdf.

Dodd, S.D., Jack, S., & Anderson, A.R. (2013). From admiration to abhorrence: the contentious appeal of entrepreneurship across Europe. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 25(1-2), 69-89, https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2012.746878

Duffy, B., Shrimpton, H., Clemence, M. (2017). *Millennial myths and realities*. London: Ipsos Mori.

Ekong, A. (2019). *Why Gen Z is choosing flexibility over stability*. https://debut.careers/insight/why-gen-z-is-choosing-flexibility-over-stability/

Gonzalez, L. (2019). The gig economy has costs. We can no longer ignore them. *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/09/11/gig-economy-has-costs-we-can-no-longer-ignore-them/

Hern, A. (2020). Gig economy traps workers in precarious existence, says report. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/jan/29/gig-economy-traps-workers-in-precarious-existence-says-report

Herzberg. F. (1966). *Work and the nature of man.* Cleveland: World Publishing Company.

Hofstede G. (1984). The cultural relativity of the quality of life concept. *The Academy of Management Review*, 9(3), 389. https://doi.org/10.2307/258280

Hopson, B. (2010). *From vocational guidance to portfolio careers: a critical reflection*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

Hooley, T. (2012). How the internet changed career: framing the relationship between career development and online technologies. *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (NICEC)*, 29, 2-12.

Hooley, T. (2015). Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery: Self-actualisation, social justice and the politics of career guidance. Derby: *International Centre for Guidance Studies*, University of Derby.

Hooley, T. & Cutts, B. (2018). 'It all kind of symbolises something doesn't it?' How students present their career image online, *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (NICEC)*, 40 (1), 40-47. https://doi.org/10.20856/jnicec.4007.

Huws, U., Spencer, N., Syrdal, D. S., & Holts, K. (2017). *Work in the European gig economy: Research results from the UK, Sweden, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Italy*. Brussels: FEPS, UNI Europa, University of Hertfordshire.

Kost, D., Fieseler, C., & Wong, S. I. (2019). Boundaryless careers in the gig economy: An oxymoron? *Human Resource Management Journal*, 30(1), 100-113. https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12265

Maslow, A.H. (1954). *Motivation and personality.* New York: Harper and Row.

McCash, P. (2010). Using concept mapping to develop a career studies curriculum. *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (NICEC)*, 23, 25-33.

Moore, N. and Hooley, T. (2012). *Talking About career: The language used by and with young people to discuss life, learning and work*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

Perera, K., Ohrvik-Stott, J., & Miller, C. (2020). *Better work in the gig economy*. London: Doteveryone. https://www.doteveryone.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/DE_BetterWork_Webcopy_220120.pdf

Reid, H. L. (2016). *Introduction to career counselling & coaching*. London: SAGE Publications.

TUC (2019). *UK's gig economy workforce has doubled since 2016, TUC and FEPS-backed research shows*. https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/uk%E2%80%99s-gig-economy-workforce-has-doubled-2016-tuc-and-feps-backed-researchshows.

For correspondence

Esther Galfalvi,
University of Derby

E.Galfalvi@derby.ac.uk

10.20856/jnicec.4506

Parental career-specific behaviours and adolescent career adaptability

Mara Šimunović, Iva Šverko, & Toni Babarović

Parents are a major influence on adolescents' career development. However, past studies have mostly explored general rather than career-specific parenting aspects. According to Dietrich and Kracke (2009) parental support, parental interference, and lack of parental career engagement are basic dimensions of career-specific parental behaviours. This study examined the relationship between these parental behaviours and career adaptability in a sample of high school students (N = 197; Mage = 16.79). The data were collected in a group online testing. Student career adaptability was measured with the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) and parental career-specific behaviours were measured by the scale developed by Dietrich and Kracke (2009). Parental support emerged as the most important positive predictor of career adaptability since it predicted both global career adaptability and separate dimensions. Parental interference negatively predicted career control, career confidence, and overall career adaptability but only when parents' career engagement was higher. The results point out that in understanding parental influences in students' career development it is important to consider different parenting practices and also examine separate students' career adaptability resources. Parents should be helped to recognise their career-related parenting practices and to understand the potential of these behaviours in facilitating their children's career adaptability. Special counselling interventions should be provided for students who perceive that their parents are not providing enough career-related support.

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing research interest in understanding how family context shapes young people's career development (Ginevra et al., 2015). Parents have been identified as a more important source of influence on children's career development than school and peers (Hartung et al., 2005; Paa & McWhirter, 2000) and highlighted as a crucial social factor during students' educational and career transitions (Mortimer et al., 2002). However, as Dietrich and Kracke (2009; 2011) pointed out, most studies in this area have explored general rather than domain-specific parenting aspects. These studies have found that secure attachment and authoritative parenting style are associated with positive outcomes in adolescents' career development (e g., Kracke, 1997; Guay et al., 2003; O'Brien et al., 2000; Vignoli et al., 2005). These general parenting elements are hard to target by intervention programs and career counselling (Dietrich & Kracke, 2009). Thus, in this study, we will focus on parental career-specific behaviours and their association with adolescents' career adaptability.

It is known that the perception of other's behaviour and not the behaviour itself has a crucial formative influence (Boerchi & Tagliabue, 2018). Thus, the research in this area is mostly focused on children's *perceptions* of parental career-related practices. According to Dietrich and Kracke (2009) children can perceive their parents' career-related practices as supportive, interfering, or lacking. When parents are supportive, they encourage their children to explore vocational possibilities, they offer advice and instrumental support if needed. Parental interference refers to parents' controlling behaviours related to students' career preparations and choices. Finally, the lack of parental engagement portrays parents' disinterest or the low importance parents attach to children's career development process.

These three parenting dimensions have been linked to different career-related outcomes in adolescence. Parental career-related support has been associated with higher students' career exploration (Dietrich & Kracke, 2009; Guan et al., 2015) and decision-making self-efficacy

(Guan et al., 2016), higher autonomous career goal motivation (Dietrich & Salmela-Aro, 2013), and lower controlled career goal motivation (Dietrich & Salmela-Aro, 2013). Parental interference and lack of engagement have been associated with students' decision-making difficulties (Dietrich & Kracke, 2009). Furthermore, parental lack of engagement has been related to lower autonomous career goal motivation, higher controlled career goal motivation, and higher career goal stress among adolescents (Dietrich & Salmela-Aro, 2013). Parental interference has been associated with lower career exploration (Guan et al., 2015).

As Guan and colleagues (2015) noted, little is known about how parent career-specific behaviours are associated with students' adaptive-abilities related to their career development. In recent years, Savickas proposed the Career Construction Model of Adaptation (Savickas, 2002; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Savickas et al., 2018), which states that adaptive readiness fosters adaptability resources which further encourage adapting behaviours which lead to adaptation results. The sequence of four adaptation dimensions in the model (i.e. adaptivity – adaptability – adapting – adaptation) has been confirmed in the recent studies (Hirschi et al., 2015; Savickas et al. 2018; Šverko & Babarović, 2019) and meta-analyses (Rudolph et al., 2017b; Rudolph et al., 2017a). Parental career-related behaviours may be seen as an aspect of adaptivity dimension as it refers to fundamental personal potential for adaptation and therefore influences career adaptability. In a study by Guan and colleagues (2015) students' career adaptability was positively predicted by parental support, but negatively by parental interference and lack of engagement. To our knowledge, this is the only study that inspected all three facets of parental career-specific behaviours in relation to students' career adaptability. This study included Chinese university students and their parents and parents' assessments of their career-specific behaviours were utilised. Thus, our study will contribute to this area of research by including a younger sample of students from a different cultural setting and by assessing students' perceptions of their parents' behaviours.

Furthermore, previous studies have found some interesting combined effects of parental career-related behaviours in predicting student career-related outcomes (e.g. Dietrich & Kracke, 2009; Guan et al., 2015). Thus, in this study, we will examine not only general associations between parental career-specific behaviours and student career adaptability but also the effects of interaction between parental behaviours on career adaptability.

Method

The participants in this study were 197 high school students (83.2% female), aged 15 to 18 (M = 16.79, SD = 0.96). Students attended first (27.9%), second (42.1%), and third grade (29.9%). In Croatia, students typically start their secondary education around the age of 15. Thus, in first grade students are around the age of 15, in second grade around the age of 16, and in third grade around the age of 17. Students came from one grammar school (33%) and two vocational secondary schools (77%). All schools were in central Croatia. In grammar schools in Croatia, students acquire general knowledge and skills that prepare them for entering higher education. Programmes of secondary vocational education provide students with professional qualifications and prepare them for the labour market. Education in grammars schools lasts for four years, while in vocational schools it usually lasts from three to five years, depending on the vocational curriculum for a particular profession.

The data were collected in a group online testing in school computer classrooms. Students completed the survey on a website that was developed for the purpose of the project. The research was approved by the Ethical Committee of the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences, by the Croatian Ministry of Science and Education and by the principals of the participating schools. We have obtained signed parental consent for the participating students. Students' participation in the research was voluntary and anonymous. Researchers visited the participating schools and informed students about the purposes of the research and about the research procedure. Students were assured that their responses were anonymous and to be used only for research purposes. They were also provided with researchers' contact information and were informed that they can withdraw at any time from the research without any consequences. Students gave their consent to participate in the study by checking the provided box on the survey's website that was placed at the beginning of the survey. The collected data were

protected and available only to the researchers. No information about the respondents was shared with the third parties as the procedure of data collection and storage was fully in line with the General Data Protection Regulation.

Students' career adaptability was measured with the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). The scale measures four career adaptability resources (i. e. subscales of career concern, career control, career curiosity, and career confidence) and consists of 24 items to which students responded on a scale from 1 (*not strong)* to 5 (*strongest*). The result can be expressed as the global indicator of career adaptability (total score for the 24 items) and as the result on each of the four subscales (concern, control, curiosity, and confidence). Each subscale is measured by six items. The Cronbach's alpha was .89 for the global indicator of career adaptability, .88 for concern, .73 for control, .75 for curiosity, and .80 for confidence. Cronbach's alpha is one of the most used numerical coefficients of reliability of summated scales. It provides an estimate of the extent to which scale's items are a consistent measure of a construct they are intended to measure. Cronbach' s alpha that is higher than 0.7 has been indicated to be an acceptable reliability coefficient (Nunnaly, 1978).

Parental behaviours were measured by the scale developed by Dietrich and Kracke (2009). This scale contains 15 items to which students responded on the 4-point scale (1 = *does not apply*, 4= *fully applies*). Parental support, interference, and lack of engagement are measured by five items each. The Cronbach's alpha was .89 for support, .84 for interference, and .89 for lack of engagement. This scale has been previously used for different student samples. Dietrich and Kracke (2009) used the scale for a sample of German adolescents aged 15-18, and some items have been used for Finnish adolescents when they were at age 18 and 21 (Dietrich & Salmela-Aro, 2013). The adapted version of the scale has been also used for parents. Dietrich and Kracke (2011) assessed career-related support of mothers of German adolescents aged around 19. In the study conducted by Guan and colleagues (2015), parents (a mother or a father) assessed their career-specific behaviours when their children were attending university at age 21.

Results

The descriptive statistics and inter-correlations between variables are presented in the Table 1. Higher overall career adaptability was related with higher parental support (r = .44; p < .001), lower parental interference (r = -.21; p < .05), and lower lack of engagement (r = -.30; p < .001). Higher results on all adaptability dimensions were related with higher

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations between Study Variiables

		M	***SD***	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1.	Overall career adaptability	3.92	0.43									
2.	Career concern	4.02	0.64	.76***								
3.	Career control	3.89	0.58	.75***	.33***							
4.	Career curiosity	3.93	0.53	.76***	.53***	.39***						
5.	Career confidence	3.85	0.53	.78***	.41***	.58***	.45***					
6.	Parental support	3.88	0.79	.44***	.43***	.29***	.29***	.32***				
7.	Parental interference	2.28	0.90	-.21**	-.14	-.30***	-.09	-.10	-.14			
8.	Parental lack of engagement	1.63	0.70	-.30***	-.25***	-.22**	-.21**	-.22**	-.56***	.34***		
9.	Student grade	-	-	.17*	.13	.17*	.06	.14*	-.03	-.06	-.01	
10.	Student gender [a]	-	-	-.02	.04	-.11	.01	.01	.17*	-.05	-.16*	-.04

a 1 = male; 2 = female

***p < .001; **p < .01; *p < .05.

parental support (*rs* ranged from .29 to .43) and lower lack of engagement (*rs* ranged from -.21 to -.30). Higher parental interference was related with lower career control (r = -.30; p < .001).

We ran five multiple regressions to test the relationship between parental behaviours, their interactions, and student career adaptability. In order to minimize problems with multicollinearity, parental variables were centred (Aiken & West, 1991). The results of these analyses showed which parental behaviours have a significant contribution in explaining inter-individual differences in student career adaptability, while also taking into account the effects of student gender and grade. We also examined if an effect of a specific parental career-related behaviour on student career adaptability depends on the level of some other parental career-related behaviour. This was done by inspecting the significance of interaction terms in the regression models. Table 2 presents the results of these analyses for predicting the overall career adaptability and for predicting each adaptability dimension.

The independent variables (i.e. student gender and grade, parental behaviours, and interactions between parental behaviours) explained around 25% of the career adaptability variance (i.e. differences in student career adaptability). Students attending higher grades (β = .17; p = .007) and students who perceived more parental career-specific support (β = .45; p < .001) reported higher adaptability. There was a significant interaction Parent interference (PI) × Lack of engagement (LE) (β = .18; p = .035). We investigated this interaction by plotting it at points 1 SD below and above the mean of the parent support and lack of engagement and simple effect analysis was conducted (Cohen et al., 2003). Results showed (Figure 1) that when parents were highly engaged (i.e. lack of parental career engagement was 1 SD below the mean), parental interference was negatively related to adaptability (b = -0.13; SE = .05; t = -2.78; p = .006) and when parents showed lower engagement (i.e. lack of parental career engagement was 1 SD above the mean), this relationship was insignificant (b = 0.02; SE = .05; t = 0.40; p = .689).

Table 2. Summary of Multiple Regression Predicting the Student Career Adaptability

Predictors	*b*	*SE*	*β*	*p*	*Adjusted R^2*	*F*	*p*
			Overall career adaptability				
Student grade	.10	.04	.17	.007			
Student gender	-.12	.07	-.10	.109			
Parent support (PS)	.25	.04	.45	<.001			
Parent interference (PI)	-.06	.03	-.12	.088			
Lack of engagement (LE)	-.06	.05	-.10	.263			
PS × PI	.07	.04	.14	.088			
PS × LE	-.04	.03	-.09	.280			
PI × LE	.11	.05	.18	.035	.245	8.91	<.001
			Career concern				
Student grade	.11	.05	.14	.036			
Student gender	-.05	.11	-.03	.630			
Parent support (PS)	.37	.07	.45	<.001			
Parent interference (PI)	-.03	.05	-.05	.491			
Lack of engagement (LE)	-.03	.08	-.03	.708			
PS × PI	.12	.07	.15	.071			
PS × LE	-.06	.05	-.10	.228			
PI × LE	.07	.08	.08	.350	.193	6.81	<.001

Predictors	b	SE	β	p	Adjusted R^2	F	p
Career control							
Student grade	.13	.05	.16	.012			
Student gender	-.27	.10	-.17	.010			
Parent support (PS)	.23	.06	.30	<.001			
Parent interference (PI)	-.17	.05	-.26	<.001			
Lack of engagement (LE)	-.05	.07	-.05	.544			
PS × PI	.05	.06	.07	.402			
PS × LE	-.01	.05	-.02	.787			
PI × LE	.16	.07	.19	.027	.194	6.86	<.001
Career curiosity							
Student grade	.04	.05	.06	.401			
Student gender	-.07	.10	-.05	.470			
Parent support (PS)	.19	.06	.29	.002			
Parent interference (PI)	-.01	.04	-.02	.845			
Lack of engagement (LE)	-.07	.07	-.10	.321			
PS × PI	.05	.06	.08	.388			
PS × LE	-.04	.05	-.09	.338			
PI × LE	.03	.07	.04	.649	.063	2.65	.009
Career confidence							
Student grade	.11	.05	.16	.022			
Student gender	-.08	.10	-.06	.383			
Parent support (PS)	.22	.06	.33	<.001			
Parent interference (PI)	-.01	.04	-.02	.747			
Lack of engagement (LE)	-.09	.07	-.12	.183			
PS × PI	.08	.06	.12	.174			
PS × LE	-.03	.04	-.06	.525			
PI × LE	.17	.07	.23	.011	.130	4.65	<.001

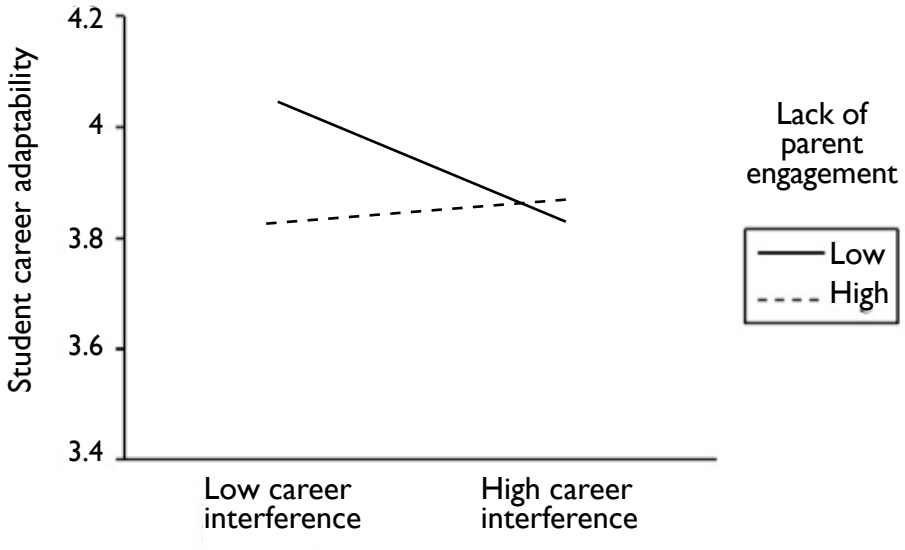


Figure 1.
The interaction effects of parental interference and lack of engagement on student career adaptability.

The independent variables explained around 19% of the career concern variance. Higher student grade (β = .14; p = .036) and higher parental support (β = .45; p < .001) predicted higher result on this dimension. None of the combined effects of parental behaviours were significant.

The model explained around 19% of the career control variance. Students attending higher grades (β = .16; p = .012) reported higher control. Boys reported higher control than girls (β = -.17; p = .010). Higher parental support (β= .30; p < .001) and lower parental interference predicted higher student control (β = -.26; p < .001). The PI × LE interaction was also significant (β = .19; p = .027). As shown in Figure 2, when parents were highly engaged (i.e. lack of parental career engagement was 1 SD below the mean), parental interference was negatively related to adaptability (b = -0.27; SE = .06; t = -4.31; p < .001) and when parents showed lower engagement (i.e. lack of parental career engagement was 1 SD above the mean), this relationship was insignificant (b = -0.06; SE = .07; t = -0.82; p = .419).

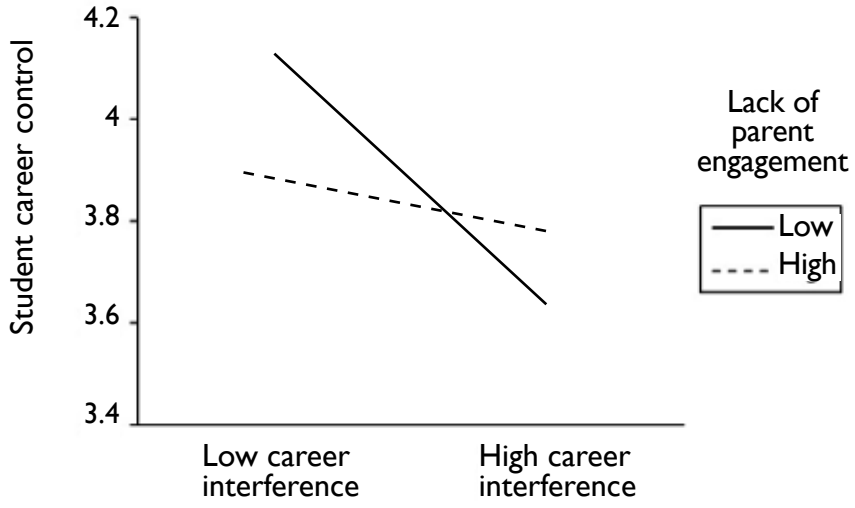
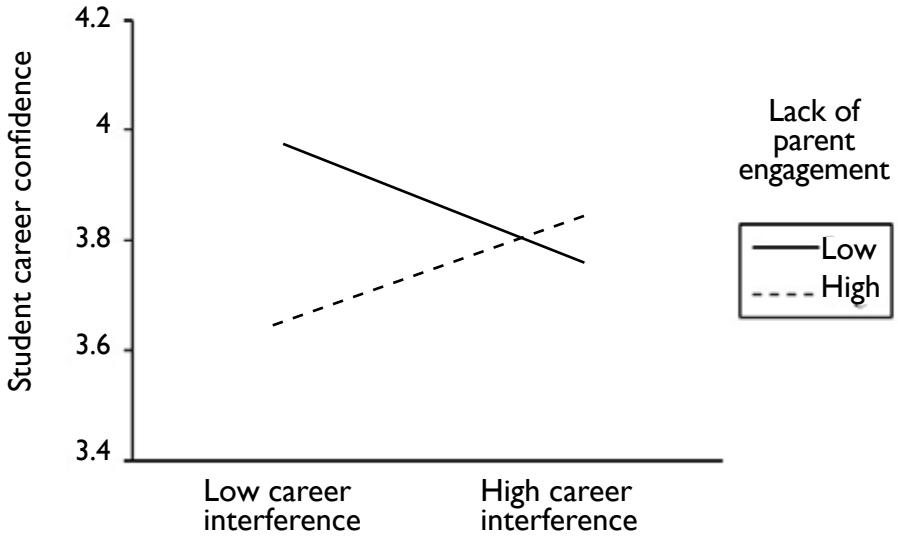


Figure 2.
The interaction effects of parental interference and lack of engagement on student career control.

Around 6% of the variance in the student career curiosity was explained by the independent variables. Parental support was the only significant positive predictor of this dimension (β = .29; p = .002).

The independent variables explained around 13% of career confidence variance. Older students (β = .16; p = .022) and students who perceived more parental career-specific support (β = .33; p < .001) reported higher confidence. There was again a significant PI × LE interaction (β = .23; p = .011). As shown on Figure 3, parental interference was not significantly related with student confidence on a higher level of parental lack of engagement (b = 0.11; SE = .06; t = 1.64; p = .103) but it was negatively related to student confidence when parental engagement was higher (b = -0.12; SE = .06; t = -2.09; p = .038).

Figure 3.
The interaction effects of parental interference and lack of engagement on student career confidence.



Discussion

In this study, parental career-related support emerged as the most important positive predictor of students' career adaptability since it predicted both global career adaptability and separate dimensions. Other parental behaviours were mostly insignificant predictors of career adaptability. Parental career-related support was previously found to be a significant positive predictor of several other aspects of adolescents' career development such career exploration (Dietrich & Kracke, 2009; Guan et al., 2015), decision-making self-efficacy (Guan et al., 2016), and autonomous career goal motivation (Dietrich & Salmela-Aro, 2013). Our results are partially in line with the previous study by Guan and colleagues (2015) who found that parental support was a significant positive predictor of all adaptability dimensions except control.

On the other hand, the authors also found parental interference to be a negative predictor of the same adaptability dimensions, while lack of engagement negatively predicted overall adaptability. However, the mentioned study only included Chinese students at the university level, and in measuring parental career-specific behaviours only parents' assessments of their behaviours were utilised. The different results could also be explained by cultural differences that can affect parental influences in the career paths of young people. A few decades ago, Croatian society was oriented towards collectivism but nowadays there is a significant shift towards individualism (Podrug et al., 2014). On the other hand, China is characterized as a highly collectivist culture (Hofstede, 2001). Autonomy and individuation from parents are emphasized in the individualistic cultures, while in collectivistic cultures there is an emphasize on respect to family traditions and norms (Hardin et al., 2001). Accordingly, Chinese parents place a high value on parental control (Kagitcibasi, 1994). It may be that in China the negative parental career-specific practices have a more salient role in adolescents' career development than in Croatia, given the stronger collectivistic orientation in China which puts more emphasize on external social pressure.

We also found that parental interference negatively predicted overall career adaptability, career control, and career confidence but only when parents showed higher levels of career engagement. The same effect was previously found in predicting student career exploration (Guan et al., 2015). Our results suggest that when parents are engaged in their children's career development but at the same time show highly controlling behaviours they can inhibit students in being confident about their career aspirations and they can prevent students' self-initiated and agentive career-related behaviour. This result portrays a dynamic and complex process through which parental career-specific behaviours may shape student career development. The relationship between parental behaviours, their interactions and student career adaptability was not the same across all four adaptability resources (i.e. concern, control, curiosity, confidence). Thus, our study also points out that in understanding parental influences in students' career development it is important to consider different parenting practices and also examine separate students' career adaptability resources.

Even though these results are not central to the research questions of our study, we will also comment on the found grade and gender differences in student career adaptability. In our study, older students had higher scores on all the subscales of career adaptability except on career curiosity. Past studies (Negru-Subtirica et al., 2015; Skorikov, 2007; Stringer et al., 2011) also found that older adolescents had higher career adaptability. This can be explained by the fact that with time students are exposed to more career-related tasks and have to become more focus on their career choices. In Croatia, the tipping point of the career exploration for adolescents is around the age of 18 when they approach the end of their secondary education (Babarović & Šverko, 2016). Concerning gender differences in career adaptability, past research mostly suggested that these differences are not significant (e.g. Cheung & Jin, 2016; Hirschi, 2009; Zacher, 2014). Our results also point out to that conclusion since gender differences were found only on one out of the four adaptability dimensions and there was no gender difference in the overall student career adaptability.

Limitations and implication for practice

In this study, we have not examined mutual influences between parents and students that have been questioned in previous research (Dietrich & Salmela-

Aro, 2013). From our cross-sectional data, we cannot conclude that parental career-specific behaviours lead to changes in student career adaptability. It may be that the relationship also operates in the opposite direction, such as that higher parental support is a reaction to higher student initial career adaptability. For example, students who show higher levels of career curiosity may seek more parental career-related support in form of career advice and information. To explore the direction and strength of these parent-adolescent relationships, future studies should employ longitudinal designs and involve parents directly. Furthermore, in order to better understand the relationship between parental behaviours and career adaptability, other student career-related variables should be taken into account, such as career exploration that has been found to have a possible mediating role in explaining this relationship (Guan et al., 2015). We have not examined students' perceptions of their respective parents (for students who have both parents present in their lives). This should be considered since fathers and mothers can have different influences on their children's career choices (Lee & Mun, 2011). Lastly, future research should employ bigger samples that are better gender-balanced in order to achieve stronger generalisability and power.

There are several practical implications of this study. First, parents should be helped to understand their career-related parenting practices in the period of their children's secondary education. Parents should be helped to recognise that it is crucial that their children perceive their career-related behaviours as supportive in order to successfully promote their psychological resources in the process of their career development. Schools can assist parents in supporting their children's career development using a range of approaches including information-centred approaches, family learning interventions, and family therapy or counselling options (Oomen, 2016). Parents should also be aware that high levels of interference in combination with high levels of engagement can have a negative effect on student career adaptability. Furthermore, the identification of students who perceive that their parents are not providing enough career-related support could be important for teachers and counsellors who can focus on providing special counselling interventions for these students.

References

Aiken, L. S., & West, S. G. (1991). *Multiple regression: Testing and interpreting interactions*. Sage.

Babarović, T., & Šverko, I. (2016). Vocational development in adolescence: Career construction, career decision-making difficulties and career adaptability of Croatian high school students. *Primenjena psihologija*, 9(4), 429-448. https://doi.org/10.19090/pp.2016.4.429-448

Boerchi, D., & Tagliabue, S. (2018). Assessing students' perception of parental career-related support: development of a new scale and a new taxonomy. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 18(2), 181-201. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-017-9354-1

Cheung, R., & Jin, Q. (2016). Impact of a career exploration course on career decision making, adaptability, and relational support in Hong Kong. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 24(3), 481-496. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072715599390

Cohen, J., Cohen, P., West, S. G., & Aiken, L. S. (2003). *Applied multiple regression/correlation analysis for the behavioral sciences* (3rd ed.). Erlbaum.

Dietrich, J., & Kracke, B. (2009). Career-specific parental behaviors in adolescents' development. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 75(2), 109-119. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2009.03.005

Dietrich, J., & Kracke, B. (2011). Brief report: Cross-informant ratings of self-and other regulation at career transitions in adolescence. *Journal of Adolescence*, 34(5), 1097-1101. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2010.05.017

Dietrich, J., & Salmela-Aro, K. (2013). Parental involvement and adolescents' career goal pursuit during the post-school transition. *Journal of Adolescence*, 36(1), 121-128. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2012.10.009

Ginevra, M. C., Nota, L., & Ferrari, L. (2015). Parental support in adolescents' career development: Parents' and children's perceptions. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 63(1), 2-15. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2015.00091.x

Guan, P., Capezio, A., Restubog, S. L. D., Read, S., Lajom, J. A. L., & Li, M. (2016). The role of traditionality in the relationships among parental support, career decision-making self-efficacy and career adaptability. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 94, 114-123. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2016.02.018

Guan, Y., Wang, F., Liu, H., Ji, Y., Jia, X., Fang, Z., Li, Y., Hua, H., & Li, C. (2015). Career-specific parental behaviors, career exploration and career adaptability: A three-wave investigation among Chinese undergraduates. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 86, 95-103. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2014.10.007

Guay, F., Senecal, C., Gauthier, L., & Fernet, C. (2003). Predicting career indecision: A self-determination theory perspective. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 50(2), 165-177. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.50.2.165

Hardin, E. E., Leong, F.T., & Osipow, S. H. (2001). Cultural relativity in the conceptualization of career maturity. *Journal of Vocational Behavior,* 58(1), 36-52. https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.2000.1762

Hartung, P. J., Porfeli, E. J., & Vondracek, F.W. (2005). Child vocational development: A review and reconsideration. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 66, 385-419. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2004.05.006

Hirschi, A. (2009). Career adaptability development in adolescence: Multiple predictors and effect onsense of power and life satisfaction. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 74,145-155. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2009.01.002

Hirschi, A., Herrmann, A., & Keller, A. C. (2015). Career adaptivity, adaptability, and adapting: A conceptual and empirical investigation. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 87, 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2014.11.008

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations*. Sage publications.

Kagitcibasi, C. (1994). A critical appraisal of individualism and collectivism: Toward a new formulation. In U. Kim, H. C. Triandis, C. Kagitcibasi, S.-C. Choi, & G. Yoon (Eds.), *Individualism and collectivism: Theory, method, and applications* (pp. 52-65). Sage.

Kracke, B. (1997). Parental behaviors and adolescents' career exploration. *Career Development Quarterly*, 45(4), 341-350. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.1997.tb00538.x

Lee, J. H., & Mun, E. M. (2011). The effects into juvenile career decision making self-efficacy by parental career support. *The Journal of Career Education Research*, 24(1), 173-188. https://doi.org/10.24123/aipj.v34i4.2581

Mortimer, J. T., Zimmer-Gembeck, M. J., Holmes, M., & Shanahan, M. J. (2002). The process of occupational decision making: Patterns during the transition to adulthood. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 61(3), 439-465. https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.2002.1885

Negru-Subtirica, O., Pop, E. I., & Crocetti, E. (2015). Developmental trajectories and reciprocal associations between career adaptability and vocational identity: A three-wave longitudinal study with adolescents. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 88, 131-142. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2015.03.004

Nunnaly, J. (1978). *Psychometric theory*. McGraw-Hill.

O'Brien, K. M., Friedman, S. M., Tipton, L. C., & Linn, S. G. (2000). Attachment, separation, and women's vocational development: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 47(3), 301-315. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.47.3.301

Oomen, A. (2016). Parental involvement in career education and guidance in secondary education. *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling*, 37(1), 39-46. https://doi.org/10.20856/jnicec.3707

Paa, H. K., & McWhirter, E. H. (2000). Perceived influences on high school students' current career expectations. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 49(1), 29-44. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2000.tb00749.x

Podrug, N., Filipović, D., & Stančić, I. (2014). Analysis of cultural differences between Croatia, Brazil, Germany and Serbia. *Economic research-Ekonomska istraživanja*, 27(1), 818-829. https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2014.974915

Rudolph, C. W., Lavigne, K. N., Katz, I. M., & Zacher, H. (2017a). Linking dimensions of career adaptability to adaptation results: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 102, 151-173. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2017.06.003.

Rudolph, C.W., Lavigne, K. N., & Zacher, H. (2017b). Career adaptablility: A meta-analysis of relationships with measures of adaptivity, adapting responses, and adaptation results. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 98, 17-34. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2016.09.002

Savickas, M. L. (2002). Career construction: A developmental theory of vocational behaviour. In D. Brown and Associates (Eds.), *Career Choice and Development* (4th ed, pp. 149-205). Jossey-Bass.

Savickas, M. L., & Porfeli, E. J. (2012). Career Adapt-Abilities Scale: Construction, reliability, and measurement equivalence across 13 countries. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 80, 661-673. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2012.01.011

Savickas, M. L., Porfeli, E. J., Lara Hilton, T., & Savickas, S. (2018). The Student Career Construction Inventory. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 106, 138-152. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.01.009

Skorikov, V. (2007). Continuity in adolescent career preparation and its effects on adjustment. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 70, 8-24. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2006.04.007

Stringer, K., Kerpelman, J., & Skorikov, V. (2011). Career preparation: A longitudinal, process-oriented examination. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 79, 158-169. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2010.12.012

Šverko, I. & Babarović, T. (2019). Applying career construction model of adaptation to career transition in adolescence: A two-study paper. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 111, 59-73. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.10.011.

Vignoli, E., Croity-Belz, S., Chapeland, V., de Fillipis, A., & Garcia, M. (2005). Career exploration in adolescents: The role of anxiety, attachment, and parenting style. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 67(2), 153-168. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2004.08.006

Zacher, H. (2014). Individual difference predictors of change in career adaptability over time. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 84(2), 188-198. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2014.01.001

Acknowledgements

This work has been fully supported by the Croatian Science Foundation under the project number IP-2019-04-7537 (Free Career Choice).

For correspondence

Iva Šverko,

Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences,
Marulićev trg 19/I, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia.

Iva.Sverko@pilar.hr

10.20856/jnicec.4507

The relevance of Community Interaction Theory to 'Widening Participation': A role for the guidance practitioner as applied psychologist and sociologist?

Emily Róisín Reid

This essay reviews research I conducted through the lens of Law's Community Interaction Theory, and draws out its contextual relevance to widening participation in medicine. It discusses implications for practice, and suggests potential in Law's idea for the role of guidance practitioner as both applied psychologist and sociologist.

Introduction

As a reflective practitioner, it seems only fitting to begin this piece with a personal reflection on how I arrived at undertaking research into widening participation, and how over the past decade I developed my fascination with the work of Dr Bill Law.

I grew up in Aston, a bustling multi-cultural area of Birmingham that was, and remains, one of the most deprived wards in the city, still characterised by low participation rates into higher education. My brother and I grew up in a cosy terraced house with my mother, Irish grandparents and many aunts & uncles, in a street where we were all first or second-generation diaspora, mostly from Ireland, Jamaica and Pakistan. Growing up with such rich cultural diversity, I was aware of what Law defined as 'modes of community influence' but without understanding the significance of this. I observed the expectations of my immediate community as prizing education and received different types of feedback and support to reinforce working hard at school; albeit without specific expectations, or precise knowledge about how this would translate into future career opportunities.

Fast forward in time, I have spent the last decade in the field of careers: the first half supporting long-term unemployed individuals into meaningful work, the latter half working in careers and widening participation (WP); helping students from low-participation backgrounds to access university education (specifically, in medicine). Through my work, I experienced first-hand what Law explained as the 'mid-range' focus of community interaction: the iterative, mutable and recursive relationship by which individuals within various groups imprint on each other, relating expectations of behaviour through social nudges (Law, 1981).

Researching WP in medicine

Recent policy imperatives are placing increasing pressure on higher education to widen participation from under-represented groups (Sutton Trust, 2016). This is compounded in the study of medicine, where stringent entry requirements make it harder to address systemic problems with regards to under-representation (Medical Schools Council, 2016).

I was curious to find out how students from WP backgrounds have overcome barriers to entry, and decided to conduct a piece of exploratory research by conducting semi-structured interviews (n=22) and focus groups (n=2). This article presents one small extract from a large two-year exploratory research project looking at the career narratives of medical students from lower socio-economic backgrounds in the light of Dr Bill Law's Community Interaction Theory.

Community Interaction Theory

Bill Law produced his Community Interaction Theory as a counterpoint to what had become a debate about 'self-concept' versus 'opportunity structure'. His theory encouraged readers to consider the spectrum of community influences as a mid-range intermediary between these two seemingly juxtaposed concepts, contending that 'whatever explanatory and predicative significance we may wish to assign to self-concept or to opportunity structure as influences upon career development, that significance will be modified by exchanges occurring between the individual and the groups within which he or she is a member' (Law, 1981, p.148). His theory broke ground in that it posed that not only do communities transmit 'the effects of "big-picture" sociological processes: they also *modify* these effects' (Law, 1981, p.149). The implication of this theory in the context of the aforementioned debate, is that communities can of themselves contribute sources of motivation that can constrain or liberate individuals, out with the position of these individuals' relative to their opportunity structure, and with a recursive relationship on self-concept.

This is particularly interesting in the light of the vocational choice that people make when they pursue a career in medicine. Compared to most occupations, medicine is pervasive, with most people visiting a doctor at some point in their life. There has been a historical prestige associated with this profession, which has been maintained over the course of centuries (Girasek et al., 2011). This prestige is, in part, upheld by the current admissions processes into the vocation, which in turn is a function of how well the profession is remunerated (Girasek et al., 2011). In and of itself, this very fact has implications for social justice, however it has particular resonance when viewed in the light of Law's Community Interaction Theory.

Law outlined fives modes of influence: expectations, feedback, support, modelling, and information. The term 'expectation' is used to refer to 'the cues, pressures, and enticements that are often embedded in membership of groups' (Law, 1981, p.150). In the context of this research an example of the influence of expectations might be family members indicating praise for the career choice of medicine, or suggesting to the individual that this would be a desirable career for them e.g. 'wouldn't it be lovely to have a Doctor in the family!'. Law defines feedback as "the messages that people receive concerning their suitability for different sorts of social roles" (Law, 1981, p.150). For Law, the term 'support' refers to the 'reinforcements and encouragements that group membership can entail' (Law, 1981, p.150). Modelling, as referred to by Law, accounts for 'the flesh and blood examples which offer specific targets for identification to members of the group' (Law, 1981, p.150). And finally, he uses the term 'information-provision' to refer to 'the communication of impressions, images and data which people distil from conversation in the groups of which they are members' (Law, 1981, p.150).

Methods

The study consisted of two phases. Phase I gained benchmarking data via a quantitative survey with qualitative insight questions, which was completed by 46% of the student population (n=326). Phase II consisted of a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews (n=22) and two focus groups (participant n=13). The chosen epistemological basis was social constructionism, as matters such as identity, place in society, and socialisation are foregrounded, which has particular resonance for this research when hearing the voices of an under-represented minority (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Burr, 2003). The primary research question was underpinned by a theoretical framework of key sociological texts and career theories. This essay explicitly chooses to focus on Law's Community Interaction Theory. I followed Braun and Clarke's six-point framework (2006), where I coded both deductively to the pre-determined theoretical framework, and inductively in order to interpret some of the emergent themes. This essay focuses only on deductive coding to the five modes of community influence drawn from 'Community Interaction Theory'.

I took on board Braun and Clarke's argument that prevalence is only one factor that should indicate the 'presence' of a theme (2006: 82). I decided that the qualities which were also important in determining what constituted a theme included: consistency across the data (i.e. emerging in the same way in the data) and salience (i.e. how important this is in the case of the individual to their career choice). I have therefore used

Phase	Process	Mapped to theoretical framework
Phase 1: **Familiarise yourself with the data**	"Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas" (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 87).	I approached the data, reading and re-reading with Community Interaction Theory in mind.
Phase 2: **Generate initial codes**	"Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code" (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 87). "In deductive thematic analysis, you might approach the data with specific questions in mind that you wish to code around" (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 88-9).	After immersing myself in the data, I decided to apply the following 'initial codes' drawn from the theoretical framework to both the interviews and the focus groups: Expectations, Feedback, Support, Information, Modelling.
Phase 3 **Searching for themes**	"Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme" (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 87).	I completed a deductive coding of the data against the concepts drawn out from the theoretical framework.
Phase 4 **Reviewing themes**	"Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis" (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 87).	I mapped the themes across the data and began to recognise patterns across the entire data.
Phase 5 **Defining and naming themes**	"Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme" (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 87).	I mapped the specifics of these themes to provide a comprehensive analysis of what these themes contributed to our understanding of the data.
Phase 6 **Producing the report**	"The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis" (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 87).	In the final phase, I chose compelling extracts which I felt encapsulated the sense drawn from the data as a whole.

Table 1: Application of Braun and Clarke's six-point framework (2006, p. 87-89)

these criteria when reporting back on findings. When reporting on findings, I chose to use synonyms protect participants' identities.

Findings and discussion

Community Interaction Theory as a whole was highly prevalent in all 24 of the sources, with 601 references across the five modes of influence, which appeared consistently across the data-set, although 'Expectations', 'Feedback and 'Information' appeared to be more salient to these narratives than 'Modelling' and 'Support'.

Expectations

For the most part, the expectations placed upon these individuals were mostly perceived as positive sources of motivation, and emerged in 23 of the 24 sources, with 107 references. Expectations of teachers appeared critical, even more so than family members.

There seemed to be a juxtaposition between those who were identified as being academically capable of 'getting into medicine' and those who weren't, which appeared in this data as the graduate-entry nature of this course meant that we heard different school-age experiences. These two narratives succinctly highlight this effect:

> I think there'd always been a lot expected of me [at school], because I'd always done fairly well, academically, and, particularly for the school that I went to. I was Deputy Head Boy at the school, and they expected their prefects, and all this sort of stuff, they expected them to do, you know, fantastically.
>
> (Rob, Interview)

> I was in a single parent family, not particularly well off. In my head at that point it was 'that's not the type of person that becomes a doctor'. That type of person could become a nurse, that type of person could become successful but not one of the higher professions that people think of like doctor, lawyer, architect, those were all still a little bit out of reach.
>
> (Daria, Interview)

Taking these together, it is possible to consider the vast extent to which the 'social contract' of the 'prestige of medicine' has a bearing on community perceptions of medicine as a career choice. As mentioned above, the longstanding history of medicine as an 'elite' career makes it more likely for some groups, notably those from lower socio-economic backgrounds and their communities to *expect* that this is out of reach for them. And yet in other instances, those high expectations set by school communities have seemingly modified the social functioning in these respects, and have provided a new source of motivation to these individuals.

In these narratives, expectations appeared to emanate most strongly from the school community, rather that parental or family expectations. Drawing from the work of Hodkinson (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997), if communities career 'horizons' are bounded by career options that are in view (i.e. those of family or from their immediate networks), they would not necessarily be best positioned to raise pupils' expectations.

Therefore, the role of teachers, career professionals and the school community takes on a vital role in expectation setting. Guidance practitioners could be ideally positioned to enable individuals to reflect on these expectations. For example, undertaking narrative-approach group work with students who are making career decisions (i.e. choosing subjects for GCSE/ A Level), where students are encouraged to story-board the expectations being placed upon them. Drawing from the work of Law (2015), this could enable new insights and wider horizons to be explored, and challenge unhelpful or negative self-limiting beliefs. Guidance practitioners would then be well-positioned to occupy the role of 'applied psychologist and sociologist' that Law had envisaged for them (1981, p.158), where they are able to interpret and debrief these with individuals in 1-1 guidance, where the result could be that in students where negative expectations are reinforcing negative career stereotypes, these could potentially be critically reviewed.

Feedback

Feedback emerged as prevalent, consistent and highly salient in the data; coded 72 times across 21 sources. Students received feedback around their suitability for a medical career, which appeared to have had a lasting impact:

> They used to say: 'I've got a cut, what do you think I should do?' really childish stuff but I really liked it and I've always been the person in my friendship groups, since really little, the advice giver. Most people see doctors as advice givers so a lot of my friends were like: 'you'd make a really good doctor, you're really caring, etc.', I guess I was always known as someone who was clever but not necessarily sciency, I was just a clever person who happened to be caring and gave advice willingly.
>
> (Sunita, Interview)

Another strong presence in the data were the narratives of students identified as academically 'gifted and talented', who appeared to gain feedback to the effect that this was considered shorthand for them pursuing medicine as a career choice. Tom summarises this effect succinctly:

> I was always generally quite a high achiever at school. [Medicine] was *always* the thing that was talked about.
>
> (Tom, Focus Group 2 Participant. Italics added for emphasis)

These narratives give examples of how these young individuals have integrated certain qualities into their self-concept, however (and crucially) this is as a result of the community interaction. Presumably, it is also the affective aspect that each of these examples evidences that has created these as associative learning experienced; for example, the esteem through which friends impart their own admiration on their friends first aid skills, or the confidence boost from being identified as a high achiever.

Examples of negative feedback were not especially present in this study. The very fact that this study only reviews narratives from students who successfully got into medicine is significant for this reason. Guidance practitioners are perhaps uniquely placed in being able to offer students a source of independent 'feedback', and could also occupy a unique space at meta-level, through supporting teachers to realise the true impact that the feedback they give can have on individuals.

Support

Support was consistent and prevalent in all 24 of 24 sources (127 references), however did not appear to be especially salient in this data as a whole. This support seems to overthrow some of the challenges that students from WP backgrounds have in believing that the medical profession is in fact a tangible career option for them:

> If you have people on your side who completely believe in you even on your lowest day, when you don't believe in yourself and you have those people, I think that's a big help.
>
> (Jade, Focus Group)

Despite the fact that in the rest of the narratives, it appeared that students clearly had sources of support from their family and friends, in their reflections these sources of support were not perceived as the most relevant influences on their career decisions. The relative position of the person giving the support seems to be important (i.e. the support of someone with latent knowledge about the process is likely to have more valence than someone without this). Perhaps this indicates that students from WP backgrounds were less likely to get the forms of support that were useful to them in their journey to medicine. Given the important role that support can have on rendering a career decision possible or impossible as evidenced here, it is important that guidance practitioners consider ways in which they can expose students to sources of support that are likely to increase their social capital. For example, exposing young people to what they are likely to perceive as sources of support for them (e.g. successful returning students) or hosting career networking-events which have been evidenced to have lasting career effects on pay and job prospects (Percy & Kashefpakdel, 2019; Kashefpakdel & Percy, 2016).

Modelling

The impact of role-models on medical career decision-making is well documented (Gibson, 2004). Modelling was reasonably prevalent (42 references across 17 sources), however surprisingly did not appear to be very consistent in the data overall. In these narratives, role-models appeared to be most salient for the students that came to medicine as a career choice later in their lives, and served to help prospective students identify medicine as a tangible goal:

> I happened to be living next door to [a medical student]. In my first year of my degree, I was in a student house. On my first day, I was emptying the bin or something and she was mopping, we started talking and she happened to be a medical student. Because of that I met some of her friends who were also medical students and ended up living with some of them in the final year of my degree.
>
> (Joe, Interview)

The stringent recruitment processes in medicine, which involve the securing of work experience, undertaking and passing an aptitude test in addition to successfully passing a multiple mini interview are significant barriers for students to cross, not least as appears from this research, in students from lower socio-economic groups who are less likely to have the accumulation of cultural capital needed to navigate these processes. It seemed especially important in

these narratives that these students were 'near-peers' and who were equipped with the knowledge and expertise of navigating the processes, but also from similar communities such that they are relatable to the individual. The role models in these instances weren't just people who had succeeded in getting into medicine, they were people *like them*. To situate this in the self-concept *vs* opportunity structure debate, these narratives reveal how important Law's work was in developing understanding of the mid-range effects that community interaction plays; and that if it were not for the 'chance' element to these individuals being exposed to these role models, it is possible that they would never have considered medicine as a career (showing the unpredictable results that can occur as a result of community interaction). Again, this highlights the crucial role that career guidance practitioners can have in widening participation, purely through hosting events where a range of role models can be showcased, and in order to help students to widen their own networks of contacts.

In addition to face-to-face role models, media role-models were mentioned in 21 of the 24 sources (36 references):

> Well, at the end of the day, being a doctor is a cool job. I mean, I think Scrubs is just a really, really good TV show. I quite enjoy it. One of the things I liked about it, actually, was that the people in it are quite down to earth and quite, sort of, nice, and give you quite a nice view of medicine.
>
> (Phil, Interview)

Nearly all medical TV programmes were named in the recording of the research! These narratives illustrated ways in which students were using these role-models to triangulate, and work out if medicine is suited to their personality etc. Given the increasing and demonstrable influence that media (including social media) now has, further research could explore this rich arena to ascertain the extent to which digital role-models are having an influence on individuals' perceptions of certain careers. This is considered to be pertinent particularly in the light of social justice where there is a clear need to demonstrate a representative range of role models and voices from different backgrounds. Innovative ideas should foreground more diversity in role modelling, especially when it comes to TV and media portrayal, in addition to social media campaigns.

Information

Information was one of the most prevalent themes in all (n=24) sources, it appeared consistently, and presented as highly salient as a sub-theme in 22 of 24 sources. These student narratives revealed a patchy provision of careers services and access to advice, showing in practice the well-documented effect that governmental policy on devolution of funding for careers provision to schools has had on this generation (Hughes, 2017; Houghton, Armstrong and Okeke, 2020; Lewis, and Tolgensbakk, 2019). This appears to be causing an uneven playing field when it comes to provision of accurate information, with students from WP backgrounds most likely to be at a disadvantage (Hughes, 2017; Houghton, Armstrong & Okeke, 2020; Lewis, & Tolgensbakk, 2019). Where career advisors were present in student narratives, they were regarded as a helpful source of information, and a vehicle for which students were able to move towards their career:

> There was this fantastic careers advisor and I owe a lot to them […] I got three out of my five offers, so amazing results for what I applied with.
>
> (Sunita, Interview)

It is therefore important for guidance practitioners to remember the role they play in the provision of information, and the salient role this has particularly for WP students. Perhaps as a profession, we could be bolder in our collective use of social media as a source of information, working more collaboratively in teams to share resources and promote equality of access.

Conclusion

This research remembers the significant contribution by Dr Bill Law, and contends that Community Interaction Theory holds its ground as one of the most relevant career development theories of our time. It is particularly useful in the current climate where there is an increased focus for guidance practitioners to take an active role in promoting social justice (Hooley et al., 2019). Implications for practice have been discussed

throughout, however the unequivocal thread that permeates this work is that guidance practitioners have a significant role to play in helping students from WP backgrounds to conceptualise the range of community influences that are acting upon them, and in so doing can take an emancipatory role towards social justice and crucially, help these individuals to achieve their ambitions.

In the last line of his seminal work, Law suggested a follow-up publication proposing a role for guidance practitioners as 'applied psychologists and sociologists'; a promise which remained unfulfilled. This research finds merit in this idea, and calls for further research to take up this mantel, giving the increased complexity in the task at hand for the guidance practitioner. It also calls upon our community to consider the re-imagination of the role of guidance practitioner, particularly in the manner within which this role is communicated outwardly in terms of a 'social contract' for what we do. This and other research has established that the existing societal social contract of careers work has been damaged as a result of a decade worth of cuts in funding (Reid, 2018). Therefore, an inward reflection on what it is we *do* and *should be doing* is necessary, and could bring us closer to what Law had conceptualised.

References

Berger, P. & Luckmann, T. (1991). *The social construction of reality*. Penguin Books.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 3(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/ 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Burr, V. (2003). *Social constructionism* (2nd Ed.). Routledge.

Gibson, D. (2004). Role models in career development: New directions for theory and research. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 65, 134–156. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0001-8791(03)00051-4

Girasek, E. , Molnár, R. Eke, E., & Szócska, M. (2011). The medical career choice motivations – Results from a Hungarian study. *Central European Journal of Medicine*. 6, 502-509. https://doi.org/10.2478/s11536-011-0034-0

Hodkinson, P. &. Sparkes, A. C. (1997). Careership: a sociological theory of career decision making, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 18(1), 29-44, https://doi.org/10.1080/0142569970180102

Hooley, T., Sultana, R., & Thomsen, R. (2019). (Eds). *Career Guidance for Emancipation: Reclaiming Justice for the Multitude*. Routledge.

Houghton, A. M., Armstrong, J., & Okeke, R. I. (2020). Delivering careers guidance in English secondary schools: Policy versus practice. *British Journal of Educational Studies*. Online first, 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2020.1734533

Hughes, D. (2017). Careers work in England's schools: Politics, practices and prospects. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*. 45(4), 427-440. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2017.1346234

Kashefpakdel, E.T., & Percy, C. (2017). Career education that works: an economic analysis using the British Cohort Study. *Journal of Education and Work*, 30(3), 217-234. https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080.2016.1177636

Law, B. (1981). Community interaction: a 'mid-range' focus for theories of career development in young adults, *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 9 (2), 142-158. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069888108258210

Law, B. (2009) *Building on what we know: community-interaction and its importance for contemporary careers-work*. http://www.hihohiho.com/memory/cafcit.pdf

Law B. (2015) Storyboarding and the Uses of Narrative. In M. McMahon, & M. Watson. (eds.) *Career Assessment. Career Development Series* (Connecting Theory and Practice). Sense Publishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6300-034-5_12

Lewis, C., & Tolgensbakk, I. (2019). Public policy on career education, information, advice and guidance: developments in the United Kingdom and Norway. In B. Hvinden, J. O'Reilly, M.A. Schoyen, & C. Hyggen (Eds.) *Negotiating Early Job Insecurity* (pp.205-227). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788118798

Medical Schools Council. (2016). *Implementing Selecting for Excellence: A progress update*. http://www.medschools.ac.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/Selecting-for-Excellence-2016-update-MSC.pdf

Percy, C., & Kashefpakdel, E. (2019). Social advantage, access to employers and the role of schools in modern British education. In T. Hooley, R. G. Sultana & R. Thomsen (Eds.), *Career guidance for emancipation: reclaiming justice for the multitude* (pp.148-165). London: Routledge.

Reid, E. R. (2018). Length matters! The impact of shortening guidance appointments. *Prospects Luminate*. Manchester: Higher Education Careers Services Unit Publications. https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/the-impact-of-shortening-career-guidance-appointments

Sutton Trust Report (2016). *Social Mobility APPG Access into Leading Professions Inquiry Session Two – Access into Medicine – a summary*. http://www.suttontrust.com/newsarchive/social-mobility-appg-access-into-leading-professions-inquiry-session-two-access-into-medicine-a-summary/

.

For correspondence

Emily Róisín Reid,
Director for Student Experience, Employability and Progression,
Warwick Medical School,
University of Warwick.

e.reid.1@warwick.ac.uk

10.20856/jnicec.4508

Rewriting the future: Young people's stories of educational engagement

Deborah Crook

Young people's educational trajectories are always provisional. This article considers young people's perspectives about enablers and barriers to continued education, and questions models of aspiration-raising that prioritise particular trajectories and are critical when young people cannot engage. Participatory methods enabled 30 young people aged 12-24 from disadvantaged areas in northwest England to imagine steps towards future possible selves. Through collaborative story-making with researchers, they established that inter-generational relationships are important to these journeys, especially support from adults who believed in their capabilities and encouraged young people's influence over decisions for change.

Theoretical approach

Collaborative story-making has been used as a participatory method to facilitate nuanced understandings of young people's lives through rigorous and faithful accounts of their experiences and participation in both data production and analysis (Satchwell, Larkins, Davidge, & Carter, 2020). Young people can address issues of complex social relations involving values, meanings and beliefs, providing a reflective and practical means to develop solutions to problems, which scientific tests for 'truth' or limited logic fail to reveal (Hinyard & Kreuter, 2007).

Such rights-based research can produce alternative narratives about young people's lives that emphasise less the need for young people to change or overcome adversity, and more adults' understandings of how to work with them for change. This repositioning of young people as experts in their own lives can be difficult for adults, especially when stories challenge childhood norms (Garrett, 2016; Shaw, 2012). However, Gair and Moloney (2013) suggest that creating and sharing insider stories to explore possible selves can be empowering and therapeutic.

According to Erikson (2007), possible selves theory considers future self conceptions as narratives, socially and culturally based in experience. How young people imagine their own futures is formed in relation to social contexts, including their schooling (Archer, DeWitt & Wong, 2014). *How* they remember experiences matters just as much as *what* they remember (Strahan & Wilson, 2006). The act of reflecting on desirable and undesirable selves is itself an experience, potentially shaping identities, and motivating or moderating behaviours (Harrison, 2018; Destin & Oyserman, 2009; Wainwright, Nee, & Vrij, 2018). Even with positive ideas about potential futures, young people may not take action if they perceive barriers will obstruct them (Destin & Oyserman, 2009). How they perceive their influence over decisions is related to both their experiences and future imaginings.

Responding to a dearth of research in career education involving young people, the project presented here considered young people as agents for change (Archer et al., 2014; Erikson, 2007; Archer, 2007). It focused on the *process* of imagining futures (rather than the outcomes themselves) and the identification of resources young people perceived as necessary to their continued educational engagement. The article provides insight into what is involved in rewriting the future – the who, what, where, when and why. It discusses two specific themes that emerged through young people's collaborative story-making –

their emphasis on inter-generational relationships and the role adults play in supporting their own decision-making.

Context of study

The UK has expansive achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students, especially in secondary education and in the north west of England where gaps continue to widen (Hutchinson, Bonneti, Crenna-Jennings & Akhal, 2019). There are areas of high socio-economic disadvantage where, although young people attain benchmarks for educational achievement, few continue to higher education (HE). The National Collaborative Outreach Programme was set up to achieve the UK government's aim to double the proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in HE by 2020 through education, business and community collaborations, including FutureU who commissioned the present research.

The lack of educational progression has been blamed on a lack of aspiration associated with levels of deprivation (Whitty, Hayton & Tang, 2015). There is little evidence to support this, despite education policy being formulated on this premise (Archer, 2007; Archer et al., 2014; Hayward & Williams, 2011); such supposition may itself present barriers diverting attention from structural forces (Harrison, 2018; Hayward & Williams, 2011). Increasing numbers attending HE has not countered the disproportionate selection of privately educated students from higher income families, thus Hayward and Williams (2011) suggest interventions should pay better attention to opportunity structures.

Neoliberalism has produced a global education reform movement that prioritises economic growth through standardisation, whereby particular career pathways are promoted as success (Archer, 2007; Archer et al., 2014; Grant, 2017; Wrigley, 2015). Whitty et al. (2015) suggests that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds possess habits, skills and dispositions less valued and embodied in HE. They may be considered failing or at odds with school systems, lacking aspiration, responsible for their own underachievement and expected to 'correct' perceived deficits (Harrison, 2018; Garrett, 2016; Archer, 2007). Simultaneously, Anglo-Saxon model welfare systems accept high levels of deprivation, lack universal services, and intervene only when considered dangerous not to do so, which places additional socio-economic pressures on young people, often in tension with their rights (Spratt, 2016). These conditions compound criticism of young people's aspirations (Grant, 2017; Pimlott-Wilson, 2011).

Limited concepts of aspiration as career pathway, rather than young people's own hopes and dreams, life satisfaction and equality, are contested (Harrison, 2018; Spohrer, 2016). Even so, policy and practice tend to support interventions as mechanistic means of attaining, rather than imagining and creating positive futures (St Clair & Benjamin, 2011; Hayward & Williams, 2011). Emphasis on academic qualifications and entry into HE at age 18, presents barriers for young people who have, for many reasons, been unable to thrive in education. Career interventions may ask young people to set goals, but rarely draw attention to barriers that must be overcome to achieve these goals, and rarely include imagining their futures whilst drawing on limited social resources within constrained contexts (St Clair & Benjamin, 2010). Specifically, 'resolute goal-directed hope' (Grant, 2017, p297) does not work because disadvantaged young people are expected to change their dispositions or cultural habits, which reinforces the idea that it is personal deficit rather than social structures that constitute barriers. Such measures also fail to take account of the roles that adults play in fostering expectations (Goyette, 2008; Shaw, 2012).

All young people have participation rights, these include the right to a view in all matters that affect them, to information, and to education that enables them to reach their fullest potential. These rights are protected by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (UNCRC), and ratified by the UK in December 1991, with obligations coming in to force in 1992. Career education research that acknowledges young people as holders of rights or their potential to contribute to career education development is scarce. Bassot, Barnes and Chant (2014) exceptionally suggest young people should be at the centre of career development design, delivery and evaluation. The UK has not addressed the criticism by the UN of the failure to ensure participation rights (CRC, 2008, p15). One reason

for this resistance is that enduring attitudes to childhood position young people as future citizens, producing a state of reinforced dependency and staged socialisation through schools, until they achieve adult 'completeness' (Prout & James, 2015). This positioning draws attention away from young people's current lives and expectations. Rights-based research instead recognises how young people might contribute to shaping spaces that enable them to flourish.

Research design

This article introduces the project 'Rewriting the Future' (RtF) which aimed to explore young people's stories and their perceived enablers and barriers to continued educational engagement through participatory research using arts-based approaches. Thereby, young people are enabled to share experiences using more than words, responding to each individual's preferred communication style. Young people can steer the process, sharing what they want to say - the researcher working with rather than on or for young people (Aldridge, 2017). They can create characters with whom they and others can strongly identify, making immersive stories with potential to influence broad audiences (Hinyard & Kreuter, 2007). The methods used in RtF were originally developed through Stories2Connect[1], where writers and artists worked with young people to make stories about overcoming adversity, recognising that 'Experience, understood narratively, has both artistic and aesthetic dimensions' (Clandinin & Huber, 2002, p. 162). In RtF, the design also drew on possible selves theory by encouraging young people to look at their educational journeys, whilst challenging straight line assumptions about achievement by using real life experiences to understand what planning for the future entails.

Drawing on my own experiences as a designer and teacher, I developed a movie-based theme to enable participants to create collective stories about their educational journeys and what they believed worked to help them achieve their hopes and dreams. Arts-based participatory activities, such as drawing, songwriting and map-making, allowed young people to create movie plots to analyse and communicate their ideas, which the findings discuss.

Thirty young people aged 12 to 24 were recruited through three settings: 1) Three males and six females (aged 12-15) attending children and family wellbeing services (CFWS); 2) nine males and four females (aged 16-24) who had experienced not being in education, employment or training attending a college access to education programme; and 3) three males and five females (aged 13-15) attending a voluntary sector youth club. They experienced disadvantage through complex combinations of poverty, family breakdown, bereavement, disability, violence, bullying, mental illness, exclusion from school, being a young parent, and being looked after by the state.

Informed consent was established from all participants, and parents/carers for those under 16, with procedures approved by university ethics committee. Ethical research with young people is complex, especially where there is potential that adverse experiences may be shared. This was countered with responsive approaches enabling the young people themselves to suggest ways of creating and sharing their stories, workers who knew them available for support if required, and the freedom to withdraw at any point (Skånfors, 2009).

Data collection and analysis

Participatory workshops were designed and facilitated by two researchers (including the author) at all three settings. There were between six and twelve hours contact time at each setting. Young people were invited to draw or describe themselves and talk about their experiences of education and their hopes and dreams. Some created movie characters; the youth club group animated these with a filmmaker. All three groups co-produced maps about important places in their lives. The researchers facilitated these activities using questions, visual prompts and providing resources and flexibility with the planned activities. For example, young people in the CFWS took the researchers on a walk around their town and this was filmed when we asked them what it is like living and studying in their town. The college group additionally drew storylines to share their educational journeys and what returning to college meant to them.

1 Further details for the project led by Professor Candice Satchwell and examples of data, including from this study 'Rewriting the Future,' can be found at http://stories2connect.org/

Alongside the workshops, individual semi-structured interviews, lasting between 15 and 65 minutes, were audio recorded and transcribed.

Data included: audio and video recordings and transcripts; drawings; ideas for movies and songs; and maps. After each workshop, the researchers logged notes in a reflective journal of encounters that were not always apparent in these materials. For example, what young people responded to and were predominantly concerned with, as well as how they related to each other and the adults present. Analysis was an ongoing, responsive and collaborative process between the two researchers and young people (Satchwell et al., 2020). This involved a discussion at each workshop to check for meanings of recordings or interpretations of materials produced.

Models of participatory research can position participants as subjects, actors, or leaders, often shifting between these roles. The researchers attempted to achieve a balance between the time needed to build trust and enable young people to influence what and how they shared their stories, but also what was realistically achievable using the resources available (Aldridge, 2017). A commitment to young people's influence meant accepting their versions of experience, but this was also limited by the researchers' interpretations. We encouraged young people to identify key messages that they believed were crucial for realisable change through their movie designs. In doing so, we purposefully drew attention to the subjectivity involved in knowledge creation.

Findings

All the young people shared talents and interests and talked about achievements in their lives, as well as potential careers, which challenged assumptions about low aspirations (St Clair & Benjamin, 2011). Some hoped to shape careers around their talents and interests, such as art, writing or music. Most talked about relationships and having their own families; with one young parent expressing how he hoped he could become a good dad. They described places they hoped to visit or live. They also described complex situations including being homeless (sofa surfing), difficult relationships with family, experiencing bullying and violence, and poor mental health.

Emerging themes about educational engagement were expressed through contexts of *family, place, school, finances, information* and *social networks* resonating with Archer et al. (2014). Interconnecting were themes about *significant adults, consistency, knowledge, social life* and *personal qualities*. These could be barriers or potential enablers of young people's educational engagement in the different contexts. During analysis, young people identified how important inter-generational relationships were in constructing these barriers and enablers, and how they believed these are potentially a key to change. Their co-created movie designs helped to summarise these perspectives and are shared in the next two sections supported by extracts from their interviews and discussions.

Inter-generational relationships

The youth club cohort co-created a movie design based around the image of an onion that focused on inter-generational relationships. As each layer peeled away, it revealed more about their lives. The data are from their discussions and interviews, with some of the single words from their maps. The onion skin was their hometown, which appeared a pleasant 'leafy suburbia'. In the next layer they wanted to show a different reality, using words such as 'scummy,' 'judging,' 'unaccepting,' 'a place I want to leave,' knife crime,' 'drunken addicts,' 'underage smoking,' 'false news' and 'no love.' Next they introduced tensions around these perspectives:

> 'This place where I exist is where I live, get my education, meet my friends, and figure out who I am. What happens here matters.'
>
> 'But just because one person does something does not mean we all do the same. We are all different.'

In the next layer, they identified safety zones, safe spaces to meet new people, friends and be sociable:

> 'Home and school are where we have to be most of the time…If things aren't ok then we really lack anywhere to go.'
>
> 'What we have discovered though is that some things make a difference. It's not just places that count but people and how they are with us.'

They then wanted adults to know and take on board that their hopes and dreams are not just about making money and passing exams. They produced a list of what they wanted from life:

- to be able to explore the world
- to make friends and have families
- our communities to be safe places
- schools to work with us on what we can do, not what we can't
- adults to listen to us and see us for who we really are

Their conclusions at the onion's centre were:

> 'It can take a real effort to be who we want to be but all of us are capable of achieving our hopes and dreams. We need space to think and speak to work this out.'

Tense inter-generational relationships were described by all three cohorts. It is important to understand the depths of injustice many of these young people felt in order to appreciate the differences they identified when mentioning significant adults (described in the next section) who they claimed were exceptions. Availability of local resources also influenced how they thought young people in general were valued, with the CFWS group describing fear to venture out because of potentially violent crime. At the same time, they felt locked in due to parents' worries and because the public transport infrastructure was poor. Their video of the walk around the area focused on deserted public spaces including playgrounds. The youth zone, where their workshops were held, was only open to people attending CFWS for interventions, so they felt they had nowhere to go. In contrast, young people at the voluntary sector youth club, met regularly and had started their own interest group. Even so, they described tensions in the town about how the youth club was perceived and how some young people would not attend because it was so tightly structured and controlled.

For most of the participants, school was a difficult environment characterised by the following reasons: constantly changing classes and teachers; bullying; and the perception that adults did not care or spend time to get to know them. Young people in the college described how if they did not complete their course, they could never again access education. Many felt let down after experiencing bullying or isolation related to disabilities or poor mental health at school. All they wanted is what they considered to be their real stories to be recognised, rather than those created by the adults around them:

> 'The CAMHS worker support workers comes to my home so my mum makes it look like we're absolutely fine at the home but we're not…'

Adult belief in, or expectations of, individuals was significant, which resonates with Goyette (2008) and Shaw (2012). For example, young people attending CFWS described how, because they were not in the 'top sets' for their subjects, teachers did not talk about HE or involve them in visits. In contrast, a young woman with special educational needs, whose family had high expectations of her, had recommended she attend the college access course to move forward:

> 'They want me to do good in life basically, so they're going to support me… and similar to my friends they always ring me, they always text me, and they check up on me, all the time basically.'

Recognising and supporting young people's capacities for change

Inter-generational relationships were also recognised as important for enabling change, especially in education, resonating with Bessell (2017) and Shaw (2012). Young people described times when they felt successful and had been supported. Whether parents or carers, other relatives, leaders or teachers had been supportive, these significant adults' inspired them through consistent listening, giving advice without judgment and genuinely believing in their capabilities to shape their own lives. These relationships made the difference between whether they engaged in or attended school or college and coped with detrimental situations and instability within the systems. This finding is consistent with McNamara, Harvey and Andrewartha (2017) and Sanders, Munford and Thimasarn-Anwar (2016). One academically able young woman with ASD, described a significant teacher as:

> 'He always had faith in me, and always helped with things that have needed to be answered. I have always been included with conversations with him and he's just really funny and witty.'

Recognition of a young person's personal qualities, consistently communicating high expectations, not judging, and the timely sharing of knowledge, were characteristics important in whether a young person took on board the information offered by adults:

> 'Originally I didn't actually want to go to university, because, oh there's no point in that I want to become an author. I don't need a degree to become an author…my mum said … you are going to university, because you have that opportunity, so you might as well take it, because there are so many other people who don't have that opportunity, so now this is your responsibility to take it … I magically managed to get into set one for Maths this year, and my mum said see you can do it, you are capable, so now you need to work for it and earn your place there.'

A second movie design produced at the CFWS highlighted tensions young people had identified between their hopes and dreams, and how they were treated in school and their community.

The plot is summarised here:

> There is a boy called Bill who lives in [town] and he is being bullied. The reality is dull, people such as bullies and teachers put barriers in Bill's way, saying he can't do it and putting down his confidence. He was given a hat from a family member. When he wears this hat, he is transported to the farm world where he is on the farm with the unicorns and the flying pigs. It is like a dream life. When he is worried, he likes to put on his favourite song too. When Bill is in a horse race, he falls off a lot, but he keeps getting back on. It doesn't matter where he finishes, just that he eventually does.
>
> The boy who did most of this design described two significant family members: one who actively encouraged him to get fit; and the other to pursue his dreams of working in the film industry through his artistic talents. Through their consistent encouragement, following years of anxiousness about his body, severe attacks by bullies, and perceived lack of support for change at school, he had identified his own personal qualities - perseverance and willingness to try even if he did not always succeed. By then collaborating with these significant adults, who consistently communicated higher expectations, he realised he could change his story.

Conclusions

Educational trajectories shift when opportunities, experiences and expectations shift. Wainwright, Nee and Vrij (2018) suggest that the most impact occurs if young people can develop strategies for achieving these shifts. This research offers a potential way forward by suggesting educationalists make space for young people to simultaneously think about and work out how they might achieve possible future selves and access the resources needed to continue their journeys. By working with researchers to analyse data about their own perspectives, young people suggested that inter-generational relationships influence whether particular themes become barriers or enablers to these journeys and that these may also be a key to change.

Inter-generational relationships matter (Bessell, 2017). Adults can fail to see potential in every young person, especially those already disadvantaged. But if adults treat them differently, by supporting young people's participation in educational decisions through consistently high expectations and not judging, as well as the timely sharing of their insights, they become significant in enabling change. Young people in this study wanted adults to rethink how they envisaged their lives by spending time to get to know them and who they really were. Thus enabling them to share their own understandings of the world, and working with them to imagine potential futures and how to get there.

Expectations are important and have already been identified as good predictors of attainment (Goyette, 2008). However, standardisation and performance driven school processes can limit what adults

understand about young people to prior academic attainment, thereby ignoring their hopes, dreams and other talents. The movie designs demonstrated these tensions as experienced by young people. Yet, they were able to envisage how adults could be important in journeying with them towards their hopes and dreams. Through positive inter-generational relationships, they also recognised that their own personal qualities were important – their interests and talents as well as their perseverance and effort.

Whitty et al., (2015) argues that rights-based responses cannot address inequalities in education, because disadvantaged young people do not possess the capacities to exercise these rights, but this overlooks adults' actions in constituting barriers through inter-generational relationships and the control of resources. The arts-based participatory approaches, instead of positioning young people as lacking capacities, started from their perspectives and demonstrated how it is possible to bring together young people, when they share an interest in an issue to identify and co-create opportunities for change (Gair & Moloney, 2013). The relationships they constituted were effective in imagining 'roadmaps' for the future (Oyserman, Destin & Novin, 2004) and bringing hope within challenging political contexts (Boliver, Gorard & Siddiqui, 2017).

The study was limited by small participant numbers. Global forces affecting priorities and relationships in schools, also provoke questions as to whether rights-based responses can ever be possible or even desirable in UK education systems. Yet, opportunities in these systems that value young people's perspectives and well-being are integral to education that promotes human flourishing (Spratt, 2016). By adopting participatory methods that encourage young people to imagine, not only their future selves, but how barriers and enablers influence their journeys, they may be able to identify and lead the way for change. The challenge now is to translate this into meaningful educational experiences that can be facilitated within the educational system.

References

Aldridge, J. (2017). Advancing participatory research. *Relational Social Work,* 1(2), 26-35.

Archer, L. (2007). Diversity, equality and higher education: A critical reflection on the ab/uses of equity discourse within widening participation. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 12(5-6), 635-653. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510701595325

Archer, L., DeWitt, J., & Wong, B. (2014). Spheres of influence: what shapes young people's aspirations at age 12/13 and what are the implications for education policy? *Journal of Education Policy*, 29(1), 58-85. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2013.790079

Bassot, B., Barnes, A., & Chant, A. (2014). *A Practical Guide to Career Learning and Development: Innovation in careers*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Bessell, S. (2017). The role of inter-generational relationships in children's experiences of community. *Children and Society*, 31(4), 263-275. https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12197

Boliver V., Gorard S., & Siddiqui N. (2017). How can we widen participation in higher education? The promise of contextualised admissions. In R. Deem and H. Eggins (Eds.), *The University as a critical institution?* Rotterdam: SensePublishers.

Clandinin, D.J., & Huber J. (2002). Narrative inquiry: toward understanding life's artistry. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 32(2), 161-169. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-873X.00220

CRC (Committee on the Rights of the Child) (2008). *Forty-ninth session consideration of reports submitted by states parties under Article 44 of the convention, concluding observations: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*. Geneva: UN OHCHR - Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Destin, M., & Oyserman, D. (2009). From assets to school outcomes: how finances shape children's perceived possibilities and intentions. *Psychological Science*, 20, 414-418. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02309.x

Erikson, M.G. (2007). The meaning of the future: toward a more specific definition of possible selves.

Review of General Psychology, 11(4), 348-35. https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.11.4.348

Gair, S., & Moloney, S. (2013). Unspeakable stories: when counter narratives are deemed unacceptable. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 13(1), 49-61. https://doi.org/10.1108/14439881311314568

Garrett, P.M. (2016). Questioning tales of 'ordinary magic': 'resilience' and neoliberal reasoning. *British Journal of Social Work*, 46 (7), 1909-1925. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcv017

Goyette, K.A. (2008). College for some to college for all: Social background, occupational expectations, and educational expectations over time. *Social Science Research*, 37(2), 461-484. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2008.02.002

Grant, T. (2017). The complexity of aspiration: the role of hope and habitus in shaping working-class young people's aspirations to higher education. *Children's Geographies*, 15 (3), 289-303. https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2016.1221057

Harrison, N. (2018). Using the lens of 'possible selves' to explore access to higher education: a new conceptual model for practice, policy, and research. *Social Science*, 7, 209. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci7100209

Hayward, G., & Williams, R. (2011). Joining the big society: am I bothered? *London Review of Education*, 9(2), 175-189. https://doi.org/10.1080/14748460.2011.585877

Hinyard, L. J., & Kreuter, M.W. (2007). Using narrative communication as a tool for health behavior change: a conceptual, theoretical, and empirical overview. *Health, Education and Behaviour*, 34(5), 777-792. https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198106291963

Hutchinson, J., Bonetti, S., Crenna-Jennings, W., & Akhal, A. (2019) *Education in England: Annual report 2019*. London: Fair Education Alliance and Education Policy Institute.

McNamara, P., Harvey, A., & Andrewartha, L. (2017). Passports out of poverty: Raising access to higher education for care leavers in Australia. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 97, 85-93. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.07.015

Oyserman, D., Destin, M., & Novin, S. (2015). The context-sensitive future self: possible selves motivate in context, not otherwise. *Self and Identity*, 14, 173-88. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2014.965733

Pimlott-Wilson, H. (2011). The role of familial habitus in shaping children's views of their future employment. *Children's Geographies*, 9(1), 111-118. https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2011.540443

Prout, A. & James, A. (2015). A new paradigm for the sociology of childhood?: provenance, promise and problems. In A. James & A. Prout (Eds.), *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood (Classic edition)* (pp. 6-28). Abingdon: Routledge.

Sanders, J., Munford, R., & Thimasarn-Anwar, T. (2016). Staying on-track despite the odds: factors that assist young people facing adversity to continue with their education. *British Education Research Journal*, 42(1), 56-73. https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3202

Satchwell, C., Larkins, C., Davidge, G., & Carter, B. (2020). Stories as findings in collaborative research: making meaning through fictional writing with disadvantaged young people. *Qualitative Research*, 2020, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794120904892

Shaw, J. (2012). A case study exploring student choice making behaviour and progression agreements. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 17(1), 115-123. https://doi.org/10.1080/13596748.2012.649969

Skånfors, L. (2009). Ethics in child research: children's agency and researchers' 'ethical radar'. *Childhoods Today*, 3(1), 1-22.

Spratt, J. (2016). Childhood wellbeing: What role for education? *British Educational Research Journal*, 42(2), 223-239. https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3211

St Clair, R., & Benjamin, A. (2011). Performing desires: the dilemma of aspirations and educational attainment. *British Educational Research Journal*, 37(3), 501-517. https://doi.org/10.1080/01411926.2010.481358

Spohrer, K. (2016). Negotiating and contesting 'success': Discourses of aspiration in a UK secondary school. *Discourse*, 37(3), 411-425. https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2015.1044423

Strahan, E. J., & Wilson, A. E. (2006). In C. Dunkel, & J. Kerpelman (Eds), *Possible Selves: Theory, Research and Applications* (pp. 1-15). New York: Nova Science Publications Inc.

Wainwright, L., Nee, C., & Vrij, A. (2018). 'I don't know how, but I'll figure it out somehow': future possible selves and aspirations in 'at-risk' early adolescents. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 62(2), 504-523. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X16665182

Whitty, G., Hayton, A., & Tang, S. (2015). Who you know, what you know and knowing the ropes: a review of evidence about access to higher education institutions in England. *Review of Education*, 3(1), 27-67. https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3038

Wrigley, T. (2015). *Gove's curriculum and the GERM. FORUM for Promoting 3-19 Comprehensive Education*, 57(2), 197-204. http://doi.org/10.15730/forum.2015.57.2.197

For correspondence

Dr Deborah Crook,
University of Central Lancashire

Dcrook5@uclan.ac.uk

10.20856/jnicec.4509

Career counselling with life design in a collectivist cultural context: An action research study

Aparna Bhalla & Gill Frigerio

Large-scale macro forces are restructuring forms of work in urban India creating the need for alternative methods of career counselling. This research explores the application of a US-based approach to constructing careers i.e. Life-Design Career Counseling (i.e., LDC) with two mid-career professionals in India. Data consisted of client responses to different narrative career counselling exercises such as a lifeline activity, a career construction interview and semi-structured feedback interviews. Action research's focus on reflexivity helped integrate theory with practice to contribute to knowledge production and meaningful innovations within practice. Findings from this research underscored the importance of relationship, reflection and sense-making and the need for India to utilise a culturally resonant career intervention. The study holds value for career professionals, in India and beyond where LDC is still unexplored. Moreover, LDC practitioners in non-Western countries and collectivist societies will benefit from a contextual adaptation that encourages focus on client learning.

Introduction

Traditionally, India is a collectivist society. Whilst globalization and technology are restructuring urban India's career outlook, there exist deeply rooted beliefs that could prevent its populace from flourishing within this dynamic context. Gideon Arulmani's research provides insights into career guidance in the Indian context. It illustrates Indian adolescents' lack of awareness regarding self and the world of work, and the strong influence of perceptions regarding prestige and status on career development (Arulmani & Nag, 2006). These career beliefs are passed on from parents, family and community traditions leading to an age-old belief system wherein the focus for many Indians becomes obtaining qualifications and employment rather than lifelong learning and building career resilience (Mehta, 2013; Ubba, 2016). Career counselling in India is unstructured and dominated by private provision from organizations and individuals. The approach to counselling is predominantly psychometric and prescriptive in orientation, with a focus on information provision and subject selection (Arulmani, 2007). It is rooted in the ancient Indian tradition wherein the counsellor (or religious head in the past) is seen as a guide, and the client with family, expect to be 'told' about the best career (Arulmani, 2011a).

Career development theories designed to inform practice have largely been developed in western contexts and may have limited applicability in India (Arulmani 2011a, b; Arulmani & Nag, 2006). Indian career counselling is still largely about matching and constructivist techniques are yet to be explored extensively. Some attempts have been made by Bakshi and Satish (2015) and Arulmani's (2011a) 'Jiva' approach which combines contemporary career concepts with Indian epistemology and culture. Encouraging the 'cultural preparedness' approach, Arulmani (2011b) acknowledges that career development occurs under the influence of a wide range of factors. Family, social structure, economic climate, and political orientations, together create an environment in which attitudes and opinions are formed about occupations and career. Career interventions need to attend to all of these factors if they are to be effective. The aim of this

action-research study is to explore the application of the US-originated Life Design Counselling to this Indian collectivist context to determine its suitability for future integration.

Theoretical Overview

Life Design Counselling (LDC) has been developed for the 21st century occupational landscape, commonly described as 'VUCA'- volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (Savickas, 2015b). Advanced through a multinational collaboration, the LDC framework implements theories of self-construction (Guichard, 2005) and career construction (Savickas, 2005). LDC's administration has been explored within diverse client groups (varied age groups, clients with disabilities and marginalized sections of society) from Western countries. There are a few studies that examine the effectiveness of LCD and Maree (2013) is one example of the exploration of its diversity. Tien (2015) discusses multicultural issues in LDC with application to the generalised Eastern context and the research presented here further adds to the subject by highlighting nuanced realities that define Indian culture. Tien makes pertinent points about gender, drawing attention to the relevance of Indian society's patriarchal outlook where often families wish for a son to propagate their business and perpetuate their pre-conceived professional legacy. For example, engineers and lawyers 'inherit' their careers from fathers/ grandfathers or family businesses are expected to be inherited and expanded. This outlook adds to the societal pressure on Indian adolescent boys and also on girls that belong to families without male progeny. Following a consideration of these cultural factors, we now will discuss the Life-Design Counselling framework in more detail.

The Life-Design Counselling (LDC) framework comprises of the Career Construction Interview (CCI), designed to elicit a client's life story as a series of micro-stories. These are later consolidated by the client and counsellor to co-create a psychological life-portrait that provides an autobiographical narrative of the client's central life-theme. The life-portrait is then used to prompt the client to move intentionally towards enacting self in life/career. LDC's aim is to increase clients' adaptability, narratability, intentionality and reflexivity. Achievement of these goals help clients thrive within their changing environment, articulate their life-career story in their own language, purposefully shape their life-career story and increase their contemplative awareness and understanding about their own lives and career development (Hartung & Vess, 2016).

Life-Design Counseling has been criticised for its lack of orientation towards social justice and career learning (Patton & Watson, 2015). Watson (2013) has critically examined core tenets of Career Construction Theory and their relevance for non-western and developing contexts. He recommends practitioners to theoretically adapt to contexts where: the clients' cultural frame of reference is collectivistic; the language used has different connotations; and career oppressive contexts challenge the meaning of constructing a self within the work role. These aspects, along with Arulmani's recommendations for a cultural preparedness approach, have been addressed via theoretical triangulation elsewhere (Bhalla, 2019), but are beyond the scope of this article.

The present study implemented a hybrid approach to Life-Design Counseling by combining CCI with a lifeline. This activity retains focus on the client while facilitating in-depth self-reflection. Visually, it is helpful in mapping the occupational plot (Savickas, 2011) and identifying the client's life-theme. The use of appropriate questioning further aids the understanding of the client's salient life-roles.

Research Methodology

The research questions were derived from the aim and purpose of the study and framed to follow the Action Research (AR) cycle of plan-act-review-to plan again. These are:

(RQ1): How can I conduct a successful LDC intervention with mid-career professionals in India?

(RQ2): What are the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention?

(RQ3): What are the recommendations for my services?

Sampling/ Participants

Data collection consisted of audio recorded interviews with clients, real-time notes made during the CCI and observations recorded in an electronic reflective journal. The participants were recruited via email from the counsellor's existing client network in India. As a result, four candidates responded. However due to time constraints only two candidates were able to participate in the research. Although the sample was only a small number, rich insights were yielded from feedback interviews consisting of a pre-determined set of open-ended questions. Whilst a larger sample would be needed to ensure data saturation, the depth of insights from the small number of participants was deemed appropriate given the clear constructivist epistemological position of both the research project and the LDC framework itself.

In order to respect the rights and dignity of research subjects, pseudonyms have been used to refer to clients and any other identifying text has been altered. Jane (female 24 years old) was managing her forty-year old family-owned retail business of sports equipment. She was contemplating an international Masters and seeking clarity whether she should pursue what she is 'good at professionally' or what she 'enjoyed personally'. She identified Sports Management as an ideal career path because she loved sports and enjoyed leadership but wanted reaffirmation. Personally, Jane enjoyed creative writing, but considered it too subjective and a risk professionally. She was one of three daughters living in a multi-generational extended family unit which was strict and conservative. They (especially her father) believed in the dignity of self-employment and she was influenced by this view.

Drew (male 25 years old) was a culinary professional who had recently left his job at a renowned coffee-chain as head-chef due to dissatisfaction with the environment and supervisor. Drew had a history of not enjoying studies unless they 'made sense, were logical and had practical application'. During school and college, he left his studies midway because he did not see merit in what was being taught. Drew had recently attended his sister's graduation at a prestigious institution in Spain and was doubtful whether he should pursue the same MBA, because as he stated in the interview 'Drew and studies don't go together'.

Procedure

The following four steps were conducted over two client meetings and constituted the response to RQ1.

1. Introduction to the nature and purpose of this study followed by the opening question of CCI (see Table 1 below).
2. Lifeline activity to ascertain the life-theme from client's life story. Significant positive and negative career/ life events were plotted on a line graph. Subsequently, the remainder of the CCI was conducted.
3. In the time between the first and second meetings, the life-portrait was constructed using a staged process (Maree, 2013; Savickas, 2011; 2015a, b).
4. The second session was initiated with the question - 'Has anything become clearer to you since our last meeting?'. Thereafter, the life-portrait was discussed and any beliefs that needed to be redressed were negotiated. After confirming achievement of mutually agreed counselling goals, each client wrote a mission statement or success formula. The intervention was concluded by conducting a semi-structured feedback interview.

To address RQ2, the data was explored to assess the strengths and weaknesses of LDC with Indian clients. In RQ3, the inferences drawn from the first two questions were examined to make recommendations for practice. After completion of all three stages with the first client, the entire cycle was repeated for the second client. The counsellor utilized multiple frameworks for evaluation (see Table 2. below). This article is limited to the use of the triadic lens, which comprises of LDC's core elements in order to summarize evaluation and to make recommendations for practice.

For assessment of CCI responses, Savickas (2011) advocates identifying the client's script from their favourite story, to learn which cultural tales clients reproduce. Clients adopt these scripts from the master narrative their communities provide, and knowing a culture means knowing its standard stories. The lead author's knowledge of the client and

Table 1. Career Construction Interview Content

QUESTION	PURPOSE
How can I be useful to you through this session?	Elicit counselling goals to set the **scene**
Who did you admire when you were growing up? List three heroes / role-models. **a.** What attracts you to your favourite magazines or television shows? **b.** Favourite subjects **c.** Favourite subjects **d.** Hobbies	Character traits portray the **self** Indicated manifest interests/settings and preferred work **stages** to enact self
What is your current favourite story?	Storyline provides a **script** for linking self to setting
Tell me your favourite saying or motto?	Self-advice offers support strategies and **solution** for constructing next episode in the story
What is your earliest recollection?	Early memories give **perspective** on current problem

Table 2. Details of the Interpretive Framework

Analysis Phase	Focus Area	The Multiple Lenses Utilized for Data Analysis	Answers Research Question (RQ)
Stage 1	LDC Outcome	**1)** Client* **2)** Autobiographical/Practitioner **3)** Life-Design Counseling (Goals) **4)** Additional Career Theories (Holland, Law & Krumboltz)	RQ 1
Stage 2	LDC Process (4 stages)	**1)** Construction **2)** Deconstruction **3)** Reconstruction **4)** Co-construction	RQ 2
Stage 3	LDC Key Components	**1)** Relationship **2)** Reflection **3)** Sense-Making	RQ 3

**Adapted from Brookfield's (2017) four lens reflective* model.

counsellor's common master narrative prompted two modifications to the LDC process. First was the decision to omit the list of suitable occupations in Jane's life-portrait. Second, in view of LDC's narratability goal, the client's ability to recite the new story to audiences was restricted to the counsellor. This is because in India, for most part of an individual's life, he/she is financially supported by their parents. Their life/career goals are considered the family's goals. Declaring any deviation from the original plan, as decided with parents is considered a sign of disrespect. The utilization of an alternative audience for this purpose is discussed later.

Results

Life-Design Counselling's core elements are relationship, reflection and sense-making. A collaborative relationship provides a safe space and holding environment wherein counsellors prompt self-reflection and sense-making to produce intentionality. Several instances during Jane and Drew's LDC interventions pointed towards the requirement for a stronger working alliance. For example, during CCI Jane mentioned 'feeling creepy', indicating she wasn't expecting to identify a pattern within her responses to the lifeline and CCI. Also, after the first session, Drew's comment 'I don't know what will emerge from this discussion, but I thoroughly enjoyed the conversation' indicated lack of clarity about LDC process and purpose.

The lifeline exercise elicited a rich transition narrative. Nevertheless, further scope for reflection was identified. Savickas (2011) recommends practitioners help clients acknowledge how transition 'feels' to them as they prepare to enter a new story. During the feedback interview, Jane mentioned going through 'a gamut of emotions,' whereas, Drew's emotional experience was restricted to early recollections. Deeper reflection could have helped Drew recognize the emotional connection between his current situation and early recollections, to facilitate the acknowledgement of his life theme. There was, however, a noticeable change in Drew's body language at this stage. As the narrated life-portrait revealed intrinsic details, Drew's posture changed from interestedly leaning forward to leaning back and crossing his arms. He maintained this posture throughout the remainder of the session, deflecting any attempts to address his beliefs. This could have been due to Drew's generally restrained personality or due to the element of culture with gender, wherein he felt uncomfortable coming across as vulnerable to a female counsellor. It indicated that Drew was potentially unprepared for LDC's psychodynamic approach.

Both clients described LDC as a positive experience. As Jane bid a final goodbye she held up the mission statement and said: 'This gives me hope'. Whereas, Drew said: 'I would have preferred some critical feedback, as it signifies scope for improvement'. This is evident of the client's lack of career confidence or self-esteem as a result of community influence, which is a common feature of India's collectivist context. Also, at the end of their respective interventions, both clients' said they knew the answer to their transition query. This is a key principle of LDC, which was explained to both clients - that the solution lies within them. Although Jane acknowledged the role of LDC, Drew nonchalantly stated knowing everything beforehand.

Life-Design Counseling makes clients become fully aware of how they articulate salient life roles in relation to some major future expectations. Counsellors then encourage clients to find ways to achieve these expectations, such as defining priorities, identifying support, cultivating resources, and engaging in activities. Counsellor's awareness regarding the role of gender in Indian culture helped identify Jane's attempts to balance her child/daughter role (and related expectations) and worker role, with the leisurite role. This was confirmed while assessing her transition narrative (mentioned love for sports) with her list of hobbies (did not feature sports). In case of Drew, the MBA seemed to be a family legacy he wanted to take forward, more than a course of interest. This aligns with the cultural context, where extended family dynamics and domestic arrangements mean that is fairly common for children and their achievements to be compared with their cousins to encourage progress. Correspondingly, self-esteem issues with Drew were identified based on him admitting that he runs away from appreciation, suggesting advantages to using strength building exercises with Indian clients.

Recommendations for Practice

A key component of the counselling relationship is a strong working alliance, which creates the foundation for an effective counselling intervention. Even while setting goals and describing tasks, counsellors establish the working alliance by eliciting emotions and offering comfort (Savickas, 2011). But in India, not everyone is comfortable articulating emotions. Therefore, while screening and contracting, clients need to be informed that to draw maximum benefit from LDC, they should be willing to engage with their emotions.

Compatibility between counsellor and client beliefs and expectations is also crucial to strengthening the working alliance (Cardozo, 2015). LDC is a new form of career intervention for Indian clients habituated to a prescriptive approach. Therefore client expectations should be addressed before initiating LDC. Counsellors need to establish a collaborative partnership, while emphasizing that clients are the sole experts on their lives and encourage them to actively analyse their micro-stories. Apprehensions about the value of this can be addressed by emphasising LDC's aim to empower clients with tools for lifelong career management and decision-making.

In order to enhance shared construction by the client and counsellor, scope for further client reflection and self-examination was identified. Maree (2013) recommends that counsellors repeatedly read client responses back to them and request clients to authorize and validate (or invalidate) the counsellor's interpretations. When clients believe that they are being heard and feel validated, they reflect more deeply on their career narratives. In this manner, validity, credibility and trustworthiness can be established to further strengthen the working alliance and facilitate sense-making.

Comprehension of the client's own narrative identities emerges from dialogue (Savickas, 2011). Through effective dialogue, the counsellor needs to induce a concrete experience (Kolb, 1984). Only if the experience is sufficiently concrete will it be suitable for construction, or bring forth the client's thoughts, beliefs and emotions for reflective self-examination and deconstruction in the subsequent stage. This leads to another important aspect to be considered while setting client expectations and prompting reflection i.e., having confidence in the concept of 'bricolage'.

Savickas (2015b) describes bricolage as constructing something new from whatever is at hand. As practitioners prompt reflection through CCI, they should further inquire about the cultural plots and metaphors that the client has used to articulate his or her most profound concerns and fundamental truth. These elements work as source material for biographical bricolage, wherein the counsellor engages the client in a dialogue with these sources of their own self, to rearrange them and direct client decision making. The lifeline activity provides wider scope for biographical bricolage and should be utilized intelligently. Thoughtful questioning by the counsellor will facilitate reflection and self-awareness, while CCI and lifeline will represent the scaffolding for self-assembly and reassembly (Savickas, 2015b).

After building any structure, the builder views it from all four sides to get an overall assessment. Similarly during the construction stage, after constructing the concrete experience, it should be assessed from all the perspectives summarized by Savickas (2015a), as listed in Table 3. below. This multi-dimensional analysis will demonstrate what the concrete experience symbolically represents for the client, and the tension that holds it together. Therefore, for learning outcomes from a successful LDC intervention, each stage of the LDC process should be analyzed from all four perspectives before moving on to the subsequent stage.

Describing the Indian value system, Arulmani uses the term 'Dharma' reflecting porous boundaries between self and other (Arulmani, 2011). These values are highly prevalent as Indian parents believe their child's success is representative of their own success, while children perceive parental expectations as their own (Bhalla, 2017). Tien (2015) also highlights how in eastern cultures, family is a part of the whole picture for self-construction. These characteristics of collectivist societies and analysis of the two LDC interventions, call for considering life roles (and role salience) as part of LDC.

Some techniques focused on life-roles may not be suitable for an Indian context. The Life-Role Analysis,

Table 3. Four Phases of Life-Design Counseling Process

Client Experience	Life Designing	Learning Cycle (Kolb, 1984)	Client Operations (Watson & Rennie, 1994)
Tension	Construct	Concrete Experience	Symbolic Representation
Attention	Deconstruct	Reflective Observation	Reflexive self-examination
Intention	Reconstruct	Abstract Conceptualization	New Realizations
Extension	Co-Construct	Active Experimentation	Revisioning Self

wherein clients examine costs and benefits of the culturally defined and gender-based role expectations they picked-up based on parental messages and those garnered from media and society, may be perceived as disrespectful towards families and culture. Therefore, administering the Life-Space Map (Brott, 2005) may be more suitable. Thereby, the concept of life roles can be explored through the Life-Space Map, where clients are given a blank sheet of paper and asked to draw a circle representing them. Additional circles representing other people are also drawn with a double ring around those related to the presenting problem. These circles are drawn on paper in a spatial relationship to the client (i.e., close, overlapping and distant) with the counsellor providing exploratory prompts.

In this research, both clients volunteered information on their short, medium and long term goals indicating the increasing clarity of their intentions. However, further facilitated action and planning (with sense-making) is recommended using the future-focused, extended lifeline exercise (Brott, 2005). On a lifeline exercise sheet, clients can mark their life goals and related events with tentative future dates. This future-focused lifeline can be placed onto the previous lifeline, to demonstrate the client's life theme extending into the future. Thereafter, counsellor and client can discuss the values, beliefs and steps required for the achievement of those goals and their match with the client's mission statement.

Savickas (2015a) emphasizes the role of audience in achieving the goal of narratability and facilitating action. He states that sharing their re-authored stories with important audiences is a critical component of the client's action plan. Clients need to secure validation of relevant audiences and marshal social resources towards performances of new roles. Indian clients consider parents the most important audience, yet they are uncomfortable sharing their mission statement with them. Savickas (2015a) emphasizes that counsellors should encourage clients to ground their new stories in a secure base by narrating it to an audience outside of the counselling session. Briddickk and Sensoy-Briddickk (2013) recommend helping the client recruit 'known', 'imaginary' or 'introduced' audiences for his purpose.

Tien (2015) recommends strength-centred career counselling for Asian clients. Her suggestion to encourage clients to think positively is highly relevant because doing well is considered a child's obligation. Instead of rejoicing in their strengths, family and relatives tend to compare their child's achievements to his/her peers and children of their peers with shortcomings as a focal point of discussion. Drew's inability to accept appreciation, expecting criticism from the counsellor and his lack of career confidence reflect this common trend. Hence, strength building exercises would be highly recommended for clients within a collectivist context.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this current research study, one can conclude that Life-Design Counseling can be an effective career intervention for the Indian context. However, for LDC to be successful, practitioners need to focus on instilling confidence in their clients and empowering them to find the solution situated within them. From the cultural perspective, it was found that for India's collectivist value system, the exploration of the concept of life roles through reflection may significantly contribute to the overall LDC experience. Practitioners who are familiar with the client's cultural orientation and outlook are certainly at an advantage while counselling. However, counsellors who lack knowledge of the cultural script followed in countries with a collectivist orientation can utilize the concept of life-roles to understand and acknowledge the client's context. In this manner, practitioners can demonstrate empathy and administer a culturally resonant career intervention.

This qualitative study is the first inquiry into Life-Design Career Counseling within the Indian context. It should be noted, this study is based on AR conducted with a small volunteer sample (i.e., two clients) and extensive review of LDC and related literature. Whilst we are not generalizing that the conclusions in this research are applicable to the entire urban population of India, the detailed and rich account of the clients and practitioner experience is appealing to the concept of transferability. This means that what has been researched in this study will be of interest to other researchers interested in Life-Design Counseling and will add to the literature on LDC applicability.

References

Arulmani, G. & Nag, S. (2006). *Work orientations and responses to career choices: Indian regional survey*. Bangalore: The Promise Foundation.

Arulmani, G. (2011a). Striking the right note: the cultural preparedness approach to developing resonant career guidance programmes. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 11(2), 79-93. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-011-9199-y

Arulmani, G. (2011b). Receive in order to give: Eastern cultural values and their relevance to contemporary career counselling contexts. In H. L. Reid (Ed.), *Vocation, vocation, vocation: Placing meaning in the foreground of career decision-making (Occasional Paper)* (pp. 16-22). Canterbury, England: Centre for Career and Personal Development, Canterbury Christ Church University.

Bakshi A.J. & Sathish, V. (2015). Qualitative assessment using a genogram. In M. McMahon & M. Watson, M (Eds.) *Qualitative Assessment Qualitative Approaches* (pp. 69-80). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Bhalla, A. (2017). *Solve the career puzzle* [Unpublished Masters Dissertation]. University of Warwick.

Bhalla, A. (2019). *Life Design Counseling: Lessons from and Indian Qualitative Study* [Unpublished Masters Dissertation]. University of Warwick.

Brott, P. (2005). A constructivist look at life roles, *The Career Development Quarterly*, 54, 138-149. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2005.tb00146.x.

Briddick, W. C.& Sensoy-Briddick, H. (2013). The role of audience in Life Design. In A. Di Fabio, A. & J.G. Maree. (Eds.), *Psychology of career counseling: New challenges for a new era* (pp.1-13). Hauppauge, New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Cardozo, P. (2016). Integrating Life-Design counseling and psychotherapy: Possibilities and practices, *The Career Development Quarterly*, 64, 49-63. https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12040

Guichard, J. (2005). Life-long self-construction. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 5, 111–124. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-005-8789-y

Hartung, P.J. Vess, L. (2016). Critical moments in career construction counseling, *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 97, 31-39. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2016.07.014

Maree, J.G. (2013) *Counselling for career construction*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Kolb, D. (1984) *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall

Nota. L., & Rossier. J. (2015). *Handbook of Life Design: From practice to theory and from theory to practice*. Gottingen: Hogrefe.

Rao M.B., Mehta M. (2017). Academic Choices and Perceptions of Success by Students in Mumbai: An Analysis of Socio-Cultural Factors. In L. Wood & Y. Breyer. (Eds.), *Success in Higher Education* (pp. 301-314). Singapore: Springer.

Savickas, M.L., (2011) *Career counseling*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

Savickas, M.L., (2015a). *Life Design counseling manual*. http://vocopher.com/LifeDesign/LifeDesign.pdf

Savickas, M.L., (2015b) Life Designing with adults: Developmental individualization using biographical bricolage. In L. Nota & J. Rossier (Eds.), *Handbook of Life Design* (pp. 136-149). Gottingen: Hogrefe.

Savickas, M. L. (2005). The theory and practice of career construction. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counselling: Putting theory and research to work* (pp. 42-70). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Tien, H.L.S. (2015). Cultural perspectives on Life Design. In L. Nota & J. Rossier (Eds.), *Handbook of Life-Design* (pp. 249-265). Gottingen: Hogrefe.

Ubba, S. (2016). Parental Perceptions of Careers and their Preferences of Careers for their Children: An Exploratory Study. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 4(1: 71), 1-23.

Watson, M.,& McMahon, M. (2015). From narratives to action and a Life-Design approach. In L. Nota & J. Rossier (Eds.), *Handbook of Life-Design* (pp. 269-279). Gottingen: Hogrefe.

Watson, M. (2013). Deconstruction, reconstruction, co-construction: Career construction theory in a developing world context. *Indian Journal of Career and Livelihood Planning*, 2(1), 3-14.

For correspondence

Aparna Bhalla,
Independent Career Consultant, India.

aparnasbhalla@gmail.com

Gill Frigerio,
Associate Professor,
University of Warwick.

G.Frigerio@warwick.ac.uk

10.20856/jnicec.4510

Mary Munro

Mary had a stroke in 2014 which considerably reduced her mobility. She went into hospital on 18 April 2020 with a bacterial infection of her kidney. The infection failed to respond to antibiotic treatment. She was moved to the Arthur Rank Hospice for palliative care and died peacefully in the evening of Tuesday 5 May 2020.

Mary read mathematics at Newnham College, Cambridge. She then taught mathematics at Cambridgeshire College of Arts and Technology (CCAT) and worked as a computer programmer in Cambridge for several distinguished scientists including Edward Bullard (geophysics), Richard Stone (applied economics) and Francis Crick (molecular biology) – the latter two later won Nobel Prizes.

Mary was one of our first appointments when Adrian Bridgewater and I started CRAC in 1964. She was appointed as our first Research Officer, and in particular produced a report on Technology as a Career. She subsequently worked as an older leavers specialist careers adviser and as Principal Officer (Guidance) for Cambridgeshire Careers Service, and at CCAT (now Anglia Ruskin University) where she established its careers centre. She also wrote several widely-used careers guides published by CRAC/Hobsons, including *Your Choice of A-levels*, *Jobs and Careers after A-levels*, and *Careers with a Science Degree*.

In 1994 Mary wrote, with Bill Law, The Morrisby Careers Education Programme, as a NICEC project; the programme was published by The Morrisby Organisation as a teaching pack in 1994. Mary was elected an Associate Fellow of NICEC and later a full Fellow. She and David Elsom produced an influential research report on Choosing Science at 16, published as a NICEC Research Report in 2000.

Mary had great dignity and generosity. She had many interests, including art, music and tennis. She was, for example, the founder of Cambridge Sculpture Trails and helped in its development. But she also made a substantial contribution to career guidance in the UK, as a practitioner, manager, writer and researcher.

Mary is survived by her husband Alan (an immunologist, and Master of Christ's College, Cambridge, from 1995 to 2002), by their two sons (Sean and Ben) and by their five grandchildren.

Tony Watts
20 May 2020

Call for papers

Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling: October 2021 Issue

Open call for papers

Editor: Phil McCash

In order to enable and encourage the widest possible range of contributions, there is no specific theme identified for the October 2021 issue of the journal. Accordingly, papers are invited on any subject related to career development. As a rough guide, the following contexts and/or topics may be addressed. Any further suggestions to the editor would also be welcome.

Context(s) could include:

- Workplace settings (e.g. career coaching, L&D, HR, outplacement)
- Educational settings (e.g. schools, further education and skills, higher education)
- Informal settings (e.g. community-based)
- Career development work with young people in any context
- Career development work with adults in any context
- Any other relevant context

Topics(s) could include:

- Creative practice
- Innovation in relevant concepts or theories
- Current labour market issues and/or societal developments
- The organisation, management, or marketing of career support services
- Emerging political, corporate and/or governmental issues
- Expanding and/or innovative services and areas of activity
- Global, international, or non-UK-based work
- Social justice, critical pedagogical, and/or emancipatory practices
- The role of learning in the support of career development
- New tools, technologies, and models
- Fresh critical perspectives
- New case studies and other empirical work
- The relationship between career and lifelong learning, employability, well-being or other area
- The training and education of people who provide career help
- Any other relevant topic

Please feel free to email Phil McCash, the issue editor, with any preliminary queries and/or expressions of interest: p.t.mccash@warwick.ac.uk

Final deadline for complete submissions prior to peer review: 30th June 2021

Forthcoming events | NICEC

The NICEC Events Calendar for 2021 is currently in development. Details will be maintained on the website (http://www.nicec.org/). Non-members can register an interest in keeping up to date with the developing programme via the website and queries can also be addressed to Claire.m.nix@gmail.com. Events are included as part of the NICEC Membership fee, but non-members can pay £25 to participate.

Date & Time	Event	Location
Monday 16 November 2020 5-6.30pm	*Seminar* **Career Development Work in Organisations** • Wendy Hirsch, Rosemary McLean, Jo Edwards and Rob Nathan discuss the reality and challenges of career development for employees and those who support them in employing organisations.	Remote Delivery via Zoom
Monday 17 May 2021 2-5pm	*Network meeting* **New Perspectives on Career Development** • Phil McCash, Pete Robertson and Tristram Hooley lead a network meeting to explore the ideas presented in the new Oxford Handbook of Career Development	Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, Euston, London (Subject to Covid-19 regulations)

Planned events

NICEC is still finalising its 2021 programme of events. Planned events include:

- **AI and careers** – How artificial intelligence is shaping jobs, sectors and career education and guidance.
- **Career and career guidance in the Nordic countries** – How our neighbours to the North organise careers services.
- **Careers in a Covid world** – Examining how Covid is changing the careers and the labour market and examining remote approaches to service delivery.
- **Green careers and sustainability** – How career education and guidance can respond to environmental challenges.
- **Providing career support for service children** – The challenge in supporting the children of service people.
- **Race and careers** – Exploring how the concept of career is taught and used in practice and considering how it might be re-framed in a more diverse and inclusive way.
- **The careers profession in higher education** - The professional identity of higher education careers advisers and careers dilemnas presented by students.
- **Universal Basic Income** – Can UBI transform our economy?

Forthcoming events | CDI

This page lists key events organised by the Career Development Institute (CDI).

A full list of CPD events as well as further information about the events listed below are available on the CDI website at https://www.thecdi.net/Skills-training-events

The events pages have recently undergone a facelift, making it much easier to identify the various different types of training we offer including webinars, digital bytes, expert training online, conferences and accredited courses through the CDI Academy.

Dates	Location	Event
Monday 23 - Tuesday 24 November 2020	Online	**National Careers Leaders Conference – Quality, Sustainability and Professional Practice** The conference will help practitioners explore the key themes through the lens of the COVID19 pandemic and to make plans for the new 'normal'. Using a dedicated conference platform, the event offers keynote speakers, expert panels, an interactive exhibition, networking and choice of 6 workshops from 18. https://www.thecdi.net/National-Careers-Leaders-Conference-2020
Wednesday 13 - Tuesday 14 January 2021	Online	**Tech Fest – Innovation, Ethics and Practice, Social Media and Digital Tools** The CDI is leading the way in promoting digital working and enhancing the digital skills of practitioners. This conference offers the usual blend of speakers, panels, exhibition, workshops and networking with a strong digital focus.
Wednesday 24 ***or*** Thursday 25 February	Online	**National Research Conference** This practitioner focused conference will explore the latest in evidence and practitioner research in the career development field. Workshop sessions will focus on: Quantitative data analysis, constructing online surveys and reviewing literature.
Friday 26 February	Online	**Scottish Students and Members Conference** Bringing together Scottish CDI members and new entrants to the profession.
Monday 8 March - Friday 12 March	Online	**UK Career Development Awards** One week of celebration of career development achievement. 11 Awards will be presented over 5 days, including the CDI Research Award and the NICEC Bill Law Award
Tuesday 25 March	Online	**CDI Student Conference** Discussion of research, policy and practice for current career development students.

CPD Webinars

- All our CPD webinars are free to members – please register your interest for each session so we can send you the joining link. Non-members can also join these sessions by registering and paying online.
  For more information visit https://www.thecdi.net/Full-Webinar-Calendar
- Members can also view any webinar in our back catalogue, through our YouTube channel which contains over 100 webinar recordings. This is accessed through the members' area of the CDI website www.thecdi.net

ABOUT THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

The Career Development Institute (CDI) is the UK-wide professional body for the career development sector. We have a growing membership of 4500 individual members and affiliate organisations and speak with one voice for a lively and diverse sector.

We have a key role to play in influencing UK skills policy as it affects those with whom career development practitioners work and a clear purpose to improve and assure the quality and availability of career development services for all throughout the UK.

All CDI members subscribe to a Code of Ethics, which is supported by a strong disciplinary process, and subscribe to the principles of CPD.

Importantly the CDI is responsible for the UK Register of Career Development Professionals; the National Occupational Standards (NOS: CD); the first Career Progression Pathway for the sector; UK Career Development Awards; QCD and QCG/D qualifications; the CDI Academy; the Careers Framework and a UK-wide CPD programme.

Below are a few of our major achievements:

- A powerful brand supported by an evolving website **www.thecdi.net**; social media (Twitter and LinkedIn) presence; and quarterly magazine *Career Matters*;
- A schedule of CPD, skills training, webinars and conferences based on market analysis and members' training needs;
- A growing media and lobbying presence with the CDI recognised as the *expert voice* in the field; advising politicians, speaking at conferences and commenting on policy;
- The establishment of the UK Career Development Awards – ten sponsored awards including *Careers Adviser/Coach of the Year* and *Careers Leader of the Year and Lifetime Achievement Award*;
- Clear focus on professional identity and increasing the professionalism of the sector through our influence, ownership and development of the QCD and QCG/D and the CDI Academy including the new *CDI Certificate in Careers Leadership*.

ASSURING QUALITY

The CDI has a critical role to play in setting standards and articulating what quality looks like for the sector. Importantly we are an awarding body, managing the Qualification in Career Development (previously the QCG/D) and the UK Register for Career Development Professionals, which is pivotal to our ongoing quality agenda and is fast becoming recognised as the sector's equivalent to chartered status.

We are delighted to be working in partnership with NICEC on the Journal and the NICEC/CDI research-focused events which take place twice a year across the UK.

The Journal is made available to all CDI members via our website.

Contents

EDITORIAL

ARTICLES