Melinde Coetzee *Editor*

Psycho-social Career Meta-capacities

Dynamics of contemporary career development

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 Springer

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Preface

The book *Psychosocial career meta-capacities: Dynamics of contemporary career development* addresses a gap in the current research literature by putting together various psychological perspectives on the psychosocial capacities and resources people need to solve the challenges and problematic complexities presented by their vocational tasks, the more frequent career transitions they will experience and potential traumas they might encounter in the pursuit of their careers in the contemporary workplace and labor market. Researchers and scholars in the field have published (and are publishing) research on these new trends in various scientific journals, however, currently no book discussing these trends and perspectives in one book is available to make the information accessible in a coherent manner to other subject specialists, post graduate students and practicing professionals.

Psychosocial career meta-attributes, resources and capacities have taken on greater salience in today's career and turbulent environmental context. Individuals are increasingly dependent on their psychological and social resources (inner value and social capital) and less dependent on organizational career arrangements because they experience more frequent career transitions, are expected to have greater agency in career decisions and be proactive, able, adaptable and self-directed life-long learners. People's self-regulatory career meta-capacities (with the assistance of a blend of quantitative and qualitative career assessment approaches, techniques and processes) help them to navigate their way through the uncertainties of modern day career lives and organize their career-related experiences in meaningful patterns in guiding them to rediscover the meaning of earlier events (for example, job loss, job insecurity, unemployment, underemployment) in the light of subsequent ones. Psychosocial career meta-capacities further help to establish criteria for success whereby individuals can assess their career and work achievements and experiences. These capacities generally help individuals to enhance and sustain their employability and guide adaptive strategies for implementing the self-concept in shifting work roles in order to facilitate a harmonic fit and integration between personal needs and external opportunities.

Broadly the chapters bring new perspectives that add intriguing insights into career development phenomena that are of significance in today's turbulent economy in four areas:

Part I: Psychosocial dynamics of the contemporary career development context (Chaps. 1 to 6)

Part II: Psychosocial career meta-capacities in organizational career development (Chaps. 7 to 10)

Part III: Career wellbeing and psychosocial career meta-capacities (Chaps. 11 and 12)

Part IV: Psychosocial career meta-capacities in educational career development (Chaps. 13 to 17)

The themes, research evidence, case studies and debates offered in the first six chapters presented in **Part I**, set the scene for understanding the challenges and dynamics of contemporary career development. The career meta-capacities discussed in the various chapters are modeled as multi-dimensional, providing cognitive, affective (emotional), conative (motivational), and interpersonal behavioral dimensions in a matrix of resources. The authors argue for the revitalization of traditional career counseling and guidance theoretical models and practices by illustrating how to combine them with postmodern, narrative career counseling approaches, techniques and practices in innovative and original ways. They further argue for a holistic and systems perspective by illustrating that modern day career counseling and guidance theory and practice should focus on studying individuals within their ever changing contexts and shifting roles as they encounter more frequent career transitions, career uncertainty, and events of unemployment/underemployment in an unstable business environment. Reflecting on the contributions made by the six chapters, it is concluded that although emphasizing the development of individual psycho-social career meta-capacities as a focal point of inquiry in contemporary career development is helpful and important, the broader socio-economic and political factors that are creating new generations of unemployed people should not be neglected. The role of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other devalued identities in the search for stable employment should also be considered in contemporary career research, theory and practice.

In **Part II**, the themes, research evidence and discussions presented in Chaps. 7 to 10 demonstrate the relevance of person-environment fit as a cornerstone in contemporary career development, especially in the retention context. The discussions by the various authors suggest that contemporary organizational career development practices need to take cognizance of the personal variables (interests, career anchors, psychological ownership, career adaptability, hardiness, psychological career resources, job embeddedness and organizational commitment) that influence the fit harmonics with the organizational environment. However, optimal person-environment (job, occupation, organization) fit or congruence may increasingly be more difficult to achieve in the twenty-first century workplace. Employees must increasingly realize that achieving an optimal fit in today's workplace or in one's working life may not be possible and should rather strive for person-environment integration by adapting to shifting work and social role expectations and changes in the person-environment harmonics. It appears from the various chapter contributions that the traditional quantitative career assessment measures are still deemed important and useful in order for career practitioners and managers to understand how individuals' psycho-social career resources or meta-capacities influence their psychological attachment to the organization. However, given the uncertain and changing nature of organizational career paths and career possibilities in today's world of work, it is

recommended that career practitioners complement quantitative career assessment measures that assess person-environment fit with the narrative career counselling processes which value subjectivity, active agency, meaning making, the importance of context and the interconnection of individuals and environments.

The themes, discussions and research evidence on flourishing and sense of coherence outlined in Chap. 11 and 12 in **Part III** provide a perspective that connects with the strengths-based focus of the positive psychology movement. In Chap. 11, the author introduces the notion of flourishing as a personal resource for enhancing career wellbeing in organizational context. The chapter appears to confirm that career counseling and guidance practices should strive to help clients choose occupations and work roles that fit their interests, values and abilities. In addition, career practitioners should help clients explore and manage the relationships that form part of their working lives. Chapter 12 suggests that contemporary career counseling and guidance practices must make room for the assessment and development of clients' sense of coherence as an essential meta-capacity. Sense of coherence is discussed as a dynamic general health resource influencing the general career wellbeing of individuals.

Part IV discusses career construction and career adaptability, flourishing, early career expectations and entitlements in the psychological contract, entrepreneurship, and life-long learning as important psychosocial resources in the pre-adolescence, adolescence and young adulthood life stages and in the educational career development of students from which organizations and individuals may benefit in the long-term. The themes, research evidence and discussions of Chap. 13 to 17 bring to the fore the role of career educational services and educational institutions in preparing children, adolescents and students for the complexities of the world of work. It is recommended that educational career practitioners and educators work jointly in helping students across the lifespan recognize the importance of psychosocial career meta-capacities and other non-job-specific generic graduate skills and attributes in developing the mindsets, skills and attributes graduates need to enhance and sustain their employability and flourish in their careers in the modern workplace and labor market. Students should also be guided to develop realistic expectations in terms of the work world and what they will be entitled to as graduates in today's workplace.

Finally, as authors, we trust that the rich information presented and career phenomena discussed in the various chapters will be fascinating to the global scholar because of their complexity and their connection with so many different aspects of the contemporary occupational world and employment context, the organizational career and people's personal career lives. For the practitioner, they link to career assessment approaches and practices and issues that are of fundamental importance to the future of people's career development, employability, career and life satisfaction and wellbeing. We trust that readers of this book will find the book enriching to their own understanding of the role and importance of psychosocial career meta-capacities in modern day career development, and most importantly, in guiding further research on the subject matter.

20 September 2013   Melinde Coetzee

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This book and each chapter has been independently peer review. The authors would also like to offer their thanks to the reviewers for their feedback and suggestions for improving the quality of the chapter contributions and the book in general.

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Part I
Psycho-Social Dynamics of the Contemporary Career Development Context

This part of the book comprises six chapters. The **first chapter** by Claudia van der Heijde (*Employability and self-regulation in contemporary careers*) introduces the reader to the dynamics of contemporary career development by positioning the construct of employability in the unemployment, employment and reorganizational contexts. Employability is becoming more important as lifelong employment becomes less prevalent. Career opportunities are seen in the light of employability, in which career development goes beyond the boundaries of organizations and the responsibility for career management shifts to the individual. Individuals increasingly rely more heavily on their own employability competences which provide the psycho-social resources they need to navigate their own way through a complex and continually changing work world in which career paths have become more blurred and uncertain. Psycho-social resources are seen as those capacities that help individuals effectively influence their environment and regulate their behavior in order to succeed in work and nonwork settings. Resources such as personal motivation, flexibility, protean career attitude, career adaptability, career identity, proactivity, emotional control and social competence are, amongst others, some of the psycho-social capacities that lead to employability competences. Van der Heijde posits that contemporary career development appeals to self-steering, also called self-management or self-regulation as an integral facet of employability. According to her, self-regulation comprises both cognitive and emotional behavioral aspects that act as motivational processes and steer the allocation of resources to attain certain goals and career-related outcomes. She further argues that employability and self-regulation entail complex interactions between social, motivational, and behavioral processes. Career counseling and guidance practices should focus on long-term (instead of the traditional short-term) career decisions and on stimulating career self-management capacities in all groups of workers (school leavers, new entrants and older workers). She states that career insight generally improves during career counseling and has the potential to enhance perceived employability, career self-directedness (employer-independent action) and adaptability.

Chapter 2 (*Using protean career attitude to facilitate a positive approach to unemployment*), written by Lea Waters, Jon Briscoe, and Douglass Hall, positions the protean career attitude as an important career meta-capacity in the unemployment

context. Unemployment involves predictable and unpredictable transitions between work and nonwork roles in the economic market place, and given the instability of the contemporary labor market, may become increasingly more common and challenging (Blustein et al. 2012). Following the developmental, life-stage career models, Waters, Briscoe, and Hall argue that unemployment should be seen as an event within the individual's career rather than a break that puts the individual outside of a career. The authors cite research showing that many unemployed people generally retain their career identity, continue to plan their career and engage in behaviors that will enhance their employability during unemployment. They further provide empirical evidence that a protean career attitude helps people to positively respond to unemployment and reemployment by facilitating internal psychological energy. According to the authors, protean self-directed attitudes (e. g. proactivity, openness to change, optimism, values self-awareness and adaptability) stimulate a sense of autonomy and psychologically energize people to find reemployment. Their research suggests that a protean attitude helps people to see their career as separate from an organization and stimulates self-directed and values driven behavior in their job search and career exploration. The protean career attitude is associated with a personal learning orientation and seen to create positive career outcomes such as career growth and job improvement. The authors suggest that career counselors should follow a strength-based approach by assisting their clients in building up a protean career attitude. This approach involves engaging clients in a process of career self-exploration and re-connecting to personal guiding values and intrinsic motivators. Clients should also be guided to consider non-work achievements and capacities in how they define themselves and their career.

In **chapter 3** (*Personality and psycho-social employability attributes as meta-capacities for sustained employability*), Ingrid Potgieter discusses a set of personality attributes (personality preferences, self-esteem and emotional intelligence) and provides research evidence of how these attributes influence individuals' capacity to demonstrate psycho-social employability attributes. The author explores these attributes in the light of cognitive, affective, conative (motivational) and interpersonal behavioral domains. Based on her research, Potgieter proposes that career counseling interventions should focus on assessing an overall psychological career meta-capacities profile of the client. Her research shows that enhancing individuals' self-esteem and emotional intelligence stimulate career self-management behaviors. Career resilience, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and sociability are also regarded as important meta-capacities for sustaining one's employability.

In **chapter 4** (*Adaptability in action: using personality, interest and values data to help clients increase their emotional, social, and cognitive career meta-capacities*), Sarah Stauffer, Christian Maggiori, Ariane Froidevaux and Jérôme Rossier illustrate by means of a case study how career counselors can help clients strengthen and employ their emotional, social, and cognitive abilities and career meta-capacities to obtain a fit with suitable work. Drawing from concepts from career construction, employability, emotional intelligence, and happenstance learning theories, as well as life design in the career counseling approach, the authors illustrate that traditional

career assessment tools, such as interests, personality, and values questionnaires, provide pertinent indications about the client's social, emotional, and cognitive abilities. Self-awareness of and insight in these abilities helped the client to increase her career meta-capacities. The authors further illustrate how the client's career meta-capacities emerged as a result of the narrative career counseling approach and techniques and the trusting relationship fostered between the career counselor and the client.

In **chapter 5** (*Constructing career identity through systemic thinking*), Mary McMahon considers the systemic location in which career identity is constructed and illustrates by means of narrative career counseling how systemic thinking may be a useful skill (meta-capacity) for individuals and career counselors to learn in the active and intentional construction of career identities. Drawing from the systems theory framework, McMahon emphasizes that the construction of career identity occurs within a complex range of recursively interacting influences and that the decisions and transitions individuals face should therefore be understood within a systems context. The author regards identity as a narrative practice. Career identity is constructed in interaction with others and emerges from an internalized and evolving life story as individuals craft their narratives from experiences, tell these stories internally and to others, and apply these stories to knowledge of self, other and the world in general. The author illustrates by means of a case study how the interrelatedness of the systemic constructs of connectedness, reflection, meaning making, learning and agency manifests in the responses of career counselors and in the stories of clients in the narrative process. The author proposes six strategies that narrative career counselors could adopt in their practice to assist individuals to learn systemic thinking skills that facilitate the construction of identity. She further argues that career counselors who use and model systemic thinking skills in their practice will be well positioned to assist clients across the lifespan better understand complex career situations and develop the capacity for systemic thinking.

Chapter 6 (*A psychological career resources framework for contemporary career development*) explores the notion of psycho-social career meta-capacities from a holistic perspective by reviewing the role of career preferences and values, enabling and motivational career capacities, and self-regulatory or harmonizing career capacities in contemporary career development. Melinde Coetzee reports on the theoretical development and psychometric properties of the Psychological Career Resources Inventory (PCRI), a quantitative career assessment measure developed to help career practitioners assess the strengths and underdeveloped facets of clients' psycho-social career meta-capacities. Drawing from the tenets of contextual action theory, the author posits that a well-developed psychological career resources profile enables optimal vocational development and agency in the career action (self-design) system. Underdeveloped facets hinder the optimal functioning of other career meta-capacities and negatively influence the potentiality for self-empowering career action and agency. The author emphasizes that the PCRI is intended to be used as an assessment tool that facilitates client self-understanding and exploration of their strengths, rather than to make predictions or recommendations. The information produced from the assessment is seen as something to be shared in a joint action project between the client and the career practitioner. Coetzee recommends the PCRI as a useful instrument that could be combined with narrative career counseling approaches in

postmodern career construction. She further suggests that career counselors follow a narrative approach by considering the integrative structured interview process and story crafting questions suggested by McMahon and Watson (2012) to discuss the results of quantitative career assessment measures such as the PCRI.

Finally, the themes, research evidence, case studies and debates offered in these six chapters set the scene for understanding the challenges and dynamics of contemporary career development. It is evident that the challenges posed by the global digitally-driven knowledge economy require individuals to develop self-regulatory capacities to self-direct and manage their vocational behavior in the life/career design process. These capacities reflect externally and internally focused active control tendencies embedded in the individual's repertoire of psycho-social career resources or meta-capacities and are assumed to be beneficial in developing a successful modern career (Converse et al. 2012). It is important to note that the career meta-capacities discussed in the various chapters are modeled as multi-dimensional, providing cognitive, affective (emotional), conative (motivational), and interpersonal behavioral dimensions in a matrix of resources as also noted by Savickas and Porfeli (2012). The authors argue for the revitalization of traditional career counseling and guidance theoretical models and practices by illustrating how to combine them with postmodern, narrative career counseling approaches, techniques and practices in innovative and original ways. They further argue for a holistic and systems perspective by illustrating that modern day career counseling and guidance theory and practice should focus on studying individuals within their ever changing contexts and shifting roles as they encounter more frequent career transitions, career uncertainty, and events of unemployment/underemployment in an unstable business environment.

Savickas (2011) confirms this approach and states that career practitioners should examine how career counseling theory and techniques may best help clients negotiate a lifetime of job changes and how to successfully adapt to the constant reorganization of work, unemployment events, and employment in multi-cultural information societies without losing their sense of self or social identity. Savickas (2011) further posits that vocational psychology should increasingly focus attention on employability, rather than employment. Employability is advanced as a critical personal resource in contemporary working life (Cuyper et al. 2012). According to Savickas (2011), employability assumes that individuals are capable of actively managing their career possibilities through the proactive use and development of psycho-social capacities such as adaptability, intentionality, lifelong learning, and autobiographical reasoning. In this regard, psychological constructivism, contextual action theory, systems theory, happenstance theory, life designing and narrative career counseling approaches seem to offer theory and techniques that may complement the traditional career counseling approaches in stimulating the development of psycho-social career meta-capacities. However, Stead and Perry (2012) warn from a critical psychology perspective that to purely expect people to design their lives or adjust and adapt to the working world's requirements ignores the limited (or lack of) career choices many marginalized groups of people have. It may be argued that although emphasizing the development of individual psycho-social career meta-capacities as a focal point of inquiry in contemporary career development is helpful and important, the broader

socio-economic and political factors that are creating new generations of unemployed people should not be neglected. The role of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other devalued identities in the search for stable employment should also be considered in contemporary career research, theory and practice (Blustein et al. 2012).

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Chapter 1
Employability and Self-Regulation in Contemporary Careers

Claudia M. van der Heijde

Abstract As they have become increasingly boundaryless, contemporary careers are often depicted as ones wherein workers are employable, proactive, and self-regulative. Reorganization and technological innovations are only some of the developments that contemporary careers face. An often agreed upon definition of employability is: being able to gain and maintain work, both within and across organizations. The employability concept is characterized for its shifts in meaning throughout time, depending on changing labor market conditions and government policies. In addition, several scientific contributions emphasize different aspects of employability. The concept of self-regulation can bridge the gap between several employability theories, in the sense that different employability approaches (different contexts) are all results-oriented, that a performance orientation and a learning orientation are both relevant and that they assume the deployment of strategies and the removing of obstacles to get to the result. This chapter deals with employability approaches in some frequently occurring work situations: the unemployment context, the organizational context, and the reorganizational context. Furthermore, practical implications for career counseling, and guidance for contemporary careers—wherein employability and career self-management fulfill important roles—are provided.

Keywords Employability · Unemployment · Self-regulation · Self-directedness · Career self-management · Job Search · Career resilience · Coping · Competences

Introduction

Contemporary careers, are often depicted as ones wherein workers are employable, self-regulative, proactive, and eager to learn. They experience horizontal career moves besides vertical ones, and move easily between departments and organizations. In reality, not all careers do have a boundaryless or protean character. Changing organizations and functions often correlates with factors such as educational level, type of education, line of work, niche, function specific developments, and other work and socio-economic contextual factors. In contemporary careers though, in

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general, workers do meet a larger array and multiplicity of changes, and as a result will have to take responsibility to frequently reevaluate and make adjustments to their careers (self-steer, called self-management or self-regulation) (King 2004; Strauss et al. 2012).

Some of the challenges that contemporary workers face nowadays (e.g. Rousseau 1997) are reorganization, frequent technological innovations, telework, job rotations, aging and dejuvenization. Employability seems to be an answer. In several publications, employability has been associated with the capacity to get and hold on to employment, both within and across organizations (e.g. Finn 2000; Fugate and Kinicki 2008; McArdle et al. 2007; Rothwell and Arnold 2007). Rothwell and Arnold (2007) developed and validated a perceived employability measure that reflects the self-valuation of employability within and outside the person's current organization, based on one's personal and occupational attributes (p. 40). Although formulated from an individual gain perspective, employability also has been regarded to be advantageous for organizations, since employable individuals are flexible, (e.g. Rothwell and Arnold 2007; Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden 2006; Van Dam 2004), implying a win-win situation.

In this chapter, an overview of theories on employability and self-regulation are presented, including operationalizations and validated measurement instruments, for different contemporary career contexts. The concept of self-regulation has been proven useful in several domains, such as work and organizational psychology, education science, sports psychology and health science. In addition to a positive relationship with results (e.g. work performance, transfer of training), self-regulation has been found to be positively related to health and wellbeing (e.g. John and Gross 2004). In the first section, a self-regulation approach to employability is presented, the second section proceeds with employability approaches in some frequently occurring work and career environment situations including some employability operationalizations and instruments, and in the final section, special attention is paid to practical implications for career counseling and guidance.

Self-Regulation Approaches to Employability

Various theories and definitions of employability, that have surfaced since the emergence of the concept, around 1955, have neatly illustrated its multidimensional or variegated character (e.g. Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden 2006). Changing labor market conditions and government policies have brought shifts in its meaning, and several authors have emphasized different aspects of the concept (e.g. Rothwell and Arnold 2007). One criticism of the employability concept is that it is fuzzy: that it has too many meanings (e.g. Nauta 2011; Rothwell and Arnold 2007). In the literature we find different elaborations of employability depending on the context such as the unemployment context, the organizational context, the organizational change context, and the new entrants context. In that sense employability can be defined as: how to function as effectively, efficiently and healthily as possible within a given (un)employment context (now and in the future).

The first similarity between the employability and self-regulation concepts is that they are both outcome or results-oriented, Porath and Bateman (2006) quote effective self-regulation as "the ability to flexibly apply as many different resources and skills as necessary to achieve a goal". In their opinion both dispositional (e.g. Lee et al. 2003) and situational components are important to this process, that is not about stable personality traits but "manageable behavior". Self-regulation can bridge the gap between several employability theories, in the sense that different employability approaches (that emerged from studying the concept within different contexts) are all results-oriented (and in that sense concern: bringing about or adapting to change). In one case the result is the acquisition of a job, in the other case high production, a high quality product or service or an increase in assignments and clients, an adaptation in an organizational change context or graduation -all manifestations of career success.

Self-regulation is of an agentic nature and concerns motivational processes that steer the allocation of resources with regard to the attainment of certain goals, both concerning on and off task activities, and consists both of cognitive as well as emotional aspects (e.g. Baumeister and Heatherton 1996; Lee et al. 2003; Sokol and Müller 2007). Employability could be regarded a career-related elaboration of Baumeister and Heatherton's (1996), feedback-loop model, in which self-regulation consists of three ingredients: (1) standards, (2) monitoring and (3) bringing about change (operate phase).

Several initiatives in work and organizational psychology describe comparable processes. The future work self (Strauss et al. 2012), a mental representation of oneself in the future regarding hopes and aspirations in relation to work, seems to be positively related to a person's proactive career behavior. The study provides initial evidence that the clearer a person's vision is, the more likely they are to be moved toward proactive behavior.

In King's model of career self-management (2004) (a contemporary update of Crites' model of vocational adjustment (1969) or career development), career self-management consists of behaviors aimed at increasing perceived control over one's career. It accounts for the motives behind why people engage in career self-management, the possible career and life outcomes (occupational health and well-being, promotions, fulfillment, career satisfaction, etc.) and the so-called coping strategies employed to overcome career obstacles (called work adjustment mechanisms by Crites).

A second similarity between the concepts of employability and self-regulation with regard to attaining results (and thus employability), is that performance orientation (prove or avoid) and learning orientation are both relevant, because of permanent organization and market changes. Porath and Bateman (2006, p. 185) define self-regulation as "processes that enable an individual to guide his or her goal-directed activities over time and across changing circumstances, including the modulation of thought, affect, and behavior". According to the approach—avoidance framework of Elliot and Trash (2002), 'performance prove' and learning orientations, focusing on the possibility of success, are both positively related to performance. A 'performance avoid' orientation, that is focusing on the possibility of failure, is negatively related to achievement (e.g. Creed et al. 2009; Porath and Bateman 2006; VandeWalle et al. 1999).

A third similarity between the concepts of employability and self-regulation concerns: the deployment of strategies and the removing of obstacles to get to the result (e.g. King 2004). Goal setting, effort and planning, feedback-seeking, proactive behavior, emotional control, and social competence are mentioned as SR tactics (e.g. Porath and Bateman 2006; VandeWalle et al. 1999). Furthermore, Abele and Wiese (2008) distinguish between general SR strategies (from Baltes and Baltes 1990, selection optimization and compensation) and specific career SR strategies, and demonstrate their relationship with career success.

In relation to the aforementioned, employability and self-regulation also have an important link to coping. When strived for goals are not met, plans have to be adapted and disappointments have to be handled. In the proactive coping theoretical framework of Aspinwall and Taylor, (1997), the concept of proactive coping is an overlap between coping and self-regulation. Proactive coping actually entails the elimination of stressors *before* they have the chance to develop. Proactive coping is conceptualized as five stages: resource accumulation, attention recognition, initial appraisal, preliminary coping and 'elicit and use feedback'.

Career adaptability, a more proactive variant of career resilience (Bimrose and Hearne 2012), is defined by Savickas (1997, p. 254) (building on Super and Knasel (1981)) as "the readiness to cope with the predictable tasks of preparing for and participating in the work role and with the unpredictable adjustments prompted by changes in work and working conditions"—also bears resemblance to employability, and implying self-regulatory processes.

In the following sections, we will look more closely into employability approaches in some frequently occurring work situations: the unemployment context, the organizational context, and the reorganizational context. Without aiming to be exhaustive, examples of more elaborate employability measurement instruments for those specific contexts will be given.

Employability Within an Unemployment Context

The employability focus in an unemployment context is on the qualities and competences that the unemployed individual must have, to regain employment. McArdle et al. (2007) tested Fugate's person-centered psycho-social construct (2004), an approach in which the employability of an individual can be evaluated apart from their employment status. According to Fugate et al. (2004), employability is highly relevant in an unemployment context. Specifically, they suggest that employable individuals are "(a) less likely to be psychologically harmed by job loss, (b) more likely to engage in greater job search, and (c) more likely to gain high quality re-employment" (McArdle et al. 2007, p. 249). Employability (adaptability, career identity, human, and social capital) was found to be positively related to job search, re-employment (although a less strong relationship), and self-esteem.

Koen et al. (2013), tested a positive relationship between employability and job search intensity and finding reemployment in long-term unemployed persons, thereby extending the application of the concept of employability beyond only working persons.

The components of employability (Fugate et al. 2004) *adaptability* and *career identity* were positively related to job search intensity one year later, and the *social and human capital* and *career identity* components were important factors contributing to reemployment success.

Kanfer et al. (2001) demonstrated the relationship of antecedents to job search and employment outcomes as a motivational self-regulatory process. The antecedents were personality, generalized expectancies, self-evaluations, motives, social context, and biographical variables. Two dimensions of personality: extraversion and conscientiousness were rather strongly related to job search. The antecedents were even stronger related to job search as they were to employment outcomes. They found that job search effort and job search intensity were related to employment success. Differences were also found for job losers, new entrants and employed individuals, for instance job search behavior was more positively related to employment success in job-to-job seekers than in new entrants or job losers.

Although several studies focused on the relationship of job search intensity and re-employment, (e.g. Creed et al. 2009), one wasn't always found, thus urging future studies to focus on the quality of job search instead. Saks (2005) present an integrative self-regulatory (process) model of job search predictors, behaviors, and outcomes. In this model, self-regulation—which includes job search self-efficacy, perceived control, goal-setting, and job search behaviors—functions as a mediator between individual, biographical variables, and situational variables, and employment outcomes and employment quality.

But the focus in an unemployment situation should not solely be on job-seeking (a performance orientation). With regard to a learning orientation, job seekers need to expand or broaden their horizon, in the sense that they need to follow some kind of training, education or do unpaid work to get experience in a certain field, or perhaps they can do an internship (or settle for less with a less attractive job, only to stay on top of (labor) market developments, preferably also contributing to broadening of knowledge and experience). (e.g. Ebberwein et al. 2004). It should be recognized that the job search process is a learning experience in itself, offering possibilities to improve networking skills, personal presentation skills and self-knowledge and discovering portfolio gaps, and acquire knowledge about the current job market and one's particular niche of interest.

The emotion regulation or the coping part of unemployment (caused either by job loss or prolonged unemployment) is improvable with interventions. As an example, Caplan et al. (1989), created a job-seeking training including anticipating setbacks, developing functional responses and skills to setbacks and positive social reinforcement. They demonstrated higher quality reemployment (earnings, job satisfaction) or higher job seeking motivation from this intervention.

Employability Within an Organizational Context

Employability within an organizational context focuses on the qualities and competences that the employed individual must have, to retain employment. In the competence-based approach to employability (Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden 2006), an elaboration of the resource-based view of the firm, employability is not only

a precursor for employee results (e.g. performance, career outcomes), but also for organizational outcomes (e.g. Fugate et al. 2004). Organizations can reach a *human resource advantage* over other firms by selecting and retaining competent workers and investing in them with appropriate HR policies and practices (Boxall 1998).

Jiang et al. (2012), looked into the effects of three dimensions of HR systems—skills-enhancing, motivation-enhancing, and opportunity-enhancing—on organizational outcomes. It appeared that proximal firm outcomes human capital and motivation were important mediating variables between these HR systems and more distant firm outcomes such as voluntary turnover and operational and financial outcomes. Likewise, Crook et al. (2011) found in their meta-analysis of 66 studies, that human capital has a strong relationship with organizational performance, especially when not easily tradable in labor markets and when (non-profit) operational performance measures are used.

In the competence-based approach to employability (Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden 2006), employability implies a lot of flexibility and broadening alongside expertise development (occupational expertise complemented with more generic competences: anticipation and optimization, personal flexibility, corporate sense and balance, see pp. 475–476 for the validated measure). Workers need to find their balance between moving along with organizations in the process of adapting to changing environments, and staying protean (staying in control of career). Employability in this sense entails a continuous monitoring of one's competences compared to certain performance standards of the organizational (changing) environment, coupled with (developmental) actions.

Competences can be regarded as self-directed actions of individuals: the perfect and integrated execution of a whole series of different tasks within a certain (occupational) domain (Mulder 2001; Onstenk 1997; Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden 2006), that are a result of personal motivation, capacities, both function and domain specific and unspecific knowledge and skills, attitudes and personality. Some scientific research contributions have focused on the employability competence level (resulting level); others however have focused on the level of personal attributes (ksa's) as a precursor, leading to employability competences.

Employability and self-regulation, beyond metacognition (about knowledge states and deductive reasoning) entail complex interactions between social, motivational, and behavioral processes (e.g. Fugate et al. 2004; Zimmerman 1995). Employable self-regulating workers, are also able to handle emotional processes and other obstacles (fatigue, stressors, distractions) (Zimmerman 1995). It is a good example of why being able to graduate with the highest grades (or having a very high IQ), has less predictive value than estimated on how successful a person is later in his/her career.

Employability Within a Reorganizational Context

Contemporary organizations, go through frequent restructuring, delayering and downsizing—aimed at improving their efficiency, productivity and competitiveness (Cascio 1993; Freeman and Cameron 1993), thereby relying heavily on the employability of workers. Besides being able to deal with increased feelings of job insecurity

(due to involuntary job employee reductions) and being able to cope with emotions, survivors have to work more efficiently and with more flexibility. They have to be more creative and innovative, and perform new tasks for which they have no formal education or practical experience (i.e. Hamel and Prahalad 1994).

Wittekind et al. (2010) performed a longitudinal study to investigate predictors of *perceived* employability in a situation of organizational change, stemming from the idea that the cognitive appraisal of the situation (Lazarus and Folkman 1984) determines the amount of stress experienced. Potential involuntary job loss could lead to lower levels of organizational commitment, performance, job satisfaction, or decreased health and wellbeing (Wittekind et al. 2010). They found that education, support for career and skill development, current level of job-related skills, and willingness to change jobs were significant predictors of perceived employability, which they define (p. 579) and operationalize (p. 572) as "a person's perception" of his/her chance of finding alternative employment".

An important part of self-regulation, particularly in reorganization situations, is emotion regulation. An important reorganization failure is the lack of attention for the workers to adapt to the intended organizational changes. A supportive and righteous climate that takes into account the emotions of the employees while adapting to organizational changes, is not seldom overlooked (Kimberley and Härtel 2007).

According to a study into the HR perception of survivor syndrome in a downsizing firm (Sahdev and Vinnicombe 1998), emotions such as fear and guilt are common. This study concludes that stress increased and motivation decreased. According to the life-span theory of control, stressful events with regard to career-related goals, also have the potential to contribute to a decline in control strivings, especially in cases of urgency, with regard to developmental deadlines, thereby impairing motivational processes (Poulin and Heckhausen 2007). As such they have the power to explain negative results from stressful events such as decreases in job performance, etc. Both primary control (control directed at the external world) as well as secondary control strategies (control directed towards the self) are deployed for goal pursuit.

The Fugate and Kinicki (2008) dispositional approach to employability (including a reliable and validated measure, p. 512) has been developed from the perspective of organizational change. "Dispositional employability was defined as a constellation of individual differences that predispose individuals to (pro)active adaptability specific to work and careers." Fugate and Kinicki (2008) argue that individual dispositions become more important in shaping behaviors and performance in organizations, due to organizational environments becoming more malleable. The dimensions openness to changes at work, work and career proactivity, career motivation, work and career resilience, optimism at work and work identity, all bear witness to elements of proactive self-regulation, such as self-monitoring and self-evaluating, setting goals and desired states for changing, as well as self-regulation tactics in the face of adversity.

Furthermore, Fugate and Kinicki (2008) found their dispositional approach to employability to be positively related to positive emotions related to changes and affective commitment to changes—ultimately seeming promising with regard to control coping with organizational change which entails both actions and cognitive

reappraisals. In Fugate et al. (2008), negative organizational outcomes such as sick time used, intentions to quit, and voluntary turnover were predicted by negative appraisal, emotions and control and escape coping (in that order).

Practical Implications for Career Counseling and Guidance

To stimulate the contemporary workforce towards greater employability and self-regulation, contemporary career counseling and guidance should focus on the development of career self-directedness (Verbruggen 2010). Second, contemporary career counseling and guidance in contrast to traditional career counseling, should focus on long-term instead of short-term career decisions. Furthermore, career guidance should be available to workers at each step of their career, and all groups of workers (both organizational career management as well as external career counseling), in contrast to traditional career counseling (f.i. not only school leavers and new entrants but also experienced and older workers)

To stimulate career self-management, addressing career attitudes and career insight (aspirations) and career self-management behaviors (networking, creating visibility) are important (De Vos and Soens 2008). Career insight, which can be improved during career counseling, has the potential to increase perceived employability. In Vos and Soens (2008), career insight fully mediated protean career attitude and career outcomes (perceived employability and career satisfaction). They also found a positive relationship between protean career attitude and career self-management behaviors.

Likewise, Verbruggen and Sels (2008), found improved career self-directedness in career counseling clients (within a span of at least 6 months), partly and significantly through increasing self-awareness and adaptability in the counseling process. Also the suspected positive relationship between increased career self-directedness and employer-independent action was found in the form of increased training participation and job mobility.

It seems as though workers with a protean career attitude and who score high on career self-management, profit more from career counseling and guidance than workers that are not as actively and consciously involved in their careers, although this high involvement also might have a negative side effect. Since careers do not evolve in a vacuum, dispositional and environmental factors also play an important role in career goal progress, making workers vulnerable to disappointments. However, Verbruggen and Sels (2010) tested Lent and Brown's social cognitive model of wellbeing in the work domain, and found that clients with higher career goal self-efficacy at the end of counseling, on average, encountered less external barriers, and realized more career goal progress and higher career goal self-efficacy beliefs half a year after the counseling. These factors in turn all contributed to a higher level of career satisfaction.

In contemporary dynamic career and work environments, there is a need for more up-to-date and modern career counseling and guidance theoretical models and practices, wherein individuals are studied within their ever-changing contexts with major roles for personal flexibility and adaptability and lifelong learning (Savickas et al. 2009). Current models reason too much from stable careers. Savickas et al. (2009) propose 'life designing' interventions, which take into account personal life alongside one's working life (see also Ebberwein et al. 2004; King 2004). It entails a focus shift from test scores and profile interpretations to stories and activities (Savickas et al. 2009). Organizations, no longer able to provide structure to careers, from a career constructionist theoretical point of view, the personal life story (including past, present and future work roles) should fulfill that function now.

Chapter Summary

This chapter dealt with employability approaches in some frequently occurring work situations: the unemployment context, the organizational context, and the reorganizational context. Furthermore, practical implications for career counseling, and guidance for contemporary careers—wherein employability and career self-management fulfill important roles—were provided.

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Chapter 2
Using Protean Career Attitude to Facilitate a Positive Approach to Unemployment

Lea Waters, Jon Briscoe and Douglas T. Hall

Abstract The rise in unemployment rates associated with the global financial crisis mean that a timely understanding is needed of the ways in which a person's career attitude influences their reactions to job loss. Much of the research into unemployment has focused on what people lose during unemployment rather than what people can potentially gain during unemployment. In this paper, we deliberately adopt a "positive deviance" approach (Marsh et al., *British Medical Journal*, 329:1177–1179, 2004) to unemployment and study the attitudes and behaviors that enable people to find successful solutions during job loss. Specifically, we suggest that protean career attitude is a positive factor that can be built upon during unemployment to enhance successful re-employment. The chapter outlines a 6-month longitudinal study that assesses the influence of protean career attitude on self esteem, job search, re-employment, career growth and job improvement. By studying the positive processes through which people positively deviate during unemployment, we can offer unemployed people new ways to create change for themselves.

Unemployment as a Career Event and the Negativity Bias in Unemployment Research

Rapid changes in employment conditions have brought about a marked restructuring of the contract between employees and their organisations from that of a permanent relational bond to one that is more temporary, performance-based, and

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transactional in nature (Hall and Mirvis 1996; Rousseau 1995). These insecure employment conditions have led to substantial career discontinuity, often in the form of underemployment and unemployment (Arthur et al. 1999; Parker and Arthur 2000). Unemployment is high in many countries due to the global financial crisis and is currently at 7.9 % in the United States of America (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2013), 7.7 % in the United Kingdom (Office for National Statistics 2013) and 11.7 % across the European Union (Eurostat 2013).

Following developmental, life-long notions of the career, we suggest that a person's career journey does not stop due to an absence of paid employment or an episode of unemployment. Indeed research shows that many unemployed people still plan their career and engage in behaviours that will enhance their career (e.g., re-training) during unemployment (Zikic 2005; Zikic and Klehe 2006). As such, we argue that unemployment can be incorporated into one's career journey as a 'career-event' rather than a 'career-break'.

However, in order for career counselors to help unemployed clients re-frame unemployment from a career-break to a career event, more research is required that explores the possibility for people to use the unemployment/time away from paid employment, to create positive career outcomes such as career growth and job improvement. To date, much of the research into unemployment has focused on what people lose during unemployment rather than what people can gain during unemployment. We conducted bibliometric research using 19 data bases (see Appendix A) to examine the negative to positive ratio of outcome measures assessed in unemployment studies. The database was built to include all journal articles that focused on the psychological impact of unemployment, incorporated a population study and were written after 1980. We finished with a total of 475 articles in the database. We reviewed these articles by looking at the outcome measures that were used in these studies and classifying these outcomes measures as negative (e.g. depression) or positive (e.g., career growth). The positive to negative ratio was 1:33. That is, for every one article studying positive outcomes there are 33 that focus on negative outcomes.

Negative outcome measures typically studied were stress, depression, distress, anxiety, suicidal ideation, grief, anger, fear, external locus of control, guilt, helplessness, and pessimism. Well-being was used as an outcome measure in 80 studies, but these studies were investigating the *negative* effects of unemployment upon well-being. Coping outcomes were studied in 74 studies. However, coping constructs were measured in relation to their ability to *mitigate* the negative effects of unemployment.

Unemployment is a stressful time and unemployed individuals are more likely to experience financial hardship, social isolation, physical illness and psychological distress (Paul and Moser 2009; McKee-Ryan et al. 2005). Psychological distress commonly manifests itself through high levels of anxiety, depression, and stress (McKee-Ryan et al. 2005) together with low levels of well-being, self-esteem, and life satisfaction (McKee-Ryan et al. 2005; Waters and Moore 2002a). Unemployment has also been associated with feelings of helplessness, anger, pessimism, fear, guilt, grief and suicidal ideation (Archer and Rhodes 1993; Hammarström and Janlert 1997; Noh 2009; Paul and Moser 2009).

While the emphasis upon negative outcomes of unemployment has received considerable research attention, the potential positive aspects of job loss have been relatively neglected. Little research attention has been given to the human strengths that can shine during this challenging time: courage, adaptability, perseverance, wisdom etc.

Yet, by studying the positive end of the spectrum and the positive processes by which people build resilience and wellness during unemployment, we can offer unemployed people new ways to create change for themselves. These positive elements may be in the minority, however a "positive deviance" approach (Marsh et al. 2004) allows successful, albeit uncommon, behaviors or strategies to be identified that enable people to find better solutions to their problems and enable them to build on what is going right.

In fact, one could go further and argue that a sole focus on ameliorating the negative effects of unemployment might actually be self-limiting. For example, following Keyes' (2002) two-factor theory, the research shows that efforts to reduce ill-being during unemployment do not necessarily bring about a rise in well-being. Accordingly, we believe that unemployment interventions need to expand from a deficit-based orientation (i.e., to fix what is going wrong) to a strength-based orientation (i.e., to build upon what is going right).

Added Value from a Positive Lens on Unemployment

There is a small body of research studying the potential positive processes and outcomes of job loss. For instance, Zikic (2005) and Zikic and Klehe (2006) found that career exploration during unemployment was a positive process related to career growth upon re-employment when self-exploration and career exploration were utilized. Niessen (2006) found evidence that unemployment can be a time where people are motivated to learn and see that continuous learning can occur throughout the lifespan, despite the absence of employment. Of the four groups identified by Wanberg and Marchese (1994) two were deemed positive: (1) 'coping and optimistic' and (2) 'confident but concerned'. The other two groups were labelled as: (1) distressed, and (2) indifferent. Jones (1989) also found that, for some people, unemployment was experienced as a positive opportunity to make a change of life direction.

Beyond this limited literature, there is little known about the ways in which to build well-being beyond ameliorating distress and/or just merely 'coping' with unemployment. We argue that it is time to add a new, more positive, direction of inquiry into the unemployment research. In the current study we adopted a positive psychology approach to the experience of unemployment and asked if there are certain attitudes and processes that will foster positive outcomes such as self-esteem, re-employment, job improvement and career growth. More specifically, we investigated the role of protean career attitude during unemployment in creating positive outcomes.

Protean Career Attitude and Self-Esteem During Unemployment

Hall and his colleagues contend that the 'protean' attitude is a particularly well-suited adaptation to the current career landscape (Hall et al. 1997; Hall and Moss 1998; Mirvis and Hall 1994). Hall (2004) defines a protean career attitude as "one in which the person, not the organization, is in charge" and where "the core values are freedom and growth" (p. 4).

The current longitudinal study explores the interrelationships between protean career attitude with self-esteem and job search activity during job loss in a large sample of unemployed adults. In addition, the study examines the relationship between protean career attitude with reemployment, job improvement and career growth in a sample of unemployed people who move to reemployment over a 6 month time frame.

The two most important features of a protean career attitude are being self-directed and being values-driven. Self-direction expresses the degree to which an individual takes control of his/her own career in a tactical fashion (Briscoe et al. 2006; Mirvis and Hall 1994). A values-driven approach to the career implies that the individual is heavily aware of their own personal priorities and uses them as standards by which to make and evaluate career decisions (Hall et al. 1997). People who adopt a protean career attitude are more likely to be independent of an organization, peer pressure, and/or other external "voices" when making their career choices and to consider intrinsic motivators such as whether the job allows for personal growth and whether the job is aligned to the person's values and passions (Briscoe et al. 2006).

Whilst the role of being values-driven during unemployment has not been tested, indirect evidence for the link between being values-driven and self-esteem can be seen in the finding that the ability to hold on to one's core identity during unemployment is positively associated with psychological health (Cassidy 2001). Katz and Kahn (1978) suggest that values are essential for building and clarifying identity. It is likely that expressing personal values during unemployment is one way to retain a strong sense of identity and this promotes a positive self-esteem during unemployment.

Hypothesis One: Protean career attitude[1] will be positively associated with self esteem during unemployment.

Protean Career Attitude and Job Search During Unemployment

Protean career attitude has not been explicitly tested in relation to job search. However, there is indirect evidence that self-direction may play a significant role in job search. For instance, similar constructs to self-direction such as mastery, self efficacy and autonomous motivation have been found to be important antecedents to job search during unemployment (Vansteenkiste et al. 2005; Wanberg et al. 2005).

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[1]In all the hypotheses presented in this paper, protean career attitude is comprised of self-direction and being values-driven.

As with self-direction, the second element of a protean attitude, that of being values-driven, has not been directly tested in relation to job search behavior. However, a positive relationship between being values-driven and job search is proposed. This is because values may act as a compass to aid job search. Certainly, Wanberg et al.'s (2002) research shows that one of the reasons people do *not* search for work is a feeling of uncertainty about what to do in the next job. Presumably, people who are values-driven can use their values as an anchor to develop clarity about the type of work they hope to find.

Hypothesis Two: Protean career attitude will be positively associated with job search activity during unemployment.

Protean Career Attitude, Self Esteem, Job Search and Re-employment

Protean career orientation may be related to one's success in gaining reemployment because it promotes an "internal psychological energy" (Leana and Feldman 1995, p. 1383). The protean/self-directed attitude can act as a psychologically energizing force through its link to a sense of autonomy and control over one's career. With this type of internal energy as a resource, or positive buffer, people are better able to deal with the strain and uncertainty of job loss without being drained which, therefore, allows them to energized and focused on gaining reemployment.

Further qualities associated with a protean attitude (e.g. proactivity, openness to change, optimism, self-awareness about values, and adaptability) may make these people more appealing and, therefore, more employable. Fugate et al. (2004) have suggested that the personal characteristics of adaptability and self-awareness, amongst others, would be an attractive quality for employers. Leana and Feldman (1995) found that optimism led to reemployment. The evidence above leads to Hypothesis Three.

Hypothesis Three: Protean career attitude will be positively associated with reemployment.

Protean Career Attitude, Job Improvement and Career Growth

Job improvement represents a favorable comparison of one's new job in comparison to the job held prior to unemployment (Burke 1986; Wanberg et al. 2002). Protean career attitude which is proactive in nature may give an individual the confidence and direction needed to consider only those new employment prospects that are an improvement on the old. A protean orientation may allow a person to base his/her acceptance of an offer of employment on whether the new job search gratifies intrinsic values rather than extrinsic drivers.

An emphasis upon reflection, and learning from experience may also foster a transition into improved employment for one with protean attitudes. Also, the protean career's focus on values of growth and freedom (Hall et al. 1997; Hall and Moss 1998) is likely to motivate a search for improved working arrangements.

Hypothesis Four: Protean career attitude will be positively associated with job improvement upon reemployment at the 6 month re-test.

Latack and Dozier (1986) examined unemployment as a career transition that leads to career growth when career gains of the job loss outweighed the career losses. They defined career growth as the situation where the transition from job loss to reemployment provides new, and sometimes more, opportunities for career success. People with a protean orientation may be able to separate their identity from recent employment contexts, and see unemployment in part as a chance to appraise their career goals, gain greater self-insight, and develop new competencies. While they did not assess protean career attitude per se, Zikic and Klehe (2006) showed that those people who used job loss as a time to examine self -identity and alternate career options obtained high quality reemployment. With this in mind, we present Hypothesis Five.

Hypothesis Five**:** Protean career attitude will be positively associated with career growth upon reemployment at the 6 month re-test.

Method

This study involved 455 unemployed people who were, clients with Centerlink, the Australian Government body that provides financial assistance to people requiring welfare and were receiving government unemployment benefits[2] (62 % male; mean age = 33.52 years ± 11.17). The participants were recruited through 'Job Network', which is an Australian national service, made up of private, government, and community agencies that provide job referrals to job seekers.[3] Respondents reported a variety of education levels: 39.9 % had finished high school, 21.5 % had completed

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[2]The Australian Government provides welfare payments to unemployed people in the form of a 'basic living' allowance. As such, only people who do not have enough money to pay for the basic necessities of life (e.g. rent, food, bills) are eligible to receive Federal Assistance. The receipt and amount of Federal assistance given by the Australian Government to unemployed people is determined by their assets, savings, and debts. If the unemployed individual is married or in a de facto relationship, their partner's income, assets, savings, and debts are also taken into account. By only recruiting people who were receiving unemployment benefits we were able to ensure that the financial situation was similar amongst the study participants. Our aim was to reduce the noise associated with economic hardship as this variable has been shown to influence levels of job search intensity and psychological well being during unemployment (Leana and Feldman 1995; Wanberg et al. 2002).

[3]Job Network provides assistant to unemployed people to find work. These people may, or may not be, clients with Centrelink (the agency that provides welfare payments).

university, 13.6 % had obtained a TAFE (Technical and Further Education) qualification, 10.8 % had completed part of a university course, and 6.6 % had completed an apprenticeship.

At the 6-month follow up, 222, of the original 455 baseline participants completed the follow survey. Statistical checks for response bias were conducted between those people who continued on with the study and those who did not. The 6 month group was significantly older (35.15 ± 11.89) than the baseline non-responders (32.18 ± 10.37), t(446) = − 2.82, $p = 0.005$. However, there were no associations between responders and non-responders on gender, education level, protean career attitude, job-search activity and self esteem.

Forty six people had gained full time reemployment (21 %), 73 people had gained part-time or casual reemployment (34 %), 71 people remained unemployed (33 %), 12 people had moved into further training (5 %), and 13 people were in the 'other' category (e.g., deciding to take time out of the labour market to have child) (6 %). The small sample sizes of the final two groupings meant that they were excluded from subsequent analysis. The sample consisted of 123 males (58 %) and 88 females (42 %) with a mean age of 35.15 years ($\pm$ 11.89). Respondents reported a variety of education levels: 37.9 % had finished high school, 20 % had completed university, 20 % had completed part of a university course, 14.4 % had obtained a TAFE qualification, and 7.6 % had completed an apprenticeship

Protean career attitude was measured using Briscoe et al.'s (2006) 'Protean Career Attitude' survey (14 items; e.g., "It doesn't matter much to me how other people evaluate the choices I make in my career" Cronbach's alpha = 0.86). Kinicki and Latack's (1990) 'Proactive Job-Search' scale was used (5 items; e.g., "Get together with job contacts and people who can find me a job"; Cronbach's alpha = 0.84). The 'Global Self Worth' scale from Messer and Harter's (1986) Adult Self Perception Profile (ASPP) was used to assess self esteem (five items; e.g., 'I am very happy being the way I am'; Cronbach's alpha = 0.74).

At the 6 month re-test, reemployment status was provided by each participant's Job Network Agency. Job improvement was measured using Wanberg et al's (2002) adaptation of Burke's (1986) scale that asked people to compare their new job with the job they had prior to unemployment. Participants made comparisons on 11 dimensions (e.g., learning opportunities, career opportunities; Cronbach's alpha = 0.88). Career growth combined two items developed by Bedeian et al. (1991) (e.g. "I feel that my present job will lead to the attainment of my career goals"), and two items adapted from Eby and Buch (1995) (e.g., "I now consider the loss of my previous job to be a positive growth opportunity; Cronbach's alpha = 0.92)

Results

Table 2.1 presents the means, standard deviations and correlations for the study variables at baseline and 6 month re-test. Spearman Correlational analysis was used given the non-parametric nature of the employment status variable. Protean career

Table 2.1 Means, standard deviation and spearman correlation coefficients for study variables at baseline, 6 month re-test

Variables	Time point	N	Mean	St. Dev	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Protean career attitude	Baseline	455	3.67	0.53	1.00					
2. Self Esteem	Baseline	437	3.29	0.78	0.40**	1.00				
3. Job search activity	Baseline	453	3.77	0.78	0.19**	0.08	1.00			
4. Employment status	6 month re-test	190	–	–	0.19**	0.10	0.14	1.00		
5. Job improvement	6 month re-test	119	3.40	1.20	0.41**	0.28**	0.07	0.19*	1.00	
6. Career Growth	6 month re-test	118	3.22	1.03	0.27**	0.24*	0.04	0.24*	0.74*	1.00

Scale scores were computed to a total score of 5 for purposes of comparability across scales
Employment status is coded as $1 =$ unemployed, $2 =$ part time or casual re-employed, and $3 =$ full time re-employed
*significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); **significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

attitude was significantly correlated with self-esteem and job search during unemployment. Protean career attitude was also significantly correlated with employment status together with job improvement and career growth upon reemployment.

Structural Equation Modelling was used to test hypotheses 1 and 2. The hypothesised model was tested next and the data provided an adequate fit to the model, $\chi^2(249) = 835.725$, $p < 0.001$, CFI $= 0.822$, IFI $= 0.824$, RMSEA $= 0.073$ (90 % CI: 0.068–0.079), and SRMR $= 0.049$[4]. As shown in Fig. 2.1, protean career attitude was significantly associated with self-esteem. Protean career attitude significantly predicted self-esteem (beta $= 0.49$, $p < 0.001$). Protean career attitude accounted for 24 % of variance in self-esteem, and thus, provides support for hypothesis one. Protean career attitude was also significantly associated with job search activity, thus supporting hypothesis two. Protean career attitude predicted job search with a standardised beta of 0.21 ($p < 0.003$). Together, protean career attitude and self-esteem accounted for 3 % of variance in job search behaviour. However, of the two hypothesised predictors of job search, only protean career attitude had a significant standardised beta.

In order to test hypotheses 3 a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was run to examine the relationship between employment status at the 6 month re-test (1 =

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[4]Given that CFA model and SEM models use the same items they are equivalent in terms of statistical fit. The only difference between the two models is that one is correlational between the latent traits and the other posits regression lines.
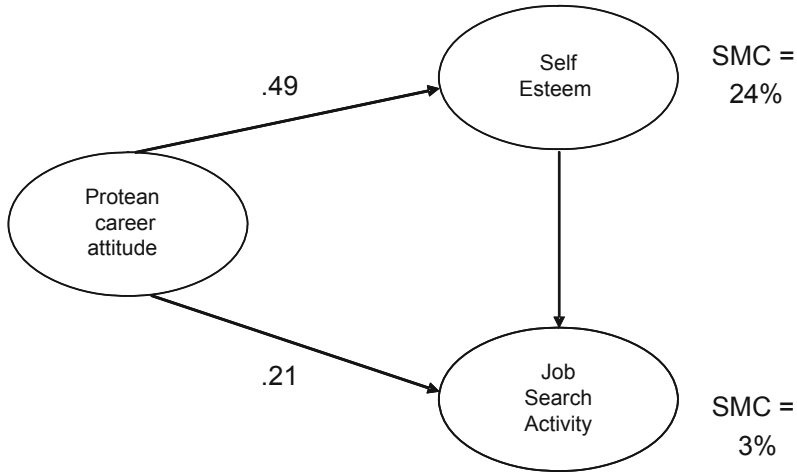
Fig. 2.1 Structural equation model depicting the interrelationships between protean career attitude, job search activity and self esteem

Table 2.2 Means, standard deviations, F statistic, p value and Eta squared for 6 month employment status groupings on baseline variables

		Unemployed	Part time/casual	Full time employed	F statistic	p	Eta squared
Protean career attitude	N	70	71	40			
	Mean	3.60	3.69	3.85	3.14	0.046	0.03
	Std. Dev.	0.44	0.57	0.49			

unemployed, $2 =$ part time or casual re-employed, and $3 =$ full time re-employed) on baseline levels of protean career attitude, self-esteem and job search. Table 2.2 presents the means for baseline levels of protean career attitude. The three groups showed significant differences on protean career attitude at baseline. As shown in Table 2.2, the study participants who went on to gain reemployment at the 6 month re-test had higher levels of protean career attitude than those who gained part time or causal reemployment and those who remained unemployed. More specifically, post hoc testing revealed that the full time re-employed group had significantly higher levels of protean career attitude than the unemployed group. There was no difference between the unemployed and part-time/casual re-employed group.

Hypotheses four and five were tested via Regression Analysis. Hypothesis four was supported as protean career attitude predicted job improvement in those study participants who had gained reemployment, $F(1,117) = 7.36$, $p = 0.008$. R square was 0.60 and the adjusted R square was 0.50. Hypothesis five was supported at the 6 month re-test where protean career attitude predicted career growth, $F(1,116) = 9.32$, $p = 0.003$. R square was 0.75 and the adjusted R square was 0.67.

Discussion

Today's career landscape is unpredictable and the current unemployment figures suggest that job loss may be a common, albeit unwanted, aspect of one' career. Following the developmental, life-stage, career models, unemployment is more aptly seen as an event *within* one's career rather than a break that puts one *outside* of a career, because people still seek to develop their career and still retain their career identity despite the absence of paid employment.

Given that many people still hold a traditional organizational career attitude, where their career identity is anchored in identification with their employer (Lips-Wiersma and Hall 2007; Granrose and Baccili 2006; Briscoe et al. 2006) unemployment is likely to be experienced as a very negative event. For people with this type of 'organizational career', a separation from the organization is likely to lead to the feelings of being separated from one's career. Career failure and identity loss are typically reported by people during unemployment (McKee-Ryan et al. 2005; Waters and Moore 2002b).

However, if unemployment is to be incorporated into the notion of one's ongoing career despite the absence of an employer we may find more positive career outcomes because people are able to remain confident and energized. In the current study we deliberately adopted a 'positive deviance' approach and studied positive outcome variables such as self-esteem, reemployment, job improvement and career growth. We were also interested in the role of protean career attitude and job search that fostered these positive outcomes.

Our results suggest that a protean attitude helps people to see their career as separate from an organization, to take control of their own career, and thus to be self-directed and values-driven in their job search. Protean career attitude was significantly associated with self-esteem and job search during unemployment. However, causality cannot be determined, as we do not know if those with a high self-esteem are more likely to adopt a protean career attitude or if a protean career attitude allows people to uphold a positive esteem during unemployment. Either way though, the findings do allow us to suggest that counselors working with unemployed people may find benefit in assisting unemployed people to reflect on and perhaps modify their attitude towards who is responsible for their own career—themselves or an employer.

At the 6 month re-test, those people who had gained full time reemployment were found to have significantly higher baseline scores on protean career attitude than those people who remained unemployed. This finding suggests that protean career attitude is a useful attitude to adopt when trying to obtain paid employment.

As this is the first study to empirically test the relationship between protean career attitude and reemployment, the mechanisms that underpin this relationship are not yet clear. However, the protean career attitude may increase a person's chance of moving from unemployment to reemployment by fostering 'internal psychological energy' which helps them to retain continued energy stores during unemployment. The personal learning orientation that is associated with a protean career attitude

(Briscoe et al. 2006) means that job loss, and its associated negative experience, is put into a longer term exploratory frame, and is thus more likely to lead to a positive career learning and psychological success cycle (Hall 2004; Pratt et al. 2006). Moreover, internal energy allows people to self- inquire and learn new things about themselves and their careers during their time away from paid employment.

Not only was protean career attitude associated with re-gaining reemployment at the 6 month re-test, it was also related to job improvement and career growth upon reemployment. These are important findings, given that of the literature has traditionally shown that people moving from unemployment to reemployment often move into low quality employment (Butts 1997; Romeyn 1992; Wanberg et al. 2002).

Practical Implications for Career Counseling and Guidance

The findings of this study suggest that protean career attitude is a useful construct through which to study unemployment and reemployment. Given that attitudes are amenable, we see that protean career attitude is something that can be promoted during unemployment and we, thus, consider that this is a construct that can be used within a strength-based approach. Kopelman et al. (2012) suggest that protean career attitude can be used with mindful negotiation to help people find a 'career with a heart.'

The findings of this study suggest that interventions can be designed to specifically boost a person's ability to be self-directed and values driven with respect to their career. Applying the concept of internalization to career orientation, the counselor could assist the unemployed individual to identify their *extrinsic* career and then to re-connect the individual to their own *intrinsic* values.

The results of this study can be used to recommend that people build up a protean career attitude by engaging in a process of career self-exploration (Zikic and Hall 2009) that clarifies one's guiding values and intrinsic motivators and considers non-work achievements and capacities in how they define themselves and their career. Self-reflection and clarification of core values could be facilitated through counselling, self-assessment surveys, analysis of critical career incidents, and feedback from others. Training to enhance self-direction and values expression could also use techniques such as appreciative writing, emotional expression exercises, mental imagery, and mindfulness. These techniques are all well-validated interventions with other samples (Burton and King 2004; Joseph and Greenberg 2001; Langer 2009; Niederhoffer and Pennebaker 2009).

Methodological Considerations

The results of this study may have been influenced by the fact that the study participants were Centrelink clients who were recruited via the Job Network Agency. It could be that the institutional supports (e.g., provision of employment networks

from Job Network staff) and institutional constraints (e.g. the fact that people are forced to take a job or the welfare benefits are cut) under which the sample were operating, had stronger effects on the outcome variables used in this study than individual difference variables such as protean career attitude. If this is the case, then the current results may actually under-report the effects of a protean career attitude.

Finally, the fact that the measures were derived from self-reports could well have created common method variance. This problem is not uncommon for research investigating psychological reactions to unemployment given that self-report strategies are often the best way to assess the subjective attitudes of unemployed people. A number of procedural methods were used in this study to reduce common method variance. First, the independent variables (protean career attitude, self esteem and job search activity) were tested at baseline and were, thus, temporally separated from the dependent variables (reemployment status, job improvement and career growth) which were tested 6 months later. Second, reemployment status was verified against objective data.

Chapter Summary

In summary, we suggest that protean career attitude is a positive factor that can be built-upon during unemployment to assist re-employment. Our results showed that, despite being unemployed, people in our sample were experiencing positive self-esteem and were able to engage in the positive process of volitional, self-regulated job search. Additionally, there were people in our sample who reported positive career outcomes such as job improvement and career growth following unemployment. Importantly, these positive outcomes were more likely to occur for people who adopted a protean career approach. We believe that it is necessary for researchers, policy makers and counselors to look for positive approaches to unemployment and protean career attitude has shown to be one such a positive approach.

Appendix A: Data Bases

The search was performed on the articles' Titles, Abstracts and Key Term lists
Web of Science (ISI)
Academic Search Premier (EBSCO)
AGIS Plus Text (Informit)
APAFT: Australian Public Affairs
APAIS-Health—Australian Public Affairs Information Service-Health (Informit)
ASSIA applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (CSA)
British Humanities Index (CSA) ERIC (CSA)
Expanded Academic ASAP (Gale)
Family & Society Plus Text (Informit)

Family & Society Studies Worldwide (EBSCO)
Full Text (Informit)
IBSS: International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (CSA) PsycArticles (CSA)
Psychology + Behavior (EBSCO)
PsycINFO (CSA)
SCOPUS—V.4 (Elsevier)
SocINDEX (EBSCO)
Sociological Abstracts (CSA)
WORKLIT (Informit)
Worldwide Political Science Abstracts (CSA)

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Chapter 3
Personality and Psycho-Social Employability Attributes as Meta-capacities for Sustained Employability

Ingrid L. Potgieter

Abstract More and more researchers currently working and studying in the field of career development suggest that individuals need to be more conscious of their work-related capability and career meta-competencies or psychological career resources (Baruch, *Career Development International,*9:58–73, 2004; Blickle and Witzki, *Society and Business Review,*3:149–161, 2008; Coetzee, *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology,*34:32–41, 2008; Hess et al., *Journal of Vocational Behavior,*10, 2011; Hoekstra, *Journal of Vocational Behavior,*78:159–173, 2011; Puffer, *Journal of Career Assessment,*19:130–150, 2011; Savickas and Porfeli, *Journal of Vocational Behavior,*80:661–673, 2012). In the context of this chapter, the term "career meta-competencies" refers to a set of psychological career resources which are critical in career development. Psychological career resources include personal attributes and abilities such as behavioral adaptability, self-knowledge, career orientation awareness, sense of purpose, self-esteem and emotional literacy, which allow individuals to be self-sufficient learners and to manage their own careers in a businesslike manner (Briscoe and Hall, *Organisational Dynamics,*28:37–52, 1999; Coetzee, *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology,*34:32–41, 2008; Coetzee and Roythorne-Jacobs, *Career counselling and guidance in the workplace: A manual for career practitioners*, 2nd edn., 2012; Hall and Chandler, *Journal of Organizational Behaviour,*26:155–176, 2005; Herr et al., *Career guidance and counselling through the lfespan*, 2004). People who possess a wide range of psychological career resources are generally better able to adapt to changing career circumstances and tend to demonstrate higher levels of employability (Fugate et al., *Journal of Vocational Behaviour,*65:14–38, 2004; Griffen and Hesketh, *Australian Journal of Psychology,*55:65–73, 2005). Zinser (*Journal of Vocational Behaviour,*65:14–38, 2003) states that employability attributes include a range of personality attributes as well as work-related skills. Personality attributes generally include displaying emotional intelligence, high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence, personality preferences and proactive career-related behavioral attributes (Potgieter, *The development of a career meta-competency model for sustained employability*, 2012). This chapter discusses a psychological profile constituting the psychological career meta-competencies and attributes required for sustaining employability in a more turbulent and uncertain occupational world.

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Career Development and Employability

The world of work is ever changing. People entering the contemporary world of work are faced with a number of challenges, such as decreased employment opportunities, diminished job security, fast-changing technology and an increasing personal responsibility for keeping up with an evolving body of knowledge in their field of specialisation, keeping their skills updated, and sustaining their employability by adopting an attitude of continuous learning (Coetzee 2012; Marock 2008; Pool and Sewell 2007).

Marock (2008) highlights the importance of developing employability skills for school leavers and graduates in order to help them to progress in their careers. Many organizations are concerned with their employees' employability these days. Anyone who wishes to gain an advantage at the organizational and individual level has a responsibility to develop and enhance his or her skills in order to increase and sustain one's personal employability (Marock 2008). De la Harpe et al. (2000) voice the concern that graduates who enter the workplace do not have the necessary interpersonal skills. Harvey and Bowers-Brown (2004) express the same concern in stating that there is a growing need for a psycho-social model of personality and employability attributes in order to prepare people more effectively for the world of work. Cranmer (2006) found that employability skills can be taught effectively. It is suggested that all career counseling and development interventions include employability-enhancing content in order to increase people's employability skills at an early stage and therefore improve their chances of obtaining employment.

According to the cognitive social learning paradigm, and in particular the cognitive-affective theories of Mischel (1999), Rotter (1982) and Worline et al. (2002), behavior is shaped by personal dispositions in conjunction with a person's specific cognitive and affective processes, which may include perceptions of and feelings about themselves in a particular situation that is meaningful to them. Personality traits, together with the situation, predict the behavior of an individual (Coetzee 2005). However, personal qualities (such as people's beliefs about what they can do, their plans and strategies for enacting behaviors, their expectations of success, their self-concept, their positive and negative feelings about themselves, their needs based on their personality preferences and their self-regulating strategies) will override their behavior in certain circumstances (Coetzee 2005).

Kerka (1998) suggests that career development is influenced by various factors, such as personality and self-esteem. Industrial psychologists, human resource practitioners and career practitioners should therefore consider these factors when providing career counseling. In addition, many researchers are increasingly emphasizing the importance of emotional intelligence in influencing career behaviour

which, in turn, influences employability. Emotional intelligence could therefore also influence employability (Brown et al. 2003a; Lambert et al. 2010; Pool and Sewell 2007). Moreover, the new relationship between the worker and the world of work has created the need to develop career interventions that help individuals to take ownership of their careers and be proactive agents in managing their careers (Baruch 2004; Coetzee 2008; Fugate et al. 2004). In addition, individuals need to reflect about their career meta-competencies as key psychological resources in sustaining their employability (Coetzee 2008; Savickas et al. 2009). Although employability does not guarantee employment, it increases the likelihood of being able to embark on a suitable career (Clarke 2008). Currently, the question is no longer "what is employabilty" but rather "how to manage employability". Supporting individuals' employability by means of appropriate and relevant career counseling frameworks may prove to be a powerful tool to balance the needs of the organization and the individual within the current labour market context (Clarke 2008). Traditional models of career counseling are therefore no longer adequate. New career counseling models need to be incorporated into the career counseling process to help individuals to sustain their employability in the contemporary employment context (Richardson 2002).

The question that now arises is what will such a model look like? What personality and employability attributes should be included in such a model?

Personality Attributes

According to Sharf (1997), various career development theories are derived from theories of personality. Analytical psychology emphasises balance, harmony and wholeness as the aim of personality development. Jung (1921, 1959) states that people differ in the way they react to the external world. Quenk (1996) bears this out by postulating that people use psychological energy differently; they gather information differently, they come to conclusions in a different manner and relate differently to the outside world. People therefore use their minds differently as well.

The concept of personality preferences seems to be partly useful for explaining people's career behavior. Keirsy and Bates (1984) describe personality type as the innate preference of human behavior which dictates individual beliefs and behavior. Myers (1987) argues that an environment that encourages and supports individual innate capacities or preferences supports healthy development. Conversely, a climate that stresses conformity and rejects nonconformity thwarts the process of personality development. This thwarting process results in a lack of confidence in one's own personality type. The resulting negative influence on one's self-esteem results in low self-esteem (Pidduck 1988).

Personality type theory explains individuals' differences in learning and communication styles, conflict management and interpersonal relating styles. The psychological type theory of Myers (1987) explains how the use of four mental functions (sensing, intuition, thinking, feeling) and attitudes (extraversion-introversion, perceiving-judging) can aid a person's personality development and growth. As previously mentioned, Quenk (1996) states that a person can use all four mental functions effectively, but anyone tends to develop and overuse a dominant mental functioning

according to his or her personality type preference. In the process they neglect the development of the other four mental functions which might influence their ability to demonstrate emotional intelligence. Cole et al. (2009) found that personality plays a role in the selection of an employee. They also recognize that a relationship exists between personality preferences and employability. Higgs (2001) suggests that people could develop their weaker personality function and thereby deliver more rounded behavior, which could possibly influence employability. It is therefore evident that personality preferences should play a role in a person's employability and therefore be included in a career meta-competency model used during a career counseling or career development intervention.

Negative personality development may result in low self-esteem. Baumeister (1997, p. 681) defines self-concept as the sum of the inferences that an individual has drawn about himself or herself. These inferences generally refer to an individual's personality traits and schemas, but they could include an understanding of social roles and relationships. He also notes that the term self-esteem refers to the evaluative dimension of the self-concept. Greenwalk et al. (1998) corroborate this in their article in which they say that self-esteem is an essential characteristic and one of the most important elements of the self-concept. Sherman et al. (2009, p. 745) describe self-esteem as the process by which individuals sustain a sense of self-integrity, which includes a perception of themselves as globally moral, sufficient and effective when they confront threats to a valued self-image. According to Kim et al. (2010), one can know oneself both from the inside and from the outside. Baumeister (1997) found that self-esteem has two sources: One is the evaluative feedback that a person receives from others (however distorted it may be), and the other is the direct experience of failure or success.

According to Maslow (1970), people have a need for a positive self-esteem (to feel good about themselves), a need for esteem from others and a need for belongingness (that is, a sense that others also feel positive about them and that they are accepted by the group). To develop a positive self-esteem, individuals strive for achievement and mastery of their sociocultural environment (Coetzee 2005). In order to be accepted by the group and gain respect from others, they behave in ways intended to gain them recognition, appreciation and prestige. People tend to feel confident, competent, strong, useful and needed by others when their self-esteem needs have been satisfied. On the other hand, when an individual's need for self-esteem has not been satisfied, he or she tends to feel inferior, anxious, worried, depressed, weak and helpless.

The humanistic perspectives of Rogers (1980) and Maslow (1970) place particular emphasis on the motivational aspect of self-esteem and positive self-regard. People conform to social expectations in order to receive the approval of others, thereby enhancing self-esteem. They associate with others selectively, choosing those who will provide or confirm a positive self-evaluation. Self-esteem is enhanced when a person is able to draw favourable comparisons with other people or with an ideal self, and also when the person is functioning effectively in his or her physical or social environment (Battle 1992; Damon 1995; Gecas and Schwalbe 1983; Hewitt 2002; Owens 1995; Rosenberg 1979, 1981; Sherman et al. 2009; Swann 1996; Wills 1981).

Brockner and Guare (1983) and Kerka (1998) found that a person with a low self-esteem is more likely to perform poorly and achieve less than a person with a high self-esteem. Baumeister (1997) also found that people with a low self-esteem do not seem to have a clear sense of who and what they are and are not confident of succeeding at anything they try. It therefore seems as if people with a low self-esteem would be less likely to have well-developed employability skills than people with a high self-esteem. Brockner and Gaure (1983) and Smoll et al. (1993) found that low self-esteem can be altered through training. It is therefore evident that self-esteem should play a role in a person's employability and therefore be included in a career meta-competency model used during a career counseling or career development intervention.

Brown et al. (2003) found that students with a higher self-esteem display a higher emotional intelligence. They also found that when people possess a high emotional intelligence and self-esteem, they are more likely to perform well in career-related tasks (which could include higher employability skills). Most career practitioners have difficulty with the more complex issues of career counselling such as locus of control, identity formation and emotion (Emmerling and Cherniss 2003). If emotional intelligence is introduced into the counselling relationship, clients can be helped to understand their own emotions and the way their emotions could influence their behavior and career-related choices. Emotional intelligence represents a set of dispositional attributes (such as self-awareness, emotional management, self-motivation, empathy and relationship management) for monitoring one's own feelings, beliefs and internal states and those of others in order to provide useful information to guide one's own thinking and actions and those of others (Day 2000; Goleman 1995, Salovey and Mayer 1990; Wong and Law 2002). Salovey and Mayer (1990, p. 185) describe emotional intelligence as the extent to which individuals are able to tap into their feeling and emotions as a source of energy to guide their thinking and actions. Salovey and Mayer (1990) noted that emotional intelligence consists of four interrelated abilities which include perceiving emotions, using emotions to facilitate thoughts, understanding emotions and managing emotions to enhance personal growth.

According to Brown et al. (2003) and Young et al. (1997), the action theory approach to career development explains the role of emotion in career building. According to these authors, emotion motivates and energizes actions and behavior. Ashkanasy and Daus (2005), Dulewicz and Higgs (1999) and Locke (2005) state that emotional intelligence is a tool for predicting behavior and is something that develops over a person's whole life span, but that it can be enhanced through training and, as Jeager (2003) states, through teaching and learning in the educational context. Pool and Sewell (2007) and Yorke and Knight (2004) also recognize emotional intelligence as an important attribute of an individual's employability. It is therefore evident that emotional intelligence should play a role in a person's employability and therefore be included in a career meta-competency model used during career counseling and development interventions.

Employability Attributes

Bezuidenhout (2010), in collaboration with Coetzee (2010), developed an employ-ability attributes framework specifically for students in the South African higher education context. This framework consists of eight core career-related employabil-ity attributes which are important for increasing an individual's likelihood of securing and sustaining employment opportunities (Bezuidenhout and Coetzee 2011). The following Table 3.1 outlines the eight dimensions identified by Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2011).

A Career Meta-competency Model for Sustained Employability

Personality attributes (that is, personality preferences, self-esteem and emotional intelligence) and employability attributes should theoretically be considered for a career meta-competency model to be used in career counseling and development interventions (Potgieter 2012).

Figure 3.1 provides a conceptual overview of the four constructs and how they relate to each other on a theoretical level. Potgieter (2012) found that individu-als' personality preferences, self-esteem and emotional intelligence are significantly related to their employability attributes. Theoretically, the sustained employabil-ity of an individual is dependent on the development and demonstration of personal career-related attributes (career meta-competencies) that constitute the employability construct (Cranmer 2006; Tomlinson 2007).

It is important, however, to explore the relationship between the subelements of each of the four relevant constructs as this might also give career practitioners meaningful guidance in terms of the relationship between the various constructs and therefore provide an indication of the necessary interventions to facilitate the enhancement of employability attributes. Such guidance can assist career practition-ers to help individuals to develop their less developed personality preferences and enhance their self-esteem and employability attributes in order to improve their em-ployability as a desired outcome. As a further aid to career practitioners, research has attempted to develop a psychological career meta-competency profile consisting of personality and employability attributes important for individuals to sustain their employability in the contemporary employment context.

Table 3.2 illustrates the psychological profile made up of an individual's per-sonality attributes (personality preferences, self-esteem and emotional intelligence) and employability attributes. Because the career meta-competency model constitutes psychological career-related attributes or meta-competencies, they are described in terms of cognitive, affective, conative and interpersonal behavioral attributes.

**Table 3.1** Overview of employability attributes. (Coetzee 2011, p. 10)

Employability attributes	Description	Skills and attributes (adapted from Bezuidenhout 2010)
Career self-management	An individual's ability to sustain employability through constant learning as well as career planning and management efforts (Schreuder and Coetzee 2011)	Ability to reflect one's career aspirations as well as a clear sense of what one wants to achieve in one's career Ability to recognise the skills needed to be successful in one's career as well as the actions to take in order to achieve career goals Having the confidence and determination to pursue and achieve set career goals Continuously engage in development activities to achieve career goals
Cultural competence	The metacognitive ability to understand, act and interface successfully within a diverse cultural environment (Bezuidenhout 2010)	Knowing the customs of other cultures as well as understanding their beliefs and values Having the confidence to communicate interculturally, as well as finding it easy and enjoyable Being able to initiate and maintain relationships with individuals from diverse cultures
Self-efficacy	An individual's perception of the extent of difficulty of career-related or performance related tasks which they believe they are going to attempt as well as their perception of how well they will be able to execute the required actions in order to deal with those tasks. In addition, self-efficacy refers to the extent to which their perception will persist, despite obstacles (Schreuder and Coetzee 2011) Self-efficacy also refers to the estimate that an individual makes of his or her ability to cope, perform and thrive (Bezuidenhout 2010)	Functioning independently of others Making one's one decisions Having the confidence to succeed at one's goals and efforts Being persistent with challenges Enjoying the discovery of creative new solutions Keeping oneself up to date with the newest developments in one's job and career

Table 3.1 (continued)

Employability attributes	Description	Skills and attributes (adapted from Bezuidenhout 2010)
Career resilience	An individual's ability to adapt to changing situations by accepting job and organisational changes, looking forward to working with different and new people, being willing to take risks as well as having self-confidence (Schreuder and Coetzee 2011) Bezuidenhout (2010) describes career resilience as a personal disposition that facilitates a high level of adaptability, self-confidence, competence as well as confidence irrespective of difficult career situations	High self-regard for own personal qualities Open to feedback from others with regard to strengths and weaknesses Self-confidence in successfully identifying one's accomplishments Open to (and able to proactively adapt to) changes in one's environment
Sociability	The ability to be open to, establish and maintain social contacts, as well as utilise formal and informal networks for the benefit of one's career (Bezuidenhout 2010)	Building a network of friends who could advance one's career Using networks in order to search for and find new job opportunities Actively seeking feedback from other people in order to progress in one's career Being willing to take risks Having self-confidence Adapting to various social situations by changing nonverbal behaviour within different sociocultural situations
Entrepreneurial orientation	An individual's preference for innovation and creativity, a tendency to take risks, a need for achievement, a tolerance for uncertainty as well as a preference for autonomy in the exploitation of opportunities within the career environment and the creation of something valuable (Bezuidenhout 2010)	Being interested in and continuously undertaking new business opportunities Being open to new ideas Having a positive attitude towards the implications of changes within one's workplace or studies Being comfortable in uncertain situations Accepting responsibility for the success or failure of one's career

Table 3.1 (continued)

Employability attributes	Description	Skills and attributes (adapted from Bezuidenhout 2010)
Proactivity	An individual's tendency to engage in active role orientations that lead to future-oriented and self-initiated action in order to change oneself and one's situation (Bezuidenhout 2010)	Taking responsibility for one's decisions Setting challenging targets for oneself Identifying opportunities before others do Improving on one's knowledge and skills in order to ensure career progress Adapting to changing situations Persisting in spite of difficult career circumstances
Emotional literacy	An individual's ability to use emotions adaptively as well as the quality of an individual's ability to read, understand and control own and other people's emotions (Bezuidenhout 2010; Coetzee 2010)	Understanding one's own emotions and feelings Managing one's own mood and emotions Identifying others' emotions Defusing an emotionally explosive situation Cheering sad people up
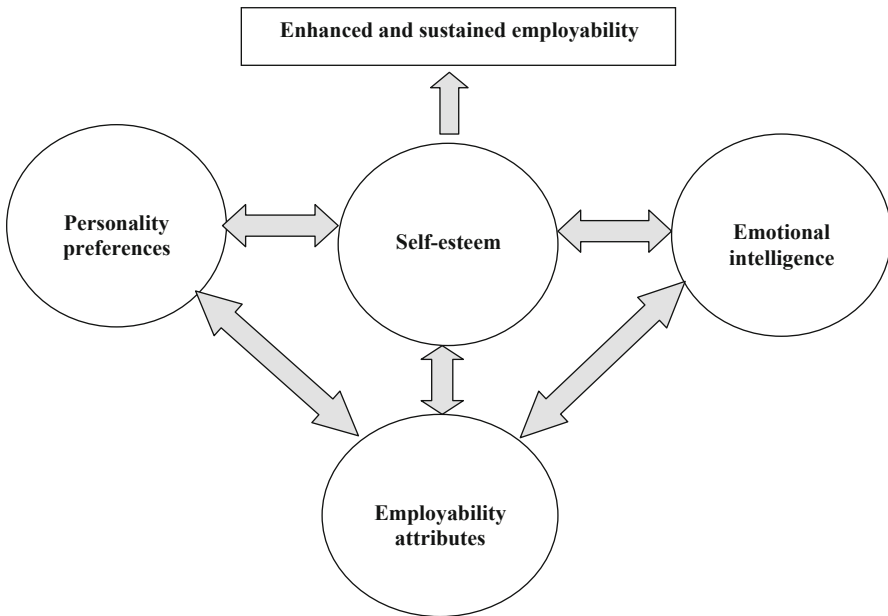
Fig. 3.1 Hypothesized relationship between the constructs. (Potgieter 2012)

Cole et al. (2009) and Kerka (1998) found a positive relationship between personality preferences and employability. Pool and Sewell (2007) found that employability attributes (such as self-esteem) relate significantly to personality attributes and employability. Bandura (1997) explained that individuals' self-esteem influences the way in which they think, feel, motivate themselves and act. It is furthermore suggested that individuals who feel and think that they can achieve anything are more likely to succeed in whatever occupation they choose than are people who do not have a high self-esteem (Yorke and Knight 2004). The development of a healthy, high self-esteem therefore relates positively to employability (Coetzee 2008).

Brown et al. (2003) found that students with a higher self-esteem display a higher emotional intelligence. They furthermore found that when a person possesses a high emotional intelligence and self-esteem, he or she is more likely to perform well in career-related tasks (which could include higher employability skills). Bezuidenhout (2010) and Coetzee and Beukes (2010) found that career self-management and emotional literacy are important career-related attributes. Jeager (2003) found that emotional intelligence correlates positively with employability. It therefore appears that Ashkanasy and Daus (2002) recognize the relationship between emotional intelligence and employability attributes. Pool and Sewell (2007) and Yorke and Knight (2007) also recognize emotional intelligence as an important attribute of an individual's employability.

On a **cognitive level**, individuals' personality preferences (Cole et al. 2009; Higgs 2001; Kerka 1998), general self-esteem (Bandura 1999; Coetzee 2008; Pool and Sewell 2007; Yorke and Knight 2004), perceptions of their emotions (Ashkanasy

Table 3.2 Psychological profile reflecting personality preferences, self-esteem, emotional intelligence and employability attributes. (Potgieter 2012)

Psychological dimension	Career Meta-Competencies			
	Personality attributes			Employability attributes
	Personality preferences	Self-esteem	Emotional intelligence	
Cognitive	Extraversion introversion Sensing intuition Thinking feeling Judging perception	General self-esteem	Perception of emotion	Career self-management Self-efficacy
Affective		Personal self-esteem	Managing own emotion Utilisation of emotion	Emotional literacy
Conative				Career resilience Entrepreneurial orientation Proactivity
Interpersonal		Social/peer-related self-esteem	Managing others' emotion	Cultural competence Sociability

and Daus 2002; Brown et al. 2003; Bezuidenhout 2010; Coetzee and Beukes 2010; Jeager 2003; Yorke and Knight 2007), career self-management (Bezuidenhout 2010; Coetzee and Beukes 2010) and self-efficacy (Bezuidenhout 2010) may influence their ability to create employment opportunities and sustain their employability. Career development support practices and career counseling should focus on creating self-awareness to make it possible to recognize (and improve) on underdeveloped personality types. Individuals should also be assisted within these interventions to enhance their general self-esteem and engage in managing their own careers. Such interventions could possibly help individuals to enhance their employability attributes on a cognitive level.

On an **affective level**, individuals' personal self-esteem (Coetzee 2008; Pool and Sewell 2007; Yorke and Knight 2004), management of their own emotions, utilization of emotions and emotional literacy (Ashkanasy and Daus 2002; Brown et al. 2003; Bezuidenhout 2010; Coetzee and Beukes 2010; Jeager 2003; Yorke and Knight 2007) may influence their ability to adapt to changing situations and therefore sustain their employability. Career development support practices and career counseling should help individuals to gain personal insight. This could enable individuals to improve on their personal self-esteem and not only to manage their own emotions but also to utilize their emotions appropriately within the work context. Having a high personal self-esteem and ability to manage and utilise emotions could prove valuable to individuals in obtaining and sustaining their employability.

On a **conative level**, individuals' career resilience, entrepreneurial orientation and proactivity may influence their ability to adapt to and welcome organizational changes, willingness to take risks and engage in creative problem solving in order to improve themselves, their situation or their employability (Bezuidenhout 2010; Coetzee 2012). These attributes may assist individuals to obtain employment and thereby enhance their employability. Career development support practices and career counseling could possibly help individuals to improve their confidence so that they become more willing to take risks and try creative solutions to problems when confronted with changing situations within the new world of work.

On an **interpersonal level**, individuals' social/peer-related self-esteem (Bandura 1997; Coetzee 2008; Pool and Sewell 2007; Yorke and Knight 2004), management of others' emotions (Ashkanasy and Daus 2002; Brown et al. 2003; Bezuidenhout 2010; Coetzee and Beukes 2010; Jeager 2003; Yorke and Knight 2007), cultural competence and sociability (Bezuidenhout 2010; Coetzee 2012) may influence their ability to interact and network with others. Effective interaction and networking may create employment opportunities for individuals and thereby enhance their employability. Career development support practices and career counseling could assist individuals to read and understand the emotions of others (in order to respond appropriately to opportunities) as well as to communicate and connect with people from other cultures or backgrounds. It should be remembered that the new world of work incorporates very diverse cultures.

Potgieter (2012) conducted an empirical investigation into the statistical interrelationship between the personality attributes construct variables (personality preferences, self-esteem and emotional intelligence) and the employabiltiy attributes construct variables in a sample employed in a typical South African organizational context. Her study revealed that, apart from the Extraverted preference, personality preferences were not significantly associated with or related to the participants' self-esteem, emotional intelligence or employability attributes. A significant relationship was found between extraversion and self-esteem. This suggests that extraverted individuals may tend to display higher levels of self-esteem. They would probably display a high sense of psychological well-being, have high self-acceptance and have a sense of belonginess within groups. This finding might be explained by the fact that extraverted individuals are more outgoing and comfortable within groups, which is not only a reflection of the fact that not only do they display a high self-esteem but they also develop a high self-esteem during interaction with other people. These results corraborate findings by Baumeister (1997) and Bullock-Yowell et al. (2011), who also found a significant relationship between extraversion as a personality preference and self-esteem.

Participants with an extraverted preference also seem to display higher levels of emotional intelligence. This suggests that they would probably be able to manage their own and others' emotions more effectively and be able to utilise their emotions appropriately. Extraverted individuals tend to interact with people more frequently and may therefore be better able to deal with others' emotions more appropriately as well as use their own emotions during an interaction with others. These findings are in line with the findings of Ciarrochi et al. (2000), George (2000) and Higgs (2001) who also found a number of significant positive relationships between personality and emotional intelligence.

It further appears that extraverted individuals are likely to display higher employability attributes than introverted types, which suggests that they might be able to understand and interact with diverse cultures, be able to adapt to changing circumstances, be open to maintaining and establishing social contacts and engage in active role orientations. Extraverted individuals tend to be more confident in interacting with people from other cultures; they prefer focusing their energy on the outer world and are therefore able to adapt to the changing outer world more effortlessly and might be more confident about enaging in active role orientations. Bullock-Yowell et al. (2011) and Cole et al. (2009) also found personality preferences to be significant related to employability.

Potgieter's (2012) study also revealed a significant relationship between self-esteem and emotional intelligence. This suggests that participants with a high sense of psychological well-being, who function self-efficaciously in terms of the cultural criteria of sucess and happiness, who have a high sense of belonginess and acceptance and a high self-regard will also have a high and accurate perception of their emotions, be able to manage their own emotions and those of others and effectively utilise their emotions appropriately. This relationship might exist because participants with a high self-esteem seemed more confident about expressing their emotions, interacting with others and managing their emotions as well as utlising their own emotions during interaction with others. These findings confirm the findings of Brown et al. (2003), Di Fabio and Kenny (2011), Ciarrochi et al. (2000) and Schutte et al. (2002), who also reported significant positive relationships between self-esteem and emotional intelligence.

Self-esteem showed an overall high relationship with employability attributes. Therefore participants who have a high self-efficacy and emotional awareness might likely be more confident about displaying employability attributes. They might therefore be more confident and effective in the management of their careers, be culturally competent, have a high level of self-efficacy, display career resilience, be sociable, display an orientation towards enterpreneurship, be proactive and have a high emotional literacy. This relationship might be due to the fact that individuals with a high self-esteem appear to be more confident about socialising with others and interacting with people from a diverse culture as well as being more confident about taking risks and engaging in entrepreneurial activities. Briscoe and Hall (1999), Coetzee and Roythorne-Jacobs (2012), Hall and Chandler (2005), Herr et al. (2004), Van der Velde and Van den Berg (2003), as well as Weng and McElroy (2010) also reported a significant relationship between self-esteem and employability.

The highest overall association was found between emotional intelligence and employability attributes. All emotional intelligence subscales (perception of emotion, management of own emotions, management of others' emotions and utilization of emotions) were significantly associated with employability attributes (Potgieter 2012). This suggests that participants with a high emotional intelligence might be more effective in career planning efforts, understand and act effectively in diverse cultures, have an accurate approximation of their ability and capacity to complete tasks, adapt to changing circumstances, establish and maintain social relationships, take risks, engage in active role orientations and use their emotions adaptively. The

observed relationship between the variables might be due to the fact that emotionally intelligent participants seem to be better able to manage and use their emotions to plan their careers, interact with other people appropriately, establish social networks that they can utilise in finding career opportunites and handle their emotions during changing circumstances and risk taking. Ashkanasy and Daus (2005), Brown et al. (2003), Dulewicz and Higgs (1999), Locke (2005), Pool and Sewell (2007), Puffer (2011) as well as Yorke and Knight (2007) also reported significant relationships between emotional intelligence and employability. Salovey et al. (2008) also emphasized the importance of using conative, interpersonal, affective and cognitive abilities when displaying employability attributes.

Based on the statistical relationship between the personality attributes construct variables (personality preferences, self-esteem and emotional intelligence) and the employabiltiy attributes construct variables, Potgieter (2012) further assessed the fit between the empirically manifested structural equation model and the theoretically hypothesized model. The structural equation model indicated that the theoretically hypothesized career meta-competency model has a marginal (and acceptable) fit with the empirically manifested structural model. The model fit revealed that self-esteem and emotional intelligence were contributing most significantly towards the personality attributes construct. Only career self-management, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation and proactivity were included in the employability attributes construct. A significant positive relationship was found between personality attributes and employability attributes. The structural equation model highlighted the importance of self-esteem and emotional intelligence as important attributes to enable individuals to develop the confidence to demonstrate the employabiltiy attributes needed for sustained employability. Schreuder and Coetzee (2011) also noted that individuals could sustain employability by the optimal use of both occupation- related attributes and career meta-competencies. The empirical career meta-competency model can therefore be utilized in a career counselling context in order to enhance an individual's career meta-competencies in order to develop the attributes required to sustain employability.

It is interesting to note that cognitive, affective, conative and interpersonal psychological dimensions are found to be significant and important in a career meta-competency model. Cognitive, interpersonal and affective psychological dimensions contributed most to the personality attributes construct, suggesting that individuals should be developed on a cognitive, interpersonal and affective level in order to enhance their personality attributes. Employability attributes included in the model mostly relate to the conative psychological dimension, suggesting that individuals should be developed on a conative (motivational) level in order to increase their employability attributes. Hartung (2011) also noted that cognitive, affective, conative and interpersonal psychological dimensions are important in career development practices.

The following career meta-competencies (as shown in Table 3.3 below) are therefore included in the proposed career meta-competency model for sustained employability.

Based on the results, the psychological model (as displayed in Fig. 3.2) can be adopted during career counselling and career development interventions. In order to

Table 3.3 Career meta-competencies for sustained employability. (Potgieter 2012)

Psychological dimension	Career meta-competencies		
	Self-esteem	Emotional intelligence	Employability attributes
Cognitive	General self-esteem	Perception of emotion	Career self-management
Affective	Personal self-esteem	Managing own emotion	
Conative			Career resilience Entrepreneurial orientation Proactivity
Interpersonal	Social/peer-related self-esteem	Managing others' emotion	Sociability
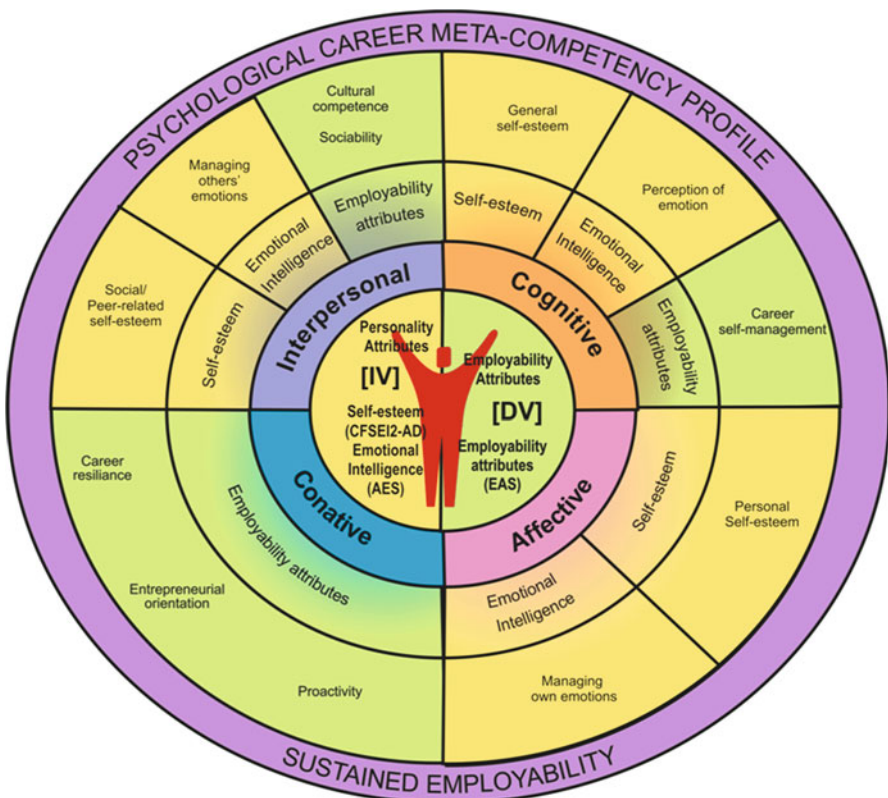
Fig. 3.2 Career meta-competency model for sustained employability. (Potgieter 2012)

increase individuals' confidence in displaying the employabilty attributes (required for sustained employability), career practitioners, human resource practitioners and industrial psychologists should consider developing the following behavioral elements in their career counselling and development interventions.

On a **cognitive level**, interventions should assist individuals to enhance their general self-esteem. An awareness of emotions should be developed along with individuals' ability to manage their own careers. On an **affective level**, individuals should be assisted to enhance their personal self-esteem and to manage own emotions. Puffer (2011) points out that recently the role of emotion is often neglected during career counseling and development interventions. Human resource practitioners, industrial psychologists and career practitioners should help individuals to become aware of their own emotions, understand their own emotions and the emotions of others and to respond appropriately or react to their own emotions and those of others, thereby increasing individuals' emotional intelligence. On a **conative level**, individuals should increase their career resilience, entrepreneurial orientation and ability to act proactively. On an **interpersonal level**, individuals' social self-esteem should be enhanced, as should their abilty to manage others' emotions and be more sociable within a working environment

Based on the literature review and the study done by Potgieter (2012), it seems as if general self-esteem, social self-esteem, personal self-esteem, perception of emotions, managing own emotions and managing others' emotions should be developed in order to increase the participants' employability attributes. Furthermore, career self-management, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation and proactivity seem to be the most important attributes to consider in career counseling and career development. These competencies and attributes appear to be important to develop to help individuals to proactively manage their career development and sustain their employability in the contemporary world of work.

Practical Implications for Career Counseling and Guidance

Sustainable employability refers not merely to obtaining a job, but to remaining employable over the long term. To achieve this, individuals need a broader collection of attributes (such as, for example, those suggested by means of the psychological career profile discussed in this chapter) in order to be successful in their career development and their work (Potgieter 2012; Watts 2006). Career counseling can be effective in assisting individuals to develop the necessary skills to enter the world of work and to boost their careers and employability levels (Byrne et al. 2008). Career counseling and development activities can be undertaken by people who are on the verge of embarking on their careers as well as those who are already working in the field and simply want to engage in continuous professional development (Bimrose 2006).

As previously discussed, the nature of work and careers is changing, and hence the essence of career counseling must change as well. One needs to identify and understand one's own temperament and the strenghts and weaknesses of one's psychological career meta-competencies and employablity attributes as a key to success in the new world of work (Bridges 1994; Potgieter 2012; Tett et al. 1991). The enhancement of employability attributes should be undertaken by various stakeholders

(such as industrial psychologists, human resource practitioners and career practitioners) working in close collaboration. These stakeholders (specializing in career guidance) can play a vital role in assisting individuals to understand, develop and direct their employability skills. Clarke (2008) also suggests that a developmental framework should be introduced during the career counseling sessions in order to assist individuals to develop the tools and competencies necessary to manage their own employability.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed personality preferences, self-esteem, emotional intelligence (as a set of composite personality attributes) and employability attributes and proposed a career meta-competency model for sustained employability that can be used during career counseling and development interventions. It is concluded that these competencies and attributes need to be developed to help the individuals to proactively manage their career development and sustain their employability in the contemporary world of work.

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Chapter 4
Adaptability in Action: Using Personality, Interest, and Values Data to Help Clients Increase Their Emotional, Social, and Cognitive Career Meta-capacities

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Abstract   Career adaptability encompasses the attitudes, behaviors, and competencies that people use "in fitting themselves into work that suits them" (Savickas, *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work*, Hoboken, Wiley, p. 45, 2005). Savickas (*The Career Development Quarterly,* 45:247–259, 1997) proposed adaptability as a unifying concept to Super's (*The psychology of careers*. New York: Harper & Row, 1957; *Career development in the 1980s: Theory and practice*, pp. 28–42, Springfield: Thomas, 1981; *Career choice and development,* pp. 197–261 San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990) life-span, life-space theory, essentially integrating the three major perspectives that Super elaborated: development, self, and context. Career adaptability includes four specific dimensions: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. Career counselors can use these four dimensions dynamically within the counseling process to help clients better adapt their needs and capacities to different constraints imposed by the work environment (Savickas et al., *Journal of Vocational Behavior,* 75:239–250, 2009).

In this global, postmodern economy, people currently face a growing number of transitions, wherein they must manage several internal and external challenges of change (Ashford and Taylor, *Research in personnel and human resources management*, pp. 1–39, Greenwich: JAI Press, 1990). The use of a vocational battery that includes personality, interest, intelligence or aptitude, and values instruments in career counseling may help clients to identify their strengths and weaknesses, their emotional skill level, and increase their self-knowledge and career decision-making abilities (Rossier, *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance,* 5:175–188, 2005) in order to use this knowledge and these skills more appropriately and effectively in the future. Sharing results from

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clients' personality, interests, and values inventories with them and showing them how their individual profiles have helped and hindered their career performance in the past helps them to build further strengths. Additionally, career counselors can use this data to help clients improve upon their social, emotional, and cognitive meta-capacities in order to become more adaptable individuals, capable of altering their cognitions, behaviors, and affect (Fugate et al., *Journal of Vocational Behavior,* 65:14–38, 2004) to more easily enter—or reenter—the job market.

In this chapter, we will apply theoretical constructs to a case study from our consultation service. We aim to highlight, through the exploration of theory and practice, how career counselors can help clients become more adaptable and build their social, emotional, and cognitive meta-capacities through a brief career counseling intervention.

Keywords Career adaptability · Interests · Personality · Values · Emotional career meta-capacities · Social career meta-capacities · Cognitive career meta-capacities · Career counseling · Emotional intelligence · Employability · Career construction theory· Happenstance theory

Introduction

For many years, trait-and-factor theories have dominated the career counseling literature, as career counseling has consisted in helping clients match their personal traits and interests to job market demands to navigate school-to-work and work-to-work career transitions. This type of matching depends largely on stability in the labor market context and in people's behavior (Krumboltz and Worthington 1999; Savickas et al. 2009). However, such labor market stability rarely exists in today's economic climate. Additionally, "human behavior is not only a function of the person but also of the environment" (Savickas et al. 2009, p. 240), rendering human behavior even less predictable. Savickas et al. (2009) implored career counselors to reconsider their assumptions regarding the theories and techniques they used in the past in order to better promote life-long learning, flexibility, and adaptability as sustainable concepts in career counseling in this postmodern, global economy. Understanding adaptability and career construction concepts and taking into account clients' social, emotional, and cognitive meta-capacities may provide career counselors with some solid theoretical foundations for helping clients mitigate career counseling and life designing challenges.

In this chapter, we explore how these key concepts and theories that support them, such as career construction (Savickas 1997, 2005), employability (Fugate et al. 2004), emotional intelligence (Mayer and Salovey 1997; Petrides and Furnham 2003), and happenstance learning theory (Krumboltz 1996, 2009), may be useful for helping clients gain insight into their current career and personal situations; how career counseling data from personality, interest, and values assessments may be used to help career counselors formulate working hypotheses and stimulate client insight;

and how to help clients develop their social, emotional, and cognitive abilities and their career meta-capacities. Ultimately, developing these meta-capacities, which is the capability to more efficiently use their abilities, will help clients to become more adaptable individuals who are more capable of "fitting themselves into work that suits them" (Savickas 2005, p. 45). The major goal of career counseling is helping clients "learn to take actions to achieve more satisfying career and personal lives—not to make a single career decision" (Krumboltz 2009, p. 135). We illustrate this chapter with a case study from our career counseling service to show how theory and practice inform each other to further clients' career counseling goals and build their career meta-capacities within the life-design frame of reference.

Integrative Approach to Career Counseling

Several career counseling scholars (e.g., Heppner and Heppner 2003; Savickas et al. 2009) have called for more holistic approaches that go beyond information giving and testing in session. According to the Life Design International Research Group, a collaborative of career counseling scholars primarily from the US and Europe, "the life design model aims to help individuals articulate and enact a career story that supports adaptive and flexible responses to developmental tasks, vocational traumas, and occupational transitions" (Savickas et al. 2009, p. 245). Through life design, Savickas et al. (2009) suggested that building clients' abilities and their capacities to use them—and, as we would further argue, their meta-capacities– to prepare for and adapt to changing work environments would help clients execute career plans in their personal and professional contexts. Building emotional, social, or cognitive meta-capacities begins with acquiring and more closely examining clients' self-knowledge. Peterson et al. (2002) argued that the process of acquiring self-knowledge involves interpreting past events and reconstructing these interpretations "to fit present events in one's social context" (p. 321).

Life-design interventions rely on clients' self-awareness of their values, attitudes, habits, and identity, in addition to past and present barriers to meeting personal and professional objectives they have encountered in order to construct a fruitful career and life plan; the use of narrative construction is helpful in this process. In composing their stories, clients first chronologically organize salient career and life events, then re-examine these events with their counselors in order to identify, deconstruct, and reconstruct more helpful narratives that unblock personal or professional barriers and open new possibilities for career and personal advancement, but never with the idea of forgetting their past entirely (Savickas 2010). More specifically, life-design interventions aim to increase the five Cs of career construction theory: concern, control, curiosity, confidence, and commitment (Savickas et al. 2009). Adaptability is the pivotal constituent of career construction theory and the unifying concept proposed as an extension to Super's (1957, 1981, 1990) life-span, life-space theory, in which Super took the client's development, self, and context into account. According to Savickas (2005), "Adaptive individuals are conceptualized as: becoming *concerned*

for their future as a worker, increasing personal *control* over their vocational future, displaying *curiosity* by exploring possible selves and future scenarios, and strengthening the *confidence* to pursue their aspirations" (p. 52). *Commitment* refers to clients' broader engagement to their life projects as opposed to one particular job (Savickas et al. 2009).

Krumboltz (2009) agreed with Savickas et al.'s (2009) position, and also wrote about the importance of clients being able to look beyond their immediate career decision to the evolving role of their careers in their lives. Through happenstance learning theory, Krumboltz (1996, 2009) elaborated that human behavior results from a combination of learning experiences from both planned and unplanned situations to which individuals are exposed. As Krumboltz (2009) explained, such situations arise partly as a function the actions that people take or are due, in part, to circumstances completely out of their control. Either way, clients can learn from these situations. Additionally, Krumboltz (2009) suggested ways career counselors can guide clients in controlling unplanned events, such as a chance encounter with someone from a company searching for workers in the client's interest area. Taking advantage of unplanned events includes consciously experiencing the events, taking actions to recognize potential learning opportunities, and initiating further actions to benefit from these events. In the case of a chance encounter, this may mean that the client initiates a conversation with the representative about his or her work skills and experience, then asks for the representative's business card with a promise to send his or her CV by e-mail within the next couple of days.

Although the life design intervention model relies more on co-constructing a client's career and life narratives through stories and activities, and not on test scores and interpretations (Savickas et al. 2009), Krumboltz (2009) argued that career assessments of all kinds (e.g., interest, personality, and beliefs inventories) can be used to promote self-knowledge and learning. We find it helpful to use and discuss clients' test scores directly with them in common language and to incorporate this information into the counselor and client's shared understanding of the client's work and life stories. Rossier (2005) argued that intelligence, interests, and personality concern different aspects of an individual that cannot be substituted for one another. Therefore, a vocational battery combining personality, interests, intelligence or aptitudes, and values inventories may be useful to further describe clients' strengths and weaknesses, to indicate clients' emotional skill level, and to help clients in career decision-making activities.

As Peterson et al. (2002) aptly noted, "Career problem solving and decision making involve the interaction of both affective and cognitive processes" (p. 318). The role of affectivity seems particularly salient in the career counseling process, considering the current changing professional landscape. People face a growing number of horizontal and vertical transitions, and frequently have to manage several internal and external challenges of change (Ashford and Taylor 1990) in which they have to be able to manage and alter their cognitions, behaviors, and affect (Fugate et al. 2004). In this context, fostering and improving adaptive emotional functioning and competences may help clients to cope with current labor market challenges and needs and to handle objective and affective challenges. Recently, several interventions and programs

have been developed to increase adults' employability capacities (e.g., adaptability, among others; e.g., Koen et al. 2013 and to enhance their use of daily emotional abilities and skills, e.g., Dacre Pool and Qualter 2012; Di Fabio and Kenny 2011; Nelis et al. 2011; Slaski and Cartwright 2003). Knowing more about clients' levels of emotional, cognitive, and social skills will help career counselors in designing activities and tailoring discussions to build clients' career meta-capacities and further improve their employability characteristics, career insertion activities, and overall life satisfaction (e.g., Dacre Pool and Qualter 2012; Petrides and Furnham 2003).

Developing Emotional Meta-capacities: The Role of Emotional Intelligence and Employability in Career Counseling

Emotions -and their regulation- are an essential aspect of human experience and development (Izard 1971, 1977; Lazarus 1991), notably concerning individuals' social and physical adaptation to situations. Emotions contribute to determining human reactions, behaviors, and perceptions, and are relevant in all life domains, such as health, well-being, family, and work. Overall, emotional competences, such as expressing and understanding emotions, have important implications for psychological, social, physical, and professional adjustment. In the professional sphere, emotions have direct and indirect impacts on employability competences and several work-related outcomes, such as job satisfaction, work stress, work engagement, and burnout (Boland and Ross 2010; Genoud and Brodard 2012; Joseph and Newman 2010; Lopes et al. 2006). Researchers have found that low neuroticism (which is indicative of higher emotional stability) is positively correlated with job satisfaction and job performance (Judge and Bono 2001), and that emotional regulation is positively associated with higher academic achievement and job performance (Joseph and Newman 2010; Leroy and Grégoire 2007).

In the current literature, several concepts and models related to career functioning, employability, and work outcomes emphasize the role and impact of emotional abilities, such as emotional intelligence and emotional self-esteem. For example, Fugate et al. (2004) highlighted the central role played by affectivity for employability. More specifically, employability is a multidimensional concept that aggregates career identity, personal adaptability, and social and human capital dimensions, and represents a form of work-specific proactive adaptability. The psychosocial construct of employability embodies individual characteristics that foster adaptive cognition, behavior, and affect, and enhance the individual-work interface (Fugate et al. 2004). Meta-cognitive capacities, such as self-talk, self-awareness, and monitoring and controlling the regulation and integration of thought processes (Peterson et al. 2002), can be used to enhance emotional abilities and skills and to transfer these skills into behavioral change. Fugate et al. (2004) underscored the cognitive-affective nature of career planning as being as important as emotional intelligence is to the human capital of employability. It is imperative to stress that employability is conceptualized as enhancing movement between jobs, both between and within organizations

(Morrison and Hall 2002), and increases the possibilities of reemployment. McArdle et al. (2007) found that employability was positively related to job searching in that employable individuals took a more proactive approach to engaging in the labor market and, therefore, finding reemployment six months later.

During the last two decades, researchers have explored the role of emotional abilities and skills, such as emotional intelligence and emotional self-efficacy, in greater detail (Dacre Pool and Qualter 2012). Emotional intelligence (EI), also often labeled "emotional competence" or "emotional skills," (Nelis et al. 2011), is often conceived as an ability or as a trait, and refers to the perception, processing, regulation, and utilization of emotional information (Mayer and Salovey 1997; Petrides and Furnham 2003); EI has an important impact on several life domains, such as physical and mental health, social interaction, and work performance. Overall, EI is negatively associated with psychopathology and positively with general health, well-being-related variables (Malterer et al. 2008; Petrides et al. 2007) and job performance and occupational success, especially for work centered on interpersonal relations, such as nursing (Bachman et al. 2000; Nelis et al. 2011). Emotional self-efficacy (ESE), which is concerned with beliefs in one's emotional functioning capabilities, has recently been shown to be important in relation to academic achievement and graduate employability (Dacre Pool and Qualter 2012).

Based notably on Mayer and Salovey's (1997) model, Nelis et al. (2011) developed an 18-hour intervention to improve EI and other general emotional competences, such as better understanding emotions in order to effectuate change on daily behaviors and thoughts. Moreover, they aimed to facilitate the transfer of these competences in the daily lives of young adults. In this program, they proposed theoretical knowledge and training and exercises, including role-plays, homework, group discussion, and simulation exercises, to enhance specific emotional skills. Nelis et al. (2011) observed that this intervention induced an improvement of several components of EI (e.g., emotional understanding, identification and regulation) that persisted over the long-term (6 months or more). Additionally, these interventions also led to benefits in general health, quality of social functioning, psychological well-being, and objective employability or work success. Di Fabio and Kenny (2011) used an ability-based model of EI to train high school students to overcome decisional problems. In their study, increases in EI abilities and self-reported EI were associated with reductions in students' levels of indecisiveness and career decision difficulties. Dacre Pool and Qualter (2012) implemented an intervention with undergraduate students based on theoretical and practical activities, which included discussion, role-play, and case studies, to foster EI and ESE. Their program addressed emotional perception, understanding, and using and managing emotion. They showed that it was possible to increase ESE and emotion regulation skills (e.g., understanding and managing emotion). Others programs have been implemented to foster other personal resources. Koen et al. (2013) developed a program to increase long-term unemployed individuals' job search activities and attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to employability dimensions. They concluded that reemployment interventions are useful for developing employability, even with people who had been unemployed over a long term.

Overall, current findings support the vision of emotional abilities as a central element for employability and work success and have shown that it is possible to increase young adults' and middle-aged adults' (e.g., Koen et al. 2013) emotional abilities and work-related competences, even after a relatively brief training. Moreover, these changes are persistent and emotion-centered interventions seem to lead to a number of other benefits, such as improvements in general health and well-being, most notably in terms of happiness, mental health, life satisfaction, and the quality of social relationships (Nelis et al. 2011). Although programs to improve these abilities could be particularly pertinent in unemployment circumstances (Nelis et al. 2011), it is necessary to adapt and test these interventions with unemployed workers, and specifically long-term unemployed populations. Such an adapted approach to research and intervention should take several key factors into consideration in order to produce the best results for clients in these and other difficult circumstances.

Practical Implications for Career Counseling and Guidance

Whiston et al. (1998) found individual sessions to be the most effective and efficient career counseling treatment modality. Several key ingredients found in individual career counseling interventions make this type more advantageous for clients and more efficacious in terms of career-specific and non-career-specific outcomes. A "*common factors approach*" (Imel and Wampold 2008, p. 249) that utilizes ingredients key to all forms of psychotherapeutic intervention aids in better understanding the process (Norcross 2005) and is important to the success of the intervention (Imel and Wampold 2008). More specifically, based on meta-analyses (e.g., Brown and Ryan Krane 2000; Ryan 1999), Brown et al. (2003) identified five critical ingredients related to career choice outcomes that were each individually important to include and had even greater effect in combination: workbooks and written exercises, individualized interpretations and feedback, world of work information, modeling, and attention to building support.

Additionally, the importance of tending to individual client characteristics and their impact on relational factors in counseling has been well documented. Masdonati et al. (2009) studied the impact of the working alliance on our individual career counseling intervention. They found that the working alliance was positively correlated with clients' satisfaction with the intervention and their overall satisfaction with life at the end of counseling, and negatively correlated with clients' career indecision. It stands to reason that clients and counselors who agree more on counseling goals and how to achieve them will have a stronger bond (Bordin 1979) and, therefore, will share more pertinent and useful information in session that leads to less career indecision. Consequentially, working alliance moderated Masdonati et al.'s (2009) intervention, such that high working alliance was associated with greater effectiveness. Several authors have called for research and career counseling interventions designed to take clients' individual characteristics into account (e.g., Blustein et al. 2005; Hartung et al. 1998; Whiston and Rahardja 2008). Stauffer et al. (2013) took

personality, career decision-making, satisfaction with life, and satisfaction with the intervention into account in the intervention described below. The intervention was less effective with clients with high neuroticism and low conscientiousness; and older clients, who were typically making a work-to-work transition, had lower satisfaction with life than younger clients making a school-to-work transition.

According to Krumboltz (2009), the success of career counseling lies in "the extent to which clients thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in the real world have changed" (p. 148). To determine the effectiveness of our career counseling intervention over the long term, Perdrix et al. (2012) qualitatively examined clients' career project implementation progress at 6-months post-intervention and 1-year post-intervention via follow-up questionnaires returned by 78 former clients who participated in the study. They found that a great majority of clients had implemented the career project discussed in session one year after career counseling sessions (64 %), some had partially implemented their plans (12 %), some had changed their career choice but successfully implemented this new choice without further advisement (12 %), and others had not advanced in implementing plans discussed in session or any other choice during this time frame (12 %). These real-world behavioral indicators of career project implementation served as encouraging evidence that our career counseling intervention was successful for 88 % of our clients within the year that followed intervention.

Our Career Counseling Intervention

Our intervention consisted of four or five 1-hour face-to-face weekly career counseling sessions that included at least four of the five critical ingredients identified by Brown et al. (2003). Advanced master's-level career counseling students provided guidance and counsel using written exercises, individualized interpretation and feedback, world of work information, and attention to building social and moral support; however, modeling was not systematically present in each client's intervention when an individual need for modeling was not deemed necessary (Masdonati et al. 2009).

Clients paid a fixed price for the intervention according to their student/employment status, irrespective of the number of sessions (four or five) they received. Qualified counselors employed at the university closely supervised student career counselors in their work, as all sessions were viewed live by supervisors and fellow supervisees via closed-circuit video connection. The common viewing of all sessions is very helpful for training purposes, as the student counselor can process information gleaned in session with his or her fellow supervisees and supervisor in order to collectively generate working hypotheses and a myriad of possible solutions and alternatives to clients' presenting problems. Additionally, all sessions were videotaped and intervention from supervisors was directly given, when needed, to ensure that a certain standardization of the intervention was maintained in light of adaptations made to suit individual clients' needs.

The Case of Joanne

Joanne's Request for Career Counseling

Joanne (pseudonym, details also disguised to protect client anonymity) is a single, Belgian woman in her early thirties who finished her second master's degree at a Belgian university two years ago. She moved to Switzerland with her boyfriend after graduating and found a job as an accountant in a prominent financial company. When the counselor asked her how she was doing, she answered, "I'm doing a lot of soul searching these days!" She voluntarily sought career counseling, stating that she "felt bored at work." She explained that she was not really interested in accounting, and that her relationships with her colleagues were really stressful. She felt different from them, and described them as "cold, cynical, and interested mostly in making money."

Early on in the counseling process, Joanne was laid off from her accounting job due to downsizing at her company. She was one of the first to be released due to mutual dissatisfaction in the strained relationships she had with her supervisor and co-workers. This tension and the resulting layoff made her feel very nervous, because she was concerned about how to approach looking for a new job or field and her ability to support herself financially. So, her request for career counseling quickly evolved from finding a job environment in the business field better suited to her values without having to re-invest in further educational pursuits, into re-examining her career aspirations and opportunities altogether in light of the relationship issues that had been recently triggered in her professional life and reactivated from her painful past family experiences.

Personal and Educational Background

Joanne is the middle child of three girls. Her older sister is a well-known and respected engineer, and her younger sister is currently finishing a medical degree. Joanne sees herself as inferior to her sisters. She described how she despises herself, because both of her sisters are successful in their careers and she is envious that they never doubted which careers they wanted to pursue. Joanne feels like she is the only one of the three who is encountering difficulties in her career, who hesitates between choices, and has been the only one to lose her job. In addition, her sisters' studies—engineering and medicine—were more prestigious than her first pursuit—music theory.

Joanne has played the piano since she was 7 years old. She reported encountering serious family stressors after finishing high school, when her parents divorced. For many years prior to their divorce, though, her father, who worked in an industrial plant, was violent with her mother, who was a housekeeper, and with the children; often, Joanne was afraid to return home from school. Music was her refuge from a difficult home life, so she made the "logical" decision to study music theory in

college, and later completed a master's degree in music theory. Although she taught piano as a master's student in music theory, she neither wanted to become a full-time piano teacher nor a professional musician. Although Joanne was talented at playing the piano, even as a child, she realized the limitations of her employment possibilities, and piano became more of a hobby for her than a true career aspiration. So, Joanne undertook a second master's degree in Marketing and Management at the same Belgian university in order to guarantee her many diverse job opportunities. Two years after finishing that degree, she and her boyfriend moved to Switzerland when he found employment; she found a job as an accountant shortly thereafter in a prominent financial company. Her relationship ended one year later.

Joanne was seeing an outside therapist at the same time as she sought career counseling, mostly to process her family history of domestic violence, which is still hard for her to live with today. As a result of the trauma she witnessed and experienced in her family of origin, her therapist diagnosed her with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), from which she continues to suffer today. Although Leung (2008) argued that "a skillful career counselor should be just as able to mediate this [career and personal aspects of life] dispute as a marriage counselor" (p. 141), it is important to note that, in Switzerland, career counselors are not trained in psychotherapy techniques or practice. Therefore, we whole-heartedly encouraged Joanne to continue with her outside therapy sessions in parallel to and after the termination of the career counseling services we were providing.

Career Counseling Process

Joanne received four career counseling sessions at our university-run career counseling service. In the first session, she and her career counselor got acquainted and began building their working alliance, and Joanne shared both her background history and her motives for seeking career counseling. At the end of the first session, Joanne was asked to complete a homework exercise to clarify what she wanted to keep from her first two professional experiences (as a piano teacher and an accountant), and what aspects of these jobs she wanted to avoid in a future job.

During the second session, Joanne discussed the homework assignment with her career counselor. First, they analyzed her current job as an accountant. According to Joanne, this exercise shed light on how she reacted to events, and that she wanted to change those reactions in the future. She explained that she analyzed challenges at work too superficially. She gave an example: "For one year now, I've known that I really do not like my job, but I have done nothing to change that. It was only when I started to lose sleep over it that I decided to do something." She described a conflict situation at work with her superior, explaining that she felt "very anxious and threatened, like when I was a little girl," linking her reaction directly to the history of domestic violence in her family. Concretely, what she really could no longer stand was the work atmosphere, which she described as "rigid and threatening." Ultimately, this exercise enabled her to realize that her current job as an accountant was not

entirely negative: She liked working with clients to resolve their financial concerns, working on a productive team, writing, and completing administrative tasks.

In the second part of the exercise, Joanne and her counselor analyzed her job as a musician and a piano teacher. What Joanne wanted to keep from this experience for her next job was teaching. She expressed interest in teaching adults in the future. She also really liked taking part in a musical ensemble, so teamwork was also important to her in a future job. What she wanted to avoid in the future was the financial precariousness of this job, and the huge stress she felt before playing in musical concerts. While playing, she felt judged to the point that she began to take anti-anxiety medicines before performing in order to manage her feelings and physical sensations of anxiety. Another important observation made by her student counselor and this counselor's supervision group was that Joanne, again, described herself as being the predominant problem in this job, because she not only had difficulties in dealing with stress and anxiety, but she also lacked self-confidence. For Joanne, playing the piano became associated mostly with "bad memories."

Further along in the second session, her career counselor asked Joanne to list some objectives she had for the next 5–10 years. Joanne spontaneously provided objectives relating to professional goals and characteristics she sought in future work environments. She listed working in a managerial capacity, because she wanted to use her compassion for others to help different people to achieve their goals. The characteristics she sought in a future work environment were autonomy, stability, a good atmosphere, a great team with which to work, and above all, "peace and calm." In the second part of this exercise, Joanne recorded some of her dreams. She listed writing books, teaching at a university, playing piano in concerts from time to time as a hobby, and, finally, feeling fulfilled in a romantic relationship and creating a family of her own someday.

During the third session, the results of Joanne's interest, values, and personality assessments (see below), which she completed between sessions, were discussed with her in order for Joanne and her counselor to better understand her strengths and weaknesses, and to help her focus on things that she might wish to change (Krumboltz 2009). The battery that Joanne completed was comprised of valid and reliable instruments regionally normed and often used in western Switzerland. To save time in session, she was provided with a username and password to access the instruments on line from home, and the results were sent directly to the counseling center. Leung (2008) supported and encouraged the use of locally-developed reliable and valid measures that account for cultural adaptations and norms in career counseling practice. After the first session, she completed the Listes des Verbes/Listes des Métiers (LIVAP/LIMET; Gendre et al. 2006), an interest inventory that includes a list of activities and occupations; and the Inventaire de Valeurs Professionnelles et Générales (IVPG; Gendre et al. 2011), a personal and professional values questionnaire. After the second session, she completed the Liste des Adjectifs Bipolaires en Échelle de Likert [*sic*] (LABEL; Gendre and Capel 2013), a personality profile. We did not assess Joanne's aptitudes because in successfully completing two university master's degrees, we assumed that she possessed high intellectual capacities that would enable her to do any kind of work, however demanding.

The LIVAP/LIMET revealed very few interests, if any. Of Holland's (1966) six schemes for personality and vocational characteristics (e.g., Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional; RIASEC), Joanne scores revealed only a slight interest in entrepreneurial activities and jobs. This was surprising, because she seemed to be generally very enthusiastic and curious. Moreover, given that Joanne is a talented musician, the artistic side was surprisingly absent, as well as the social side, as she had thought about teaching at a university as a possible future plan. Personality results on the LABEL indicated that Joanne is very altruistic and agreeable, but revealed very high anxiety and feelings of stress. Her level of PTSD certainly had an impact on the results regarding the anxiety she exhibited. Such a level of anxiety may generate difficulties in expressing a differentiated profile of career interests, which Joanne confirmed. Finally, the main values resulting from the IVPG were pleasure, aesthetics, and altruism.

During the last session, Joanne and her career counselor talked about the strengths of her resume and her major skills—mostly planning and social skills. As an appraisal of the counseling process, Joanne stated that she would not repeat the same "mistake" as she had before : Even if she felt very anxious about being unemployed, she would not "choose" the easiest route to employment and seek another job as an accountant in another organization, as she came to hate the job as much as the environment in which she performed it. Instead, she wanted to follow her quest for a calmer working environment and professional and personal happiness. She clarified her priorities: to feel good and satisfied in her work, and to seek a job with fewer challenges.

Joanne's Emotional, Social, and Cognitive Strengths and Weaknesses

Discussing the results of the three questionnaires with Joanne lead her to several reflections and revelations concerning her current situation. First, it shed light on her social values. Altruism was important both in Joanne's values and personality questionnaires. The counselor reinforced how pleasant it was to work with her, as well as her extraversion and her pleasure in being with others, for example spending time with friends each weekend. From the beginning, Joanne highlighted her difficulties with her boss and her colleagues, mostly men, whom she found "cold, cynical, and interested mostly in making money." With high scores on values such as commitment, work atmosphere, solidarity, altruism, and benevolence, it became clear that good relationships were one of the most important factors for Joanne's well-being at work.

Second, the personality questionnaire highlighted the gravity of Joanne's current anxiety and stress (at more than 1.5 *SD* above that of the average population). We discussed how, generally, Joanne is an anxious person, which she attributed to her family history of domestic violence. However, her unemployed status also was particularly hard for her to deal with emotionally. She explained that through outside therapy she was coming to understand how her lack of secure attachment in childhood (Bowlby 1982) was affecting her current emotional stability. She still feels

hurt many years later; the reactivation of her past relationship issues worsened her current problems in the workplace, and this monopolized a lot of her energy. As Peterson et al. (2002) explained, "Each time a present event triggers an association to episodes in the past, we may not only reconstruct our past in a subtle way but shape our self-concept as well" (p. 321–322). Joanne recounted that she used to be ambitious about her career goals but, now, she is more fervent about seeking personal happiness. Given that symptoms of anxiety and PTSD can prevent an individual's healthy vocational development, it is important that career counseling reinforce certain emotional competences, such as emotion regulation, communication, and ESE (Dacre Pool and Qualter 2012); and this was especially true in Joanne's case.

Third, Joanne realized that she had hated her accounting job almost since the very beginning, but that she "chose" that profession because it was a field in which Switzerland was lacking workers. She admitted that her first choice of music theory did not constitute a real choice, either, but it was the easiest solution to a difficult career problem she could not deal with at that moment. She and her career counselor jointly concluded that throughout her life, Joanne had never really thought about and balanced different career options against her true professional interests and personal well-being. In her early thirties, Joanne now understands that her previous career selections did not adequately take her well-being and values into account.

With the help of her career counselor, Joanne realized that she did not need to undertake entirely new studies, but rather to find a work environment that is better aligned with her values. She decided not to apply for jobs in finance and not to work for a company that was too demanding where profit-seeking and competition, overtime hours expectations, etc, were concerned. By contrast, she was seeking a work opportunity in which she could learn from and with clients and colleagues. Joanne summarized her main career objective as "finding a healthy, stable and protective work environment, and combining my interpersonal skills with my entrepreneurial interest. "

Conclusions: Conceptualizing Joanne's Career Counseling Issues from an Integrative Perspective

In Joanne's career and life stories, she has faced a number of vocational and personal traumas (Savickas et al. 2009), which have led to the current life transitions she faces. She was seeking a financially stable source of employment that would not "bore" her but, rather, make good use of the cognitive and interpersonal resources that would enable her to successfully lead a team in another line of work. Through her career counseling sessions, Joanne demonstrated several adapt-abilities described in career construction theory, as well as a *commitment* to furthering life pursuits beyond finding her next stable occupation (Savickas 2005). For instance, from the moment that Joanne actively sought career counseling to help her find a new field or job in which she could apply her education and skills in an atmosphere and state of mind of "peace and calm," she demonstrated *concern* for her future as a

worker. She took measures to *increase her control* over her professional future by setting specific standards for what she wanted in her next job, such as autonomy and a good work atmosphere with team-oriented colleagues, then actively seeking employment opportunities that corresponded with these standards. Although she was unable to control being laid off, she explored how she could use her skills and apply her emotional, cognitive, and social strengths to finding a more fulfilling job in another line of work. Through her *curiosity* to explore her *self* in future scenarios, Joanne and her career counselor discussed the results of her personality, interests, and values inventories to more thoroughly consider how to improve upon her personal and professional relationships. Personally, she concluded that outside therapy was helpful to her in seeking more fulfilling family and romantic relationships; professionally, Joanne concluded that she could use her compassion and collective interest to help others achieve their goals by seeking a management role on a team.

Both Joanne and her career counselor remarked that she lacked self-confidence and suffered from anxiety and PTSD symptoms as a result of the traumatic personal and professional experiences she had lived. Peterson et al. (2002) highlighted that the complexity of contextual factors stemming from familial, societal, workplace, or economic hardships could render career decision making more or less difficult. Joanne's familial history of domestic violence proved to be such a factor in her past and present career decision-making processes. Through career counseling and outside therapy sessions, Joanne was working on *strengthening her confidence* in order to achieve her career and life goals. Joanne's *commitment* to broader engagement in life projects was evident in the fact that she did not want to give up playing the piano entirely, despite the anxiety and stress playing professionally once invoked, but compromising by relegating her practice to a non-stress-inducing hobby. Professionally, this commitment involved using her cognitive and social capacities to help clients and faculty members in her new job to achieve their goals and tasks.

Krumboltz (1996, 2009) insisted that people could learn from any planned or unplanned circumstance and could turn those lessons into adaptive skills and capacities. In Joanne's case, she planned her educational routes in pursuing two master's degrees based on her past experiences and training in music and her entrepreneurial interests, respectively. By realistically exploring and analyzing these experiences, as well as the possibility of applying her skills and interests to the world of work, she determined that she could use aspects of both professions in finding a more suitable work alternative (Savickas 2005). Two unplanned situations, having experienced domestic violence in her family of origin and more recently having been laid off, presented Joanne with opportunities for learning more about herself, her personal and professional skills and career adapt-abilities. Her career counselor helped Joanne increase her meta-capacities by teaching her how to use these skills and adapt-abilities more effectively to successfully navigate the vocational trauma and resulting changes this trauma incited in her life.

Joanne could not control her former company's economic need to layoff workers, but she realized that her strained interpersonal relationships with her supervisor and co-workers played an integral part in her being one of the first to have to leave the company. In this unplanned and difficult turn of events, which reactivated the

traumatic history of familial domestic violence she experienced, Joanne accepted her social and interpersonal relationship issues as a means of learning more about herself and processed this information from a professional stand point in career counseling and a personal stand point in outside therapy. She took the opportunity to grow through these difficulties and to further explore how she could be helpful to others in a new managerial capacity. The fact that she willingly grappled with her fears and interpersonal issues head on in both career counseling and outside therapy demonstrated her social and emotional meta-capacities to confront difficult situations, learn from them, and begin to *transform* them into personal skills and strengths. Joanne was managing several internal and external challenges (Ashford and Taylor 1990) as a result of the transitions she faced, and through her counseling and therapy work, was learning how to change her cognitions, behaviors, and affect (Fugate et al. 2004), in order to effectuate changes in her responses to others and to solicit a different interactional pattern from others.

During her career counseling sessions, Joanne became extremely motivated to find another job that would make her happier than this last one. She continued her outside therapy in parallel to career counseling. She processed the negative emotions resulting from her traumatic familial past in therapy and the relationship issues that surfaced from her recent unemployment, as well as her doubts about her future career options in career counseling. The career counseling process helped Joanne to reframe her relationships with her two sisters, and the inadequacies that she felt relative to the prestige of the professions the three of them had chosen to pursue.

Recalling that Krumboltz (2009) measured the success of any career counseling intervention by the extent to which clients were capable of transforming their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors into real-world change, we were pleased to learn that Joanne interviewed for and accepted a job as a program coordinator in a business school a few days after terminating career counseling sessions. Joanne's career counselor learned of her progress through an e-mail Joanne sent three weeks after she started the new job. She reported that this job is easier than her previous one, as it is very administrative, and that she would work fewer hours but be paid the same salary as in her previous accounting position. She would have contact with many people, both students and faculty members at the business school. Joanne stated that the fact that this job was not cognitively demanding would help her advance her personal goals outside of her professional concerns and allow her to fully pursue her outside therapy. In her e-mail, Joanne thanked her counselor and the counselor's supervisor for the work they had done together and stated that she really was thrilled with her new position. Through the help of her career counselor, Joanne was able to strengthen and employ her emotional, social, and cognitive abilities and career meta-capacities in order to fit herself into work that suits her.

Chapter Summary

Theory and practice should never be fully separate from one another. In this chapter, concepts from career construction (Savickas 2005), employability (Fugate et al. 2004), emotional intelligence (Mayer and Salovey 1997; Petrides and Furnham

2003), happenstance learning theory (Krumboltz 1996, 2009), and life design (Savickas et al. 2009) were used conjointly to illustrate the case of Joanne. The four sessions of career counseling that Joanne received enabled her to reconsider her life both personally and professionally. The interests, personality, and values question-naires gave pertinent indications about her social, emotional, and cognitive abilities and helped her to increase her career meta-capacities, which could only emerge within the trusting relationship she developed with her career counselor (Rossier, in press). She and her career counselor co-constructed a new meaning and understand-ing of the intersection between her personal life history and her previous career choices, which revealed new professional and personal goals for Joanne to follow.

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Chapter 5
Constructing Career Identity Through Systemic Thinking

Mary McMahon

Abstract The construction of careers has become a central focus of contemporary trends in career counseling theory. In practice, this focus has resulted in the increasing adoption of narrative approaches to career counseling. Concomitant with these trends in theory and practice has been an emphasis on individuals as active agents in the construction of their career identities. A tacit assumption is that individuals know how to do this. But do they? How would they learn the skills of career construction?

This chapter views the construction of career identity as a process that begins in childhood and continues throughout life. It considers the systemic location in which career identity is constructed and how systemic thinking may be a useful skill for individuals to learn in order to take a more active and intentional role in the construction of their career identities. Systemic thinking is fundamental to narrative approaches to career counseling but a criticism of these approaches is that career practitioners struggle to know how to implement them (Reid, *Career counselling: Constructivist approaches*, pp. 16–29. London, Routledge, 2006). Constructs such as meaning making and agency that underpin narrative career counseling are somewhat esoteric in nature (Reid, *Career counselling: Constructivist approaches*, pp. 16–29. London, Routledge, 2006) and their practical application is not clearly articulated. The systemic thinking constructs of connectedness, reflection, meaning making, learning and agency (McMahon, *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 42:29–38, 2005) are recursively related (McMahon et al., *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 40:127–141, 2012a). Systemic thinking may be regarded as an essential skill in the construction of career identity. This chapter proposes that implementing systemic thinking in practice can be learned and that narrative career counseling can be a site for such learning. Practical suggestions are offered to assist career counselors and individuals to develop the skill of systemic thinking in order to facilitate the construction of identity.

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Career Identity

Identity is a narrative practice (Gibson 2004; LaPointe 2010; Meijers and Lengelle 2012) described by McAdams (2001) as "an internalized and evolving life story" (p. 117). Singer (2004) explained that identity is produced as individuals make up stories about their experiences which they tell to themselves and to others. They also relate these stories to what they know about themselves, others and the world around them. Similarly, career identity may be regarded as a discursive process and more as something individuals construct in interaction with others rather than as something they have; it is a practice of "articulating, performing and negotiating identity positions in narrating career experiences" (LaPointe 2010, p. 1). Narratives enable individuals to make their experiences meaningful (Polkinghorne 1988). Thus, career identity is expressed in the stories individuals tell and in the themes revealed in those stories (Meijers and Lengelle 2012). Career stories do not pre-exist; rather they change over time as individuals gain new experiences, social discourse changes, and the purpose of storytelling changes (LaPointe 2010). A recursive relationship exists between narratives and identity that is clearly described by Gibson (2004) who explained that narratives depict identity as well as shape it. Similarly, Botella et al. (2004) claim that identity is both an outcome of constructing and telling stories and the process of doing so. LaPointe (2010) regards career identity as "co-constructed, socially situated and performed in interaction" (p. 2) and thus career identity is never fixed. Indeed, a capacity to reflect is necessary for telling stories and identity construction (Meijers and Lengelle 2012).

Put simply, career identity is "the commitment a person has towards specific occupational activities or a specific career" (Meijers et al. 2013, p. 49). Career identity is constructed within historical, social and cultural contexts and over time beginning in childhood (Patton and McMahon 2006). Through their daily experiences in the home and other locations, children become aware of adult roles and of the intrinsic place of work in the lives of adults. Children begin to imagine themselves in adult roles that are sometimes reflected in play through games such as doctors and nurses. During childhood, identities related to gender and social status are constructed. As children grow older, through experience, they gain a more realistic appreciation of their abilities and during adolescence, face their first important career decisions in relation to subject choice at secondary school and subsequently their transition from school. Career identity continues to be constructed and reconstructed during adulthood, as individuals reflect on their experiences and chart directions for themselves. Time and context are integrally related to the construction of career identity.

Identity Construction: A Systems Theory View

Wijers and Meijers (1996) claim that forming an identity, as well as determining a direction and planning a career are three learning tasks that enable individuals to take control of their careers. The achievement of these three tasks is evident in the

following story of a research participant who has been named Simon who constructed his career identity in context and over time.

> Simon was a sixteen year old boy who attended a rural school. He was in his final year of school and was considering his options. Simon knew he was creative. He liked to draw and had learned music from a young age. He had always wanted to be an architect until he participated in work experience two years ago. Unexpectedly, he found that he did not like architecture at all because he could not be as creative as he had hoped. He did not like the building regulations that he encountered and he decided not to pursue architecture as a career. At school Simon played in the school orchestra which he really enjoyed. After playing in the pit for the school musical, Simon decided that he "just wanted to be on stage" so the next year he auditioned for a place in the chorus and subsequently had his first experience on stage which he thoroughly enjoyed. He determined that he wanted to go further with his dream to "be on stage" and the following year he auditioned again and was given the lead role for which he received high praise from a range of people including his family. He intended to join a local theatre group. Simon decided that he wanted to study drama when he left school so that he could pursue an acting career. He knew that studying drama would mean leaving home and moving to a metropolitan area where appropriate courses were available.

As Simon's story shows, his career identity was being constructed in the context of a system of career influences as described in the Systems Theory Framework of career development (STF; Patton and McMahon 2006). Increasingly, career theory is taking account of the broader contexts in which career identity is constructed and the STF is one example of a theoretical framework that identifies a broad range of career influences. The STF depicts the dynamic complexity of career development over time through a series of three interconnected systems of influence, specifically the individual system, the social system, and the environmental-societal system. All systems are located in the context of past, present and future time. The dynamic nature of the system is portrayed through the processes of recursiveness which is the interaction within and between influences, change over time and chance which can suddenly and irreversibly disrupt the system. In the case of Simon, at the level of his individual system, he was aware of personal attributes such as his abilities and interests. In the context of his social system, he was afforded experiences at his school such as playing in the school orchestra, participating in work experience, and acting in the school musical. He also came from a close and supportive family. More broadly, in the context of his environmental-societal system, living in a rural location meant that opportunities to study drama post-school were not available and he would have to move to a larger metropolitan area. His career identity had also changed over time as he told different stories of himself, that is, Simon as architect and Simon as actor. Taking a systemic perspective of Simon's career stories provides a way of recognizing the recursive interconnectedness between elements of the system.

Simon's story warrants consideration in terms of the construction of a career identity. First, on the basis of his creative abilities, he had constructed a future identity for himself as an architect. Second, during his work experience, he reflected on his lack of enjoyment of architecture, and began to construct a different identity. Thus his identity was clearly not fixed. Third, through the experience of playing in the orchestra, he observed a possible interest and imagined himself on stage through a reflective process. In addition, he took action to gain experience of his

new interest and subsequently began to construct an identity of himself as an actor. In Simon's case, his experience of being on stage was confirmatory for him and he determined that he would pursue a path towards becoming an actor. Thus Simon completed the three learning tasks identified by Wijers and Meijers (1996). Simon was positioning himself for future opportunities by making sense of his experiences through subjective interpretation from which he was able to "draw new insights and formulate new strategies" (Amundson et al. 2002, p. 27). Further, Amundson, et al. emphasize the need for individuals to intentionally act to bring about change as Simon did.

However, many clients do not engage in reflective processes as Simon did. It is not uncommon for career counselors to hear clients say "I hate my job. I don't want to do it any more" or "I hate Mathematics. I would like to do another subject." One possible response to such concerns may be something along the lines of "Well, what would you prefer to do?" to which the response is often "I don't know." Amundson (2003) refers to such responses as "a crisis of imagination" (p. 28) and claims that a new way of thinking that is more creative and empowering is required. But what form would such thinking take and how can individuals be prepared to think in such ways? As evident in Simon's story, he was able to make connections between his interests and abilities and the opportunities and experiences he encountered. He was also able to make connections between his past, present and future career identities. Indeed, Simon was thinking systemically. Systemic thinking offers a way of building the capacity to circumvent the possible crises of imagination that individuals may face in their lives that impede the construction of career identity.

Systemic Thinking

Systemic thinking emanates from systems theory and "takes an 'individual in context' view of clients that considers complexity and avoids oversimplification of career decision-making and career development" (McMahon et al. 2013). General systems theory originated in biology and has been applied in family therapy, counseling and career development (e.g., the STF; Patton and McMahon 2006). Ludwig von Bertalanffy first proposed systems theory in 1968. He regarded a system as a "complex of elements standing in interaction" (p. 33). Systemic thinking enables individuals to understand the complex systems in which their career identities are constructed (Ryan and Tomlin 2010); in narrative career counseling, systemic thinking necessitates viewing individuals in the context of their lives.

Systems theory contains a number of key elements that inform systemic thinking and recent narrative approaches to career counseling (Patton and McMahon 2006). First, systems approaches are holistic in their consideration of individuals. Second, the relationships between the elements of the system present in the form of patterns and rules. Third, acausality which stresses the multiplicity of possible relationships within a system is favored over linear, causal relationships. Fourth, recursiveness is a process of multidirectional feedback between elements of the system. Fifth, systems

are dynamic and constantly changing in a discontinuous manner that allows for sudden and unexpected change. Sixth, systems may be open or closed. Open systems are open to input from the external environment and are thus relevant to narrative career counseling. Seventh, is a form of reasoning known as abductive reasoning which is related to lateral thinking and the patterns and relationships that exist within open systems. Eighth, story makes possible accounts of the relationships and patterns within the system. These elements are clearly evident in Simon's story and are indicative of the dynamic and constantly changing nature of Simon's system of influences and his connectedness within his system of influences. Systemic thinking underpins narrative approaches to career counseling and the telling of stories is fundamental to these approaches.

Narrative Career Counseling

Narrative career counseling was first described in Cochran's (1997) seminal work. Since that time, a number of different approaches have been proposed including Amundson's (2009) active engagement; McMahon and Watson's (2012a, b) story telling approach; Peavy's (1998) sociodynamic approach; Pryor and Bright's (2011) chaos theory; Savickas et al.'s (2009) life designing; and Young et al.'s (2011) action theory. While each of these approaches has its own particular focus, they all emphasize client strengths, view clients and career counselors as partners, adapt a constructionist approach to meaning, and emphasize the narrative or story form of meaning (Polkinghorne 2004). Further they are all systemic in nature. Of these approaches, only one, the story telling approach is grounded specifically in systems theory (McMahon 2006, 2007; McMahon and Watson 2012a) through its parent framework the STF (Patton and McMahon 2006). All narrative career counseling approaches including the story telling approach incorporate connectedness, meaning making and agency as core constructs. In addition, the story telling approach explicitly incorporates reflection and learning as core constructs. While these two core constructs also feature in other approaches, their role is more implicit. These five core constructs are fundamental to systemic thinking. Each will now be briefly described.

Connectedness Connectedness has been described in terms of relatedness, belonging, closeness, attachment or affiliation to something other than oneself such as family or community, and interdependence (McMahon et al. 2012a; Mkhize 2011). Connectedness has traditionally assumed a more prominent place in some cultures than in others. For example, in the African context, the value of Ubuntu refers to a common humanity, interconnectedness and spiritual connectedness (Mkhize 2011; Watson et al. 2011). Connectedness operates at both intrapersonal and interpersonal levels and is closely related to identity construction (Townsend and McWhirter 2005). The inseparability of career and other facets of life is emphasized through connectedness and thus suggests that career counseling should assume a holistic focus. Indeed

connectedness is fundamental to narrative career counseling. In practice, the identification of themes and patterns that connect stories from different settings, times and experiences facilitates connectedness. Systemic thinking is integral to connectedness and reflects the complex recursive relationships that operate within the lives of individual and their contexts (McMahon 2007).

Reflection Reflection, according to Dewey's (1933) seminal work has as its purpose the transformation of situations where individuals experience "obscurity, doubt, conflict, disturbance of some sort, into a situation that is clear, coherent, settled, harmonious" (Dewey 1933). This purpose reasonably explains why clients seek assistance from career counselors. In essence, they are in a situation which they want to change and are unsure about how to change or what to change to. Narrative career counseling provides clients with a reflective space in which they can contemplate their career futures and tell their stories (McMahon 2006, 2007).

Reflection is an effective way for individuals to consider their situations, identify possible outcomes and stimulate learning (Thorsen and DeVore 2013). In essence, reflective practice is closely connected to learning from experience (Thompson and Pascal 2012). The seminal work of Schön (1983) identified three types of reflective practices, reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, and reflection-for-action respectively. Reflection-in-action refers to the thinking and reasoning we engage in during an experience such as completing a task. Reflection-on-action refers to the thinking and evaluation we do after an experience. Reflection-for-practice refers to forethought and planning. Reflection is therefore a useful systemic skill for individuals to use to monitor their experiences, learn from them, and position themselves for the future.

The systemic nature of reflection is evident in four criteria proposed by Rogers (2002). First and foremost, reflection is a process of meaning making that enables individuals to understand a situation or experience more deeply and to identify its connections and relationships with other experiences and ideas. In doing so, individuals move from one experience to the next. Second, as reflected in the first criterion, reflection is a "systematic, rigorous, disciplined way of thinking" (p. 845). Third, reflection occurs best in interaction with others; thus career counseling provides an ideal relationship for reflection. Fourth, reflection is about growth as individuals gain a deeper appreciation and personal understanding of themselves.

Various types of reflection have been identified which have implications for narrative career counseling and the construction of career identity. These range from descriptive information which is simply a recounting of events with no attempt at explanation to critical reflection which takes account of the multiple socio-cultural and historical contexts in which events occur and therefore the multiple perspectives of the event (Thorsen and DeVore 2013). Thompson and Pascal (2012) suggest that we should move towards critical reflection and thus emancipatory practice that considers the implications of sociopolitical and sociocultural systems on individuals. Systemic thinking could assist career counselors to identify influences where intervention at a systems level (e.g., within a workplace, family or organization) rather than at the level of the individual client may be appropriate (Arthur and McMahon 2005).

Meaning Making Meaning making is a subjective process of deep thinking by which individuals try to understand their experiences (Chen 2011). Processes such as awareness, insight, sense making, understanding, and interpretation contribute to meaning making (McMahon et al. 2012a). Meaning making necessarily is related to context and action (Chen 2006, 2011); experience occurs in context, and enhanced understanding should stimulate action. According to Chen (2001) meaning making "helps individuals make sense of what has happened in their past and present, and more importantly, project their future life career course" (p. 328). In making sense of their experiences, individuals identify the themes and patterns that connect their experiences which may have previously seemed discrete and unrelated. Recognizing the meaning individuals ascribe to their career experiences enables the subjective career (Collin 1986; Khapova et al. 2007) to be acknowledged as well as the objective career. Lack of attention to the subjective career has long been a criticism of the career field. The creation of a reflective space and the expectation of clients to take a greater role through the telling of their stories well positions narrative career counseling to hear both the objective and subjective stories.

Learning Learning has long been emphasized in career theory (e.g., Mitchell and Krumboltz 1996; Patton and McMahon 2006; Super 1990), yet it has not been widely or explicitly applied in career counseling. Rather in most approaches to counseling, learning is more implicit than explicit. However, individuals do not necessarily learn from experience themselves (Meijers and Lengelle 2012). One approach to narrative career counseling, the story telling approach (McMahon 2007; McMahon and Watson 2012a, b) makes learning an explicit component of the career counseling process. Learning has been described as a cyclic process that "moves between action, to reflection, to new thinking, to planning and then back to action" (Hawkins and Shohet 2000, p. 177). Learning involves transformation, new understanding, and knowledge creation (McMahon et al. 2012a). Law (1996), in his learning approach to career counseling, claims that four processes of sensing, sifting, focusing and understanding guide the process of learning in career counseling. Sensing relates to information gathering but not offering explanations. Sorting relates to making comparisons and moving towards explanations. Focusing relates to developing a point of view. Understanding relates to anticipating consequences, developing explanations, and gaining insight. For many individuals, especially children and adolescents, the learning that informs the construction of their career identities is largely unintentional (Patton and McMahon 2006). By contrast, intentional career development learning may be facilitated by career guidance practices such as narrative career counseling.

Agency Agency refers to the capacity of individuals to think and act for themselves and to speak on their own behalf (Monk et al. 1997). Emerging from Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, human agency represents a combination of capacity and intention that enables individuals to have some control over their lives (Chen 2006). Peavy (1998) regards an agent as "one who makes things happen" (p. 3). Agency is therefore more than a cognitive exercise. Rather it necessitates intentional action (Young and Domene 2011). Traditionally, there has been limited emphasis on agency in the career field until comparatively recently when greater attention has

been placed on the construction of careers by individuals (Chen 2006; Young and Domene 2011). Chen (2006) suggested that human agency can be enhanced in career counseling by attending to the foundations of agency, namely intentionality and action. First, intentionality may be enhanced by understanding intention by exploring clients' subjective experiences, building intention and reconstructing intention. Second, action may be enhanced by increasing clients' awareness of the need for them to act, designing action plans, and implementing action.

Practical Implications for Career Counseling and Guidance

While the systemic constructs of connectedness, reflection, meaning making , learning and agency may be viewed as discrete constructs, in practice, in narrative career counseling they are recursively interrelated in the responses of career counselors and also in the stories of clients (McMahon et al. 2012a, b). This is evident in Simon's story. For example, he had originally linked his creative ability with architecture (*connectedness*). As he thought about his experience in architecture and his new found interest in acting (*reflection*) he came to understand his creativity differently (*meaning making*) and realized that architecture did not offer him the avenue for creative expression that he had hoped (*learning*). He decided not to pursue architecture and subsequently took steps to gain experience on stage (*agency*). As reflected in his stories, Simon's career identity changed over time.

The construction of career identity occurs within a complex range of recursively interacting influences. Individuals, the decisions they make, and the transitions they face are best understood in context. For example, Simon's desire to "be on stage" is more comprehensively understood in the context of his personal attributes, school experiences, family support and the geographic location in which he lives. Systemic thinking therefore is an important skill for individuals and for career counselors. As an individual, Simon applied systemic thinking to reflect on his work experience in architecture to look at the parts such as the opportunities for creative expression, building codes and regulations and the nature of his own creativity. Individuals however, may not be as adept at or familiar with systemic thinking as Simon. Adolescents in particular may need to be assisted to learn and apply systemic thinking (McMahon et al. 2005, 2008).

Career counseling and guidance is well positioned to assist individuals to learn the systemic thinking skills that facilitate the construction of identity. McMahon, et al. (2012a) proposed six strategies that narrative career counselors could adopt in their practice, specifically:

> (1) providing a space for reflection; (2) listening deeply for clues in client stories; (3) using the clues to construct brief responses or invitations to tell further stories; (4) assisting clients to identify and make explicit themes and patterns in their stories; (5) connecting previously disconnected stories through the identification of themes and patterns; and (6) incorporating themes and patterns as 'ingredients' of future stories (p. 138).

McMahon et al. (2012a) concluded that while each of the five constructs of systemic thinking may be taught, the recursive nature of their interrelationship affords a holistic process of narrative career counseling. Importantly, these strategies suggest primary functions for career counselors as facilitators and also as listeners. While facilitation is beginning to receive more attention in narrative career counseling, listening has received much less attention. Indeed, career counseling has a long held reputation as a 'test and tell' practice that is dominated by the counselor. However, listening is fundamental to narrative career counseling and can also be taught to individuals in order that they 'listen to themselves' and to others. In this regard, Lee and Prior (2013) claimed that listening in counseling is different from social listening and that counselors need to more self-aware, and more intensely focused on the relationship and the client.

Gentle and persistent curiosity (McMahon et al. 2012a) is an essential quality that enhances the career counselor's ability to facilitate and listen. Individuals may also be taught to be curious about their experiences, and reflect on those experiences in order to make meaning of them. Indeed, McMahon et al. (2012a, b) found that a facilitative role employing attentive listening and systemic thinking resulted in the client speaking for a longer time than the career counselor which provided a space for reflection.

In relation to the facilitation role of career counselors, McMahon and Watson (2012a) proposed the use of story crafting questions at three systemic levels. Level one story crafting questions seek information and fact based stories; level two story crafting questions facilitate connectedness between stories and elicit the subjective experience of individuals; and level three questions facilitate the construction of a future career identity by connecting past and present experiences with possible futures. As reflected in the three levels of story crafting questions, systems thinking stimulates deep thinking (Ryan and Tomlin 2010); systems thinking enables a reflective process of connecting and making meaning of the many influences of the STF through storytelling (McMahon et al. 2005, 2012a). Importantly, career counselors can model systemic thinking for their clients that they can apply in future career decisions.

Conclusions

Systemic thinking challenges a reductionist, 'parts in isolation', single story approach, takes account of context, encourages the subjective experience of clients to be understood, emphasizes strong, collaborative counselor client relationships, and de-emphasizes expert driven processes (McMahon et al. 2013 in press). Individuals who develop the skills of systemic thinking will be well positioned to construct their career identities. Career counselors who use systemic thinking in their practice will also be well positioned to assist clients better understand complex career situations. Further, career counselors who use systemic thinking can model it to clients and assist them to develop their capacity for systemic thinking.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has considered the construction of identity through the application of systemic thinking skills. It suggested that the recursively related systemic thinking constructs of connectedness, reflection, meaning making, learning and agency (McMahon 2005) can be learned and offered practical suggestions for career counselors and individuals to develop these skills. Such skills may be used across the lifespan to facilitate the construction of identity.

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Chapter 6
A Psychological Career Resources Framework for Contemporary Career Development

Melinde Coetzee

Abstract In a complex, boundaryless and continually changing work world, people increasingly focus on their subjective careers as a framework for their career growth and development (Converse et al., J Vocat Behav 80:148–159, 2012; Khapova et al., Handbook of Career Studies, pp. 114–130, 2007. The subjective career represents an internally-driven self-regulated psychological state of vocational development that influences the individual's capability to effectively cope with, adapt to, and succeed in a particular work setting or occupational role, and deal effectively with career transitions (Converse et al., J Vocat Behav 80:148–159, 2012; Khapova et al., Handbook of Career Studies, pp. 114–130, 2007; Savickas and Porfeli, J Vocat Behav 80:661–673, 2012). The psychological state of development is a consequence of individuals' psycho-social meta-capacities (Coetzee, South African J Ind Psychol 34(2):32–41, 2008; Savickas and Porfeli, J Vocat Behav 80:661–673, 2012; Weigl et al., J Vocat Behav 77:140–153, 2010) which comprise their psychological capital and social resources and strengths (Avey et al., Human Resour Dev Q 22(2):127–152, 2011). People's psycho-social resources (meta-capacities) have been related to key self-evaluations and agentic processes that enable them to control and influence their environment (Hobfoll et al., J Personal Soc Psychol 84:632–643, 2003; Rottinghaus et al., J Career Assess 20(2):123–139, 2012), successfully cope with job demands, attain goals, achieve personal growth and development (Demerouti et al., J Appl Psychol 86:499–512, 2001) and solve the unfamiliar, complex and ill-defined problems presented by current and anticipated developmental vocational tasks, and transitions and traumas in occupational roles (Savickas and Porfeli, J Vocat Behav 80:661–673, 2012). This chapter proposes a psychological career resources (career meta-capacities) framework relevant to the 21st century occupational world and reports research findings on the development and validation of a quantitative measure of psychological career resources that can be applied in the contemporary career counseling context.

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Career Meta-capacities

Career meta-capacities denote psycho-social capabilities such as behavioral and career adaptability (Coetzee 2008; Lips-Wiersma and Hall 2007; Rottinghaus et al. 2012; Savickas and Porfeli 2012), resiliency and optimism (Hobfoll et al. 2003; Luthans et al. 2007; Rottinghaus et al. 2012; Vuori et al. 2012), identity awareness (Flores 2008; Valcour and Ladge 2008), sense of purpose and calling (Domene 2012; Weiss et al. 2004), self-esteem, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence (Bezuidenhout 2011; Bowling et al. 2010; Di Fabio and Kenny 2011; Hobfoll and Schumm 2009). Acting as key transactional resources between the inner (psychological) and outer (social) worlds of a person (Savickas and Porfeli 2012), these meta-capacities enable people to be self-directed learners and proactive agents in the construction and design of their careers and employability in the contemporary turbulent occupational world (Bezuidenhout 2011; Briscoe and Hall 1999; Coetzee 2008; Ferreira 2012; Hall and Chandler 2005; Potgieter 2012; Vuori et al. 2012).

A strong reservoir of psychological resources facilitate the acquisition, enrichment and use of other resources, which, in turn, positively influence psychological development, personal resilience, and growth (Hobfoll 2002), and promote general employability and occupational expertise (Bezuidenhout 2011; Briscoe and Hall 1999; Hall and Chandler 2005). Rottinghaus et al. (2012) posit that career practitioners need to reason about and focus on the coping skills, attitudes and resources clients need to increase their agency and adjustment or adaptation to the turbulent circumstances affecting their careers and work lives. Overall, in line with the tenets underpinning the theory of Carol Ryff (1989) and the perspective of Diener et al. (2010) on human flourishing and well-being, it can be suggested that the presence of well-developed career meta-capacities or psycho-social resources may facilitate career wellbeing and career agency, that is, help individuals to flourish in their career development and career-life self-design in the post-modern career development context.

Although various career assessment instruments are available to assess aspects of individuals' career meta-capacities, for example: the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (Savickas and Porfeli 2012), Career Orientations Inventory (Schein 1990); Employability Attributes Scale (Bezuidenhout 2011), and the Flourishing Scale (Diener et al. 2010), an overarching framework for assessing individuals' career meta-capacities seems to be lacking. The next section reports on the theoretical development and psychometric properties of the Psychological Career Resources Inventory (PCRI) developed by Coetzee (2007, 2008) as a career meta-capacities framework that can be used in the contemporary career development context. Overall, research

provides evidence that high PCRI scores relate positively to individuals' career anchors (Coetzee and Schreuder 2009; Kuok 2011); subjective work experiences, that is, life satisfaction, job/career satisfaction, and work meaningfulness (Coetzee and Bergh 2009); coping resources (Coetzee and Esterhuizen 2010); work engagement (Venter 2012; Tladinyane 2012); organizational commitment (Ferreira et al. 2010; Tladinyane 2012); job embeddedness (Ferreira 2012); and psycho-social employability attributes such as openness to change, career resiliency, career self-management drive, self-efficacy, proactivity, and emotional literacy (Symington 2012).

Theoretical Basis for the Development of the Psychological Career Resources Inventory

Psychological career resources are regarded as individuals' inherent psycho-social resources or meta-capacities which enable them to adapt to changing or uncertain career circumstances and to shape and select environments in order to attain success within a particular socio-cultural context (Coetzee 2008). A well-developed psychological career resources profile leads to self-empowering, pro-active career action and behavior that promote career agency and general employability (Bezuidenhout 2011; Symington 2012), career coping (Coetzee and Esterhuizen 2010) and positive subjective work experiences (Coetzee and Bergh 2009).

The theoretical tenets underpinning Coetzee's (2008) psychological career resources framework are based on Young et al.'s (2005) contextual action theory of career development. In a post-modern context, contextual action theory views the career as an action system. Being intentional and goal-directed, career-related action is constructed socially through discussions and interactions in a particular systems context. The career action system is self-designing in the sense that it contains the resources and willingness (intentionality) to continually learn and explore, and the innate capability to review personal experiences regularly including the capability to review the way of reviewing (Khapova et al. 2007). Residing within a particular socio-cultural or employment context (i.e. organization)—also regarded as a self-designing system continually in flux—the individual pursues the continual redesign of internal agentic processes rather than outcomes, capacities and intentions for continued employability rather than titles, psychological fulfilment and wellbeing rather than advancement, and roles (personal vocational identity) rather than a position (Khapova et al. 2007; Savickas 2010). The assumption of self-designing is that people are better at creating new approaches to their careers and lives if they perform within relatively underspecified conditions. Self-designing by individuals and organizations has become necessary for survival in fast-changing and unpredictable environments (Khapova et al. 2007).

Contextual action theory (Young et al. 2005) posits that individuals make sense of their careers through the career-related action—social environment interaction. The career action is viewed from three perspectives: manifest behavior, conscious cognitions (including thoughts and feelings), and social meaning (the meaning of

the action to the self and to others). Career counselling is seen as a project where counsellor and client are involved in joint action, particularly in settings where career action occurs (for example, the workplace). Language and narrative are used to help clients make sense of life's events (Kidd 2007).

Helping clients to gain deeper insight into and self-awareness of their psychological career resources profile, and how their psychological career resources influence their subjective work experiences, career agency and career construction capability, forms part of the career language and narrative (Schreuder and Coetzee 2011). In line with the reasoning of Adler (1956), Coetzee (2008) posits that individuals' psychological career resources profile reflects their dominant career consciousness. The career consciousness denotes people's conscious, career-related cognitions (that is, perceptions, awareness and self-evaluations) of their career preferences and values, and their career-related meta-capacities (career enablers, career drivers and career harmonizers) that are understood and regarded by them as being helpful in realizing their career action project goals and achieving career success in a particular socio-cultural environment.

The Psychological Career Resources Inventory (PCRI) was developed to make an instrument available that could complement the diagnostic process in a joint career action setting as postulated by contextual action theory. Many aspects of the PCRI relate to Bandura's (2006) notion of personal agency, that is, the capability to take charge of one's own career development by intentionally pursuing relevant educational goals and adapting to changing skills requirements and life role demands (Rottinghaus et al. 2012). Psychological career resources (Coetzee 2008) relate to agentic attributes and processes (Bandura 2006) that individuals employ to successfully navigate their way through the complexities, challenges, and hazards of the contemporary work world. According to Bandura (2006, p. 168), people have to learn how to make sound judgments about their capabilities, anticipate the probable effects of different events and courses of action, size up socio-cultural opportunities and constraints, and regulate their behavior accordingly.

The PCRI is a self-rated measure developed to measure an individual's self-perceived strengths in terms of five key psychological career resources facets and how these manifest in a particular socio-cultural context that demands career action and agentic processes. The five psychological career resources facets measured by the PCRI are as follows: (1) career preferences and (2) career values; (3) skills that enable effective and proactive career planning/self-design, reinvention and development (career enablers); (4) intrinsic career motivations that drive individuals' career actions and intentionalities (career drivers); and (5) psycho-social career meta-capacities that facilitate resiliency and adaptability within individuals' unique social-cultural contexts (career harmonizers; Coetzee 2008).

Career Preferences and Values

Coetzee's (2008) view of career preferences and values is based on Schein's (1990) theory of the career self-concept. People's career preferences and values comprise their unique views about the paths their careers should follow and guide their career decisions (Coetzee 2008; Schein 1990). Coetzee (2008) identifies four career preferences in terms of the psychological career resources framework, namely: stability/expertise (need for occupations or jobs that offer stability, predictability and the opportunity to develop one's expertise in a particular field), managerial (need for upward mobility to positions of successively greater responsibility), creativity/variety (need for a career that allows one to work on a variety of different tasks which require one to use and develop a wide range of skills, abilities and knowledge in innovative and creative ways) and autonomy/independence (need for autonomous functioning and freedom from external interruptions). Research by Coetzee (2007) suggests that the managerial and autonomy/independence career preferences are positively associated with the need for authority and influence as a dominant career value. The stability/expertise and creativity/variety career preferences appear to be positively associated with individuals' needs for further growth and development as a dominant career value.

Career preferences and career values are regarded as the enduring cognitive or conceptual structures underlying people's thoughts about their careers and which define the meaning of a career to them (Coetzee 2008; Driver 1982; Kim 2005). In line with Super's (1995) view, it is posited that the career preferences differ from individuals' career values in that the career preferences are the activities (career action) undertaken by people to attain their career values and thus satisfy the needs underpinning their career preferences. The essence of a value is the motivational goal it expresses (Schwartz 1992; Woehr et. al 2013).

As career meta-capacities, having a clear sense of one's career preferences (interests and needs) and what one values is vital to help one make effective career decisions and experience subjective and objective career success (Schein 1990; Valcour and Ladge 2008). Individuals with well-differentiated career preferences and values tend to have higher levels of subjective career well-being (Coetzee and Schreuder 2012); career adaptability and job embeddedness (Ferreira 2012) and devote more resources (time, energy, attention) to their jobs, occupations and careers (Tladinyane 2012), thereby increasing their chances of objective career success.

Career Enablers

Based on Sternberg's (2003) theory of successful intelligence in career choice and development, Coetzee (2008) view people's career enablers as essential transferable skills that help them to succeed in their careers in a particular socio-cultural context. According to Sternberg (2003), people use and capitalize on the strengths of their analytical, creative and practical abilities to select and achieve life goals and adapt to, shape and select environments congruent to their career needs and interests.

Coetzee (2008) differentiates between people's practical and creative skills and their self-management and interpersonal relations skills. Practical intelligence and creative intelligence are required to implement career options and to make them work in innovative and creative ways (Sternberg 2003). Research by Coetzee and Schreuder (2012) shows that people with strong practical/creative skills tend to perceive their work as meaningful.

Building on Gardner's (1983) notion of personal intelligence, Coetzee (2008) refers to self/other skills as intrapersonal intelligence (the ability to understand one's feelings and motivations and exerting self-discipline in one's interactions) and interpersonal intelligence (the ability to understand, honor, empathize and interact effectively with others). Gardner (1983) posits that the development of self-other intelligence is important as individuals function within a social context. In agreement with Young et al.'s (2005) contextual action theory, studies by Phillips et al. (2001) and Higgins (2001) also showed that career decision making takes place in a social-relational context. Ferreira (2012) found the career enablers to be positively related to individuals' job embeddedness which involves their links and sense of belonging to others in the organization. Research by Tladinyane (2012) further shows that people's commitment to and involvement in their careers, occupations and organizations are significantly enhanced by strong career enablers.

Career Drivers

The career drivers comprise people's intrinsic motivations for their career actions and intentionality. Individuals' career action motivations are reflected in their career purpose (a sense of having a career calling and a higher purpose of being of service to the broader society), career directedness (a sense of clarity about future career directions and goals, where and how to find support for achieving one's career goals or finding/creating/designing new job/employment opportunities), and career venturing (the willingness and intentionality to take risks in finding/creating/designing and experimenting with new career opportunities) (Coetzee 2008). Whilst the career enablers help individuals to open up to new potentialities and make sense of their lives, the career drivers constitute the motivation and drive to give their life identity, to help express, create or define who they are in the career construction/design process.

Coetzee's (2008) notion of career drivers stems from the basic premise of self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan 1985, 2000; Gagne and Deci 2005; Ryan and Deci 2000) that optimally individuals motivate themselves to achieve intrinsic goals. Internalized goals are appraised in terms of autonomous motivation, i.e. the pursuit of goals because of intrinsic motivation or identity congruence (Sheldon 2002). Autonomous motivation has been linked to higher levels of sustained effort in achieving goals and higher levels of effectiveness in the effort (Sheldon 2002). In line with research conducted by Salmela-Aro et al. (2012), the career drivers can be seen as intrinsic motivators in a process whereby individuals adjust to their working environment, make plans, set personal goals, strive to improve their future and evaluate

their potential and efficacy in the contemporary uncertain and changing working life. According to Weiss et al. (2004), people's sense of purpose and career directedness is expressed through the use of their strengths and aptitudes (career enablers). Individuals are drawn to enact their careers using abilities which represent their genius. The career drivers energize people and motivate them towards experimenting with new or alternative career and employment possibilities that are based on their viewpoints of the possible selves they could become or the possible working roles they could experience (Coetzee 2008; Schreuder and Coetzee 2011). Tladinyane (2012) found that people's commitment to and involvement in their careers, occupations and organizations are significantly enhanced by strong career drivers. A study by Coetzee and Schreuder (2012) indicated people's career drivers as significant predictors of their job and career satisfaction and perceiving their work as meaningful.

Career Harmonizers

Coetzee's (2008) notion of career harmonizers is anchored in Ryff's (1989) and Diener et al.'s (2010) theories of human flourishing (psychological wellbeing) which capture the individual's self-perceived success in important areas such as self-esteem, positive relations with others, autonomy, personal growth, purpose, environmental mastery, and optimism. Coetzee (2008) describes the career harmonizers as important agentic processes that individuals employ to affect their psychological state of well-being. The career harmonizers comprise people's self-evaluations in terms of the following:

- *Self-esteem*: self-evaluation in terms of being capable, worthy, significant and effective in comparison to other members of the social group;
- *Behavioral adaptability*: the capacity to engage autonomously, proactively and courageously in the career action process, deal positively with setbacks, initiate effort and achieve psychological success;
- *Emotional literacy*: the ability to accept and express a range of emotional responses which facilitate career adaptive behaviors in the career construction/design process; and
- *Social connectivity*: the ability to connect with others, and establish and maintain mutually satisfying and supporting relationships in the pursuit of career goals.

Coetzee (2008) posits that these psychological attributes act as promoters of flexibility, resilience, and as controls by keeping the career drivers in balance so that people do not go overboard (or burn themselves out) in the process of constructing, designing, pursuing and reinventing their careers. In line with self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci 2000), the fulfillment of the psychological needs underpinning individuals' intrinsic motivations (i.e. need for competence, relatedness, and autonomy) contributes to human flourishing. A study by Coetzee and Schreuder (2012) indicated people's career harmonizers as significant predictors of their life satisfaction, job and career satisfaction, sense of happiness and perceiving their work as

meaningful. Ferreira (2012) found the career harmonizers to be positively related to individuals' job embedded-fit and -links (sense of belonging) in the organization.

According to Coetzee (2008), the various facets of an individual's psychological career resources repertoire need to be well-developed to enable optimal vocational development and agency in the career action (self-design) system. Underdeveloped facets hinder the optimal functioning of other facets and negatively influence the potentiality for self-empowering career action and agency. Clearly differentiated career preferences and values and strong self-evaluations in terms of the career enablers, career drivers and career harmonizers are indicative of an intrinsically motivated self-regulatory capacity driven by a crystallized self-awareness of the strengths of the repertoire of psycho-social career meta-capacities in successfully constructing and designing the life-career.

Study 1: Scale Development

Method

Based on the theoretical framework and operational definitions developed by Coetzee (2008), the researcher generated 70 items reflecting the various psychological career resources constructs outlined in the fifteen theoretical sub-dimensions identified by Coetzee (2008). The psychological career resources construct was presented as a multidimensional construct reflected in five latent dimensions: career preferences, career values, career drivers, career enablers and career harmonizers. Each of these latent factors possesses an a priori, and unique, set of sub-dimensions, each with its own set of items as indicators. Overall, the psychological career resources construct was presented to reflect fifteen second order factors, clustered into five higher order factors.

A content analysis was conducted involving five subject matter experts (two industrial psychologists and three academics in the industrial and organizational psychology field) to ensure that the items reflected the fifteen theoretical sub-dimensions. The subject matter experts reviewed a list of definitions corresponding to the component dimensions of psychological career resources. An iterative process was used to refine the definitions and to more accurately capture the conceptual intent of each dimension of psychological career resources. Inter-rater reliabilities between the five evaluators were 0.97 to 0.99. The content analysis provided preliminary support for the content validity for a measure of psychological career resources. A total of 6 items were removed due to redundancies which resulted in a 64-item pool for the research questionnaire (see Table 6.6 in the Appendix). Next, an independent quantitative study was conducted to further establish construct validity of the PCRI measure.

A cross-sectional survey was used to collect the data. Participants responded to the questionnaire by indicating the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement using a 6-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*).

Participants

The participants were a random sample of students who were registered across various fields of studies at a higher distance education institution for a particular year. The total sample of 2 997 students constituted 58 % females and 42 % males. Blacks represented 67 % and whites 33 % of the sample. The sample was represented by mostly single (52 %) and married (42 %) participants in the early adulthood life stage (25–40 years) (82 %). The mean age of participants was 32, which implies well-established internal career preferences and values (Schein 1990).

The sample had a relatively high educational level, with 84 % having attained a Grade 12 qualification, diploma and undergraduate higher education qualification. The sample represented participants in full-time employment (80 %), who occupied relatively high-level positions at senior and middle management level (18 %) and middle- and first-level supervisory level (54 %) in the service industry (81 %) with occupational expertise predominantly in the financial (21 %), education (11 %), human resource management (9 %), protective services (9 %), and health care (8 %) fields.

Permission to conduct the research was granted by the management and research ethics committee of the higher education institution. The PCRI questionnaire included a covering letter inviting subjects to participate in the study and assuring them that their individual responses would remain confidential and that the results would be used for research purposes only.

Results

The 64 items were subjected to a principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation after evaluating the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (0.89) and Bartlett's test of sphericity (approximate chi-square $= 10{,}730.949$; df $= 2016$; $p = 0.000$) values. Examination of the scree plot and factor interpretability revealed the presence of fifteen plausible factors. As shown in Table 6.6 (*see the Appendix*), factors with item-factor loadings of ≥ 0.30 were retained, revealing a fifteen-factor solution fitting the theoretical model proposed by Coetzee (2008). All 64 items were retained. Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficients ranged between 0.65 and 0.90 (see Table 6.1). Inter-subscale (bivariate) correlations (see Table 6.2) ranged between 0.10 and 0.58 ($p \leq 0.001$), suggesting acceptable construct and discriminant validity (Tabachnick and Fidell 2007) of the Psychological Career Resources Inventory (PCRI) subscales.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) showed that the data for the PCRI fit the baseline measurement model well, indicating construct validity. The fit indices were RMSEA $= 0.05$, SRMR $= 0.05$ and CFI $= 0.97$ (good fit), which is in line with established joint fit criteria (Hu and Bentler 1999; Kline 2005). All the item loadings were moderate to strong ($> 0.58 - > 1.60$) indicators of the fifteen second-order constructs of the PCRI, which are, in turn, strong indicators of the overall psychological career resources construct, and thus its convergent validity properties.

Table 6.1 Means, standard deviations, and internal-consistency reliability estimates for the Psychological Career Resources Inventory in the development and validation samples

Subscale	Number of items	Development sample (n = 2,997)			Validation sample 1 (n = 318)		
		M	SD	Cronbach's alpha	M	SD	Cronbach's alpha
Stability/expertise (CP)	5	3.52	0.48	0.73	5.30	0.64	0.67
Managerial (CP)	4	2.84	0.77	0.75	4.48	1.16	0.85
Variety/creativity (CP)	4	3.17	0.72	0.70	5.05	0.85	0.83
Independence/autonomy (CP)	4	2.81	0.70	0.62	4.74	0.91	0.70
Subscale overall (CP)	17	3.09	0.67	0.84	4.89	0.89	0.88
Growth/development (CV)	3	3.58	0.46	0.74	5.49	0.66	0.71
Authority/influence (CV)	3	2.84	0.71	0.61	4.97	0.86	0.65
Subscale overall (CV)	6	3.21	0.59	0.74	5.23	0.76	0.75
Practical/creative skills (CE)	4	3.28	0.79	0.68	4.63	0.91	0.76
Self/other skills (CE)	4	3.4	0.53	0.62	4.93	0.79	0.78
Subscale overall (CE)	8	3.34	0.66	0.71	4.78	0.85	0.86
Career purpose (CD)	5	3.62	0.41	0.66	5.34	0.72	0.78
Career directedness (CD)	3	3.01	0.68	0.63	4.68	0.86	0.72
Career venturing (CD)	3	2.92	0.85	0.71	4.76	0.94	0.68
Subscale overall (CD)	11	3.18	0.65	0.78	4.93	0.84	0.83
Self-esteem (CH)	6	3.30	0.51	0.77	5.09	0.81	0.77
Behavioral adaptability (CH)	6	3.22	0.54	0.73	4.92	0.79	0.83
Emotional literacy (CH)	5	3.05	0.60	0.70	4.52	0.96	0.76
Social connectivity (CH)	5	3.33	0.55	0.66	5.04	0.76	0.77
Subscale overall (CH)	22	3.23	0.55	0.88	4.89	0.83	0.90

Total PCRI items = 64

CP career preference, *CV* career value, *CD* career driver, *CE* career enabler, *CH* career harmonizer

Table 6.2 Bivariate correlations between the Psychological Career Resources Inventory subscales in the development and validation samples

	Career preferences				Career values		Career enablers		Career drivers			Career harmonizers			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1 Stability/expertise (CP)	–	0.49	0.30	0.25	0.50	0.45	0.19	0.26	0.35	0.19	0.14	0.24	0.17	0.13	0.25
2 Managerial (CP)	0.49	–	0.20	0.24	0.29	0.61	n/s	n/s	n/s	n/s	n/s	0.11	0.05	0.07	0.10
3 Variety/creativity (CP)	0.47	0.34	–	0.55	0.43	0.32	0.53	0.39	0.37	0.35	0.45	0.34	0.37	0.20	0.24
4 Independence/autonomy (CP)	0.35	0.44	0.41	–	0.38	0.44	0.55	0.34	0.27	0.23	0.37	0.31	0.26	0.22	0.20
5 Growth/development (CV)	0.51	0.33	0.46	0.31	–	0.48	0.40	0.54	0.57	0.37	0.31	0.37	0.36	0.29	0.40
6 Authority/influence (CV)	0.32	0.59	0.35	0.53	0.41	–	0.33	0.28	0.22	0.12	0.11	0.22	0.27	0.19	0.23
7 Practical/Creative skills (CE)	0.19	0.18	0.29	0.21	0.34	0.24	–	0.67	0.40	0.43	0.39	0.36	0.46	0.25	0.32
8 Self/other skills (CE)	0.27	0.19	0.25	0.14	0.45	0.20	0.35	–	0.63	0.47	0.42	0.43	0.55	0.38	0.51
9 Career purpose (CD)	0.41	0.24	0.28	0.15	0.52	0.22	0.26	0.58	–	0.50	0.41	0.50	0.46	0.30	0.45
10 Career directedness (CD)	0.28	0.23	0.24	0.15	0.34	0.22	0.30	0.34	0.52	–	0.50	0.43	0.47	0.28	0.35
11 Career venturing (CD)	0.23	0.24	0.36	0.34	0.33	0.27	0.27	0.33	0.41	0.38	–	0.50	0.50	0.26	0.39
12 Self-esteem (CH)	0.31	0.26	0.23	0.17	0.39	0.23	0.31	0.51	0.54	0.42	0.34	–	0.50	0.38	0.46
13 Behavioral adaptability (CH)	0.20	0.14	0.26	0.15	0.32	0.18	0.29	0.47	0.42	0.38	0.32	0.58	–	0.54	0.55
14 Emotional literacy (CH)	0.17	0.14	0.15	0.12	0.29	0.19	0.22	0.38	0.34	0.32	0.23	0.47	0.45	–	0.59
15 Social connectivity (CH)	0.21	0.16	0.19	0.10	0.32	0.16	0.25	0.51	0.46	0.35	0.29	0.58	0.51	0.46	–

Correlations below the diagonal represent the development sample ($N = 2.997$); correlations above the diagonal represent the validation sample 1 ($N = 318$). The managerial (CP) variable did not correlate significantly with the career enabler and career driver variables in the validation sample 1. All other correlations for both the development and validation samples are all significant at $p \leq 0.05$

n/s not significant

Study 2: PCRI Validation

Method

Participants

A non-probability purposive sample of employed adults ($N = 318$) at managerial and staff levels in the field of industrial and organizational psychology participated in the study. Overall, the majority of the participants were blacks (76 %) and females (76 %) in the early adulthood life stage and establishment phase of their careers (84 % = 26–40 years). The participants occupied staff level (57 %) and managerial level (43 %) positions in the South African services industry. Participants responded to the PCRI questionnaire items by indicating the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement using a 6-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*).

Permission to conduct the research was granted by the management and research ethics committee of the higher education institution. The PCRI questionnaire included a covering letter inviting subjects to participate in the study and assuring them that their individual responses would remain confidential and that the results would be used for research purposes only.

Results

Unidimensionality, Construct Validity and Reliability of the PCRI

To establish the usefulness of the PCRI, a Rasch analysis was performed. The Rasch analysis evaluated the unidimensionality of the PCRI by calculating the infit and outfit chi-square statistics to gain an indication of how well the items measure the underlying constructs. The results of the Rasch analysis further confirmed the reliability and construct validity of the PCRI. In terms of internal consistency reliability, Table 6.3 show that all the PCRI dimensions obtained Cronbach's Alpha coefficients (internal consistency reliabilities) close to.65 and higher than the guideline of 0.70 (Hair et al. 2010). Inter-subscale correlations (see Table 6.2) ranged between 0.05 and 0.61 ($p \leq 0.05$), suggesting acceptable construct validity (Tabachnick and Fidell 2007) of the PCRI. The managerial career preference variable did not correlate significantly with the career enabler and career driver variables.

Overall, the Rasch findings suggest that the PCRI could be regarded as a reliable and useful instrument in the career development context. Table 6.3 shows that the person and item separation indices for all the dimensions are in line with the guideline (≥ 2.00) (Bond and Fox 2007; Fox and Jones 1998), indicating that the items of the sub-dimensions differentiate well among the measured variables and that the PCRI item placement could probably be replicated in other samples with confidence.

Table 6.3 Rasch analysis: Psychological Career Resources Inventory person and item statistics of validation sample 1

Dimension	Average measure (SD)	MNSQ infit (SD)	MNSQ outfit (SD)	Separation	Reliability	α
Stability/expertise (CP)						0.67
Person	2.40 (1.36)	0.99 (0.70)	1.00 (0.79)	0.86	0.42	
Item	0.00 (0.47)	0.99 (0.13)	1.00 (0.10)	5.46	0.97	
Managerial (CP)						0.85
Person	1.56 (1.90)	0.97 (0.99)	0.95 (0.97)	2.01	0.80	
Item	0.00 (0.40)	1.00 (0.06)	0.95 (0.08)	5.35	0.97	
Variety/creativity (CP)						0.83
Person	3.03 (2.04)	1.01 (0.99)	1.01 (0.97)	1.71	0.74	
Item	0.00 (0.46)	0.99 (0.17)	1.00 (0.15)	4.83	0.96	
Independence/autonomy (CP)						0.70
Person	1.53 (1.42)	0.99 (0.90)	0.97 (0.89)	1.31	0.63	
Item	0.00 (0.27)	0.99 (0.14)	0.97 (0.12)	3.87	0.94	
Scale overall (CP)						0.88
Growth/development (CV)						0.71
Person	1.28 (0.89)	1.04 (0.58)	1.04 (0.59)	2.04	0.81	
Item	0.00 (0.43)	0.99 (0.16)	1.04 (0.16)	6.98	0.98	
Authority/influence (CV)						0.65
Person	3.71 (1.76)	0.99 (1.06)	0.95 (1.03)	0.78	0.38	
Item	0.00 (0.63)	1.02 (0.24)	0.95 (0.22)	5.19	0.96	
Scale overall (CV)						0.75
Person	2.75 (1.98)	0.90 (1.00)	1.13 (1.63)	1.36	0.65	
Item	0.00 (1.33)	0.99 (0.23)	1.14 (0.46)	14.08	0.99	
Practical/creative skills (CE)						0.76
Person	2.56 (1.49)	1.00 (0.84)	1.00 (1.00)	1.36	0.65	
Item	0.00 (0.88)	0.98 (0.24)	1.00 (0.23)	9.92	0.99	
Self/other skills (CE)						0.78
Person	1.61 (1.59)	1.00 (0.97)	1.00 (0.97)	1.66	0.73	
Item	0.00 (0.07)	1.00 (0.22)	1.00 (0.22)	0.00	0.00	
Scale overall (CE)						0.86
Person	2.00 (1.53)	1.00 (0.87)	1.00 (0.88)	1.52	0.70	
Item	0.00 (0.29)	1.00 (0.26)	1.00 (0.27)	3.70	0.93	

Table 6.3 (continued)

Dimension	Average measure (SD)	MNSQ infit (SD)	MNSQ outfit (SD)	Separation	Reliability	α
Person	1.58 (1.30)	1.01 (0.75)	1.02 (0.76)	2.03	0.81	
Item	0.00 (0.29)	1.00 (0.30)	1.02 (0.33)	4.13	0.94	
Career purpose (CD)						0.78
Person	2.78 (1.70)	0.98 (0.95)	0.97 (0.93)	1.01	0.51	
Item	0.00 (0.26)	1.01 (0.17)	0.97 (0.13)	2.59	0.87	
Career directedness (CD)						0.72
Person	1.87 (1.62)	0.94 (0.85)	1.05 (1.12)	1.28	0.70	
Item	0.00 (1.02)	1.02 (0.29)	1.05 (0.34)	11.99	0.99	
Career venturing (CD)						0.68
Person	2.32 (1.97)	0.89 (1.22)	1.10 (1.69)	1.51	0.69	
Item	0.00 (1.21)	1.09 (0.60)	1.14 (0.69)	13.95	0.99	
Scale overall (CD)						0.83
Person	1.71 (1.18)	1.04 (0.73)	1.06 (0.87)	1.77	0.81	
Item	0.00 (0.71)	1.03 (0.17)	1.06 (0.16)	9.96	0.99	
Self-esteem (CH)						0.77
Person	2.12 (1.57)	0.99 (0.81)	0.98 (0.81)	1.26	0.61	
Item	0.00 (0.37)	1.00 (0.13)	0.98 (0.12)	4.84	0.96	
Behavioral adaptability (CH)						0.83
Person	2.06 (1.71)	0.99 (0.83)	0.99 (0.83)	1.78	0.76	
Item	0.00 (0.35)	1.00 (0.26)	0.99 (0.23)	4.14	0.95	
Emotional literacy (CH)						0.76
Person	1.12 (1.34)	1.00 (0.84)	1.01 (0.85)	1.58	0.71	
Item	0.00 (0.13)	1.01 (0.23)	1.01 (0.26)	1.89	0.78	
Social connectivity (CH)						0.77
Person	2.60 (1.91)	1.00 (1.12)	1.00 (1.13)	1.48	0.69	
Item	0.00 (0.24)	1.00 (0.26)	1.00 (0.24)	2.53	0.86	
Scale overall (CH)						0.90
Person	1.31 (1.07)	1.06 (0.63)	1.04 (0.62)	2.58	0.87	
Item	0.00 (0.33)	1.00 (0.24)	1.04 (0.27)	5.18	0.96	

$N = 318$; *MNSQ* mean square

Table 6.4 Average variance extracted estimates for each higher order PCRI factor vs the squared interconstruct correlations (SIC) associated with the relevant higher order factor (validation sample 1)

		SIC				
	AVE	CP	CV	CE	CD	CH
CP	0.58	1.00	1.10	0.36	0.41	0.24
CV	0.70	1.10	1.00	0.45	0.41	0.36
CE	0.83	0.36	0.45	1.00	0.68	0.53
CD	0.70	0.41	0.41	0.68	1.00	0.71
CH	0.71	0.24	0.36	0.53	0.71	1.00

$n = 318$; *CP* career preferences, *CV* career values, *CE* career enablers, *CD* career drivers, *CH* career harmonizers, *AVE* average variance extracted, *SIC* squared interconstruct correlations

The fit statistics (shown in Table 6.3) further confirm the unidimensionality and validity of the PCRI. The average outfit mean squares are in line with the guidelines of Wilson (2005) which suggest $\geq 0.75 \leq 1.33$ as indicating overall satisfactory model fit. Table 6.3 shows that the infit and outfit chi-square statistics for the person and item measures are equal to or close to 1.00 as suggested by Cervellione et al. (2009), confirming the construct validity and reliability of the PCRI subscale items and the PCRI as a measure of the psychological career resources construct. In agreement with the guidelines provided by Bond and Fox (2007), no item underfits (fit statistics ≤ 0.70) or person underfits (fit statistics ≥ 1.30) were detected. The item infit and outfit statistics were all ≤ 2.00 (Bond and Fox 2007) which indicates that useful and logical information was obtained from the participants and that participants in other settings will most probably provide the same answers. The person infit and outfit statistics indicate that the individual respondents responded to the items in a consistent manner.

Discriminant Validity

The magnitude of the intercorrelations shown in Table 6.2 suggests that the items defining the fifteen subdimensions of the PCRI do not possess excessive overlapping item content, suggesting discriminant validity among the PCRI subdimensions. However, to establish the intra-dimensional discriminant validity of the PCRI, the average variance extracted (AVE) estimates were compared with the squared interconstruct correlations (SIC) associated with each of the five higher order PCRI factors.

The results shown in Table 6.4 show that the AVE values are mostly larger than or close to the SIC values, providing supportive evidence for the intra-dimensional discriminant validity of the PCRI higher order factors. Dimensions that do not seem to show acceptable discriminant validity are the career preferences versus the career values constructs. The bivariate correlations (see Table 6.2) indicated relative strong correlations between the managerial career preference and the authority/influence career value ($r = 0.61$) and the stability/expertise career preference and the growth/development value ($r = 0.50$) suggesting thus overlapping item content.
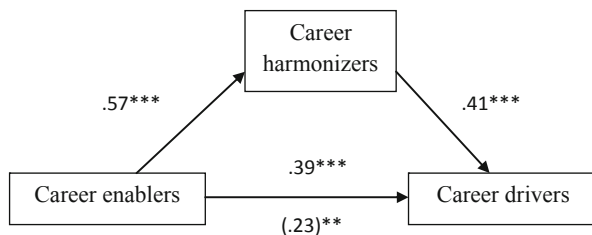
Fig. 6.1 Mediator model examining the direct and indirect relation of the career enablers and career drivers and the mediation effect of the career harmonizers. Values in parentheses represent the indirect effect of the career enablers via the career harmonizers (mediator) on the career drivers. All path coefficients are significant at $p \leq 0.01$. The standardized regression weights (path coefficients) are a bias-corrected bootstrap approximation at the 95 % corrected confidence interval (two-sided). $n = 318$

Mediating Effects of the Career Harmonizers

A simple mediation model with the bootstrapping approach, as described by Preacher and Hayes (2008), was calculated to examine Coetzee's (2008) proposition that the career harmonizers act as promoters of flexibility and resiliency, and as controls to keep the career drivers in balance so that people do not go overboard (or burn themselves out) in the process of pursuing and reinventing their careers. The career enablers are seen as the practical and creative skills, and the self-management and interpersonal relations skills people use to plan, pursue, manage or reinvent their career development in a particular socio-cultural context (Coetzee 2008; Schreuder and Coetzee 2011). Recognizing that the cross-sectional nature of the research design does not allow for casual inferences from the data analyses (Wu and Zumbo 2008), the focus was on correlational inferences to identify the extent to which the mediator variable (the career harmonizer construct) accounted for the direct and indirect relationship between the independent variable (the career enablers construct) and the dependent variable (career drivers construct). The magnitude of the direct and indirect effects (standardized path coefficients) between the variables was therefore examined (see Fig. 6.1). To establish the unique effect of the mediator (career harmonizers) on the dependent variable (career drivers), the analyses controlled for the independent variable (the career enablers construct) and for gender and age.

As shown in Fig. 6.1, the relation between the career enablers and the career drivers was significantly mediated by the career harmonizers ($p \leq 0.001$). The career harmonizers variable turned to zero in the equation. The career drivers variable related positively to the career enablers and career harmonizer variables. The career enablers had a significant direct effect on the career harmonizers (0.57; $p = 0.001$) and the career drivers (0.39; $p \leq 0.001$). Overall, the results suggest that high scores on the career enablers increased the scores on the career harmonizers. In turn, high scores on the career harmonizers significantly increased the scores on the career drivers. The unique direct effects of the career harmonizers (0.41; $p = 0.001$) on the career drivers were large in magnitude. Bootstrapping results showed that the career enablers had also a significant indirect effect on the career drivers as mediated through the career

harmonizers. The confidence intervals for each indirect pathway excluded zero, thus providing significant support for the indirect effects between the career enablers and the career drivers as mediated by the career harmonizers ($SE = 0.23$; $CI = 0.29$ to 0.49; $p = 0.01$). However, as shown in parentheses in Fig. 6.1, the strength of the relation of the career enablers to the career drivers was substantially reduced after accounting for the mediating effect of the career harmonizers. The results thus provide supportive evidence for Coetzee's (2008) proposition about the balancing effect of the career harmonizers on the career drivers.

Study 3: PCRI Validation

Method

Participants

A non-probability purposive sample of employed adults ($N = 358$) at managerial and staff levels employed in a human resource capacity in the economic and management sectors participated in the study. Overall, the majority of the participants were blacks (84 %) and females (76 %) in the early adulthood life stage and establishment phase of their careers (84 % = 26–40 years). The participants occupied staff level (53 %) and managerial level (47 %) positions in the South African services industry. Participants responded to the PCRI questionnaire items by indicating the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement using a 6-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*).

Permission to conduct the research was granted by the management and research ethics committee of the higher education institution. The PCRI questionnaire included a covering letter inviting subjects to participate in the study and assuring them that their individual responses would remain confidential and that the results would be used for research purposes only.

Results

Inter-subscale (bivariate) correlations (see Table 6.5) ranged between 0.14 and 0.51 ($p \leq 0.01$), confirming acceptable construct and discriminant validity (Tabachnick and Fidell 2007) of the Psychological Career Resources Inventory (PCRI) subscales.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) showed that the data for the PCRI fit the baseline measurement model well, indicating construct validity. The fit indices were $RMSEA = 0.07$, $SRMR = 0.05$ and $CFI = 0.92$ (good fit), which is in line with established joint fit criteria (Hu and Bentler 1999; Kline 2005). All the item loadings were moderate to strong ($> 0.58 - > 1.04$) indicators of the fifteen second-order constructs of the PCRI, which are, in turn, strong indicators of the overall psychological career resources construct, and thus its convergent validity properties.

Table 6.5 Internal consistency reliability and bivariate correlations between the Psychological Career Resources Inventory subscales in validation sample 2

	α	Career preferences				Career values		Career enablers		Career drivers			Career harmonizers			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1 Stability/expertise (CP)	0.69	–														
2 Managerial (CP)	0.69	0.39	–													
3 Variety/creativity (CP)	0.76	0.42	0.44	–												
4 Independence/Autonomy (CP)	0.76	0.24	0.37	0.45	–											
5 Growth/development (CV)	0.76	0.45	0.35	0.46	0.31	–										
6 Authority/influence (CV)	0.61	0.23	0.37	0.35	0.43	0.29	–									
7 Practical/creative skills (CE)	0.82	0.30	0.34	0.46	0.30	0.42	0.42	–								
8 Self/other skills (CE)	0.70	0.34	0.26	0.36	0.19	0.45	0.22	0.58	–							
9 Career purpose (CD)	0.80	0.42	0.38	0.46	0.23	0.61	0.26	0.49	0.57	–						
10 Career directedness (CD)	0.74	0.27	0.33	0.33	0.30	0.31	0.28	0.45	0.43	0.48	–					
11 Career venturing (CD)	0.87	0.16	0.21	0.26	0.23	0.22	0.25	0.27	0.27	0.28	0.34	–				
12 Self-esteem (CH)	0.84	0.27	0.29	0.30	0.19	0.39	0.17	0.40	0.43	0.53	0.41	0.35	–			
13 Behavioral adaptability (CH)	0.77	0.30	0.24	0.36	0.22	0.41	0.25	0.42	0.42	0.51	0.37	0.31	0.44	–		
14 Emotional literacy (CH)	0.79	0.27	0.21	0.27	0.21	0.34	0.18	0.32	0.28	0.35	0.29	0.22	0.37	0.54	–	
15 Social connectivity (CH)	0.79	0.24	0.18	0.24	0.14	0.31	0.19	0.27	0.36	0.43	0.29	0.19	0.48	0.50	0.49	–

$N = 358$; correlations are all significant at $p \leq 0.01$

Discussion

Overall, the results suggest that psychological career resources could be represented by the fifteen-factor model postulated by Coetzee (2008). The results further confirmed the measurement accuracy, validity and usefulness of the PCRI as a multidimensional measure of individuals' psychological career resources. Research by Coetzee and Esterhuizen (2010), Ferreira (2012), Symington (2012) and Venter (2012) further confirmed the internal-consistency reliability and construct validity of the 15-factor PCRI. Moreover, research (Coetzee and Esterhuizen 2010; Coetzee and Schreuder 2009; Ferreira 2012; Ferreira et al. 2010; Symington 2012; Venter 2012) provides supportive evidence of the predictive (nomological) validity of the PCRI constructs. Overall, the internal consistency reliabilities confirm the usefulness of the PCRI as a research and career assessment instrument. The validation sample 1 (study 2) results indicated a measure of overlap between the career values and preferences which may suggest that the PCRI does not differentiate well between these two constructs as posited by Super (1995). However, the confirmatory factor analyses of the validation sample 2 (study 3) did not indicate overlapping items and rather confirmed the convergent and discriminant validity of the PCRI subscales.

The results also provided supportive evidence for Coetzee's (2008) proposition about the balancing effect of the career harmonizers on the career drivers. The substantive mediating effect of the career harmonizers in the career enabler-career driver relation in study 2, suggests their importance in helping individuals to flourish in their career action project, career construction and development. Strengthened by the career enablers (practical/creative and self/other skills), the career harmonizers appear to act as important agentic processes that, in turn, enhance individuals' career drivers (career action motivators). Research (Coetzee and Esterhuizen 2010) showed that strong career drivers promote health-promoting behaviors that lead to an increase in the individual's physical and emotional well-being and an optimistic attitude toward the self and one's life in general. The career drivers relate to having a sense of calling or higher purpose and goal-directed intentionality towards one's career development (Coetzee 2008) which are important psycho-social capabilities for the career self-designing process. Symington (2012) found the career enablers and career harmonizers to positively predict individuals' career resilience. Coetzee and Esterhuizen (2010) found positive self-esteem to be related to people's optimism about life in general. Research by Symington (2012) shows the career enablers and career drivers to positively predict individuals' career self-management drive. The career enablers and career preferences positively predict individuals' openness to change and proactivity while the career preferences and career values appear to be strong predictors of individuals' generalized self-efficacy (Symington 2012).

Future Directions for Research on the Psychological Career Resources Inventory

Future research could focus on further refinement and purification of the PCRI. The stability of the structure of the PCRI needs to be more fully tested by replicating studies using other diverse samples and applying group confirmatory factor analysis to assess the structural equivalence of the PCRI for gender, race, and age groups for example. It is also important to show the convergence of the PCRI with other measures of career meta-capacities and related concepts like career maturity, career adaptability, psycho-social employability, hardiness, and flourishing. The use of self-report measures may also pose threats to the reliability of data and hence the validity of inferences due to the influence of social desirability and poor self-insight. The Rasch analyses in the validation sample addressed the concerns about social desirability. To deal with the issue of poor self-insight, career practitioners need to verify the PCRI results of clients in a career counseling session.

Practical Implications for Career Counseling and Guidance

Considering the relevance of the constructs measured by the PCRI to the contemporary career development context, the theoretical psychological career resources framework (Coetzee 2008) and the PCRI can be regarded as useful career counselling tools to deepen client self-awareness and self-insight. Within the context of contextual action theory (Young et al. 2005), the PCRI is intended to be used as an assessment tool that facilitates client self-understanding and exploration, rather than to make predictions or recommendations. In addition, the information produced from the assessment is seen as something to be shared in a joint action project between the client and the career practitioner. Clients should be encouraged to express their feelings about the usefulness and accuracy of the psychological career resources profile that emerged from the PCRI assessment. A discussion of the client's strengths and areas that appear to be underdeveloped and that need further enrichment provides a mechanism for helping clients to make sense of their subjective experiences of career satisfaction or dissatisfaction and to facilitate agency, adaptability and career action. As suggested by McMahon and Watson (2012), the goal of career assessment is to promote career exploration and self-exploration; "it is less about the instrument used and more about the process in which it is used" (p. 441).

The PCRI may be a useful instrument that could be combined with qualitative postmodern narrative career counseling approaches. McMahon and Watson (2012) suggest, for example, an integrative structured interview process using story crafting questions to integrate narrative career counseling with a quantitative career assessment process. Using story crafting questions to guide self-exploration, the PCRI profile results could be used to form the basis for an interactive process between the career practitioner and client. This approach would provide an open way to the career practitioner to focus on how the client sees the world and deal with the diverse

cultural attitudes and traditions regarding work and career by valuing the uniqueness of individual narratives (Sharf 2010, p. 345). Kidd (2007, p. 106) states that quantitative assessment techniques complement postmodern narrative approaches by helping clients not only to organize their knowledge of themselves and their situation, but also gain better self-understanding.

Clients can be guided to reflect on their PCRI profile and how they can improve their subjective experiences of work and career success by developing and capitalizing on the strengths of their psychological career resources. They can also be guided to reflect on how their psychological career resources influenced their career identity and self-concept and their capability to deal with challenging career experiences. While the career construction, deconstruction and co-construction process suggested by Savickas (2010) may help clients to gain self-clarity and direct new action, knowledge of their psychological career resources strengths may instill the courage and fortitude to actively engage in the career self-designing and action process. Clients engage the world by action, action prompts further self-making, identity shaping, and career constructing (Savickas 2010). The client's psychological career resources profile reflects the psychological self and its career-related meta-capacities. These capacities act as the inner compass for assuring individuals' wellbeing and the resources that allow them to discover their potentiality for career success in turbulent contexts. Knowledge of the strengths of one's psychological career resources instill the motivation and confidence in one's efficacy to deal effectively and creatively with new choices and challenges and to move one's career narrative in a new inspiring direction.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reflected on the importance of psycho-social career meta-capacities in contemporary career development. The development and validation of the PCRI as a measure of the multidimensional psychological career resources framework developed by Coetzee (2008) was reported. Future research directions of the refinement of the PCRI were recommended. The practical use of the PCRI in the postmodern career counseling context was discussed. Overall, it can be concluded that the psychological career resources (career meta-capacities) framework presented in this chapter may be useful to guide clients toward career wellbeing and psychological success in the 21st century work world.

Appendix

Table 6.6 Psychological Career Resources Inventory (PCRI) Exploratory Factor Analyses eigenvalues, factor loadings and communalities (development sample)

Factor/Item	Loadings														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Factor 1: Career preference—Stability/expertise															
I would prefer a career in which I could develop my skills and knowledge in depth	0.71														
I will feel successful in my career only if I can develop my specialist skills to a very high level of competence and expertise	0.47														
I would prefer a career that requires me to have special knowledge and skills to perform well	0.46														
I prefer to have a career that will give me a sense of security and stability	0.43														
I prefer a career where I could stay in my chosen field and move up to higher levels of authority and responsibility	0.38														
Factor 2: Career preference—Managerial															
I will feel successful in my career only if I become a senior manager in some organisation		0.63													
I would like to achieve a high level managerial position in an organisation		0.59													
I will feel satisfied in my career when I have the authority to make important decisions		0.57													
I would like to have people reporting directly to me		0.53													
Factor 3: Career preference—Variety/creativity															
I would prefer a career that offers me much variety and a constant flow of new and unexpected things to do			0.68												
I would prefer a career that allow me to be creative and to work on job tasks that no one else in the group or organisation has worked on before			0.61												
I would like a career that allows me to work on a variety of challenging tasks that will require me to use a wide range of skills and knowledge			0.52												
I like opportunities to invent new ideas or things			0.60												

Table 6.6 (continued)

Factor/Item	Loadings														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Factor 4: Career preference—Independence/autonomy															
I would prefer a career in which I have the independence to pick and choose my job tasks and projects and to get things done wherever and whenever I choose				0.67											
I prefer the freedom to make my own decisions, set my own schedule and hours, and establish my own priorities				0.65											
I will be most fulfilled in my career when I have been able to build something that is entirely the result of my own ideas and efforts				0.34											
I prefer a career where I would be able to move out of it into new and very different jobs whenever I feel the need to move on to something new				.31											
Factor 5: Career value—Growth/development															
I like to engage in further growth and learning opportunities					0.67										
I like to get involved in projects and tasks which help me to develop new knowledge and skills					0.66										
I like to be knowledgeable and skilled in what I do					0.44										
Factor 6: Career value—Authority/influence															
I like to have influence and authority over others						0.71									
I like to have the power to make important things happen						0.53									
I like opportunities to do important things without being constrained by rules and boundaries						0.44									
Factor 7: Career enabler—Practical/creative skills															
I am good at using my mind to visualize something that I want to create							0.63								
I am good at researching the information and ideas I need to obtain my goals							0.61								
I am good at putting my ideas into practical plans and making it work for me							0.52								
I am good at analysing situations and data to create new solutions							0.50								
Factor 8: Career enabler—Self/other skills															
I can discipline myself to keep my composure and get the most out of myself								0.62							
I make the most of my good qualities to achieve success in what I do								0.53							

Table 6.6 (continued)

Factor/Item	Loadings														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
I am good at working with people and helping them identify and overcome problems								0.53							
I like to help others grow and develop								0.43							
Factor 9: Career driver—Career purpose															
I am deeply aware of my and others' spiritual side, that we all have a life purpose and that all life forms are sacred									0.43						
I trust in the purpose of my life, that there is a reason for my being here in this world									0.55						
I have a strong desire to fulfill my dreams for the career I choose to pursue									0.44						
I prefer a career which allow me to contribute to the greater good of others									0.42						
I prefer to give my best in any job task or anything I am responsible for									0.41						
Factor 10: Career driver—Career directedness															
I am clear about what I would like to become career wise										0.56					
I know where and how to find the help and support I need to achieve my career goals										0.56					
It is easy for me to make up my mind about how and where to find a new job opportunity										0.54					
Factor 11: Career driver—Career venturing															
I am willing to explore new career opportunities											0.80				
I am willing to take the risk to go out and test new career experiences											0.63				
I prefer having the option to change my current occupation or career whenever I desire so											0.54				
Factor 12: Career harmonizer—Self-esteem															
I feel confident in my ability to achieve my goals												0.54			
I like myself and generally see myself as lovable												0.46			
I accept compliments easily												0.47			

Table 6.6 (continued)

Factor/Item	Loadings														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
I am in good physical shape and have plenty of energy												0.44			
I feel as worthwhile as anyone else												0.44			
I am optimistic about my future												0.39			
Factor 13: Career harmonizer—Behavioral adaptability															
I have the courage to deal with things and situations that I am afraid of													0.75		
I have the courage to handle my misfortunes and failures													0.74		
I can laugh at myself when I make a mistake													0.38		
It is easy for me to adapt to new things and situations in my life													0.36		
My values and beliefs help me to meet daily challenges													0.36		
I accept the mysteries of life and death													0.32		
Factor 14: Career harmonizer—Emotional literacy															
I express my feelings and/or needs to my close friends														0.54	
I can show when I am sad or angry														0.54	
I find it easy to express my feelings and/or needs clearly and directly														0.51	
I admit when I am afraid of something														0.51	
I can identify my emotions														0.48	
Factor 15: Career harmonizer—Social connectivity															
Other people like me															0.60
I get along well with others															0.55
I show others that I care about them															0.39
I find it easy to connect with others															0.36
I find it easy to ask others for or accept their help or support															0.38
Eigen values	5.04	1.71	1.43	1.08	3.04	1.21	2.68	1.29	3.53	1.22	1.07	6.36	1.54	1.40	1.05
Percent common variance	12.63	10.44	9.63	8.66	23.64	14.66	17.59	15.65	14.87	13.98	12.83	11.17	10.88	8.51	7.81

Loadings of development sample. Boldface values identify the strongest item-factor loading for each item $N = 2{,}997$

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Part II
Psycho-Social Career Meta-Capacities in Organizational Career Development

This part of the book explores the role of psycho-social career meta-capacities in the organizational context. The global skills shortages have led to an increase in career mobility opportunities for the professionally qualified knowledge worker which has brought with it several challenges for talent retention. The contemporary world of work therefore increasingly witnesses a global "war for talent" as a consequence of the boundarylessness of careers and greater career mobility and employment opportunities for people with specialized, scarce and hard-to-replace skills (João and Coetzee 2011). Recent research has indicated that the psychological attachment of employees remain important for business leaders in terms of attracting, motivating and retaining key talent (Coetzee and Gunz 2012; João and Coetzee 2011). People's inner work lives, their self-identities, inner career goals, motivations and desires, and the characteristics of their jobs have been shown to influence their attitudes toward their jobs and the organization (Amabile and Kramer 2012; Bothma and Roodt 2012; Hirschi 2012; Lumley 2009; Yuan et al. 2012) because these appear to act as a motivating force that generate feelings of engagement and commitment (Coetzee and De Villiers 2010; Meyer et al. 2012; Oyewobi et al. 2012).

A central challenge in enhancing employees' commitment and engagement is to create the working conditions that facilitate perceptions of fit or congruence between individuals' career self-concepts, values, needs and desires and the characteristics of their jobs (Lumley 2009), and the organization's cultural values, practices and objectives (Lumley 2009; Martins and Coetzee 2011). Although proponents of postmodern career constructivism and life design question the validity of traditional, objective-based matching approaches linking person to environment in a contemporary career development context, recent research provides evidence that fit and congruence still matter in today's organizational context (Durr II and Tracey 2009; see also chapter 7 by Wilkins & Tracey). However, as illustrated by the contributions in Part I, career practitioners are urged to follow a holistic approach by combining the traditional objective and quantitative career assessment approaches with postmodern subjective qualitative, narrative and constructivist approaches to account for the complexity and demands of the work environment and the career development needs of individuals.

The chapter contributions to this section promote understanding of the psycho-social career meta-capacities that influence employees' job and career satisfaction, affective commitment and engagement, and hence their decision to stay to leave.

In **chapter 7** (*Person-environment fit and vocational outcomes*), Kerrie Wilkins and Terence Tracey review the literature on definitions of congruence and the relation of interest-occupation congruence with different indicators of career satisfaction and productivity. They conclude that although research provides evidence of a moderate relation of interest-congruence and indicators of career satisfaction and productivity, the relation cannot be regarded as minor in importance. Their discussion supports the continued centrality and validity of interest-occupation congruence in relation to vocational outcomes in organizational career development counseling practices. The authors demonstrate that much of the moderation effects are related to several key moderators: how congruence is defined, the presence of prestige, individual interest flexibility, environmental interest constrain and cultural variance. They recommend that career practitioners take into account a client's interest flexibility, cultural variants, and the characteristics of the occupation or major environment when using interest measures.

In **chapter 8**, (*Career anchors as a career meta-capacity in organizational career development*), Melinde Coetzee and Dries Schreuder review the basic and most recent research literature on Schein's career anchor theory and its relevance to contemporary career development. Being a product of the interaction between the individual and the workplace, the career self-concept (expressed in a dominant career anchor) acts as an important motivational element of people's internal career and their career choices and attitudes. They conclude that the career anchor framework of Schein continues to add value to the practice of career counselling and guidance in today's organizational context. The authors posit that people's career anchors (as a personal resource) act as the lens by means of which individuals interpret and negotiate their career experiences, cope with and adapt to career transitions in an attempt to optimize the person-environment fit harmonics. Based on a review of the research literature, they recommend that career practitioners and managers engage in career anchor profiling and career discussions with employees to increase understanding of the interests, needs, values and motivations that drive the internal career satisfaction, engagement and commitment of employees.

Chapter 9 (*Exploring the theoretical relationship between psychological ownership and career anchors*), written by Chantal Olckers and Yvonne du Plessis, introduces the notion of psychological ownership in relation to employees' career anchors. They posit that psychological ownership as a cognitive-affective state of feeling possessive and psychologically tied to material objects (e. g. tools and work) and immaterial objects (e. g. ideas and workspace) along with career anchors contribute to the dynamics of talent retention and contemporary career development in the organizational context. They postulate in their discussion relations between the seven psychological ownership dimensional attributes and the underlying career interests, motives and values of the eight career anchors described by Schein. Their discussion suggests that both psychological ownership and career anchors influence

employees' affective organizational commitment and job satisfaction and should be considered by career practitioners and managers in retaining talent.

Chapter 10 (*Career meta-competencies in the retention of employees*) by Nadia Ferreira explores the relationship between psycho-social career meta-competencies (psychological career resources, career adaptability and hardiness) and retention-related dispositions (job embeddedness and organizational commitment). Being multi-dimensional behavioral constructs, she then discusses these constructs in terms of their cognitive, affective, conative (motivational) and interpersonal characteristics and how these relate to organizational retention practices. Her discussion provides research evidence that individuals' psycho-social career meta-competencies influence their retention-related dispositions. She recommends that career practitioners use quantitative career assessment measures to construct employees' psychological career profiles comprising these variables in order to inform organizational retention practices.

Finally, the themes, research evidence and discussions presented in the chapter contributions demonstrate the relevance of person-environment fit in contemporary career development. The notion of person-environment fit is regarded as a cornerstone of the field of vocational psychology and research provides extensive evidence of its continued centrality in the organizational context (Durr II and Tracey 2009). The discussions by the various authors suggest that contemporary organizational career development practices need to take cognizance of the personal variables (interests, career anchors, psychological ownership, career adaptability, hardiness, psychological career resources, job embeddedness and organizational commitment) that influence the fit harmonics with the organizational environment. However, career practitioners and managers need to realize that the combined effects of mergers, downsizings, evolution of technological advances in an information- and knowledge-driven economy, job restructurings, and new organizational designs have a profound impact on organizational career pathing practices. In many organizations it may become increasingly difficult to formulate individual career plans that are based on a consistent path of jobs. The 21st century workplace requires of employees to be more proactive, flexible and adaptable, boundaryless and protean in the ways they attempt to manage their movements along a career path that has the potential to shift (or be eliminated) at any given time (Greenhaus et al. 2010).

Optimal person-environment (job, occupation, organization) fit or congruence may increasingly be more difficult to achieve in the 21st century workplace. Career practitioners need to recognize how individuals' psycho-social career meta-capacities (especially their interests and career anchors) and the characteristics of their jobs, occupations and the organizational culture influence their perceptions and experiences of fit. Wilkins and Tracey (see chapter 7) found, for example, that individuals who highly value interest-occupation fit appear to attach higher value to interests-occupation fit. They further found that occupations that are more constraining than others require greater interest-occupation fit from those in the occupation. Interest-occupation fit also appears to have greater centrality in more individualistic cultures than other cultures. Greenhaus et al (2010) suggest that organizations consider an alternative approach to career path development, one that facilitates the construction

of realistic career paths for employees that provide them with flexibility in career mobility. Such an approach, for example, defines the various career path options within the organization by actual job behavior requirements (knowledge, skills, behaviors) of families of jobs which are linked to logically possible and cross-functional paths of progression among these job families. Cross-functional paths may help to leverage company or functional experiences into new environments. Such an approach may further expand career mobility opportunities for employees and limit the constraints that may negatively influence the perceived fit between their interests and the occupation, job or organization. Toderi and Sarchielli (2011) suggest that organizational career development must assist employees to be more protean in adjusting to the higher mobility requirements of different work contexts and the more frequent transitions they will have to cope with. On the other hand, organizations need to socialize employees to help them adjust to the new work context and changing job roles. Managing organizational socialization and shifting work-role and -context adjustment may also help to retain valuable staff members.

The research literature (as discussed in the various chapters presented in Part II) provides empirical evidence that person-environment incongruence relates, amongst other vocational outcomes, to job and career dissatisfaction, and lower engagement and commitment. In this regard, it appears that the traditional quantitative career assessment measures are still deemed important and useful in order for career practitioners and managers to understand how individuals' psycho-social career resources or meta-capacities influence their psychological attachment to the organization. However, given the uncertain and changing nature of organizational career paths and career possibilities in today's world of work, career practitioners need to expand their career counseling and guidance approaches to include assessment and counselling techniques and practices (such as those illustrated in Part I, for example) that enable individuals to become active agents in the design of their careers. Research by Ferreira (2012) shows, for example, that psycho-social career meta-competencies strengthen individuals' sense of job embedded fit with the organization. The chapter contributions in Part I also illustrate that the techniques of qualitative, narrative, and constructivist approaches to career counselling assist in developing individuals' career meta-capacities.

McMahon and Watson (2012) emphasize that career assessment (quantitative or qualitative) should be used in a critical way with the goal to stimulate continued self-discovery, career exploration and self-exploration given the changing and unstable nature of work. The challenges posed by the complexities inherent to the dynamics of contemporary career development require that career assessment becomes less about the instruments used and more about the process in which they are used. Today's career practitioners should therefore complement quantitative career assessment measures that assess person-environment fit with the narrative career counselling processes which value subjectivity, active agency, meaning making, the importance of context and the interconnection of individuals and environments (McMahon and Watson 2012). Employees must increasingly realize that achieving an optimal fit in today's workplace or in one's working life may not be possible and should rather strive for person-environment integration by adapting to shifting work

and social role expectations and changes in the person-environment harmonics (Savickas and Porfeli 2012). Career practitioners must therefore focus on helping clients develop the psycho-social career meta-capacities they need to become career adaptable and flexible in terms of their interests and needs. Well-developed psycho-social career meta-capacities enable self-regulated active career agency and the confidence to solve the unfamiliar, complex career-related situations, events and developmental tasks posed by today's working environment.

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Chapter 7
Person Environment Fit and Vocational Outcomes

Kerrie G. Wilkins and Terence J. G. Tracey

Abstract Person–Environment fit (P-E fit) is a salient construct within vocational psychology (Parsons, Choosing a vocation, 1909). People are believed to do better and are more satisfied when there is a fit between the person and the characteristics of their occupational environment. There are many dimensions on which this matching can be done (e.g., abilities, needs, and values), but the most common is the congruence of interests with occupational environments (i.e., interest–occupation congruence). It is theorized that the greater the interest-occupational environment congruence, the greater the career outcomes such as satisfaction and productivity (Dawis and Lofquist, A psychological theory of work adjustment, 1984; Holland, Making vocational choices: A theory of vocational personalities and work environments, 1997; Tracey and Robbins, Journal of Vocational Behavior, 69:64–89, 2006). However, the literature on this relation has yielded equivocal results (Assouline and Meir, Journal of Vocational Behavior, 31:319–332, 1987; Spokane, Journal of Vocational Behavior, 26:306–343, 1985; Spokane et al., Journal of Vocational Behavior, 57:137–187, 2000; Tsabari et al., Journal of Career Assessment, 13:216–232, 2005). This has caused some to question the significance of the interest-occupational environment congruence (e.g., Arnold, Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 77:95–113, 2005; Tinsley, Journal of Vocational Behavior, 56:405−423, 2000) while others view the small to moderate relation as comparable to trait–behavior relations in the personality domain (Rounds and Tracey, Career counseling: Contemporary topics in vocational psychology, pp. 1−44, 1990; Spokane, Journal of Vocational Behavior, 26:306–343, 1985). The focus of this chapter is on reviewing the basic and most recent research on interest-occupational congruence, suggesting reasons for the discrepancy in this relation and examining empirically validated moderators of the congruence-career outcomes relation.

Keywords Interest-occupation congruence · Person-environment fit · Occupational environment · Holland's theory · Congruence-career outcome relation · Occupational choice · Vocational interests · RIASEC model · Vocational types

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Holland's Theory and Congruence-Outcome Relation

For decades now, Person-Environment fit (P-E fit) has served as a cornerstone of vocational psychology, specifically, within major theories of occupational choice (e.g., Dawis and Lofquist 1984; Holland 1985, 1997). The basic premise being, people do better and are more satisfied when there is a fit between the person and the characteristics of their occupational environment. P-E fit has been supported by a myriad of empirical examinations (Kristof 1996; Kristof-Brown et al. 2005) and they vary with respect to how fit is defined (e.g., abilities, needs, and values). The most common dimension however is the congruence of interests with occupational environments (i.e., interest–occupation congruence). Pioneers have suggested that "the developments with regard to the diagnostic meaning of interests [specifically] would prove to be one of the great, if not the greatest, contributions to applied psychology" (Strong 1943, p. vii). Vocational interests reflect a person's preferences for behaviors, situations, contexts in which activities occur, and/or the outcomes associated with the preferred activities (Rounds 1995; Su et al. 2009). The most heavily researched and arguably the most ubiquitous model of vocational interests is John Holland's (1959, 1997) theory of vocational types. The widespread use of Holland's theory is largely a result of his commensurate model of representing both interests and occupations.

Holland (1959, 1997) proposed that both individuals and their environments can be organized into six vocational types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional; collectively referred to as the RIASEC model. The types, as illustrated in Fig. 7.1, are arranged around a hexagonal structure with their relative degree of similarity being indicated by their proximity. Adjacent types (e.g. artistic and social) are most related, alternate types (e.g. artistic and enterprising) have an intermediate relationship, and the opposite types (e.g. artistic and conventional) are least related. Research using large representative samples of college students (Day and Rounds 1998; Day et al. 1998), as well as structural meta-analysis of RIASEC correlation indices (Tracey and Rounds 1993), has supported the hexagonal ordering of the six RIASEC types. Furthermore, the contextual nature of Holland's interest types led Armstrong et al. (2008) to suggest that these types could provide a starting point for creating a complete "atlas" for integrating individual differences. Holland's hexagonal model has received empirical support for its parsimonious interpretation of the RIASEC interest structure.

Holland (1997) further proposed that work environments could be organized using the six RIASEC types. He suggested that individuals are drawn to work environments that are compatible with their interests. This compatibility influences the work attitudes and behaviors of employees such that they tend to be more satisfied, more successful and more likely to persist. This has become known as the "congruence hypothesis." Holland (1997), also realized that many subenvironments can exist within an organization. So seeing that occupational environments are rarely ever homogenous, Holland suggested assessing the subenvironment that has the largest influence on the individual when examining compatibility. Occupations and college majors are salient examples of such environments and also tend to have the largest impact on behavior. When applied to students in postsecondary education, we refer
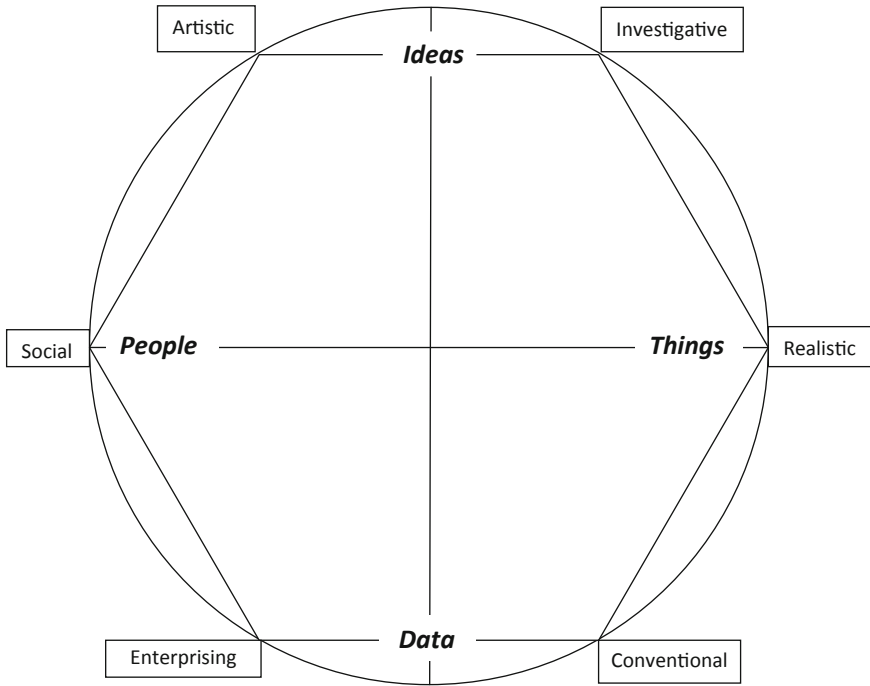
Fig. 7.1 Spatial representation of Holland's RIASEC types and Prediger's underlying dimensions

to the level of fit between a student's interest and his or her major's environment as *interest-major congruence*. In the case of employees, we refer to this congruence as *interest-occupation congruence*. The degree to which the two fit strongly impacts how congruence scores relate to career outcomes (i.e. congruence-outcome relation).

Congruence-Outcome Research

Gottfredson (1996) posited five global career outcomes: performance, satisfaction, persistence, economic stability and identity. A host of researchers over the last century has examined the relation between Holland's (1997) congruence hypotheses and the first three of these career outcomes. This is largely due to the availability of established measures. The following paragraphs offer a review of the most recent studies that have examined the congruence-outcomes.

With regard to higher education, performance is an especially important outcome indicator (Robbins et al. 2004). In general, past research has supported the theoretical link between P-E fit and performance (Nye et al. 2012). Performance is usually measured using grade point average (GPA) most typically assessed at the end of the first semester. However, the first year in college is a particularly labile time for students

which can lead to spurious results. To get a more accurate assessment, Tracey and Robbins (2006) examined GPA after the first and second years as well as at graduation using an initial sample of 80, 574 individuals enrolled in 87 colleges. Results indicated that congruence predicted GPA at all three time points regardless of institutional differences. Thus students enrolled in majors consistent with their interest tended to have higher GPA's than those individuals whose interest-major match was lower. Nye et al. (2012) also explored the congruence-performance relation. Similar to the findings in Tracey and Robbins (2006), Nye et al. (2012) found that congruence was positively related to performance. Individuals enrolled in majors similar to their interest profile had higher GPAs than those individuals whose interest-major match was lower. In the work domain, Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) conducted a meta-analysis on over 172 published articles, conference presentations, dissertations and working papers of individuals' pre and post entry into an occupation and found a positive relation between person-job fit and performance.

Persistence is another salient outcome within organizations and higher education. When individuals' interests are compatible with their environment, they are more likely to stay in an occupation or persist in their major. Although persistence has been examined in a number of ways (e.g. timely degree attainment, tenure, etc.), past research has consistently supported a positive association between interest congruence and persistence. One such study was conducted by Allen and Robbins (2010) who examined the relation between interest-major congruence and timely degree attainment using longitudinal student data from four year ($N = 3,072$) and two year ($N = 788$) postsecondary institutions. They found support for the congruence-timely degree attainment relation in both the two year and four year samples. Students whose interests matched their majors tended to graduate on time or even early. This can be attributed to the decreased likelihood of students switching majors when they have higher interest-major congruence. Switching majors would likely result in needing to complete extra course work and this in turn would prolong students graduation. Allen and Robbins (2010) findings were consistent with what these researchers previously found (Allen and Robbins 2008); interest-major fit positively predicted whether a student will stay in their entering major. These finding underscore the importance of effective career and educational planning for students and institutions as they actively promote timely degree attainment. With regard to the work domain, the relation between person-job and longer occupational tenure was supported by two meta analyses (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005; Morris 2003). Employees whose interests were congruent with their work environments tended to stay employed with these organizations longer. Furthermore, Donohue (2006) found that non-persisters in the process of changing careers had lower congruence scores with their previous occupations but tended to move towards careers that were more congruent with their personality profile.

The literature examining congruence and career outcomes has given a lot of focus to job satisfaction. In a meta-analysis conducted by Assouline and Meir's (1987), a significant relationship between congruence and job satisfaction was found across 53 correlations. Specifically, the mean congruence-job satisfaction correlation was 0.21 and after further breaking the data into groups according to type of environmental reference, the mean congruence-job satisfaction correlation exceeded 0.35.

In their investigation of 66 published congruence studies from 1985–1999, Spokane et al. (2000) found support for the relation between congruence and job satisfaction. This is consistent with their previous meta-analysis (Spokane 1985). Similarly, Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) found that job satisfaction was most strongly influenced by person-job fit in their meta-analysis of over 170 articles. In his meta-analysis, Morris (2003) too found a moderate relationship between interest congruence and job satisfaction. In examining the present and intended occupation of 42 nontraditional students who returned to college after deciding upon a job change, Oleski and Subich (1996) also found correlations between congruence and satisfaction of 0.32 (using the C index) and 0.33 (using the K-P index). Moreover, congruence ratios were substantially higher for respondents intended occupation (the one they wanted to change to) than they were for their present occupation. Such findings indicate that job satisfaction tends to be highest among employees whose interests are congruent with their work environment. Congruence has also been examined with regard to satisfaction in academic domains. Students with greater interest–major congruence tended to be more satisfied with their academic program.

It is clear from these P-E congruence results that fit matters. These findings suggest that the correspondence between the individual and his or her environment is important for predicting career and academic outcomes. In short, the results support Holland's (1997) hypothesis regarding congruence. So whether the outcome focus is solely on occupational or academic success indicators, the relation of the congruence of interests and environment to outcome has served as a defining function of many career theories and interventions. Despite this however, the magnitude of the congruence-outcome relation tends to be modest at best. This has resulted in a number of researchers calling for the abandonment of the centrality of the congruence-outcome relation in our theories (e.g. Arnold 2005; Tinsley 2000). In the following section we offer several explanations for this modest relation.

Justification for the Modest Congruence-Outcome relation

Self selection: As seen in the aforementioned studies, the congruence-outcome relation typically relies upon assessing the fit between interests and course major or occupation and then relating this to outcome. If congruence is at all operating, then individuals will choose majors and occupations that are in line with their interests. As such, there is relatively little variance in the congruence indices. This poses a very serious issue with this assessment. So, individuals with great amounts of "misfit" would likely leave the major or occupation very quickly and would presumably not be available for inclusion in research. If there is at least a modicum of congruence for individuals in actual majors and occupations, then there is little variance to account for in the congruence-outcome relation. The lack of variance does not indicate that there is no validity in the congruence-outcome relation as has been claimed (e.g., Tinsley 2000). So given the presence of self selection, it is not reasonable to expect a large relation in the congruence-outcome relation. It should be modest at best (Tracey 2007).

Similar to the magnitude of other trait relations: Others have noted that the small to moderate magnitude of the interest-occupational congruence with outcome relation is what it should be (Rounds and Tracey 1990; Tracey et al. 2000). Looking at the predictability afforded in other areas of psychology such as personality, it is not reasonable to expect that there would be greater magnitude (Tracey 2007). Meyer et al. (2001) examined the issues associated with psychological assessment and noted that the correlation obtained in psychology are comparable to those found in medicine. Based on their findings, correlations in the range of 0.20–0.30 are reasonable for the social sciences. For example, a study conducted by MacDaniel and his colleagues (1994) found a correlation of 0.20 between job interview and success on the job in a sample of 25, 244 respondents. Career outcomes are extremely important variables and as such a contribution of 5 to 10 % in explained variance is meaningful.

Congruence indices: One of the benefits of using the RIASEC model is that interests and occupations can be represented using similar constructs, making an assessment of congruence simpler. Following this, it should be relatively easy to develop an index that would take account of the two. However, there is a myriad of formulae for aggregating RIASEC interest scores with RIASEC occupations (Young et al. 1998), from simple yes/no matching of one-letter high point codes to more sophisticated representations of the top three scores of the RIASEC profile for each individual and environment (e.g., C index of Brown and Gore 1994). This array of indices and their limitations pose a number of issues in the determination of congruence. Researchers have demonstrated that the congruence–outcome relation varies as a function of the congruence index used such that results of studies will vary substantially (De Fruyt 2002; Tinsley 2000; Tsabari et al. 2005). Additionally, none of the indices represent the complexity of the entire RIASEC profile (De Fruyt 2002), but instead are generally gross simplifications of both the interest profile and occupation, thus omitting key information. Dik et al. (2010), examined the relation of the incongruence of the low point codes and satisfaction. Their findings offer support that indices of congruence should take account of the entire profile of RIASEC scores, not just a subset, in order to reduce the loss of information. Another salient issue is the problem of ties that indicate an equal resemblance to two or more RIASEC types. Ties are often ignored or a random ordering is proposed because there is usually no external criterion available to decide on the ranking of tied letters. De Fruyt (2002) found that 45 % of all person profiles in a sample ($N = 934$) had ties in their six-letter code. This highlights the need to address this issue seeing that ties occur frequently.

Interests are too narrow: Holland's (1997) interest model affords the commensurate assessment of both the individual and the environment. Because of this ease of assessing P-E fit, most studies use this interest model. However, some researchers (e.g. Hogan and Roberts 2000; Schneider et al. 2000; Walsh 2001) view the modest congruence-outcome relation as stemming from the overly restrictive view of examining only interests as an indication of the environment in P-E fit. Interests are argued as too narrow to account for all the important variance in person-occupation congruence.

Restricted range: Some researchers (e.g., Dik and Hansen 2010; Gore and Brown 2006) cite the likelihood of restricted range in most samples on both congruence and satisfaction as an explanation for the modest findings of the congruence-outcome relation seeing that it places a low ceiling on the magnitude.

Moderation effect: Lastly, the modest congruence-outcome findings could be attributed to the fact that the relationship is not being fully explained. An often proposed, but seldom tested, possibility is that the congruence-outcome relation may differ for some individuals and not others (see Tracey 2003). That is, moderating variables on this relation may not be taken into account. In their meta analysis of the congruence–satisfaction relation Spokane et al. (2000) stated the following:

> We believe that the relationship between congruence and satisfaction in traditional correlational studies is presently around 0.25, or 5 % of variance. If appropriate procedures are used, in a number of instances (e.g. conditions employing an important moderator), correlations between congruence and satisfaction or other wellbeing variables substantially exceed the 0.25 or even 0.3 correlational plateau and reach correlations of 0.40. (p. 179).

Several moderators have been put forth or tested, among them are vocational identity (Spokane 1985), differentiation of interests (Holland 1997), adherence of RIASEC scores to a circumplex (e.g., "traitedness"; Tracey 2003, 2008), and mean interest level (Darcy and Tracey 2003; Tracey and Robbins 2006). To date, the only variable which has been found to moderate the relation between congruence and job satisfaction in more than one study is group importance.

It is evident that the congruence-outcome relation is an integral component within vocational psychology. Prior to discrediting the benefits of this relation as proposed by some (e.g. Tinsley 2000), it would be useful to address the aforementioned factors that contribute to the small to modest magnitudes in this relationship.

Moderators of the Congruence-Outcome Relation

More recently, researchers have begun exploring moderators on the congruence-outcome relation. The following section offers an overview of the studies that have addressed the possibility that moderation could increase the magnitude of this relation.

Among the moderators that have been proposed or tested is interest flexibility. Factor analyses conducted on interest inventories reveal two things, a prominent general factor and two factors defining the RIASEC circle (Prediger 1982; Rounds and Tracey 1993). However, there are mixed opinions about the meaning and importance of this general factor. Some view it as inconsequential and reflective of a general yea/nay-saying response style. While others have found that individuals who endorsed a large number of the items tended to have specific personality traits such as being dominant, impulsive, enthusiastic and the personality traits of those with lower overall scores included being cautious, cynical, and moody (Berdie 1943; Holland 1997; Stewart 1960). Darcy and Tracey (2003) proposed that interest level moderates the congruence and occupational outcomes relation. They conceptualize

interest level as an index of interest flexibility. Such that, having high mean scores indicates a liking for a wide variety of activities and having a low mean indicates liking relatively few. Should one interest be thwarted say by an inability to engage in desired activities, flexible individuals, characterized by high mean scores, would just pursue one of their many other interests. However for individuals with lower interest flexibility, removal of activities for that interest expression would result in poorer outcomes such as frustration. Tracey and Robbins (2006) examined the moderating effect of interest level on congruence-GPA and congruence-persistence relations. They found support for the latter relationship. Interest-major congruence mattered for individuals with low overall interest levels. Similarly, Tracey et al. (2012) examined the moderating effects of interest level on the relation between interest-major congruence and persistence. They too found a stronger relation between congruence and college outcomes for those individuals with lower overall profile levels (i.e., low flexibility) than those with high. This supports the hypothesis put forth by Darcy and Tracey (2003) that individuals with low interest flexibility have a narrower set of interests. The implication of this is that it would be more important for these students to obtain good interest–occupation congruence, than those with high levels in order to get good occupational outcomes.

A sound assessment of congruence relies on accurate measurement of both interests and the work environment. In the case of interest measurement, this has typically been done well. However the same cannot be said of environmental assessment. According to Tracey (2007), assessment of occupations and their individual job tasks is generally done quickly and in a very gross manner by outsiders. However occupations have a good deal of variance within them so aggregate ratings by individuals in those occupations are problematic with respect to representing the occupational environment. Tracey (2007) proposed that the variance in environments serve as an important moderator on the congruence-outcome relation. Such that in environments that are very constrained and everyone is very similar, the magnitude of the congruence-outcome relation should be greater. While in environments where there is little constraint and where there is more variance in the interests of the employees, there would be a lower relation between congruence and outcomes. The variance within an environment is likely an indication that there are many different interests being expressed in that environment. Therefore, being incongruent would not have as many consequences. This variance could be attributed to selection by both the individual and the environment. According to Tracey et al. (2012), people who have strong preferences that match an environment would be attracted to this environment and seek entry. As the environment is composed of people, the people in the environment would then act to constrain the behavior of individuals in it. This constraint would result in specifying what behaviors are appropriate as well as result in selecting out those who do not adhere. So, the extent to which the environment constrains interest expression could be a key moderator on the congruence-outcome relation. This would be reflected in the amount of interest variance among individuals in that environment. Using a sample of 88,813 undergraduates from 42 different colleges, Tracey et al. (2012) conducted a longitudinal study where they examined the moderating effect of environmental constraint on the relationship between interest-major

congruence and persistence (enrollment status after 1 year and after 2 years) and on major persistence in year 3. Environmental constraint was found to moderate the congruence-persistence relation on all persistence outcomes. In constraining major environments, there was a positive relation between P–E congruence and the persistence outcomes, but this relation was zero for those less constraining majors. This pattern of results supported the hypotheses.

Group importance has also been found to moderate the relation between congruence and job satisfaction. According to Holland's theory (1997), a state of incongruence will engender efforts by both the individual and the group to effect change on each other in order to achieve congruence. This is manifested through a system of reinforcements. So an individual will receive positive reinforcement when they behave in accordance with the predominant characteristic of the group, while incongruent behavior with the group expectations will receive negative reinforcement or punishment. Therefore, the group member gradually learns to respond in a manner that is closer to expectations. According to Meir et al. (1986), as it stands, Holland's theory does not take into account the perceived importance of one's group. Specifically, if little satisfaction is garnered from the group and group membership is perceived as unimportant then a system of reinforcements, positive or negative, will have little to no effect on a group member. While the opposite is true for individuals who value group importance. In other words, an "important" group is influential in changing an individual's behavior through reinforcements but an "unimportant" group will have little to no influence. Meir et al. (1986) found support for their hypothesis; congruence-satisfaction correlations were stronger for individuals who attributed greater levels of importance to their work groups. Dik and Hansen (2010) examined a class of variables bearing conceptual similarity to group importance, work centrality. Results were largely consistent with previous finding of the moderating effect of group importance. Dik and Hansen (2010) found that work centrality, specifically job involvement and intrinsic motivation, significantly moderated the congruence-intrinsic job satisfaction relation. Consequently, those individuals who do not attach importance to the group they work with are viewed as less likely to have high relations between congruence and outcomes.

Another moderator, borrowed from personality psychology, is "traitedness." Traitedness refers to the variability of a trait score (Tracey 2003). More specifically, it is the extent to which any one trait is consistently demonstrated across situations (Baumeister and Tice 1988). Baumeister and Tice (1988) proposed that traitedness moderates the extent to which trait scores predicted specific behaviors. Individuals high in traitedness demonstrate their trait score in nearly all contexts, whereas the behaviors of those low in traitedness will vary greatly across situations. Several studies have demonstrated that, by taking traitedness into account, the prediction of behaviors from trait scores improves (Bem and Allen 1974; Chaplin 1991; Lanning 1988). In his study, Tracey (2003) applied the concept of traitedness to RIASEC interest data. Specifically, level of interest–occupation congruence was examined to see whether it varies as a function of interest score traitedness. The results of the study provided some support for the moderating effect of interest traitedness. Each of the traitedness

variables examined had a significant moderating effect on the relation of interest–occupation fit and career certainty. Although there was significant moderation present in the data, the overall magnitude of the moderation was not large, accounting for only an additional 1 % of the variance, corresponding to a small effect size.

In addition to the aforementioned moderating variables, a number of other variables have been proposed regarding the congruence-outcome relation. For example, Spokane (1985) examined vocational identity as a moderator of the congruence–outcome relation and found individuals high on vocational maturity having a greater congruence–outcome relation. Interest profile differentiation (i.e., greater difference between highest and lowest scale scores) was also proposed to moderate the congruence-outcome relation (Holland 1997) such that, greater interest profile differentiation would manifest stronger relations between congruence and outcomes compared to less interest profile differentiation. These results suggest that prior to abandoning the congruence-outcome relation as has been proposed by some (e.g., Tinsley 2000), it would be advantageous to examine the potential contribution of moderators to our theories and research of this relation. The simple models that have been examined do not adequately represent either congruence itself or its relation to various outcomes. Moderation involving the aforementioned variables as well as differing outcomes needs to be taken into account in the research.

Future Directions for Research on the Congruence-Outcome Relation

As researchers continue to examine the congruence-outcome relation, it is suggested that influential factors proposed to improve the magnitude of this relation be taken into consideration. This section outlines a number of these factors.

Holland's (1997) interest model of RIASEC types is the most widely used model of assessing P-E fit because it enables commensurate assessment of both the individual and the environment. Despite this simpler method, the assessment of P-E fit has been difficult. This is largely due to the wide array of congruence indices developed to measure this fit and the issues that arise with multiple indices. The most salient of these issues is that the complexity of the entire RIASEC profile is not fully captured by any of the preexisting indices (see Justification section for a more detailed overview of the issues stemming from multiple indices). As such, an alternative representation of interests and occupations is worth exploring. One such alternative method was proposed by Prediger and Vansickle (1992), who suggested representing the RIASEC scores using the two dimensions of People/Things and Data/Ideas. This method only uses two scores, instead of six, thus providing a simpler representation of the occupation and interest profiles. Unlike prior methods such as HPC, this method takes the entire RIASEC profile into account. Support for using the full profile was found in a recent study conducted by Dik et al. (2010). There are two ways to calculate congruence indices using Prediger and Vansickle (1992) two dimensions of People/Things and Data/Ideas. The first is *Euclidean Distance,* defined as the distance between an individual and an occupation's point on the two dimensions. Closer

points indicate greater congruence while more distal points indicate less congruence. The second is *Angular Agreement*. Here, distance is not taken into account, but instead similarity of the general area. According to Tracey and Robbins (2006), angular agreement focuses on the extent to which interests and environments match with respect to being in similar "slices of the pie." This alternate method of representing both interests and occupations has received a significant amount of support (Tracey and Hopkins 2001; Tracey and Robbins 2006; Tracey et al. 2005; Tracey et al. 2012). It is recommended that future research examine the difference in the magnitude of the congruence-outcome relation in using this and former methods of assessing fit.

Examination of the circular structure that underlies the widely used Holland's (1997) RIASEC model demonstrated the existence of a third independent dimension, that of prestige (Tracey 1997; Tracey and Rounds 1996a, b). This research has shown that interests can be described as existing in three dimensions: Prediger's (Prediger 1982; Prediger and Vansickle 1992) two dimensions of People-Things and Data-Ideas, and prestige. A number of researchers have found strong support for this representation of interests (Darcy 2005; Long et al. 2006; Tracey 1997, 2002a; Tracey and Rounds 1996a, b). Prestige has been described as "one of the most prominent factors that people use in evaluating different occupations" (Tracey 2002a, p. 115). Empirical support has been found for the inclusion of a prestige dimension to more accurately explain one's interests, career, and the congruence between the two (Tracey and Rounds 1996a, b). Because RIASEC scales exist on the People-Things and Data-Ideas plane, all current indices of PE fit use only these dimensions. Only one study to date has included prestige in their examination of the congruence-outcome relation (Durr and Tracey 2009). These researchers (Durr and Terence 2009) examined prestige as an additional important component of the PE fit-career outcome relation. Furthermore they investigated whether incorporating a prestige dimension in the fit calculations altered the strength of the relation of PE fit to occupational certainty. Similar to previous research (Tracey and Rounds 1996a, b) their findings indicated that incorporation of a third dimension of prestige added additional information to the fit between person variables and occupational environment, as well as improve the ability of PE fit to reliably predict career outcomes such as career certainty. These results demonstrate the importance of taking other variables into account when examining the congruence-outcome relation.

There has been an increase in the number of studies examining the role of contextual variables as a means of further explaining various relations in the social sciences (e.g. Social Cognitive Career Theories). Several researchers have argued for a similar examination to explain a proportion of the variance in the congruence outcome relationship (Day and Rounds 1998; Fouad and Mohler 2004; Gupta and Tracey 2005; Toit and Bruinn 2002; Tsabari et al. 2005). Tsabari et al. (2005) examined the connection between congruence and satisfaction with consideration of culture as a moderating variable. They reported that, "Culture is a moderating variable for the correlation between congruence and satisfaction" (p. 220), and that, "This correlation will be higher in some cultures than in others" (p. 220). Magerkorth (2000) found that students who self-identified as belonging to an ethnic minority group scored significantly lower than Caucasian students in interest/choice congruence. Leung

et al. (1994) found congruence played less of a role in predicting the career choices of Asian Americans. They hypothesized that this lower congruence was associated with the Asian culture value on family seeing that career choices are determined more by adhering to family choices than individual choices. Consistent with Leung et al. (1994), Gupta and Tracey (2005) found that when compared to whites, congruence played a less important role for Indians in choosing a career path. Leong et al. (1998) found that congruence did not predict job or occupational satisfaction in workers in India, suggesting cross-cultural boundaries on Holland's theory itself. In the absence of empirical support, it was assumed that person– environment fit would play a relatively modest role in the lives of African American employees because of the competing significance of discrimination. To empirically examine this Lyons and O'Brien (2006) examined the role of person–environment fit in the job satisfaction and tenure intentions of 212 African American employees. Results of their study suggested that P-E fit explained robust levels of variance in job satisfaction and turnover intentions for African American employees. These findings underscore the importance of taking culture into account both in a moderating effect and main effect stance.

As illustrated in this chapter, a number of avenues can be explored to assist with improving the magnitude of the congruence-outcome relation. Given the importance of fit within vocational psychology, it is imperative that we carefully examine the potential to demonstrate relations greater than 0.30 in light of the findings in other disciplines and other influential factors such as self-selection and restricted range. It would also be advantageous for us to explore the above mentioned options as well as others prior to discarding this relationship.

Practical Implications for Career Counseling and Guidance

While some have argued for eschewing examination of person-occupational matching, we have argued that there is support for the relation of Person-Environment fit, as assessed using vocational interests, as related to key career outcome such as job satisfaction and productivity. These results indicate that indeed the common practice of matching interest to occupations is valid and a central part of career counseling. There are no other interventions that have relations to career outcomes anywhere near as good. Despite the importance of interest-occupation matching, there still are many factors that affect how strong this relation is and practitioners need to take these into account when counseling individuals. As noted, three key variables that moderate the importance of interest-occupation fit are individual interest flexibility, environmental constraint and cultural variance. Interest-occupation fit means most for those individuals who are the least flexible, that is those who have the lowest overall endorsement of interests in general. Also, occupations that are more constraining require greater interest-occupation fit from those in the occupation. Occupations with less constraint are more able to have individuals who have lower interest match and

still be productive. Finally, in some cultures, presumably more individualistic cultures, interest-occupation fit is more central and more highly related to satisfaction and productivity than it is in other cultures. Hence, counselors need to take a client's interest flexibility, culture, and their occupation or major environment in into account when using interest measures.

Chapter Summary

We reviewed the literature on the definition of congruence, and the relation of interest-occupation congruence with different indicators of satisfaction and productivity. We demonstrated that there is a moderate relation of interest-occupation congruence with most all indicators of career satisfaction and productivity. We then reviewed why this moderate relation is not minor in importance. Specifically we demonstrated that it is similar in magnitude to personality research and that given self-selection into occupations, and resulting restriction of range, one should not expect higher results. Finally much of the results are related to several key moderators: how congruence is defined, the presence of prestige, individual interest flexibility, environmental interest constraint and cultural variance. Interest-Occupation congruence serves as a key if not central intervention and our discussion supports its continued centrality.

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Chapter 8
Career Anchors as a Meta-Capacity in Organizational Career Development

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Abstract The contemporary career paradigm acknowledges the unpredictable, turbulent and globally market-sensitive context within which individuals' careers unfold (Savickas, Journal of Career Assessment 19:251–258, 2011). Individuals are drawing on their personal resources and capacities (i.e. strengths, intrinsic motivation, values, aspirations, and coping capacities) to be more resilient and adaptable in negotiating the person-environment fit harmonics in a more turbulent employment context (Ferreira, Constructing a psychological career profile for staff retention, 2012). The research literature furthermore suggests that individuals will increasingly have to rely on internal definitions and measures of career success in the construction of their careers (Savickas, Journal of Career Assessment 19:251–258, 2011; Schreuder and Coetzee Careers: An organisational perspective, 2011). Schein's (Career dynamics: Matching individual and organizational needs, 1978, Journal of Occupational Behavior 5:71–81, 1984, Career anchors: Discovering your real values, 1990, Academy of Management Executive 1, 80–88, 1996, Encyclopedia of career development, 2006) exploration of the dynamics of the internal career, through his career anchor concept, poses interesting implications for career counseling and guidance in the contemporary career paradigm. Individuals' subjective measures of career success are generally driven by their need for meaningful work that matches their personal motivations, career interests, abilities, motives, and values (internal career anchors). Career anchors act as the motivational forces (meta-capacities) that guide individuals' career decisions and preferences for work and work environments (Schein Career anchors: Discovering your real values, 1990). Achieving a harmonic fit between their internal career needs and the characteristics of the external occupational environment results in enhanced levels of career well-being and career and life satisfaction (Coetzee et al. South African Journal of Human Resource Management 8:13, 2010). This chapter explores the relevance of Schein's career anchor theory to contemporary career development by presenting an overview of various research findings that show how people's career anchors influence their subjective experiences of their work and careers.

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Schein's Career Anchor Theory

Schein (1990, 1996) views the career anchor as a person's self-concept or internal identity that evolves only as the person gains occupational and life experience. As a product of the interaction between the individual and the workplace (Wils et al. 2010), the career self-concept acts as an important motivational element for individuals' internal career and their career choices and attitudes (Schein 1990, 1996). As their careers and lives evolve, individuals discover a dominant career anchor (approximately by the age of 30) that drives their career decisions (Schein 1990). The dominant career anchor reflects people's long-term preferences regarding their work and work environment and how they would like to express or utilise personal resources around three poles: (1) self-perceived work talents and abilities, (2) self-perceived motives and needs, and (3) basic values and attitudes as they pertain to the internal or subjective career (Schein 1990, 1996).

The career anchor is an internal resource (meta-capacity) that functions as a set of driving and constraining forces on individuals' career decisions and choices (Schein 1978). Based on this view of Schein, Du Toit (2010) posits that career anchors form part of the conscious content of the psyche. They represent stabilizing and consistent values and personal views of oneself, one's life and one's self-concept that influence one's career decision-making and experiences of career success. Research conducted by Du Toit and Coetzee (2012) shows that individuals' career anchors are associated with their archetypal values which represent universal emotional, cognitive and behavioral styles that form part of the collective unconscious. Different archetypal values represent unique psychological themes and underlying goals, values and desires which direct individuals' personal development in a particular life phase (Pearson 1991). Du Toit and Coetzee (2012) posit that individuals' career anchors are energized by archetypal life themes that act as psychological forces in driving the expression of the career self-concept associated with the individual's dominant career anchor.

As a career meta-capacity, having a clear sense of one's career anchor (abilities, talents, needs, interests, motivations and what one values) is vital to help one make effective career decisions and experience subjective and objective career success (Schein 1990; Valcour and Ladge 2008). The career self-concept revolves around eight categories of career anchors (Schein 1990):

- *Technical/functional competence:* Values the achievement of expert status among peers and recognition for skills. Desires specialization and further learning and development in one's specialty.

- *General managerial competence:* Values the willingness to solve complex problems affecting the entire organization and undertake subsequent decision-making; promotion and higher levels of responsibility. Desires power, influence, and advancement up the corporate ladder.
- *Entrepreneurial creativity:* Values income, profitability of the organization, opportunity for creativity and identification of new businesses, products or services. Desires power and freedom to create wealth, high personal visibility and public recognition.
- *Autonomy/Independence:* Values increased autonomy and personal freedom in job content and settings. Desires freedom to achieve and demonstrate one's competence.
- *Security/stability:* Values recognition for loyalty, long-term employment for health benefits and retirement options. Desires predictability and being rewarded for length of service.
- *Lifestyle:* Values flexitime and balancing personal and the family's welfare with work commitments. Desires flexibility and the freedom to balance work-family life.
- *Service/dedication to a cause:* Values helping others, organizational mission, and working for the greater good of organisations or communities. Desires influence and the freedom to operate autonomously in the pursuit of personal values or higher life purpose/goal.
- *Pure challenge:* Values novel or challenging work and testing personal endurance through risky projects or physically challenging work. Desires power and influence to be competitive and win.

The technical competence, managerial competence and entrepreneurial creativity anchors relate to the work talents of individuals because they center on the day-to-day work performed by individuals. The security/stability, autonomy/independence and lifestyle anchors represent career motives and needs because they refer to the way in which individuals attempt to structure their work according to their basic personal desires and lives. The service/dedication to a cause anchor and the pure challenge anchors represent attitudes and values because they are related to ways in which individuals identify with their occupations and their organizational cultures (Feldman and Bolino 1996; Wils et al. 2010). In line with Schwartz's (1992) view that values are associated with certain motivational domains, Wils et al. (2010) argue that conceptually, the career anchor motives postulated by Schein (1978) are closely related to work values. Their research also indicates significant associations between Schein's career anchors and the work values system of Schwartz (1992). Research by Wils et al. (2010) provides supportive evidence of the conflictual (mutually inconsistent) nature of the opposing poles of career anchor clusters, as depicted in Fig. 8.1.

Figure 8.1 shows how Wils et al. (2010) cluster the eight career anchors in terms of the four values structure model of Schwartz (1992). The horizontal structure contrasts openness to change (pure challenge; entrepreneurial creativity and autonomy/independence) with conservation (security/stability and lifestyle). The vertical
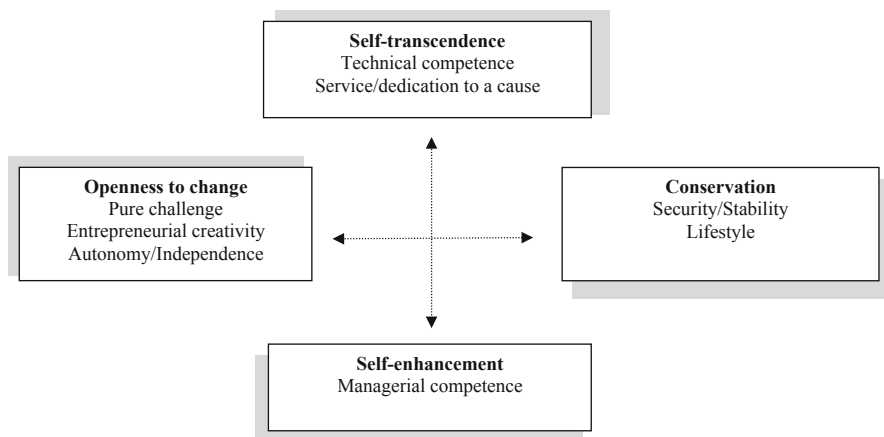
Fig. 8.1 The career anchors structure in terms of the value structure system of Schwartz

axis juxtaposes self-transcendence (technical competence and service/dedication to a cause) and self-enhancement (managerial competence). Each of the four values relates to specific interdependent motivational domains that can be either compatible or mutually inconsistent (Wils et al. 2010).

- *Openness to change* relates to the motivational domains of self-direction, stimulation and hedonism.
- *Conservation* relates to the motivational domains of tradition, conformity and security.
- *Self-transcendence* relates to the motivational domains of universalism and benevolence.
- *Self-enhancement* relates to the motivational domains of achievement and power (Wils et al. 2010).

Career Anchor Patterns

Feldman and Bolino (1996) posit that an individual can have a dominant career anchor in each of the three categories postulated to underpin Schein's (1978, 1990) definition of career anchors: talents and abilities; motives and needs; and attitudes and values. Although Schein (1978, 1996) maintains that over time (generally in the first 5–10 years of work), a single, dominant career anchor emerges that stabilizes, guides and constrains an individual's career path, research (see Table 8.1) provides evidence of a multiple career anchor profile comprising of a primary, secondary, and even tertiary career anchors. The simultaneous existence of multiple career anchors suggest that individuals can develop more than one strong career anchor which may suggest an overlap of values and motives among the eight career anchors (Coetzee and Schreuder 2008; Feldman and Bolino 1996; Ramakrishna and Potosky 2003; Schein 1996; Wils et al. 2010).

Table 8.1 Dominant career anchor patterns

Research studies	Talents and abilities-based career anchor motivations			Motives and needs-based career anchor motivations			Attitudes and values-based career anchor motivations	
	Technical/ functional competence	General managerial competence	Entrepreneurial creativity	Autonomy/ independence	Security/stability	Lifestyle	Service/ dedication to a cause	Pure challenge
	Self-trans-cendence	Self-enhan-cement	Openness to change		Conservation		Self-transcendence	Openness to change
Schreuder (1989) Managerial staff in SA private/parastatal/government sectors (n = 258)		3			1		2	
Igbaria et al. (1991) Management Information Systems personnel (n = 464)	1	2	3					
Ellison (1997) SA Midcareer staff (n = 295)	1					2		3
Tan and Quek (2001) Educators (n = 160)				3		1	2	
Erdoğmus (2003) Turkish professionals (n = 138)			3	2			1	
Marshall and Bonner (2003) Graduate students (management) (n = 423)		3				1		2

Table 8.1 (continued)

Research studies	Talents and abilities-based career anchor motivations			Motives and needs-based career anchor motivations			Attitudes and values-based career anchor motivations	
	Technical/ functional competence	General managerial competence	Entrepreneurial creativity	Autonomy/ independence	Security/stability	Lifestyle	Service/ dedication to a cause	Pure challenge
	Self-trans-cendence	Self-enhan-cement	Openness to change		Conservation		Self-transcendence	Openness to change
Van Rensburg et al. (2003) Pharmacists (n = 56)	3						1	2
Nieuwenhuizen and Groenewald (2006) Business entrepreneurs (n = 50)			1	3		2		
Coetzee et al. (2007) Human resource specialists (n = 157)						3	1	2
Chang et al. (2007) EMBA (IS) students (n = 145)					1	2	3	
Singh et al. (2009) Executives (engineering sector) (n = 1441)						3	2	1
Weber and Ladkin (2009) Asian convention/exhibition professionals (n = 700)						1	3	2

Table 8.1 (continued)

Research studies	Talents and abilities-based career anchor motivations			Motives and needs-based career anchor motivations			Attitudes and values-based career anchor motivations	
	Technical/functional competence	General managerial competence	Entrepreneurial creativity	Autonomy/independence	Security/stability	Lifestyle	Service/dedication to a cause	Pure challenge
	Self-transcendence	Self-enhancement	Openness to change		Conservation		Self-transcendence	Openness to change
Lopa et al. (2009) Hospitality and Tourism Educators (n = 337)				2		1	3	
Coetzee and Schreuder (2009b) Managerial and staff level—service industry (n = 2 978)		3				2	1	
Coetzee and De Villiers (2010) Staff in SA financial sector (n = 250)			1		3	2		
Cerdin and Le Pargneux (2010) French expatriates (n = 303)				2		1	3	
Coetzee and Schreuder (2011) Management/economic services sector (n = 270)					1		2	3

Table 8.1 (continued)

Research studies	Talents and abilities-based career anchor motivations			Motives and needs-based career anchor motivations			Attitudes and values-based career anchor motivations	
	Technical/functional competence	General managerial competence	Entrepreneurial creativity	Autonomy/independence	Security/stability	Lifestyle	Service/dedication to a cause	Pure challenge
	Self-transcendence	Self-enhancement	Openness to change		Conservation		Self-transcendence	Openness to change
Du Toit and Coetzee (2012) Science and engineering staff (n = 207)						1	3	2
Quesenberry and Trauth (2012) IT personnel (n = 210)					2	1		3
Chang et al. (2012) Taiwanese IT professionals (n = 10)			3	2			1	
Coetzee et al. (in review) Managers/staff in SA service industry (n = 318)						1	2	3
Frequency: dominant career anchor (n/21 studies)	2(10 %)	0	2(10 %)	0	3(14 %)	8(38 %)	4(19 %)	2(10 %)
Frequency: secondary career anchor (n/21 studies)	0	1(5 %)	0	3(14 %)	2(10 %)	5(24 %)	5(24 %)	5(24 %)
Frequency: tertiary career anchor (n/21 studies)	0	4(19 %)	3(14 %)	1(5 %)	2(10 %)	2(10 %)	5(24 %)	4(19 %)

Research by Coetzee and Schreuder (2009a), Igbaria and Baroudi (1993) and Igbaria et al. (1999) provides evidence of overlapping or complementary values and motives between the general managerial competence, pure challenge, autonomy/independence and entrepreneurial/creativity career anchors. Wils et al. (2010) found that several career anchors are complementary (e.g. creativity and challenge—being open to change) while others are conflictual (e.g. challenge—openness to change versus security—conservation) in terms of work values and motivational domains. Research also indicates that values change as people age and go through life and career stages (Smola and Sutton 2002; Rodrigues and Guest 2010). Rodriques and Guest (2010) found that people's career motivations may change and adapt as a result of critical events in their personal and work lives. Their study also provides evidence that some people seek to redefine their career priorities when they have met their most important career goals.

The various research studies reported in Table 8.1, all indicated a strong dominant career anchor with two secondary (less strong) career anchors, thus supporting Schein's (1996) proposition of a dominant career anchor. Although the emergence of three strong career anchors in a sample profile seems to support the notion of overlapping and complementary values and motives between the career anchors, one should also take cognizance of the fact that the research on Schein's career anchors are generally based on broad group measures by means of the Career Orientations Inventory (DeLong 1982; Schein 1978, 1990). In the case of individual testing situations, career practitioners must take note of the occupational context and the unique characteristics of the respondent (such as their current life and career stage preoccupations within a particular cultural and socio-economic context) when applying the Career Orientations Inventory (Coetzee and Schreuder 2009a). Qualitative data gathering by means of an in-depth interview (as suggested by Schein 1990), should complement individual assessment. This approach might provide further support for Schein's notion of a dominant career anchor. Quesenberry and Trauth (2012) found, for example, that although individuals quantitatively tend to express sentiments across all career anchors, they qualitatively identify strongly with at least one career anchor and less strongly with a second and third career anchor.

The simultaneous existence of several dominant career anchors may point to the diverse career needs of individuals. Being an expression of the career self-concept, one could postulate that the dominant career anchor may serve to direct individuals' career choices while the secondary and tertiary career anchors may serve as important internal resources in helping individuals to adapt to changing career circumstance or enabling a harmonic fit between their dominant career needs and interests and the characteristics of the external employment environment. Haley-Lock (2008) argues that with increased global mobility opportunities and the boundarylessness of careers, employees are increasingly seeking to fulfil expressive values at work through tasks—and entire jobs—that allow them to exercise a wider range of their talents and interests. However, further longitudinal quantitative and qualitative research is needed to assess whether a multiple career anchor profile exists because of indifferentiation (Wils et al. 2010), overlapping/complementary needs, values and motives among the career anchors (Feldman and Bolino 1996; Wils et al. 2010), shifting life/career stage priorities and interests, or because of adaptation to one's work and life circumstances (Rodrigues and Guest 2010).

An analysis of Table 8.1 reveals that overall the dominant and secondary career anchors of the various studies were predominantly associated with complementary work values clusters (for example, security/stability and lifestyle—conservation; technical/functional competence and service/dedication to a cause –self-transcendence). However, when reviewing the pattern of the career anchors in terms of each individual study, some of the career anchors were associated with both complementary and opposing values clusters, and more in line with Feldman and Bolino's (1996) contention that individuals may have career anchors in each or two of the three categories postulated in their research: talents and abilities; motives and needs; and attitudes and values. In developing his theory of career anchors, Schein (1978) explored a view of careers by examining the interrelationship between individuals' career talents, motives and values. He also posited that a person's talents/abilities, motives, and values are mutually interactive and inseparable (Marshall and Bonner 2003). Forming the basis for Schein's (1978) definition of the career anchor, these three categories seem to act as important personal resources (meta-capacities) that relate to the internal career and the enablement of a harmonic fit between the person and work environment.

It is also interesting to observe that Table 8.1 reflects a shift toward the lifestyle career anchor as being the first, or at least the second career anchor. As noted by Marshall and Bonner (2003), this career anchor was not identified in Schein's seminal work undertaken in the 1970s. It appears that the concerns about job security/stability in the 1970s and 1990s (Schreuder 1989; Marshall and Bonner 2003) have shifted to lifestyle concerns. Both the security/stability and lifestyle career anchors are associated with values of conservation (Wils et al. 2010). Meister and Willyerd (2010) predict that the 2020 workplace will be a globally, hyperconnected and virtual employment environment that provides intensely personalized, social experiences due to the digital revolution and increase in mobile technology allowing people to choose how, when and where they work. Consequently, individuals' concerns about work/life flexibility (conservation) will increase as they seek ways to manage both work and their personal lives better. The increasing emphasis on social responsibility (Meister and Willyerd 2010) and global and moral citizenship (Coetzee 2012; Peiperl and Jonsen 2007) may also explain the noticeable shift to the service/dedication career anchor as either a primary or secondary career orientation.

Person-Environment Fit Harmonics

Career anchors relate to the internal (subjective) career of individuals and reflect the goals and values they hold in relation to their working lives and the criteria of success by which they judge themselves. The external career refers to the actual job sequences that specify a path through an occupation or organization (Marshall and Bonner 2003; Schein 2006). Whereas the internal career is a self-definition of career success which is long term and stable, representing life, career and work goals (intentionalities), the external career refers to the organizational or professional (occupational) definition

of career success which is more short term, unpredictable and fast-changing (Coetzee and Schreuder 2009a, b; Derr and Briscoe 2007). Individuals' career identities inform their subjective career experiences, both in term of the evolving relationship to their work and to relevant others in their lives (Ibarra and Deshpande 2007; Zikic et al. 2010). Being an integral part of the subjective career, it is posited that people's career anchors (as a personal resource) act as the lens by means of which individuals interpret and negotiate their career experiences, cope with and adapt to career transitions in an attempt to optimize the person-environment fit harmonics.

The subjective or internal career is the focal point of career guidance and counseling which relies on the client's report of career dissatisfaction—generally a consequence of the degree of congruence (or harmonic fit) between individuals' talents, interests, values, desires, motivations (career anchors) and their job/career and occupational choice and development (Schein 1990, 1996; Zikic et al. 2010). Research by Herrbach and Mignonac (2012) shows that individuals' career anchors influence their subjective experiences of career success and how the work environment is interpreted. The internal career desires motivate individuals and the level of motivation influences people's perceptions of career success and satisfaction. People's career anchors are shown to positively influence their subjective work experiences, that is, their life satisfaction, job/career satisfaction, sense of happiness and perceptions of work as a valuable activity (Coetzee et al. 2010), as well as their satisfaction with their self-perceived employability (Coetzee and Schreuder 2011).

Research provides evidence of how individuals' career anchors match their preferred job types and settings (Igbaria et al. 1991) and their job characteristic preferences (Chang et al. 2007). Steele and Francis-Smythe (2010) found that career anchors can be matched to job roles. High levels of congruence also increase individuals' job and career satisfaction, organizational commitment and intention to stay (Igbaria et al. 1991; Quesenberry and Trauth 2012; Steele and Francis-Smythe 2010). A study by Jiang et al. (2001) indicates that career satisfaction is positively related to both individuals' internal career orientations and the external career situations provided by their organizations. Chang et al. (2012) also found evidence of the relationships among internal career anchors, external opportunities, job satisfaction, discrepancy, and perceived job alternatives. Individuals' career anchors positively moderate the relation between their level of work engagement and job commitment (Coetzee et al., in review) and significantly predict their organizational commitment (Coetzee et al. 2007).

Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Research

As argued by the research literature, Schein's theory of career anchors continues to be tested and remains consistent and socially grounded in its premises. The research literature provides evidence of the notion of career anchors being an important career meta-capacity influencing and enabling individuals' experiences of subjective career success. In the career counseling context, the career anchor framework of

Schein (1990) can be a valuable tool in helping individuals gain deeper insight in their career needs, interests, and desires, and how these influence their career dissatisfaction. However, longitudinal studies are required to assess the validity of the theory and the stability of career anchors over time (and how they manifest in different multi-cultural and socio-economic contexts) in a more turbulent occupational and work world impacted by rapidly evolving information technological advances. Guillaume and Pochic (2009) and Herrbach and Mignonac (2012) argue that individuals make adaptations to their career goals over time, especially after the very early career years and as a consequence of later work experiences. Schein (1984) also argued that the specific culture within which career orientations develop should be taken into account in understanding and explaining individuals' career anchors. Gerber et al. (2009) also found that mixtures of career orientations exist across different cultural and socio-economic contexts. Other multi-cultural and gender, and age studies (Coetzee and Schreuder 2008; Coetzee et al. 2007; Kniveton 2004; Marshall and Bonner 2003; Quesenberry and Trauth 2012) showed that occupational position, gender, ethnicity/race and age influence the strength of individuals' career anchor preferences.

Practical Implications for Career Counseling and Guidance

Schein's (1990) career anchors framework and the Career Orientations Inventory (Schein 1990) have proven to be valuable tools for assessing the diverse career needs, motivations and values of employees in the organizational context (Coetzee and Schreuder 2009a; Marshall and Bonner 2003). The career anchor theory emphasizes the importance of organizations to ensure that they offer career paths, reward, recognition, and growth/development opportunities congruent with the diversity of their employees' career anchors. According to Schenk (2003, p. 91), career anchor studies typically find a broad distribution of anchors in every occupation, even though one may expect some bias towards a given anchor in some occupations. Considering that the career anchor is a product of the interaction between the individual and the workplace (Wils et al. 2010), career practitioners should also take cognizance of the changing world of work and how the increasingly knowledge- and digitally-driven workplace will influence individuals' self-perceived talents and abilities, career motives and needs, and their career attitudes and values.

Individuals discover their dominant career anchors by using self-observations and external feedback on behavior in concrete job situations. Although most careers permit the fulfillment of several needs that underlie different anchors, the one true career anchor only emerges after the person has accumulated a meaningful amount of life and work experiences (Schein 1990, 1996). A stable career identity is formed only through the combination of individuals' talents and interests with their abilities, motives and values, as well as through concrete experiences with real tasks, co-workers and workplaces. In this regard, career anchors emphasize the importance

of feedback in shaping the development and crystallization of a person's career self-concept or identity (Schein 1990; Weber and Ladkin 2009). Career practitioners and managers should therefore engage in career anchor profiling and career discussions with employees to increase understanding of the interests, needs, values and motives that drive the internal career satisfaction of employees (Erdoğmus 2003). Providing external career situations congruent to individuals' multidimensional career needs and motivations, as imbedded in their career anchors (internal career orientations), is critical to retain valuable staff members (Jiang et al. 2001). Self-insight about one's career-related interests, abilities, motives, needs and values, and the sharing of such insights in career discussions may reduce the negative impact of job dissatisfaction and intention to leave (Tan and Quek 2001). The multi-dimensionality of an individual's career success orientations and the crystallization of the career self-concept should also be considered when assessing the career anchors profile. In the case of multiple career anchors, career practitioners must help clients consider whether those multiple career anchors are complementary or conflictual (mutually inconsistent), that is, whether it is possible to find a form of occupation or job which fulfils all career preferences. In the case of mutually inconsistent career anchors, job roles may need to be redefined to fulfill the various preferences indicated by the multiple career anchors (Feldman and Bolino 1996; Weber and Ladkin 2009).

Kanye and Crous (2007) found that the contextualized career needs, views and expectations of young adults in the early career stage lack overall congruence with their dominant career success orientations. As argued by Feldman and Bolino (1996), career decisions are based on a complex structure of career success orientations (as, for example, reflected by the career anchors construct) rather than a dependence on a singular career success orientation. Schein (1996) also argues that the career self-concept evolves and stabilizes by the age of 30 once the individual has been exposed to various work experiences. Young adults at early stages of their careers tend to lack a well-crystallized career self-concept and therefore tend to have numerous needs, values, attitudes and capabilities that start to coalesce into several patterns or trends over time as their life experience evolves (Kanye and Crous 2007).

Research by Coetzee and Schreuder (2009b) indicates that individuals' psychological career resources (career enablers, career drivers and career harmonizers) significantly predict the strength of their career anchors. It appears from their research that individuals' psychological career resources provide the energy and impetus that facilitate the actual enactment of their career desires. In agreement with Schein's arguments, Coetzee and Schreuder (2009b; p. 3) view individuals' career anchors as master career motives that act as a cognitive compass; motivating and pulling them towards (or constraining them from) specific career actions, choices and decisions. Individuals' psychological career resources enable them to proactively realize or create opportunities that match their career aspirations. Helping clients gain self-awareness of their career anchors along with their overarching psychological career resources profile, will help them establish their career identity in their career life cycle (Coetzee and Schreuder 2009b; Kanye and Crous 2007) and to capitalize on the strengths of their career anchors as important career meta-capacities in the career construction/design process in today's more turbulent times.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the basic and most recent research on Schein's career anchor theory and its relevance to contemporary career development. It is concluded that the career anchor framework continues to add value to the practice of career guidance and counseling. Individuals' career anchors act as valuable personal resources (meta-capacities) in understanding their career satisfaction or dissatisfaction in a more turbulent occupational world. However, longitudinal research on the stability of and the shift in individuals' career anchors over time is still required to validate the usefulness of the construct as a career meta-capacity in a knowledge- and digitally-driven employment context.

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Chapter 9
Exploring the Theoretical Relationship Between Psychological Ownership and Career Anchors

Chantal Olckers and Yvonne du Plessis

Abstract This chapter explores the possible role that individuals' psychological ownership can play in their career anchors, since job satisfaction and commitment are common denominators of both constructs. The chapter will commence with a description and an explanation of career anchors and psychological ownership. The possible relationship between the seven dimensions of psychological ownership and the eight career anchors is explored to indicate possible linkages. Several propositions are developed, based on their theoretical relationship, and these propositions are illustrated in a proposed figure.

Introduction

Organisational competitiveness in the current unpredictable environment, which is the result of trends of globalisation and technological sophistication, forces organisations not only to recruit top talent, but also to retain talented employees who are psychologically connected to their work and to the organisation (Arnold and Randall 2010). As the 'war for skilled talent' escalates, according to De Villiers (2006), it becomes increasingly important to explore the psychological factors that influence people's commitment and loyalty to an organisation in order to retain skilled employees. According to João (2010), there is an increase in career mobility opportunities for professionally qualified employees due to the global skills shortages that impact on talent retention.

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Employees are adjusting to a new truth of shorter employment relationships by following new career strategies and behaviours that support and promote their own career success (Ballout 2009). Therefore, employees are forced to use both occupation-related and career meta-competencies (Ferreira et al. 2010). Locally and internationally, skilled employees have realised that career opportunities have no boundaries and that they can choose from a larger pool of employment possibilities.

Organisations are challenged to come up with new research-based knowledge and practical applications of the ways to attract, develop and retain talent that will fit into the twenty-first century work context and that will support relevant career development interventions (Coetzee and Gunz 2012). According to Feldman and Bolino (2000) employees' career decision-making and their psychological attachment to an occupation are influenced by their career anchors. Career anchors refer to the employees' perceived abilities, career motives and values (Schein 1996). Individuals' choice of a career or a workplace is determined by their career anchors. The purpose of career anchors is to assist individuals in organising their experiences, identifying their long-term contributions and establishing the criteria for success by which they can measure themselves (Coetzee et al. 2007). Smit (1992) states that career anchors can help one understand the reasons why people choose specific occupations, because these career anchors provide useful frameworks for determining how individuals' career anchors relate to their organisational commitment levels. This brings us to the question: "How can the psychological factors that influence people's job attitudes, satisfaction and commitment be linked to their career anchors?"

In an extensive literature study conducted by Olckers and Du Plessis (2012b) it is concluded that organisations can benefit if they understand psychological ownership as an attitudinal state because psychological ownership leads employees to feel responsible toward the organisation and to show stewardship and therefore psychological ownership can play a role in the retention of talent. Psychological ownership has recently received attention from many researchers. It is hypothesised that a psychological sense of ownership may form an integral part of an individual's relationship with an organisation.

To date, no research has been done on how individuals' psychological ownership can play a role in their career anchors, and this role will be explored in this paper in order to make a contribution to career development and talent management.

Defining Career Anchors and Psychological Ownership

A *career anchor* is defined as a pattern of self-perceived talents and abilities, personal values and motives that influences an individual's career-related decisions, which represents that individual's career identity or self-concept (Schein 1978). According to Kniveton (2004), the purpose of a career anchor is not to categorise a whole person, but to reflect the person's career-related orientation towards their work. This orientation plays an important role in the career-making decisions of a person (Schein 1978), affects the way in which a person responds to experiences at work (Ramakrishna and Potosky 2003), and develops over time (Schein 1990). However, according to Schein (1978) it is possible for a person to have a preference for more than one anchor.

Psychological ownership has been described as a cognitive-affective construct that is based on individuals' feelings of possessiveness and of being psychologically tied or attached to material objects (for example tools or work) as well as to immaterial objects. (for example ideas or workspace). Psychological ownership thus refers to a person's state of mind—a feeling that the target of ownership or a piece of that target is theirs ("It is *mine*!"). This state of mind reflects the person's "awareness, thoughts and beliefs regarding the target of ownership" (Pierce et al. 2003, p. 86).

Scholars specialising in analysing organisations (Avey et al. 2009; Mayhew et al. 2007; Pierce et al. 2003, 2004) focus on the roles that the psychology of possession and the sense of ownership play in the work and in the organisational context. According to Van Dyne and Pierce (2004), psychological ownership asks the question: "How much do I feel this is mine?".

Organisational Commitment and Job Satisfaction as Common Denominators Between Psychological Ownership and Career Anchors

Organisational Commitment

Pierce et al. (2003) theorise that psychological ownership has positive consequences regardless of the organisational member's financial ownership or legal status as owner or non-owner. Pierce and his colleagues propose that psychological ownership is associated with positive behavioural and psychological consequences, and that this association will hold true even for members without an equity ownership position.

Pierce et al. (2001) argue that feelings of ownership produce pleasure and as a result, members of an organisation will want to maintain their relationship with whatever produces this positive effect. They further propose that as employee-owners develop feelings of ownership of the organisation, they become more and more integrated into the organisation. This integration reveals itself, in part, through an attachment to the organisation and a desire to maintain that relationship (VandeWalle et al. 1995).

O'Driscoll et al. (2006) and Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) conclude that psychological ownership leads to the type of organisational attachment that Meyer and Allen (1991) refer to as affective commitment. Affective commitment is based on a sense of identity with the organisation, its values and its goals, and is reflected in feelings of belongingness and of wanting to be attached to the organisation.

VandeWalle et al. (1995) establish a positive link between psychological ownership and organisational commitment. Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) have examined the relationship between psychological ownership and organisational commitment in two organisations and have reported that psychological ownership of an organisation increases variance in commitment. Several studies (Avey et al. 2009; Mayhew et al. 2007; O'Driscoll et al. 2006; Olckers 2011) confirm that there is a strong association between affective organisational commitment and psychological ownership of an organisation.

According to Coetzee et al. (2007), organisational commitment is related to occupational commitment. Meyer et al. (1993) indicate that when involvement in one's occupation is experienced as satisfying, affective commitment develops. In a study done by Valentine et al. (2002) a positive relationship is found between organisational commitment and person-organisation fit. Research conducted by Judge and Ferris (1992) and Peterson (2003) shows that conflict between employees' personal characteristics and the attributes of their organisations results in low levels of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and turnover, as well as sub-standard job performance. Although Coetzee et al. (2007) do not find that career anchors significantly predict organisational commitment, their results show a number of significant associations between the organisational commitment levels and career anchors of their respondents.

Since both psychological ownership and career anchors seem to be related to organisational commitment, an association seems to exist between individuals' psychological ownership and their career anchors.

Job Satisfaction

According to Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), general satisfaction refers to the overall situation in the workplace, while job satisfaction refers to a more specific evaluation of a particular job. Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) propose that a feeling of being an important part of an organisation, thus the experience of psychological ownership, enhances general satisfaction and provides a context for job satisfaction. Employees who have a positive attitude towards their organisation and their work experience are more likely to report positive job satisfaction.

The theory of psychological ownership states that a sense of possession directed toward an organisation satisfies three basic human motives, namely efficacy and effectance, self-identity, and possession of place ('home'), and that this sense of possession produces positive evaluative judgements (Pierce et al. 2003). This theory is supported by research on possession that demonstrates that people develop favourable evaluations of their possessions (Beggan 1992), and that they judge owned objects more favourably than similar, un-owned objects (Nuttin 1987). Therefore, Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) argue that when employees feel possessive of an organisation (in other words, they have influence and control at work and an intimate knowledge about their organisation, and they feel they have invested themselves in their organisational roles), they should experience high levels of satisfaction, which in turn should influence job satisfaction. Several studies (Avey et al. 2009; Mayhew et al. 2007; Olckers 2011; VandeWalle et al. 1995; Van Dyne and Pierce 2004) provide empirical evidence of a positive relationship between psychological ownership and job satisfaction.

In their study, VandeWalle et al. (1995) prove that psychological ownership is a more potent antecedent of extra-role behaviour than satisfaction, and, therefore, that psychological ownership can be considered an important antecedent of extra-role

behaviour. The differential strength between psychological ownership and extra-role behaviour, and satisfaction and extra-role behaviour suggests that managers might derive more benefit from paying more attention to creating a sense of psychological ownership than trying to increase satisfaction. The difference is consistent with the theory of Pierce et al. (2003) that possession and the resulting sense of responsibility are core characteristics of psychological ownership, and that this is what differentiates it from other constructs that concern the relationship between organisations and their members.

Research provides evidence of increased job satisfaction when person-environment congruence exists (Roe and Lunneborg 1990; Spokane 1987) and, more specifically, when there is a person-environment fit between a career anchor and an occupational type (Kaplan 1990; Schein 1990). Ellison and Schreuder (2000) confirm that mid-career employees with a fit between their career anchor and their occupational type will probably experience a higher level of general and intrinsic job satisfaction than those with no such fit. Intrinsic job satisfaction refers to satisfaction that develops from the content of the job itself, which include the opportunity to do a variety of work and the chance to put one's own ideas into practice. Research conducted by Coetzee et al. (2010) indicates that people's career anchors significantly predict their job and career satisfaction, their overall life satisfaction and the meaning they attach to their work.

Career anchors, as well as psychological ownership, lead to increased job satisfaction. Based on the aforementioned research findings it is hypothesised that psychological ownership is significantly related to people's career anchors.

Description and Explanation of Career Anchors and Psychological Ownership

Career Anchors

Most people's career self-concepts are grounded in eight career anchors (Schein 1990) that are categorised according to three groups, namely talents-based, needs-based and values-based anchors (Feldman and Bolino 2000). The *talents-based* anchors comprise technical/functional competence (regarded as an expert among peers), general managerial competence (interested in making or co-ordinating major policy decisions and solving complex, organisational problems) and entrepreneurial creativity (the need to create or exercise creativity and to identify new organisations, products and services). The *needs-based* anchors comprise autonomy/independence (values personal freedom to do things one's own way), security and stability (values long-term employment for health benefits and retirement options) and lifestyle motivations (values maintaining a balance between personal/family needs and work/career needs). The *values-based* anchors comprise service and dedication to a cause (the need to express one's own values in the work context and to serve the

nation) and a pure challenge (to be involved in physically challenging work and risky projects that test personal endurance). An overview of the core goals/concerns and desires underlying each of the eight career anchors as summarised by Coetzee and Schreuder (2011), is given in Table 9.1.

According to Schein (1990), people generally strive for a balance between their career anchors and the work environment in which they pursue their career anchors.

Psychological Ownership

An organisational manifestation of psychological ownership has been suggested by several managerial practitioners (such as Brown 1989; Kostova 1998; Peters 1988) and scholars (such as Pierce et al. 2001). Rudmin and Berry (1987) and Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) explain that, in view of the ever-present nature of feelings of possession and ownership, it can be expected that individuals might develop feelings of psychological ownership toward various organisational targets, such as organisations themselves, jobs, work space, work tasks, work tools and equipment, ideas or suggestions, and even team members.

Two distinct types of psychological ownership, namely *organisation-based psychological ownership* and *job-based psychological ownership* have been identified (Mayhew et al. 2007).

Organisation-based psychological ownership is associated with an individual's feelings of possession of and psychological relation to an entire organisation. According to Mayhew et al. (2007), organisation-based psychological ownership could be affected by a number of characteristics, including company goals and vision, company policies and procedures, organisational culture and climate, status of the organisation and attitudes of senior management.

Job-based psychological ownership is concerned with individuals' feelings of possession toward their particular jobs (Mayhew et al. 2007). Researchers, such as Van Dyne and Pierce (2004), consider both types of psychological ownership as attitudinal rather than as enduring personality traits. According to Mayhew et al. (2007), psychological ownership is context-specific and reflects an individual's current position concerning both the present organisation and the existing job.

In their study, Mayhew et al. (2007) find that job-based psychological ownership is related to job satisfaction, whereas organisation-based psychological ownership is related to affective organisational commitment and job satisfaction. This finding provides support for *psychological ownership* as a distinct construct that has relationships with the work attitudes of organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Mayhew et al. 2007) also find that autonomy has direct and indirect effects on psychological ownership and work attitudes. According to Mayhew et al. (2007), organisation-based psychological ownership partially mediates the relationship between autonomy and organisational commitment, whereas job-based psychological ownership partially mediates the relationship between autonomy and job satisfaction.

Table 9.1 Core goals/concerns, desires and values of the eight career anchors (Source: Coetzee and Schreuder (2011, p. 81))

Construct	Core goal/career concerns	Core desire from workplace	Core value
Schein's career anchors			
Talents-based career anchors			
Technical/functional competence	To exercise talent and develop knowledge of one's expertise	Challenging work that tests one's talents, abilities and skills	Specialisation Further learning and development in one's specialty
General managerial competence	To rise to organisational levels where one is responsible for major policy decisions and where one's own efforts will make the difference between success and failure	High level of responsibility; challenging, varied and integrative work; opportunities for leadership; work that contributes to the success of the organisation	Power and influence, advancement up the corporate ladder
Entrepreneurial creativity	To create a new business of one's own; to develop new products or services; to build new organisations	Challenging opportunities to create own enterprises; opportunities to create or invent new products or services	Power and freedom to create wealth High personal visibility and public recognition
Needs-based career anchors			
Autonomy/independence	To do things in one's own way, at one's own pace, by one's own standards and on one's own terms	Clearly delineated, time-bound kinds of work within own area of expertise, which allow one to accomplish tasks/goals on one's own terms and in one's own way	Freedom to achieve and demonstrate one's competence
Security/stability	To feel safe and secure	Job tenure and job security; retirement plan and benefits; rewarding of steady, predictable performance	Predictability and being rewarded for length of service
Lifestyle	To integrate one's work/ career with one's personal and family needs (to balance entire lifestyle)	Respect for personal and family concerns and openness to renegotiate the psychological contract in line with changing lifestyle needs	Flexibility and freedom to balance work and family life

Table 9.1 (continued)

Schein's career anchors

Construct	Core goal/career concerns	Core desire from workplace	Core value
Values-based career anchors			
Service/ dedication to a cause	To improve the world or society in some way; to serve humanity and one's nation	Opportunities to influence the employing organisation or social policies in the direction of one's personal values; opportunities to serve a higher purpose in line with one's personal values	Influence and freedom to operate autonomously in the pursuit of one's personal values or higher life purpose/ goal
Pure challenge	To overcome impossible obstacles; to solve apparently unsolvable problems, or to beat extremely tough opponents	Tasks or situations that provide a constant variety of challenging opportunities for self-tests	Power and influence to be competitive and win

Table 9.2 Differences between organisation-based and job-based psychological ownership

Organisation-based psychological ownership	Job-based psychological ownership
Employees' feelings of possession and psychological connection to the organisation	Employees' feelings of possession toward their particular jobs as a whole
Influenced by:	*Influenced by:*
Corporate goals and vision	Autonomy
Policies and procedures	Technology
Organisational culture and climate	Participative decision-making
Reputation of the organisation	
Attitudes of senior management	
Autonomy	
Technology	
Participative decision-making	
Related to:	*Related to:*
Affective organisational commitment	Affective organisational commitment
Job satisfaction	Job satisfaction
Partially mediate the relationship between autonomy and organisational commitment	Partially mediate the relationship between autonomy and job satisfaction

According to O'Driscoll et al. (2006), a less structured work environment provides employees with the opportunity to exercise control over their actions. These feelings of increased control are associated with a greater sense of ownership of both the job and the organisation. In their study, O'Driscoll et al. (2006) find that lower levels of structure in the work environment are positively related to higher levels of employee-felt ownership of both the job and the organisation. Each of the work environment structuring variables, namely autonomy, technology and participative decision-making, has a positive and significant relationship with both dimensions of psychological ownership. They further find that job- and organisation-based psychological ownership have a positive association with affective commitment to the organisation.

The core differences between organisation-based and job-based psychological ownership are summarised in Table 9.2.

Organisations can strengthen the link between job-based and organisation-based ownership by ensuring that employees understand the importance of their roles and jobs within the organisation. Trevor-Roberts and McAlpine (2008, p. 33) state that "creating a sense of ownership among employees for the organisation and their jobs has the potential to increase staff retention and productivity".

From the above discussion it seems that job-based psychological ownership is more related to career anchors than is organisation-based psychological ownership.
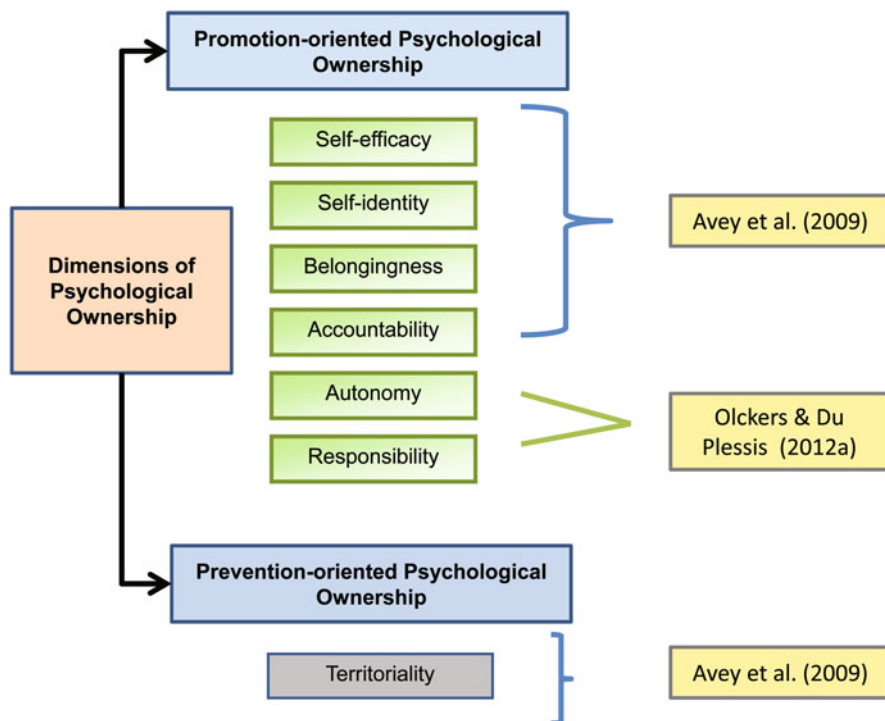
Fig. 9.1 Theoretical dimensions of psychological ownership. (Source: Olckers (2011))

Olckers (2011) asserts that psychological ownership is a multi-dimensional construct comprising seven dimensions that impact the extent to which psychological ownership is experienced. Pierce et al. (2001) report that psychological ownership has three dimensions, namely self-efficacy, self-identity and belongingness. Avey et al. (2009) expand on this construct by Pierce et al. (2001) by categorising the dimensions of psychological ownership as either promotive or preventive orientated and by positing the concepts of territoriality and accountability as additional aspects of psychological ownership. Olckers and Du Plessis (2012a) argue that autonomy and responsibility are significant and should be included in the dimensions of psychological ownership. The multi-dimensional construct of psychological ownership and its proposed dimensions are displayed in Fig. 9.1 and will be discussed in more detail.

Promotion-Orientated Psychological Ownership

Promotion-orientated psychological ownership is the extent to which employees might use their perceived psychological ownership of an object for the greater good of their work, their team or the organisation as a whole. According to Kark and Van Dijk

(2007), a promotion-focused approach reflects individuals' hopes and aspirations and is needed to pursue development, improvement and change to explore the advantages of creative behaviours. Six promotion-orientated psychological ownership dimensions have been identified, namely self-efficacy, self-identity, belongingness, accountability, autonomy and responsibility (Avey et al. 2009; Olckers and Du Plessis 2012a; Pierce et al. 2001).

Self-efficacy According to Bandura (1995), self-efficacy is concerned with how individuals judge their capabilities and how, through their self-perception of efficacy, they influence their motivation and behaviour. Barling and Beattie (1983) contend that employees who feel capable of performing particular tasks tend to perform better. Furby (1978) states that being in control forms an important part of self-efficacy. Therefore, the possibilities of being in control, being able to do something with regard to the environment and being able to effect a desirable outcome of actions are psychological components that result in feelings of self-efficacy and the creation of psychological ownership.

Self-identity According to Dittmar (1992, p. 86), people's sense of identity and their self-definition are "established, maintained, reproduced and transformed" through their interaction with tangible possessions, such as their physical work setting, and intangibles, such as their organisation's mission or purpose, coupled with a reflection upon their meaning. Individuals thus see the target of ownership (for example their job) as an extension of who they are (Belk 1988). Interaction with their possessions provides people with feelings of comfort, autonomy and pleasure, as well as with an opportunity to facilitate the development and cultivation of their identity (Kron and Saunders, as cited in Pierce et al. 2003).

Belongingness Individuals have a need to have a certain own area or space, 'a home', in which to dwell (Weil 1952). According to Pierce et al. (2001), feelings of psychological ownership through attachment to a place or an object result in that place or object becoming 'home' to the individual. Belongingness in terms of psychological ownership of an organisation may be best understood as a person's feeling of being 'at home' in a workplace. A particular job, work team, division or even an organisation as a whole, might satisfy the need of individuals to belong in their places of work (Avey et al. 2009).

Accountability Lerner and Tetlock (1999, p. 255) define accountability as "the implicit or explicit expectation that one may be called on to justify one's beliefs, feelings and actions to others". Being prepared to account for one's actions also implies the right to hold others accountable for theirs—this is consistent with the expected rights and responsibilities as described by Pierce et al. (2001). According to Pierce et al. (2001), for every right of ownership there is a balancing responsibility. For example, employees who feel psychological ownership of their organisation might feel they have the right to know what is happening with their target of ownership and might, therefore, challenge the leaders in their organisation to justify their decisions regarding the management of the organisation (Avey et al. 2009).

Autonomy Ryan and Deci (2006) define autonomy as the extent to which a person needs or is eager to experience individual initiative in performing a job. Therefore, people want to regulate themselves. The ability to exercise influence and control over objects forms an important aspect of possession and ownership (Rudmin and Berry 1987). Amabile (1983) and Utman (1997) are of the opinion that the promotion of autonomy frees individuals to experience attachment and intimacy. Mayhew et al. (2007) provide evidence that if employees are allowed the flexibility and freedom to plan and perform their work activities, and if they are given the opportunity to exercise discretion and to control their work environment, then the manifestation of their work-related attitudes (job satisfaction and organisation-based self-esteem) and behaviours is promoted. In their study, Md-Sidin et al. (2010) find that academics that are provided with enough autonomy over their work tend to possess higher degrees of psychological ownership.

Responsibility Feelings of ownership are accompanied by a felt responsibility for the target of ownership, and the implicit right to control that is associated with ownership also leads to a sense of responsibility (Pierce et al. 2001). Pierce et al. (2001) further state that when an individual's self is closely linked to a job or to an organisation, as in the case of psychological ownership, a desire to maintain, enhance and protect that identity will result in an enhanced sense of responsibility for the target of those ownership feelings. A positive relationship between responsibility activities and psychological ownership has been confirmed by Paré et al. (2006).

Prevention-Orientated Psychological Ownership

Prevention-orientated psychological ownership is the extent to which employees might withhold information from other employees because they seek to avoid change and want to maintain stability (Avey et al. 2009). Employees following a prevention-focused approach seek safety, stability and predictability and therefore stick to rules and obligations to avoid punishment (Higgens 1997).

Territoriality Organisational members can and do become territorial over tangibles, such as physical space and possessions; over intangibles, such as ideas, roles and responsibilities; and over social entities, such as people and groups. Brown et al. (2005, p. 578) define territoriality as "an individual's behavioural expression of his or her feelings of ownership toward a physical or social object". This definition of theirs includes behaviours for constructing, communicating, maintaining and restoring territories around those objects in the organisation toward which individuals feel proprietary attachment.

Relatedness Between Psychological Ownership and Career Anchors

Relation Between Self-Efficacy and Career Anchors

King (2004) states that individuals' self-efficacy and their intention to exercise control over career outcomes enable them to demonstrate career self-management behaviours. These career behaviours can lead to the achievement of desired career goals and ultimately to career success. According to Stucliffe and Vogus (2003), individuals develop an overall sense of efficacy and competence that enables them to gain control and mastery over task-related behaviours. Research indicates a positive relationship between career decision-making self-efficacy and personal attributes, and this finding supports the fact that individuals with high self-efficacy display considerable control over their life events and successfully master decision-making tasks and behaviours in career decision-making (Taylor and Popma 1990; Abdalla 1995). Empirical evidence supports the finding that self-efficacy beliefs influence career development and growth (Bell and Staw 1989; Noe and Wilk 1993).

Individuals with a pure challenge career anchor value the challenge of their work above all else. These individuals constantly search for opportunities to prove to themselves that they can overcome impossible obstacles. Their goal is to solve unsolvable problems and to win against all odds (Schein 1990). They most probably believe that they are capable of effecting the desirable outcome of their actions. This belief may also be applicable to individuals with a technical/functional competence career anchor because the satisfaction of being an expert in a particular field is more important to them than anything else. If they moved into other fields of work they would probably experience less satisfaction. Their identity is built around the content of their work and therefore they are committed to being a specialist (Schein 1990). The fact that they seem to be in control of their work and environment might enhance their feelings of self-efficacy.

> *Proposition 1*: There is a positive relationship between self-efficacy and the pure challenge career anchor.
> *Proposition 2*: There is a positive relationship between self-efficacy and the technical/functional competence career anchor.

Relation Between Belongingness and Career Anchors

According to Porteous (1976), 'the home' is essential for the reason that it provides the individual with both spiritual and physical security. The overriding need of an individual with a security/stability anchor is the need to feel safe and secure within an organisation. Therefore, there seems to be a positive relation between an individual's sense of belongingness and the security/stability career anchor.

> *Proposition 3*: There is a positive relationship between an individual's sense of belongingness and the security/stability career anchor.

Relation Between Accountability and Career Anchors

According to Pierce et al. (2003), a side benefit that organisations experience from psychological ownership is that a member with high levels of ownership will act as the conscience of others, with the result that all team members will make the required contribution to achieve their targets of ownership. Individuals with a service/dedication-to-a-cause career anchor have the desire to improve the world or society and to serve humanity and their nation. They seem to feel accountable for the world and society and want to serve a purpose in line with their personal values (Coetzee and Schreuder 2011). Therefore, it seems that a positive relationship might exist between individuals with a service/dedication-to-a-cause career anchor and accountability.

> *Proposition*4*:* There is a positive relationship between accountability and the security/dedication-to-a-cause career anchor.

Relation Between Autonomy and Career Anchors

Individuals with an autonomy/independence career anchor value the freedom to do things their own way, and they will avoid being subjected to other people's norms. These individuals are characterised by self-reliance and independent judgement, and they find organisational life intrusive and restricting (Ellison and Schreuder 2000). Employment situations in which one can be the master of one's own fate appeal to them. Therefore, the individual's autonomy/independence career anchor and the autonomy dimension representative of psychological ownership seem to be related.

> *Proposition 5*: There is a positive relationship between autonomy and the autonomy/independence career anchor.

Relation Between Self-identity and Career Outcomes

It seems that self-identity is not related to a specific career anchor, but that it is related to career outcomes in general. According to Lumley et al. (2011), the goals and desires that underlie people's career anchors have an influence on their career choices and decisions, as well as on their job and career satisfaction. For individuals to make correct career choices, they need to gain a deeper sense of identity. When individuals are guided to make correct choices, it is of the utmost importance to get them to gain self-insight (Hall and Mirvis 1995).

Relation Between Responsibility and Career Anchors

The managerial-anchored individual has an interest in being responsible for major policy decisions and has the desire to make a difference between the success and the failure of an organisation (Coetzee 2011). According to Rogers and Freundlich (1998), employees who feel like owners of the organisation believe that they have the right to influence the direction of the organisation and that they have a "deeper responsibility" than those who do not feel ownership. Therefore, it seems that a relationship might exist between individuals with a managerial-anchored orientation and responsibility.

> *Proposition 6*: There is a positive relationship between responsibility and the managerial competence career anchor.

Relation Between Territoriality and Career Anchors

For individuals with a technical/functional competence career anchor it is of the utmost importance to be an expert in a particular field. They feel drawn back to their specific area of competence (Coetzee and Schreuder 2011). These individuals might become so preoccupied with their "objects of ownership" that they might not want to share the object (for example, machinery or physical space or ideas) at the expense of their performance or of other pro-social behaviours. Therefore, it is possible that individuals with a technical/functional competence career anchor become too territorial about their expertise and knowledge.

> *Proposition 7*: There is a positive relationship between territoriality and the technical/functional competence career anchor.

Based on the propositions that have been formulated, a theoretical framework has been constructed and is presented in Fig. 9.2 to indicate the probable relationship between psychological ownership and career anchors.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter contributes to the body of knowledge regarding the role that psychological ownership can play in career management. Management, human resource practitioners and career counsellors can benefit from recognising job-based psychological ownership as an important factor that leads employees to feel responsible towards their targets of ownership, in this case their career anchors.

Practical Implications for Career Counselling and Guidance

Psychological ownership, therefore, contributes to career psychology and may be used to inform HR practices that are concerned with optimising person-job fits and with the job and career satisfaction of employees with a view to career success and
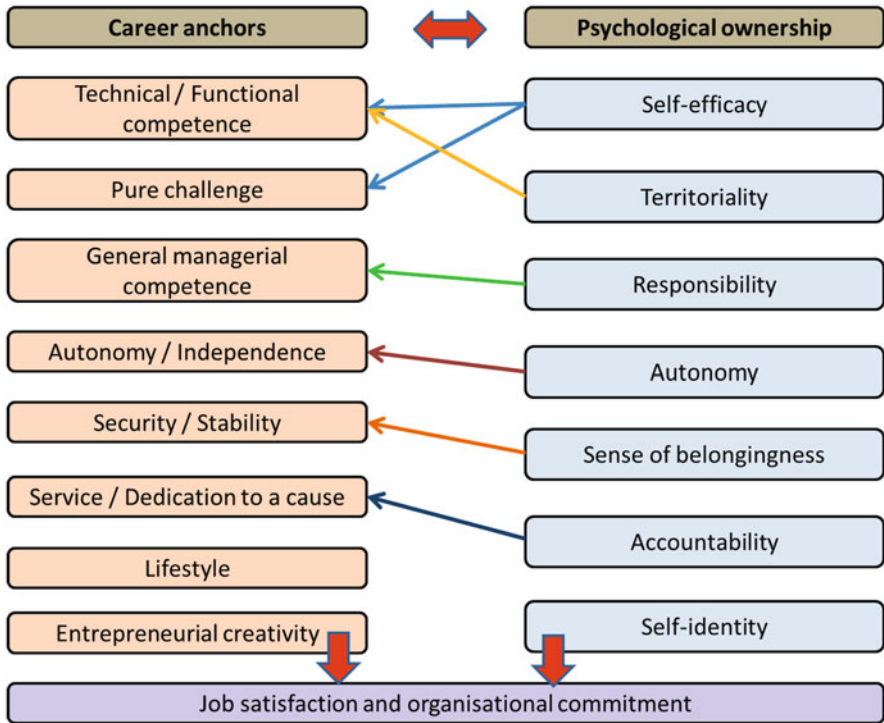
Fig. 9.2 Theoretical relationship between psychological ownership and career anchors

talent retention. In the light of the current changing work context, career counsellors may also find the suggestions in this paper useful to facilitate proactive career behaviour among, in particular, skilled employees.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the probable theoretical relationship between psychological ownership and career anchors has been indicated. The presence of the common denominators of job satisfaction and commitment in both the aforementioned concepts has prompted the exploration of the probable theoretical relationship between psychological ownership and career anchors, and this relationship has been discussed. Furthermore, a description and explanation of career anchors and psychological ownership have been given. The possible relationship between the seven dimensions of psychological ownership and the eight career anchors were explored and the possible linkages have been indicated, which can be further researched.

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Chapter 10
Career Meta-Competencies in the Retention of Employees

Nadia Ferreira

Abstract It is clear from the literature that the work context has changed dramatically during the 21st century (Baruch, *Managing careers.* Harlow: Pearson Education, 2004a; *Career Dev Int* 9:58–73, 2004b; Burke and Ng, *Human Resource Management Review,* 16:86–94, 2006). As a result of these changes, careers have also changed and moved away from what was known as the traditional career to the boundary-less career (Ashkenas et al., *The boundaryless organization.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1995; DeFillippi and Arthur, *Journal of Organizational Behaviour,* 15: 307, 1994; McArdle et al., *Journal of Vocational Behaviour,* 71:247–264, 2007). The more complex work environment in a rapidly expanding knowledge economy has influenced the skills and competencies of individuals wishing to enter the 21st century world of work. Higher qualifications or technical skills are no longer enough to secure a job (Cox and King, *Education and Training,* 48:262–274, 2006). Career adaptability and hardiness as psychological career meta-competencies and job embeddedness and organizational commitment as retention-related dispositions influencing the retention of valuable employees in an organization will form the basis of this chapter. Investigating the psychological career meta-competencies (career adaptability and hardiness) that influence individuals' retention-related dispositions (job embeddedness and organizational commitment) has become crucial in the light of the changing nature of careers and the global skills scarcity. Psychological career meta-competencies were found to influence the job embeddedness and organizational commitment in a changed organizational context and could make a vital contribution to the potential retention of talented staff (Ferreira, *Constructing a psychological profile for staff retention.* Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2012).

Keywords Psychological career profile · Psychological career resources · Hardiness · Career adaptability · Job embeddedness · Organizational commitment · Retention-related dispositions · Career meta-competencies · Staff retention

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Career Meta-Competencies in a Changing Workplace

Change has always existed, but the speed with which it happens seems to be increasing (Baruch 2004b). Business organizations (nonprofit, public and private organisations) are bombarded with rapid developments or changes in various areas such as the economy, technology and society in general. These developments or changes have wide implications for the management of individuals at work and specifically the planning and management of their careers. The current generation fails to see the boundaries in many facets of life, and this could have implications for their careers as such because careers are becoming multidirectional and boundaryless (Baruch 2004a).

As a result of the changes in the work world and focus on employability, individuals need to equip themselves with a wider variety of skills in order to be more flexible to meet the needs of organizations and customers. The onus is therefore on the individual to continuously undergo training to up skill himself or herself. This will ensure continued employment in the fast-changing world and the new challenges in 21st century careers. Fallows and Steven (2000) emphasise the fact that higher education plays a pivotal role in assisting graduates to gain the skills to become more employable, which can help them manage their careers successfully. Hence employability has become a concern for both the providers of educational services and those individuals wishing to enter the world of work (Cox and King 2006).

Organizations are also grappling with changing workforce demographics, attitudes and values, incorporating and utilizing the rapid advancements in technology and addressing globalization-related challenges such as increased competitive pressures, outsourcing and offshoring and a global workforce that places a higer premium on cross-cultural sensitivities and skills (Burke and Ng 2006). As new technology is invented, the way one does things changes, and these changes in turn affect one personally and directly, such as where one lives and work. According to Burke and Ng (2006), globalization has opened up new opportunities for workers and organizations alike and changed the work experience and evironment for individual workers, groups and organizations.

Conventional thinking suggests that organizations simply do not matter as much as they used to (Baruch 2004a). The boundaryless organization (Ashkenas et al. 1995) resulted in the emergence of the boundaryless career (DeFillippi and Arthur 1994). Careers have become transitional and flexible, and the dynamics of restructuring are blurring the tidy and firm former routes for success (requiring new perspectives on what success means). Linear career systems have become multidirectional (Baruch 2006).

If individuals are to acquire the necessary psychological attributes or career meta-competencies to flourish in the changing occupational world, they need to take responsibility for up-skilling themselves and managing their careers as effectively as possible. Individuals can engage in career counseling and development activities to identify their strengths and weaknesses and develop certain psycho-social capacities as tools for enhancing their employability. A psychological profile constituting the

psycho-social career meta-competencies that are required to adapt to and flourish in the contemporary workplace would be a powerful tool for industrial psychologists, human resource practitioners, managers, career counselors and individuals as career agents. As a career counseling and guidance tool, such a psychological profile could be used to deepen the understanding of how career agents' career meta-competencies influence their psychological attachment to the organization. This knowledge could be useful in the design of retention practices for talented staff in the light of the global scarce skills concerns.

Psychological Career Meta-competencies

Ferreira (2012) identified psychological career resources, career adaptability, and hardiness as important career meta-competencies for contemporary career development.

Psychological Career Resources

Psychological career resources is defined as the set of career-related preferences, values, attitudes and attributes that lead to self-empowering, proactive career behaviour that promotes general employability (Coetzee 2008). Psychological career resources are further regarded as individuals' inherent resources or meta-competencies which enable them to adapt to changing or uncertain career circumstances and shape and select environments in order to attain success in a particular socio-cultural context. Coetzee (2008) differentiates between (1) career preferences and (2) career values; (3) skills that enable effective and proactive career planning/self-design, reinvention and development (career enablers); (4) intrinsic career motivations that drive individuals' career actions and intentionalities (career drivers); and (5) psycho-social career meta-capacities that facilitate resiliency and adaptability within individuals' unique social-cultural contexts (career harmonizers). The construct of psychological career resources is discussed in detail by Coetzee in Chap. 6.

Career Adaptability

Career adaptability assists the individual to adjust and fit into a new career-related situation (Koen et al. 2010). Career adaptability incorporates factors such as, planfullness, exploration, decision making, information and realism (Super 1974), career planning and career exploration (Zikic and Klehe 2006), a boundaryless mind-set (McArdle et al. 2007) of career planning, career decidedness and career confidence (Skorikov 2007). Career adaptability may be particularly useful in understanding the

job search process because this conceptualization signifies the willingness and diverse adaptive resources that may assist individuals to prepare for and manage career transitions such as a move from unemployment to re-employment (Koen et al. 2010). According to Savickas (1997, 2002, 2005), career adaptability involves looking forward to one's future career (planning), knowing what career to follow (decision making), looking around at different career options (exploration) and having a feeling of self-efficiency to effectively perform the activities needed to accomplish one's career objectives (confidence).

Career adaptability includes an individual's capability to face, track or acknowledge changing career roles and to effectively handle career shifts (Savickas 1997, 2002, 2005), such as finishing a state of joblessness by searching for a job. Career adaptability can furthermore be used in terms of finding appropriate re-employment. It can be argued that the four dimensions of career adaptability (career planning, decision making, exploration and confidence) refer to an individual's preparation and psychological willingness to use diverse job search strategies, which in turn can influence the individual's re-employment results (Koen et al. 2010). Understanding an individual's career adaptability profile may influence staff retention in an organization.

In considering adaptability, the career construction theory (Savickas 2005) highlights a set of specific attitudes, beliefs and competencies, which shape the actual problem-solving strategies and coping behaviour that individuals use to synthesise their vocational self-concepts with work roles. Accordingly, the aim of a life design intervention is to increase career adaptability. For example, it seeks to increase the five "Cs" of career adaptability theory, namely concern, control, curiosity, confidence and commitment.

- *Concern* involves a tendency to consider life within a time perspective anchored in hope and optimism (becoming concerned about the vocational future).
- *Control* rests on the conviction that it is an advantage for people to be able not only to use self-regulation strategies to adjust to the needs of the different settings, but also to exert some sort of influence and control over the context (increasing personal control over one's vocational future).
- *Curiosity* about possible selves and social opportunities increases people's active exploration behaviours (they display curiosity by exploring possible selves and future scenarios).
- *Confidence* includes the capacity to stand by one's own aspirations and objectives, even in the face of obstacles and barriers (strengthening the confidence to pursue one's aspirations).
- *Commitment* to one's life projects instead of one's particular job means that career indecision should not necessarily be removed because it actually generates new possibilities and experimentations that allow individuals to be active, even in uncertain situations.

Hardiness

Hardiness explains a generalized style of functioning, characterized by a strong sense of commitment, control and challenge that serves to alleviate the negative effects of stress (Azeem 2010; Delahaij et al. 2010; Hystad et al. 2010; Zhang 2010). In their original work, Kobassa (1979), Kobassa (1982) and Kobassa and Puccetti (1983) defined hardiness as a collection of personality characteristics that function as a flexible resource during the encounter with demanding life events. Over the years, research has established and extended the original hardiness research across a number of groups, including army and police officers, nurses, teachers, emergency personnel and professional athletes, and consistently found that hardiness moderates the stress-health relationship (Barton et al. 2004; Bartone et al. 1989; Bohle 1997; Chan 2003; Golby and Sheard 2004; Hystad et al. 2010; Zach et al. 2007). Several studies headed by Kobassa found a comparable protecting effect of hardiness, as well as a moderating effect on stress (Kobassa 1982; Kobassa and Pucceti 1983). Analysis of these investigations led Kobassa to propose that hardy individuals have a clear sense of direction, a dynamic approach in demanding situations and a sense of self-belief and control that moderates the intensity of possible threats and dangers (Zakin et al. 2003).

Over the last 25 years, hardiness has emerged in psychology as a pattern of attitudes that facilitate turning stressful circumstances from potential disasters into growth opportunities (Gerhardt et al. 2001; Maddi 1994, 1998, 2002, 2007; Maddi et al. 2006, 2010). These attitudes of hardiness constitute the courage and motivation to face and transform stressors, instead of denying or catastrophising, and to avoid or strike out against them, and are especially essential in our changing tubulent times (Maddi 1998, 2002; Maddi et al. 2009). According to Maddi and Khoshaba (2001), hardy individuals construct meaning in their lives by recognising that (1) everything they do contitutes a decision, (2) decisions invariably involve pushing towards the future or shrinking into the past, and (3) choosing the future explands meaning, whereas choosing the past contracts it (Sheard 2009).

Highly fussy individuals are described as being intellectually inquisitive and maybe more success oriented, hardworking and persistent (Komarraju and Karau 2005). Such a description of an individual fits well with the"hardy personality" (Kobassa 1979b). Hystad et al. (2010), Maddi (2002), Ramanaiah and Sharpe (1999) and Sheard and Golby (2007) have identified a positive correlation between hardiness and meticulousness.

The hardiness trait is described as a constellation of three attitudes: commitment, control and challenge (Kobassa 1979a, b). These attitudes reflect deeply held beliefs that influence the way people interpret stressful events. A hardy individual views potentially stressful situations as meaningful and interesting (commitment), sees stressors as changeable (control) and regards change as a normal aspect of life rather than a threat and as an opportunity for growth (challenge) (Funk 1992). High levels of commitment enable individuals to believe in the truth, importance and interest value of who they are and what they are doing, and therefore the tendency to involve

themselves fully in the many situations of life, including work, family, interpersonal relationships and social institutions (Kobassa 1987, p. 6). Commitment engenders feelings of excitement along with a strong sense of community and motivation to remain engaged during difficult times (Kobassa 1982, 1985).

Control

Control enhances motivation to engage in effortful coping because it predisposes the individual to view stressors as changeable (Kobassa 1982; Maddi 2002; Maddi and Kobassa 1984). Hardy individuals feel that attempting to control or change a demanding or undesirable situation (instead of fatalistically accepting the outcome) falls within their scope of personal responsibility. Individuals demonstrating control, perceive many stressful life events as predictable consequences of their own activities, which are subject to their direction and manipulation (Kobassa 1982, p. 7). When faced with difficulties, high control individuals are more likely to feel capable of acting effectively on their own. They reflect on how to turn a situation to their advantage instead of taking things at face value (Maddi and Kobassa 1984).

Challenge

Challenge generates a zest for facing up to (or even seeking out) difficult experiences because they are viewed as opportunities for personal growth rather than as potential threats to security (Maddi et al. 2002). Hence individuals who expect to thrive must learn to embrace the strenuousness of "authentic living", drawing strength from difficulties previously faced and successfully overcome as opposed to looking for ways to avoid stressful events.

Individuals high in challenge are motivated to become catalysts in their environments and to practise responding to the unexpected. They are apt to more thoroughly explore their surroundings in an on-going search for new and interesting experiences. As a result, they know where to turn for resources to help them cope with stress. High challenge individuals are characterised by cognitive flexibility and tolerance for ambiguity. This allows them to more easily integrate unexpected or otherwise stressful events (Kobassa 1982; Maddi 1999).

Hardiness and Coping

Although the relationship between hardiness and coping is not examined in this study, a brief explanation is necessary to clarify how hardiness can influence health and well-being. Hardiness theorists propose that hardiness influences the relationship between stressors and strain primarily through its effect on appraisal and coping process. In the hardiness literature, coping and appraisal processes are subsumed under the rubric of coping strategies (Maddi and Kobassa 1984). Coping strategies

include primary appraisals (challenge or threat appraisals), secondary appraisals (assessments of the adequacy of available resources for dealing with environmental demands) and the actions taken in response to those stressors (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). Hardiness allows the individual to appraise stressors in a way that minimises the level of threat perceived and limits the amount of negative arousal experienced (Kobassa 1982). Hardy individuals are thus expected to interpret stressful events as being less threatening and more controllable (Kobassa 1979b, 1982; Maddi 1987; Maddi and Kobassa 1984). Furthermore, hardy individuals are more likely to choose adaptive (or transformational) coping strategies over avoidant (or regressive) methods (Genry and Kobassa 1984; Kobassa 1979a, b, 1982, 1985; Kobassa and Puccetti 1983; Maddi 1987, 2002; Maddi et al. 1998; Maddi and Kobassa 1984).

Conceptually, not one of the three Cs per se is enough to provide the necessary courage and motivation to turn stress into an advantage. What is needed is all three of the Cs operating together (Maddi 2002). American psychology is currently proccupied with the importance of the control attitude, and some feel that it is this attitude that fully defines hardiness. Imagine people high in control but simultaneously low in commitment and challenge. They would want to determine outcomes, but not waste time and effort learning from experience or feeling involved with people, things and events (Maddi 2004). They would be egotistical and vulnerable to seeing themselves as better than others and as having nothing more to learn. They would be riddled with impatience, irritability, isolation and bitter suffering whenever control efforts fails. This is not hardiness so much as the Type A behaviour pattern with all its physical, mental and social vulnerabilities (Maddi 2002, 2004).

Retention-Related Dispositions

The retention-related dispositions included in the suggested psychological profile have been identified as job embeddedness and organizational commitment (Ferreira 2012).

Job Embeddedness

According to Mitchell et al. (2001a, p. 1104), job embeddedness presupposes that there are several strands that unite an employee and his or her family in a social, psychological, and financial network that contains work and non-work friends, groups, the community, and the physical environment in which he or she lives. Job embeddedness represents a broad set of influences on an employee's decision to stay on the job. These influences include on-the-job factors such as bonds with co-workers, the fit between one's skills and the demands of the jobs, and organization-sponsored community-service activities (Crossley et al. 2007; Holtom et al. 2006). Job embeddedness also includes of-the-job factors such as personal, family and community

commitments. The value of the construct job embeddedness was also demonstrated by Holtom et al. (2006). Job embeddedness is a stronger predictor of significant organizational outcomes such as employee attendance, retention and performance that the best-known and accepted psychological explanations (e.g., job satisfaction and organizational commitment) (Holtom et al. 2006).

Mitchell et al. (2001a) developed the organizational embeddedness concept as a construct that merges the retention research focused on job satisfaction, job involvement, and organizational commitment with turnover models on structural economic and external reasons for leaving an organization. The concept of being embedded in a job involves a wide array of options that influence employee retention. Building on the turnover models of Steers and Mowday (1981), Mitchell and Lee (2001) advanced their model by adding a new dimension to the understanding of turnover; -a counter-intuitive notion that individuals may leave an organisation for reasons other than job dissatisfaction. Job embeddedness is a multi-dimensional construct that focuses on the factors that make an individual more likely to remain in the job, namely the work and social, non-work attachements that are developed over a period of time. Job embeddedness includes multiple factors: such as work or organizational options like choosing one's own clients, empowerment, or mentoring activities, or non-work or social embeddedness (Van Emmerik and Sanders 2004) which may include links to family, non-work and off-the-job interests, and job and organisational embeddedness (Mitchell et al. 2001a).

Job embeddedness is a relatively new construct developed to indicate a more comprehensive view of the employee-employer relationship than is typically reflected by attitudinal measures such as satisfaction or commitment (Mitchell et al. 2001b). Job embeddedness also differs from the traditional model of turnover in that it focuses on at employee retention, instead of employee turnover (Holtom and O'Neill 2004). Thus, the central focus is how to keep people in an organization, as opposed how to keep them from moving to a different organisation.

According to Feldman and Ng (2007), researchers have only recently begun to pay more attention to questions about why people stay in their jobs, organizations, and occupations even when other (and better) opportunities are available elsewhere. Starting primarily with the work of Mitchell et al. (2001a), there is now increased interest in the constructs of embeddedness, namely, the totality of forces that keep people in their current employment situations.

Job embeddedness assesses a broad set of influences on employee retention. The critical aspects of job embeddedness include the following: (1) the extent to which an employee's job and community fit with the other aspects of his or her life space; (2) the extent to which employees have links to other people or activities; and (3) the ease with which links can be broken—what employees would give up if they were to leave, expecially if they were to physically move to another home or city (Holtom and O'Neill 2004). The concept of embeddedness goes well beyond the organization. It extends to the employee's family members fitting into an organisation and a community. Links, fit and sacrifice are considered at two different levels: (1) on the job and (2) off the job, generating the three job embedded dimensions discussed above (Mitchell et al. 2001b).

Although off-the-job embeddedness may be more crucial when relocation is involved, it may still apply in situations requiring only a change in jobs. In addition, if people are embedded they may remove job alternatives that require relocation from the set of job options they consider (Mitchell et al. 2001a).

Job embeddedness implies that the evaluation of social relationships influences the decision-making process leading to turnover. The theory proposes that people who consider themselves embedded (as measured by questions relating to their working environment and community experience) are less likely to indicate their intention to leave (Mitchell et al. 2001b).

It is easy to associate embeddedness with tenure, since time allows for the development of links. In support of the embeddedness concept, Griffeth et al. (2000) meta-analysis shows the two best demographic predictors of turnover as tenure and children in the household.

Mitchell et al. (2001) in a study of two organizations, reported correlations of -0.41 and -0.47 ($p < 0.01$) between job embeddedness and intentions to leave the organisation. In addition, the study demonstrates that job embeddedness significantly imporved the prediction of turnover beyond that accounted for by job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Job embeddedness reflects those on-and off-the-job factors that keep people in their current positions.

According to Mitchell et al. (2001, p. 1104), job embeddedness suggests that there are several strands that unite an employee and his or her family in a social, psychological and financial network that contains work and nonwork friends, groups, the community and the physical environment in which he or she lives. Job embeddedness represents a broad set of influences on an employee's decision to stay on the job. These influences include on-the-job factors such as bonds with co-workers, the fit between one's skills and the demands of the jobs, and organization-sponsored community-service activities (Crossley et al. 2007; Holtom et al. 2006). They also includes off-the-job factors such as personal, family and community commitments. The value of the construct of job embeddedness was also demonstrated by Mitchell et al.

In the work and the community environments, an individual can have three kinds of attachments: links, fit and sacrifice. Hence with the two factors (work and community) and the three kinds of attachments (links, fit and sacrifice), the job embeddedness model has six dimensions: work links, work fit, work sacrifice (organisational embeddedness) and community links, community fit and community sacrifice (community embeddedness). An individual is embedded when he or she has multiple links to the people in the employing organization and non-work community, when the workplace and the community environment are a good fit for the individual and when the individual feels he or she would have to sacrifice too much to leave the organization and community (Mitchell et al. 2001a).

Organizational Commitment

According to Meyer and Allen's (1991) definition of organizational commitment reflects three extensive elements namely (1) affective, (2) continuance and (3) normative. Commitment can therefore be defined as reflecting an affective point of

reference towards the organisation, acknowledgement of the consequences relating to leaving the organization and an ethical responsibility to remain with the organisation (Meyer and Allen 1991). For the purposes of this study, this definition will be adopted.

According to Mathieu and Zajac (1990), various definitions and measures of organizational commitment have been formulated over the years. By examining the diverse definitions and measures, it is obvious that they have a common universal idea, namely that organizational commitment is regarded as a person's connection with or link to his or her organization. The definitions vary in respect of how this link is deemed to have developed. Commitment to an occupation suggests the desire to stay with an organisation in order to develop business and professional associations (Colarelli and Bishop 1990). Commitment to an internally defined occupation may turn out to be a vital foundation of occupational significance and stability because modern organizations are in a state of flux and are less able to ensure employment protection (Colarelli and Bishop 1990). Career commitment is differentiated by the development of individual occupational objectives, and the connection to, classification with and participation in those objectives. According to Hall (1976), career commitment should go beyond career and employment.

Organizational commitment is the psychological connection an individual has with the organization, which includes a sense of job involvement, loyalty and belief in the organization's values (O'Reilly 1989, p. 17). Here organizational commitment is reported as an employee's recognition of organizational goals and his or her enthusiasm into making an effort on the organization's behalf (O'Reilly 1989).

According to Meyer and Allen (1991), organizational commitment is a psychological condition that (1) differentiates the association with the organization, and (2) has repercussions for the choice to continue memebership thereof. Meyer and Allen (1991) thus identified these three components as affective, continuance and normative commitment. these components will be discussed in detail below.

Affective Commitment

According to Meyer and Allen (1997), affective commitment is the individual's affecting connection to, recognition as part of and participation in the organisation. Employees who are affectively committed to the organisation will probably continue work for it because they want to (Meyer and Allen 1991). Individuals who are dedicated at an emotional level usually remain with the organisation because they see their individual employment relationship as being harmonious with the goals and values of the organization for which they are currently working (Beck and Wilson 2000).

Kanter (1968) describes affective commitment as the connection of an individual's support of affective feelings towards the group. Affective commitment is an outlook or point of reference towards the organization, which links the individuality of the individual to the organization(Sheldon 1971).

Hall et al. (1970) regard the affective component as the procedure whereby the objectives of the organization and those of the individual become increasingly harmonious. Affective commitment is also considered to be a supporting factor, commitment to the objectives and principles of the organization, to the individual's responsibility in relation to objectives and principles, and to the organization for its own sake, apart from its merely active value (Buchanan 1974). Some individuals put more into their careers than is required to complete the job successfully and qualify this as the affective component or organizational commitment (Gould 1979). Affective commitment is also influenced by factors such as work challenge, role clearness, clarity about objectives and the difficulty of the objectives, openness on the part of management, peer unity, equity, individual significance, feedback, contributions and steadiness (Meyer and Allen 1997).

Affective commitment development involves recognition of the organization and internalisation of organisational principles and standards (Beck and Wilson 2000).

Continuance Commitment

The second component of Allen and Meyer's (1990) model of organizational commitment is continuance commitment. Continuance commitment includes the awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization (Meyer and Allen 1997, p. 11). Kanter (1968, p. 504) concurs with this definition stating that it is the gain associated with sustained involvement and the costs associated with leaving the organization. Because of the individual's awareness of consideration of expenses and threats linked to leaving the existing organization it is considered to be calculative (Meyer and Allen 1997) Meyer and Allen (1991) also indicate that individuals whose primary connection to the organization is based on continuance commitment, stay because they need to.

Continuance commitment can be seen as a helpful accessory to the organization, where the individual's relationship is based on an evaluation of the financial benefits received (Beck and Wilson 2000). Another perception of continuance commitment is that it is a structural occurrence, because of the individual-organizational contract and ammendments to sidetakes or saving over a period of time (Hrebiniak and Alutto 1972).

Meyer et al. (1990, p. 715) also maintain that "accrued investments and poor employment alternatives tend to force individuals to maintain their line of action and are responsible for these individuals being committed because they need to". Individuals remain with a specific organization because of the money they add as a result of the time spent in the organisation, not because they want to. This differs from affective commitment where individuals remain with an organisation because they want to, and because they are familiar with it and its principles.

Normative Commitment

Normative commitment is defined as a sense of responsibility to continue employment with a specific organization (Meyer and Allen 1997). The internalised normative idea of responsibility and commitment allows employees to appreciate continued memebership of a specific organisation (Allen and Meyer 1990). The normative element is viewed as the commitment individuals think about morally regarding their right to remain with a specific organization, in spite of how much status improvement or fulfilment the organization provides them over the years (March and Mannari 1977).

Normative commitment illustrates development whereby organizational procedures (which include choice and socialisation actions) and individual tendencies (which include the personal-organisational importance similarity and generalised reliability or responsibility approach) direct the way to the progression of organizational commitment (Wiener 1982).

Commitment behaviours are generaly acknowledged behaviours that go beyond formal and/or normative prospects relating to the purpose of commitment (Wiener 1982). Normative commitment is also regarded as the sum of internalized normative forces that unite organisational objectives and organizational wellbeing (Wiener 1982).

According to Suliman and Iles (2000), acknowledgement of the regulations pertaining to mutual responsibility between the organization and its employees influences the strength of normative organisational commitment. The mutual responsibility is based on the social exchange theory, which proposes that an individual who benefits has a normative responsibility to give something back to the organization (McDonald and Makin 2000). Normative career commitment engenders thoughts or faithfulness to an occupation (Kidd 2006). Meyer et al.'s (1993) model focuses on feelings or the responsibility to remain in an occupation and a sense of accountability to stay in the occupation and organization.

Affective, continuance and normative commitment are components of organizational commitment, instead of types of commitment because the employee-employer relationship imitates variable degrees of all three components (Meyer and Allen 1997). The multidimensional structure or conceptualization appears to be suitable. The lack of consensus on the definition of commitment was generally responsible for its being dealt with as a multidimensional construct (Meyer and Allen 1997).

A Psychological Career Profile for Staff Retention

Figure 10.1 provides an overview of the psychological career profile that can be constructed to guide retention practices (Ferreira 2012).

As shown in Fig. 10.1, the suggested psychological career meta-competencies profile is described in terms of four psychological behavioral dimensions: cognitive, affective, conative and interpersonal levels.
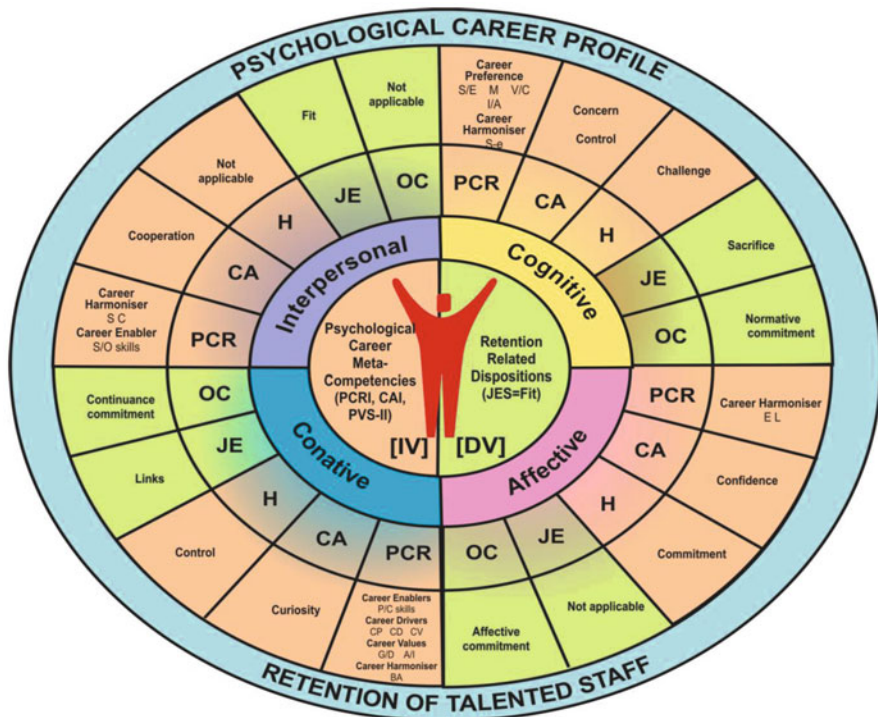
Fig. 10.1 Psychological career meta-competencies profile for staff retention (Ferreira 2012). *PCR* psychological career resources, *CA* career adaptability, *H* hardiness, *JE* job embeddedness, *OC* organizational commitment

On a **cognitive level**, the retention of individuals may be influenced by their career preferences and career harmonizers (psychological career resources), concern and control (career adaptability), control, commitment and challenge (hardiness), sacrifice (job embeddedness) and normative commitment (organizational commitment) (Coetzee 2008; Ferreira et al. 2010; Savickas 2002; Schreuder and Coetzee 2011). Career development support practices and career counseling should focus on creating a work environment that provide stability, managerial opportunities, enhance creativity, provide independence, and enhance positive self-esteem as well as social connectivity. Furthermore, it is important for organizations to assist individuals with coping skills, commitment towards the organization as well as how to deal with challenges within the workplace. Employees should also be assisted with the dealing with the sacrifice that needs to be made between work and family time. Organizations should also be assisted within these interventions to enhance individuals' organizational commitment and engage them in managing their own careers. Such interventions could possibly assist the organization with the retention of talented staff.

On an **affective level**, individuals' retention may be influenced by their career harmonizers (psychological career resources), curiosity (career adaptability), commitment (hardiness) and affective commitment (organizational commitment) (Allen and Meyer 1990; Brown et al. 2003; Coetzee and Bergh 2009; Ferreira 2012). Career development support practices and career counseling should assist individuals with gaining personal insight. This may help individuals to improve their personal self-esteem, behavioral adaptability, emotional intelligence, social connectivity, curiosity and commitment but also to utilize their emotions appropriately within the work context. This will ensure that employees feel a sense of belonging (he or she fits in the organization) towards the organization and show an emotional connection with the organization. Having a high personal self-esteem and ability to manage and utilize emotions within the career context, could possibly assist organizations with the retention of talented staff.

On a **conative level**, individuals' retention may be influenced by their career values, career enablers and career drivers (psychological career resources), cooperation and confidence (career adaptability), control, commitment and challenge (hardiness), fit, links and sacrifice (job embeddedness) and continuance- and normative commitment (organizational commitment) (Coetzee 2008; Koen et al. 2010; Maddi 2002; Meyer and Allen 1991; Mitchell and Lee 2001; Savickas 1997). Career development support practices and career counseling could possibly assist individuals to encouraging their growth and development of different skills, provide opportunities for authority and influence, and assist employees to establish career purpose and direction. By assisting individuals in the suggested manner, their cooperation, confidence, job embeddedness and commitment towards the organization might increase. This in turn might assist organizations with the retention of talented staff.

On an **interpersonal level**, individuals' retention may be influenced by their career harmonizers (psychological career resources), cooperation and concern (career adaptability), fit and links (job embeddedness) and affective-, continuance- and normative commitment (organizational commitment) (Coetzee 2008; Ferreira et al. 2010; Koen et al. 2010; Maddi 2002; Meyer and Allen 1991; Mitchell and Lee 2001; Savickas 1997, 2001, 2002). Effective interaction and social connectivity with others may create a feeling of security within the individual, which might have a positive effect on the retention of talented staff. Career development support practices and career counseling could assist individual to enhance their self-esteem, behavioral adaptability, emotional literacy, cooperation and address concerns, which might have a positive effect on their commitment towards the organization. It is also important for organizations to help individual fit into the organization and assist them with dealing with the connection and sacrifice between the work situations and the community, which include their family.

Keeping employees committed to the organisation is a top priority for many contemporary organizations (Neininger et al. 2010). Especially in times of crises and job cuts, committing top performers to the organization becomes a challenge. Organizations that fail to accomplish this will have reduced resources for the capability of competing in the future (Neininger et al. 2010; Rappaport et al. 2003).

Research by Ferreira (2012) indicated that psychological career resources (self/other skills, career directedness and behavioral adaptability), career adaptability (concern, control, cusiosity, cooperation and confidence) and hardiness (commitment and control) contributed most significantly to the psychological career meta-competencies construct, while job embeddedness (fit) contributed significantly to the retention-related factors construct. The psychological career meta-competencies also relsated signifcantly to the retention-related dispositions. Ferreira (2012) found the cognitive, affective, conative and interpersonal psychological dimensions to be significant in a psychological career meta-competencies profile. These behavioral dimensions contributed significantly in explaining the retention-related dispositions (job embeddedness and organizational commitment). The retention-related dispositions mostly related to the interpersonal psychological dimension, suggesting that individuals should be developed at an interpersonal level in order to increase their job embeddedness, especially their fit.

Practical Implications for Career Counseling and Guidance

The psychological career meta-competencies profile adds a broader perspective on how individuals' psychological career resources, career adaptability and hardiness explain their job embeddedness and organizational commitment (Ferreira 2012). The behavioural dimensions and the underpinning career meta-competencies could be used to help clients develop greater insight into their psychological career meta-competencies and how these influence their psychological attachment to the organization. This new awareness, in turn, may inform the career development and retention of talented staff.

The primary focus of a manager, career practitioner and industrial psychologist is to help individuals seeking career advice by removing as much uncertainty in them as possible about their career choice and environment. If organisations invest in positive contracts with their employees, this could result in employees who are more embedded and committed, motivated and trustworthy towards the organization. However, if the psychological contract is neglected, employees could experience reduced levels of embeddedness and commitment and their intentions to leave the organization could become stronger. It is recommended that organizations should have a sound commitment strategy in place which will enable employees to remain committed to the organization (Ferreira 2012).

Ferreira (2012) recommends the following organizational interventions in terms of career development and retention strategies:

- Organizations that are endeavouring to retain valuable employees should attempt to provide career development interventions that strengthen employees' underlying self/other skills, behavioral adaptability, career adaptability and hardi-commitment and hardi-control.

- Individuals' psychological career meta-competencies should be developed or enhanced as an essential career development support technique in order to retain embedded and committed employees.
- Organizations should ensure that the nature of work offered to employees is challenging and provides them with the level of skills and experience aligned with their own personal and professional growth needs.
- Organizations could develop a career development counseling framework that could be used to help employees sharpen their career decision-making competencies. This would help them to develop their career directedness and self-awareness by identifying the relationship between their own psychological career meta-competencies (self/other skills, career directedness, behavioral adaptability, career adaptability, hardi-commitment and hard-control) and their fit with and commitment to the organization. Employees may experience emotional attachment to the organization when their abilities and values match those of the work environment and when their need for movement in the organization is satisfied.

The following recommendations apply to career practitioners and industrial psychologists working in the field of careers and retention:

- Individuals can engage in self-reflection when receiving feedback on their psychological career meta-competencies at a cognitive, affective, conative and interpersonal level.
- Individuals can engage in career counselling interventions in order to enhance their psychological career meta-competencies and job embeddedness at a cognitive, affective, conative and interpersonal level.

The positive outcomes of possible future research could include raising awareness of the fact that individuals in the workplace have different psychological career resources, career adaptability and hardiness levels. Every individual needs to be treated in a manner that is appropriate to him or her in order to promote job and career satisfaction, which will culminate in job embeddedness and organizational commitment. Another positive outcome was the realization of the way in which employees' psychological career meta-competencies influence their level of embeddedness and commitment towards the employing organization (Ferreira 2012).

There is a need for future research on psychological career resources, career adaptability, hardiness, job embeddedness and organizational commitment, specifically in South Africa. Further studies would be valuable for career counseling purposes because it would help career practitioners provide guidance to individuals when making career choices, based on their ability to translate their career self-concept and motivators into occupations what would meet their personal needs.

Conclusions

Individuals' psychological career meta-competencies (psychological career resources, career adaptability, and hardiness) and their retention-related dispositions (job embeddedness and organizational commitment) seem to be important attributes

to consider in career counseling and development. These constructs therefore need to be developed to help the individuals to proactively manage their career development and assist organizations in the retention of valuable staff.

Chapter Summary

This chapter identified the implications of the theoretical relationship between psychological career resources, career adaptability and hardiness (as a set of composite career-meta competencies) and job embeddedness and organizational commitment (as a set of composite retention-related dispositions) for staff retention. The suggested psychological career meta-competencies profile discussed in this chapter can be used for career counselling and guidance purposes for retaining staff in the contemporary work world.

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Part III
Career Wellbeing and Psycho-Social Career Meta-Capacities

This part of the book discusses the role of psycho-social career meta-capacities in influencing the general career wellbeing of individuals. Interest in the subjective aspects of career success and satisfaction has gained greater salience in contemporary career research. This can be ascribed to the more turbulent career context resulting in careers being less ordered and predictable (Arnold and Cohen 2008; Arthur et al. 2005; Hall and Chandler 2005; Kidd 2008; Savickas 2011; Sinclair 2009). People's subjective experiences of their careers and working lives relate to their general career wellbeing (Bozionelos 2004; Kidd 2008; Sinclair 2009). The notion of career wellbeing has been coined by Kidd (2008) to measure people's subjective career experiences as expressed by their positive and negative feelings about their careers. Other researchers such as Gottfredson and Duffy (2008), Coetzee and Bergh (2009) and Keyes (2002) use more general measures of subjective well-being (including happiness, satisfaction and flourishing) in the careers context. Research provides evidence that individuals' career experiences affect their mental health, that is, their psychological, emotional and social wellbeing (Hall and Heras 2012; Keyes 2002; see also chapter 11 by Rothmann). It has therefore become important for career practitioners to assess their clients' general career wellbeing, and whether they have the psycho-social career meta-capacities that will enable them to successfully cope with a more complex career terrain.

Work and working are regarded as activities that are central and fundamental to people's lives and have been linked to job and career satisfaction and subjective wellbeing (Harpaz and Fu 2002; Hartung and Taber 2008; Whitehead and Kotze 2003). In addition to its obvious economic functions, working has a powerful potential to fulfill and satisfy other important roles and needs of the individual such as personal growth and skills development, self-esteem, psychological fulfillment, identity, social interaction, and sustaining a reasonable standard of living and status (Harpaz and Fu 2002). People also strive towards various goals and values through working. Research conducted by Whitehead and Kotze (2003) and Woodd (2000) found that people's main motivations for working related to intrinsic values that give their lives meaning. Hartung and Taber (2008) posit that a central objective of career assessment and counseling is that of assisting clients to explore, choose, and manage work (or working) so that it fulfils, enriches, and satisfies. According to

these authors, an ultimate goal of career assessment and counseling is to help individuals experience a sense of purpose and wellbeing, rather than being consumed by working and feelings of dissatisfaction and discontent with it. In this regard, psycho-social career meta-capacities (for example, career adaptability) are seen to promote individuals' subjective and general career wellbeing. These capacities serve as personal resources and adaptive coping strategies allowing individuals to adjust their behavior to the constraints of their working environments or situations and the career compromises resulting from these, and to deal proactively with developmental tasks, transitions, and change (Hartung and Taber 2008; Savickas and Porfeli 2012). Creed and Blume (2013) found, for example, that career compromises negatively influence career-related wellbeing. Discarding unattainable occupations and adopting new work goals and interests due to a changing, uncertain and more chaotic work world implies a process of career compromise where desired goals at times will have to be adjusted downward. In relation to wellbeing, Creed and Blume (2013) state that giving up on a cherished goal can be appraised as threatening and stressful, and result in negative feelings such as dissatisfaction and distress, and even employee turnover. The contributions in Part III address the notions of flourishing and sense of coherence as meta-capacities that may help promote career and subjective wellbeing and thus assist in alleviating feelings of dissatisfaction and distress in the work context resulting from career compromises.

In **chapter 11**, (*Flourishing in work and careers*), Ian Rothmann discusses the notion of flourishing (seen as a model of positive mental health) in the context of work-related and career wellbeing. The author posits that experiences in the work environment play an important role in the flourishing or languishing of managers. Building on the basic tenets of person-environment fit explored in Part II, Rothmann hypothesizes and empirically tests a model showing the effect of the nature of job demands, the task, supervisor and co-worker relations, remuneration and advancement on the flourishing (psychosocial emotional wellbeing) of individuals. His study shows that managers who reported good work role fit, intrinsically rewarding job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback), good co-worker relations and good remuneration were flourishing in the workplace. The author confirms the notion that career counseling and guidance practices should strive to help clients choose occupations and work roles that fit their interests, values and abilities. In addition, career practitioners should help clients explore and manage the relationships that form part of their working lives.

The aforementioned conclusion of Rothmann reminds of Savickas and Porfei's (2012) contention that individuals should strive for person-environment integration, rather than an optimal person-environment fit. The proposition might be made that career practitioners should assist clients in managing career compromises (in cases of person-environment incongruence) and adapting to shifting work and social role expectations and changes to help them flourish in the contemporary workplace. To optimize person-environment integration, career assessment should focus on profiling the core career meta-capacities needed for flourishing (see the chapter contributions in Part I and Part II for examples). This may entail using quantitative career

assessment measures such as those reported by Rothmann complemented by narrative career assessments and processes such as those suggested by McMahon and Watson (2012) and Hartung and Taber (2008). The chapter contributions in Part I also provide excellent guidelines for integrating quantitative and qualitative career assessment measures, techniques and processes.

In **chapter 12** (*Sense of coherence and professional career development*), Claude-Hélène Mayer discusses the construct of sense of coherence as a dynamic general health resource influencing the general career wellbeing of individuals. The author posits that sense of coherence influences the individual's ability to mobilize and generate personal and social resources in the workplace. She cites research showing that job insecurity and unemployment negatively impact on individuals' sense of coherence. Individuals' sense of coherence may be challenged by a work situation that does not allow career progress and that is interpreted as professional failure. Sense of coherence may also have a moderating effect on stressful life events, such as career decision-making challenges in uncertain and shifting contexts. Research provides evidence that sense of coherence, as a career meta-capacity, facilitates positive career thinking. Individuals with a strong sense of coherence have higher levels of career decision-making self-efficacy and therefore seem to be more likely to persevere in managing and resolving career challenges. Mayer recommends that career practitioners take cognizance of clients' sense of coherence as it reflects their general orientation towards life challenges. Sense of coherence can be developed and may change over the lifespan of individuals as they encounter life events and gain deeper self-insight and perspective on life in general. Mayer cites research which suggests that strengthening other psycho-social career meta-capacities may also result in a stronger sense of coherence. It is posited that self-reflection and—learning may also be helpful in strengthening clients' sense of coherence. The counseling processes recommended by Mayer further remind of the narrative career assessment and counseling approaches discussed in Part I. In the light of the increasing concerns about clients' ability to adapt and adjust to changes in a more turbulent, chaotic and unpredictable occupation and work world, it stands to reason that contemporary career counseling and guidance practices must make room for the assessment and development of clients' sense of coherence as an essential meta-capacity.

Finally, the themes, discussions and research evidence on flourishing and sense of coherence outlined in chapters 11 and 12 provide a perspective that connects with the aims of the positive psychology movement (Seligman 2003). Positive psychology focuses on those individual strengths and values that are assumed to help people enhance the quality of their lives and experience greater subjective wellbeing (Manuti et al. 2011) which also relates to individuals career wellbeing in organizational context. Manuti et al. (2011) regard wellbeing as a constitutive dimension of personal and social identity in the sense that subjective wellbeing is a very significant life experience which might influence individuals' plans, behaviors, choices, decisions, beliefs, values, and coping styles. Individuals' sense of subjective wellbeing and flourishing are generally reflected in their personal life stories. Life stories also reflect individuals' sense of coherence or life orientation. Gabriel et al. (2010) coin

the term "narrative coping" to illustrate how life stories assist people in dealing constructively with distressing (traumatic) career-related experiences such as job loss and unemployment. It is evident from the research literature that by attending to psychosocial career meta-capacities, career identity and self-concept, adaptation and coping strategies, personal stories and narratives, intentionalities and self-selected goals, and career agency and actions, life design and career construction approaches assist in comprehending and promoting subjective wellbeing theory, research and practice (see, for example, Gabriel et al. 2010; Hartung and Taber 2008; Savickas 2010).

Manuti et al. (2011) regard subjective wellbeing as an existential life project and their research shows that irrespective of change or transitions, people continue to define work and working as a significant and central wellbeing experience. Work and working provide a space and context for solidifying one's personal project of wellbeing and re-negotiating its meaning in light of the demands of the organizational or working context. The chapter contributions in Parts I, II, and II, showed that occupational status (temporary of permanently employed, unemployed or underemployed) and person-environment fit/congruence, amongst other variables, contribute to redefining the meaning individuals attach to career wellbeing and flourishing. Although work and working might be seen as a psychosocial resource for personal wellbeing, organizational flexibility (i. e. restructuring and change) and consequent changes in occupational status and role identity might challenge individual wellbeing. The nature of work itself also challenges wellbeing and interpersonal relationships because it challenges health and psychophysical wellbeing and conditions individual choices as individuals strive for work-life balance and -flexibility (Manuti et al. 2011). It is evident, that as the form of career and working changes from stability to mobility and flexibility to reflect the labor needs of the 21st century work world (Manuti et al. 2011; Savickas 2010), the form of career assessment and counseling must change to assist individuals in developing the psycho-social career meta-capacities they need for life design and personal wellbeing flexibility.

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Chapter 11
Flourishing in Work and Careers

S.(Ian) Rothmann

Abstract Mental health is an important career resource that will help individuals to be function optimally, be self-sufficient, adapt to change, manage their careers well. The aim of this chapter was to investigate the relationships between work- and career-related experiences (including work role fit, job characteristics, overload, supervisor relations, co-worker relations, advancement and remuneration) and the flourishing of managers in South Africa. A cross-sectional survey design was used with managers in the agricultural sector in South Africa ($N = 507$). The Antecedents Scale and the Mental Health Continuum Short Form were administered. The results showed that work role fit, job characteristics, co-worker relations and remuneration affected flourishing positively. Overload, advancement and supervisor relations did not predict the flourishing of managers in this study. Interventions to promote career development should focus on promoting the flourishing of people and developing positive institutions.

Introduction

Mental health is an important career resource for individuals. Being mentally healthy will allow individuals to be self-sufficient, adapt to changing circumstances, manage their careers well, and to optimize their potential. Hall and Heras (2012, p. 507) define a career as "the sequence of work experiences that a person has over his lifespan". Work is a major factor affecting the quality of individuals' lives. Work experiences also affect career experiences. Because a career represents the cumulative effects of all the work experiences of an individual over the lifespan, it can have positive experiences and outcomes in a person's life, for example it can convey identity, reflect meaning and purpose, fulfill potential, and provide opportunities for

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autonomy, support and challenge (Hall and Heras 2012). Negative experiences and outcomes could have the opposite effect on people.

Keyes (2002) points out that mental health includes the absence of psychopathology, but he defines it as the presence of high levels of emotional, psychological and social well-being, which is referred to as flourishing (Keyes 2005). Youssef and Luthans (2012) define human flourishing as functioning within the optimal range, characterized by growth and generativity. According to Keyes (2002), flourishing can be distinguished from mental illness, which represents the negative end of a continuum, and languishing, a neutral state where mental illness may be absent, but where hollowness and emptiness are experienced (Keyes 2002).

Keyes (2002, 2007) distinguishes between three types of subjective well-being, namely emotional well-being (indicating whether a person is "feeling well"), and psychological and social well-being (indicating whether he or she is "functioning well"). The concepts of flourishing and languishing are used to describe opposite endpoints on a continuum of mental health, indicating the well-being of individuals in terms of these three dimensions (Keyes 2007). The prevalence of positive mental health is relatively low, with less than a quarter of the general adult population in countries, for instance in the United States of America (Keyes 2002; Keyes et al. 2010) and South Africa (Khumalo et al. 2012) flourishing.

Keyes et al. (2010) found that gains in mental health (i.e. towards flourishing) predict declines in mental illness, while losses in mental health predict increases in mental illness. Flourishing is associated with various benefits for society, including fewer workdays lost, fewer health problems, and fewer limitations (Harter et al. 2002). In a study of information technology professionals in South Africa, Diedericks and Rothmann (in press) found that flourishing affected job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior and organizational commitment. Flourishing affected turnover intention indirectly and negatively via low organizational commitment.

Experiences in the work environment play an important role in the flourishing or languishing of managers. According to Deci and Ryan (2011), the systems within which individuals are embedded affect their well-being. Social-contextual variables impact on conscious and non-conscious psychological experiences of individuals, which are, in turn, important causes of their behaviors (Deci and Ryan 2011). Bono et al. (2012) found self-determination and more specifically autonomous and intrinsic motivation to be associated with flourishing. This supports the premise that functioning well (by being psychologically and socially well) is volitional and under the control of the individual.

Relatively little is known about the features of work and careers that are important for flourishing (Kidd 2008). Therefore it is of great importance to investigate the factors associated with the flourishing of people and to implement interventions to promote flourishing. Studies (Kahn 1990; May et al. 2004; Schaufeli and Bakker 2004; Rothmann and Rothmann 2010) stress the importance of the job demands, nature of the task, supervisor and co-worker relations, remuneration and advancement for the well-being of individuals. The current study builds on the flourishing literature to hypothesize a model in which the nature of job demands, the task, supervisor and co-worker relations, remuneration and advancement affect the flourishing of individuals.

Table 11.1 Mental health continuum diagnostic criteria and scale descriptions

Diagnostic measurement	Diagnostic scale and symptoms
Emotional well-being (how often people feel positive affect and satisfaction with life)	*Positive affect* (Cheerful, in good spirits, happy, calm, peaceful, satisfied, full of life)
	Life satisfaction (Satisfied with life or domains thereof)
Psychological well-being (how people see themselves thriving in their personal lives)	*Self-acceptance* ("I like most parts of my personality")
	Personal growth ("For me, life has been a continual process of learning, changing and growth")
	Purpose in life ("I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life")
	Environmental mastery ("I am good at managing the responsibilities of daily life")
	Autonomy ("I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions")
	Positive relations with others ("maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me")
Social well-being (how people thrive in their social lives)	*Social acceptance* ("People do not care about other people")
	Social actualization ("Society isn't improving for people like me")
	Social contribution ("My daily activities do not create anything worthwhile for my community")
	Social coherence ("I cannot make sense of what's going on in the world")
	Social integration ("I feel close to other people in my community")

Flourishing

Keyes and Annas (2009) define flourishing as a state in which individuals experience high levels of emotional well-being (i.e. feeling well as indicated by satisfaction with life and positive affect) and psychological as well as social well-being (i.e. functioning well). Keyes (2002) developed the Mental Health Continuum (MHC) on which a person's level of flourishing or languishing or a value in between can be determined. Flourishing, as a model of positive mental health, was derived from theory, factor analysis and rational criteria (Ryff 1989; Ryff and Keyes 1995).

Table 11.1 shows the diagnostic criteria and scale descriptions of the MHC. Individuals who experience emotional well-being are calm, interested in life and satisfied with life. Psychological well-being is characterized by self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy and positive relations with others. Social well-being is characterized by social acceptance, social actualization, social contribution, social coherence and social integration (Keyes 2007; Keyes et al. 2010). Flourishing scores are determined by upper ratings on one of the two measures of emotional well-being and high levels on 6 of the 11 scales of positive functioning, i.e. psychological and social well-being. Languishing is associated with low emotional, psychological and social well-being. Khumalo et al. (2012) found less than one quarter of the adult population in the North West Province of South Africa (20 %) to be flourishing. A total of 67.8 % of the sample were moderately flourishing, while 12.2 % were languishing.

Rothmann (2013) argues in favor of a multidimensional model of well-being. The importance of a multidimensional perspective is evident when its dimensions (feeling good and functioning well) are combined to understand behavior. For example, if an employee is functioning well, but feels dissatisfied and experiences high negative emotions (compared to positive emotions), he or she does not flourish. The study of Rothmann (2013) showed that flourishing at work (experiencing job satisfaction and positive emotions at work, energy, dedication, autonomy, competence and relatedness satisfaction, as well as purpose and meaning at work) is strongly related to mental health (on a scale varying from languishing to flourishing in life).

Antecedents of Flourishing

Employees' experiences of the work situation affect their mental health. Useful knowledge about well-being in the work context has been gained by applying specific theories and models. Person-environment fit theory implies that well-being will result from a good person-environment fit: high congruence between corresponding person characteristics and environment characteristics yields more positive outcomes (Greguras and Diefendorff 2009). The job characteristics model of Hackman and Oldham (1976, 1980) links intrinsic task characteristics to well-being of employees. The effects of relationships at work on well-being can be explained by social exchange theory (Blau 1964). If relationships prove to be mutually beneficial over time, both parties gradually increase their contributions to a point where there is an equitable balance between each party's contributions and the value thereof. Broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson 2001) states that positive emotions during career experiences broaden individuals' attention and thinking, while negative emotions narrow their attention and thinking. Over time, the expansive mind sets that are triggered by positive emotions help people to discover and build personal resources, which contribute to well-being. The importance of job demands for well-being is evident in the job demands-resources model (Schaufeli and Bakker 2004), and effort recovery model (Meijman and Mulder 1998).

The next section focuses on the effects of work role fit, job characteristics, workload, supervisor and co-worker relations, advancement and remuneration on individuals' work and career well-being.

Work Role Fit

Kahn (1990) believes that when people experience greater congruence between their subjective interpretation of the requirements of the role and their self-concept, they will invest greater personal effort to achieve individual and organizational goals. Work role fit instills an individual belief that the working environment is conducive to what the organization wants, and eventually leads to positive outcomes for the

employee and the organization (Greguras and Diefendorff 2009). A good work role fit allows the employee to express his or her beliefs and values within the workplace (May et al. 2004). Shamir (1991) found that employees seek out work roles where they can live out their authentic self-concepts, i.e. who and what they are and stand for and not simply to achieve work-related goals.

Studies (May et al. 2004; Olivier and Rothmann 2007) showed that employees who have good work role fit experience more psychological meaning and assist co-workers. Kahn (1990) found that employees who experience acceptance for their contributions are inclined to share more readily with those that credit them for these contributions and are more inclined to engage in organizational citizenship behavior, i.e. assisting fellow workers to achieve mutual organizational goals and doing so with no regard for time or financial reward.

Nature of the Job

Job characteristics will lead to higher levels of well-being if they allow individuals to take responsibility for their work, to be involved in the job in its totality, to be engaged in different tasks with varying levels of complexity and to be given regular feedback on accomplishment (May et al. 2004). Keyes (1998) states that work experiences spill over into the private domain in that the employee is more inclined to form similar trusting and supportive relationships with neighbors, engage in social challenges and experience social well-being. Catalino and Fredrickson (2011) suggested that the nature of the task (i.e. whether it is intrinsically rewarding) impacts on positive emotions, which results in flourishing.

According to Hackman and Oldham (1980), individuals experience intrinsic motivation and psychological meaningfulness when five dimensions, namely skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback are present in a job. 'Skill variety' refers to the assortment of diverse skills employees have to apply in order to complete their task. 'Task identity' relates to the degree to which a specific piece of work is identifiable, in other words, where it is clear to see what piece of work has been completed. 'Task significance' is defined as the importance of a piece of work against the backdrop of the overall organizational goal. Autonomy in a task relates to the degree of freedom with which employees can choose what and how to complete their tasks. The last component of job enrichment relates to the feedback from the job itself. Moneta and Csikszentmihalyi (1996) found that individuals are more motivated by fun, mastery and potential personal growth in tasks than by the outcomes thereof (e.g. rewards).

Task characteristics, e.g. autonomy, variety and learning opportunities, allow individuals to experience ownership, autonomy, competence, learning and growth (Deci and Ryan 2008; Kahn 1990; May et al. 2004). Perpetually perceived congruence between organizational and/or managerial requests and the need for autonomy will result in spontaneous actions and need not be externally generated all the time (Robak and Nagda 2011; Van den Broecket al. 2008). Autonomy satisfaction is stimulated by democratic processes, which result in well-being (Deci and Ryan 2011).

Supervisor and Co-worker Relations

Employee well-being is affected negatively when managers behave unpredictably, inconsistently or hypocritically (May et al. 2004). The supervisor should be supportive, be sensitive to the specific needs and expectations of the individual and should create a supportive work environment (Saks 2006; Tekleab and Chiaburu 2011). Supportive supervision (characterized by showing concern for the individual, fostering a supportive working environment, providing feedback and allowing employees to voice concerns), is essential to promote well-being (Barak et al. 2009; May et al. 2004).

Wright et al. (2007) found that positive emotions within the workplace, caused by supervisor relations, related to emotional well-being of employees. Liu et al. (2010) found that continued positive relationships between supervisor and employee facilitated similar trustworthy and supportive relationships in social exchanges outside the workplace and enhanced the employee's social well-being. According to Catalino and Fredrickson (2011), positive interactions with others (and specifically supervisors) result in positive emotions.

The acceptance of the individuals by their fellow workers has a significant influence on the meaning that individuals experience in their work and life (Steger and Dik 2010). May et al. (2004) and Kahn (1990) are of the opinion that when employees experience co-worker relations as rewarding, they will experience greater meaningfulness in the workplace. Employees perform better if they are included in the social activities of that group—both internal and external to the working environment. May et al. (2004) found that the culmination of these factors relate to a stronger identity with the workplace, the job, co-workers and the organization as a whole. This, in turn, relates to a stronger sense of social identity as the employee endeavors to seek similar relationships in the social environment and build those relationships on the principles of mutual trust and respect.

Satisfying relations with co-workers create camaraderie and a sense of belonging, may lead to psychological meaningfulness. Rewarding co-worker relations can create an experience of belonging and care, which can lead to feeling psychologically safer at work (Olivier and Rothmann 2007). Regarding relatedness needs, the employee has the desire to share successes with colleagues and also has the intimate support when envisioned successes do not materialize (Van den Broeck et al. 2008). This need for relatedness can be satisfied through interaction with supervisors, peers and subordinates. Robak and Nagda (2011, p. 75) describe the intimate nature of these relationships as being such that "... one feels close, cared for and secure".

If the supervisor is supportive and not controlling, employees' relatedness and autonomy needs are satisfied, which contributes to well-being (Deci and Ryan 2008; Edmondson 2004). Meaningful interaction with the supervisor (characterized by trust, support and non-exploitation) contributes to individuals feeling appreciated and respected (Kahn 1990), and results in reciprocal behavior by them (May et al. 2004). A mutual perception of trustworthiness and the intention to sustain it contribute to satisfaction of the psychological need for belonging and relatedness. The individual who is allowed the freedom to work within agreed parameters will engage in a job and flourish (Kahn 1990; Rothmann and Rothmann 2010).

Overload

Cognitive resources are necessary because many managerial positions require high levels of cognitive endurance and sharpness, especially if the task is complex and intricate and minute mistakes can lead to substantial losses. Physical resources are necessary in order to deal with physical challenges in the work environment. Emotional resources are necessary because continuous emotional demands in managerial jobs could lead to exhaustion. Fatigue and lack of physical strength for whatever reason can lead to withdrawal (Lee and Ashforth 1996). Love et al. (2007) state that certain positions require high levels of interaction and this, in turn, requires psychological or emotional resilience.

The quality and level of demands vary between and within jobs. The diminishing and/or depletion of resources and inability to comply with job demands lead to exhaustion and eventual disengagement (Kahn 1990). Individuals who feel that their job demands exceed the available resources will gradually feel that they cannot meet set targets, will have to endure less favorable performance appraisals and will eventually realize that they are losing control over their jobs. If employees experience insufficient resources because of cognitive, emotional or physical overload, they will feel incompetent to cope (May et al. 2004; Schaufeli and Bakker 2004). This will lead to the employee experiencing a lack of environmental mastery and consequently they will not flourish.

Advancement

Advancement means moving forward within a career and includes training, career opportunities and promotion. Training is essential to prepare individuals who lack knowledge and skills to become competent to perform their jobs. Training helps employees feel more secure about their ability to perform their jobs. According to Kahn (1990), individuals are more ready to engage in their roles when they can cope with various demands and when they have the ability to engage in coping strategies. Another key aspect of advancement that might affect the well-being of individuals is promotion. This requires that the appraisal and evaluation of employee performance should be done in a fair way (Latham et al. 2005).

Remuneration

Much debate had been offered on the role of remuneration in employees' well-being. The role of remuneration is generally viewed from two broad perspectives, namely motivating or maintaining behavior. The role of remuneration can be explained by expectancy theory (Lawler 1981; Vroom 1994). According to expectancy theory, an employee will decide to behave or act in a certain way because they are motivated

to select a specific behavior over other behaviors based on their expectations of that particular behavior. Employees will be satisfied and engaged if the perceived rewards are attractive and equitable, and if rewards are linked to performance.

In the case of higher-earning employees, they perceived incentive rewards as supportive of their efforts in their jobs and as markers of their competence and personal worth. Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) state that frequent positive affect (emotional well-being) makes for a happier, psychologically adjusted (functioning well) and socially adaptable employee. Such employees can overcome adversity in the workplace easier and use their positive resilience to flourish. Robitschek and Keyes (2009) state that employees perceive adequate and equitable remuneration as a significant means to social well-being, i.e. being able to afford the comforts of the social environment, such as a house, vehicles, holidays and items of daily sustenance.

According to Deci and Ryan (2011), monetary rewards might diminish a person's well-being. Gagne and Forest (2008) proposed that compensation is an important organizational lever that influences well-being. However, they distinguish between monetary and verbal compensation and show that the two can offset one another within the context of intrinsic motivation. Financial compensation that aims to motivate people extrinsically will not contribute to psychological need satisfaction—especially not if it is awarded conditionally and without being integrated with a sound performance management system (Deci et al. 1999). Deci and Ryan (2000) caution that whilst financial reward has a definite role to play in organizations, the overextension thereof can result in a decrease in general well-being.

Study Aim and Hypothesis

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationships individuals' experiences of the work environment and flourishing (emotional, psychological and social well-being). Based on a review of the literature, it is expected that work role fit, intrinsically motivating jobs, not being overloaded, supportive supervisor and co-worker relations, positive experiences of advancement and remuneration will affect individuals' flourishing. Given the analytical strategy and based on the literature review, the following hypothesis was set for this study: Work role fit, challenging task characteristics, low overload, supportive supervisor and co-worker relations, advancement and remuneration are predict flourishing of individuals in their work and careers.

Method

Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design was used. The research approach was exploratory, descriptive and correlational. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to investigate the relationships between variables (Kline 2010), but the causality of relationships can only be argued and not claimed.

Table 11.2 Characteristics of the participants ($N = 507$)

Item		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	406	80.10
	Female	101	19.90
Race	White	455	89.70
	African	16	3.20
	Colored	29	5.70
	Indian	5	1.00
	Other	2	0.40
Home language	Afrikaans	470	92.70
	English	21	4.10
	African	16	3.20
Education	Grade 12	194	38.30
	Technical college diploma	46	9.10
	Technicon diploma	63	12.40
	University degree	104	20.50
	Postgraduate degree	100	19.70
Job level	Executive management	26	5.10
	Senior management	74	14.60
	Middle management	239	47.10
	Junior management	168	33.10

Participants

It was decided to target managers in one sector in South Africa. The authors selected the agricultural sector, not only because of its important role in the economic development and food security, but also because the sector faces various challenges (including the empowerment of historically disadvantaged people) in South Africa. Agricultural companies in the formal sector in five provinces in South Africa (namely the Western Cape, Northern Cape, North West Province and Gauteng) were approached to participate in the study. Two of the three large agricultural companies in the North West Province decided not to participate in the study. To obtain a large sample for purposes of assessing structural relationships, it was decided to include all available managers on different levels in the eight remaining companies in the study ($N = 1,500$). A total of 507 managers responded to the invitation to participate in the study. The number of participants varied from four per company (in the case of small companies) to 199 (in the case of the large companies). The ages of the participants varied from 23 to 63 (Mean $= 42.42$, $SD = 9.45$). The length of service in the various companies varied between one and 45 years (Mean $= 19.35$, $SD = 9.93$). The characteristics of the participants ($N = 507$) are reported in Table 11.2.

Males represented 80.10 % of the total sample and females 19.90 %. With regard to race, Whites dominated the sample with 89.70 %, followed by Africans (3.20 %), Coloureds (5.70 %) and Indians (1 %). With regard to education, 61.70 % of the participants had tertiary qualifications. The distribution of participants per management level was as follows: middle management level (47.1 %), junior management level (33.1 %), senior management level (14.6 %) and the executive level (5.1 %).

Measuring Instruments

Scales from May et al. (2004) were used to measure work-role fit, supervisor relations and co-worker relations. Work-role fit was measured by averaging three items (e.g. "My job 'fits' how I see myself") that measured individuals' perceived fit with their jobs and self-concept ($\alpha = 0.90$). Co-worker relationships were measured using 10 items ($\alpha = 0.93$; e.g. "My co-workers value my input"). Supervisor relations were measured by 10 items (e.g. "My manager encourages employees to speak up when they disagree with a decision"). Each item requires the respondent to answer on a scale which varies from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Job characteristics, overload, advancement and remuneration were measures using the *Job-Demands-Resources Scale* (Rothmann et al. 2006). Job characteristics were measured by seven items (e.g. "Does your work make sufficient demands on all your skills and capacities?"). Overload was measured by six items (e.g. "Do you have too much work to do?"). Advancement was measured by six items (e.g. "Does your job give you the opportunity to be promoted?"). Remuneration was measured by four items (e.g. "Do you think you are paid enough for the work that you do?"). Each item requires the respondent to answer on a scale which varies from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*every day*).

The *Mental Health Continuum Short Form* (MHC-SF; Keyes 2002) was used to measure emotional, social and psychological well-being. The MCH-SF consists of 14 items which measure emotional well-being (three items), psychological well-being (six items), and social well-being (five items). Items were rated using a six-point scale varying from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*every day*). The MHC-SF has shown high internal consistency (> 0.80) and discriminant validity (Keyes 2009). The three-factor structure of the MHC-SF has been confirmed in studies in the USA (Keyes 2009) and South Africa (Keyes et al. 2008).

Statistical Analysis

The data was analyzed using Mplus version 7.12 (Muthén and Muthén 2012). To assess model fit, the comparative fit index (CFI; > 0.90), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI; > 0.90), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; < 0.08), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR < 0.08) were used. Reliabilities (ρ) of scales measured by items rated on a continuous scale were computed using a formula based on the sum of squares of standardized loadings and the sum of standardized variance of error terms (Wang and Wang 2012). This was done as an alternative for Cronbach's alpha, which does not provide a dependable estimate of scale reliability when latent variable modeling is used.

Table 11.3 Descriptive statistics, reliabilities and correlations of the scales ($N = 505$)

Variable	Mean	SD	ρ	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Work role fit	5.18	1.17	0.91	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Job characteristics	4.05	0.96	0.83	0.42*	–	–	–	–	–	–
Overload	3.99	0.88	0.82	0.08	0.26*	–	–	–	–	–
Supervisor relations	5.01	1.26	0.95	0.38*	0.56*	0.01	–	–	–	–
Co-worker relations	5.30	0.93	0.95	0.55*	0.47*	–0.04	0.45*	–	–	–
Advancement	3.40	1.43	0.88	0.19*	0.48	0.12	0.40*	0.20*	–	–
Remuneration	3.16	1.52	0.88	0.33*	0.40*	0.07	0.40*	0.26*	0.40*	–
Flourishing	3.30	0.79	0.91	0.54*	0.51*	0.07	0.39*	0.51*	0.22*	0.37*

*$p < 0.01$

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analyses

Confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) with Mplus was used to estimate the distinctness of the assessed variables. The results showed that the hypothesized eight-factor model, distinguishing work role fit, job characteristics, overload, supervisor relations, co-worker relations, advancement, remuneration and flourishing (consisting of three factors, namely emotional, psychological and social well-being), fit the data well: $\chi^2(1395, N = 507) = 3,130.21$; $p < 0.001$; CFI $= 0.91$, TLI $= 0.90$, RMSEA $= 0.05$ (90 % CI 0.04–0.06) and SRMR $= 0.05$. This model provided a significantly better fit (all $p < 0.001$) than a two-factor model consisting of antecedents (work role fit, job characteristics, overload, supervisor relations, co-worker relations , advancement, remuneration combined into one factor) and flourishing (consisting of three factors, namely emotional, psychological and social well-being); a two-factor model consisting of antecedents (work role fit, job characteristics, overload, supervisor relations, co-worker relations, advancement, remuneration combined into one factor) and flourishing (consisting of the 14 items); or a one-factor model (i.e., combining all variables into one factor). Standardized coefficients from items to factors ranged from 0.36 to 0.92. Furthermore, the results indicated that the relationship between each observed variable and its respective construct was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), establishing the posited relationships among indicators and constructs (see Hair et al. 2010).

Testing the Structural Model

Table 11.3 reports the descriptive statistics, reliabilities and correlations of the scales. Table 11.3 shows scale reliabilities ranging from 0.82 to 0.95, which indicate acceptable internal consistency (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). The results of this study

Table 11.4 Standardized regression coefficients of the independent variables on flourishing

Variable	Estimate	SE	Est/SE	p
Work role fit	0.28	0.05	50.27	0.000*
Job characteristics	0.27	0.07	30.99	0.000*
Overload	−0.02	0.05	−00.42	0.672
Supervisor relations	0.02	0.07	00.32	0.752
Co-worker relations	0.20	0.06	30.61	0.000*
Advancement	−0.06	0.05	−10.09	0.275
Remuneration	0.14	0.05	20.84	0.005*

*$p < 0.01$

showed that 3 % of managers were languishing (i.e. experiencing low levels of mental health). A total of 48.5 % were moderately flourishing, while the other 48.5 % were flourishing.

The structural model was tested based on the measurement model. The hypothesized relationships were tested using latent variable modeling as implemented by Mplus (Muthén and Muthén 2012). Results indicated a good fit of the revised model to the data $\chi^2(1395, N = 507) = 3130.21; p < 0.001;$ CFI $= 0.91$, TLI $= 0.90$, RMSEA $= 0.05$ (90 % CI 0.04−0.06) and SRMR $= 0.05$. Table 11.4 shows the standardized path coefficients estimated by Mplus for the proposed theoretical model.

Table 11.4 shows that the path coefficients of work role fit ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.01$), job characteristics ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$), co-worker relations ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$) and remuneration ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$) were statistically significant and had the expected signs. H_1 is accepted. The path coefficients of overload, supervisor relations and advancement were not statistically significant. Taken together, the model fit indices suggest that the relationships posited in the model account for a substantial amount of the covariation in the data. The model accounts for 43 % ($p < 0.001$) of the variance in flourishing, lending empirical support for the model's fit. Regarding flourishing, the latent variable extracted 71, 86 and 68 % of variance in emotional, psychological and social well-being respectively.

Discussion

This study set out to investigate the relationships among work role fit, challenging task characteristics, overload, supportive supervisor and co-worker relations, advancement and remuneration and flourishing (emotional, psychological and social well-being). The results showed that work role fit, job characteristics, co-worker relationships and remuneration affected flourishing positively. Overload, supervisor relations and advancement did not predict flourishing of managers.

More people in this study were flourishing compared to the statistics reported by Khumalo et al. (2012) who showed that 20 % of a South African sample was flourishing, while 67.8 % were moderately flourishing and 12.2 % were languishing. Keyes and Annas (2009) presented convincing evidence that positive mental health is threatened when no interventions are directed at it. Although a relatively large portion of managers in the current study were flourishing, this was to be expected. The level of positive mental health in a sample of managers is expected to be better than the norm, given the extensive efforts to select, train, socialize and remunerate them. However, more than 51 % of the participants were not flourishing, making them a risk group that should be targeted for positive mental health interventions.

The results showed that work role fit, job characteristics, co-worker relations and remuneration explained 43 % of variance in flourishing. Managers who reported good work role fit, intrinsically rewarding job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback), good co-worker relations and good remuneration were flourishing. This is best explained by the Mental Health Continuum of Keyes (2002) that mastery of the work and the resources within the workplace makes for an employee that thrives within the workplace, experiences growth at work and in life. This, in turn, impacts on social acceptance and integration.

Previous studies (e.g. Greguras and Diefendorff 2009) showed that work role fit leads to positive outcomes for the individual and the organization. A good work role fit allows the employee to express his or her beliefs and values within the workplace (May et al. 2004), so that individuals could live out their authentic self-concepts (Shamir 1991). Studies (May et al. 2004; Olivier and Rothmann 2007) also showed that employees who have good work role fit experience more psychological meaning and assist co-workers.

Job characteristics made a significant contribution to flourishing. If tasks are challenging and allow for autonomy and variety, individuals experience intrinsic enjoyment and fulfillment, which does not only contribute to feeling well (emotional well-being), but also to functioning well (psychological and social well-being) (Alexander and Klein 2001; O'Connor and Vallerand 1994). From the perspective of broaden-and-build theory (Catalino and Fredrickson 2011), the impact of an intrinsically rewarding task takes place through experiences of positive emotions, which results in flourishing.

Supportive co-worker relations contributed to flourishing in this study. The advantages of good co-worker relations are evident in the literature. Steger and Dik (2010) found that he acceptance of the individuals by their fellow workers has a significant influence on the meaning that individuals experience in their work and life. Satisfying relations with co-workers create camaraderie and a sense of belonging, may lead to flourishing. Rewarding co-worker relations can create an experience of belonging and care, which can lead to experiences of psychologically safer at work (Olivier and Rothmann 2007).

The results show that remuneration plays a significant role in flourishing. People engage in intrinsically motivated behaviors for the pleasure and satisfaction they derive from such behaviors, rather than for the material rewards they would receive (O'Connor and Vallerand 1994). Employees work better and thrive at work when

they have autonomy and are able to act volitionally within the parameters of their work (Deci and Ryan 2011). Self-determination and more specifically autonomous and intrinsic motivation are associated with flourishing in life and at work (Bono et al. 2012). Remuneration can play a role in psychological need satisfaction—especially if the behaviour required by the person is valued by him or her and is perceived as chosen by the self (O'Connor and Vallerand 1994).

The question arises why low overload, supervisor relations and advancement did not predict flourishing of managers in this study. It was evident from the correlations that supportive supervisor relations (characterized by showing concern for employees, fostering a supportive working environment, providing feedback and allowing employees to voice concerns) and advancement (characterized by training and promotion opportunities) are related to flourishing of managers (May et al. 2004; Saks 2006; Tekleab and Chiaburu 2011). The finding that these variables were not related to flourishing (or languishing) in the structural model can be explained by the nature and characteristics of the sample.

Practical Implications for Career Counseling and Guidance

The findings of this study have implications for career counseling and for managers who are responsible for career support. Career counseling should focus on helping people choose occupations and work roles that fit their interests, values and abilities. Therefore it is necessary to understand differences between work roles. Specific characteristics are also important in career counseling with young people and employees who aspire for managerial jobs. They should assess the significance of the job characteristics and remuneration to them. Career counseling should help clients to explore and manage the relationships that work part of their working lives.

It is recommended that interventions be developed and implemented to promote the flourishing of people. Such interventions should target well-being as a multidimensional construct (i.e. emotional, psychological and social well-being). Interventions could focus on individuals and institutions. Organizations should invest in promoting flourishing of individuals by implementing workshops, counseling and coaching, by initiating resilience training, and by building and promoting positive relationships in organizations and communities. Organizations should create an environment that supports flourishing. This can be done by taking into account the perspectives of employees, encouraging initiative and a sense of choice, being responsive to their ideas, questions and initiatives, and promoting learning, competence and belonging (Deci and Ryan 2008).

Developing and maintaining positive institutions will also contribute to flourishing of individuals. According to Helliwell (2011), five factors contribute to institutions as creators of well-being, namely the social context (maintaining social ties and identities and allowing people the opportunity to design their own decisions), benevolence (creating opportunities for people to do things for others), building trust, focusing on positive outcomes and promoting engagement lead to well-being.

Chapter Summary

The results in this chapter show that work experiences affect the flourishing of individuals. Work role fit, job characteristics, co-worker relationships and remuneration affected flourishing of individuals positively. The first feature of work and career well-being has to do with managers' work role fit. Work-related and career well-being are particularly damaged when an individual does not fit in a role. The second feature has to do with individuals' relationships with specific jobs and tasks. Experiencing skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback in a job contribute to flourishing. The third feature has to do with social exchange relationships, including co-worker relationships and remuneration.

This study had limitations. First, work experiences rather than career experiences were studied. Career experiences are less static than work experiences because they happen in a sequence over a lifespan. Therefore career experiences have to be studied over a longer period, but as Kidd (2008) pointed out, work and career experiences are usually very close, with one exception: work experiences might not include an experience such as job loss. The findings of this study were based on correlational data, making it impossible to prove the causality of relationships. Second, the sample was not representative regarding cultural and gender groups. Third, this research relied on self-report instruments to measure variables. It is also necessary to develop and test objective measuring instruments of flourishing at work. Fourth, the sample included only managers in the agricultural sector in South Africa. Work and career experiences in other occupations might affect flourishing in a different way. Furthermore, the sample was strongly biased towards white and male managers in the sector.

Studies should research and implement measures to assist individuals to make informed life choices through mood monitoring and by charting the consequences of choice. Future studies should also focus on the development of measurement instruments to assess flourishing at work. It would similarly be useful to assess the spill-over effect between flourishing in life and flourishing at work, as the two can never be separated.

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Chapter 12
Sense of Coherence and Professional Career Development

Claude-Hélène Mayer

He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how

Friedrich Nietzsche

Abstract The sense of coherence (SOC) is a global life orientation. During the past decades, it has been demonstrated as a dynamic general health resource. SOC has three components: comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness. Comprehensibility refers to the degree to which the individual perceives stimuli as predictable, structured, ordered and making cognitive sense. Manageability refers to the individual's appraisal of internal and external resources to manage daily life stressors. Meaningfulness pertains to the individual's appraisal that life makes sense and that demands are worthy of energy and commitment. In recent years, the impact of SOC on career and career development has been empirically researched and discussed, and today SOC has a central position in the domain of career development research. Studies show that SOC is related to career thoughts and career development, and impacts on other career-related issues, as emphasised in this chapter. This chapter introduces the theoretical approaches of salutogenesis and SOC in the context of selected career-related issues. It demonstrates the relationship between SOC and career psychology, and focuses particularly on the interrelationship of SOC with career thoughts and career development. It also provides insights into related areas of research, presenting practical insights regarding SOC in career counselling as well as a conclusion and future research perspectives.

Keywords Sense of coherence · Life orientation · Comprehensibility · Manageability · Meaningfulness · Salutogenisis · Career development · Psychological attributes · Positive psychology · Wellbeing · Health · General resistance resources · Career decision-making

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Introduction

The discourse on healthy work environments has recently attracted interest in management sciences and industrial psychology (Rothmann and Cilliers 2007). During the past decade, many scholars have responded to the salutogenic question 'What keeps people healthy?' (Antonovsky 1979) as applied to various professional and organizational settings (Mayer and Krause 2011).

Salutogenesis is concerned with the dynamic relationship between health, stress and coping (Antonovsky 1979). Salutogenic factors include both personal and contextual determinants, whereby personal determinants include the sense of coherence (SOC) (Antonovsky 1979, 1987a, b, c), fortitude, internal locus of control (Strümpfer 1990) and resilience (McCubbin et al. 1998). Contextual determinants, on the other hand, include social integration and support (Beutel 1989), financial security and social status (Antonovsky et al. 1987), religion and the belief in God (Smith 2002), organizational management and identity (Riese 2005), as well as trust and behaviour (Rigotti and Mohr 2006). Personal and contextual determinants impact on careers and career development of individuals.

In the contemporary world of work, career development seems to be strongly influenced by psychological attributes that include individuals' ability to adapt and deal proactively with work challenges in global and constantly changing work settings (Savickas 2011). Employees become more dependent on their psycho-social capacities, due to frequent career transitions, and the increasing demand for adaptability and individual agency in career decisions (Rossier et al. 2012). Salutogenesis and SOC are psycho-social career meta-capacities, which influence career wellbeing (Kidd 2008), career development and other career-related issues such as career thoughts, career decision status (Austin et al. 2010) and employment (Liukkonen et al. 2009). Work has been defined as a highly important part of life, comparable with family, leisure, community and religion (Harpaz and Fu 2002). The meaning of work is an important source of SOC, workplace wellbeing and mental health (Mayer 2011), as well as workplace spirituality. Salutogenesis as a concept of positive psychology has been emphasised as being interlinked with various career concepts and career wellbeing (Rothman 2011; Savickas et al. 2009).

In this chapter, basic aspects of salutogenesis and SOC are explained in terms of a psycho-social career meta-capacity. Selected career-related issues, such as career thought, career development, work-place wellbeing and work-place spirituality are highlighted.

Salutogenesis or 'What Keeps People Healthy?'

The positive psychology movement emboldened the World Health Organization (WHO 1946) to define health as a social category, constructed through the relationship of body and psyche (Faltermaier 1994). Health depends on individual perceptions, coping strategies and the ability to manage stress in daily interactions. Thus,

health is not only a physical phenomenon, but rather a psycho-social construct within a certain sociocultural context and tradition. It is inter-related with 'the subjective wellbeing and the health-oriented behaviour of a person' (Bengel et al. 2001, p. 15).

Antonovsky (1979), a medical sociologist, revolutionised health research by posing the question: 'What keeps people healthy?' instead of investigating the causes of illness. This question is the foundation of salutogenesis, a theoretical model that defines health in a human being as an active, dynamic, self-regulating process (Bengel et al. 2001). In his theoretical approach to health, Antonovsky (1987a, p. 90) refers to the bio-psycho-social model and describes salutogenesis with a metaphor :

> My fundamental philosophical assumption is that the river is the stream of life. None walks the shore safely. Moreover, it is clear to me that much of the river is polluted, literally and figuratively. There are forks in the river that lead to gentle streams or to dangerous rapids and whirlpools. My work has been devoted to confronting the question: 'Wherever one is in the stream—the nature of which is determined by historical, social-cultural, and physical environmental conditions—what shapes one's ability to swim well?'

Antonovsky's theoretical approaches (1979) reject the traditional bio-medical model and its dichotomy separating health and illness. He describes the relationship of health and illness as a continuous variable, a 'health-ease versus dis-ease continuum' (Antonovsky 1979). Disease is thus associated with rigidity, emotional suffering, narcissism, exploitation of others and unconscious repulsion. Contrary to disease, health is associated with conscious coping, creative adaptation and growth, happiness, reciprocal interaction and self-love (Singer and Brähler 2007). One key concept in salutogenesis is the sense of coherence (SOC), introduced below.

Defining the Sense of Coherence

Antonovsky (1979, p. 123) defines SOC as follows:

> A global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that one's internal and external environments are predictable and that there is a high probability that things will work out as well as can reasonably be expected.

SOC is primarily a mental health concept that impacts on physical health (Wydler et al. 2000). It develops mainly during childhood (Antonovsky 1987a, b, c), but can be influenced and changed through certain powerful life experiences (Bahrs and Matthiessen 2007), counselling, therapeutic interventions and training (Krause and Mayer 2012). Targeted interventions can support the strengthening of SOC to ensure and improve an individual's ability to respond to subsequent life challenges (Nilsson et al. 2003; Schnyder et al. 2000). Professional interventions, such as therapy, counselling or consulting, can support the development and improvement of SOC (Bahrs and Matthiessen 2007; Mayer 2011). Fostering managerial abilities and competences to cope with diverse work-related challenges (Hellriegel et al. 2007) can further promote SOC and contribute positively to increased managerial health, wellbeing and productivity at work.

Antonovsky (1985, p. 276) further complements the definition of SOC in a later publication:

> [It is a] feeling of confidence that (1) the stimuli from one's internal and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable, and explicable; (2) the resources are available to one to meet the demands posed by these stimuli; and (3) these demands are challenges, worthy of investment and engagement.

Individuals with a strong SOC are usually more resistant to the negative effects of stress and anxiety, which could otherwise result in a suppressed immune system, leaving an individual more prone to illness (Adams et al. 2000). A strong SOC provides a person with the fundamental confidence that a situation will be resolved (Antonovsky 1990) and is associated with fewer subjective body complaints, somato-form symptoms and minor health-related problems (Schumacher et al. 2000). Recent research demonstrates that the SOC determines one's perceived (mental) health and wellbeing (Lindström and Eriksson 2006).

The more pronounced an individual's SOC, the healthier the person will feel and the quicker she/he will regain health or remain healthy. Individuals with a strong SOC are more likely to seek treatment and information, follow professional guidance and avoid behaviour that interferes with health, such as smoking, excessive drinking, unhealthy diet or a sedentary lifestyle (Kivimäki et al. 2000). SOC has been found to be associated with general indices of lifestyle (Forsberg et al. 2010) and career-issues (Rothmann 2011).

The SOC refers to consistency, congruence and harmony, affecting one's 'way of looking at the world' (Antonovsky 1979, p. 8), and is a general feeling of confidence that the individual's internal and external environments are predictable and that things will work out positively (Antonovsky 1987a). SOC supports the development and strengthening of resilience and a positive health state, particularly through three components, which are discussed below.

The Three Components of Sense of Coherence

The sense of coherence has three components. Firstly, the sense of comprehensibility is the cognitive component. It describes the expectation or the ability of a person to process familiar and unfamiliar stimuli as ordered, consistent, structured information, rather than chaotic, random, accidental or inexplicable (Antonovsky 1987a). This comprehensibility component results from experiences of consistency that support the classification, categorizing and structuring of information. The person scoring high in SOC expects that stimuli encountered in the future will be predictable, or-dered and explicit. Comprehensibility exists when stimuli from the environment are perceived to make cognitive sense (Antonovsky 1990).

Secondly, the sense of manageability is the instrumental and behavioural component of SOC. A person with a strong sense of manageability is convinced that difficulties are solvable. The sense of manageability consists of confidence and 'the extent to which one perceives that resources are at one's disposal, which is adequate to

meet the demands posed by the stimuli that bombard one' (Antonovsky 1987a, p. 17). This SOC component develops through the experience of one's own resources, the belief that strains and stress can be kept in balance and managed, and that people can cope with the things happening in their lives. According to Antonovsky (1990) manageability occurs when both the individual and legitimate others, such as spouses, friends, professionals, formal authorities and spiritual figures, perceive the occurring stimuli as being under control.

In the work context, the employee's overload-underload balance is directly linked with the manageability component. Individuals with a high sense of manageability are more likely to feel comfortable in managing life experiences and events that confront them daily. Such individuals have developed the capacity to cope with stressors, rather than to complain and grieve (Antonovsky 1987a).

Thirdly, the sense of meaningfulness is the motivational component of the sense of coherence and describes

> The extent to which one feels that life makes sense emotionally, that at least some of the problems and demands posed by living are worth investing energy in, are worthy of commitment and engagement, are challenges that are 'welcome' rather than burdens that one would much rather do without (Antonovsky 1987a, p. 18).

Meaningfulness is fostered by the feeling of having influence on events and by the experience that these events are purposeful. It is considered the most important component, because without meaningfulness life is experienced as a burden (Bengel et al. 2001). Basson and Rothman (2002) assert that meaningfulness is experienced when stimuli are perceived as motivationally relevant. Thus, stimuli are welcomed as challenges worth engaging with and investing oneself in. Meaningfulness is significant to individuals actively involved in processes shaping their destiny and daily life experiences, and refers to the sense of importance (Antonovsky 1987a). Singer and Brähler (2007) point out that those individuals with a high sense of meaningfulness are more likely to be positive in the way they confront life experiences such as the death of a loved one, unsuccessful work performance or dismissal from work. Although they still experience these life events as strenuous, the attribution of sense lends motivation to cope with the situation.

The Four Appraisals of Sense of Coherence

SOC refers to four appraisals (Antonovsky 1979), which interlink SOC directly to aspects of successful living, such as effective work performance, effective interpersonal relationships, community involvement, religious expression and economic and political functioning (Strümpfer 1995). By interlinking SOC to work-related issues, SOC's influence on careers and their development is obvious.

A stimulus is defined as a stressor in the first stage of appraisal (Antonovsky 1987a). Individuals with a strong SOC tend to react flexibly (Primary Appraisal I, flexibility). A strong SOC enables a person to judge a particular stimulus as neutral, when the same thing would cause tension in persons with a weak SOC. A person with a

strong SOC is apt to select a coping strategy that seems most appropriate for dealing with the stressor that confronts him/her (Antonovsky 1987a). Individuals with a strong SOC are more likely to view life events as having coherence (perception) and are influenced by their positive perception of stressful events without their conscious awareness (Amirkhan and Greaves 2003).

In the second stage of appraisal (Primary Appraisal II, cognition), a person with a strong SOC defines the encountered stressor as structured, or even as a welcome challenge, and has confidence that it can be managed successfully. A strong SOC allows a person to identify a stimulus as a stressor, while at the same time determining whether the stressor is threatening, favourable or irrelevant. Classifying the stressor as favourable or irrelevant means that tension is perceived, but simultaneously expected to cease without the activation of resources (Antonovsky 1979). The stressor is thus redefined as a non-stressor.

Individuals with a strong SOC accept setbacks and failures as normal and not necessarily indicative of their incompetence, or proof of a hostile world (Semmer 2003). Through comprehensibility and meaningfulness, negative experiences are put into perspective, interpreted as part of the larger picture of the world and as having meaning beyond the present situation (Muller and Rothmann 2009).

In the third stage of appraisal (Primary Appraisal III, behaviour), an individual with a strong SOC is capable of realising the nature of a problem and is eager to encounter it. The Primary Appraisal III shows that individuals with a strong SOC experience, define problems and conflicts in a more differentiated way than individuals with a low SOC (Mayer 2011). Perception differs between individuals with a strong SOC and those with a low SOC (Amirkhan and Greaves 2003), and the SOC, therefore, influences the appraisal of stress (Semmer 2003). Individuals with a strong SOC experience emotions as less diffuse, more focused and less paralysing than individuals with a low SOC (Faltermaier 1994, p. 53). Individuals with a strong SOC react flexibly to threatening situations with appropriate and directed feelings that can be influenced by actions. Amirkhan and Greaves (2003) point out that these individuals use more instrumental and fewer avoidant responses to cope with stressors in their life. They exploit resources more easily than individuals with a low SOC (Antonovsky 1987a) and see themselves as capable of influencing life. Finally, individuals with a strong SOC usually have stronger transcultural competences than individuals with a weak SOC (Mayer 2011).

The fourth stage is reappraisal (Primary Appraisal IV, reappraisal). In this stage, an individual with a strong SOC is open to feedback and to the possibility of correction (Antonovsky 1987b).

Viewing these four appraisals in the light of career development, it is obvious that a strong SOC contributes to career development in terms of supporting a person in recognising the world and work challenges on his/her way to career development and also welcoming challenges, which are experienced as structured, consistent and worth managing. Individuals who are aware of their resources and ways of activating them, are more prepared to address challenges within their careers than individuals who lack this awareness. Finally, individuals with a strong SOC, who are able to cope with feedback and see feedback as presenting options of changing, are more prepared to implement feedback-based changes than individuals with a weak SOC.

Sense of Coherence and General Resistance Resources as Psycho-social Career Meta-Capacities

Work can play an important role in supporting mental health and functional capacity (physical, mental and social) (Mayer 2011). Therefore, the development of career meta-capacities is, at the same time, crucial in fitting person to environment in a career context (Savickas and Porfeli 2012). Career meta-capacities are defined as the set of psychological career resources that individuals use proactively to plan and manage their career and its development. Individuals with a high SOC also influence their socio-occupational environments and self-regulate their behaviour for career success in the work place (Coetzee 2008). In Coetzee's framework for psychological career resources, people's career meta-competencies comprise career preferences, career values, career drivers, career enablers and career harmonisers. Career development is also influenced by a well-developed psychological career resources profile (Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden 2006).

The SOC's strength arises from adaptability and universal use (Lindström and Eriksson 2005). According to Antonovsky (1993, p. 972), individual health is largely determined by a single psychological factor, namely, the individual's general attitude toward the world and his/her own life. Individuals experiencing comparable external conditions display different states of health. These differences are determined by the individual's cognitive and motivational perspective on life. This life-orientation (sense of coherence), in turn, influences the strength of the individual to utilise available resources for maintaining health and wellbeing.

Antonovsky (1979) assumes that experiences characterised by consistency, balanced challenges and a feeling of being able to manage such experiences contribute to the feeling of coherence, as well as to the motivation to search for and construct coherence in different contexts. Coherence of experience depends on the individual's General Resistance Resources (GRRs) (Antonovsky 1979), which influence the sense of coherence and its development. GRRs are shaped by life experiences characterised by consistency, participation in shaping outcome, and the balance between underload and overload. Thus, when these resources are available the person has a better chance of dealing with life's challenges. The absence of GRRs can, in itself, become a stressor (Antonovsky 1979, p. 119).

Antonovsky (1987a, p. xiii) describes GRRs as 'making sense out of the countless stressors with which we are constantly bombarded' and identifies the following GRRs:

- Physical and biochemical, such as immune-suppressors and stimulators;
- Artefactual material GRRs, particularly wealth, that can buy health services and afford power, status and other services;
- Cognitive GRRs, particularly knowledge-intelligence, contingent on education, which includes skills and knowledge, for example, about avoiding HIV or carcinogens;
- Emotional GRR of ego identity;
- Coping strategies, as overall plans for overcoming stressors;

- Interpersonal-relational GRRs, such as social support and commitment; and
- Macro-socio-cultural GRRs of ready answers provided by one's cultural and social structure, which includes religion.

Individuals with the ability to activate GRRs are likely to construct a strong SOC and to find new resources, thereby gaining stronger resistance against stressors and generating health. GRRs serve as coping resources that protect a person from negative impacts of tensions associated with stressors. GRRs support 'the self-organisation and the self-renewal of the health system of an individual' (Mussmann et al. 1993, p. 9). Specifically, psychological career resources are viewed as supportive in career advancement (Coetzee and Bergh 2009).

Sense of Coherence and Careers in Organizational Contexts

Salutogenesis, in the global industry, recently attracted interest in industrial and organizational psychology research (e.g. Rothmann and Cilliers 2007). The prevalence, ill effects and difficult treatment of stress provide further credence for the organization to focus on developing techniques and an environment that fosters concepts such as sense of coherence (Antonovsky 1994). This equips the individual to withstand the various stressors arising from challenging work situations.

Work has significant meaning in the life of an employee who spends a significant amount of time at work and has to cope with success and crises (Siegrist 1997) that influence his/her career, conflictual interactions (Frone 2000), competition as well as other career issues (Converse et al. 2012). Experiences in the professional life usually impact on all other aspects of an individual's life (Richter et al. 1998). At the same time, even the development and the valuation of identity are connected with professional activity (Siegrist 1997), whereby the professional identity is often defined in terms of success and career (Mayer 2011).

In the contemporary work arena, the development of personal career-related capabilities and dispositions have become important. In the work context, individuals rely strongly on capabilities and dispositions to influence their careers effectively, and adjust their work behaviour to succeed in challenging, globalising work settings (Converse et al. 2012). Conflictual experiences in the workplace can become stressors for employees and impact strongly on the health and wellbeing of the individual, resulting in stress, which is linked to a host of diseases (Antonovsky 1979).

In addition, individual requirements, rapid technological development and intensified competition (Badura et al. 2001, p. 14–16), as well as a demand for a higher degree of participation and responsibility (Köhler 2004, p. 62), decentralization of production and services, outsourcing processes and employing virtual organizations, can lead to 'mental overload' (Bedner 2001, p. 73–76). Health promotion in organizations requires an integrated approach that includes individual and organizational characteristics, as well as external influences (Johanson et al. 2007, p. 84). All of these influence career development in contemporary work contexts.

A healthy organization is defined as promoting trustful relationships, positive feedback, common values and clear rules (Münch et al. 2003, p.18). Healthy organizations provide predictable requirements (comprehensibility), the possibility to respond to change and development (manageability), as well as the possibility to achieve individual and collective objectives (meaningfulness) (Rosenbrock 1996, p. 13).

Healthy organizations exhibit low levels of stress, high organizational commitment and job satisfaction, a low incidence of sickness and employee absenteeism, staff turnover below the national average, positive industrial relations and infrequent strikes. Safety and accident records are good and the fear of litigation is absent (Cartwright and Cooper 1994). Healthy organizations offer conflict management training, equal opportunities for employees and a climate conducive to working and good mental health (Johanson et al. 2007, p. 144). It provides a clear and founded structure of policies, procedures and systems that allow employees and managers to achieve personal and organizational goals, as opposed to an unhealthy work environment fraught with stress, hostility and authoritarianism (Disch 2002). In healthy organizations, career paths are clearly structured, open to any employee, and career development is supported.

Organizational studies have indicated that SOC is positively related to work engagement (Fourie et al. 2008), job satisfaction (Rothmann 2001), competence and life satisfaction (Kalimo and Vuori 1990), general wellbeing (Feldt 1997) and active coping with stressors (Redelinghuys and Rothmann 2005). SOC is also a good predictor of perceived job characteristics, a person's influence on work, and a person's supportiveness towards colleagues and superiors (Feldt et al. 2004). SOC influences the ability to mobilise and generate social resources in the workplace : SOC is viewed as having a significant effect on how managers perceive demands and resources at work (Fourie et al. 2008). In terms of managing careers, individuals with a low SOC tend to be motivated by extrinsic resources, such as salaries, while individuals with a strong SOC seem to be motivated by the 'intrinsic nature of the work', which they perceive as engaging and satisfying (Muller and Rothmann 2009, p. 3). The foundations of careers and their development, therefore, might vary among individuals with strong and/or low SOC.

A strong SOC supports wellbeing and health and is directly related to aspects of successful living, such as effective work performance, effective interpersonal relationships, community involvement, religious expression and economic and political functioning. The four SOC appraisals, namely, perception, cognition, behaviour and reappraisal (Semmer 2003), indicate that employees with a high SOC react flexibly (Appraisal I), encounter stressors and conflicts as structured and manageable (Appraisal II), are capable of realising the nature of a problem and are eager to encounter it (Appraisal III), and are open to feedback and the possibility of correction (Appraisal IV). Obviously, these four appraisals impact instantly on career development and career thoughts.

Sense of Coherence in Professional Careers and Career Development

Recently, the SOC has entered the domain of career development (Höge and Büssing 2004; Lustig and Strauser 2002), particularly demonstrating its health-related value. Many empirical studies have shown significant correlations between meaning and psychological wellbeing (e.g. Pearson and Sheffield 1974). At the same time, studies have indicated that the meaningfulness of work is highly important for employees' wellbeing (Schreuder and Coetzee 2011). According to Antonovsky (1987c), social valuation is the main source of meaningfulness at work. The sense of coherence, however, is decreased by the lack of work in societies, as well as the lack of social valuation (Löyttyniemi et al. 2004).

Studies in the field of career psychology and professional career development have emphasised that an individual's wellbeing is associated with stable employment in the labour market, good vocational education and respected work (Kalimo and Vuori 1990). Consistent career development is also valued as essential for the wellbeing of individuals in employment (Liukkonen et al. 2009).

At the same time, job insecurity is associated with negative effects on sense of coherence, particularly for professionals committed to their work (Kaufman 1982), and there appears to be a decrease of SOC among the population during a period of increasing unemployment (Nilsson et al. 2003). Löyttyniemi et al. (2004) maintain that the professional career in contemporary Finland is constructed between work and family, and that the sense of coherence, particularly with regard to manageability and meaningfulness, is clearly built upon a meaningful dialogue between family and profession: whereas an inharmonious combination of professional career and family can impact negatively on the construction of meaningfulness and on the sense of coherence. A strong SOC protects against psychosomatic symptoms and emotional exhaustion at work (Feldt 1997; Feldt et al. 2000) and stable employment supports the development of SOC in certain occupational fields (Feldt et al. 2005a, b).

In addition, the sense of coherence can be challenged by a work situation that does not allow career progress and is interpreted as professional failure (Löyttyniemi et al. 2004). The authors argue that in contemporary professional careers, sense of meaningfulness

> Does not necessarily require a vision of linear and continuous career. Instead, meaningfulness is constructed with the 'tools' and 'materials' available in a way that makes it possible to envision an ambiguous, unpredictable, multiple careers—and gain social value. (Löyttyniemi et al. 2004, p. 937)

There is still a void in research with regard to SOC in contemporary work settings, which is based on the unpredictability of the work environment and the expected flexibility of the individual (Tompa et al. 2007), as well as on labour market careers and the stability of SOC (Liukkonen et al. 2009). Fixed-term employment has a negative impact on SOC. It has also been proven that changes in SOC are associated with employment trajectories and that particularly strong effects are seen in employees aged 30 years and older (Liukkonen et al. 2009).

Sense of Coherence, Career Decision-Making, Thoughts, Success and Wellbeing

Career decision-making is a stressful process (Reardon et al. 2000), because it requires decisions that involve various conflicting thoughts and emotions and might have multiple influences on a person's life (Sampson et al. 1996). When faced with a difficult career decision, the individual with a strong SOC is more likely to persevere in managing and resolving the career challenge (Antonovsky 1987). Conceptualising career decision-making as a stressful life event, SOC may be viewed as having a moderating effect on the career decision process (Reardon et al. 2000).

In recent research, it has been stated that career decision making depends on the person's level of positive psychology constructs (Snyder and Lopez 2009) and the depth and nature of one's psychological resources (Sampson 2006). Cilliers and Kossuth (2004) have suggested that particularly salutogenetic functioning impacts on positive and negative decision making.

SOC has a significant and positive relationship with career decision-making self-efficacy (Carielli 2004). It supports the individual in not perceiving educational barriers as barriers, but rather as challenging and welcome stimuli. Furthermore, SOC is significantly related to coping with educational barriers (Carielli 2004).

SOC is correlated with career thoughts (Carielli 2004). Career thoughts are viewed as functional and dysfunctional factors that influence an individual's career decision-making process and vocational development (Lustig and Strauser 2008). SOC is related to career thought processing, and dysfunctional career thoughts are associated with a low self-worth and low subjective wellbeing (Lustig and Strauser 2008) as well as with a low SOC (Lustig and Strauser 2002).

Austin and Cilliers (2011) have found that there is a significant psychometric relationship between career thinking (negative and positive career thoughts and salutogenic functioning i.e. loss of control and SOC). In the same study, the authors (Austin and Cilliers 2011, p. 19) suggest that the SOC

> Acts as a facilitator of effective career thinking: the higher the person's functioning on comprehension, meaningfulness and manageability as salutogenic characteristics, the easier it will be for that person to make decisions leading to positive career outcomes.

Other authors highlight that individuals demonstrating a stronger SOC present lower levels of dysfunctional career thinking, and that a stronger SOC is associated with less confusion regarding career choice (Austin et al. 2010).

In addition, SOC seems to modify subjective wellbeing and is related to higher decision latitude in the workplace (Nasermoadelli et al. 2003).

Individuals with a higher SOC may require less support and make career decisions more effectively than individuals with a lower SOC. Several studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between SOC and functional career thoughts (Lustig et al. 2000). A person with a high SOC is

> [more] likely to believe that the difficult process of resolving their career indecision is worth the time and effort, that career information is understandable with effort, and that he has the capacity to cognitively and emotionally handle making an effective career decision' (Lustig and Strauser 2008, p. 141).

Individuals with a stronger SOC have lower levels of dysfunctional career thoughts than individuals with a weaker SOC and are, therefore, better prepared to deal with career decision-making processes (Lustig and Strauser 2002, 2008). Austin et al. (2010) emphasise that a stronger SOC increases the resoluteness and independence of the individual's career choice. These individuals will spend less time and fewer emotional resources when making a career decision. At the same time, an 'ineffective' career decision could entail an increase in dysfunctional career thoughts (Sampson et al. 2004).

Individuals with a strong SOC react differently in a work environment to individuals with a weak SOC: individuals with a strong SOC rather value humanistic values, diverse work environments and transcultural competences at work, while individuals with a weak SOC seem to value social support (Mayer 2011). In addition, with regard to international and global work contexts, managers with a high SOC are more aware of the importance of intercultural competences, mention these competences more often as being important to their work and personal development, and judge an intercultural environment as positive and stimulating (Mayer 2011).

The basic values of individuals with strong and weak SOC are expected to impact on career thoughts, career development and career success of individuals and within organizations.

Career success refers to real or objective, and perceived or subjective accomplishments of individuals in their work lives (Judge et al. 1995). The career success of an employee in an organization is linked with the sense of wellbeing at work (Rothmann 2011). In addition, individuals' personal career experiences, career desires and their self-awareness are becoming important in the contemporary workplace, due to their strong interlinkages with organizational health and wellbeing.

Career wellbeing—defined as individuals' career experiences as expressed by their positive and negative feelings about their careers (Kidd 2008)—is driven by career experiences 'which lead to positive and negative evaluations (thoughts) and feelings about the career' (Schreuder and Coetzee 2011, p. 68). Experiences of wellbeing are influenced by the individual's sense of coherence, which is related to the career anchors that again have implications for the career decision-making process (De Villiers 2009). Career anchors are viewed as descriptive and predictive tools that serve to guide, constrain, stabilise and integrate the person's career (Schein 1978). De Villiers (2009) concludes that a balanced professional and private life, personal lifestyle needs, family concerns, security and stability, entrepreneurial creativity and personal development are important career anchors, which relate to employee wellbeing. There is a relationship between SOC and career anchors with regard to female contract workers who are particularly in need of job security and steady employment, while allowing flexible working arrangements and challenging assignments at the same time for a feeling of wellbeing. Employee wellness and career anchors are further influenced by variables such as race, gender, age, personal attributes, marital status and educational level (Coetzee and Schreuder 2008).

Practical Implications for Career Counselling and Guidance

Sense of coherence impacts on professional careers and career development in various ways. Antonovsky (1987) maintains that an individual's SOC is determined mainly in early childhood and particularly through experiences characterised by consistency and a balanced life, as well as experiences of comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness. Antonovsky (1997) emphasises that changes in SOC are very rare and are bound to dramatic changes in life patterns. However, studies also provide evidence that SOC changes over time (Smith et al. 2003) and can also vary widely in the context of dramatic life experiences and trauma (Snekkevik et al. 2003). Other authors (Krause and Mayer 2012) emphasise that SOC can also be developed through long-term interventions and an enduring change in life circumstances, as well as through training, counselling and therapy. Other authors highlight the positive effect that group training can have on SOC development (Franke and Witte 2009), and Petzold (2010) describes a self-learning approach to strengthen SOC.

In counselling and therapies, the individual's SOC can be strengthened by providing the individual with experiences that enhance comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness through specific interventions, but also through the counselling relationship. Krause and Mayer (2012) suggest that in salutogenic training sessions, selected resources need strengthening, such as self-worth, belonging, emotional intelligence, communication competences as well as conflict management and transformation competences, inter- and transcultural competences, stress management and, finally, the development of health-related movement and diet. Developing these resources can lead to improved comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness, and helps to strengthen the ability of the individual to structure and understand the living and working environment, to practise manageability actively, for example, in decision-making and conflict transformation in the work environment, as well as integrating meaningfulness in terms of belonging (Krause and Mayer 2012). Mayer and Boness (2013) emphasise that, particularly in the management context, counselling and self-management in the workplace need to draw attention to aspects of meaningfulness in terms of spirituality and the development of a 'healthy organisational culture'. The importance of spirituality in the work environment and the development of meaningfulness have also been stated with regard to the development of professional careers (Schreuder and Coetzee 2011). Thus, strengthening work spirituality and meaningfulness seem to be key to developing SOC and a successful professional career.

It has been suggested (Mayer and Krause 2012; Nilsson et al. 2003; Schnyder et al. 2000) that therapies and consultancy should focus on assets like SOC to ensure and strengthen an individual's ability to respond to subsequent life challenges, such as career decisions.

Particularly during the past two decades, there has been increasing emphasis on the need for interventions in career counselling (Strauser and Lustig 2003). Regarding professional counselling and consultance practice, career counsellors need to structure counselling in such a way that the client understands the process, its aims and himself/herself within the counselling setting (comprehensibility). Thereby, career

counselling should always focus on the resources of the clients to promote saluto-genic counselling (Krause 2003a, p. 187). The client needs to participate actively in the decision-making process and should not feel overwhelmed or underestimated (manageability). Finally, professional career counselling should also focus on the individual's life-orientation, the client's purpose in life and within the professional arena (meaningfulness), and integrate the individual life concepts with regard to career planning and decision making.

Krause (2003a, p. 198–199) explains that counselling should contribute to the following:

- Developing and promoting self-reflection—recognition and use of individual strength;
- Using health-promoting development of communication skills, conflict management and resolution strategies;
- Developing and promoting physical experiences and physical consciousness—perception of own and others' physical attributes, pride in one's own body; and
- Developing a consciousness of healthy nutrition.

All four aspects are also important in developing a successful career within a professional field or an organization (Mayer 2011). Sense of coherence should become an important variable in career counselling (Joachim et al. 2003; Landsverk and Kane 1998), which should be strengthened through resource-orientation of the counsellor, systemic counselling approaches, empathy as well as the creating of support and belonging (Mayer 2011). Sense of coherence should also be developed through mentorships and stuartships within organizations, which could, in parallel, contribute to individual career development within the organisation (Mayer 2011).

With regard to an individual's career development and career decision making, the counselling process should emphasise and promote the individual's understanding, and recognise the level of manageability and the role of meaningfulness with regard to the profession. In career counselling, the counsellor needs to challenge the client's understanding of the world, his/her ways of managing professional and career-related aspects and his/her constructions of the world with respect to a sense of coherence (Lustig and Strauser 2008). Thereby, systemic counselling approaches can assist in elucidating, evaluating and restructuring the client's beliefs about profession, career and career decision-making processes. Since systemic counselling approaches follow a humanistic paradigm, are often solution-oriented, salutogenetic, resource-focused and growth-oriented (Mayer 2011; Krause 2003b), they could contribute strongly to career counselling approaches.

Additionally, in professional and career counselling sessions, the life-orientation questionnaire could be used and evaluated to provide the client as well as the counsellor with an idea of the client's SOC (Mayer 2011). The evaluation of SOC components could be a starting point for both clients and counsellors to develop aims for the counselling sessions. The SOC evaluation could support the counsellor's choice of counselling interventions and his/her priorities for the client's development with regard to SOC and career. Recently, the model of Mental Health in Transcultural Organizations (MEHTO) has been developed to promote SOC in organizational

contexts through counselling, training, mentoring and facilitation, which contribute to the individual as well as to the organizational sense of coherence and, thereby, impact on career development in individual and organizational contexts.

Conclusion, Future Perspectives and Directions

This chapter is aimed at introducing a sense of coherence as an important concept of salutogenesis as well as a newly recognised concept in career psychology. Research into SOC and career has recognised the importance of the concept in career decision-making processes, career development and other career-related aspects. The three components of SOC, comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness, are interlinked with creating individual and organisational meaningfulness and careers.

With regard to career counselling, SOC should become a recognised concept to promote salutogenic counselling, which can influence career decision making and career development in a positive and constructive way.

Future research in salutogenesis and careers should focus on the following:

- Sense of coherence and the influence of its three components on career decision making and career development
- The impact of salutogenic counselling in career counselling, as well as
- The impact of salutogenic career counselling interventions and their impact on career decision making and career development

Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the theoretical approaches of salutogenesis and sense of coherence (SOC) and emphasised the impact of SOC on career and career development. It demonstrated the relationship of SOC and career psychology, particularly focusing on SOC, career thoughts and career development. It also provided practical insights into SOC in career counselling and guidance.

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Part IV
Psycho-Social Career Meta-Capacities in Educational Career Development

This part of the book discusses career construction, career adaptability, flourishing, early career expectations and entitlements in the psychological contract, entrepreneurship, and life-long learning as important psycho-social resources in the educational career development of children, adolescents and adult learners from which organizations and individuals may benefit in the long-term. Today's organizations recognize the human capital inherent in their professionally qualified and high-skilled knowledge workers as important intangible assets to gain a competitive advantage and secure survival and success in a turbulent business environment (Noe et al. 2010; Reissner and Watson 2010). Although companies who invest in the further education of their employees may be successful in developing a well-educated and professionally high-skilled workforce, the digitally-driven knowledge economies and societies of the future need lifelong learners who are competent self-learners, capable, adaptable, flexible, entrepreneurial and innovative (O'Donoghue and Maguire 2005; Thijssen et al. 2008). Educational institutions therefore globally face the challenge of ensuring that their programs of study are relevant to industry and society (Crossman and Clarke 2010; Gannon and Maher 2012; Griesel and Parker 2009) and that their graduates are work ready (employable) and able to add immediate value by participating successfully and innovatively in a more complex work environment (Green et al. 2009; Jackson and Chapman 2011).

Apart from the demands and expectations of employers, young people preparing to enter the work of world are faced with the challenge of dealing with uncertainties and unemployment resulting from the economic crises experienced by especially Western countries. Laura Nota, Maria Cristina Ginevra, Sara Santilli, and Salvatore Soresi emphatically state in **chapter 13** (*Contemporary career construction: The role of career adaptability*) that, given the socioeconomic context of Western countries, existing traditional career guidance and counseling interventions and services must make room for approaches that consider life designing and promote career adaptability and its resources (i. e. concern about the future, career control, curiosity toward the environment, and confidence in one's own ability) in pre-adolescence, adolescence, and in adulthood. They suggest preventive career interventions from childhood that introduce children to the world of work, encourage them to develop career adaptability, career knowledge and a positive mindset toward the world of

work. Preventive career interventions foster lifelong learning and the ability to handle uncertainties and career transitions. The authors further posit that adolescents should be trained to gain increasingly control on their own school-career decisions by encouraging the development of decisional abilities and the setting of school and career goals. They argue for career education interventions that emphasize an attitude of training and vocational exploration to increase world of work knowledge and realistic career aspirations. The authors recommend developing and encouraging agency, creativity, optimism, persistence, mental open-mindedness, and staying hopeful in planning for the future in the early and formative years. The authors emphasize that young adults should be prepared to cope with transitions and uncertainties. They further describe career education interventions that help to strengthen the adaptability resources young adults need to cope with the school-to-work transition so as to prevent persistent unemployment, underemployment, and negative effect on their future careers. The authors highlight studies showing that career adaptability is positively associated with various work-related outcomes, such as career aspirations, vocational identity, employability, career success, job search and career satisfaction.

In **chapter 14** (*Flourishing intervention: a practical guide to student development*), Llewellyn van Zyl and Marius Stander discuss the role of higher education institutions in developing flourishing students from which companies may benefit in the long-term. Flourishing is defined as living in an optimal range of human functioning, a life that is filled with goodness, generativity, personal growth and resilience (and hence more fruitful and rewarding careers). The authors cite research showing that flourishing students tend to be more proactive with higher levels of self-control; they tend to adopt a mastery-approach towards their goals and have higher levels of academic performance. The authors further argue that developing flourishing students might contribute to a flourishing labor force because these students might be more inclined to manage work-related stressors effectively, show higher levels of self-determination, organizational commitment and performance, lower levels of absenteeism, and generally be happier at work. Building their rationale for developing flourishing students from the basic premise that work and working are central to the individual's perception of personal wellbeing (see also Part III), they posit that career development interventions should, amongst others, focus on individuals' work-related wellbeing and psycho-physical health. The authors emphasize that career development interventions aimed at flourishing should be implemented at an early age to ensure individuals have the mindsets, skills and abilities needed to cope with employability and work/working demands and challenges. Taking the strength-based approach of positive psychology, the authors operationalise the concept of flourishing students by discussing an intervention and practical techniques (coined as PERMA: **P**ositive emotions, **E**ngagement, **R**elationships, **Me**aning crafting, and **A**ccomplishments) which could be used in the higher education and organizational context by academics, educators and career practitioners.

In **chapter 15** (*Anticipatory psychological contracts of undergraduate students: implications for early career entitlement expectations*), Bennie Linde and Werner Gress give an overview of the anticipatory psychological contract and the pre-entry expectations and entitlements of undergraduate students that influence this contract.

They posit that graduates tend to take preconceived expectations to their first post-graduation job and these contribute to their perceptions of entitlement expectations. The authors see the psychological contract as a set of beliefs about what the employee (or prospective employee) and employer expects to receive and is compelled to award in exchange for the other party's contribution. The authors further explain that the psychological contract can be influenced by newcomers' pre-entry expectations, even if a clear actual employment contract exists. They point out that obtaining a qualification may lead to higher expectations and entitlements in the early career. The study conducted by the authors amongst undergraduate students (prospective employees) show that their main expectations relate to personal wellness, conditions of employment, benefits and pursuing their career aspirations (thus confirming the centrality of work/working in career wellbeing). Some of the main entitlement factors that influenced the normative entitlement perceptions of the students include affirmative action policies and workplace location. Overall, the normative (salary) expectations of entitlement appeared to be high because of the level of qualification. The authors recommend that academics and career practitioners should develop an understanding of the pre-entry entitlement expectations of early career students and assist in shaping their normative entitlement beliefs to prepare them for more realistic organizational expectations. Preparing new entrants for the work world in terms of normative entitlements may help to prevent experiences of breach and violation of the psychological contract which may influence the general career wellbeing (see Part III), commitment and productivity of the employee.

In **chapter 16** (*Entrepreneurship as 21st century skill: taking a developmental perspective*), Martin Obschonka discusses entrepreneurship as a form of human agency that can be seen as a proactive and productive response to the new demands and challenges imposed by today's macro-level change. The author posits that entrepreneurial human agency has become a key strategy to productively deal (both on the individual and societal level) with the positive and negative sides of change (for example, youth unemployment). In the career context, entrepreneurship represents a broad range of activities or processes (ranging from opportunity discovery to opportunity exploitation) which are characterized by proactive and venturesome behaviors. The author explains that entrepreneurship is, for example, evident when individuals react to the increasing uncertainty concerning career planning or new learning demands with their own entrepreneurial agency and self-responsive, proactive, and creative behavior. Viewing entrepreneurship as a meta-capacity for both successful careers and prosperous economies, he further argues for entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities to foster entrepreneurial mindsets and skills from an early age onwards. Moreover, entrepreneurship seems to be on the increase and many young people might work self-employed at some point in their career. The author cites research showing that successful entrepreneurship in the working life is a developmental outcome, that is, successful entrepreneurship in adulthood is a consequence of entrepreneurial competence growth from childhood on. The *Life Span Model of Entrepreneurial Development* by Obschonka and Silbereisen (cited by the author) stresses the importance of certain developmental variables and processes, and the developmental interplay between nature and nurture in developing

an entrepreneurial mindset in the formative years and onward. The author recommends that career practitioners and educators involved in engaging individuals in entrepreneurship consider the developmental variables proposed in the *Life Span Model of Entrepreneurial Development* discussed in the chapter. The author concludes by emphasizing that preparing children, adolescents and young, emerging adults to be competent and skilful entrepreneurial agents in a global economy that is shifting towards entrepreneurial societies should be a key point on the educational agenda. Educators and career practitioners should regard entrepreneurship as a key 21st century competency for lifelong learning, personal fulfillment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion, and employment.

In **chapter 17** (*Designing learning experiences to prepare lifelong learners for the complexities of the workplace*), Willa Louw continues the debate on the role of education in preparing students for the complexities of the changing workplace. She posits that teaching and learning in higher education should be approached from the perspective that students are active, autonomous and self-directed agents in their learning. The digitally-driven information society is seeing an increase in online learning modes and modalities in the workplace and by educational institutions. The author therefore argues for the development of basic and advanced digital skills for lifelong learners in teaching and learning design. She further illustrates how the open and distance learning context and a heutagogical approach to teaching and learning design help create a learning space for lifelong and life-wide learning skills for the adult learner. The author points out that often students entering an open distance learning environment are not prepared through career guidance and education to make the right career choices. She argues that career practitioners and educators should realize that the increasing complexities in society, industry and technology development will make it difficult for open distance learning students to adjust themselves to the changing contextual spaces in which they have to fulfill and balance their various role commitments (as citizen, worker, family member, student). The author emphasizes the need for career counseling and guidance with well-resourced centres where advisors and academics work closely together.

Finally, the themes, research evidence and discussions of the chapter contributions bring to the fore the role of educational institutions in preparing students for the complexities of the world of work. A major consequence of the rapidly expanding knowledge economy and the information technology revolution is that providers of education are expected to incorporate generic, transferable cognitive and social skills in the curriculum that enable students and graduates to apply their disciplinary knowledge and skills to the benefit of the business (Gamble et al. 2010; Griesel and Parker 2009; Jackson and Chapman 2011). Prominent examples of these non-job-specific skills and attributes are critical, lateral and creative thinking skills, initiative and enterprise, problem-solving and decision-making skills, working effectively with others, self-management skills, self-directed learning, ethical practice, a life-long learning orientation, and effectively using information and social media technology to interact and communicate with others (Coetzee 2012; Griesel and Parker 2009; Jackson and Chapman 2011; McNeil et al. 2012). The cultivation of generic graduate attributes and skills in discipline-specific contexts at different levels of educational

complexity are supposed to add to the graduateness and employability of graduates as these attributes and skills are assumed to equip them as scholars, global and moral citizens, life-long learners, and effective members of modern society who can act as agents of social good, change and innovation (Barrie 2004; Coetzee 2012; Green et al. 2009; Steur et al. 2012). Linde and Gress (see chapter 15) add that students should develop realistic expectations in terms of the work world and what they will be entitled to as graduates in today's workplace.

In the career context, generic, transferable graduate attributes and skills can be seen as critical employability resources supporting the psychosocial career meta-capacities discussed by the chapter contributions in Part I, Part II, Part III, and Part IV. Although youth unemployment and employability have become a global concern, Gabriel et al. (2010) mention that unemployment and job insecurity (and hence employability) also affect managerial and professional employees due to modern day layoffs and organizational restructuring in response to a changing and more chaotic business economy. Career practitioners and educators therefore need to work jointly in helping students across the lifespan recognize the importance of these resources and capacities in developing the mindsets, skills and attributes they need to enhance and sustain their employability and flourish in their careers in the modern workplace and labor market.

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Chapter 13
Contemporary Career Construction: The Role of Career Adaptability

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Abstract Over the last decade, the rapidly changing job market has begun to demand that people more actively construct their professional lives and acquire career adaptability.

In this chapter, after a presentation of the recent models and theoretical approaches that recognize the need to carefully consider the role of career adaptability to face, pursue, or accept changing career roles, we will analyze some studies that focus on the career adaptability in adolescents, young adults and temporary workers to successfully handle career transitions. In addition, a review will be presented of assessment procedures of career adaptability that can be found internationally. Lastly, in relation to the relevance of the career adaptability for youth's career development, in this chapter we will discuss how to implement personalized forms of vocational guidance intervention aimed to increase career adaptability.

Introduction

The economic crises that have recently affected and concerned the Western countries have brought with them the need to reconsider how individuals can be helped in thinking about and planning their vocational future. Existing traditional career guidance assumptions have been swept away, together with other certainties, by the sudden changes that have taken place in the world of work and in the economic field. Prospects of growth and development in our countries have dramatically decreased, and many warn that still harder times are to come and that the future is not what it once was (Soresi 2011). The economic crisis has severely impaired the employment prospects of young people in the Western countries, USA and Europe in particular, with unemployment rate rising respectively to 16.3 % (International Labour Organization 2013) and 11 % (European Commission 2013) in 2013. Moreover, because

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of the economic crisis, the number of young people not in employment, education and training (NEETs) has risen by almost 20 % in Europe since 2007. Among European Union nations, Italy has shown a greater increase in young unemployment rate, reaching 39.1 % in 2013 (Eurostat 2013). Nowadays in Italy, as an example, as many as 30 % of young people do not work nor study. The drama of it becomes even more striking if we consider that in 1985 the population aged between 18 and 25 amounted to 15 million, whereas now it is only seven million—less than half—and all the same so many of them do not have a job. Many and complex are the causes underlying this situation and, besides the current financial crisis, a role has been played also by a widespread automatization process. As Prodi (2011) recalls, such a process has affected all production activities and caused the loss of millions of jobs spanning from the automobile to the agricultural sector, from the production of electrical appliances to employment in the aeronautical sector and in large department stores. At the same time it must also be underlined that very few opportunities of work inclusion will be available to those that are not culturally equipped to take on active and productive roles within what will be the future knowledge society (Bagnara 2010).

The uncertainty is common to all, so that Augè (2012) asserted that the young feel stuck in a present of precariousness and fear they will not find a job, they will not be able to plan their future. At the same time he wrote that the fathers fear they will lose their pension and social welfare, and so end up in poverty. Career counselors can no longer behave as if the future were still predictable and full of opportunities and promise. We should relinquish traditional theoretical references and their practices, and among the approaches that can play an important role in attempting to deal with the current social, financial and cultural challenges, we wish to mention Life Design (Savickas et al. 2009). Within Life Design, careful consideration is given to new and important dimensions, such as hope and optimism, representation of the future, self-determination, and adaptability. In the present chapter we will analyze career adaptability in depth, by studying its meaning and its psycho-social components, and examine useful instruments to evaluate it which we used in a series of research works, whose most significant data will be reported here. We will also try to put forward suggestions on the type of interventions that could be designed and implemented to promote increased adaptability.

From Adaptation to Adaptability

The career adaptability construct was described by Savickas (1997) in his acknowledgement of the patrimony of Super's thinking, who proposed the Life Space Life Span theory, represented in the Life Career Rainbow. Specifically, Super denoted that the individual is the principal actor of his/her career construction, that is characterized by five stages of development, e.g., the five life phases of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and retirement. Super (1990) suggested that these stages define an essentially predictable evolution, even with individual differences. At each phase, specific development tasks, i.e. a set of actions that people are asked to do before going on to the next phase, are carried out. Such tasks are related to age,

social norms and expectations. A person's ability to successfully cope with the vocational tasks set out in the different phases would depend on his/her vocational maturity, in other words, on his/her ability to make advantageous choices as regards vocational training. Super used the term "life space" to indicate the roles that an individual acquire in certain life periods, and "life span" to denote five life phases of development. In 1984, he stressed the importance of career counseling aspects that analyze the different roles that individuals play at home, at school, at work, and in the community and the context barriers (e.g. relating to corporate restructuring, layoffs, and economic crises) individuals experience in their career development. In his work Super emphasizes the adjustment process through which individuals adapt to the situations they have to face by making efforts to realize their own self. During this adjustment process people try to improve themselves or increase their person-environment fit, and at the same time attempt to become what they wish and to achieve their objectives (Savickas 1997). Such attention to adjustment laid the foundations that allowed Savickas to bring together into a single model the different perspectives on vocational development that he had elaborated (Savickas 1997) and to re-think development in terms of adaptability.

As also mentioned by Savickas and Porfeli (2012), the term *adaptability* derive from the Latin *adaptō* that means to fit or to connect. Over time, the term adapt has assumed different meanings, including adaptation, adapting, adaptivity, and adaptability. Adaptation means being able to implement one's self-concept in working roles and, when there is a good fit, it leads to the achievement of a desirable fusion between past concerns and present aspirations. Adapting implies the enactment of behaviors that adjust to changing circumstances (coping with professional distress, handling work-to-work transitions), through five typically repeated actions: orientation, exploration, establishment, management, and disengagement. Adaptivity is either a personality trait that can be resilient and stable or a person's tendency to be flexible or willing to change. In either case it becomes a core characteristic of that individual. Adaptability is a psycho-social construct centered on the individual's resources to handle developmental tasks to prepare for future professional roles. Adaptability implies ability to adjust to unexpected needs arisen from changes in the labor market and/or in working conditions (Savickas and Porfeli 2012). The construct encloses the professional duties and transitions individuals find themselves having to deal with and also the strategies needed to cope with them. It is a process through which people dynamically build their professional life, at the same time handling changes and considering the context they are living in (Karaevli and Hall 2006; Savickas 2005). Four main resources (known as the 4Cs) characterize adaptability and they denote the problem-solving and coping strategies used by people to incorporate the self-concept into their work roles. These four resources are: (1) Concern about the future, that is, to be positively oriented to the future, linking the past and the present, (2) Control, that is, to consider the future as at least controllable, and to be persistent, (3) Curiosity, the willingness to explore the environment, with the aim of acquiring information about themselves and the outside world, and (4) Confidence in one's own ability to face the challenges and overcome the obstacles and barriers that may be experienced in reaching the goals (Savickas 2011; Savickas et al. 2009; Savickas and Porfeli 2012).

Career Adaptability: Assessment Procedures

Linked to the belief that it helps cope with many of the challenges we can all experience in building up our vocational life, the interest in the construct of career adaptability is witnessed by the increasing number of articles published over the last few years in the international literature. The Journal of Vocational Behavior (JBV)—one of the most prestigious journals in the field of vocational behavior—has seen a considerable increase in the number of publications on career adaptability: 1 in the year 2000, 5 in 2004/2005, 15 in 2009/2010, 18 in 2011, and as many as 38 articles in 2012 with a special issue also devoted to it (Ferrari 2012). Interest in the construct has gone hand in hand with interest in its measurement, so much so that today we have at our disposal a fair number of both quantitative and qualitative assessment procedures. The former refer to self-evaluation scales that allow comparing a person's score with normative reference data, also with the aim to outline a profile of adaptability level. The latter regards a qualitative career assessment through interviews, life stories, and narratives to highlight life patterns and themes (Hartung and Borges 2005).

The Quantitative Approach In literature, there are studies in which the authors have used scales and subtests that, in addition to other dimensions, provide estimates of some adaptability components; there are also works that are proposed to develop specific and original rating scales (see Table 13.1).

Hirschi (2009), for example, has conceptualized the career adaptability as an aggregate model of four distinct constructs, examined through different measures: (1) Career choice readiness, assessed with the Career Maturity Inventory (Crites 1973; Seifert and Stangl 1986), (2) Career planning and (3) Career exploration, assessed with the Career Development Inventory (Seifert and Eder 1985; Super et al. 1981), and (4) Confidence, assessed with two specific career competency beliefs scales. Also Kenny and Bledsoe (2005) used different measures for each dimension of career adaptability: school identification, perceptions of educational barriers, career outcome expectations, and career planning, respectively assessed with the Identification with School Questionnaire (Voelkl 1996, 1997), Perceptions of Educational Barriers (McWhirter et al. 2000), The Outcome Expectation Scale (McWhirter et al. 2000), and the Career Development Inventory. In a similar way, with adults, Klehe et al. (2011) used different self-reports: the career exploration was assessed using an adaptation of the Career Exploration Survey (Stumpf et al. 1983) and the planning through a six-item scale (Gould 1979). As regards the specific new instruments, Rottinghaus et al. (2005) developed The Career Futures Inventory, a 25-item inventory to investigate career adaptability, career optimism, and perceived knowledge of the job market. More recently, Savickas and Porfeli (2011) reviewed the Career Maturity Inventory (CMI), using the theory of career construction to the 75 items of the original instrument. Although the original CMI focused on both beliefs about and attitudes toward the career-decision making process, in the new version of the instrument the authors deleted the belief items. The 24-item final form of the instrument (CMI Form C) allows to assess three dimensions of career adaptability

Table 13.1 Quantitative procedures overview

Authors	Adaptability components assessed	Instruments used
Scales and subtests used to assess some adaptability components		
Hirschi (2009)	Career choice readiness	Career Maturity Inventory (Crites 1973; Seifert and Stangl 1986)
	Career planning	Career Development Inventory (Seifert and Eder 1985; Super et al. 1981)
	Career exploration	Career Development Inventory (Seifert and Eder 1985; Super et al. 1981)
	Confidence	Career competency beliefs scales (Hirschi 2009)
Kenny and Bledsoe (2005)	School identification	Identification with School Questionnaire (Voelkl 1996, 1997)
	Perceptions of educational barriers	Perceptions of Educational Barriers (McWhirter et al. 2000)
	Career outcome expectations	The Outcome Expectation Scale (McWhirter et al. 2000)
	Career planning	Career Development Inventory (Seifert and Eder 1985; Super et al. 1981)
Klehe et al. (2011)	Career exploration	Adaptation of the Career Exploration Survey (Stumpf et al. 1983)
	Career planning	A six-item scale (Gould 1979)
Specific and original rating scales for career adaptability		
Rottinghaus et al. (2005)	Career adaptability	The Career Futures Inventory (Rottinghaus et al. 2005)
Savickas and Porfeli (2011)	Concern, curiosity, confidence, career choice readiness, and consultation	Revision of Career Maturity Inventory (CMI; Savickas and Porfeli 2011)
Nota et al. (2012)	Concern, curiosity, control, confidence, and cooperation	Career and Work Adaptability (Nota et al. 2012)
Savickas and Porfeli (2012)	Concern, curiosity, control, and confidence	Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS; Savickas and Porfeli 2012)

(concern, curiosity and confidence); career choice readiness, that is the level of career adaptability and readiness to choice career paths; and consultation, that regards the degree to which the individual seeks social supports in career decision-making.

In the Italian context, Nota et al. (2012) developed the Career and Work Adaptability to assess adolescents' career adaptability. This 31-item self-report allows to evaluate alongside the "4c" (Concern, Curiosity, Control, and Confidence) another "C", that is Cooperation, also referred to Savickas' reflections from 2008 (personal communication, July 18, 2008). This dimension regards the ability to cooperate with others, to establish positive interactions useful to facilitate reflections about the future and to create supportive social networks (Nota and Soresi 2003). It also allows highlighting the importance of relationships established in different life areas, for both

personal and professional motivations (Richardson 2012; Savickas et al. 2009). The psychometric analysis carried out showed acceptable levels of internal consistency (ranging from.60 to.89).

With support of Mark Savickas, an international team of vocational psychologists from 13 countries (Belgium, Brazil, China, France, Iceland, Italy, Korea, Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa, Switzerland, Taiwan, and USA), "Career Adaptability Team", worked together to develop a shared self-report, "Career Adapt-Abilities Scale", useful for cross-cultural research. In order to draw attention to culture specific and general aspects of career adaptability, the N-way approach (Brett et al. 1997) was used to operationalize the dimensions of adaptability. Taking into account the linguistic definitions, 25 items were developed for each of the 4C. Then data collected by the team were put together in order to evaluate the psychometric characteristics of the inventory. The resulting Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS), shared in 13 countries, is composed by 24 item that assess the core dimensions of adaptability: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence (Savickas and Porfeli 2012). The authors have proceeded to evaluate the measurement equivalence or invariance, important to test differences across countries (Vandenberg and Lance 2000). The analysis highlighted that the International form of Career Adapt-Abilities Scale has good reliability and suitable measurement equivalence across countries.

Qualitative Procedures In addition to quantitative methods, the international team discussed qualitative approaches to assess career adaptability, collecting techniques and tools specifically suited for life-design counseling. This approach was mainly used by members from Australia, England, and South Africa (Savickas and Porfeli 2012). Drawing from the social constructionist approach, materials include early recollections, card sorts, sentence completions and genograms, to stimulate career narratives (Savickas et al. 2009). These narratives should stimulate clients to develop their career personality and four adaptability resources and to identify their life themes (Savickas 2005).

To understand how individuals construct their professional lives, Savickas (2005) suggests using the Career Style Interview (CSI) as a means to identify life themes from a career construction theory perspective, which has its roots in Adler's individual psychology and in constructivism (Taber et al. 2011). The interview allows gathering information in the form of stories narrated by clients about life structure (roles), adaptability strategies, motivations, and personality style. The CSI asks an initial question (How can I be useful to you in constructing your career?) that elicits clients' goals for counseling, and seven core questions that are used to elicit narratives from clients for understanding and constructing their life stories. The questions concern: role models, which encourage the analysis of clients' life ideals, of the goals and solutions that they adopt as regards their core life problems; preferred social environments, examined by asking to indicate the television programs or the magazines that they regularly watch or read; problems perceived and ways to cope with them, examined by asking to indicate their favorite books or movies; manifest interests, ascertained by exploring the leisure time activities they carry out; preferred work environments, examined by asking to specify their favorite subjects when they went

to school; life story designations (ways of living) analyzed by asking to indicate a motto of theirs or a favorite saying; and lastly their core interests and worries, which emerge from recollection of specific events occurred before they were 10 years old.

Over the last few years, research has been able to propose diversified assessment instruments capable to guarantee personalized assessment and give the chance to focus on people's resources, in line with the increasing importance attributed to the need to realize personalized interventions that can allow counselors to approach clients with the aim of giving them voice and favoring expression of and respect for their peculiarities.

The Career Adaptability in Adolescents and Adults

Adolescents and Adaptability Propensity to look to the future, recognizing one's right to make decisions autonomously, wishing to explore vocational opportunities and build up a sense of efficacy in coping with challenges contribute to characterizing adaptability during pre-adolescence and adolescence (Hartung et al. 2008). On account of this, some studies have more recently focused on the topic of career adaptability in pre-adolescence and adolescence. For example, Hirschi (2009) examined career adaptability predictors and effects on development of life satisfaction and sense of power among 330 Swiss eighth graders, aged from 12 to 16 years. The author identified four career adaptability predictors, which are goal decidedness, capability beliefs, beliefs and social context, and found that higher levels of career adaptability predicted sense of growth power and life satisfaction. In an additional study, Hirschi (2010) investigated the role of adaptability, measured by planning and exploration, in affecting level of career aspiration development in terms of stability, realism, and coherence, in a group of 262 Swiss students, aged from 13 to 15 years. He observed that the degree of adaptability explained realism and stability of career aspirations.

Porfeli and Savickas (2012), involving a group of 460 10th and 11th grade U.S. students, found that career adaptability was strongly correlated with career identity, and, specifically, with vocational exploration and identification with career commitments. This result emphasizes that identity and career adaptability are crucial in career construction (Savickas 2011), and that people with higher levels of career adaptability make career choices that implement one's identity. Pouyaud et al. (2012), found, in French adolescents, that career adaptability, and in particular concern scale, correlated significantly with the motivation in educational environments; it also negatively correlated with general anxiety and the fear of failing in one's educational-professional path. These results highlighted that anxiety and fear of failing can affect the development of adaptability resources.

De Guzman and Ok (2013), involving 193 technical students, observed that adolescents with high levels of career adaptability showed high employability skills. This result emphasized that people with higher levels of adaptability have greater possibility of finding a suitable job, thereby achieving career success and work satisfaction.

As regards pre-adolescents, Soresi and Nota (2012) examined the relationship among career adaptability and hope, optimism, and resilience in a group of 388 Italian middle school students, ranged from 12 to 13 years old. The authors found that students with higher levels of career adaptability are more future oriented than participants with lower levels of career adaptability. Specifically, they presented higher levels of hope and optimism toward the future, and higher tendency to cope positively with stress and difficult situations (resilience). Involving high-school students, Soresi et al. (2012), observed that adolescents with higher levels of adaptability showed lower perceived internal and external career barriers, a broader range of career interests, and higher quality of life than adolescents with lower levels of career adaptability. In another study with Italian high-school students, career adaptability was associated with problem-solving and career decision status. Specifically, Nota et al. (2012) observed that adolescents with higher levels of career adaptability felt more career decided, more projected toward the future, and more competent as regards the construction of their future career intentions and the transformation of their intentions into goal-oriented behaviors. Lastly, considering time perspective, one component of career adaptability, Ferrari et al. (2010) found that middle and high school students with higher levels of time perspective were more greatly involved in the decisional process and more committed in school.

With undergraduate students, Duffy (2010) observed similar findings. He examined the relationship between career adaptability and sense of personal control, founding that individuals with a greater sense of personal control have more career adaptability, and consequently may be able to overcome the world of work more proactively.

Adults and Career Adaptability   Considering that precariousness and insecurity now characterize the modern world of work and that work contracts are mostly short-term, atypical, and contingent (Savickas 2012), career adaptability is a crucial characteristic for today's workers. It in fact comprises the ability to take up career roles and to deal with career transition, which workers more frequently than in the past have to manage (Savickas 2008). Moreover, it is a resource that may support people to prepare for and cope with career transitions. As this regards, using qualitative procedures, McMahon et al. (2012) examined career pathways through the stories of career transitions (e.g. work-to-work, retirement) managed by 36 older women from Australia, England and South Africa. The interviews were analyzed using qualitative descriptors of dimensions of career adaptability. The authors highlighted the role of career confidence, control, curiosity, tendency to be proactively prepared for future (concern) and cooperation in career transitions.

Career adaptability may be particularly helpful in transitions that imply a shift from unemployment to reemployment. It seems to impact on the process of looking for a job and also seems to affect the choice of strategies and the quality of reemployment (Koen et al. 2010).

In this connection, some researchers—especially in the European and North-American contexts—have involved unemployed youths and adults in the search for a new job. For example, Weber and Mahringer (2006) found that the level of career

adaptability of a group of unemployed adults predicted their behavior of active search for a job, so much so that it influenced the number of job offers received and the quality of the jobs they reemployed in. McArdle et al. (2007), involving a group of unemployed Australian, observed that career adaptability, conceptualized as an aggregate of boundaryless mindset and proactive personality; identity, conceived as identity awareness or career curiosity and career self-efficacy; and social support, predicted directly the employability, and through the latter, self-esteem, job search behavior during unemployment, and quality of re-employment at 6-month follow-up. Such results suggest that adaptability and vocational identity affect a person's employability level, which impacts on the person's ability to better tolerate a period of unemployment, to positively approach the work market, and find a new job. Van Vianen and collaborators investigated the role of career adaptability in searching for a job by studying groups of diverse individuals (Klehe et al. 2012). In the first survey conducted by Zikic and Klehe (2006) they involved 215 unemployed adults, aged about 45 years, with good training (67 % of them had a degree), and with good socio-economic status, which afforded them the time to explore and plan for their future. The authors found that career planning and vocational exploration predicted employment status and quality of reemployment six months later. In an additional study, Koen et al. (2010) involved a group of 248 young unemployed, with different educational backgrounds (only 26 % of participants had an university degree), and with a longer period of unemployment (about 22 months). They observed that career planning, career control and confidence predicted, eight months later, the quality of re-employment, operationalized as need-supplies fit, work satisfaction and low turnover intensions. Same results were found also in a sample of immigrants: career planning and career confidence predicted perceived work satisfaction, career path, and turnover intentions (Zikic and Klehe 2012). Koen et al. (2010) concluded that career adaptability may affect the way people search for a new job. They observed that those with higher levels of adaptability used targeted search strategies to a greater extent, whereas those with low levels of adaptability more frequently resorted to random strategies which implied a "trial-and-error" type of search. Higher levels of career planning and greater acceptance of responsibility can help use focused job-search strategies aiming to find professional options and objectives before starting the actual job search. This would focus attention only on those jobs that are most suitable to one's needs, competencies and interests; decision making mirrors the assurance with which an individual is certain of what career to go in for; career exploration means mental openness toward collecting information in an explorative way; career confidence implies concentration in job searching, as well as the scope of looking for a job whilst determined to find re-employment.

Examining the relationship between adaptability, time perspective, hope and optimism, Santilli et al. (2012) observed that young unemployed with higher levels of career adaptability had higher time perspective; specifically, they planned frequently their future in the medium- and long-period, describing more in detail their career activities, perceived better possibility of progress in their professional sphere in the long term (next 10 years), and took on greater responsibility for their choices. Moreover, the authors found that participants with higher levels of career adaptability

characterized also for higher levels of optimism and hope. In addition, Rossier et al. (2012) found that career adaptability mediated the relationship between different personality dimensions, particularly neuroticism and conscientiousness, and work engagement, concluding that career adaptability played a crucial role in work-related outcomes, such as career success, work satisfaction, and work engagement.

The economic crisis currently affecting the whole world has caused less investment in human resources and consequently produced fewer job opportunities, this being especially so for individuals that are not capable to keep up high standards of productivity (Stensrud 2007). Albeit unemployment rates do differ in the various countries, in 2009 the European Union registered an overall rate of 9.1 %, which, however, is more than double if we refer to immigrants, individuals with impairment or intellectual disabilities, or young workers, all of whom have reduced access to training and other supporting services (Council of the European Union 2010). Bricout and Bentley (2000) found that employers rated job applicants with disabilities less employable than applicants without disabilities. The highest employability ratings were reserved for individuals with physical disabilities, especially when compared with individuals with psychiatric issues, who were likely to get the highest levels of discrimination (Bricout and Bentley 2000). Adaptability becomes then an important variable also, and especially, among individuals with more difficulties, such as those with impairment, who are increasingly required to cope with barriers and challenges and manage transitions and changes. In this connection, Nota and Soresi (2012) have studied 92 persons with mild disability and as many without disability and clearly highlighted that in both groups those with higher levels of adaptability showed greater propensity to positively consider future situations that might involve changes of course, improving themselves, and strengthening their competencies. Higher levels of adaptability are also associated with higher levels of hope and optimism, and it seems clear that it can predict the quality of life of individuals both with and without disability.

The studies summed up underline that adaptability is an important resource throughout the lifespan and that it acquires special relevance at times of school–work or work–work transitions. People that show greater adaptability typically seem better able to anticipate possible novel situations and get ready in advance for change by acquiring new abilities and strengthening their network of supports. That would certainly facilitate making more advantageous decisions capable to positively influence sense of control over one's own life, psycho-physical wellbeing, and perceived quality of life.

Practical Implications for Career Counseling and Guidance

Given the important role played by career adaptability also in vocational planning, counselors interested in people's wellbeing and counselors working in career education services should resolve to pay particular attention to the strengthening of the various components of adaptability (Savickas 2011).

In this connection, the Life Design approach suggests planning and implementing programs and interventions that should be applied as early as possible to favor the strengthening of individual resources and professional adaptability long before people have to cope with a professional transition (Savickas et al. 2009). It considers childhood as the dawn of career development and as an active developmental period, that in relation to an emerging sense of self includes the development of career adaptability (Hartung et al. 2005). Therefore, preventive career interventions, from childhood, should prepare children to the world of work, helping them to develop career knowledge and adaptability and to enhance a positive attitude toward the world of work. These career interventions could encourage lifelong learning and the ability to handle career transitions (Hartung et al. 2008).

Useful suggestions for practice and for the proposal of activities aiming at education and training can be found in the literature for each component of career adaptability. As regards career concern, for instance, and the presence of disinterest in the future and in vocational planning, interventions should be devised to stimulate reflection on one's own future, on vocational development tasks, and on the occupational transitions lying ahead. These interventions induce future orientation, foster optimism, make the future feel real, reinforce positive attitudes toward planning, link present activities to future outcomes, practice planning skills, and heighten career awareness (Savickas 2005).

As regards control, the devised interventions should train adolescents to gain increasing control on their own school-career decisions, by encouraging the development of decisional abilities and the setting of school and career goals. More in detail, inability to choose can be addressed by career interventions designed to foster decisive attitudes and decisional competencies, and to diminish career indecision, which is often associated with lack of sense of control, by realizing training on assertiveness, decisional abilities, and career attitudes.

As to curiosity, the interventions should emphasize the promotion among adolescents of an attitude of training and vocational exploration with the aim to increase knowledge and career aspirations (Blustein 1992; Flum and Blustein 2000; Patton and Porfeli 2007). Lack of career curiosity may foster naivety in picturing the world of work and stimulate a fuzzy self-image. Such lack of realism can be addressed by career counseling interventions that aim to increase self-knowledge and understanding of the world of work.

About confidence, Hartung et al. (2008) recall the need to encourage agency and persistence through increasing self-efficacy beliefs and abilities of problem solving and coping with barriers, through role modeling, success acknowledgment, encouragement, anxiety reduction, and problem-solving training (Savickas 2005). These coping attitudes, beliefs, and competencies strengthen career confidence and lead directly to engaging in and mastering vocational development tasks, occupational transitions, and personal traumas.

A significant role in all that could be played by parents, teachers and other significant adults that could encourage experiences, opportunities, and activities useful to offer young people a growing sense of hope and planning for the future (Hartung et al. 2008). They could be involved through specific training activities that would inform on adaptability, the resources that make it up and the ways to favor it (Savickas et al. 2009; Soresi and Nota 2009).

Table 13.2 The didactic units of the training "Career Adaptability"

Career adaptability

(Ginevra 2012)

1. *Mental open-mindedness, chance, and plans for the future*: The focus is on propensity to pay attention to opportunities and on the ability to stimulate the occurrence of events considered important to foster positive development of the present

2. *Curiosity and vocational exploration*: Attention is focused on the importance of curiosity, on ways to encourage it, on the advantages associated with it and the exploratory activities that can be realized on internal processes, on one's own strengths and weaknesses, on relational—which can be either supports or barriers—and contextual situations in order to get better knowledge of occupational options

3. *Creativity*: regards the need to shift adolescents' attention toward the ability of using inventiveness, fantasy, imagination and of abandoning their usual ways of doing, imagining and describing things. They could do it by employing strategies useful to stimulating creative moments, taking time to go in depth into problems and produce different and original solutions

4. *Optimism*: It encourages youths to think of more productive ways to examine negative events, to use strategies to 'revisit' them in light of a positive attitude, spotting some of their good aspects, and to set themselves new challenges

5. *Transitions*: The focus is on transitions, those experienced and those one might experience, but also on those that are not so predictable and desirable, by directing attention to the importance of being prepared to cope with them and being ready in good time

6. *Time perspective*: It aims to stimulate the ability to put together present, past and future, to find underlying themes, issues that have characterized life up to the present time and that might be cultivated in the future too, and to use all that to reflect on the future in order to imagine it and find ways and possible routes

7. *Vocational goals*: It addresses the issue of vocational goals, the choice of ways that can help identify and define them in order to have a wider range of options available, and 'ideas' and scenarios for the future

Drawing on what suggested by Savickas et al. (2009), Ginevra (2012) has tested an intervention made up of seven didactic units aiming to increase career adaptability in a group of adolescents (see Table 13.2). Each didactic unit could lead to an in-depth study of a specific issue and involve adolescents for a tree-hour session.

In order to verify the efficacy of this intervention, the experimental (participating in the intervention program) and control groups (did not participating in this program) were both assessed in a pre-test phase and a post-test phase with the following measures: Career and Work Adaptability (Nota et al. 2012), How much confidence do I have in myself? (Nota et al. 2005), used to assess career self-efficacy and My life as a Student (Soresi and Nota 2003), to measure quality of life as experienced by students. The experimental and control group students did not differ on pre-test levels from the aforementioned variables; instead in the post-test situation, students in the experimental group showed higher levels of career adaptability, career self-efficacy and quality of life than they did at pre-test.

Counselors should help young adults approaching today's world of work and adults finding themselves in situations of precariousness and unemployment by preparing them to cope with transitions and by promoting abilities to find suitable employment at times of extreme uncertainty. They would then enhance career success and even wellbeing (Hartung and Taber 2008; Hirschi 2010; Skorikov 2007). That would help the young to strengthen the resources they need to cope with the

school-to-work transition so as to prevent persistent unemployment, underemployment, and negative effects on their further careers. It would also stimulate them to seize the opportunities that come their way and cope with transitions, obstacles and holdups (Savickas and Porfeli 2012).

Koen et al. (2012) developed a training aimed at increasing career adaptability in a group of graduates or who had just graduated with a Master's degree. They based their program on Savickas' recommendation (2005) to propose exercises for each dimensions of career adaptability by planning, decision-making, exploration and problem solving. In addition, they took into consideration also some suggestions by Brown and Ryan Krane (2000), who have examined the critical aspects of career choice interventions. The training included four sessions of about two hours in length. The meetings were dedicated to discuss the four dimensions of career adaptability.

In the first section the focus was especially on career curiosity to make participants aware of their own values, given that psychological success in one's career is best achieved through being guided by one's values. The aim of the second section was to enable participants to widen and perfect their self-concept, while the third and last sections aimed to encourage participants to implement their self-concepts in occupational roles by concentrating first on a more general plan for the future (concern) and then choosing the most crucial and important steps needed to realize that plan (control). In other words, first of all possible career options were examined in depth (career exploration), then planning ways to pursue those options was stimulated (career concern), and lastly control over the future was strengthen by deciding what options to follow and when (career control). Career confidence was dealt with in the exercises of all the different sections by making use of role modeling, reducing anxiety for career-related activities, recognizing the success of one's own and others' career experiences, and discussing strategies to overcome possible barriers.

To check the effects of the training, differences between the experimental and control groups, at the pre-training, at the end of the training (post-training) and six months later (follow-up), were investigated. At the end of the training, the experimental and control groups did not differentiate in their levels of career adaptability, whereas at the follow-up, the experimental group showed higher levels of concern, control and curiosity than control group. The first result could be related to the fact that immediately after the training participants may have had greater awareness of the barriers to search for a new job; and this may have had an impact on the measurement. Moreover, among those who had found job six months later, experimental participants stated higher employment quality than control group. Although the intervention was tested only with graduates, the authors suggest that it may also be realized with adults who experience situations of insecurity or unemployment.

The career education activities described above are conducted with small groups and so cannot only reach several people at once, they have also the added advantage of containing the costs usually associated with the implementation of counseling practices. Moreover, the participants have the chance to realize that others are experiencing their same difficulties and this can help them see their situation less negatively. Lastly, showing techniques that encourage active participation (practicals, simulations, homework) and paying attention to the participants' real difficulties give the chance to consider various examples of how to manage the difficult situations one is going through (Brown and Ryan Krane 2000; Nota and Soresi 2003; Whiston 2002).

Conclusions

As we have attempted to show, the contemporary international literature is beginning to gather several indications on adaptability, on the role it seems to have in vocational development, on how to assess it, and on useful pathways to strengthen it. However, we feel we must underline that encouraging adaptability requires the counselors who do the 'encouraging' to have the same resources that they wish to develop and/or increase in their users or clients. Indeed, it is fundamental that those who implement interventions aiming to strengthen adaptability should be the first to frequently show, at least in their context, curiosity, concern, confidence and control that might help them to efficiently manage any transitions or difficult times that they themselves are facing. That would make them seem credible professional 'roles' and 'witnesses' of the advantage of resorting to those very abilities that they wish to impart.

Chapter Summary

In the present chapter, after an analysis of the European socioeconomic context, characterized by uncertainty and unemployment, the concept of career adaptability and its resources, the 4Cs, were discussed. The resources of career adaptability are concern about the future, career control, curiosity toward the environment, and confidence in one's own ability. We then presented qualitative and quantitative procedures used in literature to assess career adaptability. The former regards self-evaluation scales or subtest used to provide estimates of career adaptability dimensions. The latter refers the assessment through interviews, and life stories. We then analyze the career adaptability in different developmental phases, considering the role of adaptability in pre-adolescence, adolescence, and in adulthood. The studies presented highlighted that career adaptability is correlated with various work-related outcomes, such as career aspirations, vocational identity, employability, career success, job search, career satisfaction. Lastly, we provided suggestions for career counseling and examples of career interventions designed and implemented with adolescents and adults to promote career adaptability.

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Chapter 14
Flourishing Interventions: A Practical Guide to Student Development

Llewellyn Ellardus Van Zyl and Marius Wilhelm Stander

Abstract This chapter presents a practical guide for the development of flourishing students. Flourishing is defined as a positive psychological state characterised by positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and accomplishments with various positive work/life outcomes (Seligman, Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being, 2011). Within an academic setting, recent research has alluded to the relationship between flourishing students and academic performance (Van Zyl and Rothmann, *Journal of Psychology in Africa* 22(3), 2012). Howell (*Journal of Positive Psychology* 4(1):1–13, 2009) found that flourishing students were less likely to procrastinate, had higher levels of self-control, adopted a mastery-approach towards their goals and reported higher levels of academic performance. Further, Seligman (Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being, 2011) argued that flourishing students has a higher probability to experience fruitful and rewarding careers. Therefore, it is imperative to equip students with the necessary skills to enhance flourishing early in their academic careers. This chapter aims to present the theoretical implications of flourishing as well as to provide a practical approach towards developing flourishing students.

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Introduction

Attracting, engaging, retaining and developing people will be one the most important challenges for companies the next few years. One of the best ways to retain and engage individuals at work is to invest in their personal and professional development. People want to achieve and grow, but at the same time they want to be happy. Although almost half the world's population is relatively unhappy (Seligman 2004), achieving and maintaining happiness at work is therefore an important life goal for many individuals (Dik and Duffy 2008; Lyubomirsky et al. 2011; Seligman 2011). Happy people tend to be more helpful, creative, social and even earn more money (Biswas-Diener and Dean 2007).

The concept of human flourishing (or the top-end experience of happiness) has recently become the focus of positive psychology (Keyes 2007a, 2010; Seligman 2011). Research suggests that less than 20 % of adults' report that they are flourishing in their lives and/or careers (Keyes 2002, 2011). Yet, for most, flourishing at work is at the top of their 'bucket lists' (Lyubomirsky 2011; Seligman 2011). Various work-related interventions are mentioned in the literature that is aimed at re-crafting work in order to facilitate the development of flourishing (*see* Dik and Duffy 2008; Wrzesniewski and Tosti 2005). However, these interventions showed mixed results (Seligman 2011; Sin and Lyubomirsky 2009). Some researchers argue that these mixed results are attributable to various individual, environmental and organisational factors (Dik and Duffy 2009; Kreitner and Kinicki 2007; Parry 2006) of which a shared belief exists that these interventions are implemented *ex post facto* (Amundson et al. 2005; Brown 2003; Van Zyl and Rothmann 2012).

Van Zyl and Rothmann (2012) argued that most organisational interventions are implemented during the early to mid-career phases and are aimed at 'forcing a fit between the individual and the job' or to 're-craft the individuals work so they can derive more meaning from work-related tasks'. Hirschi and Freund (in press) argued that an imperative contributor to the success of these interventions is the time of its implementation. Seligman (2011) suggests that the experiences of fruitful and rewarding careers later in life can be traced back to the skills and abilities learned during late adolescences and early adulthood. Various researchers argued that interventions should be implemented at earlier stages in individuals' career development journeys in order to either (a) match the individual to a better fitting job (Dik and Duffy 2009; Lyubomirsky 2011) or (b) to provide individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, abilities and attitudes to flourish in their later positions (Seligman 2011; Van Zyl and Rothmann 2012). Therefore, it is important to implement these interventions, aimed at flourishing, at an early stage in the individuals' development (Seligman 2011).

In order to ensure happy and flourishing individuals at work, research suggest that interventions should be developed and implemented during individuals' tertiary education (Dik and Duffy 2009; Van Zyl and Rothmann 2012). These interventions have various short term (during the tertiary education) and long term (at work) benefits for the individual. Within the academic environment, recent research has alluded to the relationship between flourishing students and academic performance (Seligman 2011; Van Zyl and Rothmann 2012). Howell (2009) found that flourishing students

were less likely to procrastinate, had higher levels of self-control, adopted a mastery-approach towards their goals and reported higher levels of academic performance. Within the work-related setting, Seligman (2011) argued that a flourishing labour force is more inclined to manage work-related stressors effectively, show higher levels of commitment to the organisation, show higher levels of performance and be generally 'happier' in their careers.

Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to present the theoretical implications of flourishing as well as to provide a practical approach towards developing flourishing students.

Flourishing

Flourishing has become an integrative theory which combines various theorems and approaches into a single multidimensional approach towards understanding and developing top-end happiness (Dunn and Dougherty 2008; Fredrickson and Losada 2005). From the literature it is apparent that there are two main approaches towards the conceptualisation of flourishing: Keyes' (2002) *mental health continuum* and Seligman's (2011) *flourishing*. Although there are theoretical differences in their conceptualisation of flourishing, both approaches agree that flourishing can be defined as living in an optimal range of human functioning, a life that is filled with goodness, generativity, personal growth and resilience (Dunn and Dougherty 2008; Seligman 2011; Van Zyl and Rothmann 2012).

In his conceptualisation, Keyes (2005) argued that human flourishing can be seen as a syndrome relating to an individual's subjective well-being with elevated levels of psychological, emotional, and social well-being. Keyes (2005, p. 7) summarised flourishing as "a syndrome of subjective well-being which combines feeling good (emotional well-being) with positive functioning (psychological and social well-being)". Keyes (2005, 2006, 2007a) operationalized flourishing as a theory of happiness combining three approaches. Firstly, drawing from the work of Diener, Suh, Lucas, and Smith (1999), emotional well-being accentuates the presence of positive emotions and a feeling that one is satisfied with life. Building on the framework developed by Ryff and Keyes (1995), PWB further relates to a positive evaluation of the self that includes a sense of satisfaction with one's achievements, having a purpose in life and developing/growing as an individual. Finally, building on his own work, Keyes (2005) emphasised the importance of social well-being (Keyes 1998). This refers to the quality of the relationships one has with others, including positive appraisals of others and believing that one is making a constructive contribution to the larger system (Keyes 1998, 2005).

Various studies regarding Keyes' (2002) conceptualisation of flourishing have been conducted since its development (Howell 2009). Higher levels of flourishing have shown to have positive life and work outcomes, such as lower levels of absenteeism, higher levels of self-determination, internal motivation to perform (Keyes 2006), increased levels of academic performance, lower levels of procrastination (Howell 2009), increased energy, self-control and an increase in the experience of satisfying careers (Keyes and Westerhof 2011). Furthermore, patients with higher
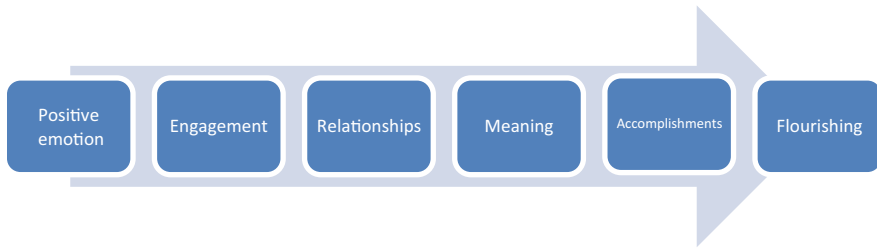
Fig. 14.1 The PERMA model for flourishing. (Seligman 2011)

levels of flourishing tend to recover faster from illness and are less likely to fall into a relapse (Keyes 2010). Although Keyes' (2002) model integrates various perspectives on optimal development, there is limited research regarding the physical application of this model in applied science (Van Zyl and Rothmann 2012). While Keyes' model on human flourishing is widely accepted as an acceptable model for predicting top-end happiness or human flourishing, little applied research exists regarding its utilisation in intervention studies (Boyes et al. 2011). Therefore, the effectiveness of the model as a practical approach towards developing positive emotions through interventions is questionable (Giannopoulos and Vella-Brodrick 2011a, b).

To address these concerns, Seligman (2011) developed a new model for human flourishing built upon his original conceptualisation of authentic happiness (see Seligman 2002). Seligman (2011) argued that individuals are at their happiest (i.e. Flourishing) when they have PERMA (see Fig. 14.1). PERMA is an acronym that stands for **P**ositive emotion, **E**ngagement, positive **R**elationships, **M**eaning and **A**ccomplishments (Seligman 2011).

Positive emotions refer to emotions relating to the enjoyment of the here and now (Seligman 2011). Seligman (2011) argued that the experience of positive emotion is vital to flourishing, as long as the other elements of PERMA are in place. Secondly, engagement entails being highly involved in the activities of one's life, which are coupled with a feeling that time stands still as one loses one's self in the current activity (Seligman 2011). Thirdly, positive relationships are the most influential component in human happiness and well-being (Foregeard et al. 2011). Fourthly, meaning is concerned with a feeling that one is connected to something larger than one's self, serving a cause bigger than one's self (Seligman 2011).

The final component is accomplishment/achievement (Seligman 2011). Accomplishments can be defined in terms of the achievement or mastery of a particular domain at the highest level possible (Seligman 2011). At an individual level, this can be defined in terms of achieving a desired state and realising pre-identified goals (Foregeard et al. 2011; Seligman 2011). Achievement has also been shown to correlate highly with aspects of perceived competence (Seligman 2011). Seligman (2011) argued that the development of human flourishing through interventions should be structured around the development of these five elements. Facilitating the development of these components through career development strategies are imperative for enhancing individual well-being and organisational performance (Van Zyl and Rothmann 2012). Therefore, interventions need to be structured around PERMA in order to facilitate optimal career and personal development.

Flourishing and Career Development Interventions: Practical Implications

The concept, implication and perceptions of a *career* has changed dramatically over the past five decades (Amundson et al. 2005; Cleary et al. 2013). Cleary et al. (2013) argued that careers in the modern era have become a 'life style concept'. From this perspective the career is defined as a course of events which builds up an individual's life or the total constellation of roles individuals play over the course of their life time. Post-modernists argue that a career is central to the identity of the individual, where work becomes central to one's perception of self (Alberts et al. 2003; Amundson et al. 2005; Barnett and Napoli 2008). This strong link between one's perception of identity and one's career indicates that the concept and implication of 'work' is central to one's perception of personal well-being (Alberts et al. 2003; Barnett and Napoli 2008). Research argues that higher levels of career uncertainty, job/occupational dissatisfaction and lack of meaning in work are strongly correlated with heightened levels of psychological and physical distress (Barnett and Napoli 2008; Constantine and Flores 2006; Seligman 2011). This implies that career development interventions could not only have an impact on individuals' work-related well-being but also on their general physiological and psychological health (Seligman 2011).

Therefore, it is imperative that career development interventions, aimed at flourishing, be implemented during late adolescence to early adulthood in order to ensure that individuals have the necessary skills and abilities to cope with work-related demands (which impacts on career satisfaction) from an early age. Career development interventions should therefore be aimed at developing PERMA in students in order to ensure future success, well-being and performance (Seligman 2011). Flourishing interventions should be aimed at developing the necessary skills and techniques required to develop a high level of self-awareness in order to translate experiences into optimal career related choices (Foregeard et al. 2011; Seligman 2011). These interventions can be aimed at facilitating the individual to clarify his/her life-role salience, interests and values through PERMA in order to ensure optimal career related decision making and career satisfaction (Peterson 2006; Seligman 2006).

Enhancing Positive Emotions

Although the affective responses associated with flourishing cannot be sustained indefinitely within any career, one must ensure that positive emotions (such as zest, pleasure, contentment and the like) are experienced often (Fredrickson and Losada 2005; Seligman 2011). Research suggests that a flourishing career is comprised of a ratio of 2.9 (or rounded off to 3) positive emotions to 1 negative emotion per day (Fredrickson and Losada 2005). This positivity ratio provides a guideline for individuals to understand what is meant by a "healthy balance" with regards to affect (Fredrickson 2009; Seligman 2011). Increasingly, students enter into the job market

Table 14.1 Techniques for enhancing positive affect

Technique
Express gratitude
Learn to forgive
Avoid overthinking and social comparison
Be mindful and savour life's joys
Cultivate optimism
Build relationships to create feedback
Learn from successes and mishaps
Expressing the positives in written form

with the unrealistic expectation that the given career should *ad infinitum* provide fun and pleasurable experiences (Fredrickson 2009). However, one needs to facilitate the understanding that negative emotions are required in order to be contrasted with the positive. This is done to enhance the promotion of positive effect, and diminish the experience of negative affect within the career (Fredrickson 2009).

Table 14.1 summarises practical techniques which can be used to enhance the experience of positive affect within a given career. These are general techniques which can be applied to an individual's life or be adapted for the work context. If these techniques are applied or developed in one domain of the individual's life, the effects is likely to spill over into the other domains (Van Zyl and Stander 2013).

Developing Engagement

From the flourishing perspective, engagement refers to a state in which an individual is actively involved in an activity or career, categorised by a feeling that nothing else matters (Seligman 2011). Achieving engagement is a natural process especially when individuals engage in careers which they enjoy or find meaningful (Seligman 2006). In order to develop engagement, study or work activities need to be brought in line with an individual's signature strengths (Peterson and Seligman 2004; Seligman 2011). Seligman (2011) defines a strength as a pre-existing capacity which affects the way an individual thinks, feels and behaves which is authentic, energising and enables optimal functioning, development and performance. These strengths are unique to the individual and upon activation, energizes the individual and results in a feeling that 'time stands still' (Peterson and Seligman 2004). The closer the distance between an individual's strengths and the given task, the higher the chance of experiencing engagement (Seligman 2006). There are various tools available which can assist the individual in identifying his strengths, such as the VIA Signature Strengths Inventory (Peterson and Seligman 2004; can be accessed at authentichappiness.org), or the Strengths Finder 2.0 (Rath 2007).

One main deterring factor that influences the experience of engagement is 'distraction' (Foregeard et al. 2011). Distraction is a common problem for any student and employee, where phones, computers, distress and social pressures may influence the onset of engagement in a particular task (Seligman 2011). It is therefore

Table 14.2 Techniques for enhancing engagement

Technique
Goal setting and goal commitment
Dealing with distress and developing coping strategies
Nurture social relationships
Identify and act in accordance with one's strengths
Seek out projects, jobs, careers and/or tasks which are in line with one's signature strengths
Seek out mentorship and talk regularly about one's own development
Develop strategies to minimize distractions and improve concentration
Compile personal development plan
Draw from personal insight as well as career and job knowledge to recraft work
Seek out projects, jobs, careers and/or tasks which are in line with one's work preferences and career anchors

imperative that individuals be provided with the necessary skills to cope with the demands of life/work and how to channel their energies in such a manner that they can achieve this flow like state within a given career. Table 14.2 provides an overview of some techniques which can be used to enhance or establish engagement.

Cultivating Positive Relationships

Establishing and maintaining positive relationships is crucial to the experience of flourishing in a career (Keyes 2002, 2007b, 2010; Seligman 2011). Individuals spend more than a third of their lives at work, therefore it is imperative to build meaningful and positive relationships in this domain (Seligman 2006, 2011). Seligman (2011) and Warr (2007) argued that individuals with a 'best friend' at work is seven times more likely to be engaged in their jobs, is 11 times more likely to outperform others and eight times more likely to experience heightened levels of satisfaction with their careers. Furthermore, Seligman (2011) suggests that individuals who have good relationships at work are more likely to be satisfied with other domains of their lives. Good working relationships have several other benefits: it makes work more enjoyable, less resistant to change, it provides opportunities for more creativity and innovation (Lyubomirsky 2011). It is therefore imperative to cultivate positive relationships in life and at work.

In order to build and maintain positive relationships, one can utilise the techniques mentioned in Table 14.3.

Crafting Meaning

Many researchers argue that the concept of meaning is integral to the experience of flourishing in life, at work and in careers (Keyes 2010; Seligman 2011; Van Zyl 2012). Meaning refers to the extent towards which one feels connected to the larger

Table 14.3 Techniques for cultivating positive relationships

Technique
Have meaningful and mindful conversations
Use active listening during conversations
Practice kindness and generosity
Utilise active constructive responding
Show gratitude
Be authentic
Be friendly and supporting to others
Share and celebrate others victories
Build a network of expertise and personal development
Identify and contract a mentor

Table 14.4 Techniques for crafting meaning

Technique
Exercise the freedom to choose
View work as something bigger than you are
Detect the meaning of life's moments
Practice religion or spirituality
Engage in career related activities which are in line with your strengths and preferences
Make a list of all the ways you positively impact people (in life and at work)
Act as a mentor for someone and facilitate their development
Deepen social relationships in life and at work
Be curious and seek novelty in tasks or jobs

socially constructed reality (Van Zyl 2012) and that one receives a return on investment in the energy exerted in activities (Seligman 2011). The physical manifestation of meaning is different for each individual, and therefore the approach towards development which will differ from person-to-person. Warr (2007) argued that finding and experiencing meaning is an imperative life condition which affects one's overall sense of well-being. Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, and Schwartz (1997) argued that meaning can be found in life and/or in a career. Meaning associated with a career tends to spill over into other domains, however meaning in other domains do not spill back into work (Steger et al. in press-a; Wrzesniewski et al. 1997).

Unlike any of the other components of PERMA, meaning is the most difficult to develop (Seligman 2011; Steger et al. (in press-b); Wrzesniewski et al. 1997). Steger et al. (in press-a, in press-b) argued that meaning is created by:

(a) understanding what to do and how to do it (competence)
(b) understand how work/career fits into the proverbial 'bigger picture'
(c) evaluate how these activities contribute to the life of someone else.

Despite the difficulty in developing or crafting meaning, there are some general guidelines for crafting or re-crafting meaning in life, work or careers. These guidelines is summarised in Table 14.4.

Table 14.5 Techniques for attaining accomplishments

Technique
Set specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound goals
Visualise goal achievement
Make your goals known to others
Intermittently check the progress of the goal
Implement reward structures for attaining goals
Give and ask continuous feedback

Attaining Accomplishments

Seligman (2011) argued that achieving accomplishments are an objective, external, fuel source for flourishing. There needs to be a balance between your current skill set and the goals and objectives one sets out for oneself (Peterson and Seligman 2004). The goal or objective needs to be slightly more challenging than the individual's current level of competence. This discrepancy between the difficulty of the task and the level of competence needs to be large enough to be a "challenge" to the individual, yet not too large as to result in failure (Foregeard et al. 2011). This fine line needs to be balanced and the outcomes of accomplishments managed (Seligman 2011) since accomplishments can be pursued for its own sake. If an individual is too achievement focused, the emphasis of the component (as part of flourishing) is lost in translation. Table 14.5 provides an overview of techniques which can be used to pursue accomplishments.

Practical Implications for Educational Career Development and Counseling

In order to ensure productive and flourishing individuals at work, tertiary institutions should consider having a compulsory module "managing my career" for all final year students. This interventions can lead to academic performance, better relationships, less procrastination, higher levels of self-control, mastering goals (short term), and managing personal energy, experiencing a better "job-person fit", feeling empowered, showing higher levels of work engagement, performance and be more satisfied with life in general (long term).

The content of such a program can consist of:

- Enhancing **P**ositive emotions
- Developing **E**ngagement
- Cultivating positive **R**elationships
- Crafting **M**eaning
- Attaining **A**ccomplishments

Topics in Tables 1–5 could be used as detailed content.

Companies could consider integrating the above topics into their "on boarding" priograms for newly joined employees.

Conclusion

Developing individuals is core to the role of managers today. Employees experience managers as genuine when they show interest in their development (Goleman et al. 2002; Knobel 2006) and enable them to reach their full potential. The importance of the manager as coach are emphasised by Ladyshewsky (2010) who identified it as an important skill of managers. Therefore, equipping people developers (such as managers, lecturers, coaches etc) with scientifically proven 'tools' to develop flourishing individuals, will have a profound effect on any organisation, team or group's bottom line (Seligman 2011).

As in the workplace, development processes, for example coaching, mentoring and self-development can play a major role in the development of students. According to Biswas-Diener and Dean (2007) coaching can be instrumental in optimising people's potential, leading to flourishing.

Chapter Summary

This chapter attempted to provide developers of students (lecturers, guidance councillors and trainers) with a sound theoretical base as well as some practical techniques to create higher levels of flourishing. The theory is rooted in the positive psychology based on the work on flourishing by Keyes and Seligman. The practical techniques are anchored on a strengths-based approach and practical experience. A positive or strengths based development where the student take accountability for his or her development is prosed.

When developers of people succeed in creating flourishing students one can expect that it will contribute to organisational (performance, retention, engagement) as well as personal outcomes (satisfaction with life, performance, career satisfaction).

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Chapter 15
Anticipatory Psychological Contracts of Undergraduates Management Students: Implications for Early Career Entitlement Expectations

Bennie Linde and Werner Gresse

Abstract Interest in the concept of the psychological contract has vastly grown since the 1990s, even though it was first introduced by Argyris in 1960. Levinson et al. (Men, Management and Mental Health, 1962) then elaborated on the psychological contract by explaining it as an exchange relationship between employer and employee, in which each party has expectations about mutual obligations (Freese and Schalk, South African J Psychology 38(2):269–286, 2008). With this chapter an overview is given of the psychological contract, as well as pre-entry expectations and entitlements of scholars and students that can influence this contract. Furthermore, the perceived future employment expectations and obligations of undergraduate management students were investigated, based on entitlement and anticipatory psychological contract themes identified through a qualitative study on a similar study population (Gresse and Linde, Management Revue, in press). The influence of psychological entitlement on this anticipatory psychological contract was determined, after which the results of the empirical study were discussed. This chapter ends with implications for career counseling and guidance in the contemporary workplace.

Defining the Psychological Contract

Rousseau (1989) defined the psychological contract as an individual's belief regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between that central person and another party. As such, the psychological contract can be seen as a set of

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Fig. 15.1 Contracts
influencing the psychological
contract. (Adapted from
Rousseau 1995, p. 9)

		Collective	**Individual**
Formal		**Social Contract** • ILO conventions • Societal norms • Constitution • Labor Legislation • Collective agreement	**Legal Contract** • Written/Verbal employment contract • Idiosyncratic deals
Informal		**Normative Contract** • Professional Status • Generally accepted job behavior • Designated groups • Group norms • Subculture norms	**Implicit Contract** • Personality type behavior • Cultural background • Physical characteristics • Literacy levels

beliefs about what the employee and employer expect to receive and are compelled
to award in exchange for the other party's contribution (Bal and Vink 2011). In other
words, from an employee's viewpoint a psychological contract indicates what is
assumed of what the organization has promised or offered in exchange for the em-
ployee's commitment and contributions to the organization (Freese and Schalk 2011).

Rousseau (2001) also claims that the factors that form the expectations and obli-
gations of the psychological contract are formed before employment and can include
the recruiting process, as well as socialization with the other employees when first
starting in the job. The employee has certain ideas about the organization, even before
he actually starts working there (Linde and Schalk 2006). As indicated in Fig. 15.1,
Rousseau (1995) states that the individual psychological contract consists of four
influences of other contracts, namely the social contract (including labor legislation
and other societal norms), the legal contract (such as the employment contract), the
normative contract (this usually is the norms of the groups the individual associate
with), and the implicit contract (including the background as well as personal char-
acteristics of the individual). Thus, a psychological contract can be influenced by
pre-entry expectations, even if a clear actual employment contract exists.

Each individual has an unique psychological contract, based on his own un-
derstanding of obligations towards the organization (Clinton and Guest 2013).
Employees with balanced psychological contracts are less likely to want to leave a
relationship, such as an employment relationship (Scott et al. 2001), while employees
with unreasonable expectations and unbalanced psychological contracts may easier
exit employment relations, or become frustrated employees (Katou 2013).

Psychological contract breach occurs when an employee experiences that the or-
ganization did not live up to its obligations (Restubog et al. 2006; Turnley et al.
2003). According to Paul et al. (2000) and Morrison and Robinson (1997), a failure
to meet the employee's expectations may result in a breach of the psychological con-
tract between the employee and employer. If this breach is significant, it constitutes
an experience of violation. Linde (2007) defined contract breach as the cognitive per-
ception an employee experiences when the employee perceives that the organization
has failed to uphold one or more aspects of the psychological contract. On the other
hand, a violation of the psychological contract refers to the emotional and affective
reactions, such as those that can arise when an employee feels that the organization

failed to properly maintain its end of the psychological contract (Hellgren 2003; Linde 2007; Morrison and Robinson 1997).

The Difference Between Expectations and Entitlements in the Psychological Contract

Since 1960, when research began on the psychological contract, expectations were considered interrelated to the psychological contract (Freese and Schalk 2008; Van den Heuvel and Schalk 2009; Paul et al. 2000). According to the Oxford Dictionary (2010), an expectation is a strong belief about the way something should happen or how somebody should behave. When entering an employment relationship, people tend to develop certain expectations about that relationship. Employees learn what the other party (employer) expects them to contribute and, in return, these employees develop ideas about what they should receive for services rendered to the employer (De Jong et al. 2012). Sutton and Griffin (2004) used the term 'pre-entry expectations' to refer to newcomer expectations that were formed prior to actual employment. These implicit or explicit expectations constitute the perceived contract—the psychological contract—in a relationship.

However, according to VandenBos (2006), the word entitlement refers to the right or benefits legally bestowed on a person or group, for instance through legislation or a contract, or unreasonable claims to special consideration (the latter referring to psychological entitlement). Snyders (2002, p. 21) describes entitlement as "a sense of deservingness". It may become a sort of identity which presupposes the individual's own rights and needs, such as the rights to status and power, others' mind and bodies, space and place, not to pay attention to other peoples' reactions, not to be empathic, view of life as a constant battle, winning and losing, with losing resulting in shame and humiliation for the individual, blame outwards and blame others without considering one's own role in problems and processes, and viewing oneself as superior.

Snyders (2002) also described the entitlement as an attitude, or a way of viewing life. Harvey and Harris (2010) mention that a person or group may also feel a sense of entitlement due to factors within that person or group. They (Harvey and Harris 2010) refer to this perception of entitlement as psychological entitlement. Psychological entitlement can be perceived as a fairly stable and universal characteristic that occurs when an individual expect a high level of reward or preferential treatment regardless of his ability and performance level (Campbell et al. 2004; Harvey and Harris 2010). According to Snyders (2002), persons with this approach of entitlement believe that they are owed many things in life where they do not have to earn what they get, but they are just entitled to it, because of who they are.

When considering the model, adapted from Rousseau (1995), in Fig. 15.1, there is a collective and individual component to the psychological contract theory. Psychological entitlement is a perception of an individual and—although it can be generalized to the group the individual is associated with—it doesn't form part of the group's entitlement beliefs as such. When a sense of deservingness arises as part of a

normative contract, the reference to the term "normative entitlement" can be further explored. A normative entitlement can develop where a specific group believes that being part of that group promises special treatment. An example of such a normative entitlement can be in South Africa, where affirmative action is protected by law to balance out past racial discrimination in the workplace. Therefore certain groups receive preference in employment and remuneration, which can enhance entitlements.

From the above paragraphs the main difference between expectation and entitlement can be seen as the "sense of deservingness", where an expectation is the individual's *anticipation* to receive something and entitlement is the individual's perceived *right* to receive something, even without a formal contract confirming this right. Considering this, there tend to be a fundamental difference between expectations and entitlements. In this chapter we attempt to identify the anticipatory psychological contract of undergraduate management students and explore the influence of entitlements on it.

Unrealistic Entitlements and Career Development

Unrealistic entitlement perceptions can cause problems for both employees and employers. Snyders (2002) confirms that there should be a warning to individuals who are in the process of attaining something that they perceive as significant—like a degree or diploma—and then fall subject to the danger of this psychological entitlement. Such a qualification level may also influence the entitlement belief of the candidates, since such a higher qualification can lead to higher expectations and entitlements. Ochse (2005) reports on a study that was conducted by the University of South Africa—determining the academic expectation and perceptions of university students—and found that all groups within South Africa have fairly unrealistic expectations for future conditions of employment and success, and that these students believed that they were intellectually above average. Furthermore, Ochse (2005) found that students from all racial and gender groups overestimated their future success, where they had lower actual achievement. In truth, the achievement of a degree does not entitle any person to anything but merely marks the beginning of a process of earning respect, success, status and capital (Snyders 2002).

Such entitlements can develop into a menacing perception, which has the potential to lead to heavy complacency, low self-esteem and low productivity. In other words, the person becomes lazy, self-satisfied and comfortable. A job seeker with a high level of psychological entitlement can also miss good career opportunities by not being interested in work, perceived as beneath him.

High levels of entitlement can also influence employee conduct. Research that focused on psychological entitlement in the work context found that psychologically entitled employees displayed a tendency toward unethical behavior and conflict with their supervisors, high pay expectations, low levels of job satisfaction, and high levels of turnover intention (Harvey and Harris 2010; Harvey and Martinko 2009; Kets de Vries 2006; Levine 2005).

Measuring the Anticipatory Psychological Contract of Undergraduate Management Students

We used a quantitative approach to data gathering to determine the expectation and entitlement levels of undergraduate management students in South Africa. Since this study focus on entitlement experiences, we incorporated

We also differentiated between participants who benefit from the affirmative policies of South Africa—the designated groups—and those who do not—the non-designated group. The motivation for this differentiation is based on the entitlements that were identified through interviews in a South African context, where affirmative action initiatives were associated with the perceived entitlement that preference should be given to previously disadvantaged employees (Gresse and Linde, in press). Entitlement beliefs, based on employment equity regulations, are also relevant to samples outside of South Africa, since it is associated with legitimate expectations, protected by legal regulations.

Convenience sampling was used to select a sample from the study population composed of final year university students. Structured questionnaires were administered to students during a third year class at a tertiary academic institution. The questionnaire was completely anonymous and none of the information obtained made the respondents by any means identifiable. This was an attempt by the researchers to enhance the overall honesty of the respondents and to limit researcher bias.

Research Participants

The sample consisted of 179 ($n = 179$) third year economic and management sciences students. The majority of the participants were female (63.1 %) and 36.3 % male. The majority (91.1 %) of the respondents was between the ages of 20 and 22. 74.2 % of the respondents were from the designated group as defined in the Employment Equity Act (EEA; no 55 of 1998): Females, Africans, Indians, Coloreds and people with disabilities. 25.8 % of respondents were from the non-designated group (white males). The main qualifications that the respondents were studying for were in labor relations, human resource management, industrial psychology, business management and tourism.

Measuring Instrument

The questionnaire used was developed to measure the entitlement beliefs and anticipatory psychological contract. It consisted of three sections, where the first section gathered the biographical information of the respondents. This included their gender, employment equity group association, age and qualification. This information had to be filled out by the respondent. The second section consisted of items that determined the entitlement perception of respondents. There were a total of eight items in the

second section of the questionnaire. A combination of a one to seven Likert scale and a dichotomous response scale were used for each item to determine the entitlement perception of that specific item. According to Trochim and Donnelly (2008), Likert scaling can be defined as "the process of developing a scale in which the rating of the items is summed to get the final scale score; rating is usually done using a one-to-five disagree-to-agree response format" (p. 136). A dichotomous response scale is defined as a question that has only two possible responses (Trochim and Donnelly 2008); in this case the option for response was either positive or negative.

The final section of the questionnaire determined the various expectations levels of the participants. This section consisted of two parts. Firstly, the respondent had to provide his/her salary expectation (ZAR per month). Secondly, a one to seven Likert scale was used on a total of 15 items to determine the expectations level of the respondent.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis was carried out with the IBM SPSS program (IBM 2011). Firstly, cross-tabulation was used to display the positive/negative frequency of entitlement beliefs. Factor analysis was used to determine the validity of the items in the questionnaire by analyzing the internal consistency between the items of entitlement factors and expectations. This was achieved through a data reduction process. Descriptive statistics will display the entitlement factors and expectations of the respondents. The descriptive statistics provided the mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of each factor. According to Trochim and Donnelly (2008), the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) determined the reliability of the questionnaire. According to Trochim and Donnelly (2008), a questionnaire is considered reliable when the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is higher than 0.7 ($\alpha > 0.7$). The correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between the factors that influence entitlement beliefs and the expectation of the respondents. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) has been used to determine the differences between designated and non-designated groups' salary expectations and a *t*-test was administered to determine the difference between the male and female salary expectations. Pearson's product moment correlation coefficients were used to determine the strength of the relationship between various expectation and entitlement variables.

Results

The frequency of positive/negative entitlement beliefs are displayed in Table 15.1. This frequency table displays the respondents' belief regarding the effect of the identified
entitlement factors on their employment expectations (qualifications, personality, professionalism, self-efficacy, affirmative action, labor market tendencies, and previous experience), as well as the difference between the EEA groups. Designated

Table 15.1 Frequencies of positive/negative entitlement beliefs

Item	EEA group	Positive		Negative		Total responses	Percentage
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage		
Qualification	African[a]	24	100	0	0	24	100
	Indian[a]	8	88.8	1	11.2	9	100
	Colored[a]	24	96	1	4	25	100
	White female[a]	70	94.6	4	5.4	74	100
	White male[b]	46	100	0	0	46	100
	Total	172	96.6	6	3.3	178	100
Personality	African[a]	22	91.6	2	8.4	24	100
	Indian[a]	9	100	0	0	9	100
	Colored[a]	26	100	0	0	26	100
	White female[a]	71	97.3	2	2.7	73	100
	White male[b]	46	100	0	0	46	100
	Total	174	97.8	4	2.2	178	100
Professionalism	African[a]	20	83.3	4	16.7	24	100
	Indian[a]	9	100	0	0	9	100
	Colored[a]	26	100	0	0	26	100
	White female[a]	72	97.3	2	2.7	74	100
	White male[b]	43	95.6	2	4.4	45	
	Total	170	95.5	8	4.5	178	100
Self-efficacy	African[a]	23	95.8	1	4.2	24	100
	Indian[a]	9	100	0	0	9	100
	Colored[a]	26	100	0	0	26	100
	White female[a]	73	98.6	1	1.4	74	100
	White male[b]	46	100	0	0	46	100
	Total	177	98.9	2	1.1	179	100

Table 15.1 (continued)

Item	EEA group	Positive		Negative		Total responses	Percentage
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage		
Affirmative action	African[a]	19	79.2	5	20.8	24	100
	Indian[a]	6	66.7	3	33.3	9	100
	Colored[a]	20	76.9	6	23.1	26	100
	White female[a]	44	59.5	30	40.5	74	100
	White male[b]	13	28.3	33	71.7	46	100
	Total	102	57	77	43	179	100
Labour market tendencies	African[a]	13	54.2	11	45.8	24	100
	Indian[a]	6	66.7	3	33.3	9	100
	Colored[a]	15	57.7	11	42.3	26	100
	White female[a]	28	37.8	46	62.2	74	100
	White male[b]	23	50	23	50	46	100
	Total	85	47.5	94	52.5	179	100
Previous job experience	African[a]	13	54.2	11	45.8	24	100
	Indian[a]	6	66.7	3	33.3	9	100
	Colored[a]	23	88.5	3	11.5	26	100
	White female[a]	60	81.1	14	18.9	74	100
	White male[b]	36	78.3	10	21.7	46	100
	Total	138	77.1	41	22.9	179	100

[a] Designated group
[b] Non-designated group

Table 15.2 Expectation extraction method

Variable	Component			Communalities
	F1	F2	F3	
Car	0.096	0.157	0.640	0.444
Medical	0.472	0.359	0.264	0.421
Pension	0.589	0.279	0.240	0.482
Relaxation	− 0.101	0.248	0.737	0.615
Cell phone	0.076	0.109	0.746	0.575
Insurance	0.383	0.250	0.648	0.629
Employee assistance programs	0.597	0.340	0.153	0.496
Flexible hours	0.400	0.460	0.370	0.508
Additional annual leave	0.153	0.809	0.216	0.725
Additional sick leave	0.075	0.824	0.300	0.775
Additional overtime pay	0.135	0.848	0.119	0.752
Skills development	0.819	0.103	− 0.119	0.695
Career development	0.739	0.240	0.189	0.640
High work status	0.646	− 0.044	0.114	0.432
Respect in the workplace	0.722	− 0.040	0.242	0.582
Squared multiple correlation	3.460	2.819	2.490	
Percentage of variance	23.07	18.79	16.6	
Cumulative percentage of variance	23.07	41.86	58.46	

F1 employee wellness, *F2* conditions of employment, *F3* benefits, *F4* career aspiration

groups refer to the applicants to new jobs that receive preference, under the employment equity regulations of South Africa. Gresse and Linde (in press) indicated this preference as an entitlement of South African job seekers.

As indicated in Table 15.1, the majority of the respondents regarded their qualification, personality, professionalism, self-efficacy level, affirmative action and previous job experience as having a positive influence on their future employment, whereas the majority of respondents (52.5 %) considered the current labor market tendency as having a negative influence on their future employment.

The part of the questionnaire that measured the anticipatory expectations of the participants had a total of 15 items. An extraction method was used to reduce these 15 items into four encompassing components. The results of the extraction method for expectations are displayed in Table 15.2.

The items for expectations could be grouped into three components, but considering the items in "employee wellness", it was evident that these items' characteristics did not correlate logically with each other, which led to the creation of an additional factor: "career aspiration". Therefore the items medical, pension and employee assistance program formed part of the component "employee wellness" and skills development; career development, high work status, and respect in the workplace formed the additional component "career aspirations".

The same process of extraction method was also used to reduce the amount of entitlement factor items. By conducting a principal component analysis some entitlement belief items could be grouped together to form a singular component

Table 15.3 Entitlement beliefs extraction method

Variable	Component	Communalities
	F1	
Qualification	**0.696**	0.484
Personality	**0.536**	0.287
Professionalism	**0.739**	0.546
Self-efficacy	**0.729**	0.531
Affirmative action	**0.441**	0.195
Labour market	**0.697**	0.486
Job experience	**0.587**	0.344
Workplace location	**0.464**	0.215
Squared multiple correlation	*2.615*	
Percentage of variance	*52.3*	
Cumulative percentage of variance	*52.3*	

F1 entitlement factors

(entitlement factors). The items that formed part of the entitlement factor component were qualification, personality, professionalism, self-efficacy, labor market tendency and previous job experience.

From the above extraction method the results of the respondents' expectations will be provided in terms of expectations regarding employee wellness, conditions of employment, job benefits and occupation aspiration. The results of the entitlement beliefs of respondents will be provided in terms of entitlement factors, personality, affirmative action and workplace location. The results of the extraction method for expectations are displayed in Table 15.3.

The descriptive statistics and Cronbach's alpha of the measurement components, expectations and entitlement factors, are reported in Table 15.4.

As indicated in Table 15.4, all the measurements of the questionnaire had a relative normal distribution. Considering the mean of the expectations components, the respondents' expectations regarding employee wellness, occupation aspirations, conditions of employment and benefits were all relatively high considering that the average mean would be 3.50 ($M = 3.50$). The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficients are acceptable when following the ≥ 0.07 guideline (Pallant 2007).

Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were used to determine the strength of the relationship between expectation and entitlement variables. The correlation coefficients can be seen in Table 15.5.

The most significant findings are the correlation between the following factors: entitlement factors and occupation aspiration, which has statistical and medium practical significance; entitlement factors and benefits, which is practically significant with a large effect; personality and employee wellness, which has statistical and practical significance (medium effect); personality and occupational aspirations, which has statistical and medium practical significance; affirmative action and employee wellness, which is statistically and practical significant (medium effect); affirmative action and occupational aspirations, which has statistical and medium practical

Table 15.4 Descriptive statistics and Cronbach's alpha

Components	Min	Max	*M*	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	α
Employee wellness	2.64	7.00	6.02	0.95	− 1.151	0.978	0.77
Occupation aspirations	4.00	7.00	6.32	0.69	− 1.058	0.595	0.84
Conditions of employment	1.25	7.00	5.48	1.15	− 0.575	− 0.003	0.74
Benefits	1.00	7.00	4.56	1.25	− 0.421	− 0.333	0.71
Entitlement factors	3.00	7.00	5.73	0.87	− 0.595	0.033	–
Personality	2.00	7.00	5.89	0.93	− 0.835	0.902	–
Affirmative action	1.00	7.00	4.99	1.46	− 0.382	− 0.261	–
Workplace location	1.00	7.00	5.37	1.35	− 0.879	1.014	–
Salary	2,000	35,000	13,838	5,835.67	0.987	1.544	0.74

significance; and workplace location and employee wellness, which is statistically significant. Salary had no practical or statistical significance with any factors that influence an employee's entitlement perception.

Comparative means were used to determine the difference between salary expectations of different EEA groups. The average salary expectations, according to EEA groups, were: Africans with a mean of R 15,695.65 pm, Indians with a mean of R 10,222.22 pm, Colored with a mean of R 13,846.15 pm and Whites with a mean of R 13,838.07 pm.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) with EEA group as independent variable and salary as depended variable was used to determine if there was a significant difference between salary expectations of EEA groups. The results displayed that the significance level is 0.120, which indicate that there is no significant difference between salary expectations of these groups.

An independent-sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the salary expectations scores for males and females. There was a significant difference in scores for males ($M =$ R 15,301.59 pm, $SD =$ R 6,215.58) and females ($M =$ R 13,004. 46, $SD =$ R 5,493.85) with $sig.(2\text{-}tailed) = 0.012$.

Conclusion

According to the results all the respondents, irrespective of EEA group association, had relative high normative entitlement perceptions and organizational expectations. This correlates with the findings of Ocshe (2005), who reports that all the groups in South Africa have fairly high expectations for future organizational success. The only difference between designated and non-designated groups is in terms of their perception of how certain factors will influence their future organizational expectations. The only factor that showed a difference between designated and non-designated group expectations was in terms of the potential affirmative action policy of their future employer, where the majority of the non-designated group regarded affirmative action as having a negative effect on future employment expectations. It should,

Table 15.5 Correlations between entitlement factors and expectations

Components	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Employee wellness	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2. Occupation aspirations	0.536***[a]	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
3. Conditions of employment	0.516***[a]	0.323***[b]	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
4. Benefits	0.413***[b]	0.186*	0.520***[a]	1	–	–	–	–	–
5. Entitlement factors	0.267*	0.434***[b]	0.057	0.562[a]	1	–	–	–	–
6. Personality	0.368***[b]	0.302***[b]	0.164*	0.010	0.394***[b]	1	–	–	–
7. Affirmative action	0.295***[b]	0.380***[b]	0.107	−0.140	0.291**	0.185*	1	–	–
8. Workplace location	0.264***	0.193*	0.129	0.156*	0.293**	0.256*	0.142	1	–
9. Salary	0.101	0.067	0.154*	0.240**	−0.069	−0.022	−0.034	−0.054	1

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

[a]Practical significant large effect

[b]Practical significant medium effect

however, still be noted that these individuals still had relative high expectations regarding their total expectations irrespective of affirmative action playing a major role in South Africa. According to Naumann et al. (2002), total perceptions of entitlement in the social sciences are assumed to vary along a continuum, which has the effect that more than one factor may lead to the total entitlement perception of an individual and that some factors may have a greater impact on the total entitlement belief of prospective employees, for instance the respondents' result for qualification where more than 95 % of the respondents regarded their qualification level as having a positive effect on future employment expectations. This may explain the reason why the respondents displayed high normative entitlement levels, also accompanied with high expectations levels.

An interesting finding from the results is that approximately 20 % of the designated group respondents regarded affirmative action as having a negative influence on their future expectations, although theoretically affirmative action enhances their future employment possibilities and career mobility. This notion is reinforced from the findings which displayed a practical and statistical significant link between the respondents' believe regarding the influence of affirmative action and their occupational aspiration expectation. This response, where some designated group respondents view affirmative action as a negative influence on their employment expectations, may be as a result of the negative stigma associated with affirmative action appointees, where unqualified or incompetent employees are appointed on the basis of affirmative action (Sebola 2009).

When considering the link between entitlement factors and expectations there was no statistical link between entitlement factors and salary expectations. In other words, salary expectations are influenced by other aspects than what is identified in this paper. A survey conducted by the South African Graduate Recruiter Association (SAGRA 2011) regarding the starting salaries of graduates in South Africa, found that the median graduate starting salary for 2011 was about R 130,000 per annum, which was approximately R 10,000 pm (SAGRA 2011). The highest starting salaries for 2011 were for positions at investment banks or fund managers, consulting firms, law firms and engineering or industrial companies, which each have a median starting salary in excess of R 230,000, which is approximately R 19,000 pm (SAGRA 2011). When considering the normative expectations of the respondents, all the designated and non-designated groups had higher salary expectations than what is regarded as average, with no significant difference between groups. There was a significant difference between male and female salary expectations, where females had a lower salary expectation than males. This may be due to the traditional perspective that women are stereotyped as a homemaker (Penchiliah 2005) and men as the primary breadwinner.

Practical Implications for Career Counseling and Guidance

The main entitlement factors that influenced the normative entitlement perception of designated and non-designated groups were characterized in terms of entitlement factors, personality, affirmative action policies and workplace location. The main

expectations that employees had were characterized in terms of expectations regarding employee wellness, conditions of employment, benefits and career aspirations. From the results it was evident that the normative entitlement of both designated and non-designated groups was high, and this high entitlement belief level was also associated with high expectation levels.

From the findings there was a correlation between entitlement factors and expectation levels of prospective employees. At least one of each factor that influences the entitlement perception of prospective employees had a statistically and/or practically significant correlation with the future expectations of those individuals. This concludes that entitlement perceptions of prospective employees can be seen as an antecedent of expectations. Hurst and Good (2009) stated that the "pre-entry expectations are based on prior experiences. Therefore, college graduates take preconceived expectations to their first post-graduation job. And, because these pre-entry expectations contribute to their entitlement perceptions, we conceptualize pre-entry expectations to be an antecedent of entitlement perceptions" (p. 576). Although this is in contradiction with the abovementioned conclusion, it is important to note that Hurst and Good (2009) researched college graduates that already had experience, although not necessarily formal work experience, in the retail industry; thus it makes sense that these individuals alter their entitlement perception according to past experiences.

The career practitioner should be aware of the influence of entitlement perceptions on expectations, they may be able to better understand and shape graduate entitlement beliefs to prepare them for more realistic organizational expectations. It is possible to minimize breach or violation of the psychological contract between these prospective employees and their potential employers, by managing the normative entitlements and expectations of scholars and graduates. The career practitioner should prepare scholars and students (graduates) that unrealistic expectations can lead to the experience of contract breach, as well as violation. This can still materialize, even with a clear employment contract that the employee agrees with. Furthermore, a job seeker with high psychological entitlement levels will enhance an unrealistic psychological contract and can further amplify the violation experience.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the psychological contract, as well as pre-entry expectations and entitlements of scholars and students that can influence this contract. The perceived future employment expectations and obligations of undergraduate management students were investigated, based on entitlement and anticipatory psychological contract themes identified through a qualitative study on a similar study population. The influence of psychological entitlement on this anticipatory psychological contract was determined, after which the results of the empirical study were discussed. Finally, implications for career counseling and guidance in the contemporary workplace were explored.

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Chapter 16
Entrepreneurship as 21st Century Skill: Taking a Developmental Perspective

Martin Obschonka

And I'm calling on our nation's governors and state education chiefs to develop standards and assessments that don't simply measure whether students can fill in a bubble on a test, but whether they possess 21st century skills like problem-solving and critical thinking and entrepreneurship and creativity.

Barack H. Obama 2009

Abstract This chapter discusses recent research on entrepreneurial development (those successive and systematic changes, occurring across a person's life course, that make an [successful] entrepreneurial career more likely, Obschonka and Silbereisen, Int J Dev Sci, 6(3–4): 107–115, 2012). The chapter is based in part on my dissertation thesis (Obschonka, Entrepreneurship as developmental outcome: The entrepreneurial process and the life span perspective of human development. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Jena, Germany, 2011) as well as on the (other) theoretical and empirical literature in this field. It provides an overview over biological, psychosocial, behavioral, and contextual factors of entrepreneurship by taking a developmental perspective. The chapter starts with a definition of entrepreneurship and then contextualizes the topic by explaining the interplay between today's accelerated macro-level change and entrepreneurial human agency. This is followed by an introduction into the developmental perspective of entrepreneurship, and by the presentation of the research findings in this field. These sections tackle questions such as "Are entrepreneurs born or made?" or "How to promote entrepreneurial mindsets?" The chapters finishes with a presentation of a new integrative theory of entrepreneurial development across the life-span, and with implications for career counseling and guidance.

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Definition and Forms of Entrepreneurship

In today's everyday language the term entrepreneurship can be used for a broad range of activities that are characterized by proactive and venturesome behaviors (Baumol 1990). For example, to initiate and mount a new project or to take on a fresh challenge can be generally considered as entrepreneurship. Such projects or challenges may include social projects (e.g., the foundation of a charity organization; Corner and Ho 2010), work activities (e.g., founding a new venture to generate income; Reynolds 2007), or leisure time activities (e.g., the circumnavigation of the earth on a small sailboat; Munoz 2010).

In contrast to the broad use of the term entrepreneurship in everyday language, one may expect a more narrow definition in the academic research field of entrepreneurship. However, a look into economic encyclopedias reveals that the term entrepreneurship is also used differentially in academia. As stated by *Baum et al. (2007)*, "there are hundreds of definitions of entrepreneur, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial" (p. 6). Thus, it is not surprising that entrepreneurship researchers often criticize the lack of a consistent definition of entrepreneurship. Nonetheless, one can observe a recent trend in the literature, and that is the agreement on Shane and Venkatamaran's (2000) definition as the current dominant definition of entrepreneurship research (see also Shane 2012). They defined the study of entrepreneurship "*as the scholarly examination of how, by whom, and with what effects opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated, and exploited*" (p. 218). Hence, entrepreneurship is about perceiving, creating, and exploiting opportunities. Further central elements are risk and innovation.

Shane and Venkatamaran's definition makes clear that entrepreneurship is not a single behavior but refers to a process; the process from opportunity discovery to opportunity exploitation. Accordingly, the process perspective has become the predominant framework in contemporary entrepreneurship research (Baron and Shane 2005). The prototypical example of this process is the venture creation process. Carland et al. (1984) argued that entrepreneurs are, first and foremost, characterized by their drive to start new ventures and to successfully lead them. Likewise, Audretsch (2007) and Shane (2008) view the core of entrepreneurial activity as the exploitation of new ideas and inventions through venture creation. Shedding light on this process and on the interplay between the individual and the new business is one of the main aims of contemporary entrepreneurship research (Bruyat and Julien 2000).

While profit-oriented, innovation-based venture creation may be the most prototypical enterprising behavior, entrepreneurship, in its narrow sense, can take on many other forms. Entrepreneurial behavior within existing organization (e.g., by employees) is often termed intrapreneurship (Hisrich et al. 2007). Besides profit-oriented activities, entrepreneurial behavior can also serve societal, non-profit aims, e.g., in the form of social or public entrepreneurship that tackle societal problems (e.g., Corner and Ho 2010).

Social and Economic Change and the Relevance of Entrepreneurship

Historically viewed, the relevance of entrepreneurial behavior (in its different facets) for societal wealth and development has a long tradition (an elaborated overview of the history of entrepreneurship, from ancient Mesopotamia to modern times, can be found elsewhere (Landes et al. 2010)). In today's changing world, entrepreneurship has a unique position because it is intimately interconnected with the massive change occurring at the macro level such as globalization, technological progress, and political change (Silbereisen and Chen 2010).

First, the growing prevalence of entrepreneurship around the globe (Reynolds et al. 2000) may be *a result* of social, political, and economic change. Post-industrial society (Audretsch 2007), the deregulation of the labor market (Heinz 2003), globalization, rapid technological progress, political change, and the increasing individualization of the life-course (Beck 1992; Giddins 1991) together have contributed to an era of the entrepreneur. Shane (2008) concluded accordingly that entrepreneurship has become "one of the most popular topics of our time" (p. 1).

Second, entrepreneurship is also *a driver* of change, for example via the introduction of inventions into society and the creation of jobs and wealth (Birch 1987; Schumpeter 1934). An illustrative example are the current transitions in Asia (e.g., in China or India; Mahbubani 2008), where entrepreneurship is a driver in the rise of these economies. The rise of the U.S. in the last century towards a leading economy worldwide is another example. It was the promise of the American Dream that attracted so many people from different nations to come to the country and to make their own way there. One crucial part of the American Dream, in turn, is entrepreneurship, starting one's own business in a stimulating, supporting, but also competitive environment to exploit oneself and one's own ideas and visions, and to create something truly new under the sun (Carland and Carland 1997). Other historical examples are the introduction of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg around 1450 in Mainz, Germany (which revolutionized communication as well as political, societal, and religious life at that time), or the introduction of the apochromatic lens by Carl Zeiss, Ernst Abbe, and Otto Schott 1886 in Jena, Germany (which was the basis for high-performance microscopes as used in medicine or biology).

Third, entrepreneurship is connected to today's macro-level change because it is a form of human agency that can be seen as proactive and productive response to the new demands and challenges imposed by the change. One example is reacting to the increasing uncertainty concerning career planning or new learning demands with own entrepreneurial agency and self-responsive, proactive, and creative behavior (Obschonka 2012). Another example is finding innovative solutions to new societal problems via social entrepreneurship (OECD 1999). Enterprising behavior can also be a means of utilizing new opportunities resulting from the change (e.g., opportunities related to the new communication age). In other words, entrepreneurial human agency has become a key strategy *to productively deal*, both on the individual and societal level, with the positive and negative sides of change.

Besides its embeddedness in the macro-change, entrepreneurship is important due to its employment effects, which makes it a key topic for policymakers facing high unemployment rates and poverty. For example, stimulating youth entrepreneurship is currently discussed as one way of responding to the high youth unemployment rates in large parts of Europe. Economists particularly emphasize the crucial role of *innovative* entrepreneurship for economic prosperity (Schumpeter 1934, 1942). It is argued that startups exploiting new ideas and inventions have thus a better potential to grow, and such business growth in turn leads to positive external economics effects (Shane 2008). This puts the focus on the small business sector. The picture may be somewhat different in less developed and industrialized countries (e.g., in large parts of Africa), but many would agree that "one of the best ways to reduce poverty and to increase economic development and growth is to strengthen the small business sector" in these countries (Frese et al. 2007, p. 1485). Even in developed countries with their strong industry and service sectors with large established firms, most jobs are created in the small business sector, and entrepreneurship and innovation are major forces in this sector (Birch 1987; Neumark et al. 2011).

However, the picture might actually be more complex as enterprising behavior may not only come along as a positive thing. Without a doubt, there is also a "dark side". For example, both societies and enterprising individual have to deal with high failure rates of newly founded businesses. Moreover, many new startup projects never reach the point where they operate as going business. Many entrepreneurs report more stress at work and longer working hours than employees. Somewhat paradoxically, an often replicated finding, in turn, is that self-employed show higher levels of job satisfaction than employees, despite these more stressful work conditions. It seems that the higher degree of personal freedom, personal growth, and self-determination in self-employed work, compared to employed work, might account for this paradox (Benz and Frey 2008). Enjoying more freedom and self-determination may also protect the individual entrepreneur from parts of the dark side of entrepreneurship (e.g., the risk of failure).

The Developmental Perspective

In view of the obvious societal relevance of entrepreneurship and it's interconnectedness with the accelerated macro-level change, establishing an entrepreneurial workforce may be crucial for the success of today's (changing) societies that have to deal with the challenges of our modern times. Hence, policymakers and educators have developed a strong interest in fostering entrepreneurial mindsets and skills from an early age onwards to "educate the next wave of entrepreneurs" (World Economic Forum 2009), and to prepare young people for the challenges in their future working life. Beside other factors that are also in part discussed in the other chapters of this book, entrepreneurship has become a "meta-capacity" for both successful careers and prosperous economies.

While entrepreneurship education in colleges and universities (e.g., among MBA students) has a longer tradition (Katz 2003), establishing entrepreneurship education as part of the school curriculum in primary and secondary education is a more recent trend (European Commission 2006). Despite this increasing interest among policy-makers and educators in following a developmental perspective to entrepreneurship with an emphasis on the early formative years, such an approach has long been disregarded in empirical research on the enterprising individual, probably due to the dominance of economic and management approaches and the focus on the actual enterprising behavior in adulthood (e.g., to identify strategies leading to entrepreneurial success, e.g., Frese et al. 2007). However, the field of entrepreneurship research is constituted as an interdisciplinary endeavor, involving not only economics and management but also psychology, geography, sociology, law, and other disciplines. Recently, developmental science (e.g., developmental psychology and developmental genetics) is becoming a new player in this interdisciplinary orchestra dealing with the "examination of how, by whom, and with what effects opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated, and exploited" (Shane and Venkatamaran 2000, p. 218). Such developmental research in this field may be particularly important for providing new answers to the questions whether entrepreneurs are born or made, and (provided that they are made) how, and at which ages, one can educate young people to build-up their entrepreneurial human and social capital.

Biographies of entrepreneurs, which are sometimes attracting considerable attention in popular media nowadays (Isaacson 2011), provide us with anecdotal evidence on developmental issues (e.g., early precursors in childhood and adolescence) but cannot replace systematic empirical research or inform public policies (e.g., how to promote early entrepreneurial development or to tackle the question whether entrepreneurs are born or made). These biographies give us some evidence that (successful) entrepreneurship in the working life should be understood as a developmental outcome (e.g., that a person's successful entrepreneurship in adulthood is based on a developmental history of entrepreneurial competence growth from childhood on), but systematic and theory-driven research is needed. Only then can one infer evidence-based implications for public policy schemes that aim at promoting entrepreneurial mindsets. Moreover, as knowledge about vocational development is crucial for career counseling, such research may also promote adaptive career choices and planning via career counseling informed by this research.

What Do We Know so far About Entrepreneurial Development?

Over the past decade, a number of empirical studies were devoted to the study of vocational development in the context of entrepreneurship (e.g., Falck et al. in press; Geldhof et al. in press; Obschonka et al. 2010, 2011a, b, 2012; Schmitt-Rodermund 2004, 2007; Schmitt-Rodermund and Vondracek 2002; Saw and Schneider 2012;

Schoon and Duckworth in press; Zhang and Arvey 2009) and of biological factors underlying enterprising behavior (e.g., genetic influences, e.g., Nicolaou et al. 2008; Quaye et al. 2012). Entrepreneurial development was also the topic of a recent interdisciplinary Special Issue that, probably for the first time, brought together economists, biologists, developmentalists, work psychologists, and sociologists to study developmental, biological, and contextual aspects of entrepreneurial development (Obschonka and Silbereisen 2012).

So are entrepreneurs born or made? Such a question dealing with the nature vs. nurture debate is also asked in many other fields of human behavior and performance (e.g., in talent and giftedness research, Ericsson et al. 2007)? Behavioral-genetic research indicates that the "heritability of the tendency to engage in entrepreneurship ranges from 0.37 to 0.48 depending on the operationalization" (Quaye et al. 2012). Hence, at first glance the genetic make-up and biological factors seem to play a crucial role, which would speak for a deterministic hypothesis of innate entrepreneurship. One should keep in mind, however, that these behavioral-genetic studies do not look at the actual gene level. They are "mainly a purely statistical enterprise derived from population genetics" (Gottlieb 2003, p. 338). Furthermore, molecular-genetic research failed thus far to identify an "entrepreneurial gene". Although one should be cautious with predictions in this regard, it seems unlikely that one will find such a gene because we now know that the relationship between genes, phenotypes, and environments is much more complex then previously thought. Besides manifold interactions within the biological system (e.g., between the genes themselves in gene activation and expression), one central lesson from research on the human genome is that experiences and interactions with the environment are crucial, and that a developmental view on gene expression is necessary to understand the biological system (e.g., when looking at epigenetic factors; Meaney 2010). In a modern understanding of biopsychosocial mechanisms of change, one assumes a mutual interplay and transactions between all levels of human development across the life course (genetic, neural, behavioral, and environmental factors; Gottlieb 2003). Hence, behavior is not only affected by genes but also by the environment (e.g., the physical, social, and cultural environment). Perhaps even more important, the environment, in turn, can also affect genes and the biological system via behavior and neural activity. In other words, the environment "bites" into the biological system and genetic effects cannot be understood without considering the environment. This is also the reason why it is so interesting to study the co-evolution of genes and culture in the history of humanity as well as the interplay of biology and culture in shaping the mind and behavior across a person's life course (Li 2003).

There are both classic theoretical considerations and new empirical research pointing to the crucial role of experiences, learning, and human agency in entrepreneurial development. In their seminal works, McClelland (1961) and Weber (1904, 2007) theorized that parental influences on child and adolescent development (e.g., exerted through parenting style) shape entrepreneurial mindsets (e.g., a need for achievement) from early developmental stages on, and thus the enterprising occupational career during the subsequent working life. Nonetheless, these theoretical considerations on the nexus between life span development and individual entrepreneurship

remained to be empirically untested for a long time. Consistent with a view that entrepreneurship cannot be merely the consequence of a person's genetic make-up, the new developmental research on entrepreneurs delivered evidence that entrepreneurs indeed develop, and that experiences and behaviors as well as environments are crucial for entrepreneurial development over the life-course, particularly (but not only) in the early formative years. Interestingly, this is also the story told in related fields such as talent research (Ericsson et al. 2007). Such a developmental perspective focusing on the early formative years (e.g., early critical and sensitive phases of brain development in childhood and adolescence) has also become a leading perspective in economic human capital research (Heckman 2006).

The existing developmental research of entrepreneurs utilized both prospective data following children well into adulthood (e.g., the British Cohort Study, the Terman Study of gifted children in California, or the Swedish IDA study) and retrospective data that looks back at the early life of (potential) business founders (e.g., the Thuringian Founder Study in Germany). The most central message from this research is that entrepreneurial thinking and acting in adulthood can indeed be understood as developmental outcome (Obschonka 2011), as the result of early experiences and developmental achievements and underlying developmental pathways connecting these early experiences and achievement with entrepreneurial competencies in adulthood. Consistent with the more general notion that a person's vocational development starts as early as in childhood (Hartung et al. 2005; Super 1980), the entrepreneurial mindset in adulthood "does not fall from the sky" but has a developmental history reaching back to early formative years. Interestingly, this research provides first support (from a developmental perspective) for the current public measures of implementing early entrepreneurship education programs as early as in childhood and adolescence as a means of fostering entrepreneurial thinking and acting in adulthood. But we are far from deciding whether such measures are indeed effective, since the systematic study of entrepreneurial development has just begun.

More specifically, studies indicate that age-appropriate early entrepreneurial competencies in childhood and adolescence such as early leadership in peer groups, social competencies, early inventions, and early commercialization activities establish the developmental basis of an entrepreneurial mindset in adulthood (e.g., founding skills, entrepreneurial networks, and entrepreneurial intentions, behaviour, and success in adulthood; Obschonka et al. 2010, 2011, 2012; Schmitt-Rodermund 2004, 2007; Schoon and Duckworth in press). An early interest in enterprising activities as well as early entrepreneurial career intentions and aspirations are further early precursors (Saw and Schneider 2012; Schmitt-Rodermund 2004, 2007). Another interesting topic is the link between educational pathways and entrepreneurial development (some famous entrepreneurs were school dropouts). In this respect, Saw and Schneider (2012) found indication that budding entrepreneurs hold a weaker attachment to school (e.g., modest level of school engagement and motivation). Another fascinating finding is that many entrepreneurs were more rebellious and unruly in their teenage years than non-entrepreneurs (Obschonka et al. 2013a; Zhang and Arvey 2009).

Another focus in this research is on the role of dispositional personality traits in vocational development towards entrepreneurship, thereby extending the personality approach, which is widely regarded as the classic psychological approach to entrepreneurship (e.g., Rauch and Frese 2007a, b; see also Obschonka et al. 2013b), with a framework of human development. The findings show that personality does not (only) affect enterprising behavior because adults' decision to engage in entrepreneurship is in part an expression of their personality make-up. Personality also affects a person's early entrepreneurial development from early stages on (e.g., early competence growth, early vocational interests, Schmitt-Rodermund 2007; Obschonka 2011). In other words, personality differences (e.g., an entrepreneurial constellation of the Big Five traits within the person, Obschonka et al. 2013b; Schmitt-Rodermund 2004, 2007) channel a person' vocational development towards entrepreneurship from childhood onwards. This indicates that we cannot understand the effect of personality differences in this field without considering personal entrepreneurial development over the life course. It is not very surprising that this discovery fits the modern developmental understanding of the effect of biological factors such as genes on human behavior because personality has a strong genetic basis.

As already assumed in the classic theorizing on early entrepreneurial development, the new research also showed that early developmental contexts such as parenting style or early role enterprising role models matter in stimulating early entrepreneurial development (Schmitt-Rodermund 2004, 2007; Obschonka et al. 2011a). Human development (e.g., a person's vocational development) can only be fully understood if one considers the contexts in which this development takes place (Vondracek et al. 1986). These contexts, in turn, are subject to macro-level change (e.g., historical, social, and economic change; Silbereisen and Chen 2010), which again underscores the relevance of considering macro-level changes when trying to understand why people become entrepreneurs and what fosters the (early) development of entrepreneurial mindsets. In this regard, Fritsch and Rusakova (2012) found indication that rapid social change such as the break-down of the communist regimes in East Europe in the early 1990's affected entrepreneurial development in these countries via changes in the effect of parental role models and school education.

An Integrative Theory of Entrepreneurial Development

Particularly in such an interdisciplinary field like entrepreneurship, the development of integrative meta-theories connecting approaches and findings from the different fields and perspectives is necessary and important. With this in mind, the Special Issue addressed the elaboration of a new integrative framework of entrepreneurial development, thereby drawing from a modern understanding of developmental science (Lerner 2006), life-span psychology (Baltes et al. 2006), and life course sociology (Elder and Shanahan 2006). It attemps to combine the existing empirical findings concerning biological, psychosocial, behavioral, and contextual factors of entrepreneurial development.

This *Life Span Model of Entrepreneurial Development* (Obschonka and Silbereisen 2012) understands entrepreneurship as a developmental outcome in that it incorporates the effect of biologically-based propensities (e.g., genetic make-up, temperament, broad personality traits), characteristic adaptations (e.g., competencies growth, motivational aspects), and ecological opportunities and constraints (e.g., stimulating early environments such as promotive early role models, parenting, and peer interactions in the formative years) on the development of an entrepreneurial mindset across childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. A central part in the model is *early characteristic adaptations in childhood/adolescence* as precursor of an entrepreneurial mindset in adulthood, and through which biologically-based propensities and ecological conditions exert an effect. Hence, these early characteristic adaptations are *characteristic* because they are in part the expression of biologically-based propensities (they reflect the "character" of the individual). They are *adaptations* because they develop from interactions with the environment (they are adaptations to the environment). The entrepreneurial mindset in adulthood (which are also characteristic adaptations) results from the early characteristic adaptations (e.g., through growth processes, deliberate practice, etc.) and is also influenced by biologically-based propensities and ecological conditions present in adulthood (e.g., adult personality make-up; availability of role models). However, these biological and ecological factors, which should show more or less high stability, reach back to the formative years as well. The model also takes into account that entrepreneurial development does not stop in adulthood but is an ongoing process of learning and (characteristic) adaptation (e.g., through entrepreneurial learning while conducting enterprising activities, Cope 2005). Concerning the nature vs. nurture debate in entrepreneurship research, this model stresses the importance of developmental processes, and of the developmental interplay between nature and nurture.

Practical Implications for Career Counseling and Guidance

The developmental approach to entrepreneurship underscores the relevance of taking a development perspective not only in research but also in the world of practice. For example, when counseling adults concerning a possible engagement in entrepreneurship (e.g., starting an own business) one may take into account the individual developmental history regarding characteristic adaptations (e.g., competence growth from early on, early activities and experiences across childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, or the development of interests). If entrepreneurship is indeed a developmental outcome, as suggested by the growing number of studies, then it may not suffice to offer an informed counseling by looking at current characteristics such as personality, interests, and human and social capital, or whether this person has shown entrepreneurial behavior before. The developmental aspects should also be considered. Indeed, other than previously expected, studies found that experienced entrepreneurs usually do not achieve better business performance than novice entrepreneurs (Ucbasaran et al. 2008). This indicates that it is quite hard to learn

entrepreneurial thinking and acting by doing. It is further consistent with the developmental approach to entrepreneurship (e.g., Obschonka and Silbereisen 2012; Schmitt-Rodermund 2004), which stresses the role of the early formative years, early activities and experiences, and the developmental pathways leading to an entrepreneurial career in adulthood, without neglecting that human development is a life-long process (Baltes et al. 2006). A focus on the accumulation of characteristic adaptations across the individual development may be crucial—this is not only the story told in numerous biographies of entrepreneurs but also by the developmental research. This accumulation seems to occur via interactions between biologically-based propensities and stimulating contexts but much more research is needed in this field.

Across the world, entrepreneurship is on the increase and many young people will work self-employed at some point in their career (Audretsch 2007, e.g., due to instability of today's careers). So practitioners should keep in mind that the fundament of personal entrepreneurial resources in adulthood is built early in life and the results of research in this fields are very much in line with the notion that (successful) entrepreneurship can be fostered early in life (World Economic Forum 2009). The research further suggests that such public efforts may also target extracurricular activities (besides entrepreneurship education in schools). For example, promoting early entrepreneurial competence may not only mean fostering knowledge of the world of business. It may also mean fostering repeat age-appropriate entrepreneurial activities (e.g., assuming leadership roles in different contexts or being inventive in different areas) in order to stimulate (deliberate) practice and early mastery in interaction with peers (Ericsson et al. 2007). From the perspective of economics, promoting such an early competence growth is nothing other than what Nobel laureate Schultz (1980) called "investment in entrepreneurial ability", which, according to the (more general) research of another Nobel laureate from economics, namely James J. Heckman, is particularly worthwhile when one targets children and adolescents. Heckman (2006) could show that the ability gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged children open up early in the lives of the children (due to constraints in the opportunity structure such as growing up in a poor family). Moreover, he was interested in comparing the efficiency of promotion programs aiming at enhancing the general skill-level of disadvantaged children, adolescents, and adults. He thereby differentiated between early promotion efforts (children and adolescents) and efforts in adulthood such as public job training. The result was, and this is the important message, that the economic returns (e.g., life course productivity of the subjects who received public support) to initial investments at early ages are high, whereas the economic returns to investments at adolescence are low. The positive economic return is particularly pronounced with regard to preschool programs and thus to early childhood. In other words, Heckman's message is that the earlier the promotion of skills that one lacks due to contextual constraints and that one needs to be a productive and successful adult, the better the societal achievement of both equity (in leveling the playing field for individuals' development across the life span) and efficiency (of public efforts).

Given the current changes in the world of work (e.g., the shift from work trajectories to negotiated careers (Heinz 2003), the growing importance of proactive behaviors and personal decisions and responsibility in the shaping of the work life-course, and the shift from industrialized and managed economies to entrepreneurial societies (Audretsch 2007)), preparing children and adolescents to be competent and skillful agents in this future world should be a key point on the educational agenda. Indeed, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union declared entrepreneurship as one of eight key competencies for lifelong learning, personal fulfillment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion, and employment (European Commission 2006). Likewise, as indicated in the quote that precedes this book chapter (a section of President Barack Obama's speech to the members of the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce from 2009), entrepreneurship can be seen as one of the 21st century skills (besides skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, and innovation). Such 21st century skills are key competencies to succeed in our globalized and changing societies, and a better understanding on the origin, development, assessment, and promotion of these skills may be key to the success of education policies and measures. The same may apply for career counseling and guidance.

Chapter Summary

The chapter provided a definition of entrepreneurship and contextualized the topic by explaining the interplay between today's accelerated macro-level change and entrepreneurial human agency. This was followed by an introduction into the developmental perspective of entrepreneurship, and by the presentation of the research findings in this field. These sections tackled questions such as "Are entrepreneurs born or made?" or "How to promote entrepreneurial mindsets?" The chapters ended with a presentation of a new integrative theory of entrepreneurial development across the life-span, and with implications for career counseling and guidance.

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Chapter 17
Designing Learning Experiences to Prepare Lifelong Learners for the Complexities of the Workplace

Willa Louw

Abstract It is argued that the rapidly changing context of the workplace requires radical changes in the teaching methods and modes of delivery of the lifelong learner. This means that the approach to teaching and learning in higher education should place the emphasis on students that are autonomous and self-directed. This leads to profound implications for designers of open and distance learning (ODL) study materials as students in this environment usually reside far away from the institution and often feel alienated when starting this learning process. E-learning can change this landscape to become a platform where knowledge can be shared and discussed amongst peers. In this chapter I will, through a case study, give an example of such a process that not only creates a virtual rich environment for active e-learning, but also delivers critical thinking graduates to the workplace.

Introduction

Modes of teaching and learning have changed quite dramatically over the past decade; the way we interact with knowledge and the internet has brought a new virtual classroom to the fore. Davidson and Goldberg (2009, p. 8) ask: "If we are going to imagine . . . virtual institutions—we have to ask, what are those institutions and what work do they perform? What does a virtual learning institution look like, who supports it, what does it do?" Yoon (2003) says that effective online education is a blend of pedagogy, technology, and institutional support. She further points out that to view online learning as an alternative form of the traditional classroom learning, where the two are compared with each other, is a common mistake made by many in education

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fields. She says online learning, especially technology-mediated interactions are new and are different from time- and place-dependent face-to-face interactions.

According to Yoon (2003, p. 29), the online learner's learning experiences are shaped largely by their interaction with various sources such as their study materials, technological interfaces, their peers and all the other stakeholders that construct a "technology-mediated environment". Davidson and Goldberg (2009) call these interactions participatory learning where learners of any age can use new technologies to participate in a virtual community where ideas are shared and comments are made on one another's projects and ideas. These authors are of the opinion that participatory learning is not simply interaction; rather it is a co-creation of content amongst peers who are strangers in the real world, but who interact as peers from all over the globe in a virtual environment. This, they say, leads to a blurring role for the traditional academic who is used to being the only authoritative subject expert.

Open and distance learning (ODL) is also a term that is nowadays used widely in educational circles. This term, for me, highlights any way that is used to reach students over geographical distances. In this chapter I will refer to online learning which will incorporate both e-learning and ODL. Online learning can provide practical and convenient study material for adult learners who are unable to reside near to traditional classroom institutions in an interactive manner. Barnett (2000, p. 257), is of the opinion that learning is a social activity; he explains that educators need to situate curricula amid the wider social and even global context. He further advises that students should not be prepared for a complex world but for a supercomplex world.

> A *complex* world is one in which we are assailed by more facts, data, evidence, tasks and arguments than we can easily handle *within* the frameworks in which we have our being. By contrast, a *supercomplex* world is one in which the very frameworks by which we orient ourselves to the world are themselves contested.

In this Chap. 1 intend to consult with literature and, through an empirical study, describe the journey of students entering higher education. Students that lack certain qualities continue on this journey and are shaped and formed by planned learning experiences in order to deliver citizens that are self-directed learners in charge of their own professional journeys, lifelong learners who are not only employable graduates, but also upstanding citizens in their communities. I will therefore use a case study upfront to explain the context and will discuss it in more detail later where I will try to explain the practical side of the planning process of the learning experiences in order to guide the students to self-directed learning.

The words *student* and *learner* will be used interchangeably, as the term *lifelong learner* means learning your whole life (De Beer and Brandt 2012) and the word *student* is the preferred term for the learners entering a higher education institution. Assessment tasks within the case study will be used as examples to show how to create an enriching learning environment in a virtual and technological environment. Lastly, the digitised workplace complexities and the lifelong learner as well as the lessons learnt in designing a signature module will be discussed.

Case Study: Signature Module Sustainability and Greed

The University of South Africa (Unisa) introduced six signature modules with the aim of helping students become graduates of distinction that can bring about change. According to Unisawise (2012, p. 13), the vision for these modules is as follows: "Imagine a South Africa where every graduate leaving university is ready and equipped to make a difference—not only in the workplace, but in society at large", and "The introduction of these signature modules might prove to be a decisive step in Unisa's teaching and learning journey towards becoming a leading open and distance learning university" (Unisawise 2012, p. 15).

With the above vision in mind, the College of Economics and Management Sciences (CEMS) decided to design a module with the title *Sustainability and Greed,* which was tasked to not only bring business ethics to the fore, but also to impart critical thinking skills. This module had to keep in step with a world that has gone digital and was to be delivered only online, the heutagogical approach was adopted as pedagogy, the students had to participate in frequent assignments and the study material was to be shared and debated with peers and teachers of the module. It was named a signature module because it had to be a unique offering within the college. "The content of the signature modules is relevant and focuses on societal values and what defines good citizenship" (Unisawise 2012, p. 14).

For the reasons mentioned above, this is an ideal case study for the argument of this chapter as it can illustrate how the learning experiences were designed in order to prepare lifelong learners for the complexities of the workplace. This meant that learning experiences had to go beyond the surface level of design considerations to achieve ownership of learning by the creation of multiple perspectives from the learner's own community and its perspective in the global world.

This signature module was therefore constructed to start with a multiple-choice questionnaire which the students completed online and which was then automatically assessed by computer. The questions were related to poverty, the economy and the environment. African folklore was thus used as content to tell universal stories which can be interpreted through multiple perspectives. The advice of Seel and Schenk (2003, p. 215) was kept in mind when designing this online module: "There is considerable concern that student's thinking skills, motivational dispositions, and domain-specific knowledge might be inadequate for them to lead fulfilling lives in a global, information-rich, technology-orientated world".

The students were asked to work through the online learning units, almost all of which began with a story. By means of online discussion forums they discussed these stories with their peers. At the end of about 15 weeks they repeated the first self-assessment assignment and then had to reflect on how their answers had changed from the beginning of the module to the end of it. The reason for this was that the students had to reflect on their own learning journey and their growth in order for them to become self-directed learners on a journey towards lifelong and life-wide learning.

Self-Directed Learning and Heutagogy

Heutagogy as a method of teaching is described by Blaschke (2012) as in this approach to teaching and learning, students are seen as highly autonomous and self-determined and the focus is placed on the development of the students' capacity and capability with the goal of producing students who are well-prepared for the complexities of the workplace of today. She further states that heutagogy is a form of self-determined learning which has practices and principles rooted in andragogy where the students are involved when their needs are identified and with the planning on how those needs will be met.

Double-loop learning and self-reflection are also key concepts of heutagogy, according to Blaschke (2012), where the learners, in addition to considering the problem and planning the actions and outcomes, also reflect upon the problem-solving process where they question their own values, assumptions and beliefs. According to Luppicini (2003, p. 77), reflection "is perhaps the most powerful resource that individuals possess . . . Reflection is necessary to uncover the tacit knowledge that impacts individuals' life actions . . . At the most basic level, reflection provides information concerning where ideas come from, which is essential for advancing learning or eliminating habits that prevent learning."

Williams (2012, p. 303) quotes Jarvis in his argument of viewing the student as a "social actor" : "the person, the self, who has emerged through the process of learning has the freedom to choose to act in accordance with structure and culture, or to act innovatively." He says it is up to the student to reflect through thought, emotion and action. He explains that the student becomes an agent that can act back on structures, thereby changing social and cultural structures through this learning process. It is important, states Williams (2012)., that educators recognise this human agent within the social context where learning is happening.

McLoughlin (2000) remarks that it is especially important for indigenous community members to have a sense of place and belonging, in order for collaboration and sharing to take place and that program planners and instructional designers should be attuned to the need to validate and affirm cultural traditions and values for that the learning environment to be motivating and appealing to students.

A Rich Environment for Active E-Learning

When educators plan a new module that is to be delivered fully online such as the signature courses, the first thing that comes to mind is the developers' lack of experience in this regard. Therefore the first step will be to see what the literature has to say before attempting to begin to design these virtual learning experiences.

Carr (2000) is of the opinion that the high drop rates in online modules are the lack of experience from faculty in online teaching and learning. Diaz (2002) blames it on the fact that many institutions are used to a fixed outcome whereas the online environment is much more flexible. Technology in this environment has the potential

to transform the learning delivery, to widen the participation of students and to increase the scale and scope of learning opportunities, but without careful planning, he warns, it can also marginalise students. Butcher (2003) says that e-learning should not focus too much on the technology but should give much more attention to the teaching and learning part.

Blaschke (2012, p. 7) agrees by stating that higher education has so far been reluctant to respond to heutagogy. However, educators in nursing, engineering and education have reported heutagogy to be a credible way of addressing critical issues that face students within the workplace: ". . . in an ever-changing environment that is both complex and unpredictable; a heutagogical approach to learning helps them to become lifelong learners. . ."

Goetz (2004) is of the opinion that online environments can only be successful if the students are orientated upfront to their newfound online tools: where guidance, time management skills, being introduced to and becoming familiar with the online community, proper etiquette for communicating, guidance on how the online programme differs from previous programmes and where to get help with all of the above are important.

Blaschke (2012) further indicates that Web 2.0 supports the heutagogical approach by allowing students to direct and determine their own learning path where they take an active rather than a passive approach to their own learning journey. She quotes the research of Lee and McLoughlin when she says that in addition, Web 2.0 encourages interaction, reflection in dialogue, collaboration, information sharing, and promotes autonomy and supports the creation of student generated content. Davidson and Goldberg (2009) agree that digital technologies increasingly enable social networking and interactive, collaborative engagements which dramatically encourages self-learning.

According to Blaschke (2012), recent research shows that the social media also supports self-determined learning. She gives the following examples:

> Mobile learning supports collaboration and resource capturing; The virtual asynchronous philosopher's tool helps students' self-discovery processes which leads to reflection; Twitter helps to keep the students more actively engaged in the learning process; and Active use of social media helped them to generate content more easily.

Davidson and Goldberg (2009) suggest that the following ten principles (summarised) be followed when rethinking the future of learning activities in a digital environment:

- Self-learning has bloomed; even online reading has become collaborative, interactive and nonlinear engaging multiple voices.
- Horizontal structures of learning puts pressure on the learning path as workplaces nowadays involve collaboration with colleagues in teams.
- Learning is shifting from presumed authority to a collective credibility where wise choices can be made on an epistemological, methodological and collaborative level.
- A decentred pedagogy prefers a collective pedagogy.
- Networked learning has a vision of learning in a social environment.

- Open source education shares learning materials openly and freely.
- Learning is connective and interactive which is made possible by digitally enabled technologies.
- Lifelong learning and the increasingly rapid changes in the world mean that learners must learn anew to face up to the challenges.
- Learning institutions are mobilising networks that stress flexibility, interactivity and being enabling to students' growth.
- Flexible scalability and simulations enable scales of learning. New technologies allow for small groups who are at a physical distance from one another to learn collaboratively.

Blaschke (2012) says that when designing self-determined learning experiences according to the heutagogical approach, the following elements should be considered:

> Individual learning contracts with students that clearly state how the learning path will evolve and what the role of the student is; A flexible curriculum which allows the students to be drivers of their own curriculum; Learner-directed questions and discussions which help them to make sense of the content and to give clarity to their ideas; and Flexible and negotiated assessment where the students are involved in the designing and time frames of their own assessment.

Goetz (2004) gives practical advice on what to focus on when designing an online module:

Online higher education institutions should work harder at the retention of their students because their students have other societal responsibilities competing for their time. Students should therefore be placed in the same group from beginning to end of the module in order to establish a sense of belonging. Building interactivity begins with the learning management system which allows students to interact with faculty and fellow students. Groups should not be larger than 15–40 students to encourage maximum interaction. Synchronous activities, where students and faculty interact at the same time, are not necessary, as this is not sensitive to the needs of part-time and working students. Asynchronous activities should be planned for maximum interactivity such as threaded discussions and group assignments.

Online modules, according to the literature, therefore have to be designed to be asynchronous, interactive, collaborative and flexible. The students must be pre-orientated and well acquainted with their role as self-directed learners studying towards being employable graduates who can handle the complexities of the workplace.

Workplace Complexities and the Lifelong Learner

According to the policy of the Joint Research Centre (JRC), lifelong learning strategies need to answer to the growing need for advanced digital competencies for all jobs and for all learners (Ala-Mutka et al. 2008). The centre is of the opinion that digital skills need not be a separate subject but should be embedded within the teaching of all subjects. This means, states the JRC, that lifelong learners must be able

to access digital media, understand and critically evaluate different aspects of digital media and communicate effectively in a variety of contexts, as this will lead to confident and critical use of information and communication technology (ICT) for employment, self-development and participation in society (Ala-Mutka et al. 2008). Advanced digital skills, according to JRC, include not only the use of ICT tools, but also skills related to privacy and security, ethical and legal use, critical creation of content and a critical attitude in using this content (Ala-Mutka et al. 2008).

Yoon (2003) says that institutions that make use of digital learning are visionary as they can reach more students and a bigger differentiation of adult learners. She maintains that not only does this improve equity, but studying online better prepares them for the workforce of the future because they can earn an advanced degree or finish undergraduate studies even when they are travelling or are far away from the institution.

Williams (2012) warns that lifelong learning also means life-wide learning. This is not only focused on education, but on all aspects of the students' life which is fundamental to the human evolution. Edmonton (1995) suggests that we should remind ourselves of how we learnt to work on a computer. How much was formal education and how much was picked up by trial and error? Edmonton asserts that this shows that learning does not always happen in a structured and orderly manner, but she warns that companies cannot rely entirely on the self-motivation of their employees. Even though this type of learning often happens, it does not mean it is efficient as workers only use about 10 % of the capacity and capabilities of a computer. Formal training is therefore needed not only to recall facts, but to move beyond "principles or correct procedures and into the area of creativity, problem-solving, analysis or evaluation (the very skills needed in a work-place in a knowledge based economy)" (Edmonton 1995, p. 5).

In a report on *New understandings of learning in work,* Fenwick (2002) quotes the work of Varela, Thompson, Rosch, Edwards, Garrick and Usher, who are of the opinion that systemic epistemology actively shapes ontology and that graduates globally need to be flexible workers who are responsive, adaptive and transferable. This will result in enterprising workers that are active, self-responsible, self-reflexive constructors of their own work capacities, biographies and successes. They are further of the opinion that workplace learning is the foundation for organisational health and there is a shift in thinking about the boundaries between a worker's private space of self and soul, and that of the turmoil of an organisation's growth. They call this *enactivism learning theory,* which holds that a human being emerges together as an intertwined *system*. Fenwick (2002, p. 34) states: "The focus is not on the learning event. . . , but on the relationships binding them together in complex systems."

Fenwick (2002) remarks that self-managed careers should be emphasised, in other words an individual has a responsibility to create their own work and should develop their own knowledge and skills.

Roscorla (2012, p. 2) gives as an example of the above the University of Massachusetts, where all the students that are enrolled in the 'university without walls' are required to take a writing course in their junior year: "We're looking for that deep level of analysis and that deep level of reflection." Students must therefore not only rely on prior learning, but give evidence of their train of thought and this is assessed

according to the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning's guidelines on how to assess students for lifelong learning. Crisp (2012) agrees when he says students must be provided with more authentic tasks that will engage them in using the full range of their capabilities that they have developed throughout their life. Assessment 2.0, he says, is a term that describes assessments that are aligned with Web 2.0, which has the following characteristics: authentic, personalised, negotiated, engaging, recognising existing skills, assesses deep knowledge and not memorisation, problem orientated, collaboratively produced and self- and peer-assessed.

The designer of learning experiences has to keep all of the above in mind when an online module is designed for a lifelong learner.

Designing Learning Experiences

The first question to ask was how much of a designer's years of experience in designing study materials in print form could be used in this new digital platform. The advantages and the disadvantages of online teaching had to be considered before this question could be answered. The virtual environment has many advantages but it also has limitations. For instance, the study material has to be interactive but because there are no physical or verbal clues to fall back on, communication must be very clear.

Students depend on one another to achieve the intended goals, they have to be present and be part of a community of learners studying towards a pre-negotiated goal. This medium therefore calls for self-directed and very motivated and independent students. They have to perform together much the same as a sports team would; therefore all assumptions in this signature module had to be replaced by clear rules. Rules such as how often will I be online, what are the rules of engagement, how much will depend on group activities and how much on the individual had to be established first. In this signature module this did not mean that students had to work their way through textbooks or memorise facts. The study material had to be manufactured to be results orientated and integrated and the sequence and the navigation therefore became very important.

Pedagogy usually means that the teacher decides what the style and the content of the study material should be. At Unisa this is standard practice, but with the signature module a different approach was needed. Although the literature suggests heutagogy as the way to go (where the how and what to teach is as much the task of the student as possible), the designers of the module were not confident or experienced enough to implement this to its fullest sense. We opted for andragogy where the content was determined by the teacher and how to learn was directed by the student.

Structure

The learning units were constructed with Learning Unit 0 as the welcome page and an overview of the whole module that clearly stated how the learning path would

evolve and what the role of the student was. Instructions were given in a simple and a clear manner, guiding the learners on how to navigate through the learning units. The navigation of the structure of the module and of the technical platform also played a very important role in the planning process of a 15-week semester (plus two weeks for final assessment).

The following learning units were constructed around a story which the students had to read and then discuss their own thoughts on the ethics in the texts with their peers in a discussion forum. The stories were from African folklore which they could apply practically by critically analysing the stories and evaluating the behaviour of the animals. This was designed with the intention of sharpening the critical thinking skills of the students.

Discussions amongst peers were considered as very important, and before every assignment was due they had to discuss it first, taking into account other students' opinions and cultural differences. With the use of a rubric they were graded to establish the quality and quantity of their engagements. The students had to make many decisions and had to do most of the work. The teacher merely had to observe and when the discussions were taking a turn for the worse, he had to guide them back to the original topic or aim. They were guided to answer the following questions before posting their opinions: Is your message accurate? Is it relevant? Do you have something new to say? Is your posting properly cited? Is it well organised? Is it logically presented? Is the correct language used? Is it the correct length?

Rules of Engagement

The learning units were designed for interactivity amongst peers and between the teacher and the students. They were therefore expected to respect one another's opinions and not to use rude language which could offend, or to use short message system (SMS) language.

Lifelong digital learning strategies were also considered as important in order to shape their thinking on the sustainability of the workplace, the economy, the environment and the world.

Assessment

The assessment plan was constructed to be self-assessment as the first assignment; thereafter biweekly graded discussion forums as collaborative assignment projects and finally the first self-assessment assignment again. The students had to compare the two answer sheets for the repeated assignment and write a reflective portfolio on how the answers differed and what they had learnt through this process. This was their final achievement portfolio which counted only 20 marks towards their year

mark to pass or fail this module. All the assessment tasks were added up to constitute their final mark.

Digital competencies were embedded in the texts and the assignment tasks also indirectly assessed these competencies. Many of the students in Africa do not have access to advanced computers; therefore it was decided to keep these tasks as simple as possible. The approach was 'ICT for learning' and not the other way around.

Lessons Learnt

Many lessons were—and are still being—learnt as these signature modules are currently being rolled out. Formal research needs be done on these modules once all the data is gathered. Here are some of the lessons learnt:

- The design process was much more time consuming than what was initially anticipated. Once the module was up and running, more time and human resources were needed to support the students on a pedagogical and a technical level.
- Incentives were needed to keep the students from dropping out. The discussion forums needed to be well crafted and enticing prompts were needed to keep them going.
- Blogs were completed in a more honest, open and casual manner because they were not graded. However in the discussion forums the students were more formal and more structured, as this was part of the assessment plan.
- The technology had to be as simple as possible and the instructions clear.
- A skilled facilitator with a constant presence was of the utmost importance to ensure that the module reached its goals.

Conclusion

The literature that was reviewed for this chapter advised that for effective online teaching, a blend of pedagogy and technology should be used in order to design meaningful learning experiences that will explore new educational interactivity. Heutagogy as the method of teaching was decided upon before this module was designed, where the students would be highly autonomous and self-determined. The emphasis was to be placed on the development of students' capacity and capability with the goal of producing students who are well prepared for the complexities of today's workplace. Heutagogy, as a form of self-determined learning, appeared to be what the designers were looking for, but in practice this did not turn out as planned. Because of the vast numbers of students, the designers opted for a more structural approach where the practices and principles rooted in andragogy seemed a better choice. The teacher decided on the context that should be taught and the students were involved in identifying their learning needs and planning on how those needs would be met.

Double-loop learning and self-reflection, which are also key concepts of heutagogy, were planned for by the teacher. In addition to considering the problem and planning the actions and outcomes, the students also reflected upon the problem-solving process where they questioned their own values, assumptions and beliefs. In the discussion forums it was observed that this approach worked well, as reflection was a powerful way of processing the study material. Reflection proved to be necessary to uncover the tacit knowledge that impacted their actions in life. The words of Blaschke (2012) proved to be true that even at the most basic level, reflection provides information concerning where ideas came from. This was ultimately essential for advancing the online learning process and to eliminate habits that prevented this from happening.

The arguments of Williams (2012) and Jarvis proved to be true by seeing the student as a social actor because the student that emerged through this process of learning had the freedom to choose to act in accordance with the structure of the module but was confronted by other cultures and had to act innovatively. In the discussion forums it emerged that it was up to the student to reflect through thought, emotion and action. The student became an agent that could act back on structures and in doing so could change social and cultural beliefs through personal experiences within this learning process.

Many issues of increased access and the participation of large numbers of students were challenges in this process. The online platform was planned not to be the focus, but became an issue when students encountered problems on a technological front. The teaching and learning part was planned to enable students to, through interactive learning experiences, develop new knowledge which would enable them to integrate new concepts within a coherent perspective of prior knowledge. This forced the learning experiences to go beyond the surface level of design considerations to achieve ownership of learning by the creation of multiple perspectives from the learners' own community and its perspective in the global world.

The literature stated that higher education has so far been reluctant to respond to heutagogy. However, it was found in the signature module to be a credible way of addressing critical issues that students will face within the workplace. In an ever-changing supercomplex world a heutagogical, and in this case also an andragogical, approach to learning helped them voice their own opinions in order to become lifelong learners that are also critical thinkers.

Practical Implications for Career Counseling and Guidance

In the introduction it has been mentioned that Yoon (2003) states that effective online teaching is a blend of pedagogy, technology and organisational support. With this it is meant that systems, procedures and policies must be in place to guarantee success, but Chireshe (2012) quotes Watts, Varalakshmi and Moly when he argues that career counselling and guidance are crucial to the success of the lifelong learner in order to make better informed choices about their future education, training and occupational choices.

Chireshe (2012). compares developed countries such as Finland and the United States of America with Africa and quotes Cosser and Du Toit who found that 60 % of South African students have had no career guidance and counselling. These students enter Higher Education on a trial and error basis. He is of the opinion that even if they had received guidance and counselling it was inadequate to help them to make the right choices as he believes that the increasing complexities in society, industry and technology development will make it difficult for students to adjust themselves to society, work, and family. Hence the crucial need for career counselling and guidance with well-resourced centres where advisors and academics work closely together. If this fails to happen Chireshe (2012, pp. 305–309) is of the opinion that all our efforts to prepare lifelong learners for the complexities of the workplace will be in vain as they will not be able to be active managers of their own career paths.

Chapter Summary

This article has been written with the aim of providing the reader with insight into the process behind the design of an online module. The literature was consulted with particular emphasis on the critical thinking skills of the students around ethics and how these skills would enhance their employability in a digital workplace in the future. The article has attempted to show that the rapidly changing context of the workplace requires radical changes in the teaching methods and modes of delivery on the part of higher education institutions, which have to deliver students that will form an autonomous and self-directed workforce. Experienced designers of ODL study materials should re-examine their previous practices and need to embrace e-learning as a platform where knowledge can be shared and discussed amongst peers. The concept of designing learning experiences for the lifelong and life-wide learner was explained in praxis through the use of a case study of the signature module from the College of Economics and Management Sciences.

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