

From career decision-making to career decision-management: New trends and prospects for career counseling

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ABSTRACT

The primary goal of this paper is to present a number of recent major theoretical and empirical advances in the field of career decision-making since this process has been increasingly identified by experts as a relatively subjective experience. In this line, a series of conceptual shifts concerning career decision-making and the relevant fundamental problem of career indecision are described. In particular, it seems that the scope of career guidance and counseling has moved from some rigid constructs (e.g. “sources of indecision”, “decision-making styles”) to more flexible, dynamic, holistic and multi-dimensional concepts (e.g. “coping strategies”, “positive psychosocial strengths-resources”, “future time perspective”) that may support the individuals in making better career decisions in the complex world of work of the 21st century. Another aim of the article, on the basis of the aforementioned developments, is to provide proposals for the construction of an effective model for dealing with career decision-making challenges, in which the transition from the simple possession of related skills to the need of managing the decision-making process is adumbrated. Finally, specific implications and ideas regarding the use of methods and techniques intended for career interventions with young adults are discussed.

Keywords: career management, career decision-making, career indecision, coping strategies, future time perspective, positive strengths in career decisions, career counseling interventions

The current economic crisis has increased uncertainty to a very large extent and created enormous difficulties in the decision-making process regarding the planning of a career whilst the margin of error has been substantially restricted. Under the circumstances, the educational and vocational decisions do not appear to be following a linear career development but rather a non linear course. For this reason, the traditional and restrictive views that the decisions of individuals determine to a large degree the outcome of their life appear to be gradually disputed (Savickas, 2011). By contrast, it is thought that the career decision-making is a multi-dimensional and complex process (Gadassi, Gati, & Dayan, 2012) with sustained and continuous course where a decision could either be converted or replaced by another.

Of course, it is not possible to predict how the future labour market will be because the economic, political, environmental, social and other parameters that influence it are not normally stable or easily foreseen. Consequently, we cannot have an exact picture of the way in which people will be making decisions in the next few years (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, 2016).

Accordingly, while in the past the question asked by individuals regarding their career was: *'What profession shall I follow that match my personal characteristics?'* or *'What profession shall I follow in order to find work?'* now the following question is prevalent: *'How will I design my career in the best possible way so as to respond to the variety of changes and the unexpected educational and vocational choices?'* (Argyropoulou, 2017). So, formerly, the decision-making skills (i.e. the activation of the individual regarding work, exploration of choices, the discovery and adoption of the best of them and their execution) (Facione & Facione, 2007) looked to be enough in order to secure professional security, today's labour market tendencies show that a successful and effective decision-making relies on additional skills or meta-skills. Meta-skills are regarded high level skills which allow in other skills to be used and developed (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, Argyropoulou, Drosos, Kaliris, & Mikedaki, 2015) and which individuals are called upon to develop in order to respond to decision-making effectively. It concerns a combination of personality elements, behavioural and social skills which seem to be particularly important in the decision-making management, career exploration, life planning (Savickas, 2013) and the confrontation of the professional changes (Akkermans, Brenninkmeijer, Huibers, & Blonk, 2013)

As the world of work becomes more and more complex as well as more flexible, people are expected to develop their existing skills relating to the career decision-making. In the present article, based on a review of the recent literature, we are attempting to give a spherical viewpoint regarding the theoretical developments in the field of career decision-making during the recent decades. Subsequently, we intend to provide proposals for the construction of a more effective model of career decision-making, in which the transition from the simple possession of related skills to the need for the management of the career decision-making process is adumbrated. In the framework of this effort and on the basis of the modern literature we are putting forward a number of implications for career intervention which relate to the confrontation of career indecision in young adults and the facilitation of the career decision-making process.

The Adaptability of Career Decision-Making Profiles: From career decision-making styles to flexible career decision making profiles

People do not take decisions in the same way. The styles or the strategies of decision-making refer to patterns of behaviour, or the methodology that every individual follows in order that their decision should have the best possible result (e.g. rational, intuitive, dependent) (Argyropoulou, Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, & Giannitsas, 2006). Previous studies of career decision-making styles have yielded mainly taxonomies based on the assumption that decision-making style is a fairly stable personality trait (Harren, 1979). Research in this field has typically focused on the classification of individuals into a "type," based on a single dominant characteristic (Arroba, 1977). However, studies using such taxonomies to investigate individuals' decision making have revealed that this approach may be insufficient for diagnosing individuals in a way that can help them advance in their career decision-making process (Singh & Greenhaus, 2004).

The complex character of making decisions leads today the researchers to approach the style of career decisions with the term 'profile' in order to express the large number of factors which shape such a decision (Gati, Landman, Davidovitch, Asulin-Peretz, & Gadassi, 2010). The profile of every individual differs because each one of us is a different personality and the style of thought varies according to the case and the circumstances. The adoption of the term 'profile' focus on the individual's personality elements as well as external factors on the basis of which it is possible to determine the way the individual takes decisions (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, Argyropoulou, & Drosos, 2011). Under the circumstances, it appears that individuals use a

variety of methods for decision-making, led by a combination of characteristics, in contrast with the previously held perceptions of one dominant 'type'. This perception which is referred to in such a complex strategy offers more and particularly targeted information for the way individuals take decisions (Willner, Gati, & Guan, 2015).

Career decision-making adaptability pertains to the ability to make career decisions after sufficiently considering information needed for the decision, without unnecessary delays in either entering or completing the process (Gadassi et al., 2012). Based on this conceptualization, the focus on the adaptiveness of *specific dimensions of the decision-making profile* rather than on a *global style* is especially important considering recent evidence to the understanding of progress in the career decision-making process (Gati, Gadassi, & Mashiah-Cohen, 2012). Specifically, more comprehensive information gathering, more analytic information processing, a more internal locus of control, more effort invested, lower levels of procrastination, greater speed of making the final decision, less dependence on others, and less desire to please others are considered to formulate the adaptive career decision-making profile (Gati & Levin, 2014). Therefore, those that are more adaptive invest in career decision-making, lead to a positive attitude towards career planning and career exploration and have been more satisfied with their decision (Vertsberger & Gati, 2015)..

The information gathered by a client about their *career decision-making adaptability* provide a more refined portrait of the client's needs as they directly present the ways he or she is making career decisions. This crucial type of information also highlights the importance of using career decision-making-specific dimensions in career management. The acquired information about the adaptability of the dimensions may be directly presented to educate the client on career decision-making, helping them this way to build great confidence in their own ability to achieve their occupational goals (Willner et al., 2015). Being aware of a client's career decision-making profile makes it possible to facilitate the decision-making process and to tailor counseling interventions to the specific client more sensitively (Gati et al., 2010). Knowing, for example, that a client is more analytic than holistic in the information-processing dimension, or that the client has little willingness to compromise, should shape the way the counselor conveys information and communicates with the client (Gati & Levin, 2014).

Coping with Career Indecision: From exploring the sources of indecision to coping strategies with career indecision

The changes in the labour market have led to an increase in the number of transitions from one job to another during the period of an individual's life; the more decisions individuals need to make in relation to their professional journey the more possible it is to meet with difficulties while making them. Thus, these difficulties create confusion and anxiety as a result of a wrong decision, compromise or hesitation as to what is the best possible choice, delay, or postponement of the decision-making process (Frydenberg, 2008)

Numerous publications over the past two or three decades have pointed that career indecision is considered as a dichotomy (i.e. clients were categorised as either equipped to make viable career decisions or not equipped to do so). Over time, the belief grew that clients could be plotted on a one-dimensional continuum anchored by 'undecided' and 'decided'. This view was in turn replaced by the belief that career indecision should be seen as a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Several studies have focused on various aspects of career indecision, such as cognitive, emotional, and personality-related aspects, and researchers have developed taxonomies and appropriate diagnostic instruments in order to map these difficulties (e.g. Saka, Gati, & Kelly, 2008; Gati et al., 2011). Therefore, researchers in career counseling devised assessment instruments to determine the nature of clients' indecision and began to design

different interventions for different subcategories of indecision (Gati & Willner, 2013; Gati, Osipow, Krausz, & Saka, 2000). Indeed, understanding the sources of career indecision is important because it allows career counselors to better match their counseling strategies to the major sources of their clients' decision making problems and foster more effective coping with these difficulties. This 'positivist' approach is useful for designing satisfactory interventions for career indecision.

On the other hand, a stress-specific approach might facilitate an understanding of how individuals cope with career indecision. How individuals approach this problem is of vital interest to career counselors for helping their clients deal better with the challenge of making career decisions more effectively. For that reason, coping with career indecision focuses on the way individuals confront the difficulties or threats they face in career decision-making using strategies which facilitate or hinder coping with these difficulties. Lipshits-Braziler, Gati, and Tatar (2016) proposed a model, which is divided into three major clusters of strategies, namely: *Productive coping* that facilitates coping with career indecision, *Support-seeking* which includes strategies that involve others in coping with one's career indecision and *Non-productive coping* that includes strategies that hinder coping with career indecision.

Various techniques, strategies, and interventions are at the disposal of career counselors to help clients resolve their career indecision and deal more effectively with the challenges of the career decision-making process. Career counselors can implement a multi-dimensional approach for organizing and mapping coping categories in order to help their clients to cope with the impasse brought on them.

Future time perspective in career decision making: From a carefully designed decision to a decision that entails a future time perspective

Traditionally, the career decision-making is considered a logical process which includes knowledge, goal assessment, exploration, commitment, application, and reassessment (Guyrdham & Tyler, 1992). A carefully planned career decision invariably leads to important future vocational outcomes. However, the individuals can never be sure that a decision could be right in time, further than the moment they took it, because even if they could control the external factors they could never avoid their internal changes (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou, 1993). However, some people tend to be more prepared to make career decisions than other people. Betz, Klein, and Taylor (1996) view career decision self-efficacy as a key and necessary component in successful career decision-making. Career decision self-efficacy is defined as having confidence to make decisions based upon one's self-concept, goals, and career options. The notions of career decision-making and career decision-making self-efficacy include time perspective as an implicit variable in "expectancy, anticipation, estimation, or subjective probability of future success" (Savickas, Silling, & Schwartz, 1984, p. 259).

Time perspective has been defined as an individual's ability to move into the past through the use of memory and/or to imagine the future (Savickas, 1991). Future time perspective, in particular, has been conceptually understood as the individuals' mental representation of the future (Husman & Shell, 2008). Individuals who are future-oriented typically have a better understanding of how their current behavior serves a direct role in attaining future goals. Two important aspects of future time perspective that have been found to be of particular relevance are "valence" and "perceived instrumentality". Valence has been described as the importance individuals attribute or place on goals that can be attained in the future. Husman and Shell (2008) suggested that valuing the future is one indicator that individuals are oriented to the future. Perceived instrumentality is an individual's understanding of the value of present behavior in effecting future goals.

Savickas and Lent (1994) assumed that valence (valuing future goals) and instrumentality (importance placed on the connection between present tasks and future goals) would be associated with career-decision-making self-efficacy and career indecision. People who tend to be more future-oriented may have more focus on what they want and might be taking necessary steps to achieve their desired occupational outcome. Consequently, exploring the self, future career goals and the tasks required to meet those goals, would be key features that lead to a sense of confidence in making career-related decisions (Walker & Tracey, 2012).

According to the above, the subjective sense of the prospect of time helps individuals to orientate themselves towards the future (Ferrari, Nota, & Soresi, 2010), to realise the long-term advantages of the decision-making process and to remain in a continuous awareness of the procedure. From a practical point of view this may well mean that in order for individuals to take the best professional decisions it is not enough only to activate themselves towards the decision-making process or to become aware with the various stages of decision-making, but also to adopt a 'progressive attitude' which will strengthen the reasons they act in a constructive way in decision-making situations, while they would assess if the specific actions are towards the 'right' direction.

The sense of control in career decision-making: From career decision-making self-efficacy to personal mastery in career decision making

The rapid changes in work environments and work structures as well as the continuous introduction of new technologies have brought about the need for new and multiple career skills so that individuals would effectively manage them. This changing structure in the nature of career is also in tandem with the post-modern internationalization or globalization of the world economies, hence, the labour market demands for career adaptability skills of the workforce (Saari & Rashid, 2013). Individuals all over the world are usually concerned about their future and this can be expressed in diverse manners of career decisions. The career decision process can be difficult and may result in career indecision (Brown et al., 2012). For that reason, career decision-making self-efficacy is considered a necessary component of successful career decision-making.

Career decision-making not only includes career decision-making self-efficacy but also has a link with career adaptability skills. Career adaptability is a self-regulatory, transactional, and flexible competency for coping with developmental tasks, like career decision-making, present and future changes in the career context. This set of abilities promotes adjustment and successful transition across the career life span (Rudolph, Lavigne, & Zacher, 2017). It is characterized by four Cs: control, curiosity, confidence and concern (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Career decision-making strongly aligns with the adaptability dimension; "control" (Savickas, 2013). Control refers to the need of the individuals to exercise some influence on the environment and the formation of the career matters that concern them. It expresses the need of the individuals for a conscious, expedient and organised realisation of targets in regard to their professional development and relevant transitions. Those with high sense of control assume high personal responsibility for their decisions, negotiate career changes, while their autonomy and trust in their own powers is increased (Ebenehi, Rashid, & Bakar, 2016). Moreover, individuals who have for any reason a narrower range of career alternatives, through the exercise of control, are able to examine the restricted number of possibilities they have and give a personal meaning to their available choices (Savickas, 2013).

Therefore, individuals who feel more personal mastery over their lives may be more able to adapt to the world of work. Numerous theorists have proposed that having a high sense of personal control will relate positively to an individual's career decision-making process and

work satisfaction (Duffy, 2010). Persons holding a high sense of control also tend to believe that they are responsible for constructing their careers (Savickas, 2005). Savickas (2010) maintains clients who show career indecision (which is, in essence, an indication of pending transformation and change in outlook) demonstrate a lack of the career control needed to make sound career-life decisions. Therefore, for adult clients to be able to effectively adapt to changes in their work environment, or for students to be flexible in their career decision-making process, it may be important that they have a high sense of personal control. Doing so may foster the notion that the ability to adapt is under their own power and not governed by external factors.

Life designing in career decision making: From an objective decision to a subjective experience

In modern society, work has shifted to become not just a means of survival but a part of our integral identity as people. Career decisions are no longer a single discrete choice made at one point in time. Instead, people can now expect to hold multiple positions in various areas of employment. For such movements, career focuses in creating, maintaining, and continually adjusting one's core identity. Developing a strong and certain identity may allow for people to cope with uncertainties in the modern world of work and support people to go through various transitions with integrity (Lei & Woodend, 2014).

Career is a lifelong process consisting of continuous decision-making incidents that are influenced holistically. That is, decision-making is not based solely on interests or traits, but also on such things as familial influence, market pressures, and societal expectations (Savickas et al., 2009). The result of this broader perspective is that decisions that are appropriate in one context may become obsolete in another one, necessitating a revision of the decision-making process and the understanding of career over the lifetime. The challenge then becomes navigating expectations to pick one career with the reality of multiple career identities within the life span. Namely, considering that once we pick one direction, we then must negotiate switching or adjusting career paths as well as possibly letting go of previous paths and goals.

Overall, it seems apparent from all previous considerations that contemporary careers require decision-making processes which are formed through various subjective experiences and influences that may significantly differ among individuals, depending on their cultural background, education, gender, domestic labour markets, family and societal influences. Career and life decisions may also adhere with different meanings for each person, according to the context/contexts one lives in and designs their career.

As a result, clients may be encouraged to explore previous decisions through sharing meaningfully crafted stories. Life stories are a valuable tool for the definition of a variety of subjects, life roles and problems people face while making decisions. The narratives reflect personal values, attitudes and beliefs, hence, comprising basic components in the decision-making process in relation to professional plans or the reformulation of the career (Tsergas, 2016). With the use of narration, the individuals authenticate the stories of their career in order to make up 'a grand story' for the educational/vocational personal course. In other words, the concern for the previous decisions leads towards a reassessment of the decisions and it is transformed into a future rethinking (regarding the strengths, the possibilities, and the aims) and finally to the planning of life.

Career counselors working from a life design-career construction perspective help their clients identify major life themes, choose careers, construct themselves, and, in the process, make meaning of their lives. Career counselors emphasize the importance of meaning-making which

is generated in and through clients' career decisions (Maree, 2016). Being able to narrate one's career-life story (Savickas et al., 2009) facilitates decision-making because it helps clients locate career choice issues in the bigger pattern of lived meaning. The notion of 'narratability' involves the use of narratives to shed light on career-related choices, and, ultimately, promote clients' capacity to make decisions. 'Narratability' works as a means of strengthening self-confidence and independence, encouraging a positive position and empowering the autonomy of the clients—factors which could contribute to well-taken decisions.

From skills and talents to positive strengths-resources in the decision-making process

Character strengths can be defined as individuals' positive characteristics expressed through behavior, thoughts and feelings, and can provide a sense of meaning and fulfillment. They compose personality and identity, and make us who we are (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The beauty of character strengths is that we all have each of them in some degree, but there is a unique combination or constellation of strengths that makes us who we are. They are distinguished from other kinds of strengths, such as skills or talents. Whereas strengths are assumed to come natural to a person, skills are learned through training or experience. Talents on the other hand are innate abilities which are characterized by a strong biological background (Niemic, 2013). According to this definition, talents do somehow come natural to a person however they do not necessarily evoke feelings of energy, joy, or authenticity, as the use of character strengths does. The character strengths most highly associated with meaning in career are wisdom, courage, humanity, self-regulation, open-mindedness, spirituality, gratitude, hope, optimism, resilience (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007). We claim that better decisions are made when we leverage and capitalize on our strengths instead of simply focusing on trying to mitigate or eliminate our decision-making weaknesses. When we focus on our strengths instead of our failures, we simply learn more (Dye, 2009).

According to Peterson and Seligman (2004) wisdom is representing a superior level of knowledge and judgment that is used for the good of oneself and that of others, and define prudence as a cognitive orientation to the future, a form of practical reasoning and self-management that contributes to the achievement of long term goals. It is easy to imagine utilizing these strengths when we make a decision. Other strengths such as open-mindedness and hopefulness have less of a direct tie to decision making, but appear to be more helpful to the process when they are broken down into such constituent parts. Thus, open-mindedness can be broken down into and clarified as judgment and critical thinking while future orientation is listed as an integral part of hopefulness. Resilience also, can be vitally important in decision-making after an individual or an organization has experienced a significant setback (Fair, 2014).

Finally, courage seems a crucial strength as it could result in an individual to move forward by making decisions and envision their future optimistically despite possible risks. Consequently, it seems that such courageous attitudes relate to fewer career decision-making difficulties (Argyropoulou, Katsioulas, Drosos, & Kaliris, in press. Kaliris et al., 2017). Moreover, Sovet, Annovazzi, Ginevra, Kaliris, & Lodi (2018) in a cross-cultural research including adolescents from three countries (France, Greece, and Italy) showed that higher levels of courage were associated with higher career adaptability levels in these samples, whereby courage was found to be a good predictor of career adaptability. Moreover, results of Argyropoulou et al. (in press)'s survey with 11th and 12th grade upper-secondary school students showed that the psychosocial strength of courage was negatively correlated with the maladaptive decision-making characteristic (as measured with CDMP; Gati et al., 2010) of "desire to please others" and positively correlated with other adaptive facets of the process, namely (a) "Aspiration for

an ideal occupation”, (b) “Internal locus of control”, and (c) “Speed of making the final decision”.

DISCUSSION

In this paper, based on robust contemporary literature and empirical research we attempted to show that career decision-making is a complex and multidimensional process. This seems especially true today where postmodern work contexts are characterized by rapid change, fluidity and conditions of instability. Nowadays, individuals are facing numerous career-related challenges, educational and work transitions (Di Fabio, Maree, & Kenny, 2018) as engaging in stable work environments across one’s life tends to be a disappearing option.

To help clients make better career decisions, many career counselors try not only to guide their clients toward the “right” decision but also to help them overcome the difficulties that impede their career decision-making. Many counselors often attempt to teach their clients how to make career decisions by providing insights about which actions are adaptive for career decision making. Career choice is essentially a situation in which an individual is in the process of deciding which occupational alternative(s) to pursue. To this end, the individual compares and evaluates the different alternatives using various factors. Consequently, facilitating clients’ career decision-making can be better achieved if each client’s unique ways of making career decisions are taken into account and his or her difficulties are discovered.

Maree (2016) distinguishes between two broad groups of people facing points of transition that may result in career indecision, which can be defined as ‘an inability to make a decision about the vocation one wishes to pursue’. The first group of people may experience career indecision when they are expected to make a ‘natural’ transition or face a ‘natural’ crossroads requiring career-related decisions. The second group of people begins to question as to whether the choices they made are the ‘right’ (appropriate) ones. Therefore, counselors have to be aware of both situations that their clients may face. Individuals often find themselves overwhelmed, struggle to plan their professional future in the face of the practically endless possibilities they can attempt to realize, and seek professional help in the quest for a college major or deciding on a career path that will fulfill them.

Grounded on the previous assumptions, it is profound that the emphasis on career counseling interventions nowadays should be shifted from solely guiding and counseling clients for making a single right decision to support them in managing their life and career projects more effectively. Sound career decisions play a central role in this attempt but this variety of decisions may no longer focus only on rational information-processing, including evaluation of the options and a final choice. Although this strategy is optional and effective for some people, others may find that it does not help them define themselves in the career era; what they really want to achieve and what they really want to become in work and across their lives in a broader sense. After all, life projects are always intertwined with career issues while it seems that careers belong to people who also take the responsibility of managing their career and life projects (Guichard, 2018).

Our claim is that career counselors should have in mind that the goal for clients is not to make optional career decisions but rather help them enable their identity identification through career counseling procedures and techniques. Some predominant contemporary shifts in career decision-making and career counseling itself which were discussed in this article may serve as a guide for counselors, in correspondence with some emerging clients’ needs, in order to help them cope with career planning challenges in a more effective manner. Although, there may be no way to integrate the variety of all these innovative components discussed herein

together in one set of skills and attitudes for decision-making, a career professional may utilize in each occasion those ones that fit for specific clients.

Some interesting notions such as that of “reflexivity” regarding career and life projects may stand as a promising new feature in facing complex career decision-making issues. By enhancing reflexivity individuals can reach self-awareness; thus balancing aspects of identity that relate to the past, the present and the future. Through this process clients are able to identify authentic aspects of the self and consequently choose life and career projects characterized by clarity. Doing so, they are facilitated to offer meaning to their decisions and thereby, advance their professional and personal lives and well-being (Di Fabio et al., 2018).

Another important aspect relates to the demonstrated link between various personality constructs and career indecisiveness (e.g. Di Fabio, Palazzeschi, Asulin-Peretz, & Gati, 2013; Di Fabio, Palazzeschi, Levin, & Gati, 2014; Gati et al., 2010; Saka & Gati, 2007) which calls for interventions which should take into account personality characteristics of the clients. For example, Di Fabio et al.’s (2014) research results showed that regardless of the specific educational setting that young adults are currently at, those who are less extroverted and more neurotic are likely to experience more career indecision. Such findings support the need for further research on individual inputs linked to career decision making difficulties, as well as the possibility that career indecision should be reconceptualized to better describe its manifestations among different groups.

It is also important to note that drastic changes in the world of work, society, and economy require individuals to become more resourceful and to exercise career-adaptive behaviours (Lent & Brown, 2013; Savickas, 2013). In general, individuals who use their positive characteristics pursue to solve the career-related problems, tend to be more able to perform courageous behaviors with regard to their future decisions despite perceived obstacles and cope with risks related to their future. This type of attitude may favor a more positive cognitive judgement of their career life (Bockorny, 2015). As shown in this paper there is a movement in current research towards the examination of the role that positive psychosocial strengths-resources play for career development and decision-making. Several findings seem to be promising in that positive characteristics relate negatively with some maladaptive decision-making behaviors (e.g. need to please others) and positively with more adaptive ones (e.g. a more internal locus of control). Therefore, both counselors and clients should be aware of and benefit from the ways in which some adaptive decision-making styles and positive strengths-resources of their clients (i.e. hope, resilience, courage, career adaptability, etc.) could facilitate choices about educational, work and other personal projects.

Career counselors could propose orientation activities to promote career concern and a sense of control to their clients. They may also use techniques such as modeling and vicarious learning to foster confidence and the development of positive characteristics in persisting to reach future decisions (Rossier, 2015). Besides individual career counseling, group life design interventions could be implemented to demonstrate the utility of the above strengths. Overall, considering oneself able to construct own future career intentions and to handle career decisions may favor the tendency to execute intentional acts to pursue own goals despite perceived obstacles and risks related to the future. These actions seem to be positively linked to life satisfaction (Ginevra et al., 2018).

An idea we identified through the literature review is that it might be useful for career interventions to synthesize some influential contemporary elements related with career decision-making in order to explore the utility of a new comprehensive career decision-

management intervention. Compared to the traditional methodologies, a possible new model may mostly endorse the exploitation of positive psychosocial resources–strengths (career adaptability, resilience, hope, courage etc.) of the clients. In an initial stage this sort of intervention may also encompass the significant component of exploring the coping strategies the client uses to deal with difficulties in decision-making. By reaching this end we assume that a greater sense of awareness would have already been accomplished. Then, in a next phase, a greater emphasis could also be placed on fostering a sense of control in clients through the use of self-efficacy enhancement techniques (i.e. exercises about the worthiness of past accomplishments, role modeling etc.) and by initiating discussions about how aspirations, goals and actions taking place at the present tend to formulate a future-time orientation in career development. This future-time perspective would be of great value in this hypothesized model as it could energize and motivate clients in order to take specific actions towards the accomplishment of their future goals. In tandem with these mainly positivist approaches, it would be useful throughout the sessions to constantly investigate possible connections between several life themes brought up by the client and support “narratability”. This approach could enhance meaning-making about career and life issues so that the client is urged to realize what they want to accomplish and what they really need to become.

CAREER COUNSELING IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Young adults face the subject of their definite departure from the parental home and the effort of achieving their own identity. This period of their life includes the question ‘What do I do afterwards?’, their further studies or some ‘trials’ with various jobs and the effort to adjust to them seeking an answer to the question ‘Is this how work is in reality?’. As a result the disappointment for the values and the views prevailing in the working environment could create additional disputes and dilemmas in the career decision-making raising new questions of the type ‘How right were the educational decisions made during one’s adolescent period?’ or ‘How can I succeed more effectively in my social and work adjustment?’ (Nathan & Hill, 2006).

Higher education students often face enormous career planning difficulties. During their period of study in tertiary education some students insist that they do not have a clear self-awareness. Often they declare that ‘I don’t know my abilities and my talents’ in order to decide which professional direction they will follow. Other problems that could be discovered during this particular age period are the pressure from others; or conflicts as a result of imposed values; or refusal to assume responsibility for the decision; or non-execution of the career decision as a result of economic recession; or the unrealistic desire to find quickly and painlessly a “secure” position.

Young people need support in order to manage effectively the career decision-making process. They may benefit from adopting the view of skills development for the management of decision-making including the aforementioned suggestions for formulating a new theoretical model. We consider that students need to recognise and define what is that makes it difficult for them to decide, to explore and discuss possible irrational ideas they have for themselves and their plans or some subconscious conflict or dilemma which prevents them from taking a decision. It is important that counselors help young people to realise that the methods of decision-making vary among individuals, but also from one environment to another. The development of techniques which facilitate the way an individual makes decisions allows them to work out their feelings and decide in correspondence with their needs and abilities. As a result, young people understand the decision-making process as a challenge for which they need to make use of fitting methods in order to face it and in this way to solve the difficulties related to future career planning.

Despite the fact that many young adults face career decision-making problems (for example Vertsberger & Gati, 2015 showed in their study that 65% of the participants indicated that it was difficult for them to choose a field of study), very few intend to seek help from an expert [only 46% in Vertsberger & Gati's (2015)]. Young individuals tend to use easily accessible sources of support (e.g. people close to them, incumbents in occupations they are considering), even when they perceive some of them as being less effective. However, it has been shown that not using any type of support increases the likelihood for a student of being indecisive for choosing a major. Therefore, both University Professors and family should encourage young adults who are deliberating on several alternatives to seek support from a career counselor (serving, for example, at the career office of the institution) or counseling center or use relevant online resources. It is advisable to convince students that it is better to use any type of support rather than none. Therefore, we have to inform young adults about the various available types of support. School counselors should speak to both the students and their parents and explain the importance of the advantages of seeking professional help when it is needed (Vertsberger & Gati, 2015).

Among the most prevalent difficulties in career decision-making are those related to dysfunctional beliefs about career choices. Several studies reported that the dysfunctional beliefs scale of the Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ; Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996) has one of the highest scale means of all the difficulty categories in a number of cultural contexts. However, dysfunctional beliefs have been shown to be the difficulty category that young adults are least aware of (Amir & Gati, 2006). Such beliefs impede career decision-making due to their unfavorable consequences (e.g., lack of motivation, procrastination, and regret). Dysfunctional career beliefs have been shown to lead to detrimental consequences, such as avoiding the process, beginning the process but not finishing it, or making less than optimal decisions.

According to Hechtlinger, Levin, and Gati (2017) such beliefs should be evaluated on the basis of their effect on the career decision-making process itself and not just be viewed as inherently "irrational" or "negative.". Thus, eliciting young adults' dysfunctional beliefs, bringing them to their attention, helping them realize that such beliefs are dysfunctional, and then challenging them are essential components of career counseling. This can be done through the use of a new instrument that measures several dimensions related with this sort of beliefs, the DCB (Hechtlinger et al., 2017). Reframing involves altering beliefs from dysfunctional to functional ones (Hechtlinger et al., 2017). An interesting example that seems to optimally serve the purpose of reframing such beliefs is that of challenging the 'criticality belief' (i.e. great importance of the decision). The client and the counselor could discuss the discrepancy between beliefs involving the criticality of the decision and the current state of the world of work, where individuals often make career changes during their life (Pryor & Bright, 2014). Then discuss examples of people who changed their career path successfully. The counselor can demonstrate that decreasing one's belief in the criticality of the decision does not mean that the client should not invest any effort in the process but rather should realize that although their decision is important, it is still not irrevocable.

There is a broad repertoire of sound decision-making instruments a career counselor can use with their clients to resolve decision-making issues (see for example, EPCD, CDDQ, CDMP, recently SCCI and DCB). Although one specialist may not use them all in the sessions with a client he or she may find useful to use some of them in an eclectic manner, with respect to the client's needs. For instance, using EPCD helps locating the sources of the client's indecisiveness in terms of three major clusters: pessimistic views, anxiety, and self-concept and identity. Assessing the sources of a client's general indecisiveness may reveal that the client is anxious

not only about making the decision, but also because of the uncertainty involved in their future preferences and changes in the world of work. In such cases, the counselor can devote some of the counseling sessions to discussing these issues or refer the client to an appropriate fellow professional. The CDMP is another tool that can assist in assessing career decision-making styles. Gati and Levin (2014) suggest that counselors use it only after mapping the client's career decision making difficulties. This is because the client's career decision-making profile provides the counselor with information about the way a person typically deals with these decision-making difficulties. Moreover, characterizing the client's decision making profile is a way to reveal maladaptive decision-making behaviors. Gadassi et al. (2012) showed that certain CDMP dimensions have a more adaptive pole (e.g., internal locus of control and less dependence on others); therefore, a client's high scores in maladaptive CDMP dimensions should signal the counselor to focus on additional counseling goals. For example, if a university student receives a high score in the CDMP dimension "desire to please others", the counselor can illustrate the importance of balancing one's own desires with those of significant others.

We recommend a flexible use of these assessments with young adults, always according to their actual needs. The major advantages of integrating such structured career indecision assessments into the one-on-one counseling process are (Gati & Levin, 2014): Firstly, that the use of assessments together with automated scoring and interpretation validated by a group of expert career counselors (e.g. Amir, Gati, & Kleiman, 2008) can assist counselors by corroborating their intuitions on possible difficulties. Secondly, they provide a more refined portrait of the clients' needs. Thirdly, they can increase the counselor's confidence in the assessment of these needs.

It is also important for counselors and researchers to consider in their interventions recent data showing that career indecision consists of both trait and state components which can be measured and might require different counseling approaches. Some part of career indecision is a state, thus it is likely that this will improve with time due to self-guided career exploration and planning as students advance in their university years. Career counselors could assist this process by providing career information and self-assessments for students. However, as a large part of career indecision is relatively stable many students are unable to resolve it simply by advancing through their university experience. These students would need more profound counseling than just providing information or a simple self-assessment. In such cases, it is crucial to address negative self-views, perceived barriers, and self-efficacy (Jaensch, Hirschi, & Freund, 2015).

It is also vital that we, as counselors, do not only understand the causes of clients' indecision, but also help them cope more effectively with their concerns. The study of coping subsumes the regulation of emotion, attention, behavior, motivation, and cognition, and focuses on how people organize or coordinate these features of action under stress, or fail to do so (Skinner et al., 2003). Individuals usually adapt their strategies to the demands of the particular problem (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). The effective use of coping skills is one of a number of factors that foster resilience in career development and help people anticipate or avert unfavorable outcomes (Lent & Brown, 2013). Helping young adults deal effectively with their career decision-making concerns is thus an especially critical function for career counselors.

Coping strategies (productive and nonproductive) as well as career decision-making self-efficacy are significant predictors of career indecision. Determining the more productive strategies would be useful in designing interventions to help young people cope more effectively. It is also advantageous to educate young adults in ways of reducing the use of non-productive coping strategies (Lipshits-Braziler, 2018) –since the effectiveness of productive

coping strategies could not be conclusively determined as shown through various studies-while, reinforcing their career decision-making self-efficacy. More specifically, if a client tends to use non-productive coping methods such as self-blame, helplessness, or ruminative thinking, the counselor could discover them and initiate a discussion about whether or not they are helping them regulate emotions and/or solve specific career problems. Lipshits-Brazilier (2018) also advocates that career counselors may need to focus more on the active attempts of the client to resolve the problem rather than on the outcome. Further research should investigate which strategies are more effective than others for coping with specific difficulties. This can be done by finding associations between young adults' sources of career indecision and their use of coping strategies (Lipshits-Brazilier, Gati, & Tatar, 2015).

Career counseling interventions that attempt to develop young people's coping skills should teach positive cognitive appraisal (Lipshits-Brazilier, 2018), that is, how to see career decision-making as challenging rather than threatening. To do so the counselor could use techniques for positive reappraisal and reinterpretation of stressful situations, establish a positive mood, identify a young adult's profile of coping strategies, which can help further tailor counseling to that particular client's needs. The SCCI (Strategies for Coping with Career Indecision) questionnaire (Lipshits-Brazilier et al., 2015) fills a void as it provides a new tool for assessing the way individuals cope with career indecision and makes it easier to recommend ways of dealing more effectively with such difficulties. The SCCI could be administered before initiating face-to-face counseling or at its very beginning. This can save in-session time for processing and discussing the results (Gati & Levin, 2014). During the session the counselor may review the results obtained from the assessment, verify them, and discuss the conclusions with the client (Gati & Levin, 2014).

Individuals do not always engage in technically "rational" behaviors, often making decisions based on their own "pragmatic rationality" (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997), responding to randomly occurring opportunities (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996; Hambly, 2007) in an 'intuitive' way (Harren, 1979). Furthermore, counselors should know that any decisions about career enactment have to be placed in a particular spatial, labour market and socio-cultural context (Bimrose & Brown, 2015). The management of the career decision-making process presupposes that one places meaning to the decisions. Therefore, the career counselor needs to help the young people to distinguish the decision-making as a subjective experience (Savickas, 1997). Savickas (2005) adds that career indecision frequently signifies hesitation before transformation occurs and presents oscillatory movement in search of meaning.

Higher education students, in particular, unlike other population groups, are at a distance from the labour market, with their most recent experiences of decision-making typically relating to education rather than work. Hence their perspectives about making a career decision may seem more removed, compared with adults in employment (Bimrose & Brown, 2015). Thus, cultivating a future time perspective in this age group may be a key factor for effective career decision-making (Walker & Tracey, 2012). The lack of direct experience of making career decisions and the lack of clearly articulated career goals in university students means that any exercise or assessment handed in them should be grounded on how these individuals actually make career decisions and not in how they imagine they might make decisions.

The exploitation of the positive characteristics and strengths of the young people foster not only the feeling of control in the career decision-making process but also the belief that their sufficiency in relation to the process depends mainly on their own resources. The positive powers may strengthen the motivation for action and the perceived progress towards the targets. As a result, the individuals continue the pursuit of their decisions and believe that they

are capable of achieving them successfully. This all shows that if counselors are able to help young people to discern and exploit their positive powers in an effective way, they would help them to confront problems which exist when taking career decisions and the uncertainty for the future (Larsen, Edey, & LeMay, 2007).

When career decision is at issue, counselors may need to accept the value of narrative approaches to career counseling in addition to 'positivist' ones in order to help their clients identify major life themes, choose careers, construct themselves, and, in the process, make meaning of their lives. More specifically, the ability of young adults (e.g. students) to narrate their stories and draw upon them will help them deal with crucial career decisions as and when they occur. Understanding central life themes will help them in the career decision-making process appreciate the importance of not choosing a field of study solely on the basis of test results and just expecting to be successful in the associated career. They should first of all clarify the initial pain they wish to master and build upon this insight when they choose careers and construct themselves. In doing so, they will be able to turn their pain into hope, heal themselves and others, and make substantial social contributions (Maree, 2016).

In line with Maree (2016), we would recommend the integration of the well-established positivist approaches (career assessments and questionnaires) with some post-modern and more "subjective" approaches such as career construction. We support the idea that this kind of dealing with clients' problems is more holistic and helps them find out what they want to become; not only which problems in career decision-making should avoid or confront with. Early 20th century career counselors, influenced by the work of Parsons (1905), consequently based their efforts to help clients deal with career indecision on a "positivist" paradigm involving the theory and principles of logical positivism (see Richardson, 1993), which stipulated the need for "reliable" and "valid" measuring instruments and techniques to assess career indecision. However, in contemporary complex contexts the "positivist" approach seems not sufficient itself for designing a satisfactory intervention for career indecision. This is because such indecision obstacles should be regarded as a subjective transformative experience. Cochran (1991) speaks of "wavering" to explain what happens during indecision: the undecided person moves back and forth (and side to side), trying to "construct the whole that will clarify the parts" (as cited at Savickas, 1995, p. 3).

Arguing from a constructivist perspective, Savickas (1995, p. 365) states that "the career indecision experienced by adolescents and young adults may occur, in part, because they have not recognized their life themes". Savickas (2013) blended the psychodynamic approach with differential and developmental approaches to create a meta-theoretical framework known as *career construction counseling*. This approach emphasizes the importance of meaning-making in and through their careers. Career counselors working from a career construction perspective help their clients identify major life themes with the final aim of making meaning of their lives, in general. Self-construction entails construction of the self as story and enhancement of the self as an inner compass to deal with transitions.

Helping clients to say who they really are by getting them to enunciate and hear their career-life stories [autobiographical reasoning, Savickas (2009a)] lies at the heart of career construction counseling. Being able to narrate one's career-life story facilitates the moderation and eventually the resolution of indecision because it helps clients locate career choice issues in the bigger pattern of lived meaning. When biographicity occurs, clients are enabled to join micro-aspects of their lives into a "grand story" thereby building a "biographical bridge" across the divide between indecision and sound decision making. Retrospective reflection (facilitated during career counseling) is transformed into prospective reflexivity and, eventually, life

designing. A major advantage of career construction counseling is that by enabling clients to recount (narrate) their career-life stories are helping them enact these stories purposefully and intentionally. The individual stories are eventually connected into an articulate and interrelated story which inspires forward movement (Hartung 2011). Overall, career construction counseling can be considered as a means of enhancing self-efficacy levels and independence, instilling a positive attitude, and fostering autonomy in clients –the very factors that can contribute to a decrease in career indecision.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this theoretical article was to provide colleagues with some recent major advances noted in theoretical and empirical research with regard to career decision-making. Specifically, we underscored a shift in the focus of the relevant literature from career decision-making characteristics, skills and processes towards career decision-management issues. First, we attempted to highlight these trends in separate sections and, second, discuss general implications for career counseling since supporting individuals in making effective career decisions has always been a significant goal in our field. Moreover, based on the complex needs and characteristics of young adults and especially of higher education students we generated several suggestions for career interventions with this group, that we hope colleagues will find interesting and useful.

In line with the post-modern perspectives that have been articulated through the last decades in career guidance and counseling, we think that a key question that emerges for career practice relates to the extent to which current frameworks that guide it, -with an emphasis on rational decision making- can accommodate, adequately, the varied ways that clients navigate the labour market, their life and their career paths. It seems that career interventions are not quick and simple and practitioners may need to “allow for less certainty in outcomes, less decidedness, and less surety” (Krieshok, 2001, p. 215). The challenge for practice is to ensure that frameworks guiding work with clients are sufficiently flexible and responsive to the varied decision-making preferences that clients bring to career work. The point which is clearly generalizable is that a range of career decision-making styles exist, other than the career decision-making approach around which much formal career guidance and counseling provision is still organized (see Bimrose & Brown, 2015).

It is also useful for all of us to remember that the emphasis on career counseling and the study of vocational behavior has shifted from guiding and counseling people on career development to enabling them to manage their careers and their lives (Savickas, 2013). Therefore, the main challenge is no longer to help people make sound career or work-related decisions but to help them define who and what they want to become in work and across their lives more broadly (Di Fabio, 2017; Di Fabio & Maree, 2012). Building on this set of proposals, we suggest that the state of career indecision should be no more considered by counselors as a major problem but in contrast, it should be viewed as a great chance for identity transformation. If we, as counselors, adopt this view it may also be much easier for our clients to embrace a positive attitude on the career development phase/ transition in which they are involved.

Career guidance and counseling (CGC) still aims to support individuals at all stages of their career. However, it needs to ensure that it incorporates research findings, including those relating to dynamic elements like career decision-making styles, strategies for coping with career indecision, the role of positive psychological strengths-resources, future time perspective and many more, that could enhance its effectiveness. Similarly, CGC can play a vital role in helping individuals construct or reshape coherent career narratives, especially when it

embraces perspectives from various sociocultural contexts and constantly strives to integrate them into daily practice.

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