Career construction counseling: A thematic analysis of outcomes for four clients

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A B S T R A C T

Thematic analysis was used in this study of career construction counseling with four diverse, purposively-selected participants. After the intervention, the participants who sought and received career construction counseling were interviewed to determine their experience of the in-tervention. The results showed the value of career construction counseling in bringing about change in the participants' career-life stories.

1. Introduction

The world of work has undergone dramatic changes following the global economic meltdown and related developments over the past few decades. The resultant uncertainty, insecurity, work trauma, and feelings of 'stuckness' experienced by many employees as the form of work changed from stability to mobility to meet the labor needs of postcorporate societies called for an innovative, adap-tive, flexible response from counselors and clients alike. This response included the rethinking of existing career counseling theories; the design of new strategies, techniques, and assessment instruments (narrative instruments in particular); and a move away from using objective approaches in isolation.

This transition coincided with a shift in career counseling toward a focus on subjective aspects of clients' career-life stories. Hartung (2011) argued that people draw on their emotions to maintain equilibrium between their personal needs and the demands of changing environments "in a homeostatic process of organismic self-regulation" (p. 302). He adds that the disregard in terms of both theory and practice shown by career development and vocational psychology specialists for the subjective, lived experiences of clients has strengthened the view of career counseling as a simplistic, uninspiring, detached, and objective endeavor.

These developments should be interpreted against the background of fifth wave phenomena in the global economy. Gurri (2013) believes that two largely incompatible global forces are currently competing for domination of the career life at all levels. Hierarchies reflected in metaphors of pyramids, ladders, chains of command, and pecking orders characterized work contexts until a few decades ago. They represented conventional power structures marked by disregard for individual workers, a top-down approach, bureaucracy, centralization, and an almost mindless insistence on loyalty and obedience to one organization. This approach made little provision for the subjective experiences of employees. Self-reflection in career counseling was often stifled. In contrast, postmodernism is characterized by global connectedness and networking as well as by impermanence, unrestricted participation at all levels, immediacy, and

ample allowance for emotion, creativity, and innovation. The pendulum has swung strongly toward appreciation for feelings, passion, and freedom of expression, and the sense of being listened to by people at all levels and at all times.

Career counseling should focus on the subjective aspects of people's career-life stories "specifically [on] fostering goal directedness, shaping purpose, constructing meaning, increasing narratability, and promoting intentionality in life-career design" (Hartung, 2011, p. 302). Krumboltz and Chan (2005), too, confirm the importance of accepting the inevitability of change, embracing its effects and preparing clients to do likewise. The notion of choosing and committing to a specific career for a lifetime is no longer viable. Moreover, interests change over time, and "[r]emaining ever open-minded is the smartest way to adapt to change" (p. 351). This helps explain the move toward an integrated, qualitative + qualitative approach and the use of qualitative and quantitative, and objective and sub-jective methods of career counseling assessment, data gathering, and counseling to elicit career-related information (Maree, 2014). Emphasis is placed on encouraging and enabling clients to express their deepest emotions and passions more openly and thereby help them identify deep-seated strengths and motives. Innovative techniques are used to empower clients to a) reflect on their career and life stories, and b) reflect on these reflections to initiate self- and career construction through appropriate action and movement forward.

2. Definition of concepts

Hartung (2013) maintains that the discipline of career counseling has transitioned through the following three waves of theory and intervention.

a. Matching people to jobs.
b. Managing numerous roles in the course of a person's life span.
c. Designing contemporary approaches and strategies to help people make (instead of find) "meaning" through their work and rela-tionships. Assessment and intervention should therefore aim to improve clients' employability, enhance their career adaptability, and help them assume authorship of their career and life stories (Savickas, 2011).

To come to terms with changes in the world of work, workers themselves have to change on personal and work-related levels. Scholars have devised new "order-creating" terms to describe 21st century work situations and workers' responses to the accompa-nying changes. Two terms that have specific relevance for this article are discussed below. "Protean careers" mean careers where employees remain resilient so that they can deal with the effect of new technologies and new developments in the world of work on their work lives (Baruch, 2004; Hall, 1996). "Boundaryless" careers, on the other hand, denote a move away from traditional agree-ments with organizations (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996).

3. Career- and self-construction counseling

Savickas (2005, 2014) career construction discourse was used as the theoretical and conceptual framework for analyzing and interpreting the data in the present study. This framework explains career from an action-orientated perspective that blends personal meanings, past memories, current experiences, and future objectives into life themes that evolve over time. The subjective career is shaped by actively creating meaning, while work-related actions are guided, regulated, and supported. Moreover, the subjective ca-reer comprises biographical reflexivity that is constructed conversationally and operationalized through work-related behavior. Guichard (2010) maintains that the career construction perspective offers an integrated view of people who inspire change in specific communities whereas the self-construction perspective sees people as attempting to promote change by merging different aspects of their (personal) existence. Whereas career construction counseling is concerned with the importance of change in enhancing the meaning of career in the life of any person, self-construction counseling is concerned with what changes can be achieved in life to make it more meaningful. Both career construction and self-construction need to be considered in order to enable people to survive if not always thrive in the 21st century economy.

The need for individuals to design emotionally gratifying lives (and redesign them as the need arises) has received much attention in recent times. It has, however, become progressively more difficult to achieve this aim (Savickas, 2014) following the move away from "fixed" truths and "guaranteed" employment in a "stable" world toward the uncertainty brought about by fourth and fifth wave changes in the world of work and their impact on the financial and emotional lives of workers (Guichard, 2009). Increasingly, people struggle with escalating change and subsequently find it more difficult to create emotional "holding" environments (Winnicott, 1987) for themselves and their families in the face of escalating discontinuity (Savickas, 2007). Career construction and self-construction therefore acquire new meaning and significance and can be facilitated by asking clients to write and enact their career-life stories to help them regain a sense of emotional security and stability through building biographical bridges and reconstructing their (often severely impaired) sense of self. In other words, to help them embrace and appreciate change as an oppor-tunity to redesign themselves and to move forward in harmony with a changing world.

4. Working assumption for the study

I, the author of this article, assumed that career construction counseling, culminating in the crafting of clients' life portraits, could demonstrate how people could use their stories (self-constructed 'scripts') to identify and articulate their most profound needs and, eventually, draw on these scripts to change themselves and move forward.

5. Aim of the study

This study aimed to determine the effect of career construction counseling on four participants who differed in terms of age, gender, mother tongue, and level of training. More specifically, the goals were a) to analyze thematically the conversations with the participants to establish which i) general themes and ii) change-related themes emerged collectively, and b) to determine the impact of the specific career counseling intervention over time.

6. Methodology

6.1. Participants and contexts

Four participants were purposively selected to participate in the study in 2013 (Table 1).

The first participant (Judy — pseudonyms were used in the case studies) was selected purposively from among a group of mid-career employees (from minority contexts) who had sought career counseling. Judy was 41 years old at the time of the study, held a BSc degree, a teaching diploma, and an Honors degree in Education and had sought guidance regarding future career options. The second participant (Mapule), a 65-year-old black woman, was selected purposively from among a group of late-career employees (from minority contexts) who had sought career counseling. Mapule, who held a Master's degree in Education, expressed concern about what she was going to do after her retirement, which she perceived to be the "*end of my career*". She was almost fearful of having "*nothing to do when I leave the university where I have been working for so long.*" The third participant (Temba), a 35-year-old mid-career black man, approached me (the author of this article) for guidance on the choice of a career while I was conducting research at the school where he was teaching. Temba had a wife and a child at the time of the study. He held an Honors degree in Education and took up a post at his current school (in an extremely impoverished area) some 10 years ago. Peter (the fourth participant), a 17-year-old boy in Grade 11, consulted me for guidance on the choice of a career.

The sample was purposive as the participants were from different socio-economic strata, different age and gender groups, and different levels of training.

6.2. Mode of inquiry

A longitudinal, explorative, descriptive, multiple case study design was used. I applied a postmodern career facilitation technique and strategy (Savickas, 2011) to enhance the participants' involvement in the career construction process and to facilitate change through the construction, deconstruction, reconstruction, and co-construction of their career-life stories.

Data were collected from the participants in one-on-one research settings where I focused on understanding and interpreting the meanings they gave to their experience of career counseling.

6.3. Data-gathering sources

The Career Construction Interview (CCI) (Savickas, 2011), which is based on career construction discourse, was used in the re-search as a data-gathering technique and a career counseling strategy. More pertinently, it was used to elicit the participants' career-life stories and to promote the processes of career construction, life design (Savickas et al., 2009), and self-construction (Guichard, 2009).

6.4. Intervention

It was agreed with Mapule and Temba that the assessment would comprise three sessions (taking roughly four hours to complete in total). After the intake interview, the assessment process began. Session 1 lasted one hour, during which the participants responded to questions on various aspects of their lives. The CCI was conducted during Session 2 (about two hours). During session 3 (one hour), "authorization" took place (the participants' career-life stories were read back to them, and they were invited to evaluate the outcome of the assessment, that is, authorize their career-life stories) (Savickas, 2011). In the final session, in accordance with Savickas (2006) observation: "Magic happens when we move [forward]", the participants were encouraged to actively pursue the recommendations agreed upon during Session 3, after which the entire career facilitation process was revisited. Possible future options were discussed to facilitate the participants' career construction and life design. In the cases of June (who had to fly to the city where the assessment was conducted) and Peter (whose parents had a very busy schedule),

Table 1
Participants' profiles.

Biographical detail	Age	Gender	SES	Mother tongue	Race
Judy	42	Female	Average	Afrikaans	White
Temba	32	Male	Low	Pedi	Black
Mapule	65	Female	Average	Tswana	Black
Peter	17	Male	High	English	White

two initial sessions were held after which communication (including verification) proceeded electronically. The participants provided feedback at regular intervals.

6.5. Data analysis and interpretation

6.5.1. Analyzing the CCI
Participants' responses to the *CCI* questions were analyzed according to the guidelines proposed by Savickas (2011) and Hartung (2011). The eight steps proposed by Savickas (2011) were implemented to create life portraits of the participants.

6.5.2. Thematic analysis
Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis was used to identify, analyze, and report themes and subthemes across the four sets of data. I first familiarized myself with the data and then transcribed, read, and re-read the data, after which I generated preliminary codes systematically. In Step 3, I organized the codes into possible themes and subthemes, which were reviewed in Step 4, and defined and labeled in Step 5. In the last step, the report was written.

All the comments in the manuscript were client appraisals of and reflections on the counseling. The themes reported in this article (see Table 2) are based on these comments.

6.6. Rigor of the study: ensuring trustworthiness

The participants' oral responses were followed up by their written responses over time to enhance the credibility of the study. The data were coded independently by an external coder to ensure that the identified themes accurately reflected the data. To facilitate transferability of the data, detailed descriptions were given of the particular settings of the participants and the techniques used to enable readers to judge the applicability of the findings to other known settings. Lastly, the participants were given feedback during all phases of the research, and, to avoid any misunderstanding, the interpretations of all the conversations were discussed and verified with them.

6.7. Role of the career counselor

For the purposes of the study, I acted as facilitator, instrument, and confidant.

6.8. Ethics

Written informed consent was obtained from all the participants and confidentiality of the data guaranteed. I also took care to ensure that the participants understood the feedback during all stages of the research by allowing enough time for questions to be asked and answered.

6.9. Inductive data analysis approach

An inductive approach to data analysis was followed thereby allowing themes to emerge free of any preconceived ideas. The participants were repeatedly reminded that they were the sole experts on their lives and that I was merely retelling their career-life stories during feedback so that they could authorize these stories. They were also frequently asked to make connections between

Table 2
Themes and subthemes identified through thematic analysis.

1. Self-reflection
Subtheme 1: Narratability
Subtheme 2: Autobiographicity
Subtheme 3: Awareness of psycho-social resources
Subtheme 4: Viewing the past as a springboard to the future
2. Reflexivity
Subtheme 1: Future orientation
Subtheme 2: Adaptability
Subtheme 3: Readiness to choose
Subtheme 4: Action orientation
3. Enhanced sense of self
Subtheme 1: Identity discovery
Subtheme 2: Discovering capacity to 'hold' oneself and others
4. Emancipation
Subtheme 1: Sense of enlightenment
Subtheme 2: Feeling of empowerment
5. Transformation (change)
Subtheme 1: Change orientation
Subtheme 2: Social contribution orientation

their life themes and possible working environments to enable them to actualize these themes and consequently enter into suitable occupations and design successful lives.

7. Results

The themes and subthemes identified through thematic analysis are listed below (Table 2).

Each theme and its subthemes will be substantiated by quoting from the participants' narratives. (These narratives/extracts were edited professionally while retaining their original meaning.)

7.1. Theme 1: Self-reflection

All the participants gave ample evidence of deep self-reflection (looking back on past thoughts and actions). Careful analysis of the participants' reflections yielded the following four subthemes.

7.1.1. Narratability (Savickas, 2011)

This subtheme indicates the capacity of the participants to express their innermost needs and feelings freely. Temba, for example, said, "*I am 'totally amazed' about how I managed to say what I think and feel*", and Judy responded, "*I so much needed someone to let me talk about my innermost feelings without reserve.*" Mapule commented, "*I have been wanting to speak about this matter for a long time because I dreaded the idea of retiring and then 'doing nothing'.*" Peter replied that "*I was hoping for more than the 'usual' counseling regarding the choice of a career. I was hoping for an opportunity to express myself more satisfactorily.*"

7.1.2. Autobiographicity (Savickas, 2011)

This subtheme concerns the participants' ability to draw on their own stories to deal with change. Temba said, "*The information about my own 'story' and about possible career choices other than the ones I knew about was enlightening.*" He added, "*The idea of 'writing' my 'story' initially sounded strange but now strongly appeals to me.*" Judy said, "*I am smiling because looking back over my story in this way has made me realize that I have indeed faced so many transitions successfully.*" Mapule commented that one good thing she had learned was, "*I have faced and dealt with multiple changes already and that has just made me stronger.*"

7.1.3. Awareness of psycho-social resources

This subtheme concerns participants' heightened awareness of the psycho-social resources available to them. In describing himself Temba said, "*I am a brave man who has managed to work through many challenges (poverty, growing up without a father, having no support structures, dealing with difficult challenges without much support from others, and having had to act responsibly at home in a way far beyond my years).*" Mapule, on the other hand, asked the question, "*Wow! How could I have overlooked the opportunities that will always be available to me to carry on working indefinitely? Especially in the township environment where I will be living after 'retirement'?*"

7.1.4. Viewing the past as a springboard to the future

This subtheme encompasses participants' newly discovered ability to utilize the past to design a better future. Temba stated, "*Looking back over my life in this way was a surprising experience that opened many new possibilities for me … but also for my community.*" Mapule, too, remarked, "*Looking back over my life and considering the trials and tribulations that my family and I went through during the apartheid years and thereafter was uplifting and revealing and helped me join many unconnected dots.*"

7.2. Theme 2: Reflexivity

This theme relates to the participants' new-found capacity and desire to plan for the future more adequately.

7.2.1. Future orientation

This subtheme indicates imminent movement away from fixating on the past toward focusing on new endeavors. Temba stated it this way, "*Looking back over my life has helped me understand myself and has also given me the courage to deal with my current challenges and hope for the future.*" Mapule exclaimed that she was an energetic, gifted leader with great initiative, was determined to succeed, was a hard worker, and was someone who easily connected with people. "*I can put these traits to very good effect in the township environment where I live,*" she said. Peter commented, "*It was revealing to realize that one does not need to carry 'baggage' all the time. Everyone can work through his or her pain.*"

7.2.2. Adaptability

This subtheme reflects the participants' optimism about their ability to deal with challenges and repeated transitions. Temba remarked, "*The sessions helped me focus on the bigger picture and should equip me with the know-how not only to improve myself but also meet my deep-seated need to help others who are facing terrible hardships; people who are disadvantaged and less fortunate.*" Judy said, "*I realized that I first needed to further refine my skills to deal with the multiple challenges that adapting in an entirely new environment would pose.*" Mapule felt "lighter" after the assessment: "*It was good to be reminded that I am multi-talented. Growing up in a family that regards it as all-important to adapt to change instead of dreading it will help me greatly in the future.*"

7.2.3. Readiness to choose
All the participants displayed a new willingness, after the sessions, to actively pursue their own career-stories. Temba reported, "*Hearing my own 'story' and investigating exciting possible career choices other than the ones I was aware of was encouraging.*" Judy, too, talked about "*the career-related possibilities that we have discovered*" and was thrilled when she realized that these options were "*possible and feasible: you have affirmed my talents and interests.*" Mapule commented, "*Consulting informed people who shared important tips with me taught me certain important psycho-social skills, including even the best ways in which to complete my PhD.*" Peter said that he "*just needed confirmation that [he was] on the 'right' track.*"

7.2.4. Action orientation
This subtheme signals moving forward actively toward realizing the agreed-upon mission statement. Temba's response was revealing: "*Before we met, I felt disheartened and disempowered. Now I feel energized and capable of taking steps to escape from the 'hole' I was in.*" Likewise, Judy expressed delight at having been able to deal with "*having been 'stuck' in a discouraging environment for so long.*" Peter reported, "*I consulted a counselor to show me how to deal with my lack of time management and study skills, my impulsivity, and my occasional inability to focus in class and on the sports field from time to time.*"

7.3. Theme 3: Enhanced sense of self

This theme deals with the participants' improved awareness of who they are and their capacity to care for themselves and others.

7.3.1. Identity discovery
This subtheme denotes the participants' changed (improved) sense of who they were. Temba commented, "*I now understand myself better. I know what I can realistically aim for,*" and Judy remarked, "*It [was] educative and insightful to gain an overview of who I am; of my talent, my gifts, my expectations and my dreams.*" Peter believed that he had received confirmation of "*who I am*".

7.3.2. Discovering capacity to 'hold' oneself and others
This subtheme reflects the participants' ability to take care of themselves and others. Temba said in this regard, "*The sincerity and care you demonstrated made me feel proud of myself because you believed in me. And because you assured me that my own development will be beneficial to others as well.*" Mapule, too, highlighted this point: "*I wanted you to help me be the best I can be … for other people and for myself. I have managed to rediscover how to realize this aim.*" Judy also referred to being of service to others: "*Finding a way to maximize my qualities will in the long-term enable me to serve others.*" Peter was even more forthright: "*I want to become the CEO of my own business one day so I can make important decisions and positively influence the lives of people.*"

7.4. Theme 4: Emancipation

This theme relates to the participants' newfound insight and experience of having become more resilient.

7.4.1. Sense of enlightenment
This subtheme refers to a sense of enlightenment and insight. Temba expressed delight at having "*seen how I advised myself,*" while Judy stated, "*The positive aspect of my pain and disappointment is beginning to dawn on me: it has just made me stronger and more determined to be there for others who have been unjustifiably denied certain opportunities in the past. I can now leave the past behind me, draw from it, and devote my life to others.*" Peter, even at his young age, commented, "*Instead of feeling depressed and upset about having been left in the lurch, I will in future stand up for others who have been betrayed. I know what that feels like.*"

7.4.2. Feeling of empowerment
As a subtheme empowerment means that participants feel stronger and more resilient. Temba recently applied for a senior post (something he had never considered before) and was appointed (on the strength of his recent enrolment and achievement in a Master's program): "*I am 'totally' relieved to know that I can take my community with me instead of leaving it behind, which was my greatest fear before I met you.*" June reported, "*I have regained my (inner and outer) voice; rekindled my ability to accept personal responsibility to move on instead of allowing myself to be 'boxed in' by things that I cannot change.*" Mapule smilingly commented, "*You see, I was right to assume that I knew the answers already and that it was important also to get the opinions of other people. I am a sharer and an inquisitive, curious, helpful person. The choice is mine now.*"

7.5. Theme 5: Transformation (change)

This theme touches on participants' experience of having changed and their commitment to promoting change by making social contributions.

7.5.1. Change orientation
This subtheme concerns the experience of change and the will to promote change and instill hope. Temba stated, "*Looking back over my life has helped me understand myself, given me the courage to deal with my current challenges, and given me hope for the future. Things are 'the same' on the surface; yet, inside, I have changed. I am continuing to grow. I am ready now to transform hurtful issues into*

something meaningful." Mapule's answer was particularly poignant: "*What surprised and heartened me most was to learn that retiring is only a social construct; that the notion exists only in one's own mind. It is a matter of re-inventing oneself. 'Retirement' indeed exists only in the minds of people.*" Peter, too, expressed realization of the importance of changing his somewhat negative approach to different issues: "*I am upbeat about the future now. I have a better understanding and appreciation of the talents that I have received; the vast opportunities that there are for me.*"

7.5.2. Social contribution orientation

This subtheme concerns the willingness to make meaningful social contributions. Temba was deeply grateful: "*I am determined to make even greater contributions in the future because I am acquiring a stronger 'voice' all the time.*" June expressed similar sentiments: "*I am actively reaching out to others now, including significant others, who need encouragement and advice on how to deal with issues, instead of looking inwardly and feeling sorry for myself. Presenting for counseling has now turned into an 'act of rescue' almost.*" Mapule's plans for the future were very positive: "*I want to write a book; tell and share my inspiring story with others; touch the everyday lives of people around me who are suffering.*" Lastly, Peter reported, "*I felt 'held' all the time during the assessment. Moreover, I understood the importance of also focusing on others' needs and helping them in times of need.*"

7.6. Follow-up results after 12 months

Temba reported having enrolled in and doing well in a Master's course in Education Management in addition to having applied successfully for a senior post (which would give him the opportunity to serve vulnerable people at a higher level). June reported on having emigrated and thriving in her new environment (where she felt really appreciated). Having made a smooth transition from university life to working in her community, Mapule was actively pursuing her dreams and ideals in her new 'working' environment. She expressed gratitude for having at last been given the opportunity to devote herself fully to "*what I have always wanted to do, namely serve a community challenged by poverty and adversity.*" Peter was studying Business Law at a local university and was doing well academically and also in cricket.

8. Discussion

Some of the themes that emerged in this study have also been highlighted by others. Taber, Hartung, Briddick, Briddick, and Rehfuss (2011), for instance, highlighted the value of the *CCI* in inspiring hope in a brighter future. Likewise, Del Corso, Rehfuss, and Glavin (2011), a n d Taber and Briddick (2011) demonstrated the value of the *CCI* in enhancing the career adaptability of clients. Maree (2014) showed the value of the *CCI* in working with members of marginalized and minority groups. Similarly, the findings in the present study support the findings of Hughes, Gibbons, and Mynatt (2013), who confirmed the pivotal role of career adaptability in students' career success. The current findings are also in line with the findings of Bangali and Guichard (2012) insofar as the reflex-ivity displayed by all four participants evidently played a major role in the career construction process by enabling them to challenge their long-held views on key issues and prepared the ground for change in their career-lives. Lastly, the current findings support Perdrix, Stauffer, Masdonati, Massoudi, and Rossier's (2012) finding that qualitative career counseling can decrease clients' career decision-making problems.

The findings reported in this article indicate that career construction counseling, using the *CCI*, can contribute substantially toward narrowing the gap between the actual practice of career counseling on the one hand and the current theory of career counseling on the other (Porfeli, 2003). The findings show that using the *CCI* in counseling (and, by implication, therapeutic) settings can help counselors assist clients in constructing, deconstructing, reconstructing, and co-constructing their career-life stories as and when the need arises. More particularly, clients can be helped to reflect carefully on their lives and, in doing so, equip themselves with the skills needed to plan for the future, take the necessary action steps to realize these plans and, ultimately, undergo and achieve much needed change (transformation). The findings support Jennings and Lynn's (2005) finding that narrative techniques promote critical (self-)reflection.

In a sense, the findings listed in this article support Hoffman's (2003) view that the self should be seen from, for example, the per-spective of Australian aborigines, who are born into 'songlines' but know only a part of those songlines (Chatwin, 2005). By going on regular walkabouts to people who know other stanzas, authorship of one's own songline is confirmed and extended. This is curiously similar to the way in which clients promote their own career-life stories during career construction counseling by revisiting and reflecting on the past. Moreover, continuing with the Australian aborigine metaphor, the individual identity is not interpreted 'mechanically' as "a stretch of moving history progressive, like a river or a stream" (p. 119) and something entirely within the person but, rather, as consisting of temporal movements (prompted by reflexivity) aimed at internal and external self-construction and accomplished by actions.

The approach and strategy in the *CCI* has much in common with McNamee and Gergen's (1996) view: "The [new] guiding perspec-tive for most therapeutic endeavors … is committed to the assumption of the individual knower … It is the individual who possesses the capacity to know the world and to act adaptively within it" (p.1).

This article attempts to address the challenges posed by critical pedagogy, namely "[challenging] us to question our long-held as-sumptions … encourages us to find the magic of personal discovery based on our own lived experiences" (Wink, 2005, p. 67) a n d c a n thus be seen as a call for action in terms of writing (one's own story), reflecting critically (on that story), and 'acting actively' thereafter to facilitate movement. Career construction counseling, using the *CCI*, enables counselor and client to deal with 'glass ceiling' challenges

brought about by having been formerly silenced, marginalized, unvoiced, and 'named' unjustly (Wink, 2005) and helps counselors substantiate their refusal to accept that 'one size fits all' (Savickas, 2013).

The positive outcomes achieved by the participants in the present study (all of whom displayed an improved attitude toward seeking external support, an active attempt to deal with changing and trying environments, and an increased awareness of who they were) also support Briscoe, Henagan, Burton, and Murphy's (2012) finding on the value of self-directed (protean) and bound-aryless career attitudes in facilitating constructive outcomes in uncertain work environments.

9. Limitations

My subjective interpretation of the data could be regarded as a limitation. Also, longitudinal research (involving more participants) should be conducted to demonstrate the applicability of the strategy advocated here in broader contexts.

10. Advice to others who may wish to conduct this type of intervention and analysis

Successful implementation of the strategy is dependent on the acceptance of change as a necessary and normal phenomenon by career counselors who should also embrace the concept of positive psychology and the importance of moving forward to turn (per-ceived) adversity into opportunity (Duarte, 2009; Maree, 2013; Savickas, 2011). Professional training and supervision in *CCI*-based intervention are also necessary.

11. Conclusion

Thematic analysis was used in this study as the chosen style of narrative inquiry to analyses the narratives of the four participants who presented with a broad array of career-related and age-based concerns. I used the *CCI* to address the participants' concerns in the belief that "[w]ith the new work paradigm, workers can no longer rely on static components of their personality to be the primary source of career guidance" (Barclay & Wolff, 2012, p. 367). I also concur with Blustein, Saliha Kozan, and Connors-Kellgren (2013) when they write that quantitative inquiry is incapable of revealing the levels of profundity and shades of meaning that qualitative in-quiry can reveal.

The feedback indicated that all four participants had managed to 'escape' from the feeling of being 'stuck' (whether perceived or real) and the ensuing 'inactiveness' and had proceeded to co-construct more satisfactory work-related environments. All the partic-ipants reported having managed to deal with their study and work-related challenges and trauma, and they all displayed an improved sense of personal authorship of their career-life stories (Savickas et al., 2009; Hartung, 2014).

This study confirmed that while change will inevitably impact the career-lives of all workers and prospective workers, it should not be feared or considered insurmountable thereby leading to paralyzed inactivity. Career construction counseling, using the *CCI*, offers a viable and exciting strategy to deal with the effects of change intentionally, actively, and effectively. What remains is, in the words of Krumboltz (1993), to demonstrate actively with our clients that we actually believe ourselves. Cardoso, Silva, Gonçalves, and Duarte (2014) are correct, in my opinion, when they say that the practice of career counseling should be adapted to fit the needs of their clients. Moreover, I support their call for adopting an integrated perspective on and approach to (facilitating) change in career counseling. In-deed: In the words of Savickas (2014): "We as career counselors should us become multilingual instead of unilingual" (in other words, we should open ourselves up to additional and more contemporary ways of dealing with challenges associated with global change and its effect on workers in the 21st century).

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