

**INVESTIGATING THE APPLICATION OF THE ASSET-
BASED APPROACH IN CAREER FACILITATION**

by

Sonja Coetzee

Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree

**MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS
(EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY)**

in the

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

**Supervisor
Dr. L. Ebersöhn**

**Co-supervisor
Me. R. Ferreira**

October 2005

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincerest gratitude to the following persons who walked beside me during this journey:

- Dr Liesel Ebersöhn. Your gift to me was your time, skilful guidance and everlasting encouragement, and above all, believing in me.
- The unnamed client-partners for your willingness to share your expertise and time.
- Ronél Ferreira, Teresa Wolfaardt and Prof Pretorius for your advice and support.
- Friends and family for your loving support and motivation.
- My husband Waldo for being patient and always offering a gentle refuge.
- To my omnipresent Lord and Creator who never failed to bless me with love.

The *footprints* we share on this journey are *heartprints* I take with me onto the next one,
thank you.

LIST OF KEYWORDS

- Asset-based approach
- Asset-based strategies
- Asset-based principles
- Career facilitation
- Asset-based career facilitation
- Career development
- Asset-mapping
- Career facilitator

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the asset-based approach as alternative in career facilitation. In traditional *career counselling*, the *career counsellor* is seen as an *expert* and one-stop service provider that matches clients to careers. Alternatively, an *asset-based career facilitator* aims at *facilitating* sustainable career development skills by means of applying asset-based principles such as collaboration and shared responsibility.

In this study, client-partners were viewed from several complementary theoretical frameworks, namely the asset-based approach, bio-ecological model of human development, Positive Psychology and the process of career facilitation. In addition, phenomenology was selected as meta-theory to guide the instrumental case study. Five career seeking client-partners between the ages of 16 and 18 were chosen according to criteria, and took part in an approximately six week asset-based career facilitation process. Client-partners were aware that the process was under study and willingly reflected on the process after completion.

Thematic analysis resulted in the following themes: firstly, it appeared that individual client-partner profiles impacted on the application of asset-based principles. Factors pertaining to individual client profiles are personality traits, age, unique family dynamics, career interests and previous career assessment experiences. Secondly, applying asset-based principles seemed to impact on the career facilitation process with regard to the challenging role of the asset-based career facilitator as well as advantages and disadvantages of applying such principles. Thirdly, it looked as if the entrenched nature of the old paradigm or medical model impacted on the process as some client-partners still preferred the expert matching done in traditional career counselling and resisted being a partner in the career facilitation process.

Findings suggest indicators and contra-indicators concerning the application of asset-based principles and strategies in career facilitation, as well as implicate recommendations with regard to training and further research.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

1.1	INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE	1
1.2	STATEMENT OF INTENT AND AIMS OF THE STUDY	4
1.3	CONCEPTUALISATION	5
1.3.1	ASSET-BASED APPROACH	5
1.3.1.1	ASSET-BASED PRINCIPLES	5
1.3.1.2	ASSET-BASED STRATEGIES	6
1.3.2	ASSET-BASED CAREER FACILITATION	6
1.3.3	APPLICATION	6
1.3.4	INVESTIGATION	6
1.3.5	CAREER DEVELOPMENT	6
1.4	PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE	7
1.5	RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	7
1.6	OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS	9
1.7	CONCLUSION	10

CHAPTER TWO

POTENTIAL PARTNERS: THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH AND CAREER FACILITATION PROCESS

2.1	INTRODUCTION	11
2.2	THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH	11
2.2.1	FUNDAMENTAL UNDERPINNINGS OF THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH	11
2.2.2	ALIGNING ASSET-BASED PRINCIPLES TO CAREER FACILITATION	13
2.2.3	SITUATING THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH WITHIN POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY	20
2.3	CAREER FACILITATION	22
2.3.1	EXPLORATION WITHIN CAREER FACILITATION	27
2.4	LOCATING THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH WITHIN EXISTING CAREER THEORY	29
2.5	CONCLUSION	32

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1	INTRODUCTION	34
3.2	AIM OF THE STUDY	34
3.3	PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES	36
3.3.1	META-THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS (EPISTEMOLOGY)	36
3.3.2	THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS	39
3.3.3	METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS	40
3.4	METHODOLOGY	41
3.4.1	A CASE STUDY DESIGN	43
3.4.1.1	AN INSTRUMENTAL CASE STUDY	43
3.4.2	SELECTION OF CASES	45
3.4.3	METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION	46
3.4.4	DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	49
3.5	THE RESEARCHER AS INSTRUMENT	52
3.6	MEASURES TO ENSURE RIGOUR IN THE STUDY (QUALITY CRITERIA)	53
3.6.1	TRUSTWORTHINESS STRATEGIES	53
3.6.1.1	CREDIBILITY	53
3.6.1.2	DEPENDABILITY	55
3.6.1.3	TRANSFERABILITY	56
3.6.1.4	CONFIRMABILITY	56
3.6.1.5	AUTHENTICITY	57
3.7	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	57
3.7.1	INFORMED CONSENT	57
3.7.2	DECEPTION OF PARTICIPANTS	58
3.7.3	VIOLATION OF PRIVACY	58
3.7.4	ACTION AND COMPETENCE OF THE RESEARCHER	58
3.8	CONCLUSION	58

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND LITERATURE CONTROL

4.1	INTRODUCTION	60
4.2	SELECTION REALISATION	60
4.2.1	ASSET-BASED CAREER FACILITATION PLANNING	61
4.2.2	DATA COLLECTION	62
4.2.3	DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	62
4.3	DISCUSSION OF RESULTS	63
4.3.1	MAJOR THEME 1: THE IMPACT OF <i>INDIVIDUAL CLIENT-PARTNER PROFILES</i> ON THE USE OF ASSET-BASED PRINCIPLES	64
4.3.1.1	SUB-THEME A: THE INFLUENCE OF CERTAIN <i>PERSONALITY TRAITS</i> OF THE CLIENT-PARTNER ON THE USE OF ASSET-BASED STRATEGIES	64
4.3.1.2	SUB-THEME B: THE <i>AGE</i> OF THE CLIENT-PARTNER	69
4.3.1.3	SUB-THEME C: UNIQUE <i>FAMILY DYNAMICS</i>	71
4.3.1.4	SUB-THEME D: <i>CAREER INTERESTS</i> OF THE CLIENT-PARTNER	72
4.3.1.5	SUB-THEME E: <i>PREVIOUS CAREER ASSESSMENT EXPERIENCE</i> OF THE CLIENT-PARTNER	74
4.3.2	MAJOR THEME 2: THE IMPACT OF APPLYING ASSET-BASED PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES IN CAREER FACILITATION SESSIONS	76
4.3.2.1	SUB-THEME F: THE CHALLENGING ROLE OF THE ASSET-BASED CAREER FACILITATOR IN CAREER FACILITATION SESSIONS	76
4.3.2.2	SUB-THEME G: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY OF APPLYING ASSET-BASED STRATEGIES IN CAREER FACILITATION	78
4.3.3	MAJOR THEME 3: THE IMPACT OF THE OLD PARADIGM ON THE USE OF ASSET-BASED PRINCIPLES	80
4.3.3.1	SUB-THEME H: CLIENT-PARTNERS' EXPECTATIONS THAT THE CAREER FACILITATOR IS THE EXPERT	80
4.3.3.2	SUB-THEME I: RESISTANCE OF THE CLIENT-PARTNER TO BE PART OF A PARTNERSHIP	81
4.4	CONCLUSION	82

CHAPTER FIVE

REFLECTIONS, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1	INTRODUCTION	83
5.2	OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS	83
5.3	REFLECTING ON THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	84
5.3.1	WHAT IS CAREER FACILITATION?	85
5.3.2	WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH?	85
5.3.3	HOW CAN THE STRATEGIES OF THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH BE IMPLEMENTED DURING CAREER FACILITATION?	86
5.3.4	HOW DO CLIENT-PARTNERS APPLY ASSET-BASED PRINCIPLES DURING CAREER FACILITATION?	87
5.3.5	HOW DOES THE CAREER FACILITATOR APPLY ASSET-BASED PRINCIPLES DURING CAREER FACILITATION?	87
5.3.6	WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF APPLYING ASSET-BASED PRINCIPLES TO CAREER FACILITATION?	88
5.4	CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY	88
5.4.1	INDICATORS AND CONTRA-INDICATORS FOR APPLYING THE ASSET-BASED APPROACH IN CAREER FACILITATION	88
5.4.2	COMPARING AN ASSET-BASED CAREER FACILITATION PROCESS TO AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO TRADITIONAL CAREER COUNSELLING	90
5.5	ENSURING THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY	91
5.5.1	CREDIBILITY	91
5.5.2	DEPENDABILITY	92
5.5.3	TRANSFERABILITY	92
5.5.4	CONFIRMABILITY	92
5.5.5	AUTHENTICITY	92
5.6	THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER	93
5.7	CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY	93
5.8	RECOMMENDATIONS	93
5.8.1	RECOMMENDATIONS WITH REGARD TO FURTHER RESEARCH IN THE FIELD	93

5.8.2	RECOMMENDATIONS WITH REGARD TO ASSET-BASED CAREER FACILITATION TRAINING	94
5.9	CONCLUSION	94
	REFERENCES	96

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1.1	The research design and methodological choices of the study	8
FIGURE 2.1	Proposed components of the asset-based approach	14
FIGURE 2.2	Comparison between needs-based approach and asset-based approach	15
FIGURE 2.3	Relationship between psychosocial resilience, asset-based approach career facilitation and the bio-ecological model	17
FIGURE 2.4	Constructs used in the asset-based approach	19
FIGURE 2.5	Concepts used to define the process of helping clients with their career paths	23
FIGURE 2.6	A guide to exploration within career facilitation	28
FIGURE 2.7	A comparison of the medical model with the asset-based approach in terms of career development tasks	30
FIGURE 3.1	The aim of this study	35
FIGURE 3.2	A flow diagram of the research process	42
FIGURE 3.3	Criteria for case selection	45
FIGURE 3.4	Methods of data collection	46
FIGURE 3.5	Structured activities based on Morse and Field's (1994) approach to data analysis, corresponding with the steps of Tesch (1990)	50
FIGURE 3.6	Advantages and challenges of using qualitative data analysis, and measures to address such challenges	52
FIGURE 4.1	Selected cases	60
FIGURE 4.2	Selected cases for theme saturation	60
FIGURE 4.3	Summary of major themes and corresponding sub-themes that emerged from the study	63
FIGURE 4.4	Comparison of personality profiles of client-partners	66
FIGURE 5.1	The underlying principles of the asset-based approach and their application in career facilitation	85
FIGURE 5.2	Indicators and contra-indicators for an asset-based career	

facilitation process 89

FIGURE 5.3 Similarities between the post-modern perspective of Savickas
and an asset-based career facilitation process

90

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A	INFORMATION LETTER AND LETTER OF CONSENT
APPENDIX B	SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS WITH CLIENT-PARTNERS
APPENDIX C	OUTLINE OF INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS
APPENDIX D	BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION
APPENDIX E	EXAMPLES OF OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS IN MY RESEARCH DIARY
APPENDIX F	EXAMPLES OF FIELD NOTES AND PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS
APPENDIX G	EXAMPLES OF LISTS OF INDICATORS AND CONTRA-INDICATORS OF CLIENT-PARTNERS
APPENDIX H	LIST OF OTHER TOPICS
APPENDIX I	COMPOUND THEMES ILLUSTRATING INDICATORS AND CONTRA-INDICATORS
APPENDIX J	MINDMAP OF MAJOR THEMES AND CORRESPONDING SUB-THEMES
APPENDIX K	EXAMPLES OF ASSET MAPS OF CLIENT PARTNERS
APPENDIX L	EXAMPLES OF MEDIA USED DURING CAREER FACILITATION