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The career resources model: an integrative framework for career counsellors

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Changes in the nature of work and organisations have led to an increased need for self-directed career management (SDCM). However, there is no consensus in the literature of what constitutes SDCM and many related concepts have been proposed. Integrating previous research across different conceptualisations of SDCM, the article proposes four critical career resources which are essential for career development in the modern context: human capital resources, social resources, psychological resources and identity resources. Implications of this framework for counselling practice are presented.

Keywords: career adaptability; career motivation; employability; career self-management

The nature of careers has changed dramatically over the past three decades due to advances in technology, increased workforce diversity and changes in organisational structures (Arnold & Jackson, 1997). Kossek, Roberts, Fisher, and Demarr (1998) report that companies are increasingly pursuing a human resource policy that shifts accountability for career management from the employer to the employee. These changes have profound effects on how careers develop, resulting in more non-linear and less predictable career patterns. Accordingly, increased self-directed career management (SDCM) in terms of self-management, flexibility and adaptability is required on the part of employees if they are to cope successfully with the changes in the realm of work (Sullivan, Carden, & Martin, 1998).

Following this trend, the careers literature has seen a surge in theoretical and empirical work referring to this new reality. One of the most prominent emerging notions is career adaptability (Goodman, 1994; Morrison & Hall, 2002; Savickas, 1997; Super & Knasel, 1981). However, there is no consensus of what constitutes career adaptability and whether it should be conceived as a competence, resource, disposition or personal readiness. Moreover, there are a number of additional constructs proposed in the literature which tap into SDCM and share many commonalities with career adaptability (for example employability, career self-management) but they have not been sufficiently related to each other, let alone integrated into an overarching framework. The present article makes a theoretical contribution to this rather dispersed body of research by providing an overview of different concepts of SDCM and showing how they can be integrated into a broader

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framework of four critical career resources. The framework proposed here also attempts to bring different streams of research together, building a critical bridge between the literature of vocational and organisational behaviour.

First, I provide a representative, but not exhaustive, overview of existing constructs within the domain of SDCM in terms of career adaptability, employability, career motivation, career self-management, career competencies and a protean and boundaryless career orientation. Building upon this review, I will then present how the different notions of SDCM can be integrated in a more general framework of four critical career resources: human capital resources, social resources, psychological resources and identity resources. The article finishes with practical implications of the model.

A brief review of SDCM constructs

Career adaptability

The notion of career adaptability has been approached from many different angles. Savickas (1997, 2005) describes career adaptability as a construct that deals with how an individual constructs a career and that enables individuals to effectively implement their self-concepts in occupational roles. He defines career adaptability as ‘... a psychosocial construct that denotes an individual’s readiness and resources for coping with current and imminent vocational developmental tasks, occupational transitions, and personal traumas’ (2005, p. 51). Within his career construction theory, he sees career adaptability as attitudes, behaviours and competencies that individuals use in fitting themselves to work that suits them, consisting of the four dimensions of concern (planning, being planful), control (decision making, being decisive), curiosity (exploring, being inquisitive), and confidence (problem solving, being efficacious). Morrison and Hall (2002) conceptualise adaptability as a meta-competency because it enables the person to develop other competencies. They state that adaptability is the predisposition or propensity to consciously and continually maintain an integration of person and environment and that adaptability is the product of adaptive competence and adaptive motivation, including identity exploration, response learning and integrative potential. Kossek et al. (1998) define adaptability as the ability to adapt to changing career circumstances and propose it as an indicator of openness to change and ability to handle the stresses of a new career context. Fugate, Kinicki, and Ashforth (2004) also conceptualise personal adaptability as a component of their psychosocial construct of employability, referring to optimism, propensity to learn, openness, internal locus of control and generalised self-efficacy.

Employability

Conceptions of employability vary greatly in the way they focus on the current employability radius of a person, on employability skills or personal qualifications and on contextual factors (Thijssen, Van der Heijden, & Rocco, 2008). Also, there are different perspectives on employability focusing on society and government, the organisation or the individual (Forrier & Sels, 2003). For the present purpose, I focus on employability as it refers to the individual because those conventions are most relevant to personal career adaptability. In this vein, Fugate et al. (2004) describe

employability as a form of work-specific active adaptability that enables workers to identify and realise career opportunities, consisting of the four dimensions of career identity, personal adaptability, human capital and social capital. Rothwell and Arnold (2007) describe employability as the ability to keep the job one has or to get the job one desires, consisting of skills and behaviours that contribute to effective performance as core aspects of employability: resilience, in the sense of being able to respond effectively to changing circumstances; networks of contacts that provide information and support; and job-seeking skills and labour market knowledge. Other models include the process model by Forrier and Sels (2003), which is based on the notion of 'movement capital', which itself includes the career competencies of knowing how, knowing whom and knowing why. Finally, some researchers have investigated the concept of perceived employability, which basically represents a specific belief regarding one's ability to gain or secure employment (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007).

Career self-management

Career self-management is mostly used in reference to specific career management behaviours. For example, Kossek et al. (1998, p. 938) define career self-management as 'the degree to which one regularly gathers information and plans for career problem solving and decision making'. Noe (1996, p. 119) defines career [self-]management as 'the process by which individuals collect information about values, interests, and skill strengths and weaknesses (career exploration), identify a career goal, and engage in career strategies that increase the probability that career goals will be achieved'. King (2004) conceptualises career self-management as a dynamic process involving the execution of a set of co-occurring behaviours in terms of positioning, influence and boundary management. Sturges (2008) refers to the related behaviours of networking, visibility, positioning and building human capital as some of the core career self-management strategies identified in the literature. Claes and Ruiz-Quintanilla (1998) propose that proactive career behaviours include career planning, skill development, consultation and networking. Kossek et al. (1998) state that career self-management consists of two main behaviours: (1) developmental feedback-seeking, whose aim is continuous improvement in one's current job; and (2) job mobility preparedness, which encompasses career exploration, networking and aspects of planning. Raabe, Frese, and Beehr (2007) use action theory and self-regulation theory to explain the process of career self-management, which consists of goal setting, information collection, planning, execution and feedback collection. Finally, Stickland (1996) proposes that in addition to organisational survival skills and career navigation, self-awareness is a prerequisite for career self-management.

Career competencies, career capital

Kuijpers and Scheerens (2006, p. 305) define career competencies as 'competencies that are relevant for all employees to develop their own career, regardless of the specific job they have'. There are a number of different competencies proposed in the literature, but many identify three basic competencies or 'ways of knowing': knowing how (career-relevant skills and job-related knowledge), knowing why (motivation, personal meaning and identification) and knowing whom (career-related networks

and contacts). Eby, Butts, and Lockwood (2003) propose that these competencies predict career success in a career world without boundaries; Inkson and Arthur (2001) refer to them as *career capital* necessary for career success; Forrier and Sels (2003) speak of them in terms of *movement capital*, which influences the chances of mobility in the labour market; and Parker, Khapova, and Arthur (2009) base their *intelligent career* framework upon them. Providing a different perspective, Kuijpers and Scheerens (2006) theoretically identify four career competencies: career reflection, work exploration, career control and self-presentation.

Career motivation

London (1983; London & Noe, 1997) proposes the construct of career motivation. It is defined as ‘the set of individual characteristics and associated career decisions and behaviours that reflect the person’s career identity, insight into factors affecting his or her career, and resilience in the face of unfavourable career conditions’ (London, 1983, p. 620). Career identity refers to how central one’s career is to one’s identity and consists of two sub-domains: work involvement and desire for upward mobility. Career insight is the extent to which a person has realistic perceptions of him or herself and his or her organisation, and it involves relating these perceptions to career goals. Those two components represent career identity resources. The third component of career resilience is a person’s resistance to career disruption in a less than optimal environment. This component has three sub-domains: (generalised) self-efficacy, risk taking and dependency.

Protean and boundaryless career orientations

Based on the notion of increased flexibility and the need for self-directedness in today’s careers, Hall (1976) and Arthur (1994) have proposed the related yet distinct concepts of protean and boundaryless careers, respectively. Briscoe and Hall (2006) define the protean career as a career in which the person is values driven and self-directed in personal career management. Sullivan and Arthur (2006) define a boundaryless career as one that involves physical and/or psychological career mobility.

Similarities and discrepancies among existing concepts

While the above reviewed concepts partially overlap and share many commonalities, there are also important discrepancies, specifically (a) the scope of included variables across constructs; (b) specification of antecedents, consequences and core concepts; (c) the components within conceptually similar constructs; and (d) levels of variable specification.

Firstly, the constructs show similarities and differences in the scope of included variables. For example, personality characteristics are included in some conceptualisations of employability, career capital and career motivation (Eby et al., 2003; Fugate et al., 2004; Inkson & Arthur, 2001; London, 1983; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007; Van Der Heijde & Van Der Heijden, 2006) but not in others such as protean and boundaryless career orientations, career adaptability or career self-management (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Hall, 2004; Kuijpers & Scheerens, 2006; Noe, 1996; Savickas, 2005; Stickland, 1996). The same is true of social and human capital, which are

considered an integral part of career competencies and career capital (Eby et al., 2003; Inkson & Arthur, 2001) and some definitions of employability (Fugate et al., 2004; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007; Van Der Heijde & Van Der Heijden, 2006), but not protean and boundaryless career orientations, career motivation or career adaptability (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Hall, 2004; London, 1983; London & Noe, 1997; Savickas, 2005; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006).

Secondly, the concepts overlap but also differ remarkably in terms of what they define as core constructs of SDCM and its antecedents or consequences. Personality characteristics are treated as integral parts of the concepts in some instances, for example as part of career competencies and career capital (Eby et al., 2003; Inkson & Arthur, 2001), employability (Fugate et al., 2004; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007; Van Der Heijde & Van Der Heijden, 2006) or career motivation (London, 1983). For others, personality dispositions are treated as antecedents, for example for protean and boundaryless career orientations (Hall, 2004; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006), career adaptability (Morrison & Hall, 2002; Savickas, 1997) or career self-management (King, 2004; Kossek et al., 1998; Raabe et al., 2007).

Thirdly, an overarching construct of the same formal term is often composed of very different components by different authors. For example, King (2004) and Raabe et al. (2007) describe career self-management in terms of specific behaviours. Verbruggen and Sels (2008) focus on specific attitudes, while Noe (1996) and Kossek et al. (1998) include both behaviours and attitudes in their conceptualisations of career self-management. A similar discrepancy can be observed for the construct of career adaptability. Although it is stressed by different conceptualisations – for example Fugate et al.'s (2004) model of employability, by Hall (2004) as a 'metacompetence' for being more protean, Savickas's (2005) model of career construction, or as a concept closely related to London's (1983; London & Noe, 1997) notion of career resilience – often the same term can have quite different meanings within those constructs. For London, career resiliency refers to a person's resistance to career disruption in a less than optimal environment comprising self-efficacy, risk taking and dependency. Fugate et al. (2004) conceptualise personal adaptability in terms of personality dispositions such as optimism, propensity to learn, openness, internal locus of control and generalised self-efficacy. For Hall (Morrison & Hall, 2002), career adaptability is the product of adaptive competence (consisting of identity exploration, response learning and integrative potential) and adaptive motivation (the willingness to develop and apply the adaptive competencies to a given situation). Lastly, Savickas describes adaptability as consisting of certain career attitudes and behaviours in terms of planfulness (planning), decisiveness (decision making), curiosity (exploring) and confidence (problem solving).

Finally, related to the former point is the difficulty that arises when existing constructs show different levels of variable specification. Some models propose very generic components, which by themselves are a combination of attitudes, personality characteristics and behaviours. For example, the 'knowing why' of career competencies and career capital encompasses such diverse aspects as (a) proactive personality, openness to experience, or energy referring to general personality characteristics; (b) self-knowledge, career insight and sense of purpose in reference to attitudinal components; and (c) career exploration, referring to behavioural components (Eby et al., 2003; Inkson & Arthur, 2001). Other models focus on very specific aspects and propose, for example, single behaviours that together would constitute an overarching concept (e.g., career self-management) (King, 2004; Noe,

1996). Such complexities can exist even within a single framework. For example, Stickland (1996) proposes that self-awareness and career navigation (i.e., the ability to navigate a career) are both requisites for career self-management, yet they seem to be conceptually quite different, with career navigation referring to a very generic competence that might as well be the result of successful career self-management.

Four critical career resources

The brief review above shows that different notions within the domain of SDCM share many commonalities and redundancies in some regards, yet also differ importantly in their content and scope in other ways. SDCM has been described as consisting of personal dispositions, readiness or abilities/competences. In an attempt to provide a unifying framework, I propose that four categories of critical resources can be identified across different constructs (see Table 1 and Figure 1): human capital resources, social resources, psychological resources and identity resources. Those resources are developed and used for one's own career decision making and career management by career management skills (e.g., career exploration, career planning, networking) situated in the middle of the framework in Figure 1. Thus, the framework proposes different resources in the person and the environment which are essential for positive career development. Resources can be defined as 'those entities that either are centrally valued in their own right [...] or act as a means to obtain centrally valued ends [...]' (Hobfoll, 2002, p. 307).

Human capital resources

Human capital resources can be defined as one's ability to meet the performance expectations for a given occupation (Fugate et al., 2004; Inkson & Arthur, 2001). They include factors such as education, experience and training and cognitive ability (Coleman, 1994) within the broader category of work-relevant knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics (KSAOs). Available information resources are indirectly included in this category because they can enhance a person's knowledge and abilities. As shown in the above review and summarised in Table 1, human capital resources are primarily stressed in models of employability and career competencies.

Social resources

Social resources (often referred to as social capital) are defined as 'the goodwill available to individuals or groups' (Adler & Kwon, 2002, p. 23). Its source lies in the structure and content of an individual's social relations, and its effects flow from the information, influence and solidarity it makes available to the person (Adler & Kwon, 2002). The availability and characteristics of a mentor are one prominent form of social capital (Allen, Eby, Potteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004). Recently, social capital is also more broadly regarded in terms of one's developmental network, which can be characterised according to its structure and diversity (e.g., range and density) and quality or strength (Higgins & Kram, 2001). This resource is different from the other four because its source lies outside of the individual. This acknowledges that available environmental support is also a major factor that enables SDCM. As is the case with human capital resources, the importance of social resources for coping with career development tasks is primarily stressed in models of employability and career competencies.

Table 1. Relation of the four career resources to existing models of self-directed career management.

	Psychological resources	Career identity resources	Social resources	Human capital resources
Career adaptability	Openness to change, hardiness, adaptive motivation, confidence, concern, curiosity	Career decidedness, control, career commitment	–	–
Employability	Personal adaptability (optimism, propensity to learn, openness, internal locus of control, and generalised self-efficacy), resilience, personal flexibility, perceived employability	Career identity	Goodwill inherent in social networks	Job-seeking skills, skills and behaviours that contribute to effective performance, occupational expertise, labour market knowledge
Career self-management	–	Identification of career goals, insights into career aspirations, goal commitment, self-awareness	–	–
Career competencies, career capital	‘Knowing why’ (proactive personality, openness to experience, energy, motivation)	‘Knowing why’ (self-knowledge, career insight, sense of purpose, identification)	‘Knowing whom’	‘Knowing how’
Career motivation	Career resilience (self-efficacy, risk taking, dependency)	Career identity (work involvement and desire for upward mobility), career insight (realistic self-perceptions and goals)	–	–
Protean/boundaryless career orientations	Psychological mobility	Self-directed, values-driven career orientation	–	–

Psychological resources

Psychological resources refer to the positive psychological traits and states, such as the cognitions, motivations and affect of the person, which are generalised and expressed in different contexts and more specifically in relation to the work role.

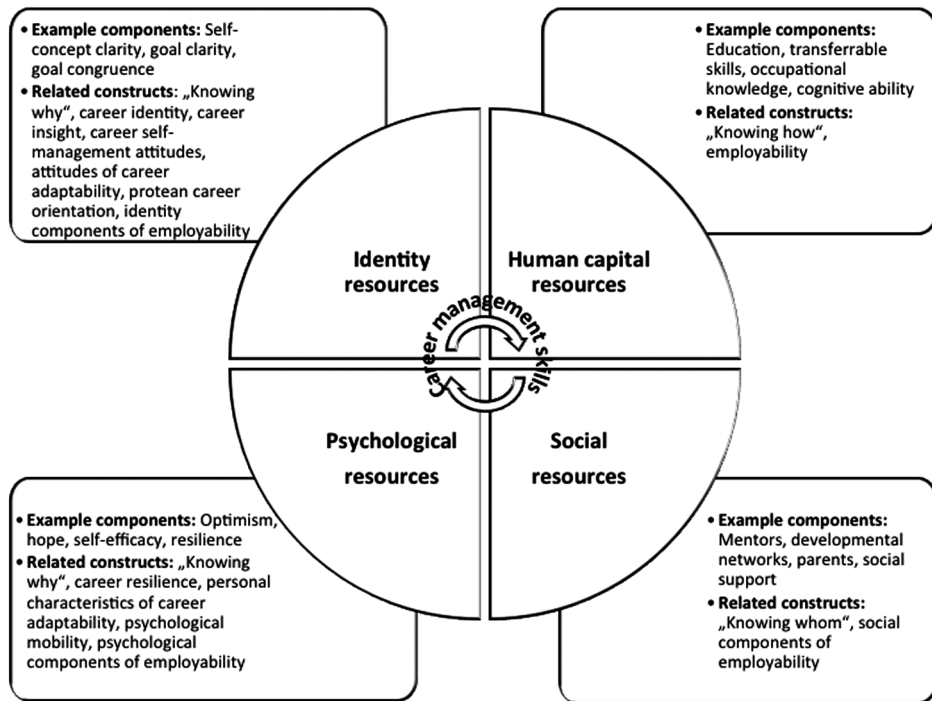


Figure 1. Integrative framework of four career resources, with example components and related construct of each resource domain. The arrows indicate that the resources are not static entities but do change in a dynamic process of mutual reinforcement over time.

Hence, psychological resources influence career development and range from more trait-like (such as neuroticism, extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience, core self-evaluations, proactive personality, or positive and negative affect) (e.g., Judge & Hurst, 2008; Rogers, Creed, & Ian Glendon, 2008) to more state-like (such as career self-efficacy beliefs or vocational hope) (e.g., Avey, Luthans, & Youssef, 2010; Diemer & Blustein, 2007). As shown in Table 1, although the specific constructs vary greatly, almost all of the concepts reviewed here propose that some form of psychological resource is pivotal for successful career development.

Career identity resources

Finally, career identity resources are resources related to one's conscious awareness of oneself as a worker, of one's occupational interests, abilities, goals and values, of the importance of one's work and of the structure of meanings in which such self-perceptions are linked with career roles (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Meijers, 1998). At the core of career identity is the question, 'Who am I and how is my work meaningful to me?' Hence, career identity resources can be distinguished from more general psychological resources in the sense that they specifically refer to how one consciously views oneself in relation to one's work. The above presented review shows that career identity resources (e.g., self-insight, commitment) are stressed in virtually every model of SDCM.

The relationship between the four career resources

After reviewing the content of the four resources and their relation to existing models in the literature, I now turn to the important issue of how the different resources can be conceptualised as related to each other. Applying Hobfoll's categorisation of resources (2002), the four resources can be seen as multiple-component resources, each consisting of several different factors that together form the overarching resource. The four resources as a whole represent an integrated resource model because all four resources are proposed to work in tandem in promoting successful career development. As such, in order to allow successful SDCM, each resource needs to be present and lack in one area cannot simply be compensated with more in another resource area. While each resource is unique, I propose that they are not independent of each other but are instead related within and across time. As stated in the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), resources do not generally exist in isolation but instead aggregate such that a person with more resources in one area (e.g., social support) will also possess more resources in other areas (e.g., career identity). The framework presented herein specifically suggests that career management skills have to be applied to use and develop the four resources. Moreover, career management skills can be used to capitalise on one resource to develop another, for example when focused environmental career exploration, capitalising on identity resources in terms of goal and preference clarity, builds human capital resources in terms of career knowledge. The positive relationships of components within the four resources are indicated in numerous empirical studies in the career literature (e.g., Hirschi, Niles, & Akos, 2011).

I further propose that the reason for the positive relation of the four resources within time comes from processes in which resources promote each other's development. This notion is common to most resource theories (Hobfoll, 2002), which state that resources reinforce each other in the way that accumulation of one resource facilitates the accumulation of another resource. This notion is also exemplified in various instances of observed gain spirals in vocational and organisational research (e.g., Hakanen, Perhoniemi, & Toppinen-Tanner, 2008; Weigl et al., 2010) where positive situations or states (e.g., job resources) promote the development of other positive situations or states (e.g., work engagement) which in turn reinforce more of the former positive situations and states (e.g., accumulation of more job resources). In a similar vein, Parker et al. (2009), describing their intelligent career framework in reference to 'knowing why', 'knowing how' and 'knowing whom', propose that those three ways of knowing mutually influence each other in a dynamic process over time. For example, people with a clearer sense of who they are and what they want ('knowing why') more easily build social networks ('knowing whom') and acquire relevant knowledge ('knowing how') because they show more goal-directed initiative in their career development. Likewise, the existence of developmental networks ('knowing whom') can facilitate the development of a professional identity ('knowing why') through available role models and enable accumulation of professional knowledge ('knowing how') through knowledge sharing within the network. Finally, professional knowledge ('knowing how') can increase the chances to obtain social support from mentors ('knowing whom') because one is perceived to be a more promising protégé, and can facilitate the development of professional goals ('knowing why') by allowing more informed choices and goal commitment.

As also outlined by Parker et al. (2009), there are a number of theoretical and empirical studies to support such claims. For example, Judge and Hurst (2007) showed that children and adolescents with more positive core self-evaluations (a trait-like psychological resource) were more successful in attaining later career success in terms of income, partially because they accumulated more human capital resources in terms of academic achievement. Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) present a study that shows how social capital resources promote the development of human capital resources in organisations due to ease of access to information within established social networks. The research reviewed and theoretical model proposed by Dutton, Roberts, and Bednar (2010) show that positive identity resources promote the development of social capital resources at work through such processes as increased openness and authenticity in information sharing or the promotion of trust and respect in relationships due to identity-consistent behaviours. On the other hand, social capital resources in terms of parents, mentors and developmental networks can enhance a person's sense of identity and self-efficacy by providing role models and psychosocial support (Allen et al., 2004; Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, & DuBois, 2008; Guerra & Braungart-Ricker, 1999). Psychological resources, such as self-efficacy beliefs or positive affect, can promote identity development because they enhance the focused collection and integration of career information (career exploration) and facilitate career decision making and goal setting (Hirschi, 2011). It is important to note that among psychological resources, the development of the more state-like components seems the most likely to be affected by the other resources. However, the longitudinal study by Luyckx, Soenens, and Goossens (2006) indicates a dynamic interplay of trait personality characteristics and identity development among emerging adult women, suggesting that even trait-like psychological resources can be developed and affected by other resources.

Hence, I propose that career resources are not static entities but are instead assets that change in a dynamic process of mutual reinforcement over time, such that the existence of resources in one area promotes the development of resources in the other areas. Likewise, the lack of resources in one domain can hinder the development of resources in another domain. As such, the model not only implies gain spirals but also offers an integrative explanation of why some clients present a persistent lack of development in counselling.

Implications for practice

The proposed career resources model has several implications for career counselling and guidance. The existing research reviewed in this article suggests that the four proposed career resources are critical for students, job seekers and employees if they are to successfully manage their careers. Assisting those groups in career counselling, job placement and outplacement services entails assisting clients/employees in developing those resources. Due to its generic nature, the career resources model can be integrated into blueprints of more general career guidance frameworks (e.g., Reardon, Lenz, Sampson, & Peterson, 2000) and models of career competencies (e.g., Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs [MCEECDYA], 2010) by providing a focus on the content areas that counsellors and programmes should pay attention to. One first step would be to critically assess the current level of resources available in each domain. In working with this framework, counsellors should first ask themselves to what extent each of

the four resources are developed in the client, what information they would need to obtain a clear understanding of the resource level in each domain and how they plan to acquire this information. Such an assessment might then be undertaken via a structured interview, possibly assisted by more formalised tests and archival data. The goal of counselling would subsequently be to support the client in developing a sufficient level of resources in each domain. Here the counsellors need to ask how they can enhance the resources and develop a treatment plan that meets the client's individual needs in each resource domain. Towards this goal, it is also important to keep in mind the mutual influence of the four resources. This means that if working with a client who shows persistent lack of development in one area (e.g., identity resources in terms of lack of goal clarity), it might be important to strengthen the other resources (e.g., identity resources in terms of self-efficacy beliefs or human capital resources in terms of occupational knowledge) in order to develop the first resource domain. Hence, counselling would subsequently consist of specific action steps to enhance resources in areas where they are currently lacking and needed.

The development of psychological resources may need a more therapeutic approach and require more counselling sessions than often used in career guidance, more focused on information and direct guidance. However, resources such as self-efficacy beliefs can also be enhanced with relatively brief interventions where clients are assigned tasks that allow experiencing small successes, the provision of adequate role models who have mastered similar tasks in similar situations and circumstances, and verbal encouragement from the counsellor that tasks can be accomplished by the client (Betz & Schifano, 2000). Other resources such as hope can be enhanced by working with the client towards the articulation of specific goals and thinking of multiple and alternative pathways that might lead the client to those ends. Clients should be assisted in developing agentic thinking of wanting to and being able to use those pathways by elaborating specific behaviours and next steps that might lead to the articulated goals, envisioning possible obstacles that clients might encounter on their path and elaborate strategies for how the client could deal with those obstacles if their occur (Snyder, 2002).

Identity resources can be enhanced through biographical exercises, structured group activities and formal tests of personal characteristics, interests and values. For example, the career-style interview (Savickas, 1989) can be used to help clients construct a sense of identity and meaning by identifying life themes, early recollections, childhood heroes and leisure interests. Other constructivist assessments such as the life line, card sorts or goal map (Brott, 2004) can be used to enhance a client's sense of identity by clarifying career and life goals, integrating the work role with other life domains or clarifying personal preferences and values. Finally, standardised assessments of interests or personality traits can be used in counselling with the aim of enhancing the self-understanding of the client. This approach attempts to actively involve the client in the selection of assessment instruments and assigns an active role to the client in understanding the meaning of the assessment results, while avoiding a test-and-tell approach that puts the counsellor in the role of expert and the client in the role of a passive recipient of test scores (Osborn & Zunker, 2005).

Social resources can be enriched by enabling clients to acquire mentors. This could be achieved by establishing a formal mentoring programme where mentors are recruited from the community or specific organisations and clients are matched to mentors according to specific criteria such as gender or area of career interest.

Clients can also be assisted in developing informal mentoring relationships by providing them with information and training on how to be a good protégé and how to benefit most from mentoring relationships (Chandler, Hall, & Kram, 2009). Secondly, clients can be assisted in developing their networking abilities more generally and in enlarging their developmental networks with people within and outside their current or aspiring professional domain. This can be achieved by establishing a list of potential contacts and discussing strategies to initiate and maintain relations with them. Finally, parents and significant others can be actively involved in the counselling process in order to enhance the tangible and emotional support that a client receives from his or her environment. Counselling sessions where all relevant parties are present and where goals, pathways and available support are discussed could be used for this purpose.

Finally, human capital resources can be promoted by identifying specific training and educational opportunities that might enhance a client's professional knowledge and transferable skills. Counsellors can also encourage career exploration and assist in the collection and interpretation of career information in order to allow the client to acquire more accurate, complete and elaborated career knowledge (Gysbers, Heppner, & Johnston, 2009).

Conclusions

To summarise, this article presents an integrative framework of four career resources that helps to integrate the dispersed literature on self-directed career management. It proposes that successful career management depends on four career resources that are enacted by career management skills. By organising the diverse concepts of self-directed career management, the presented framework allows counsellors to more easily identify and evaluate the factors that research has proposed as essential for clients to develop. As such, the framework can be used by career counsellors as guidance in their counselling practice for designing career interventions and counselling sessions. It can also be used by clients to achieve a clearer understanding of the different resources that are important for them to develop. Career counsellors are encouraged to assess and develop those resources among their clients and to use the framework as guidance in their discussions with clients about what factors are important in order to master the diverse career development tasks in today's world of work.

Notes on contributor

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