Expectations and experiences of career counselling

- An exploration of interpersonal behaviour

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Abstract

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The overall purpose of this thesis is to describe and analyse interpersonal behaviour in career counselling sessions. The importance of the relationship in counselling for the outcome of sessions has been acknowledged in earlier research. How the actual interaction process between client and career counsellor looks like has been sparsely investigated. The present research explores expected, experienced behaviours and self-image of 15 adolescent clients' and counsellors' dyads in career counselling. The research was guided by interpersonal theory and the model of structural analysis of social behaviour (SASB) developed by Lorna Smith Benjamin. The research focuses on four different aspect of interpersonal behaviour. First, the significance of different behaviours by the clients and the career counsellors related to session evaluation. Second, the significance of expected and experienced similarity in perceptions of self and other behaviours related to session evaluation. Third, differences of perceived behaviours and possible influence by self-image over the course of sessions and fourth, comparing the influence of positive and negative self-image to expected and experienced behaviours, perceived important events during session and session evaluation session by clients'. Results indicate the importance for clients to become close to the career counsellor in session, while the career counsellors' encouragement of clients' independency during sessions showed to be of less importance for the clients'. This pattern imply a difficult balance act for career counsellors between providing a safe and close relationship and promoting independence and exploration for the clients. Further, it was found that career counsellors had difficulties in identifying their own contributions to a positive session evaluation, indicating a problem for the career counsellors' to make conscious adjustments of behaviours. The degree to which client and career counsellor agreed of their behaviours only mattered for experiences of the career counsellors' behaviour when related to their evaluation of session. Only minor tendencies of influence by the career counsellors' self-image of clients' perceived differences in behaviours were found. Self-image played a significant role in how the clients' expected and experienced behaviours, perceived important events in session and in their session evaluation. Clients' with positive self-image showed consistently more positive perceptions on each of the involved variables.

Key words: career counselling, interpersonal behaviour, SASB, self-image, expectations, experiences, client behaviour, career counsellor behaviour

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Almost 10 years ago I had the opportunity to be accepted to the doctoral program at the department of psychology, Umeå university. Looking back to those 10 years it has truly been a turning point for me. To have been given the privilege to meet so many interesting people, to have had the possibility to spend so much time in something you find rewarding and to become absorbed of developing your own knowledge has indeed been a pleasure, however, occasionally also a painful pleasure I must admit.

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Umeå May 2007

List of papers

EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF CAREER COUNSELLING
- AN EXPLORATION OF INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOUR

This doctoral thesis is based on the following articles.

I   Schedin G (2005) Interpersonal behaviour in counseling: Client and counselor expectations and experiences related to their evaluation of session. International Journal for the advancement of counselling. 27(1)

II   Schedin G (2005) Similarity of interpersonal behaviour in career counselling. International Journal for educational and vocational guidance. 5(1)

III   Schedin, G & Armelius, K (2007) Career counselling: A pilot study of self-image and perception of behaviour. Manuscript submitted for publication

IV   Schedin, G. & Armelius, K. (2007) Does self-image matter? Client's self image, behaviour and evaluation of career counselling session. An exploratory study. Manuscript submitted for publication

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Contents

INTRODUCTION

Career counselling deals with one of the fundamental questions in people's lives: How would I like to live my life? For some people this question is easily resolved – by themselves or with support from others. Yet, there are individuals that struggle with the question more or less throughout their lives - triggered by unsatisfying working conditions or by developmental and structural changes in society. Throughout the years many researchers have made substantial efforts to describe and develop theories of career development. These theories have contributed greatly to our understanding of factors affecting "-why people choose the occupations they choose"- in working life. From an individual perspective people's career paths are not always as smooth as they would like and difficulties may arise from time to time during their transition from, for example one level of education to another, from education to work or from unemployment to work. These difficulties are often accompanied by varying degrees of distress. Various types of support exist, in Sweden, to help people who have become stuck in their career development, one of these being career counselling. Career counselling aims to facilitate career decisions and has developed its own frame of reference. As in the case of career development theories, several methods of career counselling have been developed and improved over the years. From its early beginning as a more or less diagnostic and directive discipline, later career counselling methods have become more aware and considerate of the differing needs of clients, focusing on individual strengths, facilitating change, contributing to clients' growth and providing action planning towards preferred work or educational programs. As career counselling has developed over the decades, greater emphasis has been placed on the quality of the interaction between client and career counsellor, as this has proven to be important in order to achieve change. However, knowledge about client - career counsellor interaction in a natural setting is sparse. The focus in this thesis is on young people in upper secondary school voluntarily seeking help from a career counsellor in their present school. The intention is to explore and analyse interpersonal behaviour in career counselling sessions.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE AND CAREER COUNSELLING

The purpose of this historical review is to give a brief overview of the historical development of career guidance and career counselling, adding glimpses of important events in historical development in Sweden. Some implications are highlighted at the end.

First to set this historical description in perspective it's reasonable to think of guidance and counselling as existing over a very long period. Most likely the need for and access to guidance and counselling have been present in a variety of contexts throughout history. Greek philosophers such as Socrates and the oracle at Delphi would serve as examples of the use and distribution, in their historical time

and culture, of what may be considered a form of guidance and counselling. In daily speaking, both among lay people and practitioners, the two concepts, guidance and counselling, are often used interchangeably, while in a more professional context and in the professional literature they are sometimes defined separately (e.g. Hiebert and Borgen, 2002; Ali and Graham, 1996).

The use of the concept of vocational guidance can be traced back to the progressivism and reformism within the American education system and public schools in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Zytowski,2001; Aubrey, 1977). This period is characterized as one of tension in American society. The structural transition from agrarian to industrialized society had put high demands on literacy and education. The high number of immigrants from different countries who had placed their hopes for a better future in America added to these demands. Cities were facing substantial unemployment with negative effects for individuals.

The need to assist people in their transition to work and in their choice of occupation was identified early. In 1881 Lysander Richards anticipated a new occupation (Zytowski, 2001). Richards's book, "Vocophy, The new profession: A system to enabling a person to name the calling or vocation one is best suited to follow", is an early prediction of a profession which Frank Parsons 25 years later, would name vocational guidance. At the time of the origin of vocational guidance, the major progress was within the educational system. At the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century "vocational and moral guidance" was implemented in the curriculum in some schools and one period a week was used for this lesson. Some years later vocational guidance in American schools became reformulated and more focused on the pupil's character in order to facilitate his/her understanding of her-/himself as a social being in some future occupation (Aubrey, 1977). However, the implementation did not embrace all American schools.

One of the most important persons in the establishment and development of career services was Frank Parsons, often referred to as the father of vocational guidance (Aubrey, 1977; O'Brian, 2001; DeBelle, 2001). Frank Parsons was a man deeply engaged in issues of social justice. Although he is described as a shy person he seems to have been something of an entrepreneur in many cases, especially regarding his self-promotion (Pope and Sveinsdottir, 2005). A turning point for implementing vocational guidance was one of Parsons's lectures (about 1906), ″The ideal city′(Zytowski, 2001). The lecture addressed young peoples need of help in their choice of a vocation and it made such an impact that Parsons was asked to formulate a plan for systematic vocational guidance. Parsons opened the Vocation Bureau in Civic Service House in Boston in January 1908 with financial support and contributions from Pauline Agassiz Shaw. Similar ideas also emerged in Europe at the time. In England, the Public Labour Bureau was established by law in 1902 (Mulvey, 2006) and in Scotland Ogilvie Gordon proposed in 1904, at a

meeting of the Glasgow Union of Women, a national system of information and employment bureau to help young people towards employment (Hopson and Hayes, 1968).

Frank Parsons died in September 1908, by an infection after a kidney surgery, only nine month after the opening of the Vocation Bureau and one year before his book ´On choosing a vocation´ was published (Pope and Sveinsdottir, 2005). The book ´On choosing a vocation´ was posthumous published and contained a very specific outline of his ideas of vocational guidance. The basic foundations of vocational guidance were built on four principles (O'Brian, 2001): 1) Light as the insight gained about oneself. 2) Information as data collected about oneself and the world of work. 3) Inspiration as the hope and encouragement in career pursuit and 4) Cooperation as the mobilization of resources to succeed in one's career choice. Parsons articulated these principles into the three famous factors of the matching model to make a wise vocational choice:

> *"1) a clear understanding of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations and their causes; 2) a knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work; 3) true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts." (Parsons 1909, p5 cited in Hartung and Blustein, 2002)*

Parsons's model was an application of a scientific method on social problems (Hartung and Blustein, 2002) and it was based on logic and common sense without strong philosophical or psychological support (Aubrey, 1977). During the following years psychometrics became an important tool in the performance of vocational guidance. At the time, the use of psychometrics served two purposes. First, it provided a tool to address the first part in guidance – self-assessment. Second, psychometrics provided guidance with a scientific procedure that gave guidance respectability in sociaty (Pope, 2000). During the 1920's and the large scale unemployment of the 1930's the influence of psychological processes, derived from the mental health movement and psychoanalysis, became influential in the guidance movement (Aubrey, 1977). An important, additional, influence during this period was Carl Rogers' book ´Counseling and psychotherapy´ from 1942 (Super, 1955). The amalgamation between psychometrics and the influences of psychological processes affected vocational guidance during the 30's and 40's. The result of this amalgamation was that the first phase of guidance kept the diagnostic approach and was best served by the use of psychometrics while the last phase, to match the individual to a suitable job, was best served by a psychological process. Use of counselling in the final "reasoning stage" of guidance became known as trait and factor counselling, also known as directive counselling or counsellor-centred counselling (Aubrey,1977).

In the beginning of the 1950s vocational guidance was non-existent in some parts of the world and partly implemented in others. The quality of services delivered in Europe was found not to adequately address the new conditions nor meet the needs of clients (Borgen, 2003). The need for guidance to expand its scope and purpose was evident since the period after the Second World War had put new demands on guidance and counselling (Aubrey, 1977; Borgen, 2003). The 1950s were the beginning of an important period for vocational guidance and career counselling as a major shift was about to occur (Aubrey, 1977). The influence of Carl Rogers refocused earlier emphasis in the guidance literature from being practical oriented to becoming client-centred with an emphasis on different techniques and methods and their consequences for the client-counsellor accomplishment. The focus of tests in vocational guidance shifted rapidly to a more counselling oriented approach during this period. The influence of Rogers's theory and research was strong and there were voices of warning stating that the impact might not be beneficial for the profession as guidance theory was not strong enough to integrate the work of Rogers without becoming simply a bandwagon effect, leaving the acquired knowledge behind without considerations of integration (Aubrey, 1977).

In Sweden, the beginnings of vocational guidance can be traced to the opening of an employment agency in 1902 (Lindh, 1987; Lovén, 2000), and to the governmental subsidises to provide young people with help in their choice of vocation in 1906 (Nilsson, 2005). In 1918, helping pupils to be employed in vocations for which they had the best requirements was incorporated in the national school curricula (Nilsson, 2005).

It was not until the 40's that Sweden organised more professional vocational guidance when Einar Neymark became director for the Youth Vocational Guidance unit within the Public Labour Market commission (Nilsson, 2005). The development of vocational guidance in Sweden was influenced by the early guidance movement by using tests of clients' traits and comparing them to vocational demands. In Sweden educational reforms during the 1950s resulted in the development of a guidance organisation that provided schools with a teacher who was specifically designated to be responsible for vocational guidance and who was initially offered a few weeks of training. The main means for this teacher to provide guidance was by providing information and teaching. Only in exceptional cases was individual guidance used (Nilsson, 2005). It was not until 1972 that career counsellors had posts in schools - not as teachers but still within the educational system. At the same time a one-year training program for career counsellors was developed within teacher education in Sweden. At the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s the training for career counsellors had developed into a three-year undergraduate university program – the career counselling program.

This brief historical review seems to point to some interesting implications regarding the concepts of vocational guidance and career counselling. Initially vocational guidance rested heavily on testing individuals, matching their traits to suitable vocations. Watts and Kidd (2000) relate this to a diagnosis and prescription period. The assumption was that, by measuring individuals' traits, an expert (guidance practitioner) could advise the individual in choosing a successful career path. The content, the information to be gathered and provided in vocational guidance, played an important role. Even though the importance of psychological processes started to influence vocational guidance early, in the true reasoning phase (counselling phase), it was not until the 1950's and the later work of Carl Rogers that a major shift took place. The integration of psychological processes led to a shift in focus of vocational guidance from content to process. The guidance practitioner was no longer seen as an expert providing advice but a counsellor paying careful attention to the clients' needs. The interviews became more focused on facilitating the individual's decision-making process and to developing his or her own decision-making skills (Watts and Kidd, 2000). The concepts of vocational guidance and career counselling, in a broad sense, share the same goal, which is to help clients with their career related problems. The way guidance and counselling address career related problems seems to be a consequence of their legacy - either emphasis of gathering information and matching this information in career guidance or emphasizing the clients' change process in career counselling.

The role of a counselling relationship.

There is no doubt that Parsons still influences career counselling in Sweden and there is no doubt that Rogers and the client-centred approach is equally important in Sweden today (e.g. Lindh, 1997; Lovén, 2000). To become stuck in transition can be a stressful experience (Multon et al 2001), for the pupils in upper secondary school as well as for the unemployed worker urgently needing to find a new career path. The purpose of career counselling is to offer help to people experiencing difficulties acting in their own best interests – experiencing a problem. To investigate clients experiences, perceptions and explore possibilities related to clients' problem situations and to working together to shape a better future implies change - a change in perception of oneself and/or one's possibilities, which can entail changing perceptions and actions acquired earlier in life. The extent to which the client and the career counsellor will accomplish a valuable outcome rests on the establishment of a working relationship (Kidd, 1996).

The relationship has been recognized as one of the fundamental aspects of providing facilitation for the client's decision-making process. Sexton and Whiston (1994) conclude that of all the examined factors affecting the therapeutic process only the relationship has consistently contributed to success. Kolden et al (1994) suggest that the relationship serves two fundamental purposes: to provide conditions for change and to provide the power by which change can be facilitated.

Kiesler (1996) suggests that the most important contextual environment in therapy is the relationship.

The in-session relationship is identified as an important factor to provide conditions for a positive outcome but the definition of the relationship and the important components, in the relationship seems to be argumentative. Horvath and Greenberg (1989) argue that there are three major theoretical, technique specific, formulations whose purpose is to define and explore variables that are important for the relationship and the outcome of counselling. Rogers's (1961/2001) client-centred approach, based on the counsellors' psychological maturity in communicating empathy as the capacity to enter and experiencing the private world of the other, unconditional positive regard as the positive attitude towards the client, genuinely as the extent to which the counsellor is genuine towards the client and congruence as the extent to which the counsellor has capability to communicate in consistence with his/her conscious experiences ; Strong's (1986) social influence, emphasising the degree to which clients' perceived trustworthiness, the involved counsellors open and forthright manner, expertise, the competent and experienced counsellor, and attractiveness, the physical appearance and non-possessive manner of the counsellor as crucial for the outcome of counselling; and Bordin's (1979) working alliance, in which the client and counsellor ability to collaborate around the three components *task,* which represents the mutual responsibility of perceiving the in-session interaction as the substance of the helping process in counselling; *goal,* the agreement of valuing and confirming the target both are striving for; and *bond* as the positive personal experiences of mutual trust, acceptance and confidence (Horvath & Greenberg, 1989). Although Rogers and Strong both emphasise the role of either the counsellor or the client while Bordin places the focus on the collaborative relationship between client and counsellor, there is little doubt that they all acknowledged the mutuality in developing the relationship in counselling. The importance of the interpersonal dimension of the in-sessions working relationship is evident since most of the assumptions in the described constructs are dependant of a mutual interaction whose purpose is to create change within the client. The research of Rogers, Strong and Bordin has made significant contributions in order to describe components and how generic variables may contribute in the development of the in-session relationship. Their theories and models have inspired other researchers to additional research contributing to a better understanding of the effects of the specific components. Still, we don't know much of the client and career counsellor interaction (Heppner & Heppner, 2003).

INTERPERSONAL THEORY

Interpersonal theory, developed by H S Sullivan (1953), is characterised as a theory focusing on the interaction between people. The book "The interpersonal theory of

psychiatry" was posthumous edited and printed in 1953 and largely based on Sullivan's writings and written lectures. Sullivan's (1953) initial formulation of an interpersonal theory was a response to the lack of theoretical frameworks in psychiatry. The book reflects Sullivan's special interest in communication and how this communication could be used to understand and help individuals with psychological dysfunctions. From his perspective, an individual's psychological dysfunction was generally caused by inadequate communication derived from anxiety in early developmental stages. When formulating his theory Sullivan was well aware of the difficulties of describing the complex nature of human organisation of thoughts and the number of channels that influence us from birth onward. He looked at the theory as a genuinely scientific approach that could cope with the inefficiencies and inadequacies of life, although the scientific approach he was speaking about was far from precise. The theory was rather thought of as helping to make highly probable statements rather than certainties, because individuals are so capable of adjusting that we cannot predict with certainty.

Three fields for the development of interpersonal theory influenced Sullivan. First was Adolf Mayer's development in the field of psychobiology, which looked at the individual as the central unit of study, not in the way that had been predominant earlier with its distinction between psychology and sociology, but rather as the study of the individual as the highest embodiment of mentally integrated life. The individual was to be studied with a focus on mental processes and social and environmental experiences. This embodiment of mentally integrated life included a subject organisation by which one is able to think of oneself as if objectively. The emerging new field of social psychology made a strong impact on Sullivan, especially the original thinking of G. H. Mead and development of the concept of the self. Sullivan was influenced by Mead's notion that the unique individual was a complex derivative of many others. The third field that Sullivan thought influential in the development of interpersonal theory was cultural anthropology - especially cultural anthropologists' description of the way organised activities in a shared environment produces common tasks to be carried out in specific ways as a result of social rules and morals that prescribes specific actions for the individual. However, as psychobiology represented the study of the individual human being, social psychology represented the biologically and culturally conditioned, and the cultural anthropology represented the study of the social heritage expressed in people's behaviour, Sullivan (ibid) saw the occurring interpersonal processes in the interpersonal situations as the most important domain of interest.

The role of tension

According to Sullivan tension and euphoria are two fundamental emotional experiences in our daily living. He used the concepts of euphoria and tension in a reciprocal way, as the level of euphoria varies inversely with the level of tension. Most people would find themselves somewhere in the middle between these

concepts in their daily living as there may be some tension and the euphoria is not as high as it could be. While euphoria may not be troublesome for the individual, tension plays a very important part in our thinking. Sullivan also emphasised the importance of anxiety in understanding interpersonal interaction. To avoid, minimize or get rid of anxiety is the essence of the way we act. Sullivan saw the tension of anxiety as differentiated from all other reductions in euphoria. While biological needs may arise and be satisfied by providing essentials such as water, for example, the only way to reduce anxiety is to experience – not satisfy – interpersonal security. Anxiety is primarily picked up from early caregivers and significant others as they transfer their own anxiety to the child, which receives the anxiety by their emphatic capability. During our psychological development we learn from earlier successful actions and when we experience needs and anxiety we recall previous actions, which thereby provide some foresight as how to respond to certain situations. Our actions, based on our foresights and experiences, are made to satisfy needs or relieve tensions. In encounters with others the individual uses a well-established pattern of behaviour. If this basic pattern is challenged, the tension of anxiety is experienced and calls for activities (security operations) to relieve this tension. To strive for satisfaction and security are fundamental motives for human action. Successful actions will produce a positive self-esteem while unsuccessful actions will evoke tension and lower self-esteem.

Another important concept in Sullivan's thinking is "self-dynamism". Sullivan suggests that the self-system is a learning process, based on rewards. The two constructs "Good me" and "Bad me" are important to understanding the self-system. The "Good me" is developed when the infant has an anxiety-free nursing relation and co-operation with the caregiver. Nursing is carried out without tension and the infant's needs are satisfied, and this is where the personification of "Good me" begins. This situation provides an experience of tension-free pleasure and fulfilment. The organisation of experiences starts as I am rewarded by my way of being as "good". The "Bad me" is the organisation of experiences of the increased anxiety associated with behaviour involving the caregiver. The fundament of acting in ways to be the "Good me" is then first, to avoid anxiety and second, to experience satisfaction.

Sullivan formulated a theorem of reciprocal emotions, also called reciprocal motivational patterns in interpersonal relationships. The underlying assumption is that individuals in interpersonal interaction bring emotional needs into the situation. These needs affect each individual's pattern of activity as he or she responds based on the foresight developed by earlier similar needs. At best, the interaction may resolve the needs of the interacting persons, reciprocal patterns develop and become more refined, and there is foresight into how satisfaction can be gained or continued by improved performance. According to Kiesler (1996) the complementary needs refer to a situation where the needs of one person relate to

the needs of another so that the behaviour relevant to the two basic needs of closeness and power tends to produce satisfaction for both persons.

The development of "me" is closely related to the interaction with the caregiver and, at its first stage the awareness of "my body". "Me" is composed of three aspects; the "Good me", the "Bad me" and the "Not me". As mentioned earlier the "Good me" is developed in interaction when experiencing satisfaction and the reward of tender caring by the caregiver. This is an indication that the caregiver is pleased with the interaction and feels free to express appreciation of the infant. The "Bad me" is the organisation of experiences with varying degrees of anxiety associated with a non-functional interaction. These experiences are related to an increased tension and forbidding by a significant other that can induce anxiety in the infant. The "Not me" is related to intense anxiety and cannot be connected to a cause and effect relationship. The characteristics of the "Not me" experiences are not nearly as useful in guiding interaction as the previous two types. This personification of "me" is expanded to the personification of the caregiver, which, later in childhood becomes the "Good caregiver" and the "Bad caregiver".

In his theory, Sullivan saw the extensive complexity of human development, the anxiety provoking challenges that we try to avoid by security operations, but also meeting the needs of people that matter to us so we can maintain a positive feeling about ourselves. A theory that captures much of the legacy of Sullivan is the model of Structural Analysis of Social Behaviour (SASB).

Structural analysis of social behaviour (SASB).

Sullivan's (1953) thinking has played an important role in the development of models intended to capture human characteristics in terms of interaction. A frequently used type of model to capture interaction and behaviours are the circular models. Even though these kinds of circular models had existed earlier, in the ancient Greek societies, and then later on for example, in the work of Leonardo da Vinci (Wiggins, 1996), the primary founder of a clinical adaptation guided by the theory is ascribed to Timothy Leary (Wiggins, 1996; Kiesler; 1996; Benjamin, 1996a). Leary used the work of Sullivan and the personality psychologist Henry Murray and combined his findings into an interpersonal circumplex model categorising psychiatric labels (Benjamin, 1994). Since the original interpersonal circular model, there have been various other models, most of them sharing the basic underlying dimensions of love – hate on the horizontal axes and dominance-submission on the vertical axes. During the 1960s and 1970s Lorna Smith Benjamin developed a model to assess interpersonal interaction and self-image called the Structural analysis of social behaviour (SASB). The model is an elaboration of earlier models. The difference in Benjamin's model is that she added new dimensions into the circumplex models by separating different aspects of the

relationship (action and reaction) and self-image into three differentiated surfaces. The model offers a tool for an expanded assessment of the perception of interpersonal relationships. The result of the model is descriptive statistics that permits one to compare and contrast different perspectives of for example, self and other. The SASB model provides a useful tool for systematic description of interaction both as a subjective assessment questionnaire and in observations by observers.

The underlying theoretical assumptions include that the characteristics of a person is acquired during childhood through social learning. Significant others influence the child by their actions in their caring and upbringing of the child. These actions are internalised by the child and becomes the fundamentals of the child's self-image. The action by the child represents the child's hope for love and approval from the internalised representation of early caregivers. The resonance of the internalised caregivers and search for love and approval manifest itself in one or more of, what Benjamin (1996b) calls, copy processes. These copy processes affect the individual to a) be like the significant other (identification) b) act as if the significant other is still present (recapitulation) or c) treat him- or herself as the significant other has (introjection). Benjamin deviates from Sullivan's (1953) thinking of the fundamentals for human behaviour. While Sullivan (ibid) saw the individual actions in terms of primarily avoiding anxiety and secondary as experience satisfaction Benjamin (ibid) suggests that the basic motivating force of actions is to seek love and approval of an internalised significant other. The early internalisation of the significant other and the actions to seek out love and approval indicate the association between self-image and behaviours.

The SASB model consists of three surfaces directed to three different perspectives (attentional focus) in interaction. The first surface is called the transitive focus and captures the perceived actions from self towards other; the second surface is called the intransitive focus and captures the reactions from the perceived behaviour of other. The last surface is the self-image and focuses on how a person perceives his or her action towards self, how an individual treats him or herself. Like many other circumplex models, the SASB model is built on the two fundamental dimensions where the endpoints of the horizontal axes represent Hate-Love. The vertical axes have different names at their endpoints depending on the surface, however, all names represents aspects of the dimension of Enmeshment-Differentiation. These two orthogonal located axes form the basis for the complete model on each surface and the different behaviours originating from one or two of the endpoints. SASB is constructed so that it can be used to describe both positive and negative behaviours as well as the balance between autonomy and control and the intensity of specific behaviours. The simplified cluster model of SASB has eight typical behaviours positioned around the two basic dimensions (figure 1).
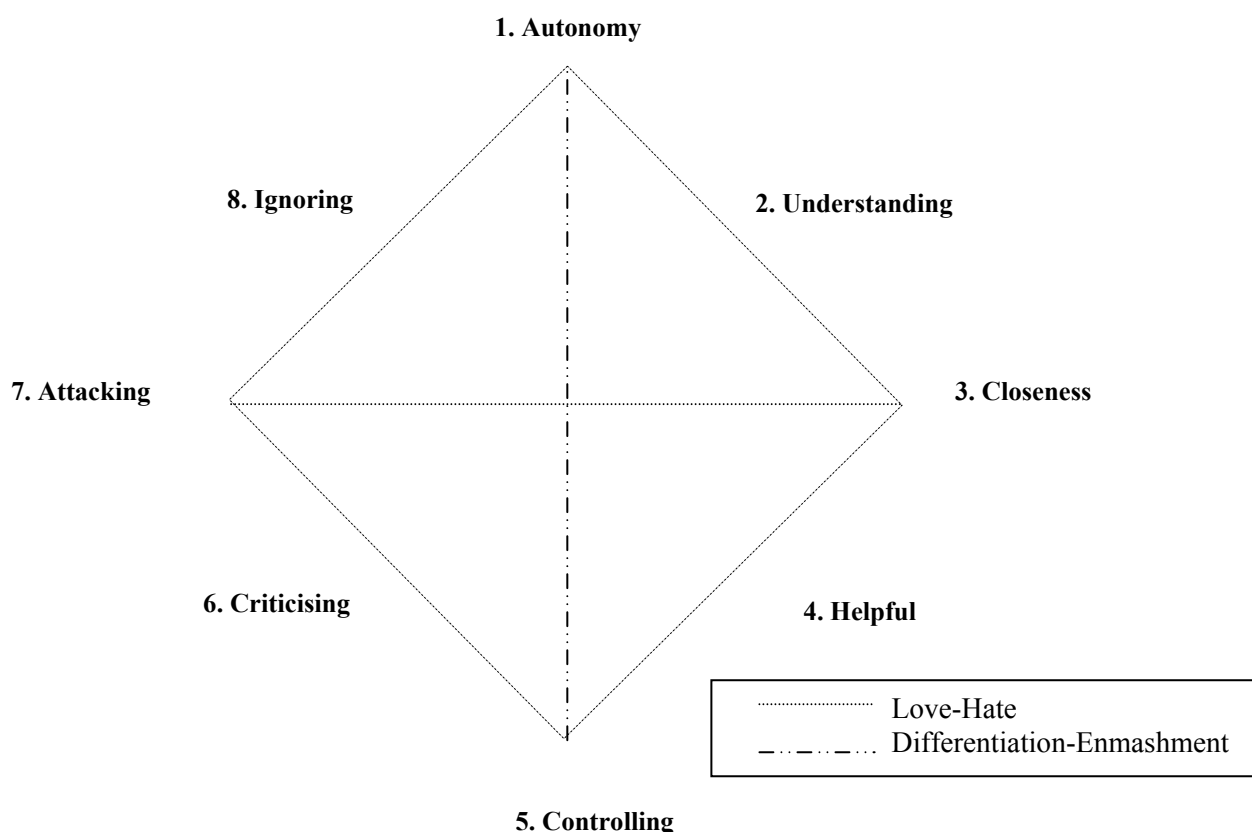
Figure 1. Example of the SASB model used in the present study to assess behaviour of self and other.

The concepts used in the model differ between the three surfaces but have the same fundamental meaning and capture the same underlying dimension or a combination of two of the basic dimensions. Positive behaviours are located at the right side of the model and are described as understanding, closeness and helpful. Understanding behaviour reflects acceptance and affirmation of either self or other, closeness reflects love and liking of self or other, and helpful reflects caring and protecting of self or other. These three behaviours represent behaviours of attachment and are considered to be the foundations of a positive self-image and essential for the development of a close, trustful and caring relationship. At the left side are the negative and hostile behaviours ignoring, attacking and criticising. These belong to disruptive attachment since they describe a negative self-image and the development of a negative relationship. Ignoring reflects behaviours related to neglecting or paying no attention to self or other, attacking reflects rejection and distancing from self or other, and criticising reflects accusation and blame. At the vertical axes are the dimensions autonomy and control. Autonomy reflects spontaneity and encouragement to be separate, while controlling reflects monitoring and forcing behaviour. The predictable principle in SASB (by combining both transitive and intransitive focus) is that of complementarity where closeness (action) evokes closeness (reaction) and control (action) pulls submission (reaction). How complementary a relationship will be depends on the negotiation

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process, including how close one would like to be to the other and how much control one would like to have or give to the other. Most research, using the SASB model, has been within psychotherapy and psychopathology and the development of the instrument has primarily aimed at being a useful diagnostic tool.

The fundamental mechanisms, in the development of interpersonal behaviour, have been described by Henry (1996, 1994). The child's early parental interpersonal behaviour provides an internalized image of important others and affect the child's self-image. These early experiences of interpersonal behaviour are copied into mental representations effecting expectations and experiences. Additionally, people share similar goals, wishes and fears. The early mental representations of significant other, self image and our goals, wishes and fears forms some of fundamental factors in our interpersonal behaviour.

Different use of SASB

There has been a number of ways in which the SASB model have been used in different research projects, of which some has been described in Benjamin (1996a). The formal coding system of the SASB model invites to apply the assessment in a variety of creative ways. An advantage of the SASB model is the capability to capture subtle elements in complex interaction. The SASB model can be used, for example: for self-assessment, for observational assessments or to analyse transcribed interactions. It can be used to explore past relationships, present relationships and anticipated future relationships. SASB can be directed to assess any other person of which the person in focus can imagine. The criticism (Benjamin et al, 2006) of the SASB model has been, for example, that the complexity of the model have contributed to lack of development and contributes to the lack of user-friendliness, the self-ratings does not measure reality and the SASB model is not a perfect circle but rather an ellipse.

In the present study the SASB model was used to capture, for clients and career counsellors, the expected and experienced behaviours of self and other. In addition, both clients and career counsellors performed a self-image measure. These two types of measures were used in different ways. In Studies 1-3 the expected and experienced behaviours were collapsed into the vector of autonomy and like/love by the weighting procedure suggested by Pincus et al (1998). Such weighting results in a vector based on the dimensions affiliation (AFF) and autonomy (AUT). The different weights are determined by an item's distance from each pole of the dimensions autonomy and affiliation respectively. The magnitude of weight for each position of the dimensions is calculated as:

AFF = 0 x behaviour 1 + 4.5 x behaviour 2 + 7.8 x behaviour 3 + 4.5 x behaviour 4 + 0 x behaviour 5 – 4.5 x behaviour 6 – 7.8 x behaviour 7 – 4.5 x behaviour 8

AUT = 7.8 x behaviour 1 + 4.5 x behaviour 2 + 0 x behaviour 3 − 4.5 x behaviour 4 − 7.8 x behaviour 5 − 4.5 x behaviour 6 + 0 x behaviour 7 + 4.5 x behaviour 8

This procedure thus gives six variables reflecting the two dimensions AFF and AUT for self-image, for expected behaviour and for experienced behaviour. This procedure also allows for the use of AFF and AUT as vectors and the possibility to plot any client or career counsellor rating by using rated values as coordinates.

In Study 3 the weighted values of AFF and AUT were used to determine changes in perceived behaviour from expectations to experiences in relation to self-image. The individual ratings of each participant regarding expected and experienced behaviours and self-image rating were calculated to establish the distance between expected behaviour and self-image, and the distance between experienced behaviour and self-image, resulting in differences in participants' distances. To explore influences of the other's self-image the calculation in distances was executed by first using their own self-image and second, the exchange and use of the self-image of the other person in the same dyad. The differences in distance (Dd) between self-image and behaviour on the AFF (a) and the AUT dimension (y) were calculated as:

$Dda = |ia - ba| - |ia - ca|$ and AUT dimension (y) $Ddy = |iy - by| - |iy - cy|$ where ia is the self-image of the affiliative dimension and iy is the self-image of the autonomy dimension, b is expected behaviour of either AFF (a) or AUT (y) and c is experienced behaviour of either AFF (a) or AUT (y).

The distance between self- image and expected behaviour of AFF and AUT was calculated and returned in absolute values separately and subtracted from the calculated distance between self-image and experienced behaviour of AFF and AUT. After subtracting the received absolute values the sign plus (+) or minus (-) indicates if a distance between self-image and behaviour becomes more or less distanced from self and other self-image.

In Study 4 the SASB self-image instrument was used to determine the two most positive and the two most negative self-images among the fifteen clients. The calculation was based on Benjamin' s (1996b) definitions of attachment group of behaviours (AG) and disruptive attachment group of behaviours (DAG). AG is the aggregation of behaviours 2, 3 and 4 in the SASB model and reflects the positive aspect of self-image, while DAG is the aggregation of behaviours 6, 7 and 8 in the SASB model and reflects the negative aspect of self-image. AG represents friendly behaviour accompanied by pleasant affects and flexibility while DAG includes hate and hostility accompanied by unpleasant affects and rigidity. To distinguish between the clients with positive and negative self-image the sum of AG minus the sum of DAG for each client was used. A high positive sum indicates a positive self-

image and a high negative sum indicates a negative self-image. The two clients with the highest positive and the two clients with the highest negative sum were selected to participate in the study.

Validity and reliability of SASB

Pincus, Gurtman and Ruiz (1998) evaluated the structure validity of SASB and found that the model did not meet all the geometric conditions for circumplexity, since the SASB clusters of behaviour did not exhibit a constant radius and equal spacing of a circle but rather the shape of an ellipse. This result deviates from earlier findings by Benjamin that show a higher degree of similarity to the circular model. Benjamin also found that deviance is less likely to occur when using non-patients (Benjamin, 2006). The differences in results may be explained by the choice of method used for evaluation (Pincus, Gurtman and Ruiz, 1998). Still, the authors conclude that the SASB model captured the two underlying dimensions of autonomy and affiliation. Also the reliability and validity of the Swedish translated model of SASB used in this study has been tested (Armelius, 2001, unpublished). Reliability was tested by the Split-half method and Spearman-Brown rank order correlation. Generally the mean internal consistency for the self-image test showed r_s=.87. For the simplified cluster model the consistencies were: positive behaviours 1-4 r_s = .89 and for the negative behaviours 5-8 r_s = .85 using a sample of 624 individuals. Validity was tested using a confirmatory factor analysis on each of the dimensions autonomy-control and closeness/like-distance/attack. This construct validation was performed to determine the extent to which the factor loadings of each cluster on each of the dimensions corresponded with the underlying model. The result of the validation procedure, using a sample of 52 individuals, showed that the Swedish translated version of SASB used in this study expressed the basic underlying model. Deviance was found for affirmative/understanding behaviour, which contained too much love/like and criticizing. which consisted of too much attack/hate.

AIM OF THE STUDIES

The importance of the relationship in professional interaction has been emphasised in a number of studies (Horvath and Greenberg, 1989; Sexton and Whiston, 1994 Kolden et al 1994; Kidd, 1996; Kiesler,1996; Kelly, 1997). So far, previous research has shown that career counselling interventions, such as individualized interpretations and feedback, modelling and attention to building support, are effective (Brown & Krane, 2000). However, despite several calls from researchers there seems to be a lack of understanding of the career counselling process (e g Heppner and Heppner, 2003; Swanson, 1995; Kirschner et al, 1994). Earlier research has contributed to the significance of various variables in career counselling (response modes, intentions and self-efficacy: e g Moulton et al, 2003; Heppner et al 1998; Lindh, 1997; Nagel et al, 1995; Watkins & Savickas, 1992;

Watkins et al, 1990), clients' and career counsellors' experiences of sessions (e g Anderson & Niles, 2000; Kirschner et al, 1994) and pre-counselling expectations and experiences (e g Whitaker et al, 2004; Coursol et al, 2001; Millar & Brotherton, 2001; Lovén, 2000; Tinsley et al, 1994; Gelassi et al,1992). However, the significance of specific behaviours in career counselling has rarely been addressed. In order to emphasise research of the establishment of relationships Sexton and Whiston (1994) suggested a more explorative approach of the actual interaction between client and counsellor.

The explorative approach in this thesis were guided by the general question: What expectations and experiences of self and other behaviours do clients and career counsellors have in career counselling? To capture different aspects of pre and post session impressions of the interpersonal interaction, more specific questions were developed: What are the most important expected and experienced behaviours for clients and career counsellors as related to session evaluation? How do differences in expectations and experiences relate to the clients and the career counsellors' self-image? How is session evaluation affected when the client and career counsellor share similar expectations and experiences of behaviours? How is self-image related to expectations, experiences, in-session behaviour and evaluation?

METHOD

The Swedish school system consists of four levels: pre-school (children between 1and 6 years) compulsory lower secondary school (pupils aged between 7 and 16), upper secondary school (students aged between 16 and19), and higher education (e.g. universities). All public education in Sweden is free of charge. The present investigation was conducted in the Swedish upper secondary school system. Pupils that have completed compulsory lower secondary school have the prerequisite and the option to choose any of the 18 national programs. These programs provide the basic eligibility for higher education but vary in the degree of preparation for transition to a vocation or further studies. Municipalities have to make available to their pupils the possibility of all of the 18 different educational programmes, all three years in length. The transition from compulsory school to upper secondary school in Sweden is made by 98% of the students (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2003). Usually no single upper secondary school can offer all 18 of the national programs, but each school usually has a balanced variety between programs preparing for higher education and vocational preparatory programs. Upper secondary schools in Sweden employ career counsellors to help students with career-related issues.

The mean age of the included students from upper secondary school was 18 years (girls 17.9 and boys 18.2). Of the 15 students 11 studied in programs preparing for higher education while 4 (2 boys and 2 girls) studied in programs preparing for a vocation. The average work experience of the career counsellors was 10.8 years

(females 12.9 and males 6.8). The time of the included career counselling sessions varied between 35 to 60 minutes. The presenting problems, by the student/clients, were mainly related to transition from upper secondary school to higher education or work (66%) or the present situation in school (20%).

The defined area used for data collection is located in northern Sweden. To describe the size of the area, England can be used as an example. However, the population in the investigated area only rounds up to about 2 % of England's population. The defined area has six cities with populations ranging from approximately 55 000 to 110 000. The participants in this study came from ten different upper secondary schools in seven different municipalities, five of which were represented by cities. Nearly 70% of the career counsellors working in upper secondary schools in the defined area were asked to participate, and 20% accepted.

Ethical considerations, participants and procedure

In this study the ethical standards of the Swedish Research Council (HSRF, 1990) regarding information, consent, confidentiality and use of data were used. First, contact with the 23 schools (including 59 potential participants) was made by a letter to the principals informing them of the study and its purpose and asking for consent to ask their career counsellors to participate. Second, in those upper secondary schools (21) where the principal agreed to the research, a letter was sent to the career counsellor (55 potential participants). Each career counsellor was asked if s/he would consider participating in the study. Additional information about the purpose, required conditions and procedures of the study was attached to the letter. To counsellors who agreed to participate (15) additional information was sent, including a letter for the student/client the career counsellor was asking to participate. The student's letter contained information about the purpose of the research, what information was to be gathered and how it would be stored, specifying the limitations placed on its accessibility and use, further the letter informed the student that s/he could withdraw from the study at any time. When the student/client agreed to participate in the study, a time was set for the counselling session and the career counsellor informed the researcher of the date and time of the session. On the day of the session the researcher was present, administering the questionnaire to both participants before and after the session. In addition, after the session, separate critical incident interviews were held with the student/client and the career counsellor.

As a high number of career counsellors' choose not to participate in the study, a telephone follow-up interview was performed with six who declined. The purpose of the interviews was to explore their choice of whether or not to participate in the study. In general there were three main arguments for not participating. The first and the most common argument was that they did not feel that they had the time to participate (one hour) within the three months allotted for data collection. The

career counsellors were offered an expansion of the time limits from three to five months, but still were not able to fit this in to their workload. The second argument was that they probably would not add anything to the research. They felt unsafe, as they perceived themselves to be too inexperienced since they had not been working for a long time, or they had their career counsellor training too long ago and felt unsure as to whether they worked in accordance with current methods. The last argument, given by one of the interviewees, was that the career counsellor did not organise the work so that it would be possible to notify the researcher at least two days in advance and it was therefore not possible to fulfil the required condition to participate.

The career counsellors' hesitancy about participating in the present research shows similarities to earlier studies of career counsellors in Sweden (Lindh, 1997). Some of the career counsellors' arguments in Lindh's study are similar to those made in the present study, for example being unsure that their skills will meet the standards of current career counsellor training, which implied that those career counsellors who refrained from participating experienced the research as a controlling element and they thereby became uncertain about exposing their practices. The number of counsellors who were unable to participate in this study implies limitations to the study. First, there may be a systematic positive bias in the selection process resulting in a limited or skewed distribution of the participants' characteristics. It may be that the participants that agreed to be included in this study felt more competent were more inclined to contribute to research and were more curious and opened to receiving some feedback about their practice. Second, those who agreed to be included may have been more interested in keeping their skills updated by, for example in-service training or taking courses to develop their practice and thereby represent a more well trained group. Third, the design of this study prescribed that the career counsellors was to choose the client to be included. This design may imply that the career counsellors asked clients with whom they anticipated they would work well, for example, to client characteristics, type of problem or preference of working with a specific sex. Fourth, 15 clients and 15 career counsellors were included in the study. The relative low number of participants included in the study restricts the statistical power and are especially vulnerable to an incorrect "no-difference" conclusion (Cook and Campbell, 1979).

Instruments

To explore and describe the interaction between student/client and career counsellor in the present study the SASB model was used. The transitive (action) focus was on assessing the expected and experienced behaviours of self and other, of both career counsellors and clients. The introject focus was used to assess the self-image. The instrument, based on the SASB model, consists of statements related to the eight different positions in the circular model of behaviour (see figure

1). Each statement was rated on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 represented "do not agree at all" to 5 represented "agree completely". To assess behaviour, 16 statements (8 for expectations and 8 for experiences) were used. The instrument was distributed immediately before and after the session. The SASB self-image measure consisted of 36 items representing the 8 positions in the SASB model. Each item was rated on a scale ranging from 0 representing "do not agree at all" to 100 representing "agree completely". Clients and career counsellors completed the self-image questionnaire before the session began.

An evaluation instrument was developed to relate expected and experienced behaviours to the clients' and career counsellors' more general assessments of their sessions. The instrument was developed to capture different aspects of a career counselling session. Earlier findings regarding positive interventions and skills were reviewed to construct a short questionnaire that had the characteristics of an evaluation form. The evaluation was based on earlier findings of clients' reports of important experiences of career counselling sessions (Kirschner et al, 1994; Brown and Krane, 2000; Anderson & Niles, 2000). The questions addressed: the overall satisfaction with the session (satisfaction), the extent to which the session had focused on the future (focus), the extent to which information had been given (educate), the extent to which the clients had felt supported during session (support), the extent to which different client traits had been discussed (self-explore) and the extent to which the clients had become more clear about how they might address the presented problem (clarity). The evaluation items were presented as statements where participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed on a scale ranging from 1 (not agree) to 5 (totally agree). The instrument is not standardised and the location of the mean value, degree of variance and associations between variables was unknown.
Additional data was also collected such as age, sex, emotional state, educational program, presenting problem and importance of session.

As the clients' perception of in-session events may be affected by the self-image and/or the interpersonal behaviour occurring during session, an interview was made after the session and presented in the fourth study. The interview was an adaptation of the Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954). Critical incident method was developed by Flanagan (ibid) to identify important events in relation to a specified outcome. In the present Study important events was related to addressing clients problem. To identify a critical incident in a career counseling session requires observable actions that make a significant impact on the observer, positive or negative in regard to the purpose of the session. One of the benefits of critical incident method is that it requires little preparation except of the formulations of three questions: Were there any helpful/non-helpful events in this session? What lead up to this event? and What happened after of this event? The method prescribes the researcher to ask the interviewee to identify and elaborate upon moments in the session that they had experienced as significantly helpful and

non-helpful. Open-ended questions were used during the interview to identify important event and to elaborate their meaning for the clients'. Each identified important event in the interviews was transcribed and analysed. In the analysis of helpful/non-helpful event the same categorisation as Anderson & Niles (2000) was used. Anderson & Niles based their categorisation on the therapist intention list (Hill and O'Grady, 1985; Hill et al 1988). As the approach in the present Study was similar to Anderson and Niles (2000) a comparison of the relative frequencies in each category was possible.

SUMMARY OF THE FOUR STUDIES

In Studies 1-3, 15 client - career counsellor dyads were used. The career counsellors (10 female and 5 male) were from 10 different secondary schools in northern Sweden and they had volunteered to participate in the study. Total work experience ranged from 1 to 28 years with an average of 10.8 years as career counsellors (female 12.9 and male 6.8 years). The clients in this study were 15 students (10 girls and 5 boys) who had a mean age of 18 years (girls 17.9 and boys 18.2 years). Similar gender distribution of use of career counselling services by student/clients in upper secondary schools has been found in other studies (Gruffman and Schedin, 2007). Two of the boys and two of the girls were studying in vocational programs while the rest of the students studied in programs preparing for higher education. The clients' reasons for seeking help through career counselling were mainly related to making the transition from secondary school to university or work (66%) or to the student's present situation in school (20%). In Study 4 ,the two clients with the most positive self-image and the two clients with most negative self-image were selected from the group of fifteen clients.

Study 1.Interpersonal behaviour in counseling: Client and counselor expectations and experiences related to their evaluation of session.

The overall aim of this study was to explore how clients' and carer counsellors' expected and experienced behaviours were related to evaluation of the session. Earlier research indicates the importance of the relationship for the outcome of career counselling sessions (e g Meara & Patton, 1994; Heppner & Hendricks, 1995). A review of the literature suggests that clients may relate in-session activities to outcomes (e.g. Kirschner et al, 1994) while therapists may have difficulty identifying their in-session contributions to outcomes (e.g. Orlinski et al, 1994). This study investigated the relative importance of different behaviours of self and other by relating the client's and career counsellor's behaviour to their evaluation of the session. In addition, earlier research indicated a lack of therapist identification of their own contribution of helpful actions in sessions. It was anticipated, in the present study, that the career counsellors' would have similar difficulties identifying their contributions to a positive evaluation.

The SASB model (Benjamin, 1996a,b), used in this study, allows participants to rate eight different types of behaviour related to the dimensions affiliation and autonomy (4 positive and 4 negative behaviours). In the analysis of clients' and career counsellors' rated behaviours the eight behaviours were collapsed into the two dimensions affiliation and autonomy as described by Pincus et al (1998). This transformation gave each participant eight variables of behaviour, expected behaviour of self (2) and of other (2), experienced behaviour of self (2) and of other (2). In addition, four evaluation variables were used for the client and the career counsellors and two unique variables for clients were added. To the extent to which expected and experienced behaviours of self and other were associated with evaluation of the session, Pearson Product moment correlation was used for clients and career counsellors separately. In addition, to explore how different perspectives of expected and experienced behaviours contributed to clients' and career counsellors' evaluations, the four strongest correlated evaluation variables (two for client and two for career counsellors) were used separately as dependent variables and expected and experienced behaviours as independent variables in a stepwise multiple regression analysis.

Associations between expected behaviour and evaluation

The results showed that clients' expectations of themselves and of the career counsellor on the dimension of affiliation was important for the evaluation variable of feeling more secure after the session. It seems that the clients' expectations of becoming close to the career counsellors are important for reducing distress (becoming more secure after the session). Clients' expectations of career counsellors' encouragement of independence (autonomy behaviour) showed a negative association to the career counsellors' evaluation of given support. The results suggest that clients' higher expectations of being encouraged to act independently relate to the career counsellors' experience of giving less support, as reported after the session. No association was found between the career counsellors' expected behaviour of self and other and the evaluations.

Associations between experienced behaviour and evaluation

Clients' experiences of their own affiliative behaviour were positively associated with their own evaluation of feeling more secure and their satisfaction with the session. Clients who experienced encouragement from the career counsellors to be independent (autonomy) during the session showed a positive association with clients' evaluation of feeling more secure after the session but were negatively associated with the career counsellors' evaluation of feeling satisfied after the session. Two associations were found of the clients' experiences of the career counsellors. When clients experienced affiliative behaviour from the career counsellors they felt more secure and more satisfied after the session. Clients' experiences of both their own and the career counsellors' behaviour were positively

related to their evaluation of the session. The only association related to the career counsellors was the negative association between their experiences of the clients' encouragement of independence and the career counsellors' evaluation of support given. No association was found between the career counsellors' experiences of their own behaviour and their session evaluation.

The contribution of different expected and experienced dimensions of self and other behaviour to the evaluation variables was explored. The results show that when clients experienced more affiliative behaviour from the career counsellors it predicted a higher degree of satisfaction for the clients and greater feelings security after the session for the clients. The results of the career counsellors' evaluations showed two inverse contributions. When clients expected themselves to act in a more affiliative manner the career counsellors rated a lower degree of satisfaction, and when clients expected the career counsellors to encourage autonomy, the career counsellors evaluated a lower degree of support giving. This indicates that the most important behaviour, in terms of evaluation for the clients, was the degree of experienced affiliative behaviour from client and the career counsellors. The most important behaviour for the career counsellors was the client's expectation of their own affiliative behaviour and the clients' expectation of the career counsellors' encouragement of independence. The clients' evaluations seem to be associated to the expected and experienced behaviours of self and other, while the career counsellors' evaluations are more related to the clients' expectations of the career counsellors' behaviour.

The results indicate that the clients could identify and relate expected and experienced behaviours of self and other to their evaluations while the career counsellors seemed to be more sensitive to clients' expectations. The results also indicate that the clients tend to have more and stronger associations in their experiences of behaviour compared to expectations. In turn, these higher expectations of positive behaviour tend to evoke positive experiences of behaviour and result in clients giving a more positive evaluation of their sessions. This is especially evident regarding affiliative behaviour. Career counsellors, on the other hand, showed no association between self or other behaviour and their session evaluation. Associations were found only with the clients' behaviour. Consequently, how career counsellors expect or experience their own behaviour seems to have little influence on their session evaluation. This indicates a possibility that the career counsellors may have focused mostly on the clients' behaviour, and thus it may have been difficult for the career counsellors to relate their own behaviour to session evaluation.

Study 2. Similarity of interpersonal behaviour in career counselling

The 15 clients and 15 career counsellors included in Study 1 were investigated further in Study 2. The 15 client and career counsellor dyads were explored with a

view to determining the extent to which similarity of expected and experienced behaviours of self and other was associated with evaluation of career counselling sessions.

The role of similarity (congruence) between the client and counsellor/therapist as it relates to the relationship has been of interest for a number of researchers, particularly how similarity of expected and experienced interaction affects the session (e. g. Kelly, 1955/1991; Rogers, 1967/2001; Tracy and Dundon, 1988; Galassi et al, 1992; Al-Darmaki and Kivlighan, 1993).

The underlying assumption of similarity or agreement is that a better match would affect the establishment of the relationship. In the present study, based on Al-Darmaki and Kivlighan (1993), the following hypothesis of expectations was formulated: a higher degree of similarity in expectations of self- and other-behaviour will lead to a more positive evaluation of the session. Second, a hypothesis of experiences based on Rogers (1967/2001) was formulated: a higher degree of perceived similarity between self perception and how one is perceived by the other will lead to a more positive evaluation of the session.

Similarity between the client's and the career counsellor's perceived behaviour was measured as the difference between the assessment of one's own behaviour and the other's assessment of the same individual's behaviour, for both clients and career counsellors, and assessing both expectations and experiences. Differences were returned as absolute values. The absolute values were correlated with the clients' and the career counsellors' evaluations of the session.

At first, by using mean values of rated behaviours a comparison of the most prominent expected and experienced behaviours of clients and career counsellors, was explored. Clients and career counsellors demonstrated no difference with respect to the most prominent expected and experienced client behaviours. Differences occurred with respect to the career counsellors' behaviour. Thus, there seems to be similarities in prominence of client behaviour but dissimilarity in prominence of career counsellor behaviour. Second, the degree of similarity in prominent expected and experienced behaviours was explored. In general there was a high degree of similarity between clients' and counsellors' expected behaviour of self and other. Less similarity was found in experienced behaviour, especially career counsellors' behaviour.

The degree of similarity between client and counsellor expected and experienced behaviours of client and career counsellor behaviours were correlated with session evaluation. The results showed that a high degree of similarity of the expected career counsellor's behaviour reduced the client's experience of support after the session. This result was somewhat contradictory to the initial similarity of expectation hypothesis that anticipated that similarity between clients and career counsellors' expectation would be positively associated with session evaluation. The

second hypothesis regarded the positive association between similarity of experienced in-session behaviour and evaluation of the session. This hypothesis was partly confirmed as overall similarity was correlated with experiences of received information. The results showed an association between overall similarity of client and career counsellor experiences of career counsellors' behaviour and evaluation by the career counsellors. No associations were found of expectations or experiences between overall similarity of clients' behaviour and evaluation.

To better understand the phenomenon of similarity of expected and experienced behaviour a more refined analysis was added to the study by using the associations of specific behaviours and session evaluation. It seemed that disconfirmation of the first hypothesis may be affected by three factors. First, the closer analysis indicates that clients' expectations of specific behaviours such as the career counsellors' acting understanding (affirmative) may be more important compared to overall similarity of client and career counsellor expectations of behaviour. Second, the evaluation variables of sessions indicated an association between received information and satisfaction with the session, which may indicate that the content in the sessions may have affected the evaluation measures of the session. Third, career counsellors expected themselves to act to create greater closeness compared to the clients. This was interpreted as a reflection of the career counsellors' confidence about being able to build a good relationship with the clients. Career counsellors' confidence in establishing a relationship was suggested by Heppner et al (1998) to somewhat counteract clients' positive experiences in session since the clients may experience lack of personal growth and control during sessions. In terms of interpersonal theory and the SASB model, career counsellors' expectation of acting with a high degree of closeness does not encourage clients' sense of self-control.

The second hypothesis was to some extent confirmed. In the elaborated analysis of specific behaviour it seems that three associations may have contributed to this result. First, the association between perceived similarity of the career counsellor's helpful behaviour and his/her evaluation of given information and satisfaction. In terms of interpersonal theory and the SASB model, helpful behaviour consists of both close and controlling behaviour. To give information is to be somewhat controlling. To accept information is, to a slight extent, to submit to (trust) the sender. This mechanism indicates a complementary function between client and career counsellor. In turn to be complementary may be experienced and expressed by the career counsellor in terms of satisfaction. Second, similarity of the career counsellors' understanding (affirmative) behaviour was negatively related to career counsellors' satisfaction with the session. One possible interpretation of this result is that the career counsellors place more value on acting understanding (affirmative). This is also indicated by their high mean value of rated experienced behaviour of self. This indicates that similarity may be of secondary importance. A second possibility that may have influenced the significance of the degree of

similarity is the relative importance one attaches to a specific behaviour. The importance of similarity may be affected by the significance the participants attach to different behaviours.

Study 3 Career counselling: A pilot study of self-image and altered perception of behaviour.

In the third study the 15 career counselling sessions used in the previous two studies were used to explore how clients and career counsellors altered their perceptions of behaviour from expectations to experiences of a career counselling session.

The extent to which the process between client and career counsellor affects their perception of behaviour, and how this occurs, is rarely addressed. In fact several researchers have noted the lack of knowledge regarding career counselling and how different factors affect the process (Heppner and Heppner, 2003; Whiston, 2000; Swanson, 1995). The work of Dorn (1986) and Strong (1986) is an invitation to understand the social influence in counselling; unfortunately there has been little interest in exploring and understanding the factors involved in the actual change process of career counselling (Heppner and Cliborn, 1989). Earlier research has mainly explored different behaviours and how they affect clients perceptions of the counsellors' trustworthiness, attractiveness and expertise (Miller, 1992). The present study is an attempt to address the actual change process by exploring differences of expected and experienced behaviours related to possible influence of self-image. In order to assess altered perceptions, differences in clients' and career counsellors' rated expectations and experiences of behaviour were used. In addition, these differences were related to the clients' and the career counsellors' assessment of self-image. Two hypotheses were used. First, since Strong (1986) found, in therapy, that clients conformed to therapists' objectives while therapists remained stable during sessions, it was hypothesised that the difference from expected to experienced perceived behaviour will be greater for clients than for career counsellors. Second, since career counsellors possess more social power compared to clients, it was hypothesised that a career counsellor's self-image is more important for changes in perceived behaviour compared to a client's self-image. Two different methods were used to assess perceived altered behaviour. First, the assessments of specific expected and experienced behaviours change in intensity of each of the eight behaviours of the SASB model. Second, using the dimensions AFF and AUT of self-image of each participant as a baseline, the distance between expected and experienced behaviours and self-image was compared. The self-images of both self and other were used to detect any possible influence of self-image.

The results showed, contrary to what was expected in the first hypotheses, one significant difference each for both the clients' and career counsellors' perceived

alteration of behaviour. The significant alteration concerned clients' increased experiences of acting more understanding/affirmative and career counsellors experiencing decreased encouragement of independence. The hypothesis of clients' higher degree of alteration was not confirmed. The results of the second tested hypothesis regarded the clients' and career counsellors' perceived altered behaviour related to self-image. Only one significant alteration of behaviour in regard to self-image was found. Career counsellors became significantly more distanced in their behaviour on the autonomy dimension if related to the client's self-image on the autonomy dimension. Clients indicated no significant alteration of behaviour related either to their own or to the career counsellor's self-image. However, the systematic pattern of the clients' alterations of behaviours showed a consistency in becoming more distanced in relation to their own self-image and closer to the career counsellors' self-image. This was interpreted as an indication of some support of the suggested hypothesis. The consistent pattern showed similarities to the copy process of identification (Benjamin, 1996b) influenced by the career counsellor's social power (Dorn, 1986).

Study 4 Does self-image matter? Client's self-image, behaviour and evaluation of a career counselling session. An exploratory study.

This study explored client characteristics by comparing 4 females out of the total 15 (2 client's with positive self-image and 2 client's with negative self-image) in a career counselling session.

There have been strong indications that client variables influence the outcome in therapy (Clarkin and Levy, 2004). The extent to which these client variables have significance in career counselling is in general not known as researchers tend to present career counselling clients as a homogeneous group (Heppner and Heppner, 2003). Earlier findings have indicated the influence of client characteristics in terms of personality-related concepts (e g Clarkin & Levy, 2004; Rochlen et al, 2004; Saunders, 2000; Heppner & Hendricks, 1995). The purpose of this study was to compare clients demonstrating a positive self-image (PSI) with clients demonstrating a negative self-image (NSI). The comparison regarded differences in their expected and experienced in-session behaviours of themselves and the career counsellor; it also compared the perceptions of helpful and non-helpful events during the sessions and the clients' session evaluations.

The selection of the 4 students, included in this study, was based on the SASB self-image assessment (Benjamin, 1996a,b) of 15 clients prior to a career counselling session. From this group, 2 were selected as indicating the two most positive self-images and 2 were selected as indicating the two most negative self-images.

Results showed that clients with positive self-image (PSI) expected and experienced their own behaviour as more positive compared to clients with negative self-image

(NSI). The PSI clients also expected and experienced the career counsellor's behaviours as more positive compared to the NSI clients. In addition, the PSI clients expected and experienced the career counsellors as acting more positively compared to the NSI clients.

The interviews, discussing helpful and non-helpful events showed that the most frequent helpful events were support, self-explore and educate/suggest. Even though educate/suggest was one of the most frequently perceived helpful events during sessions, it was also experienced as the most non-helpful event. Finally, the session evaluation showed that the PSI clients had a mean rating of the positive evaluation variables of 4.42 compared to the NSI clients mean value of 3.17. In fact the PSI clients gave higher scores on each of the evaluation measures compared to the NSI clients.

The results convincingly show the significance of self-image as an important variable of client characteristic influencing perception of the session. The understanding of the association between self-image and behaviour was interpreted in terms of interpersonal theory. The PSI clients had a more positive view of them selves and thereby generated more positive behaviour from the career counsellors; they thereby experienced confirmation of their self-image and had a more positive perception of the career counsellor. These differences between PSI and NSI clients regarding behaviour were also reflected in the session evaluation.

DISCUSSION

The purpose in this part of the thesis is not only to discuss the contribution to knowledge of interpersonal interaction for career counselling but also to discuss some of the shortcomings of this research.

The main focus of this research was to explore the client - career counsellor in-session relationship in terms of expected and experienced interaction. In general, most people have a definition of what constitutes a relationship. In addition, most people would agree that interpersonal relationships would need at least two people and that a relationship is likely to be dominated by an emotional experience. From a research perspective the concept "relationship" is seen as more complex. The concept "relationship" is a social construction aimed to capture a complexity consisting of different components and perspectives. As the social constructions of "relationship" are used in research it also implies that such components exist and could be identified in a social context. Whatever inner experiences - feelings, thoughts and needs - two individuals have are likely to be expressed in their behaviour during interaction. Capturing the perceptions of those actions became the fundamental issue when the design of this research was developed. Another consideration in the development of the design was the notion of the relationship as a negotiation process involving self-image as a significant component (Kiesler, 1996). The result of the chosen design became a complex structure in which it was

possible to compare participants expectation, experience, and agreement of perceived actions, and relate them to participants' self-image.

The interaction between the adolescent client and the career counsellor was explored by attending their natural settings in the upper secondary school. An early consideration in choosing a naturalistic approach was the notion by earlier researcher (e.g.Heppner and Heppner, 2003) that had identified the sparse use of naturalistic settings in process research. Naturalistic research does have limitations as it is usually more time consuming and costly, and it creates logistical difficulties for the researcher; however, naturalistic research also has benefits such as allowing participants to provide the researcher with contextual competence such as the career counsellors working conditions, the present workload, number of clients the actual day of collecting data. This kind of information may contribute to the researchers understanding of data. Naturalistic research also reflects conditions that are as close to actual conditions as possible.

Some shortcomings of this study

As pointed out earlier, due to the small number of participants and the sample selection in this study, the results cannot be generalized. The number of career counsellors declining to participant and the self-selection by both career counsellors and clients is problematic in regard to randomisation. The problem of sample selection is common among naturalistic studies, especially where the researcher has no control over who is included in the study (Gratziano & Raulin, 1993). To randomise a sample of students seeking help from a career counsellor would be very difficult as it is not known in advance which students, of all students in upper secondary school, will face career development problems for which they will seek help from a career counsellor. A possible way of handling the student sample problem could be to bring more students to each career counsellor who agrees to participate in studies and randomise a selection from the gathered student participants. However, in the present research, this would create another research problem, as some of the individual patterns of interaction of each career counsellor are likely to recur in each session, despite different clients. This would affect the results since the interaction would be confounded by the career counsellor's style of interacting and thereby restrict clients' repertoire of behaviour. The benefit of using unique client – career counsellor dyads was considered to be more favourable as it was assumed to provide a greater variance between and within the dyads.

The main purpose of using statistical methods, in the included studies, was to facilitate analysis and the understanding of the collected data in the sample. The benefits of using statistical tools were to put numerical values to similarities, associations and differences and thereby be able to discriminate what seemed to be important from what may be more peripheral results. However, the use of

statistical analysis in the present study does not allow asserting existence as well as non-existent, except within the investigated groups.

Expectations have been regarded as a somewhat problematic concept in earlier research of counselling (Tracy & Dundon, 1988). Some of the arguments that have been addressing the use of "expectations" in research are that expectations may be understood in two ways - either as a preference or as anticipation. The uncertainty about which of the two meanings clients attaches to the concept of expectations creates substantial difficulties for the researcher when analysing data. To use the concept "anticipation" or "preference" instead of "expectation" seems to partly eliminate the problem (Galassi et al 1992). They found evidence that it is possible for clients' to distinguish between preference and anticipation when the two concepts were used similar. This emphasises the importance of clarity in the way expectations are addressed. In the present research, statements clarifying the actual investigated behaviour were used to express what behaviour and towards whom the participants would direct their expectations. This way of addressing expectations of behaviour was anticipated to minimise the possibility of unwanted interpretations, and at the same time maintain theoretical rigour. Another issue that may raise some concerns is the basis of the clients' and the career counsellors' expectations of self and other behaviour. It is anticipated that as clients and career counsellors enter into a session their reference of interaction is based on earlier interactions (Benjamin,1996 a, b). To the extent that these earlier experiences have worked well for them they are likely to repeat the earlier actions and perceptions of the other. The behavioural repertoire for individuals is set early and will shape expectations of behaviour. In this sense it could be stated that expectations are an echo of earlier awareness of how one usually behaves in specific situations. The clients and career counsellors are unlikely to suddenly adopt a completely new way of acting. Some support could be found in Galassi et al (1992), who found no differences in preferences and anticipations among clients who had earlier experiences with the counsellor and those who had not met the counsellor before.

Experiences were addressed similarly to expectations by presenting statements representing the behaviours that were to be considered. The extent to which individuals can accurately estimate their own behaviour have been addressed by Gosling et al (1998). They found variations of among participants' accuracy of rating of behaviour compared to the observers' ratings. A high degree of consensus between participant and observer occurred when the behaviour was observable and desirable and came from the extroversion and conscientiousness part of the Big Five personality domain. In general they found a tendency for self-enhancement when the acts were highly desirable and difficult to observe. John and Robins (1994) compared the accuracy of individual evaluations of their own performance and others' performance. The results show that people are less accurate in evaluating their own performance compared to their evaluation of others' performance. As did Gosling et al (1998), they found a tendency for self-

enhancement when evaluating participants' own performance. Both studies (John and Robins, 1994; Gosling et al 1998) relate their result of self-enhancement to participants' narcissistic traits. These results indicate a possible positive bias of the career counsellor and the clients' estimation of their own behaviour while their estimation of the others' behaviour may be more accurate. However, the accuracy problem was perceived as a smaller problem as the present research was not exploring accuracy but comparing behaviour as rated by the same participant. It was assumed that the potential bias in the participants' self-assessments would be similar in both their expectations and experiences and therefore not interfere with the results.

Main results.

The results indicate that the degree of clients' expectations of their own behaviour, to become close to the other, relate to the degree of positive evaluation of the session. The association between behaviour and evaluation of the session increase when the clients recall their experiences of behaviour after the session. This phenomenon of clients' increased perceived positive behaviour may be explained by interpersonal theory (Kiesler, 1996). Clients' entering into a session with positive expectations of acting for closeness behaves in a way that brings about a behaviour conveying the career counsellor to act in a complementary manner. An assumption in the SASB model (Benjamin, 1996 a, b) is that if one person acts in an affiliative manner this will elicit a corresponding behaviour from the other, reinforcing the initial behaviour. To act in ways to create closeness will excite similar actions in the other, which in turn will lead to the maintenance or strengthening of the initial behaviour. Additionally, in conjunction with clients' expectation, selective perception, based on the clients' prediction of the career counsellor's complementary behaviour, may also reinforce the experiences of the career counsellor's behaviour. The clients' perceptions of the career counsellors' behavioural responses will be selectively perceived in consistence with the clients' own striving for confirmation of their self-image.

Both the clients' expected and experienced affiliative behaviours of the career counsellor were related to positive session evaluation. Hathaway (2000) suggested that it is likely that mere counsellor attention will be enough for a client to have a positive experience, regardless of the counsellor's behaviour. The results of the present research indicate that clients do not equally value all of the career counsellors' behaviours. How the career counsellor acts will affect the clients' experiences of the session. There were no associations between clients' expected and experienced of career counsellors' encouragement of clients' autonomy and positive evaluation. A tentative explanation may be that the importance, for clients' having a problem, is to become close to the career counsellor. To strive for closeness is evoked by the clients' early experiences of caretakers that protected and

offered security at moments of distress. The career counsellors' encouragement of clients' to be independent is ignored and experienced as an unimportant for the clients. This reasoning connects to the work of John Bowlby (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991) and Attachment Theory emphasising the fundamental need of close positive attachment for individuals to be able to become involved in a more independent and explorative actions. The result of this study indicate similarities suggesting clients to become close and encouragement to be independent will only be of important after the clients experience close attachment to the career counsellor.

As predicted in the study based, on findings in therapy (Orliansky et al, 1994), career counsellors did not show any associations between their own rated behaviour and their evaluations of sessions. This result is interesting and important but difficult to explain with existing data. The lack of association do raise questions of how career counsellors' develop their interpersonal skills with clients' during years of practice and how they become aware of their own contribution of establishing a working relationship.

Several researchers have, in different ways, based their thinking about the positive effect on session outcome of clients and counsellors/therapists similar perceptions (e.g. Kelly 1955; Rogers, 1961; Tracy,1986; Tracy & Dundon, 1988; Galassi, Crase, Martin, James Jr & Wallace, 1992; Al-Darmaki & Kivlighan,1993; Kivlighan & Arthur, 2000). The present study used similarity of expected and experienced behaviour related to session evaluation as an indicator of the importance of similarity. The result indicated having similar expectations of each other's behaviour made no difference for clients or career counsellors in terms of positive evaluation of sessions. Some support was found for similarity of experienced career counsellor behaviour and positive association with the career counsellors' evaluation of the sessions. This result provided a somewhat different perspective of the expected and experienced behaviour compared to the first study. The results indicated that the degree of similarity between clients' and the career counsellors' experiences of career counsellor behaviour might be more important for the career counsellors' (compared to clients') evaluation. It also relates to Rogers's (1961) thinking of a genuine relationship, as perceived similarity may be an indicator of the degree of congruence between clients' and career counsellors' experience and the consistency by which the experience is communicated. The client and career counsellor agreement of the career counsellors' behaviours were associated to information giving. To provide information is probably one of the most prominent actions of the career counsellors in sessions and will likely facilitate agreement on behaviours by both participants.

It was assumed that clients would change their perceived behaviour between expectations and experiences more compared to the career counsellors and that the career counsellors' self-image would be more influential in this difference of

perceived behaviour. There was no substantial support for influence of the clients' or the career counsellors' self-image on the differences between expected and experienced behaviour. A closer examination of the results did reveal an interesting pattern between self-image and differences in expected and experienced behaviours that may indicate a possible influence of the career counsellors' self-image and the clients' different rating of behaviours. This pattern implies that there may be some reasons to examine the way the study was performed and address the issue of influence once more. The lack of identified influence of self-image may be due to the chosen method and instrument. The length of the sessions varied from 35 to 60 minutes. This may have been too short a time to capture any possible influence of the self-image on perceived behaviour. Using several subsequent sessions between the same client - career counsellor dyad may increase the probability of detecting potential influence of self-image on behaviour. Another factor that may have contributed to the lack of identified influence is the instrument, which may not be sensitive enough to capture small differences in perceived behaviour. To review and develop the sensitiveness of the instrument could contribute to a more fine-grained analysis. Finally, the low number of participants may also have reduced the possibility of detecting more consistent changes. Increasing the number of participants is an important mission of a new study.

The present research also highlighted clients' characteristics as the impact of clients' self-image on perceptions of a career counselling session, by comparing two clients with positive self-image and two clients with negative self-image and their perception of expected and experienced behaviours, important events in session and evaluation of session. Earlier findings of client characteristics, as self-image, have shown to affect the development of the counselling relationship (Kokotovic & Tracy, 1990). As self-image develops in relationships with significant others (Benjamin, 1996 a,b) the quality and characteristics of these early interactions are likely to affect how the client relates to the career counsellor. In the present research the results indicate that clients with a positive self-image gave a more positive rating for each of the explored variables. Whether the client has a positive or negative self-image seems to influence how s/he will value different aspects of a career counselling session, as for example important helpful events during session such as for example perceived information and support, in a career counselling session. As this research included only four participants, carefulness is required when drawing conclusions from the results.

To make any far-reaching conclusions would be premature considering the limitations described earlier. However, the results do point to some interesting findings. The results of clients' need for closeness and the relative unimportance of becoming independent in session imply important knowledge for practitioners. To be able to offer a close relationship and careful balancing the support of clients' independence is an important task for the career counsellors. However, the difficulty for the career counsellors, to identify their own contributions in sessions

may be an obstacle in trying to balance the closeness - autonomy behaviours by the career counsellors. Self-image, as a client characteristic, indicates to have an overall influence in career counselling. The extent to which clients have a positive or negative self-image seems to affect all of the explored variables in this study. The results imply the importance for career counsellors to acknowledge differences between clients' self-image and to explore consequences of these differences in their own practice. To develop different strategies to meet clients with different characteristics may facilitate the achievement of a preferred outcome.

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