

Career development and management in 21st century adults: readings towards harmonization of global and individual levels

Manuel Joaquim Enriques Rafael

School of Psychology and Educational Sciences,
University of Lisbon

Portugal

mrafael@fpce.ul.pt

Abstract

The history of Vocational Guidance has produced a broad, rich set of theorizations and interventions as well as substantial literature. Many of these contributions arose in response to the needs of society: from the first conceptions of Parsons, followed by lifespan career development proposals, up to the current contextualist and constructivist approaches. Despite the abundance of contributions, the adult population has gained increased attention only in more recent times, this being spurred on by a number of demographic and technological factors. Some of these factors are presented in this article, as well as the more relevant aspects for understanding and intervening with adults, drawn from different theories and authors who address career development. Considering that in this day and age, particularly for the adult world, the term “Guidance” is less appropriate, we discuss challenges faced by adult *Career Development and Management*, as brought on by societal change at the beginning of the 21st century, due in part to the globalization phenomenon. In this way, some responses to Career Development and Management at the global/international level, organization level and individual level are discussed.

Keywords: vocational guidance; career development and management; adults; global; organizational; individual

Introduction: first readings

Career Development and Management in adults is a relatively new field. While *Guidance*, from a scientific perspective, was initiated some 100 years ago with Frank Parsons, formulation of models which span the life cycle and which address the specific issues of adult subjects is a quite more recent concern.

Theories and interventions in the context of Guidance were for many years devoted exclusively to the adolescent. The following statement illustrates this situation: “Looking at a typical psychology text book, anyone would be inclined to think that human development is completed at the age of 21” (Hopson & Scally, 1980). The evolution of these conceptions, and in particular, the rise of lifespan developmental models, as well as a set of demographic and technological factors, have awakened in society in general, and in the scientific community in particular, an interest in the study of the adult. It is demonstrated, for example, that changes in the life of the adult subject are an ever more frequent phenomenon due in part to the uncertainties of the economic environment and to technological changes, as well as to the rise of new individual attitudes toward work.

Consequently, a growing number of studies on career and vocational adjustment of adults of all ages have appeared, such that in the last forty years a profound change in the study of career development has taken place. This can be seen in the number of studies with samples of adults and professionals, competing with those that address adolescents and university students.

Considering the adult domain as a fundamental topic in Career Development and Management, this article has the following general objectives: a) to present some of the factors which lead to increased interest in adult-directed Guidance, after theoretical and intervention considerations initially devoted only to youth; b) to analyze, from different authors (and perspectives), contributions for understanding, theorizing and intervening with adults, and c) presenting the main challenges, needs and opportunities currently facing Career Development and Management with adults.

A reading from history: from adolescence to the relevance of studying the adult

The rise of Vocational Psychology as a scientific problem came about at the beginning of the 20th century, underscored by an approach whose main concern was comparing the characteristics of the individual with professional demands at the moment when the individual entered the work world. This approach, called trait-factor, owes its success to a large extent to Frank Parsons, whose ideas were formulated in a book entitled *Choosing a Vocation*.

Parsons' theorization in itself is uncomplicated, in the author's words: "(professional) guidance consists of three steps: first, a clear understanding of oneself, of one's aptitudes, abilities, resources, limitations ... and other qualities; second, an understanding of the work world: its demands and conditioning factors; advantages and disadvantages, opportunities ... and third, a combination of the relationships between these two groups of factors" (Parsons, 1909, p.5). This theorization would lead to deep and long reflections on the theory and practice of Guidance until the decade of the 1950s (Crites, 1969; Hackett, Lent & Greenhaus, 1991). On the Iberian Peninsula, particularly significant are studies by Mira and López and José Germain; and by Faria de Vasconcelos. Binet, Piéron, Munsterberg and Claparède are likewise important European figures from this era (Ferreira Marques, 1993; Vasconcelos, 1936).

Gradually it becomes recognized that the process of Guidance is something more complex than Parsons' description, with particularly important stages. In the decades of the 1930s to 1950s, on one hand, we find the evolution of differential psychology and of psychometry (with the rise of tests for evaluating aptitudes, the first Strong inventory, and the scientific study of the professions), and on the other hand, the 1942 publication of the work *Counseling and Psychotherapy* by Rogers; this work, though it focuses on psychotherapeutic aspects, had a particular influence on the conception of guidance focused on the individual, as shown by the importance given to motivational and affective aspects, in the focus on self-acceptance and self-understanding, in attention to the subject's verbalizations as a source of information, and furthermore, in the stimulus it gave to research and practice regarding the counselor/client interaction (Crites, 1969, 1981).

A radical change in the theoretical conceptions of Guidance takes place in the 1950s with the emergence of theories on lifespan career development. The innovative nature of the-

se theories consists in understanding human psychological development according to a lifespan perspective, highlighting the study of all changes in the context of individual physical, intellectual, affective, social, personality and vocational development (Jepsen, 1990). Work by Ginsberg and collaborators constitutes a decisive contribution toward this change (Ginzberg, 1952) due to stimulating an increase in developmental perspectives, though it is limited because of their restriction to the period of adolescence and early adulthood.

The first theoretical formulations by Super, which look at the entire life cycle, undoubtedly constitute a new, decisive impulse in this context (Super, 1953, 1957). Research with an evident longitudinal nature, such as the *Career Pattern Study* by Super, the *Career Development Study* by Bribbons and Lohnes and the *Talent Project* by Flanagan have provided in turn important empirical bases (Ferreira Marques, 1993).

Thus, in the decade of the 1960s, the designations of Career and Career Development become popular. The growing importance of developmental perspectives becomes an additional tendency in the 1970s, during which time important contributions appear, such as the autonomy of Vocational Psychology, understood as the study of vocational behavior and development (Crites, 1969) and the rise of the career education movement established by joining guidance with education, with the school curriculum and the educational process (Herr & Cramer, 1996).

New conceptions in Guidance are reflected in terminology frequently used today in expressions such as Career Guidance and Career Advising. A recent evolution is that of integrating guidance into the personal and social development picture, as can be witnessed in the statement: “Career advising and individual counseling are inextricably related. Career problems have a strong emotional component ... it is almost impossible to separate or categorize a problem as being a career problem or a personal one” (Krumboltz, 1993, p. 143).

Nonetheless, important repercussions from these models, in both research and in practice, have shown a basic concern with the adolescent and young adult, while interest in events that take place after entry in the work world is limited.

The rise of new realities makes clear that people of all ages can have career needs and concerns, in many different circumstances, and that furthermore society can benefit from ca-

reer counseling programs and services (Campbell & Heffernan, 1983), in summary, by going beyond the initial approach of the early 20th century, a time when the population under study was restricted to youth in transition from school to the labor market.

Thus, the adult receives growing attention as the central object of research and intervention, not only on the part of the scientific community and of counseling specialists, but also on the part of society in general, and of the work world in particular. Along with this change of attitudes in practice and in theory, a change in labor market demands has also concurred, in the sense of providing support for people of all ages and in all stages of development (Johnston & Heppner, 1984; Law, 1981).

Among the factors that give rise to increasing attention to the adult, there are legitimate conditioning factors for certain professions, as well as those relating to older women with children returning to professional activity, or significant changes of a social, economic or political nature; these factors are now considered classic, whereas we now call attention to other current factors of a demographic, technological or psychological nature (Campbell & Heffernan, 1983; McCrae & Costa, 1990; Watts, 1980).

Demographic aspects are particularly important, among which we highlight increased life expectancy (so that we must take into account the population 65 and older) and additionally, the number of women involved in the work world, including those with a university education (Campbell & Heffernan, 1983; Johnston & Heppner, 1984).

In technological aspects, there is a clearly growing number of professions, many of which did not exist at the time when today's working adults were making career choices; these changes occur largely in areas involved with information and communication technology. Thus the pattern school-work-retirement is no longer compatible with this reality; it is now more common to make changes in the type and place of one's work over one's lifetime (Brown, 1998; Johnston & Heppner, 1984; Kerka, 1995).

Cultural and economic changes in society and technological and organizational modifications in jobs can create frustration for a large number of workers. Furthermore, changes in subjects' values, needs and expectations lead a large proportion of adults to reformulate their career plans (Lankard, 1993).

On account of the above, we are witnessing growing career flexibility, which translates into the following phenomena: middle age is no longer a period of settling down, professionally speaking, and of maintaining one's employment; unemployment and subemployment lead to the thought that career progression is not only vertical but also lateral; needs for ongoing training lead to a requirement for making consistent career decisions; early retirement, due to legal issues, implies consideration of alternative activities with social value; the appearance of new lifestyles induces the adult to remake initial career plans (Campbell & Heffernan, 1983; Neapolitan, 1980; Thomas, 1980; Watts, 1980). Thus, new competencies and new adjustment formulas are needed; it is imperative to reach an understanding that clearly integrates the subjects' personal development, in contrast to a static character approach.

On one hand, these aspects highlight the importance of studying the individual's development, which translates into counseling practices, but on the other hand, they underscore the large diversity of populations. Traditionally psychologists have focused on concerns of women returning to the workplace, or men and women who questioned the course of their current profession and were looking for career change; today, they address different, specific groups. The following are most notable: older workers, looking for post-retirement careers; displaced workers, whose employment was eliminated due to events such as farm closures, bankruptcies and company mergers; and couples, where both are working and whose needs are more complex than where only one partner is practicing a profession (Avedon, 1995; Goodman & Hoppin, 1988; Imel, 1996).

The above factors and adult-based research serve as the basis for defining the need for assistance in the career development process. Here, different aspects can be emphasized: (1) aspects of career development from a global point of view, as a maxi-cycle, with successive stages and mini-cycles that sometimes occur in each stage; (2) assessment of the different roles which the subject is called on to fulfill, taking into account their specific importance during each life stage, and how they interact reciprocally (particularly important in the adult, where there can be conflicts between family and professional roles); (3) the issue of "life events", in other words, helping the subject learn to manage transitions caused by changes foreseen or unforeseen, such that he or she can exercise control and not be controlled by them, and can learn to find growth opportunities out of such events (Duarte, 2004a, 2004b; Watts, 1980).

A reading of theories: conceptualizations and interventions with adults

Although not specifically directed toward the adult population, the main theories developed in the context of the evolution of Guidance can translate into notable contributions with regard to understanding the adult development dynamic, and furthermore, can provide relevant clues to counseling with adults. Using some of the criteria formulated by Krumboltz and Nichols (1990), wherever appropriate, we turn now to searching the main approaches for aspects that can enrich our understanding of the adult subject.

This task involves a first difficulty – what models to choose? In reality, the different classifications of existing models follow different organizing criteria, so that consequently the classifications are very diverse. Let us look at a few examples. Crites (1969) makes the distinction between non-psychological theories (accidental, economical, cultural and sociological) and psychological theories (trait-factor, psychodynamic, developmental and decision-making). Walsh (1990) underscores the trait-factor theories, theories focused on the person, psychodynamic theories, developmental theories, theories of social learning and computer-assisted guidance. Osipow (1990) identifies a set of four theories that stand out historically and culturally: trait-factor, work adjustment, social learning and developmental. Herr and Cramer (1996) make the distinction between trait-factor approaches, decision theories, situational, sociological and contextual approaches, psychodynamic approaches and developmental approaches. Savickas and Lent (1994), in turn, highlight five authors as most representative of current perspectives in guidance: John D. Krumboltz, René V. Dawis, John L. Holland, Edward S. Bordin and Donald Super.

From the *trait-factor* approaches, important aspects can be drawn out with regard to understanding the adult: personal characteristics, environmental characteristics and the adjustment process. Today, contributions from the theory of work adjustment by Davis and Lofquist stand out, as well as from the theory of vocational personalities and work environments by Holland.

The theory of work adjustment, which makes the comparison between individual needs and environmental demands in order to predict adjustment, satisfaction and the subjects' tenacity in the functions being performed, operationalizes concepts by turning to a set

of evaluation instruments. It thus offers an important contribution with regard to the diagnosis of the client's personality characteristics (abilities and psychological needs). Another important contribution consists of making possible the evaluation of environmental characteristics, allowing us to find significant matches and mismatches. In this way psychology can help the client with adjustment, whether the approach relies on changing the environment, the subject or both, in the sense of searching for the subject's satisfaction (degree of satisfaction with regard to the work being performed or the degree to which individual needs are satisfied through work) or the organization's needs (degree of satisfaction with regard to the the subject's performance) (Dawis, 1994; Dawis & Lofquist, 1977; Lofquist & Dawis, 1991; Swanson, 1996).

Holland, in turn, presents a set of simple ideas, from which he moves to more complex elaborations. Personalities are characterized by their similarity with one of six personality types (Realistic, Intellectual, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional); environments in which people perform are characterized by their similarity to six environmental models with the same designations as the personality types; finally, the combination of persons and environments translates into predictable, understandable results as we base our knowledge on the personality types and environmental models. Thus, by proposing a comprehensive system that leads to explicit linking between personality characteristics and environmental characteristics, it also has led to numerous empirical studies resulting in contributions at the level of instruments that evaluate personal variables, their usefulness is revealed in the diagnosis process (Holland, 1997).

In synthesis, one of the main contributions of the trait-factor perspectives, according to each of the authors' specifications, lies in the information component, whether the information is related to the subject or to the environment; for this purpose it is possible to visualize information as promoting self-knowledge (Lent, 1996). It can be further mentioned that current trait-factor perspectives underscore the reciprocal interaction between individual and environmental characteristics, that is, the individual shapes the environment, and the environment in turn shapes the individual (Swanson, 1996), an aspect that can be useful from the point of view of understanding adult adjustment processes.

The possibility of establishing a comprehensive image of individual career development is a notable contribution from *developmental theories* with regard to "representation of

reality”, since they allow for situating and helping situate the subject in a dynamic developmental process. Contributions from the different theories are different in quantity, complexity and specificity of proposed concepts, and also in the dimension of the empirical studies which uphold them. Herr and Cramer (1996) highlight that developmental theories by Super, Savickas and Schlosseberg are among those that address the adult.

Among developmental theories, the “*career development, assessment and counselling model*” is noteworthy (Osborne, Brown, Niles, & Miner, 1997; Super, Osborne, Walsh, Brown, & Niles, 1992). This is a model derived from a broad set of research carried out by Donald Super, considering that some of the aspects of career development can be evaluated and influenced by the interpretation of results from career-related psychological and counselling tests. Theoretizations which form the basis of the “career development, assessment and counselling model” are grouped into three large categories: “career development, maturity or adaptability model”; “career rainbow model” and “Norman arch career model” (Osborne, Brown, Niles & Miner, 1997; Super, 1953, 1955, 1957, 1986, 1990), with the following notable aspects:

- a differentialist component shown in the meaning attributed to personal characteristics, to individual differences and to the interaction between the individual and the environment, in the person’s assertion as an active agent in the development process;

- a strong developmental thrust clearly articulated in the formulation of a theory with developmental stages and substages, characterized by typical vocational behaviors (maxi-cycle), by possible superpositions, by flexible age limits, equally flexible transitions, and even by retraining over the course of the mini-cycles;

- concepts of maturity and/or adaptability and the respective theoretical models, with particular meaning in individual counseling for its prompt visibility in the subject’s decision-making and in the interpretation of psychological tests;

- conceptual innovation, in career psychology, resulting from the introduction of the concept of roles (that is, the relative importance of different roles), clearly expressed in the rainbow career model; in summary, the career is observable over a sequence of stages and is likewise characterized by the fulfillment of a variety of roles in a broad universe of settings;

- the importance of different determining factors (biological, psychological and socioeconomical) in choices, integrated comprehensively in the life span and life space and in their relationship to self-concepts, exceptionally evident in the Norman arch career model;

- emphasis on the help process, over the length of the lifespan (exposing career problems, and furthermore, in the presence of different populations) and in different contexts (academic, organizational); it brings together new explanatory models of psychological functioning in the adult and new realities (in society and in the work world) by presenting flexible forms of intervention. Thus, the model advocates for a set of evaluation instruments with psychological dimensions more closely related to vocational choices. Different sequences for using these instruments are proposed, in a flexible perspective where the substitution or addition of other instruments provides for evaluating dimensions as a function of intervention or research needs (Rafael, 2001; Rivas, 1998).

Schlossberg (1981) in turn has appropriately synthesized the work of adult theoreticians in what regards development and counseling, and shows the importance of social aspects in the context of adult behavior, these aspects predominating over biological ones (the latter are more visibly influential during childhood and adolescence). She underscores at the same time the adult's specifications. The emphasis which Schlossberg gives to the concept of transition (as opposed to a version of stability and certainty) suggests that the adult individual is a being which undergoes changes, whether deliberately or as a function of forces from the outside. Furthermore, she characterizes transition in terms of type, context and impact, and defends that a transition should be examined as a function of the molds within which the subject evaluates the nature of the transition, the existing resources at the moment of transition, and the characteristics of the person and the environment. She thus makes an important addition to the vision of the adult (and to counseling), that of understanding variability and its relevance (Schlossberg, 1981).

Savickas' conceptualization relates the way people live and structure their time with their conceptions of career and vocational behavior, defending that success and career satisfaction are related to experiences of time (Herr & Cramer, 1996). The conceptualization of the experience of time is an important contribution in the counseling process of the adult; this is a subjective experience of time as opposed to the objective time measured by clocks, the time that occurs in chronology, in history, the time of calendars (Ringle & Savickas, 1983).

Time perspective and time integration are the factors integrated into this subjective conception of time:

- time perspective indicates how subjects (and organizations) visualize and orient themselves in time; it is determined by the time domain (past, present or future) which takes on most relevance in the decision process, including the images, analogies and metaphors used by persons for the purpose of understanding time (Ringle & Savickas, 1983; Savickas, 1991);

- time differentiation is characterized by the dimensions of density and space. Density relates to the number of events that occur in a set time period/domain; for example, with regard to the future, it is demonstrated that persons clearly differ in the number of events that they suppose are going to occur in a five-year period in their organizations/lives; likewise, looking at the past, it can be observed that some subjects recount a rich local history, while others know very little of what happened before they joined an institution. Space includes aspects of both a retrospective and a prospective nature; the former indicate to what extent subjects are able to look back into the history of their organization/life while the latter refers to the time extension with which they project themselves or their organization into the future (Ringle & Savickas, 1983);

- time integration, with respect to the link between events from different periods of time, contains two variables: continuity (of a cognitive nature) and optimism (of an affective nature). For these authors, a direction of continuity facilitates establishment of relationships, interconnecting the present, the past and the future with current efforts. A sense of discontinuity of time produces fragmentary, disconnected and frustrating experiences. Optimism denotes a sense of confidence in reaching future objectives (Ringle & Savickas, 1983).

In synthesis, for Savickas, persons have a need for an objective career direction which allows them to possess conscious feelings about themselves, integrating the past, the present and the future. Once the subjective career emerges from beliefs and attitudes towards time, concepts of time perspective, time differentiation and time integration can be used in the counseling process with the objective of encouraging planning-oriented attitudes and activities and of enhancing positive decision making processes. It is a matter of framing personal objectives through life stories--in a meaningful context, anticipating events and developing planning-oriented attitudes and competencies, contingency plans and directed action that allow us to help people create, articulate and reach their aspirations (Marko & Savickas, 1998; Ringle & Savickas, 1983; Savickas, 1991).

It can be said, therefore, that lifespan career development theories do not constitute a unitary whole, but rather a variety of configurations, each one attributing emphasis to different aspects of work, to life roles and to the *self* (Law, 1998), thus contributing in different ways to understanding adult development.

From perspectives under the category of *social learning*, and within the context of studying the adult, we gain an explanation of how persons make vocational choices, based on a set of behavioral and cognitive learning processes.

When we suggest that persons acquire preferences for certain activities through learning experiences, the influence of reinforcement in developing self-concept and in determining behavior stand out as fundamental; thus, these approaches emphasize the reinforcement of desirable responses, in modeling and in acquisition of decision-making competencies (Walsh, 1990). Social and cognitive processes can be used to explain individual differences in the promptness of processing and utilizing information in counseling. Analyzing the system of beliefs, cognitions, metacognitive processes in counseling, together with job history analysis, are important for understanding the individual and for outlining intervention strategies (Chartrand, 1996).

To be explicit, identification of beliefs that may be influencing the client's ability to reach objectives, such as career myths or ineffective attitudes, simultaneously with the analysis of school and professional learning, clarify useful aspects that must be taken into account in the case of adults, for whom it becomes necessary to intervene at the level of learning, of behavior modification, management and control (Krumboltz, 1991, 1994; Law, 1998).

The main objective of *dynamic approaches* is to help persons to discover socially viable and personally desirable vocational opportunities which may be able to help them in developing their life themes and which support their development through work. Thus they point to a process which is not only focused on vocational adjustment, but also on general and personal adjustment, making evident an understanding of the *self* in a process whose tendency is therapeutic guidance. Placing the emphasis on conscious and unconscious aspects, they visualize the subject as reacting to impulses, needs and motives. They value interpretation and integration of test results, in the context of the interview, such as in the case of projecting

and autobiographical techniques, which involve dialogue toward understanding the subject and toward his or her self-understanding (Walsh, 1990).

Bordin's psychodynamic model of career choice and satisfaction highlights the importance of the personality in development and in vocational decision, integrating key concepts such as the importance of play, of spontaneity, of compulsion and of effort. One of the notable implications of this model is that the subject is considered as a whole and not only in his or her role as a worker; thus, in addition to a consideration of work realities, particular attention is given to affect. In this way, analysis of the subject's entire history is amply valued in the counseling process, in order to try to understand how the subject visualizes himself or herself, and what conflicts are being experienced. Possible strategies are proposed, namely performing fantasy exercises aimed at freeing the subject from the constraints of reality, and granting freedom to his or her inner life (Bordin, 1990, 1994). These aspects from dynamic models, although they may be considered for intervention processes, give rise to operationalization difficulties, and consequently, difficulties in applicability and scientific verification.

Career development and management in the 21st century: in search of new readings

Earlier we referred to increased attention toward the adult, reflected in the multiplicity of populations receiving intervention, and in the areas and content of intervention programs. This has resulted in a clear break with conceptions from the early 20th century, placing the emphasis on a developmental approach to the career over one's life span, where personal aspects take on central importance. Taken from the words of Brown and Brooks (1991, p.5), "career counseling is an integrated process aimed at helping subjects with problems of career development ... it is a process of choice, entry, adjustment and progress in a profession ... it is a process that interacts dynamically with other life roles" such that "career problems include, but are not limited to, decision and indecision in career choice, work performance, stress and adjustment, incongruity in the subject and the work environment, and inadequate or unsatisfactory role integration".

We also referred earlier to certain theories whose contributions toward understanding the adult and toward providing a basis for intervention are considered relevant. Growing attention toward the adult is also reflected in recent literature reviews (Guindon & Richmond,

2005), specifically highlighting the need to increase intervention in the work world (Watts, 2005).

In the evolution of perspectives on the adult, the importance of the subject's responsibility in managing his or her career also emerges. This is often supported by organizations which make programs available to workers, such programs being diverse in character (Arnold, 1997; Gottfredson, 2005; Kidd, 1998).

Thus, it is possible to observe special attention being given to the adult's placement in the work world, an aspect which in some cases leads to an analysis of the subject's interaction with the organization, and consequently, to establishing close relations between the individual career and the demands of the organization. This is what determines the stages, positions and psychological processes which psychologists must be attentive to.

However, the work world, as a privileged scenario which the adult can move in, is currently undergoing profound modifications as indicated by many authors from different areas of knowledge. Undoubtedly, we find ourselves in a knowledge society characterized by globalization, internationalization and technology, where change appears to be the only certainty, not only for subjects but also for organizations. Changes occur in organizations and in work (e.g. mergers; competitiveness and pressure for productivity; ethnic and cultural diversity), but also in opportunities and challenges presented to subjects (e.g. the nature of labor contracts; growing emphasis on technological and interpersonal competencies— *teamwork*, *networking*; unemployment; increasing work opportunities in different parts of the world; the need to consider self-employment options; less stable and less predictable career patterns; less opportunity for vertical promotion; reconciling work and family) (Amundson, 2005; Baruch, 2004; Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalh, 2000).

These new realities force us to reassess and review available perspectives and to find new responses to the challenges faced by persons, organizations and society. It is not a matter of claiming to have found the answers (or to direct the tendencies), but only to indicate a few points of view that this “old lady” Guidance, or more suitably expressed, Career Development and Management, should include.

Not to diminish its historically unquestionable impact on the lives of subjects and on organizations, it is now a matter of addressing the *Global/International*, of responding to the

Organizational, and of responding to the *Individual* and, at each of these levels, to reflect the roles of theory, of research and of intervention. Let us consider, then, some of these challenges, without pretending to be exhaustive. It is evident that these tasks and challenges affect all professionals, but they are essentially challenges from the area we refer to as Career Development and Management.

Responding to Globalization /Internationalization

The world, as a global reality, is one of the scenarios of organizations and persons. The Psychology of Career Development and Management (with adults) has important challenges at this level, some of which have been seen as we analyzed its history.

This is the case of the substantial number of instruments and evaluation techniques, many of which are adapted for other countries, and contrary to the situation a short time ago, are now easily accessible to the public through Internet. As Whiston (2003) indicates, one the challenge relates to the assurance that instruments posted online have solid psychometric bases. A possible response would have to do with regulating services provided via Internet, an aspect where scientific and professional associations from this area should play a central role.

The response at a global level also pertains to increasing international collaboration networks, whether for research projects¹, or in training, whether at the level of publication or of dissemination (e.g., journals with a truly international character).

More specifically, the response would address new internationalization career phenomena (particularly, in the near future, at the level of upper management) and of cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity, a phenomenon which is beginning to gain visibility in Europe in terms of mobility of students, teachers and researchers as a consequence of the Bologna Declaration.

The response would also involve revitalizing the importance of culture, or better put, cultures, whether in their impact on subjects or on organizations (in the line of pioneer studies by Geert Hofstede, 1991). Here we consider the likely expansion of Career Development and

¹ An excellent example of this type of study is the *Work Importance Study* (Super & Šverko, 1995).

Management to less traditional groups and to countries which are currently beginning to carry out activities in this area, as Pope (2003) mentions. We are inevitably facing the consideration of multi-cultural and cross-cultural repercussions.

Naturally, many of these challenges in the domain of Career Development and Management fall to those who participate and influence through forceful intervention, namely international associations and organizations.

Responding to the organization

Pressures generated by the impositions of productivity pose new challenges, as we have mentioned. One direct consequence is that interventions in the context of Career Development and Management are forced to adopt a certain pragmatism, without losing scientific rigor, and as Niles (2003) accurately indicates, interventions should be documented and show clearly that services are effective. It is often a matter of transforming what is academic and theoretical into more of a business language, and consequently, a more useful language from the point of view of organizational interventions. This component requires a more enterprising attitude, something which most psychologists are not particularly attentive to, since their intervention has traditionally focused on the individual.

In the area of more specific topics, contributions toward planning and integrating human resources (e.g. personnel recruiting, selection and hiring; performance management and evaluation; training) continue to be current, on the agenda. New business realities push toward diversification of the traditional domain of career counseling and toward the integration of career management in human resource systems, namely through organizational interventions such as coaching, tutoring and outplacement. Some associated questions are likewise worthy of attention: see, for example, Whiston's (2003) very timely reference to the current popularity of those who call themselves *coaches* and are highly compensated but lacking in preparation; these constitute a direct threat to those with proper preparation and training and who possess the appropriate competencies and knowledge for carrying out effective interventions.

Naturally, many organizational topics are not found exclusively in the domain of professionals from Career Development and Management. These topics, besides being scientific areas, are to a large degree subjects for analysis or problems for intervention with a necessari-

ly multidisciplinary nature. Here lies another important challenge for psychologists, consisting of considering contributions from other areas of knowledge (e.g. economy, law, sociology) in the sense of making possible an effective response to the needs of the organizations, and of finding language and methodologies that are understood across disciplines.

Responding to the individual

Finally, we refer to the first historical and traditional level: the individual. Without disregarding the role of existing theories, as referred to above, currently we highlight the importance of new constructivist and contextual approaches (Guichard & Lenz, 2005; Richardson, 2002, 2004; Savickas, 2005) and their prominence as reference frameworks in research and intervention.

However, we cannot forget that the response to the individual undoubtedly involves responding to the new issues that await him or her. The following are examples of critical topics: particular attention to lifelong learning; bringing “employability” to the forefront and not employment in individual interventions; quality of life and quality of life at work; professional stress; professional satisfaction; career and succession plans; unemployment; aging and active aging; managing diversity; free time; satisfaction and productivity.

Independently of the level being considered, responses to Career Development and Management must be interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and contextualized.

Conclusions: final readings

In the still relatively recent history of Guidance, as a scientific problem, lifespan approaches to career development emerged in the 1950s, as opposed to conceptions from Parsons which were in effect until that time. Nonetheless, if developmental conceptions have begun to lead the practice of guidance, the adult population has only received increased attention from the scientific community and from society in the recent past. This attention comes as a consequence of a set of demographic, technological and psychological factors, giving increased importance to changes occurring in the adult subject in society. Change is certainly the key word: change in the work world, change in the personal view towards the importance of work, change in needs, in values and in subjects’ expectations, growing beyond the evolution of theoretical models.

But the nature of work is different now from what it was in the past (and even from the still recent past), with phenomena of global competitiveness, cultural diversity, new technologies and new management procedures becoming realities that require subjects to use critical thought, to be competent in problem solving and in communication, in addition to having high levels of professional competence (Lankard, 1996). Furthermore, the meaning of work is variable according to the subject (Ferreira Marques, 1998; Herriot, 2001) and in the same subject over time (Herriot, 2001).

These realities naturally draw out the need for growing, systematic collaboration between theoreticians from Career Development and Management, practitioners and researchers, as well as members of the research teams, toward understanding vocational behavior in specific contexts and with equally specific populations (Herr & Cramer, 1996).

Thus, it is unlikely that a single theory is adequate for explaining and providing the basis for interventions in Career Development and Management. This fact does not constitute a problem, from our point of view. Indeed, as Gergen (2001) suggests, when we reflect on the proliferation of methodologies and paradigms, if scientific theories and methodologies only provide an incomplete view of reality, then adopting multiple theoretical perspectives and methodologies will lead to an enrichment of our understanding of psychological phenomena.

The Psychology of Career Development and Management has witnessed profound changes in society and in the concept of work, from the end of the industrial society to the eras of information and knowledge. Along this course, it has not only survived, but has been revitalized and adapted, and it has offered proposals and interventions using solid theoretical foundations and proofs generated from within the field. Taking this fruitful, successful past into consideration as a predictor of the future, it will surely be able to respond to new challenges that arise. However, the challenges today are at new levels, beyond the individual (the traditional level, and still central), coming into the organizational, and above all, at the beginning of this new century, into the emergence of the global level.

The search for answers at these levels—answers that ultimately will constitute the very identity of Career Development and Management—unmistakably involves theorizing, research and intervention.

From the past we can surely draw out essential indicators and teachings as we have seen in the relevant readings above. Nonetheless, the complexity of current challenges demands thought (thinking globally, thinking organizationally, and thinking individually) about the conceptualization of theory and research as foundational supports to intervention. Answers are neither unique nor linear, but rather “multilinear” and “interlinear” given the inevitable mix of levels under consideration. Merely as an example, to think Individual/Individual (e.g., in career counseling) is certainly different from thinking Individual/Organization (e.g., in personnel recruiting and selection) or Individual/Globalization (e.g., systems and plans for international degree programs). According to these levels, the resulting mixes of levels, and directionality, growing attention is also demanded toward other areas.

Intervening in Psychology, therefore, cannot be intervention only in Psychology. Thinking Psychology means thinking politically, thinking economically, thinking socially and culturally, in other words, *Thinking across disciplines* and *Thinking Multi-disciplines* at all times (in theory, in research and in practice), with a need for new readings and new responses to the challenges, always seeking to harmonize the global and the individual.

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