

Chapter 2

Innovating Counseling for Self- and Career Construction: Theoretical Premises, Antecedents, and Associations



Innovation is taking two things that already exist and putting them together in a new way (Tom Freston)

Abstract In this chapter, I first discuss the need for an innovative approach to career counseling. A few examples of key life transitions are given. Several personality theories that have influenced the development of career counseling theory and practice are considered. Next, humanistic and related perspectives on human performance, development, choice-making, and execution that relate to counseling for self- and career construction and life design are covered. I also discuss different perspectives on the notion of “Active mastering of passive suffering”.

2.1 Need for an Innovative and Proactive Approach to Career Counseling

The world of work is changing rapidly largely because of major work-defining technological advances brought about by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Work 4.0) (Urbanaviciute, Udayar, & Rossier, 2019).¹ Work contexts are transforming mainly due to information and communication (ICT) innovations, and in the process many workers are feeling alienated and losing their sense of safety and security in the work environment. Many jobs are likely to disappear and many human beings may well be replaced by robots in the workplace. Thousands of people are either losing their jobs or are unable to access work. Underemployment and unemployment rates across the world are rising steadily, and inequality is spiraling. Big business is gathering large data sets and hiring data analysts to identify and predict work-related trends, and career counselors should do the same. In the midst of the changes taking place in

¹For the purposes of this book, career counseling is defined as “helping people to develop and accept an integrated and adequate picture of themselves and of their role in the work world, to test this concept against reality, and to convert it into reality with satisfaction to themselves and benefit to society” (Savickas, 2019a, p. 161; also see Super, 1951).

Table 2.1 Examples of key life transitions

	Transition from	To
1	Womb	World
2	Home	Crèche
3	Crèche	Primary school
4	Primary school	Secondary school
5	Secondary school	Tertiary training
6	Tertiary training	World of work
7	One work environment	Next ... (and so on)
8	Etc.	

the workplace, a high premium is placed on workers' ability to deal effectively with repeated work-related transitions, work insecurity, and work-related trauma.

People need to be reminded that they have already successfully navigated many crossroads in their lives, that facing a crossroads is a natural phenomenon in the life of everyone, and that people should draw inspiration from these crossroads experiences. Table 2.1 shows a few examples of life transitions.

Questions I am frequently asked by research participants, students, congress and workshop attendees, colleagues, and clients include the following: Will all jobs disappear in the future or change to such an extent that I will no longer be able to do my work competently? Will robots take the place of most human workers? Will I still fit into my current work environment? How will I deal with the additional free time at my disposal since robots will increasingly take over "routine" tasks? Is it true that people will change jobs up to 20 times and more? Will I be allowed to work after the age of, for instance, 40? Will non-regulated jobs increase? These questions often reveal insecurity, low self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness, depression, and even thoughts of suicide (Pillay, 2019). Individually and collectively these questions reflect people's concern about an occupational environment over which they have seemingly lost control. They indicate that we as career psychology theorists, researchers, and practitioners must respond timeously and appropriately to ensure that we continue to provide a career counseling service that meets the changing career counseling needs of our clients. Of course, this also means that we as human beings and workers ourselves need to attend to and make sense of these changes and draw on our experiences to guide and enable us to meet adequately and professionally the needs of clients.

2.2 Changing and Innovating Our Approach to Career Counseling Routinely

Several economic downturns, globalization, technological advances, downsizing, retrenchments, and organizational mergers are changing the occupational world and impacting career theory and practice irreversibly (Maree & Di Fabio, 2019; Reid & West, 2011, 2016; Savickas, 2019a).² The unprecedented hardships caused by the economic, financial, and psychological impact of the coronavirus pandemic illustrate what I mean. Reid and West (2016) maintain that “[i]n the context of mass migration and unstable labor markets ... traditional career guidance is no longer sufficient ... the need for a paradigm shift is becoming more urgent” (p. 573). Arulmani (2019) contends that “More than two thirds of the world follow occupations where work is mainly in the informal sector” and asks: “Does “career” really exist in these contexts?” (n.p.) The search is on for a model that supplements, updates, and innovates current interventions to address numerous key changes in the occupational world impelled by information communication technology developments fast-tracked by networking and increased connectivity (Gurri, 2013). The chances of finding “stable” work and working for one organization throughout one’s life are fast disappearing; causing insecurity and uncertainty among present-day workers. Research is therefore needed on how the occupational world is changing, how these changes are impacting workers, and what the reasons for the changes are. We then need to project into the future and devise innovative career counseling interventions to ensure that the service we offer remains relevant, helpful, and valuable, bearing in mind technological advances and the advent of Work 4.0 and Work 5.0 as well as the envisaged effect of artificial intelligence developments.

To a smaller or larger extent, the counseling for self- and career construction approach advocated in this book correlates positively with several personality and identity theories. Some of these theories are discussed below.

2.3 Influence of Personality and Identity Theories on the Development of Career Counseling Theory and Practice

It is generally agreed that the development of career counseling theory and practice has been strongly influenced by personality theories (Cherry, 2018; Maree, 2002, 2009, 2013; Overview of ..., n.d.; Phares, 1992; Trull & Phares, 2001). To a smaller or larger extent, the counseling for self- and career construction approach advocated in

²The discipline of career counseling has witnessed innovation in Global North countries (Western European and North American countries in particular) during the past three to four decades especially. However, this has not quite been the case in Global South (i.e. developing) countries. However, the inspiring efforts of colleagues and researchers such as Arulmani (2019) and Ribeiro (2016) in this regard are acknowledged and appreciated.

this book correlates positively with the psychodynamic and humanistic perspectives on human performance, the narrative perspective, the socio-constructionist perspective, the systems theory perspective but also with psycho-social development as well as self-concept development (a key aspect of life span, life-space career development theories). All these perspectives are reflected in the integrative strategy advocated in the book and discussed below.

2.3.1 Psychodynamic Approach as an Important Premise of Career Construction Counseling

People are influenced by the dynamic forces that begin to shape their lives at a very young age (Bordin, 1994). How they interact with significant others (close family members in particular) are key aspects of their future storylines. Negative experiences (e.g. trauma, sadness, and rejection) as well as positive experiences (e.g. emotional support, encouragement, and approval) and unresolved issues (e.g. parents' divorce) in the early years remain with people throughout their lives. People's lives are also shaped by a wide array of experiences later in life. These influences provide the foundation for decision-making as and when new crossroads are experienced, such as going to school for the first time, transitioning from one grade to another, losing a friend, leaving the parental home to study, taking up a new job, and dealing with perceived "failure"³ or success. Here, it is important to stress the word "perceived" as an achievement (e.g. achieving 75% in a test) may signify failure for one person (who tried to achieve 80% in the test) and success for another person. A lot depends on how achievement (or lack thereof) is perceived (or perceived to be perceived) by significant others. Put differently: People's life stories (autobiographies) (Savickas, 2019a) or life narratives (Edwards, 2018) are constantly shaped, co-shaped, and reshaped; scripted, co-scripted, and rescripted in the course of interaction that includes both verbal and non-verbal communication and conversation as well as reflection (reflecting on one's life story) and reflexivity (drawing on one's reflections to bring about change and forward movement in one's life). In the process, a wealth of information (on how people can deal with transitions) is built up that people can draw on whenever they experience repeated transitions that must be negotiated.

Essentially, the psychodynamic approach holds that powerful **conscious as well as subconscious motivations and determinations will** influence people throughout their lives. The **storied approach with its narrative framework** (Brott, 2001) draws on the underpinnings outlined above by acknowledging the power and influence of past experiences on people's lives and is premised on the assumption that **every person's life story starts with hurt, pain, or suffering** (Savickas, 2011a). However,

³The word 'fail' has no place in current education parlance. Instead the phrase 'insufficient achievement' is more appropriate. I am using the word here merely because it has become ingrained in our education vocabulary.

it should be emphasized that this approach essentially focuses on the creation or construction of new possibilities and transforming past experiences of hurt into positive stories that promote the transcending of a hurtful past and inadequate access to resources of various kinds. Elicitation of these stories sets in motion the dynamic process of construction, deconstruction, reconstruction, and co-construction of the stories to help people make meaning of their lives (choose and construct meaningful careers and lives), find a sense of purpose, and (re-)kindle a sense of hope for the future.

Here it may be worth noting Enright's (2018) assertion that experiencing (emotional) pain of whatever kind ("challenges") early in one's life almost always serves a useful purpose. The author contends that the growth of young people who have had almost all their needs met and who have experienced little suffering may be stifled (Enright, 2018). In my opinion, the search for a sense of meaning and purpose is humankind's most profound search, irrespective of the context in which one finds oneself. I frequently present workshops on the art and science of writing scholarly articles and participants' single most important question generally is: "Why do we have to write these articles that, in most cases, mean nothing to society and are read by a very small number of people at best?"

2.3.2 The Humanistic Approach as a Keystone of the Narrative Approach

Rogers (1951, 1961, 1977) has a non-deterministic view of human functioning and development that emphasizes the effect of human motivation and preferences on how people think and act. Rogers foregrounded the power of people's inner world but also their perceptions of the world on how they behaved. In similar vein, Seeman (2008), Teixeira and Gomes (2000), and Young and Valach (2004) maintain that people's personal choice and agency are crucial shaping forces in their key life decisions. Cochran (1997), too, underscores the importance of agency in actively making things happen instead of letting things happen to one. Also, from a social cognitive career theory perspective, many authors (e.g. Bandura, 2011; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, 1996) stress the importance of people's self-efficacy or the belief that they can achieve desired outcomes or aims.

The person-centered perspective (humanistic perspective) holds that people are free to choose and are not "condemned" by or subject to "chance" or circumstances beyond their control (Rogers, 1951). Hartung (2011, 2015), McAdams (2010), and Savickas (2019a) argue that adapting oneself to the life-long (perpetual or continuous) progression of fitting oneself to work-related roles (as social actors), accomplishing career-life goals (as motivated agents), and constructing oneself and one's career to make personal and social meaning (as autobiographical authors) already commences in the early childhood years. Maree (2018a, 2018b) maintains that experiences during early childhood constitute happenings that comprise "a series of happenstances",

developmental crises, and areas for growth” (p. 421) that collectively form psychic footprints or life themes that acquire particular prominence later in life. This implies that self- and career construction (and, ultimately, life design intervention) should be introduced early in life to enable people to attain stable work-life identities that may help them deal with challenges and transitions during their work-lives (Maree, 2018a, 2018b).

Factors emphasized by humanistic perspectives include the importance of self-authorship, accepting responsibility for one’s actions, the elicitation of people’s career and personal stories, the importance of meaning-making (achieving a meaningful existence), and people’s continual search for a purposeful life and meeting their destiny. It is believed also that people can transcend perceived or real barriers and challenges imposed on them by their environments by taking ownership of and accepting responsibility for their actions. (Maslow’s (1987) view that having an occupation contributes meaningfully to people’s need satisfaction is relevant here too.)

The notions of active mastering of passive suffering. The humanistic view implicitly advances the idea that reflection and, subsequently, reflexivity are key elements in career counseling. Once people arrive at a good understanding of their private world, they are more likely to rise above life’s vicissitudes, view their idiosyncratic restrictions (“limitations”) as opportunities for growth (development), and actively master what they have suffered (Freud, 1963; Savickas, 2019a).

Table 2.2 Different perspectives on the notion of “Active mastering of passive suffering”

	Distinctive explication of the notion “Active mastering of passive suffering”	Author
1	Active mastering of passive suffering	Savickas (2005, 2019a, 2019b)
2	The wound is the place where the light enters you	Sehgal (2016)
3	Our torments also may, in length of time, become our elements	Milton (2002)
4	Every opportunity has a difficulty, and every difficulty has an opportunity	Ryan (2016)
5	“Where id was, there ego shall be” (p. 112)	Freud (1991)
6	From a felt negative [sense of failure] to a perceived plus	Adler (1958); Slavik and Carlson (2007)
7	From tragedy to triumph	Frankl (2006)
8	From identity crisis (role confusion) to adequate identity formation	Cherry (2020); Erikson (1994)
Etc.		

Challenging developments in children’s storylines signify unresolved issues they have passively experienced (key developmental tasks they have failed to master successfully) (Erikson, 1994). His strong emphasis on the importance of young children mastering key developmental tasks is a fundamental contribution to current thinking on the essence of career counselling (Erikson, 1968)

The principle of converting pain or hurt into hope and a social contribution (Savickas, 2016, 2019a, 2019b) has been elaborated on by many leading scholars in the twin fields of psychology and career counseling (see Table 2.2). Typically, career counselors seek to identify the unresolved challenges/pain clients suffered during their early lives and enable them to turn their hurt into hope. ‘Problematic’ (challenging) “twists” in clients’ storylines (unresolved issues they have passively experienced) are thus resolved. In reality, and even though this may seem unlikely at first, these “opposites” are in fact very close and to a certain extent relate to the notion of “graduating” from feeling disempowered to feeling empowered. Needless to say, from a self- and career construction perspective, this also implies that **people’s “pain” (feeling disempowered) can and should be linked to their future careers (that should ‘empower’ them to heal others but also themselves.** The following examples illustrate the point. Suzanne cited the fact that she “could not pronounce words correctly and was mocked because of that” as her most painful experience when she was young. After three unsuccessful attempts, she succeeded in enrolling for a degree in speech and language. Jane said: “I was fat and ‘ugly’ and was the butt of many sick jokes by my friends”. She is now studying to become a dietician.

The “every thesis has an antithesis” principle. Here, the authors draw on the “every thesis has an antithesis” assumption (all beliefs or emotions have contrasting opposites). Every preoccupation (compulsion or obsession) has a diametric opposite, for instance, feeling ‘invisible’ (unacknowledged) is the diametric opposite of feeling ‘visible’ (acknowledged) (see Table 2.3). Ultimately, the aim of career counseling is to bring about change in clients by facilitating progress in meaning-making within them. For instance, an individual who feels “hurt” should be assisted to find a way to **convert her or his hurt into hope and social contributions (potentially even into a business model).** The success of such intervention requires career counselors to guide clients practically on how to achieve progress in identifying the kind of meaning they attach to key life experiences.

There are, of course, numerous examples of this kind of change that demonstrates progress in the meaning people attach to life experiences. The point is that staying at an abstract, theoretical level when dealing with preoccupations is not helpful. Career counselors and their clients should rather work together to devise action plans to bring about positive change in the negative meaning people often attach to life experiences. It is also important to understand that there is never a single ‘accurate’, ‘valid’, or ‘objective’ analysis of people’s stories (Savickas, 2016) or “right” or “wrong” ways of dealing with preoccupations. Certain “action plans” may, however, be less appropriate than others and, consequently, following up on clients’ progress and renegotiating action strategies as and when needed are crucial.

This perspective resonates positively with me. Early in my career as a psychologist, I was interested in the influence of “subconscious personality challenges” on my clients’ career-related decisions. At the time, under the guidance of a respected mentor, I used the *Zulliger ink blots* and the *Thematic Apperception Test* (Murray, 1943; Zulliger, 1969) to illuminate clients’ “subconscious personality challenges”. Having identified such challenges, I tried to find a way to link them to future occupations. I wondered about the wisdom and, especially, the theoretical and scientific

Table 2.3 Demonstrating the thesis vs antithesis assumption: Examples of changes demonstrating progress in making meaning of life experiences

Thesis	Antithesis	Action steps to bring about progress in such meaning-making
“Stuckness”, impediment, or constriction (preoccupation; key life experience and theme)	Change demonstrating progress in making meaning of life experiences (purposeful resolution)	Practical examples
Hurt	Hope	A mother loses her daughter to cancer and starts a support group for parents of children with terminal illnesses
Invisibility	Visibility	A woman who feels unacknowledged (“invisible”) by her peers offers her “help” to an orphanage where she helps abandoned children with their homework
Victim	Survivor	A hijacking survivor writes a book on what to do during hijacking situations and how to deal with emotional scarring that may occur after a hijacking. He gives talks at schools to promote learners’ alertness to possible hijacking situations
Hardship	Opportunity	A young black man from a seriously disadvantaged region completes school, becomes an engineer, and starts to give extra classes in mathematics and physical sciences to disadvantaged high school learners on Saturday afternoons to help them achieve better marks so that they can qualify for sought-after fields of study
Symptom	Strength	A young girl suffers from severe acne and is mocked by her peers. She later becomes a medical specialist specializing in skin-related problems such as acne

(continued)

Table 2.3 (continued)

Thesis	Antithesis	Action steps to bring about progress in such meaning-making
Demoralized	Inspirational	A woman loses the “love of her life” in a motorcar accident. She writes a song about her traumatic experience and starts a support group for others who have had similar experiences. She is amazed at the healing they find by writing songs or poems about their experiences
Denied	Acknowledged	A young man who was denied access to a private school establishes an NGO that secures funding for talented learners from resource-constrained environments
Unloved	Loved	A young man is “sold” by his parents at the age of five. He completes his university studies, becomes a hugely successful construction manager, and devotes his life to finding money to establish facilities for homeless children
Silenced	Articulation	A young man who stuttered early in his life (and still struggles with certain sounds) studies speech-language pathology to help children with speech-language impediments
Suffering	Surviving	A young woman from a destitute background writes an inspiring teenage novel on how she managed to deal with what she described as an almost “hopeless” situation

(continued)

Table 2.3 (continued)

Thesis	Antithesis	Action steps to bring about progress in such meaning-making
Vulnerable	Resilient	A young woman gives birth to a baby girl while in Grade 11 and is compelled to give her baby up for adoption (a day that she describes as “the saddest day of my life”). She completes school and becomes a social worker who works with pregnant adolescents. Travelling and lecturing across the world helps her not only heal others as well as herself but also make a decent living—a good example of innovatively converting pain into hope and a viable business model ^a
Receiving	Giving	A young student from an affluent family who has “everything” in life starts taking drugs and is expelled from university on account of his addiction. He befriends a counselor while in an institution for victims of substance abuse, enrolls for a degree in teaching, and becomes a youth counselor in a township school, specializing in working with learners with substance abuse problems

^aSugars (2013) asserts that “Having an idea for a business is great, but knowing the difference between a good idea and a good commercial idea is literally money in the bank” (p. 2)

justification and appropriateness of encouraging a person who presented with, for instance, a history of having been bullied or even abused as a child to venture into fields such as teaching or law. After all, there is a strong likelihood that such a person will repeatedly be confronted with challenges like the very she or he had experienced in early (or earlier) life. I still recall the popular but somewhat denigrating observation that psychologists venture into the field of psychology precisely because they have themselves experienced the “problems” they would have to deal with as psychologists. It was only after I had met Mark Savickas that the realization began to dawn on me that we can all heal ourselves through our daily work by helping to heal others with similar experiences.

Enright (2018) maintains that when people are treated unreasonably, they suffer and subsequently develop feelings of anger, disappointment, anxiety, and sadness (sentiments that can impede healthy development). They can choose to internalize the negativity that results from suffering (which can stifle their growth and development forever) or they can choose **not** to internalize their suffering and concomitant anger by making a conscious effort to make meaning of their suffering, absolve those who have hurt them, and work through their suffering in a way that prevents others from being hurt in the process. Frankl is globally renowned for having stressed the value of finding meaning in one's suffering. Seen from this perspective, external trauma and suffering can be converted into motivations for growth and development. According to Enright (2018), "[h]ow we respond to the suffering, internally and not just behaviorally, may make all the difference in our lives" (p. 2). Ziller (2000) concisely summarizes the humanistic perspective by stating that we all have the capacity to become our "own agents of change" (p. 265).

2.4 Narrative Counseling as the Bedrock of Career Construction Counseling

Cochran (1997, 2011), Hatch and Cunliffe (2006), Jones (1996), Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber (1998), Logan (2004), Maree (2013), Savickas (2019a), Sonn, Stevens, and Duncan (2013), and Stevens, Duncan, and Hook (2013) contend that narrative counseling is founded on several premises and assumptions, including the following:

- People's individual life stories give significance and meaning to and help them construct their career-lives.
- People's life stories revolve around several central life themes.
- People author and perform their general life stories and their life stories.
- Various people, events, environments, and other influences jointly shape people's life stories.
- People's life stories filter their interpretations and perceptions either constructively or destructively.
- People are the key protagonists (social actors, motivated agents, and autobiographical authors) in their life stories.
- Storytelling comes to people naturally. Moreover, people's life stories enhance a sense of consistency or coherence and continuity to their lived experiences and interactions.
- Narrative counseling comprises more than a mere technique or strategy—its key characteristic vests in its capacity to enhance meaning-making.
- Narratives should not be regarded as "a" or "the" story because they have multiple meanings for different people (interviewers and interviewees).
- How the concepts of social actorship, motivated agency, and autobiographical authorship are intertwined either promotes or inhibits the extension and promotion of people's career-life stories (McAdams, 2013; Savickas, 2011a, 2016).

- People’s micro-stories are personal, self-scripted, and self-constructed and can be gathered and connected or woven into a macro-story (emplotment).
- Integrated, these small or micro-stories constitute people’s “grand life story” in microcosm. The meaning we make in our stories potentially predisposes us to either destructive or constructive thinking, feeling, understanding, and behavior patterns.
- Many people are not offered appropriate opportunities to narrate or articulate their life stories and elicit inner advice regarding appropriate ways to deal with challenges and navigate numerous life transitions.
- The conversion of “problem-saturated” narratives or stories (White & Epston, 1990) into positive, healing, and inspiring ones is key to meaning-making and living a purposeful life. People can choose whether to accept passively unconstructive “storylines” imposed on them by life or actively convert them into stories of hope and inspiration. Counseling for self- and career construction counseling intervention can contribute to the transformation of destructive stories into positive ones.
- Autobiographical reasoning enables people to conceptualize ways to manage numerous career-life transitions.

The quality of the counseling relationship will co-determine the success or failure of narrative (storied) career counseling. So too will the extent to which career counselors succeed in facilitating safe holding environments or safe spaces for clients (Winnicott, 1964). The latter substantially enhance the construction, deconstruction, reconstruction, and co-construction (sharing, unpacking, re-authoring, and co-authoring) of people’s life stories.

2.5 Social Constructionism

The emphasis in social constructionism is on how people themselves, their knowledge construction, and their life stories are shaped and influenced by their idiosyncratic sociocultural and historical contexts (Hutchison, 2003; Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 2005). Stated differently: Social constructionism relates to self- and career identity construction (which includes both objective and subjective facets). Career counselors adopt a “not-knowing” position (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992). The social constructionist emphasis is on eliciting and understanding people’s idiosyncratic cultural scripts and narratives (life stories). A collaborative relationship is established between counselors and clients with the aim of promoting authentic self- and career construction by clients.

2.6 Systems Theory

This theory espouses the idea of a closely interconnected series of micro-, meso-, or macro-level, individual systems “within which is depicted a range of intrapersonal influences on career development, such as personality, ability, gender, and sexual orientation” (Patton & McMahon, 2006a, p. 154). People’s individual systems are embedded in numerous interconnected, open systems that relate to many other influences that encompass their unique environmental and social systems. Systems theory correlates positively with the storied approach (the idea that people’s life stories comprise a series of closely intertwined consecutive chapters). New chapters emerge from and are intrinsically linked to earlier chapters and vice versa. People’s many stories are embedded in the stories of their communities—many cultural scripts (broader sub- and sub-subsystems) are available that shape people’s individual life stories. Hatch and Cunliffe (2006) argue that our stories are “intertwined with organizational, social, and historical narratives” (p. 198). All systems form part of an overall all-inclusive system (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a, 2006b). Any happening at any level has a ripple effect on the other levels in a given hierarchy. Whatever happens in a person’s life influences that person in toto.

2.7 Psychosocial Development Theory: The Importance of Focusing on Key Developmental Tasks

Erikson’s (1963, 1968) psychoanalytic theory distinguishes between eight stages in human development, beginning in infancy and culminating in late adulthood, namely 1. Basic trust versus Mistrust (infancy, 1–2 years); 2. Autonomy versus Shame and doubt (early childhood, 2–4 years); 3. Initiative versus Guilt (preschool age, 4–5 years); 4. Industry versus Inferiority (school age, 5–12 years); 5. Identity versus Role confusion (adolescence, 13–19 years); 6. Intimacy versus Isolation (early adulthood, 20–40 years); 7. Generativity versus Stagnation (adulthood, 40–65 years); and 8. Ego integrity versus Despair (maturity, 65-) (Erikson, 1994; Sprouts, 2017). These stages unfold naturally after birth and are influenced by people’s environmental and culture-related nurturing, rearing, and education. People encounter and must deal with different challenges in each consecutive stage, and, ideally, they succeed in mastering these challenges. If certain challenges are not dealt with successfully, they often recur as “problems” in later stages. People nevertheless move from one stage to another irrespective of whether challenges encountered during previous stages have been dealt with successfully or not.

Erikson (1968) singles out identity formation as a key developmental task during adolescence in particular but also during the next stage when people transition from adolescence to early adulthood (i.e. the two stages when people normally choose fields of study, careers, and/or jobs). Stringer, Kerpelman, and Skorikov (2011, p. 158) define career identity as “the sense of self derived from one’s development of an

occupational career ... [it] is an important component of one's overall identity". Erikson (1963) argues that being unable to choose an appropriate career and find satisfying work or having an insufficient sense of self (or a negative career identity) renders career-related transitions particularly challenging. He emphasizes the social aspects of identity formation while acknowledging that broader contexts shape and co-determine people's various career-life roles. McAdams, Josselson, and Lieblich (2001) and Savickas (2011a) view identity formation as a self-construction process that develops over time.

2.8 Self-Concept Development/Identity Formation as a Key Facet of Life Span, Life Space Theory

Identity formation is also an integral element of Super's (1951, 1957) developmental perspectives on vocational choice. The notion of identity formation is especially relevant in his discussion of the exploratory stage of life, which he sees as the period between the ages of 14 and 24 years. Developmental theories are central to the approach discussed in this book because they promote our understanding of childhood and adolescence and the challenges faced while negotiating career-related transitions during this stage of life—a time when adolescents strive not only to gather information about themselves but, at a deeper level, also to authenticate their sense of self (self-concept or self-view). The fundamental question they endeavor to answer is, “Who am I?” (See Chap. 9 for a more detailed discussion.)

2.9 Summary

This chapter brought together insights into and perspectives on the theory base in relation to postmodernizing (a key component of which is innovation) career counseling across the world. The emergence and advancement of qualitative perspectives on career counseling coincided with and were strongly influenced by personality theories such as different and divergent career development theories, humanistic theories, and systems theory. Humanistic and phenomenological perspectives, in tandem with narrative and socio-constructionist perspectives, have had a major bearing on the emergence, general acceptance, and implementation of qualitative career counseling theory, research, practice, and policy. The latter manifested particularly in life, career, and life design counseling in Global North countries especially. Looking back over the past three decades in particular, it seems clear that the successful postmodernizing of career counseling can be ascribed largely to the stellar contributions of Savickas (2019a) (career construction counseling), Guichard (2005) (self-construction), and the life design group (Savickas et al., 2009) (life design counseling). The next chapter (Chap. 3) discusses the postmodernizing and innovating influence on career counseling of the above trio of contributions.

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