

Adolescent Career Clarity: Exploring career interventions from an adolescent perspective

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material to which a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of an institution of higher learning.

Signed:

X 

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Abstract

Career decision making is an important developmental milestone for adolescents. The purpose of this study is to explore career intervention from an adolescent perspective and to examine the impact of career practice using validated assessment tools and the adolescent client's own experiences.

A thorough analysis of the results and a comprehensive literature review enabled me to develop a new model of career clarity in the adolescent. Drawing from Burch's Four-Stage Competency Model (Adams, 2016) and Simon Sinek's (2010) Golden Circle, with consideration given to the Dunning-Kruger Effect (1999), a new three-stage model of career clarity was developed. This model can be used to help practitioners assess the adolescent client's needs and progress in achieving career clarity whilst measuring and improving efficacy of practice through the establishment of a working alliance.

Executive Summary

For a young person, entry into the world of work can be a daunting prospect. With the rise of technology and the disruption of the traditional workforce, clarity about career choice may seem unattainable. There is a wealth of literature and research to suggest that career guidance assists young people in achieving career clarity. This clarity leads to several other benefits such as increased motivation at school or work, increased self-efficacy and overall increased engagement with the broader community (Choi et al., 2015; Everitt et al., 2018; Robertson, 2013). There is little research, however, on what constitutes effective career intervention from the perspective of the adolescent.

This study examines my career practice and explores adolescent perceptions, expectations and experiences of career intervention and to compare these findings to a validated assessment tool. A modified version of both Jones' (1989) Career Decision Profile and the Vocational Identity Situation Assessment (Porfeli et al., 2011) are used in conjunction with subjective, open-ended questions regarding the adolescents' expectations, objectives and perceived career needs before the consultation. The same assessments, along with additional questions relating to the helpfulness of the meeting, were administered post consultation.

Prominent themes in the clients' needs, objectives and experiences emerged. These themes and the differences in the validated assessment tools were compared to provide an extensive account of the adolescent experience in career intervention. While there was some congruency in the participants' responses and validated assessment tools, there were other more common trends that arose from the data.

An unexpected result from this study was the development of a new model describing the achievement of career clarity that incorporates Burch's model of competency while considering the Dunning-Kruger effect. This Career Clarity Model can be used to describe the different stages of career development and how one can expect their levels of career decidedness and comfort fluctuate throughout the process of achieving career clarity. It also explains why some of the participants' responses were incongruent with the assessment tool results.

The Career Clarity Model can be used to identify an individual's stage of career development, establish collaborative goals and to provide feedback on my career practice. It is also useful in demonstrating to adolescents the importance of self-reflection in career planning while providing them with the framework for sustainable career clarity throughout their life.

The development of the Career Clarity Model has several implications for my practice. These include a better understanding of the stages of career development related to the adolescent client. I now have a better understanding of how to address the needs and objectives of the individual through the various stages of career development. In a broader context, the Career Clarity Model could assist practitioners, adolescents and their parents in better understanding the career clarity process. It can explain how comfort levels, decidedness and career associated needs may change as the adolescent client becomes more aware of their purpose. In addition to this use, the model can be used to increase the efficacy of practice by providing a way to establish a working alliance with the client while also providing real-time feedback on the practitioners' intervention.