Motivational Essay - A Useful Tool in Career Choice?

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Abstract: The proposed study is based on a double causality, such as: the need to improve the counselling tools for high school students for the appropriate choice of a career development path; the existence of the category of disadvantaged students from an economic perspective, whose difficulties in choosing a training path for their career have been augmented during the pandemic. Our research provides an analysis of how the motivational essay can be substantiated as a useful tool in career counselling activities, as well as how it can be integrated into counselling approaches for the economically disadvantaged teenagers to choose the academic development path. We have used a mixed research methodology, which complements the peer review approach with the qualitative analysis of a set of motivation essays developed by the 11th and 12th Grade students. The research aims to identify the level of development of self-analysis, self-reflection and self-assessment of motivational factors, which may be decisive in choosing a future career. The essay analysis highlights a series of elements, which reflects the dynamics of the change of motivational resources in the context of the digitalisation acceleration, of the upheavals on the labour market generated by the new social and economic context. The obtained results allow the formulation of conclusions: confirming the need for such an approach; certifying the possibility and usefulness of integrating the motivational essay into the career counsellor's methodological portfolio and professional counselling approaches; illustrating useful effects and limits of the reflective effort generated during the essay.

Keywords: *Motivational essay, career choice, career counselling, economically disadvantaged students; COVID-19 period.*

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1. Some guidelines on career counselling and postmodernism

Our contemporary society is characterised by an unparalleled dynamism, generating the problems of the contemporary world accompanied by the shaping of new emerging needs in the educational universe. These produce changes in the social / individual responsibilities towards a sustainable development and determine the need for new approaches to education and educational methods, implicitly to counselling activities.

The career orientation issues are undergoing transformations that lead to greater flexibility and adaptation to the current context. The traditionalist approaches and the classic path of career counselling require adjustments and improvements, or in this framework it is clear the need to use new methods and tools in order to allow a more client-centred approach, providing opportunities and equal chances to education and educational services (Lyon, 1999).

Therefore, the career counselling paradigm has begun to be reformed, moving towards an interpretive approach, in which counsellors support the beneficiaries of the process to successfully put together their own meaningful search in line with the labour market, the division work and the community in which they live (Savickas, 1993).

Career counselling in a postmodernist context entails the need to provide young people with new skills, in a higher agreement with an ultradynamic, versatile, unstable world of work, marked by digitalisation, information explosion, professional mobility (Maree, 2010) but also by the crisis of values, all interrelated, more recently, in a pandemic time and, therefore, even more problematic and contradictory: *cognitive* skills (documentation, selection, critical analysis); *(self) reflective* skills ((self) knowledge, (self)-design, (self)-achievement, (self)-monitoring, (self) -assessment) and *action* type skills (initiative, trial and error, search, creation). These would gradually provide the individual both with the necessary tools and with the capacity to accept and take responsibility for building his/her own career (Maree, 2010). These competencies can be effectively shaped as an expression of a new kind of approach to client-centred counselling.

The orientation towards methods which make use of the potential of self-reflection and self-evaluation allow the social and cultural dimensions to be taken together (Lyon, 1999), personalised and reflected in a realistic approach on the future career path in an increasingly globalised world. These dimensions are the ones which allow the valorisation and recovery of the skill potential (also) of the people coming from disadvantaged groups.

The postmodern qualitative approach to counselling has led to the development of the constructivist theory according to which each person can build their own life and career based on self-knowledge, identifying their vocational behaviour and connecting it with their work experiences (Maree, 2010). One of the relevant theories from this perspective is Savickas's career construction theory (Savickas, 2002; Savickas, 2003; Savickas, 2008; Savickas, 2005; Savickas et al., 2009;). Career becomes the central aspect of individual existence and it is built in a unique context. This implies that each individual has the opportunity to identify the way in which they want to build his career and insert it into their own existence. In this respect, career building requires counselling strategies (Savickas 2002; Savickas, 2005) to ensure adequate self-knowledge in order to be able, on this basis, to enter the world of work with major contributions. The modern dichotomy between an individual and society is overcome by the postmodern approach, in which the individual can be formed, inserted, maintained and educated continuously in society as an expression of interpersonal relationships and the roles they play through their work, contributing, through cooperation, to community evolution (Savickas, 2005).

The overturning of the predominantly quantitative positivist classical counselling paradigm towards the recognition of the value of the qualitative approaches and the construction of combined qualitative-quantitative approaches (Maree, 2010) is the sign of current interest in the career counselling efforts. Within these strategies, the heuristic, reflective, self-interrogative, narrative ones occupy an emergent place, precisely because they allow the exploration of the self and the finding of the optimal personal areas for insertion on the labour market.

The existing context (pandemic and post-pandemic) only highlights and confirms that the specific approaches to postmodernism can generate answers to the above-mentioned challenges. The awareness of individuality and uniqueness, the opening of possibilities for self-discovery, the valorisation of the aspects related to multiple intelligences, of the diversity and responsible perspective towards one's own but also others' future is possible only through self-responsible orientation towards oneself. These are just a few reasons which have led us to explore and valorise the potential of the motivational essay as a valuable tool in the career guidance process.

2. Could a motivational essay be a useful tool in career choice?

The issue specific to the COVID-19 epidemic has generated in the 2019-2021 period numerous studies which have aimed to highlight the way

in which it has impacted the career decision making process among high school students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The research covers a wide range of issues: from the fundamental values young people believe in (and how they have changed or not as a manifestation of the pandemic) (Antoci, 2021), to questions about the exacerbation of training equity / inequity during the pandemic (Jackson, 2021) and up to specific tools for career counselling, in the context of the online education and the dividing internet (Bao, 2020; Mareş et al., 2021; Moore & Czerwinska, 2019; Pordelan & Hosseinian, 2021).

The knowledge of the way teenagers perceive themselves and, based on this, project their professional future and make career choices is a constant phase of the career counselling steps (Andreassen, 2016; Albion & Fogarty, 2002). Modern approaches specific to the areas related to personnel selection and career orientation involve the use of non-traditional methods so that people are able to develop but also to reveal their personal potential and interests for productive human activities. The narrative methodological approach, such as the reflective essay, are ways to exploit the approaches specific to the postmodern social constructivism in order to shape a comprehensive manner of building the professional path of the modern man (Collin & Patton, 2009). Career counselling from a postmodern perspective is restructured as a client centered approach, intervention approaches being rather a collaborative process strongly articulated in the present social context (Blustein Ali & Flores, 2019; Chakraborty & Wang, 2015).

One of the theoretical pillars of our approach is Super's theory according to which from the age of 15 to 20, young people are in an exploration period, trying to understand themselves, to form an accurate self-image and to decide upon their preferences (Super et al., 1996). By following 3 sub-stages successively which involve temptation manifestation / fight, career decision and preference clarification / crystallisation, young people are gradually growing and engaging on the professional path.

The ways in which this goal can be accomplished are different and complementary, the most productive are usually those in which the methodology is mixed, integrating a variety of techniques and tools (psychological tests for the identification of skills, attitudes, and motivation, questionnaires, scales, essays) (Abdullah et al., 2018; Andreassen, 2016; Lee & Rojewskij, 2012; Marciniak et al., 2020). "Preparing for a career is a key developmental task of adolescence" (Marciniak et. al, 2020, p. 3) which

justifies the studies on this topic (Albion & Fogarty, 2002; Batool & Ghayas, 2020; Sandelands, et al., 2020) for both the high school and university counsellors. The research on the factors determining the career choice and the tools which can help in this respect are very useful, and is usually done in high school education (to establish a choice) and in the first year of university studies, in order to validate the choice (Cui et al., 2021).

Studying the specialised literature on the topic allows us to highlight the following conclusions:

- From a theoretical point of view, there are a limited number of references in the literature on the topic of counselling applications that capitalise on the motivational essay (Ackerman, 2020; Mailhot, 2018; Super et al., 1963; Yang & Wong, 2020);
- From a practical point of view, a motivational essay is used, most often, for other purposes than career counselling: as a tool for selecting candidates in the admission process to some universities (Bucharest University of Economic Studies, 2021; CB Community, 2020), which can be found under the name of letter of intent, motivation letter, letter of motivation; as a tool for learning-evaluation, the versions of the pedagogical essay, integrated in the reflective journal) (Cojocariu & Mareș, 2019); as a tool for stimulating motivation (Hanson, 2021); as a tool to identify the students' and teachers' expectations towards the first year of academic activity (Hassel & Ridout, 2018);
- the motivational essay is not used in a well-established, constant and systematic way as a tool for choosing a career path.

Theoretically speaking, generating and valorising the motivational essay in the career choice process involve a useful conceptual and methodological transfer, which involves several major changes in approach :

- If, currently, the motivational essay is made to generate an interest in the reader (Hanson, 2021), we consider that if it is valorised in the career choice, it entails, first of all, an involvement, activation and clarification at the level of the one who makes it;
- If, most of the time, a motivational essay is included in the category of narrative essays (Hanson, 2021), (because it describes a series of aspects of personal evolution), we appreciate that the one used in choosing a career is a self-

reflexive, interrogative one, which tries to infiltrate into the deepest layers of the self of the one who elaborates it;

- If an argumentative essay must comply with the language requirements of the field in which it falls, we consider that the one used in the career choice can be elaborated in a personal way (Hanson, 2021), the language can be personal, using the 1st person, to express states, options, points of view, personal experiences, feelings;

We appreciate that the motivational essay can be used in this approach as a self-reflexive tool. Its drafting can be prepared or supported by exercises that guide both the process of self-knowledge and the career choice, both the attitudinal and the motivational component (e.g. “You win at life” exercise, Pickett, 2018). The way we designed and used it in the present research aims at its impact on triggering and stimulating the awareness process regarding the career choice process by the economically disadvantaged high school students. The aspects targeted in this case are self-knowledge, expectations related to student life, motivation for choosing the professional path and perspective on the professional future.

3. Research methodology

The proposed study is based on a double causality: the need to improve the counselling tools for high school students for the appropriate choice of a career development path; the existence of the category of disadvantaged students from an economic perspective, whose difficulties in choosing a training path for their career have been augmented during the pandemic.

Our research provides an analysis of how a *motivational essay* can be substantiated as a *useful tool in career counselling* activities, as well as how it can be integrated into counselling approaches *for the economically disadvantaged teenagers* to choose the academic development path.

Research question: The possibility of using the motivational essay as a valuable tool in choosing the career path.

Research Objectives:

- O1: Substantiation of the possibility of capitalising the motivational essay as a useful tool in choosing a career path based on the study of literature;

- O2: Quasi-experimental use of the motivational essay in choosing a career path for the economically disadvantaged 11th and 12th Grade students;
- O3: Qualitative and quantitative analysis of the collected set of essays;
- O4: Drawing conclusions on the possibility of extending the career counselling methodology by including the motivational essay as a tool for knowing and guiding students in order to choose their career path.

Research methodology

We have used a mixed research methodology, which complements the peer review approach with the qualitative analysis of a set of motivational essays developed by the 11th and 12th Grade student within the FDI Project entitled: "Study at UBc! Learning and training opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds" (STUDIA-UBc) CNFIS-FDI-2021-0279, financed by the National Council for Financing Higher Education, Romania, carried out between May and December 2021. Its context allowed us to quasi-experiment the motivational essay as a tool in choosing a career path for a group of 150 economically disadvantaged 11th and 12th grade students from 4 high schools in Bacău, Vrancea and Neamț counties.

Research stages

1. September 2021 – target group identification;
2. 1st October – 20th November 2021 – data collection - 150 students from the target group of the project were invited to develop a semi-structured motivational essay, following the group counselling activities carried out online. The process of collecting the essays involved multiple calls in order to speed up the process. Finally, a total of 46 essays were collected, but only 25 essays were selected according to the criteria;
3. 21st-30th November 2021 – data analysis. The students were explained that their participation in the essay elaboration process and electronic transmission is voluntary and their lack of participation or transmitted contents will not be followed by any repercussions. By completing and transmitting the motivational essay, the students expressed their consent to use the data collected for the declared research. In addition, all students under 18 years had their caregivers' written consent to participate in this research. Our research meets the requirements and research ethics rules of the "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacău. *Research tool*

The suggested dimensions for structuring the motivational essay further subjected to qualitative analysis were the following:

1. the dimension of self-knowledge (*Who am I?*);
2. expectations related to student life (*What do I expect from student life? - at the personal and professional level, minimum 3 expectations*);
3. motivation for choosing the professional path (*Why have you chosen the study programme? - name and support at least 3 arguments*);
4. perspective on the professional future (*What are my expectations at the end of university studies?*).

4. Qualitative analysis of the obtained results

The obtained results are further presented and analysed in accordance with the four dimensions of the above-mentioned motivational essay.

1. **the dimension of self - knowledge** - involved a meta-reflexive exercise to answer the question “Who am I?” Unfortunately, the self-analytical, introspective and self-reflexive exercises are not habitual practice for the Romanian educational system in which the curricula have too low an emphasis on transversal skill training. Therefore, the self-reflexive activities and those relating to the use of critical thinking involve students in a self-learning effort and self-patience training (Bocoş, Andronac & Peculea, 2015). Modern approaches in the educational process require the use of self-questioning and self-reflexive processes as an integral part of their formation process including their own professional identity (Belobrov, 2018; Gibbs, 2013). The process of self-discovery of interests and skills cannot be achieved without a knowingly realistic reporting to own resources informed and without reference to psychological needs connected to the needs of the society we live in (Blustein, Ali & Flores, 2019).

In this exercise, the students showed *reduced availability for self-disclosure, presenting mainly demographic data, study profile, but also some personal skills* - ideas found in 86% of the essays presented:

I am creative, sociable, communicative. I like reading, going out with friends, discovering new things and making new friends (F, 17 years old);

I am a calm, creative, punctual and persuasive person, who really likes reading, discovering myself (M -18 years old).

The self-presentations made from the perspective of this dimension were relatively concise, poor in depth elements, without offering the image of real self-knowledge. These aspects can be the expression of both the previous exercise of self-knowledge, self-analysis, self-reflection and self-

expression, as well as of reduced verbal expression skills. We believe that the analysis of these responses reveals the necessity to shift the focus in education from to know on to be and to become so that the introspective and self-analytical skills become useful and usable tools by adolescents both to face the challenges of everyday life and to start or continue a realistic decision-making process of their own career path.

2. expectations related to student life

The question “What do I expect from student life?” made the students aware first of all that the *time* had come *to make a choice regarding the continuation of their studies and the field that suited them best*, an idea found in 86% of the essays analysed. 78% of students think that this period is considered a new stage, a period of growing up:

Personally, it is a period which is new and in which we are independent both in terms of our way of thinking and the way of action in building our future. Professionally, it is the aspiration for a job that would develop my skills or a passion that I would like to promote (F -17 years old).

Another perspective on student life is that this is a *stage of transition and adaptation* - 59% of the essays analysed:

Although student life also involves hard work, exam sessions, sleepless nights, giving up free time, it also appears to compensate for shaping the human character, personality, defining as a person and principles (F -18 years old).

Approximately 35% of the essays refer to the future life of the student as a period of exploration and experimentation:

I want to experience this period to the maximum, to build and to shape myself in every moment, in order to outline an optimal professional future (M - 17 years old).

Other identified issues: teamwork - 15%, practical activities - 13%, teacher's openness - 9%, overcoming barriers related to social issues - 8%, fast integration into the labour market - 5%, opportunities to get involved in non-formal activities - 4%:

I want to participate in workshops, competitions, volunteering, sports and cultural activities (M-17 years old).

Although the elements from the first dimension of self-knowledge emphasised skills and a low concern for self-discovery, the answers falling in the second dimension underline the fact that the prospect of a future and by default of the component of education and training is optimistic. The perspective on the student life is correlated, as it was previously presented, rather to an adaptation stage to the adult life, to the exploration and looking for a personal path rather than to a period of becoming and professional

training. These perspectives highlight a strong note of immature decision, but also the need to be more realistic regarding the personal future (Akosah-Twumasiet al. 2018). Naturally, young people can sometimes overestimate the expectations towards the academic environment (Hassel & Ridout, 2018; Maketab, 2018; Money et al., 2017; Crisp et al., 2009; Batchelor, 2006), but, among other things, one of the responsibilities of the career counsellors is that of making them responsible and determined to be realistic, both in setting goals and the ways in which they can achieve them.

3. the motivation to choose the professional path

The reflection process on the educational offers generated among students their positioning and repositioning in relation to career decisions. The estimated skill potential self-analysis correlated to the prospects opened by the career guidance activities has elements which catalyse and crystallise intrinsic motivational supports (Hall & Chandler, 2005) which are valuable in career decision.

The choice of a study programme is based on the *development of personal skills* - 16%, the *appeal to certain fields* - 15%, *employability* - 13%:

I have chosen this study programme because I am passionate about communication sciences, because we are offered an exceptional academic experience (F -17 years old).

Unfortunately, most of the high school students have an unrealistic image of the professional path they will take after graduation, some of them considering that the name of the study programme is similar to that of their future profession. In addition, they identify the beginning of the academic life with absolute freedom.

I can hardly wait to go to university to get to know new and more interesting people, who are not boring and who do not keep me accountable for everything I do or want to do (F -18 years old) .

Other high school students consider the university training as an opportunity for personal development, as a way of learning how to form social skills, as a way of building interpersonal relationships or as a way they can separate from their family and from the strict rules of the family environment / restrictions imposed by their parents (Zheng, et al. 2002).

I'm not necessarily interested in learning a job, I'd rather want to make new friends, to be far away from my parents and their nagging, so that I can really have fun (M -19 years old) .

Unfortunately, this type of reason for choosing university studies is part of the preconditions for academic failure and partially explains the dropout rate after the first year of study (Kennett, Reed & Stuart, 2013). We believe that in order to prevent such situations it is worth reflecting on the

Dutch student selection model in which, after shaping their high school option, high school students attend a counselling programme to identify the level of matching of the requirements of the study programme with motivation, personal beliefs etc. (Van Herpen, et al., 2017) .

Other important elements in choosing a faculty are represented by the conditions offered by the university - 19%, training opportunities - 15%, extra-curricular activities - 14%, but also the distance from home - 7%.

I am inclined towards this faculty because I am now convinced that I will have a warm environment, based on respect, cordiality and professionalism, criteria that will be the basis of my professional training (F - 18 years old).

The self-reflexive process implies a shift to the rational approach in the decision about the personal future, which has made us believe that teenagers also take into account a number of pragmatic elements, as the above mentioned.

All these results lead us to emphasise the students' need for acknowledgement, autonomy and independence (Guiffrida et al., 2013) and, also, the need to be treated in a professional manner by the academic or non-academic staff.

There are studies which show that sometimes students from the disadvantaged groups have a much stronger intrinsic motivation to access the academic environment (Hassel & Ridout, 2018). On the other hand, they show the need for relatedness, or for another compensatory process (Guiffrida & all, 2013), the desire to be acknowledged in the origin background, recognition supported not only in terms of academic results but also by the association to a new social group with a higher status.

4. perspective on the professional future

Most students (61%) referred to expectations related to *obtaining a well-paid job*, to *consolidating professional skills* - 15% , but also to *personal skills* - 12%.

I expect to acquire the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge to provide me with guaranteed success in the field in which I will practise and to continue my training through master's degree studies (M - 17 years old).

The essay analysis highlighted the importance of the motivational essay to boost the capacity to be oriented more analytically and realistically towards the personal and professional future, having an important guiding role in the formation or development of prospective thinking skills (Gibbs , 2013).

I want to become a policeman and have a future as good as possible for me and for the family I wish to have. I want this job to be the basis and if I manage to

do something extra, besides having more finances, it would not be a problem. (M - 17 years old)

I consider that being an economist suits my personality, as I am recommended by my work power, organisational and observational spirit, ability to get involved and desire to know. (F - 18 years old)

The resource introspection generated by the self-reflexive attitude is a good starting point for making realistic projections onto the future, to establish tangible and realistic personal and professional goal sets. In addition, in terms of prospective thinking, it is highlighted that elements such as goal setting and priority, procrastination management, (The Open University, 2021) or coping with possible stressful situations that may occur etc. are developed simultaneously with the practice of reflexive and self-reflexive processes. Therefore, the decisions on future academic or professional path are connected with a wide variety of either intrinsic or extrinsic reasons (Balloo et al., 2017). Overall, an analysis of the answers identified in the essays confirm the research results showing that students perceive academic studies as an extremely useful and important step for future career developments, as an opening to the acquisition of a future personal, professional but also creative independence (Hassel & Rido, 2018; Money et al., 2017).

5. Conclusions

The economically disadvantaged high school students require additional actions specific to career counselling, due to both the financial restrictions which aggravate their entire educational path and perhaps to the lack of successful career models in their immediate living environment (Toit, 2015).

The obtained data confirm the results found in the literature, in particular with regard to the need to intensify the self-knowledge process in adolescence and within the existing correlation with the career choice. (Antoci, 2021; Abdullah & all, 2018; Albion & Fogarty, 2002; Association for Career and Technical Education, 2018; Andreassen 2016; Batchelor, 2006; Crisam & Turda, 2016; Isufi & Stanculescu, 2014; Plesa, 2019; Toit, 2015). The development of self-awareness (Ackerman, 2020) is an important component of the decision-making ability, in general, and of the career decision, in particular. Personal reflection is a good way to ensure “the link between becoming oneself and becoming what one wants to be, and to ground career aspirations in self-knowledge” (Batchelor, 2006, p. 235). This can be practised by using the motivational essay. Therefore, the use of tools

and of more diverse techniques can make an important contribution in this direction.

The activity of the project mentioned in this study confirms the idea that if we work systematically with students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds on the career counselling component, including the motivational essay, then their involvement in this effort increases and their reflexive, meta-reflexive, communicative, knowledge and self-knowledge skills improve. The research confirms the need for this kind of approach in the counselling process in order to help teenagers develop self-reflection and critical thinking skills. There are suggestions for practising certain exercises for stimulating the capacity of self awareness suggested “to process your thoughts through writing” and “to make time to reflect” (Ackerman, 2020), approaches in which diaries and different types of essays can be used successfully (Jigău, et al. 2007), including the motivational essay.

Young people (especially those from the economically disadvantaged backgrounds) often activate their career choices in an unrealistic way, starting from “higher occupational status expectations” (Marciniak et al., 2020, p. 16), without correlating this indicator with their own level of training, with specific personality issues or with the appropriateness of the expectation threshold and their own possibilities to make a career, ignoring the real gap between what they want and what they can do (Mann, et al., 2020; Toit, 2015).

There are numerous current studies which underline the importance of “career-related attitudes and motivation” for a better established career choice (Albion & Fogarty, 2002; Chiru, 2007; Jigău, 2007; Marciniak et al., 2020, p. 3; Thome, 2016; Toit, 2015).

There are numerous current studies which underline the importance of “career-related attitudes and motivation” for a better established career choice (Albion & Fogarty, 2002; Chiru, 2007; Jigău, 2007; Marciniak & all, 2020, p. 3; Thome, 2016; Toit, 2015).

The disadvantaged students need to be trained in their effort to their attitude awareness / knowledge and to their real career choice motivation, in order to ensure an appropriate professional training. There are studies showing that if high school students from disadvantaged schools are involved in career counselling approaches aimed at knowledge /self-knowledge (personality, skills, interests) then their decision career will be done properly and more easily (Career Exploration in Middle School: Setting Students on the Path to Success, 2018; Thome, 2016; Toit, 2015). Moreover,

they are the most exposed to wrong career choices because they do not know themselves, are confused and cannot benefit from or appeal to the career counselling interventions (Mann et al., 2020).

The study certifies the possibility and usefulness of integrating the motivational essay into the career counsellor's methodological portfolio and professional counselling approaches. The study highlights the useful effects and limits of the reflective effort generated during the essay. There are no objective limiting factors of integrating the motivational essay in the career counselling approaches. There may be factors related either to the career counsellor's training and attitude (lack of concern for updating the work tools, routine, demotivation), or related to the beneficiaries of counselling (lack of involvement, disinterest, reluctance to this activity). As always, the source of change lies with the professional counsellors, in their efforts to continue training, in their curiosity, the desire to know and to do. The university counselling departments are fully free to propose and carry out actions (with counsellors, students, pupils, together) in order to expand and capitalise on this tool.

“Career interventions can help to systematically increase one or more facets of career preparedness. Adolescents may be assisted in engaging in career exploration behaviors, learn more about the world of work, or learn about career decision strategies to increase self-efficacy” (Marciniak&all, 2020, p. 13). One of the major goals of the career counselling activities is still the facilitation of the decision-making process so as to be able to provide specialised support for the young people facing difficulties in this respect through varied and individualized tools (Ferreira & Lima, 2010).

Choosing the right career remains an extremely important decision (Toit, 2015) for all the young, especially for the economically disadvantaged who can essentially change the future professional standard and their life course, as a whole. Therefore, the career counselling practices should be improved with new useful, attractive tools both in the secondary and higher education environment (Sandelands, et al., 2020; Yang & Wong, 2020). Through our study results, we advocate the introduction and valorisation of the motivational essay in a career counsellor's tool portfolio.

The essay analysis confirms the idea that the postmodern approach in career counselling is necessary because of the connections with the personal development process and not with the general approach imposed by systems and organisations (Chakraborty, & Wang, 2015; Collin, & Patton, 2009).

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