

Career Counseling Experiences in Norway: A Q Methodological Study

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Abstract: This study explores career counseling subjectivity as experienced in Norway through a balanced block design based on a person-environment interactive theory of decision-making. Four career decision-making factors emerged from the study expressing self-reliance, dependency on others, self-other interaction with emphasis on dialogue and self-other interaction with emphasis on internal feelings and thoughts. Discussion of the factor values includes some practical suggestions for career counseling.

Introduction

Theories about career decision-making processes have been developed and discussed from different perspectives in the field of career counseling (Osipow and Fitzgerald 1996). Early theories focused on vocational choices and attempted to connect the individual choosing a career direction to the structures and demands of a job market together with educational paths and requirements. A simple person-work matching theory built upon basic trait-factor principles, developed in the early part of the twentieth century, continues to influence mainstream thinking about career counseling. This theory proposed a simple match between individuals' abilities and interests and the job market. Once the match was made, the person's career choice problem was solved. In the latter part of the century the person-work theory became known as the person-environment theory (Spokane 1991, 12) and is represented by Holland (1985) and Super (1957) among others. Other theories have focused on sociological, developmental, personality, and behavioral approaches or models (Osipow and Fitzgerald 1996). Recently, more intricate, detailed, and holistic understandings have emerged within career counseling, including the person-environment match as part of a larger picture of lifelong integrative decision-making (Betz and Corning 1993; Hansen 1997). Developments in the field include a view of career choice as a complex interactive process between the individual and, for example, the influence of significant others, desired life styles, or the vicissitudes of the job market.

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Career counseling is increasingly seen as inseparable from personal counseling as a part of the larger whole of a person's life (Allgood and Kvalsund 1999). The individual is considered an active agent making choices interactively with others within fluctuating contexts¹ (Hansen 1997). Gelatt (1989) has proposed that a positive attitude towards uncertainty can be a significant contributor to the decision-making process, thus placing subjectivity in a central position. Subjective experience and the creative development of future-oriented narratives have become as important components in the career counseling process (Cochran 1997) as they are in experientially oriented personal counseling approaches (Allgood and Kvalsund 1999; Grendstad 1996; Hunt 1987; 1992). Q methodology seemed well suited for the present study of career counseling because of its philosophy of the importance of subjectivity and its technique for eliciting factors based on subjective experience reflecting persons holding similar viewpoints, not on characteristic traits. This study focuses on subjectivity as a key aspect of the emerging complex understanding of career counseling in the particular context of career counseling practices and programs in Norway.

Career counseling services in Norway are relatively undeveloped and are found primarily in middle schools, high schools and government unemployment agencies. Career development centers at universities are recent and scarce innovations in comparison to similar programs in North America. At the time of this study there appears to have been no systematic investigation of service users' experience with career counseling in Norway. A Q methodological study was undertaken as a first step toward discovering how users have experienced career counseling programs and practices.

Building the Experimental Design

The experimental design is based on the personal professional knowledge of the authors. It reflects principles in a theory of the person in which the person is understood as intrinsically relational (Allgood and Kvalsund 1999; Kvalsund 1998). Central to the theory is that there is no "I" without a "You." The individual's subjectivity as a component of "I" is seen as forming and developing in relation to "You." Furthermore, "You" has the possibility of being both a personal and general "Other," and thus implies a multitude of relations that the individual can experience. Given this relational perspective, there are a number of possible "You's" that can be selected in the complex career counseling process with which the "I" can interact. Based on Spokane's (1991) theory of career intervention, information, communication, and interaction are proposed as three central features of career counseling. Each is

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discussed as an effect in the overall experimental design in which subjectivity is primary (Table 1).

Table 1: Experimental Design

| <i>Effects</i> | <i>Levels</i> | | | <i>Items</i> |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Information | external (a) | | internal (b) | 2 |
| Communication | reactions (c) | intentions (d) | explorations (e) | 3 |
| Interaction | choice (f) | | support (g) | 2 |

Both external and internal domains contain sources of *information* available to an individual making a career decision. Tension exists between the objectivity of external information and the subjectivity of information coming from the individual. Examination of the tensions arising in the decision-making process can reveal which domains of information are meaningful for individuals.

The external information domain (a), which consists of both the actual job-market situations and the means used to inform individuals about existent possibilities, has an important place in the career decision-making process. The internal subjective domain of the individual (b) is also a valuable source of information that can be assessed in terms of traits, characteristics, interests, aptitudes, and abilities. People can learn about themselves quite easily, for example, through interaction with a variety of test materials or experiential exercises. Other pertinent sources of subjective information are based on self-reflection and both formal and informal communication with others. Thus, the experimental design includes an information effect with two levels, internal and external representing a significant part of the concourse of the career counseling process.

Although the importance placed on subjectivity in career counseling has certainly varied, its *communication* is necessary to mediate the tension between the individual and the external environment. A communication effect composed of three levels can be observed as a person meets the demands of the decision-making process. The first level (c) is comprised by the bodily and feeling reactions experienced throughout communication. The second level (d) includes one's intention and imagination, as constituted by the rational and intuitive thought processes related to decision-making. The third level (e) involves personal exploration of different directional paths that widen the actual communication field, which also appears connected to different phases in the decision-making process.

The third effect built into this design is an *interactive process* that implies the potential of mutual influence, the individual as an agent in relation to the

general "Other." This concept is central to newer career-counseling models. The interactive process effect consists of the concerted interaction between the environment and the individual in the choice of a career. Interaction is conceptualized as operating on two levels: the individual's act of choosing or deciding on a career path (f), and the feedback and support that gird a feeling of sustenance and confirm the career decision (g).

The structural effects/levels combinations built into the design thus allow for a systematic exploration of the communication culture of career counseling. The $2 \times 3 \times 2$ design has 12 combinations of cells with 3 replications in each cell yielding a sample of 36 statements (see Appendix). The authors constructed the Q statements based on their personal professional knowledge of career counseling and counseling in general.

Seventeen persons, 5 female and 12 male ranging in age from 16 to 66, completed a Q sort with the condition of instruction: "Sort the statements from the perspective of your experience with career counseling in Norway." The participants were acquaintances of the authors and were known to have a variety of experiences with career counseling based partly on their connections to distinct geographical and cultural areas of the country and on their different educational backgrounds. The sorts were analyzed using PQmethod (Atkinson 1992; Schmolck 1997) with a varimax rotation. A four-factor solution was selected for interpretation. Informal conversations with participants during the interpretive process supplemented the authors' collaboration in inducing meaning for the factor. In this exploratory investigation no formal post-sort interviews with the participants were conducted.

Interpretation of the Four Factors

Factor 1: Self-Reliance

Factor 1 seems to express self-reliance where the person's inner feelings, thought processes and imaginations are most central in the career decision-making process. Three persons define Factor 1: a 16 year-old male (0.70), a 47 year-old female (0.61), and a 66 year-old male (0.70). The numbers in parentheses are their respective loadings on the factor. The factor seems to express self-reliance where the person's inner feelings and thought processes are most central in the career decision-making process.

27. Neither information nor support from others will give one certainty if one does not think thoroughly through the situation oneself. (+4)
15. One's own thoughts and purposes from life are more decisive for making choices than the feedback one gets from others and objective test results. (+3)
25. If one does not feel at home in an educational or career environment one should think along different lines. (+3)

36. What one feels like doing is decisive in one's choice of job or education. (+3)

Other forms of communication within the field, such as testing, support, encouragement, and feedback in the workplace, assist and are subordinate in the choosing process that is primarily internally oriented (statements 15, 32). Statement 32, with a factor score of +3, distinguishes this factor from Factors 2, 3, and 4 with respective scores of -2, -2, and +1. Henceforth, in the case of distinguishing statements all 4 factor scores will be reported together with the pertinent score emphasized as illustrated below in statement 32. In all other cases, factor scores of statements will be reported singly as in statements 27, 15, 25, and 36 above. Factor scores of statements that are not distinguishing will be reported singly as in statements 25, 15, 27, and 36 above.

32. Exploring and getting impressions about a workplace through interviewing the people working there does not create a good enough basis for knowing what to choose. (+3 -2 -2 +1)

It seems reasonable to assert that for this factor more clearly than the others, direct information from hands-on experience in a workplace is inadequate, and even unimportant, as a basis for making career decisions.

22. Only through exploring a career environment can one experience whether or not one can be whole as a human being in connection to the tasks as well as one's co-workers. (-3)
33. Choosing a career or job on a sound basis can only be achieved after one has been at the workplace for a while and experienced the degree of fit between oneself and the people working there as well as whether or not one thrives in the atmosphere of that environment. (-3)

At the same time this factor sees testing as not having power to determine who one wants to be (6), to decrease the creative imagination for the choice process (9), or to aid self-exploration (11).

6. Tests do not disclose how one is but rather they tell one how one wants to be and therefore are problematic as a ground for career choices. (-4)
9. Testing decreases the possibilities for career choices thus depriving the individual of his or her imaginative power. (-3)
11. It is not so useful for one to explore oneself through so-called objective tests. (+4)

These three statements suggest that, for individuals on this factor, testing is not a particularly useful tool in career counseling. It does not have much power to influence the career decision-making process. Although in congruence with this factor's emphasis on inner processes, feelings that emerge in a testing situation are valued.

21. The feeling about knowing something about oneself through test results increases one's chance of making the right choices (+2)

In contrast to the other three, this factor seems to express self-reliance or independence through indifference to communication generally, and specifically that involving face-to-face meetings and explorations with others.

1. In order to know oneself most of one's exploring must occur in real meetings with other people who can give one much more confirmation than test results and their interpretation. (0 +4 +4 +3)

In addition, the factor does not see any clear connection between testing, knowledge, and information, on the one hand, and feedback and support from others. Each seems to have an independent, self-sufficient value.

19. Whether or not the features and characteristics revealed from test results are real can only be tested through exploring them in co-operation with others in a group. (-2 0 0 +1)
34. Without one's experiencing support from those representing a particular job or educational environment, one will find little value in information and knowledge. (-2 +3 0 +1)

In Factor 1 the individual's subjectivity is primary. One's own cognitive processes, imaginations, and emotions are the resources for making career choices. Real interactions with others as well as direct exploration of the workplace are seen as less significant than the individual's own inner communications. Furthermore, the factor includes some skepticism about the usefulness of objective testing, even though the internal feeling experiences associated with testing are valued.

In terms of the study design, as reflected in the Q sample structure, the internal (b), reactions (c), intentions (d), and choice (f) categories are most represented in this factor. External information (a) about career and educational options garnered from exploring oneself in relation to others or from others' support (g), encouragement, and sustenance is not seen as particularly valuable. The prevailing value in this factor seems to be self-reliance.

Factor 2: Dependence on Others

Three persons defined this factor, a 26-year-old woman (0.67) and two men 20 and 44 years old (0.58 and 0.45). The word *dependence* describes the factor's overall view with interpersonal supportive communication and feedback being most helpful in the career choice process.

1. In order to know oneself most of one's exploring must occur in real meetings with other people who can give one much more confirmation than test results and their interpretation. (+4)

16. Support and feedback from others about who one is more important than one's feelings and the results from objective test data. (+3)

Even though feelings may seem subordinated (16), it is not the feeling *per se* that is important (4, 36), but rather how it is created and confirmed in relation to others.

4. Support and encouragement from others means a lot less than objective and good information. It is the latter that creates involvement and enthusiasm. (-4)
36. What one feels like doing is decisive in one's choice of job or education. (+3)

Similar to Factor 1, this factor expresses an antagonistic attitude about most kinds of testing as aids in the decision-making process.

12. Interpretations of test results and reflections about their consequences are decisive for making necessary choices. (-4)
3. Looking at objective tests is reasonable, especially if the results and interpretations coincide with the impressions others have of one. (-3)
5. Uncertainty about onerous, unavoidable choices is resolved through rational thinking built on objective test data. (-3)
10. Uncertainty about one's own career choice preferences will remain great if one has not had the opportunity to learn about one's abilities, aptitudes and interests through testing. (-3)

Information from and exploration of test results in cooperation with others in a group do not seem to be worthwhile options.

19. Whether or not the features and characteristics revealed from test results are real can only be tested through exploring them in co-operation with others in a group. (0)

Possibly the negative value given *testing* offsets the positive value given *feedback and support* resulting in the (0) placement for statement 19.

The working environment alone does not seem to be significantly meaningful as an information and communication source, for the decision-making process.

22. Only through exploring a career environment can one experience whether or not one can be whole as a human being in connection to the tasks as well as one's co-workers. (0)
33. Choosing a career or job on a sound basis can only be achieved after one has been at the workplace for a while and experienced the degree of fit between oneself and the people working there as well as whether or not one thrives in the atmosphere of that environment. (0)

The distinguishing statements for this factor, particularly statement 34, reveal that the persons on the factor only value information and knowledge about a field if they also feel supported in their career search by people connected to the area.

34. Without one's experiencing support from those representing a particular job or educational environment, one will find little value in information and knowledge. (-2 +3 0 +1)

Information about careers and test results are almost dismissed altogether. In addition, support and encouragement from other people are clearly emphasized and judged as more important than one's own inner feelings in making choices.

16. Support and feedback from others about who one is more important than one's feelings and the results from objective test data. (+1 +3 -3 0)

Factor 2, therefore, depends on focused support and external feedback (a) to feel secure in the process of decision-making. The main direction of Factor 2 is toward informal communications especially focused on the individual career decision maker who acquires constructive self-awareness through supportive and confirming feedback (g). In addition, this factor has a neutral or indifferent stance towards testing as seen in relation to other forms of communication. The factor does not particularly value either exploring a workplace (e) or the information obtained from such activity. Positive interaction with others takes center stage in the career decision process for individuals who load on Factor 2.

Factor 3: Self-Other Dialogue

Factor 3 seems to value dialogic interactions in working through the various decision-making processes in career counseling. Four people, two women, 27 and 53 (0.51 and 0.59), and two men 30 and 33 years old (0.71 and 0.52) define Factor 3. Actual person-to-person meeting and dialogue between the counselor and the person seeking career counseling are prominent.

1. In order to know oneself most of one's exploring must occur in real meetings with other people who can give one much more confirmation than test results and their interpretation. (+4)
18. It is the conversation between the counselor and the client that constitutes the quality of the decision-making process and creates the ground for making wise career choices, not test materials and their interpretation. (+4)

The strong focus on the meetings is ameliorated by the importance of the individual's feelings and thoughts. Feelings are seen as controlling where one finds support from others (14) and as being the impetus for a change in environment (25).

14. One's feelings and reactions control with whom one finds support; not test results. (+3)

25. If one does not feel at home in an educational or career environment one should think along different lines. (+3)

With the confirmation provided by external information about careers and education, augmented by personal relations with others, one's own thoughts determine whether one feels secure or certain in making a career decision.

27. Neither information nor support from others will give one certainty if one does not think thoroughly through the situation oneself. (+3)

29. If information about careers and education concur with the thoughts one has about oneself and one's discussions with others, one will feel secure. (+3)

Individuals on this factor do not feel that objective testing will resolve feelings of uncertainty (5). Neither is it a source of personal involvement and engagement (4) in the decision-making process. There is some indication to suggest that tests that encourage subjective awareness are useful (5, 9), but not sufficient alone to strongly influence the decision-making process.

There is a view that testing complements and enhances the individual's subjective imaginative power (9). For instance, the information gained from tests can stimulate further exploration (4). For test results to be emotionally meaningful the person must internalize them through interactions with others (17).

5. Uncertainty about onerous, unavoidable choices is resolved through rational thinking built on objective test data. (-4)

9. Testing decreases the possibilities for career choices thus depriving the individual of his or her imaginative power. (-4)

4. Support and encouragement from others means a lot less than objective and good information. It is the latter that creates involvement and enthusiasm. (-3)

17. All forms of testing can create good or bad feelings but they will have no effect until they are communicated and one feels support from others. (+2)

At the same time there seems to be a distinctive balanced view of the relative strengths of support, encouragement, feedback, tests, and feelings.

16. Support and feedback from others about who one is more important than one's feelings and the results from objective test data. (-1 +3 -3 0)

In comparison with the other factors, Factor 3 values exploring through trying out jobs and participating in career orientations (35). The assertion that tests are not so useful is affirmed by all the other factors but not supported by Factor 3 (11), which seeks the balanced value of one's own feelings and

thoughts, objective information sources, and communication with others. One can wonder how or if the inclusion or exclusion of the adjective "objective" attached to "tests" might that have influenced the placement of statement 11 in Factor 3.

35. Going through a thorough career orientation once or twice has little meaning for the choices one makes later. (0 +1 -3 -1)
11. It is not so useful for one to explore oneself through so-called objective tests. (+4 +4 -2 +2)

Factor 3 appears to value dialogic interactions as an important means for working through the decision-making processes that occur in career counseling. Both internal (b) and external (a) sources of information are experienced as meaningful for the individual. Communications are resources for the expression of personal feelings (c), imagination (d), and exploratory action (e). Interactions with others are considered important sources for decision-making (f) and for feeling support (g). A person who represents this view might say, "It is my experience that real meetings with others are significantly important in my career decision-making process. Tests are also helpful if used as sources of information within the context of the meetings. Meetings and dialogue with others, my own feelings, and information from tests form the parts of a balanced, holistic career selection process."

Factor 4: Self-Other Internal Focus

The persons on Factor 4 are all male with the following ages and loadings 25 (0.46), 28 (0.62), 41 (0.73), 47 (0.60). Factor 4 values interactions with other people, yet it reflects a strong emphasis on internal understanding of self as guide to career decision-making process. Similar to Factor 3, this factor is relational. It differs from Factor 3 in that it expresses a rather strong positive preference for using internal feelings and thoughts as guidelines for action (25, 29, 31) over the actual counseling dialogue.

25. If one does not feel at home in an educational or career environment one should think along different lines. (+4)
29. If information about careers and education concur with the thoughts one has about oneself and one's discussions with others, one will feel secure. (+4)
31. One makes the best choices when one learns to know one's own feelings and what one really wants through having good information about the job market and educational paths. (+3)

Quality information is viewed as important in facilitating the process of acquiring self-knowledge (31), however it is generally experienced as less valuable than interactions with others that support and confirm one's own thoughts (1, 23, 26, 29).

1. In order to know oneself most of one's exploring must occur in real meetings with other people who can give one much more confirmation than test results and their interpretation. (+3)
23. Support and encouragement from others leads one to think more positively about a future career than focusing on the interpretation of test results. (+3)
26. Support and encouragement from others help one to think through and plan one's education. (+3)

Although information about the job market, educational options and testing has a subordinate role of supporting one's thoughts and feelings, it is acknowledged as making a valuable contribution to the career decision-making process. In addition, explorations through typologies and testing are viewed as being relevant today (2), able to uncover aspects of oneself (6), and not restricting creativity (9).

2. Explorations of personality traits and particular career typologies are not suitable in our rapidly changing society. (-3)
6. Tests do not disclose how one is but rather they tell one how one wants to be and therefore are problematic as a ground for career choices. (-4)
9. Testing decreases the possibilities for career choices thus depriving the individual of his or her imaginative power. (-3)

However, even when they are used together with others' opinions (3), tests seem insufficient as sources for making decisions. This seems consistent with the strong need for and emphasis on support for one's own thoughts and feelings (26) that exemplifies this factor.

3. Looking at objective tests is reasonable; especially if the results and interpretations coincide with the impressions others have of one. (-3)
26. Support and encouragement from others help one to think through and plan one's education. (+3)

In terms of distinguishing statements, Factor 4's emphasis on emotional support from others over both external job and test related information as well as one's imagination about jobs is seen in contrast to the other factors.

23. Support and encouragement from others leads one to think more positively about a future career than focusing on the interpretation of test results. (+1 0 +1 +3)
7. To be able to imagine and know what a job entails gives one the best decisional basis for choosing correctly. (+2 +1 0 -1)

Factor 4's distinction from Factor 3 is exemplified by statement 8. One's own experience is valued as more decisive than information about oneself from external sources.

8. Who one is and what one stands for can only be experienced by oneself and it is that which decides one's choices, not testing and knowledge about one's own interests. (0 +1 -2 +2)

Even if Factor 4 values interactions between the self (b) and Other (a), including persons and environment, it is distinguished from Factor 3 by its stronger emphasis on one's internal resources (c,d) as guides in the career decision-making process. As a determining feature, the dialogue between persons is given lesser weight than in Factor 3. Tests are useful sources of information as subordinate parts of a larger whole. A person who represents Factor 4 might say, "Although meetings with others and being in dialogue are important, they provide only background confirmation and support to the primacy of my own internal thoughts and feelings."

Commonalties in the 4 Factors

Consensus statements for the four factors show that every one expresses the importance of the counseling interview (18) and one's feelings (36) as important.

18. It is the conversation between the counselor and the client that constitutes the quality of the decision-making process and creates the ground for making wise career choices, not test materials and their interpretation. (+1 +2 +4 +2)
36. What one feels like doing is decisive in one's choice of job or education. (+3 +3 +2 +2)

All factors seem to agree that even though external information, such as testing, is not sufficient alone for making career choices (4, 14), it is valued as making a positive contribution to the decision-making process (6).

4. Support and encouragement from others means a lot less than objective and good information. It is the latter that creates involvement and enthusiasm. (-1 -4 -3 -2)
14. One's feelings and reactions control with whom one finds support, not test results. (+1 +2 +3 +1)
6. Tests do not disclose how one is but rather they tell one how one wants to be, and therefore are problematic as ground for career choices. (-4 -1 -1 -4)

No factor supports the view that practitioners react negatively to expending time and effort to create work experience opportunities as part of a career counseling program (24).

24. Arranging practicums and inviting novices to try out jobs often leads to more work and negative reactions for those concerned. (-4 -2 -3 -4)

These shared values reflect key components in all counseling processes. Decision-making is a shared experience that needs to include feelings and

actions; thinking is not enough. The meeting between two persons, counselor and client, is significant in determining the quality of the counseling experience, although its emphasis varies in the factors.

Discussion

The subjective experience of career counseling participants in Norway seems to be grouped into at least 4 different viewpoints. One factor relies on inner experience as the guiding light for future career decisions. Another is more inclined to value and depend on others, finding their support and feedback especially helpful in the decision-making process. The third factor presents an interactive view that values the dialogue between Self and Other. The fourth factor values one's own feelings and thoughts while yet retaining an interactive orientation toward both Self and Other.

Looking at the results from the point of view of the Q sample structure, one might expect to find some expression about the value of information among the four viewpoints. However, the discounting of intrinsic worth of information is not seen as an isolated effect in the factors. On the contrary, mediation of so-called objective information, coming either from the job market or from the educational field as a one-way communication of institutionalized expertise to clients, is regarded as not worthwhile in career counseling. In planning future counseling service programs, one might refrain from the temptation to maintain and enhance the myth that the dissemination of information is a sufficient condition for making solid career choices, even if it is economically attractive. Information might be important when combined with the effects and levels of communication and personal interaction (Figure 1).

As subjective experience speaks for itself and is revealed through the factors, there is a surprising variety of dynamics operating between and among the levels and effects in this experimental design. The emergent nuances and combinations, as well as the dynamics themselves, should be sources of influence for better future planning of career services. In its holistic orientation Q-methodology has the capacity to uncover images and imaginations about a theme, thus transcending the elementarism of measuring only isolated effects.

Recall the condition of instruction: "Sort the statements from the perspective of your experience with career counseling in Norway." The intention of the Q-sorting operation was to allow the sorters to uncover their own experience about career counseling in Norway and not what they liked or disliked about their experiences. With reference to James' Law of *me* and *mine* (Stephenson 1974), the factors in this study are intentionally a representation of *mine* and not *me*. "Mine" in this connection means the experience of career counseling practices and programs in the local Norwegian culture. However,

one must be mindful of the presence of "me," one's "self," selectively interpreting and always present in the background. It seems likely that the factors represent how people have experienced career counseling, and how they valued it in particular local cultures. For example, Factor 1 might be interpreted as the experience of "self-reliance," perhaps the primary value that steered the whole career counseling process in a local culture. Whether or not that value would also represent the persons' own "self" or "me" for those defining the factor must for now remain an open question to be answered in a future study. At this point one can only say that the "me" aspect seems to be closely related to an experiential view of looking for something from within one's own subjective field.

From the interpretation and comparison of the factors found in this study, it is possible to make several suggestions concerning career-counseling practices. It is obviously beneficial for counselors to discover the styles of their clients and not assume that a packaged career counseling approach will work for all. The counselor, therefore, will need to create helping relationships with clients (Allgood and Kvalsund 1999) and engage them in dialogues designed to elicit their decision-making preferences. This strategy would seem to support recent directions in career counseling such as narrative (Cochran 1997) and those that are holistic and relational (Hanson 1997). There is a value in career counseling processes designed to be flexible and tailor-made to meet individual styles and needs.

Since the feelings and thoughts of individuals occupy a prominent position in the decision-making process (Rogers 1951), support and feedback from others should be available for those who seek benefit from them. Tests and other external sources of information such as experiential exercises could be important as optional resources. Opportunities to explore workplaces through interviews, visits, and hands-on experiences should be provided.

Making a career choice, or any significant life decision, is a complex process and it continues to challenge individuals and the counselors who try to help them. There appears to be merit in a holistic perspective that includes values expressed in all 4 factors as important ingredients for developing career counseling in Norway.

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Appendix

Factor Scores

| No. | Statement | Factor | | | |
|-----|---|--------|----|----|----|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | In order to know oneself most of one's exploring must occur in real meetings with other people who can give one much more confirmation than test results and their interpretation. | 0 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| 2 | Explorations of personality traits and particular career typologies are not suitable in our rapidly changing society. | -2 | 0 | -3 | -3 |
| 3 | Looking at objective tests is reasonable, especially if the results and interpretations coincide with the impressions others have of one. | 1 | -3 | 0 | -3 |
| 4 | Support and encouragement from others means a lot less than objective and good information. It is the latter that creates involvement and enthusiasm. | -1 | -4 | -3 | -2 |
| 5 | Uncertainty about onerous, unavoidable choices is resolved through rational thinking built on objective test data. | 0 | -3 | -4 | -2 |
| 6 | Tests do not disclose how one is but rather they tell one how one wants to be and therefore are problematic as a ground for career choices. | -4 | -1 | -1 | -4 |
| 7 | To be able to imagine and know what a job entails gives one the best decisional basis for choosing correctly. | 2 | 1 | 0 | -1 |
| 8 | Who one is and what one stands for can only be experienced by oneself and it is that which decides one's choices, not testing and knowledge about one's own interests. | 0 | 1 | -2 | 2 |
| 9 | Testing decreases the possibilities for career choices thus depriving the individual of his or her imaginative power. | -3 | 1 | -4 | -3 |
| 10 | Uncertainty about one's own career choice preferences will remain great if one has not had the opportunity to learn about one's abilities, aptitudes and interests through testing. | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| 11 | It is not so useful for one to explore oneself through so-called objective tests. | 4 | 4 | -2 | 2 |
| 12 | Interpretations of test results and reflections about their consequences are decisive for making necessary choices. | 0 | -4 | -1 | -2 |
| 13 | Information from the career counselor about the labour market and educational paths has special meaning for one's discovering what choices attract and suit one. | -1 | -3 | -1 | 0 |

| No. | Statement | Factor | | | |
|-----|---|--------|----|----|----|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14 | One's feelings and reactions control with whom one finds support; not test results. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| 15 | One's own thoughts and purposes from life are more decisive for making choices than the feedback one gets from others and objective test results. | 3 | -1 | 1 | -1 |
| 16 | Support and feedback from others about who one is more important than one's feelings and the results from objective test data. | -1 | 3 | -3 | 0 |
| 17 | All forms of testing can create good or bad feelings but they will have no effect until they are communicated and one feels support from others. | 0 | -1 | 2 | -1 |
| 18 | It is the conversation between the counselor and the client that constitutes the quality of the decision-making process and creates the ground for making wise career choices, not test materials and their interpretation. | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| 19 | Whether or not the features and characteristics revealed from test results are real can only be tested through exploring them in co-operation with others in a group. | -2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 20 | Good information from the counselor is often enough to create inner relations and feelings which one can experience as supportive and motivating. | -2 | -3 | 0 | 0 |
| 21 | The feeling about knowing something about oneself through test results increases one's chance of making the right choices. | 2 | -2 | 2 | 1 |
| 22 | Only through exploring a career environment can one experience whether or not one can be whole as a human being in connection to the tasks as well as one's co-workers. | -3 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| 23 | Support and encouragement from others leads one to think more positively about a future career than focusing on the interpretation of test results. | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| 24 | Arranging practicums and inviting novices to try out jobs often leads to more work and negative reactions for those concerned. | -4 | -2 | -3 | -4 |
| 25 | If one does not feel at home in an educational or career environment one should think along different lines. | 3 | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| 26 | Support and encouragement from others helps one to think through and plan one's education. | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| 27 | Neither information nor support from others will give one certainty if one does not think thoroughly through the situation oneself. | 4 | 2 | 3 | -3 |

| <i>No.</i> | <i>Statement</i> | <i>Factor</i> | | | |
|------------|--|---------------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> |
| 28 | Difficult choices do not come easier even if one knows how to think about and one has knowledge about educational and career paths. | -1 | -1 | 1 | 0 |
| 29 | If information about careers and education concur with the thoughts one has about oneself and one's discussions with others, one will feel secure. | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| 30 | Being at a job and exploring it over time is a precondition for making wise choices about a future career. | -3 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 31 | One makes the best choices when one learns to know one's own feelings and what one really wants through having good information about the job market and educational paths. | 1 | -1 | 1 | 3 |
| 32 | Exploring and getting impressions about a workplace through interviewing the people working there does not create a good enough basis for knowing what to choose. | 3 | -2 | -2 | 1 |
| 33 | Choosing a career or job on a sound basis can only be achieved after one has been at the workplace for a while and experienced the degree of fit between oneself and the people working there as well as whether or not one thrives in the atmosphere of that environment. | -3 | 0 | -1 | 1 |
| 34 | Without one's experiencing support from those representing a particular job or educational environment, one will find little value in information and knowledge. | -2 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| 35 | Going through a thorough career orientation once or twice has little meaning for the choices one makes later. | 0 | 1 | -3 | -1 |
| 36 | What one feels like doing is decisive in one's choice of job or education. | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 |