



Career counseling meets motivational interviewing: A sequential analysis of dynamic counselor–client interactions



Florian E. Klonek^{a,*}, Elisabeth Wunderlich^a, Daniel Spurk^b, Simone Kauffeld^a

^a Technische Universität Braunschweig, Institute of Psychology, Braunschweig, Lower Saxony 38106, Germany

^b University of Bern, Institut für Psychologie, Abteilung Arbeits- und Organisationspsychologie, 3012, Switzerland

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 2 November 2015

Received in revised form 27 January 2016

Accepted 29 January 2016

Available online 1 February 2016

Keywords:

Career counseling

Motivational interviewing

Observational methods

MIIT

Sequential analysis

ABSTRACT

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a client-centered communication style with the aim to resolve client ambivalence within a change-related counseling. Its potential benefit for career counseling has been discussed by several scholars but no empirical research has investigated MI in this context so far. The current study used process measures from MI to investigate dynamic interactions within a career counseling intervention. Overall, we analyzed two videotaped sessions of 14 unique counselor–client dyads. Verbal behavior of counselors and clients were coded with two observational coding schemes from MI (one for counselors and one for clients, respectively). Behavior profiles of counselors were compared with benchmarks of good MI. Furthermore, client verbal ambivalence was compared between sessions. Finally, we conducted lag sequential analyses to analyze temporal dynamics between counselor behavior and immediate client verbal responses across $N = 6883$ behavioral events. Our results showed, first, behavior profiles of career counselors did significantly differ from recommended counseling benchmarks of good MI practice. Second, as assumed on the basis of past studies, client ambivalence decreased across sessions. Third, MI consistent counselor behaviors showed a positive sequential association with client positive career talk, whereas MI inconsistent counselor behaviors showed the reverse pattern. Our results suggest that counseling behaviors recommended from MI are facilitating career interventions. We discuss how trainings in MI could amend career counseling interventions and provide ethical implications when integrating MI into career counseling programs.

© 2016 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, a globalizing and digital society provides graduate students who enter the workforce many job possibilities and career paths (Savickas, 2011b). Boundaryless career paths demand high physical and psychological mobility (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006), and changes in careers are harder to foresee. Therefore, educational systems are increasingly providing career counseling for graduate students and young professionals in order to foster positive career development (Perdrix, Stauffer, Masdonati, Massoudi, & Rossier, 2012).

One task of career counseling interventions is to help individuals “by promoting intention and action” (Savickas, 2011b, p. 6). Several meta-analyses (Brown et al., 2003; Whiston, Sexton, & Lasoff, 1998), experimental (Obi, 2015), and longitudinal studies (Perdrix et al., 2012) suggest that career counseling interventions positively impact client outcomes (e.g., choice certainty or

* Corresponding author at: Technische Universität Braunschweig, Department of Industrial/Organizational and Social Psychology, Spielmannstr. 19, 38106 Braunschweig, Germany.

E-mail address: f.klonek@tu-braunschweig.de (F.E. Klonek).

career planning). However, due to a large variability in effect sizes, researchers have increasingly called for process studies that open the ‘black box’ of what actually happens within career counseling sessions (e.g., Heppner & Heppner, 2003; Kirschner, Hoffman, & Hill, 1994; Spurk, Kauffeld, Barthauer, & Heinemann, 2015). Furthermore, it remained unclear how intervention ingredients that reduce client ambivalence about change topics, such as Motivational Interviewing (MI, Miller & Rollnick, 2013), are useful within career interventions (Anstiss & Passmore, 2013; Krieshok, Motl, & Rutt, 2011; Stoltz & Young, 2013).

Against this background, the current study investigates a MI based behavioral taxonomy of career counselor and client verbal behavior that contributes to the literature in several ways. First, we introduce and analyze a MI based behavioral taxonomy to study career counselors’ verbal behavior. By this, we shed light on the behavioral profiles of career counselors and how far they resemble a MI approach by contrasting the detected behavior against MI benchmarks. Second, we investigate how career counseling is effective in terms of resolving client ambivalence across counseling sessions. Therefore, we introduce a new operationalization of career ambivalence based on verbal responses of the client. Third, we shed light on the interactional dynamics between counselor behaviors and client responses. By building on empirical evidence from the MI literature and applying advanced statistical methods (i.e., sequential analyses), we analyze how specific counselor behaviors positively or negatively affect clients’ within-session behaviors.

1.1. What is MI and how does it relate to career counseling?

MI is an evidence-based counseling approach that is defined as a “person-centered counseling style for addressing the common problem of ambivalence about change.” (Miller & Rollnick, 2013, p. 29). Since MI is applied across a wide range of behavior domains (e.g., substance abuse counseling, classroom management, parenting; cf., Miller & Rollnick, 2013), there is an increasing call to integrate it with work-related interventions (e.g., Anstiss & Passmore, 2013; Harakas, 2013), especially within career counseling (Krieshok et al., 2011; Stoltz & Young, 2013).

MI is strongly linked with practical recommendations from self-determination theory as it aims to promote client autonomy in decision-making (Klonek, Güntner, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Kauffeld, 2015; Leffingwell, Neumann, Babitzke, Leedy, & Walters, 2007; Vansteenkiste & Sheldon, 2006). Since it has been argued that career interventions should foster client autonomy (Savickas, Briddick, & Watkins, 2002), counselors who apply behavioral guidelines from MI should promote career development and transition (Stoltz & Young, 2013). Most importantly, clinical process studies from MI have provided observational measures that allow pinpointing counselor behaviors that are characteristic of a MI (e.g., Lombardi, Button, & Westra, 2014; Magill et al., 2014). These taxonomies provide a solid basis for the analysis of MI behavior within career counseling.

1.2. Status quo: MI specific behavioral taxonomy and career counselor behavior

In their research agenda on how to identify process variables in career counseling, Heppner and Heppner (2003) have noted that “there may be considerable potential to enhance career counseling by expanding counselor and client taxonomies” (p. 445). That is, researchers can develop behavioral counselor profiles and test how far specific counselor behaviors are conducive to positive client responses. Heppner and Heppner (2003) noted that we do not know whether counselors in psychotherapy behave similar to career counselors and recommended to investigate taped sessions as a starting point to answer these questions.

The present study followed their recommendations and applied widely used behavioral coding schemes from MI (cf., Glynn & Moyers, 2012; Moyers, Martin, Manuel, Hendrickson, & Miller, 2005) in order to derive behavioral profiles for career counselors and their clients, respectively. After deriving the behavioral profiles, the behavior frequencies can be contrasted against MI benchmarks in order to give a first impression about the status quo of MI related career counseling behavior. As career counseling and MI show similarities but also dissimilarities we argue that there exists a detectable amount of MI within career counseling, but the level is below proficiency.

From a theoretical point of view, Stoltz and Young (2013, p. 335) have pointed out that “one caveat specific to career counseling is the giving of career information”. The weakness that the authors see is that counselors educate “about career exploration strategies, career assessment tools, and job search techniques” whereas clients are not fully decided about their future career path. This assumption is supported by a study from Mittendorff, den Brok, and Beijaard (2010) who coded career conversations between teachers and students and showed that over one third of counselor behaviors encompassed explaining/informing (33%) and giving advice (4%) – both behaviors are not recommended from a MI perspective (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Similarly, Multon, Ellis-Kalton, Heppner, and Gysbers (2003) coded a sample of 19 in-training career counselors and reported similar results with counselors providing mostly information (35%). The authors also reported that counselors asked overall more closed (17%) than open questions (10%) – a ratio that is not recommended from MI perspectives (Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

These previous studies suggest that career counselors do not necessarily exhibit a behavior profile that is compatible with a sophisticated MI communication style (e.g., talking less than clients, reflecting twice for each question, using complex reflections, asking mostly open questions; Miller, 2000). Such recommendations for MI proficiency have been translated in specific behavioral benchmarks (e.g., Opheim, Andreasson, Eklund, & Prescott, 2009). In sum, because of these previous behavioral studies on career counseling, and because proficiency in MI requires specific training (e.g., de Roten, Zimmermann, Ortega, & Despland, 2013; Klonek & Kauffeld, 2015), we hypothesize the following:

H1. Behavioral profiles of MI untrained career counselors are below recommended MI proficiency benchmarks.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7247519>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7247519>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)