



Following Super's Heritage: Evaluation of a Career Development Program in Spain

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Abstract. One of Super's most important contributions has been his emphasis on the fact that careers develop over a life span. He proposed that counsellors measure career development through the construct of vocational maturity, by identifying the coping methods used in facing a vocational task at each chronological age. To complement the construct of maturation as the central process in adolescent career development he devised measures of career maturity, such as the Career Development Inventory – School Form (CDI-SF). Adopting an integrated perspective akin to Super and the specific concepts he identified as comprising Career Maturity, the author reviewed recent advances in guidance and counselling theories to lay the theoretical foundations for the design of her Career Development Program: *Tu Futuro Profesional – TFP* (Your Future Career). This article shows that, although the concept of career maturity has its limitations, the CDI can be used to measure the outcome of the Program – TFP and to evaluate its effectiveness. This procedure was used in a pre-post-test research with 4991 Spanish students from the 7th to 11th grade.

Résumé: Dans les pas de Super: Evaluation d'un programme de développement vocationnel en Espagne. L'une des plus importantes contributions de Super a été son insistance sur le fait que les carrières se développent au cours de la vie. Il a proposé que les conseillers mesurent le développement à travers le construit de maturité vocationnelle, en identifiant les méthodes dont on use pour faire face à un travail vocationnel à chaque âge chronologique. Afin de compléter le construit de maturation qui est le processus central du développement vocationnel à l'adolescence, il a imaginé des mesures de maturité vocationnelle, telles que l'Inventaire de Développement Vocationnel – Forme Scolaire (IDV – FS). En adoptant une perspective intégrée apparentée à celle de Super et à son concept ultérieur de Maturité Vocationnelle, l'auteur a fait la recension des avancées récentes des théories de l'orientation et du conseil afin d'établir les fondements de son Programme de Développement Vocationnel: *Tu Futuro Profesional – TFP* (Ta Future Carrière). Cet article montre que, bien que le concept de maturité vocationnelle ait ses limitations, l'IDV peut être utilisé pour mesurer les résultats du Programme – TFP et évaluer son efficacité. Cette procédure a été appliquée dans une recherche pré-post-test à 4991 étudiants espagnols de 7^e jusqu'en 11^e année.

Zusammenfassung: In der Nachfolge Supers: Evaluation eines Berufsberatungsprogramms in Spanien. Einer der bedeutendsten Beiträge Supers liegt in seiner Betonung der Berufswahl als einem Prozess, der sich über das gesamte Leben erstreckt. Er schlug vor, Berufsberater sollten die berufliche Entwicklung vor dem Hintergrund des Konstrukts der Berufsreife betrachten, indem sie die Vorgehensweisen im Umgang mit beruflichen

Problemen in Abhängigkeit vom Lebensalter identifizieren. Das Konstrukt der Reifung als den zentralen Prozess der beruflichen Entwicklung im Jugendalter zu begreifen, hat zu Instrumenten zur Messung der Berufsreife geführt, wie z. B. das *Career Development Inventory–School Form – CDI-SF* (deutsch etwa “Berufsentwicklungs-Inventar, Version für Schulen”). Die Autorin dieses Artikels hat eine integrierte Perspektive im Sinne Supers und seines Berufsreifekonzepts eingenommen und aus diesem Blickwinkel aktuelle Entwicklungen der Berufswahltheorie zusammengefasst, um die theoretischen Grundlagen für die Ausgestaltung ihres *Berufsentwicklungsprogramms Tu Futuro Profesional – TFP* (Deine berufliche Zukunft) zu legen. Dieser Artikel zeigt, dass, obwohl das Konzept der Berufsreife gewisse Begrenzungen aufweist, der CDI dazu verwendet werden kann, die Ergebnisse des TFP-Programms zu messen und seine Wirksamkeit zu evaluieren. Dieses Verfahren wurde mit 4991 spanischen Schülern der Klassen 7 bis 11 in einer Untersuchung angewandt, die vor und nach der Anwendung des TFP – Programms die Veränderungen analysierte.

Resumen: Evaluación de un programa de desarrollo de la carrera en España: el legado de Super. Una de las contribuciones más importantes de Super ha sido el énfasis que hizo sobre el hecho de que la carrera profesional se desarrolla a lo largo de la vida. Propuso medir el desarrollo de la carrera a través del constructo de Madurez Vocacional (MV), identificando los métodos mediante los cuales los sujetos se enfrentan a una tarea vocacional en cada edad cronológica. Para complementar el constructo de maduración como el proceso central del desarrollo de la Carrera de los adolescentes, diseñó medidas de madurez vocacional tales como el Inventario del Desarrollo de la Carrera – Forma Escolar (IDC). Desde una perspectiva afín a Super y al concepto denominado más tarde como Madurez de la Carrera, la autora ha revisado los avances recientes en las teorías de orientación para fundamentar teóricamente el diseño de su Programa de Orientación para la Carrera – Tu Futuro Profesional (TFP). Este artículo muestra que, a pesar de las limitaciones del concepto de Madurez de la Carrera, el IDC puede utilizarse para medir los resultados del Programa TFP y evaluar su eficacia. Este procedimiento fue utilizado en una investigación con un diseño pre-test-post-test, en la que participaron 4991 estudiantes pertenecientes a los cursos 7º a 11º (secundaria obligatoria y post-obligatoria).

Introduction

The author was in contact with Donald E. Super for 21 years, within the framework of the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance, which influenced greatly her view on Super’s theories, contributions to career counselling practice and the quality of Super’s thinking.

Among Super’s many contributions to guidance and counselling, one of the most important has been his theoretical conceptualisation and operational definitions of career development. The purpose of the current study, presented in Super’s honour, is to re-examine his ideas about career maturity and its empirical measurement with the Career Development Inventory – School Form – CDI-SF (Super, 1981), as applied to a Spanish Career Development Program. Thus, the theoretical foundations, the main objectives

and the elaboration process of the Career Development Program called *Tu Futuro Profesional* – TFP (Your Future Career; Repetto, 1999) are briefly discussed, as well as the results of its outcome evaluation using Super's CDI-SF. Comparison of pre-and post-test measures of the CDI seven scales on a sample of Spanish students in experimental and control groups indicated significant gains regarding the students' results in the experimental groups. These results provide confirmation that the Spanish adaptation of CDI-SF components can measure the performance objectives of the Program TFP and that the latter is suitable to train Spanish students in career development attitudes and competencies.

The study presented in this article adds to the abundant research that has been carried out in relation to Super's Career Development perspective. Although many of his constructs have been revisited, his contributions to the concept of career development as a process of growth and learning have unquestionably led to multiple studies and research projects that have identified the key processes necessary to develop competencies such as self-awareness, decision-making, career planning and information about the world of work.

Super's career development model and the program *Tu Futuro Profesional*

Central role of Super's career development

Parsons (1909) was the first to write about matching people with jobs at a time he was working with young people moving from school to work. The method of matching people featuring certain characteristics to occupations was put into a simple, easy-to-use, well validated procedure by Holland in 1959 and was updated in 1985 (Holland, 1985). But client readiness for decision-making (career maturity) is not considered in the matching models.

In contrast to the prevailing structural models of the time, Super (1957) focused his attention on the evolution of vocational behaviour, adapting Buehler's (1933) framework of life stage to organise vocational behaviour throughout the life cycle. That is, whereas occupational choices might otherwise be considered isolated, Super's work suggested that such choices must be considered with reference to the past and the future. Career development is the process of growth and learning that results in increases and modification of a person's repertoire for vocational behaviour. His particular perspective was that each life stage – growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline – imposes certain tasks that must be addressed in response to some developmental prerequisites, and that there is good

objective evidence of great individual differences in career maturity (Super, 1983). His concept of development prerequisites is reflected in the construct of vocational maturity as “readiness to cope with the developmental tasks of one’s life stage” (Super & Jordaan, 1973, p. 4). According to the theoretical framework for the Career Pattern Study (Super, 1957) the years after high school are directed to exploration for career maturity pointing to the eventual establishment of adult career patterns.

There are several research projects supporting the significance of demographic variables such as age, gender and culture. For example Healy et al. (1987) have confirmed that career maturity increased with age, Luzzo (1995) reported that young women have significantly higher levels of career maturity than young men, and Post-Kammer (1987) found that students in higher grades have higher levels of career maturity than students in lower grades. The Festschrift for Donald Super, in *The Career Development Quarterly* (1994) honoured his memory by recounting his accomplishments. As Savickas (1994) said “Super’s work on conceptualising and measuring career development provides a remarkable, and timely springboard into the future for career development theory, research and evaluation” (p. 61).

But today, the central role of career maturity in career development is being reconsidered. In this sense, I would only like to refer to some suggestions offered by several of his followers. One special section of *The Career Development Quarterly* (1998) was dedicated to the future of Super’s theory. The authors’ suggestions not only have implications for theoretical improvements, but also have proved useful for counsellors in their work. Thus, Herr (1997) recommended improving several concepts of Super’s theory, such as replacing self-concept dimensions with a social constructivist framework and replacing career maturity by career adaptability. Savickas (1997) proposed that adaptation can be a bridging construct for integrating the diverse segments of Super’s life-span, suggesting that adaptability must replace career maturity. With respect to exploration, Blustein (1997) proposed a context-rich perspective as a critical dimension in adaptability for life roles, concluding that exploratory behaviour is an important coping skill that may be relevant throughout the life-span. Osborne et al. (1997) in their book “Career Development, Assessment, and Counseling: Applications of the Donald E. Super C-DAC Approach” (1997), reviewed the theory and research underlying Career Development Assessment. In addition, Vondracek and Reitzle (1998) suggested that time-as-sequence models of career maturity should be replaced by timing, which captures the interplay between organism and environment. Schmitt-Rodermund and Silbereisen (1998) contended that more attention should be paid to cultural and historical conditions in individual career development.

Theoretical basis and main objectives of the program *Tu Futuro Profesional – TFP*

Comprehensive Career Development programs for adolescents are not widespread in Spain. Some foreign vocational guidance programs have been translated into Spanish or adapted to our context. These include Pelletier and Bujold's (1984), which was adapted by Alvarez (1991a, b), and validated by Cruz (1997). On the other hand, some interventions are designed to achieve specific aims of vocational guidance. For instance, there are programs that help students in their decision-making process, such as *Aprender a Tomar Decisiones* (Learning to make decisions) elaborated by Rodriguez Moreno (1994) or *Toma la Iniciativa* (Take the lead) by Delgado (1995). But there is no comprehensive career education program designed to be part of the curriculum.

Because of this lack of a comprehensive career development program a research project called "Educational and Social Benefits of Guidance for Career Development and Transition into Working Life" (Repetto, 1992) was launched in 1990. Having reviewed the state of the art, the Program *Tu Futuro Profesional – TFP* (Repetto, 1994) was constructed to train middle and high school students (12–18-years-old, or 7th–12th graders) in the main competencies related to career development.

The TFP is comprised of four sub-programs: Self Awareness, Decision Making, Career Exploration, and Career Planning and Management, organized into units which indicate the learning objectives, activities, timing, implementation procedures, resources, and general instructions to help the tutor/teacher implement the program, taking into account student participation, among other issues. The program addresses students from 7th to 12th grade (12–18-year-olds), distributed as follows:

Level I : aimed at 7th & 8th graders (12–14-year-olds).

Level II: aimed at 9th & 10th graders (15–16-year-olds)

Level III: aimed at 11th & 12th graders (17–18-year-olds)

The Career Planning and Management sub-program is included as part of in the first level.

The purpose of the program is to provide students with competencies in self-awareness and awareness of other people, knowledge of the decision-making process, positive attitudes towards career exploration, planning and management, as well as the skills needed to develop them.

The theoretical foundations of the TFP Program are based primarily on Super's career developmental theory, although Krumboltz' learning theory (1979, 1988, 1993), Peavy's constructivism (1996), and in the latest version, the cross-cultural and multicultural approach of Pedersen (1985) and Sue (1998), were also considered. Super's developmental approach underlies the

Program's general structure and sequence of activities, these corresponding to the developmental stages of adolescents. More specifically, this approach served as the basis for units that address self-awareness of interests and job values, decision making, and those that train students in career exploration, planning and management.

Krumboltz' learning theory has inspired the design of those units aimed at improving problem-solving skills and the interaction with the environment to include experiential learning activities that contribute the modification of individual competencies, work habits, beliefs, and values.

The constructivist approach (Peavy, 1996) underlies the activities in which students participate in small groups, regarding themselves as dynamic projects engaged in the construction of their own self and that of the others. Thus, the inclusion of the "I as a project" and co-construction of oneself complements Super's perspectives on self-concept development.

There were two consecutive versions of the TFP Program during the process of elaboration due to the subsequent validation processes. The first expert validation was presented at the National Career Development Association (NCDA) Conference in San Francisco (Repetto et al., 1995). Aspects evaluated were sufficiency, relevance and range of objectives, group size, timing, resources, reliability, viability, sufficiency of activities and applicability of the program. The elements with lower scores were modified, adding other units and activities according to the constructivist approach and adapting them to the new educational and work legislation in Spain. These changes lead to the development of the first version (Repetto, 1999). This version of the program had meanwhile been assessed in the school year 1997–1998. The outcomes of the evaluation are presented in this contribution.

Methodology

Design

Based on previous research, an initial evaluation of the results of the implementation of the TFP was carried out using a quasi-experimental design based on a pre-post-test concurrent criterion validity study with two groups, control and experimental. These correspond to pairs of classes in the same grades, where each class was randomly assigned to the experimental or control group. The Guidance Program was implemented during one year with one group – the experimental one – and an independent measure of the students' results was obtained.

Super's career maturity construct, measured with the Career Development Inventory – School Form (CDI-SF), is considered as the dependent variable

and the training provided by the TFP program in career development competencies is the independent variable. The Program was administered to a sample of Spanish students from grades 7–12, during the academic year 1996–97. In order to assess the gains of the experimental groups as compared to the control groups, the CDI-SF was administered to the students at the beginning and at the end of the academic year. The experimental group was trained with the TFP, whereas the control group received no training at all. Career development varies depending on the grade, so this demographic characteristic was included in the study.

Based on results of the former research, the following directional hypotheses were tested:

1. Students who are trained with the TFP (experimental group) obtain significantly higher scores in the CDI-SF, thus showing gains (improving) in their career development process, compared to those who are not trained with the program (control).
2. Students in the upper grades show significant gains in their career development compared to those in the lower ones.

Sample

The sample comprised 4991 Spanish Secondary Education students (2484 women and 2507 men, 87 cases were missing). Groups were formed by taking two classes of the same grade in different schools, randomly assigning the classes to each of the control (2388) and experimental (2516) groups. The age of participants ranged from 11 to 18 (there was only one 11-year-old and twelve 18-year-olds). Most participants belonged to the 8th grade (2826), followed by the 7th (958), the 11th (611), the 9th (343), the 10th (195) and the 12th (58).

The sample was obtained with the assistance of students enrolled in a Post-graduate course on Guidance and Counselling at the National Distance University of Spain (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia – UNED), and who volunteered to take part in the evaluation of the Program. Most of these students were in-service teachers who used their own classes for the evaluation.

Procedure

In order to measure the effects of the TFP program on the career maturity of adolescents, a Spanish adaptation of Super's CDI-SF (Anaya & Repetto, 1998), was administered to the sample students at the beginning of the school year (pre-test), and at the end of it (post-test). The CDI-SF, assesses the following dimensions of career maturity: attitudes toward planning and

exploration, and competencies in career knowledge and decision making. It consists of seven scales: four assess specific dimensions of career development, such as Career Planning-CP (20 items), Career Exploration-CE (20 items), Decision Making-DM (20 items) and World of Work Information-WW (20 items). Two scales measure two group factors (conative and cognitive): Career Development Attitudes (CDA) combines CP and CE scales which are highly intercorrelated and have factor loading; Career Development Knowledge and Skills (CDK), combines DM and WW scales which are highly intercorrelated and increase reliability. The last scale, Career Orientation Total (COT) is a composite measure of CP, CE, DM and WW (it combines the CDA and CDK composites).

Educational authorities granted permission to administer the CDI-SF to both the control and experimental groups in the participating schools, and to implement the TFP with the experimental ones. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of the data gathered, and that responses would be anonymous. They were also given the option to decline participation in the study, although few of them did so.

Analysis

The gains in each variable were measured by computing the differences between post-test and pre-test scales for both control and experimental groups. This leads to the construction of a new variable: the mean (or average) gain. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on these new values in order to test if there were significant differences according to the variables group (control/experimental) and grade (7th–12th) (see Tables 1 and 2).

Results and discussion

The analysis of the differences, between the experimental and the control group, in the mean gain for the CDI-scores produce some interesting results.

The mean scores (gains) of the students in the experimental groups (post-test) were much higher than the mean scores (gains) of the control groups. We should pay special attention to the high differences between the mean gains of the attitudinal variables Career Exploration and Career Planning (4.83 and 8.35), whereas the means for the cognitive variables – Decision Making and World of Work Information – were very low (1.08 and 0.76). Accordingly, the mean gains of the composite variables in the attitudinal block are higher than those in the cognitive block (Career Development Attitudes – CDA = 9.65, Career Development Knowledge and Skills – CDK = 1.75).

The mean score of the variable WW Information obtained by the control group deserves special attention (WW = -0.07). A plausible explanation for this negative value might be that most students in high school have very little information about the labour market. This is probably due to the fact that hardly any career development programs are implemented in schools, information on the world of work being provided only during the last year of high school, or in vocational training. The mean gain of the experimental groups is not very high either (0.76). It is also important to highlight the great difference between the means of the total variable COT (Career Orientation Total), yielding only 0.86 for the control groups, whereas the value is 12.24 for the experimental groups.

If we analyse the mean or average gains of the groups according to the grade they belong to, we obtain the following results: in the 10th grade, the gains are clearly higher for the experimental groups (EG) regarding variables CP (Control Group CG = -0.18 / Experimental Group EG = 4.37), CE (CG = 1.56 / EG = 6.47), as well as variables CDA and COT with a difference of approximately 11 points. These differences are more distinct in the 11th grade as the experimental groups' scores increase significantly. For instance, variables WW, CE, CDA, and COT obtained the following means: WW (CG = 2.78/EG = 10.00), CE (CG = 0.75 / EG = 10.32), CDA (CG = 3.50 / EG = 21.04), and COT (CG = 3.71 / EG = 23.28).

The ANOVA results indicate that:

- There are significant differences between the control and the experimental groups for all the scales after TFP program application. This difference is always significant for the experimental group as we can see in Table 1.
- Depending on the grade, there are significant differences in all the scales except for DM ($p = 0.059$), CDA ($p = 0.073$) and CDK ($p = 0.139$). Nevertheless, for the rest of variables, it is possible to contend, with $p < 0.001$, that there are significant differences according to educational level (Table 2).

Thus, we can state that our research has confirmed Hypothesis 1, which predicted significant gains of Spanish students in grades 7–11, in relation to self-awareness, decision making, and career exploration, planning and management. Hypothesis 2 has also been demonstrated, confirming the results of previous research, with respect to students' CP, CE, WW and COT.

Conclusion

The results of our study concerning the initial evaluation of the TFP suggest a potential positive effect of this career development program on Spanish

Table 1. Analysis of variance on CDI gains (pre-test – post-test) of groups exposed to treatment (Tu Futuro Profesional)

		Square S	df	Square M	F	p <
GAIN CP	Between	16344.913	1	16344.913	109.709	0.00
	Within	718106.241	4820	148.985		
	Total	734451.154	4821			
GAIN CE	Between	52373.584	1	52373.584	74.038	0.00
	Within	3399711.3	4806	707.389		
	Total	3452084.9	4807			
GAIN DM	Between	1134.175	1	1134.175	102.438	0.00
	Within	53421.564	4825	11.072		
	Total	54555.739	4826			
GAIN WW	Between	816.529	1	816.529	66.241	0.00
	Within	59599.004	4835	12.327		
	Total	60415.533	4836			
GAIN CDA	Between	108400.101	1	108400.101	35.424	0.00
	Within	13718271	4483	3060.065		
	Total	13826671	4484			
GAIN CDK	Between	2873.879	1	2837.879	56.109	0.00
	Within	235489.928	4656	50.578		
	Total	238327.807	4657			
GAIN COT	Between	139344.502	1	139344.502	57.900	0.00
	Within	10353363	4302	2406.639		
	Total	10492707	4303			

NOTE: Between groups/Within groups * $p < 0.05$.

middle and high school students. The gains in the post-test scores with respect to the pre-test scores of the students who received training with the program are surprising given the limited treatment exposure of the students in the experimental group (one school year), as well as the limitations of the sample selection. The results have certainly been more dramatic than the author expected when designing the Program and its initial evaluation.

Future research designed to promote understanding of the role that career maturity plays in the career development of adolescents must continue to evaluate potential demographic and cultural differences. Although the results of this investigation failed to reveal differences in career development on the basis of the demographic variables such as gender, we need to keep on consid-

Table 2. Analysis of variance on CDI gains (pre-test – post-test) according to educational level (grade)

		Square S	df	Square M	F	p <
GAIN CP	Between	12084.107	5	2416.821	15.488	0.000
	Within	762577.852	4887	156.042		
	Total	774661.960	4892			
GAIN CE	Between	30482.302	5	6096.460	8.552	0.000
	Within	3452336.9	4843	712.851		
	Total	3482819.2	4848			
GAIN DM	Between	120.351	5	24.070	2.130	0.059
	Within	54973.444	4864	11.302		
	Total	55093.795	4869			
GAIN WW	Between	247.266	5	49.453	3.945	0.001
	Within	61092.852	4874	12.534		
	Total	61340.118	4879			
GAIN CDA	Between	45919.457	5	9195.891	2.021	0.073
	Within	20710744	4552	4549.812		
	Total	20756723	4557			
GAIN CDK	Between	526.284	5	105.257	1.669	0.139
	Within	298667.517	4735	63.077		
	Total	299193.801	4740			
GAIN COT	Between	118311.510	5	23662.302	4.443	0.000
	Within	23288991	4373	5325.633		
	Total	23407303	4378			

* $p < 0.05$.

ering this variable and others such as socio-economic and cultural factors. Furthermore, future research could make up for some of the limitations of the present study, such as the lack of information about the socio-economic background and geographic location of the sample.

Other research limitations have arisen from the elaboration of the TFP program itself. New units will have to be introduced to take into account the cross-cultural and multicultural approaches (Pedersen, 1985; Sue, 1998). Both of these perspectives will be useful in enabling students to become aware of the effects of social class, culture and gender on career development. It is necessary to design activities to help students develop the competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes), to function effectively in a multi-cultural

society by being able to negotiate and communicate with people from diverse backgrounds. Spain has a great diversity of regional cultures and languages, and in recent years the diversity resulting from the increasing immigration from Eastern Europe, North Africa, and South America has been reflected in schools. With the introduction of demographic variables in the study, and a new revised version of the TFP, other effects of the program not perceptible in this research might become apparent.

Despite the limitations of this study, results suggest specific actions in which counsellors can address the career development of adolescents more adequately. Instead of assuming that career maturity will naturally increase as students move from one grade to the next, counsellors might want to develop systematic interventions that can be integrated as part of the curricular experiences, thereby providing students with numerous opportunities to develop more mature career development attitudes and knowledge. Periodic assessment of the students' career development competencies would allow counsellors to determine program effectiveness and consider alternative strategies for increasing student career development.

We also need to make Spanish policymakers and educational authorities more aware of the need to implement career guidance programs and build them into the curriculum, and apply them throughout working life. International meetings of guidance experts and policymakers, such as the meeting that took place in Ottawa in 1999, and the meeting to be held in Vancouver in 2001, will very likely contribute to that purpose. It is imperative to make them aware of the educational and social benefits of career development programs to society in the new millennium. In conclusion, I should like to quote Prof. Hiebert, in his introduction to the publication *Making Waves: Career Development and Public Policy* (1999): "Many agree that policy related to the structure and delivery of career development services must undergo radical change in order to lead us successfully into the new era" (p. 1).

Among other things we should endeavour to redefine work within the global labour market and recast the role of career professionals, programs and services in the society. Hopefully, the project presented in this article will help strengthen this relationship, and new methods will be developed on the basis of Super's valuable contributions to assist all individuals in their professional development in the society of the new millennium.

Acknowledgements

The author thanks J.A. Gil for his assistance in statistical analyses and Beatriz Malik for her help in the translation into English.

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