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## Facebook as an instrument to enhance the career construction journeys of adolescent learners

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*“By giving people the power to share, we’re making the world more transparent”* (Mark Zuckerberg, n.d., in BrainyQuote, 2017).

Globally, the effects of Facebook® as a social media instrument are far-reaching for all, but more so for the 21st-century adolescent. Although most adolescents spend time on Facebook, this form of social media is inadequately used to enhance their teaching, learning and counselling experiences. Schools increasingly use Facebook for social engagement, or as a form of communication to parents and learners, thereby treating it as a notice board rather than an instrument for enhancing learning and development. While Facebook is used in the health and business sectors, few studies have explored the use of Facebook as an instrument for career development. Using a qualitative multiple case study design, this article explores the use of Facebook as an instrument that can enhance the career construction journeys of adolescent learners. Findings suggest that Facebook can contribute to career construction journeys. This study identified themes that are consistent with other career assessment instruments, such as the Career Interest Profile (CIP) and the Jung Personality Questionnaire (JPQ). The information found in Facebook profiles and statuses can be used as supplementary tools to identify alternative career narratives.

**Keywords:** adolescents; career construction; career counselling; Facebook; social media

### Introduction

Current trends in the world of work pose challenging questions to career counsellors and clients alike. There is a need for career counselling and development that enables the youth to contribute to the national and global economy effectively (Maree, 2013). Furthermore, the fourth economic wave fostered by information communication technologies (ICTs) has led to the need for career counselling approaches that meet the demands of clients living in knowledge-based societies (Hartung, 2011; Savickas, 2011). ICTs have emphasised the importance of self-management in the absence of stable jobs and the work environments of the past. This requires that counsellors go beyond the traditional methods of career counselling with their adolescent clients. They have to adapt to technologies used so as to enhance their communication and to engage with their adolescent clients during career counselling sessions meaningfully. It is in this sense that Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2011) argue for a strong need in the career counselling profession to create more relevant theories and practices that meet the global needs of employers and reflect the realities of the world of work in the 21st century.

Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, and Instagram, are part of the daily communication and self-expression channels permeating the education arena, and have become essential sources of information for many, including adolescents (Chen & Bryer, 2012). Of these top networks, Facebook is considered the most popular social network in South Africa, with more than 11.8 million (22%) of the population being users, 55% (23 September 2016) of whom are based in Johannesburg. Adolescents aged between 13 and 18 account for the single biggest user population (World Wide Worx, 2014, 2016). Nadkarni and Hofmann (2012) argue that people are motivated to use Facebook because of their need to belong and their need for positive self-presentation. In addition, Toma and Hancock (2013) argue that people’s Facebook profiles help satisfy their need for self-worth. This means that information contained in Facebook profiles is potentially valuable for the career counselling process.

While Richiteanu-Nastase, Mihaila and Nisioiu (2011) state that in general, the internet provides valuable information that can be used in the career development of clients, we further argue that, if used correctly, Facebook has the potential to elucidate important information about adolescent clients that do not surface in psychometric career instruments. Considering Nadkarni and Hofmann’s (2012); and Toma and Hancock’s (2013) arguments, if used constructively, the possibility exists that user data presented on Facebook profiles – such as in status updates – would help career counsellors to become better acquainted with their clients during counselling. This would also allow adolescent clients the opportunity to present themselves as belonging to the global community, thereby fulfilling their needs for self-worth and self-integrity, both valued highly in their striving for self-identity.

In light of the above, this research argues that Facebook as a social media platform can contribute to developing more relevant career counselling practices that may inform and develop a theory for the 21st century. As a result, the main research question guiding this article is: how can Facebook be used as an

instrument to enhance the career construction journeys of Grade 11 adolescents? Specifically, this article explored the use of Facebook as a social media instrument for enhancing career construction journeys.

#### Conceptualising the Career Construction of Adolescents within the SA Context

Choosing a career path in the 21st century is a complicated process, with several twists and turns that learners must navigate successfully. Due to this complication – never as straightforward as it has been made out to be – Maree (2013) warns against the danger of depending only on psychometric results to provide career counselling to learners. Instead, he emphasises the importance of considering the subjective meanings people attach to their career (and life) stories as these are key to successful career choices, self and career construction, and life design. Di Fabio and Maree (2012) describe career construction to be a more specific process than self-construction, with career construction focusing only on the construction of an identity derived from one's career. For this reason, Savickas (2005, 2012) advocates for the use of Career Construction Theory (CCT) as a career counselling framework relevant for the 21st century. CCT takes into consideration a client's flexibility, adaptability, and lifelong learning. According to the CCT, careers develop over time as individuals attribute meaning to their work experiences (Di Fabio & Maree, 2012). It is during this development that counsellors play a major role in the lives of adolescent learners as they navigate their career paths and construct their career identities.

Savickas (2005:43) asserts that "individuals construct their careers by imposing meaning on their vocational behaviour and occupational experiences." This meaning is embedded in the five step process of Career Construction Theory, viz. constructing, deconstructing, reconstructing, co-constructing, and taking action (Savickas, 2012). Maree (2013:36) contends that CCT not only relies on other career theories, but takes them into consideration when blending these theories into an "all-encompassing theory of career and vocational behaviour."

Savickas, Nota, Rossier, Dauwalder, Duarte, Guichard, Soresi, Van Esbroeck and Van Vianen (2009) further assert that the career counselling

approaches that are currently used are insufficient in a modern economy since they ignore the rapidly changing environments in which their clients live.

In support of Savickas's assertion, Maree (2013) argues that traditionally, career counselling has been dominated by a positivist epistemological paradigm, and is informed by various quantitative assessment and counselling approaches. In various contexts, the counsellor is still perceived as an expert, and his/her role is to provide the client with expert knowledge gleaned from psychometric assessment results. As part of this five-step process, however, the client,<sup>1</sup> together with the counsellor, work towards identifying central life roles through dialogue that eventually enables them to define their priorities, identify supports, cultivate resources, as well as engage in activities that help them to discover what is meaningful in the clients' lives (Cook & Maree, 2016; Savickas et al., 2009). As part of CCT, the Career Construction Interview (CCI) questionnaire is used to facilitate clients' career journeys to the world of career possibilities (Savickas, 2011). The CCI contains five-story constructing questions encompassing topics around role models; favourite television programmes, magazines, and websites; favourite story, book or movie; favourite saying or motto; and finally, early life recollections. These topics are used to uncover life themes that inform the clients' career decisions and life transitions. These questions allow the career counsellor to facilitate the career construction process by helping adolescents to explore an alternative narrative of their lives.

While CCT and CCI (Savickas, 2005, 2011) are used as a contextual background to career construction processes internationally, we draw on Maree's (2010, 2013) notion of Career Interest Profile (CIP). The CIP uses on CCI to understand the use of Facebook as a social media instrument that can enhance career journeys. Maree (2013:72) explains the CIP as aiming to:

help clients narrate their career stories [...] The CIP provides career counsellors with a strategy to help clients not only choose 'appropriate' careers but, more importantly, advance their unfinished stories, construct life trajectories, construct themselves and use their careers to design and live successful lives.

Therefore, to facilitate these career construction journeys with clients, the CIP requires the completion of its four parts (Table 1).

**Table 1** Outline of the four CIP parts (adapted from Maree, 2013:72–73)

Part	Aim of CIP Parts
Part 1	Elicits the client's biographical and familial details.
Part 2	Elicits the client's various career preferences and dislikes. In this section, the client selects five career categories of preference and five career categories of dislike.
Part 3	This part asks the client four questions related to his/her career choices.
Part 4	This part asks the client 17 career-related questions and sub-questions, and is very closely related to the Career Construction Interview.

Maree (2013) suggests that, after the CIP has been developed, an inductive qualitative analysis of the CIP results must be conducted to identify the client's life themes, interests, habits, and attitudes related to his/her career construction. He further suggests that the inductive qualitative analysis be done in collaboration with the client to co-construct the career journey with the client's active participation.

#### Adolescent Career Construction and the Uses of Technology

Developmentally, adolescence is defined as the transition period between childhood and adulthood (World Health Organisation, 2014). It is a developmental stage characterised by immense physical and hormonal changes, as well as dramatic changes in identity, self-consciousness, and cognitive flexibility (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006:296). Setlhare (2010) concludes that career construction interventions can be used when assisting adolescents. Further research suggests that career preparation is a vital developmental task for adolescents (Skorikov, 2007). Crous (2011) concludes that the most critical stage of identity development is during the adolescent period of a person's life. For this reason, it can be deduced that a career construction intervention is relevant to an adolescent client; however, a more specific focus on identity formation, career preparation, and career adaptability is needed. Concerning adolescence and the use of the internet, Wartella, Caplovitz and Lee (2004) note that many adolescents already use the internet to explore their identities (Phillips, 2007). Evidence suggests that adolescents currently use Facebook for various reasons, including self-disclosure (Bazarova & Choi, 2014), satisfying their need for a sense of belonging and self-presentation (Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012), the need to feel worthy and preserve their self-integrities (Toma & Hancock, 2013), and to explore their personal and social identities (Barker, 2009; Zhao, Grasmuck & Martin, 2008). Jenkins-Guarnieri, Wright and Johnson (2013), as well as Oldmeadow, Quinn and Kowert (2013) have studied attachment styles evident on Facebook, and they conclude that users display the progression of certain developmental tasks. Wilson, Gosling and Graham (2012: 213) explain that "[t]he Facebook profile page amounts to a blank canvas on which each user has free reign to construct a public or semi-public image of him - or herself."

#### Facebook as a Social Media Instrument for Adolescents' Career Construction

Networking and connectivity can be viewed as hallmarks of the fifth wave in career development, which highlights connectedness via digital devices and associated programmes (Maree, 2013). This digital connectedness is characterised by what Maree (2013:11) refers to as "impermanence,

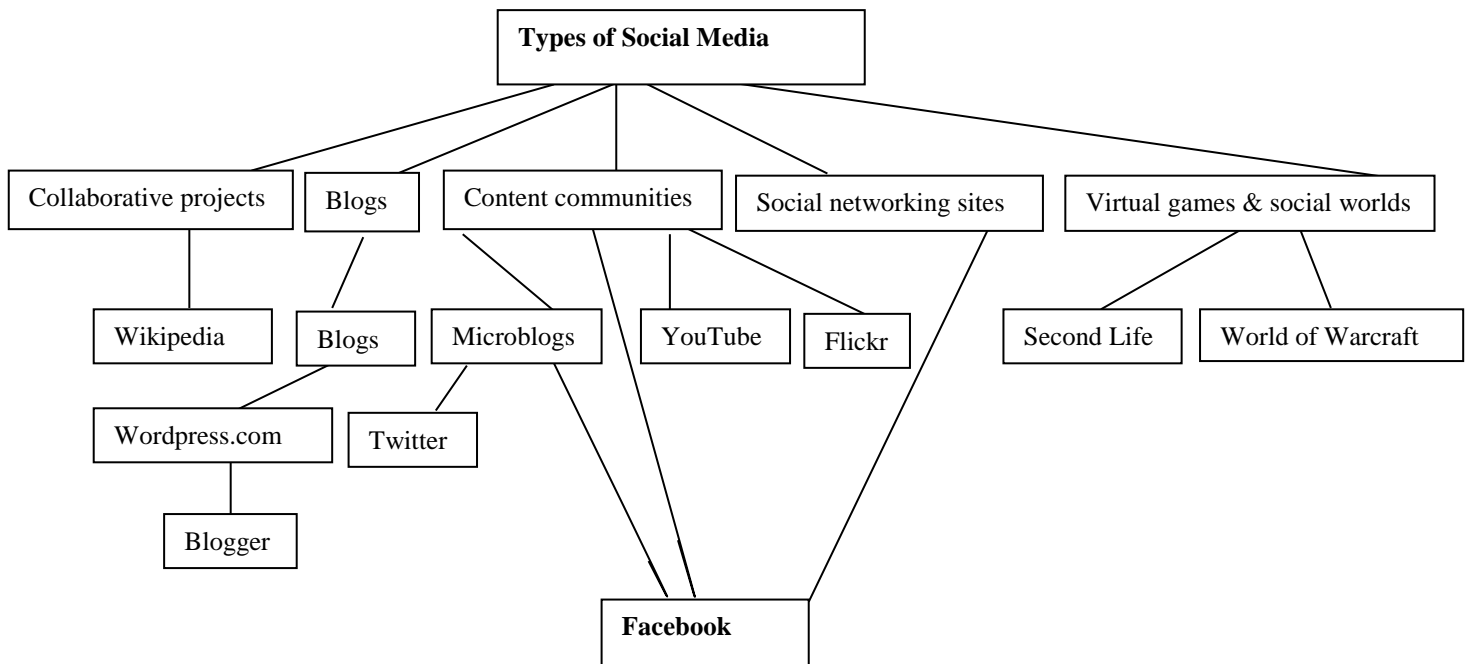
fragmentation, immediacy, disregard for authority, unlimited potential for creativity and innovation, freedom of expression, the feeling of being listened to by all people at all times, unlimited potential for self-construction, and electivity", where people can choose with whom to associate at an individual and collective level. Social media forms part of this networking system and has a huge following of adolescents. Social media is defined as a collection of online instruments that support social interaction between users (Hansen, Shneiderman & Smith, 2011). It is further seen as a form of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content such as videos (Merriam-Webster, 2017). Mayfield (2008), moreover, describes social media as a form of online media that have certain characteristics in common. These characteristics are participation, openness, conversation, community, and connectedness. With the above definitions in mind, we describe social media as a set of online instruments that emphasise communication, collaboration and participation amongst their users. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010:60) identify six different types of social media, namely: collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds (Figure 1).

Of these platforms, Facebook is currently the largest social networking site, with more than one billion active users worldwide as of March 2017 (Facebook, 2017). It is an online platform that focuses on the concept of personal commentary and interaction and that allows its users to create and share personal profiles. These profiles serve as a means of linking and communicating with other Facebook members, viewing information on their profiles and growing a list of friends via the platform (Wilson et al., 2012). However, it is a question as to Facebook's relevance for an adolescent's career construction. It is important to consider that while Facebook plays a major role in adolescents' career construction, the accuracy of profile information must be triangulated with other data sources to obtain a holistic view of adolescents. This is because people only post on Facebook what they want us to know about them.

When asked about the purpose of Facebook in a television interview, Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook, answered: "... the question isn't what do we want to know about people, it's what do people want to tell about themselves" (Schonfeld, 2011). His response is significant to this article since, during the career construction process, clients' perceptions and 'what they want to disclose about themselves' are central to assisting them in constructing their career journeys. The relevance of Facebook is augmented by its uniform layout and popularity. This relevance is confirmed by Gon-

zales and Hancock's (2011) choice of Facebook as their preferred social media platform for research purposes. Due to the concept of personal sharing

and its uniform layout and popularity as a social media instrument, Facebook served as the ideal platform for the research presented in this article.



**Figure 1** Types of social media and their relation to Facebook<sup>ii</sup> based on Kaplan and Haenlein (2010)

Available literature on the use of Facebook yields few research results regarding the use of Facebook as a career construction instrument. It describes Facebook as an instrument to: (a) promote career services at various educational institutions; and (b) provide students with information related to their future careers (O'Reilly, 2011; Osborn & LoFrisco, 2012). Although research is limited regarding the use of Facebook as a career construction instrument, other research fields and professions have used Facebook for various purposes. Moorhead, Hazlett, Harrison, Carroll, Irwin and Hoving (2013) conducted a systematic review of the uses, limitations, and benefits of social media in the healthcare profession. This review concludes that social media can improve communication and help raise awareness about health-related issues. Various studies emphasise the utility value of Facebook as a platform for recruitment, sources of data, research, education and communication. Recent studies by Fournier, Hall, Ricke and Storey (2013) used social media platforms to research various perceptions about binge drinking at universities. Facebook was further used by Amerson (2011) as a communication instrument to find participants for her study. As a company, Facebook used its platform to conduct a psychological experiment to measure the emotional contagion of status updates (Coviello, Sohn, Kramer, Marlow, Franceschetti, Christakis & Fowler, 2014). Various studies have also been

conducted by utilising user profiles as a data source (Back, Stopfer, Vazire, Gaddis, Schumke, Egloff & Gosling, 2010; Darvell, Walsh & White, 2011; Gosling, Gaddis & Vazire, 2007). The research presented in this article has highlighted Facebook's potential to be used as an instrument to educate, communicate and serve as a data source during the career construction process.

## Method

### Mode of Inquiry

A qualitative multiple case study design from a constructivist paradigm was used in this research. The CIP 4 (CIP, Maree, 2010, 2013) was used as a framework to facilitate the career construction process with the three participants. Maree (2013:72) states that "the CIP provides career counsellors with a strategy to help clients not only choose 'appropriate' careers but, more importantly, advance their unfinished stories, construct their life trajectories, construct themselves and use their careers to design and live successful lives."

### Participants and Context

A non-probability purposive sample of three participants was used. All three had gone through a full career assessment and guidance process at the research site. These learners were then approached for possible participation in this research study. The average age of the learners was 17 years. They all met the criteria of being Grade 11 adolescent

learners, and all had a Facebook Profile for more than two years and were willing to participate in the research. The research site was a private school situated in the Northern suburbs of Johannesburg, consisting of families who fall in the middle-to-high income bracket. The language of teaching and learning at school was English, and although participants' home language was not English, they communicated in English both at school and at

home. The school's headmaster acted as the gate-keeper, and parents' consent and learners' assent was requested. Of the three participants, one was male, and two were female. Although one of the participants was not of South African origin (Table 2), at the time of the study, she was living in Johannesburg and attended the high school in which the research was conducted.

**Table 2** Participants' profiles

Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Race	Country of Origin
Participant 1: Michael	Male	Coloured	South African
Participant 2: Monica	Female	Caucasian English	South African
Participant 3: Thuli	Female	African Black	Zimbabwean

#### Data-Gathering Strategy

Data was collected during the career construction process with each participant. Crous (2011) used the career construction process as a data collection framework in her study. However, in contrast to this study, she used a process mapped out by Campell and Ungar (2004, cited in Crous, 2011:58) and Savickas et al. (2009). Since this study is contextually based in South Africa, the CIP 4 (Maree, 2013) was used as a framework for the three case studies. Maree (2013) reminds us that the information contained in the CIP should not be used in isolation and should be triangulated with other sources of career information. To this end, we supplemented the CIP 4 with the Jung Personality Questionnaire (Du Toit, 1996) that the participants had completed when they initially requested career guidance from the school. During the career counselling process observations and process, notes were also kept. Although the psychometric assessments were administered in a group setting, the CIP 4 was used to facilitate the career construction process with each participant. The participants' Facebook profiles were captured via the "Download your Facebook data" (Facebook, 2015) feature on Facebook. However, the participants and their parents had to provide a signed consent form to use the information for research purposes. Only the information that the participants wished to share was used for this study. The information was saved in a password-protected electronic encrypted format to ensure the participants' confidentiality.

#### Data Analysis

The data from each participant's Facebook profile and career assessments was analysed by an inductive thematic analysis method described by Braun and Clarke (2006). This technique assisted us to segment, categorise, summarise, and reconstruct the data in a way that captured the important concepts in the data set (Ayres, 2008). The data set subsequently informed the interaction during the process of career construction. Maree (2013:44) proposes that the role of the career counsellor during the process is that of a "reflective co-

constructor of meaning in the stories and lives of clients."

Process notes of each case study were kept, after which a cross-case analysis was conducted, and each case was "collectively compared" (Race, 2010:118) to explore the use of Facebook as a social media instrument that enhanced career construction journeys.

#### Trustworthiness

The electronic nature of the qualitative data source (Facebook) and the standardised nature of career assessment questionnaires increased the trustworthiness and accuracy of the data sources in this study. Furthermore, each participant was provided with an opportunity to co-construct themes in collaboration with the researcher to verify the correctness of the interpretation of what they had said.

#### Ethical Issues

Ethical approval was granted for the study by the University of Johannesburg Ethical Clearance Number: 2014-021. In addition, the school management approved of the study to be conducted at the school. All participants were informed of the purpose of the study and were reassured that any identifying information would be kept safe and confidential. None of the participants were exposed to harmful situations. The benefits of this research, therefore, outweighed the risks. Participation in the research was voluntary, and participants provided their assent. The parents of the learners also provided their consent for this research.

#### Findings

From the thematic analysis, three career construction themes relating to participants' career development, personal development, and social development emerged. The discussion of the findings is presented considering how individual participants constructed their career journeys. These findings were triangulated with findings from Facebook profiles and statuses, CIP 4 and JPQ data. The fourth theme on supplementary data

from Facebook was added as it significantly contributed to the study of who participants are and how they portray themselves on social media. The career construction approach was chosen due to its positive slant to career counselling, with its emphasis on promoting clients' wellbeing and resilience. Table 3 indicates the identified career construction themes about the individual participants' sub-themes, revealing Facebook as an instrument that can be used to enhance the career construction of Grade 11 adolescent learners.

#### Participant 1: Michael's Themes

From the data derived from his Facebook profile, statuses, CIP 4 and JPQ, Michael's theme relating to his career aspirations was Sports. In the theme Sports, Michael stated he was most interested in becoming a professional soccer player or sports manager, or in pursuing a career in sports law.<sup>iii</sup> On his Facebook profile, soccer-related terminology was frequently repeated e.g., "UEFA Champions League", "Barclays Football, SoccerBible." In addition, various sports-related terminology appeared on his Facebook page e.g., "Nike Sportswear" and "talkSport." He further commented on soccer in two of his status updates: "What a comeback from city!!!!!! It shows what they can do as a football club!!!! Wow!!!" and "23 to Sundowns 0 to Powerlines FC lolhahahahaha."

Michael's personal development was related to his Extraversion theme. It was noted that his Facebook statuses included comments such as: "Work=pay=pay day=tomorrow" and "Money money money ... I've got some now OHYA." He also posted five statuses about him selling either tickets or clothing items to his peers. This personal interest related to an initial career aspiration, due to the fact that in the CIP 4 results he indicated "Entrepreneurship, running and maintaining personal business" as his second preferred career category. "Business Studies" was also one of his favourite subjects at school.

In the Extraversion theme, Michael expressed an aversion to being lonely in his CIP 4 results. This corresponded to his Facebook status, "Lisito-land friday gonna be big with the peeps awes!!!", interpreted as an expression of the need to be amongst people. According to his JPQ results, he was prone to extraversion.

Although Michael's High Self Esteem theme was derived only from his Facebook profile and statuses, it was an important supplementary piece

of information as this kind of character is needed in both the sports and business worlds. These statuses include: "Ok ok you know I AM JUST AMAZINGGGGGG"; "Amazing just how i remember" and "I got movesve like micheal jackson look into my eyes and il own you!!!!."

#### Participant 2: Monica's Themes

Monica's themes were identified as Arts, Objectivity, Enjoyment and Animals. Although not overtly expressed as a career aspiration, content related to the Arts theme was triangulated with and across the assessments and her Facebook profile and statuses. Monica's profile displayed various groups related to the beauty industry e.g., "which haircut suits you?" and "what kind of beautiful are you?" In addition, the career in which she was most interested was the beauty industry. We observed with interest that although Monica wants to work in a social and artistic field where one has to build relationships with people, in her Facebook statuses, she seemed to be anti-people. Monica frequently commented on her annoyance with people in her Facebook statuses e.g., "I Find A Few People Annoying, And You Are All Of Them" and "Jissus PEOPLE!!!!!!!!!" Furthermore, she stated in her CIP 4 results: "I get tired of listening to other peoples problems." She expressed an aversion to working in large groups, and her JPQ profile revealed a preference for introversion.

Monica's Objectivity theme was evident in her frequent comments on her status updates that expressed logic and common sense: "How convenient that bread and milk the most common things on a shopping list and more often than not the only thing on the list are on opposite sides of the shop! Where is common sense now days?" and "You know ... I don't get it ... Parents tell their kids that 'there's starving kids all over the world and you can't even finish the food on your plate!' But even if they finished the food on their plate there's still gonna be starving kids all over the world ... So what point are they trying to make? ... That there's starving kids all over the world who are still starving and you sitting here stuffing your face with food you don't really want to eat ... Just saying." Additionally, her Facebook profile also demonstrated a liking for groups that deal with knowledge and facts: "WTF Facts" and "Fact Alarm." She furthermore expressed her preference to facts in her CIP results.

**Table 3** Contribution of Facebook to the career construction journeys of Grade 11 adolescents

Data Sources	Participant 1: Michael*				Participant 2: Monica*				Participant 3: Thuli*			
Career construction themes	Career development	Personal development	Social development	Supplementary theme	Career development	Personal development	Social development	Supplementary theme	Career development	Personal development	Social development	Supplementary theme
Participants' themes	Sports	Enterprise	Extraversion	High Self Esteem	Arts	Objectivity	Enjoyment	Animals	Status	Trust	Food	Religion
FB Profile	✓			✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
FB Statuses	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
CIP 4	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
JPQ		✓			✓						✓	
	T r i	T r i	T r i	S u p	T r i	T r i	T r i	S u p	T r i	T r i	T r i	S u p

Note. \* = Pseudonyms used for participants; Tri = Facebook served as a tool to triangulate data; Sup = Facebook served as a tool to supplement addition theme; FB – Facebook; CIP – Career Interest Profile; JPQ – Jung Personality Questionnaire.

Concerning the Enjoyment theme, Monica frequently referred to being bored e.g., “Ok the airport is officially the most boring place in the world!!! Even worse than school and thats saying something!!” and “life is good but {boring}.” In her CIP 4 results, she expressed a dislike for a career category, because she considered it boring. In the CIP 4 question related to what she did not enjoy, she stated she did not enjoy a “lengthy process.” It was interesting that although Monica did not express an interest in animals in her career assessments, her Facebook profile regarded the Animals theme as high. The theme was regarded as a supplementary one, as it was only found on her Facebook profile, but could be a replacement for her anti-people stance and her annoyance with lengthy talks and processes. Monica liked two groups related to the advocacy and care of animals: “Highveld Horse Care Unit” and “Horse Fighting in the Philippines MUST END \*\*, Please Sign The Petition.” In addition, her Facebook profile displayed various groups related to animals.

#### Participant 3: Thuli's Themes

Thuli's career theme seemed to be related to her aspirations towards status, which she linked to having money, and to being well known. This was evident from both her CIP results and her Facebook statuses. She expressed an abhorrence for poverty, demonstrated in the following quotes: “poverty is not a condition, it's a state of mind” and “the greatest enemy in the church is NOT the devil, the greatest enemy is POVERTY! POVERTY IS A CURSE! \*\*Bishop Freddie Edwards.” In addition, when asked what career her parents recommend that she pursue, she stated: “Anything I enjoy and makes a lot of money.” Thuli also expressed that Beyonce is her role model, “because she Beyonce, she had money and everyone knew her and loved her.”

At a personal level, trust emerged as an important theme for Thuli. In her CIP results, she states that she does not trust a person easily and that one of her biggest failures was trusting the wrong people; however, her Facebook status could be seen to read: “Trust God and Smile!!” and “I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust Psalms 91:1–2.” These quotes related to information found in her Facebook profile and updates on religion, which served as an interesting supplementary tool in relation to the theme of trust, but contradicted her theme of status. A major part of her Facebook statuses consisted of comments about her religion, deity, and church. Examples of these comments include: “For God so loved me that when HE looked at my Nasty self, He gave HIS Son for me and then when His Son looked at my Dirty self, He gave HIS life for me. I am not saved by beauty or accent, but I AM SAVED BY GRACE!!!! PrOud

To Say JESUS is My SAVIOR!!!” On her Facebook profile, she expressed her favourite books to be The Bible, Bible, The Holy Bible, The Anointing, Hope for Today. She also notes her favourite activities to be “Praying, Born-again Christian.” It is interesting to note that in her other career assessment such as the Values Scale, little reference is made to religion.

Food was a theme found in both her CIP and Facebook profile. In the CIP, she stated that she enjoyed baking. Additionally, on her Facebook profile, reference is made to cooking recipes, eating well, and cooking. This was related to her social development, as people who love cooking are usually in the company of others, so that they can put their recipes to the test and get feedback from significant others, be they family or friends.

Although there were triangulations and a supplement found in Thuli's Facebook statuses and Facebook profiles, one interesting contradiction was revealed. Under her Facebook Status theme, Thuli displayed an aversion to poverty and an affinity for money. However, in her CIP 4 results, she viewed Mother Teresa as her role model because “she wasn't that wealthy.” In her case study, the contradictory information on Facebook served as a reflection of her adolescent identity.

#### Discussion

Based on the above analysis that emerges across the different case studies, it is evident that, to some extent, Facebook serves as an essential instrument in the career construction journeys of adolescent learners at two levels, namely: as a triangulation instrument, and as a supplementary career counselling instrument.

The analysis of all the case studies indicates that Facebook serves as an instrument for the triangulation of information. Triangulation is defined as a method that helps a career counsellor to increase the credibility of his/her findings (Rothbauer, 2008). Maree (2013) notes further that, in the career construction process, triangulation is a method that implements quality assurance. He observes that “different qualitative data-gathering methods are typically used to facilitate crystallization [*sic*] and enhance the trustworthiness of a study” (Maree, 2013:77). The analysis of the case studies above validated Facebook as an additional qualitative tool that can contribute to the quality assurance of adolescents' career construction journeys. Chen and Bryer (2012) state that using such platforms as potentially valuable sources of information can help the counsellor to understand individual clients' behaviour on such sites, thus allowing the counsellor to further explore alternative voices during the client's career construction journey.

By describing Facebook as a supplementary information instrument, we posit that Facebook can



be used as a tool for finding additional information that is not revealed by other career assessments. In other words, the Facebook analysis identified a clear theme(s) not revealed by the other career assessments. Concerning the career construction paradigm, Savickas et al. (2009) reminds career counsellors of the many narrative realities of their clients. They point out that the career construction process enables clients to engage in meaning-making activities that allow them to create a new perspective of themselves. Hartung (2011), Maree (2013), and Maree and Beck (2004) caution, moreover, against the use of psychometric tests as the only instruments in the career counselling of clients in the multicultural and diverse South African context, as they are not sufficient in revealing the clients' life and career stories. This is equally pertinent in the South African context, given its cultural, historical and political landscape, where psychometric tests were used to discriminate against its citizens based on race (Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2011). Savickas (2012) summarises the career construction process as construction, deconstruction, reconstruction, co-construction and action. In the career construction process, clients are seen as the "authors who may be characterized [*sic*] by autobiographical stories and who may be helped to reflect on life themes with which to construct their careers" (Savickas, 2012:17). Viewed in light of the findings, it does seem evident that Facebook serves as an information source that could assist in the construction and deconstruction processes. Further to this, while technology-based tools such as Facebook are used widely with ease by adolescents in South Africa, this is not the case with career assessments, since most of the instruments used are still developed in Western and European countries and are thus highly culturally biased. Therefore, the supplementary information that emerges from Facebook could enable a South African client to develop a new perspective about him/herself that psychometric batteries invariably miss. This renders it challenging for the counsellor to reconstruct a comprehensive career profile with the client, as significant informational narratives are left untold.

The construction and deconstruction processes of career construction entail unpacking the autobiographical identity and career stories of clients (McIlveen & Patton, 2007; Savickas, 2012). From Facebook statuses, narrative elements are observable and are able to be unpacked in collaboration with a client to assist with deconstructing career narratives. For instance, the themes supplemented a client's identified themes and enabled the career counsellor and client to deconstruct additional narratives that are highlighted in the other career assessments.

Related to social learning theories, and in particular, to connectivism theory (Siemens, 2005),

social learning is integrated with social media technologies, as it is seen as an external and universal multi-connected process, rather than an internal individualistic activity (Chen & Bryer, 2012). For this reason, clients' connections to others through multiple social media platforms such as Facebook provide the ideal resource to deconstruct the various personal and behavioural influences on a client's biographical construction. For example, the theme of religion emerged in Thuli's career themes. Many of her status updates related to religion were in the form of quotations. Various Christian writers and opinion leaders were, therefore, a major influence on Thuli's biographical construction. Bandura (2001) argues that exposure to mass communication media has a pivotal influence on people's socially constructed realities. It also provides the client and the counsellor with the potential to recreate the counselling environment, which can allow counselling to be experienced as a uniquely social enterprise co-created by all involved. Such a transformative approach has the potential to allow greater interaction across the counsellor-client divide (Chen & Bryer, 2012). The content to which both counsellor and client are exposed will help shape their principles and perceptions of reality. Therefore, the information on Facebook affords a career counsellor a glimpse into the content to which his/her client is exposed, and that plays an important role in shaping a client's constructed reality. Adopting the idea that Facebook forms part of the client's life story and reality, we concur with Savickas's (2012:13) notion that "life design interventions constructs career through small stories, reconstructs the stories into a life portrait, and co-constructs intentions that advance the career story into a new episode."

#### Limitations and Future Research

One of the possible limitations of this study is that, due to the multiple case study design of the research, the extent of the findings is limited. Moreover, because only three participants were included, the findings cannot be generalised to the entire adolescent population of South Africa. Furthermore, although the trustworthiness and credibility criteria were strictly adhered to, since this was part of a career counselling process, as researchers, we cannot be separated from our subjective interpretations. A future study with more participants may provide more generalisable results. Future research is also needed using deductive analysis on the Facebook profiles of research participants to look for life themes, values and career construction themes specifically. Although we have noted some advantages of using Facebook in career counselling, it is imperative that we consider some ethical dilemmas that may be caused by such interventions. With policy and legislation around the use of social media in South

Africa being at a developmental stage at present, there are no clear guidelines as to online psychological activities. However, we recommend that practitioners who wish to use such interventions with their clients follow the current procedures, as described by the HPCSA codes of ethical conduct.

### Conclusion

The use of Facebook as an instrument to enhance the career construction journeys of adolescent learners poses significant opportunities in the field of career development. Facebook can be readily accessible to both career counsellors and their clients, providing fast and up-to-date information that can be useful to their career construction process. However, the proposal to use Facebook in career counselling also poses challenges, as this is a new development that still requires guidelines from professional bodies in South Africa. There is a further need for professional development and supervision guidelines that will support counsellors in using social media networks such as Facebook responsibly, taking ethical boundaries into consideration and foreseeing any ethical dilemmas that may arise. A further challenge to be taken into consideration is the client's right to information privacy with the Protection of Personal Information (PoPI) Act of 2013 (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2013).

We agree, however, with Maree (2015:19) who asserts that "theorists and practitioners alike should help people deal with the impact of networking and connectivity in a world of work characterised by hierarchical structures on the one hand and networking and connectivity on the other." For us to strive for an action-orientated, positive approach to career construction, the author further proposes that "all of us in career counselling should work together to blend retrospect and prospect in a concerted attempt to convert challenges in career counselling into opportunities, hurt into hope, and hopelessness into inspiration" (Maree, 2015:20).

In summary, this research advocates for the use of Facebook as a social media instrument that can enhance the career construction journeys of adolescents. We believe the study can assist career counsellors to rethink their practices and to move beyond the traditional methods of career counselling. The research may, therefore, help counsellors to use technology-based tools based on the realisation that society shapes and, in turn, is shaped by developing technologies (Lynch & Redpath, 2014). Facebook is the biggest social media-based technology influencing both adults and adolescents alike and is, therefore, a valuable tool in career construction.

### Notes

- i. The word client in the context of this article refers to the Grade 11 adolescent learner.
- ii. Unless otherwise stated, all images in this article were created for the purposes of this study only.
- iii. Quotations from the data set is presented in italics and underlined to assist with the readability of this section.
- iv. Published under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

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