



**A Local Portrait of South African Counselling Psychologists' Endorsement of the Values and Scope of Practice of their Profession in Relation to their Career Satisfaction.**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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By

Nhlori Ngobeni

G14N6378

Supervised by

Professor Charles Young

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## DECLARATION

I, Nhlori G. Ngobeni, declare that **A Local Portrait of South African Counselling Psychologists' Endorsement of the Values and Scope of Practice of their Profession in Relation to Career Satisfaction** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and that this work has not been submitted before any other degree at any other institution.

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## **DEDICATION**

This is dedicated to my children (my precious twins): Ripfumelo Angel and Lifaletu Able Ngobeni Tsotsi.

In the short time we had together, you brought me so much joy and renewed my faith in God, family, love and life.

Every time I think of quitting, I remember that you are watching.

I love and miss you beyond words.

## ABSTRACT

The 2011 revision to the scope of practice of counselling psychology in South Africa has renewed debates about what is it that should distinguish counselling psychology as a distinctive area of practice and research in South Africa. This study reports the findings of a survey of a sample of 228 South African registered counselling psychologists, including the extent to which they endorse the traditional values of their category, the extent to which they endorse the current scope of practice for counselling psychology, and measures of career satisfaction. Findings are that women and white practitioners comprise the large majority of the category. Counselling psychologists strongly endorse most of the traditional values of the category and are generally highly satisfied with their careers. Surprisingly, given these findings, only a large minority indicate that they would choose counselling psychology again knowing what they know now. Most significant, the findings of a multiple regression analysis indicate that endorsement of the scope of practice most strongly predicts career satisfaction scores, followed closely by black racial identification, years of experience, and then endorsement of counselling psychology values. Logistic regression analysis to predict which counselling psychologists would choose counselling psychology again knowing what they know now, revealed that only endorsement of counselling psychology values and endorsement of the scope practice made a significant contribution to predictions. This study provides a snapshot of the current status of South African counselling psychology today and it remains that in the next ten years, there will be significant changes as the category changes across the globe. **Keywords:** *South African counselling psychology, traditional values of counselling psychology, scope of practice, career satisfaction.*

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The profession of psychology is one of immense importance in South Africa for it provides an understanding of the psychological and social issues that people encounter (S. Cooper & Nicholas, 2012) and addresses critical mental health issues with the aim of enhancing well-being. Psychologists, like all health practitioners, are regulated by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) as established by the Health Professions Act 56 of 1974 (Department of Health, 1974; Health Professions Council of South Africa, 2013). Therefore, the Minister of Health and the HPCSA are responsible for clearly defining the scope of each profession (Department of Health, 2011); while the HPCSA specifically guides the profession and protects the public by setting, amongst other things, the training standards and the ethical rules (Health Professions Council of South Africa, 2013).

In 2011, an amendment to the Health Professions Act defined the scope of practice of the psychology profession and its underlying categories (Department of Health, 2011). Revisions to the scope of practice of counselling psychology were generally not well received by counselling psychologists (Young, 2013). Furthermore, the lack of clarity on the new scopes resulted in some interpreting the scopes as stating that counselling psychologists may not deal with the remediation of psychopathology (see, for example, Botha, 2011). Others argue that an appropriate interpretation of the scope of practice is not (or should not be) as limiting as others suggest (e.g., Young, 2013; Bantjes, Kagee, & Young, 2016). Nevertheless, the furore highlights the confusion about the professional identity of counselling psychology in South Africa. This study is an investigation of the extent to which South African counselling psychologists endorse the values of counselling psychology, the extent to which such an endorsement is correlated with career satisfaction, and whether the relationship between endorsement of values and career satisfaction is mediated by the endorsement of the new scope of practice.

### 1.1 Research aims and questions

A global survey of counselling psychology across eight countries, including South Africa, was conducted by Goodyear et al. (2016). The global survey made comparisons of the demographics, professional identities, roles, settings, activities, career satisfaction and the endorsement of

counselling psychology's values of counselling psychologists in those countries. The South African data was collected by an online survey and has been published as part of the global survey. Now, this current study is the first analysis of the South African data alone and it includes aspects that were not included in the global study. In particular, this study is interested in the values, endorsement of scope of practice, and the relationship between these and counselling psychologists' career satisfaction. The measurement of the endorsement of the scope of practice involved items unique to the South African data. The aim of this study is to contribute to the understanding of the professional identity of counselling psychology in South Africa by seeking answers to the questions posed below.

- To what extent do South African counselling psychologists endorse the traditional values of counselling psychology?
- To what extent do they endorse the new scope of practice?
- To what extent are counselling psychologists satisfied with their choice of career?
- To what extent do gender, race, experience and the endorsement of the values and the scope of practice predict career satisfaction?

## **1.2 Overview of the study**

Chapter 2, the literature review, highlights the historical development of counselling psychology as it emerged in the United States of America (USA). The literature review also explores counselling psychology's relationship with the other psychology categories with the aim of establishing counselling psychology's distinctiveness with respect to its philosophical orientation, historical values, professional setting and scope of practice. The chapter further looks at the emergence and status of counselling psychology in South Africa in light of the 2011 scope of practice. The subsequent chapter, Chapter 3, describes in detail the quantitative methodology used to collect and analyse the data. Chapter 4 is concerned with the presentation of the findings and Chapter 5 with a discussion of the findings. The final chapter, Chapter 6 concludes the study with recommendations for future research.

### **1.3 Conclusion**

A study of counselling psychologists' values, career satisfaction and endorsement of the scope of practice, and the potential relationship between these aspects is a useful addition to the literature at a time when there is much uncertainty about the role and relevance of counselling psychology in South Africa today. The following chapter is the literature review, which describes the rich history of counselling psychology as it started and developed in the USA in particular, and then the history and current status of counselling psychology in South Africa.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This literature review is a synopsis of the history of counselling psychology as it emerged in the USA and the events that shaped the category there and have influenced it elsewhere, followed by a discussion of the distinctiveness of counselling psychology in terms of its philosophical orientation, historical values, professional settings and scope of practice. The chapter concludes with specific focus on counselling psychology in South Africa, including the history leading to the current scope of practice debate.

### **2.2 Historical development of counselling psychology in the USA**

“The practice of counselling psychology has a short history and a distant past” is a famous phrase by early psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus which was borrowed and adapted by Fuertes, Spokane and Holloway (2013, p.1). It points to the fact that although counselling psychology has only recently been recognised as a formal discipline, its roots date back as far as 1909 and beyond. Counselling psychology’s history as it unfolded initially in the USA is embedded in early movements, such as the vocational guidance, mental health and psychometric movements, which were themselves influenced by both world wars, and then formally shaped by a series of major conferences (Fuertes et al., 2013; Super, 1955). Counselling in itself is a process and so was its development as a profession; therefore, some names and events do not fit neatly into a rigid chronology, they overlap (Gladding, 2012). Nonetheless, it is still important to take a historical journey of the development of counselling psychology. Roger F. Aubrey, one of the best and most creative writers in the field of guidance and counselling, put it well when he stated that “In looking ahead, our profession might do well to also look back” (Aubrey, 1977, p.288).

According to Brewer et al. (1942), one of the early influential movements was the vocational movement which began with a partnership between philanthropically-minded citizens and social agencies, community Christian associations and schools that aimed to provide young people with post school information and orientation to the workplace. Jesse B. Davis was the first person to set up a systematized guidance program in public schools in response to the vocational and social problems that he had witnessed students encounter in his capacity as a school administrator

(Aubrey, 1977). Another pioneer in the field of guidance and counselling was the father of guidance, Frank Parsons, whose vocational guidance work included the Vocational Bureau which assisted young people with choosing occupations, preparing for the workplace and building their careers (Zytowski, 2001). Parsons' work also formed the basis for career counselling as we know it today. The movement also drew on the work of psychometrists such as Alfred Binet who at the time published his intelligence scale in Paris (Super, 1955).

The mental health movement was the second early influence on the development of counselling psychology. This movement is marked by Sigmund Freud and his colleagues' endorsement of centres wherein psychological interventions were used to treat mental illness and enhance emotional and psychological well-being (Woody, Hansen & Rossberg, 1989, as cited in Fuertes et al., 2013). The movement also included the work of Lightner Witmer who opened the first psychological clinic at the University of Pennsylvania to help children with 'mental defects' (Thomas, 2009). The clinic serviced children from surrounding public schools with medical and psychological treatment to be able to advance in their school work and life in general (Green, n.d.).

In 1913, the National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA) was founded to provide guidance literature and continues to do so through the *Journal of Counselling and Development* (Gladding, 2012). The NVGA's members were from psychology, education, community service, business, and government (Super, 1955) and were afforded the platform to engage with each other as per their mutual interest in vocational counselling (Gladding, 2012). Fuertes et al. (2013) reported that, subsequently, vocational counselling became a much needed service during the First World War as military personnel needed to be identified, trained and placed in positions while returning veterans required guidance with re-integration to the workplace. Furthermore, education, learning and guidance were also strongly emphasised due to social movements and new legislature which resulted in more counselling and guidance programs in schools, communities and higher education institutions.

The 1930s marked the high prevalence of unemployment during the Great Depression and as a result the American government took more interest in counselling and guidance while researchers and practitioners developed strategies and counselling methods in an attempt to alleviate the situation (Gladding, 2012; Super, 1955). Parallel to these developments in vocational guidance, a

small group of applied psychologists formed the American Association for Applied Psychology in 1937, with a focus on the nascent development of clinical, counselling, educational, and industrial psychology (Super, 1955).

The development of counselling was also influenced by Carl Rogers' seminal work, with its emphasis on the counselling relationship and an attentive and non-judgemental approach to afford clients the responsibility for their own growth (Gladding, 2012). The vocational guidance movement was influenced by these new psychotherapeutic procedures. As counsellors became more cognisant of how complex the counselling process was, they realised that problems of adjustment in one area can affect the functionality of other areas of the person's life; therefore, they began to counsel people, not just their problems and also factored in the person's personality in the counselling process (Super, 1955).

World War II also played a significant role in the development of counselling psychology. Prior to World War II, psychologists had been trained mainly as scientists, but a need for an appropriate level of training became apparent (Raimy, 1950, as cited in Cranston, 1986) when war veterans returned from the war. Veterans required help with adjusting to everyday life and so the Veterans Administration (VA) and the GI Bill (benefits for veterans) funded the training for counsellors and psychologists (Nugent, 1981, as cited in Gladding, 2012). In 1949, the American Psychological Association (APA) organised the Boulder Conference, which resulted in the adoption of the scientist-practitioner model (Raimy, 1950, as cited in Cranston, 1986), and stipulated that doctoral training was necessary to practice professionally. The birth of counselling psychology followed just two years later in 1951 at a conference at the Northwestern university, which had been called by the then president of the Division of Counselling and Guidance of the APA, Gilbert C. Wrenn (Super, 1955). According to Leong (2008), the conference debated the uniqueness of counselling psychology in terms of its identity, specialization and training, its role in political and social advocacy, and suggestions for more standardised curriculum, clinical training and admission processes. Like clinical psychology, the scientist-practitioner model was also reaffirmed (Fuertes et al., 2013).

The Northwestern conference was significant because it marked the adoption of the title of counselling psychologist (CP) and the official birth of counselling psychology (Super, 1955). It

also drew the APA's attention to recognising counselling psychology as a category and so the division of Counselling and Guidance became the Society of Counselling Psychology (Division 17), followed by the launch of the Journal of Counselling Psychology in 1954 (Baker & Subich, 2008). In addition, the APA was asked to collaborate with the department of Veterans Affairs to develop internships and training opportunities for counselling psychology doctoral students (Leong, 2008). Thereafter, counselling psychology was now found firstly within the medicine and neurology units of Veterans Administration (VA) hospitals and then in the outpatient community centres and college counselling centres (Fuertes et al., 2013).

The next major conference was the Greyston conference of 1964 (Leong, 2008), which took place in New York under the leadership of Donald Super and Al Thompson. One notable concern that was debated was the identity of counselling psychology, which some thought was lacking in distinctiveness, undifferentiated from clinical psychology. However, the conclusion was that this was not an identity issue, but rather that counselling psychology suffered from lack of visibility, which prevented the public and universities from fully appreciating and utilising the discipline. Another concern was that the emphasis on hygiene had prevented the necessary knowledge and understanding of pathology and diagnosis. Alongside these issues were calls for counselling psychology students to also be financially supported like the clinical psychology students were supported. Some programs were reportedly lacking training in vocational psychology, while there were calls for counselling psychologists to lead counselling psychology training programs.

The conference took place at a time of great social and political turmoil, most notably the Vietnam War and the anti-war movement, the civil rights movement and the women's movement (Gladding, 2012). These called attention to the many social issues, including those of poverty, human rights, education and marginalisation. The conference concluded that counselling psychology was well poised to address many of these social challenges, with its emphasis on understanding people in context (Fuertes et al., 2013). Indeed, this marked counselling psychology's explicit turn to the political.

The next national conference in counselling psychology took place in Atlanta in 1987. By then the focus was on the public image of counselling psychology, professional practice in various settings, training and accreditation, research, and organisational and political issues in counselling

psychology (Weissberg et al., 1988). In particular, the identity issue was raised again with the aim of fostering the uniqueness of counselling psychology to ward off the perceived threats to the discipline from the move to generic rather than discipline-specific internships and the continuing rise of the clinical training programs and doctoral programs. Furthermore, with regards to the training of counselling psychologists, the scientist-practitioner model once again received strong endorsement. It was also emphasised that students must be better prepared for working with a variety of clients and dealing with the realities of training programs being housed in colleges of education rather than the arts and sciences. The social and political advocacy saw multicultural issues receive more attention in research and training and the category's increased involvement in the APA (Leong, 2008).

According to Leong (2008), the Houston National Conference of Counselling Psychology of 2001 did not focus so much on identity because by then the profession was reportedly considered by many people to have matured. In addition, the Commission of Recognition of Specialities and Proficiencies in Professional Psychology (CRSPP) had in 1999 provided a description and definition of counselling psychology as follows: "Within the context of lifespan development, counselling psychology focuses on healthy aspects and strengths of the client (individual, couple, family, group, system or organization), environmental or situational influences (including the context of cultural, gender and lifestyle issues) and the role of career and vocation on individual development" (Leong, 2008, p.105). The Houston conference, unlike the three previous national conferences, had an open admission. The goal was to have multiple groups defining the field rather than identifying one group as the defining group of counselling psychologists. It was also emphasised that the philosophical orientation was what held the profession together, not work settings and activities (Fouad et al., 2004).

In terms of training, the Houston conference addressed issues such as ensuring that students can work in managed healthcare settings and that they are prepared when working with clients who experience more serious levels of distress and forms of psychopathology (Leong, 2008). Another significant outcome was the formation of social action groups (SAGs) to address the important social issues of community violence, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, homelessness and welfare, the economic boom and the poor or working class, care for the chronically or severely mentally ill, racism, social justice and ethics in counselling psychology practice, and the moral

challenge of managed care (Fouad et al., 2004). Baluch, Pieterse and Bolden (2004) reported experiencing the Houston conference as explicitly about expanding the identity of counselling psychology to include social justice therefore adding the role of being social change agents; however, they also reported being disappointed that little follow up was made in the profession to fully integrate a social justice perspective.

Leong (2008) asserts that the four national conferences – the Northwestern, Greystone, Atlanta and Houston conferences - played a fundamental role in the developmental process of psychology and counselling psychology's unique identity. While Fuertes et al. (2013) argue that the conferences also emphasised that the talents and strengths of people could be discovered and cultivated through developing, refining and using assessment procedures and interventions; they further asserted that counselling psychology must foster an awareness of social justice, opportunity and tolerance in people and society as a whole.

The above-mentioned national conferences were followed by the 2008 international counselling conference that took place in Chicago. It was themed “Creating the Future, Counselling Psychologists in a Changing World” (Leong, 2008). Although this conference reflected the importance of the global emergence of counselling psychology, it endorsed traditional themed papers and workshops of the scientist-practitioner training, prevention, career and vocational psychology as well as strength-based approaches (Fuertes et al., 2013). Therefore, what essentially started as vocational guidance emphasising vocational orientation activities emerged as the new field of counselling psychology by integrating a psychotherapeutic approach (Super, 1955). In reaction to the emergence of counselling psychology as a specialty, questions arose regarding the category's distinctiveness: where do they work (Krauskopf, Thoreson, & McAleer, 1973)? What do they do (Fitzgerald & Osipow, 1986)? The following section explores these questions in order to establish what makes counselling psychology distinct from other specialities, if at all.

### **2.3 Counselling psychology as a distinct category**

A significant part of the historical development of counselling psychology included grappling with and addressing the category's identity issues. The distinctiveness of counselling psychology is explored by addressing questions pertaining to the philosophical stance, values, work settings and the scope of practice of counselling psychologists.

### 2.3.1 What exactly makes counselling psychology distinct?

Fitzgerald and Osipow (1986) did an occupational analysis to investigate what makes counselling psychology unique. They found little of substance to differentiate counselling from clinical psychology and suggested the merging of the two. Although the two categories historically differed in terms of the settings and populations they worked with (Fuertes et al., 2013), their shared emphasis on similar psychological theory and research suggested a likeness, particularly as both have been increasingly employed in clinical situations (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010). However, despite much overlap in practice, counselling psychology was considered to carry its distinctiveness in its philosophical orientation (Fouad et al., 2004).

Counselling psychology's distinctiveness is considered to stem from five elements, as outlined by Gelso and Fretz (2001, as cited in Fuertes et al., 2013). Firstly, counselling psychology focuses on intact personalities, meaning clients who have considerable independence and psychological functioning. These clients are usually in need of guidance regarding everyday life issues such as careers, growth, fulfilment, adjustment as well as psychological help in dealing with a crisis or developmental challenges. Secondly, assessing and diagnosing are an integral part of what counselling psychologists do (American Board of Professional Psychology, n.d.); however, Gelso and Fretz argue that counselling psychologists pay attention to and promote their clients' assets, strengths, development, fulfilment and growth as priority.

The third element is an emphasis on brief interventions that are solution-focused, client-centred and that promote development, adjustment, psychoeducation and overall well-being of clients (American Psychological Association, Division 17, 2017). Fourthly, counselling psychology pays attention to not only the individual, but also to the environmental factors at play in their lives such as social ills (poverty, racism, sexism etc.), family structure, communities, gender and race (Canadian Psychological Association, 2009). The final element defining counselling psychology is attention to the educational and vocational development of the person (Stanley, 2013). Counselling psychology regards this element as important for all clients whether the client is dealing with a normal developmental challenge or crises, or has experienced significant or prolonged psychopathology (Gelso & Fretz, 2001, as cited in Fuertes et al., 2013).

Counselling psychology depicts the universal human practice of responding to another person's need for help due to distress or challenges by using knowledge, skills and resources (Farrell, 2013; Fuertes et al., 2013). However, therapists and counsellors were previously expected to keep the counselling process value-free in order to remain objective. That perspective changed when values (personal and professional) were found to be an integral part of the professional's selection of psychology as a career as well as the way they conducted their work (Dragan, 1974). A value is "a moral, social, or aesthetic principle accepted by an individual or society as a guide to what is good, desirable or important" (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2015). Duffy (1990, as cited in Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010) asserts that counselling psychology's philosophical position of collaboratively relating to clients rather than just applying treatment through upholding the values of empathy, acceptance and authenticity in the therapeutic relationship makes the category different from the others.

In a seminal and often cited paper, Packard (2009) expressed the conviction that practice patterns and work settings do not distinguish counselling psychology from other specialities, rather the category's distinctiveness lies in its core values. Packard furthermore proposed nine core values of counselling psychology. The first core value is that counselling psychologists regard altruism as their foundation when helping others improve their well-being. The second value is the importance of promoting change by developing and nurturing positive relationships with clients. Further emphasis by Packard is on counselling psychologists' regard for the integration of science and practice as an important part of their work, as this affords them various methods of enquiry.

The fourth core value is that counselling psychologists also strive to prevent avoidable problems and facilitate individual and societal growth by paying attention to whether their clients are developing in a healthy manner (Packard, 2009; Stanley, 2013). Packard asserts that this is achieved by the value of upholding a holistic frame of reference of promoting strengths, resilience and positive coping in their clients. The sixth value identified by Packard is that counselling psychologists aim to help everyone from all walks of life and treat everyone with respect e.g. by celebrating cultural and individual diversity. Further, in pursuit of enhancing the well-being of their clients and society as a whole, counselling psychologists uphold social justice and advocacy as crucial to their work. The eighth value asserted by Packard is that counselling psychologists advocate for collaboration with other professionals and support multidisciplinary practice and

research. Lastly, Packard emphasises that counselling psychologists always prioritise strengths and positive coping in their remedial work.

Farrell (2013) states that counselling psychology, as fundamentally a practice tradition with core values such as privileging the therapeutic relationship in the process of helping people with all kinds of problems experienced throughout their lifetime, appropriately regards cultural, social, and ecosystemic contexts. The ever changing dynamics of the world have resulted in global problems now including culture shock of migration, identity conflict and confusion amongst others (Marsella & Pedersen, 2004). Counselling psychology has maintained its relevance by keeping up with the changes in the marketplace, society (political and social), psychology profession in general, cultural context and technological innovations (Goodyear et al., 2000). For example, counselling psychologists strive to be aware of their own cultural background and how that influences their interactions with clients (Sue et al., 1998, as cited in Vera & Speight, 2003). In addition, they ensure that opportunities and resources are distributed fairly (Fouad, Gerstein, & Toporek, 2006, p.1). The above lends to the values of counselling psychology being relevant as a distinct area of practice and research in multicultural countries such as South Africa (Young, 2013).

### **2.3.2 Where do counselling psychologists work?**

The other emerging question regarding counselling psychology's uniqueness was: where do they work (Fitzgerald & Osipow, 1986)? In those early times in the USA, Super (1955) reported the typical work settings of psychologists as follows: clinical psychologists were found in medical settings; educational psychologists, who were typically professors or researchers, worked in educational settings; school psychologists were employed in schools; and personnel psychologists typically worked in government, industry, or business. In contrast, counselling psychologists were found in a variety of settings, namely university counselling centres, secondary schools, hospitals, rehabilitation centres, social welfare agencies, industry, business and government. This, according Super, revealed a unique strength of counselling psychology, which was that it was not defined by work context but rather by the fact that it deals with individuals located and functioning in a variety of settings. This flexibility is said to have contributed to the rapid development of the category.

Similarly, Watkins, Lopez, Campbell and Himmell (1986) conducted a survey exploring the demographics, professional activities, institutional affiliations, and training satisfaction of counselling psychologists. The participants were members of Division 17 of the American Psychological Association (APA). They found that the majority of the counselling psychologists were employed in higher education settings. However, more and more counselling psychologists identified with private practice work, though the concern was that their training had not adequately prepared them for this. Watkins, Schneider, Cox and Reinberg (1987) also did a study on the similarities and differences between counselling and clinical psychologists affiliated with the APA. They found partial support for the hypothesis that counselling psychologists work in different settings to clinical psychologists. The primary work setting for both groups was employment at university faculties. The difference between the two groups was evident in the secondary setting as counselling psychologists were found in agency settings, while clinical psychologists were found in private practice. Overall, the results showed that both groups were affiliated with academic and human service (agency and private practice) positions.

Two decades later, in 2011, Neimeyer, Taylor, Wear and Buyukgoze-Kavas investigated the question of whether the work settings of counselling and clinical psychologists had converged or retained their distinctiveness. They worked with the State, Provincial and Territorial Psychological Associations (SPTAs) to conduct an internet survey across North America on three cohorts of both categories: “early career” phase (0–7 years post-highest degree), “mid-career” phase (8–20 years post-highest degree) and “late career” phase (21 or more years post-highest degree). The work settings explored in this study were community mental health centres (CMHCs), hospital or medical, independent practice, academic and university counselling centres (Neimeyer, Taylor, Wear, & Buyukgoze-Kavas, 2011).

Neimeyer et al. (2011) found that, in CMHCs settings, counselling and clinical psychologists in their early and mid-career phases were similarly employed; however, those in their late career phase from both categories were less likely to work in CMHCs. With regards to hospital or medical settings, there was a substantial difference as more clinical than counselling psychologists worked in this setting in their early career. The percentages for both categories were comparable in their mid-career; however, in their late career, more clinical than counselling psychologists worked in the hospital or medical settings. Neimeyer et al. (2011) further found that independent practice

was the predominant work setting across all career phases. This work setting, unlike the other settings, increased from early to late career in both categories. In addition, more clinical psychologists than counselling psychologists reported working in the independent practice setting throughout the three career phases.

Neimeyer et al. (2011) also found that, for both counselling and clinical psychologists, the percentages of those employed in academic settings were consistent throughout the three career phases; however, counselling psychologists more than clinical psychologists worked in academic settings. The most remarkable differences occurred in the university counselling centre setting: in each career phase, counselling psychologists dominated at three times that of clinical psychologists, although both categories showed a decline from early to late career phase. Overall, this study showed significant support for distinctiveness in the work settings of counselling and clinical psychologists. Although there were some similarities, clinical psychologists worked predominately in hospital and medical settings especially in their early career, while counselling psychologists were predominately found in university counselling centre settings throughout their careers. Lastly, Neimeyer et al. (2011) emphasised that employment opportunities were available to both categories in all the work settings because the study had showed representation of both categories in each of the workplace settings.

### **2.3.3 What do counselling psychologists do?**

As stated before, upon counselling psychology's emergence, one of the other pressing questions focused on what exactly does this new discipline do (Watkins et al., 1986). The above question was referring to counselling psychologists' scope of practice which is described as the range of matters that a psychology professional (a psychologist, psychometrist and/or registered counsellor) is permitted to deal with in accordance with the set boundaries of their specific discipline or category (Pretorius, 2012).

From the start, Super (1955) reported various, opposing viewpoints about the scope and place of counselling psychology. On the one hand, the disciplines of clinical, educational, school, and personnel each claimed kinship to counselling psychology. On the other hand, some clinical psychologists advocated that counselling and clinical should merge because they deemed counselling psychology to be a branch of clinical psychology. Counselling psychologists

themselves also held differing views about their scope of practice. While some regarded the work of counselling psychology to be confined to healthy people (students, workers and parents), Super and others were at pains to emphasise that, like clinical psychology, “counselling psychology is also concerned with the handicapped, abnormal, or maladjusted, but in a way which is different from that which has characterized clinical psychology” (Super, 1955, p.5).

The occupational analysis of counselling psychology by Watkins et al. (1986) also sheds some insights into the scope of practice matter. Counselling psychologists were found to be a diverse group providing various services such as psychotherapy, vocational counselling and psychodiagnostic and preventive work. However, what was much unexpected was how minimal the assessment and vocational work was considering that this type of work had previously been regarded as an important aspect of counselling psychology. One reason considered for such a decrease was the new graduates’ growing interest in remedial work over vocational work. This was attributed to vocational assessment and vocational counselling not being reimbursable through third-party payments, thus rendering this line of work less attractive to counselling psychologists in private practice. The survey results also revealed that individual psychotherapy was the predominant professional activity with quite an involvement in marital and family therapy. On the other hand, Watkins et al. were encouraged to find that counselling psychologists were greatly involved in research to the extent of doing presentations locally and nationally and publishing their work.

A follow up study by Goodyear et al. (2008) examined the identities, roles, attitudes and behaviours of counselling psychologists in the United States. A comparison was made of the results of the two *Society of Counselling Psychology (SCP) members* surveys conducted in 1986 and 2000. The surveys confirm the trend that counselling psychologists’ involvement in career or vocational counselling has decreased possibly due to the increased focus on remedial work than preventative work. Furthermore, over the 15 year period of the two surveys, SCP members’ career satisfaction increased which is evident in them identifying as counselling psychologists. The engagement in individual psychotherapy was reportedly higher than involvement in other types of counselling for both SCP and SCP non-members. Some experts in the field argue that after all, counselling psychology is the broadest and most flexible category; it traditionally focuses on personal growth and career development, but also covers the entire spectrum of psychological

practice of inpatient, neuropsychological, health, assessment and diagnosis, and psychotherapy (Ivey, 1979).

It is the state or national regulators or associations that determines the scope of practice of the disciplines under its regulation; the extent of the regulation is dependent on how much psychology has developed in that particular country (Azar, 2009). Specifically, counselling psychology training and licensing requirements vary, such that psychologists must adapt to the culture, language and specific requirements in order to practice in the various countries around the world. In addition, the discipline is recognised and regulated in some countries, but in others it exists without formal recognition (Azar, 2009). The following are some of the countries where counselling psychology is formally recognised and regulated: the United States of America (American Psychological Association, 2016), Australia (Psychology Board of Australia, 2011), South Africa (Health Professions Council of South Africa, 2013), the United Kingdom (Health and Care Professions Council, n.d.), Canada (Canadian Psychological Association, 2016), Korea (Korean Psychological Association, n.d.), New Zealand (New Zealand Psychologists Board, 2017) and Taiwan (Chan, Leung, Lee, Wang, & Zhang, 2012). However, countries such as Ireland (Psychological Society of Ireland, 2010), Hong Kong (Hong Kong Psychological Society, n.d.) and China (Chan et al., 2012) only have non-statutory society registers because psychology, as a profession, is not yet regulated by statute. In 2008, Goodyear et al. argued that surveys should be conducted around the world to see how counselling psychology is progressing globally and subsequently, Goodyear et al. (2016) published an international study.

#### **2.3.4 International Study by Goodyear et al. (2016): “A global portrait of counselling psychologists’ characteristics, perspectives, and professional behaviours”**

The study by Goodyear et al. (2016) is the first survey that has investigated the demographics, professional identities, roles, settings, activities, career satisfaction and the endorsement of counselling psychology’s values of counselling psychologists in eight countries (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, and the United States). Because this is such a unique and important study, the results are reported here in detail. The following is a summary of the findings.

In terms of demographics, the study found that most counselling psychologists are women regardless of the country. The results regarding professional identities were that the regulatory agencies of some countries such as South Africa do not permit self-designation; therefore, only respondents from six out of the eight countries were asked about their title preference. The results showed that the professional title of “counselling psychologist” was endorsed in Australia, New Zealand, the UK and the USA; while Canada preferred the term “psychologist” and South Korea had a preference for the term “Counsellor”. In addition, the majority of counselling psychologists across seven of the eight countries reported their primary work role as that of clinical practitioner. The results further showed that the common work settings across the countries were university counselling centres, self-employed or private practice, university or professional school faculty, and K-12 (kindergarten to grade 12); however, work settings varied across the different countries. For example, Taiwan reportedly had the least self-employed or private practice practitioners while Australia and South Africa had much higher proportions.

Goodyear et al. (2016) found that most counselling psychologists were to some extent involved in administration or management and counselling or therapy activity. Although considered a cornerstone of counselling psychology as it developed in the USA (Super, 1955), only a few counselling psychologists reported doing career counselling work across the countries; however, South Korea, South Africa and Taiwan had the highest proportions of counselling psychologists engaged in career counselling. The study further found that counselling psychologists spent most of their time doing psychotherapy and the least time engaged in neuropsychological assessment. Furthermore, counselling psychologists were found to mostly endorse theoretical orientations of integrative or eclectic, followed by cognitive or cognitive-behavioural then psychodynamic models (Goodyear et al., 2016).

Furthermore, with regards to the extent of the endorsement of values, Goodyear et al. (2016) found that counselling psychologists rated the focus on people’s strengths (i.e. “hygiology”) as the top one plus it was also the one with the least variability across countries. The other values were placed into clusters with the first and highest rated being focusing on clients’ strengths and assets, attention to issues of diversity, focusing on person–environment interactions and maintaining a developmental focus. This was followed by the cluster of maintaining a social justice focus, using research to inform practice, using both long- and short-term treatments, focusing on prevention

and addressing career issues. The final and lowest rated value was that of conducting research. Lastly, counselling psychologists across the countries reported being more highly satisfied with their career choice of counselling psychology than the training for it.

The above work by Goodyear et al. (2016) provided a unique snapshot of counselling psychology globally by reporting the combined data from the eight countries. It shows that while there are some notable differences between the practices of counselling psychology in different countries, overall that, there appears to be a shared, common understanding of what counselling psychology is across national boundaries. This suggests that in dealing with its local struggle for relevance and to remain viable, there is much that South African counselling psychologists could learn from their counterparts in other countries. The history and challenges faced by counselling psychology as a profession in South Africa are discussed in the section that follows.

## **2.4 Counselling psychology in South Africa**

### **2.4.1 The Past**

“But a mark of any discipline’s relevance is its ability to keep pace with social dynamics and emerge competent to describe its purview in terms of social relevance” proclaimed the former president of the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA), Dr Saths Cooper, when interviewed by Cavill (2000). This statement resonates well with the field of psychology in South Africa which is historically considered inseparable from the country’s past political system of apartheid because psychology is argued to have perpetuated racial segregation and discrimination through what the profession did as well as what it failed to do (Mauer, Marais, & Prinsloo, 1991). In particular reference to counselling psychology, Leach, Akhurst and Basson (2003) argue that the category has its origins at the Stellenbosch university, which was an Afrikaans-language university and once the intellectual cradle of Afrikaner nationalism. In 1927, Stellenbosch university appointed H.F. Verwoerd, soon to become a major architect of apartheid, as professor of applied psychology. Foster (1993, as cited in Leach et al., 2003) contends that from the 1930s, a philosophical separation occurred within psychology: clinical psychology was associated more with English-speaking people and Afrikaner nationalists looked to a new discipline that would align with their ideologies. Although it was yet to be recognised as a discipline in South Africa, counselling psychology was initially seen as a category for the support and development of white

Afrikaners, particularly those who were economically deprived, in order to keep economic power within the white minority of the country (Leach et al., 2003). According to Leach et al. (2003), counselling psychology was thus used to perpetuate the ideologies of apartheid and white racial superiority. Since then, the profession of psychology as a whole has changed from its apartheid past to being at the forefront of alleviating distress, addressing human issues and meeting the needs of the people (S. Cooper & Nicholas, 2012); but not without some challenges.

Though psychology was long established in academic settings, counselling psychology only became regulated in 1974, at a time when clinical psychology was the most developed discipline in South Africa (Department of Health, 1974; Leach et al., 2003). With long-established links to government institutions and closely aligned with medicine, clinical psychology enjoyed (and continues to enjoy) a higher status and greater recognition than the other categories (Leach et al., 2003; Watson & Fouche, 2007). Counselling psychology in South Africa, in contrast, has been largely misunderstood, supposedly because of its humanistic philosophical orientation and emphasis on prevention and development values, which often are seen as contradictory to the medical model as endorsed by psychiatry and clinical psychology (Leach et al., 2003).

Yet, there is little to differentiate the two categories of clinical and counselling psychology. Pillay and Petersen (1996) conducted a study of counselling and clinical psychologists in South Africa to describe their practice patterns. The authors found that services were rendered to more adult than child clients; the majority of people were unable to access services due to language, culture, and costs of services; and that the professionals worked in private practice than community work settings. Pillay and Petersen (1996) overall found that there is a great deal of overlap between the categories in terms of the practice patterns as well as the psychological problems they dealt with, implying a lack of distinction between the two. The following is an exploration of the scope of practice debate in South Africa.

#### **2.4.2 The Present: the scope of practice debate**

The year 2011 marked the promulgation of new psychology scopes of practice for South Africa. The new scopes of practice strongly emphasised that each category must operate within the boundaries of its scope of practice (Department of Health, 1974, 2011). According to the new scopes of practice, clinical psychologists are permitted to use psychotherapeutic interventions to

treat psychological and psychiatric conditions. Counselling psychologists may counsel people with developmental and adjustment problems. Educational psychologists are allowed to perform therapeutic interventions related to learning and development. Research psychologists may develop tests and interventions, but may not use or administer them (Department of Health, 2011; Medical Chronicle, 2011; Laher, 2016). The new regulations have been interpreted as being restrictive on counselling psychology and permissive for clinical psychology: counselling and clinical psychology are overlapping in practice (Pillay & Petersen, 1996) and as evidenced in training programs and models, literature and institutional documents (Leach et al., 2003). The overly restrictive interpretation of the regulations by medical aid schemes has resulted in the rejection of many of the claims made by counselling and educational psychologists that were allowed in the past, which has affected their livelihoods (Medical Brief, 2016; Medical Chronicle, 2011; Potgieter, 2011; Smith, n.d.).

Ellis (2016) reported that the promulgation of the new scope of practice was met with fierce frustration, resistance and severe criticism. Furthermore, the ongoing scope of practice debate has taken central focus and the power struggles have divided the profession (Bantjes et al., 2016) as contradictory and opposing viewpoints have emerged from psychologists in all categories. For example, Pretorius (2012) argued that the new scope of practice was developed to enable psychologists to make their profession more relevant to the South African society and that while the power and hierarchy struggles are going on, the needs of people might unfortunately not be addressed. Pretorius' plea is justified in so much as it calls for psychology to remain focused on helping, advocating that all categories are recognised and esteemed with equal professional status as well as urging psychologists to utilise all their skills such as group work, programme development, prevention, community intervention models etc. instead of operating mainly from a one-on-one basis (Bantjes et al., 2016; Pretorius, 2012). However, other professionals in psychology assert that the new scope of practice has failed to realise this ideal, because its current inappropriate interpretation does limit counselling psychology and other categories (Bantjes et al., 2016; Young, 2013; Laher, 2016).

The debate and resistance to the new scope of practice escalated to legal action being taken against the Minister of Health, the HPCSA, the Professional Board of Psychology and the Board of Healthcare Funders of SA by the Recognition of Prior Learning Action Group, the Rural Health

Advocacy Project and the Justice Alliance of SA (Child, 2016; Educational Psychology Association of South Africa, 2016; Nombembe, 2016). After a three year wait for the case to be heard at the Cape Town High Court (Nombembe, 2016), a settlement was reached on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November 2016 (Educational Psychology Association of South Africa, 2016). The court order was made on very technical grounds: the regulations were declared invalid because the Minister of Health was unable to show that he had consulted the various submissions made in response to the call for comment; therefore, the process has to be repeated (Ellis, 2016). What it all means is that the Minister of Health and the relevant organisations have 24 months to review and follow proper procedure regarding the new regulations; however, the downside is that the judgment is unfortunately in no way an evaluation of the actual wording of the scopes. This thesis, which explores the practice of counselling psychology in South Africa, is therefore timely.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

Having explored and considered the history of counselling psychology from its origins in the United States as well as its fundamentals in terms of values and philosophical orientation, it is quite interesting to see how the discipline has emerged and continues to unfold. The above depicts how counselling psychology was initially such a distinctive category, established in its humanistic philosophical orientation, exceptional historical values, and located in a variety of settings. However, over time, the distinctiveness of the category has been lost in some aspects. This is most evident in counselling psychology's complicated affiliation with clinical psychology. Super (1955) hypothesised that perhaps all the categories will merge to form one consulting psychology that caters to all people in their various situations and issues. On the other hand, Super also wondered if maybe each category will eventually have definite differences that will be clearly apparent and respected by all the psychology professionals and the society at large. What has transpired is that, although counselling and clinical psychology have not merged, there is an overlap between the two categories in terms of the populations they work with, settings, academic training and associations they are part of (Pillay & Petersen, 1996; Fuertes et al., 2013).

While the above-mentioned studies offer important insights into the practice and values of counselling psychology, the practice of counselling psychology is not static and the last local survey was published two decades ago. Furthermore, counselling psychology in South Africa has

a significant challenge with regards to its professional identity (Young, 2013). Although the current scopes are arguably poorly aligned with the professional identity of some of the categories, specifically counselling and educational psychology, it remains that the judgement and suspension is based on the processes followed and not necessarily on the way in which the Board for Psychology has attempted to demarcate the categories. This current study is important because it comes at a pivotal time in the history of psychology in South Africa. This research will help shed insight into whether counselling psychologists in South Africa endorse the values and scope of practice of their profession and whether they are satisfied with their careers. At the time of writing, there is much anticipation about what the Minister will announce in the time frame provided by the court, and whether the new regulations will meet the needs of the population, protect the public and enable psychologists to provide the best psychological services (Health Professions Council of South Africa, 2013; Pretorius, 2012).

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the research objectives and questions that the study attempted to answer. This is followed by an explanation of the research design and methods used to answer the research questions, including a description of the measure, details of the statistical analysis and the various ethical considerations.

### **3.2 Research objectives and questions**

This study followed Young's (2013) call to investigate what distinguishes counselling psychology as a distinctive area of practice and research in South Africa. Therefore, the study aimed to describe the demographics, areas of practice, career satisfaction and values of counselling psychologists in South Africa. Specifically, the research questions that this study aimed to answer are as follows:

- 3.2.1 To what extent do South African counselling psychologists endorse the traditional values of counselling psychology?
- 3.2.2 To what extent do they endorse the new scope of practice?
- 3.2.3 To what extent are counselling psychologists satisfied with their choice of career?
- 3.2.4 To what extent do gender, race, experience and the endorsement of the values and the scope of practice predict career satisfaction?

### **3.3 Research design and methodology**

This project was an analysis of the data collected for the South African component of the global survey of counselling psychology (Goodyear et al., 2016). While the global study analysed the pooled global data, this study provided an analysis of the South African data, which has yet to have been fully described, separately analysed or independently published. Therefore, this study was a quantitative analysis of the survey data of counselling psychology in South Africa which was already collected as part of the Goodyear et al. (2016) study. While the survey is extensive, this study focused only on the items related to satisfaction, values and the scope of practice.

A survey was deemed an appropriate method for this study because of its strengths, which include the collection of large amounts of data from the counselling psychology population which in itself is too large to observe directly. A survey is also flexible because information can be obtained about a variety of different variables such as demographics, personal characteristics, opinions, references, experiences, attitudes and behaviours as was the case in this study (Gravetter & Forzano, 2008). Furthermore, a survey was cheaper, efficient and user-friendly for the participants (Babbie, 2008).

### **3.4 Units of analysis and sampling procedure**

The intention was to reach as many South African counselling psychologists as possible; however, there was difficulty in gaining access to all registered counselling psychologists because at the time of the data collection, a complete list of South African counselling psychologists was not available. As a solution, the non-probability snowballing sampling procedure was used. Initially, a list was compiled of the contact details of as many HPCSA registered counselling psychologists known to the principle researcher, including those in training and interns. A link to the web-based questionnaire, which was hosted on surveymonkey.com, with a cover letter explaining the research and its purpose were emailed to colleagues in counselling psychology, including training and intern counselling psychologists, inviting them to take part in the study by completing the survey. These counselling psychologists served as participants and also as informants because they were asked to forward the email to other professionals in counselling psychology through various informal networks (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

The data was collected from mid-June to the end of October 2014. The completion of the survey was stressed as voluntary and not expected to take more than 25 minutes or so. The final item of the survey asked participants to indicate whether they would like to receive a report of the main findings by providing an email address. The participants were assured that the email addresses will be extracted from the datasheet before analysis and stored separately. No attempts were made to identify participants. Participants were also asked to complete the survey only once (the survey settings prevented more than one response from any single device). Lastly, participants gave consent by clicking the button to start the survey. In total, 228 qualified and registered counselling psychologists completed the survey.

### **3.5 Research instrument**

As mentioned above, this study was the local component of the global project led by Goodyear and colleagues that aimed to describe counselling psychology around the world. All countries involved in the global project were required to use a common set of questions in their surveys as this would allow for comparisons, but also adapted and elaborated when necessary to accommodate particular country characteristics. The common set of questions across all the surveys focused on the personal characteristics (gender, age, level and type of training), work settings, professional roles and activities, endorsed values, level of satisfaction with the category and the theoretical orientations of the participants. Once permission was granted by Goodyear and colleagues (see Goodyear et al., 2016) to use their instrument for the study, the questionnaire was modified for the South African context.

#### **3.5.1 Developmental history of the survey questionnaire**

Goodyear et al. (2016) report that the survey questionnaire of the global project originated from a survey developed for clinical psychologists by Kelly (1961). The original was further developed by Garfield and Kurtz (1974) when they did a survey study of clinical psychologists' characteristics, activities and orientations. Norcross and his colleagues also utilised the questionnaire for studies on clinical psychologists (see Norcross & Karpiak, 2012; Norcross & Prochaska, 1982). The survey questionnaire was adapted for counselling psychology. These include Watkins et al. (1986) which focused on the work, beliefs, and attitudes of counselling psychologists in the United States. In addition, Goodyear et al. (2008) and Lichtenberg, Goodyear, Overland and Hutman (2014) examined stability and change in counselling psychologists' identities, roles, functions and career satisfaction. Goodyear et al. (2016) argues that the replication of the survey in the counselling psychology category has made it possible to explore the changes taking place as well as increased collaborations with other countries.

#### **3.5.2 Content of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire for this study was divided into the following five sections: background information, theoretical orientation, professional activities, training and career experiences, and critical incidents. There were 52 items in the questionnaire (see Appendix A). To make the study

more relevant to the South African context, the adaptations made included using relevant terms with regards to race and professional registration categories. There were also questions about the scope of practice that were added. The survey primarily used Likert and open-ended questions. For the purposes of this study, only the demographic items and those related to values, the scope of practice and career satisfaction were used.

### **3.5.3 Validity and reliability of the questionnaire**

The matters of validity and reliability were an integral part of this research project. Cohen et al. (2007) regards reliability to stem from whether a study is dependable, consistent and able to be replicated over time, over instruments and over groups of participants. This description is fitting for this study because of the following reasons. The developmental history of the research instrument documented above highlights that the questionnaire had been refined over time. In particular, the questionnaire, as previously used in Goodyear et al. (2016), was modified for the South African context. Furthermore, the questionnaire retained the main components of personal characteristics (gender, age, level and type of training), work settings, professional roles and activities, endorsed values, level of satisfaction with the category and the theoretical orientations that were present in previous studies. With regards to validity, this study demonstrated content validity because the questionnaire had items that reflected the current practices of counselling psychology and which were relevant to the research questions of this study (Cohen et al., 2007).

### **3.6 Data analysis**

The data analysis for this study included descriptive statistics to summarise the endorsement of values, scope of practice and career satisfaction overall and by gender, race and experience.

Then standard multiple regression (weighted least-squares regression) was used to address two questions: a) what is the size of the overall relationship between satisfaction scores and the various demographic variables, endorsement of values and endorsement of the scope of practice? b) How much does each independent variable uniquely contribute to that relationship?

Following this, a standard logistic regression analysis was conducted to predict whether counselling psychologists would choose counselling psychology again knowing what they know

now using endorsement of counselling psychology values, endorsement of the scope of practice, black racial identification, female gender, and experience as predictors.

### **3.7 Limitations of my research**

The main limitation was that the data had not been collected from a probabilistic sample. At the time, there was no way of obtaining a complete list of counselling psychologists' email addresses. It is also therefore possible that the sample was biased towards those who had particular concerns about the status of counselling psychology in South Africa, a limitation that is acknowledged.

### **3.8 Ethical considerations**

The ethical issues of voluntary participation, no harm to participants, informed consent, deception, anonymity and confidentiality as outlined by Babbie (2008) were treated with the utmost regard in this study as these are the cornerstones of all social research. The original project already had been given ethical clearance by the Department of Psychology's Research Proposal and Ethics Review Committee. The first page of the survey was a cover letter which provided information about the purpose of the study and other relevant information (see Appendix B). Participants were also encouraged to voluntarily participate in the study and to indicate consent by clicking on the link to the rest of the survey. This is conventional for online surveys. In terms of potential harm to participants, the risk of harm was minimal. There was always a slight possibility that participants might be embarrassed by questions that are asked of them, but this was expected to be both minimal and temporary. All participants were trained psychologists and skilled in self-care. The anonymity of the data was appropriately addressed by removing all identifying material from the dataset and only aggregated data will be published. Lastly, there is a perception that counselling psychology is largely neglected as a research topic and as an interest group. This sort of research is expected to benefit counselling psychology as a category by raising its profile and providing the necessary evidence for the purpose of the ongoing debates.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

This chapter outlines the methods that were employed to explore the extent to which South African counselling psychologists endorse the traditional values of counselling psychology and the current

scope of practice, and explores counselling psychologists' career satisfaction, and the extent to which endorsement of values and the scope of practice predicts career satisfaction. The following chapter is a summary of the results of the study.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the survey results of this study which explored South African counselling psychologists' endorsement of the values and scope of practice of their category as well as their career satisfaction, and the extent to which the endorsement of values and the scope of practice predicts career satisfaction.

### 4.2 Demographics

For the purposes of this study, the demographic information of interest include gender, race and years of experience.

#### 4.2.1 Gender

As shown below in Table 1, females make up the majority of the participants at 80.70% while the male counselling psychologists were at 17.98%. There were 3 participants that did not specify their gender.

Table 1. Gender of counselling psychologists

	N	%
Female	184	80.70
Male	41	17.98
Transgender	0	0
Not Specified	3	1.32
Total	228	100.00

#### 4.2.2 Race

The variable of race remains important in South Africa as it shapes social experience and remains an indicator of life opportunities. However, the researcher rejects the racist assumptions on which these categories were originally based. For the purposes of analysis, the black category includes the African, coloured and Indian participants. Table 2 shows that the black participants made up

only 15.4% of this counselling psychologists sample, while the majority were the white participants at 84.6%.

Table 2. Race of counselling psychologists

	N	%
Black	35	15.4
White	193	84.6
Total	228	100.0

#### 4.2.3 Years of experience

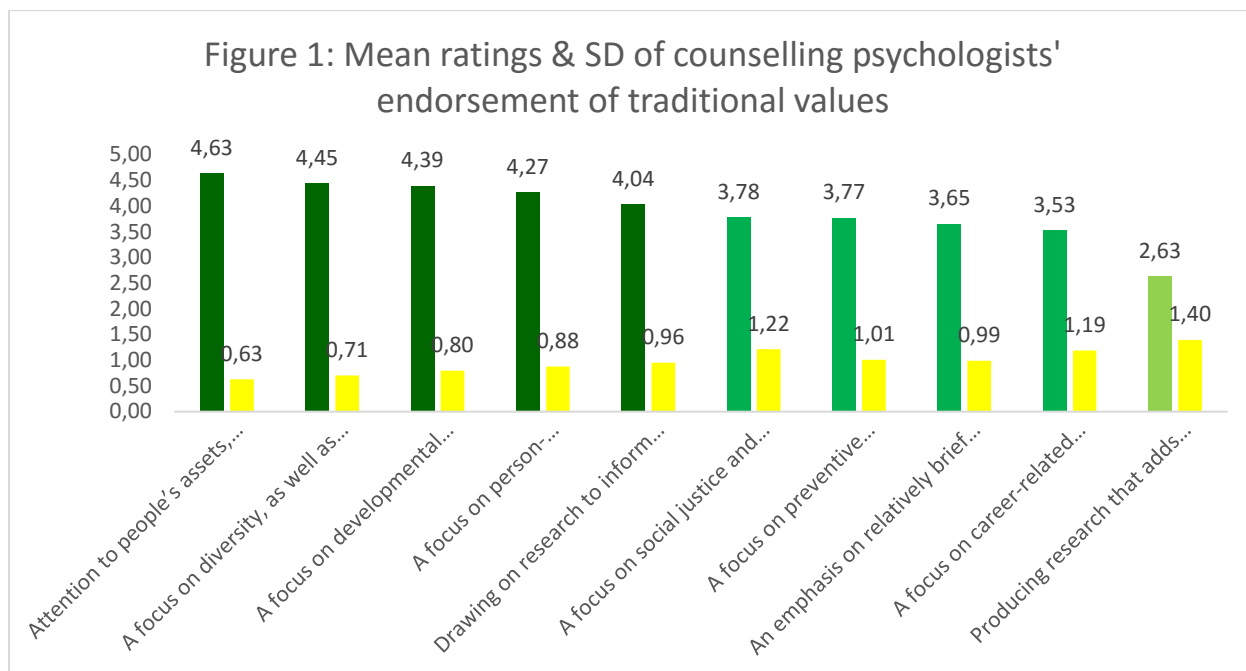
Data in Table 3 indicates that the majority of the participants possess more than ten years of experience as registered counselling psychologists. There were 44.3% participants who reported having less than ten years of experience in the profession. There were 2 participants whose years of experience were not reported.

Table 3. Counselling psychologists' years of experience (by registration date)

	N	%
<10 Years	101	44.3
>10 Years	125	54.8
Total	226	99.1
Missing	2	.9
Total	228	100.0

#### 4.3 Endorsement of counselling psychology values

Figure 1 below is a graph of the mean ratings and standard deviations of counselling psychologists' endorsement of the traditional values of their category. The ratings below are grouped into three clusters from most endorsed to least endorsed values. The first cluster containing the most endorsed values includes attention to people's assets, strengths and resources; a focus on diversity; a focus on developmental issues; a focus on person-environment interactions; and drawing on research to inform practice. The second cluster formed the moderately endorsed values of focusing on social justice; a focus on preventative interventions; an emphasis on relatively brief interventions; and a focus on career-related issues. The third cluster contained the least endorsed value of producing research that adds to knowledge of counselling psychology related topics.



#### 4.4 Awareness and level of agreement with revised scope of practice

Table 4 indicates that the majority of the participants are aware of the revised scope of practice. There were seven participants who reported that they were not aware of the revised scope of practice; while 18.42% (n=42) of the participants did not specify their status of awareness.

Table 4. Counselling psychologists' awareness of revised scope of practice

	N	%
Yes	179	78.5
No	7	3.1
Total	186	81.6
Missing	42	18.4
Total	228	100.0

Table 5 below shows data on counselling psychologists' level of agreement with the new scope of practice. The participants were requested to rate on a 5 point scale, wherein 1 = 'Not at all' and 5 = 'Very much so', their level of agreement with statements about the new scope of practice. Overall, endorsement of the scope of practice regulations is very low.

Table 5. Mean ratings of counselling psychologists' level of agreement with scope of practice

	M	SD
Congruent with my current practice as a counselling psychologist	2.15	1.07
Coherent definition of counselling psychology	1.92	1.00
Aligned with my training as a counselling psychologist	1.84	.99
Satisfied with the new scope of practice	1.82	.96
Advance the interests of counselling psychology in South Africa	1.58	.83

#### 4.5 Level of career satisfaction

Table 6 below shows the mean ratings of counselling psychologists' level of satisfaction with aspects of their careers. The participants were asked to rate their satisfaction on a 6 point scale wherein 1 = 'Very dissatisfied' and 6 = 'Very satisfied'. Overall, the participants report being most satisfied with their choice of counselling psychology as a career. However, when participants were asked what career they would choose if they could start over again knowing what they know now, only 41% indicated that they would choose the same category again; 8% indicated that they would choose a career in medicine or psychiatry; while 45% said that they would choose clinical psychology.

Table 6. Mean ratings of counselling psychologists' level of satisfaction

	M	SD
Choice of counselling psychology as a career	4.99	1.27
Postgraduate training in counselling psychology	4.81	1.16
Training internship	4.66	1.28
Postgraduate training for professional practice	4.56	1.26
Postgraduate training for research	4.34	1.21

#### 4.6 Comparison of endorsement of counselling psychology values, scope of practice and career satisfaction

Table 7. Comparison of endorsement of counselling psychology values, scope of practice and career satisfaction

	All	Female	Male	Black	White	Greater than 10 years experience	10 years experience or less
Values	n	148	37	23	165	100	86
	Mean	38.82	39.30	40.96	38.62	39.38	38.26
	SD	6.01	6.54	8.36	5.65	6.70	5.22
Scope	n	140	37	23	157	95	84
	Mean	9.36	9.24	8.61	9.37	8.72	9.83
	SD	3.98	5.25	3.51	4.35	4.08	4.08
Satisfaction	n	148	37	23	165	100	86
	Mean	23.39	22.78	25.52	23.02	22.61	24.05
	SD	4.34	4.53	2.63	23.02	4.74	3.76

Standard multiple regression (weighted least-squares regression) was used to address a couple of questions: a) what is the size of the overall relationship between satisfaction scores and the various demographic variables, endorsement of values and endorsement of the scope of practice? b) How much does each independent variable uniquely contribute to that relationship?

In standard multiple regression all predictor variables are entered into the regression equation at once. A significant regression equation was found ( $F(5,170) = 9.1015, p < .0001$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .2112, indicating that approximately 21% of the variance of the satisfaction scores can be accounted for by the linear combination of endorsement of values, endorsement of scope of practice, race, sex and experience. Four of the five variables added statistically significantly to the prediction,  $p < 0.05$ . The analysis shows that endorsement of counselling psychology values ( $b = .1192, p = .001$ ), endorsement of the scope of practice ( $b = .1828, p < .001$ ), black racial identification ( $b = 2.1531, p < .003$ ), and experience ( $b = -0.1035, p < .01$ ) significantly predict

career satisfaction scores. The exception was female gender, which did not predict career satisfaction ( $p = .67$ ).

The partial correlation coefficient  $r_{\text{partial}}$  is the coefficient of correlation of the variable with the dependent variable, adjusted for the effect of the other variables in the model. Of the four statistically significant predictor variables, endorsement of the scope of practice most strongly predicts satisfaction scores ( $r_{\text{partial}} = .2522$ ), followed closely by black racial identification ( $r_{\text{partial}} = .2299$ ) and years of experience ( $r_{\text{partial}} = -.2290$ ), and then endorsement of counselling psychology values ( $r_{\text{partial}} = .1934$ ).

A standard logistic regression analysis was conducted to predict whether counselling psychologists would choose counselling psychology again knowing what they know now using endorsement of counselling psychology values, endorsement of the scope of practice, black racial identification, female gender, and experience as predictors. A test of the full model against a constant only model was statistically significant, indicating that the predictors as a set reliably distinguished between those who would and those who would not repeat their career choice (chi square = 21.013,  $p < 0.001$  with  $df = 5$ ). Nagelkerke's  $R^2$  of .163 indicated a weak relationship between prediction and grouping. Prediction success overall was 64.4%. The finding was 53% for not repeating counselling psychology and 41.2% for repeating counselling psychology. The Wald criterion demonstrated that only endorsement of counselling psychology values ( $p = .025$ ) and endorsement of the scope practice ( $p < .005$ ) made a significant contribution to prediction.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

While counselling psychologists endorse most of the traditional values of counselling psychology and are generally satisfied with their careers, they do not endorse the 2011 scopes of practice regulations. Endorsement of the scopes of practice most strongly predicts career satisfaction. A reasonable conclusion to the finding that while satisfied with their careers, more would choose clinical over counselling psychology if they could make their career decision knowing what they know now, is that the perceptions of scope of practice detracts from people's view of the viability and future of the category. What follows in the next chapter is a discussion of the above results.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the survey results of this study which were presented in the previous results chapter. For the purpose of coherence, the structure of the results chapter was retained. Therefore, the discussion takes the following order: demographics (gender, race and years of experience); endorsement of counselling psychology values; awareness of revised scope of practice; level of career satisfaction; and concludes with a comparison of the endorsement of counselling psychology values, scope of practice and career satisfaction. Notably, the discussion will take into consideration the literature review by evaluating this study's results in relation to the findings of previous related studies.

### 5.2 Demographics

The demographics of interest in this study were gender, race and years of experience.

#### 5.2.1 Gender

This study found that by far most counselling psychologists in South Africa are women. This is not a new finding for counselling psychology in South Africa. In their study of women psychologists in South Africa, Richter and Griesel (1999) found counselling psychology to have the most extreme gender disproportion with 80% women counselling psychologists. However, counselling psychology internationally has undergone quite significant change, from being dominated by men to being dominated by women (Goodyear et al., 2008; Goodyear et al., 2016). Furthermore, it is predicted that the increase will strengthen over generations to come; the impact on the category remains to be seen (Hutman, Lichtenberg, Goodyear, Overland, & Tracey, 2016).

This finding of the rise of women counselling psychologists in South Africa is not unique to only counselling psychology. Richter and Griesel (1999) found that the increase of women psychologists also occurred in the other psychology categories. They found that clinical psychology in South Africa experienced a statistical gender change as women become the majority. A recent study of clinical psychologists in South Africa also made the same finding about

women clinical psychologists being the majority (Deane, 2016). Furthermore, Richter and Griesel (1999) found that, compared to counselling and clinical psychology, research psychology had a lower percentage of women though women were still the majority. The category of industrial psychology was the only one found to still be predominately male (65 percent as compared with 35 percent women). Though whether Richter and Griesel's findings remain as they were is not known. According to Richter and Griesel (1999), in South Africa, the increase in the number of women is not because men are leaving the psychology profession; rather, they claim that especially around the 1980s, the profession experienced a great increase in the number of psychologists in general and most of those psychologists were women. The rate at which women joined psychology was just much higher in the recent years (Skinner & Louw, 2009).

This phenomenal increase of women joining the profession of psychology is known as the "feminization of psychology", a term first used by Howard (1987, as cited in Ostertag & McNamara, 1991). The feminization of psychology has been met with some controversy. Florence Denmark, a former APA president who advocated for women to have opportunities, expressed concern that a previously male-dominated profession may be awarded a lower prestige when women enter that profession in large numbers because most cultures devalue female-typed occupations (Denmark, personal communication, 1979, as cited in Rosenzweig, 1994). In South Africa, Richter and Griesel (1999) found that in addition to lower prestige, the feminization of psychology resulted in lower salaries and a move towards privatized, home-based and part-time professional activities. Ostertag and McNamara (1991) strongly disagreed with the influx of women being the reason for these changes in psychology; they questioned why there was no outcry when psychology was previously male-dominated.

In contrast, Rosenzweig (1994) argues that the profession of psychology is not devalued as a result of the feminization of psychology. Rather, according to this view, psychology has experienced lower prestige and salaries because it became less competitive and less attractive in comparison to other professions such as medicine, business and engineering. Similarly, the Task Force on the Changing Gender Composition of Psychology created in 1991 by the Board of Directors of the APA found no evidence for the increase of women in psychology being the reason for the lower status of psychology (Pion et al., 1996). Rather, such changes in the profession were attributed to some extent to changes in the marketplace, perceptions of psychology by the public and

policymakers. According to the Task Force, the feminization of psychology is a positive phenomenon.

Whatever the reason for any apparent decline in the status of the profession, the feminization of psychology has also had positive effects. Richter and Griesel (1999) reported that in South Africa, the feminization of psychology has yielded diversity in research topics and subjects as women psychologists do more research on women issues and issues affecting children more than male psychologists.

### 5.2.2 Race

With regards to race, this study found that the white participants were the large majority, despite efforts to transform the profession. The finding of this study also concurs with Richter and Griesel's (1999) claim that even though the number of black psychologists has increased, the profession of psychology in South Africa in general remains predominately white. In their study of the current practice patterns of counselling and clinical psychologists in South Africa, Pillay and Petersen (1996) found that white English and Afrikaans speaking psychologists were the majority and that the professionals worked in private practice than community work settings. The implication being that the majority of black South African people are unable to access services due to language, culture and costs of services. The above leads to this question, why has counselling psychology not attracted more black practitioners in the last 30 years?

A similar and recent study of clinical psychology found that the proportion of black clinical psychologists, while still a minority, is twice as large as for counselling psychology at a little more than 30% (Deane, 2016). One must note that historical inequalities have and continue to disadvantage black South Africans. The disproportionately lower number of black psychology graduates eligible for admission to professional programmes may be a factor of the financial constraints that black students encounter when pursuing further training to become psychologists (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004; Pillay & Kramers, 2003), and possibly also psychology is seen by many as a western profession alien to people's lived experiences (Pillay & Kramers, 2003). With an already unrepresentative and disproportionately smaller pool of black graduates, the rate of change for counselling psychology is slower than that of clinical psychology, which has the advantage of being better known and with possibly clearer or more secure career opportunities. Clinical

psychology has state bursaries such as the one with the department of health (“Department of Health Bursaries,” 2018). It also offers more financial security and an easier integration of the practitioners into the state mental health care system through the compulsory internship and community service years (HPCSA, 2017). Counselling psychology, in contrast, has no requirement for a community service year, minimal state bursaries, few state internship opportunities and lower financial compensation especially in internship programmes completed at counselling centres.

Whatever the reason for the continued numerical dominance of white psychologists, much more needs to be done to transform the profession so that it is better representative of the racial groups of the country in order to remain a viable and relevant profession. Pillay and Petersen (1996) stressed that it is crucial for South African psychology to produce more black psychologists and find ways to make psychological services more accessible to the black communities because failure to do so may render psychology irrelevant in South Africa.

### **5.2.3 Years of experience**

Interestingly, the proportions are more or less evenly split between those with more and those with less than ten years of experience. This suggests that whatever the challenges, counselling psychology is obviously a viable profession in that people remain and invest in the category of the broader field for significant periods of their working lives.

## **5.3 Endorsement of counselling psychology values**

One of the aims of this study was to answer this question: to what extent do South African counselling psychologists endorse the traditional values of counselling psychology? In response to this research question, the findings of this study are that counselling psychologists in South Africa have a high regard for all the traditional values of their category; therefore, counselling psychology can be defined by its commitment to particular values. Counselling psychology is regarded as the expression of its values, thus in essence, the values are what counselling psychologists do (Cooper, 2009).

The most endorsed value was paying attention to people’s assets, strengths and resources regardless of the degree of disturbance, which is arguably the defining value of counselling

psychology. Throughout the literature, this value is regarded as one of the cornerstones of counselling psychology (Super, 1955). It is said to form the basis for what defines counselling psychology (Young, 2013) and to also establish counselling psychology as a distinct category (Packard, 2009). However, the value is often misunderstood: a concern with people's strengths is not the scope of practice. Bedi and Domene (2008, as cited in Bedi et al., 2011) argue that "focusing on strengths does not imply a particular scope of practice; rather, it represents an instance where the field's philosophical orientation infuses multiple areas of its practice" (p. 131). Overall, this remains an especially important value for South African counselling psychologists to endorse given the country's political history, specifically its under-development and scarce and inequitable distribution of resources; it is crucial to help people recognise and utilise their strengths and resources. The high regard for this value is not unique to South Africa; the promoting of individuals' strengths was also rated the highest value by counselling psychologists across countries in the global study by Goodyear et al. (2016).

The second most endorsed and equally important value for South African counselling psychologists was a focus on diversity. This is a worthy value for a multicultural, multiracial and multilingual country like South Africa. However, based on this study's finding of such an unequal racial composition, counselling psychology can hardly claim to be diverse where it most matters. It seems a commitment to diversity does not rely on a diverse category or that a commitment to diversity does not necessarily carry over to the actual demographics of the profession. Therefore, there is a need for counselling psychologists to be accessible in all spheres of society and be able to reach clients from all areas. The emphasis on diversity accords with the call for psychologists to learn the indigenous languages and cultures of the black majority as well as work in community settings (Pillay & Petersen, 1996). In addition, counselling psychologists would be in a better place to work with the diverse people of South Africa if they were afforded more opportunities in the public health care system (Bantjes et al., 2016).

In the global study of counselling psychologists, Goodyear et al. (2016) also found that a focus on diversity to be the second most endorsed value. However, Taylor, Kolaski, Wright, Hashtpari and Neimeyer (2018) report an interesting finding with regards to the value of focusing on diversity. They conducted a study in the USA with the current training directors from all 69 APA accredited counselling psychology training programs. It is predicted that, in the next ten years, the focus on

diversity will be held as the most essential core value of counselling psychology. The second most essential value is predicted to be a commitment to social justice and activism. Counselling psychologists are said to increasingly prioritise these two values in response to the events taking place in society.

Other values are endorsed less strongly, but still sufficiently to indicate their relevance to counselling psychology. What is perhaps surprising, given the roots of the category, is that amongst the least endorsed is a focus on career-related issues. This finding is indicative of a shift from career counselling, what was previously known as assessment and vocational work, which is another cornerstone of counselling psychology (Super, 1955). Watkins et al. (1986) attributed the decrease in career counselling to graduates preferring remedial work because vocational assessment and vocational counselling were not reimbursable through third-party payments. The emphasis on remediation at the expense of vocational work is unfortunate because career counselling can help individuals navigate through school, higher education institutions, work and society (Naicker, 1994), and thus alleviate issues such as unemployment and poverty that are so prevalent in South Africa. Goodyear et al. (2016) also found that, on a global scale, only a few counselling psychologists reported an emphasis on career counselling work across the countries; however, it is perhaps comforting to know that South Africa along with South Korea and Taiwan had the highest proportions of counselling psychologists engaged in career counselling. Furthermore, Lichtenberg, Hutman and Goodyear (2018) argue that even though counselling psychologists report doing minimal career psychology work, it is likely that it remains an inherent part of their psychotherapy work because career issues are still regarded as a significant aspect of people's development and well-being. When predicting the future of counselling psychology, vocational and career counselling is rated number nine amongst the values that will make the core of the category (Taylor et al., 2018).

The least endorsed value was that of producing research that adds to the knowledge of counselling psychology related topics. This finding raises some concern since the counselling psychologists rated the value of drawing on research to inform practice in their top five values; yet it seems they do not prioritise doing research to enhance their category. It is also concerning that counselling psychologists across countries around the world also regard doing research as their lowest value (Goodyear et al., 2016). One reason for the status challenge that counselling psychology faces is,

arguably, that there has not been enough to demonstrate the category's actual and potential contribution to practice. Also, the finding is at odds with the prediction that research and program evaluation skills made the top five (at number four) of the future core values of counselling psychology (Taylor et al., 2018). Furthermore, a significant prediction for the future is that research and training, as a domain, will increase with the commitment to evidence-based practice gaining the most attention.

#### **5.4 Endorsement of the scope of practice for counselling psychology**

This study aimed to answer the question: to what extent do South African counselling psychologists endorse the new scope of practice? This study found that the large majority reported that they were aware of the regulations. This high rate of awareness may be because of the controversy that the regulations have caused.

Significantly, most counselling psychologists are dissatisfied with the scope of practice regulations and do not think it will advance the interests of counselling psychology in South Africa. The scope of practice is also experienced as failing to provide a coherent definition of the category and is said to not align with training and current practice. In a study of how counselling psychology is defined and practiced globally, Young (2013) found that counselling psychology involves three overlapping domains of practice across the lifespan, namely development, prevention and remediation. The counselling psychology scope of practice, as far as the document can be interpreted, seems to promote a focus on developmental interventions, with limited space to conduct remedial work and no mention of the important area of preventative work (Department of Health, 2011). This is perhaps at odds with what counselling psychologists are currently doing and at odds with what counselling psychologists should be doing. As Young asserts, it will be a disservice to the nation if counselling psychologists in South Africa continue to emphasise remedial work at the expense of their developmental and preventative efforts.

The dissatisfaction with the scopes has divided the profession. While some professionals express support for the revised scope of practice, arguing that it will make the profession more relevant to the South African society (Pretorius, 2012); others believe that the current inappropriate interpretation of the new scope of practice limits counselling psychology and the other disciplines (Bantjes et al., 2016; Young, 2013; Laher, 2016). While much of the debate is framed as the

differences in opinion, this study shows that registered counselling psychologists are almost unanimous in their disapproval of the 2011 scope of practice regulations.

### **5.5 Level of career satisfaction**

The findings of the study are counselling psychologists are generally highly satisfied with their choice of counselling psychology as a career. However, despite this, slightly more would choose clinical psychology rather than their current category, if they could go back in time knowing what they know now. While this finding may appear to be contradictory, it can be understood as the mixed view resulting from a combination of a rewarding career with concerns about the viability or future of the category. Clinical psychology offers many of the satisfying aspects of counselling psychology without the very restrictive scope of practice. However, clinical psychology would probably be a less satisfying expression of the values of counselling psychology.

It is important not to lose sight of the fact that while a minority, it is still a significant proportion (41%) of counselling psychologists who would choose the same again. Training programmes might benefit the profession and the country by ensuring that those who are selected are likely to be amongst this pro-counselling psychology proportion so that it increases with time. Additionally, it is important that both clinical and counselling psychology are accorded equal status with scopes of practice that are appropriately aligned with their training to enable both to make their full contributions. While clinical psychology plays a very important role in meeting the mental health needs of the country, a degradation of counselling psychology would risk forfeiting any unique contribution that the category can make towards the developmental and mental health needs of the country.

### **5.6 Comparison of endorsement of counselling psychology values, scope of practice and career satisfaction**

The final research question of this study was: to what extent do gender, race, experience and the endorsement of the values and the scope of practice predict career satisfaction? This study found that the endorsement of counselling psychology values, endorsement of the scope of practice, black racial identification and experience significantly predict career satisfaction. Significantly, this supports the interpretation above, which is that concerns about the scope of practice detract from

the satisfaction of counselling psychologists, or more specifically, detract from counselling psychologists' confidence that the category will continue to offer a satisfying career choice in the future. This finding is quite significant because it provides an understanding of why the promulgation of the revised scope of practice caused such an uproar. In order for the counselling psychologists in South Africa to be satisfied with their current and future careers, they require the scope of practice to better reflect the values of their category.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

In conclusion, based on the results of this study, the demographics of counselling psychology in South Africa indicate that women psychologists are the majority. While the feminisation of psychology may have positively shifted areas of research and practice, the category remains predominantly white. To widen accessibility and to broaden traditional areas of practice and research, it is critical that more should be done to ensure that the category is better representative of the country's racial, cultural and linguistic demographics. Indeed, as noted by others, if this does not change, the category will become redundant.

South African counselling psychologists operate on the basis of a rich international value-based tradition, even if the origins of counselling psychology in South Africa is tainted by association with apartheid. The endorsement of these values is well aligned with the constitutional imperative for social redress, human rights and social justice. More is needed to bring this value base from aspiration to reality in South Africa so that the category is able to make a unique and significant contribution to the developmental and mental health needs of the country.

That the views and experiences of the scope of practice detracts from the current or future career satisfaction of counselling psychologists is a concern. The order of the court that compels the HPCSA to revise the scopes of practice for all psychologists is a welcome opportunity to address the problems. A starting point would be for the HPCSA and Board for Psychology to revise the scope of practice so that it is better aligned with the values and practice of counselling psychology to ensure that the services that are provided by these highly-skilled practitioners are not wasted.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides closing statements of the study. It begins by summarising the findings, followed by an acknowledgement of the limitations as well as the strengths of the study. The recommendations for future studies are also provided.

### 6.2 Summary of findings

The demographics of counselling psychology are such that women are the majority. This feminization of the profession of psychology has been met with some negativity because some fear that it leads to a lower status for the profession; on the other hand, the increase of women as a proportion has shifted areas of research and practice towards greater inclusivity. However, while the gender distribution is very different to what it was, the same, unfortunately, cannot be said of the racial distribution of practitioners. Although the number of black psychologists has increased over the years, the numbers are still quite low in counselling psychology in comparison to clinical psychology and very low in comparison with the country's racial demographics. While there may be many challenges, blame for the lack of transformation of the category must go to the profession for not doing enough to welcome, support and promote candidates who are not well represented in the profession.

Counselling psychologists in South Africa have a high regard for all the traditional values of their category with the most endorsed value being paying attention to people's assets, strengths and resources regardless of the degree of disturbance. There is a need for more research across the discipline; hence, the importance of this current study.

Counselling psychologists are for the most part well aware of the 2011 scopes of practice; however, there is great dissatisfaction with the wording or the current interpretation of the regulations that seems to be too restrictive on the highly qualified practitioners. Hopefully, the forthcoming revisions to the regulations will address these problems.

Although the counselling psychologists report being very satisfied with their career choice, the majority expressed that they would not choose counselling psychology again, which would seem a paradoxical finding. However, the finding that the endorsement of the scopes of practice predicts satisfaction offers a way of understanding this finding. Counselling psychologists can be very satisfied with their career choice and their training, while also being concerned about the future satisfaction or viability of their careers. Therefore, the scope of practice should be written in such a way as to accurately reflect the values of their category in order for the counselling psychologists in South Africa to be satisfied with their careers now and in the future.

### **6.3 Limitations and strengths of the study**

The demographics of the sample reflects the South African counselling psychology population, but it is also possible that the sample was biased towards those who had particular concerns about the status of counselling psychology in South Africa, a limitation that is acknowledged. The sampling strategy detracts from the extent to which the findings can be confidently considered representative of the profession.

On the other hand, to my knowledge, this is the largest survey of counselling psychologists in South Africa. Counselling psychology practice in South Africa is a neglected research topic, and so this study and the adaptation of the questionnaire are important first steps towards important, needed research. This study's most important contribution is that it comes at a time when the category of counselling psychology and the entire psychology field in South Africa is in crisis. This study, in its investigation of the South African counselling psychologists' endorsement of the values and scope of practice and the subsequent impact on career satisfaction, adds invaluable knowledge during such a critical period. It is hoped that the findings will assist the regulators and other stakeholders to better understand the category and point to possible solutions to the troubles.

### **6.4 Recommendations for future studies**

The discussion of some of the findings is necessarily speculative. To elaborate on these interpretations, a qualitative study of the experiences of training and practice of counselling psychologists would provide very useful information. Further survey research will enable the tracking of changes, and it will certainly be important to determine whether career satisfaction is affected by the forthcoming changes to the regulations. It would similarly be useful to collect data

from other categories and to compare the demographics, practices, values, endorsement of the scopes of practice and career satisfaction of practitioners in these different categories. Finally, it would be useful to explore whether the values that are strongly endorsed by counselling psychologists actually shape their practice or remain largely aspirational. Certainly there is much more research that can add to the body of knowledge of counselling psychology and make it more relevant to the needs of the people.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

Counselling psychology is regarded as the expression of its values, thus in essence, the values are what counselling psychologists do (Cooper, 2009). Therefore, it is important that the scope of practice of counselling psychology be aligned with the values of counselling psychology, and that the category is better representative of the people of South Africa. Time will tell, if the result is that the category becomes better poised to make a meaningful contribution to the needs of the country.

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## **APPENDIX**

A. Online Questionnaire

B. Participant Information Letter (including informed consent document)

(Both are attached on the following pages)