

Career counseling

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Abstract

After completing primary school education, each of us is concerned with the question of what to do next, what direction to take, what job and related education to choose. Most often, these questions are addressed by adolescents before entering high school and university. Young generations are increasingly demanding in terms of the quality of education, employment, but above all the quality of their personal lives, and they much prefer their free time, where employment and financial resources are the means to fulfil this time and goals. Work (employment) is therefore not a priority for the youngest generations; rather, it is a means of self-realization. According to a Gallup poll in the US, 62% of adults of all ages would not choose the work they currently do if they could start over. (1997 NOICC/NCDA, Gallup Poll, USA). Choosing a profession is a crucial decision at the beginning of a professional career.

Keywords: Preference, Counselling, Professional Career

1 Work Assignment

To ensure maximum efficiency in employee performance at their posts, as efficiently as possible, it is necessary to consider psychological factors in addition to health and qualifications when assigning work. These include psychological insights from the fields of career counselling and work psychology which are valuable for effectively placing employees within organizations. The old principle of both disciplines—'the right person in the right place'—is well-known and still valid. Consider how often we find ourselves dissatisfied with the work of craftsmen, managers, politicians, or our children's teachers.

Optimal work assignment means finding a job for the employee that allows them to fully utilize their best abilities and qualities and, from the employer's side, allows all functional positions in the organization to be filled by employees who bring the greatest benefit to the company. This benefit lies in labour productivity, worker stability, and possibly even in their innovative activities for the organization. When properly assigned, an employee's abilities,

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qualifications, and motivations are fully utilized to the institution's advantage. If a person is inappropriately employed, they develop their creativity and spend most of their energy outside the work framework. It is known that a person's work and life satisfaction depend on the degree to which they can utilize their abilities, personality traits, needs, and interests in their job—therefore, realizing themselves. More and more people in this new millennium are looking for meaningful employment that provides more than just income to cover basic life needs. For example, according to a Gallup Institute survey in the USA, 62% of adults (of all age categories) would not choose the type of work they have if they could start over (1977 NOICC/NCDA, Gallup Poll, USA).

Career counselling currently has its broad scope, especially within educational counselling at primary and secondary schools, where it is handled by educational advisors. In pedagogical-psychological counselling centres, career counselling is conducted by psychologists. The prevailing form is individual work with students who are undecided or with students with altered work capacity. Psychological examinations are also part of the counselling activities provided by psychologists. Career counselling in the Czech Republic and Slovakia is also developing in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs sector. Each employment office has an information and counselling centre—a counselling unit, for which career counselling is a basic job description. Professional counselling is also provided by personnel agencies.

The legislative framework for career counselling in the Czech Republic is formed by Decree 72/2005 Coll. on providing counselling services in schools and (school) counselling facilities and the Council of the European Union decision of July 12, 2005, on the main directions of employment policies of member states (2005/600/EC). Counselling is also provided by employers, who are increasingly taking responsibility for the career development of their employees, as the average adult changes jobs several times during their career (in the USA, an average 20-year-old entering the world of work changes jobs 6-7 times; Carney Wells, 1987, p.3).

Counselling cannot be just a one-time help to a young person at the end of school but should continue throughout the entire working life. This is evidenced by research conducted on a sample of 181 adults who used the services of career counsellors during their university studies. Up to 78% of them were satisfied or very satisfied, and 85% said they followed the advice that concerned further education or a change of profession. (Healy, 2001, p. 364).

In one of the works devoted to career counselling, in the book *Applying Career Development Theory to Counselling*, the author emphasizes the importance of career counselling with fitting words: "The awareness that a few hours dedicated to counselling can change an individual's life is an exciting challenge for a career counsellor." And further: "There are several types of counselling, such as personality counselling, crisis counselling, and psychotherapy, but few counselling situations can have such far-reaching consequences as career counselling." (Sharf, 1992, p.1).

From an economic perspective, the cost of the work produced by an average worker employed for 40 years is over 21 million crowns at today's indicators. Such an investment is usually

decided upon by a commission of experts over several days. Career counsellors, therefore, have a great responsibility for the future of not only their clients but indirectly for the economy's efficiency because tomorrow's resources are in today's school classrooms. Particularly significant is the fact that the right to career counselling is enshrined in the European Social Charter. (Štefan Vendel, 2008, p. 15-18).

2 Analysis of the Work and Needs of Career Counsellors in Schools

The survey mapped five main areas related to the work of educational - career counsellors in primary and secondary schools. The aim was to create a typical profile of a current school counsellor and also to determine what conditions this counsellor has for providing counselling at school, what their typical job description is, how they, or the school, promote it, who their typical clients are, what topics they most often deal with, and what kind of support, which would improve, streamline, or facilitate their work, these counsellors would welcome.

Who is involved in career counselling in schools?

Each of the contacted schools has a person designated by the principal who directly deals with this issue – usually, it is a counsellor who is sometimes still referred to as educational, sometimes career, and sometimes educational-career. At the same time, teachers who are in daily contact with students and can also deal with topics related to career choice, and who also work on this issue within cross-curricular topics, are also involved in career counselling. In secondary schools, according to respondents, topics of educational and career path choices for students are also dealt with by, for example, special educators or school psychologists.

How do counsellors in schools perceive the role of schools, labour offices, and pedagogical-psychological counselling centres in the field of career counselling?

Counsellors in both primary and secondary schools see an irreplaceable role for the labour office in specific areas that directly fall under career counselling or are related to it. They also recognize the significant role of both primary and secondary schools. Generally, counsellors in primary schools place greater importance on the role of primary education, while counsellors in secondary schools emphasize the significance of secondary education. The role of pedagogical-psychological counselling centres is seen by counsellors from both levels of schools as crucial in the area of testing and diagnosing study potential. Additionally, counsellors at both levels of schools see their role in providing comprehensive individual career counselling. In the areas of career counselling directly related to the labour market and employment, however, respondents view the role of these counselling centres more as complementary (compared to the role of labour offices and schools).

3 Summary

Career counsellors in schools are most often women with pedagogical education, of middle age, with an average of 6 years of practice in educational and career choice counselling. They usually perform counselling alongside teaching and often hold additional roles within one employment contract. They do not have enough real-time space for counselling practice. Only 2/3 of counsellors are involved in preparing or implementing the cross-curricular topic of Man and the World of Work. In terms of offered counselling services, counsellors rate their school's information service for students as the best. However, the provision of career counselling information for the parents of these students is not always sufficient. The promotion of these counselling services outside the school (e.g., for future students) is minimal. The use of web portals differs between primary and secondary school counsellors. Primary school counsellors prefer portals that offer student testing, whereas secondary school counsellors favour those focused-on career choices and professions. Regarding collaboration with other entities in the education and labour sectors involved in career counselling, counsellors consider labour offices and Information Counselling Centres (IPS) to be key partners.

The topics discussed with clients are very similar in both primary and secondary schools, differing mainly in frequency: the level of school (primary vs. secondary) and the type of secondary education (general vs. vocational) determine how often a counsellor encounters certain topics in their practice. Respondents at both levels of schools would welcome support mainly in access to information on career counselling in the Czech Republic and tools they could use during counselling practice (including access to methodologies). In primary schools, access to legislation related to career counselling and the ability to share information with colleagues (through personal meetings) are also highly valued. In the area of education support, the choice of topic significantly influences the choice of form (face-to-face, distance, combined). Overall, respondents preferred e-learning courses and then face-to-face courses. There is a slight preference for basic-level e-learning courses and for interactive, advanced-level face-to-face training (Drahoňovská P., Eliášková I., 2011, p. 48).

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