

Evaluation of Career Counsellors' Competences in Career Guidance

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Abstract: The importance of career guidance and the role of career counsellor is described and highlighted in this article. The aim of the study is to evaluate the importance of career counsellor competencies in the field of career guidance in Latvia, to develop criteria for evaluating career counsellor competence in order to achieve this goal. The self-evaluation of career counsellors regarding their competences was used. In the study 337 respondents were taken from all Latvia regions, they were graduates of the last ten years of the Career Counsellors Master's Program and other in-service career counsellors and school career counsellors working in schools, employment agencies and private consulting companies. The data were analysed statistically by using SPSS computer program: 1) rank transformation, 2) crosstab method, 3) chi-squared test. The significance of the results and the most important conclusion: the best developed professional competencies of career counsellors and school career counsellors on criteria *Career information competences* are *knowledge of updated information on employment trends, labour market, and social issues*. The best developed sub-competences on criteria *Career education competences* are to *demonstrate the knowledge of lifelong career development process and to use career planning and decision making in training*. The three most developed sub-competencies on criteria *Career counselling competences* are *ability to use dialogue in career guidance, exploration competency and use of counselling methods*. The three most developed sub-competencies on criteria *Career service managing competence* are *skills to cooperate effectively in a team of professionals, knowledge of (office) politics, networking ability*. The three most developed sub-competencies on criteria *Generic competence* are *observing ethical standards, communication and listening and empathy, insight*.

Keywords: competences, career counsellors, career guidance, career education.

Introduction

The importance of career guidance and the role of career counsellor

The rapid changes in the economic and labour market structure, the diversity of study programs and the relevance of education outcomes to the labour market, have led to the development of a system to help individuals better integrate into the education process and into the labour market at national and international levels. Career guidance is implemented through the organization of a range of activities that include career guidance, career education and information on education and on work opportunities as well as on inter-relation between them. The results of the study show that the availability and quality of information about education and job opportunities, involving employers, provided by career counsellors, positively influences the person to choose the education and career path that suits his / her interests and abilities (Jaunzeme, 2011, 126). It shows the importance of career guidance.

Promotion and advocacy of career development for individuals is ensured regardless of age, culture, mental/physical ability, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion/spirituality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital/partnership status, military or civilian status, language preference, socioeconomic status, any other characteristics not specifically relevant to job performance, in accordance with National Career Development Association policy (Minimum Competencies for..., 2009). It is important to follow to these political principles.

Career education is the systematic collaboration between educational institutions, parents, and the community to help children, adolescents, young people and adults to learn to develop and independently evaluate their careers. Career education is implemented in educational institutions. The development of students' competences in accordance with the requirements of the labour market can be promoted by implementing career education measures and integrating them into higher education studies. Recognizing the importance of career guidance in promoting student employability, more and more Universities in the European Union and Universities of other countries are introducing modular courses or activities to equip

students with general and career management skills. For example, in the United Kingdom, academic staff, staff of the career centre, social partners and students work closely together to deliver these activities (Gothard et al., 2001; Jaunzeme, 2011, 127). This model defines career services as support for academic departments to integrate employability and career management skills into curriculum content.

Modern education systems help learners to develop emotionally, socially, intellectually and physically (Karataş, Kaya, 2015). Career counsellors help students to develop and to make informed decisions, including career choices. According to K.M. Oertle and S. O'Leary (2017), guidance is about services that help students to solve problems, to make decisions, to improve their abilities and to act responsibly. The individuals that offer and maintain professional counselling services are school counsellors and other qualified experts in counselling. E. Goodman-Scott and T. Grothaus (2017) expound that counsellor' roles have evolved over time and have included mental health counselling, assessment and psychometry, career guidance, coordination, collaboration, and education among others. According to K. Karataş and I. Kaya (2015), counsellors establish vital psychological relationships with individual learners, which help in maintaining their respective development and decision-making (Hanimoglu, 2018). As a result of innovative processes taking place in modern society is developing a new system of educational values. Educational strategies involve the use of an educational competence model that provides the conditions for personality development and growth (Zhanguzhinova, Magauova, Nauryzbaeva, 2016). As a result of scientific research, several models of career guidance have been developed at our Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies to improve the content development of the Career Counsellor study program.

J. Pavulens worked out the *Career Management Cycle: Constructivist Model* (Pavulens, 2015, 334), which is based on the constructivist approach and includes assumptions created on the basis of several theories such as career, learning, activity and project management theory. Career management competence he described as the ability to handle career situations; to mobilize and combine personal and external resources and to use them in the implementation of appropriate activities to achieve the desired results; to cooperate with others and to be able to attract scarce resources; and to learn from experience. Life and career development consist of goal setting, career modelling, testing and optimization of different career models, testing of conditions and resources and finally the realization of the most appropriately selected model. The model suggested by J. Pavulens is recommended for use by a career counsellor.

Guidance Model for Promoting Self-Directed Career Decision-Making by Secondary School Students (Briska, Dislere, 2018, 349) focuses on secondary school students who has inability to make crucial decisions on their future profession as well as to understand themselves, their interests, abilities and needs. Using this model and encouraging action career guidance counsellors and the classroom teachers-counsellors stimulate student initiative through self-study to develop their abilities and skills, to identify their interests and talents, to set learning and career goals, to plan their work and to make responsible decisions.

The Information communication Technologies (ICT)-based Career Guidance Model (Urdzina-Merca, Dislere, 2018, 411) was developed based on both scientists' work experience and previous scientific findings. It is important to integrate the theoretical findings, the latest ICT achievements and the content of career education (professional diversity, labour market requirements and self-presentation skills) and the newest career counselling techniques (the project method, video training and company workshop visits) into career guidance activities. The authors believe that an interaction of the model's all sections: "Theories", "ICT" and "Content" in particular could yield the best outcomes in career guidance for young individuals.

To provide career support to women experiencing professional crisis, A. Racene and V. Dislere have developed the *Didactic Model of Crisis Management for Women in Professional Crisis Situations* (Racene, Dislere, 2016, 7), the target audience is women wishing or being forced to change their occupation due to a professional crisis. A type of consultation (advising, informative consultation, diagnostic consultation, formative and corrective consultation and e-consultation) is chosen on the basis of customer's wishes or the content of a career consultation. The model provides a methodology for managing a professional crisis, observing the principle of gender conformity in the course of career counselling (compliance with gender equality set in law, application of communication theories, breaking of stereotypes and raising of women's self-confidence). The developed model is recommended to use for career counsellors.

The importance of career counselling has also been studied by several authors. Providing guidance and counselling is both a practical and a theoretical approach, stemming from the social pressures of industrial

development (Patton, McMahon, 2014). Researchers have developed systems theory and studied the role of theory and practice in career development (Patton, McMahon, 2014). C. Stăiculescu, R. Livinți, L.R. Ștefan, S. Todea, and N. Albu (2017) studied the aspect of managing the necessity of counselling and career guidance among the students. The researchers indicate that selecting the right profession and then progressing through the required steps to be a specialist is a sophisticated endeavour. They reduce dropouts, foster transition in different education levels, enhance participation, bolster social inclusion, and ensure accessibility to the labour market (Hanımoglu, 2018). Professional career counsellors offer appropriate guidance that are specific to individuals after assessing and testing a learner's intelligence, skills, personality, and interests. There are several conditions that affect a learner's choice of career; hence, it is vital to guide the learners to make informed and appropriate decisions regarding their future career (Hanımoglu, 2018).

R.S. Sharf (2014) has developed and researched career development theories in multiple dimensions, he provides important perspectives that may be useful in counselling, such as, constructivist approach that emphasize understanding clients' perceptions of the world; how individuals are influenced by others in career decision making (Phillips, Christopher-Sisk, Gravino, 2001); how behavioural approaches influences the client. The use of dialogue in career guidance of students of secondary vocational schools helps to build and develops their professional identity. Evolution of dialogue for students' career guidance in secondary vocational education is worked out by I. Soika (2017). Her experience of career guidance has shown that the meanings constructed through dialogue, develops an understanding of career planning and life designing. F. Meijers, M. Kuijpers, C. Gundy (2013) in their studies proved contribution of career dialogue in rising learning motivation, experienced fit of choice with learning tasks and experienced fit of internship.

Sustainable community development is related to the formation and development of new attitude to workplace wellness in educational process (Brizga, Peks, 2014). Workplace wellness includes the following dimensions: social, occupational, spiritual, physical, intellectual and emotional. Workplace wellness is any workplace health promotion activity or organizational policy designed to support healthy behaviour in the workplace including career counsellor workplace.

It follows from the above that the qualifications of a career counsellor are of paramount importance in order to be competent in their profession and able to apply their knowledge of the structure of the labour market and use the opportunities offered by the education system to carry out their professional work. Links between career guidance, demands of labour market and education system are explained in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Links between career guidance, demands of labour market and education system (Katsarov et al., 2014).

A career counsellor has to be able to implement a variety of career support models and programmes to provide support to people (schoolchildren, students, adults, the unemployed) in acquiring an education or retraining, in career choices or career changes, to provide consultations, and to be understanding assistants in life choices.

What are the competencies of a career counsellor

Many scientists have been working on identifying the competencies of career counsellors and exploring their need and importance, also several studies have already been carried out: career counselling from a constructivist perspective, the analysis of school counsellors' activities is based on two directions: a) the choice of intervention strategies in relation to activities specific to the school they work in (middle school,

theoretical/technological/vocational high school), and b) professional experience (beginners or not) (Axinte, 2014); skills for career counsellor – empathy, insight, communication and listening, flexibility and tolerance (Blank, 2017); core competences – ethical behaviour, advocacy and leadership, awareness and appreciation of clients' cultural differences, integrate theory and research into practice in guidance, implement counselling programmes, awareness of own capacity, language knowledge, knowledge of updated information on educational, training, employment trends, labour market, and social issues, skills to cooperate effectively in a team of professionals, demonstrate knowledge of lifelong career development process (Hiebert, Neault, 2014); The right choice of a method and the interpretation of the counselling result could stimulate the student to make a decision based on his/her values; value identification methods help career counsellors to identify career counselling boundaries as well as act professionally, ethically and wisely in assessing any particular situation and identifying the particular kind of career guidance needed (Racene, Dislere, 2019).

In the counselling process, the counsellor uses a variety of tools, exercises and tasks, including selection and using of diagnostic methods, that aim to broaden the client's self-confidence, create and practice new behaviours and new views to support their informed decision-making. Counselling methods and tools are not aimed at diagnosing, but at building self-awareness and letting the client widely explore himself, his life and his environment, which you can call self-diagnosis (Bielecki, 2013).

The authors C.R. Ridley, D. Mollen and S.M. Kelly (2011) conceptualize counselling competence as more complex and nuanced than do traditional micro-skills models and include cognitive, affective, and behavioural components. The model consists of 4 superordinate competencies—determining therapeutic outcomes, facilitating therapeutic outcomes, evaluating therapeutic outcomes, and sustaining therapeutic outcomes—and 12 subordinate competencies: self-appraisal/ self-evaluating, structuring the therapy, building a therapeutic alliance, applying a conceptual map of therapeutic change, using therapeutic techniques, self-correcting, surmounting obstacles, leveraging opportunities, managing special situations, working with other systems of care, consulting other sources, and terminating therapy. Integral to the model is the integrated deep structure, which consists of 5 metacognitions: purposefulness, motivation, selection, sequencing, and timing.

Career counsellors have distinct personalities. They tend to be social individuals, which means they're kind, generous, cooperative, patient, caring, helpful, empathetic, tactful, and friendly. They excel at socializing, helping others, and teaching. Some of them are also enterprising, meaning they're adventurous, ambitious, assertive, extroverted, energetic, enthusiastic, confident, and optimistic (What does a career..., 2019).

A study on career competences and a factor analytic study on a large sample yielded a seven-factor structure were done based on several competences: goal setting and career planning, self-knowledge, job performance, career-related skills, knowledge of (office) politics, career guidance and networking, and feedback seeking and self-presentation. The results suggested to use this seven-factor criterion for evaluation of the validity of competences (Francis-Smythe et al., 2013).

One of the competencies of career counsellors is ability use an online tool in career counselling, helping people in need of career guidance remotely, they can get career guidance from a career counsellor no matter when or where they are (Rācene, Dišlere, 2014). Nowadays, this method is becoming more and more popular. Also, A. Racene (2017) in her study about importance of goal-setting tasks in career counselling, what was carried out involving vocational school students, revealed that the respondents most often set the following goals: starting a family, starting up a business and becoming a good specialist in the chosen profession. This research contributed to the understanding of importance of goalsetting tasks in career counselling and give insight into youth's goals in their lives. Students develop their abilities to think, to plan and to analyse and to define their life goals.

The ability to reconstruct a client's life portrait is part of a career counsellor's competence- to integrate clients' small stories into a large story, that enriches clients' self-understanding, changes perspective, clarifies what is at stake in the transition, eases decision making, and prompts client action, which is also the most important result (Savickas, 2011). R. Bobu, L. Soitu (2012) describe competences as exploration competency, planning competencies, relationship abilities – respect, motivation, project engagement that should be developed to a superior level regarding the counselled person, through the capacity to build a genuine relationship. Career counsellor roles are facilitator of personal and professional development, consultant for those seeking a job, motivator, information supplier for labour market and

occupational areas, facilitating customer access to career opportunities in the labour market, designer to initiate development activities of staff in an organisation.

R. Orbé-Austin (2010) offers five key tips to consider when developing a multicultural career counselling competence - cultural career history, outcome expectations, protected careers and self-efficacy, networking ability and awareness of our own cultural biases. Multicultural career counselling competence is always a work in progress, and our goal as career experts should be to maintain a stance of openness to learn and enhancing our knowledge, skills and awareness to adjust to the changing needs of client population (Mani, 2020). A career counsellor should have the ability to respond appropriately to individuals from diverse cultures and populations, and to be able to interact with a client in both individual and group counselling, providing targeted and sensitive support for clients/students in using the information, resources, and technologies, observing ethical standards and using supervision and professional consultations effectively (Minimum Competencies for..., 2009).

The *Network for Innovations in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe (NICE)* (Network for Innovations..., 2019) makes a major contribution in working out career counsellor competences. NICE is an open European network for the academic training of people who practice career guidance and counselling (career practitioners). Scientists from this network presents the fields of core competences of career counsellor (Figure 2) (Katsarov et al., 2014).

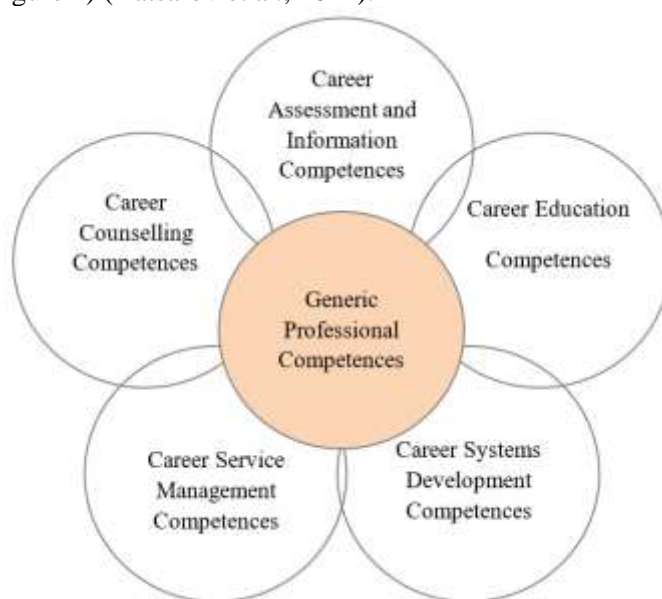


Figure 2. Core Competences should be understood as fields of competence; not as measurable competences (Katsarov et al., 2014).

In compiling and evaluating the scientific findings of the above scientists, the authors developed criteria for assessing the relevance of career counsellor competencies (Table 1).

Table 1

The criteria for assessing the competence of career counsellors

N	Criteria field of competence	Sub-competences
1	Career information competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge of updated information on educational and training • knowledge of updated information on employment trends, labour market, and social issues
2	Career education competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to integrate the theory and research into practice in guidance • to demonstrate the knowledge of lifelong career development process • to use the goal setting tasks in training • to use career planning and decision making in training

N	Criteria field of competence	Sub-competences
3	Career counselling competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploration competency • selection and using of diagnostic methods • use of counselling methods • to be able to interact with a client in individual counselling • to be able to interact with a client in group counselling • ability to use of dialogue in career guidance • a multicultural career counselling
4	Career service managing competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ability to implement a variety of career support models and programmes • ability to carry out a variety of career support models and programmes • skills to cooperate effectively in a team of professionals, • knowledge of (office) politics • networking ability
5	Generic competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • empathy, insight • communication and listening, • flexibility and tolerance • observing ethical standards • awareness and appreciation of clients' cultural differences, • use an online tool in career counselling • workplace wellness • awareness of own capacity

The aim of the study is to evaluate the importance of career counsellor' competencies in the field of career guidance in Latvia, and to develop criteria for evaluating career counsellor competence in order to achieve this goal.

Methodology

The empirical study was developed at the Latvia University of Life Sciences and technologies at the Institute of Education and Home Economics and conducted in late 2019 and early 2020.

Questionnaires were done via emails and social networks. The questionnaires were sent to graduates of the last ten years of the Career Counsellors Master's Program and other in-service career counsellors and school career counsellors working in schools, employment agencies and private consulting companies in Latvia. For the study 826 questionnaires were sent out, 337 questionnaires were got back; 23 % of respondents are career counsellors, 77 % of respondents are school career counsellors.

Respondents were asked to fill in questionnaires and self-assess their career counsellor competencies according to the criteria developed by the authors (Table 1), where competencies were grouped into 5 fields and several sub-competences were assigned to each field using the scientific findings in the theoretical review. Respondents were asked, what career counsellor competencies do they think they have and to what extent (3-excellent; 2-good; 1-poor).

Research tasks:

- to evaluate the importance of career counsellor' competencies in the field of career guidance in Latvia;
- to discover if there is a relationship between two independent samples;
- to analyse the frequency of respondent answers and to find out statistically significant prevalence.

Research methods:

- data collection methods: questionnaire;
- data processing methods:
 - rank transformation (Ranking Data in..., 2020);
 - crosstab method (Paura, Arhipova, 2002);
 - chi-square test (Arhipova, Bāliņa, 2006).

The data were analysed statistically by using SPSS Statistics software.

Results and Discussion

The criteria for assessing the relevance of career counsellor competencies were analysed below using rank transformation (Table 2-6).

Highest number of responses to the answer *good* is in sub-competence "knowledge of updated information on employment trends, labour market, and social issues" (ranked data 216). Highest number of responses to the answer *excellent* is in sub-competence "knowledge of updated information on educational and training" (ranked data 144). Overall, career information competences are well advanced and only a few respondents (24 respondents or 7.1 % and 6 respondents or 1.8 %) need to improve them (Table 2).

Table 2

Rank transformation of Career information competences

Ranked data		Answers	Sub-competences
n	%		
216	64.3	good	knowledge of updated information on employment trends, labour market, and social issues
144	42.9	excellent	knowledge of updated information on educational and training
96	28.6	excellent	knowledge of updated information on employment trends, labour market, and social issues
85	25.3	good	knowledge of updated information on educational and training
24	7.1	poor	knowledge of updated information on employment trends, labour market, and social issues
6	1.8	poor	knowledge of updated information on educational and training

Highest number of responses to the answer *good* is in sub-competence "to integrate the theory and research into practice in guidance" (ranked data 243). Highest number of responses to the answer *excellent* is in sub-competence "to demonstrate the knowledge of lifelong career development process" (ranked data 126). Only 6.5-13.4 % of respondents are required to improve these competences (Table 3).

Table 3

Rank transformation of Career education competences

Ranked data		Answers	Sub-competences
n	%		
243	72.1	good	to integrate the theory and research into practice in guidance
202	59.9	good	to use the goal setting tasks in training
191	56.7	good	to use career planning and decision making in training
187	55.5	good	to demonstrate the knowledge of lifelong career development process
126	37.4	excellent	to demonstrate the knowledge of lifelong career development process
113	33.5	excellent	to use career planning and decision making in training
100	29.7	excellent	to use the goal setting tasks in training
47	13.9	excellent	to integrate the theory and research into practice in guidance
45	13.4	poor	to integrate the theory and research into practice in guidance
32	9.5	poor	to use the goal setting tasks in training
30	8.9	poor	to use career planning and decision making in training
22	6.5	poor	to demonstrate the knowledge of lifelong career development process

Highest number of responses to the answer *good* is in sub-competence "selection and using of diagnostic methods" (ranked data 208). Highest number of responses to the answer *excellent* is in sub-competence "ability to use of dialogue in career guidance" (ranked data 127). Overall, career counselling competences are well advanced and only 8.3-27.3 % of respondents need to improve them (Table 4).

Highest number of responses to the answer *good* is in sub-competence "ability to carry out a variety of career support models and programmes" (ranked data 213). Highest number of responses to the answer *excellent* is in sub-competence "skills to cooperate effectively in a team of professionals" (ranked data 139). Only 6.2-25.5 % of respondents are required to improve these competences (Table 5).

Table 4

Rank transformation of Career counselling competences

Ranked data		Answers	Sub-competences
n	%		
208	61.7	good	selection and using of diagnostic methods
205	60.8	good	exploration competency
202	59.9	good	a multicultural career counselling
184	54.6	good	to be able to interact with a client in group counselling
177	52.5	good	use of counselling methods
176	52.2	good	ability to use of dialogue in career guidance
156	46.3	good	to be able to interact with a client in individual counselling
127	37.7	excellent	ability to use of dialogue in career guidance
119	35.3	excellent	to be able to interact with a client in individual counselling
103	30.6	excellent	to be able to interact with a client in group counselling
102	30.3	excellent	use of counselling methods
92	27.3	excellent	exploration competency
92	27.3	poor	a multicultural career counselling
63	18.7	excellent	selection and using of diagnostic methods
59	17.5	poor	selection and using of diagnostic methods
53	15.7	poor	use of counselling methods
52	15.4	poor	to be able to interact with a client in individual counselling
43	12.8	poor	to be able to interact with a client in group counselling
36	10.7	excellent	a multicultural career counselling
34	10.1	poor	exploration competency
28	8.3	poor	ability to use of dialogue in career guidance

Table 5

Rank transformation of Career service managing competence

Ranked data		Answers	Sub-competences
n	%		
213	63.2	good	ability to carry out a variety of career support models and programmes
207	61.4	good	ability to implement a variety of career support models and programmes
207	61.4	good	networking ability
201	59.6	good	knowledge of (office) politics
175	51.9	good	skills to cooperate effectively in a team of professionals
139	41.2	excellent	skills to cooperate effectively in a team of professionals
111	32.9	excellent	knowledge of (office) politics
86	25.5	poor	ability to implement a variety of career support models and programmes
67	19.9	excellent	networking ability
65	19.3	poor	ability to carry out a variety of career support models and programmes
58	17.2	poor	networking ability
55	16.3	excellent	ability to carry out a variety of career support models and programmes
40	11.9	excellent	ability to implement a variety of career support models and programmes
22	6.5	poor	knowledge of (office) politics
21	6.2	poor	skills to cooperate effectively in a team of professionals

Highest number of responses to the answer *excellent* is in sub-competence "*observing ethical standards*" (ranked data 262). Highest number of responses to the answer *good* is in sub-competence "*awareness of own capacity*" (ranked data 194). Overall, career information competences are well advanced and only a few respondents (5 respondents or 1.5 % and 3 respondents or 0.9 %) need to improve them (Table 6).

Crosstabs method is used to discover if there is a relationship between more independent samples: *sub-competences* sample and *to what extent* sample. Null hypothesis: there is not a relationship between two independent samples, while alternative hypothesis: there is a relationship between two independent samples (Table 7-11).

The *Pearson Chi-Square p-value* = 0.000 (Table 7), so the null hypothesis must be rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. In the criteria *Career information competences* is a relationship between *Sub-competences* sample and *to what Extent* sample.

Table 6

Rank transformation of Generic competence			
Ranked data		Answers	Sub-competences
n	%		
262	77.7	excellent	observing ethical standards
235	69.7	excellent	communication and listening
213	63.2	excellent	flexibility and tolerance
209	62.0	excellent	empathy, insight
194	57.6	good	awareness of own capacity
191	56.7	good	use an online tool in career counselling
186	55.2	good	awareness and appreciation of clients' cultural differences
171	50.7	excellent	workplace wellness
162	48.1	good	workplace wellness
148	43.9	excellent	awareness and appreciation of clients' cultural differences
141	41.8	excellent	awareness of own capacity
129	38.3	excellent	use an online tool in career counselling
127	37.7	good	empathy, insight
121	35.9	good	flexibility and tolerance
102	30.3	good	communication and listening
74	22.0	good	observing ethical standards
17	5.0	poor	use an online tool in career counselling
5	1.5	poor	workplace wellness
3	0.9	poor	awareness of own capacity
0	0.0	poor	empathy, insight
0	0.0	poor	communication and listening
0	0.0	poor	flexibility and tolerance
0	0.0	poor	observing ethical standards
0	0.0	poor	awareness and appreciation of clients' cultural differences

Table 7

Crosstabs Chi-Square test of criteria Career information competences

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	61.471	2	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	62.235	2	0.000
N of Valid Cases	571		

The *Pearson Chi-Square p-value* = 0.000 (Table 8), so the null hypothesis must be rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. In the criteria *Career education competences* is a relationship between *Sub-competences* sample and *to what Extent* sample.

Table 8

Crosstabs Chi-Square test of criteria Career education competences

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	55.320	6	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	59.993	6	0.000
N of Valid Cases	1338		

The *Pearson Chi-Square p-value* = 0.000 (Table 9), so the null hypothesis must be rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. In the criteria *Career counselling competences* is a relationship between *Sub-competences* sample and *to what Extent* sample.

Table 9

Crosstabs Chi-Square test of criteria Career counselling competences

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	129.758	12	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	135.936	12	0.000
N of Valid Cases	2311		

The *Pearson Chi-Square p-value* = 0.000 (Table 10), so the null hypothesis must be rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. In the criteria *Career service managing competence* is a relationship between *Sub-competences* sample and *to what Extent* sample.

Table 10

Crosstabs Chi-Square test of criteria Career service managing competence			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	73.202	8	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	75.736	8	0.000
N of Valid Cases	1667		

The *Pearson Chi-Square p-value* = 0.000 (Table 11), so the null hypothesis must be rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. In the criteria *Career service managing competence* is a relationship between *Sub-competences* sample and *to what Extent* sample.

Table 11

Crosstabs Chi-Square test of criteria Generic competence			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	73.202	8	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	75.736	8	0.000
N of Valid Cases	1667		

Next, the frequency of respondent answers about the criteria for assessing the competence with relevant sub-competences were statistically analysed with the help of chi-square test, where the null hypothesis: the frequency of respondent answers is the same and the alternative hypothesis: the frequency of respondent answers not the same (Table 12-16).

Since the p-value (excellent) = 0.002 < 0.05, p-value (good) = 0.000 < 0.05, and p-value (poor) = 0.01 is less than the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ (Table 12), so the null hypothesis must be rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. The frequency of respondent answers is different. Statistically significant prevalence was: for the answer *knowledge of updated information on educational and training* at excellent choice (24.0), for the answer *knowledge of updated information on employment trends, labour market, and social issues* both at good (65.0) and poor choice (9.0).

Table 12

Answers	Residual		
	excellent	good	poor
knowledge of updated information on educational and training	24.0	-65.0	-9.0
knowledge of updated information on employment trends, labour market, and social issues	-24.0	65.0	9.0
Total	240	302	30
Chi-Square	9.600	55.960	10.800
df	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	0.002	0.000	0.01

Table 13

Answers	Residual		
	excellent	good	poor
to integrate the theory and research into practice in guidance	-49.5	37.3	12.8
to demonstrate the knowledge of lifelong career development process	29.5	-18.8	-10.3
to use the goal setting tasks in training	3.5	-3.8	-0.3
to use career planning and decision making in training	16.5	-14.8	-2.3
Total	386	823	129
Chi-Square	37.358	9.578	8.457
df	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	0.000	0.023	0.037

Since the p-value (excellent) = 0.000 < 0.05, p-value (good) = 0.023 < 0.05, and p-value (poor) = 0.037 is less than the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ (Table 13), so the null hypothesis must be rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. The frequency of respondent answers is different. Statistically significant prevalence was: for the answer *to demonstrate the knowledge of lifelong career development process* at excellent choice (29.5), for the answer *to integrate the theory and research into practice in guidance* both at good (37.3) and poor choice (12.8).

Since the p-value (excellent) = 0.000 < 0.05, and p-value (poor) = 0.000 < 0.05 (Table 14), so the null hypothesis must be rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. The frequency of respondent answers is different. Statistically significant prevalence was: for the answer *ability to use of dialogue in career guidance* at excellent choice (35.3), for the answer *a multicultural career counselling* poor choice (40.4). The p-value (good) = 0.070 > 0.05, the null hypothesis can't be rejected. Thus, can be concluded that the frequency of respondent answers is the same.

Table 14

Chi-square test statistics of criteria Career counselling competences

Answers	Residual		
	excellent	good	poor
exploration competency	0.3	18.1	-17.6
selection and using of diagnostic methods	-28.7	21.1	7.4
use of counselling methods	10.3	-9.9	1.4
to be able to interact with a client in individual counselling	27.3	-30.9	0.4
to be able to interact with a client in group counselling	11.3	-2.9	-8.6
ability to use of dialogue in career guidance	35.3	-10.9	-23.6
a multicultural career counselling	-55.7	15.1	40.4
Total	642	1308	361
Chi-Square	67.072	11.671	50.992
df	6	6	6
Asymp. Sig.	0.000	0.070	0.000

Since the p-value (excellent) = 0.000 < 0.05, p-value (poor) = 0.000 < 0.05 (Table 15), so the null hypothesis must be rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. The frequency of respondent answers is different. Statistically significant prevalence was: for the answer *skills to cooperate effectively in a team of professionals* at excellent choice (56.6), for the answer *ability to implement a variety of career support models and programmes* poor choice (35.6).

The p-value (good) = 0.349 > 0.05, the null hypothesis can't be rejected. Thus, can be concluded that the frequency of respondent answers is the same.

Table 15

Chi-square test statistics of criteria Career service managing competence

Answers	Residual		
	excellent	good	poor
ability to implement a variety of career support models and programmes	-42.4	6.4	35.6
ability to carry out a variety of career support models and programmes	-27.4	12.4	14.6
skills to cooperate effectively in a team of professionals	56.6	-25.6	-29.4
knowledge of (office) politics	28.6	0.4	-28.4
networking ability	-15.4	6.4	7.6
Total	412	1003	252
Chi-Square	82.612	4.443	63.675
df	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.000	0.349	0.000

Since the p-value (excellent) = 0.000 < 0.05, p-value (good) = 0.000 < 0.05, p-value (poor) = 0.001 < 0.05 (Table 16). So the null hypothesis must be rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. The frequency of respondent answers is different. Statistically significant prevalence was: for the answer *observing ethical standards* at excellent choice (73.5), for the answer *awareness of own capacity* (49.4), for the answer *use an online tools in career counselling* poor choice (8.7).

Table 16

Chi-square test statistics of criteria Generic competence

Answers	Residual		
	excellent	good	poor
observing ethical standards	73.5	-70.6	-
communication and listening	46.5	-42.6	-
flexibility and tolerance	24.5	-23.6	-
empathy, insight	20.5	-17.6	-
awareness of own capacity	-47.5	49.4	-5.3
use an online tools in career counselling	-59.5	46.4	8.7
awareness and appreciation of clients' cultural differences	-40.5	41.4	-
workplace wellness	-17.5	17.4	-3.3
Total	1508	1157	25
Chi-Square	86.621	98.710	13.760
df	7	7	2
Asymp. Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.001

Conclusions

It follows from all of the above that it is extremely important for a career counsellor to be qualified, to be a competent professional and to be able to apply the knowledge of the structure of the labour market and use the opportunities offered by the education system for doing professional work and help clients to take responsible career decisions. A career counsellor must be competent at all fields of competences: career information, career education, career counselling, career service managing and she/he must also possess generic competencies.

Analysing the results of study on career counsellors and school career counsellor's questionnaire the criteria visible in Table 1 for assessing the professional competence of career counsellors developed by authors were used. The criteria conclude 5 competence fields, each field having several sub-competences. Analysing the respondents' responses to *excellent* and *good* together, it can be concluded that the best developed sub-competencies on criteria *Career information competences* are *knowledge of updated information on employment trends, labour market, and social issues* (n = 312, p-value = 0.000 < 0.05, residual = 65.0). The best developed sub-competences on criteria *Career education competences* are *to demonstrate the knowledge of lifelong career development process* (n = 313, p-value = 0.000 < 0.05, residual = 29.5) and *to use career planning and decision making in training* (n = 304). The three most developed sub-competencies on criteria *Career counselling competences* are *ability to use dialogue in career guidance* (n = 303, p-value = 0.000 < 0.05, residual = 35.3), *exploration competency* (n = 297) and *use of counselling methods* (n = 279). The three most developed sub-competencies on criteria *Career service managing competence* are *skills to cooperate effectively in a team of professionals* (n = 314, p-value = 0.000, residual = 56.6), *knowledge of (office) politics* (n = 312), *networking ability* (n = 274). The three most developed sub-competencies on criteria *Generic competence* are *observing ethical standards* (n = 336, p-value = 0.000 < 0.05, residual = 73.3), *communication and listening* (n = 337) and *empathy, insight* (n = 336). Competences that are needed to be improved demonstrated by respondents were: a multicultural career counselling (27.3 %) and ability to implement a variety of career support models and programmes (25.5 %). In general, it can be concluded that the professional competences of career counsellors and school career counsellors are sufficiently developed in Latvia.

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