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Career Counselling in Human Resource Management

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Abstract: The relevance of the research is related to the expansion of the career counsellors' professional activity, which has been affected by the continuous socio-economic changes in society. This, in turn, has created various challenges in people's career development and life design, and made career counselling look at from the point of view of human resources management. The purpose of the study is to evaluate how career counselling fits into human resources management. Research methodology includes theoretical studies and analysis of guidelines in career counselling, career support and human resource management. The results of the study show that career counselling in human resources management requires evaluating the career counsellor's professional profile and professional roles, considering the complex and diverse context in which a person manages his own career and designs his life. The results of the research are significant because they give an insight into the problems of career counselling and guidance in the development of wider society. The results of the study are useful for career guidance researchers and career guidance practitioners.

Keywords: career counselling, career guidance, human resource management.

Introduction

The professional activity of career counsellors is most directly affected by the continuous socio-economic changes in society, both global and local, that have been taking place in recent decades. This, in turn, has created various challenges in the design of people's lives, looking at career development and career support in a much broader context (Greenhaus et al. 2018; Hall, 2001; Baruch, 2004; Savickas et al., 2009), touching on the following areas.

- The area of education as a focus on individual progress in lifelong learning, as citizens must be able to return to education, training and learning throughout their lives, as their needs and circumstances change and develop along with the introduction of various innovative technologies into the labour market. Various EU policy initiatives have increased flexibility by allowing individuals to start, resume and combine education, training and learning according to their specific needs and circumstances (OECD, 2023; ILO, 2022).
- The area of employment, because changes in the labour market no longer guarantee a secure job with one employer for a lifetime. Therefore, individuals are forced to take greater personal responsibility for managing their careers and ensuring the necessary personal and professional growth (CEDEFOP, 2021).
- The area of social policy, as questions about the security, equality, and well-being of the individual's personal and working life are brought up in connection with such global developments as demographic changes, migration and growing inequality (OECD, 2023; Hooley et al., 2016).

This creates new challenges for career guidance policymakers in their efforts to better understand the impact of these factors on employment and education systems. This indicates the expansion of career counsellors' professional activities, as it is necessary to take into account not only the models of individual development of clients and career development created in organizations, but also the diverse context in which life designing takes place. Moreover, it should be emphasized that career counsellors provide both key conditions and contexts to promote individual growth in the context of lifelong career development (European Commission, 2020).

The International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) (International Competencies for Educational..., 2018) also points out that the continuous structural changes of the labour market, labour migration and the increase in the pace of technological development in the last ten years have been the main reason to raise the issue of the professional activities and training of career guidance specialists. The fact that the influence of these topics on the provision of career guidance is

huge both in the EU countries and in the world is indicated by several scientific studies (Enoch et al., 2022; European Lifelong Guidance ..., 2015; Ertelt et al., 2011). This also applies to the education of career counsellors in Latvia universities. The position of the Department of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of the Ministry of Education and Science is that it is necessary to prepare these specialists with more widely applicable competences than only the field of education. Although many graduates of this study program work in the field of education, they are not teachers and do not perform pedagogical activities. In addition, looking at the total workplace, work in educational institutions is only a small part of career counsellors' employment opportunities. Consequently, the issue of educating these specialists in a different field of study, except for the direction "Education, Pedagogy and Sports" has been brought up (Nestere-Nikandrova, 2018). One of the areas where the education of career counsellors fit in is human resource management. This is also indicated by the Professional Standard of the Republic of Latvia that a career counsellor works in state and local government institutions, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, companies, with merchants, in connection with personnel or human resources management or as a self-employed person or individual merchant (Karjeras konsultanta profesijas..., 2011). The target audience of his work is people of all ages, representing clients of various social and cultural backgrounds. A career counsellor performs the following tasks: advises, informs and educates clients of different ages, social and cultural origins in career development issues, provides support in career planning and development; helps develop career management skills, including job search skills; advises in the form of individual discussions and in groups; informs and educates the public on issues related to career guidance services (writes articles, speaks at seminars and mass media) (Karjeras konsultanta profesijas..., 2011). The activity of career counsellors in the field of human resources management is also confirmed by the IAEVG competence framework (International Competencies for Educational..., 2018), which indicates the broad general and special competencies of educational and vocational guidance practitioners, regardless of their work environment or specialization.

The significance of this scientific article is also confirmed by the research carried out on the topic of Master Theses of career counsellors defended in Latvian universities, which revealed their interdisciplinary nature (Soika et al., 2021). This, in turn, shows not only the diverse context and challenges in solving career development issues, but also the fact that career counsellors have to take on multiple professional roles to meet the different needs of clients at different levels of career guidance.

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the inclusion of career counselling in human resources management, as well as to describe the career counsellor's professional profile and areas of activity in human resources management.

Methodology

The following tasks were put forward in the study:

- investigate and describe trends in explanations of career-related theoretical concepts;
- describe human resources management, its functions and purpose;
- find out how career counselling is included in human resources management, emphasizing the career counsellor's professional profile and areas of activity in human resources management.

The descriptions of career counselling, career guidance and human resources management in the works of Western European and global scientists for the 21st century, as well as in guidelines and documents of various levels are investigated in the study. The main research method was a theoretical analysis of the importance of career counselling and career guidance in human resource management, which has been studied by scientists from various fields and career guidance policymakers.

Results and Discussion

Career, career counselling and career guidance

Changes in the structure of employment and the economy, as well as intensification of competition and globalization, have increased the importance of the individual in the career management process. The person himself is responsible for the choice of profession and occupation and the way to design his life. He is required to have the skills to plan his employment more and to be open to a lifelong learning process. This has given the basis for defining a career as the interaction of education, work and private

life during a person's lifetime. The concept of career has an interdisciplinary nature, and its research is mainly carried out in the context of the areas of education, psychology, sociology, political science, economics and management science. The development of the concept of career is closely related to socioeconomic changes and the actualization of such theoretical concepts as follows.

- *Life designing*, which is an ongoing iterative process of self-exploration, setting career goals, learning and developing skills, and searching for suitable employment opportunities (Savickas et al, 2009).
- Career management skills that provide structured ways for individuals and groups to collect analyse, synthesize and organize information about themselves, education and occupations, as well as skills for career planning, decision-making and transitions. These are the life, learning, training and employment skills that individuals need to effectively develop and manage their careers (European Lifelong Guidance..., 2010).
- Career management the process in which individuals develop, implement and control their career goals and strategies. It helps to optimize the match between the individual and the educational or work environment, thus maintaining his employability both in changing labour market conditions and in adapting to new situations (Greenhaus et al., 2018; Sullivan et al, 2009).
- Career self-management a process that must take place continuously and regularly during an individual's life in order to promote developing personal and professional trajectories. This process includes: (a) career exploration, in particular, self-knowledge (values, interests, skills) and knowledge of the world (education, training, professionalism) in a systematic and deliberate manner; (b) developing life and career goals that are clear, realistic and take into account short-term, medium-term and long-term dimensions; (c) planning and implementation of action plans, which include all the behaviours and strategies an individual uses to achieve their defined career goals, and (d) monitoring and obtaining feedback, through which individuals continually assess their progress against their defined career goals (Greenhaus et al., 2018; King, 2004; Pinto et al., 2013).
- *Employability*, when an individual is able to manage, direct, and change the shape of his career according to personal choice, because the world of work is changing rapidly, introducing a new reality in which the occupations and jobs of the future and the skills that will be needed to perform them are not clearly known today. Therefore, the focus should now be on employability more than promotion (Aylott, 2018).

Linear and predictable careers are becoming less common as individuals become more interested in doing work that is personally meaningful to them. For a long time, career researchers (Hall 2001; Greenhaus et al., 2014; Allan et al., 2020) point out that career is fluid and diverse. The following main features characterize boundary less and protean career (Hall, 2001; Sullivan et al., 2009; Inkson, 2006):

- career is managed by the person himself, not by the organization;
- career is reinvented from time to time as the person and the environment change;
- career becomes an individual's identity;
- career is a series of experiences, skills, knowledge, transitions, and identity changes that occur during a professional life;
- career development is continuous, self-directed and related to learning, which is found in professional challenges and takes place throughout life;
- career development is not always formal professional training, retraining, upward mobility, but also horizontal, i.e., related to mixing jobs with similar duties in different areas of competence;
- psychological success has become an essential goal of an individual's career, consisting of a sense of pride and personal fulfilment resulting from the achievement of the most important personal life goals.

An individual's personal life, work and career are constantly undergoing tremendous changes, which has contributed to the need for lifelong career guidance. Receiving such support allows every person at any stage of life to determine their abilities, competences and interests, to make meaningful decisions in the field of education, training and profession and to manage their individual situation in studies, work and other circumstances (European Commission, 2020). Moreover, in order to help an individual to promote meaningful and sustainable career development throughout life, both individual (changes in

personality, work values or goal-setting that affect career development) and contextual factors must be taken into account (Nagy et al., 2019; Nykänen et al., 2012). Lifelong career guidance reflects individual, organizational and societal expectations. Therefore, career counsellors work in a variety of settings, both in the education and employment sectors (Vuorinen et al., 2017). Lifelong career guidance enables people to get decent work, manage their learning and careers in a way that reflects their interests and goals, benefiting themselves, the economy and society as a whole.

Human resources management - a view from another side

When looking at career counselling in human resources management, an obvious difference is noticeable. Career counsellors have always worked with clients in specific periods of career development and change, making a choice of profession, transitioning from school to the labour market, from secondary school to post-secondary education and then to work; during periods of unemployment or returning to work; moving from one job to another, etc. The various interventions have included counselling on career exploration and life designing, decision-making and goal-setting strategies, career assessment, and job transition and search skills (Neault, 2000). Human resources (HR) specialists, on the other hand, usually work with people who are already employed, providing assistance in building internal careers in the organization, achieving plans, benchmarking skills and competencies, and corporate evaluations (Neault, 2000; Vulpen, 2019). Although there is some overlap in the practice of career counsellors and HR professionals, traditionally the focus of interest of these two groups has been very different. Career counsellors are primarily concerned with providing assistance and support to individuals, whereas HR professionals generally serve the needs of organizations. (Neault, 2000). And yet, career counselling in human resources management can be looked at from another side - as a developing process in which career is the effective use of the individual's own resources to achieve one's life goals, purposeful activity for the improvement and expression of one's competences in both the social and professional sphere throughout life.

Competition in the global labour market has led to new management approaches, especially in human resources management. The traditional definition of human resources management is the use of the qualified workforce in the organization (their knowledge, skills, abilities and talents) to keep the organization growing. Since every organization is made up of people, it is important to obtain their services, develop their skills, motivate them to achieve higher performance and ensure that they continue to maintain their loyalty to the organization to achieve the goals of the organization (Armstrong et al., 2014). The objectives of human resources management are: to support the organization in achieving its goals by developing and implementing human resources strategies that are integrated with the business strategy; to promote the development of a high-performance organizational culture; to ensure that the organization has the talented and skilled people that it needs; to create a positive atmosphere and mutual trust between management and employees; to promote the application of an ethical approach to people management (Armstrong et al., 2014).

Although the main functions of HRM are attracting and retaining professionals, motivating them and developing their skills, and that sustainable human resource management (SHRM) defines the broader goals of human resource management, recognizing the complexity of the dynamics of the world of work, including the opportunity for an individual to develop as a person, as a professional and to a member of society through work-related experiences (Kramar, 2014), it does not really address the current career needs of individuals and the needs of society (Prins et al., 2020). Flexicurity, robotization, lifelong learning and cross-border labour mobility are the main drivers of change and innovation in the global labour market, where there is a strong tendency for the importance of an individual's career to dominate over the importance of the workplace in one particular organization. These challenges not only where and how individuals learn and work, but also when and why they do so. In addition, an aging Europe is creating a working population that has to work longer, requiring more support for 'second careers'. Added to this is the trend to personalize learning, which is necessary to remain relevant to the labour market (European Commission, 2019; OECD 2019). The people taking responsibility for their career development and life designing; choose the best and most suitable occupation for themselves, because they need to feel safe in order to plan their future. This allows seeing human resources management from a different point of view. As noted by several researchers (McGaughey, 2018; Vernon, 2009; Hooley et al., 2016), the principle of social justice is thus emphasized by thinking more about the development of the person himself and human rights. In a just society, human capacity expands through

education, better health and sustainable prosperity. In turn, the creativity that is necessary for the functioning of people's lives is enabled when they have a voice in political and economic power and the security to design their lives and realize their potential.

A self-directed career in human resource management

Here we can already talk about a person's self-directed career as a process of regulation of actions (Raabe et al., 2007) and a process of resource management, which is organized and monitored by the individual himself (Hirschi, 2012). Thus, it can be assumed that a self-directed career is a process of conscious creation, maintenance and use of various personal (self-assessment of skills, interests, hobbies, values and passions) and contextual resources that lead to successful career outcomes (Spurk et al., 2018). For example, in a work or educational setting, this can be achieved through means such as mentoring, developmental feedback or career workshops, turning the career management relationship between the individual and the career practitioner or employee and employer into a 'shared responsibility' (Aburumman et al., 2022). Two components are important in order to achieve such synergy: first, there must be expectations that the recipients of career guidance will be responsible for managing their own careers; and second, organizations must provide enabling career development support that is integrated into the organizational culture. Moreover, an individual, by exploring and realizing his resources, learns himself and creates his own career path, and this may not be limited to just one organization. The individual takes the initiative to find resources that can help their career development with a personal career path (Wilhelm et al., 2019). Realizing the intellectual, emotional, physical and moral potential of his personality (Kosturiak, 2010), the individual develops and improves his skills depending on the demand of the labour market (Bridgstock, 2011) and gains confidence that by fully using his resources and potential, he will be able to live a more fulfilling life (Vernon, 2009; McGaughey, 2018).

Human resources and potential have an adaptive and contextual nature, depending on how life circumstances shape its expression, development and realization. Awareness of an individual's resources begins already in childhood, in the school years, when under the influence of various circumstances, the basis for the development of the individual's potential, i.e., intellectual, moral and physical abilities, is formed. Any type of education a child receives from day one will determine the outcome of their potential and prospects in the future. A child's brain is constantly changing and growing, and it can develop in any direction. Through early learning and childhood development, a child is prepared for formal education and life. By encouraging children to rebel, explore and develop their curiosity for learning and knowledge, and matching this with quality education, they are empowered to become strong individuals (Dai, 2020). Facilitating conditions are essential, which actually make it possible to increase the individual's abilities - they allow individuals to develop new characteristics that are biologically secondary and therefore related to extensive educational experience and training and allow less able individuals to surpass themselves through development. One must agree with Dai, D. Y. (2020) that an individual realizes and develops their own resources by going through a progressive process of learning and talent development - informal learning experiences, followed by formal education and/or self-study as systematic learning, in-depth training, and finally progressive work in certain areas.

Career counsellor's professional profile and areas of activity in human resource management

The above points to the need for individuals to be provided with personalized, objective and timely career support, thereby helping them realize their resources and reach their potential. Such support acts as a promoter of the discovery, nurturing and development of individual talents. This allows individuals to navigate digital and green transitions more confidently during economic turmoil. It helps to implement lifelong approaches to learning and more active involvement in the labour market. Both young people and adults need such career guidance. Young people, because they, experience a much higher unemployment rate than older people. Rapidly changing labour demand, many new occupations emerging and many existing ones changing or declining complicate their decision-making about education and training opportunities. For adults, because of their ageing, technological advances and globalization are causing huge changes in the labour market - old jobs are disappearing or radically changing, and new jobs are emerging that require different skills and competences. Retraining and upskilling are increasingly considered an integral part of working life (Investing in Career..., 2021).

This indicates the wide field of activity (in different educational and employment and social environments) for individual career counsellors and organizations that offer career guidance services

and educational institutions that monitor labour market developments and try to facilitate career transitions for both individuals and organizations. Focusing on the importance of a career affects the professional work profile of a career counsellor much more than before. A career counsellor must be competent in solving many career issues: in *career information*, there should be knowledge of updated information on education and training, as well as current information on employment trends, labour market and social issues. In *career education* – one must be able to integrate theory into research practice in the field of career guidance, demonstrate knowledge of the lifelong career development process, and use goal-setting tasks in career planning and decision-making. In *career counselling* – carry out research, choose and use appropriate diagnostic and counselling methods, be able to cooperate with the client in individual consultations and group counselling, know how to use dialogue in the field of career guidance, performs multicultural career counselling. In the *management of career services* – to be able to introduce and implement various career support models, methodologies and programs, to be able to cooperate effectively in a team of professionals, to know (office) policy and to be able to network.

Career counsellors must have <u>general competences</u> - the ability to be empathetic, communicate and listen, be flexible and tolerant, adhere to ethical standards, be aware and acknowledge cultural differences of clients, use various online tools in career counselling, feel good about their job duties, and be aware of their abilities (Network for Innovation..., 2016).

A career counsellor must be aware of several professional roles that make up his professional identity: as <u>a counsellor</u> - to help people understand their situation, solve problems to find solutions, make difficult career decisions and implement personal changes; as <u>an educator</u> - to help people develop their career management skills needed for career-related learning and development; as <u>an expert</u> in career evaluation and information - to help people get relevant information about themselves, the labour market and educational or vocational training opportunities, depending on their information needs; as <u>a social system intervenes</u> - support people and organizations in the development of suitable career paths; <u>as a career services manager</u> who provides quality service delivery (Network for Innovation ..., 2016). When providing services, a career counsellor must be able to both switch between these professional roles and sometimes combine them based on the unique needs of clients. In addition, performance tasks of career counsellors may, depending on the circumstances, offer advice and basic career support for immediate problem solutions, career support and advice for individuals and groups focusing on complex career issues, as well as specialized services related to with complex career challenges, career management, research and development (Network for Innovation..., 2016; International Competencies for Educational..., 2018).

Several signs show that the field of career guidance and counselling is becoming more and more versatile. Firstly, the provision of career guidance becomes more specific and precise in order to meet the needs of the specific target audience. Secondly, no single provider of career guidance service can meet the needs of different client groups at different levels of career guidance. Therefore, providing career guidance is the responsibility of inter-administrative and multi-professional networks (Nykänen et al., 2012). Thirdly, such a way of providing career guidance services as a one-stop agency concept is increasingly used, which combines multi-professional, low-threshold services for different client groups under one roof (Moreno da Fonseca, 2015). Fourthly, new technologies and skills intelligence and use of information to make better career choices. Success in developing ICT competence in career services requires a dynamic combination of cognitive, social, emotional and ethical factors in the work of a career counsellor (Kettunen et al., 2016). Another challenge for networking is the growing demand for transnational mobility, as labour shortages in certain sectors have led to international recruitment and the need for more comprehensive integration of career guidance services. This transition to group and collective activities is a process involving many stakeholders with different interests on several levels. This requires a greater emphasis on strategic competencies that enable practitioners to define their new roles and tasks in multi-professional networks, both within organizations and in the internal interactions of these service providers. Career counsellors must be able to cope with challenging situations and function properly in conflicting roles in order to receive support and possible sanctions related to active labour market measures (Ertelt et al., 2011). This versatility allows career counselling to be assessed within the social context itself, placing greater emphasis on how human resources are managed and used in life design.

Conclusions

Career counselling in human resources management focuses on:

- the person who is important to finding the right ways to realize their abilities and develop their potential throughout their life;
- the career as a self-directed regulatory activity and resource management process, which is organized and monitored by the individual himself, making and implementing meaningful decisions in the field of education, training, professional challenges and personal life;
- the broad field of activity of a career counsellor in a variety of educational, occupational and social settings to facilitate the career transition of individuals and organizations;
- the professional identity of a career counsellor to be competent in service management, providing counselling, informing, educating, evaluating and supporting individuals and organizations in the development of the most suitable career paths;
- the diverse context in which the career counsellor must promote all conditions so that the individual has the opportunity to develop both as a person, as a professional, and as a member of society.

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