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Content and English Abstracts

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English Abstracts

Quality Development and Evidence Base for Career Guidance – the Influence of International Research and Policy Development on Career Guidance Policy and Research in Germany

Judith Langner and Karen Schober

Over the last 15 to 20 years, the development of career guidance and counselling in Germany has been significantly influenced by international policy, research and practice. The article gives an overview of the most important activities of international organisations, for example the OECD, the UN (ILO and UNESCO), the IAEVG and the EU. The tools developed by the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN), such as the Quality Assurance and Evidence Base Framework (QAE) and the ELGPN Lifelong Guidance Evidence Guide on international research findings, are described in detail as they are designed to support policymakers in the EU and the member states in reviewing and improving their guidance policies and practices. Germany benefited from the ELGPN concept of lifelong guidance and the transversal and cross-sectoral approach of lifelong guidance, which had an impact on several policy documents (e.g. the government's strategy for demographic change, the renewal of the guidance concept in the Public Employment Service (Bundesagentur für Arbeit)). Furthermore, the Evidence Guide brought the German guidance research community together to present their different projects and approaches in order to evaluate and investigate guidance outcomes, impact and evidence for policy and practice. It thus enhanced the interdisciplinary discussion of various research approaches and methodological difficulties in collecting solid data and measuring guidance outcomes and impact.

Moving beyond ‘what works’: Using the Evidence base in lifelong Guidance to inform Policy Making

Tristram Hooley

This chapter examines the evidence base in career guidance. It argues that such evidence should be a critical part of policy making in the field. Career guidance has a strong relevance to a range of policy agendas associated with the education system, the labour market and with wider social policies. The paper sets out a hierarchical model of impacts which it defines as investment, take-up, reaction, learning, behaviour, results and return on investment. Policy makers should seek to discover whether career guidance interventions are making impacts at each of these levels. The chapter argues that the evidence base for career guidance uses a wide range of methods, that it is multi-disciplinary and international and that it provides evidence of all of the levels of impact outlined. It also notes that career guidance is a lifelong activity and that evidence exists to support its utilisation at all life stages (although the depth of this evidence varies across life stages). Finally, the paper argues that the evidence base highlights a number of lessons for policy makers as follows. Career guidance should: (1) be lifelong and progressive; (2) be connected to wider experience; (3) recognise the diversity of individuals and their needs; (4) involve employers and working people, and providing active experiences of workplaces; (5) be understood as not one intervention, but many; (6) develop career management skills; (7) be holistic and well-integrated into other services; (8) ensuring professionalism; (9) make use of career information; and (10) assuring quality and evaluate provision.

Impact Dimensions for Guidance and Counselling in Education, Career and Employment and Requirements for the Exploration thereof

Christiane Schiersmann and Peter Weber

The research on the impact of guidance and counselling is a young research field – still weakly developed in Europe. At the same time, it is methodologically very challenging. In order to clarify the specificity of impact research, this article first clarifies the differences and similarities that can be observed with regard to the related concepts of evaluation, quality management, and evidence-based policy and practice. Different input, process, output and outcome aspects are subsequently characterized as the central impact-dimensions of guidance and counselling. These are underpinned by examples from German and European studies. The conclusion outlines implications for a future, systematic impact research.

“You Get What You Measure”? Professional Policy Considerations for a Guidance Monitoring and Reporting System

Karen Schober and Bernd Käpplinger

Evidence-based lifelong guidance policy is committed to designing guidance services according to the needs and interests of users. It requires reliable empirical data about the form, scope and quality of services, the participation of different target groups in guidance services as well as evidence about the outcomes and impact of guidance interventions. From a professional policy perspective, it would also be most desirable to have sound empirical information about guidance issues to make the efforts and impact of guidance services visible. At the same time, this could also point out potential deficits in the delivery of these services. To date, only very few, sound empirical data are available regarding the career guidance sector. These could be used for systematic monitoring and reporting in order to strengthen the evidence base of lifelong guidance. The paper shows possible ways of establishing a data and indicator-based monitoring and reporting system in the field of career guidance.

However, the authors are aware of the need to establish a sound theoretical and empirical basis before conceptualising a system of indicators for such a monitoring system. Furthermore, researchers and policymakers should be very clear about the goals of a monitoring system and whom it is supposed to serve. It should also be clear what ‘evidence base’ means with regard to career guidance. Finally, the authors present some considerations regarding a framework for guidance indicators and potential scenarios of implementation.

Non-Expected Decrease in Guidance and Counselling Related to Continuing Education? The Adult Education Survey (AES) as a Source for Analysing Guidance and Counselling

Bernd Käpplinger and Frauke Bilger

The European Adult Education Survey (AES) and its German predecessor Berichtssystem Weiterbildung (BSW) are seminal, well-established surveys. A number of core questions concerning guidance and counselling in relation to continuing education have been posed for decades although the surveys are mainly focused on participation in adult learning. Guidance and counselling are minor issues but some German scholars focused on it at an early stage, which informed the methodology of the AES. Long-term developments have been observed in Germany since 1991. At first glance, some decreasing results appear disturbing since they could question premature assumptions made by policymakers and scientists about a general need for further information on continuing education. However, the results could also indicate that the provision and visibility of guidance and counselling are not as extensive and sustainable as might be assumed when looking solely at the many non-permanent projects and programmes. The general level of user satisfaction with guidance and counselling services has vastly increased over the last few years. This could be due to changes in service providers. Nonetheless, the valuable data provided by AES are also relatively limited in scope and depth. Data that are even more detailed are required from a separate survey with a major focus on guidance and counselling.

Multi-Level Approach of Measuring Outcomes and Effects for Public Career Guidance in Berlin

Birte Komosin and Henning Kruse

In light of the growing interest in the effects of career and education guidance, the municipal government of Berlin initiated the development of an instrument that may provide some evidence in this matter. Challenged by the necessity of effectiveness and given the short intervention time of the guidance itself, the instrument had to

be both economical and practical. The authors show their approach, which is based on the specific aims of the guidance at an international level (OECD) and out of municipal labour market policy. They describe indicators that were derived on different levels to reveal the extent to which these aims are achieved. The approach is characterised by the combination of 'hard' and 'soft' outcomes and effects. To obtain the data, they implemented a system that embeds the measurement of effects in the mandatory case documentation. Consultants launched an automated process, during which the clients are invited to take part in a two-stage survey. The results can be synchronised with the case documentation, enabling differentiated evaluations. The results of the first year already allow significant statements to be made about the effects of guidance. They are used on both the micro and the macro level to monitor and manage guidance processes. Guidance organisations and government obtain real-time results via an interactive statistics tool, which is integrated in the web-based documentation system.

Effectiveness of Guidance on Further Education – Quasi-Experimental Evidence achieved in the "Dresdner Bildungsbahnen" Project

Norbert Schanne and Antje Weyh

The impact of educational guidance can only be assessed by a comparison between counselled persons and untreated controls with similar characteristics. In this study, data on participation in the "Dresdner Bildungsbahnen" guidance programme (focused on experienced workers) is linked with record data from the Federal Employment Agency. Not only does this allow a control group to be established, it also enables the further careers of counselled persons and controls to be observed.

Depending on the educational guidance, un-/non-employed persons show increased participation in further training for 18 months. During this period, they experience more days of unemployment and earn less money due to counselling. However, the negative labour market effects are rarely statistically significant; they can be interpreted as a lock-in effect of the training efforts and are cleared two years after counselling at the latest.

The Impact of Student Counselling – Learning Motivation, Career Planning, Resilience and Drop-Out prevention

Istvan Kiss

The impact factors of student counselling were examined, based on cross-sectional studies in Hungary followed by a longitudinal pilot project in Germany. The Student Service Impact Inventory (SSII; Kiss, Weber, in print) was piloted in collaboration with the Student Counselling Centre/Career Service team at Heidelberg University. The results confirm that information delivery and work-related experiences may support informed study decisions by strengthening the students' self-efficacy. However, student counselling, especially face-to-face conversations, may offer considerable benefit compared to the mere transfer of information. The effects of individual counselling in study-related issues and career planning are significantly higher. The counselling sessions strengthen career management skills, while the elaboration of future career plans increase students' resilience. These protect against dysfunctional cognitive attitudes, which could be a significant contributory factor for dropouts. Students with realistic plans and proper career management strategies are better protected against stress during their studies. They perceive problems as less threatening and have greater resources to cope with them. These effects – especially the increase in career-related self-efficacy – can still be detected a long time after completing the counselling process. The research data also confirm that a process counselling with three meetings, investing about two hours, has a demonstrable effect on students' coping strategies. It is possible to increase the effectiveness of services provided by bundling the offers and networking the consultancy services. Investing in university counselling is a highly profitable educational policy decision. The prevention of just a few dropouts at a university could well save the annual salary of a student counsellor.

Subjective Quality Management in Vocational Counselling – Effective Counselling from the Counsellors' Perspective

Bernd-Joachim Ertelt, Heiner Bleckmann and Thomas Röser

In recent years, ELGPN (the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network) has developed a Quality Assurance and Evidence Base (QAE) framework and, in cooperation with the IBW (Institute for Consulting Sciences) at Heidelberg University, the nfb (National Forum of Guidance practitioners) has developed a system for measuring guidance quality known as BeQu. Both systems are able to initiate and structure development processes at the

political, organisational and professional level. The goal is to develop categorial systems for quality assurance and professionalisation and, in particular, to implement them in daily practice, with emphasis on the perception of situational events from the perspective of guidance consultants. In 2014, the research forum of the dvb (German Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance) initiated a pilot study into how professional guidance consultants who are active in the field of vocational counselling perceive individual success. It proved possible to involve partner organisations in six different European countries in the study, although with widely diverging methodology. The dominance of subjective success was demonstrated in the international comparison. For the practitioner, the 'feeling of having helped the client' is the essential evaluation factor that determines the success of a guidance session. It is not the constant stream of new catalogues or systems for quality management, but scientific curiosity and 'modesty', the practical reality of their work combined with their skills as guidance practitioners that should be the basis for externally set quality criteria in order to develop and improve guidance practice in the long term.

Guidance as a Personal Employment Service – Concepts of Evidence-Based Evaluation and Empirical Approaches

Peter Bartelheimer

This paper discusses the qualitative evaluation of placement-oriented guidance for jobseekers provided by the German Public Employment Service (PES). Realistic evaluation designs need to consider what is specific to these services: other types of practical activity, like referring jobseekers to employers with vacancies, eligibility checks and an activating control of search strategies may interfere with the professional logic of counselling. While case officers have to implement institutional rules and are bound by their agency's business objectives, effective service 'co-production' also calls for building a supportive service relationship with individual jobseekers. In assessing outcomes and impact, the choice of perspective is crucial: whereas jobseekers derive benefit when services give direction to their strategies and enlarge their employment options, other criteria may be targeted by the PES. Theories and assumptions on the workings and impact of interactive service work cannot be tested without direct, non-participant observation of casework and the reconstruction of individual cases. Reconstructive evaluations may target agreements reached on individual objectives, the accessibility of individually valued employment options and the adoption of professional guidance standards by caseworkers or jobseekers' criteria in assessing service quality.

Impact of Intense Counselling and Individualised Job Placement in the "Berliner Joboffensive"

Katrin Hunger and Marco Puxi

The objective of the triannual pilot project, "Berliner Joboffensive", was to increase the number of integrations into the first labour market by an intensified assistance and more individualised counselling approach. The programme was aimed at the long-term unemployed, who were profiled as being relatively close to the labour market. Additional staff were employed in the 12 participating Job Centres in Berlin to ensure an improved ratio of Job Centre staff to clients (1:100). The evaluation of the programme was carried out by ISG using a combined qualitative and quantitative approach. The qualitative implementation study, integrating stakeholders on the strategic and operational level in semi-structured interviews and case studies within a longitudinal analysis in three waves, focused on assessing whether the individualized counselling and intensified job placement activities helped to increase the chances of finding a new job. In addition, a counterfactual impact evaluation was performed on basic process data collected by the Federal Employment Agency on an individual basis, matching information on participants with non-participants. The evaluation showed significant positive effects of the project in terms of the transition into unsubsidized work and stability of jobs. In addition, the results of the implementation study showed one positive effect of the project in terms of quality in counselling and matching strategies of the Job Centres. Moreover, the financial savings realized within the project exceeded the additional staff costs.

Effects of One-To-One Career Counselling Sessions on the Individual Career Choice Readiness of Young Adults in the Transition from School to Work

Matthias Rübner and Stefan Höft

The study investigates the effectiveness of one-to-one career counselling for school leavers under the age of 25, who are qualified for apprenticeships. The focus is on career choice readiness (CCR), a construct originating from Super's concept of vocational maturity: CCR is defined as the readiness and ability of a person to reach a well-founded career decision. Our working model differentiates five CCR dimensions (problem awareness, vocational self-evaluation, level of vocational information, decision behaviour, and realisation activity), measured by a 16-item self-report questionnaire (called BET16-U25), which was designed and validated in a previous study. We measured the CCR status of N=605 career-counselling clients participating voluntarily in one-to-one counselling sessions at three points: immediately prior to the counselling session, three days and three months after the career guidance intervention. Results suggest a positive change of CCR overall as well as in several dimensions. The effects are moderated by the level of problem awareness expressed by clients prior to career guidance. The effect sizes are in the lower to medium range and correspond to the effect sizes reported in meta-analysis. The positive effects of career counselling remain stable over a period of three months. Higher CCR also correlates to the initiation of certain vocational activities.

(Partial) Integration auf Qualitative and Quantitative Impact Assessment: the Evaluation of the German Career Entry Guidance Programme (Berufseinstiegsbegleitung)

Bernhard Boockmann

Taking the example of the German Career Entry Guidance Programme, this article shows that linking qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods generates research results that could not have been obtained by applying only one methodology or the isolated application of the two approaches. The inclusion of qualitative results in the interpretation of the estimated quantitative effects helps in interpreting the results appropriately. Conversely, the quantitative results allow us to examine the generality of the conclusions observed in the case studies. While the article stresses the scientific potential of integrating research methods, it also indicates possible limitations.

Extratherapeutic Factors in psycho-social and socio-pedagogic Counselling

Kathy Küchenmeister and Annett Kupfer

Different reviews and meta-analytic results confirm that counselling interventions are helpful in coping with daily struggles and crisis situations. Nevertheless, it remains to be clarified which part of counselling is actually helpful. According to Asay and Lambert (2001, "The Big Four"), extratherapeutic factors (40 %), the relationship between therapist/counsellor and client (30 %), placebo effects (15 %) and therapeutic- counselling methodology (15 %) are relevant factors for the counselling outcome. Despite their obviously considerable effects, social and 'contextual' influences are widely neglected in psychotherapy and counselling research, as well as in theory and Practice. This paper illustrates the results of a DFG research project, focusing on the 'extratherapeutic factors'. Results show a close integration of the counselling clients in (emotional) supportive networks, which not only support and promote the seeking of professional help to a large extent, but also (positively) influence the professional counselling relationship and have a decisive impact on the success or outcome of professional intervention. However, these omnipresent social effects often remain unreflected and are rarely included in the professional helping process.