



Interactive Poster session

03-10-2025 - 10:00 - 10:30

P-01 The Role of Emotional Difficulties and Prosocial Behavior in Career Adaptability among Students in General Upper Secondary Education

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Objectives and theoretical basis: Preparing for vocational futures, making independent decisions, and taking responsibility are fundamental to career adaptability. According to career construction theory (Savickas, 1997, 2002, 2005; Savickas et al., 2009), career adaptability is a continuous integration process where individuals actively build their careers and respond to challenges. However, their responses depend on their resources and perceived barriers (Savickas, 2005). The self-regulation resources of individuals have been seen crucial for adolescents navigating developmental tasks, occupational transitions and work-related challenges (Savickas, 2002, 2005). These resources also play a role in determining how effectively individuals can integrate their self-identity with their professional roles, as highlighted by research from Savickas (2005) and Savickas & Porfeli (2012).

Previous research (Henriksson et al., 2019; Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, 2023) has raised growing concerns about well-being issues among secondary school students, such as emotional difficulties and anxiety, which can lead to adverse outcomes like low postsecondary enrollment, high dropout rates (Sanford et al., 2011), difficulties during educational transitions, obstacles in securing employment and lower vocational identity (Brehmer et al., 2023). Research also indicates that protective factors such as prosocial behavior serve as vital elements in the holistic development of young individuals, fostering overall well-being and promoting mental health (Murphy et al., 2010). Given that upper secondary education is not only academically rigorous and serves as preparation for future postgraduate studies but also occurs within a high-pressure environment that can adversely impact students' well-being, this study specifically examines the role that resources, defined as prosocial behavior, and barriers, defined as emotional difficulties, play as individual predictors across various dimensions of career adaptabilities (CAAS) among adolescents in general upper secondary schools.

Methods/Methodology: This quantitative research study, conducted between 2018 and 2021 as part of the "Pathway to Supported and Holistic Career Counseling in Upper Secondary School" project in Eastern Finland, recruited participants from six general upper secondary schools, evenly split between urban and rural areas. A total of 214 boys and 244 girls in the beginning of the study, attending general upper secondary school reported their strengths and difficulties (SDQ) and their career adaptability (CAAS) in the beginning and end of studies. Structural equation modeling was performed to test theoretical hypothesis about the relation between emotional difficulties and prosocial behavior to career adaptability.

Results: In the first year, emotional symptoms were linked to lower levels of career control and confidence. There were no gender differences found in these relationships.

In the end of their studies, emotional symptoms continued to negatively impact career control, confidence, curiosity and concern. Additionally, prosocial behavior positively influenced career curiosity and confidence. Similar to the first year, no gender differences were observed.

Discussion: Our study revealed that both emotional difficulties and prosocial behavior predicted different dimensions of career adaptability, and these relationships vary between the beginning of general upper secondary school and the end of it. Our analyses suggest that counsellors should integrate social dimensions into career planning when designing structures, practices and interventions for career counselling. We propose that interventions should promote prosocial behavior, as they can help students develop positive career resources and better prepare themselves for future career transitions. In particular, interventions could focus on enhancing and recognising the resources of students who exhibit emotional difficulties, as our study indicated that career adaptability resources are especially lacking for these students. Based on our research findings, the SDQ could serve as an effective assessment tool for identifying individuals with distinct barriers and resources, helping to recognise those who would benefit from targeted guidance services and support in navigating their career paths.

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P-02 "I need to clearly be something in order to be something." Finnish General upper secondary education girls' peer sociality negotiations

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This research investigates how Finnish general upper secondary school (GUS) girls negotiate peer sociality within a gendered school environment. Previous research, focusing on the Finnish context, has largely focused on peer relations in lower secondary school and leisure contexts (Armila & Käyhkö, 2022; Kulmalainen, 2015). Our research seeks to address this gap by focusing on GUS context and on gendered hierarchies and diversity as a specific issue (Lehtonen, 2023; Taavetti, 2018; Worthen, 2023). Concerns about girls' well-being often individualise the issue, overlooking how schools function as gendered institutions that transmit local cultural ideals and expectations (Þrastardóttir et al., 2021; Francis, 2005; Kulmalainen, 2015). Our study approaches peer sociality through girlhood and femininity, showing how gendered norms—linked to care, emotionality, and compliance—are culturally constructed and reinforced in peer interactions, shaping girls' agency and social positioning (Adler et al., 1992; Omojemite et al., 2024).

In our research, we ask: How is peer sociality negotiated in the GUS girls' accounts? What kinds of gendered interpretations are associated with it? And how does GUS as an institutional context inform or frame these negotiation processes? Based on in-depth interviews with 11 girls and the data were analyzed using dialogical thematization. The research identifies four categories of peer sociality: as a resource, a competitive arena, unattainable, and undesirable. These categories reflect the diverse ways in which peer relationships influence girls' academic engagement and sense of belonging. While some girls find emotional and academic support in peer groups, others experience pressure, exclusion, or choose to distance themselves from relationships. The research highlights how girls often feel the need to "be something" to gain social acceptance, revealing the gendered expectations embedded in school culture. Peer sociality is shaped by institutional structures, such as class organization and teacher practices, which may either support or hinder social inclusion. The findings emphasize the importance of recognizing the gendered nature of peer dynamics and call for schools to foster inclusive, supportive environments.

Keywords: Finnish general upper secondary school; Peer sociality; Girlhood studies; Gender; Feminism

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P-03 Career Counsellors in the Context of Higher Education Reforms in Latvia

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The relevance of the study is related to the expansion of the professional activities of career counselors, which has been influenced by continuous socio-economic changes today and has created various challenges for career counselors to enable conditions and promote people's career designing in a dynamic and uncertain context. The International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) (International Competencies for Educational..., 2018) indicates that continuous structural changes in the labor market, labor migration and the increase in the pace of technological development in the last decade have been the main reasons why the issue of professional activities and the training of career guidance specialists has become relevant. The impact of these topics on the provision of career development support is observed both in EU countries and globally, as evidenced by several scientific studies (Enoch et al., 2022; European Lifelong Learning ..., 2015; Ertelt et al., 2011). This also applies to the education of career counselors in Latvia higher education institutions.

The objective of the study is to assess:

How the role and professional activities of a career counselor have changed in dynamic socio-economic conditions.

How this context has changed the training of career guidance specialists in Latvia higher education.

The research methodology includes theoretical studies of career counselling, career guidance and human resource management.

The results of the study indicate that it is necessary to evaluate both the professional profile and professional roles of a career counselor, as well as the complex and diverse context in which a career counselor must enable the conditions for a person to manage their own career and plan their own life. The results of the study are significant because they provide insight into the problems of career counseling and guidance in the development of a wider society.

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P-04 Leadership and policy-driven service innovation in career guidance – a scoping review

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In keeping with how Paradise et al. (2010) have identified a knowledge gap in career guidance literature, the overall purpose of this project is to acquire new knowledge about public service innovation, leadership and philosophies on leadership within career guidance.

The overarching topic of my PhD-project is the career guidance services offered to adults by the Norwegian county municipalities, and how these have been strategically developed over the past years. The concept of public services is multi-dimensional. To narrow the scope of my research, my projects and articles will explore the processes of policy driven service innovation or development in the county municipal career guidance services. The relationship between national and local policies, organization, careers leaders' competencies and philosophies on leadership within the county municipal career services are particularly important aspects of these processes and will be a continuous theme in the project.

Research question

To build an initial understanding of the topic I will explore, I will begin by conducting a systematic literature review in the effort to determine *what research has been done on leadership and policy-driven service innovation or development within the career guidance field*. Part of this work will determine what terms are used to describe the concepts that I am exploring, which also contributes to an understanding of the topic.

Theoretical concepts

I aim to analyse how management and service innovation in career guidance, viewed as parts of a system, function within the county municipalities, seen as systems, to produce career guidance services. This can theoretically be understood through a systems theory approach.

The overall theoretical foundation of the project could then be seen as a systemic-constructivist approach to creating accessible, comprehensive and high-quality career guidance services (Kriz, 2010).

Since recurring themes are leadership and public service innovation, I consider it relevant to anchor later analyses and discussions in theoretical perspectives on organization and public service innovation (Chen et al., 2020).

Methodology

To determine the scale of my topic, I follow the methodology of Booth et al. (2022) and conducted a scoping search as basis for writing a scoping review. The primary objective is to write a review that gives useful insights on the topic.

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P-05 Organization, Management, and Design of County Municipal Career Services in Norway – a PhD-project

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My PhD-research investigates the organization, management, and design of career guidance services for adults provided by Norwegian county municipalities, focusing on policy-driven service innovation. The study aims to explore how national and local policies, organizational structures, and leadership philosophies influence the development and operationalization of these services. Grounded in social constructivism and systems theory, the research examines public organizations as systems where individuals interact within structured processes. The project seeks to address the knowledge gap identified in career guidance literature regarding leadership roles (Paradise et al., 2010), with the ultimate goal of enhancing the quality and accessibility of career services as recommended by the OECD (OECD, 2014a, 2014b)

Methods

The project employs a mixed research design combining a systematic literature review, an ethnographic organizational study, and a Q-methodological study. The integrative scoping review will build an initial understanding of the topic by defining relevant concepts and constructs. A comprehensive search in academic databases and grey literature sources will be conducted using pearl harvesting, information interviews, and citation searching to ensure a thorough review (Booth et al., 2022; Farace et al., 2010; Sandieson et al., 2010). The ethnographic study involves qualitative, semi-structured interviews with managers responsible for county municipal career services, supplemented by document analyses (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Williamson, 2006). Interviews may be conducted digitally or in person, depending on resource availability (Thunberg & Arnell, 2022). Data will be recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using ethnographic techniques framed by social constructivist theory. The final Q-methodological study will explore leadership philosophies based on the findings from the previous subprojects. (Watts & Stenner, 2005, 2012)

The integrative scoping review aims to identify existing research and terminologies related to leadership and service innovation within career guidance. Preliminary searches have indicated that leadership and service innovation within career guidance is an underexplored area, thus highlighting the relevance of this study (EBSCO Industries Inc., 2024). The review will combine academic literature and relevant grey literature (Farace et al., 2010), such as policy documents and frameworks for practice. The findings will be synthesized in narrative and graphical forms to provide a comprehensive overview.

The ethnographic organizational study seeks to understand how leaders working with career guidance in the county municipalities translate national policies, legislation, local policy plans, and the quality framework for career guidance into practice. Qualitative, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with managers responsible for county municipal career services. Local policy documents

and legislative histories will also be analyzed. The interviews may be conducted digitally or in person, and the data will be recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using ethnographic techniques framed by social constructivist theory (Williamson, 2006).

The Q-methodological study will explore the subjective understandings and views that career leaders hold on how they practice leadership. This mixed method approach involves constructing a set of statements representing different subjective views, which participants will sort and rank. Statistical analyses will be conducted to identify different subjective viewpoints, followed by qualitative interpretation of the data (Thorsen et al., 2010; Watts & Stenner, 2005, 2012)

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes include a detailed understanding of how career guidance services are managed and designed within Norwegian county municipalities. The integrative scoping review will provide insights into existing research and terminologies related to leadership and service innovation within career guidance. The ethnographic organizational study will reveal how leaders translate policies into practice, offering a comprehensive understanding of the operationalization of career guidance services. The Q-methodological study will explore the subjective viewpoints of career leaders, providing insights into leadership philosophies and service innovation.

Overall, the research aims to reveal the interplay between policy development, leadership philosophies, and service innovation, contributing to the systematic improvement of career services. Insights gained will be applicable not only to career guidance but also to other health and welfare services, enhancing the overall quality and coherence of public service provision. The findings will be synthesized into models that represent "Model Services," providing a basis for further research and practical applications.

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P-06 Proposal for a national competency framework for career professionals in Finland

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As part of the national development project on lifelong guidance, coordinated by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, and the Development and Administration Centre (KEHA Centre), the Finnish Institute for Educational Research of the University of Jyväskylä has prepared a proposal for the competency descriptions of guidance professionals as presented in the National Strategy for Lifelong Guidance 2020-24. Several hundred guidance professionals participated in co-creation of the competence descriptions, including practitioners from all levels of education, public and private employment services, youth services, guidance professionals' organisations, student organisations, training units, ministries, regional and public administrations, and expert bodies. The Proposal for the National Competency Framework for Career Professionals consists of three main areas: professionalism, client work, and systemic competency. Together these provide a foundation for the competency of professionals working in different lifelong guidance settings and a tool for competency assessment and development. The descriptions consist of 12 competence areas which are divided into more detailed smaller parts.

P-07 Objectives and contents in the Finnish career guidance professionals' training programs

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As part of the national development project on lifelong guidance, coordinated by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, and the Development and Administration Centre (KEHA Centre), the Finnish Institute for Educational Research of the University of Jyväskylä has conducted an evaluation of the training programs of career professionals in Finland as presented in the National Strategy for Lifelong Guidance 2020–24. The evaluation focused on the structure and content of the programs leading to legally defined qualifications of guidance counsellors in education and psychologists, on programs which provide opportunities to work in guidance related activities and on existing in-service training modules. Based on the analysis of existing curricula, main focus seem to be on competences related to actual work with different client groups with knowledge of guidance theories. More attention needs to be paid on digital competence, identification and acquisition of career management skills as well as evaluation and monitoring the outcomes and impact of guidance processes and programs

