Study of Vocational Client Profile: Implications for Educational Settings
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BACKGROUND

Following recommendations for vocational intervention (e.g., Lent, 2001; Savickas, 2001; Fouad, 2001; Vondracek, 2001), and based on career theory and research, the mission of the Career Counseling Psychology and Human Development, in the Department of Psychology, University of Minho, is to:

- To facilitate scientific understanding of career choice and development
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- To promote Psychology students' and professionals' training in career counseling issues

In this study, the assessment intervention outcomes have been recently incorporated into our applied research activity. Outcome effects might be improved by conceptualizing and diagnosing individual intervention goals and decision-making difficulties, and by tailoring intervention efforts to these goals and difficulties (Brown & Madefall, 2001).

PURPOSE AND HYPOTHESIS

In this paper the conceptualization and diagnosis of career problems at the Career Counseling Unit of the Center for Counseling Psychology and Human Development, CIOCUPH and the Department of Psychology, University of Minho – are presented and discussed, considering that clients sources for their career decision-making difficulties and their reasons for seeking career counseling are not uniform, and that it may vary as a function of clients gender and age as well as a function of psychologists classification.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Five diagnostic models are used more frequently in career counseling behavior analysis: (Kanfer & Saksheff, 1985), developmental (Criss, 1988; kop & Criss, 1982), ability-oriented (Gershonold, 1986), personality assessment (Holland, 1985), and pro-life focused (Campbell, Clarke, Skilley, Long & Pakos, 1978, 1986) (see Kaplan, 1984).

This study evaluates the advantages of using a problem-focused diagnostic model with young and adult career counseling clients, based on the use of the Diagnostic Assessment of Career Development Problems developed by Campbell et al. (1977). This taxonomy provides a framework emphasizing problem identification, analysis, and resolution in career intervention, especially for adults. Problem categories identified were: Problems in career decision-making, Problems in implementing career plans, Problems in organizational/institutional action. Problems in organizational/institutional action (see Table 1).

The study's sample included 105 clients (64, 57.1% men and 72, 42.9% men) with ages between 15 and 59 years (ME 21.12, DE 4.7, Aged) individual (ME 86.6%, group 57, 58.3% or total 0.76%)(valid) of clients (total 1, 26% or total 0.76%)(valid) valid of career counseling at the CIOCUPH, during the academic years of 2006-2007. And also, a random sample of 557 work professionals of different types of practice, who diagnosed their problems with the diagnostic problem and individual intervention model (group 1, with more than 5 years of experience), who diagnosed 78, 46.4% of the 24, 14.3% of the 578, 33% of the clients, and group 3, with less than 1 year of experience, who classified 24, 14.3% of the clients.

RESULTS

Table 1. Results of Diagnostic Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Problem in Career Decision Making</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Problem in Implementing Career Plans</td>
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<td>3. Problem in Organizational/Institutional Action</td>
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CONCLUSIONS

- Assessment of career problems and difficulties based on a problem focused diagnostic model evidenced individual differences in clients career counseling motives and career decision-making difficulties, as well as counselors individual differences in diagnostic assessment as function of their level of practical experience. This knowledge should be used to adjust career interventions to clients’ characteristics and surpass the more common belief on the uniformity of career indecision sources among different groups of clients.

- Several models of diagnostic assessment can be used in career counseling. Research on the described advantages and disadvantages can offer a more comprehensive view of assessment instruments and activities in career counseling.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


