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**CAREER MANAGEMENT OF SPECIAL PEOPLE
NEEDS IN THE LABOUR MARKET**

Katarina Kravos

Assistant,
Department of Educational Sciences,
University of Primorska,
Koper, Slovenia

E-mail: kravos.katarina@gmail.com
orcid.org/0000-0003-0726-5063

Introduction. The paper reviews the literature on characteristics of labour market and its effect on career of people with special needs. While independent career guidance and management remains difficult for people with special needs, because of the rapid changes in the modern labour market, the evidence shows that their career remains a challenge mostly because of the way they are viewed – they are often viewed through their deficits, disabilities, and illnesses.

Aim and tasks. The purpose of this paper is to suggest a new, inclusive perspective in career counselling of persons with special needs and their careers. By abandoning the medical paradigm in career of people with special needs, we focus on advantage competences model and self-determination.

Results. It is shown that today's labour market has become unstable and unpredictable, which can be proven by an increased development of atypical ways of employment. The changes in today's labour market have also affected the careers of people with special needs, who are additionally faced with possible illnesses, disorders, and other barriers. Therefore, we may expect that they may require more help from career advisers and different approaches in counselling. In addition, characteristics of today's labour market suggest that we must focus on different career understanding – not as a guidance, as it cannot be further predicted, but as management, to become our own life/career agent. It should not be any different in people with special needs.

The area of employing people with special needs has not yet abandon the medical paradigm, which is a barrier for their career management. Thus the new inclusive approach has been developed – an advantage competence model. In the model competences of people with special needs, there are a basis for career interventions, for finding a prospective area of career, where they are more likely to succeed. The model supports self-determination, which is recognized as a way of improving one's self-esteem, a positive career identity, autonomy, maintain or improve quality of life and person's active participation.

Conclusions. Although the guidance and management of career is a challenge nowadays, it should be viewed as a positive challenge, which can nurture and develop our curiosity, flexibility, optimism, and gaining knowledge. The growing needs for labour market knowledge urge people to constantly gain competences, therefore, they can become managers of their own careers. Nevertheless, this process of career management should not be any different with people with special needs. By using advantages competence model, we rely on strengths every person has and builds on the potential of their independent career managing.

Keywords: career management, counseling, labour market, people with special needs, competences.

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КАР'ЄРНЕ УПРАВЛІННЯ ЛЮДЕЙ З ОСОБЛИВИМИ ПОТРЕБАМИ НА РИНКУ ПРАЦІ

Катаріна Кравос

Асистент кафедри освітніх наук,
Приморський Університет,
Копер, Словенія

E-mail: kravos.katarina@gmail.com
orcid.org/0000-0003-0726-5063

Вступ. У статті досліджуються характеристики сучасного ринку праці та його вплив на кар'єру людей з особливими потребами. Хоча незалежне профорієнтаційне керівництво та управління залишаються складними для людей з особливими потребами через швидкі зміни на сучасному ринку праці, дані свідчать, що їхня кар'єра залишається викликом, головним чином, завдяки тому, як вони сприймаються.

Мета і завдання. Метою даної роботи є запропонування нової перспективи в професійному консультуванні осіб з особливими потребами та їхній кар'єрі. Відмовляючись від медичної парадигми в кар'єрі людей з особливими потребами, ми орієнтуємося на модель переваг компетенцій та самовизначення.

Результати. Показано, що сьогоднішній ринок праці став нестабільним та непередбачуваним, що може бути підтверджено посиленням розвитку нетипових способів зайнятості. Зміни на ринку праці сьогодні вплинули і на кар'єру людей з особливими потребами, які додатково стикаються з можливими хворобами, розладами та іншими бар'єрами. Тому ми можемо очікувати, що вони можуть зажадати більшої допомоги кар'єрних радників та різних підходів у консультуванні. Крім того, характеристики сучасного ринку праці говорять про те, що ми повинні зосередитись на різному розумінні кар'єри – не як настанові, як це не може бути надалі прогнозовано, а як менеджмент кар'єри. Сфера працевлаштування людей з особливими потребами ще не відмовилася від медичної парадигми, яка є бар'єром для їх кар'єрного управління. Таким чином, був розроблений новий інклюзивний підхід переваги компетенції. У компетенціях людей з особливими потребами є основа для кар'єрних втручань, пошуку перспективного напрямку кар'єри. Ця модель підтримує самовизначення, яке визнається способом поліпшення самооцінки, позитивної кар'єрної ідентичності, самостійності, підтримання або покращення якості життя та активної участі людини.

Висновки. Незважаючи на те, що керівництво та управління кар'єрою зараз є викликом, це слід розглядати як позитивний виклик, який може розвивати та розвивати нашу цікавість, гнучкість, оптимізм та здобуття знань. Зростаючі потреби в знаннях про ринок праці спонукають людей постійно здобувати компетенції, тому вони можуть стати менеджерами своєї власної кар'єри. Тим не менш, цей процес управління кар'єрою не повинен відрізнятися від людей з особливими потребами. Використовуючи модель компетенцій переваг, ми спираємось на сильні сторони кожної людини та спираємось на потенціал незалежного управління кар'єрою.

Ключові слова: кар'єрне управління, консультування, ринок праці, люди з особливими потребами, компетенції.

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Introduction. Today's world of work is marked with instability, fastness of constant new changes, risks, and unpredictability in jobs and employment [1, 2, 4]. These are all results of fast technological development and modernization, which brought a deeper understanding and need for information and communication technology (IKT) in the modern world of work. Furthermore, the development of IKT made today's world of work change [3] – it enables and increases atypical ways of employment [4]. Atypical ways of employment are for example temporary jobs, “gig economy”, work from home, project work, etc. [3, 4]. Organizations are also often temporarily shut down by completing projects, immediately leaving all employees without work. Employment contracts are becoming flexible and temporary, since business relationships are uncertain [5]. Such ways of employment enable a person to become more independent, free, and flexible [1]. As such, person's knowledge is greatly valued in today's world of work, as are social skills, multitasking, creativity, and the meaning of lifelong, constant learning [3].

This vastness of changes forces workers to try to construct their own life and shape their own identity in a different way [6]. In that sense, we speak of individual's career construction, which is especially important nowadays as unpredictability makes it hard for every person to plan a stable and predictable career [2].

Getting into today's world of work requires more effort, deeper self-knowledge, trust [6], and learnt optimism. Especially learnt optimism in nowadays fast changing world enables a person to maintain stability concurring these changes and challenges [7]. However, some individuals may require help dealing with unstable employment and frequent transitions from career advisers [6].

The discussed changes in today's world of work have also affected the careers of people with special needs. Measures of positive discrimination, such as job preservation or prohibition of dismissals, have become ineffective [5], since most jobs are basically temporary. Furthermore, such dynamic situations, rising demands of the employment environment of constant, lifelong learning, rapid employment transitions, and constant adaptation

to new work environments affect careers of people with special needs, who are additionally faced with more problems than people without special needs, such as possible illnesses, disorders and other barriers. In addition to that, we may expect that people with special needs may require more help from career advisers and different approaches in counselling [6].

However, the question remains, which approach in counselling is affective for persons with special needs facing the demands of today's world of work. Existing approaches to career management and guidance, based on classical rehabilitation approaches, have proved ineffective, because they are suited for permanent, typical employments. It is not a question, which theories or approaches are better, but which theory is more appropriate for today's situation [8]. For that, we have to answer a question of how persons with special needs can face the challenges of a new labour market and realize their own career.

Analysis recent research and publications.

Although Super [9] in his theory of career development explains that individual's self-concept should have a key role in choosing a profession and managing his or her own career, self-concept can be found as a central topic in other theories of careers as well. Either in structural (Holland), developmental (Super, & Ginzberg) circumstances and compromises (Gottfredson), or also in more modern – social cognitive (Lent, Brown, & Hacquet) and constructivist (Savickas) theories [2]. Savickas [6] in particular understands the importance of construction and reconstruction of one's self-concept for the purpose of individual's career planning or counselling.

Generally speaking, self-concept can be defined as a product of vast interactions, including individual's life experiences and environmental factors; perception of self, including emotional factors of self (self-confidence, self-worth, ability etc.) [10]. Slovenian author Kopal Grum [11] summarizes and combines various definitions and defines “itself” as an organized whole of characteristics, moves, feelings, images, attitudes, abilities, and other psychic content that the individual at different stages of development and in various situations attributes to himself or herself.

The creation of self-concept is influenced by an important function of the environment, since the individual's interaction with it forms his or her self-concept and translates it into professional and career terms [9]. We argue that social environment is a powerful factor in the creation of self-esteem [8, 10] as many researchers have also proved that successfulness of career is strongly related to our self-esteem (can be found in Beheshtifar, & Rahimi-Nezhad [13], Gardner, Dyne, & Pierce, [14]). In the case of persons with special needs, the problem of low self-esteem is often strongly present and therefore represents a direct cause for their poor performance in the labour market and in life-career management. Thus, the key goal should firstly be on improving their professional self-esteem [15].

In the process of rehabilitation of persons with special needs, with the focus on rehabilitating the individual's disease, disability, or disorder, there is always a risk of occurrence of low self-esteem, especially in the presence of medical authorities, who focus on the client's weaknesses instead of strengths [16]. Individuals' low and poor self-image can lead to lack of motivation and skills, fear of employment [16], learnt helplessness [10], etc. The individual is therefore seeking external help, hoping for retirement, looking for mercy

The prevailing medical paradigm in the rehabilitation process becomes an obstacle for a successful career management, because it defines people with special needs as incapable of job employment and independent living [17]. This is particularly a problem with persons with intellectual disabilities [2]. Constant focusing on the disease and disorder creates negative identity, low self-esteem [2, 15], and promotes the fear of future employment challenges [5]. However, in a career, merely high positive self-esteem is not sufficient for success [6].

In their career theories, Savickas [1, 6], Patton, & McMahon [8], and Amundson [21] emphasize the importance of autonomy and independence in professional decision-making and career management, which should be a primary focus in career counselling, rather than the subordination of clients to counsellors or other authorities. In this way, the client becomes the subject of the decision and not the object of the discussion. Savickas [6] states the

importance of empowering clients to construct their own careers, whereas Wehmeyer [19] also speaks of self-determination as a theoretical framework for encouraging people with or without special needs to become their own life agent and, rather than adapting self-determined behaviour, they should adapt self-determined action.

Because career has become a complex process of professional and everyday life activities [2], Super [9] believes that the concept of career management has to help the person to develop the capacity for autonomous decision-making and that the environment, such as professional counsellors, career coaches, and others, considers this – they act supportive and not patronizing. Amundson [21] recommends that targeted counselling should include a strong supportive counselling relationship and the consolidation of personal responsibility in an individual. They should be able to design and implement meaningful personal plans and help individuals to locate and shape their personal plan with realistic content. Savickas [6] also points out the supportive role of the career counsellor in the processes of deconstruction of the client's past (problematic) career stories, therefore, the individual can, with the help of the counsellor, reconstruct better future career episodes.

The same concept should therefore be applied for clients with special needs in the procedures of career guidance and rehabilitation. However, the problem still remains in medical paradigm, which is usually used in rehabilitation and employment programs of people with special needs. Experts still decide on the vocation, training, and all other issues that are related to the client's further career path [2]. Brown, & Lent's [20] research also suggests that many career counsellors still primary focus on person's with special needs weakness (deficits, disabilities), therefore, the active participation of person with special needs in the counselling process is questionable [6]. The various formal acts of findings and opinions that we know from disability commissions in Slovenia are clearly diagnostic acts adopted by medical authorities, while the individual can object and complain only about the decision of the administrative procedure, but not about the findings and decisions of the commissions.

Other countries have similar proceedings. Although supporting systems are necessary, they should not be above the person, but in a form of potential opportunities and choices that each individual chooses [2].

For a person with special needs, the key to vocational decision-making and career management is to develop self-determination behaviour. The basis for such behaviour is the individual's autonomy. Autonomous functioning behaviour is the result of the process of formulation individual's identity, which is a transition from dependence to independence, primarily in terms of care, life preferences, and self-care. Therefore, it is important that the individual works in accordance with his priorities, interests, and abilities, independent and free from external influence. It is crucial that they are able to independently manage their own activities, take care of themselves, and make decisions about family life and other issues of concrete everyday life, because it is believed that self-determination can maintain or improve quality of life and life satisfaction, but also enhance person's active participation. Therefore, socialization and learning processes are important, because through them they gradually progress from childhood and become more self-determined in their growing empowerment [19]. However, the problem of self-determination and independence remains with people with intellectual disabilities, because intellectual functioning is crucial for independent decision-making [2].

The modern labour market is becoming more diverse and the differentiation of society is increasing [1, 3, 4]. Therefore, new professional areas, where we can exercise our potential, are being created every day. In such environment, there are more and more new "free areas" where we can succeed and that are not competitively saturated [2]. Through analyses Drobnič [18] concludes that free niches are always being created a new, which means that employment careers of people with special needs have become more and more promising.

Each individual has his or her own profile of abilities, skills, strengths, competences, and other countless individual characteristics – dominant, exceptional, vague, shrouded, or undeveloped. Therefore, it is essential to find out the best features in person's profile, which

he or she can realize in the most favourable environmental (employment) – the priority niches [18].

Aim and tasks. In this paper, our primary aim is trying to find a way to improve professional self-esteem of people with special needs, which, we predict, will possibly enable them to manage their own career by self-determination. For realizing this goal, we introduce Drobnič advantage competences model in career counselling.

In the area of employing people with special needs, we have not yet abandon the medical paradigm, neither mention or discuss the careers of people with special needs, or implement a new inclusive paradigm in the career field. Thus, career success of people with special needs is rarely found in literature [2] or career theories [17]. In the field of people with special needs and their career, Wehmeyer [19] is known for introducing a specific concept of self-determination, where he points out the necessity of focusing on the individual's strengths and not emphasising the disorder. Therefore, Wehmeyer's [19] theory of self-determination can be used in and be potentially promising for improving independence in career management of people with special needs, whereas, by using Drobnič [2] advantage competence model, we can be more specific in defining the primary focus in career counselling for people with special needs.

By adapting Drobnič [2] advantage competence model, we can achieve two important goals. The first goal is being more oriented towards the individual's qualities, instead of dealing with disorders and difficulties [2]. This stimulates the search for a prospective individual's career, where he or she is more likely to succeed [18]. The second goal is focusing on one's own excellence, in addition to weaknesses and difficulties, and by doing so influencing the improvement of self-esteem, what creates a positive career identity instead of a disability, which is a key factor for career success [2]. We should note that the individual's narrower social environment plays an important role, too [8], since the formation of an individual's self-image is a process of reciprocal interaction between himself or herself and his or her social environment [10].

"The important other" [11] or those who have a "special role" in helping persons with special needs should also be discussed. They too should be informed of focusing on individual's strengths, rather than constantly dealing with their disorders.

We predict that if we shift focus on the individual's strengths and the potentials that the person has, we can increase one's self-image and aid to a more successful individual's career by increasing person's self-determination [18]. Therefore, we suggest the replacement of medical paradigm with more inclusive paradigm, which can be found in above-mentioned Drobnič [2] model.

Results. Changes in the labour market have triggered shifts in career counselling for people with special needs, where the starting point of counselling was primarily with well-diagnosed problems, disabilities and disorders [2]. Brown [17] stresses the need for changes in career counselling to leave a positivist approach that is characteristic for trait and factor theories and recommends the adoption of others, for example, constructivist approaches. In the classic positivist approach, the career counsellor relies on assessing the features of the clients, where he makes a diagnosis and gives advice while maintaining a dominantly superior role [2].

Modern approaches to career counselling are mainly reflected in constructivist theories [2, 8]. Career advisers should include especially those sciences that deal with self-concept and career creation, because they are most useful for the current situation. In these movements, we recognize that the responsibility for one's career has shifted from institutions to individuals, in the sense that people must live their career. A modern concept of career has become distinctly individual, subjective and adaptable, therefore, the success of individual careers is subjective to individual [1, 2, 6, 8]. The question arises whether to include such approaches in the case of persons with special needs.

From the above mentioned findings, we can conclude that the vocational rehabilitation of persons with special needs is not an appropriate starting point for career success and keeping the care of people with special needs, since the subject of engagement is predominantly dealing with diseases,

disabilities, and searching for some treatment [2, 17, 19, 20]. Therefore, the rehabilitation should be integrated as an auxiliary measure of career counselling for people with special needs and should be primarily based on the individual's choice of strong competences and advantages, which can be found in Drobnič [2] model (this can be also found in Wehmeyer's self-determination theory [19]). Moreover, we can determine that the diagnosis in the modern concept of career counselling has a less important role than in previous practice of career counselling [8].

In determining the field of career realization for persons with special needs, Drobnič [2] in his advantage competence model states that we should especially seek the potential of the individual [18], their advantage competences [2]. These are essentially internal (intrinsic) factors of professional decision-making. Therefore, we do not seek out the individual's weaknesses in order to first identify them and then "fix", "cure", and improve them, but to build a career perspective on priorities that is above average. Individual's personal characteristics that are crucial for an individual's career judgment can be his or her specific skills, knowledge, personality traits or competences that shape their "profile" and represent the key factor for good professional and employment development [2].

Based on the profile of strengths, it is therefore necessary to find an appropriate area for the realization of a career path, to develop the necessary skills and to create professional goals. The individual's problems, illness, and disability may still be important to identify, however, these will be only the basis for intervention (treatment, rehabilitation, assistance), rather than the starting point for a career decision [2]. Defining the individual's weaknesses (disability, incapacity, special needs) has an important function in Drobnič [2] model, firstly, as defining the areas that will be avoided when choosing a priority career path; secondly, as identifying the necessary tools, supporting technology, personalized work organization, which is necessary for functioning in the (chosen) competent field (if necessary); and thirdly, the definition of additional skills acquisition (education, vocational rehabilitation, training at the workplace) [2, 5].

In this way, the activities of setting diagnoses and deviations from “a typical, normal person” are of secondary significance and not a starting point [2].

If we engage in Drobnič [2] advantage competence model, dealing with people with special needs and their careers, the further question remains whether people with special needs will even need compensation, rehabilitation measures, and procedures in their career. We believe that people with special needs, following Drobnič [2] advantage competence model, will be more competitive in the labour market in the future, as Drobnič [2] states that it is becoming more and more promising for people with special needs. Hence, the focus would be on the individual's strong points and personal challenges. This way, an individual would then be able to easily transform his or her predominantly sickness-invalidity identity (medical paradigm) into a career identity [2].

Consequently, career advisers or consolors should be adapted in this process – no longer dominant, unequivocal, and should not make decisions instead of clients. Therefore, the directive role of the adviser is less acceptable and, in the case of persons with special needs, advisers should promote their personal growth, individuality, and autonomous decision-making [2, 19]. The role of counsellors, where we become managers of our careers, is primarily to stimulate and reflect us [2, 6, 23]. It is a process in which the counsellor and client jointly construct and reconstruct the understanding of what is important through the process of informing, interpreting, supporting, encouraging, and facing the challenges [6].

Career counselling should also stress the importance of continuous acquisition of knowledge and the ability for transitions, agrees Krumboltz [26]. Knowledge is constructed through individual's experience and the principles of social learning are therefore emphasized [2, 26]. Since an individual learns from everyday experience, his or her knowledge is less and less achievable by teaching, but by processes of (self) learning [2, 6, 8]. According to Savickas [1, 2, 6, 27], knowledge and therefore reality is completely dependent on the individual's experience with the environment. Reality is not the case of an objective

assessment of an individual's career. This has become completely subjective – a matter of the individual's judgment and entirely relevant to the individual. Therefore, we cannot talk about applying the theory to an individual, but rather about each individual constructing his or her own individual career.

Savickas [6, 27] states that we cannot easily distinguish career counselling from the personal counselling and that the constructivist approach is basically therapeutic, as the counsellor is involved in analysing the individual's career or stories and the conjugation of new employment episodes, which is related to personal distress and problems which need to be addressed at the same time. Therefore, we must move away from the question of what is true to the issue of participation and communication, from the objectivity to perspective and individuality, therefore, the career counselling is reformed into an interpretive discipline. We consider such career counselling as a coherent developmental profession, which is a very complex one. Career counselling should become a part of lifelong career decision making, because career counselling must be responsive to all the changes in society that are fast, thorough and global [1, 2]. In the changed role, counsellors should show the necessary flexibility, originality, imagination, creativity and eagerness to be open for new situations [21]. Such relationship could be called a working partnership in which the recipient and the aid provider are actively engaged, without consultant being pervasive and the client without knowledge and necessary advice [2].

Another thing that we should focus on in the career counselling for people with special needs is building a supportive environment [2]. Uncertainties in the labour market require individual's financial management in terms of social insurance and personal career decisions, what has an effect on his roles, which become increasingly complex. In these circumstances, an individual is forced to become a manager of his or her own career and therefore has to make decisions about his or her career path several times in his life. This means that it is indispensable for an individual to be trained in such a career, to continuously upgrade his or her knowledge and competences in career path.

This is completely different from the classic positivist approach to vocational decision-making, where counsellors or medical staffs have made decisions about an individual's career [1, 2, 6, 23].

Nota, Ferrari, Soresi, & Wehmeyer [22] emphasize the importance of a supportive environment and the autonomy of personal decision. Creating someone's own career must be in accordance with the person's development phases and in consideration with his or her level of autonomy. At the same time, knowing the involvement of external experts and supporting measures is important, but meeting the needs and individual decisions in the context of achieving his or her bigger autonomy is of greater importance.

When talking about supporting measures for people with special needs on a career path, we think about all those environmental interventions that help individuals to construct and realize a successful career. These may include various consultations, information on the labour market, conducting surveys, technical and personal support, monitoring, etc. [2]

Primarily, the most important supporting factors in the processes of career development of people with special needs are school, family and relatives – the close social environment [2, 19]. School and family play a key role in the first period of the individual's professional life. In the future, however, consideration should be given to the progress of independence and self-regulation of a person, while the key factor would be the training for the acquisition of professional and social skills and empowerment. In later periods of his or her career, other institutions can take on supportive functions present in the environment where the individual lives and works, but the decision to use them should be in the domain of the individual [2].

Some theoretical frameworks and researches state the key factors for career success are supported employment measures, which are a system of values and practices for individuals to prepare and train for work, focusing on the individual's adaptation to the specific work set out in the market offer [2, 24]. However, the problem occurs if the employment environment completely dominates the individual who has a subordinate role [25].

According to Bennie [25], it is necessary to set an emancipatory supportive employment model instead, which is more responsive and focused on the needs of an individual where the environment adapts to the individual. Dawis and Lofquist also state the importance of reciprocal adjustment between a person and his or her work environment [8].

Therefore, supporting measures should be comprehensive and accessible in all necessary dimensions: chronological, locational and financial, but at the same time they should contribute to the construction of an individual as an autonomous person, what means that the use of these measures is decided by the individual and not imposed by others. This shows respect for his or her individuality and freedom, and on the other hand, accessible support [2, 19, 25].

Conclusions. Although we state that career management is a challenge in nowadays for every person, it should be viewed as a positive challenge – in a way, that career is viewed in social cognitive career theories. Such theories suggest the importance of developing our curiosity, flexibility, optimism, and gaining knowledge. Social learning is also important for career success, where the focus is on learning instead of teaching. Therefore, an individual must be open to the environment, perceive changes, and learn from the situations that have arisen [1, 2, 26, 28]. By personally growing and becoming autonomous, he or she takes responsibility for his or her professional decisions, employment, and other activities on the career path [8]. Supporting measures that should be complete and accessible are important, but the person should decide based on his or her own autonomy and needs [19]. The growing needs for labour market knowledge urge people to constantly gain professional and social competences, therefore, they become managers of their own careers [1, 2, 23, 27]. The consultants, together with the client, analyses the path, mistakes, and problems that have been made so far, and construct a further run and episodes [2, 6] and abandon the role of all-time experts. In doing so, they will rely primarily on strengths – the characteristics that every person has and build a perspective on them, rather than on diseases and disabilities [2].

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