CONFERENCE PAPER

WHAT DO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS EXPECT FROM CAREER COUNSELLING?

RESULTS OF THE LEONARDO DA VINCI PROJECT: IMPACT

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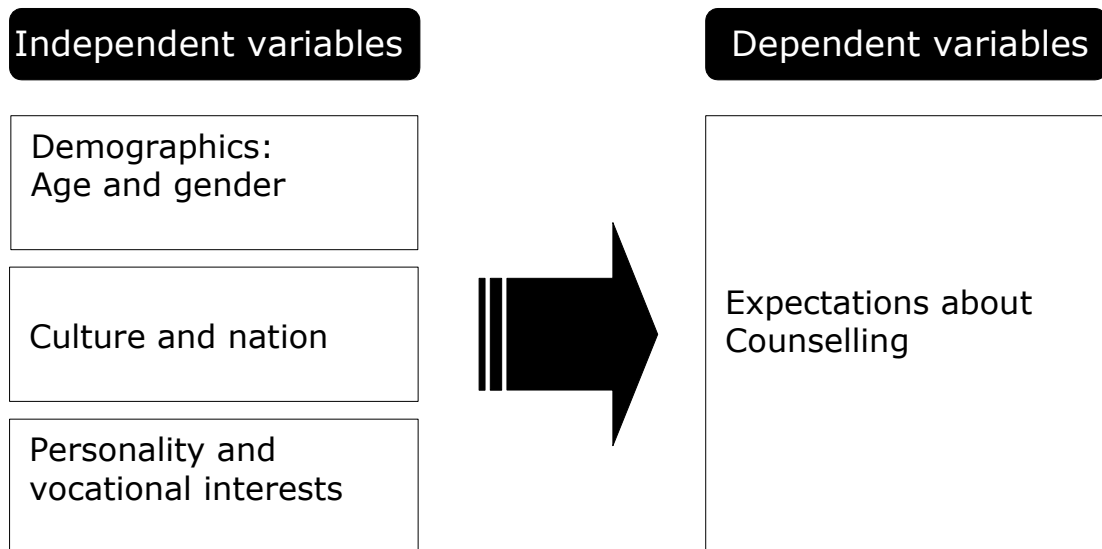F 43 - 1 - 522 65 77
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1 The aim of research

Expectations about counselling have an impact on the process and on the outcome of counselling in general (Tinsley et al., 1991). The present research explores the different expectancies people have about career counselling in six European countries and identifies factors that influence these expectancies. Results should help to adjust career guidance to the individual clients' requirements and to raise the efficiency of job counsellors' work by familiarizing them with clients' expectations in long term.

2 Theoretical background

The internationalization of labour markets and the growing mobility in Europe raises the questions, how career guidance can give consideration to this effect. People from different cultural backgrounds with various vocational interests could take part in career counselling processes. It is obvious, that these persons have different expectancies about career counselling, how the process evolves and what the outputs are, about the role of the counsellor and what clients can do in scope of the guidance process. As some former studies from Tinsley (1990, 1994) and others show, these expectancies are connected to the personality, to the age and the gender of persons (Paszkowa-Rogacz, 2003).

This research-project is partly a repetition of earlier studies in a larger sample with some changes within the instrument. Furthermore it tests the hypotheses, that the cultural background and national differences have a significant impact on the expectancies about counselling. The theoretical model of influences is mapped in figure 1.

Fig.1: Theoretical model

Independent variables		Dependent variables
Demographics: Age and gender		
Culture and nation	→	Expectations about Counselling
Personality and vocational interests		

The two main hypotheses are:

a) The culture and the nation a person belongs to, have a significant influence on the expectancies about career counselling.

b) The personality and vocational interests have a significant impact on the expectancies about career counselling.

As known from previous studies, age and gender have an effect on expectations about the career counselling process and the preferences people have for counsellors. Therefore gender and age are defined as another independent variable in the design. Additionally the age of persons in the research sample varies only in a small range, to hold the impact of age rather small.

3 Method
3.1 Sample

1283 high school students from Sweden, Poland, Lithuania, Cyprus, UK and Austria participated in the study, about 200 students from each country. The average age of the students was 18 years old at the range from 16 to 22. The variable age and gender are approximately equally distributed over countries; overall more women than men participated, 47 % male and 53 % female participants.

3.2 Instruments

To assess the cultural background and the impact of the cultural background, the Cultural Manifestation Questionnaire was developed (Paszkowska-Rogacz, 2005), building on the Cultural Dimensions by Geert Hofstede (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2004). The Cultural Manifestation Questionnaire consists of 28 questions about the culture and measure how participants perceive their surrounding culture. The three scales "Individualism", "Power-Distance Scale" and "Uncertainty-Avoidance Scale (through warm relations)" are used for this research. Also the variable "nation" is taken as another indicator of culture. The variable "nation" simply points at the country in which the participant lives.

In order to analyse the students' personality type according to vocational interests, the choice task "The Party" (Holland, 1985) was used. It is built on the assumption that most persons can be categorized to one of six types including realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising or conventional. The "realistic" type, for example, is described as follows: it has athletic or mechanical ability, prefer to work with machines, tools, plants, or animals, or it prefers to be outdoors. Participants who choose to join this group of people are assumed to be "realistic" and therefore will respond proactively to directive counselling.

In order to assess the expectations, the questionnaire "Expectations About Career Counselling" (Tinsley, 1980, 1982) was applied. The questionnaire consists of 68 statements such as "In the counselling process I expect to discuss my thoughts for my future openly", or "I expect the counsellor to tell me what to do." The 17[1] scales of the questionnaire used for this study focus on clients' attitudes and behaviours, expectations about counsellors' attitudes and counsellors' characteristics and furthermore the scales focus on expectations about the counselling process and its outcome.

3.3   Analyses

For statistical analyses the theoretical model (see Fig. 1) is transferred to a General Linear Model, in order to analyse the data with regard to the influence of the independent variables on students' expectations about career counselling. This multivariate and multidimensional model reduces significant findings obtained by chance.
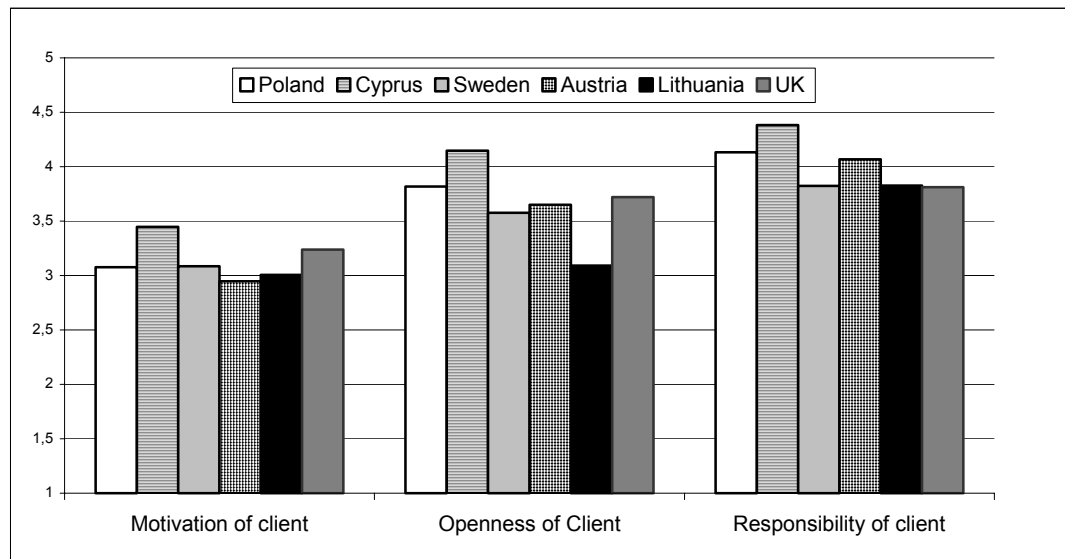
4   Results

In the General Linear Model the variables age ($F=2.26$, $df=17$, $p<.01$), gender ($F=1.71$, $df=17$, $p<.05$) and nationality (7.01, $df=85$, $p<0.01$) turn out to have a significant influence on students' expectations in general.

The main hypothesis a) can be assumed only partly. A detailed analyses of data showed, that the variable "nation" has a major influence on the expectancies. The cultural dimensions measured in the "Cultural Manifestation Questionnaire" did not have an impact on the expectations per se. So to say, the main "factor" is the country a person lives in that influences the expectations of the client. Below some of the major differences in the expectancies between students of different countries are discussed. Similar results can be shown for hypotheses b). Although vocational interests have significant effects on expectancies in GLM without the variable "nation", the analyses including this variable show, that vocation interests have only almost significant impact on the expectancies about counselling ($p=.59$). The variable "nation" is the main explanatory factor again. Students of different countries have significant different vocational interests (assessed by "The Party"). Also a highly significant interaction
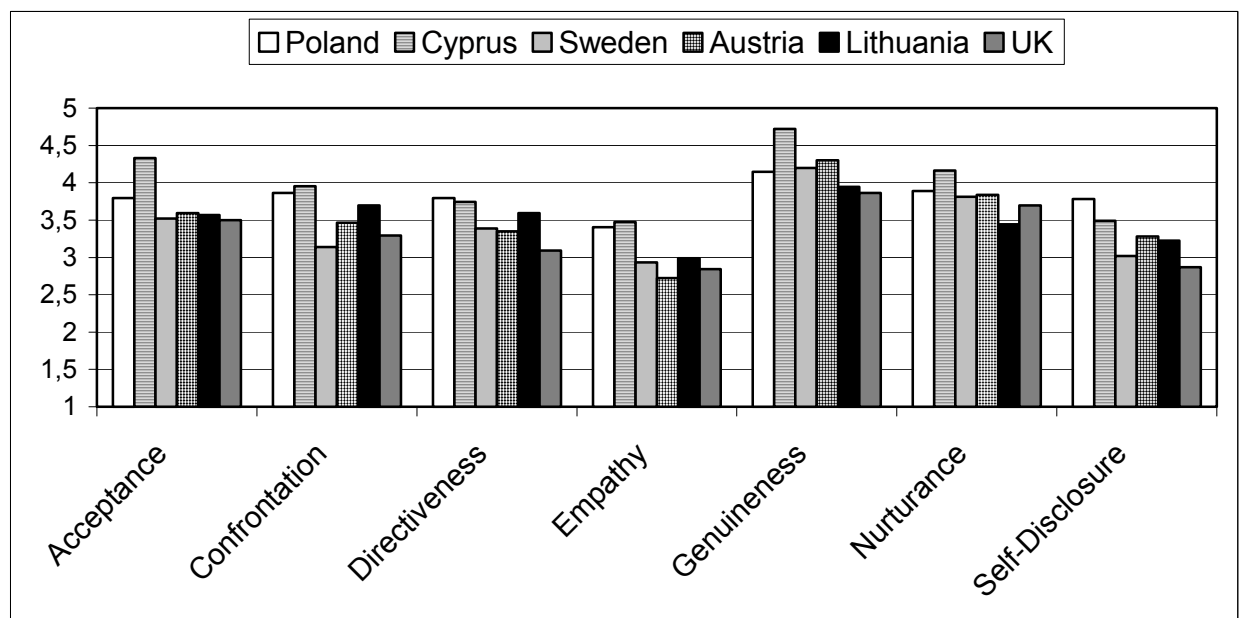
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[1] Due to the fact that "Realism" scale was not comparable between countries it was not used for analyses.

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between the nationality of respondents and their vocational interests concerning students' expectation scales was identified.

Nationality had a highly significant influence on all Tinsley scales apart from the scale "Motivation of Client". This means that there is no difference in the motivation of students from different countries to participate actively in the career counselling process. (Interpreting scores at item level concludes that the motivation is rather moderate in general.) In all other dimensions (scale-scores) differences between countries exist. Participants from Cyprus have high expectations about counselling, in comparison. In 11 Tinsley scales they have highest points including the following scales, that define the counsellors attitudes "Acceptance" "Confrontation", "Empathy", "Genuineness", "Nurturance", "Attractiveness", "Trustworthiness". Furthermore, participants from Cyprus expect relatively high directiveness, self-disclosure, expertise, and tolerance from the counsellor and they have high demands on the outcome of counselling just as the Lithuanian and Polish students. The results of the activities during the counselling-process are expected to happen "immediately" and the help should be "concrete" for Cypriot and Polish students. But the Cypriot students do not only expect more from the counsellor and the counselling process, they also expect more from themselves. They state to go into counselling openly and be prepared to assume responsibility for their vocational decisions and the advancement for career-counselling. Also Polish and Austrian students expect to take responsibility. One interesting detail is, that Lithuanian students seem to be less open; they expect not to talk very openly in the counselling. In general, women have slightly higher scores on this scale than men, and they expect significantly more acceptance, trustworthiness and genuineness from the counsellor. These characteristics were identified through items such as "I expect to take responsibility for making my own decisions", "I expect the counsellor to be friendly and warm towards me", or "I expect the counsellor to respect me as a person". This can be interpreted this way, that women have higher demands with regard to the professional social competencies of the counsellors, and that they are more likely to take on responsibilities for the outcome of the process than men do.

Fig. 2: Client characteristics by nation [2]

Means per scale calculated from the following answers: 1 – Not true, 2 - Slightly true, 3 Partly true, partly not true, 4 – very true, 5 – Definitely true. High scores indicate high motivation and high openness of client towards the counselling and the client takes responsibility for his career and vocational decisions.

Fig. 3: Counsellor attitudes by nation

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[2] The graphs show scales calculated with means of items for a better comparability. Post-hoc-tests and

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Fig. 4:

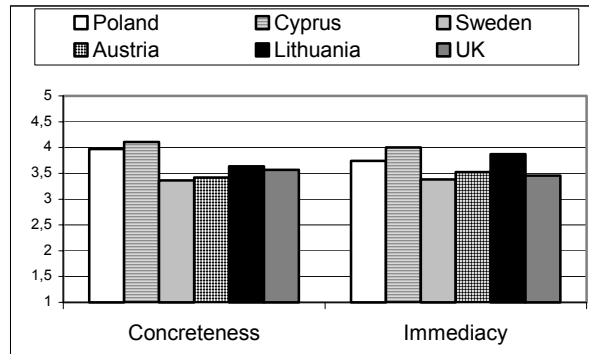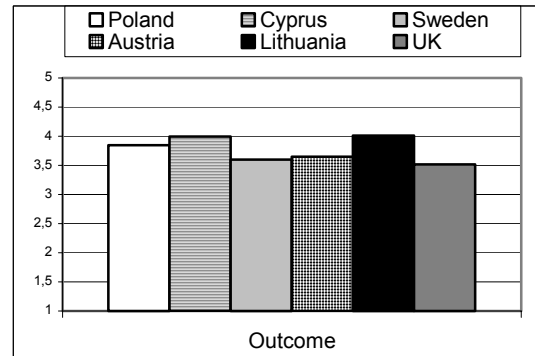**Characteristics of process by nation**

Fig. 5:

Quality of outcome by nation

5 Discussion

Women and men have different expectations about counselling. Age has also an impact. These findings go along with prior studies. Additionally it could be shown during actual research very clearly, that people from different countries anticipate counselling in different ways. The fact, that the effect of vocational personality type could not be evinced in this multivariate study design, is attributed to the strong effect of the variable "nation" and the interaction between vocational interests and "nation". Students from different countries have significant different interests. The way this and other study results of the Leonardo da Vinci project "IMPACT" can help to develop career counselling in Europe will be discussed in next future. More results and ongoing discussion can be found under www.impact-edu.org.

GLM are calculated with raw-scores of scales (sum-scores).

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