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Katarzyna PARDEJ

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7111-7834>

Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw, Poland

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Career Counsellor's Assistance in Choosing a Technical School in the Opinion of Parents

Abstract

This article presents the results of the author's research, which aimed to identify how parents perceive career Counsellor's assistance in the choice of post-primary school and to what extent labour market forecasts are considered in the decision-making process. The research results correspond with the view presented from the perspective of their children published in the article "Career Counsellor's Assistance to Students in the Choice of Post-primary School and Profession Sought in the Labour Market" (Pardej, 2024a). The qualitative research used the interview method. The analysis of the research material was conducted using the MAXQDA 2022 program. The research sample consisted of parents of first-year students of Warsaw technical schools studying the professions of the future N=53 (Monitor Polski, Journal of Laws, 2023, item 145).

Regarding the choice of secondary school and profession, parents and their children most often use the services of a career counsellor at primary school (40 coded segments). In many families, however, the decision-making process occurs without consulting a career counsellor (28 coded segments). According to parents, their children are more likely to seek the help of a career counsellor at school than at the psychological-educational counselling centre because of the long-term contact, followed by the child's openness to cooperation. Parents see many areas for improvement regarding the competence of career counsellors and the lessons they teach. Parents have a (usually everyday) knowledge of the labour market and desired occupations (30 coded segments). If they check labour market forecasts, they often do so together with their children (12 coded segments) or give up this activity (23 coded segments). In contrast, occasionally, they do so alone (either children or parents).

Keywords: parents of Warsaw technical school students, career counselling, choice of Polish secondary school, labour market.

Introduction

According to the Integrated Skills Strategy 2030, a key objective is, among others, to develop effective career counselling for children, young people and adults from all social and professional groups. Diagnosing the resources and potential of individuals and providing information on possible educational and career paths is a crucial function of career counselling. Its development should be based on a reliable diagnosis of the demand for occupations, qualifications, and skills and adequate information on the demand and supply of skills at national and regional levels. Career counselling is present in the Polish education system. Its importance and the need to disseminate it among students and their parents are emphasised. Schools are obliged to carry out planned activities in this area. Informed choice of school and profession is considered to be one of the essential elements of effectively implemented education, which has a principal impact on the functioning of graduates in the labour market and in civil society (Integrated Skills Strategy 2030. Policies for developing skills in line with lifelong learning, 2020, p. 35).

The career counsellor's tasks and career counselling curriculum content for grades 7 and 8 of primary school are included in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 12 February 2019 on career counselling (Journal of Laws, 20 February 2019, item 325). According to the curriculum content, students in the final grades of primary school should acquire knowledge and skills in four areas: get to know their resources, get to know the world of professions and the labour market, get to know the educational market and understand the essence of lifelong learning, as well as to be able to plan their development and make educational and professional decisions. The tasks of career counselling include, among others, systematic diagnosis of students' demand for activities related to the implementation of career counselling, conducting classes, development and implementation of the programme, cooperation with other teachers in the implementation of the programme, coordination of information and counselling activities carried out by the school (collecting, updating and making available educational and professional information appropriate for the given level of education) (Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 12 February 2019 on career counselling, Journal of Laws, 20 February 2019, item 325, § 5.1, Appendix 3).

It is not uncommon for students' parents to be involved in the decision-making process (25% parents of lower secondary school students, 10% parents of first-year technical school students), taking on the role of advisor and consultant, but at the same time using this opportunity to give the child a sense of freedom and self-determination. Parents accepting their child's decision waive their responsibility for their child's possible future and educational failure. (Kamie-

niecka, 2015, p. 24, cf. Pisula, 2009, pp. 86–87). Parents are often uncertain about the correctness of the choice made by their child, which they will only find out about in the future as a result of confrontation with the labour market. They lack ideas on how to help their child constructively and usually limit themselves to talking to them in the privacy of their homes. When suggesting a course of study to their children, they are not convinced it suits them. Sometimes, they do not use the knowledge about their child's interests and passions to choose a specific educational and professional path or a field of study consistent with their predispositions and capabilities (Kamieniecka, 2015, p. 24; see also Łukasiewicz-Wieleba, 2013, p. 182, 185).

Students who make a career choice according to their individual preferences, aptitudes, and talents are more satisfied and engaged in learning and are subsequently better prepared to participate in the labour market (Integrated Skills Strategy 2030. Policies for developing skills in line with lifelong learning, 2020, p. 35). In addition, having their interests and obtaining the required number of points during the recruitment process to the secondary school of their choice means that fewer students experience difficulties in choosing a secondary school (64% of parents of first-year students in technical schools) (Pardej, 2024b, p. 11).

A career counsellor should accompany parents and children in this arduous process. Career counsellors say they bring the issue of educational and career counselling closer to the parents of students (89% of counsellors from lower secondary schools, 67% of counsellors from technical schools). They inform them about the world of professions and the requirements of specific professions and provide knowledge about the labour market, enable them to confirm students' competences and professional qualifications (70% of career counsellors); they also provide them with content devoted to the development of students' social competences, analysis of their strengths and weaknesses, career planning and personal development (80% of career counsellors); they present issues related to students' further education planning (90% of career counsellors) (Podwójcic, 2015, pp. 91–92).

Results of own research

This article presents some of the results of the author's research¹. The qualitative study used the interview method, where the research technique was an individual, standard, categorised interview, and the research instrument was the author's Interview Questionnaire.

¹ The research was carried out within the framework of an internal project of the Maria Grzegorzewska University, BNS 52/23, implemented on the basis of a competition grant.

The research was carried out in three technical schools in Warsaw, i.e. the Mechatronics Technical School No. 1 in the Secondary and Technical School Complex No. 1, Technical School No. 7 in the Stanisław Wysocki School Complex, former "Kolejówka", and the Jan Karski Technical School No. 8 in School Complex No. 42. The director of the fourth selected technical school refused to allow the study to take place.

The research covered 53 parents of first-year students of technical schools studying the following occupations (in alphabetical order): rail transport electrician technician, electrician technician, IT technician, logistics technician, mechatronics technician, programming technician, tourism organisation technician, renewable energy devices and systems technician and rail transport technician. The results of the study should not be generalised to the entire population. It is a sectional view, referring to the group under study. Analysis of the research material was carried out using MAXQDA 2022. The interviews were given consecutive numbers from R1 to R53.

The research aimed to identify how parents perceive the assistance of career counsellors in choosing a post-primary school and to what extent labour market forecasts are taken into account in the decision-making process.

The approach to a given issue from the student's perspective is presented in the article "Career Counsellor's Help to Students in Choosing a Secondary School and a Profession Sought on the Labour Market" (Pardej, 2024a, pp. 89–106).

The research subject was parents' experiences of the young people's choice of post-primary school.

Reflections on career counselling led the author to formulate the following main problem: What role did the career counsellor play in choosing a technical school as perceived by parents? The main problem was formulated with detailed questions:

1. Where do parents and their children use the services of a career counsellor?
2. How is the support of the career counsellor in educational institutions (primary school vs psychological-educational counselling centre) evaluated according to parents?
3. What knowledge do parents of students have of the career counsellors and the lessons they teach?
4. How do parents feel about the usefulness of the career counsellor's services and the relevance of their advice?
5. Are labour market forecasts taken into account when choosing a secondary school?
6. How do parents argue the validity (or lack thereof) of checking labour market forecasts in decision-making?

After using a tool to support qualitative data analysis, the MAXQDA 2022 program's two main categories were distinguished: career counselling and the

labour market. A total of 298 fragments were coded. The MAXQDA program made it possible to analyse the research material in detail and select the statements faithfully quoted in the various sections of the article. We have limited ourselves to citing the most characteristic statements made by respondents.

The parent group was predominantly female (87%). Most respondents were born in the 1970s (62%), fewer in the 1980s (36%) and the least in the 1960s (2%). Most of them have higher education (83%), much less have secondary education (13%), and occasionally basic vocational and primary education (2% each). The largest groups are parents with two (53%) and three children (20%). Only 13% of parents have one child. Even fewer respondents have four, five or six children (6%, 6%, and 2%, respectively). The child attending the first class of the technical school is, in the majority of cases, the first in order of birth (60%), fewer children were born second (36%), and the fewest children were born third (4%). Most respondents live in Warsaw (53%), although only slightly fewer parents live outside Warsaw (47%).

Career counselling and the choice of a secondary school

Parents most frequently commented on the use of the services of a career counsellor at primary school (40 coded segments): "There were career counselling classes at school" [R2]; "I contacted a career counsellor at school" [R8]; "At school yes, because my friend is a counsellor" [R18]; "Yes, I used counselling at school" [R18]; "The counsellor invited us (me and my son) for an individual talk about school choice. The conversation occurred after the first semester of 8th grade" [R30]. Parents could count on the support of a counsellor also in the psychological-educational counselling centre to which they reported (6 coded segments): "Yes, we used the counselling centre" [R8]; "We were in the counselling centre twice, i.e., the first time – for a test and interview, the second time – for a choice proposal" [R8]; "My son had classes at school, and we were in the counselling centre to identify our son's strengths" [R38]; "We were in the counselling centre because we needed to renew the decision on the need for special education and this occasion we consulted on the choice of school" [R42]. It was not common for parents to use the service of a career counsellor employed at the primary school and also at the psychological-educational counselling centre (2 coded segments): "Yes, we used a career counsellor at school and the counselling centre" [R19]; "We used a career counsellor at school and the counselling centre" [R25]. Some parents show particular concern for their child's future and choose to meet with a career counsellor employed elsewhere than the primary school and the psychological-educational counselling centre (2 coded segments): "No, but my son had a meeting; it did not change his decision much" [R24]; "Yes, we used private counselling" [R52].

Secondary school students find it challenging to decide on their educational and career paths (Akpochofo, 2020, p. 5921–5922). A career counsellor's participation enhances secondary school students' ability to make career decisions, improves their career adaptability and strengthens their ability to make informed career decisions (Maree, Magere, 2023, pp. 29–31). Psychosocial strengths (e.g. courage) help secondary school students in their career choice and career planning decisions. Most of them (70% of Greek secondary school students in grades 11 and 12) have already chosen their future education and profession, regardless of their grades. However, no significant relationship was found between courage and whether students decided on a future education or occupation. Psychosocial strengths (courage) play a positive role in designing career guidance and counselling interventions for young people (Argyropoulou, Katsioulou, Drosos, Kaliris, 2018, pp. 32–36). Those who have become more decisive have less difficulty in making career decisions ($d = 1.26$), while those who show indecisiveness towards the end of the year (i.e. when the decision deadline is approaching) show an increase in negative emotions ($d = 0.72$) (Angehel, Gati, 2019, pp. 1–15, see also: Bacanlı 2016, pp. 233–250).

In some families, the decision related to the child's further education was made without the help of a career counsellor (28 coded segments): "We did not feel the need" [R4]; "We did not use it" [R41]; "Our son was home-schooled, he did not go to school" [R49]. They argued this fact because their child already had his/her plans for further education clarified and, therefore, lessons with a career counsellor were not helpful for them (13 coded segments): "My son assured me that he would manage and choose his school" [R1]; "No, he decided himself which school he wanted to go to" [R7]; "He knew where he wanted to go, so the counsellor did not have much advice to give him" [R11]; "No, because there was no need for it" [R31]; "From the very beginning he knew what he wanted, I did not look for other interests for him" [R32]; "He has well-established interests" [R45]; "Career counselling at school – unnecessary lessons, my son knew from grade 7 which direction he wanted to go to, although he did not know exactly which school to go to" [R27]; "He wants to be like his dad. He is going to be an IT specialist" [R45].

The respondents also included parents whose children considered their choice of secondary school only with their family (4 coded segments): "I encouraged my son to become a firefighter, but he is afraid of heights. We chose mechatronics" [R40]; "My husband was involved in choosing the school" [R42]; "I did the work myself. I created a list of 20 schools" [R46]; "My husband is an IT specialist. My son wants to become a pilot. The level was too low for us at the aviation technical school. After attending IT technical school, he can continue his dream. He would be outstanding in the aviation school, and the others would be average. Yes, he wants to be like his dad" [R45]. One mother limited her in-

volvement to giving her son a warning (1 coded segment): "I told him to watch the deadlines" [R1].

In the decision-making process, parents of students mainly adopt three attitudes, i.e. directive parents, parents who engage in dialogue and treat their child as capable of managing their destiny, liberal parents – passive parents or supportive parents (Wojtasik 2011, pp. 107–108). Most parents considered choosing a post-primary school when their child was in the final year of lower secondary school (44%). The overriding factors influencing the school choice decision included the reputation of the school (63%), proximity to home (53%) and academic performance (51%). Most parents showed satisfaction with their child's choice (77%), but as many as 23% admitted that they had to compromise (West, David, Hailes, Ribbens, 1995, pp. 30–31).

The interviewees' statements were further enriched by an attempt to compare the help received from a career counsellor in primary school versus in a psychological-educational counselling centre. Comparing the differences in being able to consult a career counsellor at primary school versus at the psychological-educational counselling centre, parents note that (3 coded segments): "We had better contact with the career counsellor at school than at the counselling centre, because he knew the teacher. My son opens up better when he knows the person longer. These were cyclical classes" [R8]; "In the counselling centre, a career counsellor diagnosed him with his predispositions and said he should attend a technical school. My son assessed the lessons conducted by the counsellor at school positively. He found out what professions there are and what to expect when performing a given profession" [R25]; "My son had classes at school, and we went to the counselling centre to determine his strengths" [R38].

In their narratives, parents referred to the person of a career counsellor. They see areas for improvement in the career counsellor's attitude and the way they conduct their lessons and admit a lack of satisfaction with their actions (9 coded segments): "The career counsellor used outdated tests that I used 20 years ago when I taught career counselling to unemployed people" [R2]; "He had a template approach. Take the test, and you'll find out what you're good at" [R2]; "Not much conversation, insight, even into these results" [R2]; "They didn't have a good teacher" [R5]; "They had a teacher whose disposition didn't suit her to teach the subject. She was very pessimistic" [R5]; "She didn't give my son any suggestions for other directions – like, maybe try here; she didn't say where it was easier to get admitted; that was missing" [R34]. One interviewee shared his concerns: "A bad teacher in such a subject can do more damage than good" [R5]. Another expressed his belief that teachers were not involved: "Teachers have stopped interfering in anything" [R22]. Alongside this type of opinion, there were ambivalent opinions according to which parents expressed satisfaction with the career counsellor (2 coded segments): "She got to know each of these

children. She did not speak in general terms, but talked in detail about each child" [R30]; "She helps with everything" [R17]. Among the statements, some present a neutral opinion (2 coded segments): "We didn't have a problem with her" [R10]; "The teacher made a presentation and discussed the professions" [R20].

Other fragments from the parents' statements illustrate their opinion on the lessons conducted by career counsellors in primary school. The majority of the statements related to their dissatisfaction with the lessons mentioned above (8 coded segments): "It's seemingly there, but it's done sloppily" [R5]; "I was very dissatisfied with the subject" [R5]; "It's a good thing that the children approached the subject with a pinch of salt because he would mess up (the career counsellor)" [R5]; "They (the students) didn't know anything" [R6]; "My son was not enthusiastic about these lessons" [R15]. Almost half as many statements indicated a favourable opinion (3 coded segments): "My son said the classes were ok" [R12]; "I think the lessons were interesting" [R29]; "He liked the lessons" [R50]. Some parents found it difficult to express their own opinion on the career counselling lessons (8 coded segments): "Let's be honest, this subject requires going beyond the knowledge acquired, it enters the personal life of the student" [R5]; "He had some lessons at school, something was going on, but I think he saw this teacher twice" [R11]; "I don't know what it was like in the counselling lessons, because it is complicated to learn anything from my son" [R24]; "They said to take into account the child's dreams, not to impose your opinion on him" [R36]; "My son had these lessons, but they were of no interest to him" [R37]; "I don't know how the lessons went" [R43]; "My son had the subject, but I don't know what came out of it" [R39]; "My son didn't say anything about the lessons with the career counsellor" [R53]. Two parents admitted that they did not know if their child attended career counselling lessons (2 coded segments): "The lessons with the career counsellor at school were optional, and I don't know if my son attended these lessons or not" [R13]; "There were lessons with a career counsellor at school, but I don't know if my son attended them" [R51].

Career counsellors admit that they prefer to conduct observations and interviews with young people in the classroom, while they find survey questionnaires too engaging and time-consuming. Students' needs are identified more or less carefully depending on the tools used in the diagnosis process. Their selection depends on whether the person teaching the lessons is qualified in career counselling (Frąszczak, Głowacka, Kąkolewski, Korczak, Łuczak, Zasada, 2022, p. 9, see also Chłoń-Domińczak 2015, p. 55). As far as the diagnosis of parents' needs for career counselling is concerned, it takes place only in the last two grades of primary school and is limited to the recruitment process, thus focusing on the enrolment of students in secondary schools; parents of students in the younger grades are not covered. Career counsellors say that parents are reluctant to take on the role of co-participants in the educational process, i.e., they

are reluctant to support their children in preparing them to make decisions about their choice of post-primary school and profession. The school's cooperation with parents in the field of career counselling is most often limited to indirect contacts (using the electronic school logbook, e.g. sending out information about activities that can be undertaken or events that support career planning – 85% of respondents), and direct contacts are rare (Frąszczak, Głowacka, Kąkolewski, Korczak, Łuczak, Zasada, 2022, p. 9, 13, 15). It is worth quoting the results presented in the report from the evaluation study concerning the assessment of support in the scope of career counselling addressed to the students of lower secondary schools in Małopolska and, after the reform, to grades 7 and 8 of primary schools, which was provided under the project Modernisation of Professional Education in Małopolska II initiated by the Board of the Małopolska Voivodeship. The majority of students said that attending classes with a career counsellor helped them to choose a secondary school (63.97%), a small group of students was opposed to this position (19.31), a small number of students had no opinion on the subject (16.11%). The tests used in classes with a career counsellor to identify strengths, weaknesses and vocational predispositions were rated as helpful by the students (79.74%), few students stated that the tests did not help them (14.54%), the least frequent answer was "hard to say" (5.54%) (Wiekiera-Michau, 2020, p. 12, 15).

Not everyone perceived the services of a career counsellor as helpful in choosing a school and profession (20 coded segments): "Honestly, they did not help him in choosing" [R3]; "Maybe other kids benefited from it more than my son. He didn't know anything" [R6]; "He had classes at school, but they brought nothing" [R13]; "The meeting with the counsellor did not change much in my son's decision" [R24]; "The lessons at school do not explain what is most important. The specialisations and what to look out for, what they are good at, which grades will be important to be admitted to a technical school" [R28]; "There was nothing to help in choosing a school" [R33], "My son had the impression that the counsellor was telling him what he wanted to hear" [R34], "These lessons did not bring anything to my son, he said it was a waste of time" [R35]; "My son had lessons with a career counsellor, but his preferences were not examined, and they should be, to give him direction" [R47]. One parent stated that although the career counsellor did not help choose a school, he did provide some practical information: "The counsellor did not help him choose a school, but he informed us what would happen if he was not admitted to the school he wanted to get into" [R30]. From a comparable number of parents' statements, we learn that the career counsellor met their expectations and provided helpful advice in choosing a school and a profession (16 coded segments): "We asked the teacher as a class community to email us useful messages and she sent us helpful links" [R10]; "When there was a problem, we turned to her and she out-

lined everything for us" [R10]; "I was in the parents' class council, parents reported their needs to me. I would pass them on to the counsellor, and the counsellor would put them all together and send the information by email" [R10]; "They found out what to expect from a particular profession, and it changed the view on choosing a school" [R12]; "It gives a lot" [R17]; "It gave my son something" [R12]; "She emailed me information about schools. I printed them out, and it helped me" [R18]; "The lessons at school were helpful, a lot of knowledge and direction" [R18]; "My son learnt about different professions and what to expect from a given profession" [R25]; "They helped in deciding whether to go to general secondary school or technical school" [R29]; "There was a lecture, presentations of the schools, what the recruitment process is like. I found them very helpful" [R36]; "I think that if someone doesn't know what school to go to, the lessons with the counsellor will help them because he did comprehensive research" [R38]; "The counsellor did the tests. She said interesting things about my son's skills and aptitude" [R52].

According to the parents, the advice received from the career counsellor was accurate (9 coded segments): "He chose logistics because it involves problem-solving, e.g. arranging a plan" [R17]; "He told the counsellor where he wanted to go and he confirmed" [R34]; "For my son, it was complementary and reaffirmed him that his decision was great" [R50]; "The teacher suggested that he should pursue a management profile and also study at a technical school because he has leadership qualities" [R52]; "There was an aptitude and interest test, in which subjects he felt better or worse; whether in manual, technical or languages. There were several jobs ticked off that he could do. Moreover, he decided that a technical school would be better than a general secondary school. My child needs special education" [R8]. There were no statements from parents presenting an opposing position.

The majority of students are ultimately satisfied with their choice of post-primary school (62.6 per cent), with students from primary vocational schools (88.2 per cent), technical schools (62.2 per cent) showing the most excellent satisfaction, and general secondary schools (47.5 per cent) showing the least satisfaction (INDEKS Social Research Centre, 2017, p. 22, see also Hausman, Goldring, 1997, pp. 24–25). According to lower secondary school students, in order for them to be prepared to choose upper secondary school and profession, career counsellors/school counsellors most often talked to them about a given profession, school and professional work (72%). In addition, they were presented with secondary school offers (68%) and informed where to find information on jobs and professions (58%). Students also participated in interest groups (58%) and others. (Klementowska, 2018, p. 166).

Labour market forecasts and the choice of secondary school

Parents of first graders most often commented that there was no need to check the labour market demand for workers in the profession their children were studying when choosing a secondary school and a profession. They are convinced that there is a demand for workers in their chosen professions, and this is a well-known fact (26 coded segments): "I didn't have to do it because I know it's not easy. You have to look for good warehouse workers" [R2]; "There are plenty of logistics centres here in Warsaw, people choose for themselves" [R2]; "We found out from ordinary life, i.e. from television, from conversations with friends" [R6]; "At the moment, I believe that the greatest demand is for renewable energy systems" [R7]; "Heat pumps, photovoltaic panels – this is the future" [R7]; "I have a brother who sells photovoltaics and there is great demand" [R7]; "I know how much electricians earn. It is difficult to find a good electrician" [R19]; "At the moment, I think there is a demand, if not for passenger transport, then freight" [R21]; "He will find employment among friends" [R29]; "We know it is easy to get a job" [R37]; "I deal with the IT area, and I am aware of the demand; we did not have to check it" [R47]; "In the company I work with, there is still a shortage of people with IT qualifications" [R47]; "We generally knew that IT is in demand" [R50]; "I can see that there is a demand" [R51]; "I have heard from my patients who graduated from the mechatronics technical school that 4th, 5th-graders are recruited for jobs" [R35]; "There is work. It's important too" [R1]; "You hear everywhere that there is a shortage of people in this profession" [R26]. Parents say that the professions their children have chosen to study at the technical school are a guarantee of finding employment, as they are the professions of the future (4 coded segments): "The profession of a logistics specialist will probably never disappear" [R3]; "It is a profession that will also be in demand. It's not a matter of fashion" [R26]; "It's a profession in short supply" [R48]; "This profession looks promising, and that shouldn't change" [R52]; "It's a profession that is evolving and offers opportunities in different directions, such as space" [R27]. From two statements, it can be concluded that checking the labour market forecast is pointless because of the rapid changes (2 coded segments): "What for? That could change completely in five years anyway" [R5]; "It wasn't that important. We didn't go into all that. It all changes every year" [R10].

According to the forecast of demand for employees in vocational education professions on the national and voivodeship labour market announced by the Minister of Education and Science (Monitor Polski, Journal of Laws, 2023, item 145), the occupations which students have decided to learn are of particular importance for the country's development and are expected to be in particular demand. The type of profession acquired (47%) ranks second, just behind intel-

ligence and ability (56%) among the factors that determine finding a job after graduation (Grabowska, Gwiazda, 2019, p. 88).

There are more arguments explaining why it is or is not worthwhile to check the labour market demand for workers in a given profession (6 coded segments): "Why check if he doesn't know if he would be admitted to this school" [R21]; "What are we going to check – if they need a train driver in the PKP – if we don't know if he would be admitted to this school" [R21]; "What for, they have the ease of re-branding" [R29]. One parent admitted that it did not matter to him (1 coded segment): "It wasn't that important to me. When I took the documents to the school, the teachers receiving them said that there was plenty of work and that it was a good choice for my son" [R1]. According to parents, it is not worthwhile to verify which professions are in short supply if they are not sure that their child will be admitted to a technical school, if public opinion suggests that there is a shortage of workers in a particular profession or if the vocational qualification acquired provides the basis for a quick change of profession.

The largest number of respondents said that no one in the family had checked the labour market forecasts (23 coded segments): "Honestly – no" [R5]; "We didn't check" [R21]; "No one looked for it in the market" [R29]; "We didn't check it, but we know that it's easy to get a job" [R37]. Three parents admitted that they did not check labour market forecasts (3 coded segments): "I did not check" [R1]; "I did not check specifically" [R27]; "I did not formally check it" [R39]. Two parents, on the other hand, referred in the interview to their children's lack of interest in labour market verification (2 coded segments): "My son did not check" [R3]; "Maja did not check" [R16].

In some families, parents together with their children checked the labour market demand for workers in the profession their children were studying (12 coded segments): "We looked once or twice" [R10]; "Yes, we both checked" [R18]; "He checked more, but I verified his information" [R28]; "Yes, we looked together" [R34]. Only in one case did the parents get help from a career counsellor in this respect (1 coded segment): "We checked with the career counsellor on the need for railway control workers" [R30]. Parents often undertook this activity on their own and sometimes shared the results of their explorations with their children (7 coded segments): "I checked with my husband" [R3]; "I checked. I'm familiar with it regularly" [R23]; "I checked, my son didn't. I showed him" [R25]; "I was looking a bit, but I don't remember now" [R33]. Sometimes, the situation was the other way around. The responsibility in this matter was mainly on the students (5 coded segments): "My son checked" [R12], "Yes, he checked the salaries himself" [R20]; "My child checked, I didn't really" [R32]; "My son also reads different forums, and he tells me. He's up to date, even more than I am" [R24]; "He looked at the pracuj.pl website, and he was looking for offers

for rail electricians, and we talked about it" [R25]. Parents began a dialogue with their children on the information they had acquired.

The results obtained – in the course of the search for professions with a positive impact on the development of the national economy – were satisfactory (15 coded segments): "It came out very promising" [R4]; "There was quite a lot of demand" [R16]; "There is much demand for these professions and he is watching the wages" [R22]; "More and more people are admitted" [R24]; "They are opening up to the market" [R24]; "There is demand all the time" [R30]; "There is work" [R34]. Of all respondents, only one shared a pessimistic vision of the future (1 coded segment): "It did not look good" [R33].

One of the most important factors influencing the choice of school, according to students and graduates from all over the country, turned out to be the brand (quality) of the school – 32.3 per cent and the profession, the job prospect – 27.8 per cent (Kruszakin, 2017, p. 25), a similar position on this issue is taken by the parents of students, for whom the quality of education is crucial (Ericson, 2017, p. 498).

Conclusions of the research

Parents have had the most experience with career counsellors in primary school, whom they consulted with their children on their choice of post-primary school and profession (40 coded segments). They used the services of a career counsellor at a psychological-educational counselling centre much less frequently (6 coded segments). Occasionally, a career counsellor's help at educational establishments and one employed at another workplace was sought (2 segments coded each).

Decisions were made without consulting a career counsellor (28 coded segments). This situation was because the child had made (before 7th and 8th grade) a choice of post-primary school and profession (which was explained by the child having interests or wanting to continue in the profession of one of the parents), the parent's belief in the child's independence in this matter, and the decision to choose within the family.

When comparing the parents' opinions on the help received from the career counsellor at primary school and at the psychological-pedagogical counselling centre, they found that long-term contact with the career counsellor at school fosters the child's openness to working with him or her, the career counsellor at school contributes to learning about resources and the labour market. In contrast, at the psychological-pedagogical counselling centre, he/she contributes to learning about the child's resources and choosing a particular type of secondary school (3 coded segments). It is worth emphasising that only three respondents raised this topic, and it will be the subject of further research.

The majority of parents have pejorative opinions about primary school career counsellors and the career counselling lessons they conduct (9 coded segments). In their view, they are characterised by an inappropriate attitude, i.e. pessimism and indifference. The counsellor conducts career counselling lessons in a template fashion using outdated psychological tests, the results of which he/she does not discuss in depth. Attending the lessons does not guarantee that their children will learn about their resources, professions, labour markets, and education markets. Based on the lessons, they cannot plan their development and make educational and career decisions. These opinions failed in a minority of cases (2 coded segments). They show that the career counsellor has an individual approach to each student, that the lessons with them are exciting and that their children enjoy them. However, an equal number of statement fragments (as those with negative overtones) indicate that parents acknowledge that they do not have sufficient knowledge about the lessons taught by the career counsellor and have refrained from expressing their opinions on the matter (8 coded segments each).

As far as the evaluation of career counselling services in terms of usefulness in the choice of secondary school and profession is concerned, there was a slight predominance of fragments of statements indicating their uselessness (4 coded segments more), which was argued to be due to the lack of information on educational offers (or more precisely on the fields of study), on the criteria taken into account in recruitment to vocational-technical schools, as well as the lack of psychological tests (checking the child's career preferences). The opponents, in turn, stated that the career counsellor provided them with selected and practical information about educational offers, introduced them to the recruitment process, conducted psychological tests and made a diagnosis based on them.

In the case of the career counsellor's advice considered by the parents as relevant, it should be noted that it concerned the choice of the type of school and the child's vocational aptitude with the indication of the recommended professions and the reaffirmation of the child's right decision (9 coded segments). There were no statements from parents that would present an ambivalent position.

Regarding the relevance of checking labour market demand in deciding on the choice of secondary school and profession, most parents' statements referred to a lack of need to do so due to knowing the subject from their own experience, the media, and friends. It shows that their children's chosen professions are the professions of the future and guarantees that they will find a job in line with their learned profession or the development of an educational and professional path based on this profession (30 coded segments). The least frequent statements were that it is not worth checking the labour market forecast due to dynamic changes, lack of certainty that the child will qualify for a given school and the possibility of changing industries (6 coded segments). One parent

took a neutral position and stated that labour market forecasts played no role in decision-making (1 coded segment).

Concerning checking or not checking labour market forecasts, the most coded fragments of statements concerned its performance (12 coded segments) or failure to perform it (23 coded segments) by parents and children. The least coded fragments of statements indicated that this activity was undertaken either by the parent (non-checking – 3 coded segments; checking – 7 coded segments) or by the child (non-checking – 2; checking – 5 coded segments). The data retrieved by the children became the basis for dialogue with parents in the decision-making process. Notably, only one coded statement indicates that a career counsellor was consulted on this issue.

The labour market outlook, according to parents, looked optimistic (15 coded segments). They stated that there was a demand for workers in the profession their children had chosen to learn at the technical school, and they indicated that there was continuity in this phenomenon. They further noted the monitoring of earnings. Surprisingly, one parent had the opposite opinion to the one above (1 coded segment).

Conclusion

Not all parents and their children use the help of a career counsellor when choosing a secondary school and a profession. However, those who decide to take this step most often seek the help of a career counsellor employed by the primary school. In implementing the curriculum in career counselling classes, they note several areas needing change, such as young people being fully prepared to make such an important decision as choosing an educational and career path, considering the labour market forecast.

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Pomoc doradcy zawodowego w wyborze technikum w opinii rodziców

Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiono wyniki badań własnych, których celem było rozpoznanie, jak rodzice postrzegają pomoc doradców zawodowych w wyborze szkoły ponadpodstawowej oraz w jakim stopniu w procesie decyzyjnym uwzględniane są prognozy rynku pracy. Wyniki badań korespondują z ujęciem przedstawionym z perspektywy ich dzieci opublikowanym w artykule „Pomoc doradcy zawodowego uczniom w wyborze szkoły ponadpodstawowej oraz zawodu poszukiwanego na rynku pracy” (Pardej, 2024a). W badaniach jakościowych wykorzystano metodę wywiadu. Analizę materiału badawczego przeprowadzono z wykorzystaniem programu MAXQDA 2022. Próbę badaną stanowili rodzice uczniów klas pierwszych warszawskich techników kształcących się w zawodach przyszłości N=53 (Monitor Polski, D.U. 2023, poz. 145). W sprawie wyboru szkoły ponadpodstawowej i zawodu rodzice i ich dzieci korzystają najczęściej z usług doradcy zawodowego

w szkole podstawowej (40 zakodowanych segmentów). W wielu rodzinach jednak proces decyzyjny odbywa się bez konsultacji z doradcą zawodowym (28 zakodowanych segmentów). Według rodziców ich dzieci chętniej korzystają z pomocy doradcy zawodowego w szkole niż w poradni psychologiczno-pedagogicznej z uwagi na długotrwały kontakt, którego następstwem jest otwartość dziecka na współpracę. Rodzice zauważają wiele obszarów wymagających poprawy odnośnie do kompetencji doradcy zawodowego oraz prowadzonych przez niego lekcji. Rodzice posiadają (zazwyczaj powszechną) wiedzę na temat rynku pracy i pożądaných zawodów (30 zakodowanych segmentów). Jeśli podejmują się czynności sprawdzania prognoz rynku pracy, to najczęściej robią to razem z dziećmi (12 zakodowanych segmentów) lub razem rezygnują z tej czynności (23 zakodowane segmenty); natomiast sporadycznie czynią to w pojedynkę (dzieci albo rodzice).

Słowa kluczowe: rodzice uczniów warszawskich techników, doradztwo zawodowe, wybór polskiej szkoły średniej, rynek pracy.