

The Importance of School and Career Guidance in the Educational Process

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Abstract:

This research aims to elucidate the importance of school and career guidance, which constitutes one of the indispensable pillars of the educational process and a key actor in achieving its quality. This is accomplished by providing an appropriate environment for pupils and assisting them in their growth and development through continuous monitoring, which is based on precise scientific planning and objective implementation, with the ultimate goal of building responsible, well-integrated citizens.

Keywords: school guidance, career counselling, educational guidance services, student adjustment, Algerian educational system.

Introduction:

In recent years, the world has witnessed tremendous, rapid developments, particularly in technology, as well as transformations affecting political, social, cultural, and economic systems, alongside the emergence of what is known as the risk society. This reflects the challenges and crises resulting from these developments, which have encompassed all aspects of life, institutions, and individuals. The school is among the institutions threatened by these crises, including the globalisation of educational values and behavioural health crises.

Within the context of these changes, the educational process has moved beyond its classical form. It has shifted toward a new framework that has led to a qualitative transformation and a particular focus on attending to the diverse requirements and needs of learners and their educational environments, enabling the development of their abilities and potential to the maximum extent. This objective cannot be achieved without guidance and counselling, which have become important variables in the educational process. Recent studies have demonstrated that the need for guidance and counselling is an individual right, a matter taken for granted, and a foundation of guidance and counselling.

School and career guidance and counselling represent services that the Algerian educational system has committed itself to providing through a range of services delivered via developmental, preventive, and remedial programs for learners to assist them in choosing appropriate studies, enrolling in them, continuing within them, and overcoming the problems they encounter to achieve adjustment and productivity. These services aim to support the learner and facilitate their adaptation to academic and professional life on the one hand and to support society on the other hand. The school and career guidance counsellor is considered the primary person responsible for this process and the link between the learner, teachers, parents, and administrative staff. In this context, the present research highlights the importance of school and career guidance in the educational process.

1. The Concept of School and Career Guidance and Counselling

1.1 Definition of School and Career Guidance

It has been defined as “a process of assisting students to choose the type of study appropriate to them, to enrol in it, to adapt to it, and to overcome the difficulties they encounter during their studies and in school and professional life in general” (Morsi Sayed Abdel Hamid, 1976, p. 121).

It has also been defined as “including the totality of educational, psychological, social, and vocational services provided to the individual in order to enable them to plan the future of their life in accordance with their abilities, intellectual and physical capacities, and inclinations in a manner that satisfies their needs and fulfils their self-concept. Guidance in this sense encompasses several domains, including education, family, personal, and professional life. It also includes various services, such as providing information, counselling services, and vocational adjustment. Guidance may be direct, individual, or collective and usually aims at adjustment to the present and the future while benefiting from the past and its experiences” (Saeed Abdel Aziz and Jawdat Ezzat Atioui, 2004, p. 11).

It has also been defined as “the process of assisting the individual in drawing educational and vocational plans that correspond to their abilities, inclinations, and objectives, enabling them to choose the appropriate type of study, curricula, and subjects that help them discover educational opportunities beyond their present educational level, and assisting them in succeeding in their educational programme, in addition to diagnosing and treating educational problems in a manner that achieves their educational adjustment in general” (Hamed Abdel Salam Zahran, 1980, p. 377).

It has also been defined as “the process concerned with achieving compatibility between the individual, with their distinctive characteristics, on the one hand, and the various educational opportunities and differing requirements on the other, and which also seeks to provide the environment that leads to the individual’s development and education” (Al-Tarawneh Abdullah, 2009, p. 11).

From these definitions, it can be stated that school guidance comprises the totality of educational, psychological, and vocational services provided to pupils that assist them in planning their future in accordance with their inclinations, abilities, and intellectual and physical capacities in a manner that satisfies their needs.

1.2 Definition of School Counselling

Linguistically, “the word counselling derives from the verb arshada, meaning to guide or direct. Irshad derives from the verb arshada, rashada, murshid, rushdan, and rushd, which denote righteousness and correctness in contrast to error and deviation” (Al-Asadi Saeed & Ibrahim Marwan, 2003, p. 24).

The American Psychological Counselling Association defines it as “the services provided by specialists in counselling psychology according to the principles and methods of studying human behaviour across the various stages of development. They provide their services to emphasise the positive aspects of the client’s personality and utilise them to achieve adjustment, with the aim of acquiring new skills that assist in meeting developmental requirements, achieving adjustment to life, and the ability to make decisions. Counselling

services are provided to all individuals across different age stages” (Mohamed Mahrous Al-Shennawi, 1994, p. 25).

Glanner defined it as “an interactive process that arises between two individuals, one of whom is a specialist, the counsellor, and the other the client. Through this relationship, the counsellor assists the client in confronting a problem by changing or developing their behaviour and methods of dealing with the circumstances they face” (Abu Hamad Nasser Al-Din, 2010, p. 5). From the foregoing, it can be stated that school and career guidance and counselling constitute “a planned and organised process that enables pupils to choose the type of study that corresponds to their aptitudes, abilities, and inclinations and assists them in resolving the problems they encounter in a manner that achieves their psychological, educational, and vocational adjustment.”

2. The Historical Development of Guidance and Counselling

The process of guidance and counselling is as old as human education itself, having passed through several significant stages in its development, which can be summarised as follows:

The Stage of Emphasis on Educational Guidance:

At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the problems of academic delay and intellectual deficiency attracted the attention of psychologists. Consequently, the number of studies in this field has increased, and several attempts have been made to study academic delay and intellectual deficiency. Efforts were also made to educate, guide, and counsel these two groups. In 1905, Binet developed the first intelligence test. Furthermore, expansion and interest increased in curricula and in planning the educational future of ordinary pupils (Zahran Hamed Abdel Salam, 1980, p. 42). The general objectives of guidance during this stage were as follows:

- Gaining people’s trust and fostering a sense of belonging to the nation.
- Assisting in cooperative work.
- Interpreting and explaining society's changing needs.
- Development of individual abilities.

The Stage of Emphasis on Vocational Guidance:

At the beginning of its emergence, counselling was associated with vocational guidance, which aimed to assist individuals in choosing a profession that corresponded to their abilities, capacities, and aptitudes and to overcome vocational problems through the analysis of both the individual and the profession. The objective of this stage was to place the appropriate person in the appropriate occupation. Most studies agree that the actual beginning of this stage was led by Frank Parsons, who authored a book entitled *Choosing a Vocation*. He emphasised the necessity of studying the individual's capacities (abilities, aptitudes, and inclinations), as well as occupations and the skills they require, and of placing the appropriate person in the appropriate position (vocational compatibility). In 1908, a vocational bureau was established, and in 1910, the first conference on vocational guidance was held, alongside the publication of the first journal on vocational guidance (Hussein Taha Abdel Azim, 2008, p. 42).

Stage of Emphasis on the Psychometric Movement:

Psychometric movement, the study of individual differences among individuals, and the construction of psychological tests and scales significantly influenced the development of

guidance and counselling. Alfred Binet (1875–1911) developed the first practical measure of intelligence, as well as a personality measure, both of which profoundly affected the development of psychological guidance and counselling.

The Stage of Emphasis on Adjustment and Mental Health:

During this stage, guidance focused on a well-balanced personality and on achieving adjustment in all its aspects. Among the factors that contributed to the emergence of this stage were the mental health movement that spread in institutions and clinics, the emergence of the psychoanalytic movement and the spread of its ideas through Sigmund Freud, in addition to the problems of adjustment among pupils and the modification of their behaviour (Melhem Sami Mohamed, 2007, p. 25).

From the foregoing, guidance and counselling began with vocational guidance and then progressed to school guidance. Guidance and counselling programmes subsequently expanded into educational domains, followed by the emergence of counselling psychology in the 1970s, which focuses on mental health and psychological development. Guidance and counselling assumed a decision-making role to reduce students' anxiety. The concept then developed further, and attitudes toward psychological guidance and counselling programs became more positive, with recognition being acquired as an established scientific field. Hence, educational guidance and counselling, as a structured and planned process and program, emerged relatively recently, at the beginning of the twentieth century, for the following reasons:

1. The scientific renaissance has characterised all fields of life.
2. The industrial and technological revolution and the profound developments in thought and social structures that accompanied it.
3. The population exploded.
4. The multiplicity of specialisations and the branching of scientific fields.
5. The nature of the modern era is shaped by rapid, successive changes across the economic, social, political, and cultural domains.
6. The use of modern technological methods, among which the outcomes were the emergence of new professions and the disappearance of others.
7. The transformation of the structure of society in general, whether through the modification or replacement of systems, values, customs, norms, or traditions.
8. The migration of large numbers of people from villages and rural areas to cities.
9. Women's entry into the labour market.
10. The expansion of education and the accompanying changes in attitudes, customs, modes of thinking, and ways of life (Mohamed Jassem Al-Obaidi and Alaa Jassem Al-Obaidi, 2009, p. 52).

3. The Development of School and Career Guidance and Counselling in Algeria

The function of counselling and guidance in Algeria has developed in the following stages:

The First Period: 1962–1972

During this period, the tasks of the guidance counsellor consisted of the following:

- Develop, prepare, and analyse processes related to examinations and conduct statistical investigations concerning the school and educational situation.

- Conducting studies and training activities.
- Collecting and disseminating information related to professional pathways.

The Period 1970–1980

This period witnessed the first reform in 1976, during which the duties of the school counsellor were defined as follows:

- Adapting educational activities according to the individual abilities of pupils.
- Establishing techniques to regulate procedures through which pupils' qualifications and knowledge are assessed.
- This study contributes to educational research concerning the effectiveness of educational methods and the use of teaching aids.
- Organising informational meetings concerning studies and various professions, as well as psychological examinations and interviews that enable the discovery of pupils' aptitudes and knowledge.
- This study contributes to educational research concerning the effectiveness of educational methods and the use of teaching aids.
- Organising informational meetings concerning studies and various professions, as well as psychological examinations and interviews that enable the discovery of pupils' aptitudes.
- Monitoring the development of pupils in their studies.
- It contributes to the integration of pupils into the professional environment.

The Period 1980–1990

This period was characterised by the following:

- Organising the duties and relationships of the guidance counsellor within secondary schools.
- Identifying pupils' aspirations and evaluating their aptitudes and academic results.
- Assisting in managing pupils' educational pathways and providing them with guidance.

The Period of 1990–2002

This period witnessed the reform of 1992, which emphasised the need to establish mechanisms capable of directing pupils in a manner consistent with their abilities and intellectual competencies to preserve their chances of success and to promote guidance from the field of administrative management into the domain of psychological follow-up.

Ministerial Decision No. 827 of 1991 defined the duties of counsellors and senior counsellors in school and career guidance in Articles 6–14 as follows:

- Guiding pupils, informing them, and monitoring their academic work.
- Conducting studies and investigations within training institutions and in the world of work.
- Contributing to the analysis of educational content and teaching resources.

The decision also specified other duties for the counsellor, such as the following:

- Conducting studies and investigations of importance in the field of pedagogical research.
- Monitoring and supervising the activities of novice school and career guidance counsellors within the framework of continuing training.

This period also involved the implementation of a questionnaire on pupils' inclinations and interests in common core streams to identify their preferences.

The Period 2002–2022

This period witnessed a fundamental shift in the perception of guidance and counselling. The Orientation Law for Education of 2008 stated that “school counselling and information concerning school, university, and vocational pathways constitute an educational act aimed at assisting each pupil throughout their schooling to prepare their orientation according to their aptitudes, abilities, wishes, aspirations, and the requirements of the social and economic environment, thereby enabling them progressively to construct their personal project and make informed educational and vocational choices.” The tasks of the guidance counsellor were generally defined as follows:

- Organising informational sessions and individual interviews.
- Conducting psychological studies.
- Monitoring the development of pupils’ results throughout their educational pathway.
- Proposing measures to facilitate the processes of orientation and reorientation with the contribution of pupils’ parents.
- This contributes to the integration of graduates of the educational system into the professional environment.

The function and trajectory of guidance and counselling have undergone three principal stages in their development. After independence, guidance was merely an administrative process. In the second stage, it became a function in its own right, with school guidance constituting the counsellor's principal duty. The importance of the pupil's preference in the orientation process was also recognised, along with attention to their psychological and developmental aspects. The final stage witnessed a qualitative transformation, in line with the broader shift in educational philosophy, by emphasising the centrality of the pupil. Guidance thus became a purposeful developmental process in which the pupils themselves played a role, emphasising the necessity of assisting and monitoring the pupils to achieve their personal project.

4. Guidance and Counselling Services in Educational Institutions in Algeria

Information:

Information is defined as the set of data and knowledge provided to pupils and is related primarily to their educational, school, and vocational realities. It aims to connect them with the surrounding social, economic, and political environment and to assist them in acquiring various forms of knowledge and skills that develop their inclinations and interests in accordance with their abilities, thereby enabling them to construct their vocational project. School and career guidance counsellors provide informational services, either individually or collectively, to all pupils without exception, with particular attention given to pupils in the fourth year of middle school and those in the common core streams. Among the informational topics addressed are the new school environment to which they will move, the structure of secondary education, the available specialisations, and the procedures for enrolment in vocational training centers. These services rely on several means, including brochures, ministerial decrees, posters, preference forms, and vocational training guides. Ministerial Decision No. 827 defined the duties of counsellors and senior counsellors in the field of information in Articles 6–14 as follows:

- Conducting collective informational sessions and organising meetings between parents, pupils, and professional stakeholders according to a schedule prepared in cooperation with the director of the concerned school.
- Organising informational campaigns concerning studies, occupations, and vocational opportunities available in the labour market.
- The information and documentation office within educational institutions should be managed with the assistance of teachers and educational assistants, and documents should be provided to ensure adequate information for pupils.

Guidance:

School guidance is defined as the educational process through which the pupil is directed towards choosing a field of study that corresponds to their abilities and capacities, on the one hand, and their inclinations and interests, on the other hand. The same decree emphasised that the process of school guidance includes the following:

- Providing psychological and educational counselling to assist pupils in adapting to educational activities.
- Conducting the necessary psychological examinations to support pupils who suffer from particular conditions.
- This study contributes to the identification of pupils who are experiencing academic delay and who are participating in the organisation and the evaluation of adapted education and remedial lessons.

The school and career guidance counsellor performs this task using a range of techniques, including the questionnaire on inclinations and interests and the preference form.

Evaluation:

To verify the achievement of the established objectives, the school and career guidance counsellor conducts comprehensive evaluations on the basis of academic results, pupils' records, and monitoring and guidance cards. This is conducted through the following:

- Presenting and discussing the results of the Baccalaureate Certificate and the Middle School Education Certificate in class councils with members of the educational team.
- Identifying and documenting cases of academic delay to address them promptly and thereby reduce the rates of failure and dropout.
- Strengths and weaknesses in the educational process should be identified and addressed by proposing alternatives and appropriate means.
- Inform pupils of the results of the evaluation.
- Holding meetings with teachers to sensitise them to the importance of the evaluation process in identifying individual differences among pupils and facilitating the proper progression of the subject matter.
- Holding meetings with pupils' parents to inform them of the academic level of their children (Boulehwaach Omar, 2015, p. 309).

Psychological assistance services:

The concept of counselling was introduced into the Algerian educational system within the framework of the democratisation of education, where educational policy gives particular attention to all pupils and provides what facilitates their development to achieve school

adjustment. Among these pupils are those who experience difficulties in school adjustment and those with special needs (Hannash Fadila, 2011, p. 33).

School and career guidance counsellors play a highly significant role in providing psychological support to pupils by helping them overcome various psychological and educational difficulties they encounter. This is achieved by conducting individual interviews to diagnose problems, providing support, and coordinating with teachers and parents to resolve them. Among the most important tasks carried out are the following:

- Conducting individual and group counselling sessions for pupils to assist them in achieving psychological and educational adjustment within their educational institutions.
- The various psychological and educational problems experienced by the pupils were diagnosed, and specific follow-up records were prepared for them.
- Strengthening pupils' self-confidence and motivation through raising morale and employing methods of encouragement and positive reinforcement.

5. The Need for School and Career Guidance and Counselling in Educational Institutions

From the foregoing, school and career guidance and counselling have become educational, social, and economic necessities. They also represent the most effective means of providing the essential services required by educational systems with minimal effort and, in the shortest time, to achieve integration between the school and society and realise the common objectives between them through the attainment of the general objectives of national development plans. The process of guiding and counselling pupils contributes to achieving compatibility between pupils' abilities, on the one hand, and the wishes of parents and the needs of society for qualified human resources, on the other hand. This is achieved by assisting pupils in their positive development in all fields, enabling them to recognise and develop their abilities and aptitudes, and attempting to resolve the psychological, educational, and behavioural problems that hinder their progress to assist them in making choices related to their educational and vocational future through the construction of their future personal project in accordance with their reality and aspirations.

Results of the Study

1. School and career guidance and counselling constitute a planned and organised process that enables the pupil to understand themselves and to choose the type of study that corresponds to their abilities and inclinations and fulfils their aspirations, in addition to developing their capacities and working to resolve their problems to achieve psychological, social, educational, and vocational adjustment through the following:
 - ❖ **Achieving self-realisation:** This is accomplished by providing the pupil with a positive concept of the self, which leads to the transformation of negative and undesirable behavioural patterns into positive behaviours, in addition to modifying and correcting the individual's attitudes and limited perceptions, that is, working at the level of representations, perceptions, and the domain of inclinations and desires, as well as strengthening the individual's ability to choose and make decisions.
 - ❖ **Work analysis:** This provides accurate and specific information about various job positions across different specialisations, on the one hand, and an understanding of

pupils' aptitudes, inclinations, abilities, and the opportunities available to them, on the other hand. It also assists them in choosing academic specialisations that correspond to their inclinations and desires on the one hand and to their aptitudes and abilities on the other, in a manner consistent with the professions available in society, their requirements, and the needs for them.

- ❖ **Achieving adjustment at the personal, social, and academic levels:** This leads to mental health and enables individuals to develop the capacity for future self-direction, which is reflected positively in individuals, their families, and society in general.
- 2. Working to improve the educational process through attention to the following:
 - Recognising individual differences and assisting development on this basis.
 - Providing parents, teachers, and learners with all the necessary information for constructing sound choices and making appropriate decisions.
 - Enabling pupils to acquire the skills necessary for effective learning and academic achievement.
- 3. School and career guidance and counselling specialists are the people responsible for enabling pupils to become aware of their abilities and various aptitudes; for contributing to their intellectual, emotional, and social development (all aspects of personality); and for assisting them in overcoming the problems they encounter.
- 4. The success of the school and career guidance and counselling specialist, with the assistance of all the parties involved in the educational process, in carrying out the tasks entrusted to them, is essential for the success of educational and societal development plans. Therefore, attention should be given to them, and their working conditions should be improved.

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