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PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OF VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE AND CAREER COUNSELING FOR STUDENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF LABOR MARKET TRANSFORMATION: THE EXPERIENCE OF UKRAINE AND EU COUNTRIES

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Abstract

Relevance Relevance: The relevance of the study is driven by the shifting logic of career trajectories caused by the transformation of the modern labor market, digitalization, "green" modernization of the economy, demographic changes, and increasing population mobility. Career choice ceases to be a single event (one-time act) and turns into a process of managing transitions and lifelong learning. Quantitative indicators (number of events, consultations, participants) still dominate vocational guidance and career counseling practices in Ukraine, whereas qualitative indicators reflecting real changes in competences (competencies) and career readiness are applied to a limited extent. This limits the opportunities for comparing results obtained by educational institutions and complicates integration with European standards, which emphasize process quality, outcomes, and long-term effects.

Objective: To substantiate a multi-level system of performance indicators for vocational guidance and career counseling of students in Ukraine as a tool for adapting to the challenges of the modern labor market, taking into account the relevant experience of EU countries.

Methods: Comparison of Ukrainian and European experience in organizing career services; content analysis of regulatory (normative) documents; logical-framework (logical-structural) modeling to build a system of indicators (from inputs to outcomes); thematic grouping of indicators and expert assessment of their clarity and data collection feasibility.

Results: A system of indicators encompassing four levels (inputs/resources, processes, outputs/outcomes, and impact) is proposed; six key evaluation areas are identified (from human resource potential to employment success); a "minimum set" of key performance indicators (KPIs) for vocational and professional pre-higher education institutions has been developed (service coverage, average waiting time for counseling, availability of individual action plans, graduate employment rate); comparative analysis showed that in EU countries, monitoring focuses on process quality and tracking graduates' career trajectories, while a quantitative approach prevails in Ukraine.

Conclusions: The developed system of indicators will allow educational institutions to transition from formal reporting to quality management of career services; the conditions for its implementation in Ukraine are characterized (establishing unified data standards, regular surveys of students, analyzing service accessibility, and integrating up-to-date labor market information into counseling); the effectiveness of the "sufficient simplicity" model, which involves using clear descriptive analytics and basic measurement of results with minimal time investment, is proven. Further research should be directed toward testing (piloting) the system in various types of institutions, adapting methodologies for assessing career readiness, and aligning indicators with state graduate employment monitoring systems.

Keywords: *career adaptability, labor market, self-efficacy, counseling quality, EU standards, outcomes monitoring, competences (competencies).*

Introduction. The transformation of the labor market, accompanied by the rapid updating of professions, the spread of hybrid employment, and the growing demand for digital and green skills, creates conditions of permanent uncertainty in which students design their own educational and professional trajectories. In domestic scientific discourse, the essence of the concept of "green skills" is interpreted as "the ability to apply knowledge to perform tasks and solve problems," whereas in foreign sources, they are defined as the knowledge, abilities, values, and attitudes needed to live in, develop, and support a resource-efficient society (Semihina & Markevych, 2022).

The increasing volatility of career paths means that students require not only professional knowledge but also systemic support in career choice, planning, and management throughout their lives. Under such conditions, professional choice increasingly takes on the character of a continuous decision-making process rather than a one-time act, with decisions being refined under the influence of experience and external factors. Accordingly, vocational guidance and career counseling in vocational (vocational-technical) and professional pre-higher education institutions must provide not only information but also develop the ability to navigate alternatives and risks while maintaining agency (subjectivity) in a changing environment. Despite this, the evaluation of the effectiveness of vocational guidance practices often remains reporting-bound and quantitative: the number of events held, the number of consultations, and the number of participants. Such metrics describe the organizers' activity but shed little light on the actual benefits for the student. In particular, current indicators do not allow for an assessment of the level of development of career competences (competencies), which are defined as "fundamental

conditions for personal self-actualization, as they reflect a person's awareness and understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses, limitations, and abilities, as well as the ability to anticipate and plan future personal, professional, and career growth" (Hrytsenok, 2025). Furthermore, the dynamics of career self-efficacy, the degree of realism of the decisions made, and the sustainability of the achieved effects over time remain overlooked.

In global practice, career counseling is viewed as a strategic tool for ensuring the competitiveness of youth in the labor market. In EU countries, established competence standards in the field of career guidance and counseling have been developed (Slideshare, 2016), and performance evaluation includes the analysis of process quality, outcome-based changes, and follow-up measurements (CEDEFOP, 2023, pp. 14, 51, 66). In Ukraine, however, the monitoring system remains fragmented: unified data standards are missing, and there is a lack of regular student surveys and integration of labor market information into the counseling process.

Thus, reimagining the approaches to monitoring the performance of vocational guidance work is not only relevant but also a necessary tool for modernizing the national education system. Establishing clear performance indicators will make it possible to move beyond formal statistics and focus on real changes in the professional consciousness of young people. Currently, there is a lack of knowledge on how exactly to integrate qualitative and quantitative indicators into a unified system that would be suitable for comparison between educational institutions, comply with European standards, and at the same time take into account Ukrainian realities.

The implementation of a balanced evaluation system that combines Ukrainian realities with best European practices will ensure an objective analysis of how well educational institutions prepare future specialists for the challenges of a dynamic labor market. This, in turn, will allow not merely stating the number of consultations conducted, but measuring the actual readiness of graduates for independent career design and successful self-actualization in conditions of continuous technological transformations.

Sources of research. The theoretical analysis of the problem was conducted based on modern scientific works highlighting the methodology of vocational guidance, career development models, mechanisms of youth transition from education to employment, as well as approaches to evaluating counseling effectiveness. Particular attention is paid to studies of the 2020s, which analyze the digitalization of employment, the spread of hybrid forms of work, the impact of military and migration factors on career trajectories, as well as the formation of new competences (competencies) required for the competitiveness of graduates.

Ukrainian scientists have investigated various aspects of this problem: the modernization of the vocational education system, the development of the competence approach, the institutional role of career centers in educational institutions, and the interaction of education with employers and regional labor markets. In modern works (Kremen, 2021; Nychkalo, 2020; Lokshyna, 2023; Lukianova, 2020; Radkevych, 2022), the necessity of aligning educational programs with the dynamic demands of the knowledge economy is substantiated, and the importance of strengthening practice-oriented training and introducing graduate employment monitoring systems is proven. New analytical materials from Ukrainian and European institutions for 2020–2025, dedicated to youth employment, professional intentions of students, and the impact of relocation and distance learning on professional self-determination, have also become important for this study.

Foreign authors (Lent & Brown, 2021; Fabio, Svicher, Palazzeschi, & Gori, 2022; Hirschi & Koen, 2021), as well as international and European organizations the ILO, Cedefop,

UNESCO, OECD, the European Commission, ETF, and ICCDPP dealing with labor, education, and economic development, reveal the modern foundations of career construction, social cognitive career theory, preventive and inclusive career counseling, and systemic evaluation of the effectiveness of vocational guidance services. The documents (Cedefop, 2021; OECD, 2021) emphasize the need for integrating lifelong guidance services, early career navigation, the use of digital platforms for professional diagnostics, and personalized learning trajectories. The concept of a "lifelong career" implies a transition from discrete vocational guidance/career events to continuous career support of an individual throughout their education and professional activity. To provide universally accessible quality counseling services across Europe, the Council of the European Union adopted a resolution in 2008 on enhancing the role of lifelong guidance within lifelong learning strategies (Zakatnov, 2025). A comparative analysis of practices in EU countries demonstrates that the highest performance is achieved by models that combine school counseling, dual education, employer mentorship, and regular tracking of graduates' career outcomes.

The results of the scientific research confirm the necessity and expediency of further studying the performance indicators of vocational guidance and career counseling for students in Ukraine, taking into account EU standards and best practices. It is the systemic implementation and comprehensive use of these indicators that create the foundation for developing an effective, flexible, and socially just system of career support for youth.

The objective of the study is to substantiate a multi-level system of performance indicators for vocational guidance and career counseling of students in Ukraine and EU countries as a tool for adapting to the challenges of the modern labor market.

To achieve this objective, the study involves highlighting the differences in approaches to evaluating the effectiveness of career services in Ukraine and EU countries, which allows outlining the prospects for adapting national practices to European standards.

Research methods. The study was carried out by comparing Ukrainian and European

experience in organizing vocational guidance and career counseling. A comprehensive set of scientific methods combining theoretical and practical approaches was used. Theoretical methods included content analysis of regulatory (normative) documents, logical-framework (logical-structural) modeling to build a system of indicators (from inputs/resources to outcomes), and comparative analysis, which allowed identifying common and distinctive features in the functioning of career counseling systems. Practical methods were aimed at verifying the applied suitability of the proposed KPIs: an expert evaluation of their clarity and data collection feasibility was conducted, and a thematic grouping of indicators was carried out to systematize the results. The combination of these methods ensured the comprehensiveness of the study and confirmed the practical significance of the developed system of indicators.

Results and discussion. Career interventions in education must be based on theoretical models that allow for the explication of career behavior mechanisms and the substantiation of their performance indicators. As defined by J. Sampson (2023), such interventions encompass any activity or effort aimed at facilitating career development and the making of effective decisions by the subject through the provision of relevant resources and services. At the same time, the forms of implementing interventions are heterogeneous: from "highly structured classroom activities and computer programs to job club activities and individualized counseling" (Gelso & Williams, 2022, p. 376).

The social cognitive career theory of A. Bandura emphasizes the role of self-efficacy an individual's belief in their own capability to perform a specific task. Students (learners) with a high level of self-efficacy demonstrate greater persistence and the capacity to overcome difficulties (Haivoronska, 2024). Self-efficacy, in turn, is linked to the internal mechanisms of personal self-regulation, which O. Kredentser (2023) defines as "a system of subjective representations of the ability to act successfully in specific situations, which is evaluative in nature and ensures the regulation of actions aimed at achieving certain goals by forming judgments about one's ability to successfully solve the assigned tasks."

In the context of dynamic changes in the labor market, the concept of career adaptability describes the resources that help manage transitions and roles, which is particularly important under conditions of uncertainty. At the same time, within modern psychological and pedagogical research, typological approaches to career choice emphasize the congruence (alignment) between personal interests and the work environment as a factor of satisfaction and trajectory stability. Such a conceptual stance directly correlates with the vector of modernization of the educational process, according to which "modern approaches to vocational guidance of youth should be focused on ensuring the competitiveness of graduates in the labor market, forming their holistic personality for the conscious choice of their own educational and professional vectorness" (Dolid, Bobrykova, & Lahodych, 2026).

The life-span (life-course) approach to career development emphasizes the sequence of tasks a person undergoes during different periods of life, and the role of educational institutions in supporting these transitions. In view of these approaches, it is appropriate to evaluate the effectiveness of vocational guidance and counseling not through the "correctness" of a one-time choice, but through the development of competences (competencies) and conditions that enhance the quality of decisions over time. Relatively speaking, quality career support should help the student learn to: find and critically evaluate information about professions; correlate professional requirements with their own resources; formulate alternatives and plan for risks; take real steps (internships, work placements, portfolio development); and adjust the plan without losing the motivational core. It is these abilities that must be reflected in the system of indicators.

Under conditions of uncertainty, it is advisable to distinguish between indicators describing service accessibility, quality, outcomes for the student, and the long-term effects of vocational guidance and career counseling, which are "confirmed by longitudinal studies, the high social status of the career counselor profession in economically developed countries, and the interest of the state and society in resolving problems related to preparing the younger generation for choosing and pursuing a professional career" (Zakatnov,

2020). The effectiveness of vocational guidance and career counseling is determined by a sequential chain of conditions. If a service is inaccessible, it does not cover the target groups. If the process is of

poor quality, even an accessible service may remain formal. If real changes in competences (competencies) do not occur, it is difficult to expect long-term results (Fig. 1).

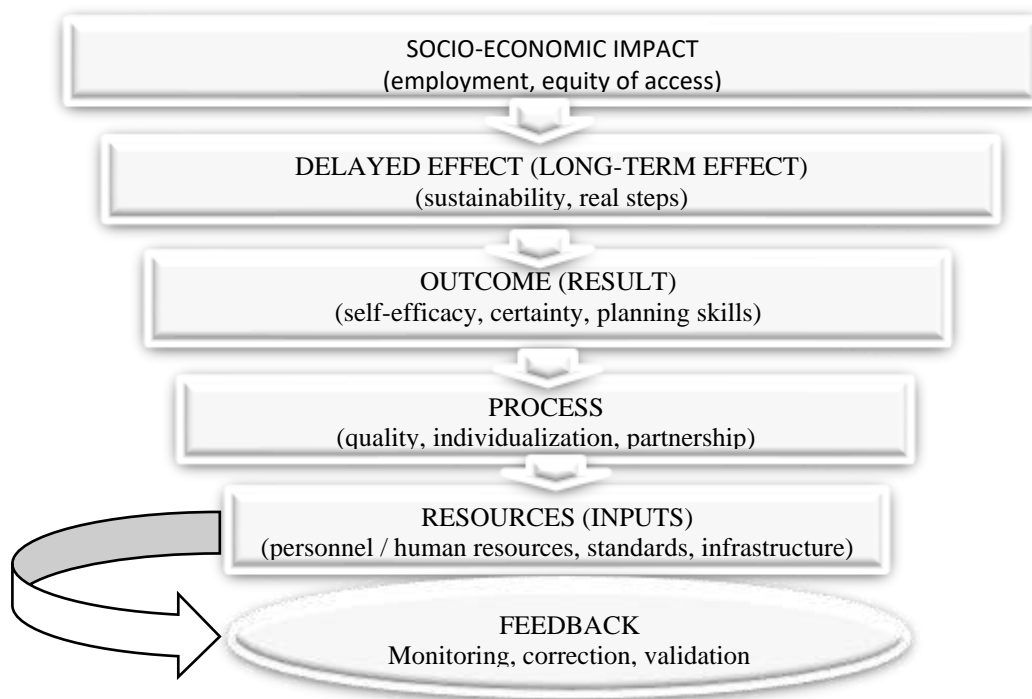


Fig. 1. Logical model for evaluating the effectiveness of vocational guidance and career counseling

Accessibility (accessibility/availability) is a baseline performance indicator. It must account not only for the number of covered students (learners) but also for access barriers. The most practical accessibility indicators are:

- average waiting time from application to consultation;
- the proportion of students who received an individual consultation or completed a career literacy module;
- the share of repeat inquiries (appointments/visits) as an indicator of trust;
- accessibility for diverse groups (inclusivity, online formats).

In European practices, the concept of "accessibility" is interpreted as a comprehensive phenomenon that goes beyond physical or technical access. It encompasses clear rules for entering the service, the availability of clear and transparent information about its functioning, inclusivity, and the clarity of procedures. This provision is enshrined in the European Accessibility Act (Directive (EU), 2019), which specifies that services must be not only

technically accessible but also understandable to users. This approach directly applies to the career counseling system, where transparency of rules and user awareness are key conditions for trust and effectiveness.

The next key aspect of the effectiveness of vocational guidance and career counseling is the quality of the service delivery process. Process quality characterizes whether the counseling is professional and structured, and whether it ensures compliance with methodological standards and the actual needs of students. Service quality indicators (process indicators) reflect process efficiency and allow for an evaluation of whether a specific process can be executed faster or costs can be reduced without compromising quality. These indicators should reflect: the qualification of counselors and the regularity of professional competence development, which can be viewed both as a comprehensive indicator characterizing the specialist's professional level and as a combination of certain professional and personal qualities of a specialist necessary for effective work activity

(Sadrytska, 2022); the presence of a post-consultation outcome in the form of a brief action plan (2–4 weeks) and agreed-upon steps; transparency and ethics (voluntariness, confidentiality, informed consent, caution in testing); and the quality of feedback (a brief evaluation of the utility and clarity of the service). In the EU, these indicators are often linked to institutional quality standards (Qual-IMG Consortium, 2019, p. 9), whereas in Ukraine they are not always the subject of systematic monitoring.

The quality of vocational guidance and career counseling determines the level of professionalism, structuredness, and compliance with methodological standards. However, this is insufficient for a comprehensive performance evaluation of this area; it is necessary to also consider outcome (resultative) indicators that record the specific achievements of students after completing vocational guidance programs or a counseling cycle. Outcome indicators of vocational guidance should capture what exactly the student is able to do after the vocational guidance program or counseling cycle. The key task is to prepare the individual for agency (effectiveness/action) in situations of uncertainty, which are interpreted as: "...transitional states that prompt a person to experience positive emotions in new unstructured, ambiguous situations, perceiving them not as a threat but as challenging. A situation of uncertainty implies that at the moment of choice, it is impossible to understand which option will be more effective (fruitful)" (Fedoryshyn, 2022).

In such conditions, the effectiveness of vocational guidance is measured through the level of development of career competences (competencies): labor market information literacy (searching, verifying, and interpreting data); decision-making skills (selection criteria, comparison of alternatives, plan A/B); trajectory planning (competence gaps, selection of courses, internships, and projects); and readiness for the first professional experience (resume, portfolio, job interview). Such indicators can be measured by brief "before/after" scales, mini-tests, as well as the availability of a resume, plan, or portfolio.

Along with these immediate results, an important component of a comprehensive evaluation is the delayed effects (long-term effects) that

manifest 6–12 months after the completion of the program. It is these effects that make it possible to determine the sustainability of the acquired competences (competencies) and the real impact of vocational guidance activities on the educational and professional trajectory of students. Delayed effects are a critical evaluation component. They demonstrate whether the acquired competences have transformed into sustainable decisions and actions. Such indicators include:

- the sustainability of the plan and the presence of alternatives after 6–12 months;
- real steps (internships, work placements, participation in projects, updating the portfolio);
- a reduction in the number of "accidental" changes to the educational trajectory caused by mistaken expectations.

At the same time, the interpretation of stability requires caution: quality counseling can also lead to plan adjustment if new reliable data emerges. Therefore, it is not the fact of change itself that is important, but its justification and timeliness. In practice, collecting such data requires coordination between departments (career centers, support services) and conducting a longitudinal study. This is a study in which measurements are repeatedly carried out (data is collected) over a certain period of time. Longitudinal studies are most often observational, meaning they do not exert external influence on the study participants (Eltorai, Liu, Chand, & Kalva, 2023).

Delayed effects cannot be viewed in isolation: they become indicators not only of the individual sustainability of the educational trajectory but also of the systemic capacity for correction and adaptation. It is this dual function (capturing stability and the legitimacy of changes) that opens up space for comparing different educational models. In this context, the juxtaposition of Ukrainian approaches with EU practices is particularly revealing, as discrepancies are traced not only in the choice of indicators but also in the ways they are interpreted. First, in the EU, service quality standards and counselor training requirements are applied more frequently (Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), 2015), which supports procedural accountability based not only on the number of activities but also on results.

Second, more attention is paid to the user experience: accessibility, clarity, utility, as well as ethics (Shynkaruk, 2023). Third, multi-source data and delayed measurements are used more often, allowing for the assessment of effect sustainability.

In Ukraine, however, evaluation often remains reporting-bound and quantitative, and delayed effects are measured only occasionally (episodically). At the same time, the "Ukraine – EU" comparison should be understood not as a contrast, but as a way to identify the structural conditions under which certain indicators become possible or, conversely, distorted.

In many EU countries, career services are integrated into institutional networks of interaction between education, employment services, and employers (Makhsma & Chub, 2022), which facilitates the collection of delayed indicators and makes professional trials (work trials/tasters) a regular practice. The digitalization of services is more frequently accompanied by data protection policies and transparent rules for handling information, allowing aggregated data to be used for monitoring without breaching privacy. In countries with advanced apprenticeship or dual education models, the link between career support and real trajectories (internship/work placement – training – first job) is shorter, which increases the sensitivity of effect indicators to service quality.

For Ukraine, it is important to take into account that uncertainty has not only an economic but also a social and security dimension: migration processes, resource inequality between regions, and differing starting opportunities for students. This means that performance indicators must be context-sensitive. For example, "the absence of trajectory change" is not always a positive effect: sometimes a well-founded adjustment of the plan after receiving reliable information is an indication of high-quality counseling. Accordingly, delayed effects should be interpreted as the quality of correction (justification, timeliness, availability of alternatives) rather than mechanical stability. The balance between individual and group formats requires separate attention.

The modern international paradigm of career guidance, presented in the joint declaration of leading institutions (WGCG), is based on the principle of a differentiated approach. Effective

European practices demonstrate a combined support model: group modules are aimed at developing general career management skills, while individual counseling is critically necessary for handling complex cases and mitigating personal barriers (social isolation, psychological insecurity, low level of support). This approach allows transforming career guidance from mere information provision into a comprehensive tool for developing the socio-emotional resilience and adaptability of an individual in a dynamic labor market (Cedefop, pp. 4–5). Accordingly, performance indicators must take the format into account: for group modules, short tests and professional competence assessment scales are appropriate, while for individual counseling the quality of the plan, the execution of agreed-upon steps, and the frequency of repeat inquiries as an indicator of service relevance.

Finally, in a comparative perspective, it is advisable to distinguish between effectiveness and equity. Even a program with high average indicators can reproduce inequality if the benefits are gained primarily by students with higher social capital. In this context, social capital is viewed as "a system of horizontal and vertical ties encompassing the level of institutional and interpersonal trust, norms of interaction, and civic engagement. A high level of social capital is considered one of the defining factors for effective local self-government, the development of civil society, and increasing welfare..." (Dovbysh, 2025). It is social capital that determines access to resources, opportunities, and support, which in turn affects the real effectiveness of educational programs. Therefore, at least one indicator equity should be included in the monitoring system: for example, the coverage and growth of outcome indicators within vulnerable groups (internally displaced persons, students with disabilities). This approach aligns with European inclusion guidelines and enhances the applied value of evaluating vocational guidance and career counseling for students.

The proposed indicators in the article are viewed as a tool for transitioning from formal reporting to evidence-based quality management of career services. For this purpose, it is important to demonstrate how the concepts of career psychology and pedagogy can be transformed into measurable indicators. It is also necessary to determine the

conditions under which these indicators become clear, comparable, and useful for managerial decision-making. The methodological framework must rely on the principles of operationalization, validity, reliability, sensitivity to change, and context responsiveness (context sensitivity).

Constructing an indicator begins with distinguishing between three levels. The first level constitutes a theoretical construct, such as career self-efficacy. The second level is a measurement tool, which can be a brief scale, rubric, or test. The third level is a managerial metric, i.e., an aggregated indicator that allows tracking changes over time and utilizing them in quality improvement cycles, such as average score, growth (gain), percentage of participants who achieved significant improvement above a defined minimum level, or differences between groups. If these levels are not distinguished, a typical conflation (substitution) occurs: the tool begins to be perceived as the indicator itself, and the results are interpreted without taking its limitations into account. Operationalization essentially means developing a system of indicators that allow for the empirical testing of the study's working hypotheses (Samiilenko & Khmara, 2025) and must include a definition, a calculation rule, and a logic of interpretation.

To ensure the validity of career services monitoring, the operationalization of each indicator must include a clear terminological definition, a calculation algorithm, and a logic for interpreting the results. In particular, when evaluating service accessibility through waiting time limits, it is inappropriate to use the arithmetic mean, as isolated cases of long delays significantly distort the overall statistics. A more representative approach is calculating the median, which allows capturing the typical experience of the majority of users and neutralizing the impact of anomalous outliers.

The analysis of the coverage indicator requires a differentiated approach, as the mechanical summation of all event participants ignores the fundamental difference in the intensity of impact. A scientifically grounded methodology involves separate accounting of participation in mass group events and the receipt of in-depth individual consultations, which allows for a more accurate assessment of the real scale of assistance. Furthermore, the evaluation of career planning

effectiveness should not be limited to a formal confirmation of the document's presence. To measure the quality of the outcome, it is advisable to implement evaluation rubrics that verify the content of the plan against the criteria of step specificity, realism, and alignment with the available resources and abilities of the student. Such a comprehensive approach transforms quantitative monitoring into a tool for quality management of the vocational guidance system.

Ensuring the validity of indicators in the career support system involves establishing a direct link between the evaluation indicator and the essential outcome of the counseling process. In the methodology of career support research, it is fundamental to distinguish between three levels of validation:

Construct validity, which serves as a guarantor of the theoretical precision of the toolkit. It determines the extent to which a test "actually measures the theoretical construct or concept it is intended to measure" (Chaban & Burdeinyi, 2025). It is considered to be one of the most complex and important types of validity. In practice, this ensures the alignment of the chosen method with a specific concept of career development (for instance, professional identity or career adaptability).

Criterion validity, which reflects the predictive value of the indicator. It "determines how well the test results correlate with other external criteria or standards considered to be indicators of the phenomenon under study" (Chaban & Burdeinyi, 2025). This type of validity allows for the verification of the link between the obtained data and real behavioral indicators, particularly the delayed effects of students' professional self-determination.

Ecological validity, which determines "the extent to which test results can be generalized to real-life situations or conditions. Validation involves data collection, results analysis, and evaluation to ensure that the instrument is reliable and accurate in measuring what it was created to measure" (Chaban & Burdeinyi, 2025). This aspect determines the functionality of the toolkit in the real conditions of an educational institution, guaranteeing that the monitoring results remain reliable beyond the controlled experiment.

Effective monitoring of outcomes requires tools that combine relevance (alignment with research goals), indicator stability, and their sensitivity to changes after intervention. Measurement reliability is ensured by the strict standardization of data collection procedures and the elimination of any ambiguity in formulations.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of vocational guidance and career counseling for students does not occur in a vacuum: results are influenced by economic fluctuations, the availability of internships (work placements), regional differences, the socio-economic resources of the family, and migration processes. Within the Ukraine–EU comparative framework, these factors can lead to erroneous conclusions. Methodologically, it is correct to separate process indicators (quality of service delivery) and outcome indicators (which depend more heavily on the external environment), apply stratification by groups, and use delayed measurements to verify the sustainability of changes.

The use of a minimal toolkit does not simplify the essence of evaluation, but merely optimizes data collection. To analyze accessibility, it is sufficient to record the dates of inquiries and their recurrence in a registration log. Process quality can be monitored via a concise checklist (alignment of goals and steps) and a single question regarding the utility of the session. Effectiveness is evaluated by comparing competences (competencies) "before" and "after" the consultation, as well as by the presence of finished products (resume, career plan). To detect delayed effects, it is advisable to conduct a brief survey regarding the real steps taken by the student. Such an approach allows for evaluating the specific effect rather than just the volume of work performed. At the same time, the proposed baseline is adaptive: it can easily be expanded with more complex analytical methods given the availability of appropriate resources. To systematize this process, it is advisable to define key indicators, data sources, and measurement frequency. An example of the corresponding indicator matrix is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Performance indicators of vocational guidance and career counseling

Group	Indicator	Data source
Accessibility	Average waiting time; coverage; repeat inquiries; inclusion	inquiry logs; registers; brief questionnaires
Process	Coverage, regularity, individualization, partnership, professional trials	logs/registers, quality checklists, analysis of plans
Outcome	Certainty, decision quality, self-efficacy, planning skills	questionnaires, standardized scales, interviews, portfolios
Effect (Impact)	Satisfaction, sustainability of intentions, retention within an individual educational trajectory, adaptation in practice	repeated measurements, learning analytics

Source: Author's systematization

At the initial stage, it is sufficient to use rapid diagnostics (rapid assessment): 5–7 questions about career competences (competencies), 1–2 questions about satisfaction with vocational guidance and career counseling, as well as tracking waiting times and coverage. Subsequently, the toolkit can be expanded to include service quality evaluation indicators, the analysis of portfolio elements, and, where possible, data on practices and internships (work placements). It is crucial to align the rules for interpreting the indicators.

First, coverage and the number of events should not be interpreted as effectiveness without an increase in outcome (resultative) indicators. Second,

comparisons between departments must take context into account such as the availability of internships, socio-economic conditions, and regional specifics. Third, monitoring indicators must not serve a punitive (repressive) function; instead, they should be viewed as a tool for supporting quality management and improving vocational guidance and career counseling for students. Fourth, it is advisable to verify the consistency between self-reports and behavioral indicators, as the gap between them often signals barriers that require additional support.

Effective monitoring requires establishing specific critical thresholds (boundaries) for each

indicator. These are values that indicate the necessity for managerial decisions. For example, if the waiting time for a consultation exceeds the established norm, it serves as a signal to review the workload of specialists or to implement new formats of work (e.g., conducting brief group sessions for typical inquiries instead of individual meetings).

At the same time, it is important to analyze the ratio of data: a large number of participants in the absence of real skill development indicates an overly superficial nature of assistance. Conversely, if a program yields a powerful result but covers few people, this is a direct argument for its scaling up (expansion).

Measuring results in short-term monitoring cycles should be carried out through a combination of subjective assessments (self-reports) and objective actions behavioral indicators, which serve as the foundation for constructing a universal competence model (Voloboieva, Kravchuk, & Parashchuk, 2021). Self-reports allow for rapid data collection on the status of students, although they can sometimes contain biased (distorted) information due to respondents' desire to appear better (social desirability bias). Behavioral indicators are more reliable: the availability of a ready resume or portfolio, submitting applications for internships, or actual participation in projects. Such data are objective but require clear rules of recording.

The optimal solution is to use a limited set of indicators that are easy to verify without excessive time investment. In European practice, this approach is known as combining "hard" (objective facts) and "soft" (subjective assessments) performance indicators. Using such a model in combination with repeated surveys allows for confirming the sustainability of the obtained results. Hard skills, also referred to as cognitive skills, are those abilities that can be demonstrated, precisely measured, and evaluated, such as the ability to use computer programs, foreign language proficiency, etc. Hard skills are easy to observe in everyday life. They are acquired through practice and are unique to each profession. Therefore, numerous professional tests and certificates exist to verify technical skills. On the other hand, soft skills enable an individual to be successful regardless of the specific field or direction in which they work. These skills include

the ability to persuade, connect with people (find an approach to people), be a leader, conduct negotiation processes, work in a team, creativity, etc. (Sharshatkin, Mamich, & Maliahanov, 2022). Evaluating soft skills is much more difficult, as they relate to interaction and relationships in society. Therefore, other people friends, colleagues, psychologists can help with this. They are also self-assessed using tests.

In modern Ukrainian realities, monitoring results should be evaluated with caution, given the unstable situation in the country. For instance, if a student decides to change their career plan, this does not always indicate an error on the counselor's part. On the contrary, it may be a conscious and correct decision made after acquiring new knowledge about the labor market. That is why during subsequent surveys, it is important to record not only the fact of changes itself but also what caused them. This will help distinguish accidental fluctuations from a deliberate path adjustment. The latter is an important sign that the individual has learned to make rational decisions even under conditions of uncertainty.

A separate element of the recommendations is the measurement of equity of access and outcomes. If a program demonstrates positive average changes, but vulnerable groups have less access or a lower growth of competences (competencies), the effectiveness of the system is limited because inequality is reproduced. In such cases, managerial decisions may include targeted support formats, mentorship, additional consultations, and altering information channels. In European logic, inclusion is considered an inherent component of educational quality, enshrined in the Council Resolution of 26 February 2021 (2021/C 66/01). This document defines inclusion as the first strategic priority of the European Education Area, which guarantees effectiveness through individual support and counseling sessions (Council of the European Union, 2021).

Finally, monitoring must be an ethical support tool rather than a punitive mechanism. If counselors face negative consequences for "low" metrics, there is a risk of manipulation or working only with those who have better baseline (starting) conditions. Therefore, indicators should primarily be used as a development tool: to identify barriers, adjust programs, enhance qualifications, build

partnerships with employers, and improve professional trials.

The proposed multi-level system of performance indicators for vocational guidance and career counseling of students allows institutions to transition from formal reporting to quality management of career services. It covers four levels (inputs/resources, processes, outputs/outcomes, and impact) and ensures a balance between quantitative and qualitative indicators. At the same time, the study has certain limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. Data fragmentation is observed in Ukraine, caused by the lack of unified standards for data collection in educational institutions. There is a limitation in qualitative indicators, as it is difficult to measure the dynamics of career self-efficacy and long-term effects. Insufficient integration with the labor market manifests in the lack of systemic access to up-to-date data on graduate employment. Methodological differences between EU countries and Ukraine complicate direct comparison of results. Furthermore, the approbation (testing/piloting) of the indicator system has not yet been conducted across a wide range of various types of institutions, which limits the generalizability of the conclusions.

Accounting for these limitations is important for future research aimed at improving the performance evaluation system of career counseling and its adaptation to European standards.

Conclusions. The effectiveness of vocational guidance and career counseling for students under conditions of uncertainty should be evaluated through a system of indicators that encompasses the accessibility of vocational guidance and career counseling for students, process quality, outcomes for the student, and delayed effects (long-term effects). A comparative analysis of Ukraine and EU countries indicates the methodological expediency of shifting the focus from reporting-bound activity metrics to measuring career competences (competencies) and follow-up

outcomes, as well as including indicators for equity of access and outcomes. The proposed indicator matrix and recommendations for a minimal monitoring cycle can serve as a baseline for implementing more meaningful evaluation of career services in educational institutions. Prospects for further research are linked to the practical verification of the proposed indicators and the refinement of their predictive value regarding delayed effects. It is advisable to test which specific outcome indicators (labor market information literacy, decision-making skills, trajectory planning, career self-efficacy, adaptability) best predict the real steps taken by students after 6–12 months. The question of the optimal intensity of interventions requires clarification: what combinations of group modules and individual counseling provide the greatest growth in competences (competencies) with minimal resource expenditure, and how this effect is modified by baseline conditions.

The development of brief tools allowing for the evaluation of not only plan stability but also the quality of trajectory correction under external changes is highly promising, since adaptive transitions are the norm for the modern labor market. Combining learning (educational) analytics with ethical approaches to data handling is also urgent (relevant) to ensure a balance between evidence-based management and privacy protection.

In the practical dimension, an important direction is the formation of an evaluation culture that supports the development of vocational guidance and career counseling for students rather than formal reporting. This implies the application of continuous improvement cycles, regular feedback for counselors and the management team, as well as transparently informing students about why data is collected and how it is used. In this sense, a comparative analysis with EU approaches is useful not as borrowing a set of "ready-made KPIs," but as a guide to a logic where the key unit of measurement becomes the outcome for the individual and its sustainability over time.

Conflict of Interest

The author certifies that no conflict of interest (financial, professional, or personal) exists that could have influenced the objectivity of the research results or conclusions. The integrity of the double-blind peer review process was ensured through a mandatory declaration of the absence of conflict of interest submitted via the journal's editorial system. This protocol guaranteed complete author anonymity and the independence of the expert evaluation throughout the entire editorial cycle.

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ПОКАЗНИКИ ЕФЕКТИВНОСТІ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ ОРІЄНТАЦІЇ ТА КАР'ЄРНОГО КОНСУЛЬТУВАННЯ ЗДОБУВАЧІВ ОСВІТИ В УМОВАХ ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЇ РИНКУ ПРАЦІ: ДОСВІД УКРАЇНИ ТА КРАЇН ЄС

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Реферат:

Актуальність дослідження зумовлена зміною логіки кар'єрних траєкторій, спричиненою трансформацією сучасного ринку праці, цифровізацією, «зеленою» модернізацією економіки, демографічними змінами та зростанням мобільності населення. Вибір професії перестає бути одноразовим актом і перетворюється на процес управління переходами та навчання упродовж життя. У практиках професійної орієнтації та кар'єрного консультування в Україні досі домінують кількісні показники (кількість заходів, консультацій, учасників), тоді як якісні індикатори, що відображають реальні зміни у компетентностях і готовності до кар'єри, застосовуються обмежено. Це обмежує можливості порівняння результатів, отриманих закладами освіти, та ускладнює інтеграцію з європейськими стандартами, де акцент робиться на якості процесу, результатах і довгострокових ефектах.

Мета: обґрунтувати багаторівневу систему показників ефективності професійної орієнтації та кар'єрного консультування здобувачів освіти в Україні як інструменту адаптації до викликів сучасного ринку праці з урахуванням відповідного досвіду країн ЄС.

Методи: порівняння українського та європейського досвіду організації кар'єрних сервісів; контент-аналіз нормативних документів; логіко-структурне моделювання для побудови системи показників (від

ресурсів до результатів); тематичне групування індикаторів та експертне оцінювання їхньої зрозумілості й можливості збору даних.

Результати: запропоновано систему показників, що охоплює чотири рівні (ресурси, процеси, результати та вплив); визначено шість ключових напрямів оцінювання (від кадрового потенціалу до успішності працевлаштування); сформовано «мінімальний набір» показників ефективності (КРІ) для закладів професійної та фахової передвищої освіти (охоплення сервісами, середній час очікування консультації, наявність індивідуальних планів дій, рівень працевлаштування випускників); порівняльний аналіз показав, що у країнах ЄС моніторинг орієнтований на якість процесу та відстеження кар'єрних траєкторій випускників, тоді як в Україні переважає кількісний підхід.

Висновки: розроблена система показників дозволить закладам освіти перейти від формальної звітності до управління якістю кар'єрних послуг; охарактеризовано умови її впровадження в Україні (встановлення єдиних стандартів даних, регулярні опитування здобувачів освіти, аналіз доступності послуг та інтеграція актуальної інформації про ринок праці у консультування); доведено ефективність моделі «достатньої простоти», що передбачає використання зрозумілої описової аналітики та базових вимірювань результатів при мінімальних витратах час. Подальші дослідження варто спрямувати на апробацію системи в закладах різних типів, адаптацію методик оцінювання готовності до кар'єри та узгодження показників із державними системами моніторингу працевлаштування випускників.

Ключові слова: *кар'єрна адаптивність, ринок праці, самоефективність, якість консультування, стандарти ЄС, моніторинг результатів, компетентності.*

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