Type of contribution: Paper

Title: “Youth’s experience and understanding of social justice in the meeting with counsellors in school. How does the school and local community context affect their view?”

Author/s of proposal including affiliations and e-mail address (should be left out in the version for review)

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Abstract and 3 – 5 keywords (up to 150 words)

Based on interviews with students in lower and upper secondary school in Norway, this paper will analyse the students’ views of their meeting with career guidance in school. We will try to understand their agendas for career guidance, and see how this differ in the local context of the schools and the career counsellors’ mixed and locally constructed agenda for career guidance. Based on this we will analyse how the concept of social justice is understood and constructed locally, by student and counsellors.

Keywords: Pupils, Local context, Local agendas, Social justice

Relation to the conference theme (up to 50 words)

Youths in Norwegian upper and lower secondary school meets counsellors with different agendas, due to the local context. The paper will explore if and how different context affect the pupils’ expectations towards the counsellor and the counselling, and if and how the pupils have any notion of social justice in career counselling.

General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework (up to 600 words)

In the words of Andrews and Hooley (2018) A career is something that an individual pursues in the context of the world. The world experienced by individuals however, is not one, but rather composed of local realities, local contexts (Berger and Luckman, 1966). This paper will explore experiences with career counselling in relation to social justice and local context among pupils in secondary and upper secondary schools. Mathiesen, Mordal, and Buland (2014) found that different local context affect how the counsellors design their practice and role Three main agendas was visible: 1) the school’s needs, 2) the local society and industry’s needs and 3) the needs of the youths . The cross pressure in the counsellors’ role were highly visible, but the counsellors themselves did not experience it as problematic. The fact that they had a clear personal/local agenda for to prioritizing made it easier for them to handle the cross pressure. This implies that pupils in different schools and communities
meet counsellor with different agendas and therefore receive different counselling. In what ways does this contribute to social justice?

We will also explore if and how different context influence the pupils’ expectations towards the counsellor and the counselling. Do students experience such different agendas, or do they just experience a counsellor who to varying degrees succeed in helping them in their choices. And not least, what’s important to them? What are the pupils’ own agenda in their meeting with the counsellors? What do they want, to be like their parents and live on in the village, do they aspire to be they be rich and / or famous, do they want a safe job, or do they aspire to get away from the local community as soon as possible?

In the extension of this, we will try to analyse it’s possible to construct a general understanding/definition of social justice, independent of the local context. Is social justice “an articulation of what individuals, groups and societies believe is morally and politically right” (Hooley, Sultana and Thomsen, 2018), and therefore inconceivable disconnected from local context? Will the fact that different context may imply different counselling agendas and practice, necessarily lead to social injustice? Or is the most social just practice the one which adapts career counselling to the local context in the best possible way; where “Career guidance has the potential to be a context for action in which people can join forces to deal with problems and the conditions associated with these problems” (Thomsen, 2012)?

The pupils address their frustration over all the difficult choices they have to make, and we see clearly how it is experienced as overwhelming to make a choice that feels crucial for the rest of their lives and at the same time to feel like the opportunities is boundless. Everything is possible if only they want it enough. We will explore the pupil’s experiences of making a choice in relation to the three abovementioned schools agendas. Is there a difference in pupils’ experiences of making career choices based on the counsellors different agendas? If so, how and in which way and can we through this deduce which career counselling’s agendas that make the pupils feel the least frustrated and have the most feeling of being met with a social just practice?

**Methods/methodology**

This paper will be based on 19 group interviews with pupils in 9 secondary and 9 upper secondary school in Norway. The interviews were conducted in 2013-2014 in three different counties in an project completed by SINTEF, NTNU and IRIS (Buland et al., 2014). The schools were selected to obtain variation on these criteria: urban/rural, big/small schools and affiliation to a local community dominated by industrial sector/public sector. These criteria were met in all three counties. The interviews were conducted as focus groups with a duration of 50-80 minutes. We had an interview guide as a starting point, but the participants had good opportunity to talk about what was on their agenda. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.
Outcomes/ expected results

We hope to be able to show how students agendas and therefore expectations when seeking career guidance in school is a differs as a result of the local context. I addition to this we will be able to demonstrate how the concept of social justice is also constructed locally, in the interplay between local society, schools and the local career guidance. The understanding of social justice therefore may be constructed and understood differently in different local context.

References


