

The Need of Trainees for the Services of Guidance Counselors in Vocational Training Institutions in Algeria – An Analytical Study

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Abstract:

This study aimed to introduce the vocational training sector in Algeria and the body of guidance counselors within it, as well as to define its categories and to identify the extent to which trainees need their services. To achieve this, the study addressed the vocational training sector, professional guidance and its characteristics, and also presented the body of guidance counselors, identifying their categories and the tasks assigned to each, according to the Official Gazette. The study concluded that the need of both trainees and the sector is significant and urgent for these services provided by the body of vocational guidance counselors.

Keywords: vocational training - vocational guidance- trainees

Introduction / Problem Statement

There is no doubt today that the vocational training sector is one of the strategic sectors that significantly contributes to driving the wheel of national economic development. For this reason, the state has recently granted it clear importance and attention in order to enhance the efficiency of its outputs and improve the quality of its training, in line with the current requirements of the labor market. The latter demands a skilled workforce with high competence and flexibility, capable of adapting quickly to the successive changes in the new professional requirements. To achieve this, strong will and diligent, serious work must be provided by the actors in this sector. This is reflected in the recent efforts and strategies undertaken. The vocational training sector in Algeria has witnessed several initiatives that express a sincere intention for change, whether in relation to the training process in its various elements or to the management of institutions.

At the forefront of this stands the body of guidance counselors, with all its categories. Their general mission consists of attracting, receiving, guiding, and monitoring trainees in the labor market. It is a sensitive and crucial body, as it represents the face and ambassador of the sector to society, from which trainees are recruited, followed up until they complete their training path, crowned with various certificates, and integrated into the labor market successfully. In light of this, and to encompass the subject, the following questions are raised:

1. What are the tasks and categories of guidance counselors in vocational training institutions in Algeria?
2. To what extent do trainees need the services of vocational guidance counselors provided in vocational training institutions in Algeria?

Objectives of the Study

The present study aims to:

1. Define each category of the body of guidance counselors and their tasks.
2. Determine the degree or extent to which trainees need the services of guidance counselors in vocational training institutions.
3. Identify the importance of the services provided by the body of guidance counselors, whether in relation to trainees or institutions.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study derives from the importance of its variables. Undoubtedly, the body of guidance counselors is a key component within the institution, serving as its representative and ambassador to society. Therefore, it must receive the necessary care and attention in order to carry out its missions in the best possible way and according to the required performance standards. This ensures that the training process is successfully completed in a healthy environment that allows trainees to receive proper training in suitable conditions.

The importance of this study also lies in:

- Drawing the attention of decision-makers to the importance of the vocational training sector as a parallel sector in preparing effective human resources needed by the labor market, which today represents the true capital of any country. Hence, the labor market today enables the vocational training sector to prove its presence and effectiveness, provided that efforts are coordinated.
- Drawing the attention of those in charge of vocational training to the importance of the services of the body of guidance counselors and their effective role in attracting, guiding, monitoring, and integrating trainees, as well as ensuring their commitment to training until they are awarded their certificates.

Research Methodology

Since the present study aims to identify the extent to which trainees in vocational training institutions in Algeria need the services of the body of guidance counselors, the most appropriate method is the descriptive approach.

Definition of vocational training

Many researchers have defined vocational training, among them:

- Ben Kroum and Yaakoubi (2005), who define it as a system that prepares candidates to practice or adapt to a professional activity, based on school and professional achievements. Its aim is to improve employability and serve as a tool for qualifying the competencies of institutions (Bouchrit, 2019, p.19).
- It can also be defined as: an organized development and enhancement of attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behavioral patterns in various work situations, in order for individuals to perform their professional tasks better and in less time, often within the framework of continuing education (Boufelja, 1984, p.23).

Thus, from the above definitions, vocational training is a planned and organized process aimed at providing the necessary skills to perform a specific profession or to improve performance skills in current jobs in a better way, in line with the requirements of the labor market.

The Need for Vocational Training

The need for vocational training has become urgent in all fields, for several reasons:

- Vocational training has become the main channel for achieving any economic development based on industrial development. Moreover, it leads to establishing an economic balance that preserves the stability and continuity of society (Slatnia, 2001, p.122).
- Scientific progress and the diversification of industrial activities have led to the expansion and complexity of professions.
- Vocational training has become one of the fundamental requirements of any development policy, as it represents a social product that plays a decisive role in shaping the features of national development. This product is based on modern knowledge, personal motivation, and job enrichment on the one hand, and is linked to the social structure it shapes on the other (Slatnia, 2001, pp.29–30).

Objectives of Vocational Training

Vocational training aims to:

- Disseminate industrial culture.
- Provide local trainers.
- Raise the level of youth in an attempt to integrate them socially and professionally.
- Address the problem of unemployment and employment policies (Bousna, 1993, p.237).

Types of Vocational Training

In response to the requirements of society and in order to accommodate the largest possible number of individuals, several types of vocational training have been established:

Residential Training

This type of training takes place within specialized and well-equipped training structures, such as vocational training and apprenticeship centers, as well as national specialized institutes for vocational training. Residential vocational training is provided within a specific training institution throughout the internship period and is complemented by a practical training phase organized in an industrial environment for the trainees.

Apprenticeship

The objective of apprenticeship training is to provide the apprentice with professional qualification by placing them in direct contact with the profession, either in a workshop, with a skilled craftsman, in a production company, or within administrative services.

The apprentice is supervised by the craftsman himself, the technician in the factory workshop, or the administrative officer, thus acquiring their profession through direct interaction with real-world practice. As for the theoretical aspect of this type of training—such as lessons in technology, technical drawing, and general principles—the apprentice receives them at the nearest vocational training center where they are enrolled. Once the apprenticeship contract procedures are completed, a designated teacher at the center takes charge of monitoring the apprenticeship training in the field.

Distance Vocational Education

This type of training is based on providing educational courses through correspondence (postal mail), delivered to the homes of registered learners. To benefit from distance vocational training courses, learners must register with the services of the National Center for Distance Vocational Education.

Distance vocational education is limited to professions and specializations that do not require special or complex equipment. It prepares learners for the same certificates awarded in vocational training centers and institutes.

Continuing Training

This type of training is provided for the benefit of workers and employees throughout their professional lives and is also referred to as in-service training. The objective of this type of training is to ensure skills improvement, retraining, and updating of knowledge, enabling individuals to adapt to the evolution and renewal of techniques and production methods.

Consequently, it guarantees the social and professional advancement of individuals throughout their lives, while also enhancing productivity and competitiveness in industrial institutions. For this reason, it is considered a duty for all workers throughout their careers.

Levels of Vocational Training

In Algeria, vocational training comprises five levels in which trainees are enrolled and crowned with certificates at the end of the internship (Amzian Jefal, 2003, p.16):

First Level: Training of specialized workers, who are awarded the Certificate of Specialization in Vocational Training upon completion.

Second Level: Training of workers and qualified assistants, who are awarded the Certificate of Professional Competence.

Third Level: Training of highly qualified workers and assistants, who are awarded the Certificate of Professional Mastery.

Fourth Level: Training of technicians and control assistants, who are awarded the Technician Certificate.

Fifth Level: Training of senior technicians, who are awarded the Senior Technician Certificate at the end of their training.

Vocational Guidance

Definition of Vocational Guidance

Several definitions have addressed the concept of vocational guidance, including:

- Vocational guidance is the process of providing the individual with information, experience, and advice to help him choose a profession, prepare for it, enter it, and progress within it (Mustafa, 2001, p.129).
- It can also be defined as the provision of information and expertise related to choosing a profession, preparing for it, joining it, and advancing in it (Abou Hamad, 2008, p.240).
- Another definition states that vocational guidance is assisting the individual in choosing a profession compatible with his abilities, inclinations, motives, and future plans, i.e., his aspirations and projects (Issawi, 1998, p.41).

Thus, from the above definitions, vocational guidance is a process of assistance provided to the individual to help him choose a profession that suits his abilities and skills, perform it successfully, and achieve professional success.

Benefits of Vocational Guidance

Placing the right person in the right profession results in numerous benefits, the most important of which are:

1. The individual feels satisfaction and happiness in his profession, which positively reflects on all aspects of his life.
2. Proper guidance leads to an increase in both the quality and quantity of production.
3. Proper vocational guidance reduces unemployment rates.
4. Proper vocational guidance reduces worker absenteeism.
5. Proper vocational guidance reduces workplace accidents.
6. Proper vocational guidance promotes workers' psychological well-being (Abou Hamad, 2008, p.250).

Therefore, vocational guidance has many benefits in addition to those mentioned, which demonstrates its importance and the necessity of strengthening its services across various vocational training institutions.

Characteristics of Vocational Guidance

According to Super, vocational guidance is a psychological process characterized by the following:

- It is a process aimed at helping the individual develop a self-concept that is comprehensive and consistent with his various potentials, including aptitudes, abilities, interests, desires, values, and attitudes.
- It is a process that seeks to help the individual develop and accept the role he plays in the world of work, in line with his abilities.
- It is a process that helps the individual test and experience the self-image he has formed, along with the role he has chosen in the world of work.
- It is a process aimed at helping the individual realize his self-image in the field of work in a way that ensures his personal satisfaction while also serving society (Al-Badri, 2011, p.35).

The Body of Guidance Counselors in the Vocational Training Sector in Algeria

The body of vocational guidance counselors in Algeria is divided into four grades:

1. Grade of Psychological Technician.
2. Grade of Vocational Guidance and Evaluation Counselor.
3. Grade of Vocational Guidance, Evaluation, and Integration Counselor.
4. Grade of Principal Counselor in Vocational Guidance, Evaluation, and Integration.

Duties of Guidance Counselors According to Their Grades

Tasks of Psychological Technicians

According to Article 79, psychological technicians are specifically entrusted with the following:

- Participating in the organization of psychological and technical tests for candidates in order to guide them towards training that matches their physical and mental abilities.

- Assisting trainees and apprentices during their training, in coordination with the training instructor in all types of training, and suggesting reorientation if necessary, based on continuous assessment of their competencies.
- Participating in investigations, studies, and surveys within the framework of matching training with employment.
- Supporting students, trainees, and apprentices throughout the training phase.

Tasks of Vocational Guidance and Evaluation Counselors

According to Article 80, in addition to the duties assigned to psychological technicians, vocational guidance and evaluation counselors are entrusted, in all types of training, with the following:

- Coordinating and planning activities related to the orientation of candidates for training.
- Ensuring the follow-up of trainees, students, and apprentices experiencing psychological or pedagogical difficulties, in order to enable them to continue their training.
- Assessing the program and the performance of psychological technicians.
- Conducting evaluations and analyses of training outcomes, as well as surveys and polls.

Tasks of Vocational Guidance, Evaluation, and Integration Counselors

According to Article 81, in addition to the tasks assigned to vocational guidance and evaluation counselors, counselors for guidance, evaluation, and integration are specifically entrusted, in all types of training, with the following:

- Coordinating and planning the institution's activities in the field of vocational information and guidance.
- Conducting professional evaluation interviews to guide candidates towards training suited to their abilities and intellectual qualifications.
- Supporting trainees, students, and apprentices at the end of their training in terms of professional integration, with the aim of actively seeking employment.
- Assisting trainees, students, and apprentices during their training, in coordination with the training instructor in all types of training, and proposing reorientation through continuous assessment of their abilities when necessary.

Tasks of Principal Counselors in Vocational Guidance, Evaluation, and Integration

According to Article 82, in addition to the tasks assigned to guidance, evaluation, and integration counselors, principal counselors are entrusted with the following:

- Coordinating the activities of guidance, evaluation, and integration counselors.
- Preparing annual and multi-year plans for guidance, evaluation, and integration support activities.
- Coordinating, planning, and leading the institution's work in the field of vocational information and guidance.
- Leading and coordinating activities related to vocational information and guidance in cooperation with various associations.
- Conducting investigations and studies in the field of guidance and professional integration support.

Analysis and Importance of Their Role

From the presentation of the duties of the body of guidance counselors in the vocational training sector, as outlined in the Official Gazette, it is clear that these are sensitive and precise

responsibilities, especially as they are directed towards a sensitive group. Most trainees who join vocational training centers are adolescents who, for various reasons, were unable to complete their studies in educational institutions. Thus, they are at a critical age and situation, and it is well known what adolescence entails in terms of changes in all aspects of development.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of counselors to support and guide them with wisdom, helping them adapt to new circumstances and convincing them that vocational training institutions are no less important than other institutions. Both share the same goal: preparing the individual and developing his capacities to become a productive member of society. For this reason, these trainees are in great need of guidance services, enabling them to enroll in vocational institutions, acquire training in specific professions, and avoid being left on the streets at risk of social problems. Moreover, vocational training is crucial for creating the skilled young workforce required by the labor market to support and develop the national economy.

Guidance counselors thus serve as the gateway between society and vocational training. It is essential for decision-makers to adopt strong and standardized guidance policies that meet quality requirements. Counselors are the first to welcome trainees and represent the image of the sector. The more attractive and positive this image is, the more it will encourage enrollment in vocational training.

The need for guidance services is also urgent because guidance ensures that the right individual is placed in the right position, according to his abilities and potential. This avoids burdens for institutions such as reorientation and dropout, while ensuring continuity and efficiency.

Furthermore, vocational guidance services are fundamentally based on respecting the trainee and considering his desires and interests. In practice, this leads to better adaptation, higher morale, and greater commitment to training until certification is achieved. Guidance also extends beyond graduation, accompanying the trainee in professional integration, which strongly motivates him to complete his training and encourages others to enroll.

From all of the above, we can conclude that the body of guidance counselors is a vital and effective component of vocational training institutions, given the services it provides to trainees in particular, and to the sector and the national economy in general.

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