Career Practitioners’ Ways of Experiencing Social Media in Career Services

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The increasing use of social media in career-related activities is placing new demands on career practitioners and on the organizations (Bimrose & Barnes, 2010; Sampson, Osborn, Dikel, & Sampson, 2011).

Successful integration social media in career services is not only dependent on the skills or technical facilities available, but also on practitioners' willingness to accept the changes that new technology may bring to service delivery (Kettunen, Vuorinen, Sampson, 2013).
Previous Research/ literature

- Indications of the association between career practitioners' conceptions of social media and their practices have been confirmed (Kettunen et al., 2013)
- A key challenge for the immediate future is to ensure that the career guidance sector is equipped to respond to these new demands
- Training and skills development needs have been emphasized (e.g. Bimrose et al, 2010; Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey 2013)

**Gap:** Due to the novelty of using social media in career services there has been little research describing the experiences of career practitioners
Defining the social media

“Social media is a process, where individuals and groups build up a common understanding and meanings with contents, communities and web 2.0 technology.”

Sources: Kangas et al. (2007) and Ahlqvist et al (2010)
Aim of the study

The aim is to discover and describe the qualitatively variation in the ways of experiencing the phenomenon.

The research questions are as follows:
1. What are career practitioners ways of experiencing social media in career service?
2. What are the critical aspects that differentiate qualitatively varying ways of experiencing the phenomenon?
Method

- Phenomenographic research

- Investigates the qualitatively different ways in which people at collective level experience or conceptualize the target phenomenon (Marton and Booth, 1997; Marton and Pong, 2005; Åkerlind, 2005; 2012)

- The research outcome contains a hierarchically structured set of categories that describe people’s qualitatively different ways of experiencing the same phenomenon (Marton, 1986).
Data

- collected using focus group interview methodology
- 16 Danish and Finnish career practitioners (10 women, 6 men), with experience using social media in career services
  - comprehensive, secondary, and higher education as well as public employment services amid both urban and rural settings.
  - purposeful sampling was utilized: experiences concerning the use of social media guided the identification and selection of interviewees.
- analyzed using phenomenograpical data analysis methods
Results

Four distinct categories of description reflecting the career practitioners’ conceptions ways of experiencing social media in career services

- means for delivering information
- medium for one-to-one communication
- interactive working space
- impetus for paradigm change and reform

## Results

### Career practitioners’ ways of experiencing social media in career services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIMENSIONS OF VARIATION</th>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Means for delivering information</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium for one-to-one communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interactive working space</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Impetus for paradigm change and reform</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Role of social media
- Purpose
- Attitude
- Rationale
- Intervention paradigm
- Nature of interaction
- Practitioner's role

Category 1: Means for delivering information

Role of social media: useful tools
Purpose: delivering information and advice
Attitude: reserved
Rationale: visibility
Perception: challenge
Intervention paradigm: individual face-to-face intervention
Nature of interaction: practitioner ➔ individual
Practitioner's role: expert role

“It is used as, kind of like the first step to something real/proper.”
**Category 2: Medium for one-to-one communication**

- **Role in guidance**: viable alternative
- **Purpose**: delivering career services
- **Attitude**: careful
- **Rationale**: accessibility
- **Perception**: change
- **Intervention paradigm**: individual intervention
- **Nature of interaction**: practitioner ↔ individual
- **Practitioner's role**: reflexive role

*“How do I integrate these new practices into old, established work routine?”*
### Category 3: Interactive working space

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role in guidance</th>
<th>space for career services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>collaborative career exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>adaptive-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>interactivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention paradigm</td>
<td>group intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of interaction</td>
<td>practitioner ↔ individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>individual ↔ peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practitioner's role</td>
<td>facilitationg role</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“...the services target group uses it – so that made it an somehow obvious direction to go.”
## Category 4: Impetus for paradigm change and reform

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role in guidance</th>
<th>participatory social space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>co-careering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>proactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention paradigm</td>
<td>co-constructed intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of interaction</td>
<td>individual ↔ community members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practitioner</td>
<td>individual ↔ practitioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practitioner's role</td>
<td>participating and engaging role</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"we need to create completely new way of thinking there..."
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<td>Role of social media</td>
<td>useful tools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>delivering information and advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>reserved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>visibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>challenge</td>
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<td>Intervention paradigm</td>
<td>individual face-to-face intervention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature of interaction</td>
<td>practitioner ← individual</td>
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<td>Practitioner’s role</td>
<td>expert role</td>
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Discussion

In general, it was possible to see the expansion of collective awareness of critical aspects, especially in regarding the following aspects:

- **The role of social media**: from tools to participatory social space
- **Purpose**: from delivering information and advice to co-construction on career issues, co-careering
- **Attitude**: from reserved to a proactive
- **The rationale**: opening up from visibility to not only to increase accessibility and interactivity, but also to enhance direct and indirect influence
- **Perception**: from perceiving the use of social media as a challenge to perceiving it as reform where emphasis has changed to a fresh approach to interaction and communication dependent on citizens’ needs.
expansion of collective awareness of critical aspects:

- **Intervention paradigm**: from individual face to face intervention to group intervention (with or without practitioner) and co-constructed intervention
- **Nature of interaction**: from `practitioner to individual´ to interaction between all community members
- **Role of practitioner**: from expert role to participating and engaging role in - toward
Key questions for consideration

- What are the implications for training, research and policy development?
Further information

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