

Effective vocational guidance as a protective factor in the development of vocational distress

Dra. Annie Julieth Álvarez-Maestre PhD

SUMMARY

Stress as a psychopathological syndrome shows a prevalence between 1 % and 2 % of the world population. The normal conditions of daily life can become a threatening agent when the individual does not have the psychological and physical resources to respond to the situation. Vocational distress is the response of tension and discomfort to the stimuli and demands derived from vocational development. This includes vocational decision, loss of employment, perception of self-efficacy, tensions between study-family-work, among others. In this research article, the narrative review research documentary methodology was used; obtaining as result the relevance of effective vocational guidance is related as a preventive strategy to the possibility of developing vocational distress. Achieving that the process of vocational guidance becomes the context where the individual is provided with a repertoire of cognitive-behavioral tools essential for decision-making, resilience, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and vocational maturity, which are established as factors of protection against the risk of mental and psychophysiological diseases. This writing contributes to the prevention of mental disorder of possible appearance in the dimensions of study and work, understanding their benefits to the mitigation

of risk factors, according to the recommendations of the World Health Organization.

Key words: Vocational orientation, vocational distress, vocational stress, stress, distress, protective factors, risk factors, education, educational psychology.

RESUMEN

El estrés como síndrome psicopatológico muestra una prevalencia entre 1 % y 2 % de la población mundial. Las condiciones normales de la vida diaria pueden convertirse en un agente amenazante cuando el individuo no tiene los recursos psicológicos y físicos para responder a la situación. El estrés vocacional es la respuesta de tensión e incomodidad a los estímulos y demandas derivados del desarrollo vocacional. Esto incluye la decisión vocacional, la pérdida del empleo, la percepción de autoeficacia, las tensiones entre el estudio, el trabajo y la familia, entre otros. En este artículo de investigación, se utilizó la metodología documental de investigación de revisión narrativa; como resultado se mostró la relevancia que una orientación profesional efectiva se relaciona como una estrategia preventiva a la posibilidad de desarrollar distrés profesional. Lograr que el proceso de orientación vocacional se convierta en el contexto en el que se proporciona al individuo un repertorio de herramientas cognitivo-conductuales esenciales para la toma de decisiones, la resiliencia, la autoestima, la autoeficacia y la madurez vocacional, las cuales se establecen como factores de protección contra el riesgo de enfermedades mentales y psicofisiológicas. Este escrito contribuye a la prevención del trastorno mental de posible aparición en las dimensiones del estudio y el trabajo, entendiendo sus beneficios para

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Facultad de Educación y Ciencias Sociales del Tecnológico de Antioquia Institución Universitaria.
<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9432-8554>
Contacto: anniejulieth@gmail.com; coor.licenciaturas@tdea.edu.co

la mitigación de los factores de riesgo, de acuerdo con las recomendaciones de la Organización Mundial de la Salud.

Palabras clave: *Orientación vocacional, angustia vocacional, estrés vocacional, estrés, angustia, factores protectores, factores de riesgo, educación, psicología educativa.*

INTRODUCTION

The current efforts of educational institutions to improve and maintain the quality of life of their students have made them try to complement their curriculums and education focusing on new perspectives beyond cognitive and academic development. Current education seeks to build subjects to benefit society, making it the best entity to help the formation of a useful citizen, who is also committed to the development and the construction of society (1).

The schools become the immediate environment of the transitional stage from adolescence to young adult, where it can be facilitated and helped to identify what will be their life project and subsequent plan after the completion of secondary studies (2). To do this, vocational guidance models seek to respond to the needs of students about their life projects outside of secondary education institutions. Focusing not only on access to university studies but also, student satisfaction is sought through vocational or technical studies for which they have skills (3-5).

Understanding the relevance of the process of vocational decision in the life of the individual and the subsequent effect of an adequate or inadequate decision making leads to predict the possible appearance of stress symptoms. The symptoms of stress emerging as a response to the demands of the psychosocial environment and the need to adapt appropriately to the threatening event, an aspect that does not differ from any other stage of the life cycle such as career selection, where the appropriate psychological adjustment is required (6,7). In this process the subject can interpret the event vocational selection as threatening, activating a set of physiological and cognitive responses to the potentially stressful event. Subsequent act the individual evaluates

his or her resources to face the event, and if he or she does not count on a considerable set of coping strategies to handle the situation, there will be an imbalance that most likely will lead to distress (6,8).

In view of the previously mentioned problem, the present review study of scientific publications was developed, establishing as a hypothesis that, the comprehensive literature review provides information on how to prevent vocational distress. Given the above, the results suggest effective vocational guidance is presented as a protective factor against the appearance of problems related to anxiety and distress. Since the effects of vocational distress are not only maintained during decision making, they also affect the initial moment of their formative process (9-11). Given this, there has been a significant dropout rate in university students when they have not been adequately oriented in relation to their vocation (12,13).

This causes that in the moment of entering institutions of higher education students present demotivation, disinterest, and low tolerance to frustration leading them to easily quit their studies. Although several variables affect the level of retention in universities including economic, family, or unforeseen situations, are those related to a defective vocational orientation that generates more cases of desertion in first-year university students (14-16).

Thus, to understand what vocational guidance is as a protection factor, it is essential to explain its concept, practices, and historical evolution. The beginnings of vocational guidance are contemplated since the beginning of humanity, where different civilizations sought to locate the individual in a position of profit for social integration within their society. Formally, as an element of orientation within formal education, it appears as a resource for the placement of students in work activities (17). It is also true that the concept and its applications have had constant changes as a result of the social changes of each decade and it is still considered an important tool for the process of job training and subsequent professional performance.

The changes resulting from globalization, new forms of employment, problems in educational supply and demand, contributions to the

development index and relevance of quality of life have stimulated the transformation of this branch of counseling, coining terms such as 'orientation of career', 'vocational' or 'professional orientation' appear, making it possible to keep up to date the emerging needs of society (18). Another of the concerns of this branch of study is humanistic education. The vocational orientation has developed the concern that the training and preparation of the student should not prevail only in the work aspect, it must also satisfy the need for self-knowledge, reflection, pursue of happiness and enable freedom (19). It is not surprising, then, that updated vocational and professional guidance programs include aspects focused on context, diversity, and human development (20).

Savickas and Savickas (21) explains that the consensus among students of the topic is that the orientation arose in the United States with Frank Parsons, with a foundation date in 1908, when the Vocational Bureau was established and the term 'vocational orientation' is mentioned for the first time. Savickas and Savickas (21) also point out how Parsons details his orientation model based on three components: self-knowledge counting on a clear understanding of self including aptitudes, interests, abilities, expectations, among others; information for the world of work including supply, demand, risks, opportunities, even of different possible occupations; and finally, the unification of both, adjusting the individual for the appropriate task, so that there is a mutual gain between the individual and the society. However, this model is only considered applicable for adolescents, a fact that is considered appropriate and still applies today.

Throughout the years, the different investigations and the appearance of new theories began to conceive a vocational orientation for long-term life, where the conditions of the human being and the circumstances are crucial elements in their decisions in situations such as changing work, occupation or place of residence. Therefore, vocational choice ceases to be considered static to be thought from a dynamic approach (22).

Despite the efforts developed for the unification of the theories, difficulties are specifying all the elements that make up the vocational orientation establishing them in a single theory (23). These conflicts are identified in aspects such as the

different adjectives that they have been applying for the orientation process, where they are united with the terms 'professional', 'occupational', 'school', 'vocational', among others. At the level of the intervention, there is no consensus either, using interchangeably terms of 'vocational counseling', 'vocational guidance', 'vocational development' and others; and the third component of disagreement is the indefinite number of functions assigned to the counselor, including counseling, consulting, intervention, therapy, and diagnosis (17).

The different theorists of the subject have tried to unify the previous situations of disagreement and establish basic elements to talk about the subject. One of these essential elements is decision-making as a process of selecting a profession and another one, vocational preferences as a determinant for the vocational or professional selection and development process (24). Within these researchers, it is possible to mention as influential Super (25) who establishes the term of vocational maturity to indicate the degree of development of the individual to make decisions about his occupational choice. Likewise, he proposes the vocational and career development terms, the latter referring to the occupational selection of the person to meet the needs of the self-realization of the individual. The main intention of the vocational guidance for this author is to locate the person concerning his or her job role through the development of his personality (7,26).

Another relevant historical contribution belongs to Ginzberg (27), beginning to relate vocational preferences, interests, and their influence on the future election of a career or vocation. Also, it is necessary to mention Holland (28), which begins to differentiate occupational preferences and how to identify or measure them through activities, occupations, or self-evaluations. Thus, the author also relates the construct of personality development with vocational selection. The contributions of these researchers gave way to the formation of theories that facilitated the development of orientation programs and the understanding of the phenomenon of vocational selection in students at the secondary and higher education levels.

There are different approaches to professional

guidance, however, a complete definition is developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (29), which in its definition explains that the process of a professional orientation is addressed to the strengthening and supporting the educational development, whether occupational and/or professional, which can be facilitated during any stage of the life cycle. According to OECD, these processes include any activity that leads to reflection on the life project, understanding labor market systems, and opportunities in the education system. In other words, it is responsible for the teaching of planning in terms of concrete actions related to their interests, abilities, and aptitudes with the decision-making on study or work.

METHOD

For the present document, a documentary research methodology of narrative review type was developed from Onwuegbuzie and Frels (30). Based on existing evidence and research, the narrative review allows an exhaustive exploration focused on responding to a specific topic, without the need to execute experimentation or intervention processes with participants. Synthesizing the literature and research already developed allows the tracking of the best studies giving them a quality rating, therefore, the conclusions provided at the end of the study will be rigorous and relevant to respond to the auscultated phenomenon.

The objective of this study was to develop a critical synthesis of scientific literature related to the prevention of vocational distress, employing a documentary methodology of narrative review, providing key elements for the design of effective vocational guidance programs.

The methodology for this documentary review was supported under the phases of collection, systematization, comparison, and analysis of scientific publications that responded to the topic of vocational guidance, protective factors, and vocational distress. These topics are intended to contribute to the answer to the question: how can vocational distress be prevented and what factors of protection and risk are related?

The phases that were considered for this investigation are the following (30):

1. Collection phase:
 - Formulation of the problem: how can vocational distress be prevented and what factors of protection and risk are related?
 - Definition of the selection criteria for studies that reported on the prevention of vocational distress.
 - Design: all types of studies were collected, quantitative, qualitative, or mixed.
 - Criteria: the established search criteria include scientific publication between 2010 and 2020, using databases such as ProQuest, Scopus, SciELO, EBSCO host, DOAJ, ERIC, Redalyc, Dialnet, Latindex, among others. The criteria for document selection included studies that contained data on vocational or professional models, programs, or designs. In the same way, the concepts of protective factors and vocational distress were sought.
 - Languages: The documents were reviewed in Spanish and English languages.
2. Systematization phase: To organize the information identified, a registration model was used; a matrix required to include information on the subject, author and date, type of study design, type of data analysis, the data collection instrument, the participating subjects, and results.
3. Comparison phase: in the organization of the information, a conceptual map was elaborated, facilitating the organization, classification, integration of the categories, and prioritization, categorizing in three sections: vocational distress, vocational orientation as a protective factor, effective vocational guidance, to later write the document.
4. Analysis phase: according to the results obtained from the categories, the writing was started giving meaning to the writing allowing concluding the strategies that can respond to the formulation of the problem. In this writing, the corresponding credits of the selected sources were granted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Risk factors for vocational distress

The concept of stress, unlike the imaginary one, has of being a disease or a negative situation, corresponds to one of the innate characteristics of protection in human beings. The word stress, which is also associated with the term of tension, refers to the natural response of an individual to attend an event or stimulus that demands prompt adaptation. In a situation of change, an individual may present stress reactions (8). And although the appearance of stress involves the activation of a series of psychophysiological reactions that the individual cannot control, its emergence and maintenance will depend on the assessment of the stimulus, perceiving it as lost, threatened or challenged (31). This implies that stress as a warning mechanism is necessary to strengthen human development, skills, and sense of self-control, also called eustress or positive stress (32,33). Also, the set of coping strategies that the subject has will facilitate homeostatic recovery when facing conflict situations (34).

In other cases, without proper management, stress as a natural response becomes a constant state that affects the performance of the individual, affecting their quality of life. Constant exposure to stressful stimuli and a demand that surpasses the coping resources of the individual, and perceiving the situation as a threat or danger, can generate clinically significant discomfort that influences the different areas of performance of the subject (9,31). This particular form of response to stress is known as distress (33,35). That is to say, having an adequate repertoire of strategies becomes a factor of protection against the development of mental and physiological diseases (36,37). Following this line of thought, the decisive moment that the human being goes through in terms of its vocational choice is not an event far from the stress response (38). The different stages of the life cycle have changes that require adaptation and the moment of vocational selection and the continuum of decisions made from the vocational dimension is not the exception (6,7). In this dimension, we can find located the construction of the concept of self, the perception of ability, and the capacity of the relationship between the family, study, work,

free time, and community subsystems (39,40).

However, vocational distress is not part of a single event related to career choice: it can emerge in any situation related to the vocational component from any of its stages, reiterating that the vocation is a process that occurs throughout the life of the human being (41-43) career adaptability (career planning, career exploration, self-exploration, decision-making, self-regulation. Super (44) defines four stages of vocational development: the stage of growth (up to 15 years, which includes a phase of fantasy, interests, and capacity); the exploration stage (up to 25, including trial, transition, and trial phase); the stage of establishment or affirmation (up to 44 years, which includes phase of trial, establishment, consolidation); the maintenance stage (up to 65 years) and the stage of decline (from 65 years and up). Therefore, at any time the individual can face a stimulus generating vocational distress to need to meet any demand that this process involves (35).

At this point, it is necessary to differentiate vocational distress from academic stress and occupational stress, terms that can be confused by their immediate relationship with the vocational dimension. In the first place, academic stress is related to physiological response and activation, in response to the demands of the school, university, academic environment, or outside of formal education (45). In this case, the stressors can be exams, jobs, exhibitions, grades, preparation, and academic planning, among others. Likewise, as in other cases of prolonged exposure to the stressor event without proper management, impairments can occur in the physiological, cognitive, and behavioral planes. Its presence impacts academic performance, the quality of student life, and the university system (46).

Secondly, occupational stress is the stress response originating from the work environment which, as in other environments, has an adaptive component. The working environment — in the face of the physical and mental requirements of work activity — can generate high levels of stress (47,48). The presence of stress at work and inadequate management can cause deficits in performance, productivity, and affect physical and mental health, transforming it into a well-known psychological disorder called Burnout

syndrome (49-51). It is estimated that stress as a psychopathological syndrome shows a prevalence between 1 % and 2 % of the world population (52).

The essential difference between these three problems lies in their stressors. However, their physiological and psychological symptoms may be similar (53-55), stimuli, situations or events such as the overload in the face of vocational indecision (9), the constant doubt with temporary pressure, the perception of self-efficiency (56) before the demands of the vocation of interest. Likewise, the lack of employment after graduation from the academic institution, academic desertion, the relationship between demand and supply of the market over the studied career, the low economic income before the elaborated expectations, rethinking the vocation, the constant demand of updating entering in conflict family time, economic income, mobilization and payment of educational loans, among others, are conditions that impact vocational development, possibly considering themselves threatening stimuli (57).

Symptomatology of vocational distress is classified according to the American Psychiatric Association (53) within the category of disorders related to traumas and stress factors, in the adaptation disorders subtype. The predominant symptoms in these disorders are a result of the response to stressful stimuli. In the face of stressful stimuli, emotional or behavioral symptoms may emerge (58). These must appear within 3 months after exposure to the stressful stimulus (53,59). Likewise, the symptoms generate a clinically significant malaise in different areas of the individual's performance. Based on its different manifestations, it can be specified if it occurs, with depressed mood, with anxiety, with mixed anxiety and depressed mood, with altered behavior, with mixed disturbance of emotion or behavior and without specifying (53).

The risk factors associated with the development of the adaptation disorder or distress include belonging to the life cycle of adolescents and young adults, low level of education, being a student, and belonging to rural areas (60,61). Also, the presence of this disorder in the individual can be commensurate with the occurrence of suicidal ideation and suicide attempt, abuse of psychoactive substances, anxiety disorders, and depression (52,59,62-64).

Vocational orientation as a protective factor

It is understood as a protective factor the condition of the environment (biological, physical, and sociocultural) or those skills or individual resources of a psychological or socio-emotional type that are developed and may decrease the probability of falling into a risky behavior (65). Protective factors contribute to the preservation of physical, mental, and social health, favoring the welfare state, and facilitating the adaptation of the individual to the demands of the environment (66,67). The risk factors are the conditions that can limit healthy development, becoming facilitators of the appearance of diseases or health problems (68). A risk factor increases the likelihood of vulnerability to hazards (66,69).

Following this line of thought, the likelihood of developing a serious or transient mental disorder is highly associated with the presence of stressful life events. Therefore, the development of individual psychological and socio-emotional protection factors will be essential for the maintenance of mental health (70). Investigations related to the skills or resources to be developed by the individual as protective factors, coincide in their findings highlighting self-concept and self-esteem, decision-making, problem-solving, life project, emotional control, self-control, tolerance to frustration, perception of self-efficiency, social skills, resilience (48,69-74). The lack or deficiency of the previous ones would become a possible risk factor for the human development of the individual.

There is scientific evidence that preventing the risk factors from the increase of protective factors, decreases the appearance of mental disorders (75-77). In this sense, the research of Fusco et al (78) presents evidence on the positive correlation between effective vocational guidance and resilience. This correlation, which is equally involved in the commitment dimension, diminishes the probability of flexibility and self-doubt (79). Thus, it is worth mentioning that resilience is one of the protective factors for the probabilistic decrease in developing mental illnesses (80). On-time, Eskin's research (81) establishes a relationship between training in problem-solving and the decrease in the presence of distress. Likewise, the Bavolar and Bacikova-

Sleskova study (82) determines the positive relationship between decision making and protection factors, such as resilience, optimism, and social support, evidencing benefits for mental health.

Effective vocational guidance

Therefore, experts in the area of vocational guidance have designed theories and models that promote effective vocational guidance, turning this from a mere exercise of work placement to a continuum of accompaniment for life. That is, to provide the individual with a set of tools that allow for appropriate decision making and support the individual's personal growth throughout their occupational life. This favors the reduction of stress or in other words, learning to manage it, understanding that it is not possible to eliminate it (83,84).

Effective vocational guidance is understood as those models that fully complement the vocational development needs of the individual (85). It should be noted that the vocation is not a single moment in the life of the individual, as it has been contemplated in the recent years of vocational guidance, which in some way has been determined exclusively for the secondary transition - higher education. Effective vocational guidance will seek to be a construction of various elements that provide the individual with tools to sustain themselves throughout life, strengthening their behavioral cognitive repertoire of protective factors and coping strategies, which decrease the likelihood of developing vocational distress and psychopathological consequences that implies (85-87).

An effective vocational guidance model proposed by Rounds and Tracey (88) exposes the theory of traits and factors complementary to the adjustment model of professional behavior. This hybrid model focuses its development on problem-solving and information processing. They propose as tools for the application of this model the coding skills, pattern adaptation skills together with the recognition of the scope and limitations of these skills. It's timelier application is proposed from a problem resolution with an emphasis on the diagnosis, evaluation, and guidance of actuarial methods from one or

more environmental models of adjustment, on occupational choice and labor adjustment.

Jepsen (89) contributes to the conceptualization of vocational guidance theory for development. This approach supposes a contribution to specific conditions according to the development of the individual at a physical, cognitive, emotional, and social level. Given this, human development is considered a continuous, irreversible process, with differential patterns and established periods called stages, where its objective is the increase of maturity. For him, the role of the counselor in this model is continuous, it is not a process that is encompassed in a single session, on the contrary, the counselor works as a companion throughout life depending on the experiences of the oriented. The counselor must act as an integral professional knowledgeable about the essential subjects for career guidance such as economics, sociology, education, anthropology, psychology, as he/she develops teamwork with other professionals who can present a general spectrum on the situation of the oriented.

According to Krumboltz and Nichols (90), social learning theory provides information through decision-making about how people choose a specific job over a wide variety of occupations. From this same analysis, interventions that lead to the decision-making of a satisfactory vocation can be rightly suggested. He also explains that vocational development is a process that never ends. Being a process throughout life, individuals must maintain adequate knowledge of themselves adjusting themselves appropriately and promptly to the demands of the environment (87,91). This is the premise of the social-psychological approach, which employs the technique of persuasion as part of the process to assist in vocational selection. This means that the counselor is perceived as an expert and trustworthy so that the subject is motivated and able to modify his/her behavior towards a more adaptive vocational level.

Another timely model to the changes exerted by globalization and the emergence of technology is presented by Pordelan et al (92,93) who relate computers and vocational guidance. His approach is based on the fact that it is possible to link computers and technological strategies in the orientation process. They were able to identify in

his research that the participation of technology in vocational guidance creates awareness of the need to plan occupational orientation, as well as providing advantages in the evaluation of content, reports and timely data for a successful selection to develop a better-prepared spectrum, turning this model and its strategies into one of the best and most successful tools for career selection.

Krumboltz (85) explains in his model of casual learning that, starting from the human dynamics on the environment where they develop, individuals are exposed to constant changes that require early adaptation. In this sense, the vocational counselor will have as a role to provide those tools that enable the individual to stay in the changing and demanding work environment. This includes strengthening interests, values, abilities, skills, work habits, beliefs, and qualities.

On the other hand, Álvarez-Maestre (94) presents evidence on the quality criteria that should be considered in the design of vocational programs. The result is a strict systematic review that states that vocational guidance must be developed throughout life as an essential process of human development. However, in the first years, the activity will focus on the formation of protective factors such as self-esteem, decision-making, vocational maturity, problem-solving, cognitive development and self-knowledge, which help to counteract other phenomena that affect compliance with the life project such as drug addiction, teenage pregnancy, school dropout or low academic performance. This approach is related to a preventive training stage, which will later support the focus of the vocational or occupational process in adolescence. The stage where occupational profiles will be strengthened from potential tools from effective information, skill practices, review of vocational interests, decision making, and life project planning.

Another perspective is the one proposed by McMahon and Patton (95), who from the Systems Theory Framework (STF), through the application of systems mapping and systems thinking, manage to effectively apply professional advice, career evaluation, professional education, and professional research, allowing to identify all possible influences on the individual's vocational development.

Thenmozhi (23) in his model explains that

vocational guidance should be based on the principles of individualized care, on employing different strategies for the identification and care of vocational needs and on revealing the global vocational vision to the individual. Likewise, it is essential not to consider the vocation as a fixed decision and to consider the vocation as a dimension to satisfy needs, optimizing aptitudes, interests, and competences, and not to conceive the vocation only as a source of income (96).

CONCLUSION

Unexpected events throughout life that can be challenging can trigger an immediate need for response and adaptation. The impact on physical and mental health may be greater than expected if the individual does not have the coping strategies to perceive the stimulus as a favorable event in the place of a threatening one. Given this, having the right tools within the behavioral repertoire of the individual will be significant to address the emerging stimuli. In this article, the correspondence of the coping response and the development of distress before the events related to the vocation were addressed. Understanding this last one as the interest of the individual for the accomplishment of activity to dedicate itself to his plan of life.

Concerning the objectives established in this research, it was possible to determine whether there are scientific publications that respond to the mental health problem of vocational distress. It is concluded through the review that the essential concept in this prevention process is vocational guidance. The concept of vocational guidance is mostly associated with the life cycle stage of adolescence and the contribution that this process facilitates in this stage for the conformation of a life project. However, throughout this document, evidence has been presented of the need to bet on vocational guidance as a long-term strategy that begins with accompaniment from an early age to adulthood. The goal is to provide the individual with the necessary tools to face the different stages of the vocation increasing his/her behavioral repertoire for the effective response to the presence of adaptive stimuli that can be interpreted as a threat and generate clinically significant discomfort, which can also be realized

in the appearance of mental disorders.

The promotion of protective factors through vocational guidance will contribute to the prevention and reduction of the possibility of the appearance of risk factors associated with the development of mental disorders such as vocational distress, also categorized in the Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-5 within adjustment disorders. Procuring this way, a different perception from the individual before the threatening stimuli, going from the interpretation of distress to that of eustress. Thus, the subject can adapt quickly to the challenging event and adjust easily to the change.

The proposal of different expert authors in the topic of vocational orientation is to design the programs based on the population's needs, where the long term for its application is considered and not only its execution in the last school year of the students in secondary school. That is to say, to initiate the vocational orientation from the first educational years to adulthood, starting from the fact that the vocation is not a single moment in the life of the human being but a constant construction of its need for self-realization. Likewise, it is necessary to include within the programs to design and apply the promotion in the development of protective factors, among them, aspects such as the development of self-esteem and vocational maturity, strengthening the skills of problem-solving, decision-making, cognitive development, and self-knowledge.

Limitations

Although the present study was looking for a critical synthesis of scientific literature related to the prevention of vocational distress, employing a documentary methodology of narrative review, providing key elements for the design of effective vocational guidance programs, different limitations. First, the collection phase was affected by the publication bias, where sufficient articles could not be found to achieve the proposed objectives. Given this, larger collection time spaces are suggested.

Second, the limitations of the study may also be related to the selection bias, under the inclusion and exclusion criteria. And, although we tried to expand the inclusion criteria for the design

of the research, the researcher's subjectivity may influence the selection or exclusion of selected studies. Given this, the work of several researchers is suggested in the collection and selection phase of the publications.

A final limitation was associated with the number of publications found on the particular topic of vocational distress, the risk factors for its development, and the protective factors for its prevention. The invitation in this case is to promote research on this topic since much research on the distress is focused on occupational distress and academic distress.

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