

## SUCCESS OF PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION OF DEAF PEOPLE ACCORDING TO CHOSEN OCCUPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper presents a comparative overview of selected professions of deaf people and people with no hearing impairments within their professional orientation and occupations carried out in their workplace. The research was conducted on a sample of 238 respondents. For the evaluation of the results, descriptive analysis was used. The results showed that deaf people in 36.6% of cases are not employed in the occupation for which they have acquired professional qualifications, compared to 14.5% percent of respondents with no hearing impairments. The results indicate that it is necessary to reorganize the inefficient process of professional orientation of the deaf people, which should contribute to establishing an efficient system of employment in professions for which they are oriented.*

**Key words:** professional orientation, career choice, deaf workers and workers without hearing impairments.

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### INTRODUCTION

Deaf people belong to a very heterogeneous population, which in addition to hearing impairment usually have additional psychological and physical disorders. Hearing impairment in addition to communication difficulties leaves greater effects on the functioning of the deaf people. Although no differences in capabilities required to perform the duties and tasks in different areas were determined, there is an issue of their employment within the profession for which they are qualified. The cause of this situation can be found in the inadequate professional orientation and career choices for deaf people. With professional orientation, those people are directed to those occupations that are best suited to individual differences and abilities, specific mental and physical demands of the workplace and educational programs of individual schools.

Bujas (1968) states that the essence of the professional orientation is contained in individual psycho-physical characteristics and preferences, different requirements at workplaces in terms of abilities, skills and knowledge. The same author states that performing more poorly at a job does not mean the overall professional unfitness, but the causes can be found in a bad choice of occupation. A significant number of young deaf people and people with hearing impairment receive additional services in the context of social disability insurance (Daněk and Busby, 1999), without being involved in any production activities (Bullis et al., 1995; Bullis et al., 1997). DeCaro et al (2001) suggest that deafness can be a cultural determinant when it comes to career choice and opportunities for deaf people.

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These authors have observed that regardless of the cultural differences between countries, deaf people are directed in similar occupations based on the attitudes of employers and society, and Punch et al (2004) stated that when conducting evaluations for the choice of profession, there is a tendency of ignoring the quality of individual personality, and generally only the hearing impairment is taken into account. Communication requirements at workplace: communication in silence and noise, detection of the sound source, localization of sounds, distinguishing different sounds, very often not taken into account when choosing a profession. Although Schroedel and Geyer (2000) state that a deaf person can perform duties and tasks as successfully as their colleagues with normal hearing, if they are provided with equal educational opportunities and equal access to employment, their years of education to overcome interest, which are not in accordance with the labor market. Lane et al (1996) stated that the adoption of the Law on Professional Rehabilitation removed obstacles to hiring deaf people in government institutions, as well as in large corporations, which contributed to the extension of legislation to the private sector and allowed the expansion of the list of professions for which deaf people had been trained. There is no legislation that limits the deaf people in certain occupations, which indicates the presence of equal opportunities in access and choice of acquiring professional qualifications. Although the professional orientation is an activity that has a long tradition in the context of rehabilitation of deaf population, there were observed no positive and affirmative results, which can be linked with an adequate choice of profession and employment. Results of the research conducted by Schroedel (1992), in which teachers and counselors evaluated the ability of making decisions about the choice of profession of deaf students, which showed that that 61% of students considered to have insufficient knowledge of particular industries and that 40% of them are not aware of their professional skills and interest for performing certain occupations. Gottshall and Stefanou (2011) stated that deaf students may have difficulties in understanding their own abilities in finding a job, but that does not mean that experts should take over the decision on the choice of profession, because in this way a sense of helplessness and inability to making decisions is developing. According to research conducted by Jambor and Elliott

(2005) the cause of the incorrect view about the possibility of carrying out certain professions for deaf people may be information provided during adolescence by teachers, parents and guardians, who believe that deafness prevents an individual to engage in certain occupations and to be successful in them. Bonds (2003) stated that deaf people face difficulties in finding and keeping a job, because of inadequate training in the context of professional rehabilitation, which could be overcome with adequate education and professional training, while research conducted in the US and Australia revealed that students with hearing impairment and deaf students in regular schools were included in very few activities for planning their career choice (Punch et al., 2006; Luft and Huff, 2011; Luft, 2014). Lent et al (2000) examined the influence of social factors on the choice of occupations of deaf population, where they found that discrimination and inadequate support of the system plays an important role in career guidance and professional development of deaf people.

The influence of parents in professional orientation of deaf children is extremely important. Experience shows that parents of deaf children often do not have enough information when it comes to choice of occupation and jobs their children can perform. Since deaf children in 90% of cases have hearing parents, who usually had no previous experience or knowledge about deafness, DeCarlo et al (1983) stated that parents very often express low expectations about the professional development of their deaf children, and as the reasons for this they point out difficulties in communication and safety at the workplace. Schroedel and Carnahan (1991) came to similar findings, which stated that parents of deaf children believe that deafness limits their ability to work, and that deaf children cannot participate equally in the workplace as their peers with no hearing impairment, and also Jamieson et al (2011) stated that parents of deaf children express concern and uncertainty in educational and professional opportunities of their children. Research conducted by Weisel and Cinamon (2005) points out that parents of deaf children express low expectations toward abilities of deaf people to achieve success in carrying out various occupations. In this way, as stated by DeCaro et al (2001), the interests of deaf individuals, their intellectual abilities, and their personality traits, which are taken into account in the guidance hearing population are ignored.

Professional orientation is usually planned and implemented by persons with no hearing impairments, which by Benedict and Sass-Lehrer (2007) control the direction of education of deaf people and have a strong influence on legislative policy, research programs, curriculum, and the work of institutions engaged in professional rehabilitation.

## METHODS OF WORK

The study sample consisted of 238 subjects, aged between 18 and 65 years, divided into two subsample. The first subsample consisted of deaf subjects ( $n = 124$ ) who have a minimum of one year of experience in tasks they performed, and the other subsample consisted of subjects without hearing impairment ( $n = 114$ ), having at least one year of experience with deaf people. The study was conducted in public and private companies in which respondents had a work contract.

For data processing descriptive analysis method was used, using computer statistical program SPSS for WINDOWS 14.

### Descriptive characteristics of the research sample

The sample of deaf workers consisted of 65.3% of male respondents and 34.7% of female respondents. The largest percentage of deaf people (35.5%) was born in the period from 1961 to 1970, which were between 47 and 56 years, followed by respondents born from 1971 to 1980 (33.1%) which were 37 to 46 years, and respondents born from 1981 to 1991 (18.5%), which were between 26 and 36 years. The lowest percentage of respondents were born between

1951 and 1960 (8.1%) and had 57 to 66 years, and respondents born between 1991 and 1995 (4.8%) which were between 22 and 26 years. Respondents covered by this research are employed in the field of craft services and manufacturing (71.6%), in the service sector are present in 18.8% of cases, in the context of health care institutions (6.3%), in the mining and construction (2.4 %) and education (0.8%). The highest percentage of respondents have completed secondary education (93.5%), followed by respondents with a university degree (4%) and low-skilled workers in 2.4% of cases.

The sample of workers and foremen with no hearing impairment included 56.8% male and 43.2% of female respondents. The largest percentage of respondents (37.8%) was born in the period from 1961 to 1970, followed by respondents born from 1971 to 1980 (29.7%), from 1981 to 1990 (18%), from 1951 to 1960 (13.5 %) and the lowest percentage of respondents born from 1991 to 1995 (0.9%). Frequency of representation of workers without hearing impairment by age ranges from 22 years to 66 years of age, and the highest percentage of respondents were between 37 and 54 years (67.5%). The structure of the sample of employees and manager without hearing impairment consisted of respondents employed in the field of craft services and manufacturing (55.8%), service sector (12.5%), health care institutions (14.2%), mining and construction (11.7%) and education (5.8%). The analyzed data on the qualifications of workers show that respondents without hearing impairment in 82.9% of cases have secondary education, and a university degree in 11.7% of cases. The study also included 5.4% of respondents without education.

Table 1. Structure of subsample of deaf workers in relation to gender, age, experience and qualifications

Variable		The amount of deaf respondents		The amount of respondents without hearing impairment	
		f	%	f	%
Sex	Male	81	65,3	63	56,8
	Female	43	34,7	48	43,2
Year of birth	1951-1960	10	8,1	15	13,5
	1961-1970	44	35,5	42	37,8
	1971-1980	41	33,1	33	29,7
	1981-1990	23	18,5	20	18,0
	1991-1995	6	4,8	1	0,9
Qualification of respondents	Without education	3	2,4	6	5,4
	Secondary education	116	93,5	92	82,9
	University degree	5	4,0	13	11,7

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 shows the ratio of completed professional education of the deaf, their acquired qualifications and jobs in which they are employed. Examining these results, it can be concluded that the largest percentage of deaf people were educated to work as tailors (16.1%), shoemakers (9.7%), car painters (8.9%), tinsmiths (8.1) bookbinder (7.3%), locksmiths (6.5%) and sign maker (6.5%). The same percentage (3.2%) of deaf people were educated for therapists, hairdressers and mechanical technicians, followed by opticians, draftsmen and photographers (2.4%), dental technicians and the audiologists (1.6%). In a small percentage (0.8%) respondents with secondary education have gained qualification for the professions of precise mechanics, metal grinders, upholsterers, economic, tourist and leather technicians, car electricians, graphic artists, plumbers, electricians, stamp-makers, jewelers, installers of central heating, web and product designers, and in the context of university degree they were educated for economists, social workers and construction engineers, each with a percentage of 0.8%.

Also, to similar data come Boutin and Wilson (2009), which stated that persons with hearing impairment were educated and employed in the context of professional activities (art, education and managerial jobs), while deaf people were oriented to crafting professions (operators of the machinery, metal and wood processing, welders, sign maker, as well as jobs in the context of transporta-

tion, preparation and processing of food, janitors, etc.), explaining this practice in a way that in the context of expert jobs a greater interaction with the hearing environment is expected, which requires greater communication skills.

Schildroth et al. (1991) presented data that 20% of deaf workers, after high school, were employed in jobs related to food preparation, 17% in jobs related to technical and office work, and 10% in housekeeper jobs. Research conducted by Capella (2003), which compared the effectiveness of professional rehabilitation of deaf persons and persons without hearing impairment, indicating that deaf people in 11.3% of cases were fewer employed in the context of expert and technical professions, and in 11.5% of cases over-represented within manufacturing jobs.

Examination of the data relating to the completed education for tailors, sign maker, physical therapists, dental technicians, metal grinders, electricians, stamp-makers, web designers, civil engineers and economists, it is recognized that deaf people are employed in workplaces, which are consistent with their achieved qualification. From a total of 33 professions for which deaf people were trained in the process of professional rehabilitation, at 10 of them deaf people are working within their acquired qualifications, indicating that in 69.7% of all professions skilled deaf people are not represented. The largest deviations in completed educations and jobs is reflected in jobs like shoemakers, tinsmiths, hairdressers, opticians and photographers.

Table 2. Comparative display of completed educations and workplaces where employees are deaf respondents

Profession	Completed education		Workplace		Working in their profession	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Tailor	20	16,1	22	17,7	20	16,1
Shoemaker	12	9,7	7	5,6	7	5,6
Car painter	11	8,9	8	6,5	8	6,4
Car tinsmith	10	8,1	2	1,6	2	1,6
Bookbinder	9	7,3	7	5,6	7	5,6
Locksmith	8	6,5	6	4,8	6	4,8
Sign maker	8	6,5	8	6,5	8	6,4
Physiotherapist	4	3,2	4	3,2	4	3,3
Hairdresser	4	3,2	0	0	0	0
Mechanical technician	4	3,2	3	2,4	3	2,4
Optician	3	2,4	0	0	0	0
Technical drawer	3	2,4	2	1,6	2	1,6
Photographer	3	2,4	0	0	0	0
Dental technician	2	1,6	2	1,6	2	1,6
Audiologist	2	1,6	1	0,8	1	0,8
Precise mechanic	1	0,8	0	0	0	0
Upholsterer	1	0,8	0	0	0	0
Metal grinder	1	0,8	1	0,8	1	0,8
Economic technician	1	0,8	0	0	0	0
Car electrician	1	0,8	1	0,8	1	0,8
Leather technician	1	0,8	0	0	0	0
Graphic artist	1	0,8	0	0	0	0
Plumber	1	0,8	0	0	0	0
Electrician	1	0,8	0	0	0	0
Stamp-maker	1	0,8	1	0,8	1	0,8
Jeweler	1	0,8	0	0	0	0
Installer of central heating	1	0,8	0	0	0	0
Economist	1	0,8	1	0,8	1	0,8
Web designer	1	0,8	1	0,8	1	0,8
Civil engineer	1	0,8	1	0,8	1	0,8
Product designer	1	0,8	0	0	0	0
Social worker	1	0,8	0	0	0	0
Tourist technician	1	0,8	0	0	0	0
Uneducated workers	3	2,4	18	12,1	3	2,4
Total	124	100	96	74,8	79	63,4

Table 3 shows the ratio of completed educations for professions of people without hearing impairment, acquired qualifications and jobs in which they are employed. By examining the results it can be concluded that the highest percentage of persons without hearing impairment were qualified to professions like physiotherapists (14.4%), tailors (7.2%), graphic artists (7.2%), mechanical technicians (6.3%) and economic technicians (5.4%).

The same percentage of respondents (4.5%) were educated for professions of audiologists, electricians, and mining technicians, following by economic tech-

nicians, carpenters and shoemakers (3.6%), civil and electrical engineers and lawyers (2.7%), as well as drivers, mechanics, administrative technicians and turners (1.8%). In a smaller percentage of respondents (0.9%) with secondary education have gained qualification for the professions of car painters, locksmiths, instrument technicians, electronic technicians, painters, ceramists, telecommunications technicians, gas system installers and plumbers, fashion designers, veterinary technicians, and within the university education economists, social workers, civil and electrical engineers and teachers each with a percentage of 0.9%.



The largest deviations in completed educations and jobs is reflected in the professions of tailors and mechanical technicians. From a total of 34 professions for which respondents without hearing impairments were educated in their professional rehabilitation, it

was found that in all professions skilled workers were present. Looking at Table 3 it can be recognized that 84.5% of respondents without hearing impairment work in the workplace for which they have professional qualifications.

Table 3. Comparative display of completed education and jobs in which respondents without hearing impairment are employed

Profession	Completed education		Workplace		Working in their profession	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Physiotherapist	16	14,4	16	14,4	16	14,4
Tailor	8	7,2	12	10,8	8	7,2
Graphic artist	8	7,2	7	6,3	7	6,3
Mechanical technician	7	6,3	2	1,8	2	1,8
Economic technician	6	5,4	5	4,5	5	4,5
Audiologist	5	4,5	5	4,5	5	4,5
Electrician	5	4,5	3	2,7	3	2,7
Mining technician	5	4,5	5	4,5	5	4,5
Merchant	4	3,6	2	1,8	2	1,8
Carpenter	4	3,6	4	3,6	4	3,6
Shoemaker	4	3,6	4	3,6	4	3,6
Construction technician	3	2,7	3	2,7	3	2,7
Electrical technician	3	2,7	3	2,7	3	2,7
Lawyer	3	2,7	1	0,9	1	0,9
Driver	2	1,8	2	1,8	2	1,8
Car mechanic	2	1,8	1	0,9	1	0,9
Administrative worker	2	1,8	2	1,8	2	1,8
Turner	2	1,8	2	1,8	2	1,8
Plumber	1	0,9	1	0,9	1	0,9
Car painter	1	0,9	1	0,9	1	0,9
Civil engineer	1	0,9	1	0,9	1	0,9
Social worker	1	0,9	1	0,9	1	0,9
Locksmith	1	0,9	1	0,9	1	0,9
Instrument technician	1	0,9	1	0,9	1	0,9
Electronic technician	1	0,9	1	0,9	1	0,9
Painter	1	0,9	1	0,9	1	0,9
Ceramist	1	0,9	1	0,9	1	0,9
Telecommunication technician	1	0,9	1	0,9	1	0,9
Teacher	1	0,9	1	0,9	1	0,9
Gas system installer	1	0,9	0	0	1	0
Fashion designer	1	0,9	0	0	0	0
Veterinary technician	1	0,9	0	0	0	0
Economist	1	0,9	1	0,9	1	0,9
Electrical engineer	1	0,9	1	0,9	1	0,9
Uneducated workers	6	5,4	9	8,1	6	5,3
Total	111	100	101	91,6	95	84,5

Table 4 shows the representation of jobs at which the respondents are employed in relation to their acquired qualification, where it can be found that the highest percentage of both groups of respondents performed tasks in the context of their acquired qualifications, but also differences in the performance of unskilled and assistant workers, and respondents who have completed secondary education. The obtained results indicate that 12.1% of deaf respondents, compared to 1.8% of workers without hearing impairment, educated for professions of opticians, painters, locksmiths, graphic artists, plumbers, bookbinders, tailors, photographers and central heating installers are engaged in jobs for which uneducated workers qualify for.

Deaf respondents performing the activities of assistant workers in 4.8% of cases, are educated for pro-

fessions of tinsmiths, hairdressers, shoemakers and bookbinders, unlike respondents without hearing impairment which do not work as assistant workers. To similar results also came Johnson (1993), Welsh (1993) and Rosengreen (2007), which stated that much smaller selection of professions offered to deaf people in relation to people without hearing impairment in the course of their professional education, and they are often degraded at jobs which are not in accordance with their acquired qualifications. Ozdowski (2004) points out that although deaf people have a good knowledge and sufficient qualifications to perform certain tasks, they usually do not get the job for which they are qualified, and also Schroedel and Geyer (2000) state that 13% to 15% of deaf workers, covered by their research, have a higher level of education compared to the tasks they perform.

Table 4. Representation of jobs in relation to acquired qualification

Workplace	The amount of deaf respondents		The amount of respondents without hearing impairment	
	f	%	f	%
Workplace in accordance with acquired qualification	102	82,2	106	95,5
Workplace unqualified workers respondents with secondary school education	15	12,1	2	1,8
Workplace assistant worker respondents with secondary school education	6	4,8	0	0
Workplace secondary school education respondents with university degree	1	0,8	3	2,7
Total	124	100	111	100

## CONCLUSION

The results showed that deaf people in 36.6% of cases are not employed in the occupation for which they have acquired professional qualifications, compared to 14.5% percent of respondents with no hearing impairments. The data obtained indicates that professional orientation of deaf people does not follow the market interest and the labor market, and that deaf people are directed in those occupations for which they can not find an adequate work place. A long-term rehabilitation,

including the segment of professional training, realized on this ineffective way, puts deaf workers at a disadvantage in relation to their colleagues without hearing impairment, which are oriented and educated for a broader scope of professions, which will lead to a lower rate of employment and working at low paid jobs. The results indicate that it is necessary to reorganize the inefficient process of professional orientation of the deaf people, which should contribute to establishing an efficient system of employment in professions for which they are oriented.

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