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Connecting Career Counselling and Human Resource Development in
Enterprises for Higher Education and Training in Practice (CONNECT!)

IO2

NATIONAL REPORT

Greece

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National survey on the current practices, needs and requirements of
experts and professionals in the fields of CGC and HRM in Greece

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1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the Greek results of the two surveys sent to professionals in the fields of career support for adults by ISON Psychometrica. The aim of the surveys was to gather information on the current practices, needs and requirements of the project’s two main target groups:

- Experts and practitioners in the professional field of career guidance and counseling (CGC)
- Experts and practitioners in the professional field of human resources management (HRM)

Two separate surveys translated in Greek were distributed to collect data from these professional groups. Recruitment was carried out over a three-month period (June to August 2020), utilizing ISON's professional network and affiliations. Information about the HRM and CGC surveys was shared on ISON's LinkedIn social media platform. Moreover, the Greek People Management Association (GPMA) was contacted directly and the surveys were shared with approximately 500 of its members.

In the present report, the results of both surveys are presented and discussed, as well as an overall synthesis which compares and contrasts the findings from the HRM and CGC professionals. Overall, 11 HRM and 10 CGC professionals completed the survey.

2 CURRENT PRACTICES, NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS OF CGC PROFESSIONALS

2.1 Analysis of Respondents

A total of 10 individuals responded to the survey.

Two respondents worked in Public Employment Services (PES), one in higher education (University), one in Adult Education, four in Independent Career Counselling facilities, one in Social Services, and one in a field (not specified; Figure 2.1).

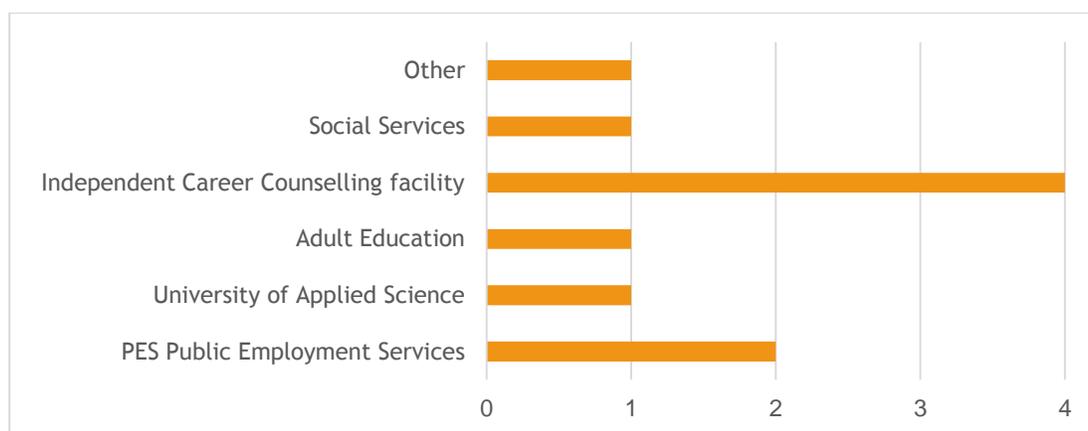


Figure 2.1: Domains in which participating institutions operate

In regard to the size of the companies, 5 individuals were employed in companies of up to 49 people, 1 respondent in a company of 50 to 249 people, 2 respondents in companies of more than 500 people, and 2 respondents were self-employed. In total, 8 respondents were working part-time and 2 were employed full-time.

Concerning their position in the organization, 1 respondent was the head of the counselling department, 4 respondents were counselling practitioners/career counsellors, 1 was a teacher/professor with career counselling functions, and 4 respondents worked as independent counsellors/trainers/coaches.

The subsample of independent counsellors/trainers/coaches either worked in a small company of up to 49 people ($n=2$) or were self-employed (single-person business; $n=2$). Moreover, the majority of employed counselling practitioners/career counsellors worked in small (up to 49; $n=2$) or medium (50 to 249; $n=1$) sized companies. Only 1 counselling practitioner/career counsellor worked in a company with more than 500 employees, 1 respondent was employed by a large organization (more than 500 employees), and 1 respondent managed a small company (up to 49 employees).

Due to the limited sample and the dispersion of the respondents in the business domains, a comparison between the different sectors was not carried out.

2.2 Involvement in the Professional Life Cycle & Types of Activities

Career practitioners who participated in this survey considered their role as important in a variety of domains of their professional life cycle (see Table 2.1). Specifically, they deemed the areas of integration of new employees, development of professional knowledge and skills, and development of personal and social competencies as very important in their work domain.

The areas of recruitment and management were also seen as important by the majority of respondents. In regard to retirement and dismissal, the majority of the sample reported that their role is not applicable in these areas. Even when examining the responses of the counsellors who did not select the “not applicable” option, opinions were still divided as to whether or not retirement and dismissal were part of their role.

Besides the aforementioned options, participants were asked to report whether any additional domains that are considered as important within their work role. Three respondents did provide additional insight indicating their roles are important in the following domains: (1) career counseling and guidance for teenagers, (2) career change, and (3) employee needs.

<i>Domains</i>	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important	Not applicable
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<i>Recruitment</i>	30% 3	30% 3	20% 2	0.00% 0	20% 2
<i>Integration of (new) employees)</i>	50% 5	20% 2	10% 1	0.00% 0	20% 2
<i>Development of professional knowledge and skills</i>	80% 8	10% 1	10% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Development of personal and social competences</i>	70% 7	10% 1	20% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Management of changes</i>	40% 4	20% 2	10% 1	10% 1	20% 2
<i>Dismissal</i>	10% 1	20% 2	30% 3	0.00% 0	40% 4
<i>Retirement</i>	10% 1	10% 1	20% 2	10% 1	50% 5

Table 2.1: Responses to the question “How important would you consider your role as career counsellor in the following domains of the professional life cycle in enterprises?”

A total of 4 respondents (of 10) reported playing an active role in the formal onboarding process. Of those, 3 were counselling practitioners and career counsellors (either employees or independent), and the other respondent was a managing director/branch office manager.

Respondents were then provided with a list of activities and were asked to report how often they perform each one (Table 2.2). The majority of the sample (50%) reported providing career information several times a year. Similarly, regarding counselling on career decisions, 50% of the sample reported performing such tasks several times a year and 40% of the sample performed it more often, several times a month).

The most commonly performed activity was the assessment of career skills and competencies (50% - often/several times a month). This activity, as expected, was most often conducted either by counselling practitioners/career counsellors and/or independent counsellors/trainers/coaches.

The activities associated with the design and promotion of career counselling and managing programs for career development and training, were evenly distributed among the sample. As expected, out of the 10 respondents, those who reported performing these two activities “often” or “very often” were either independent or employed career counsellors.

Finally, performing activities of social responsibility (humanitarian, health, environment), and taking initiatives for quality development and innovation were the least performed actions in the present sample (50% - seldom). Only one independent counsellor/trainer/coach reported executing this activity on an often basis.

Besides the presented options, participants were asked to report whether there are any additional activities they perform not presented in the questionnaire. Three respondents provided a list of additional activities including career counselling to children of working parents, parent and employee counselling/psychotherapy, and counselling on balancing family and work life.

Activity	Very often	Often (several	Sometimes (several	Seldom (by	Not applicable
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	(every week)	times in a month)	times in a year)	occasion)	
<i>Providing career information</i>	10% 1	20% 2	50% 5	20% 2	0.00% 0
<i>Assessing career skills and competences</i>	0.00% 0	50% 5	30% 3	10% 1	10% 1
<i>Counselling career decisions</i>	0.00% 0	40% 4	50% 5	0.00% 0	10% 1
<i>Counselling and planning career promotion</i>	0.00% 0	20% 2	30% 3	30% 3	20% 2
<i>Designing & managing programs for career development & training</i>	20% 2	20% 2	40% 4	10% 1	10% 1
<i>Executing actions of social responsibility (humanitarian, health, environment)</i>	0.00% 0	10% 1	20% 2	50% 5	20% 2
<i>Taking initiatives for quality development & innovation</i>	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	40% 4	50% 5	10% 1

Table 2.2: Responses on the frequency of performing the listed activities

2.3 The role of CGC in enterprises, Beneficiaries, & Counselling Issues

Among the different reasons for providing career counselling in enterprises, finding individualized solutions was deemed as very important by the majority of the sample (70%). Similarly, achieving higher acceptance of (external) counselling offers, providing independent counselling (without suspicion of company's interests), and increasing the credibility of the counselling services associated with the counsellor's professionalism, were reported as very important by 50% of the sample, and as important by approximately 40% of the sample. Answers were more evenly distributed for reasons associated with increasing the commitment to the enterprise. Overall, none of the listed reasons were considered as not important by the sample (Table 2.3).

Besides the presented options, participants were asked to report whether there are any additional reasons for providing counselling services. Three respondents reported the following: team building, increasing the overall quality of employee health and organizational wellbeing, and building skills for self-development and promotion.

Reasons	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important	Not applicable
<i>Finding Individualized solutions</i>	70% 7	30% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Achieving higher acceptance of the (external) counselling offers</i>	50% 5	30% 3	20% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Provide independent counselling (without suspicion of company's interests)</i>	50% 5	30% 3	20% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Rising the credibility of the counselling because of the professionalism of the counsellor</i>	50% 5	40% 4	10% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Arising the commitment to the enterprise</i>	40% 4	40% 4	20% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0

Table 2.3: Perception of importance of the reasons for conducting career counselling

The following question concerned the nature of the beneficiaries who receive career guidance and counselling services (Table 2.4). Amongst the provided list of employee groups, apprentices/trainees were the most common recipient of counselling services (40% - Often), followed by new employees (20% - Often). The sample reported that new employees (30%), future managers (30%) and older employees (30%) might receive counselling several times within a year. The majority of the respondents indicated that this question is not applicable to their work in regard to migrants (70%), persons with disabilities (60%), highly talented persons (60%), and employees preparing for retirement (60%). As a general comment, there seems to be an overall lack of service provision to most employee groups, as a substantial amount reported that the question is not applicable to their organization.

Groups of employees	Very often (every week)	Often (several times in a month)	Sometimes (several times in a year)	Seldom (by occasion)	Not applicable
<i>Apprentices/trainees</i>	0.00% 0	40% 4	10% 1	30% 3	20% 2
<i>New employees</i>	0.00% 0	20% 2	30% 3	10% 1	40% 4
<i>Migrants</i>	10% 1	0.00% 0	10% 1	10% 1	70% 7
<i>Persons with disabilities</i>	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10% 1	30% 3	60% 6
<i>Highly talented persons</i>	0.00% 0	20% 2	10% 1	10% 1	60% 6
<i>Future managers</i>	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	30% 3	30% 3	40% 4
<i>Employees returning from parents' leave</i>	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10% 1	40% 4	50% 5

<i>Elder employees (50+)</i>	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	30% 3	20% 2	50% 5
<i>Employees threatened by dismissal</i>	10% 1	0.00% 0	20% 2	20% 2	50% 5
<i>Employees preparing for retirement</i>	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	40% 4	60% 6

Table 2.4: Frequency of providing career counselling to the following groups in the enterprise

Concerning the issues around career counselling, the respondents provided an evenly distributed image regarding its occurrence (Table 2.5). Further education and training, and learning and performance problems were dealt with often (30%), whereas half of the sample reported that team problems were dealt with several times per year (sometimes). The issues around personal problems and career planning were evenly distributed among the respondents.

<i>Counselling issues</i>	Very often (every week)	Often (several times in a month)	Sometimes (several times in a year)	Seldom (by occasion)	Not applicable
<i>Further education & training</i>	10% 1	30% 3	20% 2	30% 3	10% 1
<i>Career planning</i>	10% 1	10% 1	20% 2	40% 4	20% 2
<i>Learning & performance problems</i>	0.00% 0	30% 3	20% 2	50% 5	0.00% 0
<i>Team problems</i>	10% 1	20% 2	50% 5	10% 1	10% 1
<i>Personal problems</i>	10% 1	10% 1	20% 2	30% 3	30% 3

Table 2.5: Responses on the frequency of dealing with the listed issues of career counselling

Concerning the modalities of work (Figure 2.2), the majority of the respondents provide the services on a one to one basis (9 out of 10), and are self-reliant (persons without enterprise; 9 out of 10). The answers were almost equally distributed concerning the place of provision, with 4 respondents visiting the client's workplace, and 3 respondents providing the service off the client's workplace.

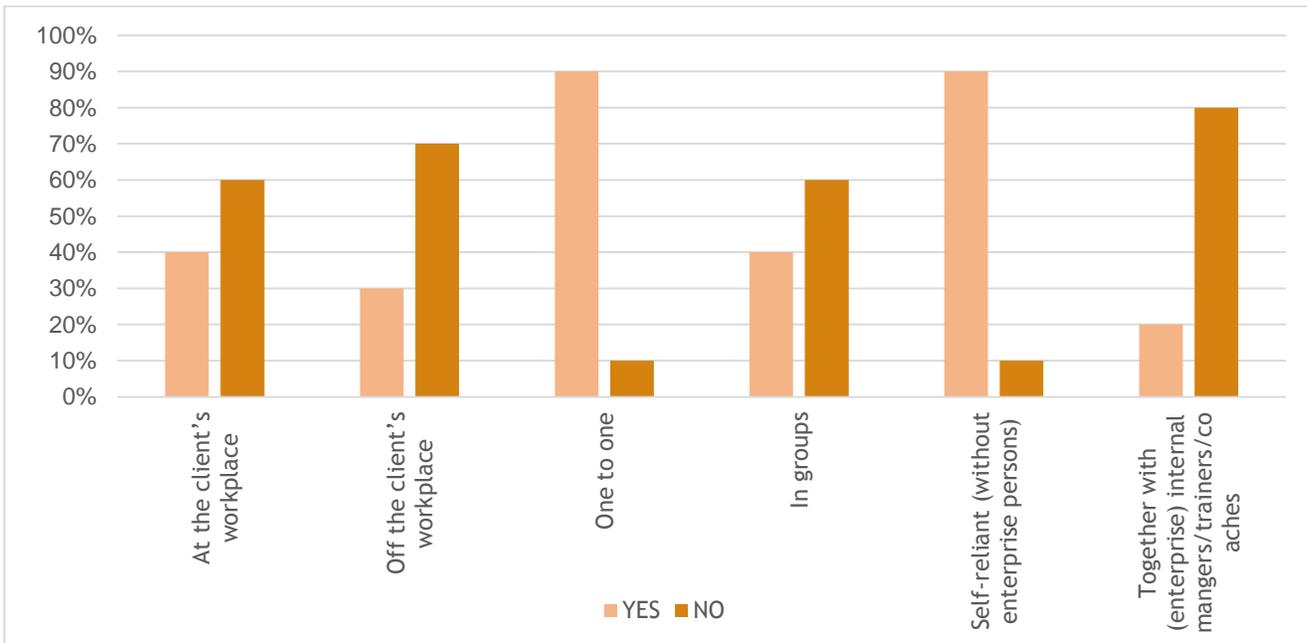


Figure 2.2: Modalities of career counselling provided to enterprises

2.4 Developing the necessary knowledge, skills, and competences

The majority of the sample reported self-study (6 out of 10), enrollment in continuing education (7 out of 10), and attending short training courses/workshops/conferences (6 out of 10) as very important in obtaining the necessary skills and knowledge for their job roles (Table 2.6). Reliance on previous academic studies, advice from peers and other institutions, and advice from external peers and experts were also regarded as very important or important by the sample. Overall, none of the options were deemed as not important. In the open-ended part of the questions, two respondents additionally referred to the internet, as well as conferences and academic journals as important sources of knowledge.

Reasons	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important	Not applicable
<i>I still rely on my former (academic) studies</i>	50% 5	50% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Self-study (internet, MOOCs, books etc.)</i>	60% 6	30% 3	10% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Enrollment in continuing education (face to face and blended learning)</i>	70% 7	30% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Attending short training courses/workshops/conferences</i>	60% 6	40% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Advice from peers and experts in my institution</i>	40% 4	40% 4	20% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Advice from external peers and experts</i>	50% 5	30% 3	20% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0

Table 2.6: Responses to the question “How important are the following sources for you to gain the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to fulfill all your roles?”

2.5 Interactions/networking and co-operations, & Perceived Benefits

When asked how often they interact with members of enterprises or entrepreneurial representations, the majority of the sample (7 out of 10) said that they do so sometimes/several times a year. Two respondents reported interacting often (several times a month), and one respondent reported interacting on a very often basis (every week).

In regard to active cooperation (concerning special tasks, development projects, challenging problems), the responses are similar, as the majority of the sample (6 out of 10) reported doing it sometimes/several times per year. Two participants reported doing it often (several times a month), and the last two reported seldom cooperating (by occasion).

Regarding the list of benefits that are considered important, all the provided benefits were rated either as very important or important. Indeed, for the majority of the options, the sample’s opinions were equally divided among these two classifications. Only one respondent marked cooperation for special purpose as non-applicable to them (Table 2.7).

Benefits	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important	Not applicable
<i>Further information</i>	40% 4	40% 4	20% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Exchange of experience</i>	40% 4	40% 4	20% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Learn about best practice examples</i>	40% 4	50% 5	10% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Cooperation for special purpose</i>	30% 3	40% 4	20% 2	0.00% 0	10% 1
<i>Learning from each other</i>	40% 4	50% 5	10% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Attending joint seminars/workshops/trainings</i>	50% 5	40% 4	10% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0

Table 2.7: Ratings of benefits from cooperation with representatives of professional institutions or independent experts from the field of Career guidance and counselling

2.6 Challenges: Qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions

From the 10 participants, 6 provided additional qualitative information about their experience in the domain of career counseling. This information is discussed below.

Regarding topics and problems that are currently the most challenging for career counsellors, one managing director/branch manager reported “*change management and crisis management*”. As a potential solution, the

respondent underlined the importance of *“continuous training and education”*, as well as the *“cooperation with senior executives and staff”*.

Another respondent, working as an independent counselor, reported one of the main concerns being the *“uncertainty in the market which does allow the development of reliable career paths”*. According to the respondent, it is vital for *“Human Resources staff, who focus on development, to exhibit high levels of commitment and adaptability”*.

A respondent working as a career counsellor/career practitioner, said that a common concern is for counsellors to *“keep their skills up to date and employ innovative practices”* whilst providing services. The respondent said that *“keeping contact and communicating with peers and colleagues”* is a good way of overcoming these difficulties. The same participant added a final comment, arguing that *“it is very important to be able to find talented individuals (talent management)”*.

An interesting response by an independent counsellor was that one of the main difficulties in their work role is to be able to *“persuade the client to see reality clearly”*. According to them, a counsellor must *“stay informed and updated”* on current trends and practices, so as to better assist the client.

The last two respondents only provided information about the challenges of counselling work. More specifically, an independent counsellor reported that a big issue is *“matching one’s personal traits to their skills”*, whereas the other respondent (working as a counselling practitioner) referred to *“issues related to the horizontal movement of employees or career change”*.

3 CURRENT PRACTICES, NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS OF HRM PROFESSIONALS

3.1 Analysis of Respondents

A total of 11 individuals responded to the survey.

A total of 4 respondents worked in the services sector, 2 worked in the merchandizing sector, 2 worked in the technology/IT sector, 2 worked in industrial production, and 1 worked in the banking sector. In regard to the size of companies, only 3 of the respondents were employed by large organizations, with more than 500 employees (Figure 3.1). Representatives from smaller organizations comprised the majority of the sample: 6 respondents worked in small organizations with up to 49 employees, and 2 respondents worked in organizations that employed between 50 and 249 employees.

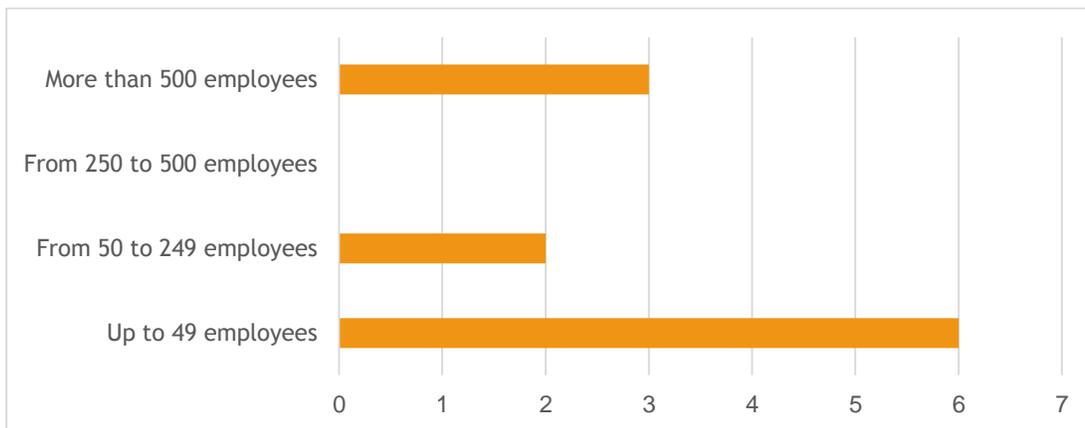


Figure 3.1: Number of people employed in the enterprise

The majority of respondents reported working as personnel managers (36.36%), followed by in-house trainers/coaches (27.27), heads of personnel development/training (18.18%), entrepreneurs/managing directors (9.09%), while 1 respondent indicated ‘other’ who worked as group operations HR manager. Almost all of the respondents reported working full time (72.72%) with only 3 reporting working part-time on their function in HRM (27.27%).

From the available information sourced for IO1 including, literature, media and resources at the national level, the findings indicated that the career development support to employees is more likely to be provided by external organizations to individuals, rather than in-house by employers/organizations as part of a career development plan. This may explain the majority of participants being from small (54.54%) rather than large organizations. The comparison between companies of different size and different sectors will be limited due to small number of respondents.

3.2 Involvement in the professional life cycle & Types of activities

The majority of respondents indicated that the role of HR is very important or important in the domains of recruitment and integration of (new) employees (Table 3.1). This response may be viewed as being linked to the finding that the majority of the surveyed respondents (81.81%) stated their enterprise has a formal onboarding process.

Around two thirds of respondents reported that their role is important in regard to the development of professional knowledge and skills, as well as personal and social competencies. Opinions were divided when it came to dismissals and retirement – where just under half of HR professionals involved in this survey reported that the role of HR in these domains was less important, not important at all, or not applicable. For the open-ended question regarding the importance of other domains, one respondent reported reorganizing processes and functions within HR, and another reported HR budgeting and compensation.

<i>Domains</i>	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important	Not applicable
<i>Recruitment</i>	45.45% 5	27.27% 3	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	18.18% 2
<i>Integration of (new) employees</i>	72.72% 8	27.27% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Development of professional knowledge and skills</i>	63.63% 7	27.27% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	9.09% 1
<i>Development of personal and social competences</i>	72.72% 8	18.18% 2	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Management of changes</i>	63.63% 7	27.27% 3	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Dismissal</i>	18.18% 2	27.27% 3	36.36% 4	0.00% 0	18.18% 2
<i>Retirement</i>	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	27.27% 3	27.27% 3	36.36% 4

Table 3.1: Responses to the question “How important do you consider your role in the following domains of the professional life cycle?”

The results of the survey indicate that, in their job, HR professionals most frequently take initiatives for quality development and innovation (63.63%), execute actions of social responsibility (54.54%), and provide career information (45.45%) as indicated by approximately half of respondents reported doing every week or several times per month (Table 3.2). To a lesser extent, providing career information (54.54%), counselling career decisions (72.72%), and counselling and planning career decisions (54.54%) were listed as activities being done several times a year or occasionally by approximately half of respondents.

Respondents were divided concerning designing and managing programs for career development and training - for some of them this is done several times in a month, while for others it is being done several times a year or only occasionally. Finally, assessing career skills and competencies was reported playing a central role in HR professionals’ life cycle – all of the respondents (99.99%) reported engaging in activities every week or several times per month.

One respondent mentioned as a comment to this question that they often re-evaluate the selection processes, but did not mention the frequency with which they engage in this activity.

<i>Activity</i>	Very often (every week)	Often (several times in a month)	Sometimes (several times in a year)	Seldom (by occasion)	Not applicable
<i>Providing career information</i>	9.09% 1	36.36% 4	45.45% 5	9.09% 1	0.00% 0
<i>Assessing career skills and competences</i>	18.18% 2	81.81% 9	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Counselling career decisions</i>	9.09% 1	18.18% 2	54.54% 6	18.18% 2	0.00% 0

<i>Counselling and planning career promotion</i>	18.18% 2	27.27% 3	18.18% 2	36.36% 4	0.00% 0
<i>Designing & managing programs for career development & training</i>	45.45% 5	27.27% 3	9.09% 1	18.18% 2	0.00% 0
<i>Executing actions of social responsibility (humanitarian, health, environment)</i>	18.18% 2	36.36% 4	18.18% 2	18.18% 2	9.09% 1
<i>Taking initiatives for quality development & innovation</i>	36.36% 4	27.27% 3	27.27% 3	9.09% 1	0.00% 0

Table 3.2: Responses on the frequency of performing the listed activities

3.3 The Role of CGC in Enterprises, Beneficiaries, & Counselling Issues

Arising commitment to the enterprise, finding individualized solutions, achieving higher learning effects, and increasing sustainability of learning were the main reasons that all HR professionals participating in this research found to be important motivators to conduct career counselling (Table 3.3). Although achieving higher learning effects was also recognized as very important, ratings indicated a lesser degree of importance compared to the other listed reasons.

Reasons	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important	Not applicable
<i>Finding Individualized solutions</i>	63.63% 7	27.27% 3	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	0.00% 0
<i>Achieving consensual decisions</i>	45.45% 5	45.45% 5	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Achieving higher learning effects</i>	63.63% 7	27.27% 3	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Increasing sustainability of learning</i>	63.63% 7	27.27% 3	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	0.00% 0
<i>Arising the commitment to the enterprise</i>	72.72% 8	18.18% 2	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	0.00% 0

Table 3.3: Perceived importance of the reasons for conducting career counselling

The beneficiaries of career counselling varied (Table 3.4). Around half of HR professionals who participated in the survey reported very often providing these services to highly talented persons (18.18%), new employees (9.09%), future managers (9.09%), and elder employees (9.09%).

The frequency of provision of services to apprentices/trainees and new employees appeared to vary across organizations. Approximately half of the respondents reported providing career counselling several times a year to apprentices/trainees, highly talented persons, and future managers.

These services were reported to seldom be provided or not applicable to persons with disabilities, migrants, employees threatened with dismissal, and employees preparing for retirement. Nearly all respondents (90.95%) indicated that providing services to migrants was not applicable in the case of their organization.

One additional insight was provided by a HR professional who reported that their organization offers these services to collaborators and employees from franchise companies.

<i>Groups of employees</i>	Very often (every week)	Often (several times in a month)	Sometimes (several times in a year)	Seldom (by occasion)	Not applicable
<i>Apprentices/trainees</i>	0.00% 0	18.18% 2	45.45% 5	36.36% 4	0.00% 0
<i>New employees</i>	9.09% 1	36.36% 4	36.36% 4	18.18% 2	0.00% 0
<i>Migrants</i>	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	81.81% 9
<i>Persons with disabilities</i>	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	27.27% 3	45.45% 5	18.18% 2
<i>Highly talented persons</i>	18.18% 2	9.09% 1	45.45% 5	27.27% 3	0.00% 0
<i>Future managers</i>	9.09% 1	27.27% 3	45.45% 5	0.00% 0	18.18% 2
<i>Employees returning from parents' leave</i>	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	27.27% 3	36.36% 4	36.36% 4
<i>Elder employees (50+)</i>	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	18.18% 2	45.45% 5	27.27% 3
<i>Employees threatened by dismissal</i>	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18.18% 2	54.54% 6	27.27% 3
<i>Employees preparing for retirement</i>	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18.18% 2	54.54% 6	27.27% 3

Table 3.4: Responses to the question "How often do you provide career counselling to the following groups in your enterprise?"

Nearly all HR professionals reported dealing with team problems, personal problems, and further education and training issues most of the time (very often or often; 90.90%). Approximately half of the time, they reported dealing with learning and performance problems and career planning issues (very often or often 63.63%). However, it should also be noted that less than one quarter of respondents reported seldom dealing with further education and training, career planning, and personal problems (Table 3.5).

<i>Counselling issues</i>	Very often (every week)	Often (several times in a month)	Sometimes (several times in a year)	Seldom (by occasion)	Not applicable
<i>Further education & training</i>	54.54% 6	36.36% 4	0.00% 0	9.09% 1	0.00% 0

<i>Career planning</i>	18.18% 2	45.45% 5	18.18% 2	18.18% 2	0.00% 0
<i>Learning & performance problems</i>	36.36% 4	27.27% 3	36.36% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Team problems</i>	36.36% 4	54.54% 6	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Personal problems</i>	9.09% 1	36.36% 4	45.45% 5	9.09% 1	0.00% 0

Table 3.5: Responses on the frequency of dealing with the listed issues of career counselling

Concerning the type and modalities of career counselling which are provided by the respondents who participated in this survey (Figure 3.2), the majority of enterprises provide them at the workplace (81.81%), including one to one (81.81%) and in groups (72.72%), primarily with internal counsellors and coaches (72.72%) rather with external counsellors and coaches (27.27%).

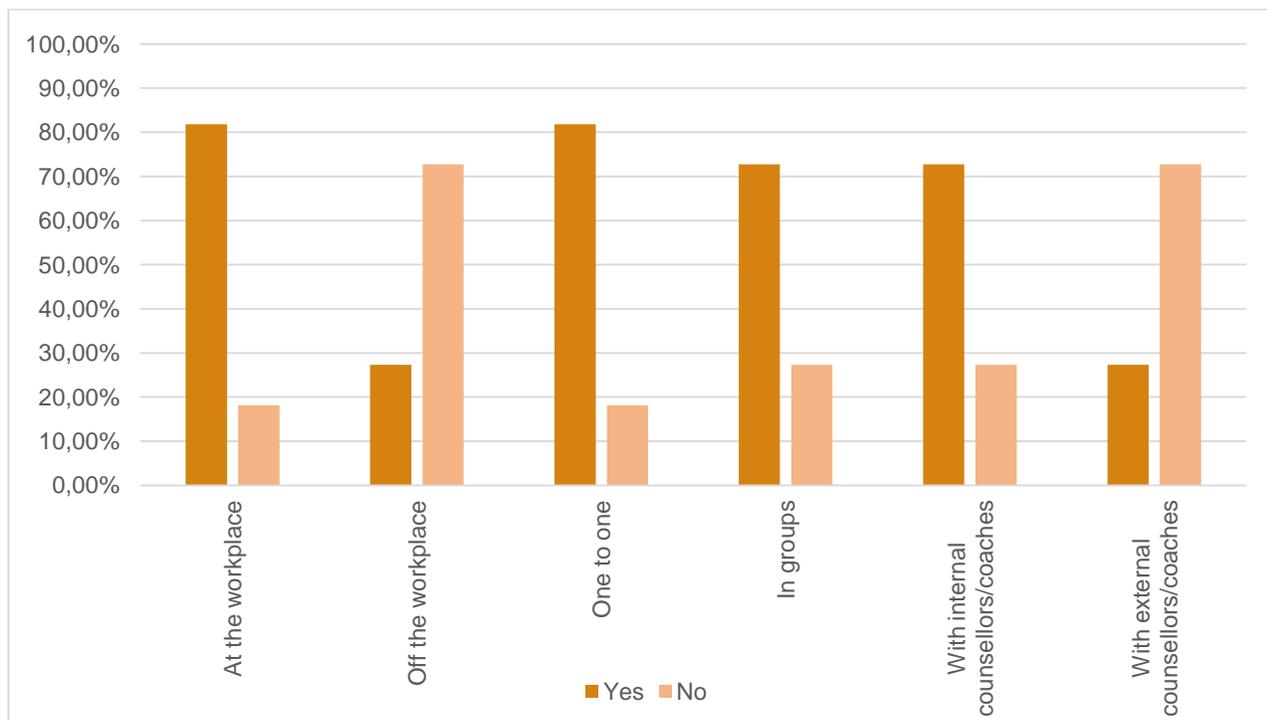


Figure 3.2: Types and modalities of career counselling which are provided in enterprises

3.4 Developing the Necessary Knowledge, Skills, and Competences

All HRM professionals who participated in the present survey indicated that they consider attending short training courses, workshops and conferences (99.99%) as most important to gain the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to fulfill all their roles, followed by enrollment in continuing education (very important and important; 81.81%) (Table 3.6). Self-study (internet, MOOCs, books, etc.; 72.72%) and advice from external

peers and experts (54.54%) were reported being of secondary importance in gaining the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies. Finally, relying on former academic studies (36.36%) and advice from internal peers and experts (36.36%) were reported being of least importance with some respondents indicating these were not important at all or not applicable.

Reasons	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important	Not applicable
<i>I still rely on my former (academic) studies</i>	18.18% 2	18.18% 2	36.36% 4	18.18% 2	9.09% 1
<i>Self-study (internet, MOOCs, books etc.)</i>	36.36% 4	36.36% 4	18.18% 2	0.00% 0	9.09% 1
<i>Enrollment in continuing education (face to face and blended learning)</i>	63.63% 7	18.18% 2	18.18% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Attending short training courses/workshops/conferences</i>	54.54% 6	45.45% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Advice from internal peers and experts</i>	18.18% 2	18.18% 2	27.27% 3	0.00% 0	36.36% 4
<i>Advice from external peers and experts</i>	27.27% 3	27.27% 3	45.45% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0

Table 3.6: Responses to the question “How important are the following sources for you to gain the necessary knowledge, skills and competences to fulfill all your roles?”

3.5 Interactions/Networking and Co-Operations, & Perceived Benefits

Human resource professionals indicated that attending joint seminars, workshops, and trainings in the field of Career Guidance and Counselling is something that happens moderately often. Only 3 respondents (27.27%) stated that these interactions are very important, while 2 respondents indicated they are important (18.18%). Nearly half the sample surveyed indicated such meetings are less important (54.54%).

When it comes to active cooperation (concerning special tasks, development projects, challenging problems), situation varies from company to company. In total, 2 HR professionals indicated that this occurs very often (18.18%), 4 indicated this occurs sometimes (36.36%), and 5 indicated that it seldom occurs (45.45%).

Concerning the list of benefits respondents might expect from working together with representatives of professional institutions or independent experts from the field of Career guidance and counselling, nearly all of the respondents see great benefit in acquiring further information (90.90%), exchanging experience (90.90%), and learning about best practice examples (90.90%). To a slightly lesser extent, respondents see important benefit in learning from each other (81.81%; Table 3.7).

Benefits	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important	Not applicable
<i>Further information</i>	18.18% 2	72.72% 8	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0

<i>Exchange of experience</i>	63.63% 7	27.27% 3	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Learn about best practice examples</i>	63.63% 7	27.27% 3	9.09% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Cooperation for special purpose</i>	36.36% 4	45.45% 5	18.18% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Learning from each other</i>	81.81% 9	0.00% 0	18.18% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
<i>Attending joint seminars/workshops/trainings</i>	27.27% 3	18.18% 2	54.54% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0

Table 3.7: Ratings of benefits from cooperation with representatives of professional institutions or independent experts from the field of Career guidance and counselling

3.6 Challenges: Qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions

From the 11 participants, 9 of them provided additional qualitative information about their experience in the human resources management domain. This information is discussed in this section. Regarding the topics and problems that are currently the most challenging for HRM professionals, answers covered a big range, highlighting not only the human and strategic element of HRM, but also some societal factors.

Regarding the societal level, a managing director underlined that a major issue in the HRM field is the lack of knowledge among professionals. Specifically, they stated that *“education has evolved into an automated process of “how”. Education should focus on the “why” if we are to see an improvement in human resources”,* underlining that the educational system should aim towards creating a *“thinking HR”* instead of an *“executive HR”*.

The second cluster of respondents focused on the individual level of HRM. A total of 2 respondents, 1 personnel manager, and 1 in-company trainer, both noted that developing a commonly shared and coherent organizational culture, as well as fostering organizational commitment, are both challenging tasks. On a similar note, 1 personnel manager stated that changing the mentality and habits of employees, increasing engagement, and managing conflict are all commonly faced issues in the HRM field. Respondents indicated that possible solutions for the aforementioned issues could be the conduction of group programs aimed at fostering a shared identity, and the development of an organizational climate that promotes cooperation and trust.

The third cluster of respondents focused on HRM processes. One personnel manager indicated that hiring, evaluating, training, and developing suitable employees, as well as fostering team spirit are some of the most challenging issues in the field. They suggested that a better collection of high-quality CVs, a higher quality collaboration with universities, research centers, or even recruitment agencies could mitigate for some of these issues. Under the same category, 2 respondents stressed that successfully applying performance management and change management is particularly difficult. Their suggested solution involved higher quality employee coaching.

The last cluster of respondents mentioned issues regarding the strategic elements of HRM. One respondent, head of personnel development and training, underlined that a difficulty within the HRM field is forming and aligning the desired results, situations, and short-term goals with the organization's long-term goals. A suggested solution was the formation of a concrete executive succession plan. The final respondent—a personnel manager—stated that using HR as a competitive advantage is a challenging task to tackle. They noted that only through the employees' continuous training and education can the above be achieved.

4 SYNTHESIS

The data synthesis from the HRM and CGC surveys yielded a plethora of noteworthy similarities and differences. These are presented and discussed in this section.

4.1 Importance of Domains of Work Among HRM and CGC Professionals

The CGC sample was found to be active across a number of sectors, with the majority of respondents actively working in independent career counseling facilities. There was almost unanimous agreement that the most important domains in the area of CGC work are development of professional knowledge and skills, and personal and social competencies. Interestingly, these results are congruent with the responses of HRM professionals, who agreed that the two aforementioned areas are extremely important. One difference identified between the two samples was that the HRM sample rated as equally important the domains of “integration of (new) employees” and “management of change”. Such a discrepancy is not surprising, considering the responsibilities of the HRM job role.

4.2 Frequency of Performed Activities Among HRM and CGC Professionals

Concerning the frequency of undertaking various activities, the majority of CGC respondents reported “assessing career skills and competencies” and “counseling career decisions” as those they engage with most often. Interestingly, HRM professionals also reported “assessing skills and competences” as one the most commonly undertaken activities (81% of the sample). This overlap underlines the importance of integrating CGC and HRM knowledge within organizations. Lastly, unlike CG counselors, HRM professionals reported “designing & managing programs for career development & training” and “taking initiatives for quality development & innovation” as their most frequently performed activities, which can be attributed to the management responsibilities associated with their role.

4.3 Groups of Beneficiaries Among HRM and CGC Professionals

The groups of people that career guidance counselors involve as beneficiaries of their services are mostly apprentices/trainees and new employees. As shown in Table 4 in the corresponding report, there is a general lack of service provision across most employee groups. This is not the case for HRM professionals, who seem to provide the services to a wider group of individuals including apprentices/trainees, new employees, highly talented persons, and future managers. Across both CGC and HRM professionals, elder employees, employees

threatened by dismissal, employees preparing for retirement and, especially, migrants, receive career counseling services either extremely rarely or not at all.

The observed pattern may be interpreted in two ways. First, specific groups of people (i.e. migrants) may not be considered as potential beneficiaries, especially in the case of CGC counselors. As such, no active efforts are made to come into contact and provide personalized services to these individuals. Second, as reported in the national synthesis report, career guidance services in Greece remain limited both in terms of availability and in terms of their focus on professional development. This, coupled with the small sample size, can provide an adequate explanation for the findings.

4.4 Types of Career Counselling Issues Among HRM and CGC Professionals

Salient differences were identified between CGC and HRM respondents as far as the frequency of dealing with career counselling issues is concerned. HRM professionals reported dealing with career counselling issues either “very often (every week)” or “often (several times per month)”, whereas career guidance counselors reported dealing with career counselling issues “sometimes” or “seldom”. This discrepancy between respondents further illustrates the lack of bridging between CGC and HRM in the present sample, with most counselling issues being undertaken by HRM professionals. Thus, it may be inferred that the responsibilities of CGC counselors within organizations rarely go beyond the traditional expectations surrounding career guidance services.

4.5 Types of Sources Utilized Among HRM and CGC Professionals

Lastly, regarding the importance of sources in obtaining the necessary skills and knowledge for their job, both samples provided similar responses, rating the majority of sources as very important for their role content. One difference identified between the two samples was that where CGC professionals rated the responses “I still rely on my former (academic) studies” and “advice from external peers and experts” as very important for performing their role, HRM professionals rated these responses as less important. One possible interpretation for the reliance on former academic studies is the wide-spread perception among Greek organizations that HRM is a practice-focused, experiential field of work, whereas CGC is mostly based on educational experience and/or previous academic studies/training.