

## SPANISH PRODUCTION OF PhD THESIS IN THE FIELD OF GUIDANCE ON TESEO DATABASE (2001-2012)

[*La producción española en tesis doctorales sobre orientación en la base de datos TESEO (2001-2012)*]

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### Abstract

The objective of this research is to analyse the scientific production in PhD Thesis about guidance in Spain from 2001 to 2012. The data have been recollected on the TESEO database belonging to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport. It has realized a content analysis of the titles, keywords and abstracts and it has assessed of them their productivity, the general and methodological features and the subjects that have been studied. It has been obtained ninety PhD Thesis in relation to the field of guidance over the last ten years that have studied mainly curriculum and career development.

### Keywords

Educational guidance, vocational guidance, Doctoral Thesis, educational research, TESEO database, bibliometric study.

### Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio es analizar la producción científica en Tesis Doctorales sobre orientación en España entre 2001 y 2012. Los datos han sido recogidos a través de la Base de datos TESEO del Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. Se ha realizado un análisis de contenido de los títulos, descriptores y resúmenes, valorando la productividad del área, las principales características generales y metodológicas y las temáticas estudiadas. Se han obtenido noventa Tesis Doctorales relacionadas con el ámbito de la orientación en los últimos diez años que han estudiado principalmente aspectos sobre el currículum y el desarrollo vocacional.

### Descriptores

Orientación pedagógica, orientación profesional, Tesis Doctoral, investigación educativa, base TESEO, estudio bibliométrico.

The evolution of the term guidance has been characterized by confusion in its definition as well as its principles and functions.

To Vélaz Medrano (1998, cited in Grañeras Pastrana & Parras Laguna, 2008) this fact is justified by the use of different meanings to define the guidance such as vocational, occupational, educational, personal, etc.; the indiscriminate use of other related terms like guidance and counselling; and the disparity of

functions assigned to the counsellor such as counselling, therapy, diagnosis, etc. Regarding this last point, Rodríguez Moreno (1995) presents the basic functions of guidance summarizing them in four: help, education and evolution, advice and diagnosis and informative. The general functions would be “*to know the person, to help him in order to get, by itself and gradually, a personal and social adjustment, and to fully inform on the educational, professional and personal spheres*”

(Rodríguez Moreno, 1995, p. 17). According to Bisquerra (2006), guidance includes the following areas:

- Guidance for career development (vocational guidance)
- Guidance in the teaching-learning processes
- Attention to diversity
- Guidance for prevention and development

The concept 'guidance' arises with the name *vocational guidance* (professional guidance, also known as guidance for career development) although most authors differentiate within this concept the academic guidance since it has its own identity as a guideline for the development of the academic stage as the preparation for the professional career. Other term that has emerged related to the field of guidance is *counselling*. Santana Vega (2009) defines these concepts (*guidance* and *counselling*) through a revision of definitions given by several authors indicating that both are processes that help and support and differentiating that the *guidance* concept is characterized by the use of educational and interpretive procedures of systematic and professional nature, while *counselling* uses personal communication and its nature is direct interpersonal.

The academic and professional guidance has evolved throughout the twentieth century at a conceptual level, going from a narrow and punctual perspective of adjustment to a support and career development concept that takes part throughout the lifecycle (Alvarez & Bisquerra, 2012). Thus, the academic-professional guidance entails that professional development is a process that extends throughout life and encompasses not only access to an occupation, but also adaptation and personal and professional development in life (Grañeras Pastrana & Parras Laguna, 2008, p. 226). An example of this is found in the *Ley Orgánica de Educación* (LOE) where in its principles and purposes can be read: *the student's educational and professional guidance, as a way to achieve personalized training, that*

*support an integral education in knowledge, skills and values.*

As Alvarez and Bisquerra (2012, p. 159) point out, academic and professional guidance could be defined as:

- a) a process of support and assistance
- b) addressed to all people
- c) along a lifetime (life cycle approach)
- d) in situations related to professional life in the broadest sense: formative period, transitions, professional development, etc.
- e) in order to develop skills that prepare for adult life in general and, in particular, for active life (professional)
- f) through a continuous, systematic, technical and professional intervention
- g) with the involvement of educators and professionals.

In this study we focus on the academic-professional guidance, however, due to the interrelation that characterizes the recently pointed areas, all of them can be reflected by the results. The purpose of this study is to analyze the scientific production of PhD Thesis defended in Spain between 2001 and 2012 in the field of educational and vocational guidance. This is a bibliometric study that allows knowing the investigating state in PhD Thesis of the disciplinary guidance field.

## Objectives

The main goal of this study is to analyze and describe the characteristics of the scientific production of PhD Thesis on guidance conducted from 2001 to 2012 in Spain. This overall purpose can be concentrated into two specific aims:

- To analyze productivity of the guidance area through the volume of PhD Thesis defended in Spain from the academic year 2001-02 until 2011-12.
- To identify issues and major research lines that have focused the interest of PhD students during the period between 2001 and 2012 in Spain.

## Method

Data has been collected through the *Consulta de la Base de datos de Tesis Doctorales* (TESEO), from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, which collects information from the PhD Thesis defended in Spain since 1976 (Lorenzo Rodríguez, Martínez Piñero & Piñero Martínez, 2004). The data identification has been carried out taking into account the selected period (academic years 2001-02 until 2011-12) and by the keywords of the Thesis by introducing the *guidance* search term in the thesaurus. The results of this research are: psychological counselling and guidance (UNESCO Code: 610300), educational counselling and guidance (UNESCO Code: 610303) and vocational and professional guidance (UNESCO Code: 610309). In the data selection the topics related to academic and professional guidance have been taken into account while the ones related to psychology and health have not been considered because they are not related to the educational and psych-pedagogical fields. The data has been identified by performing a content analysis through the reading of the titles, descriptors and abstracts provided by the database.

The data have been analysed by a descriptive and content analysis. In this analysis has been assessed the productivity of the field through the volume of defended Doctoral Thesis from the academic year 2001-2002 to 2011-2012, the main general and methodological characteristics and priority issues studied. To this effect, the results were two databases for the selected search matters (counselling and educational guidance, and career and professional guidance) in which the registers were collected of the following variables from the Doctoral Thesis analysed: title of the Doctoral Thesis, year of reading, gender of the author, university, topic and research methodology.

It has differentiated eleven categories from content analysis to counselling and educational guidance and seven for career and vocational guidance:

- Counselling and educational guidance: diversity, curriculum, personal counselling, tutorial support, functions of the counsellor, professional role, pedagogical or training programs, school success factors, new technologies, family and academic transition.
- Vocational and career guidance: assessment and practice of the guidance, professional skills, career development, labour market integration, transitions, decision-making and new technologies.

## Results

### Productivity of the field

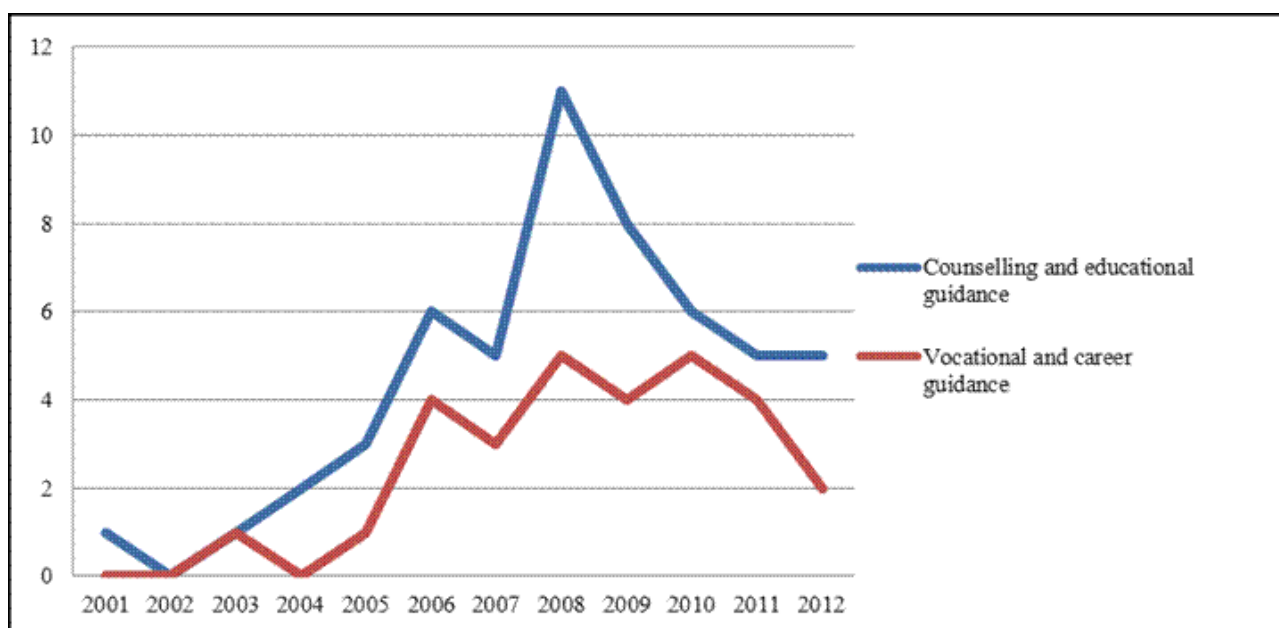
Ninety Thesis were obtained related to the field of academic and professional guidance in the last ten years (academic year 2001/02 to 2011/12). This has been the search result by keyword *guidance* on the thesaurus of TESEO. It is observed that 59% are about counselling and educational guidance (N = 53), 26% of vocational and career guidance (N = 23) and 16% include both aspects in their descriptors (N = 14) taking into account the Doctoral Thesis descriptors resulting.

We have selected 82 Thesis about guidance by the content analysis made through titles, descriptors and abstracts, of which 53 (65%) refer to counselling and educational guidance and 29 (35%) to vocational and career guidance. In this analysis we have discarded those Thesis that although having as descriptor academic or career guidance, not related to their field of study.

In the last decade there was a small evolution in the production of Doctoral Thesis on guidance (see Table 1). In relation to counselling and educational guidance, the years in which there are more PhD Thesis defended are from 2008 to 2010, resulting in a slight decrease in the last two years. The productivity of Doctoral Thesis about of vocational and career guidance is less the first years of this period with regard to academic guidance, later there is an increase of these in the second half of the last ten years.

Table 1. Doctoral Thesis analyzed by year of defence and percentage of total

Doctoral Thesis on Guidance						
Year of defence	Counselling and educational guidance		Vocational and career guidance		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
2001	1	2%	0	0%	1	1%
2002	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
2003	1	2%	1	3%	2	2%
2004	2	4%	0	0%	2	2%
2005	3	6%	1	3%	4	5%
2006	6	11%	4	14%	10	12%
2007	5	9%	3	10%	8	10%
2008	11	21%	5	17%	16	20%
2009	8	15%	4	14%	12	15%
2010	6	11%	5	17%	11	13%
2011	5	9%	4	14%	9	11%
2012	5	9%	2	7%	7	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>



Graphic 1. Evolution of scientific productivity on PhD Thesis on guidance

### The main general and methodological characteristics

In this section we present the following results considering the criteria selected in the analysis of Doctoral Thesis on academic or career guidance for variables: gender of the author, university and research methodology.

There are not significant differences in gender of the author of the Doctoral Thesis about guidance (see Table 2), inasmuch as 44% of them have been defended by men and a slightly higher number by women (56%), with greater difference in Doctoral Thesis on vocational and career guidance.

Table 2. Doctoral Thesis analyzed by gender of the author and percentage of total

Doctoral Thesis on Guidance						
Gender of the author	Counselling and educational guidance		Vocational and career guidance		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Women	29	55%	17	59%	46	56%
Men	24	45%	12	41%	36	44%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>

Focusing on the regions, considering universities where the Thesis were conducted, stand Andalusia (22%) and Catalonia (16%) for having higher rate of Doctoral Thesis defended. These regions, Castile and León, and Madrid

have the highest percentage of PhD Thesis on academic guidance. Moreover, in relation to vocational and career guidance, Valencia stands at 24% of Doctoral Thesis defended in this field of study and Catalonia with 21%.

Table 3. Doctoral Thesis analyzed by region and percentage of total

Doctoral Thesis on Guidance						
Regions	Counselling and educational guidance		Vocational and career guidance		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Andalusia	14	26%	4	14%	18	22%
Aragon	2	4%	0	0	2	2%
Canary Islands	1	2%	0	0	1	1%
Castile and León	6	11%	3	10%	9	11%
Catalonia	7	13%	6	21%	13	16%
Valencia	2	4%	7	24%	9	11%
State	2	4%	2	7%	4	5%
Estremadura	4	8%	0	0	4	5%
Galicia	4	8%	5	17%	9	11%
Madrid	6	11%	2	7%	8	10%
Murcia	1	2%	0	0	1	1%
The Basque Country	4	8%	0	0	4	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>

Regarding the research methodology used in the Doctoral Thesis analysed, there is greater use of quantitative methodology (33%) versus qualitative (20%), which is accentuated in the Doctoral Thesis on vocational and career guidance since that about half of them use this type of methodology. Of note is the extensive use

of mixed methodology (11%) as it allows combining the advantages of the two major types of research methodology. A major limitation in the analysis of this variable is that it was not possible to identify the type of research carried out by 37% of the Doctoral Thesis analysed.

Table 4. Doctoral Thesis analyzed by research methodology and percentage of total

Doctoral Thesis on Guidance						
Research methodology	Counselling and educational guidance		Vocational and career guidance		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Quantitative	15	28%	12	41%	27	33%
Qualitative	12	23%	4	14%	16	20%
Mixed	5	9%	4	14%	9	11%
Not specified	21	40%	9	31%	30	37%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Priority issues studied

We have identified the following areas or thematic categories related to the fields of study through a content analysis. The aspects that include each of the themes and the main research lines identified in this analysis are:

- Counselling and educational guidance:

- Diversity: students with disabilities, special education needs, multiculturalism, sick children, special education, etc.
- Curriculum: teaching methods, contents, lesson plans, ECTS credits, evaluation, learning contexts, values education, etc.
- Personal counselling: self, childhood stress, emotional intelligence, burnout, motivation, etc.
- Tutorial support: tutoring in Higher Education, tutoring and guidance, peer tutoring, tutoring in Secondary Education, etc.
- Functions of the counsellor: Guidance Departments in Secondary Education, Educational Guidance Teams, common model of counselling and guidance, etc.
- Professional role: knowledge of the practice of counselling, lifelong learning, skills, bidirectional relationship counsellor-teachers, counsellors, social and educational actions, etc.
- Pedagogical or training programs: sexual orientation in school, substance use in adolescents, bullying, etc.

- School success factors: culture, language and communication, etc.

- New technologies: ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies), computer support, etc.

- Family: parents as mediators in learning, bidirectional relationship family-school, etc.

- Academic transition: Transition to Secondary Education, transition to Higher Education, etc.

- Vocational and career guidance:

- Assessment and practice of the guidance: guidance needs in the university.

- Professional skills: skills made manifest in the professional practice (job skills, professional skills, training needs).

- Career development: vocational maturity, career counselling, occupational interests and values of both university and non-university students.

- Labour market integration: employment of young people in care, over 45 and occupational segregation according to gender.

- Transitions: Transition to college and the job market.

- Decision-making: development of a comprehensive career guidance that encourages decision making based on own knowledge.

- New technologies: use of ICTs in guidance practice, webquest.

The results of this section reflect the themes that have focused the interest of the scientific community guidance in the analyzed period. As shown in the table below, the lines of research studied in academic guidance are main-

ly related to aspects of the curriculum (23%) and with the tutorial action (13%), being the factors of success in school, family and the academic transition (all 4%) those areas in which less deepen Doctoral Thesis.

*Table 5. Doctoral Thesis on counselling and educational guidance analyzed by thematic categories and percentage of total*

Ranking	Thematic categories	N	%
1	Curriculum	12	23%
2	Tutorial support	7	13%
3	Diversity	6	11%
4	Professional role	6	11%
5	Personal counselling	5	9%
6	Functions of the counsellor	5	9%
7	Pedagogical or training programs	3	6%
8	New technologies	3	6%
9	School success factors	2	4%
10	Family	2	4%
11	Academic transition	2	4%
<b>Total</b>		<b>53</b>	<b>100%</b>

If we focus on the thematic categories of vocational and professional guidance, greater homogeneity is reflected in the lines of re-

search. The highest percentage corresponds to the career development category (27%) and lowest in the decision-making (3%).

*Table 6. Doctoral Thesis on vocational and career guidance analyzed by thematic categories and percentage of total*

Ranking	Thematic categories	N	%
1	Career development	8	27%
2	Professional skills	6	21%
3	Assessment and practice of the guidance	4	14%
4	Labour market integration	4	14%
5	Transitions	3	10%
6	New technologies	3	10%
7	Decision-making	1	3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Conclusions

As a result of this study, we have observed that more Doctoral Thesis have been submitted in the area of academic guidance than in the area of vocational guidance, being the main themes studied those relating to curriculum development and professional skills respectively. Moreover, the researches less studied are school success factors, family and aca-

demical transition in the area of educational guidance, and decision-making in the area of career guidance. Also, it reflects an increase in the production of Doctoral Thesis about guidance in recent years of the studied period, and extensive use of quantitative methodology against qualitative, and mixed methodology presence in them.

Following the development of this study, we are aware of the problems and limitations we have presented and the prospective study we show here. First, and as previously indicated, database TESEO contains three codes to the keyword *guidance*: psychological guidance and counselling, educative guidance and counselling, and finally, vocational and professional guidance. For the first, the Doctoral Thesis found are not related to the concept of guidance studied and therefore, were not taken into account because they are linked, to a greater, in the scope of psychology and health. However, we found Doctoral Thesis in the scope of personal guidance that have been registered in the appropriate category in the area of academic guidance. Another limitation that we have found is the lack of information in the summaries regarding the study methodology, a fact that is reflected in the result used. Therefore, by not having the information in the database, we have searched about Doctoral Thesis on internet without obtaining, in most cases, significant results. Moreover, used in isolated cases, summaries offered by the database mentioned do not match with studied Thesis and, in others, no clearly express the purpose of the investigation. This is a problem that, outside our study has led to the dismissal of some of the Thesis related to both the professional and educational scope.

The design of this study allowed us to observe that guidance has an essential role today and is an area of great interest among Doctoral students, a fact that makes us think about its relevance and the need to know and investigate more about this subject. Guidance is intended that students reach personal fulfilment in all facets and dimensions throughout their life (Echeverría, Isus, Martinez & Sarasola, 2008). Namely, the student throughout his life by the experience will be developed on a personal, educational and social level. According Isús (2008), educational guidance is not only to offer students lots of informative data, but to provide learning situations through which they can gain experience of their own subjectivity, values and interests and the objectives

that pretend get. And therefore, from educational institutions, guidance should be integrated into the curriculum and should provide help, support and resources to support life transitions that students experience throughout their lives. We believe that guidance involves the accompaniment, guide and support to students in the construction of knowledge, own knowledge and in the process of analysis of the realities, trying to integrate all factors (knowledge, desires, interests, skills, values, etc.) and the various processes of development (intellectual, social, emotional, vocational, professional, career, etc.) in a personal project of life (Fernandez, 2009).

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