

National Practitioner Research Conference 2025

Perspective of people from an economically disadvantaged background on their journey to a successful career: qualitative research

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With roughly one in five people in the UK living in poverty career guidance is seen as a tool to promote social equity. Statutory requirements include providing more career-related information and aspiring students by having more employers visiting schools, widening life experiences by organising work experiences during school times and securing personal support for every student. However, there is limited evidence from the group of economically disadvantaged students on what kind of interventions and support is helpful for their successful career development.

Research questions:

- 1) How is career success perceived by people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds?
- 2) What factors do people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds consider significant for their career development?



Krumboltz's social learning theory of career decision-making



Getting wider life experience

Volunteering and travelling

Extra-curricular

Starting work early

It takes only one person to believe in you

Parental influence

Wider family influence

Support from non-family

Friends and their families

Practical help

Change of social status

Status

Achievement

Financial incentive

Wish to have and be more

Thinking about future of children

To prove others wrong

Seeking parental improvement



7 semi-structured interviews (Ethics approved by UWE)

Participation criteria: 1) secondary education in the UK; 2) eligibility for Free school meals; 3) Consider themselves having a successful career.

Thematic analysis (Braun, Clarke and Rance, 2017).
20 cluster codes and 3 themes were identified.



Reflection for my practice: 1) my job matters, I can be that one person who will help them; 2) practical help should not be underestimated; 3) high achievers, who are pupil premium should not be put at the back of the queue for a career advice; 4) motivation is important.

Future research directions: action-based research where we compare raising aspirations and creating knowledge with increasing student's motivation to act and change