

## CAREER MANAGEMENT: SHORT ANALYSIS REGARDING INTEREST ON EMPLOYMENT FIELDS AMONG YOUTHS

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**Abstract:** In the present paper the authors address the importance of forward-thinking in terms of career management among youths. Because the youth -perceived as a central section of the future evolution- must develop both in terms of personal and professional features, the authors approached aspects regarding youths' interest on employment fields and their propensity towards future development. The study approached within the present paper was carried out through "Be active, get involved!" project, which took place between 2015 and 2016; the study itself represent a subaction of "Career counselling and guidance" activity carried out within the project. This article provides to readers the opportunity to create a picture regarding youths' propensity to early career management and their interest on future employment fields.

**Key words:** career management, decision, employability.

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### Introduction

Within the "World Youth Report" (2012) was stated that "[...] with less experience and fewer skills than many adults, young people often encounter particular difficulty accessing work". This statement comes to sustain what, together with other project partners, was identified as being one of the most important problems among future generation: reduced level of services provided in connection to career guidance and counselling for youths.

In the 1960s, career management was perceived as a way to help employees to achieve their personal goals. This was usually done through workshops that aimed at career counselling and guidance; in the 1980s, the business environment considerably went through several changes, so career management became an instrument for satisfying the persistive needs specific to a more challenging business environment.

Taking after Bridgstock (2009), career management can be viewed as the ability to build a career; to intentionally manage the interaction of work, learning and other aspects of the individual's life throughout the lifespan (Haines et al., 2003; Webster et al., 2004; Bunăiașu et al., 2014). Another definition refers to the intentional

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management of work, learning and other aspects of life through reflective, evaluative and decision making process (Leong, 2012).

Different authors, like Rychen and Salganik (2003) acknowledged the benefits that early career management brought to individual, collective and societal wellbeing. More than that, there are authors as Mayston (2002); Gillie and Gillie Isenhour (2003); Bąk-Grabowska and Jagoda (2015); Guseva et al. (2016); Korauš et al. (2017); Illmeyer et al. (2017); Bendaravičienė (2017); Vlacsekova and Mura, (2017) who studied and demonstrated the influence that well-developed career management skills have on economic growth and, indirectly, how these impact the productivity and employability.

One of the factors of the successful employment is the level of education, professional qualities of the applicant, and working experience in the specialty (Baydetsky, 2013; Bauk and Jusufranic, 2014, Bencsik et al., 2016; Sokół and Figurska, 2017; Oganisjana et al., 2017). Given recent labour market movement away from job security and towards continual task and role change (Bridgstock, 2009; Delibasic, 2016; Draskovic et al., 2017), „1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia, together with other partners within Alba County held the “Be active, get involved!” project from 2015 to 2016, aiming at developing a sustainable partnership between university and pre-university education for actively involving pupils, students and teachers in a process that allows transfer of good practices and know-how and that enhances personal and professional development. Within the project, a study aiming to identify the interest on employment fields among youths was developed. The activities carried out and the results of the study will be emphasized within the present paper. In the following paragraphs, the importance of career management will be emphasized.

### **The Importance of Finding the Way: Career Management for a Better Self**

There is a global competition in almost each industry. Taking this in consideration we can say that the nature of the individual work contract has suffered alterations. Employees can no longer trust that their employers will have a stable workplace for them in the following years, thus, neither organizations can rely on people's loyalty. The ones who want to get employment must be more and more responsible for career decisions, and companies must offer a good career development opportunity in order to keep its most talented employees. The opinion of the authors Carter et al. (2009) and Wróblewski (2017) „ social and cultural changes led to more varied and more complex careers and ways to careers. For instance these changes include the number of families in which both parents work, a rise in the number of households kept by only one parent and an increase in the number of people that can become retired, but who still work to a certain extent. In order for companies to keep their valuable employees they should understand their employees needs and how can the work place and the given tasks satisfy these needs. Organisations should also offer flexibility and alternative tasks and

furthermore alternative career options based on the particular situation of each person.”

Even though the term of counselling is widely used the concept itself of counselling cannot be easily defined or differentiated in the broader context of many other activities that resort to it.

According to what author Andreea Szilagyi says, „counselling is a process by which a specialized person named counselor offers support in a well defined methodological area to a person who is thus supported in adopting and approaching some decisions that pertain to personal and professional life.” The approach is a holistic one that touches upon life, career and personal development issues with the purpose to reach an equilibrium among these issues so that all of them to flourish over a long period of time (Szilagiy, 2008). In specialized literature the term counselling rarely appears by itself. Most frequently it is in relation with a specialisation field: school/educational counselling, family counselling, rehabilitation counselling etc. The 50’s have witnessed the birth of full-time counselors in colleges where strong counselling centers were founded.

Recent research warn us of the fact that people are complex occupational behaviour beings who have a mix of characteristics, values, desires, attitudes and skills which they developed in different existential contexts. In addition in their socio-professional life people have roles different from one another, different of those connected to their occupation or profession, as well as those connecte to family, their education, their way of communication, of spending their free time, volunteer work or different roles they come across during their lives. In their book, *Career Development and Services. A Cognitive Approach*, Peterson et al. (1991) propose a new approach to developing one’s career. They entitled it *Cognitive Information Processing*. Cognitive theories refer to the ways people process, integrate and react to information by using their own cognitive patterns/structures. Beginning with the last century, people used to appreciate their career progress by looking at the level they reached from professional point of view according to their age, based on a career progress ladder. Because of the various changes suffered by the business environment in the last decades, in the beginning of 1990s, the focus changed again; now, career management is perceived as a necessity of obtaining an equilibrium between personal expectations and employment environment’ expectations.

One’s career is perceived now as a personal property or as a personal trait, rather than the position held within an organization (Bajdor and Grabara, 2011; Siemieniuk, 2016). The progress according to age is no longer seen by organizations as realistic. Moreover, organizations tend to maximize the individual’s potential and to perceive this process as a crucial step in developing and maintaining the company on its natural ascendent course (Dragolea and Cotîrlea, 2009).

**Career Management Project: *Be Active, Get Involved!***

For enhancing skills and personal and professional development within Alba County, an yearly project was thought at regional level. Its main purpose is to bridge the gap between University and high-school education by actively involving pupils, students and teachers in order to facilitate a good practice transfer between the two educational systems. It is also meant to facilitate and help the transition from high-school to university for pupils. All the activities within the project were designed to continuously train youths, to enhance their skills and to help them develop from personal and professional point of view so as for them to be much more easier to get employed at the end of their studies.

The stated objectives of the project include: Developing communication and social skills; Developing and enhancing teamwork skills; Manifestation of competition spirit; The practical adhibition of theoretical knowledge acquired by youths during classes; Learning the stages of decision-making process in choosing, planning and developing a particular career; Maximizing the chances of attending university studies for the members of the target group; Developing a long-term partnership between highschoools, „1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia, city’s representatives and local community.

In order to build a harmonious relation between highschoools and university for promoting continuous development, within the project got involved numerous volunteers, teachers, career counsellors, media partners etc. The entire project was characterized by involvement, devotement and seriosity – demonstrated both by the adults and youths involved in the organizing process. The connection and strong relationship between the County’s high schools and “1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia was accomplished through: Scholar and professional orientation visits; Involvement of teachers, students and pupils in symposiums, workshops and trainngs organized within the university aiming at delivering soft skills to target group; Teaching practice for high-school students; Granting access for teachers and pupils to the university library; Supporting teachers in acquiring pedagogical grades (specific to Romanian education environment); Collaborations between students and pupils for organising different events throughout the year.

The activities carried out from 2015 to 2016, while the project was implemented, include: Organizing different press conferences and ensuring mass-media participation for the best mediatization of the project and its activities; Drafting marketing materials and carrying out PR activities for enhancing project’s visibility; Providing career counselling and guidance services for youths; Organizing local and regional mock companies competitions; Organizing different cultural-artistic events dedicated to youths; Youths’ involvement in scientific events on different topics of interest (marketing, management, accounting, tourism, food safety, consumer rights and consumer protection etc.)

## **Case Study: Interest on Employment Fields Among Youths Within „Be Active, Get Involved!” Project**

### Aim and objectives

The study addresses the importance of forward-thinking in terms of career management among youths, for creating a picture regarding youths' propensity to early career management and their interest on future employment fields. The present research studied the interests connected to career and career management among the pupils in the pre-university educational system and identified their preoccupation in choosing an occupational field.

The objectives of this investigation was achieved by asking closed-answer questions, as well as multiple choice and semi-open questions. By the given closed-answer questions we managed to spot the total interest of pupils in terms of self-awareness, their beliefs regardig how they are perceived by teachers and other professionals with whom they interract, their sources of information in terms of career management and personal development etc.

Any questionnaire imposes a selection of the stimuli chosen in connection with the hypotheses of the research. The way the questions were formulated has in them the hypothesis that pupils are interested in choosing a profession based on such stimuli as beauty, prestige, the answerer's personall skills, earning possibilites or personal reasons. We also wanted to observe the personal professional wish of each pupil.

Another objective that we set for our investigation was to determine the number of students that benefit from career guidance and couselling, as well as the number of students that wish to take up such modules.

### Methodology

The direct beneficiaries of the “*Be Active, Get Involved!*” project answered to a questionnaire in order to assess their forward-thinking in terms of career management and for creating a picture regarding their propensity to early career management and their interest on future employment fields.

The target population of the present study is represented by the pupils engages in 12th grade studies within Alba Iulia highschool in the school year 2015-2016. Their total number was 629. The data was collected from 1st of March, 2016 to 1st of June, 2016. Using this sample population we meant it as a follow up to the counselling and career orientation programme held in 2012 in the first edition of the project „Be active, get involved!” in the pre-university environment in Alba Iulia city. Another important aspect in choosing the sample population is the fact that the pupils in all city high-schools come both from the city and the village environment, of both sexes, male and female. Furthermore, these come from secondary schools in our city and the 12 neighbouring villages of Alba Iulia.

We started by observing a sample in order to set the right number for a population that would represent at another scale our research. The investigators who gave the questionnaires to the 12th graders were their teachers. Only the pupils who wanted to reply these questions were given this questionnaire. Their number was 550. This

is a representative sample for the pre-university population we mentioned. Starting from here we can further extend the results of this investigation.

#### Presenting the questionnaire

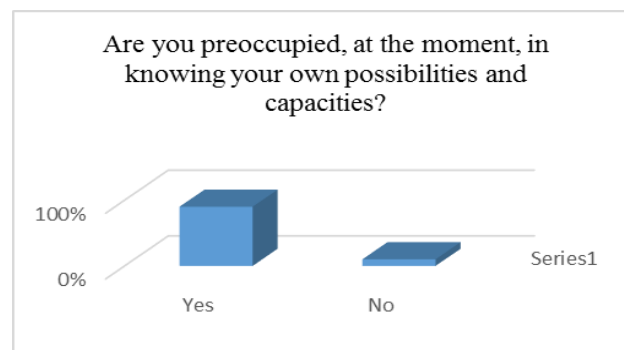
The research instrument is represented by a questionnaire through which the authors could analyse the link between career planning process and choosing a career by the pupils who are in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The questionnaire we drafted was composed of factual data showing concrete facts that can be directly seen. Such type of investigation is frequently used in school collectivities as well as in the university ones. The data was collected from 1st of March, 2016 to 1st of June, 2016 and the questionnaire comprised of: 6 open questions that allow a personal response; 5 closed dichotomic questions in which the answerer can only choose one variant; 7 closed multiple-choice questions that allowed us to gather information about the way students think are seen by their teachers and what makes them choose a certain profession.

#### Data processing

Out of the total number of questionnaires given to 12th graders, a number of 147 questionnaires were cancelled because they were not complete or the answers were not relevant. For these reasons they were not part of our analysis. After the questionnaire was given to all people who wanted to reply their answers to the closed questions were entered into a database. These answers were then put on columns according to the chosen option by each answerer. In the end we had a clear record of the variants pupils prefer.

#### Exposing the study results

All the information we gathered was put into different categories and was further presented in graphical form. These graphics clearly show all the answers of the questioned people. We can both see the questions as well as the answers' typology.



**Figure 1. Youths' inclination towards self awareness**

Graphic 1 shows the results to the 1st closed question from which we see that 90% of the answerers are concerned about knowing their own skills and capacities, while 10% are not. This proves that pupils are really involved in the process of

self-discovery. This is why we think the first step toward career orientation was done.

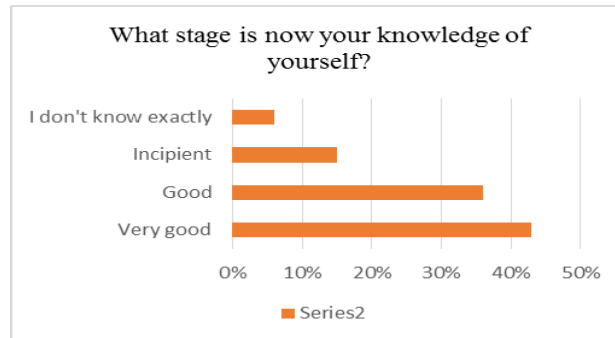


Figure 2. Youths' appreciation of self consciousness

As you can see in Graphic 2, people are more and more interested in knowing themselves better. There is a difference between those who are at an intermediate stage and those who are at an advanced stage of their knowledge about themselves. This aspect is encouraging and a positive one because students are more and more interested in knowing themselves better, finding out new sides of their personality and are willing to make more steps in this direction.

The fact that these answers are affirmative is a positive aspect because the efficiency of the career planning process is directly depending on the abilities the students acquire in various fields such as self knowledge with the structuring and exploring of information about themselves and the part informing them about the gathering of information concerning their educational and occupational opportunities (Wróblewski, 2015). Another positive aspect is that most students are aware of their teachers' opinions about them. 82% of them answered at the closed question, that their teachers appreciate them exactly as they really are. This shows that the teachers know their students well enough and on this basis they are able to instruct and help them much better to find a career suitable to their aspirations and abilities. 12% declared that their teacher considers them worse than they really are, while 6% said that they are considered better than they deserve. This shows the fact that they need to be assessed at their real value, this also shows the students' need for more communication and interaction on multiple levels with the teaching staff as well as with other persons who can help them during their pre-university/high school years. The majority of high school students have already chosen a profession and only a small number has never thought of this aspect. The fact that 83% of the students have already thought of their future profession, shows a significant improvement of the quality of education lately. The 17% that answered that they haven't thought about their future profession, still can do it and choose something according to their abilities even during the university studies where they can be helped in choosing the next level of academic education.

The number of those who really want to achieve their studies in the profession they had already chosen as well as the number of those who haven't chosen yet their profession show the degree of knowledge concerning their own personality and their abilities. When the lack of success is an issue a rather small number of students may have several possibilities. According to this fact there is a need for a good career plan and a better process of counseling and orientation concerning the correct and easy management of their careers. At the same time there is a small number of students who do not really want to complete their studies in the field they had chosen. This can be changed with the help of a good orientation and counseling in their careers and with a better knowledge of each individual. This can only be achieved by the good will and collaboration of the students, through a centre of career management and orientation. Any aspect which targets a person occupation belongs to entirely by himself, and what really matters is not necessarily the native intelligence, but dexterity he uses in finding the right profession (Grigoriu, 2012). As a result of the careful analysis of all the data obtained after the questioning we found out that 73% of the students acquire information about various professions and careers from several sources such as: newspapers, magazines, members of their families, internet sites ,etc. This is good because they have various sources and possibilities to get informed and have a large portfolio concerning this subject. 25% access only the Internet for further information. This is not so good because some information can be false or not helpful. The Internet can be a good source of information only because it has many sites about professions many encyclopedias in various domains suitable for many people. 1% say they do not know how to acquire information and 1% said they acquire information from courses.

The social networks can be very useful for employers under condition that a social strategy has been developed in the company (Korzynski, 2011). 59% from those questioned answered that they had the benefit of counseling and orientation services and 41% answered that they had had no such facilities. This shows the need of quality career counseling and orientation among high school students not only for a good academic orientation but also for a career according to their personal abilities and wishes. When the students were asked about the 1<sup>st</sup> year preparatory module 41% answered that they wanted to attend it. 40% that they didn't know if they want it and 19% answered that they didn't want to. The small difference in number between those who wanted and those who didn't know if they wanted shows that they didn't understand the necessity and usefulness of such a course and they don't even know what it is about . This also shows the necessity of a career counselor in school who could inform shortly but precisely about the free facilities the students can use for a better information and orientation, that could help them on the long run. 91% of the students are over 18, 8% are 19 and 1% are 20, the gender/sex of the respondents was 72% male and 28% female, 65% are from the urban area and 35% from the rural areas. We can see that the students are more and more interested in their academic progress especially that related to their



profession. The correct implementation of the career orientation and counseling programmes and the future editions of the project "BE ACTIVE, GET INVOLVED" will surely generate more interest and wish to build a successful career.

### Summary

Through international programmes that can serve as models of good practice for educational environment, youths [...] are offered the possibility of a direct contact with the labor market, in terms of existing opportunities and specific requirements. Thus, all these have an important role in the increase of graduates' insertion on the labor market, partnerships linked through programs co-financed by The European Social Fund, offering numerous opportunities to graduates to prove what they are capable of. Furthermore, not few are the times in which the students and organizations/institutions involved in such projects have continued collaborating even after the end of the practical training, many of the direct beneficiaries becoming employees at the entities in which they carried out their internship. The resulting conclusions of this research are that a correct and responsible orientation and career counseling and a good management of it will always be necessary no matter what career or profession is being chosen. The development along the years of human resources and their higher quality standards as well as their more intense management, place in their center the human being as the most important factor that can contribute to the success or the failure of an organization. The personal professional training and a good self-knowledge can lead to a long lasting success that is the ground for a long , successful and easy career. When one is a good highly qualified professional one can ask for a pay rise, fewer working hours , bonuses and even a higher place in leadership/hierarchy. Another important aspect is the fact that every individual is working according to some personal principles. These should be a solid professional education started from primary/secondary school. The choice of a good academic plan would lead to the choice and achievement of a career based on quality information, knowledge and personal wishes. A positive aspect is the fact that professional and educational offers are changing all the time. This leads to a better knowledge of the professional environment, a better cooperation among various abilities or needs and thus each individual can choose the most suitable career from all these points of view. Teachers from high school and universities and career counselors can help students a lot in choosing the most suitable career by knowing themselves and their abilities from an early age, ensuring thus their success. At the University "1 Decembrie 1918" in Alba Iulia, career counseling activities are carried out by the Center for Information, Orientation and Career, which operates since 1998. A problem in choosing a career is given by the reduced level of knowledge of the pupils. Many of them argue that they do not have enough information about one occupation field or another, which leads to neglecting a possible path to a successful career, or at least to a great start in life, which can be a springboard to a successful choice

among domain of study, profession and even career. Also, management is not just a word used to describe the planning, organizing, directing and controlling. Management is an expression, a metaphor that can describe any of us when we want to improve our perspective, when we want more and we take steps to have more, when we learn and we want to put this into practice. These processes of managing and career planning are tools that will always be useful. Personal and professional development, career planning, the road to a successful career, go side by side with education, knowledge and the desire for information. For an efficient career management and orientation towards a beneficial career to us, it is advisable that all these features to work together, because we are at the moment when a successful career can only be achieved by a good management of the educational and the personal life.

Several actions were identified for raising and increasing youths' interest in career management with the aim of identifying the best suitable profession for every each of them and thus, for ensuring long-term success and wellbeing. Among these, we mention: developing the creative and innovative potential of young people through non-formal learning in ways that are relevant to employability; carrying out career guidance programs for youth still in school; support information projects to provide career and labor market information for youths; create and engage with programs that build young people's work experience.

Together with project's partners and researching through literature, we also identified several solutions that can be adopted by employers (see also ManpowerGroup, 2012): provide career guidance to youth and participate in information systems and programs; engage with training-to-employment programs for youth; engage with apprenticeship and experience programs; commit to hiring, training and mentoring young people; promote youth entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education.

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### ZARZĄDZANIE KARIERĄ: KRÓTKA ANALIZA DOTYCZĄCA ZAINTERESOWAŃ W OBSZARZE ZATRUDNIENIA WŚRÓD MŁODZIEŻY

**Streszczenie:** W niniejszym artykule autorzy zwracają uwagę na znaczenie myślenia przyszłościowego w zakresie zarządzania karierą wśród młodzieży. Ponieważ młodzież - postrzegana jako centralna część przyszłej ewolucji - musi rozwijać się zarówno pod względem cech osobistych, jak i zawodowych, autorzy podeszli do aspektów dotyczących zainteresowania młodzieży dziedzinami zatrudnienia i ich skłonnością do przyszłego rozwoju. Badanie, którego dotyczyła niniejsza praca, zostało zrealizowane poprzez projekt "Bądź aktywny, angażuj się!", który miał miejsce w latach 2015-2016; samo badanie stanowi część działania "poradnictwa i doradztwa zawodowego" realizowanego w ramach projektu. Artykuł ten zapewnia czytelnikom możliwość stworzenia obrazu dotyczącego skłonności młodzieży do wczesnego zarządzania karierą i zainteresowania przyszłymi obszarami zatrudnienia.

**Słowa kluczowe:** zarządzanie karierą, decyzja, szanse na zatrudnienie

#### 職業生涯管理：對青年就業領域的興趣的短期分析

**摘要:** 在本文中，作者闡述了在青年職業生涯管理方面的前瞻性思維的重要性。因為青年被認為是未來發展的核心部分，必須在個人和專業方面都有所發展，所以作者探討了青年對就業領域的興趣和對未來發展的傾向。本文所接近的研究是通過2015 - 2016年間“積極參與！”項目進行的，這項研究本身代表了項目內部“職業諮詢和指導”活動的一個子項目。本文為讀者提供了一個機會，為青年的早期職業管理傾向和他們對未來就業領域的興趣創造一個圖景。

**關鍵詞:** 職業生涯管理，決策，就業