

**HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS VALUES AND DECISIONS  
IN FUTURE CAREER**

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**Abstract:** This study was accomplished within the project: „The suitcase, the map and the voyage of a youth worker” project financed by The European Union through the program ERASMUS + „Aurel Vlaicu” as a partner, with responsibilities for the elaboration of a career guide and for some specific instruments of guidance and career direction of the universal youth. The main purposes of the project was at least 50 youth workers from the project’s partners – participants in the online training course; at least 200 young people (13-30 year old) from 30 Programme countries – participants in the learning to learn – online training course and user of the SIMULATION BOX of JOBS and Career box; at least 50 youth workers from 25 Programme countries – participants in the online training course and multiplier event; at least 42 persons interested to become certified youth worker according to the Romanian National Qualification Standard; at least 30 European structures to integrate the products results in their regular activities.

To achieve these facts there was initiated an investigation according to the youth’s needs to identify some specific elements of the professional exposure: important values for teenagers, influential factors in the decision for the choosing of a career, the professional options teenagers have, their perception towards the desirable profession . In this article we will refer to the two primary aspects of the preparation of learning how to choose a career- values and factors which include several elections.

**Key words:** youth workers, youth’s needs, career, professional option, choosing a career

## **1. Introduction – The Content of the study**

The study was accomplished within the project: „The suitcase, the map and the voyage of a youth worker” project financed by The European Union through the program ERASMUS + „Aurel Vlaicu” as a partner, with responsibilities for the elaboration of a career guide and for some specific instruments of guidance and career direction of the universal youth. The main objectives of the project are: to prepare a full range of 3 necessary tools for youth workers, in 2 years of the project; To build and test an online training course for 50 people interested to become youth workers, in 2 years of the project; to allow 200 young people to test a full range of innovative, created tools in order to project their personal and professional life plan with the support of youth workers, during 2 years of the project; to create and test an online training courses for one key competence from the Reference Framework, by 200 young people, during 2 years of the project; to certificate 42 people interested to become youth workers on the Romanian Occupational Standard; to build an international partnership network of 9 structures, in the ground of youth work during 2 years of the project - 1st September 2015- 31 August 2017.

The project is specially designed for the youth, at the end of it there will be envisioned the following results: at least 50 youth workers from the project's partners – participants in the online training course; at least 200 young people (13-30 year old) from 30 Programme countries – participants in the learning to learn – online training course and user of the SIMULATION BOX of JOBS and Career box; at least 50 youth workers from 25 Programme countries – participants in the online training course and multiplier event; at least 42 persons interested to become certified youth worker according to the Romanian National Qualification Standard; at least 30 European structures to integrate the products results in their regular activities.

To achieve these facts there was initiated an investigation according to the youth's needs to identify some specific elements of the professional exposure: important values for teenagers, influential factors in the decision for the choosing of a career, the professional options teenagers have, their perception towards the desirable profession . In this article we will refer to the two primar aspects of the preparation of learning how to choose a career- values and factors which include several elections.

## **1. Theoretical assumptions**

The decision a teenager makes towards his professional development is the result of a more or less complexed process, the elaboration and the restructuring of several information which come from two directions: internal and external. When we refer to external factors we take into account the parents: their availability for according support, offering their feed-back, their possibility they give to their teenagers to choose, realistic expectation of their teenagers career elections.

Beside the parents these students contact significant people who have got an important factor upon their decision. One of these factors is he group a student takes part in. It may be possible that he could choose based on the decision the hall group makes and not a personal one. He may feel the pressure the group lays on him in making new decisions for his future career.

The equal persons found in the group may influence the myths and stereotypes of a future career. (Lemeni, G., Miclea, M., 2004) The external conditions which can either favour or block the development of a succesful career which for every person in part adding in the materialistic and financial situation, the resources of formation and information, the lerning situation a person can achieve in one moment of his life.

According to the internal factors which influence the election of a career there can be distinguished three categories of attainments ( Dughi, T, 2014, Lemeni, G, Miclea, M 2004): the self, the possibilities of formation and the career in the context of working field. When these attainments are more exact the chances grow significantly that the student may choose in a functional way. Within the category of self there can be found information about cognitive capacities, interests , values, personal acquirements. Edgar Schein, in his work *Career Anch. Discovering Your Real Values* (1990) reunites these perceptions about self through the idea of an anchor in career. These refer to the self image of the human, his self, as he as grown in experience through his life. Within the self image of a person we can see the condensed and transfigured motifs, values, aspirations, beliefs about his own competences and abilities for its own existence and development in the working activity. Indeed, the anchor of a career represents the psychological construction which synthetizes the most important acquisitions of the person in the valued, attitude and compartmental field, which he would never give up on.

When people choose activities that don't match to their anchor they will give up on them in the end and reorganize themselves towards their own anchor. Shcein has mentioned eight anchors of a career, which he has described them in a general method and than in a particular, according to a cycle of parameters such as: The type of activity, the remuneration and

benefits, the promoting system, the type of recognition. (Vlasceanu, 2002, pp. 51-52).

We ascertain that a defining element of an anchor is the value. From the professional orientation point of view the term value is associated to two perspectives: one of quality, of importance and the assessment of an object, the value been given by the capacity of satisfying several desires, that of recognition and social validation of an object, this time, the realization of a social judgement which produces values and criteria and evaluative standards, accepted and shared by the main majority of a community. (Dughi, T, 2011)

A young person will choose a profession according to its values attached to it. Lemeni and Miclea (2004, pg, 149) organise these values in four categories: Values that represent the working field- Flexibility, Limited terms, pleased background, security, great income, action, quick rhythm, structure, relaxed rhythm, predictibility, direct contacts with the clients. Comfortable earning, working relations- team work, trust, cultural identity, competition, kindness, cooperation, humor, armony, opened communication, working content – challenge, competence, experthyse, rysc, detailed orientation, social activity, learning, creativity, variaty, development, knowledge, work in general- dignity, statute, integrity, respect, responsibility, power, assessment, helping, equality, independence, contribution, participation, autenticity. Some of these values have been studied in our work in order to assess in what way more or less the election of a career is influences by these values.

## **2. The objectives of the study**

The following study had its own objective to highlight the difining elements which influwncw the proffesional orientation of the pupils from the 10th grade in High School. The specific objectives have been the following: The identification of the pupils elections of a career, te identification od the options of a proffesional formation and the distinguish of the different types of preparation and learning.

## **3. Test Sample**

For this study there were 470 participant from the 10th grade students from 13 High School in Arad; at least one class from each High School was in the study, accordgin to the number of 10th grade.

The access for classes has been insured by the employees of the Centru Judetean de Resurse si Asistenta Educativa Arad. The Sample is one of intention, including 10th grade students because we consider that these pupils can still realise professional career activities based on the results we got after the investigation, while those in the 12th grade has already decided for their future career.

**Table 1**  
**The different profiles of the 10th grade students**

Total	Arhitectură	Serviciu comerț	Filologie	Matematică Informatică	Muzică	Pedagogic	Profil Real (diferent de profilul de matematică)	Tehnic	Teologie
470	25	26	56	50	26	25	142	97	23
100%	5%	5%	12%	11%	5%	5%	30%	22%	5%

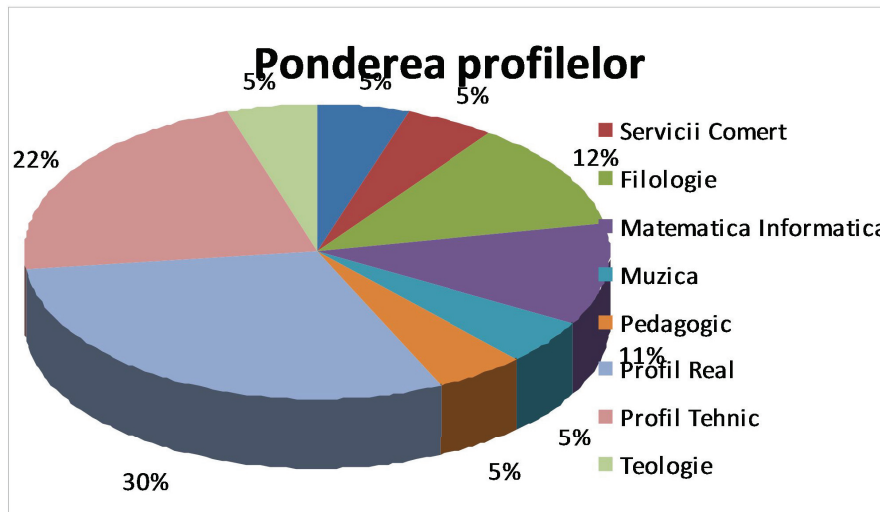


Figure 1

#### 4. Instruments of investigation

The method elected is based on the investigation we made in order to get more result in a shorter period of time. The results we got through this investigation gave us the opportunity to get some information which

can be analysed by quantity and its quality as well. The disadvantage of this method is the ambiguity or the absence of the answers to opened questions. (Rotariu, Ilut, 1997)

The main concept which stood at the elaboration of the investigation is the decision in the future career. For this study there has been taken into account the following: factors which influence the decision, values of anchor type, which guides the teenager in choosing a career, the professional option, if there exists one, the option of type formation, learning aspects as a transforming process including the career.

The indicators were formulated by items with double option of choice, with a scale Likert, hierarchization items, and items with one option, and opened items.

### 5. The analyse and the interpretation of the dates

For this study we have chosen to present the referring aspects towards the importance that the pupils give to the different factors of decision regarding the profession and the referring aspects associated by the pupils with the profession.

In order to evidenciate the diverse factors of information, we used the scale of Likert from 1 to 4, where 1 is the most unimportant while 4 represents the most important, while the neutre variant is eliminated. The pupils answer to the question How important are for you the following sources, when you think about your future career. For this questions there was the options they could choose from 1 to 4 to the responses: parents advice, friends information, mass-media information, internet, movies, job sites, own preferences, the career concilation.

**Table 2**

**The importance of the sources**

	Very important	Less important	Important	Very important
Parents advice	43	99	<b>229</b>	91
Parents profession	<b>219</b>	168	57	18
Friends information	55	<b>194</b>	187	27
Mass-media information	125	<b>174</b>	141	21
Internet	72	<b>172</b>	<b>172</b>	46
Movies	<b>233</b>	163	50	17
Jobs sites	129	<b>162</b>	133	40
Own preferences	10	15	74	<b>362</b>
Career concilation	45	106	<b>213</b>	94

As it can be observed the important and very important factors in the election of a career are: own preferences (362 elected as the most important option, parents advice and career cosilation.)

As it can be observed in the figure 2, pupils depend on mostly on their own preferences when they think about a proffesion. The average to the answers 3,69 indicates the fact that this aspect is very important for the majority of pupils, 77%of them choosing the value 4 for this aspect.

It is ascertianed that the parents advice is considered important, the average being 2,77 and the same importance has the career orientation is counseling. It can be seen tat pupils are receptive to the information that come from adults, it is not based on what they believe or what they want. Starting from this reality, it;s the adult attribution to offer good information in the choosing of a career to these pupils, to guide them systemaically using specigic instrumnts for the career counseling.

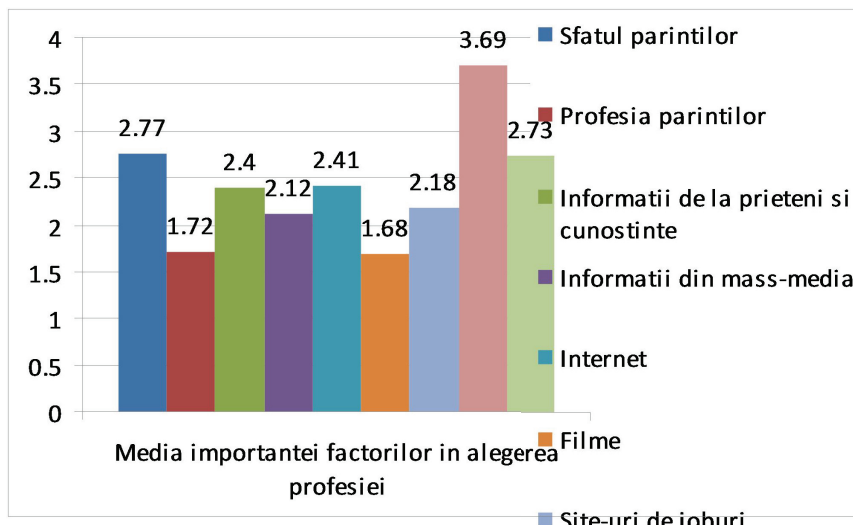


Figure 2 The importance average in choosing a career

As it can be observed in the chart 6.1, pupils rely on their own preferences when they think about a career. The average of answers 3,69 indicate the fact that this aspect is very important for the majority of pupils, 77% of them choosing number 4 for this aspect. It is stated that parents advices are also important, the average for this is 2,77 and the same importance is given for the career counseling. Thus, Pupils are receptive to the information that come from adults, it doesn't rely on on what they think or what they want.



Starting from this reality, it is the respondents attribution to give relevant information and guidance using specific instruments for the career counseling and orientation.

The next level of answers in the chart is the information they get from relatives and friends with an average of 2,4 and internet of 2,41. It's interesting the fact that internet is equally considered less important and important for the repondents ( 172 elections of this option). Jobs sites were considered by 62,58% as being very unimportant in the decision of a career. Also the less important are movies 9 average 1,68) and parents proffesion ( average 1,72), only 16% of students considering this as being important and very important for their proffesional orientation.

To mark out the values which were associated to proffesion and the importance of them for these pupils it has been accomplished three values in the order of their preferences through a list of 15 values. The items were formulated based on general proffesional values- recompensation, respect, prestige, autonomy, independence, proffesional development, but also specific values in the working field- conditions of work, challenge, flexibility, working relations- helping, getting along, trust and cooperation. For the question „ Regarding your future career, which of these aspects are the most important for you?” pupils answers maximum 3 in the order of preferences and noted them from 1 to 3, where 1 is the most important.

In figure 2 there are preseted the brut dates and the percentage which expresses the choices pupils made. It can be marked out the fact that on the first place it has been placed in accordance with their own preferences, 42% of them according the first range, 17% the second range, only 24% the third range, 31% of them not choosing this option at all.

The others included it in their list of values, explicit fac that because of the age and proffesional represetations for these. The external award for a realised work, based on money, is specfic not only for age but also for a society based on consuming, and satisfying some material needs.

However, specific for their age is the desire for autonomy, expressed not only through „I do whatever I like” but through the financial independence also. If they are now dependent on their parents, is normal to wait for having a proffesion in the future, and this dependece will not exist anymore.

**Table 3**

**The demands for the workplace**

	Neales		First place		Second place		Third place		Total
	%		%		%		%		
Great Income	31.0	143	23.0	106	24.3	112	21.7	100	461

To feel comfortable at work	48.6	225	12.5	58	21.6	100	17.3	80	463
To do what I like	24.8	115	<b>42.0</b>	195	<b>16.8</b>	78	<b>16.4</b>	76	464
To be respected and valued	73.4	339	5.6	26	9.1	42	11.9	55	462
To be challenged	91.4	425	2.2	10	4.3	20	2.2	10	465
Good conditions of work	87.0	400	2.6	12	4.3	20	6.1	28	460
To have good colleagues	94.8	442	0.6	3	1.7	8	2.8	13	466
To have a reasonable boss	94.8	441	0.6	3	1.1	5	3.4	16	465
To have my performance recognised	90.3	420	1.3	6	4.3	20	4.1	19	465
To have a flexible schedule	95.5	445	1.3	6	1.7	8	1.5	7	466
To have a balance between work and personal life (home work, more vacation, etc.)	87.5	407	1.9	9	5.2	24	5.4	25	465
To have autonomy in work	98.1	454	0.4	2	1.3	6	0.2	1	463
To be independent (without a chief)	93.8	436	2.2	10	1.9	9	2.2	10	465
To be included in training programs	92.9	432	2.4	11	1.9	9	2.8	13	465
My work contributes to a noble purpose	95.1	442	1.7	8	1.1	5	2.2	10	465

The center of pupils is based on themselves, a principle of hedonism orientated to their own person- „To feel comfortable at work”. A great percentage of pupils – 52% choose this value, 12% placed it on the first place, 22% on the second place and 17% on the third place. Also another factor that places on the self is „ To be respected and valued”, but this time it can be remarked another set of needs than the material ones, they go to another level, to the need of getting respect from others. Here, the percentage is not as great as the first one, but still 12% of pupils placed it on the third place and 6% on the first place.

This fact proves that a perception more completed upon the professional options. Thus, work is not estimated just for making money but now it's marked by their own identity. the fact

that some pupils consider important the difference between work and personal work demonstrates the fact that they are thinking about other future challenges than work.

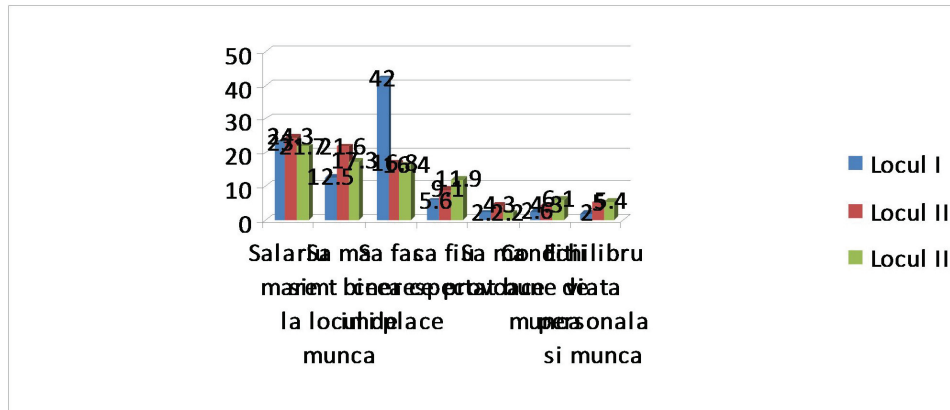


Figure 3

Analysing the elements from Chart 6.1 it can be observed that pupils consider the most important fact for them the respect of their own preference when they find their future career. If 42% placed this aspect on the first place, only 15% of pupils considering important the other aspects. On the second place there are the same values, only the third place marks out the fact that appears a percentage of 12% from pupils who choose respect as an important value associated to the future career.

The percentage for those who choose values such as professional recognition, independence, constant formation, working relation are very small, between 2% and 10%. The accent he falls upon is the materialistic needs, immediate, centered on the own person. Only 2 pupils place on the first place the autonomy, 6 place on the second place and only one pupil places on the third place.

The correlation study between the referring variables to the professional values assumed by the respondents show that the following significant correlations for a significant level, lower than 0.05 for the majority of variable-values.

Table

4

Correlations between the variables referring to the professional values

		earning	To feel good	To do what I like	respect	challenge	Working conditions	Good colleagues	Responsible boss	The performance recognized	Autonomy
ear nin g	Pearson Correlation	1	-,058	-,120(*)	-,092(*)	-,050	-,144(*)	-,057	-,054	-,184(**)	-,053
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,214	<b>,010</b>	<b>,048</b>	,284	<b>,002</b>	,221	,244	<b>,000</b>	,252
To fee l	Pearson Correlation	-,058	1	,015	-,094(*)	-,065	-,161(*)	-,048	-,055	-,064	,003

good											
To do what I like	Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,214	,748	<b>,042</b>	,165	<b>,000</b>	,303	,237	,167	,943	
respects		-	1	-0,089	-	-	-0,075	-	-0,062	-0,042	
Challenge	Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	<b>,010</b>	,748	,056	<b>,029</b>	<b>,003</b>	,105	<b>,008</b>	,181	,362	
God working conditions		-	-	1	-0,040	-	-0,046	,016	-0,051	,077	
God colleague	Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	<b>,048</b>	<b>,042</b>	,056	,394	<b>,012</b>	,318	,726	,274	,095	
God colleague		-	-	-0,040	1	,052	,043	,018	-0,015	,207(*)	
God colleague	Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,284	,165	<b>,029</b>	,394	,265	,353	,704	,751	<b>,000</b>	
God colleague		-	-	-	-0,116(*)	,052	1	,044	,114(*)	,036	
God colleague	Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	<b>,002</b>	<b>,000</b>	<b>,003</b>	<b>,012</b>	,265	,348	<b>,014</b>	,440	,052	
God colleague		-0,057	-	-0,075	-0,046	,043	,044	1	,158(**)	,016	
God colleague	Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,221	,303	,105	,318	,353	,348	<b>,001</b>	,733	<b>,000</b>	
God colleague		-0,054	-	-	,016	,018	,114(*)	,158(**)	1	,051	
God colleague	Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,244	,237	<b>,008</b>	,726	,704	<b>,014</b>	<b>,001</b>	,271	<b>,000</b>	
God colleague		-	-	-0,062	-0,051	-0,015	,036	,016	,051	1	
God colleague	Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	<b>,000</b>	,167	,181	,274	,751	,440	,733	,271	<b>,003</b>	
God colleague	Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,523	<b>,000</b>	,102	<b>,004</b>	,390	,894	,082	,980	<b>,007</b>	
God colleague		,053	,003	-0,042	,077	,207(**)	,090	,178(**)	,263(**)	,136(**)	
God colleague	Sig. (2-tailed)	,252	,943	,362	,095	<b>,000</b>	,052	<b>,000</b>	<b>,000</b>	<b>,003</b>	

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The subjects that desire to feel comfortable at work, also want a balance between their personal life and professional life, flexible schedule, good conditions of work, value and respect.

Some subjects desire to do what they like, in a good background, with a decent earning, having a reasonable boss and a flexible schedule. This category of subjects want their job to bring them new challenge.

Persons who search for new challenges at work want autonomy and independence in the accomplishment of tasks. Also, they want to do what they like.

The respondents consider that the performance has to be recognised through earning and the actual autonomy.

Those who wish for a balance between professional life and personal life desire to be independent and to be given opportunities of performance, while those who wish to do a good work want to be recognised, through their earning. We can affirm that the number and typology of significant correlations demonstrate the internal consistency of the applied instrument.

## **Conclusions**

The study reveals several important aspects for the professional orientation of pupils. The obtained results demonstrate the fact that pupils are valorically guided upon the satisfying of their own desires and interests. The weight factor is great for those who express the fact that the personal ideas constitute the most important source in making a professional decision, weight that is found as the same importance as the future associated career- „ to do what I like to do”, thus satisfying the own desires.

This aspect is a positive one if we think at the level of pupils assertiveness. It must be completed this self confidence and centeredness on the own person with objective informations about the personal structure and personality, offering solid guidance in the process of self-knowledge. It is possible that in all cases for pupils to have a real self image related to the requirements of a profession. It is necessary good information about their own possibilities but also the structure of profession they can achieve. Also, it is very important for pupils to be stimulated in discovering other elements associated to the profession beside the earning income, this being just a consequence for their good work. The counseling must be given according to each personality of each student in part. Thus, it is assured a good guidance for students to be responsible in making their own decisions regarding their future career.

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