THE FOURTH/FINAL-YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENT FUTURE PROFESSIONAL CAREER: ANALYSIS OF FACTORS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES[1)]

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Abstract. Career management as a lifelong lasting process becomes very actual in today's modern society because of many reasons. The environment becomes turbulent, in a general sense; therefore, it is natural that career environment, basically, is chaotic as well. Nevertheless, career for many people is, undoubtedly, very important, because it is directly related to life quality. Professional activity satisfies almost all human needs: physiological, safety, social, attainment, self-realisation, independence, autonomy and other. The efficiency of the mentioned activity and the ability of the personality to construct his career are closely related things. Individual's career process studies are especially popular recently, because deeper career perception helps to understand the most important relations between man and work, career management and constant learning, helps not only to know man's abilities, but also the abilities to give oneself to modern environment, to understand career projection possibilities, to plan one's professional future. Seeking to analyse final-year university student position regarding career questions, a written form survey was carried out. The research was carried out between September 2015 and March 2016. The research sample (185) was structured applying a consecutive 'bunch' system. The respondents from three Lithuanian universities

Klaipėda, Vilnius and Šiauliai, were selected in the sample. Professional career parameters were evaluated: career conception, the importance of work values and abilities, study influence, promoting and limiting factors and personal qualities. The research is grounded on a mixed strategy, when quantitative and qualitative research approach is combined. The obtained results, based on qualitative analysis, about professional personal career promoting and limiting factors and personal qualities are presented in this research.

Keywords: career education, personal qualities, professional career, qualitative analysis, university students

Introduction

At the end of the 20th century, it has been started to understand that career phenomena are so complex, that to properly explain them concentrating only to their content or to their processes is practically impossible. An individual seeks career not in an isolated world, but keeping one sort or another relation in a sufficiently wide context, in which one can distinguish the social system (microsystem, mesosystem) and the environmental – societal system (exosystem, macrosystem) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Patton & McMahon, 1999; 2006). These systems have influence on individual career's solutions, they are the source of values, convictions, attitudes, system structure and their element influence intensity changes in the individual's development context.

Brown (2002) notes, that human career is impossible in social vacuum. Its development medium are organisations or other social structures. Super (1980) reveals social career nature, claiming, that career includes five main social roles (learner, worker, family member, society member, entertainment lover) acceptance and performance at school, at work, in the society and at a leisure time in human's life. The understanding about an individual's career comes to light pointing out to his relation to social structures, other people or groups, following such categories as duty, status, responsibility spheres, com-

petence change, work values, progression direction and speed, which grant different value to various accepted roles of an individual in a definite social system and time. Social context makes preconditions for every person to understand career process in its own way and to discern in it different priorities.

Berger & Luckmann (1999) and Giddens (2005) accentuate social context and society importance for an individual's development and activity a lot. In recent year research sociologists expanded the list of phenomena, having influence on profession choice and professional success: besides family social condition, socio-psychological factors, were also added sex, race, society, geographical location, culture, historical conditions, media, globalization processes and so on. It is stated, that the wholeness of career development determining social factors very often determines career development and success, that the individual realises career taking into consideration social context and the external factors having influence on him. Nevertheless, by career competence education it is being tried to neutralise or compensate socially conditioned career management difficulties, to educate social environment cognition and its influence lessening abilities.

Therefore, it has been started to search for the new, integral attitudes to an individual's career. One of such integral attitudes is the attitude to career as to a system. System theory and systematic analysis enable to look to a career phenomenon as to a wholeness, as to a harmonious object, joining in itself various elements, marking themselves in diverse relations (Patton & McMahon, 1999). Patton & McMahon, (1999) reveal a complex interaction between three systems: *the individual system* (gender, values, health, disability, ability, interests, skills, beliefs, personality, sexual orientation, age, world-of-work knowledge, self-concept, physical attributes, ethnicity, aptitudes), *the social system* (peers, family, media, community groups, workplace, education institutions), *the environmental – societal system* (geographical location, political decisions, historical trends, globalization, socioeconomic status, employment market). Interaction between an individual (individual system) and context

(social system and environmental – societal system) variables is complex, multidirectional and not always can be explained as reason – cause chain. Individual's and context system factors or their interaction can facilitate proper, successful for an individual's career solution acceptance or, on the contrary, to become career obstacle. System theory forms possibilities to use a model, in which one can ascertain and analyse complex interrelations between personality traits and external factor wholeness, having influence on career procedure.

Individual's career process studies are especially popular recently, because deeper career perception helps to understand the most important relations between man and work, career management and constant learning, helps not only to know man's abilities, but also the abilities to give oneself to modern environment, to understand career projection possibilities, to plan one's professional future (Augienė & Lamanauskas, 2013). Earlier carried out research in Lithuania with the first year students showed, that students point out external factors, including stimulating relations with the surrounding, as the most important possibility to successfully manage and realise their professional career. In students' opinion, career context can have both positive and negative influence on career realisation. However, the students provide career context with more negative than positive influence on career realisation. Therefore, as the most important negative factor group, disturbing to realise career in future, the students name unfavourable career context (working place shortage, competition, unstable economy, corruption, emigration and so on). Also, students partly (insufficiently) value professional improvement. Less than one fourth of the students name professional improvement (professional preparation, goal seeking) as able to help in seeking successful career. On the other hand, more than half of the students pointed out, that their negative personality activity traits (distrust in yourself, indifference to activity, incompetence) can disturb successfully realise professional career. Only one third of the students evaluated their personality activity features (activity, competence) as successful career premise (Lamanauskas & Augienė, 2014). The analysis of all fac-

tors, both encouraging, and hindering professional career is significant, seeking to more effectively plan the latter. The research carried out in Malaysia showed, that according to final-year students at public universities there are the top 3 extrinsic factors rated as significant in selecting a career destination were salary, benefits, and geographical location (Hasan et al., 2010). The research carried out with German university students showed, that the underlying motives for career choice are interlinked and can be grouped into the main components 'Status orientation', 'Self-realisation' and 'Self-determination' (Haase & Lautenschläger, 2011). The other research show quite controversial situation, stating, that university students are mainly influenced from the family and technological environments but not from the learning environment (Özlen & Arnaut, 2013).

Thus, as researchers state, more universal understanding of factors that influence students in making decisions about career choices is important (Alexander et al., 2011).

Research object/focus is the fourth/final year university student position on the question of the future professional career. *Research aim* is by qualitative analysis, to reveal plausible promoting and limiting factors and personal traits, having the biggest influence on professional career.

Methodology

General research characteristics

To carry out research *Successful career factors* are grounded on mixed methodology (quantitative and qualitative approach is applied). This is a narrow size research, i.e., the research conclusions do not reflect all Lithuanian university student population and fully cannot be applied to it. The research is of a piloting type seeking more to reflect social and humanitarian science field students' position on professional career questions. On the other hand, the research results will be used preparing a wider size research. The research was carried out between January and May, 2016.

Research sample

Bachelor study students of three Lithuanian universities: (Šiauliai – ŠU, Lithuanian University of Educational sciences - LEU, and Klaipėda - KU) participated in the research. 200 questionnaires were prepared. On the whole, 185 questionnaires were acknowledged acceptable. Reversibility quota is 92%. More detailed information about the respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The respondent sample characteristics

Institution	N (%)	Distribution according to study programmes
Šiauliai University	124 (67.0)	Family pedagogy and child rights protection (33), physical education (18), health education (10), logopedy (24), kinesiotherapy (14), music pedagogy (25)
Lithuanian university of Educational Sciences	24 (20.0)	Primary education pedagogy (20), ethics (4)
Klaipėda University	37 (13.0)	Sport pedagogy (37)

Sampling was structured applying a consecutive 'bunch' system. Research sample is considered sufficiently representative according to a chosen research amount. The majority of the respondents answered to the presented open questions. Only 8 out of 185 respondents did not give any answer.

Research instrument

The authors' prepared questionnaire applied in the research is formed from open and closed questions (Lamanauskas & Augienė, 2014). The respondents were asked to evaluate statements about career, the importance of work values and skills to the professional career, and also study influence to the future career. Four open questions were presented in the questionnaire as well: (i) what external factors could *help* you to successfully realise your professional career; (ii) what external factors could *disturb* you to successfully realise your professional career; (iii) what your personal qualities could *help*

you to successfully realise your professional career; (iv) what personal qualities could *disturb* you to successfully realise your professional career.

A demographic part is included in the questionnaire too (the respondent sex, course, study programme).

Data analysis

Data, obtained by open questions, are analysed qualitatively. Data analysis has been carried out using *content* analysis, when in the information array (the respondents' presented answers, commentaries) main characteristics are distinguished. A methodological attitude is followed, that content analysis helps to reveal and understand reality. A multiple presented commentary reading and analysis is used, it is searched for semantically close answers and "key" words, semantic unit interpretation is carried out, later sub-categories are excluded, which subsequently are joined into bigger semantic units – categories. Category interpretation has been carried out. In the first stage, categorisation has been performed by two researchers independently of one another. Later, the received categories were adjusted, checked repeatedly.

Results

Having analysed external factors, which could help successfully realise your professional career, three categories have been discerned: positive activity context, positive social context, high professional achievements (Table 2).

Table 2. External factors, helping successfully realise professional career

Category	N (%)	Subcategory	N (%)	Subcategory components	N (%)
		Labour market	26 (14.5)	Work according to acquired speciality	10 (5.6)
				New working place creation	8 (4.5)
				Bigger employment possibilities	4 (2.2)
				Work demand	2 (1.1)

Positive activity context	72 (40.3)			Work demand increase	2 (1.1)
		Profession attractive-ness/prestige	16 (9.0)	Speciality (profession) attractiveness and demand	6 (3.4)
				Positive society attitude to pedagogues	5 (2.8)
				Profession prestige increase	3 (1.7)
				Professional acknowledgement in labour market	2 (1.1)
		Work environment/conditions	16 (9.0)	Good working conditions, suitable environment	8 (4.5)
				Competent, organised, flexible staff	5 (2.8)
				Suitable environment	3 (1.7)
		Professional readiness	5 (2.8)	Quality education	5 (2.8)
		Economic changes	4 (2.2)	Better economic situation in the country	4 (2.2)
		Social guarantees	3 (1.7)	Social guarantees	3 (1.7)
		Coincidence	2 (1.1)	Just success	2 (1.1)
Positive social context	54 (31.6)	Social/professional net	31 (18.7)	Useful acquaintances	22 (13.6)
				Useful social relations	6 (3.4)
				Useful professional relations	3 (1.7)
		Family support	21 (11.8)	Encouragement of the surrounding people to pursue a goal, support	12 (6.7)
				Relative encouragement and support	6 (3.4)
				Family support	3 (1.7)
		Accommodation	2 (1.1)	Suitable accommodation	2 (1.1)
High professional achievements	52 (28.1)	Professional improvement	29 (15.2)	Constant learning	10 (5.6)
				Participation in conferences, seminars	8 (4.5)
				Personal efforts	8 (4.5)
				Favourite, likeable activity	1 (0.6)
		Material award	17 (9.5)	Bigger work payment	15 (8.4)
				Extra income	2 (1.1)
		Professional evaluation	6 (3.4)	Adequate evaluation	5 (2.8)
				Good work results	1 (0.6)

Mostly external factors, which could help successfully realise career, express/reflect the activity context. In students' opinion, the external factors of the first category "Positive activity context" (40.3%, have the biggest positive influence on their successful professional career. It is obvious, that the fourth/final year students very clearly understand, that their career success depends greatly on the situation in the labour market (14.5%): on the work according to the acquired speciality, new working place creation, bigger employment possibilities, work demand, work demand increase. In students' opinion, the acquired profession attractiveness/prestige (9.0%) (speciality/profession attractiveness and demand, positive society attitude to pedagogues, profession prestige increase, professional acknowledgement in the labour market) and work environment/conditions (9.0%) (good working conditions, suitable environment, competent, organised, flexible staff, suitable environment) have an equally great influence for successful career realisation. Students give very little meaning to such unstable factors as social guarantees (1.7%) and coincidence (1.1%). This shows, that the fourth/final year students have formed a modern/contemporary career understanding, where career stability and social guarantees have maximally decreased and are less determining, and unplanned career, referring only to coincidence, has no perspectives.

The second according to importance category "Positive social context" (31.6%) shows, that students understand quite well, that social relations influence successful career realisation. Especially great importance students give to social/professional net (18.7%): useful acquaintances, useful social relations, useful professional relations. A part of students identifies the importance of family support (11.8%).

The third category "High professional achievements" (28.1%) demonstrate, that students identify professional improvement as the basis of successful career (15.2%), highlighting such factors as, constant learning, participation in conferences, seminars, personal efforts.

Having analysed external factors, which could disturb successfully realise your professional career, three categories have been discerned: negative activity context, negative social context, low professional readiness (Table 3).

Table 3. External factors, disturbing successfully realise professional career

Category	N (%)	Subcategory	N (%)	Subcategory components	N (%)
Negative activity context	128 (74.8)	Unfavourable situation in the labour market	46 (27.4)	Big competition in the labour market	22 (13.4)
				Working place shortage	18 (10.5)
				Increasing unemployment	6 (3.5)
		Unfavourable work relations	34 (19.6)	Poor relationship in the staff	12 (7.0)
				Ill- disposed colleagues	8 (4.6)
				Jealousy of the surrounding	6 (3.5)
				Employee exploitation	3 (1.7)
				Incompetent employers	3 (1.7)
				Lack of support from the surrounding people	2 (1.1)
		Lack of funds	20 (11.6)	Low work payment	14 (8.1)
				Lack of funds	6 (3.5)
		Unfavourable working conditions	13 (7.5)	Unsafe working environment, tension at work	5 (2.9)
				Big working load	4 (2.3)
				Time shortage	3 (1.7)
				Unsuitable working conditions	1 (0.6)
		Low profession prestige	10 (5.8)	Unfavourable profession (speciality)	10 (5.8)
		Unfavourable economic conditions	5 (2.9)	Weak economic situation of the country	5 (2.9)
Negative social context	29 (16.7)	Weak social relations	12 (6.9)	Lack of acquaintances	5 (2.9)
				Lack of communication skills	5 (2.9)
				Poor social relations	2 (1.1)
		Family problems	10 (5.8)	Care for the family	5 (2.9)
				Career and family incompatibility	5 (2.9)
		Unfavourable		Negative attitude of	3 (1.7)

		attitude to the youth	3 (1.7)	the senior toward youth	
		Unfavourable demographic situation	3 (1.7)	Emigration	3 (1.7)
		Unfavourable accommodation	1 (0.6)	Unsuitable accommodation	1 (0.6)
Low professional readiness	15 (8.5)	Poor practical experience	9 (5.2)	Lack of experience	8 (4.6)
				Lack of competence	1 (0.6)
		Lack of education	6 (3.3)	Lack of knowledge	2 (1.1)
				Lack of education	2 (1.1)
				Poor possibilities to invest in one's education	2 (1.1)

The biggest part of external factors, able to hinder successful career realisation are related with unfavourable activity context. The first category "Negative activity context" (74.8%) demonstrates student understanding, that unfavourable situation in the labour market, unfavourable work relations, lack of funds, unfavourable working conditions, low professional prestige professional activity, unfavourable economic conditions can unsuccessfully affect professional career.

The second category "Negative social context" reveals that a big part of students (16.7%) point out, that such external factors as their weak social relations (lack of acquaintances, lack of communication skills, weak social relations) family problems (care for family, career and family incompatibility), unfavourable attitude toward youth and other, can unfavourably affect their career realisation,

The third category "Low professional readiness" (8.5%) illustrates, that only a small part of students defines that negative influence for their successful career realisation can have poor practical experience (5.2 %) and lack of education (3.3%): lack of knowledge, lack of education, poor possibilities to invest in their education.

Having analysed personal characteristics, which could help successfully realise your professional career, two categories were singled out: positive professional traits, positive social traits (Table 4).

Table 4. Personal qualities helping successfully realise professional career

Category	N (%)	Subcategory	N (%)	Subcategory components	N (%)
Positive professional traits	251 (78.6)	Diligence/responsibility	106 (33.5)	Responsibility	38 (12.3)
				Diligence and thoroughness	25 (7.8)
				Conscientiousness	20 (6.3)
				Dutifulness	8 (2.5)
				Independence	6 (1.8)
				Punctuality	4 (1.3)
				Wish to work	3 (0.9)
				Responsible attitude to work	2 (0.6)
		Leadership	83 (25.8)	Stubbornness / persistence	30 (9.4)
				Striving for aim	12 (3.8)
				Activity / impetuosity	10 (3.1)
				Ability to adapt	8 (2.5)
				Confidence in yourself	6 (1.8)
				Bossiness	6 (1.8)
				Initiative	5 (1.5)
				Good organisational skills	4 (1.3)
				Ambitiousness	2 (0.6)
		Aim to improve	39 (12.1)	Wish to improve	26 (8.1)
				Curiosity	8 (2.5)
				Openness to novelties	5 (1.5)
		Creativity	23 (7.2)	Creativity	18 (5.6)
				Critical thinking	4 (1.3)
				Talent	1 (0.3)
Positive social traits	69 (21.4)	Communication abilities	61 (19.0)	Communicability	26 (8.1)
				Ability to communicate	14 (4.4)
				Ability to work in a team	8 (2.5)
				Ability to communicate	8 (2.5)

				Acceptance of criticism	5 (1.5)
		Respect for the sur-rounding people	8 (2.4)	Empathy /self-empathy	5 (1.5)
				Sincerity	2 (0.6)
				Respect for differ-ent people	1 (0.3)

The first category "Positive personal traits" (78.6%) has the highest weight. This obviously illustrates, that students mostly value personal trait which are related with professional activity and point out, that they can have the biggest influence on successful professional career realisation. The third of students (33.5%) define personal traits, which in one way or another are related with diligence/responsibility (responsibility, diligence and thoroughness, conscientiousness, dutifulness, independence, punctuality, wish to work, responsible attitude to work). A big part of students (25.8%) identify the traits characteristic of the leader, which can influence successful their professional career development (stubbornness, persistence, striving for aim, activity, impetuosity, ability to adapt, self-confidence, bossiness, initiative and other). Recently, the importance of leadership is accentuated in various activities. It is obvious, that students understand leader traits as a successful career guarantor. 12.1 % of students think, that their personal traits related with the aim to improve (wish to improve, curiosity, openness to novelties) can help successfully realise professional career. A part of students (7.2%) relate successful career realisation with their creativity (critical thinking, talent).

The second category "Positive social traits" (21.4%) illustrate students' understanding, that in a successful professional activity very important are constructive relations among people. 19.0% of students think, that their cooperation abilities (communicability, ability to communicate, ability to work in a team, ability to cooperate, acceptance of criticism) can help successfully seek for professional career. A part of students (2.4%) accentuate respect for the surrounding people (empathy, sincerity, respect for different people).

Having analysed personal traits, which could hinder successfully realise your professional career, two categories were singled out: negative activity traits and negative communication skills (Table 5).

Table 5. Personal traits hindering successfully realise professional career

Category	N (%)	Subcategory	N (%)	Subcategory components	N (%)
Negative activity traits	104 (62.8)	Absence of confidence	50 (30.4)	Lack of self-confidence	34 (20.8)
				Indecision. Lack of determination	8 (4.8)
				Fear to risk	5 (3.0)
				Timidity	3 (1.8)
		Indifference to activity	38 (22.8)	Lack of motivation	11 (6.6)
				Passivity	10 (6.0)
				Laziness	8 (4.8)
				Lack of responsibility / irresponsibility	5 (3.0)
				Lack of will	2 (1.2)
				Indifference	2 (1.2)
		Being inflexible in the activity	16 (9.6)	Bossiness	6 (3.6)
				Inflexibility	5 (3.0)
				Conservativeness	3 (1.8)
				Pettiness	2 (1.2)
Negative communication traits	62 (37.2)	Negative character traits	27 (16.2)	Sensitivity	6 (3.6)
				Reservedness	5 (3.0)
				Modesty	4 (2.4)
				Indulgence	4 (2.4)
				Shyness	3 (1.8)
				Straightforwardness	2 (1.2)
				Strictness	2 (1.2)
				Naivety	1 (0.6)
		Inflexible character	18 (10.8)	Perfectionism	10 (6.0)
				Self-criticism	4 (2.4)
				Introversion	2 (1.2)
				Maximalism	2 (1.2)
		Improper behaviour	17 (10.2)	Impulsiveness	8 (4.8)
				Emotionality	5 (3.0)
				Hardly manageable stress	2 (1.2)
				Lack of patience	2 (1.2)

The first category Negative activity traits (62.8%) illustrate students' negative personal traits, related with activity process. The biggest part of students defines here, that lack of self-confidence (indecision, fear to risk, timidity and so on), indifference to activity (lack of motivation, passivity, laziness, irresponsibility, lack of will and so on) and inflexibility in the activity (bossiness, conservativeness, pettiness and so on) can disturb successfully realise professional career.

The second category "Negative communication traits" (37.2%) illustrate students' expressed ideas about their negative personal traits manifesting themselves in the communication process. Students define, that these their negative communication skills can hinder successfully realise professional career. A part of students (16.2%) point out, that their negative character traits (sensitivity, reticence, modesty, indulgence, shyness, straightforwardness, strictness, naivety) can hinder to pursue successful career. The other students (10.8%) think, that their inflexible character (perfectionism, self-criticism, introversion, maximalism) and improper behaviour (10.2%) (impulsiveness, emotionality, hardly manageable stress, lack of patience) can hinder them seek successful career.

Such expressed students' self-critical evaluation of their personal activity and communication traits, able to hinder successful professional career realisation, allows making a hypothetical assumption, that being able to recognise them, students will be able to control and overcome them.

Conclusions and implications

The distinguished external factors, which could help successfully realise your professional career allow formulating three categories: "Positive activity context", "Positive social context", "High professional achievements". In the first of these categories most of the factors are related with positive changes, taking place in the labour market. In the second category, the biggest load has the factors, related with social/professional net development, and in the

third category – professional improvement factors, related with constant learning, participation in conferences, personal efforts. It is obvious, that social guarantees and coincidence would not help successfully realise professional career. Contemporary modern career changing context understanding comes to light. Person's positive activity forms possibilities to seek successful professional career.

The distinguished external factors, which could hinder successfully realise professional career, allow formulating three categories: "Negative activity context", Negative social context", "Low professional readiness". These factors are mostly related with unfavourable situation in the labour market, with unfavourable work relations, shortage of funds, unfavourable working conditions, low profession prestige, unfavourable economic conditions. Besides, social context can hinder successfully realise career: weak social relations, family problems and other. A small load has such factors as poor practical experience and lack of education.

Two personal trait categories have been discerned, which could help successfully realise career: "Positive professional traits" and "Positive social traits". In the category "Positive professional traits", the most important significance has personal traits realising diligence/responsibility (thoroughness, conscientiousness, dutifulness, punctuality and other). This demonstrates understanding, that in order to successfully realise yourself in professional activity, important is diligence and personal responsibility for your career. Important are personal traits, which are characteristic of the leader. Social trait (communication skills, respect for the surrounding people) importance is accentuated in successful professional activity. This shows understanding, that today, in a constant change reality, to achieve success in professional activity one can only acting together with the other people and forming constructive relations in the staff.

Two personal trait categories, which could hinder successfully realise professional career: "Negative activity traits" and "Negative communication

traits". Most personal traits, able to hinder successfully seek career, are related with activity. This is lack of self-confidence, indifference to activity, inflexibility in the activity. Personal traits, related with possible communication difficulties, can negatively affect professional career success. Negative character traits (sensitivity, reticence, modesty, indulgence, shyness, straightforwardness, strictness, naivety), inflexible character (perfectionism, self-criticism, introversion, maximalism), improper behaviour (impulsiveness, emotionality, hardly manageable stress, lack of patience) hinder to seek career.

NOTES

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