BABEŞ – BOLYAI UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA

FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

CAREER PLANNING STUDENTS

- ABSTRACT-

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CLUJ-NAPOCA

2010

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Key words: Project students career counselling and guidance, dysfunctional cognitions, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, external conflicts, motivation;

Thesis entitled "Career planning students" is structured in two parts, which in turn contains several chapters.

The first part presents "General aspects - theoretical guidance counsellors and career", being divided into two chapters. Chapter I - Theoretical aspects of career guidance and counselling, divided into six major topics, addresses theoretical problems in this area. Top themes established the theoretical parts which are engaged in career counselling and guidance, focusing on defining concepts, history and orientation activities in Romania and the main theories for guidance specific career. These theories incorporate different views of the quarry, presenting it as a process of life, as a process of problem solves and decision making and creative ways, and not at least as an individual experience. Particular attention was paid to models useful in career counselling and factors that influence student career counselling and guidance. Given the importance of business advice and guidance to students, to increase efficiency of services in this area numerous studies have been done highlighting the introduction of quality standards in career counselling. Career advice quality standards are described in the last issue of this chapter.

Chapter II – "Practice and research in career counselling and guidance", present state of knowledge in the field of career interventions. In the design and implementation of „Project attending counselling and career guidance of students", I used some of these research results.

Whiston, Sexton and Lasoff (1998) concluded that no career counselor interventions are less effective than interventions conducted by a career counselor. Another important discovery is related to the fact that interventions in structured groups gave better results than interventions in groups unorganized, unstructured.

Brown and Cranes (2000) identified five major components that provide effective programs of counselling and career guidance

1. workbooks and exercises that cover topics and exercises useful in defining the purpose;
2. specific meetings to search for information and identification of career opportunities under the guidance of an adviser;
3. providing feedback from a professional, similar to the level of knowledge about career (self-knowledge, occupational knowledge);
4. creating opportunities to observe and interact with specialists in various fields (models);
5. systematic efforts to help customers to build their own social support for integration on labor market.

Peng (2005) demonstrated that participation in a course on career decision making of the students from the first year significantly reduced anxiety levels.

The second part refers to "Applied Studies".

The main directions of research pursued:

a) the needs analysis advice and guidance in choosing a field of study or an occupation of the students, highlighted in the study 1 and study 2;

b) determining the extent to which, by implementing a „Project attending counselling and career guidance of students", we can positively influence student's progress, in terms of choosing an educational and occupational field (study 3)

In the first chapter of Part II, entitled „Needs assessment for career counselling and guidance" are described two ways that made identification of these needs, reflected in two studies.

STUDY 1

This study highlights the concerns that students have in choosing an educational or occupational area and their availability to participate in planned services and guidance on career counselling.

Research objectives

1. Identifying the knowledge of students' selves.
2. Highlighting the most significant matters which affect the choice of occupational field by the students.
3. The degree of participation of students in counselling and career guidance.

Research hypotheses

1. Although the participation in some activities and guidance on career counselling was sporadic, it was observed the student's availability to participate in a complet module, over the last one year.
2. Although students have some self-knowledge and occupational knowledge, they encounter difficulties in choosing or following a particular occupational field.

Methodology

 Participants

 This study was conducted in April 2004 and involved the participation of 119 students (5 classes), an economic school.

 Methods used

 The need of the advice and guidance on career was measured by a questionnaire developed in this study.

 Procedure

 The participants completed the questionnaire in pencil version - paper, during a student reception organized by teachers

Results and discussion

It was confirm the hypothesis that „although participation in some activities and guidance on career counselling was sporadic, it was noted the students' availability to participate to a complet module, during an year." We base our claim on the following research results:

Although only 21.8% of survey participants were said to be the beneficiaries of the activities of advice and career guidance, the percentage of those who have expressed their desire to participate in the development of a module   reach to 47.9%. Percentage of 36.1%, representing „undecided" can be explained by lack of information regarding the content of this module and hence the low level of motivation and involvement.

It confirms the hypothesis that „although students have some self-knowledge and occupational knowledge, they encounter difficulties in choosing or following a particular occupational field". We base our claim on the following research results

➢ Percentage of those who are undecided in the election and follow of an occupational option, those who were not fixed on any occupational field or were fixed on an occupational field, but not necessarily take it out, and those who have several variants for possible failures amounted to 56.3%.

➢ Most of the reasons that stand behind choosing an occupational field are extrinsic in nature, as illustrated by the results of this study, „earning opportunities offered (38.7%)", „prestige enjoyed (16%)" „the beauty of occupation (10.9%)".

➢ Although the majority of self-knowledge and occupational knowledge come from external sources (Internet, experts, family, friends), in conjunction with the high percentage of those who claim that they did not receive counselling and career guidance (69, 6%), we can say that the choice of occupational field is based on conjectural factors rather than from an in-depth knowledge / planned of this field.

➢ The results show the a low influence of the family in choosing a occupational field and an increased influence in the implementation of occupational options. Responses of some participants confirmed this, some of them saying that „parents do not care as long as they are students", „they agree to do the job that I want", „parents are not involved","it is just my choice".

 In conclusion, we can say that although students have some knowledge useful in selecting and implementing career choices, and such knowledge is unstructured, conjectural, it can be observed their availability to participate in a structured module of advice and guidance.

STUDY 2

The premise from which we started in this study refers to the fact that the implementation of a choice of educational field, reflected in the registry to a particular academic specialization, after graduating from high school, is made having sufficient information in advance and a strong motivation to follow it. This implies a concern since high school, compared to the choice of education and significant differences between the first option and the option for which the student registered.

Research objectives

1. Identifying students' concerns to follow a specialization by high school graduates, concerns reflected in knowledge specialization for which they registered, the motivation to follow the specialization chosen and the link between school discipline preferred and chosen specialization.

2. Determine the previous participation of high school graduates in counselling and career guidance and willingness to participate in a module on career counselling and guidance, with one year duration.

Research hypotheses

1. High school graduates who opted for a particular area of education, reflected in the registry to a particular academic specialization, prove insufficient information and motivation fot the chosen option.

2. Although most participants in the study have not previously received counselling services and guidance on career, expresse their readiness to follow a module on career counselling and guidance, with one year duration.

Methodology

Participants

This study was conducted in August 2004 and involved the participation of 450 high school graduates, when they registered for the specialty they were admitted.

Methods used

The need advice and guidance on career was measured by a questionnaire developed in this study.

Procedure

The participants completed the questionnaire in pencil version - paper, after filing the necessary registration documents**.**

Results and discussion

It stated the hypothesis that „high school graduates who opted for a particular area of education, reflected in the registry to a particular academic specialization, prove insufficient information and motivation fot the chosen option". We base our claim on the following research results:

➢ The results show that 70.9% of survey participants noted that they are strongly motivated to follow the chosen specialization, taking into account that the number of those who have registered for the first specialization they opted is 51.7 %. Another aspect that worth mentioned is that 81.6% of survey participants opted for the second specialization, even within a different faculties (Option I - social assistance, and Option II - Economic Research) and 53.8% opted for even the third degree. A previous study on a new batch of students on

decision-making styles promoted in choosing a career, highlighted the importance of style „to choose seif", when someone make career choices, that could explain this choice multiple participants in the study.

➢ As the level of information regarding the specialization for which students registered, 66.9% of participants claimed to have information about specialization they have registered but not enough, implying a certain readiness to assimilate new information.

➢ Establishing the link between preferred school discipline and specialization the students have registered requires a certain knowledge of the educational field they have opted, the results of this study revealling that 55.6% of participants said that there was a strong link between those two. Thus, we conclude that over half of respondents have knowledge about educational choice, although we do not know the quantity, nature and specific knowledge.

The results of this study confirm the hypothesis that „although most participants in the study have not previously received counselling services and guidance on career, expresse their readiness to follow a module on career counselling and guidance, during an year". In the following arguments we support these claims:

➢ 78.2% did not receive counselling and career guidance. To support these finding come the results from processing data regarding the information sources through which young graduates have collected information on specialization for which they originally chose. If graduates would have received orientation and career counselling, we would expect that the main sources of information to be the teachers, principals and advisers. But the results show that the main source of information was: brochure for admission in the „University" 1 December 1918 Alba Iulia", 70.9% of subjects inspiring from it. A fairly important role in terms of spreading information to the young graduates have had friends (for 27.3% of survey participants).

➢ As regards the intention to follow a module on career counselling and guidance, the percentage who answered „I do not know" is 49.1% and of those who responded positively is 37.6%. The indecision of the majority of study participants can be explained by lack of information regarding the content of such a module (40.7% of survey participants have not previously received services on career guidance and counselling) or lack of interest, translated by perception that once the election ends of a specialization and a career orientation as well, attending such a module might seem unnecessary.

The second chapter of Part Two, entitled "Experimental Study – Project attending counselling and career guidance of students", describes the three steps taken in order to validate "Project student counselling and career guidance": design, implementation and evaluation.

STUDY 3

The premise from which we started this study is that solving career problems and confusion in decision making, experimentation with negative emotional states on a commitment, external conflict and increased motivation to achieve career-related goals can lead to improve performance in a career choice.

Considering the needs identified by previous studies, we proposed a project development advice and guidance on career, so choosing an educational or occupational field to make the students informed, based on sufficient knowledge of itself and the world of work, forming decision making skills and following a well-structured action plan.

Research hypotheses

Supposing that "Project attending counselling and career guidance of students", contribute to:

1. lower overall level of dysfunctional career cognitions;
2. eliminate confusion regarding career choices;
3. decreased anxiety-makers, generated by its inability to get a commitment to a specific career choice;
4. reducing external conflict generated by different perceptions of policy maker and the key persons in his life, regarding choosing his career.

Methodology

Participants

The survey was conducted for one year, during September 2005-June 2006 and was performed on a sample consisting of 140 experimental students (3 classes of the Eleventh and Tenth-2), a high school technical profile, in Alba Iulia. To validate the survey data we used a control group consisting of 105 students (two classes of the X, a class has a class XI and the XII) of the same school.

Methods used

To identify the overall level of dysfunctional cognitions, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety and external conflict, we translated and adapted the Romanian population Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI), developed by Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, Saunders (1996) . Psychometric qualities of the test allowed us to use inventory for trial purposes, at an appropriate level, achieving the following indicators: internal consistency coefficients CTI Total (overall score of dysfunctional cognitions - 0.92), scale DMC (decision making confusion - 0.84), AC scale (commitment anxiety - 0.72) and EC scale (external conflict - 0.64), test-retest coefficients CTI Total (0.77), scale DMC (0.73), scale CA (0.70) and EC scale (0.59). The results show a fairly high for overall score (Total CTI), moderate for DMC and CA scales and low for EC, this being due to the low number of items constituting the scale and / or issues specific to

adolescent development. If valid, with a focus on convergent validity, significant correlations were observed between the nevrotism scale Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) and Global CTI Total score, scale Decision making confusion (DMC), Commitment Anxiety scale (CA) of Career Thoughts Inventory. All these results indicate that although some factors (DMC, CA) had a moderate score, there is an adequate internal consistency and stability on using this tool, stressed by the validity. An internal consistency and stability for lower EC scale, made us to be more cautious in using this scale, although this scale items discussed in advisory work demonstrated us the conflict situation in which the respondent is.

Detailing research content

I. Design

Our intention has been to provide a model for career counselling and guidance that could involve all the "educational agents": students, teachers, masters and teachers-advisers. Thus, we designed:

➢ specification of student work - including media information and worksheets

➢ Web-masters course for teachers - including curriculum module student's advice and career guidance, timing, and units of learning projects

➢ model of career counselling, advice to the teachers - they are running advisers described steps: identifying cognitions negative / dysfunctional career, change their cognition and their reformulation in an adaptive sense.

In developing "Project student counselling and career guidance", we relied on the "Cognitive information processing theory of career", whose authors are Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon (1996) and model building motivation - ARCS: attention, relevance, confidence, satisfaction, designed by Keller (1987).

"Cognitive information processing theory of career" suggests that choice and a decision on his career, is a cognitive process that is based on two constructs:

➢ The pyramid of Information Processing Domains: refers to the content problem solving and decision involving self-knowledge, occupational knowledge, skills and metacognition decision making;

➢ CASVE cycle: refers to the process of problem solving and decision making, including phases such as: communication, analysis, synthesis, evaluation and implementation.

The aim of this approach is to assist individuals with career today and acquisition of appropriate problem solving skills and decision making skills that will assist them in future
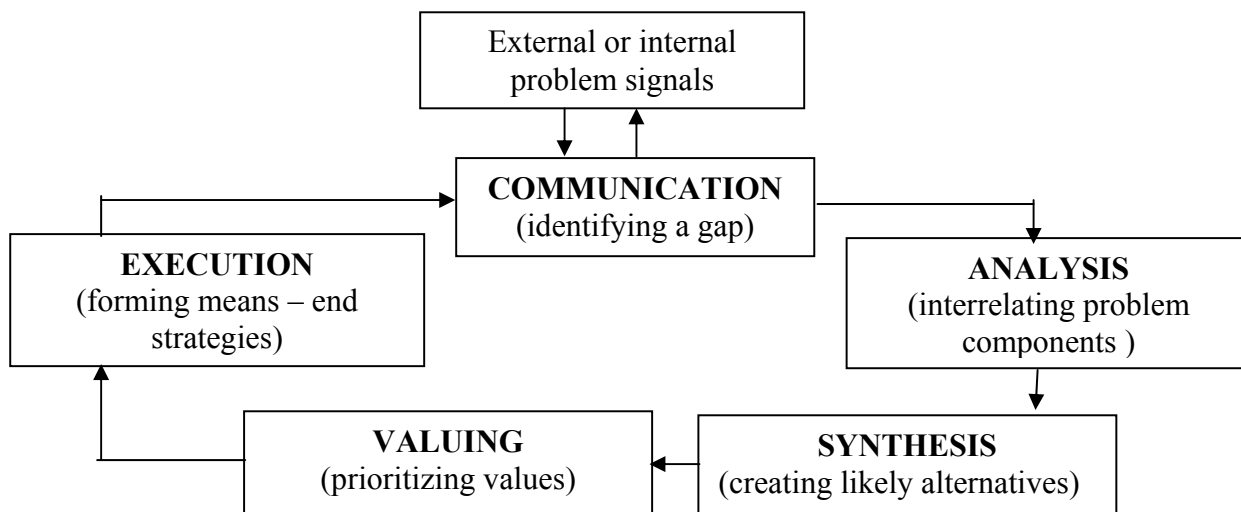
Figura 1. The Pyramid of Information Processing Domains

Sursa. *Career Development and Services: A Cognitive Approach*, de Peterson G.W, Sampson J.P., Reardon R.C., 1991, p.28.
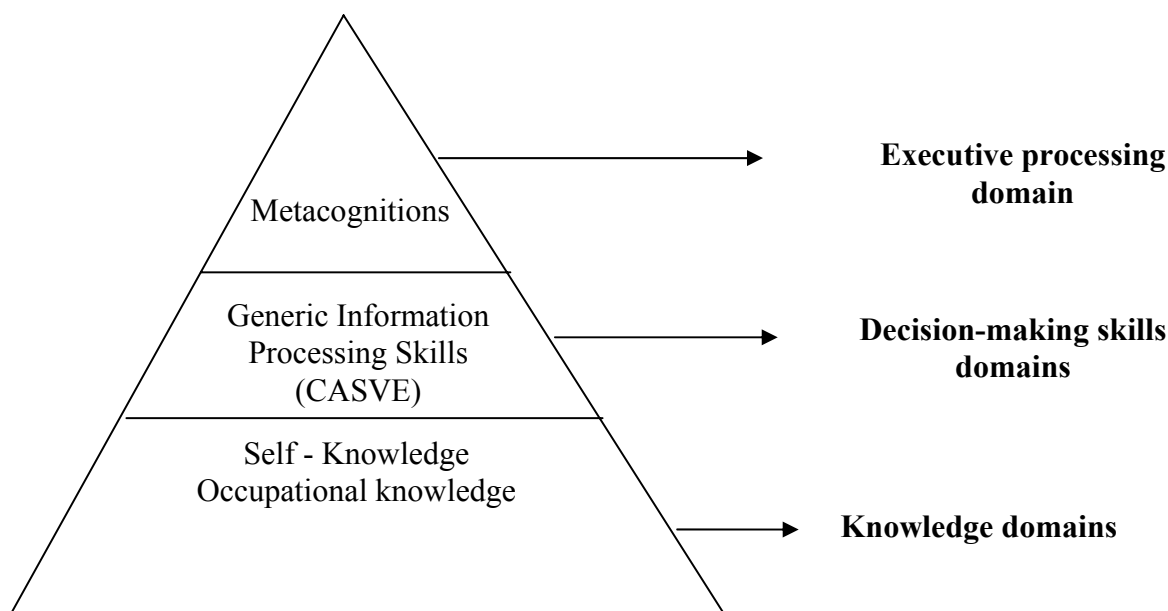
Figura 2. CASVE Cycle

Sursa. *Career Development and Services: A Cognitive Approach*, de Peterson G.W, Sampson J.P., Reardon R.C., 1991, p.33.

Keller (1987) developed this model to improve learning among students. We have proposed to transfer this model for guidance in career exploration to motivate students to actively work environment and career motivation to implement the decision, respecting the essential elements of the model as follows:

a. Attention: developing strategies to arouse and sustain curiosity and interest by promoting performance models.;

Subcomponents:

Perception (attention capture) or watching a movie career or stories of success;

Investigation (propensity to stimulate investigation): tracking how a person operates in his family or autobiographies of people looking for success;

Diversity (attention maintenance): follow-up, at work, of how different people operate;

b. Relevance: developing strategies to identify needs, career interests of students, the design goals and ways of achieving these goals;

Subcomponents:

Goal setting: depending on the interests, values and skills students are established certain intermediate goals;

Joining reasons: optimal timing for taking responsibility to achieve goals;

Familiarity: updating strategies for achieving goals, based on previous experience of students;

c. Confidence: developing strategies to help students develop positive expectations, opposite to their goals;

Subcomponents:

Performance requirements: the formation of positive expectations for the attainment of career;

Success / opportunity: realizing the experience to sustain and intensify faith in their powers;

Personal control: awareness that the success of students across the achievement of the aim is the result of their efforts and skills;

d. Satisfaction

Subcomponents:

Natural consequences: experience situations in which students can demonstrate teir competence to achieve certain goals;

Positive consequences: the creation of situations in which students can receive feedback for their efforts in achieving intermediate goals;

Combining the two approaches I have built my own model of counselling and career guidance of the students. Thus the main components of the model focused on career choice in terms of capacity, motivation and opportunity. In general, these components I have presented thus:

1. Introduction to career planning issues

O_1 - identifying student's learning styles;

O_2 - release and motivating students to have group experience ;

O_3 - creating an optimal working environment and security;

O_4 - generate interest and enthusiasm for the Project;

2. Initial stage of career choice

O_1 - identifying educational and occupational options, student's initial;

3. Career decision making: analysis phase

a. Understanding oneself

O_1 - clarifying interests, values, student's skills;

O_2 - identifying personality traits, the role of career;

b. Understanding the areas of study and occupational areas

O_1 - determining future occupations;

O_2- analysis per business occupations;

O_3 - Analysis of educational areas, of specializations offered by the educational system;

O_4 - identifying sources of information, exploring educational and career paths;

O_5 - information on national education and employment opportunities;

c. Understanding how the decisions are made

O_1- identification students'decision styles

O_2 - analysis of how decision-making styles affect future elections;

O_3 - recognition of decision-making stages;

d. Thinking about my decision making - metacognition

O_1 - specifying sources that can block / hinder the process of career decision making;

O_2 - identifying obstacles that may block / hold decision-making process;

O_3 - analysis and assessment of metacognitive ability;

4. Career decision: synthesis phase

O_1 - identify possible areas of occupational and / or education interests;

O_2 - choose up no more than three work areas, based on information gathered;

5. Career decision making: evaluation phase

O_1 - analysis of first career choices, depending on cost-benefit criterion, perception of significant individuals, community perception and cultural group

6. Career decision: stage execution

O_1 - drawing up the individual action plan

O_2 - developing skills to promote their image in order to obtain a job

O_3 - experiment with situations in which students will be able to achieve the objectives

7. Intermediate stage of career choice

O_1 - identify changes appeared in student's career choice process

O_2 - identify level of solving career problems

8. School success and professional motivation

O_1 - implementing strategies to sustain curiosity and interest, across the first career choices

O_2 - the establishment of strategies to develop positive expectations opposite goals;

9. Final stage of career choice

O_1 - identifying final educational and occupational options of students

II. Implementation

The project was implemented in 2005-2006 school year.

Deployment methods included:

➢ working class students organized by teachers in classes (29 hours), under a tutor Professor;

➢ individual and group counselling of students with high and very high level of dysfunctional career cognitions, of confusion in making decisions, of the anxiety of commitment and external conflict, outside of the class, under Professor adviser.

To support teachers - masters, besides "The course designed for teachers, masters", we held weekly meetings with teachers masters, for analysis of each meeting held with students, discussing relevant issues, the difficulties encountered in running „Project advice and career guidance of the students".

III. Evaluation

III.1. Results

Interaction between the two groups (experimental group - control group) and changes occurring over time (phase is pre - posttest), revealed the results statistically significant for both the overall score of dysfunctional cognitions and the three other career cognitions Inventory scales, as follows:

➢ for the CTI Total: $F(1, 243) = 374.67$, $p < 0.001$ and therefore we welcome a significant reduction in dysfunctional cognitions on career choices as a result of participating in „Project student counselling and career guidance";

➢ for DMC (decision making confusion): $F(1, 243) = 159.17$, $p < 0.001$ and therefore we welcome a significant decrease in the „confusion in the decision" as a result of participation in „Project student counselling and career guidance".

➢ for (commitment anxiety): $F(1, 243) = 266.10$, $p < 0.001$ and therefore we welcome a significant decrease in the „anxiety of commitment" as a result of participating in „Project student counselling and career guidance".

➢ for EC (external conflicts): $F(1, 243) = 164.16$, $p < 0.001$ and therefore we welcome a significant decrease in the „external conflict" as a result of participation in „Project student counselling and career guidance".

All these changes are captured and in the graphic below as follows:

Figura 3. Graphical representation of the average of the two groups regarding the overall level of dysfunctional cognitions (CTI total) phase is pre and posttest

CTI total
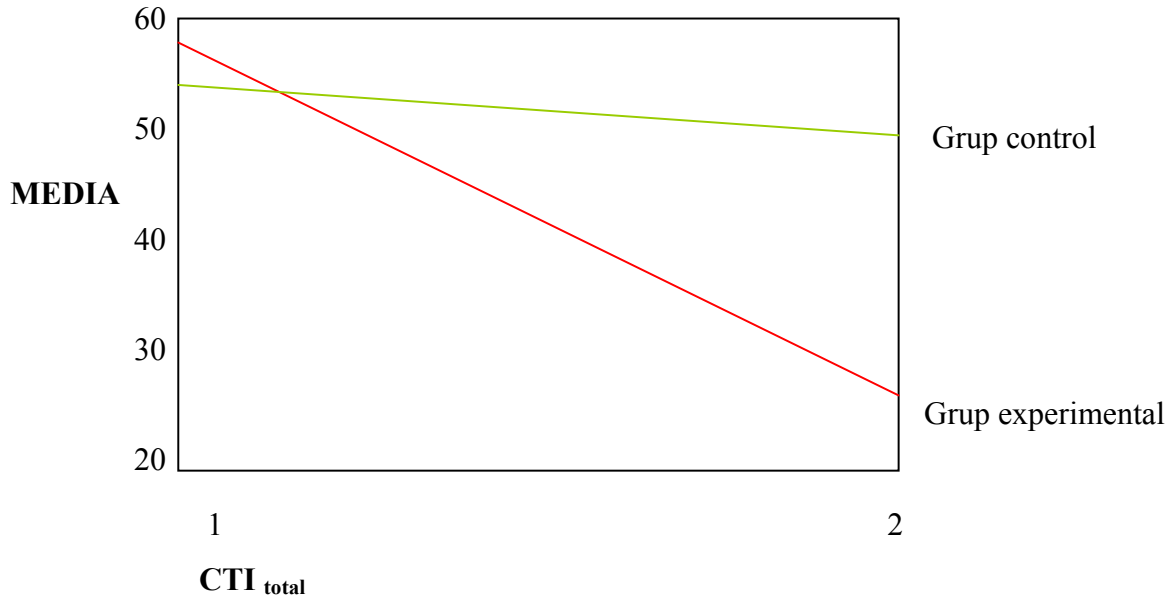
Figura 4. Graphical representation of the average of the two groups in terms of " decision making confusion " (DMC), the stage is pre and posttest

DMC
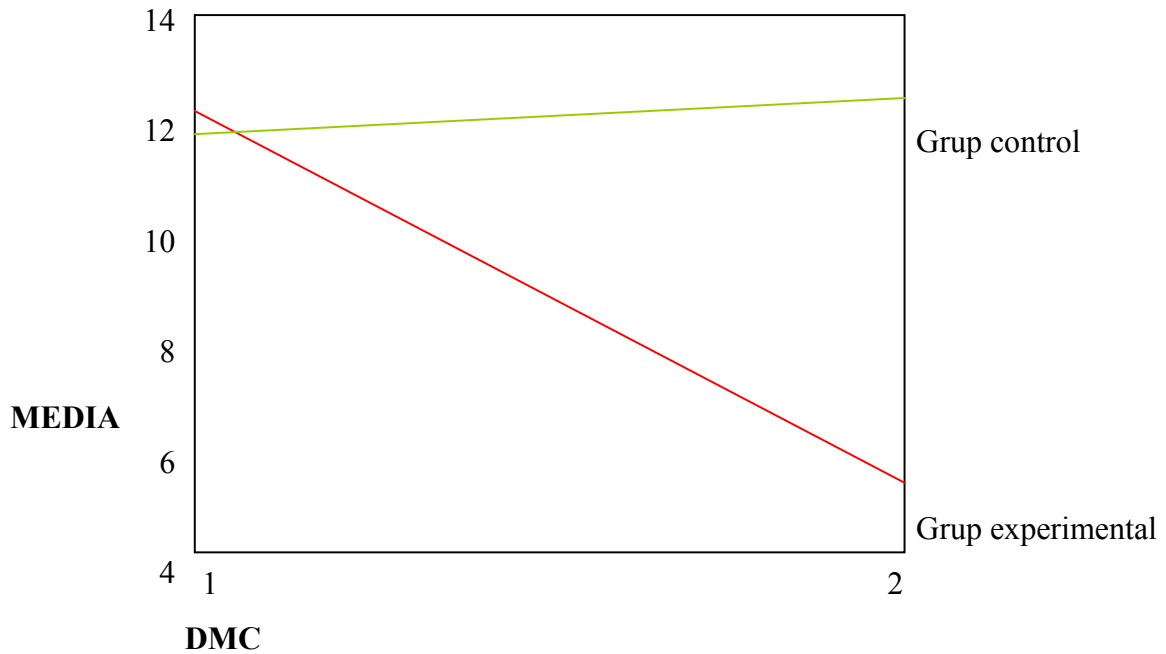
Figura 5. Graphic representation of the average of the two groups in terms of "commitment anxiety (CA) phase is pre and posttest
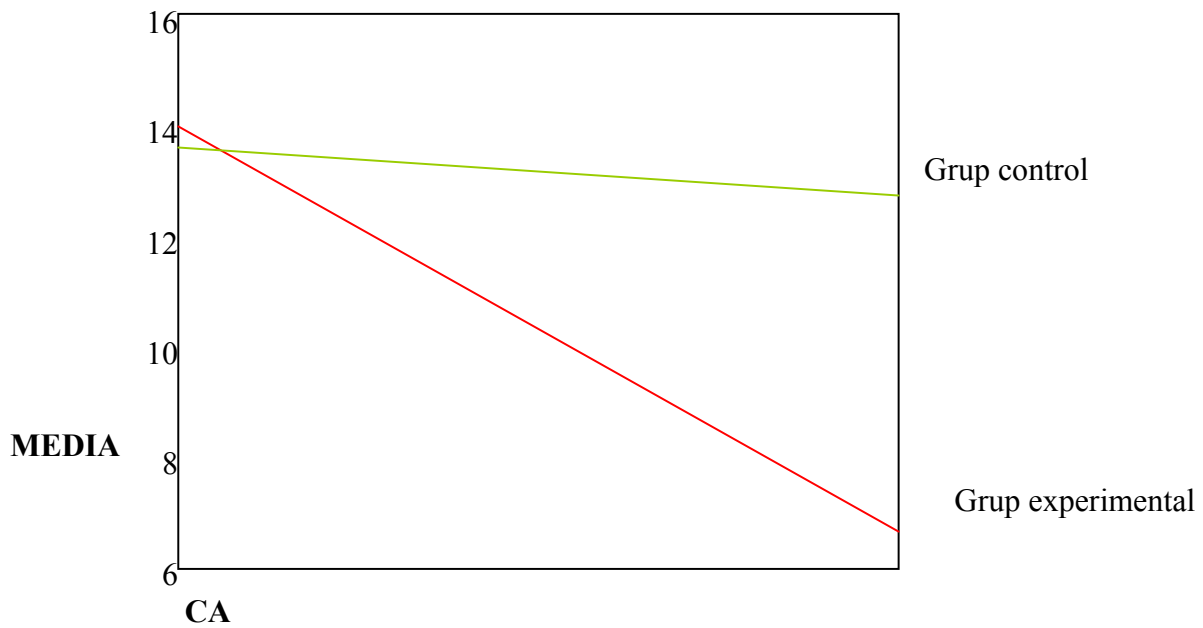
Figura 6. Graphical representation of the average of the two groups in terms of "external conflict" (CE) phase is pre and posttest
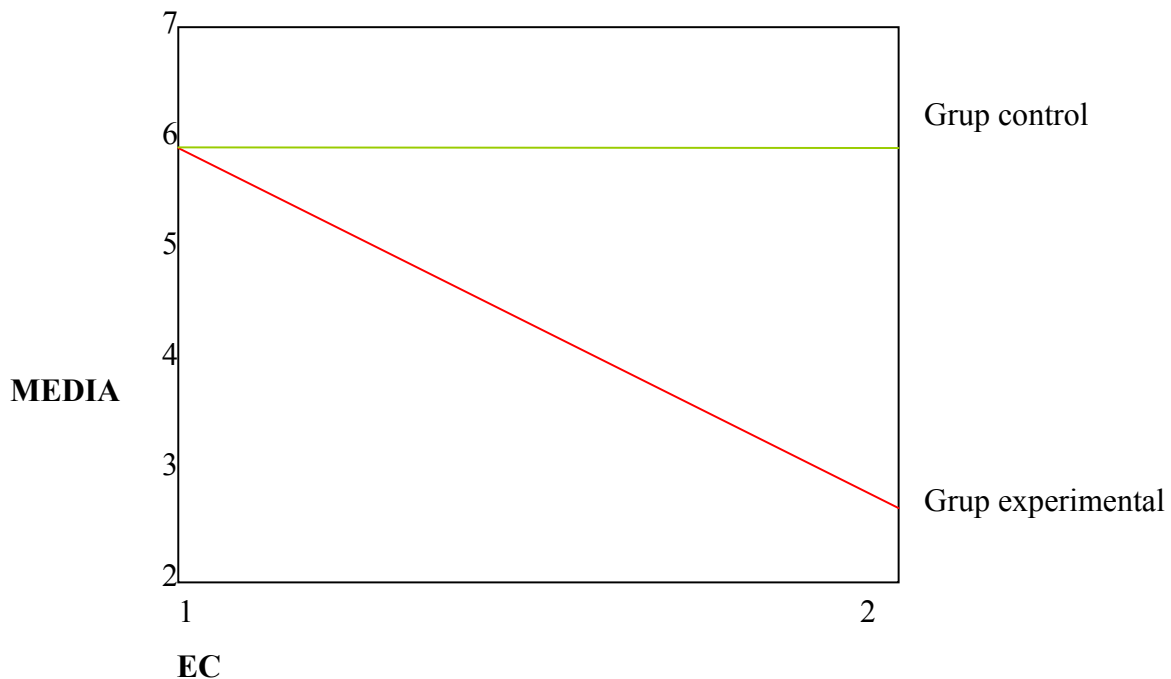
In addition we have developed pairs t test between the scores before and after application Career Thoughts Inventory,, identifying the size effect in experimental groups,

Pairs t test was applied to assess the impact of intervention on scores CTItotal DMC, CA, CE. The results of these treatments showed a significant decrease in scores, as a result of browsing Project of student counselling and career guidance and a high magnitude of the effect, in any career cognitions Inventory scales, as described below.

	$m_{pretest}$	$\sigma_{pretest}$	$m_{posttest}$	$\sigma_{posttest}$	t	p	size effect η^2
CTI$_{total}$	56,90	13,37	27,29	10,03	30,30	0,001	0,86
DMC	12,38	5,14	5,37	3,39	19,08	0,001	0,72
CA	14,35	3,57	6,81	2,90	27,19	0,001	0,84
EC	5,92	2,16	2,74	1,71	21,65	0,001	0,77

III.2. Discussions

In conclusion we can say a significant reduction in dysfunctional cognitions on career choices, the „decision making confusion", the „anxiety of commitment" and „external conflict" as a result of participation in the „students' counselling and career guidance". All these results confirm the work assumptions, stressing the efficiency of the „Project student counselling and career guidance";

These results are confirmed by teachers - masters involved in the project, whoshowed that student involvement in proposed activities occurred gradually, with the discovery of the usefulness of the training offer. Another positive aspect revealed was that open discussion with the whole class or working groups, providing constant feedback, made the students to become more open to communication self awareness and more involved in individual and group tasks.

Among the activities with an impact on students' motivations, reflected in their choices as favorites can be mentioned: the description of „the factors that lead to success", viewing the film „How to introduce yourself to an interview", feedback evaluation from others, identifying their values, decision-making styles, implementation of projects related to labor supply and demand jobs in the labor market, occupations, labor market analysis, observation of people at work, shaping of the biographies of successful people.

Students who received individual and group counselling expressed enthusiasm about the benefits browsing in such a project, benefits which they translate as: „I never thought talking about my problems, I find solutions to them, I felt that if I say what I think the others will laugh at me", „Now I realize that we all have something to do and that we all have weaknesses, nobody's perfect," „I am pleased that I was able to realize better what I want to do in life and I managed to communicate this to my parents", „at first I took this project in more play, then I realized that helps me to realize who I am, what I want to do later and this made me treat it seriously". Student's final comments were many and various, mostly highlighting the practical utility of conducting such a project and personal benefits this have brought them.

All these results allow us to conclude on the effectiveness of conducting such a Project, by lowering the overall level of dysfunctional cognitions, decision-making confusion, anxiety and a commitment to reduce the conflict with significant persons in the students' life .

The last part, captured as „Conclusions" concludes the thesis by providing a summary of the main contributions and focuses on some limitations and future research.

The main contribution of this thesis is the utility and innovative character of the model student counselling and career guidance, verified and validated, in 2005-2006. The themes proposed have a logical progress being easily adapted for classroom teachers-masters. The exercises proposed to students, most worksheets are easy to go and complete. Many of these exercises were designed as a starting point for analysis of intra-and interpersonal, in classroom discussions, in the debates. A great emphasis was placed on the interaction students - teachers, masters, giving feedback on students, leading to the improvement of students communication, increasing motivation to participate in such projects, confirmed by teachers -masters throughout the year.

As difficulty encountered during the research, we emphasize that the students' school programme, sometimes 7 hours , made the sequencing of activities outside school classes to be difficult (individual and group counselling). As a solution we used to conduct these activities, merged, during practice, expanding the worksheets at home.

Like any research approach, studies presented in this thesis have a number of limitations. These limits can be classified into the following categories: limitations related to experimental method and limits regarding the type and number of subjects selected for study.

 Of these limitations, we believe that most important is the type of participants in the study. All studies were high school students as target group, which makes extrapolation of findings to other categories of participants impossible.

Another limit concerns the translation and adaptation of the Career Thoughts Inventory only for Romanian school population, although the authors of the Inventory recommend him both for students and for adults. Therefore, it would be useful for such Inventory to be adusted to other categories.

Another limit of this scientific approach would be that I have not pursued the retesting the study participants after a certain period of time to verify the temporal stability results

Noting how our dysfunctional cognitions may affect our career decisions, we suggest as a research perspective the development of a project to provide advice and career guidance for people in other categories such as students or unemployed.

Another perspective that we consider to study is the involvement of all significant persons in their life, especially family, designing and implementing a way to address them.

In conclusion, through this research, we aim to offer:

➢   comprehensive summary of key studies and relevant theories for guidance on career;

➢ needs a comprehensive picture of student counselling and career guidance;

➢ a project on career counselling and guidance, comprehensive and coherent, responsive to the needs of students career counselling and guidance;

➢ media information for teachers and teacher advisors masters to support activities for students career counselling and guidance;

➢ a valid instrument to determine students' progress objectively, in terms of solving career problem and career choices.

Taken together, the book supports practitioners in counselling and career guidance, providing a theoretical and especially scientifically based framework

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