

# Mass media influence on high school graduates choice of professional domain

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**Abstract.** *In the following article we will discuss the subject of media influence on career decisions and the choice of a professional route, by adolescents, after completion of high school studies.*

*The hypothesis underlying this work and subsequently, of a research, is that young people are much more influenced in choosing a particular professional field, promoted by in Media, respectively, a career in avant-garde fields (e.g. "vlogging", "blogging"), compared to young people a decade or two ago, whose values, expectations, skills and skills for certain professional fields did not make a discordant note with those of their parents, mentor teachers or other role models that they had learned and followed. Today, young high school graduates, vocational or theoretically, have changed their values and expectations about their future career, or work, the profession they will actually perform, under the growing influence of the free movement of information in the virtual environment, the Internet; Are focus on achieving the immediate notoriety to which they aspire by following a media-promoted career. As a result of the need to be paid more and more than the hours of work the psycho-physical effort involved in a particular activity, these young graduates will seek professions, future work through social networks, in classical journalistic publications or in the in television broadcasts, career fairs or information on new professions, at the fashion", promoted multi-Media. All these societal changes involving new professions and occupations will have a major impact on their decision to access a particular profession, area of activity, not taking into account, in the end, cases of personal values, skills and abilities they have for those professional fields for which long-term training is no longer appropriate!*

**Keywords:** choice, profession, influence Media, success, values

## Introduction

In a century when information travels at the speed of light, dominated by technology, a world that gives you every question, a multitude of answers, in various fields of activity, the conscious field of choices that young graduates make, about preparing for a particular profession, after graduating from high school, narrows, the information that is at "a click distance", influences them the perceptive field about what is beneficial to their professional path, and from the multitude of options, they are often tempted to consider according to what is promoted media, what seems to be notorious, and then

anticipate that it would bring them immediate benefits in meeting some of the most diverse needs (money, success, fame, notoriety, easy work on physical exertion and the effort of time invested in the activity...).

The media presents in an attractive way the evolution of the work market through job fairs/career, through classical journalistic publications and online, through the television presentation and through the Internet of personalities, models of success in various professions, however, young people promoted as successful in avant-garde fields, "influencers" who dictate trends in vast fields of activity, catch the most in young audiences, even before they reach the age of the first elections, adolescence, namely, children of elementary school age and up to the level of the middle classes, to whom they become fans and regard them as idols. These young people with impact on social media, forums and online platforms, who enjoy the attention and notoriety of the press, fashionable publications, like tabloids, have become our children's new successful career models! They seem attractive all the more so because their success, relatively easy, seems to "overnight", leads young people not to consider the voluntary effort on time and involvement in post-secondary, university and postgraduate studies as necessary and timely!

Whether we are talking about star-actors, singers, blog writers, vlogging writers or promoters of various products through the Internet - such as influencers, dictators in fashion and technology, they are constantly increasing their income thanks to their followers on specialized sites and leading many high school students, teenagers, to seek to assert themselves in a similar way.

Media influences, in the opinion of the authors of the paper, impact more strongly than ever on the permeable psyche of generations of young people who, at present, in the entire pre-university educational process have been the target of educational reforms that, instead of making their thinking more flexible, developing their critical, analytical spirit, in relation to the information with which they come into contact, see themselves in a situation of oscillating more than all times, in future professional elections.

In Romania, the development of new highly digitized technologies, the spread and increase of Internet speed, have generated new ways of searching and solving the needs of informing young people about the profession, the work market and the level of employability(Centrul Județean de Resurse și Asistență Educațională Iași, n.d).

Work migration to the West, seasonal or long-term abandonment by parents on generations of children and adolescents, deprived them of models, authentic life milestones, emotional and moral support, but, above all, disrupted their process of individuality, made it difficult to delineate and establish personal boundaries in front of virtual attractions, and deprived them of practicing appropriate patterns of behavior. , proactive lying on the employment and professional life that they could have provided if they had worked in the country (Allport, 1991, p. 81).

## **Literature review**

### ***Early childhood and fantastic dreams of choosing a career, imagining a professional future: The girls dream of becoming doctors, and the boys are firefighters!***

Early childhood is characterized as the most imaginative period traversed by the human being. The fervent imagination helps the child to know the world from the perspective of others, to develop his thinking by analysing all the environmental, family and social factors with which he interacts. The child's imagination is guided by the fantasy that underlies "magical thinking". It develops around the age of 18 months,

when children begin to play creating imaginary worlds. The child's magical thinking is based on his false beliefs that they can change reality, unfavorable events only if they believe and want enough (Tomša, 1999, p.34).

Magical thinking develops between 18 months and lasts until around the age of 8, when the child reaches the stage of concrete operations and integrates the concept of permanence of objects and reversibility of phenomena, according to Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development. At this stage, irrational beliefs make children dream of saviours, heroes, influenced by gender stereotypes, as well as media influences, TV cartoons and the encouragement to believe in characters such as Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, or the Fairy. Little table. The girls become in their fantasies about future careers doctors, the boys dream of firefighters and policemen.

Although the stage of magical thinking lasts until around the age of 8, its fantasies fundamentally change the child's image of himself, the world and life, of the tangible and intangible. Studies and research on the period of magical thinking have shown that those who populated their childhood with "imaginary friends" developed more empathy and social intelligence, and these children became more creative adults in solving problems. Crossing the stage of magical thinking is essential in our development as individuals, without magical thinking people would be overwhelmed by existential anxiety when they realized that "they are just a non-permanent collection of pointless molecules," says Matthew Hutson in "The 7 Laws of Magical Thinking: How Irrational Beliefs Keep Us Happy, Healthy, and Sane" (Hutson 2012, cited in Gardner & Davis, 2015, p.97).

"Magic thinking" helps us to make sense of a world whose meaning is not easy to understand, gives us comfort and apparent control over the environment, helps us accept our mortality and therefore, says the same author, would characterize us all of us human beings.

### ***The role of Social Learning in the crystallization of the first directions of choosing a future professional path of students***

Social learning is a fundamental process that all human individuals go through, from childhood to adulthood. This process takes place through three stages - Imitation, Identification and Self-Reinforcement. In this way the child learns to communicate about himself and the world with others, learns to manifest certain desirable or undesirable behaviours, observing and imitating others. In the game with friends, the child, by imitation, reproduces what significant adults in his life, manifest in relation to him or others. Imitating role models, attachment people in the child's life - parents, grandparents, siblings, cousins, teachers, is a first step in understanding their own needs and needs, later, and those of others (non-me). He learns about himself by imitating others who become his mirrors.

Children invent role-playing games about the professions of adults when the need arises to identify with them, in the process of social learning. Identifying the child with the beloved parent involves learning by observation the adult's behaviours and actions, his interactions with those around him that he will replicate in his game.

The child wants to be like dads or moms - to earn money, to help other people, to travel and use the talents and abilities he sees endowed with them (to play like dads at the piano or to paint, to cook as mommy ...) and then the games will abound in such imitations.

Learning and experiencing life in childhood is done through imitation and identification with the adult to whom it is attached, or whom the child perceives as dominant (out of the need for security is identified with the strong) and are considered fundamental

steps in acquiring intrapersonal intelligence and high-level interpersonal skills for the future adult (Brich, 2000, p. 97).

In addition to imitation and identification, the child's behavior is shaped by a system of punishments and rewards that adults introduce in education and which is meant to ensure the predominant manifestation by the child of socially and morally accepted behaviors. Thus, by rewarding the desired behaviors and punishing the intolerable ones, the adult contributes in the social learning process through which the child passes, to the acquisition of norms and judgments, moral and social values specific to the culture of which the child is part.

Research on social learning by modelling children's behaviours by adults, through the system of rewards and punishments, revealed that psychological punishments applied to children who manifested intolerable behaviours (punishment such as withdrawal of the disease against the child from the adult) led to the development of a strong sense of Self-Consciousness in the child, and the physical punishments applied to them for intolerable behaviours, did not lead to the development of an adequate Self-Consciousness of the child. The results of an experiment conducted for this purpose on some children giving a test showed that those children who had suffered emotional punishment from adults for inappropriate behaviour did not copy that test when given the opportunity, and those who had suffered physical punishment, beatings for the same inappropriate behaviour, they copied when given the opportunity, a sign that the former had a high self-consciousness, and the latter had a weak consciousness (Cojocar, 2008, p.112).

Self-reinforcement, as a stage in the process of social learning, requires that people, from the age of self-awareness - adolescence to adulthood, be able to define and set successful standards for their own behavior. These standards involve taking punishments and rewards for missing, achieving or exceeding one's own standards of success.

Rewards can take the form of positive emotional reinforcements such as pride, satisfaction, and punishments take the form of shame and guilt, the latter, lived intensely can lead to depressive states, depression is considered self-punishment through intense emotional suffering.

For young schoolchildren, the rewards for learning and manifesting behavior that is accepted by adults with an educational role in their lives could be intrinsic in nature, when little ones seek the attention and affection of parents and teachers, or extrinsic, such as material rewards, games, sweets, good grades that would attract the sympathy of colleagues and other loved ones in the family or school.

Things are different for high school and middle school students, in terms of behavioural modelling through rewards and punishments (Brich, 2000, p. 98).

Children at puberty find it a reward to be praised in front of colleagues, peers whose opinion becomes a priority in forming a positive self-image, they want to belong to the group, to be accepted and assimilated by it, and if they are criticized by teachers, family members or other peers for their role as opinion leaders in the group they belong to, it can be by far, the greatest punishment they can receive. Exclusion, emotional intimidation at this age gives rise to real catastrophes, self-image becomes negative and self-esteem low (Cosmovici, 1999, pp. 35-36).

Now, the interests of a social nature, hobbies and preferences, interests of any kind, regarding even a future career are shaped by referring to the attachment people in the puberty group. The structure of a group of preadolescents seems to be unshakable, given the common interests and similar preferences that united puberty, however, conflicts arise spontaneously and rapidly when the psycho-physiological changes

specific to puberty occur rapidly and result in rapid changes of disposition. Something completely different is happening with teenagers. They question everything and no longer listen to any system of rules that contradicts their own needs, discovering themselves and becoming more aware of the complexity of their personality being structured. This process of individuation, of differentiating the self in relation to the world and others makes them much more introspective than the pubescent and hesitant in the choices they have to make about their time, the quality of the relationships they have developed with others and the choices life and career they have to do (Cosmovici, 1999, p.37). However, since what separates us, can actually bring us closer" (Coman, 2007, p.24), even though people differentiate themselves and go through processes of individuation, they still come together and form solid groups.

### ***Decisive factors involved in the career choice of adolescents at the end of high school***

Psychotherapist and NLP trainer, Ursula Yvonne Sandner stated that "Our life is defined by our elections. We choose what we dress, what we eat, who we talk to, what we talk to, what way we take, who we go with, where we live, how we live, how we care, what we think, what we feel, what we believe, what values we have [...]" (Sandner, 2017, p.105), but all this, are naturally assimilated to the human individual, mature, after the tumultuous and question-free stage about oneself, life and the world, how is often described Adolescence, the age of intense inner turmoil.

Adolescence is a natural and necessary stage of life to move from the innocence of childhood to maturity, can often be described as a bridge, the link between the two. Now comes the confrontation with the Self through the awareness of the place and role you occupy in the world, a vision totally different from the egocentrism of childhood, in which the individual places himself "Centre of the Universe" and Maturity, or the stage of time in which man becomes balanced with expectations in relation to others, he knows himself sufficiently to become a fine negotiator of roles and place in the world. We could thus say of Adolescence that it is the time of great trials and experiences, learning is often experienced by experimentation of the 'test and error' type, but, in the end, acquiring that clarity, understanding of the self and the surrounding world leads to maturity ( Plosca, 2001).

The choice of profession is a moment of major importance in the life of every young person, being the basis of his later social integration, but factors involved in this decision-making process are complex. These may be factors of a personal, educational, economic, or contextual nature, as shown by studies in the psychoeducational field.

Professional career creation is a long process that starts early for the student with the educational path and continues with the professional path, throughout life. Career may involve prestige or significant material gains, but the balance is given by pleasure and involvement in the work tasks, by the professional environment in which the person works, known to be a lot of time spent at work, regardless of the professional field to which the young person aspires.

Career choice is directly influenced by the adolescent's level of self-knowledge in terms of skills, talents and values transmitted culturally to it by the family, and other significant members of the community to which it belongs (Plosca, 2001).

### ***Decision-making styles in career choices***

Career decision is a complex process by which the young person facing choices about the future course of a profession he wants selects an option from a number of available

options.

Mental fragility, distortions in thinking, dependence on the opinion of others cause him to oscillate between existing variants, to postpone, avoid or become impulsive, agonizing in these decisions. Knowing the decision-making style of adolescents helps people with a formative, educational role in their lives to strengthen their self-confidence and the decisions they can make about their professional future.

a) Rational style: - characterized by analysis, a logical and organized approach and careful planning before applying the decision taken;

b) Dependent style: - is always based on someone else's suggestions and advice when making important decisions, considers the guidance and support of those close to them as indispensable;

c) Avoidant style: - tends to permanently delay decision-making, or avoids being put in a position to formulate and then implement a decision on career choices;

d) Intuitive style: - he is guided by his intuitions, is impressionable and does not seek to support, to debate his decision made;

e) Spontaneous style: - takes decisions on the spur of the moment, without long, fast and steep deliberations.

### ***Career-conceptual boundaries:***

Career is the set of professional roles played throughout the active adult life whose succession can follow different trajectories over time. The career trajectory depends not only on the actions of the person at the beginning of the career and during the career, but also on the opportunities and, above all, on how the individual has clear career goals and is able to use the opportunities that arise to achieve them.

A clear distinction is made between what is defined as a profession and what a person carries out as an occupation. The profession is defined as a skill that the person obtains through studies, and the occupation is the activity that a person carries out in order to be remunerated in an economic and social unit.

### ***Factors influencing career choice***

a. Personal factors - personal values, personal interests and personal skills, decision-making style and life planning style as a whole

Factors related to the person can be grouped into factors such as the personality of the young person, which defines him as individuality, characteristics such as sex, ethnicity, and spoken language, and native country, family structure of provenance, psycho-physical integrity of the individual, age and state of health.

b. Educational factors - family and school teachers, multi-Media channels

Family and school - as formal education factors and various media channels - as informal education factors, are considered to be major sources of influence in career choices for young people at the age of major career decisions on the pursuit of a career path.

c. Economic factors - financial gain, stability of a financial income

Tempted by the opportunities offered in the form of "magical solutions" of enrichment and rapid social recognition, high school students are oriented "digitally and virtually" to choose future skills and professions that bring them money, prestige and fame, without too much effort of self-knowledge, empowerment in a field for which they do not have the necessary skills, are not willing to make great efforts for study, as one or two decades ago, and their present career choices are not made solely against the background of family, moral, social, religious, cultural values transmitted transgenerational and intracultural, as was the case in the past.

d. Contextual factors - career opportunities arising and professional training / specializing in the workplace

Since diverse communication channels and means possess the power to reach different types of audiences (Coman, et al., 2018, p.41), the media also has a growing weight in influencing the young generation, informing it about the dynamics of the work market, professional mobility, the promotion of models of career success (specialized sites, newspaper ads, job fairs), essentially all the opportunities that arise to increase the level of employability of young people.

Among the positive effects of the media on career choices is the fact that students can access full courses offered by universities around the world, and with the availability of accessible technologies, MOOCs increase access to an extraordinary number of courses offered by institutions and world-renowned teachers.

The negative effects of media influence can be identified in the choice of adolescents' career path, by taking on "false models of success" embodied by film characters and controversial can-can appearances, which present themselves as financial, social and professionally, not knowing, in essence, the compromises made for such an easy ascent by celebrities who appeared "overnight", in positions and with dominant functions of power.

## Conclusion

Students who have well-defined goals of future life and career, know their interests, skills and values, and trust their ability to make decisions will be much less subject to media influences or family pressures that can keep them away from an assumed and independent life.

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