

BULGARIAN STUDENTS' CAREER MOTIVATION AND CAREER CHOICE

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Abstract

Career motivation is related to career choice. Several studies of Bulgarian students' career motivation were conducted in 2007, 2013 and 2015. A questionnaire based on Moses typology of career motivators was used. The studied students were compared by specialties and years of study. Several career motivators have been stable during the years. More and more Stability seeking is substituting Lifestylers (private life is more important than professional duties are) as leading career motivation.

Key words: career choice, career motivation, cohort study, motivational types, university students.

Introduction

It is important to be studied students' career motivation because the students are the social category whose future is directly related to career choice and realisation. The findings from a study of students' career motivation indicated that career motivation increased with increase of level of education (Chand & Sharma, 2010). Educational motivation of age 15 was an indicator for career choice at 26 years old (Gustafson, Stattin & Magnusson, 1992). These findings reveal the importance of education for enhancement of career motivation.

Several studies of students' career motivation have been conducted in different countries and different time periods, but data is not sufficient concerning the dynamics of preferences of career motivators. A replication of the study of students' career motivators was conducted in 2004 and 2009 among USA librarian students and the results revealed similarity in answers (Taylor et al., 2010). A cohort study was conducted among students in Northern Ireland in 1999–2001, 2000–2002 and 2001–2003 that also revealed stability of career motivators in the area of social work (Wilson & McCrystal, 2007).

Some studies have found cross-cultural differences in students' career motivators (Limb & Organista, 2006). Another study pointed out the importance of external career motivators (Milos & Cicek, 2014). Intrinsic career motivation was important for taking decisions related to career change (Williams & Forgasz, 2009).

A study of Bulgarian students' career motivation has indicated the possibility for personal development as a leading career motivator (*Rezultati ot parvoto nacionalno prouchvane na profesionalnata orientatsia I motivatsia na studentite*, 2009).

This study of Bulgarian students' career motivation is based on Moses classification (2003, pp. 27-55) of eight career motivational types:

A Sociability seeker considers as important to like his/her colleagues, to get on well with his/her colleagues. She or he prefers a job where s/he meets daily with a lot of people.

Career builders strive to progress of their career, to receive recognition for their work. They agree to work whatever it may be if it presents an opening for fast promotion in their career. They are in pursuit of their goals by all means in the name of the success of their career.

It is important to an Authenticity seeker that the work gives him/her pleasure. He or she would hardly sacrifice his/her personal interests in the name of the organization s/he works for. In his/her work, s/he strives to defend one's principles. She or he tries hard to implement his/her ideas in his/her work. She or he prefers doing creative work expressing one's ideas in this way.

It is important for Personal developers in their work to acquire new knowledge and skills. They take risks and new challenges in order to develop their personality. They tend to compromise with their personal life in the name of their professional improvement. They are confused when they work with low-skilled people who do not strive for professional advancement.

Autonomy seeker prefers doing things in his/her work according to one's opinion, not according to the other expectations. He or she likes being independent. He or she prefers owning his/her business, because this gives him/her freedom.

A Novelty seeker likes frequent changes. He or she gets bored to work the same thing with the same people for a long period of time. He or she has many-sided interests. S/he loves taking risks.

Stability seekers prefer their work to be stable and to be sure in their professional future. They accept tranquilly the routine and the same professional daily round. The rules, the order and the discipline at the workplace make them feel well. They don't like to take risks. They prefer doing executive work without any risks. Innovations and changes at their job embarrass them.

Lifestylers follow the motto "I work to live, not live to work." Personal life is more important for them than their work. They avoid the extra work and the prolonged work time. They like a job allowing them enough free time. During their free time, they prefer not to think of work at all (Gian-nouli & Stoyanova, 2014).

The hypothesis supposed consistency in major career motivators among students measured in different years - 2007, 2013 and 2015, in Bulgaria.

Methodology of Research

Sample

294 Bulgarian students were studied from 2007 to 2015. In 2007, the Bulgarian students participating in the study were 163. In 2013, they were 90. In 2015, they were 41. This was a cohort study.

83 were men (28.2%). 211 were women (71.8%). They were from 17 to 58 years old. Their mean age was 23.6 years old, $SD=5$ years. They came from different parts of the country.

They studied in different majors, specialties like psychology, law, public administration, philology and linguistics, sport, etc. The students in humanitarian studies were 68.7% of the total sample. The students in philology and linguistic studies were 23.7% of the total sample. The students in sport were 7.6% of the total sample.

They were from 2nd to 5th year of study – 20% were in their 2nd year of study; 57.6% - third year of study; 8.8% - fourth year of study; and 13.6% - fifth year of study.

More than half of the respondents did not have any work experience ($N = 154$; 52.4%). The others had different work experience – from 1 month to 40 years. Their average work experience was 2 years ($SD = 4$ years).

Method of Research

A questionnaire created by Slavchov & Stoyanova (2007) measuring career motivational types according to Moses' typology (2003) was used. Each career motivational type included 8 items and the scale Lie (Social desirability) included 9 items. The answers were given on a 5-point scale from "Not at all" - 1 to "A lot" - 5.

The reliability coefficients of its scales were high enough – between .64 and $\alpha = .81$ (Slavchov & Stoyanova, 2007).

The data were statistically processed by means of SPSS 16 using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations; One Sample T Test (for comparisons with normative sample in 2007); One-Way ANOVA for comparisons of Bulgarian students' career motivational types in different years; Kruskal – Wallis non-parametric method for comparisons between years of studies and majors, specialties; and Linear Regression equation (for age and work experience differences).

Results of Research

The results on the scale of Social desirability ($M=22.4$; $SD=13.7$) indicated that the respondents were sincere in their answers, because their average value was below the mean of the normative sample 32.51 , $SD=6.22$ (Slavchov & Stoyanova, 2007), and $t=8.415$, $df=129$; $p<.001$.

A mean ranking of Bulgarian students' career motivators in 2007, 2013, and 2015 is presented in Figure 1.

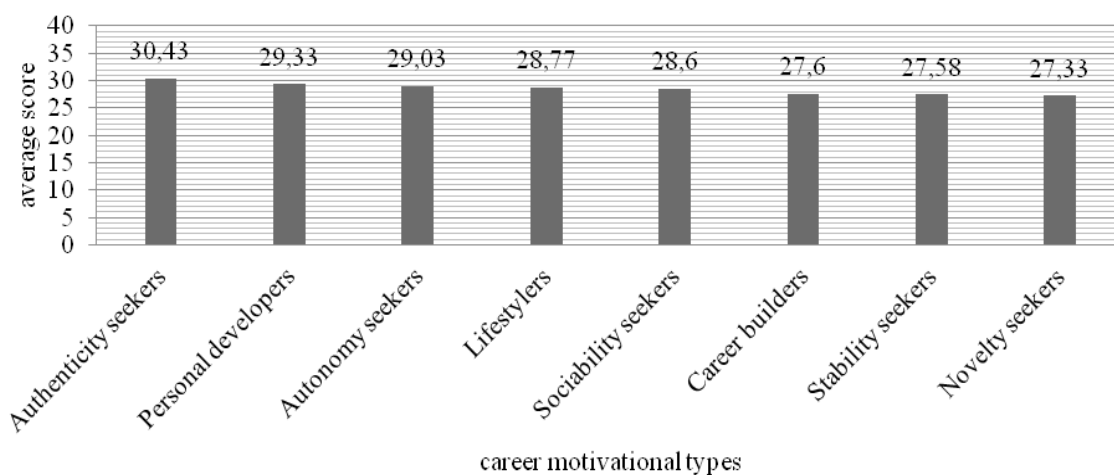


Figure 1: Bulgarian students' career motivational types (total average scores for the years 2007, 2013, and 2015).

The type of Authenticity seekers was the preferred career motivational type by Bulgarian students, followed by Personal developers and Autonomy seekers. The type of Novelty seekers was the rarest career motivator for Bulgarian students.

Preference for Authenticity seekers was related to preference for Career builders ($r=.302$; $p<.001$). Bulgarian students would strive for advance in career that they consider as relevant to their personal qualities.

Preference for Stability seekers was related to non-preference for Novelty seekers ($r= -.302$; $p<.001$). Changes in work contradict to stability.

Preference for Autonomy seekers was related to preference for Lifestylers ($r=.312$; $p<.001$). Striving for being independent is related to striving for satisfying one's needs.

Preference for Autonomy seekers was related to preference for Career builders ($r=.383$; $p<.001$). Being independent was perceived as being a head, manager, at the top of organizational hierarchy.

Preference for Sociability seekers was related to preference for Novelty seekers ($r=.363$; $p<.001$). Communication with more people, new acquaintances changes daily routine.

Preference for Sociability seekers was related to preference for Autonomy seekers ($r=.319$; $p<.001$). Seeking for independence is related to increase communication with other people in order to co-ordinate, arrange deals, etc.

Preference for Autonomy seekers was related to preference for Novelty seekers ($r=.353$; $p<.001$). Being independent is related to self-confidence in new situations.

There were also some significant gender, age, work experience, year of study and specialty dif-

ferences in Bulgarian students' career motivators. Lifestylers were more frequently Bulgarian female students ($M=29.1$; $SD=4.8$) than male ($M=27.9$; $SD=4.8$; $t_{292}=2.045$; $p=.042$). Gender differences in career motivators have been found also in some other studies (Robnett & Leaper, 2013).

Career builders were less frequent career motivators with age advance (Linear regression model; $R = .204$; $R^2 = .042$; $F_{[1, 292]} = 12.694$; $p < .001$; $B = -.195$; $t = -3.563$; $p < .001$).

Autonomy seekers were less frequent career motivators with age advance (Linear regression model; $R = .121$; $R^2 = .015$; $F_{[1, 292]} = 4.372$; $p = .037$; $B = -.114$; $t = -2.091$; $p = .037$).

Career builders were less frequent career motivators with more work experience (Linear regression model; $R = .194$; $R^2 = .038$; $F_{[1, 292]} = 11.197$; $p = .001$; $B = -.211$; $t = -3.346$; $p = .001$).

Sociability seekers were less frequent career motivators with more work experience (Linear regression model; $R = .117$; $R^2 = .014$; $F_{[1, 285]} = 3.948$; $p = .048$; $B = -.113$; $t = -1.987$; $p = .048$).

Autonomy seekers were less frequent career motivators with more work experience (Linear regression model; $R = .124$; $R^2 = .015$; $F_{[1, 285]} = 4.419$; $p = .036$; $B = -.13$; $t = -2.102$; $p = .036$).

The students in humanitarian studies (Mean rank = 73.8) were more often Personal developers (Kruskal – Wallis Chi – Square = 10.599; $df=2$; $p=.005$) than the students in sport (Mean rank = 63.3) and the students in philology and linguistic studies (Mean rank = 47.2).

The students in humanitarian studies (Mean rank = 58.4) were more rarely Lifestylers (Kruskal – Wallis Chi – Square = 12.436; $df=2$; $p=.002$) than the students in sport (Mean rank = 73.2) and the students in philology and linguistic studies (Mean rank = 85.8).

The students in their fifth (Mean rank = 85.2) and fourth (Mean rank = 83.1) years of study were more often Personal developers (Kruskal – Wallis Chi – Square = 12.689; $df=3$; $p=.005$) than the students in their third (Mean rank = 56.7) and second (Mean rank = 57.1) years of study.

The students in their third (Mean rank = 69.2) and second (Mean rank = 66) years of study were more often Lifestylers (Kruskal – Wallis Chi – Square = 10.149; $df=3$; $p=.017$) than the students in their fifth (Mean rank = 47.4), and fourth (Mean rank = 39.5) years of study.

The students in their third (Mean rank = 67), fifth (Mean rank = 66.7), and second (Mean rank = 62.8) years of study were more often Novelty seekers (Kruskal – Wallis Chi – Square = 9.441; $df=3$; $p=.024$) than the students in their fourth (Mean rank = 31.5) year of study.

There were some significant differences between Bulgarian students' career motivators in different years of study (see Table 1).

Table 1. Differences in Bulgarian students' career motivational types between years 2007, 2013, and 2015.

Career motivators	Years	N	M	SD	$F_{(2, 291)}$	p
Authenticity seekers	2007	163	30,56	3,141	0.309	.734
	2013	90	30,32	3,830		
	2015	41	30,15	3,623		
Personal developers	2007	163	29,40	3,657	5.339	.005
	2013	90	30,04	4,967		
	2015	41	27,49	4,190		
Stability seekers	2007	163	27,79	4,370	.989	.373
	2013	90	27,04	4,462		
	2015	41	27,93	4,089		
Lifestylers	2007	163	29,61	4,831	11.567	<.001
	2013	90	26,80	4,379		
	2015	41	29,73	4,588		
Career builders	2007	163	28,39	4,515	5.268	.006
	2013	90	26,77	4,920		
	2015	41	26,27	5,258		

Career motivators	Years	N	M	SD	F _(2, 291)	p
Sociability seekers	2007	163	29,86	3,683	18.952	<.001
	2013	90	26,68	4,482		
	2015	41	27,83	4,295		
Novelty seekers	2007	163	28,59	4,448	13.377	<.001
	2013	90	25,26	5,674		
	2015	41	26,85	5,131		
Autonomy seekers	2007	163	29,80	3,971	5.371	.005
	2013	90	27,82	5,464		
	2015	41	28,66	5,242		

Bulgarian students were more rarely Personal developers in 2015 compared to 2013 ($P_{LSD}=.001$) and 2007 ($P_{LSD}=.009$).

Bulgarian students were more rarely Lifestylers in 2013 compared to 2015 ($P_{LSD}=.001$) and 2007 ($P_{LSD}<.001$).

Bulgarian students were more frequently Career builders in 2007 compared to 2013 ($P_{LSD}=.01$) and 2015 ($P_{LSD}=.011$).

Bulgarian students were more frequently Sociability seekers in 2007 compared to 2013 ($P_{LSD}<.001$) and 2015 ($P_{LSD}=.004$).

Bulgarian students were more frequently Novelty seekers in 2007 compared to 2013 ($P_{LSD}<.001$) and 2015 ($P_{LSD}=.046$).

Bulgarian students were more frequently autonomy seekers in 2007 compared to 2013 ($P_{LSD}=.001$).

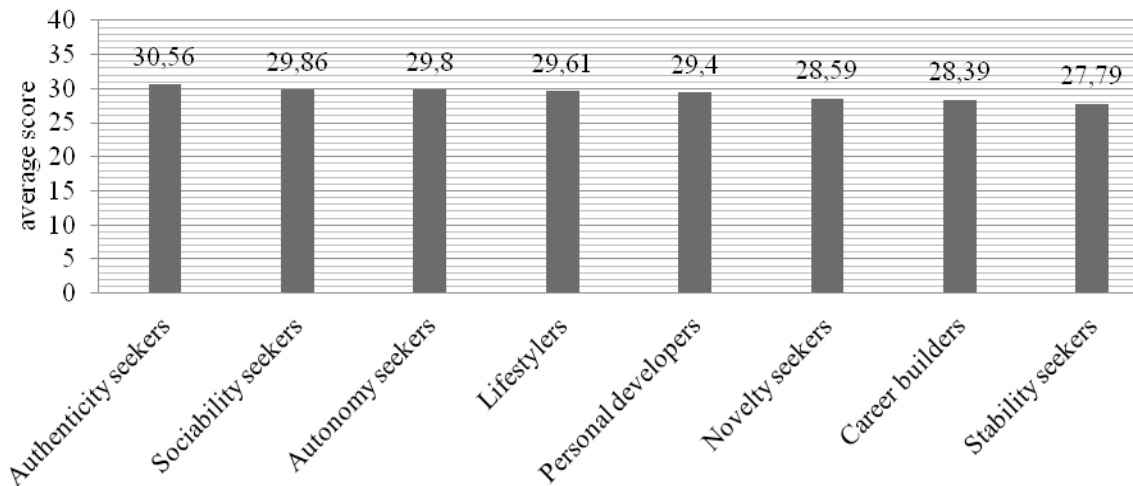


Figure 2: Bulgarian students' career motivational types in 2007.

The type of Authenticity seekers was the preferred career motivational type by Bulgarian students in 2007, followed by Sociability seekers and Autonomy seekers. The type of Stability seekers was the rarest career motivator for Bulgarian students (see Figure 2).

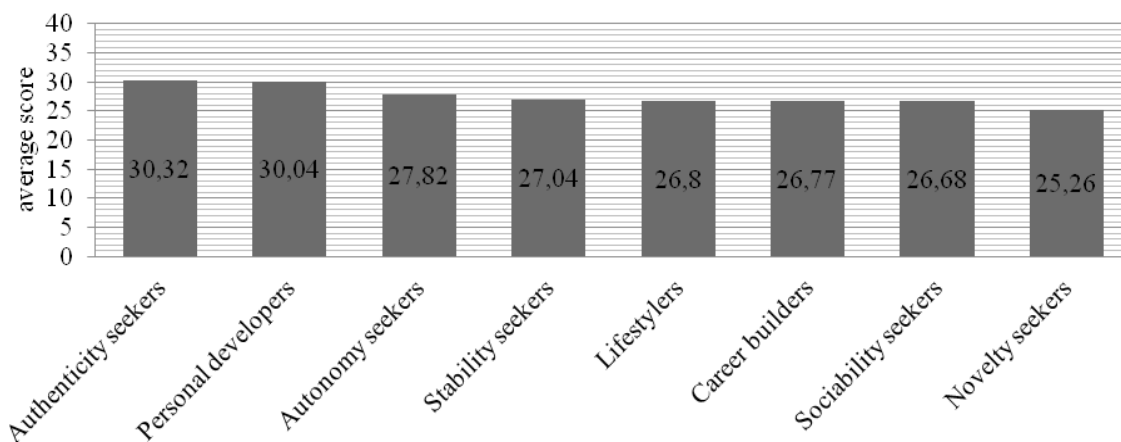


Figure 3: Bulgarian students' career motivational types in 2013.

The type of Authenticity seekers was the preferred career motivational type by Bulgarian students in 2013, followed by Personal developers and Autonomy seekers. The type of Stability seekers was the rarest career motivator for Bulgarian students (see Figure 3).

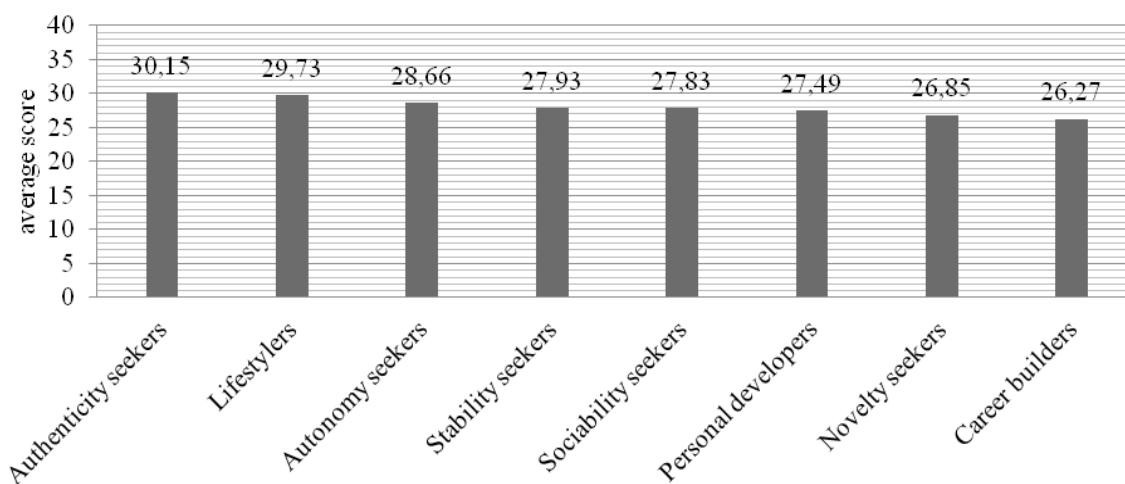


Figure 4: Bulgarian students' career motivational types in 2015.

The type of Authenticity seekers was the preferred career motivational type by Bulgarian students in 2015, followed by Lifestylers and Autonomy seekers. The type of Career builders was the rarest career motivator for Bulgarian students (see Figure 4).

This cohort study has indicated that only the first (Authenticity seekers) and the third (Autonomy seekers) preferred career motivational types by Bulgarian students were stable during the years. Bulgarian students changed their preferences for the other career motivational types. The type of Novelty seekers was among the last three career motivators for Bulgarian students from 2007 to 2015, i.e. it was non-preferred by the studied Bulgarian students.

Discussion

The hypothesis of the study that supposed consistency in major career motivators among students measured in different years - 2007, 2013 and 2015, in Bulgaria was proved partly.

Bulgarian students had stable preferences for the career motivational types of Authenticity seekers and Autonomy seekers that were among the most preferred career motivational types by Bulgarian students, while the type of Novelty seekers was among the least important career motivators for Bulgarian students from 2007 to 2015.

More and more Stability seeking is substituting Lifestylers (private life is more important than professional duties are) as leading career motivation, because of higher social-economic insecurity in the country and the increased number of the unemployed people.

The average trend for the period between 2007 and 2015 revealed that in total, Personal developers was an important career motivator for Bulgarian students (see Figure 1).

Personal developers has been among the leading career motivators in Bulgaria since 1997 (Minkov, 2007). Motives for career development related to personal development are more often declared publicly than motives related to career building (Winter & Brammar, 2014).

The role of some career motivators could be specific for a professional field. Professional autonomy was among the main motivators for choosing medicine (Pagnin et al., 2013). Job security was among main motivators for choosing medicine by students in South Africa (Draper & Louw, 2007). Social work students were more often Personal developers, because they were frequently motivated by a desire to gain knowledge and expertise, whereas business students were more often Career builders and Autonomy seekers, because career advancement and self-sufficiency were important for them (Basham & Buchanan, 2010).

Students focused on career advancement, salary, job market and prestige of the chosen field perceive great social support from family, friends and significant others (Voitkāne et al., 2006). This finding suggests the links between career motivators.

Some limitations of this study are related to the number of participating students, the use only of a self-report questionnaire, and conducting a cohort study instead of a longitudinal study.

Measuring career motivational types could be used in career consulting for revealing personal career motivators and suggesting the appropriate job. Clarifying the strengths and weaknesses of each career motivational type and better self-knowledge could be used for enhancement of work motivation.

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