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**INTEGRATED MEASURES TO INCREASE ACCESS TO HIGHER  
EDUCATION AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

Stepan Raluca Amalia (a)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) University of Bucharest, Bucharest, amalia.raluca.stepan@gmail.com,

***Abstract***

The present article tells about the execution of a diagnosis study, at regional level, as concerns the correlation of specific needs of high school pupils before and from terminal years as regards to the existing offer in the university education, at national level. The study was conducted within a financial project financed from the fund CNFIS-FDI-2016 and aimed the accomplishment of a sociological research at regional level about the specific needs of high school pupils, the impact analysis and how to put into practice the identified and suggested measures as regards the school situations and their access to higher education. In this regard, it was applied a questionnaire of 250 high school pupils in the S-W Region of Oltenia, in the period October-December 2016.

The justification for the application of this questionnaire was based on the identification of some real difficulties faced by pupils in their attempts to adapt their needs, in relation to their own professional path with the existing offer at the level of higher education. The universities give a great importance to the needs of the pupils that come from terminal classes of the high schools in the region of S-W Oltenia, in relation to what they want to find as study offer within them.

Thus, it is constantly under consideration the diversification of the educational offer through the emergence of new fields and specializations, in accordance with both the needs of the pupils' requests and the evolving trend of the labor market in the area.

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**Keywords:** Highschool pupils, professional path, higher education, educational offer.



## 1. Introduction

The counseling and career orientation centers (CCOC) perform activities by means of which they support pupils, students and **graduates** of the universities **as concerns their professional** performance and as concerns making decisions that will facilitate the academic and professional success by **means** of educational and psychological services (Bîrle, 2010). One of the studies that was performed at the level of the Counseling and **Career** Orientation Center of Craiova University aimed **the questioning and registration** of the high school pupils' options **in the region of the south west** of Oltenia as regards their subsequent educational course. The study aimed the facilitation of the access at the permanent education of the young people that want to acquire new knowledge and capacities as regards the adaptation at the **university** curriculum and subsequently at the requests of the labor market in the south west region of Oltenia. By means of carrying out the career guidance and professional guidance and by making a diagnosis study made in the period October-December 2016, the following were aimed: making a bridge between the pupils and the university environment ; raising awareness of the young people regards the importance of continuing the studies in a right and assumed direction: the promotion of volunteering in filling the resume in order to increase the employability; the increase of the measure of taking an informed decision regarding the professional career..

## 2. Problem Statement

A frequently reached limit as concerns the performance of the activities of counselling and career orientation is given by the lack of implication in taking a decision by the pupils or student that takes benefit of these services. For example, in case of the pupils, the most important thing for a decision towards a certain study field and a proper university is a level of a high degree of self-knowledge and assumption. In their absence, the results are very negative and at the same time seen in all statistics as regards the post-graduation employability and in the percent's, sometimes low, that say how many graduates work in their activity fields and how many of them don't. From the perspective of the specialty literature, the American psychologists Holland & Holland (1997) suggested a model based on a theory the feature-agent, according to which the personality of each person prevails in choosing the profession and the profile of its interest reflect its personality. There are 6 types of interest surprised by Holland, among which the realistic, artistic, investigative, social, entrepreneurial and conventional interests.

A good congruence between them and the choices of a person lead to great chances of professional accomplishment while a mismatch and a lack of self-knowledge as concerns the taking of a decision leas to a professional failure and to very many unfulfillments. Other theories centered on the personal autobiographies and on the career's development along their life belong to Super (1990) and subsequently to Savickas (2002). Based on these theories a great importance have the processes that are involved as concerns taking a decision unlike the correspondence-personality-environment. Linda Gottfredson (2002) in the theory of the circumscription, of the compromise and self-creation puts an emphasis on the pre-existent and pre- defined models for each person in part and who according to some theories puts great emphasis on the individual- stereotypes related to the social, professional statute, gender, age, the origin environment etc..

Other approaches of the decision process are given by cognitive theories between the social cognitive theory on the career - Lent, Steven D. Brown & Gail Hackett (2002). These put an emphasis on self-esteem, focus on clear aims and accepting other concrete results in the educational and professional path of a person.

### **3. Research Questions**

The objective aimed the accomplishment of a sociological research at regional level about the specific needs of high school pupils, the impact analysis and how to put into practice the identified and suggested measures as regards the school situations and their access to higher education. In this regard, it was applied a questionnaire of 250 high school pupils in the South- West Region of Oltenia, in the period October-December 2016.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The present article tells about the execution of a diagnosis study, at regional level, as concerns the correlation of specific needs of high school pupils before and from terminal years as regards to the existing offer in the university education, at national level.

### **5. Research Methods**

The work methodology is a quantitative one. In the activity that we perform within the Counseling and Career Orientation in Craiova University, we also perform a series of studies concerning:

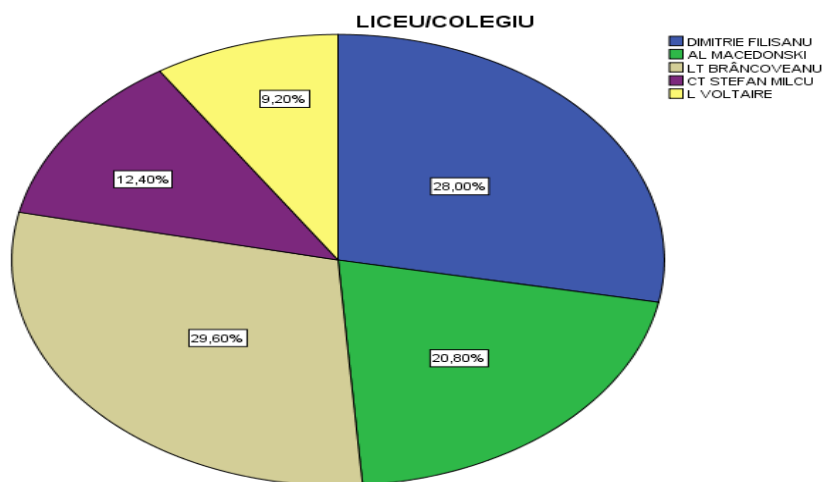
- post graduation employability of the students of UCV by means of the elaboration and the application of a questionnaire one year after finishing the studies program ( L/M/D)to a significant number of graduates of 12 faculties of UCV;
- Accomplishment of a diagnosis study at the level of the main actors of the socio economic environment from different relevant study fields regarding their specific needs about the employment process of the students who graduated higher education (request, general, specific, competences, the profile of the ideal candidate);
- The elaboration of the questionnaire for the option of the pupils in terminal grades) This questionnaire is applied as concerns highlighting the pupils' option about continuing the studies, of the chosen educational institution, of the motivation as concerns the choice that was taken.

Within this article I will briefly present the results of completing the last questionnaire, about the choice of the high school pupils regarding their professional path. The applied questionnaire was applied to a number of 250 pupils, in the period October-December 2016.

The questionnaire's items aimed the analysis of the main factors of motivation regarding the choice of the future career, the sources of the decision for the career, the option for the continuity of the studies, and if so, to university centres and long term field studies. Although premature at the level of high school, one of the items also aimed the mentioning of a job, a clear choice in this regard, making it much easier to reach the objectives.

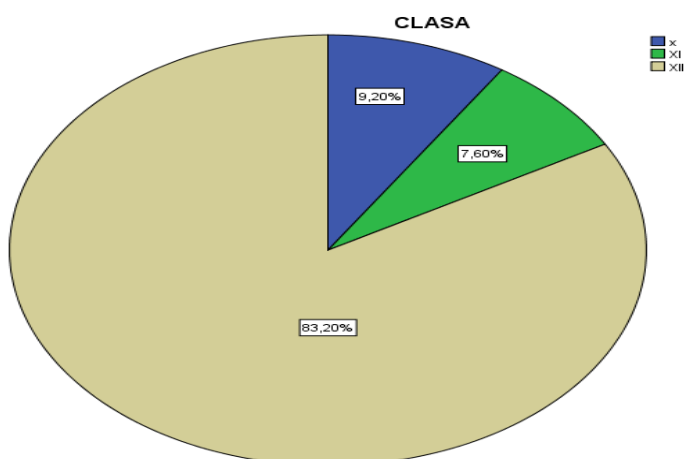
## 6. Findings

The 250 students participating in the study come from 5 high schools in the south west region of Oltenia, respectively 29,60% study at C. Brancoveanu high school in Slatina, Olt county, 28 % are students of Dimitrie Filisanu high school in Filiasi, Dolj county, 20,80% are students of Al. Macedonski high school in Mehedinți county, 12,40 % are pupils of Stefan Milcu high school, and 9,20 % are students of Voltaire high school in Craiova.



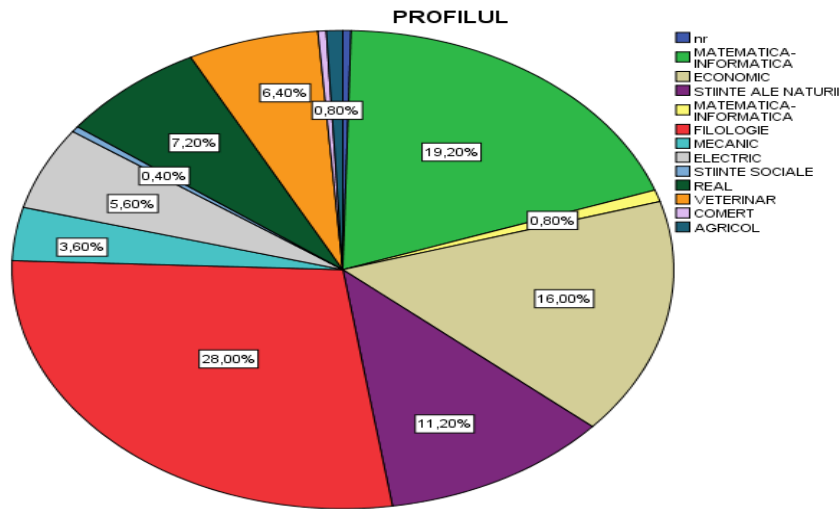
**Figure 01.** High schools participating at the research in the South West region of Oltenia

A significant percent of these are in X grade. As such, one can observe that the study's respondents at the study will be soon before an inevitable choice of their educational and professional path.



**Figure 02.** Classrooms' level

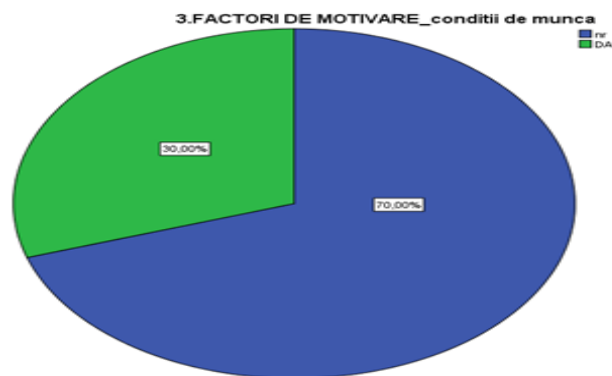
As study profile, one can notice a balanced distribution of the study's participants, as such: 28,0% study philology, 19,2% are students at a Math Informatics profile, 16% study an economic profile, and the rest of them study profiles such as: natural sciences, mechanics, electricity, veterinary, trade and agriculture.



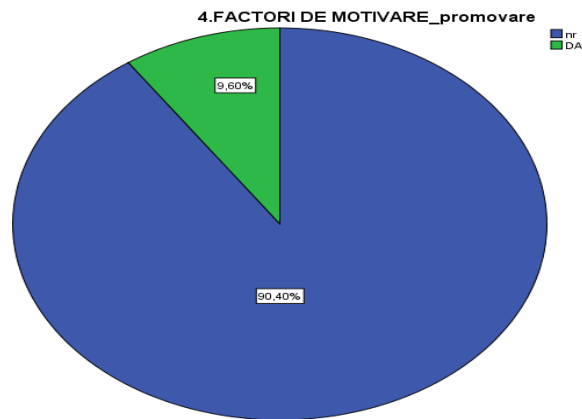
**Figure 03.** Pupils' high school profile

Between the motivation factors that determine them to take decisions before graduation, the students found themselves in the work conditions (a percentage of 70%), promotion possibility (90, 40%), the facilities offered at the present work place (90, 40%), and their desire of achievement guides more than half of the study participants (56, 40%).

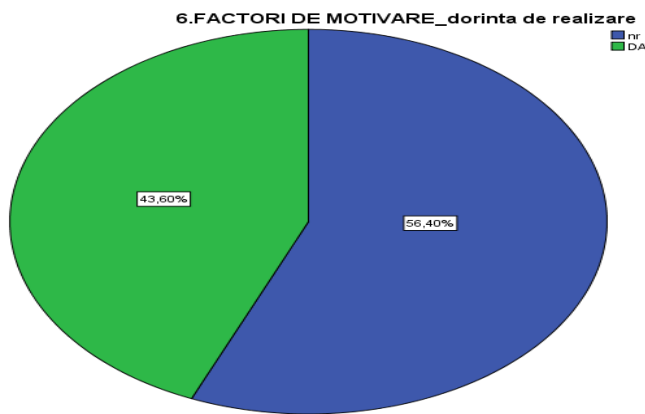
Being a majority of students from communities with parents left to work abroad and coming from high school with a low level of promotion, is somehow natural that these orientate themselves towards a work place and towards earning their own living following the model offered by society and by the family and educational environment.



**Figure 04.** Pupils' motivation factors: work conditions, promotion and desire to achievements

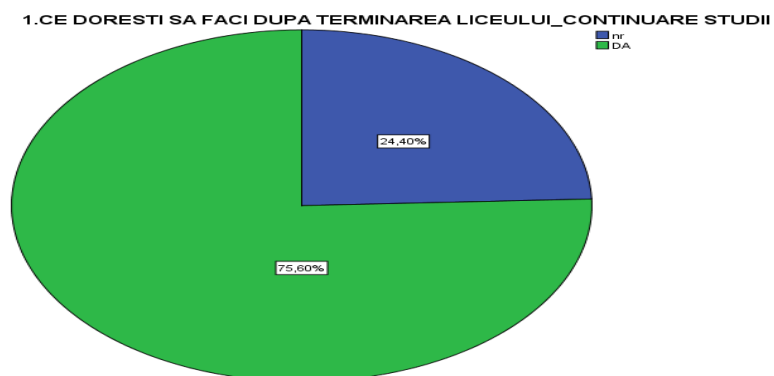


**Figure 05.** Pupils' motivation factors: work conditions, promotion and desire to achievements

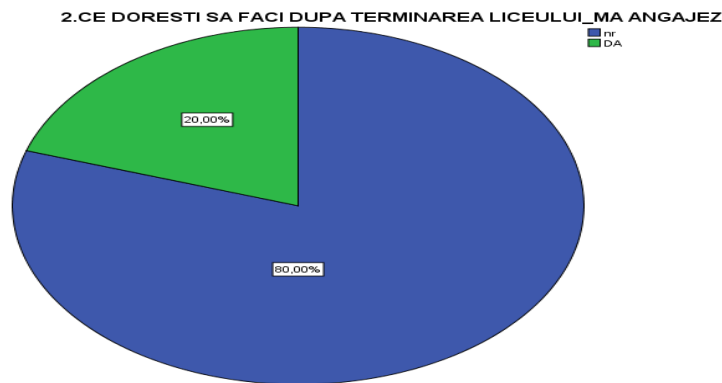


**Figure 06.** Pupils' motivation factors: work conditions, promotion and desire to achievements

The way one can notice as follows, although 75,60% of the students want to continue their students after graduating, a bigger percent of these want to achieve this thing because of the desire to find a work place even if they have an average level of education.

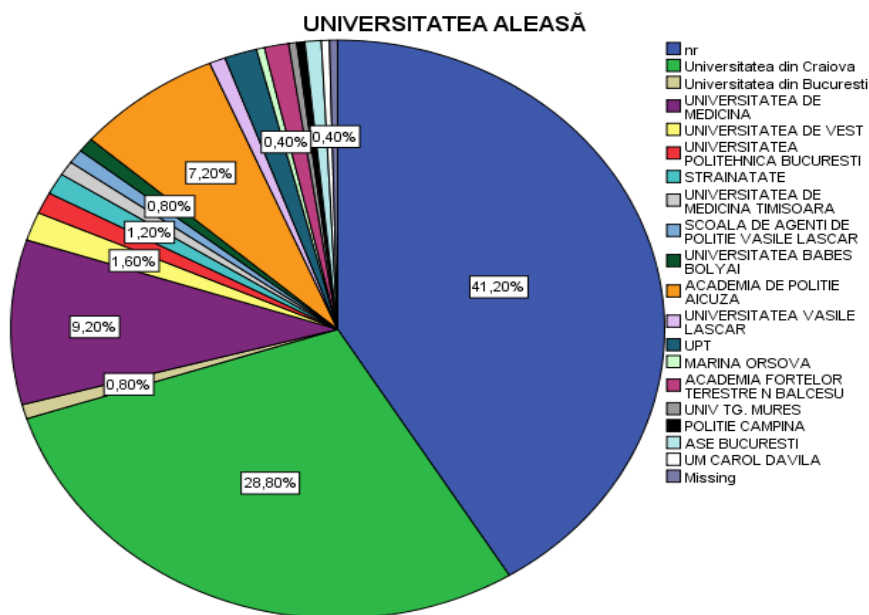


**Figure 07.** Employment/ Ongoing Studies after high school graduation



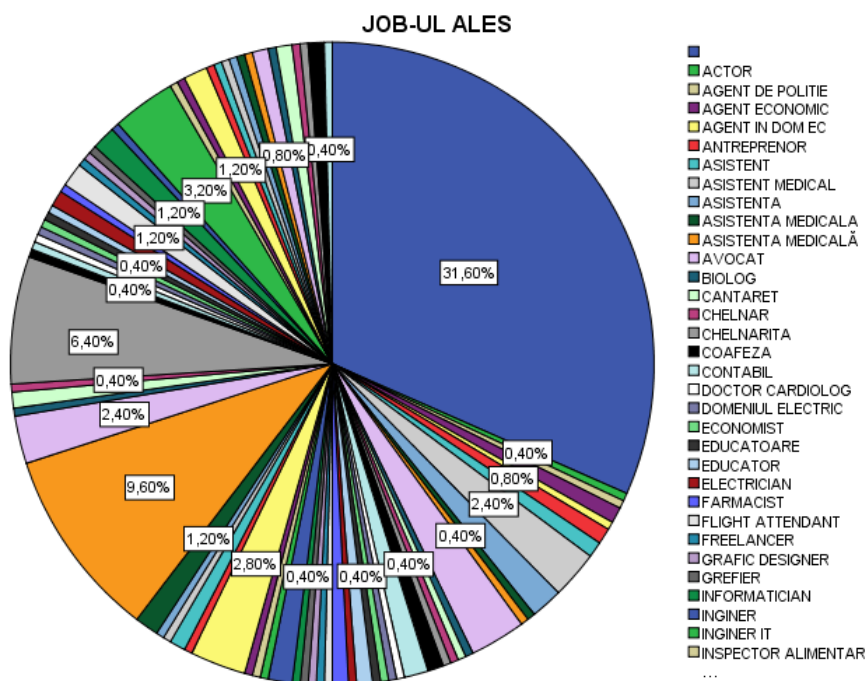
**Figure 08.** Employment/ Ongoing Studies after high school graduation

In case they would continue their studies the students would choose -a percent of 28,80%-the University of Craiova and in a percent of 30 %: The University of Bucharest, The University of Medicine and Pharmacy, The West University, Babes Bolyai University, The School of Police Agents Vasile Lascar, The Academy of the Territorial Forces of Balcescu, The Academy of Economical Studies in Bucharest, The Academy of Economical Studies of Bucharest, The Polytechnic University in Bucharest, etc. But, a very big percent of these haven't decided yet: ( 41, 20%).



**Figure 09.** Chosen university after high school graduation

As a future profession or a job wanted by pupils we have the following jobs: actor, economic agent, police agent, economist, entrepreneur, assistant, medical assistant, lawyer, biologist, singer, waiter, electrician, pharmacist, computer scientist, engineer, food inspector, while the percentage of indecision remains but it diminishes at 31, 60%.



**Figure 10.** Future profession or job preferences

## 7. Conclusion

As one can notice from the present answers and options of the highschool students, they intend to be successful in life, they hope having good jobs, with promotion possibilities and different facilities, but they aren't paying much attention to the present moment and they don't understand that it's all up to them. Because of a significant number of families and young people that are left abroad, many of them think that this is the only choice for them. They see an easy earning here, and especially the pupils from the rural or urban environment, that are poorly developed, only to obtain the certificate after the graduation of 12 grades in order to be able to go abroad to work for unqualified jobs. In the situation when some members of the family have chosen this path, their motivation to learn and to graduate is cancelled. If in this situation is added a percent of graduate of 5% si 35- 40%, then the students makes no more effort to make any efforts.

This all explain the big percents of the ones who are not decided although they are in the final year. All these could be surpassed by means of the activities of counselling, of promotion of the universities' offers, of trying to make the young people be aware of the importance of the jobs acquired, the superior versus the unqualified ones, as well as the academic ones. Here is very important the choice of the university, the study filed that is compatible with the desires, capacities and not least the labor market. These integrated measures should become accessible to any pupils and especially to the ones that come from disadvantaged environments.

The projects with different financial sources come presently in support of these activities and they are continuously implemented. It is necessary their continuity and the awareness of all direct or indirect actors that are participant in the educational act by achieving of some optimal guidance and with the potential of each learner so that they can reach or exceed their expectations.



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