

MOTIVATION, VALUES, AND CAREER RESEARCH AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract: *Career and motivation examinations are an interesting point to consider at all times. This is not only the company leaders need to find and hire the adequate employee but they have to be capable of keeping them. However, what motivates the individual? What is necessary for employees to stay at the organization? What kind of carrier expectation they have? These questions are not only important when somebody is in the system but when somebody is at the beginning of their work. Due to these questions, we have considered important to carry out examinations on motivation, value, and career among the employees and students. The research has been conducted among the students at the University of Debrecen Faculty of Economics. These students will be the fresh enterers of the labor market and may become talented employees of organizations. In the research joint surveys have been applied. The questionnaires were related to working values, values, motivation and career. The sample contains 235 full-time students. One of the positive results of the examination is sampled students are strongly performance motivated. Regarding their performances, the pursuit of success and the need for execution tasks are important, and the high level of effort-performance is outstanding. The results are closely aligned with the sampled students because personal development is important to them and this is a typical age characteristic. The appearance for fulfilling basic needs such as safety, material and physical environment and self-assertion also have a key role. Regarding their career orientation security is in the center of attention. They do not want reputation with all their hearts. Furthermore, management and leadership are not the most important for them. The career anchor analysis has also proved this because leader competence was the lowest career anchor. In the future it would be worth extending the research to the other faculties of the University of Debrecen or other Hungarian Universities. The extended research may result in a representative sample and it would be appropriate to explore gender and professional differences. Furthermore, differences between MA and BA programs may be unrevealed.*

Keywords: motivation; career; value; education; work values inventory; career anchor

JEL Classification: M12

1. Heading:

“Youth is no longer interested in collective solidarity, and they do not feel enthusiastic about community issues. Their real chance is in the capability for change and the joy in revved up. In this risk generation, only those have a

reputation, who can react quickly and make quick decisions. The boundary between professional and private life has completely disappeared. This group has pleasure only by itself or with some close friends. They trust in none but itself. Their passwords: money, power, the world is ours!" (Kövesdi, 2006, 54. old.) Reading these thoughts, the questions may arise if young people think that way and what motivates them. Students at higher education institutions supposed to be successful groups of the Hungarian society. Exploring their value-system and what career means for them would be in considering interest.

The trajectory of a career is thought to be determined by three factors. The first of those is what we call self-perceived talent and abilities, aptitude and family resources. The second one is motives and needs represented by the social and economic environment with their potential possibilities and/or limitations. The third group of factors involves the intentions and aspirations of the individual toward the achievement of set goals and desires that rule their everyday activities (Bodnár, Kovács and Sass, 2011). This one is the strongest of the factors examined. The individual would never give this up, not even in the face of a very hard and complicated decision. The chance of an individual to achieve success is very heavily influenced by the career self-concept and career orientation of that individual, and of the vision by which they organize their career plan. This is what generally is called a career model (Schein, 1978; Schein, 1986, cited by Custodio, 2004). The analysis of the elements of the third group of factors could lead us closer to the understanding of the career concepts and career goals young people may have. Career anchors are important for the influence they have on career choices, on decisions concerning changing jobs; career anchors shape the expectations of life young people may have, they determine their future outlooks, they influence their decisions on selecting a job or a working environment, and they influence the responses young people would give to their job experiences.

It is easy to recognize that peoples' career aims may have a relationship with the standards of their values and work values, and motivations. Tertiary level students have a variety of preferences of values. The differences may originate from many sources; one of those could be the difference of their career socialization which begins even before they enter the higher education, and whose importance will heavily grow during the years of their study for the simple reason that they enter the job market right from the lecture halls (Sörös, 2012).

This study introduces the results of our research in career, motivation, value and work value analysis. The research was carried out among students at a higher education institution.

2. Literature review

The new career concept does not mean the progression from lower to higher levels on the career ladder it means personal enrichment and competence development. Extension of professional, methodological, social and human competencies can be subsumed under this term. By understanding career, improvement and development necessity can be more widely found. (Dienesné és Berde, 2003). A career can be divided into series of stages and characterized by generalized experience. Following Hall (1976) four career stages are identified: exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline. The exploration stage is worth characterizing because the individuals of our research, by the distribution of ages, belong to this group. In this stage the focus is on self-concept and implementing

career choice. This stage refers to the period when individuals are 15-24 years old, young people are success-oriented and able to develop themselves to achieve their goals. From the employee's point of view, it is determining to have a realistic view of their competencies and talent, to discover their values and motivations to choose an adequate career. Super (1973) in his career model integrated the elements of determining personal and social factors about career building. Super links the determination of certain career stages to the personality development. The individuals in the research belong to the groups of 18-21 and 21-24 years old determined by Super's model. In this stage career aspirations and value systems will be defined and work expectations will become clear.

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"Career anchors are those skills, competencies and conditions of which utilization and exercise an individual does not intend to give up. Career-concepts are centered around them, and this is our self-concept that leads or limits our career decisions" (Langer, 2001, 41.p). According to Schein people differ from each other in which part of their self-concept is dominant in decision making. There are people whom the most important is to satisfy certain needs in their work or to their professional skill be recognized. Others think that they are successful if they can live in the line with their values. The career anchor is an inside self-concept and formed on the basis of an individual career. It is called anchor because it pulls backward an individual from directions which are not in the line with their self-concept. A lot of experience have to be accumulated in order to build a developed self-concept (Schein, 1974). Value is the personal beliefs about what is the right life-style. "The value-system of an individual is his or her values by importance, relatively durable, sorted by hierarchy and in accordance with their relative importance determines an individual behavior" (Mérei és Szakács, 1988, 404. p.). Values have motivation tasks also, that is to motivate the achievement of adequate goals. McClelland (1985) differentiates five dimensions: general achievement motivation, goal-oriented achievement motivation, avoidance achievement motivation, power motivation, and affiliation motivation.

3. Material and Methodology

The formula of the questionnaires used in the survey were compiled by the synthesis of a varied body of literature (Karcics, 2006; Márton, 1992; Münnich, 2002) and on the basis of our experience. They were supplemented by the brief versions of Super's work value (Dienes and Simon, 1987) and of the Motivation and career anchor inventories (Iványiné, 2011).

The survey was also dealing with the analysis of the motivation. We used the motivation questionnaire developed by Csukonyi and Münich (2002) on the basis of McClelland's (1985) basic motivation theory. McClelland differentiates five dimensions: general achievement motivation, goal-oriented achievement motivation, avoidance achievement motivation, power motivation, and affiliation motivation. Individuals with general achievement motivation are motivated to achieve better performance than others. Those with goal-oriented achievement motivation are driven by the desire to achieve in order to succeed. A person with avoidance achievement motivation is driven by the desire to avoid failures and

negative outcomes. For individuals with power motivation it is very important that they have influence on others, and that they have prestigious positions. Affiliation motivation involves a need for friendly relationships and interaction with other people (cited by Csukonyi and Münnich, 2002, 20-24. pp.).

The questioner to assess the students' preferences of values relies on relevant research by Csukonyi and Münnich (2002). The series of questions are based on Schwartz's (1995) theory of values comprising 12 dimensions of values: recognition, dominance, self-direction, conformity, security, support, independence, achievement, hedonism, self-enhancement, liberalism, conservatism. The dominance dimension of values means appreciation and recognition. Those individuals who seek to control others and resources recognize dominance as a priority. The achievement dimension of values covers the effort for personal achievement. This is expressed through the personal competencies with regard to social standards. Hedonism includes delights and seeking happiness. The fourth value dimension subsumes challenges and seeking excitement. Self-direction as a value is characterized by independent thinking and autonomous decision making and for this creative thinking and researcher attitude are necessary. Conformity means understanding and accepting others. The value dimension of support suggests that for an individual is important to create prosperity for family and intimate friends. Traditionalism means that an individual respects traditional and religious rites related to given culture. Those to whom conformity as a value is important likely to avoid such activities, which may hurt others. Security is the last value, and it includes seeking harmony in relations and for individuals. These values serve the fundamental operations of the individual and the society. Seeking for value can be in line with each other, but it may also be reverse. (cited by Csukonyi és Münnich, 2002, 38-39. pg.).

The next larger block of questions comprises Super's work values inventory. Work values are measured against the following properties: spirituality, achievement, integrity, material reward, altruism, creativity, social relations, prestige, control, diversity, aesthetics, independence, hierarchy, security, and physical environment (Dienes and Simon, 1987). Spirituality as a value related to work which is spiritually challenging for the employee. At work independent thinking and using intellectual competencies are important. Those who prefer achievement higher, are characterized by task-orientation, need for task-execution and achievement efforts. Self-assertion is related to the work that enables an individual to choose a lifestyle in accordance with their expectation. Super states that lifestyle is not present at young ages. Those, to whom the material reward is an important value, chose a well-paying job and that is secure them a proper living. Altruism is related to the work which enables others prosperity. Those, for whom creativity is important, seek a job where new things, new products can be introduced. Social relations are connected to the work which enables forming a good relationship with colleagues. Prestige as a value is related to the work which is respected by others. Those, who recognizes control and leading as a priority, gladly have control under others. Diversity enables work pleasure but task-orientation doesn't. For the young people, diversity is more important value than for the elderly. Aesthetics enables to create nice things and helps for making the world better. The value called independence is related to the work where an individual can define work in their own way and has independent behavior. Work as quickly or slowly as he wants. Hierarchy as a value related to the work which enables treating working tasks equally. People need to

get information about how and what extent they are evaluated. Security is related to the work stability. An individual would like to have a job which ensures long-term employment. Those, who recognize physical environment as a great value, working in the adequate material environment is important (cited by Dienes és Simon, 1987, 6-9. pg.).

The last section of the questioner is dealing with the career anchors. The career anchors make it easier for people to select those of their needs that are of top priority for their work. The following groups of needs can be differentiated: security, stability, loyalty, autonomy/independence, technical/functional competence, general managerial competence, entrepreneurial creativity, service or dedication to a cause, pure challenge, and life style/harmony. Individuals with the career anchors of security and stability are characterized by a strong sense of loyalty to the company, they value the security provided by long term employment and regular earnings, but they are ready to change their jobs if this serves the interest of the company. Also, such individuals are strongly tied to the geographical location they live in; they would rather give up some of their life standards than move place. Individuals having career anchors autonomy/independence want to define their work in their own way, they need jobs that allow them flexibility regarding when and how to work, and they like to do their work with a high degree of independence irrespective of others. Individuals with career anchors technical/functional value knowledge and outstanding achievement in a special area very high. If a person has general managerial competence, they will take every opportunity to climb to a level high enough to ensure them long term possibility of money-making and wealth accumulation. Individuals having entrepreneurial creativity will take every opportunity to create an organization or enterprise of their own; they are motivated to take risk and overcome obstacles. People having career anchors service/dedication to a cause pursue jobs that serve the benefit of others even by scarifying their own interests. If an individual has career anchors of pure challenge, they would value nothing but big challenges. Individuals valuing lifestyle/harmony do not prioritize jobs that require self-assertion; they would rather work to achieve a balance between different values like family, friends, hobbies, relaxation, leisure or off-job learning etc. (Iványiné, 2011).

To evaluate items, we applied 7 points Likert scale in every group of questions. The survey was conducted among the students at University of Debrecen Faculty of Economics. The sample contains 235 full-time students, 161 of them are at Bsc/BA and 74 of them are at Msc/Ma programs. The female to male ratio is 67% to 33%. Distribution of ages shows that most of the sampled students belong to 19-24 age group however some students belong to 25-30 age group. 62% of the sampled students live together with their parents in the same household.

4. Results

4.1 Motivation analysis

The motivation survey includes five scales: general achievement motivation, goal-oriented achievement motivation, avoidance achievement motivation, affiliation motivation and power motivation. Figure 1. shows the average values of motivation forms in the sample

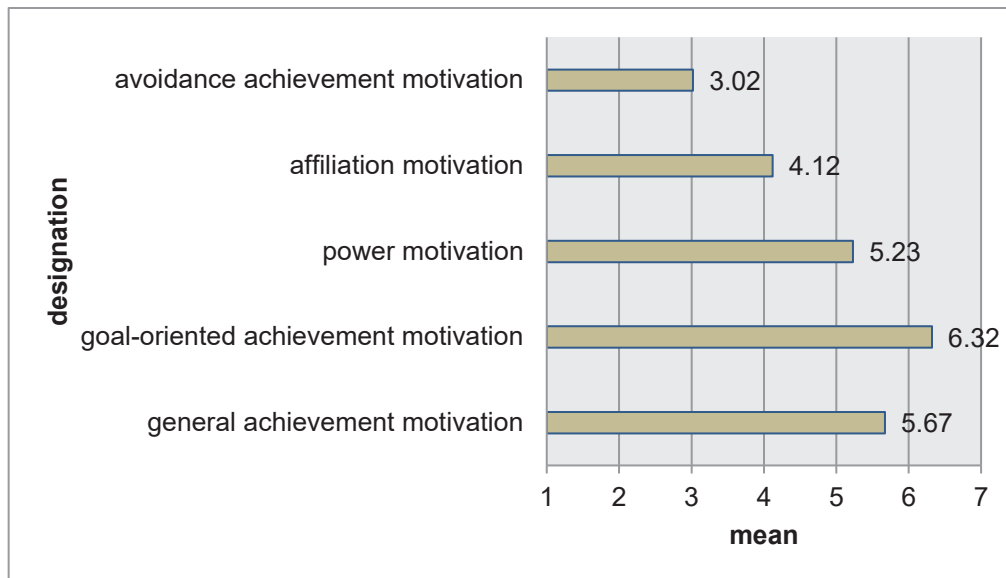


Figure 1: Average values of motivation forms
Source: Own data collection, 2015-2016

The sample is mostly characterized by the goal-oriented achievement motivation that is, to realize their achievement in the line with success and to keep in mind the execution of given tasks. Affiliation motivation has one of the lowest scores it means that building and caring relationships are beaten by the other motivation factors. If they consider relations necessary to achieve progress the affiliation motivation would become more important and more emphasized. Avoidance achievement motivation has the lowest score among the sampled students so avoiding failure is not their main motivator and not in the focus.

4.2 Exploring values

The applied survey to explore values and important factors contains 12 scales (Figure 2.). The respondents think that personality development is the most important factor, regarding their ages it seems normally. Achievement, support, security and recognition are also important factors to them. Independence, dominance, and conformity do not have outstanding scores.

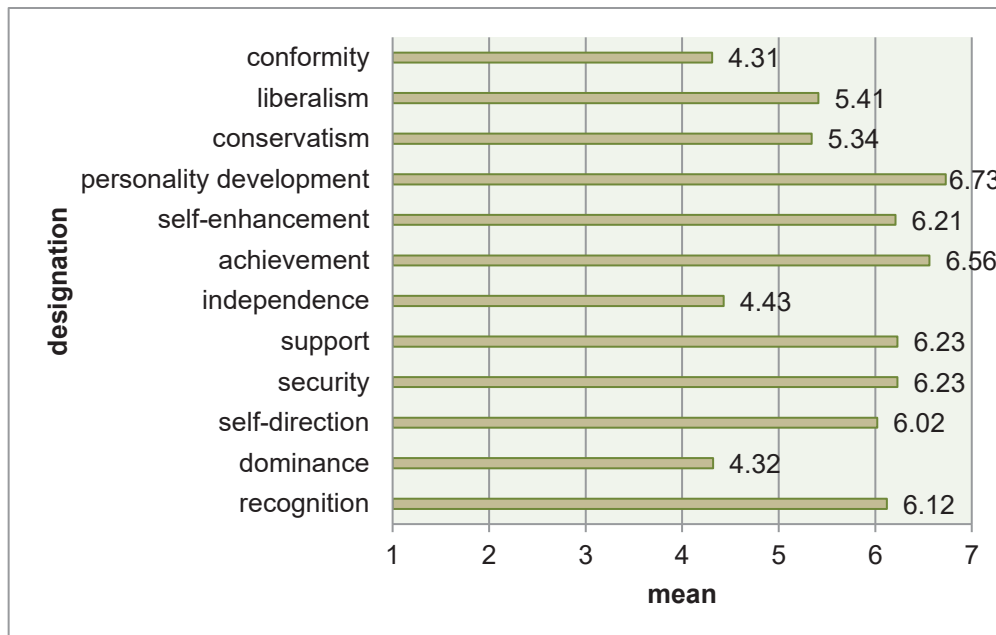


Figure 2: Average of values

Source: Own data collection, 2015-2016

Based on these it can be concluded that for the sampled students significantly important to understand their own personality and to start their own development. For them seeking higher achievement, securing prosperity for close ones and creating harmony are important. However, they do not want recognition with all their hearts and as students they consider conformity as a less important factor.

4.3 Work-value analysis

To explore work-values we applied Super's work-value questionnaire. Figure 3. demonstrates the results. Among the work-values according to the sampled students the most important are the material reward, the assertiveness and the physical environment. Although all the factors have higher average scores than four so none of the groups got low scores. We would stress that control as work-value got 4,87 average score. We expected a higher score for this factor because most of the sampled students would like to work as leaders.

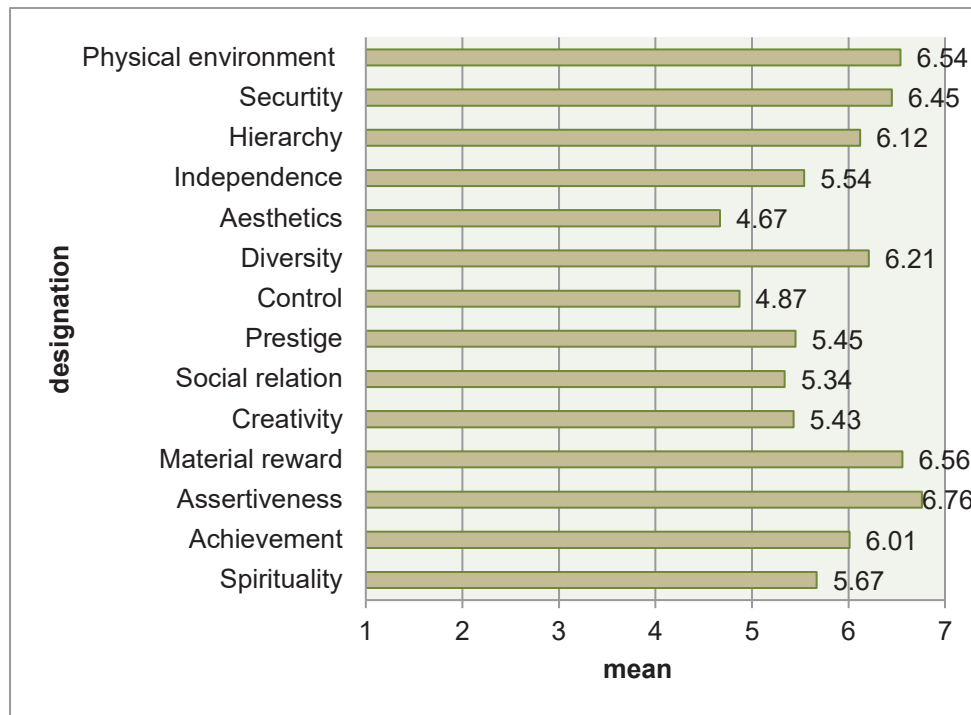


Figure 3: Average values of work-values inventory

Source: Own data collection, 2015-2016

The 6,45 average score of security is outstanding and have to be highlighted this high level of needs. Regarding creativity and social relations we concluded that more attention should be paid to these factors in the future. These two factors can play a key role in professional development.

4.4 Career anchors evaluation

Figure 4. demonstrates the average scores of career anchor items. The anchor "Security, stability, loyalty" produced the highest average scores, thus we can consider it to be the primary anchor. The respondents value loyalty to the company very high, and they prioritize the security provided by long term employment, regular earnings and a modest career advancement. Success for the individuals with the security anchors involves long term affiliation to the company irrespective the level of their employment.

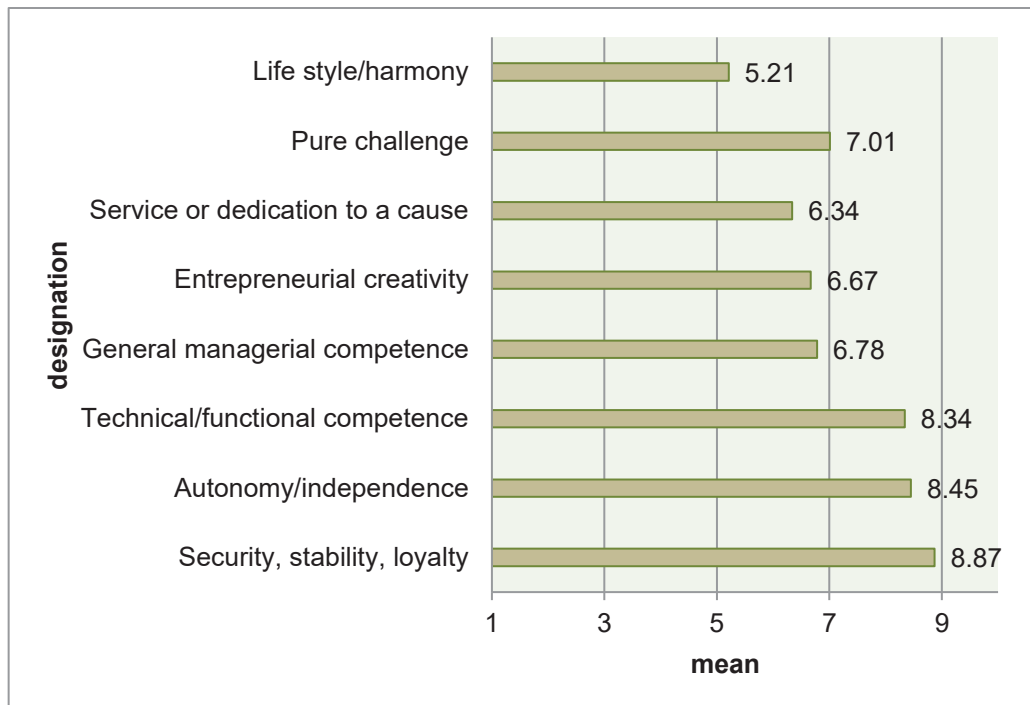


Figure 4: Average values of the career anchors

Source: Own data collection, 2015-2016

The anchors “Technical/Functional” and “Autonomy/Independence” turn out to be the secondary anchors. Individuals with career anchors technical/functional are motivated to bring their knowledge to perfection and to produce outstanding achievement in a special area. Their self-concept is highly influenced by their achievement of success and recognition in their special fields. Technical/functional competence may yield managerial positions, but the individual will only be satisfied if they take this position in their special field of knowledge. Individuals having career anchors autonomy/independence want to define their work in their own way; they need a high degree of flexibility. Quite often, such people earn high qualifications in order to secure their autonomy and independence. It is interesting that in the case of basic values independence got low scores but among work values respondents scored this factor outstanding important. The respondents scored “Managerial competences” the lowest of the anchors. Individuals with general managerial competence will take every opportunity to climb to a level of high responsibility so they can contribute to the achievements of the company, and ensure long term potentials of money-making and wealth accumulation for themselves. The previously introduced value analysis has shown similar results.

Conclusion

There is increasing pressure on company leaders to hire and keep talented employees. The sample includes students at higher education, who will be the fresh enterers of the labor market and may become the talented employees of the organizations. This leads to the conclusion that one of the positive results of the

research is the strong presence of goal-oriented achievement motivation of the sampled students. Regarding their achievement, the pursuit of success and the need for execution tasks are important and the high level of effort-performance is outstanding. In the process of realizing higher level abilities creativity and social relations are key factors. However sampled students did not score them high. The motivation analysis also proved the underestimation of social relations. The respondents think that building and caring relationships do not have a significant impact on their career development. In the future it would be worth paying more attention to these factors. The results are closely aligned with the sampled students because personal development is important to them and this is a typical age characteristic. The appearance for fulfilling basic needs such as security, material and physical environment and self-assertion also have key roles. Regarding their career orientation safety is in the center of attention. We expected the result that respondents have leader ambitions but none of the surveys succeed to prove our premise. They do not want recognition with all their hearts. Furthermore, management and leadership are not the most important for them. The career anchor analysis has also proved this because leader competence was the lowest career anchor. It may be worth spreading the research to the other faculties of the University of Debrecen, or even to several universities in Hungary, on which basis a representative sample may be compiled. Such a sample may be suitable for revealing differences in gender and special fields as well as to discover the differences between MA and BA training. As a suggestion, it can be concluded that organizing career-related training for students at higher education would be worthy. During these training students would have the opportunity to get information about career options and get feedback about their possibilities. Training would enable them to gain personal experience, and that would be useful in making career-related decisions. Training aimed to support students to become talented employees could be supplemented with team-building training, creativity developing tasks and leader training. Gaining these competencies would have a contribution in realizing high achievement at future workplaces.

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