

CAREER MANAGEMENT IN THE ARTISTIC FIELD

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Abstract: *Career management is a concept of interest at present for organizations that aim to maintain staff employment in the long term, with the expected performance. This study looks at aspects of artistic career management within a musical theatre. The empirical research approach includes an analysis of how the artistic career is managed, starting with the studies followed by the activities that employees carry out today and projections for the future. The results of the study show that the studies completed by respondents are compatible with the current job, and the general perception of career is related to the exercise of passion.*

Key words: *human resources, management, career, professional development, musical theatre.*

1. Introduction

The dynamics of the labor market implies the development of a vision consistent with the possibility of adapting to rapid changes from a managerial point of view. Those who are at the helm of an organization must be aware of the factors that influence professional activity and design a career development model that allows them to integrate personal values and needs, the cultural dimension, financial aspects, professional training, performance evaluation and many other implications related to career management.

The perspective of career management in the artistic field was considered in this study, a professional environment that includes many challenges generated by the unpredictability and the spirit of artists, which also involves a stereotype related to freedom in structuring a technically organized career path.

The aims of the study consisted in analyzing how artists have followed their career path so far, how they act at present and what the projections for the future are in relation to their vision of everything that includes the concept of career.

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2. Theoretical Background

Career can be defined in the way it is described in the "*Dictionary of Psychology*", which was coordinated in 1977 by U. Şchiopu, as a "succession of statuses and roles occupied by a person during his or her lifetime" (Pânişoară, 2016). In this sense, career can also be understood from the perspective in which the employee develops a sense of dedication to the workplace. Human personality, specific abilities and personal interests are much better suited to certain professions except with those for which we have not developed an interest.

If the activities carried out by individuals throughout life are very different as an object of work, we cannot say that they have built a career, but there needs to be a coherence in choices to be taken into account, which shows us the multiple perspectives on career (Vlăsceanu, 2002, p.11) and a career counseling stage (Mardache, Mândroiu, 2019, p. 72)

J. Holland (1973) developed a theory according to which we can characterize people by the way they identify with one of six personality types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional. The author explains the usefulness of the theory in identifying and interpreting certain occupational choices in relation to types of behavior at work. It can be used to clarify the occupational history of a person who has made different choices, which translates into incompatibility of vocation with profession.

Career Anchor Theory was stated by Edgar Schein who described the "career anchor" as being someone's self-image. "Career anchor" is a combination of perceptions regarding competence, reasons, and values that one would not give up, for anything in the world and it represents our self. It is also called the internal career of the person. (Vlăsceanu, 2002).

The identity of an artist can be determined through some key questions which should be an everyday guide for someone who needs to understand what his or her purpose as an artist is. An artist needs to know what is the core value which leads his or her actions regarding the professional activity (Miller, 2020).

For artists it is essential to take control of their lives and stand up for what they have achieved through their career and where they fit in this world. Having a creative mindset and not focusing only on the simplest solutions, can influence the entire process of career planning (Miller, Wojak, 2023).

To understand how artistic career management works, it is necessary to understand what the artistic field means and how the professional activity within a musical theater is carried out in the case of this work. D. Throsby (2008) elaborates a concentric model of cultural industries that offers a more accessible perspective to everyday understanding: core creative arts (literature, music, performing arts, visual arts), other core cultural industries (film, museum, libraries, photography), wider cultural industries (heritage services, print and media, sound recording, computer games), related industries (advertising, architecture, design, fashion). Another definition of this area highlights aspects according to which creative industries are those activities that originate from individual creativity, skills and talent and have the potential to create

wealth and jobs through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property (BOP Consulting, 2010, p. 17).

Human resources management with artistic specificity is different from other types of organizational management due to the particularities of human resources: motivation is what makes the artistic act successful, with effects on the development of activities and administrative processes that are intertwined with the degree of involvement of all employees. The result of the artistic act depends largely on the personal experience of the one who exercises it, on the potential of each person and on the level of commitment to achieving individual and organizational goals (Bonet, Schargorodsky, 2018, p.69).

A development of human resources within an institution must be regarded as a set of systematized activities, programmed to be specific to the organizational activity and to integrate in the long term into its strategy.

The institution must provide a launch pad for artists for them to be able to develop their careers and it must have a strategical approach to encourage their creativity (Fillis, Lee, Fraser, 2022). There are also recent studies that explore the impact of a college degree for artists in relation to their chances of getting employed in a cultural institution. The link between studies and the process of building a career in this field has a relevant impact on their level of satisfaction (Woronkiewicz, 2023). The development process has the role of providing the employed personnel with a set of skills and knowledge necessary in the exercise of the profession. As this activity is conceived, it must begin with the moment when the employees integrate into the organization and continue throughout their career, at the level of any category of employees (Lukács, 2010, p. 8), aiming also at identifying programs for professional development (Mitrea, 2014, pp. 136-138).

3. Research Methodology

The study used questionnaire-based and interview-based sociological inquiry as a research method.

The questionnaire was divided into three dimensions based on time, comprising 16 questions, and subjects had to answer issues related to their professional past, present and future. The questions focused on the age category, the current department of professional activity, the profile of the completed studies and referred to the meaning of the concepts of "*successful career*" and "*career management*". It was desired to determine the influencing factors of professional evolution, so that later elements related to the degree of satisfaction of professional evolution were achieved. Respondents were asked how they actively invest in achieving a successful career as they understand it. In support of confirming the need for a career management system for artists, the research population also had to assess whether specific knowledge of this type would be useful.

The data obtained from the application of the questionnaire summed up a total number of 34 respondents aged between 20 and over 55 who were in various activity departments of the institution. The data collection was done through the Google Forms

platform in April 2023, and the data processing was done with IBM SPSS Statistics, version 29.0.

Regarding the interview, the form selected for the approach of the paper was that of the semi-structured interview and the formulation of the questions was substantiated from theoretical sources found in M. Chraif and M. Aniţei (2011), who built a classification of questions regarding the spheres of interest of an interview, from which those relevant to this study were selected.

It was composed of three dimensions: accommodation in the specific roles of the interview, self-presentation of the candidate captured by 5 questions and the interview itself consisting of 10 questions. The interview was designed to capture the characteristic of the artistic field in terms of personality traits of the interviewed subject. The attitude and satisfaction towards the profession were investigated to verify these parameters in relation to the specifics of the interviewed subject's profession and his nonverbal language. Those that considered professional careers were formulated to identify the initial field of training but also the current activity.

Two directorial collaborators were selected who are not part of the institution's employees, but who periodically staged new projects within the musical theater. The two interviews aimed to capture both a local perspective of an artist with an acting history, in the family having the model of his father, but also of a perspective outside the local environment, with other determining factors in his career. One of the interviewed subjects lives in Galati, is a director and actor, is currently 46 years old and comes from a family with an artistic history. He held management positions in the institutions where he worked, he played important roles in national and international directors, and now he carries out his professional activity from the director's chair. The second interviewed subject is also a director currently in his 50s and lives in Resita. He also held important positions in the management of a theater in Reşiţa, and at the age of 41, after 22 years of working as an actor, he decided to specialize with a master's degree in directing.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The ages of the 34 respondents ranged from *20 to over 55*, which shows that this field has a potential for employee retention at various age levels and this could be a starting point in planning future career management strategies.

The concept of "successful career" was described by most respondents as follows: *professional development and experience, balance between personal and professional life, personal development*, confirming the hypothesis according to which artists lean towards a *career* that encompasses these spheres.

Successful career

Table 1

	Frequency
a) Sequence of functions.	1
b) High professional status.	1
d) Personal development.	7
e) Work-life balance.	7

f) Professional development and experience.	13
h) Achieving professional autonomy.	2
j) Professional specialization.	1
k) Following childhood dreams.	2
Total	34

The artistic type from Holland's theory is shown in the following context. Career management was identified by 24 respondents as signifying how *passion turns into career*, followed by 6 responses in favor of *career development to meet financial needs*.

Career Management

Table 2

	Frequency
a) Career development to meet financial needs.	6
b) Career development in a prestigious organization.	2
d) Developing an appreciated career in society.	2
e) Turning passion into career.	24
Total	34

Graduating from artistic studies proved to have an impact on hiring respondents in departments that correspond to their studies. The distribution was made between: Artistic – choir – 8 responses, Artistic – ballet – 7 responses, Artistic – magazine – 4 responses, Artistic – *technical direction and stage service* – 4 responses, *Artistic – soloists* – 1 response, *Production* – 1 response. The other graduate studies were divided into some different departments not exactly directly related to one another.

Table 3

Graduate studies in relation to actual department of activity

Graduate Studies / Department of Activity	No. of respondents
Studies with artistic profile.	25
b) Artistic – soloists	1
c) Artistic – choir	8
d) Artistic – ballet	7
f) Artistic – magazine	4
h) Artistic – technical direction and stage service	4
j) Production	1
Other: Technical studies.	4
h) Artistic – technical direction and stage service	1
i) Technical	3
Mathematical sciences.	2
d) Artistic – ballet	2
Engineering studies.	1
a) Management	1
Science of sport and physical education.	2
i) Technical	2
Total	34

The reasons why these respondents chose to work in musical theatre were quite diverse, including: *the possibility of career development* – 8 responses, *passion* – 9 responses, *professional recognition* – 5 responses, *professional satisfaction* – 3 responses. Which means the need of them to develop their career inside of an institution was met when they got employed.

The factors influencing the career evolution of respondents mostly fell into two categories of those available as answer options: *own skills and competences* – 21 responses, *professional training* – 8 responses.

Considering the indicator of satisfaction in the context of their professional development, 17 respondents said that they were *very satisfied with their professional development*, and 7 other respondents *were extraordinarily satisfied*.

For the level of satisfaction in relation to the position currently occupied, the responses were divided between *very satisfied* – 13 responses, *satisfied* – 12 responses and *extraordinarily satisfied* – 7 responses.

Personal fulfillment was mostly appreciated with *satisfied* – 14 responses, *very satisfied* – 12 responses and *extraordinarily satisfied* – 6 responses. The salary level falls within the average satisfaction level of the scale with 18 responses. The social status offered by this profession was perceived as an aspect that gives them satisfaction with 14 responses for *satisfied* and 12 responses for *very satisfied*.

The analyzed aspects showed how the level of satisfaction is related to the personal needs of an artist and to the organizational impact on their career development.

Furthermore, the extent to which they considered that the organization should be involved in the career development of employees was oriented towards the higher levels of the scale, *to a large extent* – 13 responses and *to a very large extent* – 8 responses.

Given that effective career management takes place over longer periods of time and under the influence of certain factors, respondents were asked to assess what determines their next career steps. The values recorded confirmed the assumption that aspirations consider both institutional and individual aspects.

Communication with superiors was also identified as having a relevant impact for those planning their professional evolution. The organization needs to primarily have strategic communication for the employees to perform. Compared with the above indicator, *communication with colleagues* was recorded as quite relevant for planning the next stages of the career. Of the 34 respondents, 29 considered this aspect to be *very important*. This should be in the attention of the management because the creative process is connected to efficient communication between the team members.

Promotion within an institution remains a point of interest in an individual's career planning and therefore artists appreciated that is the case for them too. The principle is valid as it emerged from the answers: half of the respondents largely considered that they do want to promote within the organization.

Openness to new visions has a considerable influence for 31 respondents out of a total of 34. The areas of interest for the objectives set in career planning to be achieved are represented by a wider range of activities, and the most frequently selected one was *the improvement of professional knowledge*, by almost half of those who responded.

Areas of improvement

Table 4

Areas of improvement	No. of respondents
e) Improvement of professional knowledge.	15
a) Extra-professional activities.	6
d) Cultivating creative potential.	3
k) Improvement of physical fitness.	3
l) Do not invest in career development.	3
h) Personal development courses.	2
j) Financial education.	2
Total	34

Considering all the traits that were the subject of the previous questions, some of the respondents of the questionnaire considered that they want to promote within the organization and others affirmed that they would not make any changes in their present situation. *Only 2 people would transfer to another field of activity.*

Regarding the need to develop specialized career management knowledge, 27 respondents out of 34 answered that this is necessary and the remaining 7 said they do *not know* to what extent they would be useful.

The level of career achievement, on a scale of 1 to 10, in relation to the idea of "successful career" falls predominantly into level *8 of the measurement scale.*

Director C. G. is 46 years old and is fully dedicated to his profession, having his father as role model who was also a respected actor of the Galati scene. He is currently employed by a theatre in Galati, claiming that: *"I liked this wonderful place where I grew up, which is the theatre. I liked the mystery; I liked the people how they were and how they told the stories in the big black box under the spotlight. I've always been fascinated with that space and always wanted to be a part of it."*

One could notice in the nonverbal language the attachment and involvement in the projects he has completed or is currently running, stating: *"I dedicate myself totally to the projects I have in progress, always trying to learn from others and share with others what I already know"*. The personality traits identified by himself were evident from his speech through all observable elements and at the level of body language, namely that he carries out his professional activity under the influence of passion for culture.

The design of his career had a starting point related to his father's model, which did not explicitly influence his choices, but recognizes his degree of influence as he spent his childhood inside the theater. His career is seen as a way of living, and his defining personality traits (from his perspective), seriousness and focus, confirm the need for elements other than talent. By graduating from specialized studies, he managed to professionalize in this field, so it is found that there is a need for constant evolution in the artistic field, in this case materialized through sustainable career management. The standard to which he refers when measuring his success is a subjective definition and, in

a fairly large proportion, we can assume that it is represented by the anchor of his career, by the internal career he has built. In this case, we identify a strong enough determination to follow the proposed steps in his career, without his aspirations changing along the way and he does not believe that there are factors that could make him change his field of activity.

Director D.M. is 56 years old and lives in Reşiţa, and his professional activity takes place in several cities of the country.

His defining personality traits are ambition and determination to overcome any obstacle that arises during projects: *"one of the characteristics of my personality is that I am very ambitious at certain times and even stubborn. When I set my mind to something, even if it doesn't succeed at the moment and my idea doesn't coincide with reality, I make it something positive."* Having the characteristic of native talent and being noticed by a person outside the family, he received the necessary guidance and training to be admitted to an acting faculty at a time when the competition was very tight: *"I had the chance to be noticed by my Romanian language teacher who saw in me the native talent and prepared me for admission to the theater faculty"*.

Building his career has always been based on transparency in dealing with actors, and this is also a combination of talent and ambition. The studies he undertook the field of acting, first and then in directing, made the difference in shaping him as a professional artist. His professional aspirations materialized through temporary peculiarities, such as acting, managing the theater, which helped evaluate his career. The decision to pursue directing gave him the stability and professional fulfillment he aspired to. He believes that there are no factors that could influence his change of professional field in a completely different direction.

5. Conclusion

Establishing career plans is a challenging task for anyone interested in fulfilling them successfully, to provide the satisfaction and fulfillment to which they aspire but, at the same time, to be able to integrate into the goals of an organization. Career management in the artistic field is directly associated with the skills and competencies specific to each genre of artist. The career anchors with which employees come to the organization combine with the system for its efficiency and functionality.

The results of the research highlight the fact that the studies graduated by the respondents of the questionnaire have a high degree of compatibility with the profile of the department in which they work within the theater, and the perception of career management relates to passion. For them, the meaning attributed to a "successful career" is mainly influenced by the following elements: professional development and experience, balance between personal and professional life, but also personal development. The ratio of career achievement level to influencing factors captures success in correlation with talent exercised through specific skills and competences.

Survey respondents have diverse areas in which they actively invest to develop the successful career they aspire to, which shows interest in building the proposed career. The information obtained from the questionnaire revealed a close link between the high

level of satisfaction of professional development, position, personal fulfillment, social status, and salary level with the general level of career achievement.

After analyzing the interviews from a comparative perspective, they proved useful in understanding the aspects according to which artists actively invest in a wide range of interests. The answers received regarding the graduated studies revealed their influence on the professional evolution of both directors. The likelihood that the idea of career management is associated with the pursuit of the profession through the prism of passion to build a successful lifelong career could also be seen in the interviewees' responses. Also, influencing factors in personal contexts had a considerable impact on career planning according to a certain well-established route. Both directors brought up the notion of truth, which emerges as the most specific to this profession.

In conclusion, the research approach proved extremely useful because it allowed knowledge of a part of artistic career management, from where further research can be developed. For the Human Resources specialist, it is a trigger of thinking that one must design career planning and development programs applicable to the specifics of the institutions in which he or she works and be a real support for the career of employees. Without motivated and professionally satisfied staff, the organization cannot meet its goals either.

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