

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GRADUATES' PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT, FIRST CAREER CHOICE AND EARLY CAREER SUCCESS

Prof. Dr. Ans De Vos

Antwerp Management School

ans.devos@ams.ac.be

Research Questions

- How do graduates (Masters in Management) form their professional identity during their final year of graduation?
- What is the relationship between their professional identity and their first career choice?
- How do professional identities and career choices change and are interrelated over time, and what is the relationship with career success?

Findings from earlier research

- De Vos, De Wilde & De Clippeleer, 2009; De Vos & De Hauw, 2010
- (Management) students often feel insecure about their future career direction
- Unrealistically high expectations about their future psychological contract
- Low levels of active career self-management

Study method & design

- Survey among \pm 200 students graduating from the business school
- Start of the project in 2011
- Longitudinal design:
 - T1: early in academic year
 - T2: late in academic year
 - T3: 1 month after graduation
 - T4: 1 year after graduation
 - T5 Recurring survey every one or 2 years

Key variables

- Professional identity: self-insight (values, competencies, personality), vocational interest, leadership capabilities
- Self-management behaviors (feedback seeking, networking, creating visibility)
- Job (content domain, responsibility, remuneration) and organization (size, sector, location) characteristics
- Career success: subjective and objective