

## VAŽNOST KARIJERNOG SAMOUPRAVLJANJA: STRATEGIJE I UČINCI NA PROFESIONALNI RAZVOJ

### *THE IMPORTANCE OF CAREER SELF-MANAGEMENT: STRATEGIES AND OUTCOMES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT*

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#### SAŽETAK

U današnjem svijetu koji je obilježen ubrzanom tehnološkim napretkom i sve većom nesigurnošću na tržištu rada, samostalno upravljanje karijerom (CSM) postaje ključna vještina za dugoročnu zapošljivost i profesionalni razvoj. Cilj ovog stručnog rada je deskriptivna analiza znanstvene literature s fokusom na identifikaciju pozitivnih i negativnih ishoda CSM ponašanja, kao i prikaz praktičnih strategija za upravljanje karijerom. Rezultati ukazuju na povezanost između aktivne primjene CSM ponašanja i pozitivnih ishoda poput povećane zapošljivosti, zadovoljstva karijerom, psihološke dobrobiti i ravnoteže između poslovnog i privatnog života. Također, rad prikazuje ciklički model CSM-a kao praktičan alat koji se može primijeniti u individualnom planiranju karijere, ali i u programima zapošljavanja i kurikulumu usmjerenom na profesionalni razvoj.

**Ključne riječi:** *samoupravljanje karijerom, zapošljivost, strategija, tržište rada, nesigurnost dobrobit*

#### ABSTRACT

In a modern world defined by accelerated technological advancement and labor market uncertainty, Career Self-Management (CSM) emerges as a proactive skill for long-term employability and professional development. The primary objective of this professional paper is to conduct a descriptive analysis of academic literature, identifying both positive and negative outcomes of CSM behaviors, as well as practical strategies for career navigation and development.

The findings of this paper highlighted the strong correlation between active usage of CSM behaviors and increased positive CSM outcomes like employability, career satisfaction, psychological well-being, and life balance. Additionally, the paper presented the cyclic model of CSM as a practical tool that can be used for career navigation and CSM integrating into employment programs and curriculums about career advising.

**Keywords:** *career self-management, employability, strategy, labor market, uncertainty, well-being.*

#### 1. UVOD

##### 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic and unpredictable world, rapid changes continuously shape both the personal and professional aspects of people's lives. The changing nature of the labor market challenges modern employees to continuously refine their skills, knowledge, and sense of responsibility for managing their career paths. As long-term job security continues to decline, responsibility for career self-management (CSM) is increasingly shifting from employers to individuals. Career self-management is often considered as an umbrella term encompassing various cognitive and behavioral activities through which individuals develop, implement, and monitor career goals and strategies [1]. The traditional model of employment had two major disruptions that reshaped the relationship between the labor market, employers and employees.

The first disruption emerged with the rise of gig economy and expansion of freelance and platform-based labor [2]. Simultaneously, the Fourth Industrial Revolution has brought increasing uncertainty, competition, and complexity into career environments [3,4]. In the last five years, the first major shock to the job market was the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to job losses due to the lockdown measures and economic disruptions. The first quarter of 2020, global working hours declined by 5,4%, equivalent to 155 million full-time jobs, while in the second quarter fell further decline of 14%, equivalent to 400 million full-time jobs [5]. This decline in working hours resulted in two negative effects: employment losses and reduced working hours for the people employed [5]. The COVID -19 pandemic negatively affected individual career development, increasing the unemployment rate to 2,95% compared to the situation prepanedmic when the unemployment rate was 2,88 [6].

These figures clearly present how external global factors can destabilize employment market and increase insecurity leading to job losses and existential problems.

The second major disruption began with the accelerated advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation technologies. These developments have led not only to a reduction in certain jobs but also to the creation of new employment opportunities. Research by McKinsey Global Institute predicted that 50% of work activities could be replaced by AI, especially those that are manual and repetitive [7]. In this context CSM is not just an educational tool, but also a key mechanism to manage one's career during periods of uncertainty and structural change. As AI and automatization continue to develop, individuals need to take responsibility for their careers, often without the direct support from employers or formal institutions. This shift calls for a stronger education about CSM outcomes and strategies as well as CSM integration into the education system and lifelong learning. According to the World Economic Forum, large language models like GPT 4 could have an impact on 40% of all working hours by displacing routine tasks and creating new roles such as AI specialists, data analysts, and digital transformation experts [8]. As

a result, the responsibility for career growth and development is transferring from organizations to individuals. With the rise in job transitions and decreasing employment stability, individuals now hold a greater responsibility for career planning, navigation and development. In this context research on CSM is on the rise. Existing research emphasized a growing interest in developing coping strategies aimed at reducing the perceived insecurity in career development [9,3,4]. While CSM has also been proposed as a coping mechanism for career insecurity and change [10,3], De Vos & Soens [10] warns that without structured guidance, individuals may struggle to adapt to ever-changing careers. The expectation that individuals will successfully manage their careers and navigate through different career transitions, without institutional assistance, may lead to demotivation and poor decision-making.

This professional paper aims to explore the significance and practical application of CSM in the context of a rapidly changing labor market by researching the theoretical foundation, behavioral dimensions and associated outcomes and strategies.

## **2. TEORIJSKI OKVIR: RAZUMIJAVNJE SAMOUPRAVLJANJA KARIJEROM**

### **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: UNDERSTANDING CSM**

CSM is a multidimensional construct with various definitions that have evolved through several disciplinary areas like psychology, economics and health. It broadly refers to the proactive process by which individuals take control over their career path, regulating and controlling their behavior, goals and resources. It includes both cognitive and behavioral strategies aimed at career development and navigation. It broadly refers to self-management and is related to actions whose purpose is to create order, discipline, and control [12], like self-efficacy and self-regulation [13]. Self-efficacy is a significant predictor and consequence of self-management strategies and defines it as a belief to perform effectively through behavior. In this professional paper, self-management is approached through the lens

of self-regulation, a significant concept used primarily in social and personality psychology, from which it found its way to several other areas of psychology and economics [14]. The concepts describe individual regulation of psychological processes and behaviors. Furthermore, it is crucial to emphasize individual responsibility in CSM. Due to increasing demands of labor market, competition, stress and burn out exposure, employees need to take care of themselves [15]. Several studies recognized the importance of proactive employees and individual responsibility for career management [15,16,10,4]. De Vos and Soens mentioned the term "protean career attitude," explaining it as the degree to which an individual manages his career proactively and self-directedly [10]. Likewise, other studies [17] also underlined the significance of proactive coping as a crucial factor in managing an individual career path, while Alisic and Wiese [4] emphasized that changes in the labor market necessitate a higher degree of self-management. Furthermore, a recent study from Hirschi and Pang [18] significantly advances CSM literature, presenting a bifactor model. Authors explored how different types of career striving (self-enhancement, self-transcendence, and personal growth) relate to specific CSM behaviors and career outcomes. Their results showed that:

- self-enhancement strivings correlate with self-promotion activities, like seeking recognition or presenting their accomplishments.
- self-transcendent strivings relate to prosocial behaviors (showing concerns and support for others)
- personal growth strivings are connected to continuous learning.

It is important to highlight that when individuals have more career striving this could motivate them to engage in more CSM behaviors to achieve career goals. For example, understanding cravings and their connections to behaviors can lead to the implementation of tailor-made educational programs. Despite the growing body of literature on CSM, negative outcomes have been neglected. While proactive behaviors relate to increased employability and satisfaction, there is also a negative side effect of CSM behaviors, such as stress and burnout. This article aims to present

a practical overview of key CSM strategies and behaviors, while also highlighting both positive and negative outcomes.

### 3. CILJ STRUČNOG RADA

#### 3. *THE AIM OF THIS PROFESSIONAL PAPER*

This professional paper aims to explore the relevance and practical implication of CSM in the context of dynamic and uncertain labor market. By drawing on recent literature, the paper analyzes key CSM behaviors and positive and negative outcomes as well as CSM strategies for career navigation and development. The purpose is to introduce applied knowledge that supports individual career growth and upskilling in the competitive labor market. Research questions:

1. How is CSM defined and conceptualized in recent literature?
2. What are the key individual behaviors in effective career self-management?
3. What are the positive and negative outcomes associated with CSM behaviors?
4. What are the key strategies for career development and navigation?

### 4. PONAŠANJE I ISHODI

#### SAMOUPRAVLJANJA KARIJEROM

#### 4. *CSM BEHAVIORS AND OUTCOMES*

This section provides an overview of positive and negative CSM outcomes, with an emphasis on practical implications for career management and navigation. Hirschi and Koen, in 2021, highlighted the importance of individual self-direction and flexibility [1], while Arntz, Gregory and Zeirahn underlined the need for upskilling, especially among low-qualified employees who are at greater risk of job displacement and will need retraining [19]. In the context of 2025, it is evident that these early observations remain highly relevant because employees are facing insecurity and instability in the labor market. This insecurity and instability can only be managed with the right career navigation and upskilling. To improve, individuals must understand their

weaknesses and strengths as well as the strategies for achieving their career goals.

To build a deeper theoretical understanding of CSM, this section examines how various CSM behaviors influence career outcomes. Drawing from the significant empirical and theoretical contributions in the CSM field, the focus is placed on identifying both positive and negative outcomes. Research by De Vos has shown that CSM behaviors can lead to positive CSM outcomes: pay increase, speed in job transition, career satisfaction [20], and perceived employability [10]. Specifically, Raabe and Frese found that training employees to self-manage their career plans positively is related to a higher speed in job transition [20]. These findings clearly emphasize the importance of CSM positive outcomes while positioning CSM as an educational and strategic tool that empowers individuals in their career development.

Given the growing interconnection between professional success and personal well-being, the positive impact of CSM on career satisfaction deserves particular attention. In the context of career exploration and decision making, CSM behaviors; (i.e., career exploration, career goal development, and career strategy implementation) can lead to job decision effectiveness and vocational self-concept crystallization [21]. Nevertheless, these outcomes are not isolated CSM behaviors and need to be connected to career strategies that drive career growth. Theoretical articles by Hirschi and King [22,15] also outlined that both career and non-career behaviors influence a range of outcomes including career goal attainment, career satisfaction, work-life balance, and psychological well-being [22]. Career satisfaction presents the self-evaluation of career progress/ career outcomes assessed by an individual [23]. It presents a subjective evaluation that is based on individual perception, value system and interpretation of success. There is no unique definition of success. For one person, success might mean earning a high salary, driving and working in a prestigious office, while for another, it could mean achieving stability, a work-life balance, and the ability to raise a family.

Work-life is another key CSM outcome, defined as satisfaction across life roles and includes

work and non-work roles. Although sometimes it is difficult to achieve, this balance plays a crucial role in maintaining overall satisfaction. Research by Sturges found that boundary management (prioritizing work or non-work) - influenced perceived work-life balance [25]. This behavior, alongside other CSM related actions like networking behavior, positioning behavior, visibility behavior, validating behavior, and building human capital is often influenced by the current career goal [25]. These results further support the significance of CSM; because it is not just an educational tool but can also support work-life balance through conscious prioritization, self-awareness, and strategic planning. King [15] argued that CSM behaviors could lead to desired career outcomes, career satisfaction, life satisfaction, and learned helplessness. Outcome learned helplessness is a negative outcome of CSM behaviors. If CSM does not deliver desired career outcomes, the negative outcome is psychological disengagement, learned helplessness, or alienation [15]. Additionally, a study by Kim, Faud and Lee examined a range of different levels of traditionality of career in working men. The cross-sectional analysis on a sample of 693 working men revealed that CSM behaviors correlate positively with job satisfaction, family satisfaction and life satisfaction [26]. Moreover, recent literature emphasizes the importance of cognitive skills like communication, integrity, intercultural competence, resilience and social skills for self-directed career management [24]. Key takeaways from these articles are collective presentations of outcomes of CSM behaviors that are represented in Table 1 and Figure 1. Table 1 presents CSM outcomes and Figure 2 presents a visual comparison of outcomes related to CSM behaviors reported by key authors. These outcomes are mostly positive, like career success, work-life balance, and overall psychological well-being and bring attention to the necessity for CSM because:

- individuals who actively manage their own careers are increasing their employability, have better job opportunities and higher career satisfaction and salary
- career self-management helps during job transition and psychological wellbeing and work-life balance

**Table 1** Key Research Findings on the Outcomes of Career Self-Management

**Tablica 1** Ključni nalazi istraživanja o ishodima samostalnog upravljanja karijerom

Study	Reported Outcomes
Raabe & Frese [20]	Pay Increase, Job Transition Speed, Career Satisfaction
De Vos & Soens [16]	Perceived Employability, Career Satisfaction
Hirschi & King [22,25]	Career Goal Attainment, Non-Work Goal Attainment, Career Satisfaction, Work-Life Balance, Psychological Well-Being
Sturges [27]	Work-Life Balance, Boundary Management
Crites [26]	Vocational Maladjustment
Kim, Faud & Lee [28]	Job Satisfaction, Family Satisfaction, Life Satisfaction
Hirschi & Koen [17]	Self-Direction, Flexibility
King [25]	Career Satisfaction, Life Satisfaction, Learned Helplessness

## 5. METODOLOGIJA

### 5. METHODOLOGY

This professional paper applies to relevant literature selection from academic databases like Google Scholar, Scopus and Science Direct. Although the study is not a systematic review in the academic sense, the literature search followed a search using terms such as *career self-management, career development, protean career,*

*career development.* Inclusion criteria were peer-reviewed in journal articles and conference papers, published in the last 20 years in the field of economy and psychology. Exclusion criteria were articles focused solely on medical or clinical self-management unrelated to careers, and papers that focused exclusively on institutional human resource strategies.

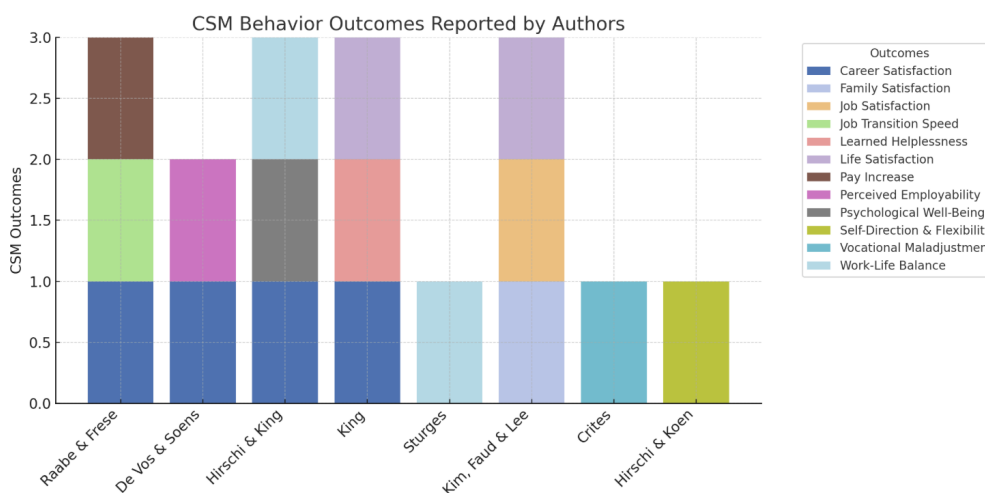
This literature selection ensured relevant literature that reflects multidisciplinary viewpoint and builds upon the theory proposed by renowned authors such as Hirschi, King, Crites, King, De Vos and Wilhelm.

## 6. STRATEGIJE ZA UPRAVLJANJE KARIJEROM U PROMJENJIVOM OKRUŽENJU

### 6. CAREER SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN A CHANGING WORK ENVIRONMENT

One of the key components of career self-management are strategies that can be undertaken by an individual for career navigation and career growth. The subsequent sections will provide a comprehensive explanation of the model Cyclic model of career self-management which consists of four sequential steps [27].

1. Chart landscape
2. Identify gatekeepers
3. Implement strategies
4. Evaluate strategies



**Figure 1** CSM Behavior Outcomes Reported by Authors

**Slika 1** Ishodi ponašanja u okviru karijernog samoupravljanja prema autorima

This model explains how people can navigate through their career and shape their own behavior and career strategies. King described organizations as political due to their modus operandi which requires employees to compete for their own position [27].

The first step of cycling model of career-self management - charting the landscape – involves assessment of work environment, like a due diligence - it requires insight into organization structures and hierarchy of a decision-making process. Opportunity awareness includes a deeper understanding of the work environment, including hidden opportunities that may not be apparent on the surface. It also includes recognizing the necessary activities to access those opportunities, as well as the rewards and satisfaction behind rewards. Furthermore, to obtain the reward, employees need to know who the decision-makers are – the second step in cyclic model of CSM. Decision-makers, referred to as gatekeepers, are the ones that are controlling individual career outcome and the decision makers over person's initiatives at work [27].

The concept of gatekeepers originates from role theory and describes managerial effectiveness and leadership. It is essential for employees to identify the criteria used by gatekeepers to make better decisions about their own career outcomes (promotion, work allocation).

The third step in a cyclic model of career self-management is career strategies, and there are two types: influence and positioning strategy [27]. The implementation of career strategies involves influencing the gatekeepers and expanding one's social networking through obtaining more contacts. The first strategy that involves influencing the gatekeepers is an influence strategy and the second one that refers to optimizing one's contacts, skills and experience is called positioning. Sonnenfeld & Peiperl highlighted an interesting situation describing organizations with a fortress career system as "*institutions under siege*, where institutional survivor is more important than individual employee [27]. In such an environment, the only reasonable strategy is to develop an external network of contacts and

make smart decisions about job transitions to maximize career opportunities elsewhere.

Past experience is the final task in a cyclic model of self-management career that refers to evaluating past experience – experience that reoccurred in this cyclic model of career self-management. This step is highly important because without the evaluation an individual won't be able to assess the effectiveness of prior strategies. Information for evaluation and be obtained from various feedback like verbal cues from gatekeepers, observation from colleagues, social comparison with individuals that had similar experience. To evaluate career outcomes individual needs to analyze past behavior; whether the strategies were effective and whether the selected strategies paved an effective course to achieving the desired results [27].

This is the moment when an individual can assess his current state and outcomes versus planned activities and strategies. In this phase an individual can adjust and fine tune his strategies and select more effective strategies for career development.

## 7. DOPRINOS I OGRANIČENJA

### 7. CONTRIBUTION AND LIMITATIONS

**Contribution:** The paper contributes to the professional and academic discussion on CSM by:

- highlighting the growing relevance of CSM
- presenting a structured overview of CSM outcomes and a practical model for individual career navigation
- proposing the need for CSM education and integration into lifelong learning

**Limitations:** This paper does not conduct quantitative study or systematic literature review. Given that CSM is a research domain with more than 20 years of academic development, the decision not to conduct systematic literature review is justified. Furthermore, a comprehensive literature review has already been provided by Hirschi in 2021 in his article "Contemporary career orientations and career self-management: A review and integration published in the *Journal of Vocational Behavior*.

## 8. ZAKLJUČAK

### 8. CONCLUSION

This professional paper established the link between CSM outcomes and positive CSM behaviors. CSM is a supportive tool and foundational strategy for career navigation. Positive CSM behaviors such as planning, exploration, and networking correlate positively with employability, well-being, and job satisfaction. However, the lack of adequate education puts a strain on the new employees in times of insecurity and automatization. CSM should be recognized as a necessary competence for management and employees, and should be systematically implemented into education, Human Resources practices, and employment policies. However, it is important to emphasize that CSM has been primarily researched through positive outcomes, but it also carries many negative outcomes like: stress, burnout, psychological disengagement. These findings call out for a more systematic approach to develop tailor made educational programs in order to support sustainable CSM strategies. The implementation of the cyclic model could also lead to proactive career decisions.

#### Practical Implications:

- institutions should incorporate CSM principles into career services and human resource development.
- education systems should implement and promote CSM through curricula.
- policymakers should design targeted education and provide support to vulnerable employees

## 9. REFERENCE

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