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The Relationship between Vocational Identity and Educational Adaptation at High School Students

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Abstract: Vocational identity is an important aspect in the development of pupils' personality. Its formation requires a long study of the professions but also the choice of an educational path correlated with the pupil's potential, preferences and abilities. In this process, the influence of the social environment, but also, the individual peculiarities, tend to outline educational options. This paper analyse the role of predisposing factors in the process of school and professional orientation of students, based on the career anchors theory elaborated by E. Schein. The investigative group consisted of 40 pupils of Dimitrie Cantemir High School, Darabani, from the 9th and 12th grades. The main dimension that organizes / determines the vocational identity is school success. Through these approaches, the educational environment has a considerable influence on the development of adolescents.

Keywords: *vocational identity; educational adaptation; career anchors.*

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Introduction

In the version of Erikson (1980), identity is in a permanent construction / reconstruction. Structured on the basis of perpetual modeling, identity is the result of the confluence of self-heteroperceptive attitudes converging into a perceptual unitary construct and integrating a coherent ensemble of various structures: talent abilities, various types of relationships, temperaments, patterns, paths, ways of managing / self-managing. Identity is formed in childhood and continues throughout life by acquiring successive promoters with a regulatory function in individual evolution. Erikson believes that the specificity of the environment impinges on the individual evolution by acting as a determinant proximity (the specificity of the identities being catalyzed by the nature of the relations of the individual social environment updated on different temporal sectors of its evolution). Super (1967) showed that there is a direct proportional correlation between self-image and professional goals, pointing out that the higher they are, the more self-image is more positive. On the basis of these theoretical considerations we do not exclude the existence of a correlation between the vocational identity and the identities manifest at the age of adolescence, the correlation reflecting the direct proportional link between the psycho-social maturity and the vocational maturity.

1. Theoretical framework

Vocational identity is a perceptual set of skills, values, interests, skills in combination with preference for a certain type of activity, interaction styles and work environments. Vocational identity is highlighted alongside the general one, and the exploration of the vocational identity (clue of the maturity of the individual) is facilitated by the investigation of a set of structures through various ways to facilitate individual self-knowledge and career decision. Vocational identity as well as self-identity knows evolutionary paths. Ginzberg, (1972) showed that it went through three stages, namely:

- The phantasy phase (3-10 years) manifests through the child's tendency to imitate in the games the professional behavior of the persons working in the desired professions;
- The explorations phase (11-17 years), a flexible phase, insufficiently consolidated, concretized in the detailed exploration of the characteristics of the professions desired while investigating their own desires in order to reveal their consonance, consonance generating

subsequent professional decisions. The phase is not decisive, however, the option for a career being likely at this age to be eradicated by another potential professional option.

• Realism, crystallization of vocational identity, (18-25 years of age) is manifested through a definitive, pragmatic option based on a balance of its own characteristics with the set of socio-educational backgrounds of the individual trajectory.

Vocational identity has a unitary structure. Depending on the identities of the subjects, it knows a variety of forms molded on these identities and sometimes expresses the vague nature of the professional options. Marcia, (1980) shows that vocational identity has several forms in adolescents:

• Forced identity - in which the subject is effectively overturned in its school and professional orientation, taking uncritical choices of others and materializing their requirements, expectations, desires.

• The identity crisis manifests itself through the difficulty of shaping a certain identity, and in an optional plan it manifests itself by the tendency of a delay in the decision;

• Identity Diffusion - materialized in the absence of an option despite internal inherent pressure.

• Shaped identity, crystallized around a well-defined option, which subordinates all intrinsic behaviors to the goal pursued.

The complexity of the school and professional orientation process derives not only from the detailed analysis of the characteristics of the potential socio-professional environments in subsequent activities, but also from the highlighting of some characteristic elements relevant to the specificity of the respective environment. Baban (2003) highlights the significant role of exploring personal interests in the process of school and professional orientation. The constitutive elements of the motivational complex, interests reflect the preferential focus for certain areas of activity. Exploring interests in various ways facilitates the identification of potential areas in the professional perfection of subjects, identifying the disclosure of the causes of current professional dissatisfaction, disclosing and encouraging potential alternative options.

One way to investigate motivational structures in the process of school and professional orientation is Schein's test (1993). Schein (1993) is of the opinion that subjects at the edge of professional choices should prioritize certain determinants of the individual's sphere. Included in a broader conceptual sphere, being even anchors, these factors are highlighted in any context by stimulating, inhibiting, conditioning, braking, facilitating

behaviors that are grouped periodically with a successful effect - versus failure in the work done. Schein (1993) highlights eight anchors that are updated during career development and act as benchmarks in the functional specificity of individuals:

1. functional competence, concretized in the existence of a series of abilities whose effects are individualized in obtaining immediate products that generate satisfaction;

2. managerial competence, manifested by the instinctive tendency to lead, manage and subordinate, the subjects manifesting themselves as experts in managerial activities;

3. personal autonomy, manifested by the granting of personal value exclusivity in the process of activities, by the tendency to realize its own program, in strict independence from external governing rules;

4. security - stability, individualized in the tendency of individuals to focus on the securing element that confers safety and stability in the work process;

5. entrepreneurial creativity, manifested by the tendency of individuals to be entrepreneurs, to undertake, to start and to finalize various business; they are the promoters of various business ideas;

6. dedication of a case - encompassing all those who focus on professions with a strictly humanist role;

7. the pure provocation - specific to people who like ambiguity, indefinite environments, unstructured tasks and opposed to rigid and inflexible activities;

8. lifestyle - specific to people who are looking for the conditions of activity to give them the opportunity to put their personality in value.

Career anchors are updated independently of domain characteristics. Thus, it is not excluded that they generate feelings of satisfaction versus dissatisfaction depending on the degree of compatibility with the specificity of the work performed. A subject dominated by the need for command and control will not feel at ease in a subordinate activity, as an artist tempted by unstructured environments will find no satisfaction in well-defined and rigid environments. Career anchors manifest in an incipient phase and in student behavior. They inhibit, determine, constrain, limit and condition so that, depending on its anchor, the student will precipitate towards certain learning activities that are compatible with them. Therefore, his / her learning behavior will have a selective character or certain activities will generate satisfaction, as they are the living expression of an anchor career. Therefore, the pupil will feel at ease in learning activities that allow the updating of the

career anchor, and this will also be highlighted in the specifics of the school results.

Starting from Marcia's theories (1980) we consider that an individual with a well-defined vocational identity knows his / her tendencies, needs, abilities, predispositions and is aware of his / her school and professional success through these identities.

At the age of adolescence, a barometer of self-esteem that reflects an acquired identity is also the educational adaptation.

2. Methodology

The purpose of this study is to identify the role of predisposing factors in the process of school and professional orientation of students. The hypothesis of the study is: *students with a well-defined vocational identity are presumed to have no difficulty in adapting to school.*

The investigative group consisted of 40 pupils of Dimitrie Cantemir High School, Darabani, from the 9th and 12th grades. 11 subjects are male representing 27.5% of the total, and 29 are female representing 72.5% of the total. The research tools consisted of:

• Questionnaire for identification of career anchors – Schein, adaptated Dandara (2013);

• Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS), developed by A.K.P. Sinha and

R.P. Singh (2004). For checking the validity of the hypothesis, the following objectives have been proposed: a) to determinate how the Vocational Identity is reflected in the specifics of school results in pupils; b) to highlight how well-defined career anchors can prevent school adaptation difficulties.

3. Results

In order to check the research hypothesis, we have applied inferential statistics. Below, we present the means, standard deviations and the lot of subjects (table 1).

Table 1. The means, standard deviations and the lot of subjects of the frequency of adaptation distribution and career anchors

Adaptation			**Career anchors**		
M	SD	n	M	SD	n
2.6250	.49029	40	4.5500	2.20663	40

According to the obtained data (table 2), the sense of educational adaptation prevails 62.5% compared to 37.5% social adaptation. The frequency of emotional adaptation has not reached statistically significant odds.

Table 2. Frequency of social and educational adaptation

Adaptation					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Social adaptation	15	36.6	37.5	37.5
	Educational adaptation	25	61.0	62.5	100.0
	Total	40	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.4		
Total		41	100.0		

The results of the AISS application are as follows (table 3): 12.5% - manifest functional skills, 10% - managing skills, 10% -manifest autonomy, 17.5% -security stability, 7.5% - entrepreneurial creativity, 20% - the dedication of a cause , 14.6% - pure challenge, 7.5% - lifestyle. We note that most subjects have professional anchors in the direction of dedicating a cause - 20% of the subjects.

Table 3. Frequency of career anchors

Career anchors					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	functional skills	5	12.2	12.5	12.5
	managing skills	4	9.8	10.0	22.5
	autonomy	4	9.8	10.0	32.5
	security stability	7	17.1	17.5	50.0
	entrepreneurial creativity	3	7.3	7.5	57.5
	the dedication of a cause	8	19.5	20.0	77.5
	pure challenge	6	14.6	15.0	92.5
	lifestyle	3	7.3	7.5	100.0

	Total	40	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.4		
Total		41	100.0		

From the statistical processing methods we selected the Pearson correlation. The results are presented below:

Table 4. The mean and standard deviation obtained from correlation

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
career anchors	4.5500	2.20663	40
educational adaptation	10.4500	1.53506	40

Further, we shall analyse the correlation between the two variables: educational adaptation and career anchors. From the analysis of the results (table 5), we can see a correlation between the two variables but of the inverse proportionality, which shows that the more subjects have a more well-defined vocational identity, the more they have a school inadequacy ($r = -0.317$ at $p < 0.05$), which forces us to accept the null hypothesis and reject the advanced one. Considering the Cohen scale (2008) the association between the two variables is moderate and the determination coefficient is 10%, which shows that only 10% of the scattering of a variable is explained by the existence of the second rest of the association being incidental.

Table 5. The results obtained from the correlation of the two variables

Correlations			
		career anchors	educational adaptation
career anchors	Pearson Correlation	1	-.317*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.046
	N	40	40
educational adaptation	Pearson Correlation	-.317*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.046	
	N	40	40
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

4. Implications/Discussion

Reverse proportionality reflects the fact that the subjects have the better outlined identity, the more obvious difficulties of school adaptation. The explanation might lie in the existing incompatibility between career anchors and the specificity of the high school profile they are studying. The school, through its specificity, handles a series of objective requirements and responsibilities that the student has to pay.

When these are compatible with native predispositions, it is assisted in increasing school performance, which can only be encouraging for tutors. On the contrary, when an incompatibility is found (student with artistic inclinations at a high school of natural science, for example), ineffective learning outcomes may be the expression of this incompatibility. This is why it is good that special attention should also be paid to skills, inclinations, native predispositions in school and professional guidance processes, as they can often be decisive for successful schooling.

5. Conclusions

The obtained results show that the hypothesis is infirmed and we accept the null hypothesis. In the studies, we have identified various benchmarks that explain the diversity of priorities in educational adaptation: perhaps not necessarily an anchor of career makes adolescents face difficulties in adapting, but it helps them outline options worthy of expression and counseling in the direction of reaching maximum potential. A simple reflection on the issues examined reinforces the idea of the need for a responsible attitude towards the choice and the decision of the school, and then the professional one.

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