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# THE LEARNING SITUATION AND THE PROFESSIONAL OPTIONS OF THE STUDENTS

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**Abstract**

The rationale of this paper is based on the issues emerged in those areas of interference (ways) between educational training and socio-professional activities. We assume that there is a relationship between the student's learning situation in their last two years of high school and their attitude towards the professional prestige and options The second part of this paper exposes the theoretical and methodological base and the use of certain sociometric items. We included 110 students from a high school, 73 girls and 37 boys. The results pointed out by this paper are grouped into six classifications, four of which being primal and two derived ones obtained by converting the primal charts into the research hypotheses. The last part of the paper comprises a series of discussions regarding the validity of the research and several conclusions. This paper can have implications in order to organize more activities of knowledge of world's professions.

## 1. Introduction

One of the most important aspects of postmodernism as a cultural movement is represented by a stronger and stronger orientation of educational sciences towards those areas of interference (ways) between school training and other social activities such as occupations or the actual way in which student professional integration is achieved.

The socio-political and economic transformations that have occurred within the last decades have lead to significant changes regarding the issue of education and orientation of educational sciences. We are witnessing today a more and more pronounced process of educational globalizing and Europeanisation which includes all the problems and difficulties we have to face. By analyzing the educational and learning system and the knowledge society in the 21st centruty, Roxana Chivu stated that „the starting point of this synthetic enterprise is represented by the attempt to illustrate the key concepts." (Chivu,

2008, p. 19) Taking this into account it is more and more required the principle of integrated learning which is enhanced by the development of informational and communication technologies.

Such restructurings in the field of education are due  according to Lucian Ciolan among other things to the changes which have been made on the labour market and especially to strong development of competition. Thus , it has been noticed that „public or private employers have given special importance to quality work...the professionalism of an economy based on knowledge needs a better qualification to respond to the requests and needs of occupational competences in order to maintain and develop  a correct occupational policy on an ever changing labour market." (Ciolan, 2008, p. 61-62)

To the fore of educational sciences the concept of total quality management is more and more pronounced. (MQT) It represents top fields regarding educational management, new platforms of construction related to organization, the leadership of organizations interested in quality and the participation of all its memebers to its success." (Potolea, 2015, p.11)

The direct connection between competence viewed as an educational product and the professional abilities is more and more obvious as a first-class condition for ensuring the economic and social progress. Insisting on such aspects Mușata Bocoș considers that „competence represents an individual characteristic or a collective one  in order to select, mobilize, combine and efficiently use a system in a given context „ an integrated set of knowledge, abilities and attitudes and to successfully perform certain tasks." (Bocoș, 2015, p. 96)

The theoretical draft outlined above suggests the existence of multipple ralations between educational activity and socio-economic  life,  one of these being of great interest to us, namely, the ratio betwen the students' learning situation regarding the last two years of high school and the professional options. It is true that choosing a faculty as a first defining step in terms of prefessional option is taken as a decisive moment before the Baccalaureate Exam, when young students are forced by circumstances to make important decisions regarding their future.

## 2.  Methodology

The main objective of this paper is the analysis of the connection between the learning situation in the last years of high school and the professional options. We have used the following methodology: delimiting variables, advancing hypotheses, testing hypotheses by means of sociometric techniques, calculating the correlation index of the ranks, etc.

Regarding the learning situation as one of the main variables of our research I took into account by means of operationalizing the students' averages in their last year and semester of school. Similarly to their professional choice , the other important variable of our research has been the prestige of the professions chosen by the students. Our research has had a projective and indirect characteristic , that is, we did not ask the students to indicate their learning institution or the faculty they intend to attend, but instead we asked them to name the profession they want to have in the future. They have been asked to name what the most prestigious professions  are according to their opinion, examining in this way the axiological aspects of prefessions from a psychological point of view and obviously to name their professional choice.

The hypothesis we took into account has been that according to which there is a connection between the students' learning situation in their last two years of high school and their attitude towards the professional prestige and options. On the side we have guessed that in the case of the students with a better learning situation, there is a better accordance between their professional options and the statute of professions in the way these are perceived by the students'mentality.

The actual research has been performed in *Traian Vuia* Oradea highschool, during the second semester of the school year 2015-2016. One hundred and ten students have been questioned, 73 girls and 37 boys.

The operationalization of the professional statute has been performed according to the sociometric system: „Name three professions in the order you consider they are socially appreciated, which of these do you think is the most appreciated and which one would be on the second and third place in terms of social appreciation." The first place has been given three points, the second place two points and the third place one point, so that we have counted 660 points.

The other variable has been operationalized by means of the averages got by each student during the first semester of the school year 2015- 2016, respectively of the averages got during the school year 2014- 2015. According to these averages by conventionally converting the grades from the first semester of the school year 2015-2016 to the averages from the previous school year, in the sense that we regarded them as being equivalent in terms of quantification value, we have created two groups: the first group includes students with averages above eight, and the second one students with averages below eight. In this respect we got the charts 3, 4, 5 and 6.

We have tried to estimate the interference of different psychological factors such as: the students' perception of the difficulties characteristic of each profession, the identification of the statute of professions, etc. We have also taken into account the study concerning the correlation between the statute of professions on one hand and the professions chosen by the students on the other hand. In order to make such an association we had to harmonize the two charts, that is we had to maintain in the two charts only the professions that appear in both of them.

## 3. Results

All the students answered to this item, three hundred thirty preferences being expressed thus leading to the account for six hundred sixty points.

The results of the statistic processing are presented under the form of six charts, four primal (I-IV) and two derived (V and VI) resulting from the homogenization of the primal charts.

The profession status as resulting from the students' preferences can be presented as seen in the first chart.

*Chart 1. The profession status according to the students 'preferences*

First place – computer scientist

Second place – doctor

Third place – economist

Fourth place – lawyer

Fifth place – engineer

Sixth place – professor

Seventh place – police officer

Eighth place – officer

Ninth place- entrepreneur

Tenth place – technician

Eleventh place – waiter

Twelfth place – beautician

Thirteenth place – horticultural engineer

Fourteenth place – designer

Fifteenth place – other professions

According to the item ("Which is your favourite profession?", "What would you like to profess after graduating from school?", "What would you like to become?") to which all the students have given an answer, we have gathered 110 options according to which we have created the second chart.

*Chart 2. The professions chosen by the students in the last two years of high school*

1. Engineering  21
2. Computer scientist  19
3. Economist  18
4. Lawyer  13
5. Doctor  9
6. Professor  8
7. Entrepreneur  6
8. Police officer  5
9. Revenue officer  4
10. Beautician  2
11. Agriculture worker  2
12. Other 3

*Chart 3: The professions chosen by the students with good learning results*

First place- computer scientist

Second place- doctor

Third place – lawyer

Fourth place – professor

Fifth place – economist

Sixth place – entrepreneur

Seventh place – beautician

Eighth place – police officer

Ninth place – officer

Tenth place – aviator

*Chart 4. The professions preferred by the students with averages below eight*

First place- Economist

Second place- engineer

Third place – waiter

Fourth place – police officer

Fifth place – computer scientist

Sixth place – horticultural engineer

Seventh place – doctor

Eighth place – technician

Ninth place – professor

Tenth place – designer

By analyzing the first chart one can conclude that the most appreciated profession is that of computer scientist, which proves that last –year students not only perceive but are interested in the prestige of a certain profession taking into consideration especially the job's remuneration and the attention it gets socially. By comparing the first chart with the third one we will also notice that most of the students with high results in learning have already decided to study computer science. By comparing the first chart with the fourth one, we can observe that although the students with averages below eight perceive the high status of being a computer scientist, they choose the profession of economist first, followed by that of an engineer. The option for informatics lies on the fifth place and it is followed by that of an engineer. Their preference for computer science is overtaken by their options for jobs such as waiter and police officer, which in the first chart appear on the seventh and eighth place.

If we compare the first chart, which represents the status of professions for all the subjects with the second chart which indicates the professions chosen by the pupils, we notice that the profession of computer scientist is on the first place while in the case of the second chart it is on the second place. One may conclude that students understand the difficulties they might face in case they would choose that job. The same difficulties are perceived when taking into account the profession of being a doctor which is on the second place in the case of the first chart but on the fifth place in the case of the second chart. However, when dealing with the doctor profession although being less appreciated in terms of prestige (it is situated only on the fifth place in the case of the first chart), it lies on the first place in the case of the second chart. This means that students feel they may have more chances to succeed either because the competition is not so strong or due to social facilities.

Consequently, we got the fifth and the sixth charts.

*Chart 5: The converted statute of professions*

First place – computer scientist

Second place – doctor

Third place – economist

Fourth place – lawyer

Fifth place – engineer

Sixth place – professor

Seventh place – police officer

Eighth place – beautician

The sixth place – the professions chosen by the students who are in their last two years of high school. Converted.

First place – engineer

Second place – computer scientist

Third place – economist

Fourth place – lawyer

Fifth place – doctor

Sixth place – professor

Seventh place – police officer

Eighth place – beautician

In order to verify the hypothesis of the research we have calculated the coefficient of correlation between the two charts.

By means of calculating the correlation index according to the rank coefficients we got S = 0.70. The high value of S indicates that there is a deep psycho affective connection between the statute of professions and the occupations chosen by the students who are in their final years of high school.

The research carried out according to some provisory operationalization and quantification patterns pointed out the existence of significant connections between the learning situation and the professional choices of the students who are in the last years of high school, which allows us to outline a certain psycho – educational frame meant to help teachers and those in charge with the students' professional orientation.

## 4. Conclusions

The status of professions is relatively well perceived by the students in their final years of high school, despite the fact that the school does not systematically organize an extended activity of presenting the occupations and the chances of being employed, payment and promotion opportunities.

We consider that the role held by the school in optimizing the students' professional integration would be improved a great deal if the way activities are organized were characterized by a higher level of informality and the curriculum included more optional and facultative subjects.

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