

**Pro Edu. International Journal of  
Educational Sciences**



**Number 3, Year 2, June 2020,  
Ideas Forum International Academic and Scientific Association  
Romania**

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IFIASA Publishing House,

Web: web: <http://peijes.com/en/>  
[ifiasa@yahoo.com](mailto:ifiasa@yahoo.com)

Grafic disinger: Marin BUGIULESCU

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## Preface

We are happy to see that our demarche - to gather in a dedicated journal a series of works oriented on various aspects of Educational Sciences - recorded an important echo not just at national (Romanian) level, but also at international level. Therefore, we salute the presence of the authors who found in our journal a platform where they can introduce their researches or present their innovative ideas. In this respect, this 3rd issue of Pro Edu. International Journal of Educational Sciences (June 2020) call your attention with 9 papers and 1 book review.

First, Antonella NUZZACI proposes a paper that aims to explore the future primary school teachers' perceptions, attitudes and beliefs towards evaluation, during the early stages of their training. The second paper, written by Sudhakar VENUKAPALLI tries to answer a question related to the pattern of thought that lies behind the scientific discoveries, trying to underline on the recognition of the centrality of discovery in scientific theorizing, that enables the activation of a mode of thinking which must be inoculated in the students' minds, with the view to find the relationship between science and other domains of human creative endeavor.

In the following paper, Elena-Ancuța SANTI explores the teenagers' perceptions of moral values, but also the manner in which they are set to work in their life, challenging the teacher to identify educational ways and solutions in order to contribute to the formation of the adolescent as an individual with moral personality and conduct.

Next, Maria-Antoaneta VASILESCU introduces her study that present the case of a preteen abandoned by one parent and left by the other (for working abroad), aiming to evaluate his adaptability and the proper communication modalities, in order to find a method able to produce changes at relational level and improve the communication between the preteen and the departed parent.

In the fifth paper, Crisanta-Alina MAZILESCU, Daniel PASQUIER and Bernard GANGLOFF try to demonstrate that personality descriptors are not neutral, but rather bearers of a social valence - in positive or negative sense -, a valence which testifies to social desirability and/or utility. The following paper, written by Georgiana Alexandra ȘERBU, addresses the subject of creativity and its manifestation in the preschool period, highlighting on important aspects concerning the process of developing the child's personality. Next, Ramona Nicoleta ARIEȘAN balances between phenomenology and violence, trying to decide which of them is more present in our lives.

In the eight paper, Valentina Iuliana MANEA, Gabriel GORGHIU and Costin PRIBEANU analyze the negative effects of the Facebook use on university students' work, by discussing around three variables - number of Facebook friends, number of daily logs and the time spent daily -, and defining three Facebook user profiles based on the intensity of use.

Last paper, written by Adina NICHITA, Dumitru ENACHE and Rebecca-Eunice PELMUȘ, explore the bullying phenomenon in the school environment, highlighting on the existed situation in Italy and Romania, and investigating a sample of students, with the view to identify and propose concrete ways, to prevent, reduce and combat this phenomenon.

In the end of this issue, Ana-Maria Aurelia PETRESCU signs a book presentation - "Formative and Evaluative Valences of the Portfolio in Prospective Teachers Training", written by Crisanta-Alina MAZILESCU, and published at Editura Eurostampa, Timișoara, in 2019.

June 2020,

Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Gabriel GORGHIU,  
Teacher Training Department  
Valahia University of Targoviste, ROMANIA

## BELIEFS, ATTITUDES, AND PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT OF FUTURE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS: THE ROLE OF THE PREVIOUS SCHOLASTIC EXPERIENCE

**Prof. Ph.D. Antonella NUZZACI,**

Experimental Pedagogy Department of Human Studies – University of L’Aquila,  
ITALY,

E-mail: [antonella.nuzzaci@univaq.it](mailto:antonella.nuzzaci@univaq.it)

### ABSTRACT

*The present study is aimed at exploring perceptions attitudes and beliefs of future primary school teachers towards evaluation during the early stages of their training. It is clear from the literature that, in the initial training phase, assessment is a potentially problematic area of the curriculum, in which past learning experiences seem to have a strong influence on the development of negative attitudes and feelings towards evaluation and forms of verification. Through data collected with different tools, they have been examined perceptions and beliefs regarding the evaluation and assessment of University students, future teachers of primary school in initial training, to try to understand if the previous school experiences had an impact on the general attitude taken towards the assessment and on the intentionality of use of it in the educational field. There is in fact convincing evidence that show how beliefs, values, beliefs and attitudes of future teachers influence cognitive aspects, behavior, decision-making processes and class practices. The study bears witness to this influence above all in the case of previous negative evaluation experiences, which are highly predictive of intentionality of use the assessment in the teaching.*

**Keywords:** *Assessment; Evaluations; Previous Experience; Preservice Teacher Education; Student Teaching; Teacher Education Preparation;*

### INTRODUCTION

The literature shows how attitudes, beliefs and perceptions about assessment are important for the choices and implementation of assessment practices in the school setting (Brown, 2004; Brown et al., 2011; Remesal, 2011; Kitiashvili, 2014), as well as what teachers think of themselves is able to influence their decision-making processes in the teaching-learning paths and their results (Roelofs & Sanders, 2007). For this reason, it is appropriate to take these beliefs into account in the initial training of teachers in order to avoid that misconceptions, negative experiences and prejudices negatively affect the way of planning and evaluating. The perception of one's own evaluation competence certainly influences the evaluation process (Maba, 2017) and there are numerous factors that can guide or play a role in shaping teachers' perceptions, especially during initial training (XXXX, 2019b), on their evaluation in the classroom. Different ways of evaluating can be traced back to subjective perceptions and different perceptions can influence the teacher's behaviour with specific regard to the judgements he or she makes. The teacher's perception of whether he or she is adequate or not in evaluating, as well as his or her beliefs and feelings, have a decisive

influence on the intentionality of action; and therefore in carrying out the evaluation in reality (XXXX, 2018; 2019b). This will cause the production of judgments and will, in turn, influence the way the evaluation process is implemented (Astawa *et al.*, 2017).

In fact, if there are many researches aimed at understanding the uses that teachers make of evaluation in the education process and their needs variously expressed in terms of assessment (Metin & Özmen, 2010), less frequent are those aimed at understanding how previous experiences in terms of evaluation they condition and strongly influence the work of the teacher in initial and in-service training, especially in terms of decision-making processes (Domenici & Lucisano 2001) and valid and reliable practices (Lucisano, 2003). Equally rare are also researchers directed at investigating how and why the evaluation generates feelings of fear, states of vulnerability and perceived problems of self-esteem and self-efficacy with respect to both learning and teaching.

Even less explored then seems to be the way in which the exposure to previous negative school experiences about the assessment affect the attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of teachers in initial and continuous training.

Just think of how, for example, self-esteem and self-efficacy (LevyVered & Nasser-Abu Alhija, 2015) can be conditioned by negative evaluation experiences that have left an indelible trace in individuals.

It is also known how the interactions between these factors have the power to influence the cultural and social meaning and validity of the teaching-learning processes, fueling the resistance to the evaluation process and the rejection that occurs when threats to self-esteem or self-efficacy are high.

Although therefore in the literature there are a series of studies that explore attitudes, perceptions and beliefs with respect to evaluation, rather rare are those examples that refer to the power exercised by previous school experience on the early stages of the training of future primary teachers and their professional development.

This is probably due to the fact that the influence of negative experience on teachers' beliefs is in the effects it produces underestimated.

In this regard, Gimenez (1999) argues that beliefs and biography should be integrated within a reflective approach in the initial training of teachers, since it happens that the latter too often claim to be lacking adequate preparation in the areas of evaluation and measurement (Plake, 1993). In the training of teachers, these areas of expertise to be potentially problematic areas of the curriculum (Akcadag, 2010), which always appear to be growing.

Teachers in initial training, in fact, risk, if not properly trained, to approach the teaching world and to base their future evaluation practices on representations that refer to past experiences related to educational and personal processes, their past school background (when they were pupils), well as to individual and social expectations (such as family expectations, for example), rather than on scientifically based methodological skills. Therefore, if it is true that evaluation practices are able to have a positive impact on training, it seems important to analyze the factors linked to the representations and beliefs possessed by teachers in initial training about the use of evaluation and its tools, in order to understand how they condition future teaching practices to better direct university training on the function they assume in the teaching-learning processes.

This aspect has been widely explored by Brookhart (2001), who underlined how the difficulties related to the preparation and training of teachers in terms of evaluation and assessment are increasing (Gelbal & Kelecioğlu, 2007; Gencil & Ozbasi, 2013) and it is now

urgent to study these issues, also considering the fact that, although the focus on teacher training has grown at all levels in all countries of the world, a culture of evaluation at school it cannot yet be said to be fully affirmed.

This leads one to think that for many teachers, whether or not they are exposed to evaluation-related training does not always mean, in itself, that they have become literate in it or have been able to remove those obstacles that prevent them from practicing it in appropriate forms. This is also demonstrated by the great intolerance or reluctance that still exists among teachers in training and in service when it talks to evaluation and assessment. Therefore, it may happen that many teachers, for example, arrive at their first teaching assignment after having been exposed to initial training that has fed a not entirely internalized knowledge on important aspects concerning evaluation, knowledge that appears even weaker when it comes to measurement.

In recent years, evaluation and assessment, in terms of techniques, methods, procedures and tools, have assumed an increasingly important role in teacher training curricula and in an increasing number of professionalisation courses, but this has often been more out of necessity than out of real conviction that this area of competence was authentically of interest for their professional development. It has also frequently happened that such programs have not always been able to remove the sedimented rejection (tacit acquisition) of assessment in teachers in training, often own linked to the memory of previous experiences - not always positive - than when they were students, preventing them from applying what they had learned about the assessment (XXXX, 2018; 2019).

Therefore, if past school experiences seem to have a strong impact on the development of negative attitudes and feelings of apprehension of future teachers towards assessment and exam tests (XXXX, 2018; 2019), then affecting training and intentionality of use in teaching (teaching activities that they will carry out once they enter the school), it is therefore urgent to identify those factors and obstacles that have a repercussion on the correct acquisition of evaluation skills (Schafer, 1991; Plake, 1993) with the intent to try during training to remove them.

## 1. Research

This study aimed to explore the attitude of future primary teachers towards assessment during the early stages of their professional training.

It is clear from the literature that for many trainee teachers, assessment is a potentially problematic area of the curriculum where past learning experiences seem to have a strong impact on the development of negative attitudes and feelings of apprehension towards assessment and exam tests, which in turn could have an impact on the teaching activity that they will carry out in the future.

Through a combination of data collected with different tools, attitudes and perceptions were examined towards the assessment and assessment of students enrolled in the Master's Degree in Primary Teacher Education (a single cycle degree/Combined Bachelor and Master - 5 years) of the Uni, to try to understand if the previous school experiences had an impact on the general attitude taken towards the evaluation during the ongoing training and on the intentionality of use in the didactic field.

There is convincing evidence indeed that shows how the beliefs, values, beliefs and attitudes of future teachers play an important role in decision making and classroom practices (Calderhead & Robson, 1991); examining how they emerge and evolve during initial training is of fundamental importance for their professional development of teachers

and for “quality” teaching and raising the level of performance in various educational contexts (Nasri *et al.*, 2010). According to Belk and Calais (1998), evaluation allows the teacher to collect information on student progress and the achievement of curricular objectives, constituting the measure by which teaching becomes effective for a certain category of recipients of the training action. The teachers agree that evaluation is, for them, a tool for continuous improvement (Atkins, 1996), even if they do not always make appropriate use of it or have adequate skills (xxxx, 2006). The correlation between assessment and teaching success is ascertained (Atkins, 1996; Oppenheim, 1994) and determines the value of teacher education (Peterson, 2000). The literature shows that teachers' attitude towards evaluation is still substantially very traditional, especially due to the lack of preparation of teachers in applying specific techniques and tools (Akcadag, 2010; Bicak & Cakan, 2004; Schafer, 1991; Yasar, 2014) and how the assessment is considered by them to be particularly complex (Maden & Durukan, 2009).

The study described here uses a descriptive model to clarify the relationship between beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and experience of teachers in initial training with regard to assessment and assessment in order to clarify the degree of relationship between two or more variables (Lucisano & Salerni, 2003). It focuses on the problem of evaluation in teaching, the main source of concern in the professionalization of teachers, linked to the importance of making teaching more effective and efficient and overcoming the difficulties associated with teaching-learning processes.

Describing the beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and experiences of future teachers regarding assessment and understanding what could influence the choice and use of assessment techniques and tools in the school context means gathering important indications to develop more incisive training actions in terms of conducts and behaviors professional ethically and pedagogically corrected in educational settings.

Therefore, it was first validated the hypothesis that previous negative experiences in evaluation influenced the attitude toward it, which has progressively become negative or of refusal, determining over time a lesser opening toward evaluation in the didactic context in terms of intentionality of use.

We then went on to ask the participants to report on their exposure and frequency to negative and / or positive experiences with reference to the evaluation, assuming that the negative ones would have led to negative, closure or refusal attitudes towards the evaluation, mediated by relationship between experiences, beliefs and perceptions.

The study accounted for in this article was preceded by another study, which served as the background for the one described here. The first study had the aim of highlighting the relationship between previous experience in evaluation and the perception of evaluation associated with academic activities by university students enrolled to the Degree Course in Primary Teacher Education.

The first study included:

- *a correlational analysis* that was concerned with studying whether (Hp1) a statistically significant relationship existed between previous negative experience in terms of evaluation (which had prevented the acquisition of specific skills) and perception of the evaluation in the university context; (Hp2) a statistically significant relationship between previous negative experience in terms of evaluation and acquisition of evaluation skills.

- *a predictive analysis* that went to verify if the previous negative experience towards the evaluation predicted the negative perception of university students in terms of evaluation during the degree course they attend.



Therefore, of the two correlation hypotheses, the first was clearly confirmed: it showed that the greater the negative experience, the greater the negative perception over time. The second hypothesis showed the relationship with other intervening variables and this result should be further explored. Confirmed is also the second hypothesis, which sees the previous scholastic experience foresee the negative perception of the university students in terms of evaluation. This is the background of subsequent studies which is accounted for below.

## 2. Aims

The principal aim of this research was to strengthen the internal studies of the Degree Course in Primary Teacher Education of the Un, in order to gather indications on how to promote greater professional awareness of teachers in initial training in the use of evaluation in educational settings.

It was a matter of investigating which factors, more than others, could adversely affect the attitudes related to the didactic use of evaluation, creating barriers to the use of techniques, criteria, and tools suitable for measuring and evaluating learning. In further studies, which cannot be accounted for here, the relationship between assessment, assessment and methodological-didactic skills has also been studied in relation to the teaching profession that future teachers will carry out on leaving the university.

## 3. Methodology

### *Participants*

The study participants were 248 university students enrolled in the first year of the Degree Course in Primary Teacher Education of the Uni. The survey covered the second semester of the 2016-2017 academic year and the first semester of the 2017-2018 academic year. Of a total of 248 students who participated in the study, 96.96% (= 238) were female and 4.03% male (= 10). The age of the champion ranges from 19 to 45 years. The largest number of students 67.64% (= 168) is placed in the age group ranging from 19 to 26 years. Of the 248 students, 34.67% (= 86) had previously graduated and the remainder graduated. 6.85 (= 17) was already a teacher.

### *Hypothesis*

- Hp1 = There is a significant relationship between general attitude towards evaluation and previous experience
- Hp2 = Previous evaluation experience predicts the general attitude towards evaluation
- Hp3 = the previous school experience predicts the attitude towards the use of evaluation in a didactic context
- Hp3 = the previous evaluation experience predicts perceived usefulness
- Hp4 = the previous evaluation experience predicts intention of use in a didactic context

### *Sub-hypothesis*

- Hp1 = There is a significant difference in the attitude towards evaluation between younger students (<19 years) and older students (> 40)
- Hp2 = There is no significant difference in attitude towards the use of evaluation between students who have a degree and students who have a diploma

#### Independent variable

- The previous school experience perceived in terms of evaluation

#### Dependent variables

- General attitude towards evaluation
- Perceived utility
- Positive and negative attitudes towards the didactic use of evaluation
- Intentional use

#### *Data Collecting Instruments*

Questionnaire “Attitude and perception towards evaluation” (15-20 minutes) (XXXX, 2016; Arastaman *et al.* 2015; Ozan & Kose, 2013) and Interview structured for previous experience (30 minutes) (Blanchet & Gotman, 2000).

All study participants were asked to give their informed consent and to provide a voluntary declaration of participation in the research.

#### *Attitudes towards evaluation*

The main tool was aimed at detecting teachers' beliefs and attitudes in initial training with respect to assessment.

It is an instrument aimed at measuring not the “absolute attitudes” towards the evaluation, but the “general” and personal attitudes of university students, which includes, in addition to the skimmed and planned items for the final version, a section for collecting information on the demographic characteristics of the participants and additional observations.

In order to test the validity and reliability of the instrument, it was administered to students coming from similar contexts, selected by age and year of course.

The questionnaire, which consists of five sections, uses a five-point Likert scale. The subjects are called to give their opinion on some statements compared to which they must express their agreement or disagreement.

The items are divided into four sub-scales, whose reliability coefficients were respectively 0.93, 0.86, 0.78, 0.79 and 0.82, with an overall Cronbach's Alpha of 0.834.

This allowed us to conclude that the tool had satisfactory reliability in assessing students' attitudes towards evaluation and assessment.

In order to assess the relevance of each factor, they were made comparisons within subject between different sub-scales of each section and a descriptive analysis was performed on all four scales of the instrument, though significant differences between the sub-scales emerge in the aspects that characterize the experience [ $F(2,268)=438,133$ ;  $p<.001$ ].

#### *Previous self-reported evaluation experiences*

In order to measure the frequency of previous negative experiences in evaluation previous studies were taken into account. The scale measured the number of episodes and exposure to different negative experiences. To determine whether the tool regarding the evaluation experiences was valid, it was subjected to an analysis of the main components using a direct SPSS rotation, which allowed to extract three factors with eigenvalues of 5.16, 1.88 and 1.26. The set of factors explained 49.84% of the variance in the data. Component 1 contained seven elements related to the frequency of negative experiences in the school field concerning different school grades, Component 2 contained six elements related to one's

experiences with different subjective elements and Component 3 contained six elements related to perceptions. We have defined these factors as “Evaluation experiences” ( $\alpha = .74$ ), “Negative evaluation experiences” ( $\alpha = 0.759$ ) and “Perceptions” ( $\alpha = 0.67$ ). The factors were positively correlated,  $r = .68$ ,  $p < .001$ .

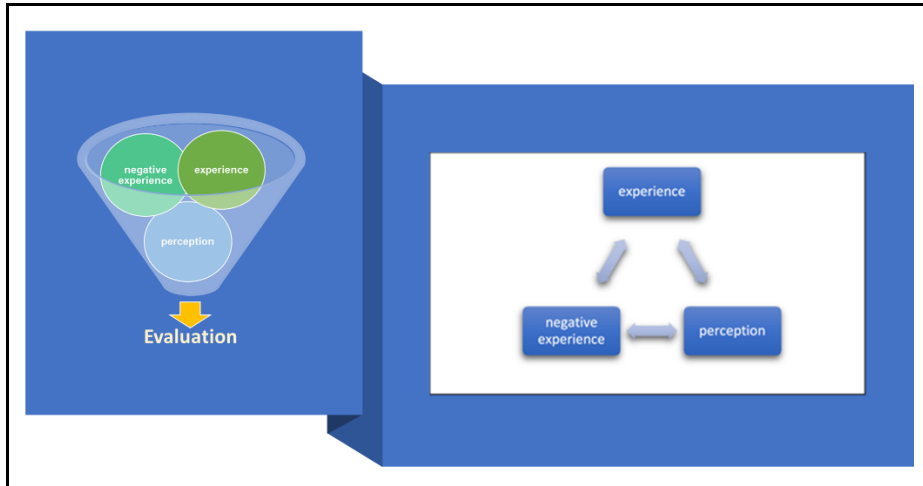


Fig. 1 - Mediation model that describes the effect of previous evaluation experiences with elements on the attitude through perception. The total effect is listed in parentheses; all regression values are not standardized

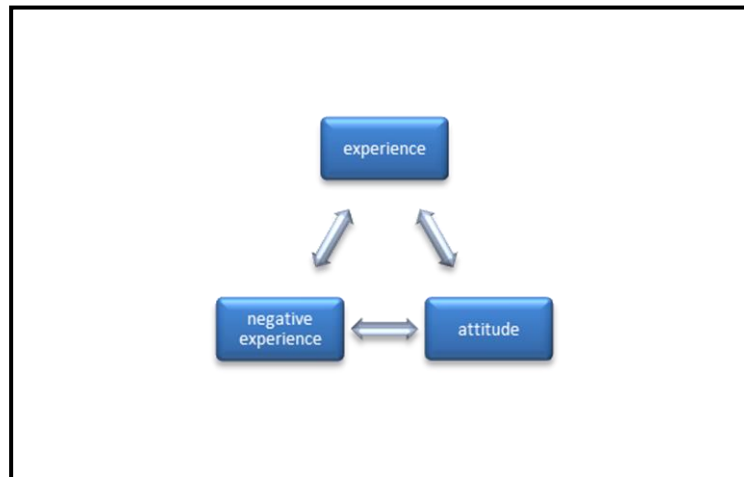


Fig. 2 - Mediation model that describes the effect of experiences and cultural elements. The total effect is listed in parentheses; all regression values are not standardized

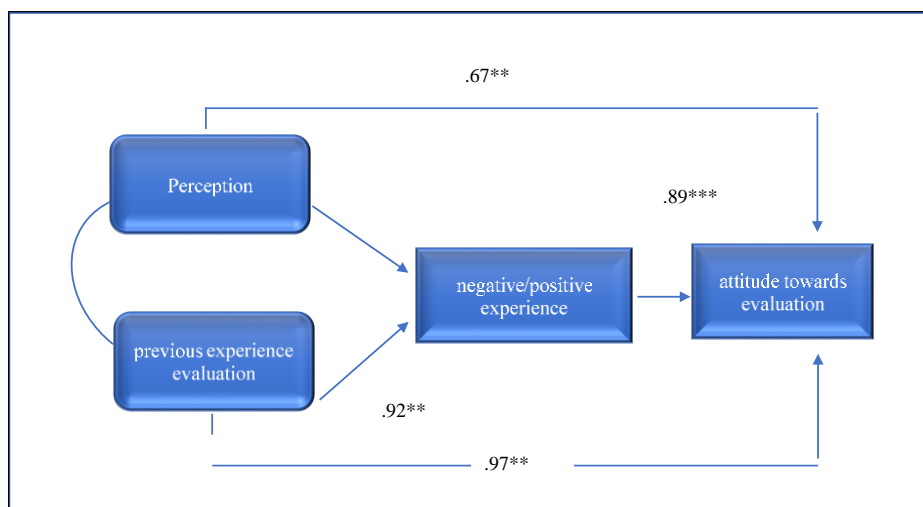


Fig. 3 - Path model that describes the effect of both components of previous evaluation experiences and attitude towards evaluation

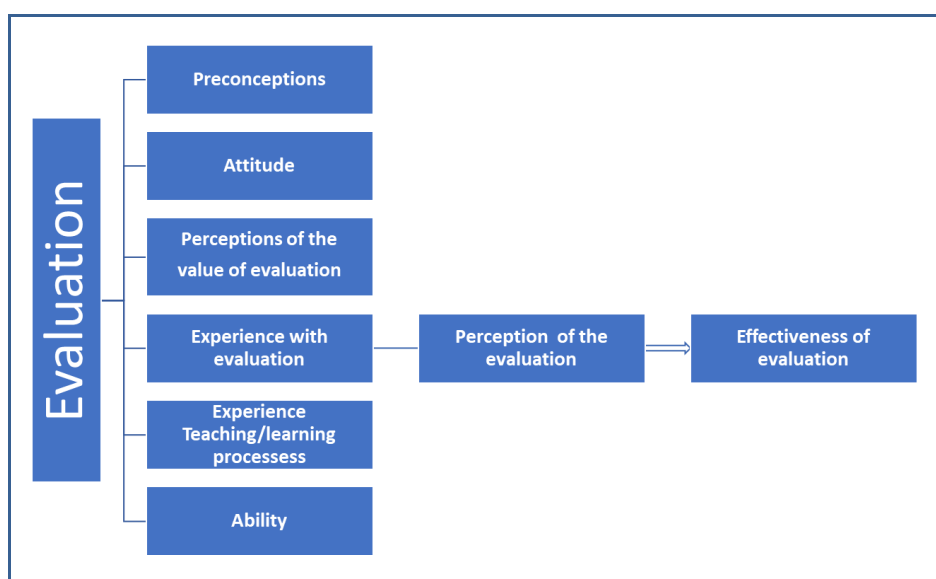


Fig. 4 – Perception of the evaluation and effectiveness of evaluation

#### 4. Results

##### *Descriptive analysis: attitude towards evaluation*

Based on the results, the composite variables were calculated as the average values of the elements involved in each construct. The descriptive statistics included: means, standard deviation and correlation coefficients with model fit and regression, factorial analysis and varimax rotation.

A correlational analysis was conducted relating to the variables considered in the key hypotheses. A positive mean correlation was found with a  $r$  value of  $.866$  ( $p < .01$ ).

Pearson's correlation was conducted to examine the first research question relating to the relationship between the general attitude towards evaluation and school experience in

evaluation, also in reference to the exploration of the attitude towards didactic use and identification of any significant difference in the importance and perceived usefulness between younger students (<18 years) and older students (> 40) and between those who already have a degree, as well as the intentionality of use.

A multiple linear regression analysis was then conducted to determine the contribution of past evaluation experience on dependent variables (general attitude towards evaluation and assessment).

The analysis shows that there is a substantial positive correlation between general attitude towards evaluation and evaluation experience ( $r = .97, p < .01$ ) and attitudes of use and age ( $r = .69, p < .01$ ) and between attitude towards educational use ( $r = .83, p < .01$ ), as well as between perceived utility ( $r = .91, p < .01$ ) and intentionality of use ( $r = .85, p < .01$ ).

Further analysis showed a moderate correlation between past experience and intentionality of use ( $r = .85, p < .01$ ) and educational use ( $r = .64, p < .01$ ), as well as a very high correlation between intentionality of use and attitude towards educational use ( $r = .86, p < .01$ ).

Narrow appears the link between previous experience and general attitude and between previous experience and attitude to a didactic use of evaluation, which implies that as the negative previous experience towards evaluation tends to grow negative general attitude and perception.

To perform the regression analysis, the existence of high correlation values between the variables ( $r = .92$ ) was examined.

The index score of the general attitude towards evaluation was taken as a dependent variable and the scores related to previous evaluation experience were considered as independent variables.

The results show that the evaluation experience in the school history of future teachers, together with the sub-dimensions, explains approximately 57% of the variance of the index score of the general attitude towards evaluation ( $R = 0.689, R^2 = 0.42, p < .01, F(4.275) = 45.315, p = 0.000$ ).

The corrected  $R^2$ , which corresponds to the model in the population, suggests that the independent variables intersect the dependent variable at the average level ( $R^2 = 383$ ).

According to the standardized regression coefficients ( $\beta$ ), the relative order of importance of the variables with respect to experience is 'use measurement instruments' ( $\beta = .261$ ), 'be familiar with the basic concepts of evaluation' ( $\beta = .209$ ) and 'use alternative and/or innovative measurement instruments' ( $\beta = .173$ ), while 'develop measurement instruments' does not appear significant.

The study also used factorial analysis and varimax rotation component analysis to clarify the structure of attitudes towards evaluation and its use in a didactic context: a didactic use of evaluation is closely related to an ambivalent attitude in terms of values mediated by previous experience.

### *Analysis of the results*

The SPSS (Package Statistical for Social Scientists) version 15.1 was used for data processing.

The descriptive analysis of the sample highlights how past experiences in evaluation influence the attitudes of future teachers towards evaluation and how their frequency in terms of exposure to negative ones correlates positively with attitude; so much is this that a

university student who has experienced negative experiences in terms of evaluation also has attitudes of closure or refusal of evaluation (mediated by perception) which tend to persist over time and which lead him to consider it not very useful (perception of usefulness), especially on the level of intentionality of use in a school context.

Exposure to previous negative evaluation experiences is also tendentially associated with a high negative attitude towards assessment tools with a perceived experience that mediates the relationship between negative experiences and negative attitudes.

On the other hand, those who have benefited in the school past of favourable environments and experiences in terms of evaluation seem more willing to use it profitably in the school context and to use more innovative evaluation tools (the latter dimension which should be further investigated in terms of positive attitudes towards students and teaching).

The data therefore suggest how the experiences (self-reported), containing precise elements / events, reliably predict the attitude towards the intentionality of use (self-reported) of the evaluation at school; in fact, the indirect effect of negative / positive experiences on the attitude in the evaluation through perception resulted in the analysis more robust than the indirect effects of other factors.

The students' comments on evaluation methods and tools mainly concerned the distance that often exists between what is declared in the teaching session on the evaluation and what instead is achieved, as, for example, in the case of teaching programs that frequently present a certain divergence between what is written and what is actually requested by the teachers, both in written and oral modalities. Examining the data collected, in the context of L, on the conceptions that future primary teachers have of the evaluation in relation to teaching practices, common representations emerged in the literature as well as a series of so-called “naive” knowledge (XXXX, 2018), directly attributable to the negative individual experiences lived by the interviewees, in particular during the school experience.

The overall results show that the reduction of a negative attitude towards assessment is of decisive importance in the initial training of teachers (XXXX, 2018), since the less negative attitudes are present, the more the favorable disposition to correctly use the assessment in a didactic sense will be increased, avoiding drifts of refusal or ambiguity in favor of balanced attitudes and rigorous behavior on a methodological level.

The previous negative evaluation experience appears to be an important predictor of the attitude which, on an in-depth examination, reveals, specifically, a data that is only apparently ambivalent: university students, who perceived themselves as “failed students” and exposed to a “Unjust evaluation”, presented, in some cases, a higher intentionality of use in a didactic context, explained by perception.

Scale	Eigenvalues	Reliability	Correlation Component	Correlation Component
Component 1 “Evaluation experiences”	5.16	$\alpha = .748$	Component 2 = .898	Component 3 = .952

<i>Component 2</i> “Negative evaluation experiences”	1.88	$\alpha = .759$	Component 1 = .862	Component 3 = .876
<i>Component 3</i> “Perceptions”	1.26	$\alpha = .679$	Component 1 = .924	Component 2 = .962

Table 1. *Previous self-reported evaluation experiences*

The study provided a further deepening, which consisted of two phases: carry out of a scale on previous experience in terms of evaluation and a history interview (Blanchet & Gotman, 2000) on school life with the interviewed, to understand how the future teacher had gained a negative or positive perception of the assessment over time. In the first phase, the student teachers were asked to give an account of the degree and number of negative or positive experiences lived in the school path, while in the second phase they have been asked to conceptualize the critical episodes or accidents, also with the help of metaphors, from their school history compared to what is reported in the previous scale. The scale and guide for the interview were designed with reference to the literature revised. The interview data were used to explore some central aspects of the history of school life of the student teachers and to understand how they were related to the aptitude and perception of the assessment. Methods of data collection included the interview after the carry out of the scale with the student teacher, the recording of interviews and the analysis of the material by external evaluators.

The results showed how the impact of the previous experience of the student teachers affect their conceptualization of the assessment is very strong, showing how it shapes their perception in different ways, also reference to models of teaching and teacher. They testify how the evaluation is strictly connected to the other teaching functions and exercise its influence even after some time. Moreover, some teachers interviewed (n. 32) declare that a part of assessment knowledge and skills depend largely on the correct attitudes that are assumed in teaching and how a teacher can really guide a pupil to learn. This implies, in their opinion, that use assessment as a positive and illuminating process only when understands what is didactically doing and why it is being done.

Most of the existing literature indeed notes that the prior scholastic experience lived by student teachers has a binding effect on learning of the assessment skills in University context when they are trained professionally to become a teacher. It is however that professional training can do a lot to overcome the powerful effects of previous experience, also because an interactive vision of the training process maintains that these experiences exert a certain influence but do not totally determine social and cultural results (Zeichner and Gore 1990). The research also highlights how the history of school life can be used as a teaching resource for the teacher. Collay (1998) goes beyond the premise that life history has the power to shape teachers' beliefs about their roles and practices by claiming the importance of training in teaching learning. The results obtained show how school life and training influence each other.

Teaching is not only shaped by the scholastic history of life, and its reinterpretation offers new opportunities to make sense of those scholastic stories. Some authors (Sikes and Troyna 1991) argue, in this sense, that the use of a biographical approach in initial teacher education is transformative, contributes to capitalizing on experiences and perspectives and to using them as resources for teaching; it can be considered as a window on the world and on the vision of oneself. They also argue that previous scholastic history opens up new options for the future and group stories provide clarifying effects (Woods and Skies 1987). In summary, If it is true that it is important for university students to avoid entering the teaching profession with negative opinions, poorly founded attitudes and naive beliefs, the challenge for teacher trainers can only be to remove or interrupt these “circles vicious”, culturally inappropriate, to promote scientifically based professional habitus.

As for other professionals, teachers are expected to carry out their educational functions without prejudice, without neglecting important aspects of their professionalism, which requires the acquisition of appropriate methodological skills, but also the assumption of an ethically appropriate professional attitude, an “evaluation habitus” aimed at increasing teaching effectiveness through continuous development: evaluation is linked to education and its problems!

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Assessment literacy in fact includes families of skills and knowledge that are indispensable to identify, select or create forms of assessment optimally designed for various purposes and to examine and use evidence of a different nature with a view to making appropriate decisions aimed at advancing students' learning (Kahl et al. 2013), accelerating their commitment and success.

It is first of all useful here to remember how the teacher must first of all possess precise skills in order to be able to identify what (what learning) is being evaluated (training objectives), why and how best to do it, i.e. which methods, tools and techniques should be used to detect the phenomenon concerned, having certain references (evaluation criteria) and being aware of the problems that could occur in the evaluation process, as well as how to prevent them from occurring (Stiggins, 1995; Stiggins, 1997; Stiggins, 1991; Stiggins, 1988), making judgments, always provisional, on what has been detected.

In fact, according to Mertler (2004), experienced assessment teachers are able to recognize both the value of assessment and the value of measurement, taking care of the communicative practices of judging and carefully choosing the assessment methods to be used to gather credible information about pupils' academic performance and other variables interacting with them, as well as being able to document and communicate them.

If we do not want to run into a sort of “systemic hypocrisy”, which prevents the emergence of a real “culture of evaluation”, capable of translating intention into action and awareness of and action, instead of remaining a mere declaration of intent, teachers must be equipped of general routine competences concerning measurement, but above all the coherence of the functions and the didactic actions implemented.



## 5. Conclusions

Although the picture outlined so far is certainly limited compared to what may be contained in the domain of the perception of the evaluation, it can be of some use for those who want to start confronting the authentic problems of education and teacher professionalism, but above all on the importance the acquisition of “assessment and assessment skills”. The extent of the professional (cultural, social and political) role played by teachers and the responsibility for an adequate assessment of pupils' learning can be described in terms of activities that take place before and during education, which require teachers to have adequate assessment skills, as well as sufficient time and resources to perform their institutional tasks. In this context, the future teacher is called upon to acquire adequate assessment skills that allow him to take on a set solid methodology to intervene in complex school contexts and to help him generate proposals corresponding to the needs of the recipients, also in an attempt to fulfill the real professional needs of contemporary society. This opens up the prospect to the continuous improvement of the teaching profession, the reformulation of new curricular objectives and an innovative teaching perspective.

Identifying teachers beliefs about evaluation and assessment in initial training phase would have paramount importance as it could inform the teacher trainers about the specific area of weakness that the education program should target on and the means through which the targets could be achieved. On this regard, the result of this study indicated that the student-teachers have traditional beliefs of evaluation and assessment as well as teaching and learning. Furthermore, they tend to prefer traditional teacher-centered evaluation approach which is consistent with their conceptions of evaluating and assessment. This result seems to support the conclusion that teachers' beliefs about teaching shape their evaluative and instructional decisions in the classroom. The teacher education programmes should target on influencing the deep-seated beliefs of these student-teachers who are in the early stages of their training. This means that student teachers need to be exposed to a learning environment that deconstruct their existing beliefs, as a pre-requisite for implementing the mastery in the evaluation and assessment. The first and foremost remedy through which the teacher training should create opportunities for student-teachers is that is to initiate reflection from their experience as students. If student-teachers see in use appropriate evaluating techniques, methods, and strategies modeled within their own training, they will be more comfortable with assessment principles and more likely will be more available to adopt valid and reliable measuring instruments in their future classrooms.

### Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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## THE CENTRALITY OF DISCOVERY IN SCIENTIFIC THEORIZING

**Prof. Ph.D. Sudhakar VENUKAPALLI,**  
The English and Foreign Languages University Hyderabad,  
INDIA,

E-mail: [sudhakarvenu.efluniversity@gmail.com](mailto:sudhakarvenu.efluniversity@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*Scientific frame of mind consists in a certain mode of thinking and type of response to certain problems. In order to develop these qualities and attitudes one has to imbibe and internalize the dynamics of the method of science. But the vital question is, what is that pattern of thought, if at all it exists, that lies behind the discoveries of science? The answer to this question has something substantial to contribute to our knowledge of scientific method and therefore, to science training and to the philosophy of science education. The recognition of the centrality of discovery in scientific theorizing will enable us to realize what mode of thinking we must inculcate in the minds of science students and also how to enable them to see the relation between science and other domains of human creative endeavor such as art. An attempt is made in this paper to develop the philosophical position of Gary Gutting and Richard Burian on scientific discovery against the backdrop of Thomas Nickles ideas of problems and constraints. These two philosophers of science have succeeded in bringing to fore the idea of problems and constraints as the pivotal concepts in characterizing scientific thinking. It is true that Karl Popper was the first philosopher to emphasize the role of problems in scientific thinking. However, he stopped at it without laying bare the texture of the scientific problematic, a task which is very ably performed by Gutting and Richard Burian who have been taken the problem of discovery as the central methodological issue. Most importantly their position on scientific discovery fundamentally distinguishes itself from the conservative views in terms of categorial reorientation, which replaces the old categories by the new ones through which the essential nature of science is described and explained. As will be elaborated in the following discussion, these changes have fundamentally altered the discourse about discovery in ways that can be of momentous significance to science education, formal or otherwise.*

**Keywords:** *scientific discovery; scientific invention; background knowledge; problems and constraints;*

### INTRODUCTION

In October 1978 hardcore physicists, cognitive psychologists, historians of science and philosophers of science across the globe assembled at the University of Nevada, Reno to review and discuss various philosophical issues of scientific discovery. In this historical conference, “the simplistic dichotomy between discovery and justification was rejected, and it was acknowledged that discovery can either refer narrowly to original generation or broadly to the process which starts with generation (or even before) and ends up with final

acceptance" (Sintonen and Kiikeri 2004). The serious deliberations in the conference enabled them to recognize the need and importance of multidisciplinary investigations and the epistemological and philosophical significance of scientific discovery. This intellectual congregate highlighted the idea of *problems* and *constraints* laying stress upon perpetual and radical change in science and also by bring to light the *background knowledge* that is overlooked by the conventional understanding of science.

## DISCUSSION

Popper was the first person to recognise the seminal importance of problems in the structure of scientific thought. However, Popper failed to fully work out the rich texture of the scientific problematic. This is in of the fact that he rightly recognises science as essentially a problem-solving activity and man as problem-solving animal. This is because for Popper the recognition of the centrality of the problem was important only to the extent that such a recognition replaces 'data' as the beginning of scientific thinking - an idea that was central to inductivism. In other words, undoubtedly in Popper's scheme the problem stands in the beginning but it only any epistemological dynamics. (Sudhakar 1993).

Nickles goes a long way in doing justice to the ideas of problems and science as a problem-solving activity by laying bare the rich texture of the scientific problematic. Central to Nickles' idea of problems is his notion of "constraints" as constitutive of problems. According to him, Problem = constraints + demand. The solution lies in the direction pointed to by the constraints. The direction may be sometimes straightforward when the constraints imply logically or deductively a solution or may be sometimes round about. Note that it needs reasoning to go from constraints to solution. Also the perception of a problem involves the grasping of the constraints and understanding the demand made under those constraints - a perfectly rational process. It may also be noted that the constraints may not be given at one go. The progressive formulation of constraints is the progressive articulation of a problem which is how a problem grows. The perception of a problem, the developing of a problem and arriving at a permissible solution are all fully rational exercises that precede the stage of the so-called rational evaluation of .solution. That is to say, generation involves percep-tion of a problem and some kind of selection for preliminary evaluation and therefore the terms of its articulation are to a great extent normative. It is because of this normativity that problems and constraints constitute two faces of the same kind such that the distinction between them is possible only in the abstract and not in the actual scien-. tific practice. The inseparability of problems from constraints makes the structure of a problem rich and complex lending it "*crucial importance to the methodology of discovery*"( Nickles 1980) . The idea that discovery is illegitimate as a philosophical topic is the result of the neglect of "problem" as a methodological category. The result of this neglect, Nickles believes, "*is a theory-oriented bias in philosophy of science, but one which can be corrected by a more problem-oriented approach*"( Nickles 1980).

Gary Gutting and Richard Burian provide a somewhat more elaborate and focussed presentation of the concept of constraint which also figures at the core of Nickles' analysis. In doing so, Gutting and Burian invoke the concept of background which denotes what lies behind the foreground constituted by the theoretical structure. Their idea of background is an extended version of Nickles' notion of constraints in the sense that background works as a constraint for the foreground constituted by theories.

In his article 'The Logic of Invention' (1980) Gary Gutting attempts to uncover the fundamental reason due to which Hanson's abductive analysis of discovery remained

unfruitful. In this connection he says that Hanson, by focussing exclusively on the logical form of abductive inference, ignores Peirce's own emphasis on another feature of abduction viz., its dependence on a set of principles regulating the choice of the explanatory hypothesis. The inseparable association of abductive reasoning with the regulative principles accounts for the fact that in abductive reasoning the hypothesis occurs as a key premise in deriving a result that meet the condition set down by the relevant regulative principles such that it is the latter which constitutes the conclusion of an abductive reasoning and not the hypothesis and therefore the charge against abductive reasoning that it places the very hypothesis whose plausibility has to be established in the place of the key premise, is absolutely misplaced. Secondly, the role of regulative principles in abduction explains why abduction typically fails to lead to a full-fledged scientific hypothesis but at best only to a plausible idea. The explanation is that regulative principles are "*general constraints that will usually under determine the choice of an answer to a scientific question*" (Gutting 1980), such that "*There will almost always be a significant range of possible hypotheses meeting all of those constraints*" (Gutting 1980). Two things are to be noted in what Gutting says. Firstly, even though he talks of regulative principles in the context of abductive reasoning presented by Peirce and Hanson as a logic of discovery, the point holds in all cases of reasoning involved in the process of discovery, abductive or non-abductive. That is to say, though the idea of regulative principles is contextualized by Gutting to abductive reasoning, they are present, according to Gutting, in the case of any type of scientific reasoning in the development of a scientific idea. Secondly, it may also be noted that Gutting's talk of regulative principles as constraints can be treated as an extension of or an enrichment of Nickles' notion of constraints (Sudhakar 1993).

However, let us look at Gutting's elaboration of his central idea of regulative principles. The regulative principles which govern the invention of any scientific hypothesis or idea are of three types, namely,

1. heuristic principles,
2. scientific intentions and
3. cosmological principles.

Heuristic principles facilitate the process of developing scientific ideas and are therefore concerned with a hypothesis' efficiency as a means to the ultimate goal of finding an acceptable theory. Gutting considers simplicity and analogy as two such principles. Many times in science simpler hypothesis and hypothesis which are analogous to familiar ones are taken up and even accepted provisionally even if their being true is not known for the simple reason that they might help us later to go in the correct direction even if they were false. Of course it is true that simplicity is an extremely complex notion. There are many types of simplicity like pragmatic, syntactical, semantic, etc., and there are no objective criteria to decide the relative merits of these different types of simplicity (Bunge 1961). Secondly, the decision concerning what is simple is more often subjective; what appeared to the followers of Copernicus as a cumbersome process of artificial patching appeared to the followers of Ptolemy as the natural extension of their theory (Kuhn 1957). Further, '*analogical reasoning is more often fallacious than not*', as the saying goes. However, Gutting recognises that the notions of simplicity and analogy are problematic and accepts that appeals to simplicity and analogy are best construed as having just the minimal heuristic sense.

The next type of regulative principles is constituted by what Gutting calls '*scientific intentions*', that is to say, the goals and purposes that direct scientific activity. Scientific intentions can be of two types, namely, basic intentions and subsidiary intentions. The

former define what Habermas calls "Cognitive interests" of science and can be variously construed as truth, explanation, prediction, control, problem-solving, etc. The latter concern the demands for, for example, mathematization or particular type of mathematization, for evolutionary or mechanic-models, etc. Thus these principles are related to the various ideals of science that scientists with different persuasions hope the theories they develop will be able to realise. The idea of scientific intentions functioning as regulative principles, obviously is in line with the post-Positivist view of science as primarily a human activity rather than an abstract system of propositions. It also accounts for certain historical facts that point to the role of methodological commitments in the shaping of the actual scientific practice. Moreover, recognition of the role of scientific intentions critically affects our received view of scientific rationality and to a great extent promotes a more adequate alternative.

The third type of regulative principles which are called cosmological principles concern substantive views about the nature of the world or more particularly, of that aspect of the world that a particular science is purported to study, as for example, Matter in the case of Physics, Life in the case of Biology, Society in the case of Social Sciences. Needless to say, such views are far removed from the empirical data of day-to-day science. But this does not minimise the integral role of those philosophical world-views in science in general and fundamental (theoretical) science in particular. The role of such views is a necessary feature of science, since scientific activity consists in the construction of a scientific world-view with a starting point *"that is developed and tested to obtain a picture of nature that meets certain scientific standards of conceptual precision and empirical adequacy. By definition, such a starting point must be a non-scientific conceptual framework"* (Gutting, 1980). The fertility of a cosmological principle depends upon the possibility of its success in generating acceptable hypotheses. The recognition of the cosmological principles as regulative adversely affects the thesis of the autonomy of science that is so central to the positivist philosophy. Such a recognition will go a long way in placing science within the broader intellectual mosaic of a milieu.

The crucial methodological role of cosmological principles so spiritedly enunciated by Gutting is more convincingly brought by Rom Harre (1964), who draws our attention to the fact that it is what he calls general conceptual systems peculiar to a historical epoch that determines our conceptions of reality which in their turn determine the character of our explanations. A general conceptual system of a given epoch consists of basic assumptions about what types of processes and structures underlie the world. That is to say, it consists of the answers to the fundamental questions concerning the nature of the stuff the world is made of. The methods of investigation considered to be proper and the kinds of explanation deemed to be appropriate in any given epoch depend, Harre points out, *"in part, on the particular specification of general concept of matter popular in that epoch"* (Harre 1964). It is this fact which accounts for the qualitative difference between the type of explanations characteristic of Aristotelian science which is by and large teleological and those of Galilean science which is by and large mechanistic. Galilean science heralded the abolition of the world as a finite closed system with a structure that is determined by a hierarchy of values - the world of Aristotle. It replaced it with the conception of an infinite universe held together only by a set of non-hierarchical components and mechanical laws. Unless this fundamental difference between these modes of scientific theorizing is appreciated one fails to grasp the significance of the intellectual spectrum whose initial point is the Copernican revolution and the end point is the corpuscular theory. Further it must be noted that in science we do not go



on explaining *ad infinitum* but stop at a point and say "no more explanation is needed". As Harre says, "*at any given epoch there is an end to explanation and this end is reached when the entities and processes of an explanatory mechanism are those which form part of the denotation of ... the general conceptual system of an epoch*" (Harre 1964 ). In other words, reaching the rock-bottom of all explanation, however provisionally, is an essential feature of science as an explanatory endeavour and the rock-bottom is specified in terms of what is constituted to be the ultimate constituents of that domain of reality into which a particular science inquires and in particular the conception of matter. Since the general conceptual system is historically specific, the recognition of role of general conceptual systems as regulative principles brings to the surface the essential historicity of scientific activity and scientific rationality.

A similar emphasis on the historicity of science can be found in the treatment of discovery given by Richard M. Burian (1980) who provides a further development of the idea of constraints. An adequate philosophical understanding of scientific discovery, according to Burian, must seek "*to establish a cognitively useful classification of conceptual innovations or of methodological guidelines for achieving such innovations*" (Burian 1980). And that "*this classification should play a significant part in cognitive evaluation of conceptual innovations or of programmes or methodologies aimed at achieving conceptual innovations*" (Burian 1980 ). In doing so, such a philosophical understanding of discovery should not take recourse to context-free rules by means of which to rank the plausibility of alternative hypothesis. Burian (1980) says, "*It is primarily in the light of substantive knowledge of the structure and interactions of the objects, events, or processes under investigation that we can evaluate our ways of trying to learn more about those objects, events or processes*". In other words, according to Burian, the constraints governing plausibility, adequacy and rationality in the context of discovery vary with scientific contexts and purposes. Therefore, an adequate philosophical account of discovery must exhibit the role of contextual factors by which Burian means, among other things what Nickles has called 'Constraints' on adequate solutions" (Burian 1980).

The contextuality of scientific theorizing via the contextuality of the constraints, Burian seeks to bring out by focussing on what he calls the background to and preparation for discovery. According to him, a synoptic account of discovery is contingent upon coming up with adequate classifications of the kinds of backbround to and preparation for discovery, of the patterns of inference employed in hypothesis generation, of cognitive and non-cognitive factors affecting the content of discovery and of factors bearing on plausibility and trustworthiness of a hypothesis. In this connection Burian notes three features that chacacterize the background and pave way for discovery. The first concerns isolation of a domain of phenomena concerning which there is a body of moderately exact and reliable results. Such an isolation involves more than collection of data.

Burian draws our attention to the distinction between the factual knowledge of electricity possessed by Greeks and that possessed by scientists at the time of Frankline. The latter was definitely more systematic in the sense that a coherent body of facts was delineated in terms of certain principles through which the facts were refined and unified. As Burian points out, "*To be acceptable, the resultant discovery is often constrained to account for the apparent unity of the relevant domain of phenomena either' by offering, in prospect, a unified account of the entire domain or by providing the principles by means of which to reallocate some phenomena to other domains*" (Burian 1980). Such a systemati-zation and unification, apart from providing the constraints on acceptable hypothesis, points to the

direction in which the search for an adequate hypothesis must proceed. As Burian aptly points out, *"as we learn more about the principles on which our information regarding the phenomena of a given domain can be unified, we learn more about how to learn about the phenomena of even distantly related domains"* (Burian 1980).

The second feature pertains to the structure of the background knowledge. It may be recapitulated that the first feature concerns the refinement and unification of a subset of background knowledge into a domain for which a hypothesis is proposed. The second feature concerns the change that might occur in the other domains and its impact upon the discovery. Of course, the degree of the impact that might decisively shift the constraints on the domain depends upon the degree of connection expected between the "neighbouring" domains, the character and relative success of the theories deployed in those domains, etc. In this connection Burian gives the example of the wave theory of heat. It may be noted that this theory replaced in 1830's the caloric theory of heat. The reasons for this change were neither the results of the theories of Davy and Rumford nor Joule's experimental determination of mechanical equivalent of heat. The most decisive reason was the success of the wave theory of light over its competitors. Thanks to the work of Fresnel's in 1820's and the analogy between heat and light, not established by any unifying theory but persuasively brought about by experiments of W:Herschel and and M. Melloni on radiant heat. This example very clearly brings out how the background knowledge constituting a neighbouring domain can. (through an analogy with a neighbouring theory) decisively affect the constraints on discovery in a particular domain.

The third feature concerns the relation between problem and background knowledge. In this context it is apt to recall Popper who rightly recognizes the importance of problem as the initial point of scientific theorizing and fails to work out in detail the rich texture of scientific problematic. Scientific reasoning undoubtedly is characterized by the presence of constraints but there are a great many ways, not easily noticeable, of violating these constraints, without inviting the charge of irrationality. There are built-in mechanisms to escape from such a charge. These built-in mechanisms basically consist in ensuring some possibility of a prospective success.

In other words, a forward looking orientation works as a guarantor of rationality. Nickles brings out successfully in this way the complex-texture of scientific reasoning in and through the concepts of problem and constraint. Nickles(1980) goes a long way in doing so by pointing out the inseparability of a problem from constraints on its solution. This point is reinforced by Burian who relates constraints and therefore, the problem, to the background knowledge. This means that the structure of a problem undergoes a transformation if a change is brought in the background knowledge. In this context Burian (1980). says, *"it is the definiteness of problem structure and of the shifts in that structure when the background knowledge changes which account for many of the notorious cases of simultaneous discovery"*.

## CONCLUSION

The above discussion brings to surface the precise ways by which Nickles, Gutting and Burian have enriched the concept of discovery by invoking the concepts of problem, constraints, regulative principles and background knowledge. By this they greatly effected a categorial re-orientation to the discourse about discovery by means of categorial innovation best expressed in highlighting the concepts of problem and constraint as the foci of methodological interest. Hence scientific discovery will have some bearing on an adequate

construal of not only science education in the formal sense of the term but also in the informal sense i.e., in the task of making science part of our public ethos, in shaping the role of science in increasing the mental horizons of the layman who stands outside the pale of formal science education.

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## MORAL DEVELOPMENT AND MORAL VALUES IN ADOLESCENCE

**Ph.D. Elena-Ancuța SANTI,**

Teacher Training Department, Valahia University Targoviste, Romania.

E-mail: santi.anca@yahoo.ro

### ABSTRACT

*The moral dimension of one's personality is the expression of the existence of man as superior being, actively manifested in knowledge, observance and application of some ethical principles, attitudes, values and norms in our personal life and in relation to the people around and the society. During the years of adolescence, defined by experts as a very important stage in the process of building one's self-identity, major changes occur at biological, social and cultural level. These changes may be exploited from educational perspective as complex opportunities of the adolescent's formation and development. Knowledge of the needs specific to this age as well as the related individual characteristics, authentic communication and interaction between the adult (parent, teacher) and the teenager, creation of some personal development opportunities and providing moral models and landmarks may be essential in the crystallization process of the moral ego and moral conscience, in this stage of one's life. The expansion of the socialization frontiers, the importance attached to the group of friends, as well as temptations, negative stimuli and non-values intensely promoted in the social and the virtual media to which the teenager is exposed, represent direct threats to the moral and ethical integrity of the teenager. In this context, school and family have to be vigilant, discreet and receptive partners who should work together towards a common goal: shaping a nice character, a harmonious, valuable personality, capable of doing what is right in the world. This study aims to explore the teenagers' perceptions of moral values and the manner in which they are set to work in their life; additionally, we seek to identify educational ways and solutions by which the teacher may contribute to the formation and growth of the adolescent as an individual with moral personality and conduct.*

**Keywords:** adolescence, character, moral development, moral values

### INTRODUCTION

The experts have asserted that over the past decades the society has gone through a moral crisis as a consequence of the technological and scientific unprecedented progress, loss of moral landmarks and values, decrease in the quality of the education provided by family and school, etc. The most susceptible to these changes are the teenagers. They are receptive to newness and nonconformist and their desire to stand out determine them to take over everything that is out of the ordinary without conducting a thorough analysis; sometimes their choices are good, some other times they are not. Experiencing the age at which the changes at cognitive, emotional and biological level prevail, the teenagers attempt to understand the world in a more profound and abstract way, they analyze, search logical answers and sometimes adopt radical points of view which they strongly support.

Some researches show that the teenagers' orientations towards morality are contradictory; they consider that moral values are arbitrary and that people should be free to believe and do as they think appropriate (Adams & Berzonsky, 2009, p. 284); nevertheless, studies state that the pro-social engagements and the care manifested in interpersonal relations emerge during teenage years. In order to understand the morality of the teenagers, the researchers should take into consideration both evolutive changes and situational variations in relation to moral and social judgments (Adams & Berzonsky, 2009, p. 285).

## 1. ADOLESCENCE – PERIOD OF IDENTITY FORMATION

Adolescence is a special time in the individual's life characterized by multiple and important changes both at physical, mental and social level. As a stage of age ranging from the onset of puberty to acquirement of social independence (Steinberg, 2014), adolescence is a critical period (Curtis, 2015) in the development of the individual, a transition process from childhood to adulthood.

The term "adolescence" originates in the Latin "adolescere"- which means growing up. In most western societies, adolescence was not recognized prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, childhood came to an end and it was the turn of the adulthood when the person reached the age of 18. The contemporary specialists argue that adolescence starts between 10 and 14/15 years (puberty or pre-adolescence), and is followed by the adolescence itself (14/15-18/20 years) and prolonged adolescence (18/20-24/25 years) (Şchiopu, Verza, 1997).

The significant physical, cognitive, emotional and social changes specific to this period make the adolescent feel anxious, insecure, vulnerable, unprepared, both through their rapidity of their manifestation and their intensity.

The adolescent is "invaded" by emotions, under the impact of hormonal changes determining changes of moods, reactions and behaviors unspecific to the previous period. The hormonal changes may influence the teenagers' self-esteem, their happiness, their capacity to focus, aggression, behavioral issues and social relations (Adams & Berzonsky, 2009, p. 28).

The American psychologist G. Stanley Hall (1904, apud Arnett, 2006, p. 186) states that adolescence would be a stage of "*storm and stress*", as the adolescent oscillates between the extremes: exuberance and apathy, cruelty and sensitivity, hard-work and inactivity; this is a stage of emotional turmoil and rebellion, in which the teenagers take chances, search extreme sensations and unique experiences, experiment, test their personal limits and seek to continually improve themselves.

E. Verza (2000, p. 185) consider that teenagers do not go through this period at a slow pace; on the contrary, this period involves a lot of turmoil, sometimes some conflicts and dramatic feelings, internal tumult toward finding sources of satisfying one's aspirations, having the tendency to avoid fear of the obstacles which may emerge in connection with their plans and projects for the future. Researchers such as Masterson (1967) or Rutter, Tizard and Whitmore (1970) state that the teenagers are often overwhelmed by anxiety, emotional malaise or even depression in connection with more than half of the cases of normal adolescents under study – samples of ages ranging from 12 to 18 years, most cases being recorded for the age bracket of 14 to 15 years (apud Birch, 2000).

*The identity crisis* (concept introduced by Erik Erikson, 1963) is specific to this age. Its specific element is the question "*Who am I?*", question to which the teenager seeks to find an answer. This is a key moment around which the whole life of the individual gravitates and which manifests itself through a series of sudden changes, of psychological

and social nature, which starts at around 12-14 years for girls and 14-16 years for boys and which consists in a systematic denial of one's previous identity (the child's) and the strong desire to acquire the social status of the adult (Golu, 2015), in the attempt to define their own identity.

Identity includes two concepts (APA, 2002, p. 15): The first is *the concept of self*, which refers to a set of beliefs of the adolescent in relation to their own person: beliefs on personal (physical or mental) qualities (e.g.: tall, intelligent, funny), roles and goals towards building a career in the future (e.g.: what job he or she will have when they grow up) and interests, values and (religious, political etc) beliefs. The second concept is *self-esteem*, which involves assessment of what adolescents feel about them, the value (appreciation) assigned by the adolescent to their own self. The global self-esteem refers to the extent to which the adolescent likes or accepts themselves on the whole; the specific self-esteem refers to those parts which the adolescent appreciates about themselves (e.g.: looking good or being a student etc). Self-esteem is a construct formed by social comparison and may undergo, in adolescence in particular, variations depending on some factors: success/failure, expectancies, patterns, models, beliefs, feedback from the others, especially from friends, acceptance/rejection, self-imposed standards etc. According to researches, low self-esteem is associated with a series of manifestations such as (Jaffe, 1998):

- Depression;
- Lack of energy;
- Lack of self-appreciation and rejection of compliments;
- Feelings of insecurity and inadequacy;
- Unrealistic expectations from oneself;
- Feelings of insecurity about the future;
- Excessive shyness and lack of courage when expressing an opinion;
- Conformism in relation to what the others want and acceptance of imposed points of view.

In the context of the formation of one's identity, the experts also mention an originality crisis, which is an active phenomenon of rejection of conventional aspects, characterized by nonconformism, independence and, sometimes, desire for self-improvement (Debesse, 1970 apud Verza, 2000). In their need for independence, the teenager's conduct takes shape and starts to reveal itself through a personal style of participation to social life and the performances obtained. Therefore, the adolescent tries to be original, creative, different, to stand out and to be recognized, to create a style and to find their own place in the world. The need to distinguish from the others, to be unique, comes from the need to discover oneself, to form one's personality and anchor oneself in a stable and profound identity.

All these manifestations contribute to formation of a coherent, secure and sustainable identity, of the self; in case a failure comes to affect acquirement of the identity, the specialists affirm that *diffusion (confusion) of the role* emerges. This means emergence of a feeling of who and what an individual is (Birch, 2000). An important role in the formation of the identity is played by models for adolescents, parents, teachers, siblings, colleagues, friends or even celebrities, from whom the adolescents borrow attitudes, behaviors, values (or non-values), traits of character, vision of the world and life.

The main construct during the adolescence, the identity also includes the moral self or the moral conscience, which is now modeled and underlies an ethical, moral behavior of the individual in relation to the others around and in society.

## 2. MORAL DEVELOPMENT IN ADOLESCENCE

Morality was in general defined as the capacity to discern between good and evil (Hart & Carlo, 2005). Over the past years there has been an increase in the approaches of the morality issues in psychology.

Morality refers to how people relate to principles, norms and values and apply such guidelines in their life, by choosing between good and evil. Each individual makes moral judgments on a daily basis. However, in adolescence, as abstract, logical thinking and emotional and social dimension develop, these judgments are more nuanced, in line with the adolescent's values and beliefs. Moral development refers to changes in moral convictions coming to surface as a person grows and matures. Moral convictions are linked but different from moral behavior: we may know what we should do and yet, in reality, fail adopting a moral behavior.

Moral development is closely connected to cognitive development; the most popular theory on moral development was elaborated by Lawrence Kohlberg (1927 – 1987), an American psychologist who studied the stages undergone by a child while forming moral judgments, starting from moral dilemmas (short fiction stories which describe the situations in which a person is forced to make a moral decision). L. Kohlberg (1984) states that people develop both morally and cognitively in a gradual manner, and moral reasoning becomes increasingly complex as the individual goes from one stage in their life to the next one.

In his theory, Kohlberg (1984) asserts that moral judgment, basis of an ethical behavior, implies six phases of development grouped into three levels: pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional morality:

- Premoral or pre-conventional level (between 4 and 10 years), in which there is no personal code of morality, and the actions are judged by the consequences arising from complying or breaking the rules. This level has two substages: the stage of morality of listening and the stage of morality of naïve instrumental hedonism.
- Level of conventional morality (between 10 and 13 years), this is the level of conforming to external norms (pleasure in being recognized as having a moral behavior, in being appreciated as a “good” child) and has two substages: the stage of morality of good relations and the stage of law and order morality, in which the feeling of duty and responsibility starts to take shape.
- The level of moral autonomy or interiorization and personal acceptance of moral principles (above 13 years, when young or never), in which acceptance of moral norms emerge as a form of identification with the group of reference, by sharing the same rights or responsibilities. The main characteristic of this level is the maturity of the moral reasoning, materialized in the individual's tendency to detach themselves from the stereotypes existing at a certain time in society and their capacity to define their moral values on their own terms. This is the time when moral judgment becomes rational and interiorized, subordinate to an already assimilated ethical code. The sub-stages are: stage of contractual morality and democratic acceptance of the law and the stage of the morality of individual principles of conduct; this is the time when the person's own system of moral values crystallizes by personal meanings assigned to concepts of justice, reciprocity, equality, dignity. This is the highest stage of moral development – the persons who reach this stage have very strong moral beliefs and convictions.

Adolescents perceive values, principles, ideas of society in a critical way and try to build their own system of values. They quest their own manner of expression, through behavior and attitudinal constructions and models, through adopting a personal manner of response, through exploration of their own limits. The researches on the formation of a child's character show that the values acquired by such child come, to a large extent, from their personal and social interaction with parents, siblings or other adults within the family (See, 2018; Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Lexmond & Reeves, 2009) or outside it, in particular in the learning environment (See, 2018; APA, 2002; Borba, 2002).

See (2018, p. 2) defines the character as a set of behaviors, beliefs and attitudes modeled through the values interiorized by the individual: kindness, justice, respect, honesty, sincerity, loyalty, tolerance, dignity, understanding, altruism etc. The character is not a component of the inborn personality; the character is a component forming as early as childhood and adolescence in particular.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study is to explore the teenagers' perceptions on moral values and how they apply in their life as well as some educational ways and solutions by which the teacher may contribute to the formation and growth of the teenager as a personality possessing moral character and conduct. The research sample was made of 93 high school students. In terms of instruments used to identify teenagers' perceptions on moral values, a questionnaire with various items was specially created and applied.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

At item 1 the subjects were requested to choose from a list of terms 5 moral values that are essential to them and to rank them by order of importance assigned, from 1 to 5, where 1 means a very important value in their life and 5 means the least important of the value chosen. Results are shown in figure 1:

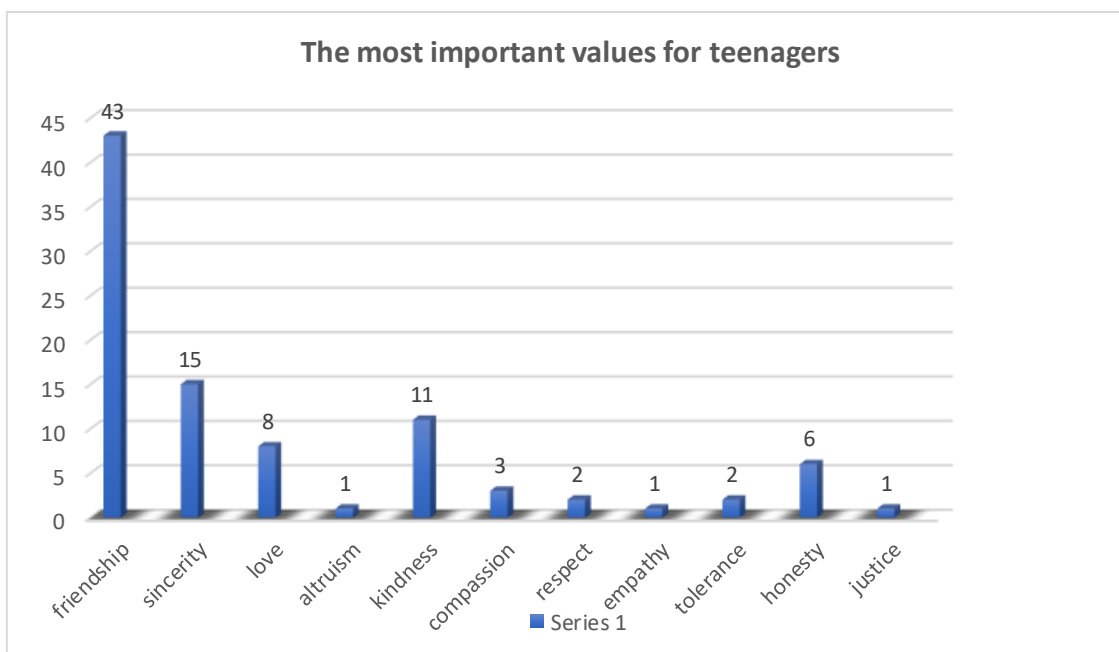


Fig. 1. The values placed in the first place in the students' perception



Therefore, most teenagers questioned ranked friendship as the most important value in their hierarchy. This fact is also mentioned by the theories in this field, theories which focus on the need to socialization specific to the adolescent and the importance attached at this age to the group of one's friends. Sincerity is another value ranked in first position by 15 teenagers questioned, 11 of the ones questioned consider kindness as the most important value whereas 8 value love. Values which the students failed to mention among the first 5 chosen and prioritized are: commitment, dignity, integrity, patriotism, perseverance.

Item 2 aimed to identify the personal significance assigned by students to the concept of moral character: "What does 'having moral character' mean to you?". Figure 2 summarizes their responses. Therefore, 35% of the teenagers consider that having moral character means helping others; 27% consider that the term refers to doing what is good for you, while others, i.e. 22%, judge that having a moral character means doing harm to nobody, 3% of the students believe that it refers to doing only what you wish to.

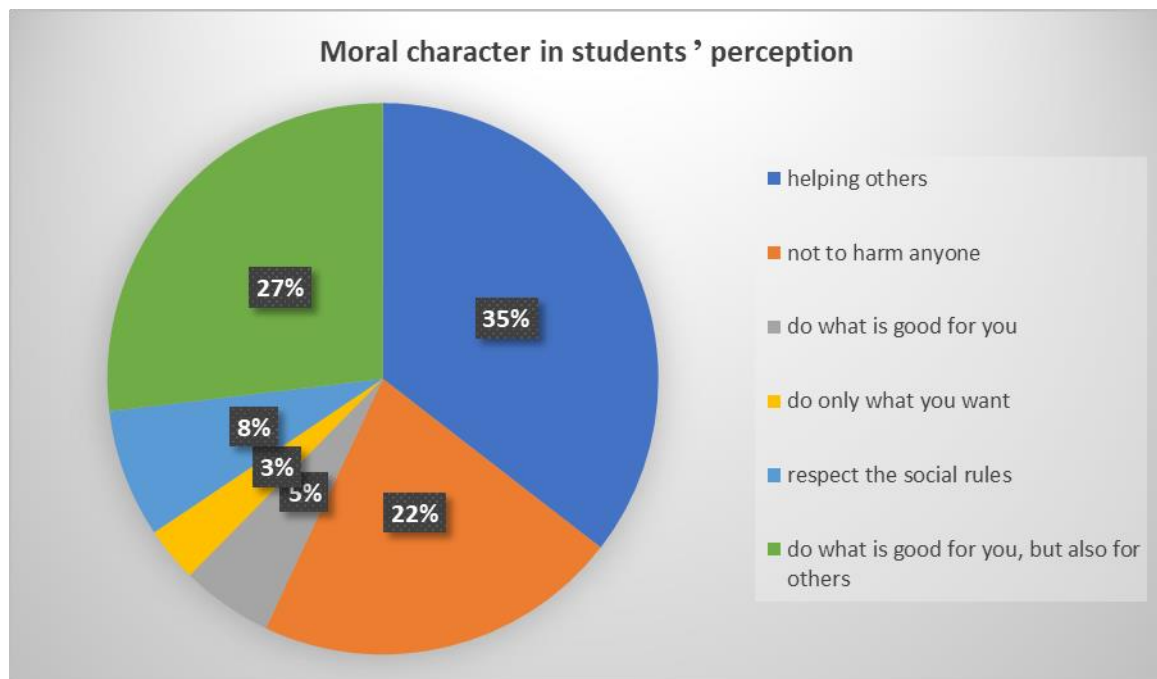


Fig. 2. The personal significance attributed to the concept of moral character

The following item focused on identifying the model considered by teenagers to be a moral landmark in their life. As a consequence, they were requested to fill in the following item with a free answer: "Your model of moral behavior is ...". The results obtained are shown in figure 3:

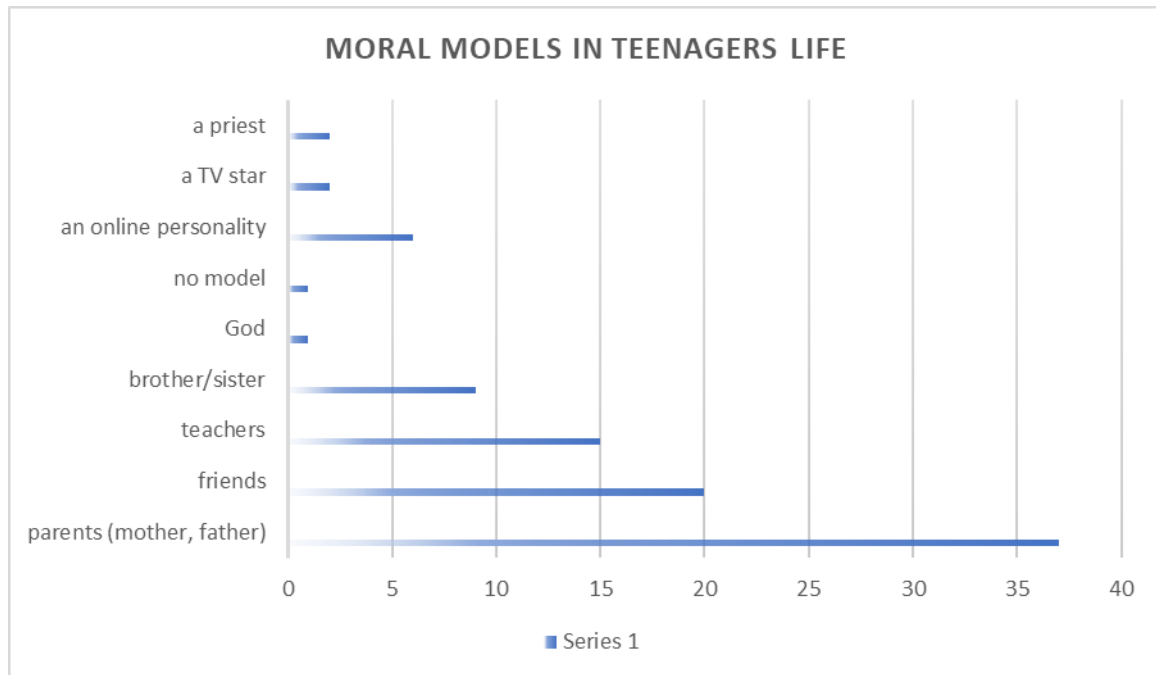


Fig. 3. Adolescents' perception of the moral models in their lives

Most teenagers questioned affirm that their model in life is one of the parents or both; for others, friends are a moral landmark; another category indicates a teacher as their model to follow in life; other responses given: brother/sister, an online celebrity, a TV star, a priest, God or no model at all.

The last item aimed to identify how teenagers perceive themselves as good persons, individuals with moral character: “Do you see yourself as a good, moral person?”.

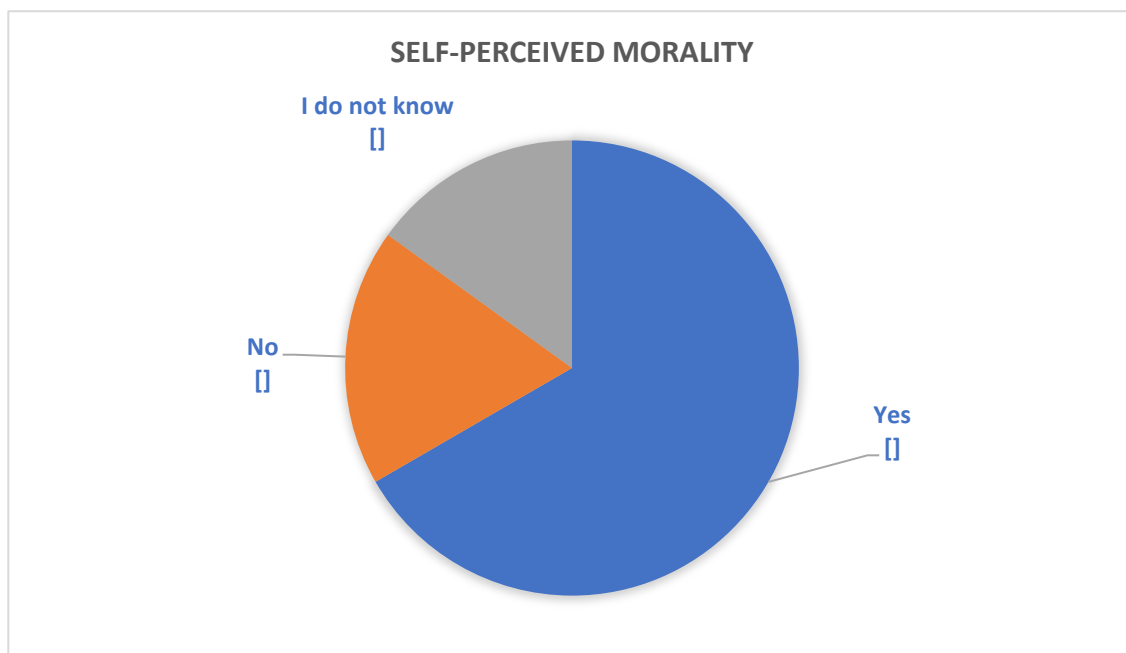


Fig. 4. Adolescents' perception of the moral self

Figure 4 is a graphic representation of their responses: 67% of the students questioned have a positive perception of them and consider themselves as good, moral persons. Nevertheless, 18% of the respondents consider that they are not good persons while 15% state that they do not know.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The researches on moral development in adolescence have significant psychopedagogical implications, as teachers may contribute to the formation of their students' moral character; they may represent models of behavior for the adolescents through principles, values and attitudes which they apply in their life and also through some activities, debates and didactic scenarios of which students are expected to understand and interiorize their own moral schemes.

Additionally, students may be involved in extracurricular and volunteer activities which focus on development of the moral component of their personality. Positive examples from real life may also be provided so as to teach students how to behave in various situations. According to G. Stanley Hall, "adolescence is the time when the best and the worst impulses of the human soul fight for supremacy". Consequently, the adolescent is vulnerable, prone to breaking the rules, eager to stand out, yet anxious, depressive, with oscillating self-esteem, disorientated and insecure. His or her need to be understood, need for affection, respect, freedom, acceptance, confidence and support should be a priority for the adults; although this age is difficult and involves many challenges and changes, the adolescents who communicate and interact with their parents, teachers and other adults in an efficient manner, overcome this age crisis and acquire a self-identity and a strong value sense of one's own person reflected in everything that he or she does.

Being aware of how important the teacher is in forming the students' moral character, it is required of the teacher to have an ethical behavior, based on keeping the promises made, to be objective when assessing, tolerant, respectable, understanding, open to their students, consistent in applying principles and rules; furthermore, the teacher should stimulate the development of altruism, pro-social behavior, care for the others.

Adolescents are receptive to the models that they choose, this is why the family, the school, the friends, the mass-media, the community, the church are all responsible in this respect and may influence the adolescent's value system to a very large extent.

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## EVALUATION OF ADAPTATION CAPACITY AND THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CHILDREN AND PARENTS WHO EMIGRATE

**Maria-Antoaneta VASILESCU (STANCIU),**

Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Bucharest, PhD student  
Bucharest, Romania.

E-mail: maria-antoaneta.vasilescu@drd.unibuc.ro

### ABSTRACT

*The article follows the case of a preteen with certain particularities (12 years old, a pupil of a school located on the outskirts of Bucharest), who is in the situation of abandonment by one parent and the other parent left for a period of time to work abroad. The present study aims to evaluate the adaptability available to it, as well as the communication modalities, in order to find a method through which to make changes at relational level and to improve the communication between the preteen left at home and the departed parent. The research methods by which the case study data were collected were: BASC 2 test, anamnesis, interview, observation, activity product analysis. The results of the study show that, in the process of improving the capacity of school adaptation, following the emigration of parents, an essential role is played by the communication with the departed parent, the time allocated, the technology used, the frequency of communication with him. At the same time, the conclusions of the research affirm the importance of paying special attention to the children left at home, taking into account the potential of their increased vulnerability and the high probability that certain emotional deficiencies will arise in their development.*

**Keywords:** *ability to adapt; communicate; audio-video technology; migration; children left at home;*

### 1. THE PHENOMENON OF MIGRATION AND THE CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND BY MIGRANTS, IN THE ROMANIAN AND EUROPEAN SPACE

Following the phenomenon of migration from Romania from the perspective of the censuses of the last years it was found that Romania loses population due to the natural and negative migration increase. The phenomenon of migration is a socio-demographic phenomenon that is socio-economically conditioned. This phenomenon of migration arose due to the socio-economic situation of the country.

The migration landscape is dynamic and constantly changing. Parental migration and the health outcomes of children left at home have become an increasingly global issue. The phenomenon of migration was determined by economic, environmental, political or social conditions.

Migration is defined as "the mass movement of some tribes or populations from one territory to another, determined by economic, social, political or natural factors" (Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language, the second edition revised and added, 2012).

In the specialized dictionaries we find the term migration as designating "the phenomenon that consists of moving a lot of people, from one territorial area to another, followed by the change of domicile and/or the classification in an activity form in the arrival area" (Dictionary of Sociology, 1998, p. 351).

There are two forms of migration, namely: immigration which means the totality of entries and emigration represented by the totality of exits. Sociologists argue that any migratory act represents both the migratory act and the emigration act.

Immigrants are those persons who have foreign citizenship and have their habitual residence in Romania; emigrants are those persons with Romanian citizenship who have their residence in Romania and reside abroad.

After the process of our country's accession to the EU in 2007, the phenomenon of migration increased through temporary migration to more economically developed countries with the aim of improving the quality of social and family life as a whole.

More and more people who are in the category of vulnerable and poor population choose to emigrate, motivating that they leave due to the job shortage or very low economic incomes. Following these departures, the most affected are those who are left behind, namely children.

In the specialty literature, the phenomenon of economic migration manifests a significant increase due to the changes at the political level with the fall of the communist system and the breaking of the borders and due to the problems of economic nature and the industrialization which is in a continuous growth in countries such as East and South-East Asia.

In Romania, there is already a labor shortage in certain economic sectors due to the gap between labor market demand and supply, which has determined a large part of global migratory movements. The migration of Romanians is a relatively recent phenomenon, but with the political and economic changes this phenomenon is increasing.

According to the statistics from 2007, 85% of the migrant population is represented by persons between the ages of 15-64, persons who fall into the active life of the labor market. This process leads to an increase in labor resources in the destination countries and thus contributes to lowering the cost of labor.

During three years, from 2010 until 2013, the dynamics of the international migratory population is discussed by a population of about 5 percent, from 221 to 231 million migrants.

Migration has become a necessary strategy to reduce poverty in households.

In 2013, the number of migrant workers increased. The children of migrants have thus become an increased target of socio-economic vulnerability. With the departure of the mother from the family, the children are redistributed in the care of the extended family, who require more attention.

Some migrant workers in urban areas are not registered as residents and thus cannot have public access to the health system, renting a stable home and access to the education system.

Parental migration can improve the quality of life of children left at home through remittances sent with the primary goal of reducing poverty. If the financial situation of migrant parents worsens, the quality of life of children left behind decreases.

As a negative consequence of the migration phenomenon is the separation of the family. The most pronounced consequence on the child's development is the breakup of the family through divorce. The divorce itself does not affect the child as much as the conflicts arising from it regarding the custody of the child and the division of common property.

In addition, there are many underdeveloped rural areas where internet and mobile access are limited or non-existent. Thus, ties may be non-existent with departed parents, these aspects can have long-term effects on the child's development, even leading to the inability to establish relationships with adults (Chase-Lansdale, Cherlin and Kiernan, 1995; Peterson, 1993).

In the specialized literature, the effects of migration on children left at home have been discussed, but the environment in which the child lives after leaving the parents is of particular importance. In fact, it is not the departure of the parents that affects the children, but the framework that the parents offered and what they could offer, the deprivation of what a family environment offers them. If their presence is not lacking, it is replaced by something else, the fact that the parents are far away has no effect on the child's development. Either by leaving they did not suffer at all because those children were deprived of the emotional environment anyway and escaped the burden of the presence of their parents, or after leaving they entered a sufficiently compensatory family support environment.

What is important is the way the child is cared for and the relationship with the extended family.

The focus is on regular communication with the departed parent, which would reduce psychological costs and could maintain the role that parents play as authoritative figures, thus helping to reduce behavioral disorders and improve school results.

### **1.1. The educational effects of separation from parents as a consequence of migration**

The effects of migration on the education system are mixed. From the perspective of the authors Brown and Park, it was found that school performance is closely related to household income (Brown & Park, 2002). A large part of the income of the migrants is sent home to their family and with these incomes children can have higher access to education and thus they can improve their school performance.

Lack of parents and their supervision is likely to lead to poor school results, negative well-being, emotional and behavioral disorders.

Those who remain in the care of their grandparents are less motivated to support their children's studies and less interested in their school results. In the case of children from extended families, they were prevented from receiving education due to internal problems and the limited space they benefited from. In the specialized literature, in a survey made of 7600 children in 4th and 5th grade from over 74 schools in different areas of China, Ninxia and Qinghai Province found that lack of parents can reduce the score on math performance by 15, 6%.

The material resources of the family can contribute to the school success of the child through direct investment as well as in an indirect way through access to the education system that will allow the child a good cognitive development (Tufiş, A, 2007).

In Romania, the situation of children with parents who have gone abroad presents a great deficit of the integration and support of these children first and foremost in the education system. Poverty, inability of the state system to ensure safety and violation of the rights of these children lead to the inability to prevent risk situations to which they are exposed with the departure of parents through temporary migration (Tufiş. A, 2007).

## **2. ANALYSIS OF ADAPTABILITY AND THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CHILDREN AND PARENTS WHO EMIGRATE**

The departure of the parent to work abroad is perceived as a lack of supervision followed by the lack of affection of a developing child.

Poverty in early childhood leaves these children alone facing challenges that happen later. Most of the pre-adolescents remain in the field of action, of the act, unable to express their feelings through word because they did not receive this in their early childhood.

This preteen was left behind by the emigration of the father with the relatives from the extended family, in an apparently secure environment, and the relationship with the parents is limited to the audio-video contacts, the communication remains superficial, the experiences of the child can practically not be noticed and thus the relations are cooled, due to the low availability of parents working abroad, communication decreases (Panaitescu, 2019).

BN's parents work daylight abroad, they do not have the availability of an authentic communication, so there is a possibility that the preadolescent may lose a basis of trust that allows him to be open with his parents. Between the BN preteen and the father, it all comes down to a material exchange "If you are good, I will send you what you want, and if you have good grades as well". This exchange of communication remains at the level of material and rewards. The emotional insecurity that the preadolescent feels usually persists. Parents, especially those who have earned some money abroad, are stunned when they return home to enjoy what they have achieved, but they are amazed by the emotional cold of to these children and their lack of gratitude for the ungratefulness of the sacrifice the parents made.

It revolves around the idea of sacrifice, which is not at all constructive for building a parent-child relationship and for building trust. When the parent returns home, there is an emotional gap between him and the preteen remaining at home (Panaitescu, 2019). In preadolescents this wandering (of the faulty relationship between parent and child) ends up curling addictions, crimes, and in some cases they reach psychiatric centers in dramatic conditions because there is no possibility of verbal communication with them.

Very poor self-esteem is another problem, because everything is invested in a hypertrophied self-image that focuses only on the material appearance, on what is possessed. The evolutionary consequences of preadolescent development can be quite dramatic. There are children from vulnerable, disadvantaged social backgrounds, who are often abandoned or manipulated by the fragility of their parents' personality. There are children who go through situations of abuse, who reach critical states as a result of these abuses, ranging from labor exploitation to sexual partner replacements for fathers, to their use to obtain small material benefits by working for others or doing sexual services.

The problem faced by the Romanian society in the case of the children left at home are the mistreatment behaviors of the pre-adolescents who come from the fathers, because according to statistics, mothers are the ones who decide to leave more often and they often discover happiness at a distance and never return home, so that the lives of these children go through a situation of existential nightmare (Panaitescu, 2019).



It is also observed in environments with a better material situation, a relational dynamic that can be at the origin of unhealthy relationships, schematically there is a continuous line between rewards, overprotection and emotional negotiation.

Sociological research in the literature examines the plurality of situations of emigrants who left their children in the care of other relatives or friends, this vision is fragmentary, in the light of these cases it is necessary for specialists to start from the problematic situations encountered to find prevention solutions.

It is essential to ensure a stable but especially welcoming living environment in the cases encountered, which offers these children a state of security, which is quite rare. Depending on the complexity of the situation, the evolution of children who are victims of separation from their parents or who are victims of total breakup by one or both parents, are very variable.

The child psychiatric clinic is faced with severe cases accordingly expressed by behavioral disorders that are the hallmark of depressive states, conversive disorders encountered in the nineteenth century due to lack of communication and expression, or pathological personality structures in children left at home by migrant parents, who have gone through situations of abuse or mistreatment, are often found post-traumatic stress syndromes and adaptation disorders (Panaitescu, 2019).

The problem of addiction is a widespread problem in such cases, on the one hand parents offer these means to children on their own initiative but often foster carers claim that they are advised to provide their children with these phones with internet access, without thinking as a result of the vulnerability of these children to the online universe. The neurological and mental vulnerability of the preadolescent leads to the development of addictions as well as to the development of emotional disorders and social adaptation as a result of attending certain sites or certain types of games (Panaitescu, 2019).

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Evaluation Objective:

##### The purpose of the evaluation is:

- to check whether there is a general tendency to increase the relationship between the child left at home and the parent gone, given the guilt of the parents.
- to identify mental health and / or illness as well as the ability to adapt socially in order to improve communication with the parent working abroad relevant to BN.

#### BASC test 2

The behavioral evaluation system for children.

Using as interview research methods, observation sheet, adolescent BASC 2 self-assessment scale, children's assessment system-BASC 2 teacher-adolescent evaluation scale, BASC 2 structured development history.

#### BASC test 2

BASC 2 involves a multi-method approach containing several evaluation methods that can be used both together and separately. It contains two evaluation scales, one for teachers (TRS) included in the case analysis and another for parents. Through these scales, data on the observable behavior of the child can be collected (Reynolds et al. 2011).

Another scale of the test is the self-assessment applied in this case analysis (self-report, SRP) through which the child can describe his feelings, emotions and perceptions about himself. It also contains a structured interview that refers to the history of personal development and an observation sheet in which you can record the directly observable behaviors during class hours (Reynolds et al. 2011).

"The test involves the way the subject is evaluated in different social contexts, as well as the way the teacher relates to him, targeting: school problems, internalization problems, inattention / hyperactivity, personal adaptation and a general composite score, the index of emotional symptoms. Testing emotional reactivity to certain stimuli and perceptions of oneself. The test facilitates the identification at the educational level of a multitude of emotional and behavioral problems "(Reynolds et al. 2011).

#### 4. Case study presentation:

Name and surname: BN is 12 years old, male, is a student in the 5th grade, in a school on the outskirts of Bucharest. He is part of a broken family with divorced parents. Arriving at the school's psycho-pedagogical counseling office on his mother's initiative, he speaks openly about his family and his problems.

The child has two younger brothers, one of whom is a stepbrother. The family in which the child lived when the father left for Austria consisted of both grandparents, the father and the younger brother. They all lived in their grandparents' house.

The father, 35 years old, works in a factory in Austria and in the past he was an electrician. The mother, 34 years old, of Roma ethnicity, has a cohabitation relationship with a man who is a criminal. The mother never worked and the BN was left in the care of her paternal grandparents. The contacts with the mother are limited, she does not pay them any alimony, context in which the BN refuses to go out with the mother most of the time, considers that she does not care about him.

The father's presence and educational influence were moderate due to the fact that he had a disorganized work schedule for the child's needs. The father was a conscious presence only during the period when he was free several times a week. One can easily observe the low motivation of the preteen for involvement in the learning task, the motivation is an oscillating one, the father is not interested in the school situation, and the grandmother is involved occasionally. The level of aspirations is low, the father constantly tells him that "if your mother signs your paper, we will all leave and we will have a better life there in Austria". BN only thinks about the beautiful life he can ever have. He is not stimulated to be actively involved in the learning task, he has no role model. The father's first departure was two months after he separated from BN's mother for a period of two years. All members of the family knew and were aware of this.

BN is very attached to his paternal grandmother, a situation in which he did not deeply perceive his father's departure. The father told them that they are leaving to give them a better life. BN was filled with many gifts after his father's visit, after a period of absence of one year. The father stayed at home for a month around the holidays and then returned to work. Referring to the relationship between the departed parent and the preteen remaining in the country, communication had improved during the departure due to the frequency with which they communicated audio-video. The father's second departure was for a period of two years, during which time he did not return at all, but kept the communication with BN for a few days and were seen using audio-video technology. During all this time when he

was working in Austria, his father created a new relationship with a woman of Romanian nationality who had no children and their relationship resulted in a child.

After two years, the father returned home with the new family to his parents' house where he left. The parents of these children played the role of grandparents and the father was a kind of brother or uncle who brought resources but he was never perceived as a father.

The father never came to the school counseling office because he did not have time. Regarding the counseling activity, the father sent the written counseling agreement.

The child does not have a social image of the role of the father, he is influenced by the father's relatives and tends to reject the natural mother, considering her guilty for the inability to leave the country with the father and the adoptive mother. The conflict situation between the father's family and the mother does not allow us to obtain significant data about the mother. Mother who, after the grandmother's reports, took the children after her divorce and three days after brought them back and left them at the gates of the house.

The fact that some amplified ideas were brought to his attention create his mother's guilt about the lack of physical presence between them, so the child came to blame his mother and did not want to see her even though he lives very close to her. He always rejects his mother, so his mother no longer wants to go out with him. He is deprived of the parents' affection, the father left and the mother is absent. Grandparents are not involved in school work. Both grandparents work until the evening.

The last time his mother came to school, she came during the class to take BN out of class. The teacher asked her to wait for the break, but she refused and wanted to force him out of class. Failing this, she protested and was taken out of school. From BN's stories we know that she sometimes passes in front of his house but she doesn't come inside at all. The child's parents never came to the counseling office and did not request information about the counseling process in which the preteen participates. In the case of the preadolescent family, they live in the paternal grandparents' house and the relationship with the biological mother is almost non-existent based only on the material side.

**4.2.** Following the application of the BASC 2 Adolescent Self-Assessment Scale, the following were highlighted:

**Attitude towards school** the subject of the study shows negative attitudes and feelings, bored with the school system.

In the relationship with teachers, he manifests typical, age-specific attitudes.

**Atypicality** indicates an above average number of strange behaviors and thoughts as well as lack of control over thoughts.

**Seeking stimulation.** The subject indicates typical levels of age-related stimulation seeking.

#### **School problems**

**The place of control**-the subject has a sense of control below average, is not controlled by any adult, weak interest of the adult in his school life. The social stress manifested by the preteen is within the normal limits, specific to the age. The level of anxiety and depression indicates their typical age-specific levels.

The pre-adolescent manifests the feeling of maladaptation in a relatively large number, gives up easily, permanently feels the sense of failure. It does not present atypical manifestations of somatization, it presents age-specific manifestations.

**Internalization problems**

The pre-adolescent indicates attention problems, the score indicates problematic levels in paying attention to tasks as well as low ability to focus attention. He is hyperactive and has problematic levels of activity, he cannot stay in one place and he has moments when he becomes noisy.

**Adaptive scales**

**Relations with parents.** At the relational level, the preadolescent has a problematic relationship with the parents, the parents are divorced, the mother rebuilt her life and abandoned them, and the father went to work abroad. The child shows a lack of trust and closeness to them. Communication with the immigrant parent is not authentic.

**Interpersonal relations.** Social relations are poor, limited, the boy is not liked by all those close to him.

The pre-adolescent shows low levels of self-esteem, sometimes the desire to be someone else appears.

**Self-confidence.** The subject has below average levels of self-confidence, does not feel safe and is unable to make decisions.

**Behavioral assessment system for children-assessment scale for teacher-adolescent BASC 2**

**hyperactivity.** The preadolescent obtains a high score of hyperactivity which indicates problematic levels of the activity, he can show haste in carrying out some activities or he can bother the others.

**Aggression.** It is obtained a score that indicates problematic levels of aggression and can manifest threats as well as hitting others.

**Behavior problems.** The score obtained indicates problematic levels of anxiety, the subject may manifest certain fears, emotionality.

**Anxiety and depression** has typical age-specific levels.

**Somatization.** The subject indicates problematic levels of somatization, it can be manifested by headache or generalized pain.

**Attention issues.** The subject indicates problematic levels in paying attention and can be distracted or easily given up.

**Learning problems.** Depending on the score, the subject may have problems in areas that involve reading / math.

**Atypicality.** The child can be easily confused.

**Withdrawal.** Indicates problematic levels of withdrawal and can be manifested by shyness.

**Adaptive scales**

The score obtained on the adaptability scale indicates problematic levels of adaptability and may show difficulties in adapting to change as well as difficulties in changing tasks.

**Social skills and leadership.** Indicates typical levels manifested by an ordinary child at this age.

**Learning skills.** Indicates below average levels of study skills, he may show poor study skills.

**Functional communication.** Indicates below average levels of functional communication, the child may manifest inadequate answers to questions.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study led to the identification and evaluation of the situation of a pre-adolescent who remained at home due to the parental migration in the care of paternal grandparents, who present emotional disorders with negative emotional attitudes towards the school, lack of stimulation and motivation in this regard. The emphasis is on the importance of the communication link between the preadolescent left at home and the parent who went to work abroad. Teachers, from BN's perspective, are not interested in his fate from what he said. The feeling of maladaptation emerges both from the BASC 2 evaluation system itself and from the results of the adolescent teacher evaluation scale. The scores obtained in tests indicate low levels of study skills due to the lack of parental involvement or of the parents in the school activity. In the child's vision, it presents the school as very boring. At the level of the cognitive component, the results are poor, which indicates a lack of stimulation and motivation in this regard.

Following the application of the BASC 2 test to preadolescents, action-related disorders at the adaptive level there is repeated postponement, systematic lack of punctuality at the beginning of various activities, various acts of indiscipline during their development (he is late for classes sometimes, does not perform his tasks, is aggressive in various ways with colleagues and sometimes with teachers).

He shows disinterest in school and has a low involvement in school tasks and his circle of friends does not trust him. At the level of cooperation, he shows selfishness and is slightly conflicted (he wants to be well, sometimes he feels ignored by his relatives), slightly aggressive behaviors (verbal or physical).

The preadolescent's self-esteem is low. He has moments when he would like to be someone else. Relationship with his family appears to be problematic, unreliable, keeping a distant relationship with them. Following the counseling sessions, the emotional instability was observed, the preteen during the discussions between reactions of obvious hatred and contempt for the biological mother, and the father appears to be his 'protector' whom he idolizes. It is recommended to advise the father when he returns to the country as well as the relatives (grandparents in whose care the preadolescent remained) as well as the authentic communication of the parents with the preadolescent, focused on his interests, socio-emotional needs.

Educational deficiencies and the lack of a parent or both parents has destabilized the mental balance of the preteen, so parents need to focus more attention on family relationships.

Parents will be advised to get involved in the child's school life, following his / her motivation and stimulation in the learning process as well as in extracurricular activities with recreational character.

It will be considered counseling the caregivers regarding the presence of control over the Internet games and limiting them, staying away from temptations risking health and personal safety. Permanent emotional support of the child by his parents is highly recommended, providing a safe environment and continuing counseling sessions within the school in order to improve communication between the migrant parent and the preadolescent left at home.

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## WHAT DO PERSONOLOGICAL DESCRIPTORS DESCRIBE?

**Crisanta-Alina MAZILESCU<sup>1</sup>, Daniel PASQUIER<sup>2</sup>, Bernard GANGLOFF<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Politehnica University Timisoara, ROMANIA, <sup>2</sup>Université François-Rabelais de Tours FRANCE, <sup>3</sup>Université Paris Ouest-Nanterre La Défense FRANCE.

<sup>1</sup> alina.mazilescu@upt.ro, <sup>2</sup>dpasquier@avenireentreprise.fr, <sup>3</sup>bernard.gangloff@univ-rouen.fr

### ABSTRACT

*The objective of this article is to demonstrate that personality descriptors are not neutral, but rather bearers of a social valence, be it positive or negative, valence which testifies to social desirability and / or utility. Our research is based on two studies related to the estimation of the social value of 60 personological descriptors from the NEO PI-R. The first study makes reference to the social desirability and utility of NEO PI-R personological descriptors, while the second makes reference to the social value of the information transmitted by the NEO PI-R personological descriptors. The results show that the projection of social value, whether useful or desirable, on personological descriptors obeys some regularities: - People prefer to describe themselves in positive terms in situations with relational stakes. - People prefer to describe themselves as being more conscientious in relation to other domains of personality in performance-oriented situations. The personological content of personality descriptors, organized according to the five factor model, would only be a surface structure, just “smoke and mirrors”, masking a process of social value attribution, self-attribution in the case of self-descriptions and hetero-attribution when evaluating other people.*

**Keywords:** social value; social desirability; social utility; personality descriptors;

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Within the field of personology, information, seen as useful knowledge, is employed in order to know a person better. Personological information speaks about the value of people within a social relationship and also allows for a form of evaluation. This approach was developed by Beauvois (1995), who speaks of double knowledge: descriptive knowledge and evaluative knowledge. Descriptive knowledge is defined as scientific knowledge that informs of the nature of the objects, while evaluative knowledge is defined by its informative nature on the social value of the object and refers to the issue of social norms of judgment.

The social value communicated by personological information is considered to entail two dimensions: a desirable dimension, which refers to the emotional or motivational register, and a useful one, rooted in the social functioning and more particularly in the economical field. According to Beauvois and his collaborators (Beauvois, 1995; Beauvois, Dubois & Peeters, 1999; Dubois, 2005; Dubois et Beauvois, 2001; Cambon, 2002; Le Barbenchon, Cambon and Lavigne, 2005), the social value of people can be dichotomized, with utility on the one hand and desirability on the other. Desirability, which would participate to a

socio-relational register anchored in the emotional and the motivational, is oriented on the agreeable, attractive, pleasant character of the person, on their relational value and expresses the reputation of a person for exciting positive affects in a social relationship. Social utility provides information on the adequacy of the individual in terms of social functioning, meaning the adequacy of their characteristics in terms of the normative requirements of social functioning. Please note that it is not a matter of situational or functional utility and that one must take into consideration the economic dimension of social utility and its relationship with a given social context. Social utility would refer to «...the knowledge that we have of a person's chances to succeed or fail in their social life according to their higher or lower adequacy to the requirements of the social functioning in which they find themselves» (Dubois, 2005). Social utility expresses the reputation of achieving performance within a social system. The differentiation between desirability and utility is based on «...the social functioning which states which character or trait is useful and which not» (Dubois & Beauvois, 2001, p. 394).

The two dimensions of value, as observed by numerous authors, have received various designations (value and dynamism from Osgood, 1962; communion and agentivity from Wiggins, 1991; desirability and competence from Fiske, Cuddy, Glick & Xu, 2002; etc.). It seems that these designations cover very similar realities (*acc. to* Beauvois, Dubois & Peeters, 1999). However, the relationships between these two elements have not yet been very well clarified: while Kim and Rosenberg (1980) have observed a positive correlation between the two, other researchers have observed negative correlations between them (such as Fiske, Cuddy, Glick & Xu, 2002) and still others observed an independence between the two (such as Devos-Comby & Devos, 2001).

In what concerns utility, there is a differentiation on the conceptual level between the model proposed by Beauvois and Dubois and that of Peeters. Profitability for others and profitability for oneself are both dimensions of the adaptive value of traits, value which has an individual origin in Peeters' model (Peeters, 1992, 1999, 2002), as compared to the social origin of value of Beauvois and Dubois' model. This differentiation is not found on an empirical level, because the characteristics profitable for oneself would be equally useful for the society and the traits profitable for others seem to be equally bearers of social desirability (Le Barbenchon, Cambon & Lavigne, 2005).

Several authors have been interested in this approach of the social value of people. This is the case with Milhabet (1993), Gueguen (1994), Cambon (2002), Mignon (2001), Leonova (2001), and more recently Dubois and Beauvois (2011), Pansu and Dompnier (2011), Gangloff (2010), Dubois (2010), Dubois and Aubert (2010), Caruana (2014), Laloum-Cohen, (2015). The works attempting to validate the modelling of this theory are based mainly on portraits and lists of traits.

Gangloff and Pasquier (2010) have shown that the personological trait refers to the expression of social norms and that the study of personality using personality inventories indicates firstly the degree of conformism or deviance as compared to the dominant personological prototype.

This perspective of personality analysis has started from Mandler's statement (1993) that the attributed value or self-attributed value of a person (as part of a subjective and unconscious approach) represents the distance between the self and the prototype of «good people». This means that in a self-descriptive questionnaire, the answers indicate first of all the distance between the self-image of the responder as compared to a personological prototype (socially desirable), the responder being under the impression that they are conducting a sincere and valid self-description.



The theory of social and normative distance stated that « the individual distance to norms is a construct that has little to do with an objective reality for the subject, the system of internalized norms emerging from an unconscious process, but of which one eventually becomes aware, which regulates the subjective distances to oneself, to others, to institutions self-image playing a mediating role in that self-attributed and / or hetero-attributed social positioning » (Pasquier, 2010, pp. 8-9).

In what regards this direction of the socio-normative theory, we can mention two studies (Gangloff & Pasquier, 2010) that have highlighted the normative nature of the personological traits, but also the role of the regulator of the socio-normative distance between organizational commitment and anxiety at work (Pasquier & Valéau, 2011).

The objectives of this article are intended on the one hand to confirm the hypothesis that personality descriptors allow people to communicate social value, and on the other hand to suggest that the projection of social value, be it useful or desirable, on personological descriptors obeys certain regularities.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

Our research is based on two previous studies related to the estimation of the social desirability and utility of 60 personological descriptors from the NEO PI-R. The first study makes reference to the social desirability and social utility of NEO PI-R personological descriptors (Mazilescu, Gangloff, Auzoult, 2011), while the second makes reference to the social desirability and social utility of the information transmitted by the NEO PI-R personological descriptors (Mazilescu, Abdellaoui, Gangloff, 2012).

### 2.1. Study on the social value of personological descriptors of NEO PI-R (Study 1)

The sample group was composed of 30 subjects, students of a Romanian technical university. The instructions of the first study asked the participants to evaluate (on two 7-point scales) the social utility and social desirability of 60 NEO PI-R personality descriptors (5 traits x 6 facets / trait x 2 versants / facet). In order to better understand the significance of the terms, each descriptor was followed by a short description (taken from the NEO PI-R textbook). For example, for agreeableness, facet A4, positive versant, we used the « compliant » descriptor, followed by a short explanation « *a person with a tendency to submit to others, to inhibit their aggression, to forgive and forget* ».

In order to evaluate the NEO PI-R personality descriptors, we used the 4 scales employed by Le Barbenchon et al. (2005) in order to operationalize social utility and social desirability: two items that refer to professional success and salary are used to evaluate social utility, and two items that make reference to the ability to befriend others and to being loved are used to evaluate social desirability. The evaluation is made using 7-point scales.

### 2.2. Study on the social value of information on the NEO PI-R descriptors (Study 2)

For the second study, the same list of 60 descriptors was used (5 traits x 6 facets / trait x 2 versants / facet) as in the first study, each descriptor being followed by a short description taken from the NEO PI-R textbook.

The instructions for the second study indicated to each subject that they were to soon come into contact with a stranger and that the only information we could provide them with was that this stranger possessed the X trait, embodied by any of the 60 descriptors used. The subjects are asked to answer 2 questions, one referring to the desirability and the other one to the utility of personological information. The subjects were asked to indicate on the one

hand if they found the information on the descriptors of the person in question agreeable, indifferent or disagreeable, and on the other hand if the information on the descriptors of the person in question was useful, not interesting or embarrassing to them.

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1. Verification of the social valence of descriptors

In order to answer the question: « Are personality descriptors neutral from the point of view of social value? » we rely on the two studies mentioned above. It is a matter of identifying if social value plays a role in the assessment of personality descriptors or if the assignment of a trait bears value or not.

If the descriptors have no social valence, then in the case of the first study, in what regards the scale used, the average social value of the personality descriptors should be 4, and in the case of the second study, it should be 2. Assuming there is a social valence attached to the predictors, then we expect the deviation of the average score of each item to be situated outside of the confidence interval. We will use the statistics from Student's t-test, with a threshold  $\alpha = .05$ .

In the case of the first study, the deviation values observed are situated outside of the confidence interval for 100 out of 120 items (see Appendix 1) and we can say for the vast majority of the descriptors analysed (83.33%) that the average social value of personality descriptors is different from 4.

In the case of the second study, we find that for 117 items out of 120 the deviation values observed are situated outside of the confidence interval and we can conclude that the vast majority of the descriptors analysed (97.50%) are not neutral: they bear a latent social valence not expressed within the contents of the item (see Appendix B).

Both studies conducted test the social value of personological dimensions and the social value of information within personological dimensions and demonstrate the impregnation with social desirability and social utility of descriptors and of the information on descriptors.

The descriptors from the *Big Five* theoretical model bear social valence, be it positive or negative, valence which reflects social desirability and/or utility.

#### 3.2. Verification of the positive poles versus negative poles

In what regards the socially useful and desirable traits, a more significant effect of social value for the positive poles than for the negative poles is expected. ***Positive poles are expected to be awarded better scores than the negative poles.***

We have tested the differences between the positive poles and the negative poles using Student's t-test, on the one hand, and Cohen's d for a Bayesian probability on the other hand.

The results show significant differences between the positive pole and the negative pole and also a notable effect both on desirability and utility (table 1). For both components of social value (desirability and utility), the positive poles have been awarded better scores than the negative poles of the descriptors. These results confirm that people have a tendency to attribute more value to the positive content.

**Table 1. Study on the effects of the descriptors' poles on social desirability and utility**

Study 1	m	s	Difference	Cohen's d	effect	t	P	sign.
Positive desirability	5.33	1.14	2.02	1.77	notable	6.86	<0.01	V.S.
Negative desirability	3.31	1.14						
Positive utility	5.08	1.21	1.43	1.11	notable	4.30	<0.01	V.S.
Negative utility	3.65	1.36						

m – average; s - standard deviation; t- Student test ; p - level of significance; VS – very significant

In the first study, the difference between the positive poles and the negative poles is somewhat higher for desirability than for utility. In the second study we have also calculated Student's t and Cohen's d. The results obtained are listed in table 2.

**Table 2. Study on the effects of the descriptors' poles on the information regarding social desirability and utility**

Study 2	m	s	difference	Cohen's d	effect	t	p	sign.
Positive desirability	2.45	0.11	0.54	3.93	notable	15.23	<0.01	V.S.
Negative desirability	1.91	0.16						
Positive utility	2.70	0.09	0.07	0.77	notable	3.01	<0.01	V.S.
Negative utility	2,63	0.09						

m – average; s - standard deviation; t- Student test; p - level of significance; VS – very significant

The hypothesis that positive poles are awarded better scores than negative poles is equally confirmed by this second study, both for the desirability and the utility of the information on personality descriptors. In this second study, the effect is much more significant for desirability than for utility.

Both studies show that the positive poles of personality descriptors are charged with social value more than the negative poles and in situations when something is at stake, people use positive traits more in order to describe themselves and to convey a positive impression of themselves (self-presentation strategy).

A graphical representation of the size of the effects of Studies 1 and 2 shows that (figure 1):

- the effect of poles on utility is comparable within the two studies (Cohen's d has close values);

- in what regards desirability, Cohen's d is significantly more elevated in the second study, meaning there is an increase in the effect. This result could be interpreted by the involvement of the respondent (instructions for the second study), which increases the effect in the case of desirability.

**Table 3. Table of Cohen's d (effect sizes)**

	Cohen's d (effect sizes)	
	Desirability	Utility
Study 1	1.77	1.11
Study 2	3.93	0.77

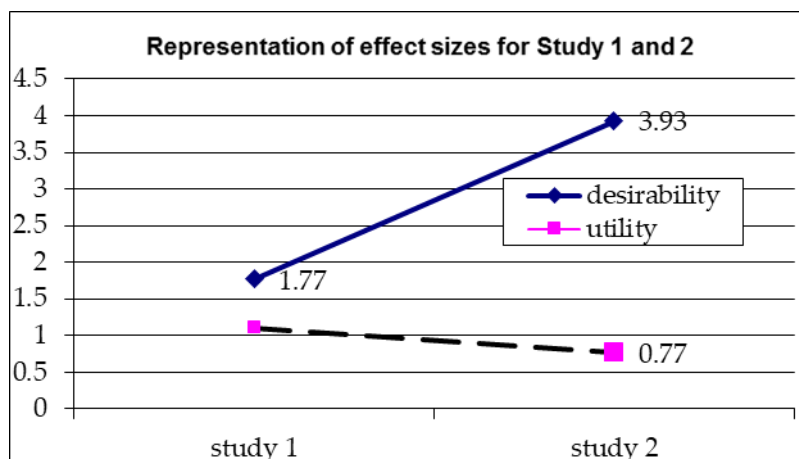


Figure 1. Effect sizes for Study 1 and 2

The results show that in a context of relational stake, oriented on the agreeable, attractive, pleasant nature of a person, the positive poles of the descriptors are selected more often, to the extent to which they bring more social value.

But, in what regards utility, the difference between the positive pole and the negative pole is less underlined. If the value does not play a role for utility, one assumes there is another dimension that counts. One assumes that in performance-oriented situations, content (the domain) is more important than the poles of the descriptors.

### 3.3. Verification of the effects of the descriptors' content

In what regards the investigation of the social utility of personological descriptors, one expects an effect of the content of the descriptors (of the domain) to be more significant for Conscientiousness as compared to the other domains of the Big Five descriptors (in the existing studies, Conscientiousness is the most useful personological dimension).

The variance analysis (table 4) shows highly significant differences between the domains of Big Five in what regards the evaluation of the social utility of descriptors, Conscientiousness (C) being the trait most often selected and most often rejected, followed by Neuroticism (N).

These results confirm the works of numerous researchers (Barrick *et al.*, 2001; Hough *et al.*, 1990; Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999; Mount, Barrick, & Stewart, 1998; Salgado, 1997; Tett *et al.*, 1991) that recognized the conscientious character and emotional stability as predictors of performance, regardless of the performance criteria and the type of profession.

Table 4. Study on the effects of the personality domain on social desirability and utility

Study 1	Cohen's d	effect	F	p	sign.	order
Positive desirability	0.29	negligible	1.33	0.26	N.S.	A, E, N, C, O
Negative desirability	0.64	Intermediary	6.25	<0.01	V.S.	O, E, C, N, A
Positive utility	0.63	Intermediary	6.07	<0.01	V.S.	C, N, E, A, O
Negative utility	1.1	Notable	18.42	<0.01	V.S.	A, O, E, N, C

F – F de Snedecor ; p - level of significance; VS – very significant; NS – non significant; A - Agreeableness ; E –Extroversion; C – Conscientious; O – Openness; N - Neuroticism

The results referring to the first study, listed in table 4, show that for desirability the results are slightly heterogenic: there are no significant differences between the social desirability of positive descriptors, but there are differences when it comes to the desirability of the negative poles of the descriptors. When assessing social desirability, agreeableness is the domain most often selected and most often rejected. Not being agreeable in a situation with a relational stake counts much more than the other personality domains.

The results of the second study (table 5) show that, in what concerns desirability, we fail to find a clearly ordered structure.

But, in what concerns utility, as in the first study, we find that Conscientious (C) is the dimension most often selected and most often rejected. At the same time, it should also be noted that Agreeableness (A) is the dimension most often selected and most often rejected, after Conscientious (C).

In what regards Agreeableness, the results of other research works have established that it would predict performance if relational stakes are explicitly present in the evaluation context, such as, for example, within professions based on cooperation among the employees or between employees and clients (Hough, 1992; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000; Thoresen, Bradley, Bliese, & Thoresen, 2004).

The ranking of utility is strong because it is situated perfectly symmetrically between the positive and the negative poles.

**Table 5. Study on the effects of the personality domain on the social desirability and utility of personological information**

Study 2	Cohen's d	effect	F	p	sign.	order
Positive desirability	4.82	notable	348.97	<0.01	V.S.	C, E, A, O, N
Negative desirability	3.75	notable	211.13	<0.01	V.S.	N, O, E, C, A
Positive utility	1.18	notable	21.06	<0.01	V.S.	C, A, E, N, O
Negative utility	1.83	notable	50.4	<0.01	V.S.	N, E, O, A, C

Agreeableness; E –Extroversion; C – Conscientious; O – Openness; N - Neuroticism  
F – F de Snedecor ; p - level of significance; VS – very significant;

The variance analysis shows highly significant differences among the areas of Big Five both for the desirability and for the utility of personological information.

Compared to our hypothesis, the results have underlined a surprise in what regards Agreeableness. In situations involving a relational stake, it is loaded with greater social value than the other domains of personality, but this result is confirmed only by the negative desirability in the second study.

Within the evaluation of social utility, we can conclude that content is more important (when talking about Conscientious (C)) than the poles.

In what regards the structure force of the personological dimensions, the first study shows that utility has the most prominent and strongest structure, while in the second study desirability holds the strongest structure.

The second study is slightly ambiguous, because the structure commences with Conscientious (C), which has more utility than desirability.

Starting from Cohen's d and Snedecor's F, we notice that the differences between the OCEAN domains are more prominent in what concerns utility, as compared to desirability,

and also that they are more differentiated in what concerns the negative versants as compared to the positive versants.

Finally, in what regards the utility criterion, the choice most marked in both studies is Conscientiousness.

The result is congruent with the findings of the studies conducted on the subject.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The two studies presented in this study aimed to measure the social valuation conveyed by personality descriptors. The results indicate that social desirability and social utility distil themselves within each personality factor and pole.

The personality descriptors are not neutral from the point of view of social value, but rather are charged with a positive or negative valence. Every personological trait hides a latent social value regardless of the semantic content of the item, social valence seen as the implicit face of the value, « the shadow of the value ».

People attribute social value to the personality descriptors they use in their descriptions or to the ones they choose to describe themselves in situations explicitly or implicitly evaluative, with personal and / or professional stakes, according to their objective to communicate the social that they attribute themselves, especially when the other is an important person.

In both studies presented and analysed in this article, people react to the same stereotype: they prefer to describe themselves in positive terms when it comes to desirability and they present themselves as more Conscientious when it comes to social utility.

If regardless of the instructions we obtain the same structure, we can conclude that desirability is structured rather according to poles and utility rather according to content (for example, the trait of Conscientious is the most appreciated at work).

Therefore, in situations with relational stakes, the positive traits are used as vectors of social reputation. In performance-oriented situations, the personological content acts as a decoy to catch social value, in the more or less conscious hope to appear in the best light within a process that has to do with self-deception (bias of convenience) and also with hetero-deception (self-presentation strategy). One could liken these forms of cheating to social competence (Valéau, & Pasquier, 2003). Consequently, it would be desirable for the user of a questionnaire based on the five factor model to know beforehand what they want to describe or assess: a personological profile and / or a socio-normative distance.

The results show that the projection of social value, be it useful or desirable, on personological descriptors obeys some regularities:

- People prefer to describe themselves in positive terms in situations with relational stakes.

- People prefer to describe themselves as more conscientious in relation to other domains of personality in performance-oriented situations.

When someone describes themselves, they do it according to social value. Therefore, there is a certain ambiguity within the results of the personological tests. What do personality descriptors communicate to us? A personological content or social value? We see a proximity to a judgment norm.

Appendix A

A1. Decreasing order of social value of personality descriptor as a function of p (Test value=4, N=30, ddl = 29)

ITEMS	m	$\sigma_s$	deviation/4	t	p	Confidence interval	
						(p=0,05)	
<b>O5nD</b>	4,00	0,80	0,00	0,00	1,00	-0,30	0,30
<b>O5nU</b>	3,98	1,07	-0,02	-0,09	0,93	-0,42	0,38
<b>C6nU</b>	3,97	1,03	-0,03	-0,18	0,86	-0,42	0,35
<b>A1PU</b>	4,05	1,06	0,05	0,26	0,80	-0,35	0,45
<b>O2nU</b>	3,95	0,79	-0,05	-0,35	0,73	-0,35	0,25
<b>A1nU</b>	3,90	1,05	-0,10	-0,52	0,61	-0,49	0,29
<b>A4nU</b>	4,13	1,40	0,13	0,52	0,61	-0,39	0,66
<b>C3nU</b>	3,92	0,81	-0,08	-0,56	0,58	-0,39	0,22
<b>E5nU</b>	3,90	0,94	-0,10	-0,58	0,57	-0,45	0,25
<b>O1nU</b>	4,15	1,18	0,15	0,70	0,49	-0,29	0,59
<b>E4nU</b>	4,12	0,89	0,12	0,72	0,48	-0,21	0,45
<b>E6nU</b>	3,87	0,98	-0,13	-0,74	0,46	-0,50	0,23
<b>C6nD</b>	3,83	1,18	-0,17	-0,78	0,44	-0,61	0,27
<b>E5PD</b>	4,22	1,19	0,22	1,00	0,33	-0,23	0,66
<b>C2nD</b>	3,73	1,26	-0,27	-1,16	0,25	-0,74	0,20
<b>E6nD</b>	3,70	1,16	-0,30	-1,41	0,17	-0,73	0,13
<b>C3nD</b>	4,18	0,66	0,18	1,51	0,14	-0,06	0,43
<b>O4nD</b>	3,78	0,73	-0,22	-1,63	0,11	-0,49	0,05
<b>E5PU</b>	3,67	0,99	-0,33	-1,84	0,08	-0,70	0,04
<b>E3nD</b>	4,33	0,98	0,33	1,87	0,07	-0,03	0,70
A4PU	4,40	1,05	0,40	2,10	0,04	0,01	0,79
E4PD	4,48	1,26	0,48	2,11	0,04	0,01	0,95
O1nD	4,38	0,94	0,38	2,22	0,03	0,03	0,74
O6nD	4,37	0,87	0,37	2,31	0,03	0,04	0,69
O3PU	4,33	0,76	0,33	2,41	0,02	0,05	0,62
A2PU	4,53	1,20	0,53	2,43	0,02	0,08	0,98
A2nU	4,85	1,83	0,85	2,54	0,02	0,17	1,53
A5nU	4,50	1,07	0,50	2,57	0,02	0,10	0,90
O3nU	4,57	1,17	0,57	2,66	0,01	0,13	1,00
A3PU	4,45	0,90	0,45	2,73	0,01	0,11	0,79
O2PU	4,40	0,78	0,40	2,80	0,01	0,11	0,69
O2nD	3,50	0,89	-0,50	-3,08	0,00	-0,83	-0,17
O4nU	3,43	0,95	-0,57	-3,26	0,00	-0,92	-0,21
E5nD	3,48	0,86	-0,52	-3,31	0,00	-0,84	-0,20
O6PD	3,20	1,29	-0,80	-3,40	0,00	-1,28	-0,32
O6nU	4,70	1,10	0,70	3,48	0,00	0,29	1,11
E1nU	4,63	0,98	0,63	3,53	0,00	0,27	1,00
E4nD	4,43	0,65	0,43	3,63	0,00	0,19	0,68
N5nD	4,73	1,10	0,73	3,64	0,00	0,32	1,15
E2nU	3,27	1,09	-0,73	-3,69	0,00	-1,14	-0,33
N6PD	3,45	0,80	-0,55	-3,75	0,00	-0,85	-0,25
E1PU	4,58	0,79	0,58	4,05	0,00	0,29	0,88
N4PU	3,32	0,91	-0,68	-4,09	0,00	-1,02	-0,34
C2nU	2,95	1,37	-1,05	-4,19	0,00	-1,56	-0,54
A3nU	5,03	1,33	1,03	4,25	0,00	0,54	1,53
A4nD	3,07	1,14	-0,93	-4,47	0,00	-1,36	-0,51
N5nU	4,97	1,17	0,97	4,51	0,00	0,53	1,41
E1nD	3,10	1,06	-0,90	-4,64	0,00	-1,30	-0,50
N3PU	3,20	0,93	-0,80	-4,69	0,00	-1,15	-0,45

C5nD	3,18	0,93	-0,82	-4,79	0,00	-1,17	-0,47
O6PU	2,90	1,25	-1,10	-4,83	0,00	-1,57	-0,63
O3nD	3,00	1,13	-1,00	-4,85	0,00	-1,42	-0,58
A6PU	4,68	0,77	0,68	4,85	0,00	0,40	0,97
E3nU	3,02	1,06	-0,98	-5,07	0,00	-1,38	-0,59
A6NU	5,00	1,07	1,00	5,13	0,00	0,60	1,40
E6PU	5,00	1,05	1,00	5,21	0,00	0,61	1,39
N5PD	3,17	0,87	-0,83	-5,22	0,00	-1,16	-0,51
N1PU	3,10	0,94	-0,90	-5,24	0,00	-1,25	-0,55
O2PD	4,90	0,94	0,90	5,24	0,00	0,55	1,25
A6nD	3,15	0,86	-0,85	-5,40	0,00	-1,17	-0,53
C4PD	5,08	1,08	1,08	5,48	0,00	0,68	1,49
A5nD	2,85	1,10	-1,15	-5,73	0,00	-1,56	-0,74
N3PD	3,12	0,82	-0,88	-5,92	0,00	-1,19	-0,58
C5PD	5,03	0,95	1,03	5,98	0,00	0,68	1,39
C3PU	5,13	1,02	1,13	6,11	0,00	0,75	1,51
C3PD	5,28	1,12	1,28	6,28	0,00	0,87	1,70
N3nD	4,82	0,70	0,82	6,38	0,00	0,55	1,08
N5PU	2,92	0,92	-1,08	-6,45	0,00	-1,43	-0,74
O1PU	5,17	0,99	1,17	6,48	0,00	0,80	1,53
C6PD	5,15	0,97	1,15	6,52	0,00	0,79	1,51
N1nU	4,95	0,79	0,95	6,57	0,00	0,65	1,25
N1PD	2,92	0,90	-1,08	-6,59	0,00	-1,42	-0,75
C1nD	3,02	0,81	-0,98	-6,61	0,00	-1,29	-0,68
A2nD	2,32	1,38	-1,68	-6,68	0,00	-2,20	-1,17
C4PU	5,88	1,53	1,88	6,74	0,00	1,31	2,45
A5PU	4,97	0,75	0,97	7,03	0,00	0,69	1,25
C2PD	5,30	1,01	1,30	7,08	0,00	0,92	1,68
E2PU	5,17	0,89	1,17	7,15	0,00	0,83	1,50
N4PD	2,88	0,84	-1,12	-7,30	0,00	-1,43	-0,80
N6nD	5,22	0,89	1,22	7,51	0,00	0,89	1,55
E3PD	5,38	1,00	1,38	7,60	0,00	1,01	1,76
N3nU	5,08	0,78	1,08	7,63	0,00	0,79	1,37
C4nD	2,68	0,92	-1,32	-7,81	0,00	-1,66	-0,97
C5nU	2,37	1,14	-1,63	-7,82	0,00	-2,06	-1,21
A4PD	5,62	1,13	1,62	7,86	0,00	1,20	2,04
E2nD	2,73	0,88	-1,27	-7,90	0,00	-1,59	-0,94
N2MU	5,33	0,90	1,33	8,08	0,00	1,00	1,67
C1PD	5,53	1,02	1,53	8,19	0,00	1,15	1,92
N2PU	2,65	0,89	-1,35	-8,29	0,00	-1,68	-1,02
A2PD	5,28	0,84	1,28	8,39	0,00	0,97	1,60
O5PD	5,33	0,86	1,33	8,45	0,00	1,01	1,66
O1PD	5,45	0,93	1,45	8,52	0,00	1,10	1,80
A3nD	2,00	1,27	-2,00	-8,60	0,00	-2,48	-1,52
C6PU	5,57	0,98	1,57	8,75	0,00	1,20	1,93
N1nD	5,60	0,99	1,60	8,81	0,00	1,23	1,97
O4PD	5,37	0,84	1,37	8,91	0,00	1,05	1,68
A5PD	5,33	0,81	1,33	8,98	0,00	1,03	1,64
A1nD	2,67	0,80	-1,33	-9,10	0,00	-1,63	-1,03
A1PD	5,37	0,80	1,37	9,38	0,00	1,07	1,66
N4nD	5,47	0,82	1,47	9,80	0,00	1,16	1,77
C2PU	5,67	0,89	1,67	10,21	0,00	1,33	2,00
N6PU	2,58	0,76	-1,42	-10,27	0,00	-1,70	-1,13
O3PD	5,90	0,99	1,90	10,46	0,00	1,53	2,27
A6PD	6,03	1,02	2,03	10,87	0,00	1,65	2,42
O4PU	5,63	0,80	1,63	11,21	0,00	1,34	1,93
O5PU	5,87	0,88	1,87	11,62	0,00	1,54	2,20



N2nD	5,78	0,82	1,78	11,96	0,00	1,48	2,09
N4nU	5,70	0,75	1,70	12,42	0,00	1,42	1,98
N6nU	5,92	0,82	1,92	12,79	0,00	1,61	2,22
E3PU	6,02	0,86	2,02	12,91	0,00	1,70	2,34
A3PD	6,10	0,87	2,10	13,30	0,00	1,78	2,42
C5PU	6,08	0,85	2,08	13,40	0,00	1,77	2,40
N2PD	2,33	0,67	-1,67	-13,55	0,00	-1,92	-1,42
C1nU	1,67	0,87	-2,33	-14,62	0,00	-2,66	-2,01
E4PU	5,92	0,70	1,92	15,09	0,00	1,66	2,18
E2PD	6,20	0,69	2,20	17,47	0,00	1,94	2,46
E1PD	6,35	0,73	2,35	17,56	0,00	2,08	2,62
C4nU	1,90	0,65	-2,10	-17,73	0,00	-2,34	-1,86
C1PU	6,40	0,65	2,40	20,27	0,00	2,16	2,64
E6PD	6,50	0,59	2,50	23,32	0,00	2,28	2,72

P – Positive pole; n – negative pole; D – desirability; U – utility

Agreeableness (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6); E –Extroversion (E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, E6); C – Conscientious (C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6); O – Openness (O1, O2, O3, O4, O5, O6); N - Neuroticism (N1, N2, N3, N4, N5, N6)

### Appendix B

**Table 7.** Decreasing order of social value of personality descriptor information as a function of p (Test value = 2, N = 30, ddl = 29)

items	m	$\sigma_s$	deviation/2	t	p	Confidence interval (p=0,05)	
E2PD	2,03	0,16	0,03	1,02	0,31	-0,03	0,09
N6nD	2,00	0,17	0,00	0,00	1,00	-0,06	0,06
C5nU	2,00	0,17	0,00	0,00	1,00	-0,06	0,06

P – Positive pole; n – negative pole; D – desirability; U – utility; E –Extroversion; C – Conscientious; N – Neuroticism

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## CREATIVITY AND PRESCHOOL EDUCATION – IMPERATIVES TO AN HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD

**Georgiana Alexandra ȘERBU,**  
PhD. Student, University of Bucharest,  
Romania  
E-mail: serbu.virgil@yahoo.com

### ABSTRACT

*The investment in pre-school education is due to the importance of this period in terms of acquiring knowledge, training skills and behavioral, affective, intellectual, social, etc. The variable of creativity, in the preschool period, has influences on the development of the personality of the child. Recent studies show that there are significant links between creativity and happiness, motor development, self-image formation. The implications of creativity on the development of the personality of the child have been followed over time by the researchers interested in finding explanations regarding the manifestation and stimulation of the creative process, still early. Creativity, seen as an action aimed at innovation, novelty can be seen as a way of adaptation. The present study aims to address the subject of creativity and its manifestation in the preschool period, highlighting important aspects regarding the process of developing the child's personality.*

**Keywords:** *creativity; preschool education; personality development;*

### 1. CREATIVITY - PERSONALITY VARIABLE

#### 1.1. Conceptual delimitations

Over time, certain definitions of creativity have been delineated. An explanation of creativity was formulated by Rogers (1961) who considered that man adapts naturally through his creativity.

For the first time, the term was used by G. W. Allport, who referred to creativity as a personality formation that included both skills, attitudes, and behavioral traits. (Roco, 2004)

The human personality is complex and has certain defining features as a result of which man develops and adapts to the requirements of the environment and society to which he belongs. Creativity, in terms of personality, refers to man's ability to create something new, ingenious, unseen, as well as man's ability to solve problems through new, inventive methods. In Erika Landau's (1979) vision, originality and the way the world is perceived are the main premises of creativity.

In every field of activity there are people who have the ability to think in order to improve and that is why creativity intervenes as a necessity and as a response to the need for innovation. (De Bono, 1992). De Bono also believes that the variable of creativity is correlated with thinking, which initially becomes lateral thinking and then turns into creative thinking. (Bucur, 2016) Thus, the variable of creativity becomes a necessary tool for the harmonious development of the individual, and stimulation from an early age has effects on the child.

Certain definitions given by researchers over time about creativity have been identified by Mihaela Roco (2004). Creativity was correlated with giftedness and genius. In W. Duff's view, the three faculties of the creative mind, namely imagination, judgment, and taste, can be considered the main components of genius. (W. Duff, quoted by Roco, 2004). He concluded that certain features of creativity, such as spontaneity, associativity, curiosity are specific to children and creative adults, noting that the variable of creativity manifests itself differently, depending on the level and stage of development.

E. P. Torrance's significant contributions in terms of creativity have led to a better understanding of the creative phenomenon which, in his view, involves a process that proposes new solutions, correlates old information with new ones in order to solve problems, check, in order to finally communicate the final results of this process. (Torrance, 1978, quoted by M. Dincă, 2002) Thus, the variable of creativity implies a reorganization of the old elements, seen from new perspectives and new combinations.

Guilford's vision of creativity considers thinking as problem solving, and creativity as an integral part of the area of thinking. (Zlate, 2000) Creativity is correlated with thinking, so it becomes a mental state in which intelligence, in all its forms, is activated. (Fisher & Williams, 2004, quoted by Bucur, 2016)

Another researcher of the creative phenomenon, L. Vygotsky (2004), attributed the creativity of the brain activity, more precisely to the combinatorics of the imagination through the variety of associations and operations it performs. Ken Robinson (Fisher & Williams, 2004) defines creativity as a process of imagination that produces new, original and valuable results.

## 1.2. The characteristics of creativity

Creativity, seen as a personality variable, has certain characteristics that define it. Mihaela Roco (2004) delimits creativity as being characterized by productivity, utility, efficiency, the value of the products of creative activity, ingenuity, novelty and originality.

Productivity refers to the large number of products of creativity, namely ideas, works, etc. Utility aims at the results of the action that must have a use, to contribute to the smooth running of the activity. Efficiency refers to what creativity produces by using its results (Roco, 2004) Value refers to the recognition of the theoretical or practical significance of the products of creative activity. Ingenuity involves the innovative use of solving methods. The novelty concerns the distance in time of the creative products. However, there may be situations in which recently developed things have a low level of originality, which refers to uniqueness, rarity, something special that has never been done before.

The main characteristics of creativity are fluidity, plasticity and originality. (Cosmovici, Andrei, 2008)

## 1.3. Creativity as a process or as a product

Creativity can be seen from a procedural perspective (as a process) or from a product perspective.

Creativity as a process involves solving problems by correlating old experiences with new ones. (Landau, 1979)

From the procedural perspective of creativity, the phases of the creative process are preparation, incubation, lighting or inspiration and verification. (Sălăvăstru, 2004)

Regarding creativity as a product, it aims at the new meanings that the individual attributes to the world through his creative act. (Ghiselin, 1957, quoted by Landau, 1979)

I. Taylor's idea, according to which creative behavior, from the product perspective, is distinguished in the form of several plans, includes: the expressive plan, where the basis of creativity is found, the productive plan that involves acquiring skills, abilities, techniques, knowledge, inventive plan or operative of creativity, the inventive, innovative and supreme or emergent plan. (Tomşa, 2004)

#### 1.4. Factors of the emergence of creativity

The factors that determine the emergence of creativity are intellectual, character and social. Cosmovici Andrei (2008) realizes a typology of factors that determine and influence the appearance of the creative phenomenon. Thus, the factors that determine the appearance of creativity are of an intellectual, character or social nature.

##### *Factors of an intellectual nature*

A first factor of an intellectual nature is the *imagination* which involves a process of a psychic nature through which new reactions and cognitive, affective or motor phenomena are obtained. Imagination, as a determining intellectual factor of creativity, involves two fundamental processes, namely analysis and synthesis. The analysis refers to a decomposition of the representations that, by synthesis, are reorganized and used using the information previously held. (Cosmovici, Andrei, 2006)

*Memory* influences creativity. *The volume of acquired knowledge*, their *variety*, but also the *exercise of memory* determine the appearance and stimulation of creativity.

*The level of thinking* and *intelligence* are factors that influence the emergence of creativity.

About creativity, referring to convergent and divergent thinking, Guilford recalls in his research. (Guilford, 1957) He calls divergent thinking as the one that produces more solutions, and convergent thinking the one that finds the solution, the only correct answer. Creativity, seen through the prism of convergent and divergent thinking, gives rise to theories about the creative potential that is characteristic, according to Guilford, of those who have divergent thinking and are able to produce a large number of solutions, ideas.

He considers that the cognitive trait materialized by divergent thinking is essential to the creative process. The vision of Isaksen, Dorval and Treffinger (2010) stated that creative people alternate divergent thinking with convergent thinking.

Divergent thinking, in their opinion, represents the thought processes involved in finding a greater number of solutions, options, and convergent thinking, the processes involved in integrating different options in finding the right solution. Both types of thinking are interdependent in the case of creative people.

##### *Characteristic factors*

Creativity can be influenced by a person's *predispositions*, *intellectual abilities*, and *will*.

##### *Social factors*

A person's *motivation* differs from case to case. Also, *the requirements of society* are different from one historical moment to another, so *the motivation* to achieve things differs in this respect. *The stage of development of the discipline* is another factor of a social nature that influences the emergence of creativity.

#### 1.5. The specificity of creativity at preschool age

The child's imagination process was researched by T. Berry Brazelton and Stanley I. Greenspan (2013). They believe that since children have the ability to generate new ideas, they can use fantasy, imagination to be able to discern the world in which they live and of

which they are a part. In other words, during childhood, the imagination has a special development that manifests itself through fantasy. The child makes contact with the world around him and begins to make connections, new ideas, which he recombines. The presence of fantasy is a projection of the child's imagination that helps him to understand and explain his reality. Through fantasy, the child knows and understands the complex world, imagines new things that can be possible, regardless of impediments. Therefore, stimulating the production of fantasy among children is a way in which it actually stimulates their creativity. From the presence of imaginary friends, to the imaginary role play through which the child "pretends" to play, all these actions aim to stimulate the child's imagination and thereby, to stimulate creativity from an early age.

The investment in preschool education is due to the importance of this period in terms of acquiring knowledge, developing skills and abilities in behavioral, emotional, intellectual, social, etc. The program Early Education Matters (2000) proposed by Judith L. Evans, Robert G. Myers and Ellen M. Ilfeld discusses the importance of early education for the development of the child's personality. Children as young as eight can learn more easily by manipulating their objects more easily through exploration and experimentation, learning by mistake and trying.

Fromm (Schultz, 1976) considers that each individual is characterized by the process of individualization. This process aims at gaining autonomy and independence, freedom of development and the use of all the skills he is capable of. He believed that during childhood, the child develops a lot. Also, the influence of the family on the child, from his point of view, is important for the harmonious development of the child, even if it does not play a decisive role in this process. He stated that the child's development is influenced by the family, but not entirely because the pressures of society, the social environment, heredity, all affect the development equally.

The relationship between the child and the family is important, and involvement in the child's development has influences on the later adult. Also, the importance of creativity on the child's development, in Fromm's view, is very high because each variable has an influence on personality modeling.

It was found that the success of the child's learning during school is correlated with the memorization skills that he develops since preschool. A study by Elena Bateneva (2016) managed to conclude that memory can be stimulated through educational games. They have progressive tasks and support the child in the memorization process. Stimulating memory also stimulates creativity. Thus, the child manages to form a positive self-image, has confidence in his own strengths, completes work tasks, stimulates memory, and implicitly, creativity.

The importance of practicing memory from an early age, according to Elena Bateneva, has positive influences on the child's learning process. It is important that the tasks are oriented towards the process of developing the child's personality, and implicitly, creativity. In the preschool period, the child is familiar with the concept of learning that is achieved through the game that fulfills formative and informative functions. The child learns through play and play, and the creativity variable has an influence on the whole process of developing his personality.

In the preschool period, the child manifests his figurative and verbal creativity. Verbal creativity is manifested through the variety of words and their symbolism. Thus, the child verbalizes his actions, imagines and explains, communicates creatively with those around him. Through fantasy, the child manifests verbal creativity, communicating his

thoughts and feelings. Manifestations of verbal creativity target his communication and imagination skills. Through role play, the preschooler is put in a position to imagine different poses and roles, thus developing his figurative creativity.

The influence of society on the child's development leads to the idea that education has the role of stimulating the formation of his personality according to current and future requirements of society. Therefore, investing in education from an early age produces positive effects on the child. Stimulating the creativity variable has the ability to influence personality development. By providing the child with the necessary experiences for a harmonious development, he manages to adapt and form skills, sets of knowledge, skills.

At first the lines are indefinite, unclear, the drawing being ambiguous. However, the child notices that his drawing has a meaning, he sees something completely different from the adult in his creations. Therefore, it is very important not to restrict children's creativity, to encourage them in the creative process and to praise the results of their work. Being stimulated, children gain confidence in their own strengths and are motivated to create. Encouragement in the process of creativity leads to the formation of a positive image and self-esteem, which supports the child in the process of formation.

### **1.6. Methods and techniques used to stimulate the emergence and development of creativity in preschool**

- Brainstorming: the child is encouraged to formulate as many ideas as possible, in the shortest possible time. This method stimulates thinking, forming new connections based on the old ones, the child being encouraged to offer as many solutions to the problem.

- Role play: the child is encouraged to create unique scenarios. This method develops children's thinking, ease, free communication and verbal creativity.

- Retelling: the child must retell the story read by the educator. It cultivates children's attention, memory and free communication.

- Build the story !: the child must build a story based on images or from his imagination. This method is often used in preschool because it develops children's imagination and verbal creativity.

- Artistic-plastic activities: through these activities, the child is encouraged to develop his figurative creativity. Through modeling, free drawing, the use of various painting techniques, the child discovers and stimulates his figurative creativity.

- Outdoor explorations: through excursions, outdoor explorations, activities carried out in a non-formal setting, the child explores the surrounding world, forms perceptions and representations, knows, becomes curious, and thus develops his creativity.

## **2. CASE STUDY ON THE MANIFESTATION OF CREATIVITY IN THE PRESCHOOL PERIOD**

### *Case study hypothesis*

In the educational activity carried out in the preschool institution it was found that there are differences, sometimes significant, in terms of the manifestation of figurative creativity. The choice of this case was due to the observation of more special skills in terms of expressing the figural creativity of the preschool period.

The working hypothesis regarding the case study is that according to the subject "S. J. " has a high score of figurative creativity compared to other children in the group to which it belongs, based on observations during educational activities in kindergarten.



### *Identifying and revealing the importance of the case*

The importance of the identified case derives from the need to explain the phenomenon of figurative creativity in the preschool period and to find ways to stimulate the creative phenomenon.

*The objectives of the case study* were to reveal the characteristics related to the manifestation of figurative creativity in the preschool period, as well as the ways to stimulate figurative creativity in the preschool period.

*The purpose of the case study* is to identify effective ways to stimulate, from an early age, children's figurative creativity.

### *Analysis of the socio-economic and cultural environment*

The subject „S. J ”comes from a family with high socio-economic status, the parents having good economic potential and higher education. The family is also involved in the child's education and provides him with all the circumstances for a harmonious development and a proper education. The child's personality is closely correlated with the genetic material he receives at birth, but also with the effects of education and the environment on development and adaptation. The influence of the family on the development of the child's personality is special. A study conducted by Lucia Gonzalez et al in 2018 in Spain concluded that the influence of the mother on the child's personality is greater than that of the father. Also, the mother's level of education and the father's social status are the factors that contribute to the child's cognitive development.

### *Subject's characteristics*

The subject „S. J ”is 6 years old. Physically, it is a properly developed child, height and weight correspond to chronological age. Regarding the body scheme, it recognizes the body organization and details of one's own body and that of others, it recognizes the right / left segments of one's own body.

From an intellectual point of view, the subject has an above average intelligence compared to his colleagues, with special abilities. Regarding the spatial orientation, it operates with the notions: up / down, next to, below, inside, closed / open, distinguishes the size of large / small objects, it is oriented graphically. Has time orientation and recognizes parts of the day, lists the days of the week, lists the seasons.

Attention is stable, has a good ability to concentrate for long periods of time and is resistant to disturbing factors. He also has a rich imagination, tells stories with great ease, detailing when necessary and has a very good memory. Select, group, compare, sort objects, name the category of grouped objects, compose an integer of component parts, easily count in the center 1-10, associate the number with the set of corresponding elements, carrying the number to the quantity.

Vocabulary is very well developed. He trains in games either alone or with partners, collaborates in the game, respects the rules of the game.

Emotionally, she is a child who needs affection, is sometimes difficult, presents arguments when she does not want to achieve something, is pretentious and needs attention. He is interested in activities, he works carefully, he is neat, he has initiative.

### *Description of the test applied*

Following the application of Torrance tests for the detection of figurative creativity, form A, we could find that the subject “S. J ”has distinct features from his colleagues. Torrance tests to detect the level of creativity are specially designed to determine the appearance of a certain type of motivation. (Torrance, 2019)

The Torrance test for figurative creativity, form A, involves three types of activities. The first activity concerns the construction of images. The second activity involves completing images, by adding lines of incomplete drawings so as to make interesting objects and drawings, and the last refers to making new images by using the given lines. All activities also involve awarding titles to the works, titles that are scored to detect the level of figurative creativity, form A.

### 3. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Through his research, Ashton (2013) launched the idea that children's personality is influenced by the environment in which they live and certain similarities can be observed between children living in the same home. Also, the group of friends can influence children's behavior, even if the family has different personality traits.

For a harmonious development of the child, all components of personality are important. Creativity, seen as a personality variable, stimulated from an early age, leads to the formation of a personality according to the current and future requirements of society, so that the child can adapt and develop.

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## BETWEEN PHENOMENOLOGY AND VIOLENCE

**Ramona Nicoleta ARIEȘAN,**

Ph.D. student, Faculty of History and Philosophy, at Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca,  
Romania.

E-mail: cashmerephotography@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

*We are surrounded by mean people, mean life-styles and mean concepts. Everything that we know might be just a fact, might not have anything to sustain it or might be just a temporarily faze that the world is going through. But two things have been present, since maybe the very beginning of this world: phenomenology and violence. And although phenomenology might be something quite hard to understand, and this is why I tried to focus more on this subject, it still exists, it is still present in our day to day life even if we do not notice it and it will always be a huge part of our lives. Standing between phenomenology and violence and trying to decide which one is more present in our lives is quite the difficult task to ask of someone. This is why I tried to make this article as comprehensive as I could and also the reason why I tried to put things into a more positive light. It is quite a difficult job to make a living in today's world. But even though this is the harsh reality that we are living in I will always stand by phenomenology and the fact that violence can be defeated through it.*

**Keywords:** *phenomenology; violence; human; understanding; perspective;*

### 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF PHENOMENOLOGY

Phenomenology studies the conscious experience of how it is felt, lived and expressed by each individual person, in his own way and through the rhythm of his own perceptions. It is a pure subject that goes hand in hand with the human being and with its own level of knowledge and self-knowledge. This field of philosophy must then be distinguished from other important fields of philosophy, such as ontology, epistemology, logic, ethics, and many others. In the recent philosophy of the mind, the term phenomenology is often, in a limited way, designated to characterize the different abilities and sensory characteristics associated with a person. This happens, however, in the context in which everything that we experience offers a much more wider palette of content than a simple sensation. *“For Ricoeur, action denotes the basic manner in which persons exist and inhabit the world. Action involves not only doing but undergoing. Actions comprise our capabilities, including our limitations. Through our actions we constitute our identity”* (Gadamer and Ricoeur 2011:7).

Consequently, in the phenomenological tradition, phenomenology is associated with a much larger ensemble, which allows it to address the significance that things have in our experience, in particular the meaning of objects, events, instruments, time flow, self and others, as they appear and are lived, felt, processed and sometimes even over-processed in our daily lives. Thus, it addresses the phenomena experienced and the dimensions they offer, different and inexhaustible, full of significance and ambiguities in perspective. So, phenomenology can be seen as a real attempt to understand what really means the experience and the means that it uses to allow us access to new dimensions, or in other words it gives us

a formal account of the conscious experience and its implications. However, what is called phenomenology is not a rigid school or a uniform philosophical discipline with a set of incontestable dogmas. Rather, there is a great diversity and almost unlimited number of views of thinkers and so many approaches that could ultimately constitute a true collection of phenomenological knowledge. Consequently, as a philosophical movement, phenomenology is marked by a variety of forms, ideas, thoughts, moments, evolutions and subsequent variations. And just like Hans-Georg Gadamer said:

I think it necessary at this point to adhere precisely to the fact that something is only ever a beginning in relation to an end or a goal. Between these two, beginning and end, stands an indissoluble connection. The beginning always implies the end. Whenever we fail to mention what the beginning in question refers to, we say something meaningless. The end determines the beginning, and this is why we get into a long series of difficulties. The anticipation of the end is a prerequisite for the concrete meaning of beginning (Gadamer and Ricoeur 2011:15).

What happens to phenomenology when it is completely free from the task of following the origin of meaning back to the work of the transcendental self? Does it somehow lose its critical potential? Does it lose its autonomy in relation to opinions, beliefs and perspectives of knowledge that ultimately constitute natural attitudes? Is it enough to obey and be led by the forces of irrationality? Or, ultimately, it gains something that is in favor of subjectivity, for the experience we actually live-and that also means for the phenomenon itself and, as such, the recognition, the rights, and the truth that is due or what is ours due? Maybe it sounds improper, but somehow, I think that phenomenology owes us something special, something that cannot be transposed accurately into words, but it can certainly be felt. And we support this because in one form or another, as human beings, we are in a relationship of symbiosis with phenomenology, which naturally leads to self-fulfillment and self-completion.

The unconditionality of a moral imperative certainly does not mean that the moral consciousness must remain rigid in judging others. Rather, it is morally imperative to detach oneself from the subjective, private conditions of one's own judgment and to assume the standpoint of the other person. But this unconditionality also means that the moral consciousness cannot avoid appealing to the judgment of others. The obligatoriness of the imperative is universal in a stricter sense than the universality of sensibility can ever attain. Applying the moral law to the will is a matter for judgment (Gadamer and Ricoeur 2004:29).

The fundamental structure of consciousness, found in reflection or analysis, involves other forms of experience. Thus, phenomenology offers a complex account of temporal awareness in the flow of consciousness, spatial awareness, especially encountered in perception, of course, making a complex distinction between focal and marginal consciousness, awareness of own experience through ego, alter ego and supra-ego, in a sense, self-awareness, by itself and in itself, in different roles, at different times and of course in different ways, such as thinking, acting, embodied action, including the theoretical awareness of the practical movement, awareness of others in empathy, intersubjectivity, collectivity, even to the everyday activity characterized by a certain culture or even by the way we as subjective beings perceive that culture.

Our task, it seems to me, is to transcend the prejudices that underlie the aesthetic consciousness, the historical consciousness, and the hermeneutical consciousness that has been restricted to a technique for avoiding misunderstandings and to overcome the alienations present in them all. What is it, then, in these three experiences that seemed to us

to have been left out, and what makes us so sensitive to the distinctiveness of these experiences? (Hans-Georg Gadamer 1977:8).

For a very long time, people have been constantly told who they are, who they must be, what they should do or experience. The liberation from this socio-cultural implication of meaning implies a subject, whether individually or collectively, in a phenomenological gesture whereby experience, in addition to being actually lived, is ultimately recognized, and existential significance is respected as such. The supremacy of phenomenology is that it insists on recognizing and observing the reality of our experience as it was lived, intercepted and felt. In fact, she legitimizes and empowers the reflexive, critical capacity of subjectivity in her struggle to break away from the oppressive cultural interpretations imposed upon him. In this sense, phenomenology is already an ethics, already a politics, let's say a common one. In this context, the significance of phenomenology is that it provides a disciplined method of working hermeneutically and critically with the experience experienced to reveal the implicit or latent potential of the light, and to carry this critical potential further, to translate it into this environment and in many others in ways that are considered to be life-giving, because it offers one of the fundamental things that allows us to live at the absolute maximum intensity: freedom. This concept of objective spirit, the roots of which reach far back into antiquity, finds its real philosophical justification in Hegel through the fact that it is itself transcended by what Hegel calls absolute spirit. By absolute spirit, Hegel means a form of spirit that contains nothing more in itself that is alien, other, or in opposition, such as customs, which can stand over against us as something limiting us, or the laws of a state, which restrict our will by expressing prohibitions (Hans-Georg Gadamer 1977:114).

Therefore, phenomenology opens up a completely new field of investigation that has not been properly explored previously. Rather than supposing or trying to discern what exists outside the mental domain and what causal relationships belong to these entities, we can study the objects strictly as they are given, that is, as it appears to us and as we perceive in the experience. Phenomenology is the study of all things related to modernity, and scientific certainty becomes something to be understood. It is the destruction of the idea that we can know everything absolutely, everything is, or is logical. Phenomenology refers to perception, although perhaps for many this is still something difficult to observe. So, there is a question: if there is a world in which I live and inspire, which has an irreducible quality as it seems to me to feel, why will I pretend that it is only in my mind and that I am not connected in any way, in a real way with myself?

As soon as history is in play, what matters is not what is merely given, but, decisively, what is new. Insofar as nothing new, no innovation, and nothing unforeseen is present, there is also no history to relate. Destiny also means constant unpredictability. The concept of development, therefore, brings to expression the fundamental difference that exists between the process-quality of nature and the fluctuating accidents and incidents of human life. What comes to expression here is a primordial opposition between nature and spirit ( Hans-Georg Gadamer 1977: 16).

The ultimate goal of phenomenology is to address our experience in such a way that it is no longer mediated by concepts or representations offered by our subjective consciousness but rather to provide a clearer representation of the life that is offered to us to enjoy it fully and make the most out of it. It allows phenomena to give us by our own and personal means and as they will give themselves, thus noticing how we live and, moreover, how the truth gives us, and how it really puts us in front of our reflection to really offer a true representation of who we are. Phenomenology, far from being an outdated and

irrelevant methodology, holds a privileged position today. It is found in vast and varied fields, including journalism, where it helps to portray reality in a clear, shadowless and maskless light. It is a truly poetic and appropriate approach to understanding the different living conditions and having higher judgments. It is also almost incredible that these conditions and experiences are constantly changing and unfolding in such unpredictable ways that perhaps few people would have expected phenomenology to become the pillar linking all these areas and all these feelings.

In contrast to the mere givenness of the phenomena of objective consciousness, a givenness in intentional experiences, this reflection constitutes a new dimension of research. For there is such a thing as givenness that is not itself the object of intentional acts. Every experience has implicit horizons of before and after, and finally fuses with the continuum of the experiences present in the before and after to form a unified flow of experience (Hans-Georg Gadamer 2004:237).

### 1.1. Phenomenology's aspect in a world of violence

To reveal the relational character, I will try to substantially extend the phenomenological concept of meaning. Meaning is a very complete concept although apparently does not give that impression. The meaning may be the predefined one, it may be something completely objective or on the contrary, it may be probably one of the most subjective concepts, experiences and perceptions, in the context in which this meaning is associated with an intimate thing: sense. Sense, in other words, occurs in the relationship between the subject and those with whom it interacts in this world, which can make this world seem something unreal or something incredible, or eventually it can make it disappear, and consequently, the subject becomes conditioned to shape self-understanding, self-contemplation and self-reflection.

The mediation of finite and infinite that is appropriate to us as finite being lies in language - in the linguistic character of our experience of the world. It exhibits an experience that is always finite but that nowhere encounters a barrier at which something infinite is intended that can barely be surmised and no longer spoken. Its own operation is never limited, and yet is not a progressive approximation of an intended meaning. There is rather a constant representation of this meaning in every one of its steps. The success of the work constitutes its meaning, not what is only meant by it (Hans-Georg Gadamer 1977: 80).

The discussion of violence in relation to a relational phenomenon or inter-phenomenon requires an emphasis on two aspects: first, the fact that the feeling of violence, once lived, cannot be extracted from a single perspective or viewed in the context of a crowd of prospects, a fundamental order, a teleological order, or even a procedural order. This understanding rather gives us the opportunity to consider those dimensions of our inter-corporal existence in which the feeling of lived violence develops in multiple ways without our active or even conscious participation. Secondly, the discussion of violence as a relational phenomenon is evidence that we have become accustomed to understanding violence as an exception to our intrinsic sociality, or as a way to avoid any form of externalizing us because of fear of an improper future, overshadowed by a possible act of violence. The main purpose of phenomenology is to raise the intentional horizons of a life full of experiences, in which we move, think and act by following a kind of daily pattern, without these actions being mainly and, most of all, thematic.

Correspondingly, the culture of inwardness, the intensification of personal conflicts in human life, and the pent-up expressive power of its artistic representation is gradually

becoming alien to us. The social order develops forms of such power that the individual is hardly conscious at all any longer of living out of his own decisions, even in the intimate sphere of his own personal existence. Thus we must sharpen the question in our own time as to how man can understand himself within the totality of a social reality dominated by science (Hans-Georg Gadamer 1977: 111).

Some might wonder because one of the starting points in terms of the philosophical and phenomenological approach to violence could be the very philosophical character of the person involved in the act of violence or more, even the philosophical character of the act itself. And these things are more than a mere advent to reality about this ensemble of violence and philosophical character. Because eventually everything has to start somewhere and I think that all of us are often in the same place, maybe even at the same time, but what distinguishes us from those who choose violence is our philosophical character, a positive one otherwise, and also how we can use it. Perhaps, on the other hand, the problems of violence are not, in the end, all that obscure, even if they may be difficult to understand. In fact, there are a number of approaches to violence that provide very convincing explanations for this phenomenon. The problem of war, an ongoing one, for example, can be formulated as a limited issue, a problem in the military science technique where the specialist investigates how to fight more effectively by mobilizing and concentrating forces. Such approaches provide a thematic basis on which to construct a true worthy example, just like real solutions have to be found and perhaps more often, these solutions could find themselves in phenomenology, but they are hidden under other aspects of this field. And what matters even more is that they are not limited to the actual warfare; for example, the familiar question about what legal or social institutions would be needed to shape human affairs in such a way that even if it does not rule out completely the existence of war at least it reduces its appeal to other people.

The real power of hermeneutical consciousness is our ability to see what is questionable. Now if what we have before our eyes is not only the artistic tradition of a people, or historical tradition, or the principle of modern science in its hermeneutical preconditions but rather the whole of our experience, then we have succeeded, I think, in joining the experience of science to our own universal and human experience of life (Hans-Georg Gadamer 1977: 13).

From the perspective of technical approaches, violence issues do not disappear as a mere consequence, but they do not seem to be usually obscure. They should not attract the concept of philosophy, at least if it is accepted that violence has been effectively understood through a variety of conceptual frameworks that such approaches offer. But if we find ourselves caught in the notion that there are no real problems of war or real problems of conflict at this intensity and that everything is limited to a problem of approach and technique, whether military, legal or social, then it means we limit ourselves alone in the solutions that we know. And on top of that, we also shut down any way of accessing others or a phenomenology of truth, or any philosophical leverage that could help us deeply investigate the war or any act of violence. There are precedents for such a commitment to the philosophy that remains strictly in these horizons; they are based on the idea that philosophy, together with human sciences, such as history and sociology, can be an important resource for the development and study of the basic categories used by military science, international politics or law (which is also found in the weather of the ancient and preserved to this day through the customs).



Anytime we attempt to reach a shared understanding, there is not only the danger of one voice silencing the others or out-shouting them so that they cannot be heard. There is also the danger of one voice actually putting words in the other's mouth, and thereby doing a kind of violence to the individuality of the Other and his own thought. This is a way of misrepresenting what the Other says, and doing him an injustice in the process (Hans-Georg Gadamer 1977: 61).

The very idea of violence as a pure means of rationalization rejects any argument that could support the meaning or meanings known to man. It's like denying it almost directly. Because the rationalization in question does not claim to have brought into question what is essential for those lives that are affected by war and violence in particular. It is not claimed to be the rationalization of war as a total human event, but only of war in its limited, reductive representation, such as the use of means or material potential for the practices of violence. All questions arising from different acts of violence and likely to find a rather well-defined answer in the phenomenology remain unresolved when we restrict any philosophical sense or any kind of rationalization that would allow access to and other directions than violence. Phenomenology is practically connected to the hands and feet, it is unable to do any kind of movement, to connect with the self, with the self or with the consciousness of the person. Violence often wins, but because we need to see the good in any situation, we can still say that what gives us hope and in these situations is the foundation of phenomenology and philosophy, a foundation that has resisted some very little known times to people. Also, the morality of the war does not find, according to this principle, a chance to be expressed as long as we only pursue the passage of this phenomenon of violence and do not try to hang on to it. It is both necessary and sufficient for a moral reflection to start with the damage or to understand the results of a cause and from there to ask for reason and justification; to be concerned about violence as such, a possible origin of any significant meaning that would contribute to defining the parameters of moral reflection, and would not simply block any reflection of an act that contradicts the spiritual nature of the human being.

What can be called an experience constitutes itself in memory. By calling it such, we are referring to the lasting meaning that an experience has for the This is the reason for talking about an intentional experience and the ideological structure of consciousness. On the other hand, however, the notion of experience also implies a contrast between life and mere concept. Experience has a definite immediacy which eludes every opinion about its meaning. Everything that is experienced is experienced by oneself, and part of its meaning is that it belongs to the unity of this self and thus contains an unmistakable and irreplaceable relation to the whole of this one life (Hans-Georg Gadamer 2004:58).

## 2. COMING TOGETHER

The working hypothesis regarding the case study is that according to the subject "S. J. " has a Violence comes in so many different shapes and sizes, that there is absolutely no way in completely preventing it, but definitely, there will also be solutions to defeating it. Through philosophy and phenomenology in particular we can reach new levels of understanding one another, of understanding where we stand in this world, how we perceive things and we can use our surroundings to our advantage. It is not an easy thing to do. And of course, the human nature works its ways into everything, it will also be quite difficult to overcome our inner fears, inner judgements and inner limits in order for us to fully accept phenomenology as a real life style. Although I believe that a little bit of this philosophy field can be found in each and everyone of us, the difficult part might be actually acknowledging

it and understanding how to use it in our own advantage. And I do say advantage because in today's life and today's world we really need to learn how to use things in our advantage.

Being vulnerable in the face of violence is one of the most courageous acts a person can put out there. It is not something that comes easy. But just like being stubborn is part of the human nature, so is being there for one another, and this is the key for us to be able to get past the huge level of violence that we encounter each and every single day. Because violence, like phenomenology, comes in different shapes and sizes. And even though the concept is the same, the way it affects us and the way we perceive it will always differ from one person to another, from one culture to the next one, from one part of the world to the opposite one.

But being able to identify with our inner selves, with what we describe as being our conscience and how it affects us can really make the difference. The moment we can fully comprehend who we truly are and we can acknowledge this because we understand the concept of phenomenology will mark a turning point in our lives. It is not hard for us to be kind to one another. What is hard is the fact that we care too much about how others see us, about how their violence could affect us and even change us into something that we would never be if it wasn't for their violence. Coming together really means being able to be kind, to be humane, to be human beings and to really just put our hearts on a plate and fight against any form of violence because deep down we all know that this is what can change the world. We just need to find a way and use phenomenology to get people to admit who they truly are and let them know that they matter and that violence is not the answer.

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## IS FACEBOOK HARMFUL? EFFECTS OF INTENSE FACEBOOK USE ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' WORK

Valentina Iuliana MANEA<sup>1</sup>, Gabriel GORGHIU<sup>2</sup>, Costin PRIBEANU<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Technical University of Civil Engineering, Bucharest,

<sup>2</sup>Valahia University of Târgoviște,

<sup>3</sup>Academy of Romanian Scientists, Bucharest,

ROMANIA,

E-mail: <sup>1</sup>vmanea@yahoo.ro, <sup>2</sup>ggorghiu@gmail.com, <sup>3</sup>costin.pribeanu@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

*The advances in social media technology and mobile devices have an important impact on the educational process, in a general context in which the use of social networks have a great influence on many aspects of daily life. However, despite the great potential of social networks in the field of education, the possibilities of applying interactive methodologies that include social networking and turning the actual education in a more attractive format of learning is still in a beginner phase... In this respect, it is obvious that the education providers do not exploit enough such learning environments. However, the objective of this paper is to analyze the negative effects of Facebook use on university students' work. A summated scale for the Facebook intensity of use has been proposed, by integrating three variables: the number of Facebook friends, the number of daily logs, and the time spent daily. Three Facebook user profiles have been defined based on the intensity of use: low, moderate, and high Facebook intensity. The results show significant group differences which especially as regards the concentration in university and students' work.*

**Keywords:** social networking websites; Facebook; problematic use; negative effects of social network; the intensity of Facebook use;

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, social media technology and mobile devices could have a great potential in the educational process. Practically, the use of social networks in education represents a form of recognition of all the social changes induced by their presence in our daily lives.

At present, social networks should be considered an educational tool, due to the fact that most of them allow the creation of groups (e.g. class-group, group of certain groups), and in this way, the information is sent in an easy and fast way. Learning through the use of such networks represents an attractive educational alternative that reduces various restrictions: temporal, social, or spatial.

There are a series of advantages related to the use of social networks in education: considering the space in which the students are working, this has an intimate character and does not require formalization; the student can learn at his own pace; the own progress can be controlled quickly; the student benefits of fast and permanent feedback; the interaction with the teacher is free and unconstrained; there are no travel fees involved and the time

allocated for virtual meetings can be flexible. More, in a virtual classroom, students of all ages can be brought together, having different backgrounds, and neglecting the distances.

In terms of disadvantages, it is important to mention: dependence, privacy concerns, possible exposure of personal data, cyberbullying, but also depression (Moreno, et al., 2011; Park et al., 2013). Pantic (2014) emphasized the negative correlations between the frequent use of social networks and well-being or mental health.

Overall, on the one hand, both educators and students have to take advantage from the new opportunities created by the social networking websites (Ellison et al., 2007; Greenhow & Levin, 2016; Pribeanu et al., 2018) and to effectively adapt to social learning (Brown & Adler, 2008; Manca & Ranieri, 2016). On the other hand, too much time spent on social media websites is affecting the students' concentration in the university activities, and it may even lead to adverse effects on their lives (LaRose et al., 2010; Balog et al., 2013; Orosz et al., 2015; Gorghiu et al., 2016). However, social networks offer to students the feeling of belonging to a community, but also the opportunity to explore their own identity.

## 1. RELATED WORK

There is no clear boundary between the use and abuse of social media sites. Waycott et al. (2013) expressed several concerns related to the positive effects of using social networks in higher education, but there are also authors who insisted on its negative effects, mainly on *students' academic performance* (Kirschner, & Karpinski, 2010; Paul et al., 2012). In addition, there were introduced concerns related to the *plagiarism* situations or possible *rejection of students' various views* (Yu et al., 2010; Waycott et al., 2013).

If we limit the discussion just to Facebook, related works illustrate a diversity of terms related to on-line activities: excessive, problematic, addictive, unregulated (Young, & Rogers, 1998; Caplan, 2002; LaRose et al., 2010; Orosz et al., 2015).

The study of LaRose et al. (2010) analyzed the Facebook use focusing on different types of Facebook activities and proposed a model of *habitual Internet activities* rooted in the social cognitive theory and media consumption theory. They argued to make a distinction between different habitual activities when analyzing the negative life consequences.

Ellison et al. (2007) developed a *composite measure* for the Facebook intensity that combined two characteristics of use (number of Facebook friends and minutes spent daily) with six attitudinal items. Although the scale is not unidimensional, it has been widely used in social networking websites research. They found that Facebook intensity predicts the level of three forms of social capital. They also found a relationship between Facebook usage and psychological well-being, especially for users having low self-esteem and life satisfaction.

Orosz et al. (2015) proposed a *Multidimensional Facebook Intensity Scale* having four dimensions: persistence, boredom, overuse, and self-expression. On the one hand, the scale enables a more detailed analysis of problematic and non-problematic Facebook use. On another hand, it enables the prediction of frequent Facebook-related behaviors.

Munkaila & Iddrisu (2015) specified that the extensive use of social networks by students can have a negative impact on their social interaction, and more, can lead to depression, sleep disorders and dependence.

In this sense, Gorghiu et al. (2016) analyzed the relationship between Facebook dependence and its negative effects on students' work on three groups according to the number of Facebook friends. The comparison between groups showed that students having larger networks also log on Facebook more often, spend more time on Facebook daily, have a higher level of dependence, and their university work is more affected.

## 2. METHOD AND SAMPLE

The goal of this study is to find out the extent to which an intense Facebook use has negative effects on the students' work. The Facebook intensity (*FB-Int*) is measured with a summated scale that integrates three variables: number of Facebook friends, logging behavior, and minutes spent daily on Facebook. The measure differs from the Facebook intensity measure defined by Ellisson et al. (2007) in two respects:

- it does not include attitudinal items since those are related to various aspects such as emotional affect or dependence.
- it includes the number of logs/day (daily frequency of use).

The frequency of use has been measured with the help of two variables: number of days/week and number of logs/day (1=once, 2=twice, 3=three times and more, 4=continuous log). The number of Facebook friends and the minutes spent daily on Facebook have been scaled on a 6-points scale, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Variable scaling

Value	FB friends	Minutes / Day
1	1-300	0-15
2	301-600	16-30
3	601-1000	31-60
4	1001-1500	61-90
5	1501-2500	91-120
6	>2500	>120

The method is based on group comparison. Three groups have been defined based on the Facebook intensity: 3-6, 7-10, and 10-16. Those groups correspond to the low, moderate, and high intensity of use.

The sample consists of 182 students (127 males and 55 females) from Technical University of Civil Engineering in Bucharest. The data has been collected in May 2019. The age of participants ranges between 18 and 34 years old ( $M=20.36$ ,  $SD=2.00$ ).

First, students have been asked to answer questions related to the characteristics of use: number of Facebook friends, frequency, and duration of use. Then, students have been asked to rate several items on a 7-points Likert scale. The items related to the negative effects of Facebook use are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Items measuring the negative effects of Facebook

Item	Statement
ANC1	My academic performance suffers because of Facebook
ANC2	My concentration at university suffers because I am on Facebook
ANC3	I often neglect my university work because of Facebook

## 3. RESULTS

The number of Facebook friends ranges between 6 and 5781 with a mean of 1173.13 ( $SD=1113.12$ ). The mean number of days/week is 5.54 ( $SD=2.10$ ), the mean number of logs/day is 2.72 ( $SD=0.87$ ), and the time spent in minutes/day is on average 60.85 ( $SD=68.69$ ), with a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 400 minutes. As it could be noticed, students have large Facebook networks and spend a lot of time daily.

The mean values for the characteristics of Facebook usage in each group are presented in Table 3. While the number of students in the first and third groups is almost equal, the second group is the largest, showing that almost half of the students (48.43%) are using Facebook moderately.

Table 3. Characteristics of Facebook use

FB-Int	N	FBf	DaysWeek	LogDay	MinDay
Low (3-6)	46	489.30	4.39	1.80	15.74
Moderate (7-10)	88	1076.57	5.69	2.86	50.69
High (11-16)	48	2005.50	6.35	3.35	122.71

As it could be noticed, the higher is the intensity of Facebook use, the larger are the network size, frequency, and duration of use. A one-way ANOVA (2, 179, 181) showed that differences are statistically significant for all variables at  $p=0.000$  level.

The descriptives for those three items measuring the negative effects of Facebook on the university work of students are presented in Table 3. As it could be noticed, the negative effects are low to moderate.

Table 4. Descriptives for ANC items (N=182)

Item	Min	Max	Mean	SD
ANC1	1	7	2.82	1.81
ANC2	1	7	2.75	1.75
ANC3	1	7	2.64	1.77

The average of those three items is 2.73 (SD=1.63). An analysis of frequency for the mean value shows that for 133 students (73.62%) is below 4 (neutral value, on a 7-point Likert scale), for 12 students is 4 (moderate negative effects), for 31 students is between 4 and 6 (high negative effects). Only 6 students reported a mean value over 6, which means very high negative effects. Overall, for 145 students (79.67%) the negative effects are low and moderate and for 37 students (20.33%), the negative effects are high and very high.

The mean value of items measuring the negative effects of Facebook use for each group is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Negative effects of Facebook by the intensity of use

FB-Int	N	ANC1	ANC2	ANC3
Low (3-6)	46	2.41	2.17	1.96
Moderate (7-10)	88	2.81	2.82	2.72
High (11-16)	48	3.23	3.17	3.15
Total	182	2.82	2.75	2.64

For each group, there is a positive correlation between Facebook intensity and the negative effects on students' work. For the last two items, the differences are larger between the first and the second group showing that even moderate Facebook use is affecting the concentration at university and the university work.

A one-way ANOVA (2, 179, 181) showed that differences are statistically significant for all items: ANC1 ( $F=2.437$ ,  $p=0.090$ ), ANC2 ( $F=4.036$ ,  $p=0.019$ ), and ANC3 ( $F=5.747$ ,  $p=0.004$ ).

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The study contributes to the analysis of the negative effects of Facebook on university students' work with an approach based on group comparison. A summated scale for the Facebook intensity of use has been proposed, by integrating three variables: the number of Facebook friends, the number of daily logs, and the time spent daily. Three Facebook user profiles have been defined based on the intensity of use: low, moderate, and high Facebook intensity.

The results confirm the findings of a previous study on the negative effects of excessive Facebook use on the Romanian university students' work (Gorghiu et al., 2016). For the whole sample, the items measuring the negative effects have an average magnitude below 3 on a 7-points Likert scale, which means a low to moderate negative effect of the Facebook intensity on the university work.

One of the main concerns remains the important amount of time which is spent by the students on surfing the Facebook. In this respect, it is necessary to separate the time dedicated for academic purposes, in opposition to that time in which the students are immersed in non-academic activities - the excessive use is materialized in spending time on looking at friends' images and commenting them, watching videos, posting or discussing.

As mentioned above, a moderate usage of Facebook has negative impact on student's concentration and work. This comes in the same line described by Kirschner & Karpinski (2010), considering students' over-involvement or their obsession about the social networks, having major negative impact on their academic performance.

#### CONCLUSIONS

As an answer to the main question of this work ("*Is Facebook harmful?*"), it is clear that an excessive use of it could be really dangerous for students. Even though Facebook is attracting the interest of the educational actors now - many university students being declared themselves as big fans -, in some cases they lost their concentration and working energy for academic purposes. Without saying that the university students are possible "*Facebook victims*", it is obvious that their academic performance is negatively influenced by the excessive use of this social media site.

Of course, there are various possibilities to use social media in academic activities. Beyond that, it is extremely important for teachers, how to maximize its advantages, and minimize its negative effects (Gorghiu et al., 2016).

There are several limitations to this study. An inherent limitation is a fact that the data is based on self-reporting and issues related to dependence and negative effects on university work might be underestimated. Another limitation is related to the sample size and to the fact that it includes students from only one university. Students' perceptions of Facebook use might differ from generation to generation as well as from one university to another.

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## THE BULLYING PHENOMENON IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

**Adina NICHITA, Dumitru ENACHE, Rebecca-Eunice PELMUȘ,**

<sup>1</sup>MSc, Faculty of Environmental Engineering and Food Science, Valahia University of Târgoviște, <sup>2</sup>MSc, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Electronics and Information Technology, Valahia University of Târgoviște, <sup>3</sup>MSc, Faculty of Sciences and Arts, Valahia University of Târgoviște,  
Romania.

E-mail: <sup>1</sup>nichitaadina79@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup>ing.dumitru.enache@gmail.com,  
<sup>3</sup>rebecutza2014@yahoo.com

### ABSTRACT

*Bullying represents a phenomenon that manifests itself in most schools around the world, and in recent years has received increased attention from teachers, educational policymakers, and other people involved in education. The approach to bullying has become a topic of global interest, especially by understanding its significance, ways of manifestation, but also methods to prevent and combat or reduce it. This paper focuses on the comparative analysis between two European countries, Italy and Romania, which are ranked second and third in Europe on the phenomenon of bullying in schools. The paper includes theoretical notions about this phenomenon, figures taken from studies conducted in Italy and Romania on the phenomenon of bullying, a comparison between the two countries, statistics based on a questionnaire administered to a sample of students in Dâmbovița County - Romania, such as and proposing measures to prevent and combat or reduce the phenomenon, depending on the hypotheses of the study and the results obtained from the application of the questionnaire. The purpose of the investigation is to obtain a clear presentation of bullying, to highlight the situation that both education systems are going through, to obtain feedback from the questionnaire applied to a sample of students and to identify and propose concrete ways, to prevent, reduce and combat bullying in the school environment, in order to increase the quality of education.*

**Keywords:** *aggressor; victim; bullying; types of aggression; prevention; mitigation; combating actions;*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a form of violent and intentional social behavior, of a physical and/or psychological nature, repeated over time, which may seem discouraging to people who are victims, considered easy targets or unable to defend themselves. The term bullying is intended to define an aggressive, repeated behavior towards people who cannot defend themselves and who become victims of the aggressive person. Usually, the roles in bullying are well defined: on the one hand, the aggressor, who has a violent physical or psychological behavior, and on the other hand, the victim, who is subjected to the aggressive behavior.

In general, the phenomenon of bullying in school is “*a category of aggressive behavior that involves an imbalance of power, the aggressive act being repetitive*” (Olweus, 1991;

Smith, & Thompson, 1991), but also it is “*a deliberate, repetitive act that involves negative actions against others, performed by a group of people or a person who has a social status superior to the victim(s)*” (Olweus, 1993).

Psychological suffering and social exclusion are the most common feelings in children, they do not want to find themselves in the situation of laying the role of the victim, who is repeatedly subjected to be humiliated by the aggressor. The main characteristics that allow us to define a situation with the label of “*bullying*” are: the aggressive behaviors manifested intentionally, the aggressive actions in a systematic way - physical or psychological -, which can lead to acts of persecution. So, an action is not enough to be able to impose the bullying situation, but the power asymmetry between the victim and his persecutor is recorded. Bullying represents a serious and common problem in the Italian and Romanian schools, but also in many other schools from Europe.

The aggressor's motivations can be different: the need to dominate, the feeling of superiority, the desire to become the group leader, jealousy, defending the honor of the family, the desire to form a close circle, the possibility of being a victim. Practically, bullying can be defined as “*an intentional, malicious form of proactive aggression. It differs from other types of violent behavior, is repetitive and is characterized by a real or perceived imbalance of power, in which the victim is defenseless.*” (Arseneault, Bowes, & Shakoor, 2010).

The victims deny the events, minimize them, especially due to the fear, making it difficult to identify the aggressor. The victim is poorly motivated, has low self-esteem, is discouraged from school, is afraid, has somatic disorders such as stomach pain, anxiety, decreased school performance. They tend to isolate themselves, not understanding why such things happen. Usually, they do not share the problem, they tell after a while when there are serious consequences on self-esteem and they do it because it is not easy to hide the consequences. More, the victims talk to their best friends, few of them talk to their parents or teachers.

In some cases, victims directly express suffering (especially to parents), or through inappropriate behavior (irritation, anxiety, aggression, self-harm, destruction of objects, dropping out of school). Some victims accept the treatments of the psychologist/psychiatrist, others refuse to benefit from out-of-school treatments. Sometimes the victims do not return to school.

Students who watch what happens without helping the victim are usually classmates who pretend not to notice and are not willing to talk. Generally, those people do nothing, especially for the fear that they may be victims.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. General notions

Nowadays, bullying represents a phenomenon that worries many European countries and beyond. As an example, in Italy, surveys indicate that one of two children is a victim of bullying. The age with the highest risk is between 11 and 17 years, even the most critical period is between 11 and 13 years: at first, insults, mocking words, followed by ridicule on the physical appearance, and according to the *ISTAT study*, in four out of ten cases, beatings, kicks, and punches. (Redazione Salute, April 2018)

## 2.2. Several causes of the bullying phenomenon

The underlying causes of bullying are multiple and take into account several individual factors and group dynamics such as the child's temperament, family patterns, stereotypes imposed by the media, or education shared by parents and schools. The motivations that can lead to cases of bullying can be multiple:

- lack of rules: in places where the rules are not followed.
- lack of supervision: the saying "*when the cat is not at home, the mice play on the table*" is valid.
- social boredom: lack of stimuli, dissatisfaction, monotony - can sometimes push children to find stimuli in negative behaviors.
- attraction of power and superiority of the aggressor: the desire for power is old history, everyone wants to be leader, to be important, to be in the front line. Whoever is a follower of this idea does not stop in front of anyone, using any means by which can dominate.
- pleasure of dominating - to dominate someone else, forcing, humiliating, pleasing to put a person in a condition of inferiority. People who have these sick feelings perform inappropriate actions and behaviors.
- belonging to the group of people or alliances of people - sometimes the alliance of people can be very dangerous. Even a person who behaves normally, if he allies himself with a group of *alliances of people*, can commit actions that he would not normally do.
- envy - some people would do their best to turn a situation to their advantage.
- antipathy towards certain people - often trying to find in bullying particular motivations, instead it is nothing more than simple antipathy (showing a hostile attitude and behavior towards him/her, of social exclusion).
- intolerance of difference - one of the most common motivations in bullying is intolerance of who is perceived as different, without the victim doing anything wrong, just for the simple fact that he/she is different: e.g. homosexual, foreign (not necessarily as a nationality, but also as a county, region, north and south, skin color, disability, belonging to a different culture or religion etc.). Usually, those attitudes are exacerbated by dangerous positions such as those related to the religion of different categories, homosexuality, emigrants, they have a different culture. Most of the time intolerances are born in the family.
- feeling great - many teenagers want to prove that they are older than they really are and often do to feel like their older colleagues... And what is the best way to prove if not by force? To show others that they are brave, strong, careless, even if it means beating a weaker colleague to prove that he/she is a leader.
- physical strength - being aware of one's physical strength does not mean that one can do what he/she wants.
- sensitivity and fear of the victim - it seems a paradox, but if a child is strong and confident, he/she does not risk being intimidated. The fact of being sensitive, fearful, inconstant can determine the arrogance of the aggressor.
- lack of maturity, responsibility, and morality of the aggressor - the aggressor does not demonstrate morality, then how could he/she respect others or the victim in particular?

- pleasure of making others suffer - some teenagers feel pleasure in seeing that another person is suffering, they take pleasure in seeing that the other has lost, they sometimes enjoy even without limit.
- inadequate family education styles - many education styles can be a source of discomfort and / or inappropriate behavior.

The children of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have higher and higher demands. We can often hear: “*My child must have everything I didn't have!*” - a tablet at 6 years old, a car at 18 years old, SUV at 20 years old etc. When they do not get what they want, they start crying, screaming, kicking and kicking their parents, grandparents etc. How can a child who uses violence to get what he wants, even with adults, role models, not use violence with colleagues when they fail to get what they want? To find reliable solutions we need to ask ourselves some questions, like: “*What is bullying?*”, or “*What are the causes of bullying?*”, or “*And how can we correct it?*”.

Bullying represents a form of repression by children, which can cause inconvenience to other more sensitive, weak, victimized children who do not know how to defend themselves. The victim is usually humiliated, intimidated. The aggressor’s behavior begins by injuring the victim, both verbally and physically. After the victim is humiliated, he/she is no longer the person he/she was before this event: the child refuses to go at school, to avoid other abuses, feels guilty because he/she attracts negative behaviors, loses self-esteem, security and self-confidence.

An important cause is the lack of support from teachers and parents. Also, nowadays, for example, certain violent video games encourage aggressive behavior and subtly induce children to bully, to act aggressively. As an example, in Italy, the Ministry of Education does not recommend the purchase of such videogames that contain scenes of violence, conditioning certain young people who are already prone to violence. Injury to the victim’s self-esteem is metabolized over time and can cause the person to experience a great disregard for school, to such an extent that the victim can also become an aggressor. As we have seen, the causes and factors that can cause acts of bullying are multiple. Possible solutions to put an end to the inappropriate behavior of the aggressor can be:

- communicate to teachers and parents what is happening;
- encourage the students who saw what the aggressor was doing to speak out;
- encourage the abused student, to speak out action performed by the parents;

The first efficient answer lies in the way of educational operation of the adult, the teachers having the duty to collaborate, but also to cooperate with the students’ families, to intervene with the same firmness on small and large aggressions.

Those for whom this educational intervention is intended are not only the aggressor and the victim, but also the whole class group, including those who take a neutral position trying not to be involved (spectators).

### 2.3. Statistics from Italy

A close connection between family, school, institutions and strong supervision on social media, was the proposal of the Ministry of Health, through Beatrice Lorenzin, as an opposition to the phenomenon: “... *We must raise awareness of both children and parents on bullying acquis. We need to work on respect for ourselves, respect for others, and respect for the rules.*”

This issue is by no means negligible. ISTAT data (Redazione Salute, April 2018) found that in 2014, more than 50% of children aged 11 to 17 had certain offensive behaviors,

both verbal and physical, from other colleagues during the school year. The percentage is higher of children aged 11 to 13 years, approximately (22.5%), adolescents aged 14 to 17 years have constantly suffered offensive, humiliating, and violent behaviors (17.9%). The victims of the bullying phenomenon are mainly girls (20.9%), followed by boys (18.8%). Instead, the most numerous victims are in high schools (19.4%), followed by vocational schools (18.1%) and technical institutions (16%). There are also differences between the northern and southern regions of Italy: the phenomenon is more widespread in the northern regions of the country, 23% targeting children aged 11-17; the percentage exceeding 57% in cases of bullying that come regularly.

According to the same study, the most common violence is represented by insults (12.1%), slander, derision of physical appearance or manner of speaking (6.3%), denigration (5.1%), exclusion for their own opinions (4,7%), aggression with pushing, beating, kicking and punching (3.8%). The phenomenon persists and refers not only to classmates but also to violence and threats against teachers. The data speaks for itself: in Italy, there is on average a case of bullying every day. This figure is given by the emergency calls of the Blue Phone in 2017. 10% of the requests for help were addressed to the Association that deals with bullying - 46% come from northern Italy, followed by southern Italy and the island of Sardinia with 31% and 23% respectively. The latest data indicate that students' aggression against their teachers is commonplace.

In fact, based on what about seven thousand middle school and high school students told *Skuola.net*, the phenomenon is less serious than previously thought. Only 7% of students stated that they witnessed an aggressive reaction of a colleague to the teacher. We are talking about a ratio of 1:20. In most cases, there is talk of verbal aggression: 55% of those interviewed reported that the aggressor was limited to insults. In more than a quarter of those incidents (36%), the student resorted to violence, raising his/her hand to the teacher; in absolute terms, this is translated into few episodes of this type. 354 teenagers were victims of aggression in 2017. It is a problem that has not been given due attention, and now attempts are being made to remedy it.

The data collected by *Skuola.net* and the *National Surveillance* are: 28% among high school students are victims of bullying and the percentage is 30% for middle school students. The percentage is increasing compared to 2016 when the percentage was 20%. Only 1.8% of the victims are persecuted online, the vast majority suffering violence, humiliation every day. The consequences of this violence lead to depression (75% victims), crying crises (54%), acts of self-aggression (32%), and suicide (46%). A percentage that scares and invites us to reflect on this phenomenon, realizing that the research subjects represent adolescents aged between 11-18 years.

The data of the *National Center for Listening to the Blue Telephone*, in Italy, concerning the school year 2015-2016, highlighted the following (S.O.S. Il Telefono Azzurro Onlus, 2016):

- in the 2015-2016 school year, the Blue Telephone took over on average one case per day of bullying and cyberbullying episodes, based on the 19696 and chat phone lines. In total, the cases taken over were 270 (the total number of cases taken over by the Association was 13%, a higher percentage than that between February-July 2015, which was 10.3%);
- from the 270 cases taken over, 62% concerned requests for assistance regarding bullying, and 10% were requests for assistance concerning cyberbullying;

- more than half of the reported cyberbullying cases came from northern Italy, in 56.5%;
- mainly, the victims of bullying are students (89.5%), more than one girl in 6 is the victim of cyberbullying (16.7%);
- the age of victims decreases: there is an increase in victims among young children, even 5 years old (22% of cases);
- the requests for help in cases of episodes of cyberbullying start with high school and continue with adolescence (1 from 2 requests involve adolescents);
- the prevalence of victims of Italian nationality is reconfirmed (data around 85% of cases);
- the aggressors are generally boys, in about 60% of cases;
- most episodes of bullying and cyberbullying occur in schools (82%) and online (7%).

With the introduction of Law no. 71 (May 29, 2017), and its publication in the *Italian Official Gazette* (17.07.2017), the Parliament approved new provisions on the protection of children who are victims of cyberbullying.

The objective of this law is to combat this phenomenon, by adopting preventive actions and punishing those responsible. This law allows the condemnation of acts of bullying, acts of defamation broadcast online that violate privacy. (Open Your Wings, 2018)

#### 2.4. Statistics from Romania

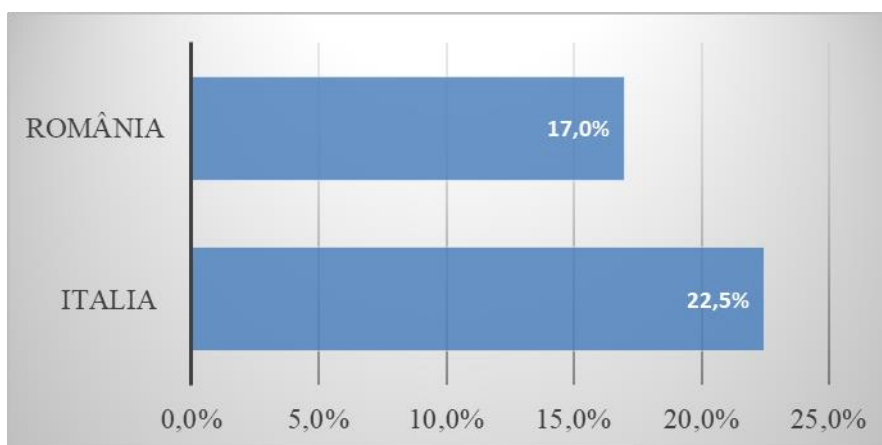
A study conducted by *Save the Children Romania*, made in 2016, related to the situation of the bullying phenomenon in the Romanian school environment, highlighted the following aspects:

- 2 out of 10 children reported co-deaths of exclusion from a group by other students, so 31% of students said they were declared excluded from group activities, and another 23% received the promise of exclusion from the group.
- the cases of the humiliation of students in front of others are presented with a percentage of 23%, while 37% of students who endured negative words spread in the school.
- in situations of physical bullying, the data show that 13% of students had the destruction of property by other students, 30% of students said that they were repeatedly hit by students at school, in the situation of assisting a case of bullying, 78% of students highlighted this fact.
- 68% of cyberbullying cases are reported, most of which take place on social networks.

In the same study, it is mentioned the research conducted by the *World Health Organization (WHO)*, where the results illustrated the situation of children of different ages, so the first category is that of 11-year-olds who assaulted other students several times in the previous month with a percentage of 17%, for children who are older, respectively 13 years and 15 years, being 23% - it results in a difference of 6% between those two percentages. The data processed for this situation - provided by the *Ministry of National Education* - for the 2014-2015 school year, indicated 18,783 cases of violence, at the national level.

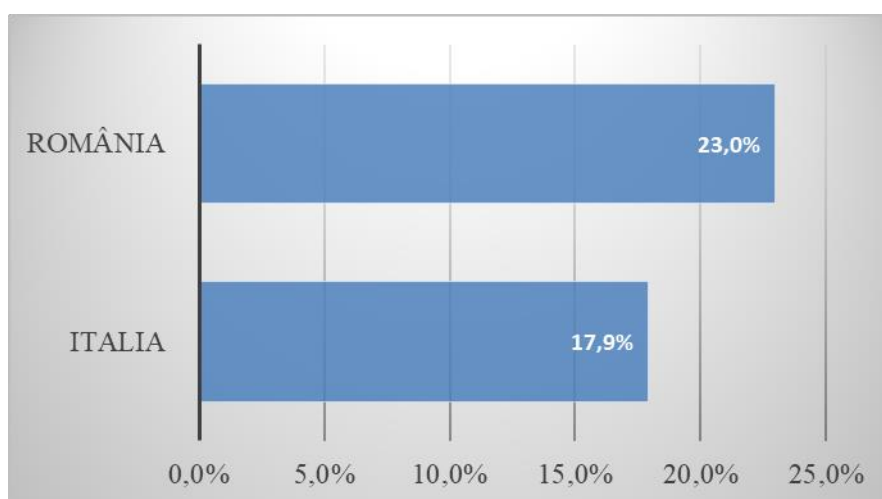
### 2.5. A parallel between Romania and Italy

Presenting the situation in Italy - extracted from the *ISTAT* study - and the situation in Romania - described by the *Save the Children Romania* study -, a comparison was interested to be made, concerning the situations recorded in both countries. In this respect, figures 1 and 2 offer an image of the incidence of bullying on two age ranges, respectively range 11-13 years old and range 14-17 years old.



*Fig. 1. A comparison between Romania and Italy, related to the bullying phenomenon recorded for the range 11-13 years old*

Figure 1 illustrates the percentages of bullying existence in the age range 11-13 years old, in Italy and Romania. It is visible that Romania is situated under Italy, at a difference of 5.5%. The children had certain offensive behaviors, both verbal and physical, from other colleagues, during the school year.



*Fig. 2. A comparison between Romania and Italy, related to the bullying phenomenon recorded for the range 14-17 years old*

Figure 2 illustrates the percentages of bullying existence in the age range 14-17 years old, in Italy and Romania. In this case, Romania is situated over Italy, at a difference of 5.1%. The adolescents had constantly suffered offensive, humiliating, and violent behavior from other colleagues during the school year.

### 3. THE MICRO-RESEARCH

#### 3.1. Proposed hypotheses

We investigated how the bullying phenomenon is manifested, at the level of several school units from Dâmbovița County, Romania, advancing the following hypotheses:

- *if frequent situations of bullying are identified at the level of the school institution, then it is efficient to design and implement strategies to combat or reduce the phenomenon.*

- *if isolated situations of bullying are identified at the level of the school institution, then it is efficient to design and implement mainly strategies to prevent the phenomenon.*

For research, a survey based on the questionnaire was used. The sample under investigation was composed of 92 people from several schools (middle school and high school) from Dâmbovița County, Romania, between November - December 2019. The purpose of the questionnaire was to identify, in percentages (%), the cases of bullying, and to find places where the victims are assaulted. This can lead to propose necessary measures to prevent or fade the bullying phenomenon.

The measures are not be taken at random, but only after prior analysis of the data, by the teachers who are members in the *School Board*, following the development of the programs that aim to prevent the bullying phenomenon.

The questionnaires were directed to students, in the classrooms, at the same time. The teachers coordinated the process of questioning and collaborated on explaining to students the importance of honestly completing. The role of the questionnaire was to highlight the current situation in schools, by asking six questions to students of different classes.

Highlighting students' knowledge about the bullying phenomenon was introduced by the first question. Here, the students must check if they know what does bullying means, or if this is a term unknown to them.

Question number two was addressed in order to highlight the percentage of students who have had and have not had acts of bullying in the last 30 days.

The periodicity in which the bullying phenomenon manifests itself was deduced from the answer to question number three - by ticking a single variant, the students present the frequency of occurrence of the cases of aggression on them.

When the phenomenon manifests itself, it was important to know the type of behavior that manifests itself - it differs from insults to physical aggression, this fact being established with the help of the question number four.

Question number five determined - in percentage - the places where psychological, verbal, and physical aggression took place.

The last question is comprehensive for people who have witnessed various acts of bullying in school, thus highlighting a category of people who have witnessed or not those acts of harassment.



### 3.2. Results

The results are concentrated in Table 1.

*Table 1. Centralization of students' feedback concerning the bullying phenomenon*

No.	Question	Answer variants	Percentage
1	What do you think that bullying is?	a) A random quarrel between colleagues	0%
		b) Insults, offense, denigration, derision of physical appearance, violence, which happened intentionally and frequently	100%
2	Have you had verbal or physical aggression in the last 30 days?	a) Yes	33%
		b) No	67%
3	How often do you get assaulted?	a) Daily	0%
		b) Weekly	7%
		c) Monthly	18%
		d) It does not happen to me	75%
4	What aggressive behaviors have you suffered?	a) Swearing, insults, humiliation, ridicule of physical appearance etc.	31%
		b) Fists, palms, kicks, pushes etc.	6%
		c) It does not happen to me	63%
5	Where do those aggressions take place?	a) In the schoolyard	27%
		b) In classes	21%
		c) On school halls, in breaks	30%
		d) In parks	22%
6	Have you ever been present at such episodes in your school?	a) Yes	72%
		b) No	28%

### 3.3. Discussion

Following the application of the questionnaire, it was highlighted that the phenomenon of bullying is alive in schools, therefore it can be considered that both hypotheses mentioned before were met. It is obvious that preventing and combating/reducing the bullying phenomenon is strongly necessary.

Bullying prevention activities can be designed as teaching strategies or curricular activities, which target certain educational and cognitive objectives, mostly on how such activities are carried out promote positive relationships and the development of pro-social skills. The organization of those activities is very important, as may involve a class of children or more, being proposed during the school year, when deemed necessary.

The teaching materials can be created starting from an explanation of bullying phenomenon, enriched with the experience of teachers in their classes, or exploiting the teachers' knowledge gained in dedicated training courses. Here the example of Italian teachers is relevant, as they participated in training courses organized by the *Blue Telephone Association*.

Special attention has to be paid to victims, by raising the attention of potentially positive colleagues, who often remain indifferent, acting in parallel with the aggressor as passive supporters or neutral observers. Some people are not directly involved, but - through the attitude of indifference - favor the perpetuation of the phenomenon: they are the silent majority who even if they do not approve the aggression, they tolerate it and do not intervene in the defense of the victim.

The objectives of such activities target on valuing the students as “*exchange agents*”, using the positive resources of the class and the natural abilities of children to feel compassion for the colleagues in difficulty. It is important to discourage the aggressor and the fact that there are no spectators to applaud, but they are all in the defense of the victim.

Here are also some examples of proposed activities designed for the prevention of bullying:

1. “*Friendship bracelet*”

Place of activity: school.

Participants: high school students and middle school students involved in this activity.

Description of the activity: the students are divided into groups of two and create bracelets made of colored threads, sealing the friendship. They discuss their recent experiences and highlight positive behaviors and attitudes. The extent to which the activity helps to increase the sense of security in the school is discussed.

Responsible: collaborators.

Beneficiaries: students.

Assessment methods: discussion on how the students felt when they stayed to work together, what difficulties they encountered and how they were helped.

2. “*Adoption experiment*”

Place of activity: school.

Participants: high school and middle school students involved in the activity.

Description of the activity: In order to diminish the bullying phenomenon in school, “old” students - from grades IX-XII - become “older brothers and/or sisters” for their younger fellows. The “old” students assume responsibilities: counselors, guidance, unconditional support, encouragement. They are models for “younger siblings” throughout the school year. Friendship is sealed by making a symbol, in practical applications. The “older siblings” assume their collective commitment through an oath, in front of the teachers. The aim is to identify bullying, types of violence in school, and to discuss measures to prevent the phenomenon.

Assessment methods: questionnaire.

3. “*Words that hurt*”

Place of activity: school.

Participants: middle school and high school students.

Materials needed: Adhesive tape, sticky sheets, pens, or pencils.

Description of the activity: stickers and pencils are distributed to the students. Students are asked to write on the sticky sheets the rude and abusive comments, nicknames, insults they have heard about other students (without indicating or writing the student’s name). The adhesive tape is placed on the classroom floor and the following grid/ladder is marked: light jokes or teasing, humiliating jokes, painful insults, very painful insults. Students complete those sheets without talking to each other, and each student sticks them on the adhesive tape next to the ladder/grid considered most appropriate.

Many of the words are repeated and placed on the scale or gradation in different positions. After placing the students in the bench and gluing all the sheets, they are asked to carefully observe the graduated tape. It is reflected, guiding the discussion with the students, to the following questions:

- Have you seen words of the same type in several positions on the scale/gradation?
- Why do you think that some of you considered a word less offensive while others see the same word as painful or humiliating?
- Does it matter who uses the word and how - or in what context - is used?
- Why are such words used?
- Are there words that are used only for girls and others only for boys?
- What are the most insulting words, and in what category do they fall (girls/boys)?

The teacher, in this case, has to explain why the same word is more offensive or insulting, explain that it depends a lot on the context in which it is said, how it is expressed, the intention which is said, the tone which is pronounced, the facial expression, the influence on how the word is perceived, good or bad.

Identifying the case and the aggressor in class is particularly important, and the adult attitude towards the highlighted phenomenon consists of developing intervention programs and continuous monitoring over time. There must also be a close collaboration of all those responsible for well-being: children (teachers, parents, psychologist, school-staff etc.). In the case of adolescents, they are already trained, and if they have aggressive verbal and physical behaviors, the chances of a teacher or expert succeeding in changing the situation are quite low, or at least one can try an incisive intervention in training.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Any objective proposed for combating or reducing bullying, after the identification of a case, has to target on emphasizing the support of collaborative behaviors between students and school. As long as there is collaboration, there is a common interest.

Creating a collaborative class is not an easy task, as it requires high energy consumption, and difficulties can be encountered in order to achieve such objective because it is not enough to bring several students together, but it is also necessary to create an atmosphere of collaboration. Encouraging collaboration allows changing hostile attitudes that exist in the classroom, helping reduce difficulties in studying and integrating students with problems (aggressor and victim).

However, due to the magnitude of the bullying phenomenon, it is necessary to develop a legislative framework to prohibit bullying in schools, and according to its provisions, any behavior that consists of psychological violence must be prohibited.

An important measure to combat this phenomenon can be the training of teachers, in training sessions concerning psychological violence. More, a proper solution is represented by the installation of surveillance cameras in schools and/or the permanent presence of surveillance staff.

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**BOOK REVIEW,**  
**FORMATIVE AND EVALUATIVE VALENCES OF THE  
PORTFOLIO IN PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS TRAINING,**  
(author) **Crisanta-Alina MAZILESCU**  
(**Valențe formative și evaluative ale portofoliului în formarea  
viitorilor profesori, Editura Eurostampa, Timișoara, 2019**)

**Ana-Maria Aurelia PETRESCU,**  
Teacher Training Department, Valahia University Targoviste  
Romania.  
E-mail: [anapetrescu2007@yahoo.com](mailto:anapetrescu2007@yahoo.com)

In this volume, Mrs. Crisanta-Alina MAZILESCU, Professor PhD at the Teacher Training Department, Politehnica University of Timișoara, approaches from a double perspective - theoretical and methodological -, a modern/alternative method of teaching and evaluation, namely *the portfolio*. Thus, the author appreciates from the introduction that “*one of the pedagogical devices that leaves the student autonomous, and allows the teacher to guide and accompany him/her in the study, and finally to evaluate him/her, is the portfolio*” (Mazilescu, 2019, page 11).

Moreover, in the context of the book, the author aims to highlight the formative and evaluative role of the portfolio, in the acquisition of teaching knowledge, by students who want to become teachers.

As a structure, the book is organized in three parts, each with numerous chapters and subchapters, to which are added the annexes and bibliographic references.

The first part, entitled *the Portfolio*, begins with an introduction, with an argument, and continues with the definition, classification, and characterization of the portfolio, the identification of its formative and evaluative valences. This part concludes with the description, in a detailed manner, of the specific elements regarding the elaboration and content of the portfolio, considering specific disciplines as *Didactics* of various specializations.

In the context of the second part, *Useful theory in the elaboration of the portfolio*, the author starts from the identification of the basic competencies necessary for the exercise of the teaching profession and analyzes the training needs for a didactic career.

In this respect, special attention is paid to the design of training situations/activities, implementation of training activities and their evaluation. The chapter ends with the sequential description of the approach to be taken for the correct construction of a knowledge assessment tool.

The third part, entitled as suggestive as possible: *Conceptual maps in pedagogy and didactics*, includes 65 logical schemes (*concept maps*), useful for the psycho-pedagogical and methodical training of those who are preparing for the teaching career.

According to the author, each of those conceptual maps constitutes “a *notional network that allows the schematization of a set of knowledge or concepts found in a relationship*” (Mazilescu, 2019, page 111).

We cannot conclude without noticing the operational and practical value of this work, the examples presented by the author, from the perspective of her vast experience as a teacher, having a fundamental role in understanding the addressed issues.

We also appreciate the high-quality graphics, images, and numerous tables used to help the prospective teacher to understand better the content, being extremely useful in making the whole book easier to be read.

In conclusion, it can be said that the volume exploits productively the valuable expertise of the author in the field of Didactics, and vast documentation (over 60 selected bibliographic sources from international and Romanian literature), being elaborated clearly and coherently, certainly representing a valuable work for the field of Educational Sciences in general, and Didactics, in particular.

The book entitled *Formative and evaluative valences of the portfolio in prospective teachers training* represents a useful and necessary tool, both for the psycho-pedagogical training of bachelor and master students, who want to embrace a teaching career, but also for teachers of different specializations, in various stages of their continuous professional development.

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