COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE LEVEL OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE OF INTERESTS BETWEEN PREUNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY LEVELS

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ABSTRACT

In the last decades, the evolution of society imposed an increase in the degree of intellectualization of work activities and thus, we considered that the process of building a career starts with education in school, education which allows a person to accomplish a relatively constant occupational profile at the end of studies, for the entire active life.The hereby article is intended to present the results of a research whose general objective was to highlight the outstanding importance of early detection of interests and their determining role in drawing the educational/university path in accomplishing a successful career.The specific objectives consider the identification of significant differences regarding the vocational interests of the participants in the study, the analysis of compatibility between the vocational interests identified and the school/university profile chosen and highlighting the degree of maturation of the interests that have a decisional role in choosing an educational and professional path.

Keywords: vocational interests, career, school profile, academic guidance

INTRODUCTION

The central role of interests in choosing the school/university profile and implicitly of a career is highlighted by analyzing the influence each piece of information about itself is implied in this choice as well as analyzing the congruence between interests, values, skills and traits of personality(Pomozan, Sava, Petcu, 2010).

Affectiveness, anchoring, thinking and behavior of individuals are traits of personality which quickly analyzed would represent the determining variables in choosing a career. Still, persons with similar personality traits can have performances in different domains of activity as well as different traits of personality determine similar performances within a domain of activity. In fact, personality traits are an important criterion in choosing the work environment and not the occupation.

Personal values are within the main factors in choosing the school/university profile (Lemeni, Miclea,2010). This choice shall be done function of the way the educational/occupational area shall promote the personal values. Academic satisfaction shall be realized only if individual values meet

individual interests.

Preferences for certain domains or activity, established in time, determine the building of vocational interests. Cultivation of interests together with the improvement of competences and skills in a certain activity or domain determines the building and consolidation of aptitudes. Success and performance in a domain are achieved only if aptitudes support the interest for the respective domain or activity.

For this, choosing the adequate educational path must be done function of the correlation between interests and aptitudes, a significant correlation meaning success in the educational and vocational future of the individual.

In case interests in a domain or activity are not supported by specific skills, performance can not be achieved even if the efforts correspondingly grow in order to compensate for this lack of concordance

General Objective

The main objective of the hereby research is to highlight the importance of early revealing of interests and their determining role in drawing the school/university path for realizing a success career.

Specific Objectives

Specific objectives leading to the achievement of the general objective are as follows:

1.   Identifying significant differences in the vocational interests of the individuals participating in the study;

2.   Analysis of the compatibility between the identified vocational interests and the chosen school/university profile.

Hypothesis of Research:

1.   It is assumed that the vocational interests are mediated by biological gender of the subjects as variable;

2.   It is assumed that the vocational interests vary function of the chosen school/university profile;

3.   It is assumed that there are significant correlations between the pre-university profile graduated and choosing the university profile.

Research Batch:

In order to reach the objectives of the research by verifying the proposed hypotheses, we implied in the study a number of 180 subjects: 90 pupils from the XII grade of two high schools from Constanta and 90 students from university in the same town. The research batch consists of 113 female subjects and 67 male subjects, 147 from the urban area and 33, from rural area.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to assess preferences for certain activity domains, we used the Questionnaire for Interest Evaluation (QIE), elaborated by SC Cognitrom SRL Cluj(Albu, Porumb, 2009), a research tool calibrated for Romanian population.The QIE evaluates the interests of a person, meaning its materialized preferences for certain domains of knowledge or activity. These are the essential motivational factors in choosing a career and determine the degree of satisfaction and performance for the person in the activities it is implied in.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETING THE DATA:

VERIFYING HYPOTHESIS 1 - It is assumed that the vocational interests are mediated by biological gender of the subjects as variable;

Invariable descriptive analysis highlighted that the distributions for the artistic, conventional, realistic and investigative interests do not deviate from normality (Popa, 2008), for which the statistic type used is a parametric one, while for distribution of variables given by social and entrepreneur type of interests we used non-parametric tests(Popa, 2010)as these deviate from the requirements of a normal distribution.

T test onIndependent samples revealed a significant statistic difference between the averages obtained by female subjects and male subjects in what concerns their attraction for artistic domains, showing that women are more attracted by this domain compared to men: ($t=5,20$, $df=178$, $p <.001$).

In what concerns the Conventional type of interests, the t test on independent samples revealed a significant statistic difference between variable averages function of the biological gender, ($t=-2,01$, $df=178$, $p < 0,05$), showing that men are more attracted in this domain than women.

Realistic type of interests recorded significantly higher scores in men compared to women, t test on independent samples revealing a difference between the averages of the two batches of$t=-2,726$, $df=178$, $p < .01$) compared to female scores ($M=8,01$ $AS= 4,748$).

Investigative type interests were preferred by women and less by men. As a result, t test on independent samples highlighted a significant high value in the statistic threshold ($t=-2,30$, $df=178$, $p < 0,05$).

Mann Whitney U test shows that the scores for Social type interests are significantly higher in female subjects. Thus, the value of range averages are significantly different in the statistic threshold ($U=2345,5$, $p < 0,001$)

For the Entrepreneur type of interests, Mann Whitney Unon-parametric test showed significant differences between the range averages obtained by the two batches of subjects, revealing that men are more attracted in these domains than women($U=2884$, $p < 0,01$).

In conclusion, for the 180 subjects of the research, the scores recorded for vocational interests showed significant differences function of the gender of the subjects.

For the 113 female subjects, there were significantly higher scores recorded for the Artistic, Social and Investigative types of interests, while for the 67 male subjects, there were significantly higher

scores recorded for the Conventional, Realistic and Entrepreneur type of interests.

Following these results it can be said that the null hypothesis was rejected.

VERIFYING HYPOTHESIS2 - It is assumed that the vocational interests vary function of the chosen school/university profile.

For normal distribution interests (artistic, conventional, realistic, investigative types)- with the ANOVA variable analysisfor independent samples.For interests whose distributions deviate from normality (social an entrepreneur type) non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test shall be used.

After applying *one wayANOVA,* the dataindicate that there are significant differences at general level for the Artistic type between the subjects coming from the six specializations (mathematics and information technology, food industry, natural sciences, psychology, law, economics), $F_{5,174} = 4,61$, $p < .001$). After applying the Bonferroni test, there were significant differences resulted from analyzing the Artistic type of interests in subjects studying Psychology and those studying Food Industry and Natural Sciences, as well as between the Law students and Food Industry students.

In what concerns the Conventional type interests, the*one way ANOVA test* indicates that there are significant differences at general level between the subjects studying the six specializations ($F_{5,174} = 5,90$, $p< .001$). After applying the Bonferroni test, there were significant differences observed between the averages obtained by the subjects studying Economics and those studying Food Industry, Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Information Technology and Psychology.

Aplying the*one wayANOVA*test highlighted significant differences in Realistic ype of interests between the subjects coming from the six specializations ($F_{5,174} = 3,87$, $p< .01$).After applying the Bonferroni test,there were significant differences observed in the averages obtained by the subjects of the research studying Natural Sciences and those studying Law and Economics.

Significant results were obtained by applying the *one wayANOVA*test also for the Investigative type of interests ($F_{5,174} = 7,07$, $p< .001$).the subjects implied in the research indicated differentlytheir preferences for domains of activity, function of their specialization, at a global level. After applying the Bonferroni test, significant differences were recorded between the subjects studying Psychology and those studyingMathematics and Information Technology, Natural Sciences and Food Industry, between the Law students and those studying Food Industry and between those studying Mathematics and Information Technology and Food Industry.

After applying the Kruskal Wallis test, the results showed significant differences at a general level in what concerns the Entrepreneur type interests between the subjects coming from the six specializations ($\chi^2= 18,25$, df=5, $p < .01$). In order to find out which of the six groups differs significantly, we applied theMann Whitney U test. Significant differences revealed between the subjects studying Mathematics and Information Technology and those studying Food Industry and Psychology, between those studying Food Industry and those in Economics and Law, between subjects from Natural Sciences specialization and those from Psychology and between those in Psychology and those studying Law and Economic Sciences.

In what concerns the attraction for the Social type of interests, the Kruskal Wallistest showed significant differences between the subjects from the six specializations ($\chi^2= 47,05$, df=5, $p = 0,001$). In order to find out which of the six groups differs significantly, we applied the U Mann Whitney test. Significant differences resulted between the subjects studying Mathematics and Information Technology and those studying Psychology, Law and Economics, between the subjects studying in Food Industry and those studying Psychology, Economics and Law and between the students from Natural Sciences and those from Psychology, Law and Economics.

In conclusion, for the 180 subjects of the research, the scores recorded for vocational interests showed significant differences function of theschool/university profile chosen.

Following these results it can be said that the null hypothesis was rejected.

VERIFYING HYPOTHESIS 3 - It is assumed that there are significant correlations between the pre-university profile graduated and choosing the university profile.

This hypothesis shall be verified with theChi-Square test. Following the analysis done, the desire to continue the studies in the specialization of the high school was evidentiated only for 4 subjects for Mathematics and Information Technology specialization, for 2 subjects from the Food Industry and for 8 subjects studying Natural Sciences. At university level, only 6 subjects from Psychology, 6 subjects from Law and 13 subjects from Accountability continued their studies in the same direction after graduating the high school. Thus, at high school level, only 6 out of 90 subjects desire to continue their studies in the specialization of the high school and at university level, 25 subjects continued their studies in the specialization of the high school they graduated from. The results obtained showed the existance of a significant differencebetween the subjects that choose to continue the specialization they graduated from pre-university with university and those that choose a different university profile (χ^2 = 23,57, df = 5, p< .001) thus showing that the null hypothesis is rejected.

CONCLUSION

The verification of the three hypotheses was meant to highlight the important role of school guidance on the decision to draw up a certain educational path. The quasi-experimental research explorative method and the scientific validated tool had a buffer effect on the subjects implied in the research, leading to an increase of their degree of self-knowledge, which shall support them in taking the right decision in what concerns their educational/professional path.

The adequate educational path must be chosen function of the correlation between interests and aptitudes, the correlation being significant; it shall determine the future educational and professional success.

In case the interests for a certain domain or activity are not supported by specific activities, performance can not be achieved even if the efforts correspondingly grow in order to compensate for this lack of concordance.

Identification of interests is of most importance as it determines the generation and selection of those educational and professional alternatives to lead to a successful career.

Choosing the school profile without knowing the interests determines the academic dissatisfaction, failure in school and profession.

The beliefs on one's capacities and skills for accomplishing the proposed objectives show the self-efficiency as perceived by each person.

Long-term individual interests are created in those domains where the level of self-efficiency is high and positive results have already been obtained. Also, the level of self-efficiency increases due to occupational interests as they determine the implication in activities where, in time, positive results are obtained.

The decision related to the school profile must be taken only when there is a strong correlation between one's interests, aptitudes, values, personality and educational offer.

This correlation leads to satisfaction and academic performance, stability in choices made and a good capacity of facing the social environment requirements.

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