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Study on Self-Awareness and Vocational Counseling of High School Students

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Abstract

Problem Statement: The term career guidance is a general term that covers a range of activities from informing, evaluating and continuing to education and career counseling. Career counseling aims to develop the skills a person / group of persons needs in solving specific career related problems such as difficulties in formulating career options, difficulties in job retention and professional development, unemployment. Career education is an educational intervention for the development of habits and skills necessary for the development and management of their careers. **Purpose of Study:** The research objectives are centered on investigation of adolescent personality types that is needed for academic and professional guidance, investigate how personal decision are made and social problem are solved as prerequisites in choosing a suitable profession, study efficiency analysis of the: psychological counseling activities, vocational and career guidance for high school students. **The methods of our research were:** the Type Finder Personality Test, based on Carl Jung's and Isabel Briggs Myers' typological approach to personality, Questionnaire about decisions making styles of students A. J. Rowe and R. O. Mason, *Managing with Style: A Guide to Understanding, Assessing, and Improving Decision Making*. **Conclusions:** A job can contribute to self-esteem and a sense of personal identity by allowing adolescents to feel they are doing something useful. They often show pride in their place of work as well as in themselves as workers. Not only are expressing the sense of industry and competence they worked and developing in middle childhood, they also are participating their future role as economically self- sufficient individuals. At the same time, by taking responsibility for showing up on time and doing the tasks they are given, they confirm their emerging status as adults. Career education is an educational intervention for the development of habits and skills necessary for the development and management of the careers.

Keywords: Teenagers, vocational counseling, personality types, types of decision-making.

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1. Introduction

The efficient activity in the contemporary social-professional environment is determined by the ability of a person to have self-awareness and self-control. The difficulties experienced by young people on their attempt to cope with everyday problems and the specific difficulties of adolescence lead to the acquisition by students of self-discovery and personal development strategies. Adolescence is an important period for development of the socially integrated self-concept. Research in developmental psychology has shown that evaluation of oneself becomes more comprehensive and differentiated during childhood and adolescence. (Brown, 2004; Gallagher, 2000). Identifying a subject personality type plays an important role in vocational guidance. The term self-awareness involves the exploration and structuring of personal characteristics (emotions, abilities, beliefs, motivations, etc.) that facilitate the construction of self-image of adolescents. Career education defines both the formation and development of an active oriented attitude toward self-awareness and personal development, and the exploration of educational and professional opportunity.

In Romania, as shown by the current literature Lemeni and Miclea (2010), are used three technical terms related to interventions for counseling and career guidance for teens:

- 1) Career guidance (academic and professional guidance)
- 2) Career counseling,
- 3) Career education

The term *career guidance* is a general term that covers a range of activities from informing, evaluating and continuing to education and career counseling. *Career counseling* aims to develop the skills a person / group of persons needs in solving specific career related problems such as difficulties in formulating career options, difficulties in job retention and professional development, unemployment. Career education is an educational intervention for the development of habits and skills necessary for the development and management of their careers.

According to Carl G. Jung's theory of psychological types [Jung, 1971], people can be characterized by their preference of general attitude: Extraverted (E) vs. Introverted (I), their preference of one of the two functions of perception: Sensing (S) vs. Intuition (N), and their preference of one of the two functions of judging: Thinking (T) vs. Feeling (F). The three areas of preferences introduced by Jung are *dichotomies* (i.e. bipolar dimensions where each pole represents a different preference). Jung also proposed that in a person one of the four above functions is dominant – either a function of perception or a function of judging. Isabel Briggs Myers, a researcher and practitioner of Jung's theory, proposed to see the judging-perceiving relationship as a fourth dichotomy influencing personality type [Briggs Myers, 1980]: Judging (J) vs. Perceiving (P). The first criterion, Extraversion – Introversion, signifies the source and direction of a person's energy expression. An extravert's source and direction of energy expression is mainly in the external world, while an introvert has a source of energy mainly in their own internal world. The second criterion, Sensing – Intuition, represents the method by which someone perceives information. Sensing means that a person mainly believes information he or she receives directly from the external world. Intuition means that a person believes mainly information he or she receives from the internal or imaginative world. The third criterion, Thinking – Feeling, represents how a person processes information. Thinking means that a person makes a decision mainly through logic. Feeling means that, as a rule, he or she makes a decision based on emotion, i.e. based on what they feel they should do. The fourth criterion, Judging – Perceiving, reflects how a person implements the information he or she has processed. Judging means that a person organizes all of his life events and, as a rule, sticks to his plans. Perceiving means that he or she is inclined to improvise and explore alternative options. All possible permutations of preferences in the 4 dichotomies above yield 16 different combinations, or personality types, representing which of the two poles in each of the four dichotomies dominates in

a person, thus defining 16 different personality types. Each personality type can be assigned a 4 letter acronym of corresponding combination of preferences:

Table 1. The 16 personality types

ESTJ	ISTJ	ENTJ	INTJ
ESTP	ISTP	ENTP	INTP
ESFJ	ISFJ	ENFJ	INFJ
ESFP	ISFP	ENFP	INFP

The first letter in the personality type acronym corresponds to the first letter of the preference of general attitude - "E" for extraversion and "I" for introversion. The second letter in the personality type acronym corresponds to the preference within the sensing-intuition dimension: "S" stands for sensing and "N" stands for intuition. The third letter in the personality type acronym corresponds to preference within the thinking-feeling pair: "T" stands for thinking and "F" stands for feeling. The fourth letter in the personality type acronym corresponds to a person's preference within the judging-perceiving pair: "J" for judging and "P" for perception. For example: ISTJ stands for Introverted, Sensing, Thinking, Judging, ENFP stands for Extraverted, intuitive, Feeling, Perceiving.

2. Experimental research

2.1 Research Objectives

- a) Investigation of adolescent personality types that is needed for academic and professional guidance,
- b) Investigate how personal decision are made and social problem are solved as prerequisites in choosing a suitable profession.
- c) Efficiency analysis of the: psychological counseling activities, vocational and career guidance for high school students.

2.2 The group of subjects

The group of subjects of the research were represented by 155 high school students aged 16 to 18 from Constanta, Tulcea and Braila selected from the 5,000 students from the South-East of Romania who participated in the project.

In the period May 2014 to November 2015 in Romania was carried out POSDRU project: Build your career step by step! - Vocational guidance and counseling for students from the Center and South-East regions, ID 132 690 project organized by DONIT Brasov in partnership with the Ovidius University, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Lower Danube University Galati, University of Medicine and Pharmacy Tirgul Mures and funded by the European Union. The project offered services / guidance and counseling activities conducted for choosing the educational route and orientation to the labor market for students in secondary education.

2.3 The research methods were

- a) The Type Finder Personality Test, based on Carl Jung's and Isabel Briggs Myers' typological approach to personality.
- b) Questionnaire about decisions making styles of students A. J. Rowe and R. O. Mason, *Managing with Style: A Guide to Understanding, Assessing, and Improving Decision Making* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987):40-41.

The project objectives were:

- 1) Identify the counseling needs of students and the types of tools and resources needed for informed, responsible and autonomous career decisions;
- 2) Planning and implementation of specialized interventions consistent with the needs and interests of students - psychological counseling, educational counseling, vocational and career guidance as appropriate;
- 3) Capturing public interest and especially of students, teachers, parents and employers about the benefits of counseling for their choice of school and professional training;
- 4) Facilitate the access of students, employers and other relevant actors to resources and information on school and professional advice with regard to labor market opportunities and career management elements;
- 5) Development of an online methodology for information and advice to students that is focused on their remote participation in advisory activities and the creation by them of resources and relevant content in a virtual environment;
- 6) Develop a long-term strategy in the field of educational and vocational counseling, involving all the stakeholders - teachers, students, employers, professionals.

In accordance with the dimensions shown above, was started from the premise that the organization of counseling is not an end in itself, but it is a purpose to achieve the project objectives, we envisage the following counseling activities, that are integrated and correlated:

a) Psychological counseling

Is used for developing self-awareness, creating a positive personal image for emotional stability, education and management of emotions, educating the competitive spirit, motivation, education, personal management of the elements for making medium and long term decisions, conflict management;

b) Educational and academic counseling

Facilitates the design of the educational route, school and career training, facilitating the transition from school to work and the transition between educational levels - middle school - high school - university; facilitate student access to resources on the entrance examination, tests to support them in evaluating educational offers and decision making; assisting students with educational / academic career management; awareness on the usefulness of university studies for career picking, knowledge and management of learning styles.

c) Career counseling and guidance

Facilitating access to resources containing relevant information about employment, qualifications, occupations, skill levels, roster of occupations, etc.; knowledge of the options available in the labor market in areas of interest to students; assisting students in search / simulated search for a job, according to personal interests and skills; connecting students with resources and organizations that support insertion / integration in the labor market; facilitate the transition from being a student to the employee who retains his workplace.

The methods applied in vocational counseling were: Psychological counseling, Educational and academic counseling and Career counseling and guidance.

2.4 Research results

The results obtained from vocational counseling conducted in personal and professional development camps have shown that the highest frequency of personality types is type ESTJ (22%), followed by the type ISTJ (20%) and type ESFJ (11%).

Personality Type ESTJ ((Extraversion, Sensing, Thinking, Judgment) was achieved by 22% of adolescents evaluated. This is a logical, analytical, hard to persuade otherwise than by reason type of person. Focuses mainly on work and less on social relations, is persistent in achieving goals, prefer concrete results. Assumes the risk of the decision; It has a good ability to distinguish between what is effective and ineffective. Therefore, usually goes toward positions of leadership, efficiency. But if they work with people, we need to develop their sensitivity to other people's needs. Many adolescents who are characterized by this kind of personality want to pursue a profession in economics: insurance agent, salesperson, accountant, project manager, finance inspector; in the medical field: doctor; dentist; pharmacist, medical technician or in the legal field: attorney.

Personality Type ISTJ (introversion, sensing, thinking, judgment) is the realist type, who shows his emotions easy. When he assumes responsibility is a serious person, trustworthy. From the lot of adolescents investigated, 20% of students showed for this type of personality and said they want to become programmers, computer scientists; government officials, researchers.

Personality Type ESFJ was obtained by 11% of adolescents with a higher frequency among girls is concerned about the others, and the relationship harmony, friendly, tactful and sympathetic. He always appreciate the value in the opinions of others, and when they are conflicting, he eventually harmonized them. It is practical and is interested in everything related to sensory experiences. He likes to communicate and his comfort resulting from quality of relationships with those around him, so it will be drawn to activities based on cooperation between people. Among the desired professions by these teenagers were: teacher, special education teacher; social worker; priest, nurse.

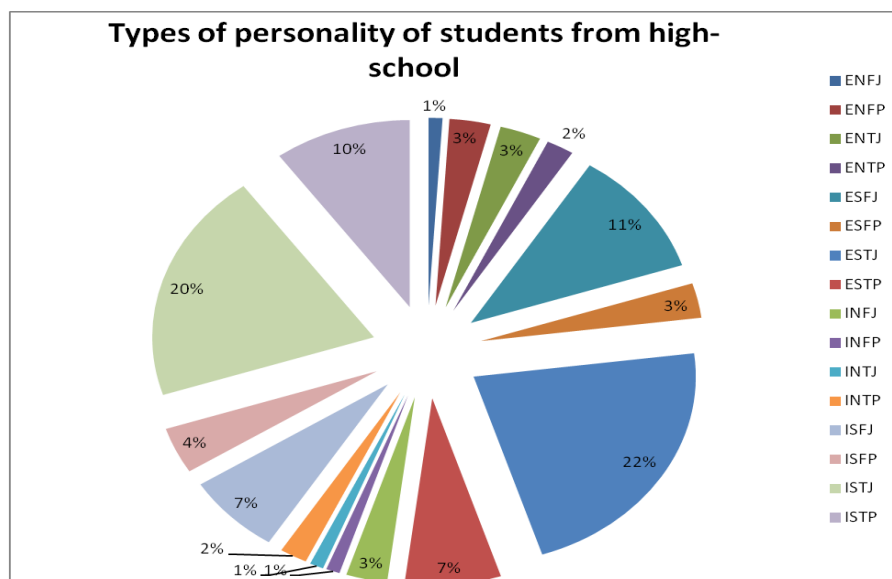


Figure 1. Types of personality of students from high-school

Regarding students' styles of decision the following results were obtained:

- 37% of students have the Directive style,

- 30% of students Organized (Analytical) style,
- 23% have Inventive (Conceptual) style and
- 10% have behavior style.

Students with Directive style (37%) are perspicacious people, able to solve several problems at the same time, responsible, persistent, realistic, adaptable to change, energetic, intelligent, masters of its own forces. Students with Inventive (Conceptual) style (23%) have a big imagination, are curious, nonconformist, clever, original thinking, capacity of observation, assessment and understanding of various phenomena. Among the professions wanted by this style are: researcher, analyst, microbiologist, psychologist, ergonomics specialist etc. Students with Organized (Analytical) style, (23%) are good strategists, have the ability to organize, coordinate and direct a team or a group, manage to be heard, especially in critical, emergency situations, stands by his principles and he is trying everything to achieve his goal. Students who exhibit this style want in the future to occupy administrative positions. 10% from adolescence have behavior style. Behavioral style is a particular pattern of observable behavior patterns or habits, that have developed over time, and that are characteristic of a given individual.

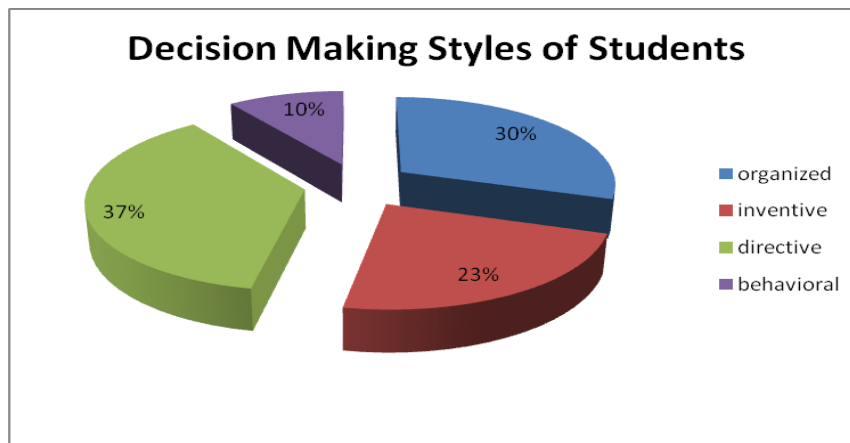


Figure 2. Decision Making Styles of Students

3. Conclusions

Regardless of how the transition to adulthood is carried out, important tasks face every adolescent. For one thing, the adolescent must achieve a sense of self-unity. He or she must also achieve some sense of uniqueness, of being in some ways different from other people. Ericson (1981) calls all these developments regarding the self the process of establishing a personal identity. A personal identity not only must be perceived by the individual but also must be recognized and confirmed by others. These major achievements are made possible by cognitive advances- in particular by the adolescent's new capacities to reflect on the self and to consider a range of possible alternatives. Thus, the adolescent can examine the self at present, relate that self to past behavior and project the self into the future with the many different roles it offers.

A job can contribute to self-esteem and a sense of personal identity by allowing adolescents to feel they are doing something useful. They often show pride in their place of work as well as in themselves as workers. Not only are expressing the sense of industry and competence they worked and developing in middle childhood, they also are participating their future role as economically self-sufficient individuals. At the same time, by taking responsibility for showing up on time and doing the tasks they are given, they confirm their emerging status as adults. The pay they earn helps make them

more independent of their parents, and it also gives them experience with managing money. By forcing teens to budget their time, balance demands, and make choices, a part-time job can foster maturity. (Fine et al., 1990; Greenberger & Steinberg, 1980).

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