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## How the attitude towards the learning process is influenced at Romanian teenager ‘pupils by their well-being status?

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### Abstract

Learning process, depending on the person’s age, requires the person’s resources in relation to their form (formal or informal), their purpose and their content. In schools, the learning process takes place in a specific environment that should be secure and involves two major players: teacher(s) and pupil(s). Each party comes with a specific ‘luggage’ (health level, family background, economical background, personal well-being status, etc.) that supports the acquisition of skills, abilities and knowledge, and also favour the developing of learning styles, communication styles, specific attitudes, personality traits and so on. Each party has their own learning process agenda; pupils will acquire specific and transversal competencies, and teachers will be more efficient in using educational strategies, methods, techniques and procedures. The conclusions that came after administration of specific psychological instruments reveal an interesting influence of the well-being level upon the attitude towards learning activities.

**Keywords:** Well-being, attitude towards learning process, teenagers, educational training process.

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## **1. Introduction**

The development of human society has increased the demands on a high level of quality of the educational services provided by teachers, psychologist, pedagogues, special educators and so on. Beyond these demands, there is a continuum investigational process due to the fact that the pupils from today have a different potential for being educated due to the fact that the investigational team is multidisciplinary one and tries to be focussed on the findings' implications. A special zone of interest is the leaning process where it became more and more clear that the process is related with its efficiency assumed as a participative, active and creative form (Neacsu, 1990, p. 12).

Each person who learns in an active manner is his/her own initiator and organiser of learning experiences, and constantly, in a systemic manner, he/she will be able to reorganise and restructure his/her acquisitions. By developing the active learning process, teachers stimulate pupils to be able to develop personalised learning projects, to assume responsibility for their learning process, to become aware, to apply, to (self) assess, to manage and gradually to gain autonomy in their own training (Bocos, 2002, p. 63).

In 1993, Meyers and Jones have stipulated that active learning is a learning environment that allows pupils to discuss, to listen, to read, to write and to reflect on their own ways of knowing through the problem solving exercises, through participation in informal micro-groups, through simulations and case studies, through role plays and other activities, all meant to ask them to apply what they learn (Nicola, 1996, p. 11).

The atmosphere created by a teacher in the classroom is a factor that influences the student's active learning behaviour. Setting up a climate favourable to fruitful collaboration between teachers and pupils, a climate characterised by affective, positive tone, exigency and understanding and responsibility, is a key condition that has to be achieved in the lesson (Potolea, Neacsu, Iucu & Panisoara 2008, p. 85).

The experts in the education field have pointed that there are a significant number of factors related to pupils that can/cannot encourage the active learning process such as their native background, the stimulating or non-stimulatory environment from which it originates, the traits of their personality (also see Urea, 2016, p. 53), the character features, the power of engaging in specific tasks, the attitude towards work and the attitude towards learning process.

During the last decade, in Romania, teachers have developed different tools to reveal the elements that influence the active learning features in pre-adolescents and teenagers (see Urea, 2012, p. 43)

## **2. The structure of research**

### **2.1. Objectives and hypotheses of the research**

Beyond respecting children's rights to education, educating teenager pupils involves reconsidering the conflict between generations (teacher versus student) in the context of their well-being.

Well-being is often associated with way in which the whole community is provided with the goods and services necessary to achieve a way of life that is considered to be normal. This association reflects that situational character and its socio-historical determination. Each society, through economic progress, provides a certain level of well-being (see also Arendt, 1998, p. 18).

Hence, the situation has raised the following question: the efficiency of an active learning process at Romanian teenager pupils is related to their well-being level and specific attitude towards the learning process, if we take into consideration their personality features?

To answer this question, we performed a psychological research aiming at revealing in Romanian teenagers the influence of their well-being upon specific attitude towards the learning process in relation with their 'need to conquer the world'.

Our research focused on two major objectives: a) revealing of well-being features in Romanian teenager pupils and b) revealing the attitudes developed towards the learning process at Romanian teenager pupils.

We started from the following hypothesis: taking into consideration personality features of teenagers, we assume that, in teenagers, we will find specific influences of well-being status upon social the attitudes towards the learning process.

## **2.2. The procedure of the research**

Our research had an initial testing procedure on 25 Romanian teenager pupils and the obtained Cronbach Alpha index ( $\alpha = 0.703$ ) that allowed us to proceed to an extended psychological research that had two stages: a) investigation of well-being status at Romanian teenager pupils b) investigation of attitudes developed towards the learning process at Romanian teenager pupils.

## **3. The target group characteristics of the investigated population**

The research was carried out on 150 Romanian teenager pupils, coming from urban environment, aged 15–18 years (with mean of 16.8 years and median = 16.60 years). Romanian teenager pupils participated in this investigation with their parents' agreement. Distribution was uniform, skewness index values from 1.908 to 4.828, with standard error of skewness from 0.645 to 0.996, kurtosis index values from 0.680 to 1.542 and standard error of kurtosis from 0.694 to 1.738.

## **4. Methods of research**

We used in our investigation the following methods: a) 'the Ryff's well-being scale', adapted in 2016 by R. Urea for Romanian teenagers (internal consistency index: 802, fidelity index:.707); b) 'the Thomas-Killman's questionnaire' adapted in 2009 by R. Urea for Romanian teenager pupils (internal consistency index: 769, fidelity index:. 675); c) 107 non-directive interviews and d) statistical processing methods.

## **5. Research findings**

### **5.1. Investigation of well-being status in Romanian teenager pupils**

'The Ryff's well-being scale' is a specific instrument aimed to investigate the following variables: personal autonomy, self-control, personal development, positive relationships, the meaning of life and self-acceptance. It also computes the current level of well-being.

In our research, we used a Likert scale of five levels of assessment for all the variables, 1 (the lowest level) to 5 (the highest level), and we took into consideration our data analyses process, the investigated teenager's age. The collected data are present in Table 1.

**Table 1. The Ryff's well-being scale data for our investigated subjects**

Variables	Teenagers of 15 years old (average index)	Teenagers of 16 years old (average index)	Teenagers of 17 years old (average index)	Teenagers of 18 years old (average index)
Personal autonomy	3.15	3.68	4.05	4.40
Self-control	2.78	3.30	4.07	4.35
Personal development	3.25	3.60	3.95	4.50
Positive relationships	2.90	3.25	3.8	4.29
The meaning of life	2.75	3.40	4.25	4.45
Self-acceptance	5	4.45	3.80	3.20
Level of well-being (global index)	4.45	4.15	3.5	3

As we notice from the data collected in Table 1, even if most of the constituent elements of the well-being are increasing as the teenager grows, we find that its value decreases. The only element that decreases is the self-acceptance. How can we explain these things?

If we look closer and take in consideration the features of teenagers' personality, we can say that the desire that the teenagers have to affirm themselves in social environment imparts the widening of the contexts of social interaction. In this way, their experience grows, but at the same time, it makes the teenagers to create their social models and, depending on them, to develop new self-evaluation criteria. The process of self-evaluation will determine, after finding some similitudes with their social models, the awareness of the 'defects' they have reported on the social model that teenagers have as a landmark, which has a significant impact on the level of well-being (a direct and significant correlation between the level of self-acceptance and the level of well-being,  $r = 0.805$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ).

*Therefore, we can say that in teenager pupils, the well-being level is a reflection of the dimensioning their self-image in social environment based on increasing their personal interactions.*

### **5.2. Investigation of attitudes developed towards the learning process at Romanian teenager pupils**

'The Thomas-Killman's questionnaire' is a psychological instrument that focuses on revealing the following types of attitudes towards learning process: competition, collaboration, compromise, avoidance and accommodation. These types of attitudes were assessed on a Likert scale of five levels of assessment: 1 (the lowest level) to 5 (the highest level), and we took into consideration in our data analyses process, the subject's age. The collected data are present in Table 2.

**Table 2. The types of attitudes towards the learning process at our investigated subjects**

Variables	Teenagers of 15 years old (average index)	Teenagers of 16 years old (average index)	Teenagers of 17 years old (average index)	Teenagers of 18 years old (average index)
Competition	3.15	3.68	4.05	4.40
Collaboration	2.25	2.65	2.90	3.20
Compromise	4.25	3.90	3.65	3.10
Avoidance	3.05	2.90	2.80	2.50
Accommodation	2.50	2.90	3.25	3.65

We notice from the collected data presented in Table 2 that there are three types of attitudes that increase as the subjects grow: competition, collaboration and accommodation, and two of the attitudes that are decreased as the subjects grow: compromise and avoidance (that also has the

lowest level at 18 years old teenagers). This signified that our investigated subjects start to be mature persons. Still, the infantile elements are present in terms of radical criticism regarding the compromise and avoidance attitudes that are generalised by our investigated subjects to all types of activities that a person can perform, not only towards learning process. In other words, there is zero tolerance from our investigated subjects regarding the compromise and avoidance attitudes; those attitudes also signified: a 'weak personality' (revealed by 78.4% from our investigated subjects, during the non-interviews that were performed); 'a person without the power to assert his/her own values' (revealed by 60.4% from our investigated subjects, during the non-interviews that were performed); and 'without strength of character' (revealed by 42.6% from our investigated subjects, during the non-interviews that were performed).

The statistical data analyses have pointed, in our investigated subjects, direct and significant correlation between: a) personal development level and the competition attitudes towards the learning process ( $r = 0.801, p = 0.05$ ); b) self-control level and the accommodation attitudes towards the learning process ( $r = 0.697, p = 0.05$ ); c) personal autonomy level and collaboration attitudes towards the learning process ( $r = 0.724, p = 0.05$ ); d) the self-acceptance level and compromise attitudes towards the learning process ( $r = 0.829, p = 0.01$ ); e) the global level of well-being and avoidance attitudes towards the learning process ( $r = 0.785, p = 0.05$ ).

*We can say that, in teenagers, the attitudes towards the learning process are related to 'the gains' (in terms of personal affirmation) obtained from learning as a mark of their personality development.*

## 6. Conclusion

From the beginning, our research aimed at analysing in teenager pupils the influence of their well-being upon specific attitude towards the learning process in relation with their 'need to conquer the world'.

Adapted psychological instruments for Romanian teenager pupils were used in our investigation.

Based on the statistical analyses, we found that the Cronbach Alpha index is 0.795. This value is a sign of the high reliability of the psychological instruments that were used in our research.

The research findings suggest that:

- i. In Romanian teenager pupils, it is a direct influence between the well-being status and the types of attitudes developed during the learning activities/ situations/process.
- ii. These findings reflect a specific vulnerability of our investigated teenagers as consequences of duality generated by the conflict between generations: to have benefits as the adult and the child's responsibilities.
- iii. Based on the above-mentioned findings, our research objectivities were reached.
- iv. The statistical analyses data—Cronbach's Alpha index is 0.795—confirm our research hypothesis.
- v. We can develop special programmes: one type will concern on the implementation of different strategies in teachers for increasing the stimulating and emotional secure learning environment; the other type of programmes will be address to teenager pupils for developing and endorsing skills in findings the long-term benefits that are coming from learning process result.

*Future studies should pay more attention on the well-being level, such as conditional factor, upon human activity.*

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