

ASPECTS OF MOTIVATING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO INTEGRATE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract. *The paper aims at bringing into attention the issue of motivation for the 12th grade high- school students to continue their studies in higher education. The general direction of investigation relates to the identification of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational aspects which drive students to continue their basic training at the university. In order to realize this goal, the study included three high schools from the rural area of the districts of Timiș and Gorj. The research method was the investigation based on a questionnaire, and the investigation tool was a questionnaire of opinion containing closed-ended and semi-opened questions. The questionnaire was first applied upon a number of 111 students from the 12th grade, but then there was a selection of a batch of 91 students who declared their intention to continue their education after graduating high school. The research focused on the extent to which the intrinsic motivation (e.g. the desire to become a good specialist; the desire to have a successful life; the pleasure to study; the appreciation of the role of education in any individual's training), but also the extrinsic one (an attractive workplace; parents' influence; the environment influence) stimulate the decision to attend the courses of a faculty. The results showed that the intrinsic motivation comes first for the majority of students, who are strongly motivated by the desire to succeed in life, by the interest in learning, but mostly by the desire to be best specialists in a domain. The study offers some openings to specialists in counseling and vocational orientation from the field of pre-university and university education.*

Keywords: *intrinsic motivation, higher education, extrinsic motivation*

INTRODUCTION

The implications of motivational phenomena have generated a series of remarks coming from the researchers in the domain. Along a series of specialty studies, they have analyzed the two levels of motivation, the internal intrinsic level and the external extrinsic one, and tried to explain more precisely the implications of each level upon some processes and decisions of educable subjects. In this paper, we approached the implications of the phenomenon regarding the career decision, especially the reasons standing at the basis of high school students' will to continue their studies, by enumerating the reasons which make them wish to go to the faculty. If we take into account the phenomenon of globalization, the future students' selection becomes more and more difficult, as we deal with a need of qualified human resource, able to adjust to the requirements of a dynamic work market. (IATAGAN, 2015). As a result of his research, RARIȚA (2014) evokes the fact that students manifest their desire to attend a faculty by referring first to their personal interests (76%), and also by bringing up some social issues, a fact that proves the involvement from a rational point of view of those mentioned. Thus, their decision will be based on the desire to work in a certain area, fact that correlates with the chosen profession and also with the financial earnings associated and the desire to find the best work place as easily as possible. At the level of 2001, BANDURA et. al. (2001) performed a longitudinal study which approached the socio-cognitive influences that outlined the educational expectations of the educable and their career directions; the study underlined the fact that the students' academic expectations were positively correlated with the trust in their abilities and represented a key factor in making the decision for the desired career.

Motivation is influenced also by the methods of assessment used in the didactic

process (SAVESCU ET AL., 2016). Currently at the European level, the teaching methodologies and also evaluation proceedings in use are centered more on the student, aiming at "developing formative assessment systems and instruments and incorporating teaching methodologies that stimulate the university student's autonomous learning" (LOPEZ ET AL., 2007, p. 1, CITED IN LOPEZ, 2017). WILLIAMS & BURDEN (1997) CITED IN THU. H. TRAN (2013), have identified several practical suggestions as concerns motivation and especially its stimulation and development among students. The first observes the complexity of the phenomenon and places the accent on the necessity to take into teachers' consideration of all the factors that may intensify it. Then there's the need for teachers' awareness regarding the ways to initiate and maintain it, as well as the necessity to always explain the activities developed in class and to stimulate the students' trust in their own abilities and create a supporting work environment, with the provision of a personal way of approaching tasks and decisions, thus intensifying the intrinsic component of each person's motivation. By following these directions, they lay the foundation of a triserial model compounded of: the reasons to do something, a decision to make and the support of decisional effort. The review of the specialty literature have determined EIDIMTAS & JUCEVICIENE in 2014 to identify a series of four categories of factors which make the graduating students decide to continue by choosing a faculty, namely: "educational factors" which may refer to the family and the educational style or to school, where they get the recommendations of counselors and teachers; the "information factors" refer to exhibitions, mass media and open gate days; the "economic factors" (school tuition, career perspective) and "other factors" (personal skills, demography, geographical localization and ratings). Thus, "when students have positive expectations about their effectiveness in school achievement, they tend to approach difficult tasks as challenges, to attribute intrinsic interest to activities, to establish challenging goals and pursue them" (PAULINO, LOPES Da Silva, 2011). Having in view the fact that we as people use to react differently when it comes for our personal needs and especially their identification, it is better to take into consideration the personality traits of each person, his or her professional interests and motivational aspects that act in one's benefit, to be capable, as teachers, career counselors or teachers in charge to offer the educable pertinent information concerning the tendencies of the work market, in order to decant the offered alternatives (GURANDA, 2014) by each student's personal filter and outline a final decision leading to a final career option.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

The research aims at analyzing the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational register of students relating to the choice of the faculty they wish to attend. In order to outline a most correct image upon the investigated issue, an empirical quantitative study of transversal type was performed during the first semester of the school year 2016-2017 at 3 high-schools with a Technology line of studies, from the rural area. The data was collected by applying a questionnaire of opinion which contained, together with factual data, 9 closed questions with pre-codified questions and a semi-open question, to which students could add other reasons found at the basis of a faculty choice, (others than the ones already mentioned in the questionnaire). Based on the statistical program SPSS 17.0, a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted.

Initially, the batch of subjects included 111 participants, which were students in the 12th grade at 3 high schools from rural area, offering 3 types of programs: Services (N=21); Natural resources (N=43); Techniques (N=47). The range of students' ages was between 17 and 19 years old (M=17.57; SD=0.59). Out of the total number of students, 65% were girls (N=72) and 35% were boys (N=29). After they filled in the questionnaire, we made a selection of a batch of 91 students who affirmed the intention to continue their education at faculty, after

graduating high school. From this selected group, 34% were male subjects (N=31), and 66% feminine subjects (N=60).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Having in mind the aim of the research, we analyzed the means and standard deviations of the scores given by students to each reason for choosing a faculty, the answers being rated on a scale from 1 to 5, according to the importance degree. The results are displayed in Table 1:

Table 1

| Reasons to choose a faculty | Mean | SD |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|
| Desire to be successful in life | 4.16 | 0.94 |
| Desire to become a good specialist | 3.85 | 1.07 |
| An attractive work place | 3.86 | 1.18 |
| Pleasure to learn | 3.82 | 1.11 |
| Benefit of guidance | 3.75 | 1.18 |
| Appreciation of the role of education | 3.72 | 1.29 |
| The chance to find a work place | 3.71 | 1.13 |
| Parents' influence | 3.69 | 1.28 |
| Entourage | 3.46 | 1.19 |

By analyzing the results, we find that the highest scores are registered on the line of two intrinsic motivational aspects, namely the desire to be successful in life and the desire to become a good specialist. The future students are animated by the desire to become an accomplished person, with a good reputation in the professional domain, capable to assume his or her own professional training and development. The intrinsic motivation is completed by the pleasure to study, as the students declare that they study mainly for pleasure so they intent to continue their studies in higher education.

There follows the classification of the 12th grade students, two reasons which refer rather to the extrinsic motivation: the desire to find an attractive work place, along with guidance received from certain people whom teenagers trust (parents, teachers, faculty graduates). Obviously, these reasons are solidly grounded in the finality of higher education, having in view the fact that the graduates need to successfully integrate on a concurential and dynamic work market –established. Also, most part of the students need the opinion of people who succeeded in life, to make a best choice regarding higher studies. A much closed score has the chance of the graduates to find a work place easier, in high school students' vision. All these extrinsic reasons give consistency to the motivation of the 12th grade students belonging to the investigated group. As for the intrinsic aspect, we positively remark the fact the graduating students highly appreciate the role of education in their life. They consider education as a value worth to invest in, on both the individual and social level.

The last scores signal two extrinsic type reasons: parents' and entourage's influence. We find that in the investigated group, models and examples offered by parents and peers don't have much influence over the motivation to attend a faculty. On the contrary, in the rural areas, where there aren't many people who graduated higher education institutions, students chose other raw models, so they don't take the guidance of parents or other from their environment.

CONCLUSIONS

According to the results, the intrinsic motivation comes first for the majority of students belonging to the group included in the our study, as they are strongly motivated by the desire to be successful in life, by the interest in learning, and especially the desire to be best specialists in a domain; they positively appreciate the role of education in their individual and social development all along. There is also a strong extrinsic motivational foundation at the basis of the option for higher education: the desire and chance to have an attractive work place, guidance received from the part of those informed and, to a little extent, the influence of environment or parents. The results are concordant with the results of other studies according to which, in the category of main factors found at the basis of success in life and profession there are: intelligence, education, ambition, diligence, and also a united family (Pricopie, et.al, 2011).

As for the semi-opened questions where students were asked to list additional reasons, the answers were: the desire to progress, the desire to move to the urban area and the desire to help his or her family. The study offers openings for specialists in counseling and professional orientation in the area of pre-university and university education. In order to stimulate the insertion of rural area graduates in higher education there are certain directions to be considered: the professional counseling of students; the increased quality of teacher training; counseling services for parents; the correlation of academic study programs with the requirement of the work market; and the implementation of social programs to financially support the high school graduates coming from the rural areas or other disadvantaged environments (Gavrilă, Tulbure, Mărghitan, 2016).

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