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**INCREASING THE VOCATIONAL POTENTIAL IN THE  
ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT: MEANINGS,  
ACHIEVEMENTS, PERSPECTIVES**

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**Abstract**

*Our aim in this research was to analyse the student's compatibility with the profile of their chosen faculty. We started from the idea according to which the compatibility between the value system and the faculty profile leads to an increase in self-efficacy. Students from the Polytechnic faculty, the AES (Academy of Economic Sciences) and Psychology took part in this research. In order to test the starting hypotheses, we employed the AVS survey, the SES scale of self-efficacy and a survey on decisional styles. Results showed that 30% of AES students fit into the economic value system, 36% of Polytechnic students fit into the theoretical value system, and 30% of the Psychology students fit into the social value system. Regarding the degree of self-efficacy, in 35.7% of the AES students who fit the profile of the faculty self-efficacy is present, in 35.7% of the polytechnic students that have a theoretical value system self-efficacy is present and in 41.7% of the psychology students who fit into the social value system self-efficacy is present. Furthermore, 41.7% of these students, who fit into a religious value system, also demonstrate self-efficacy; psychology students show a predominantly intuitive decisional style, whereas the AES students show a predominantly rational decisional style.*

**Keywords:** *vocational counseling, career, professional orientation, educational counseling, university abandon*

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

The aim of the present research is to provide an overview of the current academic environment in Romania. As a general objective, we aim at analysing student compatibility with the profile of their chosen faculty. As specific objectives, we would like to emphasize the fact that students choose the profile of their faculty without taking into consideration their personal values as well as to study the relation between value systems, the choice of faculty profile and self-efficacy.

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The reason for choosing this topic was the stringent necessity to introduce a programme of vocational counseling in schools and high schools.

In our current Romanian society, people receive very little information about the role and importance of vocational counseling, therefore going for careers that are unsuitable for them, which may lead to job dissatisfaction, low performance and stress.

In psychology the concept of career has been extensively studied, especially in regard to the way people choose a certain field. In the recent years, the specialty literature has focused on the practice of career development and counseling regarding psychological implications such as self-efficacy, decisional style or personal values (Abele, Spurk, 2009).

With regard to personal values, studies have shown that they represent an essential aspect when choosing the right career. On the basis of these values, a person can orient itself correctly to a certain field. The relation between job performance, job satisfaction and the capacity for goal achievement has been investigated (Feldman, 2002; Herr, Cramer & Niles, 2004; Patton & McMahon, 2006).

Studies on self-efficacy in relation to career have shown that it has an influence on the choices people make regarding the activities they will get involved in, on the individuals willingness to sustain effort and persevere in fulfilling tasks, his/her emotional reactions, response to stress, and job performance. It is also strongly associated with professional interests, job satisfaction, commitment and devotion to the job, as well as with a capacity for responsible management of work activities and relations. (Abele, Spurk, 2009; Betz, 2000; Bora, 2003; Ignat, Clipa, 2010; Patrick et. al., 2011).

Decision is considered to be one of the key elements in career development. Recent research has established that career decision is related to specific results in the field of work, especially with job satisfaction, organisational structure and performance (Bratu, Rizeanu, Constantin, Rizeanu, 2018). People who make decisions based on an accurate appraisal of their knowledge and abilities generally derive a better appreciation from the point of view of job performance. Determination in regard to decision-making was found to be associated with a high degree of satisfaction in the chosen career (Bright et.al., 2005; Duffy, Raque Bogdan, 2010; Earl, Bright, 2004; Gunkel et.al., 2010; Pânisoară, Pânisoară, 2010).

The interest in this field issues a word of warning about the importance of implementing a programme of vocational counseling in schools and highschools. A less studied part is the way this programme should be introduced to the students, so that it would offer them a better knowledge of their own abilities, interests and personal values as well as a proper direction towards a field where they could perform well and obtain satisfaction (Bogluț, Rizeanu, Burtăverde, 2015).

The implementation of such a programme of vocational counseling represents a future direction of this study.

## 2. OBJECTIVE AND HYPOTHESES

### 2.1. OBJECTIVE

*Main objective:* The main objective of this paper is to analyse student compatibility with the profile of their chosen faculty.

*Specific objectives:* As specific objective, we aim at emphasizing the fact that students choose the profile of their faculty without taking into account personal values. Another objective is to study the relation between value system, the choice of faculty profile and self-efficacy.

### 2.2. HYPOTHESES

*General hypotheses:* We suppose that a low percent of the students are compatible with the profile of their chosen faculty. The more the value system agrees with the faculty profile, the more self-efficacy is improved. We suppose that there is a connection between the decisional style and the faculty profile.

*Specific hypotheses:*

We suppose that students from the AES have a predominantly rational decisional style.

We suppose that students from the Polytechnic have a predominantly rational decisional style.

We suppose that students from Psychology have a predominantly intuitive decisional style. We suppose that there are differences of compatibility with the faculty profile, according to gender.

We suppose that there are differences in the degree of self-efficacy according to gender.

We suppose that there is a correlation between the decisional style and the value system.

We suppose that there is a correlation between the decisional style and the level of self-efficacy.

## 3. METHOD

The first step when carrying out the current research consisted in studying the specialty literature. Subsequently, the most adequate instruments were chosen in order to measure the studied variables. The chosen groups were asked to fill in the

tests according to the following instructions: „Please read carefully the statements included in these surveys and choose the answer that fits you best!” After collecting all the tests, they were scored, and the data were introduced in the database of the statistic programme SPSS, where they were statistically processed with a view to validating the hypotheses of the present research.

### 3.1. PARTICIPANTS/SUBJECTS

In order to carry out the present research a number of 90 participants were tested, male and female, with ages between 18 and 25, first year students at the Faculty of Psychology, Hyperion University, at the AES and the Polytechnic. They were divided into three lots as follows: 30 participants from the Faculty of Psychology, 30 participants from the AES, 30 participants from the Faculty of Polytechnic. Of the total participants, 34.4% are male, and 65.6% of participants are female; The average age of the participants is 21.23.

### 3.2. INSTRUMENTS

**The AVS survey**, translated and adapted by Mihaela Roco (1994) was used to assess personal values. The survey is made up of two parts, the first comprising 30 items, with dichotomous answers, yes/no, the second including 15 items, with four answer options, a, b, c or d, which have to be ranked in the order of the preferences of each participant who fills in the survey. The highest score will reveal the participant's personal value. The test is applied with paper and pencil, without any time limit.

**The SES scale of self-efficacy** (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995) comprises 10 items and is designed with the aim of assessing a person's convictions regarding its own capacity of dealing with the setbacks encountered during task-solving. The scale was created in 1981 by Matthias Jerusalem and Ralf Schwarzer and so far it has been used in numerous studies and adapted for 33 languages. The SES scale may be said to measure self-efficacy in adapting to everyday problems, confidence in goal-setting, effort investment and perseverance in action.

**The Survey Decisional Styles** (Gati, Krausz & Osipow, 1996). In order to delineate the participants decisional style, we adapted a survey made up of 5 items, each representing one of the 5 decisional styles, rational, dependent, spontaneous, intuitive and hesitating. Participants were instructed to read carefully all the five statements and choose the one that fit them best.

#### 4. RESULTS

After applying the AVS test, we obtained an average value of 16.68, with the following frequencies: 24.4% theoretical, 16.7% economic, 26.7% social, 6.7% political, 10% aesthetic and 15.6% religious;

After applying the decisional style questionnaire, we obtained an average value of 20, with the following frequencies: 43.3% rational, 21.1% dependent, 7.8% avoidant, 22.2% intuitive, 5.6% spontaneous;

After applying the SES test, we obtained the average value of 50, with the following frequencies: 44.4% present, 55.6% absent.

##### The statistical interpretation of results

The statistical results validated the proposed hypotheses, as follows: Regarding the hypothesis that a low percent of students is compatible with the profile of the chosen faculty, results have shown that: only 30% of the participants in the study, students from the AES, fit into the economic value system; 36% of the participants, students from the Polytechnic faculty, fit into the theoretical value system, and 30% of the participants, students from the Psychology faculty, fit into the social value system.

Table 1-Association between faculty and value system

Faculty	Theoretical	Economic	Social	Political	Esthetic	Religious
AES	30%	<b>30%</b>	23.3%	10%	0%	6.7%
Polytechnic	<b>36%</b>	20%	26.7%	3.3%	10%	3.3 %
Psychology	6.7%	0%	<b>30%</b>	6.7%	20%	36.7%

The second hypothesis which presupposes that the more the value system corresponds to the faculty profile, the more self-efficacy increases, is validated, as follows: 35.7% of the AES students, who fit into the economic value system, have self-efficacy, being the largest percent, compared with the other value systems. 35.7% of the Polytechnic students, who fit into the theoretical value system have self-efficacy, being the largest percent, compared with the other value systems. 41.7% of the Psychology students, who fit into the social value system, have self-efficacy. Also, 41.7% of them, who fit into the religious value system have self-efficacy.

Table 2-Association between faculty, value system and self-efficacy

<b>Self-efficacy Present</b>	<b>Theoretical</b>	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Political</b>	<b>Esthetic</b>	<b>Religious</b>
AES	28.6%	<b>35.7%</b>	28.6%	0%	0%	7.1%
Polytechnic	<b>35.7%</b>	28.6%	28.6%	0%	7.1%	0%
Psychology	0%	0%	<b>41.7%</b>	8.3%	8.3%	41.7%
<b>Self-efficacy Absent</b>	<b>Theoretical</b>	<b>Economic</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Political</b>	<b>Esthetic</b>	<b>Religious</b>
AES	31.2%	<b>25.0%</b>	18.8%	18.8%	0%	6.2%
Polytechnic	<b>37.5%</b>	12.4%	25%	6.2%	12.5%	6.2%
Psychology	11.1%	0%	<b>22.2%</b>	5.6%	27.8%	33.3%

The third hypothesis presupposes that there is a connection between decisional style and faculty profile, as follows: the first working hypothesis presupposes that students from the AES have a predominantly rational decisional style. This is validated, results show that 66.7% of the student participants from the AES have a rational decisional style. The second hypothesis presupposes that students in the Polytechnic have a predominantly rational decisional style. This was invalidated, results showing that the greatest percent, 33.3% of Polytechnic students have a dependent decisional style, followed by a rational decisional style, 30% of them. The third working hypothesis presupposes that Psychology students have an intuitive decisional style. According to the results, this is validated. 40% of the Psychology students have an intuitive decisional style.

Table 3- Association between faculty and decisional style

<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Decisional Style</b>				
	Theoretical	Economic	Social	Political	Esthetic
AES	<b>66.7%</b>	13.3%	0%	10%	10%
Polytechnic	<b>30%</b>	33.3%	13.3%	16.7%	6.7%
Psychology	33.3%	16.7%	10%	<b>40%</b>	0%

The fourth working hypothesis presupposes that there are differences in the compatibility with the faculty profile, depending on gender. Results show that this is validated, as follows: regarding AES students, results show that 36.4% of the students who fit the economic profile of the faculty are female, and only 12.5% are male. From the Polytechnic students who fit the theoretical profile of the faculty, 53.3% are female, while 20% are male. From the Psychology students who fit the social profile of the faculty, 37.5% are male, and 27.3% are female.

Table 4-Association between faculty, value system and gender

<b>Male</b>		Theoretical	Economic	Social	Political	Esthetic	Theoretical
	AES	37.5%	<b>12.5%</b>	25.0%	12.5%	0%	12.5%
Polytechnic	<b>20.0%</b>	20.0%	40.0%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	
Psychology	12.5%	0%	<b>37.5%</b>	0%	12.5%	37.5%	
<b>Female</b>		Theoretical	Economic	Social	Political	Esthetic	Theoretical
	AES	27.3%	<b>36.4%</b>	22.7%	9.1%	0%	4.5%
Polytechnic	<b>53.3%</b>	20.0%	13.3%	0%	13.3%	0%	
Psychology	4.5%	0%	<b>27.3%</b>	9.1%	22.7%	36.4%	

Regarding the hypothesis that there are differences in the degree of self-efficacy according to gender, this is validated, results showing that self-efficacy is present in 54.8% of the male participants, a greater percent, compared with 39% of the female participants.

Table 5-Association between self-efficacy and gender

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Self-efficacy</b>	
	Absent	Present
Male	54.8%	45.2%
Female	39%	61%

The hypothesis which presupposes that there is a correlation between decisional style and value system was invalidated. Results show that there is no correlation between the two variables, for  $p=0.15$ .

The hypothesis which presupposes that there is a correlation between decisional style and self-efficacy was invalidated. Results show that there is no correlation between the two variables, for  $p=0.14$ .

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The low number of students who fit the profile of their chosen faculty can be put down to the lack of students' knowledge regarding their abilities, interests and personal values and their importance in choosing a field of activity. Young people choose this field on the basis of other criteria such as parents or friends suggestions, the financial attractiveness of certain fields, or the ease with which they can access that field.

The hypothesis that the more the value system corresponds to the faculty profile, the more self-efficacy increases, is validated. This can be due to the fact that a person who has better knowledge of its abilities, interests and personal values and orients itself according to them, becomes a person who is confident that it can

organize, carry out and adapt strategies in order to obtain the desired results. These people can set themselves high goals, invest more effort and more time into solving a difficult task. These results have been supported by other authors, for example Honicke & Broadbent (2016).

Regarding the decisional style, results confirmed that AES students have a predominantly rational decisional style. In the economic field, the individual uses a logical and organized approach to decision-making, and he has to elaborate detailed plans and take into account all the alternatives.

With regard to the decisional style of the Psychology students, results have confirmed that it is mostly intuitive. Here a person focuses on intuition and its own impressions when making a decision, instead of looking for evidence to support decision-making, and does what he/she feels it is best. These results have been supported by other authors (Bergeron & Romano, 1994).

The limits of this research are the low number of participants, who were not chosen randomly, and the fact that variables such as the environment, the economic status and the grade average for entrance into the faculty were not taken into account.

Its contribution consists in emphasizing the fact that in the academic environment, only a low number of students fit the profile they have chosen, which leads to low self-efficacy. From here future directions might be creating strategies and programmes of vocational counselling, which should lead to an increase in the percentage of students who fit the faculty profile.

Such an undertaking will shortly lead to an increase in job performance and job satisfaction in the Romanian society as well as to an increase in the number of specialists available on the job market.

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