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PREMISES FOR AN EFFICIENT SCHOOL ORIENTATION AND CAREER COUNSELLING

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Abstract: *School orientation and career counselling refer to the set of educational-training activities by which people get support, help and guidance in choosing studies and professions that are the most appropriate to the structure of their personality and meet society's requirements. The main research objective is the need for taking certain measures able to lead to the shaping of the clearest picture possible as regards the awareness about the school network in the county and school pupils' and students' counselling.*

The research hypotheses are the following: if all pupils got enrolled in high school or vocational studies, we may affirm they are aware of their abilities and interests, and thus they succeeded, and the activity of counselling about school and career orientation to which the well-known factors have contributed was satisfactory. The research sample was made of 120 high school students. The method used was a 16-item questionnaire.

From the data analysis and interpretation we consider that the presence in school of an organisational psychologist is absolutely necessary. In Romania the school organisational psychologist has not found his place in school yet, it is considered that the educational psychologist has as task the pupils' and students' professional orientation and counselling. However, the students' answers have not mentioned the presence of the educational psychologist.

The conclusions and recommendations are that in the lifelong learning system there should be training modules in career counselling, training modules for teachers in counselling and modules of personal development, of professional supervision.

Keywords: *school orientation, career counselling, school counselling*

1. INTRODUCTION

Counselling for school and career orientation is a field of psycho-pedagogic counselling which includes specific activities destined to school pupils' and students' education and training, enabling them to adopt the best decisions regarding professional studies, occupations that may be embraced by each of them during their entire life [2]. Career is built by each person. It is successful and

brings satisfaction if it is shaped as realistically as possible.

Our study aims at highlighting the necessity to take measures leading to the shaping of the clearest picture possible as regards the awareness about the county school network to the counselling of school pupils and students who have chosen a school that is not fit for them, does not match their potential and knowledge.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study hypothesis. The study hypotheses are the following:

- If all pupils got enrolled in high school or vocational studies, we may affirm that they are aware of their capacities and interests, and thus they have succeeded, and the activity of counselling regarding school and vocational orientation, to which the well-known factors have contributed, was satisfactory.
- If not all school pupils continue their studies, then the activity of orientation was not adequate, and it should be improved the following school year,

2.2 Research sample. For the verification of the above hypotheses we applied a questionnaire to a number of 120 nine-graders from a college (high school) distributed as follows: 52.5% M and 46.6% F.

2.3 Questionnaire. The method used was a 16-item questionnaire, presented below:

1. Have you made a final option as regards the faculty / post-graduate school you wish to attend when you graduate from high school?
Possible answers: yes or no.
2. What type of school did you want to attend when you graduated from the 8th grade?
Possible answers: high school; vocational school; apprenticeship school; other: describe ...
3. Where did you get the information related to the main high schools in your town, about their educational profile, their curriculum supply?
Possible answers: from form teachers; from teachers; from the school counsellor; from parents; from acquaintances, friends and colleagues, other sources: describe ...
4. Who should offer you information regarding your future career?
Open question
5. Which were the criteria having oriented you to chose that type of studies?
Open question

6. Did you talk with your form teacher in educational classes about topics related to your career, about what you are to do in the future?

Possible answers: yes or no.

7. If the above answer was yes, please elaborate on some of these themes debated.

Open question

8. Which were the greatest difficulties you encountered in finalising your options?

Open question

9. What topics you think should have been discussed in school?

Open question

10. What were the results following the educational classes with your form teacher related to your school orientation?

Open question

11. Do you think that your school orientation plays an important part in your evolution as school pupils and students?

Possible answers: yes or no.

12. Is there a reason that could motivate the selection of your future studies?

Open question ...

13. What is the weight of your parents' involvement in your orientation for the future?

Open question

14. Did the information you received related to high schools and vocational schools, with their laborious offers, influence you in any way?

Possible answers: yes or no.

15. If you answered yes to the above question, which were the most important offers?

Open question

16. Do you think that you will overcome the future obstacles with success and that the choice of your career in the near future will be successful?

Please state your reasons. Open question ...

In the end please state your grade, age and gender.



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3. DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

3.1 Presentation and interpretation of answers item by item. The data collected from the answers to the questionnaire are the following (item by item).

Item 1.

Most school pupils are decided since middle school what type of high school they wish to attend. Consequently 94.16% of them have finalised their option and are rather self-confident, whereas 5% have certain difficulties in choosing.

Item 2.

The pupils' preference for high schools is the highest (94.16%), whereas only 4.16% chose vocational schools and even less, 0.83% opted for apprenticeship schools.

Item 3.

The answers to question 3 regarding the school network show that pupils received information from their form teachers (60%), teachers (13%), parents (8%), school counsellors (8%), schoolmates and friends (7%). It results that school was the main source of information (81%).

Item 4.

When we analyse this item, we find that pupils consider that the highest weight in receiving information about career comes from form teachers (44 answers), and parents (22 answers). Hence the conclusion that pupils prefer to be informed about their future by school and family.

Item 5.

This item showed the criteria underlying the pupils' options and the following situation resulted: "mark at the national examination" – 15 pupils, "inclinations and talents – 28 pupils; "parents' advice" – 27 pupils. We remark that

7 pupils chose as criterion "the conditions provided by the school" and "it should be a good school".

Item 6.

In this item we find that most students answered they have discussed with the form teacher, during educational classes, topics about career, about their future, and they gave affirmative answers in 80% of the cases, which is a rather satisfactory situation.

Item 7.

This item asked for examples of debate topics. 37 students mentioned the topic "the school we wish to choose", 23 of them – "Where do I orient my career?", another 23 students mentioned the topic "profession – most valuable jewel in life". From this item it results that they talked rather little about the examination they were about to take and how to fill in the option chart.

Item 8.

The item was meant to highlight the difficulties encountered in expressing options. For 35 pupils they were represented by "grades", 15 pupils said "there are no difficulties", 13 pupils were afraid of low marks at the examination. We remark that in general the students are aware of the difficulties they may encounter. There were two cases in which the difficulty was "convincing parents to let them attend a certain high school":

Item 9.

Here students were asked what further topics should be discussed. 37 pupils affirmed to have discussed them all, 15 students are sufficiently informed, 15 pupils wish information about the professions required the most on the labour market, and the rest desire information about the school network and their offer.

Item 10.

As for the results of educational classes with the form teacher related to school orientation, the situation is the following: very good results (30%), good results (38%), “I am better oriented” (15%), “more informed” (13%), “none (4%). Hence the conclusion that educational classes with the form teacher were efficient on these themes.

Item 11.

The answers to the question if school orientation plays an important part in their evolution as school pupils and students were 98% affirmative and 2% negative.

Item 12.

When motivating the choice of future studies, 25 students affirmed “there are no reasons, 30 students said “there are certain reasons, 15 of them chose “money”! as motivation, 25 motivate “I like the profession of ...”, while 5 students express their desire to have “a decent job”.

Item 13.

As for the weight of parents’ involvement in their orientation for the future, the situation is the following: 51% answered that parents have a hundred percent importance, 13% of them assessed this intention as advice “they said it would be better”, and the other students mentioned that the parents’ involvement weight is moderate, little or even minimal.

Item 14.

When asked if the information they received from high schools or vocational schools influenced them. 62% of them answered yes, and the other said no.

Item 15.

They consider that the most relevant and comprehensive offers are those of “Traian Vuia” High School (40 students), School Groups (20), “Mircea Eliade” High School (10 students), “Traian Lalescu” High School (8 students). A number of 30 students affirm there were no offers, and thus we conclude that they do not consider important the passage from middle school to high school, or the educational factors did not do enough to convince them.

Item 16.

Very many students, more precisely 91, are sure of their success in overcoming future obstacles, 13 students “think and hope so”, 8

students “are not sure” and the rest do not believe they will be successful.

3.2 Overall interpretation. From the analysis of all items, we remark that pupils are mostly sure they will choose a high school and not a vocational school. In some cases form teachers have not insisted enough upon certain debate topics related to career, or pupils were not interested enough. We remark a high importance of parents' involvement in pupils' orientation. In selecting their options, a determining role is played by the marks obtained in school and obviously the score at the “national tests”. The orientation toward a good high school from the part of parents is beneficial, but this should not be imposed without the child' agreement [3].

3. CONCLUSIONS & ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The educational ideal of Romanian school consists in free, whole and balanced development of human personalities. In view of reaching this ideal, an important role is played by school pupils’ and students’ psycho-pedagogic awareness in view of building and supporting the capacity of self-awareness, getting information about the world of professions and school network and the optimum modalities to acquire them, as well as awakening and developing pupils’ interests / aspiration in view of the appropriate structuring of social motivation specific to the labour market [1].

The means used before in school as regards school orientation and career counselling are not at all obsolete, but they have to undergo a process of adaptation, of matching with reality, they should be modernised, updated and integrated in the new contents of education provided in the national curriculum.

So that the act of school - professional choice be actually justified, school pupils and students should be offered knowledge , information and data about several professions, domains of activity, trades, social positions etc. and thus they will be put in the real situation of choosing from among



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alternatives, of actual selection and comparison, and consequently they will be free to choose.

The first elements of school orientation and career counselling will be simple information and knowledge from the environment known to the pupils: neighbouring schools in the locality and nearby towns, and in the county, professions and jobs specific to the region, with the extension similar to the previous situation. The details will be provided at the express request of certain pupils and students, at the pressure of new schooling stages or on graduation from the chosen schools.

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