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INMATES' PERCEPTION, MOTIVATION AND FEELINGS TOWARDS SCHOOL ON EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED IN GIURGIU PRISON

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Abstract: *This study is based on the legislative framework that regulates the educational and psychosocial activities in Romanian prisons, specifically the Law 254/2013 of penal execution and the Law 1/2011 of national education. The study has as starting point certain researches in the field of education regarding the way in which is perceived the professor (Fraser, 1996; Wubbels and Levy, 1993), but also the learning activity (Waugh, 2001) and the individuals' feelings towards school (Essex, 1997; Wulfsohn, 2000; Watson, Clark, and Tellegen, 1988). The study intends to approach another category of persons – the inmates held in Giurgiu Prison, who attends educational activities. For this study, we selected three types of activities: school, training activities, and educational activities conducted by the educator of each prison ward in order to identify the way in which the inmates, according to their age, criminal record and relationships with their families, have different perceptions, motivations and feelings towards school/educational activities conducted by the Educational Bureau of Giurgiu Prison. The European Council approved on 13 October 1989 the following: "All inmates should have the right to education; this should include basic education, vocational training, creative and cultural activities, physical education and sports, social education and library facilities".*

Keywords: *inmates, perception, motivation, feelings towards school*

1.1 Educational activities in adulthood

The term "education of adults" is relatively recent, although historically, since 1919, in the UK was established the Adult Education Committee.

For centuries persisted the belief that education is achieved in the first period of human life, i.e. in childhood. In fact, it was believed that there are three major sequences of human life: childhood, characterized by education; maturity, when predominates work; and old age, which is thought to be a period of peace and relaxation after so many years of work. Gradually, the industrial labor changed the entire content of human life, education

being extended beyond childhood. Even the strong development of university education in the last century and the beginning of twentieth century, shows that it was necessary to continue training and education in adulthood.

The learning process is defined this days from many perspectives: "transformation of individual psychological consciousness" (Piaget, 1987); "to complete and promote changes of human behavioral organization" (Osterrieth, 1986); "changing the positive value of human rational behavior" (Cerghit, 1994); "process of assimilation and practice of information, values and human actions" (Vintau, 1984) etc.

In fact, the learning process is the continuous construction and reconstruction of an inner pattern of knowledge, appreciation and action in relation to the world in which we live. It is also a humanization process through which individuals acquire new human qualities with which they can establish a relatively stable balance with social, cultural, professional and natural environment. Psychologists have highlighted some particularities of adults involved in learning process. Adults feel the need to be actively involved in determining what and how they will learn, preferring active and not passive learning situation. They rely on their own forces and therefore, prefer to work independently. Adults have also concrete and immediate necessities. They become impatient and nervous when teachers give long speeches on theory, preferring to see the practical application of that theory. They are rather task-centered or problem-centered than topic-centered. This does not mean that they are not interested in theory: for them it is important to see also the application of theory. Adults have an extensive life experience gained over the years which must be “exploited”.

When we refer to education in prison, we actually are referring to education of adults.

1.2 How does the adult perceive the teacher?

It is very difficult to get an accurate picture of the people with whom we develop relationships. In fact, it is impossible to obtain such a picture, we can only tend toward the formation of a correct and more complex image. The difficulty of outlining the other image arises not only from the complexity of the perceived “object”, but also from the characteristics of the subject who perceives and the process of perception of other itself (Chelcea, 1994).

Different persons perceive the same person differently because of the importance they attach to a different trait and, the different evaluation of that trait as positive or negative. A teacher can consider ambition as a quality, while other may consider it a flaw. Therefore, differences may occur in the other perception because of the value system of the perceiver. It was also found that when it comes to the perception of others, people tend to give more importance to negative information than to positive information.

Given how important the accurate perception of a person is, both in order to optimize the communication in educational context and in general, in all social interaction between

individuals, the following question arises: How can we form a perception of other that will reflect as much as possible the objective reality?

One answer will be the following: the achievement of awareness of individual, promotion of openness to others, rising the interest in observing individuals; all these can only be achieved through education.

1.3 Motivation of adult learning

1. The motivation of learning in adulthood is a generalizing notion that includes psychological formations (interests – attitudes) and personality needs (performance/success), which are subject to lifetime structural and content changes.

2. Motivating adults to learn is a psycho-pedagogical and socio-economical process achieved at the level of interference of personality identities (professional, social-civic, parental, and marital), work and learning activities, and habitual dimensions of motivation.

1.4 Adults’ feelings towards learning process

Level of development, which refers to physical, cognitive and personality development and of roles through the entire existence, is considered the first indicator of analysis of adult learning. The starting point is the approaches taken to provide opportunities for learning and development, taking into account the differences between the two notions as they are defined by Pedler et al. (1989): learning means the increasing knowledge or obtaining a higher level of already existing skills, and development means moving into another stage of being or function.

Feelings towards these two process are related to the persons that need to learn, their desire to develop, their extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. The feelings of persons are also related to their experience with learning.

2. Objectives and hypotheses

2.1 The objectives of the research:

The general objective of this study is to investigate the differences in perception of professor-student interaction, feelings towards school and academic/learning motivation of inmates held in Giurgiu Prison, according to their



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age, criminal records and contact with their families.

O.1: To investigate the differences in perception of professor-student interaction and feelings towards school according to the inmates' age.

O.2: To investigate the differences in perception of professor-student interaction and academic/learning motivation according to the inmates' criminal record.

O.3: To investigate the differences in academic/learning motivation according to the inmates' contact with their families.

2.2 The hypotheses of the research:

The general hypothesis of this study is to assume that there are differences in perception of professor-student interaction, feelings towards school and academic/learning motivation of inmates held in Giurgiu Prison, according to their age, criminal records and contact with their families.

I.1. We assume that there are differences in perception of professor-student interaction and feelings towards school according to the inmates' age.

I.1.1: We expect to find differences in perception of professor-student interaction according to the inmates' age.

I.1.2: We expect to find differences in feelings towards school according to the inmates' age.

I.2: We assume that there are differences in perception of professor-student interaction and academic/learning motivation according to the inmates' criminal record.

I.2.1: We expect to find differences in perception of professor-student interaction according to the inmates' criminal record.

I.2.2: We expect to find differences in academic/learning motivation according to the inmates' criminal record.

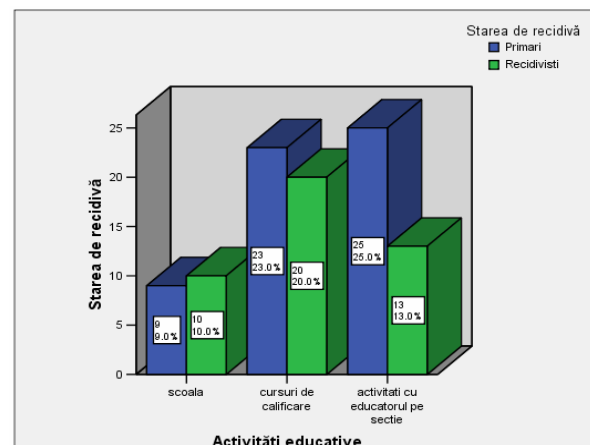
I.3: We assume that there are differences in academic/learning motivation according to the inmates' contact with their families.

I.3.1: We expect to find differences in academic/learning motivation according to the inmates' contact with their families.

3. The method:

3.1 The participants:

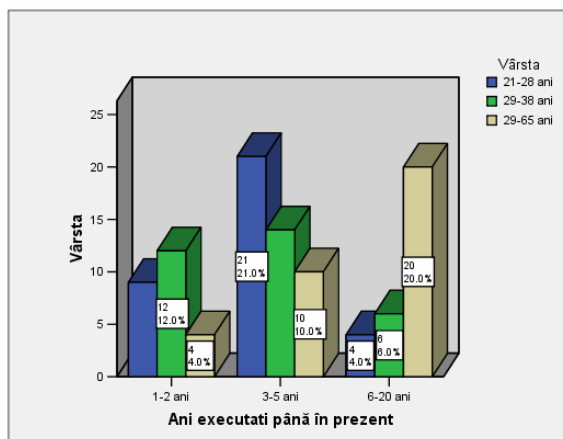
The study has 100 male participants, inmates held at Giurgiu Maximum Security Prison, with ages between 21 and 65 (M=35.16; SD=10.62), which were the direct beneficiaries of educational activities designed and implemented by the Education Bureau of Giurgiu Prison. In the graphs below we can see the characteristics of our group as defined by the following variables: age, years served in prison, criminal record, and types of educational activities attended.



Graph no.1: distribution of inmates by the educational activities and criminal record.

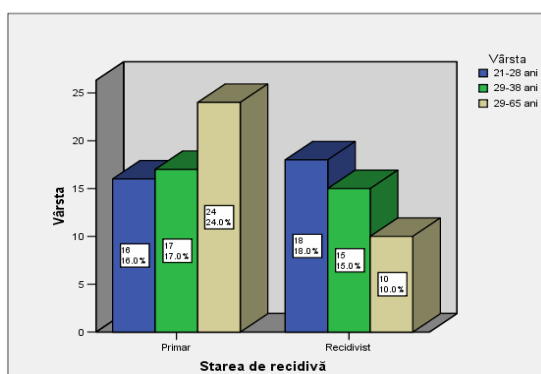
Chart no. 1 shows three groups of activities that are designed and conducted by the Education Bureau of Giurgiu Maximum Security Prison, attended both by first-time imprisoned offenders and recidivists. Thus, we see that: in the group of

inmates attending school, 9 are incarcerated for the first-time and 10 are recidivist; in the group of inmates attending vocational training courses, 23 are incarcerated for the first-time and 20 are recidivists; in the group of inmates participating at educational activities designed and conducted by the educator of prison ward, 25 are incarcerated for the first-time and 13 are recidivists.



Graph no.2: distribution of inmates by age and number of years served in prison.

Graph no.2 shows three age groups, obtained by percentile division of age variable: group of inmates of 21 to 28 years old ($M=24.94$; $SD=1.80$), of which: 9 have served between 1 and 2 years of imprisonment, 21 have served between 3 and 5 years and 4 have served between 6 and 20 years of imprisonment; group of 29-38 years old ($M=33.38$; $SD=3.03$), of which: 12 have executed between 1 and 2 years in prison, 14 have executed between 3 and 5 years and 6 have executed between 6 and 20 years of imprisonment; group of 39-65 years old ($M=47.06$; $SD=8.38$), of which: 4 have executed between 1 and 2 years in prison, 10 have executed between 3 and 5 years and 20 have served between 6 and 20 years of imprisonment.



Graph no.3: distribution of inmates by age and criminal record.

Graph no.3 shows three age groups, obtained by percentile division of age variable: group of inmates of 21 to 28 years old ($M=24.94$; $SD=1.80$), of which: 16 are imprisoned for the first time and 18 are recidivists; group of 29-38 years old ($M=33.38$; $SD=3.03$), of which: 17 are for the first-time in prison, and 15 are recidivists; group of 39-65 years old ($M=47.06$; $SD=8.38$), of which: 24 are incarcerated for the first-time and 10 are recidivists.

3.2. The instruments:

Data were collected by means of the scale: Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction, Feelings about School and Academic intrinsic-extrinsic motivation scale.

Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI) was developed to assess the nature and quality of the interaction between teachers and students and (Fraser, 1996; Wubbels and Levy, 1993). The QTI was developed to assess student perceptions of the four behavior aspects.

Feelings about School is a 24-item measure of positive and negative affect regarding school. It was developed by Essex (1997) based on the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson et al., 1988) as a questionnaire. Each item is rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = not at all to 5 = a lot to indicate the extent to which the child expresses the indicated affect.

Academic intrinsic-extrinsic motivation scale (Waugh, 2001), with two subscales: intrinsic/extrinsic motivation.

Table 1. The Descriptive statistics of the measured variables

Variable	Mean	Std. deviation	Cronbach alpha
Democratic interaction	4.13	1.26	.77
Supportive interaction	4.05	.77	.66
Permissive interaction	2.31	.66	.65
Unpredictable interaction	2.08	.46	.63
Feelings about School	3.76	.58	.69
Academic intrinsic motivation	3.78	.83	.59
Academic extrinsic motivation	4.20	.84	.63

In Table 1 are: means, standard deviation and Alpha coefficient, for the scores obtained by the participants at the scale: Questionnaire on Teacher



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Interaction, Feelings about School and Academic intrinsic-extrinsic motivation scale. As shown in the table below: the highest value was obtained at the scale about conceptions of academic extrinsic motivation. The lowest value was obtained at scale unpredictable interaction with the teacher.

4. The results:

Collected data were computed using program SPSS 13. The results can be observed in tables 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

To test the hypotheses of this study were used: ANOVA statistical procedure and t test for independent samples.

Levene test (table 2) shows an equal dispersion between groups only for variable - Democratic interaction ($p = 0.507 > 0.05$), Permissive interaction ($p = 0.397 > 0.05$), Academic extrinsic motivation ($p = 0.930 > 0.05$), Academic intrinsic motivation ($p = 0.885 > 0.05$), and Feelings about School ($p = 0.937 > 0.05$) but not for other variables as Supportive interaction ($p = 0.04 < 0.05$) and Unpredictable interaction ($p < 0.001 < 0.05$), which the account was taken in subsequent interpretation of results.

Table 2. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Democratic interaction	.687	2	97	.506
Supportive interaction	5.828	2	97	.004
Permissive interaction	.933	2	97	.397
Unpredictable interaction	37.992	2	97	.000
Feelings about School	.065	2	97	.937

Anova table was analyzed (table 2) and showed that there is no significant statistical difference between groups for the variable - teacher's democratic interaction ($p = 0.262 > 0.05$) and

Permissive interaction ($p = 0.766 > 0.05$). There is a big difference between the two mean squares (2.160 and .121) and the other subscale means squares as: teacher's supportive interaction, teacher's unpredictable interaction, academic intrinsic motivation and Feelings about School, which is a significant statistical difference, and because are large samples it can be calculate Bonferoni test (table 4).

Table 3. ANOVA results for the measured teacher's Interaction, inmate's motivation and feelings about school

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Democratic interaction	Between Groups	4,324	2	2.162	1.359	.262
	Within Groups	154.300	97	1.591		
	Total	158.625	99			
Supportive interaction	Between Groups	36.342	2	18.171	75.324	.000
	Within Groups	23.400	97	.241		
	Total	59.742	99			
Permissive interaction	Between Groups	.242	2	.121	.268	.766
	Within Groups	43.860	97	.452		
	Total	44.102	99			
Unpredictable interaction	Between Groups	2.227	2	1.113	5.749	.004
	Within Groups	18.786	97	.194		
	Total	21.012	99			
Feelings about School	Between Groups	5.423	2	2.711	9.120	.000
	Within Groups	28.837	97	.297		
	Total	34.260	99			

As can be seen in Table 4, there are statistically significant differences in the perception of teacher

as supportive, unpredictable, in the intrinsic academic motivation and also, in the feelings towards school. Thus, data show that older inmates perceive the teacher as more supportive than the younger inmates. Also, younger inmates perceive the teacher as unpredictable. We can interpret this result by saying that in prison, older inmates who participate in educational activities are intrinsically motivated than younger inmates, as shown in Table 4. Older inmates have stronger feelings towards school than younger ones. Life experience, longer periods of time spent in prison, participation at several activities conducted by the Education Bureau succeeded to create a sense of trust in teachers/educators. On contrary, the youngsters, having fewer years spent in prison and fewer and poorer educational experiences, weren't able to clearly define their expectations from teachers, having a high level of distrust in them.

Table 4. Class differences in teacher's Interaction, inmates' motivation and feelings about school (Multiple Comparisons with Bonferroni test)

Dependent Variable	(I) NTILES of vârsta	(J) NTILES of vârsta	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Democratic interaction	21-28 ani	29-38 ani	-.22243	.31064	1,000	-.9792	.5344
		29-65 ani	-.50327	.30590	.309	-1,2485	.2420
	29-38 ani	21-28 ani	.22243	.31064	1,000	-.5344	.9792
		29-65 ani	-.28084	.31064	1,000	-1,0376	.4759
Supportive interaction	21-28 ani	29-38 ani	.50327	.30590	.309	-.2420	1,2485
		29-65 ani	.28084	.31064	1,000	-.4759	1,0376
	29-38 ani	21-28 ani	-.09871	.12097	1,000	-.3934	.1960
		29-65 ani	-1,31765*	.11912	.000	-1,6079	-1,0274
Permissive interaction	21-28 ani	29-38 ani	.09871	.12097	1,000	-.1960	.3934
		29-65 ani	-1,21893*	.12097	.000	-1,5136	-.9242
	29-38 ani	21-28 ani	1,31765*	.11912	.000	1,0274	1,6079
		29-65 ani	1,21893*	.12097	.000	.9242	1,5136
Unpredictable interaction	21-28 ani	29-38 ani	-.12099	.16562	1,000	-.5245	.2825
		29-65 ani	-.05348	.16309	1,000	-.4508	.3438
	29-38 ani	21-28 ani	.12099	.16562	1,000	-.2825	.5245
		29-65 ani	.06751	.16562	1,000	-.3360	.4710
Feelings about School	21-28 ani	29-38 ani	.05348	.16309	1,000	-.3438	.4508
		29-65 ani	-.06751	.16562	1,000	-.4710	.3360
	29-38 ani	21-28 ani	.04208	.10839	1,000	-.2220	.3061
		29-65 ani	.33333*	.10673	.007	.0733	.5934
Academic extrinsic motivation	21-28 ani	29-38 ani	-.04208	.10839	1,000	-.3061	.2220
		29-65 ani	.29126*	.10839	.025	.0272	.5553
	29-38 ani	21-28 ani	-.33333*	.10673	.007	-.5934	-.0733
		29-65 ani	-.29126*	.10839	.025	-.5553	-.0272
Academic intrinsic motivation	21-28 ani	29-38 ani	-.06419	.13429	1,000	-.3913	.2630
		29-65 ani	-.51961*	.13224	.000	-.8418	-.1974
	29-38 ani	21-28 ani	.06419	.13429	1,000	-.2630	.3913
		29-65 ani	-.45542*	.13429	.003	-.7826	-.1283
Academic extrinsic motivation	21-28 ani	29-38 ani	.51961*	.13224	.000	.1974	.8418
		29-65 ani	.45542*	.13429	.003	.1283	.7826
	29-38 ani	21-28 ani	-.51961*	.13224	.000	-.8418	-.1974
		29-65 ani	-.45542*	.13429	.003	-.7826	-.1283

In order to test the second hypothesis we used T test for independent samples. According to Table 5, it resulted statistically significant differences. Thus, recidivist inmates perceive the teacher-student relationship with apprehension and mistrust. Their relapse status also highlights their mistrust in education system of which most of them didn't attend it, having, as shown in Table 4, a lower intrinsic and extrinsic motivation compared with inmates with no criminal record. Data points out that the lack of education and

mistrust in education system can be seen as pathways favorable to the development of recidivism. Regarding the activities carried out during detention, the majority states that these activities will not be of much help for them after release from prison. Indeed, ex-prisoners reintegration on the labor market represents a real problem, since in times of economic crisis some firms have restructured and closed their business, on the one hand and on the other hand, former prisoners are rejected when they declare that they are former convicts. To all these is added poverty, alcoholism, unemployment, drug trafficking, the promotion of violence, abuses and discrimination in the media, which are major scourges of Romania and also, parts of criminality risk factors.

Table 5. Mean, standard deviations and T-coefficients for relapse status of inmates in teacher's Interaction, and Academic motivation scale

Scale	relapse status of inmates	Mean	Std. Deviation	T
Democratic interaction	No	4.01	1.34	-1.082
	Yes	4.29	1.15	
Supportive interaction	No	4.14	.81	1.288
	Yes	3.94	.71	
Permissive interaction	No	2.39	.64	1.440
	Yes	2.20	.68	
Unpredictable interaction	No	1.99	.46	-
	Yes	2.21	.42	
Academic extrinsic motivation	No	4.45	.82	3.641*
	Yes	3.86	.77	
Academic intrinsic motivation	No	4.01	.75	3.326*
	Yes	3.48	.85	

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.001 males (n=57); females (n=43)

In order to test the third hypothesis we used T test for independent samples. According to Table 6, it resulted statistically significant differences. Thus, inmates who keep contact with their families have a stronger intrinsic motivation than those who do not maintain contact with their families. This result can be explain by the fact that the family is the fulcrum of all of us, especially in difficult times.

Prison is a pathogenic environment, characterized by the limitation of rights, dramatic lifestyle changes, major difficulties in preserving relationships, all of which requiring the inmates to maximize their coping skills. Internalization of tasks and shift from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation can define a path of rehabilitation as



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long as the inmate recognize his guilt. In this way, educational activities become enjoyable and the perception of teachers/ educators turns into one of support. Thus, the inmates will accept and take advantage of these activities as long as they will perceive them as beneficial. This perception come from the intrinsic desire of individuals to evolve, but also from their family support.

Table 6. Mean, standard deviations and T-coefficients for: Contact with inmate's family for teacher's Interaction, and Academic motivation scale

Scale	Contact with family	Mean	Std. Deviation	T
Academic extrinsic motivation	No	4.28	.80	.935
	Yes	4.12	.88	
Academic intrinsic motivation	No	3.57	.84	-2.649*
	Yes	4.00	.77	
* p < 0.05, **p < 0.001 males (n=57); females (n=43)				

5. Conclusions:

The general objective of this study was to investigate the differences in perception of professor-student interaction, feelings towards school and academic/learning motivation of inmates held in Giurgiu Prison, according to their age, criminal records and contact with their families.

We appreciate that the objectives of this study have been successfully met as the above presented results confirmed the hypotheses.

Compared with younger inmates, the older ones perceive the teacher as more supportive. Also, the older inmates have stronger feelings towards school than younger inmates. On contrary, the younger inmates perceive the teacher as unpredictable. The recidivists perceive the teacher-student relationship with apprehension and mistrust. Their relapse status also highlights their mistrust in education system of which most of them didn't attend it, having a lower intrinsic and

extrinsic motivation compared with inmates with no criminal record.

Inmates who keep contact with their families have a stronger intrinsic motivation than those who do not maintain contact with their families. This result can be explain by the fact that family is the fulcrum of all of us, especially in difficult times.

These results are congruent with the studies of gender and educational level differences in conceptions of learning undertaken by Reinaldo J. Martínez-Fernández (2009), Tynjälä (1999), Entwistle & McCune, (2004), Paul C. Burnett, Hitendra Pillay & Barry C Dart (2008). The most important results of the study are evidence about the role of gender and educational level on the students' conception of learning. Therefore, the findings are limited by their assessments, and further efforts with the use of different scales and methods may expand these findings. The study is based on the legislative framework that regulates the educational and psycho-social activities conducted in Romanian prisons. Thus, according the Law 254/2013 of penal execution and the Law 1/2011 of national education, article 13

Aligned (1) Lifelong learning is a right guaranteed by the law.

Also, the study has as starting point certain researches in the field of education regarding the way in which is perceived the professor (Fraser, 1996; Wubbels and Levy, 1993), but also the learning activity through the quality of motivating the student (Waugh, 2001) and his/her feelings about school (Essex, 1997; Wulfsohn, 2000; Watson, Clark, and Tellegen, 1988).

As further lines of research, we can consider several types of activities and we can create on the basis of the obtained results a project based on career counseling sessions or support groups for inmates who are no longer supported by their families. This study could form the basis of the project as a feasibility study.

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