

THE CAREER AS THE FULFILLMENT OF VOCATION

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Abstract: *Vocation, as an internal force of personality, is accomplished through the choice of a profession, which represents a mean of self-fulfillment for the individual. Lack of correspondence between vocation and profession can lead to failure to adapt and lack of satisfaction, thus, disturbing the balance of one’s personality. Young people’s career choices are based on extrinsic factors (work place stability, salary, social prestige), yet, the role of aptitude or talent is not to be ignored when choosing and pursuing a career.*

Key words: *profession, vocation, vocational conflict, failure to adapt.*

1. THE NEED FOR SELF ACCOMPLISHMENT THROUGH CAREER

From a social perspective, the inner force of the vocation may be fulfilled through career. In this context, the vocation implies the “*preferred professional activity which, in its whole substance, corresponds to the inner model of the individual*” [1]. In reality, the following situation become distinct:

1. **The ideal or desired situation**, is that in which the vocational integration is achieved, which means that the vocation and the career coincide. The superposition of one’s career over the personal “model” leads to an absolute engagement of the individual into his or her professional activity, with both a maximum efficiency and the joy of satisfactions.

Which are the prerequisites for this ideal to be accomplished? When the option is the result of a personal decision, based on an authentic self-knowledge, the chances for the option to be close to the vocation are increased. Consequently, the self-knowledge, the self- image, based on which the individual projects himself or herself into the future, play a decisive role. Thus, the career does no longer represent merely a means of ensuring the subsistence, but also the fulfillment of personality, which identifies with the career. Therefore, the vocational correspondence

becomes a source of satisfaction and equilibrium. The optimal integration within the professional role leads to a maximum of equilibrium, satisfactions and high aspirations. In this case, the professional role fully satisfies the need for affirmation, creation, self-esteem and prestige. Whereas the entire dynamics of personality is nothing more than the expression of the self-quest and self-assertion, we can state that the vocation represents the highest stage of its accomplishment.

2. **The situation of mismatch between the individual and his or her career** is situated at the opposite extreme. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his *Confessions* [2] revealed his own drama: Francueil, a general tax collector, a career that totally disgusted him, employed him. The moment when he resigned from this job, the author suffered from affective disorders and fell sick. The vocational mismatch may become a source of lack of balance for the human personality, it generating the following conditions: failure in adjustment, vocational conflict, vocational frustration, behavioral disorders and lack of school or professional success.

- *The failure in adjustment* is the effect of the incompatibility, disagreement, lack of correspondence between the individual and the selected career for which he or she is training or practices already. “*The Ego wastes itself whenever it does not find a manner to fully*

express itself" [3]. The failure in adjustment finally leads to a gradual disintegration of the Ego.

- *The vocational conflict* appears when the individual is simultaneously stressed by two incompatible requirements. Conflicts may be *inter-subjective* (between internal and external requirements or two external ones: school and family) or *intra-subjective* (when two internal requirements clash, between aptitudes and material interests). Finally, all inner conflicts (intra-subjective) are the expression of some inter-subjective conflicts. The vocational conflict is the conflict between the role played by the individual and his or her personality, convictions and aptitudes, in other words, between the external model (offered by the role) and the inner model (a configuration of his or her own personality). The professional activity may become a source for conflict since the individual tends to accomplish his or her external model (and play his/her social role as well as he/she can), but his or her interiority (aptitudes, abilities, interests) does not hold the capacity of molding on the external model, which gradually leads to exhaustion.

- *The vocational frustration* is tightly connected to the vocational conflict, they inducing reciprocally. The frustration is "*the physical state of dissatisfaction and feeling of futility, due to the subjective incapacity or the objective impossibility of achieving a certain goal*" [4]. Frustration has three components: a frustrating situation, a state of frustration and an answer to frustration. The blockage of the goals to be achieved, the deceit of expectations and the failures generate demobilizing feelings, resentments, physical tension and the loss of self-confidence. Any frustration represents a psychological stress and releases defending mechanisms of the Ego. Anger, fear and anxiety are forgotten or camouflaged by two behavioral manifestations: fantasy and compensation. Fantasy leads to the accomplishment of the frustrated desires through imagination, while compensation consists of hiding the weakness by the over-accomplishment of another desire. The research in this respect (L.F.Shaffer, E.J.Shaben, 1956), show that the majority of the investigated subjects used to have fantasies

about vocational successes. In case of compensation, the subject adopts a type of behavior that creates the illusion of success. For example, a young woman who had failed the entrance examination to the Theater and Film Academy started a career in Physical Education, imagining a kind of theater acting in performing physical exercises. Other manners to answer the vocational frustration are the aggressiveness and the indifference. Even though frustration and the vocational conflict do not always become manifest, they manage to destabilize the human personality, negatively influencing his/her social and professional integration.

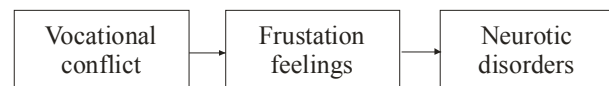


Fig. 1 Psychological consequences of the vocational conflict

The destabilization of personality may be defined as an undermining of the mental health and the beginning of behavioral disorders: psychical instability, irascibility, revolt spirit, antisocial acts etc. this is the extreme limit of the vocational mismatch, able to shatter the very physical and psychical integrity of an individual. In between these two contrasting situations (positive and negative) described above, there lies a scale of various other instances, which may be found in reality and which express the relation between aspiration and vocation or, that type of behavior that is adopted by each of us, in relation with the self and own existence.

The level of aspiration in each individual is the result of both his/her inner structure and the models provided by society. Individual who become distinct may be grouped as follows:

a) *Subjects with an optimal vocational behavior*— characterized by a high aspiration-level, and by a permanent search for goals. These people are highly trained in their professional activity, which they see as a vital necessity, meant to be satisfied;

b) *The vocational marginal* - with fluctuating satisfactions and aspiration levels, yet who can be ascendingly trained via favorable mobiles;

c) *The indifferent* - who do not hold a professional ideal and look for their satisfactions in other activities than professional;

d) *The revolted* - the revolt appears in those subjects who are permanently dissatisfied and in conflict with the surrounding world and themselves.

2. THE ADOLESCENTS AND THE MILITARY CAREER

A major issue, which the unstable and insecure contemporary world brings to attention, is that of the professional insertion of young people. Starting from the premise that young people represent the most valuable treasure of a society, and the most valuable human resource of the future, the society cannot afford to neglect the professional insertion process, since such an omission might have devastating effects on a long and medium range terms. As the importance of professional orientation becomes more acute, the demand for compatibility between the professional training and the dynamics of the labor market increases. The orientation and directions of economic policies, of social protection, education and training must take into account the profound mutations, which the contemporary society faces, and diminish the perturbations and the dysfunctions with destabilizing, negative effect over the young people. Besides the social losses, caused by a deficient valorization of the human potential of thinking and acting, we witness dysfunctions in the socializing process of young people, a damaging of the social integration process and a manifestation of frustration phenomena and disordered behaviors. A portrait of the socio-professionally-not-integrated young person would very suggestive: the lack of accomplishment of his human and professional aspirations may lead to the formation of an altered self-perception. The young person may feel like an outcast, futile, disoriented, pushed towards a very unsafe lifestyle, forced to accept black market labor offers. Out of these, we obtain a distorted personality, unable to engage into life or professional projects.

Peter Grootings [5], the coordinator of a

study on young people, under the European Center for Research and Documentation Coordination in Social Sciences from Vienna, observes the existence of a mismatch between the qualifications, expectations and aspirations of young people and the realities of the contemporary labor market's demands. In other words, a mismatch between the education products and the demands of the labor market. Among the most serious outcomes of this mismatch are the unemployment and the underemployment (the employment of young people with high qualifications in positions requiring inferior qualifications). The underemployment, in turn, highlights another negative phenomenon: the super-education of new generations, who represent the stored educational product, unable to find an adequate and complete use on the labor market" [6].

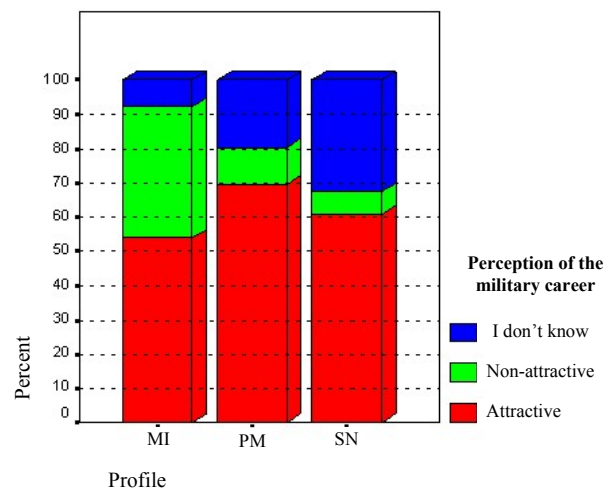


Fig. 2 Perception of the military career

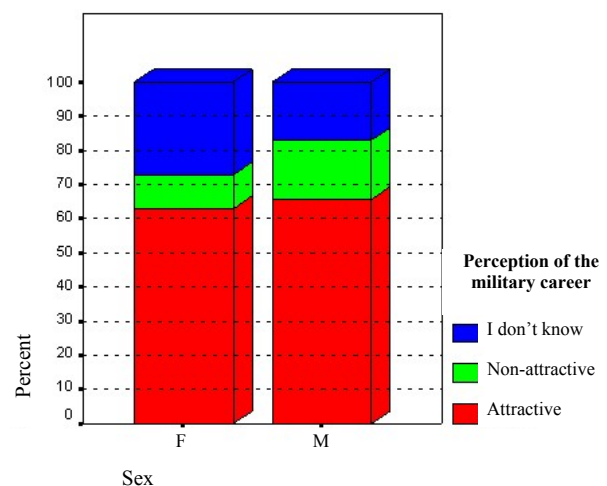


Fig. 3 Perception of the military career

The present study was achieved on a sample of 105 adolescents, aged between 18-19, pupils in their twelfth grade, at a national college from Brasov.

When asked about their perception of the military career in the actual context of the labor market offers, 50% of the interviewed appreciated it as attractive.

Nevertheless, when declaring their real professional option, at the end of their studies, the young people's choices were tightly connected to the specialization provided by the highschool they were about to graduate, which means that the school option of each of them had been made at the very beginning of their highschool entrance.

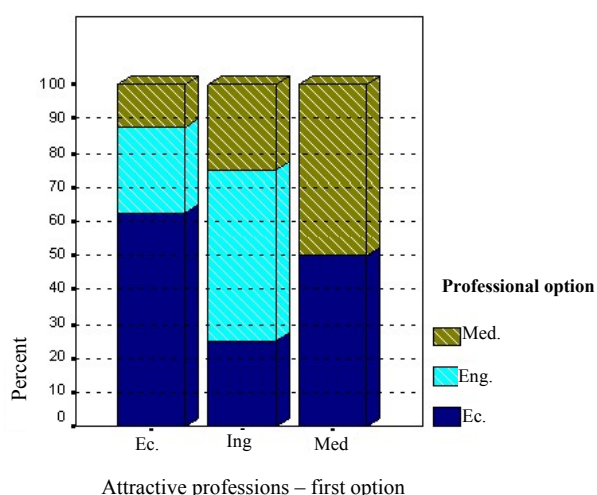


Fig. 4 Professional option

Thus, those attending the courses of the Mathematics - Computer Sciences (MI) profile, opted for the economist career (62%), those attending the specialization Environment Protection (PM) chose the engineering career (50%), and those attending the Nature Sciences (SN) specialization selected the medical career (50%).

The remaining young people, still undecided, considered the military career as a possible option. In this context, the attractiveness of the military career is related to rather a positive stereotype, describing the military institution, while the career selection is made based on extrinsic motivations consisting of: the safety of the workplace, payment and social prestige.

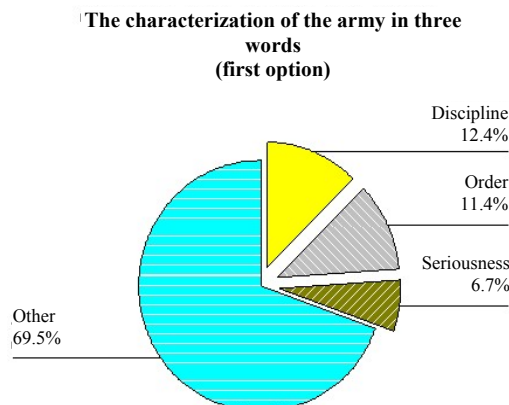


Fig. 5 The characterization of the army in three words

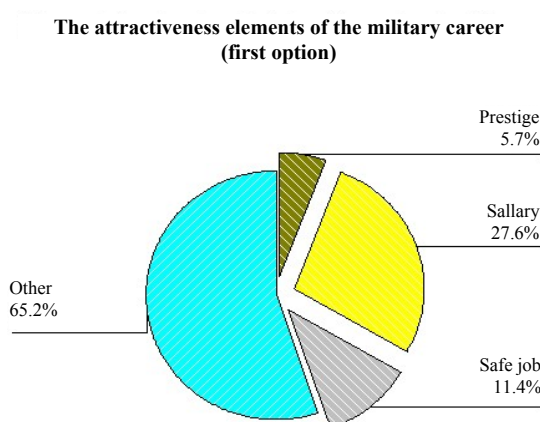


Fig. 6 The attractiveness elements of the military career

However, young people considered that aptitudes were very important in selecting and practicing of a career. 55% of the questioned subjects placed aptitudes on a very high rank. The career selection at graduation from the highschool was conditioned by and based on aptitudes for 64.8% of the subjects and on an extrinsic motivation for the remaining.

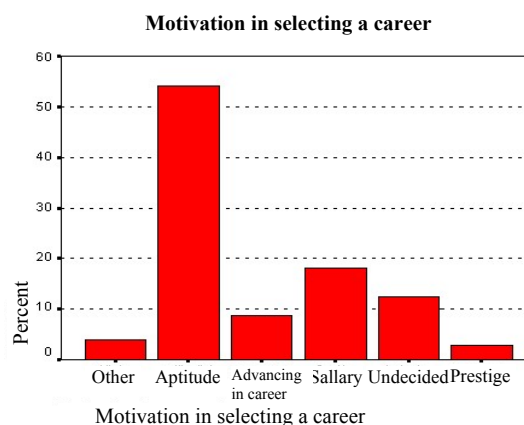


Fig. 7 Motivation in selecting a career

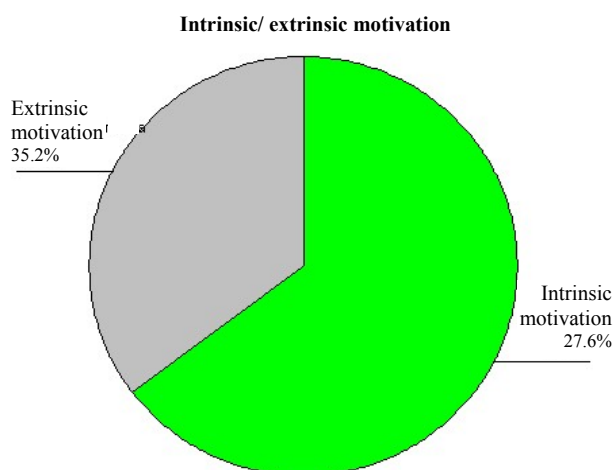


Fig. 8 Intrinsic/extrinsic motivation

Although the results of the study cannot be extrapolated over a larger population due to the reduced size of the sample, the following conclusion may result:

1. The social perception of the adolescent over the military institution and profession is tightly connected to the existence of a positive stereotype in the social space, and it is not based on knowledge of the real characteristics of the military career, with its challenges and minuses.

2. The school option, in case of highschool studies, is made from the perspective of selecting a future career, due to a large spectrum of offers provided by the educational system.

3. The pragmatism of the society and the dynamics of the socio-professional structures

force the young people to select a career able to offer them stability and good material gains. However, the awareness of the necessity of aptitudes in selecting and practicing a career and implicitly in self-accomplishment mirrors the fact that this generally human necessity - the need of self-accomplishment - cannot be neglected.

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