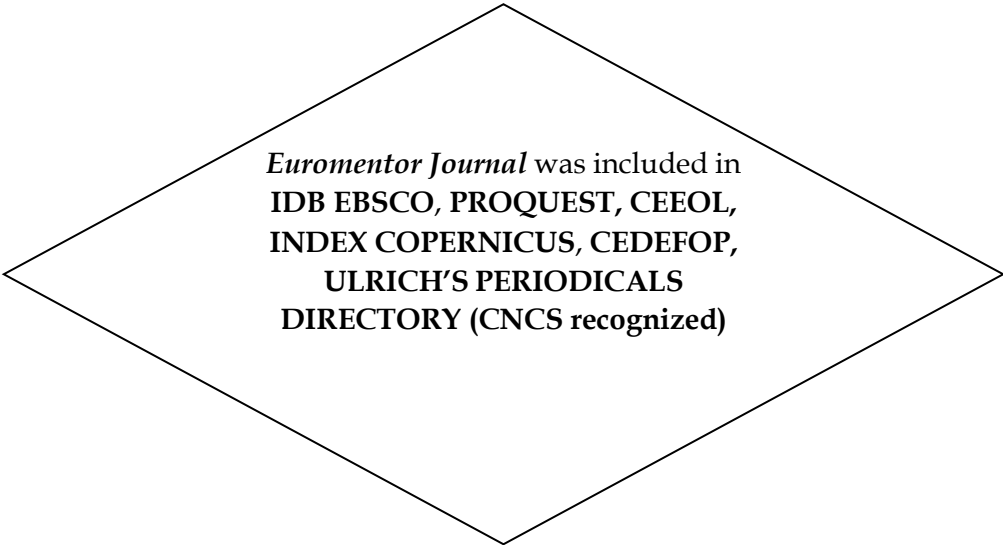


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# AN ANALYSIS OF RAMAYANA AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL THROUGHOUT THE AGES IN INDIAN CIVILIZATION

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**Abstract:** *The Rama legends are present, in some form or other, in many Asian countries: China, Tibet, East Turkestan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaya, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and Burma. Scholars have considered them an “instrument of historical contact and cultural transmission between India and Asia” (S.N. Desai, 1970). Valmiki’s Ramayana can be interpreted in many ways, from a religious point of view, as a perfect embodiment of the values of dharma in Hindu society, to the historicist interpretation of Romila Thapar who sees Ramayana as proof of the victory of kingship (Ayodhya) over clan society (Romila Thapar, 2013).*

*As a Japanologist familiarized with the influence of Confucianism in Asia, I am inclined to point out the similarity between the pivotal concepts of the Indian and Chinese worldviews: the concept of dharma with all its moral ramifications, and the ethical principles and concepts of Confucianism, which had the same role of legitimizing and regulating kingship and power in ancient China, Japan, Korea and other places in Asia.*

*Moreover, the fact that this pan-Indian story of Rama is found both in the Dravidian speaking south and the Sanskrit north, in both folk and high literary culture, may be pointing to a reality that is obscured by our present view of history: the educational value.*

**Keywords:** *Ramayana, dharma, itihasa, education, history*

## 1. Historical approach to Ramayana

**Indian views on the Ramayana.** In terms of Western philosophical and literary criticism, *Ramayana* can be considered an epic, a “National epic”, or an “epic of growth”<sup>1</sup>, while in the Indian tradition it is considered

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<sup>1</sup> Chandra Gopal Bayen, “Epic *Ramayana*: Sociological Thought, Culture & Ancient Indian Science”, in *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention*, vol. 1, issue 6/2014 (482-489), p 482. The author motivates this attribution to the epic genre with *Ramayana*’s perfect correspondence to Aristotle’s requirements that the epic “should be based on a single action, one that is a complete whole in itself, with a beginning, middle, and end, so as to enable to work to produce its own proper pleasure

history, belonging to the *Itihasang Puratanam* Vedic lineage<sup>2</sup>. *Ramayana's* importance as a national, pan-Indian repository of historical tradition, philosophical conceptions, sensibility, social customs, etc., is mirrored also by the number of versions and translations it induced. The story was transposed by ancient poets in various other philosophical points of view, such as *Advaita Ramayana*, *Adhyatma Ramayana* or *Yogabashistha Ramayana*, and was later translated in modern Indian languages, or in other non-Indian languages like Cambodian, Indonesian, Filipino, Thai, Burmese, Malaysian, etc.<sup>3</sup>

How was possible the spreading of so many legends and versions pertaining to this epic (the most famous version, the Sanskrit Vālmīki epic, was crystallized around the fifth century B.C.)? For one reason, the telling, enactment and interpretation of epic stories has been an important cultural activity in India for the past three thousand years, a means of transmitting ethical concepts as well as myths, of ultimately educating the people. "The two great epic accounts that stem from South Asian cultural sources are the *Māhābharata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which are still of great importance in popular thought. ... Via the *Daśaratha Jātaka* (in Pali) the *Rāmāyaṇa* echoes penetrated even Sino-Japanese Buddhist writing."<sup>4</sup>

*Ramayana*, as a national epic, has united all the aspects of Indian culture and all the peoples of the subcontinent. It was written and rewritten by many ancient poets, translated in all the Indian languages. Valmiki's 5<sup>th</sup> century BC version consists of 24,000 verses, divided in 7 Books (*kandas*), 500 Cantos (*sarga*) and the poetic metre was called the 32 syllable *anustubha* (*anustubh* meaning 'inventive', 'elegant', 'knowledgeful').

**Ramayana outside India:** about 300 versions of *Ramayana* exist outside India, the most representative to each of the neighbouring countries being: *Yama Zatdaw* in Myanmar, *Reamker* in Cambodia, *Ramakien* in Thailand, *Kakawin Ramayana* in Indonesia, *Phra Lak Phra Lam* in Laos, *Hikayat Seri Rama* in Malaysia, *Maharadia Lawana* in the Philippines, while in Nepal the Bhasa version called *Siddhi Ramayan* was

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with all the organic unity of a living creature", apud Ingram Baywater's translation of Aristoteles' *Poetics*.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 482-483a

<sup>4</sup> Romila Thapar, *The Past before Us. Historical Traditions of Early North India*, Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2013, p. xxxvii-xxxviii



written during the Bhasa renaissance era and the Khas language (later called "Nepali") version of *Bhanubhaktako Ramayan* marked the first epic written in the language. In China the Ramayana legends are found in several manuscripts from Dunhuang. Regarding the characteristics of this transmission of the epic in South-East Asia, Indian researcher Santosh Desai says that, although "The Rama legend—rather legends—are prevalent in almost all countries of Asia, namely China, Tibet, East Turkestan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaya, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, and Burma ... the cultural contact mediated by the famous epic was by no means confined to the Brahmanical values which were upheld by Vālmīki in the Sanskrit *Rāmāyaṇa* and shared by the upper strata of Hindu society. The Rama legends prevalent in Asia, except those in China, do not agree in content and emphasis with the Vālmīki version. A close examination of the Rama story in India itself reveals that in addition to the Vālmīki version, a number of Rama legends, differing from the Valmiki story, were prevalent in vernacular and Jain Literature all over the country. All these versions provided the diverse and complex source material for the Ramayanic legends of Asia. Brahmanical and non-Brahmanical elements appeared in different mixtures and emphasis. While China accepted the more orthodox ethical values, the countries of Southeast Asia adopted *Rāmāyaṇa* mostly for the epic qualities of romance, adventure, and valor."<sup>5</sup>

### **Ramayana and Dharma**

**What is *dharma*?** "Dharma is the greatest and the most valuable contribution to humanity by Bharata Varsha, our beloved Motherland. On account of its antiquity, utility and universality the very mention of that word rouses the conscience of an individual in this land" – is the opinion of Sri M. Rama Jois, retired Supreme Court Judge of Punjab, expressed in his essay *Dharma – The Global Ethic*, published in 2018 ([DHARMA the global ethic \(vhp-america.org\)](http://DHARMA_the_global_ethic(vhp-america.org))). In the Hindu philosophy of life *dharma* is one of the *trivarga* (objectives of life): *kama* (love), *artha* (wealth) and *dharma* (righteousness), and without it, the first two are meaningless. However, *dharma* is much more than a moral code, righteousness or justice. In the Vedic literature it is almost a technical term used to describe the "invincible power of Nature which upholds existence. [dharma]

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<sup>5</sup> N. Santosh Desai, "Ramayana – An Instrument of Historical Contact and Cultural Transmission between India and Asia", in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 30, Issue 1, Nov. 1970, (5-20), p. 5

maintains evolution and forms the very basis of cosmic life. It supports all that is helpful for evolution and discourages all that is opposed to it.”<sup>6</sup>

### **The Hindu, philosophical interpretation of Ramayana**

Many passages in the *Ramayana* deal with the application of *dharma*, seen as Natural Law, or governing force of the universe. Rama, the hero, is described as an embodiment of *dharma*. According to William Sands, a disciple of Maharishi, “*Ramayana* is a reliable guide for proper living and proper behaviour.”<sup>7</sup>

The famous Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1918-2008), founder of the transcendental meditation technique and Maharishi University of management in Iowa, and the Beatles’ spiritual adviser, considered that *Ramayana* has a deeper value when considered in relation to the whole Vedic literature. For him, Vedic literature was “much more than a collection of books on a variety of topics; it is the expression of the most fundamental level of Nature’s functioning, the self-interacting dynamics of a Unified Field of Pure Consciousness.”<sup>8</sup> According to Maharishi, the entire universe is the expression of an “unbounded field of pure intelligence”, that he described as “self-referral consciousness”, self-referral because it is eternally self-knowing and self-sufficient – it has no reference to anything outside itself<sup>9</sup>. Maharishi was a physicist turned spiritual leader, but in the Vedic language this self-referral consciousness is called *atman*, and this *atman* is available to our human awareness. In his opinion this is the practical significance of *dharma* in the *Ramayana*.

The idea that individuals can identify themselves with the total potential of Natural Law is a startling concept for the western critics because the Western scientific tradition studies the laws of nature as objective phenomena and to obtain ‘supernatural powers’ (*siddhi*) through meditation is not acceptable in scientific thought. Thus, we come to the problem of Rama’s divinity.

Throughout the epic, prince Rama performs deeds of super-human prowess, and is often called “the ruler of the universe”, ‘ruler of the three

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<sup>6</sup> Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, *On the Bhagavad Gita: A New Translation and Commentary Chapters 1-6*, Baltimore: Penguin Classics, 1969, p. 26, quoted in William F. Sands, “Natural Law in the Valmiki Ramayan in the Light of Maharishi Vedic Science and Technology”, in *Maharishi Science and Vedic Science*, Vol. 8, no. 1 (1998), p. 8

<sup>7</sup> Sands, op. cit., p. 6

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem.

worlds” (Book 5, Canto 51, verse 43). Rama as an embodiment of *dharma* – seen as the Natural Law, is a trope that appears all through the epic: he is ‘the knower of the supreme dharma’ (*paramadharmagya*), or ‘the one whose self (*atman*) is firmly established in dharma’. His divine status is emphasized in the southern versions of the epic, in the Bala, Yuddha and Uttara Books (*kandas*). In the *Yuddhakanda* Hanuman warns Rama’s enemy, Ravana, of Rama’s powers:

“Easily withdrawing all the worlds together with all Beings, both moving and unmoving, the mighty Ram is capable of creating them again.”<sup>10</sup>

### **Western interpretations of Ramayana**

Western scholars, on the other hand, have a tendency to rationalize things. When faced with the complicated narrative structure, the magicians, talking beasts and ogres that populate the epic they “displayed, almost invariably, a characteristic uneasiness ... and sought to identify an ‘epic nucleus’ ... embedded within the ample tapestry of the Rāmāyaṇa”<sup>11</sup>.

A philological interpretation of an ancient text presupposes “an effort ‘to understand the text at first as well as, and then even better than, its author’ (Schleiermacher 1997:112). It is an effort to theorize about the “original nucleus” of a text – to distinguish between the “old” and the “new”, the “original” and the “spurious” sections of a text, to reconstruct – psychologically and historically – the original author’s mind.”<sup>12</sup>

At the origin of today’s higher criticism that was operated on the *Ramayana* by western critics is a German author, Friedrich August Wolf (1754-1824), who looked with skepticism at ancient literary works. In 1795, he published *Prolegomena ad Homerum, sive De operum Homericorum prisca et genuina forma variisque mutationibus et probabili ratione emandandi* where he challenged the notion that Homer wrote the Iliad or the Odyssey, considering that they were gradually built in the course of time by storytellers and wandering Greek minstrels, and could not be ascribed to any one author.

Regarding the *Ramayana*, in 1893, Hermann Jacobi published the study *Das Ramayana: Geschichte und Inhalt nebst Concordanz der Gedruckten*

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<sup>10</sup> Sands, op. cit., p. 18

<sup>11</sup> P. 29

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, p. 33. The reference to Schleiermacher is to his *Hermeneutics: the handwritten manuscripts*, by Schleiermacher, Friedrich, 1768-1834, ed. By H. Kimmeler

*Recensionen*,<sup>13</sup> where he expressed the view that Rama was originally conceived as a purely human, albeit extraordinarily gifted prince of Ayodhya. Other western critics also assumed that Rama's divine status was superimposed during the text's long history, while it was transmitted by itinerant storytellers who wanted to embellish their narrative or simply expressed their own system of beliefs. Thus Rama's 'superpowers' are dismissed by modern critics as hyperbole and we see here the fundamental difference between this interpretation and Sri Maharishi's spiritual and deeply philosophical interpretation of Rama as an embodiment of *dharma*.

Indeed, the western approach is much more concrete, simplifying and ordering the elements that pertain to the visible social domain. John Brockington's study, *The Concept of Dharma in the Ramayana*, analyses the 1100 or more occurrences of the term *dharma* and other closely related terms. He found out that two thirds of the occurrences have "the sense of 'propriety' or 'morality'", while "the second most frequent sense in the text is that of 'caste' or 'personal duty'", as the compounds *ksatradharma* (the duty of the nobility), *rajadharma* (the duty of the king) and *svadharma* (one's duty) show<sup>14</sup>.

### **Modern Indian readings of the Ramayana**

It was often claimed by Western scholars that India lacks historical writing in the sense familiar to us from the study of classic civilizations in the Middle east or Europe, but Indian historian Romila Thapar asked in her book, *The Past Before Us*, the important question of recognizing the historical sense of societies whose past is recorded in ways very different from European conventions. Analysing the *itihasa* traditions of North India Thapar showed that the body of classical Indian literature may reveal a consciousness of history embedded in the narrative. However, the history recorded in such texts as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* is of a different type - less concerned with presenting and legitimizing persons and events than with presenting a picture of traditions striving to retain legitimacy and continuity amid social change. Looking at texts from approx. 1000 BCE to 1400 CE, Thapar delineated three distinct historical

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<sup>13</sup> Hermann Jacobi, *Das Ramayana: Geschichte und Inhalt nebst Concordanz der Gedruckten Recensionen*, Bonn: Friedrich Cohen, 1893, accessed at [Das Ramayana : Jacobi, Hermann : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming: Internet Archive](#)

<sup>14</sup> J. Brockington, "The Concept of Dharma in the Ramayana", in *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, No. 32, (655-670), 2004, p. 658

traditions: an Itihasa-Purana tradition of Brahman authors; a tradition composed mainly by Buddhist and Jain scholars; and a popular bardic tradition. She analysed the Vedic texts, the epics, the Buddhist canon and monastic chronicles, inscriptions, regional accounts, and royal biographies and dramas not as sources of factual data but as genres that disclose how Indians of ancient times represented their own past to themselves.

In a manner similar to René Girard's demonstration of how one can find in myths and literary texts arguments for recreating an anthropological history of mankind, Romila Thapar demonstrates in her book that Indian society has always had an interest in its own past, however different might the expression of that interest be from the modern forms of historical writing and sensibility. She uses specific concepts on history, such as embedded versus externalized history and the transition from clan-based society to state or kingship-based society.

In Part Five of her book, *The Historical Tradition Externalized*, using the concepts of embedded versus externalized history or historical tradition, she presents the value of biography as historical writing, or that of the inscriptions found throughout the Gupta state as official histories, as well as the specifically Indian *Vamśāvalīs*, or "Chronicles of Place and Person" and their claims as history. Another important concept of her historical approach is the transition from lineage-based clan society to state, or kingdom society, which in her opinion was completed by the time of the Gupta period. At the same time with this process there emerged a more externalized and self-conscious historical tradition.

Romila Thapar finds in the Valmiki *Ramayana's* descriptions of the two states, Ayodhya and Ravana's island-city of Lanka, a clash between two types of social organizations, the kingship of Ayodhya, a superior form of organization, versus the chiefship of the *raksasas* and *vanaras*, forest dwellers living in hunter style and involved in magic, which allows them to assume various forms<sup>15</sup>. "The demonizing of the *raksasas* and an association with magic could be born out of fear of the enemy. The *raksasas* have the characteristics of supernatural beings but can more often, perhaps, be viewed as fantasized aliens."<sup>16</sup>

This concept of transition from a type of society to another can be well matched to the older, *Ramayana-as-embodiment-of-dharma* type of approach. If Rama, the epitome of a good king, is viewed also as the

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<sup>15</sup> Thapar, op. cit., pp. 233-241

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem, p. 234

embodiment of all *dharma* values, Ravana - the evil king of Lanka, can be perceived as lacking *dharma* values altogether.

Her book is a reconceptualization of India's early history and of what it means to look for history from pre-modern sources. The ancient source texts become themselves central historical questions, if we think of how different texts craft different relationships to the past. These ancient texts can offer not only information but also consciousness of information, value judgment and understanding of the past. This emic approach on the past is necessary, because to treat sources as mere informants is unjust. They offer both reflection upon and congealed experience of their history.

### **The Western conception of the epic versus the Indian conception of art in the genre of *kavya/itihasa* and the relevance for education**

The great epics of Western tradition, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, speak of war, of the prowess and cunning of great heroes. Shakespeare's tragedies and historical plays, as well as the ancient Greek tragedies, also focus on the public figures of kings, dictators, on issues of war and peace. When approaching the ancient writings of India, the *Itihasa Purana* and the literary works (both poems and prose) known as *kāvya-s*<sup>17</sup>, Western critics tended to equate them with Western epics. However, Indian scholars like Coomaraswami explained the connection between poetry/art (*kāvya*, like the *Ramayana*) and yoga. In the essay, *The Theory of Art in Asia* (1934), Coomaraswamy demonstrated the formal steps in the yoga of creating a work of art: freeing himself by yoga practices of the worldly emotions the artist visualizes the form, sees like in a dream the future work of art and identifies himself with it. The form thus known to him is the model from which the artist proceeds to execution in stone, pigment or other material<sup>18</sup>. Similarly, "Vālmiki, although he was already familiar with the story of Rāma, before composing his own Rāmāyaṇa sought to realize it more profoundly, and seating himself with his face towards the East and sipping water according to rule (i. e. ceremonial purification), he set himself to yoga-contemplation of his theme. By virtue of his yoga-power he clearly saw before him Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā,

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<sup>17</sup> The term refers to the courtly literature and Valmiki is considered to be *ādikavi*, the 'first poet', just like 'om' is the foremost syllable of the universe. In the Vedic language, however, *kavi* had a more mystical meaning, referring to a 'seer of vibration and light' (*Bhagavad Gita*).

<sup>18</sup> Manjushree, Hegde, *Reclaiming the Ramayana - Disentangling the Discourses. Proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Swadeshi Indology Conference, Infinity Foundation India, 2018*, p. 120

and Daśaratha, together with his wives, in his kingdom laughing, talking, acting and moving as if in real life ... by yoga-power that righteous one beheld all that had come to pass, and all that was to come to pass in the future .... And having truly seen all by virtue of his concentration, the generous sage began the setting forth of the history of Rāma”<sup>19</sup>.

Thus, the poet starts his writing process with tapas, or ascetic practices, and the whole process of artistic creation is a highly spiritual one. Instruction or a political agenda, the motivation of a certain social policy is not the primary purpose of literature in ancient India.

### **The significance of *Ramayana* in modern India**

Regarding the assimilation of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* (of *itihasa* in general) with the Western epics, Sanskrit scholars like Dr. V. Raghavan, have always cautioned: “To place the two Indian epics on a par with Homer or Virgil is to ignore how the Indian poems have been adored and how they have moulded the character and faith of the people”<sup>20</sup>. Indeed, if we search the large body of critical literature written in India about the *Ramayana*, excluding the highly specialized works of the Sanskrit scholars, there are many essays that extoll the virtues of Rama, and the importance of the work for the whole Indian society.

Indians still celebrate the birth of Rāma with fasting, prayers and recitations of the the text, and commemorate Rāma’s return from exile to Ayodhyā; the nine nights of the Navarātri Festival see a re-enactment of the *Rāmāyaṇa* – and on the tenth night an effigy of Rāvaṇa is burnt symbolically to remember Rāma’s victory.

In Coomaraswamy’s words, “to be such a man as Rāma, such a wife as Sītā, rather than to express ‘oneself’, is the aim [of every Indian]”<sup>21</sup> (Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Shiva*, 1918).

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<sup>19</sup> Ibidem.

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# NAVIGATING POLITICAL LANDSCAPE: BLENDED LEARNING AS THE METAPHORICAL BRIDGE TO INFORMED CITIZENSHIP

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***Abstract:** The article delves into the metaphorical concept of blended learning as a bridge to informed citizenship in the dynamic realm of politics. The study aims to explore how blended learning, a modern educational approach, can serve as a metaphorical bridge, connecting citizens to comprehensive political understanding. Employing comprehensive methodology involving metaphor analysis and educational research methods, this study sheds light on the transformative potential of blended learning in fostering informed citizenship.*

*The metaphorical bridge of blended learning gains further depth when considering its structural aspects. The metaphor extends to the idea of overcoming obstacles. Bridges are engineered to span gaps and surmount obstacles, much like blended learning addresses barriers that hinder political education. By providing access to a wealth of information sources, blended learning empowers citizens to surmount challenges posed by limited information access and varying learning styles.*

***Keywords:** blended learning, metaphor, informed citizenship, educational approach, political understanding*

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Blended learning, often hailed as a pioneering educational methodology, combines traditional classroom instruction with digital resources. Blended learning bridges the gap between formal education and the evolving demands of political engagement, just as a bridge facilitates movement between separate lands. This metaphor underscores the role of education as a conduit, enabling citizens to cross over from a state of passive observation to active participation in shaping their political realities.

The metaphorical bridge of blended learning gains further depth when considering its structural aspects. Like a bridge's components supporting safe passage, blended learning encompasses diverse learning modes—online resources, face-to-face interactions, and virtual discussions—providing citizens with a robust foundation for comprehending the complexities of politics.

The problem of the introduction of blended learning was discussed by foreign and domestic scientists at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thus, the American Society for Learning and Development in 2003 saw blended learning as one of the best trends.

A lot of researchers (M. Mokhova, A. Nazarenko, M. Orlova, N. Lomonosova, M. Tatorynova, C. Tytova, V. Fanday, Kondakova M.L., Latypova E.V.<sup>1</sup>, Tkachuk G.V.<sup>2</sup>) and foreign (I. Allen, K. Bonk, L. Galverson, D. Garrison, J. Heap<sup>3</sup>, C. Graham, M. Gruber, C. Dziuban, K. Christensen, R. Larsen, G. Mayer, K. Manwaring, A. Norberg, K. Sprin, H. Stucker, D. Traxler), dedicated their works to the issues of theory and practice of blended learning. Principles of blended learning became part of the scientific interests of such Ukrainian scientists as K. Bugaichuk, S.

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<sup>1</sup> Kondakova M.L., Latypova E.V. *Mixed training: the leading educational technologies of the present time Herald of education*. 2013. No. 9 (27). P. 54–64

<sup>2</sup> Tkachuk G.V. *Blended learning and features use of the rotational model in education process Information technologies in education*. 2017. No. 4 (33). C. 143–156

<sup>3</sup> Heap J. Conversation analysis methods in researching language and education // *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*. Vol. 8: Research Methods in Language and Education / N.H. Hornberger, D. Corson (Eds.). Dordrecht; Boston; London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997. – P. 217 – 225.

Berezenska, O. Kolgatin, V. Kukharenko<sup>4</sup>, M. Oliynyk, N. Rashevskaya, O. Spirin, E. Smirnova-Trybulska, A. Striuk, H. Tkachuk, Yu. Trius, M. Umryk.

The term of "blended learning" was introduced and defined by researchers S. Bonk and S. Graham in 2006 after the publication of the "Handbook of Blended Learning". It should be noted that along with the term "blended learning" the concept is used "hybrid training", "combined training", "flexible training", which are considered synonymous. The words "hybrid", "combined", "flexible" have equivalents in the English language, such as "hybrid", "combined" and "flexible".

In the Recommendations on the implementation of mixed education in institutions of professional pre-higher and higher education, it is determined that there is mixed learning approach, pedagogical and technological model, a method that, along with online technologies, relies on direct interaction between students and teachers in the classroom.<sup>5</sup>

Analyzing approaches to defining the concept of "blended learning", we see that it is considered as a teaching system, a model, a method, a mixture of learning methods and strategies, a form of learning and a program. But what is common is what is at the base lies the interaction of subjects in the educational process by combining different types of learning, such as distance (online) and traditional (offline), because most scientists adhere to the definition that indicates that blended learning is a process of acquiring knowledge, skills and skills, which is accompanied by a combination of different learning technologies<sup>6</sup>. We fully agree that any training cannot exist in its pure form, but must be an effective combination of various technologies, which will significantly increase the effectiveness

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<sup>4</sup> Theory and practice of blended learning: monograph / V.M. Kuharenko and others. Kharkiv, 2016. 284 p

<sup>5</sup> *Recommendations on the implementation of mixed education in institutions of professional pre-higher and higher education* URL: <https://mon.gov.ua/storage/app/media/vishchaosvita/2020/zmyshene%20navchanny/zmishanenavchanniabookletsread%20s-2.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> L. Shanaieva-Tsymbal, S., Kachmarchyk, S., Khrystiuk, *Using blended learning technology in foreign language communicative competence forming of future International relations specialists*. Revista Romaneasca pentru Educatie Multidimensional. -2019, Volume 11, Issue 4, p.84-99.

<https://lumenpublishing.com/journals/index.php/rr/article/view/1555/pdf>

of training. When choosing forms of education, one should take into account the specifics of the educational discipline, the spatial arrangement of students, material and technical equipment and support, the level of digital competence of the teacher and students, and the study schedule<sup>7</sup>.

Based on the analysis of scientific literature and practical experiences of teachers we summarized the task of blended learning in institutions of higher education:

- expansion of students' educational opportunities due to availability and flexibility;
- consideration of individual educational needs, pace, rhythm of educational material
- increasing the motivation of applicants to educational and cognitive activity, independence, social activity, reflection and introspection, formation of responsibility;

The analysis of political metaphors used by a politician in rhetoric makes it possible to reveal his hidden attitudes and goals. Metaphor was initially studied in the field of rhetoric, and later entered the field of linguistics, and only later became the subject of scientific research in such sciences as social and political science, sociology, communication theory, public relations<sup>8</sup>. There are actually scientific reasons for the revival of interest in political metaphor. First, the publication by the famous theorists of cognitive linguistics, J. Lakoff and M. Johnson<sup>9</sup>, of a new look at metaphor, which fundamentally changed the understanding of the nature and essence of this phenomenon. The approach proposed by them began to be actively applied to metaphors in politics, contributing to the expansion of relevant research. Secondly, under the influence of the above-mentioned extralinguistic factors, interest in the language of politics

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<sup>7</sup> L., Shanaieva-Tsymbal, N., Yamnych, *The efficiency of application of various models such as blended learning, flipped learning, case method in a professional sphere*. Euromentor Journal Studies About Education, Volume XII, No. 2/June 2021, p. 52-64.

[http://euromentor.ucdc.ro/EUROMENTOR\\_nr\\_2\\_2021.pdf#page=52](http://euromentor.ucdc.ro/EUROMENTOR_nr_2_2021.pdf#page=52)

<sup>8</sup> J.B. Elstein, *On the relationship between political language and political reality* / J.B. Elstein // Logos. - 2005. - No. 3-142c

<sup>9</sup> J. Lakoff, M., Johnson, *Metaphors by which we live* // Theory of metaphor: Collection: Trans. with English, French, German, Spanish, Polish. M.: Progress, 1990. - 415c

on the part of discourse researchers has increased. The study of political metaphors uses the speeches of political figures, documents of socio-political parties and movements, publications in mass media, as well as the language of round tables, TV debates, pre-election speeches of candidates and campaign literature. Thirdly, in recent decades, the entire complex of issues related to linguistic influence has been widely discussed. In particular, there is a revival of rhetoric in her ancient traditions and actualization of the initial connection of metaphor with politics through the field of political argumentation. Political metaphor is obliged to the formation and development at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century of a new interdisciplinary field - discursive analysis.

A discursive approach to the study of political metaphors offers a multidimensional lens to analyze the intricacies of language, power dynamics, and the construction of political reality. It delves into the contextual use of metaphors, recognizing them as more than mere linguistic flourishes and explores how metaphors shape perceptions, ideologies, and policies in political discourse. This approach reveals the underlying ideologies and hidden agendas often embedded within metaphoric expressions. Metaphors are seen as vehicles that facilitate the transfer of abstract concepts into concrete mental images.

Discursive analysis examines the social and cultural implications of metaphors within the political context. It underscores the role of metaphors in framing public understanding and influencing policy decisions. This approach highlights metaphors' ability to evoke emotions and rally public support around specific political narratives. Discourse analysis reveals metaphors' capacity to create a shared sense of identity and belonging among citizens. It uncovers how metaphors can reinforce or challenge power structures and social hierarchies. This approach elucidates how metaphors contribute to the normalization of certain ideas and the marginalization of others. It recognizes metaphors as tools that politicians <sup>10</sup> use strategically to enhance their persuasive power. Discursive analysis delves into metaphors' role in shaping political debates and influencing public opinion. It explores metaphors' potential to generate strong emotional responses that transcend rational

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<sup>10</sup> L.O. Shanaeva-Tsymbal, *Formation of ecological self-awareness of citizens of Ukraine* / L.O. Shanaeva-Tsymbal // Bulletin of the Academy of the Customs Service of Ukraine. Series: Public administration. - 2014. - No. 2(11). - P. 136-140.

argumentation. This approach reveals how metaphors can construct dichotomies, presenting complex issues in simplified terms.

Discourse analysis investigates the role of metaphors in framing issues as crises or threats, influencing policy priorities. It underscores metaphors' ability to convey complex ideological messages without explicit elaboration. This approach emphasizes the dynamic nature of metaphors, which can evolve over time and reshape political discourses. Discursive analysis highlights how metaphors can facilitate the spread of political ideologies through persuasive narratives. It examines the cultural resonance of metaphors, linking linguistic expressions to historical and cultural contexts. This approach reveals metaphors' capacity to evoke historical analogies, influencing public memory and perceptions. Discourse analysis recognizes metaphors as vehicles for constructing and negotiating social identities. It reveals the interplay between metaphors, media, and public opinion in shaping political realities.

Discursive analysis examines how metaphors contribute to the framing of social issues and policy debates. It acknowledges the potential pitfalls of metaphors, such as oversimplification or misrepresentation. This approach reveals metaphors' role in shaping the narrative of social movements and resistance efforts. Discourse analysis highlights how metaphors can be contested spaces, subject to reinterpretation and negotiation. It explores metaphors' cross-cultural and cross-linguistic variations, influencing international diplomacy. This approach recognizes metaphors' subtleties, which can carry different connotations depending on context. Discursive analysis offers a comprehensive framework to uncover the rich tapestry of meanings woven into political metaphors, shedding light on their influence on public consciousness and the broader political landscape.

Blended learning, with its dual foundations in traditional and digital education, serves as a metaphorical bridge in the journey to informed citizenship. Just as a bridge connects disparate lands, blended learning connects conventional classroom learning with digital resources, providing a comprehensive foundation for political education. The metaphor resonates with the idea that citizens must traverse this bridge to bridge the gap between political disengagement and active involvement.

The metaphorical bridge of blended learning in the political landscape is a powerful allegory for the journey to informed citizenship. Just as bridges connect people and places, blended learning connects citizens with comprehensive political knowledge, enabling them to bridge gaps in

understanding and actively participate in shaping their society. The metaphor encapsulates the transformative potential of blended learning as a conduit to informed, engaged, and empowered citizenship.

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# KEY ASPECTS OF VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG INDIVIDUALS

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***Abstract:** In this paper, we provide new empirical evidence that supports the idea that achieving performance and success in certain vocational professions, specifically in the fields of music and computer science, relies on distinct psychological traits of individuals; these traits not only facilitate but also sustain the development of specific competencies required for these professions; furthermore, the data presented here highlights that an early understanding of psychological traits, particularly in terms of vocational and aptitudinal potential unique to each individual, contributes to making informed decisions regarding the educational and career paths of adolescents; this approach ensures an optimal alignment between an individual's psychological profile and the requirements of a given profession.*

***Keywords:** vocation; vocational counseling/orientation; career choice; individual psychological profile; match.*

## Conceptual frameworks on vocation and career

In a 1932 paper (pp.12-52), Rădulescu-Motru<sup>1</sup> points out that Johann Gottlieb Fichte describes vocation as early as 1800 as a higher calling that transcends the sensory world and requires the individual to develop his thinking and consciousness. Vocation transcends the limits of time, space and sensibility, and man must have knowledge of his own nature and

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Note: the authors have equal contributions to the research.

<sup>1</sup> C. Rădulescu-Motru, *Vocation, A decisive factor in the culture of nations*, Bucharest, House of Schools Publishing, 1932, pp. 12-52.

understand what he is and what he must become. Vocation implies that thinking rises above all restrictions imposed by the sensory world, so that material limitations are overcome in the search for man's deepest purpose and fulfillment.

At the same time, the author mentions that vocation is not only determined by specific aptitudes but is linked to the whole physical and moral structure of the individual. Aptitudes can make a person a good factory worker or at best a good professional, but they do not guarantee a vocation. A person with a vocation engages in a type of work that resonates deeply with their inner desires and aspirations, achieving spiritual fulfillment in their creations. This person is dedicated and conscientious because they have a deep understanding of the purpose of work and the meaning of existence, which they integrate into their work. A man of vocation is often distinguished by outstanding talents. However, what sets him apart is not his skills but his character. He possesses a morality distinct from that of a professional. This morality refers to consistency with himself, not in the theological sense of the term.

At the same time, some approaches highlight the role and importance of vocation in close relation to career development, without which it makes no sense, and an essential stage in the vocational guidance process is the assessment of intelligence level, seen as a *sine qua non*. Intelligence assessment, known as I.Q., is presented as a long-standing concern of specialists in this field, with different results, meaning and significance from one stage to another, using different instruments, some even sophisticated, often obtaining a score, an aptitude profile or even a hierarchy of the persons assessed. No doubt this approach is correct and works well, but an alternative model, guided by a different orientation on intelligence assessment, is the pluralistic view of intelligence. A model that recognizes many discrete and different facets of cognition, and also accepts that people have different cognitive powers and styles, and responds better to the requirements of vocational guidance for career development (Prisăcaru<sup>2</sup>, 2012, p. 145).

The aforementioned model was pertinently argued in the early 1980s by Howard Gardner, referred to as "multiple intelligences theory", which is thought to "better describe human cognitive competence in terms of a set of mental capacities, talents or aptitudes and that all people possess

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<sup>2</sup> A. Prisăcaru, *Prevalence of the multiple intelligences model in psychological selection*, Bucharest, U.N.Ap. Publishing House, 2012, p. 145.

each of these capacities to some extent, the difference being in the proportion and nature of their combination" (Gardner<sup>3</sup>, 2006, p. 78).

The theory pluralizes the traditional concept of intelligence, arguing that intelligence is "a computational capacity", which means an ability to process a particular type of information or the ability to solve a particular type of problem, based on identifiable operations or set of operations, being activated or triggered by certain types of information present internally or externally (Gardner, 2006, p. 81).

Research began in the 1970s, starting from developmental psychology and neuropsychology, but was shaped later, in the early 1980s, leading to this theory.

This brilliant conception of individual competence is credited with profound changes in education in the nearly four decades since the publication of the first work "Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences". Thousands of educators, teachers, researchers and parents around the world have explored, applied and then appreciated the practical implications and applications of "multiple intelligences theory", including in the arts.

The author appreciates that hundreds of books and thousands of scientific articles have been written, hundreds or even thousands of schools around the world claim to have implemented the ideas of multiple intelligences theory, and in educational institutions, it was fashionable to address and apply the principles of "multiple intelligences theory". The author presents new applications of the theory in education and the workplace and challenges practitioners to design projects based on multiple intelligences (Gardner, 2006, p. 82).

On the other hand, the researchers believed that, by applying the theory to the mass educational process, the effect would be to gain a deeper understanding of each student and participate in their vocational orientation, even at a young age, towards the professions in which they will have the greatest efficiency and psychological comfort, and that the most appropriate application would be recommended in the educational system, namely in education focused on skills development.

The fundamental idea of the theory is to appreciate the existence of distinct human capacities, from musical intelligence to that involved in self-understanding.

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<sup>3</sup> H. Gardner, *Multiple intelligences*, Bucharest, Sigma Publishing House, 2016, p. 78, 81, 82.

To exemplify we bring to attention the following (Prisăcaru & Cracsner<sup>4</sup>, 2010, pp. 175-183):

- *on the development of linguistic intelligence* - the computer has penetrated all social, cultural and educational environments, and is transforming every field of knowledge and educational systems, as both students and teachers learn to use and have access to databases from all over the world through multimedia technology, and various software programs run on the computer allow even children who cannot yet read or write to construct stories, diagrams, clips, images, dynamic sound effects and so on;

- *on the development of musical intelligence* - computer programs and processors can make it possible to orchestrate, through imitation, specific sounds of musical instruments, compose musical scores using synthesizers, and amplifiers, or by arranging musical notes even compose and record songs from different musical genres.

More recent approaches (Dries<sup>5</sup>, 2013, pp. 272-285) also bring attention to the innate perspective and the acquired perspective on talent. Referring to the innate component, the author emphasizes the selection and identification of high-potential individuals from the outset, believing that organizations can quickly and effectively identify individuals with outstanding skills and talents, which can contribute to building a strong team and achieving superior performance. This can save time and resources in the development and training process by focusing on individuals who already have certain skills and talents with the potential to make valuable contributions to the organization.

Referring to the acquired perspective on talent, the author believes that it focuses on education, training and experience as tools for talent development and that organizations need to invest in the development of existing employees by providing them with opportunities for learning and professional growth. By focusing on developing and nurturing existing talent, the organization can benefit from adaptability and flexibility as employees can acquire new skills and competencies to respond to changes

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<sup>4</sup> A. Prisăcaru & E.C. Cracsner, *The facets of multiple intelligences in the theory and practice of psychological selection*, Bucharest, Army Technical-Editorial Center Publishing House, 2010, pp. 175-183.

<sup>5</sup> N. Dries, *The psychology of talent management: A review and research agenda*, *Human Resource Management Review*, Elsevier Journal, 23(4), 2013, pp. 272-285. doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2013.05.001.

in the work environment. Finally, the author believes that both perspectives have advantages and disadvantages, and that the right approach may vary depending on the context and objectives of the organization.

As mentioned earlier, some of the researchers and promoters of the theory of multiple intelligences believed that by applying its values in the educational and vocational/professional guidance process, the results and effects would be found in a deeper understanding of each person and, subsequently, their orientation towards education focused on skills development.

### **Research objectives**

The present paper brings to attention some data and conclusions drawn from a pilot study aimed at highlighting the relationship between specific vocational/aptitudinal characteristics of people working in IT and in the artistic/musical field, life orientation, job satisfaction and their personality dimensions, pursuing some objectives as follows:

- Objective 1 - To highlight the requirements of the psychological profile specific to the two professional fields, from the personality perspective and vocational/aptitudinal dimensions.

- Objective 2 - To highlight the significance of vocational orientation, specifically the match between person and profession in achieving optimal professional performance.

- Objective 3 - To analyze the implications for the relationship between vocation and psychological characteristics such as personal development, autonomy, well-being, overall life satisfaction, and work-life balance.

- Objective 4 - Identify and promote practical recommendations for enhancing vocational characteristics in relation to professional activity.

### **Research hypotheses**

To achieve the objectives of this research, we proposed to guide it through the following hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1 - We assume that between some personality traits and vocational characteristics specific to people practicing the profession of musician and computer scientist, there are some interdependent relationships.

- Hypothesis 2 - We assume that there are differences in vocational characteristics between computer scientists and musicians.

- Hypothesis 3 - We assume that there are some interdependent relationships between personality traits specific to musicians and computer scientists, life satisfaction and life orientation.

- Hypothesis 4 - We assume that there are gender differences in job satisfaction.

### **Research group description**

The research lot was constructed according to the non-probability (non-random) technique, known as the convenience technique, which does not take into account the requirement of indicating the probability of selection of cases, as a result, there is no guarantee that the sample is composed of cases that accurately describe the reference population.

At the same time, the technique involves the inclusion of accessible and available cases, based on voluntarism, and is the least rigorous but most common in research practice for limited purposes, such as the present study.

The group consists of 69 people of different ages and genders (29 females and 40 males), of whom 36 have graduated from secondary school and higher vocational education or vocational extra-curricular courses and work partly or completely in music, and 33 have graduated from secondary school and higher technical education and work in IT.

### **Instruments used for data collection**

The data collection consisted of six standardized psychological assessment instruments taken from [www.researchcentral.ro](http://www.researchcentral.ro), as follows:

- **The Big Five Inventory - 2 (short form)** contains 30 items and assesses five personality dimensions: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Negative Emotions and Open-mindedness. The requirement is for the assessors to complete responses to each item on a 5-step Likert-type scale, where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 5 means "strongly agree".

- **The Public Domain Brief RIASEC Measures** consists of 48 items and is used to determine the specific interest code of six occupational areas: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, entrepreneurial and conventional.

Participants rate through the content of the items how much they would like to work in the mentioned occupational fields, and responses are recorded on a 5-step Likert-type scale, where 1 has the meaning "would very much dislike" and 5 has the meaning "would very much like".

By calculating the score for each of the six categories (realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, conventional) and then ranking them from highest to lowest, we obtain a hierarchy of occupational preferences, based on the code of interests of the persons assessed, which is defined in terms of the top three positions with the highest scores.

- **The Life Orientation Test-Revised (LOT-R)** contains 10 items and assesses the level of optimism or neuroticism, level of self-worth and self-esteem through statements such as "*In times of uncertainty, I expect the best*". Responses are recorded on a 5-step Likert-type scale, where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 5 means "strongly agree".

- **The Satisfaction Scale** consists of 10 items and covers the reaction to some common/usual activities in everyday life, such as "*I feel that people find it hard to understand me*". Responses are completed on a 5-step Likert-type scale, where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 5 means "strongly agree".

- **Job Satisfaction** consists of 10 items and assesses the level of job fit within an organization, with statements such as "In general, I like working here". Responses are recorded on a 7-step Likert-type scale, where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 7 means "strongly agree".

- **The demographic questionnaire** was designed to collect data on the gender of the research group, their age, level of education, specialization obtained after graduation, and current profession. The answers were recorded by ticking/selecting the specific field of one of the predefined variants or filling in a short statement, according to the requirement.

### **Research results and interpretation of the data obtained**

After collecting data using the psychological assessment instruments mentioned above, an electronic database was created using SPSS version 21.0 software, in which all the results obtained were entered.

For the demonstration of Hypothesis 1, with the following content: *We assume that between some personality traits and vocational characteristics specific to people practicing the profession of musician and computer scientist, there are some interdependent relationships*, the statistical technique called Pearson Correlations was used.

The data on personality traits and vocational characteristics specific to people practicing the two professions mentioned in the hypothesis were collected using the Big Five Inventory-2 (short form) and the Public

Domain Brief RIASEC Measures, and the results obtained are presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

*Table 1 – Means and standard deviations of personality traits and vocational characteristics*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Artistic</b>	22.77	8.009	69
<b>Social</b>	16.78	7.019	69
<b>Enterprising</b>	17.14	6.475	69
<b>Conventional</b>	11.75	4.972	69
<b>Agreeableness</b>	21.39	3.490	69
<b>Open-Mindedness</b>	23.83	3.718	69
<b>Negative Emotionality</b>	15.19	4.836	69

*Table 2 – Correlation coefficients between personality traits and vocational characteristics (N=69)*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(6)</b>	<b>(7)</b>
<b>(1) Artistic</b>	-						
<b>(2) Social</b>	.597**	-					
<b>(3) Enterprising</b>	.507**	.627**	-				
<b>(4) Conventional</b>	.164	.413**	.638**	-			
<b>(5) Agreeableness</b>	.090	.241*	.063	-.033	-		
<b>(6) Open-Mindedness</b>	.575**	.262*	.095	-.122	.053	-	
<b>(7) Negative Emotionality</b>	.194	-.118	-.250	-.256*	-.187	-.187	-

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to Colton<sup>6</sup> (1974, p.167), correlation coefficients are interpreted as follows:

- a correlation coefficient of -0.25 to 0.25 means a weak or zero correlation;
- a correlation coefficient of 0.25 to 0.50 (or -0.25 to -0.50) means an acceptable degree of association;
- a correlation coefficient of 0.50 to 0.75 (or -0.50 to -0.75) means a moderate to good correlation;
- a correlation coefficient greater than 0.75 (or less than -0.75) means a very good association or correlation.

<sup>6</sup> T. Colton, *Statistics in medicine*, Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1974, p. 167.



Following the analysis of the data in the previous tables we can conclude:

- between the variable artistic type and the variable mental openness the correlation coefficient value is 0.575, which means that there is a good positive association among people with a more developed artistic sense and the tendency to experiment with unconventional/innovative ideas and approaches to obtain new directions of development;

- also, between the artistic type variable and the social and entrepreneurial variables there is a good positive association, supported by the correlation coefficient values of 0.597 and 0.507, which means that people with an artistic sense also have some capacity to develop social relationships and be oriented towards financial gain;

- between the variable social type and the variable agreeableness the correlation coefficient value is 0.241, which means that there is a low positive association, which means people with low capacity to develop interpersonal relationships and attention to the needs of others;

- also, between the variable social type and the variable mental openness the correlation coefficient value is low, 0.262, which means that people interested in social interaction could express a tendency towards new experiences;

- between the variable entrepreneurial type and the variable negative emotions the correlation coefficient value is 0.250, which means that people oriented towards entrepreneurship may show a lower level of anxiety or sadness;

- between the variable conventional type and the variable negative emotions the correlation coefficient value is -0.256, a negative association, showing that an increasing variable leads to a decrease of the other or, in other words, when some people have intense feelings of anxiety, they will not be interested/attracted to administrative, accounting or similar activities.

*Partial conclusion: Taking into account the values of the correlation coefficients mentioned in Table 2, it can be concluded that hypothesis 1 is statistically supported.*

To prove *Hypothesis 2*, with the following content: *Assuming that there are differences in vocational characteristics between persons practicing the profession of computer scientist and musician, the statistical technique called differences of means (Independent Sample T-test) was used.*

Data on the level of vocational/apitudinal characteristics of the two subgroups, musicians and computer scientists, were collected using the

Vocational Orientation Assessment Inventory and the results are presented in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3 - Statistical mean and standard deviation for the two professional fields

Field	IT/MUS	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<b>Realist (IT)</b>	1	33	20.15	6.553	1.141
	2	36	15.17	6.893	1.149
<b>Artistic (music)</b>	1	33	19.03	7.485	1.303
	2	36	26.19	6.940	1.157

Table 4 - Mean difference between the two fields of professional activity

Field		Levene's Test		T-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
<b>Realist</b>	EVA	.003	.957	3.072	67	.003	4.985	1.623	1.746	8.224
	EVNA			3.079	66.905	.003	4.985	1.619	1.753	8.216
<b>Artistic</b>	EVA	.183	.670	-4.126	67	.000	-7.164	1.737	-10.630	-3.698
	EVNA			-4.112	65.254	.000	-7.164	1.742	-10.644	-3.685

Legend: Equal variances assumed (EVA); Equal variances not assumed (EVNA)

Following the analysis of the data presented in Table 4 we can conclude:

- some sustained differences between the statistical means for the two occupational/vocational fields are highlighted, thus the persons in the group of computer scientists obtained a mean value of 20.15 in the Realistic field and a mean value of 19.03 in the Artistic field, and the persons in the group of musicians obtained the average value of 15.17 in the Realistic field and the mean value of 26.19 in the Artistic field;

- for the t-significance test the values obtained show differences in means of 4.985,  $t=3.072$  and  $p=0.003$  (lower than Fisher's criterion) for the Realist field and  $t=-4.126$  and  $p=0.000$  (lower than Fisher's criterion) for the Artistic field, which allows us to conclude that people working in the IT field and those working in the music field show different specific

vocational characteristics, revealing different vocational/aptitudinal psychological profiles.

*Partial conclusion: The data obtained show the difference in vocational characteristics between the group of musicians, where the vocational orientation is predominantly towards the Artistic field, and the group of computer scientists, where the vocational orientation is predominantly towards the Realistic field, so we consider that hypothesis 2 is statistically supported.*

For the demonstration of Hypothesis 3, with the following content: We assume that some interdependent relationships exist between personality traits specific to people in the music and computer science professions, life satisfaction and life orientation, the statistical technique called Pearson Correlations was used. Data on personality traits were collected using the Big Five-2 Inventory, data on life satisfaction using the Satisfaction Scale and data on life orientation using the Life Orientation Test. The results are presented in Table 5 and Table 6.

*Table 5 – Means and standard deviations of personality and vocational traits*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Extraversion</b>	17.43	3.188	69
<b>Agreeableness</b>	21.39	3.490	69
<b>Conscientiousness</b>	23.38	3.956	69
<b>Negative Emotionality</b>	15.19	4.836	69
<b>Satisfaction</b>	39.17	5.136	69
<b>Life Orientation</b>	22.12	3.980	69

*Table 6 – Correlation coefficients between personality traits, satisfaction and life orientation*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(6)</b>
<b>(1) Extraversion</b>	-					
<b>(2) Agreeableness</b>	-.138	-				
<b>(3) Conscientiousness</b>	.320**	.265*	-			
<b>(4) Negative Emotionality</b>	-.160	-.187	-.445**	-		
<b>(5) Satisfaction</b>	Nu	.320**	.385**	-.425**	-	
<b>(6) Life Orientation</b>	.244*	.313**	.370**	-.638**	Nu	-

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Following the analysis of the data presented in the previous tables we can conclude:

- between the variables agreeableness and conscientiousness and the variable life satisfaction we observe moderate positive associations, also between the variable agreeableness and life satisfaction the correlation coefficient value is 0.320, and between the variable conscientiousness and the variable life satisfaction the correlation coefficient value is 0.385, which allows us to appreciate that people who have a high level of openness to others, more organized, attentive to details and responsible tend to perceive a higher life satisfaction;

- between the variable negative emotions and the variable life satisfaction the correlation coefficient value is -0.425, which represents a moderate negative association; people with a higher level of appreciation of daily life are more motivated to improve their well-being and more oriented towards obtaining positive experiences, thus leading to a lower level of negative emotions;

- between the extraversion variable and the life orientation variable the correlation coefficient value is 0.244, which represents a low positive association, which means that more enthusiastic and sociable people are better positioned in the social context;

- between the agreeableness variable and the life orientation variable the correlation coefficient value is 0.313 and we have a moderate positive association, signalling that empathetic, kind, cooperative people have an acceptable life orientation;

- between the conscientiousness variable and the life orientation variable the correlation coefficient value is 0.370, representing a moderate positive association. We can appreciate that disciplined, organized and responsible people tend to make cognitively informed decisions;

- between the variable negative emotions and the variable orientation in life the correlation coefficient value is -0.638, indicating a substantial negative association; we can conclude that people with clear goals and high motivation lead to a low level of negative emotions.

*Partial conclusion: Taking into account the data mentioned in Table 5 and Table 6, it can be concluded that hypothesis 3 is statistically supported.*

To prove *Hypothesis 4*, with the following content: *Assuming that there are differences in job satisfaction by gender*, the statistical technique called differences in means (Independent Sample T-test) was used. The data on the assessment of job satisfaction were collected using the Job Satisfaction

Scale, and the data on gender were obtained using the Demographic Questionnaire, taking into account that the group was divided into two subgroups, of which 40 were male and 29 female. The results obtained are presented in Table 7 and Table 8.

Table 7 - Mean and standard deviation regarding the job satisfaction variable.

Characteristic	M/F	N	Mean	Std. DEviation	Std. Error Mean
Job Satisfaction	1	40	18.45	2.459	.389
	2	29	16.34	3.716	.690

Table 8 - Mean difference regarding job satisfaction based on gender.

Characteristic		Levene`s Test		T-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diffe-rence	Std. Error Diffe-rence	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Job Satis- faction	EVA	4.088	.047	2.832	67	.006	2.105	.743	.621	3.589
	EVN A			2.658	45.33 0	.011	2.105	.792	.510	3.700

Legend: Equal variances assumed (EVA); Equal variances not assumed (EVNA).

From the data presented in Table 7 and Table 8, we can draw the following conclusions

- there is a certain difference regarding means from job satisfaction according to gender, for the group of men it has a value of 18.45 and for the group of women the value of 16.34;

- for the t-significance test, the difference in means is 2.105,  $t=2.832$  and  $p=0.006$  (lower than Fisher's criterion), which indicates that there is a difference in the perception of job satisfaction between men and women, although the value is not very high, it should be taken into account.

*Partial conclusion: Taking into account the values of the t-significance test mentioned in Table 8, regarding the level/grade of job satisfaction at work according to the gender of the research participants, we can assess that hypothesis 4 is statistically supported, as differences between the two groups were revealed.*

## Final conclusions

The data presented in the previous chapter allow us to assess that personality traits are closely related to aptitude/vocational characteristics, life orientation and job satisfaction, and that the psychological characteristics that shape and customize the individual psychological profile of each of us can substantially influence the decisions we make regarding the choice of profession.

At the same time, the results obtained by using statistical apparatus, including the t-significance test, show that in a vocational profession a high and different level of aptitude is required to achieve performance and affirmation, also highlighting the importance of matching individual talents with the requirements of the chosen profession. At the same time, it highlights the need to explore and develop skills or competencies in a vocational field related to the person's interests and inclinations.

From a psychological perspective, early vocational guidance, even from secondary school onwards, is of particular importance in considering areas of study that are in line with pupils' interests and aptitudes, and in this way is more likely to increase motivation to learn, to achieve better school results and to have a more enjoyable experience in later life. All of these aspects contribute to the development of a general sense of well-being and the building of a strong professional identity.

People who receive vocational/educational and career counseling experience higher job satisfaction, and when there is a match between personal interests and values and professional requirements, the conditions for a satisfying long-term work experience are created.

The school psychologist can play a key role in guiding students and adolescents in developing skills for future career planning, informing, motivating and creating contexts in which they can learn more about themselves.

The practitioner psychologist Radomir Roxana<sup>7</sup>, appreciates that interests are those that shape a person's preferences for a particular field of knowledge or activity, and the person must choose a profession in line with them to increase their chances of satisfaction, professional stability, performance, stress reduction and that we will recognize a person who has an interest in an activity when he experiences positive emotions when engaging frequently in that type of activities.

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<sup>7</sup> R. Radomir, *Vocational orientation* ([www.mentalpraxis.ro](http://www.mentalpraxis.ro)).

Also, in agreement with Lemeni<sup>8</sup> (2004, p. 145), we support the role of self-efficacy, as adolescents develop interests in activities in which they feel capable and for which they expect to achieve positive results, and if they are not aware of what they can do, they are likely to find it very difficult to crystallize their occupational preferences or to move towards activities other than those for which they have the mental tools.

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<sup>8</sup> G. Lemeni & A. Negru, *Career Planning. Counseling and Guidance - Career Education Guide*. Cluj-Napoca, ASCR Publishing House, 2004, p. 145.

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# ETHICS OF PLATO'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION FOR NIGERIA'S EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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***Abstract:** Plato's conception of the human person is dependent on the human power of projecting beyond the influences of one's materiality. This is the seat of the idealistic conception of existence, owing that, the mind is the seat of knowledge and wisdom, on its capacity and capability to project beyond what the sense can offer to the human person and society. This conception of being and beingness is informed by Plato's theory of knowledge, a belief of innateness. This is, in extension, directs Plato's projection of what the educational contents of the human person should be and what it should be dependent on as contents of its curriculum in attainment of meaningful and sustainable development. Hence, the paper is concerned with the analysis of the ethical implication of Plato's philosophy of education, as with the reflective examination of the values placed on the contents of the minds, as the very seat of knowledge, even beyond the capacity and capability of the sense, in informing what should be considered as the contents of human education, especially in the face of the growing influences of scientific methodology in attaining and establishing knowledge claims and contents, as it is related to the development of Nigerian educational development, as the basis of ethical living. Employing evaluative mode of analysis, therefore, the paper concludes that the ethical imports of Plato's philosophy of education as a basis of Nigeria's educational philosophy in promoting the ideal contents of the education in relation to interesting contemporary interests for scientific method of enquiry, with little or no references to the mental capacities of establishing the true or real knowledge contents of development.*

***Keywords:** Knowledge, Human Mind, Plato, Ethics, Imagination, Philosophy of Education*

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## Introduction

Plato had not always planned a career as a philosopher. Born in 428 or 427 B.C.E. into an aristocratic Athenian family, he was educated and groomed to become a great political leader. After Socrates' death, however, he decided to devote all his energies to philosophy. Initially, he traveled for a while. Some think he may have made it as far as Egypt. Whether this is true or not, we do know he went to Italy in 388 and to the city of Syracuse in Sicily. On returning to Athens, he founded a school, the first university in the Western world. Plato's school was called the Academy, having been located outside the city walls in a grove sacred to the hero Academus. Nine hundred years later, the institutional heir of Plato's school was still operating, and its fame lives on today, signified by the fact that "the Academy" and "academics" are still terms used to refer to higher education.

It is recorded that Plato spent the remainder of his life teaching and directing the Academy as well as writing philosophical works. Among the most famous of his works was the Republic. In this book he argued that society would never be just unless people with philosophical vision became rulers or rulers acquired philosophical wisdom. In 368 and again in 361, he returned to Syracuse in response to the request to educate Dionysius the Younger, the young ruler who had inherited the throne. Unfortunately, Plato did not succeed, for the ruler was too committed to tyranny and little interested. On his second visit, the two did not get along at all, and Plato barely escaped with his life. Plato returned to the Academy, where he continued to teach until he died suddenly but peacefully around 348 or 347 B.C.E.<sup>9</sup>

Hence, Plato's theory of knowledge is a build-up of the philosophy of education of Socrates but Plato, went further to postulate the world of forms and that belief correspond to the sensible world while knowledge correspond to the forms, emphasizing on the reality and power of the human minds as a basic door of knowledge and window. The mind is capable of existing and then housing the existence of real things. This is the basis for Plato's notion of education bearing in mind that he is an idealist. Therefore, the paper explicates and exposes Plato's philosophy of education in the relation to his theory of knowledge, and then assesses its

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<sup>9</sup> William F. Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery A Historical Introduction to Philosophy* (4<sup>th</sup> edit.), (CENGAGE Learning: United States, 2015), 49-50.

implications to our contemporary humanism, driving by what science and technology can offer.

### **Platonic Philosophy of Education**

The basis of the development is dependent on the contents of education, the values of the human mind. In looking at Plato's notion on education; we shall first be looking at briefly how Plato came to arrive at his own view on education or what formed the foundation for his philosophical discourse on education. Philosophy of education was seen as the philosophical inquiry dealing with the ends and ideals of education, as well as with pedagogy, which focuses on educational methods and procedures. In Ancient Greece, the predominant educational idea was '*kalos kai agathos*', which is vigorously translated as 'right and good', 'just and good', and 'beautiful and good'.<sup>10</sup>

The philosopher of the classical period tried to specify this idea and formulate the methods for attaining it. Socrates for instance, formulated the doctrine of 'Socratic Intellectualism', according to which goodness, virtue or wisdom is simply a kind of knowledge and once one knows what is good and what is evil, he or she bound to the right. Plato, in the *Republic*, had already introduced tripartite soul (appetite, reason and strength), from which a psychology of emotion follows that seems to invalidate the ethical consequences of Socratic intellectualism. For there, Plato considered training of the passions to be crucial for developing the ideal state.<sup>11</sup> Before we can understand Plato's philosophy of education, it is necessary that we have a firsthand understanding of Plato's intellectual reflection whether on Metaphysics, Epistemology, Ethics, Politics which have their basis on his idealism.

**Plato's Epistemological and Metaphysical Frameworks:** Plato brought a synergy between Heraclitus and Parmenides notion of change. He agreed with Heraclitus that change is real and permanent in the physical world, and also supported Parmenides claim that reality is one and immutable, but not in the sensible world. He did not stop there, he went further to postulate the world of form where real things are. Hence, his theory of forms becomes the hinge of his philosophical domain.<sup>12</sup> In

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<sup>10</sup> Pablo A. Iannone, *Dictionary of World Philosophy*, (London: Routledge, 2013), 405.

<sup>11</sup> Iannone, *Dictionary of World Philosophy*, 405.

<sup>12</sup> M.M. Uzomah and P.O. Isanbor, *Philosophies and Theories of Education* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Kaduna: Eiizy, 2019, p, 202.

the Ancient era, and among the Western philosophers, Plato is said to be the first to consider the nature of human knowledge and how the human mind comes to the apprehension of knowledge.<sup>13</sup> Plato gave a description of how the human mind gets knowledge and he describes what knowledge consists in his allegory of the cave, his metaphor of divided lines and in his doctrine of forms.<sup>14</sup> In his allegory of the cave, Plato made us to understand that the senses are full of illusion and only the philosopher king truly have knowledge because they utilize the lens of reasoning. His metaphor of divided line shows our movement from ignorance to knowledge. In his *Republic*, he made a distinction between knowledge and belief. He maintains that knowledge is infallible while belief is non- infallible. He made a distinction between the sensible world and the world of forms in relation to knowledge and belief. He opines that the forms correspond to knowledge while sensible world correspond to belief. This means that, for one to gain knowledge it has to come from the world of forms that is why he says that the beliefs in the sensible world are reflections of the real knowledge in the forms. For him, the former is perfect intelligence or wisdom while the latter is mere opinions or shadows.<sup>15</sup> Hence, Plato gave the classical definition of knowledge as justified true belief.

**The Doctrine of Recollection:** Plato argues that all our knowledge is reminiscence or recollection. For him, knowledge comes through recollection. For instance, when we are seeking the meaning of something, it is either we know it or we do not know it. If we know it, we do not need to seek it but if we do not know it, how do we recognize it when we see it? When we find them, we will recall what they are; they are actually innate in us. For Plato, universal forms are imprinted in us so, when we see it, we necessarily recognize it. Furthermore, Plato's theory of recollection opines that human knowledge is not based on experience, knowledge is innate in the human person. Here, in learning, the human person reactivates the already existing ideas from within. By this doctrine recollection and relating to education; education is a matter of conversion, a complete

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<sup>13</sup> M.M. Uzomah and P. O. Isanbor, p. 202.

<sup>14</sup> Samuel Stumpf, *Philosophy: History and Problems* (USA: McGraw- Hill, 1983), 23.

<sup>15</sup> M.M. Uzomah and P. O. Isanbor, p. 203.

turning around from the world of appearance to the world of reality- the dark world of the cave versus bright world of light.<sup>16</sup>

**Plato's Philosophy of Education:** Plato's philosophy of education is inherent in his epistemology, metaphysics and socio- political philosophy. The main focus of Plato's philosophy of education is the method and purpose of education; it spread through the institutions which help in education. The main purpose of his theory of education was to ban individualism, abolish incompetence and immaturity and establish the rule of the efficient, that is, the seat of one's capability of critical thinking.. The highest goal of education, Plato believes, is the knowledge of good; which will help to nurture the human 'educated person' for the betterment of the society he or she belongs.<sup>17</sup> Plato believes that education is the birth right of every citizen since, it is only education that forms good citizens for the state. His educational system is divided into three formal levels and these levels go with the age of the learner. Nursery/ Kindergarten learning (3-6years old), Elementary education (7-10years old), Secondary learning (11-17years old), and Higher Education (Optional).

Plato recommended the first three basic levels of education and he holds that they should be compulsory for all without exception. At the kindergarten level, Plato was convinced that parents portend a corruptive and contaminative influence on their children and recommended that at this level that children should be separated from their parents and be placed in a state controlled Nursery school until they get to the age of six. In other words, children are inclined to play at this level. At the elementary level, educators are to engage the children in games, sports, reading and storytelling so that such child can develop physically, morally and intellectually. At the secondary level, as a build from the foundation already established, children are to be taught Gymnastic, Music, Geometry, Astronomy, Literature and mathematics as a form of re-awakening the consciousness of the mind's conceptual powers. This is to promote character formation and skill development. Hence, for effective and efficient working of the unified system of education, learners or children should be sorted into difference classes according to their natural endowments.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>17</sup> Mondal Punja, *Plato's Theory of Education*, Acceded vis yourarticle.com, 2019.

## **Ethics of Platonic Philosophy of Education**

Plato as we all known unrepentant absolute idealist whose philosophy of education underscores the common good of the human society, projects the power of the human mind as the seat of real and idea knowledge. It is in a critical engagement of the mind that true and idea knowledge, which is universal, can be attained. For society to achieve this common good (sumum bonus) for him; the society must be rooted in deep knowledge and knowledge must be universal. One of the most impactful consideration of Plato philosophy of education that will yield a positive effect on Nigeria education curriculum if it duly apply, is that for Plato “education is the birth right of every child in the society” he frowns at it when parents deny their child this inalienability right. This is because, education aim at developing the individuals to self-realization, self-actualization and self-maturity for the usefulness of the society through the contents of the minds as the seat of character formation. Plato follow his master belief that ignorance is attributed to wrong doing since knowledge is a virtue and the opposite of it is vice. Hence, every members of the society necessary needs the powerful of education to illuminate his or mind to act morally upright in order to avoid vices.

Furthermore, he also noted that education eradicate evil from the very grass root. The ethical implications or relevance of this philosophy centred on the following:

- **It is socially oriented:** The Hallmark of Plato emphasis on education is to promote the common good of the society. This is to help us avoid self-centeredness, egocentric and individualism. As a matter of fact Plato social orientation on philosophy of education is consonant with African traditional setting which encapsulate solidarity and subsidiary.
- **Self-Realization of the Actualization of the Individuals:** Flowing from Plato view that knowledge is innate, presupposing that every human person has the potential ability and pre disposition to some certain truth. From this innateness of ideas ensouled in potentiality Man can be helped through the instrumentality of education; to bring forth or that innate ideas, which is inherent in man. This position of Plato will go a long way to make a positive effect on Nigeria curriculum to set free those who had been politically, religiously and culturally indoctrinated.

## Ethics of Plato's Philosophy of Education in Nigerian Educational Landscapes

We can recall that Plato's philosophy of education on his theory of knowledge, recognizing the power of innateness. Imbued with his epistemological doctrine of recollection he postulated that learning is finding out what you already know.<sup>18</sup> Then, the philosophy and goals of Nigeria's education would be fruitful if it is well implemented. It is evident that the National Policy on Education (2004) has provided not only the aims and objectives of education in Nigeria. Also, it has enunciated the steps and means to be taken in order that the aims and objectives it presents to the nation can be better achieved. But, the main problem of education in Nigeria is lack of implementation of educational policy as a result of political crisis among other factors. On this note, Ikejiani lamented that there is a big gap between operations and policy makers. Thus, there is the need for the collective effort of the government, students, parents, the school authority and the general public towards actualization of the aims and objectives of education in Nigeria.<sup>19</sup>

Plato's notion of education is designed mainly for the philosopher kings, it is expected that a person who is being prepared to rule must at least be conversant with the study of literature, music and elementary mathematics at the age of eighteen. Then, at the age of twenty, after a two years period of military training, those who give the evidence of their competence and suitability proceed to higher education and subsequent practical experience.<sup>20</sup> At the age of twenty, few that distinguished themselves would be selected to pursue an advanced course in mathematics. At age of thirty, a five years course in dialectics and moral philosophy would begin. The next fifteen years would be spent gathering practical experience through public service. Finally, at the age of fifty, the ablest men who reach the highest level of knowledge, the vision of good, would then be ready for the task of governing the state.<sup>21</sup> With this conception, Plato sought to develop a political system in which leaders would be knowledgeable and good. And this has been very relevant to Nigeria's educational system. One of the main objectives which serve as foundations for the national policy, upon which the philosophy of

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<sup>18</sup> M.M. Uzoaah and P.O. Isanbor, *Philosophies and Theories of Education*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 202.

<sup>19</sup> O. Ikejiani, ed. *Nigerian Education*. (London: Bristol Western Press. 1964), 11.

<sup>20</sup> G.R.F. Ferrari, *Plato The Republic*, ed. transl. by Tom Griffith. Cambridge: (Cambridge University Press 2000), 105.

<sup>21</sup>Ibidem, p.107.

Nigerian education is built, is to create a free and democratic society. Nigeria's philosophy of education is based on democratic principles. People should be educated to elect their government responsibly. The political and economic crises we have now in Nigeria are as a result of bad leadership. As Achebe rightly observed that the problem with Nigeria is bad leadership. Bad people force themselves into government without the proper elective process. If people are educated properly, they cannot perpetrate such act in view of its consequences.<sup>22</sup>

Hence, Nigerian leaders have to be educated in the knowledge of the good which will help them to seek for the common good of the people. It will contribute to form the necessary understanding which would assist the public to perceive, think, imagine desire, choose and act in a way that is fully and distinctively human.<sup>23</sup> Plato saw education in music and physical training as very essential for the guardians to develop a character that is both gentle and high spirited at the same time. Hence, this proper nature and upbringing would make them absorb the laws and preserve its belief against corruption from pleasure, pain, fear and desire.<sup>24</sup> Nigerians should incorporate the positive aspects of Plato's philosophy into their military school. Nigerian soldiers have to be educated in order to carry out their tasks efficiently. They should not use their strength as an advantage to exploit the masses. Thus, they should be educated to resist the attraction of going into government to control the affairs of the state which is not meant for them. This anomaly brings injustice, anarchy and corruption. Nigeria is still suffering the bad effects of military authoritarianism in their socio-political system.

Furthermore, Plato's education of the masses according to the need of each craft is necessary for the provision of goods and services for the state. This can be very relevant to Nigerian situation. It will help to accomplish the national goals upon which the philosophy of Nigerian education is built. In order to achieve a united, strong and self-reliant nation, government should equip the schools with proper infrastructural facilities necessary for practical training in different fields of learning. Vocational

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<sup>22</sup> C. Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria*. (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd. 1980) 1.

<sup>23</sup> M.A. Izibili, and P.O., Isanbor, "No Teacher, No Nation': X-raying Some Emerging Controversies in Nigerian Educational Development." In M.A. Izibili, P.O. Isanbor and S.U. Attoh (eds). *Studies in Philosophy and Society: Book of Readings*. Vol. I. Kaduna State, Kagoma: Department of Philosophy, Albertine Institute, 2018, pp. 157-170.

<sup>24</sup> J. M. Cooper, ed. *Republic in Plato Complete Works*. (Indiana: Hackett, 1997, p. 1036.



training should be encouraged in schools to enable the students acquire the skills for useful living in the society. There is the need for Africans to embark on their technology instead of relying solely on manufactured goods imported from advanced economies of Europe and America.

On the other hand, Plato's system of education is quite different from Nigeria's educational system. Plato's *Timaeus* gave room for moral education, which allow for cultivation of virtue and goodness. This seems to be lacking in Nigeria's educational system. Moral education should be introduced in Nigeria's educational system at all levels and not just only to primary or secondary education.<sup>25</sup>

Again, Nigeria's 9:3:4 system of education by Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme which is a migration of 6-3-3-4 system of education by Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme, practically differs from Plato's system of education. Plato devised different form of education for each class of citizen. For instance, Platonic education of rulers stipulated that at the age of eighteen, that a person who is being prepared to rule must study literature, music and elementary mathematics.<sup>26</sup> After this, he pursues a rigorous physical and military training for two years. At the age of twenty, few that distinguished themselves will be selected to pursue an advanced course in mathematics. At age of thirty, a five years course in dialectics and moral philosophy would begin. The next fifteen years would be spent gathering practical experience through public service. But, physical and military training is lacking in Nigeria's educational system for the masses. On this note, physical and military training should be introduced into Nigeria's educational system after tertiary education before the practical experience of youth service. It will help to balance their intellectual learning with physical fitness of the body. Besides, it is a pre-requisite for effective experience of youth service.

### **Conclusion**

Plato's notion of education may be difficult to implement in our contemporary times. This is because it is too theoretical and lacks essentially practical aspects, especially contemporary values that have been driving by scientific and technological humanism. Again, Plato

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<sup>25</sup> J.M ,Cooper, ed. *Timaeus in Plato Complete Works*. (Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 1997.

<sup>26</sup> G.R.F., Ferrari, ed. *Plato The Republic* transl. by Tom Griffith, p. 128.

belongs to the ancient period and so; some of his recommendations may appeared to remain an ancient values due to the level of development at the time of such philosophical postulations, and difficult to fit into the contemporary times. Hence, Plato's framework is suitable for character formation in any society, especially the less developed countries like Nigeria. Therefore, to truly grasp the fact that Plato philosophical thoughts on the development of the human mind as the seat of knowledge and as the foundation of true education may not be utopic in nature, as all facet of development of the human person and the society are dependent on what the mind can offer, be it, creativity and innovation. However, we strongly believe that positive effects of Plato philosophy of education as the ethics of development is hinged on the values of human character for the proper social change and cohesion, can be materialized in Nigeria educational curriculum to help transform our country to the ideal state.

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# STRESS CAUSED BY COVID-19 AS A PREDICTOR OF BURNOUT TO MEDICAL STAFF

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## **Abstract:**

**Objective:** The aim of the study is to highlight a statistically significant relationship between burnout and stress caused by COVID 19 in medical staff.

**Methods:** The study included 160 participants from Cluj-Napoca County Emergency Clinical Hospital using the Maslach Burnout Inventory and The Covid-19 Stress scales. The research period was from January 2021 to April 2021.

**Results:** The result showed that there is a positive correlation between burnout and stress caused by Covid-19. At the same time, there is a positive correlation between burnout and, (traumatic stress, contamination) and checking. And there is a statistically significant positive correlation between stress Covid-19 and emotional exhaustion, Depersonalization, personal achievement. In the Pearson statistical method, we obtained a significant correlation  $p < 0.01$ .

**Keywords:** COVID-19, burnout, stress, SARS-CoV-2, professional emotional exhaustion.

The spread of virus causing severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-Cov2) generated a global health crisis with consequences in all population categories. In March 2020, the World Health Organisation

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(WHO, 2020) declared the state of pandemic due to the speed of infection and number of deaths caused by the virus.

Health and wellbeing were factors contributing to the negative impact on population's mental state, quality of life affected both physically and mentally. With the extension and deepening of the epidemic situation, people's worries facing this vital threat increased exponentially, leading to a significant psychological distress. There is a multitude of critical and level of anxiety associated with COVID-19.<sup>1</sup>

Major efforts, in the medical and psychological areas, were made in order to explore the implications of the pandemic in the psycho-social domain and permitting later intervention strategies. Many recent studies aim to describe the mental state of people facing the Coronavirus pandemic and the factors that might influence the mental health.<sup>2</sup>

Depression, anxiety, sleeping problems, fear of becoming infected from other people leading to xenophobia, traumatic stress symptoms like intrusive thoughts and nightmares have been reported worldwide. The medical and psychological literature is rich and oriented towards general or specific population categories i.e. students, children and adolescents, pregnant women, medical workers. Researches constantly reveal direct and indirect neuropsychiatric consequences of the pandemic<sup>3</sup> The high prevalence of anxiety, stress and depression within front-line workers caring for COVID-19 patients has been repeatedly confirmed.<sup>4</sup>

Burnout syndrome is the result of poorly managed workplace stress and is characterized by emotional exhaustion describes the feeling of being exhausted and drained by ones work, chronic fatigue, sleeping and psychical troubles, depersonalization describing emotional coldness and impersonal reactions to the beneficiaries of works, cynicism and negative

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<sup>1</sup> Guan at all., Prevalence and factors for anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic among college students in China. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(9), 4974, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Shah et all. Prevalence, psychological responses and associated correlates of depression, anxiety and stress in a global population, during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 57(1), 2021, p. 101-110.

<sup>3</sup> N. Vindegaard & M. Benros, ECOVID-19 pandemic and mental health consequences: Systematic review of the current evidence. *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity*, 89, 2020, p. 531-542.

<sup>4</sup> Salari et all The prevalence of stress, anxiety and depression within front-line healthcare workers caring for COVID-19 patients: a systematic review and meta-regression. *Human Resources for Health*, 18(1), 2020, p. 1-14.

attitudes, feelings of guilt and personal achievement describing feelings of competence and accomplishment in one`s work with other people. <sup>5</sup>

## METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

### Objectives

The aim of the study is to highlight a statistically significant relationship between burnout and stress caused by COVID 19 in medical staff.

### Research assumptions are:

H1 - It is presumed that there is a statistically significant correlation between burnout and stress caused by COVID 19 in medical staff.

H2 - It is presumed that burnout - manifests differently in the medical staff, by academic training.

H3 - It is presumed that Stress caused by COVID 19 - manifests differently in the medical staff, by academic training.

### Participants

The study involved a total of 160 participants, of which 2 biologist, 131 nurses, 11 medical registrars, 16 doctor (Tabel 1). By study, 66 post high school education, 48 License degree or equivalent, 40 master's degree or equivalent, 6 PhD graduate (Tabel 2). By gender, 135 of participants were women and 25 are men (Tabel 3).

**Table 1. Frequencies profession**

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Biologist	2	1.3 %	1.3 %
Nurse	131	81.9 %	83.1 %
medical registrar	11	6.9 %	90.0 %
Doctor	16	10.0 %	100.0 %

**Table 2. Frequencies Study**

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
post high school education	66	41.3 %	41.3 %
License degree or equivalent	48	30.0 %	71.3 %
master's degree or equivalent	40	25.0 %	96.3 %
PhD graduate	6	3.8 %	100.0 %

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<sup>5</sup> C. Maslach & S.E. Jackson, Burnout in organizational settings. *Applied Social Psychology Annual*, 1984.

**Tabel 3 Frequencies Sex**

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
men	25	15.6 %	15.6 %
women	135	84.4 %	100.0 %

## RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

**1. Maslach Burnout Inventory – MBI**<sup>6</sup>. The questionnaire contains 25 items and is structured in 3 dimensions: (a) **emotional exhaustion** (9 items) describes the feeling of being exhausted and drained by one’s work, chronic fatigue, sleeping and psychical troubles. Item example for this scale: I feel emotionally drained (item 1). For this scale obtained a Cronbach Alpha coefficient  $\alpha = .92$ ; (b) **depersonalization** (6 items) describing emotional coldness and impersonal reactions to the beneficiaries of works, cynicism and negative attitudes, feelings of guilt. Item example for this scale: I communicate with some colleagues how I would communicate with objects (item 5). For this scale obtained a Cronbach Alpha coefficient  $\alpha = .80$ ; (c) **personal achievement** (10 items). Item example for this scale: I have periods when I feel overwhelmed (item 4). For this scale obtained a Cronbach Alpha coefficient  $\alpha = .85$ . In present research Maslach Burnout Inventory proved to be of very good psychometric value (for MBI total, Cronbach Alpha = .94)

**2. The Covid-19 Stress scales**<sup>7</sup>The questionnaire contains 36 items and is structured in 6 dimensions: (a) **danger** (6 items) Item example for this scale: I am worried about catching the virus (item 1). For this scale obtained a Cronbach Alpha coefficient  $\alpha = .88$ ; (b) **the socio-economic consequences** (6 items) Item example for this scale: I am worried about grocery stores running out of food (item 7). For this scale obtained a Cronbach Alpha coefficient  $\alpha = .94$ ; (c) **xenophobia** (6 items) Item example for this scale: I am worried that foreigners are spreading the virus in my country (item 13). For this scale obtained a Cronbach Alpha coefficient  $\alpha = .91$ ; (d) **contamination** (6 items) Item example for this scale: I am worried that people around me will infect me with the virus (item 19). For this scale obtained a Cronbach Alpha coefficient  $\alpha = .94$ ; (e) **traumatic stress** (6 items) Item example for this scale: I had trouble sleeping because I

<sup>6</sup> C. Maslach, S.E. Jackson, M.P. Leiter, *Maslach burnout inventory*. Scarecrow Education., 1997

<sup>7</sup> Taylor and all, Development and initial validation of the COVID Stress Scales. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 2020, 72, 102232.

worried about the virus (item 25). For this scale obtained a Cronbach Alpha coefficient  $\alpha = .92$ ; (f) **checking** (6 items) Item example for this scale: Checked social media posts concerning COVID-19 (item 31). For this scale obtained a Cronbach Alpha coefficient  $\alpha = .87$ . In present research The Covid-19 Stress scales proved to be of very good psychometric value (for The Covid-19 Stress scales, Cronbach Alpha = .95).

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

The preliminary data analysis checked the score normal distribution. The values of Skewness and Kurtosis indices were within normal ranges (less than 3 for Skewness and less than 8 for kurtosis). The mean and standard deviation scores of measured variables are shown in Table 4.



**Tabel 4 - Descriptive statistics for the measured variables**

	Mean	Median	SD	Skewness		Kurtosis	
				Skewness	SE	Kurtosis	SE
Emotional exhaustion	21.32	19.50	9.22	0.512	0.192	-0.7659	0.381
Depersonalization	11.04	10.00	4.66	1.016	0.192	0.4642	0.381
Personal achievement	19.83	19.00	6.78	0.583	0.192	-0.0576	0.381
Maslach_total	52.19	48.00	18.96	0.614	0.192	-0.3488	0.381
Stres_Covid19_total	54.43	49.00	23.01	0.973	0.192	0.3341	0.381
Stress_COVID19_danger	12.81	12.00	4.69	0.470	0.192	-0.4648	0.381
Stress_COVID19_socio-economic consequences	9.28	6.00	4.71	1.544	0.192	1.7072	0.381
Stress_COVID19_Xenophobia	9.53	8.00	4.06	1.333	0.192	1.4426	0.381
Stress_COVID19_Contamination	10.22	9.00	4.22	1.014	0.192	0.4923	0.381
Stress_COVID19 traumatic Stress	4.04	2.00	5.33	1.785	0.192	2.6747	0.381
Stress_COVID19_checking	8.54	7.50	6.44	0.543	0.192	-0.6846	0.381

H1 - It is presumed that there is a statistically significant correlation between burnout and stress caused by COVID 19 in medical staff.

**Tabel 5 - Relations between the Stress Covid-19 Scale and Maslach Burnout Inventory**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.Maslach_total	1										
2.Emotional exhaustion	<b>0.952</b>	1									
3.Depersonalization	<b>0.844</b>	0.716	1								
4.Personal achievement	<b>0.923</b>	<b>0.811</b>	<b>0.700</b>	1							
5.Stres_Covid19_total	<b>0.430</b>	<b>0.403</b>	<b>0.369</b>	<b>0.401</b>	1						
6.Stress_COVID19_Danger	<b>0.463</b>	<b>0.418</b>	<b>0.429</b>	0.433	<b>0.804</b>	1					
7.Stress_COVID19_socio-economic consequences	0.077	0.055	0.089	0.080	<b>0.701</b>	0.403	1				
8.Stress_COVID19_Xenophobia	0.233	0.239	0.165	0.214	<b>0.804</b>	0.525	0.644	1			
9.Stress_COVID19_Contamination	<b>0.398</b>	<b>0.400</b>	0.303	0.363	<b>0.787</b>	<b>0.684</b>	0.500	0.691	1		
10.Stress_COVID19_Traumatic_stress	<b>0.522</b>	<b>0.462</b>	<b>0.499</b>	0.490	<b>0.782</b>	0.634	0.355	0.512	0.463	1	
11.Stress_COVID19_Checking	<b>0.301</b>	0.298	0.225	0.282	<b>0.803</b>	0.544	0.451	0.511	0.471	0.618	1

Table 5 shows the correlations between measured variables. As evidenced, from de table 5, that there is a positive correlation between burnout and Stress caused by Covid-19 ( $r=.43$ ,  $p < .001$ ). At the same time, there is a positive correlation between burnout and danger ( $r=.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ), traumatic stress ( $r=.52$ ,  $p < .001$ ), contamination ( $r=.39$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and checking ( $r=.30$ ,  $p < .001$ ). There is a statistically significant positive correlation between stress Covid-19 and emotional exhaustion ( $r = .40$ ,  $p < .001$ ), Depersonalization ( $r = .36$ ,  $p < .001$ ), personal achievement ( $r = .40$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Or, in other words, the more severe is the burnout therefore the level of post-traumatic stress is higher as well as the level of perceived danger. At the same time as the more severe is the burnout the higher the perceived danger of contamination. People with a high level a burnout feel in stressed, have a high level of traumatic stress, have a perception of contamination and show an acute need for checking.

H2 - It is presumed that burnout - manifests differently in the medical staff, by academic training.

**Table 6 - Mean (m), standars deviation (SD) of the variables Burnout by study**

	<b>Study</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>SD</b>
Maslach_total	Post high school education	66	47.83	40.00	19.21
	License degree or equivalent	48	52.54	51.50	16.94
	Master's degree or equivalent	40	58.25	55.50	20.18
	PhD graduate	6	57.00	58.00	13.90
Emotional exhaustion	Post high school education	66	19.29	16.00	9.33
	License degree or equivalent	48	22.10	22.00	8.74
	Master's degree or equivalent	40	23.48	23.50	9.28
	PhD graduate	6	23.17	20.00	8.86
Depersonalization	Post high school education	66	9.95	8.00	4.52
	License degree or equivalent	48	10.96	10.00	4.03
	Master's degree or equivalent	40	12.68	11.50	5.31
	PhD graduate	6	12.67	12.00	3.44
Personal achievement	Post high school education	66	18.59	17.00	6.71
	License degree or equivalent	48	19.48	19.50	5.78
	Master's degree or equivalent	40	22.10	21.50	7.74
	PhD graduate	6	21.17	22.00	5.23

**Table 7 - Burnout (Maslach total) Crosstabulation function**

		Profession				Total
		biologist	nurse	medical registrar	doctor	
Burnout (Maslach total)	51 -75 average	0	14	1	3	18
	76 - 125 high score	2	117	10	13	142
<b>Total</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>160</b>

H3 - It is presumed that Stress caused by COVID 19 - manifests differently in the medical staff, by academic training.

**Table 8 - Mean (m), standards deviation (SD) of the variables Stress Covid-19 by study**

	Study	N	Mean	Median	SD
Stres_Covid19_total	Post high school education	66	56.71	52.00	23.22
	License degree or equivalent	48	53.25	47.50	23.04
	Master's degree or equivalent	40	54.40	49.00	23.84
	PhD graduate	6	39.00	39.50	6.00
Stress_COVID19_Danger	Post high school education	66	12.88	12.00	4.83
	License degree or equivalent	48	12.85	12.00	4.63
	Master's degree or equivalent	40	13.00	12.50	4.78
	PhD graduate	6	10.50	10.00	3.27
Stress_COVID19_socio-economic consequences	Post high school education	66	10.45	8.50	5.37
	License degree or equivalent	48	8.60	7.00	3.91
	Master's degree or equivalent	40	8.65	6.00	4.38

	PhD graduate	6	6.00	6.00	0.00
Stress_COVID19_Xenophobia	Post high school education	66	10.06	9.00	4.11
	License degree or equivalent	48	9.48	8.00	4.12
	Master's degree or equivalent	40	9.07	7.00	4.12
	PhD graduate	6	7.17	7.00	1.17
Stress_COVID19_Contamination	Post high school education	66	10.45	10.00	4.20
	License degree or equivalent	48	10.29	9.00	4.30
	Master's degree or equivalent	40	10.00	8.00	4.41
	PhD graduate	6	8.50	7.50	2.81
Stress_COVID19_traumatic_stres	Post high school education	66	3.76	1.00	5.34
	License degree or equivalent	48	3.94	2.00	5.34
	Master's degree or equivalent	40	5.00	4.00	5.64
	PhD graduate	6	1.67	1.50	1.63
Stress_COVID19_Checking	Post high school education	66	9.11	9.00	6.16
	License degree or equivalent	48	8.08	6.00	6.56
	Master's degree or equivalent	40	8.68	6.50	7.12
	PhD graduate	6	5.17	6.00	2.23

**Tabel 9 - Stress Covid19 total Crosstabulation function**

		Profession				Total
		Biologist	nurse	Medical registrar	doctor	
Stress Covid19 Total	1 - 48 low	0	61	5	11	77
	49 - 96 range	1	60	5	5	71
	96 - 144 high	1	10	1	0	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>160</b>

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The result of our research showed that is a positive correlation between burnout and stress caused by Covid-19 ( $r=.43$ ,  $p < .001$ ). At the same time, there is a positive correlation between burnout and danger ( $r=.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ), traumatic stress ( $r=.52$ ,  $p < .001$ ), contamination ( $r=.39$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and checking ( $r=.30$ ,  $p < .001$ ). And there is a statistically significant positive correlation between stress Covid-19 and emotional exhaustion ( $r = .40$ ,  $p < .001$ ), Depersonalization ( $r = .36$ ,  $p < .001$ ), personal achievement ( $r = .40$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Data analysis shows that burnout and stress caused by Covid-19 is pronounced to all medical staff that are directly exposed to Covid-19 (intermediate medical staff – nurses and senior medical staff – doctor). This finding is supported by numerous previous studies that have shown that the medical staff has a high level of burnout and stress<sup>1</sup>, which is pronounced in depression and anxiety<sup>2</sup>, emotional distress<sup>3</sup> and medical problems.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of this study that caution against the generalization of the results are of theoretical and methodological nature. A first limitation is represented by the tools used: the self-assessment scales depend on the respondents' honesty and reflexive ability. Moreover, some of these scales underwent special adaptation to the Romanian population. Another limitation ensues from the convenience of study population selection, namely the number of subjects from only one geographical area.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF INVESTIGATION:

We emphasize the necessity to undertake additional research that should include a larger number of participants from several geographical areas of the country in order to investigate burnout and stress caused by Covid-19. At the same time, we consider necessary to perform repeated

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<sup>1</sup> Dimitriu et al., Burnout syndrome in Romanian medical residents in time of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Medical Hypotheses*, 2020, 144, 109972

<sup>2</sup> F. Vancea & M. Apostol, Changes in mental health during the COVID-19 crisis in Romania: A repeated cross-section study based on the measurement of subjective perceptions and experiences. *Science Progress*, 2021, 104(2), 00368504211025873.

<sup>3</sup> C. Delcea & C.V Siserman, The Emotional Impact of Covid-19 On Forensic Staff. *Rom J Leg Med [29]*, 2021, p. 142-146.

assessments of the studied variables in order to be able to draw a conclusion on how long the results would stand the test of time.

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# SOLVING PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL SITUATIONS AS A MEANS OF FORMING PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL COMPETENCE OF FUTURE VETERINARIANS

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**Abstract:** *This scientific article delves into the significance of solving professional and ethical situations as a pivotal approach to fostering the professional and ethical competence of aspiring veterinarians. Professional ethics is an important component of the competence of a veterinarian, affecting the quality of care provided by him, relationships with clients and colleagues, as well as public confidence in the profession. The study explores the integration of theoretical knowledge and practical experiences in veterinary education, emphasizing the importance of ethical decision-making and problem-solving skills for successful veterinary practice. The article discusses the main ethical dilemmas faced by veterinarians, and also suggests methods and approaches to the development of professional and ethical competence of future specialists. It is stressed that case-based teaching methods and the incorporation of ethical dilemmas into the veterinary curriculum have a big impact on the development of inclusive and socially responsible veterinarians, aiming at the development of professional and ethical competence of future specialists.*

**Keywords:** *veterinary education, solving professional and ethical situations, future veterinarians, professional and ethical training.*

## Introduction

Today, when the importance of the moral factor in people's lives is dynamically growing, in the creation of a more humane world order, our society pays more and more attention to the moral and ethical education of student youth. The challenges of the times require the approval of new conceptual trends related to the humanization and humanitarianization of education. These trends are particularly relevant in medical education, in particular in veterinary education.

It is worth pointing out that modern veterinary education should not aim only at forming the necessary amount of professional knowledge,

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abilities and skills of the future doctor. Today requires that the instrumental sphere of the personality of a graduate of the veterinary faculty is closely combined with the development of the motivational and value sphere, moral and ethical qualities, which in synthesis provide a thorough professional and ethical training of a specialist.

In turn, the success of the future specialist in veterinary medicine, his development as a professional directly depends on the level of his professional and ethical preparation. Considering this, today's realities require the activation of pedagogical research aimed at studying the processes of formation and development of professional and ethical competences of future doctors of veterinary medicine.

Therefore, the teaching staff of the faculties of veterinary medicine of higher agricultural educational institutions are currently faced with a task of particular importance: to prepare a specialist who not only thoroughly possesses theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the field, but also demonstrates professionally important, in particular, moral and ethical qualities.

### Literature Review

The issue of spiritual and ethical development of the individual in the professional aspect was highlighted in their works by N. M. Vozniuk<sup>1</sup>, V.I. Lozova<sup>2</sup>, V.A. Malakhov<sup>3</sup>, N.V. Petrenko<sup>4</sup>, O V. Ponomarenko<sup>5</sup>, M.I. Rudakevych<sup>6</sup>, T.G. Hrytsenko<sup>7</sup>, O.M. Tepla<sup>8</sup> and others.

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<sup>1</sup> N.M. Vozniuk, *Ethical and pedagogical basics of person's formation: methodic guides*. Kyiv: Center for educational literature, 2005. 196 p.

<sup>2</sup> V.I. Lozova, *Cognitive activities of schoolchildren: (Special course in Didactics)*. Kharkiv: Osnova, 1990. 90 p.

<sup>3</sup> V.A. Malakhov, *Ethics. Set of lectures*. Kyiv: Lybid, 2004. 384 p.

<sup>4</sup> N.V. Petrenko, *Formation of professional and ethical competence of the future border officers during professional training*. Dissertation abstract to obtain a candidate of pedagogical sciences degree. Khmelnyskyi, 2011. 24 p.

<sup>5</sup> O.V. Ponomarenko, *Development of professional-ethical culture of social worker*. Dissertation to obtain a candidate of pedagogical sciences degree. Zaporozhia: Zaporizhia State University, 2001. 169 p.

<sup>6</sup> M.I. Rudakevych, *Peculiarities of professional ethics learning by state workers*. Scientific herald of UADU, 4, 2001, p. 203-209.

<sup>7</sup> T.B. Hrytsenko, *Ethics of business talks: Handbook*. Kyiv: Center of educational literature, 2007. 344 p.

<sup>8</sup> O.M. Tepla, *Development of humanistic values of students of agrarian higher educational institutions at after school*. Dissertation to obtain a candidate of pedagogical sciences. Kyiv: National Agrarian University, 2008. 240 p.

Domestic and foreign researchers I. S. Panko<sup>9</sup>, A. Friedman<sup>10</sup>, P. Sandoe<sup>11</sup>, J. Tannenbaum<sup>12</sup>, C. Spencer<sup>13</sup>, P. Singer<sup>14</sup>, V. Russell<sup>15</sup>, B. Rollin<sup>16</sup>, M. Bekoff<sup>17</sup>, J. Adams<sup>18</sup> and others pay attention to the ethics of a veterinary medicine doctor in their works.

The analysis of the scientific and pedagogical literature proves that, despite the significant interest of scientists in this issue, the problem of forming the professional and ethical competence of the future doctor of veterinary medicine in the system of higher agrarian education of Ukraine has not been sufficiently developed in pedagogical theory, and therefore remains in the abyss of modern scientific research.

### **The aim of our work**

This article aims to investigate the role of solving professional and ethical situations in shaping the professional and ethical competence of future veterinarians.

### **Ethical aspects in veterinary practice**

Veterinary medicine belongs to those branches of science and practical knowledge, where the problems of ethics and morality have always been given due attention. This is due to the need for veterinary specialists to influence the health and life of animals, and therefore the proper

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<sup>9</sup> I.S. Panko, *Professional ethics of veterinary medicine doctor. Textbook*. Bila Tserkva: VAT Bila Tserkva book factory, 2006. 271 p.

<sup>10</sup> A. Friedman, *Ethical Competence and Professional Associations*. London: PARN, 2007. 112 p.

<sup>11</sup> P. Sandoe, *Ethics of animal use*. Copenhagen: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 178 p.

<sup>12</sup> J. Tannenbaum, *Veterinary Ethics. Animal Welfare, Client Relations, Competition and Collegiality*. St. Louis: Mosby, 1995. 615 p.

<sup>13</sup> L. M. Spencer, *Competence at Work: Models for Superior Performance*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1993. 384 p.

<sup>14</sup> P. Singer, *Animal liberation: a new ethics for our treatment of animal*. New York: Distributed by Random House, 1975. 301 p.

<sup>15</sup> W.M.S., Russell, *The principles of humane experimental technique*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1959. 238 p.

<sup>16</sup> E. Rollin Bernard, *An Introduction to Veterinary Medical Ethics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. 331 p.

<sup>17</sup> M. Bekoff, *The Emotional Lives of Animals*. California: New World Library, 2007. 215 p.

<sup>18</sup> G. Adams, *Embedding the Main Key Competencies in the Curriculum*. Education Australia. Melbourne, 24, 1993. P. 11–13.

performance of his duties by a veterinarian is impossible without the implementation of an ethical component in his professional activity.

The possession of professional and ethical competence in veterinary activity involves the ability of a veterinarian to perform professional activities at the level of communication in a team, among his colleagues, with the owner of the animal, and also, which is perhaps one of the most difficult tasks, the veterinarian must find an approach to his patients as well – animals that do not know how to talk and cannot inform the doctor about their condition. The veterinarian himself must find an approach to the sick animal and correctly establish the diagnosis and carry out treatment. For this, he needs not only professional abilities, but also sensitivity and medical intuition, that is, directly ethical elements of his activity.

Note that the concept of "professional and ethical competence" has not yet become widely used in domestic scientific literature. To identify it and describe its essence, we analyzed foreign studies where ethical competence is derived from the concept of professional ethics.

The American scientist J. Bauman notes that almost any decision made by a specialist has an ethical nature<sup>19</sup>. For example, choosing a way to solve a problem involves rational and moral judgment. Therefore, in addition to professional competence, a specialist must possess professional and ethical competence in order to benefit the people for whom he works.

Some American researchers define professional and ethical competence as the possession of appropriate personal and professional values, as well as the ability to effectively apply them in professional activity<sup>20</sup>.

If a specialist violates moral values, duty and responsibility, then he shows ethical incompetence and inability to fulfill the social purpose of his profession.

A number of Canadian scientists are convinced that the concept of "ethical competence" is ambiguous, because the term "competence" means knowledge and skills that a specialist mobilizes in his activity<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> J. Bauman, *The professional edge*. Washington D. C: International City: County Management Association, 1998. P. 159-160.

<sup>20</sup> D.C. McClelland, *Testing for competence rather than intelligence*. American Psychologist, 28, 1973. P. 13-14.

<sup>21</sup> F. Raynal, A. Riennier, *Pédagogie: dictionnaire des concepts clés; apprentissages, formation et psychologie cognitive*. Paris: ESF éditeur, 1997. p. 120.

Professional-ethical competence, in turn, belongs to knowledge and skills related to ethics, which a specialist mobilizes during his relations with other people.

British researcher A. Friedman claims that ethical competence is the ability of a specialist to perform his professional activities in accordance with the moral code of conduct<sup>22</sup>. As a rule, this means actions that are based on ethical principles: what is right and what is wrong, given the needs of the client. A. Friedman also emphasizes that ethical competence is the element of professional competence that must be included in the professional training of a specialist.

According to the results of the analysis of scientific works and our own theoretical search, we consider “the professional and ethical competence of a veterinary medicine doctor as an integrative ability of an individual, which is determined by the presence of ethical professionally important qualities, as well as a set of professional knowledge about ethical concepts and norms of behavior and the ability to consciously apply them in veterinary practice with in order to solve ethical problems”<sup>23</sup>.

A veterinary doctor with professional and ethical competence is capable of identifying ethical dilemmas, conducting thoughtful analysis of different aspects of the issue, and making well-grounded decisions aligned with medical norms and the interests of the animals and their owners. Furthermore, it includes strong interpersonal skills, effective communication with animal owners, demonstrating empathy and understanding, and considering the feelings and needs of clients while making decisions. Professional responsibility is an integral part of professional and ethical competence, as the veterinary doctor recognizes their responsibility for the health and well-being of animals, as well as the trust placed in them by clients and society.

**The main aspects of the professional and ethical competence of a veterinarian include:**

1. Knowledge of ethical principles: veterinarians must have a solid understanding of ethical principles and codes of conduct that govern their

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<sup>22</sup> A. Friedman, *Ethical Competence and Professional Associations*. London: PARN, 2007. p. 88.

<sup>23</sup> V.A. Lashkul, *Development of ethical competence at professional training of the future veterinary medicine doctors*. Theoretical issues of culture and education, 44, 2011, p. 100-101.

profession. This includes principles such as beneficence (acting in the best interest of the animal), non-maleficence (avoiding harm to animals), justice (fair distribution of resources and treatment), and autonomy (respecting the choices of animal owners).

2. Ethical decision-making: veterinarians should possess the ability to analyze and navigate ethical dilemmas that arise in their practice. They must be skilled in making well-considered, ethical decisions that prioritize the welfare of animals while respecting the rights and values of their owners.

3. Animal welfare advocacy: ethical veterinarians advocate for the welfare of animals and prioritize their health and well-being in all aspects of their practice. They should actively promote measures to prevent animal suffering and improve the quality of life for animals under their care.

4. Client communication and education: effective communication with animal owners is crucial for ethical practice. Veterinarians must be able to discuss medical conditions, treatment options, and potential outcomes with clients in a compassionate and comprehensible manner, empowering them to make informed decisions.

5. Informed consent: obtaining informed consent from animal owners before any medical procedure is vital. Veterinarians must clearly explain the risks, benefits, and potential alternatives to the proposed treatment, allowing clients to give consent voluntarily and with a full understanding of the situation.

6. Confidentiality and privacy: veterinarians should respect the confidentiality of medical information related to animals and their owners. They must ensure that sensitive data is handled with care and shared only with authorized individuals or organizations as required by law.

7. Continuous professional development: ethical veterinarians strive for ongoing professional growth and education. They keep up-to-date with advancements in veterinary medicine and ethical practices, staying abreast of new technologies and treatment modalities.

8. Integrity and professionalism: veterinarians with ethical competence exhibit honesty, integrity, and accountability in their actions. They maintain professional boundaries, avoid conflicts of interest, and uphold high ethical standards even in challenging situations.

Ethical aspects in veterinary practice encompass a broad spectrum of situations and decisions that veterinarians encounter in their professional

activities. The following are specific examples of the ethical issues faced by veterinarians.

*Euthanasia:* deciding when and if euthanasia is appropriate for an animal can be a profound ethical dilemma. Veterinarians must consider the animal's quality of life, prognosis, and the wishes of the owner while ensuring that euthanasia is conducted humanely and compassionately.

*Animal Welfare vs. Owner's Preferences:* veterinarians may encounter situations where the best course of action for an animal's health conflicts with the preferences or financial constraints of the owner. Balancing animal welfare with owner autonomy requires careful ethical consideration.

*Resource Allocation:* in cases where resources such as advanced medical treatments or specialized procedures are limited, veterinarians must decide how to allocate these resources fairly among their patients, ensuring the best possible care for all animals under their care.

*Informed Consent:* obtaining informed consent from animal owners for medical procedures or treatments is an ethical obligation. Veterinarians must communicate potential risks, benefits, and alternatives clearly, allowing owners to make informed decisions.

*Animal Testing and Research:* veterinarians may participate in animal testing or research for medical advancements. Ethical considerations involve minimizing animal suffering, adhering to strict research protocols, and weighing potential benefits against harm.

*Confidentiality:* veterinarians must maintain the confidentiality of their patients' medical records and sensitive information, sharing it only with authorized individuals or organizations as required by law.

*Client Education:* educating clients about responsible pet ownership, preventive care, and the importance of routine veterinary visits is an ethical responsibility aimed at promoting animal well-being.

*End-of-Life Care:* providing appropriate end-of-life care for terminally ill animals involves addressing pain management, emotional support for the owner, and ensuring a dignified passing for the animal. Conflict of Interest: Veterinarians should avoid situations where their personal or financial interests could interfere with their professional judgment, ensuring that their decisions are solely based on the best interest of the animal.

*Cultural and Ethical Sensitivity:* dealing with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds may require sensitivity to different cultural attitudes

toward animals and medical decision-making, while still upholding ethical principles.

*Refusal of Treatment:* in cases where a veterinarian believes that a certain treatment is not in the best interest of the animal, they may face ethical dilemmas when a client insists on pursuing that treatment.

These examples illustrate the complexity of ethical decision-making in veterinary practice. Veterinarians must navigate these ethical issues with empathy, compassion, and a commitment to providing the best possible care for their animal patients while respecting the rights and preferences of their owners.

Professional and ethical competence is an essential aspect of comprehensive veterinary education, contributing to the provision of high-quality veterinary services, enhancing client trust, and elevating the reputation of the veterinary profession. Therefore, the professors and teachers of the veterinary medicine faculties of the universities now face a task of particular importance: to train a specialist who not only thoroughly possesses theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the field, but also demonstrates professionally important, in particular, moral and ethical qualities.

In the course of studying at a university, a student must consistently master the methods and techniques of future professional activity, so that after completing the mastery of the program, the graduate can perform production tasks from the very first days of work. This is especially important for a veterinarian, because he deals with objects of living nature, and the lives of animals often depend on his actions. Considering this, the exclusively theoretical (academic) educational and cognitive activity of the student should be systematically and consistently replaced by its educational and professional forms - practical classes, simulation modeling, practices, etc. Gradually becoming more complicated, approaching professional activity, educational and professional forms serve as a means that purposefully forms the professional competence of future specialists.

Let's focus our attention on the methodology of classes on solving professional and ethical situations, which is recognized as a leading, simple, and accessible form of simulation-game modeling.



Usually, in socio-pedagogical literature, this type of simulation-game activity is called the "Method of analysis of specific situations"<sup>24</sup>.

At the same time, a specific situation is understood as a production problem that a specialist or worker may encounter in his professional activity and which requires him to analyze the conditions of the task and perform certain actions. Most often, the following types of situations are singled out for educational purposes:

- 1) situation-illustration, which is used for a visual and overview of some process, technology, mechanism, object, etc.;
- 2) situation-exercise allows you to learn to apply certain algorithms, schemes and rules, to solve typical professional tasks that are often repeated;
- 3) situation-assessment contributes to the understanding of principles, approaches, ways that lead to a successful (or, conversely, unsuccessful) result;
- 4) a problem-oriented specific situation contains a natural or specially created problem, consists of elements that were actually present in production in the professional activity of a certain official, but at different times and/or in different places. It is the resolution of this type of situations that determines the development of a student's creative thinking, the ability to put forward proposals or projects<sup>25</sup>.

Important components of ethical education are ethical cases, discussions, simulations and mentoring.

### **Ethical cases**

Students are presented with real or fictional situations from the practice of a veterinarian in which they must make a decision based on ethical principles. For example:

Situation 1: a veterinarian is faced with a sick animal that requires complex and expensive surgery. The owner of the animal cannot afford to pay for all the necessary procedures. The student must make a

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<sup>24</sup> P.G. Luzan, *Theory and methods of formation of educational and cognitive activity of students: monograph*. Kyiv: National Agrarian University, 2004. p. 125.

<sup>25</sup> L.V. Viktorova, *Formation of professional and terminological competence of students of higher agricultural educational institutions in professional training. Dissertation to obtain a candidate of pedagogical sciences degree*. National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine. Kyiv, 2009. p. 142.

decision on how to proceed, taking into account the welfare of the animal and the financial capabilities of the owner.

Situation 2: a veterinarian is confronted by a pet owner who is responsible for his pet's injury. The owner regrets what happened and shows guilt. The student must help the owner and the animal by supporting them emotionally, despite the difficulty of the situation.

### **Group discussions**

Students gather in groups to discuss ethical issues and dilemmas. The teacher can provide students with different points of view on the same situation. Examples for discussion:

Students gather in groups to discuss ethical issues and dilemmas. The teacher can provide students with different points of view on the same situation. Examples for discussion: 1) *confidentiality*: students discuss what information about patients should be kept confidential and what exceptions may be allowed, for example, in case of a threat to public safety; 2) *conflicts of interest*: students analyze situations in which a veterinarian may have conflicts between the interests of clients, colleagues, or the organization in which he works.

### **Simulation trainings**

The use of simulation models or virtual reality allows students to practice resolving ethical dilemmas in a controlled environment. Examples: 1) *euthanasia*: students participate in an animal euthanasia simulation where they must balance the animal's suffering with the owner's desire to help their pet; 2) *challenging customer interactions*: students can practice communication skills with emotional or disgruntled pet owners.

### **Mentoring and real cases**

Students can work under the supervision of experienced veterinarians who help them deal with difficult professional and ethical situations. For example: the student can watch a veterinarian deal with ethical dilemmas with animals and their owners in real clinical situations. The mentor can provide the student with their own expert views on the ethical issues that may arise in veterinary practice.

## Conclusion

Solving professional and ethical situations serves as a powerful catalyst in forming the professional and ethical competence of future veterinarians. By instilling ethical reasoning, problem-solving skills, and social responsibility in veterinary education, aspiring veterinarians can make significant contributions to animal welfare and society as a whole. Embracing this approach will ensure the cultivation of compassionate and proficient veterinarians capable of navigating the complexities of modern veterinary practice.

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# ANTEDILUVIAN WAR OF BELLIGERENCY AGAINST WITCHCRAFT PHENOMENON IN OKULOSHO: FORESEEABLE RESULTANT EFFECTS

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***Abstract:** The horrifying and terrifying stories about witchcraft practices in most African traditional society seem to be the rocky foundation in which hatred, fear and fight against witchcraft rested down the ages. The Okulosho community is not different from Europe of the mediaeval era in terms of dehumanizing those accused of witchcraft activities. This paper observed that the disdainful manner in which witches are treated in Okulosho community has created bad blood and a lacuna between the community and the perceived witches. This dichotomy between the two camps portends something sinister and retrogression in the community. The paper further discovered that even at death witches are still been dehumanized because of the way and manner they are buried like pariah dogs. For a deeper understanding of this topic under discussion we are going to adopt phenomenological methodology. This methodology will help us to assess the topic critically without being bias.*

***Keywords:** Antediluvian, War, Belligerency, Witchcraft, Death, Life, Okulosho*

## **Introduction**

The Maccabean revolution against witchcraft in Okulosho community in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State is drawing the hand of history back to the Medieval Europe when the Church and the entire European society engaged in massive witch-hunt and supposedly spiritual cleansing. Peace was like a distance horizon, development was stampeded, superstition became enthroned as standard of judgment, and while poverty was ominously cascading in a ferocious manner on the street in the then Europe. Okulosho is almost a macrocosm of the Medieval Europe as far as witch-hunt is concern where women, the elderly, beggarly, scientists, perceived heretics, political opponents and activists were accused of witchcraft. Okulosho community attributes all misfortunes and vicissitudes of life to witchcraft while neglecting the reality of life and the

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role of nature in certain events in the universe. This paper sets out to investigate whether the fight against witchcraft in Okulosho in this 21<sup>st</sup> century is yielding any fruitful dividend in areas of economy, politics and social development. This paper adopts historical and phenomenological methodology in seeking information on the subject under discussion.

### **Concept of Witchcraft among the Okulosho People**

The Okulosho word for witch/witchcraft is 'Ofia'. Omolere (2019), defines 'Ofia' as: a person believed to have mystical power for the purpose of evil inclinations and activities.<sup>1</sup> A witch is a hater of the society and mankind and no respecter of law as his/her intention is always gear towards destruction, confusion and sadness. For Omoyajowo (1974), among the Yoruba of Western Nigeria, a witch is like a murderer who must not be spared by death, but among the Azande of Central Africa, there is nothing to worry about if someone is a witch.<sup>2</sup> For Middleston and Winter, *Witchcraft and Sorcery in East Africa*, state that witchcraft is a mystical and innate power which can be used by its possessors to harm other people.<sup>3</sup> For Gerald, in his work: *Meaning of Witchcraft*, posits that there is nothing sinister about witchcraft because witchcraft is a system involving both magic and religion.<sup>4</sup> Omolere's definition of 'Ofia' gives a general expose' of an indepth understanding of witch and witchcraft among the Okulosho people which is in conformity with many other societies in Africa and Medieval Europe. 'Ofia' is a term or concept that is unisex; which means, it does not refer to only a woman who practises witchcraft, but also a man who practises same. In Okulosho unlike most African societies, both women and men are involved in the practise of witchcraft in equal capacity. Also, they do not believe that female witches are stronger or more dangerous than their male counterparts. Nevertheless, Gardner (1955) in his work: *Witchcraft Today*, completely parts way with the above stated concepts and meaning of witchcraft common among some societies when he states that witchcraft is a spiritual system that fosters the free thought and will of the individual, encourages learning and an understanding of the earth and nature thereby affirming the divinity in all living things. Most importantly, it teaches responsibility.

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<sup>1</sup> F. Omolere, *Personal Interview*, Trader, Dagbala 68 years, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> J.A. Omoyajowo, *Witchcraft?* Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1974, pp. 18-20

<sup>3</sup> B. Middleston and E. Winter, *Witchcraft and Sorcery in East Africa*, London: Burns and Oates, 1963, p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> B.G. Gerald, *Meaning of Witchcraft*, New York: Magickal Child, INC. 1982, p. 21

It is worth noting that the instrument for initiation in Okulosho is known as *Ogbo*. *Ofia* and *Ogbogo* hand in hand. *Ogbo* in Okulosho is what makes one an *Ofia*. *Ogbo* is a spiritual substance one has to eat or drink to become an *Ofia*. It is the *Ogbo* in *Ofia* that spiritually empowers the *Ofia* to act or do extra ordinary things that look strange to ordinary eyes of the humans who are not members of the guild. *Ofia* is believed to have a magical power to kill or harm another person by work of darkness (evil), which is referred to as *Ogbo* in Okulosho. This is expressive of the traditional Okulosho view of the witch. First of all, a witch is a person whom people believe can kill or harm others. Secondly, *Ogbo* is the spiritual power that possesses the witch and gives him/her the extraordinary power to carry out his/her nefarious activities.

Also, in Okulosho traditional belief, according to Okpolo (2019), *Ofia* in a lighter use could refer not to a witch but someone who is sharp or clever or one who guesses right. In a more serious use, it could mean the powerful one. When medicine or drug is efficacious, the Okulosho say *ikumu no igume lo Ofia*-the medicine works like witchcraft magic (which means it is very powerful). The word *Ofia* then may connote *the powerful*, though in a special sense. The term *Ofia* conjures one image in the mind of the Okulosho people-the image of a person who feeds psychically on his/her victims and destroys them in installment. Somehow, an average Okulosho person knows from childhood who a witch is. Some children have read about it in story books, and if they come from polygamous homes they might have heard one woman referring to another as a witch. Witchcraft seems to be a very common phenomenon among the Okulosho, yet out of good social behaviour or fear of the witches, people hesitate to discuss witches and witchcraft in public. The first reason for this attitude is that witchcraft is generally regarded as evil and is not a matter to be discussed especially before children. Second, witches are generally resented because of the misery they are believed to be able to cause to individuals or groups. Everything is done to show that they are not wanted in the society. Frightening stories are circulated about their activities; and children are warned not to accept food from strangers, suspected neighbours and relatives. Even in the Middle Ages, such frightening stories about witches were very common as pointed out by some writers of Early European history. For instance, Hughes (1989), *Witchcraft*, asserts that witches cast spells; they raised havoc, they poisoned, they aborted cattle

and inhibited human beings; they served the Devil, parodied Christian practises, and allied themselves with the King's enemies.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Attitude of the Okulosho People towards Witchcraft**

In their characteristic manner, the first advice given by parents to a growing child who goes to other neighborhoods to play with his/her peer group is never to accept food from people. The reason hinges on the fact that, the parents would not want their children to be initiated into witchcraft. According to Saliu (2018), before the advent of Christianity that distorted Okulosho culture and traditional system, even grandparents were not allowed to feed their grandchildren if their parents were not at home for the fear of initiation into witchcraft; because, the society was infested with various types of evil and no one trusted anyone.

In Okulosho, it is observed that the people barricaded themselves both spiritually and physically from perceived witches. For instance, the wearing of charms/armlets around the waist region of both children and adults is said to scare away perceived witches from such people. Some seek the protection of the deities of the land. It is observed that there is both spiritual and physical battle between the Okulosho community and the perceived witches. Both Christians and traditional believers alike freely discuss their problems believed to have been caused by perceived witches who are family members.

Confessions of perceived witches in Okulosho are very scarce except those at the point of death. Suspected witches that are ill are asked to confess in order to recover from their illnesses, sometimes some of them even prefer to die than to confess. Ogedengbe (2018) says that the psychological trauma the alleged confessed witches are subjected to in Okulosho is worse than the excruciating death on the cross in the old Roman Empire; hence they prefer to die in silence rather than to confess and survive. Agidigbe (2003) points out that those said to be witches face a lot of humiliation either in the market or anywhere in the community. These are all measures to discourage and eradicate all forms of evil practises in the community. Even in the market, people refused to sell their products to them with the fear that they might take the products to the covens and bring bad luck to the sellers. They are suspended from their age groups so that they would not harm or initiate members of their age groups. In social gatherings, people would not have the courage to interact

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<sup>5</sup> P. Hughes, P., *Witchcraft*, Baltimore: Penguin Books. 1967, p. 56



freely with them. Even if they are not directly ostracized from the community, the treatment given to them is worse than being ostracized. This type of treatment does not only affect them alone, but also their children and members of their family; because in Okulosho, parents and close relatives are the primary source of initiation into witchcraft. The humiliation witches are subjected to in Okulosho is similar to that of the Ika people of Delta State. According to Agidigbe, among the Ika people it is believed that a witch normally initiates other members of the family and so every person in the clan is forbidden to marry from that family. It is common in Okulosho that children whose parents are suspected witches cannot socialize freely with other children in the community; even as adults they find it difficult to marry within the community.

Aberemu (2018) emphasizes how witchcraft can ruin one's career in Okulosho. He points out that, though politics is a free game that even the worse undetected criminals especially in Nigeria canvass for positions, but it is not the same in Okulosho traditional political system. He stresses that no one would give a chieftaincy title either by hereditary or rotational or honorary in Okulosho to a perceived witch, because of the sacredness and sanctity attached to it. Aberemu says that in the history of Okulosho, it is discovered that some perceived witches that were crowned ignorantly without proper consultations with the ancestors whether they were fit and free from witchcraft practices died few months later after the coronations; because of the sanctity of the title(s). The attitude of the Okulosho community towards witches and witchcraft is very common in Africa. In Africa, according to Amadi (2005), witches and wizards were accused of a wide variety of offences. In some societies in Africa in which witchcraft belief was very strong the whole gamut of life's misfortunes was blamed on them. Witches were believed to have power of metamorphosis that was why it was thought that they could change at will into any creature like bats, leopards, mosquitoes, crocodiles, etc. While in these form, they could harm their neighbours.

Naturally, one would expect that with this type of attitude of the Okulosho people towards perceived witches in general, that witchcraft activities would be suppressed or minimized if not completely eradicated in Okulosho. The deities of the land are seen also as the police force to combat perceived witches in Okulosho. According to Olori (2018), in some traditional homes in Okulosho, charms are hung at the door post or main entrance to the house to scare away evil spirits especially witches.

## **The Reaction of Witchcraft Practitioners against the Community**

Perceived witches who are stigmatized, neglected and even ridiculed publicly react by fighting back the community spiritually. Ishelowo (2019), claims that the Okulosho people are unfair to witches for not appreciating what they (witches) have done for the community yester years when there were incessant attacks of the Nupe slave merchants. He alleges that the final exit of the Nupe people from Okulosholand was through the spiritual efforts of the witches who inflicted massive death on the merchants who happened to have crossed the spot they buried their charms (Eka).

The attitude of the Okulosho people toward the witches has created a dichotomy between the community and the perceived witches. The perceived witches do act strange in their own fathers' land by not fully participating in whatever the community is doing. They feel hated and segregated by the community, hence they device a means of compensating themselves in the coven. Like some societies in Africa, death is not the end of their punishment. This idea corroborates with that of Meek (1963), *Law and Authority in a Nigeria Tribe (Igbo)*, when he states that punishment continued even after death. Usually the body was not buried but thrown into the bush, there to be devoured by wild animals.

In other avenue of analysis, Omolape (2021) claimed that witches do not deliberately fight against non-members, but rather non-members are like sorcerers who fight against even those who are not their enemies. She goes further to say that one of the reasons why she is neither a Christian nor a Muslim is because the Churches and Mosques are centres for fighting against innocent people considered to be enemies of the society (witches). Coven on the other hand focuses on issues that affect members and how to improve on their craft, and not plotting how to destroy non-members. That is not withstanding, they do fight back those who seek their down fall or destruction. As human, one has to protect him/herself against enemies to survive, and that is the only reason the witches occasionally fight against non-members.

Aiyegbeni (2022) opines that some of the calamities that take place at times in some communities happen out of provocation of witches in those respective communities. For him, when a member is unjustly accused or maltreated, it is the duty of his/her coven members to fight against those who are responsible. According to him, their belief in the law of karma does not allow them to act irrationally and inflict pains on innocent souls. He claims that non-members often misjudge and misinterpret the activities of the witches. He alleges that witchcraft is blackmailed with cannibalism,

which is completely out of their calling and philosophy. The way non-members go after their enemies by using every available means and instruments to destroy them that is the same way witches go after their enemies to pluck them down. For him the destruction of an enemy is not cannibalism, but rather self-defense. If fighting an enemy is considered as cannibalism, it means we are all guilty of cannibalistic activity. His argument looks logical from a critical point of view, but at the same time difficult to justify. Most often, non-witches do go about with grudges and plots to have their enemies killed. The enemies they mostly fight against are the unforeseeable spiritual enemies which the witches happen to belong to. When you have a physical enemy that endangers your life there are different means to settle yourselves through laws and regulations guiding the society. It is against the ethics of most societies to take another man's life you consider as an enemy without following the due process. The establishment of law enforcement agency and the judiciary is to protect both the weak and the strong in the society; therefore, killing of a human being in any form is not allowed.

### **Foreseeable Resultant Effects**

It is very glaring that there is an existing enmity, dichotomy, hatred and cold war between the two camps (witches and non-witches). In a situation like this, development and peace become almost impossible and inconceivable. Unity among members of the community becomes very weak and cranky. Cross breeding of ideas that are gear towards development become unimaginable. Acrimony, sentiments, hatred, prejudice, segregation, discrimination, accusations and counter accusations become norms and ways of life of the community.

As it stands today, Okulosho is suffering from political, economy and social malnutrition because of their obsolete beliefs that the vicissitudes of life and daily misfortunes are by-products of witchcraft. The entire universe presently is overshadowed by science and technology, and problems are resolved along this line; but in Okulosho, reverse is the case. Henry (2021), corroborates with the above views when he states that Okulosho should be renamed as 'Freudian Primitive Society' because of the people's religious mentality, superstitious beliefs and archaic approach to issues. He further points out that within Akoko-Edo Local Government Area, the people of Okulosho are not recognized in the scheme of things because of their poverty, backwardness and lack of modern ideologies. All

their problems are spiritualized and always looking for witches as scapegoats to blame for their developmental bankruptcy.

Influential sons and daughters of the soil are afraid to visit home or invest at home for the fear of being bewitched by family members who are probably jealous of their achievements. For Gorge (2022), no man invests on an unsaved environment or a place no matter how dear the environment or the place is to his heart. Okulosho is a good example of Gorge's assertion. Parents and good family members are always advising their children and wards to stay far away from home and when they visit home out of necessity, they should deliberately exhibit poverty in order not to attract undue attention from witches. If really the perceived witches possess the power they claim to have, are the Okulosho people saying that when one disguises himself the witches would not be able to know the true status of the individual? If the answer to this above question is affirmative, then witches have no power they claim to have; but if it is negation, what stops the witches from harming the person wherever he/she lives in the world?

One of the reoccurring questions that bog the minds of some intellectuals is, if the indigenes of a place refuse to invest in their own land because of superstitious beliefs, who will go and develop the place for the indigenes? Where will the development come from if not from the indigenes? Government is attracted to places where the indigenes themselves are making frantic efforts in areas of investments, infrastructural development, and bringing home those that matters in the society to come and invest in their places. Okulosho indigenes would rather scare visitors away with their obsolete beliefs in witchcraft and local politics that yield no fruitful dividend. For the lack of trust for each other they easily fall prey to Machiavellian political albatross which other communities in Akoko-Edo take advantage of and use them to climb high and juicy political positions. According to Gabriel (2021), Okulosho is only visible during electioneering campaigns, while it is wiped out of Akoko-Edo map after elections because the local political gladiators from Okulosho community have blackmailed themselves with witchcraft allegations to run down their opponents. They portray themselves as serial betrayers, calumniators, incompetent to vie for any position, and act as sycophants to other politicians in Akoko-Edo, hence they are not taken as serious minded people.

## **Ground for Reconciliation**

Most identified problems have solutions; therefore the root causes of poverty, backwardness and marginalization in Okulosho have been identified and traced to their obsolete beliefs in witchcraft and scientific-technological bankruptcy. There is an urgent need to enforce the spirit of tolerance in Okulosho community which has helped the contemporary European society to attain the zenith of development and placed it in a pinnacle of an enviable civilization today. It is the pride of any African today to travel to Europe either for a visit or to get a job because the European society was able to conquer, overcome, disposed obsolete beliefs, ideas, superstitions, and dispelled witch-hunting to enthrone intellectual freedom and fundamental human rights.

The people need re-orientation through education. Without an iota of doubt, the level of illiteracy in Okulosho community is very high compared to other neighbouring communities in Akoko-Edo. Majority of the populace have been brain washed with crude archaic custom, tradition and culture. It is the belief of an average Okulosho man/woman that witches control the destiny of an individual; therefore, when things seem not to be working according to plan it is the witches that are responsible. This has led to accusations and allegation against family members who probably appear wretched. It is through education they would be exposed to the other side of life and broaden their mental horizon as against their myopic, and parochial approach to resolving problems of life.

Religion also has a very big role to play in redirecting the adherents' orientations to focus on positive ways of resolving their conflicts. The religious leaders who occasionally organize crusades should re-evaluate their homilies not to be geared towards destruction of witches and unforeseen enemies. They should rather pray for the conversion and total repentance of the perceived witches and enemies instead of their destruction, because everyone has right to life. Jesus did not destroy the demons in his time; he only asked them to relocate because they were also created for a purpose. He did not destroy those that were possessed with evil spirits; rather he was casting out the demons in order for the victims' souls to enjoy their spiritual freedom.

Okulosho people should develop the spirit of forgiveness and unity of purpose. The community should find a way to reunite with those who have been stigmatized because of witchcraft accusations and treat them like other normal human beings in the community to create room for peaceful co-existence. The stigmatized witches should be accepted back

with love to the community like the prodigal son and give them their due respect. It is possible when they feel the community is no longer out to fight or destroy them, probably they will have a change of mind towards the community they naturally belong to and then think positively about the community.

It is only when there is a peaceful co-existence between the two camps that development will usher in. The sons and daughters of the soil in diaspora will then muster courage to come and establish some small scale businesses for their relatives at home to manage.

### **Conclusion**

This paper x-rays the fight against witchcraft phenomenon in Okulosho community over the years without fruitful dividend. This spiritual, psychological and physical fight have caused socio-economy and political malnutrition and depression in Okulosho and further turned Okulosho community to the most awkward, backward and wretched community in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State. As of today, there are no hospitals, standard schools, and recreation centres, but there are pulling centres and units where the people can exercise their voting rights/franchise. Okulosho is relegated to the lowest background because of the people's obsolete tradition, customs, culture and superstitious beliefs. This fight against witchcraft has brought nothing positive to the community, apart from suspicious of one another, frivolous accusations, and blaming perceived witches for virtually all misfortunes of life and so on.

### **Recommendations**

1. The Okulosho people should endeavor to approach their problems from scientific periscope.
2. They should develop the spirit of tolerance and forgiveness.
3. The Government should help to reduce the number of illiterates by introducing free education in favour of the children of school age.
4. The Government too should give the community functional hospitals to reduce infants' mortality rate that provide fertile ground for suspicious and witchcraft accusations.
5. Crusades in Okulosho should not always be gear towards the destruction of witches, but for peace and conversion of souls.

6. The community should protect the dignity of the individual because all of us are useful before the eyes of God.

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# BIOETHICAL COMPETENCE AS AN INTEGRAL COMPONENT OF FUTURE BIOTECHNOLOGISTS' PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

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***Abstract:** The field of biotechnology is rapidly evolving, offering immense potential for scientific advancements and societal benefits. However, the integration of powerful biotechnological tools raises complex ethical challenges that demand thoughtful consideration and responsible implementation. This article emphasizes the importance of developing bioethical competence among future biotechnologists. It explores the significance of incorporating ethical training into their professional education to foster critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and a profound sense of responsibility. By equipping biotechnologists with the knowledge and skills to navigate ethical dilemmas, we can ensure that biotechnological advancements are utilized in a socially responsible and ethically sustainable manner.*

***Keywords:** bioethical competence, professional training, future biotechnologists, bioethics, bioethics specialized curriculum.*

## Introduction

The rapid advancements in biotechnology have opened up new frontiers in scientific research and applications. As future biotechnologists, these aspiring professionals will wield powerful tools with the potential to revolutionize medicine, agriculture, and other domains. However, the transformative nature of biotechnology comes with profound ethical implications that require careful attention. The need for bioethical competence becomes evident to address emerging ethical dilemmas and ensure the responsible deployment of biotechnological innovations. Technologies cannot be considered in the isolation from the entity who will use them (or who arises to use them), therefore the question of bioethical competence the professional training of biotechnologists has been updated.

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## **Literature Review**

The issue of training specialists in biotechnology has been researched by foreign scholars B. Albers, J. Labov, J. Granger, W. Dawson, R. Dobert, P. Narasimharao, J. Rossou, K. Soames, S. Salvado, M. Kazanoves, M. Novo, R. Tomson, and in the theory and practice of domestic professional training the question has been elucidated by A. Bida, N. Ridey, L. Rytikova, O. Syrotina. The analysis of scientific literature showed that the issue of forming bioethical competence of future biotechnologists has not been investigated enough.

## **The aim of our work**

The aim of the article is to analyze bioethical principles of professional activity in the field of biotechnology and justify the need to form bioethical competence of future biotechnologists in professional training.

## **The Significance of Bioethical Competence**

Today, biotechnology has become a significant factor in the development of science and society. With the development of new technologies in the field of biology, complex ethical issues arise that require deep discussion and regulation. Today the development of biotechnology is one of the main areas of scientific and technological progress. Biotechnology is becoming an integral part of all spheres of life. However, all achievements in this field of science should be based on noosphere thinking, ethical values, protection of an individual from the negative effects of the use of biotechnology. Analysis and philosophical understanding of the history of formation and development of biogenous technologies have been conducted by such scientists, as J. Rossou, S. Svetlov, L. Sidorenko, V. Soifer, P. Tishchenko, L. Udovika, O. Chumak, Y. Habermas, J. Fayndhold, F. Fukuyama, H. Shumberh, B. Yudin and others. They tried to analyze the nature and the importance of biotechnology in human life in detail. They emphasize that despite the enormous possibilities of biotechnology to help people in difficult environmental situation its development is unpredictable. The results can be directed against a person<sup>1</sup>. According to the researcher S. Svetlov, "the paradox of technologies in general is that they are, on the one hand, provide the most favorable prospects for the results of their use (increasing productivity,

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<sup>1</sup> L.I. Sydorenko, *Worldview and ethical principles of the biotechnological model of nature management*. Philosophical readings in memory of Pavel Kopnin, 2016, p. 96.

treatment of diseases, quality of life, etc.) and on the other hand, they offer the possibility of implementing the most sinister plans and fantasies. Everything in the world of technology is manifested in two ways, all technologies can be implemented in two ways – for good or for evil. In this respect we cannot attribute to the technologies a positive or negative sign. All they are initially ambivalent, they carry both positive and negative potential. Only man himself chooses which of these potentials will be realized. Critics of biotechnology and critics of scientific and technological progress in general should know and understand this axiom very clearly. Science and technologies themselves cannot be "antihuman" or "against society." Only man himself and only society itself use science and technologies against themselves<sup>2</sup>. Modern scientific and technical progress necessitates a general awareness of the fact that further advances in the technology of human development are possible only under the conditions of the moral society creation. The technological powers of man are so significant. If they get into evil hands, not only big local and even global catastrophe will become possible. In this plan biotechnology provides good examples: even an immoral single person who has the latest biotechnological methods can potentially cause a global biocatastrophe<sup>3</sup>.

The scientific community has conflicting ideas about the further development of "life technologies". Some demand a moratorium on research that is dangerous for all living things, question the feasibility of using new opportunities, the dangers of social manipulation, define the latest trends as the degeneration of the human race, defend the "human right to a natural unchanging genome" and defend the "humane" way of further development of mankind. Proponents of new knowledge, noting "impossible ideals", call not to stand in the way of scientific progress, to abstract from the "imperfect" biological shell and define the new time as the beginning of progeneration is the birth of a future type of man<sup>4</sup>. Science has come close to the limit beyond which the secret of life is hidden. At present, it is impossible to predict what the free manipulation

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<sup>2</sup> S.V. Svetlov, *Problems of perfecting humanity. Development of biotechnology or "improving morality"* Materials of the IV Scientific and Practical Conference (April 16-17, 2004, Irkutsk). 2004. P. 165.

<sup>3</sup> V.G., Gorokhov, V., M. Rozin, I., Yu, Alekseeva, O., V. Aronson, *Philosophy of technology: History and modernity*. 1997, P. 187.

<sup>4</sup> E.D. Vyshnyak, *Human life in the context of high biotechnologies*. Mater. And National congress of bioethics, 2001, p. 21.

of this secret may end up being. Much will depend on the scientists themselves, their position, morality and conscience<sup>5</sup>.

Interaction with the powerful tools of biotechnology and medical sciences represents a huge potential for scientific research and development, but it is also associated with a set of complex ethical issues that require special attention and responsibility. Therefore, bioethical competence is an integral and necessary aspect for professionals working in the field of biology and biotechnology to ensure responsible and ethical application of their knowledge and skills. It helps minimize ethical risks and make informed decisions, contributing to the creation of a stable and harmonious development of scientific and medical practices.

Bioethical competence refers to the capability and proficiency of individuals to understand, analyze, and address ethical issues and dilemmas that arise in the fields of biology and biotechnology. It encompasses the knowledge of fundamental ethical principles, critical thinking skills to assess complex ethical situations, and the ability to make well-informed and ethically justified decisions in professional practice and research<sup>6</sup>. Bioethical competence also involves considering the broader societal and environmental implications of biotechnological advancements and ensuring responsible and ethical conduct in scientific endeavors. This competence is essential for professionals to navigate the ethical complexities inherent in their work and contribute to the ethical and sustainable advancement of biological and biotechnological sciences.

### **Consider the main elements of bioethical competence.**

1. Knowledge of ethical principles. Bioethical competence begins with a solid understanding of ethical principles relevant to the fields of biology and biotechnology. These principles may include respect for autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and veracity. Professionals with bioethical competence are well-versed in these ethical principles and can apply them to various ethical dilemmas.

2. Critical thinking and ethical analysis. Bioethical competence involves the ability to critically analyze complex ethical situations.

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<sup>5</sup> Y. Kundiyeu, *Bioethics - the dictates of time. Medicines of Ukraine*, 2002, No. 11, p. 55-57.

<sup>6</sup> T.A. Biryuchinskaya, *Formation of bioethical thinking of future teachers of biology in the educational process of the university (from work experience)*. Scientific notes of the Oryol State University. Series: Pedagogical foundations for the promotion of bioethics in illuminating the practice of the primary foundations. Humanities and social sciences. 2018. P.213-214.

Professionals must be capable of evaluating the moral implications of their actions and research, considering the potential benefits and risks, and identifying potential conflicts between ethical principles.

3. Application of ethical frameworks. Bioethical competence includes the application of ethical frameworks to resolve ethical dilemmas. Professionals may draw upon ethical theories such as utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics, and principlism to make well-considered ethical decisions.

4. Ethical decision-making. The ability to make ethically sound decisions is a key component of bioethical competence. Professionals must be able to weigh the ethical considerations, assess the potential consequences, and choose the most ethically justifiable course of action.

5. Sensitivity to cultural and social context. Bioethical competence entails recognizing the cultural and social diversity that can influence ethical perceptions and values. Professionals should be sensitive to how different cultural backgrounds and societal norms might impact ethical perspectives.

6. Communication and collaboration. Effective communication skills are essential for professionals with bioethical competence. They must be able to engage in meaningful discussions and collaborations with colleagues, patients, research participants, and the public, addressing ethical concerns and explaining complex ethical issues.

7. Ethical oversight and regulation. Bioethical competence includes an understanding of ethical oversight and regulatory processes in scientific research and medical practice. Professionals should be familiar with institutional review boards (IRBs), ethics committees, and ethical guidelines that govern their work.

8. Continuous learning and adaptation. Bioethical competence is not static but requires continuous learning and adaptation. Ethical challenges in biology and biotechnology may evolve over time, and professionals need to stay informed about emerging ethical issues and best practices.

9. Ethical leadership. Professionals with bioethical competence can play a leadership role in promoting ethical behavior and responsible research in their respective fields. They can advocate for ethical guidelines and policies, inspiring others to uphold ethical standards.

10. Reflection and self-awareness. Bioethical competence involves regular reflection on one's ethical choices and values. Professionals should be self-aware of their own biases and be willing to reevaluate their ethical judgments in light of new information and perspectives.

Overall, bioethical competence is a multi-faceted and essential aspect for professionals in the fields of biology and biotechnology. It encompasses a wide range of knowledge, skills, and ethical virtues that enable professionals to engage ethically and responsibly in their work, contributing to the advancement of science and the well-being of individuals and society as a whole.

### **Implementation of bioethics in educational practice of universities**

In recent years, new educational courses "Fundamentals of biosafety and bioethics" and "Bioethics" have been introduced in higher educational institutions of Ukraine, which have the status of elective or mandatory courses in the process of training future biotechnologists, agrarians, lawyers, philosophers, social workers, and other specialists. In many countries of the world, bioethics has become an academic discipline. It is obvious that the bioethical education of future specialists is an urgent social task, the solution of which will allow to significantly expand the boundaries of professional competence of students, to change their attitude to the field of future work. The introduction of specialized training courses on bioethics in the curricula of biotechnology faculties will allow students to gain basic knowledge about ethical principles and issues related to their future professional activities.

The founder of bioethics, the American oncologist Van Rensselaer Potter, considered it as an area of integration between science and the system of human values, natural and humanitarian knowledge, as a system of knowledge and practice that regulates human intervention in any life within the biosphere. In today's conditions, the relevance of bioethical issues and the awareness of its importance are due to the need to return to the moral foundations of spirituality, to oppose hypertrophied technical progress, in which the technocratic view of a specialist with the dominance of the principle of utility deforms human spirituality.

The methodological potential of bioethical education consists in the organic interaction of natural and socio-humanitarian knowledge; ideas of the value of life, the unity of man and living nature, the coevolution of society and nature, the full responsibility of the future specialist before life

and the universe; harmonization of connections between nature and society<sup>7</sup>.

Bioethical education, in our opinion, performs the following main functions: axiological – a combination of professional knowledge with bioethical values and morals in order to achieve the highest degree of environmental responsibility of a specialist, his active life position; worldview – formation of a bioethical noospheric worldview; preventive – formation of environmental motivations, preparation for professional activity from the standpoint of moral norms of professional and scientific activity; normative – assimilation of moral principles, norms and rules – a specific code of ethical responsibility of a specialist in a certain field of training.

Consequently, bioethical values, organically included in bioethical scientific knowledge, should be translated into educational technologies of universities and assimilated by students in the process of professional training. Therefore, for master's students who master the biotechnology specialty, taking into account the specifics of their specialty, for the development of bioethical competence, a specialized curriculum in bioethics can be used.

The curriculum typically includes a combination of theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and critical thinking exercises to foster a deep understanding of the ethical challenges and implications in the realm of biological sciences. The key components of a bioethics specialized curriculum may include:

1. Fundamentals of Bioethics. An introductory course covering the fundamental principles, theories, and frameworks of bioethics. Students learn about autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and other ethical principles relevant to biology and biotechnology.

2. Ethical Issues in Biotechnology. A course that examines the ethical dilemmas and implications arising from biotechnological innovations such as gene editing, cloning, genetic testing, and stem cell research. Students explore the ethical considerations of these technologies in healthcare, agriculture, and environmental conservation.

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<sup>7</sup> L.B. Voloshko, *Pedagogical foundations for the promotion of bioethics in the illumination of the practice of the primary foundations*. VIII International Scientific and Practical Conference "Science in the Information Space - 2012" (October 4-5, 2012).

3. **Biomedical Ethics.** This course delves into the ethical aspects of medical practice and research. It covers topics such as informed consent, end-of-life care, organ transplantation, and reproductive technologies.

4. **Environmental Ethics.** A module focused on ethical questions related to environmental conservation and sustainability. Students explore the ethical dimensions of biodiversity conservation, climate change, and the impact of biotechnological interventions on ecosystems.

5. **Research Ethics.** This segment familiarizes students with the ethical principles governing research involving human participants, animals, and data. Topics include research integrity, informed consent, ethical review processes, and responsible conduct in research.

6. **Genetics and Ethics.** A course that investigates the ethical considerations surrounding human genetics, genetic counseling, and genetic testing. Students examine the ethical implications of genetic information in various contexts.

7. **Policy and Regulation in Bioethics.** An exploration of the ethical aspects of policy development and regulation in biotechnology. Students learn about the role of ethics committees, regulatory bodies, and the process of ethical policy formation.

8. **Case Studies and Ethical Analysis.** Students engage in ethical case studies and discussions, analyzing real-world ethical dilemmas faced by professionals in biology and biotechnology. This fosters practical skills in ethical analysis and decision-making.

9. **Interdisciplinary Approaches.** The curriculum may encourage interdisciplinary approaches by incorporating courses or seminars that engage with other fields like philosophy, law, sociology, or public health, enriching the understanding of bioethical issues from various perspectives.

10. **Practical Experience and Internships.** Some specialized programs offer opportunities for students to gain practical experience through internships, where they apply bioethical principles in real-world settings, such as hospitals, research institutions, or non-profit organizations.

A well-designed bioethics specialized curriculum equips students with the knowledge, skills, and ethical awareness necessary to critically engage with the ethical challenges and responsibilities associated with advancements in biotechnology and biology. Graduates of such programs are prepared to make informed, ethical decisions and contribute

responsibly to the advancement of science and technology for the betterment of society.

In the course of mastering the course "Bioethics" in the curricula of biotechnology faculties, various teaching methods are used to engage students, encourage critical thinking, and promote active learning. These methods aim to help students understand and analyze complex ethical issues in the context of biotechnology and biology. Some of the commonly employed teaching methods include:

**Lectures.** Traditional lectures serve as a foundational element of the course, where instructors provide theoretical knowledge, present ethical concepts, and discuss relevant case studies. Lectures help students gain a comprehensive understanding of bioethical principles and frameworks.

**Case studies.** Ethical case studies present real-life scenarios where ethical dilemmas arise in the context of biotechnology and biology. Students analyze these cases, apply ethical principles, and discuss potential solutions, fostering critical thinking and ethical reasoning.

**Group discussions.** Group discussions encourage active participation and interaction among students. They promote collaborative learning, allowing students to exchange ideas, explore diverse perspectives, and collectively address ethical challenges.

**Debates.** Debates on controversial bioethical topics stimulate critical thinking and argumentation skills. Students are divided into groups, each advocating different viewpoints, enabling them to understand and evaluate multiple perspectives.

**Ethical dilemma exercises:** Instructors present students with ethical dilemmas specific to biotechnological applications. Students work individually or in groups to navigate these dilemmas, offering ethical justifications for their decisions.

**Guest lectures and expert talks.** Inviting guest speakers, such as bioethicists, researchers, or representatives from ethics committees, enhances students' exposure to real-world ethical issues and expert insights.

**Ethical reflection and writing.** Assignments that require students to reflect on ethical issues or write essays on ethical considerations in biotechnology help students clarify their thoughts and develop their own ethical viewpoints.

**Role-playing.** Role-playing activities allow students to adopt different roles, such as researchers, policymakers, or patients, to understand various perspectives and the ethical challenges each role entails.



Ethical committees simulation. Simulating ethics committees provides students with the experience of evaluating research proposals, conducting ethical reviews, and making ethical recommendations.

Field visits and case studies. Visiting research labs, healthcare facilities, or biotechnology companies allows students to observe ethical practices in real settings and connect theoretical knowledge with practical applications.

Multimedia and technology. Integrating multimedia resources, videos, and online platforms can engage students with visual and interactive content, enhancing their understanding of complex ethical concepts.

Self-directed learning. Encouraging students to explore additional bioethics resources independently, such as academic papers, documentaries, or ethics guidelines, promotes self-directed learning and deepens their understanding.

Combining these teaching methods creates a dynamic and comprehensive learning experience, enabling students to develop strong bioethical competence and ethical decision-making skills in the context of biotechnology.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the integration of bioethical competence into the professional training of future biotechnologists is not a mere choice but an imperative necessity. As the field of biotechnology continues to advance and its applications become more far-reaching, ethical considerations must be at the forefront of the minds of professionals. Bioethical competence equips these future biotechnologists with the knowledge, skills, and ethical mindset necessary to navigate the complex ethical challenges that arise in their work.

Bioethical competence fosters a deeper understanding of the moral implications of biotechnological innovations, ensuring that professionals approach their work with a profound sense of responsibility towards individuals, society, and the environment. By instilling ethical principles, critical thinking, and ethical decision-making skills, educational institutions can empower biotechnologists to make informed and morally sound choices in their research, practice, and policy advocacy.

Moreover, bioethical competence enhances the ability of future biotechnologists to engage in ethical dialogues with diverse stakeholders, from fellow scientists and colleagues to patients, policymakers, and the

general public. Effective communication of ethical considerations is vital to building trust, transparency, and accountability in biotechnological practices.

Through specialized curricula and innovative teaching methods, universities can create an environment where future biotechnologists engage in critical discussions and ethical analyses. Case studies, debates, and ethical dilemma exercises encourage students to think critically about the ethical implications of biotechnological advancements. Group discussions and interdisciplinary approaches enrich their understanding by considering diverse perspectives and societal values.

As biotechnologists, these professionals hold the key to groundbreaking discoveries and advancements that have the potential to revolutionize human well-being and the environment. However, with this immense power comes the responsibility to use it ethically and responsibly. Bioethical competence serves as a guiding light, illuminating the ethical pathway in an ever-evolving field where new challenges emerge continuously.

Ultimately, the successful integration of bioethical competence into the training of future biotechnologists will not only lead to scientifically informed decisions but also ethically conscious actions that promote the betterment of humanity and the sustainable development of biotechnological sciences. As we face unprecedented ethical questions in the realm of biotechnology, it is essential to equip the next generation of biotechnologists with the moral fortitude and ethical wisdom to navigate these challenges and uphold the values of dignity, justice, and respect for all life. By embracing bioethical competence as an integral component of their training, future biotechnologists can become ethical pioneers, shaping a future where biotechnological innovations are a force for good, contributing to the well-being of humanity and the protection of our shared planet.

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# COUNSELING TECHNIQUES AND INTEGRATIVE PSYCHOTHERAPY TOOLS USED TO MEDIATE COGNITIVE CONFLICTS AND OPTIMIZE WELL-BEING

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**Abstract:** *Dividing knowledge into distinct methods proved insufficient and no longer finds its justification in today's changing world. Promoting the integralist-functional approach determines a unitary epistemic attitude of conceiving knowledge and tools needed for action. The interdisciplinary, intercultural, transdisciplinary and transcultural approaches make this adaptation possible through a process which is built on alternative methods of solving cognitive conflicts (negotiation, mediation, creative problem solving) and is also segmented in relation to the integrative universal paradigms (information and communication, play and paradox, model and metaphor, order and chaos, left and right, conscious and unconscious, simple and complex, innovation and discovery etc.). The holistic approach of knowledge segmentation through distinct methods has proven to be insufficient, therefore its complex approach represents the actual innovation of our research. Novelty is what already exists but has been forgotten.*

**Keywords:** *cognitive conflict, consciousness, unconsciousness, flow state, well-being.*

**Motto:** *"Discovery consists of seeing what everybody else has seen and thinking what nobody else has thought."  
(Albert von Szent-Gyorgyi)*

While integrated with cognitive sciences - alongside linguistics, psychology, philosophy, neurosciences, mathematics, informatics and cultural anthropology - cognitive mediation is a hybrid discipline, a "border" one as we first see it, which competes for an integrated, but never complete, theory.

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In the view of the American linguist Noam Chomsky, language is a mirror of the mind, which means that a balanced speech is the external manifestation of psychic processes carried out in an integrated brain, inside which the two hemispheres do not fight for supremacy, due to the holistic functioning.

The existence of a whole mental baseline inside the brain of any speaker (competence) can be noticed due to its external manifestations: speech (performance).

Psychologists Vygotsky, Bruner and also Feuerstein with his method called PEI (Programme d'Enrichissement Instrumental), all have a leading role in establishing mediation as a decisive factor in cognitive development.

Paradoxically, the conflict represents both the head and the tails of a coin, it can be a stimulating factor for progress and also a nightmare for interpersonal relations.

The success of the integrative approach results from the correct relationship between thoughts and emotions, thanks to the ability of being flexible, a fundamental attribute of human behavior. The relation between cognitive intelligence (IQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ) is possible due to the mediation of the two realities: the inner one and the outer one.

The inner and outer universes are sometimes in a dramatic tension. The state of well-being results from their association, from their accommodation at the same time, from their coexistence, even from their antinomy.

The awareness of the relation that exists between the inner and the outer universe offers a triadic perspective and a different understanding of balance, a balance that is not permanent, but knows moments when it is self-fulfilling.

The current state, the potential state and the moment of balance are mutually conditioned, according to the principle of the included third or the "T" state in the vision of Stéphane Lupasco.

The research carried out by Adrian Nuță in 2007 led to the conclusion that both the horizontal coordination between the activities of the two cerebral hemispheres, as well as the vertical coordination of the two brains (the archaic brain and the modern brain), allow us to better harmonize with each other and bring together our efforts and social

contributions. The right hemisphere is able to organize random data into coherent structures, thus filling any existing gaps.<sup>1</sup>

The ability of the brain to generate new concepts and - by relating them - new meanings to any nonsense, when having an appropriate context, also with the help of interferences and metaphors, this is something peculiar to the right hemisphere.

Noam Chomsky's theory of linguistics meets the one in modern physics and is part of a line of thinking promoted by Kurt Goedel under the name of the "*incompleteness theorem*".

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Chomskyan linguistics, sometimes understood by formal linguistics, means a general term for language principles and language study methods introduced and promoted by Noam Chomsky (professor emeritus in linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)) in his fundamental works *Syntactic Structures* (1957) and *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965). Christopher Hutton notes that "Chomskyan linguistics is defined by a fundamental commitment to universalism and to the existence of a shared species-wide language faculty grounded in human biology".<sup>2</sup> He also wrote that *Chomskyan linguistics* is sometimes treated as a synonym for *formal linguistics*.

In linguistics, *generative grammar* is a grammar (or a set of rules) that indicates the structure and interpretation of sentences that native speakers of a language accept as belonging to the language.

Adopting the term *generative* from mathematics, linguist Noam Chomsky introduced the concept of generative grammar in the 1950s. This concept is also known as *Transformational Generative Grammar*.

This is how the so-called Chomsky Algebra is born in mathematics, developed on the basis of Chomsky Grammar, a fully structured and formalized theory with a special role in the theory of formal languages that are the basis of programming languages.

Let us specify that a Chomsky grammar is able to constitute a mathematical model for the syntax of a language, neglecting the semantic aspects. This is what Noam Chomsky tried to achieve for the English language in his works in 1957.

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<sup>1</sup> Adrian Nuță, *Mai mult de 10%. Unitatea verticală a creierului [More than 10%. The Vertical Unit of the Brain]*, Bucharest, SPER Publishing House, 2007

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Hutton, *Universalism and human difference in Chomskyan linguistics: The first 'superhominid' and the language faculty*, Chomskyan (R)evolutions, Kibbee, D.A. (Ed.), p. 337. Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2010

According to Chomsky's hierarchy, there are four basic types of grammar, based on the form of the rules of generation. This hierarchy is fundamental in the theory of formal languages, it was introduced by Noam Chomsky in 1958 and, by tradition, new language classes are related to this classification.

Similarly, we also mention the concept of Turing machine. The Turing machine is a language recognition mechanism. This way, the language families in the Chomsky classification correspond to specific automatic recognition: finite automata, pushdown automata, linear bounded automata, Turing machine.

Supporting the Chomskyan theory, Robin Lakoff suggests that language reflects not only the algorithms of syntax, but also the mind as a whole, that is, "*the complete set of rules according to which the human being gives form and meaning to his universe, and without which none would exist*".<sup>3</sup>

Being a hypercomplex mechanism, the human mind is capable of new expansions ad infinitum. On this basis, we leave aside the notion of *system* and enter the field where we have the notion of *holon*, which is, in the metaphorical sense, "*a selfish whole made up of altruistic parts and, at the same time, an altruistic part of a larger whole*".<sup>4</sup>

If the system paves the way for an analytical approach (from multiplicity to unity), the holon privileges the synthetic analysis.

Complex thinking is dialogical (order/disorder/organization) and translogical, because it escapes both holism and reductionism.

Antagonistic and complementary at the same time, complexity is more of a challenge than an answer, because it is located right "*at the heart of the relationship between simple and complex*"<sup>5</sup>, which allows the transition from complexity to hypercomplexity, based on the principle of *unitas multiplex*.

Albert von Szent-Gyorgyi, a double laureate of the Nobel Prize in medicine and psychology, calls this ability "*syntropy*". Thanks to successive cognitive mediations, beings develop continuously and make the most of their abilities.

In the psychology of form, the focus is on the relationships that the mind establishes between a particular element and its context.

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<sup>3</sup> Laura Carmen Cuțitaru, *Despre dilemele semnificației [About the dilemmas of meaning]*, Bucharest, România Literară Journal, no.18, 2009

<sup>4</sup> Marcus Solomon, *Timpul [Time]*, Bucharest, Albatros Publishing House, 1985

<sup>5</sup> Edgar Morin, *Introduction à la pensée complexe [Introduction to complex thinking]*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil Publishing House, 2005

Communication science has developed the idea that meaning is a construction and arises from a “*contextualization*”, as a result of organizing elements in a network.<sup>6</sup> From a philosophical perspective, there is meaning when there is understanding.

In order to “*give meaning*”, an element must act in a system in which it is integrated. This system is also called form (Gestalt Theory of form). A strong relationship is established between the perception and the interests or expectations of a person, due to the involvement of the person for whom there will be a meaning that simultaneously unfolds with the genesis of the form. This is not fixed.

New forms can emerge from the background of the collective unconscious, depending on our frames of reference. Reframing or changing the context leads to the discovery of new meanings for the actions carried out in that framework.

Forms are changeable, like fashion that comes and goes. Attachment to a particular form can be a source of conflict and a cause for maladjustment. For a mediation strategy to be effective, you need technique and the ability to know how to use it in a certain context.

A strategy used successfully in communicating with one person does not give the same results in relation to another person. The art of the mediator and/or the psychotherapist consists in the ability to put into practice the transversal skills of creative adaptation on a personal, interpersonal and professional level, skills related to his personal development and professional optimization.

The systemic, processual and integrative perspective is possible due to the relation of newly acquired knowledge, ideas and attitudes, which allows access to other levels of understanding, through two key processes:

- *An unconscious (creative, intuitive) process* of inventing new mechanisms, processes and strategies that stimulates progress;
- *A conscious (analytical) process* for discovering and removing dysfunctions that prevent progress.

Inter and transculturality are ways of preventing and mitigating conflicts that suppose a new approach to the horizon of values and open new avenues for the manifestation of differences, cultivating attitudes of respect and openness towards diversity.

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<sup>6</sup> Alex Mucchielli, *Arta de a influența [The art of influencing]*, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2002.



The intercultural educational process involves *dissociation* (imagining yourself from the outside), *worldview* (understanding the world you live in), *knowledge* (being informed about other realities), *positive thinking* (seeing the difference in a positive manner) and *valuing positive attitudes and behaviors*.

Metaphors, proverbs and transcultural stories are powerful communication and mediation tools that can be used in the field of counseling where evolutionary change is sought, but they are also used as psychotherapy tools when considering revolutionary change, which involves deeper structural changes.

Therapeutic stories can produce a change in state, context or meaning, which favors finding new solutions to problems that seemed unsolvable. They are absolutely indicated when a person's resistance to change is very high, but also when looking for specific, pedagogical and educational answers in the attempt to solve some socio-cultural consequences imposed by the scale of migration phenomena.

Nossrat Peseschkian, the founder of positive psychotherapy, came to the conclusion that transcultural stories, like medication, can lead to changes in attitude and behavior if they are used in the right way and at the right time, without insisting on the moralizing aspect.

It is recommended not to explain the metaphor, because to explain the message "*means diminishing its power to evoke in the listener a personal universe full of fantasy and creativity*".<sup>7</sup>

The child is laughing: "*My wisdom and love are the game*".  
The young man is singing: "*My game and wisdom are the love*".  
The old man is silent: "*My love and game are the wisdom*".  
(Lucian Blaga, *Three Faces*)

For a long time, games were studied as an entertainment activity, opposed to the serious activities of life. Nowadays, through games, it is possible to experience that what constitutes our personality.

Games are a dominant activity in the first seven years of life of a human being. With the age of seven he enters the learning stage. Between fourteen and twenty one years of age, his dominant activity is communication.

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<sup>7</sup> Ion Dafinoiu, *Elemente de psihoterapie integrativă [Elements of integrative psychotherapy]*, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2001.

The game creates a framework for the beginning of emotional relationships, thus allowing the development of social contacts. Games act as mediation between children and adults, but also between children and other children.

In the privileged framework of the game, the child meets his peers and socializes. Just as life experiences develop the adult's personality, playing games develops the child's personality when playing alone or when other children or adults intervene in the game.

Progressively, children increase their ability to see the real outside world. Renilde Montessori invites us to children's school to learn from them how to play, because through play we can find the solutions we are looking for to solve our problems.

*“Playing is a voluntary action or activity, conceived as an end in itself, performed within certain fixed limits of time and place, according to a freely consented but mandatory rule; this activity is accompanied by a state of tension, joy and awareness of being something other than current life”.*<sup>8</sup>

A curious paradox, pointed out by Carl Rogers, the father of the client-centered approach, is that people cannot change unless they accept themselves and are accepted as they are.

Although it is still an invitation to play, the paradox differs from the game in that its inaugural moment represents *“escaping a rule consisting in the acceptance of the distinction between two certain levels of knowledge, language, reality or behavior”* and *“initiating a game the basic rule of which is to abolish the distinction between two levels of the said type”*.<sup>9</sup>

According to another theory supported by Milton Erikson, each person has a reservoir of unconscious resources and skills to solve their problems. This does not happen by itself, either because the person does not know how to formulate his problems correctly, or because he is a prisoner of a single solution and, in this case, it can be said that the solution has become the cause of the problem.

The task of the mediator and/or the psychotherapist consists in helping the client to become aware that there are other solutions and that he can develop alternatives to the initial formulation of the problem or to the initial formulation of the solution.

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<sup>8</sup> Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens [Man playing]*, Paris, Éditions Gallimard Publishing House, 1951.

<sup>9</sup> Solomon Marcus, *Paradigme universale, III: Jocul [Universal Paradigms, III: The Game]*, Pitești, Paralela 45 Publishing House, 2007.

If mediation and/or psychotherapy does not produce results, it does not necessarily mean that the person is resistant to change. It is assumed that this person wants to change her unproductive behaviors, since she initiated mediation or therapy, but the direction of change proposed by the mediator or psychotherapist does not meet her expectations.<sup>10</sup>

Usually, conflict mediation strategies are effective if:

- The mediator teaches the client what to do, what is expected of him;
- The mediator encourages the client or maintains the desirable behaviors of the client;
- A relationship based on trust develops between the client and the mediator/psychotherapist;
- Increases the client's self-esteem and also the sense of involvement and responsibility for his own healing and personal development.

A recent research, carried out within the Romanian Institute of Integrative Psychotherapy (IRPI), distinguishes between objective and subjective in the approach to well-being in integrative psychotherapy, highlighting the conclusion of most researchers on the complexity and the dynamic nature of this concept.

The documentation activities carried out by the authors of the study about the previous research on subjective well-being led to a global and synthetic vision of the concept, by identifying its main dimensions and components from the definitions given by other authors (the cognitive component, the relationship of the Self with the Self, personal development and evolution throughout life, lifestyle and relationship with the environment, positive relationships with others, emotional balance) and understanding the importance of the concept of "*locus of control*" (LOC), promoted by Rotter and the social learning theorists, in order to define "*the specific way of an individual to perceive the connection between his own behavior and the reinforcements that the environment offers him*".

The research results revealed the common conclusion that "*internalists are superior to externalists on all levels [...] more active, more alert, more efficient in handling the elements of their living environment, more efficient in using information, more sensitive, superior in terms of cognitive processes, with a better ability to solve problems in situations of uncertainty*".<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ion Dafinoiu, *Psihoterapii scurte [Short psychotherapies]*, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Ruxandra Rășcanu, Mara Priceputu, Viorel Pașca, *Objective and subjective in approaching the state of well-being in integrative psychotherapy*, 17<sup>th</sup> European Congress of

The natural smile is the physiological index of subjective well-being and cerebral harmony<sup>12</sup>, the sign of a successful integration of instincts and thoughts, of the emotional and the cognitive, to coordinate what is simple (as an organization) with what is complex.

Adrian Nuță intuites that this type of operation is related to the “flow state”.<sup>13</sup> A person reaches the state of flow when “the goals are clear, the reactions - relevant, and the challenges and abilities are in agreement”<sup>14</sup>, because he invests all his psychic energy and his attention becomes ordered.

Flow-type activities are those in which we fully engage because they give us pleasure and give us the feeling of intense life. The state of well-being obtained as a result of flow-type experiences leads to complex thinking and also to an increase in the level of consciousness.

Unlike other states of well-being that we experience, the state of flow makes us feel stronger and more confident that we can be excellent and happy by ourselves, without being dependent on favorable external circumstances.

The awakening of consciousness is a necessary stage in the process of change for personal progress, but not sufficient.

Achieving performance and achieving excellence in any field of activity requires focused action and refocusing attention in a directed way. It is a field training, an experience that is acquired over time, through action supported by the enthusiasm resulting from superior self-esteem and self-confidence, a disciplined will that is directed towards contributing goals, which will bring more value into one's own life and in the lives of others.

Self-esteem can be acquired within the family if the parents know how to provide the child with a framework in which he feels safe and protected.

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Psychotherapy. Crisis: Change and Challenge, Bucharest, Trei Publishing House, 2010, pp. 247-266.

<sup>12</sup> David Servan-Schreiber, *Vindecă stresul, anxietatea și depresia fără medicamente și fără psihanaliză* [The Instinct to Heal: Curing Depression, Anxiety and Stress Without Drugs and Without Talk Therapy], Bucharest, Elena Francisc Publishing, 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Adrian Nuță, *Mai mult de 10%. Unitatea verticală a creierului* [More than 10%. The Vertical Unit of the Brain], Bucharest, SPER Publishing House, 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Starea de flux: Psihologia experienței supreme* [Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience], Bucharest, Curtea Veche Publishing House, 2007.

Parents' behavior does not decisively influence the child's mental development, but it can facilitate or hinder the development of healthy self-esteem, so that it becomes a natural and integral part of the child's life. It is important that the parents and other people around him, with whom he develops significant relationships (grandparents, teachers, neighbors etc.) offer him models of behavior that support his self-esteem and influence him with integrity.

Nonviolent communication, appreciating and valuing the child's behaviors, approaching him with the same attention and politeness given to adults, accepting differences, recognizing the child's needs and desires, even if they cannot be met immediately, structuring and disciplining his behaviors with authority and not in an authoritarian and punitive way are some of the conditions associated with high self-esteem in children.

Self-esteem is "*the most synthetic component of the attitude towards oneself and, implicitly, of the personality*".<sup>15</sup>

The educational process of building self-esteem and confidently asserting personality must be understood as a process of progressive ascension on the steps of consciousness, a process of successive cognitive mediation for addiction detachment and the acquisition of a "*immune system of consciousness*"<sup>16</sup> that ensures our long-term well-being.

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