

- c) the entire number of items in the test (i.e. 100) and the number of items per competence (i.e. 15 for listening, 15 for specialized vocabulary, 45 for grammar and common vocabulary, 15 for reading and 10 for writing);
- d) the format of the test, with two columns per page.

Another step of the planning stage is gathering the materials. As, in the end, there will be hundreds of items to be elaborated by each designer, it is very difficult to collect, store, check and process all the necessary materials. This may become even more difficult, because there are many people involved in test designing and many stages to be thought of. Therefore, a basic system of materials management might be helpful. Firstly, they should be indexed and stored separately from the materials that are not needed for the exam. Then, it is necessary to organize them by competences, so that the test designers could see if they have enough resources for each evaluated skill.

After gathering and organizing all the necessary materials, the authors of the tests should read in detail all the specifications contained in the regulations provided by the test commissioners and they should consult past papers, in order to avoid wasting too much time and making mistakes.

In the test development stage, the rule of thumb is to have a unique identification number for each item. Then, at various designing stages, it is useful to tick the completed items, which have already been checked and proved to be correct (e.g. to make sure that there are no identical options per item, no spelling or punctuation mistakes and that the questions match the information contained in the texts). Another useful tip would be to remove from circulation all the intermediary versions, to store them in a separate location and to send only the final versions to the test correctors.

It is important that all the test designers should meet the deadlines imposed for each stage of this process, because, otherwise, the correctors' job will be made more difficult. After the tests have been submitted to the correctors and commissioners, they must be checked, to make sure they comply with the regulations, they have the right level and, overall, they meet a certain standard of quality imposed by the academic environment. Test evaluation is usually done by a committee of experts, who check their correctness in point of form and content and their suitability for the level of the exam. If this committee encounters any mistakes in the tests, they will mention them to the authors, imposing a new deadline for receiving the tests corrected and/or completed by the designers.

It is not advisable to get the authors involved in the checking phase,

because they might not be objective enough and they may overlook their own mistakes or their colleagues'. Therefore, the expert committee consists of people who are not directly involved in the exam, thus being able to evaluate the quality of the tests objectively.

The checking committee should solve the exercises in the test as if they were the actual test takers. Therefore, in the Reading section they should read the questions before reading the text, in order to see if the candidates will find all the necessary information in the text provided, as test designers sometimes cut out some paragraphs from the original text, but leave all the questions, thus making the task impossible to be solved.

Answering all the questions in the test without looking at the key will help the correctors to identify the items that have more than one possible correct answer or confusing or poorly written options. Moreover, the reading and listening texts should be analyzed in terms of length, suitability, style and level of difficulty, to make sure they match the actual competences of the candidates.

After checking the suitability of the test, the venues where it is going to be taken must be inspected, to see if there are any building works nearby, if the ambient noise is within the acceptable limits, if the acoustics of the classrooms are good, if there are enough seats for all the candidates, taking into account that there must be enough space between desks, if the shape of the classroom allows the invigilators to see all the test takers and to have quick access to each of them, etc.

Before the beginning of the exam, test takers must be given clear instructions about how to behave during the examination. This is the reason why the exam folder contains, besides the roll, the subjects, the exam papers and the scrap papers, a list of instructions to be read to the candidates. Among these, there is information about the use of mobile phones during the test, the color and type of writing instruments to be used, the unauthorized materials, the start and end times, as well as warnings against talking and any form of cheating (including various devices, such as headphones, cameras or scanning pens).

If there are any unforeseen events, such as cheating, power failure, CD damage, lack of papers, incorrect subjects, etc., the invigilators are required to judge the situation accordingly and to write all their observations in the minutes of the test or in a full report addressed to the committee in charge with the exam or to the director of the department.

As the test for the exam of linguistic competence has 90 multiple-choice items and 10 items belonging to a cloze-type exercise and each test

is accompanied by a key printed on a clear transparency, its marking is simple and can be done by any teacher (it is usually done by the same teachers who have been the invigilators throughout the exam), not necessarily by someone who knows or teaches the language of the test. However, at the previous examinations there were cases in which the candidates gave some answers that were correct, but had not been included in the answer key; these alternative answers were taken into consideration and credited accordingly. For this reason, it is advisable for the tests to be marked by two teachers, one of whom should be proficient in the language of the test.

Dwelling on the three major concepts involved in test creation – validity, reliability and usefulness –, this article has presented the key stages of designing a test for evaluating the linguistic competences of the students at the Technical University of Civil Engineering of Bucharest. The requirements addressed to the teachers involved in this process are complex and diverse, imposing the continuous development of modern evaluation strategies. As it is important to make the evaluation criteria transparent, so that the students could see what their actual strengths and weaknesses are, the test designers are facing more and more challenges in the implementation of relevant methods to correctly assess the level of the participants in the exam of linguistic competence. Therefore, they should permanently keep up with the suggestions presented in the books and articles written on the topic of testing, devise new and interesting types of items, cooperate with their colleagues involved in the same process and constantly improve their teaching and evaluation methods.

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ENGLISH WORDS IN THE ROMANIAN MEDICAL VOCABULARY: AN OPTION OR A MUST?

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Abstract: *The present paper focuses on the use of English words in the field of medicine, adapted or not to the Romanian morphological system. It is widely known and acknowledged that English has got the necessary tools and it is very close to becoming a language studied and spoken by most people worldwide. It is precisely the starting point of our discussion: English – a “spring” of words and phrases for languages in need. Therefore, does the Romanian medical vocabulary need to borrow words from English in order for people to make themselves better and more easily understood or is it only a matter of personal choice?*

Keywords: *medicine, vocabulary, need, English, Romanian.*

English is nowadays very close to becoming a *lingua franca*, the follower of Latin somehow, and nevertheless the choice of many people in terms of communication. It is mainly due to its simplicity and ability to briefly express what in other languages could be said in much longer and more complicated phrases or even sentences.

In time, people have come in contact with one another and eventually mutually borrowed words from other languages into their own. English was both a recipient and a donor language, i.e. it borrowed words from other languages and it was also the linguistic “spring” of many other languages whom it greatly influenced. In turn, English has acquired words from Italian (mainly names of food: *pizza, pasta, prosciutto, mozzarella* or music), Latin (scientific and technological words), Greek (scientific and medical terminology), French (legal, military and political terminology), Spanish (words related to warfare, science and culture),

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German, Arabic (words related to trades) etc.

The topic of the present paper is concerned with the English influence and impact on Romanian in the medical field. It is not one of the domains that exhibit a massive invasion of English words (such as fashion, sports, IT etc.), but it ranges among the most important fields that need to be approached.

It is of a crucial importance for physicians to be aware of the changing needs of their patients and to keep up with the new discoveries and progress made in medicine, as it is very important for them to use the most appropriate vocabulary depending on each situation: when talking to a patient, when asking for a colleague's opinion, when attending conferences or when simply reading or writing journals.

The current paper lists and discusses the borrowed terminology that should be known and used correctly since the recipient language (Romanian in this case) does not possess nor can translate some words and it therefore borrows them from English and it gradually introduces them into the Romanian vocabulary.

In the second part of the paper we discuss the possibility of introducing English terms in one's personal discourse (according to one's deliberate volition) despite the existence of another or other means of expressing ideas, which is by using Romanian words and phrases as the equivalent of what is said in English.

Mandatory terminology due to the absence of an equivalent phrase or word in the recipient language

Bypass is a surgical term used to describe the surgical deviation of an artery in order to restore the circulation of blood. It is registered in most Romanian dictionaries¹ under forms like *bypass*, *by-pass* or even *baipas*, the latter being registered in *Dicționar ortografic al limbii române* (2002) close to the English pronunciation, which is preserved in Romanian. It is also adapted to the Romanian morphological system, since it was attributed a gender (neuter), being thus counted: *un bypass*, *două bypassuri*, *un by-pass*, *două by-passuri* or *un baipas*, *două baipasuri*.

"In medicine, a *stent* is a metal or plastic tube inserted into the lumen of an anatomic vessel or duct to keep the passageway open, and *stenting* is the placement of a stent"². Since the most common use of stents is on the

¹ See DEX 98, DOOM2 and www.dexonline.ro.

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stent>.

heart, the frequent phrase used in Romanian in surgery is *stent coronarian* or *stent cardiac*. It is also easily counted due to the adaptable form of the word into the Romanian vocabulary: *un stent, două stenturi*.

Screening or “mass” examination (*test de prevenție*) is the initial examination done on the whole population and it consists of several procedures and techniques meant to tentatively identify a disease, anomaly or risk factors. It is used in phrases like: *teste screening, screening prenatal, screening pentru cancerul la sân* etc. It is attributed the neutral gender, but dictionaries do not provide any plural form of the noun: *un screening, screeningul*.

Very useful, not only in medicine but in all domains of activity, is the word *tester*, which refers to any device, machine or instrument used for testing.

It is worth mentioning other medical terms necessary in the field of surgery and not only which represent the adapted forms of the English words. There are words that only change the suffix (ending) according to the governing rules of each language. However, the most prolific endings seem to be those related to surgery: *-ectomie* (indicating the removal of), *-plastie* (plastic reconstruction by means of surgery), *-centeză* (puncture), *-otomie* (cuting), *-rexie* (rupture), *-pexie* (fixation) etc. Moreover, few derivatives with the suffix *-patie* < Engl. *-pathy* (whose meaning indicate the presence of a disease or an affliction) are borrowed from English and their form is adapted to Romanian: *cardiomiopatie* < E. *cardiomyopathy* (any affliction of the cardiac muscle). Other nonsurgical endings: *-penie* (low number or amount of), *-itate, -ație, -fobie, -geneză, -iatrie* etc.

Romanian	English
-itate	-ity
absorbabilitate	absorbability (capacity of being absorbed)
hipermotilitate	Hypermotility
dizabilitate	Disability
-ație	-ation
hipoventilație	hypoventilation
hiperinflație	hyperinflation
-ectomie	-ectomy
acetabulectomie	acetabulectomy (excision of an acetabulum)
-otomie	-otomy
osteoartrotomie	osteoarthrotomy (the cuting into the extreme articulation of a bone)
periosteotomie	periosteotomy

venotomie	venotomy (surgical sectioning of a vein)
-centeză	-centesis
abdominocenteză	abdominocentesis
-plastie	-plasty
anevrismoplastie	aneurysmoplasty (surgical operation of an aneurysm)
angioplastie	angioplasty (repair of a blood vessel by means of surgery)
arterioplastie	arterioplasty (surgical repair of the arterial wall)
coreoplastie	coreoplasty (surgical repair of the pupil)
glosoplastie	glossoplasty (plastic surgery of the tongue)
neuroplastie	Neuroplasty
osteoplastie	Osteoplasty
scleroplastie	scleroplasty (surgical repair of the sclera of the eye)
-rexie	-rrhexis
angiorexie	angiorrhaxis (rupture of a blood vessel)
-patie	-pathy
glosopatie	glossopathy (any disease of the tongue)
neuromielopatie	neuromyelopathy
rinopatie	Rhinopathy
-penie	-penia
glicopenie	glicopenia (hypoglycemia)
-pexie	-pexy (fixation)
salpingopexie	salpingopexy (fixation of the fallopian tubes into nearby organs)
-fobie	-phobia
hipnofobie	hipnophobia (fear of sleep)
-geneză	-genesis
hipnogeneză	hipnogenesis (production of sleep)
-iatrie	-iatry
podiatrie	podiatry (specialty dealing with the treatment of the feet)

We should also speak of words that slightly change by adapting their form to the phonetic and phonological rules of the Romanian language, (a) by removing a consonant in a group of consonants, (b) by replacing inexistent or difficult to pronounce (groups of) sounds or (c) both.

a)

Romanian	English
abranhial	abran ch ial (respiration which is not possible through the bronchi)
antipatogen	Antipath o gen
ecocardiograf	echocardiograph (machine for echocardiography)
glosoplastie	glossoplasty (plastic surgery of the tongue)
mamograf	Mammograph
stres	Stress
stresor	stressor (stressing agent)
intratraheal	Intratracheal

b)

Romanian	English
acardiotrofie	acardiotro ph y (atrophy of the heart)
adipozuria	adiposuria (the occurrence of fats in the urine)
intravezical	Intravesical
antihemolitic	Antihemolytic
antihipnotic	Antihyp no tic
bacteriofobie	Bacterioph o bia
dermatografie	dermatograph y (anatomical description of the skin)
anevrismoplastie	aneurysmoplasty (surgical operation of an aneurysm)
intracefalic	Intrac e phalic
șunt	sh unt (pathological deviation of the bloodstream)

c)

Romanian	English
acefalobrahie	ace ph alob ra chia (congenital absence of the head and arms)
acusticofobia	acoust ic oph o bia
antitifoid	Antity ph oid

There are also words that change their prefix, by adapting their form to the norms of Romanian phonetics and morphology: *hiper-* (Rom.) < *hyper-* (Engl.), *hipo-* (Rom.) < *hypo-* (Engl.), *poli-* (Rom.) < *poly-* (Engl.) etc.

Romanian	English
hiper-	hyper-
hiperacid	H yperacid
hiperadrenalism	hyper adrenalism (increased activity of the adrenal glands)
hipergonadism	hyper gonadism (increased activity of the gonads)

hipo-	hypo-
hipomotilitate	Hypomotility
hipoacid	Hypoacid
hipobranhial	Hypobranhial
hipoventilație	hypoventilation
poli-	poly-
polimolecular	Polymolecular

Very important are also those words that shorten their form in Romanian, usually by removing the final vowel:

Romanian	English
adipofibrom	Adipofibroma
adipom	Adipoma
multinucleat	Multinucleate
nonvolatil	Nonvolatile
normotensiv	Normotensive
vaginoscop	vaginoscope (a device used to examine the vagina)

Another important aspect is that of English words which preserve their form in Romanian and are registered in dictionaries with a restricted meaning, although in everyday speech they are very frequent with a wider meaning. One such example is *lifting*, which is explained in MDN in its most restricted meaning: “esthetic surgery for the removal of wrinkles”. However, in the field of esthetic and cosmetic surgery, very often we speak of *lifting facial*, *lifting mamar* or even *lifting fesier*. *Lifting* preserves the meaning that it has in English, i.e. *rising*.

The easiest possibility is to borrow the exact spelling of an English word and adapt it to the Romanian pronunciation. It is very frequent in the case of adjectives: *antenatal*, *anticarcinogen*, *antiviral*, *interseptal*, *intraabdominal*, *intraspinal*, *intravertebral*, *juxtaarticular* (next to an articulation), *monoaxial*, *multimolecular*, *neurovascular*, *nonvirulent*, *peroneal*, *subcostal*, *subcuticular*, *subscapular*, *trifacial* (trigeminal).

It is interesting to notice that sometimes adjectives are borrowed from English and their corresponding nouns enter Romanian via French.

Romanian adjective	English adjective	Romanian noun	French noun
iatrogen(ic)	Iatrogenic	iatrogenie	iatrogénie

Many abbreviations of English origin are currently used in Romanian along with the Romanian translations. Among the most frequent ones, we could mention *HIV* (*virusul imunodeficienței umane* < E. *human immunodeficiency virus*), *CT* (*computer tomograf* < E. *computed tomography*). *EKG* (*electrocardiogramă* or *electrocardiograf*) is another very useful abbreviation in Romanian used in the field of cardiology. It was easily adapted to the neutral gender, being counted as *un EKG*, *două EKG-uri*. Romanian seems to be even more tolerant to this form, by replacing *K* with *C*, thus resulting *ECG*. Among the most useful acronyms, *laser* (*light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation*) is one that is worth mentioning.

When approaching the idea of loanwords, we should not forget about the partial or total rendering or translation of the meaning of a word or phrase from English into Romanian, which we know under the name of calques.

Very few examples of calques encountered in the absence of a Romanian equivalent for all the English words that are worth mentioning are:

✓ **Partial calques**

(Rom.) *celule stem* < (after Engl.) *stem cells*

(Rom.) *test dublu-orb* < (after Engl.) *double-blind test*

(Rom.) *subclinic* < (after Engl.) *subclinical* (referring to diseases without obvious clinical signs)

(Rom.) *supraspinal* < (after Engl.) *superspinal* (above the vertebral column)

✓ **Total calques**

(Rom.) *celulă gazdă* < (after Engl.) *host cell*

(Rom.) *termocoagulare* < (after Engl.) *thermocoagulation* (surgical method of blood coagulation by heat)

Elective terminology based on the choice of the speaker, given the occurrence of a valid alternative in the recipient language

Test, a loanword with a double etymology in Romanian – English and French – is currently used in medicine, as well, sometimes replacing the very familiar phrases: *analize de sânge* or *analize de laborator* with *teste de sânge* or *teste de laborator* < Engl. *blood tests* and *laboratory tests*, thus translating the original English structures.

Pacemaker, also known as *stimulator cardiac*, is an electrical device used to stimulate the activity of the heart. The former term tends to gradually replace the latter, given its shortness compared to the Romanian phrase,

thus granting velocity to communication. *Pacemaker* was adapted to the Romanian morphological system and therefore assigned the neutral gender: *un pacemaker, două pacemakere*.

Check-up ranks among those words or phrases used mainly by youngsters with good knowledge of English, whose aim is to show off and be fashionable. They prefer *check-up* to *control (medical)* or *examen medical complet*. MDN registers the word, assigns it the neutral gender, but does not provide any plural form.

Some other words and phrases that do not find their complete usefulness in Romanian are *blister(e) de medicamente*, although used along with its Romanian equivalent *folie (folii) de medicamente, monitoring (supraveghere, monitorizare), peeling facial, mapping* which has almost replaced *cartografiere* (rare at present), *stroke* (although restricted in use at present, despite its registration in MDN) will probably replace the very familiar *AVC (accident vascular cerebral)* etc.

There are also cases when the meaning in use of a loanword in the recipient language is slightly different from the meaning in use of the English word. It is the case of *integument*, which in English is used with the meaning of *skin*, while in Romanian it defines *the covering of some organs* and it is used in biology.

Due to the large number of words borrowed from English, not only in the medical field, but in all domains, the result is sometimes amazing through the occurrence of awkward forms adapted to the Romanian vocabulary. *Nursă* is one such example. It is adapted after the English form *nurse*, and in Romanian it is rarely used with the meaning of *nurse's aide* or *nanny*. Related to it is the word *nurserie*, which refers to the hospital ward dedicated to newborns (Engl. *nursery*). *Nursing* belongs to the same lexical family and it is used in Romanian with reference to the caring of sick people: *nursingul bolnavilor*, which sounds rather strange compared to *îngrijirea bolnavilor*.

Another remark that should be made is that most medical words in English and Romanian are similar in form due to their common origin: Latin. Both languages borrowed them and subsequently adapted them in form and pronunciation to the specificity of each language. There are cases among the words listed below that in Romanian have a double or multiple etymologies, but it is not the aim of the present paper to insist on such matters.

Romanian	English	Latin
fractură	fracture	fractura

orificiu	Orifice	orificium
pacient	patient	patiens
a suferi	to suffer	sufferire
temperatură	temperature	temperatura
plasture	plaster	plastrum
vaccin	vaccine	vaccinus

There are also useless adjectives borrowed from English whose form is preserved in Romanian. The main reason for such borrowing is again the length of the word: *prevalent* replaced the longer *predominant*, for example.

In terms of abbreviations, the Romanian *RMN* (*rezonanță magnetică nucleară*) tends to be replaced by *IRM* (*imagistică prin rezonanță magnetică* – a calque after the English *MRI = magnetic resonance imaging*).

Conclusions

The examples mentioned in the present paper clearly indicate that there is a need for English terms in the medical vocabulary of any language, Romanian included, given the progression towards the internalization of vocabulary worldwide. It is also obvious that it is the choice of the speaker how much and how often he/she will use words of English origin when there is already a valid equivalent of the English loanword in the recipient language.

Some of the examples discussed in the present paper could be included in more than one category, but we decided to include them in the most suitable and illustrative category for the purpose of the paper.

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ADVOCACY FOR THE STUDY OF CRITICAL THINKING

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Abstract: *This paper is the first in a series trying to highlight the benefits of critical thinking, when trained and taught properly in schools and faculties, for various kinds of people, no matter the age or the specialization. Given the data concerning the way of teaching critical thinking and its results in other countries, my strong belief is that introducing critical thinking classes in Romanian schools and universities could improve the communication and the civic action in our society, and could bring more reasonableness to our private intellectual life and to the various debates in our public sphere as well. Training children, students and mature or young people in general could be an opportunity for boosting our educational institutions and bringing them to a European level of competence and performance. Also, critical thinking could help any person to better know, understand, and create himself/herself.*

Keywords: *argument, critical thinking, judgment, opinion, reasoning.*

Motto:

"Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself."

(George Bernard Shaw)

1. What does critical thinking entail?

Broadly speaking, critical thinking requires attention to and leaning over the way we think, both us, as well as our interlocutors. Through its theoretical set of instruments, we are able to detect the prejudices, wicked mentalities hidden behind various opinions, mistakes in logic, in the use of some words and expressions etc. Then, we can do away with the "impurities" of thinking and communicational behavior that disrupt our decisions and actions, our communication with the peers, self-knowledge, work, emotional relationships or manifestations in various groups, in couple, family and society.

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Here is how two American academics describe critical thinking: "it involves a deliberate and lucid decision on accepting, rejecting or suspending our judgment in relation to a statement as well as on the degree of trust with which we accept, reject or suspend this judgment. The ability to think critically is vital; in fact, our lives depend on it. The way we lead our lives depends on what we believe it's true and on the assertions we accept. Our thinking is all the more critical, the more carefully we evaluate the statement and the closer we separate the relevant aspects from the irrelevant ones. (...) Critical thinking involves a series of skills, such as listening carefully, reading carefully, evaluating arguments, searching for and finding hidden assumptions, and tracking the consequences of a statement"¹.

„Critical thinking is systematic because it involves distinct procedures and methods. It entails strong evaluations and formulations because it is used to both assess existing beliefs (yours or someone else's) and to devise new ones. Critical thinking operates according to reasonable standards whereby beliefs are judged according to the reasons and reasoning that support them. Critical thinking entails, of course, logic. Logic is the study of good reasoning or of good interferences and of the rules governing them. Critical thinking, however, is more comprehensive than logic, since it implies not only logic, but also the truth or falseness of the statements, the assessment of the arguments of proofs, the use of analysis and investigation, the application of several skills that help us decide what is worth believing or doing"².

Critical thinking has at least three major qualities: it is reasonable, clear and free. Its development does not entail memorizing, accumulation of knowledge, but rather the development of the capacity to use the convenient, relevant ones in a certain situation. The skills of critical thinking can be synthesized as follows:

- to understand what is an argument and how it is argued;
- to understand what is a judgement of value;
- to distinguish between facts, opinions and judgments of value;
- to identify, understand and perform logical connections between own ideas and arguments;

¹ Moore, Brooke Noel & Parker, Richard, *Critical Thinking*, 6th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000, p. 4.

² Lewis Vaughn, *The Power of Critical Thinking*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2005, p. 4.

- to apply logic in the assessment of one's or else's arguments;
- to detect errors of reasoning in arguments and discourses;
- to create new arguments and ideas based on the already formulated or accepted ones;
- to understand the relevance or importance of ideas;
- to identify the implications of arguments, opinions, in different contexts;
- to detect unconfessed justifications or assumptions, sometimes unconscious, behind some opinions, arguments or beliefs.

It is in this way that our ability to reason, but also to self-educate ourselves, can be capitalized. Because, by default, we will embrace values that will adjust our behavior. The desired goals are: better knowledge and interaction with others, but also with ourselves, adaptation to a civilized social, cultural and communitarian environment, or even the improvement of the defective one.

2. Opportunities and hindrances

In these last years, we are witnessing the greatest openness so far in the vision and strategies of the international for on education, training and employment of young people and on-the-job trained migrants throughout the European Union. Their new European citizenship prevails over the quality of citizens of their home countries. The international mobility and adaptability to different communities and environments are growingly stimulated. In the field of scholarships, the new Erasmus+ program, launched in 2014, encourages exchanges of students and teachers between EU countries and beyond³. What, in turn, is expected from young aspirants?

As the European Commission points out, European universities must strategically capitalize on their world reputation in academic education and adopt a global vision. To develop more and more collaborative and innovative partnerships in education and research with EU countries as well as with countries on other continents. In this respect, the number of student and teaching staff exchanges between European countries is estimated at 3 million and the number of exchanges with non-European countries at 135,000. Androulla Vassiliou, Commissioner for Education,

³ http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.htm, European Commission Supporting and improving education and training in Europe, Education and Training homepage, Erasmus+.

Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, said: "The Commission will support Member States so that they can develop their international higher education networks. There is no one-size-fits-all model for this: countries need to play to their strengths"⁴.

It seems that 85% of the students are currently not mobile, lacking the international skills of a globalized world in which the phrase "world citizens" is already spoken. It requires the universities to develop international study programs and the students to acquire language skills and digital literacy⁵.

Surely, these requirements are minimal; because a more thorough investigation of European tests and assessments for various competitions and fields, shows us that the following are required: verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning, abstract reasoning⁶.

It can be seen that, of all these requirements, either at European or local level, the most "demanding" are related to critical thinking, abstract reasoning, because they imply a higher intellectual level.

However, the realities regarding the skills of our youngsters, reported by some teachers,⁷ are disappointing: „During the various comparative national and international evaluations (PIRLS, PISA, TIMMS) of the last decade, we repeatedly find that the literary level of most Romanian students is unsatisfactory - they do not understand written requirements without the teachers' support, they read informative texts without understanding their content, they do not answer correctly to comprehension questions, they lack the skills to work with texts of different types in order to extract information, data etc.. All this in the context in which school curricula often refer to "learning to learn" (...). Teachers are, however, ineffectively prepared to develop this area of competence among students"⁸.

Even when the young, the adults or the elderly have a satisfactory level of literacy, there are a few problems ultimately related to the deficiencies of our education system. They can be identified in the communication

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/romania/news/11072013_universitati_europene_ro.htm

⁵ *Idem*.

⁶ <http://www.eutests.com/purchase-epso-tests>

⁷ Romanian Association "Reading and Writing for the Development of Critical Thinking", founded in 2002, with over 120 members country-wide, <http://www.alsdgc.ro>

⁸ <http://www.alsdgc.ro/oferta> Training course: Development of literacy skills in and through subjects of study (DCLit) proposed by LSDGC Romania Association in partnership with CCD Cluj

between us, in the interactions in society, at the workplace, in the neighborhood, in the media, in institutions and organizations, etc. Either the property of terms is not respected and misunderstandings arise due to incorrect use of words; or the argumentation is wrong and illogical replies appear; or abstract reasoning is missing and irrational decisions taken; or moral education or civilization leaves much to be desired and suburban dialogues, inappropriate, offensive expressions appear. All this invalidates our communication and work.

3. Initiatives

On a daily basis, we become aware, at every step, of scarcities in thought, expression and conduct, which are related to a poor education level. Of course, not all of us could have high logical thinking and abstraction skills; but at least a more careful expression, the removal of prejudices and social bad habits, as well as the knowledge of the meaning of the terms used, could be acquired and would relieve us of many misunderstandings, insults and disputes.

How? First of all, by introducing critical thinking classes in schools, but also through training courses for adults tailored to their social-professional requirements within the framework of the continuing education programs. At present, critical thinking courses are more frequent at university level, in very few humanist faculties, and they replicate the Anglo-Saxon education model. Gradually, in Romanian society, the need to innovate the educational system began to be acknowledged, and some initiatives to propagate what was collectively called "critical thinking" emerged⁹.

Moreover, in Romania, a program has been initiated aiming to connect youngsters to the activities from different institutions and companies, activities within which critical thinking was also targeted.¹⁰

Of course, such initiatives are encouraging but insufficient for mass education. And this, given that the benefits of practicing critical thinking from early ages are noted by educators and parents, precisely because it involves the education of character. Children and teenagers are educated

⁹ <http://politeia.ro/gandirea-critica>, Why is critical thinking important; <http://cumsafiidestept.com/tag/erori-de-gandire>; <http://www.alsdgc.ro/oferta>, Training course: Development of literacy skills in and through the subjects of study (DCLit) proposed by LSDGC Romania Association in partnership with CCD Cluj.

¹⁰ [http://www.jobshadow.ro/upload_tiny_mce/file/Raport%20Job%20Shadow%20Day%202012\(1\).pdf](http://www.jobshadow.ro/upload_tiny_mce/file/Raport%20Job%20Shadow%20Day%202012(1).pdf)

in the spirit of values of good understanding, cooperation, dialogue and reasonable argumentation, respecting differences in opinions, crediting the interlocutors as well-meaning, etc.

Here is how a teacher in Bucharest evaluates the advantages of practicing critical thinking in kindergarten: "Thinking critically" means issuing one's judgments, accepting the opinions of others, being able to look at one's mistakes with a sense of responsibility and to correct them, receiving others' help and providing it to those who need it. The ability to think critically is acquired over time, allowing children to behave spontaneously, without limitation, in any learning situation without fearing the reaction of others, their opinions and to provide them with analysis and reflection strength and trust. All children, irrespective of their intellectual development or age, can contribute to the clarification of an unknown situation by saying their opinions. They should be taught since early childhood to listen and accept, making them understand that in the debates and in the exchange of opinions it is not the child, but of the idea which is the target of criticism"¹¹.

The author emphasizes the need to change the position of teachers and parents toward the child, in the training-educative process. As such, he should be regarded as an active and creative participant to its training; his interactive - creative learning abilities should be exercised from early ages for the development of his intellectual capacities.¹²

An education model aiming at enhancing critical thinking is also provided by the Republic of Moldavia, where children and youngsters are encouraged to develop their skills of debating certain topics, of carefully and kindly listening to their interlocutors, of correctly and logically reasoning and of becoming resistant to manipulation.¹³

Advantages of critical thinking development in children can be:

- In-depth self-knowledge;
- Strengthening of self-esteem and self-satisfaction;
- Development within reasonable limits of self-criticism;

¹¹ Georgiana Tiganele, *The need to develop critical thinking in pre-school ages*, http://www.gradinitaingerasi.ro/Necesitatea-dezvoltarii-gandirii-critice-la-varsta-prescolara_s134.html

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ *Critical Thinking in Children*, http://www.familia.md/ro/info/gandirea_critica_la_copii/default.aspx; <http://diez.md/2015/05/11/foto-debate-academy-iti-va-dezvolta-abilitatile-oratorice-gandirea-critica-si-implicarea-civica>

- Freedom to express their own opinions;
- Respect and tolerance toward the opinions of others, even the ones contrary to one's own opinions;
- Respect toward the interlocutors;
- Amplification of interpersonal cooperation and communication;
- Positioning of the child in the center of the educative process through individual and personalized request

Undoubtedly, in the future, the pace of improving our social relationships of any kind and at any level of complexity will be the pace of the implementation of our Critical Thinking Tools and Criteria in our education - school, family, self-education, or continuing education. Let's hope we will not become aware of this pressing need too late.

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http://www.familia.md/ro/info/gandirea_critica_la_copii/default.aspx; <http://diez.md/2015/05/11/foto-debate-academy-iti-va-dezvolta-abilitatile-oratorice-gandirea-critica-si-implicarea-civica>

HOW DOES THE HUMAN MIND WORKS? COGNITIVE BIASES IN EVERYDAY LIFE

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Abstract: *This study is a review of some cognitive biases that occur in our everyday social thinking. Their influence on the way we process social information often goes unnoticed. Although the literature makes no distinction between cognitive biases from the perspective of motivational influences on them, this article addresses this issue. A section of the article focuses on the influence of the affective state on cognitive biases. It is our belief that a minimal knowledge of the cognitive biases we make about ourselves and others can be a real help in the effort to correct these distortions of information.*

Keywords: *cognitive errors, the fundamental attribution error, actor-observer effect, egocentric bias, spotlight effect, the blind spot bias, affective state.*

The first cognitive errors that have been investigated empirically and have been confirmed over the years by various experiments are the fundamental attribution error, the actor-observer effect, and egocentric bias. I will briefly present each of them.

Heider (1958) was the first social psychologist who systematically presented how people interpret social behaviors. He asserted that when we observe a behavior we can explain it by calling upon two categories of information: information related to the person or information related to the situation in which the person acts. In Heider's view, when we refer to the person we make internal or dispositional attributions, and when we refer to the situation we make external or situational attributions¹. For example, when a person with whom we are to meet for the first time is late, we can explain this either by an internal attribution (this person is unreliable) or by an external attribution (this person is late due to traffic). Heider's assumption that we prefer to make more internal attributions over external ones has received strong empirical support. In fact, this tendency is so

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¹ F. Heider, *The psychology of interpersonal relations*, New York, John Wiley & Sons, 1958.

strong that has been named the fundamental attribution error². Ross, Amabile and Steinmetz (1977) designed an experimental gaming situation like “Who knows wins”. Participants were asked to formulate some questions that the other subjects had to answer. Because the questions proved to be quite difficult, the respondents were able to answer correctly to just four out of the ten questions. Interestingly, both those who had to answer and those who simply watched the contest considered that those who asked questions were smarter than those who had to answer³. The same tendency to ignore the external constraints on behavior was discovered in a previous experiment when some participants were asked to indicate the real attitude of the subjects who had written an essay either in favor or against Fidel Castro. In one of the experimental condition, the subjects were given the choice to freely express their real opinion, while others were required to adopt a certain position on Fidel Castro. Although the subjects had been informed that the researcher has imposed the essay type to them, they did not hesitate to infer the person’s real opinion from what people have written in their essays⁴.

The actor-observer effect captures the tendency to make situational attributions when we explain our own behavior and dispositional attributions when explaining someone else’s behavior. The first study that highlighted this fact was conducted by Nisbett and collaborators in 1973. Researchers asked Yale University students to write four paragraphs explaining why they love their girlfriends, why they chose a particular university specialization and also why their best friend loves his girlfriend and the motivation for choosing his specialty. They were then asked to imagine themselves in the place of their best friend and describe from his point of view why they chose the girlfriend and the current specialization. The results showed that students explained their own choices by referring to factors external to them (for example, the friend’s qualities and the specialization’s benefits), while their best friend choices were explained

² L. Ross, The intuitive psychologist and his shortcomings: Distortions in the attribution process. In L. Berkowitz (ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (vol. 10, pp. 173-220). New York: Academic Press, 1977.

³ L. Ross, T.M. Amabile, J.L. Steinmetz (1977). In E. Aronson, T.D. Wilson, R.M. Akert, *Social Psychology, New York, Longman*, 1998, p. 98.

⁴ E.E., Jones, V.A. Harris, The attribution of Attitudes, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 3, 1967, pp. 1-24.

referring to personality traits⁵. In a later research, Taylor and Koivumaki asked a number of 37 married students from Harvard University to complete a questionnaire that contained some positive behaviors (making a compliment, having an interesting discussion) and some negative behaviors (arguing with someone, being rude). The participants were asked to imagine such behaviors are performed by an acquaintance, by the best friend, by their spouse and by themselves and to rate them on internal-external dimension. The results revealed that all persons were considered more responsible for positive rather than for negative behaviors and the higher the degree of closeness with the rated person the higher the tendency to diminish the personal responsibility of the negative behaviors. In accordance with the actor-observer effect, when explaining their own behaviors, subjects made more external self-attributions than for their spouse's behaviors⁶.

Another error identified by social psychologists was called the egocentric bias⁷ and denotes the tendency of many of us to explain personal success in terms of internal attributions and personal failure in terms of external attributions. In other words, we blame the situation when the expected results are negative, but we take credit for positive outcomes. This pattern of explaining outcomes tended to be reversed when evaluating others. For example, when failing an exam, we may think that it was much too difficult or that we were not feeling well, whereas the other students who failed did not learn enough. A meta-analysis of 266 studies on egocentric bias revealed that this bias is the most common in the United States, followed by Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Eastern Europe and Russia. Instead, in Japan and China psychologists found the opposite tendency they called *the modesty effect*: positive outcomes are explained in terms of others offering help, while failure is almost entirely assumed⁸. The most common explanation for egocentric bias is our personal need to maintain high self-esteem.

⁵ R.E. Nisbett, C. Caputo, P. Legant, J. Maracek, Behavior as seen by the actor and as seen by the observer, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 27(2), 1973, pp. 154-164.

⁶ S.E., Taylor., J. Koivumaki, The perception of self and others: acquaintanceship, affect, and actor-observer differences, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 33(4), 1976, pp. 403-408.

⁷ L. Ross, F. Sicoly, Egocentric biases in availability and attribution, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37(3), 1979, pp. 322-336.

⁸ E. Aronson, T.D. Wilson, R.M. Akert, *Social Psychology*, New York, Longman, 1998, p. 116.

Cognitive biases explained

What are the causes of the fundamental attribution error and actor-observer effect? The first explanation was offered by Heider (1958) and it emphasized the inherent feature of behavior to dominate our perceptual field. Specifically, our attention is focused on the people's behavior and therefore is more difficult to take into account the situational factors that may exert their influence on the behavior⁹. This hypothesis of the perceptual salience of behavior was elegantly demonstrated by an experiment in which six people watched a five-minute dialogue between two persons. Observers were seated so that four of them could see only one of the two encounters, whereas the other two observers could look at both encounters. The results showed that observers who viewed one person rated this person as dominating the discussion, regardless it was person A or person B, whereas the observers who looked at both speakers appreciated that none of them dominated the discussion¹⁰. Another type of explanation concerns the importance of cultural background or the way we are socialized to explain everyday events. An earlier research discovered that there were no significant differences between American and Asian children aged 8-11 years in how they interpreted positive and negative events, but as they grew, Americans used more dispositional attributions and Asians more situational attributions¹¹.

It is worth noticing that we are not condemned to make these cognitive errors. The cross-cultural studies conducted to test the existence of these biases in various populations (other than the Americans) revealed that „Asians are more attentive than the Americans to situational influences over their own behavior and therefore are more capable of avoiding cognitive errors, such fundamental attribution error, actor-observer effect, egocentric bias”¹².

Other cognitive biases

Ross and his collaborators have defined *the false consensus effect* as people's tendency to believe that their judgments and actions are relatively common. More specifically, it is the false impression that personal opinions

⁹ F. Heider, *cited work*, p. 54.

¹⁰ E. Aronson, *cited work*, p.99.

¹¹ J.G. Miller, Culture and the development of everyday social explanation, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46, 1984, pp. 961-978.

¹² I. Choi, R.E. Nisbett, A. Norenzayan, Causal attribution across cultures: variation and universality, *Psychological Bulletin*, 125(1), 1999, p. 60.

and behaviors are shared by others to a greater extent they actually are. For example, athletes who dope think that doping is more widespread than athletes who don't dope. Drug users think that drug use is more widespread than non-drug users. People who support a political candidate think that support for that candidate is greater than people who are not the supporters of the respective candidate¹³. The need to think that our opinions and beliefs are correct determines, at least in part, this effect. Another bias that attracted much attention is the so-called *better-than-average effect* and denotes our tendency to place ourselves above the average person from our in-group when it comes to socially desirable traits and below average on undesirable traits¹⁴. For example, most people think they are more: a) virtuous, honorable, and moral than others; b) capable, competent, and talented than others; c) compassionate, understanding, and sympathetic than others¹⁵. It is worth mentioning that this error decreases when we compare ourselves with close others (friend, close relative). In fact, the most cited explanation for this bias is egocentrism: a greater focus on one's own characteristics, without taking into consideration the other's characteristics¹⁶. We also tend to think we are morally superior to most others, but not more intelligent (the *Muhammad Ali effect*)¹⁷. We also perceive ourselves as more willing to act morally in the future (*the holier than thou effect*). As the authors of this effect noticed, the holier than thou effect manifests most strongly in situations involving morality and altruism¹⁸. It seems we are committing a double mistake because, on the one hand, we exaggerate the extent to which we will behave morally, referring to our past behaviors, and on the other hand we think we are better than most others¹⁹.

¹³ M.D. Coleman, Emotion and the False Consensus Effect, *Current Psychology*, 37, 2018, p. 58.

¹⁴ J. Suls, K. Lemos, L.H. Stewart, Self-esteem, construal, and comparison with the self, friends, and peers. *Personality Processes and Individual Differences*, 82(2), 2002, p. 252.

¹⁵ J.D. Brown, Understanding the better than average effect: motives (still) matter, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 38(2), 2012, p. 209.

¹⁶ J. Krueger, Lake Wobegone be gone! The "below average effect" and the egocentric nature of comparative ability judgments, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77(2), 1999, pp. 221-232.

¹⁷ S.T. Allison, D.M., Messick, G.R., Goethals, On being better but not smarter than others: the Muhammad Ali effect, *Social Cognition*, 7(3), 1989, pp. 275-296.

¹⁸ D. Dunning, N. Epley, Feeling "holier than thou": are self-serving assessments produced by errors in self - or social prediction? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79(6), 2000, p. 862.

¹⁹ E. Balcetis, D. Dunning, R.L. Miller, Do collectivist know themselves better than individualists? Cross-cultural studies of the holier than thou phenomenon, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95(6), 2008, p. 1254.

The *spotlight effect*²⁰ captures our impression that we are at the focus of others attention. As the authors noted, we are at the center of our universe, but we have the impression that we also are at the center of the other's universe. Whether we do a blunder or act properly we tend to overestimate the extent to which our presence and actions have been spotted by others. In a series of five experiments, summing up about 351 students, Gilovich and collaborators have shown that students who wore for a few minutes T-shirts with the figure of an American singer, not so popular at that time, have overestimated the number of people who have been paying attention to their T-shirts. Similarly, those who wore a T-shirt with the figure of a celebrity appreciated by students overestimated the number of colleagues who noticed their T-shirts. In another experimental condition, students held a group discussion, at the end of which they were asked to answer some questions like: „Who made the greatest number of speech errors?“, „Who did the most to advance the discussion?“. Once again, students overrated the attention they received from their dialogue partners. An interesting result in this study was that spotlight effect decreased when people did not pay so much attention to that personal feature that might have been evaluated by others. For example, students who wore the T-shirt for a longer period of time before being seen by other people did not overestimate the number of people who paid attention to their T-shirts. The findings of this study are truly important. They may be a point of reflection for all of us who fear too much of making mistakes or care too much about the good impression on others.

We also have an illusion of personal invulnerability to cognitive biases. Social psychologists revealed that although we think that others are prone to cognitive biases, we are excluded from their negative influence. In a famous experiment conducted by Pronin and colleagues²¹, twenty-four Stanford University students were given a homework to assess how much the eight cognitive biases (which were briefly explained in the paper they received) characterize them, one of their parents and the average Americans. It is noteworthy that the researchers have not used the term error, but have replaced it with less affectionate terms such as tendency or effect. Also, 13 participants first rated themselves and then the average Americans, while the

²⁰ Th. Gilovich, V.H. Medvec, K. Savitsky, The Spotlight Effect in Social Judgment: An Egocentric Bias in Estimates of the Salience of One's Own Actions and Appearance, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78(2), 2000, 211-222.

²¹ E. Pronin, D.Y. Lin, L. Ross, The Bias Blind Spot: Perceptions of Bias in Self Versus Others, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28(3), 2002, pp. 369-381.

remaining 11 participants first evaluated the average Americans. The results showed that subjects considered themselves less prone to cognitive biases compared to the typical American. As expected, the parent was evaluated as less affected by these biases than the average Americans²². In another experiment, 30 students rated themselves on the same eight errors in comparison with the average student. This time students were more accurate in their ratings in the case of four biases (the fundamental attribution error, egocentric bias, halo effect and blaming the victim) they evaluate themselves superior to the average student. Another experiment was conducted at the San Francisco airport, on 76 passengers. This time, 18 cognitive biases were briefly described in the questionnaire and the respondents had to say to what extent the travelers make these errors. Then they had to rate themselves on these biases. Consistent with previous findings, respondents rated themselves as significantly less prone to such errors as compared to the travelers in the San Francisco airport. In a novel experiment, participants were encouraged to recognize the influence of the cognitive biases in their own reasoning. A total of 96 Stanford University students rated themselves on six personality traits (for example, caring for the others, objectivity, selfishness) compared to the average student. After answering these questions, they found on the next page a description of the better-than-average effect. This description meant to draw their attention to their own proneness to the better-than-average effect. Finally, they were asked to say how they think they would be assessed in the most objective way. Results revealed that 87% of students rated themselves as a better-than-average student. The most interesting findings of the study were that, after reading about the better-than-average effect, only 24% (19 out of 79 students) considered that they might have been wrong in their self-ratings. A percentage of 63% claimed that their initial ratings had been accurate and objective and 13% claimed that their ratings had actually been too modest²³. As convincingly demonstrated by this study, very few of us are aware or are willing to admit making exaggerated positive self-evaluations. In addition, we have no difficulty in observing others errors. This tendency has been called *the bias blind spot* or *blindness bias*.

The same mechanism may also intervene in the case of *optimistic error*²⁴. If we were asked to estimate the probability of having unfortunate

²² Idem, p. 371.

²³ Idem, p. 375.

²⁴ N.D. Weinstein, Unrealistic optimism about future life events, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39(5), 1980, pp. 806-820.

events in the future, we would estimate a lower probability as compared to other individuals probability. In the case of positive events, we believe we would probably experience more of these events than others.

The influence of the affective state on cognitive errors

A variable that has not received enough attention in the literature is the affective state we experience when making these cognitive biases. We never act in a social vacuum, just as we never have a neutral affective state. Due to psychological studies, we know that the emotions of sadness and guilt have their advantages, although they are typically described as negative emotions. I will briefly present some of the research aimed at demonstrating the role of emotions on cognitive biases.

Coleman (2018) asked 210 students to complete a short online questionnaire. The participants were asked to imagine that they have just won a contest, alongside another 100 winners, and the prize is a holiday in New York. They were asked to choose between a three-day holiday at a five-star hotel or a five-day holiday at a more modest hotel. Then some of them were asked to imagine that others had made the same choice as their own, while the rest of the participants were asked to consider that others had chosen differently. In addition, all participants were divided into three experimental conditions: neutral affective state, sadness, and happiness. The results revealed the false consensus effect, in the sense that the participants who chose one of the alternatives considered that most others have chosen the same alternative. Also, the subjects in the happy condition have overestimated consensus, compared to those in the sadness condition²⁵. A plausible explanation advanced by the author is that when we are happy we tend to remember pleasant things (for example, when others shared our point of view), while when we are sad we tend to bring to mind unpleasant things (divergences of opinion). This could explain why happy subjects considered that most others will choose the same as they did.

In line with the causal influence of emotions on cognitive biases is Forgas' study²⁶ about the role of sadness in the fundamental attribution error. The hypothesis of the study was that a state of sadness would determine a more accurate analysis of information, which would lead to a

²⁵ M.D. Coleman, Emotion and the False Consensus Effect, *Current Psychology*, 37, 2018, p. 62.

²⁶ J.P. Forgas, On being happy and mistaken: mood effects on the fundamental attribution error, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75(2), 1998, pp. 318-331.

decrease of fundamental attribution error. The affective state of the Australian participants was manipulated through positive or negative feedback after the completion of a test. Sadness or happiness was induced, then the participants read an essay on nuclear testing in France. Some subjects were informed that the author of the essay had the freedom to write his true opinion on the matter, whereas the rest of the subjects were told that the author of the essay was forced to support the opinion presented in the essay. The findings showed that happy subjects believed that the opinion presented in the essay was, in fact, the real opinion of the author, even in the case of those who were forced to express such an opinion. The same results were obtained in a field experiment. After watching a sad or a happy-end movie, moviegoers had to evaluate an essay. Once more, it has been shown that happy persons considered that the opinions expressed in the essay are the authors real opinion. One result of this study that deserves to be emphasized is that those who made the fundamental attribution error had more confidence in their answers than those who did not commit the error²⁷. The article presents a more interesting study related to the impact of the affective state on the memory of details assumed that sad subjects will remember more details than happy subjects since sadness makes us more attentive when we analyze information. The findings supported Forgas's hypothesis.

In a later research, Forgas and Locke (2005) revealed the positive influence of sadness on the egocentric error²⁸. This time the participants were experienced teachers who taught at a private school in Sydney. A number of 102 teachers, with a mean age of 41.3 years and an average of 16.5 years of teaching experience rated four situations: 1) conflict with a colleague who cuts in front of you in a photocopier queue; 2) missing playground duty; 3) dealing with an upset student; 4) missing an important meeting about the exam marking. The four listed situations had both a positive ending and a negative ending. Participants were induced to feel emotional states of either sadness or happiness. Teachers were asked to make attributions about themselves in these situations, but also about the behavior of another colleague. The results showed that those in a happy mood tended to explain both their own and others' behaviours as

²⁷ Idem, p. 326.

²⁸ J.P. Forgas, J. Locke, Affective influences on causal inferences: The effects of mood on attributions for positive and negative interpersonal episodes, *Cognition and Emotion*, 19, 2005, pp. 1071-1081.

due to internal, stable causes. However, negative mood produced different self-other attributions, suggesting an actor-observer bias. Negative mood led to stronger internal attributions for the behavior of others rather than the self²⁹. The affective state influenced causal explanation for negative outcomes. Happy persons made less internal attribution for their own bad outcomes than the bad outcomes of others, whereas sad subjects blamed themselves more than others for the negative outcomes³⁰. We should keep in mind that sadness can help us in accepting blame for negative outcomes and not to take credit for good outcomes. Even since 1988, Baumgardner and Arkin³¹ have shown that happy subjects made more internal attribution in the case of success and fewer internal attributions in case of failure, as opposed to sad subjects. More recently, Coleman (2011)³² found that guilty subjects were less prone to egocentric bias than subjects in the control condition.

Conclusions

After reviewing the most cited cognitive errors, we can notice that some of them are more related to cognition (the fundamental attribution error, the actor-observer effect), while others are more related to motivation (egocentric bias, the optimistic error, the better-than-average effect, the Muhammad Ali effect, the spotlight effect, the blind spot effect, the holier than thou effect). Although they bear the name of cognitive biases, we cannot explain them only in terms of inaccurate processing of information because many of them are born out of the need to have a high self-esteem. In addition, these cognitive biases are greatly influenced by emotional states, as the studies I have presented showed. As the knowledge of social influence techniques helps us to withstand manipulation attempts, so the knowledge of cognitive biases can help us to form more accurate impressions of others and also more accurate representations of the self.

²⁹ Idem, p. 1077.

³⁰ Idem, p. 1078.

³¹ A.H. Baumgardner, R.M. Arkin, Affective state mediates causal attributions for success and failure, *Motivation and Emotion*, 12, 1998, pp. 99-111.

³² M.D. Coleman, Emotion and the self-serving bias, *Current Psychology*, 30, 2011, pp. 345-354.

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PARENTAL MIGRATION AND SCHOOL INTEGRATION OF CHILDREN

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Abstract: *The paper aims to analyze the situation of children of Romanian migrants left at home in the care of a parent or other guardian (with or without legal forms). The main purpose of this research project is to explore the ways of adapting to the educational environment and changes in family structure as a result of the migration process for pupils whose parents are abroad.*

More specifically, I will focus on the process of linking children with parents / parents who have gone abroad and with their careers, but also about the challenges that children encounter in the school environment and how the school responds to the needs of pupils with migrant parents.

Keywords: *Migration, Parents, Children, School Integration.*

Against the backdrop of the changes that have taken place since the fall of communism, the temporary migration for work abroad of the Romanians has become a big phenomenon that has affected the lives of many families. By the leaving of one or both parents, the roles that have to be accomplished in the family are changing. Children need to adapt to the new changes: to emotionally manage the absence of the parents left to ensure a better future and to accept the takeover of parental authority by others. However, the adaptation process is not always an easy one. In the face of new changes, children can isolate themselves from others, lose interest in school, or even engage in deviant activities (for example, prolonged absenteeism). In addition to the family left at home and the child, the school has an important role to play in monitoring changes in the student's educational outcomes and behavior and to help them.

In this context, the paper seeks to explore the ways in which pupils adapt to the educational environment and changes in the family structure as a result of the migration process, but also how the school responds to

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the specific needs of pupils with parents who go abroad to work. In the following sections, I will present the main theories that underpin my research approach, the methodology used and the design of the research. In conclusion, I will discuss the usefulness of the study from the perspective of anticipated results.

Methodology: In order to examine how to adapt pupils to the educational environment and to the new family situation, and how educational institutions respond to the specific needs of these children, I intend to scout a qualitative research using a number of complementary methods: group interview, focus group and participatory observation. The research methods used are appropriate to the age of the children, which will help to obtain relevant results to current research.

I would mention that prior to starting the research activities within the educational units, I will require the parent's previous consent / legal guardian's prior consent for the pupils concerned to be able to take part in interviews and focus groups. We made this decision because in the case of the small ones - grades I-IV - the topic approached may have undesirable emotional effects.

Participatory observation: I want to take part in classes, which will address topics of interest to my research (I will speak to the teacher in advance), which will make me know the future subjects of the interviews better. I consider this to be necessary because such subjects, especially in the case of young children, may be quite sensitive, and participation in those classes will help me to address the issues raised in the interview.

Focus group: 10 group discussions with teaching staff, mediators and school psychologists. It will seek to identify the main differences between a child who has one parent left, a child with both parents left and a child whose parents have remained in the country from the perspective of the staff of the educational establishments.

Interview survey: 30 semistructured interviews with students and teachers.

The Universe of Research: The population surveyed will be made up of teachers, psychologists and school counselors, but also from pupils enrolled in the primary, lower secondary and highschool classes. I consider it appropriate to choose the children from all three education cycles to be able to identify the main problems that they encounter according to their age.

I intend to carry out field research in Moldova - Romania, a region with high emigration rates towards both Spain and Italy, and lately also to

the UK and the Nordic countries. In order to get an overview of what has happened, I will present the statistical data provided by ANPDCA in December 2008, December 2012 and June 2015:

	With only one parent left	With both parents left
December 2008	53,125	28,795
December 2012	46,917	22,993
June 2015	50,020	21,319

Besides these, there are those with the "single parent who left behind", those "not completely dependent on parental care" and those "entering the special protection system". Thus, in December 2008, there was a total of 92,328 in December 2012, a total of 79,901, and in June 2015, a total of 81,581 children whose parents or legal guardians went to work abroad.

Based on the data provided by the General Directorate for Social Assistance and Child Protection, I will choose educational institutions where there are a significant number of children whose parents have gone to work abroad. Through the selection process of respondents, namely teaching staff (school lecturers and psychologists) and pupils, I propose to capture a variety of cases. I will try to discuss with teaching staff with different seniority in the teaching process, with pupils from all three cycles of education and who have the residential environment both in urban and rural areas.

The theoretical framework: Family and school are the most relevant social contexts for child education and development. Next, I will briefly present the theoretical framework regarding the role of family and school in the development of the individual, which bases my research approach.

As Mihăilescu pointed out, the family is the most important development environment for a child: "The family is not only the place where the child is born and lives the first period of life but also the main agent of socialization"¹. At the same time, the primary socialization takes place within the family and the main behaviors, norms and values that an individual has to observe in a society are learned. Thus, the family is one of the main institutions that has an influence on the child, but also on the adult later.

As the family is the environment in which primary socialization takes

¹ I. Mihăilescu, *The Role of the Family in the Development of the Child*, (Rolul familiei în dezvoltarea copilului), University Book Publishing House, Bucharest, 2004, p.34

place, it is essential for a child to grow up with both parents. Studying the situation of children whose parents are abroad is even more stringent in terms of their implications for educational performance and integration in education institutions².

In the case of children with their parents abroad, there are some changes. First, the age of children should be mentioned when parents choose to go to another country to find a job. Depending on age, the problems encountered vary considerably.

If we look at the situation of pre-school children whose parents are both abroad, we can say that primary socialization is to a certain extent deficient. For the most part, the roles that parents had to fulfill are now being met by grandparents or those in whose care the children were left. In most cases, children come to name the above-mentioned mother and father. We cannot say, however, that these children are deprived of affection or control by those in whose care they remain³.

A rather difficult situation is also encountered by children who are in secondary socialization, when they start going to school and meet other children whose parents are in a different situation from his or her own. For children, it is very important that on the first day of school they are supported by both parents. Although this lack of affectivity tries to be replaced by material goods, they fail to supply the warmth of parenthood.

As shown by a study by the Soros Foundation in 2007, communication is an important factor in the development of children, especially in the school environment. In the case of children whose parents are gone, communication is lower, and this may have a negative effect on their school results. It is also argued that these children with emigrant parents are, to a certain extent, from broken families, and their families have a lower educational level, which perhaps implies a weaker knowledge of the needs of the basis of a child - "30% of the negative effect of parents' emigration on school results is due to this"⁴.

Besides the family, the school has a decisive role in the social integration of the child and shaping the future opportunities for realization. Another idea from which this project started is that "school is

² N. Goodman, *Introduction in Sociology, (Introducere în Sociologie)*, Lider Publishing House, Bucharest, 1992, p.250.

³ D. Sandu, *The Effects of migration: Children Left Home (Efectele migrației: copiii rămași acasă)*, Soros Foundation, 2007.

⁴ Idem 4

the institution that provides the training of individuals who will take over the available statutes of society”⁵.

As far as the school results of children with migrant parents are concerned, it cannot be said that there are very large differences between them and those children whose parents are not abroad. The difference between the two cases is up to 10% at the final average⁶. Of course, these school results also depend heavily on the genetic heritage and learning ability of the learner, but also on the control exercised by parents and those in whose care these children are, and the interest that the child manifests for learning. When the child feels that his work is valued by others, he wants to do more to get gratitude from the significant people in his life.

Unfortunately, however, there are cases where the child does not receive the respect and reward for his efforts, feels abandoned and irrelevant. The reward he expects does not necessarily consist in material things, but rather in affectivity.

Also, the mental state of these children is very important. Cases in which children experience certain depression, withdrawal from group activities during classes and private life, become less communicative, and are always thoughtful, are often children whose parents are abroad.

In this section, I think it is necessary to briefly review the legislative framework on this issue. Thus, according to Law 272/2004 on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child, republished in 2014, art.2, par. (2) and (3), "The child's superior interest is circumscribed to the child's right to normal physical and moral development, to socio-affective balance and to family life"; "The principle of the best interests of the child is also enforced in relation to the rights and obligations of the child's parents, other legal representatives, and any person to whom he / she has been legally placed."

When talking about the interests of the child, the following must be taken into account:

- The needs of physical, psychological, educational and health development, security and stability and family affiliation;
- Child's opinion by age and maturity;

⁵ N. Goodman, *Introduction in Sociology, (Introducere în Sociologie)*, Lider Publishing House, Bucharest, 1992.

⁶ D. Sandu, *Temporary Residence Abroad. Economic Migration of Romanians: 1990 – 2006, (Locuirea temporară în străinătate. Migrația economică a românilor: 1990-2006)*, Soros Foundation, Bucharest, 2006.

- The ability of parents or careers to take care of the child's growth and care to meet their specific needs;
- Maintaining personal relationships with persons to whom the child has developed attachment relationships"⁷.

In the following, I consider a brief breakdown of the above mentioned:

1. The right to a normal development both physically and mentally - refers to both food and access to the medical system. Many of the children who have their parents left feed themselves in an unhealthy way - which may be due to the fact that those in whose care they are left do not care about this, whether for the ones left alone, the semi-prepared or the type of food fast food is much more handy and easier to prepare in time. The lack of a well-established program of main meals as well as the quality of food can lead to medical problems such as: lack of vitamins, gastritis, ulcer, anorexia, obesity. Also, observance of hygiene rules is another aspect related to the good development of a child.

When we talk about mental health, we can think of the fact that these children who remain in the care of a guardian can be abused, neglected, exploited or any other form of violence that may affect them now or in the future.

2. As far as the right to education is concerned, we must look at the fact that every individual has to go through the 10 compulsory classes and during the school years he must be assisted and supported in order to gather the necessary information for promotion. In this case, children with out-of-school parents are prone to lowering the interest in the school and all the activities taking place within it - themes, thematic circles, activities carried out during and outside the class, but also absenteeism and even drop out of school in the absence of strict supervision.

According to a study by the Save the Children Organization, conducted between June and October 2007, "among boys who have both parents working abroad, there is a tendency to abandon their school"⁸ while "in the families where their mother is gone, the girls consume much

⁷ Law no. 272/2004 - *Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child*, republished in 2014, (Legea nr. 272/2004 privind *Protecția și Promovarea Drepturilor Copilului*, republicată 2014)

⁸ *The situation of children whose parents are going to work abroad*, (*Situația copiilor ai căror părinți sunt plecați la muncă în străinătate*), Save the Children Romania Foundation, p.3

of their time with household care activities, sometimes at the expense of school hours and homework"⁹.

3. As regards the right to stability and family affiliation, according to art. 35, par. (2) of Law 272/2004, "the child has the right to grow up with his parents," the latter being "responsible for raising their child". As mentioned above, the family environment helps the child to develop well and that is why the relationship that parents manage to establish with their sons plays an important role in developing children's attitudes, behaviors and values. When one or both parents choose to go to another country, this relationship suffers due to the distance, the time spent together, and parental supervision - the children begin to hide things about themselves, about the environment in who works, about the circle of friends. Many of these children remain in the care of their grandparents, but the age difference makes the relationship more and more deficient as time passes. Also, according to Article 22 of the same law, "a child whose parents reside in different states has the right to maintain personal relationships and direct contacts with them, unless this is contrary to the best interests of the child.

4. The child's right to be informed and to have an opinion on a particular situation should also be mentioned. For example, in this situation, children should be presented with the situation they will be in the next time, and why not, depending on their age, be asked for advice on how things will go.

5. The right to free time and participation in various activities - by leaving one or both of the parents, part of the homework is obligatory for the children. This has consequences such as: the child can no longer play with his buddies, he cannot go on holiday with colleagues at school, he does not have enough time to watch TV or play on computer. These things also bring about social isolation.

6. Another child's right, which is not very respected, is to have a legal guardian. According to art. 104 of Law 272/2004 with amendments in 2014, "The parent who is going to work abroad has the obligation to notify this intention to the public social service at home, at least 40 days before leaving the country. The notification will necessarily include the designation of the person in charge of child care during the absence of the parent or guardian, as the case may be. Confirmation of the person in whose custody the child will remain shall be made by the guardianship

⁹ Idem 9.

court"¹⁰. This notification supports the child because when he/she wishes to attend school Olympics, go to camps/excursions or need to be admitted, he/she needs the agreement and signature of the parent/guardian.

Design of research: Through this research, I want to identify: the ways of adapting for pupils whose parents are abroad to the educational environment and the changes in the family structure as a result of the migration process and the practices by which the school responds to the specific needs of pupils with migrant parents. In the latter case, I am interested in organizing special classes/sessions on this issue: who attends these meetings (those in whose care they remain, the parents when they are in the country, the teacher/the master - if these meetings place in the psychologist's office) and on whose initiative it is organized.

I also feel that a detailed description of the decision to go to work abroad is necessary, and for this I want to address issues that concern just the first moments when the parent/parents were forced to pass on the children's decision. In this respect, I am interested in how long before the departure they chose to make this decision known if they provided explanations for the decision taken but also whether the parents took into account the children's view of the future situation they would have to adapt.

The school integration of these children, as I have just said, can sometimes be deficient. In this respect, the teacher's intervention not only for the child, but also for the whole class is essential. As we all know, as the age increases and the problems are getting worse, the way both teachers and careers who are left with children are addressing the problems they face should also be adapted to age.

Conclusions: First of all, I believe that this research could provide an opportunity for a thorough and multifaceted understanding of the phenomenon by analyzing the positions of several actors involved: teachers, psychologists and school counselors, as well as pupils enrolled in all three cycles of education, gymnasium and highschool) and tutors.

As regards the usefulness of the study, I believe that it will provide a basis for improving existing public policies on providing support to

¹⁰ Law no. 272/2004 - *Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child*, republished in 2014, (Legea nr. 272/2004 privind *Protecția și Promovarea Drepturilor Copilului*, republicată 2014).

children whose parents are going to work abroad, as well as the fact that teachers can see alternative solutions, solutions proposed by other educational institutions, through this study, consider it to be an advantage.

Here we can mention awareness-raising campaigns for the newly created situation addressed to parents, and here we can mention Government Decision 691/2015 according to which "the Public Service for Social Assistance (SPAS) is currently monitoring the growth and care of children with their parents to work abroad.

In this respect, SPAS representatives make visits at the homes of children who have both parents left and those with the sole supporter parent left. In particular, they check whether the parents who are abroad have designated a relative to care for the child's maintenance and whether it fulfills the conditions required by law. Authorities also make visits at home to children who have only one parent left and to children who return to the country after at least one year spent abroad with their parents.

If it is found that a relative has not been designated by the court to take care of the child, the person who deals with it is informed that the person taking a child to temporarily care for or protect him until a protective measure is established under the law, has the obligation to maintain it and, within 48 hours, to announce the authority of the local public administration in whose territorial jurisdiction its headquarters or domicile, as stipulated by Law no. 272/2004 on the protection and promotion of the rights of the child.

According to the Government Decision, the person who grows up and cares for a child who has his/her parents left to work abroad has to make available all the information they have about their contact address. At the same time, the person concerned has to prove that he is in contact with the child's parents.

"The person in charge of raising and caring for a child with parent/parent left/work abroad has the obligation to make available to the public social assistance service all the data and information that he holds about the address to which he/contact your parents abroad and prove that they keep in touch with them, "writes in the normative act" ¹¹.

¹¹ G.D. 691/2015, *Approval of the Procedure for Monitoring the Way of Raising and Caring for the Child with Parents Who Have Gone Abroad and the Services They Can Benefit from, as well as for Approving the Work Methodology, (Aprobarea procedurii de monitorizare a modului de creștere și îngrijire a copilului cu părinți plecați la muncă în străinătate și a serviciilor de care aceștia pot beneficia, precum și pentru aprobarea metodologiei de muncă)* The Official Monitor, no. 663 from 01.09.2015, available online at: www.avocatnet.ro

I also consider campaigns to promote and expand School-after-School programs - a program for all those children who have difficulty understanding lessons taught at school or in solving themes.

Last but not least, I consider it necessary to extend the network of child protection specialists and school counselors to develop relationships and activities beneficial to children's normal development.

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SECURE ATTACHMENT IN THE CLASSROOM – A KEY TO OPTIMIZING LEARNING

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Abstract: *Attachment is a universal principle in nature from mere cohabiting plants to animals breeding their babies together and living in social groups. The capacity for building up attachment between teacher and students and also among students generates a better school adaptation. We are certainly able to have classes where students can learn from their careful, compassionate and unconditionally respectful teachers who, through their attitude and behavior, support the cognitive development, therefore the social and emotional development of their students. The students' capacity of learning is deeply influenced by the quality of the attachment relationship which they establish both with their teachers and mates. Could we also speak about "teacher sensitivity", a sensitivity which enables a teacher to perceive all the signals coming from students more properly and promptly?*

Neuroscience shows that adrenaline released in moments of fear or panic inhibits the hippocampus and thus the learning process, just like cortisol, the stress hormone. Stress, panic, anxiety and sometimes depression are thus the fearsome enemies of learning. The students may be attached to their teachers, they learn much better in a warm, enjoyable, hospitable, stimulating and protective environment where together they function as a small learning community. As teachers become emotionally connected with their students, they foster the development of each student's prefrontal brain and enable them to think logically. This integrated operation of the brain leads to the capacity to quickly and effectively solve problems. Little by little, students get autonomy, figuring things out for themselves at school and they start thinking creatively, particularly developing a positive attitude towards knowledge and learning. We believe that a securing attachment not only guarantees a sense of well-being in the classroom, but also optimizes the entire learning process, by enhancing motivation and facilitating neuroplasticity.

Keywords: *attachment, school adaptation, teacher sensitivity, learning community, optimizing learning, neuroplasticity.*

1. What does attachment mean?

Attachment is a universal principle found both in the physical nature (plants growing together and "helping" each other; animals living in social groups and breeding their babies together, respecting cohabitation rules),

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but also in the human nature. We define attachment as a strong bond which builds up between living beings and once built it influences their behaviors, relationships and actions.

The theory of attachment considers that this tendency to create emotional bonds with the others is the basis of our adaptation to environment. Our social needs (to join a group, to offer and get affection, to be accepted, to become attached, interact and have friends) lead to an attachment behavior and builds the basis for our capacity to establish connections. Such capacity and the attachment behavior, the sense of togetherness largely depend on the experiences lived during the first years of life. Once set, they also stimulate mutual affection, lead to adaptation, generate "well-being" and happiness.

If attachment is present in our life and influences us, why couldn't we also speak about attachment in the classroom? Could the capacity for building up attachment between teacher and students and also among students lead to a better school adaptation and efficient learning? Kind and beloved teachers who are open to intercommunication, empathetic, capable of sympathy and practice active listening support their students' cognitive, social and emotional development just like the extremely well-trained teachers in terms of scientific knowledge and didactics, but emotionally cold and paying attention only to cognitive path? What differentiates them? How do their students differ from each other? What do their students want? Could we speak about a characteristic necessary to a teacher, which is called "*teacher sensitivity*"?

Mary Anisworth¹ defined "maternal sensitivity" as a mother's capacity to perceive her child's signals very carefully, properly and promptly. Similarly, a teacher who is capable of perceiving all the signals from his students has a specific sensitivity which helps him understand if a student feels safe in the classroom, if he/she is okay physically and emotionally or afraid of the others reactions to his/her interruptions, if he/she can find the right words to express his/her own ideas or is able to easily understand the informational content being taught and enjoys the topic being discussed.

We know that the teacher-student relationship is not an equal one, but we also know it is integral and bidirectional, meaning that what a teacher feels can be transmitted, can influence students' state, sometimes it can influence learning itself and even the attitude toward school, knowledge

¹ Researcher in the field of attachment theory.

and often to the teacher.

Why students' experience with their teacher wouldn't be equally important? The experiences the students may have in the classroom with their colleagues and teachers can influence their school adaptation and have an overwhelming impact on the development of their personality, their attitude towards themselves, towards their progress and career, and even on the educational model transmitted further to their own children.

Schools still tend to standardize education. Students are each unique, they come from different environments, sometimes even from different cultures, have specific skills, even social, emotional and cognitive disabilities, but school has the same methods and the same standards for all students, usually allocating the same time to each individual child.

On the other hand, teachers are each unique, have different personalities and differently approach certain educational issues.

The world we live in is in rapid and constant change, sometimes too rapid for some of us, but for students, for the very young ones, such changes do not seem too fast, but natural. Therefore, what matters in the classroom is the quality and uniqueness of the teacher-student relationship. Teachers have the duty to teach, to attach to their classes, to their students.

Students have their own living personalities, their individual life stories and, in this respect, the teaching should be at least creative.

Neuroscience indicates that adrenaline, which is released in moments of fear and panic, inhibits the hippocampus and thus the learning process. Likewise, cortisol, the stress hormone, inhibits learning. Therefore, stress, fear, anxiety and sometimes depression are the fearsome enemies of learning.

Bowlby² noticed that infants became attached to the people who constantly and satisfactorily met their needs and developed a type of attachment that ensured a certain behavior to be repeated throughout the whole life of an individual. Bowlby defined *attachment* as the "*bond infants develop in the second half of their first year of life with their mother or the reference person*". Similarly, students may be attached to their teachers, therefore the classes may be enjoyable, as they feel safe, can say what they think without the risk of being criticized by their colleagues or teachers.

Children learn much better in a warm, enjoyable, hospitable and protective environment where together they function as a small community, know each other's problems and potentials, each other's difficulties and emotions which they decipher correctly. This is a

² The founder of the attachment theory.

fundamental prerequisite for secure attachment between a teacher and his students, therefore a favorable condition for learning.

Attachment is an emotional survival mechanism we were born with. It is our capacity to be comforted by the others and feel safe. Secure attachment in the classroom optimizes learning.

An important part of our brain, which cannot develop its potential without help from an existing careful container adult, is called prefrontal cortex. This part is placed behind our eyes and is responsible for attention and concentration. It is important in making clear decisions, achieving tolerance to frustration, in empathy and attention when passing from one activity to another. Empathic teachers who notice their students' emotions and needs favor the development of this part of the brain.

Siegel and Bryson (2011) explain that the prefrontal region is also vital for neurological integration because it is placed in such a way as to connect all the major regions of the brain. A well-developed prefrontal brain enables the higher cortex which deals with thinking to connect with the emotional center of the brain as well as with the brain stem which deals with the basic functions of the body. The prefrontal region of the brain is found in both halves of the brain.

As a teacher connects emotionally with his students, he enables the development of their prefrontal brain and capacity of logical thinking. This integrated operation of the brain leads to the ability of solving problems quickly and effectively. Little by little, students get autonomy and start figuring things out for themselves at school. In particular, they start thinking creatively and, most importantly, develop a positive attitude towards knowledge and learning.

2. Investigation into the role of the teacher -student attachment matrix for the student

Our investigation focused on the effects of the teacher-student attachment matrix upon students' results at school.

We raised the following question: *if and to what extent this complex psychological bond influences school success.*

We mainly worked with the operational concept of school success, which we defined by three dimensions: the motivation for learning, the emotional feelings generated by learning and the assessment-self assessment, the results of learning seen in relation to the requirements of the school curricula, as well as to the student's potential.

The sample on which we carried out our investigation included a total

number of 100 students. They study either at "Spiru Haret" Pedagogical High School in Buzau (in the 9th, 10th, 11th or 12th grade) or at the College of Economics in the same city. The results obtained in the investigation were corroborated with the opinions expressed by 100 college students in the first year, enrolled in the pedagogical module at the Faculty of Geography, University of Bucharest.

Our research methods were the questionnaire-based survey, the class book-based analysis of school results and the case study.

The questionnaire included three categories of items: those relating to the reasons for learning, those relating to the emotional feelings generated by learning and assessment and those relating to the teaching style preferred by the students. The students identified and ranked the elements of the teaching style which was significant to them.

It should be noted that there are no significant differences between the students of the two schools (in terms of school results) or between the opinions of the high school students and those expressed by the college students. Organizing the average grades obtained in the first semester of the school year 2017-2018, we found that:

- 10% of the high school students had grade point averages between 5 and 6; 8 of them were in the 9th grade, 1 in the 10th grade and 1 in the 12th grade;
- 4 high school students (2 in the 9th grade, 1 in the 11th grade and 1 in the 12th grade) obtained several grade point averages between 6 and 7; talking with the respective head masters, we found that the two pupils in the higher grades showed devolution)
- 17% of the students obtained grade point averages between 7 and 8;
- 33% of the students obtained grade point averages between 8 and 9;
- 36% of the students obtained grade point averages between 9 and 10.

The last categories can be found in each year of study.

70% of the high school students consider that the most important feature of a teacher in his/her teaching style is the emotional relationship he/she has with the class/student, 25% put a premium on the methods used by the teachers in teaching, while 5% think that the most important feature is the teacher's scientific authority and performance. It should be

mentioned that students who consider the teacher-student emotional relationship to be most important can be found in each year of study, mainly in the 10th and 12th grades. Those who appreciate the teacher's scientific authority and performance are in the 12th grade.

The reasons for learning include: the interest in knowledge and the need for career development (19%), their expressing of own potential (63%, mainly the students who consider the positive emotional relationship to be more important than the teaching methods), the need for prestige within the class (3%), the teacher's demandingness (10%), the need for social success, the explicit requirements and the parents' models (5%, students who put a premium on the teaching methods and the academic conduct of their teachers).

All the students consider that the objectivity of assessment is extremely important for learning.

Speaking about the emotional states the students experience and realize at school, the most significant are those they have during the assessment (60% of the students). These states are very diverse, from the satisfaction of a success, the relief of the anxiety to be checked, fear, to the pleasure/enthusiasm to share ideas with other people.

40% of the students also indicate the emotional states experienced during learning- curiosity, satisfaction of knowing.

The case study applied to the two students characterized by a relative devolution at school. One is a child whose single parent has gone abroad to work. The other child's parents have divorced. Both students spoke about an emotional crisis which they acutely experienced, in the context of a negative emotional relationship with their head master.

Conclusions

In planning the teaching process we should consider the following aspects:

Secure relationships based on trust and respect - the student's brain develops and functions best if it benefits from both class mate and teacher support. Moreover, his relationships with his colleagues and teachers are based on respect and physical and psycho-emotional security. The stress level is minimal.

What regulates neuroplasticity and learning relates to secure relationships with those living in our environment, with whom we cohabit. Interpersonal security stimulates the brain development, the neural networks, desirable conducts which are favorable to learning.

Moreover, a safe, supportive, emotionally warm environment, where the students finds help whenever he needs, leads to an emotion regulation, the objective of which is also learning. At the same time, a low stress level maximizes the biochemical process of brain plasticity, in other words the positive feelings produce the hormones for our wellbeing (dopamine, endorphins and oxytocin). As a result, the motivation and pleasure of learning are increased.

The teacher-student relationship is important for all the students, but mainly for those at risk. The secure relationships with our students, the trust and the emotional support offered to them stimulate their autonomy and emotional intelligence.

The balanced focus on thinking or emotions leads to a better coordination between the right and the left hemisphere. Thus, the students learn how to harmoniously combine the creative side, his emotions, with the logical side, his rational thinking and his language.

The attention paid to both critical thinking and emotions leads to an emotion regulation. Therefore it successfully leads to problem solving.

For instance, we can promote critical thinking in highly emotional circumstances. This encourages the functioning of both cerebral hemispheres and be best achieved through **stories which support memory and regulate the emotional behaviors of the students**. A story will certainly include conflicts, but also settlements, emotions, positive but also, negative characters. Stories integrate the students' functioning within the class, teaching them skills and values, generating common perspectives and purposes – the group cohesion is thus built and it creates the attachment matrix at class member level.

Connecting with their students emotionally, teachers help them develop their prefrontal cortices, ensure an integrated functioning of their brains and undertake an effective learning.

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PARTICULARITIES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELF IMAGE IN INSTITUTIONALIZED ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract: *The aim of this study is to present the synthesis of investigations revealed in the literature, on the issues of institutionalized adolescents and the peculiarities of their personality, as well as the results of a personal research, which aimed to investigate the image and self-esteem among institutionalized adolescents, compared to a group of adolescents from normal families.*

The objectives were: the formation of self-consciousness in adolescents, as well as the role played by self-esteem in the dynamics of personality and the functioning of the child and adolescent; the role of the family in developing the personality of the teenager; the issue of institutionalization (the causes and risks of this situation in which many children and adolescents are present), as well as the personality characteristics of institutionalized adolescents.

Research results indicate that institutionalized adolescents tend to show a more pronounced discrepancy between self-perceptions of the current Eu and expectations of the ideal person.

Keywords: *young institutionalized, maternal love, social behavior, need of affiliation.*

Theoretical landmarks on the characteristics specific to the personality of the institutionalized adolescents

One of the constituent elements of personality, that influences its later development is **affectivity**. Taking into account the fact that there is a close relation between affectivity and the general development of a child's personality, **the absence of maternal love and affection** generates disorders concerned with the normal functioning of the physical and psychical structures, by the corrosive action of the affective blockage. The lack of affectivity and affective, emotional maturity contribute to the development of various adaptation difficulties, as well as of behaviour disorders, as protest reactions against the absence of these things.

In childhood, the role of affectivity, within the general process

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concerned with the development of our personality becomes more and more significant. Affectivity is considered to be one of the “six most important forces” that determine the evolution of development and correct behaviour. The other five are: the physical factors, family, school, the social condition and intelligence. In the case of adolescents, this need is even bigger and its absence leaves deep traces in their lives, directly influencing not only their behaviour, but also their intellectual development, which makes adolescence be called “the affective, (emotional) age”¹.

According to many researches, there is a strong relation between the emotional and the general development of a child’s personality, starting with the biological aspect and ending with the psychological one. This relation contributes to the child’s removal of an emotionally improper environment. Its improvement leads to the end of disorders. The affective frustrations bring about somatic changes, by means of certain physiological mechanisms. The negative influence caused by the absence of affectivity acts in the following directions: the child becomes more and more introverted and resigned, aggressive and even violent, isolating himself, whereas his intellectual performances do not go beyond mediocrity. His entire behaviour is negatively influenced.

We cannot call into question the fact that the phenomenon of **affective deficiency** generates the feeling of frustration, which is mainly due to an interference with the emotional engagement and to the effects of a new, cold and foreign environment. Mental retardation, (learning disabilities) seems to be caused by an unpleasant and traumatizing experience. The disorders are determined by the degradation of the interpersonal relations, which emphasizes the special importance of affectivity during the first years of life, for the development of the interhuman relations, as well as for the development of both personality and social development. The deterioration of the attachment relationships, by the elimination or incompatibility of the emotional engagement can bring about serious anxieties that play an important part in certain depressions experienced by the child.

J. Bowlby (1952) has noticed that, a part of the institutionalized children have **visible manifestations determined by the affective deprivation** – in other terms, they have a labile, unstable behaviour, generated by the emotional needs, whereas the others have reached a state of neutrality, are blessed with somebody from their family or a relative

¹ Florescu, L., Frăţiman, L., *The ontogeny of development in situations of abandonment*, Constanta, “Andrei Şaguna” Foundation, 2000, p. 102.

that visit them, or, which is more plausible, the children manifest an interiorized, or depressive behaviour, losing their hope to ever win somebody's affection².

Apart from the affective deprivation, there are also other manifestations that certify the disorder of the emotional equilibrium: anxiety, hyperactivity, the inability to concentrate, bad results at school.

Levy (1937) determines several **features specific to the institutionalized children**, more precisely (apud Dumitrana, 1998): superficial relations, no real feelings – a certain incapacity to sympathize with people or make new friends, a kind of inaccessibility that exasperates the ones that try to help them, no emotional answers, a strange indifference, acting and continuous attempt to evade from responsibilities, no mental focus at school.

The same results are obtained by L. Bender (1947), who formulates the characteristic features of a syndrome that he designates **psychopathic behaviour disorder**, which is specific to the abandoned children, that he describes as follows:

“There is an incapacity to love, or to feel oneself guilty. There is no consciousness. There is capacity to conceptualize and especially, which is significant, as far as time is concerned, there is no time concept. The absence of the concept of time represents a striking characteristic of the structure specific to their personality” (apud Dumitrana, 1998).

E. Macavei³ describes a series of characteristics, such as the deficiency of the socio-affective repertoire, negative affective states, with exaggerated manifestations and reaches the conclusion that the affective needs of children, community life restrictions, associated with a bio-psychical vulnerability, bring about states of collective nervousness, as well as affection crisis, (crying and fury, aggressiveness and self-aggressiveness), claiming attitudes, (gelosy, possessiveness), behavioural regressions – finger sucking, moving up and down. These manifestations are consequences of the nevrosis caused by abandonment, determined in its turn by a deficient maternal affection and the child's neglect by the maternal adult/substitute.

Strongly related to the emotional issues, **the social behaviour disorders** also manifest themselves since early childhood. The whole behaviour of the institutionalized child is characterized by apathy, sadness, disbelief and

² Dumitrana, M., *The institutionalized child*, Bucharest, Didactical and Pedagogical Publishing House, 1998, p. 132.

³ Macavei, E., *Family and the foster home*, Bucharest, Litera, 1989, p. 128.

disorientation. According to Bowlby, (1952) there is a small degree of social adaptation in the case of those who have spent their childhood in various institutions, compared to those that have grown up within their own families, even if they had not benefited from the best conditions.

One fundamental social need is represented by the **need of affiliation, of emotional attachment** manifested by the development and maintenance of positive affective relations with other individuals, as well as by the wish to be loved and accepted. The studies have demonstrated the existence, in the case of the institutionalized children, of a powerful tendency of affiliation, determined by the **fear of rejection**, generated by the unsuccessful experiences related to the interpersonal interaction (Dumitrana, 1998). Social deprivation determined by institutionalization leads to the increase in the need of affiliation, as well as to the mistrust in the sense of one's own value, both experiences being determined by a powerful feeling of anxiety.

In the case of the institutionalized children and adolescents, the vices associated with the development of autonomy and responsibility, the deficiencies of life education, the absence of models and of communication with the others, as well as the non-participation of adolescents when it comes to make important decisions concerned with their own lives, have negative effects on their later social integration.

RESEARCH ON THE SELF-IMAGE AND SELF-ESTEEM MANIFESTED BY THE INSTITUTIONALIZED ADOLESCENTS. A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

Aim and objectives

The present research had a constative-descriptive character.

The aim was to show details on the self-image and self-esteem manifested by the institutionalized adolescents, by comparison with a group of adolescents coming from normal families, who were not confronted with the parental abandonment in one form or another.

Specialty literature points out the **importance of the primary emotional connection** between the child and his parents, (especially the mother), whose absence will later have negative effects on the structuring and development of the child's personality.

The child's deprivation of the affective needs will generate an emotional handicap, as well as a handicap related to the structuring and

development of his own Self. **Self-image** stands for one of the main constituent elements of one's own Self⁴.

Another fundamental need of each child is the **acquisition of realistic self-appreciation and of self-esteem**. The child that grows up in an institution will be faced with difficulties when it comes to the structuring of a harmonious Self, able to adapt to the social roles imposed to any individual, because the institutional environment does not help him develop a complete and coherent self-representation, (the evaluative landmarks are absent, which is also true for the abandoned children that do not benefit from an individualized supervision, but only from a group norm).

Taking into account the observations mentioned above, we have started from the assumption that the institutionalized adolescents will manifest a poor self-esteem, which is mainly due to the absence of various needs fundamental for the ontogenetic development of any human individual.

Our objectives were:

- a) the identification of certain valid psychological instruments, necessary to evaluate both self-image and self-esteem;
- b) the administration of instruments on two groups of adolescents: institutionalized and adolescents coming from normal families (non-institutionalized);
- c) the evaluation of answers according to the instructions given by the instruments' authors, the development of a database and the statistical analysis of the data obtained, with a view to identifying the tendency of both the institutionalized and normal adolescents, concerned with the level of their self-image and self-esteem;
- d) on the basis of the observations from the specialty literature and on the results of our research, we have intended to develop an intervention program, focused on the improvement of self-image and self-esteem in the case of the institutionalized adolescents.

Research hypotheses

Starting from the observations described by the specialty literature, we have assumed that:

1. *The institutionalized adolescents have a negative self-image, more obvious compared to the non institutionalized adolescents.*

⁴ Dafinoiu, I., *Personality. Qualitative methods and approaches. The observation and the interview*, Iași, Polirom, 2002, p. 65.

2. *The institutionalized adolescents have a poorer self-esteem, compared to the non institutionalized adolescents.*

The working (operational) **hypotheses** that helped us deal with the quantitative analysis of the answers given by the participants were:

1. *The institutionalized adolescents will obtain higher scores in the case of the questionnaire dealing with the evaluation of self-image, compared to the non institutionalized adolescents.*

2. *The group of the institutionalized adolescents will obtain a lower score in the case of the questionnaire dealing with the evaluation of self-esteem, compared to the group of the non institutionalized adolescents.*

The used methodology

The description of the investigated groups of adolescents

We have investigated in our research two groups of adolescents, 47 of them being institutionalized adolescents, ("St Filofteia" School of Inclusion Center Stefanesti, Pitesti-Arges), the other 55 coming from normal families, (high school students of "C. Brancusi" Technological High School, Piesti). Overall, we have investigated 102 adolescents, (58 boys and 44 girls), aged 15 - 20 ($x = 16.6$ years; $s = 1.2$ years).

20 of the institutionalized adolescents were girls and 27 were boys, aged 15 -20, ($x = 16.7$ years; $s = 1.4$ years). The reasons why they had been institutionalized in "St Filofteia" School of Inclusion were the following: abandonment, the death of both parents, termination of parental rights, family situations precarious from the socio-economic point of view, disintegrated families. Apart from the symptoms specific to institutionalization, some of the institutionalized adolescents manifested a series of specific behavioural disorders.

From among the adolescents coming from normal families, (non institutionalized), 24 were girls and 31 - boys, aged 15-18, high school students of "C. Brancusi" Technological High School, Piești. The average age of the non institutionalized adolescents, coming from normal families was 16.5 ($s = 0.9$ years).

The institutionalized adolescents filled in the questionnaires administered in small groups, (5-6 subjects), during several, different days, for a period of two weeks. We have carefully supervised them, in order to avoid the mutual influence.

Data collection was achieved last year, in May.

The instruments used for data collection

We have resorted to two types of questionnaires for the collection of those data concerned with both self-image and self-esteem:

✓ *Self-esteem scale ETES* (Echelle Toulousaine d'Estime de Soi) – the version for pubescents and adolescents, (adapted for the adolescents by the psychologist Adriana Crăciun, 1998).

✓ *Self-image questionnaire*, inspired by the researches on self-image and its role in psychotherapy, carried out by C. Rogers – this questionnaire is translated and adapted by Ion Dafinoiu, in the paper coordinated by Adrian Neculau, *26 tests to know the other*⁵.

The Self-Esteem Scale of Toulouse (ETES) has been developed by means of already existing instruments⁶, being first published in 1994, by N. Oubrayrie, M. Léonardis C. Safont, in the *European Review of Applied Psychology*. As it includes different aspects of self-esteem, ETES allows the obtainment of a global score and of five partial scores, corresponding to the five aspects it operates with. Two of them, namely the evaluation of the emotional control and of the projective self, represent the dimensions or facets that the ETES suggests alongside the other aspects. The previous homologous scales focused more on the investigation of the physical, social and/or scholastic self.

The Self-Esteem Scale of Toulouse for pubescents and adolescents consists of 60 items with dichotomic YES/NO answers, (Appendix 1). Each of the five dimensions contains 12 items.

Each item is quoted with one point if the subject answered according to the correction grid. The scores for each of the subscales are obtained by the total sum of the scores obtained for the constituent items. We can also calculate a total score, by adding all the scores of the five subscales.

According to the theoretical and applicative researches, we should operate with both scores: the scores obtained for each dimension and the global score. However, when it comes to establishing a diagnosis for orientation, selection, or counseling the adolescent/pubescent with respect to different issues, the scores of the emotional, social, scholastic, physical

⁵ Neculau, A. (coord.), *26 tests to know the other*, Iași, Polirom, 2003, p. 174.

⁶ Coopersmith, S., *Inventaire d'estime de soi. Manuel*, Paris, Édition du Centre de Psychologie Appliquée, 1984, p. 83.

and projective Self, are much more informative, having a prognostic value higher than the global score.

Table 1 describes briefly the significations of each of the five subscales, (corresponding to the dimensions or facets of the Self).

Table 1

Dimensions of self-esteem	Significances
Emotional Self	It deals with how we gain control of our emotions, with the capacity to get our impulsiveness under control; its importance within the scale can be justified by the fact that an efficient control of emotions allows the adequate organization of our activities, it facilitates the planning of realistic targets, as well as of certain efficient strategies necessary to achieve our goals, (for example, the item: <i>I quickly lose my temper when somebody reproaches me for something</i>).
Social Self	It deals with the representation of the interactions with the others, (parents, colleagues, friends), as well as of the feeling of social acknowledgement, (for example, the item: <i>When I find myself in a group, I like to make myself conspicuous and appreciated</i>).
School-related Self	It reflects the perception that the individual has on his own competences, objectifiable in his own school performances, (for example, the item: <i>I easily lose heart at school</i>).
Physical Self	It mirrors the degree of acceptance by the subject with respect to his physical appearance, (for example, the item: <i>I consider myself to be too thin/fat</i>).
Projective Self	It focuses on the subject's representations on his own future: his attitude towards the offer of the years that are to come, (for example, the item: <i>I trust the future</i>), the aimed objectives, (for example, the item: <i>My main objective is to have a job that I like</i>), the roles wished or waited for, (for example, the item: <i>I would like to take part in movements of solidarity</i>). This dimension was introduced by the scale's authors on the basis of the possible existence of a connection between the subject's self-esteem and his representations on his own future, considered to be different from the current ones.

The experimental applications of ETES carried out by the three authors with groups of trained pubescents and adolescents have revealed

interesting aspects on the importance of some of the dimensions specific to the notion of self-esteem, as well as on the differences of self-evaluation in relation to the subjects' age and gender.

The multidimensional structure of the ETES allows the expansion and refinement of the working possibilities of the school psychologist, of the psychotherapist, or clinician, as self-evaluations represent for the subject a new stage in the process of becoming aware of his/her own experiences associated with his/her competences, as well as a way to improve his/her self-esteem, assume and clarify his/her own identity, increase the efficiency of his/her own actions.

The self-esteem questionnaire comprehends the results and observations contained by Carl Rogers' researches on this dimension of personality, that the author mentioned considered to have a special importance in the therapeutic process.

The theoretical basis includes the idea according to which people have the necessary competences to look at themselves from the outside, in order to analyze their own self. Rogers noticed that many of the persons that came to psychotherapy sessions, had a negative self-image, manifesting a discordance, (discrepancy) between what they would have liked to be and what they thought themselves to be at that moment. Such discrepancies between the ways those particular persons saw themselves and what they would have liked to be led Rogers to the elaboration of the theory concerned with the conflict between the current and the ideal Self. This conflict can lead to feelings of frustration, stress and a poor self-esteem.

For some of us, the conflict between the current and the ideal Self seems to be overwhelming and it can even bring about depression, while for others, such a conflict can represent the way by means of which they gather their forces and resources necessary to reach their targets.

The questionnaire contains a list of 32 adjectives (Appendix 2), that represent both positive, (for example: *humorous, enthusiastic, trustworthy, polite, sincere, powerful*) and negative personal characteristics, (for example: *shy, fragile, introverted, cynical, envious, impulsive*). The questionnaire does not include wrong or right answers, "good" or "bad." What really counts is the way the subject sees and evaluates himself.

The subjects must read the list carefully and put down an "X" in the column *How I am at the present time*, next to each adjective that they

consider characteristic of them. Then, without taking a look at the signs made in the first column, they must read the list of adjectives again and write a “0” in the column *How I would like to be*, next to each adjective, that they would like to represent them.

Scoring is made by giving one point for each adjective noted with “X,” or with “0” in the two columns, as well as for each of the adjectives that have not been marked in any of the two columns. Then the points obtained are added, resulting in an approximate measure of the discrepancy between the current and the ideal Self.

The results obtained and their interpretation

We have compared the scores obtained by the group of institutionalized adolescents at the questionnaire concerned with the evaluation of self-image and self-esteem, to the scores obtained by the group of non-institutionalized adolescents. We have made use of the t-Student test in order to compare the scores of two independent samples. All the processes have been carried out by the use of the SPSS application.

10.00 for Windows. Table 2 contains the data obtained.

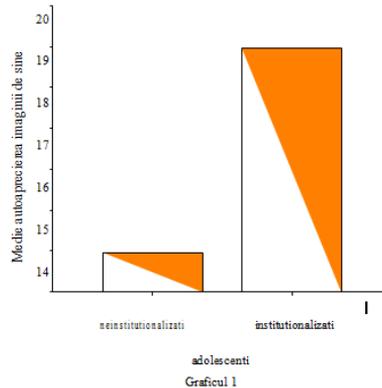
Table 2

Measured variables	Adolescents	Scores	Standard deviation	T
Self-image	Institutionalized	18.95	5.36	4.91 ***
	Non-institutionalized	13.96	4.89	
Global self-esteem	Institutionalized	38.31	5.44	- 1.05 ns
	Non-institutionalized	39.60	6.64	
Emotional self	Institutionalized	6.87	1.73	- 2.72 **
	Non-institutionalized	8.03	2.44	
Social self	Institutionalized	8.12	1.42	- 2.39 *
	Non-institutionalized	8.87	1.67	
School-related self	Institutionalized	8.40	2.21	2.50 *
	Non-institutionalized	7.23	2.46	
Physical self	Institutionalized	7.93	2.05	0.58 ns

	Non-institutionalized	7.67	2.41	
Projective self	Institutionalized	6.97	2.38	- 2.04 *
	Non-institutionalized	7.78	1.54	

* p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001; ns - statistically significant differences

The data obtained have shown a statistically significant difference, ($t = 4.91$; $p < 0.001$) between the score obtained by the institutionalized adolescents at the questionnaire concerned with the self-appreciation of their self-image and the score obtained by the non-institutionalized adolescents. The group of the institutionalized adolescents has obtained much higher scores at the questionnaire based on the self-appreciation of self-image, compared to the group of the non-institutionalized adolescents (chart 1).



According to Carl Rogers' observations, the higher the score obtained at the self-image questionnaire, the higher the discrepancy between the current, (real) and the ideal Self, subjectively perceived by an individual. An analysis of the data contained by table 2 clearly show the tendency of the institutionalized adolescents to manifest a more pronounced discrepancy between the real and the ideal Self, compared to the non-institutionalized adolescents.

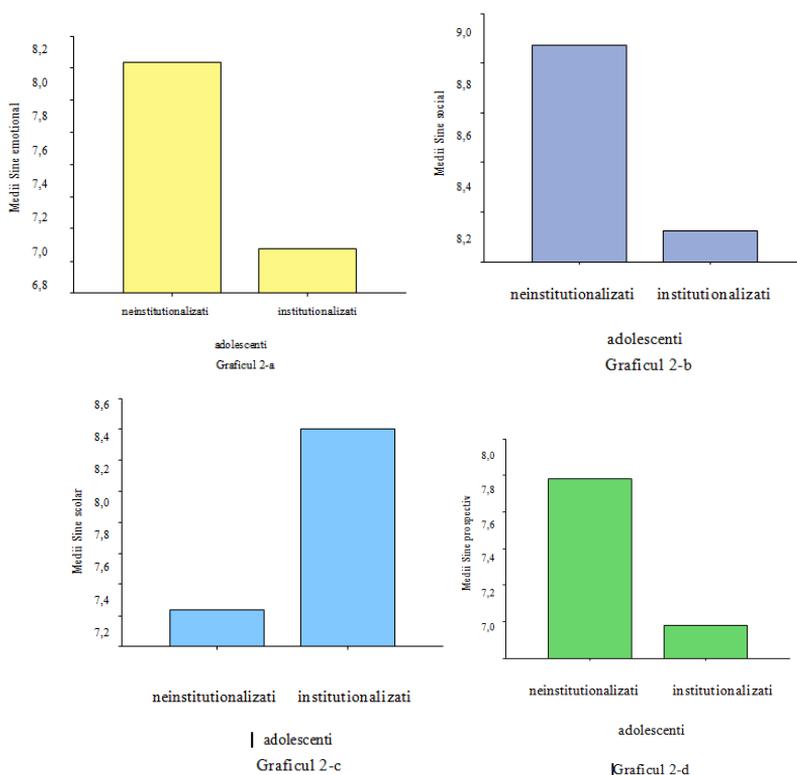
Consequently, the data obtained have confirmed the first of the general and (working) hypotheses we have started from.

The result confirms the observations contained by the specialty literature, that point out the difficulties experienced by the institutionalized adolescents as far as the representation of one's own self is concerned.

They miss their parents, brothers, sisters, friends, who, as we well know, play a very important part in the development of self-image, by the value judgments they emit. These make reference to: behaviour, competences, capacity to interrelate).

The comparisons between the scores obtained by the institutionalized adolescents and those obtained by the non-institutionalized ones at the ETES scale, concerned with the evaluation of the global self-esteem and its constituent elements, have shown significant differences for the following four dimensions related to self-esteem: *emotional self* ($t = - 2.72$; $p < 0.01$), *social self* ($t = - 2.39$; $p < 0.05$), *school-related self* ($t = 2.50$; $p < 0.05$) and *projective self* ($t = - 2.04$; $p <$

0.05) charts 2 - a, b, c and d). There were not significant differences between the two groups of adolescents, as far as the global level of self-esteem is concerned, although the group of the institutionalized adolescents has registered a lower score, compared to the group of the non-institutionalized adolescents.



As far as the first dimension of self-esteem is concerned, the score

obtained by the non-institutionalized adolescents was much higher than the one obtained by the institutionalized adolescents. The result must be interpreted from the perspective of the absence of affectivity, as well as of the deficient emotional behaviour, experienced by the institutionalized adolescents. The poor or absent affective connections that the institutionalized adolescent has with his family leave their mark upon his capacity to manage his emotions and upon the development of his emotional behaviour.

As to the second dimension of self-esteem, the non-institutionalized adolescents obtained a score higher than the one obtained by the institutionalized adolescents. This result must be interpreted from the perspective of the social dimension, specific to the development of the institutionalized adolescents. One of the characteristics proper to the institutional environment is represented by the deficient interpersonal and emotional relations. The institutionalized adolescents have few friends and poorly developed competences, when it comes to interrelationship. The self-perception of the institutionalized adolescents influences the level of self-esteem, in relation to the social competences.

As far as the *scholastic self* is concerned, the institutionalized adolescents obtained a higher score, compared to the non-institutionalized ones. This result seems unusual, if we take into consideration the level of the scholastic abilities manifested by the institutionalized children, who are usually characterized by problems related to the cognitive development, (retardations caused by the absence of stimulation, as well as blockages generated by psychical and mental retardation). The result obtained could stand for the expression of an unrealistic representation among the institutionalized adolescents, with respect to their own school competences. They manifest the tendency to perceive their own competences well above the real level.

The institutionalized adolescents voluntarily manifest the tendency to exaggerate the dimensions related to their own self, managing thus to introduce themselves in a favourable light.

There is also another difference in favour of the institutionalized adolescents, as far as the *physical self* is concerned, (a higher score), but compared to the non-institutionalized adolescents, the difference was not statistically significant.

As to the dimension of self-esteem, related to the *projective self*, the group of institutionalized adolescents obtained a score lower than the score obtained by the group of non-institutionalized adolescents. This

result must be interpreted in relation to the somber perspective of the future, as it tends to be perceived by the institutionalized adolescents, deprived of the emotional, moral and material support of their families, necessary to the choice of a professional career and to the establishment of their own families.

As we can notice, the data obtained render the tendency of the institutionalized adolescents to have poorly structured representations with respect to their own emotional competences, as well as to their own future. As they benefit from a proper education and from the emotional and moral support of their families, the non-institutionalized adolescents manifest more trust in the future, compared to the adolescents that spent their childhood in foster care centers, without any possibility to develop a clear image on their own resources, as well as a coherent plan of personal development.

Despite the differences noticed in the case of four of the five dimensions related to self-esteem, the institutionalized adolescents were not significantly different from the non-institutionalized ones, as far as the ETES global scores are concerned. However, the group of the institutionalized adolescents obtained a lower global score at the self-esteem test, compared to the group of non-institutionalized pupils.

Consequently, the data obtained after having carried out the comparisons between the scores obtained by the institutionalized adolescents and those obtained by the non-institutionalized ones, have partially confirmed the second, general (working) hypothesis we have started from.

ETES scale

APPENDIX 1

Instructions

You can analyze the feelings you experience in relation to your own person, as well as the degree of efficiency you manifest in your own actions, by means of the following questions. This self-appreciation will be authentic only if you answer all the questions spontaneously and sincerely. Read them carefully and choose the answer YES, when the statement corresponds to your usual behaviour and NO, when the answer does not represent you.

After having finished to fill in the questionnaire, check whether you answered all of the questions. Do not lose any time hesitating. Answer the questions as quickly as possible, choosing the version that best represents your usual way of thinking and feeling.

1. I easily get into a temper.

- 4. My appearance is considered to be pleasant, appealing.
 - 15. The most important thing in life is to make a lot of money.
 - 19. My body is neatly defined.
 - 32. I think my company is boring.
 - 40. I easily transform my laughter into tears.
 - 45. I feel better when I am alone.
 - 53. I have got an influence on the others around me.
 - 58. When I find myself in a group, I experience a feeling of isolation.
 - 60. I am proud of my scholastic results.
- Questionnaire on the self-evaluation of the self-esteem

The words below stand for various features people are more or less endowed with. Read each word carefully and put down an "X" in the column entitled "How I am at the present time" next to each word that, in your opinion, renders a feature that characterizes you. Then, without looking at the signs you have already made, you read the list again, and this time, you add an "O" in the column entitled "How I would like to be," next to each word that renders in your opinion the feature you would like to have. Work carefully and as quickly as you can.

How I am at the present time (X)

How I would like to be (O)

Shy _____	Impressionable _____
Jocular _____	Independent _____
Friendly _____	Ambitious _____
Interesting _____	Attractive _____
Solitary _____	Enthusiastic _____
Popular _____	Sensitive _____
Trustworthy _____	Intelligent _____
Lazy _____	Cheerful _____
Envious _____	Energetic, dynamic _____
Polite _____	Calm _____
Insightful _____	Self-assured _____
Flexible _____	Contemplative _____
Fragile _____	Sincere _____
Relaxed _____	Powerful _____
Disobedient _____	Impulsive _____
Apathetic _____	

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THE ROLE OF DIGITALIZATION IN THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION-E-LEARNING, E-YOUTH APPROACH

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Abstract: *We are facing nowadays a society which is competitive, knowledge-based and efficiency-driven. Today, throughout this process, innovation and technology are vital to many areas of activities, such as industry, commerce, assurance. We find these ITC processes in almost all areas where we work, including in schools and universities. Both teachers and students are in the position to use digital technologies for academic purposes; teachers and professors have to adjust their teaching and training techniques, to an attractive and innovative style that would appeal to those who are now called "digital natives". This paper aims to analyse the alignment of education processes in Romania with European best practices and to provide a complete image about it, by creating a focus group which consisted in academic staff from the University of Economic Studies from Bucharest. As a research method, one has used a quantitative method and designed a pilot study which consisted in a questionnaire to which the subjects answered and the, one interpreted the results.*

Keywords: *digital natives, digitization, education, e-learning.*

Introduction

The evolution of today's technologies makes the current society one that requires more and more emphasis on digitization. We observed this phenomenon among the teachers who are required to integrate technology into education, and especially in daily teaching. One important thing that we should take into consideration is the discrepancy we have between teachers and the demand of integration of digitized processes into teaching as they did not receive the same teaching and training during their learning period.¹ Another research, Siddiq and his fellows conducted a research, based on the analysis of a previous study of other researchers,

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¹ Gudmundsdottir, G.B., Loftagarden, M., & Ottestad, G. *Newly qualified teachers. Professional digital competence and experiences with ICT in teacher education.* Oslo: The Norwegian Centre for ICT in Education, 2014.

which focused on the factors that determine teachers' ICT integration²: self-efficacy, perceived ease of use, teaching beliefs, attitudes towards computer³. Technology integration for educational purposes will inevitably lead to the need for teachers to have as many digital, personal and professional skills as possible, taking into account the substantial capacities of the young generation in this field, called also "digital natives". Thus, teachers will have a dual role in using technology for their own and for didactic purposes, being empowered to contribute to the development of pre-services for teachers who need to improve their digital competences.⁴ The 21st century proposed important skills for the student's regarding the digital information and communication skills like attitudes, beliefs, knowledge.⁵ Another author, E van Laar and his fellows draw attention to these skills, pointing out which skills are considered important: a combination of a domain part (internet, multimedia) and specific knowledge perspective (competence, literacy)⁶. If we are expecting to integrate ICT for teachers and schools on a daily basis courses, we will have the opportunities to stipulate and to acknowledge all these skills.⁷ Bearing in mind what has been previously stated, this paper attempts at analyzing the current state of the education system in Romania, at the University level, in what IT&C skills are concerned. For this purpose, one has searched and studied a pilot study that focused on this use of IT&C

² F. Siddiq et al. / *Computers & Education* 92-93 (2016) 1e14 I apud. Donnelly, D., McGarr, O., & O'Reilly, J., *A framework for teachers' integration of ICT into their classroom practice*. *Computers & Education*, 57, 1469e1483.

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³ F. Siddiq et al. / *Computers & Education* 92-93 (2016) 1e14 apud Compeau, D., Higgins, C. A., & Huff, S., (1999), *Social cognitive theory and individual reactions to computing technology: a longitudinal study*. *MIS Quarterly*, 23, 145e158.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/249749>;

⁴ E.J. Instefjord, E. Munthe / *Teaching and Teacher Education* 67 (2017) 37-45

⁵ F. Siddiq et al. / *Computers & Education* 92-93 (2016) 1e14 apud Ferrari, A. (2013). *DIGCOMP: A framework for developing and understanding digital competence in Europe*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

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⁶ E. van Laar et al. / *Computers in Human Behavior* 72 (2017) 577e588 apud Hatlevik, O. E., Ottestad, G., & Throndsen, I. (2015). Predictors of digital competence in 7th grade: A multilevel analysis. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 31(3), 220e231. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12065>.

⁷ Griffin, P., Care, E., & McGraw, B., *The changing role of education and schools*. In P. Griffin, B. McGraw, & E. Care (Eds.), *Assessment and teaching of 21st century skills* (pp. 1e15). New York, NY: Springer Science and Business, 2012.

tools in the case of the University of Economic Studies from Bucharest. This study shows which IT&C tools the academic staff uses in its daily teaching activity and also on the e-learning activity. The present study, which consists in introduction, literature review, presenting the research methods and conclusions, will give a brief analysis of the digitized education system in Romania, using a focus group for showing the advantages and disadvantages of our system.

Literature review

The meaning of the word e-youth we can describe as the involvement of young people in all activities related to the online environment, i.e. the digital domain. Whether we are talking about online books, blogs, newsletters or social networks, the generation of "digital natives" is present and exercises these capacities on a daily basis. E-learning is growing more and more lurking in the eyes of young people, focusing on accessibility (for example, young people no longer need to physically carry the books, they download them from the internet, using devices like smartphones, tablets), but also on the information they can find now much faster (searching in text with a combination of keys - examples CTRL + F). That's why both concepts need to be put into practice by academic teachers, helping young people to meet their demands. According to Prensky⁸, who introduced for the first time the term of "digital natives" and tried to put in the light the fact that this concept is about children, adolescents and young adults and their behavioral conduct regarding the process of digitization: "I saw children surrounded by and using computers, digital music players, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age"⁹. In contrast, authors like Bullen, M., Morgan, T., Belfer, K., & Qayyum, A¹⁰ were wondering if the digital natives'

⁸ P.A. Kirschner, P. De Bruyckere / *Teaching and Teacher Education* 67 (2017) 135-142 apud Prensky, M., (2001). Digital natives digital immigrants. On the Horizon NCB University Press, 9(5), 1-6. Available at:

<http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20%20Digital%20Natives,%20Digital%20Immigrants%20-%20Part1.pdf>.

⁹ Kirschner, P.A., De Bruyckere, P., *Teaching and Teacher Education* 67 (2017) 135-142 apud Prensky, M. (2001, p. 1). Digital natives digital immigrants. On the Horizon NCB University Press, 9(5), 1-6. Available at:

<http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20%20Digital%20Natives,%20Digital%20Immigrants%20-%20Part1.pdf>

¹⁰ P.A. Kirschner, P. De Bruyckere / *Teaching and Teacher Education* 67 (2017) 135-142 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.06.001>) apud Bullen, M., Morgan, T., Belfer, K.,

generation really exists and if the education really needs to change in order to be able to adjust to their needs. These authors found out that all the people born after 1984 do not possess advanced knowledge of technology, and what they know is about how to use the most relevant applications of nowadays: text messaging, e-mail, social networks and surfing on the Internet. Bullen et al (2008) support the idea that students do not have enough skills to recognize and to use the entire functionality of the applications they own and that's why they need specific training in how to use these modern technologies¹¹. Kennedy and Fox (2013) found that, based on a study at Hong Kong University, first-year undergraduate students appear to use a large quantity and variety of technologies to connect to the world around them. Learning, engaging with the surroundings, communication and staying in touch with friends are some of the uses, but the primary reason why students use technology is for "personal empowerment and entertainment, but not always digitally literate in using technology to support their learning. This is particularly evident when it comes to student use of technology as consumers of content rather than creators of content specifically for academic purposes"¹². The lack of digital natives has a number of consequences for both teachers and their training. Firstly, it will help teachers avoid the pitfall of assuming that their students possess talents, abilities that they do not actually have. Just like any other set of skills and competences, the ones attributed to this generation are no different - they need to be properly taught and learned before being applied. Jones and Shao (2011)¹³ conducted a research which has shown that "the gap between students and their teachers is not fixed, nor is the gulf so large that it cannot be bridged. In many ways the relationship is determined by the requirements

& Qayyum, A. (2008, October). The digital learner at BCIT and implications for an e-strategy. Paper presented at the 2008 Research Workshop of the European Distance Education Network (EDEN), Researching and promoting access to education and training: The role of distance education and e-learning in technology-enhanced environments. Retrieved from: <https://app.box.com/shared/fxqyutottt>.

¹¹ idem

¹² Kennedy, D., & Fox, R., (2013), *Digital natives?: an Asian perspective for using learning technologies*. International Journal of Education and Development Using Information and Communication Technology, 9(1), 64e79, p. 76. Available at: <http://ijedict.dec.uwi.edu/include/getdoc.php?id¼5460&article¼1558&mode¼pdf>.

¹³ Jones, C., & Shao, B., (2011). *The net generation and digital natives: Implications for higher education*. York, UK: Higher Education Academy. Available from: http://oro.open.ac.uk/30014/1/Jones_and_Shao-Final.pdf.

teachers place upon their students to make use of new technologies and the way teachers integrate new technologies in their courses. There is little evidence that students enter university with demands for new technologies that teachers and universities cannot meet."

In what the European demands are concerned, the European Commission's (EC) 2020 Strategy is fighting for having a „smart, sustainable and inclusive growth for the European Economy and exit the crisis, by preparing the EU economy for the challenges of the next decade" (European Commission, 2010b; 2010a)¹⁴. One of the recommendations of European Commission on Digitisation is about getting more in-copyright material online, by „creating the legal framework conditions enabling large-scale digitisation"¹⁵. Thus, the Digital Agenda for Europe will help citizens from Europe to get the most information and communication technologies in order to be able to grow the economy in a sustainable way. The Europe's Digital Progress Report (EDPR)¹⁶ from 2017 emphasizes the progress made by all the member states from Europe around 5 important points: connectivity, human capital, use of internet, integration of Digital Technology and digital Public Services. The report points out that from 28 EU countries, Romania has a slow progress over the last year, being very close to Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Croatia, Poland, Cyprus, Hungary and Slovakia. In terms of digital skills, Romania is below the EU average, but, however, it's making some progress with more people getting online and skills' level slowly improving.

In addition, the Ministry of Education and Research introduced both ICT and programming classes for students, by allowing simple coding and algorithmic thinking. Furthermore, the National Education Law (2011) requires the implementation of the virtual library, by creating an e-

¹⁴ European Commission, (2010b), Europe 2020-A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Brussels: Retrieved from

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>; European Commission. (2010a). A digital agenda for Europe. Brussels: Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/digital-agenda/index_en.htm.

¹⁵ European Commission's Recommendation on Digitisation and Digital Preservation. Retrieved from: <http://libereurope.eu/european-commission-s-recommendation-on-digitisation-and-digital-preservation/>

¹⁶ Europe's Digital Progress Report 2017. Retrieved from:

<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/europes-digital-progress-report-2017>

learning platform for both teachers and students¹⁷. F. Cruz-Jesus et al (2016) conducted a research revealing that in the case of digitized education countries like Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Finland place on the top of the list, while Romania is ranked on the lowest levels, next to Bulgaria¹⁸ in what means general ICT adoption by individuals. In a study performed by Romanian researcher Diana Cojocnean (2016), she draws attention that Romania is making little steps, making the shift from the printed materials to digital resources¹⁹. Even if this evolution exists, the opinions of teachers about this shift to digital books are quite different – the youngest ones are very positive and they are trying to be updated with all types of teaching platforms, while those who are older, they do not perceive the same acceptance of this concept.

Research method

The research method is a quantitative one and we had a pilot study which had as subjects 7 professors who teach at the Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest. The study consisted in an inquiry based on a questionnaire with 10 questions. The questions from this questionnaire referred to the frequency of ICT use in the teaching process, which are the technologies they use on a daily basis, and whether they have encountered difficulties in the level of technology updates, the professional experience of the subjects, as well as the level of technological equipment of their working places. The questionnaire was available online for 3 days, period in which the subjects could access it and fill in their answers. The pilot study had as subjects a group of 7 persons - 5 women and 2 men aged between 25 and 65. Six of them have less than 10 years of teaching experience and only one person has a teaching experience of more than 30 years. The results of the pilot study were the following: in terms of ITC use in daily teaching activity, only 2 people are always using it, the rest preferring to use it most of the time. The skills that teachers consider important in ITC are the following: problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration, communication which were confirmed by other authors' analysis, and the most important equipment that helps to teach were the PC and the projector. Computer applications are also widely used, the

¹⁷ Legea educației naționale (National Education Law). Retrieved from:

http://www.dreptonline.ro/legislatie/legea_educatiei_nationale_lege_1_2011.php

¹⁸ F. Cruz-Jesus et al/Computers in Human Behaviour 56(2016) 72-82

¹⁹ Diana Cojocnean, "Teachers' Use and Perceptions of Digital School Textbooks in Romania" in Revista de Pedagogie • LXIV • 2016 (1) pp 88-96

most important being Internet surfing, e-mail, content creation through PowerPoint presentations, being closely followed by Word processing and spreadsheets such as Excell. As far as ICT facilities are concerned, people have unanimously agreed that they have normal facilities that are conducive to development and teaching for students. Suggestions collected from the interview are that the institution can also bring into classrooms smart boards, but at the same time, needs are not covered to an appropriate level for all members of the organization, leading to an imbalance for some generations in terms of exposure to digitization and ITC processes. This is a pilot study and future plans refer to extending it to a larger scale, including more subjects and analyzing whether the rate of ICT use in teaching practices at the university will increase or maintain at the same level.

Even if there was a lot of effort at the level of the university to equip the classrooms with the appropriate tools, there are still classes where the teachers write with chalk on the board and this prevents the development of ICT in the University. The solution to this problem could be given by an investment in equipping all the buildings with laboratories to ensure an equal proportion of ICT equipment and the number of students.

Overall, the results of the inquiry based on a pilot study lead to the following remarks: teachers are eager to implement ICT in daily teaching, gaining better use of new technologies, but think there is a disadvantage because of the lack of adequate equipment. Of all the people interviewed, they use applications and new technologies daily, managing digital media and they totally agree that ICT improves the efficiency and quality of teaching and learning. In the near future, one plans on extending this research to a larger group of subjects and constrasting and comparing the results with this research, in terms of conclusions - whether the results preserve the same trend or they are affected by the larger number of subjects.

Conclusions

Nowadays, one may state that ICT plays a major role in teaching and training. If years ago, teaching and training were possible without an extended use of technology, today is essential. Even more important, teachers and trainers have to adapt themselves to a reality that has dramatically changed: students use ICT in an intensive way. So, teachers and trainers have to catch up with the latest developments in ICT, in order to perform an efficient training activity. One may see that there is real shift

in thinking and teachers and trainers try to adopt ICT in their daily teaching, although this is a process that needs time (fighting against resistance to change), but also financial resources for purchasing digital equipment.

At the European level, Romania is not in the first position in terms of digitization in education. Even so, progress has been made in recent years, and this must be encouraging for the future. Teachers need more training and information regarding the use of technologies to be updated with what's new. Students also need to be aware that this process is a long-lasting one and that the teaching method will not change overnight. As a developing country, Romania needs investment at the educational level, by purchasing adequate equipment, and by providing training to enable a more qualitative learning process.

The pilot study revealed that the academic staff from the University of Economic Studies from Bucharest is eager to adopt these new technologies in their teaching practices, which will prove effective in creating a better teaching environment and reducing the generation gap in what the use of ICT is concerned. At this moment, this study analyzed the answers of a sample which consists in small number of subjects. One plans on analyzing future evolution on ICT use at academic level, when teaching Economics and further apply the questionnaire to a larger group of subjects. Bearing all these aspects in mind, one considers that the present pilot study had satisfying results, due to the answers provided by the subjects; even more, the subjects are actively involved in academic activity, researching and teaching, and their professional background is excellent.

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