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**CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN STUDENTS: MOTIVATION,  
PERSONALITY FACTORS, AND VOCATIONAL INTERESTS**

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***Abstract***

Career development is a very important aspect of modern career counseling theory and studies. The researches focused on the need to identify and to explore the psychological aspects of career decision in students. The present study investigated the associations among three variables: motivation personality factors and vocational interests in students. Within these relations, we proposed to make a brief personality profile. Hypothesis: H1: There are associations between motivation toward objectives and some of the personality factors (Extraversion, Amiability, and Counciousness). H2. There are associations between motivation toward relations and Extraversion. Method: we used a corelational study. The research included psychometrical and statistical methodes. The following instruments were used in this research: TOM (an instrument to test the motivation), CEI (a questionnaire to evaluate the vocational interests) and FFPI- Five Factor Personality Inventory (to measure the personality factors). The participants were 60 students at the University of Pitesti, 30 males and 30 females. They were randomly selected to participate in this research. Results confirmed the hypothesis. Students motivated towards objectives are more gentle, polite, determine, and dominant, and they like to perform in difficult and challenging activities. Students motivated toward relations are more sociable and friendly, they like to colaborate and to work in a non-conflictual environment.

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**Keywords:** Career development, vocational interests, personality factors.



## 1. Introduction

The career development is a very complex process based on a diversity of factors connected to the most profound aspects of human personality. The psychological dimension of this process refers to a continuous development of personal abilities, potential, and resources in a relation to the social environment.

For the last 10 years, many studies developed in the field of career and career development, linked personality factors, motivational aspects and vocational interests to some complex aspects of career, such as: career adaptability, academic success, vocational identity (Ginevra, Annovazzi, Santilli, Di Maggio, & Camussi, 2018; Hernandez-Franco, Baena, Prieto-Ursua, & Toro, 2018; Lawson, Lee, Crouter, & McHale, 2018; Martin-Gutierrez & Morales-Lozano, 2018; Schultz, Connolly, Garrison, Leveille, & Jackson, 2017). Akkermans and Kubasch (2017) reviewed all published papers from four core career journals (i.e. Career Development International, Career Development Quarterly, Journal of Career Assessment, and Journal of Career Development) between 2012 and 2016. They included personality as an essential aspect in the debates on careers among other aspects (Career success, Career decision making, Employability, Attitudes, Health and well-being, Career capital, Mentoring and counselling, Gender, Career mobility, Culture, Social capital, Identity, Meaningfulness, Work-home interaction, and Proactive behaviour). The authors noticed an evolving tendency to consider that personality traits – most notably the Big Five personality traits – can and do actually change over the lifespan and that they can be altered through interventions. Many studies focused on the personality factors that can explain differences in academic success. In a study based on a large data from 567 college students and 270 university students in Germany, Smidt (2015) linked the higher conscientiousness to higher study satisfaction.

A large study from Brazil (Ambiel & Noronha, 2016) identified Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness as the main predictors of self-efficacy in 308 high school students. They identified two personality factors (Extraversion and Conscientiousness) that could be used to differentiate people with low and high levels of self-efficacy. These findings are similar to other investigations where the personality factors Emotionality, Extraversion, Conscientiousness and Openness to Experience were significantly correlated with the overall career adaptability. Veres and Szamosközi (2017) collected data from 328 college students, from the Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania in a large study with the purpose to investigate the effects of socio-demographic characteristics, work experience, GPA and HEXACO-60 on career adaptability, and its subscales (concerns, control, curiosity, confidence). They expected that all three dimensions will be predictors of career adaptability, but only Conscientiousness and Extraversion predicted significantly the overall career adaptability.

Other researches (Shin & Kelly, 2013) explored the effects of optimism, intrinsic motivation, and family relations on vocational identity in college students in the United States and South Korea. Vocational identity was linked to optimism, and intrinsic motivation was a factor that mediated this relation. In this context, our study proposed to develop the field of career theory and practice integrating some of the existing research results into a holistic perspective of career (career decision and career development) that is more appropriate for the dynamic of careers in the modern world. From this perspective, the career development process became a part of the unique personality development process, a spiritual journey reflecting people's career decisions.

## 2. Problem Statement

In the field of career counselling, the problematic of career development became an important aspect in many studies. These researches focused on the need to identify and to explore the psychological aspects of career decision in students. The career development is a very complex and dynamic process, and it is influenced by a multitude of various factors (external factors: family, peers, and society, culture, and interior, psychological factors: personality factors, values, interests, motivation, spirituality).

## 3. Research Questions

Our study was developed from the following questions:

Is there a connexion between personality factors and motivational orientation in students?

Is there a connexion between motivational orientation and vocational interests in students?.

## 4. Purpose of the Study

This study purposed to investigate the associations among three variables: motivation (motivation toward objectives, motivation toward innovation, motivation toward leadership and motivation toward relations), personality factors (Extraversion, Amiability, Consciousness, Emotional stability, and Autonomy), and vocational interests (social, realistic, investigative, conventional, artistic, and entrepreneurial) in students. Within these relations, we proposed to make a brief personality profile.

### 4.1. The hypothesis of the study were:

Some of the personality factors (Extraversion, Amiability, and Consciousness) will significantly correlate with motivation towards objectives.

Extraversion will significantly correlate with motivation towards relations

Motivation towards innovation will significantly correlate with Consciousness.

Motivation towards objectives will significantly correlate with some of the interests (social and artistic).

Motivation towards relations will significantly correlate with artistic and social interests.

Motivation towards innovation will significantly correlate with some of the interests (artistic, entrepreneurial, social and investigative).

## 5. Research Methods

We develop a correlational study to test the hypothesis. Other used methods were: Psychometric and statistical–mathematical methods (the Pearson’s correlation coefficient).

### 5.1. Participants

The sample of the study consisted of 60 university students from the University of Pitesti, The Faculty of Educational Sciences, Social Sciences and Psychology. The average age of the participants was 20,85). Half of the students were female (50%), and half of the sample male (50%). They voluntarily participated in the study.

## 5.2. Instruments

The instruments are applicable in the context of career guidance or career counselling. Research results fully supported the validity of all the three instruments on Romanian population and testify to their high-level psychometric properties. All participants voluntarily completed the following three instruments.

### **Five Factor Personality Inventory (FFPI)**

The FFPI is an instrument with which short, behaviourally formulated items can be used to determine someone's personality profile in terms of the Big Five factors in a simple and efficient way. With great reliability the scores on the property dimensions (extraversion, Agreeableness, consciousness, emotional stability and autonomy) can be determined (Hendricks, Hosted, & De Read, 1999).

### **Motivational Orientation Assessment Test**

The motivational orientation test (TOM) is one of the most familiar European instruments to assess motivational orientation. The instrument consists of 70 items assessing four types of motivational orientations: motivation towards objectives, motivation towards innovation, motivation towards leadership and motivation towards relations.

### **The Interest Assessment Questionnaire (CEI)**

This instrument is based on John Holland's theory of interests. According to this theory, there are six categories of interests: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. The Romanian version of this questionnaire has good psychometric properties.

## 6. Findings

The means and standard deviations for all the variables of the study are presented in Table 1.

**Table 01.** Descriptive statistics

<b>Research variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Extraversion	62,5	5,83821
Agreeableness	61,3	6,15423
Counciousness	62,7	6,33072
Emotional stability	61,4667	6,74340
Autonomy	59,4167	7,29823
Orientation towards objectives	73,8500	11,65002
Orientation towards inovation	71,7000	9,35061
Orientation towards leadership	61,5333	13,43341
Orientation towards relations	71,2833	9,92871
Artistic interests	11,8167	5,20264
Conventional interests	8,9167	4,90345
Enterprising interests	10,5333	4,66675
Social interests	14,4167	3,95437
Realistic interests	11,2333	4,51876
Investigative interests	12,8667	3,68904

The Pearson Correlations were computed to test the hypothesis of the research.

There were several positive significant correlations between the personality factors and motivation: Extraversion and orientation towards objectives ( $r=0,290$ ;  $p<0.05$ ); Extraversion and orientation towards relations ( $r=0,267$ ;  $p<0.05$ ); Agreeableness and orientation towards objectives ( $r=0,255$ ;  $p<0.05$ ); Consciousness and orientation towards objectives ( $r=0,284$ ;  $p<0.05$ ); Consciousness and orientation towards innovation ( $r=0,351$ ;  $p<0.05$ ).

Motivational orientations significantly correlated with vocational interests: Orientation towards objectives and artistic ( $r=0,352$ ;  $p<0,01$ ) and social interests ( $r=0,445$ ;  $p<0,01$ ); orientation towards innovation and artistic ( $r=0,344$ ;  $p<0,01$ ), entrepreneurial ( $r=0,400$ ;  $p<0,01$ ), social ( $r=0,386$ ;  $p<0,01$ ) and investigative interests ( $r=0,328$ ;  $p<0,01$ ); orientation towards relations and artistic ( $r=0,472$ ;  $p<0,01$ ) and social interests ( $r=0,525$ ;  $p<0,01$ ).

## 7. Conclusion

### 7.1. Discussions

Results confirmed the hypothesis.

Students motivated towards objectives are more gentle, polite, determined, and dominant, and they like to perform in difficult and challenging activities. It is very important for them to have a feed-back about their implication in activities. They tend to prefer difficult activities and their performance express their pleasure to challenge personal competencies and to show their abilities. They are very decided and they like to do things based on a plan or to organize their activities. A very interesting aspect revealed by our results refers to the correlation between the personality factor Amiability and the motivation towards objectives. The participants from our research tend to develop some relational aspects such as: being polite, gentle and kind and to use these personality aspects as ways to dominate or to accomplish their goals even if they have social or artistic interests.

Students motivated toward relations are more sociable and friendly; they like to collaborate and to work in a non-conflictual environment. They have social or artistic interests, they tend to seek close relationships with other people and are less apt to do intellectual or physical activities. They prefer working with people and they are highly motivated towards collaboration and they tend to avoid any conflict with their colleagues to maintain their close relationships.

Students motivated towards innovation have entrepreneurial investigative, social and artistic interests and they like to explore new things, to confront the unfamiliar situations, to be involved in more activities trying to avoid the repetitive and rutinier activities in the same time. They like to change procedures and the existing solutions, to constantly progress and to think in a creative and innovator way.

Our study revealed another interesting situation: this motivation highly correlated with Consciousness, the tendency to plan, to organize their activities, to work on a predefined system. This discrepancy can be experienced as a conflictual situation. In the vocational counselling process, the client can be encouraged to explore this conflict, to became aware of his feelings, thoughts, needs and actions as they appear in this incongruence.

There were no correlations among Emotional Stability, Autonomy, motivation and conventional and realistic interests. These results can be explained by the students' academic field (educational science,

social sciences and psychology). Their profile of vocational interests integrated as most developed interests: social, investigative, artistic interests. Artistic and realistic interests had a close score, a situation of possible incongruence that could influence the career decision process.

## 7.2. Conclusions

This study investigated the associations among three variables: motivation (motivation toward objectives, motivation toward innovation, motivation toward leadership and motivation toward relations), personality factors (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional stability and Autonomy), and vocational interests (social, realistic, investigative, conventional, artistic, and entrepreneurial) in students. Within these relations, we made a brief personality profile.

Results show us, that Extraversion, Amiability and Conscientiousness correlated mostly with motivation towards objectives, innovation and relations, as well as with some of the vocational interests (social, artistic, investigative and enterprising). We identified two situations of incongruence and we discussed them in the context of career counselling process.

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