

## CHARACTER – THE AXIOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF STUDENT PERSONALITY

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**Abstract:** *The model of the graduate of military institutions, a model of the "final product", condenses and explains the goals of the educational process, with a particular focus on the quality of the graduate, understood as both the instilling of professional knowledge and as the molding of a student's personality. The study aims to explore the relational and axiological and the self-regulating dimensions of personality, with the purpose of facilitating psycho-pedagogical intervention with the aim of creating efficient military professionals for whom competence becomes a strategic norm.*

**Key words:** *character, student personality, psycho-pedagogical intervention.*

### 1. THE NEED FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN TRANSVERSAL SKILLS

The "Mircea cel Batran" Naval Academy, a higher learning military institution of great prestige and tradition due to its educational system, is preparing generations of cadets not just for assuming highly professional traits, useful for the insertion in the field of work, but also to facing multiple and difficult challenges that life experiences have to offer. This is the reason why a great deal of importance is given to gaining and training transversal psycho-social skills which are bonded together through the structuring of a certain type of personality that is emotionally balanced, psychologically mature, flexible and adaptable to the permanent changes in the social reality and thus, in the teacher's world.

Research in the fields of industrial and organizational psychology have proven the importance of this idea. A research that used hundreds of workers as subjects, made in order to determine the reason for which they were being fired, has proven the fact that 90% of them were sacked because they couldn't get along with their colleagues or superiors, therefore they couldn't work in a team and couldn't develop good interpersonal relationships. Meanwhile, only 10% of them were being sacked for not fulfilling their professional tasks.

For a long period of time, psychological science has established the paradigm through which the only form of intelligence with predictive value is the cognitive one and the IQ, as an expression of intellectual potential, is a predictor of success. Nevertheless, most psychologists agree that the non-cognitive dimensions of intelligence include affective, personal and social factors that contribute in a smaller portion to academic success (represented by school grades), compared to what we call "success in life".

D. Goleman, when trying to respond to the question "Why some people with high levels of IQ are unsuccessful, while the ones with low levels of IQ achieve success?", notes: "Being intelligent and hard-working when it comes to learning isn't preparing you for the storm – or the opportunities – that life's problems present. A high level of IQ doesn't guarantee success, prestige or happiness in life, because our schools and our culture focuses on learning capacities while ignoring emotional intelligence, which means a set of traits – some may call it character – that matters a lot in our personal destiny. Emotional life is dominant and it can be, like math or reading, controlled with more or less talent and requires a unique set of competences". (p. 50).

This assertion offers Goleman the opportunity to define emotional intelligence as "the capacity of being able to self-motivate and persevere in the face of frustrations; to self-control its impulses and postponing its satisfactions; to self-adjust feelings and to prevent trouble from darkening the mind; to be exigent and hopeful"(p. 50).

In support of his assertions, Goleman is using as arguments his research made on groups of American subjects:

- 95% Harvard graduates of the classes of the 40's have been analyzed during their maturity age and it has been

discovered that those who had the best results in college tests haven't been the most successful in life, in comparison with their more mediocre classmates, especially when it came to salary, efficiency and their position in their respective field of work. They haven't had the biggest satisfactions in life and neither the best of relations with friends, family or in love;

- a similar analysis at the adult age has been made on 450 boys, mostly belonging to immigrants with low financial possibilities. A third of them had an IQ below 90. Again, the IQ has been irrelevant for the way they handled with their jobs or in life in general: 7% of those with an IQ under 80 have been unemployed for 10 years or even more but this has also happened to 7% of the ones with an IQ over 100;

- another research has been made on the 81 graduates of Illinois high school class of 1981. Obviously, they had the best grades. But, while they continued to do good in college, receiving excellent grades, by the time they reached their 30's they only achieved a medium level of success. 10 years after graduation, only 1 out of 4 were at the top in their professions and many didn't do well.

Goleman considers that one of the secrets of psychology is the relative incapacity of grades, of IQ or other evaluations despite their almost mystic popularity of accurately predicting success in life.

Goleman also states that "the IQ contributes approximately 20% to the factors that determine success in life, which leaves the rest of the 80% to other factors".

As one of Goleman's critics said: "most of the positions found by people in society are determined by factors that have nothing to do with IQ, ranging from social classes to luck".

In the work "*The EQ Edge: Emotional Intelligence and Your Success*" (2003), professor Steven J. Stein, PhD. And Howard E. Book, PhD. mention that during the last 5 years, MHS in collaboration with Reuven Bar-On and other researchers from all over the world have studied the emotional intelligence coefficient of almost 42,000 inhabitants of 36 countries and thus built a large data base while discovering undeniable links between the emotional intelligence and success in professional and personal life in a wide range of activities: militaries, professional sports players, bankers, doctor, journalists, fashion designers or teachers. The authors conclude that:

- emotional intelligence is complementary to cognitive intelligence and can be measured in a serious way;

- emotional intelligence outweighs the boundary between genders, thus men and women generally have similar EQ scores;

- emotional intelligence transcends race;

- EQ is not permanently stable so the defined qualities that are measured at every EQ step can be improved throughout life;

- regarding the relevance of IQ at the workplace, research has shown that it can predict between 1 and 20% (the average is 6%) success; it has been discovered that EQ is responsible for workplace success in a percentage between 27 – 45%, depending on the field of work;

- the research made on 733 millionaires around the USA described by Thomas Stanley in "The Millionaire Mind" has shown that the subjects have put 30 factors that influenced their success in the following order:

- honesty to the ones around them;
- discipline;
- good relationships with others;
- a supporting life partner;
- being more hardworking than most

people.

All of the above show five elements are representative for emotional intelligence, while IQ situated on the 21th spot, being mentioned only by 20% of the millionaires.

- IQ is very rigid, mostly genetic and it tends to reach a high value for a 17 year old person, while it stays constant through adult age and begins to drop towards reaching seniority. Research conducted on 4,000 persons from Canada and USA decided that EQ rises step by step to an average of 95.3 towards the end of teenage life and then to an average of 102.7, where it stays relatively constant until the age of 40. After 50, it drops steadily to 101.5.

Although D. Goleman utilizes well based concepts in psychological research and thus emotional intelligence – social intelligence – personality, he retains the great merit of expressing to the scientific community the importance on non-intellectual factors in the adaptation and resolve in a high performing way of life situations, meaning achieving success.

## **2. CHARACTER – A RELATION-VALUE AND SELF-REGULATING SIDE OF PERSONALITY**

Shown as an extremely complex concept in psychology, personality, as an "ultimate and thus complex object of psychology" as Meilli wonderfully puts it, implies both the human existential nature with its spirituality, as well as the axiological patrimony of humanity englobed by man, transformed in its own psycho-motricity and shown in exterior through present and future projects. Because of this conceptual complexity, the attempts to define personality have met serious difficulties either of formal or methodological way, often creating arguments between scientists that generated progress.

A successful attempt to resume the main approach perspectives of human personalities is the one made by R.B. Ewen (2012):

- the psychodynamic perspective, represented by Freud, the father of psychoanalysis and psychic machine comprised of Ego, Superego and Unconscious, where the divided human is led by his unconscious impulses and the mental activities are put into motion by psychic energy. Psychic determinism is emphasized together with the idea that psychic activity is mostly unconscious and can be known of only through psycho-analysis techniques such as free association or dream interpretation.

Carl Gustav Jung and the analytic psychology are developing the idea that we are being motivated by basic instincts while moral tendencies and the need for religion are also basic. The functioning of psychic is based on the principles of opposites and human behavior is teleological. As a separatist to Freud, Jung takes into account the major role of the personal and collective unconscious, as the collective unconscious is a storage room for types inherited from our ancestral past. Among other types we also find the shadow, the person, anima, animus, the self, the wise elder and the Great Mother.

Alfred Adler and individual psychology treat personality as a compact unit where social interest is translated into human being's basic potential in creating relationships and cooperating with other people. Adler's central concept, he himself a separatist to Freud, represents the existence of inferiority sentiments and the fight for superiority. To Adler is allotted the discovery of

personalities' social determinants, the paternity of well-known terms such as the inferiority complex and lifestyle.

Karen Horney, who brought important contributions to neurosis and human development by underlining the importance of unconscious processes of upsets and painful intrapsychic conflicts, has been criticized for her failure in developing a large enough personal theory.

Erik Erikson and the psychology of Self, who keeps the structural model of Freud's psychic machine is granting a far too large importance to the force of self. He has been criticized for being a too big liability to Freud's psychoanalytic theory, although he did enlarge the horizon of this theory by pointing out the role of healthy and adaptive processes of self and by emphasizing the role of sociology and history.

- the humanist perspective, in which a special role can be attributed to Carl R. Rogers and the Theory of self actualization which states the idea that "the main motivation that comes along with any human behavior is a basic tendency to develop our constructive and healthy capacities." (Ewen, p.289) This theory also brings forth other important concepts such as "the need for positive appreciation, unconditional acceptance", especially from significant persons.

Considered by many as one of the important exponents of humanist psychology, Abraham H. Maslow enriched the theory of self updating with new valuable concepts: motivations for loss and grow, the hierarchy of human needs, the person found in the process of self updating (fully human).

- the personality traits perspective represented by Gordon W. Allport and the Theory of personality traits. His contributions count the popular construction of traits, the explaining of motivation both as a tension reducer as well as a pulsing growth, the constitution of personality as an integral part of theoretic psychology.

In this area it can be also be brought to discussion Raymond B. Cattell and other supporters of the Analytic-Factorial Theory which bases its ample research on personality dimensions, measured through the complicated technique of factorial analysis.

- the behaviorist perspective, even radical behaviorism represented by B.F. Skinner where we get to know classic conditioning versus operational conditioning or "Skinner's Box" as his work is based on empiric research

- the cognitive perspective which brings forth George A. Kelly's personal building psychology, a theory that has brought towards attention the way cognitions and empathies with personal buildings of other people are affecting our interpersonal relations.

Albert Bandura, the author of the social-cognitive Theory, enriches cognitive psychology with new concepts: learned helplessness, internal and external locus, schemes, functional rigidity and the heuristic of availability.

The extremely summarized passing over on perspectives and theories that try to explain human nature enforce the idea of complexity and constructive dilemmatic hardship.

Regarding us, we will approach in this work the research of personality from a structural and systemic perspective as we use the general Theory of systems where Ludwig von Bertalanffy defines system as "any assembly of elements found in an ordered interaction, as in non-random".

The systemic approach to personality centers on the links between personality components and its own end and on its opening towards social and cultural environments, considered as a macro system. We also mention here valuable Romanian psychologists who have given pertinent definitions from this perspective: Tinca

Creșu: "personality is a complex structure that implies an assembly of understructures while functioning systemically" or M.Golu: "personality is a hyper-complex, probabilistic, dynamic and open system." (in Zlate, p.351) Therefore, personality as the most complex system in the known universe has dimensions with well known

Character is a way of being of man, a "fingerprint" that is printed on the behavior, a psychic structure through which external requests are being filtered according to the way how response reactions are constructed.

It has also been called the psycho-moral profile of man, evaluated by unity criteria, composure and stability. After (Zlate,p.382), we can define character in two distinctive ways:

- in a broad, extensive meaning as being the organizational scheme of the general psycho-moral profile of a person, considered because of norms and value and ethics criteria. It ensures from within the compatibility of conduit with the existent norms. Thus, inside character psychical components are included such as: the belief about world and life, attitudes, aspirations and ideals integrated as a whole.

- in a tight, restrictive meaning, as being the assembly bonded together by attitudes and traits that determine a relatively stable way of being, constant in regards to orientation and to the reporting of the subject to the ones

conceptual and methodological boundaries: temper, skills (intelligence as a general-human skill, creativity as a special skill) and character, among those to be found relations of interdependence, interinfluention, compensation, hierarchyzation and feed-back.

around him, to himself, to his activity, to global and social human reality, with a great adaptive value. (Zlate, p.385)

In this context, attitudes appear as being synthetic psychic constructions, that contain intellectual, affective and volitive content through which a man interacts with the world. They have a valuable content and when they are compatible with social norms, with laws of progress, they form what we call the attitudes-values system, specific for every person, that functions automatically and unconsciously.

Attitudes are expressed most often in behavior through the character traits, a level that is easy to be evaluated in a teacher-student relationship.

In conclusion, character has been considered the essential component of personality, even the "core" of personality and also as being the thing that gives man a note of value in an axiological sense.

Character subordinates, controls and integrates other personality components through their maximal capitalization.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

The teacher-student relationship, a partner relationship that generates not only specialty knowledge useful for professional specialization, is a relationship that allow the educational intervention, as in the modeling of students' personalities in compatibility with the final purpose of education. Through the understanding of character as an organized and well structured system, psycho-pedagogical intervention will potent the stages for asserting character's traits, will value positive traits, correctly formed and will "push" negative character traits to the boundary of the system.

More so, the teacher as personality model, through his personal example but also through psycho-pedagogical means, will differentiate the educational action methods, given the great character variability between students and the different stages of psychological evolution of their psychic growing-up.

We consider that the positive building influence towards the personality of students is necessary to be made permanently, during classes, private tutoring, scientific clubs, extracurricular activities, through the perseverant evocation and strengthening of the factors, conditions and reasons that lead to the formation of a unitary, balanced, socially desirable character and in compatibility with psycho-professional needs of academic specialization.

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