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**SCREENING OF PERSONALITY TRAITS AND COGNITIVE  
SCHEMAS OF TEACHERS IN MURES COUNTY**

Porkolab Anamaria (a), Muresan Lavinia Mirela (b)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Targu Mures, Romania

(b) Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, muresanlavi@yahoo.co.uk

*Abstract*

Education should open new horizons for the human existence, and help the harmonious development of personality. The teacher has a crucial role in their pupils` personality development. The teacher that assumes responsibility for the healthy development of students` personality should have a balanced personality with healthy, adaptive cognitive schemas.

The maladaptive cognitive schemas of the teaching staff from the pre-university education can have a negative influence on the educational process, because it affects communication and interaction between teachers and pupils.

The current study aims to investigate the connection between the personality and the cognitive schemas among the pre-university teachers, as well as to create a personality profile of the teachers in Mures County. The study was conducted on 200 teachers in Mures County. The research used two questionnaires: ZKPQ (Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire) (Zuckerman, 2002) and Young Schema Questionnaire - short form (YSQ-S3).

The results show that teachers in Mures County have a personality profile dominated by extraversion, the sociability factor and thrill seeking with the need for increased activity.

Teachers with high impulsive thrill seeking tend to socially isolate themselves and their extraversion correlates with unrealistic and hypercritical standards. The unrealistic standards may become an obstacle for the differential education, focused on pupils, an education that established personalized standards, according to the needs of each and every pupil. Hypercriticism blocks pupils` development and their motivation for learning.

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**Keywords:** Teachers, personality, impulsive thrill seeking, unrealistic standards.



## 1. Introduction

School is a formal framework, providing training and education for young people by socializing them. School opens new horizons to the universe of knowledge, world, environment and society in which we live. School, through education, is to develop the skills of young people and to create motivational levers for their future actions in society. Education builds up the attitudes and behavior regarding their relationships with others and the environment, looming responsibilities, obligations and rights in society. Education is not only a right of the young generation, it is also a social responsibility. Education is the compass that will ensure proper integration of individuals into society. One of the aims of education is to develop responsibility and involvement in society. Through education, individuals can acquire and develop true virtues and can become a responsible and efficient actor of society. Social responsibility requires a mature and cohesive personality.

Education should open new horizons for the human existence and help the harmonious development of personality. The teacher plays a crucial role in the personality development of their pupils. The teacher who assumes responsibility for the healthy development of students' personality in turn has a balanced personality with healthy adaptive cognitive schemas. Cognitive schemas can be defined as the basic beliefs we have about ourselves, the world and others. Maladaptive cognitive schemas may be ideas as "others are better than me", "I do not deserve more than that", etc. Teachers with maladaptive cognitive schemas have no self-confidence, strength and authority needed for classroom management, and thus have no chance in assuming responsibility for the harmonious development of their students. But where did the real teachers go? Following the annual psychological assessment, I meet more and more teachers with maladaptive behavioral problems and attitudes. Actually, I think, the best, the experts do not choose the Romanian educational system.

The reason is simple: there is no material or emotional motivation to enter education. There is no material motivation; still, if we look back, teachers in the past didn't have a high income either, but instead they had something to compensate the financial, and this was the valuable status of a professor or a teacher. This respect for the one who educates slowly disappears. The education system starts to get filled with poorly trained professionals, because those well trained will choose a more attractive financial return, due to a lack of appreciation of a true teacher.

## 2. Problem Statement

The role of a teacher's personality can be approached also from the perspective of the teacher-student relationship. Freedom, responsibility, tolerance, cooperation, the values of modern society require a new evaluation of the teacher-student relationship. Responsibility for developing these values fall on the shoulders of both actors of the educational process: teacher and student, requiring affective and effective engagement of both during the teaching-learning process. In this context it is necessary to admit that teachers and students are social partners, each with the opportunity to progress through common interaction. Justice and hierarchy are some concepts with an arbitrary role, honesty and being yourself being more important values than the roles imposed by circumstances of formal education. Skills of learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be are fundamental in a society that requires and

promotes lifelong learning. Based on this vision, the teachers` role requires a change in the attitude and behavior they had before.

Choosing a teaching profession should not be a random or a backup option, it should be chosen knowingly and responsibly, as the next generation we form will be the one that will take care of us and shape the future society. Teachers need to be aware of the huge role and responsibility they have in shaping the personality of future generations, and through them, the socio-cultural environment in which our children will live. In a study conducted in Romania in 2011 (Badea et al., 2011) have outlined three cardinal qualities that teachers want to develop in students: correctness/honesty, respect and responsibility.

### **3. Research Questions**

The research questions that guided our study were:

- What is the relationship between between personality and cognitive schemas among pre-university teachers?
- What is the role of variables such as marital status, gender and living environment in this relation?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

In the present study, in assessing personality and cognitive schemas in teachers, we started from the fact that teachers are a bit confused, and do not have the appropriate professional attitudes and adaptive cognitive schemas that could develop such qualities in students.

This current study aims to investigate the relationship between personality and cognitive schemas among pre-university teachers, by creating a personality profile of teachers in Mures County. It also follows the role of variables such as marital status, gender and living environment in this relation.

### **5. Research Methods**

The study was conducted on 200 teachers in Mures County. The research used two questionnaires: ZKPQ (Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire) (Zuckerman, 2002) and Young Schema Questionnaire - short form (YSQ-S3) (Trif, 2006).

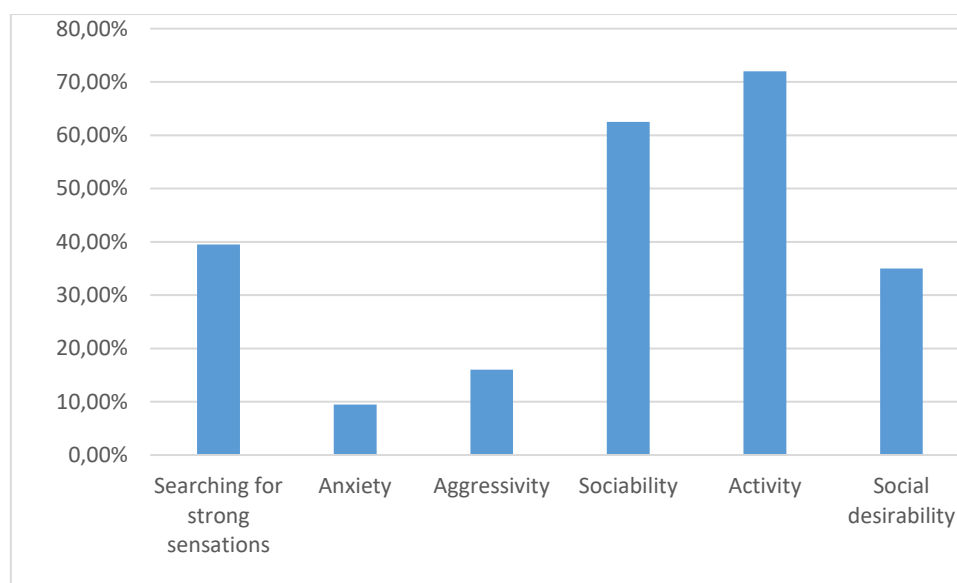
Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire Form III, Revised (ZKPQ) was developed to evaluate five features. The questionnaire assesses the fundamental dimensions of personality (temperament characteristics) in terms of psychobiology, measuring concepts that have a biological-evolutionist base: impulsive thrill seeking, neuroticism-anxiety, aggression-hostility, sociability, activity, social desirability. For assessing cognitive schemas of teachers, we have used the Young Schema Questionnaire (YSQ-S3), 114 items are divided into the following 18 subscales: Emotional Deprivation (ED) Abandonment/Instability (AB), Mistrust/Abuse (MA), Social isolation/Alienation (SI), Defectiveness/Shame (DS), Failure (FA), Dependence/incompetence (DI), vulnerability to harm or illness (VH) Enmeshment/ Undeveloped Self (EM), Entitlement / Grandiosity (ET), Insufficient Self-Control / Self-Discipline (IS), Subjugation (SB), Self-sacrifice (SS), Approval-Seeking / Recognition-Seeking (AS), Negativity/pessimism (NP), Emotional inhibition (EI) Unrealistic Standards / Hipercriticism (US), Punitiveness (PU).

Under this approach, a number of 200 teachers were selected, aged 22-67. From a gender perspective, the total number of participants there were males (9.5%) and females (90.5%). The research was conducted during September- December in Mures county schools. The sampling was non-randomized or of convenience, using the available participants. Participants were asked to respond in writing. Statistical analyzes were performed with the following methods of analysis in the SPSS 22 program: descriptive analysis: percentage frequency, bivariate correlations.

## 6. Findings

The results show that teachers in Mures County have a personality profile dominated by extraversion, the sociability factor and thrill seeking with the need for increased activity (the need to make an effort). The teaching profession is somehow associated with extraversion, as extroverted people are sociable, communicative, interested in everything that happens around them.

Thrill seeking is the strong need for sensory stimulation, this need of the teachers can be an asset, especially in teaching and learning, because students of the present generation are stimulated very hard and on multiple paths (mass-media, internet etc.) and so teachers need to possess a kind of compass in the multitudes of stimuli that affect students, and they have to be able to select among them as active and fast as possible, as these stimuli change and develop at a more and more hallucinating pace.



**Figure 01.** Personality traits of teachers in Mures County

In statistical analysis we used the simple correlation coefficient of Bravais-Pearson at a significance threshold  $p = <0.05$ .

Teachers with high thrill seeking tend to be socially isolated (.195 \*\*,  $p = .006$ ). Many teachers can not cope with rapid technological changes, and thus tend to isolate themselves behind less attractive teaching methods that are non-personal, and create barriers in the teacher-student communication.

The search for thrilling sensations correlates with grandiosity (.215 \*\* ==  $p = .002$ ) and self-discipline and insufficient self-efficiency (.222 \*\*,  $p = .002$ ). Inconsequence (as a manifestation of insufficient self-

discipline) is one of the most common characteristics in Romanian education. Inconsequence regarding the changes in the education system, and also the weakness in management of classes can cause unrealistic and ambiguous standards and insufficient self-efficacy.

Sociability correlates with unrealistic standards and hypercriticism (\* .143,  $p = 0.043$ ). The evaluated teachers have unrealistic standards that come from their own personality and maladaptive cognitive schemas with unrealistic expectations of themselves and of others, but can be determined by the unrealistic educational standards which are not at all differentiated regarding the students' particularities.

Hypercriticism is also present in teachers from our county, which lowers the self-confidence of students and their school performance.

Social desirability correlates positively (.322 \*\*,  $p = .000$ ) with the need of activity and the search for thrills. This highlights a teacher that is involved in many school and extracurricular activities, with a strong desire for affirmation, the need to be the best, but which may result in unrealistic expectations of the beneficiaries of education: the students.

The need for activity positively correlates with hypercriticism (.244 \*\*,  $p = .000$ ) and self-sacrifice (.304 \*\*,  $p = .000$ ).

Searching for thrills correlates with aggression (\* .168,  $p = .017$ ). 16% of the teachers assessed has shown an aggressive/hostile personality profile. Correlations of aggression/hostility with cognitive schemas highlight a profile of an aggressive teacher that is vulnerable to harm and illness, is a negativist with excessive precautions to protect themselves, that lives life events as a disaster might happen at any time, and can not establish limits on what is socially appropriate.

Regarding age: that correlates negatively with thrill seeking and sociability. Older teachers come from a generations of teachers who have chosen this profession as a calling, a mission, and not to highlight themselves by all means. Their sociability is decreasing as they can hardly find ways of communicating with the new generations. The age of teachers positively correlates with emotional deprivation (\* .180,  $p = .011$ ), they feel misunderstood and feel a lack of empathy from those around them.

Regarding marital status, the variable married correlates negatively with sensation seeking, while being single does positively. And unmarried people show social isolation. But there are no significant differences regarding marriage and cognitive schemas among teachers.

Regarding the gender of teachers and cognitive schemas, it was shown that in the cognitive schemas of males emotional deprivation, social isolation and shame appear more pronounced.

## 7. Conclusion

The efficiency of a teacher depends on their knowledge, skills acquired by their motivations, and finally, of certain personality traits. (Iuci, 2006). Our present study has shown a profile of a teacher that is extroverted (sociable and active) and thrill seeker. Regarding extraversion, sociability is a personality characteristics that is important for teachers, as it has been shown in other studies (Ciceu, et al. 2016), because this feature provides a more effective relating to students' needs, the interest for their development and forming their personality.

Professor Ion Ovidiu Pânișoară in an article (Pânișoară, 2013) describes the ideal profile of a teacher, that includes: scientific (professional) competence and communication skills, empathy,

fairness/objectiveness, flexibility and authority/ability to command respect. Compared to this ideal in the present study has outlined a profile of the teacher in Mures County that is sociable with unrealistic standards/expectations, eager to engage in, hypercritical and thrill seeking. High standards can help students, provided they do not become excessive and unrealistic, because it prevents objective and realistic assessments. Hypercriticism can apparently provide an authority, but with a disrespect.

The requirements of the educational system are getting higher, in terms of teachers' performance. It is not just focusing on school performance, various disadvantaged areas where some teachers work are not taken into account, but there's a high focus on extracurricular activities, the results in competitions, participation in conferences, etc. Thus the teacher has to keep step with the requirements, to make more visible and unusual things so they may stand out. Thus the need for thrills with increased activism will outline a "hyperactive" teacher, that tries to keep step with a curriculum loaded with unrealistic expectations of some parents and extracurricular programs increasingly diversified. Such a teacher will form overloaded students who will make no difference regarding priorities, and will be guided by external requirements and expectations, without their own initiatives.

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