INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY TYPE ON LEARNING SUCCESS

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Abstract: Analysing the factors that influence learning and lead to learning and professional success has been the topic of numerous researches aiming at improving the teaching and educational process. This paper presents a research regarding the relationships between personality factors according to the Big Five Model and school records, i.e. annual average after the first college year. Given that human personality mediates coping style or strategies, a low number of researchers have carried out the study of the importance of personality, of personality traits, and of the necessity of evaluating these traits. The goal of the study was to point out the configuration of personality factors in relation to school records at the end of the first year of college in the first semester of the academic year 2016-2017 on a sample of 90 undergraduates of the faculties of agriculture, horticulture, farm management and food processing. Descriptive analysis pointed out the different configuration of personality factors in relation to learning outcomes. This research is of interest for both academics and practitioners interested in increasing learning success and better knowing and developing the personality of the students.

Keywords: learning success, personality, learning intelligence, education

INTRODUCTION

Learning success reflects in optimum efficacy according to curricula and educational goals. It materialises in high grades ranging between 7 and 10 in both schoolchildren and undergraduates as well as in scientific, technical, practical, cultural, art, sports, etc. activities in different school or academic competitions, be they domestic or international.

A rather low number of researchers carried out the study of the importance of personality, of personality traits, and of the necessity of evaluating these traits because a human subject personality mediates the coping style or strategies.

Personality and coping process play both individual and interactive roles in physical and mental health: this is why personality psychology studies focus more and more on stress coping modalities (CARVER, CONNOR-SMITH, 2010).

Psychic defence strategies are closely related to such factors as:

a) The defence method (MOOS, HOLAHAN, 2003), on the response type: cognitive, behavioural or emotional/affective;

b) The personality approach type, as a state or trait: however, in the adjustment process, coping mechanisms are considered responses to stress generating situations or to stress perceived affectively and not as stable personality traits (COYNE, GOTTLIEB, 1996);

c) The personality of the human subject;

d) The parental style suggesting, according to a recent study on patients with remissive, major depression disorders, a link between parental styles and individual coping abilities of children under stress (UEHARA, SAKADO, SATO, SOMEYA, 1999);

e) The type of temper (some coping strategies are specific to certain temper types).

Personality traits involved in the genesis of disorders can be classified as: traits developing a negative affectivity (depression, anxiety, neurosis) and traits developing a positive affectivity (optimism, a developed sense of humour, vitality, perceived self-efficacy, inner control, increased self-esteem) (IAMANDESCU, 2005).

According to SAVA (2008), describing the five factors of personality (the Big Five Model) has become the favourite working method of psychologists."Though there is no consensus on the naming of the factors, researchers' consensus regarding their psychological content is high." (ZLATE, 2002)

From the perspective of *structural hypotheses*, it is not that important to attribute names to the different personality traits but to describe the nature of the relationships between them that allow structural representations of personality descriptors.

The correlation between terms and traits has been analysed through factorial analysis, and different methods and procedures such as main component analysis, centroid analysis, diagonal analysis, cluster analysis, etc. (RADU, 1993).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The goal of the study was to point out the importance of the relationship between learning success and the students' personality traits in the process of adjustment to everyday life issues.

The sample was a random one, 50 undergraduates (28 males and 32 females) from the 2nd year majoring in agriculture, horticulture, farm management and food processing at the Banat's University of Agricultural Science and Veterinary Medicine "King Michael I of Romania" from Timisoara, Romania.

The hypothesis of the study was that there is a direct proportional relationship between learning success and certain personality traits in the tested students.

The IPIP-50 Questionnaire (http://socpers.psihologietm.ro/publications.html; RUSU, MARICUȚOIU, MACSINGA, VÎRGĂ & SAVA, 2012) is a tool developed within the project International Personality Item Pool and evaluating the personality markers described by GOLDBERG (1992): Openness, Extraversion, Emotional stability, Consciousness and Agreeability.

The IPIP-50 scale was adapted to a sample of Romanian students (Rusu, Maricuțoiu, Macsinga, Vîrgă & Sava, 2012).

The analysis of factorial structure pointed out that, of the tested models, the model of the five correlated factors describes the best the structure of the IPIP-50.

Results recommend the use of the IPIP-50 in the study of Romanian samples since it is a true support for the psychological community of Romania.

Learning outcomes, i.e. **the annual average** in the 1st year

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In 1990, Goldberg developed a set of both unipolar and bipolar adjectives aiming at evaluating personality from the perspective of the Big Five Model. During several studies, these lists of adjectives showed a factorial structure congruent with this model (Goldberg, 1990, 1992) and high correlations between the lists of adjectives developed by Goldberg, NEO PI, the Hogan Inventory (Goldberg, 1992), and NEO- PI- R (MCCRAE & COSTA, 1997) (http://www.socpers.psihologietm.ro/).

In 1996, Goldberg set the bases of an international project, International Personality Item Pool (IPIP), for the use free of charge of instruments of evaluation of personality and for

their ongoing development through common efforts by the international scientific community (GOLDBERG, 1999, IN RUSU, 2012).

Table 1.

Goldberg's Model of the Bid Five

DIMENSION	ADJECTIVES
EXTRAVERSION	***Positive pole***: *alert, communicative, playful, expressive, spontaneous, uninhibited, energetic, talkative, assertive, animated, courageous, self-esteemed, sincere, humorous, ambitious, optimistic* ***Negative pole***: *distant, quiet, reserved, timid, inhibited, non-aggressive, passive, lethargic, pessimistic*
AGREEABILITY	***Positive pole***: *cooperative, kind, empathic, tolerant, polite, generous, flexible, modest, moral, warm, realistic, natural* ***Negative pole***: *conflictual, excessively critic, authoritarian, impolite, cruel, infatuate, irritable, presumptuous, stubborn, distrustful, egotistic, insensitive, grumpy, shrewd, prejudicial, unfriendly, unpredictable, selfish, treachery*
CONSCIOUSNESS	***Positive pole***: *organised, effective, trustful, precise, perseverant, precautious, punctual, firm, dignified, predictable, temperate, conventional, logical* ***Negative pole***: *disorganised, negligent, inconsistent, inattentive, wreckless, goalless, lazy, undecided, frivolous, nonconformist*
EMOTIONAL STABILITY (low neuroticism)	***Positive pole***: *calm, independent* ***Negative pole***: *insecure, fearful, emotionally unstable, envious, naive, nosy*
INTELLECT (culture, openness)	***Positive pole***: *intellectual, depth, intuitive, intelligent, creative, curious, sophisticated* ***Negative pole***: *superficial, unimaginative, unobservant, stupid*

Source: Rusu, 2012

Results are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2.

Results in the Romanian sample

Personality trait	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Consciousness	Emotional stability	Openness
Raw score	1552	1933	1852	1472	1751
Percentage	18.13%	22.58%	21.63%	17.19 %	20.45%

The personality traits in the studied sample are shown in Figure 1 below.
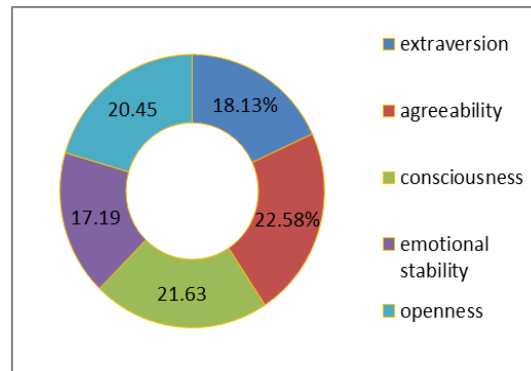
Figure 1. Personality traits in the studied sample

Neuroticism means reacting to critical events by showing a high level of negative affectivity and emotional distress (BOALS, SOUTHARD-DOBBS & BLUMENTHAL 2014, IN RUSU *et al*., 2012). Emotional stability is perceived by most researchers as emotional traits that distinguish the individuals (ZLATE, 2002). In education, also emotional stability is a factor of progress.

High rates of emotional stability are associated to emotional maturity, calmness, self-confidence and the ability of coping with stress situations. Low results point to emotionally vulnerable and unstable individuals that have fears and dissatisfactions and that are easily discouraged or irritated when confronted with different problems. Teenage per se is a life period characterised by emotional sensitivity and vulnerability.

Extroversion shows a personality's ability of directing outwards, of involving in actions, and a high level of sociability (ZLATE, 2002). It materialises in the trend to experience positive emotions, activity and sociability. Extroverted persons are capable of overcoming critical situations with the help of defining traits. It shares 18.13% of the entire sample.

Agreeability is defined by flexibility, tolerance, interpersonal trust and consideration for others' needs (MCCRAE & COSTA, 1997, IN RUSU *ET AL*., 2012). It refers to the emotional features of a person and individual differences engendered by social interaction, i.e. prosocial behaviours (ZLATE, 2002). Results point out that it shares the highest percentage of all (22.58%).

Consciousness is the trend to persist, organise, and observe norms (MCCRAE & COSTA, 1997, IN RUSU *ET AL*., 2012). This is considered an indirect emotional regulation method playing an important role in post-trauma response moderation. Consciousness is a reference trait in learning and education. Developing this personal trait can determine learning success. It shares 21.63% of the studied sample.

Personal openness refers to the trend of being interested in novelty, situations, ideas and experiences, pointing out different aspects of intellectual functions (openness to novelty, creativeness, inventiveness) (ZLATE, 2002). It shares 20.45% of the studied sample.

Traits specific to people with high levels of extroversion, openness, agreeability and consciousness enable them to control and tolerate uncertainty in different life situations, to adapt to change and to develop personally. These people are willing to analyse life events and find their meaning. These traits are associated with the ability of managing life uncertainty effectively and to adapt, to better cope with the stress engendered by life changes (TEDESCHI & CALHOUN, 1996, IN RUSU *ET AL*., 2012).

Both psychosomatic balance and unbalance states depend on an individual's PSYCHIC CONSTITUTION OR ON THE TYPE OF PERSONALITY ALLOWING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATES (Enăchescu, 2008).

One of the basic factors of learning success is learning intelligence: it is seen by J. Piaget as the dynamic balance between assimilating school requirements and adjusting to them. Learning intelligence shows the degree of adjustment of a student to school requirements. It depends on school ongoing variations, on school assignments and on individual's personality. It therefore refers to an individual's ability of acquiring knowledge, intellectual skills, etc., under common, normal, school conditions to which adjust the students of the same age (http://columna.crifts.ro).

In the studied sample, the share of personality traits at annual mean intervals within learning success is as shown in Figure 2 below
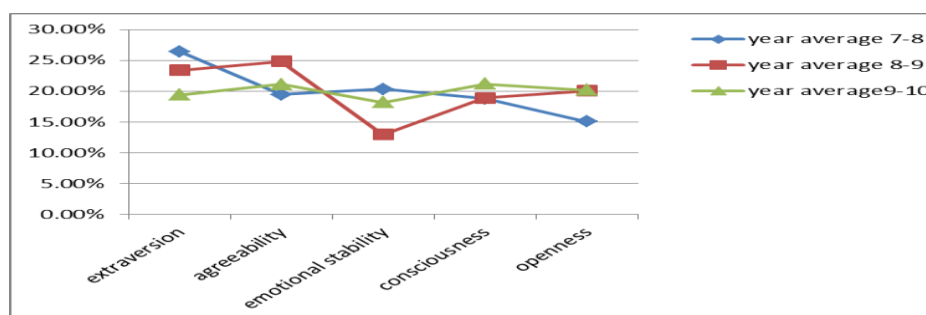

Figure 2. The share of personality traits at annual mean intervals within learning success

The share of personality factors differs in the students within the three result intervals of learning success. Within the 7-8 mean interval, the largest share is that of extraversion, followed by emotional stability, agreeability, consciousness and openness. Within the 8-9 mean interval, agreeability ranks first followed by extroversion, openness, consciousness, and emotional stability. Within the 9-10 mean interval, consciousness comes first followed by agreeability, openness, extroversion and emotional stability (Table 3).

Table 3.

Share of personality factors in the students within the three result intervals of learning success

Year average	7-8		8-9		9-10	
Personality traits (sample share)	Extroversion	26.41%	Agreeability	24.82%	Consciousness	21.15%
	Emotional stability	20.31%	Extroversion	23.38%	Agreeability	21.10%
	Agreeability	19.44%	Openness	20.04%	Openness	20.18%
	Consciousness	18.79%	Consciousness	18.88%	Extroversion	19.38%
	Openness	15.04%	Emotional stability	12.97%	Emotional stability	18.18%

CONCLUSIONS

Work capacity, resistance to effort, vitality of personality, rhythm and efficacy of activity, etc. influence learning success.

The efficacy of learning intelligence depends, besides perseverance, on the speed of mental functioning. In contrast with passive students (asthenic), active students (sthenic) are characterised by a high ability of overcoming outer difficulties, which stimulates physical and mental energy. Personality is, together with genetic inheritance, life experience and education, an important factor in learning success. There are differences between the share of personality traits and their configuration, which generate learning success. Consciousness, followed by agreeability, openness, extroversion and emotional stability seem to be the winning configuration in the studied sample.

If activism and openness are associated with developed learning abilities, perseverance will help students reach superior learning outcomes.

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