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Making Career Decisions in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic. An Analysis of Disadvantaged Student Groups

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Abstract: The educational area is a social sector where the COVID-19 pandemic impact involves making many exponential changes. In many countries, the transition from face-to-face education to on-line education implies a revolution in the hierarchy of job domains/jobs offer. Young people’s career plans may be different under the impact of internal and external factors generated by this new context. Theoretical framework revealed that under the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the career decision-making process becomes more difficult to assume by taking into consideration the job nature, the sense of belonging, and the balance between passions and risks involved. By referring to these aspects a question arises: Will the pandemic also create a crisis in the career-making decision process for young people? The research group consisted of 108 undergraduates¹ from 12 grades, attending high schools from cities under 10,000 inhabitants. Hypothesis: There is a tendency to focus on training areas dominated by the practical aspects than the theoretical one as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We used a Romanian adapted version of the Myer-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) Questionnaire used in counseling and carrier orientation services for identification of professional interests of the students. The obtained results show that it is important for high school students to receive quality services for carrier guidance and psycho-educational support to prevent over-introversion and over-critical attitude about others and themselves, self-isolation correlated with a high level of sensing and sensitiveness.

Keywords: *educational change; professional interests; job domains; jobs offer; disadvantaged student groups.*

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1. Introduction

The issue of postmodernism and post-postmodernism is fascinating for researchers, constantly revealing new inter and transdisciplinary aspects (such as the COVID-19 pandemic), which makes it of great theoretical and practical interest, open to multiple approaches and transposable to the full dimension of the global society of the years 2020-2021. Covering at least three stages, postmodernism now crosses the period we all experience, different from the previous one but still undefined and uncertain, with an appetite for the study of multiple aspects (Peters & all, 2018).

In an attempt to better capture the complexity of the phenomenon, this period was named by appealing to different words and phrases, the best known being (Peters & all, 2018, p. 1299): “post-postmodernism, new materialism, posthumanism, critical realism, digimodernism, metamodernism, performatism, post-digitalism, trans-postmodernism, post-millennialism, Marxism after postmodernism and transnationality”. However, regardless of the different options of researchers regarding the name of the current stage of postmodernism, it is certain that it highlights a complex, relatively fluid issue, which is updated as new aspects become visible and strong through impact (e.g. the COVID-19 pandemic).

Among these we highlight some that are connected with the topic we addressed: postmodern philosophy; the defining features of the current stage of postmodern society; knowledge society, respectively information and communication technologies; philosophical counseling; education in the postmodern era and, of course, the most connected theme, postmodernism and the pandemic (Gilder, 2020; Mamzer, 2020; Peters & all, 2018; Rider, 2018; Šulavíková, 2014; Vermeulen, Akker, 2010; Kirby, 2006; Delanty, 2003 ; Lyotard, 1984).

The issue of the COVID-19 pandemic illustrates one of the current facets of the post-postmodern society, where some of its particular aspects become visible: the specific way people think and act under the impact of the pandemic (including students, teachers); how the pandemic correlates with the knowledge society and the labor market; the way in which the knowledge society shapes the approach to the pandemic through communication technologies; how education, including at university level, is affected in its development by the pandemic and struggles to overcome it (Gilder, 2020); the changes generated in the career counseling plan for high school students; how to ensure access to university education for disadvantaged students in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the way in which, ultimately, the pandemic “is disrupting the sense of ontological

security” (Mamzer, 2020, p. 10). As an “old, new and scary” phenomenon, the pandemic no longer allows people to do what they used to do and in the way they would normally do it before the COVID-19 (Mamzer, 2020).

In one of the reference works on the issue of postmodernism, Lyotard (1984) analyzes, in a manner that is topical today (35 years later!), the impact of its defining features on the human condition, caught under the pressure of the times, highlighting the current or future impact of transformations (especially those of a technological nature) both on human nature and on the knowledge it achieves.

It results that the current global context is fundamentally marked by the COVID-19 crisis which has generated a profound impact on all areas: economic, social, political, educational, health, free time, community life. Mankind is experiencing today the widest and deepest crisis of the current generation, marked both by maximum extension and intensity and that is why there is a stringent need for “global understanding, reflection, and a quick solution” (Hanaba &all, 2020, p.37).

The report *The COVID-19 Pandemic: Shocks to Education and Policy Responses* (World Bank, 2020) indicates that even before the current pandemic the educational world was in crisis. But today this new global problem of humanity fully contributes to the aggravation of the already existing crisis, to the emergence of new forms of its manifestation. School closures have to lead to worsening ethical issues, especially for students from disadvantaged groups (McAleavy &all, 2020; Raaper&Brown, 2020; Schleicher, 2020), deepening inequalities and inequities in education, generating new effects. Students from disadvantaged groups have been the first to be hit, sometimes they become even more disadvantaged as they need additional support (Aristovnik &all, 2020; Sonnemann &Goss, 2020). For them, society should be able to provide socio-economic support measures (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020) and if it is not able to do so, the vicious circle of inequality and poverty is widening. Even when disadvantaged students are supported, including those in higher education, there is always a hidden potential for inequity (Curaj&all, 2020). Various studies and reports published in 2020 by UNESCO and the International Labor Organization Education point out that it is a global priority for students from disadvantaged groups to gain support during the pandemic so that inequality does not deepen (UNESCO 2; ILO, 2020).

In education, the crisis affects not only the educational process, but all its related dimensions, including career counseling, which is an extremely important part, with significant feedback for students, families, schools, and the labor market alike. Making a well-founded career decision is all the more

difficult to achieve in this context for students, but even more so for those who are part of disadvantaged groups. Students in the high school final grades are future bearers from multiple perspectives: psychological - as an evolutionary, aptitude, cognitive, socio-emotional potential; pedagogical - as a training acquisition; social - as an expression of the interpersonal relationships generated by the younger generations; economic-professional - as a prospective labor force. That is why reducing the chances of good professional advice during the COVID-19 crisis means a loss of investment in the future. Students from disadvantaged groups had difficulties even before this crisis in making a well-founded career decision: attitudinal, informational, psychological, financial difficulties. All this worsened in 2020 under the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. In a study published in June, Sonnemann and Goss (2020) show that the gaps between students from disadvantaged groups and their peers have tripled in the period when the school was no longer face-to-face. The signals given by UNESCO studies (UNESCO 3, 2020) as well as those elaborated by other bodies (Saavedra, 2020) in March warned about the risk of increasing the dropout rate, especially after a prolonged period of face-to-face school closure and economic pressure on disadvantaged families. The International Labor Organization (ILO) found that "the COVID-19 crisis is having a devastating effect on the education and training of young people" (2020, p.1), arguing that the reality is much worse for students from the disadvantaged categories, who have a low economic level, do not have access to the internet, the area where they live has very poor internet connectivity, do not have adequate equipment for online study or do not benefit from adequate home learning conditions. "The pandemic is inflicting multiple shocks on young people. It is not only destroying their jobs and employment prospects but also disrupting their education and training and having a serious impact on their mental well-being" (ILO, 2020, p.1). The same report showed that 38% of young people are uncertain about their future career development (idem).

Correlating all these aspects, specialists consider that these dimensions generate career shock and its effects (Akkermans, Richardson&Kraimer, 2020; Hite&McDonald, 2020), both through its forms of manifestation and implications.

This research started from this context and was carried out as part of a project aimed at facilitating access to career counseling services for students from disadvantaged groups in high school final grades. The project Student at UBC! Access to Education for Disadvantaged Student Groups was elaborated and conducted at ...University...,between May and

December 2020 for these reasons. It addressed the students in the final grades at high schools from two counties who study in cities with under 10,000 inhabitants. Within this project, equal conditions were provided for online group counseling and guidance activities (more numerous and more focused on the needs of this student category than in the pre-COVID period) for establishing an appropriate professional path.

The Stud-UBc project ensures equal opportunities and non-discriminatory access to university study programs for the target group, through information and career guidance campaigns. The equitable approach in education involves university actions, dedicated to disadvantaged people, to reduce differences and facilitate social inclusion.

The most relevant activities in the project illustrating ways of achieving its goals are: a. Admissions Caravan: promoting the opportunities for professional and personal development offered by UBc among high school students from disadvantaged backgrounds; b. Student 2020: conducting communication campaigns in the online environment to inform students; c. Open Doors Day: presentation of the educational offer of the 5 faculties within UBc through the students involved in the project; d. Student for 3 days: interaction between students and the Students' Union, STUD Talks Workshop and a contest with prizes for students from disadvantaged backgrounds; prizes for students from disadvantaged backgrounds; e. "It's my chance to be a student!" - career orientation seminars: Informing students from disadvantaged backgrounds about training opportunities and access to the labor market offered by continuing their studies, as well as supporting the choice of a field of study according to personal interests.

Both the entire project and the present study can be considered an investment for the post-COVID-19 period, given, on the one hand, that its beneficiaries will complete high school in 2021 and that, on the other hand, the university can also shape its educational offer in relation to the results obtained in this respect.

The study is based on several fundamental considerations: the major impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the career decision of disadvantaged groups of high school students; the non-existence of a national strategy inaimed at addressing and relatively solving this problem (which makes each institution to act in installments, as there is no unitary approach and major impact); poor representation in the literature of studies that correlate the size of continuing studies by students from disadvantaged groups with the knowledge and capitalization of their professional interests; the probability that this phenomenon will be repeated for the generation of students who will graduate high school in 2021.

2. Theoretical background

Given the relatively short period to which we refer, it is understandable why there is no rich literature that can be consulted on our topic of interest. At the same time, it is amazing how many studies allocated to the impact of this pandemic on education have generally been conducted and published. On the other hand, if more time is naturally needed for research, international bodies dedicated to it have had to react quickly, publish guides and other supporting materials to which we will refer.

There have already been studies published in the last 10 months on the issue of the correlation between the COVID-19 pandemic context and career decision, under its various aspects and affected categories (Akkermans & all, 2020; Aristovnik&all, 2020; Curaj & all, 2020; Di Pietro & all, 2020; Dos Santos, 2020; Hanaba & all, 2020; Hite & McDonald, 2020; McAleavy & all, 2020; Montacute, 2020; Raaper & Brown, 2020; Reimers & Schleicher, 2020; Saavedra, 2020; Schleicher, 2020; Sonnemann & Goss, 2020; Zhang, 2020). Most of them emphasize the profound and unexpected impact of the crisis also on career decisions. Given the short time that has elapsed since the crisis onset and manifestation and the completion of studies, we have not been able to identify any study that would target the disadvantaged student groups in relation to their career decision. We consider that from this point of view our study fills a gap in the literature, even if the problem is analyzed on a small scale.

The main aspects related to our research topic that we have identified in the literature can be systematized as follows:

1. High school and university students - economically disadvantaged category –studies show that children and young people are most affected by the current crisis. Their removal from school, the reduction of intellectual effort, the exit from the face-to-face daily tutelage of teachers can turn into a great long-term loss of human capital (World Bank., 2020; UNESCO 3, 2020; ILO, 2020). Disadvantaged young people attending high school in the 2020-2021 school year represent a risk category for the career decision, both because of the economic shock that countries are going through as a result of the pandemic, and because of its implications for school, the labor market, the financial resources needed for families to support them in accessing education and further support during university studies. Increasing the school/university dropout rate can be one of the immediate short-term effects (Saavedra, 2020) and long-term resonance (World Bank. 2020; ILO, 2020). The probability of them manifesting is high, especially since these categories of young people need to work to support themselves (or their

families) being willing to accept physical work, in difficult and poorly paid conditions. The pandemic period affects their educational aspirations and diminishes their opportunities (Montacute, 2020) to the point of altering their general well-being (ILO, 2020). Therefore, according to Saavedra (2020), keeping them in school and studying becomes critical and essential at the same time. Losing social protection mechanisms, they compromise their authentic long-term development (UN, 2020). Babarović & Šverko (2016) show that although any period of life is important for career choice, the most turbulent period is the so-called exploratory period (14–24 years) precisely because it reflects the transition from school to the labor market. It is the period in which young people explore their preferences and possibilities, gather data about different occupation routes and training routes, look for their professional vocation “and make important career decisions that will allow them to actualize themselves in the world of work” (p. 430).

2. Digital divide – one of the paradoxes of the pandemic is that new learning technologies, the internet, the digital world, known for their potential and opportunities for communication and learning, are NOT tools to ensure equal opportunities in education except under certain conditions (which become restrictive!), respectively whether access to their use is ensured and whether users have formed digital competence (Aristovnik & all, 2020). Or, from this perspective, there are countries, areas, categories of poor populations that cannot have access to online education, specific to the COVID-19 period, which determines the widening of the gaps between them and those that ensure this access (Di Pietro & all, 2020; McAleavy & all, 2020; Raaper & Brown, 2020; Schleicher, 2020; Sonnemann, 2020; ACTE, 2020; Cedefop, 2020; ILO, 2020; UN, 2020; UNESCO 1, 2020; UNESCO 3, 2020). Poor digital skills, the inability to have a computer, laptop, or smartphone, the inability of the family to ensure internet connection at home, poor connection in some rural areas are, in some cases, also for young people in the target group of our project, factors that impact those graduating high school in 2021 and their process of making a correct, realistic and appropriate career decision.

3. Pre-university education – Higher education - Labor market relationship – The three environments are strongly interconnected and their operation is interdependent. The current pandemic, causing a global economic crisis, “shocked the world, bringing it to an unprecedented stop” (Aristovnik & all, 2020, p. 1) both in the first wave and in the second, in full evolution, and has generated multiple and intense effects on education at all levels. During the lockdown period, according to the same study (Aristovnik

& all, 2020) students were permanently concerned, in a significant proportion (49.1%), about their professional development, how their education could be achieved in the next period. Negative signals from the labor market, the large number of companies that have closed, the involution of turnover, rising unemployment, especially among the last employees (usually young) are meant to amplify the fear of students from economically disadvantaged categories (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020) on their career choice and the possibility of it becoming a reality. High schools and universities have had to adapt quickly, generate, and maintain the online learning system (Aristovnik & all, 2020). Beyond the difficulty for those institutions that were not prepared for this change (in terms of infrastructure or human resources) or that had not experienced this system before, students from economically disadvantaged categories were often in one of the following situations with restrictive impact: not having access to online education (World Bank, 2020) due to lack of specific learning tools (computer, laptop, smartphone; lack of connection / poor Internet connection (Di Pietro & all, 2020; Sonnemann & Goss, 2020); lack of financial resources to procure them; poor training of digital competence. Thus learning, evaluation (Aristovnik & all, 2020; Di Pietro & all, 2020; EPI, 2020), career counseling (Cedefop, 2020), graduating high school studies, continuing access to higher education (EPI, 2020) or insertion into the labor market (ILO, 2020) were totally or largely compromised for them (Di Pietro & all, 2020). A multitude of questions related to the problem under analysis arose during this period, and at the same time, constituted problems that urgently needed to be solved: How could career development approaches be more appropriately incorporated into the curriculum content? How can we ensure that students are kept up to date on career options and their educational or professional pursuits? By what means of communication and assistance can support be provided to students in the career choice effort, in the existing uncertain economic conditions? How can career counseling activities be carried out, while maintaining social distance (individual and group counseling)? How can the organization of career fairs and the activity of support for the transition to higher education or the labor market be adapted while maintaining social distance? (ACTE, 2020). To the extent that the economic crisis is reflected in the education system, fewer students completing high school will reach higher education, and fewer and fewer disadvantaged students will have access than under normal conditions (EPI, 2020). The connection between the career decision-making process and the environmental elements, socio-cultural background, family situation, and financial elements becomes obvious (Dos Santos, 2020). In this sense, the

project underlying our research aimed to improve the information and counseling mechanisms of young people from economically disadvantaged groups to continue education through access to university studies.

4. Following COVID-19 – Studies show that humanity was not prepared for this crisis, we do not know what is coming, we are surrounded by uncertainty (Schleicher, 2020). We can only observe, analyze and highlight some trends. It is certain, however, that a deep reconsideration of all approaches will be required (Hite & McDonald, 2020), we will practically not be able to think and act in any field as we did before COVID-19. At the same time, the pandemic has highlighted how vulnerable we are and how precarious and interdependent the economy, respectively all sectors of its life, including education (Schleicher, 2020). Research indicates the emergence of short-term psychological effects as well as on career decisions, but also warns that there will be major effects, perhaps still unexpected, at least in the medium term (Akkermans & all, 2020). It is estimated that one of these major changes will be in the way future professionals are trained, with a major impact on career choice, access to higher education, students' emotional health, future education, and career (Aristovnik & all, 2020). All the more so in the post-COVID era in career preparation, young people need to be superiorly connected with employers, through practical internships but systematically develop a specific way of reporting to “jobs and careers that do not yet exist, as well as build up their capacity to cope with uncertainty, ambiguity and risk” (Zhang, 2020, p. 239). Studies show that although it is a difficult period, with negative effects, we must understand that this crisis is not only a sign of social disease but also a reality that can generate new conditions, resources, opportunities (Hanaba & all, 2020; Zang, 2020): amplification of online activities; intensifying training for online learning and work; analyzing the effects of the pandemic in the medium and long term and reflecting on investments in the post-COVID period (Akkermans & all, 2020); creating and capitalizing on new forms of communities, networks and interactions between students through which they can be formed and through which they can commit to coping with crises (Raaper & Brown, 2020); training and rapid development of digital skills. The connection with the future must be a realistic one, based on several strategies, which take into account the factors that deepen inequalities between young people precisely in the idea of reducing them (UNESCO 1, 2020).

5. COVID-19 and solidarity – The current crisis generated by the pandemic has updated and invigorated the value of solidarity (Hanaba & all, 2020; McAleavy & all, 2020) for the life of any community. Precisely because

the effects of the crisis on society and individuals are interdependent and yet unforeseen in their magnitude (Hite & Mc Donald, 2020), the action must be systemic and unitary. The main directions of solidarity concerning the issue analyzed by us refer to measures taken by governments, schools, and teachers to adopt the best measures to ensure access to education for students from economically disadvantaged groups during quarantine and online education: ensuring school policy measures to provide support for disadvantaged students as well as financial resources for the operationalization of these measures; reduction of tuition fees; acquisition of computers, laptops, tablets from European, national, institutional funds, through public-private partnership at the local and regional level; reducing or subsidizing the costs of providing an internet connection; providing logistical and learning support by teachers (Di Pietro & all, 2020); designing and carrying out career counseling procedures dedicated to students from disadvantaged categories in conditions of social distancing to increase their access to university education. Global problems require aggregate solutions and for this, we must all contribute, in communication and communion.

3. Methodology

The research is an exploratory, observative one, being carried out on a group of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

3.1. The aim and objectives of the research

Aim: To identify the connections between the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the future career decisions of a group of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Objectives (O):

- O1. identifying the types of MBTI (Myers-Briggs Typology Indicator) for future high school graduates, belonging to disadvantaged areas or social groups;
- O2. identifying the impact of COVID-19 on factors and indices important for professional interests.

3.2. Hypotheses

General hypothesis (GH) - there is a tendency to focus on training areas dominated by the practical aspects than the theoretical one as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;

Specific hypotheses (SH):

SH1. In making the career decision, the personality factors that represent indicators of professional interests introversion (I), extroversion (E), intuition (I), sensing (S), thinking (T), feeling (F), judgment (J), perception (P) are influenced by the Covid19 pandemic;

SH2. The career decision based on MBTI indices is influenced by the perception of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.3. Research sample

The research sample consisted of 108 undergraduates, who study in high schools from cities with under 10,000 inhabitants considered by the Ministry of Education as disadvantaged. In constituting the research group, convenience sampling was used, the research samples being self-administered voluntarily, online, by the students aged 18 or over. All participants of this study were informed about the purpose of the study and about the possibility to withdraw from the study without any consequences. The research started in September 2020 complying with ethical standards (Aristovnik & all, 2020) and having the approval of the Research Ethics Commission within the University. Following the analysis of the answers, just 106 questionnaires were validated, 2 of them having omissions and technical errors.

3.4. Instruments (I)

In conducting the study we used two tools, as follows:

I1 – The Myers-Briggs Typology Indicator on MBTI Appreciative Styles, an adaptation of the abbreviated form (AV). The Myers-Briggs indicator is a translated and adapted tool in Romania, being used as a test of personality knowledge through the prism of Jungian analytical psychology, as developed by Katharine Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers (Roesnberg McKay, 2019; Minulescu, 1996). Given its highly predictive capacity for the area of career guidance and counseling (McCaulley & Martin, 1995), the Appreciative Styles indicator has become a fairly used tool in the activity of identifying professional interests in relation to the MBTI (Roesnberg McKay, 2019);

I2 - Self-administered online questionnaire with 6 Likert-type items that aimed to identify the opinion of the investigated students on the influence of the Covid 19 pandemic on career decisions.

3.5. Stages (S)

The research covered the following stages:

- S1 - September 2020 – research design, selection (I1) and elaboration of tools (I2), building the research sample;
- S2 - October – application of the data collection tools;
- S3 - November – analysis, and interpretation of results.

4. Results

Results analysis was achieved by importing the data obtained from the online questionnaire into the SPSS, which showed that the influence of the pandemic on MBTI factors (Table 1).

Table 1 *Correlation between MBTI factors & COVID 19 perception*

Source: authors' own conception

fctors	E	I	S	N
r	-0.111	0.105	0.060;	-0.001
p	0.258	0.284	0.542	0.995
fctors	Tp	F	J	P
r	0.042	0.089	0.104	-0.049;
p	0.669	0.364	0.287	0.621

***p<0.05

The influence of COVID 19 in extraversion factor (E) is: E=-0.111, p=0.258 > 0.05, statistically insignificant (ns), the influence of the pandemic correlates negatively insignificantly with the extraversion factor (E). This means that people with low levels of E can be more strongly influenced in their career decisions. The analysis of the influence of the pandemic on the introversion factor (I), shows that I=0.105; p=0.284 (ns). The influence of the pandemic correlates insignificantly with I. The higher the I, the stronger the influence of the pandemic on the career orientation approaches.

We found that the influence of the pandemic on the sensing factor (S) is S=0.060; p=0.542 (statistically insignificant), therefore, the influence of the pandemic correlates insignificantly with the S factor, revealing that the stronger the S, the stronger the influence of the pandemic on the elements related to career decisions. The analysis of the correlations for the intuition factor (N) showed that the influence of the pandemic on the factor N is N=-0.001; p=0.995 (ns), and the fact that it resulted in a negative correlation

shows that when the N-factor scores are low, the influence of the perception about the effects of the pandemic on the career decision is stronger.

The analysis of the relationship between the thinking factor (I) and the influence of the pandemic on it showed that $T=-0.042$; $p=0.669$ (ns). The influence of the perception of the pandemic correlates negatively insignificantly with the T factor, meaning that if the values for T are weaker, then the influence of the perception of the pandemic is stronger in the decisions related to career orientation. Calculating the influence of the pandemic on the feeling factor (F), we find that $F=0.089$; $p=0.364$ (ns), therefore, the influence of the pandemic correlates insignificantly with F. This means that in people with higher F scores, the influence of perception on the pandemic is more strongly manifested in career decisions.

Analyzing the effect of pandemic perception on judgment factor (J), we found that (ns), which reveals that the influence of the pandemic correlates insignificantly with J and it results that if the scores for J are high, the influence of perception on the pandemic will affect career orientation decisions. The higher the J-factor, the stronger the influence of the pandemic. The influence of the pandemic on the perception factor (P) shows that $P=-0.049$; $p=0.621$ (ns). Therefore, the influence of the perception on the pandemic correlates negatively insignificantly with P and consequently, if people have low scores on the P factor then the influence of the pandemic is stronger in direct proportion to these scores.

As a result of the distributions of MBTI index scores, we were able to perform statistical analyses for only four indices: the results obtained showing the influence of COVID19 on most frequent indexes: ISTJ, ISFJ, ISFP, and ESTJ, as we will show in next table (Table no2)

Table 2 *Correlation of most frequent MBTI index scores and perception of COVID19*

Source: authors' own conception

index	ISTJ	ESTJ	ISFJ	ISFP
r	-0.111	-0.06	0.299	0.31
p	0,486	0,878	0.123	0.54

p<0.05

The results obtained from the analysis of the correlations between the indices and the perception on the pandemic showed that the results are the following: for $ISTJ=-0.111$; $p=0.486<0.05$ and $ESTJ=-0.060$; $p=0.878<0.05$ (ns), and negatively correlates, consequently the types of students who obtained poorly structured ISTJ and ESTJ form indices will be more directly influenced in the career decision by the way the pandemic is

reported/perceived. It was found that the scores obtained from the analysis of the correlation between the scores on the questionnaire regarding the impact of the pandemic on career decision are: ISFJ=0.299; $p=0.123<0.05$ and ISFP=0.316; $p=0.541<0.05$ (both positive ns) shows that if these factors are strongly structured the influence of the pandemic on the career decision is higher.

5. Limits and discussions

a. The small number of study participants, as well as their background, may have a significant influence on the results obtained. Studies conducted in 2020 and dedicated to the impact of the COVID-19 on various aspects of the pandemic show that one of these disadvantages is "a relatively small sample" (Aristovnik & all, 2020, p.3), understandable, given the exceptional conditions in which these studies could be achieved;

b. The limited number of specialized studies published on our topic of interest - After studying the existing sources on the Internet, we have concluded that there is no (or we have not had access to one!) study, even on a small sample, on how the COVID-19 can influence the career decision of students in the final grades belonging to disadvantaged groups.

c. The study reflects only the concerns/activities within the project we referred to as well as the solutions obtained at a microsocial and only institutional level. However, given the current global issue of the COVID-19, other educational institutions (high schools and universities) also face, of course, the same problem, and our study can be seen as a first research experience on this topic;

d. The online self-administration of the questionnaire, due to the COVID-19 and the recommendations of social distancing, made the study participants not to request clarifications related to the administration or for the situation of equal scores on the pairs IE, SN, FT, or JP.

We consider that the scores obtained can reflect a series of fears of students, expressed in workshops, we list only a few of them:

a) fears related to the education and training factor, similar to those identified by (Dos Santos, 2020; Mahmud & all, 2020): *they will not understand the contents taught online, fears related to evaluation, what it involves and how it will unfold, they will not practice and will not know/be well prepared to cope with their future job;*

b) fears about their future in the labor market (Akkermans & all, 2020): *they will not be able to find a job after graduation, adapting to online work and periods of*

suspension from gainful employment (if they will be employed) will not help them to acquire good professional skills and advance in their career;

c) fears related to social insecurity with an impact on mental health (APA, 2020; Akkermans & all, 2020): *they will not be able to help their family in its productive activities, they will not be able to get a job upon graduation, fear of remaining isolated from the family due to restrictions.*

6. Conclusions

The results obtained from the research partially validate the hypotheses of the study. It cannot be appreciated that there is a significant correlation between the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic and personality factors or MBTI indices. But statistical analysis reveals that for factors and indices with a negative correlation with the perception of pandemic, the influence of the perception of the pandemic is stronger in the decisions related to career orientation at our research group.

The data obtained, in accordance with the literature consulted, also support our perspective on some positive aspects (Akkermans & all, 2020) that may occur even in this pandemic context regarding the career decision-making process:

- responsibly increasing the involvement of institutions (high schools, universities, career centers, employers, families) with a role in training young people and preparing them for a future career option from the perspective of the Sustainable Development Goals (Schleicher, 2020);

- they are determined to identify new ways to prepare (disadvantaged) young people for career decisions in times of crisis (Raaper & Brown, 2020);

- career counseling is all the more important in the context of COVID-19 as the intensity of fear and anxiety emotions has increased (Mahmud & all, 2020) and have an impact on some personality types.

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