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THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COGNITIVE SPHERE OF THE PERSONALITY

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Abstract. This article examines the social and psychological foundations of the development of the cognitive sphere of the personality, that is, of perception, attention, memory, thinking and speech. It is shown that cognitive processes are not merely the result of innate abilities or biological maturation, but are formed in the course of communication with other people, within the family and within the wider social environment in which the child grows up. The article also considers the role of adult guidance, peer collaboration, family relationships and the educational environment in cognitive development. The analysis concludes that cognitive development is a complex psychological process arising from the interaction of biological maturation and social influence, and that a rich communicative environment accelerates it while a lack of attention and stimulation may slow it down.

Keywords: cognitive development, social environment, zone of proximal development, socio-cognitive conflict, parenting, communication, socioeconomic status, scaffolding.

INTRODUCTION

The development of the cognitive sphere of the personality - that is, of perception, attention, memory, thinking and speech - remains one of the most pressing problems of contemporary psychology. These processes constitute the foundation of a person's capacity to study, to work, to solve problems and to enter into relations with others. Cognitive development was formerly explained primarily by innate ability and biological maturation (Piaget, 1952:3). Scientific research, however, demonstrates that cognitive processes are shaped through communication with other people, through joint activity and through the cultural environment (Vygotsky, 1978:30).

The Swiss psychologist J. Piaget established that the child's intellect develops stage by stage in the process of acting actively upon the surrounding world and adapting to it (Piaget, 1952:357). The Russian psychologist L. S. Vygotsky, for his part, emphasised the decisive role of the social environment in cognitive development: in his view, the higher mental functions - for example voluntary attention, logical memory and thinking - first arise in relations between people, that is, in a social form, and only subsequently become the child's internal mental processes (Vygotsky, 1978:57). The concept of the «zone of proximal development» advanced by Vygotsky denotes the difference between what the child is able to accomplish independently and what the child is able to accomplish with the help of an adult or of a more knowledgeable peer (Vygotsky, 1978:86).

The aim of the present article is to analyse the socio-psychological conditions under which the cognitive sphere of the personality is formed, and to determine the role played in this process by communication with adults, cooperation with peers, the family environment and the conditions of instruction. The study proceeds from the position that the child's development must be examined together with the systems of relations in which the child is embedded, rather than in isolation from them (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:3).

MAIN PART

Later the American psychologists D. Wood, J. Bruner and G. Ross developed this idea in 1976 and proposed the concept of «scaffolding», which denotes the support given to the child by adults step by step and reduced as the child learns (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976:90). The Swiss social psychologists W. Doise and G. Mugny, turning their attention to cooperation among peers, elaborated the concept of socio-cognitive conflict: children who hold differing opinions on a single question are obliged to compare their own views with those of others and to reconsider them, and this gives an impetus to the development of thinking (Doise & Mugny, 1984:28).

Bringing these views together, it may be said that the child acquires knowledge not alone but in communication and cooperation with others. This proposition is also confirmed by the data concerning children who have been cut off from the social environment. According to the reports concerning the girls named Kamala and Amala, who were found in a forest in India in 1920 and were observed by the missionary J. Singh, they had grown up without communication with human beings, and after they were

found their speech, thinking and behaviour lagged considerably behind the age norm; they mastered speech very slowly and with great difficulty (Singh & Zingg, 1942:14). It should be stressed that this was not a controlled experiment but a single observed case, and that its data have been called into question by some researchers; for this reason it should be regarded not as proof but as an illustration of the effect that the absence of a social environment has upon cognitive development. Speech is of particular importance in this process, since, being at once a means of communication and an instrument of thought, it raises the child's cognitive activity to a new level. The question, therefore, is not which factor - internal or external - predominates in cognitive development, but how the two interact with one another.

The family environment and the child's immediate surroundings occupy an important place in the formation of the cognitive sphere. In 1979 the American psychologist U. Bronfenbrenner proposed an ecological model of human development and described the environment affecting the child's development as a series of systems nested within one another: the immediate environment such as the family and the school, the interrelations between them, and the broad socio-cultural setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:22). This model shows that the child's development depends not only upon his or her own internal potential but also upon the people with whom the child communicates directly.

Parents who communicate a great deal with the child, who answer the child's questions patiently and who set aside time for reading books and playing together create a rich environment for the development of the child's curiosity, speech and thinking (Suskind, 2015:87). Conversely, insufficient attention to the child, a scarcity of communication and the absence of a stimulating environment may cause cognitive development to slow down (Hart & Risley, 1995:180). The socioeconomic conditions of the family have likewise been found in numerous studies to be associated with the child's cognitive and linguistic development, although this association is manifested principally through the learning opportunities and the communicative environment that are created for the child within the family (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002:380).

In 1995 the American scholars B. Hart and T. Risley established that the quantity and character of communication with the child differ across families, that the number of words a child hears up to the age of three differs appreciably in families of differing socioeconomic status, and that this difference may be related to the child's subsequent

linguistic and cognitive indicators (Hart & Risley, 1995:176). D. Suskind, a physician at the University of Chicago, translated this idea into practical advice for parents, emphasising that everyday communication with the child, question and answer, and reading books together exert a favourable influence upon the development of the child's speech and thinking (Suskind, 2015:92). It must not be forgotten that what matters here is not merely the quantity of communication but also its quality and the reciprocal character of the relationship with the child.

The school and the educational environment are likewise of great significance in this process: the teacher's confidence in the child, the asking of questions that develop the child's thinking, and the use of collaborative methods of instruction consolidate the pupil's skills of independent thought (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976:98; Doise & Mugny, 1984:112). These data show that cognitive development does not consist solely in the natural aptitude of the individual, but is a process formed from childhood onward under the influence of relations with the family, the school and peers (Vygotsky, 1978:90). For this reason a supportive attitude on the part of parents and educators - one that is open to communication and that encourages independent thinking - is of decisive importance in the child's formation as an all-round developed personality in the future (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:60).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the development of the cognitive sphere of the personality is a complex psychological process that arises as a result of the interrelation between biological maturation and the influence of the social environment. While Piaget emphasised the child's active action and Vygotsky the role of communication and the cultural environment, subsequent research has shown that the graduated assistance of adults and cooperation with peers accelerate this development appreciably (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976:97; Doise & Mugny, 1984:35). The cases of children separated from the social environment (the case of Kamala and Amala) and the studies examining the quantity and quality of communication with the child likewise demonstrate the important role of communication in cognitive development.

The family environment, communication with parents and the conditions of instruction occupy a special place in cognitive development: a rich communicative environment develops the child's thinking and speech, whereas a lack of attention and encouragement

may retard it (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002:385; Suskind, 2015:104). For this reason it is of considerable importance that parents and educators should provide assistance appropriate to the child's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978:86), should involve the child in collaborative activity and should encourage independent thinking, and that they should create a social environment supporting children's cognitive curiosity (Piaget, 1952:398; Bronfenbrenner, 1979:214).

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SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN THE FORMATION OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND CAREER VALUES AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract. *This paper examines the socio-psychological factors influencing the formation of professional identity and career values among adolescents. Particular attention is given to the role of family relationships, educational environments, social expectations, interpersonal communication and individual value orientations in professional self-determination. Professional identity is considered an important component of personality development that reflects the integration of personal interests, abilities, social experiences and future occupational aspirations. The study analyses the theoretical foundations of identity formation, career development, social learning and the psychological interpretation of professional information, and concludes that professional identity becomes more coherent when adolescents are able to integrate personal interests, individual abilities and social experiences into meaningful professional aspirations.*

Keywords: *adolescence, professional identity, career values, professional self-determination, social influence, family environment, career development, personality development, occupational aspirations.*

INTRODUCTION

Professional identity formation is one of the most significant psychological processes occurring during adolescence. At this developmental stage individuals gradually develop a more differentiated understanding of their abilities, interests, personal values and future social roles. The increasing complexity of contemporary educational and occupational environments makes professional identity particularly important for successful personal and social development (Erikson, 1968).

Adolescents are expected not only to acquire knowledge and practical skills but also to establish meaningful relationships between their individual characteristics and future professional opportunities. However, professional self-determination does not occur independently of the social environment. Family expectations, educational experiences, cultural values and interpersonal relationships influence how young people perceive occupations and construct their professional aspirations (Lent, Brown &

Hackett, 1994:79-122). Consequently, the formation of professional identity should be examined as an interaction between individual psychological development and broader socio-psychological conditions.

The aim of the present paper is to identify the socio-psychological factors that condition the formation of professional identity and career values during adolescence, and to establish how these factors interact with the cognitive processes through which occupational information is interpreted (Super, 1980:282-298).

MAIN PART

The theoretical foundations of professional identity can be traced to Erikson's psychosocial theory, which identifies identity formation as a central developmental task during adolescence (Erikson, 1968). According to this perspective, individuals seek to establish a coherent understanding of themselves by integrating personal experiences, social expectations and future aspirations. Professional identity represents an important dimension of this process, because occupational preferences contribute to the individual's perception of their future position in society.

Marcia further developed the investigation of identity formation by distinguishing identity statuses on the basis of exploration and commitment (Marcia, 1966:551-558). This approach provides a useful framework for understanding differences in adolescents' professional orientations. Some adolescents actively explore various occupational alternatives before establishing relatively stable preferences, whereas others adopt professional expectations without sufficient personal exploration. These differences suggest that the development of professional identity depends not only upon the availability of career opportunities but also upon the psychological processes through which individuals evaluate and internalise social information.

Family relationships constitute an important socio-psychological factor influencing professional identity. Parents frequently serve as primary sources of occupational information, of professional expectations and of attitudes towards education and employment. Through everyday communication adolescents acquire ideas about socially desirable professions, economic stability, occupational prestige and professional success. These perceptions may contribute positively to professional development when parental expectations correspond to the individual's interests and abilities (Super, 1980:282-298).

However, contradictions between family expectations and personal aspirations may complicate the formation of professional identity. An excessive emphasis upon occupational prestige or financial achievement may encourage adolescents to evaluate professions primarily through external criteria rather than through personal suitability. At the same time, supportive family relationships may create favourable conditions for exploring different occupational opportunities and for developing realistic career values. The influence of family environments should therefore be assessed not only through the content of parental expectations but also through the quality of interpersonal communication and the degree of psychological support available to adolescents (Marcia, 1966:556).

Educational environments also play a significant role in shaping professional identity and career values. Schools and universities provide opportunities for adolescents to acquire knowledge, to identify individual strengths and to develop perceptions of different occupational fields. Teachers may influence professional aspirations through academic feedback, encouragement and the presentation of possible career pathways. Social cognitive career theory, developed by Lent, Brown and Hackett, emphasises the relationships among self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, personal goals and contextual influences in career development (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994:79-122).

This theoretical perspective suggests that professional interests and aspirations emerge through the interaction of individual learning experiences with environmental conditions. Adolescents who receive constructive feedback and opportunities to demonstrate their abilities may develop stronger perceptions of competence in particular professional domains. Conversely, limited educational resources, negative social expectations or insufficient access to occupational information may restrict the range of careers that young people consider realistic or attainable (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994:103).

The formation of professional identity is closely related to the development of individual career values. Career values reflect the importance that individuals attach to particular characteristics of professional activity, including financial security, personal achievement, creativity, independence, social contribution and opportunities for professional advancement. These values are not necessarily stable during adolescence, since they may change under the influence of personal experiences and social relationships.

Super's life-span, life-space approach to career development emphasises the importance of self-concept and of developmental processes in understanding occupational behaviour (Super, 1980:282-298).

From this perspective professional preferences are connected with the individual's changing perception of personal characteristics and life roles. Career values provide the psychological criteria through which adolescents evaluate occupational alternatives and determine their relevance to future goals. The formation of professional identity therefore requires not only an awareness of the available professions but also an understanding of the subjective significance of professional activity (Super, 1980:294).

The psychological interpretation of occupational information represents another important aspect of professional identity formation. Adolescents encounter career-related information through educational materials, family communication, social networks and various media platforms. The perception of such information, however, depends upon individual cognitive characteristics, previous experiences and existing value orientations. Jabbor, in his study of the perception of textual material as a subject of psycholinguistic analysis, addresses the psychological aspects of understanding textual information (Zhabbor, 2019:19-21).

This research direction offers a relevant methodological perspective for examining how adolescents perceive and interpret descriptions of professional activities. Career-related texts may contain information about occupational requirements, social responsibilities, working conditions and professional opportunities, and the meanings adolescents construct from these descriptions may influence their expectations and attitudes towards particular careers. The development of professional identity is consequently associated not only with the accessibility of occupational information but also with the psychological mechanisms involved in its comprehension and interpretation (Zhabbor, 2019:20).

Cognitive processes also contribute to the formation of professional identity by enabling adolescents to organise information about themselves and about their social environment. Jabbor examines the essence of cognitive methods in psychological research, emphasising the methodological importance of cognitive approaches to understanding psychological phenomena (Jabbor, 2020:28-31). In the context of professional development such approaches may be useful for investigating how adolescents categorise

occupations, compare professional roles and establish relationships between individual abilities and occupational requirements.

Cognitive representations of professions may be influenced by personal experiences, by social stereotypes and by cultural expectations. Certain occupations, for example, may be perceived as prestigious or socially desirable even when adolescents possess limited knowledge about their actual professional responsibilities. The development of more differentiated occupational representations may therefore contribute to realistic career values and to a more coherent professional identity; this process requires the integration of cognitive understanding with personal experience and social evaluation (Jabbor, 2020:30).

Peer relationships and contemporary digital environments represent additional influences upon professional identity formation. During adolescence communication with peers becomes increasingly important for social comparison, for personal evaluation and for the development of future aspirations. The opinions expressed by friends and classmates may affect perceptions of occupational attractiveness and of social recognition. Digital media, furthermore, provide adolescents with extensive information about professional lifestyles, employment opportunities and individual success (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994:79-122).

Although such resources may expand occupational awareness, they may also encourage idealised expectations when professional activities are presented without sufficient attention to their practical demands. Social comparison in digital environments may influence career values by increasing the importance attached to visible indicators of success, including financial achievement, popularity and public recognition. Adolescents therefore need opportunities to evaluate career-related representations critically and to distinguish realistic occupational information from simplified or promotional images of professional success (Zhabbor, 2019:19-21).

The theoretical analysis indicates that professional identity formation is influenced by the interaction of family relationships, educational experiences, social expectations, cognitive processes and individual value orientations. These factors may support or complicate professional self-determination depending upon their consistency with adolescents' personal characteristics and developmental needs. A favourable socio-psychological environment should encourage the exploration of professional

opportunities, the development of realistic career expectations and the gradual integration of personal interests with social responsibilities (Erikson, 1968; Super, 1980:282-298).

Psychological and educational support should therefore focus upon strengthening self-knowledge, upon expanding occupational awareness and upon creating opportunities for meaningful communication about future professional roles. Further empirical investigations may examine the relationships among family expectations, career values, professional identity statuses and the influence of digital information environments upon adolescents' occupational aspirations (Marcia, 1966:551-558; Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994:79-122).

CONCLUSION

Professional identity formation among adolescents represents a complex developmental process shaped by individual psychological characteristics and by socio-psychological influences. Family relationships, educational environments, peer communication and cultural expectations contribute to the development of occupational perceptions and of career values (Erikson, 1968; Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994:79-122).

The theoretical analysis suggests that professional identity becomes more coherent when adolescents are able to integrate personal interests, individual abilities and social experiences into meaningful professional aspirations (Marcia, 1966:551-558; Super, 1980:282-298).

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