MODULE 3:
Personal and social outcomes related to youth identity formation

Syllabus 3.1
Psycho-social adjustment:
Educational and vocational contexts, well-being
Oana Negru-Subtirica, Lavinia E. Damian, & Carina Matei
Who we are:

• Ioana Pop, PhD
  – Educational identity
  – Vocational identity

• Lavinia Damian, PhD
  – Educational identity
  – Vocational identity
Learning outcomes

• understand the main processes of identity formation in educational and vocational contexts

• critically analyze psycho-social adjustment in terms of antecedents and outcomes of identity

• explain empirical research on the formation of youth identities in the educational and vocational domains
Outline of concepts/ topics

• Educational identity
• Vocational identity
• Well-being
Educational and vocational adjustment

1. Educational identity (Crocetti, Rubini, & Meeus, 2008)
   - Utrecht Management of Identity Commitments Scale (UMICS, Crocetti et al., 2008)
     - Commitment (e.g., “My education gives me self-confidence”)
     - In-depth exploration (e.g., “I often reflect on my education”)
     - Reconsideration of commitment (e.g., “I often think it would be better to try to find a different education”)
2. Vocational identity (Porfeli, Lee, Vondracek, & Weigold, 2011)

- The Vocational Identity Status Assessment (VISA, Porfeli et al., 2011)

  - Commitment
    - commitment making (e.g., “I have invested a lot of energy into preparing for my chosen career”)
    - identification with commitment (e.g., “Becoming a worker in my chosen career will allow me to become the person I dream to be”)

Educational and vocational adjustment

http://inside.mruni.eu
2. Vocational identity (Porfeli, Lee, Vondracek, & Weigold, 2011)

• The Vocational Identity Status Assessment (VISA, Porfeli et al., 2011)

  – Exploration
    • in-breadth (e.g., “Trying to have many different experiences so that I can find several jobs that might suit me”)  
    • in-depth (e.g., “Trying to find people that share my career interests”)
2. Vocational identity (Porfeli, Lee, Vondracek, & Weigold, 2011)

• The Vocational Identity Status Assessment (VISA, Porfeli et al., 2011)

  – Reconsideration of commitment
    • self-doubt (e.g., “I may not be able to get the job I really want”)
    • commitment flexibility (e.g., “I need to learn a lot more before I can make a career choice”)

Educational and vocational adjustment
Research on educational & vocational identity

• Negru-Subtirica, Pop, & Crocetti (2017)

• Aims of the study:
  – to identify and describe educational and vocational identity statuses among Romanian adolescents
  – to examine the relation between identity statuses in educational and vocational domains
Research on educational & vocational identity

• Negru-Subtirica, Pop, & Crocetti (2017)

• Adolescent educational and vocational development – how does it look like in post-communist Romania?

• What did the results show?
  – Six identity statuses for each identity domain (i.e., education and vocation)
  – Educational and vocational identity statuses are connected in adolescence
Figure 1. Z-scores of educational identity processes for the six cluster solution.
Figure 2. Z-scores of vocational identity processes (i.e., Commitment Making = CM, Identification with Commitment = IC, In-Breadth Exploration = EB, In-Depth Exploration = ED, Self-Doubt = SD, Commitment Flexibility = FLEX) for the six cluster solution.
Practical activity: Where do you stand?

- Please fill in the Utrecht Management of Identity Scale for the educational domain (U-MICS; Crocetti et al., 2008)
- Next, you will calculate your mean score for each of the three scales (1. Commitment, 2. In-depth exploration, 3. Reconsideration of commitment)
- Based on your highs and lows, approximate in which educational identity status you fit in.*

*! This is only an approximate self-evaluation, statuses are statistically calculated based on sample mean and standard deviations.
**! The means and SDs were drawn from the sample in Negru-Subtirica et al. 2017
Educational identity

- Below are a number of questions about you and your school education. In each case, place a cross in the box that most closely matches your opinion. Response categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>completely untrue</th>
<th>untrue</th>
<th>sometimes true/sometimes not</th>
<th>true</th>
<th>completely true</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Commitment

1. My education gives me security in life
2. My education gives me self-confidence
3. My education makes me feel sure of myself
4. My education gives me security for the future
5. My education allows me to face the future with optimism
In depth exploration
1. I try to find out a lot about my education
2. I often reflect on my education
3. I make a lot of effort to keep finding out new things about my education
4. I often try to find out what other people think about my education
5. I often talk with other people about my education

Reconsideration of commitment
1. I often think it would be better to try to find a different education
2. I often think that a different education would make my life more interesting
3. In fact, I’m looking for a different education

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Break

See you in 15 minutes 😊
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low score</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
<th>High score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Below 3.7</td>
<td>3.7-4.4</td>
<td>Above 4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-depth exploration</td>
<td>Below 2.8</td>
<td>2.8-3.5</td>
<td>Above 3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconsideration of</td>
<td>Below 1.6</td>
<td>1.6-2.5</td>
<td>Above 2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Z-scores of educational identity processes for the six cluster solution.
Reflection:

• Reflect on your educational and vocational identity statuses.

• In pairs, discuss (also thinking of examples from your experience):
  – What does each form of identity mean to each of you?
  – How do you see their relation from your own perspective? (what are the similarities and differences between them in your case?)

• Summarize your conclusions to the whole group
The multidimensionality of well-being

1. Subjective well-being (Diener, 1984)
   - Positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction

• The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al. 1985)
  - E.g., “In most ways my life is close to my ideal”
  - E.g., “So far I have gotten the important things I want in life”.

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The multidimensionality of well-being

2. Psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989)

- Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB; Ryff and Keyes 1995)
  - autonomy (e.g., “I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus”)
  - environmental mastery (e.g., “I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life”)
  - personal growth (e.g., “I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world”)

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The multidimensionality of well-being

2. Psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989)
   • Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB; Ryff and Keyes 1995)
     – positive relations with others (e.g., “People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others”)
     – purpose in life (e.g., “I have a sense of direction and purpose in life”)
     – self-acceptance (e.g., “I like most aspects of my personality”)
The multidimensionality of well-being

3. Social well-being (Keyes, 1998)

- The Social Well-Being Scale (SWB; Keyes 1998)
  - social integration (e.g., “You feel like you’re an important part of your community”)
  - social acceptance (e.g., “You believe that people are kind”)
  - social contribution (e.g., “You think you have something valuable to give to the world”)
  - social actualization (e.g., “You think the world is becoming a better place for everyone”)
  - social coherence (e.g., “You think it’s worthwhile to understand the world you live in”)

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Cross-cultural research on identity & well-being

• Karaś, Cieciuch, Negru, and Crocetti (2014)

• Aim of the study:
  – to describe the dynamics of relationships between identity and well-being for university students (educational identity) and working emerging adults (job identity), from three different countries: Italy, Poland, and Romania.
Cross-cultural research on identity & well-being

- Karaś, Cieciuch, Negru, and Crocetti (2014)
- Emerging Adulthood in Italy, Poland, and Romania – what does it look like?

D. Karaś et al.

Table 1 Data on higher education attendance, graduation, and employment in Italy, Poland, and Romania

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GEO/TIME</th>
<th>Students enrolled in university studies (ages 20–24)</th>
<th>University graduates (ages 20–24)</th>
<th>Employment rates of university graduates (ages 20–34)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1,021,278</td>
<td>965,759</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>702,113</td>
<td>1,243,101</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>209,171</td>
<td>488,669</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EUROSTAT (2012)
Cross-cultural research on identity & well-being

- Karaś, Cieciuch, Negru, and Crocetti (2014)

What did the results show?

Identity as a resource for positive well-being:
- Commitment & in-depth exploration -> positive association with well-being
- Reconsideration of commitment -> negative association with well-being

Identity and well-being across national and occupational groups of emerging adults:
- This pattern of relationships was consistent across national (Italian, Polish, and Romanian) and occupational (university students and young workers) groups of emerging adults.
Reflection:

• In pairs, discuss (also thinking of examples from your experience):
  – Which are the positive and negative implications of reconsideration of identity commitments for the different dimensions of well-being?
  – When is it good and when is it bad to reconsider your educational and vocational commitments? Upon which criteria should we base our evaluation? (consider both causes and consequences)
  – Use examples to illustrate your ideas

• Summarize your conclusions to the whole group
Take home messages

Identity & Psycho-social adjustment
References

Required readings


Complementary readings


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