**"Babeş-Bolyai" University of Cluj Napoca**

**Faculty of Sociology and Social Work**

**GENDER STEREOTYPES AND DISCRIMINATION IN FORMAL EDUCATIONAL**

**ENVIRONMENT**

**(Summary)**

Scientific Coordinator:

Prof. Petru ILUŢ, Ph. D.,

Ph.D. Candidate

Maria Narcisa CIOLAN (NADOLU)

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# INTRODUCTION

**Key words:** *gender, stereotype, discrimination, values, formal educational environment*

Fascinated both by the principle of complementarities and by the miracle of human modelling and trying to get closer to a simple and natural junction of these aspects through exploring **the issues of gender** in contemporary Romanian school, our aim was to outline, through this study, a perceptual - declarative reality of Romanian educators and learners towards the presence of gender stereotypes and prejudices in the educational process.

*Gender identity* is strongly marked by the specific social interactions from formal educational environment that either come to reinforce previously acquired developmental elements or either introduce new aspects of individual structuring as a result of establishing relation with others. Thus, both teacher - student relations and relations between pupils/students often bring to the forefront of the analysis and interpretation of the addressed contextual aspects the *femininity/masculinity* of the main social actors.

The multitude and complexity of research in the field guided our investigation towards a descriptive and interpretative direction meant to complete the picture, already extremely rich, of this matter. Thus, numerous specialized studies highlight the "filter" of gender as a significant element in promoting the affirmation of individual potential in school tasks, each gender being associated with distinct possibilities of superior performance in specific activities or areas. The social dynamics involved by schooling proves to be further impregnated with gender stereotypes and prejudices that make the "territories" from formal educational environment to be specifically set out in respect with the *feminine/masculine* of those presents in action.

This paper is divided in four chapters that cover, in a complex approach, gender issues in education, both theoretically and practically. Within each chapter we have addressed distinct themes: gender, stereotypes, values, social discrimination, combining paradigms and theories in the field with the results of our applied research undertaken for this endeavour. Finally, we have included a chapter of Conclusions and openings", that summarizes the main results and possible prospects for further studies and research.

Throughout the entire paper we tried to combine in an appropriate way the theoretical benchmarks with methodological details, generating a solid structure for the support of the practical and applicative aspects of this research, by correlating the theoretical and the investigative content.

**The first chapter** addresses the issue of gender as an element of social construction. In addition to theoretically defining and explaining gender, we detailed the methods and techniques of sociological approach of the subject and described the methodological design used in the present approach (the four surveys conducted in secondary and high school education and in higher education). We have, also, included some results derived from our surveys regarding the social construction of gender.

**The second chapter** refers to stereotype and ways of developing it as emergence of social interactions. The structure of this chapter involves a theoretical and practical organization that captures the key elements of the topic: stereotype as an instrument of reality interpretation, social facilitation in terms of stereotypes and perceptual differences on gender stereotypes. In this chapter, we have also included the results obtained from the application of questionnaires.

The undeniable value of the axiological system in structuring personal and social realities is highlighted within **the third chapter** which focuses on the identity profile of values and their way of operating at personal and group level. This approach was

realized in terms of *the main influences in shaping the personal systems of values*, *an axiological profile of learners* and *value interferences with impact on gender stereotypes*. We considered adequate for the proper understanding of gender stereotypes and prejudices (which involve a value polarization of our report *to the other*) also to shape an axiological profile of the learners investigated within our study.

**The fourth chapter** brings to the fore discrimination and social dynamics by analyzing the influence that multiple inter-individual differences can have on this level. In this chapter we have focused on identifying the main manifestations of gender discrimination in formal education and on the solutions that the subjects participating in this study (both secondary and high school teachers and university teachers and also pupils and students) suggest as means of counteracting them.

The last part of the paper, which was intended to provide an overview of relevant gender issues in contemporary Romanian school, presents a set of **conclusions and openings**, followed by the related annexes. In other words, we have sketched in a unitary image the main concerns of the present study, transforming in a meaningful overview the disparate elements of different or similar reports that pupils/students and teachers have expressed in relation to this subject.

Trying to get one step closer to understanding and deepening the social phenomenon generated at social level by gender dynamics, we sought a route that combines theory with the practical-applicative aspects in order to provide the necessary support for scientific discovery and presentation.

## GENDER STEREOTYPES AND DISCRIMINATION IN FORMAL EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

In the first chapter - **GENDER as necessity of social structure** - we have analyzed the approaches regarding the structuring of gender, the methodological issues in gender

analysis, the dichotomy of personal identity - social identity, seeing that for the end of the chapter to address the mark of gender identity upon the characterization of learners by teachers.

GENDER has become an integrative concept that seeks to include the results of cross-disciplinary studies focused on understanding the origin and consequences derived from a male or female identity. Its complex nature has made in the last decade the term gender to exceed the term of sex in social sciences, the frequency of its use in specialized studies being proven to be twice higher than in the 1960s (Haig, 2004, cited in Wood and Eagly, 2009, p.629). The scientific community has established **gender** as the standard term that captures cultural differences between men and women while **sex** remains the primary benchmark in terms of biological differences between them (American Psychological Association, 2001, as cited in Wood and Eagly, 2009, p.629).

Depending on the explanatory and analytical emphasis that this topic has acquired, there were outlined two major strands of research: **biological determinism** and **differentiated socialization**. The core of biological determinism is represented by genetic, anatomical and physiological or bio- constitutional prerequisites that bring in different labels for men and women. Numerous studies have sought to circumscribe specific manifestation of men and women within native - constitutional genetic elements (evolutionary theories on gender development, socio - biology). Differentiated socialization, as shown by Kimmel (2000), points out that the development of girls and boys takes another profile especially because other community members customize the relations with them according to the sex of belonging. This view, without denying the natural - biological differences between women and men, focuses on the fact that facilitated or imposed by socialization differences can be more relevant to the process of becoming male or female.

In an attempt to clarify the existing confusions referring to gender in the social field, Risman (2004, p. 430) speaks about four distinct scientific trends concerned with this matter:

a)    the first approach focuses on how individual sexual differences are generated, tracking their biological (Undry, 2000) or social (Bem, 1993) origin. Through **gender schema theory** (launched in 1981 and revised in 1993) Sandra Bem has brought to the fore the important role that cognitive organization plays in acquiring our gender characteristics.

b)    the second, having Fuchs Epstein (1988) through its prominent representatives, is also considered the "theory of misleading distinctions" and it is a response to the first view. In this case, the centre of interest is the way in which social structure (as opposed to biological component or individual learning) generates behaviours that bear the mark of gender affiliation;

c)    the third tradition, also a reaction to the individualistic manner of the first one, emphasizes social interaction and taking into account the expectations of others, focusing especially on how "creating/building gender" produces and reproduces inequality (West and Zimmerman, 1987). The notion of "gender creation/gender construction" invokes the process, the dynamic dimension of social relations and also the functional specificity that the two authors associate with it: conformity and opposition.

d)    the fourth level approaching gender, being also the latest, brings an integrative perspective (Connell 2002; Lorber 1994; Ferree, Lorber and Hess 1999; Risman 1998) in which gender becomes a layered system socially constructed. Taking as a starting point Lorber (1994) and Martin (2003) which regard **gender** as an *institution*, Risman (2004) still prefers

to define gender through ***social structure***, considering that this concept offers the possibility of positioning on an analytical plan similar to economic or political dimension.

Referring to methodological issues in gender analysis, we find that the latest approaches present qualitative and quantitative analysis as complementarities of sociological studies, considering them inherent parts of "the general methodological research scheme" (Valsiner, 2000, p. 100).

Thus, within this study we have developed and undertaken four distinct sociological surveys, as part of our research, all focused on the issue of gender and gender discrimination but applied to four different types of respondents: secondary and high school teachers, high school pupils, university teachers and students. The mirror approach of gender and the perception of related discriminations, within the educational relationships from these two educational levels has enabled a comparative complex and detailed analysis.

The first sociological survey aimed to identify *Stereotypes and gender discrimination in Romanian educational environment* in the opinion of secondary and high school teachers (we applied a questionnaire to 216 subjects, secondary and high school teachers from Timiş county). Another sociological survey was designed for high school students/pupils and started from a complementary approach to the study for teachers. The sample on which this research was conducted included 347 subjects (high school students) aged between 14 and 19 from 5 schools from Timisoara. We applied a questionnaire with five items focused on gender issues and discrimination. This questionnaire was also used in the investigation conducted among students, where we interviewed a total of 303 subjects.

The third sociological survey was addressed to172 subjects, university teachers from different faculties and specializations. The questionnaire for secondary and high

school teachers and also for university teachers has 9 items, of which 5 items are closed questions and 4 items are half-open.

In the second chapter - **Stereotype - phenomenon generated by social and personal interferences** - we approached stereotypes as an instrument of reality interpretation and social facilitation. Research issues in this chapter aimed perceptive differences on gender stereotypes in relation to group membership: in-group / out-group.

In the opinion of specialists, the concept of stereotype receives slightly different connotations, such as:

1. Stereotypes are "a set of shared beliefs regarding personal characteristics, personality and behaviour traits, specific for a group of people" (Leyens, Yzerbyt and Schadron (1994), cited in Bourhis, Leyens 1997, p 98).

2 Lippman W. defines stereotypes as images from our minds that represent real maps designed to guide us in the world.

3. Allport G. W. assigns to stereotypes the value of exaggerated and stigmatizing beliefs regarding one or more characteristics of a class of persons, thus justifying the behaviour towards a category or group (GW Allport as cited in Simmons, 1988);

4. Devine (1989) considers that stereotypes are consistently requested, often without the knowledge of the individual, also representing a form of knowledge in the process of socialization.

5. Stereotypes are considered to be structures of knowledge that associate cognitive attributes with a group (Stangor and Lange, 1994, as cited in Bourhis, Leyens, 1997).

Many theorists have associated emotional intelligence with variables from the field of human personality or social intelligence. Research on gender differences in approaching self-assessed academic intelligence highlighted the followings (Petrides and Furnham, 2000, p. 452):

1. According to primary studies, men believe they have higher general intelligence than women, but both men and women assigned their father with higher intelligence than their mother and also, their grandfather with a higher intelligence than their grandmother.

2. Other studies, based on Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, address major gender differences primarily in relation with mathematical and spatial intelligence: women self-assessed themselves lower than men in the field of logical- mathematical, spatial and kinesthetic intelligence. Parents' estimations of their children have shown that they believe that their sons have a higher level of mathematical, spatial and intrapersonal intelligence compared to their daughters.

3. Intercultural studies on gender differences in the self-assessment of academic intelligence revealed significant gender differences but, also, cultural differences. American students have self-assessed with the highest results in terms of intelligence, but most of participants, regardless their country have assigned a higher level of intelligence to their fathers and brothers (regarding fast and accurate handling of numbers and verbal intelligence) than to females from the family.

Other studies have made inquiries regarding sex differences, analyzing ideas about emotional intelligence and found a few core elements such as self-awareness, self-motivation, emotional management, empathy, interpersonal communication, personal style.

In our work we have also addressed the phenomenon of social facilitation because formal education, through its specific nature, is suitable for analysis from the perspective of the phenomenon of social facilitation. In this context, the presence of the

other as assistant passive part, as observer or as co -action (elements characteristic to the phenomenon of social facilitation) is common and, we might say, often implied.

Our approach seeks to combine the above illustrated aspects with gender issues in school. To be girl or boy, female student or male student introduces new variables in the process of potentiating educational performances due to the presence of others. As illustrated in the previous chapter, the dichotomy male female, as a criterion of categorizing social realities, appears automatically, it makes itself. This can sometimes entail additional pressure for the subject (the one who performs) due to the social value still held by the stereotypical representations associated with feminine and masculine on the dimension of personal characteristics but also on that of capabilities and competencies that society tends to mainly assign to males or females.

According to our research, most secondary and high school teachers consider as useful and very useful the differentiated approach of students within formal education, these two variants being represented by a percentage of 76 %. Regarding the argument of these options, the responses recorded from both female and male subjects, were grouped in seven major categories: 1.Uniqueness of social standards and requirements; 2.Optimization of communication and understanding of students; 3.Differences in the psycho-pedagogical individual and age specific features; 4.Differentiated teaching activity; 5.The current organization of the educational system; 6.Avoiding discrimination; 7.Endorsement /existence of gender equality.

While in the case of teachers and students we have find a relative convergence in defining gender profiles for the two investigated samples, in the case of the differentiated perception of gender stereotypes by secondary and high school teachers and pupils, both investigated samples assigned to females mainly emotional attributes, but teachers assigned to males positive attitudes towards themselves and others, while pupils attributed to males mainly physical characteristics.

The third chapter of our thesis - Values and their use at personal and group level - examines the key influences in structuring the personal system of values, focusing mainly on practical aspects by sketching an axiological profile of the learners from current Romanian education and on value interferences with impact on gender stereotypes.

Values have always been a central concept and a major area of interest in social sciences, generating different conceptualizations in the opinion of those who have investigated and studied them: Boudon, 2001; Inglehart, 1997; Kohn, 1969; Parsons, 1951; Rokeach, 1973, Weber, 1905, Durkheim 1893. Currently, the concept of value is omnipresent in social sciences and beyond, "enjoying" multiple definitions that translate sociological, anthropological, pedagogical and psychological contributions to understanding and settling its rich meanings.

To achieve the axiological profile of the learners from current Romanian education, we have also included in the questionnaire for learners the value orientation grid developed by Schwartz and Sagiv in 1995. This tool has been used successfully in over 40 countries, including Romania and is a continuation of a research conducted by Rokeach (1973). In the view of S. Schwartz, values are trans - situational criteria that serve as guiding principles in people's lives, the grid allowing the achievement of the profile of values from the perspective of the 56 individual values or of the 10 types of values: benevolence, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, traditionalism, conformity, security and power.

Regarding the value interference with impact on gender stereotype, it can be noticed an important aspect in terms of the objectives of the present research: in teachers' opinions, gender affiliation of learners has the lowest power to influence the adoption of a differential treatment based on gender. Its values (34.3 % the lowest and 1.4% the highest) could indicate that, at least at declarative level, teachers express a

lack of gender discrimination in their educational activity. According to the research, one can find a relatively high correlation between the perspective of teachers and students about the criteria of differentiation in Romanian education. The only discrepancy between this series covers only the first option, identified by teachers as individual and developmental peculiarities (main criterion for differentiation, with an aggregate score of 3148) compared to students who have identified the academic results as the main differentiator used by teachers (3.408).

In higher education, we can see a relatively high correlation between the perspective of teachers and students regarding the criteria laying at the basis of differences in Romanian education. The only discrepancy between these series refers only to the first option, identified by teachers as *individual and developmental peculiarities* (main criterion for differentiation, with an aggregate score of 2,975) compared to students who have identified socio - professional status of their parents as the main differentiator used in Romanian education (3,358).

In the fourth chapter of the thesis - **Discrimination and social dynamics** – we approached differences as a perpetual challenge of social interaction and we reported the results of two surveys from the present research: gender discrimination identity in Romanian education in the view of the main stakeholders: teachers and pupils/students (research aspects) and strategies to prevent and fight gender discrimination in education (field research).

Similarities and distinctions represent the two poles of human interaction that generate the dynamic of our existence in more or less favourable parameters to each of us. Most theories from human and social sciences translate psycho-social reality (or socio - psychological dimensions) in attributes which associate or dissociate elements, structures, dimensions, and phenomenology. A simple reflection on the manner in which we perceive and decode the world in terms of forms or meanings can denote that giving up to comparison tends to "immobilize" knowledge. Thus, this endeavour of

research on gender can acquire new nuances by report to the phenomenon of social categorization or comparison that bring to the fore the similarities and differences that translate structural or functional aspects of social reality.

The angle from which we look to the concept of gender proves to be extremely important. Often it is another aspect of research through which we seek to understand and improve the phenomenon of discrimination; belonging to one or other of the two genres is demonstrated over time a consistent mediator of social relations. However, the gender may be a significant descriptor of the expressive complexity of the human being, perspective that primes the positive or negative of attributes assigned to genres. As day and night are different, but it is almost impossible to refer to them in absolute value as one better than the other or one superior to the other, so the attributes of masculinity or femininity become an advantage based on their suitability to a given social context or to the contribution that they bring to a situation.

The integration of the phenomenon of self-fulfilled prophecy in our study was realized in terms of gender stereotypes, which "reflect beliefs regarding characteristics and behaviours associated with feminine and masculine" (Elliott et al., 2000, p. 133).

The phenomena captured by psychosocial theories may form a scientific support for understanding the interference of gender stereotypes with psycho – individual and social aspects which have a major influence on specific performances or even on the sense of self efficiency and effectiveness as a defining element of self-image.

The correlation between theory and research results in the field (shown above) helps to understand the interference between the nature and quality of *educational and vocational guidance*, as existential path marked by numerous personal choices and decisions, with the structure and function of **gender stereotypes**. The interest generated by this issue was materialized through research in the social field and also through measures taken in the field of social policies: legislative provisions at national

level - in different countries - that would ensure equal opportunities for women and men in terms of access to education and professional training.

These measures were particularly focused on fighting gender discrimination (both positive and negative) in the educational and vocational field due to the value that "social reality" has in contemporary society, in various forms and at different levels. In this context, it highlights the manner in which the positive dimension of gender stereotypes can generate a high level of aspirations and beliefs in the possibilities of effective self-realization involving a person in a positive and upward development, both in personal and socio-professional life.

We can find on the same level, but with distinct effects the *negative dimension* of gender stereotypes, able to create emotional or cognitive blockages in the assessment of the personal potential and of the ways we dispose to effectively realize it. Here, the literature brings an illustrative example: "women have a lower level of expectation of how they will be rewarded for their work and services" (Iluț, 2000, p. 182).

The issue of **gender stereotypes** blends scientifical contents based on research regarding the options from the area of educational and vocational guidance because of their implications on the individual development, but also on social interactions involved. Such an approach can focus on socialization as "the psycho-social process of transmission - assimilation of attitudes, values, concepts and patterns of behaviour specific to a group or a community having as aim the education, adaptation and social integration of a person" (Zamfir and Lazarus, 1998, p. 546). There is therefore a two-way relationship that occurs at the interface between the social and psycho-individual dimensions characterizing our existential path and, also, our career in all its stages.

In the social field we cannot talk about gender without making a connection with the development and defining of our own identity, both in terms of taking over the attitudinal and behavioural issues (related to the structuring of "features" of both genres at mental level), but also as expression, at relational level, of personal

"assumptions" resulted from awareness. In a recent study of social psychology (Baron and al, 1998), the chapter dedicated to self is subtitled << Self identity behaviours>> (p.75), among which the authors consider as very important the behaviours of gender and ethnicity ..." (Iluț, 2001, p.15). The sociological and psycho-social approach of interactions of gender specific stereotype contents with the field of educational and vocational guidance indicates a complex phenomenon with major implications at both individual and social level.

According to recent research in the field, it can be appreciated that the particular concern for this issue, but, also, the socio-cultural transformations generated by phenomena such as globalization, the reconsideration (at legislative level and, also, in social policies) of aspects regarding equal opportunities, but not least, research in the socio-psychological field led to an ambivalent conduct or "dual attitudes" (Wilson, 2000, as cited in Iluț, 2006, p 72).

In this respect, it may be appropriate to investigate the main dimensions in relation to which teachers find useful the knowledge of gender peculiarities. Thus, the utility of knowing gender peculiarities recorded an average value in teachers' assessments regarding the *type of learning tasks* (28.2 %), the *level of difficulty of learning tasks* (29.2 %), and *assigning roles* (28,7%). The utility of knowledge of gender peculiarities is considered less useful for *evaluation*, polarizing around this assessment the given values  (31.9%).

## CONCLUSIONS AND OPENINGS

We can find on the same level of conceptual boundaries and clarifications related to gender the inspired association made by Prof. Ph. D. Iluț (2009) between the concept of *asymmetry and the concept of sex –role*, in the attempt to diminish the competition phenomenon that seems to hold hegemony in this area. The author succeeds to orient the psycho - social analysis of gender from the plan of discrimination and socio-cultural inequalities towards positive accents that personalized and different presence of feminine and masculine can acquire. The interpretation of phenomenological reality of gender from the perspective of characteristic asymmetries manages to blend the particularities of the two genres by emphasizing their connection. The failure to "align" certain dimensions of gender, *the lack of symmetry* seems to be the indispensable condition for generating another type of social and individual structure, whose "logic" and "aesthetic" implies a different dynamic of components.

The idea of female - male *asymmetries* shifts the theoretical and applied accents from deprivation or inequality (which implies an approach based on corrective and protective measures for disadvantaged groups) towards the perspective of complementarities and mutual valorisation. Thus, the *asymmetries* can generate a different balance, changing the dynamics of social and individual structures by breaking the monotony and the pattern and creating challenging complexities and vitalities, derived from the characteristics of each component as being the most appropriate to the whole, exactly in the existing form and the parameters.

Reflections on gender from the perspective of *asymmetry* seem to emphasize the added responsibility toward the positive or negative value and significance we attach to certain feminine or masculine attributes we interact with.

The angle from which we look to the concept of **gender** proves to be extremely important. Often, it represents another aspect of research through which we seek to understand and improve the phenomenon of discrimination, the membership to one or other of the two genres being demonstrated, over time, to be a consistent mediator of social relations. However, the gender may be a significant descriptor of the expressive complexity of human being, perspective that primes the positive or negative polarization of the attributes of the two genres. As day and night are different, but it is almost impossible to refer to them in absolute value as one better than the other or one superior to the other, in the same way the attributes of masculinity or femininity become an advantage based on their suitability to a given social context or their contribution to a situation.

The four sociological surveys conducted on secondary and high school teachers, pupils, university teachers, and students were focused on the investigation of gender stereotypical elements existing in Romanian education and as well on gender social construction. Analysis and interpretation of data obtained highlighted some important issues, which we will detail briefly below:

The first item of the applied questionnaires aimed to rank the most influential factors that contribute to the manifestation of gender differences. For all four investigated samples, on in the first two places were located *family education* and *the model of the parent of the same gender*. These two fundamental factors for the process of socialization have been identified as priority both by educators and learners. On the third place in the hierarchy, we can notice, however, certain differences. High school teachers and pupils ranked on the third place *heredity*, while academics have given the

same score to *heredity* and *formal education* while students ranked on the third place the *group of friends*. These tones are clearly associated with significant differences associated with the tier of age of high school pupils versus students, which present a better culturally modeled native component. For the entire sample, the distribution of these factors was:  family education (weighted value: 5), the model of the parent of the same gender (4.2), heredity (3.5), the group of friends (3),  formal education (2.9) and social and cultural models from media (2.3).

The analysis of the association of these dimensions with the other variables included in the questionnaire revealed the following correlations:

➢ Heredity strongly significantly correlates with age (0.147), young people seeing it as less important;

➢ Family education strongly significantly, but negatively, correlates with girls' affective attributes (-0.083), with boys' physical characteristics (-0.090), with the ability to communicate of female students (-0.087) and with the critical thinking of female students (-0.1). Thus, those who emphasized the importance of family education attach less importance to treating females in terms of affective attributes and males in terms of physical characteristics. Also, the focus on family education is associated with distrust in the ability of communication and critical thinking in the case of female students (for the whole sample);

➢ The parental model strongly significantly correlates with the conscientiousness of learners (0,115 girls and 0,097 boys) as well as with the differential treatment of learners by gender (0.084). Thus, those who attach high importance to the model of the same-sex parent consider learners as having high conscientiousness and, also, that, in Romanian education, learners are treated differently according to gender;

➢ Group of friends strongly significantly correlates with differential treatment of learners according to teachers' expectations (0.084) and age (0.177). Thus, those who attach high importance to the group of friends as a factor that influences male-female differentiation are younger and believe that in the Romanian educational system, learners are treated differently depending on teachers' expectations.

➢ Considering formal education as a significant factor for the emphasis of male-female differentiation strongly significantly negatively correlates with the assessment of student discipline (males -0.091) and with the differential treatment of learners by gender (0.108). In other words, those who believe that formal education emphasizes male-female differentiation tend to see boys as less disciplined and allege a clear distinction between male students and female students in the formal educational system;

➢ The appreciation of media as a contributing factor to the increasing of gender differences strongly significantly but negatively correlates with communication skills of male students (0,126 ) and with the critical thinking of female students;

➢ The overuse of positive attitudes towards work and life of girls strongly significantly but negatively correlates with the age of respondents (0,091), younger people associating utmost female learners with this variable;

➢ In the case of schoolgirls and female students, all gender attributes strongly significantly, but negatively correlates with age: conscientiousness (-0.110), intelligence (-0.181), creativity, (-0.132), competitiveness (-0.119), communication skills (-0.091), sensitivity (-0.199), discipline (-0.114), critical thinking (-0.197) and tolerance (-0.093). Younger respondents considered that all these attributes are more pronounced in schoolgirls and female

students (compared with the assessments made by older respondents, teachers).

➢ In the case of schoolboys and male students we have found significant but negative correlations of age only with the following attributes: competitiveness (-0.186), communication skills (-0.154), critical thinking (-0.073) and tolerance (-0.098) and a positive correlation with sensitivity (0,138).

➢ According to ANOVA obtained, in the case of *heredity* (F = 6.640), *same age group* (F = 12.729 ), *formal education* (F = 3.303) and *media* (F = 8.683 ) there are statistically significant differences between the four analyzed groups (secondary and high school teachers, university teachers, pupils and students) in the assessment of the contribution of these factors in shaping gender differences. Instead, in the case of *family education* (F = 0.517 ) and *parental model* (F = 1.157) there are no significant differences between teachers, pupils and students.

Regarding the evaluation of the two genres based on predefined dimensions, there were also recorded differences between secondary and high school education and the higher education. Thus, in the view of school teachers, schoolgirls are characterized primarily by *sensitivity and communication skills* and in the slightest degree by *tolerance and intelligence*. From the perspective of schoolboys, the situation is slightly different: schoolgirls are characterized primarily by *sensitivity and critical thinking* and in the slightest degree by *discipline and tolerance*.

In the case of secondary and high school education there were also recorded significant differences in the evaluation of the male gender at the level of the two samples we investigated. Teachers appreciate schoolboys as particularly *intelligent* and with *critical spirit* and less *tolerant and conscientious* while pupils appreciate males as especially *competitive and intelligent* and less as *conscientious and sensitive*. Assigning

**intelligence** to males in a percentage value almost double may be an argument that supports the identification of traditional stereotypical representations of gender in the case of school teachers.

For higher education, the two portraits are slightly different. Female students are perceived by teachers as being particularly *communicative and sensitive* and less *conscientious and tolerant* while in the opinion of students, female students appear to be mainly *sensitive and communicative* and less *disciplined and tolerant*. Males are perceived by teachers with predilection as *intelligent and competitive* and less *sensitive and conscientious.*

A similar situation was recorded in connection with the gender variable. Thus, according to these distributions, for all the 9 variables, the results obtained in relation with schoolgirls and female students differ statistically significantly between male and female respondents. In other words, at the level of the investigated sample, regardless of respondents (teachers or students) the shaped profile of schoolgirls and female students by male subjects is statistically significantly different from the profile outlined by female subjects.

When assessing males, for 7 of the 9 investigated dimensions, the differences between the four analyzed sub-samples are not random (consciousness, intelligence, competitiveness, communication skills, sensitivity, discipline and tolerance). Also, in relation to gender variable only 3 of the 9 analyzed dimensions showed statistically significant differential responses between the two genres (conscientiousness, discipline and critical thinking).

In addition to these distributions, we have also made a series of evaluations of the two genres. Thus, for secondary and high school teachers, the   female profile" is drawn primarily by affective attributes, the second place being held by physical traits, and the third by positive attitudes towards work and life. For the "male profile", in the

first place teachers mentioned men' positive attitudes towards work and life, followed by negative attitudes towards self and others, in third place being placed physical attributes. High schoolboys associated female gender with affective attributes, physical characteristics and positive attitudes towards self and others and the masculine gender with physical characteristics, positive attitudes towards work and life and negative attitudes towards self and others.

At academic level, university teachers associated females with emotional attributes, physical characteristics and positive attitudes towards work and life and males with the same features, but in reversed order. Finally, at the same question, students associated females with emotional attributes, physical characteristics and positive attitudes towards themselves and others while for the masculine gender they associated positive attitude towards work and life followed by positive attitudes towards themselves and others.

From a complementary perspective, the teachers taking part in our study consider any type of gender discrimination - positive and negative – as rare and very rare in Romanian education. This is obviously associated with predominantly negative implications of discrimination in any kind of educational system.

In the same complex area, the analysis of differentiation criteria between the connection with these distributions, we can also observe a relatively eclectic nature: excepting university teachers, all other three groups claim with priority one or more criteria of manifestation of gender differentiation in Romanian education. This profile is confirmed by ANOVA, where for all 6 involved variables, the differences between teachers, pupils and students are statistically significant (F taking values from 5.495 to 32.107).

The situation was slightly different for gender: in the case of this variable, only two dimensions present statistically significant differences: academic performances (F = 17.038) learner's gender (F = 9.920).

Finally, the analysis of the applied Schwartz's value grid has outlined – in the case of learners - two distinct profiles, relevant to the profile of the current generation of pupils and students. Thus, students are characterized, in order of obtained scores by: achievement, hedonism, self -direction, conformity, benevolence, universalism, security, stimulation, power and tradition. It can be noticed the value orientation between the two extreme outcomes -achievement and tradition - , reflecting the desire to overcome some life patterns and life patterns of the previous generation (including parents). This can be directly correlated with the perception of family education and of the model the parent of the same gender as the main factors that influences assumption of the gender role.

In the same complex area, the analysis of differentiation criteria between the two genres in Romanian educational system has revealed a relatively high degree of correspondence between teachers and pupils/students, both in high school and in higher education. Thus, for high school respondents, the only discrepancy between this series concerns only the first option, identified by teachers: *individual and developmental specific features* (as main criterion for differentiation, with an aggregated score of 3.148); pupils identified the level of academic performance as the main differentiator used by teachers (3.408).

At university level, it was kept the same quasi- total correlation, the only discrepancy between these series also targeting only the first option, identified by teachers as *individual and developmental specific features* (as main criterion for differentiation, with an aggregated score of 2.975); students identified the social and professional status of their parents as the main differentiator used in Romanian education (3.358).

For students, the distribution of values is as follows: self-direction, hedonism, conformity, benevolence, achievement, universalism, security, stimulation, tradition and

power. In this case, the guiding value is self-direction while the least appreciated is power. It can be noticed the existence of slight differences between the two generations (pupils and students), obviously caused by life experience and the shift towards a more autonomous lifestyle.

The present study can be continued in the direction of assessing gender contents in the adult population, as well as comparative analysis between existing situations in various European social spaces.

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